

Chapter 3

Exploring the Link Between Cruelty to Animals and Violence Against People: Violence Against People and Animals – Evidence

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ABSTRACT

Violence is a form of behavior of an individual, manifested in the use of physical force, psychological and verbal torture, and sexual abuse. Types of violence in which physical, mental, financial or any other aspect is significantly disproportionate in favor of the perpetrator, there are two especially sensitive types of violence: domestic violence and violence against animals. In this chapter, the authors wish to create convenient theoretical/bibliographical foundation for further studies, and to analyze actual data about these criminal acts. In order to achieve this, besides analysis and presentation of relevant past research studies in this field, attempts were also made to analyze official evidence provided by the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Serbia, as well as the official evidence obtained from the courts at several cities regarding charges brought in these cases.

INTRODUCTION

Irrespective of the acceptance of one of two basic approaches on relationship between a man and the nature – anthropocentric or ecocentric, it cannot be denied that a society with its life and work habits is inseparable part of the environment. The interaction between society and the nature is permanent and everlasting, whereas particular relationships are studied by criminologists. At this point, when the authors refer to criminogenic aspect of a man's relation to the nature, the authors do not encompass the use of so-called "dirty" technology or particular aggressive and illegal actions of groups and environmental organizations. The matter that has been occupying the attention of criminologists in recent decades pertains to recognition of the phenomenon and research of the connection between animal abuse (as indicators of personality state) and potential violent behavior against people.

Many causes and forms of criminal behavior were defined through various criminological, psychological, sociological and biological theories, whereby forms of violence and killing animals as possible indicators of violent behavior by an individual to his social environment have been undoubtedly recognized by contemporary criminological theories and research findings. Great thinkers throughout the ages have proposed a link between our treatment of animals and our treatment of humans (Flynn, 2001). Up to the first serious and consistent research on the connection between animal abuse and domestic violence as well as childhood cruelty, for the most part, knowledge about this connection came secondarily, through anecdotal evidence in the reports of wife abuse or child abuse (Flynn, 2000a).

Numerous causes of criminal behavior have arisen with the social evolution and they have developed together with it. Over time, various types of violence have found their place in psychological theories of crime and crime studies themselves, uncovering and explaining the implications those kinds of behavior have on the very personality of the perpetrator and others around him who endure violence or witness it.

Violence as a specific form of behavior, which comes into existence and manifests under various interpersonal or external influences and conditions, but also as a type of a crime, often merits a special attention of experts – criminologists, psychologists, sociologists, jurists, anthropologists and others. Among the manifestations of criminal behavior, it is hard to find the one which brings out such a strong reaction from people in any part of the world as it is the case of violent crimes. (Ignjatović, 2011). Both in literature and in practice, the idea and appearance of violence is frequently related to existence and demonstration of aggression. Pakes and Pakes (2009) define aggression as a behavior directed at intentionally hurting someone, while the authors can interpret Hollin and Howells' (1989) definition of aggression as an intentional endangerment or achieving dominance over others, which doesn't necessarily lead to physical harm, while violence implies the use of physical force much stronger than which may be possessed by the victim. Stanko (2001) labels as violence any behavior form of an individual which intentionally threatens or inflicts physical, sexual or psychological harm to others or oneself. Dahlberg and Krug (2002) define violence as the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against another person or against a group, that results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm or deprivation. According to the given facts and definitions, the authors can reach a general conclusion, which will be a guideline throughout this paper, that violence refers to a behavior of an individual which is manifested in the use of physical force, psychological and verbal torture and sexual abuse.

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