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ENGLISH SHORT SUMMARY

A permanent preoccupation of existing society is to reduce crime and facilitate the well-being of its individuals. But how is an offender redirected towards a law-abiding life-style? Is it possible that familial relationships might have such positive effects in one's criminal involvement? Specifically, do individuals who engage in romantic relationships and/or have children restrain from crime? Moreover, is it possible that the relationship between crime and family formation is circular: individuals who reduce their criminal behavior increase their chances to a family life and, in turn, their chance to a crime-free lifestyle increases even more? Is the relationship between criminal offending and family formation different for men and women, and does it vary across countries? To provide answers to such questions, this dissertation focuses on a group of individuals with youth behavioral problems, and analyses the interdependency between family life and criminal offending in their young adulthood. Various aspects of family life in modern society are taken into consideration, and the focus is placed on three types of family events: romantic union formation (referring to marriage, cohabitation or non-cohabiting romantic relationships), romantic union dissolution (separation and divorce) and parenthood. To advance knowledge on the family formation – crime relationship, this thesis:

- a) identifies and explains influences of family formation on crime;
- b) identifies and explains repercussions of criminal involvement on family formation;
- c) compares findings by gender and cross-nationally.