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DEVIANT BEHAVIOUR OF GREEK FOOTBALL SPECTATORS

Abstract of PhD thesis

By Lappas Kleomenis

Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Gyongyi Szabo Foldesi

Scientific Committee:

Prof. Dr. Janos Farkas

Prof. Dr. Csaba Istvanfi

Dr. Timea Tibori

Reviewers:

Prof. Dr. Yerzy Kosiewicz

Dr. IstvanVingender

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INTRODUCTION

Three decades ago, when football hooliganism was already a very severe social problem in many Western European countries, football stadia, in Greece were nice, quite places where football fans met and got pleasure from the game, the players' performance and from other people's company. They were in friendly relationship with players of their team and they knew the players personally not only from mass media or particularly from the TV and newspapers. The vast majority of the spectators used to be men and it was a general custom that the male members of two-three generations attended matches together. The fathers were taking their sons with them because at that time the stands were regarded as appropriate places for young boys' socialization. Indeed, they could learn about fair play, friendship, honest and proper behaviour. Although there were few cases according to which feelings of excitement and dissatisfaction occurred, especially because of the performance of the referees and the football players of both teams, there were only minor disorders since the fans of rival teams solved most problems in a sportsmanship like way.

This ideal situation came to an end in the early 1980s. By that time the behavioural pattern of Greek spectators suddenly and rapidly changed. Aggressive behaviour accompanied by violent incidents perpetuated by different groups of football fans and especially by organized groups of extremist fans, occurred to a greater extent and more frequently. Since the early 1990s football hooliganism, as it appeared throughout Europe, has been present in Greek football. During this period, the demographic characteristics and the socio-economic composition of the football crowd seemed to have changed. In the last decade the phenomenon of football deviance has steadily increased. This social problem appears to be even greater in Greece than in many European countries since the special related policies applied by the state and the efforts made by a certain number of football clubs and the National Greek Football Association in order to make stands against it, do not get to the bottom of the problem. The number of deviant incidents in and out of the football stadia, as well as the individuals and groups of spectators who are involved in such kind of incidents are increasing gradually.

Football is not the only sport in Greece, in which deviant behaviour of spectators occurs, but deviant disorders take place much more frequently in football-related contexts than in the context of any other sport. Football spectators' behaviour

appears to be an area under discussion in the Greek daily sport newspapers over the last years. Police authorities and officials of the Greek National Football Association worry that the present situation in Greek football stadia may lead to tragic episodes such as those in the Heysel stadium. The motives of the football fans' deviant behaviour are often unknown and so are the genuine reasons of the spectators' behaviour, which often appears to be unexpectedly aggressive and violent. Furthermore, it is often extremely difficult to distinguish the differences between extremist fans, organized and non-organized football fans.

There have been few attempts to study football deviance and hooliganism in Greece since the mid-1990s. Nevertheless there is still few empirical research carried out in Greek stadia. The existed studies did not involve at least relatively high numbers of football spectators and the football spectators' behavioural patterns have not been studied yet in association to the changes in wider Greek society. Still the socio-economic composition, demographic characteristics, customs and motivations of football fans of different spectating groups have never been examined in an empirical way in Greece. The research on the basis of which my thesis is based is the first attempt for clarifying these issues.

PURPOSES

The major aim of this study was to discover how the Greek football spectators' behavioural patterns have been influenced by changes in football world and how the main social, political and economical changes in wider Greek society, have affected this process. Football spectators' behaviour would be better understandable if first, an attempt of identifying who are those spectators would have been made. More detailed attempts have been made in order to respond to the following questions:

- What is the socio-economic composition of spectators attending football matches in Greece?
- What are the major demographic characteristics of Greek football spectators?
- What are the motivations of spectators in Greece for attending football matches?
- What are the attitudes of Greek spectators towards football matches?
- What are customs of football spectators in Greece?

- What kind of deviant incidents can be observed in and out of the Greek football stadia?
- To which degree football spectators react in a deviant way, influenced by racist and xenophobic motives?
- What is the role of the police forces in securing the football stadiums and the arbitration in first league matches?
- Do the mass media and especially athletic press influence individual's attitudes towards football and football fans' behaviour.

HYPOTHESES

- It is assumed that the socio-economic composition and demographic characteristics of Greek football spectators have remarkably changed over the last decades.
- It is hypothesised that the younger the spectators are, the more often they attend national, first league football matches.
- It is hypothesised that racism and xenophobia are not present in Greek football stadia to such an extent as they are in other European countries such as Hungary, Belgium, and Austria.
- It is assumed that according to spectators' views and the opinion of media experts and police authorities, alcohol consumption is *not* considered to be a major cause of deviance in football stadiums.
- It is supposed that according to views of spectators, sport reporters, officials of the National Football Association, and coaches of first league football teams the basic causes of deviance in Greek football stadia are the following:
 - a. Defective policing of football stadia by police security forces
 - b. Unreliable arbitration
 - c. A great part of the Mass Media in Greece seriously influence football spectators' deviant behaviour since they often endorse unsubstantiated information, or unofficial statements made by executive members of football associations and the leadership of football teams. Furthermore, they promote mainly aggressive, violent and vandal incidents among

different groups of spectators or among extremist fans and police security forces.

- It is assumed that there are remarkable differences in the customs and motivations of individuals belonging to different spectating groups such as non-organized spectators, organized spectators and members of the “hard cores”.

METHODS

The importance and complexity of the social problem of football deviance requires multidimensional approach, therefore several methods have been used in this work.

Those are the following:

- Survey methods
- Depth interviews
- Participant observation
- Document analysis
- Press analysis

The sample of our survey consisted of football spectators attending first league football matches. When selecting the sample of our research, we followed the examples provided in the international literature. There are countries where the number of the registered season ticket holders is big. Generally, this background facilitates the sampling process. Unfortunately in Greece it is not a custom, but there are fan clubs, that is organized groups of football spectators. Therefore we had to make the sampling and the data collection at the same time. We located our survey on the football crowd of first league teams. In 2003-2004 season, there were sixteen teams played in the first league. We selected the sample gradually. As a first step we selected five teams out of the sixteen, according to particular criteria:

- regional representation,
- size of organized spectators,
- frequency of deviant episodes as reflected in the media.

Consequently the size of the sample and the sub-samples was as follows: N= 498, Panathinaikos (n=101), Olympiakos (n=101), AEK (n=96), PAOK (n=99), Aris (n=99). The size of the sub-samples was decided according to the size of the

estimated total population based on the previous football season. Individual members in the different samples were also selected. We made this selection in two matches, at the beginning and at the end of the football season. We chose the members of the sub-samples from different areas, that is from the central, side and areas behind the goal posts. Since in all five stadia there is a specific sector where away spectators are sitting or standing, we could (during the sample selection) make a distinction between home and away spectators. We chose spectators from terraces and grandstands proportionally. The questionnaires consisted of opened and closed questions, which were based on the objectives of the research.

Guidelines were composed for the in-depth interviews containing partly similar, partly diverse questions for the different individuals. They were made in part before and after the matches, with spectators of the winning and losing teams including both home and away spectators. The spectators (n=48) were selected randomly from the organized supporters' groups for in-depth interviews. In-depth interviews were also made with coaches (n=10), managers of first league teams (n=12) and media experts (n=14).

Participant observation consisted of structured and non-structured observations. The task of participant observers was to register any kind of disorders, misconduct as well as aggressive and violent episodes.

An analysis of related documents has also been done in this work. Documents from the National Statistical Service of Greece, the Greek National Football Association and the Association of Football Limited Liability Companies (????), have been studied and evaluated. Besides, football related matters, hooliganism, and the reaction of media to football deviance has been studied from the daily newspapers and sport magazines.

The data from the questionnaires were analysed and evaluated through SPSS Statistical Program while the data from in-depth interviews and press were analysed through qualitative analysis.

RESULTS

The results on deviant behaviour are contemptible since comparing to the situation in Greek stadia few decades ago football deviancy has radically increased to such a

degree that it is considered to be one of the most severe social problems in Greek society, which has not been treated properly yet. The results of our research are summarised according to the following dimensions:

CHANGES IN THE BASIC CHARACTERISTICS OF FOOTBALL CROWD IN GREECE

Demographic Characteristics of Greek Football Supporters

Demographic characteristics of the Greek population have been rapidly changed since 1981. All those changes have influenced sports in an essential way for the function and structure of it. Furthermore, such changes have influenced individuals as units of the social system and the different groups of individuals in local societies and sports and especially football. More detailed, according to data from statistical yearbook (2003) of the National Statistical service of Greece, the Greek urban population in 1981, was 5.659.141 (58,1%), the semi urban population was 1.125.547 (11,6%), while the rural population was 2.955.729 (30,3%). Accordingly, the total population in Greece was 9.749.417 from which, 4.779.571 (49%) were males and 4.960.018 (51%) were females. Ten years later then total population has increased to 10.259.900 from which, 5.055.408 were males, while 5.204.492 were females. By that time, semi urban population has changed to urban, and a great amount of individuals has moved from the countryside to big economical centres such as Athens and Thessalonica. In 2001 the total population of Greece has increased to 10964020. There was no semi-urban population, while urban population appeared to be 72,8% and the rural population was 27,2%.

On the basis of information from different Greek football organizations, football clubs and sport newspapers, in the past decades, there was no remarkable rate difference between middle-aged and young football fans. Nowadays the proportion of the spectators in each age group has totally changed. The vast majority of the football fans are young people between 16 and 24 years old. In Hungary the situation appears to be the same. According to Foldesi (1996), young spectators “dominate the stands, almost the half of the fans are less than thirty years old”. In the 1970s and 1980s the dominance of males in larger society and in sports is quite noticeable, although the

structure of the society has been continuously changing and the customs and value system has changed as well. Females were treated as equal to the males first in Athens and then at the countryside. Since sports world is considered to be a microcosm of society, changes in the value system of society stimulated changes in sports as well and there was a quite noticeable difference in the rate of the males and females participating in the different sports. The analysis of data from the research in Greece in 2004 indicated that football appears to be a male dominated sport although the number of women participating or attending athletic events has remarkably increased. In Greece more than 50% of the spectators come from the capital of Greece, Athens. More detailed, 55,4% of the football fans comes from Athens, 30,8% come from Thessalonica and 13,8% come from other cities. The rates appear to be partly similar partly different from the rates of the total population in Greece. That means that the population of Athens is 50% of the total population in Greece, while 25% refers to the population of Thessalonica and 25% refers to the population of the other Greek cities.

Socio-Economic Composition of Greek Football Spectators

In Greece football used to be the sport of the low class people. Back to 1950's and 1960's, football and especially spectating had a totally different socio-economical and cultural basis. Football had an amateur character and the players were in most cases non-professionals players. The vast majority of the football players were simple workers who belonged to the low or middle socio-economical class. Football spectators were people from the same socio-economical classes, from the same town, from the same neighbourhood with the players. This is about the cities with high population. In the countryside people of rural societies had not enough time to deal with sports. In the 1960s and in the 1970s there was a high rate of low class football spectators in the stadia. By that time football was still an amateur physical activity. Even matches of first league had nothing to do with professionalism. In the late 1980s and until nowadays there has been a transformation of football from amateur to professional taking into consideration financial issues and the whole structure and organization of the football teams. Since 1980 the rate of the middle class football fans has started to increase year by year. Finally, in the year 2004, the rate of the spectators who belong to the middle socio-economical class has reached the 81%. It is

estimated that the greatest part of them belongs to the low middle class. In Hungary the situation appears to be totally different. In 1950s and 1970s there was a high rate of spectators belonging to the middle and low socio-economic class in the football stadia. By 1990s the socio-economic composition of football spectators in Hungary has dramatically changed, since the majority of the spectators have low social status.

Customs of Greek Football Supporters

Sport teams are composed of athletes belonging to different socio-economic classes, with different nationalities, different historical and cultural backgrounds. The situation is the same for the spectators of many sports and especially football. They attend football matches with friends' members of their family, neighbours, colleagues or even alone in order to support their team and watch their favourite players. Spectators go to football stadia in order to watch matches because they like football but they also meet friends and talk with them, say poems, sing songs, discuss about the players' and referees' performance. The vast majority of spectators, regardless of age, socio-economical class or viewer's category (occasional viewers, non-organized spectators, organized spectators or even extremist fans), prefer attending football matches with one-two friends. A remarkable number of spectators prefer watching games with neighbours or with a big company of friends. That means that the assumption according to which football is a common social institution for many members of society regardless of degree of involvement in sport, is correct. Spectating is an important part of the process of socialization in this institution.

Football fans often shout slogans at the stands, or talk with each other and discuss about players and the performance of both teams (home and guest team) and arbitration. Furthermore, spectators in sports and particularly in football do not have the chance to get down in the field and play football but they have their own psychological mechanisms to influence the football match (even the result of the game) and the players' performance. There have been few cases according to which the arbitration (referees judgment) has been partly influenced by the behaviour of the crowd at the stands. Just as players may be the stars in the field, spectators can be the stars at the stands. There is a certain amount of organized football spectators who appear to be the leaders of a high number of football fans (mainly organized and

extremist fans). Moreover, groups of spectators with similar historical, and cultural background, remarkable similarities in the socio-economic composition and the customs may also argue and fight when their favourite football teams are opponents in the championship.

The stands of the football stadiums appear to be an arena of freedom, since individuals are allowed to shout, sing, discuss and argue about football, politics, and economy. Up there they feel much stronger and much more socially important than in any other place within larger society. People and especially young men and women in cities with high population need to “*somehow spend their energy*” since physical activities in the natural environment such as ski, canoe, kayak, rock climbing, are hard to be done because of the high financial cost and the fact that they need to travel away from home. Involvement in any athletic event seems to be much better activity than “clubbing”, “surfing” in the Internet even though many violent incidents occur in sports world and especially football. Even so, the different groups of Greek spectators are influenced partly by larger society, partly by groups of spectators from abroad and at the same time they create their own customs based on their historical background of each football team.

Motivation of Greek Football Supporters

Since national sports world is considered to be a microcosm of the larger society of each country, values from society are often reflected in this microcosm, which may also create its own norms and values, which soon, will be transferred in larger society as well. Greek football appears to be a great example of the above-mentioned assumption since the *intention*, the *frequency* and the *high rate* of people attending (spectators) and participating in football matches (coaches, managers, players, referees) is similar to other traditional social functional actions such as Greek folk dances, music concerts, and theatre. Consequently sports in general and particularly football appear to be functional and important for society since there is a continual interaction between it and the larger Greek society. Greek football appears to have a symbolic character to a certain extent. Individuals and groups of individuals attend a folk dance festival because they need to meet with friends, ease psychological tension, have fun and express their regional and national identification. Football fans attend

matches partly for the same, partly for different reasons. Consequently, people attending football matches are not only interested in the football match or even their favourite player and favourite team. Being influenced by the larger society and other social institutions such as folk dance groups, they share many common values with them.

Commitment of Greek Football Supporters

In Greece, since 1996 there has been a decrease in the number of the sold tickets for first league matches. There are not remarkable differences in the number of the sold tickets of each football season although every year they are less. Violent incidents and aggression among football spectators have gradually increased. Conflicts among different groups of football supporters from the same or different city are part of the daily menu in the programs of most Greek TV channels. A remarkable amount of young men at the age of 15-19 avoid attending football matches and being involved in amateur football activities such as participating in friendly football matches at their neighbourhood as young men from previous generations did. Instead of this, their interests focus on other activities such as “surfing” and chatting in the Internet and going to parties, which are organized in special clubs where consumption of alcohol and drugs (marihuana, cocaine) may appear occasionally. It is quite probable that the “weakness” of the governmental strategies and special related policies to the problems of sports and contribute to the youth problems in larger society. The inefficiency of governmental policy can be witnessed in connection with struggling against football hooliganism.

In 2004, the interest of football fans to attend matches has been increased, probably based on the success of the national football team in the European championship. The 40% of the spectators who attended national football matches of first league go to the football stadia once per week, while 24% of them visit football stadia in order to watch first league games and only 14% of the spectators attend national matches once per month. Football is doubtless the favourite sport of Greeks. In an amateur way it can be played everywhere (neighbourhood, football fields at schools, private and local clubs and well-organized gyms. It has a low cost (a football ball is enough) and its rules are simple and easy to be followed by the vast majority of

the Greeks. Most individuals, regardless of sex, have played football since it is included in the curriculum of athletic activities in primary, secondary and high schools. Football matches can be watched in cafes and bars on wide screens in Athens and the countryside as well and are mostly watched by men.

There are fewer fans every year in football stadia that traditionally do not participate in violent incidents and they are really interested in qualitative football matches. Violent incidents in and out of the football stadia, before, during and after the matches make them avoid attending matches alone and especially with other members of their family as they used to do on 1960's and 1970's. It is even harder to convince pure football fans to go back to the stadia since football violence is also promoted through TV channels, newspapers and sport magazines. They prefer to watch football matches at home in a safe and friendly environment with friends and family members. There are also many young people who also avoid attending matches at the football fields. They prefer going out in a bar and watch the match on a wide TV screen away from their favourite players and coaches, away from live games but also away from an environment full of aggressive incidents, verbal insults and vandal actions. Of course football matches are not always followed by conflicts among spectators and aggressive and vandal incidents. However the frequency of different kind deviances perpetuated by football fans in Greece is often higher than the frequency of deviances in Hungary, Italy, or Belgium. Furthermore, the behaviour of the perpetrators of deviant incidents and especially hooligan's behaviour is unpredictable. True spectators are not willing to risk.

Manifestation of Different Kinds of Deviances

Sociologists, psychologists, police authorities, officials of the different national bodies of football are concerned, more than any other time, about the increased and tensed manifestation of deviances in Greek football, during the last years. The research in 2003-2004 football season in first league matches indicated that the majority of spectators are bothered also by the situation in football stadia, where often, different kinds of deviances occur. The most common deviances appear to be the following:

- Beating
- Breaking of seats

- Throwing coins
- Pushing
- “Dirty” words
- Throwing of different kinds of objects

In many European countries, consumption of alcohol by a great part of spectators is considered as an important problem having its roots in wider society. Football spectators often engage in acts of vandalism and bloody aggression caused by excessive alcohol intake (Bryant & McElroy, 1997). The findings of the empirical research in 2003-2004 football season showed that according to spectators views, alcohol consumption is limited in and out of the Greek football stadiums and comparing to the Hungarian case, Greek football spectators consume much less alcohol than Hungarian spectators do. Indeed, in Greece, consumption of alcohol or other toxic substances does not appear to be one of the common customs of simple spectators or organized fans. Even the vast majority of the different groups of extremist fans have been rarely noticed to be drunk before, during or right after the football matches. However, the assumption according to which few small groups of organized spectators may consume alcohol before football matches cannot be denied. The analysis of data from participant observation and in-depth interviews, confirmed the assumption that alcohol consumption is not a serious problem, although 1/3 of the participant observers realized that there were special occasions according to which groups of football fans came together a couple of hours before the match in coffee shops and bars in order to discuss about the game but also consume alcohol. In Thessalonica, the groups consisted of relatively large numbers of organized fans, while in Athens the groups of organized fans were smaller and there were also small companies of friends (non-organized spectators), consisting of three-four individuals. In such cases, consuming alcohol may be regarded as deviance since it often leads to further and more severe deviant actions involving aggression and violence.

Police authorities and officials of the Greek National Football Association, do not consider consuming alcohol as one of the major factors influencing football fans’ aggressive, violent or even vandal actions, because the majority of drinking episodes in football fields do not lead to violence, and most violence in and out of the football stadia, before during and after the match does not involve drinking or even drug use. The results of the empirical research in Greece are of the same mind with the above-mentioned statement.

A sub-category of football spectators is the extremist fans or hooligans. The expression "football hooliganism" refers to the spectators' deviant behaviour through acts of vandalism and bloody aggression, perpetuated by a certain number of football spectators. They usually go to the football stadia in organized groups and they watch a match together. They fill up the grandstands and terraces behind the goals and they use drums, banners, bombs of smoke and colourful flags in order to express their sympathy to their favourite team. They often have no interest in the football match. They look for a chance of acting in an aggressive, deviant or even vandal way, hiding behind the anonymity of the crowd. The action of the extremist fans is not limited only within the football field and during the game. Deviant episodes caused by hooligans have been noticed before or after the game, out of the football stadia. Nevertheless, it should be mentioned that hooligans' engagement in acts of vandalism and bloody aggression is infrequently caused by alcohol intake.

In Greece, hooliganism has been associated with football since it has malformed from an amateur sport activity to a professional sport. It has declined in many European countries, but in Greece it is still regarded as one of the most important social problems, which should be efficiently cured within the next years. Global and local factors have played a determinative role in extremist fans deviant behaviour. The mass media have also contributed to football deviance to a great extent. They show mostly the bad side of the football world and by doing so they propose bad models for young people. There have also been many cases according to which, a certain amount of media experts do not work ethically. Nowadays, TV channels promote violence and bloody aggression more than at any other time. Extremist fans appear to be guest stars on TV shows. Inappropriate behaviour, verbal insults, and threats in connection with pictures of violent incidents and aggressive contact are commonly promoted by private TV channels. Furthermore, hooligans' customs in football stadia are partly similar, partly different from the customs of non-organized and organized football fans.

Extremist fans occupy the areas of the stands behind the goals at stadia and nearly 40% of them pay attention to the game and their action is not limited at the stands during football matches but also out of the stadia. In the last ten years the frequency of fights among extremist fans, away from the stadia, before and after the games, has remarkably increased. Groups of such football fans arrange to meet in different areas around the cities, probably because the police forces can barely control

football deviance away from stadia. The analysis of data from interviews with members of groups of extremist fans and participant observation indicated that modern technology is used to publicize and organize fights between different traditionally rival groups of hooligans. In this way their activity is spread around the cities, involving a higher number of individuals, while at the same time they avoid intensive policing. This means that violence will rarely be reported and that the Police will be less able to control it and make arrests. In particular the Internet and mobile phones have become an essential weapon of the “ultras”. Nevertheless, hooliganism still takes place between rival groups of Greek football fans in the football stadia as well. Local derby games between traditionally rival teams often lead to violent aggressive battles between different groups of hooligans. Football deviance perpetuated by extremist fans occurs at all levels during the games, since the targets of such behaviour are often police security officers, officials and board directors of football teams, referees, coaches, players and particularly supporters of the opponent team.

Although football spectators in stadia witnessed and reported casual racist remarks made by isolated individuals, the participant observers did not register any racist or xenophobic manifestation made by smaller or bigger groups. Press analysis also suggested that journalists very rarely reported behaviour based on racist and xenophobic motives. Foreign players are really surprised because of the intensity and frequency of violent and aggressive incidents at the stands. However the lack of racist and xenophobic discrimination by their teammates and spectators of their team or by the supporters of the opponent team also surprised them. Hooligans are considered to be individuals behaving in antisocial way that is they destroy public property or physically harm other persons without any claim or demand. Nevertheless, their actions are not based on racism and xenophobia. The targets of such deviant actions can be anybody regardless of his/her ethnic group, nationality, colour of skin or gender.

MAJOR REASONS OF DEVIANT BEHAVIOUR OF GREEK FOOTBALL SPECTATORS, ROOTED IN WIDER SOCIETY

In the decades between 1960s and 1980s industry was underdeveloped in Greece. The Greek economy was based on agriculture and the proportion of RURAL population was relatively high. There were rather few cultural, commercial and administrative centres such as Athens and Thessalonica. The size of urban population has increased rapidly since themid-1960s. The process of urbanization was accompanied by waves of emigration and migration inside the country. Industrialization and modernization that had occurred in Western countries over several decades or even centuries, took place in Greece unpredictably within 20-30 years. Social norms and values had to be changed also very fast resulting in value conflicts, disorientation and in anomie. The rapid political, economic and cultural changes caused social and psychological disorganization to a great number of people in urban societies, which further had an impact on their behaviour, since it often appeared to be deviant. Such kind of behaviour can be partly explained by Durkeim's anomie theory, according to which people are dissatisfied and unable to control their behaviour following new norms, which seem to them, to be incompatible with the present situation and uncertain. Under these circumstances, a rise of deviant behaviour may be expected.

Deviance in wider society in general and especially in family, at school, within groups of friends and in the neighbourhood, later tends to be the object of imitation in sport arenas and especially in football spectating subculture. Football spectating groups are also regarded to be social institutions. Nevertheless, such institutions often provide young people with deviant behavioural patterns, which may further guide their behaviour at grandstands and in wider society as well. Such a phenomenon is better explained in Edwin's differential association theory according to which deviant behaviour is not just a result of imitation. It is a learned behaviour based on the frequency, intension and duration of an individual's experiences to different kinds of deviancies. Furthermore, deviant behaviour is learned in interaction with other persons in a process of communication

The revolution of mass media had an impact on football spectating deviant subculture. It is not only the traditional media agents such as newspapers, magazines, TV and radio; it is also the advanced technology (computers, mobile communication

from every part of the world and Internet as well which make the information exchange a very simple procedure. The consequences of all the above-mentioned changes appear to be both positive and negative. New behavioural patterns closer and similar to those of other countries including various manifestations of deviant behaviour have been raised in Greek football spectating. The greatest part of spectators evaluates the role of media in football spectating in a negative way. It is believed that the mass media show mostly the bad side of the football world and by doing so they propose bad models especially for the young football fans.

The mass media has also transferred behavioural patterns by groups of extremist fans from other European countries, into Greek football. The new transferred ideology, customs and football-related values, have been easily and immediately adapted by certain groups of extremist fans in Greece. Nevertheless it should be mentioned that the global impact of media is not considered to be the only reason of hooligans' deviant behaviour. The local and global factors influencing their behaviour are interconnected and it is often exceedingly difficult to make a distinction between them, since they partly strengthen, partly weaken each other. It means that in our case, extremist fans' were psychologically ready to adopt the new behavioural patterns brought by media in association to crowd deviant behaviour, since because of the moral collapse and psychological disorganization of a remarkable part of middle aged individuals and an even larger number of young people in wider Greek society and in football spectating as well, did not have that "defensive ethical mechanisms" in order to filter and choose what would be properly essential to adopt or what would be bad for the spectating common value system. Although football deviance has declined in frequency in most European countries over the past 5 years, most noticeably in the UK, in Greece, deviant behaviour of that special figures of the above-mentioned sub-category of spectators that is hooligans is increasing gradually, to such an extent that this social institution has become a deviant social institution.

Furthermore, since deviance in football was not sanctioned at all or in some cases it was not sanctioned properly, the manifestations of deviances have gradually increased and the number of spectators being involved in deviant incidents has been greater than before. Under those circumstances the situation could be hardly ever handled by police security forces of the stadia and the problem has increased to such an extent that groups of spectators many hours before the match and quite far from the football stadia have committed deviant episodes. As a result of this, many more police

officers have been required for the proper policing of the stadia and different areas of the city as well. Nevertheless, deviancies could not be avoided and thus there were quite often reports of damaged public or private property and in some particular occasions extremist fans (according to estimations by police officers) physically offended civilians. Yet, it is contradictory the fact according to which, although spectators view deviant actions as severe problem in football stadia, they do not consider certain deviant incidents as deviances.

The official reaction to deviance is contradictory, because first the problem was neglected and still the special sport laws (which were formulated especially to sanction the problem of football deviancy) were not fully applied in time. First they did not pay attention to the problem, then the existence of football deviance was neglected and finally authorities did not face the truth. It is true that such problem would require huge amounts of money, and new established administrative governmental and non-governmental organizations in order to study, treat and control deviance. However is quite probable that by nowadays the different kinds of deviancies perpetuated by members of football spectating subculture would be diminished in a small or great extend. Now we are facing a situation, which can be hardly controlled.

Managers, coaches, players appear to be extremely disturbed since often their teams are punished by loosing points in the National Championship because of certain deviant incident perpetuated by groups mainly of organized spectators and “ultras”. There are many cases according to which the game has been played with total absence of football fans of the one or both rival teams at the stands, which directly means that players and coaches did not have the psychological support of the spectators of their team. In the countryside, the situation appears to be even worse. The players of both rival football local teams have been often noticed first to argue with spectators and then to attack them, after spectators had first insulted verbally the players, the referees, the coaches and their families and then destroyed the seats at the stands. At such kind of matches the number of police security guards is low or nonexistent and the matches are often cancelled or interrupted mainly because of the spectators behaviour.

CONCLUSIONS

Before drawing the conclusions it should be noted that there is a lot of literature on football deviance in sport and particularly in football in Europe but in Greece very few empirical research has been carried out. Therefore, such conclusions based on a comprehensive survey have been formulated for the first time regarding football deviance in Greek football stadia, taking into consideration the following major issues:

- *Lack of **empirical research*** in Greek football stadia.
- The existed studies have *not* involved relatively **high number** of football spectators.
- Previous researches have *not* focused on the basic **characteristics** of Greek football crowd.
- Football spectators' **behavioural patterns** have not been studied in association to the changes in wider Greek society.
- A **distinction** between the different groups of football fans have *not* been done in previous studies

In order to counteract football deviance and especially hooliganism in Greece, the process of sanctioning and treatment of the problem should come in association with the deepest reasons rooted in wider society and the football spectating subculture as well. The economical changes, the social stratification, the important social problems and the global changes around the continent, play primary role in crowd and individuals' behaviour. The value system of each local society and the personal involvement in traditional actions and interactions, play also a vital role to their behaviour. Great example of all the above mentioned appears to be the traditional Greek local (agricultural in most cases) societies in the countryside. There are very few left but they appear to be well organized, excluding or solving the most important social problems by having a strong, healthy, traditional value system. The meaning of civilization in such local societies is close connected to tradition (celebrations with national Greek dances, religion-related wedding celebrations) and the healthy value system of the society, which is based on the historical background, natural environment, and commitment of humans towards natural environment. On the other hand, people in the capital and other economical centres of Greece have lost the "final destination of their trip in life".

People's increased interest in winning more money in order to spend it on useless purposes, their behaviour which in most cases can be characterized as deviant, aggressive, violent or even bloody, the lack of respect to other human beings around them, to the natural environment (forests, rivers, lakes) and animals, can be only explained in the broader spectrum of the rapid social changes and consequently changes in values, norms or even habits of societies in the countryside. It should be noted that the vast majority of the population in Athens and other cities with high population comes from the countryside. Accordingly, in Greek modern societies, the basic values and the social rules resulting from them appear to be not accepted by all persons and thus particular subsystems sets are formed, the members of which, do not acknowledge the general social value and thus in most cases they act contrary to the generally accepted social principles. Yet, nowadays, individuals are lost within an anonymous society, single trivial units for which no one is interested in. By joining in some groups, individuals gain forms of relating, and their behaviour is seriously influenced by the social rules resulting from the value system of the members of the above-mentioned subgroups.

Globalisation and the economical and political changes throughout Europe are often suspected to raise social problems such as violence, aggression, social disorganization racism and social inequalities. In our opinion, it is the moral collapse and "weakness" of a great number of members of the society as individual units to fight against all the above-mentioned social problems. The psychological disorganization and depression of low class and middle low class people often occurs after comparing their prestige, financial situation and quality of life with those of people from higher socio-economical classes. Consequently, first the social problems in larger society and more specifically the problems in each local society should be solved and then there are chances to solve problems in athleticism and especially football, such as violence and aggression. In all cases **family** is the principal factor influencing individuals' and thus crowds' behaviour since in it; young people are provided with a decisive value system shaping their character, being mentally, psychologically and physically prepared to live in larger society outside family borders.

The most important social problems are the crucial problems of the youth. Nowadays, young people experience intense psychological and emotional conflict. They realize that social institutions such as schools and families have taught them half

of the truth about life. They understand that they are not well prepared to face the crude reality. As a result of the above-mentioned situation comes the demolition of the idols to which young individuals had believed in and the rejection of all the values they had been taught thus far. So, in football fields they may use violence running contrary to the basic behavioural rules of society. Nevertheless, the state and the officials of the Ministry of Culture (sub Ministry of youth), the police authorities and the different sport and especially football associations do not apply the policies, strategies and measures which have already formulated over the last ten years to make a stand against the real causes of violence and aggression in larger society and sports world. Politicians should be satisfied since all those young people spend their depressed energy in the football fields without going out on the public roads of the cities and outside the parliament or other governmental buildings in order to argue and ask for solutions to the social problems they are faced with, such as proper higher education and job opportunities.

Yet it is quite interesting, that spectators have given a positive evaluation of football fans behaviour in football stadia although quite often many different kinds of deviant incidents occur in football matches. That probably means that they accept as non-rule-breaking behaviour the one, which outside football stadia, in wider society, is considered to be deviant. Although it runs contrary to the ethical behavioural patterns of Greek society in general, it seems to them to be part of the spectating subculture where they belong to. Since there is a certain interconnectedness between sport/football and wider society, such behavioural patterns may be severely transferred in wider society and then the management of crowd's behaviour and sanctioning of the different kinds of deviancies will be much difficult.

It is extremely difficult to fight against football deviance in Greek stadia. It is however a challenge for the state, scientists, police authorities and personnel of the administrative boards of the different football associations, to understand, properly treat and gradually decrease the problem to the greatest possible extend. We assume that the very last attempts for making a stand against all kinds of deviancies within football spectating subculture will bring notable results and may be used as a basis for further struggle against this multidimensional social problem.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of our research, the following recommendations are made in order to diminish deviant behaviour in Greek football stadia:

- Essential control mechanisms and proper “training” in conflict resolution skills may come from external social agencies such as family, school, church, or youth organizations. Therefore it is desirable to involve them in the struggle against deviant behaviour in football stadia.
- Control security procedures at the stadia should be quick and effective.
- Police security officers should:
 - ? be well trained
 - ? be properly educated
 - ? respect the football fans
- Making a stand against football deviance in Greece requires not only the special established sport laws, but also a more severe application of those laws.
- Football society must lead the fight against football-related deviancies

We suggest that before an attempt is made for struggling against football deviance in Greek stadia, the following matters indicated by the results of our research, should be seriously considered:

- Psychological disorientation, disintegration of values, and the growing anomie in Greek society, in association to the fact that football attracts relatively large attendance and stadia are often used as avenues to release tension, is a major reason of deviancy in football spectating.
- The issue of the media’s coverage of deviant behaviour by different groups of football spectators as well as the extremist fans’ aggressive and vandal actions is very important, and the way it happens appears to be essential for the football fans’ behavioural patterns. Furthermore, a great part of the mass media is also responsible for the steady increase of football deviance.

Further research should be carried out on football deviance and particularly on the role of police security forces in controlling crowds’ behaviour in Greek football stadia. Additional studies should also focus on the role of the different bodies of

football for making a stand against this severe social problem and the effectiveness of the applied strategies and policies against football spectators' deviant behaviour.

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