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CRIME IN URBAN AND RURAL ENVIRONMENTS

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INTRODUCTION

Understanding crime helps explain its causes and key factors,

Urban and rural environments show important differences,

This paper analyzes crime in selected Slovenian municipalities,

It focuses on identifying key differences and factors,

It also examines the role of the police and the local community.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND/CRIME

- Crime exists in all societies and affects safety and quality of life,
- It includes all criminal acts and socially unacceptable behavior,
- Crime can be divided into types: violent, property, economic, and cybercrime,
- It is influenced by factors such as migration, digitalization, and technological progress.



Urban environment

Urban environment – city environment

- Densely populated areas, economic and cultural centers
- High population density and developed infrastructure
- Greater social heterogeneity
- **Formal** social control prevails



Rural environment

Rural environment – countryside

- Sparsely populated areas outside cities
- Greater connection with the natural environment (agriculture, forestry, farming...)
- Closer social relationships and stronger social cohesion
- Important role of informal social control



CRIME IN THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT

Types of Crime

- **Property crime** (theft, burglary, robbery)
- **Violent crime** (physical assaults, robbery)
- **Economic crime** (fraud, financial crimes)

Crime Hotspots

- City centers
- Transport hubs
- Shopping areas

Crime is spatially concentrated



Municipality	Crime rate by year										
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Ljubljana	29.958	31.529	28.206	27.018	25.167	23.863	22.229	18.245	22.293	23.165	26.911
Maribor	11.390	8.906	7.713	7.299	7.103	7.188	7.573	5.711	5.679	7.078	7.021
Celje	9.615	6.812	6.842	6.210	5.856	6.220	6.600	5.496	6.099	5.939	6.726
Koper	6.182	6.977	4.237	4.269	4.165	3.867	4.249	3.605	3.636	3.895	4.154
Kranj	6.075	5.422	4.570	3.865	4.126	3.327	3.412	2.562	2.672	3.550	4.115

CRIME IN SELECTED MUNICIPALITIES

Municipality	Crime rate by year										
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Kamnik	546,2	367	274,2	245,8	227,2	236,1	261	289	279,3	251,5	229,5
Kočevje	426,3	352,1	393,6	362,7	508,5	418,2	468,9	414,2	425,7	486,8	610,4
Lendava	639,1	530,5	434,6	414	382,5	350,6	314,6	266,1	359,8	344,7	341,8
Tolmin	112,6	96,6	97,5	108,8	104,1	91,2	79,1	76,2	125,1	63,3	97,8
Trbovlje	281,5	207,4	140,8	132,5	181,3	181,7	285	199,1	164,9	143,5	145

Crime rates differ between municipalities

Kočevje has the highest and increasing crime rate

Tolmin has the lowest and most stable rate

Lendava shows a decreasing trend

Trbovlje has strong fluctuations

Kamnik is relatively stable

COVID-19 changed crime patterns

Less opportunistic crime, more domestic violence and cybercrime

Digitalization created new forms of crime

CRIME IN RURAL AREAS

- Common types of crime:
- Property crime (theft, burglary),
- Violent crime (assaults, domestic violence, vandalism),
- Economic crime (damage to farms),
- Environmental crime (illegal hunting, pollution, fires),
- Other (drug production, neighbor disputes, border conflicts).

CHARACTERISTICS OF CRIME IN RURAL AREAS

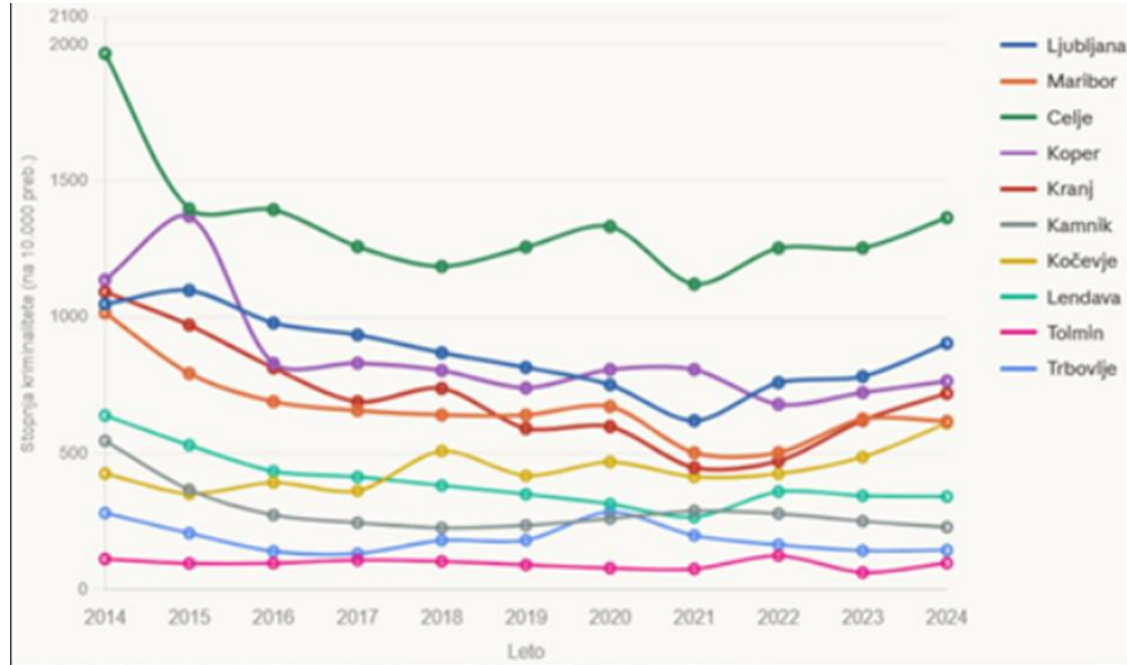
- Crime is generally lower in rural areas,
- Stronger social connections and informal control,
- People know each other better → less crime,
- Many crimes are not reported,
- Crimes can be more serious (e.g. domestic violence).

THE ROLE OF THE POLICE AND THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

- Police play a key role in crime prevention,
- Community policing = cooperation with residents,
- Trust between police and people is essential,
- Police ensure, safety, protect people and property, and reduce fear of crime,
- Local community is very important,
- Cooperation between residents, municipalities, and police is key, preventive programs improve safety and quality of life,
- Rural: less crime, more varied work, stronger community.
Urban: more crime, more specialized police work.



DISCUSSION



The time dynamics of crime show general trends of decline and subsequent increase, while differences between municipalities appear in the levels and intensity of these changes.

The map confirms the spatial differentiation of crime: urban areas show higher concentration, where as crime in rural areas is more dispersed and linked to local characteristics.



● Mestne občine (1–5) ● Ruralne/polurbane (6–10) Številka = povpr. kriminaliteta / 10.000 preb. 2014–2024



CONCLUSION

Crime in Slovenia depends on environmental characteristics.

- Urban areas show higher and more diverse forms of crime
- Rural areas have lower crime rates, but also more hidden crime
- Local, social, and spatial factors play a key role
- Effective crime control requires a locally adapted approach