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# **River Plate in the Second division of Soccer (Football): risk, Sports & Violence**

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## **Abstract**

Due to the poor performance, political corruption and serious financial problems, one of the most prestige clubs of Argentina, River Plate was placed at disaster's doors when descended to play the second division of Argentine football. This frustrating scenario paved the ways for the advent of uncontrollable riots that were broadcasted and disseminated by the media to all homes. Viewers have certainly been witnesses how not only as one of the five giant collapsed but also how violence and a couple of maniacs broke the seats of stadium and threw to players. In numbers the lootings left more than 50 injuries and thousand of million dollars in losses. In this context, the present paper explores in the connection between violence, hooliganism and risk management policies to expand the existent understanding of specialized literature. Most likely, River symbolized the times we are living where the social institutions are being radically changed and uncertainty prevails. Besides, this research examines the pervasive nature of mass media to contribute to create high expectances in fans that after ended with episodes of hooliganism. Unlike other fans, hooligans monopolize the control of signs, flags, chants and other symbols by creating stories and legends to justify their behaviors but sometimes these narratives do not correspond with events as really happened.

**Key Words: Football, Violence, Hooliganism, Risk, Security.**

## **Introduction**

River Plate is one of the most important and prestigious footballs clubs of Argentina. Founded in 1901, this club gained more than 32 national tournaments and 2 Libertadores Cup (copa Libertadores de América) in 1986 and 1996 and one intercontinental Cup. This impressive legacy and number of tournaments did not suffice to prevent the descent to the second division of Argentine football (Nacional B) after being defeated by Belgrano 2 to 0 in Cordoba and draw 1 to 1 in the Monumental (River Plate's stadium) in 2011. This match not only was problematic for the sporting excitement and consequent frustration, but also paved the ways for the advent of an incredible violence against players and the stadium that resulted in million of dollars in material losses and more than 50 casualties (many of them were policemen). Even, a couple of days

before the match, Argentine president Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner bolstered a summit with Football Argentine Federation officials to coordinate a plan of security to prevent lootings and other riots; but something came out wrong. As never before, thousands of hooligans invaded the street causing serious looting and riot surrounding River Plate stadium (El Monumental). Sergio Pezzota, the referee of the game, was pressed to issue a penalty kick in favor of River Plate in the half-time. Ultimately, many supporters and fans ran frenetically through the outskirts of El Monumental by robbing and destroying the shops situated along Del Libertador Avenue during more than one hour. Although the Committee of Discipline agreed to penalize River for the riots, the previous policies and strategies followed to warrant the event security were in vain. Under such a context, the present paper explores not only the sociological roots of hooliganism as well as its effects, but also the important aspects of anonymity in the surfacing of this episode that have been broadcasted worldwide.

**Picture 1 - Erik Lamela remorseful after the drawing with Belgrano**



Source. El Olé Magazine

To some extent, this event, known as the collapse of a giant, questioned the policy-makers' strategies to prevent a situation like this as well as specialists' prejudices around hooligans as quasi-criminal organizations in gangs that exert considerable violence in sports events or spectacles. At least and like the recent riots in UK, many of the involved actors lacked a criminal past and

antecedents. But for this, their acts were not less violent. This begs a more than interesting question, what is the relation between criminality and rules?, is crime a situational issue?.

B. Leopkey and M. Parent (2009) studied the dichotomy between what a stakeholder may state through interviews, and the derived difficulties to apply plans of event security in the field. Comparing two Canadian sporting events (international skating union and World Figure skating Championship U-20 FIFA), they found that seven risk policies were identified in stakeholders at time of managing an event: reduction of violence, avoidance of violence, reallocation, diffusion, prevention, legal and relationship management. The point of discussion is posed in the opposite direction. Situational crime is very hard to prevent. Many people who in a situation is an excellent citizen, can break the rules given the necessary conditions and coyuncture.

### **Preliminary Debate**

From different angles, hooliganism seems to be a concept which is not easy to define. One of the most troublesome aspects of mass media along with this issue is the biased view that is informed to audience. The media and journalism demonize hooligans instead of exploring the social factors that determine their behavior. For journalism, hooliganism certainly falls under social pathology which serves to be eradicated. For example, this is exactly what shows the following paragraph published recently in The Independent:

*“But it is important to keep a couple of things in mind when dealing with the phenomenon of English football hooliganism. First of all, these trouble makers are by no means representative of all England fans. Some 40.000 have travelled to Portugal to enjoy the championships and most have behaved impeccably. Only a few hundred were actually involved in skirmishes with the police. What we are dealing with is a small number of violence individuals who, like parasites, hide in larger groups of supporters”*<sup>1</sup>. These types of coverages mistakenly focus on “the uncivilized behavior” of gangs as they were from other planet or aliens maniacs who deserve psychiatric attention. That way, this naïve stance ignores the role played by society and social rule in shaping hooligan-related behaviour. Secondly, journalism across the world does not dwell on contextual factors that lead subjects to criminality. This does not mean that all citizens are

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<sup>1</sup> Independent.co.uk. “another Sorry outbreak of the English disease”. Thursday 17 June 2004.

possible hooligans but given the conditions and the lack of State to protect the property, potential looters may follow the chaos and disorder created by hooligans. This dynamic sometimes can be seen in the lootings after natural disasters or the last riots happened in UK in the last days. The founding parents of ethnomethodology showed widely how criminality and normalcy are two combined states that coexist in minds (Morgan, 2006). Further, the film *Clockwork Orange* (starred in 1962 and directed by Anthony Burgess) drew the attention respecting to the pervasive role played by violence in a society and the day to day compliance with criminal deviations. Under such a context, new fresh perspectives are needed for enriching the academic debate around hooliganism, risk in event-management, crime and violence. Next, the sociological aspects that found aggressiveness and violence will be placed under the lens of scrutiny.

### **The Hobbesian Citizenry**

In the history of philosophy and Social Sciences, questions risen surrounding social bondage has been present crossing almost all authors in a major or minor degree. Nonetheless, it was the contribution of Thomas Hobbes the platform for expanding the Socratic understanding the role of State in such a process. His primary goal was intended to unravel the net of emotions in the philosophy. Notably influenced by civil war, which took place in 1642 in England, Hobbes argued that there was a need of showing the necessity of a strong central authority to prevent the war of all against all and civic disorder. The state of nature, where each one is on its right of reaching everything, is troublesome simply because the mind is subject to greater levels of uncertainty. In this vein, two contrasting processes converge. One of them refers to the need of expropriating the good of neighbors (appetite) while the other seems to be the dear of death. These two sentiments pave the ways for conferring the authority to a third party, the Leviathan whose strength aims to avoid the civil war. Following this reasoning, Hobbes considers that society is a population, enrooted in a territory, beneath a sovereign authority where the need of protection exceeds the appetite for destruction. The cost of peace can be explained by means of a controlled-violence that remains present in all corners of society (Hobbes, 1998). Undoubtedly, the following points given by Hobbes not only passed the proof of time but also were applied to the social research worldwide, a) the civility is a result of the fear of loss or death (Macpherson, 1967) Pousadela, 2000; Ribeiro, 2000), b) human beings enter in competition because of

vainglory and the quest of distinction (Hilb and Sirczuk, 2007), c) the fear of death corresponds with a constraint for experiencing pleasure or looking for the admiration of others (Strauss, 2006; Malcolm, 2007), and d) the increasing sentiment of fright, inherited to postmodernism, is explained in accordance to the declination of trust between citizens and their State (Korstanje, 2011). That way, local forms of violence structure ultimately the practice of lay-people in a territory.

As the previous background given, one might speculate that sports are often adopted by some groups and classes insofar the less contradiction is between the body and the sense of competence with others that represents a certain style of life, consuming and being in this world (Bourdieu, 2000: 215). That way, Bourdieu adds sports combine habitus and controlled violence to be internalized in the conscience of working class while in higher-classes this afore-noted violence is exercised against nature. J. Huizinga debated that play was for humankind a key factor by shaping the culture and social institutions. Groups, our historian added, showed a penchant to develop the play as a crucial form of relationship with others. The competition plays a pivotal role in forming the self-identity of subjects and their institutions (Huizinga, 1968). Garriga-Zucal (2007) assertively explains that violence not only is part of our daily life, everywhere and every-time, but also determines the boundaries of a certain territory. Hooligans often elaborate symbolic frontiers that forge their own identity, when these frontiers are broken the violence surfaces. This means that the manifestation of violence is associated to the needs for maintaining the hegemony over a group and territory. Although social imaginary and mass-media presents hooligans as drug addict, criminals and violent with weaker social bondages, there is a much deeper relationship between hooligans and Governments that scholars ignore. In this vein, Garriga-Zucal examines the complex bondage of these fans with other stakeholders as politicians, neighbors, and leaders of clubs to find not only the instrumental logic of these actors but also a moral view-point. The encounter of hooligans and violence, in this vein, would articulate a much deeper cycle of reciprocity that transcends very well the sports. As a currency exchange, violence (el aguante) re-signifies the being in the world of hooligans. Social interaction generates some boundaries to be crossed, when this happens, violence restores the equilibrium of system. It touches all strata of society. With a major or lesser degree, all societies manage a limited violence.

Similarly, P. Albaceres and J. Garriga-Zucal (2008) describe how violence determines the corporal identity of hooligan, appealing to a much broader archetype of heroism and masculinity. This articulation contributes to create a particular sense (ethos) of community to forge attachment with peers. The rivalry against other clubs or fights allows the restructuration of a specific discourse enrooted in competition and corporeality. The clubs, explains authors, welcomes fans coming from different classes, ethnicities and contexts. The narrative of “el aguante” as a form of gaining and reinforcing status appeals to the violence as a mechanism that drew the in-group boundaries. These assumptions have been studied and expanded in other works as (Albaceres, 2004; Garriga and Moreira, 2003). Like language, violence gathers but separates at the same time.

In accordance to this, Elias and Dunning described how sport generates a mimetic activity in supporters and audience that lead them to an ongoing frenzy where violence is temporarily controlled but not eliminated. To some extent, as a part of leisure, sports are formed by means of three elements based on motility, sociability and imagination. For questions related to the territory, Elias and Dunning say that these factors allows a better control of emotionality which only seems to be circumscribed to a specific space. The process of burocratization in terms of Max Weber, obliged subjects not to exhibit their emotions in public, rather, emotions have been closed to the private life. Leisure and sports, precisely allow an overtly expression of emotions in order for the psychological order of subject to be offset. For better illustration, sociability refers to a ground element in an uttermost part of recreation activities stimulating the enjoyment of players. This mechanism not only is present in sporting spectacles but also in arts, tourism, hospitality and other cultural industries. In industrial societies, the trust among persons tends to decline. Even though this process is irreversible, emotions go beyond the frontiers of State and become dysfunctional for the social system.

In this vein, Elias and Dunning assume that sometimes the boundaries of sociability are blurred by distorting the nature of leisure and sports. Secondly, motility is linked to the mimetic capacity for societal order to regulate recreation in a pleasant way. There are some emotions that are disrupting for the social system as hatred, violence and envy simply because this generates weaker ties. Sometimes, the humdrum routine leads modern citizens to the consumption of drugs

and alcohol as a form of evasion. The mimetic element of sports, this means the capacity to merge the identity of attendants with players, give as a result a time-frame where dysfunctional emotions not only are accepted but also fagocitated. The wish to kill others, so brilliantly explained by Hobbes, is re-symbolized so that subjects can feel excitement. Last but not least, Elias and Dunning realize since the psychological penchant of humans to assassinate others for expropriating them is constrained in a civilized-society, sports symbolize a dialectic tension between two or more bands that unless otherwise resolved will recur to violence to redeem their differences. That way, spectacles and sport events would work as important vehicles to introduce in people certain degree satisfaction and self-esteem enhancement (Elias and Dunning, 1992; Dunning, 1992; Elias, 1992). From this point of view, violence can be considered as pathology of social behaviour but it is important to note before that she not only is present in all spheres of society but also plays a crucial role by legitimizing the existent cycles of authority in human groups.

### **Hooliganism and violence**

E. Durkheim was a pioneer in the study of rules and anomy. From his stance, societies engender two types of solidarities, organic and mechanical which were based on the differentiation of roles, division of labor and attachment to rules. Civilized societies are forged under an organic solidarity that replaced the primitive consciousness (mechanic solidarity) where people are much integrated and dependant of others. Progress and technical advances in all fields increased the population in the greatest cities provoking a specialization in work-places. This changed the idiosyncrasy and culture of groups creating more secularized forms of minds (Durkheim, 2004a; Bellah, 1973). The gradual disappearance of sacredness would give as a result a set of social pathologies. Needless to say that crime was one of these several pathologies Durkheim frightened. Defining previously the anomie as a “lack of coordination” or a state of disintegration that leads subject to break the rules, Durkheim considered that suicide can be explained by three motivations, a) anomic suicides (lack of attachment to community), b) altruist suicide (too much devotion to the group) and c) egoist suicide (isolation and egoism). It is important to examine the altruist suicide and its legacy to be applied to hooliganism. First and foremost, Durkheim said that a particular type of suicide is present within army forces where the subject is circumscribed to an atmosphere of desindividualization. The strong military spirit, from his end, reduces the

degree of individuality to the extent of making people more vulnerable to collective suicide in case of dishonor or inability to adjust to military life (Selvin, 1965; Durkheim, 2004b; Berk, 2006).

Similarly, many hooligans and fans commit suicide or start skirmishes with police whenever some of their clubs lose their division or are defeated. In any situation, the descent represents a symbolic disaster for supporters. The psychological frustration they feel is regulated by means of violence. This does not resolve the problem, but gives an amelioration to the frustration. Given this, one might infer how the River Plate descent to second division in 2011 generated serious incidents that culminated with 50 casualties and thousand millions dollars in material losses. This means that violence can be determined previously by frustration and hate. The riots in River Plate stadium were not only organized criminal acts, as journalism said, but a spontaneous manifestation of lay people who were frustrated by the low performance of their club, wreaked havoc everywhere. It is important here not to lose sight of the question of the role of urban spaces in these types of matters. B. Diken and C. B. Laustsen (2003) note how historically the city has been seen as a space of disciplinary entrenched by walls where subjects were converted into citizens by means of subjugation of law. Spaces of civility, following this, are contrasted to state of nature. The monopoly of violence on the hands of State engenders sites of disciplinary and control but at some extent, there are some sites excluded of the logic of control where the dichotomy inside/outside dilutes. Following the Agamben's contributions, Diken and Laustsen cite "*one of the horror sacer's first instantiations is the werewolf: neither a beast nor a man, dwelling within both without belonging to either: the werewolf is an outlaw that can be killed without the executioner facing any legal sanction. Banned and excluded from the city, the werewolf is forced to survive in the forest. This uncivilized state does, however, not exist prior to civilization. The outlaw, and the forest, is established through the ban, through a sovereign act creating both civilization and the state of nature*" (p. 3).

They are referring not to hooligans encounters in the strict sense of the word, but to Nazi concentration camps to reconsider the thesis that any state of exception prioritizes unstable identities and mobile sources of surveillance. If the city as a complex technological net can illuminate the ways and mechanisms of control, the modern city appeals to a decentralization of

center/periphery. The logic of hostages clarifies further the issue. Wars are original and very on context and economic conditions. At a first glance, wars allow a redefinition of enemies, in case of terrorism, for example, enemies are unclear and occulted what creates a situation of indistinction. Under the spirit of terrorism, all we can be hostages anytime and anywhere. The invisibilization of terror, in an ongoing state of emergency gives as a result a new way of conceiving the politics. This hysteria operating in smooth places must be understood as a form of cynic control ending to legitimate a totalitarian gaze.

Starting from the premise that the devices for security are fluid and in liquidity beyond the scope of state, security turns into perversion. There is an essential risk in this process because citizenry trust in state cannot be maintained any longer. Claims for security initiated by citizenry not only are unheard by classical state, which is facing a process of declination and fragmentation, but also are provided by other secondary actors as private security companies or the market itself. This paper, published a couple of years back, is of paramount importance to comprehend how the hooligan violence works in our society. Most certainly, hooligans vividly are not monsters (werewolf) living in a state of nature beyond the gaze of civilization. Specialists in event management security realized in last years, hooligans seem to be professionals, workers, and citizens who are in convenience of a system that makes fluid the violence in many terms. Violence is situated in a dynamic, unabated interaction among actors to the extent to be associated to nationalism and masculinity. The factors that stimulate acts of violence are determined by previous sociological aspects enrooted not only in the culture but also in micro-interaction (Taylor, 1971; King, 1999).

The psychology of hooligans has been defined as Javaloy-Mazon in terms of a need of being outstanding. This quest of excitement works as compensatory mechanism to sublimate the emotional frustrations a person suffers throughout its social life. The boredom associated to problems of identity seems to be a crucial factor to explain why the hooliganism in youth people. Based his cue on the works of John Kerr, Javaloy-Mazon argues that spontaneity and negativism, as opposed to a state of conformism, explain the hooligan behavior. From this view, emotions can be framed whether subject is involved by protector guidelines that can channel these disrupting arousals toward specific aims. This explains in part why hooligans are prone to hedonist

experiences of quick gratification (as drugs or alcohol consumption). The sensorial stimulation (impulsivity), after hearing chants for one or two hours, should be described as a strategy of excitement. The thesis in Javaloy Mazon and Kerr is that the adrenaline in the brain triggered by a situation of danger leads many hooligans to recur violence as a form of psychological recreation. For that, the harder policies taken by security forces against hooligans not only do not resolve the issue, but also gives further attractiveness to the fighting. With the benefits of hindsight, the dependency of hooligans of adrenaline is reflected in their addicted personality. The quest for excitement that pushes the mind for feeling new sensations, similarly seen in tourist-gaze, coincides with the elementary functions of leisure.

Some specialists realized that alcohol consumption is an important factor to deter or increase the degree of violence in sports event. Problems in security and deficiencies in policies fail because authorities trivialize the predisposition of attendants to consumption of drugs and alcoholism. The process of socializing, these studies demonstrate, and being with friends is critical factor for attending to an event. The controlled alcohol consumption facilitates such a connection with others (Tarlow, 2002; Pegg, Patterson and Axelsen, 2011). The crowd control in this vein and responsible policies for operating procedures needs from an international legal frame to warrant the security in sports events. Crowd management studies emphasize on the fact lay-people commits crimes or riots when their acts remain in anonymity. Crowds can be furious leading their behavior to destructive actions, hooliganism and even murder. Communication policies are of paramount importance at time of deterring lootings. Abott and Geddie present the necessary goals any communication plan should contain: a) to send a persuasive message, b) have received this message, c) to insure understanding, d) to achieve corrective actions and e) to exchange information for gaining efficiency in decision making process. In further consideration is important to debate to what an extent, authors add: *“verbal communication is one of the primary methods used in event coordination. This is not the most effective communication as it cannot be witnessed or returned by the receiver. Nonverbal communication consists of body language, facial expressions, or gestures and may be used only if individuals readily understand each other. Written communication is quite common but often misused. In effect, written messages should be kept specific, short, and to the point, as people might disregard longer messages. Visual*

*communication is mostly utilized to train employees and to promote products” (Abott and Gedie, 2001: 261).*

As early explained anyway beyond communication and alcoholism, there are others much deeper socio-factorial issues that constraint or facilitate the outbreak of violence in sport events. Centered on this concern, E. Dunning suggests that hooliganism is embedded with two main alternatives, whose forms are historically accompanied the football clubs from memorial times but secondly, there was no time more favorable to disorderliness like this in past. In recognition to this, hooliganism in some countries seems to be encouraged by politicians who use their strength as work-force to dissuade political enemies. His development focuses on the controlled levels of violence and destructive attitudes not as exceptional to other social actors but explains brilliantly how their songs and chants, fully relates to the match and its rivalry which is prolonged beyond the stadium whenever bands are challenged to fight. The British sociologist writes assertively *“each fan group has its own repertoire of songs and chants, although many of these are local variations on a stock of common themes. Central in this connection is the fact that their lyrics are punctuated with words like hate, die, fight, kick, surrender, all of which convey images of battle and conquest. Apart from violence, symbolic demasculinization of the rival fans is another recurrent terrace theme; for example, the reference to them and or the team they support as wankers, a charge accompanied by a mass gestural representation of the mal masturbatory act. Yet another recurring theme is denigration of the community of the opposing fans” (Dunning, 8).*

In sharp contrast with other colleagues, Dunning argues that violence compounds a way of solidarity based on a territory which often should be protected from alien invasion. Drugs, criminal mind, and alcohol consumption can be important to determine the degree of violence but not primary in football hooliganism. From this point of view, the exerted violence is symbolic and combines a set of rules to infer when attacks are justified and when do not. As A. King put it, hooligan gangs are constructed in basis with a shared memory to warrant the relationships with others. The problem is not with the hooligans fight but the role to affirm subjects in a specific group. For that reason, these gangs build mythical archetypes of past based on aggressiveness and collective memories of violence. As the previous argument given, the maps of past violence serve

as a guide to follow and interpret the present and future. *“For hooligans, violence constitutes the compelling form of social intercourse out of which their social groups arise. Yet, fights do not automatically promote group unity. A fight is open to differing interpretations, some of which may not enjoin collective action or group solidarity. A common understanding of the meaning of a fight to the group has to be established as a collective memory for the hooligan firm to sustain itself. Without a common agreement on the meaning of a fight and its implication for the group as a whole, the group is simply a random sample of individuals who happened to have in the same place at same time, like pedestrians on a busy street who witness an accident”* (King, 2001: 572).

To what an extent, acts of violence are exaggerated or undermined by the media corresponds with the affected interests. Violence helps societies to intellectualize the uncertainty generated by random events. It is almost impossible to eradicate violence from human interaction. If collective memory is critical to the maintenance of cohesion, conflicts divide the social intercourse of gangs. Violence helps to regulate the self-esteem of some deteriorated personalities. Violence is elsewhere, and should be studied according to its presence in the society.

For that, it is important not to lose the sight an issue of this caliber should be examined using case study as main method. Hooligans threaten the concept of security of our societies merging legal with criminal acts as assaults, fistfights, knifings, looting, drunkenness and drugs abuse that come across the world from UK to Russia. Basically, it is noteworthy to see how: *“Hooliganism involved offensive pranks and horrendous crimes, but what makes it important historically is that the hooligans reckless behavior hinted a deeper discontents while at the same time the published discussion about hooliganism transcended the specific crimes to focus on the larger social, political, and cultural issues that hooliganism seemed to explain.... On the streets, the hooligans themselves were forging a new kind of power – new for turn of the century Peterburgers, through familiar to every city dweller today-by exploiting their ability to mock and intimidate the respectable pedestrian who stood above them on the social and economic ladder”* (Neuberger, 1993: 2). To understand hooliganism, social scientist should delve into the cosmology of hooligans, evaluating their feeling, expectances and goals in the life.

The specialized literature emphasizes on the connection of violence and poverty. These behaviors are adapted to context but sociologically determined by poverty, psychological frustration and violence against hooligans in their childhood. Of course, violence at football has been in last years a disturbing problem that escapes to the efforts of modern state meanwhile the issue takes many forms. For some scholars, violence cannot be limited to football (soccer) or any other sport but they realize football by its own idiosyncrasy paves the ways for the advent of violence among hooligans. Even though this violence comes from XIX the century, it is clear how emotional reaction combines economic with social factors as well as the spontaneity of the acts. In terms of M. Comeron: *“the contemporary football world faces permanent violence of a premeditated kind. This is group violence, in the form of physical aggression or vandalism, engaged in by hardcore groups of supporters, commonly regarded as hooligans, in the context of a sort of competition running in parallel with the rivalry between their football teams. These hardcore groups follow a particular club and systematically seek confrontation with their counterparts from each rival club. They regard themselves as elite supporters and their membership of a group of hooligans as a way of life which helps to add value to their social identity”*. (Comeron, 2002:12). Last but not least, these organized criminal acts are more dependent from legitimacy and authority of their community members than other factors. Therefore, problems in event management or deficiencies in security goals are of paramount importance to diminish and eradicate these acts of vandalism. This was exactly the spirits of most specialists based on hooliganism an elaborated patter for crime at sports events and beyond.

### **River Plate falls to Second Division of Soccer.**

In Argentina problems with hooligans are very complex and its nature pervasive as many other social pathologies, but at some extent, these actors work with impunity in compliance with politicians and businessmen. Politicians employ hooligans as a “task-force” to dissuade opponents or dissidents to accept policies otherwise would be rejected. The compliance between hooligans and politicians is more than evident. However, the fact is that not all hooligans are criminals in the strict sense of the word. Once arrested, many hooligans have serious problems to live in the conditions of prison coexisting with other criminals. Anyway, given some conditions, hooligans may commit horrible crimes.

In addition, the drugs trafficking and other crimes are not only common in these gangs but also induce and allow improving the recruitment of youths living at the neighborhood. Although in recognition to this, crime coexists with the respect of the law in community, there is a special respect for the neighbors and their shops. Hooligans weave a net of alliance, similar to the old hospitality concept, called "Amistad". Two gang involved under the logic of "Amistad" are compromised in a pact of no aggression which can be definitive, sustained in history or temporal. The physical proximities among clubs are another criterion of enmity and rivalry in hooliganism but not the most important. Each gang has got and keeps affinity of its flags, colors and chants which sometimes is strictly based on the history of club. In addition, it is important to say that some hooligans are not fans of the club they boast to defend. Infiltration of narco-groups and other type of criminals in these groups seems to be frequent in Argentina but not all hooligans maintain a laminar relationship with police and vice-versa. Many hooligans only are launched to fight with other following a contextual climate that transcends our worldview. Being there is an important criterion of membership, this means that new recruited members are willing to travel other stadiums to support their clubs which opens the risk for the attacks of other gang and vice-versa. This legacy of battles paves the ways contributes for creating a narrative of violence, a discourse that day to day legitimates the existent order and hierarchy of hooligans. This text not necessarily reflects as facts occurred, but as they are memorized by hooligans.

In perspective, let me explain in the next lines how the sad River Plate descent and consequent riots evolved as well as the effects and practical consideration for making an all-encompassed plan to warrant the security of attendants in event management. A bunch of facts were indefectibly combined to push River Plate to second division of argentine football (soccer) league; corruption, bribes, the lack of victories and a pour performance on the pitch. The tournament of 2011 left River Plate in the last position of table and situated directly in "zona de promedio" (zone of descent) to play two games with Belgrano de Cordoba as visiting team and local. The first game in Cordoba ended 2 to 0 and River was pushed to the border of its worse nightmare. Newspapers and TV programs broadcasted once and once again what specialists called "the tragedy of a giant" denoting the state of emergency for this classic football club. Following this, River started scoring a goal (Pavone) at the first minutes of first time but in the second Belgrano draws. Unlike other important clubs as Racing Club and San Lorenzo, River

Plate never descended to second division in the history. With the passing of days, people speculated that River would not lose the division because officials and even president would intervene to extort money to help River but things came worse to worst. These speculations not only were not true but also paved the ways for the next events. Many supporters pointed out to Julio H. Grondona, president of AFA, as the responsible for the River Plate descent, others to Pasarella (club president). At this stage and previous days of first game, the narratives emphasized on the impossibilities for being defeated by Belgrano. Thousand of fans and supporters travelled to Cordoba to cheer on River and enjoy of the challenge. Even though, everyone accepted overtly this club was in serious problems, nobody believed that Belgrano will defeat to River.

As Durkheim put it, deviant behavior makes people to be attached to their rules by reinforcing the spirit of their community and of course this was exactly what in this case happened. Similarly, the staunch rival of River, Boca Jrs plastered the streets with propaganda mocking of River and its situation but once River collapsed, Boca fans experienced a strange psychological fear. For one hand, if River came down, Boca runs the same risk in a future; but most important (on another), the traditional big game that in past enticed thousand of tourists and million dollars between Boca and River was certainly diluted. Metaphorically speaking, Boca lost its brother and its identity was seriously affected. Diego Maradona (ex player) and Mauricio Macri (current Buenos Aires Mayor), confessed Boca supporters, stated in public their sadness for the situation of River Plate. Given this, at the second facet, once finalized the second game between River and Belgrano almost one hundred of fans have broken the sport facilities of the River Plate stadium and the surrounding establishments allocated through Del Libertador avenue. Why property is the target of hooligans in context of uncertainty and violence?.

Generally, it is important to mention that private property is often targeted by looters in sport events because of two reasons: a) it represents the hierarchal order of society and reminds fans their subordination in a daily basis and b) looters take often advantage of the context to robber merchandise or household goods. Although the former case is based on frustration, the former ones refer to speculation. In the fieldwork, it is not surprising to see these types of vandalism beyond the boundaries of the own territory, whenever hooligans are visiting other stadiums.

Nonetheless, one of the aspects that captivated the attention of specialist has been the level of violence exerted for River fans at their home. Assumptions like this can be seen in the picture 2 & 3 shown below.

**Picture 2 – A supporter throwing a wooden seat to players**



Source: El Olé Magazine

**Picture 3- an angry crowd attacks players**



Source: El Olé Magazine

The police and officials involved in this episode were not enough to prevent the damages and for that were seriously criticized by journalist after the event, but this was not the point. The real problem was the lack of knowledge of specialists and policy makers to deter these types of acts. The reading of the situation was done by specialists who ignore what the descent means.

Prevention does not work dissociated from understanding. Once the event happened, journalists questioned Police because of its inability to predict these types of issues.

Quite aside from this, it is noteworthy mass media and journalism work as moral conduits that transmit to society the moral values and possible solutions to certain issues. Based on the needs of problemizing about certain aspects of life, journalists are invested under the right to report (as objective as possible) respecting to the problems of citizenry. Even though its view is one-sided, their strength lies in the discourse disseminated and the ways of placing some actors under the lens of scrutiny. By the catalogue and of course, the power of diagnosis, journalist creates the problem and gives the solution, as it the case of the term hooligans.

At this third stage, the media focused on the inefficiency of police and specialists who work for State to prevent the chaos and riots. A strong criticism was exerted against officials because they allowed playing a game of risk with fans. Manuals and guidelines suggests whenever a club is next to descend, games should be played without public. Once described the facts, in the next line we will examine the socio-cultural factors that contributed to violence and River plate fans resentment. An ethnography was conducted during the months of May, June, and July in 2011 in Buenos Aires city. The role of ethnographer was occulted. In this case, media played a vital role in the situation they denounced later. For better understanding, the most significant points will be placed. synthesized but discussed as following:

- 1) There are two kinds of clubs: local and global. Whilst the former characterizes by having a limited loyalty circumscribed only to a certain neighborhood or city, the latter one signals to a wide-spread call that goes beyond the limits of a city and involves Argentina all. The global club is subject to a much process of commercialization that encompassed a vast audience of consumers most always associated to the premier league which concentrates millionaire volume of dollars.
- 2) Particularly, mass media reinforced in their discourse the possibility for River not to descend to second division. This engendered higher expectances by fans

that once broken into pieces generated the episodes of violence and frustration, they inadvertently broadcasted. Basically, media elaborated an image around River as a giant in problems, but never takes for granted its descent as a credible probability. Even though its collapse would be possible, newspapers and sporting journalists focused on the loyalties of fans to improve the troublesome situation. “Poner huevo”, or “aguantar al equipo” were some of the narratives posed around the club by the sport journalism. Undoubtedly, fans felt that the greatness and honor of their team was at stake. Around this discourse journalism created certainly an atmosphere of devotion that generated important profits for private corporations and State which transmitted River plate games but at higher risk. The overemphasis put in everywhere around the River’s descent provoked a context of frustration, hate and violence as explained in earlier sections.

- 3) Whenever people are in danger, they are prone to embrace the rules of their institutions and valorize their membership. That way, as Durkheim put it, as crime corresponds with an attempt to give value to property, hooliganism gives a reason to exist to sport competition and vice-versa. Of course, this seemed to be the aspects journalism ignored. From this point of view, the lack of success of players was redeemed by means of violence. The much expectance, the most difficult problems to mitigate the sentiment of frustration in case of failure. Involuntarily, the media created the preconditions for the scenario that after it condemned. In doing so, the real causes of the event were blurred with the effects.
- 4) Last but not least, River plate’s descent left a bitter taste for the other giants as Boca Jrs. simply because if the giant of Nuñez, as fans know River, slumped, any other club can suffer similar fate in a near future. Since the security is temporarily constructed in a reciprocal manner with two or more parties, the River’s tragedy embodied in some extent the logic of postmodernist time where nobody feels safe anywhere and anytime. All we can be potential victims of

unexpected disasters ranging from terrorism to alien attacks. The collective certainty and assurances have set the pace to a climate of uncertainty and constant movement where the classic institutions that made the life of people safer, simply diluted. This logic was present too in the sports fields. Policy makers in risk- management fail to prevent these events because the literature of specialists has serious problems to understand not only the role played by violence in society but also how the risk works.

Histrionically, as a theatre the coverage of media has certainly taken two perspectives, drama and comedy. The former refers to the problems and effects that bring hooliganism as well as the possible solution and plans to be followed. Secondly, the media redistributes to audience a narrative that highlights in funny anecdotes with the end of playing down the dramatic nature previously created. Once River Plate was in second division, the media echoed to an amateur video loaded by a middle class family where the father is ridiculed while he is cursing against players in the game with Belgrano. This sample is known as the Tano Pasman (a River's supporter) video and was widely watched by a much broader audience. This strategy is aimed to returning normalcy to a situation of tension that unless otherwise resolved can worsen with the passing of days. Humor resolves dialectically the irresolvable points which can generate a state of chaos or radical division.

## **Conclusion**

After further examination, this research showed the pervasiveness of violence and hooliganism in Argentina and provided readers with an all-encompassing socio-anthropological framework for being applied on other studies. The role of mass-media and above all journalism in reinforcing the moral order of a society may, at some extent, show how lay people given the conditions can be potential looters. Even though, violence acts are only the peak of iceberg of a much broader deep seated issue, one speculates that the quest of excitement, encouraged in many sense by the media, cannot be controlled. Quite aside from this speculation, this study focused on the following important issues:

The violence and hooliganism are centered not only to a territory but also to a way of connection with others.

River Plate descent symbolizes the emerging state of emergency that characterizes the late modernity where nobody feels safe.

There exists two types of clubs, locals and globalized each one of them based on diverse interests and assets.

Violence, previously generated by a state of frustration, is something else than a glitch of a social system, this determines how the corporeal identity forms the legitimacy of a group before to their leaders. Violence not only seems to be elsewhere but also remains enrooted in the core of our civilization. As a form of exerting control and enhancing legitimacy, violence is related strictly to power. Ultimately, risk prevention in event management posited in last years as fertile conduits for next research in tourism and hospitality fields. The problem is that, as inextricably intertwined with other social factors, violence should be tackled off from an all-encompassed way. Otherwise, we run the risk to fall in abstract generalization or dummy hypotheses that lead us to no where.

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