

International football tournaments, emotional entrainment and the reproduction of symbolic boundaries. A case study in Germany

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Understanding the social consequences of major soccer events is important for social science researchers and policy-makers alike. On the one hand, socially integrative effects are ascribed to these events. On the other hand, they are suspected of increasing the devaluation of minorities and disadvantaged groups. Sociological theories in a Durkheimian tradition suggest that the emotional entrainment that goes along with football-related rituals might play a role. We thus investigated the effects of the World Cup 2010 on the derogation of minorities and disadvantaged groups in Germany and hypothesized that the emotional entrainment is a predictor of changes in derogation. Results of our naturalistic study show significant increases in derogative attitudes after the World Cup. Contrary to our expectations, emotional entrainment is not associated with this increase. We discuss possible alternative explanations, in particular the influence of public discourse.

Introduction

Major international football tournaments, such as the FIFA World Cup or the UEFA European Championships, have a global impact on politics and economies, and the governing bodies of the respective associations consider football as a tool for 'making positive impacts on society and the environment'.¹ These positive impacts are frequently portrayed by national and international football associations in various campaigns and policies as promoting social inclusion and countering discrimination and the devaluation of minorities. The validity of these claims and the success of implemented policies, however, are questionable since violence, racism and homophobia have not at all disappeared from the football scene.

In fact, various scholars have noted that major football events are 'Janus-headed' in their effects on social inclusion, both within and across societies. On the one hand, football events and media coverage of these events are supposed to have socially integrative effects by bringing together a diverse audience engaged and immersed in a common activity.² On the other hand, scholars have argued that these events have socially disintegrative effects and promote exclusion and the rejection of minorities and prejudiced groups by forcing people to confront each other in competitive and affectively laden ways.³ This view is famously reflected in George Orwell's description of football as 'war minus the shooting' that activates the 'combative instincts' of both players and audiences.⁴

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Scholarship dealing with this 'darker' side of football and related media coverage have focused on two key aspects. First, a variety of sociological studies have investigated game-related violence, hooliganism and fan riots.⁵ Second, research has established various links between football and hostile attitudes towards minorities and prejudiced groups, in particular in terms of ethnic discrimination, racism and homophobia.⁶

Studies focusing on tournaments in which *national* teams are competing, such as the FIFA World Cup or the UEFA European Championships, point at an interesting aspect of this broader literature. Much of this research is concerned with the repercussions of such tournaments for national identity, national pride and national belonging.⁷ It critically scrutinizes the self-proclaimed positive effects of these events for social integration, multiculturalism or nation building, as stated, for example, by the FIFA.⁸ A closely related line of inquiry has suspected rather opposite effects of national team competitions and investigates their influence on social exclusion in a broad sense. This includes negative attitudes towards national or ethnic groups directly involved in or related to the team competition (usually stereotyped members of opposing national groups), but also towards prejudiced groups, such as migrants, ethnic or religious minorities, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) groups or persons with disabilities.⁹

Although much research has been carried out and considerable progress has been made towards understanding the social consequences of football events, it is still debated whether they primarily serve as performative stages for rivalries and competition and tend to strengthen communal bonds or whether they are rather based on the 'defining of borderlines between in-groups and out-groups', and thus contribute to the reproduction of these borders.¹⁰ Aside from this unresolved question, most existing studies tend to emphasize the discursive, praxeological and symbolic aspects of football's consequences and still comparably little is known about the social mechanisms that bring about attitudinal changes as a consequence of football events – for better or worse.

Germany, and especially the German national team, offers particularly interesting cases to further investigate these questions, chiefly with regard to the rejection of minorities and prejudiced groups. This is evident when looking at football-related discourse that had gained momentum throughout the World Cup 2006 in Germany. The 2006 World Cup is widely considered a turning point in modern Germany's self-understanding and endorsement of public expressions of national pride or patriotism (e.g. waving the German flag) that were mostly tabooed due to German history. At the same time, however, there have been constant debates and grave concerns as to whether this renewed national pride would go hand in hand with increases in xenophobia and discrimination against minorities.¹¹ This debate was again fuelled around the football World Cup 2010, when the German national team for the first time was constructed as a particularly 'multicultural' team that represented the diversity of German society in view of the discourse on German society's racial, cultural and ethnic composition.¹² The team composition was praised by many as a 'role model' for German society at large and as a stronghold against potentially derogatory effects of renewed national pride regarding nationalism and the social exclusion of minorities *within* German society.

The reasons for such 'spill-over' effects of negative attitudes arising within national contexts onto seemingly unrelated minority groups are frequently seen in

the *symbolic boundaries* of national communities¹³ that are constructed both internationally and intranationally.¹⁴ Symbolic boundaries rely on symbolic codes dividing individuals into either (national) in-group members or ‘others’ that are excluded from the group because they are perceived as threats to an alleged ‘homogeneity’ of the national community.

The workings of symbolic boundaries in the context of football have recently been linked to the performance of (mediatized) rituals and ritual practices that are integral to most major football events.¹⁵ Since Durkheim’s¹⁶ seminal works, rituals have been shown to have important consequences for solidarity and cohesion within social groups and for attitudes and behaviours towards perceived out-groups. Importantly, Durkheim suggested that a key facilitating element in bringing about these consequences is the linking of *collective effervescence*, i.e. the emotional entrainment¹⁷ experienced during rituals, with the symbols and symbolic codes (e.g. values and beliefs) that are constitutive for groups and group boundaries.

Looking at major football events from a ritual perspective thus raises the question whether the emotional entrainment experienced during these events is in fact implicated in changing attitudes towards a ‘range of different target groups of discrimination’.¹⁸ Examining major football events may also shed light on the mechanisms that bring about such changes, in particular with respect to the affective dimensions of ritual practices. In this article, we present the results of a quasi-experimental study that investigated the influence of emotional entrainment experienced in Germany during the World Cup 2010 on changes in exclusionary attitudes towards minorities and prejudiced groups in German society. We hypothesized that the emotional entrainment individuals experience more or less intensely during the World Cup is a predictor of increases in derogatory attitudes towards these groups after the World Cup. In the remainder of this article, we first outline our theoretical arguments in more detail and derive a number of testable hypotheses. We then report on the methods used and the results obtained and finally summarize and discuss our findings.

Rituals, emotional entrainment and symbolic boundaries

The socially integrative effects of nationwide-mediatized football events are thought to be closely related to their ritual features and their involving thousands of individuals from various socio-demographic and ethnic backgrounds.¹⁹ This integrative potential of rituals has been discussed in detail by Durkheim more than a hundred years ago. Durkheim suggested that rituals are crucial for group identification, cohesion, solidarity and the development of a collective consciousness. In his treatise on *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, Durkheim²⁰ argued that the social functions of rituals in tribal communities pertain to their potential to evoke the experience of *collective effervescence*, i.e. the feeling of a deep emotional entrainment with the other ritual participants and the social group.

A basic ingredient of these rituals is the close physical proximity of large numbers of community members in social gatherings with clear (symbolic) borders to non-participating outsiders. Importantly, rituals are set apart from mundane activities and constitute a ‘sacred’ space. Numerous taboos, for example, regarding consumption and conduct, as well as bodily synchronization via music, dancing and singing

guard participants from ‘profane’ distractions and assure that the crowd shares, and is mutually aware of, a common focus of attention, which is usually seen in specific symbols and symbolic codes representing the group and its values. This, in turn, leads to a state of ‘heightened intersubjectivity’²¹ and the experience of shared emotions. Durkheim²² described ‘collective effervescence’, as

a sort of electricity [that] is generated from their [participants’] closeness and quickly launches them to an extraordinary height of exaltation. Every emotion expressed resonates without interference in consciousnesses that are wide open to external impressions; each one echoing the others. The initial impulse is thereby amplified each time it is echoed.²³

Thus, collective effervescence is supposed to reinvigorate group identity, to strengthen feelings of belonging to the community and to reinforce the (symbolic) boundaries towards perceived outsiders. Along similar lines, Cohen argued for an affective understanding of the boundaries of a community: ‘similarity or difference is not a matter for objective assessment: it is a matter of feeling, a matter which resides in the minds of the members themselves’.²⁴ Cohen also agrees with Durkheim in conceiving of rituals as crucial for the symbolization of the community’s boundaries.²⁵

Durkheim²⁶ further suggested that the effects of rituals on group identification can be achieved by negative as well as by positive emotions. Crucially, the presence of group-related symbols in ritual practices leads to their ‘affective grounding’ or ‘charging’, i.e. they become imbued with emotional meaning and significance because ‘the emotions aroused are transferred to the symbol’.²⁷ These symbols, which can be any kind of object or code, for example, (representations of) idealized ancestors, artworks, animals, plants, or landmarks,²⁸ make salient a group’s values, norms, beliefs and symbolic boundaries even outside ritual gatherings, prompt feelings of belonging and solidarity, reinforce identification with the group and increase prosocial behaviour.

Although Durkheim’s original arguments largely centre on close-knit, groups such as clans and communities, he explicitly related his arguments to the context of nations and national symbols. He argued that national symbols become sacred once they have been emotionally charged – i.e. when they are loved, feared and worshipped. Durkheim²⁹ illustrates this by referring to national flags: ‘The soldier who dies for his flag dies for his country, but the idea of the flag is actually in the foreground of his consciousness’.³⁰ Actions towards symbols are interpreted as actions towards the group, and members of national communities will thus be willing to have their symbols treated with respect and to protect them from harm. Perceived defilement, for example, the burning of flags, often elicits feelings of ‘righteous anger’.³¹

Durkheim also emphasized the demarcating consequences of rituals by highlighting the strong antagonisms between the ‘sacred’ and the ‘profane’ as symbolic boundaries created and enacted in rituals.³²

When we think of sacred things, the idea of a profane object cannot present itself to the mind without meeting resistance, something within us that opposes its settlement there. The idea of the sacred does not tolerate such a neighbor. But this psychic antagonism, this mutual exclusion of ideas, must necessarily culminate in the exclusion of the things that correspond to them. If the ideas are not to coexist, the things must not touch one another or come into contact in any way.³³

This perspective was further elaborated by Bergesen³⁴ in view of the fabrication of moral antagonisms. He suggested that rituals produce and reproduce different symbolic boundaries depending on their context: political rituals tend to create an antagonism between loyal and subversive, legal rituals between innocent and guilty, etc.³⁵ Collins³⁶ also theorized on the ‘negative side’ of ‘feelings of moral solidarity’³⁷ which may manifest in ‘righteous anger’ arising towards ‘heretics, scapegoats, and other outcasts’.³⁸ Because group members successively become attached to the symbols of their group, disrespectful behaviour towards these symbols may lead to ‘shock and outrage’.³⁹

Taken together, theories in this Durkheimian tradition suggest that the experience of emotional entrainment during certain rituals is closely linked to the establishment and reproduction of symbolic boundaries. This may, on the one hand, lead to inclusion and heightened identification and solidarity with the group.⁴⁰ On the other hand, it may also promote the exclusion or derogation of objects or individuals perceived as ‘profane’ and not belonging to the group.

Rituals in present day Western societies

Durkheim already transferred his approach to the level of contemporary nation-states, where rituals can be found, for example, in events related to commemoration, inauguration or mourning. Another class of events that fits most of Durkheim’s criteria includes major international sports events, in particular football tournaments.

Football tournaments as rituals are usually not confined to spectators watching the games in the stadium. Rather, matches and events transcend the ritualized context of the stadium by far and football World Cups in particular belong to the most widely broadcasted media rituals in modern societies.⁴¹ Hardly any other event reaches a similarly large and global audience. Also, football World Cups are amongst those types of events that generate nation-based collective emotions in unparalleled ways. From Collins’s⁴² perspective on stratified rituals, individuals participate in these ritualized events for the benefit of emotional energy that is gained within the ritual. The closer people are to the centre of the event, the more powerful and successful in creating emotional energy and group attachment the ritual will be. Stratified rituals, such as major football tournaments, thus hint at the important questions of the ‘intensity’ and the ‘success’ of rituals. According to this perspective, the magnitude of the social consequences of such rituals depends on the degree of (emotional) entrainment experienced during the ritual.

It is also no surprise then, that aside from the economic and political impacts, the social consequences of major international football tournaments are continuously debated in public discourse. Given that these tournaments are inherently designed as competitions between nations or national groups – as represented by the national teams – and that citizenship and national belonging are highly salient during these tournaments, it seems obvious that the national community is discursively construed as ‘sacred’ in a Durkheimian sense during these events.⁴³ Individuals perceived as not falling within the symbolic boundaries of the national community (based on whatever criteria or ascribed characteristics) are likely to be construed as ‘profane’ and (symbolically) excluded from the community, which, by definition, is constructed with the implication of similarity among its members and differences regarding non-members.⁴⁴

In view of major (mediated and ritualized) football tournaments in which national teams compete, two (non-exclusive) conjectures seem reasonable. First, these events may promote social cohesion and integration among members of a national community through the experience of mutual emotional entrainment during the event, regardless of prevailing differences in terms of gender, age, ethnicity, social class sexual orientation or the like, and may increase national pride and patriotic attitudes. In this perspective, the symbolic boundaries are most likely drawn along the lines of nationality and citizenship, and supporters of other competing national teams are perceived as members of an ‘out-group’ falling beyond those boundaries. As mentioned previously, a second possible understanding of ‘out-group’ may be any group (within or outside the boundaries of a national community) perceived as a threat to an allegedly ‘homogeneous’ national community. This *may* include LGBT groups, migrants, disabled persons, ethnic and religious minorities and other prejudiced groups. In both cases, individuals perceived as not belonging to the national community are likely to be derogated and discriminated against. Although the two conjectures are not mutually exclusive and most probably not a matter of ‘either/or’ but rather of ‘as well as’, we will focus on the latter assumption here and look at the effects of emotional entrainment on changes in attitudes towards minorities and prejudiced groups within society.

Football events and the rejection of prejudiced groups in Germany

For a number of reasons, Germany is a particularly interesting case to examine the social consequences of major football events. First, football is the most popular spectator sport in Germany. In 2002,

40 percent of the population over 14 years old belonged to the euphoric type with regard to football, with both a very high level of interest and emotional attachment to the sport. Only 16 percent had no special interest in football, but this group was able to develop an interest in the case of the World Cup.⁴⁵

These numbers increased once again during the World Cup 2006, when more than 61 million German viewers (83% of the total population) followed at least one World Cup match on television.⁴⁶ Similar figures for Germany emerged during the 2010 World Cup in South Africa.⁴⁷ Second, the impact of increased national identification and national pride on the rejection of minorities and prejudiced groups – or out-groups more generally – has been a matter of public and academic debate, at least since the World Cup 2006, which had led to an outburst of patriotic behaviour in Germany.⁴⁸ Third, the German national football team has changed significantly over the past decades towards its present perception as a ‘multicultural team’ that represents values such as tolerance, multiculturalism and ethnic diversity.⁴⁹

Existing empirical studies of the effects of football World Cups on both group cohesion and disintegration in Germany have provided mixed results and most research focuses either on nationalism and national pride or on xenophobia. Further, we know of no studies explicitly investigating the role of emotional entrainment in attitudinal changes brought about during a major football tournament. For example, Mutz⁵⁰ showed that the Euro 2012 resulted in an (temporary) increase in nationalism and patriotism among Germans. Although this study did not specifically investigate the rejection of minorities or prejudiced groups, its results can be interpreted in this way since it has repeatedly been shown that national pride is a reliable predictor

of the devaluation of certain groups, such as ethnic and religious minorities or homosexuals.⁵¹ For example, Becker, Wagner and Christ⁵² report increases in nationalistic attitudes after the World Cup 2006 and show that the relation between nationalism and the derogation of minorities and prejudiced groups is strengthened after the world cup. In another study, however, Kersting⁵³ reports that small increases in ‘sports patriotism’ during the World Cup 2006 seem to go hand in hand with small decreases in xenophobia after the World Cup.

None of these studies have accounted for the role of emotional entrainment in the social consequences of ritualized and mediatized football events, as suggested by the theories reviewed above. It is therefore still an open question whether (a) major international football events do indeed affect attitudes towards out-groups and minorities and in which directions and (b) whether this is associated with the experience of emotional entrainment during a tournament.

The present study

Attending to the theoretical background and the unresolved questions illustrated above, we investigated the impact of the football World Cup 2010 on the rejection of minorities and prejudiced groups in Germany. This study was part of a larger study on the effects of collective emotions on attitudes and prosocial behaviour. In particular, we were interested in the role of emotional entrainment in bringing about these attitudinal changes. More specifically, we investigated whether the intensity of emotional entrainment experienced while participating in the media rituals surrounding the World Cup influenced attitudes towards ethnic, religious, cultural and other minorities. We took the FIFA Football World Cup 2010 in South Africa (between 11 June and 11 July 2010) as an international mediatized mega-sports event, during which large numbers of people experience emotional entrainment to different degrees. According to the FIFA, the World Cup

was shown in every single country and territory on Earth, including Antarctica and the Arctic Circle, generating record-breaking viewing figures in many TV markets around the world. The in-home television coverage of the competition reached over 3.2 billion people around the world, or 46.4 per cent of the global population, based on viewers watching a minimum of over one minute of coverage. [...] Based on viewers watching a minimum of 20 consecutive minutes of coverage, the 2010 tournament reached nearly a third of the world population with 2.2 billion viewers. [...] The average in-home global audience for each match was 188.4 million.⁵⁴

In Germany, games played by the German team attracted an average of 26.5 million viewers on TV.⁵⁵ In addition, up to an estimated 12 million viewers watched each game at public screening events in various public locations across Germany. Moreover, the World Cup was prominently featured extensively in daily newspapers, news shows and commercials, and hardly anyone was able to elude this ‘vectorization’.⁵⁶ This suggests that during the time of the World Cup, a significant number of spectators experienced emotional entrainment during the events and matches surrounding the tournament. In line with our theoretical assumptions, we hypothesized that the World Cup would thus lead to notable changes in exclusionary attitudes towards minorities and prejudiced groups in German society (H1), and that these changes would be positively associated to the experience of emotional entrainment during the World Cup (H2).

Methods

Our study was designed to measure both the experience of emotional entrainment during the World Cup and potential changes in the rejection of minorities and prejudiced out-groups after the World Cup. Using a quasi-experimental design, we assessed out-group rejection at two times: before and shortly after the World Cup. The experience of emotional entrainment was measured retrospectively after the World Cup. In this design, the World Cup serves as our 'treatment', which, due to missing random assignment and the lack of a control group, makes the study quasi-experimental.⁵⁷ The study was implemented using an online survey with two points of measurement. The first wave assessed out-group rejection within two weeks before the World Cup. The second wave again assessed out-group rejection and the experience of emotional entrainment during the World Cup after the tournament. Although participants received an emailed invitation on the first day after the World Cup to complete the second wave, first questionnaires were answered on the fourth day after the Cup. To reduce attrition, we allowed participants to complete the survey until 16 days after the tournament. Online surveys have been criticized for bearing a number of methodological challenges, mainly regarding sampling issues, self-selection and unrepresentative or biased samples stemming from differences in internet access.⁵⁸ However, they also bear methodological advantages because respondents can answer questions in an intended bias-reducing sequence and the absence of an interviewer is the best assurance of anonymity.⁵⁹

Participants

Participants were recruited by disseminating the URL of our survey using a snowballing system through a variety of email lists, adverts in the daily press, internet forums and by directly approaching students at Freie Universität, Berlin. Our theoretical background highlights the role of group symbols in bringing about the social consequences of rituals and emotional entrainment. Because our study took place in Germany during the World Cup when German national symbols (e.g. the German flag and its colours, the Brandenburg Gate, the National Team, the Reichstagsgebäude, etc.) were on constant display in the media and throughout public places, bars and restaurants, we limited participants to those holding German citizenship, for which the assumed effects of symbols and emotional entrainment should be most pronounced.⁶⁰ To ensure that participant data are correctly matched for the pre- and post-World Cup measures, each participant was assigned a unique and anonymous identifier. Two vouchers of an online vendor, worth 40 Euros each, were raffled off among all participants as an incentive. One hundred and seventy-seven respondents completed the first wave of the study, of which 116 took part in both waves. Eighteen participants were excluded due to non-German citizenship, which resulted in a total of 98 valid cases (36 female, 62 male; mean age = 28.36; SD = 11.38 years). Hence, male respondents are overrepresented, the sample is notably younger than the population average and most respondents are highly educated (at least having a university entrance qualification; data not shown). Although attrition markedly lowered our sample size and the generalizability of results is limited, our study still provides initial insights into the mechanisms underlying the derogation of minorities as a consequence of major international football tournaments.

Measures

Out-group rejection

To assess the rejection of minorities and other prejudiced groups in German society, we used the well-established ‘group-focused enmity’ (GFE) scale.⁶¹ The GFE scale measures prejudice towards different minority groups and conceives of out-group devaluation as a ‘syndrome’ comprising xenophobia, anti-semitism, Islamophobia, racism, sexism and the devaluation of homosexuals, disabled and homeless persons.⁶² The scale thus allows to determine whether changes in out-group rejection occur more notably for specific groups. The GFE scale is an attitudinal scale comprising 18 items. Respondents indicate their agreement with various statements on four-point scales from ‘not at all’ to ‘completely’.

Emotional entrainment

Because there is no established scale measuring emotional entrainment, we developed a questionnaire aimed at assessing the degree of emotional entrainment experienced by an individual during the World Cup. The scale consists of three items measuring the overall emotional involvement into the events surrounding the World Cup (four-point Likert scale).⁶³ These items assessed how strongly respondents felt emotionally moved when watching a game of the German team, how strongly they felt affected by the emotions of other fans and how intensely they were taken and moved by the overall atmosphere of the World Cup. The scale also included four additional questions assessing the ‘effervescence’ dimension of emotional entrainment as indicated by the viewing context and the involvement into larger crowds, as measured by the number of games of the German team watched at home alone, at home with friends or family, at a public bar or restaurant and at a large public screening event or in a stadium (see Appendix 1 for details). The latter four questions were weighted and combined into a single item so that games viewed in the presence of more people would increase the item score, and thus the overall score on the emotional entrainment scale. Reliability of the resulting scale was high ($\alpha = 0.83$), indicating a good internal consistency, and an exploratory factor analysis revealed a single-factor solution, explaining 67.27% of variance with factor loadings between 0.77 and 0.88. Convergent validity of the scale was assessed by computing correlations with the number of games respondents watched. The correlation is significant ($r = 0.70$, $p < 0.01$), lending support to the validity of the scale.

Results

We first report descriptive statistics for the dependent and independent variables (see Table 1) and then compare means of the group-focused enmity scale between wave

Table 1. Range, means and standard deviation of GFE and emotional entrainment.

	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD	<i>N</i>
GFE pre-World Cup	1.00	2.44	1.63	0.32	98
GFE post-World Cup	1.17	2.94	1.69	0.33	98
Emotional entrainment	1.00	3.93	2.36	0.68	98

one (pre-World Cup) and wave two (post-World Cup). Subsequently, we computed regression analyses to estimate the association of emotional entrainment with changes in group-focused enmity.

To investigate whether exposure to the mediatised rituals of the World Cup influences out-group rejection at a general level, we compared the means of the group-focused enmity scale before and after the World Cup (see Figure 1). Results show a moderate and significant increase in group-focused enmity after the World Cup as compared to pre-World Cup measures ($M_{\text{pre}} = 1,63$; $M_{\text{post}} = 1,69$; $T = -2,56$; $df = 97$; $p = 0,01$).

The results thus support our hypothesis H1 that the World Cup has a notable influence on out-group derogation. They also lend support to existing studies that have previously (although often indirectly) demonstrated a relation between international football tournaments and increases in out-group derogation.

To investigate the association between emotional entrainment and group-focused enmity, we ran multiple linear regressions. Our outcome variable is the level of GFE in wave two, i.e. after the World Cup. Our main predictor variable is emotional entrainment (mean-centred). We also included the level of GFE before the World Cup as well as age and gender as control variables in a stepwise fashion (see Table 2).

Contrary to our expectations, results show no significant association between emotional entrainment and GFE after the World Cup. Not surprisingly, pre-World Cup levels of GFE are a highly significant predictor of post-World Cup measures. Neither age nor gender is significantly associated with changes in GFE. We suspected that

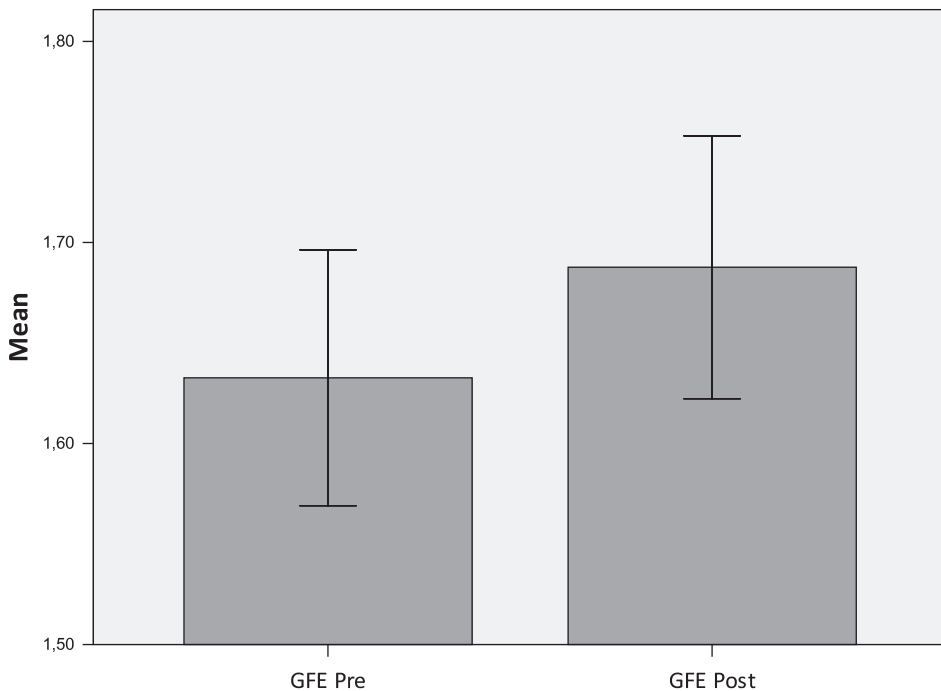


Figure 1. Mean GFE scores pre- and post-World Cup.

Table 2. Linear regression with coefficients and standard errors (dependent variable GFE post-World Cup).

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	β	SE	β	SE	β	SE
GFE pre-World Cup	0.805***	0.066	0.801***	0.068	0.800***	0.069
Emotional entrainment	-.012	0.031	-0.012	0.031	-0.011	0.031
Gender (reference: men)	-	-	-.010	0.045	-0.009	0.045
Age	-	-	-	-	0.001	0.002
Constant	0.402**	0.129	0.425*	0.170	0.388*	0.179
R^2 (corrected)	0.604	-	0.600	-	0.598	-

$N = 98$.

* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$.

failure to establish a significant association might be due to the fact that GFE does not only represent derogatory attitudes towards minorities, but also reflects how individuals construe the symbolic boundaries of the national community, i.e. accounts for whether they hold more or less exclusive views of who belongs to the nation and who does not. In this case, the experience of emotional entrainment might also be a partial *outcome* of pre-World Cup levels of GFE in that individuals with high initial levels of GFE experience emotional entrainment more strongly than those with lower levels. On the entire sample, this might obscure any meaningful association between emotional entrainment and post-World Cup GFE levels since individuals with very low and very high levels of pre-World Cup GFE would level out one another. Therefore, to test whether associations between emotional entrainment and post-World Cup GFE levels can be established depending on pre-World Cup levels, we conducted a moderation analysis.⁶⁴ Results mirror those of the regression analyses presented above and show no significant moderator effects of pre-World Cup GFE on the association between emotional entrainment and post-World Cup GFE ($\beta = -0.148$; $p = 0.882$). Details of the moderation analysis are available upon request.

In sum, therefore, we cannot confirm our hypothesis H2 that emotional entrainment is positively associated with changes in GFE after the World Cup. Our results indicate that exposure to, or participation in, the mediatized events surrounding the World Cup do lead to a moderate but significant increase in group-focused enmity, as a measure of the derogation of minorities and disadvantaged groups. As it seems, however, this increase is not fuelled by the experience of emotional entrainment during the World Cup, as a Durkheimian perspective would suggest.

To better account for alternative explanations for increases in out-group derogation, we took a closer look at changes in the distinct dimensions of GFE. As can be seen in Figure 2, all dimensions show increases after the World Cup. Comparisons of means for each sub-dimension, however, reveal no significant increase on any dimension.

To further account for the significant general increase in group-focused enmity, we looked at the single items of the GFE scale. We find significant increases after the World Cup only for the following items (see also Figure 3): ‘German re-settlers should be better off than foreigners because they are of German origin’⁶⁵ ($M_{\text{pre}} = 1.31$; $M_{\text{post}} = 1.43$; $T = 2.41$; $df = 97$; $p < 0.05$); ‘Sometimes I feel uncomfortable in the presence of handicapped people’ ($M_{\text{pre}} = 1.31$; $M_{\text{post}} = 1.43$; $T = 2.41$; $df = 97$;

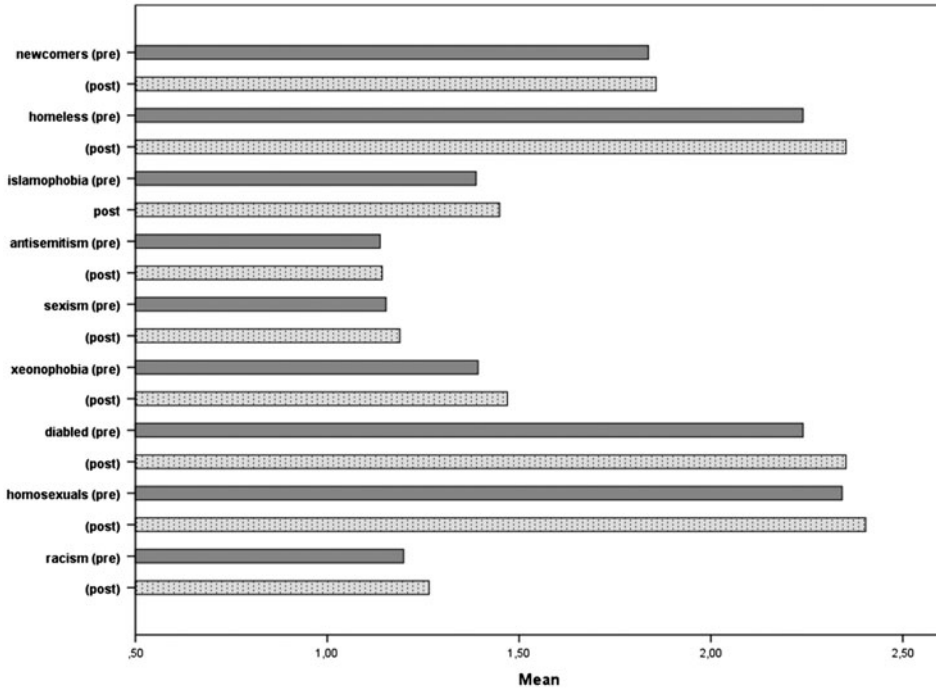


Figure 2. Pre- and post-World Cup comparison of means for distinct GFE dimensions.

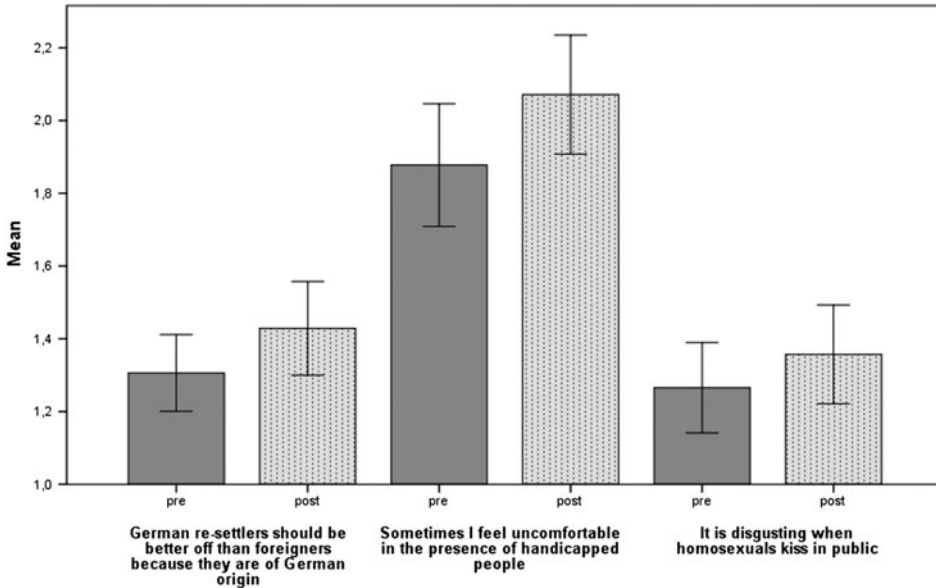


Figure 3. Mean GFE scores for single items pre- and post-World Cup (only items with significant changes shown).

$p < .05$); and 'It is disgusting when homosexuals kiss in public' ($M_{\text{pre}} = 1.88$; $M_{\text{post}} = 2.07$; $T = 2.94$; $df = 97$; $p < .01$).

Although single-item analyses are of limited informational value, these items point in a direction that might contribute to an explanation of the overall increase in out-group derogation. For example, the 'handicapped' and 'homophobia' items suggest that discourse effects might make a significant contribution to changes in out-group derogation. Given that the media coverage on football World Cups is traditionally focused on bodily strength, power and vitality as well as on a predominantly male heterosexual ideal type, this might promote distorted perceptions of and changing attitudes towards disabled and homosexual persons. The same holds for discourse related to national pride which might affect the 're-settlers' question due to a heightened salience of German identity. We will further explore these possibilities in the concluding section.

Discussion

Major football events have significant political, economic and social consequences, often at transnational and even global scales. In terms of their social consequences, there is debate as to whether these ritualized events promote social integration and understanding or rather reinforce existing lines of conflict and lead to the derogation of out-groups. The underlying mechanisms of a possible shift in devaluating attitudes also remain unclear. Sociological theory in a Durkheimian tradition suggests that the experience of collective effervescence might be critical for both, promoting social cohesion and increasing out-group rejection.

This study therefore investigated the influence of major football events on out-group rejection and the role of collective effervescence in this link. We designed a naturalistic study conducted in Germany around the football World Cup 2010, which reliably elicits collective effervescence in a non-laboratory setting. Our findings show a moderate and significant increase in group-focused enmity after the World Cup. The findings are robust when controlling for age and gender and support existing studies that emphasized the disintegrative consequences of major football events in some countries. Contrary to our expectations, we find no support for the idea that increases in exclusionary attitudes towards minorities and prejudiced groups are driven by the emotional entrainment experienced during the World Cup. This suggests that the disintegrative effects of the World Cup may not be brought about by this aspect of involvement in the ritual practices surrounding the event.

There are a couple of possible explanations for this finding. One possibility includes certain limitations of our study, for instance in view of the emotional entrainment measure used. Although the scale we developed is valid and reliable, it might be limited in capturing the actual 'effervescence' component that is critical to Durkheim's theory. Furthermore, our study does not address the diversity of possible in-group and out-group conceptions individuals may hold and with which they enter the ritual events surrounding the World Cup. For example, participants might construe all viewers at a public screening event as belonging to their in-group, with the national community only playing a minor role. Finally, considerable variation in the time of assessment of the post-World Cup measures might have led to biases in self-reports of emotional entrainment.

A second possible explanation can be found by looking at pre-/post-World Cup changes in the distinct dimensions of our group-focused enmity measure. Although

none of the nine dimensions of the scale shows a significant increase, we find significant increases for specific single items addressing the devaluation of re-settlers, handicapped people and homosexuals. Given that news and media coverage during the World Cup traditionally highlights bodily strength, power and vitality of athletes and promotes a predominantly male heterosexual ideal type, we suspect that increased agreement to statements devaluating homosexuals and disabled persons might result from media discourse effects.

A variety of studies have shown that media discourses contribute to the formation of racial and ethnic stereotypes,⁶⁶ body images,⁶⁷ and gender and sexualities schemas.⁶⁸ During World Cups, football-related content dominates newspapers, advertisements and TV-commercials and it has repeatedly been shown that this content reflects football 'as an extension of society'.⁶⁹ Importantly, research in this vein suggests that media coverage of sports and sports events reconstructs stereotypes related to gender, race and nationality.⁷⁰ There is of course a vast array of potential other events that might have affected participants' attitudes between the two points of measurement. However, an open-ended survey question inquiring for such events that was part of a related study indicated no single and particularly salient event.

Increases in negative attitudes towards disabled persons and homosexuals could therefore potentially be linked to football's inherent discourse on the body and its gendered dimension. Football as the most popular media sports in Germany is an important stage for the discursive construction of an idealized (male) body, reflecting attitudes regarding disability and homosexuality.⁷¹ A trained body shows its potential for physical dominance and is therefore a symbol of masculinity in a classic sense. Any injuries in football usually lead to exclusion: those who are sick, injured or handicapped cannot be members of a team anymore and are excluded from the group. In certain contexts, these practices may have socio-political implications, in particular when the sporting body becomes a symbol of national identity.⁷²

Second, the use of male sporting bodies as symbols of masculinity can also be seen as a contributing factor to increases in homophobia since in mainstream discourse, masculinity is closely linked to a heterosexual lifestyle.⁷³ Sports is often declared the part of society where 'a man can still be a man' and in which the male body is used either in fighting other men or in a rough expression of comradeship with teammates. Football has thus been described as a 'resort of masculinity'.⁷⁴ It is therefore no surprise that football is considered a stronghold of homophobic attitudes in Germany as well as in many other countries.⁷⁵ Finally, the increased support for the statement that 'German re-settlers should be better off than foreigners because they are of German origin' might reflect a rise in essentialist and nationalist attitudes in Germany after the World Cup.

Taken together, our study yields two important outcomes. First, it suggests that the socially integrative effects of international football tournaments – which are constantly emphasized by governing bodies such as FIFA or UEFA – cannot consistently be observed across societal groups. Instead, our study shows increases in derogatory attitudes towards minorities and disadvantaged groups, in particular homosexual and disabled persons, after the Cup. Second, the study suggests that these increases are most likely not an outcome of the emotional entrainment into the rituals surrounding the World Cup, such as participation in public screening events and an emotional attunement and 'going with the crowd'. Instead, the effects of discourse and media coverage during the World Cup offer an alternative explanation for increases in derogatory attitudes. As Cohen points out, the boundaries of a

community are relational: ‘the sense of social self at the levels of both individuality and collectivity are informed by implicit or explicit contrast’.⁷⁶ Emphasizing a male heterosexual and physically fit body as a stereotypical ideal might very well contribute to a tendency of ‘othering’ the respective contrasting groups.

Given the limitations of our study, most importantly the small sample size, little information on the longevity of the observed effects, and the naturalistic setting with lack of control of confounding variables, more research is definitely needed to better understand the consequences of mediatized football events and the role of emotional entrainment. To look at the broader societal implications of international football tournaments, future studies should rely on random population samples and specifically control for individual factors that are relevant for both, the experience of emotional entrainment and exclusionary attitudes, for example, fandom and interest in football. To more precisely account for the mechanisms underlying the reproduction of symbolic boundaries, tightly controlled laboratory experiments offer various possibilities for sociological insight.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

Notes

1. FIFA, ‘Social Responsibility’.
2. Kersting, ‘Sport and National Identity’; Marivoet, ‘Sports Mega-Events’; and Prosser, “‘Fußballverzückung’ beim Stadionbesuch”.
3. Porro and Russo, ‘The Production of a Media Epic’. See for historical examples Tomlinson and Young, *National Identity and Global Sports Events*.
4. Orwell, ‘The Sporting Spirit’, 63.
5. See, for example, Dunning, ‘Towards a Sociological Understanding of Football Hooliganism as a World Phenomenon’; Dunning, Murphy and Williams, *The Roots of Football Hooliganism*; King, ‘Football Hooliganism and the Practical Paradigm’; Pilz, ‘Zuschauergewalt im Fußball’; Hahn et al., *Fanverhalten, Massenmedien und Gewalt im Sport*; and Armstrong and Giulianotti, *Fear and Loathing in Word Football*.
6. See, for example, Dembowski and Scheidle, *Tatort Stadion. Rassismus, Antisemitismus und Sexismus im Fußball*; Caudwell, ‘Does Your Boyfriend Know You’re Here?’; and Merkel and Tokarski, *Racism and Xenophobia in European Football*.
7. See, for example, Sullivan, ‘Qualitative Investigations of Mega-sport Events’; Halm, ‘Turkish Immigrants in German Amateur Football’; and Inthorn, ‘A Game of Nations?’
8. See, for example, Baker and Rowe, ‘Mediating Mega Events and Manufacturing Multiculturalism’; and Stehle and Weber, ‘German Soccer’.
9. See, for example, Becker, Wagner and Christ, ‘Nationalismus und Patriotismus als Ursache von Fremdenfeindlichkeit’.
10. Inthorn, ‘A Game of Nations?’, 155.
11. See, for example, Becker, Wagner and Christ, ‘Nationalismus und Patriotismus als Ursache von Fremdenfeindlichkeit’; and Schediwy, *Sommermärchen im Blätterwald*.
12. Stehle and Weber, ‘German Soccer’.
13. Alexander, ‘Citizen and Enemy as Symbolic Classification’.
14. Schlesinger, *Media, State and Nation*; and Phillips, ‘Symbolic Boundaries and National Identity in Australia’.
15. See, for example, King, *The European Ritual*; Pornschlegel, ‘Wie kommt die Nation an den Ball?’; Ismer, ‘Embodying the Nation’; and Leonard, *A Sociological Perspective on Sport*.
16. Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*.

17. We prefer to use the term 'entrainment' because Durkheim's term 'effervescence' originally refers to the emotional arousal experienced by participants of face-to-face rituals and gatherings.
18. Zick et al., 'The Syndrome of Group-focused Enmity', 364.
19. Pornschlegel, 'Wie kommt die Nation an den Ball?'; Ismer, 'Embodying the Nation'; King, *The European Ritual*; King, 'Football Fandom and Post-national Identity in the New Europe'; Gebauer, *Poetik des Fussballs*; and Sterchele, 'The Limits of Interreligious Dialogue and the Form of Football Rituals'.
20. Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*.
21. Collins, *Interaction Ritual Chains*, 35.
22. Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*.
23. *Ibid.*, 217f.
24. Cohen, 'Symbolic Construction of Community', 20f.
25. *Ibid.*, 50.
26. Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, 303–405.
27. *Ibid.*, 221.
28. Collins, *Interaction Ritual Chains*, 85.
29. Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*.
30. *Ibid.*, 222.
31. Collins, *Interaction Ritual Chains*, 104.
32. Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. According to Durkheim, these categories are not only part of religious contexts. He uses the example of the French Revolution to demonstrate how 'things that were by nature purely secular were transformed by public opinion into sacred things: Fatherland, Liberty, Reason', *Ibid.*, 215f.
33. *Ibid.*, 321f.
34. Bergesen, 'Die rituelle Ordnung'.
35. *Ibid.*, 64.
36. Collins, *Interaction ritual chains*.
37. *Ibid.*, 109.
38. *Ibid.*
39. *Ibid.*
40. See, for example, Von Scheve et al., 'Emotional Entrainment, National Symbols, and Identification'.
41. See, for example, Lardellier, 'Ritual Media', for a study on the role of the media in staging rituals. He shows that the media manages to grant omnipresence to the major ritualized events of society. It becomes almost impossible for the individual to evade such events.
42. Collins, *Interaction Ritual Chains*.
43. Alexander, 'Citizen and Enemy as Symbolic Classification'.
44. See, Cohen, 'Symbolic Construction of Community', 12.
45. Brannasch, 'ARD-"Sportschau"', 91. Brannasch refers to a study by 'Sportfive', a German sports rights agency.
46. See Geese, Zeughardt and Gerhard, 'Die Fußball-Weltmeisterschaft im Fernsehen'.
47. Gerhard, Kessler and Gscheidle, 'Die Fußballweltmeisterschaft 2010 im Fernsehen'.
48. Schediwy, *Sommermärchen im Blätterwald*; and Ismer, 'Embodying the Nation'.
49. See also Stehle and Weber, 'German Soccer', 108.
50. Mutz, 'Patrioten für drei Wochen'.
51. Blank and Schmidt, 'National Identity in a United Germany'; Blank and Schmidt, 'Konstruktiver Patriotismus im vereinigten Deutschland?'; and Heyder and Schmidt, 'Deutscher Stolz'. Some of these studies build on a dichotomous understanding of 'patriotic' national pride rooted in democratic achievements of one's nation, on the one hand, and 'nationalistic' national pride which is directed on the nation as such, on the other. Only the latter is presumably connected to out-group derogation. For a critical discussion of this issue, see Cohrs et al., 'Ist patriotischer Nationalstolz wünschenswert?'
52. Becker, Wagner and Oliver, 'Nationalismus und Patriotismus als Ursache von Fremdenfeindlichkeit'.
53. Kersting, 'Sport and National Identity'.

54. FIFA, 'Almost Half the World Tuned in at Home to Watch 2010 FIFA World Cup South Africa™'.
55. Media Control, *Fußball-Weltmeisterschaft 2010*.
56. Lardellier, 'Ritual Media'.
57. Shadish, Cook and Campbell, *Experimental and Quasi-experimental Designs for Generalized Causal Inference*.
58. Thompson et al., 'From Paper to Pixels'; and Wright, 'Researching Internet-based Populations'.
59. Evans and Mathur, 'The Value of Online Surveys'.
60. While we recognize that citizenship is neither a guarantee nor a requirement for identification with a country, the debate surrounding identification and citizenship is beyond our scope of discussion. Soysal offers a closer examination of post-national citizenship, but for our purposes, we will assume that citizenship implies identification with the nation.
61. Zick et al., 'The Syndrome of Group-focused Enmity'.
62. For an overview, see Heitmeyer, *Deutsche Zustände*.
63. See Von Scheve et al., for details. 'Emotional Entrainment, National Symbols, and Identification'.
64. See, for example, Wu and Zumbo, 'Understanding and Using Mediators and Moderators'.
65. 'Re-settlers' is the term for individuals from Eastern Europe and former parts of the Soviet Union who are granted the right to apply for German citizenship and German residency by German law because they can prove what is called German 'Volkszugehörigkeit' (ethnicity). Re-settlers have to be of German descent, prove basic language skills, be defined as German by the government of their country of origin former place of residence or be self-defined as German by way of life.
66. Mastro, 'Effects of Racial and Ethnic Stereotyping'.
67. Levine and Harrison, 'Effects of Media on Eating Disorders and Body Image'; and Stice et al., 'Relation of Media Exposure to Eating Disorder Symptomatology'.
68. Ward, Hansbrough and Walker, 'Contributions of Music Video Exposure to Black Adolescents' Gender and Sexual Schemas'.
69. Crolley, Hand and Jeutter, 'National Obsessions and Identities in Football Match Reports', 185; and see also Crolley and Hand, *Football, Europe and the Press*.
70. O'Donnel, 'Mapping the Mythical'; Rowe, 'Sport and the Repudiation of the Global'; Habenstreit, 'Keep Your Hands off the Vuvuzela!'; and Lippe, 'An Orgy of a Masculine Scandal in Media'.
71. We are aware of the fact that discourses on bodies and sexuality are not limited to the realm of sports but present in numerous daily situations. Nevertheless, we argue that they gain visibility and salience during events like the World Cup. Furthermore, during the 2010 World Cup, multiple media reports characterized the German team's style of play as less aggressive, 'feminine' football. Michael Becker, an agent of one of the former teammates, even referred to the German national team as a 'bunch of gays'.
72. See Ismer, 'Embodying the Nation'.
73. For an overview see Anderson, 'Being Masculine is not about Who You Sleep with ...'. However, football has also been shown to 'encourage sexual ambiguity', see Coad, *The Metrosexual*, 10, as is evident in the growing body of literature on 'metrosexuality' in sports, often linked to the British football player, David Beckham (Ibid.).
74. Sülzle, 'Fußball als Schutzraum für Männlichkeit?'.
75. See, for example, Caudwell, 'Does your Boyfriend Know You're Here?'; and Jones and McCarthy, 'Mapping the Landscape of Gay Men's Football'. A recent study by Cashmore and Cleland, fans, homophobia and masculinities in association football, however, suggests that the days of football as a stronghold of homophobia might have come to an end. They observed decreases in homophobia and increases in 'inclusive masculinity' amongst British fans.
76. See, Cohen, 'Symbolic Construction of Community', 115.

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Appendix 1. Emotional entrainment scale items, four to six were weighted and combined into a single fourth item of the final scale

Scale ranging from 1 (none/not at all) to 4 (all/a lot)

- (1) How emotional have you felt about the German team's games?
- (2) How much have you let yourself be carried away by the mood of other fans?
- (3) How much have you let yourself be carried away by the excitement of the World Cup?
- (4) How many of the games in which the German national team played did you watch alone at home?
- (5) How many of the games in which the German national team played did you watch at home with friends/family/acquaintances?
- (6) How many of the games in which the German national team played did you watch in a public pub/bar/restaurant?
- (7) How many of the games in which the German national team played did you watch at a large public viewing event or in the stadium?