

# **False confessions in criminal proceedings from the perspective of criminalistic tactics: legal, psychological and procedural aspects**

## **Abstract**

The thesis addresses the issue of false confessions in criminal proceedings from an interdisciplinary perspective, combining criminal procedural law, criminalistics, and forensic psychology. It focuses both on cases where the accused confesses voluntarily and on situations where a confession results from external pressure, inappropriate interrogation techniques, or manipulative approaches. The thesis distinguishes between different types of false confessions, drawing primarily on the classification by Kassin and Wrightsman, who divide them into voluntary, coerced-compliant, and coerced-internalized confessions. For each category, specific psychological mechanisms are analysed that may undermine the authenticity of testimony, such as suggestibility, stress, confusion, memory distortion, or misinterpretation of reality.

A significant part of the thesis is devoted to police interrogation as a key tool for obtaining testimonies. It highlights the boundary between effective interrogation tactics and coercive practices that may negatively influence the outcome of interrogation. It also emphasizes the importance of recognizing psychological processes occurring not only in the suspect but also in the investigators themselves. In addition to analysing psychological and procedural aspects, the thesis also examines the plea bargain mechanism, which, in certain cases, may increase the likelihood of a confession being made due to the expectation of a more lenient sentence.

The thesis draws on both foreign and domestic scholarly sources, relevant case law, and specific cases in which wrongful conviction occurred. The result is the identification of key systemic weaknesses and the formulation of *de lege ferenda* proposals, including the mandatory audiovisual recording of selected interrogations, an emphasis on ethical interrogation practices, and the education of investigators in the psychological aspects of testimony. The thesis aims to contribute to a deeper academic discussion on the prevention of wrongful convictions caused by false confessions.

## **Key words:**

**false confessions; interrogation; forensic psychology; criminalistics**