



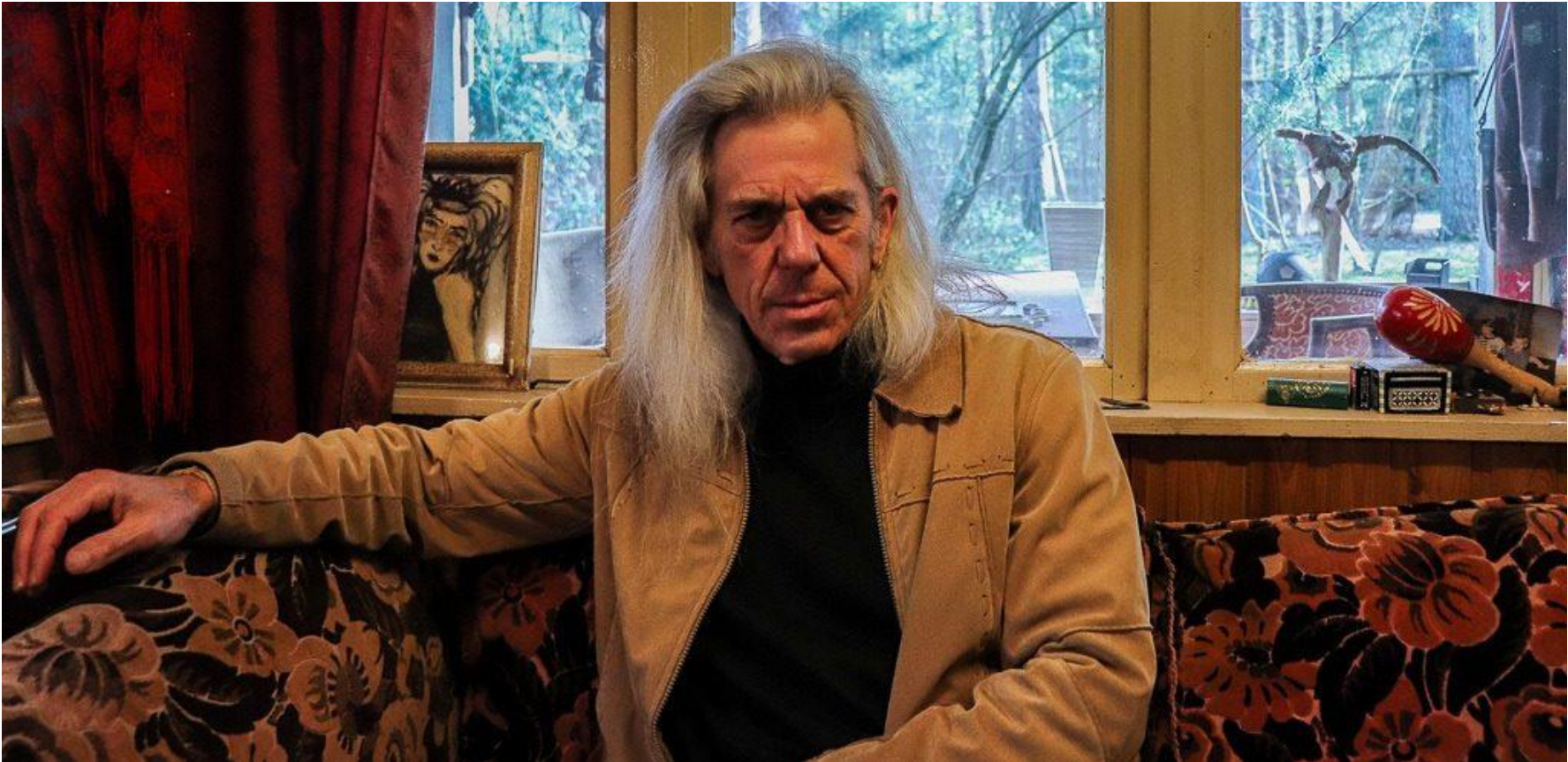
Is being a sport fan a curse or a blessing?

Status, identification and well-being

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The best joke ever ...





Sport fans should not be equated with hooligans



*These
sport fans
are crazy !*





“We sport fans are glorious expressions of all the wondrous quirks and oddities in human behaviour.”

THE SECRET LIVES
OF SPORTS FANS

THE SCIENCE OF SPORTS OBSESSION

ERIC SIMONS



Filip Boen@filip_boen

#Fandom relies on the same fundamental processes as #groupbehaviour in other contexts, intensified by

#zero-sum character of sport competitions (<-> trade, politics, ...)

The disgrace of Gijon





Filip Boen@filip_boen

#Fandom relies on the same fundamental processes as #groupbehaviour in other contexts, intensified by

#zero-sum character of sport competitions (<-> trade, politics, ...)

direct, clear and frequent #feedback on win/loss (status)

(exaggerated) #media-attention



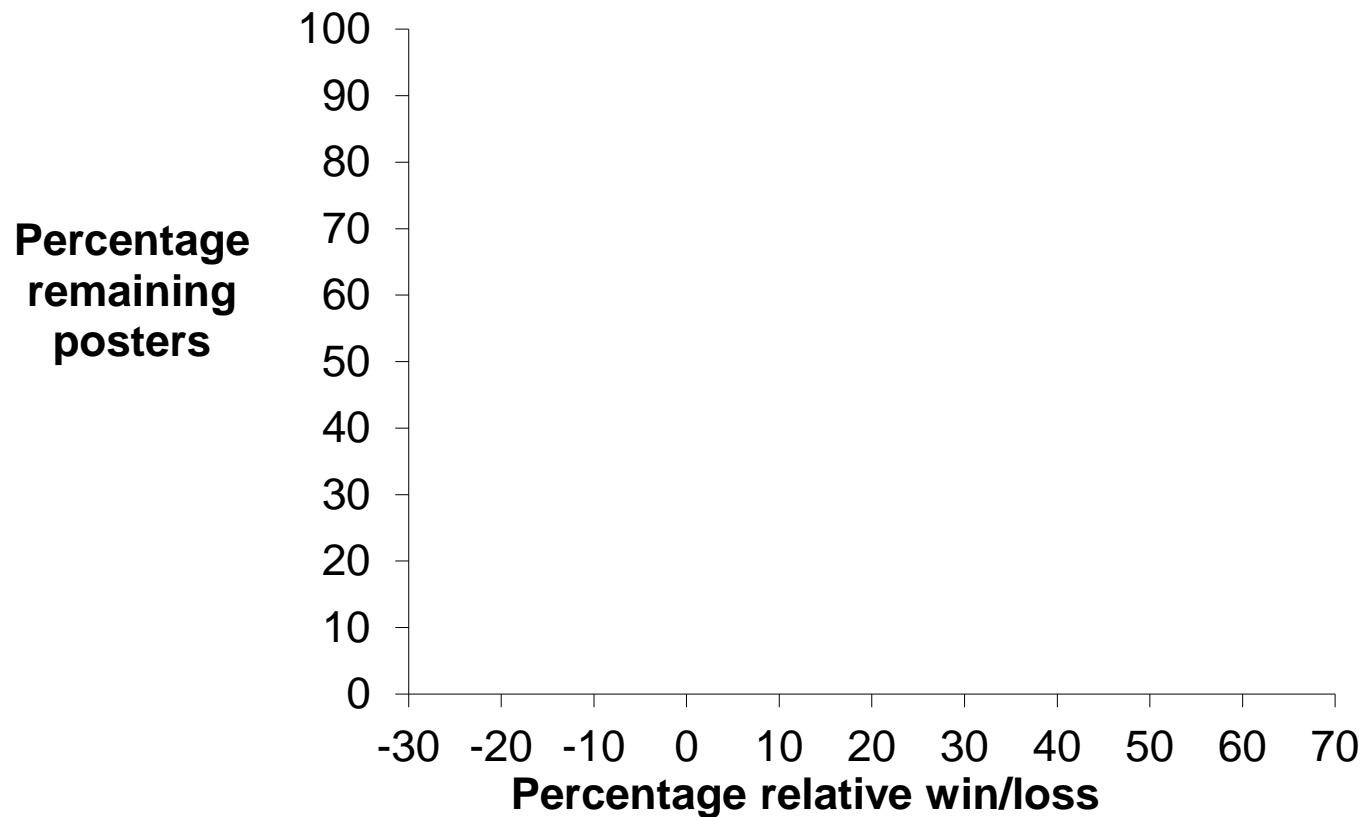
Sport fans as zebra-fishes of group behaviour

Effects of game outcome

- football-studies by Cialdini et al. (1976):
 1. more fan apparel in aula's on Mondays after win
 2. “we've won” vs. “they lost”
 3. especially after failing publicly on personal knowledge test
- Basking-In-Reflected-Glory (BIRGing) = emphasizing your association with successful others
- Cutting-Off-Reflected-Failure (CORFing) = hiding your association with unsuccessful others

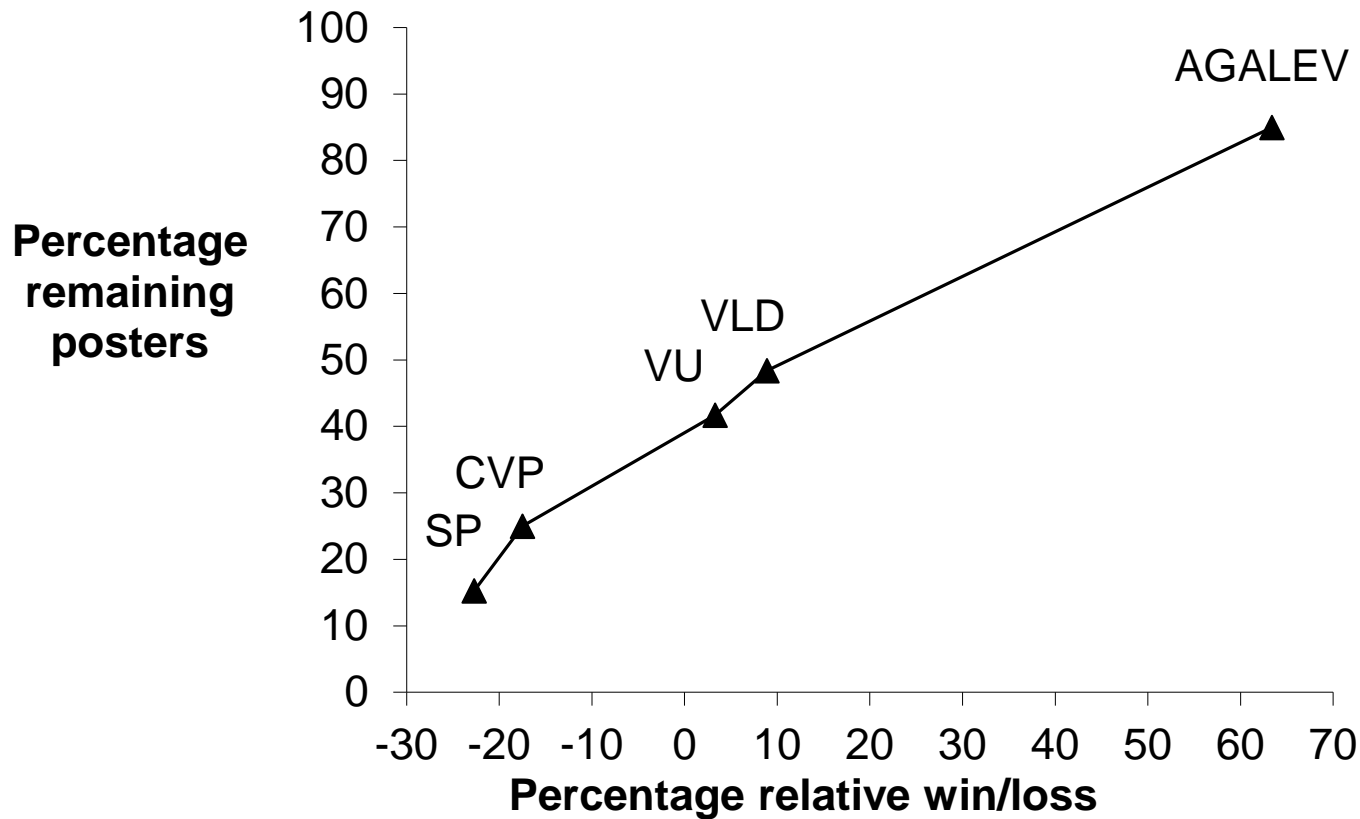
BIRGing and CORFing in politics

(Boen et al., 2002a)



BIRGing and CORFing in politics

(Boen et al., 2002a)



The moderating role of self-esteem

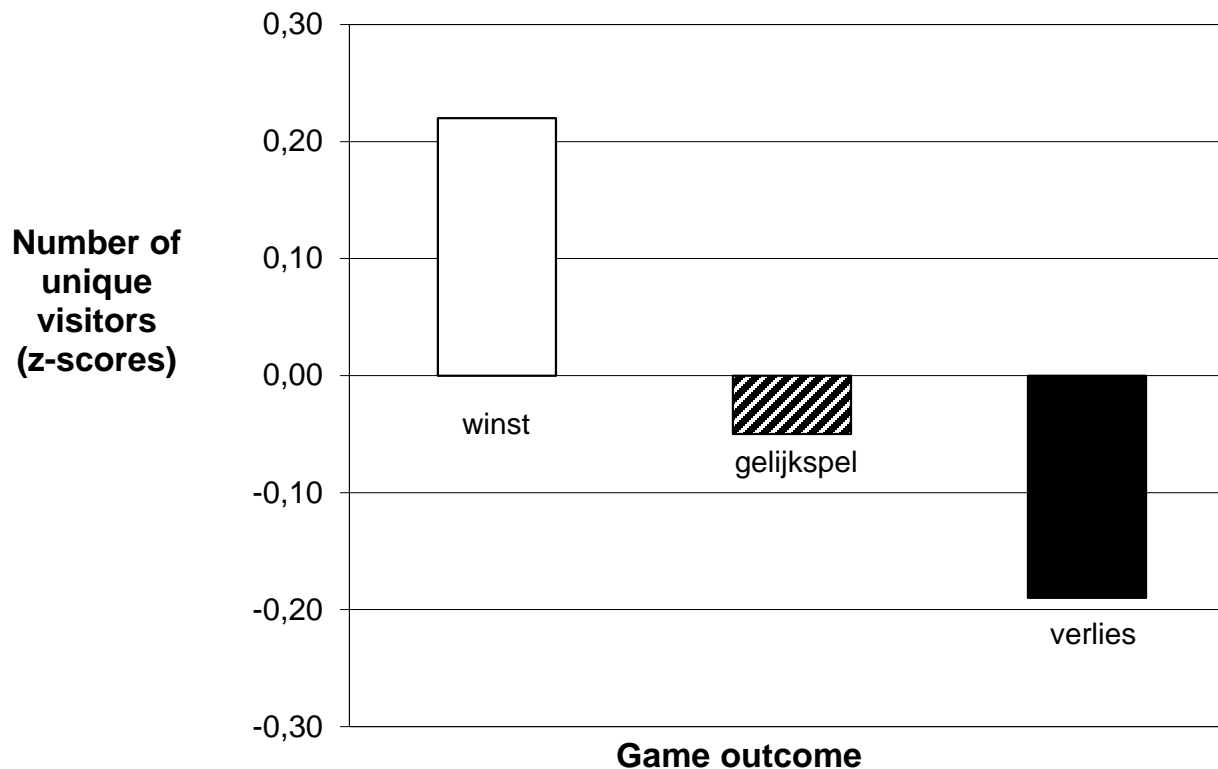


- replication in USA in 2008 (Miller, 2009):

1. Obama-signs were displayed longer than those of McCain
2. McCain-fans with low self-esteem showed more CORFing (devaluations in ratings)

Private BIRGing en CORFing: It's more than self-presentation!

visitors of websites of Belgian and Dutch soccer clubs after a game (Boen et al., 2002b)



Die-hard versus fair-weather fans





Longitudinal study 1: Impact of game outcome on BIRGing/CORFing as a function of identification

- web-based survey among 367 fans of K.R.C. Genk
- extensive pre-test before season
- weekly short survey the day after each game of first round (15 games)

- 71% males
- Mage 32.2 years

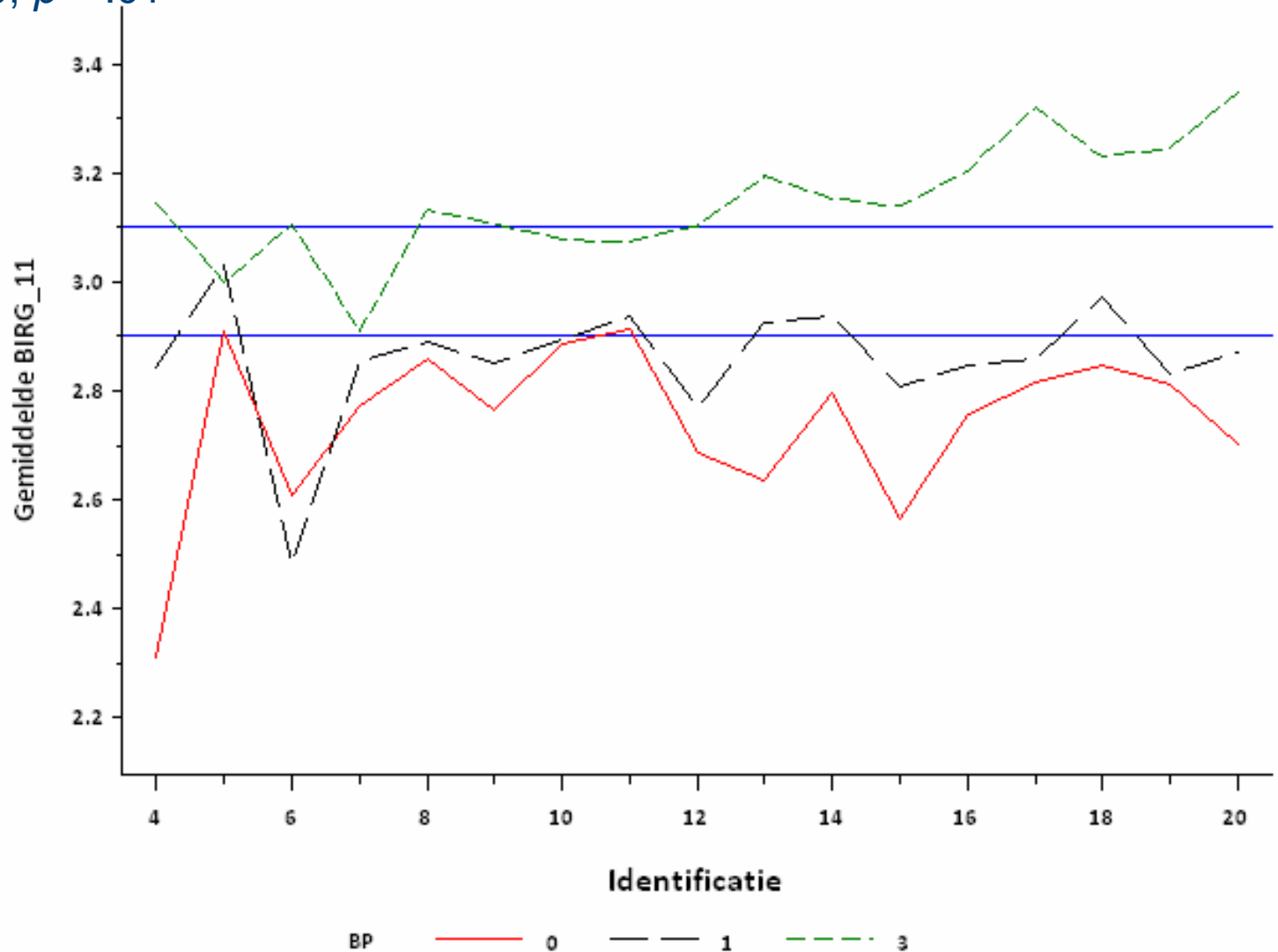


Main measures

- **team identification**, only pretest, 5-point-Likert scale
(4 items, $\alpha = .91$, $M = 3.39$, $SD = 1.05$),
e.g., “I consider myself as an ardent fan of K.R.C. Genk”
- **self-reported association/dissociation**, the day after each game
(11 items, $\alpha = .86$, $M = 3.11$, $SD = 0.80$)
e.g., “After the previous game, I have worn visible team clothing (scarf, hat,..) on the following work or schoolday” (1-5, much less -> much more than usual)
e.g. “After the previous game, I have read the game report via different media (paper, internet, television)” (1-5, much less -> much more than usual)

Significant interaction between game outcome and identification on association/dissociation,

$F(2, 1542) = 6.49, p = .01$





Longitudinal study 2: Impact of game outcome on mood as a function of identification

- web-based survey among 158 fans of Lierse
- extensive pre-test before season
- weekly short survey the day after each game of second round (15 games)

- 85.5% males
- Mage 27.98 years

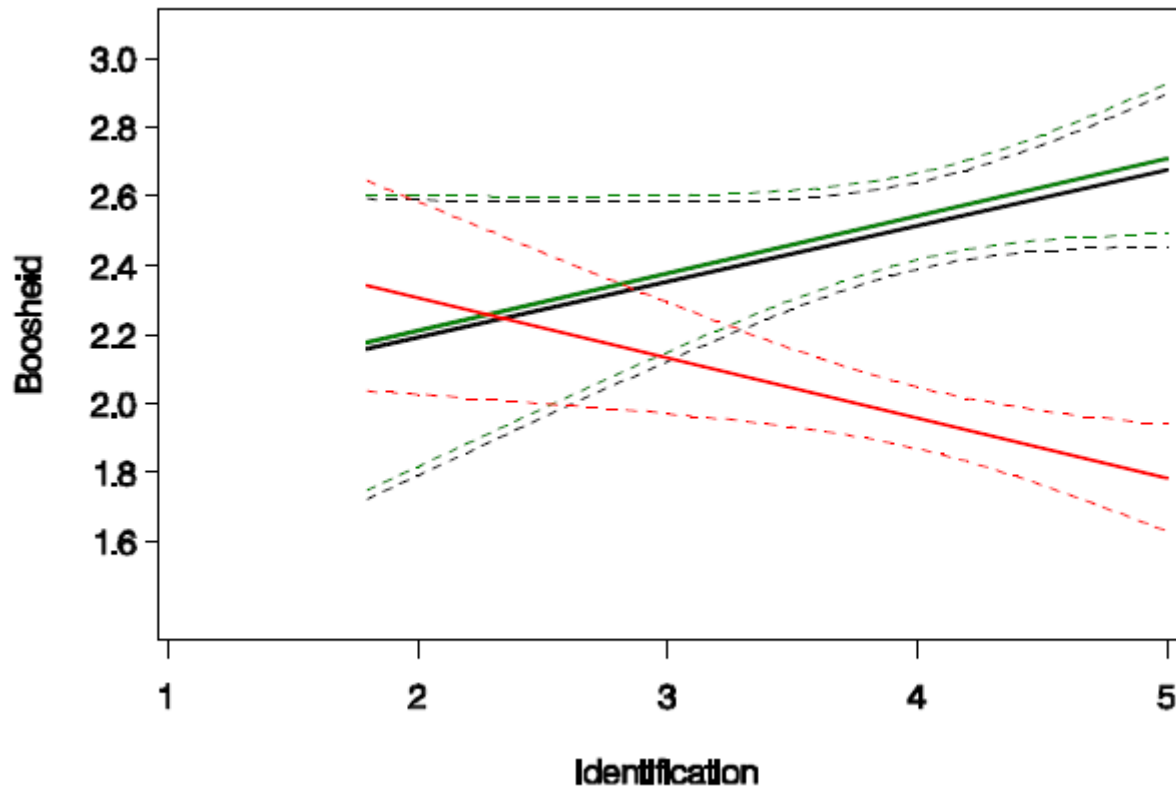


Main measures

- **team identification**, only pretest, 5-point-Likert scale (4 items, $\alpha = .82$, $M = 4.01$, $SD = 0.33$),
e.g., “I consider myself as an ardent fan of S.K. Lierse”
- **POMS** (profile of mood states) (12 items), the day after each game
e.g., anger (3 items, $\alpha = .74$, $M = 2.50$, $SD = 1.22$),
strength (3 items, $\alpha = .79$, $M = 3.42$, $SD = 0.93$),
depression (3 items, $\alpha = .84$, $M = 2.17$, $SD = 1.09$),
tension (3 items, $\alpha = .78$, $M = 2.62$, $SD = 1.19$)

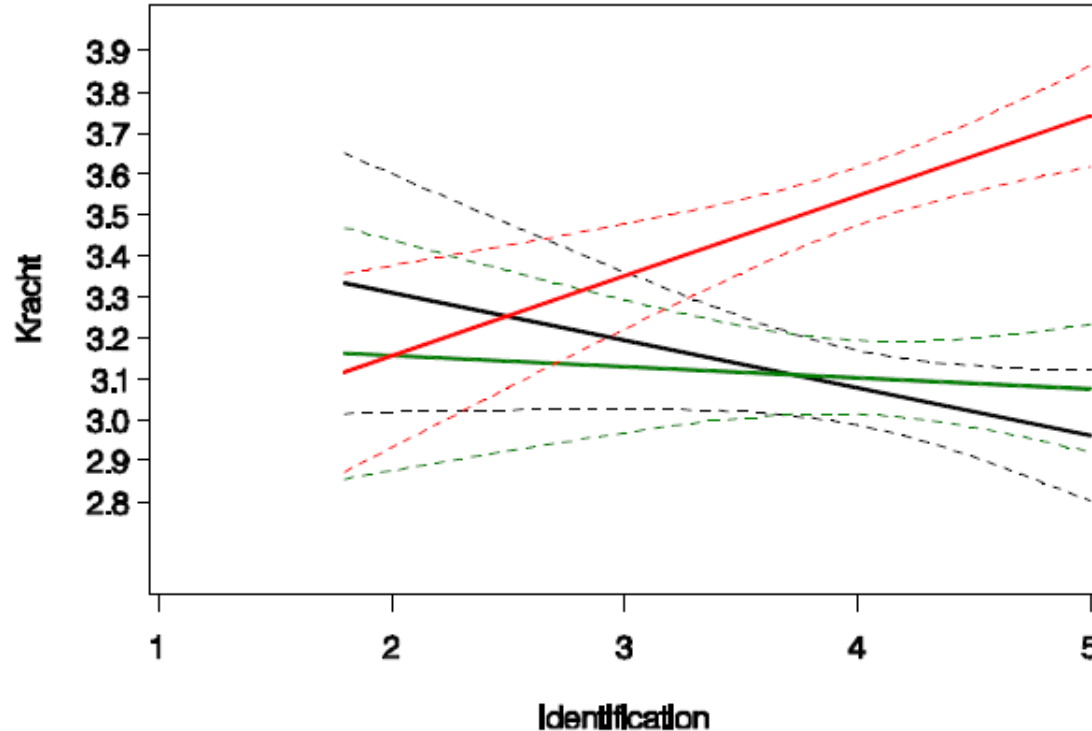
Interaction between game outcome and identification on anger, $F(2, 153) = 8.57, p = .0003$

Red = win, green = loss, black = draw !!



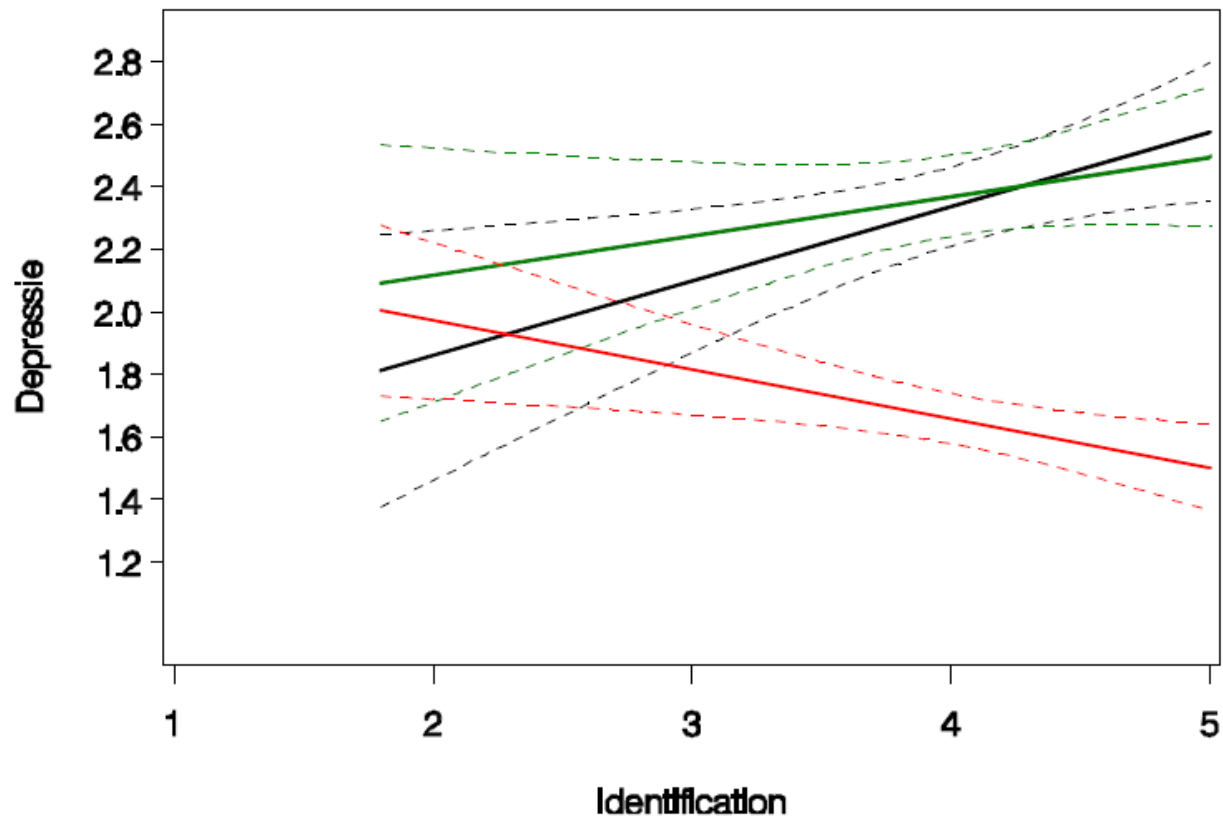
Interaction between game outcome and identification on strength, $F(2, 153) = 10.87, p < .0001$

Red = win, green = loss, black = draw !!



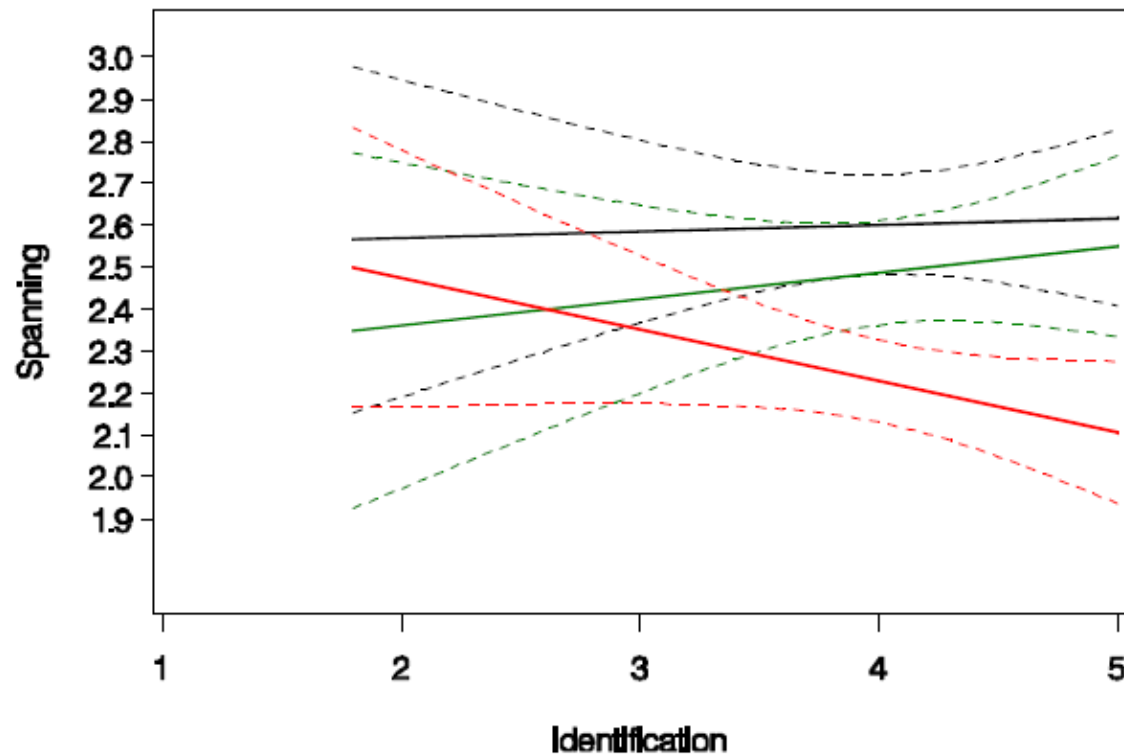
Interaction between game outcome and identification on depression, $F(2, 153) = 9.96, p < .0001$

Red = win, green = loss, black = draw !!



Interaction between game outcome and identification on tension, $F(2, 153) = 3.72, p = .03$

Red = win, green = loss, black = draw !!



Conclusion

Die-hard fans are behaviourally and emotionally affected by the game outcome of their favourite team, also after the game.



Avenues for future research: elaborating the link with well-being

- effect of game outcome/status moderated by **concrete social support** by other ingroup members



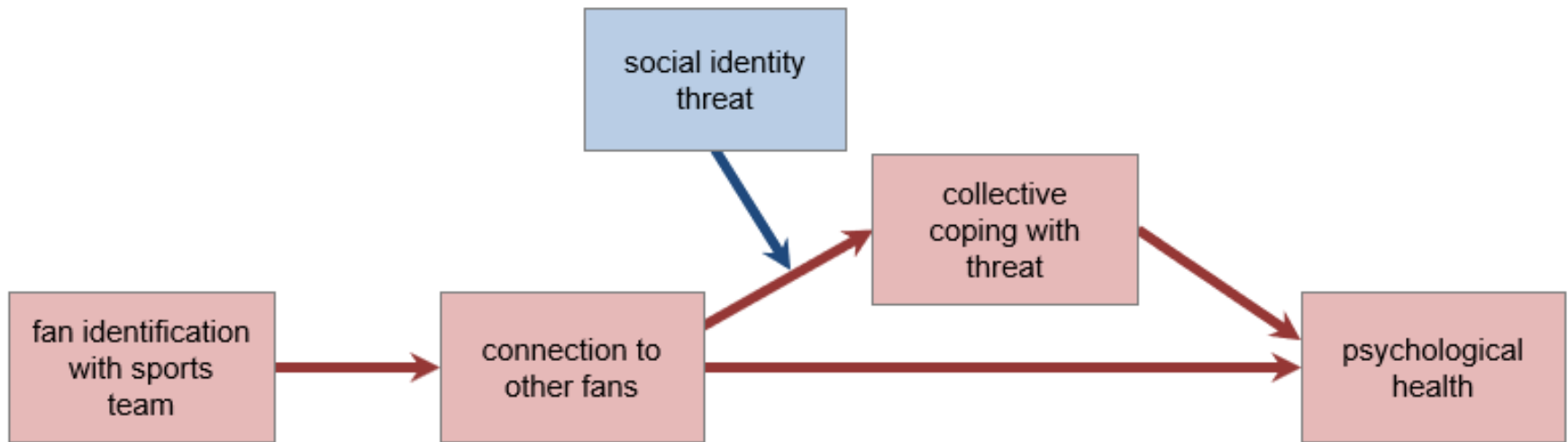
British Journal of Psychiatry (1990), 156, 475–478

Psychiatric Emergencies, Scotland and the World Cup Finals

GEORGE MASTERTON and ANTHONY J. MANDER

Reductions in emergency psychiatric presentations to hospital occurred during and after the finals of the World Cup football competitions, an effect evident in women as well as men, and more marked among the mentally ill than those who were not. Increases in the numbers of schizophrenic and neurotic men presenting before, and alcoholic men during, the competitions can be attributed to the football. The generalised reductions during and after could reflect an indirect effect upon help-seeking, although actual relapse rates of mental illnesses might be affected. These changes could arise from enhancement of national identity and cohesion.

Team Identification-Social Psychological Health Model (Wann, 2006)





Coping with chronic low status

- survey of 504 fans of KV Mechelen
 - winner of Europa Cup II in 1988
 - bankrupt in 2002, relegated to third division
 - manipulation check: “KV Mechelen as a club has lost much of its previous prestige” (1-5)
 - $M = 2.87$ ($SD = 1.16$)
- => fans are socially creative in coping with lower chronic status (e.g., best support, comparisons with city rival, ...)

Avenues for future research: elaborating the link with well-being

- effect of game outcome/status moderated by concrete social support by/interactions with other ingroup members
- team identification of fans as a resource **to change health behaviours of fans** via group norms

Football Fans in Training (FiT) (Hunt et al. 2014)



Avenues for future research: elaborating the link with well-being

- effect of game outcome/status moderated by concrete social support by/interactions with other ingroup members
- team identification of fans as a resource to change health behaviours of fans via group norms
- focus on **identity leadership** to understand fans' reactions

Steven Defour (2006-2011)



Steven Defour (2015)





Renegades are treated more harshly when they were social identity leaders



One thing I know for sure about being a fan is this: it is **not a vicarious pleasure**, despite all the appearances on the contrary, and those who say they would rather do than watch are missing the point. [...]

When there is a disastrous defeat the sorrow that engulfs us is, in effect, **self-pity**, and anyone who wishes to understand how football is consumed must realise this above all things. [...]

The players are merely our representatives, chosen by the manager rather than elected by us, but our representatives nonetheless, and sometimes if you look hard you can see the little poles that join them together, and the handles at the side that enable us to move them. ***I am part of the club, just as the club is a part of me.***

Flemish physical activity triangle



BEWEGINGSDRIEHOEK VLAARIS INSTITUUT **GEZOND LEVEN**

Thanks for your attention!



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KU LEUVEN

Filip Boen **IEDEREEN SUPPORTER?** het groepsvirus in ons brein



KU LEUVEN