

## ALCOHOL AND VIOLENCE: BRAZILIAN ORGANIZED FOOTBALL FANS

ÁLCOOL E VIOLÊNCIA: TORCIDAS ORGANIZADAS DE FUTEBOL NO BRASIL

ALCOHOL Y VIOLENCIA: HINCHADAS DE FÚTBOL BRASILEÑAS

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**Keywords:**  
Violence.  
Football.  
Public Health.  
Safety.

**Abstract:** Violence among football fans is a public safety issue in Brazil. The purpose of this study is to contribute to the debate relating it to alcohol consumption. A qualitative-quantitative research approach was adopted. Data were obtained through document analysis, semi-structured interviews, observations, and the AUDIT test. Two groups of ten male fans over 18 years of age participated as volunteers. Public safety statistics indicate that police incidents decreased after the ban on alcohol sales and consumption in Brazilian stadiums. Alcohol and other (illegal) drugs are mostly consumed outside the stadiums by violent fans. According to the AUDIT protocol, 50% of fans presented high-risk consumption while 10% were likely to be dependent. Therefore, alcohol consumption can be an important trigger for violence in football and deserves attention and proper public policies.

**Palavras chave:**  
Violência.  
Futebol.  
Saúde pública.  
Segurança  
Pública.

**Resumo:** A violência entre torcedores de futebol é um problema de segurança pública no Brasil. O propósito deste estudo é contribuir para o debate que relaciona o consumo de álcool e a violência entre torcedores de futebol. Trata-se de uma pesquisa de abordagem qualitativa-quantitativa, cujos dados foram obtidos por meio de análise documental, entrevistas semiestruturadas, observações e teste AUDIT. Dois grupos de dez torcedores homens, maiores de idade, participaram do estudo. Estatísticas de segurança apontam que ocorrências policiais diminuiram após a proibição da venda e consumo de álcool em estádios brasileiros. O álcool e outras drogas (ilícitas) são mais consumidos fora dos estádios por grupos de torcedores violentos. Segundo o protocolo AUDIT, 50% dos torcedores submetidos ao teste apresentaram consumo de alto risco e 10%, provável dependência. Portanto, o consumo de álcool pode ser um importante agente desencadeador de violências no futebol e por isso merece atenção e políticas públicas adequadas.

**Palabras clave:**  
Violencia.  
Fútbol.  
Salud Pública.  
Seguridad.

**Resumen:** La violencia entre hinchadas de fútbol es un problema de seguridad pública en Brasil. El objetivo del estudio es contribuir al debate que relaciona el consumo alcohólico y la violencia entre los hinchas futbolísticos. Se trata de una investigación con enfoque cuali-cuantitativo, cuyos datos se obtuvieron mediante análisis documental, entrevistas semiestructuradas, observaciones y la prueba AUDIT. Dos grupos de diez hinchas, hombres mayores de 18 años, participaron del estudio. Las estadísticas de seguridad apuntan que los delitos han bajado tras la prohibición de la venta y consumo de alcohol en estadios brasileños. El alcohol y otras drogas (ilícitas) son más consumidos fuera de los estadios por grupos de barra bravas. Según la prueba AUDIT, 50% de los hinchas presentaron consumo alcohólico de alto riesgo y 10%, probable dependencia. Por lo tanto, el consumo alcohólico puede ser un importante agente desencadenante de violencia en fútbol, luego, necesita atención y adecuadas políticas públicas.

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

Hooliganism is a near-global phenomenon that gained dramatic contours in Brazil between 2009 and 2012, when the country was the world's first in number of football fan deaths confirmed by police investigations. According to Murad (2017), in 2013 there were 30 deaths – a very high figure – as a consequence of conflicts between gangs infiltrated in the so-called *torcidas organizadas* (Portuguese for organized fan groups). Brazil overtook Italy and Argentina, which had held the top position for over a decade. In 2013/2014, during the FIFA Confederations Cup and the FIFA World Cup respectively, a fierce debate about consumption of alcoholic beverages in Brazilian stadiums pointed out a complex and multifaceted research problem.

Violence perpetrated by football fans is an old global public safety issue (MURAD, 2017). Brazil has the highest number of deaths proven to be the result of clashes between violent minorities within organized fan groups. Along the six most violent years (2012-2017), 86 deaths were recorded (MURAD, 2017) – all related to confrontations between organized groups according to Civil (State) Police investigations (2012). Violence in Brazilian football has grown over the years due to the country's increasingly violent social contexts, impunity, and authorities' neglect. Violent practices in football were increasing and spreading for anyone to see, with conflicts organized and publicized on social media, and no reaction by the Brazilian State. In the beginning, fights were limited to isolated events, but now aggressive processes have branched out to form new networks of brutality – events that have been found in police investigations and academic studies.

Another factor exacerbating the context of illegality in football is the proven connection with organized crime and drug trafficking, which are common in Brazilian cities (MURAD, 2017) as indicated in reports of State Prosecution Services from Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Minas Gerais, Pernambuco and Ceará (ASSOCIAÇÃO NACIONAL DOS MEMBROS DO MINISTÉRIO PÚBLICO, 2018). Other aspects in the violence between minority groups of aggressive fans in 'search of excitement' (ELIAS, 1995) are also evident, since they even try to set rules and limits to violent practices such as fighting without weapons, coward acts, and the prevalence of 'fighting only with one's hands.'

A survey conducted by Murad (2017) points to increasingly sophisticated violence and growing sadism, showing that certain deaths were planned in detail. The author also suggests that this new type of crime perpetrated with refined cruelty can be compared to acts that are considered terrorism, since they were calculated, cruel and serious actions against groups that are often defenseless, creating panic and insecurity for huge human masses. The causes of this scenario of violence in football are complex, multifactorial, structural, and cyclical. Alcoholic beverages are one element in these causes and they have been studied in Brazil and other countries as they increase aggressiveness and violence (HABERSTICK; SMOLEN; HEWITT, 2006) in different areas of social life, in traffic (as shown by the 'Dry Law'), in the family environment (HABERSTICK; SMOLEN; HEWITT, 2006; MASCARENHAS *et al.*, 2009; ROEBUCK; MATTSON; RILEY, 1999; SILVA *et al.*, 2012), and in football.

In 1995, in São Paulo, after a tragedy that resulted in the death of a 16-year-old fan and more than 100 people injured, the government took measures to combat alcohol

consumption in Brazilian stadiums for the first time. As a result, sales and consumption of alcoholic beverages in stadiums were banned (REIS, 2006; SÃO PAULO, 1996). The states of Rio Grande do Sul, Rio de Janeiro and Pernambuco adopted similar measures. The Brazilian Football Confederation (CBF) banned alcoholic beverages from matches in its championships all over the country through Presidential Resolution (RDP) 01/2008, under an agreement signed with the Federal Prosecution Service (CONSELHO NACIONAL DE PROCURADORES GERAIS, 2013).

Although law 10671 (BRASIL, 2003) – known as the ‘Fan Statute’ – is pointed out as the basis for the ban on alcoholic beverages in stadiums, this is at least debatable when referring to ‘beverages.’ Article 13-A, Paragraph 2 of Chapter 4, which addresses fans’ safety, establishes that they must “not carry objects, drinks or substances that are banned or may result in or enable the practice of acts of violence.” Thus, the document makes no direct mention of alcohol but rather of beverages in general. Water is also a beverage and the conclusion of Paragraph 2 can be – and already has been – interpreted as only a complement to ‘substances.’ Nevertheless, the Brazilian government, in an attempt to protect itself – in view of the known dubiousness of the matter – when drafting Law 12.663 (BRASIL, 2012) the so-called ‘General FIFA World Cup Law,’ saw the removal of Article 13-A as necessary to legitimize the permission of alcohol sales and consumption in stadiums during the 2013 Confederations Cup and the 2014 World Cup. According to Article 68 of that law, “the provisions of Law 10671 of May 15, 2003 apply to these competitions,” and its item 1 says that “Articles. 13-A to 17 are excluded from the supplementary application contained in the title of this article [...]” The change resulted from lobby by big beer companies and FIFA’s wealthy sponsors and megaevents.

The permission rekindled the debate on alcohol consumed and violence perpetrated by football fans. Studies and works by experts have reached no consensus on the matter. The topic is controversial, and several studies provide different findings. An important study is presented by Nepomuceno et al. (2017). While the authors use a different methodology, the issues they stress are similar to those pointed out in this study. In addition, they concluded that the sale and consumption of alcohol have little influence on violent fans’ behavior.

Dunning (2011 *apud* Reis, 2012), believes that consumption of alcoholic beverages is “not related” with hooliganism and argues that not all hooligans drink and not all those who drink will fight. Reis (2006, 2012) considers that relating all violence in football to alcohol consumption is reductionistic and has no empirical reliability, but she admits that hooliganism must be approached from a multifactorial perspective that examines several converging causes – and alcoholic beverages are undoubtedly one of them.

On a distinct line of research and using different statistical time series, Murad (2017) found a range of results that converge with Reis (2006, 2012). The author explains that relaxing control over alcohol and other drugs ended up stressing a permissive relationship that, added to the hostile environment that surrounds the hooligan universe in certain circumstances and certain fan segments, established an explosive connection within the scope of violent practices in football. In addition, the author also states that investigations in the medical and social areas have been

pointing out that alcoholism is one of the factors that, associated with others, help explain violence in traffic, in the family environment and in football – not as the single and/or main cause, but as an associated and enhancing driver. According to studies in the medical – clinical and psychiatric – and social – pedagogical, legal, psychological – areas, alcohol reduces self-criticism and self-control. This makes alcoholism an issue of public safety as well as public health.

Toledo (1996) considers the dimension of violence between fans and their causes as relative – including alcohol – and he argues that “[...] football fans are workers, students, housewives, street smart guys, marginals, police officers, political leaders. Being a football fan is just one among many other social roles played by individuals in society” (p. 12). Therefore, an analysis that focuses only on the practice of violence is at a serious risk being unsatisfactory because it provides a fragmented view. In this case, aggression would emerge, which in theory would be the last stage of a series of events. While violence is important and increasingly present in today’s fan culture, it is not the main characteristic of football fan groups, which are associative organizations based on cultural inclusion and existential belonging.

As a development of the so-called ‘General World Cup Law,’ sales of alcoholic beverages were allowed in stadiums and adjacent areas of several Brazilian states between late 2015 and early 2016. One of the overall justifications was that there were no studies proving the relationship between alcohol consumption and violence among fans. This methodological and political postulate is debatable, since several academic and operational studies point to such causal relationship (MURAD, 2017; REIS, 2006, 2012; ASSOCIAÇÃO BRASILEIRA DE PSIQUIATRIA, 2016; ASSOCIAÇÃO BRASILEIRA DO ESTUDO DO ÁLCCOLE OUTRAS DROGAS, 2018; ASSOCIAÇÃO NACIONAL DOS MEMBROS DO MINISTÉRIO PÚBLICO, 2018). Recognizing that violence in football has several motivations as a multifactorial phenomenon, the purpose of this study is to contribute to the debate relating alcohol consumption and violence among football fans.

## 2 METHOD

This qualitative-quantitative study (THOMAS; NELSON; SILVERMAN, 2012) was conducted with football fans from Rio de Janeiro between 2013 and 2014 and updated until 2017. Data collection techniques included: Document analysis; Semi-structured interviews; Unsystematic observations; and AUDIT (ALCOHOL USE DISORDERS IDENTIFICATION TEST). Separate but not independent, complementary, integrated, and convergent studies were conducted. The research project was submitted to the University’s Ethics Committee and its subjects voluntarily accepted to participate under guarantee of confidentiality.

### 2.1 DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

Through document analysis, statistics and information were obtained about three Brazilian states: São Paulo, Pernambuco, and Minas Gerais. The records (numbers, types of occurrences, relations with the public in the stadiums, etc.) were compared at two specific moments: before and after alcohol sales were allowed. These

three states were elected because they have the most systematic and consistent investigations. Their documents provide data from institutions related to the problem of violence in football, namely: State (Military) Police, Fire Department, State (Civil) Police, the Prosecution Service; and Civil Defense. Information and statistics were retrieved from the website of the National Council of Attorneys General.

## 2.2 INTERVIEWS

Semi-structured interviews (BAUER; GASKELL, 2011) were conducted with ten male members of an organized fan group in Rio de Janeiro. The participants were aged 18 or older, were members of the club, and had actively participated in the group for ten years on average. They were selected from a pre-sample of 30 fans (about 30% of the 105 members of this segment of the organized group, called 'the family') and they all were involved in violent practices and alcohol consumption. Their names were suggested by some leaders of the group who sometimes were colluding with those practices. The interviews were scheduled by phone and conducted in person in a square chosen by respondents and close to the residence of one of them. The questions asked were related to the group's structure and functioning; contexts for new members to join the group and their development; organization of attendance to matches; alcohol consumption; and violent practices. In order to give greater empirical reliability to the data collected, interviews were recorded and transcribed, and then a new meeting was scheduled for information checking (ALVES-MAZZOTTI; GEWANDSZNAJDER, 2002).

## 2.3 OBSERVATION

Unsystematic observations (ALVES-MAZZOTTI; GEWANDSZNAJDER, 2002) were crucial for establishing real contact with the research field's processes and social agents. They were conducted in five match days during the 2013 Brazilian Championship's A Series and five more days during the 2014 edition, around (within a 500-m radius) and inside the Maracanã stadium. The Observation took place at three distinct and complementary times: before, during, and after the matches. Events related to fans and alcohol consumption were observed. The researchers arrived three hours before the start of all matches. This was essential for understanding, monitoring, and assessing how the process of interaction between fans and alcoholic beverages begins near the stadium, in bars, restaurants, food carts, and street vendors.

## 2.4 ALCOHOL USE DISORDERS IDENTIFICATION TEST (AUDIT)

The AUDIT test is an instrument used by the World Health Organization (WHO), developed by Babor et al. (1992) and adapted to the Brazilian reality by Méndez (1999). It measures the level of alcohol consumption in a given group and its relationship with the disturbances that occurred there. It consists of ten items covering the last 12 months. The first three questions seek to identify the volume and regularity of alcohol consumption; the next three questions aim to find out the degrees of dependence; and the last four refer to problems of aggression and violence related to alcohol consumption.

Another ten members of the organized group – also males over 18 and suggested by the same leaders – agreed to take the test, which was applied directly, in a meeting at their headquarters.

### 3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF THE DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

As already mentioned, CBF banned alcohol in stadiums through Presidential Resolution 01/2008. Before that, some states had banned it at different times and on their own initiatives. São Paulo, Pernambuco, and Minas Gerais took the lead in banning alcohol as well as in conducting research to compare violent practices, before and after the ban.

**Table 1** – Ban on alcoholic beverages at football stadiums in São Paulo

Year	1995	1996	1997
Number of events	261	227	362
Public	1,587,878	1,122,852	2,105,299
Average public	5,969	4,946	5,816
Police on duty	14,882	13,779	18,406
Average number of police on duty	57	81	51
Occurrences handled	1,260	420	641
Average number of occurrences	4,8	1,9	1,8
People detained	1553	624	932
Average number of people detained	5,9	2,7	2,6

Source: Military Police of São Paulo State (CONSELHO NACIONAL DE PROCURADORES GERAIS, 2013)

In São Paulo, the ban was already in force in 1996 (CAPINUSSÚ, 1996; MURAD, 2017; ROEBUCK; MATTSON; RILEY, 1999), that is, before the 'Fan Statute' and in another political, economic and social context in Brazil. Police occurrences dropped from 1,260 in 1995 to 420 in 1996 (Table 1). In the following year, the numbers increased again as result of loosening in police and legal actions, recognized by the authorities.

The Greater Recife Area, in the state of Pernambuco, which banned alcohol in stadiums in 2007 (CONSELHO NACIONAL DE PROCURADORES GERAIS, 2013), is one of the main and longest-lasting references, as can be seen in the table below.

**Table 2** – Violent occurrences in football stadiums in the Greater Recife Area

Year	Occurrences
2004	825
2005	1643
2006	736
<b>2007</b>	<b>468</b>
2008	132
2009	229
2010	112

Source: Pernambuco State Prosecution Service (CONSELHO NACIONAL DE PROCURADORES GERAIS, 2013)



The Special Civil and Criminal Court for Football Fan Affairs (JETEP) started operating in the state in May 2006, and after 2017 it oversaw the ban on sales and consumption of alcoholic beverages. It involved Civil and Military State Police, Prosecution and Public Defender Services, the Department of Social Defense, and the Brazilian Bar Association (OAB). Its purpose is to safeguard the rights and duties ensured by the 'Fan Statute' (BRASIL, 2003), specially safety, and it covers from civil matters, including stadium operational problems, to criminal matters such as cases of mild bodily injury, life-threatening issues, and homicides. Table 2 shows a drop in violence rates in 2007 – the year of the ban – indicating more coordinated action between police and the Judiciary.

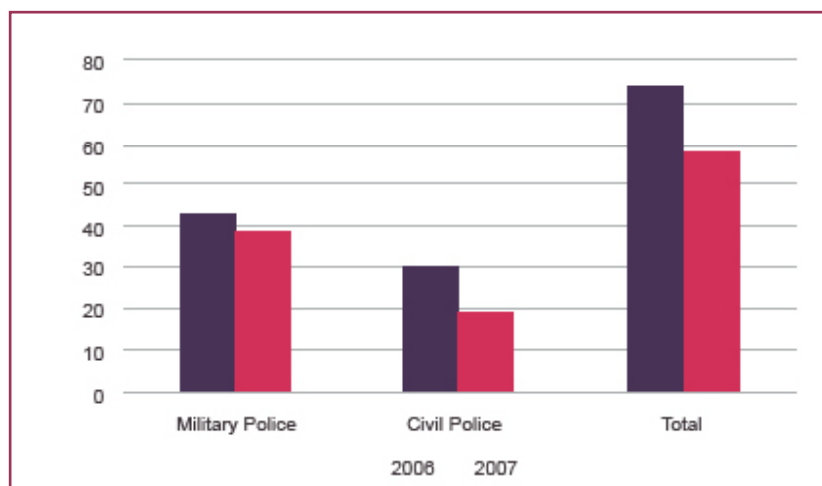
In Minas Gerais, the data were provided by the Fire Department (CONSELHO NACIONAL DE PROCURADORES GERAIS, 2013) and cover the Mineirão stadium (Table 3). Averages of 39 and ten occurrences per match were recorded in 2006 and 2007 respectively – a decrease of almost 75%.

**Table 3** – Number of occurrences recorded per game in Mineirão in 2006 and 2007

Before the ban – 2006		After the ban – 2007	
Matches	Occurrences	Matches	Occurrences
Cruzeiro X Atlético	64	Atlético X Vila Nova	15
Atlético X Avaí	48	Cruzeiro X Guarani	31
Atlético X São Raimundo	32	Atlético X Rio Branco	08
Atlético X América RN	36	Cruzeiro X Atlético	49
Cruzeiro X Corinthians	39	Cruzeiro X Ituiutaba	08
Cruzeiro X Goiás	28	Cruzeiro X Tupi	00
Cruzeiro X Santa Cruz	25	Atlético X Democrata	00
Atlético X Ceará	33	Atlético X América	00
Cruzeiro X Santos	37	Cruzeiro X Democrata	01
Atlético X Paulista	48	Atlético X América RJ	00
		Atlético X Democrata GV	00

Source: Minas Gerais Fire Department. (CONSELHO NACIONAL DE PROCURADORES GERAIS, 2013)

Still in Minas Gerais, Figure 1 shows comparative values provided by Civil and Military Police. According to the 1<sup>st</sup> Police Department of the state capital, Belo Horizonte, 167,150 people attended the stadium in 2007 and 114,728 in 2006, which shows that the public increased after alcoholic beverages were banned. In addition, the drop in violent practices is remarkable. In 2006 there was one occurrence for every 1,550 fans compared to one for 2,880 fans in 2007. These figures show reduction of more than 45% in violence rates in the Minas Gerais State Championship in 2006 – when sales and consumption of alcoholic beverages were allowed – compared to 2007, when they were banned (Figure 1).

**Figure 1** – Number of occurrences in the Minas Gerais State Championship in 2006 and 2007

Source: 1st Police Department of Belo Horizonte (CONSELHO NACIONAL DE PROCURADORES GERAIS, 2013)

The results show decrease in rates of different violent practices in the three states, compared to the periods before and after the ban on alcohol. According to the general commander of the Minas Gerais Fire Department: “Not only the numbers of occurrences has decreased, but also the severity of the situations of vandalism, aggression and violence that took place” (CONSELHO NACIONAL DE PROCURADORES GERAIS, 2013).

#### 4 DISCUSSION OF SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

The respondents showed stronger bond and affection towards the symbols of the organized fan group than to the club itself, which signals a fragmented relationship with the universe of the team, its history and tradition. That can be seen in the following statement by a fan: “The *arms* (people in charge of the fighting) love the fan group more than the club. Our flag is that of the fan group... [...]. When we tear off the enemy’s shirt by force, the fan group’s shirt is worth more than the team’s.” Such ‘partisan’ involvement, which values only part of the fans (the aggressive faction) instead of heir totality, points to a non-universal ideology towards club culture. This can enhance the ‘esprit de corps,’ that is, a self-centered feeling that admits the exclusion of the ‘other,’ seen as an ‘enemy,’ especially rival teams’ fans, and even those who root for the same team but are member of other groups. Thus, violence may follow as can be seen in the fragment of dialogue between the researcher (R) and one of the fans (F):

R: How is your relationship with alcohol?

F: People drink a lot, like it’s water [laughs].

R: What type of alcoholic beverage is most consumed?

T: Beer and cachaça [Brazilian sugarcane rum]. And vodka, but only when some rich guys are around.

R: Do you think that drinking alcohol increases the chance that one of these guys will make trouble, fight with someone?

T: Oh, I’m sure; that’s what they drink for. They don’t just drink; they do drugs as well.

Q: To build up courage?

T: Sure, the guy gets there with a clean face and all calm [laughs], and when ‘concentration’ [pre-match gathering] is over he’s a lion.



Q: How is fans' relationship with alcoholic beverages?

T: People drink a lot, but most of these fans mix it with drugs: marijuana, cocaine, and crack.

Q: Where and when do they drink?

T: We meet in some places before going to the match, sometimes even in bars, and then it starts.

Q: What about your relationship with the club?

T: F... the club! I don't care, my relationship is with the fan group; I go there to defend the group.

In the opinion of most of these violent fans (almost 80% said it), confrontations with opponents are demonstrations of 'strength and power necessary to keep respect and structure of the fan group alive and functioning satisfactorily.' Note the statement: 'of the fan group.'

They (67%) also reported that legal and illegal drugs – specially alcohol, marijuana, and cocaine – are consumed very often and work as fuels to encourage these 'necessary' tough actions. They said it was 'necessary' since 'people from other groups also use these drugs.' When asked whether certain individuals who drank too much may commit acts of violence, they were categorical and unanimous in saying yes. They showed empirical knowledge, giving examples of 'certain guys' that become more violent after periods in the group's 'concentration,' where drinking is heavy, in addition to 'opening the way' for 'heavier drugs.' According to them, 'drinking is not the only driver of confrontation, but it certainly helps.'

These violent factions are minorities and do not represent the whole of organized fan groups. It is estimated that such factions correspond to 5% of the members of the fiercest groups, which are about 70 associations with over 700 members in Brazil (MURAD, 2017).

## 5 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF THE OBSERVATIONS

On-site observation provided a holistic view of the violence practiced by groups of football fans and its relationship with alcohol. This participation in the experience gives the research more empirical reliability.

While sales of alcoholic beverages near the Maracanã stadium are banned by law (RIO DE JANEIRO, 1998), neither street vendors nor bars and restaurants comply with the law two hours before and two hours after the matches (JÚNIOR; SEDA, 2013). Alcohol was sold freely, without legal control or repression. The ostensive presence of police in the same scenario where illegalities were being committed in plain view indicates the possibility of collusion and corruption. And it results in a feeling of impunity that encourages new crimes and transgressions, particularly among members of violent groups, who said: "The police and justice won't do anything."

State (Military Police) and municipal (Municipal Guard and Secretariat of Public Order – SEOP) enforcement agencies were tolerant, even conniving, with the sales of alcoholic beverages. SEOP was an exception, specifically on one of the observation days: an inspection was taking place and it seized a large amount of beer from some street vendors. However, SEOP was not as strict in punishing bars and restaurants, since it allowed sales at times when they were banned by law.

Regarding organized fans, especially aggressive ones, the interviews clearly showed that alcohol consumption is often excessive. These segments showed higher “excitement” (ELIAS, 1995) and animosity after spending some time in bars close to the sports complex, where verbal and physical aggressions could be observed. After drinking a lot of alcohol during the long ‘concentration’ time spent in bars before entering the stadium, these groups often ran away without paying their full bills, knocking over tables and chairs. Police officers were there but did little or nothing.

## 6 AUDIT TEST RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The AUDIT test (BABOR *et al.*, 1992; MÉNDEZ, 1999) ranked organized fans as follows: Abstainers: 30%; Low-risk drinkers: 10%; Harmful or high-risk drinkers: 50%; Probably dependent: 10%. The test confirmed the findings of the Observation and the Interviews: there is indeed a tendency towards alcohol abuse in the context of organized fans (RIO DE JANEIRO, 1998), especially among the most aggressive factions – those repeatedly involved in police occurrences, with both Military and the Civil Police records. In fact, these are infiltrated gangs, aggressive and rowdy minorities, with links already established by police investigation with the so-called organized crime and drug trafficking.

It was found that 30% of individuals are abstainers, and 10% fall into the low-risk range, but the 50% of high-risk drinkers is cause for concern – according to the AUDIT protocol. And if we consider the 10% of probably dependent drinkers and the environment surrounding organized fans – so often ‘militarized’ in its culture, marked by intolerance, exclusion, macho behavior, crowded and passionate, which enhance everything – alcohol may not be *the* factor but it is *one* of the factors, because it ‘boosts aggression.’ The most serious cases were in the range of 10% of ‘probably dependent,’ not least because sometimes consumption of ‘hard drugs’ is most evident in that range. The figures represent a warning to the authorities since alcoholism is a serious collective health and safety problem. Therefore, such warning can and should result in relevant public policies.

## 7 FINAL REMARKS

The violence practiced by football fans does not have a single causal agent. It is rather a multifactorial phenomenon. Thus, there is no single solution for the whole problem. We concluded that alcoholic beverages can be one of those factors triggering violent conflicts in different sectors of social life, including football. As shown by medical research, ethanol reduces self-criticism and self-control, and it may facilitate transgression and violence, especially in certain social groups and certain ‘fields’ (BOURDIEU, 2000) of cultural action and expression.

After sales and consumption of alcoholic beverages in stadiums were banned, police occurrences saw significant decreases in the three states analyzed – 63% in the state of Pernambuco, 57% in São Paulo, and 45% in Minas Gerais. That period also saw an increase in the public going to stadiums. However, in addition to the ban

on alcohol consumption, other variables that were not presented in this study may have contributed to that, such as clubs' performances and the quality of the football spectacle.

Respondents stated that consumption of alcohol and other drugs is common in the environment of organized fan groups, particularly in violent ones. They claimed that fans often use these substances to 'build up courage' for confrontations.

As for the organized fans that took the AUDIT test, 50% were in the high-risk range and 10% were probably dependent. These figures prove a tendency to abuse alcohol among organized fans.

When Presidential Executive order 30417 of January 22, 2009 banned sales of alcoholic beverages in the surroundings of the Maracanã Stadium two hours before and two after the matches, it was enforced. The reason for the ban, according to the law, is that there was recurrent violence caused by drunk individuals who disturbed public order. Nevertheless, over a decade, the law was not always complied with and its enforcement by governments, justice and police was insufficient, especially during the FIFA World Cup (2013/2014) and 2016 Olympic Games.

Differently from most of what has been reported by the media, the 'Fan Statute' does not ban sales and consumption of alcoholic beverages in stadiums. Article 13-A, 2, the only part of the law that refers to drinking, does not specify whether it is alcoholic beverages or not. The article is at least dubious. Alcoholism among fans, in addition to being a serious public safety issue, is a collective health problem and therefore should result in public policies adopted by Brazilian authorities, and that has not been happening.

While the results indicate a drop in violent occurrences with the ban on alcohol consumption – and this is a relevant sign – establishing a direct and definitive causal relationship between the variables is not advisable. New research, including those based on experimental designs, must be conducted to complement and further interpret the different realities of the several Brazilian regions and, thus, to contribute to build public health and safety policies.

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