Football Yobbery: The Social Organization of European Soccer

Pakky M. Gerkin

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FOOTBALL YOBBERY: THE SOCIAL ORGANIZATION OF EUROPEAN SOCCER

by

Pakky M. Gerkin

A Thesis
Submitted to the
Faculty of The Graduate College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the
Degree of Master of Arts
Department of Sociology

Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, Michigan
August 2001
This study is an investigation of European football fans, known as hooligans. For this research, I went to the European Football Championships in the summer of 2000. During a two-month field research project, I observed the soccer games and the many fans who gathered for the tournament. In the course of the research, I spoke with several individuals and explored the existing literature in the sociology of sport. This work has been created through a combination of my own ethnographic work, and an extensive literature review. I have attempted to interweave both my own experiences and those of others to help me in the exploratory process.

I concluded from my research that the sport of soccer and the wider world within which the game is situated are very much connected. My research also showed that the locale of the violence has shifted from the arena to the much larger cities. Policing hooligans has become a major issue for those interested in holding soccer events; and many distinctions can be made between hooliganism within countries and hooliganism internationally.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to begin by thanking the members of my graduate committee, Dr. Gregory Howard, Dr. Ron Kramer and Dr. Tim Diamond for all of their time and effort on this project. A special thanks goes to Dr. Tim Diamond for the time he has contributed and his never-ending enthusiasm. I would also like to thank Karen Rice for her contributions in editing and formatting.

Secondly, I would like to thank my good friends Jelmer, Wytse and the entire Miedema family for treating me with such hospitality during my stay in Europe. I can’t wait to see you all again.

Finally, I would like to thank my family for their support and friendship. You are all the best!

Pakky M. Gerkin
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CHAPTER I

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODS

Preface

Let me start by proposing a challenge. I simply want you to try and live one day without witnessing the influence of sport on American culture. Those who read newspapers will fail. Those who watch television will fail. Those who leave their homes will fail. Whether they consider themselves to be competitors or fans, the influence of sport on American culture cannot be denied.

Athletes have been used to promote everything from candy bars to car insurance. Billboards are plastered with pictures of sports competitors. Sports stadiums are packed to full capacity day after day. This discussion only scratches the surface in describing the involvement of sport in American culture.

There is no denying that Americans and people all over the world have an overwhelming hunger for sports competition. Sport, whether in the form of spectatorship or participation has permeated nearly every social institution. The existence of sports as a form of popular culture is evident in the way it has been dramatized in film and books and, perhaps even more, by its infiltrating discussions at the dinner table and even around the workplace water cooler.

The financial aspects of sport are amazing. Millions upon
millions of dollars are spent daily on sports equipment, tickets for sporting events, pay-per-view events and the like. Not to mention the fact that athletes are by far the highest paid individuals in the world.


Americans are sportophiles, but Americans are not unique in the excitement, enthusiasm, dedication, and fanaticism that participation and spectator sports engender. A similar sport fervor can be observed in other parts of the world, and it is easy to demonstrate the pervasiveness and penetration of sport in society. The time, money, energy, and emotion invested in sport implies that our games are more than frivolous, carefree and inconsequential activities. (p. 2)

Today's children are socialized into sports at a young age. Organized leagues exist for children as young as six years of age in any number of sports. Children grow up idolizing sports legends and fantasizing about their own professional sports careers. Recently, sports have been recognized as aiding the socialization process, and many have begun to examine the socialization that is occurring via participation in sports. It has long been recognized that sports can teach people the fundamentals of team work, discipline, leadership and cooperation, to name a few. Participation in games and physical behavior are both parts of the socialization process, whether one recognizes it or not. According to George H. Mead (1934), the game was an illustration of the situation out of which the organized personality arose. Insofar as the child does take the attitude of the other and allows that attitude of the other to determine the things he is doing with reference to a common end, [the
child] is becoming an organized member of society. The child is
taking over the morale of the society and is becoming an essential
member of it.

Sporting events have played a major role in many societies
throughout history. Perhaps the greatest example of this is the
ancient Olympic games. These games, which even today hold the
attention of viewers around the world, serve to prove that interest
in sports is never-ending. The Greeks fascination with sport and
its heroes is clear through the amount of documentation they have
left behind to honor these athletes. Because of their greatness,
statues were erected, poems and stories written, and in some cases,
records kept of the accomplishments of these early participants.
The fact that these ancient competitors were treated with such re-
spect should come as no surprise. Athletes in this year’s Olympic
games will be treated no differently.

According to the Statistical Abstract of the United States
(Washington, D.C. U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1995), Table 1 shows
the number of participation ins sports activities in 1995, and
Table 2 shows the number of spectators at major sports events for
1995. It is apparent that a significant portion of the population
in the United States is either fans of sport or competitors them-
selves.

Eitzen and Sage (1997) state that

Sport is an institution that provides scientific observers with
a convenient laboratory within which to examine values, social-
izations, stratification, and bureaucracy to name a few struc-
tures and processes that also exist at the societal level. The types of games people choose to play, the degree of competitiveness, the types of rules, the constraints on the participants, the groups that do and do not benefit under the existing arrangements, the rate and type of change, and the reward system in sport provide us with a microcosm of the society in which sport is embedded. (p. 14)

Thus it can be stated that sports and the games we play can reveal many interesting things about us as individuals, and our culture.

Table 1
Participation in Sports Activities, 1995

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sports Activity</th>
<th>Number (in 1,000s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exercise Walking*</td>
<td>64,427</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming*</td>
<td>61,353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishing (fresh and salt water)</td>
<td>57,412</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bicycle Riding*</td>
<td>47,918</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camping</td>
<td>42,698</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bowling</td>
<td>41,305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercise (with equipment)*</td>
<td>34,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basketball</td>
<td>29,631</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aerobic Exercising*</td>
<td>24,886</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golf</td>
<td>22,633</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volleyball</td>
<td>20,477</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Running/jogging</td>
<td>20,283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiking</td>
<td>19,462</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunting</td>
<td>18,455</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Softball</td>
<td>17,943</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baseball</td>
<td>16,682</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skiing (alpine and cross-country)</td>
<td>14,222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennis</td>
<td>14,197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calisthenics*</td>
<td>10,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Football</td>
<td>14,723</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target Shooting</td>
<td>12,804</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soccer</td>
<td>10,273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Backpacking</td>
<td>9,229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racquetball</td>
<td>5,407</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*More women than men
Table 2
Number of Spectators at Major Sports Events, 1995

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sports Events</th>
<th>Number (in 1,000s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Major League Baseball</td>
<td>71,237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thoroughbred Racing</td>
<td>49,275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Football</td>
<td>34,871</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Basketball (Men's)</td>
<td>28,527</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Basketball (Women's)</td>
<td>4,193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greyhoun Racing</td>
<td>28,003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Basketball</td>
<td>19,120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Hockey</td>
<td>17,545</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Football</td>
<td>14,772</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jai Alai</td>
<td>4,634</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Introduction

The term hooligan was introduced in the 1890s as an alternative to the term street arab or ruffian. The term is now readily applied to the passionate soccer fans who emerged as a collective in the 1960s and continue to be associated with the game of soccer. Prior to 1970, hooliganism attracted little attention. A great many people were injured and even killed in the violence surrounding soccer matches, but the European public was oblivious. It was not until the late 1970s and early '80s that soccer hooligans became of interest. In the years that followed, the English are said to have spread the "English disease" throughout Europe. The English disease that they are referring to is hooliganism. While hooliganism has remained a constant part of the game throughout the years, there have been many changes in the world in which the hooligans are situated.
These changes reflect a number of factors, including efforts made by the police and other authorities, as well as economic and political conditions.

Most of the blame for the rise of hooliganism lies with the English. In England, hooliganism has always been a working-class phenomenon. Soccer for that matter, until recent years, was the game of the working class. In the mid-’70s, stadiums were filled to capacity with working-class men who used soccer as an escape from their otherwise laborious lives. Hooliganism was an outlet for their aggression and a source of entertainment. However, as the hooligan element continued to grow and spread throughout Europe, the authorities began to recognize the seriousness of the battle they were about to face.

The battle began in England and continues to rage in the form of an economic war. Slowly but surely, the working class has been pushed out of the game by a more profitable and higher-class crowd. Through my research, I have found that higher ticket prices and increased security have given the English stadiums a whole new atmosphere. The result is that the hooligans have been removed from the stadium and forced to conduct their activities elsewhere. Since this transition, the violence within the stadiums and the surrounding grounds has decreased. Club officials are quite happy with this turn of events; it is a case of out of sight, out of mind. The working class in England has supported soccer when no one else cared, paying for tickets week in and week out, and doing all they
could to help their team. Now that soccer has become trendy, and it is “cool” to be seen at a soccer game, the working class is being left behind. They are being economically eliminated from the picture. This economic battle has caused a lot of resentment toward club owners and those who seem to be exploiting the game to maximize their personal benefit.

While the economic struggle continues in England, the rest of Europe is changing as well. The hooligan element has now become a more specialized and organized unit because of heightened security and increased police efforts to control hooligans. Hooligans have organized themselves into gangs, known throughout Europe as firms. Firms follow their team from venue to venue in search of a good scrap. Fighting is their main interest. The game of soccer has become a side note, and the real thrill is the fight. Win, lose or draw, the firm is there to fight. The brilliant buzz, or adrenalin rush, that fighting provides is what they want, and all too often that is what they get. It is not uncommon for firms to be in contact with each other in weeks prior to their teams meeting to set a time and place away from the authorities for a good fight. Firms also have been known to meet days before a game or on weeks when their teams are not even playing.

With the emergence of the firms has come a more specialized unit of hooligans. Hooligans now can be identified and classified in terms of their participation in a particular firm. This is evidenced by the way firm members are highly recognized by each other,
the police and other authorities, and even sometimes the public.
The firm has developed, through time, into a way of life for those
who are interested in maintaining the lifestyle of a soccer hooligan.
Firms organize people into a world in which members share a common
goal: the buzz achieved by acts of hooliganism.

International competition continues to see a decline in acts
of hooliganism. Through my research, I have found several factors
that contribute to this decline. Europe is unifying. The creation
of the European Union and its continuing success and growth are
bringing the European nations closer together. It appears that each
nation is beginning to recognize the benefit and importance of the
success of the European Union. Many of these countries are united
in adopting a single currency. While each country is to retain the
right to design and print its own notes, the money will have value
in other countries as well.

As is often the case in regard to sports, changes in a coun-
try's culture or cultural values many times reflect alterations
within the major sports played by its people. In this particular
case, more friendly relations in the political realm have lead to
better relations between the countries' citizens and, more impor-
tantly, their soccer fans. Instead of fighting, many countries
are beginning to follow the lead of the Dutch, who have exported
their carnival-type atmosphere. They celebrate soccer as a game and
as a competition.
The conceptual framework that I am working under lies within the sociology of sport. Sport is a large social institution in and of itself. Contained within sport are many complex issues, such as racism, economics, crime, socialization, sexism, etc. All of these areas are relevant to the field of sport. Through the methods and contributions provided by sociology, we are able to gain knowledge and give meaning to our actions involving sports. Figler and Whitaker (1991) state that

the key to such an approach is sociology, the science concerned with the structure of human organization and the systems of human relationships. Sociology offers us the conceptual and procedural tools we need to unlock the mysteries of collective human behavior and to discover what is and is not true about our social world. Most important for us, it can enable us to separate fact from fiction within the institution of sport, our chief concern. (p. 3)

Sports are viewed by many as a microcosm of the larger society within which they are situated. What this means is that sports often reflect the values and structures of the greater culture, and vice versa. Thus, a study of sports played by a culture may well provide us with information about that culture as a whole. We often will find that changes in the values and beliefs within a culture are mirrored by alterations in sports that reflect larger cultural adaptations. Leonard (1998) cites Eitzen and Sage stating that

sport is an institution that provides scientific observers with a convenient laboratory within which to examine values, socialization, stratification, and bureaucracy to name a few structures and processes that also exist at the societal level. The types of games people choose to play, the degree
of competitiveness, the types of rules, the constraints on the participants, the groups that do and do not benefit under the existing arrangements, the rate and type of change, and the reward system in sport provide us with a microcosm of the society in which the sport is embedded. (p. 14)

The infiltration of sports into nearly every social institution effectively demonstrates the pervasiveness of the sports’ impact on our culture. In America, sports like baseball and football were created, in part, by a changing American culture. Voight (1974), for example, states "American baseball’s evolution from a loosely organized to a bureaucratic structure reflected the socioeconomic changes occurring in the larger society" (pp. 23-25). Along much the same lines, Riesman and Denney (1951) traced the transition of rugby into American football and noted that "the process of change was consistent with the dominant American ethos" (pp. 309-319). In fact, Nixon (1976) notes that

one could interpret the introduction of running, the minimum yardage rule, mass play, and the forward pass as responses to the need of American spectators for constant excitement and visible action. The emergence of clear, standardized, formal rules could be seen as a result of the increasing diversity of the social backgrounds of participants in football. This expansion of participation, which was consistent with the American democratic ideology, demanded formalization of the rules to prevent differences of opinion that informal collegiate, class, or local interpretations could produce. The rationalization of the game could be viewed as a partial outcome of the capitalistic emphasis on productive efficiency in American society ... the sports arena will accommodate itself and its culture to the rules and themes embodied in the broader culture of the society ... the culture of sport and the process of sports socializations bear some important similarities to the patterns of culture and socialization in the broader societal context. (p. 14)

This point might also serve to explain the reasons why soccer has not developed into a major spectator sport in America. People
want to see goals, just as they want to see touchdowns and baskets. Even baseball provides more hits or runs than the average soccer game. For many Americans, there simply is not enough action in the game of soccer. It is not uncommon for a soccer game to go the full 90 minutes and as long as 30 minutes of extra time without even one goal. Soccer simply does not fit the fast-paced style of scoring that many other American games provide, and that the American people want to see. In conversations with many Americans, I have heard it said, "Soccer is boring."

Another great example of a sport that embodies the cultural values of the larger society is bullfighting in Mexico. Leonard cites Zurcher and Meadow (1972) by stating that Zurcher and Meadow correlated Mexico’s national sport, bullfighting, with the country’s socialization practices. According to those authors, the national sport and the Mexican family both reflect cultural themes of death, dominance, personal relationships, respect, fear, hatred for authority, and passive aggressive character structures. Recently the sport of bullfighting has undergone some changes as a result of protest over its inhumane treatment of animals and excessive violence and destruction. Zurcher and Meadow suggest that the change in the sport paralleled recent alteration in the macho (virility) complex in Mexican culture and the decline of authoritarianism in the Mexican family. In short, changes in sport and the larger society tend to reinforce each other. (pp. 14-15)

It is also interesting to note that as a sport is introduced into a new culture the people will adapt the game so that the rules and purpose of the game coincide with the larger rules of the culture. Leonard cites as an example the integration of the European game of soccer into the Tangu culture of New Guinea. The Tangu culture is based on equality. Leonard (1998) states, "The idea of defeating
opposing parties through competition disturbs them because they
believe winning fosters ill will and contempt among the partici-
pants" (p. 64). The Tangu adapted the game simply by changing
the object of the game. In the Tangu version of the game, the
object is for each team to score an equal number of goals in the
allotted time. Viewing sports as a microcosm of the larger society
allows one to argue that the institution of sports can express the
core values in the named society. Figler and Whitaker cite Edwards
(1973) by stating that

sport... has primary functions in disseminating and reinforcing
the values regulating behavior and goal attainment and deter­
mining acceptable solutions to problems in the secular sphere
of life. ... This channeling affects not only perspectives on
sport, but ... affects and aids in regulating perceptions of life
in general. (pp. 48-53)

Thus, sports can play a rather significant and meaningful purpose in
our lives. For some sports are part of the socialization process
and they can teach valuable lessons such as teamwork, and good
sportsmanship.

Methods

The title of this research is "Football Yobbery: The Social
Organization of European Hooligans." In particular I am focusing my
attention on violent behavior surrounding soccer matches. The vio­
 lent behavior in this case can range from verbal altercations to
riots and fighting, where death is not an uncommon experience. Also,
I will explore the world of soccer hooligans, known throughout Europe
as firms. Firms exist for the sole purpose of committing acts of
soccer yobbery. They are organized and often plan attacks against rival firms.

From June, 10 to July, 2 of 2000, some of the best soccer teams in the world came together to battle it out for the Henry Delaunay trophy, which is awarded to the winner of the European Championships of soccer. This tournament, hosted by the Netherlands and Belgium in 2000, has a long history of hooligan-related violence. It was at this tournament in 1985 that 39 people were killed in what has now become known as the day that shamed soccer.

For one month, I spent my time in and around several of the Dutch cities, taking part in the celebration of soccer known as the European Championships.

My first research method is a technique known as participant observation. This is a research method used by individuals on a daily basis. One uses field research when he or she participates in or observes any form of social behavior and attempts to understand it. Earl Babbie (1998) states that perhaps the most natural technique for doing social research involves simply going where the action is and observing it, not unlike newspaper reporting. This is, in fact, a well established social research method called field research. In one form of this technique—participant observation—the researcher actually joins in the events under study and examines the phenomenon from the inside. (p. 8)

A second method of research used in this study is interviews. During my time in Europe, I spoke with several individuals on various topics related the soccer hooliganism. These were not structured interviews, but rather engaging conversations about hooligans. I
used these conversations, several of which have been referenced in this work, to help me explore the world of hooligans. These discussions also facilitated my final research tool.

Lastly, this piece is largely composed of a literature review. I was able to use the experiences from my time in Europe to open many doors for me and to expose me to new concepts and ideas for later exploration. I examined several autobiographical works of former soccer hooligans, as well as scholarly journals and texts. This piece would not be what it is today without the use of this last research technique.

Limitations of Research

I recognize that this research has its limitations. First and foremost, two months cannot afford anyone the opportunity to adequately explore the world of soccer hooligans through the use of participant observation research. Fortunately, I have been able to supplement my research and build on my conclusions from the works of others. In my reading of the works of several former soccer thugs, I have been able to gather some consistent findings. I have attempted to use these finding to help me organize and support my own conclusions.

Key Concepts

Hooligan--a European soccer fan who chooses to engage in acts of hooliganism.
Hooliganism--acts of violence, including fighting and rioting, sometimes resulting in great bodily harm and or death. It can also be the cause of large amounts of monetary damage. This violence has a strong association with soccer matches in Europe.

Yob--same as hooligan.

Yobbery--same as hooliganism.

Firm--A gang of hooligans. The firm refers to a soccer gang. This is a gang of individuals who travel together in support of their respective teams to fight and riot with other firm members.
CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

History

Soccer is the most popular sport in the world. While in most areas of the world the game is actually referred to as football, I will continue throughout this paper to refer to the game as soccer. This is done to avoid any confusion with American football, the more popular sport in this country.

The governing body for international soccer is the Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), which is headquartered in Zurich, Switzerland. Every four years, international teams from around the world come together to vie for one of the most coveted trophies in the game of soccer. This event is, perhaps, the most popular sporting event in the world. The 1990 World Cup final held the attention of over 1 billion viewers.

Soccer finally caught the attention of U.S. fans when the United States hosted the tournament in 1994. It was a shining moment for U.S. soccer. Soccer players like Alexi Lalas, John Harkes and Tab Ramos burst onto the scene and used the event as a stepping stone to help create enthusiasm for the creation of the MLS (Major League of Soccer). The success of the MLS, now into its fifth season, was no guarantee. There were many skeptics, but it now appears that the league is here to stay. Five years later,
the sport received an even bigger boost when the women’s national team was given the opportunity to host the event. This cup final, which found the United States battling for the World Cup trophy on its home soil against China, was the most watched women’s sporting event in history. It was a dramatic finish, as the United States, under the sure left foot of Brandi Chastain, put the game away in penalty kicks after playing 120 minutes of scoreless soccer. Now famous women like Michelle Akers, Mia Hamm and the shirtless Brandi Chastain are hoping to cash in on their success by following in the footsteps of their male counterparts and creating a professional league for women in the United States.

While soccer has a rather brief history in the United States its roots predate recorded history. Melanie James and Jeremy Friedlander (1976) state:

Soccer descends from the ancient British football game that also produced rugby and American football. A rather free-form sport at first, it often degenerated into huge street brawls. The pastime was periodically banned by various kings, roundly condemned by scholars and poets, and heartily enjoyed by the masses. (pp. 170-175)

The sport was first organized in 1863, when the London Football Association issued the first set of rules. Since that time, most all advancements in the game can be credited to the English. They were the first to hold international matches. They also introduced professionalism in 1885 and were the first to create a full-time league in the 1888. The game was then exported throughout the world by British sailors in the years to follow. A great advancement for soccer took place in 1908, the year soccer was named an
Olympic sport. By 1930, there was enough interest in the game the world over to guarantee the success of the first World Cup. Thirteen countries entered, and the World Cup tradition had begun.

The first major step for soccer in the United States occurred in 1959, when the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) named soccer an official collegiate sport, with a national championship tournament. In 1967, the North American Soccer League (NASL) was formed with the help of perhaps the greatest player to ever play the game, Pele. This league, which no longer exists, made soccer the fastest growing sport in America. Pele joined the New York Cosmos of the NASL in 1975 and drew record numbers in terms of fans to NASL contests. Today, soccer continues to be one fastest growing sports in the United States. For more information on the history of soccer see The Sports Encyclopedia (1976).

To examine the world of European soccer and its supporters, it is imperative to examine this relationship on two different levels. First, there is the international competitions. Major competitions at this level include the World Cup, and the European Championship of soccer to name two. The second level, which carries with it some basic similarities as well as differences, is soccer at the club level. Within each country, there are often several divisions of club teams that compete against each other and come together on occasion for competition as well. While there are many similarities, or characteristics shared by these groups, and membership in both categories can occur simultaneously they deserve the separate
attention. I intend to tackle discussions of these groups individually to help explain what drives them to be so passionate about their sport.

While the English have undoubtedly received much of the blame for revolutionizing and popularizing the hooligan element of soccer in the late '70s and early '80s, this phenomenon had occurred years earlier, not only in Europe but also in other areas of the world. Reports of violence at soccer matches date back to as early as 1913. In Ireland, for example, from 1913 to 1920, violence at soccer matches was a rather common occurrence. Also, in 1920, at a match in Villoggio, Italy, the police were called upon to intervene and stop fighting between fans. On this occasion, the violence resulted in the death of the head referee. (For more information on these incidents and many more, see England My England, Brimson and Brimson, 1996).

To seek the true beginning of violence with soccer, it is also important to examine the phenomenon in other areas of the world. South Americans likewise seem to carry this violent passion for the game. Brimson and Brimson in their book, England My England: The Trouble With the National Football Team, state:

Far and away the worst incident we came across anywhere occurred in Peru, in 1964, when the national team took on Argentina. Following a disallowed goal, the crowd erupted, and during the mayhem, frenzy and panic that followed, 318 people died and 500 more were injured. Yet in Argentina, the problems and consequences surrounding that match were soon forgotten by those intent on causing trouble. Just four years later, at a fixture between River Plate and Boca Juniors, 74 died and 150 were injured as Boca fans threw lighted papers onto the fans below, sending them into a panic. Many other incidents,
involving fatalities, throughout that continent could also be listed. (pp. 40-41)

The violence in South America was by no means the only violence going on at that time. In fact, Brimson and Brimson continue:

In 1967, as the two Turkish sides, Kayseri and Sivas, met, 44 were killed and 600 injured. Rioting fans used pistols, bottles, and knives at the game, and trouble spread back to Sivas itself, where cars were overturned and set on fire. Things got so out of hand that the Turkish Army was called in to restore order. (pp. 41-42)

One could go on for days reporting on the violence between soccer fans worldwide. This phenomenon is not simply a European problem; it can be found the world over. The Social Issues Research Centre (at http://www.sirc.org/publik/fvexec.html) states, "It is clear that some form of disorderly behaviour has occurred in virtually every country in which football is played. Disorder of some kind appears to be a near-universal and seemingly inevitable accompaniment of the game." This does not, however, mean that there can be a universal explanation for the violence. The SIRC continues:

Football-related disorder is not, however, necessarily of the same nature, or influenced by the same causal factors, in all of the cultures in which it occurs. Even the most dogmatic academics have come to admit that 'universal' explanations cannot accommodate all cross-cultural variations.

All of these incidents and many more unreported here occurred well before the English explosion of soccer violence, yet the English seem to receive all of the blame for this problem. This explosion of soccer violence took place in the late 1970s and the early 1980s. It was during this time that the so called English disease was said to have spread throughout the rest of the world. Brimson
and Brimson (1996) state:

When talking about European club competitions and international fixtures, two words go hand in had, 'England' and 'violence'. During the late seventies and early eighties the spread of the 'English disease' was at its height. As English clubs dominated on the field, the fans left behind a trail of destruction on the terraces and streets of Europe. ... (p. 37)

While there is no denying that an explosion in soccer violence did occur in these years, it is really far from being entirely the fault of the English. They were far from innocent, but several other factors need to be examined.

The English began their rise to the top of European hooliganism in the late 1970s. By the early '80s, the English had gained a reputation that they have not been able to escape to this day. By that time, UEFA (pronounced You- A- Fa) had been keeping close tabs on the English and had been threatening to ban English club teams from international competition if their behavior did not improve.

Following a horrific outbreak of violence before, during and after a European Championships qualifier between England and Denmark, the authorities were still not ready to take action. Again in 1983, at another European Championships qualifier, a game which saw the English 4-0 victors but not yet secure in their bid for Euro 84 the English fans turned loose in Luxembourg cities. This outbreak brought a warning from UEFA but still no ban.

On May 29, 1985, the English turned the European Cup Championships in Brussels into one of the largest catastrophes in fan violence history. This day has gone down in infamy and is known by many as the day that shamed soccer. This match, Juventus versus Liver-
pool, erupted in violence and caused 39 deaths and hundreds of injuries. The small amount of security had no hope of detaining the Liverpool fans, fueled by all-day drinking, from getting at the Juventus fans seated farther down in the same stands. As the Juventus fans fled for their lives, a retaining wall collapsed under the pressure, and many of the fans were trapped underneath. The game continued, and Juventus went on to claim victory, but it would be a victory hardly worth celebrating. The day’s events left UEFA with no choice but to sanction the English clubs. It acted swiftly in handing down a ban on all English clubs from international competition. UEFA’s intention was clear. The ban was not to be lifted until the English fans proved that they could control themselves, and UEFA felt comfortable that the hooligan element was under control.

By the onset of the European Championships in 1988, the English were well-established as the worst hooligans in the world. As Euro 88 began, the English were well-aware that UEFA, along with all of Europe would be watching their every move. Euro 88 was hosted by Germany, which meant that many English would be able to make the short trip to support their team. Many did, and although Euro 88 was pulled off without any major violence on the part of the English, the ban was not lifted.

The World Cup to be hosted by Italy in 1990 was the next big test, and an opportunity for the English fans to prove to UEFA that they could behave. UEFA attempted to secure the deal by tempting the English with a promise of lifting the ban if they could behave.
It would appear that many of the English took UEFA at its word and at least made an attempt to avoid trouble. There were several outbursts of violence throughout the tournament, but the English fans seemed to be missing from the violence. There was an occasional scuffle between the English and various other groups, but, by and large, it appeared that the English had behaved rather well. After the tournament, UEFA held true to its word, allowing both Manchester United and Aston Villa back into European competition. They did remark, however, that this would be a test to see if, in fact, the English had learned their lesson. For more on this portion of European soccer history see Brimson and Brimson (1996).

It is this portion of the history that most people are aware of and the reason for which the English have been blamed for much of the hooligan element surrounding soccer in Europe. However, it is also important to examine a few other factors that surely helped catapult the rise of soccer hooliganism in these years. First, there is the issue of the media. During the mid-'70s and early 80s, along with the spreading of the English disease, there seemed to be an accompanying media fascination with hooligans and their violent behavior. In particular, the English media seemed to be fascinated. The SIRC (http://www.sirc.org/publik/fvexec.html) reports:

Football hooliganism is a highly visible phenomenon, as journalists and TV cameras are present at virtually every match. Since the 1960s, journalists have been sent to football matches to report on crowd behaviour as much as on the game itself. ... Many researchers, and many non-academic observers, have argued that this sensationalism, together with a 'predictive' approach whereby violence at certain matches is anticipated by the media, has actually contributed to the pro-
blem. (In Britain, at least one academic 'school' regards 'media amplification' as the principal cause of the problem.)

The English media is as much at fault as those taking part in the violence for spreading the English disease. The media created a monster, and the public was fascinated by the reports, which were falsified in some cases to make things more interesting. The events surrounding soccer matches often were dramatized to be more violent or more bloody that they actually were. In fact, many believe that the English media, to get a story, went so far as to pay individuals to pose for pictures and to lie about their behavior. Colin Johnson, (2000) author of We Fear No Foe! St George in My Heart states that the English media, as usual, built up the game to be a battle for the number one seat in the prestigious European hooligan leagues that were continually being published at the time. Apparently, the Dutch were in the top spot, with the English in third place behind them and the Germans. There were numerous interviews with 'top boy' hooligans from Holland, boasting about how they were coming to London to wreck our capital city. The media like to portray themselves as anti-violence, but irresponsible journalism such as this can only increase the potential for trouble. It really is quite ironic that after violence erupts at games like this, journalists behave as if they are holier than thou and make hysterical calls for the fans to be arrested and caged for life. Many of the tabloid hacks need football violence to justify their own trips abroad. Much of their time following England is spent in seedy bars and brothels. Large sums are made on fraudulent expense claims, and on more than one occasion they have even paid some gullible English fans to start trouble to make their job easier. (p. 6)

How ironic that it was the English media that created this fascination and often falsified their stories to satisfy the public, thus serving to propel the English people to the top of the world of hooliganism. It was no surprise then to see that by the late '70s, the English fans stood alone as the kings of hooliganism. The media
had worked hard to put them there, and it left the English fans in a very vulnerable position. By now the hooligan element was well-established throughout Europe. What this meant for the English was that everywhere they traveled, people were looking out for number one, and were all too willing to have a go with them. If they traveled with their England jerseys, they were marked for abuse. No matter where they traveled people were waiting and all too happy to have a chance at dethroning the kings. The English often were outnumbered and provoked by opposing fans or were simply left with no choice but to defend themselves from attacks by other groups. Of course the media portrayed the events a little differently, blaming most of what happened on the English themselves, continuing to fuel the perception that England had the worst hooligans in the world.

Literature Review

Aggression and violence in sport can be a complicated topic. Often acts of violence and aggression are part of the sport itself. Take American football, for example. This is a game that thrives on acts of violence and aggression. Violence is required and often praised, for example, by the saying “good hit” after a player has hit his opponent in an extremely violent fashion. Being aggressive and having the so-called “killer instinct” is a positive quality. Football is not the only sport in which acts of aggression and violence are rewarded. In hockey, checking and fighting are considered a part of the game, leading to the saying, “I went to a fight and a
hockey game broke out."

While soccer is considered to be one of the more non-violent sports, acts of aggression are everywhere and praised, in many cases, just as in other sports. Players are instructed by their coaches to "go in hard for every tackle." Coaches look for players who are strong, physical, brave and determined. Aggressiveness is a positive quality in soccer much the same as in any other sport.

Aggression and sports go hand in hand. Stephen Figler and Gail Whitaker (1995) in their book *Sport and Play in American Life* created a table to show how much violence occurs within sport. Their table is titled "Taxonomy of Aggression in Sport." The following Tables 3 and 4 indicate the results of their table.

### Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Instrumental Aggression</th>
<th>Reactive Aggression</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal (Attitude)</td>
<td>Killer instinct</td>
<td>Vengefulness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aggressiveness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal (Psyching out)</td>
<td>Glaring, teeth-baring</td>
<td>Verbal threats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Catcher harrassing batter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Working the officials</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collective (May be personal</td>
<td>Aggressive team spirit</td>
<td>Fan booing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or interpersonal)</td>
<td>Cheering, chanting</td>
<td>Mob mentality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fans heckling a free-throw shooter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4
Taxonomy of Physical Aggression in Sport

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Instrumental Aggression</th>
<th>Reactive Aggression</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal (With equipment or facilities)</td>
<td>Tennis smash</td>
<td>Abuse of racket; Sack dance; Kicking a locker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Volleyball spike</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Slam dunk</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smith's typology:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BC-Body contact</td>
<td>BC-Tackle, boxing punch</td>
<td>BC-Tackling in retaliation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BV-Borderline violence</td>
<td>BV-Take-out slide</td>
<td>BV-Beanball</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QV-Quasi-criminal violence</td>
<td>QV-Illegal boxing blow</td>
<td>QV-Marichal-Fosebora</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CV-Criminal violence</td>
<td>CV-Monica Seles</td>
<td>CV-Joseph Matteucci</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collective (May be personal or interpersonal)</td>
<td>Full court press</td>
<td>Brawling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Blitz defense</td>
<td>Fan rioting</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The form of violence that interests me is located in the lower left-hand corner of this table. It falls under the category of collective violence, and according to Figler and Whitaker is a form of reactive aggression. This reactive aggression is often the result of the fans' strong interest in the outcome of the game and their apparent lack of ability to affect that outcome. Being put in this situation makes fans frustrated and, often, angry. Mann (1979) proposes five situational factors which, when combined, are many times conducive to fan violence.

1. A large crowd–irresponsible behavior brews from the anonymity of individuals, the power inherent in the
mass of people and the crowd's invulnerability to relatively weak authority.

2. A dense crowd-packed humanity is inherently frustrating, as one's personal space is violated and needs are compromised.

3. A noisy crowd—not only is noise arousing in its assault on the senses, but it leads to further arousal from the content of the event. In other words, excitement leads to noise, which leads to further elevated excitement, which, in turn, is a likely precondition for violence.

4. A standing crowd—people on their feet tend to be active; it is considerably more difficult for seated people to behave aggressively (and thus less likely that they will be).

5. Crowd composition—sports crowds tend to be diverse, but an individual prone to violence—a likely candidate might be an unemployed male in his early 20s who has been drinking—would be more likely to become aggressive among a group of similar others than among a crowd comprised of families. (pp. 337-368)

Fan violence can fall into one of two categories: first, which is directly related to the contest, and second, that which is incidental to the contest. Fan violence in the case of soccer can fall into either category and, in some cases, into both categories. Examples of directly related violence would be those acts that start within the stadium and are the result of the events what have transpired in the contest. A bad call by an official, a last-second goal or a fight on the field may, in turn, create the atmosphere for fan violence. Incidental violence usually features riots, property damage and personal injury. This type of violence usually occurs in the general vicinity of the contest itself.

M.J. Mcnamee and S.J. Parry (1998) claim that the 'problem of violence' in sport is paradoxical because some claim that aggression is a quality required in sport (especially at the highest levels) and that, therefore, it cannot be surprising if sport attracts aggressive people or actually produces aggression. (p. 206)
Mcnamee and Parry believe that sports attract aggressive people, not only as competitors, but also as fans. Thus it should come as no surprise when fans become violent or aggressive with each other.

Hooliganism in Europe has been a hot topic of research ever since the mid- to late 1960s, when the topic began to gain media attention. In subsequent years, social scientists bombarded the field with report after report on the topic. Perhaps the first to report on the modern hooligan activity was John Harrington (1968). His conclusions were drawn from questionnaire data, opinion polls and participation research. The SIRC (http://www.sirc.org/publik/fvexec.html) reports:

The emphasis in the Harrington report was principally on individual pathology and reactions to the immediate stimuli provided by the setting in which fans were placed. Terms such as 'immaturity' and 'loss of control' were frequently used, with little attention paid to wider social forces of group dynamics.

In the years following the Harrington report many criticized the work for concentrating on individuals rather than on the wider social and or political forces.

Ian Taylor was one of those men who criticized Harrington's explanations. Taylor chose to address the problem from a Marxist standpoint. Taylor argued that, following World War II, soccer became more organized. The working-class community was devalued, and the sport became a commercialized industry aimed at paying spectators. This process of embourgeoisement of football, Taylor (1971) argued was part of a more general 'collapse' of the traditional working-class weekend, which previously had incorporated traditional
leisure pursuits developed in the latter part of the 19th century. These included not only football but brass bands, whippet racing and even archery. The violence on the terraces, therefore, could be seen as an attempt by disaffected working class adolescents to reestablish the traditional weekend, with its distinctly manly, tribal features. He later reports that violence erupted at football matches, partly because of the decline of working-class traditional values and, specifically, as an attempt to retrieve control over the game from a nouveau riche elite. Taylor was not alone in this belief. Many theorists offered similar approaches, using economic factors to give meaning to the actions of hooligans.

Subculture theories make up another large portion of the attempts to understand hooliganism. These theories set out to define hooligans in terms of a deviant subculture. Many subcultures have been named, including skin heads, rockers, punks, and now firms. All have attempted to give meaning to the actions of soccer hooligans. One such attempt (http://www.sirc.org/publik/fvexec.html) states:

Their own collective organization and activities have created a form of analogy with the match itself. But in their case, it becomes a contest which takes place not on the fields but on the terraces. They have created a parallel between the physical challenge and combat on the field in their own forms of challenge and combat between the opposing ends. Thus, while the points are being won or lost on the field, territory is won or lost on the terraces. The 'ends' away record (how good it is at taking territory where the home supporters usually stand) is as important, if not more, than their team's away record. Similarly the chants, slogans and songs demonstrate support for the team and involve an effort to intervene in the game itself, by lifting and encouraging their team, and putting off the opposition. ... The violence between the sets of
fans is part of this participation in the game-part of the extension of the game on the field to include the terraces too.

Other theorists have chosen to focus their claims on media fascination. They blame the media for sensationalizing and glamorizing hooligan activity. While few actually blamed the press for creating soccer hooliganism, many feel that they were a contributing factor to the growth in the 1970s and '80s. Williams and Wagg (1991) state that

the appalled fascination of the media with the named 'firms' only served to heighten the mythologies around them and increase their attractiveness to a growing number of men whose primary interest seemed to be male comradeship and the possibilities for 'trouble' as much as the football. (p. 20)

This is the newest trend in literature surrounding the activities of soccer yobs. It has been stated by several authors in recent years that soccer yobs are in it for the adrenalin rush that comes along with fighting and rioting. Willis (1990) states that football, however, provided the kind of adventure and uncertainty and the possible dangers which are sought out by many working-class young men and which transcend conventions and normally approved patterns of behaviour. Crucially, too, for the real 'hard cases' and the nutters who wanted it, terrace rivalries also promised a 'nihilistic' grounded aesthetic - the incomprehensible buzz of the momentary disappearance of all meaning provided by the real fight (106). For some the attraction was clearly compulsive, even addictive. As a West Ham ICF 'member' put it: 'When you’ve run a firm and your adrenalin’s gone, know what I mean, and you - and you start (fighting). I mean, it’s the best. I mean 60 quid’s worth up yer nose won’t, like top that. (p. 103)

It is all about the adrenalin rush, or brilliant buzz, that one gets out of fighting or rioting. There are still elements of the sport involved. Hooligans arrange themselves into firms by the club
or team they wish to represent, and, occasionally, the violence is directly related to the game. However, often the violence is premeditated or planned. If the violence is premeditated, then it is not reactive. If it is premeditated, then there is a reason why people are doing it.

The best advice I have found to date comes from an essay written by Gerry P.T. Finn (1994) on football violence that can be found in *Football, Violence and Social Identity*.

There is no one explanation for violent behaviour in general, or at soccer matches in particular. Any human involvement in sport is a complicated and complex social phenomenon, requiring not only careful analysis but a recognition of the limitations inherent in any one perspective. No single perspective can encapsulate the whole of any social phenomenon. That is true of so-called football hooliganism as of other human activities. Yet the debate on the nature and extent of violence by football spectators has taken on an increasingly adversarial complexion. (pp. 220-222)

No one reason can be provide that will answer all of the questions about soccer hooligans. Hooliganism is a complex social issues and like any other aspect of society it can not be explained in terms of one generic explanation.
CHAPTER III

GETTING INTO EUROPE

International Competition

There I stood, just outside a bar on the periphery of the red-light district in Amsterdam. Night had fallen on the opening day of Euro 2000. This whole day was like nothing I had ever seen before. The hype, excitement and anticipation of the coming four weeks of international soccer had finally arrived. People representing countries from all around Europe spent the day celebrating their countries' appearance at this wonderful event. All of them showing support for their team and their country by wearing colorful jerseys, flying flags, painting their bodies, etc.

Around midnight, a crowd of English fans began to form outside a bar near the famous red-light district in Amsterdam. The red-light district, known for its wonderful coffee and smoke shops, as well as for legalized prostitution, is a popular destination for fans from any country taking a holiday in the Netherlands. This night appeared to be no different. As we strolled the streets, we saw fans from almost every country involved and several not involved. Everyone seemed to be enjoying the freedoms of the red-light district. Drinking, smoking and sex. Before long, the crowd of English people began to grow. It was up to around 50 or 60, and we decided to move in for a closer look. A rather small crowd of Dutch supporters had
begun to gather on the other side of the canal. There were two bridges connecting the two sides along a 600-yard stretch of the canal. The two crowds began to grow, and as they did, each group began to swell toward one of these two bridges.

It occurred to me as I looked down and saw my bright orange Nederland shirt, bought a day earlier to support my team, that I was either wearing the wrong color or standing on the wrong side of the canal. Needless to say, I decided to put on another shirt to remedy this, and my buddies did the same. We stood and listened to the chants that would echo through this town for at least the next two weeks before England was eliminated from the competition. The chant of ENGE-LAND, ENGE-LAND, ENGE-LAND and "We’re supposed to be in Holland." could be heard all around the red-light district, and the crowds began to grow, as well as did the police presence.

The police, who had been out in full force for a couple of days, now were making their position clear. They all were equipped with riot gear and traveled in paddy wagons in groups of 15-20. Their presence was obvious throughout the Dutch cities. The English continued with chants like, "If it wasn’t for the English you’d be Krauts. If it wasn’t for the English you’d be Krauts." By now, tempers were flaring and missiles were beginning to fly across the canal. As quickly as things began to boil, the burners were turned off. The police had arrived and had laid claim to the bridges at either end of the crowds. The only way to get at each other would be to swim across the canal. If you ever get the chance to visit
the red-light district, and I suggest that you do, you will quickly realize why no one bothered to attempt this. At this point they slowly ushered the more-friendly home crowd of the Dutch out of the area, thus avoiding what could have been an explosive situation.

There simply is nothing comparable in the United States to the European fanaticism and interest in the game of soccer. Passion for the game of soccer starts at a young age. According to a gentleman named Mike, an Englishman, the passion begins when "your father buys you your first England jersey." No matter which country, children are running around in soccer merchandise before they are even conscious of the game. I witnessed this on many occasions. There were entire families dressed in matching uniforms. Even the youngest children, who were unable to walk or speak, were clothed in team merchandise.

In terms of international competition, there is no choice to be made. You support your country first and foremost. Children, both male and female, can report on their favorite players, and they talk frequently with great knowledge about the goings on in the world of soccer. I discovered this first while traveling in Spain. My friend and I were staying at a campground in Madrid, camping with people from all over the world. We ended up joining a friendly game of soccer with some of the children and some of the other campers. We got to talking with some of the children, and several of the kids were from England. They were on holiday with their parents in Spain. David Beckham was, of course, the favorite player of many of the
kids, but they knew far more about international soccer than I ever will. They could discuss the English players in great detail, but they also knew many of the international stars as well.

Simply stated, soccer is a central part of European culture. Brimson and Brimson (1996) state, "Those who run football are also safe in the knowledge that as obsessive, we simply have to go. Football isn't like the cinema; it's compulsive. It's a drug to which addiction is lifelong... (p. 219).

This is a point that became evident during my time in Europe. I knew Europeans were fanatical about the game, but my experiences during Euro 2000 showed me just how passionate they really are. It was clear to me upon my arrival in Amsterdam three days before the contest was scheduled to begin. The buzz had already begun, and all of the locals were preparing for the upcoming month of soccer. My friends and I befriended the owner and manager of the bar around the corner from our apartment for the coming month. His English was more than satisfactory for communication and far superior to my attempts at speaking any Dutch. He was in the process of hanging up the new curtains, designed especially for the upcoming tournament. The large windows along the bar's main entrance were being fitted with new curtains, which proudly displayed the Dutch flag and, of course, the bright orange colors of the Dutch national side. Not only were the curtains ornamental, they served a purpose as well. Our new friend informed us that they decreased the glare on the big screen television that would soon to be providing the major source
of entertainment for the next month.

Perhaps nowhere was the passion so evident as the opening match for the Dutch national side. Through a friend of a friend, we had arranged to attend a party to view the opening match. We arrived early to help set up, and I could tell I was in for something special. It was about two hours before game time, and people were already beginning to gather. The game was broadcast onto a large movie screen that had been suspended from a tree in the courtyard of an apartment complex. There was a DJ with a turntable and an amazing sound system. The sounds echoed off the walls of the courtyard, almost providing a stadium-like atmosphere. Everyone danced at halftime, and the drinks flowed all night. It was an atmosphere I had never seen before, and it was truly enjoyable. The Dutch performance was far from stellar, but it was good enough to secure a victory, and the party continued well into the morning.

As is the case with any international competition, there is the matter of pride and nationalism. However, in the case of soccer in Europe, it seems to be magnified tenfold.

First of all, soccer is the major sport of all of Europe. It is watched and followed by more fans than any other sport hands down. Because of this the competition for bragging rights is fierce. Pride in one’s country is very strong, and attacks against one’s culture are not taken lightly.

A soccer game in Europe carries with it much significance. Let’s use as an example a game between England and Germany. For
obvious reasons, it could be said that these individuals are not on the friendliest of terms. In fact, these two teams have a rather violent history associated with their matches. What one has in this case, is two countries fascinated and fixated on the game of soccer. They are fanatical about the sport. The only major competition of any consequence between these countries comes in the form of soccer. Therefore, much is at stake when these teams do battle. The people of each respective country seem to have a strong and mutual disliking for one another. Add to that the strong sense of patriotism and pride in these countries, and you have the recipe for violence. So why then would anyone be surprised when you put thousands upon thousands of these people together, under these circumstances, and violence is the result?

McNee and Dodd (1998) describe the rivalry between neighboring countries, especially those with a history of violence in the political realm:

By the summer of 1987, many of the older lads had begun to follow England and the stories they came back to Carlisle with had the rest of us more than a little be envious. Carlisle, for those of you without your CSE in Geography is situated about 10 miles south of the border with Scotland and has been the subject of numerous takeover attempts by the men with the red beards and funny skirts way back in history. So for me to tell you that there is a little bit of rivalry between the Carlisle lads and the Jocks would be one of the greatest understatements of all time. ... The chant of “God save the Queen” went up and echoed around the station sending shivers down my spine, as it probably did everyone else there that day. We filed out of the station ten abreast heading straight into the city center, we couldn’t have been moving more than two minutes before the sound of breaking glass gave way to a huge roar from the England lads. We were on our toes, jogging over to where the commotion was coming from the England lads. When I got there I saw a middle-aged Scotsman lying unconscious in
the street, a bag of St. Andrews flags and Scotland the Brave scarves scattered all around his blood-soaked face. (pp. 219-222)

The above excerpt from McNee and Dodd’s book touches on some of the major issues involved in soccer violence at the international level. Heated rivalries exist on the soccer field because of long-standing political clashes. In this instance you can bet that the men with red beards and funny skirts were not all to happy with the English men entering their homeland with the chant of God save the Queen. This text provides us with an insider’s view of the events surrounding violence and hooligans. Information provided by the SIRC (http://www.sirc.org/publik/fvexec.html) reports findings rather similar:

The inter-war period saw a rise in nationalist sentiment on the continent and tangentially, an amplification of public enthusiasm for football. Thus in 1938 an Italian newspaper reported Bologna’s victory over Chelsea as a ‘brilliant victory for fascist Italy.’

English fans are not hard to find, nor are the fans from any country for that matter. One only need look as far as the clothing, flags or color of the face paint worn by any group to figure it out. During my time in Amsterdam, I spent several nights hanging out with a predominantly English crowd, watching the English soccer team provide their fans with nothing too much to cheer about. The Irish bars seem to attract the English, just as they were attractive to me and my pals. This is true for the simple reason that most of the bartenders’ first language is English.

On the night of the England vs. Germany match we spent the day walking the squares and watching people. As nightfall arrived, we
began our search for a watering hole and a place to watch the game. This game worried the authorities. The media had hyped this game, just as they had other England vs. Germany matches in the past. The papers reported that extra security would be on hand to handle any situation. These two teams have a long history of violence between each other, and more times than not, when these two teams do battle on the field, it leads to battle in the streets.

Finding a suitable bar was easy enough in Amsterdam at this time because every bar in the city had at least three televisions, and usually at least one of them was a big screen. We knew what we were looking for: an Irish pub. We figured the atmosphere there would be quite nice, and we were right. We could barely settle into a spot to watch the television about a half hour before game time. The place was packed. I stood there amazed as the people just kept right on coming.

By game time, the bar was so full it almost was not worth the trip to the bar for drinks. Not that it really mattered, as everyone in the bar had been drinking all day. We had decided to stand for the match, because there were no empty tables for me and my pals. Approximately 250 people, a large portion of them English, filled the bar. The atmosphere was amazing. I had never seen anything like it. They stood, at least those that could did, and honored their country in song and chants throughout the entire game. It was a great match, and the English managed to escape with a 2-1 victory, their first of the tournament. Alan Shearer provided the game winner in the final
minutes, and the bar erupted. Beer was flying, and the celebration was on. At the final whistle, the bar joined in song to honor their team and country.

Shortly thereafter, everyone hit the streets and set out on foot to wander the streets of Amsterdam. Walking through the squares, people would come together to celebrate the victory and, perhaps, throw it in the face of those they had defeated. It appeared to me to be a wonderful celebration of victory. The media reported much the same. There were no major eruptions of violence, and the authorities were quite happy. It was not exactly the headlines they had envisioned.

Recent years have seen a decline in hooliganism at international competitions throughout Europe. It would appear that many fans are beginning to take on the so-called carnival type atmosphere that was showcased by many throughout EURO 2000. The fans are as patriotic as ever, but showing their patriotism in a different way. They are uniting in European competition and celebrating the game of soccer and friendly competition. This can be attributed to a number of circumstances. First and foremost, those who have their mind set on violence for the sake of violence have found a new place to lay their allegiance. Secondly, Europe is enjoying a period of unification. The European Union has been created and is slowly gaining in popularity and participation. According to the Government & Social Sciences Info. (Http://www.lib.berkely.edu/gssi/eu.html):

The European Parliament represents, in the words of the 1957 treaty of Rome, 'the peoples of the states brought together in
the European Community. Some 375 million European citizens in 15 countries are now involved in the process of European integration through their 626 representatives in the European Parliament.

Key issues to be tackled on the 2000 agenda include employment, enlarging the European Union, and development of the Euro. The Euro refers to the new currency of the 12 member states as of January 1, 1999. As the EU continues to grow, so too does it's power and influence. This site goes on to state that

the European Parliament, which derives its legitimacy from direct universal suffrage and is elected every five years, has steadily acquired greater influence and power through a series of treaties. These treaties ... have transformed the European Parliament from a purely consultative assembly into a legislative parliament, exercising powers similar to those of the national parliaments.

The EU has even come together in its fight against hooliganism. Several of the countries in the EU have joined forces and now share intelligence about hooligans and hooligan activity with each other. Europeans are also preparing to make the change from each country having its own currency to having one unified currency. Under this system, each country will still be able to design and still hold the responsibility of producing its own currency that can be used throughout Europe. These coins and notes, called Euro dollars, are scheduled to debut on January 1, 2002. However, they are available for use by consumers in the non-cash form. With the addition of Greece in recent months, the Euro Zone, composed of those countries that use the single currency, has reached 12 members. (For more information on the European Union, consult the World Wide Web at Http://www.lib.berkely.edu/gssi/eu.html).
Thus, it is a time of unification and camaraderie throughout Europe. Europeans are coming together to support a unified Europe, and this unification has led to more friendly competitions on the soccer field. This is not the first time that this sequence of events has happened. The SIRC reports much the same trend in the years following World War II. They state that "high levels of national solidarity have helped to continue this pacific trend after the Second World War and into the 1950s."

This is often the case in regard to sports and other realms of society. Changes in the organization of sports often reflect changes in the greater society, and vice versa. I believe that unification and friendly relations between the European countries are relieving some of the tensions between countries on the soccer field.

The violence has not disappeared, but recent trends do show a decline in violence at international soccer matches. It is my belief that this violence is still caused by bad relations in realms of life other than soccer. Deeply rooted anger and hatred between nations for political and past wartime alliances still hold within the world of soccer. However, as Europe continues to unite, I think these conflicts will mend themselves. It has already begun, and I expect it to continue. People seeking premeditated violence for the sake of violence and fun have recognized this trend and have found a new place to act out.

Euro 2000 was a wonderful experience. The carnival-type
atmosphere exhibited by the host country—Holland—set the tone for most of the tournament. It was a celebration of soccer and of European competition.

Club Soccer

While recent trends have shown a decline in violence at the International Competition, hooliganism at the club level has enjoyed no such relief. What is interesting is that even nations whose national teams enjoys peaceful competitions can have a major hooligan element at its club level. This is very much the case with the Dutch. As stated previously the Dutch fans are rather peaceful when it comes to international matches, but they also have a rather large problem associated with hooliganism at many of their clubs. Brimson and Brimson (1996) state:

Quite why the Dutch national fans adopt this peaceful approach when their club sides have such a bad reputation is unclear, but they tend to adopt a refreshingly humorous, carnivalesque approach when supporting their national side. Their are almost always plenty of families among the supporters, with their now-famous orange faces, wigs, clothes, etc, and bands playing on the terracing, all so the fans can enjoy the day rather than indulge in any form of violence. Certainly, their are many fans who would welcome the opportunity to watch England in the ‘Oranje’ style, as it would be a most welcome addition to our game and would make a change from being treated like animals. The Dutch were a source of major fun during Euro 96, with some of the attire being particularly, well, orange, and some of the hats decidedly strange. (As an aside, the ability of Dutch women to look so beautiful painted orange is a curious feat.) However, the potential for disorder involving Dutch League clubs has always been present, as has the threat of serious repercussions for the clubs themselves. During the 1989-90 UEFA Cup competition, Ajax fans rioted and forced the abandonment of their match with FK Austria, and as a result the club was banned from all European competition for two years. As recently as March 1996, Feyenord faced the very real threat of
their supporters being banned from the Cup-Winners' Cup semi-final against Rapid Vienna after severe crowd trouble inside and outside the ground during their quarter-final tie with Borussia Monchengladbach. In the event, possibly due to the fear that fans would travel without tickets and cause fear disruption around the stadium, the club were fined only 30,000. This had little real impact as a deterrent: prior to the 1996 European Cup final, Ajax fans went on the offensive and fought running battles with fans of Juventus, resulting in four stab-bings and nine arrests. (p. 207)

The Dutch clubs are not the only clubs known for their violent hooligan elements. The Spanish league, Italian league and, of course, the English league all have their problems associated with hooligans.

In England, it has long been believed that hooliganism is a working-class phenomenon. For years it has been stated that those who take part in the violence at soccer matches are predominately working-class individuals. In fact, for a long time in England, soccer was the sport of the working-class. Porter and Gavin Hills (1993) report:

Eddie is just the sort of lad the law and order lobby wants to hang, flog and androgenise. He is a wily soccer causal. Football, foreign travel and fighting give him adrenaline and adventure. Lads like Eddie are naughty working-class young(ish) men who refuse to give up their lives to the suburban values that seem desirable to conservative conferences. Unlike many of those who crave vengeance against them, these lads are alive and most certainly kicking. (p. 17)

Stott and Reicher (1998), citing the work of Elias (1978), come to a very similar conclusion:

In brief, they suggest that, over time, values of 'roughness' (meaning a propensity to physical violence) have become increasingly marginalized as growing sections of the working class have been incorporated into 'mainstream' society. Pockets of the 'rough working class' do, however, still exist and converge in the context of football. It is the dispro-
portionate presence of these groups amongst football supporters (see, for example, Dunning 1994; Harrington 1968; March et al. 1978; Trivizas 1980) which lead to violence in football crowds. (p. 356)

Those who played soccer, and those who supported it were largely composed of the working class. These individuals would pay to see matches knowing full well that they could not afford it. Soccer was owned by the working class. It brought them together. It was a celebration, and each week, members of the working class would stand together on the terraces, drink their beer and escape from their problems for 90 minutes. It was like therapy. It was played in the streets by working-class children, as it was played by their fathers before the term "labor" became part of their vocabulary. Yet, they have managed to hold onto their love of the game and now celebrate each opportunity to enjoy a match with their mates.

The reality today, however, is that the game is being taken away from those who have loved it and supported it for all of these years. Ticket prices are becoming unaffordable to those in the working class. This is happening for several reasons. First of all, those who run these clubs are looking to maximize profits. Driving up ticket prices is one way to do so. They know that soccer is an obsession. Even for those who cannot really afford to purchase tickets will find a way. Each day, soccer is becoming more of a business and less of a game. Ticket prices have become more expensive. T-shirts, other club merchandise and concessions are on the rise. Working-class people can no longer afford to attend the
sport that they so passionately support. Brimson and Brimson (1996) state that

football was once the game of the working classes and the local club was at the heart of the community, the national side the pride of the country—focal points to relieve the oppression many found themselves under. You would stand shoulder to shoulder on the terraces with the people you worked, drank and lived with, and it was ours. ... Today, football is business; they don't want the local riff-raff who built up the club any more, they want people to drive up from the Home Counties in their Range Rovers and company cars. People who can spend, spend, spend. ... A good result means a check on the share prices more than anything else, and watching the right team or wearing the right tie can help close that business deal because football is trendy and in great danger of becoming the tennis or cricket of the next century. (p. 106)

The resentment is obvious. These people feel completely alienated and taken advantage of. There used to be a connection between the players and the fans. The players themselves were working-class boys, and the fans felt connected to the game and its players. The connection is now lost. Owners are looking to cash in on the current popularity of the game. Soccer is attracting a more profitable crowd and club owners are taking full advantage of the situation. Brimson and Brimson (1996) continue:

In the streets surrounding every ground in the country, there are people having to survive for a whole week on less money than it would cost to buy a first tram strip. They have to put up with their community being invaded every other week, but the clubs don't give a fuck. After all, they're only the people that the club is supposed to be representing. Supporters have become categorized: if you're rich, you watch big games, even an international, and you're welcomed wherever you come from, but if you are poor then you are allowed to watch only when the opposition is also poor. If you can't afford the ticket, then fuck off to Stockport and if you're really poor, then go to Altrincham, but wear our shirt in any case, just to let people know you're loyal to us. Let them know that you are also one of life's winners. We don't want to stand next to the people who dictate to us for us forty hours a week, we want to stand
en masse and shout our heads off on the terraces that we have paid for year after fucking year. That’s what we do to relieve the stress and the tension. But when success comes, it’s not us that reaps the reward. (p. 107)

The time has changed from when the stadiums were packed to full capacity with working-class fans who knew the game inside and out, and created the atmosphere that even the players enjoyed. Players have criticized the new fans for not providing the passion and atmosphere that was once part of the game. The new breed of fan is not so much interested in the game, as in being part of the popular culture that soccer has now become. Being a soccer fan is “trendy.” Attending games is fun and exciting, but the real fans are being eliminated from the sport at the cost of those with money enough to purchase the overpriced ticket. Brimson and Brimson (1996) continue:

The saddest thing of all is that we have allowed this to happen. We let those who run football introduce seats, let them divide us and let them screw us for money. We have let them treat us like shit and then we allow them to throw us out on to the streets. They watch our every movement, make us unwanted on our own doorstep and take our identity away, but we are not without power because the clubs are nothing without their supporters. Clubs may choose their consumers carefully, making the choice in relation to the size of their bank balance, but it is for us to drive them out and reclaim what belongs to us. (p. 108)

The working-class strongly resent the club owners, and rightfully so. Their support both financially and spiritually has allowed these clubs to exist in the worst of times. These people have a right to be angry. Now that there money is no longer needed to keep the club alive, they are no longer needed. In fact, they are being driven away from the game by high ticket prices. Club owners and
league official not only sanction this but see it as a step in the
right direction. As I stated earlier, hooliganism is a working-
class phenomenon. As the working-class is being eliminated from
the stadium atmosphere, so too is much of the hooligan element.

The face of hooliganism in the rest of Europe is changing as
well. While hooliganism within stadiums has declined as the new
breed of soccer fans is taking over, hooliganism as a whole has not.
Along with this new breed of fans has come heightened security both
in and around stadiums. This has made the stadium a much safer place
to go and watch a game. The hooligans have not given up their pas-
sion for soccer, they just no longer choose the stadium as their
playground. Rather, they have found a new place to enjoy their
brew and watch the game: the bars. As quickly as the violence left
the stadium, it moved to the street. According to the British
Transport Police 2001 (http://www.btp.police.uk/football.htm),

changes in the pattern of problems to be dealt with started in
the early 1990s. With better policing and stewarding within
stadiums, trouble tended to be displaced, often to railway
stations and often some time before or after matches were
played.

The violence was no longer a concern of the UEFA or other
governing bodies. It was no longer their problem. Out of sight,
out of mind. This has left the authorities with a rather large
problem on their hands. How do they control these people when they
do not know where they are? Is it really a plausible idea to add
security, and video surveillance to an entire city? Kerr (1994)
reports that
the rise in English soccer hooliganism abroad was partly a result of reactions to management measures taken at stadiums in England which made it more difficult and risky to engage in hooligan activity. In a sense, Europe was "easy pickings" for the hard core English hooligans who "reigned supreme against fans who did not fight back and police who were unaccustomed and ill-prepared to deal with them. (p. 12)

This trend then continued throughout Europe. As hooligan activity spread, stadiums throughout Europe were forced to deal with the hooligans. As security in and around all stadiums in Europe increased, hooligans were forced into the streets, bars, tubes, etc.

As the world of soccer was experiencing all of this change, so too was the world of soccer hooligans. One must remember that we are not talking about only few people here. We are talking about hundreds upon hundreds of people. The power that can be exerted by a thousand people is amazing. If you have never witnessed this feat, it is amazing, and can even get a bit scary.

What began to emerge from all of this is the organization of firms. A firm is composed of hooligans who come together and are organized for the sole purpose of committing acts of hooliganism. Over time, as the changes were made to counter the acts of hooligans, the people and the organization of the firm was establishing itself at the center of hooliganism. The game is losing its significance, and the acts of hooliganism themselves are now of the utmost importance. In fact, it is not uncommon as King and Knight (1999) report in their book The Naughty Nineties, "for firms to organize a battle in the city when their respective teams are not even scheduled to
The organization of the firm and membership in a firm is based on club affiliation, but the game really seems of little importance. Firms follow their team to neighboring cities not for the match, but for the scrap that they know will be waiting. They often will not even attend the match but simply travel for the fight. The firms keep in contact through use of personal cell phones to avoid police surveillance and to choose a time and place appropriate for battle. The firms usually have a home or place in which they can gather and plan for upcoming fights, and, of course, indulge in a favorite past time of their members: drinking. This location is not kept secret, and rivaling firms all know the homes of the other firms. If all else should fail, they know where to look for a scrap on game day.

Unfortunately for the firms, the police are well aware of these homes and keep a watchful eye out for any signs of hooligan activity. As the game is becoming less and less important to these individuals, one might ponder why the fighting continues. Today, the fighting is not so much a show of support for a particular club or team, but rather a source of excitement. Members report that the excitement or buzz that they receive is what keeps them going. These people simply like to fight, and they enjoy the excitement provided by fighting and violence. These statements echo the sentiments that I encountered through conversations with many of my European friends. One of my friends stated, "The violence isn't even at the stadiums. There is too much security. The violence is in the
streets, and in the pubs. The soccer games don't matter.” Another acquaintance remarked, “I think they are just doing it for the fun.”

McNee and Dodd (1998) in a section titled “Wigan Away” describe the fascination and excitement of hooliganism in excellent detail:

There is always a lot of interest from the firm in any trip to Wigan. In the Crescent, a.k.a 'The Cave' the night before, conversation was bout nothing else but Wigan town center and Springfield Park. In fact the excitement boiled over and turned into a major flare up with some bikers in our city center. Ant wouldn’t be seen again for four years after that night. He was remanded and eventually sentenced for six and a half years to Frankland Prison in Count Durham. We’d been keeping in touch with their lads through phone calls to The Bricklayers Arms, and with them calling our boozer. They had told us not to drive to The Bricklayers Arms, which had been the original idea. We had planned to pull up outside their boozer, bail out the coach, trash the widows and throw in a couple of surprises which we’d managed to persuade one of our lads who was in the Armed Forces to obtain for us, namely a green smoke grenade and a ‘thunderflash’. That would swoon have them running out the pub and then it would be game on, so to speak. Anyway, the reason the Wigan didn’t want us coming to their pub was because their local council had just installed CCTV in their town center, with one camera pointing at the doorway of The Bricklayers. Therefore we were told to stay at the outskirts of town and to head for a pub called The Bowling Green and they would find us there. This way we could get a proper skirmish underway without the Old Gill spoiling it for us. (pp. 225-226)

This is the way business is carried on in the firm. Dodd states that after the thunderflash goes off in the pub and everyone exits, it is “game on.” Interesting choice of words. That is what it is. It is a game. A game against the rivaling firm and a game to avoid the police. Why do individuals choose to engage in games, or sports? For fun. These boys are no different. It is like a game of cops and robbers, or a game of war in the backyard, but the consequences are all too real. That is what makes it exciting. The
chance of getting caught or beaten. The thrill of victory and the agony of defeat. The Crescent, or “The Cave” is the home bar for Dodd and his cronies. It is not a secret. The Bricklayers Arms is the home of the Wigan crew. Communication between these factions is not uncommon and is conducted in hopes of finding a good time to fight away from the view of the authorities. Dodd continues:

We arrived without any hindrance, going through all the usual travel accompaniments on the way down the M6, the ‘Three C’s we call them, Cans, Cannabis and Cards, before settling in at The Bowling Green. What was about to happen was like something out of ‘Monty Python.’ Here you had fifty or so lads, adrenalin pumping, waiting for a major bit of premeditated mindless violence to take place, when in walk a couple of Scouse door-knockers carrying a hold-all each trying to flog some 5-piece Razor Sharp Kitchen Knife sets. ... Half an hour and two pints later Pod emerged at the entrance of the pub and gave us the good news. ‘Get the fuck out the boozer!’ ‘They’re here!’ The pub was empty in seconds. Swan Jack snapped a pool cue in half and carried the weighted end in the club fashion; several lads carried stools; others had the knives. Here they came, a mob of about seventy advancing at a steady jog. Our usual battle cry came out ‘Beee Ceee Effff, Beee, Ceee, Effff,’ we were now only about twenty yards from each other, the ‘thunderflash’ went off in no man’s land. Green smoke started to fill the street from the grenade Gilly had just pulled the pin on, breaking his thumb in the process. This was a buzz; this is what those hundred plus there that day live for, a pure adrenaline rush, the quickening of the heart beat, WAR! (pp. 226-227)

There you have it in the words of Dodd himself. They were a few boys readily anticipating a major bit of premeditated mindless violence. The adrenalin was already pumping in anticipation of what was to come. Armed to the hilt with stolen knives, pool cues and pint glasses, the boys were ready to fight. He describes the feeling as an excellent buzz, a pure adrenaline rush. This is a war. A war between to armies whose only goal is the excitement pro-
vided by the fight. Dodd continues:

There was a stand off of about four to five seconds, everyone on their toes bouncing around looking for a target, waiting for the opposition to fire their chosen missiles. I copped a full Luczode bottle on the forehead, which luckily didn’t smash. I’d rather have a lump on my head the size of a golf ball than a dozen stitches any day. The two mobs came together, punches and kicks flying, one Wigan lad began spraying CS gas but he was quickly on his toes when a Chinese cleaver just missed his outstretched arm by inches. We began to gain ground, we had got Wigan running at home. The chase was abruptly halted by the familiar sound of sirens and screeching tyres. Time for anyone carrying anything naughty to chuck it in the nearest bin or under the nearest car. (pp. 228-230)

Dodd, author of this book, and member of the Border City Firm is well-known throughout England. He has made a reputation for himself as one of England’s most notorious soccer yobs. He has become rather famous and the English press follows Dodd from adventure to adventure.

Dodd’s escapades have landed him in jail 17 times. He has been beaten by fans, arrested by police, detained in countries and even deported for his acts of hooliganism. In a final attempt to stop Dodd from creating trouble, he has been banned from every soccer ground in England. This has done little to stop Dodd and his cronies from traveling abroad for international competitions or traveling to support his club Carlisle United.

Dodd travels with the group and is completely satisfied with the action in the various cities on game day. Dodd is also on occasion able to make his way into the stadium, although he is often nicked by the police and removed from the grounds. (For more information on Paul Dodd, and his adventures see England’s Number One,
The Border City Firm is one of many firms in England that travel together from town to town looking to catch a buzz and to fight with other gangs. Most firms have what they call their top boys. These are the leaders. Top boys are usually the toughest, craziest or simply the ones in the group who seem to be natural born leaders. Within this subculture, any member of a firm, especially the top boys, are highly recognizable to both other firms and the police.

Mickey Francis, another well known soccer thug, describes the thrill, or buzz, that one gets from fighting and soccer hooliganism. Francis was born and raised in Manchester. He lived a life of soccer yobbery from a young age. Francis, like Dodd, has been jailed numerous times and also is banned from every football ground in England. Francis was for many years a “top boy” and central organizer for the Guvnors, a group of hooligans who support Manchester City. Francis and Peter Walsh (1997) describe the thrill of hooliganism in the Prologue:

It is a thrill. It’s a fucking buzz like nothing else. To stand there with your lads on a strange street in a strange town, confronted by a baying, half-pissed mob of raging in a frenzy because you have dared to come on their manor, outnumbered, facing bricks and sticks and bottles and bats and knives and God knows what else—and to have it. To stand and take them on and never run. ...That’s a good phrase. Recreational violence. For me and thousands like me, from Carlisle to Plymouth, from Newcastle to Brighton. Young men who share the same wicked passion, derive the same satisfaction when they walk through the streets en masse and watch the passers-by stare in shock and horror and feel the same heart-pumping adrenalin surge when they steam into another gang in a roaring, kicking, punching frenzy. It’s what we do. (pp. x-xi)
Accounts such as these are a dime a dozen. The consensus for many now is that these people are simply in it for the fun. I tend to be a bit of an adrenalin junkie myself, and, at times, find it hard to deny that this type of behavior can be quite stimulating. However, that does not make it right.

What is interesting, though, is that there is a code of ethics among modern soccer thugs. A mob of hooligans is thought to be a mindless group running rampant in the city, bashing everyone and anyone in sight. This simply is not the case. Porter and Hills (1993) report: “Despite their image, few hooligans find their kicks hitting grannies and spitting at children” (p. 15). They continue on describing the days events surrounding a match in Holland as, “Hardly the onslaught of the Mongol hordes, more a highly ritualized and lightweight braw.” (p. 17)

The idea of hooligans as a crew of Mongol hordes is more true of hooligans in the past, but along with the development of the firm, came a code of ethics. How odd that a group of individuals who are organized to fight and cause mayhem would create and hold themselves to a code of ethics. However, on numerous occasions in my research, I found mention of this code. It is not a written code, but a general rule that seems to be followed by the firms. It is set up to protect innocent people from being harmed.

The average soccer fan has nothing to fear from the likes of Dodd. He does not involve himself in fights, or condone fights with innocents. That is the unwritten rule. Firm members do not get
satisfaction from beating on innocent people who aren’t up for the scrap. McNee and Dodd (1998) state:

We met Colchester United in the final at Wembley, not exactly the most attractive opposition. Still, 27,000 Carlisle fans made the six hundred mile round trip. I managed to get inside the stadium for this one but was very disappointed. I had bought the video of the Birmingham final two years earlier and had been expecting a similar kind of atmosphere. Colchester fans made up the attendance of 45,000. They brought no boys with them at all. The only trouble we had all weekend was at a pub in Camden with some doormen, and that was out of order as innocents got hurt. (p. 333)

Several times I found mention of this code and use of the term innocents to describe individuals who were injured, but had had no firm affiliation and were not looking for trouble. However, people with no firm affiliation are involved in hooliganism, but these individuals are not considered innocents because they choose to involve themselves. Innocents refers to people who do not wish to be involved. They may have no firm affiliation, but the second they throw a bottle or involve themselves in any way, they had better be prepared for the retaliation. The point of this is to keep the atmosphere safe for those fans who want nothing to do with the events surrounding soccer hooligans.

As the years progressed and the world of soccer experienced a number of changes, so too did the life and times of the soccer hooligans. Soccer hooligans have always been part of a deviant subculture, but in recent years, this subculture has become more evident, more specialized, organized and easier to define. It is a subculture in which members have been able to combine their two biggest passions: soccer and fighting.
Previously, working-class people who attended soccer matches with all their mates met all of the qualifications of a hooligan mob. Today, there appears to be more specific criteria, including participation and acceptance in a soccer gang or firm. Aside from some of the action associated with political clashes between fans of different nations, the goings on in the world of hooliganism can mostly be associated with firms. I say some of the action because even now the firms travel and support even the national team. It has already been stated that international matches appear to experiencing less and less hooliganism. The hooliganism experienced at international matches can be traced back to club affiliation and the ongoing war between club firms. What is even more interesting is that as firms travel, it is not uncommon for rival firms to gather and fight together as a team in support of their country. 

McNee and Dodd (1998) state:

As the Euston to Glasgow train pulled into Carlisle station at around 9 o’clock that Saturday morning, we saw it was packed solid with England lads, not a scarf or pom-pom hat in sight. What a buzz, this was the big league and I enjoyed a feeling of immense power as I joined a mob of maybe two thousand in number. What is it they say, “the bug had bitten me.” England was for me and it wasn’t even 9.30 in the morning. As the train sped north I became amazed at how all the other different crews and firms were gelling together. The familiar sound of ring pulls getting ripped off and the familiar smell of weed doing the rounds filled the air, everyone was buzzing and ready for whatever Scotland had waiting for us. There was a lot of friendly banter being exchanged about events during the domestic season. Unbelievable really, bouncing at each other with nothing more than GHB on their minds and then standing shoulder to shoulder with a common enemy less than an hour away. England comes first, it’s our country we’re fighting for. England’s pride is our priority. (pp. 116-117)

The friendships created on this trip abroad only last as long
as the trip. These same people drinking, and laughing together are bitter enemies in other arenas. When they meet in the following months no such friendships will exist. The only loyalty will be to the firm, and all friendships formed are lost. It is yet another interesting characteristic of this fascinating sub culture of hooligans.

Literature on deviance and deviant subcultures is also useful in attempting to define and understand the organization of the firm. Marshall B. Clinard and Robert F. Meier (1998) in their book titled Sociology of Deviant Behavior describe deviant subcultures:

Sometimes social groups develop and share a set of values and meanings not shared by the society of which they are a part. When this occurs, we speak of a subculture—"a culture within a culture." More specifically, a subculture is a collection of norms, values and beliefs whose content is distinguishable from that of the dominant culture. This implies that the people who subscribe to their subculture participate in and share the "larger" culture of which the subculture is a part. At the same time, it implies that the subculture has some norms and meanings peculiar to itself. (p. 9)

This is very true of firms. The firm is a collection of individuals with ideas and beliefs that are different from the greater culture within which they are also members. Thus, they are a culture within a culture. The shared ideas, beliefs and goals of the various firms have been discussed, but what is more important is how they come to share these beliefs, values and goals. Curtis Branch (1999) states that adolescence is generally regarded as the developmental period when questions of identity are resolved. The importance of the peer group in matters of social etiquette and behaviors is unmatched by other institutions and individuals in the lives of adolescents. Because of the high level of peer pressure in
early and middle adolescence (12-16 years) affiliation with groups (i.e., cliques, clubs, gangs) is most likely to occur during this period. It is frequently true that adolescents seek to get their affiliation needs met in a variety of settings, finally settling for contexts in which they perceive that they are accepted without conditions. (p. 197)

This is quite true of hooligan gangs. They are typically composed of males who join as teenagers. The National Criminal Intelligence Service reports that they do not comment on the psychological profiles of hooligans; they are however, invariably male. Involvement continues through the teen years and eventually, as with anything else, individuals age out of the firms and hooligan activity. McNee and Dodd (1998) report:

Dodd’s generation of thugs are drifting away from the game now. ‘A lot of them have gone into what you’d call a normal life, a wife and two kids, a nine-to-five job. ... If everyone’d stayed there’d be 200 lads at it from Carslisle. Now there’s only 40 that follow them every week.’ (p. 333)

As for why kids join these firms, there are many reasons. Often, as is with the case with street gangs in America, the kids report that the gang is their family. Branch (1999) continues:

... many adolescents who claim gang membership identify the "feeling of camaraderie" and "blind acceptance as the conditions that led them to join the gang. "They are like family." is the way several gang members seen in counseling by Branch described the relationship with the gang. (p 197)

The firm is not only a way for boys to gain acceptance and a feeling of camaraderie, but it also represents the continuation of a tradition—the tradition of hooliganism. In his book titled Delinquent Boys, Albert Cohen (1955) states, "When we speak of a delinquent subculture, we speak of a way of life that has somehow become traditional among certain groups." (p. 13) Cohen and many others
argue that the behaviors of these subcultures are continued and passed from generation to generation through personal contact and interaction. In other words, it is a process of cultural transmission. The ideas, beliefs and values of the firm are passed from one generation of firm members to the next. It is a process that occurs with the interaction of new and old members. Cohen (1966) states in another book titled *Deviance and Control*:

Deviant behavior is determined by a subsystem of knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes that make possible, permit, or prescribe specific forms of deviant behavior in specific situations. This knowledge, these beliefs, and these attitudes must first exist in the cultural surrounding of the actor, and they are "taken over" and incorporated into the personality in much the same way as any other elements of the surrounding culture. (p. 94)

The idea of cultural transmission is not distinctive to subcultures, rather it is widely believed to exist in the larger context of the cultures within which subcultures are located.

The idea that juveniles often commit delinquent acts together is no real surprise. Using official police and court data, Shaw and McKay found that the percentage of arrested juveniles who had committed offenses was never less than 50% and for most property offenses, was well over 70%. In fact, as James Q. Wilson and Richard J. Herrnstein (1992) state:

... Edwin Sutherland's theory of differential association is that gangs—and more generally, peer groups—cause crime by altering the values of changing the rewards of an individual. Bad boys produce badness in other boys: Rotten apples spoil the barrel. (p. 22)

The deviant behaviors associated with hooligans that began years ago have been transmitted to today's youth through the develop-
ment of the firm. Those deviant acts are the main reason for the existence of the firm. Firm members recognize the potential dangers of their actions, but they are somehow able to see past these dangers to the excitement and thrill provided by their actions.
CHAPTER IV

POLICING HOOLIGANS

As the hooligan element in Europe changed with the times, so too did the needs of the police. Policing football is no easy task. With the movement of hooliganism away from the stadium and into the streets, the job of policing soccer became more difficult. For obvious reasons, the police have a much tougher task on their hands patrolling entire cities to control the hooligan element. The police have developed new methods and rely more on technology to find and control the hooligans within any given city. It is not uncommon for a country to employ the military to help control hooligans.

Hooligans also have been forced to adapt to the new conditions. Prior experience and word of mouth have taught hooligans about what to expect from each country. Since each country handles its problems differently, the hooligans know what to expect when heading into foreign territory. Brimson and Brimson (1996) state:

There are of, course, many other factors involved which can come into play and inflame any given situation involving fans abroad. The use of the military, unsurprisingly, do not mess about. Indeed, in many countries, they positively relish the chance to batter a few people with absolutely no chance of anyone complaining. There is also a strong possibility that many of the police or military on duty will be football fans themselves, and if you see your favourite, or even national team get beaten, you tend to get a bit pissed off, particularly when the visiting fans get loud. Of course, some police forces, just like some countries, are worse than others, and anyone who travels regularly will have their own experiences,
both good and bad. (pp. 229-30)

The authorities and the hooligans appear to be engaged in a game of chess. They are each forced to make moves and countermoves to combat the opposing strategies. As the police adapt new strategies for policing football, the hooligans are forced to change their behavior in efforts to avoid the police. As Canter (1989) notes:

Every preventive measure can be combated by the hooligans. Missile-throwing takes the place of face-to-face confrontation, segregation within the ground displaces the aggression to outside the ground, a police presence forces anyone looking for trouble to plan ahead. Therefore the symptoms change but the illness remains the same. (p. 123)

Advancements in Policing

Until the explosion of violence in the early 70s, policing hooligans was not a major issue. However, as hooligan activity continued to gain in popularity at an alarming rate, the authorities began to recognize the seriousness of the problem. At this point hooliganism was really still confined to the stadium, and the surrounding grounds, but that was about to change. Marsh (1978) reports that the first step for British authorities was to invoke stiffer penalties. Sentences for soccer offenses carried a longer term than did similar non-soccer related offenses. This measure did result in a slight decline in hooligan activity, but it was obvious that further steps would be necessary. The next logical step for the police was to increase security. In the years to follow, increased police presence, as well as segregated seating and the use of barricades and fencing made little progress in the fight against
hooligans. Haley and Johnston (2000) state that

by the late 70's the nature of hooliganism began to change when it became more difficult to engage in hooligan activity, either at the game or adjacent to it. Management's installing of closed circuit television in the late 1970's and early 1980's made for easier identification of hooligans, and forced the hooligans to take more care when conducting their activities. (p. 7)

It finally appeared as though police efforts were paying off. Hooliganism was slowly but surely leaving the stadiums. Unfortunately it simply was not going away; it was only moving. Haley and Johnston continue, "Hooligans began to do most of their fighting and other hooligan activity in the pubs and the side streets of British city centers. They would show up at airports, truck stops, nightclubs and similar public venues ..." (p. 8).

Hooliganism in the streets and cities has been the trend in football violence for some time now, and the police continue to improve their efforts mainly through the use of manpower and technology. Groups like the BTP (British Transport Police) and the Football Intelligence Unit, a part of the National Criminal Intelligence Service have been designed strictly to fight the battle against hooligans. According to the BTP, "The British Transport Police devote a lot of resources to ensuring the safe and orderly movement of sports fans on the rail system and has developed expertise in this area" (http://www.btp.police.uk/football.htm).

This unit works with the police, as well as other intelligence units to be prepared for the arrival of hooligans. The BTP goes on to states that
successful football policing is a pro-active process depending on many factors, but chief amongst them, good intelligence, planning and cooperation between police and train operators. Planning is the key. The Force meets with the Football Association, clubs, and local police forces regularly to plan activity associated with individual matches.

It is in the area of intelligence that organizations like the NCIS come into play. According to the NCIS home page (http://www.ncis.co.uk/PRESS/26_00_02.html), the Football Intelligence Unit:

... comprises police and criminal intelligence officers. It acts as a permanent central coordinating point for intelligence coming into NCIS from around the country supplied Football Intelligence Officers (FIOs) attached to each of the 92 league teams in England and Wales. These officers are drawn from their local police forces who have built links with their local football clubs. They know the genuine fans well and work in and around the grounds gathering information about the likely problem areas or individuals who may be planning trouble.

The NCIS has gained an excellent reputation throughout Europe. In fact, several nations including Germany and the Netherlands, have created units based on the NCIS model. Gathering intelligence on hooligan members is widely believed to be the crucial in the fight against hooligans. The NCIS states, "The Government has recognized that good intelligence is the key to tackling hooliganism and that the NCIS Football Section has unparalleled reputation in Europe." Technology has allowed great advancements in this area. CCTV cameras have been placed in and around stadiums and even at locations throughout the cities where hooligan activity is often found.

Brimson and Brimson (1996) state:

The bonus for the police apart from twenty-nine arrests on the night, was the fact that it had all been captured on closed-circuit television. Within days, the media was full of pictures of those involved, and Operation Harvest was soon
in full swing. The police, in their attempt to press home the value of closed-circuit television and make their point as powerfully as possible prior to Euro 96, continued their offensive, publishing photographs in the local press and then rounding up the Newcastle mob called the Gremlins in what they called 'a major initiative against hooligans.' (pp. 236-37)

Introduction of the photophone made capturing intelligence even easier. Brimson and Brimson report that the photophone was used to take pictures of those involved in hooligan activity. This device could also take fingerprints and retain information about gang affiliation and prior record. This information then could be sent around the country and, more importantly, to the central coordinating center at Scotland Yard. Prior to Euro 96, the NCIS let it be known that they had a database of 6,000 known hooligans at their disposal, including 400 ringleaders. The European Union has even stepped forward with an effort to help control hooligans. The NCIS (http://www.ncis.co.uk/PRESS/26_00_02.html) reports that under EU agreements, member states are required to provide each other with intelligence relating to traveling supporters. The traveling supporters are identified and categorized as follows:

Category A- Peaceful, bona fide supporters
Category B- Possible risk of disorder, especially alcohol-related
Category C- Violent supporters or organizers of violence.

Some countries have even go so far as to send spotters to away fixtures. Spotters travel to the away country on game days and work with the local authorities to help them identify known hooligans from their respective countries. Europeans have begun to recognize hooliganism as a continent-wide problem and have begun working together to solve it.

Security within stadiums today is very good. There are always
plenty of police, and they are well prepared for violence to erupt. Security cameras are located throughout stadiums, allowing security personnel to spot trouble before it has a chance to escalate.

In general, police have come a long way in their dealings with hooligans. They have had no choice in the matter. To win the battle, they have developed technology and implemented new techniques for dealing with hooligans. However, it is not a problem that is on the decline. Hooligans simply don't care. Police with riot gear are as good as any hooligan mob for a good scrap, and the consequences of being caught simply do not outweigh the fun. When a situation like this exists, it is hard to control. Unfortunately, this is a fact the police, the military and soccer officials alike deal with on a daily basis.

Euro 2000

Euro 2000 was viewed largely a success by many, both in terms of the quality of soccer and controlling of hooligans. With the exception of a few explosive days in Brussels, the fans behaved rather well. Still, to many, this one incident is a reminder that the hooligans can strike at any time. The England vs. Germany match was scheduled for a stadium in Brussels and carried with it the serious potential for trouble. With some 3,000-plus officers on hand in Brussels, things still managed to get out of hand.

As I spent my days in and around several of the Dutch cities, it became apparent to me that the police were well-prepared for Euro
2000. I took note on numerous occasions of the large number of officers employed for the policing of the month-long event. I learned through several conversations with my Dutch friends that this is a normal procedure for any country hosting a major soccer competition. The idea is to send a message to the public that the police will not be undermanned and that they are prepared to handle any situation.

The police were not intimidating, but their presence was obvious. Twenty or so officers dressed in full riot gear and toting batons is a group that I, for one, simply do not wish to conflict with. On the few occasions that I did witness the police intervening, it appeared that they were very much in control of the situation. I was impressed by their confidence and ability to work the crowds. They often used the natural boundaries and obstacles like canals and buildings to corral the zealous fans.

Still, as was the case in Brussels, the police cannot be everywhere at once. They are forced to divide and patrol the entire city. As I stated, groups of 15 to 20 officers patrol the city's major traffic areas. They maintain contact through personal radios, which afford them the opportunity to join forces if necessary.

This is exactly what happened in Brussels. English hooligans turned the Neo Classical city center into a hooligan free-for-all. The police arrived, and eventually the mayhem was quelled, but that incident set the tone for the rest of the weekend. Similar uprisings occurred throughout the weekend in Charleroi and Brussels.
UEFA director Gerhard Aigner had this to say about the weekends events: "But as for the rest there is this black veil which was drawn at Charleroi by English fans who had no tickets and were beyond control. I did not like that and I can not learn to live with this vision of football." (for more comments from Gerhard Aigner see the World Wide Web at http://www.ireland.com/sports/soccer/2000).

The English were blamed for most of the weekend's outbreaks of violence, and the threat of expulsion was not needed because the English were eliminated in the group play.
CONCLUSIONS

The subculture of soccer hooligans that exists today was not always so easy to define. The creation and continuation of this more easily definable subculture is the result of constant molding and shaping. This transformation took place over many years, as hooligans have been forced to deal with those who wish to see an end to hooliganism. The attempts to stop hooliganism have really only served to change the face of hooligans into a subculture that is even more difficult to police. Canter (1989) states that

while one form of hooliganism is thus discouraged, another comes forward to take its place. Fans who are physically separated within the ground can throw missiles, coins, or even seats at each other and ‘fighting crews’ from some clubs make special foray to find rival fans in places or times not subject to match day policing. (p. 108)

There are, however, actually two faces to soccer in Europe, and while hooliganism is thriving in one game, it is on the decline in another. Hooliganism associated with international competition appears to be on the decline. This may come as a surprise to some because hooligans have always enjoyed the atmosphere at international matches. However, this appears to me as a natural step for Europeans to be taking. With the creation of the European Union and other changes to the political arena in Europe, it is a time of peace and unity in Europe. As is often the case, changes in the political and cultural values of a country reflect changes in the
sports arena as well. As the Europeans move forward in the process of unification, relations will continue in this friendly manner. The people are recognizing soccer for what it is—a game, not a metaphor for war, but a reflection of what is occurring the political realm. Many countries have begun to take on the carnival-type atmosphere associated with the Dutch. Fans celebrate the game and the competition with each other and not against each other.

While international competition continues to enjoy the recess from hooligan activity, soccer at the club level is enjoying no such break. Luckily for those who still have as their goal mindless bits of premeditated violence, there is still some place to turn. These people can be found in any of the hundreds of organizations throughout Europe whose sole purpose is the buzz achieved by hooligan activity. These organizations are referred to as firms. Firms have developed as a result of increased policing of hooligan activity. Hooligan activity has been removed from the stadiums. Stadiums have increased security and placed video surveillance throughout their stadiums. Security officers, police and league officials have gone to great lengths to halt to violence within the stadiums, and it appears that their efforts are paying off. They have increased the amount of security at games and divided the stadium into sections to keep opposing fans from mingling with one another, thus reducing the potential for violence. On the other hand, those who wish to carry on in their hooligan ways have chosen to take the battles elsewhere. This is causing troubles for the authorities, as now
they are left with entire cities to patrol.

Firms are composed mainly of young boys who enjoy the thrill, or adrenalin rush provided by the firms' activities. These young men follow their team from city to city looking to do battle with opposing firms. Firms seem to be preoccupied with violence, and a good result does not mean a victory on the soccer field, but rather a good scrap in the streets. It is not a fact that they try to hide. The thrill of being a firm member comes from fighting, rioting and the like. Membership in any of the various firms means membership in the deviant subculture known as hooligans. Police records are kept for hooligan offenses, and many of the leaders, or top boys of these firms are well-known by police and rival firm members.

Firms attract young men who seek the thrills and enjoy the camaraderie provided by their membership. This subculture continues to thrive as new members are taught the ropes through interaction with the older members. It is a process known as cultural transmission. Through this process, the younger members learn what it means to be a firm member. Through interaction with the older members, the young men are socialized into the new culture. They learn the rules, values and expectations that come with membership in the firm. As long as there are those willing to teach, there are those willing to learn, and as long as there is the sport of soccer, there will be soccer hooligans.
BABBERTH


NCIS. http://www.ncis.co.uk/Press/26_00_02.html.


