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Stadi Derby and the Securization of Urban Public Space

Abstract

Stadi Derby is a local football (soccer) match played in Helsinki, Finland, that is greatly appreciated for its atmosphere. Simultaneously, the negative characteristics connected to international football culture have become familiar in the surroundings of the stadium. The threat of violence is visible, e.g. in the media coverage reporting on the derby, which has also affected the way the city dwellers experience the urban public space. In our article, we ask what kind of reactions and discourses can be found concerning the relationship between Stadi Derby and the right to public space. We apply securitization theory to understand the ways in which these events and the media coverage of them have affected urban dwellers. We look for particular speech acts in the media coverage and analyse the ways people respond to them by analysing material produced via Facebook and a focus group interview. The Stadi Derby case is an example of the ambiguous nature of public space and what is considered acceptable behaviour in it. It also shows the mechanism through which we create an understanding of the diverse users of such a space.

Key words: Football, soccer, disturbance, hooligans, urban public space, securitization, media, Facebook

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Introduction

The atmosphere began building already several hours before the main event. The supporter groups of both teams organized fan marches to the stadium, and the songs echoed in the streets of Töölö. - - A minor negative to the bustle of the evening was the small scuffle seen before the match, after which three persons were taken into custody. (YLE 23.4.2015b)¹

Expectations were high when the football clubs HJK (Helsingin Jalkapalloklubi) and HIFK (Helsingfors Idrottsföreningen Kamraterna) played a match in Veikkausliiga, the highest competitive level in Finland, for the first time in 43 years in 2015. These local football (soccer) matches – derbies – were played continuously during the years 2015–2017, and they received the nickname Stadi Derby, with *Stadi* being the slang nickname for Helsinki and highlighting the specific localness of the event. However, quite soon afterwards these much-anticipated events began to receive less favourable attention: concerns about safety and a general sense of insecurity around the stadium space challenged the positive urban atmosphere.

In our article, we analyse the ways in which the right to public space is negotiated in the context of Stadi Derby. Katarzyna Herd (2018a, 21–22) has noted that within European ethnology, research on various sports has been plentiful, yet the field of spectator sports like football is treated cautiously: researchers of football are rather careful in their approach and analysis and tend to focus on the official side of it rather than on the micro-processes surrounding sports. We want to combine these two aspects and take a wider look at the relationship between football culture and urban public space. Using the theory of securitization, we will first look at public discourses surrounding the event, i.e. media coverage concerning the Stadi Derby and how it might affect ideas about the safety of urban space. In the second part of our analysis, we make visible the micro-processes surrounding such football events by analysing Facebook material and a focus group interview to assess reactions to the media coverage among city dwellers. The idea behind the research is to discover the underlying sentiments of ordinary spectators, bystanders and the general public.

The Stadi Derby is played in the middle of the city, just beside a well-off neighbourhood in Töölö. This means that both the matches and the events taking place before and after them are highly visible. The theory of securitization has emphasised the two-fold nature of public spaces: they can be seen both as spaces for order and conflict. When defining public space, the focal

1 All quotations have been translated into English by the authors.



HJK ultras' fan march to the stadium 30 September 2016. Photo: Miira Kuvaja.

characteristics are its accessibility and the diversity of its users. These characteristics also make public spaces unpredictable. That is why questions of security have led to a situation where critics have suggested that public space has lost its characteristic of being *public* and become more controlled, closed and homogeneous (De Backer, Melgaço, Varna, & Menichelli 2016, 1–4). These processes make visible the interconnection between public space and power, i.e. they address the principal questions about who has the right to use a space (Koops & Galič 2017, 27), not least with respect to the role of subcultural groups and the different lifestyles of city dwellers (see, e.g. Németh 2006; Stevenson 2003, 44–47).

We look at Stadi Derby as one example of the ongoing discussions about the “sanitisation, securitisation and fortification of public space” (Jones 2014, 9). Discussions concerning the use of public space often arise when the everyday use of the urban space is somehow changed or disturbed, be it electronic scooters taking over the streets, the Extinction Rebellion demonstrations or a march staged by football fans. We understand these discussions as part of the international ‘post-urban’ development in which, for instance, spatial privatisation has led to more controlled and shrinking urban public space. This has caused researchers and urban planners to question how to create socially sustainable, open and equitable cities. The complexity of urban space comes from its changing roles and from its changing users (Haas & Mehaffy 2019).

Urban spaces are not fixed or finished places; they consist instead of variable and negotiable boundaries to which different meanings can be attached (Klein 1995, 23). One aspect of this complexity involves the discourses connected with the different purposes and users of a space.

Most city dwellers have witnessed different events in their surroundings, experiencing them sometimes as unwanted intrusions and at other times as fascinating interventions into their everyday life (Klein 1995, 7–8). In the case of Stadi Derby, the complexity becomes visible in the discourses surrounding the event and how people conceive of their safety in the public space. These themes are linked to several profound questions dealing with the ways in which urban public space can be used and with the securitization processes taking place in contemporary societies. By securitization, we are referring to a situation wherein new issues are presented as security risks threatening everyday life. The theory has its origins in the political sciences and especially in international politics. However, securitization has also become an important topic when discussing the nature of contemporary urban public spaces and especially the changes taking place in their openness and accessibility (De Backer et al. 2016, 1–3; Koops & Galič 2017, 35; see also Raco 2003). It has also been defined as one of the processes “that seek to banish or limit forces, moments and agents of ‘disorder’” (Jones 2014, 87). Hence, with the help of securitization theory it is also possible to analyse mechanisms of securitization in a local context.

The violent side of football events away from the pitch, e.g., hooliganism, is a much-researched area within the study of sports. These issues have been researched by various scholars in fields like sociology, anthropology, sports science, criminology and economics. Much of this research has been devoted to the ‘problem areas’ (quotation marks original) of football (Herd 2018a, 20; see also Buchowski, Kowalska, Schwell, & Szogs 2016, 6, 8; Bairner 2006; King 2004, 191; Giulianotti & Armstrong 1997).

All in all, football culture can include many things, for example, following matches either while present at the stadium or through broadcasts, participating in different fan activities, such as fan marches and various activities at the stadium, and often also discussing football topics in different mediums (see Brown 1998; Herd 2018a). Stadi Derby is an interesting example of the way football culture may change our understanding of public space since it has only recently become much more popular and visible in Finland despite its history dating back to the late 1800s. One can argue that with the Stadi Derbies, the activities of some supporters – ultras – become visible to the wider public.

Data and methods

We have combined two sets of sources via two approaches: news articles using Critical Discourse Analysis and data collected from informants on Facebook and in a focus group with ethnographic methods emphasizing the viewpoint of the media audience. This combination of material will make visible the mechanisms of securitization.

When analyzing the public discourses concerning the derbies, we did a close reading of electronic news articles from two supposedly different news sources: the Finnish broadcasting company YLE's news pages and tabloid *Ilta-Sanomat*.

When something is securitized, the issue is dramatized and presented as an issue of priority – something the system must respond to quickly. By labelling something a security issue, one is claiming a need for and a right to treat it by extraordinary means. The process of securitization is what language theorists call a speech act. The expression itself is important here – the words themselves create the need for action (Buzan et al. 1998, 26; see also Buzan & Hansen 2009, 214). We look at these speech acts as a form of social practice, which in our case includes both the written and spoken language being used but also the visual elements supporting it.

What is spoken, written or pictured asserts something about the existing reality and at the same time constructs the same reality (see Fairclough 1995, 54; Jokinen, Juhila, & Suoninen 2016, 21, 37–38). In the case of media, it is important to make visible the ways in which pictures and videos are used to “interact with language in producing meanings” (Fairclough 1995, 58). David Rowe (2004, 127) has argued that media sport texts can effectively convey ideology particularly because of their ostensible innocence and familiarity. Media discourse analysis has generally focused on “the accounting of the presence of bias or ideology in language, or the problematizing of power relations in the society” (Cotter 2015, 797, 799). We analyse the perspective and style of media narration to track the different power relations playing out in urban public spaces.

When searching for suitable articles, we used the search term ‘Stadin Derby’ for the digital news feeds in both media. We focused on the Stadi Derby event during the period 2015–2017, reading closely the first 40 articles that appeared for each news source based on the search term. The news feed was much larger in the case of *Ilta-Sanomat*, which meant that the 40 articles mainly just covered the last year of our period of study, while in YLE the 40 articles covered all three years of the study. We focused on expressions describing both the atmosphere during the derbies and the ways in which the media outlet contextualised the events for their readerships.

In the second part of our analysis, we used data generated from a public Facebook page, 'Research on football hooligans and the Stadi Derby' (Futishuligaanit ja Stadin derby-tutkimus), and a secret Facebook group with the same name. These were created by Miira Kuvaja for her master's thesis project in 2017. There are three different Facebook groups: 1) those with public access and visible in the searches, 2) those with private access and visible in the searches, and finally, 3) those who are private and hidden from the searches, a secret group. The third group is the most applicable when researching controversial topics since an anonymous identity creates a safe environment for the participants. Kuvaja used media articles and video clips to create a discussion and to identify participants' feelings. She invited people from her own Facebook network to participate, and they then invited their own contacts. Persons who had indicated an interest in the research topic by liking the public research page were invited to join the secret group. The members were informed about the nature of the study, asked for their informed consent and promised anonymity.

The participants were given codes during the different phases of producing information. Participants in the secret Facebook group received a code starting with the letter 'F' (e.g. FH; FS), while codes starting with the letter 'C' refer to commentators on the public Facebook page (e.g. CA; CB). Codes marked with an 'I' refer to persons participating in the group interview (e.g. IA; IB). The public Facebook page collected only comments (reviews), not actual answers to the questions. Instead, valuable discussions took place on the method being used, like in the following extract:

This approach is not working. How do you plan to reach the bystanders and the so-called 'normal supporters'? It is difficult to see that even they would take the opportunity to comment with their own name on a public Facebook page. (CB)

The above point is certainly true, since the social media atmosphere has changed and people are more careful about what they write for everyone to see. As Robert V. Kozinets (2010, 5) notes, online social experiences are significantly different from face-to-face social experiences, and this causes some people to avoid taking part in online discussions (Elder 2020). The secret Facebook group proved to be more successful, but even still several people declined to respond, as they did not want to give answers that others could see. This shows, as Anna Haverinen notes (2014, 47; 2015), that understanding the different contexts of producing knowledge is crucial when carrying out digital ethnographic fieldwork (see also Rogers 2017). However, altogether 25 participants took part in the enquiry. Most of them answered all seven questions.

The questions dealt with, e.g., general feelings about the derbies and views on football culture. Eleven participants also answered the follow-up question about attending the matches with children. Not all participants answered all the questions, however, and the length of the answers varied from a few words to longer reflections. The responses from the 25 participants were quite uniform. The division between outsiders – those unfamiliar with the Stadi Derby and football fan culture – and insiders was evident among the participants. All of the participants were from the white urban middle class and included both women and men. Their ages varied from 25 to 55 years.

Reason for collecting data on Facebook was the possibility to contact the intended target groups. The fact that the first participants were at least known to the researcher may have affected the answers to some extent. Partly for this reason, she decided to stay away from the answering process, especially since at least some of the participants knew that she is an active supporter herself. With use of the term hooligan, the idea was to draw attention to the negative aspects of the events. It is known that wording is central in generating data, and we can thus even argue from a critical standpoint that the researcher set the tone for a securitizing speech act through her choice of word.

The Facebook material was supplemented with a focus group consisting of persons who attended the last derby played in 2017. To deepen understanding about the critical stance of outsiders towards the derbies, three participants in the secret Facebook group were invited to take part in the actual event. They attended the derby with Kuvaja and expressed their sentiments afterwards. Two of them had answered the research questions in the secret Facebook group, while one had only glanced through them. Two of them, IA and IB, had attended football matches in Finland before, but this was their first visit to a Stadi Derby. The group session started as a group interview and ended up closely resembling a group discussion as the participants began to discuss the topics more freely (Valtonen, 2005, 223–224). Furthermore, four interviews were conducted with persons organising and supervising the matches to understand the broader aspects of the derbies from the perspective of those most visibly officiating the games. The actors interviewed were from the local police, the clubs and the Football Association of Finland.

The mechanisms of securitization

The key concept employed in this article is securitization. Initially, securitization theory was used in relation to traditional threats affecting nation-states. Since then, research has expanded to include new threats and new subjects and objects of study, like the environment and religion (Trombetta 2011, 135; Vuori 2011, 186), as well as new research fields and scholars, such as crimi-

nologists, anthropologists and geographers (Floyd 2019, 4), not to mention urban researchers.

Securitization can be seen as a more extreme version of politicization. In theory, any public issue can be located on a spectrum ranging from non-politicised issues to politicised to securitized issues. Where the issue at hand is placed on the spectrum depends on the prevailing circumstances. Securitization is constituted by the intersubjective establishment of an existential threat with enough effect to have substantial political consequences. Objects that can be under threat might include, for example, the role of the state in the military sector. With respect to the economic and societal sectors, the objects in question and their threats are more difficult to locate. This means that the actors – objects and their threats – must be defined in relation to their surroundings. To study securitization is to study discourse and political constellations. Securitization is occurring when an argument achieves sufficient effect to make an audience accept the violation of otherwise obeyed rules. (Buzan et al. 1998, 22–25.) In our analysis, we locate both the objects and the threats to them in a small-scale, local geographic and social context (see De Backer et al. 2016, 3).

Successful securitization has three phases: existential threats, emergency action and effects on the inter-unit relations through the breaking of existing rules. The distinguishing feature is a specific rhetorical structure, words and expressions that call for special actions. This definition can function as a tool for identifying security actors and phenomena (Buzan et al. 1998, 26). Thierry Balzacq adds to this discussion the idea that the usage of words and phrases must be aligned with an independent external context to yield the desired effect, meaning the audience and context must be considered more specifically. Effective securitization is highly dependent on context; hence, the audience should be at the centre of the process for it to be successful. (Balzacq 2005.)

We apply both the idea of speech acts and the need to contextualise these speech acts by looking at the reactions of the audience. We first turn to reading the media sources from the viewpoint of the threats connected to the Stadi Derby and its relationship with public space, and we then continue by contextualising these speech acts with the help of Facebook and focus group sources.

Discourses of atmosphere and disturbance

Our categorisation of the news coverage shows that in terms of numbers, the negative aspects of the event did not receive as many comments as the positive aspects of the event. We categorised the news coverage by the two media outlets based on the points of emphasis in the story. They emphasised the different aspects of the event in a rather similar manner, with the sport itself receiving the most attention in the news stories (see Table 1). However, in

	Neutral	Problem-based	Atmosphere	sport-based
YLE	2	12	7	19
Ilta-Sanomat	3	11	3	23

Table 1. The emphasis of the news coverage in the two media outlets in focus

many of the stories the positive atmosphere was part of the news, especially in the interviews with players, coaches, experts or reports from journalists. When comparing the problem-based news coverage and stories about the atmosphere surrounding the event, we noticed a slightly greater emphasis on negative phenomena associated with the event.

The various news stories described the derbies as *tremendous* (YLE 10.8.2016b), *fierce* (YLE 30.9.2016a), *hot* (YLE 31.7.2017) and *burning hot* (IS 12.9.2017b; 31.7.2017). The matches offer *entertainment*, *atmosphere*, *emotional charge* (YLE 28.10.2017) and *great feelings* (IS 23.5.2017b), serving as a *boost* for Finnish football (YLE 24.4.2015; YLE 10.8.2016b). The matches are worth seeing just to *watch the supporters*, with one witty video clip making the culture of chanting more familiar to its audience (IS 23.5.2017a).

According to the discourse on the atmosphere of the event, the Stadi Derby was evolving into a product that involved more than just the game itself (see Oriard 2010, 180). The positive attributes presented in the news coverage included the performative engagement of the supporters, without which the match would not be the same (Herd 2018a, 85–86). According to Norman Fairclough (1995, 55), language can be used to reproduce and maintain existing identities, and the way the atmosphere is highlighted here can be seen as contributing to the general football culture. In the news coverage on the atmosphere of the event, the relationship between the writer and the potential reader seems to be a shared one, i.e. that of co-supporters of the sport. As such, the discourse supports a positive understanding of the sport. The media can have a significant impact on the way specific sports or athletes are understood and viewed by the general public, making sporting events into media events (Oriard 2010, 188). This has its background in the historical tabloidisation of sports, the media imbuing them with an aura of ‘sensationalism’ (see Oriard 2001, 33).

The fact that the perspectives of spectators or residents are almost non-existent in these articles reflects the way the media defines how the event is covered, i.e. recognising those who have the right or legitimacy to be heard on a specific topic (see Fairclough 1995, 54, 79). However, one example in our data that does include the viewpoint of a supporter is a video clip interview

with a HIFK supporter, in which he assures people that the atmosphere in the streets is not frightening when supporters are marching to the stadium: "I have waited for these kinds of encounters for a long time, to get this kind of feeling in Helsinki, and 10 000 spectators, and a really good feeling." This comment followed immediately the reporter's account of a "threatening situation" that had taken place when two groups of supporters had encountered each other in the narrow streets of the city, but which the police had handled quickly (YLE 26.5.2016).

However, the interest of the media and other publication channels in problems associated with football matches has taken a myriad of forms, present also in "fantasy football hooliganism", in which flirting "with the spectacle of violence" is viewed as a form of entertainment (Poulton 2006). Not surprisingly, these possible football-oriented problems were of interest to the Finnish media as well. While the media in this case chose to distance itself from the problems associated with the Stadi Derby, it is the voice of a supporter that defends the different aspects of the event.

Much of the news coverage about the Stadi Derby beyond actual sports coverage of the event dealt with actions of fans outside the stadium to demonstrate their fierce admiration for their respective teams. The fan marches held before the matches proceed along the residential streets of the neighbourhood, and the fear of violent after-match encounters in the city was highlighted in some of the news stories. The fan marches have also been live-streamed to readers (IS 23.5.2017c), so that they can still enjoy them even if not attending the actual event, showing also the acceptance of the pre-event rituals leading up to the matches.

However, when the Finnish Broadcasting Company YLE reported on the fan marches of 23 April 2015, including a photo gallery of seven pictures with the story, the tense level of interaction between the supporters and the police was highlighted: mounted police with helmets were shown monitoring supporters, many of whom were shouting and making gestures. The story was accompanied by Twitter feeds from readers, highlighting the dynamics of audience agency in contemporary media coverage, which also showed youngsters with covered faces and mounted police officers (YLE 23.4.2015a; see Cotter 2015, 803). Another example of the problem-based coverage surrounding the event was a story published in *Ilta-Sanomat* in May 2017. The event had been peaceful, but the headline emphasised the possible problems: "Stadi Derby was expected to become a brawl – the police wrote only one fine". The story then highlights the fear of violence, with police recounting violent events from the previous year (IS 24.5.2017). It begins with a photograph of a group

of police officers wearing safety gear, while supporters of HJK are marching in the background. As such, it highlights a threat inconsistent with the text.

Words like *fires, burning torches, disorder, violence, police, wading in, security problem* and *danger* (e.g. YLE 15.6.2016; 10.8.2016; 30.9.2016b; 30.9.2016c; 1.10.2016; 4.10.2016; 19.1.2017; IS 2.8.2017) appeared in the category of problem-based news. Graphic pictures and emotional language have been the means to describe the negative sides of football culture also in, e.g., the English media (Poulton 2005). These visuals represent clear choices about how to present the actions taking place during the events, i.e. what to include and exclude from the story (Fairclough 1995, 4–5).

A photo gallery format with a similar emphasis as in the April 2015 story was also published later the same year by YLE when covering another Stadi Derby. This time the comments from the police were also included: the fan marches had been peaceful, although some bottles had been thrown and torches lit (YLE 6.7.2015.) The very visible presence of the police, the masked youngsters, the smoke and the crowd itself shouting, waving flags and drinking created somewhat disturbing images of the events. When covering the events of another derby the following year, YLE reported that more than ten people had been detained. The nature of the conflicts was emphasised by reporting that the police had used both pepper spray and truncheons (YLE 10.8.2016b.) At the end of the season, a headline cautioned that “families with children already need to consider what is going to break and from where a torch is going to come flying” (YLE 3.10.2016).

Transgressive behaviour, or potentially transgressive behaviour that occurs in a public space, is bound to arouse concern in the media (De Backer et al. 2016, 6; see also Höijer & Rasmussen 2007), and as such, the media coverage is not surprising. It seems, however, that very little space is allotted for analysing the problem (see also Poulton 2005). “A revolting phenomenon has stuck around Stadi Derby. This has to be stopped before something worse happens”, was declared in *Ilta-Sanomat* (IS 4.10.2016). The journalist proceeds to argue that in England, the pressure created by the media to change the mood regarding transgressive behaviour within football – *football terrorism* – was the solution that led to change, and this is something that needs to be done in Helsinki as well he admonishes (*ibid.*). Here also, a connection is made between hooliganism and groups on the extreme right and left (see Herd 2018a, 205). In this way, the media is presented here as a force that can safeguard the public space.

The ambiguous feelings aroused by the Stadi Derby were analysed also by several sports experts, who noted that the brawling of the fans put a damper on the otherwise “good atmosphere of a great match” as “some crackers want

to destroy the whole event” (YLE 30.5.2016). Here, the focus is on *crackers*, or loudmouths, again giving an all-embracing explanation for the phenomena and at the same creating a linguistic account for those involved in such actions. The problem is presented as a significant one, but those making trouble are marginalised as very small and specific groups, and as such, treated as marginal or external to the actual football culture (see also Höijer & Rasmussen 2007).

However, the media often depicted the *fierce craziness* (YLE 3.10.2016) of the atmosphere as something positive, making it difficult to identify the line between acceptable and unacceptable. The journalists wonder about the anonymous masked faces in the marches but at the same time connect them to phenomena adopted from the ‘big world’ beyond Finland (see Giulianotti & Robertson 2004). The stories welcomed the derbies as events that helped increase interest in the league. However, as one journalist noted, “next time, the ski mask could be left at home” (YLE 24.4.2015).

Both media sites often gave voice to the police when commenting on the derbies (see e.g. IS 2.8.2017; YLE 6.7.2015; 1.10.2016). Despite their highly visible role at the events, quite often the comments from the police aimed to neutralise the situation. For example, in October 2016, after listing several different disturbances, the police nonetheless concluded that the city was “surprisingly peaceful” compared to expectations (YLE 1.10.2016). The police also had a visible presence in the photographs and videos (YLE 6.7.2015; 26.5.2016; IS 4.10.2016; 22.2.2017; 24.5.2017; 12.9.2017a; see also Picture 1). They are rarely shown taking action in the pictures – especially outside the stadium – but just by being present they *are prepared* to do so (IS 24.5.2017). This presence illustrates the claim to sovereignty on the streets, but also the ways it can be contested (Herbert 1998, 226; see also Herd 2018a, 208). The police are a clear sign of enforcing the order of the public space at the same time as some fans are depicted as “urban undesirables” (De Backer et al. 2016, 5), challenging the order of this same space.

The work of the police at Stadi Derby was also depicted in a reality TV series, *Police 2017* [Poliisit 2017], which was also reported on in *Ilta-Sanomat* with the aid of a video clip: “Threatening incident during Stadi Derby – glass bottles flying towards the police”. Here, too, the media site used the term *football hooligans* (IS 22.2.2017). The term is very effective, definitive and tends to be all-encompassing in scope. The different supporters can easily be labelled hooligans in the media, and the distinction between dangerous and good or bad behaviour is left undefined (Herd 2018a, 206).

Despite the somewhat reassuring comments from the police, they had requested that the derby be held on Mondays and Tuesdays for the 2017 season,

not during weekends, because of the disturbances during the previous season (YLE 19.1.1017). This change was considered a success:

As a whole, the first Stadi Derby of the season represented successful football culture and was a great indication of the fact that, in the end, this event is about something bigger than a match. (YLE 23.5.2017)

Compared to some other news coverage presented earlier, the media depicted the Stadi Derby of May 2017 as a well-organised and disciplined event, where all the important elements of football still existed. At the same time, the media described not only a trouble-free fan march, but also a trouble-free urban space.

The media representations of the Stadi Derby were ambiguous, though, or at least inconsistent (Fairclough 1995, 7): on the one hand, the news stories emphasised the positive, much-anticipated atmosphere, while on the other they gave much space to the disturbances in the form of words, videos and pictures. The analyses of the representations discussed above cannot make visible the whole process of securitization, but they can identify how the media chose to prioritise questions of security. It is clear that the media coverage effectively underlined issues of security at the same time as it emphasised the importance of the overall atmosphere, which also on a more positive note included the activities of the supporters. The dramatisation of the event, described as the first step in securitization, took place using both words and pictures, while the safety of the public space was presented as an issue of priority in the case of the Stadi Derby (Buzan et al. 1998, 26). To understand the ways in which this dramatisation may have affected city dwellers, we now turn to their experiences.

Feelings of Securitization: Insiders and Outsiders

I consider this violence glorifying the 'fan' culture of the football teams as the cancer of team sports. Disguised psychopaths gather around a group of losers who, under the guise of sport, fulfil their sick fantasies of something they do not achieve in normal life (feeling of togetherness, breaking boundaries, getting attention). All of this is done at the expense of the safety and comfort of other city dwellers and with the authorities protecting the idiots from each other. (FK)

Previous studies have suggested that some individuals are actually attracted to football primarily because it offers a tempting context for fighting. A ready-made group of opponents is available, with the supporters of the opposing

team serving as a point of focus for an alternative type of ‘war games’. What attracts them is the opportunity for fighting and demonstrating masculinity and often showing off local identity. The motives for such behaviour can be either political or personal, meaning here mainly the desire to enhance prestige among one’s peers. (Murphy et al. 1990, 11–12; see also Murphy, Williams, & Dunning 1990, 13; Dunning et al. 1988; Bairner 2006, 586.)

The derbies evoked quite strong feelings among the participants in the secret Facebook group. The feelings expressed on the public Facebook page were even stronger, but the reasons for the strong words and opinions differed. Some commentators were quite critical, as the word ‘hooligan’ was often used in the Facebook postings: “Why do you equate hooligans and fans?”, asked one commentator (CA). This comment highlights the need for clarification on use of the term. The terms ‘general public’ and ‘bystander’ generally referred to persons who follow information provided by the media or, as bystanders, just happen to pass near the stadium during the derbies. Identifying the feelings of these two groups and ordinary spectators is the main interest of this article, as our presumption is that the processes of securitization and its relations to the use of city space can be found among these groups. An ordinary spectator may in the same way be passionate about his or her own club or might just be interested in football in general. One can also further separate a fan from an ordinary spectator and from an ultra, meaning that fans prefer a seat in the end stands and are more eager to take part in the organised choreographies. The word ultra is used both by the groups themselves and by the media and also in research. An ultra participates in the marches before the matches, sits in the end stands of the stadium singing and shouting, and participates in other supportive choreographies, i.e. the tifos.

The football enthusiasts and the fans of the two teams know the event and have most likely been present at the stadium during the derbies. Through use of the term hooligan, the idea was to draw the attention of the intended ‘outsider’ groups to the negative aspects of the matches. Hence, the term hooligan refers to a person who intentionally causes disorder and who is prepared to use force to cause someone or something actual physical harm. The term is used both in the media and in football-related research. However, the labels ‘football hooliganism’ and ‘football hooligan’ should be used with care. There is no generally accepted definition for them, and the terms have been used to describe different phenomena in various contexts. (Coenen, Pearson, & Tsoukala 2016, 3–4.)

The possibility of avoiding the derbies was clearly expressed in many of the responses given by members of the Facebook group. When the participants were asked directly about their plans to attend the matches after they had seen and read the uploaded media materials about the disturbances (some of the

same disturbances cited above in our analysed media materials), many stated that they would not attend the matches or would at least consider the matter carefully. “This kind of behaviour raises fear and any slight interest in going to see the matches wears off”, commented one person (FO). Another informant, FZ, stated that she would not go to a match after seeing the materials posted in the Facebook group: “I would be scared and too much energy would go into other things than into the matter itself”. FU expressed the same sentiment: “I would be dubious of going to the match if I saw such a mob”.

All the informants described hooliganism as a negative phenomenon. Some of them also viewed the activities of ultras, like the supporter marches, in a negative light. In our study, we classified such activities as examples of hooliganism when something criminal and/or violent occurred, for example fighting. The legal and illegal were blurred together in the eyes of the general public, bystanders and ordinary supporters, affecting their understanding of the safety of public spaces. At the same time, all participants wanted to make a clear distinction between acceptable and unacceptable supporter behaviour: they welcomed the ‘real football culture’ to Finland but did not accept hooliganism.

The answers revealed an interesting finding about the insiders and outsiders to the game. People who had not attended the derbies or other larger football matches and who did not follow football reported feeling insecure, even appalled, by the hooligans and also by the ultras. They expressed strong emotions and used words like *shocking*, *uncivilised*, *idiots*, *hate*, *fear* and *disgust*. If one had attended any derbies or large football matches elsewhere, then the event did not arouse such strong concerns about security. “After experiencing Italian derbies, I don’t find the Finnish derbies very scary”, stated one person (FH). The insiders to the game had a solid stance on this question, and they did not change their opinion even when they were asked directly about the illegalities seen on a video clip from the TV series *Poliisit 2017*.

I would go to see a match anyway; in Finland, attending a football match is after all quite safe. You do not end up in problematic situations easily by accident. I do not count using flares, etc., as creating disorder (in a way I even favour this). (FS)

The ultras want to claim the streets for a few hours a year – the right to use the urban space. The fan marches are something new in Finland – other sports or even other football matches do not give rise to similar activities that are so visible, loud and organised. As Chief Inspector Jere Roimu from the Helsinki Police Department commented in his interview with the researcher, the ultras’ marches are, from the perspective of the police, normal and legal gatherings (Roimu, 13 July 2017). However, some of the participants in the Facebook group were prepared to limit this right to gather in public places:

“These fan marches should be banned immediately, and the ones participating [in them] should be arrested in the future”, comments FK. Here, we can find a direct connection to securitization since the event prompted some informants to raise concerns about individual and collective security. The participant in question expressed a desire to limit the freedom of assembly – a basic right in Finland – in this situation. At the same time, another participant commented that “this kind of march jeopardises the reputation of [us] peaceful protestors” (FY).

The use of public space for different kinds of events, as well as negotiations about such uses, have raised questions about the eventualisation of the space and about how these events, especially in recent years, have become more and more of an urban phenomenon. As urban public space is always also lived space, ideas about how to use it may vary from person to person. (Smith 2016, 13–14.) This also explains the value judgments made by the commentators above. The feeling of insecurity and of being threatened understandably emphasises this value judgement.

In one of the questions the participants were asked for their opinion on extraordinary measures used by the police during the derbies. Extraordinary measures refer to, for example, the large number of different kinds of police forces and security officers (e.g. patrolmen, riot police, mounted and traffic officers), the closing of the streets because of the fan marches, and so forth, as shown in the video clip from the TV series *Poliisit 2017* (IS 22.2.2017). These measures are of course in a way “basic crowd control stuff”, as one person (FJ) noted, but the extraordinary measures in this case had to do with the means of control used in a sporting event – or used at all in Finland at this order of magnitude. Several participants commented that the use of such control measures might enable (FK; FE; FS; FY) and even provoke (FW; FY) confrontations between the two fan groups. Others stated that maintaining order in a visible and even extraordinary way is a reasoned choice on the part of the officials (FT; FO; FL; FU; FV; FA; FS). One informant, FN, was not ready to accept the viewpoint of the police, who purportedly understated the seriousness of the situation: “If, for example, I lived in those areas and the police stated that such blustering is just a part of the sport, I would be pretty strict in demanding intervention”. Another informant commented as follows:

I believe that, in these situations, it is not far from the fact that the situation actually escapes also the hands of the authorities. I do not know if the authorities really have the means to prevent a real confrontation and protect bystanders. In this situation, there are also many interested bystanders. I do not like [this]. (FP)

As with the above response by FP, others also highlighted the connection between urban public space, its accessibility and feelings of being threatened and of insecurity. According to one informant, “enabling such a thing will set straight many real fans; [they] may not even be interested in coming to the scene, not to mention the insecurity that this brings to ordinary townies” (FE). Another informant, FF, made a direct connection between the event and the city space: “I would not go, nor would I go near the event. So, it would limit both my space and my actions in it”. She continued in another response:

I don't like football or any other culture that brings disruption and some kind of threat. Such is quite selfish and reckless, an indifferent culture. It is not just those who embrace that culture, but all those who use the same space at the same time. (FF)

One participant recounted an actual experience of passing through a certain neighbourhood during the derbies and hearing the mobs from a distance near the stadium, claiming that it had been scary and distressing, especially considering she had been in a company that included children (FL).

When answering the question about attending the derbies with children, the participants were particularly outspoken concerning their lack of interest in attending the matches: one person (FK) took a firm stand and commented as follows: “I would never take my children near those idiots”. Another (FQ) said “I would not go, nor would I let my children go”. While acknowledging the importance of supporting one's favourite team, she nonetheless expressed the sentiment that “violent clashes do not drive the cause. Some of the supporters will vanish because of these clashes”.

The participants were also asked how they felt about the fact that all the officials, even the police, albeit with some minor reservations, considered the derbies safe to attend, even for families with children. The officials helping organise and supervise the derbies were of the opinion that the media had exaggerated the instances of violence (Roimu, 13.7.2017; Väinölä, 10.8.2017; Member of Board for HIFK, 15.8.2017; Karjalainen, 28.8.2017). Based on their assessment, the participants were asked if they would change their minds about attending the derbies. Some participants who had previously described the event as unsafe and scary stated that they might attend – and even bring their children along: “Changes [things] absolutely and I am embarrassed to admit that I let the atmosphere of fear created by the media influence [me]” (FY). Another informant agreed, making the following comment: “Same as FY before [me], meaning that we would likely attend [with the children]” (FP).

According to Herd (2018a), the public and mass media have become fixated on presenting a one-sided view of football fans as predominantly loud,

angry-looking males who like to bring flares to the stadiums, with the media knowing that the best pictures are the most dramatic ones: half-naked young men wearing masks and holding burning flares make the front pages. This image is also emphasised in the problem-based media coverage in our material, part of which was presented to those participating in the Facebook group. The difference between insiders and outsiders can be seen in the ways the news stories affected their sense of security. Despite the sensationalistic media coverage, the insiders maintained an attitude that the Stadi Derby is safe to attend. They considered it safe to take part in the matches and also in the marches, even with a child:

I would go, and will go, alone and with my six-year-old son. If I would be a supporter of either of the teams, I could also participate in the march, even with my son (in this case, of course, at the tail end of the crowd). (FJ)

Instead, the insiders focused their criticism on the media coverage itself: “I think that the media is happy to take these [instances of excess] into focus and add gas to the burning flames” (FI).

This understanding of the difference between insiders and outsiders was confirmed by the focus group. One of the participants had arrived at the stadium well in advance and had had time to see the march by the HJK ultras. She did not feel insecure, but instead commented that the number of marchers was impressive: “When you see them for the first time, there are of course quite many of them. But it did not worry me; you of course stay and watch them. It was quite powerful” (IC). Here, we can detect the fascination connected with the special use of the city space by the ultras (Klein 1995, 8), as she was mesmerised by the HJK fan march.

Two observers who had answered the questions in the Facebook group had been quite suspicious of the derbies when basing their opinion on the linked media materials. After further presenting group members with the opinions of the interviewed officials about the small number of real hooligans and that ordinary supporters were not in serious – if any – danger, followed by a question on such dangers, members toned down their views. Finally, after attending the derby in person, they reported feeling quite relaxed and expressed a willingness to attend the matches also in the future. One notable point is that the observers actually did not mind the smoke torches or other activities engaged in by the ultras in the end stands. What all the observers did find unsettling were some of the chants, which included swear words. Surprisingly, the most negative point of note during the whole event was, at least for two

of the attendees, the chant by HJK ultras of “bankruptcy, bankruptcy, bankruptcy”, which referred to the other club’s financial troubles (IA; IC).

The participants said that they experience the city space during the derbies quite differently, depending on their status of being insiders or outsiders. Gender was not a determining factor, as male outsiders expressed similar views as female outsiders. The outsiders expressed strong emotions, which in fact became speech acts on their part. This being the case, both the media and the city dwellers together performed security acts.

Conclusions

In our analyses, we strove to make visible the micro-processes connected to securitization around the Stadi Derby by evaluating both the media coverage surrounding the derbies and the opinions and experiences it evokes, collected via Facebook. The problematic behaviour connected with hooligans and also ultras became visible in ways that have an effect beyond just the fan base. We argue that one of these effects is the way we experience urban public space.

In our research data, we identified security labels both in the media and Facebook materials. In the process of doing a close reading of the speech acts disseminated by the media, it became evident that the issue is not only about words, but about the images that structure feelings of security or threat (see also Herd 2018b). Especially news aimed at a wider public – not only football enthusiasts – underlined the problems of derbies with respect to urban space and its users. The Stadi Derby was something new on the Finnish football scene at the time, both in its positive and negative aspects, which also caused some ambiguity in the news coverage.

While not denying the problems, we can ask what kind of impact these types of speech acts have on our understanding of public space, its security and our possibilities to be part of these spaces, i.e. on the mechanisms of securitization.

Although the term hooligan was only used a couple of times in the media coverage, the narrative used in the problem-based news stories can be seen as part of the hooligan narrative defined by Aage Radmann (2013, 105–118; see also Herd 2018a, 207). The hooligan narrative is based on an us–them division and on stereotypes strengthened in the media. In our case, the us–them division was created between the insiders and outsiders of football culture.

The media discourses and reactions from our Facebook participants mainly paralleled one another when analysing the relationship between the Stadi Derby and the right to public space. Our focus groups, the general public, bystanders and ordinary spectators had felt appalled by, and even expressed angry reactions towards, the hooligans. Some of them wanted to put a stop to

the fan marches, even though the marches represent a normal and legal use of urban city space. This can be interpreted as reflecting a phase in securitization theory where violations of rules that would otherwise have to be obeyed are accepted (Buzan et al. 1998, 23–25). The image of threat created by a few was connected to the event as a whole. This led to a situation where the fear of losing one's right to the city space led to a critical view of others' rights.

One aspect to consider with research done in a Facebook group is how much does the first commentator influence the tone of all the following responses. The first commentator in this group had a very negative view on the matter, and it is possible that the intense wording of his replies affected how others responded, though all posts remained just within the group and most of the members did not know each other outside the internet. This being the case, it is possible that people choose their words more carefully when they are expressing their views for strangers to see. Here, we can argue that the first participant was one of the securitization actors – his definitive comments about, for example, forbidding the marches constituted speech acts in the group.

It seems that with the speech acts identified in our material, security issues were exaggerated and even imagined. If one follows the derbies only through media stories, one can easily form the belief that there are great security risks during the matches and that the public sector could and should use more forceful and effective means to prevent and contain the hooligans' behaviour. As it turned out, some persons – the outsiders – were securitized in connection with the derbies.

Thierry Balzacq emphasises the importance of context, audience and power relations in securitization (Balzacq 2005). The actors calling for security measures were in our context the media and also some of the participants in the Facebook group. The more visible presence of the security personnel was understood and even welcomed by most of the participants. Hence, we can state that the audience accepted the security acts performed by the officials as a result of different speech acts made by the media (and also by other participants). The Stadi Derby case is an example of the ambiguous nature of public space and what is considered acceptable behaviour in it. It also shows the mechanisms through which we create an understanding of the diverse users of such a space. Likewise, in this instance the speech acts resulted in a need to control the public nature of the space. As understandable as this action may have been considering the negative media coverage, it emphasises the need for dialogue and multivocality when dealing with questions about the accessibility of urban public spaces.

AUTHORS

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Pia Olsson, PhD, Associate Professor, is a university lecturer in ethnology at the University of Helsinki. In her urban studies research, she has focused on the ways people experience, feel and make meaning of their close environment. She has applied both ethnography and oral history methods in her work.

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Interviews

Interviewer: Miira Kuvaja. The recordings of the interviews are stored only on the researcher's personal recording device.

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Member of Board HIFK, 15 August 2017: HIFK Fotboll.

Roimu, Jere, 13 July 2017: Chief Inspector, Helsinki Police Department.

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IS 23.5.2017c Koko ilta yhtä suoraa lähetystä Stadin derbystä: marssit, livestudio, peli (Petri Lahti), <https://www.is.fi/veikkausliiga/art-2000005222970.html>.

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IS 31.7.2017 HJK vei tulikuuman Stadin derbyn, Jyväskylässä päädyttiin pistejakoon (Krister Jalonen), <https://www.is.fi/veikkausliiga/art-2000005309730.html>.

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YLE 23.5.2017 Kommentti: Suomi-futiksen timantti loisti, ilman maalejakin (Sami Laine), <https://yle.fi/urheilu/3-9629556>.

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YLE 31.7.2017 YLE puhe: Kauden toinen Stadin Derby – Muuriselle 600:s pääsarjaottelu valmentajana (Joni Piirainen), <https://yle.fi/urheilu/3-9749873>.

Facebook materials

The public Facebook page and the secret Facebook group moderated by Miira Kuvaja are closed, even to members of the group.

PUBLIC PAGE: FUTISHULIGAANIT JA STADIN DERBY -TUTKIMUS

CA–CD: males, ages unknown

SECRET GROUP: FUTISHULIGAANIT JA STADIN DERBY - SALAINEN TUTKIMUSRYHMÄ

Males:

FK: 45–55 years
FE: 45–55 years
FS: 25–35 years
FR: 45–55 years
FW: 35–45 years
FD: 45–55 years
FJ: 35–45 years
FI: 35–45 years
FH: 45–55 years

Females:

FO: 35–45 years
FP: 35–45 years
FL: 35–45 years
FU: 45–55 years
FV: 35–45 years
FA: 45–55 years
FM: 45–55 years
FG: 45–55 years
FN: 45–55 years
FY: 45–55 years
FT: 35–45 years
FZ: 45–55 years
FF: 35–45 years
FC: 45–55 years
FX: 35–45 years
FQ: 45–55 years

Focus group interview

The interview was conducted in 12 September 2017. Interviewer: Miira Kuvaja. The recordings of the interviews are stored only on the researcher's personal recording device.

IA: female, 45–55 years.

IB: male, 45–55 years.

IC: female, 45–55 years.

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