"We won!" Group pride and collective positive emotion following a national team victory

Gavin Brent Sullivan

Public Talk by Gavin Brent Sullivan

Location: Konferenzraum JK 33/121-123, Habelschwerdter Allee 45, 14195 Berlin

Date: 27.09.2011, 15:00 - 17:00

Citizens of a nation, when watching an important game by their national sporting team, often feel positive collective emotions and strong personal pride particularly when a victory occurs. In the present study, we aimed to examine the strength and specificity of emotional changes of 47 German spectators who attended a public viewing site to watch the German national team play a semi-final game against Turkey in the 2008 UEFA European Football Championship.

Positive emotional effects of a national team triumph were predicted to increase national pride, levels of national identification and authentic pride, while hubristic pride would increase negative attitudes towards supporters of the opposing national team who live in one's community. As predicted, there were positive emotional effects of watching a winning team performance in a public viewing setting with significant increases in euphoria, interest, pride and national pride.

There were also significant correlations between national pride, personal identification with the team and self-reported levels of pride and euphoria. Although expected increases in authentic and hubristic pride as well as a worsening of attitudes towards the Turkish minority group in Germany were not found, there were significant post-game negative correlations for pride and personal team identification with attitudes towards Turkish people in Germany. The results show that international sport can produce widely-shared positive and intense collective emotions but not all members of the victorious group adopt a magnanimous attitude towards local members of the group represented by defeated, rival team.

The implications for understanding the similarities and differences between individual and collective pride are discussed.

Gavin Brent Sullivan is a Senior Lecturer in Psychology at Monash University, Melbourne, Australia.