

**‘Arsenal/Diósgyőr Till I Die’**

**A Comparison of English and Hungarian Football Fan Culture  
Based on Nick Hornby’s *Fever Pitch* and Anthropological  
Fieldwork**

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## **Table of contents**

|                                                                                   |           |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Introduction .....</b>                                                         | <b>2</b>  |
| Similarities between Highbury and Diósgyőr.....                                   | 4         |
| <b>General features of supporters, ultras .....</b>                               | <b>6</b>  |
| Hooligans or ultras?.....                                                         | 6         |
| Becoming and being a footballholic .....                                          | 6         |
| Personal life and football .....                                                  | 7         |
| <b>Specific characteristics of fan culture .....</b>                              | <b>10</b> |
| Enthusiasm of football ultras and hooligans and its visible signs .....           | 10        |
| Spatial situation inside football stadiums .....                                  | 10        |
| Atrocities related to football.....                                               | 12        |
| Consuming alcohol and drugs, and its effects.....                                 | 13        |
| <b>Safety measurements and changes introduced .....</b>                           | <b>17</b> |
| Safety measurements introduced.....                                               | 17        |
| The influence of ultras and hooligans on the atmosphere surrounding the game..... | 17        |
| Changes in the lives of the two clubs .....                                       | 19        |
| <b>Conclusion .....</b>                                                           | <b>20</b> |
| <b>Bibliography of Works Cited .....</b>                                          | <b>22</b> |

## **Introduction**

Football is one of the most important and popular sports in the world, and is more than just a sport; it is a complex discursive system. It helps us understand and communicate everything happens around us and makes it possible to get to know other people. It can determine even the economic status of the city or district where a football club is located at. Furthermore, people can talk about the recent stories and it can also build the identity of a city or even a whole region and connect its citizens.

Furthermore, according to the main social features of a city, where there are mostly local people and immigrants, like in Turin, Italy, (Bromberger – Mariottini 1995: 35) or different religions and nationalities clash, for example in Glasgow, (Murray 1995: 121), local clubs and their fans can become real rivals. This can show us how important football is for people. It usually reflects the situation and the problem of a society and it frequently becomes more important than just being a game. Football teams can have millions of fans and the clubs usually define the fans' identity. Supporters usually think there are many similarities between them and their clubs, and claim that it is their second family. This game can be sometimes more than a hobby; the enthusiasm is sometimes almost religious. Furthermore, supporters mainly choose their team unconsciously but the identity of the club is essential (Carnochan 2010: 504).

Studying football fan cultures from sociological or anthropological aspects is a generally popular field of research, but unfortunately it is less popular in Hungary. In Hungary, there are relatively less articles and studies about this topic, none the less it is the most supported of sports and games in this country. As a consequence, examining this topic has great importance.

In my paper, I compare the fan culture of Arsenal and DVTK football teams. There are similarities between the histories of the teams and also between the two regions. Islington, where the Highbury Stadium was located, is one of the most deprived boroughs in London, while Miskolc is also one of the most disadvantaged towns in Hungary. I analyse the identifying symbols, and study the structure of the local fan culture with qualitative methods, such as: empirical fieldwork, and structured and semi-structured interviews with members of the sub-cultural group. Furthermore, I compare the infrastructure of the two countries, the conditions of football stadiums, the problem and the situation of hooliganism and the costs of

being a football fan in the United Kingdom from 1969 to 1992 and in Hungary nowadays. I also try to analyse the veracity of the most common general opinions about fan culture, for example that fans are usually uneducated, unemployed and usually are alcoholics. The structure of my paper follows the structure of Hornby's book; I compared my observations with the novel in the order of the chapters.

One basis of the comparison is *Fever Pitch* written by Nick Hornby in 1992. He has been an enthusiastic Arsenal fan and he wrote his book about becoming and being a determined football fan, and how fascinating and difficult it has been at the same time. Furthermore, he wrote about the greatest problems, such as the contemporary situation of English football and football fan culture. In this book, he mentions not just the spirituality of supporters but the opinions of 'outsiders' about the supporters.

The other basis is my anthropological research done with the fans of DVTK. I travelled to and cheered for the team at six matches with the organized groups of supporters, the so-called 'Ultras' or football hooligans. The study of Rodríguez Díaz (Rodríguez Díaz 2007: 351) about Andalusian football ultras and the socio-historical review of Miklós Hadas and Viktor Karády (Hadas – Karády 1995: 108) were the principal bases of my research. Furthermore, other studies, like Bill Murray's paper about Old Firm (Murray 1995: 121), the analysis of football rivalries written by Adam Benkwitz and Győző Molnár or *Turin Derby* by Christian Bromberger and Jean Marc Mariottini (Bromberger – Mariottini 1995: 35) have been also important. All of them describe the culture of supporters or, rather, the procedure and the origins of rivalries.

I had the possibility to go with the fan groups to several matches played at Budapest, so I could attend the matches against Ferencváros, Kispest Honvéd, Újpest FC and the unofficial viewing of the Hungarian national team's World Cup Qualifier against Romania outside the Puskás Ferenc Stadium. In addition, I also watched two matches at the stadium of DVTK. Before the home matches I could meet the members of the fan group at their haunt and I did the interviews there with them. During my research, I had to become one of the members of the examined subculture and remain a researcher at the same time. As a consequence, the observations may be subjective sometimes.

My paper follows the chapters of *Fever Pitch*: every chapter begins with the analysis of the book's plot and then it continues with the analysis of my own field work. The paper's structure is built up in the following way: the first part is about the spirituality of football fans, the importance of the game and their clubs in their lives, the signs of their commitment. In the second part I compare the contemporary situation of football in the two countries, and the

problems surrounding it. In the third part I write about the changes made and introduced in the United Kingdom during the period between 1969–1992 and the results of those in the last twenty years; I also study the perspective changes of Hungarian football regarding supporters and that whether the arguments about how these changes still work in Western European countries are true or not.

It is really important to emphasize that Hornby's novel cannot be treated as an academic work because its main goal is entertaining the reader. However, it contains some precise pieces of information about English football fan culture and about the psyche of football supporters. I would also like to place emphasis on using the term 'English' in the paper. The explanation to this expression is that in the United Kingdom there are four different football associations: the English Football Association, the Irish Football Association in Northern Ireland, the Scottish Football Association and the Football Association of Wales. Hornby's favourite club, Arsenal FC, plays in the English Premier League, which belongs to the English Football Association, so he mainly writes about the atmosphere and the environment of English football.

### **Similarities between Highbury and Diósgyőr**

There are several similarities between Diósgyőri VTK and Arsenal FC, and not just the colour of the kit of the two clubs.

Hornby refers several times Highbury Stadium was in the dusty borough of Islington in London, where mostly poor citizens lived (Hornby 2010: 89). He adds that the majority of the supporters of the club work in factories, so they are members of the low-class. Furthermore, we can know that between 1969 and 1992 was not really popular and the person who supported Arsenal was ridiculous. Demographic charts show that Islington is still the fifth most deprived borough of London, and the fourteenth most deprived are in England<sup>1</sup>. The supporters are really fanatic but in this period the club itself were not really successful.

Miskolc and Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén county is the most deprived region and the rate of unemployment is the highest in Hungary. Diósgyőr, where the stadium of DVTK is still placed and it was the location of the steel factory which employed more than 25000 people. The club itself was originally founded in order to make doing physical activities possible to the workers of the factory. As a consequence, the stadium is almost next to the factory and the

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.theguardian.com/society/2011/jun/08/islington-council-fairness-commission-wealth-gap>

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‘colony’, where the majority of the workers lived. After the factory became bankrupted, the unemployment started to increase and the population of the city dramatically decreased from 210000 to 160000 in approximately thirty years. The district of the stadium has been becoming more and more deprived in the last few years.

## **General features of supporters, ultras**

### **Hooligans or ultras?**

It is really important to clear up that hooligans and ultras are two different styles or streams of football fandom.

Firstly, the hooligans are those who although jitter during the matches but their main goal is fighting with the opponents inside or outside the stadium. This stream became popular in the 1960s and 1970s in Great Britain. Later it spread all over the world and in several countries hooligan groups were founded and caused trouble.

On the other hand, ultras were Italian supporters who made spectacular hangings, flags. They also created different choreographies before matches which are usually performed with chanting songs and using pyrotechnic devices. Their main task is supporting their own team, and if the hooligans were responsible for physical fights, they were responsible for 'verbal clashes'. It does not mean they did not fight literally, because they did but they did not as much as hooligans. It also spread world-wide and became a popular way of supporting football clubs. They usually represent radical political beliefs and it can be seen in all of their activities.

The structure of Hungarian fan culture is not so clear, as hooligan and ultra groups are not really separated from each other. We usually refer them as ultras but they are also hooligans at the same time, because the same groups plan the choreographies and the fights with other fan groups, too. That can be reason why people usually talk about them as football hooligans. They claim themselves as Diósgyőr fans and although they might be rightists, they think they are not fascists or Nazis but Hungarians who believe that it is important to express it in their own way.

### **Becoming and being a footballholic**

This subsection is about 'footballholism' 'Footballholism' is an expression which means that someone needs to get experiences related to football. The person can only think about football, his club or the national team he or she supports. They know everything about the players, the problems and every gossip about their team. What is more, they know precisely the results of every single match they have seen. Footballholics claim that the club which they support is their family, the stadium is their garden, its restaurant is their kitchen, etc. This phenomenon is global and it infects mostly men and it is usually temporal but there are several cases when it proves itself to be permanent. Footballholism has another type: it is

also related to football, but not the game itself is what is important but the jitter, the chants and the atmosphere why they always visit matches. What is more, both types of footballholics attend all the home games of their clubs and travel to as many away games as possible. It usually begins in adolescence when the ticket is cheaper, because an adult is taking care of them. In this period they usually do not go to matches played on weekdays because of doing their homework or being at school.

Nick Hornby's first experience with his club can be called typical. His parents separated that time and he as his father met at weekends and they always had the same, quite boring ritual. He claimed their relationship was disastrous and it seemed it could not be helped. Suddenly, one weekend Hornby's father offered him to visit a football match at Arsenal FC's home, Highbury Stadium (Hornby 2010: 7). Despite the fact that the match and Arsenal's football style was dull, it was love at first sight for the writer as a boy. The atmosphere surrounding football enchanted him and going to football matches became the usual way of spending weekends. What is more, he and his father got closer to each other, thanks to football. However, Hornby's father was not that an enthusiastic Arsenal fan as his son but he preferred Chelsea FC (Hornby 2010: 67). Nevertheless, his father usually went with him.

When I talked to and did the interviews with Diósgyőr fans, they usually told me they belong to the second type of footballholics, they are addicted to jitter, composing and singing their own chants, supporting their team<sup>2</sup>. They usually visited the local stadium with their father or mother and they kept going to matches after that. Football is an identity constructing system for the majority of local people: a real 'Miskolci' supports the club and usually supports it at the stadium. People who moved from Miskolc to the other side of the globe are still fond of DVTK, they still wear the team's scarf after living for example in Canada for 10–20 years. Being a fan of the local team is unavoidable and the part of the one's identity in most cases. Another proof of the importance of football in Miskolc is that the average attendance is the first or second among the Hungarian top-front clubs every year.

### **Personal life and football**

Hornby claims several times that football and supporting Arsenal saved his life and even himself to become a totally depressed adult after the separation of his parents. Source. However, he admits his vocation might be strange for the others who are not similar, so they

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<sup>2</sup> Based on the interviews made with the members of the 'Bajtársak' fan group.

are not able to understand him. Neither Hornby's friends nor his girlfriends understood this effect but they tried? to perceive his feelings and they knew if Arsenal had lost, they would have had to be much lovelier to him than usual. Hornby influenced all the people close to him, from his relatives to the already mentioned partners. They got used to that Hornby has needed being asked about the actual results, the gossips about transfers or the players' forms. His enthusiasm was so big that Hornby 'made' his stepbrother an Arsenal FC's fan too and the writer mentions in his book that he thinks this is the reason of their strong relationship. Source What is more, he usually invites his girlfriends to football matches and he thinks if the actual partner loves him, she has to get along with the Arsenal, too.

However, Hornby is not so sure that it is so good for him when one of his partners loves going to matches and she becomes also a footballholic. Furthermore, when the couple is planning about having children, the girl suggests going separately to home matches. Naturally, this makes him really angry and lets us know that he wants Arsenal for himself, so he does not want to share it with anyone. He even thinks that having a wife or girlfriend who gets angry when her partner goes to match would have been better, so he could go to every matches. This attitude might come from his adolescence when at first going to football matches was his and his father's 'thing' when his parents were being separated. Later, when Hornby could go alone to matches, it became his own hobby and he could close himself to the world of football and not thinking about his problems. That might be why he thinks sharing Arsenal with someone would be so problematic (Hornby 2010: 165). He also writes, he would not let his children to support another team, they should go with him to Arsenal's matches, does not matter if they want to or not.

Meanwhile in Miskolc and its region supporting Diósgyőr has great tradition which passes from father to son usually and they go to matches together or rather in some cases even whole families visit the stadium. The members of the ultra groups also think it is really important to support the same team, one of them usually invites his adolescent son so they can jitter together. They cannot meet so frequently apart from match days but they try to as much as possible. When somebody has problems in his private life, they try to help him and they always celebrate the members' birthdays or any happy occasions, like childbirths, marriages, etc. The interviewees do not think that DVTK is their own hobby but they told me that they and other supporters are not the same, as they fight and chant for their club, while the others usually just sit in their places and the organized fan group members think they are very

different.<sup>3</sup> However, joining fan groups is a little bit difficult, as an applicant has to make through a long procedure if he wants to be a hundred percent member. Applicants have to jitter and fight for the club and to get along with the members, then they can become real members and can participate at brigade sittings, too.

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<sup>3</sup> Based on the interview made with D.B., 34 years old ultra.

## **Specific characteristics of fan culture**

### **Enthusiasm of football ultras and hooligans and its visible signs**

Both English and Hungarian football supporters have or have had their own identifying practices. This means they create their identity through a collective consciousness in order to being seen that they belong to the same group and to express their beliefs. The existence of these practices is a common point but the way the two groups use them is completely different.

According to Hornby's description about English hooligans and several supporters in the 1980s, which seems a little bit stereotypical, they used to listen to punk music and wore jeans and black leather jacket. He adds that they were mainly teenagers or young adults, their hairstyle was typical, they were usually bald or had really short haircut. This style was quite popular amongst not just football fans but also among 'ordinary' youngsters (Kacsuk 2005: 100). They also chant or chanted different songs, chiefly heartened their team but it was not extraordinary if they scandalized the opponent fans. Hornby thought the main sign of being a fan is collecting programmes of every game the given supporter has viewed in the stadium.

Diósgyőr fans I examined have more specific features than the English hooligans. There are several microgroups inside the society of ultras and each of them has their own uniform, which is usually a sweater and a jersey. The name of the given group and its crest take place on the clothes. Furthermore, they also have own hangings and flags, demonstrating their existence and their beliefs.

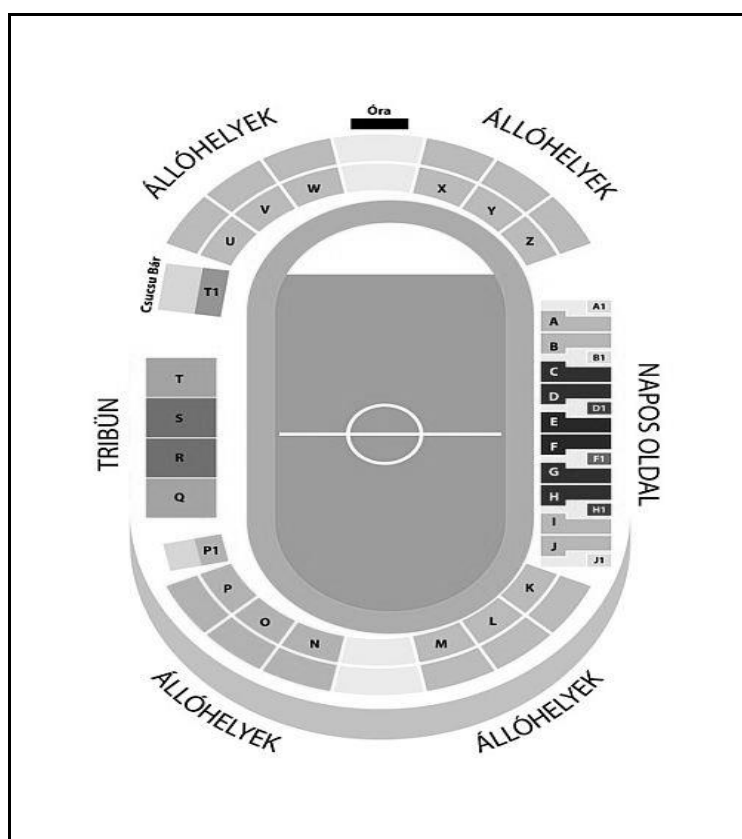
### **Spatial situation inside the stadiums**

Football stadiums are perfect to identify their visitors, because somehow every sector has an own feature why supporters go there from similar social classes.

For example, there were several specific banks and stands in the former stadium of Arsenal FC, Highbury Stadium. Everybody could choose which one is the most sympathetic to him or her and could take a seat in that sector. According to Hornby, the most important was the North Bank which was a covered terrace and there were not any seats, therefore vast crowd could watch the home matches from there which was not so safe, as the big mass could cause serious problems. Hornby describes that he felt he could drown when thousands of people started to move at the same time and to thrust forward the ones standing in the front. In addition, once he could only escape because the club did not install any net, so there was

enough space for supporters. Opponent fans were usually located near to the North Bank, at the Clock End.

The society of DVTK fans is also extremely heterogeneous and it can be seen in the sectors, too. All social classes can find their own place in the stadium, senior citizens and kids have their own sector, more determined fans and organized fan groups are also located near to each other. Furthermore, families or those who just want to be spectators and enjoy the match can also find their place. Opponent fans are separated and policemen are guarding them before and after, or rather their sectors during the matches. In Hungary, this frightening way of supporting is not so common, making and waving flags and hangings while singing chant is more popular.



first figure

Sectors of the stadium of DVTK

(source: <http://dvtk.eu/stadion/>)

Every sector in the stadium of DVTK has their regulars, so the social features of them are specific. In sectors from 'Q' to 'T', which are seated, elder men take place, who usually have season tickets and have been Diósgyőr supporters for decades. 'U', 'V' and 'W' are the sectors of children and senior citizens; 'Y' has been the place of organized fan groups, people who like the atmosphere but do not really want to join any of the ultra groups, are located in

the sectors next to it. The 'sunny side' is the biggest and the most heterogeneous sector in the stadium. Almost every social class is represented here; families with children, both younger and elder people take seat here. Standings 'K', 'L' and 'M' have been occupied by Robert Bosch GmbH, the company sponsors the club with a significant amount of money, so their workers can visit the home matches of DVTK for free. In sectors from 'N' to 'P' away fans are located.

In the last few months several changes have been made inside the stadium, on the one hand, the directorate of the club closed the 'K, L, M' sectors and the Bosch GmbH's workers can use the 'I' and 'J' sectors. On the other hand, as a consequence of the boycott of organized fan groups, the social structure of the 'Y' standing has transformed, younger fans try to substitute the 'traditional' fan groups.

### **Atrocities related to football**

Aggressiveness always has always been part of this game and neither fans of Arsenal or supporters of DVTK are exceptions. In Great Britain, football hooliganism has great tradition and authorities have been fighting against it for decades.

As a result of the unfortunate organizing of Arsenal's leadership I have mentioned, there were several atrocities between young Arsenal and other fans. These were really short and not so serious, usually they did not hurt each other, just tried to give a fright, then the opponent tried to ran away. After that everybody moved back to his place. This way of fight in English stadiums became quite popular in the 1970s and Hornby says it could be felt that there would something terrible happen. Not just because of the supporters but the impotence of the organizers and the authorities who were not capable to solve this problem.

After some serious disasters in football stadiums several safety measures were introduced. For example, after 1989, there can be only seated terraces and camera systems were introduced in all the English stadiums. As a consequence, the problem of the fights inside stadiums was solved but not outside. There are still serious fights between English hooligan firms but it is not as usual as it was ten or twenty years ago. During these atrocities, non-supporters are usually hurt despite the authorities trying hard.

The 'golden era' of Hungarian football hooliganism was in the 1990s and in the beginning of the 2000s. During this period several stadiums were damaged and fights between rival fans became really common. Even suspension of matches was quite often that authorities had to do something against it. The interviewees told me that retribution was not so serious as nowadays. Ten or fifteen years ago they only had to pay a penalty if they did something

wrong but now for the same act they could be imprisoned. These actions to enact stricter laws regarding football hooliganism have been efficient, and that it is the reason why football fans do not understand why it is necessary to make further strict actions. In the last five-six years there have been only a few fights outside the stadiums and the problem atrocities inside those was solved, only one or two have occurred.

### **Consuming alcohol and drugs, and its effects**

As Rodríguez Díaz wrote in his paper (Rodríguez Díaz 2007: 351), consuming hallucinogens, mostly alcoholic drinks, is a traditional way of entertainment. This subsection is about issue and I examine whether it is true or not.

Firstly, I introduce Hornby's opinion and experiences about drinking alcohol before, during and after the matches. He asked several fans and he also admitted that drinking alcohol, mostly beer has become the essential part of game days. It helps spectators enjoy the game more and forget the troubles and problems of their everyday lives. However, it was thought that the cause of the higher level of aggressiveness was mainly alcohol. So after the tragically accident happened in the Heysel Stadium, Brussels, Belgium, the English Football Association prohibited selling alcoholic drinks in stadiums for a couple of months. After a while, the trading interests seemed to be more important (Hornby 2010: 183) and in the same season the F.A. lifted this restriction.

The Hungarian situation is quite similar but a little bit different. The Hungarian Football Association (MLSZ) introduced the same measurements twenty years later, it was also a short-lived law because Hungarian supporters also prefer beer during the matches. Although it is true that consuming alcoholic drinks can be called common, the majority of the ultras do not drink, or if so, just a little bit alcohol when travelling to an away match. Their reason is quite simple: if they are attacked by the opponent ultras or the police, they should be extremely conscious. To conclude, they drink less alcohol than the majority of people think, the best example is their leader, who, on matchdays, drinks only green tea or mineral water.

In the introduction I have mentioned hallucinogens because consuming drugs is also a popular way of becoming relaxed. That group of supporters I examined was particularly against any drugs, so I have not seen any of the members taking any kind of drugs. What is more, they could influence one of their mates who drank alcohol frequently. Even though they did not use drugs, I could realize a whole group of supporters who were heavy drug users. They claimed this is the part of their identity and despite the fact that the others did not really

appreciate it, they just laughed and made fun of this group. It was really visible that they became more aggressive after taking drugs but they did not cause any serious atrocity.

As a conclusion of this subsection, as the failure of those measurements also shows, we cannot declare strictly there is a straight connection between the aggressive attitude of football fans and drinking alcoholic drinks.

### **Aggressiveness related to away matches or abroad**

Hornby describes that English supporters usually behave totally different when they travel abroad because of international games. As I got to know from the interviews and from the news, it is also true if we are talking about Hungarian football fans.

Hornby thinks the main reason can be the long journey when they have too much time, so they might drink too much alcohol and they think they can do much more as they would in their home country. Another explication can be the tradition of threatening the opponent fans which was accepted in Great Britain until the end of the 1980s. The biggest tragedy happened during an international football match was the already mentioned Heysel disaster in 1985 in the Heysel Stadium before the final of European Champions Cup played between the Italian Juventus F.C. and the English Liverpool FC. The young and maybe illuminated English fans attacked the group of Juventus supporters mainly formed by adults. As the Italians did not know anything about this method of threatening, they panicked and tried to escape from the stadium.

The other factor which could lead to the unfortunate catastrophe was the unstable construction of the building and the incompetence of the local authorities. The organizers did not think it would have been important to separate the sympathizers of the two teams. Furthermore, the structure of the stadium was not strengthened before the match. The result of this was that one sector of the stadium collapsed under the mass of people and 39, mostly Italian people died. It was one of the darkest events of modern football and it inspired all the leaders of football clubs and associations in England and international associations to think about and reorganize the system organizing football events and reconstruct football stadiums.

Hornby mentions several times he thought frequently he could die because of the access control or the huge number of viewers located at the same sector. He claims it was a good idea that Arsenal FC did not allow installing steel nets in the Highbury Stadium in front of the supporters' sectors. As a result, they could not organize F.A. Cup finals these times. The other bigger catastrophe happened in Hillsborough Stadium in 1989, Liverpool FC and Nottingham Forrest played against each other. Too many spectators were allowed to attend

and they could not manage to go away because of the nets, the number of victims was 96. Later, Liverpool fans composed several songs related to this tragedy (Power 2011: 96).

None of these accidents were related to Hornby's club, Arsenal FC but he claims he was extremely ashamed after the Heysel catastrophe because it could have happened to them, too. He thinks if Arsenal or any other English football team had qualified to the final they would have behaved the same way as it was the part of the tradition of English football fan culture.

The Hungarian situation is a little bit different but there are several similarities between the two country's fandom. As Hungarian teams do not often qualify themselves to international football competitions, their fans do not travel abroad so frequently as English supporters. As a consequence, away matches in their national league have more importance for ultras of DVTK than English fans. So, big fights with other fan groups happen before or after these matches. The reason can be similar to Hornby's idea, the quantity of alcoholic drinks consumed during long journeys can influence the behaviour of these supporters. However, my experiences show the opposite of this hypothesis; those fanatics who would like to fight against other ultras, or hooligans as lot of people talk about them, drink a small amount of alcohol to be braver but usually these 'missions' are usually planned well in advance.

Another popular point of view is that fan groups are really dangerous to all members of the society as they always cause troubles to non-supporters and also to the police. If we view the news of the last few years, we can see that number of atrocities related to football matches in Hungary has dramatically decreased. Diósgyőr fans also admitted that this is true, their main reason for this were the stricter and stricter laws. Ten years ago if somebody hit a policeman, he had to pay a small amount of money and if he wanted to, he could do it in instalments, too. Nowadays, for committing a smaller offence they can be punished by imprisonment and it really frightens them.<sup>4</sup> That is why they think the measurements of the last two years were completely unnecessary. Consequently, the installation of registration of football fans before every game was just the last drop in the glass for them. As they had announced it months before the promulgation of this regulation<sup>5</sup>, they do not visit those stadiums where this so-called 'card of supporters' is obligatory. Unfortunately, it was also

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<sup>4</sup> Based on the interview made with K.J., 26 years old ultra.

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.boon.hu/a-diosgyori-szurkoloi-csoportok-nemet-mondanak-a-szurkoloi-kartyara/2033880>

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'Fan Groups of Diósgyőr Say No to the Registration Card of Supporters'

introduced in Miskolc, so Diósgyőr ultras have not participated at home matches since March of 2013.

## **Safety measurements and changes introduced**

### **Safety measurements introduced**

As I have already mentioned, different safety measurements were introduced in both of the countries regarding football hooliganism and because of the prevention of serious atrocities. The most important to know about these laws that most of them were extremely unpopular and usually they were unsuccessful.

In Great Britain, after the two biggest tragedies the F.A. decided that complete reorganization was needed in English football stadiums. In order to put through this, they prohibited the standing in all of the stadiums and only seats can be used since 1990. Furthermore, the access control became more rigorous before matches and supporters' registration were also introduced. Surveillance camera systems and microphones were also installed inside and outside the stadiums and trouble-makers have to face really serious retributions, this was the most argued measurement. Another serious change was in organizing football matches because the two teams' supporters must be separated from each other. They cannot be located next to the opponent fans and stewards and policemen are looking after the order during the games. The reception of these measurements was varied and it led to the end of the traditional way of jittering in Great Britain.

Hungarian governments and leaders of Hungarian Football Association also tried to solve the problem of football hooliganism but they are dropped twenty years behind English authorities. Their method was really similar to the English one but Hungarian supporters were shocked by different measurements. The installation of camera systems was not so problematic but introducing supporters' registration card was a scandal and not just Diósgyőr fans, but supporters of other teams also demonstrate because of this measurement. As a result of the demonstration of ultras in Diósgyőr, the atmosphere of the matches of DVTK has changed in a negative way.<sup>6</sup>

### **The influence of ultras and hooligans on the atmosphere surrounding the game**

It is a general opinion that hooligans and ultras have a great influence on the atmosphere of football matches. It is not easy to show it objectively, Hornby did not even try it in his book but he used utterances. However, I tried to compare the data of home matches of DVTK with and without organized fan groups.

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<sup>6</sup> Based on interviews made with B.M., 37 years old; Zs.L., 23 years old; O.R., 19 years old supporters.

Hornby claims that everybody misses (2010: 158) the old way of jitter and the all-seated are not the same. People usually feel they are not seeing a football match in a stadium but a play in a theatre. He really misses that atmosphere and did not really like this system.

| Home matches of DVTK<br>from July 2012 to December 2012 |                                     | Home matches of DVTK<br>from March 2013 to September 2013 |                                    |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Opponent                                                | Attendance<br>(in discending order) | Opponent                                                  | Attendance<br>(in ascending order) |
| Újpest                                                  | 9 000                               | FTC                                                       | 10 000                             |
| Pápa                                                    | 7 715                               | Haladás                                                   | 4 597                              |
| Kaposvár                                                | 6 000                               | Újpest                                                    | 4 569                              |
| MTK                                                     | 6 000                               | MTK                                                       | 4 488                              |
| Győr                                                    | 6 000                               | DVSC                                                      | 4 327                              |
| Eger                                                    | 6 000                               | Videoton                                                  | 4 315                              |
| Siófok                                                  | 5 000                               | Kecskeméti TE                                             | 4 087                              |
| Paks                                                    | 5 000                               | Kecskeméti TE                                             | 3 351                              |
| Pécs                                                    | 5 000                               |                                                           |                                    |
| Honvéd                                                  | 4 000                               |                                                           |                                    |
| <b>Average of attendance: 5 971</b>                     |                                     | <b>Average of attendance: 4 966</b>                       |                                    |

second figure

attendance of home matches of DVTK

The second figure is about DVTK's home matches from July 2012 to September 2013. The first two columns contain the data of those matches when the organized fan groups participated at. It can be seen clearly that in this period the attendance was lower than 5000 only once and the average was 5971. The third and four columns contain the attendances of DVTK's home matches between March 2013 and September 2013. It is conspicuous that the attendance was not higher than 5000 but only on one match when DVTK played against Ferencvárosi TC, the biggest rival in the current Hungarian National Championship. I examined this game also, the jittering was not organized at all, and it led to the phenomenon that the 1200 FTC fans' supporting was much more effective and much louder than the 8800 Diósgyőr supporters. The reason why there are the data of two matches against Kecskeméti TE in these columns is that they played against each other in the season 2012/2013 and in the season 2013/2014, too. In my view, the main reason of the decrease of the numbers might be the deterioration of the atmosphere which surrounds the football matches in Miskolc, which was caused by the demonstration of fan groups.

## **Changes in the lives of the two clubs**

There have been several changes introduced in the lives of the two teams. In this subsection I analyse the last 21 years of Arsenal and the last one years of DVTK.

After Hornby published his book, Arsenal started to win Premier League titles and in the beginning of the 2000s Arsenal became the most successful team of English football that time. What is more, supporters of Arsenal 'got' a new stadium, because of the sponsorship of Fly Emirates it is called Emirates Stadium. After the season 2003/2004 Arsenal started to lose their brightness and somehow returned to the 'typical' dull and unsuccessful football style of Arsenal (Hornby 2010: 232). In the current season, 2013/2013, Arsenal play well and lead the table of Premier League in November 2013.

Beside the already mentioned changes in the life of supporters of DVTK, the stadium of the club has been renovated and another period of construction will start in 2014. The supporters are not totally happy about it, as the traditional stands seem to 'disappear', because the renovated stadium will be completely seated. It is likely that the same measurement will be introduced as in Great Britain; fans will not be allowed to stand during the games, and might be banned from visiting home matches as it was happened in Sunderland<sup>7</sup>. The team did not perform well in the last season, so it was terrible but as Arsenal, their form has also been getting better and better in the last few months.

It is extremely important to mention the future of organized jitter in Miskolc. As the traditional groups do not visit home matches, they usually support youth teams every weekend starting from October 2013. There are two alternatives, one of them would like to organize jitter from the 'L' sector of the stadium because ultra groups did not allow them to 'use' their sector, the 'Y'. The second group wants to support the team from the 'E' sector. Neither of the new groups has become popular yet but it is not impossible they will replace the 'traditional' groups later.

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.sunderlandecho.com/news/local/all-news/sunderland-fans-banned-for-standing-at-the-match-1-5261908>

Downloaded: 13:09 20th November, 2013

## Conclusion

In my paper, I analysed Hornby's book, *Fever Pitch* and my fieldwork done with ultras of DVTK football club. In order to make the comparison more understandable, I also used several studies related to sociology of football, which examined football fan culture.

I would like to emphasize the fact that *Fever Pitch* is not an academic writing but it contains several pieces of information about the atmosphere surrounding football and about football culture in England. My research has not been extensive enough, it has been just a basic study about football fan culture of the supporters of DVTK. However, this and Hornby's novel together can be a good base for making further studies in this topic.

I also tried to explain the background of becoming and being a football fanatic in the two cultures. This phenomenon is universal, but the opinion of Hornby and the examined group about personal life is completely different. Hornby does not really want to share the object of his enthusiasm. On the other hand, members of fan groups claimed they want their children and family support Diósgyőr in the future because the majority of them visited their first match with their parents.

Great Britain is the home of football hooliganism and supporting their team the way fans in Hungary do has not been so popular. This does not mean that Hungarian fans and supporters of DVTK are not aggressive but not so much as English fans.

Furthermore, I examined traditions related to football matches, like consuming alcohol or atrocities inside and outside stadiums. I reviewed bigger fights and catastrophes related to English football teams, the general situation of Hungarian hooliganism and the measurements introduced because of these problems.

Finally, I revised the influence of ultras and hooligans on jitter and the atmosphere of football matches in general. It was possible because of the boycott of ultras of Diósgyőr, as I could analyse the attendances of football matches before and after their demonstration.

To conclude, there are much more common points in the fan culture and in the history of the two clubs what could have been anticipated. The stadium of Arsenal was located in Highbury, in the borough of Islington which is the fifth most deprived borough in London, as Miskolc and its region is the most deprived one in Hungary. Both of the teams have had really serious downturns and have had fewer successful periods but supporters of both teams are extremely enthusiastic. As a conclusion, through the similarities between the two regions and the football clubs, it can be clearly seen that in their own environment they play a similar role.

In my opinion, further researches would be needed to understand football fandom more instead of introducing safety measurements which are probably not deliberate enough. This way there might be less atrocities and watching matches inside the stadiums could be more enjoyable.

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