

Fighting of the security forces against the football hooliganism in Hungary

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thesis

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Introduction

Football is one of the most popular sports of the world. There are 205 member countries on the list of the FIFA, the international federation of football. Football is an official sport at the Olympic Games. World and European championships are organized for the national teams. Clubs have also founded their own tournament systems mainly in Europe and South America. Its mass base is huge. Media became interested in the sport because of its extreme popularity. As a result of that football has become a spectacle sport. The best players have become world wide stars, the lifestyles of whom are envied and followed by millions of fans. Everything that happens in relation to this sport either on the pitches or around it, receives a great publicity. It is true for the violation at the terraces as well.

Violation on the pitch, football hooliganism devalues the basics of the sport and disturbs social order. The most striking dangers are listed bellow:

Hooliganism

- ? Appears as the negative alternative of fair play (with accepted rules)
- ? Discourages the decent supporters
- ? Radiates the state of being outlaw with its riots, the sanctions of which have not been elaborated yet, uncertain the citizens if the state cannot enforce the social standards and is unable to sanction the infringement of lawful rights
- ? Can supply reserves for extreme political groups from among the neglected young with identity problems, looking for connections, communities
- ? Appears as a sensational thing in the media. People soon get used to it, accept it, so a deviant sub-culture is born, having different standards that endangers or threatens society.
- ? Tests the effectivity of security forces continuously, who can count on only losing prestige among these unsettled conditions
- ? As a result of which people may/might die in or around the stadiums!
- ? With its only 'positive value' may discourages most part of society with their riots, thus enforcing the social values and standards in most of the citizens.

The phenomenon was first described in England, at the beginning of the 20th century, and it spread to each part of the world by the end of the century.

Record of riots around and in the stadiums can be found in Hungary since the 1990ies. The customs of extreme supporters were taken over by common Hungarian fans and supporters with the help of media.

The fan clubs of the teams became polarized and similar formations came into existence. Ultras and hooligans also appeared who gave permanent work to the security forces.

There had been some incidents before the change of regime in 1989, but the strict control of the regime impeded the spreading of this phenomenon. The stadiums were used as a kind of social valve.

The power holders preferred the supporters shout and the steam out in the stadiums, rather than witness them going into the streets to protest (Földesi, 1994).

Riots in the stadiums could have been dangerous in Hungary, since sometimes several ten thousand spectators were on the terraces. But the politically supported police was able to maintain the order up to the end of the 1980ies.

Police going through difficulties after the change of regime, had to face new problems. The electronic and written media published information about the police without any control.

In many cases the legal steps seemed to be brutal, as the media could broadcast only the reactions of the supporters on the police actions. The causes never appeared in the pictures.

Several laws changed at that time. The interpretation of the situation was a problem both for the football crowd and for the police.

Politics have become polarized, thus judgement of the security forces was not clear. Police often became the target of political battles that further increased the courage of the hooligans.

Privatization reached police in the middle of the 1990ies. The multiplying of property force duties resulted in creating a new job, the personal and private property forces (Act IV. 1998). New areas of activity came into existence with this specialization, in which private firms could also take part (protecting a place, delivery of money, guarding persons and events). Preparations for these activities were through individual experience or by friendly talks.

Specialists for securing events forces came from two circles; from former, retired policemen, or from old supporters at the matches.

These two sides, once being opposites of each other, now became partners, and tried to solve their duties on the basis of their former relations. Firms founded by former policemen attached to the police of course, and asked for help from them. The other side could rely on the supporters. But peace on the terraces could not yet be settled. The coordination and cooperation of police, local organizers and spectators could not be realized yet. Many expected a solution from legal regulations.

The Act on Sport, issued in 2000 separated the duties of security forces. Police was responsible for the security of public places, while inside the stadiums the organizers were responsible for the order. This act was brought by economic reasons. The solution to this problem is not unified either in Europe. In England the clubs, while in Italy the state has to pay for the security. The Hungarian clubs consider this question a public duty.

Ensuring security in the stadiums is heavy load on them. Local security forces (organizers) could choose: either ask for the help of police, or sign contracts with private security forces.

The problem is that police is very expensive, while the private firms has limited sphere of action. So this is an ambiguous solution. Most of clubs chose the private firms and ask the help of the police only in case of a serious situation.

The problem was/is still intensified with the fact that the Act, modified in 2004, determined that it is the duty of the state to ensure the security in the matches with predictable high danger. According to our opinion it is not the final solution.

We thought that the understanding of football hooliganism having grown already to be of social importance, might be aided by a sociological approach.

Aims

The major aim of this thesis is to discover what possibilities a society and within that the state and the security forces have to control aggressive and violent behaviour in football stadia. It is our objective to describe and analyse the activity of security forces working on controlling football hooliganism, and to learn their opinions and suggestions in relation to handling the problem in Hungary.

On the basis of all these we discuss the possible historical and social reasons for football hooliganism in Hungary. Then the description of present situation of hooliganism in Hungary (1999-2003) follows.

Next the legal background, the infrastructure and the training of the security forces are presented. We make an attempt to give a comprehensive picture about securing football matches in Hungary, mainly in Budapest.

The following research questions were arisen:

- ? To how much extent controlling of hooliganism is the duty of security forces?
- ? What are the social and historical reasons of rioting in and around the stadiums?
- ? Which are the main factors helping or blocking the effectivity of the work of security forces?
- ? What is relationship or cooperation between the different groups of specialists taking part in securing matches?
- ? How is the effectiveness of the security forces' activity in relation to football matches are evaluated?
- ? What are the possibilities of security forces to control football hooliganism?

Some of these problems have been already raised by Hungarian researchers. But no one really studied these specific questions, and no empirical research has been carried out in this area. This thesis discovers new knowledge, not yet published, based on empirical research.

Hypothesis

On the basis of the above mentioned questions the following hypotheses were formulated.

It was supposed, that

- ? Stopping football hooliganism can be reached only with social cooperation, the part of which is the effective prevention on the side of security forces, the law enforcement, the training, the developing of infrastructure, and the effective cooperation of security forces.
- ? Riots in and around stadiums cannot be handled only as a security problem. The social and historical reasons of hooliganism should be known.
- ? The effectiveness of security forces are influenced by the legal conditions, the infrastructural background and the training of specialists.
- ? There is no suitable cooperation between the different security force groups, the reasons of which must be looked for in the legal background, in the training, in the infrastructure and in a kind of conflicts of interest.
- ? Members of security forces are unsatisfied with the effectiveness of their work.
- ? Social cooperation is needed to put an end to football hooliganism, with e.g. effective prevention, developed law enforcement, training and infrastructure.

Methods

Several methods have been used because of the complexity of the problem.

- press analysis
- document analysis
- field work/participant observation
- surveys
- depth interviews.

After reading the sociological, psychological and security descriptions, official police documents and media news were compared, and document analyses were completed.

The police material consisted of minutes of matches, annuals, security plans and the steps and orders handling these problems. The reaction of media could be known from daily papers, programme magazines, from the Internet and the Nemzeti Sport /National Sport Paper) (1999-2003). Programs issued by the Ministry supplemented the above mentioned list ('Be a fan, do not make war'. Training reserves by Bozsik method, Orth Stadium, Reconstruction Programme), educational thematic and relevant acts were investigated. Personal observation on site (at the football matches of 4 teams from Budapest: FTC, UTE, MTK, Kispest-Honvéd) was also applied between 1999 and 2003.

On the basis of the received information three different areas could be separated (legal background, infrastructure, training), in relation of which questionnaires were prepared and filled in by the security force members.

All the members were interviewed. The survey was completed with interviews with the leaders of security forces. The results of the survey were processed with the SPSS statistical programme. The data of the questionnaires were evaluated with nominal and ordinal scales, so no parametric tests were carried out.

Results

On the basis of our research, the things to be carried out were evaluated, with which football hooliganism could be restricted. We thought that answer could be given to the problems and our hypotheses could be justified. The results of our research are summarized as follows.

Football hooliganism as a social problem

Football hooliganism is a complex social problem which endangers the security of the spectators. It is proven by series of catastrophes in the stadiums, increasing the victims of violation on the terraces.

Football hooliganism with its riots exceeds football and sport; it disturbs other functions of society. One of them is public safety. Some of the hooligans attacked pedestrians, destroyed cars, public transport vehicles, robbed petrol stations, thus disturbing the calmness of other citizens, endangering other people's property or life. Voters could feel directly the presence of violation. So football hooliganism could become a question of state security. They may set example for other citizens, to choose violence instead of telling the opinion in a democratic, legally accepted way.

It was proven during the studying of special literature that violation has always been part of sport (Mennel 1989, Perking 1969, Szabó 2003). But its judging changed periodically. Presence of violation in sport is not a good thing, but a simple fact. Violation, aggression, will-power to defeat the opponent is part of competing. Legality of the bout is controlled by judges.

The „controlled violation” is part of sport, the degree of which is determined by the rules of the game. The rules of supporting could be also formulated and justified. But only coordination of several areas is required to formulate these rules. Regulating of violence in the stadiums means the restricting of the aggression of the individual from security point of view. The values of supporting should be strengthened instead of letting the temper flow freely. It can appear at several levels.

The first level is the self-control, though which the mood in the stadium still remains within limits, in spite of the different frustrations. The combination of these standards, rules and the unwritten rules of behaviour should be formed. The second level is the effect of the immediate environment on the individual, that should prefer the fair play supporting instead of the riots.

The third level is the guiding of the society, which serves as a sample with its idols, and which takes sides against the violence on the terraces with its sanctions. But the coordination of several areas, and social cooperation is required to formulate the rules.

Legal background of football hooliganism

At the beginning of our investigation (in 1999) it seemed to be a general viewpoint that football hooliganism is not regulated. Everybody expected a solution from the „new” Sport Law of 2000. The modified act, and beside that the fact of disturbance in the Penal Code – contains specific elements of football hooliganism.

On the other hand its effectiveness lagged behind those expected. This was proven by the fact that newer modifications were done to it in 2004. But it is not only the duty of the legislator to stop football hooliganism. Why are there laws, if their application is made difficult? Even the most precise formulated laws cannot be effective if

- ? The law enforcers do not agree with them
- ? They cannot be fitted into the Hungarian practice
- ? They do not harmonize with the already existing laws
- ? There are no necessary financial means and infrastructure to implement them
- ? There are no proper security force apparatus to enforce the laws
- ? The enforcers do not make use of the complete power of the law
- ? Society does not identify itself with the fight against football hooliganism

Policemen were satisfied moderately with the laws valid for them in our survey. The members of local security forces evaluated the legal background of their work as good. But their leaders were not satisfied at all, they found unsatisfactory their rights, they urged a more accurate prohibition for those going to the pitch (it was solved in 2004) and to throwing objects to the ground as well. But in their opinion using of pyrotechnic means should be legalized. Police leaders also urged changes, but mainly in the field of law enforcement. It was a common viewpoint of all security force sides that sanctioning of rioting is very weak. Judges were referring to the principle of gradualism of punishments, and that the police arrest not the proper, really dangerous fans. They say that charges should be heard based on poor investigative facts. In our opinion the legal background to hooliganism is more or less suitable to maintain order, but the application of the acts are not effective enough.

Training security force specialists

It is very difficult to compare the different training methods of security forces. Police has an established education system formed several decades ago.

The job of property guard is existing only from 1998 officially. Police train their members at secondary school, at the Police Academy, and at organised courses. Members of local security forces have to complete a three-month course. Based on this it is obvious that policemen have more professional knowledge. The competitiveness of the local organizers derives from their structure. They can react very fast to economic changes and their bureaucracy is minimal. Their strategy is based on their half-legal qualifications (according to law it is already a profession, but the spectators still accept them as civilians) and on their relation to the supporters.

It can be made probable, that police would be able to control the refractory supporters. But at the momentary economic situation neither the state, nor the clubs are able to cover their expenses.

Considering the foreign examples, the organizers could maintain the order, but more time and more training should be spent on training specialists. The present day situation is biased. In case of an everyday match the local organizers are responsible for the security inside the stadium, and the police for the security of public places. This situation requires huge coordination and empathy from security force members. The cooperation could be started with the joint training of the security force members.

The process has already begun, as not all the young finishing the Police Academy will work as a policeman. Some will work in the civilian sphere of life, maybe in firms securing matches at football stadiums.

Technical state of stadiums from security point of view

The state of the stadiums has gradually decreased since the 1980ies. The arenas were maintained for a short time, but there was no state support for their developing. Since the 1990ies even the maintaining could not be paid for by the clubs. The Stadium Reconstruction Programme launched in the end of the 20th century was continued by the government, elected in 2002(!!!). Thirteen stadiums have been reconstructed up to now, some only with compromises.

It is very difficult to build out compatible security equipments to these newly reconstructed buildings. Traffic, parking, and access to the stadiums are already given (the new UTE Stadium is about 2 km (!) far from the Metro station, used by the visitor's fans; it cannot be changed). The entering systems could be made effective only with the help of recognizing machines and season tickets, the introduction of which still has to be waited for. Data storing and their transfer (about expelled persons) are still problematic. Observing cameras are effective only if steps are done after the infringing of rules, and if punishment matches them.

On the basis of our investigations it can be seen that police has all the necessary equipments, but the infrastructure of the local organizers have no technical ones at all. At present, processes of smaller costs should be applied up to the time when the new or reconstructed stadiums are prepared.

When there are the double derbies, stadiums located in city centres, easily accessible by different teams and their supporters (e.g. Puskás Stadium in Budapest), mobile space controlling systems, etc should be used. In spite of the numerous infrastructural changes, the state of the stadiums from security point of view is still very depressing.

Cooperation of security force specialists

Property forces enabled with much poorer legal rights, and working beside the police mean a help, but at the same time they are concurrent to police. It is very difficult to compare police and property forces.

The advantage of police is that it has an established structure (in spite of the continuous reorganization), a training system, infrastructure, legal licence, scientific background, state budget and several years of experience. But the police are unable to solve all the security duties from this state budget. The new private security force firms were organized as a social demand.

They undertake those duties, for which the police do not have capacity, but is required by the economics (guarding shops, premises, objects, persons /body guards/, transporting money and valuables, securing meetings). Their professional advantage comes from their being unstructured. They are able to move and react fast for economic demands.

So the two forces complete each other. The problem derives from the fact that very often matches are secured by both of them. The organizers cannot solve the already existing conflicts between them.

In these cases police has to interfere. This means an extra duty and money, the financing of which is not yet solved. In the opinion of police leaders property forces are unnecessary; police should be equipped a way to be able to fulfil the duty of securing matches. When local security forces are criticized, they always refer to their ambiguous legal position and to the soft-heartedness of the courts.

Securing of matches should be the duty of the state according to the clubs. They charge property force to maintain the order in the stadium from economic reasons. The opinion of the police, about the effectivity of work of property forces is described among the results. The conflicts between the police and property forces can be explained by the followings:

1. Property forces should have a personal safety fulfilling public duty according to leaders of local security forces

Police leaders would not like to see private police beside them.

2. Local organizers are market sensitive, they form their strategy matching the demands of the customer, their budget
3. The financial position of police is difficult, and the leaders do not allow the level of safeguarding to below a certain level of risk. If local organizers ask for help, the police are willing even to regroup the forces to be able to safeguard the matches properly.
4. Local organizers have no established training structure. After the basic training they get new information only through tradition handed-down. They very often do not know anything about police strategy.

Police has a settled training, work independently and the property forces have no duty in connection with this.

5. Organizers respect the education of police, but in their opinion they cannot find words with the spectators.

Local organizers are unsuitable for this work in the opinion of police.

Coordination and cooperation in this field could be the solution.

Matches of overriding danger have to be secured by the police. It was determined by the Sport Law in 2004. The other matches are the duty of the local organizers. There are several hundred such events a year.

This compromise solution is also very expensive, but forming of strategy is dangerous, because the policemen taking steps can be also attacked, if there are not enough policemen in the surroundings.

An increased police safeguarding is required in the present situation in our opinion. Local organizers should be given parts of the duty (controlling the tickets, giving information, etc.).

But strategy and managing of safeguarding should be the duty of police. The required amount of money should be looked for and the costs of safeguarding have to be planned. So auditing of football would be also needed.

So an increased and coordinated police and local organizer control should be applied, and after the filtering out of hooligans and infringers of law, the duty should be handed over to the property force.

Effectiveness of security force specialists

On the bases of questionnaires both police and security forces are satisfied with the effectiveness of their work. But they judge each other's work differently. In the police opinion local organizers are good for controlling the tickets, and working as hostesses. Only some of the public order leaders confessed, that employees of security forces have prestige among the spectators. In the opinion of local organizers police irritates the spectators, and because of them most of the disturbances are escalating. In their opinion local policemen are the most accepted by the spectators, while the members of Standby Police are the least.

It is supposed that most of the policemen are personally known for the supporters, while they get into contact with members of Standby Police only during the matches, in case of a conflict.

It would be a good initiation on the side of the club to have a police status with the greater teams, who can continuously maintain connection with the spectators, creating a kind of sport friendship with them. The duty of police is to defend citizens and the spectators.

Their duty is to maintain public order, act against the refractory supporters and to defend peaceful citizens. Organizers could help this activity. Security force members can be effective only if they cooperate.

Deductions, suggestions

A will and determination of the whole society is required to stop football hooliganism.

The first step is the social agreement that categorizes football hooliganism as a deviant behaviour. The notion, football hooliganism has to be determined, and which parts of supporters are deviant. The margins of these borders are not obvious for everybody. We could see that interest is attached to hooliganism. Politics has appeared in the stadiums; football matches are used as a place where steam can be let out, and certain economic interest can be also traced.

A sport political decision-making based on social agreement is required that determines the future of football. Hooliganism is very dangerous, even if its support is decreasing, as violence may appear in other sports as well.

Money and adequate apparatus are necessary to create safety, the direction of which should be given by specialists. A Professional Committee should be created about that determines the strategy against football hooliganism that is given a free hand and is responsible to fulfil the duties, to stop this phenomenon. The Páva Report contains those elements, with which football hooliganism could be kept within narrow bounds in Hungary.

The work finally could have been started, but within a few months, the demand for a professional expert solution has become uninteresting. To no purpose were good ideas born to stop the phenomenon, if they were not executed consequently. Football hooliganism would require immediate steps, until it claims deadly victims.

After the immediate duties, prevention should be concentrated on. It has to be accepted that football hooliganism is an existing problem and instead of the liquidation of the conflicts, stress must be put onto prevention. Prevention is expensive, and it is difficult to justify its necessity. With the effective prevention the reasons can be terminated, so economists are prone to quickly freeze donation. To avoid this situation the length of duties and the amounts to be used should be determined. The effectiveness and the use of money should be continuously controlled.

The proper sources of money have to be found. Many are irritated by the high salary of the players. A correct survey about the money in football and about the rational division should be carried out.

Areas of prevention:

- ? Fair play in training reserves and players
- ? Continuous training of security force members
- ? Keeping connection with spectators, educating fair play to them, forming rules for supporters
- ? Continuous controlling, developing and supervising of infrastructure in the stadiums
- ? Issuing clear, unambiguous acts with predictable consequences

If prevention is late, proper and legal steps supported by the society, then later strict, responsible judges with suppressing force must be issued. Closing out the refractory supporters from the stadium is a police action. Part of the social cooperation is the objective instruction of media about the events. It is the responsibility of football to set authentic examples to the young. The clubs are interested in a high level play, so that the spectators could choose a standardized entertainment instead of vandalism. It is the duty of the state to attract young with a career, based on knowledge, rather than hooliganism or crime.

Possible trends of further researches

In our opinion researches have to be continued in two directions. One could be the studying of international steps brought in the field of football hooliganism.

As a result of the European integration and the Hungarian teams participating in international cups, foreign hooligans in Hungary and Hungarian fans abroad can take part in riots. The European preventive programmes are the police tactics. The objective recommendations based on researches might be important in harmonizing the Hungarian actions. The other one could be the continuous attention paid to the Hungarian fans and teams. The deviant, extreme supporters should be picked out, isolated from among the supporters, those responsible for the mood of matches and those having an economic potential.

A detailed sociological survey could help in forming the strategy of public safety, and the economic power of the Hungarian supporters could be also mapped. Answer could be received if football is a business in Hungary or not. Both type of researches could give answer to important social problems, and could suggest useful recommendations in the area of public safety and economics.

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