

When Violence Overshadows the Spirit of Sporting Competition: Italian Football Fans and their Clubs

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ABSTRACT

This study addresses violence of fans during football matches. It focuses on group dynamics and sociodemographic variables as determinants of serious disturbances. Overall, 505 male and female football fans, who were either 'fanatic' or 'moderate' fans from Naples and Bologna, Italy, completed a questionnaire on attitudes towards football and violence in stadiums, and related matters, and gave self-descriptions and descriptions of their own and other football clubs. It was hypothesized that, if 'fanatic' fans identify more strongly with their club than 'moderate' fans do, they should discriminate more sharply between the fan clubs and more likely participate in disturbances. Violent behaviour was also assumed to depend on the norms associated with different fan clubs. Moreover, participation in disturbances was hypothesized to depend on sociodemographic variables. The results suggest that individuals become more aggressive in groups, that the behaviour is controlled by group norms and, hence, that aggression depends on the group's acceptance of violence. The study also supports a rather traditional picture of 'hooligans': the football fans who participate in disturbances are, in general, young, unemployed, poorly educated fanatics who attributed their violence to external factors.

Key words: Football, violence, football clubs, Italian football fans, intergroup relations, aggression in groups.

INTRODUCTION

Recently, the most popular Italian sports newspaper, *La Gazzetta dello Sport*, which prints more than one million copies a day, made some interesting points about the influence that football exerts in modern society. It suggested that football fans discovered long ago that in a period of instability, with everything changing—like the former constancy of intimate relationships, political ideals and religious credos—the only security seems to be represented by the favourite football team. Although foot-

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ball is not the opium of the people today, it is indeed the only dispenser of certainty in a world of worries and doubts (*La Gazzetta dello Sport*, 30 April 1990).

Despite the exaggerated tone of the article (reflecting the kind of newspaper), it is important to note that there is no other sport, either in Italy or in any other European country, that involves the masses and leads to fanaticism to the same degree as football.

It is because of its importance in our society that the problems connected with football evoke immediate and voluminous response in the mass media. Among the problems associated with football, the phenomenon of violence in the stadiums is becoming increasingly relevant in almost all European countries. The riots among fans of opposing football teams create a difficult social problem requiring immediate intervention (Roversi, 1990). The phenomenon may have been amplified by the mass media, like the catastrophes at the Heysel stadium in Brussels in 1985 and in Sheffield in 1989, but it does seem likely that there is frequently an escalation of violence during football matches.

Since the appearance of organized fan clubs, the audience has become 'the twelfth player on the playground' and, as a consequence, the nature of football has drastically changed. The names of the fan clubs are inspired by military organizations (e.g. the clubs of the 'ultras', 'brigades', 'commandos', 'armies'). The football match is considered a question of 'life or death', and antipathy towards the fans of other clubs is generally the rule. The fans have moved on from the ritual aggression observed by Marsh, Rosser and Harrè (1978) to violent fanaticism (Salvini, 1988).

The word 'hooligan' has also become popular in languages other than English, and usually refers to violent football fans, independent of the country from which they come. Considerable research has been undertaken to identify the fans who become aggressive in stadiums. However, the results are ambiguous, suggesting that almost anybody can become fanatic and violent. Most of the hooligans are neither poor, socially marginalized nor unemployed. It rather seems that they are people like all others, but with a salient need to experience strong emotions (Salvini, 1988).

Since both socially well-integrated people and marginalized people can become violent in the stadiums, some researchers have derived antithetical explanations of the phenomenon at stake. On the one hand, one can observe good sport, fairness and the need for entertainment; on the other hand, behaviour can be determined by economic motives such as the acceptance of any tactic leading to success, and the need to win irrespective of the costs (Elias and Dunning, 1986). Aggression is inherent in sporting competition: the rules of the game, the meaning of football and the consequences of football matches become contradictory: on the one hand, there is the importance of winning and, on the other hand, the importance of contributing to a fair, sporting spectacle.

Numerous factors are involved in the study of violence: sociologists, anthropologists and social psychologists have all shown that any explanation of violence focusing on a single cause is too simplistic. A study which takes into consideration the complexity of the phenomenon was conducted by Rimè, Dunand, Boulanger, Leyens, Mahjoub and Marques (1985; a follow-up study was done by Dunand in 1986) after the events at the Heysel stadium in Brussels, Belgium, in 1985, in which 39 people died and 470 were wounded. Rimè *et al.* (1985) proposed a multicausal explanation, that the convergence of numerous interacting factors give rise to processes that lead to violence. In particular, Rimè *et al.* (1985) conclude that some situational

factors facilitate uncontrolled aggression. Among these factors are the competition inherent in some sports, watching violence and aggression (Bandura, 1973; Berkowitz, 1974), collective panic (Turner and Killian, 1972), and de-individuation due to low personal identifiability and a possible lack of control (Diener, 1980; Zimbardo, 1969). Moreover, abuse of alcohol and drugs may disinhibit the fans and facilitate collective aggression (Dunand, 1986).

As far as de-individuation is concerned, it can be assumed that individuals gathering in a crowd become anonymous (LeBon, 1895); which causes a decrease in self-observation and a weakening of controls on behaviour, and further, an increase of violence. On the other hand, the hypothesis that behaviour in groups becomes deregulated has been sharply opposed by the assumption that new norms arise in groups (Turner and Killian, 1972; Reicher, 1982, 1984). Reicher (1984, p. 348) clarifies the view that de-individuation does not gain its effects through the destruction of personal identity but 'by increasing the salience of social as opposed to personal identity'. Mann, Newton and Innes (1982) found support for both theoretical positions: individuals behave more aggressively in anonymous situations, but are especially aggressive when aggressive behaviour is normative, and behave less aggressively if violence is normatively inappropriate.

In this study, four football supporters clubs are studied: two 'fanatic' supporters' clubs (called 'ultra') and two 'moderate' clubs. One group of 'fanatic' supporters and one club of 'moderate' supporters came from Naples, and supported the football team from Naples (which was the best Italian team at the time the study was conducted). The other 'moderate' and 'fanatic' groups supported the team from Bologna which played only moderately well, and was rather frustrating its fans at the time of data collection.

In Italy, football supporters' clubs are usually divided into 'moderate' and 'fanatic' clubs. 'Fanatic' supporters subscribe to different organizations from 'moderate' fans, but both may support the same team. The labels 'fanatic supporters' and 'moderate supporters' are not imposed by the authors on the basis of self-descriptions, but derive from the fans' own categorisation. 'Fanatic' supporters form groups with rather clear boundaries, 'moderate' fans do not. 'Fanatic' fans develop strong ties, wear distinguishing symbols (e.g. badges, flags, hats, specific marks), and generally watch all home matches and all away matches. 'Moderate' supporters, on the other hand, do not wear distinguishing marks or may wear some occasionally (e.g. special T-shirts). Moreover, they watch the matches of their favourite team only more or less occasionally. In other words, while 'fanatic' supporters' clubs are rather close groups that distinguish themselves from other groups, 'moderate' supporters' clubs are more loosely structured.

'Fanatic' supporters' clubs are characterized by symbols that enhance the salience of ingroup-outgroup categorization. 'These increase the perceived identity (similarity, equivalence, interchangeability) between self and ingroup members (and difference from outgroup members)', argue Turner *et al.* (1987, p. 50), 'and so depersonalize individual self perception on the stereotypical dimensions which define the relevant ingroup membership.' Thus, it can be expected that 'fanatic' supporters identify more strongly with their group than do 'moderate' fans and, since wearing distinguishing marks makes them almost anonymous in the collective situation of a football stadium, their behaviour is strongly regulated by group norms. This is especially true when 'fanatic' supporters discuss their 'interventions' and 'spectacles' before

a match starts. In other words, when 'fanatic' supporters are in the stadium, de-individuation processes occur that alter the relative salience of personal identity in favour of social identity and lead to adherence to group norms (Reicher, 1984).

According to Turner *et al.* (1987) identification with one's football club would be a necessary condition for behaviour which discriminates in favour of one's club. Moreover, differentiation between groups or, more specifically, between supporters' clubs, covaries with homogeneity within the clubs. Doise and Lorenzi-Cioldi (1989) maintain that there are situations which favour different intragroup and intergroup patterns from those hypothesized by Turner *et al.* (1987). For instance, they suggest that enhancement of intergroup discrimination can also give rise to greater differentiation among ingroup members. However, the circumstances which give rise to these different dynamics still need to be discovered.

If 'fanatic' supporters identify more strongly with their club than do 'moderate' supporters, Turner *et al.*'s theory would predict that they should distinguish more sharply between the fan clubs, they should behave more according to group norms and their perceptions of their club should be more homogeneous than those of 'moderate' supporters.

Considering the status of the football teams of Naples and Bologna, with the one being on the top of the national classification and the other holding a low position, it can be hypothesized that it is not only fanaticism which plays an important role in intergroup dynamics but also the strength and quality of the team one favours. It seems that a major interest of the fans from Naples is, indeed, to watch their team playing against another, whereas a major interest of the fans from the less successful team is to demonstrate their own power rather than watching the match and their football team. Moreover, whereas the fans supporting the team from Naples can derive positive self-esteem from their identification, those supporting the weaker team from Bologna may not be able to satisfy the needs to achieve and maintain positive self-esteem. Thus, it can be predicted that fanaticism leads to identification with the fan club and hence to intergroup discrimination more in the case of the fans from Naples. However, the supporters from Bologna may have low identification scores, but may nevertheless discriminate between supporters of the different teams on the basis of other social motives (Abrams and Hogg, 1988). The important motives could be gathering for fun and entertainment, for experiencing feelings of adventure and strength; motives which the fans from Bologna may fulfil when they meet in the stadiums and cause disturbances.

This paper suggests that there will be differences between 'fanatic' fans and 'moderate' fans who favour a successful or a rather unsuccessful team, respectively. Violent behaviour during football matches is perceived as depending on the group norms and the individuals' adherence to them. Violence, more specifically the readiness to participate in disturbances, may also depend on other factors. Some personal and situational conditions that may determine the likelihood to participate in collective violence concern sociodemographic characteristics of the fans (e.g. age, sex, being married or single), the relationship between the fans and their clubs, and personal factors (Marsh *et al.*, 1978; Salvini, 1988; Roversi, 1990). This study explores whether young males are readier to participate in disturbances than older persons, and whether marriage and responsibility for children is negatively correlated with participating in disturbances. It can also be assumed that persons with higher education and a paid job are less likely to become involved in violent encounters than

are people with low education and no jobs. The focus on these personal variables may be perceived to detract from the social psychological focus of this paper. However, since newspapers continue to try to identify the personal characteristics of those in serious disturbances and forward a picture which suggests that the violent persons are most likely to be young, male, single, poorly educated, and unemployed, it seems necessary to control for these variables in this study. Also, attribution patterns are considered since fans attributing responsibility for their behaviour to internal causes may control violent acts to a higher extent than those attributing externally.

METHOD

Subjects

The subjects were 434 male and 71 female football fans, with ages ranging from 10 to 70 years, from Bologna and Naples, Italy, who were registered in the local supporters' clubs. Most of the subjects had been members between 1985 and 1987 and were, according to their declarations, members of either 'fanatic' or 'moderate' clubs. The 'fanatic' fans watched every match of their team, including those abroad. A detailed description of the sample is given in Table 1, which shows that 'fanatic' supporters were younger than were 'moderate' supporters ($F(1,498) = 131.15$; $p < 0.001$); were more likely to be male ($z = 3.20$; $p < 0.01$), were more likely to be single ($z = 9.00$; $p < 0.01$), and less likely to be married ($z = 8.80$; $p < 0.01$), or to have one or more children ($z = 7.20$; $p < 0.01$). Finally, 'moderate' fans held higher educational qualifications than 'fanatic' fans ($z = 2.50$; $p < 0.05$) and were more likely to have a paid job ($z = 4.40$; $p < 0.01$).

Materials

A questionnaire was used to record both sociodemographic characteristics (sex, age, occupation and educational level, marital status, number of children) of the participants, and their sports activities (whether they watched sports events such as tennis matches, skiing, etc.; how often they go to see football matches; whether they play any sports and if so, how frequently (answers to all three questions were given on five-point scales on which 1 = very often to 5 = never).

Subjects were then asked to take the role of (a) the fans of their own football members' club (football clubs from Bologna or Naples), (b) the fans of the other football members' clubs, and (c) themselves as individual fans, and to indicate what came into their minds as free association. Moreover, the subjects had to evaluate themselves, their football club members and the other football club members on semantic differentials consisting of 12 adjective polarities (sensible-insensible, aggressive-pacific, good-bad, hot-cold, strong-weak, calm-restless, soft-hard, spontaneous-not spontaneous, masculine-feminine, sympathetic-unpleasant, wild-confiding, courageous-anxious; five-point scales).

Five items were presented to assess identification with the own football clubs (items taken from Brown's (1988) identification scale: my group is important, I identify with my club, I feel close to my club, I perceive myself to be an important member of my club, I am happy to belong to my football club; five-point scales).

Next, football fans' behaviour in general had to be judged on several items. Seven items were presented to assess attributions of violence during football matches (viol-

Table 1. Demographic description of the sample (frequencies and means (standard deviations), respectively)

	Bologna		Naples	
	'Fanatic' fans	'Moderate' fans	'Fanatic' fans	'Moderate' fans
<i>n</i>	127	126	203	49
Sex				
male	107	95	188	44
female	20	31	15	5
Age	20.62 (4.89)	36.23 (16.74)	21.28 (7.36)	27.61 (12.31)
Educational level				
low	65	67	108	27
middle	53	46	86	15
high	6	12	9	6
missing values	3	1	0	1
Occupational status				
employed	66	93	76	25
student	52	24	92	16
unemployed	8	3	34	8
missing values	1	6	1	0
Marital status				
single	117	56	173	36
married	8	63	22	12
divorced	1	5	4	1
widowed	1	2	1	0
missing values	0	0	3	0
Having children or not				
yes	18	63	29	13
no	109	63	174	36
missing values	0	0	4	0

ence during football matches is due to violence present in our society, violence is a form of terrorism, it is due to present political affairs, violence is due to wrong socialization of children within the family, it is due to a lack of sporting spirit and education, it is due to some disturbed persons, violence is a form of expression of human aggression; scales ranged from 1 = agree to 5 = disagree). Then the subjects indicated whether lack of control of aggression during football matches is due to lack of sporting values, not knowing the rules of football, lack of authority of the referee, or fanaticism stimulated by the mass media (subjects indicated up to three alternatives). Moreover, motives for violence had to be indicated (lack of emotional control, presence of people who want to disturb the ongoing match, irrational behaviour and collective psychosis).

Finally, the subjects were asked whether they had participated in disturbances during football matches (1 = never to 4 = often), why they had participated (the motives were group solidarity, personal defence, provocation of other fans, incorrect behaviour of the referee, incorrect behaviour of other football club), and which events led to disturbances (menaces, territorial violations, hostile gestures, others).

Procedure

The football fans were approached by a student interviewer at their clubs or at the football stadium before a match started, and were asked to volunteer in the

study. If they were willing to participate they were given a questionnaire and briefed about the scope of the study after the questionnaire was completed. Data were collected in Spring 1989 in Bologna and Naples, Italy. Completion of a questionnaire took approximately 50 minutes.

RESULTS

The data analysis addresses two main questions: (1) What differences emerge between 'moderate' and 'fanatic' fans of Bologna and Naples? (2) What determines readiness to participate in disturbances?

Differences between 'moderate' and 'fanatic' fans from Naples and Bologna

A 2 (type of fan, 'moderate' vs 'fanatic') by 2 (football club, Bologna vs Naples) analysis of variance with identification with the football club as dependent variable was conducted. The interaction effect slightly missed significance ($F(1,395) = 3.34$; $p = 0.069$). There is a tendency showing that 'fanatic' fans from Naples identified more strongly with their football club ($M = 4.11$), whereas the 'fanatic' fans from Bologna had the lowest identification indexes ($M = 3.43$). The respective means of identification for the 'moderate' fans from Naples and Bologna are $M = 4.00$ and $M = 3.79$. The main effect of the football clubs was significant ($F(1,395) = 19.57$; $p < 0.001$), indicating that the fans from Naples had higher identification scores ($M = 4.09$) than those from Bologna ($M = 3.61$).

Differences between 'moderate' and 'fanatic' fans of the two football clubs were assessed with regard to self-descriptions, descriptions of the own supporters, and descriptions of the other supporters on the semantic differentials. A principal-component analysis with varimax rotation of descriptions of oneself as football fan on the 12 items of the semantic differential revealed two factors explaining 44.7 per cent of the variance. On the first factor, items reflecting 'wildness' (wild, aggressive, violent, insensible, agitated) loaded significantly. The second factor encompassed items on 'toughness' (tough, courageous, masculine, strong, sympathetic, warm, spontaneous).

These two dimensions (summed item scores) of the semantic differentials were included in two analyses of variance with the type of fan ('moderate' vs 'fanatic'), the football club (Bologna vs Naples), and the judgements of oneself, own supporters, and other supporters as independent variables. The results are summarized in Table 2 and Figure 1. The first analysis of variance of self-descriptions on wildness revealed a significant three-way interaction effect ($F(2,788) = 8.27$; $p < 0.001$), significant two-way interactions for the type of fan by judgements ($F(2,788) = 10.08$; $p < 0.001$), and the type of fan by the club ($F(1,394) = 4.56$; $p = 0.033$) and three main effects (for the type of fan: $F(1,394) = 91.60$; $p < 0.001$; for the clubs: $F(1,394) = 55.01$; $p < 0.001$; for judgements: $F(2,788) = 10.84$; $p < 0.001$).

The results of the analysis of toughness descriptions revealed two interaction effects (type of fan by judgements: $F(2,786) = 13.27$; $p < 0.001$; club by judgements: $F(2,786) = 6.12$; $p = 0.002$) and effects of the football club ($F(1,393) = 14.72$; $p < 0.001$) and the judgements ($F(2,786) = 18.75$; $p < 0.001$).

The results indicate that 'fanatic' fans from Bologna differentiated own from other supporters on the wildness dimension, whereas the 'fanatic' fans from Naples differen-

Table 2. Mean scores and standard deviations (in parentheses) on (a) descriptions of oneself, (b) own club and (c) other club

	Bologna		Naples	
	'Fanatic' fans	'Moderate' fans	'Fanatic' fans	'Moderate' fans
(a) Self-descriptions				
wildness	3.00 (0.980)	1.89 (0.731)	2.31 (0.969)	1.65 (0.675)
toughness	2.99 (0.692)	2.83 (0.640)	3.32 (0.679)	3.29 (0.569)
(b) Descriptions of own club supporters				
wildness	3.32 (0.919)	2.09 (0.784)	2.42 (1.009)	1.94 (0.859)
toughness	3.16 (0.820)	2.94 (0.589)	3.36 (0.809)	3.35 (0.801)
(c) Descriptions of other club supporters				
wildness	2.62 (0.904)	2.37 (1.017)	2.09 (0.998)	1.59 (0.677)
toughness	2.71 (0.965)	3.04 (0.673)	2.75 (0.969)	3.10 (0.614)

tiated on the toughness factor. 'Moderate' fans differentiated on both dimensions to a considerably lower extent than the so-called 'ultra'. The fans from the less successful football team (Bologna) described themselves and their own supporters as wilder than all other fans did. 'Fanatic' fans of both cities perceived themselves and the own supporters as wilder than did the 'moderate' fans of the respective clubs. Moreover, they described the other supporters as less tough than themselves and their supporters, and also as less tough than 'moderate' fans did. The fans of Naples thought that they themselves and their club supporters are tougher than did the Bologna fans.

In the first part of the questionnaire, before presenting the semantic differential, the subjects had to describe briefly themselves, own club supporters and other club supporters by using a few adjectives. Overall, the subjects produced 88 different words which were aggregated to 25 descriptive categories. The 88 words were classified by two experts, who, in case of different categorization, discussed their classification until they reached agreement. The frequencies of these categories observed in the 'fanatic' and 'moderate' fan clubs from Bologna and Naples were analyzed by three analyses of correspondence, one for self-descriptions and two for descriptions of their own and the other fan clubs. The first two correspondence analyses yielded highly similar results. Only the results for descriptions of the own club supporters are reported here. The analysis revealed two factors, explaining 59.50 per cent and 24.78 per cent of the variance, respectively. Figure 2 represents the results. Only those descriptive terms are included in the figure which explain more than 2 per cent of the variance. As can be seen, factor 1 distinguishes between 'fanatic' fans from Bologna and the three other clubs. The 'fanatic' fans from Bologna described own supporters as strange, tough, politically engaged, drug-abusing, foolish and aggressive, while the other clubs described their supporters as reliable, well-educated and passionate. The second factor distinguishes between 'fanatic' fans from Naples and the other clubs. Contrary to 'fanatic' fans from Bologna those from Naples perceived their club as magnificent, fantastic, passionate, not hostile and engaged while 'moderate' fans described their clubs as sporting, reliable and well educated.

The final correspondence analysis, considering the descriptions of the other clubs,

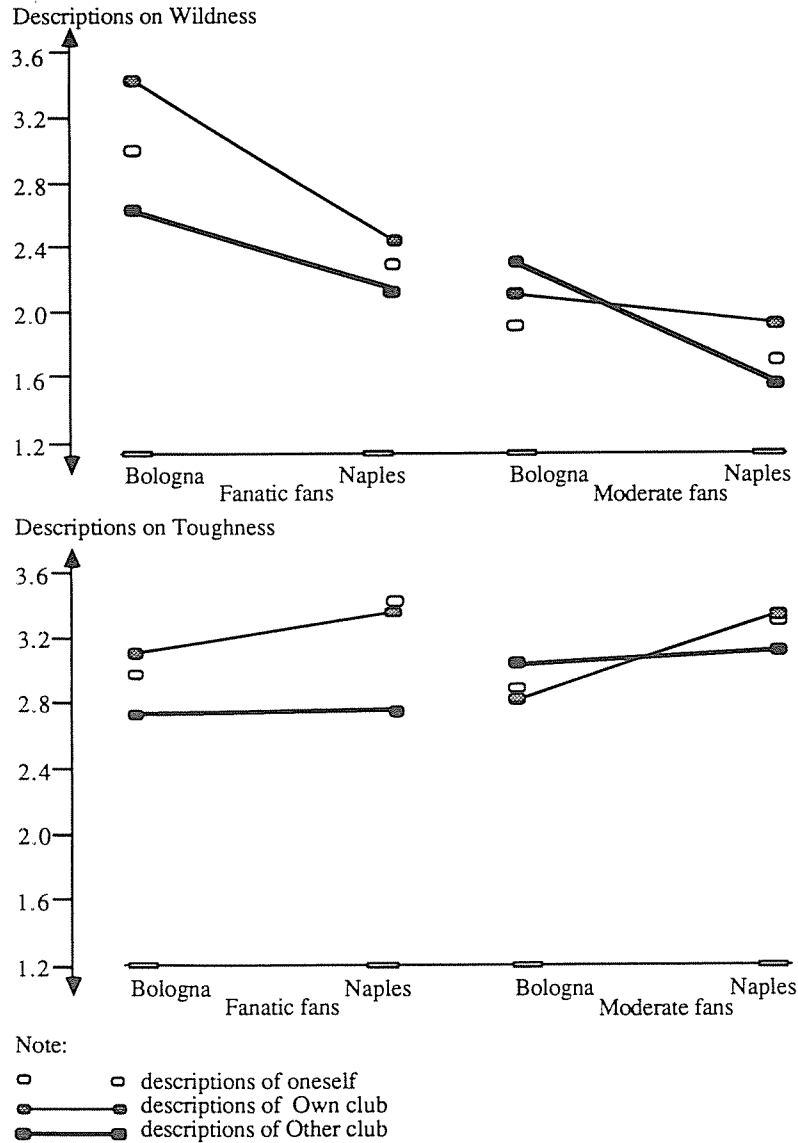


Figure 1. Mean scores of descriptions of oneself, (b) own club, and (c) other club

also revealed a structural configuration which is similar to the first two analyses: the 'fanatics' from Bologna are on one extreme, whereas the 'moderates' from Bologna and the two supporters' clubs from Naples are situated on the other pole of the first dimension. 'Fanatic' fans from Bologna described the supporters from Naples as reliable, fantastic and passionate. The fans from Naples, both the 'fanatic' and the 'moderate' ones, described the supporters from Bologna in positive terms.

Participation in disturbances

It was argued that participation in disturbances depends on de-individuation. Since 'fanatic' fans form rather close groups, wear distinguished marks, and are more

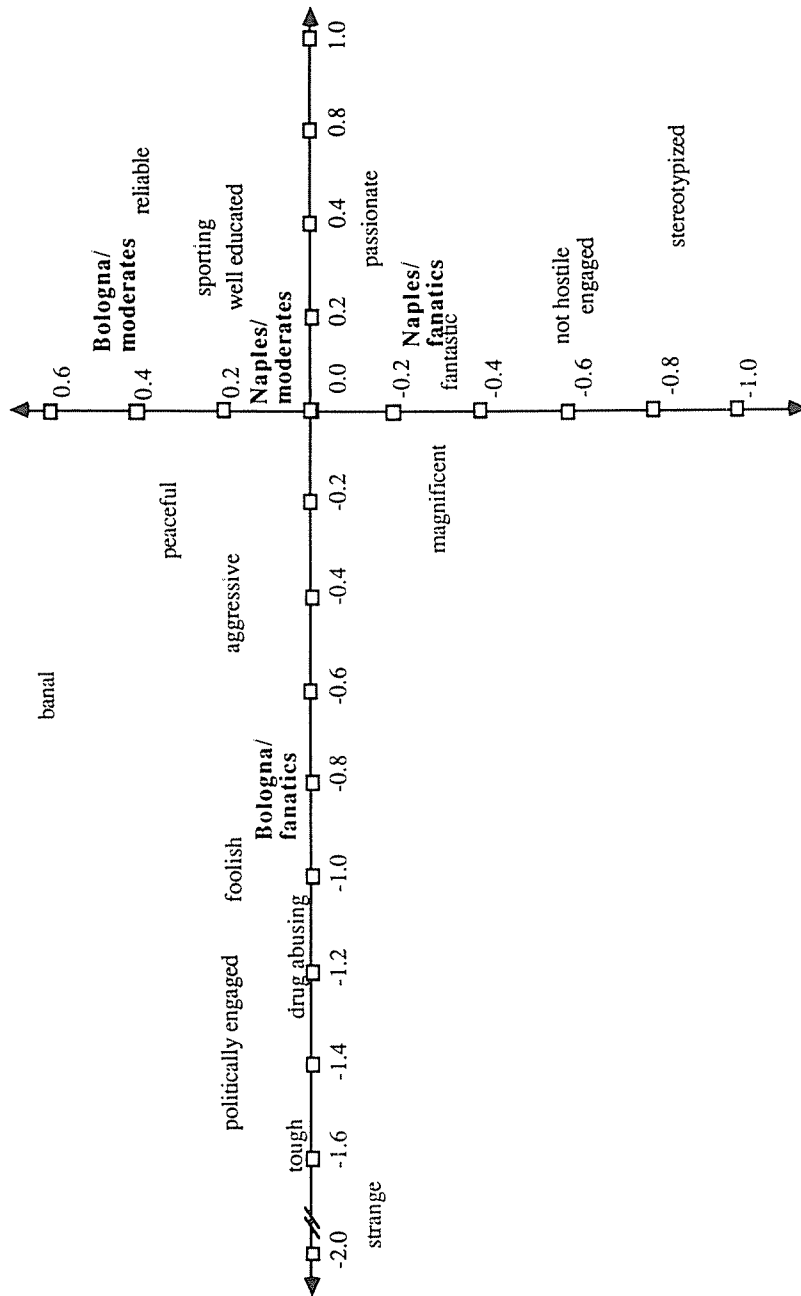


Figure 2. Results of the analysis of correspondence for descriptions of own club supporters

anonymous in football stadiums than others they should more likely participate in serious disturbances than 'moderate' fans. Also, the strength of identification with the fan club and the perceived similarity between oneself and one's club should be correlated with participation in disturbances. It was further argued that extreme behaviour depends on the influence of group norms. According to Italian newspapers and the fans' self-descriptions, the 'ultra' from Naples should follow less violent group rules than those from Bologna. Therefore, participation in disturbances should also depend on the interaction between 'football club (Naples vs Bologna) and type of fan ('fanatic' vs 'moderate')'.

Moreover, participation in disturbances may be correlated with sociodemographic variables such as age, sex, responsibility for children, one's work condition and the level of education. Also, one's sports playing may covary with violence. Finally, attribution of aggressive behaviour to internal or external factors may facilitate or inhibit participation in serious disturbances. These variables were operationalized as follows:

(Type of fan)	Subjects were either classified as 'moderate' fans (=1) or 'fanatic' fans (=0).
(Club)	The football clubs were either Naples (=1) which at the time of the study was on the top of the national ranking, or Bologna (= 0) which was in the lower ranks of the division.
(Fan by club)	The interaction between type of fan and club was the product of both variables. The variables were coded as follows: 'fanatic' fans = -1, 'moderate' fans = +1; Bologna = -1, Naples = +1.
(Identification)	Identification with the fan club was calculated as mean response to Brown's (1988) identification scale (scale ranging from 1 = low identification to 5 = high identification).
(Similarity)	Similarity of descriptions of oneself and own supporters was calculated as Euclidean distance between self-descriptions in the semantic differential and descriptions of own supporters (scale ranging from 1 = highly similar to 4 = dissimilar).
(Age)	Age of the participants ranged from 10 to 70 years.
(Sex)	This variable represented the sex of the subjects (0 = female, 1 = male).
(Family)	This variable takes account of the subjects who were married (=1) and had children versus the subjects with no children (=0).
(Work)	The working condition varied from a paid job or being a student to being unemployed. A distinction was made between workers and students (=1), on the one hand, and unemployed (=0), on the other hand.
(Education)	The level of education ranged from low (1 = elementary school) to middle (baccalaureate) to high (5 = university degree).
(Sportiveness)	Sports playing was operationalized as difference between frequency of active sports playing (football playing and other sports) and attending sports events. The values range from -4 = more active than passive sports activities to 4 = more passive than active sports activities.
(Attribution)	Attribution of violent behaviour during football matches was

Table 3. Multiple regression analysis on participation in disturbances and correlations

Determinants	Standardized beta weights	<i>t</i> -Value	<i>p</i>	Correlation	<i>p</i>
Type of fan (fanatic vs moderate)	-0.28	6.04	0.000	-0.36	0.000
Attribution (external vs internal)	-0.21	4.62	0.000	-0.27	0.000
Similarity	-0.20	4.30	0.000	-0.25	0.000
Working status (unemployed vs employed, student)	-0.13	2.79	0.006	-0.18	0.000
Identification	0.10	2.23	0.026	-0.09	0.000
Education	-0.10	2.20	0.029	-0.11	0.007
Adjusted r^2 for five significant determinants	0.26				
Age	-0.12	1.89	0.059	-0.26	0.000
Club (Bologna vs Naples)	-0.10	1.93	0.054	-0.07	0.059
Sex	0.08	1.73	0.085	0.13	0.002
Family (no children vs children)	-0.06	1.00	0.318	-0.11	0.006
Sportiveness	0.03	0.62	0.533	0.10	0.017
Interaction (fan club \times type of fan)	0.01	0.02	0.985	0.12	0.004
Adjusted r^2 for all determinants	0.27				
Number of observations	371				

either 'internal' or 'external'. The seven items assessing attributions were factor analysed (principal-component analysis with varimax rotation). The analysis revealed two factors, explaining 43.1 per cent of the variance, with the first one representing items on internal attributions (e.g. aggressive behaviour during football matches is due to lack of sporting spirit of some fans), and the other one reflecting items on external attributions (e.g. aggressive behaviour is due to violence in the society or due to political conflicts). The difference between scores on the first and second factor was used as the attribution score in the regression analysis. The values range from $-4 =$ external attribution to $4 =$ internal attribution.

(Participation in disturbances) Participation in disturbances was assessed by asking whether the subjects had been involved in disturbances (1 = never to 4 = often).

A multiple linear regression analysis with participation in disturbances as the dependent variable and predictors as described gave a multiple $r = 0.54$. The r^2 was 0.29 and the adjusted $r^2 = 0.27$, which indicates that the predictors explain approximately one-third of the variance of participation in disturbances. A stepwise regression analysis showed that six predictors are important: type of membership, attributions, identification with the group, similarity, occupational status, and educational level. Table 3 displays the results of the stepwise analysis and those of a regression analysis including all predictors simultaneously, as well as the correlation indexes.

The results show that participation in disturbances depends largely on the type of fan club one belongs to. 'Fanatic' fans participated in disturbances more often than 'moderate' fans ($\beta = -0.28$; $t = 6.04$, $p < 0.001$). Closeness to the group also plays an important role. The more the fans identify with their club ($\beta = 0.10$; $t = 2.23$,

$p < 0.05$) and the more similar they perceive themselves to be to the fans of own club ($\beta = -0.20$; $t = 4.30$, $p < 0.001$) the more likely they participate in disturbances. Moreover, the results show that the more the fans tend to attribute violent behaviour to factors *external* to the agents rather than internal ($\beta = -0.21$; $t = 4.62$, $p < 0.001$), and the lower their level of education ($\beta = -0.10$; $t = 2.20$, $p < 0.05$) the higher the probability that they had participated in disturbances. Also, unemployed subjects indicated participating in disturbances more frequently than the employed ($\beta = -0.13$; $t = 2.79$, $p < 0.05$).

The expected interaction effect between the football club and the type of fan was not found. This could be due either to covariation with other predictors in the regression analyses or to the fact that 'fanatic' fans from Bologna are highly dissimilar from 'moderate' fans from Naples. The way of calculating the interaction suggests similarity between the two types of fans. Therefore, an analysis of variance with the type of fan and the football club as independent variables and participation in disturbances as dependent variables was conducted. It showed that the 'fanatic' fans from Bologna are slightly more likely to participate in disturbances ($M = 1.00$) than the other fans (M for the 'moderate' fans from Bologna and Naples and the 'fanatic' fans from Naples = 0.23, 0.12, 0.80; F for the interaction effect (1,491) = 2.86; $p = 0.092$). The main effect of the type of fan was significant ($F(1,491) = 73.763$; $p = 0.000$), while the effect of the football club was not significant ($F(1,491) = 1.487$; $p = 0.223$). The correlation between the variable 'fanatic fans from Bologna' (= 1; all other fans = 0) and participation in disturbances amounts to $r = 0.23$ ($p = 0.000$) which is, compared to the correlations reported in Table 3, rather high. It can thus be concluded that, in addition to the socio-demographic variables that facilitate participation in disturbances, the type of fan club and identification with the own club play an important role, and, since the 'fanatic' fans from Bologna differ from those from Naples, the norms of the own group are also relevant in predicting violent behaviour.

When asked to indicate the causes of violence during football matches, the participants said that it was caused by violation of their own football club's territory (67 per cent) and because of threats by the fans of the other club (21 per cent). Subjects participating often in disturbances were more inclined to believe that violence during football matches was due to a state which can be described as 'collective madness' (44 per cent of the subjects) than subjects who had never participated in disturbances or were involved in disturbances accidentally (33 per cent). On the other hand, subjects never participating in disturbances believed that violence was due to a momentary loss of self control (43 per cent) or the presence of single individuals who wanted to disturb the ongoing match (24 per cent). Subjects participating often at disturbances indicated in 34 per cent and 22 per cent of the cases that violence was due to loss of control and the behaviour of single individuals, respectively.

When asked why they themselves had participated in disturbances, they either indicated that it was because of solidarity with the own supporters' club (34 per cent), personal defence (23 per cent), provocation by the fans of the other club (37 per cent), or other causes (5 per cent). While those participating often or very often in disturbances were more inclined to indicate solidarity with the fan club as a cause of violence (47 per cent) rather than personal defence (16 per cent) or provocation (37 per cent), those subjects who were coincidentally involved in distur-

bances tended to indicate provocations as causes (the respective percentages for solidarity, defence, and provocation are 29, 29 and 41 per cent).

DISCUSSION

The present study investigates the descriptions of oneself, one's fellow supporters and other club supporters of 505 'fanatic' and 'moderate' football fans from Naples and Bologna, Italy. The aim was to analyse intergroup and intragroup dynamics and readiness to participate in disturbances.

One of the most important findings concerns the shortcomings of a classification of fans as 'fanatic' and 'moderate', and the assumption that, without exception, 'fanatic' fans participate in disturbances and are violent. Despite the fact that 'fanatic' fans are younger, more likely to be single without responsibilities for children, hold lower educational qualifications, and are more likely to be unemployed than 'moderate' fans—factors that *are* associated with participation in disturbances—the distinction between 'fanatic' and 'moderate' fans, as reflected in the mass media and everyday opinions, is inaccurate. This study shows that 'fanatic' fans from Bologna and Naples differ in self-descriptions, descriptions of their fellow supporters and in the likelihood of their becoming violent in the stadium.

Concerning the level of identification with the club, this study found a considerable difference between 'fanatic' fans from Naples and Bologna. The 'fanatic' fans from Naples were found to be those who identify most strongly with their club, whereas the 'fanatic' fans from Bologna had the lowest identification indexes among all four groups. This difference is most likely due to the opportunity to satisfy the need for positive self-esteem for the fan clubs supporting the team from Naples, but not for those supporting Bologna. As the results of the correspondence analysis show, the fans from the better football team describe themselves and their club in highly positive terms which undoubtedly reflects high self-esteem, whereas those from Bologna made less favourable verbal associations. If identification is a necessary precondition for intergroup discrimination, as Turner *et al.* (1987) would claim, then the 'fanatic' fans from Naples should discriminate most between ingroup and outgroup, whereas those from Bologna should discriminate less. However, the results show that both 'fanatic' clubs discriminated more than 'moderate' fans did. This result indicates that besides intergroup discrimination due to identification and positive effects on the self-esteem, there are other motives which lead to discrimination processes (Abrams and Hogg, 1988; Hogg and Abrams, 1988). The 'fanatic' fans from Naples discriminated on the dimension of toughness and strength; those from Bologna discriminated on the dimension of wildness. The fans from Naples described themselves and their club as tougher and stronger than the clubs from Bologna; the fans from Bologna described themselves and their club as wilder and more aggressive than the club from Naples. Both 'moderate' clubs did not discriminate between ingroup and outgroup fans. Thus, it can be concluded that identification based on enhancement of self-esteem was not decisive for intergroup discrimination. We need to posit other (social) motives underlying intergroup discrimination in the case of the 'fanatic' fans from Bologna.

As Table 2 shows, the ratings of self-descriptions, and descriptions of one's fellow supporters, by the 'fanatic fans varied more than those of 'moderate' fans. The

higher variance indicates more perceived heterogeneity within the group. This result can be interpreted as supporting Doise and Lorenzi-Cioldi's (1989) hypothesis on the covariation between identification, inter-group discrimination and homogeneity of judgements.

For the discussion of the results on participation in disturbances, the meaning of the dimensions used to describe ingroup and outgroup fans needs to be considered. Wildness, a factor which encompasses concepts such as aggression, violence, mindlessness, etc., was used by the 'fanatic' fans from the weaker football team from Bologna to discriminate between themselves and the fans from Naples. This suggests that the fans had the need to discriminate not only between ingroup and outgroup but also between themselves and their football team. Perhaps they had the desire to claim for an image of themselves which their team had already lost. On the other hand, toughness encompasses concepts such as courage, strength and masculinity, and also adjectives like warm, sympathetic and spontaneous. The fans of the winning team attribute this positive image to themselves and their club, discriminating between ingroup and the outgroup. Similar results were obtained in the free descriptions.

These results can be perceived as indicating the operation of group standards and norms. While the 'fanatic' fans from Bologna do not have a 'magnificent' team to refer to, those from Naples can identify themselves with the best Italian football team. Consequently, the fans from Naples may adopt the norms of their team and refer to sporting values, whereas those from Bologna may develop their own values and norms. The members of the 'fanatic' club from Bologna seem to adhere to norms characterized by wildness and violence. Since the salience of social as opposed to personal identity increases in situations of 'fanatic' fan groups, the fans from Bologna react according to the rough standards of their group, while the behaviour of the fans from Naples is controlled by the spirit of sporting encounters. Thus, the results support Reicher's (1984) thesis about group norms.

It is premature to arrive at any conclusions about the violence which was observed when the teams from Bologna and Naples were playing. Nevertheless, some speculations are in order. When the data were collected, the fans from Bologna were more often involved in disturbances than those from Naples. Also, journalists often observed that the fans who were involved in disturbances were not really interested in the football matches but came to the matches merely for a chance to give vent to their emotions. It could well be that the 'fanatic' fans from Naples, identifying strongly with their team, and attributing themselves the positive image which the team has, watch the matches because they are interested in football, and while watching they suffer and hope with the team. On the other hand, the 'fanatic' fans from Bologna could lack the possibility of a positive identification with their team. Since their team 'has nothing left to lose' they are not interested in the game and in the sporting values and norms, but develop their own rules which govern the disturbances they themselves create in the stadium.

The present study also supports the hypothesis on de-individuation and loss of control of behaviour. 'Fanatic' fans and fans who felt close to their club, in general, were more inclined to participate in disturbances than 'moderate' fans. Thus, the results are in line with those reported by Mann *et al.* (1982), supporting two theories, that developed by Zimbardo (1969), Diener (1980), etc., and that put forward by Reicher (1984), and Turner and Killian (1972), etc.

As far as participation at serious disturbances is concerned, some other variables

considered in this study were highly predictive: the work situation, the pattern of attribution of violence and the level of education. These results suggest a rather 'classic' picture of the violent fans in the stadium: those who participate in disturbances are, in general, young, unemployed, poorly educated people who are members of a 'fanatic' club, and attribute the responsibility for their behaviour to external rather than internal factors.

The findings are, at least in part, not in line with sociological analyses of violence in stadiums in Europe as was reported in mass media (Elias and Dunning, 1986; Roversi, 1990). They concluded that violence became completely independent of what was going on the football pitch. Today, there may actually be two matches going on in the football stadium: the first match concerns the football teams on the pitch, the second involves 'fanatic' fans who are not interested in football as such, but in the opportunities which football offers to meet with the club-mates and to give vent to the emotions and energies in battles with others. The results rather indicate that fan clubs develop their own standards and will display them if their football team is not successful and, thus, not to be identified with. The standards developed by the fans are often extreme, negative and have nothing to do with the sporting spirit of football. After having developed their standards it is possible that they challenge sharply the spirit of sporting events which are going on the football ground. Then the likelihood increases that 'two matches' will be played.

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