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METHODOLOGY OF INVESTIGATING MONEY LAUNDERING

ABSTRACT OF THE DOCTORAL THESIS IN LAW

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Investigations**

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CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE RESEARCH

Topicality and importance of the addressed issue. The topicality and significance of the chosen subject, as well as its integration within international, national, and regional priorities, derive from the fact that money laundering constitutes one of the most insidious forms of financial crime, with a profound impact on economic stability, national security, and public trust in state institutions. Its transnational, concealed, and adaptive nature transforms it into a continuous challenge for criminal justice systems worldwide. The relevance of the researched topic stems from the reality that, under conditions of accelerated globalization, the mobility of illicit capital has surpassed legal and economic borders, generating systemic risks that require coordinated responses, modern investigative methodologies, and coherent prevention and control policies. At the international level, efforts to counter this phenomenon have materialized through the establishment of specialized bodies such as the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), which has set the global standards for the prevention and combating of money laundering and terrorist financing. The FATF Recommendations, continuously updated and transmitted to member states, have facilitated the development of an international cooperation framework encompassing the exchange of financial intelligence, the harmonization of criminal legislation, and the adoption of unified risk assessment methodologies. In parallel, the European Union has progressively adopted a series of directives and regulations aimed at strengthening the supervision of the financial sector, enhancing the transparency of beneficial ownership, and increasing the accountability of economic actors in relation to money laundering risks.

Within this context, the Republic of Moldova has been an active participant in the legislative and institutional adjustment process, undertaking to implement international standards through significant reforms such as the Law No. 308/2017 on the Prevention and Combating of Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing. The operationalization of the Service for the Prevention and Combating of Money Laundering (SPCSB) as a financial intelligence unit represented an essential step in consolidating national capacity for detecting and analyzing suspicious transactions. Nevertheless, the dynamic evolution of the phenomenon and the complex structure of criminal networks impose a constant re-evaluation of investigative methodologies, with a focus on the valorization of parallel financial investigations, the digitalization of analytical tools, and the strengthening of operational cooperation among authorities with criminal, fiscal, and financial competencies.

At the regional level, the money laundering phenomenon is amplified by the specific features of the area: an extended informal economy, systemic corruption, the use of offshore structures, and the proximity of regional illicit routes for human, drug, and arms trafficking. In such a geographical context, investigating money laundering requires the adaptation of methodological tools to institutional and legal realities, as well as the assumption of an integrated vision of the phenomenon that combines criminal-procedural,

economic, financial, and informational dimensions.

Therefore, the topic of this research possesses undeniable scientific and practical relevance, being directly connected to the concerns of the international community, the strategic priorities of the European Union, and the needs of the national criminal justice system. The investigation of money laundering can no longer be treated in isolation but must be regarded as an integral component of economic and legal security, which fully justifies the necessity for a comprehensive and up-to-date criminalistic approach, in line with modern risks and international compliance standards.

In recent decades, the crime of money laundering has become a central subject in legal, forensic, and financial scholarship, addressed extensively both internationally and within the doctrinal space of Central and Eastern Europe. This growing concern is justified by the severity of the socio-economic consequences, the difficulty of identifying illicit money flows, and the methodological challenges posed by its investigation in the context of the digital economy and the globalization of financial services.

Internationally, the specialized literature has expanded significantly following the adoption of FATF standards and Council of Europe conventions, with notable contributions from scholars such as Edward H. Jurith, who, in his article "International Cooperation in the Fight Against Money Laundering" (2002), emphasizes the importance of cross-border judicial cooperation and a global framework for financial oversight. Similarly, Adam Graycar, in his work "International and Transnational Crime and Justice," highlights the vulnerability of financial institutions to organized crime networks and the essential role of integrated supervision. A distinct contribution comes from Noriaki Yasaka (2017), who focuses on institutional knowledge management within the process of international cooperation in AML/CFT activities.

In Romania, the issue of investigating money laundering has been rigorously analyzed by authors such as Ioan Muraru, Lucian Bercea, Gheorghită Mateuț, Mihail Udriș, and Radu Chiriță, whose works outline both the applicable legal framework and the practical challenges faced by prosecutors in utilizing financial evidence and applying precautionary measures. Equally valuable are the contributions of forensic experts such as Traian Tandin and Gheorghe Nistorescu, who examined the tactics of investigations in cases of organized crime with financial components.

In Russian legal scholarship, significant contributions to the development of the theoretical and tactical framework for combating money laundering were made by Yu.E. Antipov, A.I. Alekseeva, and A.Ya. Ginzburg, who analyzed in detail the methodology for investigating suspicious financial transactions and the specifics of combating economic and financial crimes within the CIS region. Furthermore, in the studies published under the aegis of the Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation, particular emphasis is placed on the application of judicial financial expertise and banking analysis as fundamental evidentiary tools.

Within the scientific literature of the Republic of Moldova, numerous authors have contributed to the development of a solid theoretical founda-

tion in the fields of criminalistics and related disciplines. Among them stand out Tudor Osoianu, Dinu Ostavciuc, Iurie Odagiu, Constantin Rusnac, Vitalie Rusu, Mihai Gheorghită, Gheorghe Golubenco, Simion Doraș, Ion Covalciuc, Iurie Larii, Maricela Cobzariu, Sergiu Gaibu, Adrian Mircos, Sergiu Russu, Gheorghe Reniță, Mariana Rusu, Vasile Șarco, and Galina Ulian, whose works reflect the thematic diversity of modern juridical and forensic research, as well as developments in criminology, criminal law, and criminal procedure law. Through their studies, these researchers have strengthened the scientific methodology for investigating crimes, refined criminal investigation tactics, and deepened the theoretical framework of criminalistics, while also providing an integrated perspective on the relationship between the human factor, social environment, and mechanisms of criminal behavior. Although their areas of focus differ, the contributions of these authors converge toward a common goal: the modernization of the theoretical and practical tools of forensic science and their adaptation to the contemporary demands of criminal proceedings.

Despite the value of existing doctrinal contributions, there remains a deficit of integrated research capable of offering a comprehensive forensic methodology suited to the current institutional and technological realities of the Republic of Moldova. The lack of standardized investigative practices, the difficulties in accessing cross-border financial data, and the fragmented inter-institutional cooperation highlight the urgent need for applied research that transcends theoretical analysis and proposes practical solutions for the criminal justice system.

In this context, the present research directly contributes to strengthening the scientific basis for the investigation of money laundering, proposing an original methodological approach that combines doctrinal analysis, national and European case law, and best practices in forensic tactics. This work responds to a concrete need of the criminal prosecution bodies of the Republic of Moldova—namely, the development of an investigative methodology adapted to the complexity and particularities of the crime of money laundering.

Description of the Research Field and Identification of Research Problems. The research conducted within this study focuses on the theoretical, normative, and practical analysis of the forensic methodology for investigating the crime of money laundering, grounded in the institutional and judicial realities of the Republic of Moldova. Due to its financial and transnational nature, this field presents a high degree of structural complexity, requiring integrated approaches that consider both the specific characteristics of the offense and the requirements of interinstitutional and international cooperation.

At present, there is a noticeable intensification of money laundering activities in the territory of the Republic of Moldova, driven by vulnerabilities within the financial system, the increased use of electronic instruments, and the integration of illicit capital into the legal economy through sophisticated mechanisms of concealment. These realities are compounded by a lack of

methodological coherence in the work of criminal prosecution authorities, which frequently face difficulties in tracing the movement of funds, valorizing financial evidence, and documenting international criminal connections.

Despite the legislative reforms undertaken in recent years—including the adoption of Law No. 308/2017 on the Prevention and Combating of Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing—a number of deficiencies persist. These include the non-uniform application of investigative procedures, the absence of standardized tactical guidelines, and the insufficient use of international criminal and financial cooperation instruments. Moreover, bibliographic analysis reveals that national specialized literature treats the methodology of investigating this crime only superficially, often from a general legal perspective rather than a forensic and practical one.

The complexity of the phenomenon is further aggravated by new methods used by offenders, such as the use of cryptocurrencies, bank accounts in offshore jurisdictions, shell companies, and fragmented transactions through “money mule” networks. These tactics make it increasingly difficult to document the financial trail and to construct solid evidentiary frameworks in criminal cases. Such challenges call for a recalibration of traditional investigative tactics and the systematic incorporation of parallel financial investigations into criminal proceedings.

Additionally, there is an evident absence of an integrated methodological model to regulate the coordinated execution of procedural actions—from the initial financial analysis to the application of precautionary measures, the seizure of accounting documents, and the specialized interviewing of involved persons. The lack of a structured methodology has resulted in significant variations in investigative practice, undermining both the efficiency of investigations and the consistency of judicial practice.

Consequently, this research identifies an acute need to systematize the field and to establish a clear forensic methodology adapted to contemporary risks. It also emphasizes the importance of continuous professional training for criminal investigators and prosecutors, as well as the integration of modern technologies into the analysis of financial data. The study aims to fill this doctrinal and operational gap, providing a coherent, scientifically grounded, and practically applicable framework for the investigation of money laundering offenses.

Purpose and Objectives of the Research. The **purpose** of this study is to conduct a comprehensive investigation in the field of forensic science, with the primary goal of developing an effective and scientifically grounded methodology tailored to contemporary realities for the investigation of money laundering offenses. The research is anchored in the urgent need to modernize investigative practices in the context of the expanding phenomenon of financial crime, as well as the increasing use of digital technologies and offshore structures in concealing illicit funds. This work aims to address these challenges by establishing both theoretical and operational foundations for forensic tactics and methods designed to enhance the efficiency of criminal prosecution.

To achieve this overarching goal, the following **specific scientific objectives** have been established: to analyze the relevant doctrine concerning the investigation of money laundering offenses, highlighting both national and international perspectives on the applicable forensic methodology in this field; to define the forensic characteristics of the crime of money laundering by identifying its essential elements, *modus operandi*, typical traces, and the offender's profile; to describe the criminal mechanism and typical investigative situations encountered in judicial practice, including those related to the concealment of funds through cryptocurrencies, offshore structures, and shell entities; to determine the specific tactics of procedural actions, such as apprehension, search, examination of documents, interviewing of participants, conducting expert examinations, and applying special investigative measures, while emphasizing the tactical particularities specific to money laundering cases; to analyze interinstitutional and international cooperation, examining the formal and operational mechanisms of collaboration between national authorities and international partners, and to propose solutions for improving information exchange and harmonizing practices; to identify existing dysfunctions in the practice of criminal prosecution bodies and to formulate *de lege ferenda* proposals aimed at strengthening the normative and tactical framework for the investigation of money laundering offenses; to develop a unified investigative methodology that integrates theoretical foundations, the normative framework, and applied aspects into a single comprehensive instrument intended for use by forensic specialists, criminal prosecution authorities, and institutional decision-makers.

Research Hypothesis. The hypothesis of this study is grounded in the conviction that the development and implementation of a specialized and well-adapted forensic methodology for investigating money laundering will significantly enhance the efficiency of criminal prosecution and strengthen the institutional capacity to identify, document, and sanction this type of offense. It is assumed that by systematizing procedural tactics, integrating parallel financial investigations, utilizing electronic means of proof, and reinforcing interinstitutional cooperation, the investigative process will become more coherent, faster, and more accurate.

Furthermore, the research is based on the premise that the creation of a unified and operational methodology for investigating money laundering would enable a more effective adaptation to the complexity of the phenomenon, particularly in cases involving cryptocurrencies, offshore companies, or money-mule networks. It is also hypothesized that by identifying existing normative and procedural gaps and formulating legislative improvement proposals, a higher level of compliance with international AML/CFT standards can be achieved.

In this regard, validating the hypothesis requires conducting a multidisciplinary study that combines theoretical, normative, and tactical-investigative analysis with the goal of building a solid scientific foundation for the development of a modern and efficient methodology for investigating money laundering in the Republic of Moldova.

Scientific Novelty and Originality. The scientific novelty and originality of the present doctoral thesis are substantiated by the identification of a doctrinal gap within Moldovan forensic literature regarding the specific methodology for investigating the crime of money laundering. Although the phenomenon has been legislatively regulated and has generated considerable juridical and practical attention, in-depth methodological research from a forensic perspective remains in its early stages. In this context, the present work makes a significant contribution by providing a scientifically grounded and applicable methodology that reflects the current characteristics of this complex and transnational offense.

The originality of the research lies in its systematic, tactical, and integrated approach to the phenomenon of money laundering, in which the normative, procedural, and operational components of the investigative process are closely interlinked. The thesis introduces innovative tactical models focusing on the use of parallel financial investigations, the utilization of information on beneficial ownership, the integration of modern transaction analysis technologies, and the strengthening of interinstitutional and international cooperation mechanisms.

The research is both theoretical and practical, offering concrete courses of action for criminal prosecution bodies, prosecutors, and administrative structures involved in combating this type of crime. Furthermore, the thesis puts forward proposals for legislative and organizational improvement, designed to ensure the uniform and effective application of investigative and evidentiary procedures, in full alignment with international AML/CFT standards.

This study not only fills a poorly explored area within national legal doctrine but also brings added value by adapting investigative practices to the new financial, technological, and institutional realities, thereby providing an indispensable methodological framework to enhance the operational capacity of Moldovan authorities in the fight against money laundering.

Synthesis of the Research Methodology and Justification of the Chosen Research Methods. The methodological foundation of this doctoral research is based on the general principles of scientific inquiry, derived from philosophy, logic, legal theory, and forensic sciences. The theoretical framework of the study was constructed through the application of an integrated methodological approach, combining classical methods of conceptual analysis with modern applied research tools specific to criminal sciences and forensic techniques.

In the course of scientific investigation, a range of theoretical and empirical, general and specialized methods were employed, including logical and comparative analysis, synthesis and generalization of doctrinal conclusions, inductive and deductive reasoning, as well as systemic research techniques applicable to both legal and operational phenomena. The study also employed the functional analysis method of judicial practice, which allowed for the identification of dysfunctions in the application of current investigative methodologies and the formulation of viable tactical solutions.

The thesis makes extensive use of the comparative method, analyzing international regulations and practices in the field of anti-money laundering (AML)—including the standards and recommendations of the FATF, the European Union, and the Council of Europe. Additionally, the interdisciplinary method was applied, as the researched topic lies at the intersection of several domains: forensic science, criminal law, criminal procedure, economics, and information technology. More concretely, the case study method was used to examine relevant criminal cases from Moldovan judicial practice, enabling the validation or refutation of the proposed hypotheses.

The research was also grounded in a systematic analysis of national and international legislation in the field of AML/CFT, along with the examination of practical instruments used by criminal prosecution authorities, particularly concerning parallel financial investigations, the application of precautionary measures, and the use of data on beneficial ownership.

Through this methodological synthesis, the research ensures an objective, logical, and practical approach to the issues surrounding the investigation of money laundering, scientifically justifying the formulated proposals and reinforcing the applicability of the conclusions to the work of law enforcement agencies. The selection of methods was determined by the complexity and specificity of the analyzed phenomenon, as well as by the need to formulate sustainable operational solutions firmly rooted in the institutional realities of the Republic of Moldova.

Theoretical Importance and Practical Value of the Study. The theoretical importance of this work lies in the development of a coherent conceptual and methodological framework for the investigation of the crime of money laundering, addressing a relatively underexplored area within Moldovan forensic doctrine. The study proposes a systematic approach to the phenomenon, structured around the interrelation between normativity, procedural tactics, and the complexity of financial instruments used in the commission of such offenses. This theoretical foundation enriches the doctrine of applied criminalistics and may serve as a starting point for further research, particularly in the direction of integrating emerging digital technologies into the criminal prosecution process.

From an epistemological perspective, the thesis integrates both international and national doctrinal insights, contributing to the clarification of key concepts, the definition of the forensic characteristics of money laundering, the structuring of the stages of criminal prosecution, and the formulation of methodological principles for investigating this type of crime. Through these contributions, the study provides valuable scientific benchmarks for proceduralists, forensic experts, and scholars interested in deepening a field with cross-cutting implications for the entire criminal justice system.

The practical value of the research is evident in the applicability of its conclusions and recommendations, which can be utilized by criminal prosecution bodies, prosecutors, tax inspectors, officers of the SPCSB, and financial experts involved in the documentation of suspicious transactions.

The study proposes tactical models applicable in daily investigative activity, as well as solutions to overcome the challenges encountered in obtaining and exploiting financial evidence, in applying precautionary measures, in investigating cryptocurrency transactions, and in collaboration with banking institutions.

Moreover, the research findings can be used in the professional training and continuous development of criminal investigators, in the elaboration of internal procedural guidelines for specialized structures, and in legislative activities, by providing a solid basis for proposals to amend and improve the normative framework related to the prevention and combating of money laundering.

Therefore, the study not only makes an original contribution to the advancement of forensic theory, but also provides concrete practical tools for intervention in a field of strategic importance both for the Republic of Moldova and for the international community committed to protecting the integrity of financial systems.

Implementation of the Scientific Results. The implementation of the scientific results obtained through this research on the methodology for investigating money laundering offenses holds particular significance, as it concerns both the consolidation of theoretical knowledge in the field of financial forensics and the optimization of practical actions carried out by institutions responsible for law enforcement. Given the complexity of this type of crime and its impact on economic and legal stability, the formulated conclusions contribute to the development of a coherent methodological and tactical framework, indispensable for the documentation, investigation, and effective prosecution of money laundering offenses.

The results of the research can be applied within initial and continuing professional education programs for students, master's candidates, and doctoral researchers in criminal law and forensic science, providing a practical perspective on the investigation of illicit financial flows. By integrating these findings into university curricula, the study may support the formation of a new generation of specialists capable of understanding the specific nature of modern financial crimes and applying efficient investigative methods consistent with international standards.

Moreover, the work holds particular value for professional training programs dedicated to prosecutors, criminal investigators, tax inspectors, SPCSB officers, and other institutional actors involved in preventing and combating economic and financial crime. The inclusion of the methodologies proposed in this research within these programs would enhance the tactical skills of practitioners, improve their capacity to analyze suspicious transactions, and strengthen mechanisms of interinstitutional cooperation.

Another important area of implementation pertains to the operational activities of criminal prosecution bodies and administrative authorities, where the conclusions of this study can serve as the basis for drafting internal tactical guidelines, updating standard investigative procedures, and supporting decision-making processes in complex money laundering cas-

es. Applying these recommendations would improve the collection and interpretation of indirect evidence, facilitate the identification of illicit fund flows, and promote the use of parallel financial investigations as a strategic evidentiary tool.

The research results have also been disseminated through articles published in specialized journals, fostering the exchange of best practices between scholars and practitioners. Presentations at national and international conferences have further created a favorable environment for interdisciplinary dialogue and the establishment of institutional and academic partnerships relevant to the field of anti-money laundering.

Through the practical applicability of its conclusions, this research contributes to the foundation of national strategies for the prevention and combating of economic and financial crime, as well as to the adaptation of legal and institutional mechanisms to the challenges posed by the use of cryptocurrencies, offshore structures, and other modern instruments for concealing the origin of funds.

Considering the transnational and technological nature of money laundering, the dissemination and practical application of the results of this study must be regarded as a strategic priority, aimed at supporting the alignment of the Republic of Moldova with international AML/CFT standards. This endeavor contributes to the strengthening of the rule of law, the enhancement of public trust in law enforcement institutions, and the protection of national economic integrity in the face of financial criminality.

Publications Related to the Thesis: 13 publications

Keywords: money laundering, forensic investigation, methodology, tactics, interinstitutional cooperation, evidence

SUMMARY OF THE THESIS CHAPTERS

The doctoral thesis is structured in accordance with academic requirements and includes: annotations written in Romanian, English, and Russian; a list of abbreviations used; the introduction; four chapters subdivided into paragraphs; followed by general conclusions and recommendations. The final section contains the bibliography – which compiles 342 consulted sources – the statement of responsibility, and the author's curriculum vitae.

The **Introduction** presents the topical relevance of the theme, the importance of the research, the current state of the field regarding the investigation of money laundering, the scientific problem addressed, the hypothesis, objectives, methodology, and the overall structure of the work. This section provides the epistemological foundation and the justification of the scientific approach.

Chapter I – “Conceptual Aspects and the Legal Framework on Money Laundering” is dedicated to defining the concept of money laundering, outlining the evolution of this offense, and examining both the national and international legal frameworks governing it.

According to the views expressed by D. Ostavciuc, C. Rusnac, and V. Șarco, *“the process of money laundering unfolds in three stages that may involve numerous transactions carried out by money launderers – transactions that are capable of alerting financial institutions to potential criminal activity.”* These stages – placement, layering, and integration – reflect the gradual process by which illicit funds are detached from their original source, disguised through successive operations, and eventually incorporated into the legal economy.

In the doctrinal literature, Viorel Florescu complements this description, emphasizing that *“placement”* involves separating the money from the place of the original crime; *“layering”* entails dispersing the funds to make them more difficult to trace; and *“integration”* consists of reinvesting the funds into legitimate business activities. This three-stage model is widely accepted in international literature and confirmed by numerous FATF reports and real-world case studies.

Valuable contributions to the development of the investigative methodology were made by D.B. Jambalov, who, in his work dedicated to the methodological foundations of money laundering investigations, highlighted the importance of understanding the underground economy, financial concealment structures, and the use of specific procedural instruments for documenting this offense. He emphasized that an effective approach requires the clear definition of typical investigative situations and the adaptation of methods to the complex nature of each case.

From a normative perspective, the international legal framework is defined by key instruments such as the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (Palermo, 2000), the Council of Europe Convention on Laundering, Search, Seizure and Confiscation of the Proceeds

from Crime and on the Financing of Terrorism (Warsaw, 2005), as well as the FATF Recommendations, which represent the global standard for the prevention and combating of money laundering and terrorist financing.

In the European context, the EU AML Directives — particularly the Fifth and Sixth Directives — have introduced enhanced obligations related to transparency, beneficial ownership identification, and cooperation between national authorities. These directives have been transposed into Moldovan legislation through acts such as Law No. 308/2017 on the Prevention and Combating of Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing, which currently represents the primary legal foundation in the Republic of Moldova.

With regard to substantive criminal law, Article 243 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Moldova criminalizes the act of money laundering, outlining its forms and conditions of liability. It penalizes actions such as the conversion or transfer of property derived from criminal activity and the concealment of its origin or nature. Recent amendments to this article demonstrate a trend toward harmonization with international standards, particularly in expanding the scope of predicate offenses and eliminating the requirement for the perpetrator to have absolute knowledge of the illicit origin of the assets.

Another relevant aspect addressed in the thesis concerns the relationship between the predicate offense and the crime of money laundering. In investigative practice, this correlation is crucial, as evidence of the underlying criminal activity generating illicit income (e.g., drug trafficking, corruption, tax evasion) is fundamental to establishing the illicit origin of the funds. At the same time, both national and European jurisprudence confirm the possibility of severing these cases, which calls for special attention in coordinating investigations and in effectively utilizing the collected evidence.

In conclusion, Chapter I provides a solid theoretical and legal foundation for understanding the complexity of the money laundering phenomenon, highlighting the necessity of an integrated approach firmly anchored in international standards, specialized doctrine, and the institutional realities of the Republic of Moldova.

Chapter II, entitled “Forensic Characteristics of the Offence of Money Laundering,” concerns the identification and systematization of the essential features of this offence from the perspective of forensic science. In this section, the author aims to elaborate a complex and coherent vision of the defining elements that particularize money laundering, with a view to constructing an investigative methodology suited to current realities. The chapter constitutes an indispensable stage in the theoretical grounding of the work, as it allows the formulation of effective working hypotheses, anticipation of evidentiary obstacles, and the outlining of a logical model for forensic analysis.

Within this chapter, the modes of commission of the offence are first examined, emphasizing that money laundering is rarely a singular action but instead unfolds as a staged, concealed, and often cross-border process. The author describes the sequence of specific actions — placement, layering, and

integration of funds — and explains how these contribute to the dissociation of illicit funds from their criminal source. The perpetrators' *modus operandi* is analyzed and it is explained to what extent the manner of commission reflects the level of organization of the criminal network involved.

Next, the author focuses on the typical traces left by this offence, stressing that they are predominantly of a digital, financial-accounting and documentary nature. Suspicious transactions, accounting records, fictitious contracts and artificial legal structures are analyzed as forms of indirect manifestation of criminal conduct. The author explains the importance of documenting the money trail, beginning with the outward signs of apparently lawful economic activity and proceeding to the identification of hidden links that permit the reintegration of funds into the legal economy.

An important section is dedicated to the offender's profile, noting that persons involved in money laundering usually possess an advanced degree of financial, legal, or technological training, act through intermediaries, and resort to modern instruments such as cryptocurrencies, offshore accounts, or "money mule" networks. In this sense, criminal behavior is defined not by overt displays of violence but by the degree of sophistication of concealment mechanisms.

The chapter also analyzes the trail of illicit funds, explaining the tracking difficulties caused by the volatility of transfers, transaction fragmentation and the diversity of jurisdictions involved. In this context, the author highlights the necessity of synchronization between traditional criminal investigation and financial analysis, as well as the integration of digital analytical methods to reconstruct the operational chain.

Another aspect treated in detail is the perpetrator's behavioral model, particularly regarding avoidance of direct contact with funds, use of proxies, and adoption of an ostensibly discreet lifestyle. Emphasis is placed on the fact that this offence is committed in a calculated manner, avoiding any direct exposure, which requires investigative tactics tailored to this specificity.

At the end of the chapter, the author describes typical concealment schemes, presenting a typology of methods used for the conversion and reintegration of dirty money. Mechanisms such as fictitious income registration, masked purchases, rotation of capital among affiliated entities, and other forms of transfer that serve the objective of obscuring illicit origin are described.

Through this approach, the author outlines an integrated forensic profile of the offence of money laundering, which constitutes an essential theoretical support for the development of procedural tactics that will be analyzed in the following chapter. The analytical and applied character of this section provides the logical framework for correct interpretation of the offence indicators and for the development of investigative strategies based on evidence, rationality and anticipation.

Chapter III, titled "**Tactics for Conducting Criminal Investigative Actions in Money Laundering Cases**," focuses on a detailed examination of the practical method by which the offence is documented within criminal

proceedings. This section has a strongly practical character and constitutes the operational core of the thesis, as it concentrates on concrete procedural actions carried out by criminal investigation bodies with the purpose of identifying, reconstructing, and proving money laundering activities.

The author aims, in this chapter, to construct a unified and functional tactical scheme that reflects the realities of modern money laundering investigations and addresses the specific difficulties of this category of offences. Emphasis is placed on the latent nature of these acts and on the difficulty of correlating indirect evidence with the underlying criminal activity.

The first section analyzes the tactics for conducting searches, particularly in office spaces, the premises of shell companies, or the residences of perpetrators, where written records, electronic equipment, or data storage media may be found. The author stresses the particularities related to the meticulous preparation of such actions, the need to involve IT or accounting specialists, and the prioritization of digital evidence, which may sometimes be at risk of destruction or encryption.

Special attention is given to the seizure of documents and financial-accounting records, which are considered one of the main sources of information in money laundering cases. Practical aspects are highlighted with respect to identifying relevant documents (fictitious invoices, payment orders, duplicate accounting ledgers), analyzing transfer circuits, and the importance of correlating these with banking data, including through international requests.

A distinct section is devoted to interviewing procedural subjects — suspects, witnesses, and experts — emphasizing the adaptation of interviewing techniques to the specifics of the case. Regarding witnesses, the importance of hearing accountants, managers, or other persons who, although not party to the criminal act, may provide key information about financial flows, the origin of funds, or suspicious economic decisions is underlined. Concerning suspects, the author analyzes tactics for exposing contradictions, the use of confrontations, and the application of psychological strategies depending on the offender's profile.

An essential component is the tactics for conducting financial-accounting and IT expert examinations, through which discrepancies between accounting records and economic reality can be identified, repetitive transfer schemes and forged documents detected, or indicators of concealment of fund origin uncovered. The author emphasizes the role of these expert analyses not only in proving the fictitious nature of transactions but also in assessing damage and identifying the illicit source of funds.

A novel element is the treatment of the parallel financial investigation, a tool distinct from the classic criminal inquiry, aimed at tracing assets, identifying property susceptible to confiscation, and locating hidden capital. The author integrates this concept into the general investigative tactics and highlights the necessity of cooperation with tax, banking and asset management structures, as well as the exploitation of data exchange with financial intelligence units.

The issue of identifying the beneficial owner is also examined, given

that legal entities are often used to conceal the real holder of funds. Methods are presented for accessing official registers, tactics for decoding relationships among affiliated companies, and techniques to overcome the opacity of legal structures employed.

The author assigns significant weight to indirect evidence, showing situations where direct proof of illicit origin cannot be obtained, but where the ensemble of indicia — discrepancy between income and expenditures, lack of justification for the source, simulated activity — can substantiate a money laundering allegation. It is argued that proving this offence does not rely exclusively on accounting or banking documents, but on a logical, integrated, and contextual assessment of all elements present in the case file.

Through this chapter the author succeeds in building a coherent tactical strategy based on the practical realities of complex investigations and on the continuous need to adapt to offenders' techniques. The entire section is application-oriented, emphasizing operational efficiency, institutional cooperation, and the judicious use of investigative resources.

Chapter IV, entitled "**Interinstitutional and International Cooperation in the Investigation of Money Laundering Offences**," reflects the collaborative, multisectoral, and cross-border dimension of combating this complex criminal phenomenon. Considering that money laundering typically involves international transactions, dispersed legal structures, and high mobility of funds, the author dedicates this section to a detailed analysis of the institutional and procedural framework governing cooperation among entities engaged in the prevention, investigation, and prosecution of this offence.

In the first part of the chapter, the author examines interinstitutional cooperation at the national level, noting that the effectiveness of criminal prosecution fundamentally depends on the synchronization of actions among institutions with complementary competencies. The roles and responsibilities of the SPCSB (Financial Intelligence Unit), ARBI (Agency for the Recovery of Criminal Assets), CNA (National Anticorruption Center), SFS (State Tax Service), and the NBM (National Bank of Moldova) are analyzed in detail.

The study underscores the importance of operational, financial, and asset data exchange, as well as the necessity of establishing functional cooperation protocols that ensure rapid and lawful access to information essential for criminal proceedings. The author emphasizes the pivotal role of the SPCSB in aggregating data received from reporting entities (banks, notaries, audit companies, currency exchange offices, etc.) and transmitting it to prosecutors and investigators when reasonable suspicion arises.

The chapter then turns to international cooperation, explored from both a formal-legal and operational perspective. The author analyzes instruments of international legal assistance in criminal matters, including bilateral and multilateral conventions, international treaties, and the relevant EU and Council of Europe regulations. Special attention is given to procedures concerning letters rogatory, recognition and enforcement of foreign criminal judgments, and freezing and confiscation of assets derived from money laundering activities.

A significant portion is devoted to the mechanisms of information exchange and cross-border cooperation within specialized networks such as FIU.net, the Egmont Group, Eurojust, OLAF, Interpol, and the FATF. These platforms provide a crucial framework for the rapid sharing of financial and judicial data, identification of international links in suspicious transactions, and real-time coordination of criminal investigations.

The chapter also highlights the pressing need for harmonizing institutional practices between Moldovan authorities and their counterparts in other jurisdictions, especially in the context of the country's association with the European Union. The existing barriers — including the lack of interoperability between information systems, differences in the definition of offences and in the legal regime of evidence — are analyzed, and concrete directions are proposed to enhance interoperability, standardize data exchange, and foster an institutional culture of proactive cooperation.

In the final section, the author proposes functional models of operational collaboration, inspired by international best practices and comparative analyses of effective systems. Among the proposed measures are the creation of joint investigation teams, the implementation of secure communication channels between key institutions, and the development of joint risk analysis mechanisms within coordinated structures.

In conclusion, this chapter demonstrates that the investigation of money laundering offences cannot be conceived outside an extended framework of interinstitutional and international cooperation. Such a collaborative and integrated approach represents not merely a condition of efficiency but an indispensable requirement in confronting a criminal phenomenon that transcends national borders, involves multiple jurisdictions, and demands a coordinated, prompt, and professional response from all relevant authorities.

The thesis concludes with **General Conclusions**, which synthesize the key ideas derived from the research and confirm the validity of the formulated scientific hypothesis. In the **Recommendations**, the author puts forward specific normative, tactical, and organizational proposals aimed at optimizing the framework for investigating money laundering in the Republic of Moldova.

The **bibliography** comprises 356 relevant sources — including doctrinal works, legislative acts, case law, international studies, and practice-oriented documents.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The scientific results obtained through the elaboration of this research consist in the following:

a) *Determining the current state of forensic methodology in the investigation of money laundering.* The research identified the level of development of this domain in both national and international doctrine, highlighting the absence of integrated and practically applicable approaches, which necessitated the formulation of innovative methodological solutions.

b) *Elaboration and substantiation of the forensic characteristics of the offence of money laundering.* The study established the essential components of this profile: methods of fund concealment, typical environments and conditions of commission, the technical means involved, traces, and the offender's profile, while emphasizing national particularities.

c) *Identification of the criminal mechanism and traces of illegal activity.* The research determined the typical modes of operation and the ways in which criminal activity manifests in documents, financial flows, networks of shell companies, and apparently legitimate asset structures.

d) *Description of typical investigative situations.* Frequent operational configurations in money laundering cases were identified, which directly influence the choice of evidence and the tactics for conducting procedural actions.

e) *Systematization of the tactical particularities of main investigative actions.* The study provided a clear tactical framework for apprehension, search, document examination, interviewing, identification, and on-site investigations, adapted to the specific nature of the offence under analysis.

f) *Definition of the essential role of specialists and technical knowledge in criminal prosecution.* The research demonstrated the necessity of mandatory participation by IT specialists in the investigation of digital evidence and information systems, accompanied by a *de lege ferenda* proposal to amend Article 128 paragraph (5²) of the Criminal Procedure Code.

g) *Clarification of the SPCSB's function as a finding authority.* Based on its role in detecting suspicious transactions and providing pre-evidentiary data, the study proposed an amendment to Article 273 of the Criminal Procedure Code, aligning legislation with operational realities and recognizing the institution's legal status.

h) *Emphasizing the importance of special investigative measures and parallel financial investigations.* The thesis demonstrated that integrating these tools enables the reconstruction of illicit fund flows, strengthens evidentiary value, and supports the application of extended confiscation measures.

i) *Analysis of national and international cooperation particularities.* A clear picture was drawn of the interaction between national bodies (SPCSB, ARBI, CNA, NBM, SFS, etc.) and cross-border cooperation through networks such as Egmont, OLAF, and Eurojust, identifying deficiencies in harmonization and interoperability.

j) *Formulation of tactical, legislative, and institutional recommenda-*

tions. Proposals were developed for optimizing investigative methodology, improving the procedural legal framework, and increasing the efficiency of institutional cooperation, both domestically and internationally.

The results obtained through this research provide a solid theoretical and practical foundation for optimizing the process of investigating money laundering offences, in a context characterized by the constant evolution of criminal forms and the sophistication of financial concealment methods. By applying the conclusions and recommendations formulated, a coherent forensic framework is outlined, one that meets current investigative requirements and contributes to strengthening the institutional capacity to combat this transnational phenomenon.

The research enabled the development of an integrated vision of the investigative methodology, closely correlated with the structural characteristics of the offence, the specificity of financial evidence, and the requirements of interinstitutional and international cooperation. The general conclusions and recommendations reflect the need to reform certain aspects of the normative framework, to professionalize financial investigations, and to use specialized resources more efficiently. Thus, the work contributes to the development of a modern, applicable, and scientifically grounded forensic approach, capable of addressing the challenges arising from the dynamic nature of money laundering.

Within the conducted research, the phenomenon of money laundering was analyzed comprehensively from forensic, procedural, and institutional perspectives, with particular emphasis on the methodological particularities of detecting and investigating this offence in the context of both national and international realities. The study made it possible to identify essential gaps and challenges, as well as to formulate theoretical and practical solutions aimed at increasing the efficiency of criminal prosecution authorities. Based on this analysis, several key directions for developing investigative methodology were outlined, closely correlated with the dynamics of economic and financial crime, the digitalization of illicit financial flows, and the requirements of interinstitutional cooperation. Consequently, on the basis of scientific evaluation and formulated findings, the following general conclusions emerge:

- 1) The theoretical and normative analysis of the money laundering phenomenon demonstrates that this offence evolves within an extremely dynamic legal and operational ecosystem, influenced by globalization, digitalization, and transnational criminality. The effectiveness of investigative methodology depends directly on the capacity of national and international systems to cooperate, to integrate complex information flows, and to respond swiftly to the new methods used by criminal groups. In this respect, the formulated conclusions provide a solid foundation for developing integrated and proactive investigative strategies, aligned with international standards and responsive to emerging challenges in the field of economic and financial crime.

- 2) The study of the forensic characteristics of the money laundering

offence reveals that it differs substantially from other categories of crimes in its methods of concealment, the high degree of planning, and the technological sophistication involved. The investigation of this offence requires not only a deep understanding of the phenomenon in legal and economic terms, but also a deductive capacity to reconstruct the hidden reality behind seemingly legitimate transactions. Structural complexity, participant anonymity, and the absence of direct traces transform criminal prosecution into a highly analytical-investigative activity, where success depends on the integration of dispersed information, interinstitutional cooperation, and the rigorous application of financial and forensic investigative tools.

3) The analysis of the tactical particularities of investigative actions in money laundering cases reveals an investigative model profoundly different from that applicable to conventional crimes, both due to the latent nature of the acts and the sophisticated character of the mechanisms employed.

Tactics for Detaining the Suspect (Accused). The tactics for detention in money-laundering cases present a number of essential particularities determined by the sophisticated, transnational and deeply concealed nature of this type of offence. Detention is not aimed solely at immobilizing the person; its primary purpose is to prevent the rapid destruction of documentary, digital and financial evidence. This action must be planned meticulously, based on a behavioural analysis and the daily routine of the subject, so as to avoid triggering any warning or countermeasures.

It is necessary to synchronize the detention with other procedural actions and special investigative measures — searches, interviews, visual surveillance, interception of communications, etc. — in order to produce a coordinated tactical impact. Targeted persons are, as a rule, highly trained in legal or financial matters, which requires a balanced intervention with a carefully managed psychological component. After detention, the immediate isolation of the suspect is mandatory to prevent communication with other network members and the alteration of any remaining evidence. Detention thus becomes a complex tactical instrument, integrated into an extended operational plan and adapted to the risks specific to money laundering.

Tactical Particularities of Document Examination. Document examination in money-laundering cases has distinct tactical features deriving from the complex and simulated nature of the instruments underlying illicit circuits. This investigative action is usually carried out at the early stage of the inquiry, at an accelerated pace, and is oriented toward identifying and securing documentary traces before they can be altered or destroyed.

The examination concerns not only the formal validity of documents but also their relation to financial cover structures, shell companies and fictitious economic operations. Documents are subjected to direct visual analysis assisted by forensic-technical means to detect accounting discrepancies, signs of simulation or subtle forgeries. Particular attention is paid to the provenance of documents, the transactional sequence and the logical-economic coherence of their content.

The particularity of this action lies in the fact that it does not pursue

immediate conclusions but the rigorous collection of raw data that will later serve to reconstruct the money trail and underpin expert analyses. In this sense, document examination becomes an indispensable tactical stage for validating financial evidence in a context dominated by concealment, sophistication and transnationality.

Tactical Particularities of Searches and Seizure of Objects and Documents. Searches in money-laundering cases involve several essential tactical particularities that stem from the latent and concealed nature of the offence. First, a search must be planned rigorously on the basis of clear investigative hypotheses and a prior study of the targeted locations, including the suspected digital infrastructure. It is necessary to prepare a detailed operational map of the premises to be searched, taking into account the frequent use of shell companies, secondary residences and commercial spaces with fictitious activity.

Another tactical particularity is that searches must be oriented not only toward physical documents but above all toward digital devices (laptops, external hard drives, encrypted phones, servers) that contain electronic traces of transfers and financial communications. Tactics must provide for rapid interventions to prevent remote deletion of data or the activation of automatic encryption or destruction mechanisms.

With respect to seizure of objects and documents, the emphasis is on identifying items that attest to the origin of funds, the nature of transactions, the ownership structure of the entities involved and the simulated economic relationships. The particularity lies in the fact that most of the items seized are not illegal per se but acquire incriminating value through contextual and chronological correlation with other elements of evidence.

Tactical Particularities of the Hearing. The hearing in money-laundering cases requires meticulous tactical adaptation according to the procedural status, psychological profile, and actual role of the person being questioned. In the case of the accused or defendant, the tactic aims to dismantle defense versions through confrontation with documents, correlation of statements with banking data or simulated economic structures, and the gradual use of indirect evidence to destabilize their position. It is essential to avoid premature direct confrontation, focusing instead on obtaining partial admissions that can be progressively expanded.

With respect to the suspect or accused, the tactical emphasis lies in exploiting the emotional impact associated with arrest or confrontation with seemingly limited evidence. The strategy involves formulating questions progressively, alternating between neutral and accusatory elements, to encourage initial openness and later test the veracity of responses.

For witnesses—particularly employees of financial institutions, accountants, lawyers, or intermediaries—the tactic must be adjusted to their professional status and presumed relation to the facts investigated. The hearing should focus on technical and operational aspects, as well as identifying possible passive complicity or indirect knowledge of the funds' origin. It is crucial to formulate clear, fact-based questions, avoiding ambiguities

that could cause hesitation or refusal to cooperate.

A distinct category consists of representatives of legal entities involved in the concealment process. The hearing tactics for such individuals should aim to reveal the actual decision-making and control relationships, the links with other commercial entities, and signs of legal simulation. The interrogation should rely on comparing statements with data from commercial registries, contracts, fiscal documents, and ownership structures.

Regarding specialists—such as auditors, appraisers, tax or IT experts—the hearing is primarily technical in nature, aimed at clarifying terminology, validating findings, and obtaining explanations regarding documents or processes beyond the investigators' expertise. Tactically, questions must be formulated in clear and precise language, without presuming good faith or noninvolvement by default.

Overall, the tactics of hearing in this field rest on thorough prior preparation, gradual use of available information, adaptation to the psychological context of the person heard, and strict correlation of statements with existing evidence. In money-laundering cases, statements are useful only to the extent that they are logically and factually corroborated by the entire body of evidence.

Tactics for Presentation for Recognition. Presentation for recognition in the investigation of money-laundering offences involves a number of distinct tactical particularities. This action is aimed less at identifying the principal offender in the classical sense and more at confirming the involvement of intermediary persons or at identifying documents and objects used in the concealment process. It is frequently applied in the case of “frontmen” or “mules,” who act in a fragmentary manner and without direct contact with the principal perpetrator; therefore, recognition must be carefully prepared, avoiding any suggestiveness.

The tactic also targets the recognition of objects or records — contracts, ledgers, electronic devices — which, although seemingly mundane, may have major evidentiary value when correlated with other elements in the case file. A rigorous selection of the items presented is necessary, preserving visual balance and avoiding any elements that might subconsciously influence the reaction of the person being questioned.

Moreover, the particularity lies in the fact that recognition is used not only as an identification tool but also as a means to test the truthfulness of prior statements and to verify the coherence of the procedural position of witnesses or suspects. This requires an integrated tactical approach as part of an extended evidentiary plan.

Tactics of On-Site Examination. On-site examination in the investigation of money laundering has a predominantly documentary rather than reconstructive character, being focused on the identification of indirect traces of criminal activity in premises that appear to be used lawfully (offices, agency counters, headquarters of fictitious companies). The tactical particularity consists in concentrating on details that reveal the absence of genuine commercial activity — minimal furnishings, lack of employees, ab-

sence of accounting registers, or the presence of documents with outdated information.

Particular attention is paid to the positioning and condition of physical evidentiary items, including IT equipment that may contain encrypted or concealed data. The intervention of a digital forensic specialist during the on-site examination is recommended to enable the technical identification of local networks, storage servers, or hidden devices.

The tactic must also include comprehensive visual documentation – panoramic photography, detailed video recording, and marking of relevant items – to allow later reconstruction of the context and to support the evidentiary validity before the court. In these types of cases, the on-site examination does not seek traditional physical traces, but rather the indirect confirmation of concealed conduct.

Tactical Particularities of the Use of Specialized Knowledge. The use of specialized knowledge in the investigation of the offence of money laundering requires a proactive tactic, grounded in the early integration of technical expertise into the criminal process. The tactical particularities consist in involving financial, accounting, IT, or other relevant experts from the phase of identifying criminal traces and in directing investigative lines. A rigorous selection of specialists is required according to the specific concealment mechanism – whether encrypted transactions, shell companies, or offshore structures – together with a clear delineation of their roles between technical ascertainment and judicial expert opinion.

Another important tactical particularity is the use of specialized knowledge not only to clarify technical evidence but also as an instrument to deconstruct the defendant's defense, particularly in cases where the defendant invokes legal complexity or the merely formal character of financial documents. Integrating the expert into the investigative team, supported by ongoing dialogue with the prosecuting authority, thus becomes an essential tactical condition for understanding and proving the concealed criminal logic that is characteristic of money laundering.

Special Investigative Measures and Parallel Financial Investigations. The application of special investigative measures and parallel financial investigations in money-laundering cases is characterized by a tactic based on anticipation, confidentiality, and operational synchronization. The tactical particularities consist in utilizing legally authorized measures to obtain hidden or otherwise inaccessible evidence, documenting the connections between perpetrators and shell economic structures, and tracking the movement of funds in real time. The parallel financial investigation represents a tactical operation in itself, offering an integrated view of suspicious financial flows, supporting confiscation measures, and complementing criminal proceedings with an indispensable asset-recovery dimension.

4) Analysis of national and international cooperation in investigating money-laundering offences reveals a complex operational framework, in which the efficiency of criminal prosecution activities depends fundamentally on the quality and synchronization of interactions among the institu-

tions involved. At the national level, coordination between law enforcement authorities, the financial intelligence unit, and economic control structures remains an evolving process that requires procedural standardization, technological integration of data systems, and clear regulations for the sharing of responsibilities.

5) At the international level, cooperation is influenced by the degree of legislative compatibility between states, the willingness to exchange operational information, and active participation in multilateral specialized networks and mechanisms. In this context, harmonizing the domestic legal framework with European and international standards, along with the establishment of joint investigation teams, becomes a strategic imperative. Therefore, the investigation of money laundering cannot be conceived outside a functional network of institutional cooperation, both national and cross-border, that enables the detection, documentation, and effective prosecution of this global and evolving phenomenon.

In order to improve the methodology of investigation and strengthen the operational capacity of criminal prosecution bodies, the following **recommendations and *de lege ferenda*** proposals are advanced. These aim to harmonize legislation with practical realities, enhance the mandatory nature of certain procedural provisions, and ensure the functional recognition of the key institutions involved in combating money laundering:

1) Given the effective responsibilities exercised by the Service for the Prevention and Combating of Money Laundering (SPCSB) in identifying, monitoring, and documenting suspicious transactions, its explicit recognition as a criminal investigation authority is necessary. At present, the SPCSB carries out probative activities that anticipate and support the criminal process itself, substantially contributing to the initiation and substantiation of criminal prosecutions in money-laundering and other economic-financial cases. Therefore, amending and supplementing Article 273 of the Criminal Procedure Code is required to align procedural regulation with institutional and operational realities, thereby strengthening the legal framework for identifying offences and increasing the efficiency of the criminal justice system.

2) In the current context of digitalized criminality and the frequent use of information systems as means for committing or concealing offences, the involvement of information technology specialists must become obligatory. The current wording of Article 128(5²) of the Criminal Procedure Code, which provides for the participation of an IT specialist “where applicable,” leaves the decision to the discretion of investigators — a practice that may compromise the integrity of electronic evidence. In practice, computer searches and the seizure of electronic data require advanced expertise and specialized technical tools, without which the investigation may fail. Accordingly, it is proposed to eliminate the phrase “where applicable” and replace it with a mandatory formulation, requiring the presence of a specialist in all situations involving information systems or electronic media. This amendment would reflect both best judicial practices and the requirements for safeguarding fundamental rights in an effective and lawful criminal process.

3) It is recommended to institutionalize a permanent national coordination mechanism through the establishment of an operational consultative council in the field of preventing and combating money laundering. This body should include all relevant institutions (SPCSB, ARBI, CNA, Prosecutor's Office, NBM, SFS, etc.) and have responsibilities related to strategic planning, risk analysis, intervention harmonization, and the formulation of joint action policies.

4) It is recommended to make parallel financial investigations mandatory in all cases that exhibit indicators of economic or financial crime, by including them in the obligatory criminal prosecution plan. This type of investigation not only identifies the origin of funds, but also locates illicit assets, reconstructs financial circuits, and provides the basis for asset confiscation measures.

5) Specialized IT and financial experts should be integrated into investigative groups in all cases involving electronic media, cryptocurrencies, networks of shell companies, or complex financial operations. This measure would guarantee the integrity and technical relevance of evidence, avoiding the risk of its compromise due to the lack of adequate operational expertise.

6) It is necessary to develop a secure national system for early warning and data sharing among state institutions and reporting entities, with controlled access for all bodies involved in preventing and investigating money laundering. Such a system would enable early identification of suspicious transactions, automatic correlation of risk indicators, and timely intervention during the initial stages of criminal activity.

The Important Scientific Problem Solved through this Research.

The important scientific problem addressed and solved by this research lies in the development of an integrated and effective forensic methodology for the investigation of money-laundering offences, adapted to the institutional, legislative, and technological realities of the Republic of Moldova. Given the transnational nature of money laundering and the continuous diversification of mechanisms used to conceal the origin of funds, this study provides a clear theoretical and operational framework focused on practical applicability.

By structuring the investigative methodology in relation to the stages of the criminal process and the evidentiary particularities of this offence, the thesis offers concrete solutions for optimizing the activity of criminal prosecution bodies, improving their capacity to collect and exploit financial evidence, and strengthening cooperation among the institutions involved. The research proposes a set of tactical instruments adapted to the current context, including the application of parallel financial investigations, the use of technologies for analyzing suspicious transactions, the valorization of data on beneficial ownership, and the correlation of banking information with other relevant sources. The contribution of this work goes beyond the descriptive level of the phenomenon, providing applicable methodological directions for the criminal prosecution process and facilitating the adoption of coherent strategies to counter this form of criminality, in line with

international standards. At the same time, the study integrates the normative, tactical-forensic, and institutional dimensions within a unified logical framework, thereby contributing to the development of a national doctrine in the field of the methodology for investigating money-laundering offences.

Suggestions for Potential Future Research Directions. Given the complex, transnational, and constantly evolving nature of money laundering, as well as the accelerated technological progress that continues to redefine the forensic landscape, future research should focus on innovative and interdisciplinary domains capable of providing scientific solutions adapted to emerging operational realities. In this context, the following priority directions for scientific development can be identified: 1) *Development of an integrated forensic methodology for the investigation of complex financial crimes*, based on the correlation between financial analysis tools, digital expertise, and traditional criminal investigation methods. Such an approach would enable the unification of evidentiary analysis criteria and strengthen the effectiveness of investigative activities in money-laundering cases; 2) *Study of the application of artificial intelligence and algorithmic analysis in identifying illicit financial flows*. Future research could aim to create predictive models capable of detecting concealed transaction patterns, use neural networks to recognize suspicious behavior, and integrate these technologies into early-warning systems; 3) *Forensic analysis of the use of cryptocurrencies and blockchain technologies in the process of money laundering*. In light of the proliferation of digital currencies and their associated anonymity, it is necessary to develop specialized investigative methods that combine financial, IT, and legal expertise; 4) *Development of the concept of “digital financial forensics”*, an emerging interdisciplinary field situated at the intersection of forensic science, digital forensics, and economics. This discipline should provide standardized tools for the collection, analysis, and interpretation of electronic financial evidence, including data from virtual environments; 5) *Study of the role of forensic science in strengthening asset recovery mechanisms and implementing extended confiscation measures*, through the development of procedures for tracking and evidentiary evaluation of assets derived from economic and financial crimes.

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3. Articles in Scientific Collections

3.2. Collections of International Conference Proceedings

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ADNOTARE

Cătălin-Bogdan PĂUN. „Metodica investigării spălării banilor”. Teză de doctor în drept. Școala Doctorală „Științe penale și Drept public” a Academiei „Ștefan cel Mare” a MAI al Republicii Moldova. Chișinău, 2025.

Structura tezei: text de bază – 264 pagini, adnotare în limbile română, engleză și rusă, lista abrevierilor, introducere, patru capitole divizate în paragrafe, concluzii generale și recomandări, bibliografie alcătuită din 356 de surse, lista publicațiilor autorului (13 lucrări științifice relevante).

Cuvinte-cheie: spălarea banilor, investigare criminalistică, metodică, tactici, cooperare interinstituțională, probe

Domeniul cercetării: criminalistică, expertiză judiciară, investigații operative.

Scopul și obiectivele lucrării: Scopul principal constă în fundamentarea științifică a unei metodici criminalistice complexe, moderne și aplicabile în investigarea infracțiunii de spălare a banilor, cu integrarea elementelor tactico-procedurale, a cooperării interinstituționale și a standardelor internaționale. Obiectivele includ analiza doctrinară și normativă a problematicii, conturarea caracteristicii criminalistice a infracțiunii, determinarea situațiilor tipice de urmărire penală, studierea tacticilor investigative specifice acțiunilor procesuale, valorificarea rezultatelor investigațiilor financiare paralele, precum și formularea propunerilor de ajustare legislativă și metodologică în context național și internațional.

Noutatea și originalitatea științifică: Noutatea constă în propunerea unui cadru metodologic adaptat specificului infracțiunilor de spălare a banilor în Republica Moldova, fundamentat pe surse doctrinare actuale și practici comparative. Originalitatea cercetării se reflectă în formularea unor soluții tactice inovatoare privind acțiunile procesual-penale (percheziții, expertize, audieri), integrarea investigațiilor financiare paralele în metodologia de urmărire penală și propunerea unui model eficient de cooperare internațională în cazurile transfrontaliere.

Semnificația teoretică a tezei: Lucrarea contribuie la consolidarea bazei științifice a criminalisticii în domeniul combaterii criminalității economico-financiare, oferind un cadru conceptual coerent pentru investigarea unei infracțiuni moderne și greu detectabile. Autorul propune reinterpretări doctrinare și soluții integrate, utile pentru dezvoltarea teoriei și practicii investigării penale.

Valoarea aplicativă a tezei: Teza oferă practicienilor – procurori, ofițeri de urmărire penală, inspectori fiscali, judecători – un instrument metodologic complet privind investigarea spălării banilor, inclusiv modele de analiză a fluxurilor financiare, tactici de obținere și valorificare a probelor electronice și financiare, strategii de colaborare cu instituții naționale și internaționale. Concluziile și recomandările pot fi valorificate în activitatea organelor de aplicare a legii, în cadrul programelor de pregătire profesională și în procesul de elaborare a politicilor publice anticorupție.

Implementarea rezultatelor științifice: Rezultatele cercetării contribuie la dezvoltarea unui cadru metodic eficient pentru investigarea unei infracțiuni cu incidență majoră asupra securității economice și financiare. Teza propune măsuri aplicabile în actualizarea legislației, în perfecționarea instrumentarului criminalistic, dar și în armonizarea cadrului normativ cu standardele internaționale (FATF, UE). Lucrarea are un caracter inovator și integrator, oferind soluții operaționale și tactice pentru investigarea spălării banilor în condițiile globalizării și digitalizării economice.

ANNOTATION

Cătălin-Bogdan PĂUN. “The methodology of investigating money laundering”
Doctoral Thesis in Law. Doctoral School “Criminal Sciences and Public Law” of
the “Ștefan cel Mare” Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic
of Moldova. Chișinău, 2025.

Thesis structure: main text – 264 pages, annotation in Romanian, English, and Russian; list of abbreviations; introduction; four chapters divided into subchapters; general conclusions and recommendations; bibliography consisting of 356 sources; list of 13 scientific publications by the author.

Keywords: money laundering, criminalistic investigation, methodology, tactics, interinstitutional cooperation, evidence.

Research field: criminalistics, forensic expertise, operative investigations.

Aim and objectives of the thesis: The main aim of the thesis is to scientifically substantiate a complex, modern, and applicable forensic methodology for investigating money laundering offenses, integrating procedural-tactical elements, interinstitutional cooperation, and international standards. The objectives include: analyzing doctrinal and normative perspectives on the subject; developing the forensic profile of the offense; identifying typical investigative situations; studying specific tactics related to procedural actions; enhancing the use of parallel financial investigations; and proposing legislative and methodological improvements adapted to national and international contexts.

Scientific novelty and originality: The novelty of the research lies in proposing a methodology tailored to the specific features of money laundering offenses in the Republic of Moldova, based on current doctrinal sources and comparative practices. The originality is reflected in the development of innovative procedural tactics (e.g., searches, expert examinations, interrogations), the integration of parallel financial investigations into the investigation process, and the formulation of an effective model for international cooperation in transnational cases.

Theoretical significance of the thesis: This work strengthens the scientific foundation of forensic methodology in the field of economic and financial crime. It offers a coherent conceptual framework for addressing a modern and difficult-to-detect offense. The thesis provides theoretical reinterpretations and integrated solutions that are valuable for further academic research and doctrinal development.

Practical value of the thesis: The research offers a comprehensive methodological tool for practitioners—prosecutors, criminal investigators, tax inspectors, and judges—providing practical guidance on analyzing financial flows, obtaining and assessing electronic and financial evidence, and building interinstitutional collaboration. The conclusions and recommendations are also applicable in professional training programs and in the design of public anti-corruption and anti-money laundering strategies.

Implementation of the scientific results: The results contribute to the development of an effective methodological framework for investigating an offense with a significant impact on national and international financial security. The thesis proposes applicable measures for improving legislation, enhancing forensic tools, and aligning legal frameworks with international standards (FATF, EU). The research presents innovative and integrative solutions, offering both operational and strategic instruments for investigating money laundering in the context of globalization and digitalization of the economy.

АННОТАЦИЯ

Кэтэлин-Богдан ПЭУН. «Методика расследования отмывания денег». Диссертация на соискание ученой степени доктора юридических наук. Докторантура «Уголовные науки и публичное право» Академии «Штефан чел Маре» Министерства внутренних дел Республики Молдова. Кишинёу, 2025 г.

Структура диссертации: основной текст — 264 страницы, аннотация на румынском, английском и русском языках; список аббревиатур; введение; четыре главы, разделённые на параграфы; общие выводы и рекомендации; библиография, включающая 356 источников; перечень 13 научных публикаций автора.

Ключевые слова: отмывание денег, криминалистическое расследование, методика, тактика, межведомственное сотрудничество, доказательства.

Область исследования: криминалистика, судебная экспертиза, оперативно-розыскная деятельность.

Цель и задачи исследования: Целью диссертации является научное обоснование комплексной, современной и практически применимой криминалистической методики расследования преступлений, связанных с отмыванием денег, с учетом тактических, процессуальных, межведомственных и международных стандартов. Задачи включают: анализ доктринальных и нормативных аспектов данной проблемы; разработку криминалистической характеристики преступления; выявление типичных следственных ситуаций; исследование тактических приёмов проведения процессуальных действий; интеграцию параллельных финансовых расследований и формулирование предложений по совершенствованию законодательства и методик на национальном и международном уровнях.

Научная новизна и оригинальность: Новизна исследования заключается в разработке методики, адаптированной к особенностям преступлений, связанных с отмыванием денег в условиях Республики Молдова, на основе современных доктринальных источников и сравнительной практики. Оригинальность проявляется в предложении инновационных тактических решений (обыски, экспертизы, допросы), интеграции параллельных финансовых расследований в уголовный процесс и в разработке эффективной модели международного сотрудничества в транснациональных делах.

Теоретическая значимость диссертации: Работа вносит вклад в развитие научной базы криминалистики в сфере борьбы с экономической и финансовой преступностью. Автор предлагает последовательную концептуальную рамку, способствующую решению современных задач расследования преступлений. Предложенные автором теоретические положения и доктринальные интерпретации представляют научную ценность для дальнейших исследований.

Прикладное значение диссертации: Результаты исследования представляют собой практический инструмент для специалистов — прокуроров, следователей, сотрудников налоговых органов и судей — по выявлению, фиксации, расследованию и предупреждению преступлений, связанных с отмыванием денег. Выводы и рекомендации могут быть использованы в профессиональной подготовке сотрудников правоохранительных органов, а также при разработке государственных антикоррупционных стратегий и программ по борьбе с отмыванием денег.

Внедрение научных результатов: Результаты диссертации способствуют формированию эффективной методической базы для расследования преступлений, представляющих угрозу финансовой безопасности на национальном и международном уровнях. Предложенные меры применимы при совершенствовании законодательства, обновлении криминалистических инструментов и приведении правовой базы в соответствие с международными стандартами (ФАТФ, ЕС). Работа содержит инновационные и интеграционные решения, направленные на повышение эффективности расследования отмывания денег в условиях глобализации и цифровизации экономики.

PĂUN Cătălin-Bogdan

METHODOLOGY OF INVESTIGATING MONEY LAUNDERING

**Specialty: 554.04 – Forensics, Judicial Expertise,
Operative Investigations**

SUMMARY OF THE DOCTORAL THESIS IN LAW

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