

The Interdisciplinary Seminar on Conflict and Violence

promotes interdisciplinary exchanges among faculty and graduate students interested in the topics of conflict, violence and peace from a wide range of departments across campus

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How dual identities reduce rivalry-related fan aggression



Johannes Berendt, Postdoctoral Research Associate and **Sebastian Uhrich**, Professor, work at the Institute of Sport Economics and Sport Management at the German Sport University Cologne. Their research focuses on the psychology and behavior of sport consumers and mainly draws on social psychological theory. A key research area deals with the phenomenon of rivalry in sport and marketing settings.

For their project on rivalry and fan aggression, Johannes received the 2017 New Researcher Award from the European Association of Sport Management.

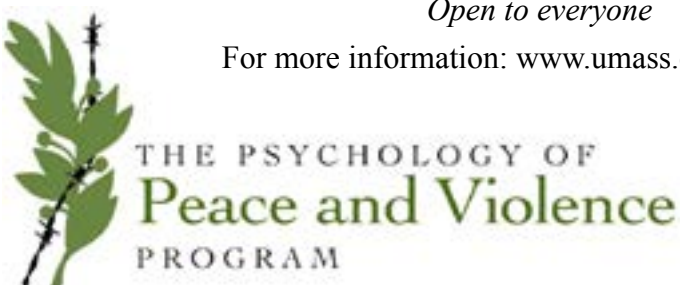
ABSTRACT: Fan violence has become a major problem in team sports. In order to cool tensions between opposing fans, sports managers often try to play down the importance of rivalry games, stating that the game is “not a war” or “just like all other games.” Our research shows that such statements are counter-productive and make fans aggressive in the first place because they disregard that rivalry is an integral part of fan identity.

Based on the intergroup conflict literature, we derive a better-suited communication strategy to reduce fan aggression: dual identity statements, which keep alive the rivalry but bring opposing fans together at a superordinate level. In three field experimental studies among German soccer fans, we show that dual identity statements significantly reduce fan aggression compared to downplaying statements and a no-statement control group, controlling for team identification and trait aggression. Further to applying social psychological theories in an emotional empirical context, we contribute to the literature by conceptualizing rivalry as an intractable identity-based conflict. We also unravel two theoretical mechanisms (superordinate fan identity strength and reactance) underlying the effects of the different types of statements.

Tuesday, March 26, 2019 4:00-5:30 P.M.
Room 423 Tobin Hall

Open to everyone Refreshments served

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