

# Djurgårdens Fina Grabbar: Local Identities and the Cross-national Transfer of Spectator-related Football Violence

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*Once known as the “English Disease,” hooliganism (or spectator-related football violence) is now a routine feature in most European football leagues. In Sweden, the number of serious violent offences in conjunction with football matches has steadily continued to mount over the last four decades. Presently, one of the worst culprits is Djurgårdens Fina Grabbar – DFG (Djurgården’s Fine Lads), the so-called “firm” (or hooligan group) associated with Djurgårdens Idrottsförening – DIF (Djurgården’s Athletic Association). DIF’s supporters have long looked to Britain for inspiration; and this tendency is very marked in DFG. Yet, in the past few years, a new Italian-inspired variety of hooliganism has likewise become more and more detectable in DFG’s actions. This, in turn, has led to a new hybrid, that is neither wholly Italian nor British in character – though it has unquestionably created a more menacing version of Swedish hooliganism. This article accounts for this change in DFG while simultaneously exploring questions relating to the continued sanctity of local identities in the context of an increasingly globalized football culture. It additionally asks whether Swedish hooliganism should be understood as a response to the challenges facing traditional masculine identities in post-industrial societies like Sweden that also strongly emphasize gender equality.*

*Jadis appelé « la maladie anglaise », le hooliganisme (ou la violence des spectateurs au football) fait dorénavant partie du décor de la plupart des ligues de football européennes. En Suède, le nombre de crimes de violence graves liés à des matches de football ne cesse de se multiplier depuis quatre décennies. À l’heure actuelle, l’un des pires coupables se nomme les Djurgårdens Fina Grabbar, ou DFG (les bons garçons de Djurgården), la pseudo « firme » (ou groupe hooligan) associée au club Djurgårdens Idrottsförening, le DIF (qui se traduit littéralement par association athlétique Djurgården). Les partisans du DIF s’inspirent depuis longtemps de la Grande-Bretagne, et cette tendance est très marquée chez les DFG. Mais voilà que les DFG exhibent aussi de plus en plus*

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*ces dernières années les signes d'une nouvelle variété de hooliganisme d'inspiration italienne dans leurs actions. Si l'hybride qui en a résulté n'est ni tout à fait italien, ni tout à fait britannique, il ne s'agit pas moins d'une version indiscutablement plus menaçante de hooliganisme suédois. L'article examine ce changement intervenu chez les DFG tout en explorant des questions en lien avec la sacro-sainte identité locale dans le contexte d'une culture du football de plus en plus mondiale. On s'y demande également si le hooliganisme suédois ne serait pas une réaction aux défis auxquels font face les identités masculines traditionnelles au sein de sociétés post-industrielles telles que la Suède, où l'on valorise aussi beaucoup l'égalité des sexes.*

ONCE KNOWN as the “English Disease,” hooliganism (or spectator-related football violence) is now a routine feature in most European football leagues. If anything, this problem is actually worsening in many parts of Europe, even as it shows signs of decline in the United Kingdom. In Sweden, the number of serious violent offences in conjunction with football matches has steadily continued to mount over last four decades. Presently, one of the worst culprits is *Djurgårdens Fina Grabbar* (DFG – Djurgården’s Fine Lads), the so-called “firm” (or hooligan group) associated with *Djurgårdens Idrottsförening* (DIF – Djurgården’s Athletic Association). DIF is one of Stockholm’s three major football clubs.<sup>1</sup>

DIF’s supporters have long looked to Britain for inspiration; and this tendency is very marked in DFG. Yet, in the past few years, a new Italian-inspired variety of hooliganism has likewise become more and more detectable in DFG’s actions. No longer content just to brawl with opposing fans and the police, DFG now also seeks to have a direct say in internal club affairs. This development, however, has only come about due to specific local circumstances – and not through any conscious emulation of Italian hooliganism on DFG’s part. This, in turn, has spawned a new hybrid, that is neither wholly Italian nor British in character – though it has unquestionably created a more menacing version of Swedish hooliganism.

Thus rather than producing a carbon copy of either of these two foreign alternatives, one can instead observe a creolization process, in which DFG’s conduct is currently shaped by a combustible mixture of local and foreign influences. All of this has contributed to a noticeable radicalization in DFG’s behaviour, as is evidenced by the group’s stepped up aggression against the members of its own club. This historical case study, the first on contemporary Swedish hooliganism, traces DFG’s evolution from the group’s inception in the summer of 1995 through the end of the 1999 football season, which culminated with a pitch invasion in which

1 Founded in 1891, DIF sponsors teams in a wide variety of sports, though most notably in ice hockey and football. Djurgården Football was first established in 1899, and historically it has also been one of the most successful teams in Sweden. The team has played over 50 seasons in the top Swedish division, *Allsvenskan* (the all-Swedish league), and has won the Swedish championship 11 times, most recently in 2002, 2003, and 2005. In addition, the club has won the Swedish Cup on four occasions, including in 2002, 2004, and 2005. Internationally, however, the team has not enjoyed nearly as much success, never reaching beyond the second elimination round in the Champions League (or the third elimination round in the UEFA-Cup). DIF website, <http://www.dif.se/sidor/?klubb fakta> and [www.dif.se/sidor/?historia](http://www.dif.se/sidor/?historia), accessed May 19, 2010.

members of DFG assaulted four players from the opposing team.<sup>2</sup> The change in *Djurgårdens Fina Grabbar* raises questions relating to the continued sanctity of local identities in the context of an increasingly globalized football culture. Additionally, this study asks whether hooliganism should be understood as a response to the challenges facing traditional masculine identities in post-industrial societies like Sweden that also strongly emphasize gender equality.

By continental standards, the hooligan problem in Sweden is still relatively benign. Compared to the rest of Scandinavia, however, Sweden nevertheless faces the biggest troubles with spectator-related football violence, and historically this has always been the case.<sup>3</sup> Sweden saw its first hooligan-connected death in 2002,<sup>4</sup> and everyone closely involved with the sport agrees that the situation is worsening.<sup>5</sup> The police are particularly concerned that the age of the perpetrators is creeping downward and that the new young generation of hooligans is far more ruthless than their older counterparts.<sup>6</sup>

As elsewhere in Europe,<sup>7</sup> this phenomenon appears in no small part to be fuelled by the media's seemingly insatiable appetite for hooligan-related stories. Indeed, both Swedish club officials and police authorities complain that the intense media coverage not only encourages more violence, but also ensures a steady flow of new recruits in to the country's rapidly growing number of hooligan groups.<sup>8</sup> As a consequence, spectator violence is currently subject to an intense societal debate in Sweden,<sup>9</sup> even at the highest levels of government.<sup>10</sup> In hopes of curbing this problem, Swedish authorities and football clubs have adopted a series of new security measures generally modelled after British precedents.<sup>11</sup>

2 In British football terminology, the field is referred to as a "pitch."

3 Torbjörn Andersson and Aage Radmann, "Football Fans in Scandinavia 1900-1997" in Adam Brown, ed., *Fanatics! Power, Identity and Fandom in Football* (New York: Routledge, 1998), pp. 141-158; "Cross-national Variations on Football Violence in Europe," Social Issues Research Centre website, <http://www.sirc.org/publik/ivcross.html>, accessed July 17, 2008.

4 In late August 2002, Tony Deogan was killed after an altercation between hooligans associated with AIK and IFK Göteborg. Tony Deogan, *Blodsbröder. En sann historia* (Malmö: Bra Böcker, 2009), pp. 201-210.

5 Bengt Madsen, chairman of Malmö FF, as cited in "De kostar oss 100 miljoner," *Aftonbladet*, May 6, 2005; Charlie Granfelt, spokesman for AIK Football, as cited in "Utvecklingen skrämmer mig," *Dagens Nyheter*, September 25, 2008.

6 "Vi älskar att slåss," *Aftonbladet*, October 12, 2007; Hans Löfdahl, supporter police in Stockholm, as cited in "Fotbollsvåldet kryper ner i åldrarna," *Svenska Dagbladet*, May 23, 2008. In 1992, Swedish police authorities established a special detail to deal with spectator-related football violence.

7 Steve Frosdick and Peter Marsh, *Football Hooliganism* (Portland, OR: Willan Publishing, 2005), pp. 113-124.

8 Bo Lundquist, chairman of DIF Football, as cited in "Boxhandskar & silkesvantar," *Sportstory.se*, January 29, 2008, <http://www.sportstory.se>, accessed January 10, 2010; Östen Gustafsson, supporter police in Gothenburg, as cited in "Huliganlivet: Våld, droger och dyra märkeskläder," *Göteborgs Posten*, October 22, 2005.

9 "Huliganer vann över fotbollen," *Dagens Nyheter*, March 19, 2004; "Huliganerna måste stoppas," *Dagens Nyheter*, February 9, 2007.

10 Göran Persson, Prime Minister of Sweden, as cited in "Tack för ett bra initiativ," *Aftonbladet*, April 17, 2005; Madeleine Sjöstedt, Minister of Culture and Sport, as cited in "Utvecklingen skrämmer mig," *Dagens Nyheter*, September 25, 2008.

11 "Off side – Huliganismen flyttar ut från arenorna," *Apropå. Brottsförbygganderådets Tidskrift* (2007), no. 4, pp. 5-11; "Nya krafttag mot huliganer," *Dagens Nyheter*, April 9, 2009.

In Sweden hooliganism is largely rooted at the club level and is less associated with the national team (though it certainly occurs at the national level as well).<sup>12</sup> Traditionally this problem has been mostly linked to the major big city clubs such as AIK, Djurgården, and Hammarby in Stockholm and IFK Göteborg in Gothenburg. Yet, in recent years, it has also become more and more of an issue for teams such as Malmö FF, Helsingborgs IF, and GAIS (which is one of IFK Göteborg's cross-town rivals).<sup>13</sup> Over the last decade or so, hooliganism has likewise begun to make inroads in many smaller rural communities and in even new sports like Bandy (a hybrid of football and hockey).<sup>14</sup> In this context, it should be emphasized that in Sweden spectator violence has frequently been as tied to ice hockey as it has been to football. This is largely explained by the fact that Djurgården and AIK have always fielded teams in both sports. In the last 15 years, however, the problem has once again become mostly identified with football, at least in the big cities.

Sweden actually has a long history of spectator-related football disturbances that dates as far back as the interwar period, if not earlier.<sup>15</sup> Still, such incidents only became more frequent and more "anglicized" in the 1970s. The birth of contemporary hooliganism in Sweden is often said to have been two "pitch invasions" by IFK Göteborg supporters in 1969 and 1970. Although spectator-related violence would intermittently continue to plague IFK Göteborg,<sup>16</sup> by the early 1980s the locus of Swedish hooliganism had nevertheless decisively shifted to Stockholm, where, at first, it was chiefly expressed in reoccurring clashes between fans of AIK and Djurgården – usually in conjunction with local hockey derbies.<sup>17</sup>

At the time, this escalation in fan violence was undeniably a testament to the increased English influence on Swedish sports – and on Swedish football in particular. The game originally arrived in Sweden from the British Isles at the turn of the twentieth century, but Britain's impact on Swedish football was greatly reinforced after 1969, when matches from the English Premier League first became weekly fare on Swedish television.<sup>18</sup> Under this influence, Swedes increasingly came to adopt a "British style of play," a tendency further encouraged by the importation of English coaches or managers.<sup>19</sup>

12 "DFG Historia" (2007), <http://www.dfgsthlm.com>, accessed July 24, 2009.

13 Henrik Qvist, supporter police in Malmö, as cited in "Bokar tid – för att slåss," *Aftonbladet*, May 7, 2005; Östen Gustafsson as cited in "Huliganlivet: Våld, droger och dyra märkeskläder," *Göteborgs Posten*, October 22, 2005.

14 Inrikesdepartementet, *Gemensamt arbete mot våld* (Stockholm: Regeringskansliet, 1997), pp. 20-22.

15 Torbjörn Andersson, "Swedish Football Hooliganism," *Soccer and Society*, vol. 2 (2001), no. 1, pp. 1-18.

16 "Firmorna får för mycket makt," *Aftonbladet*, August 2, 2002; Tore Brännberg, "Huliganism – ett mångfaldigt begrepp," in Inrikesdepartementet, *Våldet och glädjen, En debattbok om huliganer och glada supportrar* (Stockholm: SISU Idrottsböcker, 1997), pp. 15-16.

17 "Från flyttat mål till mord. Den svenska huliganismens svarta historia," *Aftonbladet*, August 3, 2002; Stefan Nyberg, "Vi slogs för AIK" in Erling Bjurström, ed., *Sporten eller livet. En antologi om huliganism, kroppsfixering och idrottliga ideal* (Stockholm: Heatwave förlag, 1996), pp. 55-56.

18 Magnus Hagström, Peter Johansson, and Carl Jurell, *Va för jävla pack e ni?* (Stockholm: Imperial Publishing, 2010), pp. 26-27, 51.

19 Bosse Andersson, former chairman of DIF Football, as cited by Henrik Ystén, *Drömmen om Europa. Djurgården will mer . . .* (Viborg, DK: Offside Press AB, 2004), p. 53.

The rising British influence, however, was not limited to the pitch, but was equally evident on the terraces (“stands” in North America). From the beginning Swedish fan culture has been deeply indebted to British norms, and this only became more and more pronounced in the late postwar period.<sup>20</sup> This development was probably best exemplified by the anglicized names that the newly created Swedish supporter groups gave themselves in the early 1980s, at which time AIK’s fans, for instance, assumed the moniker Black Army (from Manchester United’s Red Army),<sup>21</sup> while Djurgården’s supporters eventually became known as the Blue Saints (after the well-known English football chant “Oh, when the Saints”).<sup>22</sup> The strong bond between Swedish and British fan cultures has subsequently been bolstered by an emerging pattern of Swedish football tourism to the United Kingdom.<sup>23</sup>

Such tourism includes hooliganism, and a few of the early seminal figures in the Stockholm hooligan scene are said to have had first-hand personal experience of British football violence. To this day, British hooliganism is the gold standard against which Swedes measure themselves, and British hooligans are still viewed by their Swedish neophytes with an equal dose of awe and inferiority.<sup>24</sup> The United Kingdom likewise continues to serve as a “school” of sorts for Swedish hooligans, as is highlighted by DFG’s repeated trips to London to meet with members of West Ham United’s notorious hooligan group the “Inner City Firm” (ICF).<sup>25</sup> Members of the ICF have, in turn, visited DFG in Stockholm, and over the years *Djurgårdens Fina Grabbar* has cultivated relations with a number of other foreign hooligan groups as well, including the infamous “Millwall Bushwackers.”<sup>26</sup> (On an unrelated, but more menacing note, in the summer of 2009, DFG apparently hosted a small delegation of reputed IRA men in Stockholm.)<sup>27</sup>

Beyond these direct contacts, the bond with British hooliganism is primarily maintained through the Internet, though British conventions are additionally disseminated through so-called “hooligan lit” (generally memoirs of former British

20 Torbjörn Andersson and Aage Radmann, *Från gentleman till huligan? Svensk fotbollskultur för och nu* (Stockholm: Bokförlag Symposium, 1998). For a specific illustration, see DFG member “Krille” as cited in “Rätt klädd för fotbollsfajt,” *Svenska Dagbladet*, November 7, 2003.

21 Per-Olof Sännås, *Black Army* (Södertälje: Ljungbergs Tryckeri, 1998), pp. 7-11.

22 Lars Grimlund and Fredric Pavalidis, *Djurgården. En supporters handbok* (Stockholm: Bokförlaget DN, 2004), p. 86.

23 “Han är ledaren för järngänget,” *Expressen*, November 11, 1995; “Så levde han under jakten,” *Aftonbladet*, September 22, 2003. Both of these articles describe football trips by DIF hooligans to England.

24 Johan Höglund, *En av grabbarna* (Stockholm: MMG Books AB, 2005), pp. 43, 60-61, 64, 116, 138-144; Sännås, *Black Army*, pp. 49-51.

25 “Thanks to the West Ham Boys” (September 19, 2007) and “En härlig Påskhelg med I.C.F” (March 21, 2008), <http://www.dfgsthlm.com/krönikor>, accessed July 15, 2008. DIF hooligans have looked to West Ham for inspiration since the early 1990s (“Blue Saints, Bajen Fans, Black Army,” *Dagens Nyheter*, November 8, 1995).

26 Author interview with Stockholm supporter police Stig-Örjan Saether and Hans Rudolfson, June 8, 2010; “Shebeen” (May 4, 2007), DFG BLOG, <http://www.copac.se/blog>, accessed October 13, 2009. See also Deogan, *Blodsbröder*, p. 194.

27 Author interview with Mats Jonsson, head of security, DIF Football, June 18, 2010.

hooligans) as well as through feature films dealing with this subject (such as *CASS*, *The Firm*, *The Football Factory*)<sup>28</sup> These connections support the frequently made point that globalization is not necessarily a top-down process, as non-elite – and even socially stigmatized – groups often play just as important a role in facilitating transnational cultural phenomena.

In practical terms, Swedish hooligans have notably followed the British example of coalescing into smaller units – into firms composed of only the most hard-core violent fans of each club. (In British slang “a firm” originally referred to a criminal syndicate, but the term was later also adopted by English football hooligans.)<sup>29</sup> These firms normally exist as separate entities outside the larger official supporter clubs and are, in turn, broken down into various age groups, with younger hooligans essentially serving a type of apprenticeship in “baby firms” before being admitted into the main adult firm.<sup>30</sup> At one point, DFG claimed to have three such subgroups, *Djurgårdens Mindre Grabbar* (DMG – Djurgården’s Smaller Lads), *Djurgårdens Yngsta* (DY – Djurgården’s Youngest), and *Djurgårdens Baby Grabbar* (DBG – Djurgården’s Baby Lads).<sup>31</sup> DFG further boasts that it was the first hooligan group in Sweden to have its own “baby firm.” (*Babyfirman* was established in 1992 by a number of younger DIF hooligans in the city’s southern suburbs, though the group was later subsumed into DFG.)<sup>32</sup>

Swedish hooligans have similarly copied the British practice of facing off in pre-arranged fights that generally take place in locations well removed from the stadium in an attempt to escape police detection and intervention. In Sweden, these clashes now normally follow well-established rules (no weapons, a promise to field the same number of combatants) While these rules are not always followed, the violence is nevertheless highly ritualized – if not totally risk-free for participants.<sup>33</sup> In addition, these clashes are frequently filmed and then posted on the Internet, so that the participants can admire their own handiwork.<sup>34</sup> Consequently there appears to be a high degree of exhibitionism in hooligan violence, presumably intended for both a national and international audience.<sup>35</sup>

28 “Snart kommer någon att dö,” *Expressen*, November 8, 1995; Tore Brännberg, professor of social psychology at the University of Gothenburg, as cited in “Bokar tid – för att slåss,” *Aftonbladet*, May 7, 2005.

29 <http://www.slangdictionary.com/definition/firm.html>, accessed June 26, 2011.

30 Hans Lödahl as cited in “Antalet fotbollshulliganer ökar i Sverige,” *Svenska Dagbladet*, October 23, 2007.

31 <http://www.facebook.com/pages/DFG>, accessed April 1, 2009. At the moment, the supporter police in Stockholm believe that only DY (Djurgården’s Youngest) is still operating (author interview with Stig-Örjan Saether and Hans Rudolfson, June 8, 2010).

32 “Åren med Djurgår’n i Sverige” (2007), <http://www.dfgsthlm.com/krönikor>, accessed July 15, 2008.

33 “Huliganer möttes i jätteslagsmål,” *Dagens Nyheter*, April 1, 2007; “Här drabbar huliganerna samman,” *Expressen*, March 2, 2009. For example, during both of these fights DFG’s members wore either black or white clothing to be better able to distinguish themselves from their opponents. See also “DIF-Gnaget” (April 1, 2007), <http://www.joe-sthlm.blogspot.com>, accessed June 17, 2010; “Wisemen vs DFG,” <http://www.youtube.com>, accessed August 19, 2010.

34 “Tack för en skön eftermiddag,” *Svenska Dagbladet*, May 23, 2005. For specific illustrations, see “Dfg vs. KGB” (2006) and “Djurgården’s Hooligans DMG at it again,” <http://www.youtube.com>, accessed October 1, 2009.

35 “Huliganvåldet. Firmorna väljer våldet före sporten,” *Dagens Nyheter*, August 3, 2000; “Fotbolls-Mordet. Huliganerna försvann – ‘firmorna’ tog över,” *Expressen*, August 3, 2002.

Last but not least, the general outward aesthetic of Swedish hooliganism likewise bears an unmistakable British imprint, which is also true of Scandinavian football culture more generally.<sup>36</sup> Profoundly influenced by the so-called “Casual culture” that emerged on the British terraces in late 1970s (a scene that eventually also gave birth to the firms), Swedish hooligans have, for instance, conspicuously embraced the designer brands worn by their British counterparts. The specific brand names have changed over time, but they have always been high-end ones like Lacoste and Pringle or, more recently, Stone Island. This emulation of British fashion trends has been especially pronounced among the members of the firms associated with the three major Stockholm clubs<sup>37</sup> and with *Djurgårdens Fina Grabbar* specifically.<sup>38</sup>

Since its inception, DFG has distinguished itself for its loyalty to all things British – to a fault, in the eyes of its local adversaries.<sup>39</sup> The firm’s members, however, are absolutely unapologetic about this fact and candidly discuss their frequent shopping trips to England, as well as their close monitoring of British cultural and fashion trends.<sup>40</sup> Perhaps more to the point – unlike, for example, AIK’s hooligans<sup>41</sup> – DFG’s members have never publicly expressed any interest in either Italian or other southern European varieties of football violence. To them, British hooliganism is seemingly the only role model that counts.

That DFG, in particular, would look to England for inspiration is not really all that surprising given that the club’s current supporter club, *Järnkaminera* (JK) – which might roughly be translated as the “Iron Stoves” – is equally explicit about its Anglophile tendencies.<sup>42</sup> (Both have carried this heritage with them from the earlier Blue Saints’ era.)<sup>43</sup> Still, over the last decade, new Italian influences have also made themselves apparent among *Järnkaminera* and its affiliated *tifo*-group, *Fabriken* (the Factory). *Fabriken* is responsible for the choreographed flag and pyrotechnic displays that now enliven Djurgården’s “end” or *curva* during big

36 Richard Giulianotti and Gerry P. T. Finn, “Old Visions, Old Issues – New Horizons, New Openings? Change, Continuity, and other Contradictions in World Football” in Richard Giulianotti and Gerry P. T. Finn, eds., *Football Culture: Local Contests, Global Visions* (London: Frank Cass, 2000), p. 269.

37 “Casuals” (July 24, 2004), <http://www.sverigesccenen.com>, accessed July 14, 2008; “Rätt klädd för fotbolls-fajt,” *Svenska Dagbladet*, November 7, 2003. For a visual overview of DFG’s members, see “DFG ‘Allmänna idiotklubbens horungar,’” <http://www.youtube.com>, accessed August 19, 2010.

38 “Huliganerna: Det är en superaggressiv stämning just nu,” *Expressen*, February 12, 2004.

39 Höglund, *En av grabbarna*, pp. 105, 140; Sännås, *Black Army*, pp. 120-122.

40 “DFG Historia,” <http://www.dfgsthlm.com>; “Ären med Djurgår’n i Sverige,” <http://www.dfgsthlm.com/krönikor>. See also “Johan,” one of DFG’s alleged leaders, as cited in “Firmaledaren: Var redo att dö,” *Aftonbladet*, May 8, 2005.

41 Höglund, *En av grabbarna*, pp. 107, 120-121; Hagström *et al.*, *Va för jävla pack e ni?*, pp. 98-99.

42 “Info om JK,” <http://www.jarnkaminerna.se>, accessed July 24, 2009; “Järnkaminerna,” <http://sv.wikipedia.org>, accessed July 24, 2009. In addition to JK, which is primarily oriented toward the club’s younger fans who stand in the terraces, DIF football also has two supporter groups for older, more well-established fans: Djurgårdens Supporters Club (DSC) and *Sällskapet Gamla Djurgårdare* (Grimlund and Pavalidis, *Djurgården. En supporters handbok*, pp. 86-87).

43 “Bluc Saints, Bajen Fans, Black Army,” *Dagens Nyheter*, November 8, 1995. See also Hagström *et al.*, *Va för jävla pack e ni?*, pp. 37-38, 85.

games, such as the team's derbies against AIK and Hammarby.<sup>44</sup> The introduction of these new visual elements represented a departure from the singing-based fan culture found in England, and the creation of these displays additionally required far more internal organization among supporters, as well as collective effort between matches. As was the case in Germany, the *tifo* phenomenon was pioneered by a younger generation of fans;<sup>45</sup> in Djurgården's case, this development initially met some resistance from the club's older supporters, who still wished to remain loyal to earlier Anglophile traditions.<sup>46</sup>

Because of these reservations, Djurgården's fans were slower to embrace these new Italian elements than their counterparts in the other two big Stockholm clubs, who were less concerned about preserving the purity of the earlier British practices.<sup>47</sup> The "Italianization" of Swedish fan culture is a direct result of the Internet revolution and the vast expansion of cable television, which has given Italian football much greater exposure in Sweden than previously.<sup>48</sup> The growing impact of Italian supporter culture is now evident in many parts of Europe,<sup>49</sup> and in Sweden this has consequently created a novel fusion that mixes well-established British football traditions with newer Italian influences. This tendency is even discernible among DIF's self-proclaimed Anglophile hooligans – albeit only in a vicarious way.

In many respects DFG's members are not all that different from the club's other fans. Both groups, for instance, have the (slightly misleading) reputation of being "upper-class snobs."<sup>50</sup> This undoubtedly stems from the fact that DIF's home arena, *Stadion*, is located in one of the most exclusive districts in Stockholm, Östermalm, and that the club's supporters also dominate many of the more well-to-do areas in the northeastern parts of the city, such as Djursholm and Lidingö. Yet this does not necessarily give an entirely accurate picture of the club's fan base.<sup>51</sup> DIF has followers in almost every part of the city (including the suburbs),<sup>52</sup> and in recent years the club's base of support likewise seems to be

44 "Tifogruppen Fabriken," <http://www.jarnkaminerna.se>, accessed July 24, 2009; Fabriken, "Historia," <http://www.fabrikenstockholm.se>, accessed July 24, 2009. Like *Järnkaminerna*, *Fabriken* is also actively involved with the club's hockey team.

45 Udo Merkel, "Milestones in the Development of Football Fandom in Germany: Global Impacts on Local Contests" in Sean Brown, ed., *Football Fans Around the World: From Supporters to Fanatics* (New York: Routledge, 2007), pp. 69-71.

46 DIF supporter and one of the founding members of *Fabriken*, Martin Lundgren, as cited in Hagström *et al.*, *Va för jävla pack e ni?*, pp. 166-167.

47 Hagström *et al.*, *Va för jävla pack e ni?*, pp. 137-140, 166-167, 170-180.

48 Andersson and Radmann, *Från gentleman till huligan?*, p.147; Sännås, *Black Army*, p. 113.

49 Patrick Mignon, "New Supporter Cultures and Identity in France: The Case of Paris Saint-Germain" in Richard Giulianotti and John Williams, eds., *Game Without Frontiers: Football, Identity and Modernity* (Brookfield, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 1994), p. 286.

50 Author interview with Stig-Örjan Saether and Hans Rudolfson, June 8, 2010; author interview with Mats Jonsson, June 8, 2010. See also Grimlund and Pavalidis, *Djurgården. En supporters handbok*, p. 92.

51 Hagström *et al.*, *Va för jävla pack e ni?*, pp. 48-49, 160-161.

52 "Stockholm har blivit kallt," *Offside* (2008), no. 6, pp. 74-75; Grimlund and Pavalidis, *Djurgården. En supporters handbok*, p. 48.

expanding into smaller, more rural communities located outside of the capital.<sup>53</sup> To a certain extent, the team even has a national following with strong footholds in places like Jönköping and Göteborg.<sup>54</sup> For these reasons, Djurgården is not as strongly identified with a single region of Stockholm as either Hammarby or AIK, which are associated with the city's south-side and north-side, respectively. That much of DFG's original core membership came from the city's southern suburbs, from areas such as Huddinge, Hannige, and Hagästra,<sup>55</sup> speaks to both the geographic spread and socio-economic diversity of the club's fan base. These days, the team's hooligans come from all parts of greater Stockholm (and beyond), though DFG's core support is still primarily located in more economically mixed areas, like Hannige, Sollentuna, Hägersten, and Farsta.<sup>56</sup>

In contrast, it is harder to say anything more definitive about the politics of the team's fans, though in all likelihood most of them are to be found on the right side of the political spectrum.<sup>57</sup> What we do know is that – like AIK – DIF has always garnered support from people from all walks of life, so the club has never been exclusively associated with just one particular economic class,<sup>58</sup> and this appears to be true of DFG's members as well. While no exact sociological data exist about the group's members, all of the available anecdotal evidence suggests that the latter are drawn from a wide variety of vocations and social classes.<sup>59</sup> At least in this sense, then, they are probably not all that different from the club's non-violent supporters.

Nor is there any reason to believe that DFG's members are fundamentally distinct from other Swedish hooligans, who are generally also thought to be socio-economically heterogeneous in origin – encompassing everyone from middle-class professionals and students to more hardened criminals.<sup>60</sup> Hence, in this regard, DFG's members appear to be less like their British role models (who are still overwhelmingly working class)<sup>61</sup> and instead more like their Belgian,

53 <http://www.jarnkaminerna.se/artikel/supporterkultur/2009/04/hej-bonder-ar-ni-dif?>, accessed July 24, 2009.

54 Author interview with Mats Jonsson, June 18, 2010. See also Martin Persson, *JK Syd*, as cited in Hagström *et al.*, *Va för jävla pack e ni?*, pp. 292-293.

55 "DFG Historia," <http://www.dfgsthlm.com>; "Vi sammanfattar de senaste matcherna" (October 9, 2007), <http://www.dfgsthlm.com/difblog>, accessed July 24, 2009.

56 Author interview with Stig-Örjan Saether and Hans Rudolfson, June 8, 2010; author interview with Mats Jonsson, June 18, 2010. A handful of DFG's members, for example, come from as far away as Uppsala, a small university town just north of Stockholm.

57 Author interview with Mats Jonsson, June 18, 2010. However, there are some notable exceptions to this general rule of thumb, like Lars Ohly, the current chairman of the Left Party, who is a vocal supporter of the club.

58 Andersson and Radmann, "Football Fans in Scandinavia 1900-1997," p. 144.

59 Stig-Örjan Saether as cited in "Polisen laddar för risksupportrarna," *Folkbladet*, March 29, 2008; "Johan," one of DFG's alleged leaders, as cited in "Firmaledaren: Var redo att dö," *Aftonbladet*, May 8, 2005.

60 "Svårt bryta sig ur firmor," *Dagens Nyheter*, July 31, 2002; Tore Brännberg as cited in "Bokar tid – för att slåss," *Aftonbladet*, May 7, 2005; Dr. Björn Johansson, Department of Social Psychiatry, University of Örebro, as cited in "Huliganlivet: Våld, droger och dyra märkeskläder," *Göteborgs Posten*, October 22, 2005.

61 Eric Dunning, *Sport Matters: Sociological Studies of Sport, Violence and Civilization* (London: Routledge, 1999), pp. 140, 148; Frostdick and Marsh, *Football Hooliganism*, pp. 84-91.

Dutch, German, and Spanish equivalents, who are recruited from a wider range of social backgrounds.<sup>62</sup>

Such heterogeneity notwithstanding, members of the supporter police make clear that one is more likely to find blue-collar than white-collar workers among Stockholm's hooligans.<sup>63</sup> Police and criminologists also point out that Swedish hooligans are statistically more likely to come from troubled family backgrounds and to have previous criminal convictions than their generational cohorts.<sup>64</sup>

One of the more troubling trends among Djurgården's hooligans over the last decade is that they have been implicated in a series of high-profile crimes that have no discernable relationship to football violence.<sup>65</sup> In one particularly disturbing incident, a known DFG associate was apprehended after he had viciously attacked six people in broad daylight with an iron pipe, killing one.<sup>66</sup> The inclusion of this type of anti-social personality into the group, speaks to DFG's capacity for violence.

That having been said, *Djurgårdens Fina Grabbar* probably has fewer career criminals than the other two Stockholm firms, and most of its members seem to live relatively ordinary lives outside their hooligan-related activities. The firm is, for example, known to have a handful of university graduates and even a few small business owners among its ranks, and overall its members are gainfully employed.<sup>67</sup>

Still, there are real limits to DFG's diversity as some social groups are noticeably absent. *Djurgårdens Fina Grabbar* has no female members, nor can women be found in any other Swedish firm. This type of gender-based exclusion is extremely unusual in Sweden, either socially or in the workplace. Like elsewhere in Europe, Swedish hooliganism is, in effect, an all-male preserve, providing an arena in which masculine identities can be ritually reaffirmed and collectively celebrated.<sup>68</sup>

The same point can be made about Swedish football-fan culture as a whole, which traditionally has also been very male-dominated.<sup>69</sup> The stereotypical member of a Swedish supporter club is still a young man, with Swedish-born parents, who does not have a university education – though the social base of Swedish fan

62 Anastassia Tosukala, *Football Hooliganism in Europe: Security and Civil Liberties in the Balance* (New York: Palgrave, 2009), pp. 51, 100-104; Ramón Spaaij, *Understanding Football Hooliganism: A Comparison of Six Western European Football Clubs* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006), pp. 27-29.

63 Author interview with Stig-Örjan Saether and Hans Rudolfson, June 8, 2010.

64 Brottsförbygganderådet, *Läktarvåld. Orsaker och åtgärder* (Stockholm: Allmänna förlaget, 1986), p. 33; Lars Sundlöf, supporter police in Malmö, as cited in Andersson and Radmann, *Från gentleman till huligan?*, p. 127.

65 "Nedsparkad av fem huliganer," *Aftonbladet*, July 2, 2007. On this particular occasion, five DFG members allegedly attacked someone at random on a subway platform.

66 "De är mycket goda vänner," *Expressen*, September 17, 2003.

67 Author interview with Stig-Örjan Saether and Hans Rudolfson, June 8, 2010; author interview with Mats Jonsson, June 18, 2010. See also former DFG member, "Christian," as cited by Anders Wiggenius, "En kvalitativ undersökning av svensk huliganism" (Umeå University, Department of Sociology, 2007), p. 8.

68 Tosukala, *Football Hooliganism in Europe*, p. 102; Dunning, *Sport Matters*, pp. 145-150.

69 Philip Leander, "Att vara supporter" in Inrikesdepartementet, *Våldet och glädjen*, p. 65. See also Sännäs, *Black Army*, pp.60-75.

culture is slowly beginning widen to include other previously excluded groups, such as women and second-generation immigrants.<sup>70</sup>

Men between 18 and 25 years old are the most active in Swedish hooliganism, though boys as young as 13 and men as old as 40 (or older) can definitely also be found in some Swedish firms.<sup>71</sup> In most instances, hooliganism is likely be a short-lived phase in these men's lives, since by its very nature football violence is not an activity well suited for men of all ages.

Ethnic and racial minorities are similarly underrepresented in *Djurgårdens Fina Grabbar*. While this is true for most Swedish hooligan groups, in DFG's case it might partially have to do with the fact that the club's hooligans earlier had a reputation for being far-right politically.<sup>72</sup> Presumably such right-wing sympathies have not completely vanished, but presently DFG claims to have no explicit political agenda.<sup>73</sup> If anything, in recent years, the group's public image has become decidedly apolitical, verging on hedonistic. In Stockholm, at least, the members of *Djurgårdens Fina Grabbar* have a reputation for enjoying "the good life" and are known to use illegal drugs<sup>74</sup> – a fact that they do not deny.<sup>75</sup> In sum, then, DFG's activities cannot reasonably be interpreted as a form of social or political protest. Nor can the group be said to be united by any well-defined ideology, beyond fighting for (the rather abstract concept of) Djurgården's honour. Instead, loyalty to the firm itself appears to be the principal criterion for membership; DFG's members mostly seem to be addicted to the adrenalin rush created by violence, as well as by the potency of sharing a common purpose that comes with belonging to a tight-knit group of likeminded individuals.<sup>76</sup> In this, they are not much different from other Swedish hooligans<sup>77</sup> or from their counterparts in other parts of Europe.<sup>78</sup>

A fascination with violence is positively also the key distinction that separates DFG's members from Djurgården's other younger male supporters. This division between DIF's hooligans and the rest of the club's supporters was not always so marked, however. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, very little, at first glance,

70 Hagström *et al.*, *Va för jävla pack e ni?*, p. 162.

71 Author interview with Stig-Örjan Saether and Hans Rudolfson, March 29 and June 8, 2010. See also "Risk-supportrar," <http://www.polisen.se/Stockholm>, accessed July 25, 2010.

72 "Nu startar slaget mot läktarvåldet," *Expressen*, March 11, 1991; "Här hittar VAM nya medlemmar," *Expressen*, May 19, 1995.

73 Discussing an incident in which DFG supporters were apparently willing to face off against far-right demonstrators, a DFG blog entry from 2007 states: "We are not political, especially not on match days" [my translation] ("Djurgårn' – Malmö och halvtidsnack" [July 13, 2007], <http://www.dfgsthlm.com/difblog>, accessed July 15, 2008).

74 Björn Persson, supporter police in Stockholm, as cited in "Huliganer värvar 13-åringar," *Dagens Nyheter*, April 22, 2007; "De flashar med rånpengar på krogen," *Metro*, November 11, 2008.

75 "Johan" as cited in "Firmaledaren: Var redo att dö," *Aftonbladet*, May 8, 2005.

76 Former DFG member "Christian" as cited by Wigenius, "En kvalitativ undersökning av svensk huliganism," pp. 8-9; ex-DIF hooligan Patrik Asplund as cited in "Jag tröttnade på att hata," *Dagen*, October 31, 2002.

77 Östen Gustafsson as cited in "Ingen extrem samling busar," *Aftonbladet*, August 2, 2002; "Huliganlivet: Våld, droger och drya märkeskläder," *Göteborgs Posten*, October 22, 2005.

78 John Kerr, *Understanding Soccer Hooliganism* (Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1994), p. 95; Spaaij, *Understanding Football Hooliganism*, pp. 367-381.

outwardly distinguished the club's more violent followers from the rank-and-file members of the team's official supporter club, Blue Saints. Established in 1981, Blue Saints quickly developed a reputation for engaging in a wide variety of asocial behaviour, including public drunkenness, vandalism, and brawling with opposing fans and police.<sup>79</sup> During this period, Blue Saints seemingly competed with AIK's Black Army for negative headlines, with the result that the fans of these two clubs soon became the public face of Swedish hooliganism.<sup>80</sup>

Events eventually came to a head in October 1995, when a 17-year-old member of Blue Saints (later dubbed "Terror Tommy" by the press) invaded the pitch and karate-kicked the referee.<sup>81</sup> At the time, this incident seemed to capture all that was wrong with Swedish football culture – and, above all, with the Blue Saints.<sup>82</sup> To many, it seemed as if the club had reached a point of no return,<sup>83</sup> and DIF officials privately worried that the misbehaviour of the team's fans might actually bring down the entire club by driving away sponsors and all of the club's other remaining supporters. In the wake of this episode, Djurgården would receive the unenviable distinction of becoming the first Swedish club to play a home game in front of an empty arena.<sup>84</sup>

At this juncture, club officials had finally had enough and hired an outside security agency to investigate all of Blue Saints' members.<sup>85</sup> The following year – after yet another ugly incident during an away game in Gothenburg – DIF Football completely cut ties with the group.<sup>86</sup> Beyond the financial damage the Blue Saints had caused the club, its antics had an extremely demoralizing impact on the team's players and coaches.<sup>87</sup>

In 1997, however, Blue Saints would be reincarnated as *Järnkaminera*, at which time its status as an official supporter club was also restored.<sup>88</sup> The new successor organization at once sought to distance itself from the club's recent

79 "Djurgården stoppar svansen," *Expressen*, December 11, 1990; "Det är lätt att svina på bortaplan," *Dagens Nyheter*, April 28, 1992; "Hockeyfans överföll poliser," *Expressen*, February 22, 1993. Initially much of the trouble surrounding the Blue Saints occurred in conjunction with the club's hockey games.

80 Andersson and Radmann, *Från gentleman till huligan?*, pp. 123, 126, 141.

81 Only a few hours later, upon being released from police custody, "Tommy" was apprehended again, this time for brutally assaulting an AIK supporter. "Tommy" would subsequently be arrested for robbing a post office ("Domarn dömd fel – därför hoppade huliganen på honom," *Expressen*, October 29, 1995; "Terror Tommy misstänkt för postrån," *Expressen*, January 11, 2000). See also "Terror Tommy," <http://www.youtube.com>, accessed August 19, 2010.

82 Andersson and Radmann, *Från gentleman till huligan?*, p. 130.

83 Hasse Gänger, *Djurgårdens IF Fotboll 1899-2006* (Stockholm: Attraktiv Media och Djurgårdens IF Fotboll, 2007), p. 41; Ystén, *Drömmen om Europa*, pp. 28-29.

84 Anders Grönhagen, "Spel för tomma läktare" in Inrikesdepartementet, *Väldet och glädjen*, pp. 59-61; Gänger, *Djurgårdens IF Fotboll 1899-2006*, p. 41.

85 "Fotbollsklubbarna måste ta över allt ansvar för sina anhängare," *Arbetet*, March 29, 1999.

86 "Huliganismen: Djurgården bryter med fansen," *Dagens Nyheter*, August 29, 1996.

87 "Lagkaptenen skriver brev till fansen," *Expressen*, April 29, 1996; "Djurgården vädjade till sina fans att inte komma till matchen," *Expressen*, May 3, 1996.

88 The effort to set Blue Saints on a new footing was led by a well-known former DIF hooligan and Neo-Nazi, Patrik Asplund ("Blue Saints valde ex-nasisten," *Expressen*, September 11, 1996; Patrik Asplund as cited in "Boxhandskar & silkesvantar," *Sportstory.se*, January 29, 2008.

past, strongly condemning both racism and spectator-related violence.<sup>89</sup> This was done in hopes of improving the image of the club's supporters, which virtually everyone – at least initially – also agreed that it did.<sup>90</sup>

Yet, in retrospect, it is equally clear that, rather than marking a decisive turning point for the club, Blue Saints' demise would instead lay the ground work for an even more alarming form of hooliganism. Its origins can be traced back to 1989-1990, when a small group within Blue Saints splintered off to form *Järngänget* (the "Iron Crew"). *Järngänget* was solely made up of the most violence-prone members of Blue Saints, and consequently also of those who were most interested in causing trouble.<sup>91</sup> *Järngänget* was consciously modelled after the British firms, and it immediately regarded itself as a separate entity from the rest of Blue Saints,<sup>92</sup> which for the most part was non-violent.<sup>93</sup>

*Järngänget*, meanwhile, swiftly became known for its viciousness,<sup>94</sup> and its capacity for violence only multiplied once the group joined forces with people like "Terror Tommy" from *Babyfirman* to establish *Djurgårdens Fina Grabbar* in the summer of 1995.<sup>95</sup> Significantly, today's leaders of DFG all have roots in *Järngänget/Babyfirman*,<sup>96</sup> providing an underlying continuity between the two eras. Yet there are also important differences between these periods. Even after the emergence of *Järngänget*, Blue Saints' behaviour – taken as a whole – might be better described as disorderly conduct than as centrally organized hooliganism. One major distinction is that, previously, the violence was normally not premeditated or methodical in nature. Moreover, such violence was typically confined to events that occurred either directly in conjunction with transport to and from games or during the matches themselves.<sup>97</sup> Today this is no longer always the case. Currently, fan violence among Djurgården's supporters is rarely the result of spontaneous outbursts. It is usually carefully planned and sometimes takes place on non-match days. DFG's activities are

89 "Supportermanifest" (May 23, 2003), <http://www.svenskafans.com>, accessed January 28, 2010; Mats Jonsson, JK chairman 1999-2005, as cited in "Rekordklack ska lyfta Djurgården," *Svenska Dagbladet*, January 5, 2006.

90 "Supportar om Järnkaminera," *Aftonbladet*, June 16, 2001; Thomas Ifwer, a life-long DIF supporter and match steward, as cited in "Gubbarna på sittplats är det värsta åskådarna," *Aftonbladet* August 18, 2001; Bo Lundquist as cited in "De har lagt ett pussel värt guld," *Aftonbladet*, October 31, 2002.

91 Unidentified member of *Järngänget* as cited by Andersson and Radmann, *Från gentleman till huligan?*, p. 125; "DFG Historia," <http://www.dfgsthlm.com>.

92 "Han är ledaren för järngänget," *Expressen*, November 11, 1995; "Snart kommer någon att dö," *Expressen*, November 8, 1995.

93 An internal survey taken at this time shows that, of Blue Saints' 3,000 members, only 30 would ever instigate violence, while another 20 said that they would only join in if a fight were already in progress ("Fotbollsklubbarna måste ta över allt ansvar för sina anhängare," *Arbetet*, March 29, 1996).

94 "Han är ledaren för järngänget," *Expressen*, November 11, 1995; "Snart kommer någon att dö," *Expressen*, November 8, 1995.

95 "Vi slåss för Djurgården," *Expressen*, October 30, 1995; "Snart kommer någon att dö," *Expressen*, November 8, 1995. *Babyfirman* was mainly made up of people that were still too young to drink legally. For this reason, DIF's younger hooligans held their own separate gatherings.

96 Author interview with Mats Jonsson, June 18, 2010.

97 Longtime Djurgården supporter and former Blue Saints member Lars "Berra" Eisjö as cited in Hagström *et al.*, *Va för jävla pack e ni?*, pp. 50-51.

directed by a small nucleus of six or seven people who also enforce a strict hierarchy within the group.<sup>98</sup> Blue Saints' actions, conversely, were never this well coordinated, and, for this reason, the group's behaviour was seldom as menacing.

A final, crucial, distinction between the two eras is the degree of aggression that is now directed at DIF Football from its own hooligans. To be sure, threats against club officials were not totally unheard of during the waning days of the Blue Saints' era,<sup>99</sup> but, during this period, not even the most violent elements among the Blue Saints would ever have dreamed of intimidating the team's own players and coaches or other DIF fans. Such threats have, however, become more or less routine in the past five years.

Over the last decade and a half is the distinction between the club's other young male supporters and its hooligans has thus become much sharper. This becomes obvious when one looks at *Järnkaminerna's* relationship to the club's hooligans. On one hand, JK refuses to be put in the position of informing on its fellow DIF supporters, but, on the other, it steadfastly rejects the legitimacy of DFG's self-proclaimed right to fight in the club's name.<sup>100</sup> In 2002 *Järnkaminerna* underscored its disapproval of DFG when it severed all links with the group following a brawl in which several of the club's non-violent supporters were hurt.<sup>101</sup> This turn of events created a greater chasm between the team's ordinary supporters and the members of the club's firm<sup>102</sup> – a development that, in recent years, has become discernable in a number of other clubs as well.<sup>103</sup> In Djurgården's case, the exact nature of the current relationship between *Djurgårdens Fina Grabbar* and the team's other supporters admittedly remains somewhat ambiguous. DFG itself guesses that most of the club's younger fans privately enjoy the enhanced stature that the firm has supposedly brought to DIF.<sup>104</sup> This supposition is not implausible, and there is certainly some evidence to support it.<sup>105</sup> At a minimum, it is clear that some of the club's non-violent supporters do not object to DFG fighting likeminded opponents,

98 Author interview with Stig-Örjan Saether and Hans Rudolfson, June 8, 2010; author interview with Mats Jonsson, June 18, 2010.

99 "Snart kommer någon att dö," *Expressen*, November 8, 1995; "Flera ledare i Djurgården har hotas," *Expressen*, April 26, 1996.

100 "Fråga Styrelsen" (April 3, 2008), signed "Pinocchio Styrelsen," <http://www.difbutiken.se/forum>, accessed July 14, 2010. In this blog entry Pinocchio underscores JK's view that, "Violence is never okay in DIF's name" [my translation].

101 "För Djurgården – Mot våldet!" (September 4, 2002), signed "Järnkaminernas Styrelse," <http://www.difbutiken.se/forum>, accessed October 13, 2009.

102 Patrik Asplund as cited in "Boxhandskar & silkesvantar," *Sportstory.se*, January 29, 2008. According to Asplund, while DIF might be "one big family," it is still undeniable that some of the club's members do not particularly care for DFG, and vice versa.

103 Östen Gustafsson as cited in "Bokar tid – för att slåss," *Aftonbladet*, August 2, 2002.

104 "Åren med Djurgår'n i Sverige," <http://www.dfgsthlm.com/krönikor>.

105 "DFG Sthlm" (August 14, 2006), signed "blålinus," <http://www.difbutiken.se/forum>, accessed July 28, 2010; "DFG" (May 20, 2008), signed "TBS," <http://www.difforum.se>, accessed July 28, 2010; "DFG" (May 21, 2008), signed "Jack Daniel," <http://www.difforum.se>, accessed July 28, 2010.

as long as the firm does not attack innocent bystanders.<sup>106</sup> The problem is that DFG has not always abided by this proscription, and innocent people have repeatedly been victimized by its violent outbursts.<sup>107</sup>

When such incidents occur, they invariably upset many of the club's ordinary supporters who do not want to be associated with this kind of behaviour.<sup>108</sup> Furthermore, it is equally evident that many – if not most – DIF fans worry that DFG's behaviour is tarnishing the club's image.<sup>109</sup> Some of the club's followers also oppose the group on basic pacifist grounds,<sup>110</sup> while others complain that the firm's intimidation tactics are an unwelcome distraction that are bound to hurt the team's performance.<sup>111</sup> On occasion, DFG's activities have even sparked open protests against the group.<sup>112</sup>

In short, over the last few years, there have been more and more signs of mounting tension over DFG's behaviour within the club,<sup>113</sup> which calls into question the oft-repeated claim by the team's supporters that Djurgården is one big family that always sticks together.<sup>114</sup> This growing internal division seems to have two root causes. First, the team's successes of the early 2000s brought DIF Football a new generation of supporters, whose own personal histories with the club were not shaped by the "bad old days" of the late Blue Saints' era – at least, this is DFG's own interpretation.<sup>115</sup> Secondly (and more importantly),

106 "Djurgårdens Fina Grabbar" (May 4, 2007), signed "Ståhlberg," <http://www.fragbite.com>, accessed August 7, 2009; "Allsvenskan 2008!" (April 26, 2008), signed "Emil," <http://www.kissarmysweden.com>, accessed August 7, 2009. See also Martin Lundgren as cited in Hagström *et al.*, *Va för jävla pack e ni?*, p. 183.

107 "Skräcken i T-banan. Huliganer gick till attack mot instängda barnfamiljer," *Expressen*, May 20, 1997; "Flygslagsmål efter förlusten," *Sydsvenska Dagbladet*, May 11, 2009.

108 "Huliganer" (October 4, 2004) signed "Niklas," <http://www.dif.se/sidor/fans/klagomuren>, accessed May 19, 2010; Grimlund and Pavalidis, *Djurgården. En supporters handbok*, pp. 8, 174.

109 Christer Ryderfelt, DIF supporter, as cited in "Huliganbråk i natt," *Aftonbladet*, August 30, 2002; "Huliganer" (October 15, 2004), signed "Lars Johansen," <http://www.dif.se/sidor/fans/klagomuren>, accessed May 19, 2010. In both of these cases, the club's non-violent fans call upon DIF Football to eradicate the internal hooligan problem once and for all.

110 "Säkerhet" (October 4, 2004), signed "Funderingar om policy . . . m.m.," <http://www.dif.se/sidor/fans/klagomuren>, accessed May 19, 2010; "Gästkrönika: Gatuslagsmål är ingen lagsport" (January 19, 2006), signed "Blue Stripes," <http://www.svenskafans.com/global/article>, accessed January 28, 2010.

111 "DFG" (May 21, 2008), signed "Stained" and "DFG" (July 20, 2008), signed "MarcusofaDown," <http://www.difforum.se>, accessed July 28, 2010.

112 "Rubrik Saknas" (August 12, 2006), signed "Joel Håkonsen," <http://www.svenskafans.com/global/article>, accessed July 28, 2010; "Boxhandskar & silkesvantar," *Sportstory.se*, January 29, 2008. When DFG, for example, put up a banner calling for Kjell Jonevret's resignation, many of the club's supporters in the seated sections of DIF home area, *Stadion*, let their displeasure be known by booing loudly.

113 This conflict found open expression on JK's blog in the late summer of 2006, when a number of entries openly criticized the firm. DFG, in turn, responded with veiled threats ("DFG Sthlm" [August 13, 2006] signed "Mvh DFG Sthlm," <http://www.difbutiken.se/forum>, accessed July 28, 2010).

114 For illustrations of statements to this effect, see Martin Lundgren as cited in Hagström *et al.*, *Va för jävla pack e ni?*, pp. 155-156, 167-168; Patrik Asplund as cited in "Boxhandskar & silkesvantar," *Sportstory.se*, January 29, 2008.

115 "DFG Historia," <http://www.dfgsthl.com>; "Några tankar om 2006 först" (April 1, 2007), <http://www.dfgsthl.com/difblog>, accessed July 15, 2008. In this blog, DFG reprimands fellow Djurgården fans for protesting against its campaign to get the team's coach (Kjell Jonevret) fired in the previous season.

once the club's hooligans began to hold separate gatherings and arrange their own transportation to away games in the mid-1990s, they unquestionably created more distance between the firm and the rest of the team's supporters – a reality that some DFG elders regret.<sup>116</sup> Its increased isolation seems to have given DFG somewhat of a “tin ear” in relation to internal objections about its behaviour, as the firm tends to respond very defensively to such complaints.<sup>117</sup> Identical frictions are at present also manifest within both AIK and Hammarby,<sup>118</sup> with their respective firms reacting in much the same way to criticism.<sup>119</sup>

Although DFG spokesmen have conceded to causing the team harm,<sup>120</sup> they nevertheless insist that the firm represents the club's best interests.<sup>121</sup> In truth, however, what club officials and other DIF fans think is in all likelihood not much of a concern to DFG. At this point, its primary relationship is no longer really with the rest of Djurgården so much as it is with its chief cross-town rival, AIK's *Firman Boys* (FB). In terms of DFG's own mythology and self-identity, no one else is as important as its arch-nemesis.<sup>122</sup>

While DFG has of course clashed with other firms (including several foreign ones),<sup>123</sup> its main conflict has consistently been with AIK's *Firman Boys*.<sup>124</sup> In the last decade *Djurgårdens Fina Grabbar* has, for example, also gone up against the violent groupings associated with Hammarby (KGB – *Kompis Gänget Bajen*)<sup>125</sup> and Helsingborgs (IF – Frontline),<sup>126</sup> but a special animosity is nonetheless always reserved for AIK and *Firman Boys*.<sup>127</sup> In the words of a 2007

116 “Åren med Djurgår'n i Sverige,” <http://www.dfgsthlm.com/krönikor>.

117 “Några tankar om 2006 först,” <http://www.dfgsthlm.com/difblog>; “Till er som hatar firmorna” (October 9, 2007), signed “DFG behövs i Djurgårdsfamiljen,” <http://www.debatt.passagen.se>, accessed July 25, 2010.

118 “Fotboll ska vara fest och inget annat,” *Aftonbladet*, August 29, 2006; “Stökiga fans får sponsra Hammarby,” *Dagens Nyheter*, December 28, 2006.

119 Unidentified Hammarby hooligan as cited in “Vi ville ha kaos,” *Expressen*, August 30, 2006; unidentified members of Firman Boys as cited in “I mörkrets hjärta,” *Offside* (2002), no. 4, pp. 41–58.

120 “Johan” as cited in “Firmaledaren: Var redo att dö,” *Aftonbladet*, May 8, 2005; “Åren med Djurgår'n i Sverige,” <http://www.dfgsthlm.com/krönikor>.

121 “DFG Sthlm,” signed “Mvh DFG,” <http://www.difbutiken.se/forum>; “Några tankar om 2006 först,” <http://www.dfgsthlm.com/difblog>.

122 In the worlds of DFG's Facebook page, “DFG has under its whole existence been in hard conflict against AIK's counterpart, Firman Boys [my translation]” (April 1, 2009), <http://www.facebook.com/pages/DFG>, accessed July 24, 2009.

123 “Huliganbråk i natt,” *Aftonbladet*, August 30, 2002; “Bråkigt kring Djurgårdens cupmatch,” *Dagens Nyheter*, September 19, 2002.

124 “Varningsskott mot fotbollshuliganer,” *Dagens Nyheter*, June 3, 2003; “Tack för en skön eftermiddag,” *Svenska Dagbladet*, May 23, 2005; “Huliganer möttes i jätteslagsmål,” *Dagens Nyheter*, April 1, 2007.

125 “Huliganbråk i Stockholm,” *Dagens Nyheter*, October 19, 2008; “Huliganbråk på inner plan defter derbyt,” *Dagens Nyheter*, April 20, 2009. In a 2007 blog entry, DFG makes clear that although “we [DFG] also hate Hammarby plenty, we do not hate them nearly as much as AIK” [my translation] (“Inför Bajen – DIF” [June 18, 2007], <http://www.dfgsthlm.com/difblog>, accessed July 15, 2008).

126 “Huliganbråk var planerat. Måndagens slagsmål mellan supportrar till HIF och Djurgården var en sedan länge planerad uppgörelse,” *Helsingborgs Dagblad*, April 21, 2004; “Fyrtio omhändertogs vid huliganbråk,” *Dagens Nyheter*, November 22, 2008.

127 “Slakten i Vasaparken” (May 15, 2001), <http://www.dfgsthlm.com/krönikor>, accessed July 15, 2008; “Hat derby mot packet” (May 28, 2007), <http://www.dfgsthlm.com/krönikor>, accessed July 15, 2008; “DFG vs. FIRMAN BOYS” (March 31, 2007), <http://www.dfgsthlm.com/krönikor>, accessed July 15, 2008.

DFG blog entry: “A more repulsive club [AIK] and fans cannot be found on this planet.”<sup>128</sup>

Conversely, DFG has on several occasions expressed a begrudging respect for Wisemen, IFK Göteborg’s firm,<sup>129</sup> and this sentiment appears to be mutual.<sup>130</sup> Even though these two firms have repeatedly brawled, there seems to be no real malice between the two groups;<sup>131</sup> on occasion, they have also fought side by side in international contexts.<sup>132</sup> More than any other Swedish firm, *Djurgårdens Fina Grabbar* has been actively involved with violence surrounding the matches of the Swedish national team, both abroad and at home.<sup>133</sup> At times, even DFG and *Firman Boys* have collaborated, joining to form a Swedish “super-firm” to face off against hooligans from other countries,<sup>134</sup> though this has never translated into any long-term truce between the two groups.

AIK has historically always had the largest fan base in Stockholm, and in the early years the fierce reputation of its supporter club, Black Army, was unmatched in Sweden. There is thus definitely an element of sibling rivalry, with Djurgården’s hooligans (and supporters overall) traditionally playing the role of little brother. Indeed, in the early days of this conflict, DIF’s hooligans fully embraced the identity of being, in their words, “*färre, men värre*” (“fewer, but worse”).<sup>135</sup>

AIK still draws more fans, but these days the two firms appear to be close in size. In 2005 police estimated that both groups could field as many as 100 men during certain away games – and perhaps double as many in conjunction with key home games.<sup>136</sup> Since then, the ranks of both firms have only continued to swell, on occasion even reaching as many as 250 to 300 fighters, though in these situations many participants are little more than passive onlookers. In any case, neither DFG’s core group, nor that of *Firman Boys*, consists of more than 40 to 50 individuals.<sup>137</sup>

128 “Inför Helsingborg-DIF” (September 3, 2007), <http://www.dfgsthlm.com/difblog>, accessed July 15, 2008. See also “FC Flora Tallin – Djurgårdens IF ‘Vi ska hugga er . . .,’” <http://www.youtube.com>, accessed August 19, 2010.

129 “DFG-WM” (June 14, 2007), <http://www.sc.phpbb2.se/forum/viewtopic>, accessed July 15, 2008; “Johan” as cited in “Firmaledaren: Var redo att dö,” *Aftonbladet*, May 8, 2005.

130 “Här drabbar huliganerna samman,” *Expressen*, March 2, 2009.

131 “Gärdet. DFG vs. Wisemen” (April 27, 2002), <http://www.dfgsthlm.com/krönikor>, accessed July 15, 2008; “DFG vs. Wisemen i Vårbygård” (June 9, 2007), <http://www.dfgsthlm.com>, accessed July 15, 2008.

132 “DFG Historia,” <http://www.dfgsthlm.com>.

133 “Danmark vs. Sverige 070602” (May 28, 2007), DFG BLOG, <http://www.copac.se/blog>, accessed October 13, 2009. This fact is also widely acknowledged by other Swedish hooligan groups; see “Italien-Sverige, Fotboll, EM-slutspel (EURO 2004)” (June 18, 2004), <http://www.sverigesccenen.com/2006>, accessed October 13, 2009.

134 Höglund, *En av grabbarna*, pp. 140–145.

135 “DFG Historia,” <http://www.dfgsthlm.com>; “Åren med Djurgår’n i Sverige,” <http://www.dfgsthlm.com/krönikor>.

136 “Firmorna som ger fotbollen dåligt rykte,” *Svenska Dagbladet*, May 23, 2005. According to DFG sources, the club’s firm usually numbers around 80 to 100, but in an emergency it can call upon maybe as many as 150 men (“Johan” as cited in “Firmaledaren: Var redo att dö,” *Aftonbladet*, May 8, 2005).

137 Author interview with Stig-Örjan Saether and Hans Rudolfson, June 8, 2010; author interview with Mats Jonsson, June 18, 2010.

The veterans of *Djurgårdens Fina Grabbar* and *Firman Boys* were both typically baptized into their respective supporter organizations during the heated years of the two clubs' hockey rivalry in the 1980s. In many ways, the two groups are mirror images of each other, and their respective identities have always been created principally in opposition to each other. Significantly, both claim to have previously been victimized by the other, and this is also central to each group's founding mythology. This idea, moreover, continues to be crucial to both groups' claims to legitimacy, since their *raison d'être* is fundamentally that each protects its own fans from those of the other.<sup>138</sup>

*Firman Boys* was founded in 1991 in reaction to the appearance of *Järngänget*,<sup>139</sup> this move by AIK hooligans, in turn, informed the subsequent decision to consolidate *Järngänget* and *Babyfirman* into DFG in 1995.<sup>140</sup> In hindsight, the establishment of *Firman Boys* and *Djurgårdens Fina Grabbar* set Swedish hooliganism on a new path, as the most violent supporters of the two teams formed their own autonomous units. Eventually this tendency became discernable in a number of other clubs as well, and for a while the list of new firms seemed to grow almost annually.<sup>141</sup>

By its own admission, *Firman Boys* was originally also deeply indebted to British hooligan culture, but over time its members have come to regard themselves as being more along the lines of the Italian *ultras*. Similarly to its Italian role models, *Firman Boys* is no longer content just to dominate the terraces, but now wants to have a direct say in the club's personnel decisions, even about the team's style of play.<sup>142</sup> FB claims to have significant influence over major club decisions, and the group exerts its influence through a pattern of systemic intimidation. It employs coercive threats not only against opposing players and referees, but also against members of its own club. More specifically, *Firman Boys* has been known to demand "talks" with AIK's board of directors and coaches, and from time to time FB members have likewise stepped in and disciplined the club's own players.<sup>143</sup>

In recent years, DFG has increasingly come to replicate these methods, though it has yet to surpass the audacity and ruthlessness of *Firman Boys*.<sup>144</sup>

138 "Firman Boys-Historien" (2000), <http://www.sverigescenen.com>, accessed July 15, 2008; unidentified members of *Firman Boys* as cited in "I mörkrets hjärta," *Offside* (2002), no. 4, pp. 41-58; "DFG Historia," <http://www.dfgsthlm.com>; "Till er som hatar firmona," <http://www.debatt.passagen.se>. According to this last blog entry, signed "DFG behövs i Djurgårdsfamiljen," DFG was created out of self-defence against *Firman Boys*, and the group still acts as a crucial form of protection for other DIF fans.

139 "Firman Boys-Historien," <http://www.sverigescenen.com>. See also Sännås, *Black Army*, pp. 120-122.

140 "DFG Historia," <http://www.dfgsthlm.com>; "Åren med Djurgår'n i Sverige," <http://www.dfgsthlm.com>/krönikor.

141 "Från flyttat mål till mord," *Aftonbladet*, August 3, 2002.

142 Höglund, *En av grabbarna*, pp. 120-121.

143 "Firman Boys-Historien," <http://www.sverigescenen.com>; unidentified members of *Firman Boys* as cited in "I mörkrets hjärta," *Offside* (2002), no. 4, pp. 41-58.

144 *Firman Boys* are notably suspected of having sent a mail bomb to the head of AIK security, and the group has also been implicated in one death ("Redo att dö för sitt lag," *Aftonbladet*, July 30, 2002; "Kärlek till våld och AIK förenar," *Dagens Nyheter*, October 20, 2007).

DFG is rapidly catching up, however, and only *Firman Boys* has been implicated in more violent hooligan-related offences than *Djurgårdens Fina Grabbar*.<sup>145</sup> In recent years, DFG has, for example, not only tried to intimidate opposing players and coaches prior to important matches,<sup>146</sup> but has also threatened the Swedish Football Association.<sup>147</sup> Members of *Djurgårdens Fina Grabbar* have, furthermore, assaulted a handful of Swedish media personalities whom they, for one reason or another, perceive to be enemies.<sup>148</sup> Most strikingly, perhaps, in the summer of 2006, DFG launched an aggressive campaign to get the team's coach, Kjell Jonevret, to resign<sup>149</sup> – which he did, after two severed pig heads with menacing messages were left outside the club's offices and training grounds.<sup>150</sup> Two months later, *Djurgårdens Fina Grabbar* followed this up by calling upon the team to throw its last home game to prevent AIK from winning the league.<sup>151</sup>

DFG appears to regard itself as the club's consciousness,<sup>152</sup> demanding that both management and players live up to its expectations;<sup>153</sup> on at least one occasion its members leapt onto the sidelines in mid-game to make their displeasure directly known to the club's coaches and players.<sup>154</sup> *Djurgårdens Fina Grabbar* has, additionally, taken on the role of being the team's internal disciplinarian. To that end, it has sent players home from the bar,<sup>155</sup> admonished the club's supporters

145 Panu Poutvaara and Mikael Priks, "Hooliganism in the Shadow of a Terrorist Attack: Do Police Reduce Group Violence?" (2006), p. 4, [http://www.ifo.de/link/\\_confpast/pse06\\_programme.htm](http://www.ifo.de/link/_confpast/pse06_programme.htm), accessed July 19, 2010.

146 "Brandattentat mot AIK-stjärnor," *Expressen*, September 23, 2007. In this case, DFG was suspected of having thrown a flare into the hallway of an apartment building where two AIK players lived. This took place just prior to a derby against DIF and was accompanied with derogatory graffiti directed at the two players. On a previous occasion, DFG is also alleged to have threatened an opposing coach ("IF Brommapojkarna-DIF, Fotboll, Div 1 Norra" [August 12, 1997], <http://www.sverigesccnen.com/1997>, accessed October 13, 2009).

147 In this particular incident, threatening graffiti was found painted outside the offices of the Swedish Football Association, declaring "Death to SVFF" signed "DFG" ("Fotbollsförbundets kansli vandaliserat," *Svenska Dagbladet*, November 10, 2004).

148 "Lille Alex, vi har hittat dig!," *Realtid.se*, April 8, 2008, <http://www.Realtid.se>; "Schulman slogs ner på öppen gata," *Expressen*, June 2, 2008.

149 On its Facebook page, DFG shows a photo taken in 2006 of a masked hooligan standing in front of a banner calling for Jonevret's resignation. The banner's text reads: "Our patience is beginning to run out. Show heart, or change clubs!" [my translation], <http://www.facebook.com/pages/DFG>, accessed April 1, 2009. See also "Fansen attack – mot Jonevret," *Aftonbladet*, August 6, 2006.

150 "Fick en sista varning," *Expressen*, July 30, 2006.

151 "DFG vill ha läggmatch" (October 2006), <http://www.metacafe.com>, accessed July 15, 2008; "Lägg-match" (October 31, 2006), <http://www.joe-sthlm.blogspot.com>, accessed July 26, 2010. In this blog entry, "Djurgårds-Joe" insinuates that a pitch invasion might be necessary to secure the "right result."

152 According to DFG, "It is we [the fans] that are the club" (unidentified DFG member as cited in "Skyddas av polis: Fansen marcherade in på träningen," *Expressen*, July 20, 2007).

153 "Vi lämnar inte ut dig," *Aftonbladet*, April 27, 2009. In this instance, graffiti was spray-painted outside the residence of Djurgården's goalkeeper, Pa Dembo Touray, declaring "Achieve or Leave DFG" [my translation]. See also "Några tankar om 2006 först," <http://www.dfgsthlm.com/difblog>.

154 "Siggis Jönsson hotad av fans efter förlusten," *Expressen*, July 13, 2008.

155 "DFG hotar spelare som går på krogen," *Expressen*, May 19, 2008.

to show up in greater numbers,<sup>156</sup> and, incredibly, even chastised the club's other fans to behave during games.<sup>157</sup>

This evident radicalization in the group's behaviour culminated in November 2009, when four visiting players from Assyriska FF were assaulted following a pitch invasion that right after DIF had just heroically managed to stave off relegation with an overtime goal.<sup>158</sup> To many, this seemed to represent yet another new low point for the club – as one well-known football reporter put it, this was “Terror Tommy quadrupled.”<sup>159</sup> In the wake of this incident, DIF Football was once again compelled to pay heavy fines and was further forced to play the following season's first home game in front of an empty arena.<sup>160</sup> Seemingly desperate at this point, DIF Football called upon the Swedish government to pass new, even harsher legislation aimed at curbing hooligan-related offences.<sup>161</sup>

Consequently, by late 2009, DIF Football once more appeared to be at a serious crossroads in relation to its own violent supporters. Dating back to at least 2005, the club's management and coaching staff have been more or less in open conflict with DFG.<sup>162</sup> The current situation is therefore very reminiscent of the one in which DIF Football found itself only a decade earlier, as club officials yet again fret that the team's hooligans might scare off the rest of the team's supporters, not to mention its sponsors.<sup>163</sup> DIF Football wishes that it could simply be rid of this group,<sup>164</sup> but it has no legal means of doing so. Some football experts believe that rising fan violence is hurting gate receipts of the three big Stockholm clubs, which have all seen a sharp decline in attendance during the last couple of years. They have posited further that intensified pressure on the players from their own supporters has negatively affected performance on the pitch.<sup>165</sup>

Such comments beg the question of how concerned the club hierarchy should be about DFG and how much influence the group really has over the team. For

156 “Djurgårn – TFF” (September 27, 2007), <http://www.dfgsthlm.com/difblog>, accessed July 15, 2008.

157 “DIF – Göteborg” (June 13, 2007), <http://www.dfgsthlm.com/difblog>, accessed July 15, 2008. In this instance, DFG castigates other DIF supporters for throwing objects on to the pitch.

158 “Djurgårdssupporter slog ner Assyriskaspelare” (November 9, 2009), <http://www.youtube.com>, accessed July 29, 2010. In this context it is of interest that DFG had on a previous occasion already threatened Assyriska FF (“Fotbollsförbundets kansli vandaliserat,” *Svenska Dagbladet*, November 10, 2004).

159 Erik Niva, “Det här är Terror Tommy i Kvadrat,” *Aftonbladet*, November 11, 2009. In the end, no one was ever prosecuted for this attack, due to inconclusive evidence (“Dif-huligan friad – får gå på premiären,” *Aftonbladet*, February 8, 2011).

160 “Djurgården inför nykterhetskontroll,” *Aftonbladet*, February 12, 2010.

161 “Djurgårdens vädjan till politikerna: Inför längre straff för huliganerna,” *Aftonbladet*, November 10, 2009. See also editorial by Tommy Jacobsson, current chairman of DIF Football, in *Djurgårdaren* (2010), no. 1, pp. 44–45.

162 Bo Lundquist as cited in “En supporter stöder sin klubb, de här förstör enbart för oss,” *Aftonbladet*, May 6, 2005; Jonas Riedel, DIF's media representative, as cited in “Psykkrig bakom rökfakla mot AIK,” *Svenska Dagbladet*, September 24, 2007; Zoran Lukic, coach DIF Football, as cited in “Vi måste ta till kraftag,” *Aftonbladet*, April 27, 2009.

163 Patrik Asplund as cited in “Huliganer har också klubbkänsla,” *Dagens Nyheter*, September 9, 2008.

164 Bo Lundquist as cited in “Dif:s attack mot våldet,” *Aftonbladet*, February 23, 2005; Abbe Törsleff, head of security, DIF Football, as cited in “Inga enkla lösningar på derbyvåldet,” *Dagens Nyheter*, October 24, 2008.

165 Jonas Cederquist, *Stockholms fotbollshistoria 1880-2010* (Stockholm: Stockholmia förlag, 2010), pp.186, 188-189; “Stockholm har blivit kallt,” *Offside* (2008), no. 6, pp. 70-84.

its part, *Djurgårdens Fina Grabbar* predictably insists that it has a decisive say in club matters, as was demonstrated by Jonevret's resignation.<sup>166</sup> This, however, is strongly disputed by Bo Lundquist, the former DIF chairman, who maintains that DFG's threats have been but a minor nuisance to the team.<sup>167</sup> Yet, according to at least one outside observer, Bo Lundquist was himself later forced to resign under pressure from *Djurgårdens Fina Grabbar*.<sup>168</sup> While it is hard to evaluate the validity of any of these claims, what we do know is that representatives from DFG have been allowed to speak to the team's coaches<sup>169</sup> and that the group has also actively tried to assert its will at the club's membership meetings.<sup>170</sup>

Mats Jonsson, the head of security at DIF Football, offers a more nuanced answer to this question, suggesting that the best way to think about this issue is not so much in terms of the group's influence, but in terms of its effect on the team. Jonsson stresses that this is a crucial distinction, for, while DFG does not have any direct say in club decisions, its mere intimidating presence – particularly its visits to the team's practice field at Kaknäs – tends to have a negative impact on the team.<sup>171</sup> In September 2009, for instance, members of DFG were suspected of having vandalized the club's training facility following a demoralizing derby loss to AIK.<sup>172</sup> Under these circumstances, club officials have felt obliged to warn the players about the team's own hooligans, and the coaching staff has sporadically also received police protection.<sup>173</sup> Through its actions, DFG has therefore succeeded in creating a threatening atmosphere around the club.

While certainly still far less violent, DFG's recent activities are nonetheless very reminiscent of its Italian equivalents – and presently, the firm's ambitions must be said to be far grander than its British counterparts, which still, by and large, limit themselves to facing off against other firms. On the other hand, DFG does not have either the strong ideological profile or the political connections of many Italian *ultra* groups.<sup>174</sup> Nor can *Djurgårdens Fina Grabbar* be said to be running the errands of the club leadership, which has often been the case in Italy.<sup>175</sup> In fact, if there is any collusion at all between DFG and the club's management, so far it seems only to be on DFG's terms – to the detriment of DIF Football.

166 "Några tankar om 2006 först," <http://www.dfgsthlm.com/difblog>.

167 Bo Lundquist as cited in "Boxhandskar & silkesvantar," *Sportstory.se*, January 29, 2008.

168 Mats Öbrink, head of sports programming at Canal Plus, as cited in "Ekonomiskt omöjligt att flytta matcherna," *Realtid.se*, November 14, 2008.

169 Patrik Asplund as cited in "Boxhandskar & silkesvantar," *Sportstory.se*, January 29, 2008; "Skyddas av polis: Fansen marcherade in på träningen," *Expressen*, July 20, 2007.

170 "Lundquist kallad lögnare på DIF-möte," *Expressen*, November 13, 2008.

171 Author interview with Mats Jonsson, June 18, 2010. For a specific illustration, see DIF players Johan Oremo and Lance Davids as cited in "Klart det var obchagligt," *Aftonbladet*, July 13, 2008.

172 "Djurgårdens träningsanläggning vandaliserad," *Aftonbladet*, September 29, 2009.

173 "Skyddas av polis: Fansen marcherade in på träningen," *Expressen*, July 20, 2007; "Ledningen varnade spelarna för fansen," *Aftonbladet*, April 27, 2009.

174 Carlo Podaliri and Carlo Balestri, "The Ultras, Racism and Football Culture in Italy" in Brown, ed., *Fanatics!*, pp. 88-100.

175 John Foot, *Winning at all Costs: A Scandalous History of Italian Soccer* (New York: Nation Books, 2007), pp. 302-324, 344-354.

If it is any consolation, Hammarby and AIK currently find themselves in an equally bad, if not worse, position in regard to the same issues.<sup>176</sup> AIK Football, for example, has tried to handle its hooligan problem in much the same way, but with no better result.<sup>177</sup> AIK's leadership has been widely criticized in Sweden for capitulating to its own hooligans by allowing them regular access to team officials.<sup>178</sup> If anything, the behaviour of *Firman Boys* has only continued to degenerate, and the same observation can definitely be made about DFG – especially from the summer of 2006 onward. In DFG's case, this deterioration has indisputably been driven by its rivalry with *Firman Boys*, as both groups seek to outdo each other at every turn in their fierce competition for headlines, local bragging rights, and new recruits.

Twenty years ago the issue of new recruits would have been less of a concern, because at that time a club's hooligans were still only drawn internally from within its own supporter clubs. However, over the past few years team loyalties have become less and less important, and the police have determined that prospective hooligans are increasingly being recruited for their fighting skills alone. The result has been a marked upswing in the number of hardened criminal elements in the firms and in other groups of people who are solely interested in perpetuating violence.<sup>179</sup> Mats Jonson, who is responsible for security issues at DIF football, guesses that this latter group represents anywhere from 25 to 30 per cent of DFG's current membership. This crowd poses a particularly difficult problem for the club because it has no intrinsic sense of loyalty to the team and consequently cannot be persuaded to act in Djurgården's best interests.<sup>180</sup> The influx of these new recruits has thus further distanced DFG from the rest of the club.

Nor can there be any doubt that the radicalization of DFG's behaviour stems from its growing seclusion within the club. As the firm has become a world unto itself, more and more cut off from DIF's other supporters, there are no longer any dissenting opinions or voices of reason to temper the group's actions. Hence, like many other types of violent sects, hooligan firms such as DFG are liable to become victims of their own negative groupthink. They have progressively come to inhabit a mental environment totally removed from any normal frame of reference, and within this insular world the pursuit of "violence for violence' sake" appears to be totally legitimate to its members.<sup>181</sup> Moreover, along the way, these sorts of groups (DFG included) often alienate the very people whom they were originally supposed to represent. The depth of DFG's isolation was illustrated in

176 Cederquist, *Stockholms fotbollshistoria*, p. 190; "Stockholm har blivit kallt," *Offside* (2008), no. 6, pp. 78-80.

177 "I mörkrets hjärta," *Offside* (2002), no. 4, pp. 41-58.

178 "Firmorna får för mycket makt," *Aftonbladet*, August 2, 2002; "Kärlek till våld och AIK förenar," *Dagens Nyheter*, October 20, 2007.

179 Anders Green, Criminologist at the University of Stockholm, as cited in "Off side – Hulganismen flyttar ut från arenorna," *Apropå. Brottsförbygganderådets Tidskrift* (2007), no. 4, pp. 5-11; Hans Lödahl as cited in "Polisen kritisk till nya huliganlagen," *Dagens Nyheter*, April 19, 2009.

180 Author interview with Mats Jonsson, June 18, 2010. See also comments by longtime Djurgården supporter and former DIF hooligan Tommie Arvidsson as cited in Hagström, *et al.*, *Va för jävla pack e ni?*, pp. 100-101.

181 This type of thinking can also be found in far more lethal groups like the West German RAF and the Provisional IRA. Jeremy Varon, *Bringing the War Home: The Weather Underground, the Red Army Faction and*

early 2005 when Markus Karlsson, one of Djurgården's most popular players, categorically denounced the group.<sup>182</sup>

From an outsider's perspective, there is also a certain irony in the fact that, while DFG purports to represent local club interests, it is itself so wholly shaped by imported foreign influences. Looking back, DFG has played a central role in introducing a previously alien subculture – or cancer – into Swedish sports, albeit in a slightly new amalgamation. This, however, begs the question why Swedish society has proven so susceptible to the spread of hooliganism. Beyond Sweden's historically strong cultural ties to the Anglo-American world, one might speculate that, in a country internationally renowned for its egalitarian gender relations, hooliganism offers a crucial platform for the reassertion of earlier idealized forms of masculinity. Indeed, recent European scholarship on this general topic has repeatedly underscored the symbolic function that hooliganism serves in post-industrial societies like Sweden, where traditional celebrations of male physical prowess now find fewer and fewer outlets.<sup>183</sup> In Sweden, women can be found in prominent positions in virtually every facet of society, from politics to private industry; in Sweden, therefore, more than in most Western countries, hooliganism truly represents one of the last remaining all-male preserves.

Alternatively – or perhaps concomitantly – it is possible that the relative prosperity and socio-economic homogeneity of contemporary Swedish society has circuitously (and unconsciously) created a need for new socially constructed identities and divisions. If true, this would seemingly vindicate the thesis that hooliganism is essentially a form of neo-modern tribalism.<sup>184</sup> This is an intriguing idea given that Swedish hooliganism is decidedly apolitical in nature – and equally importantly because Sweden has few, if any, of the sharp internal regional, linguistic, religious, ethnic, or socio-economic fault-lines that have frequently been used to explain spectator-related football violence in other parts of Europe.<sup>185</sup> This theory seems especially pertinent to DFG'S rivalry with *Firman Boys*, since the socio-economic composition of the two clubs' fans are nearly identical, despite persistent stereotypes to the contrary.<sup>186</sup>

Internally, however, the members of *Djurgårdens Fina Grabbar* do not really have all that much in common with each other, beyond their gender, age, and to a lesser extent ethnicity. Otherwise, the firm is characterized by its geographical and sociological diversity. Moreover, the group does not have a set membership,

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*Revolutionary Violence in the Sixties and Seventies* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), pp. 8, 12, 75, 212, 225-226; Brendon O'Brien, *O'Brien Pocket History of the IRA* (Dublin: The O'Brien Press, 2003), p. 119.

182 In a letter to the club's hooligans, Markus Karlsson, former DIF captain, writes that, as far as he is concerned, they can all "go to hell" (Karlsson's letter as cited in "Dif:s attack mot våldet," *Aftonbladet*, February 23, 2005).

183 Richard Giulianotti, *Football: A Sociology of the Global Game* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1999) p. 155; Dunning, *Sport Matters*, pp. 145-150.

184 Gary Armstrong, *Football Hooligans: Knowing the Score* (New York: Berg Publishing, 1998), pp. 306-307.

185 Spaaij, *Understanding Football Hooliganism*, pp. 4, 6, 386-392; Dunning, *Sport Matters*, pp. 155-158.

186 Hagström, *et al.*, *Va för jävla pack e ni?*, pp. 16, 46-17, 160-161.

nor does it purport to possess a coherent ideological agenda. In fact, it makes no claim to a well-defined territory – save possibly for DIF’s home arena *Stadion* and the main watering hole of the club’s supporters, *Östra Station*. Yet, despite this seeming lack of unity of purpose, DFG’s members assert their willingness to make huge personal sacrifices for both the group and club: the firm’s slogan is “Without Sacrifice, No Victory” (*Utan Offer, Ingen Seger*).<sup>187</sup>

With this in mind, one might think of DFG as a localized, or truncated, version of Benedict Anderson’s famous thesis on modern nationalism and the creation of “imagined communities.” Anderson explains this as an evolutionary process in which disparate groups of people come to conceive of themselves as being a part of a larger national community that, in truth, is more often fictive than real. Nevertheless, the idea is so compelling that people are willing to fight and die for it.<sup>188</sup> In DFG’s case, the group is of course small enough that its members do actually know each other, but their bond is still arguably made up of an “imagined community” of “Djurgårdare,” whose camaraderie is created and continually reinforced through acts of collective violence.<sup>189</sup>

Finally, one can further hypothesize that the creation of this type of new localized identity has become all the more important for groups like DFG as Sweden becomes more and more integrated into the rest of Europe through the European Union. Integration, in conjunction with the accelerated pace of globalization, therefore appears to be having the paradoxical effect of leading to increased assimilation of foreign influences on one hand and a simultaneous retreat into localism on the other. Viewed from this perspective, then, *Djurgårdens Fina Grabbar* might be understood as both a symptom of – and a reaction against – the current heightened state of globalism.

This retreat into localism, however, should not necessarily be interpreted as an outright rejection of nationalism or of the national state, given DFG’s extensive involvement in violence surrounding the Swedish men’s football team. If anything, the group’s apparent willingness to collaborate with other Swedish firms within this specific framework suggests that the primacy of the DFG’s localized identity has not necessarily wholly supplanted its adherence to more traditional forms of Swedish nationalism. Rather, these two distinct identities continue to exist side by side, with each given priority depending upon the particular situation. The paradox here is that, while DFG’s brand of local patriotism is important enough to fight for (and possibly even die for), it is simultaneously malleable enough deliberately to appropriate foreign influences; as this case study shows, this transfer can occur either directly or indirectly through regional proxies.

187 <http://www.dfgsthlm.com>, accessed July 15, 2008.

188 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, rev. ed., 1991), pp. 5-7.

189 “Djurgårdare” is the plural noun for DIF supporters.