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*(Professional paper)*

## **POLICE MEASURES FOR COMBATING HOOLIGANISM AT SPORTING EVENTS**

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### **Abstract**

The subject of this paper refers to the suppression of increased aggressiveness and hooliganism at sporting events. The use of police force is successful if it is based on a thorough knowledge of local conditions and terrain, and also on quality information about the intentions of fans, strength and composition of the fan groups, as well as the forces that will join them or that support them, in case of an escalation of violence. Police organizations in different countries confront hooliganism at sporting events in different ways. At the beginning of suppressing hooliganism, police forces primarily used repressive measures as the traditional model. When they later found that such measures did not bring adequate results, that in some situations they even encourage violence, they began to implement proactive measures. Obviously, repressive measures have not, nor will they ever be completely thrown out. Instead, they have been complemented by proactive measures in areas where there are no results, or where they are very poor. The objective of this paper is aimed at the fact that each sporting event is characterized by various factors - particular police units may be affected, others may not, but it is important that they are recognized. We used the method of analysis and synthesis.

**Key words:** police, hooliganism, repression, prevention

## **Introduction**

Security at sporting events and the prevention of disorder is not an easy task. The levels of violence that may occur at sporting events are different and they depend on many factors. Police units must consider all factors when planning security at sporting events. Understanding the factors that contribute to violence will help in analyzing the problem, determining the effectiveness of measures, identifying key points where to intervene, and then at the end identifying choices of appropriate responses to violence.

While securing, police forces must take into account that a sporting event that is considered significant may cause increased aggressiveness of the fans. For example, an important victory can produce unrest during the celebration at the facility or on the streets in its vicinity. Quality sporting games can also contribute to emerging violence. If the expectations of fans are not met or their team plays poorly, fans can express dissatisfaction by whistling, throwing objects onto the field, destroying the inventory, or in extreme cases, there may be physical conflict with the players. Also, other factors, such as the presence of alcohol, negative behavior of players on the field, a big crowd at the stadium, and so on, can contribute to emerging of violence.

In addition to having to take into account the characteristics of the facility and the event itself when organizing it, it is important to know which staff organize and provide security at the sporting event. When we talk about staff taking part in the organization of a game, we talk about the police, private security agencies, members of the team management and other auxiliary staff. The staff must be well trained, in constant training for appropriate action when organizing sporting events. The security may be less effective if the staff have not been previously trained in handling such situations. Police staff have experience in such situations, but they also need special training, particularly on the potential points of a sporting facility where they can expect conflict situations because without such an approach nobody can seriously confront hooliganism at sporting events.

## **Theoretical bases**

The subject of this paper refers to the suppression of increased aggressiveness and hooliganism at sporting events. Police organizations in different countries confront hooliganism at sporting events in different ways. The objective of this paper is aimed at the fact that each sporting event is characterized by various factors - particular police units may be affected, others may not, but it is important that they are recognized. We used the method of analysis and synthesis.

### **The traditional model of suppressing hooliganism**

Ever since the emerging of the problem with hooliganism, the police have applied the traditional model of suppression where with the repressive measures and force they seek to suppress violence at sporting events. That's why police units have suffered criticism from the public on a regular basis. Individual police organizations, especially in southern and eastern Europe, as well as in Latin America, have been blamed for the use of indiscriminate violence against the fans (Spaaij, 2005, p. 4).

Police action on the problem of hooliganism often appears to be a simple reaction of the police to the problem that has suddenly appeared. However, repressive measures have often had the opposite effect because the repression of violence does not oppress, on the contrary, it encourages violence. The application of the traditional model by a police unit has many drawbacks:

- lack of communication
- disconnection of activities
- a wish for reinforcing own capacities
- repeating of the activity in the chain in different ways
- the existence of prejudice among professionals
- inclusion or exclusion of others in the process of prevention
- unwillingness to take fundamental part in projects on a long-term basis (Tramošljanin and Latinović, 2011, p. 80)

Basically, police forces base their strategy against violence at sporting events on the so-called "bang" effect, which manifests itself in the desire of the state and its organs to use the influence of legal norms and the dramatic police operations on the day of the event to achieve such a resonance with the public which will stimulate feelings in the citizens that the state authorities have achieved significant results by countering crime in a concrete, visible and effective way. Such an approach, however, has the following disadvantages:

- the measures are short-term
- they have a negligible effect on the perpetrators
- they enable transitioning of perpetrators to criminal activities
- they create insecurity among the citizens
- they do not affect the reduction of fear of crime
- the emergence of a large number of injured people
- spending a lot more money from the state budget
- demand greater engagement of human and material resources of the state authorities to find out who the perpetrators are
- build short-term confidence in state institutions and public safety (Tramošljanin i Latinović, 2011, p. 81)

### **Factors contributing to violence at sporting events**

By analysing each sporting event the police can detect and identify factors that may cause violence or factors which contribute to its development. The analysis should be based on the "triangle of violence at sporting events" (Janković, 2010, p. 132) which contains the main elements of a sporting event. This triangle is a modification of the "crime triangle" (Simonović, 2006, p. 229), which is used in the analysis of problems related to crime. The relative importance of each side of the triangle differs from event to event. By fixing the problematic characteristics on either side of the triangle, one can reduce the likelihood of violence at sporting events. The likelihood of violence can also be reduced by correcting the problems on several sides of the triangle. As some of these factors are difficult or impossible to influence or change, it is important that police units

understand how each of them contributes to the likelihood of aggression.

Every sporting facility is a story in itself and has a number of specific features and characteristics which distinguish it from others. For instance, if the fans are located near the field in a sporting facility, the possibility of violence is greater. It is assumed that it is more likely to come to violence when there is less physical distance between the spectators and participants in sporting events. Also, there is a greater likelihood that violence will occur at sporting events where the noise level is very high, or in the part of the stands that is closer to the sound system, given that it has been shown that in places where the noise is extremely high, there is increased aggression among men (Milojevic and Jankovic, 2012a, p. 317). Higher noise level can encourage the fans to cheer loudly and encourage them to misbehave. Further, if in the facility each spectator has his/her own numbered seat, that mitigates the risk of violence, while in places where the seats are not numbered and there are only standing areas, that possibility increases. An empty space without seats allows violence to first appear in this part of the stands.

If there is violence at a certain facility all the time, its negative reputation can contribute to the emerging of new violence or it can attract other aggressive fan groups that want conflict, participation in fights for the sake of media exposure, or even may encourage violent and inappropriate behavior among average spectators. It is, therefore, not surprising that more violence occurs at some sports facilities than others. If they are left unresolved, milder forms of violence at each individual facility can cause a negative reputation or they can create the impression that the facility tolerates violence or that violence can be expected in it. "Zero tolerance" strategy should be applied to those milder forms of violence - "If during small interruptions of public peace and order there is more of consistent behavior (reactions), there will be that much less serious crime that is happening in the area (surroundings)", (Simonovic, 2006, p. 32).

Formation of violence at a stadium can also happen due to warm weather because it is a well-known fact that there is a correlation between increased temperatures and aggression for both

the fans and participants of sporting games. So, as temperature increases at a sports facility, so does the risk of violence. When it comes to cold weather, the fans drink more alcoholic beverages in order to, in their opinion, "warm up", which also increases the likelihood of aggressive behavior. Besides all of the above factors, when planning sporting events the location of the facility must be taken into account because it is not the same to organize an event at a facility which is located in the city, the city's outskirts, or outside a populated area because there are different organizational problems, starting from public transport, protection of buildings (embassies, banks, shops, gas stations), which may be threatened by violent hooligan operations, etc., (Milojevic and Jankovic, 2012a,p. 318).

All that is mentioned above is about the sports facility itself, but it is also important which event will take place, between which clubs, in front of how many fans, and so on. It is more likely that violence will be generated in the part of the building where there is more male fans, especially younger ones, than in the part of the stands where the sexes are mixed or where there are entire families with children. Also, if there are less visiting fans at an event or they are not present at all, it is less likely that there will be violence. One should always keep in mind that there is a greater risk of violence if there are several different opposing fan groups in the same sporting facility or even several fractions within one fan group. One of the most drastic examples of inadequate police procedures when this factor is not seriously considered in security assessments is the tragedy in Brussels in 1985 at the Heysel Stadium. It seems fairly clear that this tragedy occurred because the police did not adequately conduct proper security assessment of the possible conflict between the two groups of fans.

Inexperienced staff can reduce the effectiveness of management strategies for organizing games. Such personnel are unable to identify potential hazards and cannot react adequately. In some situations, the inadequate response to rising violence may encourage the emergence of violence. Inexperienced staff, although trained, can be tense or nervous in highly stressed situations. Often police forces with their negative attitudes and excessive use of force may encourage violence. Also, the presence of police forces and

stewards can influence violence in several ways. First, to secure a sporting event, an adequate number of police officers and security guards must be present. Second, when planning an event, there must be a balance between the need for visible forces and uniformed members of the police and security, which will affect the viewers in a preventive way, and the excessive presence of uniformed persons that could adversely affect the fans. Inspection of each vehicle passing through the metal detectors, searching each fan and the use of service dogs can lead to increased frustration in the fans and contribute to emerging violence. And last but not least, when maintaining order at sports venues, the effective command and successful communication in the chain of command must be taken into account (Milojevic and Jankovic, 2012a, p. 318).

### **International police cooperation in combating hooliganism**

In the previous part of the text we list the factors that can contribute to emerging violence. Police can influence some of them, but not all, and it is important that they understand that they are present in order to determine how violence occurs. However, police units engaged in providing security at sporting events can take certain measures which may influence the factors that contribute to violence or police measures can contribute to the low intensity of the public order disturbance, especially in international games (Adang and Clifford, 2011, p. 5).

Scientific findings reached by many scientific studies have shown that proactive behavior of all entities, primarily the police, in combating hooliganism in cooperation with the repressive measures provide more effective and more acceptable results than previously exclusive repressive operations (Adang and Brown, 2008). One of the research studies showed that there is a certain group of police measures that contributes to the level of violence at sporting events in such a way to actually reduce the intensity or eliminate it all together. The following diagram shows the police measures that contribute to the reduction of violence at sporting events (Adang and Brown, 2008).

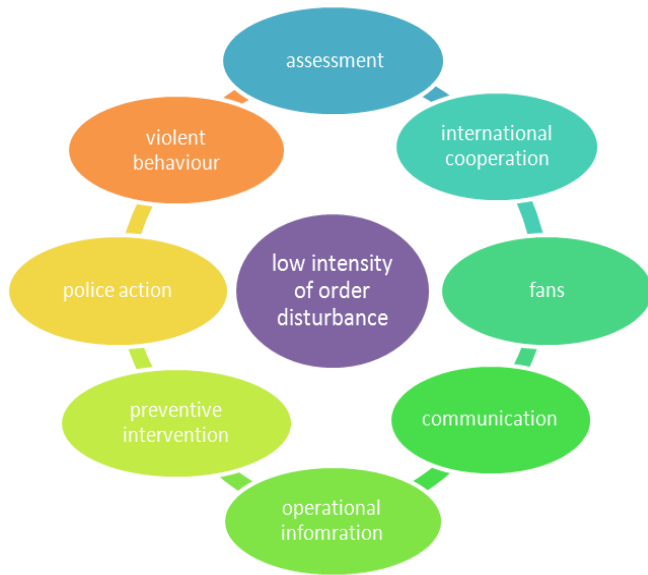


Figure 1 *Police measures that contribute to the reduction of violence at sporting events*

The above eight factors that contribute to the low intensity of disturbance of public order include a high level of international police cooperation. All these factors cannot be grouped together, and we also cannot make a complete gradation from the most important to the least important factors. One can only conclude that the degree of international police cooperation is one of the most important factors that contributes to violence never occurring in the first place.

International police cooperation can help in providing complete security at events through the activities of both domestic and foreign police forces, where each has a specific level of responsibility. Obviously, the primary carrier of police activities are the local police units, but the foreign police are responsible for the provision of information, conducting a risk analysis for their fans, as well as other ways of providing assistance to local forces. The scope of activities of foreign police teams for a specific sporting event shall

be determined through consultation of police organizations (Adang and Cuvelier, 2001, p. 21).

International police cooperation usually starts with a request for assistance to the host country, timely addressed through the competent Ministry of Interior Affairs. In the European Union, such a request must be made at least three weeks before certain international football games, and depending on the level of assessed risk for that game, the deadline should be longer, while for international football tournaments this period is limited to a minimum of 16 weeks before the start (Council Resolution 2010, p. 15). In addition to it being timely, the request must specify the amount of support and composition of the police forces that are needed to help out.

International police cooperation in the field can be done in several ways, depending on the nature of the event that is organized, as well as the needs of the police of the host country, and it takes place in several directions:

- collecting and sharing intelligence about fans
- reconnaissance, spotting and surveillance duty (operational police surveillance of fans from the start of their journey, during the match and after its completion - spotting)
- placing the fans under police control
- communication with the fans (Council Resolution 2006)

The host country has to make adequate preparations for international police cooperation at central, and at the local level (cities and regions where the sporting events are held). In this sense, working visits must be organized for foreign police teams from countries with which police cooperation will be established in order to exchange intelligence, and also to establish appropriate contact and directly meet the participants. Working visits are a very important factor for getting to know the working environment where the foreign delegations will be staying. During these visits, formal and informal contacts are established, which can contribute to a successful international police cooperation. The aim of the visit of delegations is to, at the central level, get familiar with the police system of a certain country, heads of police organizations, as well as with the work of the

National Football Information Point (NFIP), in addition to visiting the cities in which sporting events will take place in order to familiarize themselves with the local police managers and other police officers with whom they will work, as well as with the stadiums where the games will take place and the towns of the sporting events.

This kind of preparation was applied to several major football competitions and the said visits proved to be a great asset in further successful police cooperation. During these visits, in addition to the information received from the host, the foreign police delegations often had recording and data processing equipment (cameras, computers) and collected the necessary additional information on-site (Adang and Cuvelier, 2001, p. 21).

Head of the foreign police delegation team is in every aspect a leader in knowledge, possession of skills, behavior, a police officer with extensive experience in international police cooperation. He must be trained in the field of strategic, tactical and operational techniques in terms of securing public gatherings, especially football games. The leader of the delegation should have high moral and personal qualities and be an example to other members of foreign police teams. He has to show flexibility in working under a variety of circumstances, regardless of whether this is in a regular situation or in a moment when he works under pressure. He must have good communication skills in order to constructively fit in with the foreign police organization and subculture without major problems.

The host country should make the most of the support it receives from foreign police delegations. But before that, the organizers have to provide adequate conditions for the stay and work of foreign police teams. This is primarily related to the personal safety of foreign delegations, the provision of adequate information necessary for their work, an interpreter, local police liaison officers, communication equipment, accommodation, and so on. The 2002 decision was amended in 2007, when it was agreed that each member shall provide its office access to different databases on the "risk" persons, which are mainly found in the possession of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, as well as that member states shall ensure that the offices start exchanging analyses of critical situations that have

occurred at previously held competitions. Finally, it was agreed that each office must prepare a list of recommendations (generated from all previous experiences), which will then be made available to partners via the office's website or upon request (Savković and Đorđević, 2010, p. 20).

National police units in the European Union dealing with the problem of hooliganism increasingly cooperate by exchanging intelligence, especially at those moments when large football competitions are organized or during international games. This concept of police work is likely to be extended to other countries due to the expansion of the European Union, as well as due to the acceptance of such concept within sports associations, which have all started to pay more attention to safety at sports venues.

## **Conclusion**

From the above we can conclude that during the emergence of violence, police use targeted and rapid interventions to quickly make it clear which rules of behavior are acceptable and which are not, in order to prevent an escalation of violence. In all variants of operations, small units for surveillance in regular uniforms are able to easily approach and establish active contact with the fans. There are also decentralized units for intervention (with special equipment, vehicles for breaking up riots, service dogs, water cannons) located as far as possible from the place of gathering of fans or the place where the game is played.

Also, it can be concluded that the functioning of the police is based on the rapid flow of information obtained from the teams in the field or from other international police organizations, with the use of knowledge and experience of foreign police with whom there is cooperation. The ability of a certain police organization and the host country of the sporting event to successfully combat hooliganism largely depends on the support they will receive from other foreign police organizations, both from the countries where the visiting fans come from, and from other countries that have information or experience in the organization of international games. The basis of all

variants of police operations is the use of the "community policing" concept, in addition to the traditional "criminal intelligence/investigative approach". The approach of community policing is focused on the management of events at public meetings through direct and open interaction with fans.

Police forces that provide security services at the games are responsible for preventing and combating various forms of crime within the stadium and assisting the club in its responsibilities relating to security and routing of the crowd at the stadium. Also, their responsibility regards public, property and personal safety outside the territory of the stadium. In order to manage security at sporting events, they have to have previous experience in doing security work and monitoring the fans, proper training and accreditations for that job. What measures the police will take and at what level for a particular game depends on the previously prepared risk analysis. Police prepare a risk analysis based on previously gathered intelligence

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