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EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

We present to you the first issue of the *Journal of Security and Criminal Sciences* for the year 2024, marking the sixth year since this publication was introduced to its readership. In this issue, the authors featured are German Priorov (Russian Federation), Miloš Milošević and Đurica Amanović in a co-authored article (Republic of Serbia), as well as two authors from Republika Srpska, Mile Šikman and Svjetlana Dragović. Their research spans diverse fields, and each article is written in an engaging manner, appealing to a broader audience.

A refreshing addition to this issue of the journal is the study titled “Characteristics of Victimological Behavior Among University Students”, which was conducted by German Priorov. Priorov is affiliated with the Faculty of Security at the State Pedagogical University. His work reflects a deep concern for young people, particularly students who, “as a distinct social group, acutely experience the influence of societal processes, adjusting their behavior patterns in accordance with the new realities, which inevitably increase the risk of their victimization.” The author employed a survey method targeting a student population aged 17 to 23 years. His conclusion emphasizes that “the review of Russian and foreign studies on the victimization of university student indicates a rise in this phenomenon among students.”

In his paper “New Trends in Cocaine Smuggling in Europe with a Focus on the Western Balkan Countries,” Mile Šikman highlights the expansion of the cocaine drug market in Europe, drawing attention to the fact that this also pertains to the countries and regions encompassed by the term Western Balkans. In this context, the author outlines trends in smuggling, such as the transport of cocaine in containers via maritime routes, and emphasizes the “formation of an increasing number of criminal networks.” Equally concerning, according to the author, is the connection between “cocaine smuggling and violent crime,” which has, among other consequences, led to serious homicides. Šikman’s paper is both interesting and current, and it is operationally valuable for professionals engaged in combating drug smuggling.

In this issue of the *Journal of Security and Criminal Sciences*, Đurica Amanović and Miloš Milošević, whose previous article “Directions of Development, Functions, and Strategic Goals of Sports and Special Physical Education in the Serbian Police” was well-received, return with a new article titled “Dietary Supplements in Sports and Special Physical Education.” The authors explore the use of supplements, which they argue is an “indispensable practice not only for athletes and recreational exercisers but also for professionals in law enforcement and the military.” Their central thesis and conclusion assert that it is undeniable that “a balanced diet supplemented with vitamins, minerals, trace elements, low-molecular protein preparations, amino acids, and fatty acids, is a key factor in achieving optimal performance and health for both athletes and law enforcement officers.” However, they also caution that “despite the grow-

ing body of research on sports nutrition, as highlighted in this paper, many questions regarding dietary supplements remain unanswered and require further investigation.” The researchers’ caution is commendable, and their findings are of interest not only to those actively engaged in sports but also to casual consumers of certain supplements (e.g., caffeine).

In her article “The Identification of a Person or an Object by an Eyewitness,” Svjetlana Dragović emphasizes that testimony is a civic duty, which “involves a series of obligations, including the duty of the witness to give a statement.” Within this context, Dragović explores the identification of persons and objects, which is “a possible but not mandatory action within the witness examination process.” The author stresses the importance of “determining the witness’s perception abilities; determining the conditions under which the person or object was observed; selecting the appropriate person or object to be presented; providing conditions (ambience) for presentation; providing photographs in the case of indirect identification. The research concludes by highlighting the need for forensic psychological expertise when dealing with witnesses, given that “identification is much more than the witness’s assertion that they recognize an object they have previously seen among those presented.”

At the end of this issue, there is a review of Predrag Popović’s book ‘*Strategy in Counter-Terrorism with a Focus on Bosnia and Herzegovina*’ written by Dragomir Jovičić.

Even in its sixth year, the *Journal of Security and Criminal Sciences* continues to publish high-quality and operationally useful articles across all segments of security studies.

Editor-In-Chief

Predrag Čeranić

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CHARACTERISTICS OF VICTIMOLOGICAL BEHAVIOR AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

Review Article

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German Priorov¹

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Abstract: In recent years, social-political and economic problems have profoundly influenced various aspects of young people's lives, particularly their awareness and behavior. University students, as a distinct social group, acutely feel the impact of ongoing societal processes, which in turn alter their behavior patterns in response to a new reality marked by an inevitable increase in the risk of victimization. This paper aims to investigate and generalize the findings of contemporary research on the victimological behavior of university students. The factors contributing to the victimizing behavior of university students within the contemporary social environment are examined. This study was conducted as a desk-based research project, involving a review of scholarly literature and the application of survey methods targeting a student population aged 17-23. The study identifies a group of students prone to victimization, characterized by maladaptive response styles, pessimistic assessments of their life prospects, and experiences of inferiority complexes. The study generalizes research findings on the factors leading to the victimization of university students and their victimological contributions within the context of the transformations in the modern Russian education system. It also explores the capabilities of these students that enable them to counteract the victimizing influences of external or internal environments.

Keywords: victimizing behavior, student, victimization, victimization factors, victim, educational environment, higher education institution.

INTRODUCTION

The negative socio-political and economic processes in recent years have inevitably led to an increased risk of victimization among the student population. The characteristics of their transitional age, lack of life experience, and difficulties in choosing a life position significantly determine the specificity of their behavior. Student victimization is also influenced by numerous social

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problems: financial issues, employment and labor market challenges, internet addiction, and health problems (Возмилкина, 2016: 45). Contemporary conditions are marked by a high level of deterioration in both the physical and mental health of students, which is associated with changes in the lifestyle patterns of young people: irregular eating habits, insufficient physical activity, and non-adherence to the necessary regimen for their age. A study conducted by the Russian Academy of Education, involving nearly 22,000 first-year students from 22 universities across eight federal districts, revealed that 20.9% of freshmen experience emotional problems, such as increased excitability, tendencies towards depression, frequent mood swings, and anxiety. Behavioral disorders were observed in 8.7% of the participants. Students often alleviate emotional stress and tension through harmful habits (Соколова, 2022). Unfortunately, many students may be exposed to various forms of violence both within educational institutions and outside them. Insults that demean the honor and dignity of students sometimes come from peers and occasionally from teachers. Since higher education institutions predominantly consist of young individuals with still-developing psyches, disrespect, rudeness, and violation of their rights can provoke inappropriate reactions or lead to serious personality deformation. Disruptions in interpersonal relationships between students or between students and teachers can lead to conflicts and an increase in student victimization (Фролова & Байгужина, 2019: 7). The rising number of internet users increasingly affects communication methods. According to the Digital 2023 Global Overview Report, 73.3% of the total population in Russia used social networks in January 2023 (PR.STUDENT, 2023). The use of social networking sites continues to gain popularity, especially among the youth, due to their interactivity compared to traditional means of communication. However, this form of communication is not solely positive. The diverse information that young people primarily receive via the internet and social networks significantly impacts their psyche. The informational and psychological influence on the youth shapes specific ideological (social) ideas, perspectives, and beliefs, eliciting positive or negative emotions, feelings, and even mass reactions, thus forming stable representations (Крысько, 2022: 235). Intensive and uncontrolled use of the internet by students, belonging to specific social groups on social networks, sharing private life details, and exchanging various information all affect the internal state of young people. Under certain circumstances, these activities can trigger hostile thoughts, negative affect, and increased excitability (Kokkinos & Antoniadou, 2019). Due to their age and social status, students, compared to other age groups, are at a higher risk of engaging in cyberbullying or becoming victims of cybercrime. University students are often active users of social networks, while victims of cyberbullying are frequently teenagers and young people who possess certain personality traits and face various social difficulties. However, although the level of violence on social networks among this age group varies significantly, the results of most studies indicate that a considerable number of students become victims and/or perpetrators of cyber violence (Kokkinos & Saripanidis, 2017). This form of violence can escalate into

stalking, leading to victimization that can be physical, relational, and/or verbal (Gómez-Galán, Lázaro-Pérez, & Martínez-López, 2021). Many studies note that continuous abuse results in problems with the formation of students' social-adaptive potential in higher education institutions, potentially leading to significant changes in their personal characteristics with a distinctly negative outlook. The expectation of constant aggression from their immediate environment at the university may cause students to carry their negative communication experiences into new settings in the future, re-establishing violent interactions in both professional and family spheres (Андронникова, 2015; Дейнека, Духанина, & Максименко, 2020; Решетников, 2009). The sense of discomfort also affects the academic performance of students who are subjected to abuse. They are more likely to miss classes, have lower educational outcomes, and are more likely to drop out of school or transfer to other universities (UNESCO, 2019). Most students are insufficiently financially supported and, without adequate work experience, often remain uncompetitive in the job market or are forced to work for low salary, with their income only sufficient to cover current expenses. The desire to attain financial independence from their parents often leads university students to fall victim to various scams, primarily online. According to experts from Group-IB, fraud accounts for 73% of all online crimes, with the largest portion being fraud (56%), where victims voluntarily disclose their bank account details or transfer money to fraudsters (ПРАЙМ, 2021). Cyber fraudsters continually devise new ways to deceive people, offering quick and easy earnings, prizes, and more. For instance, in the spring of 2023, a large number of messages containing offers were sent, promising quick earnings through simple online tasks.

Scammers have been known to offer payments for writing reviews for various products and services for online stores, promising a decent sum in return for positive reviews and product likes. However, to transfer the money, victims were required to provide their bank account numbers (Игнатова, 2023). Cybercriminals are always looking for quick ways to make money. For several years, they have been using platforms like WhatsApp and Telegram to organize monetary rewards and gift giveaways. Social media users have been receiving messages about lottery winnings, which require them to pay a small sum as a percentage of the prize amount. Young people participate in chat rooms where various prizes are awarded, but to claim these prizes, they must first pay delivery fees or other similar charges (Московская область 24, 2024; БезФормата, 2023). According to an analytical report by the Ministry of the Interior of the Russian Federation, the number of crimes committed using information and telecommunication technologies increased by 30.8% from January to November 2023 compared to the same period in 2022 (Министерство внутренних дел Российской Федерации, 2023). However, to measure cybercrimes accurately is challenging, as victims rarely report being defrauded. Studies on cybercrime show that less than 20% of victims notify law enforcement about cybercrime victimization. Reasons for this include fear of ridicule, shame, or discomfort (Ищук, Пинкевич, & Смольянинов, 2021: 99).

The purpose of this study is to investigate and summarize the findings of contemporary research on the victimological behavior of university students. Adolescence is a factor that increases the level of victimological vulnerability among students. However, the type of victimological contribution significantly depends on the degree of socialization of the young individual's personality. Therefore, it is crucial to study the characteristics of victimological behavior in students and identify the internal personality traits that may cause their victimization. These traits can manifest under certain external circumstances.

METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted as a desk research based on a review of international and Russian scholarly literature. The research method employed was a theoretical analysis of Russian and international publications available in electronic libraries such as ScienceDirect, Jstor, Google Scholar, CyberLeninka, eLIBRARY.RU, among others, using keywords like "student victimization," "victimization factors, i.e., student behavior," and "characteristics of students' victimological contribution." Special attention was paid to identifying articles describing research using models and relevant questionnaires. Additionally, surveys were conducted among the student population aged 17 to 24 from three faculties (Faculty of Environmental Safety, Faculty of Preschool, Primary, and Special Education, and Faculty of Physical Education and Sports) of the State University of Education, with a total of 198 respondents. Due to the small sample size, this study does not aim for any scientific generalization but reflects some trends within the context of the issues under consideration.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Special emphasis is placed on the phenomenon of peer violence in international and Russian research on student victimization. Researchers highlight the primary negative consequences of this phenomenon, including feelings of anxiety, depression, emotional and physical tension, and low self-esteem among victims. Students in their earlier years of study are more frequently subjected to violence, as this period marks a critical turning point in their lives, which is associated with the need to develop new models of independent behavior and lifestyle (Бондарев, 2013: 7). In recent years, many authors have increasingly discussed digital violence (cyberbullying or online harassment). This form of violence is often perpetrated using social networks, allowing for psychological pressure on the victim. The negative impact of communication on social networks prompts students to engage in risky and thoughtless behaviors that can lead to dangerous and critical life situations (Биктагирова et al., 2019). In research on victimization in the student environment, several directions can

be distinguished. One direction is connected with studying the victimological contribution of victims of victimization who have faced online harassment. For instance, the research by Kowalski et al. (2012) aimed to study the victims of cyberbullying. The results showed that over 30% of students encountered cyberbullying for the first time during their university studies. Additionally, there was no gender difference in victimization among the respondents, except among online game users, where men exhibited a higher level of vulnerability compared to women. Victims of cyberbullying often experienced emotional burnout, decreased motivation for learning, and a loss of self-confidence. An interesting study based on the general aggression model (Kokkinos & Antoniadou, 2019) aimed to investigate the relationship between several individual and contextual variables: attachment, personal characteristics, the frequency of internet use, problematic internet use, online openness, loneliness, psychopathology, and cyber victimization. The research was conducted among 175 students at a Greek university. Results showed that active internet users exhibit specific personality traits and face various social challenges and psychopathological symptoms. Another study on the experience of cyberbullying among undergraduate students was conducted at a research university in the USA (Byrne, 2021). This study, which included 459 students, used a victimization indicator. The results indicated that victims of cyberbullying rarely seek support from professors and university staff. Instead, they rely on technical means to cope with issues, such as blocking the attacker, changing privacy settings, and other measures. However, this often leads to their isolation from the online community, which can subsequently result in relatively stable personality deformities, depression, and difficulties in social interactions.

The impact of social media addiction, cyberbullying, and cyber victimization among students, which was examined through various sociodemographic characteristics, was investigated at the Medical Faculty of Yozgat-Bozok University in Turkey (Çimke & Cerit, 2021). The study included 518 students. Data were collected using a personal information form prepared by the researchers, the social media addiction scale, the cyber victimization scale and peer bullying scale. The results showed that social media addiction was higher among female students, while male students were more frequently victims of cyberbullying. Additionally, the research results indicate that social media addiction is higher among students who rated their upbringing style as inconsistent and unbalanced, as well as among those who reported aggressive personality traits. Various studies conducted among students at foreign universities have focused on different mental health problems among victims of cyberbullying, including depression, withdrawal, fear, and anxiety (Alrajeh et al., 2021; Ho, Li, & Gu, 2020; Yildiz Durak & Saritepeci, 2020). An analysis of recent studies on cyberbullying and cybervictimization among students conducted by Russian scientists shows an increase in this phenomenon within the student community. For example, a study conducted among 125 students from four Russian universities (Тельшева & Гордеева, 2023) demonstrates the widespread prevalence of cy-

berbullying among students. According to the survey conducted, 90.4% of students have encountered internet bullying, while 3.2% are constantly exposed to cyberbullying. One reason for the spread of internet bullying at universities, according to Т.А. Заглодина and Л.Е. Панкратова (Заглодина & Панкратова, 2021), is the pervasive integration of internet technologies into the educational process. A comprehensive sociological study was conducted in 2021 at the Russian State Vocational Pedagogical University. The analysis revealed that 26% of respondents experienced internet bullying in the student environment. Students living away from their parents are three times more likely to face online aggression. Additionally, the survey results showed that some university professors were sometimes the aggressors. Similar results were obtained in a survey of students from three faculties of the State University of Education, aged 17 to 24, conducted in the fall of 2023. The study on victimization showed that around 23% of students exhibit social media addiction, with girls being the most addicted (67%). During their studies, 17% of girls and 8% of boys faced aggression on social media. The second area of research on victimization among students is focused on determining the frequency of student exposure to bullying, identifying the profiles of aggressors, victims' reactions, the consequences of violence leading to their victimization, and analyzing gender differences in victimization. A study conducted by researchers (Pörhölä et al., 2020) aimed at examining victims of peer bullying among students and faculty was carried out across 47 universities in Argentina, Estonia, Finland, and the United States. The study results showed that a significant number of students experience bullying during their education by their peers and/or university staff. The highest levels of student victimization and peer bullying were reported in Argentina (25.2% of respondents) and the United States (11.9%), while the lowest levels were in Finland (5.3%) and Estonia (2%). Victimization by university staff was most prevalent in Estonia (16.2%), Argentina (9.5%), and the United States (8.9%), with lower prevalence in Finland (6.5%). The most widespread form of bullying in all countries included verbal attacks, mockery, or criticism related to personal characteristics, social discrimination. Most forms of bullying, including physical violence or damage to the victim's property, were reported among respondents in the United States. Gender differences in the roles of bullying also varied across different countries. Girls were more often victims of bullying by males only at universities in Finland, while in Argentina, Estonia, and the United States, male students were more frequently victims of peer violence. Additionally, interesting research has been conducted on bullying at Spanish universities, which was aimed at studying bullying in the student environment, as well as its typology, scope, and predictive factors (Gómez-Galán, Lázaro-Pérez, & Martínez-López, 2021). The main findings of the research indicate that peer violence among students is most commonly relational and verbal. Physical violence among students leads to peer condemnation and resistance towards the aggressor, and it rarely occurs at universities. Additionally, the research revealed gender specificity in predispositions to victim behavior: girls

suffer more often because young men tend to assume the role of the bully and rarely suffer themselves. Similar results were obtained in studies conducted in educational institutions in Portugal (Sinkkonen, Puhakka, & Meriläinen, 2014). Gender analysis of victimization was also addressed in research conducted by Arakelyan K. N. (Аракелян, 2014), whose results showed that young men are more prone to self-harming and self-destructive behavior, while girls are more prone to dependent and helpless behavior.

The third area of research is related to the study of sexual victimization among the student population. This type of victimization is more prevalent among first-year students, as young people during this period undergo changes in their worldview and develop a need for emotionally intimate communication, which is associated with a desire to establish close relationships with their peers. This has been confirmed by research conducted among students at the State University of Education. While approximately half of first-year students (mainly girls) experience sexual harassment from their peers (mostly verbal); however, this phenomenon becomes sporadic in later years. The prevalence of sexual victimization among the student population, as a serious social issue, is described in the research by Klassen and Shipunova (Классен & Шипунова, 2013), where they analyzed findings from both foreign and Russian studies. This research also highlights the problem of violence in interpersonal intimate relationships, where both girls and boys can be victims. One reason for the high prevalence of sexual victimization among the student population is their specific lifestyle (Шипунова, 2011). Additionally, the study of risk factors for victimization of interpersonal violence in the student environment, depending on social affiliations (such as participation in sports, student associations, study abroad programs, and various student organizations), was analyzed in research conducted among college students by American scientists (Swan, Mennicke, Magnuson, & MacConnie, 2020). The research findings indicate that nearly two-thirds of survey participants reported experiencing at least one form of interpersonal violence victimization, with the most common types being sexual harassment, peer stalking, and psychological abuse by a partner. Data from a study conducted at six universities in the United States (Cho et al., 2020) further highlights the prevalence of intimate partner violence among students. This study examined gender differences, help-seeking behaviors, and their outcomes, focusing on key variables such as intimate partner victimization, its consequences, help-seeking, and resulting outcomes. The analysis revealed a higher level of victimization among female students, which led to increased rates of depression and deterioration in both physical and mental health.

Analyses of research conducted by both Russian and international scholars indicate that students' susceptibility to victimization depends on their social-psychological characteristics. Utilizing the methodology proposed in the study by S. A. Falkina (Фалкина, 2014), different groups of victimized students can be identified, and each group is characterized by maladaptive response styles and pessimistic assessments of their life prospects. The first group in-

cludes students exhibiting aggressive victimizing behavior. These young individuals have a high level of internet addiction, attempting to assert themselves on social networks, often provoking conflict situations and displaying aggression towards other users. They are prone to cyberbullying, which in turn places them in dangerous situations, making them victims of cybercrime. The second group includes students of the active type, prone to risk-taking, reckless and self-destructive behaviors. They frequently share information and photos pertaining to nearly all aspects of their lives. They often engage with unknown individuals on social networks and in real life, which makes them susceptible to violence, including sexual violence. The third group comprises proactive students with hyper-social victimizing behavior. These young individuals exhibit principled stances, intolerance to injustice, and sensitivity, which can make them targets of criminal acts by aggressors and fraudsters. The fourth group is characterized by passive behavior. These students are often prone to dependent, helpless behaviors, which may stem from individual traits or an inability to make independent decisions in unfamiliar situations. These behaviors may also be shaped by parental upbringing strategies. A lack of social support and a sense of belonging frequently make them victims of violence, as they are unable to offer resistance. The fifth group consists of uncritical students, who are unable to accurately assess life situations, they are naive, and tend to act impulsively. These young individuals often fall victim to violence and various forms of fraud. Due to their lack of critical thinking skills, they may justify criminal actions, thereby exposing themselves to danger.

CONCLUSION

The results of the review of Russian and foreign research on the victimization of university students indicate an increase in this phenomenon among students. As a distinct sociodemographic category, students are more inclined towards self-assessment, a constant search for life paths and attitudes, a pursuit of new ideas, and high-intensity communication, often manifesting feelings of anxiety and loneliness, which significantly influences their behavior. Analysis of the research demonstrates that students possess socio-psychological characteristics that predispose them to victimizing behavior (Стуколова & Волкова, 2016). This paper summarizes the findings of studies on the factors contributing to victimization and victimizing behavior among university students. Three main directions of research on victimization among students are conditionally identified. The first direction is associated with studying the victimizing behavior of students who have encountered internet violence, which often leads to various mental health issues among victims of cyberbullying, including depression, withdrawal, fear, and anxiety. The second direction involves determining the frequency and prevalence of various forms of violence against students, identifying the profiles of perpetrators, victims' reactions, and the consequenc-

es of violence leading to their victimization, as well as analyzing gender-specific differences in victimization. The third direction of research focuses on studying the sexual victimization of students and its consequences. The results of the conducted research allowed for the identification of five groups of students, each with distinct psychological characteristics and tendencies towards victimizing behavior. This understanding aids in comprehending the specifics of victimizing behavior formation among students. The identified characteristics can assist in determining directions for efforts aimed at preventing victimization in the student environment.

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NEW TRENDS IN COCANINE SMUGGLING IN EUROPE WITH A FOCUS ON THE WESTERN BALKAN COUNTRIES

Review Article

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Abstract: Over the past decade, cocaine trafficking in Europe has expanded significantly. This is evidenced by law enforcement agencies' data on drug seizures across Europe and the steadily increasing number of users. Particularly noteworthy from our perspective is the involvement of nationals from the Western Balkan countries in these activities. International organizations estimate that individuals and criminal groups from this region have become the primary cocaine traffickers in Europe. The so-called "Balkan Cartel" has established strong connections in both the source countries and transit nations (South America), enabling them to smuggle large quantities of cocaine into destination countries throughout Europe. Data obtained by decrypting encrypted communication methods (Sky ECC, Anom) have led to current legal proceedings that are just beginning to uncover the extent of these activities. The aim of this paper is to highlight the prevalence of cocaine smuggling in Europe, with a focus on its impact on the Western Balkan countries, considering the involvement of their nationals in this criminal activity and the development of the cocaine market in the region.

Keywords: cocaine, narcotics, smuggling, Europe, Western Balkans, trends.

INTRODUCTION

Cocaine smuggling is one of the leading activities of global organized crime, with a pronounced growth index.² What is specific about this narcotic is

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2 Analysis of the results shows that within the global score of organized crime, the cocaine market continues to expand, with a growth index of +0.30, making it the third fastest-growing criminal market (human trafficking has seen the highest increase at +0.39, followed by synthetic drug trafficking with a growth index of +0.33) (Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime [Global Initiative] 2023a).

the limited geographical area where the coca plant can be cultivated, including regions of Colombia, Peru, and Bolivia.³ This means that this is the only region in the world where the coca plant is cultivated and transformed into coca paste, the base for cocaine. Thus, the availability of this drug depends on the extent of its cultivation on one hand and its smuggling worldwide on the other.

The harmful consequences of cocaine consumption are well-documented. These consequences are not only directed at individuals who use the drug, such as increased mortality rates among users (Peacock et al., 2021; Rendon et al., 2023), but they also have an impact on society as a whole, affecting the security of states and regions. The illegal drug trade, especially cocaine, is closely linked to high levels of violent crime (Goldstein, 1985), thereby threatening the safety of individuals and property in those countries. These trends, which have been present in the Americas since the 1970s (Bagley, 2012; Puyana et al., 2017; International Crisis Group, 2023; Garavito et al., 2024), are now evidently spilling over into the European continent. The Western Balkan countries⁴ are not excluded from these trends. On the contrary, they are heavily involved in these criminal activities and are now identified as the main cocaine smugglers in Europe (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime [UNODC], 2023b). Specifically, data suggest that criminal groups colloquially known as the “Balkan Cartel” have established strong connections in cocaine’s source and transit countries in South America. This has enabled them to smuggle large quantities of cocaine into destination countries across Europe.

Given the above, the subject of this paper is to gain a better understanding of the new trends in cocaine smuggling in Europe. The aim is to highlight the prevalence and methods of cocaine smuggling in Europe, with a particular focus on the impact on the Western Balkan countries, considering the involvement of their citizens in this criminal activity, as well as the development of this market in the region. The structure of this paper is divided into two main sections, focusing on the following:

- Analysis of drug trafficking using containers as the main method of cocaine smuggling into Europe;
- Role of criminal groups from the Western Balkans in these criminal activities;
- Establishing the link between cocaine smuggling and violent crime.

The purpose of this study is to provide concrete recommendations and proposals for law enforcement agencies to effectively respond to the challenges and emerging threats posed by the development of the cocaine market and its association with violent crime.

³ Although the coca plant is found across much of South America, varieties containing cocaine alkaloid (the basis for cocaine hydrochloride) are primarily cultivated and processed in the three countries mentioned (United States Department of Justice, Drug Enforcement Administration, 1991).

⁴ The term “Western Balkans” denotes the countries located within the Balkan Peninsula, specifically the former Yugoslavia excluding Slovenia, plus Albania.

COCAIN MARKET IN EUROPE

The long-term trend of increasing cocaine use, which saw a temporary halt during 2020 due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, resumed its upward trajectory in 2021, with production increasing by over a third from previous levels⁵ (UNODC, 2023b). This growth is attributed to both the expansion of coca plant cultivation and improvements in the process of converting coca leaves into cocaine hydrochloride (UNODC, 2023a). The increased supply of cocaine has led to even greater demand, particularly evident in the criminal markets in North America and Europe, which remain the two primary markets for this type of drug⁶ (UNODC, 2023b). It is estimated that the retail drug market in the European Union is worth at least 30 billion euros annually, making it a major source of revenue for organized crime (Europol, 2024a). Furthermore, according to the European Union Drug Agency, cocaine is the second most commonly used illicit stimulant in Europe after cannabis, with approximately 2.5 million adults (aged 15 to 34) having used it in the past year (European Union Drug Agency [EUDA], 2024). The increased availability of this drug has resulted in a growing number of users,⁷ showing a trend of continuous growth. This trend is also supported by the declining retail price of cocaine,⁸ which is directly linked to the decrease in the “intermediary margin” (the difference between retail and producer prices), a significant component of the retail cost (Storti & De Grauwe, 2009; Storti & De Grauwe, 2008).

The cocaine market in Europe is not evenly distributed. In 2020, Belgium with 70 tons of seized cocaine, the Netherlands with 49 tons, and Spain with 37 tons accounted for approximately 73% of the estimated total in Europe. Significant quantities were also seized in Italy (13.4 tons), France (13.1 tons), Germany (11 tons), and Portugal (10 tons) (EUDA, 2022a). Furthermore, out of 13 European countries that conducted surveys in 2021, five reported higher estimates than their previous comparative survey, while eight reported stable trends (EUDA, 2024). Several factors influence this distribution, such as the routes of cocaine trafficking to Europe, the methods of smuggling, and the criminal groups involved in this type of criminal activity. The primary points of

5 The level of cocaine production reached a new record in 2021, with 2,304 tons of pure cocaine cultivated. (UNODC, 2023b).

6 Estimates indicate that 6,180,000 people in North America consume cocaine, while in Europe, that number is 5,240,000, with 640,000 in Eastern and Southeastern Europe. (UNDOC, 2023b).

7 The quote from Roberto Saviano's book *ZeroZeroZero: How Cocaine Rules the World* (2014) is very illustrative: “The guy sitting next to you on the train uses cocaine, he took it to get himself going this morning, or the driver of the bus you are taking home, he wants to put in some overtime without feeling the cramps in his neck. The people closest to you use cocaine. If it's not your father or your mother, if it's not your brother, then it's your son. And if your son doesn't use it, your boss does...” (Савијано, 2014: 13).

8 However, it should be emphasized that despite the “decline” in cocaine prices in Europe, this illicit drug remains more expensive than in the United States. For example, a kilogram of cocaine is worth up to \$28,000 in the US, while the same kilogram is worth around \$40,000 and as much as nearly 80,000 US dollars in different parts of Europe (McDermott et al., 2021).

entry for cocaine smuggling using maritime shipping containers are Belgium and the Netherlands. Additionally, Europe serves as a transit area towards the Middle East, the Russian Federation, and Asia (McDermott, Bargent, Held, & Ramírez, 2021). These changes in production, supply, and demand are not only factual but also a consequence of globalization and the liberalization of trade, which have affected the illegal drug market. Globalization has opened new routes and methods for drug smuggling, resulting in the “creation” of new markets for cocaine users worldwide, which has also influenced the prices of illicit drugs (Bagley, 2012; Bartilow & Eom, 2009; Storti & De Grauwe, 2009; Storti & De Grauwe, 2008).

In addition to the above, we can identify another emerging trend concerning efforts to relocate cocaine production to the European continent. Historically, the focus has primarily been on smuggling the finished product. However, there is currently an expansion in the illegal transport of coca paste and cocaine base to Europe, facilitating production of the final cocaine product within European laboratories (Voss, 2023; den Held, 2024). Moreover, the increasing seizures of chemicals⁹ associated with cocaine production in Europe underscore this potential (European Union Drug Agency [EUDA], 2022b). Closely related is the growing trend in the use of “crack” cocaine in Europe, with Belgium, France, and Spain notably recording a sharp increase in crack users since 2017 (UNODC, 2023a).

Routes and methods of cocaine smuggling into Europe

Given the nature of transoceanic transport, routes for smuggling cocaine from South America to Europe involve both maritime and air traffic, with inland routes also incorporating road transport. The methods of smuggling are influenced by the type of trafficking (ports or airports), the quantity of illicit drugs being trafficked, and the capabilities of criminal organizations involved in trafficking cocaine into Europe.

Over time, trends have shifted, and today we can observe that cocaine is primarily smuggled via maritime shipping containers.¹⁰ Several reasons account for this shift, primarily the large volume of overall trade conducted through ports, the infrastructure enabling the dispatch and reception of larger shipments, and the customs and police oversight conducted in ports which, due to the sheer volume of trade, is not at the same level as that of other types

9 There are 53 different types of chemicals potentially associated with cocaine production, which are subject to monitoring and supervision (EUDA, 2022b).

10 For example, in a single seizure at the port of Hamburg in 2024, 35 tons of cocaine were confiscated, with a market value of several billion euros. In comparison, ten years ago, around one and a half tons of cocaine was seized in this port in one year (Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 2024).

of transportation.¹¹ Indeed, the scale of this type of transport offers limitless opportunities for criminal groups, which are increasingly focusing on ports to build a structure embedded in the port environment to leverage legal trade, infrastructure, and facilities (Van de Bunt, Siegel, & Zaitch, 2014). This means that ports are “gateways for both the entry and exit of cocaine” (Sergi, 2020), which is characterized by a lower risk of shipment detection, which is the most critical variable assessed by criminal groups¹² (Sampó & Troncoso, 2023: 240). Closely related to this is the “costs” of container transport, which include commercial lines, meaning that smugglers do not need to invest in a ship but only in the “contamination” of containers, which entails minimal costs (Sampó & Troncoso, 2023). Essentially, ports are today “spaces of convergence for legal and illegal activities and actors” (Sciarrone, 2019, cited in Antonelli, 2021: 169). They are geographical spaces where “complex social relations are created, with complicated governance structures, coordination difficulties between public and private entities, longstanding tensions between trade and security in ports, technological challenges, including security challenges and risks such as cyber security and corruption” (Sergi, Reid, Storti, & Easton, 2021: 1). These “vulnerabilities” represent key advantages for smuggling cocaine through ports.

In this context, ports in South American countries from which cocaine is transported via container ships to European ports are crucial.¹³ Considering the quantities of cocaine seized in European ports and ports elsewhere, the primary departure points have been identified as ports in Brazil (approximately 71 tons), Ecuador (67.5 tons), Colombia (about 32 tons), and Costa Rica (20.4 tons) (EUDA, 2022a), as well as ports in Panama, Paraguay, Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and the Dominican Republic (UNODC, 2023a). Moreover, some studies suggest that current trends indicate that criminal organizations are prioritizing non-traditional ports for cocaine smuggling from transit countries,¹⁴ such as the ports of Buenos Aires (Argentina), San Antonio (Chile), and Montevideo (Uruguay), including the access routes leading to them (Sampó & Troncoso, 2023). The advantage of using these non-traditional ports for cocaine smuggling lies in the fact that they are under less scrutiny and surveillance both

11 For example, the largest European port, Rotterdam (the Netherlands), spans an area of 12,500 hectares and is 40 km long. The port handles approximately 438 million tons of cargo annually, including over 130,000 containers. Each year, around 28,000 seagoing vessels and 90,000 inland vessels operate within the port (Port of Rotterdam, n.d.).

12 According to research findings, these are “neither geographically closest routes nor the shortest or the cheapest routes. Such counterintuitive pathways include land, air, river, or even sea routes that lack obvious geographical or economic logic. Consequently, these routes enable criminal organizations to continue exporting drugs while maintaining a low risk of detection” (Sampó & Troncoso, 2023: 240).

13 However, “the latest trends indicate that the widespread use of maritime containers for smuggling cocaine from origin countries in South America makes it increasingly difficult to distinguish between ‘departure’ and ‘transit’ areas” (EUDA, 2022a).

14 For example, the main departure points used to be the ports in Venezuela, “but due to political and security instability, it seems that criminal organizations do not use them often” (UNODC, 2020: 32).

by domestic and international authorities, compared to ports already identified as major departure points for cocaine smuggling. Simultaneously, increased controls in Colombia, Peru, and Brazil over the past three to five years have led to the shifting of drug trafficking routes further south.

Between ports in South America and Europe, transit typically occurs via several traditional routes: the Caribbean and West Africa (e.g., Morocco), as well as the Madeira (Portugal), Canary (Spain), and Cape Verde islands in Africa (EUDA, 2022a).

In Europe, as a destination for cocaine, primarily large European ports are used, such as Rotterdam (the Netherlands), Antwerp (Belgium), Hamburg and Bremen (Germany), Liverpool (the United Kingdom), Barcelona, Algeciras, Valencia, and Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (Spain), Marseille (France), Gioia Tauro and Genoa (Italy), and ports in other maritime countries¹⁵ (McDermott et al., 2021; UNODC, 2023a). The choice of a specific port for smuggling is made by criminal groups based on their connections within the port structure, including their ability to control parts of the logistics and transport networks, as well as opportunities to evade customs and police checks through corruption and/or lack of intelligence information. In this context, the environment in ports is a crucial factor influencing smugglers to move from one port to another, in line with local circumstances and following the trends of the criminal market (Antonelli, 2021). Another reason for the expansion of this method of smuggling could be the use of port workers for smuggling cocaine. This refers to those workers in the ports who, due to their background (migrants) or status (poverty) or qualifications (low-skilled workers), are more easily engaged in the transport and distribution of drugs (Storti & De Grauwe, 2009; Storti & De Grauwe, 2008).

New trends indicate that the strengthening of control and surveillance measures at ports identified as “entry” points for drugs has led cocaine smugglers to increasingly direct their activities towards smaller ports in other EU countries and countries bordering the EU that have the potential to become involved in the cocaine criminal market (EUDA, 2024). As a result, certain Northern European countries, including Sweden and Norway, reported substantial cocaine seizures in maritime ports in 2023 (EUDA, 2024). Similar trends have been observed in ports in Greece, Croatia, Montenegro, Albania, Bulgaria, and Romania, demonstrating the adaptability of criminal groups to the current situation and their continuous search for new viable smuggling routes. In connection with this, estimates suggest that the Western Balkans, although currently of limited scope, “could significantly increase its role as a transit area for cocaine smuggling into Europe” (EUDA, 2022a).

¹⁵ For more details on cocaine smuggling routes, see the research report entitled the Cocaine Pipeline to Europe (McDermott et al., 2021: 3- 4).

The link between cocaine smuggling in Europe and violent crime

It has been established that increased availability of cocaine is directly correlated with higher rates of violent crime.¹⁶ Trends observed on the American continent (South, Central, and North America)¹⁷ are now manifesting in Europe.¹⁸ Specifically, intense competition in the cocaine criminal market, “both at the wholesale and retail levels,” is directly linked to an increase in various types of violence (EUDA, 2024). This includes violent acts such as brutal and ruthless murders between rival criminal groups, internal violence within criminal organizations during the distribution of profits, and efforts to maintain or gain control over cocaine smuggling routes and distribution markets. These trends are particularly evident in countries with major container ports identified as “entry” points for cocaine, where there has been an observed increase in violent crime, threats, intimidation, kidnappings, and torture,¹⁹ as well as corruption among personnel in the supply chain (EUDA, 2024).

Although Ireland, due to its high rate of cocaine use in Europe, has often been described as having an increased rate of violence associated with drug trafficking (UNODC, 2023a), Sweden is a more typical example today. In Sweden, the number of reported cases of illegal drug consumption is rising, resulting in the highest number of drug-related deaths in Europe (Hofmarcher, Leppänen, Månsdotter, Strandberg, & Håkansson, 2024). Simultaneously, statistical data indicate that fatal violence involving firearms in socially disadvantaged areas is steadily increasing²⁰ (Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention [Brå], 2021, 7). Even more alarming are the statistics on the number

16 In 1985, American criminologist Paul Goldstein developed a conceptual framework to describe and explain the relationship between drug-related crime and violent crime. This framework consists of three mechanisms: psychopharmacological violence, economic-compulsive violence, and systemic violence (Goldstein, 1985).

17 Based on several decades of available statistical data in the United States, there is an unequivocal connection between drug-related crime and increased rates of violence, which significantly contributes to the country’s high homicide rate (National Center for Drug Abuse Statistics, n.d.; Federal Bureau of Investigation, n.d.). Furthermore, estimates indicate that since 2006, over 360,000 murders in Mexico have been linked to drug trafficking and illegal drug trade involving Mexican drug cartels (Statista, 2021; Council on Foreign Relations, 2022). In South America, drug-related violence has been evident since the 1970s in Colombia (Rubiano et al., 2018; Garavito et al., 2024), and it is currently escalating in countries such as Ecuador and Costa Rica, which were previously considered safe (International Crisis Group, 2023).

18 In Europe, there is no existing system for tracking drug-related homicides. Consequently, it has been proposed to define and operationalize this concept, establish a monitoring system, and create a coordinating body (European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, 2018).

19 For instance, owing to photographs from the encrypted application EncroChat, Dutch police discovered a “torture chamber” consisting of seven soundproofed containers. Inside these containers, they found tools for torture, including a dental chair, hedge shears, scalpels, and pliers (BBC, 2020).

20 According to the same data, eight out of ten firearm homicides in Sweden occur within a criminal environment (Brå, 2021, 7). In absolute numbers, this was evident in 2022 with 391 instances of firearm use, 62 of which resulted in fatalities. This represents an increase of over 20% compared to the 45 firearm-related homicides recorded the previous year (The Guardian, 2023).

of individuals involved in or associated with criminal networks. According to a police report, there are 62,000 people considered active or connected members of criminal networks (Polisen, 2024). Some neighborhoods in Swedish cities have been identified by the police as “vulnerable”—deprived areas where criminal networks have a significant influence on local communities. These neighborhoods tend to have open drug markets and high levels of violence, including firearm use (Gerell et al., 2021), which, in turn, affects Swedish society as a whole (Magnusson, 2023). It is important to note that the flow of illegal weapons into Sweden primarily originates from the Western Balkans, highlighting the longstanding connection between criminal groups in these regions (Global Initiative, 2023b).

Considering the broader picture, it can be assumed that similar trends will emerge in other countries that serve as destinations for cocaine, especially in port cities and their surrounding areas across Europe.

THE IMPACT OF COCAIN SMUGGLING ON THE WESTERN BALKAN COUNTRIES

Cocaine smuggling in the Western Balkan countries, as previously discussed, follows trends in global cocaine smuggling.

The Western Balkan region has long been recognized as a transit area (the so-called Balkan Route) for drug smuggling, and in recent years, increasing quantities of cocaine for direct consumption have been reported²¹ (see, Ministarstvo bezbjednosti Bosne i Hercegovine, 2021; Ministarstvo bezbjednosti Bosne i Hercegovine²²). It is evident that cocaine is mainly imported into the Western Balkans through Adriatic ports such as Rijeka and Ploče (Croatia), Bar (Montenegro), and Durrës (Albania) via maritime shipping containers,²³ mirroring the general trend of cocaine trafficking into Europe (McDermott et al., 2021). Other Western Balkan countries are used as transit areas for further

21 Thus, in 2023 alone, Croatian police seized around 900 kilograms of cocaine in the shipping containers in the port of Rijeka (Ministarstvo unutrašnjih poslova, Ravnateljstvo policije, 2023). In the same year, the State Investigation and Protection Agency (SIPA) in Bosnia and Herzegovina discovered and temporarily confiscated 269 kilograms of cocaine in four separate cases (Државна агенција за истраге и заштиту СИПА, 2023)

22 For example, the quantities of seized cocaine in Bosnia and Herzegovina from 2016 to 2022 show a continuous increase, as follows: 2016 - 0.7 kg; 2017 - 1.9 kg; 2018 - 4.3 kg; 2019 - 2.8 kg; 2020 - 4.2 kg; 2021 - 9.14 kg; and 2022 - 75.18 kg (Министарство безбједности БиХ, 2023: 35).

23 For illustrative purposes, in late March 2021, more than half a ton of cocaine was discovered hidden in a container with bananas at the port of Ploče (Croatia). Similarly, on April 10, 2021, 143 kilograms of cocaine were seized in a banana-filled container at the port of Durrës (Albania) (Global Initiative, 2021). In late August 2021, 1.4 tons of cocaine were seized in Zeta (Montenegro), hidden in banana-filled containers (Euronews Serbia, 2021). Due to the use of banana containers for smuggling, such seizures have colloquially been referred to as “cocaine bananas” (Janković, 2022).

distribution of cocaine primarily to destination countries like the Netherlands, Belgium, Spain, and Italy.

Furthermore, the widespread cocaine smuggling in Europe has led to the increased involvement of citizens from Western Balkan countries in international cocaine trafficking networks. Recognizing the severe threat to European Union security, Europol established the Operational Task Force “Balkan Cartel” in 2022, comprising European states, including all Balkan countries, to effectively address this threat originating from the region (Europol, 2023a).

The involvement of Western Balkan citizens in cocaine smuggling in Europe

Cocaine smuggling in Europe has been marked by the active engagement of organized criminal groups known as the “Balkan Cartel” over the past decade. These groups have not only participated in the distribution of cocaine within the Western Balkans and the European Union but have also organized large shipments of cocaine directly from South America (Walter, 2020). It is important to emphasize that the “Balkan Cartel” is not a singular criminal group with a clear structure and leadership. Rather, it operates as a criminal network comprising interconnected individuals or groups originating from the Western Balkan countries, who are involved in international criminal structures engaged in the smuggling and distribution of cocaine.²⁴ The profitability of illegal drug trade, particularly cocaine, represents a key incentive for criminal groups to engage in such activities (Lajić & Ivanović, 2009).

The *modus operandi* of criminal groups from the Western Balkans focused on establishing direct communication with smuggling groups from South America while successfully avoiding the territorial structure of cartels from Mexico and Colombia. Instead, they operated in small, flexible groups that proved capable of smuggling large quantities of cocaine and distributing it across Europe (Stargardter, 2024). By exploiting modern telecommunication technologies, they connected an unlimited number of individuals (Durieux, 2021, cited in Simović & Šikman, 2023: 231), including establishing links with other drug trafficking criminal groups (United States Attorney Office Southern District of California, 2021). Data obtained by law enforcement agencies through the decryption of

24 In the 1990s, a criminal organization known as the “Group America, composed of Serbian nationals, was identified operating in South America and involved in drug trafficking. One of the first individuals from the Western Balkans to start smuggling cocaine directly from South America to Europe in 2005 was Darko Šarić (Montenegro), dubbed the “Balkan King of Cocaine,” who replicated the Italian mafia model. Following his arrest, the “Kotor” clan, a criminal group from Montenegro, continued operations but soon split into two factions known as the “Škaljari” and “Kavač” clans. The criminal activities of these groups have been marked by multiple mutual murders, with over 60 killings reported. Additionally, in the last decade, organized crime groups from Albanian-speaking areas have become major players in the European cocaine market, relying on a vast network of associates within the Albanian diaspora. Currently, the “Dino and Tito” cartel led by a Bosnian national who is facing criminal proceedings in several European countries, is in the spotlight. (McDermott et al, 2021; Global Initiative, 2023a; Global Initiative, 2023c; UNODC, 2023a; Global Initiative, 2024).

encrypted communication methods (EncroChat, Sky ECC, Anom) have led to ongoing legal proceedings that are just beginning to reveal the extent of cocaine smuggling into Europe and the roles of the so-called “Balkan Cartel.” These activities resulted in the 2023 and 2024²⁵ arrests of leading figures believed to be responsible for cocaine smuggling into Europe. In 2023, 2.7 tons of cocaine were seized in Spain, while in 2024, approximately eight tons of cocaine were seized in Belgium, the Netherlands, and Spain (Europol, 2023a, 2003b, 2024b). These data illustrate the strength of the so-called “Balkan Cartel,” which, along with other criminal organizations, is responsible for the expanding cocaine market in Europe and the Western Balkans. This is further corroborated by the facts that only a few organized criminal groups (such as the ‘Ndrangheta) can survive in the drug smuggling business (Antonelli, 2021).

CONCLUSION

Taking into account the analyzed comparative indicators, we can draw specific conclusions as follows:

- The cocaine market in Europe, including Western Balkan countries, is expanding with a positive growth index. This trend is driven by increased availability of cocaine and heightened competitiveness among trafficking groups, which typically results in price decreases, mirroring trends observed in regions like the United States. Consequently, this scenario is expected to lead to a rise in cocaine use prevalence, an increase in the number of users, and thereby escalate societal costs. These costs encompass public health expenditures and overall burdens on the criminal justice system;
- The aforementioned increase is significantly influenced by new trends in cocaine smuggling. This primarily pertains to cocaine smuggling in maritime shipment containers, which facilitates the smuggling of large quantities of cocaine, now measured in tons, with profits estimated in billions of euros. It is evident that criminal groups have exploited the full potential of this mode of transportation, on one hand, and the vulnerabilities of port infrastructure, on the other.
- A new trend can be observed in the increasing formation of criminal networks as the dominant form of organized crime in the field of cocaine smuggling. These organizational structures are increasingly replacing traditional mafia-style criminal groups and taking the lead in cocaine smuggling. Their flexibility, adaptability, and exploitation of modern technologies, such as encrypted communication methods, provide these networks with a crucial advantage in criminal activities.

²⁵ Additionally, efforts to uncover the so-called “Balkan Cartel” continued in 2019, resulting in the seizure of over one ton of cocaine (Europol, 2019).

- Citizens from Western Balkan countries have leveraged these advantages by collaborating with each other and emerging as key players in the cocaine trafficking network across Europe. Available data indicate that they have established direct relationships with criminal groups in source countries (Colombia, Peru, Bolivia) and transit countries (Brazil, Ecuador, Chile, etc.). This has enabled them to execute numerous cocaine shipments across Europe and globally.
- There is a pronounced link between cocaine smuggling and violent crime, which is particularly evident in the prevalence of brutal and indiscriminate homicides. This is closely associated with competition among criminal groups involved in cocaine smuggling and internal rivalries within these groups. These dynamics significantly impact public safety, law enforcement agencies, and governmental bodies. As a result, the security in areas involved in the transportation and distribution of cocaine is compromised.

If the emerging trends in cocaine smuggling and abuse in Europe and the Western Balkan countries are alarming, as they clearly are, the question arises as to how to address and control this issue. The response can be viewed through two simultaneous approaches. The first involves prevention primarily through the entities of informal social control. Prevention programs should aim to “reduce risk factors and strengthen protective factors” (Министарство безбједности БиХ, 2018: 9). In other words, consumers and the general public need to be informed that cocaine is not a magical substance that enhances abilities but a highly harmful drug, which has serious consequences (ranging from acute conditions like heart attacks or strokes to various psychological and physical disorders).

Another approach involves repressive action through formal social control agencies, which is implemented by law enforcement and judicial bodies. This approach includes measures aimed at reducing the supply of cocaine in the domestic criminal market, primarily through international police cooperation and information exchange. Ultimately, strengthening criminal policies related to illegal production and trafficking of drugs by imposing harsher penalties on offenders becomes imperative, considering the already low punitive measures in place.

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DIETARY SUPPLEMENTS IN SPORTS AND SPECIAL PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Review Article

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Abstract: Athlete nutrition attracts significant attention from both sports science and sports practitioners, while the use of supplements is an indispensable practice not only for athletes and recreational exercisers but also for professionals in law enforcement and the military. Special physical education represents a system of applied combat training that is studied (under various names) in police, military, and security agencies worldwide. The majority of the Special Physical Education program focuses on the identification and mastery of techniques from multiple martial arts systems and their application in diverse, specialized conditions of life and work of police officers, military personnel, and other security professionals. It is indisputable that a balanced diet and additional supplementation of vitamins, minerals, trace elements, low-molecular protein preparations, amino acids, and fatty acids constitute a factor for optimal performance and health for both athletes and law enforcement officers. This paper aims to present the safe use of certain dietary supplements, based on available literature, providing a starting point for specific future studies.

Keywords: Sports nutrition, supplements, sports performance, police.

INTRODUCTION

Sports nutrition has gained significant importance over the past few decades and is likely to receive even more attention, given that quality and balanced nutrition play a crucial role in an athlete's performance (Hoffman & Maresh, 2011; Amanović et al., 2020; Januszko & Lange, 2021). Based on its roles in our body, food can be divided into categories that include structural, energetic, protective, and regulatory functions (Kilibarda, 2021). While food contains numerous chemical compounds, only a few are essential for human

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life, specifically macronutrients (carbohydrates, proteins, fats, and water), as they are needed in large amounts by the body. This group also includes micronutrients (vitamins, minerals, and essential trace elements), which are necessary in smaller quantities. In certain cases (increased physical exertion, sports activities, stress, illness), in addition to a natural, quality, fresh, and varied diet based on plant-based foods, dietary supplements play an important role. Dietary supplements can have various goals, including managing micronutrient deficiencies, providing additional sources of energy and macronutrients, and offering direct benefits for athletic performance or indirect benefits such as supporting intense training regimens. In this context, the terms “competitive nutrition” and “training nutrition” are increasingly used as two distinct entities, with the former focusing on performance and the latter having an adaptable focus (Close et al., 2016).

Therefore, by emphasizing current developments in sports nutrition while discussing both traditional and new strategies for improving exercise performance and training adaptations, we this paper aims to present, based on scientific literature, certain indications for dietary supplementation in sports and Special Physical Education. This involves a structural and functional analysis of the activities within Special Physical Education, highlighting how these strategies can be effectively integrated to enhance performance and outcomes in these specific fields.

SPECIAL PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Special Physical Education (SPE) represents a complex system of applied self-defense, distinct from other employed systems (Amanovic et al., 2015). SPE combines elements from various martial arts (judo, karate, jujitsu), specifically structured into a system of activities tailored to the needs of police officers and other security personnel (Milošević et al., 2005; Milošević & Milošević, 2014; Гужвица & Паспаљ, 2020). Police activities are unique, involving varying intensity and duration of SPE techniques, utilizing different motor skills and energy mechanisms. The effectiveness of SPE techniques largely depends on the amount of adenosine triphosphate (ATP) in the muscles and the rate of its breakdown and resynthesis. Given the relatively short duration of SPE techniques, ATP resynthesis is achieved exclusively through anaerobic mechanisms: the phosphocreatine (alactic) and glycolytic (lactic) pathways. Most attacks are exhausted within a second, ranging from 0.11 seconds (hand and foot strikes) to one second (multiple consecutive strikes). Defense, therefore, requires maximum intensity, lasting from 0.8 seconds for dodging an attack to over three seconds for combinations of various techniques. Consequently, while defense can often be completed in less than two seconds, there are frequent instances requiring more than 30 seconds. Given the high intensity of these actions, the primary energy process supplying the necessary energy depends directly on the

duration of the action. In most scenarios, only one or two processes operate simultaneously. When the energy from one process is depleted, another energy production process takes over (Milošević & Milošević, 2014). The type of energy process determines the substances used to supply energy, forming the basis for considerations about nutrition and potential supplementation needs.

DIETARY SUPPLEMENTS

During intense training and increased exertion, the body is subjected to higher energy release, and regular diet often fails to meet the demands for quality nutrients. In such cases, dietary supplements become significant. The intake of macro and micronutrients can have numerous desirable effects for both athletes and security professionals: enhanced performance (Knapik et al., 2014), faster recovery after exertion (Kerksick et al., 2009), protection from injuries, and quicker rehabilitation (Burgerstein & Zimmermann, 2009). There are also numerous studies on this topic that classify dietary supplements from various perspectives. The Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) expert panel has categorized dietary supplements into four groups based on scientific evidence. Group A includes substances scientifically proven to support and enhance sports performance and prevent or treat clinical issues (caffeine, creatine, beta-alanine, vitamins, multivitamin/mineral complexes, electrolytes, and various sports drinks). Group B substances are based on emerging scientific support and warrant further research (food polyphenols, fish oil, carnitine, echinacea, glutamine, probiotics, amino acids). Group C comprises supplements without clear evidence of efficacy. Group D substances are prohibited for use either due to harmful effects or the risk of resulting in a positive doping test (Dikić, Suzić, & Radivojević, 2008). An interesting classification by Close et al. (2016) divides supplements into those that enhance endurance performance, those that increase strength/power, and those that improve general health (Table 1).

Finally, in combat sports and Special Physical Education, the benefits of using supplements can be categorized into two strategies. The first, acute supplementation strategy, involves the consumption of supplements that have the ability to optimize performance improvements when used before training, competition, or intervention (such as caffeine and sodium bicarbonate). The second, chronic supplementation strategy refers to the consumption of supplements (such as creatine, beta-alanine, and protein supplements) that are used over a period of several days or weeks to enhance performance (Campbell et al., 2011).

*Table 1. Summary of some of the most common supplements grouped as **green** – strong evidence of performance enhancement, **yellow** – moderate or emerging evidence, and **red** – lack of evidence, high risk of contamination, and/or currently banned by the World Anti-Doping Agency (Close et al., 2016).*

	Green	Yellow	Red
Endurance	Caffeine Carbohydrate gels/drinks Beta-Alanine Beetroot juice Sodium bicarbonate/ citrate Antioxidants	Taurine Cherry juice L-Carnitine	Ephedrine Methylhexanamine Herbal supplements Citrulline Malate L-Arginine Synephrine (Oxedrine)
Strength or Power	Creatine Proteins	Leucine BCAAs	ZMA Anything 'Anabolic' Testosterone Boosters Herbal Supplements Colostrum
Health status	Probiotics Electrolytes Vitamin D	Vitamin C Multivitamin Glucosamine Quercetin Glutamine Fish Oil Collagen	Magnesium Herbal Supplements

However, although supplements remain an integral part of the daily routine for elite athletes, there is a growing shift in priorities, with many athletes adopting a “food first” approach. Given the risk of contamination and the potential for failed drug tests, supplements are now often used only when there is a clear reason for their use (Dikić, Suzić, & Radivojević, 2008). Dietary supplements with scientific justification for use in sports will be analyzed further, reporting on specific studies and/or discussing publications related to the use of supplements and their support in combat sports and Special Physical Education.

Creatine

Research and information on creatine monohydrate supplementation, which is widely used, are continually expanding, making it arguably the most popular sports dietary supplement, effective and safe across various sports and age groups. Creatine plays a fundamental role in maintaining energy homeostasis, particularly in skeletal muscles, when the training goal is hypertrophy, strength, or power (Bogdanis et al., 2022), as well as enhancing recovery ability (Kerksick et al., 2009). It is also used in pathological conditions (Bonilla et al., 2021). Creatine supplementation can have significant clinical roles and benefits for older adults (Gualano et al., 2012). In combat sports (Januszko &

Lange, 2021; Cannataro et al., 2022), creatine is strongly justified in performing defense and attack at maximum intensity, which can last from 0.8 seconds, if it involves dodging, to 3 seconds or more in the case of technique combinations, during a period that does not allow for complete recovery of ATP reserves (Franchini et al., 2014). The effects of two-week creatine monohydrate supplementation and a specially designed training program on the anaerobic capacity and body composition of judokas showed significant improvements in anaerobic capacity and body composition (Radovanović et al., 2008). Additionally, some studies have indicated potential benefits in anaerobic power, muscle hypertrophy, and maximal muscle strength or power when combining protein with creatine (Beck et al., 2007). It appears that combining creatine monohydrate with carbohydrates or carbohydrates and proteins yields optimal results (Buford et al., 2007).

Traditional supplementation protocols involve either short-term (approximately 5-7 days) high-dose (around 20 g/day or 0.3 g/kg of body weight/day) supplementation (Harris et al., 1992) or long-term (approximately 4-6 weeks) low-dose (around 3 g/day or 0.03 g/kg of body weight/day) supplementation (Hultman et al., 1996). Both protocols have proven effective in increasing muscle creatine content by about 20%, as well as improving exercise performance. However, some studies suggest that high doses of creatine may not be necessary, and that lower, daily doses of creatine supplementation (i.e., 3-5 g/day) are effective in increasing intramuscular creatine stores, enhancing muscle mass, muscle performance, and recovery (Gualano et al., 2012; Antonio et al., 2021).

Beta-alanine (β-alanine)

Beta-alanine is a non-essential amino acid with ergogenic potential primarily based on its role in synthesizing carnosine, a key intramuscular buffer composed of histidine and beta-alanine. Carnosine is found in high concentrations in skeletal muscles, particularly in type II (fast-twitch) fibers, which are predominantly used in activities requiring rapid force or power generation. Beta-alanine is considered particularly effective in timeframes ranging from 1 to 10 minutes (Saunders et al., 2017), as high-intensity training within this duration may enhance adaptive responses by accumulating greater workload during each session. This effect is likely due to several interconnected factors, including improved pH buffering (Baguet et al., 2010; Artioli et al., 2019), which may allow greater reliance on aerobic metabolism, thereby reducing the build-up of glycolytic metabolites at the same exercise intensity (Gross et al., 2014). According to some studies, beta-alanine can increase strength and work capacity, reduce feelings of fatigue and exhaustion, positively affect body composition, elevate carnosine levels, and decrease lactic acid accumulation in muscles (Artioli et al., 2010; Todorovic et al., 2022). One study reported that a 4-week beta-alanine supplementation (6.4 g; 33 judokas) significantly improved performance in a special judo fitness test accompanied by simulated fights (de

Andrade Kratz et al., 2017). Another study tested 40 judo and jiu-jitsu athletes with 6.4 g of beta-alanine per kg of body weight and 500 mg of sodium bicarbonate, showing significant differences in lactate levels and overall ergogenic effect, both with beta-alanine alone and more so in combination with bicarbonate (Tobias et al., 2013).

Daily supplementation with 4 to 6 grams of beta-alanine for at least 2 to 4 weeks has been shown to improve exercise performance. A maintenance dose of approximately ~1.2 grams per day is effective in maintaining elevated muscle carnosine levels (30%-50% above baseline) after supplementation (Stegen et al., 2014). The common side effect of paresthesia (tingling of the skin) can be managed by taking smaller doses throughout the day, with 2-4 doses of approximately 1.6 grams or 3.2 grams (Smith et al., 2009).

Protein supplements

Protein powders derived from various sources are among the most commonly used dietary supplements, not only among athletes but also among military personnel and recreational exercisers (Zangelidis et al., 2008; Šoškić et al., 2016; Bukhari et al., 2021). In sports, protein intake often needs to exceed the normal recommended daily intake, which is approximately 0.8 g per kg of body weight, or around 45-55 g per day. Proteins are nitrogen-containing substances that are more complex than carbohydrates and fats. They form the main structural component of muscles and other tissues in the body, making up about ~15-20% of total body mass. Proteins are also essential for the production of hormones, enzymes, and hemoglobin. Although proteins are not the primary or preferred energy source, they can be used for energy production during periods of nutrient deficiency. For the body to utilize proteins, they must first be broken down into their simplest forms, known as amino acids. Consuming an adequate amount of essential amino acids, particularly leucine, leads to muscle mass synthesis (Hoffman et al., 2015). It is well established that consuming essential amino acids in free form or as part of a protein supplement, ranging from 20-40 g after exercise, stimulates muscle protein synthesis and can increase strength and improve body composition by increasing lean body mass (Jäger et al., 2017). Supplementing dietary proteins, combined with resistance exercises and mixed training (e.g., striking or grappling techniques), will provide a muscle system that is physiologically better prepared to generate force during technique application (Campbell et al., 2011). Increased protein consumption has also been observed among karate practitioners (Teshima et al., 2002) and judokas (Zangelidis et al., 2008).

The recommended daily protein intake for athletes ranges from 1.2 to 2 g per kg of body weight (Campbell et al., 2011). If this amount of protein is not consistently obtained through diet, protein supplements (such as whey protein, casein, or soy protein) are recommended. Excess low-molecular-weight proteins contribute to energy production, with surplus nitrogen being excreted.

There is no doubt about the use of low-molecular-weight proteins, as they are derived from edible sources and their degradation methods are physiological (Burgerstein & Zimmermann, 2009).

Caffeine

The most common dietary sources of caffeine are coffee, tea, chocolate and specialized sports foods and supplements. While caffeine intake has minimal effects on maximal strength (Davis & Green, 2009), its potential benefits are twofold: improving reaction time and increasing explosive strength. Despite the lack of scientific support linking caffeine supplementation to improved sports performance, caffeine is a commonly used supplement among judokas (Campbell et al., 2011). Specifically, 50% of surveyed judokas use caffeine supplementation (Zangelidis et al., 2008). Several studies focusing on the effect of caffeine on reaction time using simple hand movements have shown positive results (Jacobson & Edgley, 1987; Lorino et al., 2006). Another area related to reaction time is agility. Two studies investigating the effects of caffeine on agility have yielded mixed results. In one study, caffeine (6 mg/kg body weight) improved overall average agility performance (3 sprints of 22, 33, and 31 meters performed in a zig-zag pattern) by approximately 2% compared to placebo, although the improvement was not reported as significant (Davis & Green, 2009). In another randomized, double-blind experiment, no significant change in agility test performance was observed after caffeine intake (6 mg/kg body weight) compared to placebo (Stuart et al., 2005). After low (40 mg or 0.5 mg/kg) to moderate (300 mg or 4 mg/kg) doses of caffeine, alertness, reaction time, and attention are improved, but less consistent effects are noted on memory and higher-order executive functions such as judgment and decision-making (McLellan et al., 2016). In conclusion, caffeine is widely used as a performance-enhancing supplement by both athletes and non-athletes.

Regarding dosage, caffeine can enhance performance when consumed 15-30 minutes before exercise in low to moderate doses (~3-6 mg/kg body weight). Moreover, there are no additional benefits when consumed in higher doses (≥ 9 mg/kg) (Goldstein et al., 2010).

Sodium bicarbonate (sodium hydrogen carbonate or baking soda)

Sodium bicarbonate (sodium hydrogen carbonate or baking soda) is an alkalizing agent and a key component of the body's primary pH buffering system. Numerous studies have shown that endogenous bicarbonate levels can be safely and acutely increased after oral consumption of sodium bicarbonate at doses between 0.2 and 0.3 g/kg body weight (Siegler et al., 2010). Supplementation at these levels can lead to improvements of approximately 2% to 3% in various performance measures during single and repeated high-intensity exercises lasting 1-10 minutes (Hadzic et al., 2019). Two studies investigated the effective-

ness of sodium bicarbonate in combat sports athletes. In the first study (Siegler & Hirscher, 2010), 10 amateur boxers participated in 2 competitive sparring sessions. Approximately 90 minutes before the matches, each boxer consumed 0.3 g/kg sodium bicarbonate or placebo in a randomized and balanced manner. This level of sodium bicarbonate supplementation resulted in significant improvements in punch efficiency. In the second study, nine judokas performed 3 sets of a specialized judo fitness test (SJFT) with a 5-minute recovery period between each set (Artioli et al., 2007). Each participant consumed 0.3 g/kg sodium bicarbonate or placebo 2 hours before the test. The results showed that sodium bicarbonate supplementation significantly improved SJFT performance, and lactate levels were significantly lower after sodium bicarbonate intake compared to placebo, indicating a buffering effect of sodium bicarbonate. Another study examined the effects of sodium bicarbonate on performance and assessed energy system contribution during simulated taekwondo bouts. Athletes consumed 0.3 g/kg body weight of sodium bicarbonate or placebo 90 minutes before the simulated fight. After sodium bicarbonate supplementation, there was a significant increase in glycolytic metabolism contribution and thus improved performance during the simulated taekwondo fight (Lopes-Silva et al., 2018).

Current recommendations for sodium bicarbonate supplementation involve consuming between 0.2 to 0.4 g/kg of body weight along with a small carbohydrate-rich meal (~1.5 g/kg body weight) approximately 120 to 150 minutes before exercise (Maughan et al., 2018).

CONCLUSION

A balanced diet can enhance performance and recovery after training for athletes, recreational participants, and law enforcement and military professionals. Additionally, the positive effects of a balanced diet can be amplified by dietary supplements. Some supplements have proven effects on strength, muscle size, endurance, and body composition in combat sports (such as sodium bicarbonate, caffeine, creatine, beta-alanine, and protein supplements); however, no amount of supplementation can compensate for poor nutrition. Generally, dietary supplements are intended to complement the diet to meet macro- and micronutrient needs and other essential components for maintaining health, proper body development, and improving athletic performance.

Despite the growing research in sports nutrition, as highlighted in this paper, there remain many issues about dietary supplements that need to be explored to further improve sports and professional performance in Special Physical Education. These issues primarily concern safety, efficacy, and related legal regulation. To address these questions adequately, further research is needed, particularly within the populations of law enforcement and the military.

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THE IDENTIFICATION OF A PERSON OR AN OBJECT BY AN EYEWITNESS

Review Article

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Abstract: Giving testimony is a general duty of all individuals and entails a range of obligations, among which is the obligation of a witness to give a statement. Giving a statement means providing information about the criminal act, the perpetrator, and other important circumstances surround the specific case. However, in situations where, for instance, it is necessary to determine whether an eyewitness can identify a person or objects, an eyewitness identification procedure must be conducted. This means that in addition to giving a statement, in cases where it is necessary, an eyewitness is also asked to identify a person or an object. Person and object identification is a complex process. It is commonly stated that identification involves two phases: the description phase and the presentation phase for the purpose of identification. This construction is likely a result of legal formulation stating that if it is necessary to determine whether an eyewitness can identify a person or an object, the eyewitness must first describe the object to be identified, and then the object must be presented to them for identification. However, each of these phases involves a series of activities that must be undertaken, which are highly sensitive and largely determine the outcome of identification. Additionally, the procedural rules regarding identification are tentative and insufficient. Successful identification requires knowledge of and adherence to the rules prescribed by forensic science and psychology. All of these actions make the process of eyewitness identification very complex and demanding. Considering that the identification of persons and objects is realized within witness hearings as an evidentiary action in criminal proceedings, identification is officially recorded, and the record can serve as evidence in criminal proceedings. Of course, its evidentiary strength is assessed by the court in accordance with the rules that apply to the evaluation of other evidence.

Keywords: eyewitness, person identification, objects identification.

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THE CONCEPT OF IDENTIFICATION

“Often it is not enough for an eyewitness to merely state everything they know about the object in question; it is also necessary for them to identify or agnosize persons and objects presented to them. Agnosia usually occurs after testimony, with the aim of determining whether the person or object indeed corresponds to what the eyewitness’s statement referred to” (Марковић, 1930: 393). “Identification is a complex psychological process and, essentially, represents an emotional phenomenon based on a familiar impression” (Алексић 1996: 223). The essence of identification lies in observing persons and objects to establish their identity based on previously seen persons or objects, or to verify the statement given. The objects of identification can be persons and objects.²

The identification of persons mainly involves identifying perpetrators of criminal acts, which represents the most complex form of identification. It is best performed under conditions similar to those encountered in reality. Additionally, the use of a two-way mirror is recommended during a line-up identification procedure, when “the eyewitness views the individuals who stand in a row from behind the two-way mirror without being seen” (Aleksić & Škuljić, 2010: 214). Furthermore, forensic science recommends certain rules regarding lineups. Essentially, these individuals should closely resemble the suspect in terms of age, height, weight, facial features, hair color and length, ensuring “5 cm height difference, 10 kg weight difference and 5-8 years age difference between them” (Aleksić & Škuljić, 2010: 214). The eyewitness should be presented between five and eight individuals. During the identification process, the suspect should not stand out in any way. If identification occurs, the record of identification must include the basis on which identification was performed.

The identification of objects includes stolen, found, discarded, lost, or temporarily seized items related to the criminal offense committed. “the identification of objects that can serve as evidence (*corpus delicti*) or to establish certain facts in criminal proceedings is usually more reliable than person recognition because it often occurs during the investigation of property offenses, and the person who performs identification is the victim, who knows their own property and its individual, sometimes hidden, characteristics very well” (Јокић, 2016: 97). To identify an object means to conclusively determine the characteristics by which that object differs from other objects of the same type. Object identification involves giving a detailed description followed by the presentation of similar objects to be identified. Although current literature and studies do not confirm this, it was previously believed that women were “particularly good eyewitnesses regarding object identification. The number of erroneous identifications of objects is lower compared to the percentage of erroneous identifications of individuals, but for various reasons (especially self-interest), false identifications of objects are often made” (Vodinić, 1970: 142).

² According to forensic science, in addition to persons and objects, the identification procedure can also be used to identify corpses and the place where the crime was committed.

Identification is conducted not only for the purpose of identifying a person or an object that have previously been seen but also to verify the statement given. In order to verify the truthfulness and reliability of a previously given statement, the reconstructions of events, confrontations, and interrogations are often conducted alongside identification. All of these actions are undertaken when “there is suspicion that the witness did not tell the whole truth during the interview, and it is highly likely that they know it” (Алексић 1996: 241).³

Procedural laws in Bosnia and Herzegovina recognize identification made by eyewitnesses in criminal proceedings. For example, the section regulating the interviewing of witnesses contained in the Criminal Procedure Code of Republika Srpska provides for the possibility of identification “if it is necessary to determine whether the witness recognizes a person or an object.”⁴ This law does not prescribe detailed rules for conducting this action. The only rule prescribed by the law is that the witness shall first be asked to describe or indicate how the persons or objects differ, and only afterwards will they be shown to them for identification, along with other unfamiliar individuals, or, if possible, with objects of the same type. The law also provides for the possibility of identifying persons based on photographs if identification cannot be made directly.

This means that identification essentially consists of the preliminary and main phases. In the preliminary phase (the description phase), the person making an identification describes the object, specifying more concrete identification characteristics based on which the person or object can be identified. The preliminary phase is followed by the main phase (the presentation phase for the purpose of identification), in which the witness is asked to identify the persons or objects. “The person supervising the identification process should be competent and trained, possess certain knowledge of psychology and forensic science, behave impartially and objectively throughout the identification process, and must be aware that the eyewitness making an identification is constantly susceptible to suggestive influence, both verbal and non-verbal” (Jokić, 2016: 151). The identification procedure is conducted by showing the witness several persons or objects of the same type, and they should point out the person or object they have recognized (Симовић, 2005: 239-240). If it is impossible to make identification in this manner, the photo array may be also used.⁵ This

3 The most effective method for verifying the accuracy of identification is event reconstruction, conducted at the scene of the criminal act and under conditions as similar as possible to those existing at the time of the act. Through reconstruction, “the psychological properties of the witness are best determined: the ability to accurately perceive, correctly identify measurements, colors, and time, the strength of memory, reaction to events, type and degree of suggestibility. Reconstruction reveals the hidden conclusion in the statement.” (Vodinelić, 1970:140).

4 Закон о кривичном поступку Републике Српске [Criminal Procedure Code of Republika Srpska], Службени гласник Републике Српске, бр. 53/2012, 91/2017, 66/2018 и 15/2021), чл. 150, став 3.

5 When it comes to identifying objects based on photographs, the Criminal Procedure Code of Republika Srpska does not provide for this type of identification. However, there is no reason why indirect identification of objects should not be conducted, especially in situations where it is necessary to identify an object that no longer exists or has been significantly altered, or when it is

method is used exceptionally because “the photo is only a necessary auxiliary means for finding and recognizing the perpetrator. A person changes over time. Not all personality characteristics, especially facial expressions, are captured in the photo” (Vodinelić, 1970:63). Additionally, the eyewitness who saw a suspect in a real-life situation, in motion, will have a harder time recognizing them if they only have a photograph in front of them. Moreover, the quality of the photograph may vary depending on the conditions under which the photograph was taken. Of course, although identification based on photographs has its drawbacks, it is clear that a positive identification of the person can be made based on photographs, and it should be applied in situations where live lineup is impossible.

During description, the eyewitness mentions individual characteristics as they retained them in memory, while during presentation for recognition, they express their current impression and compare it with the past. For example, Vodinelić states that identification consists of three segments: “1) the eyewitness saw the perpetrator and created a memory of his face; 2) some time after this experience, faces among which is the perpetrator or a person resembling the perpetrator are displayed to the eyewitness, which is a certain experience; 3) during this experience, the eyewitness compares live faces with the face from their memory and draws conclusions about their identity or difference” (Vodinelić, 1970: 137).

THE IDENTIFICATION PHASES

The description phase and the presentation phase for the purpose of identification are closely interlinked, more precisely, one builds upon the other. The presentation for the purpose of identification follows after the description phase, but “the ability to describe does not necessarily have to be linked to the ability to recognize... Inability to describe characteristics does not exclude the possibility of make an accurate identification of others, just as an accurate description does not guarantee an accurate identification” (Vodinelić, 1985: 582). “There are various types of eyewitnesses. Some describe others excellently and accurately but recognize poorly and incorrectly. Conversely, the inability to describe others is not necessarily linked to the inability to recognize. These are two separate abilities – the ability to recognize the presented is stronger than the ability to describe it” (Vodinelić, 1970: 137). There are numerous factors that influence both the ability to describe and the ability to recognize the presented.

difficult to conduct a direct identification procedure for some reason. For instance, the Criminal Procedure Code of the Republic of Serbia stipulates that the identification of both persons and objects based on photographs may be used if the person or object to be identified is not available (Закон о кривичном поступку Републике Србије [Criminal Procedure Code of the Republic of Serbia], Службени гласник Републике Србије, бр. 72/2011, 101/2011, 121/2012, 32/2013, 45/2013, 55/2014, 35/2019, 27/2021 – одлука УС, чл. 90, став 3).

Prior to conducting the identification procedure, it is necessary to determine these abilities, taking into account individual differences among eyewitnesses.

Regarding the eyewitness's ability to describe, it is essential to consider significant individual differences among eyewitnesses. From the perspective of an observer, psychology distinguishes between synthetic and analytical types of eyewitnesses. The synthetic type of eyewitnesses "primarily receives a general impression of the object observed, losing numerous details to which they do not attach importance (attention). In their statement, such an eyewitness does not primarily expose that general impression and is not capable of detailing and accurately stating many details that precisely constitute the essence of personal description... In contrast, the analytical type primarily notices details while neglecting the general appearance of the object observed... A favorable circumstance for establishing objective truth is when the eyewitness making identifications belongs to the analytical-synthetic type" (Vodinelić, 1985: 581–582). Identification is successful only if the eyewitness has noticed and remembered "not only the group but precisely the necessary set (complex) of individual characteristics... Group membership means similarity and nothing else, while individual characteristics enable differentiation between the similar objects presented" (Vodinelić, 1985: 577).

Considering that criminal situations are often characterized by a multitude of stimuli and the presence of strong emotions, numerous factors influence what the eyewitness will perceive and remember. Forensic psychology distinguishes between two types of factors affecting event perception: those related to the event itself and those related to the person observing it. Event-related factors include distance, the duration of observation, violence level, the presence of weapons, lighting conditions, and the visibility of perpetrators. On the other hand, factors related to the witness include the presence of alcohol/drugs, stress, selective attention, prejudices, and bias (Баић, 2018: 88–89). Additionally, factors such as prior knowledge, experience, motivation, needs, desires, and expectations should not be overlooked, as they all impact eyewitness perception. Furthermore, "there are differences in the amount of content individuals are able to retain" (Пот, 1990: 80–90). Eyewitnesses also do not remember the same facts; "what they remember or forget depends on their individual characteristics. When multiple eyewitnesses observe an event, they may each remember different aspects of it. A comprehensive picture of the event can be gained if each eyewitness provides testimony about the moment they observed and remembered" (Vodinelić, 1970: 129).

After the eyewitness has described the object in question, the presentation phase (the main phase) follows. The eyewitness will be presented with the "contested" object together with other similar objects unknown to them. The eyewitness is instructed to carefully observe and say if they recognize the object they had observed at the critical time from an array of objects. "...the witness should identify the person among several unknown individuals or objects of the same type" (Simović & Simović, 2019: 353). The objects should look similar and

should be presented simultaneously. Objects can be presented to the witness in person,⁶ which is much more reliable, or they can be presented to them as photographs of the object.⁷

Regarding the witness's ability to identify objects or persons, individual differences of witnesses should be considered. Gender, age, abilities, personality traits, description quality, consistency in testimony upon re-examination, the witness's confidence in the credibility of their testimony, the appearance of the object to be identified, changes in personal description or clothes in cases of person identification, are some of the factors that can influence identification. Additionally, the time elapsed since the commission of the criminal act to the moment of identification, the context in which the identification procedure is conducted, and information about the event after the event (Байћ, 2018: 95–101) must be taken into account.

The identification of persons or objects can be successful only if the witness has noticed and remembered specific individual characteristics. Establishing identity or differences is possible only based on a set of individual characteristics. "Matching only group characteristics allows only the determination of group membership, which is by no means the same as identity. Group membership means only similarity" (Водинелић, 1985: 577). Identity or differences between similar objects can only be determined based on individual characteristics.

It is important to note that in some situations, re-presentation for the purpose of identification is performed. Although scholars agree that re-presentation is not desirable,⁸ it is inevitable in some situations, (e.g., in cases where a mistake was made during the initial presentation, if significant changes in the appearance of the suspect have occurred, if the initial recognition was based solely on a photograph, if new circumstances and evidence arise that can only be verified by re-recognition, etc.) (Водинелић, 1985: 579–581).

6 Regarding live lineups, simultaneous and sequential procedures are used for live line ups. In the simultaneous lineup procedure, all persons are shown to the witness at the same time. The persons should be selected for their similarities to the suspect (approximately the same height, hair color and length, similar clothing and shoes, etc.), and they should not be known to the suspect. In the sequential live lineup procedure, the suspect and fillers are shown to the witness one by one.. The same rules apply for the sequential lineup procedure as for the simultaneous one, with the additional instruction to the witness that they will be shown one person at a time and that the perpetrator described may be among them.

7 Forensic experts hold differing opinions on the reliability of identification based on photographs. Some argue that such identification can only be used as a supplementary tool (e.g., Vodinelic regards photographs primarily as a useful supplementary tool for locating and identifying individuals, Vodinelic 1970:63). Conversely, others contend that identification based on photographs can be successfully and reliably performed (e.g., Jokić asserts that identification can be successfully conducted based on photographs, particularly in cases where personal identification is not feasible). (Jokić, 2016: 89).

8 Some authors argue that repeated lineup procedures for identification purposes are highly risky, as "there is a possibility that the witness may genuinely recognize the person that was previously shown to them, but mistake him or her for the perpetrator" (Vodinelic, 1970: 141).

Both phases of identification must be entered into the record. besides the basic data relating to the place and time of identification, the person and object identified, it is necessary to enter a faithful description of the object identified, the questions asked and the answers given by the person being identifies in the record. The record can be used as evidence in criminal proceedings, and its probative value, that is, the probative value of identification, is assessed by the court based on its free judicial conviction, which the court develops “not based on the witness’s judgment but rather on the facts the witness present and base their judgment of identity or difference” (Водинелић, 1985: 586).

CONCLUSION

The identification of persons and objects is possible but not always necessary during witness examination. It is used when there is a need to verify witness testimony or when the witness is asked to identify the person or object they have previously seen. Regardless of the reason for using the identification procedure, it always has two phases, the description phase, and the presentation phase for the purpose of identification. Both phases include a series of activities that need to be undertaken, such as obtaining a detailed description of the person or object; determining the witness’s perception abilities; determining the conditions under which the person or object was observed; selecting the appropriate person or object to be presented; providing conditions (ambience) for presentation; providing photographs in the case of mediated identification; if the identification of a person or an object was made, detailed determination of the characteristics based on which it was made is required, etc. Each of these activities is, in itself, very sensitive and significant. A “mistake” in any phase of identification can result in erroneous identification.

As it can be seen, the result of identification depends on several factors. Of course, the person, that is, the witness and their abilities to observe, remember, reproduce, and recognize, are foremost among them. Generally, when speaking of a witness as evidence in criminal proceedings, their uncertainty lies precisely in the subjective qualities of each individual witness. In addition to factors related to the witness’s personality, there are other factors related to the object being identified, the method of identification, and the event itself.

How the court will evaluate identification procedures does not depend on the witness’s “judgment.” A cautious witness will often not be categorical even in the case of accurate identification, while a careless witness will be categorical even when unsure of their testimony. Therefore, in some situations, forensic-psychological assessments of witnesses are desirable. Identification is much more than the witness’s assertion that they recognize an object they have previously seen among those presented. In order to be used as evidence, identification procedures must be properly planned, tactically implemented, and critically analyzed and verified in the end. The court evaluates the result of

identification like other evidence, first individually, then together with all other evidence, in accordance with the principle of free assessment of evidence based on the principles of truth and the judge's own free conviction.

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Review of Strategy in Controlling Terrorism with a Focus on Bosnia and Herzegovina by Predrag Popović

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The book *Strategy in Controlling Terrorism with a Focus on Bosnia and Herzegovina* offers a comprehensive analysis of terrorism and counter-terrorism, addressing it as one of the most pressing security challenges in contemporary society. The book was published by the University of Banja Luka in 2023 and spans 419 pages. The author has utilized over 300 current sources, both domestic and international, including textbooks, academic articles, legal regulations, relevant documents, and internet sources.

The aim of the book is to present a strategic approach to controlling terrorism, with a particular focus on the current state of addressing this security issue in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Thus, this book provides a detailed examination of terrorism as a security phenomenon and the means of countering it. In this sense, the book fully aligns with the content and structure of the work.

The book is written in an accessible style, with clear and understandable language, and it comprehensively addresses the structure laid out in the text. It is suitable for use by university students, as well as professionals and general public. The book is highly relevant, as it follows all contemporary trends related to terrorism in general, as well as efforts to control this international security problem. Additionally, it incorporates all current legal and regulatory acts related to terrorism, the suppression and control of terrorist activities, the prevention of terrorism financing, and similar issues. Therefore, the book undoubtedly keeps pace with all modern trends concerning this subject matter.

Regarding the methodology, the book represents a combination of scientific knowledge and practical experiences that the author has acquired through a thorough analysis of the most current literature in this field. The literature used in the book is appropriate and aligns with the purpose of the manuscript, while the citations are accurate and proper. To facilitate readers' understanding of the book's content, the author has included numerous relevant examples, primarily drawn from international practice.

The book is composed of an introduction, three main parts, and conclusion. The introductory section addresses the problem, subject, and objectives of the research, presents and explains the hypotheses and research methods, and justifies the scientific and societal relevance of the research.

The first part discusses the fundamental characteristics of contemporary terrorism, with particular attention to the features of Islamic fundamentalism and terrorism. The second part provides a detailed examination of terrorism control in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the control of terrorism financing at both the international level and within Bosnia and Herzegovina. The third part explores the criminal law aspects of terrorism control, the procedural aspects of terrorism control, and the criminological approach to controlling and countering terrorism.

The conclusion section emphasizes that terrorism is a negative social phenomenon that garners significant public attention due to its manifestations and the consequences it brings to any society, including Bosnia and Herzegovina. From the conclusions drawn, it is evident that every state strives to effectively counter all forms of terrorist activities. Through the analyses and research conducted, the author presents and proposes seven recommendations, notably highlighting the need for police agencies to consistently apply strategic analysis and a strategic approach in the fight against terrorism, as these methods will yield much greater results. Additionally, the recommendations stress that police agencies should institutionalize criminal intelligence activities and intensify efforts in this area.

The subject of this monograph is defined by its title: *Strategy in Controlling Terrorism with a Focus on Bosnia and Herzegovina*. The author explores several critical questions: What is the quality of the deradicalization process in Bosnia and Herzegovina? To what extent is the legal framework governing the jurisdiction of police agencies in Bosnia and Herzegovina concerning terrorism offenses tailored to these agencies? What is the quality of institutional cooperation in the fight against terrorism in Bosnia and Herzegovina? How effective is Bosnia and Herzegovina's cooperation with the international community, the European Union, and regional countries in counterterrorism efforts? These questions are crucial for understanding the concept of terrorism, one of the greatest security challenges in contemporary society, which remains relevant and present in nearly all parts of the world.

The author explicitly defines the research objectives, which focus on assessing the quality of the counterterrorism strategy with a particular emphasis on Bosnia and Herzegovina. The scientific goal of the work is to provide a detailed scientific description, incorporating elements of classification, intelligence analysis, and forecasting the quality of the counterterrorism strategy in the context of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In the introductory section, after establishing the objectives, the author also formulates and determines the hypotheses that underpin the research.

After adequately formulating the hypotheses that form the foundation of this book, the author begins the first part by addressing the fundamental characteristics of contemporary terrorism. This discussion starts with a conceptual definition of terrorism, encompassing all the challenges associated with its definition. The author explores institutional and non-institutional definitions of terrorism, as well as global perspectives on the issue, while incorporating the various elements of terrorism into these definitions. This part also discusses the characteristics of Islamic fundamentalism and terrorism in general, placing particular emphasis on European Union countries. This focus is significant, given the presence of radical Islamic fundamentalists in some Western European nations. The author specifically discusses the characteristics, strategies, and tactics of Muslim fundamentalism and radicalism, as well as its impact on the radicalization of Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The author also addresses the ideology of Muslim terrorism, the methods of its propagation, and the influence of terrorist organizations in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This discussion is particularly relevant in light of the current political and security situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the presence of a substantial number of foreign nationals from the Middle East and some Asian regions (e.g., Pakistan, Iraq).

The second part of the book focuses on the control of terrorism in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) and examines the BiH Strategy for Combating Terrorism, addressing the implementation of this strategy, the achievement of its main objectives and sub-objectives, as well as the oversight of its enforcement. In this context, the author provides a detailed analysis of BiH activities in the deradicalization process, including the participation of BiH politicians in the Radicalization Awareness Network (RAN). Recognizing radicalization as a serious problem, the author treats it accordingly, placing an emphasis on the application of programs aimed at preventing radicalization in BiH. These programs are designed to prevent the recruitment of terrorists within the country. Additionally, this part pays considerable attention to the entities involved in countering terrorism in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The author focuses particularly on the collaboration among these entities in preventing, detecting, and prosecuting terrorism in BiH. Given the significance of cooperation and data exchange, the author elaborates on the cooperation between BiH's counter-terrorism entities and those of the international community, especially the European Union and neighboring countries. This issue is particularly important in BiH, a complex state where relationships among various police agencies are not fully regulated, and jurisdiction is not adequately distributed among these agencies, thus making the matter even more critical. Moreover, this part of the book addresses the issue of terrorist financing, including a general discussion on the control of terrorist financing and an overview of the international convention on the suppression of terrorist financing. The author also discusses the Law on the Prevention of Money Laundering and the Financing of Terrorist Activities in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In this regard, the book explores the forms of control over the financial activities of Islamist groups in BiH, as well as the monitoring of banks and other financial channels through which terrorist activities are fi-

nanced. It is clear that without a well-organized system for controlling terrorist financing, it is unrealistic to expect that this phenomenon can be effectively managed by state authorities.

The third part of the book discusses the criminal law aspects of countering terrorism. The discussion begins with the definition of the criminal offense of terrorism in accordance with the Warsaw Convention and the application of its provisions in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). To help readers better understand the essence of terrorist activities, the author explains the fundamental characteristics of the criminalization of terrorism in BiH, as well as the specific features of the offense under the Criminal Code of Republika Srpska. Special attention is given to the elements of the criminal offense of terrorism, which are explained in such a way that the core of the offense is made easily comprehensible. Following this, the author addresses the procedural aspects of controlling terrorism. Given the complexity and gravity of this crime, the book provides a detailed analysis of special investigative measures aimed at combating terrorism and discusses the capacities for the prosecution of terrorists in BiH. A key topic in this section is the criminal investigative approach to controlling and countering terrorism. The author discusses preventive police activities aimed at controlling terrorism, as well as the operational work of the police in suppressing terrorist activities. This includes a clarification of the classic criminal intelligence work in counterterrorism. Recognizing the inadequately organized security system in BiH, the author also thoroughly examines the legal basis for the operational and investigative work of various police agencies within the country.

In conclusion, based on the analysis presented, it can be stated that this book effectively addresses the outlined structure, providing quality explanations of the concept of terrorism and clearly defining the importance of a strategic approach to tackling this highly complex security issue. The author synthesizes the conclusions drawn from the analysis of theoretical perspectives, international instruments, judicial practice, and the research conducted (including interviews and surveys). The research confirmed the hypotheses, and the book as a whole offers a comprehensive treatment of the problem and subject of study. As a result, this work can be beneficial not only to university students but also to anyone interested in this topic.



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- ✓ Secondary sources: (Vuković, 2004, as cited in Krstić).
- ✓ Citing newspaper articles:
 - ✓ Without author (Nezavisne novine, 2017)
 - ✓ Author: (Marković, 2017)

- ✓ Citing documents and reports: (first citation: Ministry of the Interior of the Republika Srpska [MUP RS] 2012), subsequent citations (Ministry of the Interior, 2012).

2. The reference list

- ✓ **Books:** The surname of the author followed by initials, the year of publication in parentheses, italicized title of the book, the place of publication, the name of publisher.

Example:

Ignjatović, Đ. (1998). *Kriminologija*. Beograd: Nomos.

- ✓ **Book chapter:** The author's surname followed by initials and the year of publication in parentheses, the title of the chapter followed by the preposition In, initials followed by the surname (of the editor), edition abbreviation (in parentheses), italicized title of the book, the entire page range, the place of publication, the name of publisher.

Example:

Emerson, L, & Manalo, E. (2007). Essays. In L. Emerson (Ed.), *Writing guidelines for education students* (2nd ed, pp. 42-49). South Melbourne, Australia: Thomson.

- ✓ **Journal articles:** The surname of the author followed by initials, the year of publication in parentheses, the title of the article, italicized name of the journal, and the entire page range, volume and issue numbers:

Example with the volume number and year of publication:

Milašinović, S. (2008). Suština i uzroci društvenih konflikata. *Nauka, bezbednost, policija*, 13(1), 55-77.

Example with the issue number:

Strobl, R, Klemm, J, & Wurtz, S. (2005). Preventing Hate Crime: Experiences from two East-German Towns. *British Journal of Criminology*, 45, 634-646.

- ✓ **Doctoral dissertations:** The surname of the author followed by initials, the year of publication in parentheses, italicized title of doctoral dissertation, doctoral dissertation, the name of institution:

Example:

Lipovac, M. (2016). *Nacionalna bezbednost Republike Srbije u regionalnom bezbednosnom potkompleksu Zapadni Balkan*. Doktorska disertacija. Univerzitet u Beogradu: Fakultet bezbednosti.

- ✓ **Internet sources:**

To cite documents published on the internet, include the title of the document or webpage, the date of publication, a complete website address and a retrieval date.

Example:

(Републички завод за статистику Републике Српске [РЗСРС]. (2009). *Статистички годишњак Републике Српске*. Retrieved March 3, 2010, from http://www.rzs.rs.ba/Publikacije/Godisnjak/2009/Godisnjak2009_Yearbook2009.pdf)

- ✓ **References to legal materials:** Include the full title followed by italicized name of the newsletter in which the regulation was published, the number and year of publication, separated by a comma. Reference the full name at first mention with the abbreviation set off by a dash and use the abbreviation in subsequent citations (Law on General Administrative Procedure – LGAP, Official Gazette of RS, No. 13/02).
- ✓ **References to court judgments:** include complete and correct data (the type and number of judgment, the year of judgment, and, if possible, the publication where it appears).
- ✓ **Conference papers:** The surname of the author followed by initials, the year of publication in parentheses, the title of the paper, italicized title of the conference proceedings, the page number(s) being cited in parentheses, the place of publication followed by the name of publisher.

Example:

Kelly, L. (2011). Violence against women and children in the national legislation of the

EU member states: an overview of the research results. *Druga godišnja konferencija*

Viktimološkog društva Srbije-Žrtve kriminaliteta i žrtve rata: međunarodni i domaći kontekst, knjiga apstrakta (p. 13). Beograd: Viktimološko društvo Srbije & Prometej.

- ✓ **Newspaper articles:** The surname of the author followed by initials, the year and date in parentheses, the title of newspaper followed by a page number in text, or webpage from which the text was retrieved.

Example:

Гудељ, Ј. (2006, October 23). Полиција чува крст изнад Мостара. *Независне новине*, Бања Лука. Retrieved November 17, 2010, from <http://www.nezavisne.com/novosti/bih/Policija-cuva-krst-iznad-Mostara-1473.html>

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- ✓ The article, paragraph, and item of the regulation should be abbreviated as Art., Para, It. after the last issue without a period (for example, CCP, Art. 5, para. 2, it. 3, or CC, Art. 5, 6, 9 and 10, or ZPS, Art. 4-12, etc.).
- ✓ Latin and other foreign words, website addresses are italicized.
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- ✓ Uncited sources should not be included in the reference list.
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