

POLITICAL ACTIONISM ON THE FOOTBALL FIELDS OF THE WORLD AS A FORM OF A POLITICAL PROTEST

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Abstract. *Political protests during sporting events are aimed at attracting wide public attention, gaining significant media coverage and turning football fields into places of high performance during important matches. The actionists demonstrate peace, carnival spirit and certain insecurity; despite this, they confront and constitute considerable concern to the ruling elite of the states. The analysis covered nonviolent protests on football fields around the world from 1976 to 2018. This article examines political activism, namely political actionism on football fields around the world (namely, streaking) as a form of political protest. The investigation follows two approaches: first, despite being entertaining, protests at football matches are a way to voice views and positions 'uncomfortable' to the authority, and second, they may undermine the authority and damage its power. Streaking may generate more public protests in support of actionists or their convictions.*

Keywords: *political protest, political activism, political actionism, streaker, challenge, threat, ruling elite.*

Rezumat: *Acțiunismul politic pe terenurile de fotbal ale lumii, ca formă de protest politic. Protestele politice din timpul evenimentelor sportive au drept scop atragerea amplă a atenției publice, obținerea unei mediatizări semnificative și transformarea terenurilor de fotbal în locuri de înaltă performanță în timpul meciurilor importante. Acționiștii dau dovadă de pace, spirit de carnaval și o anumită nesiguranță; în ciuda acestui fapt, ei se confruntă și constituie o preocupare considerabilă pentru elita*

conducătoare a statelor. Analiza acoperă protestele nonviolente de pe terenurile de fotbal din întreaga lume, din 1976 până în 2018. Articolul examinează activismul politic, în special acționismul politic de pe terenurile de fotbal ale lumii (în special streaking-ul), ca formă de protest politic. Investigația autorilor evidențiază două probleme: în primul rând, în ciuda faptului că sunt distractive, protestele la meciurile de fotbal reprezintă o modalitate de a exprima opinii și poziții „incomode” pentru autoritate; în al doilea rând, o pot submina și îi pot deteriora puterea. Streaking-ul poate genera mai multe proteste publice în sprijinul acționiștilor sau al convingerilor lor.

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, visual society¹ is dominated by semiotic and symbolic activity in the form of performances (or plays) which have acquired paramount importance to modern communities. Political events and activities have turned into performances (‘politainment’) and have acquired spectacular and theatrical forms. The crises in the traditional understanding of political activism and the ever-growing individualism have contributed to the development of dynamic, dramatic techniques in political processes. In democratic societies, activism is the driving force behind many policies and laws. “*The concerted efforts of individuals in pursuit of a cause is crucial to a working democracy*”.² Political activism takes various ‘classical’ forms (boycotts, pickets, strikes, ‘silent’ protests, etc.), but also the form of vivid performances. Naom Chomsky believes that political activism refers to “*joining together ... changing consciousness*”.³

Modern protests need a certain degree of artfulness to be successful and sports events may turn into a perfect ‘stage’. Sport has long been linked to intense feelings and regimented performances that follow rigorous rules and guidelines. It is no surprise that any rule infractions are discussed, recounted and remembered. In other words, the action gets a ‘second life’ and since it has a political connotation, it may influence the public perception of a phenomenon, a

¹ Bill Abbate, *The Dawn of the Visual Society. What is the visual society and how does it affect your life?*, October 21, 2022, <https://medium.com/illumination/the-dawn-of-the-visual-society-db454c6ca00f> (Accessed on 05.11.2022).

² *Political Activism*, Miller Center, 2022, in <https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/teacher-resources/primary-resources/political-activism> (Accessed on 02.04.2022).

³ Naom Chomsky, *Activism, Anarchism, and Power*, in “Conversations with History: Institute of International Studies”, UC Berkeley, <http://globetrotter.berkeley.edu/conversations/people2/Chomsky/chomsky-con5.html> (Accessed on 02.04.2022).

process or a person. International football matches gather thousands of spectators in stands and millions more on television; therefore, politically active, politically conscious individuals and groups may view such matches as a platform to deliver a message or exhibit an attitude.

Sport has always been a target for many forms of political interest. Political leaders have seen the potential of exploiting sports for political purposes; sporting movements never have been afraid to include political actors in the sports family; sports organisations have always been preparing for a political 'invasion' of sport.⁴ Sports competitions in which participants represent states have a strong political element, just as political events have an impact on other areas of society. Therefore, the concept of "politics should be kept out of the sport" is only valid on the pages of the sports organizations' regulations.

Since sport is intricately linked to the larger socio-political context in which it operates, it does not exist in a vacuum. Whether football or basketball, cricket or gymnastics, social and political contexts shape both the sport and our response to it. Many sports were designed to enforce social needs, such as Japanese martial arts, celebrated as a means of spiritual development and social ordering, or cricket, which Victorians used to teach the ruling class to dominate and the plebs to obey. Leaders, autocrats, and powerful individuals have frequently used sports to assert their political dominance. Recently, more and more professional players are using their platforms to exercise their political views and support wider conversations about civil rights.⁵

Sport has a sustainable and significant political protest potential as it increasingly reflects the political problems of society, and becomes their platform, translator, and a kind of 'voice of society'. In this context stadiums turned into 'multifunctional' grounds, for instance, concentration camps (Chile during the period of the rule of A. Pinochet), and refugee camps (during military operations). Stadiums were used to host meetings, protests and marches with national symbols (a joint march under the slogan 'For United Ukraine', 2014),⁶ mass shows

⁴ Kutte Jönsson. *Sport and Politics. An Ethical Approach*, 2012, <https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1400349/FULLTEXT01.pdf> (Accessed on 02.04.2022).

⁵ Kenan Malik, *We need to separate sports and politics. But also recognise that they're inseparable*, in "The Guardian", June 13, 2021, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/jun/13/impossible-to-keep-politics-out-of-sport-just-as-it-should-be> (Accessed on 12.05.2022).

⁶ Denys Horielov, "*Rukh futbol'nykh fanativ v Ukrayini*". *Analychna zapyska* ["Movement of football fans in Ukraine". Analytical report]. National Institute of Strategic Studies,

(the Ariran festival in North Korea), to transmit politicians' speeches, and to hold election congresses (in the USA) and debates (the presidential elections in Ukraine in April 2019).

Individual, group and collective protest actions of athletes have been widely studied by scholars.⁷ At the same time, a sporting event provides an opportunity for fans to express themselves through political protest or personal stance. However, the academic community overlooks this issue, probably because such individual protests seem insignificant in terms of the effect on the state apparatus or as a powerful call for mass disobedience. However, such actions are undeniably a litmus test of societal issues (and the desire to eliminate them) precisely because of the manifestation of dissent in front of authorities and the public.

This article examines political activism, in particular individual political actionism, on football fields around the world as a form of political protest. Football, as a status sport, has a powerful media component, i.e., the championships of the world's leading football leagues are watched by billions of viewers, and the states and their leaders are in a long, highly competitive struggle to host the World and Continental Championships. That is why football matches are most often used for protest actions. The initiators of the actions consider stadiums as accessible platforms where it is convenient, efficient and effective to declare systemic political concerns, "raising awareness of social problems and injustice."⁸

Hence, taking into account the intersection of political protests and world's football matches, protests (specifically individual political actionism) during football matches may first be a way to voice views and positions 'uncomfortable' to the power, and second, a means to undermine the authority of the governing

2014, <https://niss.gov.ua/doslidzhennya/gromadyanske-suspilstvo/rukhn-futbolnikh-fanativ-v-ukraini-analitichna-zapiska> (Accessed on 08.03.2022).

⁷ M. Patrick Cottrell, Travis Nelson, *Not just the Games? Power, protest and politics at the Olympics*, in "European Journal of International Relations", Volume 17, 2011, Issue 4, pp. 729–753, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/1354066110380965> (Accessed on 02.04.2022); Eric Dunning, Jay Coakley. *Handbook of Sports Studies*, Sage Publishing, 2000; Douglas Hartmann, *The politics of race and sport: Resistance and domination in the 1968 African American Olympic protest movement*, in "Ethnic and Racial Studies", Vol. 19, 1996, Issue 3, pp. 548-566, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/01419870.1996.9993924> (Accessed on 02.04.2022).

⁸ David Thibodeau, *Sport as a Form of Protest*, in "Sports for Social Impact", June 9, 2020, <https://www.sportsforsocialimpact.com/post/sport-as-a-form-of-protest> (Accessed on 02.04.2022).

elite and destroy the image of the power. Consequently, the reaction of the state authority will differ given the political regime. Legally unrecognised nonviolent forms of protest are analysed, that is, short-term ('video') striking radical actions, which, due to media coverage, reach the widest possible audience. Traditional forms of public protest appear mundane and outdated in contrast to such outrageous actions.

All individual protest actions between 1976 and 2021 have been investigated to confirm these theories. The following sports sites were analysed: championat.com (Russia), pressball.by (Belarus), football24.ua, football.ua, dynamomania.com (Ukraine), as well as articles in such information sites as espreso.tv (Ukraine), Belsat (Belarus), euroradio.fm (European radio for Belarus), and BBC News Russian Service.

The following methods constitute the methodological basis of the study: event analysis helped in investigating the specifics of football matches and tournaments of various levels. The content analysis allowed for the discovery of politically charged protests, while comparative analyses allowed for the correlation of protest action features and their evolution. Understanding protestors' intentions as well as the emotions of officials, players, commentators, and stadium spectators was made possible through psychological analysis. Establishing cause and effect relations allowed researchers to trace the socially important events in the host countries of football matches and tournaments that preceded the political protests of citizens on the football fields, as well as the consequences of these actions for activists, clubs and authorities.

The main article's body consists of four parts. The introduction outlines the aim and the applied methodology, while the next chapter provides the theoretical support for the study target. The third chapter consists of an examination of the specificity of known protest acts, and the next chapter offers evidence of the defined hypothesis. The article ends with the main conclusions drawn from the empirical analysis.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In Latin, *protestare* suggested the etymological connection to publicness and witness; to engage in a protest is to offer public witness. T. V. Reed claims protests are not always *against* something, the prefix *pro-* suggests that protests are *for* something – proposing, putting forth positive alternatives.⁹ James M. Jasper

⁹ T. V. Reed, *The Art of Protest. Culture and Activism from Civil Rights Movements to the*

emphasizes that individuals play key roles in protests – be they strategic decision-makers or individual protesters outside of organized groups; individuals often initiate small changes, many of which become widespread.¹⁰

It is worth mentioning that normative theorists were sharply divided between realists and idealists concerning the importance of protests and activism. The *'realist'* school suggests that limited public involvement was sufficient to ensure a stable and accountable government, so long as governments in representative democracies were legitimated by free and fair elections contested by rival parties and politicians at regular intervals.¹¹ 'Idealists' believe that increased public participation is essential for democracy; *"activism is thought to have multiple virtues, proponents argue, making better people, by strengthening citizen awareness, interest in public affairs, social tolerance, generalized reciprocity, and interpersonal trust, as well as fostering more responsive and effective government, by generating better decisions and more legitimate outcomes"*.¹² This study supports an optimistic perspective on the advantages and results of political protest activism.

Political activism is *"one of the forms of conscious purposeful behaviour of individuals and social communities in the field of politics; (...) it manifests itself primarily in the dissemination of certain ideas by a person or a group, the pursuit of political goals, support for the government or the opposition."*¹³

Citizens encounter major normative challenges in their daily lives, such as what is good and bad about what is happening, including how to treat others, how to act, and what to do for the best. Accordingly, Naisargi Dave understands activism as critique, invention and creative practice that challenges social norms.¹⁴ As a result, normative definitions governing political action are established (Naisargi

Present. Second Edition, Minneapolis – London, University of Minnesota Press, 2019, p. XIII – XIV.

¹⁰ James M. Jasper, *The Art of Moral Protest. Culture, Biography and Creativity in Social Movements*, University of Chicago Press, 2008, p. XI-XII.

¹¹ Joseph A. Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*, 4th ed., London, George Allen & Unwin, 1952, p. 271.

¹² Pippa Norris, *Political Activism. New Challenges, New Opportunities*, in Carles Boix, Susan C. Stokes (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook for Comparative Politics*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2009, p. 630-631.

¹³ *Aktyvnyist' politychna* [Political Activity], in *Encyclopedia of Modern Ukraine*, 2001, https://esu.com.ua/search_articles.php?id=43540 (Accessed on 30.03.2022).

¹⁴ Naisargi N. Dave, *Queer Activism in India. A Story in the Anthropology of Ethics*, Durham, Duke University Press, 2012, p. 3.

Dave, 2012;¹⁵ Didier Fassin, 2015;¹⁶ Michael Lambek, 2010¹⁷). This study follows the values-based approaches and understands political activism as an assemblage of meanings and practices that express relationships of interest to the world.¹⁸ In our 'global village' full of contradictions and imbalance, sports have long been involved in politics. Consequently, such 'interests' may be presented in the context of sporting events, specifically football matches, to attract mass attention.

Political activism can take the form of political actionism, i.e. "*a type of political participation that is manifested in various spectacular forms of sociopolitical activism and has become increasingly prevalent in contemporary politics.*"¹⁹ Victoria Bavykina claims that actionism is, primarily, an action that violates customs and traditions, and political actionism is considered a social action conditioned by social processes and at the same time, it is a reflection of a social change, an attempt to artistically comprehend social life.²⁰ Natalia Khoma argues that "*political actionism is not all the diversity of bodily gestures; first and foremost, action is deed. Fulfilling any political tactics or realizing any artistic device, the action seeks its form and its meaning, focusing on the dynamics of direct links, rather than on institutional rules of the play. The action is a public act – or rather, it creates direct publicity through direct action. Actionist cannot always assume what will the action be, but s/he always knows what effect (outcome) s/he wants to achieve.*"²¹

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Didier Fassin, *Troubled waters. At the confluence of ethics and politics*, in Michael Lambek, Veena Das, Didier Fassin, Webb Keane, *Four Lectures on Ethics. Anthropological Perspectives*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 2015, pp. 175–210.

¹⁷ Michael Lambek, *Ordinary Ethics. Anthropology, Language and Action*, New York, Fordham University Press, 2010, pp. 39–63.

¹⁸ Sevasti-Melissa Nolas, Christos Varvantakis, Vinnarasan Aruldoss, *Political activism across the life course*, in "Contemporary Social Science", Vol. 12, 2017, Issue 1–2, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/21582041.2017.1336566> (Accessed on 30.03.2022).

¹⁹ Natalia Khoma, Vasyly Kozma, *Spectacularization of political activism: Subject matter and social effect*, in "Epitheorese Koinonikon Ereunon", No. 158, January 2022, p. 3, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/358243696_Spectacularization_of_political_activism_Subject_matter_and_social_effect (Accessed on 14.04.2022).

²⁰ Victoria Bavykina, *Politychnyy aktsionizm u konteksti teoriiy sotsial'noyi diyi* [Political actionism in the context of social action theory], PhD diss., V. N. Karazin Kharkiv National University, 2020, p. 32.

²¹ Natalia Khoma, *Political happening as a protest form of political participation*, in "Studium Europy Środkowej i Wschodniej", 2015, No. 3, p. 268.

Political actionism is based on “*symbolisation, with the investment of obvious and veiled subtexts in political actions. Political actionism is a sociocultural reflection, a form of rethinking sustainable political constructs*”.²² It is an artistic, entertaining and playful form of conveying the political. Given that protesters use inscriptions, colour on their bodies, clothing or lack thereof, i. e. it is a socio-political theatrical activity, it is appropriate to speak about the political performance, which is defined as a special, symbolic, usually ritual activity performed by an individual or a group of people to impress others, to draw attention to their activities.²³ The main goal of the political performance is to gain the audience’s attention rather than to make a mere communicative act; it is a complex communicative action, in which the roles of the actors and the audience are equal. The task of political performance is to introduce vivid, memorable information; it is a way of aestheticizing politics rather than a tool of genuine political struggle.²⁴ On the one hand, the actionists enrage society, and, on the other hand, they provoke the inevitable reaction of state authorities.²⁵

Football is the ‘No. 1 game’ in the world; it attracts the attention of thousands of spectators in the stands and a multimillion audience at various gadgets. Therefore, politically active citizens, groups and organisations increasingly arrange political rallies in football fields of countries around the world to protest, to draw the attention of the world community to address domestic and international issues.²⁶ Political protest, according to this research, is defined as a powerful citizen’s rejection of the state’s violations of their legitimate interests, universally recognised democratic norms and values, the existing political course, govern-

²² Oleksandra Gruieva, *Politychnyy aktsionizm: ponyattya, formy, dosvid vykorystannya u politychnomu protsesi* [Political actionism: concepts, forms, the experience of use in the political process], in “Politychne zhyttya” [Political Life], № 1, 2018, p. 21.

²³ Natalia Khoma, Vasyl Kozma, *Spectacularization of political activism..*, p. 11.

²⁴ N. M. Khoma (ed.), *Suchasna politychna leksyka: entsyklopedia, slovnyk-dovidnyk* [Modern political vocabulary: encyclopedia, dictionary-reference book], Lviv, Novyy Svit-2000, 2015, p. 208.

²⁵ Artem Kroytor, *Politychnyy aktsionizm yak forma mystets'koho vyrakhennya politychnoho protestu* [Political actionism as a form of artistic expression of political protest], in “Aktual'ni problemy filosofiyi ta sotsiologiyi” [Actual Problems of Philosophy and Sociology], № 24, 2019, p. 25.

²⁶ Serhii Kulyk, *Politychni aktsiyi protestu na futbol'nykh polyakh krayin svitu* [Political Protests on Football Fields Around the World], in *Nazad u maybutnye: shansy na hlobal'ne liderstvo u suchasnomu sviti* [Back to the Future: a Chance for Global Leadership in Today’s World], Lviv – Olsztyn, Vydavnytstvo LNU im. I. Franka, 2021, pp. 29–35.

ment decisions, and the prevailing relations between citizens and the state.²⁷ These actions are a manifestation and a component of much more complex political processes in specific countries; they acquire public resonance and discourse. The Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) and the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) advise reporters not to describe the behaviour of supporters who go on onto the field. Thus, these moments are not included in the telecasts, except for the beginning of the action, when the cameras immediately switch to other objects such as the stands and the bench, or the editor starts replaying the dangerous moments. Therefore, depending on how rapidly the stewards operate, the spectator may not instantly comprehend or see what has occurred on the gadget screen. This is done to discourage other activists from chasing popularity.

The term 'streaker' is used in political actionism to refer to two types of people: first, someone who runs quickly through a public place wearing no clothes as a joke²⁸ or as a form of protest against the 'conventions of society,' and second, sports hooligans whose actions are not intended to disrupt the game.²⁹ This idea, however, does not properly capture the characteristics of those involved in football fields. Because they are carriers of a certain idea that influences the opinion of others and political processes, this study examines them in terms of political leadership. They are leaders of certain social groups (fans, political opposition) or a region (Catalonia), leaders-actors according to the style of leadership (Jimmy Jump, members of Femen, Pussy Riot); dysfunctional leaders, nonconformists to the existing political system (Alexander Vengerskiy); charismatic leaders (Jimmy Jump, Femen and Pussy Riot activists). These leaders represent political opposition (in terms of intent), national (in terms of the nature of activity) and international (in terms of extent) public organisations and movements.

Political protests on football fields of the world have yet to be extensively investigated. The research is hampered by the fact that commentators and sports journalists rarely report such actions. Many people are interested in this issue because of the resonant political protests of the famous streaker Jimmy Jump, which

²⁷ *Protest politychnyy* [Political protest], in N. Khoma, V. Denysenko, O. Sorba, L. Uhryn et al. (Eds.), *Politolohiya: navchal'nyy entsyklopedychnyy slovnyk-dovidnyk* [Political Science: Educational Encyclopaedic Dictionary], L'viv, Novyy Svit-200, 2014, p. 557.

²⁸ *Streaker*, in *Collins Dictionary*, 2022, <https://www.collinsdictionary.com> (Accessed on 09.02.2022).

²⁹ *A Brief History of Streaking in Sport*, in "The Guardian", July 18, 2013, <https://www.theguardian.com/sport/blog/2013/jul/18/a-history-of-streaking-in-sport> (Accessed on 09.02.2022).

are connected to the recognition of Catalonia³⁰ as a part of Spain, granting it independence.³¹ Ruslan Siromskiy³² wrote about the information and protest actions of Canadian Ukrainians during the Olympic Games in Montreal in 1976. Anatoliy Romanov,³³ Olexandra Hruyeva,³⁴ Victoria Bavykina,³⁵ and others have reported on the peculiarities of group political protests, namely Femen and Pussy Riot and their demands.³⁶ The protest action of the Belarusian³⁷ Alexander

³⁰ Alex Mannanov, *Begushchiy chelovek* [The running man], October 30, 2014, <https://football.ua/hrusteam/253067-begushhijj-chelovek.html> (Accessed on 14.01.2022).

³¹ Zirky "Barselony" zihrayut' za zbirnu Kataloniyi proty Venesuely [The stars of "Barcelona" will play for the national team of Catalonia against Venezuela], March 19, 2019, https://espresso.tv/news/2019/03/19/zirky_quotbarselonyquot_zigrayut_za_zbirnu_kataloniyi_prot_y_venesuely (Accessed on 15.02.2022).

³² Ruslan Siromskiy, *Informatsiyno-protestni aktsiyi kanads'kykh ukrayintsiv pid chas Olimpiys'kykh ihor u Monreali 1976 roku* [Information and protest actions of Canadian Ukrainians during the 1976 Olympic Games in Montreal], in *Mizhnarodni zv'yazky Ukrayiny: naukovi poshuky i znakhidky* [International Relations of Ukraine: Scientific Search and Findings], Vyp. 28, 2019, pp. 107–120.

³³ Anatoliy Romanov, "Pussy Riot" v finale. Kto i zachem vybezhal na pole. Futbol'noye pole kak mesto dlya aktsii protesta i shutki [Pussy Riot in the final. Who and why ran out onto the field], July 15, 2018, <https://www.championat.com/football/article-3490431-pochemu-uchastnicy-pussy-riot-vybezhal-na-pole-v-finale-championata-mira.html> (Accessed on 15.02.2022); Anatoliy Romanov, *Na Olimpiade-1976 fanat vybezhal na pole i stantseval gopak. Radi nezavisimosti Ukrainy* [At the 1976 Olympics, a fan ran onto the field and danced the hopak. For the sake of Ukraine's independence], March 23, 2020, <https://www.championat.com/football/article-4001605-kak-boleschik-na-olimpiade-1976-vybezhal-na-pole-s-ukrainskim-flagom-i-stanceval-gopak.html> (Accessed on 15.02.2022).

³⁴ Oleksandra Gruieva, *op. cit.*

³⁵ Victoria Bavykina, *op. cit.*

³⁶ *Obnazhennaya aktivistka "Femen" vybezhal na pole pered matchem Ukraina – Turtsiya* [A naked Femen activist ran onto the field before the Ukraine-Turkey match], in "Bukvy", September 2, 2017, <https://bykvu.com/ua/bukvy/74062-obnazhennaya-aktivistka-femen-vybezhal-na-pole-pered-matchem-ukraina-turtsiya/> (Accessed on 12.03.2022); *Paren' s belo-krasno-belym flagom vybezhal na pole vo vremya matcha "BATE" – "Arsenal"* [A guy with a white-red-white flag jumped onto the field during the game between BATE and Arsenal], in "UDF.BY", September 29, 2017, https://udf.name/news/main_news/162822-paren-s-belo-krasno-belym-flagom-vybezhal-na-pole-vo-vremya-matcha-bate-arsenal.html (Accessed on 04.02.2022).

³⁷ Yaroslav Steshik, *Bole'shchiki provodili yego aplodishmentami. Fanat poluchil 10 sutok za belo-krasno-belyy flag na matche "BATE" – "Arsenal"* ["The fans applauded him." A

Vengersky was widely covered in the Russian-language electronic media, attempting to paint a psychological portrait of him that was acceptable to the authorities.³⁸ The memoirs of Denys Myhal,³⁹ a direct participant in the political protests at the 1976 Summer Olympics, are of utmost importance, as are the articles describing the threats posed by this action to the image of the USSR, as well as adherents of *Russkiy mir*'s⁴⁰ modern 'hybrid' interpretation of Myhal's political protest. However, most of these publications are informative rather than analytical and do not address the issue of possible challenges/threats to the state's governing class, as well as popular perception and support, posed by such political protests.

SPECTACULAR POLITICAL ACTIONISM: CASE STUDY

The streakers' performances are unsystematic, and their actions have little impact on the course and outcome of matches, but there is a pattern: the more prestigious the sports competition, the more likely their occurrence. People from the host country are more likely to engage in such behaviour, whereas supporters of the guest club, citizens of other nations, or members of the diaspora are less likely. In general, political protests on football fields are low-budget events. Actions are taken directly during the game or during breaks, such as when a player requires medical attention. When an actionist appears, the referees stop the match; footballers, who are occasionally bothered by protesters, either do not respond or help

fan received 10 days for the white-red-white flag at the BATE-Arsenal match], in "Belsat. TV", September 29, 2017, <https://belsat.eu/ru/programs/boleshniki-provodili-ego-aplodimentami-fanat-poluchil-10-sutok-za-belo-krasno-belyj-flag-na-matche-bate-arsenal/> (Accessed 04/02/2022).

³⁸ *Provokator, vybezhavshiy na futbol'noye pole v matche s "Arsenalom" s BCHB flagom, davno iskal vozmozhnosti "otlichit'sya"* [The provocateur, who ran onto the football field in the match with Arsenal with a white-red-white flag, has long been looking for opportunities to "distinguish himself"], in "Teleskop Media", September 29, 2017, <https://teleskop.media/2017/09/29/provokator-vybezhavshij-na-futbolnoe-pole-v-matche-s-arsenalom-s-bchb-flagom-davno-iskal-vozmozhnosti-otlichitsya/> (Accessed on 12.02.2022).

³⁹ Liubomyr Kuz'myak, "*Syn Bandery vyzvolyav mene z politsiyi*". *Vin stantsyuvav na poli hopak iz praporom Ukrayiny v matchi zbirnoyi SRSR* ["Bandera's Son Released Me from the Police." He Danced Hopak with the Flag of Ukraine on the Field in the Match of the USSR National Team], in "Football 24", January 30, 2018, https://football24.ua/sin_banderi_vizvolyav_mene_z_politsiyi_ukrayinskiy_prapor_na_oi_1976_legendarna_istoriya_n433682/ (Accessed on 15.02.2022).

⁴⁰ Anatoliy Romanov, *Na Olimpiade-1976 fanat vybezhhal na pole...*

stewards in detaining actionists. Spectators in the stands may applaud the actionists. Stewards and stadium security officers detain the protesters and hand them over to the police. It is interesting for the spectators in the stands to watch the 'non-standard' episode of the game, to see how it will end, so they 'additionally' remember the match because of such protests. Indeed, commentators and spectators in the stands do not immediately understand the content of the action, because they cannot always quickly navigate the colours of flags and inscriptions, and they are either team fans or, as commentators say, fans of another club. They avoid showing situations when supporters come to the field during live TV broadcasts, therefore such incidents are covered by replaying game moments or directing cameras to other objects. Protest videos and images, as well as manifestos and calls from protest participants, are widely shared on social media. Therefore, the media environment expands the range of viewers and action interpreters and introduces them to the discursive field.⁴¹ As research has shown, not all acts of streaking have political connotations. Political protests, on the other hand, acquire prominence since they are directed against the government or the leader of a specific country, as reflected by the streakers' appearance, features, and exclamations.

The following instances of political activism on football fields throughout the world are worth exploring:

1. The semi-final match on July 27, 1976, at the XXI Summer Olympic Games, between the USSR and the German Democratic Republic national teams, at the Olympic Stadium, Montreal (Canada). In the 70th minute, Denys Myhal, a 20-year-old Canadian of Ukrainian origin, a member of the Ukrainian Youth Union, and a college student ran to the central circle of the field in an embroidered shirt. He was waving the blue and yellow flag of Ukraine, shouting "*Freedom to Ukraine!*" He performed several elements of *hopak* (Ukrainian folk dance) for 15 seconds. At that time, 150 Ukrainians held a "*Freedom to Ukraine!*" poster at the stadium. Myhal's action was not spontaneous because he had an anti-Soviet position and had participated in planned protests against the USSR during the 1972 Olympic Games in Munich as a member of the Ukrainian Youth Union. When he appeared on the field, the commentator said, "*Oh, it's interesting; I guess he's a fan of the East German team. The colours of his flag seem to confirm this, but he performs a Soviet-style dance*".⁴²

Denys Myhal justified his actions by pointing out that the USSR national team consisted of nine players from the Dynamo Football Club (FC) (Kyiv), and

⁴¹ Victoria Bavykina, *op. cit.*

⁴² Ruslan Siromskiy, *op. cit.*

Ukrainians Valeriy Lobanovsky and Oleh Bazylevych coached it. *"It seemed to me that Ukrainian players in the national team of the Union will be pleased to see the Ukrainian flag directly on the field. I just wanted to draw attention and remind everyone that Ukraine is independent and has its own symbols"*.⁴³ He admitted that the act was spontaneous and he was guided only by the desire to be broadcast so that the Ukrainian flag could be seen by the whole world. The audience applauded. The referee stopped the match. The police caught Myhal as he was leaving the stadium, carefully hiding the flag close to his chest.

It should be mentioned that the incident was aired with both foreign and visiting supporters in the stands (at least fifty-hundred people). From a political point of view, public interest in protests, organizations and groups they represent, is growing, although not all citizens approve of such methods. During the Cold War, the Soviets suppressed such actions, demanding that the authorities of the states where sports events were held severely punish their participants. For example, the Montreal sports channel aired an event involving Myhal, but the match was shown on tape in the USSR, and thus the episode was censored. Myhal's reasons for his action were to have the Ukrainian flag seen by the entire world, to highlight the fate of the Ukrainian people and to support Ukrainian footballers.⁴⁴

2. June 25, 2008, European Championship, Germany – Turkey semi-final match, Stadium Park, St. Jacobi, Basel (Switzerland): at the 75th minute Jimmy Jump ran to the field, streaked 40 metres in a T-shirt with the inscription *"Tibet is not China"*. The action took place shortly before the Olympic Games in Beijing. The stewards stopped him.

His other spectacular action occurred on July 11, 2010, at the World Cup, Spain – Netherlands final match, Soccer City Stadium, Johannesburg (South Africa). Jimmy Jump wanted to put a beret on the World Cup, which stood on the stand; he was dressed in a T-shirt with the inscription 'Against Racism'. The guard stopped him a few meters away.

The Spaniard Jaume Marquet i Cot (born 1976) is considered the 'king' of streakers and sports hooligans. A fan of Barcelona FC, born and living in Catalonia, he ran on the field more than a hundred times during major international tournaments. Since his first appearance on the football field in 2002, he has called himself Jimmy Jump ('Double J') and his outings have become systemic. The purpose of his actions was to appear and stay in the broadcast of sports and social and cultural

⁴³ Liubomyr Kuz'myak, *op. cit.*

⁴⁴ *Ukrayins'kyy prapor i hopak na olimpiys'komu stadioni* [Ukrainian flag and hopak at the Olympic Stadium], in "Svoboda", № 142, August 10, 1976, p. 2.

events for as long as possible. “*My goal is to involve people in problems of racial or social inequality. And, at the same time, to make the audience laugh*”.⁴⁵ It is an instance of personal motivation.

Jimmy Jump is a cult figure for Catalonia, as his mandatory attributes include a beret, a red Catalan hat that symbolizes Catalonia’s national identity and the struggle for independence from Madrid, and often the Catalan flag. He repeatedly tried to put the beret on the heads of different players (Samuel Eto’o (2004), Lionel Messi (2007), Cristiano Ronaldo (2010) and the World Cup (2010). The stalker declared that in his actions with the beret “*there is no political message that I would like to convey. I want peace in Spain*”.⁴⁶ Jimmy Jump’s popularity is due to his website (<http://www.jimmyjump.com/>), where he published his speeches and autobiography and sold T-shirts with his name; he became the hero of the documentary and has more than 250,000 followers on Facebook. Thus, he partially commercialised his hobby to raise funds to pay fines imposed on him in different countries because of his protests. Not all of Jimmy Jump’s actions had a political connotation. Some of his actions were predictable and expected by the spectators. He kept good physical form to carry out his acts. Law enforcement officials banned him from accessing sporting venues and monitored his behaviour on the field, and he discontinued his actions in 2014 because of unpaid fines.

Although Jimmy Jump promoted the idea of Catalan independence by demonstrating symbols of the region⁴⁷ (but without making loud political statements), the government in democratic Spain treated him calmly even indifferently, i. e. his actions were interpreted as freedom of expression or hooliganism, for which he was regularly fined. Jimmy is more a symbol of entertainment than

⁴⁵ Alex Mannanov, *op. cit.*

⁴⁶ Nermin Yildirim, *Jimmy Jump şimdi de İstanbul'a mı ziplayacak?* [Will Jimmy Jump jump to Istanbul now?], in “Radikal”, September 4, 2010, <http://www.radikal.com.tr/hayat/jimmy-jump-simdi-de-istanbula-mi-ziplayacak-1017300/> (Accessed on 25.01.2022); Dmitriy Kustovskiy. *Izvestnyy sportivnyy khuligan khochet nadet' katalonskuyu shapochku na Gutora* [A well-known sports hooligan wants to put a Catalan cap on Gutor], in “Euroradio FM”, December 5, 2011, <https://euroradio.fm/ru/report/izvestnyi-sportivnyi-khuligan-khochet-nadet-katalonskuyu-shapochku-na-gutora-79306> (Accessed on 15.02.2022).

⁴⁷ Elmar Burchia. *Euro 2008, l'irruzione di “Jimmy Jump” in semifinale censurata dall' UEFA*, in “Corriere Della Sera”, 26 giugno, 2008, https://www.corriere.it/sport/08_giugno_26/immagini_tibet_uefa_censura_jimmy_643207fc-4389-11dd-bb33-00144f02aabc.shtml (Accessed on 18.01.2022).

the 'face' of separatism. However, the Catalan Independence Party paid part of the fine for Jimmy Jump.

3. On October 28, 2017, during the UEFA Europa League group stage match, BATE (Borisov) – Arsenal (London), Borisov-Arena Stadium, in Borisov (Belarus), Alexander Vengersky, a 26-year-old, entered the field in the 43rd minute. He was wearing a T-shirt with 'Pogonia' on his chest, the historical national emblem of Belarus, which is officially called an 'unregistered symbol', and the national white-red-white flag of Belarus (unlike the official red-green, which has been state-owned since Soviet times) with the 'Pogonia' coat of arms painted on it. He called his action a performance, as he wanted to promote national symbols. He ran across the whole field – from the Arsenal fan sector to the BATE fan sector. In the stands, the white-red-white flag of Belarus reminded of the flag of Arsenal because the London club has the same colours, so Belarusian commentators said that he was a fan of that club.⁴⁸ The management of football clubs takes an apolitical position on such actions, refuses to comment on incidents and offers to pass fines from FIFA and UEFA to violators or pay them themselves. The stewards caught Vengersky and handed him to the police. The Arsenal goalkeeper approached to shake the detainee's hand, while the fans greeted him with applause and cheers.⁴⁹ He was brought out of the stadium after being detained by stewards, forced on his knees, and struck on the kidneys. The court sentenced a 10-day administrative arrest for hooliganism and resistance to law enforcement, and a €5,000 fine for the BATE FC. While in custody, he went on a hunger strike in support of the prisoners.⁵⁰

The day before the match, Vengersky posted a photo on Instagram with a white-red-white flag, which he signed, "*Tomorrow will be hot*". On September 8, on the eve of the rally at the stadium, he took part in a street protest against the Belarusian-Russian military exercises 'West- 2017' with a poster "*Russian soldier go home. There is no vodka here*".⁵¹ He was arrested, tried and sentenced to pay a fine.

Vengersky's actionism is an example of a conscious political protest against the Belarusian authority, which, in the traditions of the USSR, replaced the history

⁴⁸ *Paren' s belo-krasno-belym flagom ...* .

⁴⁹ Yaroslav Steshik, *op. cit.*

⁵⁰ *Paren' s belo-krasno-belym flagom ...* .

⁵¹ *S flagom na match BATE "Arsenal" vybezhhal zhitel' Vileyki Aleksandr Vengerskiy* [Alexander Vengersky, a resident of Vileyka, ran out with a flag for the BATE Arsenal match], in "Euroradio. FM", September 28, 2018, <https://euroradio.fm/ru/bolelshchik-s-belo-krasno-belym-flagom-vybezhhal-na-pole-na-matche-bate-arsenal> (Accessed on 04.04.2022).

of Belarus with artificial symbols. It is also a protest against the militarization of Belarus in the interests of Russia's imperial ambitions. The treatment of Vengersky after his detention proves that such protests, even single ones, are seen by the authorities as a threat to the undemocratic regime and tarnish the image of the political elite.

4. July 15, 2018, Croatia – France World Cup final match, the Luzhniki Great Sports Arena, Moscow (Russia). Several heads of state were present in the stands, among them, Vladimir Putin, the Russian Federation President and Emmanuel Macron, the President of the French Republic. Four members of the Russian art group Pussy Riot, dressed in police uniforms, ran onto the field in the 50th minute of the game. Three participants were stopped at once, and one of them continued to run around the stadium asking the players to 'high five' (a gesture of celebration or greeting in which two people slap each other's palms with their arms raised). The participants called the action "*A militiaman enters the game*", it took place one day before the poet Dmitriy Prygov's death memorial. He was the one who introduced the term "a militiaman, a bearer of heavenly statehood".⁵² The French national football team player Mbappé 'high-fived' one of the protesters. Dejan Lovren, the defender of the Croatian national team stopped one of the protesters and held him until the security guards arrived. Stewards took Pussy Riot participants off the field.

The Pussy Riot Manifesto demanded the release of all political prisoners in Russia, including Ukrainian director Oleh Sentsov, the termination of criminal cases related to social media reposts, the cessation of illegal arrests at rallies, the acceptance of political competition in the country, not fabricating criminal cases and not keeping people in jail for nothing and the transformation of an earthly militiaman into a 'heavenly' militiaman.⁵³

Protesters were sentenced to a 15-day administrative arrest and fines. According to the court decision, they were forbidden to attend official sports events in Russia for three years. On social networks, the reaction of Russians was negative: "*prevented the goal*", "*disgraced Russia*", "*it is a pity that now it is not 1937*", "*under drugs*", etc. Therefore, Pussy Riot activism had little political impact

⁵² Uchastniki "*Pussy Riot*" vybezhali na pole vo vremya finala CHM. Kak im eto udalos'? [Members of Pussy Riot ran onto the field during the World Cup final. How did they do it?], in "BBC News", July 28, 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/russian/news-44840997> (Accessed on 12.02.2022).

⁵³ Anatoliy Romanov, "*Pussy Riot*" v finale...

on Russians.⁵⁴

It should be recalled that Pussy Riot has conflicted with the Russian authorities since 2012 when three members of the group were sentenced to two years in prison for 'hooliganism'. The group organized protests against Putin at the Lobnoye Mesto on the Red Square and in the Church of Christ the Savior in Moscow. After being released from prison, the members established the 'Zone of Truth' human rights group and "Mediastone" journal.

5. September 2, 2018, the 2018 World Cup qualifying match, national teams of Ukraine and Turkey, Metalist Stadium, Kharkiv (Ukraine): before the start of the match, during the Turkish national anthem, a Ukrainian Femen activist Angelina Diash ran to the field. The bare chest of the black activist had the English message 'Erdogan killer,' and a traditional Ukrainian wreath covered her head. The movement's website called the action "Femen against Erdogan" and said that the activist decided to protest against the 'dictatorial regime' of the Turkish President who "*kills freedom and simply kills*". The Turkish national team served as a background for Femen's statements concerning its attitude toward Turkey's dictator.⁵⁵ She was caught quickly. Given the performance, as well as all Femen's actions, it drew more attention to the movement itself than to the political message.

Political themes are at the centre of the radical women's movement, which is set against a backdrop of ironic and witty performances. The idea of Femen's actions is that if a woman's body is so well adapted to promote commercial advertising, then why not use it to promote socio-political topics? However, in Ukrainian society, their actions are criticized or perceived sceptically, but in the West, the reaction is analytical and positive.⁵⁶

Therefore, these bright performances appeared to be aimed solely at impressing and entertaining the audience, making their initiators famous and recognizable; however, even in such a 'carnival' form, they are oriented towards a quite serious message: political protest against injustice and activation of the civic position of both initiators and fans as potential supporters of protest actions.

⁵⁴ In Russian culture, Prygov created the image of the Militiaman, the bearer of heavenly statehood: the heavenly militiaman is talking on his walkie-talkie with God himself and the earthly militiaman fabricates criminal cases.

⁵⁵ *Obnazhennaya aktivistka "Femen"...*

⁵⁶ Maria Mayerchyk, Olha Plakhotnik, *Femen: analiz diskursiv* [Femen: analysis of discourses], Heinrich-Boll Stiftung, 2011, <https://ua.boell.org/uk/2011/02/03/femen-analiz-diskursiv> (Accessed on 08.04.2022).

CITIZENS' POLITICAL PROTESTS ON FOOTBALL FIELDS OF THE WORLD AS A CHALLENGE TO THE STATE'S RULING ELITE

Although the publicity of the streakers' actions is focused more on the emotional effect and entertainment for the audience, the state authorities may see their actions differently when the streakers' messages have a political meaning.

This involves a threat to the state's territorial integrity and national sovereignty for nations with democratic political systems because of the growth of separatism in such regions. These are separatist movements in Catalonia. Although such actions have a clearly defined regional origin and are important to the inhabitants of these regions and cities, they create social tensions and cause economic instability in the country. Thus, Jimmy Jump is a generalised symbol of Barcelona and Anti-Madrid fans; he is regarded as an 'activist', 'anti-globalist', 'international demonstrator', and 'provocateur'. Under General Franco's regime, football was one of the means to demonstrate local support of independence, the confrontation between Madrid and its Real and the expression of a personal position. Therefore, the Barcelona slogan 'more than a club' acquired a political meaning, and the club itself became one of the main symbols of Catalonia. The striped yellow and red flags of Catalonia traditionally mark the team's matches, and the UEFA regularly fines the club for using symbols with political overtones. Due to the achievements of Barca, the club began to add the identification 'Catalans' rather than 'Spaniards'. The symbols of the region were on the official equipment of the club: the captain's armband of the Sanyera (the flag of Catalonia) colours; for several seasons the same colours have been the basis for guest sets of uniforms, and press conferences were held in Catalan.⁵⁷ The management of the Barcelona FC also made an official statement in support of the referendum held on October 1, 2017, in Catalonia, on the separation of this autonomous region from Spain, which was not recognized by official Madrid. Jimmy Jump was only routinely punished and forbidden to attend games in democratic Spain for his participation in the outward display of Catalan independence.

The authorities of countries with undemocratic or semi-democratic political regimes, such as the USSR, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Belarus and the Republic of Turkey, perceive political protests on the football fields as:

⁵⁷ *Kak Olimpiada i futbol doveli Kataloniyu do referendumu* [How the Olympics and football brought Catalonia to a referendum], in "Business-Gazeta", October 27, 2017, <https://www.business-gazeta.ru/article/362064> (Accessed on 28.01.2022).

1) A threat to the state's territorial integrity by claiming alternative official histories of statehood, displaying national symbols and seeking their reinstatement. Therefore, the authorities in such countries consider protest participants to be extremists, provocateurs, and the commission of such actions is unacceptable. After all, actionists manage to display publicly their demands to thousands of viewers; their requests appear on their accounts and the websites of organisations. Protesters frequently wave flags that either are banned in their countries or are symbols of opposition. According to Myhal, he "*did not understand why Ukrainian athletes should perform under someone else's flag. Many of our compatriots won Olympic medals for the USSR. I considered this an injustice and wanted the Ukrainian flag to be raised in honour of the Ukrainians' victories. Especially since the Olympics are covered by many media. It seemed to me that my action would not remain in the shadows and the world would pay attention to the fact that Ukraine can be an independent state*".⁵⁸ Historically in Belarus, the white-red-white flag was the state flag, and 'Pagonia' was the national emblem. The Lukashenko regime has banned their use, for which one can go to prison (the case of Vengersky). Protests on football fields enrich national memory. For instance, in independent Ukraine, Myhal is considered the first stalker in USSR national team matches (at least on film); he is called "*our dancing boy*", and "*the first representative of the Ukrainian ultras*".

2) A threat to the spread of foreign influence on its territory. August 8, 2017, the UEFA Super Cup match, Real (Madrid) – Manchester United, the Philip II of Macedon stadium, in Skopje (Macedonia). Immediately after the final whistle, a fan with the heart and name 'Ronaldo' on his front and the seventh number (Cristiano Ronaldo's game number) and the name of the Russian Federation President 'Putin' on his back ran from the stands to the field. The fan ran half the field. He did not make any demands. Stewards caught him. The pro-Russian fan's run to the football field in Skopje (2017) may be interpreted as a manifestation of the state of bilateral relations between Macedonia and the Russian Federation. This was a sign of the destabilizing influence of Russia on the government in Macedonia, which began in 2008 when the attempt of this Balkan country to join NATO failed. That influence gradually spread to all sectors of society. In domestic politics – the ruling nationalist

⁵⁸ *Provokator, vybezhavshiy na futbol'noye pole v matche s "Arsenalom" s BCHB flagom, davno iskal vozmozhnosti 'otlichit'sya'* [The provocateur, who ran onto the football field in the match with Arsenal with a white-red-white flag, has long been looking for opportunities to "distinguish himself"], in "Telescop Media", September 29, 2017, https://football24.ua/sin_banderi_vizvolyav_mene_z_politsiyi_ukrayinskiy_prapor_na_oi_1976_legendarna_istoriya_n433682/ (Accessed on 30.01.2022).

conservative party “Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization – Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity” (VMRO-DPMNE) supports Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski, whose actions led to three crises in 2015 and storming the Parliament in May 2017. In the energy sector – the implementation of the Turkish Stream gas pipeline project; culture – promotion of the Panslavism idea and the common origin of religion. Other influences include the financial assistance to erect Orthodox crosses and to construct churches, the establishment of the Russia – Macedonia Friendship Societies, the opening of the Russian Cultural Centre in Skopje and the awarding of the Patriarch Alexy II Prize to Gjorge Ivanov, the President of Macedonia, by the “International Public Fund for the Unity of Orthodox Peoples.”⁵⁹ Concerning geopolitics, mention should be made on the “*isolation from the Western influence*”, the non-accession of Macedonia to the NATO, and the EU, and the creation of a “*strip of military neutral countries in the Balkans*”. As regards the policy of world sanctions against Russia over the war in eastern Ukraine, Macedonia did not join Western sanctions in 2014.⁶⁰

3) A threat to the current political regime, to the functioning of public authorities and the constitutional order posed by the progress of political institutions of democracy, such as civil society, the rule of law and the media. The demands of the protesters are in line with the international organizations’ demands and statements regarding respect for human rights and freedoms, suppression of opposition (the action of the art group Pussy Riot in Moscow), and protests against the establishment of dictatorial regimes and their struggle against political opponents and media representatives (the action of the Femen activist Diash in Kharkov).

Such protests are part of a larger chain of protests against official authority policies and acts by opposing people and civil society representatives. Although the stadium protests are neither coordinated nor agreed with other opposition forces, they create a significant social effect and demonstrate the possibility to solve existing problems. Myhal’s action against the “*Soviet-Russian sports prison of the peoples and all those who support or silence its actions*” was just one in a series of other information and political protests of the Ukrainian diaspora during the

⁵⁹ *Vstrecha s Prezidentom Makedonii George Ivanovym* [Meeting with Macedonia’s President George Ivanov], 2010, <http://special.kremlin.ru/catalog/countries/MK/events/54556> (Accessed on 26.04.2022).

⁶⁰ Aubrey Belford, Saska Cvetkovska, Biljana Sekulovska, Stevan Dojčinović, *Dokumenty utechki govoryat o popytkakh vmeshatel'stva Rossii i Serbii v dela Makedonii* [Leaked Documents Show Russian and Serbian Attempts to Intervene in Macedonian Affairs], 2017, <https://www.occrp.org/ru/spooksandspin/leaked-documents-show-russian-serbian-attempts-to-meddle-in-macedonia/> (Accessed on 26.04.2022).

1976 Summer Olympic Games in Montreal⁶¹. In the modern political history of Belarus, the protest of Vengersky, with the white-red-white flag and the 'Pogonia' emblem, echoes the protests of the opposition against the rule of Belarusian President, Alexander Lukashenko, in 2020, as well as the Femen action against Erdogan, regarding the attempts of the President of Turkey to strengthen his power in the country by fighting political opponents and media. During the detention, the actionists did not physically resist, which further confirms the peaceful nature of the protests.

4) The threat of prolonged lawsuits, intensification of human rights activities and related publicity. Court hearings of '*field runners*' (as the local media call them) in countries with undemocratic political regimes (Russia, Belarus) are held the next day after detention. According to the court verdict, violators are brought to administrative and criminal responsibility under for hooliganism and resistance to police officers, or they are sentenced to probation. Moscow police generated reports on the protestors based on four provisions of the Administrative Code. All four participants of Pussy Riot received the maximum penalty provided by the provision on gross violation of the rules of spectators' conduct during official sports competitions if such actions do not show signs of criminal punishment for such actions.

5) The threat of the rise of new leaders of public opinion, informal leaders. For example, in 2008 Jimmy Jump was awarded the International Free Spirit Award for "*unbreakable spirit and infinite energy*", for "*loud advertising tricks*" for the sake of "*decent work*".⁶² The authorities of countries with undemocratic political regimes use mass media to create a profane, contemptuous and sarcastic image of the protesters. For example, in the publication "*How Ukrainian nationalists in pants and without helped our athletes*" modern Russian propagandists called Myhal a "*disco-hopak dancer*". They claimed that Myhal's father, Bohdan, had been a medic in the SS division Galicia, and his father's elder brother, Roman, had been a member of the OUN (Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists), Deputy of Stepan Bandera in the OUN propaganda department, the commander of the combat intelligence department of the regional OUN. Finally, the Russian propagandists stressed, "the world media were quite indifferent to the actions of a Ukrainian patriot from Canada".⁶³ Russian media called the Belarusian Vengersky "*a provoca-*

⁶¹ Ruslan Siromskiy, *op. cit.*

⁶² *Free Spirit Award 2008: Martin Wyness and Jimmy Jump*, 2008, https://www.freespiritfestival.com/awards/2008-martin_wyness_and_jimmy_jump.html (Accessed 12.02.2022).

⁶³ *OI Monreal'-1976. SSSR – GDR 1:2. Sud'ba tantsora gopaka* [Olympic Games Montreal-

teur, a failed programmer, without higher education".⁶⁴

Various interpretations of the protesters' actions and features emerged in the media, ranging from positive to strongly unfavourable. Thus, "The Ukrainian Weekly" (Ukrainian Diaspora printed media), and "Svoboda" (USA) praised Myhal's actions to "*awaken national feelings in Ukrainian athletes*" as well as the conduct of police officers against him, while Soviet representatives put constant pressure on Canadian law enforcement to punish the guilty. Nowadays, representatives of the "Russkiy mir" resort to information manipulations around such actions: modern 'hybrid' Russian propaganda spreads fakes about Myhal's action at the Olympic Games, about 'our' (Soviet) sports and 'our' team claiming that Myhal planned to go to Donbas with the same flag to "*defend Ukraine as much as possible*."⁶⁵

6) Threat of public exposure of the institutions of state power's weakness and their low public authority. Political protests on the football fields of the world draw attention to the behaviour and actions of stadium security officers and law enforcement agencies, which are unable to control and prevent fan behaviour on the field. The protesters convince the audience that the protest is still possible under such conditions. The higher the level of sports competitions, the more structures and people responsible for security are involved, so it is difficult to successfully hold protests. However, CCTV footage shows that a stadium steward opened the gate to the Pussy Riot members and let them out on the field. Because it is unclear how members of Pussy Riot entered the stadium with fans' passports through several control lines, such actions must result in a revision of national and European civil and sports legislation, rules of spectator behaviour in stadiums and law enforcement agency actions, as well as the peculiarities of broadcasting sports competitions, and how the UEFA and FIFA impose sanctions on football clubs for fan behaviour.

CONCLUSIONS

The protesters' political demands are quite broad: granting state independence, restoration of the use of national symbols, the democratization of political regimes and addressing current social problems such as corruption and racism. The protests' limited duration was compensated for by their bright symbols, spec-

1976. USSR-GDR 1:2. The fate of the hopak dancer]", in "ZEN", May 11, 2020, <https://zen.yandex.ru/media/nef/oi-monreal1976-ssrgdr-12-sudba-tancora-gopaka-5eb92fa10b9b23028676ca74> (Accessed 28.01.2022).

⁶⁴ *Provokator, vybezhavshiy...*

⁶⁵ Anatolii Romanov, *Na Olimpiade-1976 fanat vybezhal na pole...*

tacular artistic solutions, and clear slogans. The peaceful behaviour of the actionists and their apparent vulnerability to the use of force by the authorities instil an understanding of the possibility and necessity of protest in the minds of citizens in an undemocratic society; it destroys the illusion of inviolability and power of the political regime. Protesters' representation of socio-political problems and slogans against heads of state destroy the positive image of the government and raise public doubts about the correctness of the chosen political course. The presence of a large number of fans in the stadiums who are thus accomplices in the action, the inability to stop the rapid spread of information about political activism, and criminal cases against protesters all undermine public confidence in the ruling elite and threaten the stability of its political institutions. Political protests involving individuals on the world's football fields are gradually combining into large anti-government protests and civil disobedience, which are already taking place or will take place soon in these countries. They develop a shared political awareness and eventually become national assets.

Public authorities limiting individuals' political protest, significant socio-political resonance and relative ease of protests on football fields around the world all contribute to a high probability that such protests will continue and develop in the future. Football fields remain a convenient platform for politically conscious citizens to interact with society on views and positions regarding current domestic and international issues, due to the widespread popularity of football and sports in general, as well as the availability of stadiums and match broadcasts.

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