

Ungentlemanly Conduct: Football Hooligans, the Media and the Construction of Notoriety¹

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Abstract

Our fundamental, epistemological position is that football hooligans and the mass media's representatives constitute two distinctive entities that have different social purposes. Formally, hooligans belong to rival 'mobs' that are deeply associated with particular football sides. The hooligans engage in competitive violence with their rivals, with the aim of acquiring status nationally or internationally for their mob while humiliating their opponents. As police measures against hooliganism have intensified, so the opportunities for confronting their opposing peers have declined. Routinely, hooligans are also part of a wider male leisure culture that includes steady drinking, sexual liaisons with women, and joking exchanges with other people (Armstrong, 1998; Giulianotti, 1996, 1998). Professionally, media reporters have a long-standing interest in covering this hooligan culture. Incidents of violent disorder are newsworthy in themselves; tracing these episodes back to particular individuals also has news value. Through television, radio and the press, the mass media present football hooligans as belonging to a separate social and cultural universe. This media coverage never explores the possibility that friendly social interaction, collusion or shared social identity may take place between hooligans and reporters. This paper will suggest otherwise. Furthermore, we suggest that hooligans are highly reflexive in their reading of the mass media, and in their dealings with its representatives. We should add that our analysis throws doubt on other common assumptions about the mass media. The distinction between the 'quality' and the 'tabloid' press becomes highly blurred. In particular, journalists working for the quality press tend to adopt reporting strategies that are more commonly associated with the 'tabloid' press during these media-hooligan exchanges. In this paper, we discuss six categories of media-hooligan interaction: England fans abroad; the hooligan formations known as the Inter-City Firm; the role of academics; media constructions of 'leadership' regarding hooligan gangs: an exploration of the ambiguous media constructions of football hooliganism in Scotland; and the unreported but intimate interaction between media reporters and their subject matter.

Each time a media institution controls market phenomena on a massive scale, it seizes and censures just as massively; it dogmatizes, no matter what its real eclecticism or facade of liberalism, its virtues or vices, may be, no matter whether it captivates or bores, whether one finds it distinguished or crude or both (Derrida. 1992, p. 101).

Introduction

In the last thirty years, no other social ‘folk devil’ has excited the volume of British media comment as the modern football hooligan. Front-page headlines, ‘exclusive’ inside stories and indignant editorials range in tone from a curt dismissal of hooligans as ‘not true supporters’ to surreal invectives about ‘animals’ and ‘barbarians’ (Hall, 1978). The vast majority of these narratives are written as ‘outraged’ responses to some recent fan disorder, but which have been viewed from afar or creatively reinterpreted at a sub-editor’s behest. Subsequently, the paucity of actual public ‘knowledge’ of football hooliganism is reflected in the fact that there still remains no precise, legal definition of what hooligans are and what their activities necessarily involve (Redhead, 1991). In any case, the reality is too ambiguous for strict categorisation. Football hooligans recognise and celebrate their participation within the hooligan ‘mob’; consider themselves genuine (often the most dedicated) supporters of their club; and easily square their violent match-day intentions with more ‘normal’ aspects of their lives (work, wives/girlfriends, wider social friendships) (Armstrong & Giulianotti, 1995). In essentially postmodern fashion, they may celebrate their ‘deviance’ but where *exactly* does their criminality begin?

The error of the State and its media is their shared reading of these ‘terrorists’ as anything other than competitive performers and players. Jean Baudrillard (1993, p. 79) wrote that football hooligans ‘carry participation to its tragic limit, while at the same time daring the State to respond with violence, to liquidate them’. In this way, the State’s response induces the greater public terror (e.g. the murderous fences at Hillsborough?). A similar form of play sees the hooligans daring the media to try to describe them and to encode them with any accuracy. Their absurd and routine failure provokes the humour of the hooligan and doubtless that of friends, family and workmates.

In previous case studies of English and Scottish fans, we have separately examined the extent to which fictitious media representations of football hooligans harmonise with the ‘intelligence’ of the State (police) and its surveillance techniques, with iniquitous results in the courts (Armstrong & Harris, 1991; Armstrong & Hobbs, 1994; Giulianotti, 1991a; Armstrong & Young, 1997; Armstrong & Giulianotti, 1998). Consideration has also been given to the techniques by which football supporters, particularly hooligans, can play with or undermine their media image to the point of parody (Armstrong, 1994; Giulianotti, 1995). We seek to expand on these more generalised discussions by examining case studies of exchanges between football hooligans and reporters. It is argued that the everyday relations between these *prima facie* distinct groupings are significantly more complex and ambiguous than media representatives and sociologists assert. We discuss six categories of media-hooligan interaction: England fans abroad; the hooligan formations known as the Inter-City Firm; the

role of academics: media constructions of 'leadership' regarding hooligan gangs: an exploration of the ambiguous media constructions of football hooliganism in Scotland; and the unreported but intimate interaction between media reporters and their subject matter.

Preparing for the English invasion: football fans, hooligans and other reporters

We begin our study by discussing the relatively recent international tournaments in which England have participated. These occasions have proven to be media spectacles where the show was the street-fighting and the football was incidental. Journalists, sociologists and authors (cf. Buford, 1991) arrive in ever greater proportions to the diminishing England support searching for those defining moments when they might view from a discrete distance (often in television rooms) the hooligan object approaching self-combustion.

Prior to the 1986 Mexico World Cup Finals, the *Daily Mail* headline 'Thugs Beat World Cup Soccer Ban' (June 2) told of hundreds of England supporters who had slipped through an anti-hooligan security net and crashed the border via the United States, where guards knew nothing of a hooligan blacklist. The reporter was obviously unaware that the cheapest means of travelling to the tournament was by air to a US city, and then to Mexico by Greyhound coach. In no way can this economical route be accurately interpreted as a means of evading police surveillance: yet the story was effectively repeated two years later by the same newspaper. Shortly before the European Championships in West Germany, the *Daily Mail's* companion paper, the *Mail on Sunday*, ran the front page headline: 'Soccer Thugs Slip Drag Net'. The article claimed hundreds of English football hooligans had travelled to the tournament using stolen rail tickets, evading another police dragnet thrown across Holland, France and Belgium. The article continued: 'The youths have beaten the intelligence gathering efforts and have confounded the authorities'. The *Mail on Sunday* failed to explain how the escapade had been achieved, but did claim 'most . . . came from Manchester and Merseyside and are known as the Intercity Jibbers, because they try to avoid paying for travel or admission to matches. They leave ICJ calling cards on people they have attacked'.²

Inspector Denis Temporal, Football Liaison Officer for the British Transport Police, was quoted as saying, 'We are up against a highly organised enemy with an inbuilt sense of cunning'. Evidently, the power of self-extinction was the most devious quality of the Intercity Jibbers; nothing more was ever heard of this fictional entity. Indeed, we have yet to find a hooligan in Britain who has ever heard of the gang. Nor do we expect to, given that the enmity between football supporters from Manchester and Liverpool is so strong that the idea of a solid hooligan pact across this divide is simply ludicrous.

Two weeks before the 1990 World Cup, the *Sunday Correspondent* sent a reporter to Sardinia to pose as an English hooligan. The reporter was attired in felt-topped tattoos, Union Jack T-shirt and carried a bottle of lager, as he walked for three hours around the capital city, Cagliari. To his chagrin, nobody took any notice of him. Accordingly, he completed his despatch by remarking that he would enjoy returning for the tournament, only next time with his head shaved. *The Guardian* also sent out reporter Jocelyn Taggett to produce a three page special on what awaited England fans about to embark on their journey to Sardinia. Published on 7 April, the article stated that for England fans, football was 'war' (not a 'pubescent only sex option'), and about rampaging through cities and beating up foreigners. The forthcoming match against Holland would produce a day of 'terrorist hooligan allstars' and be like 'Hitler versus Hitler' because of the supporters' respective reputations. To culturalise the event, the reporter compiled a glossary of Italian epithets with which to bombast locals – bastard, fuck, declaring a man a cuckold, and accusing his mother of prostitution. Readers were advised there was a plentiful supply of local building site rubble for throwing in street fights; and this very subjective reporting was perhaps a contributory factor in Mr Taggett later receiving the accolade of his peers and their award of Young Journalist of The Year.³

Media anticipation of fan violence in Italy reached its zenith when a tabloid reported that in order to prevent the 'planned' Dutch-English hooligan showdown, Dutch police were to send a battalion of two hundred officers armed with sub-machine guns. This was news to the Dutch police football intelligence unit, which was, in reality, sending four unarmed officers equipped with orange blazers to act as ambassadors for the fans. Contrary to received media and political wisdom at the time, we found from our fieldwork that ordinary English fans – well informed of hooligan activities – knew nothing of an 'organised' battle with the Dutch, but nevertheless anticipated the hysteria would invoke a self-fulfilling prophecy of aggressive policing local hostility and violent response (*Channel 4 News*, May 1990). And it was only when 247 English fans were deported from the Italian Adriatic (on a plane with exactly 247 passenger seats) that critical consideration of media coverage gained any wider support from academics, politicians and some sections of the press itself (Giulianotti, 1994b).

Three years later the policing of English fans at a fixture in the Netherlands continued to excite the media to a flow of invective. Following condemnatory coverage of the actions of England fans, and subsequent mass arrest and deportation of up to 600 fans,⁴ one report belatedly examined the possibility that the English fans had legitimate grounds for claiming police harassment (*The Guardian*, 15 Oct. 1993).⁵ However, in more familiar journalistic style, the *Sheffield Star* (13 Oct. 1994) reported that: 'City Yobs Join Soccer Rioters', and that 'Sheffield's worst hooligans are mingling with fans in riot-torn Holland',

amidst ‘incidents of savagery’ that had led to 197 arrests. The ‘evidence’ for this was based on the fact three police spotters from Sheffield were helping Dutch police to identify ‘local soccer thugs’. A Football Liaison officer from Sheffield was quoted speculating that local hooligans (he could not identify) would be in Holland. In the event no local fans were arrested, though four were involved in a fight in Belgium on their way home. Only fifteen had gone to the game in total – though not as a collective – and it transpired the four had become involved in a dispute with migrant Irish workers over the right to sing in an Irish bar in Antwerp.

A kernel element in media constructions of football hooliganism is the characterisation of ‘leaders’ whose presence is deemed most newsworthy in relation to overseas international tournaments. One celebrated figure said to be at the apex of the English hooligan pyramid is Paul Scarrot, a Nottingham Forest fan. Prior to the first England match at the 1988 European Championships in West Germany, Scarrot was arrested after ‘80 of his troops’ had tried to liberate him, apparently by hitting the panels of a police van (*Daily Mirror*, 13 June 1988). Other imagery and signifiers of notoriety append themselves easily to Scarrot. ‘Soccer’s most notorious thug . . . declared war on a German city . . . eighty convictions . . . whipped up his followers into a frenzy . . . National Front favourite . . . head of a 300 strong mob’ (*The Sun*, 13 June 1988). Three days later Ian McKerron of the *Daily Mail* indicated Scarrot was part of a wider social process, advising readers how:

mayhem is orchestrated by self-appointed ‘generals’ of hate who order their misguided troops into battle, but seldom if ever, lead from the front. Their ‘armies’ go to war on bellies full of beer and are whipped into frenzy by choruses of Neo-Nazis and National Front chants.

Academic thinking apparently concurred, with Scarrot later cited as a hooligan exemplar by the leading authorities (Murphy, Williams & Dunning, 1990, p. 179) and referred to by their main ethnographer, John Williams, at a sumptuous World Conference on Hooliganism in Athens in 1990. Yet at a match in Nottingham attended by one of us. Scarrot was turned over to police by his own fans in the home terracing after he had thrown a small bottle at the goal nets of the visiting goalkeeper. He was given a six month prison sentence.

This ‘leader of the England fan’s pool’ was profiled in the *Sunday Telegraph* (19 June 1988) by David Wostell, under a headline ‘The Will and Wisdom of a Super-Thug’. Photographed beside the statue of Robin Hood, another favourite Nottingham outlaw, the 32 year old with ‘Forest’ tattooed on his inside lip, was said to have boasted of his ‘generals’ success in West

Germany. Apparently described by police as ‘a thug and a cancer’ – because of his criminal convictions – he and his 25 year old wages clerk girlfriend, were nevertheless described as ‘charming’ by the journalist. An unspectacular biography described Scarrot as the oldest of six children of a respectable working-class, church-going family in the north of the city. Impressed by older lads, he’d began his hooligan career and decided to become ‘top dog’, seeking status through reckless acts even before leaving school at sixteen without any qualifications. And any hardship resulting from a consequent prison sentence, it seemed, would be offset by the accumulating notoriety. Employed as a cable layer at the time of the interview and never out of work. Scarrot was said to have enjoyed Beethoven in his spare time – among other things. In his defence, he is quoted as saying he would never rape anyone or attack innocents, though rival fans were ‘fair enough’. Said to be mistrusting of foreigners and depicted as a ‘white English patriot’, he is nevertheless described by Wostell as being ‘dangerous’, and his activities as ‘amoral’ and ‘evil’.

As we note later, media and police constructions of such hooligan ‘leadership’ are central to explanations of continuing football hooliganism (and reflect their prejudgements of football fans’ moral character). However, hooligans themselves are not averse to manipulating these working assumptions for their own amusement. In January 1991, Superintendent Appleby, chief of the football unit (NFIU) at the National Criminal Intelligence Service (NCIS), announced to a conference at the University of London that his team had foiled an attempt to organise violence involving England supporters in Tunisia, in late May 1990, just prior to the World Cup Finals. He asserted his unit had discovered plans to foment disorder, which he believed would have been the hooligans’ method of setting standards for the forthcoming tournament. For this reason, he explained, the thirty travellers had been warned of such knowledge at their departure point and at arrival. This timely intervention, it was claimed, prevented any disorder.

The England followers had a rather different story to tell. The fan who organised the excursion, working according to police constructs and indulging in self-deprecation, had headed notepaper made up, announcing the trip as ‘Operation CELT’, a satire on recent anti-hooligan, undercover surveillance initiatives (cf. Armstrong & Hobbs, 1994). The acronym’s full meaning was ‘Clear Ends Launch Tunisians’, a humorous genuflection to hooligan practices outdated by over a decade.⁶ For good measure, one letter was sent to the police, thereby continuing a practice introduced the previous year when ten of the touring party on holiday in Tenerife mailed a postcard to interested officers. This communique was presented by Supt Appleby as evidence of a hooligan need to travel overseas to evade police intelligence and plot atrocities. In fact the Tunisian trip was an innocent Christmas holiday for a group of football fans and

partners, and failed to produce the expected disorder: not because of good work or NFIU intelligence. but because the group had no intention of fighting the locals. Moreover, they believed a constant companion during their stay – describing himself as ‘the hotel manager’ – was a familiar face from a West London police division, who eventually accepted their repeated invitation to join them for a drink!

Inter City Fictions: Media and Police Disputes

One of the best known hooligan formations in England is the ‘Inter City Firm’ (ICF). Described as ‘superhooligans’ by some academics (Dunning, *et al.*, 1988), the ICF’s notoriety was sealed in celluloid with the 1985 *Hooligan* television documentary, which is cult viewing among young football fans. The programme’s producer had exceptionally good access to the ICF, and following several abortive ‘dawn raid’ trials in the late 1980s (Armstrong & Hobbs, 1994) he spent several days in the witness box successfully defending his sources. Police officers and fellow journalists ought to have been more attentive viewers. if their respective discourses on the ICF (and its Scottish incarnation) are to hold real credence.

An article in the *Daily Mirror* (20 March 1985) by Harry Harris introduced readers to the Inter-City Firm, who had allegedly been infiltrated by a ‘private investigator’. The ICF was described as consisting of

committed football supporters; their ages range from between 25 to 40 and some have respectable positions in society – managerial, City – and are well-suited. But they change on Saturday afternoons. They are the organisers, the rest of the scum are mere cannon-fodder who follow them. They are recruited in pubs. It’s truly startling how much funds they have at their disposal. Political forces are at work . . . both extreme wings of the right and left see soccer hooliganism as a means of furthering their causes . . . the right . . . want effectively a police state. Then they will ditch the young rabble . . . The left wingers want to bring down the power of the police.

Heralded as a product of work commissioned by Chelsea chairman Ken Bates, the knowing reader might consider this as good money wasted: for the Inter-City Firm support West Ham United, not Chelsea. The misidentification was duplicated eight years later by the NCIS’s Adrian Appleby (*Evening News*, 4 August 1993). However, Appleby was even more confused about the identity of the Scottish hooligans (‘soccer casuals’) known as the ICF who follow Glasgow Rangers. At a press conference he announced football hooligans were now organising crime syndicates and behind the rape of women, counterfeiting

currency, drug smuggling, credit card fraud, robbery and burglary (*Daily Mail*, 4 August 1993). It was also claimed hooligans went on trips to the continent to buy CS gas sprays, flares and 'we know of some leading hooligans who are believed to have bought firearms' (*Daily Record*, 4 August 1993). There followed illustrations of the 'weird alliances' existent between hooligan groups, mostly based on inaccurate information.⁷ Appleby's somewhat exaggerated claim that the ICS – a hardcore Rangers group' had been behind football-related disorder in Sunderland a week earlier was denied by Mark Dingwall, a leading Rangers supporter and editor of the popular fanzine. *Follow, Follow:*

I have never heard the term ICS. There is an ICF, but that is mainly younger guys who seem to be more into booze than fighting. They definitely have no access to guns and are not involved in the importation of narcotics (*Daily Record*, 4 August 1993).

The feature pointed out that Aberdeen and Hibs have more 'casuals' (hooligan supporters) than Rangers, and Appleby later conceded he'd mistakenly used the initials ICS instead of ICF. The Scottish police, claiming to know nothing of either the ICS or ICF criticised his story, and the officer responsible for policing Ibrox described the *Daily Record* (7 August 1993) ICF material as 'despicable'. This left it unsaid that media hysteria over one of Scotland's lesser casual gangs had been initiated by an erstwhile colleague – Supt Appleby – of the NCIS.

To most long-term observers of Scottish football, the hooliganism surrounding Glasgow Rangers is deeply historical. In the 1960s and 1970s rioting involving Rangers fans at home and abroad led to a European ban on the club, media and political criticism amidst vexation at the club's sectarianism towards Catholics, and eventual executive legislation targeted at alcohol-related disorder (Giulianotti, 1995b). Although the club is now lauded for its public order security arrangements (cf. HAC, 1990, 1991) Rangers continue to be dogged by the misdemeanours of their supporters, players and even security staff.⁸ More recently, the English FA effectively banned Rangers from playing in a pre-season tournament in London, apparently on the basis of prospective crowd disorder (*The Herald*, 20 May 1993).

Rangers' alternative was to take up an offer to play a testimonial in Sunderland on 28 July, and 10,000 fans travelled south. Forty-seven arrests ensued, and more than thirty fans needed hospital treatment (*The Scotsman*, 30 July 1993). Three people suffered serious facial injuries, for which a Scot was arrested soon after. Two days after the match several newspapers carried a profile picture of two brothers whose faces had been slashed by Rangers fans. The *Daily Record* ran a three-page special, cataloguing the 'Timetable of Shame' throughout Sunderland and South Shields in which Rangers supporters had

participated. However, a week later, the *Daily Record* (6 August 1993) sought to be more specific, claiming the Rangers 'Inter City Firm' had been behind the violence. Leading with the 'exclusive' banner headline: 'REVEALED: The group Rangers DON'T want to know', a feature based upon extensive interviews with a 'self-confessed gang leader' had photographs (with blackened eyes) of young men gathered around a Union Jack emblazoned with the legend 'Rangers ICF'. Curiously, the hooligan source quoted made the same basic error as earlier commentators in linking the ICF to Chelsea and rival hooligans and fellow readers in Scotland were left to note the disparity in the reports: that the ICF numbered only 25 at the Sunderland match; that disorder had taken place over several miles in the course of the day; and, that 'It was not English fans who caused the trouble in Sunderland. As the interviewee claimed it was us – the ICF'. The media circus then broadened its interest in those with apparent expertise and simply added to the confusion. The University of Glasgow sociologist H.F. Moorhouse appeared on BBC television news, although he clearly knew nothing about the gang or its activities, preferring instead to discuss the 1950s.

Within a week public perplexity turned to *schadenfreude* when another *Daily Record* front page announced 'Grabbed! Dawn Raid in Soccer Probe' (12 August 1993). This 'exclusive' featured colour photographs of three brothers being arrested in a 'hush-hush' and 'secret' morning raid, before being charged in Sunderland with conspiracy to cause an affray. All had been pictured in the earlier reports by the *Daily Record*. The story rounded off by noting Rangers' praise for themselves and the police; it was now the latter's turn to seek an 'exclusive' with representatives of the ICF.

A year later, the phoenix had risen and the *Daily Record* submitted another front page exclusive from 'the notorious Inter City Firm': 'CASUAL THREAT TO THE GREEKS! Yobs plan revenge' (17 August 1994). Following missile throwing by fans of AEK Athens at an earlier fixture in Greece, Rangers casualties were said to be planning revenge at the return leg in Glasgow – or so their spokesperson, 'Billy Britain', warned. In the event Rangers were knocked out of the tournament by the Greek side, and there were no reports of *any* disorder involving visiting supporters. Evidently, this did not surprise *The Sun's* (18 August 1994) Scottish editor, for the main editorial a day later attacked the *Daily Record* for 'glorifying and sensationalising football violence' on the basis of a phantom source:

Their whole front page story was based on the word of one so-called gang chief using a false name. Frankly, he could have been any old nutter. There is not an actual shred of evidence in the Record story to back up the claim that there is going to be aggro at Ibrox. But the publication of this irresponsible yarn will simply

encourage those cretins in Scottish society who enjoy a street fight to go along and start one.

Notwithstanding the duplicity of tabloid discourses during intense competition for readers, *The Sun's* editorial may also be read as the result of bitter experience with the ICF. In the week following fan disorder in Utrecht involving Scottish and Dutch hooligans at an international friendly, *The Sun* (30 May 1994) ran a front-page picture exclusive: 'SCUM: The soccer thug who shames Scotland':

This is the soccer thug who led a mob of hooligans on the rampage in Holland – and is now hellbent on shaming Scotland's good name all over the world. . . . Arrogant Kerr, 23 – who has a swastika tattooed on his left arm – claimed he led a 180-strong gang of yobs to Utrecht – for a **PRE-ARRANGED** battle with Dutch louts. After 46 people were arrested in Holland, he bragged: 'Some of the Dutch got a kicking'.

The article carried a distinctive photograph of the 'Scottish leader', without the disidentifying blackened eyes adopted earlier by the *Daily Record*. One of us met with these Scottish supporters and found no evidence of any 'Scottish leader'. No police action was taken on the basis of *The Sun* story, probably because its source had not even travelled to Holland for the match. This point was made clear to *The Sun's* desk journalist by Aberdeen casuals' phoning to correct the newspaper that they and Hibs casuals had been the main Scottish protagonists in Holland. The erstwhile 'leader' of the Scottish hooligan force was in truth a 'top boy' among Rangers casuals who had been informed earlier they would not be welcome to travel alongside the east-coast congregation of Scottish hooligans – a group of Dundee casuals also being present in Holland.⁹

Indeed we were informed that following media furore and police attention to events in Holland, *The Sun's* source was persuaded by a leading Hibs casual to 'take the strain' off them by swallowing this diversionary exclusive. The media 'wind up' was thus initiated from afar, and confirms our general findings in both Scotland and England (*pace* Bauman, 1992), that, for committed hooligans, press and public notoriety is secondary to securing future violence (and victories) against opponents.

The pursuit of the 'exclusive' saw the English ICF provide the most tasteful send-up of media attempts to make contact with the hooligans, and a wild-goose chase end in a culinary pun of some delight. In 1986, we witnessed an ITV reporter and two assistants await the arrival of the real Inter-City Firm (West Ham); while the 'hooligans' surveilled them from a distance, arranged rendezvous from a pub telephone and repeatedly changed the venue using the same

system. These fruitless peregrinations only ended after four hours when the news team were confronted by a motorcycle courier bearing a parcel containing an iced doughnut – an appropriately symbolic message suggesting their efforts had been ‘self-raising’ and ‘hollow-centred’, and that they had bitten off more than they could chew.

Academic Information: the Criteria for Selection

The media willingly turn to academic explanations of hooligan behaviour for authentication; and demand of its spokespersons a willingness to pathologise on the basis of its own diagnoses of football hooliganism’s dreadful symptoms and acuity within the public body. No evidence of fieldwork or encounters between hooligans and those defining events is demanded, for it seems such interaction would be morally polluting. And like the media perception of a hooligan rationale, the secondary opinion of these academics is supportive and clinical in its execution.

Psychological explanations have proved most popular, so that for example, on 31 May 1985 *The Sun* found an ideological soulmate in Dr Glen Wilson of the Institute of Psychiatry, who informed us the hooligan is:

Oversexed, socially frustrated and always looking for violence . . .
They are strapping lads . . . deadend jobs or unemployed . . . society rejects him . . . seeks gang or tribal groups . . . importance in the gang is enhanced if he kicks a window in or smashes someone in the face. . . . He watches videos of violence in a pub where he swears and boasts, media violence could have a knock-on effect and might go on the terraces looking for it. . . . He has sloppily permissive parents. And is possibly a battered child whose teachers failed him.

On the same day the *Daily Telegraph* spoke to two American experts. Dr Geoffrey Goldstein, a Professor of Psychology, asserted that watching aggression in sport caused spectators to behave aggressively, a scenario exacerbated by the evils of unemployment and nationalism. Dr Thomas Tutko, a Professor of Psychiatry, preferred to explain football hooliganism through an over-identification with athletes who become warriors at international sporting events. Additionally, it was said a lack of self-esteem and low job satisfaction could make the concept of defeat difficult to confront. These theoretical explanations for complex social behaviour were made in respect of the Heysel tragedy. This of course occurred prior to the match commencing, and before any possibility of confronting defeat could be a factor. The conjecture was resumed three years later (June 1988), as England fans fought in West Germany. *The Sun* ran an article by Rosaline Grace and Gary Bulshaw, ‘Inside a Soccer Yob’s Vile Mind:

soccer savages', announcing six explanations for hooliganism and wheeling in further academic back-up.

1. 'Jobs': many are unemployed. but leaders are accountants, solicitors and company directors, with an age range of between 15 and 35. 'Top psychologist' Jane Fairbank described the leaders as having twisted minds and having 'fantasies about being superman or Conan The Barbarian', because violence is a way of being a 'real man'.
2. 'Drink': this provides Dutch courage. as the hooligans act as a drunken pack.
3. 'Family': hooligans, we learn, are often broken or starved of affection. A Mr Jones, author of *Psychology of Football and Other Sports*, explains how lacking a loving upbringing, hooligans express hatred and brutality which makes them feel important.
4. 'Sex': the yobs prefer no-strings-attached sex, and girlfriends are kept well hidden from yob mates, being seen as a sign of weakness.
5. 'Politics': they are 'blindingly loyal to Mrs. Thatcher'.
6. 'Music': hooligans apparently prefer 'fascist rhythms'.

At the same time Dr George Gaskell, a social psychologist at the London School of Economics, was interviewed on LBC radio about the violence in West Germany. Listeners were told the depiction of hooliganism in the media helped promote 'amoral' groups and that 'conscriptio could solve the problem' (a statement obviously made in ignorance of arrest figures produced two days earlier which showed that nineteen British servicemen had been arrested in the fighting). Somewhat apocalyptically, Gaskell declared the 'fabric of society was being eroded', for the 'pack mentality (was) taking over' and it was now 'advantageous to be seen being violent and legless'.

Greatest media opprobrium, however, is reserved for those academics approaching a empathetic understanding of football hooliganism. Anthropological and radical sociological explanations are vulnerable to tabloid perorations. For example, prior to the release of a video in which the authors participated (one as a consultant), the *News of the World* (14 August 1994) was in no doubt of its review position: 'Exposed: Sickest Video of the Year'. Academics were accused of collusion:

As a sop to critics, the producers dragged in a handful of ‘experts’ to spout theories on why kicking someone to a pulp while laughing your head off is ‘constructing a theatre of rivalry’ (*News of the World*, 14 August 1994).

From media criticism of illegitimate knowledge, it is a short move to enlist the support of populist academics, such as Dr Howard Williamson, a social policy researcher. Paraphrased in *The Sunday Times* (8 August 1993) he:

accused football violence academics of exaggerating the problem and wasting time and money. Williamson said improved policing had helped to reduce the violence, but 20 years of research by countless sociologists, anthropologists, and psychologists had failed to produce ideas about eliminating hooliganism.

The commentator, who later contacted leading writers in the field to claim a misquoting of his views, is not alone when it comes to academic *lese-majeste*.¹⁰

Perhaps our most important illustration of the ‘hidden agenda’ that particular sections of the media and football authorities possess, however, relates to the ‘racialisation’ of an episode of football hooliganism in Belgium involving Hibs casualties. Following crowd trouble fomented by the Hibs casualties in 1989, the Hibernian board professed its commitment to obtaining the identities of those arrested and having them banned.¹¹ Three years later, Hibs were drawn in the UEFA Cup against Anderlecht, another Belgian side. At the first leg in Edinburgh, a Belgian player was pelted with coins during the game, leading to further boardroom threats to ban the culprit.¹² The second leg was marred by tragedy before Hibs fans had left the country when two men fell to their deaths on the Aberdeen-London rail express. Subsequently Hibs casualties were involved in fighting and vandalism *en route* to the match in Brussels’ Arab quarter, but press coverage of the incidents was confused (Giulianotti, 1992). Most newspapers reported the violence carried an ethnic dimension, and that at least two Hibs fans had received knife wounds from locals.¹³ Approximately thirty casualties were detained over the course of the night, with only one arrest resulting in charges being levied; and at least one supporter accusing police of unlawful arrest and assault (*Evening Express*, 2 Oct. 1992). One report quoted a Belgian police chief stating there had been no arrests, absolving the Scottish fans and blaming Moroccan immigrants for the disorder (*Daily Record*, 30 Sept. 1992). Meanwhile, *The Sun’s* reporter contacted one of us seeking further information on the violence, although he claimed to have been on an underground train vandalised by the casualties!

The most assertive coverage of the violence came from the local Edinburgh *Evening News* (30 Sept. 1992). This argued ‘racist skinheads’ had inexplicably attached themselves to Hibernian FC (a side with a Catholic, working-class history – Mackay, 1990) and had initiated the violence for racial reasons. A subsequent editorial repeated the attribution of violence to ‘a bunch of skinheads’, praised the effective liaison work of Scottish and Belgian police, and urged ‘genuine fans’ to ‘help police by pointing out the troublemakers in their midst’ (*Evening News*, 1 Oct. 1992).

A month later, the Hibs chairman, Douglas Cromb, launched his response and clearly backed the local press position: ‘We’ll kick out racists, Cromb. Culprits will face life ban’. During this period a journalist working for the official Hibernian FC programme contacted one of us following the publication of earlier research on violence in Brussels (Giulianotti, 1992). However, it transpired his remit was to investigate the presence of ‘racism’ rather than ‘soccer casualties’ within the support: and coverage of the latter was effectively quashed by the club chairman, working on an ‘oxygen of publicity’ rationale. The Edinburgh public were therefore abandoned to the false assumption that the club had an acute racist problem within its support, particularly among its casualties.¹⁴

Cabalism, Leadership and Aggro

The development of anti-racist messages in football may be interpreted as a valuable counter-action against the proselytising targeting of some clubs by fascist organisations; and also against the endemic racism of administrators and players (cf. Hill, 1989; Williams, 1991a&b). However, police-media misrepresentation of hooliganism as ‘racist’ is precipitated by an equally potent form of social prejudice that tends to typify supporters (hooligans and non-hooligans alike) as ignorant and gullible. Such social fodder, it appears, is ripe for exploitation by psychopathic individuals (the ringleaders) or sociopathic movements (the British National Party). There is a noteworthy symbiosis in these wider media and social control constructs of hooligan ‘leadership’, and the antecedent ‘cabalism’ presumed to underlie hooligan actions.¹⁵ Probably the most celebrated recipients of the cabalism-cannonfodder dichotomisation of hooliganism were the Cambridge casualties, whose activities were publicised in 1985, at the peak of executive and media disquiet over English fan disorder.

In February 1984 a lunchtime fight occurred before a second division match between Cambridge United and Chelsea. One policeman was injured, a Chelsea fan was hit by a bottle and received a neck wound and another sustained a broken jaw. Several other people received hospital treatment for minor injuries. Over a year later 24 fans were jailed at a High Court trial of local youths. Twenty-three received sentences of between fifteen months and four years, though most were in their early twenties and several were married with children

and had no previous convictions. Others were considered to be ‘good’ characters at work, and one – much to media fascination – was highly respected at his local church.

To the lawlords and the media, however, these Cambridge fans were led by one man – ‘General’ Muranyi – and part of a militaristic, highly organised unit which caused havoc throughout England. Muranyi, a 25 year old window cleaner, had been barred from the Cambridge ground in 1983 for causing trouble and served a six-month prison sentence for Unlawful Assembly related to football hooliganism. Following the Chelsea incident he was charged with Riot, and inexplicably, entered a plea of guilty. Sentencing him to five years’ imprisonment. Justice Millard stated:

You are the General. the Colonel and Majors are not before the court. You know who they are and so do they. . . . By your actions you have ruined the lives of several of your co-defendants. Some of them weaker characters than you and lads of good character. . . . This was organised, planned violence which endangered life.

The Sun (22 June 1985) said Muranyi was ‘known as the General to his army of hooligans’ and ‘the ambush took six weeks to plan’. Described as ‘the general who led a highly-organised army of soccer thugs for 10 years’ – apparently since he was 15 years old – and of having ‘masterminded all the military-style assaults that greeted visiting fans’, Muranyi’s influence was alleged to continue during his absence, to the extent that ‘on one occasion he rallied his troops from inside a jail cell’. The *Daily Star* said that when out of jail ‘He called Friday night meetings in the City Arms pub where the Cambridge Casuals . . . arrived in taxis to plan their battle to the last detail’.

The *Daily Mirror* (22 June 1985) described meeting with ‘lieutenants’ and how, even from prison, Muranyi ‘managed to plot an operation by letter’. *The Times* (22 June 1985) told how the fans were led by a General, were organised on military lines, and that their uniform was ‘Pringle label sweaters, jeans and Nike training shoes – so they could easily identify their comrades during disorders’. ‘Look-outs’, it said, were posted to seek out and divert rival fans to pubs where they’d be caught in ‘a pincer movement’. These victims, *The Times* also pointed out, were not some Chelsea equivalent of ‘the Shed Boot-Boys’ – a redundant term dating back at least ten years – for these opposing fans ‘would be using official transport and be given a police escort’. On the contrary it was said their victims ‘would be supporters who made their own way to the match’ – which was exactly what the Chelsea hooligans would also have been doing. *The Daily Star* (22 June 1985) called the victims ‘law-abiding supporters’. *The Times* (22 June 1985) claimed the Cambridge firm’s violence was immense and

ubiquitous: 'they caused havoc in football towns and cities throughout the country'; and because they 'made every match day a problem' a special team of detectives had been used against them. This made surprising reading for the Cambridge hooligans were virtual unknowns on the British hooligan grapevine then and afterwards.¹⁶ It does, however, illustrate the efficacy of the police and the media in transforming an unknown, inconsequential group into the realms of public notoriety following a single incident; and in attributing it a quasi-military structure without any real evidence.

Much of this police-media cabalism was recapitulated several years later in Scotland, in relation to a better known group of Edinburgh football hooligans. Following a riot at a Dunfermline pub in September 1990, four men were charged and two convicted of attempted murder and mobbing and rioting, largely on a police assumption that, as 'ringleaders' within the Hibs casuals, they had caused the disturbance. The entire judicial procedure, from initial police investigation to the sentence of the High Court and its handling of the Appeals, was beset by numerous irregularities (Giulianotti, 1994a). Following the release of one of the convicted men on parole, the *Daily Record* (20 Oct. 1993) undertook to obtain from him an 'exclusive' on the Hibs casuals' 'battle plans' for the League Cup Final match against Rangers. This individual, billed as 'one of the leaders of the notorious Hibs soccer casuals', had been telephoned by a journalist enquiring what Hibs casuals were doing for the match. He told the journalist he was no longer involved in football violence, and would be attending the final with his children. At this the journalist suggested a feature on the 'bad boy turned good' theme and an interview proceeded which translated past tense into future, with a front-page headline reading 'Exclusive: Casual Battle Buses Shock'. This detailed a story of 'a fleet of buses' being booked surreptitiously by 300 Hibs casuals for the final, 'with destination unknown'. An inside story under the headline 'Chilling Vow by Hibs Soccer Thug: They'll have to lock me up again to stop me' continued the 'interview', which was said to have concluded with the 'boast' – 'It's not the number that counts, it's the blood and guts'. A photograph was taken of the man and his children, but the latter were edited out in the subsequent published copy. Not surprisingly the Scottish Office contacted the individual with a view to revoking his parole, but when the circumstances and the report's fictional content were explained, they decided not to pursue the matter. His pursuit by the forces of law was not finished yet, however, and when his parole was revoked after a conviction for reset (possessing a stolen jersey), he was visited in prison by local police football intelligence officers and accused of organising a fight involving Hibs and Dundee casuals. It is not known if the police took up his suggestion that they check the prison telephone log book in relation to this accusation, for this record exhaustively details all numbers dialled by inmates!¹⁷

Our evidence suggests that hooligans captured ‘in action’ on film today are likely to fear police or employer reprisals; those quoted in the press will be disabused of their views by peers and hooligan opponents alike. The ‘pleasure’ of gaining media recognition is most common among lesser known¹⁸ or unexpected hooligan formations (e.g. Scotland casuals fighting in Holland), and most intense (as humour) when considering that rivals will read the story, get angry but remain unable to do anything about the story until the next time the two sides meet. Alternatively, some hooligan formations seek to refashion media representations of their activities. for example, through the creation of t-shirts with newspaper coverage of their exploits across the front; or calling-cards with reference to the group’s notoriety (in inverted commas, for confirmation). Willis (1990, p. 21) refers to these instances of remanufacturing media culture as ‘grounded aesthetics’, and ‘the yeast of common culture’. As our next example shows, this allows football followers to take the rise of media and academics.

A degree of strict culpability may be levelled at some academics in precipitating media constructs of hooligans which apply a military metaphor with rigidity. One of the earliest television documentaries on football hooliganism was the notorious BBC *Panorama* inquiry into the violence surrounding Millwall FC. The narrator, Dr Anthony Clare, was evidently influenced by the incumbent academic explanation of internal hierarchies of young fan formations (Marsh, 1978; Marsh, Rosser & Harré, 1978). And for the benefit of viewers, Millwall’s hooligans were therefore segmented into ‘the Half-way line’ (Novices), ‘Treatment’ (Rowdies) and ‘F-Troop’ (Hard Cases). ‘Treatment’ generated the greatest interest stylistically, not least because ‘members’ wore surgical masks with the purported aim of concealing identity and alarming rival fans with this signifier of impending hospitalisation. However, we would suggest, the function of this attire was more likely to conceal smirks while ‘winding up’ researchers; for one of the ‘Treatment’ at that time was employed at a local hospital, and purposefully ‘acquired’ and distributed the masks before filming to enhance the dramatic effect.

Sheffield United fans (the Blades) were far more successful in exploiting press and police thinking on the pyramidal organisation of football hooligan formations. This related to the creation of a fictitious leader, namely ‘Fletch’. Following a large-scale city-centre disturbance between the Blades and local Sheffield Wednesday rivals (the Owls) in 1987, police enquiries centred on the pursuit of various named individuals for questioning. One of these (Fletcher) was unknown to the Blades and seizing the opportunity to subvert police strategies of control, a group of Blades constructed a character for Fletch as they assisted police enquiries. The composite thus became a 28 year old Londoner, ostensibly an Arsenal fan, who visited the Blades purely for the instrumental purposes of creating violence and who hitherto had avoided arrest. Weeks later, two Blades

provided evidence for the charade by composing mock calling-cards which were conveniently left for uniformed police in a public bar regularly observed by officers. Even when *de facto* informed of this leader's fictitious identity by a published article (Armstrong, 1992), the police clung to the hierarchical construct of the Blades. Front page headlines were gained in the local press, by their attribution of the Blades' violence to five 'manipulative' individuals, who 'revelled in plotting atrocities' (see *Sheffield Star*, August 1993). Interestingly, the Owls consisted of nobody more than 'a few hotheads'.

Intranational Differences: Hooliganism in Scotland

The media sensationalisation of British football hooliganism through such reified metaphors as cabalism and militarism has taken distinctive forms in England and Scotland. In England, a media tendency to deamplify fan violence at club level appears to have been underway in the post-Hillsborough era, although this process can be spectacularly arrested by the graphic and unanticipated 'return' of disorder.¹⁹ In Scotland, the control strategy of deamplifying fan violence has been underway since the introduction of public order legislation in 1980. Scottish media discourses have buttressed this official position through mobilising Scottish cultural nationalism and its dislike of, or resentment against, the English, to set these against typifications of its 'hooligan' supporters; and presenting the post-1980 'soccer casual' fan violence as beyond 'normal' (drunk and sectarian) hooliganism (Giulianotti, 1991, 1994a, 1995b). Potential disorder involving Scotland's 'Tartan Army' at internationals overseas is often presented as threatened by English or other fans *masquerading* as friendly, gregarious Scots.²⁰ Matches against England (now discontinued) provided a complex set of circumstances, although the Scottish popular media were prone to apportion blame for violence to English supporters rather than Scottish hooligans.²¹ More routinely, the sporadic arrests of some international supporters, and the presence of Scottish casualties in their midst, is notably underplayed or suppressed, particularly when contrasted with more orthodox definitions of the newsworthy aspects of football fans and public disorder.²² Additionally, we have evidence that, contrary to journalist assertions of reporting only what they know, coverage of fan disorder at Scottish club matches can be restricted to either low selling editions²³ or disinterested distribution area.²⁴

In the last decade, however, with the intensification of popular press competition and the fresh profusion of British tabloids with 'Scottish' editions (cf. Meech & Kilborn, 1992), the dialectic of cultural nationalism and the traditionally newsworthy has been more regularly resolved in the latter's favour. Accordingly, Scottish football hooliganism is prone to 'rediscovery'. The recent wave of media interest in the Scottish soccer casualties coincided generally with their mass arrest in Holland (late May 1993); the violence/tough policing of Hibs,

Aberdeen. Dundee and Rangers casualties in August-September; and the release of the video *Trouble on the Terraces* (Sept.). This final item precipitated the generic *Daily Record* (15 August) headline, 'THEY'RE BACK: Evil casualties threaten new reign of terror'. and argued 'the ultra-violent gangs who plagued football in the 80s seem to be making a frightening return and bringing mayhem to the streets of Scotland'. Ironically, the main picture used to support the re-emergence narrative was almost a year old, and showed Hibs casualties striding through Glasgow with a sizeable police escort in October 1993. At the foot of the article a small feature on the forthcoming hooligan video reported on a 'mystery lout [who] spouts his neanderthal fighting philosophy'. The individual featured, an Aberdeen casualty, elected to contact the *Daily Record* to put the record straight and a reporter and photographer met him. He explained *inter alia* that, contrary to the media picture of Scottish casualties, they had never really gone away from the football scene and, in his view, often functioned not as 'abnormal' hooligans, but as a protective mechanism for fellow supporters likely to be abused by rivals – particularly ordinary Rangers and Celtic fans. A photo shoot was held outside Aberdeen's ground, and the article sent to Glasgow for editorial inspection. Neither photograph nor article were published.

The paradox of deamplifying and newsworthy predilections within Scottish popular journalism was most graphically illustrated within the space of a fortnight, by the Aberdeen *Evening Express*. Prior to the beginning of the 1994-5 season (7 August 1994), the paper ran a news feature on the general effectiveness of policing at football matches in the city. Highlighting the declining annual toll of arrests *inside* the local ground (no mention was made of football-related incidents that take place *outside* Scottish stadia), the message for football followers was nostalgically upbeat: 'A new football season could see premier division league games get back to the good old days of being family affairs – as many grounds become virtual trouble-free zones'. A week later, however, Hibs and Dundee casualties were involved in substantial disorder in Edinburgh's city centre. Above the claim 'The *Sunday Mail* – first for news', the *Mail* ran the banner headline: 'As the football season kicks off . . . CASUALS PUT THE BOOT IN', with photographs of shopkeepers brushing debris from the streets (14 August 1994). Within a week, as a belated 'spoiler', the *Evening Express* (20 August 1994) turned *volte face* on indigenous hooliganism, running the headlines, 'Casual fears rise again' and 'Fans' leader warns of trouble' alongside a picture of crowd disorder inside Aberdeen's ground (taken over a decade earlier). Readers were informed by an anonymous features writer that the 'power dressing young thugs' 'could surface again at Dons [Aberdeen] matches following a new wave of violence in Scotland'. In fact, apart from one development, no significant change in the Aberdeen casualties' numbers or activities had taken place while these events were occurring in Edinburgh; this concerned the barring of up to

forty from their regular city-centre meeting point by new bar management acting at the behest of police. This story had been partially covered by the *Evening Express*, although newspaper sources were so poor they could only define the unwanted drinkers as a collection of 'rowdies'.

The tension between Scottish press deamplification and news sensationalisation of football hooliganism can be artificially resolved by reference to the alleged intrusion of English hooligans as unwanted social agents. In 1993 and 1994, Aberdeen and Hibs casualties came under the media spotlight for alleged links with English hooligan groups and during subsequent attempts by the police to nullify 'organised' violence. Prior to a Scottish Cup Final, Grampian Police sought to play down media interest in potential disorder, noting: 'We always hear these stories about the Aberdeen casualties, and Leeds and Dutch fans coming here to cause trouble – we've yet to see it happen' (*Evening Express*, 29 May 1993). A year later the Hibs-Aberdeen fixture provided the venue for further media interest in cross-border alliances. On the morning of the match, Scotland's leading broadsheet *The Herald* (10 Sept. 1994) reported on the basis of information from an anonymous London police informant, that Chelsea and Millwall hooligans would be travelling to the Scottish match in pursuit of violence. In the event, over eighty people were detained, including a coach-load of Aberdeen supporters and a bar full of Hibs fans. All were released without charge after the match, prompting some media speculation that the police response was exaggerated and contrary to basic civil liberties, as only five people were charged after being arrested in a car.²⁵ For the *Sunday Mail* (11 Sept. 1994) the police operation had been an unmitigated success; repeating claims that Chelsea and Millwall fans had been prevented from causing trouble, the report obliquely stated, 'Undercover police have smashed an attempt by English football casualties to infiltrate Scottish matches'. A day later, however, its companion paper, the *Daily Record* (12 Sept. 1994), was less certain of the identity of the English hooligans:

Squads of English football hooligans invaded Edinburgh in search of violence. Thugs from the Manchester area travelled north in search of a battle at the Hibs-Aberdeen match on Saturday. And some of the jobs were tooled up with knives and coshes. But police were tipped off about the threat, and extra officers flooded the city centre to prevent outbreaks of violence.

In truth, only four English fans (Oldham hooligans with friends in Edinburgh) had travelled north to the match, and no Chelsea or Millwall hooligans were present. The press identification of these latter groups mirrored earlier and equally misinformed coverage of Hibs casualties and their alleged English affiliates. Prior to

the 1993 Scottish Cup Final, the *Daily Record* (22 Oct. 1993) announced, 'ENGLISH YOBS TARGET SCOTS BIG GAME: Millwall gang set for fight'. The story went on:

A 60-strong group calling themselves the Millwall Treatment aim to link up with Hibs Casuals. They then will head for a bloody battle with the Inter City Firm who follow Rangers. And it was also revealed last night that a gang of notorious Chelsea Casuals could be at Parkhead for the game . . . Last night a member of the police football intelligence unit in London said: 'The Millwall Casuals are the worst in Britain. There could be big trouble [sic]'. He added that the police were powerless to stop the fans leaving London and couldn't afford the cost of a shadowing operation.

On first reading, the content could appear to be born of a happy marriage between the media's pursuit of the newsworthy and a police desire for increased public funding. However, as the local Edinburgh *Evening News* (32 Oct. 1993) hinted, Hibs casuals had been involved in serious disorder *against* Millwall fans three years earlier, and animosity between the groups was more prevalent than amity. The same newspaper also found that a top anti-hooligan officer, Detective Inspector Peter Chapman of the NCIS, could offer no support for the *Daily Record's* tale. Predictably, the *Daily Record* sent a reporter and photographer to cover disorder which might take place at the fixture and there were 71 arrests. Under the heading 'TIGHT REIN ON THUGS', an understated report without the further publicity of pictures sought to highlight the success of a 'major police operation' in quashing violence between rival casuals (25 Oct. 1993). The scale of the police presence, however, had been in keeping with that commonly experienced by young supporters in Glasgow on big match days.

The Den of Iniquity: Media and Hooligan Inter-Relations

The rationale behind these stories posits that contemporary Scottish hooligans require the influence of notorious English firms to enable actual disorder. Our research, however, would suggest Scottish hooligans are more likely to travel south to English fixtures to operate alongside friendly hooligans.²⁶ We do accept that a sizeable divergence between the real nature and the media representation of football hooligan formations is not governed purely by prerogatives of the newsworthy or the ideologically sustainable. Obtaining and retaining social access to individuals on the basis of their hooligan predilections and public notoriety carries numerous risks and problems, not just regarding personal safety but also in terms of 'piss takes' and testing of 'participation' (cf. Armstrong, 1993; Giulianotti, 1995b). As with contemporary hooligans, the reputation of

journalists tends to precede them and football hooligans tend to be distrustful; given the journalist's greater interest in producing a salacious story on violence rather than an accurate and considered examination of the journalist's actual experiences.

In 1989, a cub reporter with a leading Scottish broadsheet was sent to do a 'special' on Hibs casualties, whose purported activities had excited substantial speculation elsewhere. Contrary to earlier promises, the resultant copy carried unedited photographs of interviewees and rode roughshod over subjudice matters by referring to the criminality of one defendant at a forthcoming trial. Some Hibs casualties expressed exasperation at the article, noting its failure to reflect the author's genuine experiences in his brief time among them, and recalling – with some humour – the occasion when the journalist quite obviously 'shit it' at a match in Dundee, as they alighted a bus in pursuit of rival casualties.

Journalists who seek to avoid this problem by claiming to share an ambiguous status between the lifeworld of research subjects and fellow professionals, tend to highlight their limited understanding of contemporary hooliganism. One Scottish media celebrity who revels in a 'bad boy' image is a former music journalist and independent film producer, now commissioning television programmes for a leading television station. In his mid-40s he is on record claiming to be 'the oldest soccer casual', but tempers his receding 'street cred' by a writing commitment to 'bringing the game into disrepute' (cf. Cosgrove, 1991); and the flashing of evidence of a criminal record (one misdemeanour). As yet, he has still to produce the documentary on Scottish soccer casualties, on which his junior researchers have twice contacted us. One stumbling block may be his somewhat naïve plan – given the Sunderland-Rangers media imbroglio – to have football hooligans interviewed *cognito* on screen.²⁷

In the late-1980s Aberdeen casualties based in the city centre enjoyed a remarkably intimate (though unreported) relationship with local female journalists. Several news and features reporters, whose professional remit included covering youth styles, crime, violence, illicit drug abuse and topical sex, habitually spent their week-ends with core hooligans at central pubs, nightclubs and private parties. Within this social circle, the journalists were collectively known by their place of work, and generally considered to be enjoying 'a bit of rough' prior to engaging in more respectable, bourgeois relationships. Of course, none of the excesses of these *liaisons très heureuses* were explicitly reported, although their pagan dimensions were mediated allegorically through the local press. One journalist exercised some control over the newspaper's horoscope, and relayed cryptic messages to individuals identified by star sign. It is not known what accidental impact these unions of Venus and Mars had upon the fertility rituals of North-East Scots as a whole!

Then again, a more financially centred relationship between journalists and hooligans can also operate. We understand one 'notorious' England hooligan was actually on the short-term payroll of a leading British tabloid, and that the same individual enjoyed a profitable *triste* in Paris with a female reporter on a right-wing 'quality' journal. A more mundane form of employment with the media occurred in an English northern provincial city in the mid-1980s, when a core hooligan also worked in a sales capacity for the local newspaper. While his journalist colleagues were seconded to investigate indigenous hooliganism through print and pictures, this prime candidate for celebrity enjoyed a profitable yet discrete relationship with the newspaper's resources. Photographs of friends were extracted from tiling cabinets, and reproduced *en masse* for sale to those seeking after self-portraits 'when in action'. And at the same time, his fellow employees provided a valuable market for the sale of soft drugs.

Conclusion

Our methodological intention has been to demonstrate the validity of a case study approach in examining media discourses on deviant social groups through the introduction of findings from extensive fieldwork. Our findings in respect of football hooliganism's treatment by the media suggest the inter-relations between young male fans and reporters is significantly more complex, ambiguous and reversible than earlier and more general sociological research allows.

This case-study approach is not, of course, restricted to the study of media-football hooligan relations in the United Kingdom. There is plenty of scope for social researchers to uncloak the more routine yet unexpected relationships and exchanges that arise between marginal or deviant social groups and media reporters or other representatives of powerful institutions (e.g. the police). International comparative studies would also be highly valuable.

Our case studies provide evidence of the artificial construction of perceivably 'newsworthy' stories, through the faithful reporting or application of police 'intelligence' (amplification) about the phenomenon. Cabalism, militarism and the anticipation of violence when overseas are integral components of such discourses. Tensions can arise, however, when official accounts of fan violence acquire a deamplificatory dynamic, thereby clashing with a media pursuit of the newsworthy. In the midst of these ambiguities, conflicts may subsequently emerge between rival police and media institutions over the legitimate portrayal of indigenous hooliganism, as we see in the treatment of the Scottish casuals. To resolve the subsequent paradoxes, three strategies appear to have been adopted by the mass media: an artificial 'rediscovery' of hooliganism; a collusion between media and police in arresting the outlaws; and, throwing the causes of the 'problem' back at the antithetical Other (e.g. the English hooligan invasion). In

their origins, none of these approaches appear to have a cumulative, longitudinal commitment to reporting actual instances of fan disorder as they occur.

Faced by the growth of police and media surveillance techniques, occasions arise when football hooligans play with or challenge their wider public representation for personal or collective amusement. Jameson (1991, p. 354) has given such a strategy of wilful disinformation a generic title:

As to a specific new or postmodern media *politics*, it has also clearly long since come into being (sometimes in the form of so-called terrorism) as one of the rare weapons available to powerless minorities or subgroups screened out and censored with the latest equipment.

In each of the case-study classifications presented above, illustrations are provided of such evasive and apocryphal strategies; of what Fiske (1993, p. 19) terms 'a culture of practice at work' involving these 'socially interested agencies'. Through their very presence, the self-pronounced football hooligans can play with the media's ceaseless demand for lazy reports and carefree headlines. A 'fatal strategy' is therefore set in motion by the reporter subjects. They wait for the hooligan 'object' to be captured *flagrante bello*. For in the media's view, this 'object' is

considered more cunning, cynical, talented than the subject, for which it lies in wait. The metamorphoses, the ruses, the strategies of the object surpass the subject's understanding. . . it has its own strategy and holds the key to the rules of the game, impenetrable to the subject, not because they are deeply mysterious, but because they are infinitely ironic (Baudrillard, 1990, p. 181; cf. Giulianotti, 1994a, p. 234).

In the interim, the hooligans may test their seductive powers on the various reporters, whether this be achieved in finance, private celebration or, in some cases, romantic *tristes*. Now that certainly *is* scoring against the run of play.

NOTES:

- 1 This paper was financially assisted by the ESRC. We would like to thank Rosemary Harris and Malcolm Young for invaluable criticisms of an earlier draft.
- 2 The newspaper's exclusive was essentially authenticated by an 'informer', who told how 500 tickets were available. These bore the stamp of a Liverpool travel agency which admitted there was a stamp missing, speculating it had been stolen.

- 3 Later that year, *The Guardian* was one of several English newspapers criticised by the Press Council for its inaccurate and exaggerated coverage of English fan activities at an international fixture in Sweden.
- 4 See, for example, the coverage of *The Guardian* ('600 English fans rounded up: running battles in Rotterdam despite tight security in third day of soccer violence') or *The Independent* ('England Supporters Fall Foul of Dutch Police') on 14 Oct. 1993.
- 5 Among those deported was a group of Edinburgh men, arrested in Amsterdam after notifying insurers of damage to their car.
- 6 In the 1970s, British football hooliganism was most spectacularly enacted inside the grounds. In the days before effective fan segregation, rival fans would attempt to take the opposition's 'end' (behind one set of goals) by weight of numbers and/or violence (Marsh, 1978; Ward, 1989).
- 7 Appleby, for example, spoke of heavily equipped Chelsea fans being arrested *en route* to a Rangers-Hibs match. We believe, however, he was referring to the Hibs - Chelsea friendly in Edinburgh, prior to which a large group of Chelsea fans were arrested in Cumbria. Appleby was quoted on independent television news stating that Wrexham hooligans had been joined by their Hibs allies to take on Carlisle hooligans. It was Celtic casuals who were the Scottish fans involved in this disorder.
- 8 Rangers supporters' activities overseas have included fighting and theft in Belgium, for which the club was fined £6,900 by UEFA (later halved) (*Aberdeen Press & Journal*, 4 March 1993); and the smuggling of drugs (£250,000 worth of cannabis) via fans' coaches (*The Herald*, 29 Oct. 1992). At home, Rangers fans were involved in an attack on a rival manager's wife and young children at a Scottish Cup Final (*The Herald*, 31 May 1993); and their ground security outfit was involved in fighting with Italian journalists after an international match at the club's ground, Ibrox (*Evening Express*, 19 Nov. 1992). Rangers players have also been involved in on-field trouble, such as an alleged head-butting incident and breaches of the peace leading to separate legal proceedings, as well as the celebratory singing of sectarian songs (*Daily Record*, cf. *The Herald*, 31 May 1993) and the provocation of opposing fans (*The Press & Journal*, 2 Feb. 1993).
- 9 In the *Daily Record* (17 August 1994) report noted earlier regarding the AEK Athens fixture, it was claimed by their ICF source that: 'Other gangs want to follow Scotland in the European Championships – but the ICF wouldn't open our curtains to watch Scotland'. This caused some hilarity amongst Aberdeen and Hibs lads *inter alia*, as they understood this apparent lack of ICF interest at international level was a virtue borne of necessity.
- 10 Harris (1992), replying to criticism of an earlier article on football hooliganism (Armstrong & Harris, 1991), observed a degree of *lese-mjeste* in the views of Dunning, Murphy & Waddington (1991) and Moorhouse (1991).

- 11 As the *Daily Record* (3 Nov. 1989) had them demand on its leading headline, 'NAME THE LOUTS!'
- 12 See the *Evening News* headline. 'Out for life. Hibees Lashed: Missile throwing 'morons' will be banned, says Cromb'. The club was later fined £6,850 by UEFA for the offences.
- 13 See, for example, *The Herald*, *Daily Express*, *The Star*, *The Sun* ('Butcher-Knife Yob Scalps Fan'), *Press & Journal*, all 30 Sept. 1992.
- 14 Racism amongst Scottish supporters is more readily found amongst the fans and casuals of Glasgow Rangers and Hearts (the Edinburgh rivals of Hibernian). Hibs and Aberdeen casuals tend to be strongly critical of those who attempt to tie their hooligan activities to the political credo of the British National Party.
- 15 Cohen (1980, p. 63) defines cabalism as the representation of behaviour which was to a large degree unorganized, spontaneous and situational, is seen as having been well planned in advance as part of some sort of conspiratorial plot'.
- 16 The autobiographical work by Hornby (1992. p. 151) makes no mention of hooliganism from his match attendances at Cambridge United. He does, however, note the club's tendency to play 'I've Got a Lovely Bunch of Coconuts' over the tannoy.
- 17 The concept of 'leadership is one that tends to be explicitly rejected by football hooligans themselves. The publication of an Aberdeen casual's autobiography and the claim he had been a 'leader', aroused uniform criticism among his former fellows of this inflated status, as well as complaints that much of the book's content was fictional or selective (Allan, 1989).
- 18 See, for example, the front-page headline 'THE CARD OF HATE! TERROR RAMPAGE BY GANG OF NAZI SOCCER THUGS' (*Daily Record*, 5 April 1990), which was drawn from the discovery of a calling-card purportedly detailing the activities of the little-known 'Inverness Casuals Incomp'.
- 19 See, for example, the headlines which the live televised violence involving Manchester City and Tottenham fans attracted in January 1993.
- 20 The polarisation of media narratives on English and Scottish fans abroad is highlighted by research into the proactive 'framing' of fan activity by photographers. While the Scots tend to be herded into group shots with 'friendly' foreign fans (Giulianotti, 1995b), English photographers are reported to offer money to fans willing to strike aggressive postures or throw missiles at opponents/police (Murphy, Williams & Dunning, 1990).
- 21 For example, the *Sunday Mail* (8 Oct. 1989) greeted the Scottish League's plan to play the English League at Hampden, Glasgow with the back-page headline, 'RETURN OF THE THUGS: Another Hampden shocker', and the opening line: 'England's football thugs are set to hit Hampden again . . . the most unwanted fans in the game are set to follow across the border. . .'

- 22 The sole occasion when Scottish hooligans have aggregated overseas, with the intention of fighting local rivals. was in May 1994 at a friendly in Utrecht, Holland. The arrest of 47 Scottish fans followed from very minor actual disorder, but induced headlines demanding national contrition and self-examination: 'SCOTS FANS SHAMED BY HIBS THUGS'. 'Ruined image' (*Evening News*, 28 May 1994); 'Tartan Army's shame: Fans from Aberdeen booted out by Dutch' (*Press & Journal*, 30 May 1994); 'Soccer thugs get the boot' (*Sunday Mail*, 29 May 1994).
- 23 For example, the opening of the 1992-3 Scottish football season saw up to 150 Aberdeen and Hibs casualties clashing in Aberdeen city-centre. Terry Penny, a local regional councillor, had attended the fixture as a guest of the police, and had noted this disorder, as well as the police response, in a local press interview (*Evening Express*, 1 August 1992). After the article had been carried in the low circulation early edition, the entire story was mysteriously dropped from the larger circulation, later editions.
- 24 For example, the *Sunday Mail's* (5 April) coverage of the violence at the 1993 Scottish Cup semi-final in Edinburgh. involving Aberdeen and Hibs casualties, only appeared in its Glasgow edition.
- 25 This point was made by the host of the popular Scottish talk-show *Sport in Question* (ITV, 12 Sept. 1994). Although the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 1980 allows for detainment without charge for up to six hours. it is against the spirit of the legislation for this policing practice to be adopted against individuals on a regular basis.
- 26 For example, Aberdeen casualties have long-standing links with English hooligans following a major London club. Elsewhere, Hibs casualties have travelled to English First Division fixtures rather than to Hibs fixtures in Glasgow.
- 27 More extensive and direct media-hooligan inter-relations occur in haphazard circumstances. Sports journalists and committed football fans tend to be male and share equivalent leisure interests and spaces, which in the context of British football excursions is alcohol consumption in public houses. Certain Scottish sportswriters are renowned among supporters for their drinking exploits at fixtures overseas, and have proven genial company to groups of Scottish casualties seeking a generous night out on someone else's copious expense account. On the domestic front, Aberdeen casualties have been interviewed as 'loyal fans' on television in anticipation of big matches (once alongside friendly English hooligans, who joined in fighting with rival fans at the match the next day); and when one balding Glaswegian journalist sought to enjoy a post-interview drink in one bar, he was jokingly told by the dozens of fellow drinkers, 'This is a casual bar' and, 'Give us a rub of your head for luck'. Davies (1990) points to three camps of mutual loathing when England play abroad: players/officials, journalists and 'hooligans'. He also draws parallels between the excesses of journalists and the fans themselves. This includes not only drunkenness, but their indulgence in 'sexual tourism'. Whilst the same journalists speak of disgraces to the English reputation at matches overseas, one scribe became notorious during the 1980s amongst core England fans for his *penchant* for prostitutes.

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