

УДК: 316.624.3:658

## **FOOTBALL HOOLIGANISM IN THE MEDIA SPACE: EUROPEAN AND DOMESTIC CONTEXTS**

**Artomov Pavel** – PhD (Sociology), assistant professor, Department of Sociology, V.N. Karazin Kharkiv national university

*Football and everything that surrounds has long been the subject of public attention and interest which maintains in the attention of international and regional media. The media discourse widely represents different information and evaluation of events on the football field and outside them which take place before, during and after football matches. Particular emphasis is placed on the behavior of the most active and visible parts of supporters - football fans and football hooligans. The media coverage of the football-related problems has national specifics and general trends. There are two main European media strategies in covering football hooliganism. The most common strategy for modern European media space is reducing attention to activity of football hooligans. According to some researchers such media reaction leads to decrease the intensity of football hooliganism. Another widespread media strategy is in heightened attention to football hooliganism in sensational way. Especial situation is formed in the Ukrainian media space. The football fans and football hooligans are praised for their active participation in Euromaidan movement, Revolution of Dignity and following war in Donbass, but their offensive actions practically are not covered. Regardless of strategies or discourses media certainly affect the existence and development of various social phenomena, including football hooliganism.*

**Keywords:** football hooliganism, football hooligans, football fans, media, media strategy, media influence.

*Футбол і все, що його оточує, давно є об'єктом особливої суспільної уваги і інтересу, що знаходить своє відображення на всіх рівнях медійного дискурсу. В масмедіа широко представлено різноманітну інформацію і оцінку подій не тільки на футбольних полях, але й за їхніми межами до, під час та після проведення футбольних матчів. Об'єктом уваги сучасних медіа є не лише люди і події, що безпосередньо пов'язані з футболом, а й футбольні уболівальники, які вже давно стали невід'ємною частиною футболу. При цьому акцент робиться на поведінці найбільш активної і помітної їхньої частини - футбольних фанатах і футбольних хуліганах. висвітлення в масмедіа проблем, які пов'язані з футбольним хуліганізмом, має свої національні особливості, але, не зважаючи на їх наявність, можна говорити про загальні тенденції, що проявляються незалежно від конкретного національного контексту. Аналіз цих тенденцій, дозволив автору зробити висновок про наявність двох основних медійних стратегій щодо футбольного хуліганізму. Найбільш поширеною в сучасному європейському медійному просторі є стратегія, яка виявляється в зниженні уваги до активності футбольних фанатів і особливо футбольних хуліганів, а у випадках, коли це неможливо, - у безоціночній констатації і інформуванні про наслідки подібної активності. Така реакція масмедіа на футбольний хуліганізм, на думку деяких дослідників, призводить до зниження інтенсивності його проявів. Ще однією досить поширеною стратегією є підвищена увага масмедіа до різноманітних проявів футбольного хуліганізму, яка дуже часто має сенсаційний характер. Результатом реалізації цієї стратегії нерідко стає ескалація проявів футбольного хуліганізму. Особлива ситуація склалася в медійному просторі України, де після активної участі футбольних фанатів і футбольних хуліганів у «революції гідності» та конфлікті на Донбасі, їхні дії отримують позитивну оцінку, а негативні прояви практично не висвітлюються. Незалежно від медійних стратегій та актуальних дискурсів сучасні масмедіа, безумовно, здійснюють суттєвий вплив на розвиток різних соціальних феноменів, зокрема футбольного хуліганізму.*

**Ключові слова:** футбольний хуліганізм, футбольні хулігани, футбольні фанати, масмедіа, медійні стратегії.

*Футбол и всё, что его окружает, давно являются объектом пристального общественного внимания и интереса, что находит своё отражение на всех уровнях медийного дискурса. В массмедиа широко представлена различная информация и оценка событий не только на футбольных полях, но и за их пределами до, во время и после футбольных матчей. Кроме людей и событий, непосредственно связанных с футболом, объектом внимания современных массмедиа часто являются футбольные болельщики, которые уже давно стали неотъемлемой*

*часть футбола. При этом акцент делается на поведении наиболее активной и заметной их части - футбольных фанатах и футбольных хулиганах. Освещение в массмедиа проблем, связанных с футбольным хулиганством, имеет свои национальные особенности, но, несмотря на это, можно говорить об общих тенденциях, которые проявляются вне зависимости от конкретного национального контекста. Анализ этих тенденций позволил автору сделать вывод о двух основных медийных стратегиях в отношении футбольного хулиганства. Наиболее распространённой в современном европейском медийном пространстве является стратегия, которая выражается в снижении внимания к активности футбольных фанатов и особенно футбольных хулиганов, а в случаях, когда это невозможно, – в безоценочной констатации и информировании о последствиях такой активности. Подобная реакция массмедиа на футбольный хулиганизм, по мнению некоторых исследователей, приводит к снижению интенсивности его проявлений. Ещё одной достаточно распространённой стратегией является повышенное внимание массмедиа к различным проявлениям футбольного хулиганства, которая имеет зачастую сенсационный характер. Результатом реализации этой стратегии нередко становится эскалация проявлений футбольного хулиганства. Особенная ситуация сложилась в медийном пространстве Украины, где после активного участия футбольных фанатов и футбольных хулиганов в «революции достоинства» и конфликте на Донбассе их действия получают позитивную оценку, а негативные проявления практически не освещаются. Вне зависимости от медийных стратегий и актуализируемых дискурсов современные массмедиа, безусловно, оказывают существенное влияние на развитие различных социальных феноменов, в том числе футбольного хулиганства.*

**Ключевые слова:** футбольный хулиганизм, футбольные хулиганы, футбольные фанаты, массмедиа, медийные стратегии.

Football is the most popular sport in the world and one of the main targets for the modern media. Professional and national football teams and its players become objects of worship of thousands and millions people worldwide. Journalists present at every match all over the world, in every football ground across many countries. Audience may follow not only football matches, but training and everyday life of footballers, coaches, football managers and even football therapists. The chances of any story or incident being missed are very small in such media coverage.

Football fanaticism is one of the parts of modern football. It is impossible to imagine football match without fans' activity. Modern football is a kind of interactive show with football stars on the field, performances on the terraces and high quality picture of both sides on different screens. More than half of a century journalists at football matches have reported crowd behavior, rather than just the game. It is evident that in these circumstances the media plays a very important role in the public's view of football fanaticism and especially hooliganism. For decades football supporters have caused disorder both inside and outside football grounds in almost all countries where football is played [1]. Acts of hooliganism have produced consequences of varying degrees of severity, including injuries and fatalities, as well as damage to property both inside and outside of stadiums [2]. As a result of such occurrences, the phenomenon has received widespread attention from a variety of circles, notably the media. The publicizing of football disorder has arguably proved unhelpful in that it has exacerbated the issue, glamorizing and reinforcing hooligan behavior [3]. However, the influence of the media in this regard has not been entirely unconstructive, as it has also succeeded in pressuring the government and football authorities to tackle the problem. Amateur digital and TV cameras, closed-circuit television (CCTV) also mean that disturbances within stadiums or nearest streets are caught and replicate in mass media or social networks.

There are two main strategies of media reaction on behavior of football fans and football hooligans in Europe. First is factual with little social comment. Second approach to the reporting of soccer violence is connected with sensationalist headlines and scaring content. Both of them can be found in one or another kind at various times, but whilst denunciation of hooligans is the norm for the European mass media.

These media strategies were relevant in different periods. The various national and regional media actualized each of them to varying degrees in current period. The recording of football matches, events before, during and after them was always a part of football. From the beginning of XX century till the end of Second World War reports of trouble around and at football were common. Most of them were made in a restrained style: small and factual articles. After WWII consciously or not press facilitated the view that football crowds were becoming more orderly and well behaved by underplaying, or just not reporting, incidents which did occur [4]. Such understanding of the football supporters' nature becomes a base of new media elucidating strategy. Small amount of anxiety and denunciation began to creep in to football reports and publication. Later concern and condemnation turned into calls for tougher action on football fans because their behavior. The roots of football-

related press sensationalism were in widespread public fear over rising youth violence and juvenile crime. The press began to carry more and more stories of its nature and football matches were an obvious place to find them [4]. In fairness we have to mention, that sensationalism in description of football-related violence isn't common for most European media and has situational nature nowadays.

For a more detailed analysis and confirmation of this thesis, let us turn to the different European media examples. We'll analyze some national cases which are devoted and represented the major and the most developed football cultures.

Football and sport media are important part of Italian culture and society. The first mentioned above media strategy was the main in Italian Press before the 1970s. The attention of the journalists was more focused on the players than on the terraces or football fans. If any kind of violence occurred, then it was reported as a secondary event in the context of the media message. From the mid 1970s attention was focused on the favoured by the Italian ultras terraces (behind the goals) and even outside the stadiums. The feature of the Italian case is that it wasn't just journalists' or authorities' monolog in media. The banners displayed in the terraces frequently include messages to journalists and football authorities. Gradually it led to widespread hatred which exists on the ultras to the media and on the media to the ultras.

It is possible to affirm that nearly the same situation was in Germany and Netherlands. Before the 1970s the main attention of the media was paid to football directly, i.e. game not terraces. The media reports of football hooligans, possible violence and extra police on football in the late 1970s to mid 1980s influenced the increasing of football hooligans' interest in coming matches. There wasn't acute hatred between media and hooligans, but there is no doubt whatsoever that the media have certain effect on football hooliganism. The spate of de-amplification of football violence in the German, Dutch as in Austrian press occurred in the mid to late 1980s. The number of media stories and mentions of football hooliganism gradually decreased and it lost the coverage which football hooligans had previously thrived upon [5]. As a result of such media "playing down" was the decreasing numbers of violent football-related incidents.

Local and sports media in France and Belgium behave in a very similar manner when reporting on football or football fans. In 1980s the relative uniqueness of football violence in the French context has made it a very newsworthy item. But after early 1990s, violence appeared in a relatively limited number of occasions but never on the same scale. French and Belgian journalists report about football supporters only when they show their discontent with the club's management, when they become violent or when football clubs meet their arch emesis. But in the French Press reports on violence outnumber reports on other issues related to football supporters [6]. That's why French media is loath to report on any kind of football fans, in order to avoid confrontations. By and large, the situation in the Belgian and French media is similar.

Football-related violence and football hooliganism wasn't common for Danish football culture. The media reaction in Denmark on behavior of football fans was predominantly factual. From the mid 1980s instead of amplification football hooliganism Danish press supported recognizable positive trends encompassing companionship, fantasy, humor and pride of football fans. As a result of such media activity was growth of popularity and the number of Danish "Roligans"<sup>1</sup> phenomenon. Danish popular press and media have an opposite role to that played by the English and formed a unique tradition of media coverage of football fans.

The sport section holds an important place in the broadsheets as well as tabloids in Scotland. In one hand a similar to Danish case exists in Scotland where from the early 1980s national football team fans, known as "Tartan Army", have consciously sought to acquire well international reputation. It was made by boisterous friendliness to the host nation and opposing fans through "carnavalesque" behavior and predominantly positive press coverage [7]. The Scottish media represent English fans as hooligans and underplay any trouble involving Scottish football fans or football hooligans. In another hand the Scottish tabloids focus on football and on the domestic rivalries much more than the broadsheets. Tabloids in Scotland regularly mention rivalries, a contentious issue that the broadsheets avoid. Media reports usually quotes and emphasises the verbal attacks of players or fans and vice versa, leading to a real war of words [6]. The way of domestic pre-match and football reporting in Scottish media is very close to English media sensationalism.

Most of European media path mentioned above phases, but football hooliganism continued to feature heavily in British newspapers and mass media in general and still do today. Sensationalist style of reporting presents football violence as far more of a concern than it actually is, elevating it to a one of the major social

---

<sup>1</sup> The term "Roligan" was invented by the Danish newspaper B.T.A. and is a pun based on the word "rolig" which means «calm» in Danish.

problem in England [4]. It's even possible to affirm that the treatment of football hooliganism in the English Press is one of the factors of amplification whereby sensationalism and exaggerated coverage of a problem can have the effect of worsening it. The huge anticipation of football-related troubles meant that English journalists picking up the smallest of incidents to make a sensation. Furthermore, numerous researchers and some authorities argue that media coverage of hooliganism has actually contributed to the problem. More recently, the popular press has been criticized for its pre-match reporting. However, the certain double standards exist within the tabloid press not only in England, but all over the Europe [7]. On the one hand media are keen to label the football hooligans as "barbarians" and "animals", their actions as "iniquity", "harm" and "evil". Whilst at the same time before top matches media encourage the antagonistic, hostile and even xenophobic views so prevalent within the football hooligans' scene. The pre-match and football reporting is shrouded in violent or war metaphors and other imagery then anyone should not be surprised that this spills over on to the football grounds, terraces or nearest streets.

The same situation was in Ukrainian media space till the end of 2013. Majority of media reports labeled the football fans in traditions of sensationalism. Active participation of football fans and football hooligans in Euromaidan movement, Revolution of Dignity and following war in Donbass extremely change public and media attitude. It is not just predominantly positive press coverage. Football fans and football hooligans become the driving force of the revolution and an outstanding example of patriotism. It's much more rapt that in any other national cases. The Ukrainian media underplaying and overlooking any trouble involving domestic football fans. In case if such mode of action become impossible or senseless, then appears factual report with little neutral comments.

The national press in particular and the mass media in general can take major credit for the public's view of the football and its fans. It is evident that the mass media plays a very substantial role in the public's view of football hooliganism. The clearest overall tendency is that the European media hesitates between different ways of dealing with violence among fans and the rivalries at the root of such violence [7]. The media has helped form the modern phenomenon of football hooliganism and shaped public opinion of the problem. The media context may directly influence the actions of fans themselves and by far the biggest problem lies in the sensationalism of such context. Therefore difficult position of the media is in not only reporting on violence but in being an actor in the construction and diffusion of violence and football hooliganism.

In any national media case, in any media strategy everyone must clearly understand that football violence and football hooliganism has not disappeared, it has simply scaled down and shied away from media, police cameras and the scrutiny of journalists. Consequently phenomenon of football hooliganism needs further comprehensive study.

#### **Bibliography:**

1. Dunning E., Maguire J., Murphy P., Williams J. The social roots of football hooliganism / E. Dunning, J. Maguire, P. Murphy, J. Williams // *Leisure Studies*, №1 (2), 1982. – pp.139-156;
2. Kerr J. H. *Understanding Soccer Hooliganism* / J. H. Kerr - Buckingham: Open University Press. 1994;
3. Redhead S. The sporting life: The realism of the Football Factory / S. Redhead // *Soccer and Society* № 8(1), 2007 - pp.90-108;
4. Frosdick S. Marsh P. *Football hooliganism* / S. Frosdick, P.Marsh - London: Willan Publishing. 2005 – 224p.;
5. Horak R. Things change: Trends in Austrian football hooliganism from 1977-1990 / R.Horak // *Sociological Review*, №39 (3), 1991. – pp. 531-548;
6. Ranc D. Football supporters and violence in the British and French Press / D. Ranc // *International Review on Sport and Violence* № 3, 2010. - pp. 24-32;
7. Marsh P., Fox K., Carnibella G., McCann J., Marsh J.: *Football Violence in Europe* / P.Marsh, K.Fox, G.Carnibella, J. McCann, J.Marsh – Електронний ресурс, режим доступу: [http://www.sirc.org/publik/football\\_violence.html](http://www.sirc.org/publik/football_violence.html)