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## Chapter 1

# Towards a sociological understanding of football hooliganism as a world phenomenon

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Writing in 1966, the only year in which the English inventors of the game staged and won the Finals of the football World Cup, the journalist Lawrence Kitchin (1966) pithily described the soccer form of football[1] as 'the only global idiom apart from science'. Since neither soccer nor science has spread throughout the entire world, and since the degree of their diffusion was even less at the time when he was writing, it would, of course, have been better had Kitchin referred to them as 'emergent' global idioms rather than as idioms which are global *tout court.* Moreover, although it was not so well known or well publicised at that time, Kitchin might have added that forms of 'hooliganism'[2] – meaning crowd and fan[3] disorderliness – have historically been a near-universal addendum to this emergent 'global idiom'. Indeed, at particular times and places, such as England in the 1980s, they have constituted a threat to the popularity of the game and perhaps even to its continuing viability as a top-level spectator sport.[4] In this chapter, we shall endeavour to construct a sociological diagnosis of football hooliganism as a world phenomenon, exploring how far it can be understood using data and theories – popular as well as academic – that were first generated using the case of England.

Our first task must be to attend to the question of definition. Probably the most important thing to stress is that the label 'football hooliganism' is not so much a scientific sociological or social psychological concept as a construct of politicians and the media. As such, it lacks precision and is used to cover a variety of forms of behaviour which take place in contexts that are related to football to a greater or lesser degree. These forms of behaviour also vary in the

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kinds and levels of violence that they tend to involve. More particularly, the politicians and media personnel who employ the term are liable to use 'football hooliganism' in a 'cover-all' sense which includes *inter alia*: forms of verbal as well as physical violence; the throwing of missiles at players, match officials, club officials and other fans; the vandalising of club and private property; fist fights; fights involving kicking; and fights involving weapons such as knives and even guns. It is also important to realise that such behaviour does not only take place at or in the vicinity of football grounds but also in locations – pubs, clubs, railway and bus stations; such encounters are often pre-arranged – that are sometimes far removed from stadia. Nor does it take place only on match days. The main common feature is fights between groups of males (these groups occasionally include females), who share a common allegiance to opposing football clubs. Intra-fan group fights have also been known to occur and the label 'football hooliganism' is also sometimes loosely used to cover politically orientated behaviour, such as that of groups on the political right. Then again, it is used in relation to protests against the owners and managers of clubs; to racist behaviour in football-related contexts and protests against such behaviour; and to fighting which is related in differing degrees to football matches *per se*. 'Football hooliganism' is therefore a complex and many-sided phenomenon. Let us examine some data, generated through an analysis of English newspaper coverage, which shed light on football hooliganism as a world phenomenon.

In the early stages of the research into football hooliganism that we started at the University of Leicester in the late 1970s,[5] we examined (as a sideline to the main study which was systematically historical as well as contemporary in its focus) a range of English newspapers and we recorded references to football-related violence involving fans rather than players reported as having occurred outside Great Britain. We looked at newspapers from 1890 onwards, ceased recording at the end of 1983 and did not use newspapers as a data source again until 1996. This means that, whilst our figures cover most of the twentieth century, they do not cover the years between 1983 and 1996. In that sense, they are incomplete. Nevertheless, until more systematic and intensive research along similar lines has been carried out, they can usefully serve as a rough indication of the worldwide incidence of football hooliganism in the twentieth century. In the course of this part of our research we came across reports of 101 incidents of football-related violence involving spectators or fans, which were reported as having occurred in 37 countries between 1908 and 1983. The countries and the number of incidents are given in table 1.

As can be seen, 16 of the reported countries – 17 if the former USSR is included – were European. This was, not surprisingly given their proximity to England, the highest geographical concentration of reported incidents. Central and South America, with hooliganism reported as having occurred in

*Table 1* **Worldwide incidence of football-related violence as reported in English newspapers, 1908–83**

| Country | Years | Country | Years |
|---|---|---|---|
| Argentina | *c.* 1936, 1965, 1968 | Italy | 1920, 1955, 1959, 1963 (2 incidents), 1965 (2 incidents), 1973, 1975, 1979, 1980, 1981, 1982 |
| Australia | 1981 | Jamaica | 1965 |
| Austria | *c.* 1965 | Lebanon | 1964 |
| Belgium | 1974, 1981 | Malta | 1975, 1980 |
| Bermuda | 1980 | Mexico | 1983 |
| Brazil | 1982 | New Zealand | 1981 |
| Canada | 1927 | Nigeria | 1983 |
| China | 1979, 1981, 1983 | Norway | 1981 |
| Colombia | 1982 | Peru | 1964 |
| Egypt | 1966 | Portugal | 1970 |
| France | 1960, 1975, 1977 (2 incidents), 1980 | Rumania | 1979 |
| Gabon | 1981 | Spain | 1950, 1980 (2 incidents), 1981, 1982 |
| Germany[1] | 1931, 1965 (2 incidents), 1971, 1978, 1979 (2 incidents), 1980, 1981 (3 incidents), 1982 (6 incidents) | Sweden | 1946 |
| Greece | 1980 (2 incidents), 1982, 1983 | Switzerland | 1981 |
| Guatemala | 1980 | Turkey | 1964, 1967 |
| Holland | 1974, 1982 | USSR | 1960, 1982 |
| Hungary | 1908 | USA | 1980 |
| India | 1931, 1982 | Yugoslavia | 1955 (2 incidents) 1982 (2 incidents) |
| Ireland[2] | 1913, 1919, 1920 (3 incidents), 1930, 1955, 1970, 1979 (3 incidents), 1981 | | |

1 Apart from the reported incident in 1931, these incidents were reported as having taken place in the former Federal Republic (West Germany).
2 Includes incidents reported as having taken place in both the Republic and Northern Ireland as well as incidents reported before the partition.

*Source*: Williams, J. et al. (1984/1989)

five countries, came second. 'Topping the poll' among the European countries were Germany, with 17 incidents reported between 1931 and 1982, Italy with 13 incidents between 1920 and 1982, and Ireland with 12 incidents between 1913 and 1982. Interestingly, if the data reported in a 20-page dossier published by the Council of the European Union in 1999 are adequate as a measure of the nation-by-nation incidence of football hooliganism – and the behaviour of a group of German hooligans in Lens (France) in 1998 at the World Cup Finals suggests that they may be – Germany continues by some way to lead what the authors of the dossier call 'the division of dishonour'.[6] This

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ostensible fact contrasts markedly with the dominant stereotype which continues to mark out football hooliganism as a mainly 'English disease'.

The overwhelming majority of the incidents referred to in table 1 were reported in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. More particularly, 17 were reported in the 1960s, 20 in the 1970s, and no fewer than 40 in the first three years of the 1980s. This pattern arguably reflects both a factual increase in the incidence of football hooliganism during that 30-year period and a correlative increase of media interest in football hooliganism as a 'newsworthy' subject. The rise in media interest also occurred correlatively with growing popular and political interest in football hooliganism as a social problem, and with what one might jargonistically call the 'tabloidisation' of the popular press. Largely as a result of intensifying competition with television news, popular newspapers in the sensationalising tabloid form have risen to prominence, and one of the repercussions of this process has been a parallel, though lesser, trend towards the sensationalising of reporting in the more 'serious' or 'broadsheet' press.

Probably more than any other single incident, it was the Heysel tragedy, which took place in Brussels at the 1985 European Cup Final between Liverpool and Juventus, that fixed the idea of football hooliganism as an 'English disease' firmly in the minds of people around the world. What happened was that a charge of Liverpool hooligans across an inadequately segregated and under-policed terrace led to the flight of the targeted Italian fans (who were not 'ultras', the Italian equivalents of English football hooligans, although 'ultras' were there in force in other parts of the ground),[7] the build-up of pressure leading a defective wall to collapse and 39 Italians to lose their lives. Probably a majority of people, perhaps especially in Western countries, would, if asked, identify Heysel as the worst directly hooligan-related football tragedy to have occurred in modern times. The data in table 2, however, suggest that it was not the worst, and that football and football hooliganism outside Europe have involved a greater number of fatalities and perhaps also a greater incidence of murderous violence than have their counterparts in Europe – the continent where people consider themselves to stand at the apex of 'civilisation' and where, if Norbert Elias ([1939] 2000) is right, a 'civilising process' can be demonstrated factually to have occurred since the Middle Ages.

Sketchy though they are, the figures on football-related murders in table 3 point in the same direction. Italy, the European country with the highest incidence of football-related murders reported in the years 1996–99, had five, whereas Argentina, largely as a result of the activities of the notorious barras bravas, had a reported 39 murders, almost eight times as many.

The Heysel tragedy occurred at or near the crest of a rising wave of English-inspired hooligan incidents in continental countries, the first of which occurred in the late 1960s and early 1970s (Williams et al., 1984/1989). Associated with this wave was the adoption and adaptation of English hooligan styles by

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*Table 2* **Selected incidents at which serious crowd violence was reported**

| *Country* | *Year* | *Match* | *Number of deaths* | *Number of injuries* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Argentina | 1968 | River Plate v Boca Juniors | 74 | 150 |
| Brazil | 1982 | San Luis v Fortaleza | 3 | 25 |
| Colombia | 1982 | Deportivo Cali v Club Argentina | 22 | 200 |
| Peru | 1964 | Peru v Argentina | 287–328 | 5000 |
| Turkey | 1964 | Kayseri v Sivas | 44 | 600 |
| USSR | 1982 | Moscow Sparta v Haarlem | 69 | 100 |

*Source*: Williams et al., 1984/1989.

*Table 3* **Number of football-related murders reported in selected English newspapers, June 1996–October 1999**

| *Country* | *Number* |
|---|---|
| Argentina | 39 |
| England | 3 |
| Italy | 5 |
| Netherlands | 1 |
| **Total** | 48 |

*Sources: The Times; The Leicester Mercury; The Guardian; The Observer; The Sunday Times.*

continental fans, although this is not something that we propose to discuss further.[8] More to the point for present purposes is that Heysel and the overall reaction to it also represented a peak in the politicisation of the English hooligan problem. It did so in the sense of leading for the first time to direct Prime Ministerial involvement in the problem and contributing to the introduction in Parliament of the Football Spectators Bill, Part 1 of which demanded computerised entry to matches. It also led the Union Européenne de Football Associations (UEFA) to ban English clubs – though not the national side – from European competition *sine die* and to an annual attempt by the English Football Association (FA) to secure their readmission. Between them, the passage of the Football Spectators Bill through Parliament and the annual attempt of the FA to secure the readmission of the English clubs helped to sustain media and popular interest in the hooligan problem. In its turn, the intense media searchlight led to large numbers of incidents being regularly observed and reported, amplifying the problem in two senses: first perceptually, by making it appear that more (and more serious) incidents were occurring than was objectively the case; and secondly by providing the oxygen of anonymous publicity which so many hooligans crave, in that way helping to sustain and even to increase the frequency of their hooligan involvements.

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The Hillsborough tragedy of 1989, in which 96 people lost their lives at an (abandoned) FA Cup Semi-Final match between Liverpool and Nottingham Forest, constituted another watershed. The tragedy was indirectly related to hooliganism in three ways. First, as part of the official attempt to contain and control the hooligan threat, terrace fans in England – those who used to stand rather than sit to watch matches[9] – were forced to watch from inside what were, in effect, wire cages. Secondly, the hooligan-related alcohol ban led many supporters to linger on in pubs until the last moment, thus contributing to a panic to gain entry to the ground and a panic response by the police. Thirdly, the police interpreted as a hooligan pitch invasion what was in fact an attempt by Liverpool fans to escape from the terrace at the Leppings Lane end of Sheffield Wednesday's Hillsborough Stadium, which had become lethally overcrowded. Overcrowding had resulted from fans being forced into a space from which there was no escape, and 96 of them were crushed to death. The central relevance of Hillsborough for present purposes, however, lies in the fact that, in his official enquiry into the tragedy, Lord Justice Taylor concluded that computerised entry was more likely to increase than decrease the incidence of crowd fatalities. As a result, the Government was forced to climb down and, in 1990, Part 1 of the Football Spectators Bill was withdrawn. This contributed in its turn to consequences such as: (i) the relative and gradual depoliticisation of the English hooligan problem; (ii) the correlative withdrawal by UEFA of its ban on English clubs; (iii) a decline in the perceived newsworthiness of the hooligan problem; (iv) a decrease in the frequency with which it was reported; and (v) a growing impression that, in England, football hooliganism was becoming 'unfashionable', a 'thing of the past'. This impression was given graphic expression by the late Ian Taylor when he wrote in the *Independent on Sunday* (21 April 1991) that: 'An astonishing sea-change is taking place in the culture of some of (England's) football terraces.' He attributed this supposed process to a conjuncture of what he called 'the BBC's packaging' of 'Italia 90' with the removal of perimeter fences from grounds in response to the report of Lord Justice Taylor. According to Ian Taylor, the dynamics of this process worked according to something like the following pattern: the removal of 'cages' reduced the frequency of 'animal-like' behaviour among the fans, and this interacted with the TV packaging of the 1990 World Cup Finals in which, as he put it, 'the opera of Pavarotti would meld ethereally into a poetic display of European football', producing a re-emphasis on 'style'. As a result, Ian Taylor argued, 'hooliganism [became] suddenly decidedly unfashionable, passé, irrelevant'.

Despite the elegance of Ian Taylor's language, the problem with this kind of impressionistic, non-research-based analysis is that it involves a gross oversimplification of the hooligan problem and is in many respects simply empirically false. What happened in England during the 1990s was not so

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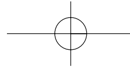



much that football hooliganism itself declined, as that, in conjunction largely with the relative depoliticisation of the problem, the reporting of football hooliganism became less fashionable. This was especially true of the reporting practices of the national media and in relation to 'bread and butter' domestic matches. It was less true of international matches, because of – among other things – their higher profile and the fact that the international media were there. For example, the 1990 World Cup Finals were accompanied in England by a hitherto virtually unprecedented form of hooliganism, namely outbreaks around the country of rioting, fighting and attacks on foreigners and foreign cars by fans who had been watching England's Italia 90 matches on TV. Similar outbreaks occurred during Euro 96 and the 1998 World Cup Finals. Events during Euro 96 are particularly instructive.

It is widely believed in England that Euro 96 passed off without the occurrence of hooliganism on any substantial scale. For example, discussing the hopes of the English FA that FIFA might allow England to host the 2006 World Cup, the journalist Martin Thorpe wrote of Euro 96 that: 'UEFA's ability to turn a handsome profit on a tournament in which England matched the best teams on the field and avoided trouble off it will go down well with FIFA when it chooses a venue for the second World Cup of the new century' (*The Guardian*, 12 October 1996). In his personal message, which fronted England's ultimately unsuccessful bid to host the 2006 World Cup Finals, the Prime Minister, Tony Blair, wrote of his belief that: 'the carnival atmosphere of Euro 96, I feel sure, has amply demonstrated our passion for football and our capacity for friendship and organisation. Our commitment to sport is unrivalled' (Football Association, n.d.). Later on in the same publication, Euro 96 was given the following fulsome praise:

> Ask anyone who was there. Euro 96 was one of the finest celebrations of international football ever staged. It was fun and friendly, yet superbly run in a safe and secure environment. No crowd problems marred the event, despite the complete absence of any perimeter fences. Almost 1.3 million spectators attended – an average of 41,270 per game – yielding profits of nearly £70 million. Euro 96 proved that England has put behind it the problems of the 1980s and is back to its best on the international stage (Football Association, London, n.d.).

There is no doubt that Euro 96 was in many respects a great success. The England team's standard of play (they reached the semi-finals only to be beaten by Germany in a penalty shoot-out), and the standard of football produced in the tournament overall exceeded many people's expectations. The Prime Minister, Tony Blair, following authors such as Richard Giulianotti, was led rightly to describe 'the carnival atmosphere' generated by the majority of people in the crowds. There was also a relative absence of serious disorders

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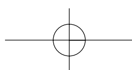



inside and in the immediate vicinity of stadia. What is problematic is the extent to which trouble was avoided in the broader context of match days. There is ample evidence that it was widespread. For example, crowds gathered in London's Trafalgar Square following England's game against Spain on 22 June and had to be dispersed by riot police. Disturbances were also reported in Hull, and fights between Englishmen and Spaniards were reported as having broken out in Fuengirola and Torremolinos on Spain's Costa del Sol (*The Independent*, 24 June 1996). By far the most serious rioting, however, occurred following England's defeat by West Germany in the semi-finals when trouble was reported, not only in London, but in Basingstoke, Bedford, Birmingham, Bournemouth, Bradford, Brighton (where a Russian teenager was mistaken for a German, stabbed in the neck and almost killed), Dunstable, Exeter, Haywards Heath, Mansfield, Norwich, Nottingham, Portsmouth, Shropshire and Swindon (*Daily Mail*, 28 June 1996). The events in London's Trafalgar Square were reported in the *Daily Mail* as follows:

> The agonising moment when Gareth Southgate's penalty was saved . . . was the trigger for a night of sustained hooliganism. Draped in flags and brandishing bottles, thousands spilled out of the pubs and bars . . . within moments of Germany's victory . . . The worst flashpoint came in Trafalgar Square . . . [I]t was the centre of . . . orchestrated rampage . . . Up to 2,000 people poured into the square shortly after 10.06 pm . . . [T]he situation rapidly deteriorated . . . Cars and motorists . . . found themselves engulfed in the rapidly-escalating violence with German Volkswagens and Mercedes singled out. A hard core of 400 hooligans . . . burst out of the square and attacked a police patrol car. The two officers inside had to flee for their lives as in less than a minute the car was smashed to pieces. The hooligans surged towards the Thames, shattering windscreens, turning one vehicle over and setting fire to a Japanese sports car . . . Between 10.10 p.m. and midnight, police received over 2,500 calls requesting urgent help. Of these 730 were related to violent disturbances . . . The final toll around Trafalgar Square was 40 vehicles damaged, six overturned and two set alight. Seven buildings were damaged with 25 police officers and 23 members of the public injured across London, as well as a further 18 casualties, both police and civilians, in Trafalgar Square itself . . . Nearly 200 people were arrested across London with 40 held during ugly scenes in Trafalgar Square (*Daily Mail*, 28 June 1996)

These events were the most violent among a series, varying in violence and scale, which took place across England during Euro 96. They took place despite a co-ordinated police effort which had been planned for some three years, cost an estimated £20 million (BBC1, 10 July 1996), and involved the well publicised arrest of 'known hooligans' up and down the country before the tournament. John Goodbody, the sports correspondent of *The Times*,

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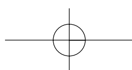



concluded not unrealistically that: 'What Wednesday night emphasised is that whenever the English supporters are taking part in an international tournament, it is inevitable that there will be trouble. However careful the preparations, troublemakers will ensure that there will be confrontations' (*The Times*, 28 June 1996).

Events in France in July 1998, especially in Marseilles, offered support for John Goodbody's view. Earlier, England fans had rioted in Sweden in 1992, in Amsterdam and Rotterdam in 1993, and in Dublin in 1995. In Dublin, they forced the abandonment of an Ireland–England match. Proponents of the 'hooliganism is a thing of the past' thesis, such as Helgadottir (1993) and I. Taylor (*Independent on Sunday*, 21 April 1991), can only account for such incidents by claiming with tortuous logic that the English hooligans have become peaceful at home and engage only in violence abroad. Alternatively, they suggest that the fans of Premiership teams have become peaceable as a result of an interaction between more effective police and club controls, and fashion changes among fans in the direction of both more carnival-like and consumer-orientated behaviour (Giulianotti, 1999). Hooliganism, they suggest, remains more stubbornly entrenched at the lower levels of the game. Yet the evidence is against them. Hooliganism continues to occur at all levels of the English game, suggesting the use of a kind of Ptolemaic logic on their part.[10] Take the figures in tables 4, 5 and 6. Table 4 offers a selection of incidents known to the police which took place at or in conjunction with Premiership, Football League and other top-level (e.g. pre-season 'friendly') matches in England and Wales during 1992–93.

Table 5 summarises data furnished by the British Transport Police (BTP) for the period 21 August 1990 to 22 December 1993, a period during which they recorded 655 incidents of varying levels of seriousness which had taken place at or in the vicinity of railway stations or on trains.

Table 6 is based on 69 reports of football hooliganism that appeared in 13 English newspapers between June 1996 and October 1999. A total of 110 incidents were referred to and/or described in these reports. Sixty-nine of them were reported as having occurred in England or Wales, and a further 20 as having involved English fans abroad. In 12 of the latter cases, the English fans were reported as aggressors and in the remaining eight as victims. Of the 21 incidents that remain, five were reported as involving Dutch fans, four Argentinian fans, four Italian fans, two German fans, two Russian fans, one an Iranian fan and the final one a Scottish fan. Twenty-four of the incidents were reported in 1996, 19 in 1997, 59 in 1998 and eight in the months January to October 1999. The larger numbers reported in 1996 and 1998, the years of Euro 96 and the last World Cup Finals respectively, are clearly in part a reflection of the heightened media interest in hooliganism that is generated in conjunction with major tournaments. Furthermore, independently of the

*Table 4* **Selected hooligan incidents at or in conjunction with Premiership, Football League, international, pre-season friendly and other matches in England and Wales**

| *Date* | *Match/fans involved* | *Type of incident* |
|---|---|---|
| 7.10.92 | Notts. Forest *v* Stockport | CS gas used, 8 policemen hurt |
| 18.10.92 | Sunderland *v* Newcastle | 30 arrests, 200 ejected |
| 31.10.92 | Leyton Orient *v* Swansea | Fights in London (Marble Arch) |
| 31.10.92 | Grimsby *v* Portsmouth | Missiles thrown at players |
| 14.11.92 | Darlington *v* Hull | Pub fights in city centre and station |
| 16.11.92 and 24.11.92 | Stoke *v* Port Vale | Fights inside/ outside ground/ town centre |
| 19.12.92 | Chelsea *v* Manchester Utd | CS gas thrown in Covent Garden pub |
| 12.1.93 | Southend *v* Millwall | Pitch invasion, pub fights |
| 16.1.93 | Tranmere | Fan beaten to death (racial more than football-related) |
| 19.1.93 | Cardiff *v* Swansea | Pitch invasion, pub fights* |
| 30.1.93 | Leicester *v* West Ham | Fights outside ground, CS gas thrown in pub |
| 20.2.93 | Tottenham *v* Leeds | 300 in fight, CS gas thrown in pub* |
| 5.3.93 | Tottenham and Blackpool | Fans fighting in Blackpool prior to Spurs/Man. City match |
| 7.3.93 | Man. City *v* Tottenham | Pitch invasion, fighting outside ground* |
| 17.3.93 | England U18 *v* Ghana | Attack on police |
| 17.3.93 | Sheffield Wed. *v* Sheffield Utd | Fighting, murder* |
| 24.3.93 | Peterborough *v* Leicester | Pitch invasion, arson |
| 3.4.93 | Millwall *v* Portsmouth | Pub fights, missiles thrown* |
| 28.4.93 | England *v* Holland | Pub fights, police attached |
| 1.5.93 | Reading *v* Swansea | Fighting inside/outside ground, pitch invasion* |
| 2.5.93 | Aston Villa *v* Oldham | Disturbances in Oldham; riot police used |
| 4.5.93 | Exeter *v* Port Vale | Attack by fans on referee |
| 8.5.93 | Millwall *v* Bristol Rovers | Pitch invasion, missiles thrown* |
| 8.5.93 | Halifax *v* Hereford | Mounted police used. Fighting inside ground |
| Div 1 Play-off Semi-Final | Portsmouth *v* Leicester (at Nottingham's City ground) | Fights outside the ground |
| Div 1 Play-off Final | Swindon *v* Leicester City (at Wembley) | Leicester fans ransacked Wembley pub. Disturbances in Swindon |

* Denotes police judgement of disturbances sufficiently serious to 'stretch' available police resources.

*Source*: These data were provided by Ian Stanier, a Leicester postgraduate student.

*Table 5* **Football-related incidents known to the British Transport Police, 1990–93**

| *Season* | | *No. of incidents* |
|---|---|---|
| 1990–91 | (21.8.90–5.6.91. Includes end-of-season play-offs) | 204 |
| 1991–92 | (17.8.91–3.6.92. Includes end-of-season play-offs and one international) | 260 |
| 1992–93 | (8.8.92–31.5.93) | 127 |
| 1993–94 | (24.7.93–22.12.93. First half season only) | 64 |
| **Total** | | 655 |

The remaining 12 incidents known to the BTP took place in conjunction with pre-season matches.

*Table 6* **Number of hooligan incidents reported in selected English newspapers, June 1996–October 1999**[1]

| | |
|---|---|
| Incidents reported as occurring in England and Wales | 69 |
| Incidents reported as involving English fans abroad as: | |
| (a) attackers | 12 |
| (b) attacked | 8 |
| Incidents reported as involving fans from Argentina (4); France (2); Germany (2); Iran (1); Italy (4); Netherlands (5); Russia (2); Scotland (1) | 21 |
| **Total** | 110 |

1 23 of these reports appeared in *The Guardian*, 18 in the *Leicester Mercury* and 15 in *The Observer*.

effects produced by media reporting, it can be unequivocally stated that these data indicate unambiguously that football hooliganism is alive and kicking.

Who are the football hooligans and why do they behave as they do? An examination of some popular and academic explanations of the phenomenon of football hooliganism in Britain will start to shed light on these issues.

In Britain, five main popular explanations of football hooliganism have been proposed, each of them espoused by the media, politicians and members of the general public. These explanations – some of them at least partly contradicting the others – are that football hooliganism is 'caused' by: excessive alcohol consumption; violent incidents on the field of play or biased and incompetent refereeing; unemployment; affluence; and 'permissiveness'. Available evidence does not show that any of these factors plays any deeper, more enduring part in generating football hooliganism. This does not mean, of course, that they cannot be an element in a more complex explanation. Alcohol consumption cannot be said to be a 'cause' of football hooliganism, because not every fan who drinks in a football context fights, not even those

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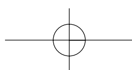
who drink heavily. The converse is also true, that is not all hooligans drink before fighting because they need a clear head in order (*a*) to avoid being caught unawares by rivals or the police and (*b*) to play a part in determining strategy (Dunning et al., 1988). Some, of course, drink or take other drugs for 'Dutch courage'. There is an *indirect* connection between soccer hooliganism and alcohol consumption, however, in that the masculinity norms of the groups involved tend to stress ability to fight, 'hardness' and ability to 'hold one's ale' as marks of being a 'man', and tests of masculinity are one of the things that football hooliganism is all about.

Violence on the field of play and refereeing that is, or is perceived to be, biased can similarly be dismissed as lying at the roots of football hooliganism. That is because incidents take place before and after as well as during matches, often at considerable distances from grounds. Nor can unemployment – a favoured 'cause' of the political left – be said in some simple sense to produce football hooliganism. For example, during the 1930s when unemployment in England was high, the incidence of reported match-related violence was at an all-time low. Similarly, when English football hooliganism began to enter its current phase in the 1960s, the national rate of unemployment was at its lowest ever recorded level. And today, the rate of participation in football hooliganism by the unemployed varies regionally, being higher in areas such as the North of England where unemployment is high and lower in usually low unemployment areas such as London and the South-East. In fact, almost every major English club has its soccer hooligans, in part independently of the local rate of unemployment, and fans from more affluent areas in the 1980s regularly used to taunt their less fortunate rivals by waving bundles of £5 or £10 notes at them en masse, singing (to the tune of 'You'll never walk alone') 'You'll never work again'. However, unemployment can be said to be an indirect 'cause' of soccer hooliganism in the sense of being one among a complex of processes which help to perpetuate the norms of aggressive masculinity which appear to be centrally involved.

The fourth popular explanation of soccer hooliganism, namely that 'affluence' rather than unemployment is the principal 'cause', tends to be favoured by the political right. This is in direct contradiction of the explanation by reference to unemployment. It is also sometimes associated with the explanation in terms of 'permissiveness', for example when it is suggested that football hooliganism is an attribute of the 'too much, too soon' generation. Whatever form it takes, however, the explanation by reference to 'affluence' is contradicted by the available evidence; it seems largely to result from an ideologically driven misreading of the fashion-switch on the part of young British football fans during the 1980s from the 'skinhead' to the 'casual' style. The skinhead style was, of course, openly working class; the casual style, by contrast, is apparently 'classless'. The clothes worn by devotees of the casual



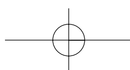


style may be, but are not necessarily, expensive. Sometimes they are stolen and sometimes only appear expensive as when 'designer labels' are sewn onto cheap, sometimes stolen, sweaters or when they are 'seconds'. Of course, some soccer hooligans are at least temporarily affluent, either because they have well-paid jobs or prosperous parents, or because they make money through black market activities or involvement in crime. But the bulk of the available evidence runs counter to the 'affluence thesis'. Data on the social origins of football hooligans first began to become available in the 1960s and they have been, on the whole, remarkably consistent since that time: while hooligans come from all levels in the class hierarchy, the majority come from the ranks of the working class and have low levels of formal education (Dunning et al., 1988). We shall return to this issue later.

The popular explanation by reference to 'permissiveness' appears to be similarly deficient. It is superficially plausible in that the advent of the so-called 'permissive society' in Britain in the 1960s coincided with the authorities and the media coming increasingly to perceive the behaviour of football fans as problematic. Yet football hooliganism in Britain as a fact if not by name can be traced back to the 1870s and 1880s (Dunning et al., 1988), and the *coup de grâce* is given to the 'permissive society' argument by the fact that, since football hooliganism began to be recognised in Britain as a social problem in the 1960s, soccer matches have become more heavily policed and subject to tighter controls. Watching British football has thus become anything but 'permissive'. Moreover, during the 1980s, members of the Thatcher government sought explicitly, by means of 'authoritarian', 'law and order' policies, to reverse what they saw as the generally deleterious 'permissiveness' of the 1960s and 1970s. Nevertheless, football hooliganism, along with crime in general, continued to grow for some time.

Let us turn now from the *popular* explanations of football hooliganism to the principal explanations of football hooliganism that have so far been proposed by British *academics* and which deal mainly with the English problem.

Besides the 'figurational' or 'process-sociological' approach on which this chapter is based,[11] six main academic approaches to the study of football hooliganism can be distinguished: the 'anthropological' approach of Armstrong and Harris (1991) and Armstrong (1998); what is perhaps best called the 'postmodernist' approach of Giulianotti (1999); the Marxist approaches of Ian Taylor (1971a; 1971b; 1982b), Clarke (1978) and Hargreaves (1986); the 'ethogenic' approach of Marsh et al. (1978) and Marsh (1978); the 'psychological reversal theory' approach advocated by Kerr (1994); and the historically sensitive/historical approaches of King (1997a; 1997b) and Robson (2000), which variously apply aspects of the theories of Durkheim, Weber, Goffman, Bernstein and Bourdieu to the problem. Each of these approaches to explanation has its particular strengths. But each has its particular weaknesses too. Since





the approaches of King and Robson are broadly consistent with that of the 'figurationalists', in the discussion that follows we shall focus on the approaches of Armstrong and Harris, Giulianotti, Taylor, Clarke, Hargreaves and Kerr.

The anthropological work on football hooliganism by Armstrong and Harris is based on rich, in-depth description of the behaviour of hooligan fans from Sheffield, a two-club city. It is theoretically eclectic, present-centred and, as is often the case with ethnographic or participant observation research, its principal author (Armstrong) seems insufficiently aware of the limitations which derive from reliance on the unsupported testimony of an individual. This is true of the work of Giulianotti, too. Armstrong also pays insufficient attention to the ways in which the dynamics of fan behaviour and relationships may have been affected by the fact that Sheffield is a two-club city; and the need for comparative observation of one-club cities such as Leicester and other two-club cities such as Liverpool and Nottingham was apparently not recognised. Nor, and this again holds good for the work of Giulianotti, is sufficient attention paid to change over time. These limitations are compounded by the authors' peremptory dismissal of virtually all research in the field other than their own, a stance which is not conducive to open dialogue and hence to the possibility of publicly establishing the degree to which the – in many ways – rich, deep and dense Sheffield findings and the rather more abstract Aberdeen findings confirm or refute the findings of others.

The work of Taylor, Clarke and Hargreaves is insightful in showing how developments in English football have been bound up with the capitalist character of the economy (see also King, 1998). None of these authors has carried out systematic in-depth research into soccer hooliganism, however, and they all neglect the significance of the fact that the phenomenon principally involves conflict *between* working-class groups – groups that only become involved in regular conflict with the football authorities and the police, and less directly with other representatives of the state – as part of an attempt to fight *among themselves*. In his early work, Taylor even romantically described football hooliganism as a 'working class resistance movement' (Taylor, 1971b). Marsh et al. do not make such mistakes. Nevertheless, their work lacks an historical dimension, with the consequence that they tend to see hooligan fighting – or what they call 'aggro' – as an unchanging historical constant. Moreover, in their stress on 'aggro' as 'ritual violence' (that is, violence which is mainly symbolic or metonymic in the sense of involving aggressive posturing but not the completion or 'consummation' of aggressive acts), they neglect the fact that ritualised aggression can be seriously violent.

Finally, through his use of 'reversal' theory, Kerr seems to do little more than dress up in complex psychological jargon some relatively simple sociological ideas. For example, he writes:

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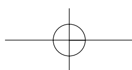



> The metamotivational state combination operative during most types of soccer hooliganism activity is paratelic-negativistic-autic-mastery. The paratelic-negativism element within this combination (with accompanying high levels of felt arousal and felt negativism) gives rise to the type of provocative, playful paratelic aggression that characterizes so many examples of soccer hooligan activity. Hooligan behaviour in these circumstances is not necessarily malicious, but is engaged in with the major purpose of generating excitement and the pleasures of release from rules (Kerr, 1994: 109).

Kerr seems to think that the football hooligans' quest for excitement through violent, deviant and delinquent acts in soccer-related contexts can be explained as a simple 'reversal' from one 'metamotivational state', 'boredom' (Kerr, 1994: 33ff), to another, 'excitement'. It is difficult to see how what he writes does more than dress up in psychological jargon what Elias and Dunning (1986) had written more than twenty years before (although we wrote about routinisation in this connection and not simple boredom), at the same time reducing a complex and graduated socio-behavioural reality to a simple dichotomy. Above all, there is no reference in what Kerr writes to what is also arguably at stake in football hooligan fighting, namely norms of masculinity. These figure centrally in the figurational/process sociological explanation (see also King, 1997a; 1997b; and Robson, 2000).

The figurational approach to football hooliganism does not constitute some kind of 'super theory' which purportedly explains everything. It is offered rather as a beginning on which to build. Its distinctive features include the fact that it is based on a synthesis of psychology, sociology and history. It also involves (i) an exploration of the meanings of hooligan behaviour via an analysis of verbatim statements by the hooligans themselves; (ii) the location of football hooligans in the overall social structure, especially the class system; and (iii) an examination of the dynamics of the relationships between them and groups in the wider society. Shortage of space means that here we can only briefly examine some of our data on the meanings and social locations of English football hooligans. Let us simply give some verbatim quotations that shed light on English football hooligans' characteristic values and motives, which have remained relatively stable over time.

Reminiscing about the emotions he experienced during his days of active hooligan involvement in the 1960s, E. Taylor wrote in *The Guardian* in 1984 of:

> The excitement of battle, the danger, the heightened activity of body and mind as the adrenaline raced, the fear and the triumph of overcoming it. To this day, when trouble starts at a game I come alive and close to getting involved. I may not forget the dangers of physical injury and criminal proceedings but I do ignore them (*The Guardian*, 28 March 1984).

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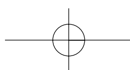



Similar sentiments were expressed by a 26-year-old lorry driver interviewed in conjunction with the 1974 Cardiff City *v* Manchester United game, a match in which serious trouble had rightly been anticipated by the authorities and the media. He said:

> I go to a match for one reason only: the aggro. It's an obsession. I get so much pleasure when I'm having aggro that I nearly wet my pants . . . I go all over the country looking for it. . . . [E]very night during the week we go round looking respectable . . . [T]hen if we see someone who looks like the enemy, we ask him the time; if he answers in a foreign accent, we do him over, and if he's . . . got any money on him, we'll roll him as well (Harrison, 1974: 602–4).

Here is how one of our Leicester informants put it in 1981. His words illustrate the sort of rationality which tends to be involved:

> If you can baffle the coppers, you'll win. You've just gotta think how they're gonna think. And you know, half the time you know what they're gonna do 'cos they're gonna take the same route every week, week in, week out. If you can figure out a way to beat 'em, you're fuckin' laughin': you'll have a good fuckin' raut ['Raut' is Leicester slang for a fight].

Finally, when interviewed in 1984–85 for the Thames TV documentary, *Hooligan*, which was centred on the Leicester research, a member of West Ham United's 'Inter City Firm' (ICF), England's most notorious football hooligan gang at the time, said:

> We don't – we don't well, we *do* go with the intention of fighting, you know what I mean . . . We look forward to it . . . It's great. You know, if you've got, say, 500 kids coming for you, like, and you know they're going to be waiting for you, it's – it's good to know, like. Like being a tennis player, you know. You get all geed up to play, like. We get geed up to fight . . . I think I fight, like, so I can make a name for meself and that, you know. Hope people, like, respect me for what I did like.

Despite the fact that they cover a period of more than 20 years, these statements are broadly consistent. What they reveal is that, for the (mainly) young men involved, football hooligan fighting is basically about masculinity, struggle to control territory, and excitement. For them, fighting is a central source of meaning, status or 'reputation', and pleasurable emotional arousal. Thus, Taylor spoke of 'battle excitement' and 'the adrenaline racing'; the ICF member referred not only to the excitement generated in fighting but also to the respect among his peers that he hoped his involvement would bring; and the lorry driver spoke of 'aggro' as a pleasurable, almost erotically arousing

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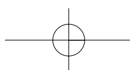



obsession. This latter point received substantiation when Jay Allan, a leading member of 'the Aberdeen Casuals', a Scottish football hooligan 'firm', wrote of fighting at football as being even more pleasurable than sex (Allan, 1989). Another non-English expression of this kind of sentiment was provided in 1994 by a 17-year-old Brazilian *torcida* who told a reporter for the Rio paper, *Journal do Brasil*: 'For me fighting is fun. I feel a great emotion when the other guy screams in pain. I don't care about how other people feel as long as I'm happy' (reported in *The Australian*, 15 December 1994). This resembles the delight taken in injuring and inflicting pain on others reported of some leading members of the Chelsea 'Headhunters', a neo-Nazi hooligan crew exposed by Donal Macintyre in a television documentary on BBC2 on 10 November 1999. American author Bill Buford, who spent around a year following a group of hooligans, expressed the same basic idea in more literary terms when he wrote in 1991 that:

> [The hooligans] talk about the crack, the buzz and the fix. They talk about having to have it, of being unable to forget it when they do, of not wanting to forget it – ever . . . They talk about it with the pride of the privileged . . . They talk about it in the way that another generation talked about drugs and drink. One lad, a publican, talks about it as though it were a chemical thing . . . once it's in the air, once an act of violence has been committed, other acts will follow inevitably – necessarily . . . Violence is one of the most intensely lived experiences and, for those capable of giving themselves over to it, one of the most intense pleasures . . . crowd violence was their drug (Buford, 1991: 206–7).

What about the social class antecedents and locations of the football hooligans? Social class raises complex and contentious sociological issues of definition and measurement. The available data on the social origins and current stratificational rankings of English football hooligans remain relatively scanty and cannot be described as definitive or 'hard'. What they suggest, however, is that while football hooligans come from most levels of the class hierarchy, the majority, some 70–80 per cent, are working class in their social origins and most usually in terms of their present stratificational standings as well. That is, the majority of their parents had low levels of formal education and worked or work in manual occupations, whilst the majority of the hooligans themselves have failed to rise above their parents' social level. The data also suggest, with one main possible exception, that this sort of distribution has remained relatively stable since the 1960s when English football hooliganism first began to attract public concern. More particularly, the data of Harrington (1968) on the 1960s, of Trivizas (1980) on the 1970s, of Stuttard (1985), Armstrong (1999), and the Leicester group (Stuttard, 1985; Dunning et al., 1988) on the 1980s, and of the Leicester group again on the

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1990s, all suggest that the majority of English football hooligans come from the lower reaches of the social scale. A small proportion, however, is recruited from around the middle, and an even smaller one is from at or near the top. Let us explore this pattern and the data which support it in greater detail.

Harrington's 1968 analysis of the occupations of 497 convicted soccer hooligans showed a preponderance of labourers and unskilled workers (see table 7). Over a decade later, Trivizas (1980) reached a similar conclusion. More particularly, on the basis of data about 520 offences committed at 'football crowd events' in London's Metropolitan Police Area during the years 1974–76, he found that:

> More than two-thirds (68.1%) of those charged with football-related offences were manual workers . . . Only 8 football-related offences were committed by people in 'intermediate' occupations. 6 were committed by students, 3 by individuals in professional occupations, and 3 by members of the armed forces (Trivizas, 1980: 281–3).

Harrison's impressionistic account of Cardiff City's 'committed rowdies' in 1974 paints a similar picture. He depicted them as coming from 'Canton and Grangetown, rows of terraced houses with few open spaces, and from Llanrumney, a massive council estate with an appalling record of vandalism' (Harrison, 1974: 602). Although Marsh et al. did not directly address the issue of social class in their 1978 study of Oxford United fans, some of their informants provided relevant comments. For example, one of them said: 'If you live up on the Leys (an Oxford council estate) then you have to fight or else people piss you about and think you're a bit soft or something' (Marsh et al., 1978: 69). In fact, over half of the large contingent of Oxford fans arrested during serious disturbances at the Coventry City–Oxford United FA Cup match in January 1981 came from the estate in question (*Oxford Mail*, 9 January 1981). Evidence from Leicester supports this general picture. One council estate alone contributed 87, or 20.32 per cent, of the 428 local persons arrested in a football context in the years 1976–80. In 1981 and 1982, the years in which the participant observation part of the Leicester research was carried out on this estate, the occupations of 23 active football hooligans from the estate were as follows: two drivers, one barman, one slaughterhouse man, three bouncers, one bookmaker's assistant, three factory workers (two in the hosiery trade and one in boots and shoes), one milkman, one apprentice printer, one apprentice electrician, one builder's labourer, and eight unemployed. The data in table 7 suggest a possible change in this overall pattern: Harrington's 1968 data indicate that 12.9 per cent of his arrested football hooligans were skilled workers, compared with 24.1 per cent in the Stuttard and Dunning et al. figures for West Ham United's 'Inter City Firm' (ICF) in

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1985, and 46.8 per cent in Armstrong's 1987 data on Sheffield United's 'Blades' (published in Armstrong, 1998). In short, these data suggest that an increase in the participation in football hooliganism of skilled relative to unskilled and semi-skilled males may have occurred in the 1980s as compared with the 1960s and 1970s.

*Table 7* **Trends in the occupational class of employed English football hooligans, 1968–87**[1]

| *Occupational class* | *Harrington, 1968* | | *Stuttard/Dunning et al., 1985* | | *Armstrong, 1987*[2] | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *No* | *%* | *No* | *%* | *No* | *%* |
| Professional | 2 | 0.5[3] | | | 3 | 2.1 |
| Intermediate | | | 8 | 5.7 | 7 | 4.9 |
| Skilled non-manual | 19 | 4.9 | 2 | 1.42 | 24 | 16.8 |
| Skilled manual | 50 | 12.9[4] | 34 | 24.1 | 67 | 46.8 |
| Semi-skilled | 112 | 28.8 | 10 | 7.0 | 14 | 9.8 |
| Unskilled | 206 | 52.9 | 25 | 17.7[5] | 28 | 19.6 |

1 Figures exclude those for schoolboys, apprentices, the unemployed and those with occupations unclassifiable in terms of the Registrar General's scheme.
2 Armstrong's 1987 data published in Armstrong (1998).
3 Professional and intermediate classified together.
4 Harrington uses different categories.
5 32 (22.7 per cent) of our ICF sample were unemployed at the time and 30 (21.2 per cent) were unclassifiable using the Registrar General's categories. Twelve of the latter earned a living as ticket touts and eight were members of the armed forces.

Assuming that this putative increase in the participation of young skilled workers in football hooliganism did in fact occur, it seems to have corresponded with the abandonment by football hooligans and by young fans in general of the avowedly working-class 'skinhead' style, and their adoption of the apparently middle-class or classless style of the so-called football 'casuals'. Although the figures it contains are very scanty and perhaps more than usually unreliable, the data culled from English newspapers and reported in table 8 appear to confirm the continuation of this pattern into the late 1990s. The description of himself as a 'property tycoon' by one English hooligan was, however, probably a 'wind-up'.

Research on the social class of football hooligans in Scotland, Belgium, The Netherlands and Italy suggests that hooligans in other countries tend to come from social backgrounds similar to those of their English counterparts. A study of Scottish 'football casuals', for example, found that:

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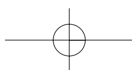



All the evidence points to the fact that 'football casuals' come predominantly from the lower levels of the social scale and are basically working class youths. (In the Edinburgh survey, 75% of the 'casuals' arrested fell into the 'unskilled manual' or 'unemployed' category. None came within the 'managerial-professional' category) (Harper, 1989: 90).

*Table 8* **Occupational data from selected British newspapers on arrested English hooligans, 1997–98**[12]

| | |
|---|---|
| *Upper and middle class* | |
| Property tycoon | 1 |
| *Intermediate and indeterminate* | |
| IT worker (City of London); clerical worker; engineer; bank worker; self-employed glazier. | 5 |
| *Working class* | |
| Hospital worker; factory worker; parcelforce worker; post-office worker; postman; railway workers (2); floor layer; roofer; RAF fireman; tiler; soldier; mould operator; builder. | 14 |
| **Total** | 20 |

*Sources*: *The Times; The Leicester Mercury; The Guardian; The Observer; The Sunday Times.*

Similarly, a study of soccer hooliganism in Belgium concluded that 'most of [Belgium's] "hard core" football hooligans . . . had a short and frustrating school career. Most . . . come from unstable working class families. Almost none . . . have a regular job . . . Their material situation is poor, the casuals get their expensive clothes by theft' (Van Limbergen et al., 1987: 8). According to the research of Van der Brug in Holland, typical Dutch hooligans: tend to resent and resist formal education; are more likely than non-hooligans to be unemployed; have parents who display a relatively tolerant attitude towards the use of violence and aggression; and gain prestige and status from fighting and generally displaying macho characteristics (Van der Brug, 1986). Finally, on the basis of a survey of Bologna 'ultras', Roversi concluded that:

The majority of young '*ultras*' are from the working class. The group in employment contains 169 males and 46 females. In this group the skilled and unskilled blue-collar workers visibly predominate, both compared to workers of other kinds and within the sample as a whole; they represent 80.3% and 51.9% respectively. They are warehousemen, porters, shop-assistants, bricklayers, carpenters but above all shop-floor workers . . . It must be emphasised that only 3.9% of the entire sample admitted to being unemployed (Roversi, 1994: 359–81).

Despite differences of theoretical, conceptual and methodological orientation, there is substantial consistency between these Scottish, Belgian, Dutch

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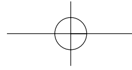



and Italian findings, those of Harrington, Armstrong and Trivizas and those of the Leicester research. Soccer is the world's most popular team sport; worldwide, a majority of its spectators tend to be male and, despite inter-societal variations in the stratificational location of the game, they tend to come from the lower reaches of the social scale. That is, they tend to come from social backgrounds where shared norms legitimate a more ready resort to overt violence and aggressiveness in everyday social relations than is usually sanctioned among the middle and upper classes. Members of these higher groups are more liable to conform in public (though not necessarily in private) with official standards.[13] To express the same point differently, lower-class males are more likely to develop an overtly violent and aggressive habitus and mode of presenting themselves to the world than tends to be the case with the male members of higher social strata. The lower-class male habitus tends to involve a complex of learned traits which seem to derive principally from: (i) a pattern of early socialisation characterised by ready resort to violence by parents, older relatives, siblings, neighbours and other children; and (ii) adolescent socialisation on the streets in the company mainly of age peers, in adolescent 'gangs' (Dunning et al., 1988).[14] In these gangs, ability and willingness to use violence and to fight tend to become criteria for membership of and prestige within the group – for the status of these males in their own and each others' eyes as 'men'. As a result, they learn to associate adrenaline arousal in fights and physical confrontations with warm, rewarding and thus pleasurable feelings, rather than with the anxiety and guilt that tend to accompany the performance and witnessing of 'real' (as opposed to 'mimetic' [Elias and Dunning, 1986]) violence in the broader context of societies in which a majority of people consider themselves to be 'civilised'.[15]

The violent and aggressive habitus of these males will tend to be reinforced when they live and work in circumstances characterised by high levels of gender and age-group segregation. That is, this habitus will tend to be reinforced to the extent that 'softening' pressure from females and older males is lacking.[16] In most societies, furthermore, the members of groups lower down the social scale are likely, by reason for example of the relative homogeneity of their work experiences, to be less highly individualised and more likely readily to form intense 'we-group' bonds and identifications (Elias, 1978: 134–48) which involve an equally intense hostility towards 'outsiders' (Elias [1939] 2000) than is the case among the more powerful, more self-steering and usually more inhibited groups who stand above them. At a soccer match, of course, the outsiders are the opposing team and its supporters, as well as, in some cases, the match officials. These groups tend to choose soccer as a context in which to fight because it, too, is about masculinity, territory and excitement. Given a widespread pattern of travel to away matches, the game also regularly provides a set of ready-made opponents with whom to fight.

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Large crowds form a milieu, furthermore, where it is possible to behave violently and in other deviant ways with a relatively good chance of escaping detection and arrest.

The above argument is not meant to imply that soccer hooliganism is always and everywhere a consequence solely or mainly of social class. As a basis for further research, it is reasonable to hypothesise that the problem will be contoured and fuelled, *ceteris paribus*, by what one might call the major 'fault-lines' of particular countries. In England, now and in the recent past, that means by class and regional differences and inequalities; in Scotland (at least in Glasgow) and Northern Ireland, by religious sectarianism; in Spain, by the partly language-based subnationalisms of the Catalans, Castilians and Basques; in Italy, by city-based particularism and perhaps the division between North and South as expressed in the formation of the 'Northern League'; and in Germany, by relations between the generations (Heitmeyer and Peter, 1992; Elias, 1996) and between East and West.[16] Religious, subnational, city-based, regional and generation-based fault-lines may draw into football hooliganism more people from higher up the social scale than has tended to be the case in England up to now. Indeed, it is possible that future social changes may produce the same effect in England, too. Arguably, however, a shared characteristic of all these fault-lines – and, of course, each can overlap and interact with others in a variety of complex ways – is that they are social formations which involve intense 'we-group' bonds ('us') and correspondingly intense antagonisms towards 'outsiders' or 'they-groups' ('them'). The relative violence and persistence of such 'we-group'/'they-group' figurations is likely to be a consequence, *ceteris paribus*, of the degree to which they involve an overlap between class, sectarian and perhaps other inequalities and rivalries.

By way of conclusion, let us make ourselves perfectly clear. We do not consider this argument about 'fault-lines' as having the status of anything more than a working hypothesis. It needs to be subjected to public discussion and tested by means of systematic, theory-guided, cross-national empirical research. Doubtless in that context, it will need to be revised, expanded, modified and perhaps even rejected altogether. It is our hope, though, that this Introduction and the chapters in this book which follow will serve as a basis from which a programme of cross-national research on football hooliganism can be constructed, leading to an expanded understanding of the phenomenon and forming the basis for more effective policies for tackling the problem at the world, European and national levels. Such policies are urgently needed if the great social invention of soccer is to be protected from the serious threat currently posed by a combination of hooligan fans, complacent politicians, and money-driven owners, managers and players.