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The Contentious Fans

The Impact of Repression, Media Coverage, Grievances and Aggressive Play on Supporters' Violence

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abstract: This article poses the question of which macro-sociological explanations best predict the level of soccer supporters' violence. By conceptualizing supporters' violence as a form of contentious violence, four possible explanations are proposed: repression, media attention, unemployment and aggressive play on the pitch. These explanations are tested for the occurrence of violence around soccer matches in the Netherlands during the period 2001–5. The authors employ a Generalized Event Count model and multi-level logistic regression analysis and demonstrate that media attention, unemployment and aggressive play on the pitch are significant explanatory factors for the occurrence of violence. Police repression does not have a significant impact.

keywords: collective action ✦ hooliganism ✦ macro sociological explanations ✦ social movements

Introduction

Hooliganism, or fan violence, has received a considerable amount of scholarly attention from sociologists (Dunning, 2000), psychologists (Marsh, 1978) and anthropologists (Armstrong, 1998). Some scholars even state that the research field has become too crowded and that this overpopulation has resulted in an unfriendly tone of the scientific debate (Carnibella et al., 1996). Despite the scrutiny of the debate we believe we

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can make a theoretical and empirical contribution to the literature. On a theoretical level, we suggest conceptualizing hooliganism as collective violence (Tilly, 2003), a specific form of contentious behaviour (McAdam et al., 2001). In their book, *Dynamics of Contention*, McAdam et al. try to overcome the boundaries between the different disciplinary streams existing in the study of collective action. In addition, they try to analyse various forms of contentious behaviour as dynamic processes that shift over time. Acting in their spirit, we think that students of hooliganism can profit from this conceptualization for two reasons.

First, on a general level, previous explanations treat hooliganism as a form of irrational behaviour, in which participants are portrayed as outrageous, emotional (Elias and Dunning, 1986), disoriented (Armstrong, 1998), carnivalesque (Giulianotti, 1999) and being contaminated by a fever (Finn, 1994). Although in the 19th century, this type of explanation was often used in the study of contentious behaviour as well and it can be regarded as a 'classical' explanation for mass upsurges (e.g. LeBon, 1896); however, it has become less mainstream during the past decades. Several other explanations, most of them originating from social movement studies, offer a more rational account of individuals when trying to understand their participation in collective action, and social movement scholars have shown their validity. They argue that collectivities act for a variety of reasons, mainly grievances and discontents following economic deprivation (Gurr, 1970; Piven and Cloward, 1979), while taking into account the availability of resources (McCarthy and Zald, 1977) and political contexts (Kriesi et al., 1995; McAdam, 1982) and being involved in social learning processes (Pitcher et al., 1978). We think that the research on hooliganism will profit from the usage of these insights that are quite mainstream in the study of other types of collective action.

Second, most approaches towards hooliganism are largely phenomenological in nature, only focusing on the general existence of hooliganism as a social phenomenon. It has been argued that hooliganism is a by-product or simple manifestation of decivilization (Dunning et al., 2002), working-class culture (Clarke, 1978), youth culture (Taylor, 1982) and masculinity (Alabarces, 2002). This type of research mainly addresses the general question why hooliganism exists at all, rather than investigating the precise conditions in which it is more or less likely to occur, and ignores how hooliganism develops over time. In this article, we try to overcome the limitation of such a static approach by researching how various factors influence the temporal and spatial fluctuations of hooliganism. Analysing the dynamics of mobilization is already commonplace for scholars focusing on other forms of collective behaviour, such as violent protests (for an overview, see Koopmans, 2004), riots (for an overview, see Useem, 1998) and revolutions (e.g. Tilly, 1978), and some even argue it is the central

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issue in studying collective action (Tarrow, 1994). Therefore, applying insights obtained by these scholars forms a formidable starting point for the present study.

Here we focus on four determinants of fluctuations in collective violence as proposed in the literature on violent contention. First, we test grievance theories that argue that collective violence follows from frustrations resulting from economic deprivation (Gurr, 1970; Piven and Cloward, 1979). Second, we consider the political process theory that holds that the intensity of collective action, in general, and collective violence, specifically, is dependent on the room the 'political' structures leave for these forms of contention to take place (Kriesi et al., 1995; McAdam, 1982). Third, we test media explanations of collective action, which contend that violent mobilization (Koopmans and Olzak, 2004), similar to other forms of contention (Gamson and Wolfsfeld, 1993), is related to media coverage. Finally, we take a closer look at social learning theory of collective violence, which claims that violent incidents are inspired by aggressive behaviour of significant others (Bandura, 1973; Pitcher et al., 1978) – soccer players in the case of hooliganism.

We test these theories by means of two quantitative analyses. Most work on fan violence is grounded in qualitative data, although there are some exceptions (De Vreese, 2000; Van der Brug, 1986). We do not want to challenge the illuminating, insightful and challenging character of most qualitative studies (e.g. Giulianotti and Robertson, 2004; Spaaij, 2006); however, we think that for the aim of this article a quantitative approach is most suitable.

The focus on qualitative studies can to a large extent be explained by the absence of national statistics concerning frequencies and levels of hooliganism (Carnibella et al., 1996). Fortunately, the Netherlands forms a positive exception to the rule. The Dutch Agency of Soccer Violence (CIV, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005) reports the frequency of supporters' violence for each match since the 2001/2 season. This offers a unique opportunity to combine these data on spectator violence with statistics collected from media, police and other statistical sources and to test the validity of the collective behaviour theories in explaining spectators' violence by means of two types of statistical modelling. First, a time series analysis with a Generalized Event Count model (King, 1989), a statistical tool suitable for estimating parameters based on contagious event counts, is executed. In addition, we execute a multi-level analysis of match–club combinations to refine the test of the social learning approach in predicting the occurrence of violent riots in specific matches.

The remainder of this article is divided into four sections. In the first section, we elaborate on the conceptualization of hooliganism as a specific form of contentious violence, outline the four explanations

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and derive testable hypotheses. The second section reflects on the data, operationalizations and models used to test the hypotheses. The third presents the empirical results, of which the implications are discussed in the concluding section.

Hooliganism as Contentious Violence

Current imageries of hooligans consist of irrational, unthinking individuals. For example, Armstong (1998) considers violent fan behaviour to be a liminal state, i.e. a transitional phase in which individuals lose their orientation, identity and control over life. Leading anthropologist Giulianotti (1999) pictures fighting fans as merrymakers during carnival, a feast characterized by haze and the conversion of rationality. This notion of irrationality resembles the paradigm on collective violence that was dominant until the 1960s. Students of social movements, riots and revolutions considered their research object as dangerous mobs blindly following emotions that were present among individuals residing in crowds. Gustave LeBon (1896) describes the blurring of moral standards that follow from acting collectively. The same line of thought is also present in the work of classic sociologists such as Blumer (1946: 170) and Weber (1951: 24), of which the latter, ironically, by most of us is held to be the champion of rationalization.

The study of collective behaviour has changed over the past decades. First, in the 1960s and 1970s scholars started sympathizing with the efforts of rebelling people (Goodwin and Jasper, 2003). This led to the acknowledgement among social scientists of the strains, grievances and deprivations that protesters experienced and formed the actual motivation for taking part in collective violence. Contentious riots and other revolutionary acts were no longer regarded as irrational excesses but were seen as reactions to social problems (Davies, 1962; Gurr, 1970) and means to an end (Piven and Cloward, 1979; but also on an individual level see Olson, 1965). Furthermore, it was shown that organizations formed the backbone of many upsurges and revolutions, and acted strategically in managing their resources and to achieve prospected goals (McCarthy and Zald, 1977; Tilly, 1978).

In addition, others started focusing on the political and media context in which contentious riots emerged. These scholars first of all studied the interaction of protest behaviour with state and media institutions, and argued that collective violence and other forms of protest were little more than a violent form of politics (McAdam, 1982) and that the intensity of collective violence was dependent on the opportunities provided by media (Gamson and Wolfsfeld, 1993; Gitlin, 1980) and state institutions (Kriesi et al., 1995).

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Finally, psychologists complemented these insights by demonstrating that perpetrators of collective violence have strong collective identities creating emergent norms (Klandermans, 1997) and were influenced by social learning (Pitcher et al., 1978) when their acts took shape.

All these lines of work culminated in the notion that riots, revolutions, protests, acts of nationalism and other forms of collective violence should be considered as subforms of contentious behaviour, i.e. collective claims making that follows from experienced discontents, and which takes place in interaction with the political contexts, is shaped by the media realm, and characterized by strong collective identities and social learning (McAdam et al., 2001).

We think that hooliganism perfectly meets this definition of contentious behaviour. First, factions of soccer hooligans are trying to make consistent claims, both political and non-political. Research conducted in the UK indicates that fan violence is embedded in the wider political context. In most cases, more or less organized groups try to initiate fights with rival groups. The aims of these riots are twofold. On the one hand, hooligans want to humiliate the competing gangs that support other club teams. On the other hand, they want to draw attention to their social background and express grievances related to it (Dunning et al., 2002). Ethnographic research in the Dutch context confirms these forms and aims of inter-fan side competition (Spaaij, 2006). Moreover, a survey held among Dutch soccer fans indicated that political distress was one of the key motivators of fan violence (Van der Brug, 1994).

Next, state institutions, such as police agencies, and the media play an important role in the lives of soccer hooligans. Spaaij shows that the interaction between police interventions and fan violence forms an important aspect of hooliganism. Both parties are engaged in an intriguing cat and mouse game in which hooligans use police actions as a means to make acts heard in the media (Spaaij, 2006). Moreover, hooligans have said that obtaining media attention for their actions is of major importance since it offers them an opportunity to express their claims and completes the humiliation of their opponents (Van der Brug, 1994).

Finally, similar to other contentious groups, soccer hooligans have a strong collective identity. Armstrong (1998) states the essence of soccer violence lies in the construction of 'us' and 'them' distinctions between rivalry groups. In the Netherlands, these constructed identities are mainly organized around regional allegiance (Spaaij, 2006: 35).

We now take a closer look at how theories on collective behaviour have tried to explain temporal and spatial fluctuation in collective violence. We focus on political process, media, grievances and social learning theories. Although we recognize that the resource mobilization approach to social movements has figured prominently in rational accounts of collective behaviour, we have to exclude this approach for practical reasons: we do

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not have any longitudinal data on the resources, such as membership figures or financial donations, that were available to Dutch fan sides.

Political Context

Political process theory holds that the political context is of major importance in accounting for fluctuations in waves of contention (McAdam, 1982). The political processes that form the backbone of the theory are often conceptualized as opportunities. Several aspects of political opportunities have been identified in the last decades (for an overview, see McAdam, 1996). McAdam distinguishes between four types of political opportunities: the openness of a political system, stability of elite systems, presence of political allies in representative institutions and the state's propensity for repression. The first three dimensions of political opportunities are rather stable in western democracies and therefore most of the time investigated using a cross-sectional design (Kriesi et al., 1995). Since we focus on only one country during a relatively short time period, we restrict ourselves to the fourth dimension.

The relationship between repression and collective violence is heavily debated by students of social movements and political violence. On the one hand, scholars state that repression in general raises the costs of collective action and therefore lowers its intensity (Kriesi et al., 1995). This notion seems to be supported by the fact that most authoritarian regimes succeed in limiting political upheavals (Tilly, 1978). On the other hand, scholars argue that repression enhances the propensity among the dissatisfied. Three reasons can be found in the literature. First, repression might reinforce collective identities of contenders leading to more offensive reactions. Karlstedt-Henke (1980), focusing on the origins of terrorism, for instance, points out that repression of terrorists scatters radical groups, leading to further marginalization and radicalization of the perpetrators and the tactics they utilize. Second, in his study on the occurrence of collective action against the authoritarian regime in El Salvador, Almeida (2003) demonstrates that violence and disruptive action is more likely to occur in a political context that is characterized by high levels of threat and repression since the repression itself becomes a grievance that catalyses mobilization. Third, Smith (2002: 521) argues that activists who are confronted with a repressive political context use more confrontational strategies. This is due to the fact that more conventional forms of claim making are not successful within hostile political environments.

This disagreement leads us to formulate two contrasting hypotheses. On the one hand, we hypothesize that repression of hooliganism positively influences the level of supporters' violence (H1a). On the other hand, we hypothesize that repression of hooliganism negatively influences the level of supporters' violence (H1b).

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Media

Scholars have acknowledged the role of mass media in the process of contentious action (Gamson and Wolfsfeld, 1993). Collective action is influenced by diffusion processes through a variety of communication channels (Soule, 2004; Tarrow, 1989). In modern democracies, mass media is by definition the most salient and powerful line through which communication occurs and therefore has a large impact on the diffusion of violent group acts (Lipsky, 1968). Extensively reported riots will diffuse quickly since they are highly visible for outsiders (Myers, 2000). As Gitlin (1980) argues, activists are well aware of the importance of media coverage for attracting more participants and ultimately reaching their goals.

Though media attention is widely regarded as being crucial for achieving mobilization, its exact influence on participation in collective behaviour has hardly been researched empirically (Vliegenthart et al., 2005). An exception is the recent study by Koopmans and Olzak (2004) on the occurrence of extreme-right violence in Germany. They show the positive impact of media attention on extreme-right violence and public reaction on the levels of these violence acts (see also Esser and Brosius, 1995). Similar results are found for race riots in the US (Myers, 2000). In short, it can be argued that media coverage of fan violence inspires other fans. Thus, we hypothesize that the amount of media coverage of hooliganism positively influences the level of supporters' violence (H2).

Grievances

It is possible to distinguish two types of grievance theories. On the one hand, scholars state that collective violence is a product of complete malintegration of society. According to this view, economic shocks combined with institutional breakdown, societal transformations and political failures create anger among civilians who accordingly get uprooted and leave behind their daily routines to get engaged in collective riots (Piven and Cloward, 1979). Others have argued that simple short-term fluctuations in grievances form an important predictor for contentious violence. Because of our single-country study and the limited time period we consider, we focus on the second line of thought, which has been utilized frequently in explaining the dynamics of revolutions, ethnic riots and violent protests.

The theory that finds its origin in the work of Gurr (1970) holds that the potential for collective violence is a function of shared discontents that follow from relative deprivation, which he defines as the 'perceived discrepancy between men's value expectations and their value capabilities' (Gurr, 1970: 13). Hence, people experience discontent because they think they are entitled to certain resources that are in practice not acquired. According to Gurr, it is this gap between expected and obtained resources

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that leads to collective grievances, rather than absolute levels of welfare. In his study of political violence in the US, he operationalizes relative deprivation as short-term fluctuations in economic hardship. In a similar vein, Davies (1962) tries to explain the timing of revolutions out of economic changes. Central in his work is the notion that revolutions need a period in which expectations get frustrated. He points out that several important revolutions in human history, such as the Dorrs rebellion, the Russian revolution and the Cairo riots of 1952, were preceded by short-term alleviations of poverty. He additionally argues that unemployment statistics can be considered to be a good proxy for measuring frustration among civilians. This logically follows from the fact that the western world to a large extent is structured by labour life, and employment is a crucial element in normal life.

A specific hypothesis that can be derived from these short-term grievance theories is that increasing unemployment leads to more non-normalized collective action (Useem, 1998: 221). Support for this hypothesis has been found in studies of racist violence (McLaren, 1999), ethnic riots (Olzak and Shanahan, 1996) and several other forms of contentious violence (for an overview, see Useem, 1998). Hence, in line with grievance theories, we hypothesize that it is not so much the absolute level of unemployment, but rather *increases* in unemployment rates that lead to more supporter violence (H3).

Social Learning

Social psychologists have proposed that the spread of contentious behaviour and other forms of collective action is also affected by processes of social learning (Pitcher et al., 1978). In sum, social learning theory holds that collective actors, by watching others working in their environment and by talking with them about their experiences, become aware of the consequences of different types of behaviour and automatically learn which actions work and which do not (Bandura, 1973).

Social learning takes shape through several mechanisms (Turner and Killian, 1987). One of these mechanisms is symbolic modelling (Bandura, 1973). The concept of symbolic modelling stresses that actions of significant others are important in shaping and spreading contentious actions. Whenever important actors in the direct environment get involved in certain forms of collective behaviour, it is likely that others will be more inclined to participate as well.

Whether others can act as significant inspirers for social groups depends on several aspects. Tilly points at the importance of authority in the process of certification. Certification is defined by Tilly (2003: 85) as the validation of people's collective performances, in general, and collective violence, specifically, by external authorities. The impact of

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certification on collective violence has only been studied in the context of religious role models (see also McAdam et al., 2001). For example, in his analysis of the French revolution, Tilly (2003: 219–20) mentions that church institutions certified popular uprisings by taking part in contentious events against the establishment themselves. This led to stronger activation and higher levels of coordination, indirectly resulting in a greater likelihood of collective violence.

Others have emphasized that identification plays a crucial role in symbolic modelling processes. Collective actors striving for the same aim and belonging to the same social category automatically construct a tie between them since they consider each other to be culturally equivalent. These constructed ties accelerate social learning. In her study of the American anti-apartheid movement, Soule (2004) focuses on the proliferation of an innovative demonstrative tactic, the sit-in, at university campuses. Her results indicate that the protest innovation spread rapidly through some universities because they identified with one another.

Ethnographic accounts have provided considerable evidence for the fact that soccer fans follow strong collective club identities and identify with soccer players (e.g. Giulianotti and Robertson, 2004). Soccer players therefore might function as significant others that instigate potential hooligans to get involved in contentious violence. Clarke (1978), without any reference to social learning theories, tries to explain soccer fan riots out of the aggressive nature of the game itself, by considering soccer violence to be a product of supporters who try to mirror and copy behaviour taking place on the pitch. A classic argument brought against this notion is that soccer is plagued by fan violence while other more aggressive sports such as ice hockey and American football face much lower levels of hooliganism (King, 1997). This argument can be easily countered. First, it tends to give a highly romanticized picture of the more aggressive sports. Canadian police statistics indicate that between three and 30 supporters get arrested per match in the Canadian Football League, National Hockey League and in Major League Baseball (Young, 2002), way above the number of police interventions during Dutch professional soccer matches. Second, soccer is one of the few sports in which every week thousands of supporters from two competing sides join each other in one and the same stadium.

If soccer fans tend to model the behaviour that is exposed to them by players on the pitch, this implies that aggressive behaviour of soccer players during a match leads to aggressive behaviour among fans watching it. This leads us to predict that soccer players' aggression on the pitch has a positive effect on the occurrence of supporters' violence (H4).

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Data and Methods

We test the hypotheses formulated in the preceding section by means of two empirical analyses. First, we try to determine whether contentious violence theories can account for macro-fluctuations in hooliganism by executing a time series analysis. Our dependent variable in this analysis is the weekly level of hooliganism in the form of the number of violent incidents for the period August 2001 to June 2005. The data are obtained from annual reports published by the Dutch Agency of Soccer Violence (CIV, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005), which defines a violent incident as an occasion asking for extra-police interference. From all these events, we deleted incidents that took place before the first whistle. This was done to adhere to the causal mechanism underlying the aggressive play hypothesis. The weekly aggregation level resulted in an *N* of 196. We deleted weeks in which no professional match was played. Since a match is an important precondition for both fan violence and aggressive play on the pitch, inclusion of these weeks might seriously overestimate the effect of our social learning hypothesis. In total, 64 matchless weeks were deleted from the analysis. The following independent variables are included in the analysis.

Political Opportunities

To measure the intensity of police repression, we aggregated the number of arrests per incident as reported by the CIV over weeks and lagged the values one time period (CIV, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005). The number of arrests divided by the number of incidents offers a good proxy for police repression since it indicates the tendency for police officials to repress hooliganism regardless of the violent instances that take place. Since the variable was skewed, we used logged scores. This operationalization is rather commonplace in studying the relationship between contention and coercion (e.g. Francisco, 1996).

Media Coverage

For our period of study, an electronic content analysis of the five most read Dutch newspapers, *Algemeen Dagblad*, *NRC Handelsblad*, *Telegraaf*, *Trouw* and *De Volkskrant* (Bakker and Scholten, 2003), was executed to obtain data on media coverage of hooliganism. These newspapers are completely independent from political parties, but represent mainstream politics in the Netherlands and reach one-third of the Dutch population (Van der Eijk, 2000). Furthermore, Kleinnijenhuis (2003) demonstrates that their content is fairly close to that of television news. All newspapers are available digitally from LexisNexis and we used a search string ('*vandalisme* and *voetbal*' or '*geweld* and *voetbal*') to select all the articles potentially dealing

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with supporter violence related to soccer matches. In addition, all the selected articles were inspected manually for content. This resulted in the deletion of 210 articles that did not directly dealt with supporter violence. After deletion, 650 articles remained. Subsequently, a weekly visibility score was calculated by summing the length in words of the articles. The importance of an article was weighted by multiplying the length of articles appearing on the front page by a factor of 2. The independent variable measuring media coverage of hooliganism was constructed by taking the mean visibility score from four weeks before the incidents took place and dividing it by 100. The four-week aggregation level was chosen because communication researchers have extensively demonstrated that media influence on an individual's behavior becomes apparent between the range of a couple of days and several weeks (Dearing and Rogers, 1996).

Grievances

Ideally, we should have unemployment figures for Dutch hooligans at our disposal to measure their relative deprivation. Not surprisingly, those data are not available for supporter groups supporting certain clubs, let alone measured on a regular basis. We therefore try to operationalize economic grievances as specifically as possible as the monthly change in harmonized seasonally-adjusted unemployment among males under 24 years in terms of percentages. We only focus on male unemployment since research has indicated that soccer violence is mainly a masculine activity (De Vreese, 2000). The specific age category was chosen since both ethnographic (Spaaij, 2006) and quantitative studies (Van der Brug, 1994) have indicated that perpetrators of fan violence are mainly young adolescents. Monthly data are obtained from Statline, the online statistical agency of the Netherlands (CBS, 2007).

Aggressive Play

Referees of soccer matches make use of a standardized penalty system that distributes yellow and red cards according to fixed criteria. Yellow cards are often used as a warning and red cards force players to leave the pitch. Information on the number of cards given per match is made available by the research agency Infostrada. The number of yellow and red cards (multiplied with a factor of 2) given per professional Dutch league match aggregated over weeks is used as a proxy for aggressive play and included in the model without a time lag (Infostrada, 2006). Sceptics could argue that including this variable without a time lag makes it impossible to rule out causal order since violent fan behaviour might cause unrest in the stadium and subsequently affect the mentality of the players on the pitch. However, this argument can be easily refuted because several researchers have

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Table 1 *Correlation Matrix Independent and Control Variables*

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Risk match	1				
2. Repression	.177	1			
3. Media coverage	–.040	.143	1		
4. Unemployment	.065	.090	.079	1	
5. Aggressive play	.291	.122	.080	–.036	1

shown that over 70 percent of soccer riots take place outside the stadium and out of sight of the players (De Vreese, 2000). Additionally, we deleted those incidents that took place before the match started.

Risk Matches

In addition, one important control variable is included in the analysis. In the soccer leagues, some matches are historically more emotionally charged than others. These so-called risk matches are characterized by increased interests of the opposing teams caused by geographical proximity, sportive prestige or a shared violent past. The intensified interest may simultaneously affect fan and player behaviour and therefore should be taken into account. In addition, risk matches might also confound the relationship between media coverage and hooliganism. Experienced journalists might anticipate soccer riots by writing much more on hooliganism for the time period before an emotionally charged game is played. In the Dutch case, games between three teams, Ajax, Feyenoord and PSV, are historically regarded as risk matches. Therefore, a dummy variable is included in the model that measures per week whether a risk match is played or not. Dates of risk matches are retrieved from the Voetbal International website (VI, 2006). A correlation matrix of the independent variables is presented in Table 1.

To be able to adequately treat the dynamic structure of our data, we employ various advanced time series techniques. Such techniques offer the opportunity to deal with one of the basic requirements of causality: the cause (independent variable) has to precede the consequence (dependent variable). By adding lagged values of independent variables to the model this requirement is met. Combined with a good theoretical basis, claims on causal relationships are persuasive, especially compared to those based on cross-sectional research.

In this article, we try to explain the level of hooliganism, a continuous process, by measuring discrete events, i.e. the number of violent occasions reported by police officers. Linear regression is inappropriate to analyse these data since it assumes that continuous processes generate continuous

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events (King, 1989). Therefore, often a generalization of the Poisson regression model is used as a technique to analyse continuous processes based on event counts (Rasler, 1996). The idea underlying the use of this technique is that social processes produce events randomly during a fixed time period. This assumption implies independence among events, something that is quite problematic in the current field of study. Supporter groups, consistent with other forms of collective actors, are inclined to react to the behaviour of fans of competing teams (Carnibella et al., 1996) and therefore dependency between events can be expected. Most often violent acts inspire other social groups (Koopmans and Olzak, 2004) leading to positive dependency. However, sometimes social groups and contextual actors become more cautious in the aftermath of incidents leading to negative dependency (Tolnay et al., 1996).

The contagious and prohibitive dependency between violent incidents can also be located between time periods. Riots that took place the previous match week can have a considerable impact on fan behaviour in subsequent weeks. To detect the levels of autocorrelation between match weeks, we constructed ARIMA models and calculated the Ljung–Box Q statistic (Enders, 2004). These models showed that after inclusion of the risk match dummy, no autocorrelation remained. This is not completely uncommon for collective violence (McLaren, 1999) and made us decide not to include autoregressive effects.

To deal with dependency within match weeks Generalized Event Count modelling (GEC), as developed by King (1989), is used to analyse the data. GEC is an appropriate tool since it resembles the classic Poisson models, in that it is capable of estimating continuous processes from observed event counts but at the same time loosens its restrictive assumptions considering independence of measurements within time points. It estimates event correlation within time points, in our case match weeks, by including parameter γ that measures overdispersion (> 0) or underdispersion (< 0). A value of γ above zero indicates that positive contagion between events takes place, i.e. the occurrence of one event increases the likelihood of the manifestation of new events within the same week. Underdispersion, a value of γ below zero reveals that negative contagion exists, i.e. the occurrence of an event lowers the likelihood of the manifestation of new events in the same week. An additional advantage of GEC is that its interpretation of parameters is quite straightforward. The effect of a one point increase in an independent variable on the count of the dependent variable equals its coefficient estimate times the sample mean. The analysis is done using the statistical software package COUNT.

In the case of the aggressive play variable, one might argue that a macroanalysis on a national level does not suffice to demonstrate the causal connection with the dependent variable because both can be measured on a

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lower level. Therefore, we refine the test of our social learning hypothesis by additionally executing a statistical analysis of riot occurrence in specific match–club combinations. In every match either fan side can riot (1) or not (0). Again, riots that took place before the match are not taken into account. Dutch professional clubs play 17 opponents in both a home and an away match. In our five-year time period we therefore have a total of 2448 match–club combinations (17×2×18×4). The aggressive play and risk match variables are operationalized similarly to the previous analysis with the difference that they are measured on a match level, rather than aggregated over weeks. This measurement captures the causal connection between player and fan behaviour. A further advantage of the match–club combination design is that it allows specifying more control variables on the match level. We additionally control for the following covariates.

Previous Confrontation An act of hooliganism might well follow from previous confrontations between the two opposing fan sides during previous encounters. We control for this possibility by constructing a dummy variable that measures whether during a previous match between the two sides a riot occurred or not.

Audience The second control variable is the percentile score of the total of supporters attending professional soccer matches. Since our dependent variable is a count of instances of violence, it is likely to depend on the size of the group of potential perpetrators. Even if the number of hooligans is more or less constant, because they come to all matches, attendance figures should be taken into account since more spectators demand police presence offering more opportunities for rioters. Audience figures are collected with help from the research agency Infostrada (2006).

Wins Finally, riots might also follow disappointment over the favourite team's losing their match. We therefore also include a dummy that measures whether the supported side won their game.

The data structure of the match club design is rather complex including several data nests that violate the dependency assumption that need to be justified for ordinary regression analysis. Individual observations are nested in clubs and matches that in their turn are nested in match weeks. To deal with the latter two clusters, we utilize a hierarchal multi-level model (Snijders and Bosker, 1999) adding random effects for both weeks and matches. Fixed effects for each club are included in the model to deal with club-level nests. Since our dependent variable is binominal, we make use of logistic regression techniques as implemented in the software package MLWIN.

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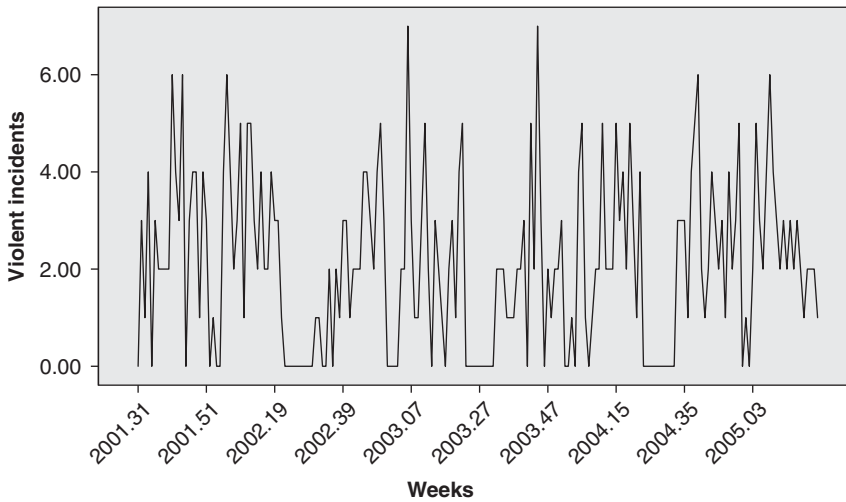

Figure 1 *The Evolution of Hooliganism 2001–5*
Source: CIV (2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005).

Results

Figure 1 shows the evolution of hooliganism over time. First, it is noticeable that there is no clear trend reflecting a steady increase in the level of fan violence. In addition, each year experiences two troughs in supporter violence, one around January and a second around August. These troughs coincide with the annual winter and summer breaks of the soccer season. Furthermore, we can observe two peaks of seven violent incidents per week in 2003. In both these weeks a risk match between two of the 'traditional top three' teams was played. Since we control for risk matches and delete soccer holidays in our final analysis, both these irregularities will be modelled away.

The GEC regression analysis, as shown in Table 2, is executed in five steps. In the first step, a baseline model was specified that only includes the control variables and the constant β. For readers' convenience, we have included the mean number of incidents on the bottom row of the table. This mean number is needed for the interpretation of the parameters. As we can see, the parameter estimate for within match contagion effects, denoted by γ, is significant and negative. This indicates that within match week incidents inhibit other incidents from taking place, which is in line with the idea that collective actors and surrounding actors become more cautious in the aftermath of violent incidents (Tolnay et al., 1996). We can see that the strength of γ increases when other parameters are

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included, indicating the robustness of the model (King, 1989). In line with our expectations, the presence of risk matches has a systematic effect on hooliganism. In weeks including a risk match, on average 0.6 (3*0.2) more violent incidents took place compared to weeks in which no risk matches were played.

In model 2, no support is found for either of the two political opportunity hypotheses that predicted that police repression lowers or increases fan violence. Our repression variable does not influence hooliganism. Its inclusion in the model hardly contributes to the explained variance.

In the third step, the media variable is added. The results support the second hypothesis regarding media attention. Media attention for fan violence in the previous four weeks substantially increases hooliganism; every 100, or 50 when appearing on the front page, words a journalist writes on soccer vandalism result in 0.18 (3*0.06) more acts of violence. Moreover, inclusion of the media coverage parameter slightly improves the model fit.

In model 4, the unemployment parameter is included in the equation. As we can see, changes in unemployment among males younger than 24 years do have a significant effect on soccer violence. Moreover, taking into account unemployment rates again improves the model fit. We therefore find support for our grievance hypothesis, which predicted that increases in unemployment would enhance aggressive behaviour among fans.

Model 5, in which the indicator of aggressive play is included, is in line with the fourth hypothesis that predicted that soccer players' aggressiveness intensifies fan violence. Aggressive play significantly strengthens the tendency for supporters to riot; one extra yellow card results in 0.04 (3*0.013) more instances of hooliganism. Inclusion of the aggressive play parameter also results in a considerable improvement of the model fit statistics and significant results from other variables remain unchanged compared to the previous models.

These results are, to a large extent, confirmed by the additional ARIMA-model that we have executed but are not reported here. This again indicates the robustness of these results.

Does the relationship between fan violence and aggressive play as predicted by the social learning theory also hold when we look at the match–club combinations? Table 3 answers this question affirmatively. While controlling for risk matches, previous confrontations, audience figures and team results, the number of cards increases the probability of fan misbehaviour. Of all the control variables, only the risk match dummy had a significant impact on hooliganism. Hence, these results confirm the findings of the time series design above.

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Table 2 *Generalized Event Count Regression of the Level of Supporter Violence on Unemployment Media Coverage, Repression and Aggressive Play 2001–5*

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4		Model 5	
	Estimate	SE	Estimate	SE	Estimate	SE	Estimate	SE	Estimate	SE
β_0	1.0134***	.0495	1.0272***	.0796	.9142***	.1038	.8382***	.1102	.5179***	.1595
Risk match	.2037**	.1106	.2095**	.1138	.233**	.114	.2523**	.1113	.2171**	.1081
Repression			–.0092	.0419	–.0095	.042	–.0098	.0404	–.0109	.0395
Media cover.					.0630**	.0363	.0845***	.0379	.0895***	.0366
Unemployment							.1581**	.0883	.1272*	.0858
Aggressive pl.									.0131***	.0048
γ	–.2686***	.1132	–.2677***	.0884	–.2826***	.1123	–.3327***	.1149	–.3992***	.1174
Log-likelihood	23.5240		23.5491		25.0094		26.5417		30.0092	
N	136		136		136		36		136	
Mean incident	3		3		3		3		3	

Sources: CIV (2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005), Infostrada (2006), CBS (2007).
* $p < .10$ (one-tailed, for dispersion parameter a two-tailed test is used).
** $p < .05$ (one-tailed, for dispersion parameter a two-tailed test is used).
*** $p < .01$ (one-tailed, for dispersion parameter a two-tailed test is used).

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Table 3 *Multi-Level Logistic Regression of Riot Occurrence in Match Club Combinations*[a]

	Estimate	SE
B_0	–1.232***	.376
Risk match	1.279***	.490
Audience	.004	.004
Previous confrontation	.271	.207
Win	–.198	.141
Aggressive play	.083**	.040
Level 3 *N*	136	
Level 2 *N*	1224	
Level 1 *N*	2448	

Sources: CIV (2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005), Infostrada (2006), CBS (2007).
[a] Including fixed effects for clubs.
* $p < .10$ (one-tailed).
** $p < .05$ (one-tailed).
***$p < .01$ (one-tailed).

Conclusion

In this article, we tried to embed hooligan research in the theoretical framework deployed to study collective violence and, by doing so, derived possible explanations for the occurrence of fan violence that have subsequently been put to the test. Hooliganism studies until now seem to conceptualize fan violence as a form of irrational behaviour. In this article, we show that this notion is incomplete at best. Similar to other forms of collective violence, fan violence takes place in interaction with media, significant others and political actors. Moreover, we would like to emphasize that soccer riots comprise elements of serious claims making since they derive from economic grievances between competing groups that try to humiliate each other.

In addition, we stress that students of soccer violence should move away from solely phenomenological explanations and should pay more attention to temporal fluctuations in violent behaviour of fans. Static explanations that only try to grasp the general existence of social phenomena overlook contextual processes that actually facilitate or hamper the rise of violence acts.

The empirical part of this article offers a promising start with respect to the central arguments outlined earlier. It shows that mainstream theories in the study of collective behaviour are quite successful in explaining the occurrence of acts of violence, and supports our idea that soccer violence is indeed embedded in economic and media contexts and hooligans are involved in processes of social learning.

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First of all, this article has found considerable support for the fact that supporter violence is an expression of deteriorating economic conditions. Second, the article makes clear that media coverage of soccer riots leads to more hooliganism in subsequent time periods. Third, it has demonstrated that aggressive play has a considerable impact on terrace terror: the more violence that is displayed on the pitch the more riots take place among supporters. We found no support for a relationship between political opportunities and acts of hooliganism. Repression did not have a significant impact on fan violence. This result might be caused by the fact we neglected the impact of riot severity in our operationalization of the repression variable. Although the operationalization we use is rather common in collective action studies, it has some serious drawbacks since it does not take into account the severity of previous week incidents. Therefore, changes in the number of arrests per incident might be caused by shifts in riot severity instead of changing levels of repression. We advise scholars to look for alternative indices that can grasp fluctuations in police behaviour such as personnel deployment.

Since our study focuses on a single country for a relatively short time period, future research should point out whether our findings are also valid in other time periods and countries. We have confidence that this indeed is the case. By defining hooliganism as contentious behaviour, we avoid particularistic explanations and instead link the phenomena to more general explanations that have been tested and for which support has been found for numerous types of collective behaviour in numerous countries.

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