Victimization of elderly people in Lithuanian villages and grange: a victimological analysis

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Summary

The article presents a victimological analysis of crime victims – victimization process of elderly people in Lithuanian villages and granges. Moreover, it addresses major victimization issues of elderly people and its consequences, presents the registered prevalence of victimization cases and nature in Lithuanian granges.

The article analyzes official data of 2000–2004 from the State Department of statistics, results of public opinion poll showing that the situation of legal and social protection of abused elderly people is critical.

The presented issues are analyzed from the perspective of criminology and victimology, where elderly people are categorized as one of the most vulnerable social groups, most sensitive to the consequences of victimization.

Keywords:
crime victims – elderly people, victimization, victimicity, crime victims in granges

Introduction

Early in 2004, the population of elderly people in Lithuania was 698 thousand¹ and comprised 1/5 (20.3 per cent) of the total population. The number of people aged 60 and above is increasing, i.e. the population is growing older. In 1995–2003, the number of children (aged 0–14) and people aged 15–59 dropped respectively by 23.7 and 3.3 per cent, and the number of elderly people jumped up by 10.2 per cent [6].

Based on data presented by the Statistics Lithuania, in early 2004 the elderly population residing in urban areas totalled 425 thousand (61 per cent) and rural areas 273 thousand (39 per cent). It is worth mentioning that in urban areas the share of elderly people among other age groups represents slightly less than 1/5 (18.5 per cent) and in rural areas nearly ¼ (23.8 per cent).

European scholars of victimology unanimously allocate elderly people to one of the most vulnerable groups of individuals having a higher likelihood to suffer from victimization of various nature. The case of Lithuania can be singled out in that besides the increased cases of brutal victimization throughout Lithuanian villages and granges, the rights of elderly people are breached in the

¹ Note: elderly person – person who is 60 years old or older.
sphere of work, health insurance, provision of goods and services. Therefore, the elderly confront a plethora of issues which are not only left unsolved, but are even being aggravated.

The rights of elderly people in Lithuania are not distinguished as a priority area, although the public opinion poll conducted by HRMI in 2004 showed that elderly people as a social group are experiencing the most severe discrimination. Such an opinion was expressed by 26.5 per cent of respondents [8].

Another national survey conducted in 2004 showed that 40.5 per cent of respondents evaluated the right of elderly people to social protection as poor or very poor, while 34.5 per cent thought that the issues of the aforementioned age group in Lithuania receive little or very little care. What should also be mentioned is that 43.6 per cent of respondents do not know where to report a breach of elderly people’s rights [11].

The **aim of this work** was to evaluate the impact of victimization on elderly people throughout Lithuanian villages and granges and to submit proposals which could improve a social and legal protection of these victims in Lithuania. This article is based on official statistics (presented by IT and Communications Department under Ministry of Interior, Statistics Lithuania under Government of the Republic of Lithuania), reports of Police Department, analysis of victimic events published in mass media, judicial investigation, law practice.

Analysis of statistical data of 2004 shows an increase in the number of registered crimes across urban and rural Lithuania.

During 2000–2003, the ratio of crimes registered in rural and urban areas was quite stable, on average 27 per cent of all crimes being registered in rural areas. Changes were observed in 2004, when the crime percentage in rural areas dropped to 24.5.

![Figure 1. Number of registered crimes in Lithuanian cities, villages and granges in 2000–2004 (absol. numb.) [3]](image)

![Figure 2. The number of registered crimes in Lithuanian cities and villages in 2000–2004 (per 10,000 elderly residents)](image)

However, the real situation is that the number of victimization processes of elderly people in rural and urban areas of Lithuania since 2000 has been growing. The data presented in Figure 2 show that the number of criminal activities calculated per 10,000 residents has increased both in rural and urban areas (see Figure 2).

Statistical data of the recent years show that the number of crimes in granges averages 3 per cent of the total crime number in Lithuanian villages (see Figure 1). However, it should be noted that the victimization processes in Lithuanian granges are extremely latent, because elderly people seldom report to the police, they do not trust law enforcement institutions, are afraid of further prosecution or they simply do not have a possibility to send for help.

Here we should mention the relatively positive role of mass media, which, though creating impacts of secondary victimization, allows the public, at least episodically, to see the present day of Lithuanian villages and granges.

On the other hand, mostly only victimic cases related to violent, highly brutal activities, gruesome injury, torture or murder are made public when intervention of law enforcement is inevitable. However, petty thefts, attempts to seize property and similar crimes are often not categorized as crimes by law enforcement institutions. This is an everyday reality of rural life, regarded as common phenomena by law enforcement institutions.

Although primary – statistic evaluation of the situation shows that for the recent years the rate of crime victims in Lithuanian granges has declined, a further analysis indicates that this “improvement” is not related to elderly people who experienced crime.

Data presented in Figure 4 show that the crime victims – elderly people represent about 12.6 per cent of all registered crime victims and the respective crime victims residing in granges even 32.1 per cent. This shows that ca-
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ses of victimization of elderly people in granges are more frequent (2.5 times) than cases of abused elderly people from other Lithuanian areas.

The analysis of statistical data has shown that the highest likelihood of victimization, i.e. the likelihood of turning into a crime victim in granges, is higher for people in their sixties and older.

Hence, the data presented in this image shows that 1/3

Table 1. Number of violent crime victims in Lithuanian granges, 2000–2004 (absol. numb.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Violent crimes (LR PC)</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Art. 104, premeditated murder / Art. 129, murder</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art. 105, premeditated murder under aggravated circumstances</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art. 111, premeditated serious bodily injury, infection with disease or causing of illness by other means, Article 135, serious disorder of health</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art. 112, premeditated bodily injury of medium seriousness, infection or causing of illness by other means</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art. 116, premeditated light bodily injury, infection or causing of illness by other means, Article 138, light disorder of health</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art. 118, Art. 149, rape</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art. 225, hooliganism, Art. 284, public nuisance</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art. 227, murder threat, Art. 145, murder threat or threat to cause a serious disorder of health or bullying of individual</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art. 140, causing of physical pain or slight disorder of health</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>46</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other violent crimes</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note:
* January–April 2003 – 128, May–December 2003 – 455, ** January–July 2004. In May 2003 the order of registry of criminal acts was changed, new statistic cards were introduced, etc. IT and Communications Department under Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Lithuania, data by individual query.

IT and Communications Department under Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Lithuania, data by individual query.

4 IT and Communications Department under Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Lithuania, data by individual query.

Note: "third" age – 60–79, "fourth" – 80 and older.

Note: Numeric order of articles is provided in accordance with Criminal Codes dated 1964 and 2000. IT and Communications Department under Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Lithuania, data by individual query.
(32.1 per cent) of crime victims in granges belong to the “third” and “fourth” age groups. Meanwhile, there are other tendencies observed in Lithuania when mostly people from age groups of 30–39 years (21.9 per cent (2004)) and 40–59 years (31.7 per cent (2004)) become victims.

It is notable that the victimization of elderly people is distinctive due to its violent nature. Analysis of statistical data of 2004 has shown that among elderly people every fifth victim of crimes in granges appears to be a victim of violent crimes.

It is notable that even “light” violent crimes should be assessed with regard to the physiology of elderly people. As victimological analysis shows, “even relatively light injuries may result in a serious and long-term harm to an elderly victim, not to mention a substantial psychological impact” [7].

The rate of victims of violent crimes stands for around 22.9 per cent of all registered victims in granges, while the total number of violent crime victims in Lithuania is 8–9 per cent. The data presented in Table 1 show that compared to 2003, in 2004 the rate of violent crimes in granges dropped by 1.7 times. However, there was an increase in rapes and premeditated murders, half of which were directed against elderly people.

Analysis of the statistical data has shown that the murders of elderly people among all registered murders account for 12–19 per cent.

In 2004 there were 345 registered murders, of them 15 were committed in granges. Seven victims of the latter murders were elderly people.

Statistical data of the previous few years and of 2003 show that elderly men more often fall victims of murders than do women of respective age. However, the likelihood for elderly women to become victims of crimes is increasing with age, whereas this tendency is reverse in cases of men.

It is also interesting that the same tendencies are noticeable in cases of suicides among elderly people. Analysis of statistical data shows that the number of suicides among elderly people is declining each year: in 2000 there were 352 cases, in 2001 – 348, in 2002 – 344 and in 2003 – 326 cases. However, among external reasons of death rate of elderly people, suicides remain prevailing, with 50 suicides falling per 10,000 people.

Analysis of statistical victimological data shows that in granges mostly property-related crime victims are reported, of which the biggest share is accounted for thefts and extortion victims. Although the number of theft victims has dropped in the recent years, their percentage has gone up among all victims, i.e. in 2003 the percentage of such victims was 59.6 of all registered victims, and in 2004 it reached 65.4 per cent. The same tendencies are also observed in cases of extortion.

In our opinion, cases of extortions in granges, although they are categorized as property-related crimes, should be considered as violent crimes, because in such cases extortions are known as exceptionally brutal, the victim experiences not only material loss, but also physical, emotional, psychological violence, however, this is rarely noted in the classification of crimes.

It is worth noting that the society is dominated by an erroneous opinion about the loss of property by victims in granges. It is often complained that people report to the police on no serious reason, e.g. one or more lost alumi-
num milk cans, a few poultry or a broken door of the house. This is also supported by law enforcement institutions saying that the police investigates “serious” crimes, and officers have neither the time nor fuel or other resources for “petty” law breaking.

However, the presented analysis of statistic data has shown that more than half victims from granges bear a material damage higher than 500 litas.

Analysis of the data has shown that even 28.9 per cent of elderly people from granges suffer a higher than 1000 litas damage, while their main source of income are retirement and social benefits.

Even 2/3 of victims of crimes committed in granges suffer a material damage of up to 500 litas, which would seem to be not an exceptionally high sum of money, although in most cases the said damage for these victims may cause a dramatic or even tragic impact, because such an individual may start lacking financial resources for food, medicine, or other necessary needs. “The loss of economic resources for elderly people is exceptionally meaningful and leads to social isolation, it may increase a likelihood of crime impact and even frequency [12].

### Table 2. The number of property-related crime victims in Lithuanian granges, 2000–2004 (absol. numb.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Property-related crimes (LR PC)</th>
<th>2000</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Art. 271 / Art. 178 theft</td>
<td>536</td>
<td>383</td>
<td>306</td>
<td>348</td>
<td>307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art. 272 / Art. 180 extortion</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art. 274 / Art. 182 fraud</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art. 278 premeditated demolition or damage to property / Art. 187 demolition or damage to property</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art. 279 demolition or harm to property due to recklessness / Art. 188 demolition of damage to property due to recklessness</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other property-related crimes</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Victimogenical factors influencing victimization of elderly individuals (personal and situational victimcity, etc.)

As regards elderly people as compared to other vulnerable groups, one should note that the victims of this category suffer victimization impacts of complex and different nature:

**a) physical – compulsive (violent).** Elderly people, due to their physiological nature, old age, disability, cannot effectively confront the assailants or take protection measures in due time, so they can be attributed to the individuals exposed to an increased victimicity, i.e. the risk, likelihood of becoming a crime victim;

**b) financial – property-related.** Most of elderly people are entitled to receive retirement benefits from the state budget. Such people did not have a possibility to accumulate pensions in private funds, part of them suffered from the great bank crises, lost their deposits, savings, and now they can only enjoy low payments of state pensions. It would seem that elderly people have not acquired any material property, but the bulk of them are the owners of real estate, the price of which is continuously growing; they have restored ownership rights to land, forest, etc. of their ancestors and therefore they become an object of interest for criminals;

**c) social.** The elderly is a social group categorized as “legalized” victims, when people are assigned special, increased requirements not only limiting their rights, but also causing material loss. For example, they are categorized as increased-risk-customers by insurance companies, and therefore higher payments are imposed on them, they may not receive service at all. Besides, elderly people in job market are categorized as cheaper workforce which may accept poorer work conditions, ignore all safety requirements, receive minimum wages, etc.

Elderly people in granges have a specific victimicity influenced by both their personal qualities and the environ-
ment resulting in a victimic situation. People living in gran-
ges due to objective (distant, scarcely populated places or
places in forest, limited possibilities to call for help, etc.) or
subjective (age, physical disability, etc.) factors are secluded
in a specific isolation, and it limits their mobility.

Here are some further factors directly influencing vic-
timization in elderly people:

- When mutual, social relations among residents beco-
  me weak, the feeling of community disappears, and it
  is especially favorable for individuals who earn their
  living by committing extortion in granges. People li-
  ve by principle “my home is my fortress”, as long as
  it is later realized that the fortress doesn’t exist. Single
  people are unable to confront an assailant physically.
  - V. P. was sentenced because on December 11, 2001,
    at around 22.00, having broken the door window
    and unhooked the door, entered the residential hou-
    se of E. G., used physical violence against the vic-
    tim and deprived her of a possibility to confront by
    locking her away in a room, seized private proper-
    ty: money, watch “Wostok”, other small things and
    various food products and in this way incurred a
    damage of LTL 132.47 for the victim. The sentenced
    person was aware of the fact that the victim was
    of elderly age, hearing-impaired, frequently hospi-
    talized due to her illnesses (criminal case No. 2K-
    49/2003).
  - V. T. was sentenced because on December 16, 1999
    at around 5.00 in village of Dargiai, Mažeikiai re-
    gion, being under the influence of alcohol, repeti-
    tively, having made a previous arrangement in a
    group with N. U., with the intent to seize the prop-
    erty of E. S., with N. U. keeping a watch, V. T. wear-
    ing a mask on his face, broke the glass of the window
    of the residential house of E. S. and entered the house,
    grabbed E. S. on the neck and in this way deprived
    her of a possibility to confront, demanded money,
    but having failed to receive it attempted by way of
    extortion to seize property – a Gold Star, TV set, va-
    lued LTL 1200, but did not complete the crime as
    other people came from outside, and V. T. ran away.
    During the prosecution it has been established that
    the defendant before entering the flat had been in-
    formed by N. U. that the flat was resided by an el-
    derly woman (criminal case No. 2K-76/2001).

- Elderly people are suspicious, distrustful and full of
  different substantiated and non-substantiated phobias.
  What should also be mentioned is that elderly people
  who once have lost their deposits are full of distrust
  and are reluctant to keep their money in banks. Fur-
  thermore, withdrawal of cash in little towns is also com-
  plicated: there are no ATMs, it is not cheap to travel to
  larger cities, in separate cases it is physically difficult,
  in case they travel all that way the whole sum is usu-
  ally withdrawn. This is what attracts robbers. These and
  many other issues are beyond the imagination for re-
  sidents of cities, although they are extremely painful
  for village people;

- Elderly villagers do not tend to install security measu-
  res, they are reluctant to use mobile phones, etc., they
  find it difficult to learn using contemporary informa-
  tion technologies.

People of senior age find it difficult to ensure physi-
  cal security, they mostly become victims of thefts from
  residential and non-residential houses, extortions, various
  bodily injuries or even murder. Crimes against these peop-
  le are exceptional due to their brutality, they are tortured
  for several days, slowly cut, smothered or injured in ot-
  her ways.

  - On January 23, 2004, at around 20.00, in Pagėgiai
    municipality, Miniotai village, the house of O. J.
    (born 1921) on unhooking the wooden latch of the
door, was entered by two young men. The intruders
tied up the owner of the grange, glued her mouth
with a scotch tape and, as they threatened by knife,
took 5 euros and 2900 litas.

  - On August 28, 2002, Police Department of Vilka-
    viškis region police detained and took into custody
    young men aged 15, 16 and 17. The detainees are
suspected of murder of P. D. (born 1927), whose
corpse, with face beaten up, marks of torture, mul-
tiple knife stabs was found on August 18 in his own
house, Dumčiai village. Taken from reports of Po-
lice Department [10].

Most of these crimes are committed by a group of peo-
ple, i.e. by 2–5 individuals (prepared, masked, armed with
knives, shotguns, etc.), while confrontation of the elderly
people is hardly possible.

On the other hand, crimes are committed in a primiti-
ve manner, with criminals being asocial people who take
anything what happens to be in their way. There are ca-
ses when a victim is harmed without a purpose of getting
money but out of sadist, hooliganist motives.

  - On March 15, 2004, 12.00, the Police Department of Ša-
    kiai region was visited by S. J. (born 1928) who decla-
red that on March 14, at 18.30, having broken the glass
window, her house in Juodapėnai village was broken into by a young man who demanded a hen or 10 litas. The woman gave him 5 litas and the assailant ran away. The material loss – 155 litas. The suspect – V. R. (born 1984) has been taken to custody.

- On November 14, 2003, the Police Department of Zarasai region received a report that on November 11, at around 19.00, in Zarasai region, Bernotiškiai village, the house of I. S. (born 1921) was broken into by three men, after having broken the window above the door. The assailants beat up the landlord residing in the grange and took medicine and food products. The material loss is being calculated [10].

What is also mentioned is that in cases of investigated crimes, the role of victim and criminal are often inverted, i.e. when a potential or existing victim trying to defend himself or a relative, becomes an actual criminal.

- On August 8, 2004, at 2.30, in Jurbarkas region, Skliausčiai village (grange), the owner of a house J. A. (born 1936), trying to defend himself from robbers, shot once into the air from a IŽ 16th caliber flat-barreled hunting rifle (permission for self-defense issued). At the same time the men started approaching J. A. and therefore he shot another shot towards the approaching people. As a result, the injured L. Ž. (born 1957) (shot wounds in the abdomen, hand and chest), who died in the hospital the same day at 8.20 from the received injuries (this man was first sentenced when during service he raped and murdered a young woman, and four years ago – when in Eržvilkas local government, Openiškiai village, using a knife, he stabbed and robbed E. G., aged 80). The second man who was under the influence of alcohol (1.67 prom. alcohol) A.M. (born 1975) and J. A. after the interrogation were released. The weapon was confiscated from J. A, a criminal case was started regarding a murder in the state of intense excitement, mental examination was prescribed [1].

- Victims residing in granges in some cases do not get any help from the police. As mentioned before, a timely help is aggravated by objective circumstances: large distance, because granges are often remote from settlements, roads are in a very poor condition, the lack of technical means, etc. The effectiveness of police work is often subject to a prompt reaction to calls and the duration of trip to the site. In 2001, officers of Personnel Service of the Police Department under Ministry of Interior carried out a public opinion poll which resulted in the following figures: there were 72.7 per cent of cases when police officers arrived at the scene of crime in 10–30 minutes; 14.7 per cent – in 1 hour; 6.1 per cent – in 1–2 hours; 2.4 per cent – in 3–12 hours; in 4.1 per cent of cases the police failed to arrive. Half of the respondents who indicated that the police officers failed to arrive lived in rural areas [9].

- Victims from granges remain beyond activities of law enforcement institutions and also beyond the interest of the non-governmental sector. There are no non-governmental organizations in Lithuania, which instead of addressing only general gerontological issues would also focus on the issues of elderly people who become victims of crimes.

It should be mentioned that the Government of the Republic of Lithuania on April 14, 2003 passed a decision No. 477 approving “The Program on Improvement of Safety of Inhabitants in Rural Areas and Enhancing Work of County Inspectors under Police Department, 2003–2005”, and its implementation was delegated to Department of the Police under Ministry of Interior. The purpose of the program is to ensure protection of rights and liberties of people living in rural areas, public order, social safety, operative and appropriate reaction of police county inspectors working in rural areas to all reports of law breaking. In 2003, in order to implement the program, LTL 3.5 million was allocated (although the actual need was nearly 26 million), of which 2/3 were used for procurement of vehicles and the other money for their maintenance and uniforms of officers. Hence, it is hopeless to expect investments in preventive measures and there is no surprise that the criminogenic situation in Lithuanian granges is growing worse.

- The created and accepted programs are a much welcomed step towards protection of human rights, although there is a lack of real support, effective action. We cannot say that nothing has been done. There were a series of campaigns in Lithuania, aimed at helping elderly people living in granges, although some of them became victimized. For instance, mobile phones are given free of charge, which elderly people do not know how to use and so they cannot get any help. Instead they attract robbers.

Worth noting is a progressive practice of International Police Association, Lithuanian Division, Alytus Subdivision, when free courses for individuals residing in granges, wishing to procure weapons for self-protection were organized. However, on the other hand, the use of a shot-
gun may result in dire aftermath. There have been cases, when elderly people using a shotgun for self-protection are unable of an adequate evaluation of circumstances, and later they are themselves prosecuted by criminal law. One should think twice whether armed security should be a prerogative of law enforcement institutions, or it creates an even higher danger for individuals after both sides start shooting at each other, or there is an attempt to create the model of “wild west”.

Victimization fear of crime victims – elderly people, its aftermath

People are overwhelmed with fear of victimization, i.e. fear of experiencing an impact of crime, becoming a victim of crime. The survey shows that the least part of those who don’t feel any concern live in granges (25 per cent), more of them live in separate houses (32 per cent), even more – in houses comprised of 4–8 apartments (36 per cent), and most of all – in apartment houses (38 per cent) [4]. Besides, people of young age (16–24 and 25–34) feel safe twice as often as people of other age, while people of senior age (45–54, 55–64, 65–94) feel very unsafe twice as often [2].

The fear of victimization is very frequent among elderly people. The fear of victimization is expressed as anxiety, tension because of a possible turning into a crime victim. The analysis of elderly people victimization cases shows that saving of victims in grange during extortion or assault is a matter of coincidence, e.g., unexpected hunters, a neighbor driving by, etc. This has a direct influence on the development of fear in elderly people, which may not necessarily depend on apparent victimogenical factors. An individual starts believing that in case of assault his destiny depends merely on accidental circumstances, beyond the individual’s influence. Therefore, an individual identifies himself with the role of victim.

In most cases elderly people are not afraid to lose their scant property, but what they do fear is torture, injury, and it is the chief fact creating or, to put it more precisely, maintaining the atmosphere of fear.

So, how does the fear of victimization influence elderly people? Sociological research has shown that individuals feel safest at home. The fear of victimization influences not only the mobility of elderly people, but also interpersonal relationships. Fear reduces social activeness of elderly people, old people avoid public places, they move less often, spend more time at home, become isolated. This is quite convenient for robbers who know that the old man is going to be at home, that a mailman has brought him pensions, he did not have a chance to spend it, after the extortion he will hardly be able to report to the police, he doesn’t socialize with neighbours a lot, etc.

What is also apparent is that fear, constant tension, stress have an impact on the health of elderly people, especially on their mental condition. There have not been any victimological surveys in Lithuania to show the impact of fear on the health of elderly people, although foreign surveys may be used as reference. They show that:

• elderly people consider themselves as the easiest and most frequent target of criminals;
• when leaving home in the daytime, not only is there the fear of burglary, but also being robbed at night;
• the fear of victimization is a serious issue as it has an impact on individual’s health, it limits his personal life, creates a social isolation;
• a causality has been noticed between the fear of victimization and assigning of premature care to elderly people [5].

Hence, because of the fear of victimization (real or supposed), elderly people restrict their lifestyle, this restriction having a negative impact on their quality of life and becoming a serious social issue.

Conclusions and suggestions

The analysis of victimogenical situation of elderly people has shown that elderly people are highly vulnerable in Lithuanian granges. These victims receive appropriate assistance or support neither from government institutions nor from non-governmental organizations.

The protection of potential victims in granges from criminal acts is a problematic issue and needs a flexible and complex approach, considering a group of subjective and objective victimogenical factors. The preventive activities concentrate on single measures and there are no systematic, purposeful activities.

We should emphasize an implementation of specialized preventive target measures, with the aim to ensure protection of elderly people and their property, direct work at the scene of crime with potential or actual victims. There is no need to develop yet another program, concept or strategy, there is a need for immediate, constant measures, direct work with an individual.

A more active intervention of local government institutions in solving the existing issues. It is necessary to initiate, raise issues on the duty of children to provide care for their elderly parents. It often happens in Lithuania that relatives start caring only after the death of an elder-
ly person, in need of processing documents of inheritance. Lithuanian law prescribes that parents must look after their children, although it is often ignored, that in turn, children also have respective duties.

The analysis of the situation has shown that law enforcement institutions should act more effectively at the scene of crime. Obviously, the activities of police are very limited when it comes to work in granges, there is a lack of police county inspectors, transport, fuel or even uniforms. It is apparent that Lithuania needs to take immediate actions in reforming the administrative section of police institutions, i.e. restricting work places for officials and transferring them to regions. Instead of increasing the number of officials, there should be an increase in the number of policemen working at the scene of crime.

References

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PAGYVENUSIŲ ŽMONIŲ VIKTIMIZACIJA LIETUVOS KAIMUOSE IR VIENKIEMIUOSE: VIKTIMOLOGINĖ ANALIZĖ

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Santrauka
Pateikiamas nusikaltimų aukų – pagyvenusių asmenų viktimizacijos Lietuvos kaimuose ir vienkiemiuose viktimologinė analizė. Iškeliamos pagrindinės pagyvenusių asmenų viktimizacijos ir jos sukeliamų padarinių problemos. Pateikiamas viktimizacijos atvejų (registruotų) paplitimas bei pobūdis Lietuvos vienkiemiuose.

Analizuojami 2000–2004 m. oficialios valstybinės statistikos duomenys, taip pat visuomenės nuomonės apie viktimizacijos rezultatų, parodantys, jog Lietuvoje nukentėjusių pagyvenusių asmenų teisinės ir socialinės apsaugos situacija yra kritinė. Pateikiamą problematiką nagrinėjama iš kriminologijos ir viktimologijos perspektyvų, kur pagyvenę asmenys priskiriami vienai pažeidžiamiausių, sunkiausiai išgyvenančių viktimizacijos padarinius, socialinių grupių.

Raktažodžiai: nusikaltimų aukos, pagyvenę asmenys, viktimizacija, viktimiškumas, vienkiemių nusikaltimų aukos