Chapter 8

The New Media and Hooliganism
Constructing Media Identities

Aage Radmann

The increasingly blurred line between the creators and consumers of media content has been recognised and examined by media researchers. The term "Web 2.0" implies a growing number of people becoming "prod-users", producing media as well as consuming it, and acting and interacting in new ways. Furthermore, the development in new media techniques means that a growing number of agents are involved in producing and creating media messages.

Media power is becoming diversified, and the right of interpretation, which has previously belonged to owners and reporters who used to control the media, is now scattered. It can belong to anyone with access to digital resources, at least in theory. Nations that attempt to censor social network communities such as Facebook face great difficulties, and global information projects like Wikileaks are part of formulating the arena of world politics. At the time this chapter was written, in January 2011, many eyes were on the "Facebook revolution" in Tunisia, a revolution that forced the president, Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, to flee. The social networking website Facebook is a growing force owing to its accessibility and online location. The Internet seems to be gaining power as a catalyst for processes leading to democracy, and as a tool for cultural reflexivity on an individual as well as a societal level.

The new media landscape affects sport. A multitude of media agents and an increasing number of other people produce and consume information about sport via the media. Football is one of the most mediatised sports – not only when it comes to the actual sports events, but also when it comes to supporter activities. The increasing media attention on football has also raised interest in the media climate around hooligans. Internet sites produced by supporters are growing in numbers and the interactivity on these sites make them an interesting source of material for academic studies as they portray the emic picture of the hooligan and of hooliganism. In order to understand and explain hooliganism – which has been, and is, seen as a great problem by authorities in society – it is necessary to explore and map out the core values within this group. In

addition, it is likely that the picture given by the hooligans themselves differs from the picture given in "old" media. The purpose of this article is, therefore, to map out and analyse the social constructions of football hooligans and hooliganism in "new" media and to compare it with the narrative pictures in "old" media and I will discuss the complexity of these pictures and identities. The main focus is Internet-based production and consumption of the image of hooligans and hooliganism on the Swedish website www.sverigescenen. com. The analysis will be carried out as a comparison, using three themes: the theatrical performance; the meaningful violence; and the "real man" – the social construction of masculinity.

Important concepts

Before turning to an analysis of the social construction of hooligans and hooliganism in old and new media some clarifying definitions of the concepts used are necessary. First it is important to consider the definition of hooligans. There is no general agreement on this, as previous researchers have used various ways of pinpointing the group and phenomenon – and distinguishing regular supporters from hooligans is no easy task. A common categorisation employed by the judicial system, by football clubs, by the media and by the hooligans themselves is to divide the supporter groups into categories from A to C supporters (BRÅ 2008). The A supporter is a fan who behaves and who will never fight or get into trouble. He or she is the ordinary supporter. The B supporter is also a fan who normally behaves and who does not seek confrontation; yet these supporters can be a part of football-related violence in certain circumstances – for example, if they are provoked in certain ways. In this article, however, the focus is on the C supporter. Characteristic of a C supporter is that he (almost 100 per cent are male) is willing to fight for his team and his group. In the context analysed in this article it is important to emphasise that this group, C supporters or hooligans, are highly active prod-users in the contemporary media landscape.

Second, it is also important to explain the concepts "old" and "new" media. Here printed tabloid press will be used as an example of old media. In the past, the right of interpretation of hooliganism belonged to the old media while the medial hooligan scene now encompasses a diversity of national and international actors (Johansson 1986; Dunning 2002). Taking the tabloid press in general as an example of old media is, however, an over-simplification. Most contemporary newspapers are multi-media enterprises that mix old and new technology and are constantly adapting to changes in the media landscape. Papers publish continually updated material online, and several newspapers now offer their material in Ipad format. When it comes to sport, it is necessary

to recognise that new technology enables users to subscribe to sports results that are sent directly to their mobile phones. Therefore, classifying the tabloid press as old media is only partly correct. Contemporary tabloid papers are also integrated into the Internet culture. Several papers have created social media groups on Facebook.

New media is, in this article, seen as characterised by new digital technology and the overall term cyber culture, defined by Nayar as the "… electronic environment where various technologies and media forms converge: video games, the Internet and email, personal homepages, online chats personal communications technologies … mobile entertainment and information technologies, bioinformatics and biomedical technologies" (Nayar 2010: 2).

Nayar's definition of cyber culture will be used in this article in order to point to the clear difference between new and old media. In new media most people with access to digital technology such as computers or mobile phones can participate actively. This is apparent in football and hooligan culture and the past few years have seen the rise of a completely new media scene around football and other sports. Supporters themselves now interpret and describe happenings on their own websites, blogs and sites like Twitter and Youtube. The new technology widens the media landscape and enables medial hypertexts within football culture. Sverigescenen.com is as a good example of how new media is created.

Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework used in this chapter will be based on works by the sociologist Erving Goffman and the network sociologist Manuel Castell, as well as theories connected to the social construction of masculinity. The dramaturgic metaphor introduced by Goffman (1959) is helpful to understand hooligans' presentation of self (Spaaij 2008). Goffman argued that all social interaction is like a theatrical performance in which actors perform one of the many roles available to them, depending on the situation in which they find themselves. Important concepts in Goffman's analysis are "onstage" and "backstage". In order to explain these concepts one can use them to describe the roles of a football-player who is "onstage" when he or she is on the field, trains, plays a game, gives press-conferences and deals with issues related to his or her profession as a football-player. The same logic applies to the referees, trainers and other professions related to the football landscape. The new media landscape, however, has blurred the differences between "onstage" and "backstage" so that there are hardly any differences between them; this blurring is explained by the risk of being watched through new media channels such as mobile cameras. The possibility of being constantly watched, commented on, taken pictures of, and

written about in a numerous websites all over the world situates the professional sportsmen and sportswomen onstage twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. In this chapter, Goffman's metaphor of social interaction as a theatrical performance will be used in the analysis of the narrative picture of hooligans in old and new media and it will be argued that the narrative of hooliganism in new media is shaped by the fact that the hooligans are "onstage".

As the interaction on an Internet site constitutes the main source material for this article a theoretical inspiration has been Castell's discussions of "symbolic communication", a term that signifies that identities are constructed according to organisational principles in the interplay between the Internet and the self, rather than through local social belonging (Castell 1996, 1998; Nayar 2010; Sveningsson 2003). Castell claims that these virtual communities are centred on the identity to which an individual aspires, the contexts to which the individual feels he or she belongs, and the social actions he or she desires to perform. The quest for identity and meaning is the main driving force behind individual interaction on the Internet, but is also a consequence of it. I don't agree with this analysis when it comes to football websites as these websites distinguish themselves among Internet communities by often having clear ties to a physical and geographical location determined by the favourite team's home arena and city. In addition, I dispute the idea that identities based on race, gender, sexuality and age can be chosen on the Internet and that they have no relation to essential bodies as the actual male body seems to play an important role for the hooligan websites (Nayar 2010).

Many researchers conclude their studies about hooliganism with the statement that hooliganism is connected to a certain form of masculinity, a masculine identity based on physical power, heterosexism and a hard body. According to R.W. Connell these are important characteristics of a hegemonic masculinity (Connell 1996). In addition, the hooligan masculinity is socially constructed as in opposition to something which is not masculine (Armstrong 1998). However, the social construction of the hooligan masculinity is likely to be more complex and just as Connell has concluded for the social construction of masculinity in general, there is no singular pattern of masculinity to be found everywhere (Connell 1996). In line with Connell, Ramòn Spaaij, a football researcher who has followed different supporters and hooligans and conducted over 400 interviews with hooligans from different countries, concludes that masculinities are not homogenous, simple states of being – they are continually produced and reproduced. Football cultures exist, not on their own as locations for the construction and contestation of hooligans' aggressive masculinity, but, rather, in complex interrelationships with other cultural sites, including the family, schools, labour market, media representations and the legal system (Spaaij 2006, 2008; Mac an Ghaill 1996). Nor do hooligans develop a single form of masculinity. Outside football, they adopt other masculine roles as partners,

parents, children, workmates and friends (Giulianotti 1999). The analysis in this chapter is, however, restricted to the media narrative, and hooligan masculinity in relation to family and friends will not be studied here. Instead, questions on whether the social constructions of hooligans' masculinities differ in old and new media will be posed.

Previous research

International research on hooligans and hooliganism has focused on explanations of these phenomena Dunning (2002). The focus has been on football hooliganism in Britain. The researchers have come from several mother disciplines and have used various theoretical frameworks for their research, such as anthropology (Harris 1991; Armstrong 1998), postmodernism (Giulianotti 1999), Marxism (Taylor 1971; Clarke 1978; Hargreaves 1986), cultural sociology (Marsh 1978), psychological theory (Kerr 1994) and history (King 1997; Robson 2000). The discipline with the widest spread, inside and outside Britain is "figuration sociology" or "process sociology". This discipline is a synthesis of psychology, history and sociology, based on the civilisation theory founded by Norbert Elias. Eric Dunning, a follower of Elias, has integrated the latter's civilisation ideas into the context of football and hooliganism. Empirically, these ideas are based in three perspectives on hooliganism: explaining the "meaning" of hooliganism by analysis of empiric material from or by the hooligans themselves, localising hooliganism in the social structure with emphasis on questions of social class and gender, and examining the dynamics at work in interactions between hooligans and other groups in society (Dunning 2002). Despite being the most widespread theory, the figuration sociologists' model of explanation has been heavily criticised for lacking in critical reflexivity, being overly descriptive and not being grounded in sufficient empirical evidence (see for example Giulianotti 2004).

Despite the tough and often harsh debate of the past twenty years among English football researchers, most agree that hooliganism is a highly complex issue that is difficult to demarcate in theory and practice. In addition, and as I have already mentioned above, it is also problematic to define what constitutes hooliganism since the definitions that have had the most impact are those created in the worlds of media and politics, and include almost any disturbance motivated by sports. In practice, this means that the violence of individual thugs on or off the field, verbal assaults, physical violence, threats of violence, and vandalisation of public or private property are all included in the term hooliganism. In the words of Dunning (2001: 1): "Probably the most important thing to stress is that the label 'football hooliganism' is not so much a scientific sociological or social psychological concept as a construct of politicians and the media".

It is clear from this quote that Dunning sees the media as having a crucial role in constructing the image of hooliganism. Dunning emphasises the importance of what he labels the tabloidization of the popular press and claims that the media's treatment of these issues strongly contributes to the spreading and development of hooliganism. He points to two tendencies in media reporting that illustrate this well. First, the media has been giving the impression that the problems are more major and serious than what is actually and objectively the case. Second, the large amount of media attention on hooliganism has fortified their collective identity and increased the number of hooligan clashes (Dunning 2002: 4). It is important for this chapter to stress that Dunning's conclusions are connected to old media, but even so, it will be claimed here that new media has a crucial role as well. The actual reporting, and what I have chosen to call the narrative picture may, however, differ between old and new media.

The role of media in connection to hooliganism has also been emphasised by researchers other than Dunning. The first Swedish report on hooliganism was published in 1986 by the educationist Martin Johansson, in which he provides an overview of psychological, socio-psychological and sociological explanations of hooliganism. Worth noting is how he points to the difficulties in measuring the frequency of violence that pertains to sports, since much of this violence can only be triggered by its being noticed in the media (Johansson 1986). Just like Dunning and other researchers, Johansson's analysis stresses medial influence on the hooligan discourse.

Other Scandinavian criminologists have emphasised the power and influence of the media (BRÅ 2008). The criminologists have – in almost a moral panic – upheld various social evils that have normally and frequently been related to the power of media in general. A conclusion has been that this power can be wielded to induce fear of crime and disorder in ordinary people as well as to reproduce a fear that is disproportionate to the actual risks. That this conclusion is valid for the Swedish case as well is demonstrated in a previous study in which I analysed articles in newspapers reporting from the time around the 1992 European football championship for men. I also conducted interviews with visiting supporters, and an analysis of articles in tabloid papers before, during and after the championships (Radmann 1994). The findings, which are in accordance with similar English football research, show that tabloid coverage of hooliganism was centred around stigmatisation of those involved, creation of a climate of panic, over-simplification of the underlying causes, and attempts to solve the problem by means of stricter control from above (such as classification systems, riot police, closed circuit cameras, and all-seater arenas) (Dunning 2002).

Research on sport, the Internet and fandom is scarce, especially in a Scandinavian context. There are, however, two good and interesting studies by Anders Svensson and Arve Hjelseth. Svensson has analysed a website for ice hockey supporters and his main idea is to consider whether the discussion

on the Internet site could be considered public, communicative, democratic and deliberative. He compares it to the political discussion on two websites, Usenet and America Online, and according to Svensson, "The hockey discussion shows a higher degree of deliberation than the political discussions" (Svensson 2007: 255). Hjelseth analyses the discussion on different websites for Norwegian football supporters and how the different supporters react to the commercialization and commodification of Norwegian football culture (Hjelseth 2006). Another Scandinavian researcher who has been interested in the links between sport and new media is Peter Dahlén, and he has also written about sport and masculinity (Dahlén 2008).

To summarise, previous research on hooliganism is focused on England, on explaining the hooliganism phenomenon and has given media an important role when it comes to the construction of hooliganism. This chapter will present a new perspective on hooliganism, as it focuses on a mapping out and analysis of the social construction of football hooligans and hooliganism in Swedish new media in order to ascertain whether this picture differs from the one given in old media (and in previous research).

Source material and methods

Sverigescenen.com was started in 2002 and is one of the largest and most popular websites for hooligans and others in Sweden (www.svenskafans. com). By March 2011 there had been 46 583 contributions to the site. The site includes texts, pictures and links to other media. Sverigescenen.com is divided into thirteen categories: "Columns", "Guest Columns", "Rumour has it…", "The Scene Year by Year", "Casuals, "On the Pitch", "AIK Hall of Fame", "We Hate", "Match schedules", "Legal Aid/Police/Media", "Boss & Josh of the Week", "R.I.P." and "Forum". The producers of the site aim to compile a historic hooligan bank (link The Scene – year by year), describing hooligan fights in Sweden in detail. Furthermore, the site gives its users the opportunity to debate the approach to football in general, and hooliganism in particular, that is held by other stakeholders such as police, media, the Swedish Football Federation and football clubs.

The website contains an enormous amount of material, and is a medial hybrid in its inclusion of links to other sites and newspapers. A random selection has been made for the purpose of this study and the material has been approached heuristically. The narrative picture of the hooligan and hooliganism is mainly analysed in texts extracted from the "Column" section of the website since it is produced by some of those behind the website. The interaction by producers and consumers is, in this context, understood as hooligans sending their reports to the site.

On Sverigescenen.com, the hooligans themselves report what could be referred to as primary empirics, such as first-hand accounts from people involved in hooligan fights. In great detail they describe the chain of events, which is then discussed and graded. The reports may only be sent in by people who are acknowledged by the site producers as "real" hooligans (members of acknowledged hooligan organisations, or recommended by members). This group is called "users" in this text. The source material is different from that used by previous research in two ways. First, the site gives researchers an opportunity to gain access to first-hand stories from hooligans. This was possible for previous researchers, but in using new media the emic narratives can be easily controlled by others, among them other researchers. Second, the emic narratives are new from a media perspective.

The site's target audience is "football lads from different clubs as well as other initiated people." It is run by supporters of AIK, a club based in Stockholm, and focuses explicitly on hooliganism. One of the main ideas is to present, discuss and grade hooligan fights. According to its creators it has approximately 200,000 visitors a month and more than 1,235 forum users (Sverigescenen.com 26 March 2011). That there are 1,235 users means that the website attracts 1,235 prod-users categorised as C supporters. In its 2010 annual report, the producers of the site describe their ambitions for their website:

> During the last year, *Sverigescenen.com* established its position as the most influential website for AIK supporters. After *Svenska Fans* it is also the most popular. Our credibility is strong, and this entails a need to maintain a high standard when it comes to textual content as well as responsibility for what is distributed, not least when it comes to things printed in FB's (Firman Boys) name. This is why updates can be infrequent. We have made this decision, to put quality before quantity in what is written on the website. (Translation by author)

According to the producers of the site it is the most influential website for supporters of this team and the most popular site after www.svenskafans.com. Moreover, they emphasise that the site maintains high standards. By claiming this they underline its credibility and correctness in reproducing what is happening in connection with hooligan activities. They use the name Firman Boys, which is actually a well-known hooligan group supporting AIK, to certify the contents of the site and its reliability. It is not only the creators of the site that claims that the information is correct. Sverigescenen.com's credibility and legitimacy also seems strong elsewhere. In an interview I conducted with a member of the supporter police, the interviewee stated: "The site is eerily correct; in many cases one might suspect them of having direct information from the police." In the analysis of the narrative picture of hooliganism I will return to this stressing of the reliability.

Apart from for reports on the fights in texts, pictures and film clips, there are several references to violence in a popular cultural context. Motifs from Stanley Kubrick's movie *A Clockwork Orange* is of special importance. In the heading of the site, a silhouette of the four main characters from the movie is set in between the words "Sverige" and "scenen". The reference to *A Clockwork Orange* is not new. The hooligans connected to AIK have used it for a long time on jackets and even as tattoos to express their view on violent behaviour.

Naturally there are problems related to source material with a website like this. One of them is that the website is produced by members of Firman Boys and that they can, of course, exaggerate their own importance, power and strength. However, in this chapter the stress is not on whether the actual number of fights is correct, or even whether they are described correctly. Instead the focus will be a mapping out and an analysis of how hooliganism is socially constructed. Used in this way, the site is very interesting source material as it is acknowledged by hooligans themselves. Another problem is that research based on Internet culture inevitably faces the difficult issues of demarcation in time and space, how to select objects of study and how to determine which information is relevant (Sveningsson 2003). The Internet is a complex and multidimensional social arena for activity and interaction. However, the most important thing for this study is to know that this is a very popular site for the hooligans themselves, and as it is popular it is likely that the social constructions of hooligans and hooliganism on this site are in accordance with the group's own voice on their ideas about their world.

The construction of the hooligan and of hooliganism

The theatrical performance

This section will start with a comparison between the "narrative picture" of hooliganism constructed in traditional media and new media. As I have already pointed out, the reports on hooligan fights are the main focus of the site Sverigescenen.com. This is a typical example from this site:

IFK Gothenburg-Helsingborg, Football, Allsvenskan

16 May, 2005:

The sixth round of Allsvenskan (Swedish Premier League), and a so-called high-risk game at Gamla Ullevi in Gothenburg between the home team and the guests from Skåne. In Askim, on the outskirts of the 031 area (031 is the area-code for Gothenburg), Category C supporters from both teams clashed in a planned battle. 40 Wisemen [supporters of IFK Gothenburg] against approximately 25 Helsingborgians [supporters of Helsingborg IF]in a 30-second fight interrupted by HIF's back lines turning and fleeing, resulting in the rest of the Scanians scattering from the site with Wisemen as the indisputable winners.

The very typical report starts by informing the reader about which supporter groups are involved, when and where the fight was situated, and the outcome of the fight. The number of supporters is presented as well as the exact time for the fight (here 30 seconds). The outcome of the fight, or "the box" as it is called on the site, is often discussed by the website's own columnists under the headline "Sverigescenen's thoughts". In this column the fighting groups are awarded points and it is decided who has won. The report is often presented as a narrative. This is clearly seen in the next quotation, which describes one of the largest hooligan fights in Sweden. It took place on 12 June 2010, and was a typical "box", far away from football arenas and match days.

> KGB (Hammarby IF) – Firman Boys (AIK) – fight, 12th of June 2010
>
> For some time, relations had been frosty between Hammarby and AIK, approaching freezing point during the winter after several, in AIK's opinion, unacceptable actions by Kompisgänget Bajen (KGB).
>
> Everything culminated Saturday the 12th of June in an encounter in Gnesta outside Stockholm. Amazingly, 440 boys from both groups were on the prowl that day, and the fight has been classified as the biggest organised football fight in Scandinavian history!
>
> KGB were completely flattened by the raging and violently punching AIK lads in front of 8 policemen, some of them from the supporter police in Stockholm, who wisely decided to stay on the sidelines and record the events on video. It took exactly 43 seconds before Kompisgänget Bajen, in AIK-circles nicknamed Kickersgänget Bajen, fled the battlefield.
>
> The AIK mob roared in triumphant joy while the Hammarby supporters gathered their wounded warriors (broken arms and legs, broken noses and other lesser injuries) and hurried to their cars …

As in the previous example, the report starts with a short heading introducing the "teams" or, rather, supporter groups. After that a moment of tension is introduced as the writers say that the relations between the supporter groups had long been tense. In this report the place and date of the fight is presented too, and how many took part (440). Again, the dutation of the fight is very precisely given: forty-three seconds.

The tension described and the setting of the fight, as well as the outcome and how it is presented, can be explained using Goffman's interpretation of social interaction as a theatrical performance (Goffman 1959). The stage and the dramaturgical effects are clear in the hooligan narrative on the site. The actors are the different hooligan groups. These groups are onstage, performing in relation to other actors and an audience. The audience is the media consumers and there are reviews, just like there would be with a theatrical performance. It is important to stress that without these consumers the the-

atrical performance would lack meaning. In new media, Sverigescenen.com, the fights are depicted as well-directed acts. An interesting point that can be made is that this theatrical performance (the hooligan fight) is presented in the same way as a sports game would be presented in old media. The participants (the hooligans), the game (the fight) and the outcome are presented. Furthermore the game (the fight) is reviewed and different players (hooligans) are marked.

This way of presenting the hooligan fight stands in contrast to how the fights are described in old media – as being chaotic (for an analysis of old media, see Radmann 1994; Andersson & Radmann 1998). That the new media offers the possibility of watching the same fight over and over again also gives room for discussions and common reflections.

The presentation of hooligans and hooliganism in new media differs from that in old media in another way as well. On the website Sverigescenen.com the hooligans are described as very credible persons when it comes to supporting their own group: "… by showing loyalty to our friends, always supporting and never backing down for anyone. We are well-organised, disciplined; everyone knows who we are and what we represent. We are the tough guys, feared and respected. We dominate the crowd, and we fully believe that football and violence belong together. We have a reputation to uphold and care for." (http://www.sverigescenen.com/sverige.htlm/FB-thehistory)

In this quotation, loyalty and discipline are emphasised. Hooligans are presented as people who will not "back down". They are tough, feared and respected. There is also an emphasis on the fact that this group dominates others and that football and violence belong together. There are also several examples on the website of instances where fans have been "unjustly and illegally" treated by the justice system. In old media the narrative of the hooligan is very different. They are not seen as loyal supporters but, rather, depicted as violent and lacking normal human capacities. They are even presented as "animals", and not seen as supporters or fans of football because they destroy the football event and the experience for themselves and for everyone else including the football club (Radmann 1994). This is clearly seen in this quotation:

Shame on all the idiots who don't know how to behave when watching football. A year ago, the football season concluded with Djurgårdens' so-called tail, Blue Saints, kicking the referee to the ground in the middle of a game. This year, Allsvenskan started in exactly the same fashion. The 08-scum came to Halmstad and cut an ear off an eighteen-year-old. Instead of celebrating getting the ball rolling we received reports about riots and riot police. The devilry culminated this summer when Djurgården's inner circle of supporters tore up asphalt and attacked the audience in Gothenburg … it is impossible to be completely safe from lunatics, but spectator violence must be culled,

whatever it takes. We have to be able to go to a game without risking our lives. (*Kvällsposten*, 31 December 1996)

Another example, ten years later, from old media is this quotation:

These pigs … They're weak, scared, unmanly little boys who really shouldn't be allowed to come to games without a parent or guardian. Stop coddling the mob. Banish them from the arenas. They don't care if matches are interrupted or clubs punished. That only satisfies their power-hunger. They want to show they exist, that they can mean something. Primitive and tragic. This mob doesn't care about Allsvenskan results – to the extent that they can even read them – they just want to fight their way out of their anguish, their aggressions, and their misdirected hatred. The symptom of their disease is that they enjoy destruction, the fear they instil, the chaos. (Åke Stolt, *Sydsvenska Dagbladet*, 29 August 2006)

The meaningful violence

Violence is an important characteristic of the hooligan world, when it is described in both old and new media. It is, however, important to see that the violence is presented in different ways in the two media forms: when described in old media, violence is seen as chaotic, without meaning, and totally in opposition to what society "is about", whereas, as previous research has pointed out, in the narratives of the hooligans violence is given meaning (Armstrong 1998). This is also seen on Sverigescenen.com. The producers of the site even comment on the old media narrative:

When it comes to approaching a solution to the constantly debated problem of "sports-related violence", the authorities have failed miserably. Could it perhaps be time to change tactics? Perhaps it is time to leave behind Mats Olsson, Lasse Anrell [two well- known, middle-aged, sport journalists] and their generation, as well as its constant cries of "England" and demand legislation suited to terrorism instead, to see the issue in its full complexity. That means acknowledging that there is an unspecified number of men of our generation who identify themselves and live with their club. They do this at a level fanatical enough for them to be prepared to practise violence against like-minded men who belong to a different club. This is not about race, religion or politics. This is about lads and alpha males who will always see themselves as the chief protectors of their club, and who are prepared to go further than anybody else for the sake of their conviction." (http://www. sverigescenen.com/sverige.htlm/FB-thehistory)

In this quotation it is stated that the authorities have failed to handle sports related violence, and that another solution has to be chosen; contemporary supporters belong to a different generation from the reporters writing in old media. The website provides no example of a solution, but explains why some men choose to live as supporters of a team and why some of them choose violence. The explanation is based on a social construction of masculinity (I shall soon turn to a discussion of masculinity, but must first emphasise that it seems like the hooligans themselves – or at least those writing on the website – are self-conscious and analytical in a way that is sometimes radically different from how they are portrayed in the old media). In addition, I claim that this way of presenting the violence as something inherent in the culture can be connected to the way the fights are presented. As I have already pointed out, the fights are described in the same way as sports games. There are even rules for these fights, as there are rules for sports games. The rules of this game, the "box", include violence and it is in this context the violence has to be interpreted. It seems that many people actually accept quite a lot of violence in sport when it is regulated; in ice hockey, in rugby or American or Australian football or in boxing, for example, violence within certain limits is regarded as a part of the game. That violence is accepted in sport when it is regulated is held by the sociologist Messner (1992: 69), and it can explain the acceptance of violence among the hooligans. In addition, if Goffman's framework of interpreting social interaction as theatrical performances is used (Goffman 1959), violence can be seen as the most essential part of the hooligan performance.

This chapter will now turn to a comparison between how the narrative hooligan in old and new media is constructed in relation to others in the football landscape (other supporters, journalists, the police). The manner in which the various hooligan fights are reported follows the same general pattern when it comes to relations between the fighting groups and the police. The quotation about the fight between supporters of the teams Hammarby and AIK presented above is completed by a reference to the other "actors" – the police. When the Hammarby supporters left the battleground they opened the stage to: "… a helicopter and some fifty policemen from Stockholm and Västerås … Both groups leave the scene of the crime in their vehicles; some are stopped by the police while others drive in a zig-zag to avoid the long arm of the law. No arrests."

The number of policemen is presented, yet there is no further comment about the police. Descriptions of police action are, however, often included although here it is only stated that no one was caught. The "grand finale" of the fight is the account of the "losing" supporter group in this fight:

The truth eventually caught up with Hammarby and its organisation. Hammarby have dressed up in a far too big and poorly cut Dressman suit and its supporters have acted like first class gypsies all winter, proving beyond

all doubt their determination to behave disgracefully until the very end. Despite their lies they were crushed by what is currently Sweden's indisputably toughest football firm. This, if anything, is justice.

The losers – the Hammarby supporters – are described as incapable and inferior to the supporter group they met in the fight. They are derided, depicted as wearing clothes that are not suitable for real hooligans, and labelled "gypsies" – a description used to humiliate them. Finally it is stated that their opponents are the real hooligans – the toughest football firm. The theatrical performance is concluded and the curtain can go down. The actors are no longer on stage.

The "real man" – the social construction of masculinity

The real hooligan is a "real man" according to the hooligans themselves, and when the users of the site Sverigescenen.com describe what characterises the firm's (that is, the hooligans') community they use words like respect, belonging and deep comradeship – characteristics connected to a socially constructed masculinity. The traditional male gender role, characterised by resilience; loyalty towards the group; sacrifice for a greater cause; an internal, almost invisible hierarchy; strict boundaries between the public and the private; and a despising of weakness, is clearly in accordance with the hooligans' description of their own masculinity (for a discussion of hegemonic masculinity, see Connell 1996; Mendel-Enk 2004). In addition, the masculinity on the website is not just *any* masculinity; it is clearly connected to a masculinity formed by toughness and a certain style. From the depiction of the losing "team" in the quotation above it is obvious that a real man dresses in a certain way. That a hegemonic masculinity is formed in relation to other masculinities is discussed by Connell (1996) and obviously the masculinity of the winning group is related to an inferior masculinity of the losing group.

Surprisingly enough, there are significant overlaps in how masculinity is constructed among sport journalists in old media and on Sverigescenen's website (according to the Swedish philosopher Kutte Jönson (2010: 68), the journalists in old media actually help to build the image of the "alpha male"). Even though an old media journalist depicts hooligans as being "weak, scared, unmanly, little boys", it is simultaneously obvious that "real men" are supposed to be "strong, manly, big boys". This description of masculinity is a narrative with which hooligans on the site Sverigescenen.com would concur. Another example is the reportage about ice hockey from Niclas Wikegård who, when given two minutes on air during the television broadcast sports gala of 2011, chose to make a joke about how "... floor ball isn't a sport, it's an activity for left-handers and bed-wetters."

On national television Wikegård mocks the ice hockey players for not partying enough, and concludes by kicking over a table and saying, "Get up on the tables, come on … stare at the biggest guy at the next table and ask him, 'What are you looking at, you fucking bowler'… bowler is the worst insult there is. I want some action, where the hell is all the action?" Wikegård is known as a dedicated and harsh ice hockey commentator who likes "rough stuff". His words (whether ironic or serious) during the sports gala, reproduce and establish a masculinity that entails having a drink, practising the "right" sport and defending one's masculinity with physical violence. This is a notion of masculinity in complete accordance with the ideology of masculinity permeating the texts published on Sverigescenen. The men who belong to the various firms like to think of themselves as the "last fortress of masculinity", "alpha males" defending their territory or club, and doing this in protest against a culture of over-protection:

> Being a dedicated supporter today means going against everything that the rest of society is working so hard to achieve: generations of men following the norm by picking up children at kindergarten, doing laundry, paying taxes, driving eco-friendly, not swearing, drinking in moderation, trying to quit taking snuff or smoking, thinking about nothing when masturbating and, above all, never succumbing to low, primitive, Neanderthal urges such as threatening, swearing, mocking and boxing. These customs are not even accepted when one's opponent welcomes them. (http://www.sverigescenen.com/sverige.htlm/Gästkrönikan)

Conclusion

To summarise, old and new media present *different* narratives about the hooligan and hooliganism. Whereas the former emphasise that hooligans and their fights are chaotic, disturbing the societal order, the latter can be interpreted as demonstrating that the hooligan fights are, in accordance with what Goffman says about social interaction (Goffman 1959) theatrical performances. On the website Sverigescenen.com the hooligan fights are described as theatrical acts with exciting beginnings, a climax, and even "grand finales". Actors and counter actors are portrayed, and the stage is well set in space, place and time. All of these seem to fit well with a description of a sports game.

New media views the fights as full of meaning, and rational – not irrational as is assumed by old media. That violence is seen as meaningful by the hooligans has also been pointed out by previous research. This chapter, however, stresses that the hooligan violence in new media can be interpreted within the sports context where regulated violence is accepted. In the performance on stage, violence is expected and performed – and even reviewed as part of the action.

A third conclusion is that the two media forms strongly resemble each other's social construction of what a "real man" is supposed to be: strong and loyal to the group; never "backing down"; prepared to use his body – possibly, or even preferably, in a violent way to prove his cause.

A fourth conclusion to be drawn in this chapter is that Castell's term "symbolic communication" which signifies that identities are constructed according to organisational principles in the interplay between the Internet and the self, rather than through local social belonging, has to be disputed (for this definition, see Castell 1996). Castell's claim that virtual communities are centred on aspired identities has to be problematised – at least in the context of new media as represented by Sverigescenen.com. To become a user of the site, and in that way to become somebody who can publish reports and comment on others, one has to have proved, through using his body (it is primarily a masculine body), that he is a "real hooligan". A "real hooligan" is prepared to use violence – is prepared to fight. In that way, identity is not negotiable and cannot be constructed only on the Internet.

Despite the seemingly contrasting descriptions of hooliganism and masculinity depicted in new and old media, but very much overlapping in their representations of the real masculinity, new media prod-users on the hooligan scene seem to use old media narratives when constructing their image. Old and new media are, obviously, difficult to separate. Old media and its view of hooliganism actually seem to be seen by many hooligans as a positive force that helps them build their identity.

> Every time the papers printed a small press item it felt like a victory. Five seconds on the evening news was enough to merit a party. One could experience it all again, record it and watch it over and over, it was a kind of validation. I would say that it is a way of finding an identity, one seeks a sense of belonging among the supporters and that new image is confirmed in the media. (Twenty-four-year-old member of Black Army, quoted in Andersson & Radmann 1998: 117)

Johan Höglund (the pseudonym behind a Swedish hooligan novel *One of the Lads*) also shows how old media has had a massive influence on the firm's identity, choice of name and expansion. At first, the hooligans named themselves "Rötäggers" ("bad eggs"), taking their name directly from what the press called them. They were pleased with this name and said that, "We liked the headlines and appreciated how the media portrayed us as deadly threats to the public. People respected and feared us, especially outside of Stockholm. They barricaded themselves in their houses when the Stockholm teams came to visit" (Höglund 2005: 104).

It is interesting to note how Höglund confirms that old media has been an important factor of validation in his long life as a hooligan, and that the aura

of violence that emanates from the news has accompanied him since he was thirteen and took part in his very first hooligan fight. He writes:

> The day after the riots, the papers delivered a juicy article with big, bold headlines about how Black Army caused a massive car accident on Nynäsvägen. It felt weird, seeing those words shining from the news bill. At the same time it gave me a nice shiver of pride, because I'd been there in the thick of it only twelve hours previously. That day at school people who knew I went to the games were asking me about what really happened and if I had seen or done anything. (Höglund 2005)

And the beginning of this chapter, the increasingly blurred line between the creators and consumers of media content was pointed out. Here a comparison between old and new media demonstrates that the line is both blurred and very sharp. It is sharp when it comes to the general categorisation of the hooligan: in old media the hooligan is presented as irrational and inhuman, whereas new media, as represented by Sverigescenen.com, describes him as rational and essentially connected to nature. When it comes to masculinity, however, there is true blurring, as both old and new media depict a real man in the same way although they are not in accordance on the hooligan as representative of this social construction of masculinity. To disentangle and understand the narrative picture, more research is essential.

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