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Rivalry and Fan Aggression: Why Acknowledging Conflict Reduces Tension between Rival Fans and Downplaying Makes Things Worse

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Abstract

Research question

In order to reduce fan aggression surrounding rivalry games, team sport organizations often try to placate fans by downplaying the importance of the game (e.g., "the derby is not a war"). Drawing on the intergroup conflict literature, this research derives so-called dual-identity statements and examines their effectiveness in reducing fan aggressiveness compared to the managerial practice to downplay.

Research methods

Three field experimental studies (one face-to-face survey and two online surveys) tested the hypotheses. Established rivalries in the German soccer league Bundesliga served as the empirical setting of the studies. The data were analyzed using ANCOVA and linear regression analyses.

Results and Findings

Dual identity statements reduce fan aggressiveness compared to both downplay statements and a no-statement control condition, independent of team identification and trait aggression. Importantly, the managerial practice of downplaying appears to be counterproductive. It produces even higher levels of fan aggressiveness than making no statement, an effect caused by psychological reactance.

Implications

Sport organizations should not alienate their fan base by attempting to play down the importance of rivalry, which is an integral part of fan identity. Instead, they should strengthen

the supporters' unique identity (as fans of a particular team) while at the same time

facilitating identification with the rival at a superordinate level (e.g., as joint fans of a region).

Keywords: rivals, superordinate identity, violence, aggressive behavior, reactance

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"While often rivalries tend to be a strong driver in sports today, the hostility that now breeds from these rivalries is reducing fan attendance and negatively impacting the family tradition of sports that so many of us grew up with. When a parent does not feel it is safe to take his children to a game, there is a problem. And regrettably, this is occurring at stadiums and arenas across the country."—fansagainstviolence.org

Introduction

Despite all the joy and excitement that team sport competitions provide for spectators, there is a dark side. Whether it is football, basketball, handball, soccer or wheelchair basketball, violent fan behavior is a major problem in many spectator sports (Associated Press, 2012; Associated Press, 2013; Baker, 2015; Reuters, 2014). The derogation of the opponent and its fans can be an enjoyable and important part of the consumption experience (Branscombe & Wann, 1994; Grau, Hoevermann, Winands, & Zick, 2016). However, spectator sports are an emotional intergroup setting in which animosity tends to become overheated and crowds can quickly shift from peaceful to violent, a phenomenon that is not limited to hooligans (Stott, Hutchinson, & Drury, 2001; Stott & Reicher, 1998; Stott, West, & Radburn, 2016). Even in the U.S., where team sports events are traditionally less affected by fan violence than in Europe, concerned supporters have launched anti-violence campaigns because they feel it is not safe to bring children to games any more (fansagainstviolence.org, 2016). In addition to distracting spectators from attending games, fan violence can generate substantial costs. For example, in Germany, the annual costs for policing soccer-related incidents were at an all-time high of US-$43 million in 2013 (FAZ, 2013), as were the number of soccer-related criminal offences (2,860). In the US, the average number of arrests at NFL games was at 6.34 in 2016 (Babb & Rich, 2016). Predominantly, the perpetrators seem to be young males (Russell, 2004).

Violence and fan aggressiveness mainly occur around clashes of rival teams, also referred to as derby games (Tyler & Cobbs, 2015). While sport organizations generally

promote rivalries to generate interest and boost attendance, they try to ease the atmosphere before games against rival teams as hostilities may escalate quickly between rival fans (Havard, 2014; Lee, 1985). However, the extant sport management literature offers little guidance how fan aggression can be reduced. Wakefield and Wann (2006) propose to limit the distribution of alcohol, select an adequate starting time and prepare special seating arrangements. Grove, Pickett, Jones, and Dorsch (2012) identify several pregame and game-day actions that sport organizations can take to reduce fans' propensity to rage. Apart from increasing security measures and collaborating with the police, they propose the use of public statements that remind fans of appropriate and inappropriate behavior at sports venues. However, there is no guidance in the literature how such messages should be designed. A widespread approach in practice is the attempt to play down the importance of rivalry games, with officials stating that the derby is "not a war" (Sonnenberg, 2014; Zeit, 2012), "only for three points" (football-espana.net, 2016) or "just another game" (DCFC.co.uk, 2013). Although the attempt to downplay the importance of the game appears intuitively useful, the effects of such statements on fan aggressiveness have not been tested empirically, leaving managers without validation.

Drawing on the intergroup conflict literature, this research identifies communication content for public statements suited to reduce fan aggression between rival fan groups and compares them to the managerial practice of downplaying. The suggested type of statement—referred to as dual identity statements—embraces the idea of enhancing fans' identities as supporters of their team while at the same time developing a superordinate identity that includes the rival fan group (e.g., "Dortmund and Schalke fans are unique, however, both represent the Ruhr Valley region"). Thus, we provide a theory-based approach to inhibit fan aggressiveness that complements the downplay strategy which has been dominating managerial practice. We then make an empirical contribution by examining the

comparative effects of dual-identity versus downplay statements in reducing fan aggressiveness using three field experimental studies. In addition, we provide an explanation for the comparative effects of the two types of statements by identifying the underlying theoretical mechanisms, and we test the source of the statement as a potential boundary condition.

The remainder of the article is structured as follows. In the following section, we characterize sport fan rivalry as a subset of intractable identity-based conflicts. We review strategies to resolve such identity conflicts and assess their potential to tackle fan aggressiveness. We then derive hypotheses and present our empirical studies before discussing the implications and limitations.

Conceptual framework and hypotheses development

Sport fan rivalry as an intractable identity conflict

Any systematic attempt to reduce hostility between rival fans requires a thorough understanding of the nature of rivalry and why it increases fan aggressiveness (Tyler & Cobbs, 2015). Based on previous research into rivalry and intergroup conflicts, we characterize sport fan rivalry as a subset of intractable identity-based conflicts.

In general, the identity as a fan of a specific sport team is highly relevant for many people's self-concept (Branscombe & Wann, 1991). Comparisons with relevant outgroups, especially with fans of other teams, are an important aspect that can result in positive or negative distinction for the ingroup (Havard, 2014; Madrigal & Chen, 2008; Tyler & Cobbs, 2017). Several authors suggest that these comparison-related identity concerns are stronger and more relevant in competitions with rivals compared to non-rival competition (Converse & Reinhard, 2016; Kilduff, Galinsky, Gallo, & Reade, 2015; Tyler & Cobbs, 2017). Recently, Converse and Reinhard (2016) identified a key reason why rival competitions are more important. They showed that such competitions increase legacy concerns because

people connect them to past and future competitions, which gives identity concerns a long-term perspective. Thus, rivalry is a competitive relational schema, in which "current competitions are connected to past competitions and the expectation that they will be remembered in the future" (Converse & Reinhard, 2016, p. 192).

Considering this conceptualization of rivalry, rival competitions share many characteristics with so-called intractable identity conflicts, a type of conflict that was identified and described in the literature on intergroup conflicts (Fiol, Pratt, & O'Connor, 2009; Northrup, 1989). Best known to exist between different nations, ethnic or religious groups, intergroup conflicts are labeled intractable when they are protracted and resist resolution. Such conflicts have been described as blatant, i.e., "conscious, hot, direct, and unambiguous" as opposed to more subtle forms of conflict (Fiske, 2002, p. 123). In intractable identity conflicts, some strategies used by ingroup members to maintain a positive social identity are downgrading, criticizing, and attacking the outgroup (Hornsey & Hogg, 2000a). Such behavior can often be observed between groups of rival fans in team sport (Uhrich, Berendt, & Koenigstorfer, 2017). Further, intractable conflicts are chronically salient, feature mutual disidentification, simplifying stereotypes and zero-sum conceptualizations, i.e., one can only win if the rival loses and vice versa (Fiol et al., 2009). Sport fan rivalries are salient all year long and not just on game day. In addition, rival fans define themselves by who they are not (Elsbach & Bhattacharya, 2001) and the "enemy" is a part of their identity (Berendt & Uhrich, 2016). This is in line with the observation that the parties in intractable conflicts often collude in maintaining the conflictual relationship and the conflict itself and salient aspects of the conflict, such as hostile acts and criticisms, become defined as self (Northrup, 1989).

Intractable identity conflicts in general and rivalry in particular have been linked to a range of negative emotional and behavioral consequences. Responses to the rival outgroup

are hot, direct and aggressive (Fiske, 2002). Aggression is defined as "the infliction of an aversive stimulus, either physical, verbal, or gestural, upon one person by another" (Tenenbaum, Stewart, Singer, & Duda, 1996, p. 229). It has been shown that competition between rivals elicits aggressive emotions (Cikara, 2015; Grove et al., 2012) and results in verbal (Burgers, Beukeboom, Kelder, & Peeters, 2014) as well as behavioral aggression, like fighting and violence (Guilianotti, 2013; Spaaj, 2008).

Managerial practice to reduce fan aggressiveness at rivalry games: Downplay statements

Generally, any step to cool tensions is considered helpful to de-escalate the situation in conflicts (Wall & Callister, 1995). Following that logic, many sport organizations seek to calm waters before derby games to avoid excessive hostility and violent animosity between rival fan groups. Across different team sport leagues, officials often direct public statements to play down the significance of the game to cool tensions.[1] For example, AS Roma coach Zdenek Zeman publicly stated that "The derby is not a war" prior to the city derby against Lazio in Italy (Zeit, 2012). In Germany, Werder Bremen coach Viktor Skripnik echoed the same words in the build-up to the prestigious Northern derby against Hamburger SV (Sonnenberg, 2014). In England, Derby County coach Nigel Clough called the clash with rivals Nottingham Forrest "just another game" (DCFC.co.uk, 2013), while the Spanish team FC Sevilla's head coach Unai Emery said the prestigious derby against Real Betis Sevilla would "only be for three points, not more and not less" (football-espana.net).

Evidently, these statements aim to reduce fan aggressiveness by playing down the importance of the game. Based on Keltner, Young, and Buswell's theorizing (1997), such statements can be characterized as anticipatory appeasement, a form of appeasement that aims to avoid potential conflict. However, it appears to be questionable whether downplaying

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[1] A content analysis of managerial statements was conducted to identify and categorize the most commonly used communication approaches prior to rivalry games. For five well-known rivalries in England and Germany, the archives of the most popular local newspapers were searched for statements from officials in the build-up to the rivalry game. Downplaying proved to be a dominant strategy.

the importance of the game in a public statement is effective in reducing fan aggressiveness because these messages disregard the identity-related aspects of the conflict. Scholars suggest that if identity is part of the problem in an intergroup conflict, it should be part of the solution (Fiol et al., 2009; Northrup, 1989). Therefore, the next section provides a review of different approaches to resolve intractable identity-based conflicts and assesses their potential to decrease hostility between rival team sport fans.

Approaches to resolve intractable identity conflicts

Research on intergroup conflicts suggests several strategies to harmonize identity-based conflicts in ethnonational, societal or religious settings. For example, Intergroup Contact Theory proposes that contact between opposing groups may reduce conflict (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006). However, contact under conditions of competition has been shown to increase animosity between the groups (Bettencourt, Brewer, Croak, & Miller, 1992).

The Common Ingroup Identity Model (Gaertner, Dovidio, Anastasio, Bachmann, & Rust, 1993) proposes to transform two separate groups into one. This assimilation strategy encourages members of competing groups to define themselves entirely at a superordinate level (e.g., as Christians rather than as Protestants or Catholics). However, it has been noted that categorization exclusively at the superordinate level may be challenging to achieve because it can be difficult or impossible to give up a previously valued social identity (Hewstone & Brown, 1986). This is also the case for team sport fans who will not give up their precious sub-identity in favor of a superordinate identity that they share with the rival (e.g., "We are all soccer fans"). Distinctiveness is important for fans and "the more similar the subgroups are perceived, the less happy they will feel being categorized exclusively at a superordinate level" (Hornsey & Hogg, 2000b, p. 949).

Based on these criticisms of the assimilation strategy, Hornsey and Hogg (2000a) propose the so-called dual identity approach, which protects against the loss of group distinctiveness "by maintaining, not weakening, subgroup identities and locating them within the context of a binding superordinate identity" (p. 143). In this case, dual identification reconfigures intergroup relations so they become more harmonious. While the important subgroup identities will be nourished, the newly-evoked superordinate identity must meet two conditions. It should be valued as a source of pride and must not contradict the sub-identities (Simon, Reichert, & Grabow, 2013). Empirical evidence confirms that promoting a dual identity can reduce intergroup hostility and bias in inter-racial and cross-university contexts (Crisp, Walsh, & Hewstone, 2006; Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000; Hornsey & Hogg, 2000c).

In the team sport context, the dual identity approach seems the most promising strategy to reduce hostility between rival groups of fans. Although rival fan groups are different, they often have many things in common, such as the same geographic location (e.g., city or region), a joint history or a long tradition (Converse & Reinhard, 2016; Harvard, 2014; Kilduff, Elfenbein, & Staw, 2010). While these shared elements are antecedents of rivalry, they can at the same time form the basis for a common superordinate fan identity.

Dual identity versus downplay statements to reduce fan aggressiveness

We propose that public statements using a dual identity approach are more effective in reducing fan aggressiveness at rivalry games than the commonly-used downplay approach. Intuitively, the logic behind downplay statements is straightforward—lower the stakes of the competition and cool the tempers. However, this approach does not sufficiently take into account the nature of rivalry as an identity conflict embedded in an ongoing competitive relationship (Converse & Reinhard, 2016). Fans might perceive a statement that downplays the relevance of the rival game as a degradation of their identity because rivalry is typically a

valued part thereof. Differentiation and identity-related segregation between the groups is considered inevitable or even desirable and aggression can serve as a means to preserve this valued element of rivalry (Fiske, 2002). Thus, the key challenge is to maintain and strengthen the two rivals' sub-identities while at the same time decrease hostility between the opposing groups.

The idea of the dual identity approach appears to be particularly suitable to address this challenge because it refers directly to fans' identity, which is the basis of the conflict. A public statement using the dual identity approach includes two important aspects: 1) it acknowledges and strengthens the rival fans' subgroup identities, including their respective distinct features (e.g., team colors, rituals, etc.) and 2) it reframes group boundaries by defining and promoting a common superordinate fan identity, which is accepted and valued by both opposing fan groups. Adopting and maintaining the superordinate fan identity in addition to the subgroup identity can be expected to decrease the hostility toward the rival fan group (Fiol et al., 2009). Thus:

H1: A dual identity statement reduces fan aggressiveness compared to a downplay statement.

The dual identity approach explicitly defines and promotes a superordinate fan identity that includes the rival fans. When fans are encouraged to reconsider previous group boundaries, the context in which social comparisons take place will contain a sense of shared existence and common identity, as indicated by the recategorisation and intergroup relations literature (Allport, 1954; Brewer & Gaertner, 2001). Statements playing down the importance of the game do not refer to specific aspects underlying the superordinate identity (e.g., similarity in geography, tradition) and therefore these statements should produce lower levels of superordinate fan identity strength. Formally:

H2: A dual identity statement increases superordinate fan identity strength compared to a downplay statement.

Ingroup favoritism is a key tenet of social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). People evaluate the ingroup more positively than the outgroup, which is often target to prejudice, hate and aggression (Brewer, 1999; Fiske, 2002). However, when a superordinate identity can be established, rival fans will be perceived as more similar to the self and move from purely outgroup to a broader ingroup (Brewer & Gaertner, 2001). Holding both the subgroup identity and the superordinate identity reduces intergroup bias by creating a sense of commonality (Fiol et al., 2009; Hornsey & Hogg, 2000c). This reduces the initial ingroup-favoring bias and makes the opposing group less of a target of aggressiveness (Crisp et al., 2006). Thus:

H3: Superordinate fan identity strength is negatively related to fan aggressiveness.

Considering hypotheses 1, 2 and 3 in combination, we expect the strength of the superordinate fan identity to mediate the effects of the type of message (dual identity versus downplay) on fan aggressiveness. Formally:

H4: Superordinate fan identity strength mediates the effect of a dual identity (versus downplay) statement on fan aggressiveness.

The moderating role of message source

As with any message, the source may play an important role as to how the statement will be perceived. Generally, ingroup members are considered more trustworthy than outgroup members (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Previous research shows that the endorsement of a superordinate identity is more effective when the initiative comes from an ingroup member (Gomez, Dovidio, Huici, Gaertner, & Cuadrado, 2008). When outgroups members are emphasizing a superordinate identity, it can even increase bias and cause people to respond more negatively (Dovidio, Saguy, & Shnabel, 2009; Gomez et al., 2008). Hence, we believe

it is important to distinguish between ingroup (favorite team`s players) and outgroup (rival team`s players) as message source.

H5:   The source of the statement moderates the effect of a dual identity (vs. downplay) statement. A dual identity statement only reduces fan aggressiveness if the statement comes from an ingroup (versus outgroup) member.

Controls

A number of studies reveal a positive link between team identification and fan aggressiveness (Branscombe & Wann, 1992; Shoham, Dalakas, & Lahav, 2015; Wakefield & Wann, 2006; Wann, Haynes, McLean, & Pullen, 2003). The more fans identify with their favorite team, the higher their willingness to engage in aggressive behavior. Hence, we control for the influence of team identification on fan aggressiveness in our studies. In addition, studies 2 and 3 control for individual aggressive disposition because this personality trait is an important driver of aggressiveness (Buss & Perry, 1992). Figure 1 sums up the research model.

(Insert Figure 1 about here)

Method

Overview of the studies

To test the hypotheses, we conducted three field experimental studies using slightly different designs. Studies 1 and 2 used a two-factorial (type of statement: dual identity vs. downplay vs. control (neutral statement) x source of statement: players of favorite team vs. rival team's players vs. players of both teams together) between-subjects design. Study 3 used a one-factorial (type of statement: dual identity vs. downplay vs. control) between-subjects design. The experimental design allows conclusions about the causal influence of the type and the source of statement on fan aggressiveness. We selected a real-life setting to

examine the comparative effects of the two types of statements under realistic conditions and thus increase the external validity of the findings. Three famous rivalries in the context of German professional soccer served as the empirical settings (study 1: Borussia Dortmund vs. Schalke 04, study 2: FC Nuremberg vs. Greuther Fuerth study 3: Eintracht Brunswick vs. Hanover 96). We conducted a pen-and-paper survey among fans of Borussia Dortmund (N = 419) and online surveys among fans of FC Nuremberg (N = 625) and Eintracht Brunswick (N = 949).

Study 1

Participants and procedure

Prior to the final game of the 2015/16 season, nine research assistants were deployed to the city of Dortmund. The interviewers intercepted Dortmund fans on their way to watch the match. Once it was confirmed that the participant was a fan of Borussia Dortmund, he or she was handed a questionnaire. A total of 419 questionnaires were completed (M_{Age} = 27.32 (±11.23), 66% male).

Design

The questionnaire featured a fictitious newspaper article alluding to the next rivalry game against Schalke 04, which by the time of the survey was more than five months away. The rivalry is widely considered the biggest in Germany (Heck, Nierhaus, & Luh, 2012), and the article suggested that due to the importance of the derby, preparations by both teams were already under way. An official statement from either Dortmund's (ingroup), Schalke's (outgroup) or both teams' players (jointly ingroup and outgroup; see Appendix A for source manipulation details) served as the experimental manipulation. In the dual identity condition, the statement sought to create a superordinate identity that is valued and not in conflict with the two rival's sub-identities. To identify a superordinate fan identity, discussions were held with several fans. The goal was to find a superordinate identity that is valued by both rival

fan groups and does not contradict their respective sub-identities. Hence, the superordinate

fan identity alludes to the rivals' shared love for their region and tradition. Both Borussia

Dortmund and Schalke 04 are located in the Ruhr Valley, a region traditionally associated

with coal mining, heavy industry and a strong sense of solidarity among the workforce. These

traditional features are also a part of both rivals' sub-identities and both teams have a large

working-class fan base. Thus, the dual identity statement explicated that even though the

rivals were fundamentally different, both clubs would stand for the Ruhr Valley tradition and

represent their region (for details, see appendix). In the downplay condition, the statement de-

emphasized the importance of the game, indicating that the derby was just for three points

and would definitely not be a war. We also included a control condition, which featured

general information about the game. The control condition enabled us to test whether or not a

statement from the club has an influence regardless of the message content. Sport

organizations often use this "no public statement" strategy prior to rivalry games when they

try to keep a low profile and not make any rivalry-related comments at all (rundschau-online,

2015). A pre-test with five fans of Borussia Dortmund gave us confidence in the success of

the experimental manipulation.

Measures

The measures for the dependent variable fan aggressiveness assessed both the

affective and the behavioral component of the construct. Established scales from the literature

captured aggressive affect ("When thinking about [rival] fans, I feel hate / anger / disgust",

Kteily, Hodson, & Bruneau (2016)) and aggressive behavioral tendencies ("I feel the desire

to hurt / inflict pain on fans of [rival]", Mackie, Devos, & Smith (2000)), using seven-point

rating scales (1 = do not agree, 7 = fully agree). The mediator superordinate fan identity

strength was measured with three items, which were adapted from Simon, Mommert, and

Renger (2015) (e.g., "Dortmund and Schalke supporters are fundamentally different, but

together we stand for tradition and Ruhr Valley soccer / we are all Ruhr Valley fans / together

we represent the Ruhr Valley"). Team identification was measured with three items from

Mael and Asforth's (1992) scale (e.g., "My favorite team's successes are my successes").

Manipulation check

Although the use of field experiments results in greater external validity due to the

real-life setting, a potential drawback is the high degree of noise and limited control over the

procedure (Gneezy, 2017). Compared to a controlled lab setting, participants may be

distracted or pay little attention to the task at hand. Hence, identifying and filtering

inattentive participants is crucial to increase signal-to-noise ratio and statistical power

(Oppenheimer, Melvis, & Davidenko, 2009). That is why we applied a conservative

manipulation check. To check whether participants in the dual identity and downplay

conditions had read and understood the article, we asked them whether the article "stressed

differences and similarities between Borussia Dortmund and Schalke" (MC1) and whether

the rivalry "was played down" (MC2). We included only those participants who gave correct

answers to both manipulation check questions, resulting in a finale sample size of 173 (dual

identity = 88, downplay = 31, control = 54).[2] The dropout rate of 58.7 % was deemed

acceptable considering the empirical setting of the field experiment (Gneezy, 2017). A

potential problem with eliminating participants is that they might differ substantially from

those participants who remained in the sample, which could reduce the generalizability of the

findings. However, a comparison of the eliminated participants with those who remained in

the sample did not show any significant differences in age ($t(417) = .10$, $p = .92$), gender (χ^2

$(1, N = 419) = 3.18$, $p = .074$), team identification ($t(417) = -.11$, $p = .91$) or season ticket

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[2] Across all three studies, we only found the reported effects after filtering out inattentive participants. However, this is no surprise because reading and understanding the article is a prerequisite for the manipulation to work and effects to occur.

ownership (χ^2 (1, $N = 419$) = .004, p =.95), leaving us confident that both populations are comparable.

Results

An exploratory factor analysis of the dependent variable fan aggressiveness, the mediator superordinate fan identity strength and the control variable team identification with principal axis factoring extraction rotated to a varimax solution revealed three dimensions (eigenvalue criterion). Although conceptually different, the affective and behavioral component of fan aggressiveness could not be separated empirically. Therefore, we combined them to an index of fan aggressiveness. H1 was tested using an ANCOVA with type of statement as the independent variable, the index of fan aggressiveness ($\alpha = .90$) as the dependent variable, and team identification ($\alpha = .84$) as control. The results show a significant main effect ($F(2, 169) = 6.90$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2 = .075$) of type of statement. Post hoc tests (Bonferroni) indicate that compared to the downplay condition, a dual identity statement significantly reduces fan aggressiveness ($M_{Dual} = 2.26$ (± 1.48) vs. $M_{Downplay} = 3.54$ (± 1.90), $p < .001$), supporting H1. The influence of the control variable team identification was also significant ($p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .211$). Interestingly, participants in the downplay condition reported significantly higher levels of fan aggressiveness than in the control condition ($M_{Downplay} = 3.54$ (± 1.90) vs. $M_{Control} = 2.44$ (± 1.69), $p < .01$).

A regression analysis tested H2. We created three dummy variables: dummy *dual* for the dual identity statement (0 = no, 1 = yes), dummy *downplay* for the downplay statement and dummy *control* for the no-statement condition. Dummy *dual* and dummy *control* served as the predictors (dummy *downplay* served as the reference category) and superordinate fan identity strength ($\alpha = .86$) as the criterion. The analysis showed a positive and significant effect of dual ($B = .87$, $p < .05$), supporting H2. The effect of the *control* dummy was not

significant ($B = .60$, $p = .13$). Another regression analysis showed that superordinate fan identity strength is negatively related to fan aggressiveness ($\beta = -.23$, $p < .01$), supporting H3.

To assess the indirect effect of type of statement on fan aggressiveness, we used Hayes' (2013) Process macro for SPSS. We entered dummy *dual* as the predictor and dummy *control* and team identification as controls, testing against the reference category dummy *downplay*. The indirect effect of dummy *dual* on fan aggressiveness was significant ($B = -.12$ [CI: .-3696 to -.0028], $p < .05$), providing support for H4. The influence of team identification ($B = .49$ [CI: .3412 to .6331], $p < .01$) and dummy *control* ($B = -.71$ [CI: -1.3566 to -.0587], $p < .05$) was also significant.

H5 was tested using an ANCOVA with source and type of statement as the independent variables, fan aggressiveness as the dependent variable, and team identification as control. The results show a non-significant main effect of source of statement ($F(2, 167) = .44$, $p = .64$). The interaction effect of *type of statement* x *source of statement* on fan aggressiveness was not significant either ($F(2, 165) = .59$, $p = .56$). The results (see Appendix D for details) thus do not support H5. Figure 2 provides a summary of the key findings.

(insert figure 2 about here)

Discussion

The results indicate that a public statement that promotes a dual identity can reduce fan aggressiveness compared to attempts to downplay the importance of the rivalry game. Fans in the dual identity condition showed a higher level of superordinate fan identity strength, which makes a shared existence and some commonality salient, and hence, reduces aggressiveness toward the rival fan group. Importantly, the influence of the public statement remained significant while controlling for team identification, a strong driver of fan aggressiveness.

An interesting finding is that the downplay statement resulted in higher levels of fan aggressiveness not only compared to the dual identity statement but also compared to the control group. This finding implies that saying nothing could be better than trying to downplay the rivalry. This is in line with our theoretical argument that fans might feel a degradation of their identity when the importance of the game is downplayed because the rivalry is a part of their identity. The fans might interpret the downplay statement as an attempt to control their behavior. In general, such situations cause psychological reactance and can result in "hostile and aggressive feelings" (Brehm, 1966, p. 9). Clee and Wicklung (1980) proposed that social influence attempts can cause a boomerang effect, i.e., the individual will tend to move in the direction opposite from the one intended. This might have happened among the Borussia Dortmund fans in the downplay condition. The fans were potentially upset that the club did not value the importance of the rivalry, resulting in reactant responses.

Surprisingly, the influence of type of statement was independent from the source of the statement. A potential explanation could be that the content of the message, due to its high identity relevance, may be more important than the source of the message.

Study 2

The goals of study 2 were fourfold. First, it aimed to replicate the findings from study 1 in a different empirical setting. Second, it tested the assumption that psychological reactance is the mechanism underlying the negative effect of the downplay statement. Third, study 2 included modifications of the experimental stimuli and the manipulation check in order to reduce the number of inattentive participants. Fourth, study 2 aimed to control for individual aggressive disposition because personality traits like impulsivity or a predisposition to exhibit aggression may impact the likelihood that someone will respond in an aggressive fashion.

Participants and procedure

The rivalry between FC Nuremberg and Greuther Fuerth, which also has a history of violence, served as the context for study 2. By the time of the survey, the next derby was more than two months away. The survey link was distributed via FC Nuremberg`s official twitter account and also emailed to 698 Nuremberg supporters clubs. Six-hundred and twenty-five questionnaires were completed (M_{Age} = 33.30 (±13.06), 89% male). Two cases were removed because the participants indicated that they were not supporters of FC Nuremberg.

Design

Again, a fictitious newspaper article was created. It was shortened and focused on the actual source and type of statement manipulations, which were now also featured in the headline. The stimulus material (see Appendix B) was similar to study 1, only it was geared towards the Franconia region based on discussions with team officials from the communications department. In addition, the manipulation check items were slightly re-phrased.

Measures

To test for the influence of psychological reactance, we included two items from Quick's (2012) reactance measure ("The players should not lecture us fans," "I do not listen to such official messages at all;" M = 3.40 (±1.05), α = .73). Fans' individual aggressive disposition was measured with five items based on Buss and Perry (1992) (e.g., "I get into fights a little more often than the average person," "I flare up quickly;" M = 2.51 (±1.06), α = .80). Superordinate fan identity strength was measured as before, only geared toward the Franconian region ("together we stand for the Franconian tradition" / "we are all Franconian" / "together we represent Franconia"). All scales showed good reliability (α ≥ .78).

Manipulation check

The refined manipulation check forced the participants to select one of the following three options: 1) the club statement (and not, as previously stated, the entire article) "not only stressed differences but also similarities between the two clubs" (dual identity condition), 2) the club statement "downplayed the rivalry" (downplay condition), or 3) there was no statement at all (control condition). Two-hundred ninety six cases were removed, resulting in a final sample size of 329 (dual identity = 142, downplay = 107, control = 80). The dropout rate was at 47.3 %, a decrease by 11 % compared to study 1. Again, a comparison of the eliminated participants with those who remained in the sample did not show any significant differences in age ($t(617) = -.48$, $p = .40$), team identification ($t(623)= -.66$, $p = .51$), aggressive disposition ($t(623)= -1.05$, $p = .30$) and season ticket ownership (χ^2 (1, N = 625) = .822, $p =.37$). There was a minor difference in gender, with more females among the participants included (13.2%) than among the participants excluded (7.8%, χ^2 (1, N = 625) = 4.80, $p =.028$).

Results

An ANCOVA showed a significant main effect of type of statement on fan aggressiveness ($F(2, 324) = 7.10$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .042$) when controlling for team identification ($p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .10$) and aggressive disposition ($p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .20$). Post hoc tests (Bonferroni) showed that the dual identity approach significantly reduces fan aggressiveness compared to downplaying the rivalry ($M_{Dual} = 1.69$ (±1.07) vs. $M_{Downplay} = 2.79$ (±1.52), $p < .001$), providing further support for H1. The dual identity statement also significantly reduced fan aggressiveness compared to the no-statement control condition ($M_{Dual} = 1.69$ vs. $M_{Control} = 2.27$ (±1.51), p < .01). As in study 1, the downplay statement produced a higher level of fan aggressiveness than the control condition ($p = .027$).

A regression analysis with downplay as the reference category showed a positive effect of dual ($B = 1.64$, $p < .001$) on superordinate fan identity strength, further supporting

H2. Dummy *control* also had a positive effect ($B = 0.82$, $p < .001$). Consistent with study 1 and in support of H3, superordinate fan identity strength was negatively related to fan aggressiveness ($\beta = -.49$, $p < .001$). In addition, the indirect effect of type of statement on fan aggressiveness was negative and significant ($B = -.32$, [CI: -.4861 to -.1917], $p < .01$) when controlling for team identification ($B = .26$, [CI: .1621 to .3451], $p < .01$) and aggressive disposition ($B = .32$, [CI: .4036 to .6404], $p < .01$), offering further support for H4. The influence of dummy *control* was not significant ($B = -.11$, [CI: -.4037 to .1801], $p = .45$).

Furthermore, an ANOVA showed significant differences in reactance between the dual identity and the downplay conditions ($M_{Dual} = 2.99$ (1.44) vs. $M_{Downplay} = 4.01$ (1.51), $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .107$). Using Hayes' (2013) Process macro, we ran a model with both superordinate fan identity strength and reactance as parallel mediators as well as team identification and aggressive disposition as controls. Dummy *dual* was included as the independent variable, while dummy *control* was excluded because participants in the control condition did not receive a statement and hence did not answer questions regarding reactance. There was a negative and significant total indirect effect on fan aggressiveness ($B = -.39$, [CI: -.6796 to -.1919], $p < .01$) via superordinate fan identity strength ($B = -.31$, [CI: -.5524 to -.1307], $p < .01$) and reactance ($B = -.09$, [CI: -.2154 to -.0135], $p < .05$) when controlling for team identification ($B = .25$, [CI: .1466 to .3549], $p < .01$) and aggressive disposition ($B = .36$, [CI: .2185 to .5048], $p < .01$). The indirect effect via superordinate fan identity strength was significantly stronger [CI: .0442 to .4292, $p < .05$] than the indirect effect via reactance. The direct effect of type of statement on fan aggressiveness became non-significant, indicating indirect-only mediation.

Again, there was no support for H5. An ANCOVA with source and type of statement as the independent variables, fan aggressiveness as the dependent variable and team identification and aggressive disposition as controls showed a non-significant main effect

(F(2, 322) = 2.40, p = .09). The interaction effect of *type of statement* x *source of statement*

on fan aggressiveness was not significant either (F(2, 320) = .19, p = .82).

Discussion

Study 2 provides additional support for the proposition that a dual identity statement

is more effective in reducing fan aggressiveness than a downplay statement. Also in line with

our previous findings, the downplay statement produced even higher levels of fan

aggressiveness than no statement at all. The two mediators superordinate fan identity strength

and reactance fully explain these effects. While the indirect effect through superordinate fan

identity strength is stronger compared to the indirect effect through reactance, the latter is

also significant and, therefore, adds to our understanding of how the two types of statements

affect fans' aggressiveness toward the rival fan group. In support of our proposition, the

downplay statement increases fans' reactance toward the public statement of the sport

organization. Thus, the advantage of using the dual identity approach is not only based on

higher levels of superordinate fan identity strength but also on lower levels of reactance.

As in study 1, the source of the statement did not have an effect—it didn´t make a

difference whether it came from the ingroup, outgroup of from both groups together.

Previous research provides a potential explanation for this unexpected finding. Gomez et al.

(2008) suggest that the endorsement of a superordinate identity from the outgroup is

acceptable if people know that fellow ingroup members also accept the superordinate

connection. Our study participants may have assumed that fellow spectators accepted the

superordinate identity and, therefore, the dual identity statement was perceived favorably

even when it came from the rival team's players.

Study 3

In addition to replicating the previous findings, study 3 served to further improve the

experimental stimuli and the manipulation check. The rivalry between Eintracht Brunswick

and Hanover 96, which also has a history of violent fan encounters, served as the empirical

setting.

Participants and procedure

Eintracht Brunswick encouraged fans to participate in the study via postings on

Twitter and the club's official webpage. After the questionnaire was pre-tested and discussed

with officials from the communications department, the survey link was also emailed to

supporters clubs. By the time of the survey, the next derby was more than four months away.

Nine-hundred and forty-nine questionnaires were completed ($M_{Age} = 42$ (±14.03), 89.5%

male). Six cases were removed because the completion had taken less than three minutes,

which strongly indicates a careless completion of the questionnaire. Twenty-six cases were

removed because participants failed an attention check ("Please tick moderately agree"). A

further 155 cases were removed because participants failed an instructional manipulation

check recommended by Oppenheimer et al. (2009) ("Please write 5 in the box below"),

which serves to deal with the problem of inattentive participants. Five cases were then

removed because the participants indicated that they were not supporters of Eintracht

Brunswick.

Design

Instead of a fictitious press article, participants only received a quote (see Appendix

C). After the source of the statement did not have an influence in the previous studies, we

opted to remove this factor and test the type of statement in a one-factorial (type of statement:

dual identity vs. downplay vs. control) between-subjects design.

Measures

The questionnaire included one item to assess the credibility of the players' statement

("I find the player statement credible," $M = 4.83$ (± 1.36)), using a seven-point rating scale.

We deem the mean rating as an indicator that the statements were sufficiently credible.

Superordinate fan identity strength was measured as before, only geared toward the Lower-Saxony region ("together we stand for the Lower-Saxon tradition" / "we are all Lower-Saxons" / "together we represent Lower-Saxony").

Manipulation check

To make sure participants had read and understood the article, we asked whether the statement "not only stressed differences but also similarities" between the two clubs (dual identity condition), "downplayed the rivalry" (downplay condition), or "does not mention the rivalry with Hanover 96 at all" (control condition). Three-hundred and thirty seven cases were removed, resulting in a final sample size of 420 (dual identity = 165, downplay = 124, control = 131). Based on the selection criteria used in studies 1 and 2, the dropout rate decreased by three percent (44.5 %). However, due to the additional checks, further participants were excluded to further reduce noise in the data, resulting in an overall drop-out rate of 55.7 %.

There were no significant differences in age ($t(938) = .79$, $p = .37$), gender (χ^2 (1, N = 949) = 3.41, $p =.18$), season ticket ownership (χ^2 (1, N = 949) = 2.28, $p =.13$) and team identification (t(948)= .08, $p = .93$) between participants included and excluded. There was a difference in aggressive disposition ($M_{Excluded} = 2.56$ (± 1.22) vs. $M_{Included} = 2.39$ (± 1.00), $t(948)= 5.35$, $p = .02$). As the effect size is extremely low ($\eta^2 = .006$), we do not believe that this difference is of any relevance. All scales displayed good reliability ($\alpha \geq .72$).

Results

An ANCOVA showed a significant main effect of type of statement on fan aggressiveness ($F(2, 415) = 10.16$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .047$) when controlling for team identification ($p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .05$) and aggressive disposition ($p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .31$). Post hoc tests (Bonferroni) showed that the dual identity statement reduces fan aggressiveness compared to the downplay condition ($M_{Dual} = 1.75$ (± 1.14) vs. $M_{Downplay} = 2.76$ (± 1.45), $p <$

.001), providing further support for H1. The dual identity statement also significantly reduced

fan aggressiveness compared to the no-statement control condition (M_{Dual} = 1.75 vs. $M_{Control}$

= 2.19 (±1.51), p < .05). Again, the downplay statement resulted in the highest levels of fan

aggressiveness with a significant difference to the control condition (p < .01).

A regression analysis with downplay as the reference category showed a positive

effect of dual (B = .85, p < .001) on superordinate fan identity strength, further supporting

H2. Dummy *control* did not have a significant influence (B = .36, p = .12).

Consistent with studies 1 and 2, superordinate fan identity was negatively related to

fan aggressiveness (β = -.36, p < .001). In addition, the indirect effect of type of statement on

fan aggressiveness was negative and significant (B = -.11, [CI: -.2087 to -.0408], p < .01)

when controlling for team identification (B = .17, [CI: .1621 to .3451], p < .01) and

aggressive disposition (B = .70, [CI: .4036 to .6404], p < .01), offering further support for H4.

The influence of dummy *control* was significant (B = -.34, [CI: -.5847 to -.0830], p < .01).

Another ANOVA showed significant differences in reactance between the dual

identity and the downplay conditions (M_{Dual} = 3.06 (1.55) vs. $M_{Downplay}$ = 3.96 (1.42), p <

.001, η^2 = .083). The analysis showed a negative and significant total indirect effect of type of

statement on fan aggressiveness (B = -.17, [CI: -.3317 to -.0504], p < .01 via superordinate

fan identity strength (B = -.08, [CI: -.2119 to -.0125], p < .01) and reactance (B = -.09, [CI: -

.2114 to -.0081], p < .01) when controlling for team identification (B = .19, [CI: .0724 to

.3030], p < .01) and aggressive disposition (B = .67, [CI: .4951 to .8399], p < .01). In study 3,

there was no significant difference in the strength of the indirect effects via superordinate fan

identity strength and via reactance. The direct effect of type of statement on fan

aggressiveness remained significant (B = -.41, [CI: -.7377 to -.0893], p < .01) indicating

partial mediation.

Discussion

Study 3 replicates the main findings of studies 1 and 2. A dual identity (vs. downplay) statement decreases fan aggressiveness by increasing superordinate fan identity strength and decreasing reactance. Again, the attempt to downplay a rivalry made fans more aggressive than not making a statement (control condition).

General Discussion

Theoretical implications

Adding to the attractiveness of games and leagues, rivalry is considered a desirable and important element of team sport competitions. This research set out to contribute to the literature by addressing a downside of rivalry in team sports, i.e., the occurrence of excessive aggression and violent fan behavior. Specifically, we examine the use of public statements directed at fans as a tool that can help sport organizations tackle this issue.

Tyler and Cobbs (2015) note that, "when animosity surrounding a rivalry becomes overheated or violent, better understanding rivalry's underpinnings can help managers de-emphasize the rivalry's most salient contributors" (p. 227). Building on this idea, we contribute to the understanding of rivalry by conceptualizing it as a subset of intractable identity conflict. While previous studies have pointed out the identity-relevance of rivalry (e.g., Berendt & Uhrich, 2016; Tyler & Cobbs, 2015), our study is the first to consider this identity-relevance in designing actions that aim to prevent violence between fans of rival teams. Drawing on the literature on identity-related intergroup conflicts, we derive the dual identity approach and provide theoretical arguments why public statements using this approach should be more effective in reducing fan aggressiveness than the common managerial practice of downplaying the importance of rivalry games.

Three field experimental studies provide consistent empirical support for our theorizing. Sport fans showed significantly lower levels of fan aggressiveness after reading a dual identity statement from their favorite team compared to both a downplay statement (all

studies) and a no-statement control condition (studies 2 and 3). The superiority of dual

identity statements over the no-statement control condition in studies 2 and 3 indicates that

the use of public statements can help sport organizations to reduce fan aggressiveness

surrounding rivalry games. The superiority over the downplay approach implies that dual

identity statements are more effective than the managerial practice to de-emphasize the

importance of rivalry games. A key finding is that downplay statements produced even

higher levels of fan aggressiveness than the no-statement control condition. This finding

suggests that the widespread use of downplay statements may not only be ineffective but can

also have counterproductive effects.

We also contribute to the literature by unraveling the theoretical mechanisms

underlying the effects of the different types of statements. Consistent with our theorizing, the

superiority of dual identity statements can be explained by their ability to strengthen a

superordinate identity that fans share with their rival. Theoretically, rival fans move from

outgroup to ingroup to some extent and, as a result, become less of a target of aggression.

The counter-intuitive finding that downplay statements increase fan aggressiveness compared

to saying nothing can be explained by psychological reactance. Fans get upset when clubs try

to play down the importance of rivalry because the conflict with other fans marks a crucial

part of their identity (Northrup, 1989). Downplaying a rivalry game fails to acknowledge

rivalry's importance to the fans' identity and, hence, has a boomerang effect on fan

aggressiveness. Disentangling these causal mechanisms adds to our understanding of how

fans respond to public statements from sport organizations and provides a basis to design

effective statements.

Interestingly, the source of the statement (ingroup, outgroup or both groups together)

did not have an influence. Given the mutual disdain, it is remarkable that fans accept a

message from the rival. It further underlines the strength of the dual identity approach and indicates that even rival fan groups are able to find common ground.

Managerial implications

It should be in the sport organizations' best interest to do everything in their power to make rivalry games as safe as possible, and this includes an appropriate pre-game communication strategy. Our research has some specific implications for managers. Most importantly, sport organizations should not alienate their fan base by attempting to play down the importance of rivalry. Any attempt to ease tension via a public statement should express appreciation for rivalry as an important part of fandom and the organization itself. This signals that the sport organization has an understanding of the fans' needs and interests. The results of this research suggest that dual identity statements are an effective approach to reduce aggression directed at rival fans. In addition to reinforcing fans' identities as supporters of the own team, dual identity statements must promote a superordinate identity that is valued as a source of pride and must not contradict the sub-identities of both rival fan groups. The identification of a superordinate identity may not be a small feat. It must not be too general (i.e., being a soccer fan in Germany) but should rather include distinctive and differentiating features. Managers need to identify aspects that represent some common ground or similarity with the rival. These aspects could relate to the region ("both fans of our region"), cultural factors ("both working class clubs") or joint history ("most exciting rivalry in the country"). While similarity can also be a driver of rivalry, it is important to emphasize that the aspects that make the rivals similar to each other distinguish them from other teams and their fans. For example, rival fan groups from a working class region might feel some level of unity as opposed to fans of non-working class clubs.

Limitations and Future Research

This research focused on the general population of fans and not a specific subgroup with a higher propensity to violence (e.g., hooligans or ultras). Hooliganism has been studied in great detail by renowned sports sociologists like Taylor (1971), Dunning (2000) and Giulianotti (2013), who describe and explain the phenomenon in terms of cultural, societal or historical terms. Rather than focusing on so-called troublemakers, this research takes a social psychological point of view that considers violence a crowd phenomenon. Stott et al. (2016) propose that the key challenge is not only to identify and control risk fans, but focus on "effectively managing the group level dynamics of the crowds within which such fans are understood to be present" (p. 3). Therefore, it appears reasonable to identify and test public statements suitable to reduce aggression in the fan base as a whole because it cannot be in the interest of a club to create an aggressive atmosphere among the non-violent majority. Although we controlled for team identification and trait aggression, we did not check whether the participants had any criminal record or were members of a certain subgroup. It would be an interesting task for future research to empirically assess the effects of public statements within specific groups of risk fans (if such groups can be approached) or directly at the rivalry games (e.g., at the stadium on game day or following the pre-game press conference). Future research could also explore whether dual identity statements can help to harmonize other intractable identity-based conflicts with more severe consequences, such as those between opposing ethnic groups or nations.

We used a field experimental approach in our research to avoid the artificial environment of laboratory settings. In order to increase signal-to-noise ratio and statistical power, we eliminated inattentive participants, as recommended by the methodological literature (Oppenheimer et al., 2009). Although our dropout rates were similar to what has been found in laboratory settings, future studies would benefit from further refinements of the experimental stimuli that decrease the percentage of inattentive participants. For example, the

statements could be presented via short videos instead of newspaper articles, which would likely increase participants' attentiveness. The videos could be easily integrated in online experiments or presented to the participants on tablets or smartphones in face-to-face interviews.

Another limitation is related to the measurement of fan aggressiveness. Although there is strong support in the literature that self-reported data appear valid of measuring involvement in delinquent behavior (Elliott & Ageton, 1980; Thornberry & Krohn, 2000), it would be interesting to capture the dependent variable in terms of behavior. Potential measures include the dispensation of aversive stimuli, such as the opportunity to distribute noise blasts or hit somebody with a foam sword (Denson, Capper, Oaten, Friese, & Schofield, 2011). Also, the measurement of the mediator superordinate fan identity strength is closely related to the independent variable type of statement, which limits its potential for a broader theoretical contribution to the field of social psychology. A more general measure (e.g., "We share a common background") could potentially overcome this problem in future research.

As rivalry is a double-edged sword with ambivalent consequences, it will remain a challenge for researchers and practitioners alike to strike the balance between increasing anticipation and reducing hostility so that rivalries can be promoted in a responsible way. Our research helps to find middle ground by reducing negative outcomes of rivalry.

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Appendix

Appendix A

stimuli used in study 1

(**dual identity condition** with source manipulation)

(…) In a statement, *the Dortmund / the Schalke / both the Dortmund and Schalke players* said: "Dortmund and Schalke are fundamentally different. Dortmund is black-yellow, Schalke is blue-white. Either club has its own distinct identity which it will never give up. But there are also important similarities. We both stand for tradition. And we both stand for the Ruhr Valley. In this region, we have the world's best fans. Everybody supports his colors and backs his team. That is what makes the Ruhr Valley special and creates the unique derby atmosphere."

(**downplay condition** with source manipulation)

(…) In a statement, *the Dortmund / the Schalke / both the Dortmund and Schalke players* said: "One must not exaggerate the rivalry. Football is not a war. From a sporting perspective, the derby is only about three points. We do not live just for this game."

(**control condition—no quote**)

(…) Some Dortmund fans may think that winning the derby is like winning the championship. The interest in the 89th Ruhr Valley derby is huge. Similar to today's Cup Final, there have been plans to stage public viewing events at different locations across the city. It is not yet certain when the next derby will be played. The German Football League will shortly announce the schedule for next season.

Appendix B

stimuli used in study 2

(dual identity condition with source manipulation)

Headline: Plea by *Nuremberg players / Furth players / archrivals*: Nuremberg and

Fuerth are unqiue clubs, but both stand for Franconia and tradition

(…) In an official statement, *the Nuremberg players / the Fuerth players / both the*

Nuremberg and Fuerth players said: "Club or shamrock—FCN and Greuther Fuerth are

fundamentally different. Both clubs are unique. Both have their own special identity. But

there are also important similarities. We both stand for tradition. And we both stand for

Franconia. Here we have the best fans in the world. Everybody sticks to his colors and

supports his team. That is what creates the incredible atmosphere at the Franconia derby."

(downplay condition—with source manipulation)

Headline: Plea by *Nuremberg players / Furth players / archrivals*: Franconia-derby is not

a war

(…) In an official statement, *the Nuremberg players / the Fuerth players / both the*

Nuremberg and Fuerth players said: "The derby is always something very special—for the

fans as well as for us players. But one must not exaggerate the rivalry. Football is not a war.

From a sporting perspective, the derby is only about three points. We do not live just for this

game."

(control condition—no quote)

Headline: Mother of all derbies—Anticipation ahead of season highlight

(…) Some Nuremberg fans may think that winning the derby is like winning the

championship. The interest in the derby is as big as always. Once again, it will be played in

front of a sell-out crowd. As of today, there have been 260 Franconia derbies, with

Nuremberg winning 138 and Fuerth winning 73. 47 times both sides settled for a draw, while two games were suspended.

Appendix C

Stimuli used in study 3

(dual identity condition with source manipulation)

Statement by *Eintracht Brunswick / Hanover 96 / both Eintracht Brunswick and Hanover 96* players: "Whether blue-yellow or red—Eintracht Brunswick and Hanover 96 are fundamentally different. Both clubs are unique. Both have their own special identity. But there are also important similarities. We both stand for tradition. And we both stand for Lower-Saxony. Here we have the best fans in the world. Everybody sticks to his colors and supports his team. That is what creates the incredible atmosphere at the Lower-Saxony derby."

(downplay condition with source manipulation)

Statement by *Eintracht Brunswick / Hanover 96 / both Eintracht Brunswick and Hanover 96* players: "For many people the derby is something special. But one must not exaggerate the rivalry. Football is not a war. From a sporting perspective, the derby is only about three points and that is why this game is not more important than other games. We do not live just for this game."

(control condition—no rivalry quote)

Statement by Eintracht *Brunswick* players: "We are very pleased about the season thus far. We worked hard to gain as many points and the current position in the standings. We want to be autumn champions and enter the back half of the season on a high."

Appendix D

(insert Figure 3 about here)

Figure captions

Figure 1: Proposed research model.

Figure 2: Means of fan aggressiveness (1 = low, 7 = high) depending on type of public statement across the three studies. *Notes:* Standard deviations in parentheses. $* p < .05$, $** p < .01$, $*** p < .001$.

Figure 3: Means of fan aggressiveness (1 = low, 7 = high) depending on source of public statement across the two studies. *Notes:* Standard deviations in parentheses. $* p < .05$, $** p < .01$, $*** p < .001$.