
HIM 1990-2015

2012

Examining crowd violence connected to sport applying the hooligan template

Kelly Worthen
University of Central Florida



Part of the [Sociology Commons](#)

Find similar works at: <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/honorstheses1990-2015>

University of Central Florida Libraries <http://library.ucf.edu>

This Open Access is brought to you for free and open access by STARS. It has been accepted for inclusion in HIM 1990-2015 by an authorized administrator of STARS. For more information, please contact STARS@ucf.edu.

Recommended Citation

Worthen, Kelly, "Examining crowd violence connected to sport applying the hooligan template" (2012). *HIM 1990-2015*. 1318.

<https://stars.library.ucf.edu/honorstheses1990-2015/1318>



EXAMINING CROWD VIOLENCE CONNECTED TO SPORT APPLYING
THE HOOLIGAN TEMPLATE

by

KELLY WORTHEN

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Honors in the Major Program in Sociology
in the College of Sciences
and in The Burnett Honors College
at the University of Central Florida
Orlando, Florida

Spring Term 2012

Thesis Chair: Dr. Amy Donley

ABSTRACT

The aim of the research is to evaluate crowd violence as it pertains to sports and its spectators. In particular, the research examines sports riots. “A sports riot is defined as violence-vandalism, throwing/shooting missiles, rushing the field or court, committing arson, and/or fighting-committed by five or more individuals in a crowd of one hundred people associated with a formally organized sporting event” (Lewis, 2007). On a micro level, the most prevalent form of spectator violence is the act of Hooliganism in relation to football (soccer).

The research on this aggression has been primarily inherent in Europe and South and Central America in concert with soccer matches. One of the goals of the research is to see if this unique type violence has the potential to occur in North America when comparing it to Europe and more specifically the United Kingdom. Currently, the average Major League Soccer (MLS) teams are capturing slightly higher attendance numbers than the NBA and the NHL. In the 2010-11 season, the average MLS attendance was 17,869, compared to 17,319 and 17,126 respectively (ESPN.com, 2011). With the expansion and globalization of the sport when traveling groups from Europe and South/Central America play United States teams (municipalities or the National team) in a “friendly” (exhibition match) or a World Cup qualifiers stateside, it is understood that supporter firms (hooligan gangs) will travel to support their team.

Are hooligans simply looking for a violent result under the guise of being football supporters? “It’s a lot more widespread than the general public realize. They might hear of one or two big incidences a year. But this thing happens week in week out at different grounds around England” (Hooligans: No one likes us, 2002). Collective behavior is the most apparent theoretic way to view these outbursts. This research however will examine this social phenomenon through symbolic interaction perspective as well. The hooligan culture is embedded with symbols of social disorder and rebellion. Racism, xenophobia homophobia and even patriotism are the tent poles of this social phenomenon. Additionally, from firm (gang) to firm (gang), socially constructed deviance such as rival history, improper police conduct, the media and alcohol are overarching factors.

The final facet of the research examines how to curb the violence. Since Hooliganism is surprisingly tactical in and of itself, how authorities can potentially identify trouble makers and anticipate violence will be assessed. Since the English have customarily been deemed by the international community as some of the worst cohort participants, the tactics that authorities abroad have utilized (successful and otherwise) will be evaluated. Recommendations to prevent and combat this problem will be made in the hopes that a proactive approach can be developed domestically.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project was made possible through the coordinated effort of multiple University of Central Florida entities. First and foremost, the Burnett Honors College should be credited for providing Undergraduates the opportunity to pursue thesis projects. Denise Crisafi and Kelly Astro are incredibly supportive and provide the tools and resources to ensure success. Another acknowledgement that is due goes to the Devos School of Business Management and more specifically Scott Bukstein, Esq. His energy level is infectious. When I thought I was stumbling, he told me to keep going and to stay true to my passion. The Sociology department has also been incredibly supportive in their own right. Their willingness to allow students the ability to pursue their own interests beyond general course work has been greatly appreciated. Within the Sociology department there is no more well rounded individual than Dr. Harold Corzine. The respect I have for his career has gone somewhat unsaid but I am in awe when it comes to his level of knowledge on a variety of subjects particularly his insight into sports. Lastly, there is my mentor – Dr. Amy Donley. From the onset she has been my inspiration and one of the reasons I came to love the discipline of Sociology. Her trust in my unconventional methods and stretching of deadlines is greatly appreciated. She displayed ultimate trust and faith in my process. This is the second project of mine that she has overseen and she has not once questioned my intent or

purpose. She has always been immediately available to provide direction, encouragement and technical savvy. I am indebted to her and would not have pursued this project had she not been involved.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TERMINOLOGY	1
METHOD	2
“WHO ARE YA!?!”	3
FROM THE STREETS TO THE STADIUM TO THE STREETS	6
SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE	10
THE MEDIA.....	11
AUTHORITY FIGURES.....	12
Sports Club Owners	12
Referees.....	13
The Police	14
ALCOHOL	16
THEORETICAL SYNTHESIS: A BLEND OF SYMBOLIC INTERACTION AND COLLECTIVE BEHAVIOR	18
What’s in a name?.....	20
Collective behavior	23
WILL IT HAPPEN HERE?	26
An Ethnographic Perspective.....	28
SOLUTIONS OLD AND NEW	33

REFERENCES 37

LIST OF TABLES

Riots connected to North American sporting events: Select Cases: 1990-2011.....	9
---	---

TERMINOLOGY

For the purposes of this research, some terms may be used that are unique or foreign to those that do not follow the game of soccer. In this research the use of the word “football” will typically have the attachment of English or European to it so that is not confused with American football. The term soccer may be used in its place. The term supporter group or firm will be used to identify fans of varying scales of enthusiasm, most specifically the perpetrators of violence. When referring to a game the term match may be used as a substitute. Club will be used in one of two ways, either to refer to a sports team or a supporter group, with the context being clarified when it is being used. The term Hooligan will be clearly defined but is understood to be a North American substitute for the term fanatic.

METHOD

Lewis (2007) states, “There are five data sources of data that can be used to investigate sports riots. These include site visits, personal interviews, newspaper accounts, photographs and police documents.” Although this is a practical approach, similar but variant methods are being employed for this research. While the review of multimedia sources is the understood foundation for any research, studying this particular social issue provides the opportunity to view incidences of violence over several decades and countries via archival footage. Having a local team and working from within has allowed me to conducting site visits and view crowd behavior within the sporting context. This access has provided a more well-rounded perspective. Moreover, having access to the geography as well as being able to observe the tactics employed during outbursts will provide invaluable insight. Utilizing a triangulation method, Lewis suggests, is the only way to understand crowd violence. First, he emphasizes that the method should be theoretically sound. Second, he believes that the “between method” is a more user friendly approach that can be developed by academics and laymen alike to analyze crowd violence in a systemic manner. (Lewis, 2007) This analysis purports to operate in that vein. This research will examine media and multimedia sources, provide theoretical support and establish ethnographic evidence that hopes to provide a rich perspective while emulating the suggested triangulation method.

“WHO ARE YA!?!”

“The term ‘hooligan’ apparently entered the English lexicon in the late nineteenth century as a term for describing “gangs of rowdy youths”. It is possibly a corruption of ‘Houlihan’, the name of an Irish family who lived in London at the time and who were renowned for their love of fighting (Pearson, 1983). Hooligans, more often than not, are highly organized groups of cohorts that take their sports fanaticism and allegiance to their club to new heights through the act of attacking each other (and innocents) in conjunction with local and international soccer matches. “Who are ya?!?” is one of their most recognizable war cries but is just one illustration of several that reflect the same taunting behavior. These chants are meant to taunt an illicit a response from what is considered to be opposition. Soccer hooligans are almost exclusively white males from working class backgrounds and upbringing (Dunning, 2000). Although hooligans are conspicuously territorial and are fiercely loyal to the club (their team) that they purport to represent, their violence has a decidedly nomadic quality as well. Hooligan gangs fight for the pride of their town and country, but their primary allegiance to themselves and their firm reputation is of utmost importance. Ironically, their team gaining a winning result on the pitch (field) at times becomes an almost incidental backdrop to the bragging rights that the match day clashes supply off the pitch.

As the game has become more globalized and corporatized, hooligan firms (Brimson, 2000) have become more highly organized and can even have an infrastructure that resembles a militaristic design. Although the hooligan conflicts themselves can become somewhat chaotic, a hooligan

clash is loosely structured both in how participants are involved and where the clashes happen. A hierarchy exists within the group itself, again with militaristic undertones. First, there are the leaders or 'Top Boys.' "He will be the one who is the most mouthy, the best fighter or even the one who remains calm in any given situation. Alongside the 'Top Boys' will be the lads who will always stand and fight or who will initiate or plan trouble. Think of them as the sergeants. Next in the order come the majority of the rest who will get involved if conditions are in their favor. Finally, there are the 'hangers-on.' Their primary role is that of instigator. The size and status of each and every firm is wholly dependent on the respective size of each of these elements" (Brimson, 2000).

For the participants, rising through the ranks of a firm on match day provides an opportunity for promotion within this subculture that may not be attainable in the society at large. These cohorts may not necessarily possess the skills to rise to the elite (or even middle) ranks within the society at large. Match day provides the opportunity to be promoted through the ranks in short order particularly when conflicts are won or when personal victories are achieved. One does not need to need to have an impeccable work ethic or an upper level education to be acknowledged within hooligan society. Rather, being the toughest, most outspoken or charismatic are acknowledged as the primary prerequisites for leadership.

Although there is an organized substructure, these groups can also be volatile and unpredictable with little hesitation or deference toward other opposing participants or innocents. This

fundamental behavior is reflective in a widely used soccer term “aggro”. Simply defined aggro is deliberately aggressive, provoking, or violent behavior. (Merriam-Webster)

FROM THE STREETS TO THE STADIUM TO THE STREETS

It's ironic that hooliganism very much resembles how the game of soccer itself was originally played. Violence involving players was the precursor to spectator violence at soccer games. "The mediaeval version of football, where participants tried to move a leather-bound bladder between defended areas, was so violent that in 1365 Edward III actually banned it because he feared that the rivalries being stirred up would lead to civil unrest. Additionally, almost 300 hundred years later the games was banned for similar reasons in the Midlands" (Brimson, 2002). Weapons were used at times and matches were very loosely regulated (if at all). From most researched accounts, contests were the equivalent of battles in open areas rather than civilized games in stadiums.

Dunning, Murphy & Williams concur and go on to explain, "A predecessor of football can be traced back to the fourteenth century. Soccer as a form of European football dates to 1863. That was the year when the English Football Association, the first national football ruling body in the world and the progenitor of the modern game was founded. However, in the Middle Ages, football (soccer) was just one of the variety of names applied in Britain to folk games or games of the common people. The 'civilizing' development involved the increasing abandonment of mass games played by unrestricted numbers of people according to local customary rules and their increasing replacement by games characterized by a limited numbers that were equalized between the opposing sides and which involved written rules that demanded that the players exercise strict self-control over physical contact and the use of physical force" (1990).

With the modern game now being played in stadiums worldwide, violence has been contained (but not eliminated) with a trial and error system particularly in the UK. Whether viewed in the stadium or by television on the streets outside, which is a common occurrence abroad, the violent undertones of the original game have perhaps been reflected in the decorum of today's fans. This problem however no longer materializes simply within the confines of soccer stadiums around the world. Rather, it occurs in the city streets within the municipalities that surround the stadiums and in different locales (pubs, railway/bus stations) which are sometimes far removed from the football stadium (Dunning, 2000). Taken even further, instances of premeditated violence have been taken to more isolated areas to avoid intervention (or in fact participation) from local authorities several miles from the stadium or in even secluded locations. The documentary, *The Real Football Factories*, portrayed one such instance in what is dubbed a "forest fight" (2006) with the goal being for the conflict to happen without fear of interruption.

In contrast riots in North America happen, more often than not, in the United States and are celebratory in nature (Lewis, 2007). Two compilations both from Lewis (2007) and Young (2002) were combined to create the table below. The highlighted incidences are anomalies in that the two occurrences in Vancouver were as a result of losses not wins and thus do not fall into the celebratory category. An anomaly in its own right, the Paterno riots were in the vain of protest as opposed to being attached to one specific sporting event. The pattern of this table and the other incidences that are not listed are overwhelmingly celebratory as Lewis and Young maintain. Another interesting common thread is that the riots themselves are almost exclusively connected to contact sports. Baseball has very little contact and seemingly has a fewer examples

of riots. When they did occur they happened in conjunction with teams winning either a highly contested series or winning after years of no championships to speak of.

Riots connected to North American sporting events: Select Cases: 1990-2011

Location/Date	Win/loss	Sport	Damage	Source
Detroit '90	win	Basketball	141 arrested, 8 killed	Calgary Herald, 1992
Dallas '93	win	Football	24 arrested, 14 injured, looting, \$150,000	Dallas Police
Montreal '93	win	Hockey	168 injured, 110 arrested, \$5 mil (Cdn.)	Macleans, 1993
Chicago '93	win	Basketball	682 arrested, 100 injured, 3 killed	NY Daily News
Vancouver '94	loss	Hockey	50 arrested 200 injured \$500,000 (Cdn.)	Macleans, 1994
Chicago '96	win	Basketball	656 arrested, 38 stores looted	NY Daily News
Denver '99	win	Football	Looting, arson	Calgary Herald, 1999
Los Angeles '00	win	Basketball	12 arrested, 12 injured, vandalism, arson	The Observer, 2000
Boston '04	win	Baseball	6 arrested, 6 injured, 1 killed	Boston Globe
Vancouver '11	loss	Hockey	100 arrested, 140 injured, arson	Toronto Sun
Paterno riots '11	n/a	Football	6-12 arrested, property damage	Fox News

Table is modeled from Young K. (2000), Sports and Violence, *Handbook of Sports Studies*, chap 25, 384 and Young, K. (2002), Standard Deviations: An Update on North American Sports Crowd Disorder. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 19, 237-275.

SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE

“Since the 1970s, the problem of football hooliganism has come to be widely considered in Europe, indeed the world at large, as solely or mainly an English ‘disease’. Up until the early 1980s, there was indeed, considerable justification for such a view”, (Dunning, Murphy & Williams, 1990). These three founders of the standards of the hooliganism are deeply rooted in the Leicester school which has produced rich hard data on this social construct. In their reports, Murphy, Dunning & Williams examine not only the violence from the English perspective but also from a widened world view. In the late 1970s and early 80s hooliganism gained notoriety and noticeably spread to the point of becoming a pan-European epidemic. In other countries like Germany, Holland and France a residual effect saw those countries fans modeling that mirrored the behavior of their hooligan neighbors in England. As a result, soccer hooliganism effectively became an ‘export’ much in the same way as the game itself had been (Dunning, Murphy and Williams, 1990). The significance of the research is to take a proactive yet reflective approach to organized violence connected to sports. Since North America is a noticeable anomaly when it pertains to this particular type of violence, being able to examine the challenges of containing this problem from the outside are valuable. This is significant as the MLS has become a more viable contender in a diverse, American sports landscape. Within the world of the hooligan and fanatic there are three outside overarching forces that shape the perception of sports related violence worldwide – the media, the authorities and alcohol consumption.

THE MEDIA

The media has been vital in the documentation of the folklore of the hooligan culture. They have been an active participant in the labeling and social construction of the firms. The reported exploits of these gangs certainly gave the hooligans firms levels of notoriety and infamy (whether intentional or not). Most experts agree the print and multimedia sources have become instrumental in the hype surrounding match day through creating the expectation of violence. Frosdick and March (2005) explain that reporting on football (soccer) matches has evolved over the last century. They explain that the reporting of hooliganism was done in a restrained fashion prior the WWI. As football progressed through World War II, crowds were said to have become more orderly. The roots of the coverage we see today started in the 1950's. While some papers still downplayed the conflicts, the groundwork of tabloid style reporting began to latch onto this particular social issue. By the 1970's, headlines like 'Smash these thugs' and 'Cage the animals', were read with a high degree of frequency by the average soccer fan. The hype all week long of an upcoming match coupled with the attached sensationalism of potential violence further influenced participants (regular supporters as well as hooligans) to have higher expectations of a winning result both on and off the pitch. The game itself became a mere backdrop focus to the violence connected to it. In North America, the media does not purport expectations of violence, rather they seem to be shock and awe when they occur.

In the technological age, social media has become a new space for rival firms to goad each other. As Rawlins (2009) has evaluated, blogs have become a new space for hooligans to occupy. The United States has experienced a similar problem a la cyber bullying in the last few years. The

power that anonymity provides can be vicious, especially when there is little fear of a physical attack online.

Technology has also become a tool that grants hooligans the ability to be more organized than ever before. The mobility of cell phones and the availability of WiFi allows rival firms to premeditate terms and locations with one another in order to plan and to minimize interference from “Old Bill” (the police). This ability to stay one step ahead of the police helps perpetuate the problem.

AUTHORITY FIGURES

Sports Club Owners

Sports club owners worldwide are generally perceived as out of touch with the average fan throughout the world. With extremely high ticket prices, uncapped player salaries and seats in tremendous demand, the common fan is virtually shut out from being able to participate in person on a regular basis. However, in other cases, club (league) teams are becoming submissive to the influence of their supporter firms. In Spain for example, hooligans are beginning to set a dangerous precedent. They are demanding tickets to support their clubs when they travel. The firms are blackmailing their own clubs with either the threat of violence or promises to contain that violence unless rewarded with tickets. There are clubs that have complied with these demands (Brimson, 2000). In other instances, the firms have had an impact on potential trades. These groups have prevented trades or demanded for them to happen citing racist and at times religious differences with individual players. These examples set dangerous precedent for

individual clubs and national teams alike. Examining this perspective further before it becomes a widespread trend will be helpful in establishing protocol or perhaps even legislation to prevent these types of bribery and extortion from happening at all.

Referees

Referees are charged with a great deal of responsibility (and blame) during any game. Any sports fan can identify with seeing their beloved team failing victim to a horrible or unfair call. Any observer in the stands that has witnessed this at a live event can understand how bad or missed calls can cause the crowd's demeanor to turn in an instant. Cries directed at the referee along the lines of "Are you blind?" or "Who bribed you?" are nothing new. Soccer is no different. In fact, since every goal is incredibly crucial to the overall seasons result, bad calls can cost quite a deal of money.

With no play-offs system in European football, every game holds special significance. The English leagues are based on a pyramid system that includes anywhere from 2-4 promotions or relegations at each level. The Premier League or 'Top Flight' is at the top of this pyramid structure which translates to top revenue dollars for the clubs that get to participate each year. When a bad call is made in any game it can literally cost a team millions of pounds in revenue since there is no redemption possible via a play off system. On March 10th 2012, a match between two Premier League teams - Bolton and Queens Park Rangers illustrated just this point. The match was crucial as both teams were toward the bottom of the standings and flirting with the relegation zone. Around the 20 minute mark, a QPR player headed a goal toward the net for

what appeared to be a goal and certainly a momentum builder for QPR. Similar to American football, when the ball breaks the plane of the goal it is considered a score. To most in attendance including and those at home who had the benefit of replay, the header was in fact a goal. However, because replay (currently being heavily debated in Europe as ‘goal line technology’) is not available to referees and the linesman and head referee views both seemed to be obscured, the goal was called off. As in most sports, this can be considered a momentum killer. That would have put QPR up a goal in a match that eventually ended in a 2-2 draw. In these tying situations, both teams receive a point. However, due to this error and a shift in momentum, Bolton received three points for the win while QPR received zero. Several worldwide news sources have reported that as a result, if QPR remains in the relegation zone and gets bumped down to the next lower league it could cost them anywhere from 50 to 100 Euros next season. This will certainly not sit well with QPR’s fans if it becomes a reality. With supporter groups in Europe being particularly die-hard, a decision like that will be remembered for years to come.

The Police

The police can act as facilitators of violence and amplify already tense situations. Dougie Brimson (2000), a former hooligan himself, explained how the authorities fail to protect or perpetuate stereotypes through their own patriarchal pride. Under a guise of authority he maintains that “Old Bill”, in many cases, will hassle visiting supporters simply because the

police themselves are, at times, supporting the home side rather than acting in the best interests of protecting visiting fans.

The police are charged with the protection of all fans through preventative measures and crowd control techniques. However, in Europe authorities can contribute to these deviant acts. Kerr (1994) explains that when the police employ tough measures it is in fact perceived as a challenge to the supporter groups. As a consequence, deterrents do not suppress the problem but instead amplify the levels of defiance and reinforce the very behavior that is trying to be curbed.

Brimson himself experienced and witnessed several incidences of the police antagonizing away fans in favor of their local club letting them know in no uncertain terms that they were not welcome out of town guests. He provides an example of arriving to Birmingham via train and as the crowd began to chant as they exited the train the police trying to suppress the behavior.

Brimson recalls a “huge copper leant over the barrier and for no apparent reason, grabbed one of the lads I was with and dragged him over. He lifted him up off the ground by his collar until their faces were just inches apart and screamed, ‘You’re in Birmingham now you little cunt, no fucking singing!’ He maintains (with several examples) that in London there was rumored to be a specific van that was used to deliver swift justice through violence as opposed to putting hooligans through the court system. These incidences involving authority figures that are supposed to be the instruments of control can in fact inflame rebellious attitudes particularly before a match even begins.

ALCOHOL

It is understood through several widely reported examples that there is a direct correlation between alcohol consumption and an increase in aggressive behavior. It is also well documented that policies have been put in place to address this very issue. One in particular involved the introduction of cut-off times prior to the end of a game in order to reduce aggressive behavior. As previously noted, crowd violence in both the U.K. and U.S, often spills into the streets and the urban landscape that is immediately attached to the stadium grounds. Ironically, Young (2002) makes the point that, in similar fashion to their English counterparts, stadiums and teams in the United States are typically sponsored by breweries. He goes on to point out that in other cases concessions may in fact be controlled by the city itself. This vested interest in concession revenue before, during and after a game requires a consistent level of responsibility to the fans that are simply there to be entertained.

Couple that alcohol consumption with high unemployment and the belief that alcohol is relatively recession proof. The facts seem to support that alcohol sales have held steady or grown throughout the current recession in the United States. CNN reported that: "Sales expanded more than 9% in 2008, the first full year of the recession, when the average unemployment rate was 5.8%. Sales slumped dramatically the following year, but were still 1% higher, as the unemployment rate shot up to about 9.3%. In 2010, sales jumped more than 9% as unemployment grew to 9.6%. Alcoholic beverage sales then grew by nearly 10% during the 12 months ended May 31 (2011), even though the average unemployment rate during that time

exceeded 9.3% . With these facts it is relatively easy to see a dotted line that can point to a propensity for violence to occur in the United States.

THEORETICAL SYNTHESIS: A BLEND OF SYMBOLIC INTERACTION AND COLLECTIVE BEHAVIOR

Symbolic interaction permeates the hooligan culture. Ironically, hooligan gangs try to present themselves as upstanding, die-hards which is in direct opposition with how they are portrayed. The simple reference to their group as *firms* provides example of this. Calling yourself a member of a firm provides a certain air that, within the context of a group, provides a higher status than one may be able to achieve in the society at large. This is not to say that the members of the more elite classes (celebrities, doctors or lawyers) are not involved in this culture. “I don’t think you can stereotype them.” DC Graham Naughton from the British Transport Police explains: “What you say is that they come from all spectrums of society. From unemployed drug addicts to practicing (sic) professionals” (Hooligans: No one likes us, 2002). A hooligan’s respect and reputation is earned in a very visible urban landscape. The want for acceptance on a wider scale is nothing short of human nature and the desire to socially stratify.

Outward appearance is an important part of the hooligan culture and there is a cornucopia of fashion culture that is associated with this way of life. Over the last several decades with attention focused on the 1960’s onward, the hooligan uniform has evolved from the MOD’s to skinheads to team colors to athletic fashion (Brimson, 2000). Beyond that, the clothing culture that firm supporters showcase is more reflective of American gang culture than the way the American sports fan portray themselves. However, throughout the years, there have been U.S.

sports brands that have become synonymous with of more hyper-masculine image like the Oakland Raiders and the Washington Bullets. These brands have been adopted by the gang counter culture and the hip-hop subculture for their menacing connotations. These are however, a small majority of fans as opposed to what is more prevalent in the U.K. where jerseys, tee shirts jackets, hats and scarves with a supporter team's logo are readily prevalent.

Due to the evolution of the clothing culture, it's ironic to note though that in Europe, unlike North America, police are now profiling fans that are not wearing team colors. 'Football hooligans don't wear the colors of their team like they did in the past. They have their own dress code. Top designer labels, Burberry, Lacoste and above all Stone Island. Sometimes the only clue to team allegiance is a tiny pin badge' (Hooligans: No one likes us, 2002). To the casual observer or foreign visitor this can be, to say the least, problematic when trying to steer clear of flashpoint violence. To combat this problem the police have begun to reverse profile large groups of people. Large groups outside the stadium are the initial giveaway, particularly after kick-off has occurred. In a way, this current fashion trend has made profiling an easier exercise but still creates the possibility for innocent fans to be unfairly profiled. Previously, it was easier for the hooligans to blend if they were more reflective of the current fashion trends, particularly once embedded in a crowd. Whereas fashion was perhaps more a reflection of the outer fringes of society like the MOD or skinhead, designer labels today are a way to again elevate one's status. At the same time it is an attempt to reinforce social cohesion within a supporter group similar to a military regiment or North American street gang.

What's in a name?

The names that the firms assign themselves also reflect symbolic, deviant and militaristic undertones. This can also be one of the more realistic clues that can reveal a firm's purpose. Names like the Gooners (Arsenal), the Mob (Blackpool), the Headhunters (Chelsea), Warlords (Oxford United), TRA - Thurnby Republican Army (Leister City) or the Subway Army (Wolverhampton) are just a few of the examples (Brimson, 2000). A nickname, in this context, is more than simply a tag or label. It conveys symbolically, as Durkheim suggested, the predominant features that can define a group. This can be a dichotomous relationship that can reflect the solidarity amongst followers or there can be a more sinister connotation as well (Eitzen, 2000). The hooligan groups do not adopt the given names of their supported teams, but rather build a hybrid name that includes the name of the club and attach a more meaningful moniker that clearly expresses the intention off the field in support of their club. The aforementioned names are not the actual names of the teams themselves but of their firms. For example, Chelsea's football team is actually known as the Blues and Wolverhampton are the Wolves. Ironically, some teams already have menacing names like Arsenal, who are in fact the Gunners not Gooners.

From outward appearance to self labeling the identity of the European sports fan begins to take shape. Although these examples have a degree of menace, orchestrated outward verbalizations to opposing fans via rhythmic chanting carries with it a great deal of meaning as well. These syncopated chants happen for a variety of reasons at matches with the common thread being to instigate or incite reaction. These collective verbalizations as McPhail (1991, 2004) refers to

them are commonly simple and short so that they catch on quickly. In America they would have the simplicity of the common “nah nah nah nah, nah nah nah nah, hey hey hey goood-bye!”. In Europe however, many of these chants contain menacing undertones that can have xenophobic, racist and homophobic connotations. To contribute to the repetitiveness of the chants at times they are accompanied to the tune of popular music. This particular example is sung to Sloop John B by the Beach Boys:

*We won it at Wem-ber-ly
We won it in Gay Paris,
In '77 and '84 it was Rome*

*We've won it five times,
We've won it five ti-i-imes,
In Istanbul, we won it five times...*

*Stevie G's eyes lit up
As he lifted the European Cup
21 years and now its coming back home*

*We've won it five times
We've won it five ti-i-imes
In Istanbul, we won it five times*

These chants are also a way of preserving history when done in a positive way. However, more often than not, these chants are used to remind opposing teams of embarrassing moments or even tragedies. Instead of preserving history these chants become an unwanted encapsulation of the past that will be used to goad the opposition when they are losing or to take them down a peg when winning. Sometimes this can get downright vicious particularly with bitter rivals like

Manchester United and Liverpool. The rivalry is intense for a couple of key reasons. Off the pitch, Liverpool was once considered a key shipping port for England until Manchester claimed that title. This opposition has had bad blood running for decades. On the pitch, Liverpool had always been ahead of Manchester United in overall titles as well as European Championships. That has changed as well primarily in the last two decades. In 2011, Manchester United won its 19th Premier League title eclipsing Liverpool by one. They are also closing the gap on Liverpool's European Championships only being behind by two.

Unfortunately, both of these teams have had very tragic circumstances happen to them during their histories. In 1958, eight Manchester United players were involved in a fatal plane crash. Liverpool created chants around this not in memoriam but to incite anger with United's fans. Likewise in 1989, ninety-six Liverpool spectators were killed when the crowd surged forward and crushed the supporters to death against a perimeter fence that was ironically put in place to prevent fans from rushing the field (Frosdick, Marsh, 2005). The Manchester fans, in the tradition of their rivals, have also created chants that do not let the Liverpool fans forget their tragedy either.

Although these instances are example of group to group interaction, the mob mentality can be turned toward the individual player as well. In some instances, group chants can be used to motivate a player that has recently returned from injury or to encourage them through a dry spell or during a big game. I've personally witnessed this on multiple occasions. Conversely, there are several examples of attacking chants that many times have the xenophobic, racist or homophobic

tones that were previously mentioned. An example I've heard personally during a televised game referring to Chelsea/Liverpool player Fernando Torres that addresses his metro sexual appearance (fanchants.co.uk):

*He's half a girl,
He's half a boy,
Torres, Torres.
He looks just like a transvestite,
Torres, Torres.
He wears a frock,
He loves the c*ck,
He sells his a*se on Albert Dock,
Fer-nan-do Torres,
Carraghers bit on the side...*

Finally, the firms use these rhythmic chants as a way to voice their dissatisfaction at the authorities when they are escorted around town particularly from the train station to the stadium and back. As Young (2002) points out it is viewed by the firms as being lead along like animals and chants of “dum de dum de dum de dum dum dum dum” or what’s referred to as an elephant chant break out.

Collective behavior

Almost exclusively, hooligan violence happens in large numbers and collective behavior is an important part of the hooligan experience. From that collective behavior standpoint, crowd violence, as an act, lives in the same vein of what Blumer referred to emergent action. He

pointed out that “the rough idea of how and where some course of action is going when we set out on it, we do not start with the whole situation of action define and the course of action fully set. A situation in which we act will itself change or evolve as we act. Therefore, defining the situation is done prior to and preparatory of the course of action, but must be a continual part of the course of action itself, involving the further defining and redefining of the situation” (Cuff, Francis & Sharrock, 2006). Hooligan clashes are supportive of the emergent action concept in that they involve organized chaos. The planning may be structured from within a particular firm but the fight itself emerges as firms communicate with one another via phone or social media. As the struggle begins, there are too many variables (the police, geographical limitations, innocents, a media presence etc.) to consider. This is the process of defining and redefining that Blumer refers to. The media and innocents become inconsequential as the fight begins. The opposing hooligans become defined as objects that are simply observers or obstacles. As the violence escalates, the police and geographical limitations are in a constant state of redefinition.

Another component to the collective behavior of the firms is their chanting and movement in crowd scenarios. Clark McPhail is a leading researcher on collective behavior in the symbolic interaction tradition. McPhail developed a table of thirty-four categories of the behavior that purport to define the activities of crowd members in any crowd (Lewis, 2007). McPhail examines collective vocalization/verbalization as well as crowd gestures and movement. Within the confines of the stadium or the streets outside, hooligan chants (along with whistling patterns) are often built on fatalistic, racist, homophobic and xenophobic foundations. Although chants of pride do occur (without the derogatory elements) the deviant chants are more often the norm.

McPhail continues his assessment of crowds through the examination of gestures like the digitus obsentus,, victory signs or a defiant fist pump.

The dramaturgy that Goffman conceptualized along with the concept of *presentation of self* is also applicable. Hooligans come from all walks of life and social status and gladly trade their workday uniform for Saturday colors. “Expressions like ‘I’m a Gooner’ are used in the same manner as ‘I’m an engineer’ is. It’s expected that others recognize the implication involved” (Brimson, 2000). They leave their professional offices and small town environments to join with up to tens of thousands of others for a common purpose - a win both on the pitch (field) and more importantly, on the streets. Every firm becomes responsible for defending their team’s integrity. Where most would deem loyalty and respect as admirable qualities in the working world, a different prerequisite is involved on match day. On those days, it is considered acceptable to literally fight ones way to the top. Whether one’s team wins on the pitch or not becomes a secondary concern. In the world of the firms, the presentation of self requires a different subset of skills, namely aggression and projected fearlessness. These qualities are required in order to be “known” within these particular cohort groups and by rivals.

WILL IT HAPPEN HERE?

It is undeniable that soccer is the world's most popular and widely played sport. It is played in every corner of the world, no matter the climate or the socio-economic conditions. "Part of the wide appeal of soccer undoubtedly stems from the fact that it does not require much equipment and is thus comparatively cheap to play" (Dunning, Murphy and Williams, 1990). What is now considered the traditional style of play has spawned hybrid forms of the sport. It is also played indoors on hardwood or turf, on the beach, in rural locations, favela towns and certainly in stadiums worldwide. That flexibility of locale and style contributes to its global appeal. Along with that universal appeal there is a dichotomous relationship that provides some fans the opportunity to take their sense of pride to a more aggressive place. Violence outside the game has become synonymous with the game of European football North American sports. In Europe, the offenders are highly organized, particularly in this technological age. They are fiercely loyal to their team and their country. Their presence and influence are undeniable.

The United States is unique in that as a consumerist society, it's citizens are provided with a diversity of live sporting events that is unparalleled anywhere else in the world. The 'Big 4' Leagues – the NFL, NBA, MLB and NHL alone account for tremendous numbers alone. Couple that the UFC, MLS, Nascar and host of 'minor' Olympic style sports like volleyball, ice skating and gymnastics and the U.S. has something for everyone. This would perhaps explain lower levels of menacing, predetermined violence. If North American's don't like how a particular

sport is being portrayed, they can simply satisfy their consumption for competitiveness elsewhere. It's a luxury that the U.K., or any other region for that matter cannot parallel.

Domestically, the socio-economic conditions are in place for civil unrest and disobedience. Politically and economically Americans are seemingly more divided than ever. We've even see a dichotomy in American sports. In basketball when court invasions happen after big wins, fans rush the court again in what is to be considered a celebratory fashion. American football differs in this regard as storming the field at times results in destruction of property by way of bringing down the goal posts. Within the context of sport, in the last year alone we've seen a riot in Vancouver in conjunction with the Stanley Cup finals. "About 150 people were injured, nine police officers were wounded, more than 50 businesses were vandalized and looted, and 15 cars were burned during the riots on June 15, 2011" (USAToday, 2011). Just a few months later in November riots accompanied the firing of Joe Paterno on Penn State's campus. "Witnesses said some rocks and bottles were thrown, a lamppost was toppled and a news van was knocked over, its windows kicked out. Officers used pepper spray to control the crowd of about 2,000 people" (Espn.go.com, 2011). For now, compared to Europe, incidences of riot violence in North American sports has been considerably lower, a point that is validated by both Lewis and Young. However, a rise in popularity of the professional ranks of soccer in America and interest in both the men's and women's National teams, the attraction from the international soccer community to the United States has gained serious momentum this decade. Top teams like Manchester

United, Barcelona and Celtic stage regular tours to the States in the off season to spread the games appeal and add to their own fan bases.

The United States last hosted the World Cup in 1994. Since then, there has been a steady climb in the sport's popularity. After withdrawing from the bidding process to host the 2018 tournament, America was denied winning the bid for 2022. China is already slated as the front-runner to host in 2026, and undoubtedly the tournament will return to Europe for 2030 (Trecker, 2011). Regardless of whether the World Cup comes to North America or not, it still host a number of international neighbors for tournaments and "friendlies" throughout the year. In lieu of the World Cup or the Olympics returning in the next two decades, is the propensity for more violent behavior connected to sport in North America to be expected? The incidences that have been highlighted here indicate that it is happening but not quite in the same tradition as Europe. However, it should be noted that soccer, as a popular sport is still in it's infancy in the States. As the culture of the game is adopted domestically, the culture of the fans is sure to follow.

An Ethnographic Perspective

Lewis (2007) explains that site visits are an important part of studying sports related violence. Working for a semi professional team provides open access to seating layout. The Orlando City Soccer Club was added to Orlando's sports landscape in 2011. Their 'supporters section' is indeed what would be considered the terrace in the European socio-economic sense. The supporter section in Orlando encompasses 13 adjacent sections in the south end of the stadium.

Season tickets (for 15 games) range from \$150-175. To make that price point even more attractive, youth soccer players (18 and under) receive a further discounted ticket of \$99 no matter what section they choose. While the goal is to attract a family element, the affordable price point allows working class fans to be able to attend as is traditional in most sports with the goal being to attract a wider variety of fans. It's typically the working class fan that has been pointed to as the most pervasive perpetrators of sports related violence. Dunning (2007) states that " ...in England five major explanations have become popular when pointing to football violence. Among them are excessive alcohol consumption, violent incidences on the pitch (in conjunction with incompetent officiating) and unemployment." Although Dunning acknowledges these causes will a small measure of credence, for the most part he debunks each of them. However, having the benefit of being able to observe supporter groups from the perspective of the fan and as a team insider provides a unique ethnographic lens from which to make some observations.

Although still a minor league team, Orlando has as many as 250-500 fans that make up 2 supporter groups. These two groups have used organization names that are reflective of the English style monikers. As previously mentioned Brimson (2000) compiled a comprehensive list of English affiliations in the back of his book *Barmy Army*.

In Orlando, The Ruckus, the larger of the two groups, are the original supporter group. Although they are affiliated with the team, they are their own independent organization. They organize primarily through social media and in-person meetings usually on a monthly basis. They have

received outside support from corporate entities and meet with the Orlando City corporate structure to discuss their affiliation with the team and how it reflects or compliments the teams image. Their shield is a menacing skull that contains a half exposed soccer ball where a brain would be and this is in line with symbols that English Clubs use. The Ruckus perform pre-game rituals outside the stadium that involve multiple drums playing, vuvuzelas (a plastic trumpet) and chants. They tailgate as a large group and parade into the stadium just prior to kick-off to announce their presence to all fans. They pride themselves on being rowdy, not to other fans in general but toward the opposing players and the referee.

Similarly the Iron Lion Firm, the 2nd largest supporter group is a more traditional reflection of soccer culture itself. By referring to themselves as a firm, the members are adopting what that connotation implies contextually like their English counter parts. They have a similar ritual of entering the stadium with equal fanfare. However, once in the stadium the use of abusive, but contextually appropriate language is used. In particular when the opposing goalkeeper is defending the south end goal and makes a good play, the Iron Lion Firm traditionally yells out, “Good job asshole!, as the goalkeeper kicks the ball out the box.

For the first time or unfamiliar fan and within the context of a developing soccer base, a quasi-breach experiment takes place. The supporter groups will consistently throw streamers and yell insults at the opposing goalkeepers, chant, and play music throughout the duration of the match. This exhibited group behavior instantly separates the supporter group from the rest of the crowd.

This separation leaves the rest of the crowd to make a choice as to whether to observe or participate.

On February 18th, 2012 Orlando City hosted an MLS franchise, the Philadelphia Union at the Citrus Bowl in Orlando. The aforementioned supporter groups participated in their typical rituals of streamer tossing, chants, blowing up a 15ft inflatable man and using a dry ice machine for an eerie effect in the stands. This is behavior I've witnessed on a number of occasions. However, when Orlando City scored the tying goal in the closing seconds something unique happened. From the corporate suites I observed pyrotechnics being shot off in the supporter section. As previously mentioned the supporters section is typically working class and it is also the only section that is general admission so as a consequence identifying the responsible parties could have been difficult. However, as in the case of some English supporter groups, the Orlando City supporter groups wear specific colors and logos that make them easier to identify. Beyond that identifier, the responsible party, The Iron Lion Firm had run a long piece of fabric from the top to the bottom of the particular section they had chosen to inhabit. This creates a separation between them and fans that are also seated in that section. Although, it is understood that the pyrotechnics were meant to be nothing more than celebratory, two interesting points should be raised. First, possession of pyrotechnics in Florida is illegal. In conjunction with that, the stadium has clearly marked gates that state that firearms, fireworks and similar items are prohibited. Second, it appears that there was disconnect in the thought process of the responsible parties when it pertained to the safety of the fans in general let alone the safety of their own group. Had one of the projectiles misfired, tipped over or caught the fabric that separated them from others

on fire, pandemonium would certainly ensue in the form of retaliation or a stampede to escape potential danger. This is a precursor to what could have developed into a violent act.

The MLS commissioner Don Garber was recently asked about some issues that have recently popped up at league games by ESPN. He was asked about the emergence of supporter groups and hardcore fans in a landscape of what the MLS had established as family friendly. Garber stated,

“What we've seen is that the supporters' culture hasn't conflicted at all with those who might be coming from the youth market, or the general family environment. In many ways, it's almost the opposite. Fans can sit at the opposite end of the stadium (for now) and look at what is taking place over there, and feel that they are part of something very special without having to bang a drum, wave a flag, paint their face, and stand on their seat all game long. We are very focused in ensuring that teams are mindful of the different experiences for each individual group.

As far as syncopated chants were concerned he went on to say that, “What I would say there is that I don't believe, as commissioner of this league, that any fan, regardless of what section they're sitting in, should be subjected to others who are using foul language. If there are organized chants using foul language in the NFL or the NBA, stadium operations folks [will] deal with that. We're going to deal with that in MLS as well. I don't think that's inconsistent with what the vast majority of supporters are looking for, and we're working with them to have them understand that there are certain standards and practices that our broadcast partners require, and there are just certain standards of good taste and civility that we're going to expect and, in many ways, demand from all fans. I don't think that's in conflict at all with being a passionate supporter. I really don't. I just think we need to make sure that supporters understand that you can really, really engage and create fan experience that is almost unparalleled in professional sports in our country without using vulgar language and using smoke bombs and the like that might be unsafe.” (espn.go.com, 2012)

SOLUTIONS OLD AND NEW

The aim of this study is not attempt to achieve definitive policy changes, but rather the study aims to provide more concise insight into the phenomenon and to make suggestions to those who may be more in the know. Since North America and the United States have only begun to see this phenomenon on a limited and less scrutinized scale, it is somewhat difficult to ascertain the future of these occurrences. However, the growth in popularity of soccer domestically, particularly in the last two decades lends to a wave of globally aware, digitally equipped fans. This unprecedented access, particularly in a consumerist society, leads to the potential for groups with similar proclivity for violence to form.

That is the question - Will this menacing type of violence happen here? The current socio-economic conditions and a shrinking middle class are representative of what make up the hooligan base. That coupled with the growing popularity of domestic soccer and increasing interest in the international game may be a simple catalyst for what becomes a complex construct. More importantly, the question becomes how can we prevent this type of violence from happening at all in America? Using the hooligan template as an overarching example of how group conditions can deteriorate during sporting events is the primary goal of this research. The hope is to anticipate the worst possible scenario that help suggest policies or to amend existing ones for a proactive approach.

For example, what if the media took a positive approach to this situation? Using reporting as a true informative source, rather than amplifying the potential for violence would be a start. A

coordinated effort could be made between the media and local authorities to provide directions to sizable and accessible safe areas and checkpoints particularly through social media. Having multiple checkpoints may be considered inconvenient to some much in the way airport policy was affected in a post 9/11 society. The media could be instrumental in this regard. This could help create a sense of security for traveling fans and locals alike. Using current and evolving technology like smart phones and tablets provide mobility to those who are charged with combating the problem as well. Safe zones can be established online through mobile devices to allow for police concentration along predetermined safe routes with the promise of collaborative efforts with stadium staff.

Communication is seemingly the key to a proactive approach avoiding menacing violence. MLS Commissioner Garber states “We do have, fortunately, really engaged communication with the supporters. They very much understand that their role is to help elevate the game-day experience for all, and it's not an insular experience that's just about them” (espn.go.com, 2012).

As far as chanting is concerned, it seems that a simple solution would be if the clubs worked with the supporter groups to create fan friendly chants that are inclusive to all fans. When an international match takes place, providing feedback through the stadium speakers with a slight delay (a ½ a second to a second) could fragment and disrupt menacing or vulgar chants so the crowd has a more difficult time chanting in unison.

English clubs as well as the Philadelphia Union have begun to issue a single hard card to their season ticket holders. This is a way of fan tracking in the way of a reward system for a particular

fans loyalty. Since this information is already tracked, it is also a method of being able to ban the rowdy fan levy sanctions. In effect, the card should be able to be deactivated for specific games as punishment for inappropriate behavior. This does not eliminate the problem as a person could still buy a single game ticket. It does however provide a way to begin to curb unsavory behavior with season or permanent bans for those that are repeat offenders.

If the menacing behavior occurs at the group level, “hot spots” could be covered with tarps to send a message to fans in general. I have actually witnessed games that were played in entirely empty stadiums to avoid violence with notorious rowdy fan bases. This is the ultimate punishment for a club. Although clubs are allowed to continue playing, the revenue lost via concessions and merchandise can be immense especially if it happens on multiple occasions during the season.

With the highlight on alcohol stated earlier, limiting access can help deter violent breakouts. Beyond that, reducing the alcoholic content of concessions or restricting the sale of hard liquor may be the first steps in addressing the correlation between alcohol and aggressive behavior. This however does not address tailgating or grabbing drinks at the pub or sports bar prior to arriving at a stadium.

Finally, education is the key. There are educational elements to the aforementioned suggestions. North America has developed an incredibly strong youth system to breed the next generation of American superstar. With bullying and cyber-bullying becoming a hot button issue domestically, the time seems appropriate to bring violence in sports to the forefront as well. Anti racism and

homophobic programs are already in place but need a sports element incorporated particularly in areas that have cut school sponsored P.E. programs.

In order to examine the violence from a fresh angle, the next step in research should explore if the temporal influence of the game of soccer has any effect on its fans. As opposed to American football, soccer is a very fluid sport similar to hockey. Soccer however is unique in the way the game is structured. Matches consist of two forty-five minute halves and the match clock runs continuously. Breaks in action only occur for substitutions, penalties or set pieces like corner or free kicks while the clock continues to run. There are no commercial breaks with the exception of halftime. Replays on television occur typically during the course of play and not during the aforementioned “stoppage” occurrences. The question becomes – Does this temporal structure contribute to an escalation of emotions? Simply put, is the way the game is structured contributing to violent behavior because it does not provide the fan with a cooling off periods after bad calls or dirty plays occur? That is the next phase of research that warrants further investigation.

REFERENCES

- Bennett, B., Drenhs, W. (2011, November 10). Penn St. students flood streets, tip van.

Espn.go.com. http://espn.go.com/college-football/story/_/id/7214791/penn-state-scandal-tv-van-gets-flipped-joe-paterno-riots-turn-violent
- Bigham, S., Burrirt, D. (2011, May 30). Police confident no repeat of '94 Canucks riot.

News1130. <http://www.news1130.com/news/local/article/233514--police-confident-no-repeat-of-94-canucks-riot#.Tsxgpjeaboc.email>
- Brimson, D. (2000). *Barmy Army: The changing face of football violence*. London, England: Headline Publishing Group
- Carlisle, J. (2012, March 7). Q&A with MLS commish Don Garber. Espn.go.com.

http://espn.go.com/sports/soccer/mls/story/_/id/7651254/mls-commissioner-don-garber-spoke-2012-season-jeff-carlisle
- Cuff, E.C., Sharrock W.W., Francis, D.W. (2006). *Perspectives in Sociology: Fifth Edition*. New York, NY: Routledge
- Day, P., Fenton, D., (2006). *The real football factories*. London, England: Bravo UK
- Dunning, E. (2000). Towards a sociological understanding of football hooliganism as a world phenomenon: *European Journal on Criminal Policy and Research* 8, 141-162.

- Dunning, E., Murphy P., & Williams, J. (1990). *Football on trial: Spectator violence and development in the football world*. London, England: Routledge.
- Eitzen, D.S., (2006). *Fair and foul: Beyond the myths and paradoxes of sport*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Frosdick, S., Marsh, P., (2005). *Football Hooliganism*. Portland, OR: Willian Publishing
- Kerr, J.H., (1994). *Understanding soccer hooliganism*. Bristol, PA: Open University Press
- Lewis, J.M. (2007). *Sports fan violence in North America*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers
- Pearson, G., (1983). *Hooligans: A history of respectable fears*. London: Manmillan, 1983.
- Trecker, J. (2010, December 2). U.S. loses 2022 World Cup bid to Qatar. *USATODAY*.
<http://msn.foxsports.com/foxsoccer/worldcup/story/world-cup-bid-usa-loses-2022-world-cup-bid-to-qatar>
- Woolwich, P. (Producer). (2002). *Hooligans: No one likes us*. London, England: BBC
- Young, K. (2002), Standard Deviations: An Update on North American Sports Crowd Disorder. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 19, 237-275.