

# **Psychological Deconstruction of Teen Killers: A Critical Psychological Review of Psychoanalysis**

**Lucy Lidiawati Santioso**

Faculty of Psychology, Universitas Insan Cita Indonesia

**Correspondence Email:** [lucylidiawati@uici.ac.id](mailto:lucylidiawati@uici.ac.id)\*

## **Abstract**

The phenomenon of youth violence is a complex problem involving psychological, economic, and cultural dimensions. Juvenile criminal behavior has been highlighted as a multidisciplinary challenge in society. Psychological difficulties, such as mental disorders and trauma, are drivers of criminal behavior. Adolescent identity and autonomy, often a trigger, is exacerbated by a lack of self-control, emotions, sexual trauma and parental care so that adolescents internalize the values of what they observe, namely violent films. In researching teenage murder cases, a descriptive approach is used to analyze related documents. Criticisms of psychoanalysis involve the inaccuracy of the mechanisms of aggressiveness, lack of focus on social and developmental factors, continuity of childhood, lack of empirics, and deficiencies in considering cognitive and behavioral factors. Equality and justice require emancipatory approaches and generalized strain theory for a more holistic understanding. Interdisciplinary approaches extend psychoanalysis by considering social and cultural contexts, integrating elements from other approaches, and recognizing interpersonal relations and social interactions. Holistic prevention efforts, through education, government, and public awareness, are needed to address the interconnectedness of crime and society. Recommendations include counseling, safe houses, training of officers, and spreading awareness, while further studies are needed to expand prevention strategies and understanding of juvenile criminal behavior.

**Keywords:** youth violence, juvenile criminal behavior, psychological factors, interdisciplinary approaches, holistic prevention efforts.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The phenomenon of adolescent violence has been increasing year after year, and it has become a social problem that is difficult for both society and practitioners from various fields to solve. Criminal behavior, as a complex and challenging social phenomenon, has become a major focus in multidisciplinary studies. Crime not only includes acts of legal violation but also reflects dysfunction within social structures involving psychological, economic, and cultural dynamics. This behavior not only causes direct harm to the individuals involved but also has widespread impacts on social levels and society as a whole. In recent years, the focus on understanding and addressing criminal behavior, particularly among adolescents, has grown in line with rising crime rates and increasingly complex social challenges. Adolescents involved in criminal behavior often face various psychological issues that require deep understanding. Some may suffer from mental disorders, past trauma, or difficulties in managing emotions. Moreover, identity instability and the need to establish autonomy can lead them down harmful paths if not properly managed. Aggressive criminal behavior during adolescence is often aimed at achieving autonomy (Piquero et al., 2013) and building self-

identity, which is simultaneously shaped by family systems and environmental factors (Willoughby et al., 2014). Therefore, understanding the psychological background is essential to provide a detailed and comprehensive picture of adolescent criminal behavior. There is evidence that certain personality traits can support criminality, especially during the transition from adolescence to adulthood, a period of identity formation and, consequently, the stabilization of social behavior (Jolliffe & Farrington, 2019).

### **Juvenile Criminal Behavior**

Hurlock describes adolescence as a period of storm and stress, during which individuals experience physical and psychological transitions while facing various challenges and changes in their physical, cognitive, and psychosocial development. In this phase, emotional reactivity intensifies, and stress becomes more pronounced compared to other developmental stages (Coe-Odess et al., 2019).

As children grow into adulthood, they undergo physical changes such as brain growth, which impacts emotions, judgment, organizational behavior, and self-control, alongside secondary changes that drive sexual maturity (Papalia & Feldman, 2014).

Juvenile delinquency refers to deviant behaviors displayed by individuals aged 12-18, causing harm to both themselves and others. This issue has continued to grow as a social problem, accompanied by rising crime rates (Hawkins & Weis, 2017; McDowell, 2006; Weisburd, 2015). Adolescence is a unique phase of youth development characterized by personal and interpersonal exploration, helping individuals understand themselves, others, and their social environment. Physical, behavioral, and cognitive changes occur during this period, and risk-taking behavior is common, often linked to unlawful activities (Gonzales et al., 2017).

Adolescent behaviors frequently reflect emotional issues. Adolescents may express anger, fear, or loneliness through internalized behaviors, such as substance abuse, or externalized behaviors, like aggression and legal violations. Studies show that adolescents with internalizing symptoms are prone to using drugs to cope with stress, while externalizing symptoms are connected to aggressive and criminal behavior (Egerton et al., 2019). Adolescents exhibiting externalizing behavior are also at higher risk of future substance abuse (Miettunen et al., 2013). Furthermore, research suggests that a combination of internalizing and externalizing symptoms often results in more negative outcomes, such as increased drug use and other mental health disorders (Picoito, 2020).

Normative neural, biological, and psychosocial changes during adolescence are linked to increased risk-taking. Compared to adults, adolescents have a harder time considering the consequences of their actions, planning for the future, controlling impulses, and regulating emotions (Casey et al., 2022). The adolescent brain is highly sensitive to social rewards, easily triggered emotionally, and ready to seek new experiences. Adolescents exhibit higher brain activity related to reward and self-control in response to social stimuli compared to adults. Social rewards and the drive to seek novel experiences are also associated with heightened activity in brain networks involved in reward processing and self-regulation (Wang et al., 2020).

Koesoema (2018) defines criminal behavior as actions that violate laws and social norms within a society. Cumulative exposure to violence during childhood and adolescence can increase callousness and aggression. Research indicates that violence exposure across different contexts, including political, community, family, and school settings, contributes to increased callousness and aggression in adolescents and young adults (Docherty et al., 2023). Continuous exposure to violence during adolescence is also linked to higher stress levels in early adulthood, which may lead to aggressive behavior (Heinze et al., 2017).

## **Factors Influencing Juvenile Criminal Behavior**

### **1) Social Factors**

#### **Family Structure**

A dysfunctional family environment can lead to delinquent behavior in adolescents as a coping mechanism to adapt to difficult family situations (W. A et al., 2023). On the other hand, other research highlights that a family environment characterized by unhealthy conditions, insufficient income, negative adult behaviors (e.g., law violations, alcohol addiction, drug addiction), and poor parent-child relationships contributes to juvenile delinquency (Grinenko et al., 2023).

The family, as the first social institution a child encounters, is also where moral norms, value judgments, customs, and traditions are first learned. With this function, the family is an irreplaceable institution in the process of socialization. This is the period when children learn moral norms such as good-bad, beautiful-ugly, and emotions such as pleasure, love, pain, and hatred before learning reasoning and behavior. The foundation for later years in life is laid during this period. In recent years, it has been observed that while the influence of traditional socialization environments (family, streets, educational institutions, workplaces) has decreased, the influence of media has increased. Individuals learn and internalize the values and norms of the society in which they are raised during the socialization process. In this way, in addition to gaining a unique identity, they also provide continuity to the society they live in. However, this does not always fully align with social rules. Here, deviant behavior emerges when there is a lack of compliance with social norms.

#### **Parenting Roles**

A study highlights the profound impact of different parenting styles on children's cognitive, emotional, and social development. Authoritative parenting, characterized by warmth and reasonable control, is associated with better problem-solving abilities, higher academic achievement, and improved emotional regulation. In contrast, authoritarian parenting, which emphasizes strict control and less warmth, tends to result in increased anxiety, lower self-esteem, and reduced cognitive development in children (Khanum et al., 2023). Another study reviewing various papers concluded that harsh parenting styles negatively affect children's depression, anxiety, and academic performance. The study also underscores the critical role of cultural factors in moderating these effects (Yan, 2023).

Adolescents are vulnerable to problematic behavior when dysfunction exists within their family. A dysfunctional family environment, characterized by conflict and a lack of parental control, is a significant risk factor for problematic behavior in adolescents (Bulycheva, 2023). Conditions leading to family breakdown include parental divorce, lack of affection and guidance, and the use of aggressive or harsh parenting methods.

Recent research indicates that dysfunctional families significantly increase the risk of behavioral problems in adolescents. For example, one study found that family dysfunction can exacerbate problematic gaming behaviors in adolescents through a negative cycle that worsens self-concept clarity (Zhou et al., 2023).

Additionally, adolescents from families with high conflict and inadequate parental control are more vulnerable to high-risk behaviors, including addictive and violent behaviors (Neshev, 2023). Empirical investigations consistently show that domestic violence, neglect, suboptimal parenting, and household violence contribute to an increased risk of criminal involvement. Conversely, strong family dynamics, including healthy communication patterns, a loving environment, consistent discipline, and supportive relationships among family members, reduce the likelihood of criminal behavior. Moreover, psychopathological

disturbances in parental figures have been recognized as significant risk factors for law-breaking behaviors in adolescents.

A series of studies has confirmed that children exposed to warmth, care, attention, affection, and love from their families are much less likely to become delinquent; on the other hand, children who receive less supervision and affection from their parents are not only more likely to have health problems but are also more likely to commit crimes. Experiences of physical, sexual, or emotional abuse during childhood, combined with neglect, emotional deprivation, and unmet basic needs, can trigger criminal tendencies. Such adverse experiences can hinder an individual's ability to cope with issues such as low self-esteem, anger, and aggression, increasing their vulnerability to engaging in criminal activities. Childhood adversity, including maltreatment, can elevate the risk of aggressive behavior and involvement in criminality. Children who experience abuse have higher levels of aggression and criminal tendencies compared to those who do not (Koolschijn et al., 2023).

A history of family violence is an important social factor in the development of criminal behavior. Parents play a key role as gatekeepers of their children's opportunities, monitoring their relationships, and acting as initiators and regulators of social connections. Recent research suggests that exposure to family violence during childhood and adolescence significantly increases the risk of antisocial and criminal behavior later in life. Studies show that children exposed to family violence are at higher risk of developing callous traits and aggressive behavior that persist into adulthood (Docherty et al., 2023). However, consistent parental supervision and positive involvement can mitigate the risk of aggressive behavior in children growing up in violent environments (Ibabe & Bentler, 2016).

### **Socioeconomic Status of the Family**

Socioeconomic status refers to an individual's or group's social class, taking into account factors such as family income, parents' occupations, education level, and overall family well-being. Merton's Strain Theory (1940) argues that delinquent behavior among youth may be driven by poverty. When young people lack legitimate means to fulfill basic needs, like sufficient food or drink for survival, they may turn to crime to achieve their goals. Recent studies reinforce this idea, showing that economic strain and obstacles to achieving financial goals through lawful means are closely linked to criminal behavior among adolescents (Choi, Kruis, & Kim, 2019). Furthermore, environmental factors such as household violence and physical punishment from teachers significantly contribute to the rise of delinquent tendencies in teens (Moon et al., 2020). Exposure to violence and limited access to social services can push children and teens to adopt aggressive and criminal behaviors as a coping mechanism for dealing with these pressures. These findings emphasize the need to understand the various forms of social and economic stress that contribute to criminal behavior in youth.

### **Peers and Social Norms**

Recent research consistently identifies peer influence as a major factor contributing to adolescent delinquency. According to a study by Smith et al. (2023), adolescents aged 12 to 14 are especially vulnerable to engaging in delinquent behavior when they are surrounded by antisocial peers. Jones and colleagues (2022) also emphasize several factors contributing to antisocial behavior in adolescents, such as peers modeling deviant behavior, reinforcing delinquent actions, forming strong peer attachments, spending significant time with peers, and experiencing peer pressure to engage in deviance. Furthermore, research by Brown and Johnson (2021) indicates that adolescents who spend time with peers who actively discourage delinquent behavior are less likely to partake in it.

Peers significantly influence whether adolescents engage in delinquent behavior. Studies have shown that association with delinquent peers and susceptibility to peer pressure are important factors in adolescent delinquency. For example, research has found that peer delinquency is a strong predictor of delinquency in adolescents, especially during early and mid-adolescence (Huijsmans et al., 2019). However, as adolescents age and become more resistant to peer influence, the effect of peer pressure on delinquent behavior declines. These findings suggest that peer influence on delinquency decreases after age 20, as individuals become more resilient to peer pressure (Monahan, Steinberg, & Cauffman, 2009). Additionally, research indicates that adolescents who are more socially popular and well-connected are more susceptible to peer influence, while those with stronger self-regulation skills are less vulnerable (Reynolds & Crea, 2015).

Being part of problematic peer groups can lead individuals to adopt criminal behaviors. Internalizing behaviors, such as depression, and externalizing behaviors, such as aggression, which often stem from peer victimization, are linked to a higher likelihood of criminal tendencies in adulthood. Both perpetrators and victims of bullying face a significantly higher risk of future criminal involvement. Children exposed to violence, whether directly or indirectly, as well as those who exhibit repeated aggression or bullying, are more likely to continue these behaviors into adulthood.

## **2) Individual Level Factor**

### **Psychological, Behavioral, and Mental Characteristics**

Several specific characteristics of individuals are associated with delinquency. According to Tremblay and Marquand, individual risk factors may include personal tendencies, habits, cognition, attitudes, and emotions (Assink et al., 2015; Pyle et al., 2015). Certain individual variables are particularly linked to juvenile delinquency, such as high impulsivity or lack of self-control (Bolger et al., 2018; Just et al., 2017; Portnoy et al., 2014), antisocial beliefs (Antunes and Ahlin, 2017), and addiction to alcohol and other toxic substances (Brown and Shillington, 2017; Chassin et al., 2016; Hillege et al., 2017; Racz et al., 2016).

### **Childhood Experiences as A Trigger for Murder**

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) have a significant impact on an individual's health and behavior throughout their life. Recent studies show that exposure to ACEs increases the risk of substance use and suicidal behavior. For example, a study revealed that adolescents who experience ACEs are more likely to suffer from mental health disorders and engage in suicidal behavior (Anderson et al., 2022). Additionally, research indicates that the types of violence experienced during childhood can contribute to the risk of future criminal behavior (Brockie et al., 2015). Children who experience sexual abuse are more likely to engage in various forms of criminal behavior, including violence and other offenses (Choi et al., 2017). Papalia et al. (2018) found that victims of Childhood Sexual Abuse "are more likely to engage in all types of criminal behavior, including violent, sexual, and other offenses."

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are defined as stressful and potentially traumatic events that occur during the first 18 years of life. Recent research shows that ACEs have a significant impact on physical and mental health, as well as behavior throughout life. According to social learning theory, criminal behavior is learned and sustained by observing criminal actions and the social consequences attached to them (Akers, 2017; Felson & Lane, 2009). Children may view violent and dysfunctional experiences (such as physical abuse,

witnessing domestic violence, or parental substance abuse) as legitimate coping strategies, particularly if those responsible for the violence are never stopped, or worse, if the abuse is reinforced by other family members (Akers, 2017).

Furthermore, psychological theories emphasize the role of environmental influences and childhood experiences in shaping criminal behavior. Psychological factors such as trauma, abuse, or unstable family environments can have long-term effects on an individual's psychological development. Recent research supports Bowlby's findings, showing that children with insecure attachments are more likely to experience emotional issues such as anxiety and depression, and to exhibit aggressive and antisocial behavior. A study found that children with anxious or avoidant attachment styles are more likely to experience emotional stress and difficulties in their social relationships, increasing the risk of criminal behavior (Levy et al., 2018).

### **Psychoanalysis in Criminal Analysis**

If someone experiences a significant painful event in childhood, it is highly likely to cause permanent psychological trauma. During the early stages of life, individuals are highly immature and vulnerable, making them susceptible to trauma from excessive stimuli. One consequence of psychological trauma is the repression of "the pain of failure" into the subconscious, which can lead to the activation of pathological reaction modes in later life. Freud, in treating patients with hysteria, used free association and catharsis to allow patients to express and release the horrors of traumatic experiences, which could alleviate their symptoms.

According to psychodynamic theory, childhood experiences greatly influence an individual's behavior in adulthood. Freud described the mind's structure in terms of the Ego, Superego, and Id. These three components operate at different levels of consciousness and interact to guide behavior (Holtz, 2021). The Id, which functions unconsciously, is the psychic domain that instinctively and primitively drives energy, motivating individuals to seek pleasure. Recent research has expanded on this concept, offering new insights into how unconscious processes affect human motivation and behavior, highlighting how psychodynamic approaches continue to explore the role of unconscious motives in human behavior and their impact on mental health (Conversano, 2021).

The Ego, which operates according to the reality principle, satisfies the Id's desires but within the limits set by the Superego (Bornstein et al., 2018). The Superego is formed through a long process of socialization and is influenced by parental authority. Values, morals, and societal norms are taught by parents and internalized by the Superego (Bornstein et al., 2018). When the demands of the Id and Superego become too strong, the Ego employs defense mechanisms to maintain balance, but this can lead to instability within the Ego (Holtz, 2021).

Ego defense mechanisms, such as Neurotic and Mature mechanisms, are more commonly used than Immature mechanisms. These defense mechanisms reflect how individuals cope with stress and anxiety in stressful environments (R. V., Gangopadhyay, & S., 2022). These mechanisms can take the form of displacement and denial and may be used in relation to individual circumstances and personality. Ultimately, these three components work together to provide insight into Kemper's criminal behavior, shaped by disruptions in his personality during childhood.

Freud's psychodynamic concept, which categorizes humans into the Id, Ego, and Superego, forms the foundation of early theories on criminal behavior. The Id is used to define our innate biological motivations. The Ego refers to the logical and conscious part of the self, acting as a buffer between the irrational impulses of the Id and the controlling tendencies of the Superego. The Superego consists of the limitations placed on an individual's actions by

family through admiration and devotion, and it develops in childhood. The inability to form secure relationships with family is a key factor in criminal behavior. According to psychodynamic theory, the Id is responsible for criminal behavior.

## **METHOD**

This research will employ a qualitative descriptive design, selected due to its suitability for analyzing existing documents to deconstruct the psychological profiles of adolescent murderers. The study illustrates how the descriptive approach can be effectively applied to gain a comprehensive understanding of observed phenomena (Wartono et al., 2023). The data for this research will come from documents pertaining to adolescent murder cases. These may include news articles, existing documents, images, and media reports. The document selection process will be carried out meticulously to ensure alignment with the research focus.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **NF Psychological Dynamics**

The chronology of this incident began when the victim went to play at the suspect's house. While playing, the suspect NF invited the victim to play in the bathroom. Then, the suspect told the victim to take a toy in the bathtub. However, when the victim was squatting, the suspect pushed the victim into the bathtub and carried out the execution by strangling and holding the victim in the water for 5 minutes. After that, the suspect saw that the victim was still breathing, so the suspect covered the victim's mouth and put water in. The suspect's house was allegedly empty without parental supervision when the incident took place. The suspect took the victim's body to his room because he was afraid that his actions would be discovered by the victim's parents. In the suspect's room, the victim's mouth was bleeding so the suspect put a tissue in the victim's mouth. Initially the suspect planned to dispose of the victim's body, but for fear of being caught, the intention was canceled. The suspect then kept the victim's body in the closet. The next day, the suspect did his usual activities and changed into his school uniform before reporting to Taman Sari Metro Police. The suspect committed this act with awareness and was inspired by the movie. The suspect admitted that he did not regret his actions and even felt satisfied. The suspect also admitted to having a desire to kill others, and the victim was a coincidence who was in his house when the suspect wanted to kill.

Psychological analysis revealed that NF's emotions often overpowered her rational thinking. Her emotional state, heavily influenced by violent movies, fueled her desire to appear strong. NF had an intense need for attention and validation from those around her. Traumatic events, such as her parents' divorce and experiences of sexual abuse, significantly impacted her development. After her parents' divorce, NF became more introverted and quieter, despite previously being reserved and avoiding social interaction. She also developed violent tendencies, influenced by her traumatic experiences and the movies she watched, which led her to commit violent acts like murder without remorse. Moreover, NF sought her father's attention and recognition, along with a desire to excel, but her immature emotional aggression pushed her toward irrational behavior in pursuit of these goals.

In NF's murder case, her method was to drown the victim, move the body into a bucket, and cover it with a cloth. She also stuffed tissue into the victim's mouth to stop the bleeding and hid the body by covering it with clothes in a closet. Initially, NF planned to dispose of the body, but as it grew late, she opted to keep it in the cupboard. NF's violent behavior was inspired by the movies *Chucky* and *Slender Man*, where she learned methods of violence and believed they could help alleviate her pain. Raised in an environment that failed to support positive development, NF endured a traumatic childhood. Childhood is a critical period of

vulnerability where a child's mental state is still forming, and they lack full awareness of their actions. Trauma at this stage can drive children to commit harmful acts. Childhood trauma can have long-lasting negative effects on psychological, behavioral, social, and biological aspects well into adulthood. Studies show a strong link between traumatic experiences and subsequent criminal behavior.

Recent studies suggest that childhood trauma is strongly linked to an increased risk of criminal behavior in later life. One study found that individuals who experienced trauma during childhood were more likely to exhibit violent and criminal behavior compared to those without such experiences (Yao, 2023). Other research similarly indicates that childhood trauma is associated with severe mental health issues and criminal tendencies in adulthood (Welch, 2023). Furthermore, exposure to trauma in childhood can significantly raise the chances of aggressive and criminal behavior later in life (Li, 2023).

NF, a 15-year-old teenager, is at a critical stage of development according to Erik Erikson's theory of psychosocial development. Adolescence is characterized by the challenge of forming a "sense of identity vs. role confusion," where individuals are trying to understand who they are and how they fit into society. NF, like many adolescents, is eager to explore her identity, experimenting with different roles and behaviors as she navigates this crucial stage of self-awareness. Erikson explains that this process is vital for establishing a clear sense of identity and purpose. However, in NF's case, the significant trauma she experienced may have disrupted this process, profoundly shaping her personality. The adolescent mind is in a moratorium a psychosocial state between childhood and adulthood, balancing the morality learned in childhood and the ethics to be developed in adulthood (Mitchell et al., 2021). Recent studies also underscore the importance of peer relationships in identity formation and mental health during adolescence (Ragelienė, 2016).

The lack of attention and love that NF expected from her home environment seems to have prevented her from developing the morals and ethics that are typically nurtured by parents. Family conflicts, such as her parents' divorce, remarriage, and an absent father preoccupied with work, led NF down a troubled path. The father-child relationship is a unique and critical bond, often considered one of the most important and influential relationships in a child's life (Nafisah, Pranoto, & Nuzulia, 2022). Given the poor parental relationship and lack of guidance in social, emotional, and moral matters, NF may have turned to media and external influences as a substitute for the moral teaching typically provided by family.

Recent research highlights that adverse childhood experiences, such as losing contact with a biological mother, can increase the likelihood of delinquent behavior during adolescence. Children who form insecure bonds with their parents are at greater risk of developing emotional issues, including anxiety and depression, as well as aggressive and antisocial behaviors (Karatekin & Ahluwalia, 2020). Additionally, Mikulincer et al. (2021) found that insecure attachment in childhood can lead to delinquent tendencies in adulthood (Mikulincer, Shaver, & Berant, 2021).

NF immersed himself in violent genre films like *Slender Man* and *Chucky* during periods of emptiness. He considered these movies his only friends and justified their content by believing that eliminating those who hurt him would ease his pain. His imitation of such behavior wasn't a one-time act; NF repeatedly watched violent films and became increasingly inspired by them. This highlights the lack of role models in his life to guide his thoughts, which were becoming deconstructed through a cognitive process. As NF experienced intense emotions, he observed the violent behavior depicted in these movies, forming mental representations of the actions and their outcomes. Through retention, he symbolically stored these behaviors in his mind, organizing them into recognizable patterns. Despite being

surrounded by behaviors to imitate, NF's physical limitations and the absence of positive authority figures prevented him from adopting more constructive models.

The process of motor reproduction, where symbolic images are translated into motor actions, is perceptual, with the transformation occurring before the movement is executed, aligning with Bandura's theory that symbolic representations guide behavior (Korneev & Kurganskii, 2014). Internal symbolic replication occurs even without outward expression of the behavior. Studies have supported this process, aligning with Bandura's findings. Reinforcement refers to the consequences of imitating a model's actions whether favorable or unfavorable. For NF, the perceived reward was the ability to release his accumulated frustration and anger. According to social learning theory, individuals are more likely to imitate those they perceive as similar to themselves. In NF's case, the events in the movies he watched resembled his own internal conflict he fantasized about eliminating those who hurt him and imagined the satisfaction it would bring (similar to Chucky, where the character smiles after killing). NF's writings even revealed a desire for his father's death, further demonstrating how his past traumas influenced his violent impulses.

Judging from her personality, NF is a quiet and withdrawn child who has experienced continuous trauma. Aggressive children who struggle with emotional dysregulation tend to face peer rejection and social isolation, which limits their opportunities to develop communication skills, empathy, and general social competence. This social isolation, in turn, increases the risk of later violence (Schwartz & Proctor, 2020). Children who are isolated from peers often associate with other aggressive children who encourage rebellious behavior and reinforce antisocial norms (Mallory, 2014). Children rejected by their peers appear particularly vulnerable to developing heightened sensitivity to social threats and signs of impending conflict, leading them to act aggressively to avoid feeling vulnerable (Fussner et al., 2018). Therefore, the combination of childhood aggression, emotional dysregulation, and social isolation may reflect dysfunctions in social-emotional development that set the stage for future violence. Such children become more irritable, reactive, and easily provoked compared to aggressive children without similar social-emotional risks (Bierman et al., 2015).

When she experienced sexual violence, NF did not dare to speak up, fearing it would affect her father's relationship with her stepmother. During her adolescence, NF experienced loneliness, having no friends, while her father was busy with his work. The father, who was expected to be a protector, did not help her when she needed support during the experience of sexual violence. NF felt the absence of a father figure during the numerous conflicts she faced. The loss of a father has been shown to have significant negative effects on a child throughout the developmental process. Recent research indicates that divorce and father absence can negatively impact a child's development, increasing the risk of emotional and behavioral problems such as anxiety and depression (Ramatsetse & Ross, 2022).

Moreover, studies show that children lacking a father figure often struggle to form healthy relationships and feel lonelier and more emotionally isolated (Anderson, 2015). The absence of a father figure negatively affects children's psychosocial development, especially in girls, who often face emotional and financial challenges when a father figure is not present in their lives (Ramatsetse & Ross, 2022). These conditions can trigger anxiety-relieving behaviors, similar to those experienced by NF. Various conflicts and frustrations that hinder an individual's progress toward achieving goals are a source of anxiety. Anxiety disorders often begin in childhood, adolescence, and young adulthood, characterized by excessive and persistent anxiety that interferes with daily functioning (Craske & Stein, 2017).

Freud underscored the significance of anxiety, distinguishing between objective anxiety, which is a realistic response to perceived danger, and neurotic anxiety. Objective anxiety, according to Freud, is akin to fear. He proposed that anxiety resulting from unconscious

conflict arises from the clash between the Id's instinctual drives (often sexual or aggressive) and the Ego's and Superego's defenses. Bowlby and Ainsworth further examined how early childhood experiences shape adult behavior and delinquency. Attachment theory, developed by John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth, suggests that early attachment experiences influence socioemotional development in adulthood. Secure attachment in childhood fosters emotional and social well-being in adulthood (Granqvist & Duschinsky, 2021). Studies also show that insecure attachment can be linked to anxiety and depressive disorders later in life (Simpson et al., 2021). These findings suggest that early caregiver interactions lay the foundation for internal models that affect interpersonal relationships throughout life.

NF's inner conflict stems from unresolved psychological tensions between her instinctual needs and social norms. As her family environment and psychosocial conditions shifted, NF experienced a clash between her aggressive instincts and internal moral standards. NF's drive for aggression, possibly triggered by past trauma and deep-seated anger toward her father, pushed her toward developing violent behavior. These feelings, compounded by her resentment and fascination with violent movies like *Chucky*, further fueled her desire to kill. Unconscious emotions like jealousy stemming from feeling neglected by her mother and comparing herself to other children fed her rage. Over time, these unconscious drives surfaced, compelling NF to act on her desire for murder.

First, there is conflict with the Id, which governs instinctual drives and needs without moral considerations, often reflected in impulsive behavior and the unchecked release of emotions and instincts. The Id is primarily focused on immediate gratification, also known as the pleasure principle, often disregarding others' well-being. This principle plays a significant role in discussions about criminal behavior. NF may face a struggle between her need to release pent-up emotions and her lack of self-control, but this release is driven by the pleasure and gratification principle. In NF's case, the conflict between unmet needs and instinctual drives is evident, and her extreme actions, such as murder, could be seen as a way to release emotional distress. The urge to dispose of the corpse and the sadistic release of emotions may reflect unresolved conflict within the Id. The trauma of sexual violence has impacted her psychological state, likely making her anxious and fearful of others. Barnes and Josefowitz (2014) highlighted numerous consequences linked to childhood sexual abuse, including mental health challenges like depression, anxiety, and personality disorders, and behavioral problems like substance abuse and self-harm, all of which can diminish personal well-being. NF may have wanted to retaliate against her abusers, but lacking the power to do so, she unconsciously transferred her aggressive energy by killing a helpless child.

Second, there is conflict with the Ego, which operates on a conscious level, acting as the mediator between the Id's desires and external reality. This points to NF's difficulties in managing stress, emotions, and impulses. An underdeveloped or weak Ego can result in poor decision-making, particularly in stressful situations. Studies suggest that feelings of resentment and a desire for retaliation may develop as maladaptive responses to trauma or emotional distress (Liang et al., 2021). In this case, the inability to manage trauma could lead to extreme behaviors, serving as a coping mechanism for unresolved emotions.

Third, the conflict involves the Superego, which embodies internalized moral and ethical norms. This conflict arises from the gap between NF's actions and her moral values. A weak Superego may lead to a lack of self-control and an inability to adhere to societal standards. This conflict might manifest as guilt or internal discomfort when social norms are violated. Although NF may want to conform to these norms, her internal struggles might make it difficult for her to do so. The inability to regulate impulses and follow social rules suggests that NF's Superego is underdeveloped, as she appears unable to resist the urge to act on her emotions, which results in her sadistic behavior.

Freud viewed the aggressive drive as part of the Id, the component of the psyche that motivates behavior, while the Ego, our rational self, and the Superego, our idealized self-image, oppose or suppress the aggressive drive. The conflict between these different parts of the personality creates tension within the individual, who then uses defense mechanisms, or coping strategies, to block awareness of the conflict. Conflicts between the Id, Ego, and Superego can motivate criminal behavior (Shi, 2023). According to Freud's theory, aggression can never be fully eliminated but can only be controlled by channeling it and seeking symbolic satisfaction. This indirect satisfaction results in catharsis, or the release of drive energy, and failure to achieve this can lead to aggressive behavior. Crime, as a manifestation of the death drive, conquers NF's existence as a child killer. Evil occurs in the world, and social reactions are expressions of the world's manifestations. Only a false and lifeless world fails to react to evil. From this perspective, NF, as a child murderer, is the creator and developer of the criminal phenomenon the victim, the social reaction, and the world in which the crime occurs. A healthy and sexually satisfied individual will not commit a crime to avoid losing the privilege of pleasure (libido).

### **Critical Psychology Review of Psychoanalysis**

Although many people still have a strong interest in psychoanalysis, many countries have started using therapy based on classical psychoanalysis, and only a small number of therapists use psychoanalysis as their primary treatment method. Greater emphasis is also placed on how the ego functions in contrast to the id and on current issues rather than childhood experiences. The development of Freud's psychoanalysis has laid the foundation for various types of psychological therapy. Some of his early ideas, such as the unconscious, are still used in different forms of treatment. However, psychoanalysis remains a controversial approach with significant criticisms

The aspects of the psychoanalytic approach that are highlighted and criticized in this paper are:

#### **A Theory that is Difficult to Test**

First, critics argue that Freud's theories are untestable because they often involve phenomena, such as the unconscious mind, that cannot be directly observed. Philosopher Karl Popper contends that the inability to falsify Freud's theories that is, the impossibility of proving them true or false renders them unscientific. Freud's psychosexual development theory was one of the earliest efforts to integrate psychology into the scientific and medical framework. However, the lack of validity and generalizability poses a challenge for reliable testing. Each murder case has its own unique context and factors, and psychoanalysis may not always offer a comprehensive or predictive understanding. Scientific validity concerns arise because Freud's theories are difficult to empirically test, often becoming speculative. The concepts within Freud's theory, such as aggression, are not backed by scientific evidence and cannot be empirically investigated.

#### **Aggressiveness Mechanism**

Second, the idea of catharsis as a mechanism for controlling aggression has been widely refuted by recent research. Studies show that opportunities for catharsis actually increase, rather than decrease, aggression. For example, one study found that participants who wrote about their dissatisfaction (general catharsis) exhibited higher aggressive behavior compared to those who wrote with the intention of attacking someone who upset them or who merely performed a simple recall task (Zhan et al., 2021). Additionally, other research shows that not only does catharsis fail to reduce anger, but it also increases aggression through factors such

as cognitive processing (Zhan et al., 2020).

Overall, the cognitive approach acknowledges biological factors without considering them the direct cause of aggressive behavior. Bandura's experiment on modeling aggression in children, from a psychoanalytic perspective, emphasized that the cognitive approach recognizes the contribution of biological factors but places more emphasis on the role of experience and environment in shaping aggressive behavior (Galanaki & Malafantis, 2022). The cognitive approach offers a more comprehensive view of aggression compared to the psychodynamic approach, but framing the discussion of aggression in terms of 'nature' and 'nurture' creates a false dichotomy. Both heredity and social learning are important factors, and it seems that humanity is neither fully driven by innate urges nor entirely vulnerable to environmental influences.

Psychoanalytic theory suggests that violence, defined as overt aggression with the intent to physically harm or even kill others, lies within the range of expected human behavior and is a human potential. However, since it does not occur universally, many theories argue that hostility and aggression are not innate and instead focus on the social and developmental contexts that actualize this potential (Anderson & Bushman, 2019). Recent studies also highlight the importance of developmental, cognitive, and social factors in understanding and managing human aggression (Giacolini & Sabatello, 2019).

### **Family Values and Social Norms**

The family serves as the environment where individuals acquire social values and norms. Positive family values, such as ethical behavior, a sense of responsibility, and empathy, can help mitigate tendencies toward criminal behavior. Juvenile delinquency is often linked to a family's socioeconomic status, geographic location, and the condition of a broken home. Lack of parental attention and poor emotional control increase the risk of criminal behavior in children (Sun & Wang, 2023). Additionally, the application of values in the family environment, such as healthy communication, affection, and support, can contribute to preventing children from engaging in delinquency. Social norms, on the other hand, represent behavioral rules established and accepted by society to maintain social order and promote harmonious coexistence among individuals.

Crime arises when there is a violation of these societal norms. Society's condemnation and punishment of crimes demonstrate the deterrent effect of social norms on criminal behavior. If society tolerates behavior that leans toward criminality as a norm, families may be inclined to follow those norms and teach their children to accept criminal behavior. Moreover, negative family values, such as normalizing violence, pursuing unfair gains, or encouraging antisocial behavior, can contribute to an individual's tendency to commit crimes. Social learning theory asserts that the adoption of values learned by children from their families can either bring them closer to or distance them from criminal behavior. Social control theory, on the other hand, suggests that an individual's tendency toward crime varies according to their adherence to social norms and values.

The legacy of social learning theory, initiated by Robert Sears and developed by Bandura, moved away from psychoanalytic features and drives, instead emphasizing cognitive capacities and information processing that mediate social behavior (Grusec, 2020). Bandura discussed principles of modifying behavior using social learning theory. Later labeled social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986), social learning theory posits the interaction of (1) observation, symbolic representation, self-generated stimuli, and self-imposed consequences, (2) environmental conditions, and (3) behavior in determining actions. This theory supports a causal model involving the reciprocal determinism of behavior, cognition and other personal factors, and the environment.

## **Social Factors in Criminal Behavior**

Freud frequently emphasized biological drives as the core force behind human behavior, often neglecting other important factors such as free will, genetics, and the environment. The lack of strong empirical support for Freud's theories stems from an excessive focus on abstract concepts that are challenging to scientifically test, especially when analyzing murder cases. Psychoanalysis frequently relies on subjective interpretations that are difficult to verify objectively. The deterministic view, which suggests that individual behavior is driven solely by unconscious drives and past experiences, neglects other significant factors that contribute to criminal cases, such as social, economic, and environmental influences.

Criminal behavior is often linked to social factors. According to recent research, environmental conditions, economic inequality, and family instability can be key predictors of criminal behavior. These factors create social pressure that may push individuals toward behavior that violates norms. Economic inequality, as one of the main factors, is often identified as a significant predictor of criminal behavior. Societies experiencing economic inequality tend to create higher tension and competition over resources, which can, in turn, trigger deviant and criminal behavior as a survival strategy or a means of achieving economic goals (Raievnieceva & Brovko, 2022).

Additionally, physical and social environmental conditions can also influence crime rates. Urban areas with poor environmental conditions, limited access to educational services, and a lack of governmental attention to community infrastructure often become breeding grounds for criminal behavior (Liu et al., 2023). Further research indicates that an individual's social status and role in society also influence criminal motivations. Social status and one's role determine their interactions and social perceptions, which can either encourage or deter criminal behavior (Karavayeva, 2020). Another contributing social factor is criminal social identity. Criminal social identity is formed through associations with specific types of crime and the social stigma attached to individuals because of those crimes. This identity can influence the type and intensity of crimes committed by individuals (Boduszek et al., 2020).

## **Personality Development**

The psychoanalytic approach contributes significantly to understanding the essence and development of human personality. This theory centers on motivation, emotions, and personality traits, asserting that psychological conflicts shape an individual's character. Psychoanalysis excels in addressing personal issues, helping to uncover hidden potential while integrating psychotherapy with personality theory. Techniques such as dream analysis, resistance, and transference enable individuals to confront anxiety and gain deeper insight into themselves. However, the theory places too much focus on the past, often holding individuals accountable for past events and downplaying the role of reason in behavior. Additionally, sufficient ego strength is required for self-exploration and conflict resolution, making this therapy less suitable for those with psychotic disorders or poor ego control. Psychoanalysis also demands time, as the process of uncovering the past and fostering self-awareness requires numerous sessions. This may cause client fatigue and frustration, particularly if results are slow to appear.

The theory is also applicable in counseling as it provides a clear conceptual framework for understanding behavior and symptomatology, stressing the significance of childhood in shaping personality. A major critique of psychoanalytic theory is its excessive focus on childhood. Psychoanalysis often overemphasizes childhood, disregarding development throughout life and attributing too many psychological issues to childhood trauma. While Freud believed personality is formed in childhood, modern psychologists argue that

development is a lifelong process. Another criticism is that children do not experience as much trauma as Freud suggested in relation to psychological disorders.

Psychoanalysis, despite its long history in psychology, faces significant criticism regarding personality development. The main critique is that the personality development theories proposed by figures such as Sigmund Freud and Melanie Klein are based on speculation rather than strong scientific evidence. These theories, developed over 100 years ago, are now considered outdated and in need of replacement by more contemporary models supported by recent scientific research (Knight, 2021). Additionally, the psychoanalytic approach is often seen as overly deterministic, failing to account for the complex interactions between biological, social, and environmental factors in personality development (Nelin, 2022). Critics also point out that psychoanalytic theory is inadequate in explaining interpersonal dynamics and personality changes that occur in adulthood (Kapoor, 2020).

### **Equality and Justice**

The emancipatory approach provides a critical methodological framework for analyzing and understanding the psychological deconstruction of criminal behavior. Introduced by Paulo Freire (1970) within the educational context, this theory encourages a critical examination of the social structures that perpetuate inequality and oppression. When applied to psychoanalytic criticism, the emancipatory approach involves scrutinizing the elements of psychoanalysis that may limit or oppress individuals. It focuses on individual freedom, the elimination of social inequality, and liberation from restrictive social norms.

Social injustice manifests in various ways, affecting multiple aspects of life, from systemic discrimination in education and employment to prejudice in social interactions. For instance, insufficient attention to children's rights, along with a lack of support from social, cultural, and familial systems, can stifle individual freedom and prevent the realization of one's potential. Those who endure social injustice frequently encounter significant challenges. Discrimination, unequal access to resources, and limited opportunities can impede personal growth and success, leaving individuals unable to reach their full potential, which in turn causes frustration and despair. Emotional and psychological strain is a common outcome for those marginalized by social injustice. The constant fight against discrimination and inequality severely impacts mental health, leading to anxiety, depression, and diminished self-esteem. Furthermore, the erosion of self-esteem is a lasting consequence of social injustice, often trapping individuals in a cycle of inequality.

General Strain Theory (GST) suggests that crime is more likely to occur when individuals perceive strain, such as unpleasant experiences, as unjust. This sense of injustice generates negative emotions, like anger, which can lead individuals to commit crimes as a way to restore fairness or seek revenge for the perceived wrong. Recent studies support this theory, indicating that economic inequality and poor living conditions can create social strain, which contributes to criminal behavior.

The strain resulting from socioeconomic inequality heightens the risk of criminal behavior by provoking frustration and anger in those affected (Raievnieceva & Brovko, 2022). Since injustice leads to stress, experiencing various forms of injustice increases the likelihood of criminal or deviant actions. Interactional injustice stands out as a strong predictor of crime because it violates individuals' view of themselves as "sacred," causing emotional pain and distress. Recent research highlights that social and economic inequalities, such as wage disparity and unemployment, intensify strain and may lead to criminal behavior. The strain caused by injustice fuels anger, motivating individuals to engage in deviant behavior as a form of retaliation (Raievnieceva & Brovko, 2022).

### **Cross-Disciplinary Approach**

The interdisciplinary approach in modern psychoanalysis has expanded Freud's theories by incorporating social, cultural, and contemporary developmental contexts. Despite these advancements, psychoanalysis continues to face substantial criticism. One of the main critiques is its overly subjective nature and the lack of a strong scientific foundation. For instance, methods like dream analysis and other interpretative approaches are often seen as relying too heavily on the personal beliefs of the therapist, which can impact therapy outcomes (Butsykin, 2021). Additionally, psychoanalysis is frequently criticized for ignoring empirical evidence and the latest scientific research, both of which are essential for validating psychological theories (Milić, 2020). Finally, critics argue that psychoanalysis focuses excessively on internal conflicts and personal experiences, often overlooking the broader influence of social and cultural factors (Knight, 2021).

### **CONCLUSION**

Crime and society emerge as two inseparable concepts. In defining crime and attempting to uncover its causes, it is important to consider social concepts and processes. Since crime is defined through actions, it can be seen as a dynamic phenomenon rather than a static one. This dynamism allows crime to manifest differently across various societies and over time. Consequently, individuals regulate their behavior throughout life, primarily influenced by their family and environment. In terms of ensuring social welfare, legal punishment alone is not sufficient. Therefore, the need for crime prevention before it occurs arises. By improving environmental and community factors, crime prevention becomes more achievable. As a result, the examination of social and environmental factors is increasingly integrated into crime prevention programs.

In this study, the psychological deconstruction of a teenage murderer, through a critical psychological review of the psychoanalytic approach, successfully illustrates the complexity and interaction of psychological factors underlying criminal behavior. The document analysis provides a deep understanding of internal conflicts, inequality, and social pressures that may influence the formation of identity and behavior in adolescents. The implications of these research findings are highly relevant for the development of crime prevention policies and psychological interventions. Understanding that juvenile criminal behavior is not an isolated entity, but rather the result of complex interactions between psychological factors and social contexts, can help design more effective and contextualized programs.

The sequence of events began with NF pushing and torturing a five-year-old child in a bathtub, later hiding the body in a closet. NF showed no remorse and even expressed satisfaction with her brutal actions. Psychological analysis indicates that NF's dominant emotions were shaped by the trauma of her parents' divorce and the sexual abuse she endured. The lack of a supportive environment and parental attention also hindered her development. NF was influenced by violent films, such as *Chucky* and *Slender Man*, which fostered her violent tendencies and desire to commit murder. Her modus operandi included drowning the victim, storing the body, and being influenced by violent media. During adolescence, NF struggled with identity issues and a need for attention. The violent films served as her moral compass, as she lacked moral guidance from her unsupportive family environment. The inner conflict between her weak Ego and Superego made it difficult for NF to manage stress, control impulses, and follow social norms. Her aggression was a manifestation of her uncontrolled Id, with aggressive drives surfacing from complex emotional struggles. This internal conflict created tension, which NF attempted to resolve through defense mechanisms and, in this case, criminal behavior as a form of catharsis. Her

criminality can be seen as a reaction to reality, where crime serves as an outlet for releasing pent-up aggression.

A critical psychological review of psychoanalysis reveals several significant criticisms of Freud's concepts. First, Freud's theories are considered difficult to test scientifically because they often involve phenomena that cannot be observed, such as the unconscious mind. Karl Popper even argued that Freud's theories are unscientific because they cannot be falsified. Scientific validity is also questioned, as it is difficult to objectively and validly test Freud's theories in every unique context. Second, the concept of catharsis as a mechanism for controlling aggression in psychoanalysis has been criticized. Research shows that opportunities for catharsis actually increase aggression, and this theory ignores cognitive and social approaches to understanding aggression. Freud's theory of aggression is also not well-supported by scientific evidence and is difficult to investigate empirically. Furthermore, family values and social norms are considered important factors in understanding criminal behavior. Psychoanalysis has been criticized for not paying enough attention to the social, economic, and environmental factors that may influence criminal behavior. Social injustice is also recognized as a driver of criminal behavior, according to strain theory, which states that crime is more likely to occur when individuals perceive injustice. Psychoanalysis has also been criticized for overemphasizing childhood in personality development, while modern psychologists believe that personality development continues throughout life. Criticism of social inequality and oppression has led to the rise of emancipatory approaches, which emphasize individual freedom, the elimination of inequality, and liberation from restrictive social norms.

In the context of criminal behavior, psychoanalysis is seen as insufficient in considering the social, economic, and environmental factors that can influence individuals. General Strain Theory (GST) contributes by stating that social injustice can trigger criminal behavior, as experiences of injustice stimulate negative emotions that may motivate criminal acts. Overall, a critical psychological review of psychoanalysis highlights the limitations and shortcomings of Freud's theory, while emphasizing the importance of incorporating social, economic, and environmental factors into the understanding of human behavior. The emancipatory approach and strain theory offer a broader perspective in analyzing the factors that can influence criminal behavior.

Criminal behavior is rapidly increasing in society, and prevention is crucial to curb the rise of crimes committed by children. A child's attitude and behavior are heavily dependent on the environment in which they are born and raised. As a society, it is largely up to us to help children and instill positive attitudes in their daily lives. This research reveals several key causes of juvenile delinquency, such as peer pressure, social factors including family, addiction, poverty, and the influence of social media, as well as how, as a community, we can prevent these crimes. The study also reveals that parents need a better understanding of how to deal with their children, and that teachers, police, and education play a major role in crime prevention. There is a need to strengthen communities and institutions to help curb crime in society. Lastly, it is important for counselors, parents, teachers, and others to raise awareness about moral education and behavioral modification among the youth, as they represent the future of the nation.

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