

Life and Death in the Criminological Perspective

Zoran Kanduč, LL.D., Institute of Criminology at the Faculty of Law Ljubljana, Slovenia. E-mail: zoran.kanduc@pf.uni-lj.si

Modern political power justifies itself as the guardian angel of its citizens. By monopolizing the means of legal and legitimate force (at least formally and at the highest level), it protects them from foreign and internal enemies. The humanist state also safeguards the lives of murderers (if they are not of the terrorist kind), for it refuses to use the death penalty. Because of the extreme respect of human existence in its "naked" or biological form, the state does not concede the individual's right to euthanasia and assisted suicide. Disavowal of the right to autonomous, meaningful death is surely cruelty par excellence. In the criminological perspective, the ardent desire of people for the good life or happiness is generally more important than their tendency towards self-preservation. But this, unfortunately, is a very difficult aim. Too many follow it by criminal (legal and illegal) means, e.g. by exploitation, plundering, frauds, thievery, extortion, bribery, and usury, or even by direct or indirect, active or passive, killing of human beings. After all, the well-being of humanity makes it possible to enjoy extremely popular permitted and prohibited psychoactive substances. The purpose of this article is to analyse the most problematic aspects of social control connected to life and death of human beings. It pays particular attention to the blurring boundaries between "good" (socially accepted) and "bad" (legally forbidden) causations of death, and on the criminogenic and criminal ways of pursuing or attaining happiness.

Key words: killing, death, life, happiness, suffering, drugs

UDC: 343.9