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Violence in Football (Soccer): Overview, Prevalence, and Risk Factors

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Football is widely regarded as the most popular spectator and participation sport in the world. It is sometimes referred to as "soccer," particularly in countries where an alternative sporting variant has traditionally proven more popular and/or is connected to national culture, notably in Australia, Ireland, and the United States. The prefix "association," the term from which "soccer" is thought to have emerged, has been used to differentiate football from other sporting codes, such as rugby union and rugby league (Rookwood, 2014). Although often considered to be of English invention, there is a degree of uncertainty surrounding the origins of football, with preexisting versions thought to have been introduced in different localities and exported along trade routes and through military conquests—for instance, from countries such as China and Italy (Walvin, 2010). The various relatively violent folk antecedents of modern football that later emerged in Britain effectively died out under pressure from puritanism, industrialization, and urbanization (Hay, Harvey, & Smith, 2014). Indeed, there have been several attempts to ban "mob football" due to its violent nature and the damage caused to property: "As far back as 1314, legislations were used to control the football crowd and many bills have been vicariously used to prosecute the unruly football fan" (Clark, 2006, p. 495).

Modern football progressed as a less violent codified game in England during the 19th century, confined in space and shaped by rules, purpose, and strategy. Football advanced during this period partly through England's public schools, a system in which such sports were developed and used to facilitate behavioral reform (Swain & Harvey, 2012). The subsequent expansion and diffusion of football saw governing bodies formed, rules ratified, clubs established, and competitions introduced. The sport gained increasing cultural significance and widespread popularity in England and elsewhere, as the experience of attending competitive matches regularly staged within expanding domestic and international tournaments helped to develop the culture of spectatorship. This was shaped by the growth of sports media, initially

The Wiley Handbook of Violence and Aggression, Peter Sturmey (Editor-in-Chief).
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DOI: 10.1002/9781119057574.whbva110

in the form of newspaper reporting, which was followed by radio broadcasting and then TV coverage.

Numerous examples of violent conduct in football have been recorded implicating competitors on the field of play. Some of these cases have also involved spectators, such as Manchester United's Eric Cantona, who attacked a Crystal Palace supporter during an English league fixture between the clubs in January 1995 (Bose, 2012). However, instances of violence in professional football during the past half-century have often proven more common between supporters, with variations in the targets of fan violence, ranging from fellow fans to players, police, bystanders, coaches, and officials. Related media coverage, popular representations, academic research, police response, and evolving legal positions have both reflected and shaped this view. Indeed, the term "football violence" has often been employed as a synonym for "football hooliganism," a widely applied reference to a "disorderly" form of fan conduct. Consequently, this chapter is primarily a reflection of the violence perpetrated by football supporters. Spectator violence is not a recent phenomenon. Factions of chariot racing, for instance, engaged in violent altercations in ancient Greece and Rome (Goldblatt, 2014). This work, however, concentrates on modern forms of football violence. The chapter examines the nature and development of violence in professional football, legal, and research definitions of key terms; the prevalence and impact of the problem; and various connected theoretical positions. Football violence is sometimes referred to as the "English disease," reflecting its perceived prevalence in England (Green & Simmons, 2015). However, although this chapter is based in part on English football, we also examine the phenomenon across various countries.

The Development of Football Violence

The behavior of football fans began to be viewed as a growing social problem in many countries in the 1960s (Davis, 2015). Prior to this period, however, conduct that might now be framed as football violence in England was instead typically portrayed by the British press as "high-spirited" (Dunning, Murphy & Williams, 1988, p. 11). Football crowds were expected to behave in a "rough" manner, and as such any instances reported in the press were not usually perceived to be reflective of a serious social problem. Until the late 1950s, match attendance in English football (and in many other domestic leagues in Europe where "hooliganism" emerged) was primarily confined to relatively localized support (Goldblatt, 2008). Alterations in employment conditions subsequently enabled increasing numbers (primarily working-class males) to travel to matches as "away fans" (Rookwood, 2009). Supporters would travel together, often in "mob-like" groups, their presence helping to alter the dynamics of football spectatorship.

Violent football gangs emerged at most English clubs from the 1960s, although the phenomenon was usually confined to professional football. Many of these socially organized or institutionalized groups (which became known as "firms") began to engage in vandalism and competitive violence, primarily against other football gangs. Some Liverpool and Manchester United supporters were early English examples, with sections of a changing media labeling the respective groups the "Merseyside Maniacs" and the "Red Army" as a consequence (Dunning et al., 1988, p. 142). Various football firms across England and Europe adopted different practices and labels. In European fandom, violent groups often became associated with a name connected to a particular part of the stadium where they congregated to watch

matches. In English contexts, some firms have maintained an attachment to a particular label over a number of years. However, many of these groups are small, transitory, and relatively short-lived gangs seeking "hyper-localized notoriety" (Redhead, 2015, p. 336). In his archiving of "hooligan memoirs," Redhead identifies 400 separate firm names in English football alone. The reflexive subcultural language employed here is an interesting component of the phenomenon itself. Firms of violent supporters have often adopted names to describe connections to given identities or practices (Davis, 2015) or to confuse perceived "enemies," namely rival firms, the media, the police, and even academics (Redhead, 2015).

The violence that often ensued between supporters eventually led to the spatial demarcation and segregation of partisan supporters in football grounds. This helped to control certain aspects of the advancing phenomenon of football violence. However, it is also thought to have sharpened the distinction and enhanced hostilities between some sections of supporters as football stadiums became increasingly territorialized (Canter, Comber, & Uzzell, 1989). Various rivalries that developed between fan groups became more problematic, with acts of violence a recurrent manifestation. Football violence has resulted in injuries and fatalities as well as damage to property both inside and outside stadiums across several continents. Broadcasting the problem—including some sensationalist and disproportionate media coverage—effectively advertised football grounds as sites to engage in violence, particularly during the 1980s (Cleland, 2015). Publicizing football violence exacerbated the problem, reinforcing and even glamorizing violent behavior (Redhead, 2015). This may have deterred match attendance by supporters who were not inclined to participate in football violence, which may have aggravated the problem by concentrating the demographic of football support (Rookwood & Pearson, 2012).

Defining Key Terms

Interpersonal violence can adopt various forms including physical and psychological abuse, threats, and intimidation. However, unlike violence in other contexts, where nonphysical variants such as deprivation and neglect can be prevalent, the often competitive forms of football violence that have become ingrained in many fan cultures are typically associated with physical interactions. Increases in football violence from the 1960s in countries such as England led to growing media coverage, which helped to shape public consciousness. The persistence of emerging social problems often leads to the repeated use and even formation of descriptive terms and expressions. As a form of neologism, "football hooliganism" is a popularized example of the latter. This has effectively become the representative label for football violence in many contexts and this definitional examination is framed accordingly.

The term "hooligan" is of uncertain origin, and many etymological studies have proven inconclusive. It could perhaps derive from Patrick Hooligan, an Irishman who gained notoriety for committing acts of violence and theft in London during the 1890s. The term could, however, have been a reference to the surname of a fictional rowdy Irish family in a popular music hall song from the same decade (Rookwood, 2014). Nevertheless, the term "hooligan" was applied and entered into common usage in the English language from the end of the 19th century. It became a label for rowdy and violent behavior in generic contexts, but it was not closely connected to English football until the early 1960s. Although it is generally accepted by scholars to be a term invented by the British press (Frosdick & Newton, 2006), it is not clear exactly where the first reference to "football hooliganism" appeared in print. However,

the terms "hooligan" and "football hooligan" have since become virtually interchangeable in many cases, reflecting the strength of their connection since the 1960s.

Various descriptive and definitional legal and academic positions have emerged pertaining to football violence and hooliganism. There have been extensive football-specific legislative developments, particularly in response to tragedies and high-profile incidents of violence at football megaevents. Numerous "football-related offenses" including pitch invasions, vandalism, and ticket touting—as well as violence—have been outlawed in the United Kingdom through the passing of various acts (Hopkins & Hamilton-Smith, 2014). Adopting a transnational perspective, Spaaij (2014) argues that conceptualizing such actions as distinct from violent fan behaviors can help to clarify an understanding of football hooliganism. Some of these laws have been labeled as "draconian measures" (Hamilton-Smith & McArdle, 2013, p. 130), criticized as disproportionate responses that allow for various infringements of the civil liberties of football fans and criminalize the collective. As a result of Britain's "cover-all" legal approach (Dunning, Murphy, & Waddington, 2002, p. 2), a vast array of different types of people and actions can be grouped together as football hooligans (Pearson, 1998, p. 6). The National Criminal Intelligence Service, which monitored football hooliganism in England and Wales until 2006, categorized football fans as A, B, or C relative to their involvement in football hooliganism (A being a law-abiding fan, C being a football hooligan, and B being someone who poses a potential risk in this context). Similar classifications are used in several domestic football leagues in Europe, while the Council of the European Union (2010) favors a binary distinction between "risk" and "non-risk" fans, the former being defined as "a person, known or not, who can be regarded as posing a possible risk to public order or antisocial behaviour, whether planned or spontaneous, at or in connection with a football event" (p. 21). More specifically, football hooliganism has been framed relative to degrees of organization, discipline, hierarchy, criminality, and involvement. As with other associated terms, however, "football hooligan" lacks both a precise legal definition and strict demarcation of membership.

The phenomenon has been subject to extensive academic research, and yet relatively few definitions have been proposed. Jewell, Simmons, and Szymanski (2014) define the term as relating to "episodes of crowd trouble inside and outside football stadiums on match days" (p. 429). Contemporary football violence is not confined to the stadiums and their immediate vicinities, as confrontations have often been displaced to locations where hooligans feel they may be less likely to encounter a police presence or video surveillance. However, although most acts of football hooliganism transpire on match days, they can also take place on adjacent days, for instance. This accounts for some of the most significant incidents of football violence, especially in relation to modern European contests in which fan excursions can spread across several days. The deaths of two Leeds United fans following clashes with Galatasaray supporters in Istanbul in 2000, for example, occurred the night before the UEFA Cup semifinal match between the clubs.

Academic positions have otherwise focused on the demography of football hooligans. Poulton (2012) refers to hooligan firms as "hyper-masculine" groups, while Spaaij (2014) suggests that "the gender of football hooligans is strikingly homogenous" (p. 334) and Pearson (2012) suggests that most football hooligans are male and aged between 15 and 50. However, given the additional demographic variance associated with the phenomenon pertaining to social class, employment status, and family background (for instance), many scholars have avoided offering a typical profile or a precise definition of a hooligan. As Young (2012) argues, the contemporary phenomenon often proves more diverse and encompassing than it has been presented. Nevertheless, it is important to offer a definitional framework when

undertaking research into football violence. Consequently, the following working definition is suggested, adapted from the work of Rookwood (2009, 2014): A football hooligan is an individual who attends football matches with the intention of becoming involved in violence with rival supporters (whether or not they achieve that aim) or a fan who becomes involved in violence (but not other disorder or criminal activities) even if this was not their initial aim, within a football context. "Rival supporters" can include those who follow the same club or national team but would more commonly serve as a reference to fans of opposing teams. As a related term that also features in British legislation, "football disorder" is perhaps best considered as an umbrella term, including acts of hooliganism and the various nonviolent but illegal football-related offenses such as those mentioned above. To identify some of the main features of football hooliganism, Spaaij (2014) distinguishes between spontaneous, relatively isolated incidents of fan violence and the behavior of institutionalized or socially organized hooligan firms who engage in competitive violence, primarily against other hooligan groups. This is certainly a useful basis for understanding the phenomenon of football violence. However, in the pursuit of simplicity and in keeping with the legal response, our definitional position here does not distinguish between organized and spontaneous forms of football violence.

There has been some confusion between the notions of football fandom and football hooliganism, with some using the terms interchangeably and others imposing a differentiation. This particularly concerns popular representations of fandom. Consequently, "reporters and columnists often struggle in their apparent quest to construct a neat typology of the modern football fan" (Poulton, 2002, p. 123). This conceptual amalgamation is especially prominent and problematic in relation to what Hughson (2002) labels as hedonistic "carnivalesque activity," including excessive drinking, swearing, and singing, which he suggests should be demarcated from hooliganism as these actions are "decidedly non-violent" (p. 44). Stott and Reicher (1998) propose a similar differentiation, referring to a fan's "right to gather in boisterous support of one's team" (p. 371) without being criminalized. In applied contexts, hooligans will typically claim to be fans (Rookwood & Pearson, 2012), and hooliganism is perhaps best considered a distinct variant of rather than a synonym of fandom. The terms "supporters," "spectators," and "fans" are, however, used interchangeably here. Finally, another related phenomenon, the "ultra" movement (originating in Italy), has often adopted and been connected to violent connotations in football fan contexts (Spaaij & Viñas, 2005; Testa & Armstrong, 2010). However, the typical association with political connections prevents the term from being employed as an unambiguous synonym for a "hooligan." Although there may be a conceptual crossover, not all ultras are violent and not all hooligans are politically motivated.

Prevalence and Impact of Football Violence

The seriousness of football hooliganism has been a source of contention for several decades. On the one hand, political and media representations of football hooliganism tend to portray it as an existential threat that requires far-reaching countermeasures to combat it, particularly in the aftermath of a high-profile violent incident. Since the 1980s, national and international authorities have introduced a raft of laws, regulations, policies, and strategies to control and prevent football violence at all levels of the game. This process involves the progressive consolidation and expansion of judicial powers, stadium security measures, policing tactics, and special investigative techniques in the fight against football hooliganism (Mastrogiannakis & Dorville, 2012; Tsoukala, 2009). On the other hand, academic research has long shown that

the threat of football hooliganism is overstated (Hall, 1978; Melnick, 1986) and that the cure may be worse than the disease, especially in terms of the impact that countermeasures have on the civil liberties of football fans (Pearson, 1999; Spaaij, 2013; Tsoukala, 2009). For instance, Melnick (1986) refers to the "mythology of football hooliganism" to argue that the nature and severity of football hooliganism has been largely overstated by the media and "unjustly elevated to the status of a major social problem by the State" (p. 1). In a similar vein, social psychologist Peter Marsh (1978) has shown that football hooliganism typically involves less harmful physical violence than is often thought, even when fans themselves look upon violence or the threat of violence as the objective and even though violence often features centrally in the apportioning of social status within football hooligan subcultures.

The controversy surrounding the prevalence and severity of football violence has led researchers to search for reliable facts and figures. One might assume that, since football violence is viewed as a threat to public safety and security, there would be a significant body of relevant statistics available from which one could accurately assess the scale and the seriousness of the phenomenon. Yet, this is not the case. To date, there are no reliable, standardized international data available on the extent and severity of football hooliganism. A number of nationally focused datasets have been developed; however, their comparability is limited due to their diverging definitions of the crime and because the hooligan label is often unhelpfully all-inclusive and used as a blanket term to group together a broad array of acts and actors, as previously stated (Pearson, 1998; Williams, 2001). The diverse methodologies used to assess the scale and seriousness of football violence further complicate any meaningful and reliable cross-national comparison. The collated data tend to measure different things, notably arrests for football-related offenses, incidents, fatalities, injuries, or banning orders. Moreover, the relationship between recorded arrests or banning orders and actual levels of football violence is problematic. The statistics "may reflect attitudes and policies of the police as much as the behaviour of the fans" (Marsh, 1977, p. 257).

The available statistics show that football violence is culturally embedded and context specific. Football-related fatalities are considerably more common in some countries than in others. In Argentina and Brazil, for example, the number of casualties related to football violence has increased significantly since the 1970s (e.g., Alabarces, 2002; Murad, 2012), to an estimated average of 5.4 and 2.9 per year, respectively (Salvemos al Fútbol, 2016). The vast majority of these fatalities resulted from confrontations between rival fans or between fans and the police. In contrast, over the same period, the Netherlands experienced only two such fatalities in total, while countries such as England and Spain also experienced much lower casualty rates (Spaaij, 2006). The figures should, however, be interpreted with caution due to methodological differences. Frosdick and Newton (2006) found that, in England and Wales, football hooliganism is associated with approximately one match in 20 and that only 0.011% of spectators are arrested for a football-related offense. In contrast, the national football intelligence unit of the Netherlands, the Centraal Informatiepunt Voetbalvandalisme (CIV, 2015), reported an average of 1.02 incidents per match during the 2014–2015 Dutch football season, approximately 15% of which involved physical violence (other incident categories included fireworks, missile throwing, and verbal offenses). These differences can be explained in large part by the broader incident/offense definition used by the CIV.

This is an interesting comparison between academic and official accounts, serving as a useful analysis of the problem across various time periods and countries. Despite their differences, the above figures reveal some common patterns, most notably with regard to the location where football violence occurs. Over half of the reported incidents in the Frosdick

and Newton (2006) study took place away from the stadium, while in the CIV report 39% of incidents took place outside the stadium. These figures highlight the aforementioned fact that contemporary football violence is not confined to stadiums and their immediate vicinities, as confrontations have often been displaced to other locations. The introduction of countermeasures, such as increased security presence and video surveillance, has diminished the opportunities for fans to engage in acts of violence in and around football stadiums. One consequence of the imposition of controls has been the displacement of confrontations between rival fans into areas where the controls are seen as being weak or nonexistent (Dunning, 1999). In some countries, this displacement process has culminated in the emergence of prearranged encounters between opposing football fans away from the stadium or outside match days. This process has implications for the financial, personal, and societal costs of football violence.

The costs of football violence are multifaceted. The effects of football violence on government expenditure on security are well documented. In addition to longer-term investments in stadium infrastructure (e.g., video surveillance), a key area of contention is the operational costs related to the deployment of police, security, and stewards. The Association of Chief Police Officers estimated it cost up to £25 million to police football matches in 2010, only half of which could be recovered from the clubs (Bridge, 2010). The rest of the cost was being borne by the police, and ultimately taxpayers. In other countries, such as the Netherlands, where the estimated annual financial burden to police is estimated at around €30 million, the government has also been actively seeking to recover this cost from clubs.

Football violence can further impact on a club's potential for generating revenue from match attendances. A study by Jewell et al. (2014) measured this effect for two distinct periods in the history of football hooliganism in the English Football League: an early period (seasons from 1984–1985 to 1994–1995) and a more recent period (2001–2002 to 2009–2010). In the early period, they found evidence of an adverse effect of arrests for football-related offenses on football club revenues for English League clubs. This effect disappeared in the more recent period, showing that football hooliganism in England and Wales no longer has adverse effects on club revenues.

The costs of efforts to prevent football violence are significant in another sense, too: namely, in their implications for football fans' civil liberties and their match-going experience. Football has been a prominent venue for the application of public order legislation and new policing strategies. As noted, authorities at the local, national, and international levels have introduced a raft of regulations, policies, and strategies to control and prevent violence. These measures have transformed football stadiums into major sites for various forms of disciplinary action and risk management (Mastrogiannakis & Dorville, 2012). Some of these measures have been criticized for marginalizing and criminalizing significant sections of football fans (Giulianotti, 2011; Tsoukala, 2009). In the United Kingdom, for example, the 2000 Football (Disorder) Act gives police officers the power to detain and ban those seeking to travel abroad if it is suspected that they will become involved in violence. These football banning orders "on complaint" have been criticized for infringing the fundamental rights of fans who have not been convicted of any offense, and their proportionality and legitimacy have been questioned (Pearson, 2005; Williams, 2001). At the same time, the actual impacts of measures intended to reduce football violence are still insufficiently understood due to a lack of robust evidence and suitable theoretical and methodological models (an exception is Schaap, Postma, Jansen, & Tolsma, 2015). While research has investigated policing (Stott, Hoggett, & Pearson, 2012; Stott & Reicher, 1998) and the legitimacy of certain legal provisions such as football banning

orders, alcohol controls, and transport measures (Pearson, 2005; Pearson & Sale, 2011; Schaap et al., 2015), it has thus far failed to systematically assess the intended and unanticipated consequences of counterhooliganism measures.

Theories and Correlates of Football Hooliganism

The causes of football violence are complex and have been examined from a range of disciplinary and theoretical perspectives. The 1968 Harrington report, one of first serious attempts to probe football hooliganism, observed that "probably no single scientific discipline can provide the answers we are looking for" (Harrington, 1968, p. iii). We can add that, within disciplines, there are major internal differences with regard to how football violence is understood and explained. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to offer a comprehensive review of the various theories of football violence. Instead, we briefly discuss certain key issues, correlates, and theories that have dominated the academic debate on the epidemiology and causes of football hooliganism.

The emphasis in psychological studies of football violence has principally been on individual pathology and reactions to the immediate stimuli provided by the setting in which football fans are placed. For example, Kerr (1994) applies reversal theory to focus on the shifting "metamotivational states" of individual offenders. He considers football hooliganism to be part of thrill-seeking behavior, which may be initiated by a need for high levels of felt arousal that, under certain conditions, people can experience as pleasant and exciting and that, in some respects, can be addictive. Kerr's (1994) focus on the seductive thrill of violence resonates with the notion of pleasurable excitement that some sociologists believe is key to the emotional experience of football hooliganism (Spaaij, 2008).

A considerable number of studies have sought to identify the immediate stimuli and person–environment interactions that affect football violence. The role of alcohol consumption is a case in point. Alcohol has long been thought to be an aggravating factor in the eruption or escalation of football hooliganism. Yet, scientific research debunks the popular belief that alcohol is implicated in many instances of football violence. Dunning (1999) argues that alcohol consumption is not a root cause of football violence for the simple reason that not every fan who drinks in a football context acts aggressively or violently, not even those who drink heavily. Some football crowds with a historical reputation for heavy drinking, such as fans of the Scottish national football team, are not known for their violent conduct (Giulianotti, 1995). These fans, although often associated with excessive alcohol consumption, are typically identified with a nonviolent carnival atmosphere where drunkenness is accompanied by good-natured sociality. Conversely, not all of those who do get involved in violence drink. In some situations, violent fans deliberately seek to keep a clear head in order to maintain their ability to fight and to avoid being arrested. Instead, Dunning (1999) argues, the relationship between football violence and alcohol consumption is mediated by the masculinity norms within fan groups, which typically encourage the ability to drink large volumes of alcohol as a form of social status and masculinity identity. In a similar vein, Pearson (2012) shows how English fans' social experience of football is based upon congregating in groups, alcohol consumption, humor, and expressions of identity. The fan groups Pearson studied were frequently brought into conflict with the football authorities and police, and alcohol was often a key object of contention. Several alcohol restrictions have been imposed on football fans, such as bans on drinking on transport to matches, prohibitions on the sale of alcohol in stadiums, and

the closing of bars around the stadium on match days. Alcohol restrictions appear to have little or no impact on levels of alcohol consumption, or on the level of violence; rather, they can create situations where conflict between fans and agents of social control becomes more likely (Pearson, 2012), or where there is an increased likelihood of incidents outside the stadium (Schaap et al., 2015).

Situational and match-related factors can influence the prevalence and severity of football violence. First, the meaning and significance of the match and the relationship between the contestants are important factors (Lewis, 2007; Spaaij, 2014). Football violence is more likely to occur as the importance in the status of the match or competition increases, as well as at matches where there is a history of intense competition and rivalry both on and off the playing field. Second, the perceived performance of match officials can act as a trigger event during or after a match, especially when a decision is seen to impact negatively on the match result. Mark, Bryant, and Lehman (1983) have termed this "justice-based sports violence," where a sense of injustice leads or contributes to fan violence. Third, the time at which a football match is played has been shown to have some effect on the prevalence of football hooliganism. Football matches played early in the day and in daylight are less likely to witness incidents of hooliganism than matches played at a later time and in darkness (Schaap et al., 2015).

Sociologists argue that football violence does not result simply from individual or situational factors but is embedded in wider social contexts. This wider context is crucial for probing the structural conditions that shape football violence. One of the most influential, yet contested, programs of sociological research into football hooliganism has been the Leicester School's figurational approach, which found that football hooliganism and its associated aggressive masculinity are shaped by conditions and values inherent in the socioeconomic background of football hooligans (Dunning et al., 1988). The hooligan's relatively deprived social conditions, they argue, are instrumental in the (re)production of social norms that are conducive to and tolerant of relatively high levels of aggression and territoriality, especially on the part of young males. Although young men with low socioeconomic status are not the only offenders, they are believed to be the most central and persistent offenders in the more serious forms of football hooliganism (Dunning et al., 1988). Subsequent research in Britain and beyond has challenged the analytical primacy of social class in explaining football hooliganism but also highlights how hooliganism is associated with the production and performance of particular forms of masculinity (Pearson, 2012; Spaaij, 2008).

Conclusion

Throughout the development of the sport, football has often been connected both to violence and to the plethora of attempts to eradicate associated violent behavior. Although transnational dissimilarities complicate the process of formulating a global conceptualization of football hooliganism, this chapter has examined the nature and development of football violence in modern professional football across various countries, exploring multiple definitional and theoretical positions and the significance and impact of football hooliganism. Fan violence in football-related contexts is multifaceted with respect to cause, involvement, locality, severity, impact, and response. The phenomenon has been overstated and overresearched in some contexts, although gaps in the knowledge base remain, particularly relating to the publication of reliable (inter)national statistical evidence. Legal and police responses to football violence have been necessary, although draconian legislation and disproportionate policing responses are

considered to have unnecessarily restricted the civil liberties of many football supporters, who have often been criminalized as a collective. Popularized views of football fans have often been shaped accordingly, informed by various media representations. However, violence in football remains ingrained in many sporting cultures and its prevalence in some contexts continues to pose a threat to civil societies.

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