

JACEK BURSKI
University of Łódź*

EURO 2012 – THE END AND THE BEGINNING FOR POLISH FOOTBALL SUPPORTERS

Abstract

The paper attempts to verify impact of UEFA Euro 2012 tournament that was hosted by Poland and Ukraine on traditional supporters' communities in Poland. Applying the typology of football fans developed by Richard Giulianotti, it focuses on traditional fans. Article explores different strategies undertaken by the supporters towards Euro 2012. The event is analyzed from various perspectives: as a chance for change in Polish public discourse; as a trigger for moral panic and as a field of conflict between various social actors (professionals, players, supporters, media, etc.).

Key words: Football supporters, Euro 2012, Sport Mega Event, Mega Project

INTRODUCTION

The choice of Ukraine and Poland as host countries for the European Championship in 2012 was a big surprise to everyone. The Polish media began a heated debate about the chances of fulfilling infrastructural projects, improvement of Poland's international brand, and risks for the Tournament. The last theme was especially focused on a discussion how the specific type of football supporters – which in Poland are strong and well-organized as traditional supporters' communities – would affect course of the Tournament. The media-based stereotype of this specific group is quite typical of descriptions which we can find in other countries: that the cores of this social group are created by

* jacekburski84@gmail.com

hermetic, aggressive, xenophobic hooligans and ultra groups, whose attitudes towards “normal” society as it is generally understood is, to put it mildly, threatening. This article focuses on the impact of Euro 2012 on traditional supporters’ communities, with special attention given to presentation of the internal perspective of fan communities. It should be emphasized that these aspects of the analysed communities and their internal discourse are frequently not visible to outside observers.

The article is divided into three main parts. It begins with a description of the meaning of the Euro 2012 as the first Sport Mega Event (SME) to take place in this part of the world in the history of SMEs. The European Championship was first event of this scale organized in Middle-East Europe. This had a strong impact on the public debate which emerged following the announcement that Poland and Ukraine had won the competition (against – among other contenders – Italy). The focus of this debate changed over time, and the moulders and attention of public opinion hooked on several topics. One of the discussed issues was directly related to the problem of football audiences, and especially traditional supporters. Their activity was seen as threat, not only to the safety of other fans from Poland and abroad who would like to join in celebration of Euro, but also as projecting physical violence itself as part of the country’s image, which might come to be viewed as subject to expected misbehaviour of the part of Polish football fans. This perceived threat acted as a trigger to pull out different kinds of stereotypes functioning in the discourse about this particular type of sport audience. Of course, it must be acknowledged that while the problem of hooligans, ultras, etc. was seen as an important risk for the Euro 2012, it was only one among other important issues, others being related to the large amount of infrastructural projects needed to be completed, especially those related to roads, railway stations and stadiums.

The second part of the article focuses on different types of actors in the public debates: professionals, politicians, the media, and the spectators themselves (both ‘traditional’ and modern). In summarizing these groups it should be noted that ‘professionals’ means individuals who take part in the social world of professional football: players, football authorities, referees, members of companies engaged in organization of the Tournament, etc. Politicians and the media are of course easily recognized in the discourse, but with respect to the role of latter it needs to be emphasized that they are frequently responsible for framing the main topics discussed in the discourse. The last category of actors – the spectators themselves – is described using the typology taken from the works of Richard Giulianotti, especially that part in which Scottish sociologists examine modern transformations of the experiences of football audiences.

The final part of the article describes representations of Euro 2012 which could be observed in the internal discourse of Polish supporters, and the impact of Euro 2012 on these traditional communities. Especially the article focuses on the processes of unification and engagement in political debates on a scale which had not been observed till now.

EURO 2012 – THE FIRST POLISH SME AND ONE OF THE FIRST POLISH MEGA PROJECTS

Before describing how the Euro 2012 was seen and actually experienced by supporters, I'd like to focus on the Euro 2012 as a specific kind of Sport Mega Event, seen from the particular and locally contextualized point of view.

The European Championship are definitely one of the most important and the biggest SMEs in the world. It ranks among the World Cup, Olympic Games, Super Bowl and a few others as the most watched event and one generating the highest income. Regardless of the place of its organization, the European Championship is always in the centre of public debate. Its meaning and impact are always negotiated in many smaller and larger discussions which offer a field for different clashes between fractions and groups of interests. However much one can observe various issues which generate wide consultations about the social, economical and political importance of the organization of mega events, there is always a contextualized focus and tension inherent in these discussions.

The Polish-Ukrainian case was no different. A description of its main features and context should result in a better understanding of the discussed processes and hence of the article itself. The first characteristic of this event was the fact that was not a joint venture, but rather two separate and discrete parts of a single venture which took place in two different locations. Apart from the obvious diplomatic issues, such as for example facilitating border crossings, there was no serious cooperation in the relations between both countries and societies. In this article there is insufficient space for a detailed analysis of the reasons for this fiasco, but it needs to be underscored that the Euro 2012 consisted of two episodes which occurred at the same time in different countries. It would not be overstatement to that there would have been no difference if the event was organized not by neighbours, but by randomly chosen countries.

From the sociological point of view, SMEs create a fantastic opportunity to observe how society works in highly-intensive, expressive, and sharpened

historical moments. But contrary to the previous championship,¹ Euro 2012 did not mark the start of serious sociological debate. One may ask why this was so. Firstly, we have to take into consideration the shape of Polish sociology of sport (as a Polish sociologist and without access to similar data from the Ukrainian side, the situation in Ukraine is not considered in this article). The sub-discipline of sport sociology, which is in many local contexts well-developed, is still in the beginning stage in Poland. Even though the preparations for the Euro 2012 stretched out over four years and could have provided a fantastic field of research, only a few research initiatives have been taken.² Today, a year after the close of the Tournament, we are still not able to say anything definitive about the general impact of the Euro 2012 on society. The only accessible data, which comes from organizers of the event, are strictly quantitative and oriented on research into the issue of the image of Euro 2012. On the other hand it needs to be said that there is express lack of research in this particular field. The reason behind this less-than-passionate engagement is related to (among other aspects) the low esteem in which the sociology of sport is held in Poland, and as a corollary the insufficient amount of research applications and low level of funding.

The third aspect of Euro 2012 which needs to be highlighted is connected with the specific atmosphere of unity which was created by media before and during the Tournament. This is not an assertion that this feeling was accompanied with real processes of social integration in society. I would rather say, referring to example of Germany in 2006, that the visions of collective experience were so overwhelming that, on its basis of the Polish society, in terms of its discursive emanation, seemed to be more united than in ordinary times.

MEGA PROJECT FOR THE WHOLE NATION

Although SMEs have a very extensive record in the literature, the need to look for new theoretical and empirical perspectives is still strong. An interesting attempt to meet this need could involve use of the concept of the Danish economic geographer, Bent Flyvbjerg [Flyvbjerg, 2007], whose work is centred around the problem of mega projects. In his conception, examples of mega projects are

¹ Please see: [Hachleitner and Manzenreiter, 2010; Giulianotti and Klauser, 2009; Giulianotti and Klauser, 2011; Horne, 2010] and many others.

² The main project, which was oriented on research into the Euro 2012 with special attention paid to its social side, was run by sociologists from the University of Warsaw (the team leader was prof. A. Giza-Poleszczuk). One of the publications resulting from this project is the article of Renata Włoch [Włoch, 2012].

marked by rather large infrastructural investments which lead to unwanted and unpredictable consequences:

(...) the major problem in megaproject policy and planning is the high level of misinformation about costs and benefits that decision makers face in deciding whether to build, and the high risks such misinformation generates.

It has to be said that Sport Mega Events have their own specific characteristics, and it is not my goal to use the above-mentioned concept in a simple way in order to analyse Euro 2012 from this particular perspective, but there is a field for comparisons.

Firstly, Euro 2012 constituted a huge chance not only to improve the image of the country but for the realisation of many infrastructural projects as well. Only because of the Tournament did the Polish Parliament enact a special law in 2007, specifically designed for (mega) projects implemented within the perspective of the upcoming event. The best examples of such mega projects are stadiums which were designated for use in the forthcoming competition. But during these preparations there was no social consultation about their use following the Euro 2012. Only one stadium (in Poznan) was renovated for the Tournament, while the other three (Warsaw, Gdansk and Wroclaw) were built from scratch. What's more interesting, the costs of maintenance and amortization are now covered from the budgets of local administration. Only the National Stadium in Warsaw has financial grounding in the central budget and is managed by a public company specially designed for this purpose. Only in one case (Poznan) was a deliberative poll conducted and – which is not surprising for anyone following the Polish public debate – its results were never taken into consideration. The goal of this research poll was to recognize the needs of the local community.

Secondly, this article is an attempt to see the Euro 2012 as a next crucial moment in Polish history after the transformation of 1989 and the accession to the European Union in 2004. Euro 2012, in this perspective, could be viewed as another chance to change the country. It had its own characteristics. One can immediately observe the focus centred around infrastructural issues and Poland's image abroad. At the same time it was accompanied by a lack of focus in certain areas: it is hard to find discussions about those problems which were mentioned after the last Euro championship which took place in Austria and Switzerland [Hagemann, 2010; Brand et al., 2010 Koller, 2010].

MAIN GROUPS OF INTEREST

As Horne and Manzenreiter said [Horne and Manzenreiter, 2006: 2]:

Two central features of contemporary mega-events are firstly, that they are deemed to have significant consequences for the host city, region or nation in which they occur, and secondly, that they will attract considerable media coverage.

The second part of the concept of a Sport Mega Event is, however, more than just about the role of media and its coverage of the event itself. The social aspects which emerge around its organization are in the eye of media as well. Among other problems which were widely reported in the media before and during the Tournament, significant attention was paid to the problem of the football audience. In particular, the ‘traditional supporters’ were taken under scrutiny. In this regard, it is important to determine *who* was engaged in emerging debate about danger for the Tournament, and what interest groups operated behind the scenes.

Firstly, we have to look at the sports professionals. In the paper this category is deemed to include all those persons who worked in the organizational sector of Euro 2012. This is not limited to only the regular employees of the Polish Football Association or officers of PL 2012 (the public company established specifically to manage and coordinate the whole event). I also categorize the players of the national team as part of this group. It is important to understand the process whereby distance was created between the ‘traditional supporters’ of Polish football and the supporters of Euro 2012, and particularly the Polish national team. The then-manager of Poland, Franciszek Smuda, decided to add players whose national identity wasn’t clear – there were caustic comments about the “real” reasons behind certain players’ wish to play for Poland, in particular with respect to players such as Damien Perquis, Eugen Polansky or Ludovic Obraniak. Each of these players has his own story, but for many supporters they were not Polish enough to play for the country. This ‘anti-voice’ come especially from those spheres of the social world of football fans in Poland who were active at local arenas. Not without significance was role of media. This in turn leads us to describe another group of interest: journalists.

When we take into consideration any concept of moral panic, starting from Cohen’s classic description [Cohen, 2002] and passing through to the ideas of Goode and Ben-Yehuda [Goode, 1994], the role of media is underlined and presented as crucial to understand a specific atmosphere of fear and pressure to act against an imaginary enemy (folk devil).

Critcher’s summary of the process model [Critcher, 2008] of moral panic establishes the role of mass media as key agents in creating and maintaining

a feeling of panic about a specific problem. In contrast to this concept (in which media are seen as active actors), in the attributional model proposed by Goode and Ben-Yehuda the media “are sometimes active in moral panics but more often are passive vehicles for others’ making claims.” [Critchler, 2008: 6].

The Euro 2012 can be analysed as an example of moral panic. The problem which created the background for the unleashing emotion of fear was not new, but definitely the trigger was directly connected with the forthcoming tournament. In 2010 in Bydgoszcz the final of the Polish Cup took place in a match between the clubs Legia Warsaw and Lech Poznan. The history of conflict between these two football environments is long and it is not necessary to describe it in detail for the purposes of this article. Suffice it to say that the supporters of these clubs have a long record of fights, and their attitude towards each other was (and it still is) confrontational. Due to very poor security measures, immediately after the match Legia’s supporters invaded the pitch (their team won the Cup) and very nearly clashed with Lech’s fans. Fortunately there were no major fights and after a few minutes the situation settled down. However, the next day more significant confrontations took place. The Prime Minister of Poland spoke out very sternly about the troubles, and local authorities began to make decisions about closing stadiums if there was any sign of expected violations of the law. The police put supporters’ communities throughout the whole country under close control and monitoring. For the next two years travelling to away matches become a huge organizational problem, and closing fan zones of stadiums for away supporters become a regular policy. It is very instructive to study the police statistics for the last five years with respect to securing sports events in Poland. Up until 2010 the data shows a gradual decrease in the number of arrests, incidents involving violations of the law and, generally speaking, hooligan activity. Budgets for security actions decreased during this time. After 2010 everything increased dramatically,³ and last but not the least a storm was unleashed in the media about football hooligans. Up until the very beginning of the Euro tournament, TV stations, newspapers and Internet portals informed public opinion in regular, short intervals about another alleged hooligan fight or, which was more fitting to the concept of moral panic, other criminal activity which was allegedly connected with football supporters.

The next key agents in this analysis are politicians. After 2010 we can observe a change in the previous rather liberal attitude toward football-related policy to a strict and oppressive one. What’s more, there are a number of public statements

³ All data are accessible at sites of Polish Police: <http://kpk.policja.gov.pl>

from prominent politicians about football-related violence and proposals for solutions. Unfortunately, this change of direction in attitude has not resulted in real and effective change. The policy toward football spectators has become significantly more restricted, and this should be considered as the main reason for the reactions which have come from supporters' communities. Since 2010 we can observe an increasing number of political acts of resistance on the terraces of Polish stadiums. This trend has had consequences outside the stadiums. Fans are organising marches and protests against oppressive measures and – a fact which is very interesting – against the ruling political party. Offensive songs and chants are frequently directed against Donald Tusk, Prime Minister of Poland who, contrary to the stereotypical image of a 'folk devil' – has become the main enemy of supporters.

The last but the most important group which is described in this article are football fans in general. The history of Polish football fandom has its own characteristics. After 1989 – which marks the actual beginning of the modern style of football supporting in the country – Poland faced a problem with football violence. In the 90's hooligan fights inside stadiums were occurring on a regular basis. What more the authorities – police and other security services – were not able to protect casual observers. The first decade following Poland's transformation was crucial in creating the basis for stereotypes of Polish football supporters. In first decade of the new millennium the reality with respect to the social world of football supporters has changed. Among others aspects of change, the following should be underscored:

- institutionalization of ephemeral communities, which has lead to the foundation of associations by majority supporters' groups;
- due to increasing level of control and monitoring we can observe hooligan groups pushing out from the stadiums and changing their habits. New strategies have evolved and fights now are being organised far from stadiums and outside observers;
- increasing engagement in political debates. It is clear that Polish supporters are close to right wing movements and thus they are a natural support base for radical groups of politicians and activists.

The context of Euro 2012 however requires a more specific description of football fan structures in Poland. Using the terminology from Giulianotti's work [Giulianotti, 2002] we can divide the world of football spectators into at least four ideal types: supporter, follower, fan and flaneur. In brief, these types are the results of crossing specific dimensions which were set in binary opposition by Scottish sociologists: hot-cool and traditional-consumer. The first pairing measures the

meaning of the club in one's value system. The thicker (hotter) the solidarity, the more of a supporter one is. The second pairing is an attempt to describe the degree of bonding with the club. The resulting characterisations provide a good insight into the history of transformation of football spectators. With football becoming more business-oriented, it is promoting a new type of relationship with a club. The latter is seen rather as a brand, with a specific client base. Seen from this perspective, SMEs have their own profile of football fans who follow particular events. If we have to choose who is the ideal fan from the organizers' point of view it would definitely be the flaneur, whose relationship with the club (in this particular situation it would be the national team) is described by Giulianotti as:

The cool consumer spectator is a football flâneur. The flâneur acquires a postmodern spectator identity through a depersonalized set of market-dominated virtual relationships, particularly interactions with the cool media of television and the Internet. [Giulianotti, 2002: 38]

From this perspective it is better for business when emotional attachment is short and can be easily switched from one team to another. This allows fans to 'remain in the game' even if the team they are rooting for loses. In this type of spectator there is no room for negative attitudes or criticism, especially on the basis of values. It is important to keep in mind the difference between clubs and national teams. Giulianotti's work was definitely focused on relations between fans and clubs. but it is interesting to speculate about the nature of the bond between a national team and its supporters. Through the prism of an SME such as Euro 2012 we can observe how this bond changes and which direction is predominating.

Even though some types of audiences are more welcome than others, this does not mean that those groups who are sceptical or openly against an SME will disappear entirely. On the contrary, in the case of Euro 2012 we can find a lot of examples of demonstrative disagreement with the way of managing the event, the direction of spectator policy management, or even the composition of the Polish national team. These cases of 'resistance' were prepared by groups of traditional supporters. Returning to Giulianotti, we can describe this type of fan as:

The traditional/hot spectator is defined here as a supporter of the football club. The classic supporter has a long-term personal and emotional investment in the club. This may be supplemented (but never supplanted) by a market-centered investment, such as buying shares in the club or expensive club merchandise, but the rationale for that outlay is still underpinned by a conscious commitment to show thick personal solidarity and offer monetary support toward the club. [Ibidem: 33]

The above citation contains an important observation about the readiness to offer financial support of the club, but conditioned on meeting the bond of authenticity. When such a bond is switched to the national level, the problem not only concerns the degree of willingness to support the team, but in engaging in the event as a whole. The Euro 2012, due to its implemented policy of control and monitoring (of clubs, not the Tournament itself), was seen more as a threat by the traditional supporters' community than as an opportunity for change for the better.

Summarizing this part of the paper, we can see the opposition between consumers (flaneurs) and supporters. But the nature of this opposition is only analytical, and open conflict between them has never occurred. In practice it would be virtually impossible, because ideal types of such negative and positive attitudes would be hard to find. The next part of this article shows how different strategies were taken by supporters, and attempts to explain why these anti-Euro actions were founded on particular interests and goals connected with the local debates about the role of supporters' communities. But before proceeding to that analysis, I would like to more specifically describe that part of the audience which was more naturally expected as a Euro-friendly one.

When Giulianotti describes flaneurs, he uses the theoretical background of postmodern theory, which means he wants to show how the traditional narration about football fans is changing. But there is one exception – class structure and its consequence, i.e. inequalities. This is the question which underlies any SME analysis – is this kind of event really inclusive? Can we speak of the Euro 2012 as an event which really invited everyone to participate? A lot of doubts appear when the Tournament is presented as a holiday for the whole nation. Firstly, we have to recall the criticism from early pages of this article. The main focus of the authorities and organizers was on infrastructural projects. Their view of the Euro 2012 as an opportunity for another civilizational leap forward has consequences. One, among others, was leaving the social aspect of the event to the side. Skipping social consultations in the process of decision-making was standard policy, and due to this practice the stadiums which were built for Euro do not meet everyday expectations. The clubs or companies who are running these buildings still have a lot of financial problems, and in addition are frequently unable to fill them during matches. This is only one example of the kinds of errors which were made during the preparations.

Secondly, when we take closer look to issue of improving Poland's image, which was established as one of the criteria of success or failure, we can observe how the predominance of thinking in the public debate was about impressions. This also has some consequences with respect to the perception of football

fans accompanying the publicity surrounding Euro 2012, and helps explain the panic reactions to every report of hooligan activity. But there are other reasons underlying this kind of response – the anti-Euro attitude which was demonstrated and popular among some groups of football fans showed that the ‘unifying atmosphere’ was not prevailing as it was supposed to.

Thirdly, the problem of the economic results of Euro 2012 need to be emphasized. In the early forecasts it was said that the Euro 2012 would bring with it a significant positive impulse for the Polish economy. The ‘Evergreen Barcelona effect’ was often used as an argument for organizing and investing in Euro 2012 and its accompanying infrastructure. As the classic scholar on mega projects’ issues, Flyvbjerg, noted at the outset of this article, it is a rule that misinformation is a regular strategy in communications about mega events. What’s more, it is frequently found that in huge projects (and the Euro 2012 and its particular investments can be analysed as such a mega project) costs are rarely calculated in a proper way. Flyvbjerg says it is not always a problem of maliciousness, but rather a consequence of complications with respect to a particular investment. The report “Impact” is a document which was ordered by PL 2012 – the company founded by the Polish state to organize Euro 2012 – in order to analyse the impact of the Tournament on the Polish economy in the time perspective of 2008-2020. It is not surprising that this document is very optimistic about the positive aspects of organization of the European Championship. Unfortunately, we do not have any data or research which would constitute a real basis for discussion about the actual consequences of the Tournament. Relying only on this report is clearly insufficient, and there is a need to extend the analysis to include more autonomous sources.

ATTITUDE TOWARD EURO 2012 INSIDE TRADITIONAL GROUPS OF SUPPORTERS

The history of football support in Poland has a specific dynamic, which I have tried to explain in earlier parts of the paper. To gain a proper understanding of the phenomenon known as Polish-style fandom, we need to go back to the 1980’s and take a closer look at the origins of today’s types of football spectators in Poland. Firstly, it has to be remembered that traditional supporters’ communities were always acting contrary to the different agendas of governance, and paid specific attention to the different kinds of security services. The most radical attitude was and still is fans vs. the police, but different actors could play the role

of 'enemy'. In the 1980's in some parts of the country anti-regime beliefs were popular among football fans. The supporters of Lechia Gdańsk had a leading role in the anti-communist movement among fans. Their activity never became big enough to impact on a country-wide scale, but it was well noted and in the negotiated mythology of Polish football fans it occupies an important place as an example of willingness to resist in the face of a threat to the most important values. It's mentioned here because a continuation of this type of specific strategy can be observed, one frequently taken by the supporters who want to create an atmosphere of danger and perceive an attack on their values or rights. This background interacts with the anti-modern approach, which in recent years has become more popular among supporters' communities in Europe.

Before moving on to describe the types of strategies were taken by supporters before and during the Euro 2012, it's worth focusing on the issue of their approach, which would be best described by the slogan: 'Against Modern Football.' In many supporters' groups all across Europe this attitude is connected with belief that the changes which have taken place beginning in the late last century in the football world have negatively affected the game. The commercialization of football is so strong as to become the main logic behind some club authorities. Starting from TV rights as the main source of money, and the associated increasing power of TV companies to manipulate league schedules, and moving on to clubs' constant attempts to enrich their stadium's revenue by creating terraces for wealthy consumers rather than die-hard fan, we can observe how the social world of football spectatorship has changed. Paradoxically, supporters of small clubs are in better position, as authorities have to keep the traditional background of support in mind. In the case of top clubs like Real, Barcelona, Manchester and others, it is hard for fans to have any impact on the decision-making process, despite the fact that the number of people following the club is enormous. Still, even in these huge communities resistance sometimes emerges and leads to secession. FC United of Manchester is probably the best example of a disagreement with a club's management policy, leading to the launch of a whole new club. The club was established in 2005 by a group of Manchester United fans who were disappointed with the fact that their beloved club was going to be sold to an American millionaire. They were convinced that this move was against the true idea of a football club. This case is an example of a successful secession at both the sport and organizational level. We can also find other cases in modern football where traditional supporters have acted to organize a collective movement to reach a particular goal: Liverpool FC, Legia Warsaw, AFC Wimbledon. The effectiveness of each of these efforts is different and is dependent on the local

context, which is comprised of factors such as: political background, economic power of the supporters' group, numbers of supporters involved, etc., but it is hard to overlook these examples of disagreement with, or even mutiny against, a particular situation in football.

Turning to the research issue of this paper, we now consider how Polish traditional supporters reacted to the Euro 2012, and examine the main attitudes and strategies taken by them, the goals set, and the forms of protest organized and utilized. These issues need to be taken into consideration separately for the time periods before, during, and after tournament. And at the end of this section I examine the consequences of the SME, which can be anticipated in the longer perspective.

In the two years leading up to the Euro 2012, one could observe a stronger unification of supporters' movements than at any other previous time. Due to the media panic unleashed about hooligans and ultras and the tightening of football surveillance policies, Polish fans decided to organize a number of actions which were aimed at both the authorities and the media. It has to be acknowledged that the actions in many cases were of a small scale and contextualized in local conditions. For example, in Poznan fans of Lech organized a boycott of *Gazeta Wyborcza* – the biggest newspaper in Poland. Supporters were often attacked in its pages for hooligan activities and the strengthening of security measures was often pointed to as one of the most effective tools in dealing with football violence. In Warsaw we can observe a conflict between fans and club owners which has been ongoing since 2007, when ITI (a media company) took over Legia Warsaw and began to limit the influence of die-hard fans. It should be noted that neither of these two actions would have been possible without active involvement and support from supporters' associations of both communities. Together with others, these two organizations were founding members of the National Association of Supporters' Associations (OZSK), which was established in 2007. Since 2010 this institution has taken the leading role in representing the entirety of Polish football fans.

The closer was the date to the kick-off of Euro 2012 the more strong was the reluctance and resistance to the Tournament. It is worth examining some strategies taken by different groups of traditional supporters before and during the event. To conduct this analysis I used (among other sources like fan-based websites, forums, and observations) material coming from my research run over the last two years, which has resulted in a compilation of empirical data as a base for my PhD project "Football Supporters' Movement in Poland. Sociological Analysis".

Supporters of LKS Łódź were interviewed. Their community is one of the most active in Poland and as such it can be seen as typical.

TYPES OF STRATEGIES TAKEN BY POLISH SUPPORTERS

1. Total negation

Some of the supporters decided to simply deny that the Euro 2012 was a national event. This was an extreme attitude but nonetheless characteristic – especially when criticism of the Tournament was combined with an equally radical negation of the Polish government. This strategy included the assumption that the national team of Poland is barely Polish, due to players who become Polish citizens shortly before the Tournament even though they were raised and lived their whole lives in another country. The cases of Eugen Polansky (Germany), Ludovic Obraniak (France) or Damien Perquis (France) were frequently discussed in the Polish media, and opinions about their playing for Poland were divided, and sometimes strongly critical. Those supporters who were firm and total in their belief against the Euro 2012 declared zero interest in the whole event (not only in the results of Polish national team).

2. Negation with curiosity

A more common attitude appearing in the interviews was one I would categorize as negation with curiosity. Although those persons whose responses would fit into this type were generally critical about the whole tournament, they still acknowledged that they were interested in the event. What's more, especially in that segment of the research group that had significant knowledge about the world of football fans, their interest was directed towards and oriented on football fans as well. They follow the activities of those groups who are seen as similar to the traditional pattern of supporters, like Russians fans. While their responses were accompanied by declared aggression, curiosity was the predominant feeling.

3. Active resistance

This strategy was based on taking different protest actions against the Euro 2012. For example, during an exhibition of Henri Delaunay Cup in Lodz, the supporters of LKS prepared special banner with the controversial text “Fuck Euro”. It was intended to be a strong message which would gain media attention and show that not everybody in Poland welcomed the forthcoming event. Other

activities of this type included a number of protests and marches organized before the Tournament in response to the authorities' action and to the policing policy. One of these protests received widespread media coverage, and is worth looking at more specifically. In May 2011, fans of Jagiellonia Bialystok, following the decision to close their club stadium, shouted words and phrases aimed at, among others, Prime Minister Donald Tusk. Some members of the group were arrested by the police and sentenced with a fine. This case was publicly criticized after announcement of the sentence due to serious allegations of violation of human rights and the Polish constitution.

In summary, it may be said that the attitudes of Polish traditional supporters were generally against the Euro 2012, which was seen by them as an excuse for the authorities and media to attack their communities. From the supporters' point of view, the Tournament was rather another field in which they could reproduce their characteristic anti-systemic attitude. Seen in this perspective, sympathizing with the organizers, politicians, authorities, and in some case foreign fans or even the Polish national team could be interpreted as confrontational. What's more, this spiral of negativity displayed towards other fans, players or authorities could paradoxically have been motivated by a desire to act in way which would be a confirmation of the fears expressed by different actors in the public debate. A good example of this mechanism could be seen in the events which occurred on the day of the match between Poland and Russia in the group stage of the Tournament. Polish and Russian hooligans clashed in a large number of fights on the streets of Warsaw. This conflict took place among other fans, who were passing to the stadium, in fan-zones, and even in the presence of ordinary citizens who were not involved in the Tournament at all. All of it was covered online and in the media (TV, radio and Internet).

It has to be said that while there are no clear conclusions (and there is a lack of research data collected about this case), it is clear that there must be a relationship between the negative (and sometimes aggressive) attitude against Euro 2012, the media hype about hooligan activities, the football audience policy in place, and this particular course of events (clashes between fans from both countries). It could be analysed as another type of experience of the Tournament - controversial, radical and (the most important factor) counter to the way preferred by the organizers and authorities for experiencing the Tournament. In this fashion we can observe what happens when types frequently described as theoretical or virtual types of football fans [Dixon, 2013], or traditional supporters and modern consumers (or, as Giulianotti put it 'post-fans' [Giulianotti, 1999] meet in the real world. What is interesting is that they do not clash but simply pass each other by.

TWO TEMPORAL PERSPECTIVES: BEFORE AND DURING THE TOURNAMENT

Taking into account the time factor when analysing the problem of football supporters and their attitudes against the Euro 2012, it is important to point out how the closeness of the event impacted and activated actions taken by different groups of football fans in Poland. As mentioned earlier in the text after, 2010 and the final match of the Polish Cup between Legia Warsaw and Lech Poznań, one can observe how the policies of authorities at both the national and local levels was changing and becoming more strict and oppressive against 'traditional football fans'. This is reflected in the public debate and, what's connected with it (according to moral panic models), the political decisions and actions focused on the problem of safety during the Euro 2012 matches. A lot of arguments can be used to criticize the direction of policies taken during this time, but the fact is that they had consequences with respect to the activation of supporters' groups. Firstly, following the decisions by local authorities to close stadiums to away spectators during league matches we can observe locally established initiatives taken by small groups of fans. Protests were organized during one of fixtures of ŁKS Łódź (among many others), when Łódź's ultra supporters refused to actively support their team. In addition to this type of protest we can add specially prepared banners and flags with slogans which were hung up across Poland against both the Euro 2012 as well as against the Polish authorities. And of course there was the previously-mentioned case of Jagiellonia fans who were arrested and sentenced for singing insulting songs about Donald Tusk.

But the resistance movement is not only relegated to local protests. The main goal remains to change the law concerning the safety of mass events, which was established in anticipation of the Euro 2012. It is one of the most restrictive acts in Europe, focused on the regulation of football fans' behaviour. The voices of supporters have been taken under consideration after the Tournament, and now representatives of National Association of Supporters' Associations are negotiating changes in the text of the act itself. This is thus an example of how a project which was started before the Euro 2012 (and was initially unsuccessful), and is still continuing (with some prospect of success).

But before moving on to the consequences of mega events, it is worthwhile to look closely at the Tournament itself. It is hard to say that large groups of Polish supporters were outside of the whole buzz connected with Euro 2012. Even though there were a number of declarations openly criticizing the fact of its organization, it seems reasonable to assume that even die-hard fans were at least interested in

course of the Tournament. Maybe not specifically in the sport rivalry, but at least the terraces were in the spotlight of supporters' interest. Even hooligans' groups treated the Tournament as an opportunity to maintain their foreign contacts: fans of Widzew Łódź, who have good relations with CSKA Moscow, hosted groups of Russian fans during the Euro 2012.

CONCLUSIONS

The European Championship which took place in Poland and Ukraine in 2012 was a unique phenomenon. In terms of politics it was a big challenge for both neighbours to cope with the host country's responsibilities. In the economical sense, the results of the Tournament are difficult to compute. Official reports from organizers are more like attempts to improve public relations of the event than reliable scientific data. From the sociological point of view, it was a fantastic opportunity to research how modern societies with specific characteristics cope with events of such a large scale. In this light, the issue of football fandom is instructive inasmuch as it allows us to proceed with analyses from different perspectives.

Firstly, we can observe how, using moral panic mechanisms, society tries to reach homeostasis. Shattered hopes for coping with the challenge have to be reassured. Different kinds of actions (formal and informal) can be used as tools in this process by authorities. The coverage by media provides plenty of social drama, and aggressive football fans play the role of folk devil. It is important to keep in mind the scale of the actions taken by both sides. There was and still is a lot of aggression among supporters, and definitely it is sometimes necessary to use the police or other measures to stop the escalation of violence. But on the other side of the coin, there are lots of doubts about scale and nature of the football spectator policy – especially with respect to those parts connected with monitoring and surveillance. In order to go to a football match in the Polish league (but paradoxically not during the Euro 2012) spectators can be required to give the club personal data like date of birth, PESEL, residence address, and even a photograph of the individual's face. Hooligan activities do not seem to be a strong enough argument to completely justify these regulations.

Secondly, the Euro 2012 can be analysed as an SME, in its all its aspects - from sociological to economical to political. In this perspective an interesting initiative would be to use the idea of mega project which is successfully used by Flyvbjerg and others. Thanks to their work we can easily extend research on the impact of

SMEs on host cities, for example. The issue of charging local budgets with expenses related to the Euro 2012 is so far absent in the economic or sociological debates, even though investments of this type are almost certain to have a serious impact on the economical, political and social situation on the local level.

Thirdly, in relation to the mechanisms of moral panic which were implemented, we can turn this perspective around and try to analyse the Tournament as a crucial moment in the history of football fandom in Poland and – and this is the most original part of this idea – make the supporters themselves the subject of this reflection. This is the actual goal of this paper – to show how Euro 2012 was seen and how it was experienced by traditional supporters. I have tried to offer glimpses of specific clashes between axiom-normative systems which constitute the basis for characteristic fans' world views, and the emanation of modern pop-culture, in which gigantic and glittering games appear to be one of the most important collective rituals. From this perspective traditional supporters' communities can be seen and treated not as a threat, but rather as one of the last bastions of the old regime, in which a bond with a club (or national team) is deeply immersed in the depths of collective identity.

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Jacek Burski

EURO 2012 – KONIEC I POCZĄTEK DLA POLSKICH KIBICÓW PIŁKARSKICH

Streszczenie

Artykuł podejmuje próbę zweryfikowania wpływu Mistrzostw Europy w piłce nożnej UEFA Euro 2012 zorganizowanych w Polsce i na Ukrainie na tradycyjne społeczności kibiców piłkarskich w Polsce. Aplikując typologię Richarda Giulianottiego, koncentruje się na fanach tradycyjnych. Artykuł analizuje różne strategie podejmowanych przez kibiców działań wobec Euro 2012. Wydarzenie to analizowane jest z różnych perspektyw: jako szansa na zmianę w polskim dyskursie publicznym, jako przyczyna paniki moralnej oraz jako pole konfliktu między różnymi aktorami społecznymi (działaczami, zawodnikami, kibicami, mediami).

Słowa kluczowe: Fani futbolowi, Euro 2012, Wielka Impreza Sportowa, megaprojekt