

Survey: There is more violence in the Balkans than in almost all of Europe, but less than in Africa

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The decades-old stereotype of the Balkans as an area of pervasive violence has been shattered by a recently published book showing that violence in the Balkans is slightly more pronounced than in northern, western and central Europe, but also less prevalent than in Eastern Europe, America or Africa. The book deals with criminological investigations into deadly violence in six Balkan countries, is the work of Croatian criminologist Ana-Marija Getos Kalac and is published by one of the leading scientific publishers - Springer.

The Balkan Murder Study ("Violence in the Balkans - First Findings from the Balkan Murder Study") provides original empirical data from 2073 court records in Croatia, Hungary, Kosovo, northern Macedonia, Romania and Slovenia. Analyzing data on 2.416 perpetrators and 2.379 victims, the book carefully examines the state, criminogenic, sacrificial and procedural characteristics of deadly violence in the Balkans, said in a preface Hans-Jörg Albrecht, one of Germany's leading criminologists. which caused such events to become deadly.

Data on deadly violence

Empirical data give a picture of the deadly violence in the Balkans, according to which it occurs mostly in smaller cities, and least in the largest and capitals of these countries. Murders are usually committed between family members, ie between intimate partners and family members, while in cases of attempted murder, the victim and the perpetrator are usually not in a family relationship. In the Balkans, as in all of Europe, deadly violence among outsiders is an exception and occurs in less than 15 percent of cases, according to a study by Ana-Marie Getos Kalac. The perpetrators of deadly violence are mostly men, mostly other men. Of all the violence, violence against intimate partners was committed by men in 15 percent of cases and by women in 39 percent. Although they are less common perpetrators of deadly violence, women commit it mostly against men - as many as 72 percent of female offenders do so.

Most of the deadly violence took place in the evening and afternoon, on weekends or the day before and after the weekend. The vast majority of deadly violence has only one perpetrator and only one victim. Regarding the motive, a little more violence is premeditated than it is done affectively, about half of the motive remains unclear, followed by violence of revenge and greed, it is pointed out.

The hidden link between violence and the organized underworld

"Despite the easier availability of firearms, due to the recent military legacy in the region, we found that only 13 percent of perpetrators used firearms, compared to as many as 62 percent of those who used cold steel and as many as 21 percent of perpetrators without weapons.", He says. Associate Professor at

the Faculty of Law in Zagreb, Getos Kalac points out that she can not determine the link between violence and organized crime, ie that even with a very broad definition of the term, only 1,6 percent of all perpetrators could be at least somewhat related with the criminal underworld. The reason is that in such cases the perpetrators are often unknown and do not enter the court records, and thus the sample of the investigation. She states that in as many as two thirds of particularly cruel cases, the victims are women, and as an interesting fact she notes that in such cases it is rarely found that the perpetrators are mentally disturbed or with reduced criminal responsibility. The share of women victims in less severe cases of deadly violence is 28,5 percent, and men 71,5 percent.

More from Western, less from Eastern Europe

According to Hans-Jrrg Albrecht, the Balkans are prone to violence because of the tradition of banditry and the legacy of "weak states", which is attributed to the long rule of foreigners. "Deadly violence rates are certainly slightly higher in the Balkans than in northern, western and central Europe, but they are lower than homicide rates in Eastern Europe, America, Africa and parts of Asia," Albrecht said.