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**THE EMERGENCE OF A COLLECTIVITY IN  
THE STATE OF INDIVIDUALISM**

**A sociological approach of “Euro 2004”**

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## **Introduction: The meta-discourse of the recognition and the narcissism of the flag**

The European Football Championship can be considered a significant event for two reasons. First of all, because it created a great amount of discourses about itself. And secondly, because all these different types of discourses, no matter which point of view they adopted, agreed on a common point: They all underlined unanimously the great importance of the event.

Team agents, football players and other professionals of the sports community saw in it a great proof of the potential of the Greek sports activity and a promise for the future. Journalists kept repeating the major effects that the victory of Greece had on the other countries. Sports fans poured in the streets in the name of the unique success that filled them with joy. Politicians hastened to congratulate the Greek team by accompanying them in Portugal and attending the matches as well as by organising several kinds of rituals in order to honour the athletes after the end of the championship. At the same time, a considerable part of the intellectual community foresaw behind all these unprecedented and continuous celebrations the core of a dangerous nationalism and did not hesitate to show its strong disapproval.

The event activated a whole semeiological mechanism and did not stop constituting a source of inspiration for a whole set of comparisons, metaphors and slogans. The Greek prime minister compared himself to Otto Rechagel and the country to the national football team; even more, he stated that the “ingredients” of that great athletic success must also be the ingredients of successful governance and he did not hesitate to urge the German referee to stay in Greece because “the country needs him”<sup>1</sup>. Nikos Konstantopoulos, who was at that time president of Synaspismos<sup>2</sup>, compared the pass of the national team to the finals with an eventual victory of his party in the elections.<sup>3</sup> On his turn, the archbishop Christodoulos, who never forgets to remind us that Greece is not yet a secular country, detected behind the victory the sign of God and hurried to bless the footballers and the cup. Finally, the sports fans in the streets could not stop singing “Raise it, raise it”, meaning raise the cup.

The football championship and in particular, the Greek victory, was inscribed in the collective memory and was socially consolidated in the collective consciousness at the very moment it was happening. Beyond the discourse, the confirmation of its importance took place at two additional levels: firstly, at the material one, which was ensured by the demonstration of the –individual and collective– human body; secondly, at the symbolic one, which was ascertained by the demonstration of the flag.

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<sup>1</sup> *Eleutherotypia*, 5/7/2004, *TA NEA*, 5/7/2004

<sup>2</sup> Synaspismos is a greek political party (Coalition of the Progressive Left)

<sup>3</sup> *Eleutherotypia* 28/6/2004, Andreas Roumeliotis repeats at his article the statement of the president of Synaspismos.

The flag, this multiply charged symbol, was the object of the suspicion of many intellectuals and people of the Left. Though we believe that their attitude was not arbitrary, we recognise that the flag was crucial for the establishment of the connection between the human bodies in the streets and the fact of the victory. It was the necessary vehicle which gave an identity to the event and at the same time provided the people with the way to appropriate it. For many days after the end of the championship, many public places, such as some commercial shops, cafeterias and bars as well as many home balconies were overflowed by flags fluttering and reminding of the victory.

Of course, the keen criticism could be the only spontaneous and healthy reaction of the Left who saw behind the torrent of the flags the danger of a well known, contemporary Western threat: nationalism.<sup>4</sup> However, we do not believe that we encountered a menacing nationalistic danger. We do not deny of course, that the chapter of the flags contained all the usual elements of a nationalistic expression; but we maintain the conviction that the attempt to explain this behaviour only in the context of nationalism is insufficient.

Irrespective of our approval or disapproval, the appearance of that great amount of flags in the streets at the time of the celebration did not surprise us. What we found yet really strange was the obsession with the flag that started and remained even after the end of the championship and the celebration. An entire group of people, everyone separately now, everyone as an individual and not as a member of the crowd anymore, started to wear a flag on their clothes, on their T-shirts, on their shoes, on their wrist watches. A flag was put on everything. It continued to be there, to demonstrate its presence and to remind of the victory.

The victory of a football team was suddenly a case for the whole country. Even social groups such as women, children and elderly people who remained traditionally indifferent toward football started now to be interested in it. The massive participation in the celebration also testifies the general acceptance. And the flag was there to prove that it was not the national football team that won the championship but all the Greeks that won the other Europeans on a fictive antagonism. After all, there was an antagonism. There was a battle which was supposed to show off the best of all. Greece just happened to share the same flag with the team that won the championship. From that time on, the victory should be remembered, it should stay alive in everyone's mind and as far as possible it should be reproduced. In other words, the victory should be individually appropriated.

Freud would have said that we are in front of a simple and classical example of what he used to call "narcissism with respect to minor differences" for the pride which individuals, groups and nations manifest about small insignia which distinguish them from other individuals, groups and nations. Although we believe that the Greek behaviour corresponds to a large extent to the Freudian description, it cannot be exhaustive. Carrying a flag on a T-shirt can be the result of a particular national narcissism but it is also something more. Very soon,

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<sup>4</sup> We refer to many articles of left newspapers such as *I Avgi*, *I Epochi*

the flag became a trend, the latest fashion tip. No wonder why when we asked many people to explain their dressing preferences for the flag on their clothes they did not refer to the victory at all, neither to the country; but they simply answered as if it was a matter of course: “The Greek flag is all the vogue.”

We are in front of a double narcissism for the flag. On the one hand we admire the magic ability of our country, which always had difficulties to follow the European rules, to leave now all the other prestigious countries behind and to get crowned queen of Europe. On the other hand, we admire our own individual ability to follow with great success and no backwardness the contemporary social orders. On the one hand, it is the narcissism of the collective distinction through the means of the idea of nation. On the other hand, it is the narcissism of the individual distinction through the means of the practice of consumption. None of them is a part of the narcissism of the being. Both of them are parts of the narcissism of the showing.

The European Football championship, from the point of view that was experienced in Greece, constitutes a complex of opposite ideologies and contradictory behaviours that coexist and help each other to the same direction: They all propose a way, or many ways, to feel, experience, appropriate, conserve and finally handle, a posture of life, which in the luck of a better word, we will call it, happiness.

In the present paper we will attempt a brief sociological analysis of the individual and collective behaviours that took place during the period of the championship in Greece, emphasizing the celebrations which followed each game and which reached their peak after the final match. We will proceed to refer to the current social and historical condition of Greece in order to be able to incorporate the event, and in particular, the massive presence of the crowd on the streets, into the general context from which it emerged. Finally, we will argue that the European Football Championship, carrying and embodying the demand for happiness, consolidates our era, other times by rewarding it and other times by opposing it.

## **Living in the rhythm of the championship<sup>5</sup>**

For over a month the country appeared to live in the rhythm of the championship. The time was separated into three successive intervals which were repeated again and again: The time of the preparation, the time of the match and the time of the celebration.<sup>6</sup>

The time of the preparation was always longer and less intense than the two others. Usually the preparation consisted of a kind of inner, moral preparation of the spectators, and only after the passing of the first matches did it take a more material form. The most passionate sports fans started to take care of their behaviour while they have been watching the matches and very soon, the preparation took the form of a repeating ritual. They kept wearing each time the same clothes and they insisted watching the matches from the very same position.<sup>7</sup> The reason for that is a strong feeling and an uncertain conviction of the spectators that each of them possesses a kind of a strange power, capable to influence the outcome of the matches and so far he/she considers him-/ herself to be in some way responsible for the result of the game. No wonder why, even some of the most rational persons appeared to be re-enchanted and followed that kind of irrational behaviour the more we were closing to the end of the championship.

The time of the match was the shortest of the three periods but it was the most crucial one as it determined the time of the celebration. The couple of hours, when the games took place, were accompanied by their own stereotypic behaviours. The ideal condition to watch a match is of course in the football field. But even if the ideal cannot be reached, it can always be constructed. That is the reason why we saw the atmosphere of the football field to be reproduced at all the places where the matches were projected. The greatest preference was given to close, public places, as for example the cafeterias with a big screen, where somebody could go alone or with company. Another possibility, that also attracted many people, was to watch the match on the big screens that were put in some central places of the big cities and even more, on a summer cinema, which projected the matches at the prize of a movie ticket! The same atmosphere of the field was reproduced even in private places, inside someone's living room, where all the friends were gathered together. No matter the place, there is a simple but inviolable condition: The match must always being watched with other people.

In front of the screen the people are sited as if they were at the tiers of the stadium. They clap their hands, they sing the slogans, they scream and they don't hesitate to express their emotional status. The spectator can yell and insult the referee with the same passion he/she

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<sup>5</sup> The information that we present at this part of the text concerning the way the people experienced the championship, came from a research that we made. We talked with 14 people about their personal experience from their own point of view and from the responses we took at a corresponding questionnaire which was answered from 30 people.

<sup>6</sup> The Greek word for it, which is used to describe that special type of celebration, is panigyrismos. It is about spontaneous celebration that accompanies a cheerful event, such as a victory on football or basketball.

<sup>7</sup> *TO VIMA*, 4/7/2004, at the article of Ant. Panoutsos

would have if he/she was in the football field. This illusion of being inside the stadium, which is reproduced without special effort, almost spontaneously, but always successfully, is very important for the following of the game. Sometimes is even the prerequisite of the watching, as we have many examples of people who preferred not follow the matches when they were alone.

The process of the watching constitutes a form of expressing the sociability. At that moment we can already observe the first phase of the formation of the collectivity that will be transported in the streets after the end of the game. It is a collectivity, conscious of itself, with one and only clear target: to watch the match and to relieve its feelings. Somebody who is alone at home doesn't yell every time somebody scores, while in the same time, somebody in a cafeteria or at the central square feels in some way obliged to yell and express his/her feelings for the goal.

The same atmosphere remains also during the time of the celebration, which presents for us the greatest interest among all. The people continue to reproduce with their behaviour the atmosphere of the football field and to spread it in the streets. They don't stop repeating the slogans that were heard in the time of the game. The slogans are the language of the crowd, expressed briefly but effectively. They give the rhythm, they unify and they identify all those who sing them.

Moreover, the people scream and jump up and down in a wave of enthusiasm. They immobilize their cars in the middle of the streets, they climb on them, they take off their clothes, and they dance. In other words they do anything they are not allowed to do in a public place in their every day life. The festive exaltation is born exactly by the transgression of the prohibitions and by the excess that the celebration itself authorizes. At that moment the crowd legitimates all the extraordinary reactions and establish a new and momentary social order in the streets: a kind of a general disorder.<sup>8</sup> However, all these exaggerated reactions of the crowd seem to obey to certain limitations. Nobody was hurt or injured during the celebration. This is a proof for the fact that when the rules are not in force and the punishment disappears, the crowd takes the responsibility upon itself. The limitations that are being kept are the auto-limitations of the people themselves. So, the disorder takes place within certain conditions.

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<sup>8</sup> Freud, *œuvres complètes*, tome XII, p.103

### **A sociological approach of the celebration: The sacrifice of individualism on the altar of happiness**

The celebration is first of all and above all an act of recognition, a sort of confirmation of the value and the importance of the event. That type of celebration that follows a success in a sporting event and takes place in the streets is called in Greek *πανηγυρισμός*, and unfortunately there is no equivalent in English, nor in French or in German. It comes from the adjective *πανηγυρικός* that described in ancient Greece the speech that was announced in front of the crowd which was gathered to receive with all honours the men who returned from the battle. It was a speech of triumph that aimed to recognise the victory and to extol the soldiers as heroes.

Nowadays the battle field became the football field and the soldiers gave their place to the football players. After all, football was always considered to be a representation of the war. And that is also the function of the sporting activity in general. It aims to confine the antagonism within a context and in so far to allow its pacific formation and its restricted development.<sup>9</sup> Football transfers the opposition to an independent and symbolic field, outside the real social and political battle, and as a state institution constitutes a contemporary form of the economy of violence.

The potential of sports to favour the identification of the spectators with the players must be seen in the same context. All those people who don't participate in the game but follow its outcome in distance experience the antagonism and the opposition between the two teams and get emotionally involved. Obviously, the more a team wins, the bigger becomes the number of its fans. There are no fans without identification and no identification without victories. That is the reason why the number of the fans of the Greek team during the European Football Championship had been steadily increasing the more the team was winning.

Beyond the power of sports to provoke the massive excitement of the people, the celebration itself has also the ability to carry the crowd along with it. We have the example of a lot of people, who did not get excited with football not even at the last moment; who participated though at the celebrations that followed, because they were carried away by the general enthusiasm and the atmosphere in the streets.

The streets play always a very important role for that type of celebration. They are actually their material prerequisite. Massive celebrations can only take place in the streets and the greatest preference is given to the most central and biggest streets of the town – in other words to those streets who are “more public” than the others. Usually, the streets as public places never have the role of a destination. We don't stay in the streets; we only traverse them quickly in order to get to another (close) public place, or to a private one. So, their

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<sup>9</sup> Norbert Elias, Eric Dunning, *Quest for excitement – Sport and Leisure in the civilising process*, 1986, p.191

mobilisation, which happens only seldom, signifies every time an event of general interest, massive participation and as a result, an event of a great importance. At the case of the European championship, the mobilisation of the streets as the place of reception of the crowd testifies also the significance of the event.

We would like now to refer to some constant characteristics of the celebration as a social and anthropological experience. First of all, it is always a collective experience; the feeling of happiness and the exaltation come within the meeting with the others. It is as if somebody had smiled us in the street and made us spontaneously to smile him/her back. Secondly, it is a transformational experience. What we mean with that is the ability of the celebration to influence the individuals to become something different from what they usually are in their everyday life. It is true, that everyone concentrates on his/her person a set of social characteristics and undertakes many social roles. In that measure he/she is expected to act and behave in certain ways. For example, a forty five-year old man who happens to be the director of a company and also a father of two children does not drink or dance in the streets, he does not yell and he does not climb on his car. However, the celebration gives him for an instant the opportunity to go out of his social roles and to act however he likes. That does not mean that he is obliged to act differently, but that if he wants to act in another way from what he usually does, it would be allowed and socially accepted. The celebration legitimates the extraordinary behaviours for everyone.

Moreover, the celebration is a particular equalizing experience, or to be more correct, it proposes its own answer at the demand for equality. At the time of the celebration every distinctive characteristic of the persons in the crowd disappears. It does not have a meaning anymore. The only thing that counts is the feeling of the massive happiness and the exaltation. Everyone's personal identity, all the private insignia of one's life, his/her economic condition, his/her social class, and all the individual interests are now put away and kept apart. This is a standard characteristic that remains the same since the time of the Dionysian rituals.

Nietzsche described the Dionysian celebration as following: "The Dionysian celebrations do not only conclude with the peace between the people, but they also renew the relationship of the affiliation between the man and the nature. [...] All the separations of the casts that the necessity and the arbitration have installed between the people disappear: the slave is a free man; the noble and the commoner are unified inside the same bacchic chariot. In a crowd which is steadily increasing, the gospel for the harmony of the worlds passes conclusively from place to place: singing and dancing, the man appears to be as a member of an ideal and superior community: he un-learnt to walk and to talk."<sup>10</sup>

The description of Nietzsche is more than accurate. The crowd that celebrates has the power to level all the individuals that compose it. In this condition the people not only is not hierarchically rated and socially separated, but it is also authorised to reach the excess. Every

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<sup>10</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *La vision dionysiaque du monde*, Edition Allia, p.26-27

person of the crowd is so the owner of a very special liberty. At that time, the people are neither equal, nor unequal; simply, the question of equality constitutes no longer an issue.

The final game of the European football championship, which determined the winner, gave the signal for the biggest but also the last party of a series of consecutive celebrations. The Greek fans poured in the streets, determined to reach their limits and to experience the opportunity with the greatest possible intensity. At the White Tower of Thessaloniki arrived among the other cars a bulldozer. It parked there, right in the middle of the crowd, filled its nippers with people, raised it up and hold it in the air while the people inside it were dancing and singing.

At the same moment, at Omonoia Square, the central place of Athens, a young man arrived with his brand new and expensive sport car and spoke to the crowd: “I deliver it to you”, he said. “Do whatever you want in order to destroy it on the name of the victory”. At that moment, this young man sacrificed on the altar of joy and happiness a material but yet symbolic characteristic of his personal identity, distinctive of his social class and economic status. His valuable car, which differentiates him and places him in the social hierarchical structure of the every day order, has no more a value. On the contrary, having this car constitutes rather an obstacle at that moment, while it prevents his total equation –equation, and not equalization– with the other celebrants. The car reminds him of his social class, when the social class should not exist, when there are no hierarchies and no insignia.

At the same time the car takes over an additional function. It constitutes the object of a sacrifice that appears to be necessary: it is the sacrifice that will attach even greater value to the event and in the same time that will reassure that the celebration will continue. We have already mentioned the auto-limitation that the crowd puts on it. The crowd did not hurt anybody. The human victim that would be necessary for the sacrifice has been replaced with a material one, which remains though an object of a great value –both material and sentimental value– capable to lend the necessary importance to the sacrifice and also, to the event for the shake of which the sacrifice has been made. When the son of Abraham is being replaced by the sheep, the sacrifice does not lose its meaning. The victim still remains innocent and of an important value.<sup>11</sup>

The chubby-faced, well-bred young man stayed in front of his car looking at it during the whole time of its destruction. He evoked in our mind the famous scene of the film of Andreï Tarkovski when the protagonist, after he had set fire to his house, remained there looking at it while it was burning. The other people cannot understand this action. They see in him a frenetic man. In the case of the young Athenian, the people that were gathered there had the same reaction. It was completely incomprehensible to them, why somebody would that. Indeed. Somebody who accepts to have his expensive car broken down and burned is as absurd as if the Third World War had broken down. But both of them know very well at that

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<sup>11</sup> René Girard, *La violence et le sacré*

moment what they do and are completely conscious of their action. The actor knows very well that the war has been avoided because of him and his sacrifice and the well-off young man knows very well that the celebration continues because of him and his sacrifice.

However, the young man who sacrificed his car in the name of the victory could not remain silent for quiet a long time, as the protagonist of the movie. Besides, he had no problem to justify his action. So, he made a very important statement in order to give an explanation for its behaviour to the surprised people who were gathered around him: “Don’t worry about the car” he said laughing. “My mum is going to buy me another car tomorrow”.

This phrase, though it doesn’t play down the importance of the sacrifice, adds a totally new element to the story. He destroys his distinctive characteristic and in the same time, he reassures everybody that this will last only temporary. Tomorrow, after a few hours, after the end of the celebration, everybody will receive back his/her personal identity. In the real life, in the real social order, he is going always to be wealthy; he is going always to have a different social and economic status from all those people that he shortly met in the celebration. This is the usual ending of every celebration. But in this case, the re-entrance in the reality will take place in a very special way: By a new act of consumption.

After having localised on the celebration for the European Football Championship all the traditional anthropological characteristics of the celebration as human social practice, it’s high time we looked for the particularities that render it unique. For that, we will try to place the event among the social and historical context that created it.

### **Inscribing the event in the socio-historical context**

It has been a long time since we last saw such a great amount of people pouring in the streets of the Greek cities. The last similar event was the victory of the national basketball team in the European championship at 1987.<sup>12</sup> Before that, we sure have a wide set of examples but they all had a different connotation. In the past, a mass of people in the streets could mean and signify just one thing: A political demonstration or another social event which was also transformed into a political demonstration. We recall in mind the demonstrations for the anniversary of the “Polytechnic School” after the reestablishment of democracy. We can also recall the funeral of Georgios Papandreou and the arrival of Konstantinos Karamanlis in Greece after the Dictatorship<sup>13</sup> –both of them were social events which were transformed into political demonstrations. We can also mention the enormous manifestations of the political parties at the early 80’s. What we try to say is that all the masses that were traditionally in the streets incarnated always the expression of collective critical demands. The people in the streets were the vehicles of a critical discourse: they expressed above all a critic against the state, the political condition, the economical system, the poverty, the inequality, the social injustice.

That kind of massive expressions appears to be in hypnosis since the end of modernity at the early 80’s. They seem to have no place in our post-modern society. The massive expressions gave their place to individual expressions and the critical demands became demands for individual prosperity. The triumph of the model of consumption, the personal happiness, and the private pleasure in our capitalistic economy, as well as the “reproduction” of the individual liberties have weakened the critical reactions in our western democracies. Power and violence assumed their most complete, soft and rational form: that one which makes us accept the injustice with an always greater facility and with an always diminishing resistance.

The modern Greek society makes undoubtedly part of that situation. The neo-greek culture demonstrates in the clearest way that the moral commands for pleasure and happiness don’t leave any space for the development of collective critical reactions. The triumph of the consumption model is in its apogee. The liberal pluralistic democracy created under others a very special relationship between its citizens and ownership. And especially in Greece, in a country where the breaking majority of people are themselves their homeowners, the consumption need is being easily transferred into secondary benefits, which aim to operate as status symbols of one’s identity.

And now, the crowd that celebrated for the European Championship came to remind us all those forgotten collectivities that we once met in the Greek streets. Indeed, this recent massive

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<sup>12</sup> Many columnists made the same remark. *Eleutherotypia*, 28/6/2004

<sup>13</sup> See in *Eleutherotypia*, 7/7/2004 the statements of the president of Democracy.

expression seemed to have gathered all the traditional characteristics of the modern mass: incoherent, aesthetically indefinable, with an ability rather to react than to act. Its enormity makes no doubt. This mass of celebrants, this enormous crowd of people, conquered with its own “body”, through this particularly material procedure, the space of its action.

Is there, finally, a relation between the two different types of mass, between the critical one and the celebrating one? And if they are two parts of the same thing, then where can we assign the object and the cause of their difference? A genealogy of the mass would allow us to conclude that the appearance of massive formations is owed to a pathology of the human sociability, which is expressed as a habit to constitute collectivities. In that extent, the crowd of our recent example is also an expression of the one and same habit.

However, this new mass does not criticise anything. Or at least, it does not criticise anything directly. We could argue that alone its existence is particularly reactionary as it is opposing to the socio-historical condition that engendered it. We are supposed to live –and we believe that it is really so– at a state of a general social individuation. The new moral command, the search for happiness is usually fulfilled through the consumer’s goods. It is something ephemeral and steadily recycling. It is also individualized: that is the reason why we don’t search it in a collective activity but in the individual practice of consumption.

What signifies though the emergence of the collectivity of our example, which is a crowd that celebrates and not a mass that criticizes? We can assume two opposing things which may be both correct. On the one hand, it is a sort of confirmation of the social condition that engenders. It incorporates the pursuit of new ways, even collective ways, to express and to appropriate the dominant demand of happiness. On the other hand, it is a sort of criticism to the individualistic society, just because of its collective formation. The emergence of a collectivity in the state of individualism is, admittedly, a great objection.

In what extent can those two assumptions correspond to the real nature of the event?

### **Epilogue: The crucial penalty of liberal democracy**

We are almost convinced that the event of the European Football Championship had such a great sensation and succeeded to rouse the public feeling because it appeared to fulfil the dominant demand of our era: the conquest of happiness. What it was the salvation of the soul for a north-European protestant at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century is today the happiness for the western disenchanting citizen.<sup>14</sup> The hope of salvation that urged the people to work hard and to save up replaced from the demand for happiness that urges the people to consume and to spend. Happiness lies behind all consumers' goods: behind the trip to the Canaries and behind the new electric device.

Exactly as it was the case of the salvation, this contemporary happiness, which is presented as demand and supreme target of our era, has to be always individual. In other words, it is a liberal happiness. Not only because it appears in the state of the liberal democracy, but also because it is individually demonstrated and accomplished. In any case, it is better and bigger when it is individual, namely, when it is self-determined, self-directed and self-achieved. Of course, Derek Parfit would have added that it this happiness is also self-defeating. Indeed. You can never conquer it completely.

The celebration for the European Football Championship incorporated to a large extent the feeling of joy and happiness, particularly through the massive exaltation and the mutual influence of the people to each other. Apparently, this happiness differs from the one that we just described. But also, this happiness comes to an end as soon as the celebration is over and the crowd is dispersed. And always after the end of the celebration and the pass of happiness, what follows is the deception. In another case, when the feeling of happiness, that gives us for example the individual consuming action, comes to an end, the target of happiness is being placed to the next object that could make it recur. In that case, more or less the same thing was attempted.

The day after the definitive end of the celebration the feeling of happiness that had been following a whole nation for about a month had to be transferred into something else. And what would be better to receive and to incorporate it than an individual act for a renewed pursuit of happiness? Let's return to what we said at the beginning about the narcissism of the flag. The victory in football had already stamped itself indelibly not only in the collective memory but also at a whole series of objects, clothes and accessories. The crowd yielded to the temptation. Until the end of the Olympic Games on August and even a little later than that, the people wore a Greek flag on their clothes, put a Greek flag on their balcony and didn't hesitate to give a smile or to turn friendly a blind eye to everyone who behaved the same. It

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<sup>14</sup> Beaudrillard was the first to make this comparison. Jean Beaudrillard, *La société de consommation*, livre de poche, p.59

was a sort of conspiratorial communication which assured that the memory of the victory was still there.

The collective happiness of the celebration has been individualized not only in order to continue to exist through other activities, but also because, after all, the individualized happiness matches better with the present social condition. So, on the one hand, the event of “Euro 2004” got adapted to the circumstances and the circumstances got adapted to the massive acceptance of the event: the consumer’s goods get dressed with its colours, they appropriate its characteristics and, in general, they enter in its state.

### **Postscript: When the unique is repeated. The anniversary**

The problem with the events such as the football championship is that after their end they stop to exist. They are ephemeral, not only because they last for a short period of time, but also because it is difficult to keep them alive after their end. At the time of the championship the celebration is institutionalized and legitimated and we are in some way obliged to participate. But when the championship is over we are obliged to forget it. And sure, it is good to give an end to the celebration, as the continuation of it could have brought many serious political and social repercussions.<sup>15</sup> However, there is a feeling that resists to the order to forget it and to leave it behind. Apart from the demonstration of the flag, which aims to show mutually that the event is remembered, there is a set of rituals that are being invented almost spontaneously and which reconstruct the event. We should consider all the songs and the broadcasts of the games, which continue to be for sale and to sound in public places, a part of that need to conserve the feelings and the memory. The songs help to recall and to relive the experience. Another attempt to re-enact the scene of the raising of the cup was being made in many summer clubs when the people have been raising every object that looked like a cup they found on their table at the moment when the corresponding song has been heard.

The anniversary would be a way to institutionalize the memory, but that type of events never gets an official anniversary. However, the excited crowd tried to find other ways to relive the experience. The Olympic Games of Athens were a very good occasion to repeat the party and to sing the slogans. The recent experience of the contest of Eurovision, where the Greece didn't miss to win, was also used for the same reason. A distinction to a song contest was enough to mobilise hundreds of people who were ready to transform and fire the event as if it has been a football match!

The question that remains is what is really what we want to recall? The event or the celebration that just happened to take place because of the event? The answer is obvious.

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<sup>15</sup> We mean by that the possibility of the development of nationalism, which proposes as principal demand the continuation of the celebration.

**Literature :**

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