

## SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF VIOLENT FAN GROUPS AT FOOTBALL MATCHES

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Original scientific paper

### Abstract

The main objective of the research was to study the most important socio-demographic characteristics of violent fan groups at football matches, as well as criminal activities of their members. The authors in the paper have used data from the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, especially originating from Novi Sad Police Department, and from the Section of monitoring violence and misbehavior at sports events, which included a total of 139 members, 18 fan groups, aged 16-40 years. The research results show that in the overall structure of registered members of fan groups, the largest share of adults as well as young adults, who are recruited from families with unfavorable socio-economic status. In terms of other socio-demographic characteristics, the survey results show that members of the fan groups in the highest percentage have finished high school, and that they were unemployed, unmarried and gravitate from the city and partially from suburban areas. In view of their delinquent activities, predominantly authors have found crimes against property and crimes and offenses, which is characterized by a particular method of execution that is dominated by violence and the use of various explosive devices.

**Key words:** socio-demographic characteristics, violent fan groups, football hooliganism.

### Introduction

Football hooliganism in the last decade has shown continuous growth in a number of countries, including Serbia, which is related to provoking riots, disruption of public order, aggressive behavior of fans, illegal possession of firearms, vandalism and confrontation with the criminal law (Milojević Simonović, Janković, Otašević, Bloc, 2013; Misić, 2010; Otašević, 2010; Otašević, 2015b; Otašević, Protić, 2012). This type of violence is not always corresponded to the sport, and can be tied to extremist groups and individuals who do not have a cheering sign, but in our region mostly associated with violence at sporting events (Koković, 1990; 2000; 2010). In contemporary society, football hooliganism is essentially the most related to the position and status of young people in society and their potential environmental and social fulfillment (Koković, 1990; 2000; 2010; Otašević, 2015). Hooliganism in general and football hooliganism, present the issues that are and that will unfortunately be part of our everyday lives. Football violence is only a small part of delinquent youth of the world, because hooligans are actors of many other forms of problematic behavior, which is not just about violence at sporting events, but can involve the usual violence on the street, carrying out extremist groups and individuals, mostly adolescents and young adults. So, violent crime of sports fans in itself sublimates all criminal activity fan groups and individuals, and from that point is not a problem of football (or any other sports) but a problem of violence, or more broadly, social problem (Đorić, 2012; Koković, 1990; 2000; 2010; Ljuština, Amanović, Ljubisavljević & Juvan, 2016; Mille, 1997). Within The Serbian scientific theory mostly we encounter to works with criminal justice and procedural aspects of dealing with the

phenomenon of football (fans) hooliganism, as well as issues of prevention actions (Ignjatovic, 2011, Đurđević, N. 2010, Savković & Đorđević, 2010; Dimovski & Ilić, 2015). In the Anglo-Saxonian literature also we can come to the research from aspects of socio-anthropological and psychological investigation of socio-psychological characteristics of members of hooligan groups (Bandura, Ross & Ross, 1963; Bodin, 1999, Bodin, Roben & Heas, 2007; Marsh, 1978). According to the results of these researches, two key characteristics of football hooliganism exist, which are applicable to all European hooligan groups are: the continuity of a certain behavior, and age structure of the actors. The members of hooligan groups are most often men, aged to 27 years, members of the lower social classes, who cherish the cult of masculinity, and maintain a strong connection to the group. They are characterized by a competitive mentality, and self-assertion achieve confrontation with members of the rival fan groups. The results of the aforementioned studies, which are based on data obtained from the participants of violence, reflecting the socio-demographic factors such as low socio-economic status of the family, poor living conditions, large families, etc. At the same time we can detect a statistically significant relationship between poverty and delinquency, with hooliganism which partly explains the social determination, although all hooligans are not socially depressed individuals, dissatisfied with their lives and with no prospect. Parallel to the bleak picture of the individuals social status, insufficiently involved in society or those belonging to the lowest social classes, these studies reflect the social reality and post warning on a number of similarities in the different countries where the research was

conducted (Bandura et al., 1963). In general, the analysis and interpretation of socio-demographic characteristics impinges on the etiological issues of crime, while on the other hand, their potential links with criminal behavior are complex and usually indirect. That what is meant by socio-demographic characteristics, are the results of a complex and dynamic relationship of personality, environment and opportunity, reflecting the difficulty of determining their importance when it comes to criminal etiological elaboration.

However, the study of the socio-demographic characteristics of the criminal population, represents the recognition of scientific point of view to the criminal phenomenon as complex phenomena (Simeunović-Patić, 2002). Given the importance of studying their own practice and work in this field, we started writing this article through research which was conducted with aim to examine the socio-demographic characteristics of violent fan groups at football matches, as well as the criminal activities of their members.

**Methods**

*Participants*

The study included 139 male participants, aged 16-40 years, a total of 18 members of the fan groups from the area of Novi Sad and the environment, who are fans of football clubs Vojvodina, Red Star, Partizan and Novi Sad.

One of the main reasons why exactly these fan groups were the subject of research, is that the same were recognized as the most influential, the riskiest and most numerous by the Police Department Novi Sad, Department of monitoring violence and misbehavior at sports event.

*Instruments*

All scientific analyzes were performed on data on the number of juvenile and adult person, which were recorded by the Police Department Novi Sad, Department of monitoring violence and misbehavior at sports event in the period from 2011 to the first half of 2016.

**Results**

*Age structure of the members of fan groups*

Age structure observed on the basis of criminal law classification, according to which a distinction is made between younger minors, aged 14-16 years, older minors (juveniles), aged 16-18 years, young adults aged 18-21 years and adults aged 21 onwards. Results of scientific research have showed a statistically significant difference in the age of representation within the members of fan groups,  $\chi^2 (3, N = 139) = 208.77, p < .01$ .

The research results show that out of 139 members of fan groups, only 1.4% belongs to the category of junior and senior juveniles, something more, 20.9% category of younger adults and much more, 76.3% adults category (Figure 1).

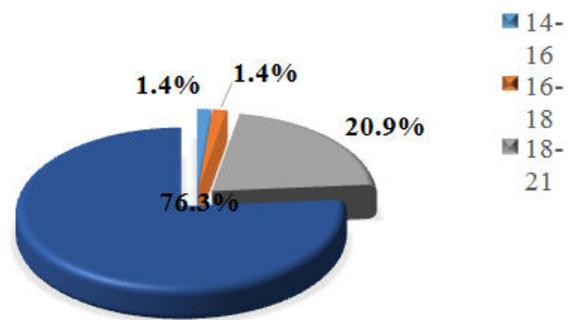


Figure 1. Age structure of the members of fan groups

*Characteristics of the residence*

Characteristics of the residence were observed according to the modalities of the city-suburban-rural area. Examination of the characteristics was aimed to determine the place of residence or the city or areas from which are recruited members of fan groups. Survey results show that the majority consisting of 73.4% of fan groups resides in the city, and that 20.9% resides in suburban areas, only 5.0% have a residence in the countryside, while there are those whose residence address is unknown in the total amount of 0.71% of,  $\chi^2 (3, N = 139) = 186.04, p < .01$  (Figure 2).

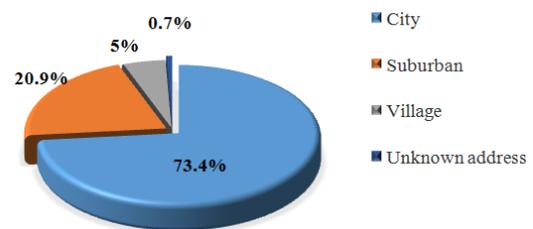


Figure 2. Characteristics of the place of residence

*Level of education of members of fan groups*

For the purpose of determining the members of fan group social position, we have tried to analyze the three types of information, ie. data relating to school education, occupation and employment. The results show that there isn't equal representation of the level of qualifications among members of fan groups,  $\chi^2 (3, N = 139) = 164.57, p < .01$ . Through the analysis of data pertaining to school education, it was found that 0.7% of the population of fan groups were without any education, 4.3% have completed primary school, and most of them have completed secondary education 69.1% (Chart 3).

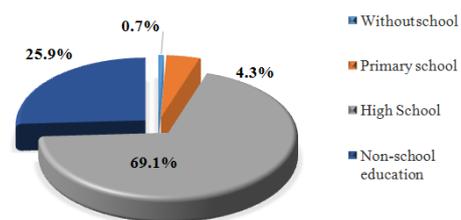


Figure 3. Education level

*The occupation of the members of fan groups*

In terms of occupations, it has been found that there is not equal frequency of the different categories of occupation within the sample fans,  $\chi^2(4, N = 139) = 206.22, p < 0.01$ . The analysis of data revealed that 18% of fans are workers, 5.8% of population are pupils, and 4.3% are students, and that 4.3% (6) of population are without permanent occupation (Figure 4). For the largest share of the sample occupation is unknown.

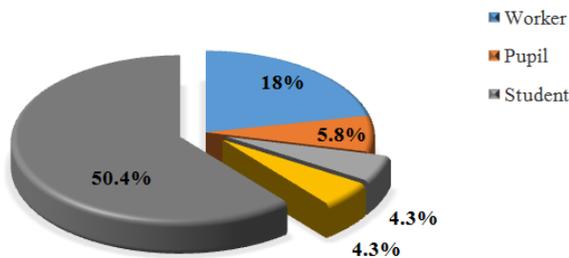


Figure 4. Members of fan groups occupation

*Employment of members of fan groups*

Results indicate that there is not equality between the incidence of certain categories of employment on a sample of fans,  $\chi^2(4, N = 139) = 76.51, p < 0.01$ . The analysis of data related to employment showed that 56.1% of the fan groups are unemployed, 7.2% were employed and 17.3% occasionally season dependently-employed (Figure 5).

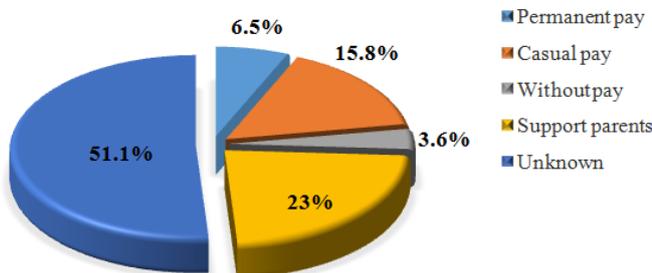


Figure 5. Employment of the members of fan groups

*Socio-economic status of members of fan groups*

Socio-economic status, is not only the result of personal characteristics, but also it is result of the broader social conditions among which are located adult members of a family, as well as the whole family. The most common way of determination of socio-economic status is its calculation in relation to income, the number of employed household members, their level of education, housing conditions, area of residence, and so on. In this study, socio-economic status is determined based on the income of members of fan groups.

The results show that a small number of fans are without income 3.6% or they have stable income 6.5%. Slightly larger number of fans have a temporary income 15.8% or are supported by their parents 23%. For most of the fans there were not available information about income  $\chi^2(4, N = 139) = 100.39, p < 0.01$  (Figure 6).

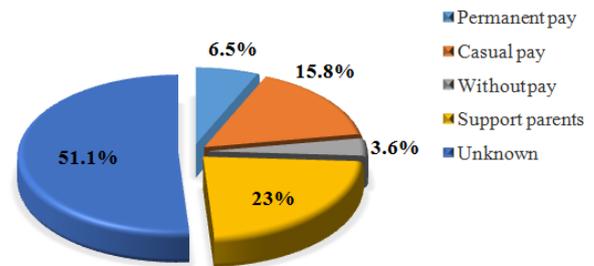


Figure 6. Socio-economic status

*Marital status of members of fan groups*

The research results show unequal representation of categories of marital status within the sample of fans,  $\chi^2(3, N = 139) = 192.89, p < 0.01$ . It turned out that most fans are single 74.8%, a lower percentage are married 3.6%, while only 0.7% are divorced. Consequently, and bearing in mind that one-fifth of fans have unknown marital status (20.9%), we can conclude that the largest number of fans haven't started a family (74.8%) (Figure 7).

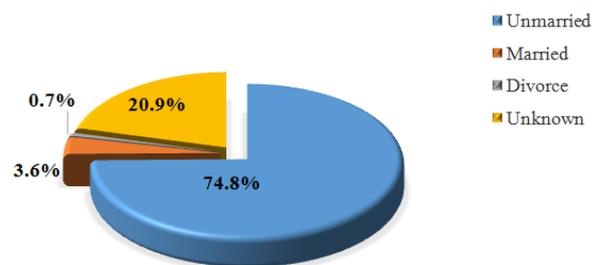


Figure 7. Members of fan groups Marital Status

*The structure of the fan groups by number of members*

On the territory of Novi Sad have been registered a total of 14 fan groups, whose members are cheering for football clubs Partizan, Red Star Belgrade, Vojvodina and Novi Sad. It is also important to note that there is one category of fans who are not members of those fan groups, but only cheering for the mentioned football clubs, which is why we mark them as fan groups of football clubs: Partizan, Red Star Belgrade, Vojvodina and Novi Sad. For the football club Red Star Belgrade fan groups are cheering the following: Futog, Veternik, Delije. For the football club Vojvodina, are cheering fan groups: Liman, Company Center, Red firm sanatorium, G-3, Sremska Kamenica, Bulevar, Grbavci, group Petrovaradin.

For the football club Novi Sad are cheering fan groups: Korida, Korida family and the football club Partizan is cheering: fan group Gravediggers 1970. By the analysis of data on the structure of the fan groups by number of members, it can be found that the largest group of supporters is one of FC Red Star (22.3%), followed by the Corrida (13.7%), Company Centre (12.2%), fan group of FC Partizan (10.7%), Liman (10.7%), G-3 (8.6%), a group of supporters of the football club Vojvodina (3.6%), Veternik (2.5%).

The following fan groups are ones that have the same number of members. These are: Korida family, Sremska Kamenica, football club Novi Sad and Red Firm Sanatorijum (2.9%). At the end there are those fan groups that have the least number of members. These are: Futog, Delije, Bulevar, Grbavci, group Petrovaradin and Gravediggers 1970 (0.7%) (Figure 8).

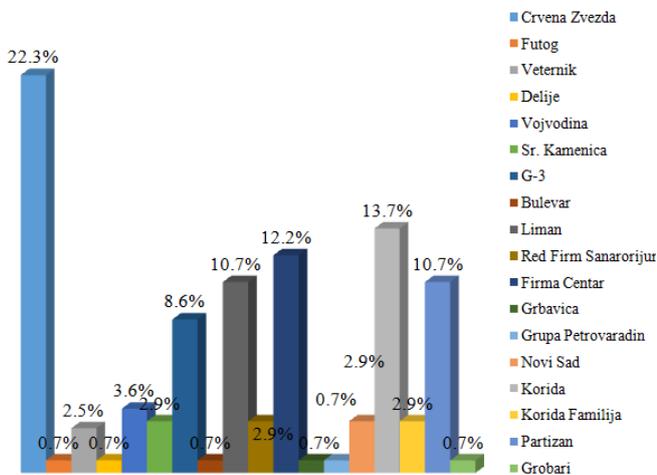


Figure 8. Structure of fan groups by number of members

Accordingly, we can conclude that in the area of Novi Sad as the largest recruiting are six fan groups: Red Star Belgrade (22.3%), Korida (13.7%), Firma center (12.2%), Partizan (10.7%), Liman (10.7%) and G -3 (8.6%).

*The age structure of the members of fan groups as perpetrator of crimes*

The results show that there are differences in the frequency of different age groups of fans who have committed criminal offenses,  $\chi^2 (3, N = 1142) = 1570.36, p < 0.01$ . Most crimes committed by the adults.

A much smaller number of crimes is committed by young adults as well as younger juveniles, and at least by older juveniles.

Survey results also show that younger minors committed 9.1% of criminal offenses, older juveniles committed 1.8% of crimes, young adults 13.9%, while 75.2% (859) criminal offenses were committed by adults (Chart 9).

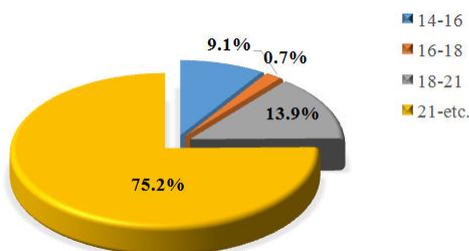


Figure 9. The current number of criminal offenses committed by members of fan groups

*The age structure of the members of fan groups as perpetrators of misdemeanors*

The results show that there is a significant difference in the incidence of certain age groups within the sample of offenses committed by fans,  $\chi^2 (3, N = 521) = 906.36, p < 0.01$ . Analysis of the data also showed that the younger minors have committed 1.7% of offenses, older juvenile have committed 0.4% offenses, young adults - 16.9%, while most violations were committed by adults 81.0% (Chart 10).

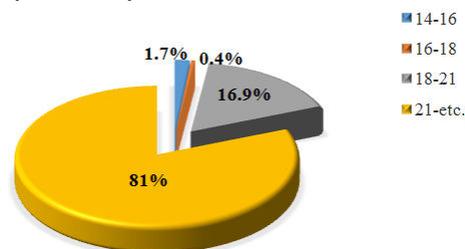


Figure 10. The number of offenses committed

*The structure of criminal offenses*

The results show a statistically significant difference in the incidence of different offenses  $\chi^2 (15, N = 1136) = 2847.94, p < 0.01$ . The analysis of data revealed that, the members of fan groups have committed 40.4% theft and aggravated theft, 15.7% robbery and aggravated robbery, 11.8% bullying, 8.1% drugs related crimes, 5.7% severe injuries, 2.7% attacks on authorized official, 2.6% fight, 1.8 offenses of illegal possession of weapons, 1% vehicle theft and endangering security, 0.8% of criminal acts of violent behavior at a public gathering, 0.5% of homicides, 0.3% extortion, blackmail and forgery and 0.2% of crimes of domestic violence (Chart 11).

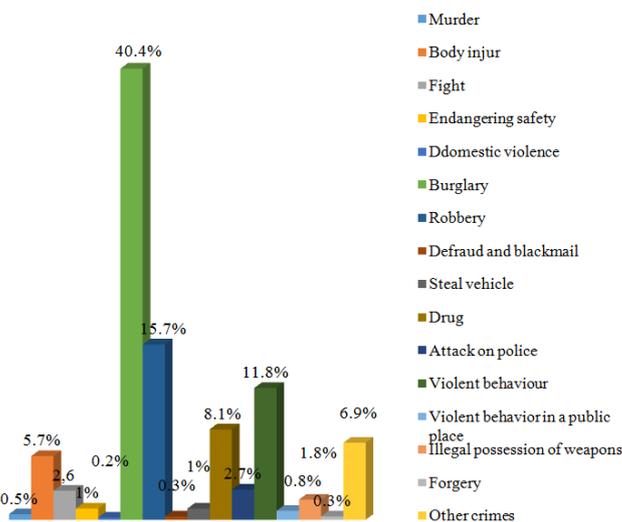


Figure 11. Structure of criminal offenses

*Composition of misdemeanors by members of fan groups*

The results show a statistically significant difference in the incidence of various offenses - misdemeanors,  $\chi^2 (9, N = 534) = 566.26, p < 0.01$ . The analysis of data revealed that of the members of fan groups committed 31% misdemeanors,

concerning violations of the Law on Identity Cards, 28% fight, 12.7% of offenses relating to indecent behavior, 8.4% misdemeanors concerning violations of the provisions of the Weapons and ammunition, 3.6% misdemeanors concerning violations of the Law on residence, 3% of threats, 1.5% of offenses related to violations of the provisions of the Law on sports and 1.3% of offenses related to violations of the provisions of the transport of explosive materials.

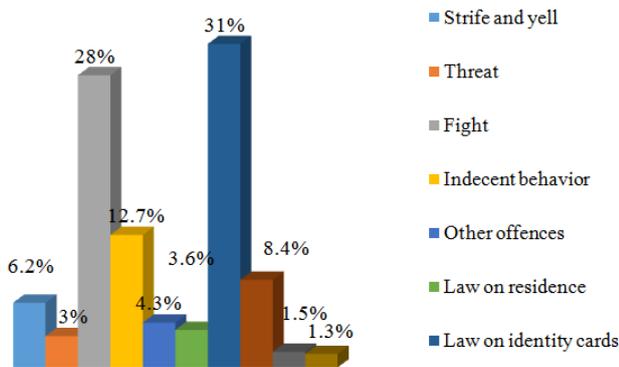


Figure 12. Structure of completed misdemeanors

*Attendance matches by members of fan groups*

By specific examination of this variable was aimed to determine how many members of various fan groups are loyal to football teams they cheer for. This parameter is seen through a regular or occasional attendance at football matches of their favorite clubs.

The analysis of data revealed that the football matches of their favorite clubs, mostly was attended by members of fan groups Korrida (13%), then, the Partizan football club (10.8%), football club Red Star (7.9%), fan group G-3 ( 6.5%), Liman (5%), Company Centre (4.3%), Korida family (3.6%), fans of the football club Novi Sad and Vojvodina (2.9%). Presented were followed by fan groups Veternik, Red firm sanatorium, Sremska Kamenica (1.4%) and at the end fan groups Futog, Delije, Bulevar, group Petrovaradin and Gravediggers 1970 (0.7%).

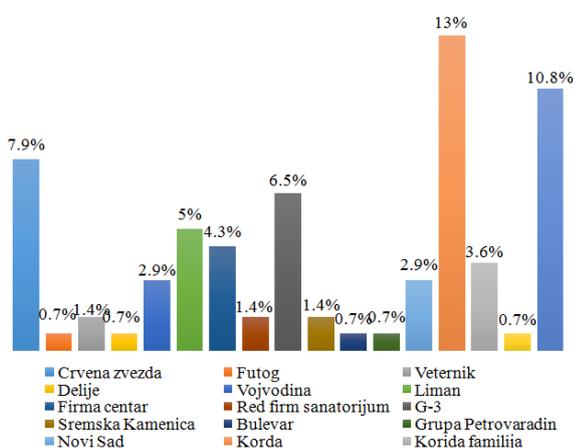


Figure 13. Attendance matches fan groups matches

**Discussion**

Based on the above it can be concluded that the overall structure of registered members of fan groups, has the largest shares of adults, as well as the participation of young adults, while a smaller percentage of participation was consisted of minors. Most members of fan groups are recruited from Novi Sad and some suburban areas such as Futog, Veternik, Sremska Kamenica, Petrovaradin, Bukovac and Kach, while a smaller percentage were registered in rural areas. In terms of education, the structure of registered members of fan groups have the largest share of persons who have completed high school, while a much smaller percentage of those who have completed primary school or do not have any kind of school education.

Results of research on occupation show that in the structure of the registered members of fan groups, there is the largest share of persons who are workers, while equal numbers of pupils, students, and those with no occupation. Results related to professions have a certain correlation with the results achieved in terms of employment. The largest number of registered members of fan groups are unemployed, while much less are those who are employed or work occasionally ie. seasonal. Data on socio-economic statuses are also in correlation with data regarding employment, since the largest number of fan groups are from middle or lower socio-economic status, while there was a significant percentage of those who are dependent economically to their parents. With regard to marital status, most of those who are unmarried, or who have not started a family.

According to the Police Department Novi Sad, Department of monitoring violence and misbehavior at sports event, in the area of Novi Sad exists a total of 14 registered fan groups, whose members are cheering for football clubs Partizan, Red Star Belgrade, Vojvodina and Novi Sad, but there are fans of one category who are not members of those fan groups, but cheer for the same. The results showed that according to the number of members of the most numerous, were fan group of FC Red Star, then following them are fan group Korida, whose members are cheering for the football club Novi Sad, and fan group Firma center, whose members are cheering for the football club Vojvodina, following them are fan group of FC Partizan and at the end of the fan group Liman and G-3, whose members also cheer for the football club Vojvodina.

When it comes to the age at which members of fan groups most often have committed crimes or misdemeanors, the results showed that the highest percentage of population represented adults, then the population of young adults, while a smaller percentage in the population of younger and older juveniles. In terms of the structure of criminal offenses, the survey results show that most crimes were committed in the area of property crimes such as crimes of theft, aggravated theft, robbery and

aggravated robbery, then criminal offenses against public order and peace, especially violent behavior, criminal acts against life and limb, such as offenses of grievous bodily harm and murder, crimes related to narcotics, crimes against the state authorities, such as the crime of assault on an authorized officer, criminal offenses against the rights and freedoms of man and citizen, particularly the crime of endangering safety, and at the end of the lower percentage crimes against the economy, such as counterfeiting and offenses against marriage and family, such as domestic violence.

In terms of the structure of committed misdemeanors, the survey results show that the most misdemeanors committed were those related to violations of the provisions of the Law on Identity Cards, where members of fan groups during identification by the police did not have identity documents. Then were registered the highest percentage of fight, indecency, and possession of explosive devices in the form of flares, smoke bombs and so on.

Finally discussed were the issues of attendance and also loyalty of members of fan groups, football teams they love. Regarding this issue, the research results show that the group of football fans Korida, were most regular at football matches of the football club Novi Sad, followed by fans of football clubs Partizan, Red Star and members of the fan group G-3, who are cheering for the football club Vojvodina.

It is also important to mention that in the future representation of violence is very important in one of the future research to analyze property crimes according to the mode of execution, in order to obtain a more complete picture of possible affection to "violent behavior". This finding is significant because the members of fan groups in a large percentage have committed crimes of robbery or robbery, and one of the important characteristics of these crimes is precisely the use of violence in order to obtain financial gain.

In this section, it would be more useful to note that the data obtained from the Police Department Novi Sad, Department of monitoring violence and misbehavior at sports event have been, to some extent, incomplete, especially when it comes to data related to socio-demographic characteristics, for which reason in the article were not processed. In doing so, we think that the same to a greater extent would contribute to change of the results of research relating to the social background, but it is

important to note that each type of record should be complemented by not only information on delinquent activities, but this kind of data, although touching on etiological issues of crime, have a direct and a potential connection with criminal behavior.

Secondly, the main goal of this type of records is that they do not exist because of "statistics", but that they are operational and thus applicable in practice, especially as it comes to the population that is prone to recidivism, the population of causing riots and the public order and peace at sports events, the population characterized by aggressive and violent behavior, vandalism and especially confrontation with the police, and thus the state authorities. In this regard, bearing in mind the special recidivism, in one of the future research it would be also necessary to complete this type of analysis with data relating to the identification of certain patterns of behavior of members of violent fan groups. This question is important because, as criminal behavior depends not only to situational factors, but is subject to the influence of cognitive and conative factors and implies the necessity of establishing certain patterns of behavior, which primarily seeks to explain criminal activity. These findings could be important in the planning and implementation of criminal activities, aimed towards clarifying, control and prevent these types of crimes like every other type of crimes where a greater percentage of recidivism (Baić, Kolarević, 2013; Baić, Kolarević, Gojković, 2015).

## Conclusion

The research has shown that football violence is only part of the world of delinquent members of fan groups, since they are the perpetrators and other crimes that are not related to football hooliganism, such as property ski tort or example. criminal offenses related to narcotic drugs, domestic violence, forgery etc. Based on the survey results, we can conclude that the data on the social background of members of fan groups unfavorable, since most members of fan groups or unemployed parents support them, although they are adults. In this sense we can say that is proof that the etiologic association of social origin and delinquency or criminal behavior, provided that it should be noted that this behavior occurs as a tangle of a plurality of mutually dependent and associated factors of psychological and social origin, and that the material status may appear only as one of the factors that cause delinquency and delinquency.

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## SOCIO-DEMOGRAFSKE KARAKTERISTIKE NASILNIH NAVIJAČKIH GRUPA NA NOGOMETNIM UTAKMICAMA

### Sažetak

Osnovni cilj istraživanja odnosio se na ispitivanje najbitnijih socio-demografskih karakteristika nasilničkih navijačkih grupa na nogometnim utakmicama, kao i kriminalne aktivnosti njihovih pripadnika. U radu su korišteni podaci Ministarstva unutrašnjih poslova Republike Srbije, Policijske uprave Novi Sad, Odsjeka za praćenje nasilja i neprimjerenog ponašanja na sportskim priredbama, koji su obuhvaćali ukupno 139 pripadnika 18 navijačkih grupa starosti od 16-40 godina. Rezultati istraživanja pokazuju da je u ukupnoj strukturi registriranih pripadnika navijačkih grupa, najveće sudjelovanje punoljetnih osoba, kao i mlađih punoljetnih osoba, koji se regrutiraju iz obitelji sa nepovoljnim socio-ekonomskim statusom. U pogledu ostalih socio-demografskih karakteristika, rezultati istraživanja pokazuju da pripadnici navijačkih grupa u najvećem postotku imaju završenu srednju školu, da su nezaposleni, neoženjeni i gravitiraju iz gradskih i dijelom prigradskih područja. U pogledu njihove delinkventne aktivnosti, prevladavaju krivična djela protiv imovine i krivična djela i prekršaji koja odlikuje određeni način izvršenja u kome dominira nasilje i upotreba različitih eksplozivnih naprava.

**Ključne reči:** socio-demografske karakteristike, nasilničke navijačke grupe, nogometni huliganizam.

Received: February 22, 2017

Accepted: March 20, 2017

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