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## **Root causes and motivations of “sport related spectators violence”**

### **Introduction to meta-review**

The question regarding the inherent causes of football hooliganism – and, to be more explicit, spectators’ violence, or “sport related event spectators violence” – is somewhat ambiguous. Partly, the problem lies in the fact that the determinant factors instigating a hooligan to engage in criminal activities and a wide spectrum of misdemeanours are as diverse as the range of the individual traits characterising that same hooligan.

This study, or “meta-review” discusses the fundamental (impacted) sources related to the topic of “football hooliganism”, or studies that deal with the genesis of a football hooligan – also referred to as radicalisation – and the basic concepts that this literature uses in connection with the assimilation of group behaviour, and, finally, a structured comparison of these processes, if they are significantly different.

Although the term “football hooliganism” is mostly used in the text, a much more suitable term would be “spectators’ violence.” This term is, however, very rare in the respective studies, with the term “football hooliganism” appearing to be more widespread.

Initially, the review intended to avoid empirical works or studies focusing exclusively on the situation in a particular country or a small group of countries. Publications containing some theoretical overlap, however, are not very frequent and therefore it was necessary to pursue a wider range of outcomes where the topics of radicalisation and spectator violence intersect. The findings are going to be primarily used for the transfer of knowledge from academia to security practice, with an emphasis on the transfer of best practices from environments where certain approaches proved to work well. In the end, it should support both performance of and reflection on the structured process of monitoring indicators, extension, and depth of radicalisation process in communities of special interest, or in society in general.

The studies that have been conducted on this topic point to several comprehensive motivational forces that could push a regular fan to turn into a hooligan, including identity, police brutality, and distorted media projections (Spain, 2006).

The first point of interest here will be academic and to some extent also non-academic literature that envisages identity as one of the reasons for the outburst of sport-related hooliganism and some forms of related criminal activities, including

through organised crime networks. It should be emphasised, however, that with these “traditional approaches” the topic remains far from being explored in full.

## **The identity question**

According to various academic opinions, identity cannot be viewed as a one-dimensional concept, but is instead associated with multiple layers that exercise a distinguishable push on potential hooligans (Stead and Rookwood, 2007). In one of the many instances where identity plays a part in instigating petty hooliganism, the sports team assumes the pivotal role of the source which grants belonging to the still undefined character of a potential hooligan. In other words, it is the emotional tie which connects the individual to his team that is responsible for creating the impression that the team needs to be defended against the perils that other such teams pose or simply defended for the sake of suppressing jealousy over other teams’ successes. Yet, in other cases it is precisely the lack of identity that may be the reason why hooligans choose to commit to football and other sports inspired mayhem.

Whether one is a parentless child who has no support to rely on or just a right-wing radicalised, poorly educated teen looking for belonging, identity (or lack of it more precisely) seems to be the common denominator that turns such individuals into dangerous subjects spoiling for a fight during football matches.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, it could easily be inferred that the search for belonging, whether intensified by the absence of an inner self or simply as a contributory factor, plays a key role in driving hooliganism, violence, etc. (see Spaaij, 2006 and Giulianotti, 2007).

Elemers (2012) writes that although people often tend to consider themselves and others as unique individuals, there are many situations in which they think, feel, and act primarily as group members. This can bring out the best in them, as when they are inspired to help fellow citizens in need, or the worst, as when they show hostility against others simply because they represent another religious or ethnic group, or, in this case, are fans of another team. The study focuses on the assumption that edgy violence, including the aggression of soccer hooligans, the maltreatment of prisoners or school shootings may be interpreted as extreme consequences of the subjects’ desire to define themselves, either as individuals or as members of a cohesive group. Understanding when and why the group self becomes more important than the individual self, and how this affects people’s thoughts, feelings, and behaviours, can help to prevent and redirect unwelcome aspects of human behaviour by addressing them at the appropriate level of self.

According to McPhail and Wohlstein (1983), the life cycles of gatherings, demonstrations, and riots begin with an assembling phase and end with a dispersal phase. The three types of events are primarily distinguished by the form and content of individual and collective behaviours that occur in the interim phase when a number of people are in the same locale at the same time. The respective article reviews some elementary forms of collective behaviour that frequently occur in all gatherings, demonstrations, and riots. The authors also examine more complex dimensions and

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<sup>1</sup> Hooliganism, in many cases, is not merely an activity of the socially weak. This is because it is a relatively “costly hobby”, both in terms of participation in sporting events and in terms of the logistics required for encounters “outside stadiums”.

forms of behaviour within political, religious, and sport demonstrations and then review research on the individual and aggregate violence against person, property, and property rights that distinguishes riots.

O'Callaghan, Greene, Conway, Carthy, and Cunningham (2013) add that many extreme right groups have had an online presence for some time through the use of dedicated websites. This has been accompanied by increased activity in social media platforms in recent years, enabling the dissemination of extreme right content to a wider audience. In this paper, they present an analysis of the activity of a selection of such groups on Twitter, using network representations based on reciprocal follower and interaction relationships, while also analysing topics found in their corresponding tweets. International relationships between certain extreme right groups across geopolitical boundaries are initially identified. Furthermore, article also discovers stable communities of accounts within local interaction networks, in addition to associated topics, where the underlying extreme right ideology of these communities is often identifiable. Ties and communication channels between groups of football hooligans are also used in communication, even international one, among groups of political radicals and extremists.

The report made by Olsen (2009) is based on in-depth interviews with individuals formerly involved in politically motivated group violence, in order to acquire accounts of processes of radicalisation in their own words. The main themes in the interviews were the following: 1) How did they become involved with militant activist groups? 2) What drove them to take part in specific militant operations? 3) What role did ideology, identity and social group processes play in these decisions? The latter theme is the main problem dealt with in this text. Thus, drawing on the three main themes listed above, the main conclusions of this text fall into three different categories: Ideology, Identity, and Social Group Processes. The object of the research are the members of left-wing groups, right-wing groups, eco-groups, animal rights groups, as well as some types of groups of football hooligans who are also often right-wing or left-wing activists.

When examining sporting ethics as a sociological phenomenon, Mariovet (2010) points out how commercialization has weakened the ethical principles of modern sport. On the example of Portugal after 1975, he shows how a greater emphasis on winning the game led to the radicalization of the audience, but also to the economic rivalry between the clubs (competing for sponsors, advertising revenue and thus also for money to buy players). Doping players and corrupted referees were not the exception. Confidence in the fairness of the competition declined sharply. One of the ways that fans have been expressing their dissatisfaction with these trends, may be the collective violent behavior (solidarity with the club is replaced by the solidarity within the group of hooligans).

Podaliri and Balestri (1998) are studying the issues of national or local and regional identity in relation to a football fan culture. They do not leave aside the question of the commercialization of the sport. Fundamental questions they ask are as follows:

- Whether the football remains a rather popular entertainment, or is more or less a "craft" for owners of clubs (who dispassionately sell highly paid players from one club to another).

- What forms is racism and extreme nationalism manifested in football.
- How does the media represent the national identity in football (in Germany, France and Spain).
- How the topics of national, religious and club identity can overlap each other (especially among the fans in England, Scotland, Ireland, Portugal and the countries of northern Europe).

Regarding the deradicalization, it is interesting, for example, that a secession movement in New Caledonia had lost the support when this Pacific country became increasingly identified with the metropolis (France), because of the fact that local native, Christian Karembeu, joined the national football team. The same applies to the visible representation of Canadian Inuits (Jordin Tootoo etc.) in national hockey or indigenous Aborigines (Catherine Freeman etc.) in athletics.

### **“Police brutality”**

Another instrumental and direct cause of some forms of hooliganism relates to the policing factor. More often than not, the police force disposed at football events tends to be overly nervous in view of an eventual violent outbreak and thus reacts quite disproportionately to small incidents. Once the police initiate a fight with the fans violence is likely to escalate very quickly. It is the disproportionate reaction, most likely stimulated by the anxiety of the police, that most of all infuriates the ordinary fan and turns him into a hooligan (Gow and Rookwood, 2010). Sometimes, the police overreaction triggers the infuriation directly. Other times, the identity factor discussed above inserts a contributory influence. In other words, the police overreaction may not only look unjustified in the eyes of the fan but may seem intentionally directed at their football camp, purposefully attacking their football and other sport related affiliation and impudently guarding the otherness of the rivalry football team. Needless to say, such a psychological inference may lead to even more violence on the stadium, which in turn to incite even more anxiety in the police and an even more brutal retaliation. To conclude, a vicious cycle is triggered once police officers mismanage their duties and a violent misconduct is in order both on the part of the fans (alternatively, hooligans) and on the part of the police (Smith, Leeson and Snow, 2011).

Marie (2016) notes that large sporting events (football matches, but also racing) are a huge burden for the police force, which must at the time of the match literally “reveal” the rest of the city and concentrate on the sports field or in its vicinity. This phenomenon is well known for the criminal subculture, which is being activated just in this time. Theft and other activities in the municipality or district (London) tend to grow nowadays. There is a question whether it is more socially acceptable to ignore the possible violence at the stadium (if there is a theft, it is sometimes rather for ritualistic reasons – when obtaining the scarf of rival club fan is presented as a “political act”), or to allow, virtually automatically, the rise in crime outside the sport arenas.

### **Violence as an “art of living”**

Another thesis regarding the causes of hooliganism states that disorderly conduct on the part of the fans is most likely when various intoxicating substances

are being abused or when it is simply “in the subject’s nature to enjoy the act of fighting.” Alcohol abuse and drug use leading to disorderly conduct form, indeed, a quite common phenomenon. Moreover, individuals who are more inclined to engage in violent activity solely for the “pleasure” and adrenaline that they extract from engaging into such activity are also a case in point – the most violent prisoner in Britain, also commonly denoted by his fighting name Charles Bronson,<sup>1</sup> being a lucidly representative example of such primitively brute and inherently aggressive character type.

Ostrowsky (2014), in his brief study that is full of links to a number of other publications, mentions the role of alcohol in relation to the violent behaviour of sports spectators. Alcohol is a part of the complex rather than a single trigger of aggression. Alcohol use, in itself, cannot explain spectator violence as a whole. For this reason, the author talks about the nine socio-psychological risk factors, which in this context are: 1) quest for thrill and excitement; 2) impulsiveness; 3) frustration; 4) anger; 5) prone to psychopathic behaviour; 6) miscalculation related to the specific situation – the overestimation of its own forces and overestimation of positive or negative sentiments of the people around (as well as prone to black and white vision of the world, “us” versus “them”); 7) tendency to collective thinking (the Bedouin syndrome); 8) identification with the team and 9) expectations associated with alcohol consumption – that is, in other words, the assumption that alcohol will initiate or enhance the aforementioned factors.

McCormack et al (2015) briefly notes that an emotional sports spectatorship, including cases of hooliganism, can be understood as a form of mental health and prevention of the burnout (as something that takes the job stress out, especially in performance-oriented positions or regarding the “helping professions”).

Spaaij (2014) notes that “herd behavior” of spectators can hardly be completely eliminated, and even cases where there is a number of victims (Port Said 2012) doesn’t mean that the large number of people in one place is the negative of itself. Many viewers go to stadiums because of the opportunity to become part of the crowd. For them it is a completely different experience than watching the match on television. If the security measures in the higher football competitions exceeded a certain degree, viewers (and crowds) would move to lower competition or to other sports. He is also pointing out that better organization and professionalisation of the sport is reflected in the increased professionalization of hooligans. It is reportedly difficult to bump into the truly spontaneous violence in the auditorium, which wouldn’t be the subject of preparation for the conflict among “professional” hooligans. Violence on the terraces is part of a planned “entertainment” of spectators. The results of the match are more or less irrelevant. The author illustrates the process of “professionalization” of a member of the hooligan subculture on a number of variables (from personal characteristic of a person, to full socialization into alternative subculture, including the internalization of its rules and rituals).

Kerr and de Kock (2002) examines the motives of spectator violence that sometimes results in casualties. Hooligans motives are often unclear, a particular person may emphasize different aspects. “Playing” with the police is for someone the evidence of fearlessness of youth, facing the state power. Men after 40 often use this

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<sup>1</sup> Michael Peterson, born 1952.

way to try to compensate their midlife crisis and a feeling that their life is not heroic enough. Controlled violence (skirmish with similarly tuned persons) can mean positive: blow off steam, lowering the aggression, which then this individual does not need to pour elsewhere.

Sprinzak (1995) comments that the radicalisation of the European extreme right is associated with an unintended by-product of violent intimidation, brutal street hooliganism and aggressive behaviour.

McPhail and Wohlstein (1983) are of the opinion that spectatorship is vicarious participation and provides catharsis for pent-up hostilities. Increases in levels of spectators' hostility corresponded to the level of violence.

What this quite simplistic and reductionist in nature argument misses, nevertheless, is the sphere preferred by people who tend to use intoxicating substances and who are associated with a conflictual temperament. Whereas for Bronson prison is this arena, hooligans deem the stadium the most appropriate place to manifest either their addiction or their innate rage (see Spaaij, 2006 and Smith, Leeson and Snow, 2011).

The lack of explanation as to the locus of activity, thereby, comes to show the major loophole of this thesis. In view of this, one may only conclude that intoxication and a conflictual personality are insufficient to amount to a comprehensive explanation as to why football hooliganism exists. On the contrary, this thesis could only serve as an additional explanation as to why football hooliganism escalates (Stead and Rookwood, 2007).

Finally, when discussing causes of hooliganism, one needs necessarily mention the disproportionate portrayal of the sport spectators (fan) culture that media tends to more often integrate in its journalistic depiction of fans' disorderly conduct. In their search for a cheap sensation and through their overly negative all-encompassment of the football fan culture, journalists are actually turning into the direct causal factor of even more hooliganism because they inspire the vengeance of the average fan. Therefore, one may easily conclude that media in their attempts to sell their sports articles and newspapers in reality create more problems than they resolve (see Tsoukala, 2009 and Spaaij, 2006).

## **Manifestations of football hooliganism in Western Europe**

Manifestations of hooliganism are many in number, diverse in nature and all-encompassing in terms of their geographical occurrence. This short section aims at providing a few examples of hooligan-related activities in order to exemplify the latter thesis. Most of them are related to football.

The 1985 Heysel Stadium disaster is up until today commonly referred to as the greatest and most egregious hooligan-related event – the tragedy took a total of 39 casualties, all of whom were Italian. Another, though, minor in terms of the number of fatalities incident occurred in the Netherlands in 1997. In this case scenario Ajax and Feyenoord football club fans had pre-arranged a fight after the rivalry football clash took place. The end-result was the death of a supporter of the Amsterdam football club (Stead and Rookwood, 2007). Yet another incident involved the stabbing to death of two Leeds United fans in Istanbul during a match of the team with Turkish

Galatasaray, taking place within the framework of the Champions League tournament. The incident took place on April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2005. A recent hooligan-caused mayhem took place also in Catania in 2007, where a policeman suffered the lethal consequences of the fans' physical attacks. As a result the Italian league was suspended for a short time (see Smith, Leeson and Snow, 2011 and Tsoukala, 2009).

Football hooliganism has, however, been indisputably most "prominent" in England. In March 1998, a Fulham supporter became a victim of football hooliganism after suffering a fatal head wound. Later, in 2003 a Nottingham Forest fan was brutally murdered in Burnley by members of the rival supporters' camp. Finally, a Charlton fan was killed under similar circumstances at Tottenham in the autumn of 2006 (Tsoukala, 2009).

The manifestations of fans' radicalisation are so numerous and repetitive in terms of predisposing circumstances and descriptive characteristics, that the further listing of examples would add little to the analysis. What, however, is crucial to understanding this phenomenon is to point to the common denominator, marking these very occurrences. What all sources agree on is that the uniting characteristic for the enlisted football-related tragedies is spontaneity (Spaaij 2006). Except for the case of the pre-arranged Amsterdam fight, all of the other incidents transpire either on the grounds of the field (in comparison to the wastelands near a certain motorway where the Dutch incident occurred) or within a distance, proximate to the field. What is more important, the discussed hooligans do not dispose of weaponry preliminarily purchased and intentionally brought to the stadiums. That comes to show that football hooligans lack organisation and willpower to engage in hooliganism but are rather provoked by the causes enlisted in the previous sections (policing, media distortions, etc.) (see Gow and Rookwood, 2010).

Concerning this topic, Scott (2012) observes that hooliganism (sports-related spectator violence) is now a routine feature in most European football leagues. In Sweden, the number of serious violent offences in conjunction with football matches has steadily continued to mount over the last four decades. Presently, one of the worst culprits is DjurgårdensFinaGrabbar – DFG (Djurgården's Fine Lads),<sup>1</sup> the so-called "firm" (or hooligan group) associated with Djurgårdens Idrottsförening – DIF (Djurgården's Athletic Association). DIF's supporters have long looked to Britain for inspiration; and this tendency is very marked in DFG. Yet, in the past few years, a new Italian-inspired variety of hooliganism has likewise become more detectable in DFG's actions. This, in turn, has led to a new hybrid, that is neither wholly Italian nor British in character – though it has unquestionably created a more menacing version of Swedish hooliganism. Article accounts for this change in DFG while simultaneously exploring questions relating to the continued sanctity of local identities in the context of an increasingly globalized football culture. It additionally asks whether Swedish hooliganism should be understood as a response to the challenges facing traditional masculine identities in post-industrial societies like Sweden that also strongly emphasize gender equality. It is also necessary to mention, that in August 2002, a Swedish fan was killed in an incident between two

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<sup>1</sup> DjurgårdensFinaGrabbar. *Facebook*. <<https://sv-se.facebook.com/DFGStlm>>.

hooligan clubs. For the security community, this meant a turning point after which more attention has been paid to the theme of spectator-related violence.

Spaaij and Vinas (2005) have studied the origins and development of the “organized” subculture of football fans (also called ultras), with emphasis on the situation in Spain. First Spanish ultras groups emerged during the World Cup in Spain in 1982. Imitation of foreign fans meant for some young people a possibility to move away from the original “parochial” fan culture and to try to organize a more visible choreography. It soon became a common phenomenon in the first and second league. The authors also mentioned the fact that this phenomenon can be interpreted as a sign of emancipation of the first post-authoritarian generation in Spain. The other side of the coin was the fact that some ultras (and hooligans) groups spawned a skinheads subculture. Mutual rivalry among some groups then often escalated into violent clashes.

Radicalisation goes hand in hand with efforts to find a collective identity, even at the cost of planned violence against members of other similar groups. Violence is seen as a form of venting the frustration.

Spaaij (2007) also analyzes the origin, evolution and dominant characters (soccer) hooliganism in the Netherlands. It points out that the current hool subculture is more complex and less clear than in the recent past. Five notes, in his opinion, the dominant trends: 1) partial restriction of violent confrontations between hooligans; 2) increasing the level of planning and coordination of the activities of hooligans; 3) searching and finding alternatives to physical violence (such as the focus on choreo); 4) violence targeted against the police, and 5) the more heterogeneous social structure of the hooligan groups. Hooligans in the Netherlands disappeared, but considerably changed. For some young men, this is a phenomenon of self-realization, adrenaline and a controlled and relatively safe violent behavior "at a time without war."

The level and seriousness of football hooliganism increased substantially due to the continuing national diffusion of the hooligan subculture and the radicalisation of some individuals.

## **The situation in post-socialist European countries**

A relatively independent research area is the situation in post-socialist European countries. It is possible to encounter both up-to-date and retrospective studies exploring this topic (related to the transition theories of political science).

Riordan (1988) is of the opinion that this is a substantially different model of defiance and radicalisation than the one that was common among the same age group in Western countries. The manifestation of belonging to movements such as punk or hippies was strongly suppressed. One of the few viable options for self-presentation, including violent one, was football hooliganism.

Duke (1990) notes that the development of so-called perestroika has been uneven both in the Soviet Union, and in individual Eastern Europe countries. Czechoslovakia was the country where the economic, political and social changes were probably the slowest. The article examines relevant development in the culture of spectatorship related to the significant Czechoslovak spectator sports (football and



ice hockey). Mentioned is the professionalization of players and commercialization of sport as such. Sport environment has pioneered social change in a number of socialist countries in the late 80s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Football hooligans have played the role of a platform of defiance against formal authorities, which, among other things, sought to maintain order in stadiums. These changes caused the tension between what political and bureaucratic spheres were willing to accept and what was demanded by the public (including the radical fans). Changes (introduction of some market principles) in spectator sports therefore were one of the dimensions of society and economy transformation after 1985.

Bosch (2012) examines developments in the former German Democratic Republic, and points to the fact that the subculture of football fans played a visible role in the crystallization of the extreme right at the end of the life of this country. At the time of the collapse of the state, far-right subculture was already entrenched. After the unification of Germany, this local activists established connection with their counterparts in the West, including the inclination to neo-Nazism and Pangermanism.

Dennis (2006) provides analysis of football's place in post-war and post-reunification Germany. The team of contributors offers wide-ranging perspectives on the significance of football in German sporting and cultural life, showing how it has emerged as a focus for an **expression of German national identity and pride in the post-war era**. The article also tries to draw attention to a rise in the number and seriousness of football-related offences. The skinheads added a more explicit racism and lethal militancy to the hooligan scene.

Varga (2008) provides an overview of recent activities of the far right in Russian Federation (especially during the years 2004–2006) and shows how formal organisations of the far right interact with skinhead subcultures and local communities. It argues that government actions have facilitated an increase in recent far-right militancy in Russian Federation. The authorities have provided the far-right with political opportunities that their organisations use to coordinate further actions, recruit new members and gain visibility. Far from being dominated by a single organisation, the far-right subculture in Russian Federation includes skinhead and hooligan subcultures, nationalist associations and many others. Especially hooligans take pride in their informality and unorganisation, as well as blind loyalty to respective football clubs.

Kuzio (2013) puts forward the proposal that nationalism in Ukraine should be investigated in a broader context than is traditionally undertaken by scholars who focus on one region (Western Ukraine) and one element (ethnic Ukrainian nationalism). Skinheads and Nazi parties and movements are included in the analysis of Russian and Soviet Nationalism because they do not espouse ethnic Ukrainian nationalist ideologies but instead propagate eclectic combinations of Ukrainian state nationalism, anti-Americanism and pan-Slavism. A number of neo-nazist incidents took place during the EURO 2012 football championship. Racist crimes in Ukraine against foreigners, migrants, asylum seekers, refugees, and Roma are rarely prosecuted and when they are they usually fall under the rubric of "hooliganism" or "disorderly conduct", which leads to minor criminal charges. Incidents in stadiums as well as outside stadiums are effectively investigated only in few cases, which further strengthens the feeling of unpunishability among radical

fans. In the latest developments in Ukraine, the role of football hooligans, the so-called "Right-Sector", is overlooked.

Neumann (2013) describes an agent-based simulation model of ethno-nationalist radicalization between political actors and their constituencies based upon evidence from the former Yugoslavia. The central mechanism is the recursive feedback between political and cultural dynamics, focusing on processes prior to the outbreak of actual violence. The results offer theoretical insights by revealing mechanisms that lead to escalation. These can be found within politics as well as among the population: between conflicting ethnically homogeneous regions, opposing radicalization forces fuel an escalation spiral. These processes are driven by political influences. Nationalist radicalization stimulates the sense of belonging to, as well as boundaries between, individual ethnic groups. Identity is also enhanced by the affinity with a religious group, language or football club. Challenging the theory that diversity breeds conflict, this suggests that multiethnic regions are more capable of withstanding political pressures. However, they are vulnerable to imported violence, driven by the local population. This finding is tested with a different model of the same events, in which different implemented mechanisms generate results, in line with the diversity-breeds-conflict theory. A comparative discussion demonstrates how simulation is sensitive to theoretical predispositions.

Trost and Kovacevic (2013) analyzed the recent events in Serbia, notably the murder of French football fan in 2009, during the hooligans' attack on gay parade in Belgrade and rioting during match between Serbia and Italy in 2010. The hooligan subculture in Serbia is sprinkle homophobic, violent, connected with the extreme right and the acute nationalists. Its members are calling for the overthrow of the current government and rejection of the efforts of European Union accession.

The radicalization of football fans can take dimensions that have not been paid much attention to until recently. The aspect of homophobia - among others - is mentioned. This can be proved by the discourse analysis of 2,700 reader comments in response to the events surrounding the 2010 gay parade that provides rich information on the major themes in everyday people's reactions to hooliganism.

Helsinki Bulletin (2009) of the The Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia recalls that in the second half of 2009 the violence in Serbia belonged to the key media and political themes. Connection between soccer hooligans and neo-Nazi and nationalist groups was an open secret. Extremely radical attitudes are also visible regarding some official state and society representatives. But public discourse closes the eyes over these phenomena. Media are talking about the violence in society in general, without incurring any formal research on the topic. The only source of information about the situation remains media monitoring (including reading "between the lines") and outputs of the foreign or transnational NGOs.

Here again, opinions appear that the radicalization and outbursts of ethnic violence might go hand in hand with homophobic actions. Violence in society, including the cases of domestic violence in Serbia has been growing rapidly, along with the economic and political frustration. Football hooligans, active and non-sporting events are one of the most visible parts of this trend.

Bassuener and Weber (2011) are of the opinion that it is clear that the continued and deepening government dysfunction, rising economic problems and

social tensions in Bosnia and Herzegovina have all put major additional pressure on the ruling elites and increase the possibility - and potential gravity - of political miscalculation. This also applies also to the self-realisation of some people in violent subcultures including football hooligans. Within so ethnically complicated country, football hooliganism is especially easy to be abused for the escalation of ethnic passions. In addition, hooligans are often bound to the criminal subcultures that have already been used for political exploits in the country, as the unpredictable "X-factor".

Armstrong and West (2013) note that many years after the Dayton Peace Accords were successful in stopping the violence, the Bosnia and Herzegovina today exists in a post-conflict stalemate. For the society (or parallelly existing societies), which - after long conflict - was a subject of a peace established from outside, the search for collective identities is understood as a form of escapism from the regimented political and dismal economic situation.

### **Examples from outside of Europe**

The probes into the situation in the non-European environment, with an emphasis on rapid politicisation of the recently non-political subculture, do appear to provide a valuable perspective on the radicalization topic, too.

El-Zatmah (2012) explores the phenomenon of sudden visibility of the hooliganism phenomenon (respectively ultras) in Egypt. After 2000, cohesive groups of radical fans (mostly related to the Cairo clubs) have emerged in the environment of lower social groups. In the context of the "Arab Spring" of 2011, these groups have politicised and use its agility to become the most radical political forces at the revolutionary scene. State security forces underestimated the hooligan subculture, because they have thought of it for a long time as an unpolitical sphere.

Dorsey (2013) is of the opinion that the football hooligans suddenly became a radicalized and an important social and ultimately political force demanding social reforms, even by using violent means.

Dorsey (2013) also reminds that a year after the death of 74 people in Port Said,<sup>1</sup> court verdict re-aggravated the situation and showed the tension that slumbers in Egyptian society. Some welcome the end of the ban on football matches; others say that such decision is premature because security measures since the incident have not been improved at all. Behind the scenes opinions are heard that the theme of football is used by the Government to divert attention from the far more serious topics, such as the judicial reform, police reform and the Egyptian security community reform in general.

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<sup>1</sup> It was a match of teams Al-Masri Port Said and Al-Ahli Cairo in the highest Egyptian football league. Between the two clubs and their supporters there is a longstanding rivalry. Al-Masri unexpectedly defeated the favored opponent 3: 1 and after the game the home fans ran on the pitch and attacked the Cairo fans and footballers. The attackers were armed with rods, knives and other weapons. At least 74 people died (mostly those related to the Al-Ahli club), and about a thousand others were injured. In the corresponding process 73 defendants were judged, including nine police officers and two football officials. After a series of appeals, the resulting verdicts in August 2015 were 11 death penalties and number of long-term imprisonments (El-Fekki, 2015).

Méronet (2009) is handling with the issue of anti-government (anti-establishment) activities in contemporary Saudi Arabia. It is a broad spectrum of activities, from various forms of physical violence, through some forms of conspiracy, radical expression on social networks etc. Specifics of one of the most orthodox Sunni Islam countries are examined in a microprobe related to the urban delinquency in Riyadh agglomeration. Hooligan subculture for local adolescents represents one of the few possible ways of escape from the rigid social control. Ahmad (2013) adds that hooliganism, overflowing into the streets, is also one of the few forms how foreign workers on the territory of Saudi Arabia vent their frustration.

Kath and Knijnik (2015) are describing the ties between the socio-political situation in Brazil and behaviour of sports spectators, which often spills over into the streets. They are in this regard paraphrasing the cultural anthropologist Anthony d'Andrea: *The grievances that protesters expressed were multifarious, including public transportation costs, expenditure on sporting mega events where investment in public health and education is lacking, police brutality, indigenous rights, government corruption, and others. A common analysis has been that these disparate issues manifest a deeper crisis of representation or state legitimacy; a sentiment that the state is not adequately representing the popular will* (Dent and Pinheiro-Machado, 2014). The role of football (soccer success) is emphasized as an important aspect in building the national pride. Setbacks in international competitions can trigger or intensify the anti-government demonstrations - and vice versa football success dampers antigovernment violence. It is thus a very specific "deradicalisation" factor.

## Trends and prospects

This section will consider some prominent theses regarding the potential prevention of the hooliganism phenomenon and will suggest how the psychological barriers that are on the way of achieving that ultimate goal should be overcome. For this purpose, two major schools of thought shall be introduced and their application to the current issue broadly discussed.

According to the proponent of the positivist school (e. g. Imre Lakatos' "protective belt" theory – see Poulton, 2012), what is essentially necessary to battle the hooliganism *malaise* is to simply accumulate statistics on the main perpetrators of hooliganism, on the provocateurs inspiring disorderly conduct, on the geographical concentration of criminal activity, as well as other relevant data. Once the data is there, Spaaij (2006) and Hopkins (2012) assume, it would be easy to conclude on commonalities and easier to extract overall trends regarding how the problem should be tackled.

The antipode to this thesis and, maybe, more promising approach lies in firmly entrenched belief in Alexander Wendt's and Michel Foucault's post-positivist theory. According to both Wendt and Foucault, and also Giulianotti et al (2007) and Jones (1997), self-perception, as well as perception of others, is being determined by identities and norms - as simple as that. So, in essence how one views a particular person or phenomenon, depends on one's self-constructed imagery regarding that person or phenomenon. What is revolutionary about the de-constructivist vision is that the identities and norms that form a person's worldview are not rigid - *i.e.* one is

not confined to his stereotypical vision of things but once consciously identifying the limitations of his principles and norms could deconstruct and build up a new vision.

This theory appears particularly relevant to hooliganism mainly because, as stipulated above, precisely identity is one of the main reasons as to why sport related fans engage in criminal endeavours and why police retaliation (according to some authors) goes over the boundaries of what is necessary. Therefore, what Giulianotti et al (2007), as well as Poulton (2012) and Jones (1997) in essence suggests is that the problem of identity formation that might later exhibit an adverse communal impact in regard to a football fan who has gone radical because he is parentless, for instance, is dissected appropriately and delivered to the fan, himself. Various seminars could very well serve the purpose of elucidating the main social problems, stemming from identity formation and to raise general awareness on the topic.

Police “brutality” could also be tackled through the direct application of the post-positivist approach. What needs to be done, Spaaij (2006), Giulianotti et al (2007) and Jones (1997) believes, is to again deconstruct the identity the police officer has built over the years - as a rivalry of the potentially unruly sport related fan. In essence, the law enforcement authorities need to stop perceiving the football fan necessarily as an enemy, but rather as a subject necessitating protection. Lecture at various police departments could do the job of de-radicalizing the rigid notion that has been established within the police mindset.

Of course, providing the police (and public security authorities in general) with comprehensive lectures in regard to how hooliganism needs to be confronted and approached might not be very useful in the peak of emotion or when manifestations of hooliganism trigger a nervous breakdown in the lines of the law enforcement organs. Therefore, in such circumstances it is necessary that precaution measures at the stadiums are preliminarily taken to limit the scope of damage a psychologically affected police officer could insert. These measures may take the form of segregating both the overly disturbed by the circumstances police officers or solely the fans that are causing the mayhem instead of chaotically protecting each other’s lines and spreading violence in multiple directions (Jones 1997).

What becomes a noticeable trend is the fact that hooliganism certainly is not a phenomenon that appears exclusively in stadiums, but this subculture “spills over” to other environments as well.

Helseth (2013) is of the opinion that the far-right - despite a growing presence online and in the media - was neither successful in the context of organizing on-street demonstrations nor able to form strong alliances in the demonstrations being held. Simultaneously, through the data collection it was observed that that the environment nevertheless was strongly represented in the online sphere. Thus, this thesis analyses and discusses this apparent discrepancy between the online and on-street mobilization of the British far-right. This is done through an analysis of the networks, which are created online in the form of hyperlinks between the far-right actors. The first key finding is that British far-right groups are connected and engaging in relations online to a much lower extent than anticipated. This finding is subsequently analysed and discussed in the light of key attributes and mechanisms known to influence the mobilizing potential of the far-right scene. From this analysis and discussion it is argued that the online sphere may provide strong opportunities for

single groups and ideologically oriented actors to mobilize, but that this in itself often prevents the potential for large-scale alliances and mobilization of the environment as a whole. The issues of acting collectively are not overcome on a group level, due to each group's ideological and local orientation. Even more, the online sphere has, despite of its influence on on-street mobilization, often become the end stop for the radical journey of new far-right actors. In other words, the British far-right environment fails to become a strong social network online and on-street. The radicalization of Islamic groups and the radicalization of the extreme right in the United Kingdom often go hand in hand. Some groups of British protesters have far more aims than simply the political ones. They try to build a sense of belonging that is linked to their roots in the environment of football hooliganism. In addition to choreography in stadiums, the "hard-core" members are trying to create their choreography on the streets.

Several studies explore the phenomenon of the European Defence League within the United Kingdom<sup>1</sup> (the name of the group itself refers to the "league", i. e. the football or sports terminology).

Jackson and Feldman (2011) are of the opinion that the European Defence League is not simply a redoubt for fascists. Some of its violent support associates with the football hooligan scene, where ultra-patriotic pride simply goes with the territory. More significantly, when it comes to mobilising numbers on the streets it is the EDL's nativist clamour for recognition, crudely articulated through sometimes racist and often violent Islamophobic language, which above all resonates with disenfranchised, disengaged, and resentful sections of the white working-class. In the throes of an English identity crisis, buffeted by socio-economic change, their concern is not with some fascist revolution but with the loss of national and cultural identity. EDL also represents some kind of "second career" for a number of former hooligans who use their mutual relations and effective communication channels for the existence of radical political scene. Their negative attitude towards Muslims - football players - is transformed into a negative attitude towards Muslims in general (football hooliganism was a fertile ground for the growth of anti-Muslim sentiment). The hooligans' role in the framework of Combat-18<sup>2</sup> or during riots in Oldham<sup>3</sup> in 2001 is also mentioned. Some groups even expressed their consent with Anders Breivik's positions, including support for the Israel in the Middle East. There is also a potential of "lone wolf" actions from the people belonging to such subculture.

Barlett and Littler (2011) further comment that the EDL is the biggest populist street movement in a generation. Since it was founded in 2009 it has rarely been out of the news, with many commentators arguing that it represents a greater - and different - challenge to social cohesion than the British National Party (BNP),<sup>4</sup> largely because its modus operandi is not organised electoral campaigning, but volatile street demonstrations. The paper is a first attempt to gain a clear understanding of

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<sup>1</sup> *English Defence League*. <<http://www.englishdefenceleague.org/>>.

<sup>2</sup> *Combat-18*. <<http://www.combat18.org/>>.

<sup>3</sup> Oldham: A town still divided? *Independent on Sunday*, 26<sup>th</sup> May 2011.

<<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/this-britain/oldham-a-town-still-divided-2289002.html>>.

<sup>4</sup> *British National Party*. <<http://www.bnp.org.uk/>>.

the motivations, concerns and attitudes of online supporters of the EDL. Elections-related activities are unattractive for numerous individuals (for people under 18 years of age these are traditionally irrelevant). What seems more attractive for them are street marches and activities related to football hooliganism. EDL activities also play a role in the radicalization of Muslims in Britain. The paper is based on an innovative way of collecting data, which brings both strengths and weaknesses to the quality of the results. These are explained fully and should be borne in mind when interpreting and understanding these results. Generating new data sets through social media sources is likely to be an important area of research in the years ahead and we welcome others getting in touch to improve on the methodologies applied here.

A specific microprobe, prepared by Johnson (2006) is related to the brief article in the daily newspaper describing the ambitions to build a mosque for 80,000 people at Wembley. Opponents and supporters of the project in this context are constantly radicalized. Commenting on the article echoes a rather interesting statement that football is a “modern religion” and matches have the same role as religious masses. Muslims argue that if football fans can “pray”, why the followers of Islam should not do the same.

## **Summary**

Based on the findings, contained, at least indicatively, in the above-mentioned documents, it can be stated, *inter alia*, the following:

Groups or subcultures of football hooligans may serve as an example of the efforts to obtain local or other forms of identity and building a sense of belonging (see Brown, 2004; Helseth, 2013; Jackson and Feldman, 2011; Neumann, 2013).

Often, though not exclusively, it is the attitude of individuals, experiencing some form of accumulation of deprived and depriving positions, problems with access to the civil society, and threats of a social, political, religious or criminal radicalisation (see Bassuener, 2011; Helsinki Charter, 2009; Armstrong and Vest, 2013; El-Zatmah, 2012).

Radicalisation processes can obviously occur both within the hooligans' subculture and outside it, or concurrently interact with other influences. An individual takes the values of the collective, which in turn appreciates his (or her) as individuals (e.g. Podaliri and Balestri, 1998). Groups of hooligans as subsections of the radical (political, ideological) structures then usually excel higher degree of agility and experience with violent clashes (see also the current situation in Ukraine, Kuzio, 2013 etc.).

Certain traditional views concerning the identity, or police “brutality”, are complemented by a new paradigm. This paradigm does not see hooliganism and politics-related radicalisation as separate concepts. There are far more links between “stadiums” and the “outer world” than what may be seen in the general discourse (spill over effect).

Ultras within many countries form the core support of many football clubs. On the other hand, their violent behaviour brings many complications, including the necessity of the costly investments in security measures at stadiums and beyond.

Spectator violence in some way differs from violence realized by the followers of the radical political parties, other movements or religious groups. Resistance to organization and preferring the “spontaneity” (spontaneous violence) is usually (not always) the sign of hooligans. That does not mean that certain parts of hooligan subculture cannot be personally connected, or be precursors to “politically more ambitious” activities (European Defence League in the United Kingdom, other far-right groups in many European countries, extended arm of oligarchs in some post-socialist countries, organizational core of the protests during the Arab Spring etc.).

Various forms of extremism, in Europe especially the right wing oriented, can be understood as a **certain by-product of violent intimidation and brutal hooliganism**. Some soccer rowdies do prefer “spontaneous violence“, some can play a role also in more sophisticated forms of violent behaviour (e.g. Jackson and Feldman, 2011; Bartlett and Littler, 2011).

As already indicated, the ideological concept of hooligans can evoke numerous parallel identities (non-ideological hooligans, far right, far left, resentment against immigrants, resistance against establishment, resistance against Islam, homophobia, misogynous attitudes etc.). The notion of the **term “radicalization” is value-neutral**. It is always necessary to consider against whom or what society or subculture, including football hooligans, the radicalisation takes place - whether it is another group of individuals, establishment in general, formal authority, or an authoritarian regime (see Duke, 1990; El-Zatmah, 2012; Dorsey, 2013; Ménoret, 2009; Dennis, 2006).

Definitely, the topic does not cover the area of the Western Europe exclusively. Very specific may be the role of hooligans in specific regions (Southeast Europe, post-socialist countries, Arab states), where they may constitute the core organizational groupings (however very specific) within social change efforts and streams.

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## RESUMÉ

**Kořeny příčin a motivace “se sportem souvisejícího diváckého násilí”.** Příspěvek si klade za cíl sumarizovat obsah širokého spektra současných studií, které se z různých úhlů vztahují k problematice diváckého násilí. Získaná zjištění jsou integrována do tematických kapitol, ve snaze docílit “informační přidané hodnoty” pro zainteresované čtenáře.

**Klíčová slova:** divácké násilí, studie, syntéza, přehled, aktuální trendy.

## SUMMARY

The paper aims to summarize the content of a wide range of contemporary studies, from different angles related to the issue of spectator violence. The findings are integrated into thematic chapters in order to achieve "information added value" for interested readers.

**Keywords:** sport related spectators violence, studies, synthesis, overview, current trends.