

SIR NORMAN CHESTER CENTRE FOR FOOTBALL RESEARCH

FACT SHEET 1

FOOTBALL AND FOOTBALL HOOLIGANISM

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** Professional football is by far and away the most popular spectator sport in Britain. Going to football matches is a predominantly male activity, but around 12% of attenders of top matches in England are female (Williams, 1996). Research conducted in the 1980s suggests a higher proportion of the population pays to watch football in Scotland than in the North and Midlands, and the South of England has a proportionally lower level still of paying support (Sports Council, 1986). The Glasgow clubs, Rangers and Celtic, quite regularly attract crowds of 40,000 and even 50,000 people these days. English clubs in the northern industrial conurbations of Merseyside, Newcastle and Leeds, and at Arsenal and Tottenham in the south, regularly attract in excess of 30,000 spectators. Manchester United's redevelopment of Old Trafford now means that club can house 55,000 fans at home matches. In 1995/96 there were almost 21 million attendees at Premier League and Football League matches. Greyhound racing is reputed to be the next most popular 'live' sport in Britain but it attracts crowds well down on those at football matches.
- 1.2** Up until quite recently, attendances at Football matches in Britain had been in steady decline since the Second World War. This decline was offset a little by the rise of a number of knock-out cup competitions and the crowds brought by European club competitions, but there is no doubt that many fewer people pay to watch professional football these days than in the 1940s, and that crowds fell fairly consistently from that date at least up until 1986/87. However, since the 'slump' season of 1985/86, which followed the Heysel tragedy, crowds in England have risen year on year and also quite dramatically in Scotland. In fact, total League attendances in England have risen steadily from a post-war low of 16.5 million in 1985/86 to 21.8 million in 1995/96, an extraordinary rise of 32%. Today it is estimated that between 4-5 million people attend a football match in England and Wales every year, though it is difficult to be precise with these figures.

- 1.3 There are many reasons why crowds declined at football in England over the 40 years immediately after the Second World War. Social habits changed and there are many more leisure options available today. Households became more 'privatised' and much more entertainment takes place in the home (e.g. through the role of television and video). Local football clubs are not followed these days irrespective of their standing or performances, as used to be more often the case in the past. This, coupled with ease of travel, is one reason why many smaller clubs now have very low attendances. Moreover, until recently the general standards of facilities at some football grounds arguably failed to keep pace with general improvements in social standards and standards of leisure provision elsewhere.
- 1.4 One thing we have not mentioned so far, but which many people point to in order to explain football's relative decline up until the mid-1980s, is *football hooliganism*. Hooliganism was not popularly identified as a serious social problem in this country until the 1960s - a long time after football's crowds began to fall - so it cannot account on its own for football's declining popularity after the war. But there seems little doubt that increasingly the experience of, and particularly the fear of, hooliganism did deter at least some fans from attending football matches between the mid-1960s and the early 1990s.

2. FOOTBALL HOOLIGANISM

- 2.1 Although football hooliganism only became recognised by government and the media as a serious problem in the 1960s, hooligan behaviour at football has a long history. 'Roughs' were regularly reported as causing trouble at matches in the professional game's early years at the end of the nineteenth century. Some clubs which were sited in particularly tough areas, have long records of spectator disorderliness. In the game's earliest days, local 'derby' matches often provoked the worst problems but, in the absence of visiting fans, home 'roughs' on occasions attacked and stoned referees as well as the visiting players, sometimes chasing them out of town! The press at the time seemed very 'low key' in its reporting of hooligan incidents compared to tabloid coverage of football violence in the 1980s (see, Dunning **et al**, 1988).
- 2.2 Between the wars, football generally became more 'respectable' and crowd problems diminished but did not disappear. It was not until the early 1960s, however, that the media coverage of football began once more regularly to report hooliganism at matches. Around this time, too, there was a general 'moral panic' (Cohen, 1973) about the behaviour of young people, sparked by rising juvenile crime rates, uncertainty about the future, the emergence of a number of 'threatening' national youth styles like that of the 'teddy boy', and racial tensions symbolised by the Notting Hill disturbances of 1958. In this climate, football became increasingly identified as a venue at which fights and other kinds of disorder regularly occurred. It was around this time, too, that football hooliganism in England began for the first time to take on the more cohesive and organised aspect that is associated with the phenomenon today.
- 2.3 The mid-1960s saw **ad hoc** match-day alliances being formed between groups of young men drawn largely from local working class housing estates and suburbs. These supporters staked out the goal-end terraces of football grounds as their 'territory' and managed to exclude from them, much more successfully than before, older spectators and rival fans. The development of these 'youth ends' and their role in defending local masculine reputations and territories helped to produce a national network of 'gang'

rivalries which focused on football. For the young men involved in these groups, their own performance in overcoming or intimidating rival ‘firms’ began to become *more* important than the performance of the players they were supposed to have come to watch. By the late-1980s most serious confrontations between rival fans no longer occurred over territories **inside** grounds.

Figure 4. Arrests at Football Matches 1986/87 – 1998/99

	Division One	Division Two	Division Three	Division Four	All Divs
1986/87	2,008	1,700	926	878	5,502
1987/88	2,216	2,136	866	929	6,147
1988/89	2,389	1,747	1,225	824	6,185
1989/90	1,857	2,203	1,151	734	5,945
1990/91	1,747	1,710	411	251	4,119
1991/92	2,114	1,328	1,020	544	5,006
	Premier League	Division One	Division Two	Division Three	All Divs
1992/93	1,647	1,347	1,081	513	4,588
1993/94	1,630	1,359	782	456	4,227
1994/95	1,723	1,227	674	226	3,850
1995/96	1,697	949	506	289	3,441
1996/97	1,759	891	626	301	3,577
1997/98	1,438	1,173	468	228	3,307
1998/99	1,534	851	641	315	3,341
2000/1	1623	816	601	351	3,391

Source: NCIS

Instead, rival groups sometimes tried to meet **outside**, before or, more usually, after matches. By 1991/92, around 5000 arrests were being made at all League Football matches, an average of 2.4 per match. There has been a long term decline in hooliganism since the mid-1980s (See Figure 4). However, concern was reignited in 2002 by incidents involving fans in and around football stadia, especially in terms of missile throwing and supporter intrusions onto the field. It isn’t clear yet to what extent these recent incidents suggest a ‘revival’ of hooliganism or a more temporary panic.

- 2.4 As far as most football fans at top matches are concerned, hooliganism no longer seems to be a terribly serious problem. In 2000, 19% of all FA Premier League fans reported they had witnessed hooliganism or missile throwing at matches in the 1999/2000 season. When asked which are the serious problems facing the game today FA Premier League fans pointed to ticket prices, ‘big business’ and kick-off times. Only 28% highlighted hooliganism. Also, in 2001 only 7% of all FA Premier League club supporters thought hooliganism was actually *increasing* as a problem at football. In the Football League, holliganism seems to be a problem around a relatively small number of clubs and specific

matches. However, the NCIS annual list of football incidents seems more likely these days to involve rivals from noted Football League clubs than supporters of the larger FA Premier League outfits.

3. DO ONLY THE ENGLISH PRODUCE HOOLIGANS?

- 3.1** Far from it. In the early 1960s, the English wanted to pull out of European club competition because of their fears about **foreign** supporters and players. By the 1980s, it was often said that the English **exported** their hooliganism more readily than other countries; but countries such as Holland, West Germany, Italy, Hungary and France all have their own named hooligan groups and some even copy the chants and styles of the English. In the book **Hooligans Abroad** (Williams **et al**, 1989), some hooligan incidents involving foreign fans are listed. Serious incidents at football matches have occurred in many South American countries as well as in countries such as China and in a number of African states. More recently, in April 2000 two Leeds United fans were murdered in Istanbul following incidents involving visiting supporters and locals. Later that year Arsenal fans and Galatasary fans clashed at the UEFA Cup final in Copenhagen
- 3.2** Back in 1985 English fans were banned for five years from European club competitions because of the behaviour of fans following Liverpool before the European Cup Final at the Heysel Stadium in Brussels. A 'charge' by Liverpool fans caused panic among rival Juventus fans leading to a wall collapse and the death of 39, mainly Italian, fans.
- 3.3** In 1990, English club sides were re-admitted to European club competitions and there have been very few serious crowd disorder problems resulting. The hooliganism problem in Germany seems especially acute at the moment given the strains of re-unification and the alleged involvement of neo-fascist groups in football disorder in that country. There have also been serious spectator problems recently in Holland and Italy. However, problems involving fans of the England national team at the European Championships in Sweden in 1992 suggested that disorder involving England fans abroad had not yet disappeared (see, also, Davies, 1990; Buford, 1991).
- 3.4** Although other countries have hooligans, arguably there are at least three features which seem to set England apart from other countries with football hooliganism problems. **Firstly**, the English, as we have said, have a long *history* of football spectator disorders, going back right to the early days of the professional sport in England in the nineteenth century. Then, referees were often the targets for attack, but football fights between rival 'gangs' using weapons, including bottles and even knives were not uncommon even into the 1920s and 1930s in England *and* in Scotland. During one match in Birmingham in 1920 it was reported that "bottles were flying around like hailstones" on the terraces and that men in the crowd used "half-pint stout bottles" instead of clubs to fight (Dunning *et al*, 1988, p111). Other reports of the time have London fans "involved in street fights using iron bars and knives" (Dunning *et al*, *loc cit*). By way of contrast, football hooliganism elsewhere in Europe tends to be described largely as a *post-war* phenomenon and in some countries - notably Holland - the rise of domestic hooliganism on the continent in the 1970s is often explicitly connected to the visits of violent English fans, just as the English media, were concerned in the 1960s that we might 'learn' or be 'infected by' hooliganism from the Latinos in Italy and South America.
- 3.5** **Secondly**, the English seem to have *exported* hooliganism much more readily than other countries. While English fans were routinely causing problems on the continent in the 1970s and 1980s, for example, there were no serious instances at all of foreign fan

hooliganism during their own regular visits to England during that time. In fact, in that period there were relatively few instances of serious inter-country hooliganism which did *not* involve the English either as perpetrators or victims. Things have changed a little in the 1990s, but beyond the historic rivalry between the Germans and the Dutch it is still quite difficult to trace regular incidents of serious hooliganism by non-English fans *outside* of their own country.

- 3.6** **Thirdly**, while many countries have had domestic hooligan problems - intense conflict between supporters of rival *clubs* - these have not typically been translated into hooligan support for their respective *national* teams. *Ultra* fans - the most committed and organised fan groups, which also contain some hooligans - from countries such as Holland, France, Italy and Spain, for example, seem to be totally committed to their clubs and much less interested in attaching their support to following their national team. Where, for example, were the continental 'Ultras' at Euro '96? By way of contrast, in England, if anything, the most serious hooligan problems in the 1980s and 1990s were connected, not to support for particular clubs but to support for the *national* team.
- 3.7** Why should the following for the England team in the 1980s and early 1990s sometimes be even *worse* in its behaviour than the worst *club* hooligans in England? Well, for one thing, the exploits of the England football team seemed to be increasingly read by the popular press in Britain as a metaphor for England itself. In this sort of discourse, as Britain declined economically, shed its empire and faced up to the new world order, the British national press spoke as if a still 'great' nation was also being betrayed by its bungling and unsuccessful footballers (Wagg, 1991). Followers of the England national football team seemed especially unwilling to accept the country's new international positioning - beaten by 'minor' footballing nations; economically outstripped by emerging nations and defeated war enemies - especially when the rhetoric of the British Government in the 1980s revived images of empire and famous triumphs in war. Hooliganism 'for' England abroad was then, in part, about defensive patriotism in the face of wider national decline. During the conflict in the Falkland Islands in 1982, English football fans in Spain for football's World Cup Finals, and for some less lethal fighting, carried banners proclaiming themselves to be 'Soccer's Task Force'. Scottish fans at the Finals seemed to have a different struggle in mind: their most famous banner, seen before the clash with Russia, read 'Alcoholism v Communism' (Williams, et al 1989). In fact, the more violent English fans behaved abroad the more determined the Scots seemed to be to manage and promote their own international football image as a friendly, 'Tartan Army' exploring the 'carnavalesque' aspects of football supporting styles. Such distinctions clearly drew, too, on the increasingly radical politicisation of Scottish popular culture in the 1980s and the rise of 'radical' nationalist and devolutionist political cultures in Scotland (Giulianotti, 1991).

4. WHO ARE THE HOOLIGANS AND WHY DO THEY DO IT?

- 4.1** Most of the evidence on hooligan offenders suggests that they are generally in their late teens or their 20s (though some 'leaders' are older), that they are mainly in manual or lower clerical occupations or, to a lesser extent, are unemployed or working in the 'grey' economy, and that they come mainly from working class backgrounds. (See Dunning **et al** 1988; and for a critique, Armstrong and Harris, 1991) Unsurprisingly, London hooligans probably tend to be more affluent than their northern counterparts, and it is certainly 'stylish' and 'macho' in these football circles to show that you have the capacity to spend on, or to steal, exclusive sportswear or leisure wear and that you know which of

the available styles and brand names are 'in'. Competition on dress sense between football 'casuals' has been intense, and rival fans often critically judge each other's styles, and ridicule those whose dress sense is cheap or unfashionable.

- 4.2 Much of the behaviour which is commonly described as 'hooliganism' is actually ritualistic and non-violent (Marsh *et al*, 1978). This involves: verbally abusing rival fans, threatening them with attack, and general horseplay aimed at 'having a laugh'. Core hooligans, however, do seem more interested in fighting or 'running' rival groups who are, in their eyes, like themselves and who are also 'looking for trouble'. Debates about the deeper 'causes' of hooliganism have divided researchers and academics for some time. In England, as we have said, the early work of psychologist Peter Marsh and his colleagues (1978) at Oxford focused on largely non-violent and ritualistic 'aggro' at football and on the terraces' own 'rules of disorder' which break down into 'real' violence only by accident or as a result of inappropriate intervention, for example, by the police. But, Marsh and his colleagues seemed almost totally seduced by the idea that it was *only* the ritual which hooligan fans had in their sights. According to this view, the violence of hooligans was by no means central to their concerns. Sociologists, however, had rather different views.

Sociological approaches

- 4.3 Sociologists at Leicester University (Dunning *et al* 1988) critiqued Marsh *et al*, not for arguing that terrace behaviour was ritualistic or rule governed, but rather for understating the amount of 'real' violence which occurred at matches. Their own account lays emphasis on the long, if patchy, history of hooliganism at football in England and the generation and reproduction of a particular form of aggressive masculinity, especially in lower class communities. In these 'rough' neighbourhoods young males are socialised (at home, at work, in peer group gangs etc) into standards that value and reward publicly assertive and openly aggressive and violent expressions of masculinity. Young men are expected to be able to 'look after themselves'. Fights can be anticipated and enjoyed, not just because of the challenges they offer, but also because of how they make the protagonists *feel*. (Some fighters describe the football action as being 'better than sex'). Such groups also have strong spatial and locational attachments (to neighbourhood, town, region, nation etc) which are 'activated' on the basis of the nature and level of external challenges.
- 4.4 Club football, as the site for symbolic struggles between representatives of 'rival' working class communities, is an appropriate and attractive venue for testing masculine identities, particularly at the level of town or city affiliation, but also at the national level. Young men like these 'defend' their own, their 'gang's', and their town's reputation against similar intruders who are aimed at subordinating their hosts. A network of spectator rivalries, with its own traditions and folk memories, has, thus, grown up around football and especially around the ritual of travelling to matches away from home. Much of this engagement is about 'running' opposing fans, but core hooligans also enjoy a fight when they can get one. Some fights are even pre-arranged, by telephone, away from matches, especially as police surveillance techniques have limited opportunities for fighting in and around stadia. As well as the manly status rewards involved in such activities, the camaraderie, loyalty and 'entertainment' value of hooligan involvement is also prized by young men whose opportunities for status and excitement via other channels is relatively limited. Heavy drinking, for example, is often a key element in a 'good day out', and drinking offences figure strongly in national football arrest statistics in England.

- 4.5 This lower class 'aggressive masculinity' thesis has itself been criticised in England on a number of counts. The sociologist Ian Taylor (1987), for example, returns to some of the themes about 'Englishness' and hooliganism mentioned above. He argues that the class fraction identified by the Leicester research as the main production ground for hooliganism cannot account for the rise of the high-spending and fashionable soccer 'casual' who is at the heart of English hooliganism in Europe in the 1990s. 'Casuals' use their conspicuous consumption of expensive and stylish clothing as another means of competing with their hooligan rivals. Taylor argues that the recent violence by English fans abroad is the specific product of an upwardly mobile and 'detached' fraction of the 'Thatcherised' working class which has a certain residual solidarity born of neighbourhood and gender, but it is generally individualistic, chauvinistic and racist. Taylor favours the contemporary troubled state of English *masculinity*, rather than class as the key to the current hooligan problem. These are hooligans, he argues, with no real class affiliation or tradition; they, instead, express the values of a contemporary and unregulated kind of masculine brutishness of England in the 1980s.
- 4.6 More recently, Garry Robson's important and detailed recent work on Millwall fans, *No-One Likes Us, We Don't Care* (2000) seems to have some approaches in common with aspects of the analysis in Leicester, especially in his focus on the sorts of *values* which are produced out of a durable core of practices, sensibilities and orientations in working class communities, and on the 'striking historical continuities' in patterns of masculine London working class identities and practices which are revealed in male spectator codes in following 'the Lions'. But he also argues, returning in fact to an earlier sociological tradition, that the practices of hooliganism - and racism - among some of the club's fans should also be read as a form of *resistance* to the intrusion into the sport and local cultures of more middle class sensibilities.
- 4.7 Robson contends, especially, that the ferocious performative manliness of 'Millwallism' is a particular and historically grounded form of social awareness built around concerns for masculinist authenticity and the ridicule of outsiders for their lack of toughness and/or metropolitan Londonness. But at football, these expressive forms are also mobilised in opposition to the new, more disciplined, family and consumption-oriented audiences and practices which are now increasingly favoured by the sport's new marketing elites. Here, *being Millwall* still sustains a rootedness and a satisfyingly alarming everyday identity in all contexts for south London men. In an associated way, Anthony King (2001) has also pointed to the role of collective memory in shaping hooligan incidents. He argues that 'The future of hooligan gangs and the form which their violence will take is substantially determined by the common values upon which they agree and which they establish through their public affirmation of shared memories.'
- 4.8 *Feminist* accounts of football violence (eg. Campbell and Dawson, 2001) stress that football cannot be disconnected from other contexts and forms of violence, nor from the gender system which is complicit in the making of masculinities. For these authors it is a problem of the masculine 'spatial and sexual domination that is routinised in popular culture. They complain that although academics tend to say a lot about racism in football, few pay attention to the sexism which seems an integral part of football - and hooligan cultures. This argument comes from a new and challenging collection on the hooligan phenomenon **Hooligan Wars**, edited by Mark Perryman.
- Anthropology and psychology*
- 4.9 From the discipline of *anthropology* Armstrong (1994, 1997) argues, too, that the stress on social class is rather overdone in the Leicester work, but he is also far less interested than

is Ian Taylor in gender identities and hooliganism. He asserts that members of 'The Blades' firm at Sheffield United - Armstrong comes from Sheffield and his research focuses on a group he knows well - come from a range of locations and backgrounds and are involved in hooliganism primarily because of its attractions as 'social drama' and the opportunity it provides for a sense of belonging, for competition, achieving 'honour' and inflicting shame on opponents. For him, hooligan groups are, in fact, very diverse in their make up - they can include fans drawn from across classes and anti-racists, for example - they exhibit negligible levels of organisation, and *pace* Marsh, they mainly enjoy *confrontation* rather than violence. Thus, for Armstrong, hooliganism is best understood through anthropology (the study of humankind) and biography rather than through sociology and structure. The social dramas enacted by 'The Blades' achieve "communion between disparate individuals pursuing achievement and selfhood" (1994, p322).

- 4.10** New *social-psychological* perspectives in England offer different explanations, again, of hooliganism but like Armstrong, their focus is more directly on the *meaning* of the activity itself rather than on the social background of those involved. Gerry Finn (1994), for example, sees hooliganism as an example of the search for a 'flow' or 'peak' experience; an intense, emotional experience not usually encountered in everyday life. Flow experiences allow for an open expression of shared, collective emotionality: an outpouring of joy or sadness, and a strengthening of a common social identity. Hooligans, like other fans, seek 'peak' or 'flow' experiences through their involvement in football; unlike other fans, however, they reject the *vicarious* role of a football supporter in favour of a more active and rewarding role as a direct *participant* in spectator confrontations. Kerr (1994) argues, in a similar fashion, that hooliganism, like other sorts of *affective* crimes (eg joy riding), reflects the search for high levels of emotional arousal through risk-taking against a general background of long periods of boredom. Although most hooligan activities occur within a collective frame which limits the dangers involved (memories here of Peter Marsh *et al*), some fans can become 'addicted' to hooliganism, which leads them into ever more violent activities in order to achieve the kind of arousal they increasingly seek. These are the so-called 'superhooligans'.

Discussion

- 4.11** What of these various approaches to explaining the motivation of hooligans? Well, it should certainly be clear that risk and excitement are central to the hooligan phenomenon. But, despite the critique of their work, British sociologists do *not* ignore the excitement and enjoyment generated by football disorder as a motivating force for being involved. Indeed, the Dunning *et al* (1988) account has this as a very central element of their analysis. Another sociologist, Paul Willis, also talks about the 'buzz', the *frisson*, involved in fight situations and the attractiveness to young working class men of 'risk' contexts in which "anything might happen" (Willis, 1990, p102). But, importantly, these assertions are *sociologically* grounded. What seems to be missing, from the non-sociologists' accounts is, arguably, any real sense of why some young men, rather than others, might find this sort of activity attractive and rewarding (*Can anyone get involved?*). Nor is it clear why, *at particular times* and in particular *kinds* of societies or in particular *places*, hooliganism of this kind should become so attractive. (Why should England in the 1980s, for example, seem to lead the hooligan field so clearly?). This is obviously a strength, especially, of Taylor's approach which tries to contextualise, using history and social issues, recent trends. Anthony King (1995) has also recently argued for looking, from a sociological perspective, at the *inter-group dynamics* of particular incidents as well as at the structural underpinnings of hooliganism. In short, theoretically at least, these non-

sociological explanations do seem very *abstract* in their approach; they hardly seem grounded or properly theorised at all.

- 4.12 Finally, a key element in almost all *sociological* approaches to hooliganism is their concern with the *social* construction of *gender* identities over time. The feminists are surely right about their point about the making of gender identity. There is a recognition here that, crucially, it is largely young *men* who are involved in hooliganism and that the construction of satisfying masculine identities is likely to be, to some extent at least, *class, spatially and culturally specific*. To put it crudely, 'be a man' or to act in a 'manly' way in, say, an affluent suburb in a country with political, cultural and *gender* relations like those in, say, Norway today, is likely to mean something quite different than it does in a particular housing estate in England or in the *banlieues* of Paris. In some non-sociological accounts, in short, it seems as if 'masculinity' is a given: something common to all cultures, unchanging, and something *not* subject to local and national interpretations and negotiations. In fact, of course, the social reproduction of gender relations and masculinities is *always* located in particular spaces or places. Some of these latter accounts find it barely important to mention at all that it is, mainly, young *men* in particular societies who are involved in hooliganism!

5. DOES DRINK HAVE A PART TO PLAY?

- 5.1 In societies like ours, a capacity for heavy drinking is generally recognised to be part of what 'being manly' is about. Males of all social classes are often encouraged, for example, to celebrate special occasions with their male friends by drinking to excess. Football trips abroad, in particular, seem regularly to involve male fans drinking heavily together in situations where drink, often of an unfamiliar kind, is cheap and easily available. On occasions like this, situations can 'get out of hand' because Englishmen placed in an unfamiliar, and perhaps threatening, culture have had too much to drink. Also, many hooligan offences these days are related to the use of alcohol. In 2000/2001, for example, 928 or 27% of all arrests at League football in England & Wales were for drink-related offences. Figure 5 carries information on arrests and offences for all matches in 2000/2001 including internationals and cup matches. It shows the wide range of offences for which arrests are made at football.

Figure 5: Arrests and charges 2000/2001 (all matches, including international)

Drink related offences	1186
Disorderly behaviour	655
Threatening behaviour	420
Affray	165
Violent disorder	85
Assault	137
Throwing missiles	107
Breach of the peace	351
Running on the pitch	292
Racial/indecent chanting	82
Drugs offences	111
Possession of weapon	30
Criminal damage	91
Other	450

Source: NCIS

5.2 It does not follow, however, that drink 'causes' hooliganism in any simple sense. After all, many people seem to drink to excess at rugby union matches, but hooliganism at such affairs is relatively restricted and is often of a different kind from that which occurs more regularly at football. Similarly, hooligans sometimes make a point of staying sober in order better to plot their campaigns. Furthermore, many Danish, Scottish and Irish football supporters get very drunk at matches, yet the supporters of these nations are now among the least violent of all major football followings. Ultra fans in Italy hardly drink at all but can be **very** violent. In short, the links between heavy drinking and violence seem to be both culturally and situationally specific and at least some of those young men regularly involved in hooliganism seem to be aggressive in certain circumstances with or without drink. In Japan and South Korea for World Cup 2002, one major fear is that the authorities might over-react to northern European football fans, who might engage in rowdy, but non-hooligan, behaviour in a way which clashes strongly with expectations about behaviour in public spaces in those societies.

6. ARE 'POLITICAL' GROUPS INVOLVED?

6.1 It is rather odd that explanations about hooliganism seem to veer widely from accounts of how 'wild' and 'random' it is, to those which talk about political conspiracies and the formal organisation of hooligan assaults. The extent to which hooliganism is formally organised has almost certainly been exaggerated. Certainly the literature of far-right political groups has sometimes been distributed at football matches (and elsewhere) and young white people are encouraged to hold racist views by some of these organisations. The success of these groups at football has, however, been very patchy, and there is no real evidence that such organisations are actively and effectively orchestrating hooliganism in this country. However, the English national side does seem to have been something of a focus for the expression of racist sentiments among some young fans, especially in the 1980s.

6.2 Worrying, too, is the belief which seems to operate among such groups that at particular moments, young football fans provide promising material for recruitment, as is the routine racism of a sizeable minority of football supporters. (See, Williams, 1992) In some cities, e.g. Newcastle and Leeds, anti-racist campaigns have been successfully launched at football by clubs, the Local Authorities and Trades Union organisations. A new national campaign aimed at 'Kicking Racism Out of Football' has gained widespread prominence and is supported by the Commission For Racial Equality, the FA Premier League, the Football League, the Football Trust and the PFA. Moreover, most people involved in the game - supporters, players administrators and the police - agree that overt and violent forms of racism, and 'organised' racist activity have *declined* at football in England over the last few years; but few people would argue that the problem of routine or 'banal' racism has disappeared from the sport either in the crowd or in the game itself.

6.3 In 2000 the Football League national fan survey suggested that around three out of ten of all fans had heard racist comments aimed at players in the 1999/2000 season. 7% had witnessed racism towards other fans. The figures are broadly similar for the FA Premier League. In 2001, only 4% of all FA Premier League fans surveyed thought racism was *getting worse* at football matches at that level. However, in the middle of 2001 apparently racially motivated organised groups of fans and others were involved in serious disturbances in an area of Oldham before the Oldham Athletic v Stoke City match. This incident seemed to trigger a series of disturbances later in northern cities as local ethnic

minority communities responded to the provocation offered by supporters of racist organisations. In 2002 it is also worth pointing out that racism in other sports – in rugby league and rugby union for example – was also a focus for national concern.

7. WHY IS HOOLIGANISM LINKED TO FOOTBALL?

- 7.1 In many ways, football is seen as an appropriate venue for these sorts of aggressive rivalries, partly because of the working class roots and traditions of the game but also because of the culturally prescribed 'territorial' and masculine values which are intrinsic to it. In England a football match is a kind of symbolic struggle between the representatives of predominantly working class male communities. Terrace fights go beyond this symbolic representation to a 'real' struggle between young men who have strong masculine attachments to their own areas, teams and friends, and a considerable emotional investment in performing in a 'manly' way when confrontations occur.
- 7.2 Often, the most celebrated football players for fans of this kind are those who have their **own** reputations for 'hardness' and aggression on the field. A top English player was fined £20,000 by the FA a few years ago for his role in the production of a video about the game's 'hard men'. However, over the longer period, violence on the field is almost certainly decreasing, though more subtle forms of cheating ('diving'; deceiving the referee; pretending to be injured, etc) may be on the increase in the modern period (See, Murphy *et al*, 1990, Ch. 5).
- 7.3 Incidents of violence, or poor refereeing on the field, can **trigger** hooligan disturbances but, once again, it is difficult to argue that such incidents are a deep **cause** of hooliganism. After all, some hooligan incidents occur hours before a match has even kicked off! Also, there are many more violent sports than football which have **not** had the same problems of hooliganism. Finally, the culture of the playing side of the game in England is certainly beginning to change following the arrival of so many foreign stars in the Premier League. Some of the brute force of the English game is, arguably, giving way to more deep thinking about the game and to more skilful and strategic play. Perhaps the heroes of the 1990s will be the McManamans, Juninhos and Zolas?
- 7.4 Unfortunately, some players and officials within the game hardly seem to help this situation with their 'revelations' in newspapers about dressing-room 'punch ups', their boasts about being 'hard men' and their preparations for a 'battle' against a rival team's 'hit man'. Recently, though he was severely provoked and perhaps racially abused, one famous player, Eric Cantona, even jumped into the crowd to attack a fan during a match. The Professional Footballers Association is concerned about the problem of player behaviour and press revelations and urges players not to damage the game's image in this way. It seems that tabloid newspapers are as interested in these sides of the game as they are in what happens on the pitch.

8 IS THERE HOOLIGANISM AT OTHER SPORTS?

- 8.1 Yes there is. It probably lacks some of the organisational aspects of hooliganism at football, but hooliganism at sports like boxing, rugby league and cricket provoke periodic panics about the behaviour of spectators. Recently, too, there have been fears expressed about standards of behaviour at major horse-race meetings, and disturbances involving

spectators at bike-race meetings are also reported but they seldom seem to get the sort of newspaper coverage which hooliganism **at football** seem to attract. Nor are these problems as institutionalised and routinised as they seem to be at football.

- 8.2 It is important to point out, too, however that disorderly behaviour and hostility towards foreigners is not just found among football fans or among 'working class' people; far from it. Problems caused by travelling rugby union clubs, for example, are fairly commonplace. Also an article in the **Daily Telegraph** (23.1.93) described the English people on the Oxbridge Ski tour at a resort in France, as a mob of "ignorant, arrogant middle class jobs", who abused foreigners and soiled their bedrooms and chalets.

9. WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA?

- 9.1 It is certainly true that newspapers generally report on football using the sort of language which seems to derive more from the world of war than it does from sport (Hall, 1978). This probably helps to heighten rivalries between opposing fan groups, as do the 'predictions' newspapers sometimes used to make that 'trouble' is likely to occur between rival fans or that the police and local residents are preparing for an 'invasion' of visiting fans or are being placed on 'red alert'. Media coverage of hooligan activities also worked at 'promoting' - though not 'causing' - this style of support around the national football team especially, probably in three ways:
- 9.2 **Firstly**, as part of the circulation wars of the 1980s, English tabloid newspapers themselves became increasingly xenophobic in their coverage of foreign cultures. In the football arena, for example, tabloid newspeak for the Germans (Krauts), French (Frogs), Spaniards (Dagos) drew from, and reflected back to, the language and the values of the terraces. There were examples of just this sort of reporting in English newspapers during Euro '96, especially aimed at the Germans. Such descriptions and sentiments also seem to reverberate in wider public discourses in Britain about 'Johnny Foreigner', especially, for example, in recent political speeches by anti-European Union MPs and in public debates about the European attitude to the British beef crisis.
- 9.3 **Secondly**, the intense interest in hooliganism shown by the mass media may well have *amplified* its occurrence and its significance. Before major tournaments – as is happening now before the World Cup finals in 2002 in Japan and South Korea – newspapers in England are usually running scare stories about hooligan fears in the host countries and the likely reaction of the local police to misbehaviour. Television film crews and tabloid newspaper reporters and photographers from all over the world in fact, tracked English football fans around European locations in the 1980s and 1990s and in Holland and Belgium in 2000. Pictures of really quite minor disturbances abroad began to make international front page news and added to the notoriety and even the celebrity of particular fans. (Many top hooligans, in fact, seem to like to collect scrap books or cuttings of their media appearances). TV camera crew lights on dark streets and in gloomy bars abroad also have the hypnotic effect of starting or escalating incidents, and there are even stories of journalists buying drink for fans or encouraging disorder with cash inducements or by circulating false rumours about local hooligan activities. British news journalists, sent abroad explicitly to tournaments to cover hooliganism, are sometimes just a little too determined to 'find' some action, at almost any price.

9.4 **Thirdly**, the moralising and personalised style of media reporting, especially in the British tabloid newspapers, tended to create near-mythical hooligan figures in England who, initially at least, gained very high status in some hooligan and popular circles. Eventually, however, especially as CCTV surveillance and police intelligence became more and more important in helping to gain convictions against hooligans in the late 1980s, this sort of reporting was identified by fans themselves as being dangerous, both in terms of its *identification* of miscreants and also in its alleged distortions and prejudices. Film crews, TV reporters and photographers are now routinely threatened and even attacked by English fans at or near the site of hooligan incidents abroad.

10. HOW DO THE POLICE COPE?

10.1 Most Premier League matches these days require between 25-100 police officers to control crowds and limit hooligan outbreaks, but 'high risk' matches demand more. But this figure is down almost three-fold down on the average numbers used in the 1980s as stewards and private security firms are taking on more and more responsibility for dealing with the management of crowds at football and as trouble inside and around grounds seems to be on the decline. However, in 2002 hooligan outbreaks inside stadia, once again put the authorities on the alert. Many smaller Football League clubs and increasing numbers of FA Premier League clubs now stage 'police-free' matches. This really means that police are not required to show a presence *inside* the stadium

10.2 Most police forces grade matches in terms of the likelihood of trouble occurring and decide their manning levels accordingly. In doing so, they take into account: numbers and reputation of travelling supporters; past meetings between the clubs; the importance of the match; and intelligence from other police forces about the visitors. The police have now established a complex intelligence network for exchanging information about 'troublesome' fans, under the auspices of the National Criminal Intelligence Services (NCIS) Football Intelligence Unit. The Football Unit was established in 1989 as a centre for the collation of evidence and intelligence on 'serious and persistent hooligans'. The use of Football Trust-funded closed circuit TV equipment (CCTV) by the police in and around grounds has also contributed to limiting problems in these areas and to the successful prosecution of offenders. In fact, it is now an offence to trespass onto the pitch or its surrounds, following the Football Offences Act of 1991, and anyone who does so is likely to be traced from CCTV coverage of their activities.

Legislation

10.3 Recent legislation has helped the police deal with hooliganism, though some of it is also controversial. The **Public Disorder Act of 1986** allowed courts to make exclusion orders banning fans from grounds. The **Football Spectators Act of 1989** allowed courts to impose 'restriction orders' on convicted fans to prevent them attending matches abroad involving England or Wales. The **Football Offences Act 1991** created three new offences of disorderly behaviour:

- Throwing missiles towards the pitch or spectators
- Taking part in indecent or racist chanting
- Going on the pitch or its surrounds without lawful authority

- 10.4** Under the **Football (Disorder) Act of 1999** courts were for the first time *required*, not merely allowed, to make a banning order if the criteria were met – and to explain in open court why no banning order was applied. Fans who were banned were also required to hand over their passports at a police station and report there at a specific time and date. The **Football Disorder Act 2000** abolishes the distinction between domestic and international banning orders. The court is now required to ensure that an offender’s passport is surrendered for international fixtures. More importantly, a banning order might now be secured by the police on their complaint to the court that the fan concerned has been involved in violence in the UK or elsewhere and that there are ‘reasonable’ grounds to believe that a banning order would help prevent hooliganism. Fan groups and Liberty have complained that these changes offer police too much power in limiting the activities of supporters – especially in relation to foreign travel.
- 10.5** The **costs** of policing and stewarding are a constant problem to clubs and to the local police authority. Clubs usually pay the full cost only for those officers **inside** grounds (usually up to one-third of all officers). Other costs are agreed locally with contributions from the club and the local police budget.

	Total number of officers deployed	Total attendance	Ratio
1985 total	4,457	329,000	1:74
1993 total	3,780	500,248	1:132
Season 1993/94			
Premier League	1,574	253,034	1:161
Division 1	1,177	127,743	1:109
Division 2	593	76,473	1:129
Division 3	436	42,998	1:99

Source: Middleton & Williams (1993)

In 1996/97 costs to Premier League clubs of *policing* football matches totalled £2.9 million. Stewarding costs were £4.1 million. Average costs of policing per match at the top level were at a peak in 1992/93 when they reached £9,300 per match. By 1996/97 these costs had fallen to £7,727 per match, on average.

- 10.6** *Critics* of football policing tend to focus on their use of CCTV and ‘intelligence’ led initiatives to deal with hooliganism (Armstrong, 1998). They tend to argue that the police ‘hype’ up hooliganism and that they use football as an opportunity to test out measures which might be useful to deal with other aspects of public order. It is certainly true that football hooligans have become the modern ‘folk devils’ and that the courts have been encouraged by successive administrations to ‘get tough’ with hooligans.

11. WHAT HAVE THE CLUBS AND FOOTBALL AUTHORITIES DONE?

- 11.1** Over the past 20 years or so, clubs have been forced by circumstances, by legislation, or both, to spend a considerable amount of money on trying to make their grounds more ‘hooligan proof’, or, more recently, less embattled and rather more civilised. At top clubs,

largely gone now are primitive toilet areas and poor refreshments. Instead, there are new stands, no fences and a more 'stable' feel to the atmosphere of football grounds.

- 11.2** Linked with these anti-hooligan and 'modernising' measures is the issue of spectator **safety**. The post-war years have seen a number of spectator disasters at British football grounds which have led to a great loss of life. The most recent disaster occurred during an F.A. Cup semi-final at Hillsborough in Sheffield, where 96 Liverpool supporters were crushed to death in a section of terracing surrounded by high perimeter fencing. Many supporters believe football clubs and the police have focused so much on the prevention of hooliganism that they have underplayed the safety of the ordinary supporter.
- 11.3** In 1989, just after the stadium disaster at Hillsborough, another group of English psychologists (Canter et al, 1989) argued that general improvements to *football stadia* and to the way fans were treated at football in England would help to reduce hooliganism. This kind of *environmental determinism*, which reads off human behaviour from the condition of the immediate physical environment, is much too simplistic to account for recent changes in the game and its audience. However, since major football grounds in Britain became modernised, unfenced, and all-seated in the early 1990s following Hillsborough, they *do* seem to have become safer and less violent venues than those even five years ago. Indeed, as football crowds have continued to rise in England, and as perimeter fences have given way to surveillance cameras and new catch-all offences for hooliganism, match arrests, and the size of police commitments at English football, have steadily *declined*. It is in this 'new era' for the game in England, that Euro '96 itself was hosted largely as an almost trouble-free football carnival. However, incidents early in 2002 seemed to re-start the debate about fence-free stadia after a spate of missile throwing incidents, and fan intrusions.
- 11.4** In addition to these changes, many clubs have also introduced family enclosures as a means of encouraging parents to attend matches with their children in safety. Clubs have traditionally provided rather poor facilities for female fans and for youngsters, but no longer. A national **Community Programme in Professional Football** run jointly by the PFA, the FA, the Premier League and the Football League is now in operation at almost all of the 92 professional clubs. This scheme aims to increase local community involvement in clubs and promote better behaviour among young spectators. More generally, the F.A. has recently introduced a new coaching initiative for youngsters which involves advice on behaviour for both spectators and players. On the whole, however, the football hierarchies have tended to regard hooliganism as a public order problem about which they can do relatively little.

12. AND THE GOVERNMENT?

- 12.1** The British Government has taken a much higher profile in the hooligan debate since the mid-1980s (Williams, 1985). It has prompted the police 'infiltration' of hooligan gangs on the one hand, but also it has helped to provide funds for the training needs of the unemployed people who are used as coaches in the National Community Programme. The Sports Council has also been involved in such initiatives (Ingham, 1979). The Government has also reduced taxes on the football pools in order to redirect finance into the game for stadium improvements.

- 12.2** As we have seen, recent Government legislation also provides for restrictions on the carriage and consumption of alcohol at football; for the banning from matches of previous football offenders; for offences against racist abuse and missile throwing; and for the making of trespass onto the playing area illegal. Central Government also legislated in 1989 for a national identity card scheme for professional football clubs. However, the ID card proposals were strongly criticised in the report on the Hillsborough disaster (chaired by Lord Chief Justice Taylor) and the scheme was abandoned. Part Two of the Football Spectators Act (1989) was designed to be used, however, to prevent hooligan offenders from travelling abroad to watch international matches. Offenders were made to report to special locations in England when matches are being played abroad, though the general view is that such provisions are considerably underused
- 12.3** Since the Labour Party came to power in 1997 football has had a rather high 'political' profile with the Government setting up a **Task Force** to examine some of the sport's ills, including racism. However, it was not charged with investigating hooliganism. Instead, a consultation document issued by the Home Office in 1998 proposed a series of measures designed to limit or prevent the sorts of problems exposed during the World Cup Finals in France in 1998 when English fans were involved in serious disturbances in Marseilles.

Home Office Proposals, 1998

- Banning known troublemakers, as well as convicted offenders, from travelling to watch England matches abroad
- Selective bans on the sale of alcohol in and around stadia for 'high risk' matches
- Confiscation of passports from 'known' football hooligans
- New legislation to outlaw racist comments by individuals at football
- New laws against ticket touting for matches abroad

- 12.4** More recently responses to the hooliganism problem also came into sharper 'political' focus because of the (unsuccessful) English ambitions to host the World Cup Finals of 2006. This 1998 Home Office document listed 29 measures to try to combat hooliganism. Some of the key ones we have put it in a box above and which were later supported by new legislation. A new Home Office Committee on hooliganism involving academics, fans and football officials and civil servants produced a new report in 2001 – but much of this seem to be covering old ground. It was also unclear how the real *roots* of the problem might be addressed here. It seems clear, however, that arguing that the hooliganism problem is confined to a handful of known 'organisers' or 'troublemakers' is likely to understate the scope and seriousness of the problem of fighting and disorder among young men in England.

13. WHAT IS THE SITUATION NOW?

- 13.1** Today, football in England is massively popular and hooliganism, perhaps wrongly, is widely perceived to be 'yesterday's problem'. Despite occasional very serious incidents – at a Stoke City v Cardiff city match in April 2000, for example, large scale disorder was reported by NCIS to have gone on 'throughout the day' - , the general view, among supporters, club officials, and among policemen involved in policing football seems to be

that since 1989 the problem of hooliganism has, until recently, been reducing, certainly in and around football grounds. More recently police concern about hooliganism has increased once more. The **National Criminal Intelligence Service (NCIS)** welcomed the new football legislation, including the new Football (Disorder) Act 2000 as a powerful weapon in the continuing fight against football hooliganism. Arrests for football related offences for domestic league matches in England and Wales increased by 8% in 2000/2001

13.2 Commenting on the 2000/2001 figures, **Bryan Drew**, Head of Strategic and Specialist Intelligence at **NCIS** said:

“There’s a nasty, ugly and anti-social element in society that clings to football that just won’t give up. What became the ‘English disease’ is no longer characterised by the mass terrace affrays and running street battles of the 1970s and 1980s. But, like other infections, new strains of football hooliganism are developing that are clever, resilient and increasingly threatening.”

Drew went on to argue that banning orders had had an impact on problems at home and abroad, and welcomed the news that the FA was planning to revamp its own Football Members Club to try to deal with hooligans. 500 banning orders were in force in 2001. Drew also called for more use of the money generated by the game for policing *outside* football grounds – where hooligan incidents were increasingly occurring.

13.3 It is clear then that not all young Englishmen have been drained of the urge to fight at football and elsewhere. Some serious hooligan incidents have been displaced *away* from stadia, and away from the video cameras. Hooliganism is also a more difficult problem these days at some smaller clubs which have been less affected by the commercial and social transformations which have occurred elsewhere. This ‘semi-detached’ form of hooligan activity may not affect other fans so badly, but it still damages the sport in Britain and points to the entrenched nature of hooliganism here. *England* matches abroad, which draw in both small town hooligans and metropolitan ‘hard’ men, are still likely to pose problems for some time, as they did in France’98 and in Belgium in 2000. But wider changes in the game do suggest that issues of context, access and definition - the media *did* lose interest in reporting hooliganism in the 1990s - are important at least in *prescribing* the settings for public violence by young men. It suggests, for example, that opening up previously quite ‘closed’ venues to more women, children and ‘families’ might have the effect of helping to reshape behavioural *male* norms in collective situations.

13.4 The game in England has changed in other important ways, too. It is currently undergoing a boom in attendances, in its finances (at least at the top), in its ability to attract major foreign players, and in its image as a fashionable and pacified sport offering enormous social cache for those who profess their support. These days British politicians and pop stars fawn over football and bathe in its reflected glory. Its new *commercialised* and highly *marketised* format may be leaving behind sections of the game's 'traditional' audience, including, perhaps, some hooligan fans. High ticket prices (£25 for a seat is not unusual these days at the top grounds - more in London); the loss of the 'physical' attractions of terracing; the sometimes oppressive management and stewarding of the football audience; the extensive merchandising of top English clubs; the changing (more 'feminised') atmosphere at football in England; and the increasing number of season ticket holders at English clubs, are all acting in ways better to regulate and control attendance. 'Traditional' young male fans - 'lads' - may well be bored by, or excluded

from, the 'new' football in England; one view is that some of them are now rather more interested in new dance/drugs cultures than in the 'passionless' and more 'middle class' sport the English game is allegedly becoming (Gilman, 1994). This is an exaggeration. Football still attracts large numbers of 'working' people and the culture of football stadiums can still be harsh and unruly. But certainly, the talk at English football, post-Hillsborough, is mainly about promoting 'safety' cultures rather than 'risk' or 'excitement' cultures inside stadia. There are complaints, too, even from new fans, that some English stadia these days are simply *too* ordered.

- 13.5** If this is true, then top football in England may begin to look more and more like the *American* sporting experience. Already marketing men at English football clubs have 'imported' intrusive ideas about promoting the sport - blaring music, cheerleaders, animal mascots, licensed products from key rings to children's clothes - from the USA. What else might we yet see? When the NBA's Chicago Bulls basketball team, for example, wins a major championship the celebratory riots which invariably follow usually occur, not at the game where tickets are at a premium, but in poorer neighbourhoods elsewhere in the city among the ticketless. The popular hit song in England during the 1996 Finals spoke of 'Football Coming Home'. Given the current trajectory of the top levels of the sport here, football seems less to be 'coming home', than it is, in the words of the US soul singer, Curtis Mayfield, to be 'Moving On Up'. The wider *social* consequences of such a shift remain to be determined.

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Last updated January 2001

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