

# Who are Swiss and ex-Yugoslavian juveniles who have been involved in group fights? Results of the International Self-Report Delinquency Study (ISR3)

ANASTASIJA MONNET LUKASH

*PhD, Postdoctoral Researcher, University of St. Gallen*

AND

MARTIN KILLIAS

*Prof. Dr. iur., Dr.h.c. (Panteion), Lic. Phil. University of St. Gallen*

(

The purpose of this paper is to evaluate the influence of several predictors on group fights, committed by Swiss juveniles with/without immigration background and their peers from ex-Yugoslavia. We found that group fights were more frequently reported by Swiss male juveniles with an immigration background. They are less controlled by their parents, are more likely to have consumed alcohol and cannabis substances during the previous thirty days, have pro-violence attitudes and friends who have committed something illegal. The influence of alcohol within this group of respondents is stronger than that of cannabis as predictors of group fights. The difference between Swiss and ex-Yugoslavian juveniles is not very large. We also found that drinking alcohol, in the form of binge-drinking, has a slightly stronger influence on group fights than cannabis use. This paper also provides trends of group fights in 2013, in comparison to 2006 in Switzerland and in ex-Yugoslavia.

## **Introduction**

The purpose of this paper is to test the influence of several predictors on group fights committed by Swiss juveniles with/without immi-

gration background and their peers from ex-Yugoslavia. We plan (1) to provide the main characteristics of youths who have been involved in group fights and (2) to define whether these characteristics vary among different groups of juveniles depending on their origin or countries of residence. *The inspiration for this paper came from an article by Prof. Courakis (1998) on football violence in Greece.*

Research on football violence/hooliganism has been a growth industry since the late 1960s in Britain, and academics in other European countries have steadily been catching up since the mid-1980s (Marsh, 1996). Two of the three waves of the International Self-Report Delinquency Study (ISRD-2 in 2006 and ISRD-3 in 2013) also partially investigated this issue. Young people in the age-group 12-16 were asked the question (among others), if they had ever and during last year participated in a group fight at a football stadium, on the street or in another public place. The availability of this variable gave us an opportunity to conduct the analysis of group fights, as a manifestation of football hooliganism.

The following findings are the results of the ISRD-3 study that has been carried out in almost forty countries all over the world. Our research group conducted this study in the nine countries of Western and Eastern Europe, as well as Asia/Oceania. This research took place in computer-based form among 12-16 year old students of the 7-9th<sup>1</sup> grades of secondary schools. In this paper we present the results of this study in Switzerland and in the four selected ex-Yugoslavian countries (Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, and Serbia). The Swiss data was collected at the national level, in Bosnia-Herzegovina it was collected in the six regions; in other ex-Yugoslavia countries, the survey took place in the two main cities and suburbs of each country (in 2013-2015). The total number of the effective responses is 12078. The results of the survey in the selected ex-Yugoslavian countries were analysed in the form of an aggregative database.

---

<sup>1</sup> Serbian students from older grades were also included into the database when they had the age of 12-16.

The analysis in this paper was conducted in Switzerland and in the selected ex-Yugoslavian countries. Among the reasons for this selection are: (1) ex-Yugoslavian countries are among the main sources of immigration to Switzerland. (2) In accordance with the results of the second International Self-Report Delinquency Study (ISR2) in Switzerland, there are disproportionate levels of offending among migrants (Killias, 2009, p.33). In the current paper, we (1) compare the above-mentioned findings from the ISR2 in Switzerland with the current results of the ISR3 in Switzerland and in ex-Yugoslavia; and (2) test the influence of several variables on group fights.

To conduct the current analysis, the following variables were selected:

- (1) Substance use (cannabis and binge-drinking, last month prevalence)
- (2) pro-violence attitude (in the form of dichotomized index, where 1= assessing robbery and/or assault as not wrong/not wrong at all)
- (3) parental control (in the form of dichotomized index, where 1= at least 8 out of 12 forms of parental control were reported as “never/ almost never”).
- (4) Having delinquent friends (in the form of dichotomized index, where 1= having friends who have committed at least three out of five offences).

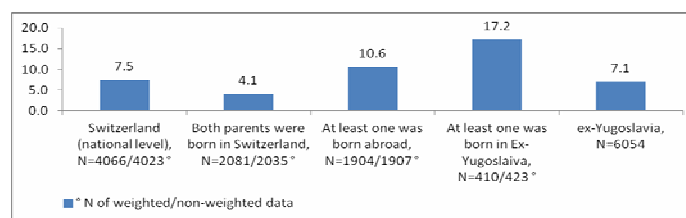
Our database also included other variables (e.g. spending leisure time in unstructured way, self-control variables), but they were not included in the analysis to avoid multicollinearity. Descriptive and multivariate analysis was conducted within the groups of respondents by their origin and countries of residence. In Swiss data, the analysis was controlled by:

1. Having immigration background (at least one parent born abroad)
2. Having no immigration background (both parents born in Switzerland)
3. Having at least one parent born in ex-Yugoslavia.

The multivariate analysis of the entire database was controlled for country of residence (Switzerland vs. ex-Yugoslavian countries).

## Results

This section provides descriptive results of group fights (last year prevalence), cannabis use, binge-drinking, pro-violence attitude, having delinquent friends, and parental control. As a first step, the prevalence of group fights among Swiss juveniles with and without foreign origin was compared. These results were also compared with the previous findings in 2006 (ISR-2).



**Figure 1** Group fights (last year prevalence) among Swiss juveniles with and without immigration background and among their peers in ex-Yugoslavia, in %; weighted data

We found that students with immigration background are twice as likely to partake in group fights. This prevalence is even higher among their Swiss peers with at least one parent born in ex-Yugoslavia. This finding is very similar to those that we obtained while comparing the prevalence of violent offences. This fact, together with an increasing foreign population in Switzerland, has become one of the most controversial political issues (Linder, 2011) and the basis of the theory of “imported violence” (Killias *et al.*, 2010). This finding is in line with the results of ISR-2 in Switzerland (2006), where Swiss respondents with ex-Yugoslavian origin also reported a higher prevalence of group fights, together with cannabis use, violent offences etc. than Swiss respondents at the national level (Killias *et al.*, 2010, Killias, 2009). We suggest that it can be explained by problems with integration into Swiss society as well as by other variables not considered in this analysis.

**Table 1** Prevalence of group fight (last year prevalence) in Switzerland and in Ex-Yugoslavia in 2006 (ISR D-2) and 2013/2015 (ISR D-3), in %, weighted data.

ISR D-2		ISR D-3			
Switzerland (national level) <sup>a</sup>		Juveniles of Swiss origin <sup>a</sup>	Juveniles Originating from Balkan region <sup>a</sup>	Juveniles origi- nating from other countries <sup>a</sup>	Bosnia- Herzego- vina <sup>b</sup>
%	8.0	6.1	16.0	11.5	11.4
N=	2477	2067	357	415	1756
Switzer- land (nation- al level) <sup>a</sup>	Juveniles with Both parents born in Swi- tzerland <sup>a</sup>	Swiss Juve- niles with at least one parent born abroad <sup>a</sup>	Swiss juve- niles with at least one parent born in ex- Yugoslavia <sup>a</sup>	Ex-Yugoslavia <sup>b c</sup>	Bosnia- Herzego- vina <sup>b</sup>
	7.5	4.1	10.6	17.2	7.1
	4066/4023	2081/2035 <sup>d</sup>	1904/1907 <sup>d</sup>	410/423 <sup>d</sup>	6054
				2883	

<sup>a</sup>Weighted data

<sup>b</sup>Non-weighted data

<sup>c</sup>Ex-Yugoslavia (ISR D-3) = Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, Kosovo, and Serbia. Aggregated data.

<sup>d</sup>Weighted/non weighted data

On the other hand, there is a fundamental difference in the prevalence of group fights in 2006 (ISR D-2) and in 2013 (ISR D-3). In accordance with the results of the ISR D-2, the prevalence of group fights in Bosnia-Herzegovina<sup>2</sup> was significantly higher than in Switzerland at the national level (11.4% vs. 8.0%, see Table 1) (Killias *et al.*, 2010, Killias, 2009). As the ISR D-3 found, the difference between group fights rates at the national level and in ex-Yugoslavian countries is modest

<sup>2</sup> Bosnia-Herzegovina was the only selected ex-Yugoslavian country in 2006.

(7.5% vs. 7.1%, see Table 1). The prevalence of group fights among all Swiss juveniles with immigration background is higher than among their peers with both parents born in Switzerland.

**Table 2** Frequencies of independent variables, in %, weighted data

	<i>Switzerland, national sample<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>Both Parents Were Born in Switzerland<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>At least one parent born abroad<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>At least one was born in ex- Yugoslavia<sup>a</sup></i>	<i>Ex- Yugoslavia<sup>b</sup></i>
<b>Pro-violence attitude (At least one out of two offences considered as not wrong)</b>					
at least 1 out of 2 is not wrong at all-a little wrong (in %)	7,6	4,8	10,7	15,4	5,3
N=	4091/4064 <sup>c</sup>	2097/2052 <sup>c</sup>	1913/1930 <sup>c</sup>	417/431 <sup>c</sup>	6128
<b>Binge-drinking, last month prevalence</b>					
1-2, 3-4 and more times per week (in %)	26,0	25,8	25,7	27,2	14,7
N=	4048/4001 <sup>c</sup>	2074/2026 <sup>c</sup>	1894/1895 <sup>c</sup>	407/421 <sup>c</sup>	6048

<b>Cannabis use, last month</b>					
<b>Prevalence</b>					
yes, cannabis (last month preva- lence, in %)	10,3	9,1	11,4	12,1	3,0
N=	4062/4013 <sup>c</sup>	2079/2030 <sup>c</sup>	1902/1902 <sup>c</sup>	407/422 <sup>c</sup>	6054
<b>Parental control</b>					
at least 8 out of 12 forms of par. control were reported as "never/almost never" (in %)	11,8	8,4	15,0	11,8	9,7
N=	4111/4099 <sup>c</sup>	2104/2069 <sup>c</sup>	1929/1952 <sup>c</sup>	421/438 <sup>c</sup>	6231
<b>Having friends who have committed something illegal</b>					
having friends who committed at least 3 out of 5 offences(in %)	15,0	10,7	19,3	19,1	3,7
N=	4123/4092 <sup>c</sup>	2105/2063 <sup>c</sup>	1935/1947 <sup>c</sup>	420/435 <sup>c</sup>	5637

<sup>a</sup> weighted data

<sup>b</sup> non-weighted data

<sup>c</sup> weighted data/non weighted data

The highest prevalence of pro-violence attitudes was reported by Swiss juveniles with at least one parent born abroad, regardless the country. These percentages are respectively twice and three times higher than among their peers without an immigration background. This rate is similar to ex-Yugoslavian juveniles. In this paper, we do not explain the reason for such differences.

The prevalence of binge-drinking is similar in all Swiss subsamples.

Swiss juveniles reported binge-drinking twice as often as their ex-Yugoslavian peers. The prevalence of cannabis use (last month prevalence) is higher among Swiss juveniles with at least one parent born in ex-Yugoslavia or in any other country.

The prevalence of parental control varies among samples and subsamples. Swiss juveniles with at least one parent born abroad, regardless of the country reported the highest prevalence of weak parental control. This rate is almost twice as high as among youths with both parents born in Switzerland.

The percentage that report having friends who have done something illegal is also different among the groups of juveniles. Swiss youths with immigration background reported having delinquent friends twice as often as their peers with both parents born in Switzerland. At the same time, ex-Yugoslavian respondents have delinquent friends five times less frequently than their Swiss peers with ex-Yugoslavian origin.

In accordance with the bivariate analysis between group fights (dependent variable) and the selected independent variables: (1) both cannabis use/binge-drinking (last month prevalence), pro-violent attitude, having delinquent friends, and parental control have a significant association with group fights ( $p \leq .000$ ). (2) In this paper, we do not consider the influence of family well-off on group fights because the relationship between these variables is not significant.

### **Multivariate Analysis**

The following multivariate analysis aims to test if:

- (1) the selected predictors affect group fights differently when the models are controlled for immigration background of Swiss respondents and by country of residence (Switzerland *vs.* ex-Yugoslavian countries);
- (2) consumption of substances (alcohol in the form of binge-drinking and cannabis use) predicts group fights differently among different groups of juveniles;
- (3) all selected variables have a significant effect on involvement in



group fights.

Table 3 provides the results of the multivariate analysis to answer the question, which of the above-mentioned predictors has the strongest influence on group fights. The influence of **parental control** is very similar in all models, controlled for immigration origin. Youths, who are less controlled by their parents, are twice as likely to engage in group fights.

While **cannabis** use affects group fights significantly, the influence of binge-drinking is stronger. Juveniles, who had at least five drinks on one occasion during the previous thirty days, were twice as likely to be involved in group fights.

Respondents, who do not consider robbery and/or assault as something wrong/very wrong (**pro-violence attitude**) are three times as likely to be involved in group fights. This probability does not vary among the models, controlled for cannabis use/binge-drinking and immigration background. **Having delinquent friends** generally does not vary among samples. Juveniles with friends, who have done something illegal, are four times as likely to be involved in group fights. It is interesting to note that, while football hooliganism is perpetrated far more often by males (Spaaij, 2008); boys are only twice more likely to be involved in group fights than girls. Respondents with **immigration background** are twice as likely to partake in group fights if they are affected by the selected predictors.

**Table 3** Logistic regression model of group fights predicted by parental control, pro-violence attitude, having friends who have committed something illegal and binge-drinking, controlled for immigration background of Swiss juveniles and gender. Swiss database, non-weighted data

	<i>Controlled for at least one parent born abroad and ...</i>		<i>Controlled for at least one parent born in ex-Yugoslavia and ...</i>	
	<i>... cannabis use</i>	<i>... binge- drinking</i>	<i>... cannabis use</i>	<i>... binge- drinking</i>
	3864 ,261	3858 ,276	3864 ,255	3858 ,269
	OR	OR	OR	OR
Parental control (1=weak)	2,414 ***	2,314 ***	2,505 ***	2,383 ***
Cannabis use, last month prevalence (1=yes)	1,905 ***		1,827 ***	
Binge-drinking (1=at least once during last thirty days)		2,434 ***		2,295 ***
Pro-violence Attitude (1=considering perpetration of robbery and/or assault as not wrong)	3,191 ***	3,086 ***	3,075 ***	2,992 ***
Having friends who have committed something illegal (1= friends have perpetrated at least three out of five offences)	4,175 ***	4,026 ***	4,518 ***	4,387 ***
Immigration Background (1=at least one	2,077 ***	2,139 ***		

parent was born abroad; 0=both parents were born in Switzerland) Immigration background 2 (1=at least one parent was born in ex-Yugoslavia; 0=all other respondents, regardless the parents' origin)			2,119 ***	2,126 ***
Gender (1=male)	2,217 ***	2,265 ***	2,208 ***	2,256 ***
Constant	,015 ***	,012 ***	,020 ***	,016 ***

\*\*\* p ≤ .000

The following models have the same predictors except for the control variables. They are controlled for country of residence to compare the influence of the above-mentioned predictors not within Switzerland, but between Switzerland and ex-Yugoslavian countries.

**Table 4** Logistic regression model of group fights predicted by parental control, pro-violence attitude, having friends who have committed something illegal and binge-drinking/cannabis, controlled for country of residence and gender (Switzerland vs. ex-Yugoslavia), non-weighted data

	<i>Cannabis use</i>		<i>Binge-drinking</i>	
	N=9424	R <sup>2</sup> =.201	N=9416	R <sup>2</sup> =.227
	Sig.	OR	Sig.	OR
Parental control (1=weak)	,000	2,166	,000	1,894
Cannabis use, last month prevalence (1=yes)	,000	2,411		
Binge-drinking (1=at least once during last thirty days)			,000	3,108
Pro-violence attitude (1=considering perpetration of robbery and/or assault as not wrong)	,000	2,761	,000	2,586
Country of residence (0=Switzerland, 1=ex-Yugoslavian countries)	,000	1,497	,000	1,524
Having friends who have committed something illegal (1= friends have perpetrated at least three out of five offences)	,000	4,199	,000	3,970
Gender (1=male)	,000	3,208	,000	3,256
Constant	0,000	,018	0,000	,014

As in the previous group of models, the influence of **parental control** is similar in both models controlled for different substance use. Youths with weaker parental control are twice as likely to engage in group fights.

**Cannabis use** has a weaker influence as a predictor of group fights than **binge-drinking**. Juveniles, who reported binge-drinking during last thirty days, were three times as likely to be involved in group fights. This probability is a slightly lower among their peers who consumed cannabis (last month prevalence). A **pro-violence attitude** has almost the same influence on participation in group fights, regardless of the substance that was consumed.

**Having friends, who have done something illegal**, also does not vary in models, controlled for living in different countries and consumption of different substances. Youths who have delinquent friends are four times as likely to be involved in group fights. Gender also does not vary among models. Boys are three times more likely to partake in group fights than girls.

Country of residence does not affect engagement in group fights differently, if various substances were consumed.

### **Conclusions**

The results obtained allow us to show the trends of group fights and some characteristics of young offenders. We found that among all groups of respondents, the prevalence of group fights is highest among Swiss juveniles with an immigration background. Swiss youths with at least one parent born in ex-Yugoslavia reported this offence four times as often as their peers with both parents born in Switzerland.

In accordance with the results of ISRD-2, the prevalence of group fights in Bosnia-Herzegovina<sup>3</sup> was significantly higher than in Switzerland at the national level (Killias *et al.*, 2010, Killias, 2009). The results of the ISRD-3 show that the difference between group fights rates at the national level and in ex-Yugoslavian countries is very modest.

---

<sup>3</sup> Bosnia-Herzegovina was the only selected Ex-Yugoslavian country in 2006

Juveniles who reported being involved in group fights are more likely boys with an immigration background. They are less controlled by their parents, reported substance use during previous thirty days, have pro-violence attitudes and friends who have committed something illegal. We suggest that this can be explained by the problems of integration into Swiss society and by the influence of other variables that were not considered in this paper.

The difference between the characteristics of Swiss and ex-Yugoslavian juveniles in the multivariate model is not very large. We also found that drinking alcohol, in the form of binge-drinking, has a slightly stronger influence on group fights than cannabis use.

#### **Future Research**

An interesting area of research to gain further insight into the phenomena analysed in this paper would be to investigate the influence of weak integration into the Swiss society on group fights among Swiss juveniles with immigration background.

#### **References**

- Courakis, N. (1998). 'Football violence: not only a British problem'. *European Journal in Criminal Policy and Research*, 6(2): 293-302.
- Killias, M. (2009). 'Paradise lost? New trends in crime and migration in Switzerland'. *Immigration. Sociology of Crime, Law and Deviance*, May, 13:33-45.
- Killias, M., Maljevic, A. & Lucia, S. (2010). 'Imported violence? Juvenile delinquency among Balkan youths in Switzerland and in Bosnia-Herzegovina', *European Journal on Criminal Policy and Research*, September, 16(3): 183-189.
- Linder W. (2011). 'Multicultural Switzerland and the challenge of immigration'. *Journal of Minority Studies*, 5: 201-225.
- Marsh, P., Fox, K., Carnibella, G., McCann, J. & Marsh, J. (1996). *Football Violence in Europe*. A report to the Amsterdam Group. Social Issues Research Centre. 168 p.
- Spaaij R. (2008). 'Men like us, boys like them. Violence, masculinity, and collective identity in football hooliganism'. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*. November, 32(4): 369-392.