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SECURITY OF LIFE IN SLOVENIA

Abstract

Security is one of the basic human needs and as such an important dimension of the quality of life. Only individuals who feel safe can be creative and can contribute to the development of society as a whole. Unfortunately, many experts argue that people in contemporary society do not enjoy a high quality of life as far as security is concerned. In spite of higher living standards, the level of victimization remains the same, although the forms of victimization may change.

In this paper the nature and characteristics of Slovenian crime victims are discussed. The goal of this paper is to explain the vulnerability and attractiveness of crime victims with factors known in victimology. The analysis is based on the "Quality of life in Slovenia" survey, which covered five forms of primary victimization: theft, willful damage, violence with evident consequences and injuries, violence without evident consequences and injuries and threat. We will utilize logistic regression to explain these forms of victimization.

We found out that there is no universal deterministic characteristic which explains the vulnerability and attractiveness of a crime victim. Specific forms of victimization have specific victims. Any final and unchangeable definition of typical characteristics of victims would be dangerous and unrealistic. People at different ages are exposed to different forms of victimization. The safety of an individual changes along with changes in his lifestyle and his property holdings.

Keywords: security, victimization, research, Slovene, logistic regression

INTRODUCTION

In today's society security is a rare thing and for that reason one of the most important goods. Only individuals who feel safe can be creative and can contribute to the development of society as a whole. Security is not just a need but also a value. When we talk about security as a need, we have in mind the physical and emotional feeling of safety. On the other hand, security as a value is also a measure which gives a positive or negative connotation to particular behaviour and social phenomena. At the same time, every individual tries to create the ideal of a safe life. Abraham Maslow, the well-known American psychologist, considered security one of the basic humans needs to be satisfied only after physiological needs (Mihalič, 1995). Swedish sociologist, Johan Galtung, also believes that security is an important dimension of the quality of life! Unfortunately, many authors argue that modern people do not enjoy a high quality of life as far as security is concerned (Antončič and Boh, 1991).

At the end of the second millenium, the security of the individual is one of the essential dimensions of quality of life. Security is a value, the meaning of which emerged together with the concept of human rights and liberties in democratic societies. People are more and more aware of their right to a safe life (Pečar, 1992). This right must therefore be ensured by state and government. Thus security has also become a political issue, since crime and the fight against it call for political interference and the activation of political resources and forces (Pečar, 1995).

We distinguish objective security from the subjective feeling of security. The security of a state can not be estimated only on the basis of official statistics, such as police and judicial records. Official statistics can only indicate how good state administration, especially the police and the jurisdiction, is functioning. There is always a gap between the officially recorded crime rate and the real crime rate. Real criminality always remains hidden and unknown. To estimate so-called "dark figure of crime" victim surveys are often used. These surveys are also used to evaluate subjective feeling of security, for example, how safe respondents feel, how sensible are they about security matters, what they are afraid of, whether they could fight against crime and could cope with crime's consequences (Lynch, 1992). In victim surveys and other social surveys about security, we are usually dealing with two distinct types of data, 'hard' and 'soft' data respectively objective and subjective indicators². The first type, 'hard' data describes actual or anticipated behaviour of individuals or groups; an objective indicator of security is, for example: Which type of victimization were the respondents exposed to? Did they report the crime to the police? The second type of data describes the psychological aspects such as thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and opinion that are not directly accessible to anyone but the respondent. (Bradburn, 1983: 289 -290).

Despite higher living standards, the level of the victimization remains the same in most societies, just the forms and types of victimization change. Higher crime rates have been observed in Slovenia as well. Although the total number of crime events last year declined, the increase in violent and organized crime occurred. According to the crime statistics violence is generally accepted as a mean of solving everyday conflicts between individuals and groups in our society. It is a reflection of personal dissatisfaction and also an expression of deprivation of particular social groups. Due to intense social and juridical changes an increase of crime events, especially violent and organized crime was expected (Report of the Ministry of the Interior for 1994, Orientations for police work on security field in 1995).

In comparison with other European countries, Slovenia still guarantees a relatively high level of security to its inhabitants (less crime events and more solved cases per inhabitant)³. Pečar (1988) argues that the state with its formal and informal mechanisms can not totally protect its inhabitants from crime and prevent individuals from being victimized⁴. Numerous public opinion surveys and many comments in the opinion pages in newspapers confirmed a general fear of crime. People feel less safe. In the 'National Security in Slovenia 1994' survey respondents named crime as one of the main factors⁵, which threatened security of Slovenia. According to a poll

done by newspaper, Večer, every third respondent felt threatened because of the growing crime rates (Večer, 23. February 1995). However, the surveys such as *Slovenian public opinion* and *Political barometer* show that crime is not the most important problem in people's life. In March 1995 only 7.0% of respondents⁶ identified crime as one of the pressing issues of our "young" state and a year later, in March 1996, the percentage even dropped to 3.9%. According to Slovenian public opinion (December 1995) people are most concerned about road accidents, especially where victims under 30 years old.

This paper will discuss the nature and characteristics of victims of crime in Slovenia. Our goal is to explain vulnerability and attractiveness of crime victims with factors known in victimology. We are also interested in how often victims report crimes to the police. The analysis is based on the Quality of Life in Slovenia survey, which covered five forms of victimization: threat, theft, willful damage, violence with evident consequences and injuries and violence without evident consequences and injuries. Theoretical issues about crime and victimization, risk factors and models are briefly considered. Furthermore, logistic regression is described and applied to analyze the main forms of victimization.

THEORETICAL ISSUES

CRIMINALITY

The human is a biological and social being, who satisfies his needs, accomplishes his interests and fulfills his commitments in close relationships with other members of society. His behavior is determined by social rules which distinguish between socially acceptable and permissible conduct and deviant, undesirable behavior. Deviant behavior can be characterized by: committing crimes, becoming an alcoholic, using drugs, etc.

Criminality is a specific social phenomenon. It is not simply the sum of criminal acts or the deviant behavior of a few individuals; it is a reflection of social conditions and a measure of how well the system of social mechanisms is operating on both a macro and micro level. Various factors influence the crime rate: legislation, socioeconomic conditions, criminal and penal policy, respect for the law, inclination of inhabitants to commit crimes (mentality), etc. Criminality can be defined as a great number of heterogeneous and different crimes or incidents, which consequences are dangerous and injurious to the individual and society as whole (Kolenc, 1993: 9-13).

VICTIMIZATION

Unfortunately, a general definition of victimization does not exist. The concept of victimization is also questionable because of a variety of types, forms and levels of victimization. The heterogeneousness of victimization is reflected in a great number of typologies. Victimization is classified according to the nature, form, effect, level, prevalence ... (Fattah, 1991: 5 - 18).

Our analysis focuses on criminal victimization, more precisely, primary victimization, where the victimization is a result of crime events and where a victim is physical subject 7 .

The two most common indicators of extent and volume of victimization are figures and rates. Figures are indicators of the incidence of victimization and rates are the indicators of the prevalence of victimization. The incidence tells us how many incidents of victimization were reported to victim interviewers or to the police in a given period of time. Usually the period of one or sometimes five years is used. Prevalence measure the ratio of persons, who were victimized one or more time in a given period of time. This tells us how prevalent a type of victimization is (van Dijk and Mayhew, 1992; Fattah, 1991; Block, 1992).

VICTIM

The victim is the basic notion in victimization. The victim, in a literal sense, designates a person who suffers from the injurious actions of other people, things or events. In law, particularly in criminal law, the victim is the injured party, the person who suffers prejudice, damage or loss as a result of criminal act. The victim could be a physical or a legal subject. It could be specified (for example, a state, a corporation or an association, etc.) or unspecified (public order, religion, etc.) (Separovič, 1973). In victimology and criminology, the term victim is used in different ways. It can be used to identify a personal characteristic (e.g. wickedness, sickness, old age, youth,...), a stereotype (ideal victim is a wick, young or old women, who does not know her big and bad offender), social status (e.g. minorities, women, ...) or social role (e.g. homosexuals, prostitutes, transsexuals, drug addicts,...). Each culture creates its own popular stereotypes of victims. Society's attitudes and reactions toward actual victims are often shaped by the extent to which victims fit these images and stereotypes. But in every society there are groups who are more vulnerable and more often exposed to victimization, usually weak, helpless and/or defenseless people or religious or ethnic minorities, etc. Vulnerability to victimization may also be related to certain occupations that render those who practice them particularly exposed to criminal attacks, such as taxi drivers, bank cashiers, pharmacists, ... (Fattah, 1991: 95 - 107).

Everyone could become a victim, but the risk for victimization is not the same for every individual. Many characteristics influence victimization, such as (Separovič, 1973, Nikolič-Ristanovič, 1990):

- personal characteristics: biological (gender, age, etc.) and psychical (aggressiveness, alienation, carelessness, etc.) characteristics.
- social characteristics (environmental, occupational, interpersonal, etc.),
- situational characteristics (conflicts, the way of life routine activities, leisure).

Garofalo, Hindelang and Gottfredson (Fattah, 1991) developed a theoretical model that uses lifestyle to explain the individual exposure to victimization risk. Their model posits that the likelihood an individual will suffer personal victimization depends heavily on the type of a lifestyle he enjoy. The

lifestyle refers to routine daily activities, both vocational activities (work, school, keeping house, etc.) and leisure activities (including location of leisure activity, regularity of leisure activity and social contacts). Individual roles in society are determined by one's assets, age, education, marital status, etc. and determine one's lifestyle. Variations in lifestyle alter the risk of victimization and variations in the convenience, the desirability, and vincibility of the person as a target for personal victimization are subject to change. (Walklate, 1989; Fattah, 1991: 319, 322 - 325)

Generally speaking, the profile of the crime victim could be composed as a young unmarried male, living alone in a rented apartment, probably of middle or high economic status with a fully active life outside the home. The findings of international victim surveys have shown that so called 'typical' victims do not pay enough attention to their own safety and if something happened to them, they usually did not report the incident to the police for many various reasons. The victim survey carried out in 1992 by the Institute for Criminology in Ljubljana in cooperation with the Center for Methodology and Informatics at the Institute of Social Science found that the victimization risk in Ljubljana was greater for a younger person with relatively high income, who lived in a residence environment of higher status and who had a widespread social network (Kolenc, 1993 and 1995).

ANALYSIS OF SECURITY

In the Quality of Life in Slovenia survey a set of questions about security was included. Respondents were asked whether they had been victimized in the last twelve months in Slovenia. The questionnaire covered five forms of primary victimization:

theft willful damage violence with evident consequences and injuries violence without evident consequences and injuries and threat.

Respondents were asked whether they were victimized and if they were, how many times. They were also asked to report where the incident took place, whether they reported the crime to the police and, in the case of theft and willful damage, whether the property was covered.

We wanted to explain specific forms of primary victimization using the following independent variables:

gender age number of household members education (primary, secondary, advanced degree) marital status (single, living with a partner, divorced, widowed) quality of resident environment (ranking disturbing factors from 0-5) property (wealth) status (ranking material goods from 0-9) leisure (identifying activities on a scale of 0 - 10) type of residence (house, apartment).

Quality of residence environment, property status and leisure are indexes created to explain primary types of victimization.

Disturbing environmental factors are included in *quality of residence environment* index, i.e.: traffic noise, noise due to industry, neglected neighbourhood, unfriendly neighbours, dull neighbourhood. More disturbing factors in residence environment, the worser the socio-ecological quality of environment.

The next index *property status* measures the possession of specific material goods such as a car, a boat, a vacation house or apartment, a caravan, one or multiple flats or family houses, valuable things, property or business buildings and stocks and bonds. More material goods in the possession of respondent, the higher respondents' property status.

In the third index, named *leisure* activities such as going to the cinema, the theater or a concert, eating out in restaurants, going dancing, traveling, visiting relatives, friends and acquaintances, walking or playing sports, are included. We are not interested in how often the respondent was engaged in activities (whether he does certain activity regularly or occasionally), but only if he is engaged or not.

LOGISTIC REGRESSION

The goal of this paper is to explain the 'rare' dichotomous dependent variable (form of victimization) with selected independent variables. The most suitable method for explaining unevenly distributed forms of victimization is logistic regression.

The basic notion of the logistic model is that the probability for particular attributive characteristic is a linear function of individual values of one or more variables (Hadživukovič, 1982: 220, Aldrich and Nelson, 1989). In logistic regression we directly estimate the probability of victimization occurring. For the case of more than one independent variable the logistic model can be written as:

$$P(Y_i=1) = \frac{1}{1+e^{-z_i}} = P_i$$

where Z_i is a linear combination

$$Z_i = \Sigma b_k X_{ik}$$

where k (k = 0, ..., m) is a number of variables and i (i = 1, ..., N) is a number of units.

The probability of victimization not occurring is estimated as

$$P(Y_i=0)=1-P_i$$
.

Logistic parameters b_k are estimated by a method called Maximum Likelihood Estimation (MLE). (Aldrich and Nelson, 1989: 49 - 52, Bye and Riley, 1989). Estimated parameters b_k determine the direction of the effect. The effect of the independent variable increases with larger value of the parameter.

Logistic regression has several coefficients and statistics for testing logistic parameters and fit of the model as whole (Aldrich and Nelson, 1989: 54-61). Statistical software SPSSPC V4.0 uses Wald statistics to test hypotheses about parameters. To test the fit of the model the following two statistics are used:-2 log likelihood (-2LL) and goodness of fit. A good model is the one that results in a high likelihood of the observed results. We have a good fit when value of -2LL is small (if model fits perfectly, the -2 times the log likelihood is 0.) and the significance level of goodness of fit is large.

Because of the comparability of our results with the results of other victim surveys (see Kolenc, 1993: 20-25) all the variables were included in the model and ENTER method was used.

RESULTS

BASIC STATISTICS

Let us present some basic characteristics of the population under study. 1806 persons participated in the survey. There were 47.6% males and 52.4% females. The average age of the population was 44.9 years (standard deviation: 17.5). 42.1% of respondents had completed primary school, 48.5% secondary and 9.4% university. Most of participants lived with a partner/spouse (63.9%), 26.2% were single, 3.3% divorced and 6.7% widowed. The average household size was 3.54 (standard deviation: 1.66). In the leisure time participants were quite active (they were engaged in five activities outside their home on average). Their property (wealth) status was not particularly high (2.24 material goods in average). The quality of residence environment was relatively high; the average number of disturbing factors was only 0.38 (standard deviation: 0.7).

In Table 1 the frequencies and prevalence of the primary victimization forms are reported. It can be seen that all victimization forms are rare (low prevalence).

Table 1
FREQUENCIES, PREVALENCE RATES AND REPORTED PRIMARY VICTIMIZATION

form of primary victimization	frequency	prevalence(%)	number of reported victimization incidents	% of reported incidents	
theft	82	4.6	56	69.6	
willful damage	70	3.9	26	36.7	
violence with evident consequences and injuries	20	1.1	15	83.0	
violence without evident consequences and injuries	28	1.5	11	39.7	
threat	60	3.3	17	27.9	

In the period of twelve months 11.3% of the respondents suffered one or more victimization incidents.

The percentage of reported incidents (see Table 1, column 5) indicates the difference between the officially recorded criminality and real criminality. We can see that victims reported most incidents of violence with evident consequences and injuries. The percentage of reported theft incidents is also relatively high, probably due to considerable economic loss that accompanies it. Willful damage, violence without evident consequences and injuries and threats are not reported as frequently, only every third victim reported the incident to the police. There are many reasons why victims do not report their victimizations to the police. Among the most common reasons is the belief that the incident is minor, that it is not a police matter (because of the relationship between the victim and victimizer), and that the police would not be able to do anything to find and arrest the culprit or recover the stolen goods. Many public opinion surveys showed skepticism as to the effectiveness of police action (Pavlovič, 1993). Sometimes the reason can be fear of revenge by the offender, especially in the case of threats and psychical violence. Many victims believe they would worsen their situation and endanger their security further should they notify the authorities.

Respondents were exposed to violence and threats most often in their homes, in their workplaces and in public places (streets, restaurants, discos, ...). In most cases the loss of property caused by theft and willful damage was not recovered. The damage cost by theft was repaid in only every fifth case (in 22.8% cases), while in case of willful damage in 34.9% cases. The reason could be that the incident was not reported to the police and therefore indemnity claims at courts or insurance companies are not possible.

To establish if there is an influence of victimization factors on specific forms of primary victimization, t-test and chi-square statistics were carried out. The marital status (Table 2, column 4) and age (Table 3, column 6) are the factors that differentiate victims from non-victims the most.

Table 2
STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT VALUES OF CHI-SQUARE STATISTIC FOR PRIMARY VICTIMIZATION

form of prim	nary victimization	gender	type of residence	marital status	education
theft		***	**	*	
willful dam	nage			*	***
violence w consequen	ith evident ices and injurie	s		***	
	ithout evident ices and injurie	* S	*	**	
threat			*	***	
Legend:	*	significant to 0.10			
	**	significant to 0.05 significant to 0.01			

An average victim is a younger person. Most often victims are single or divorced. Males with higher education, who live in better residence environments are most frequently victims of theft and violence without evident consequences and injuries. These victims mostly live in apartments and are relatively active in their leisure time. The victims of willful damage are usu-

ally from higher economic profiles. The probability of becoming a victim of violence is higher for persons under the age of 25, whereas middle aged persons (26 - 40 years) more often suffer from property victimization (willful damage and theft) and threats.

Table 3
STATISTICALLY SIGNIFICANT VALUES OF T-TEST FOR PRIMARY VICTIMIZATION

form of prim	ary victimization	quality of residence enviroment	number of household members	old (wealth		age
theft				**		**
willful dam	age			***	***	***
violence wi	ith evident ces and injuries	S				**
	ithout evident ces and injurie:	*	**			***
threat		. ***				***
Legend:	*	significant to 0.10				
	**	significant to 0.05				
	***	significant to 0.01				

LOGISTIC REGRESSION RESULTS

All models for specific forms of primary victimization can be accepted, since values of -2 log likelihood and goodness of fit statistics are statistically significant. The results are presented in Table 4.

Gender is the only factor that statistically significant determines the probability of becoming a victim of *theft*. Males are much more at risk than females, especially if they spent a lot of time in public places (streets, discos. ..).

The model for willful damage showed that the best indicators for this type of victimization are age, property (wealth) status and activities in leisure time. Individuals who are between 26 and 40 years old (average age of victims was 38 years), who spent more leisure time outside their home (they are engaged in 6.3 activities on average) and are better situated are more likely to become victims of willful damage. Although in the logistic regression model education is not statistically significant, the results of chisquare statistics (see Table 2) suggest that individuals with higher education are also more likely to become victims.

Table 4
LOGISTIC REGRESSION FOR PRIMARY VICTIMIZATION

	theft	willful damage	violence with evident cosequences and injuries	violence without evident cosequences and injuries	threat
gender	***			*	*
type of residence				**	
marital status			7-172		***
education			**		
number of household members				**	
quality of residence enviroment			*		***
leisure		**		*	
property (wealth) status		***			
age		***	*	***	***
- 2 Log likelihood	619.0	508.4	164.9	245.2	457.9
Goodness of fit	1773.2	1812.7	2325.6	2026.8	1728.7
Legend: *	significant	to 0.10			
**	significant				
***	significant	to 0.01			

The best indicators for *violence with evident consequences and injuries* are education, status of residence environment and age. Young persons between 18 in 25 are more often exposed to violence then other age groups. This is not a surprising result. Not only the police but also many experts and media warn of increasing rates of this type of victimization. Young persons with active lifestyles (being in public places at night, showing off, prone to hot tempers and using violence to solve conflicts,...) many times endanger their own security (Fattah, 1991).

Individuals in secondary school are also more often exposed to this type of violence. This is an expected result, since victims are mostly young people who still haven't finished their schooling.

Violence without evident consequences and injuries is determined with following factors: age, gender, number of household members, type of residence, activities in leisure time. On the basis of these factors we can assume that this is domestic violence. Victims of this type of crime are usually young persons between 18 and 25 years old, who live in a large households and often in too small apartments. Males prevail as victims. Conflicts in families are often caused by "boys" spending too much time outside home (at night).

According to police statistics the number of violent crimes⁹ is especially greater in public and private places. The victims of domestic violence are mostly children, juveniles and women. Domestic violence is not only result of troubled personal relationships in the family, but also a result of the

relation between family and the environment (community). Juveniles are also victims of physical injury and blackmail. Increasing unemployment, aggravated social conditions, occupational and educational uncertainty and the marginalization of some sectors of the population result in increasing number of violent acts, especially in urban centers (Preliminary information of the Ministry of the Interior, 1996).

Gender, age, marital status and status of residence environment are the most important determinants for *threats*. Divorced persons, from 26 to 40 years old, are more often exposed to threats. Victims are mostly females, who live in the residence environment of lower status. Very often these women are threatened (with bodily harm, death, suicide, kidnapping of a child, ...) by their former husbands.

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of crime victims gave us some interesting results. We found out that there is no universal deterministic characteristic to explain vulnerability and attractiveness of a crime victim. Each form of victimization had specific characteristics of crime victims:

- a. Exposure to property victimization (theft, willful damage to property) is determined with age, gender, property (wealth) status and activities in leisure time. A typical victim could be described as a highly educated, well situated male, who is about 33 years old and leads an active life outside of the home.
- b. Victims of violence are mostly males with active life styles, who live in apartments and probably haven't finish their schooling yet.
- c. A victim of threat is typically a divorced, middle aged woman who lives in a residence environment of lower status.

Individuals at different ages are exposed to different forms of victimization. Safety changes with lifestyle and property status. The state guarantees a certain degree of security, but it is not enough. Individuals can insure their own safety and the safety of their property by being sensible in their behaviour and lifestyles they lead.

Victim surveys elsewhere (Canada, Great Britain, USA) (see Fattah, 1991) also established, that victims are mostly younger males, who live in apartments and are active in their leisure time. But, any final and unchangeable definition of typical characteristics of victims would be dangerous and unreal. If somebody does not have the attributes of a typical victim, that does not mean that he hasn't been victimized or he won't be, just that statistically the risk for victimization is lower.

Unfortunately Quality of life in Slovenia survey does not include questions that ask: how individuals protect their safety, their property (by using an alarm, safety locks, weapons, dogs, guard, ...), whether they avoid dangerous places or whether they feel safe in their neighborhood. Very safe,

safe, unsafe, very unsafe? For a better understanding of security problems and victimization, it would be necessary to include questions about preventive behaviour and fear of crime in the questionnaire.

NOTES

- 1 Other dimensions of quality of life are: welfare, identity and liberty.
- 2 See Allardt, Erik (1993): Having, Loving, Being: An Alternative to the Swedish Model of Welfare Research. In: Nussbaum, M. and Sen, A. (eds.): The Quality of Life, Clarendon Press, Oxford.
- 3 Comparison of crime rates and indicators is methodologically highly risky because different levels, extent of the incrimination and classifications of particular types and forms of crime events are used.
- 4 See for more in Pečar, Janez (1992): Institucionalized non-state control, Didakta, Radovljica.
- 5 Other most exposed factors were bad economy, destruction of environment, drugs and AIDS.
 - 6 Respondents of inquiry Political barometer.
- 7 Fattah (1991: 6) separates types of victimization according to their sources in six master categories:
 - Natural victimization: Victimization by natural forces, elements, agents, substances, organisms, and so on.
 - Auto-victimization: Victimization by one's own hand or as a result of one's action.
 - Industry/Technological victimization: Victimization by synthetic substances and products and by conditions and changes created in the biophysical environment by people's action.
 - Structural victimization: Victimization by one's society, culture, government, criminal justice system, and so on.
 - Criminal victimization: Victimization by crime and by acts made punishable by law.
 - Noncriminal victimization: Victimization by torts and other noncriminal acts or omissions.

Further, criminal victimization is according to type of victim separated into five mutually exclusive categories (Fattah,1991:12-13):

- Primary victimization involves the individual victim who is directly assaulted and injured in a face-to-face offense, who is threatened, or who has property stolen or damaged.
- Secondary victimization refers to commercial establishments. The victim is impersonal, commercial, and collective, such as a department store, a railroad, a theatre, a church, etc.
- Tertiary victimization refers to a very diffusive victimization that extands to the community at large and includes offenses against public order, social harmony, or administration or government.
- Mutual victimization refers to those cases in which the participants mutually consent to engage in acts that are violations of the law.
- ${\it No\ victimization\ includes}$ alcoholism, drug abuse, running away from home, and so on.
- 8 This two factors are not perfect. When we examine the extent and volume of victimization we should always have in mind, that incidence is just an estimate of victimization, especially if the data derives from victim surveys, and the prevalence could be misleading due to the skewness of the distribution of victimization.
- 9 Slovenian penal code does not determine violence as independent criminal act. Violence is just an element of different types of crimes. It could be defined as physical or psychological misuse of power, as violence against human or object.

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