

Abstract

Sport is one of the most important leisure activities in today's Euro-American civilisation. We are not talking here only of active engagement in sport, but also of sport as a source of mass-entertainment for millions of people. In this thesis I focus above all on the conduct of spectators in football stadiums in the Czech Republic. I will approach this theme by way of oral history, where the narrators providing me with interviews regularly go to matches in the First and Second Divisions of the Czech Football League. I concentrate here above all on the motivation and attitudes of the various groups of spectators to the events in the football stadiums, and I pick out three groups in particular: normal fans, ultras and hooligans. I endeavour to delineate the main differences between these groups which, in my view, are rooted not only in their varying motivation, but also in their modes of communication, as well as in their social composition and their age-structure. At the same time, however, I also attempt to highlight the specific environment of football terraces in which, though all the spectators may conduct themselves as individuals, they at one and the same time become, in a certain way, part of a mass of spectators, and they may therefore be in certain circumstances overcome by the situation or even by crowd psychosis. I am, of course, aware of the complexity and multi-faceted nature of the issues in sporting spectatorship in general and I do not therefore make claim to a complete treatment of this phenomenon, but only to a partial analysis of some of its aspects.