

III. Doctoral thesis

CRIMINOGENIC MANIFESTATIONS OF FOOTBALL FANS AND PREVENTION: LATVIAN AND FOREIGN EXPERIENCE

(Abstract)

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Criminology is a branch of science that includes joint research. It is characterised by the emergence of new directions (separation) and this characteristic, which has a fundamental meaning, demonstrates the openness of criminology for active collaboration with other sciences. Critical awareness of new scientific areas implies presence of real social problems, the study of which requires a comprehensive interdisciplinary approach. Hence, the widely known problems with sports of criminal expression and the criminogenic potential, indicate timeliness and regularity of the scientific identification of the criminology of sport.

Sports criminology is a new field of criminology that studies criminological aspects of sports industry: development of crime and other offenses in sports; factors influencing crime and other offenses in the field of sport; personality of the offender (athletes, sports specialists and employees, visitors); peculiarities of victimology in the implementation of sports events; criminological policy in the field of sports.

The main task of sports criminology is to study criminalisation processes in the field of sports and develop measures for their prevention.

Contents of sports criminology:

1. theories and methods of sports criminology research;
2. offenses in the field of sports and limits of their criminological research;
3. determinants of offenses in the field of sports;
4. personal characteristics of a person committing a crime or other offense in the field of sport;
5. mechanism of interaction between the offender and his victim in the commission of crimes or other offenses in the field of sports;
6. prevention of crime and other offenses in the field of sports.

The 20th century introduced many adjustments in all areas of human life from the basic principles of family formation to everyday entertainment, which created new social phenomena. One such phenomenon is the subculture of football fans, the active growth of the degree of criminalisation of which is observed today. Mass riots, group disorder, acts of vandalism and violence often occur in and around stadiums.

Topicality of the theme. The struggle with disorder in sport competitions has become a European problem since last century. The starting point for this problem can be seen in the collisions of sports fans at the stadium “Heysel” in Belgium in 1985, which resulted in death of 39 people and more than 600 injured¹. As UEFA points out, about 46 % of football matches are followed by incidents, a quarter of which can be judged to be serious or critical; between 2013 and 2015, the number of disciplinary proceedings against the state or its team has increased by 64 %², which means that previous measures to prevent and combat irregularities have not been effective.

In the event of a disorder, sporting events have existed continuously, but their modern modification is very specific – more outspoken and coordinated previously in a riot organisation. Democratisation and promotion of football in all layers of society have rendered the stadium an area in which social conflicts are formed in a particularly pronounced form.

It should be noted that football fans are becoming more and more organised each year and are trying to dictate their terms not only to FC, but also to the

1. Coslett, P. 2013. Heysel disaster. *BBC*. Liverpool Web site. http://www.bbc.co.uk/liverpool/content/articles/2006/12/04/local_history_heysel_feature.shtml

2. Bengtsson, H. 2016. Football violence on the rise again: UEFA disciplinary actions up 64 % in two years. *The Guardian*.

<https://www.theguardian.com/football/datablog/2016/jun/18/football-violence-on-the-rise-again-uefa-disciplinary-actions-up-64-in-two-years>

society itself. Over the last five years, there have been cases in the world where football fans became involved in the government's overthrow process or the introduction of a new political regime. For example, on May 1, 2014, the lead researcher at Harvard University, Dmitry Gorenburg, published his analysis with two Ukrainian national maps, paying particular attention to who controlled the public administration in the course of Euromaidan.³ One of the maps shows that,⁴ in most parts of Ukraine, the public administration was controlled by the support of football fans. In the same year, in Cologne, football fans who did not hide their neo-Nazi ideology, caused collisions with the police representatives during demonstrations against conservative Islamic nationals (salafites)⁵. In personal contacts with Luca Guglielminetti, a member of the European Commission expert group of Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN), the author has learned that Italy has a similar tendency, also gaining confirmation that there are many football fans among extreme right extremists.

The author draws attention to the fact that the problem of neo-Nazi protests in the Baltic states does not exist, which does not make the problem less topical in the region. This is evidenced, for example, in January, 2015 by a vast protest by the fans of the Lithuanian FC Gargždai "Banga" in the city square held to invite the District Council to vote for the Russian investors expulsion from the club.⁶ As a result of the protests, the Klaipeda district Council, with 24 out of 26 votes decided to exclude Russian investors from the list of club owners. As the portal nra.lv tells, a hundred and a half people (football fans) expressed their opinion in the city square.⁷

The illegal behavioural problem of other country fans is relevant in Latvia.

3. Gorenburg, D. 2014. Opposition in Ukraine: A tale of two maps. *PonarsEurasia*. <http://www.ponarseurasia.org/article/opposition-ukraine-tale-two-maps>

4. Gorbachov, S. 2014. Who controls local State administration. *Facebook*. <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=850763154938797&set=pb.100000153610067.-2207520000.1398887460.&type=3&theater>

5. LETA. 2014. Pret islāmistiem vērstā demonstrācija Ķelnē izvēršas vardarbībā (Eng. The anti-Islamist demonstration in Cologne is escalating into violence). *Leta.lv*. Ziņas: Ārzemēs.

http://www.tvnet.lv/zinas/arvalstis/532640-pret_islamistiem_versta_demonstracija_kelne_izversas_vardarbiba

6. 2015. Lietuvas futbola kluba fani protestē un padzen krievu investorus (Eng. Fans of the Lithuanian football club are protesting and driving out Russian investors). *Nra.lv*. <http://nra.lv/sports/futbols/133483-lietuvas-futbola-kluba-fani-proteste-un-padzen-krievu-investorus.htm>

7. 2015. Lietuvas futbola kluba fani protestē un padzen krievu investorus (Eng. Fans of the Lithuanian football club are protesting and driving out Russian investors). *Nra.lv*. <http://nra.lv/sports/futbols/133483-lietuvas-futbola-kluba-fani-proteste-un-padzen-krievu-investorus.htm>

Its vivid affirmation happened in Liepaja stadium on 11 July, 2019, during a qualification game of UEFA European league between FC “Liepaja” and FC “Dinamo Minsk”. In the 88th minute of the game, several fans of the Belarusian team broke through the barriers and guards’ created chain, running into the field⁸. The necessity and relevance of a thorough study of the criminogenic manifestations of football fans is also confirmed at the national level by the fact that the FC “Liepaja” director and the policemen obviously did not have sufficient information on the leading views and goals of the FC “Dinamo Minsk” fan group.⁹ The author has been examining the criminogenic manifestations of football fans for more than 10 years. Having regularly followed majority of European closed football fans’ forums, it was confirmed that the situation in Liepaja did not surprise most European fans. For example, the following comments were made on the events in restricted access website:

1. They're football hooligans, it could be expected.
2. “Dinamo Minsk” fans for a long time boycotted, supporting an illegally convicted “Puma” (football fan). It’s their first trip, it could be expected.

It is, therefore, evident that the FC management did not carry out the necessary preparatory work and preventive measures.

In the past decade, football fanaticism has evolved quite rapidly in the world, and it has undergone many different changes. However, this research object has not caused serious scientific interest among Latvian sociologists and criminologists, although in Europe this phenomenon has long been studied. However, the author assumes that learning from the mistakes of others can prevent their own ones. Therefore, it is useful to pay attention to this social phenomenon, to study it before it starts creating serious problems for Latvian population.

Lack of legal frameworks in national and European sports policy is also a matter of topicality of the thesis. The sport industry is self-regulating, thus this situation has led to a high degree of legal uncertainty, as it is unclear to what extent sport organisations are entitled to act autonomously and which should be the case of a European or national Regulator’s intervention. In the light of the foregoing, the author justifies the need to investigate the criminogenic manifestations of football fans’ groups, to determine their place in the environment of criminogenic processes and phenomena, and to examine their specific nature and characteristics.

8. 2019. Video: The Liepaja disorder is in the football fans of Minsk “Dinamo”. *Delfi.lv*. Delfi Sports <https://www.delfi.lv/sports/news/futbols/video-liepaja-nekartibas-sariko-minskas-dinamo-futbola-fani.d?id=51272295>

9. 2019. Video: The Liepaja disorder is in the football fans of Minsk “Dinamo”. *Delfi.lv*. Delfi Sports <https://www.delfi.lv/sports/news/futbols/video-liepaja-nekartibas-sariko-minskas-dinamo-futbola-fani.d?id=51272295>

The novelty of the doctoral thesis. Based on traditional criminological theories and their sub-theories (sociological theory and socio-psychological theory of crime)¹⁰, the author has developed a study on the criminogenic manifestations of football fans. A structured approach to the criminological study of the criminogenic manifestations of football fans as a social legal phenomenon should be considered a significant benefit of the dissertation. The research is an investment in Latvian legal science, as it includes:

- 1) scientifically proven existence of separate content element of sports criminology;
- 2) identification of the mechanism of forming an informal football fan group;
- 3) scientifically proven existence of elements of the football fan subculture, which form the definition of the football fan subculture and determine their place in the criminal subculture;
- 4) a classification of football visitors, indicating the differences between them in general and their separate groups;
- 5) a criminological portrait of a modern football fan;
- 6) systematic study of factors that influence the criminogenic manifestations of football fans;
- 7) proposals for the improvement of preventive measures for illegal offenses, using the model of inter-institutional cooperation for this purpose.

The aim of the doctoral thesis is to develop a study, including a theoretical and practical complex on the criminological problems of the criminogenic manifestations of football fans, as well as to provide proposals for their solution.

The tasks of the doctoral thesis:

1. Explore football fans as a criminological study object.
2. Investigate the criminological character of the types of criminogenic manifestations of football fans.
3. Identify key directions for general and special prevention.
4. Identify problems and make proposals for their solution.

The object of the study is criminogenic manifestations of football fans as a criminological phenomenon.

The subject of the study is criminological aspects of the criminogenic manifestations of football fans: the state of affairs and tendencies, the research of football fans who commit an offense; identification of determinants that govern the criminogenic manifestations of football fans in Latvia and abroad.

10. Ķipēna, V. un Vilks, A. 2004. Kriminoloģija. Rīga: Nordik

Scientific research questions:

1. What are the mechanisms for the formation of a football fan association?
2. What is the criminological profile of a football fan?
3. What is the criminogenic potential of fans' subculture?
4. What measures are necessary for general and special prevention of football fans' unlawful activities?

Theoretical base of the study is the Latvian and foreign scientific research papers in **criminology**: R. Agnew, G. Armstrong, J. Baumanis, P. Backshall, D. Bodin, A. Tsoukala, M. Doidge, J. Kaufman, A. Kipane, S. Kirby, I. Kronberga, A. Vilks, A. Matvejevs, V. Voins, C. Lombroso, M. Lyman, P. Marsh, G. Pearson, G. Potter, J. Smolik, R. Spaaij, V. Burlakov (В. Бурлаков), A. Dolgova (А. Долгова), N. Kropachev (Н. Кропачев), A. Meitin (А. Мейтин); **criminal law**: S. Kaija, U. Krastiņš, I. Ponkin, (И. Понкин); **sports law**: R. Siekmann; **sociology**: R. Giulianotti, M. Guschwan, P. Leeson, M. Neill, H. Skott–Myhre, N. Smokoviti; **philosophy**: I. Vedins, J. Ortega y Gasset; **psychology**: G. Le Bon, C. Hollin, M. Melnick, G. Pease, G. Russell, D. Wann, J. Antonian, (Ю. Антонян), S. Vagadirova, (С. Багадирова), A. Gizulina, (А. Гизулина), V. Dikhor, (В. Дихорь), A. Jurina, (А. Юрина). Unless otherwise stated, all citations in the work are translated by the author.

The legal basis for the study is international conventions, acts of the European Parliament and the Council of Europe, Latvian and foreign laws.

The empirical basis for the study is official statistical data on the state and dynamics of delinquency, the quantitative and qualitative characteristics of delinquent offenses by football fans. Practical national and foreign experience was gathered from semi-structured interviews with leading specialists in football security. The author also carried out an unstructured interview with a representative from national movement "Ultras" on the internal features of the football fans' subculture.

In order to criminologically describe football fans who break the law, the author used a specially designed questionnaire, which was initially approbated in the lecture of the doctoral programme. In order to facilitate the involvement of fans in the survey, the questionnaire was prepared electronically in three languages: Latvian, Russian, English and posted on Google forms. The survey was designed with a one-time response limit, which ensured the reliability of the total number of responses, i.e. the respondent was given the opportunity to participate in the survey only once. The direct hyperlink to the anonymous questionnaire was distributed through a representative of the national movement "Ultras", provided that only fans who had committed an offense, regardless of whether they had been prosecuted or not, should participate in the survey. The obtained results of the anonymous survey are compared with foreign research projects, the results

of which are based on open interviews, surveys, court judgments. In this way, the reliability of the survey results was tested. The target group of the survey was football fans who had committed an offense in the last two seasons. In the period from 01.11.2016 to 30.01.2017, 164 football fans who have committed criminal offenses and/or administrative violations were interviewed. The obtained data is coded and processed using special data processing programmes SPSS and Excel. Statistical analysis was performed using Fisher exact test.

In addition, to create a realistic picture of the Latvian and foreign football fans, the author has analysed and for 10 years researched the available specialised web sites on the subculture of football fans, a large part of the sites is of a closed type, i.e. only available after the site administrator's confirmation about being added to the group.

The methodological basis of the study consists of general scientific methods:

1. **Monographic method:** gathering, compiling and analysing information on the problem of the study.
2. **Analytical method:** discovering the regularities in the investigation problem; the basis for conclusions and proposals.
3. **Historical method:** based on the analysis of the development of the research object, identifying the mechanisms of formal and informal formation of the football fan association.
4. **Comparative method:** provides comparison and analysis; has been used to view the football fans' unlawful activities prevention aspects in the criminological and criminal justice system, in order to make proposals for the improvement of the offences and crime prevention system development in the Republic of Latvia.
5. **Induction and deduction: induction** method is used to produce general opinions and certain relationships from certain facts about criminogenic manifestations of football fans; **method of deduction** is used to logically systematise and theoretically explain the empirical.

Methods of interpreting legal norms: the interpretation of the foreign and EU legislation in relation to the research question, the following legal translation methods (methods of interpretation) were used, such as grammatical, historical, teleological and systemic. **Grammar (philological) method of interpretation** has been used to clarify the verbal content of the legal provisions, based on clarification of the meaning of the words in the regulation. In turn, within the framework of the **systemic method**, the interconnections and interdependencies of legal norms in legal acts related to the sports sector are understood. Applying the **historical method**, the aims of the legislation related to safety issues in the sports sector have been clarified: the origin and background of the specific legal act, the legal tradition in which the legal act is ranked. The meaning of the legal

provisions was clarified by the **teleological method of interpretation** (meaning and purpose). Proposals for solving the identified problems are put forward in the light of the objective of a specific article to be analysed.

Within the framework of the doctoral thesis, three empirical studies were carried out, using both quantitative study methods (questionnaire) and qualitative study methods (semi-structured and unstructured interviews, content analysis).

The Thesis structure is designed to fulfil the thesis tasks, to achieve the aim of the thesis and logically reveal the essence of the researched problem: the thesis consists of an annotation, an introduction, a discussion structured in three chapters, each consisting of several subchapters, a conclusion and the list of literature and sources used.

Approbation and publication of the results of the Doctoral Thesis – the results of the study, presenting some problems and possible solutions, have been approbated at local and international scientific conferences in Latvia and abroad. The author of the study has published **10 scientific publications** on the topic of the research. **Three publications** are published in a scientific paper collection that are included in the *Web of Science/Clarivate Analytics*, the *SCOPUS* and *ERIH+* database.