TURKISH FOOTBALL
Protected by Laws, ruled by politics
Tolga Şenel, Freelance Consultant
tolga@tolgasenel.com
SUMMARY

- Autonomy
- Legal Protection
- Political Football
- Conclusion
AUTONOMY
Sports Administrators are addicted to a phenomenon;

The Autonomy of Sport
AUTONOMY

IN AN IDEAL WORLD,

UNDERSTAND

Specificity of Sport

PROVIDE

Sport Exemption

Legal Protection
WELCOME TO "More than ideal" WORLD
• The Turkish Football Federation (TFF) was granted autonomy after a Law adopted on 17 June 1992

• Şenes Erzik was appointed by the Prime Minister in 1989 as the President of TFF and in 1992 he became the first elected President of the TFF.
TFF rights as described in the Law;

a) To organize, regulate and monitor all football activities within Turkey;
b) To promote the development and expansion of football throughout the country;
...
d) To organize and regulate competitions at all levels and take all necessary steps to ensure the admission and participation of its representative national and club teams in international competitions;
...
f) To ensure that its own members, clubs, football players, officials, managers, head coaches and trainers, medical staff, players’ agents, match agents and all other related people comply with the statutes, regulations and directives set forth by FIFA, UEFA and the TFF as well as the decisions adopted by the competent organs and bodies of these governing bodies;
AND MORE...
IX. Youth and sports

... 
B. Development of sports and arbitration  
(Paragraph added on March 17, 2011; Act No. 6214) The decisions of sport federations relating to administration and discipline of sportive activities may be challenged only through compulsory arbitration. The decisions of Board of Arbitration are final and shall not be appealed to any judicial authority.
BUT!
Football is still ruled by politics...
POLITICAL FOOTBALL
STADIA

• All major stadiums in Turkey are constructed and owned by the ministry of Sport

• Most are leased to clubs or municipalities for free or a very reasonable price
Major Stadium Investments In Turkey

- completed
- near to completion/significant progress
- tender process completed/construction started
Major Stadium Investments In Turkey + 2011 General Elections

- Red: completed
- Orange: near to completion/significant progress
- Yellow: tender process completed/construction started

Legend:
- AKP
- CHP
- MHP
- IND.
Spor Toto;
- is the state sports betting authority,
- naming sponsor of the Super Lig, 2. Lig and 3. Lig,
- sponsor to 14 clubs in the league,
- distributes money from sports betting to all clubs in top 4 divisions

Digiturk
- Is the broadcaster of the league paying approximately $500m per year,
- The Savings Deposit Insurance Fund of Turkey (TMSF) seized Digiturk in May 2013 because of the debts of the majority shareholder Çukurova Holding
LEAGUES

TRT;
• is the public TV Channel and broadcaster of 1. Lig

PTT;
• is the national Post Office and naming sponsor of 1. Lig

ZİRAAT BANKASI;
• is a public bank and naming sponsor of the Turkish Cup
TFF, CLUBS and MORE

• The President of TFF had to get permission from Prime Minister to become a candidate

• According to many journalists Yıldırım Demirören is appointed by Erdoğan

• A new type of FC invented. Municipality Sport Clubs! They almost have no fans but plenty of sponsors and resources

• Cities/Clubs with top level AKP connections are going up the football tiers

• Some artificial fan groups established to curb the power of non AKP-friendly groups
**TWO CASES**

**ALTAY SK**
- Most consistent football team of Izmir
- Secular fan base

1959 - 2003
- The club with highest appearance in top division after Fenerbahce, Galatasaray and Besiktas
- Only two seasons without an Izmir team in top flight and 4 seasons without Altay
- Never got relegated to 3\textsuperscript{rd} tier

2003 - 13
- Never played again in Super League
- Relegated to 3\textsuperscript{rd} tier league and playing there in the last 3 seasons

**KASIMPASA A.S.**
- Is a district in Istanbul where Erdogan was born and raised
- Conservative fan base

1959 – 2003
- Never played in top tier since 1964
- Was playing in the fourth tier league in 2002-03

2003 – 13
- Promoted 4 divisions in just 5 season
- A new home ground (Recep Tayyip Erdogan Stadium) had been built
- Has one of the wealthiest boards in Turkish Football.
CONCLUSION...

- Autonomy without good governance in practice may be useless and/or dangerous
- It's difficult to claim autonomy without economic independence
- A culture of accepting and respecting autonomous institutions is more important than regulations
THANKS...

TOLGA ŞENEL
Freelance Consultant
tolga@tolgasenel.com