Outline and evaluate group explanations for aggression

Xenophobia is often present in sports events, with racist chants and signals often exhibited in the crowds of football matches. Many psychologists believe that natural selection has favored the genes, which cause humans to be altruistic towards members of their own group but intolerant towards outsiders. This may be because it would have prompted our ancestors to be suspicious towards strangers, helping them to avoid attack. Wilson supports this claims of xenophobia by documenting xenophobia in virtually every group of animals who displayed higher forms of social organization. This shows the presence of xenophobia not only in humans but also animals showing its importance and supporting its adaptive value.

Moreover MacDonald contributes to our understanding of xenophobia by stating that the cost of overprotection is less than the cost of under protection. This shows that being xenophobic contributes more to humans and their safety allowing a sense of security. It talks about the risks of not being xenophobia are far greater and would potentially have more to loose without it.

Podaliri and Balestri analyzed the tendency of xenophobic behavior in Italian football crowds and found that the Ultras were openly extremist xenophobic. This behavior is still observed in today's football matches with the Ultras, even with all the campaigns. This might suggest an evolutionary value to this behavior that cannot be changed but must evolve.

Another explanation for the evolution of group displays in sports is based on territoriality, the protective response to an invasion of one's territory. Studies have revealed that sports players feel a greater burden in matches when 'defending the home territory', and some teams use aggressive displays to intimidate their opponents. Such displays may have been adaptive to our ancestors because they allowed groups to defend valuable resources associated with their territory.

Foldesi has provided evidence to support the link between xenophobia and violent displays among Hungarian football crowds. He found that the racist conduct of a core of extremist supporters led to an increase in spectators' violence in general.

There are real-world applications of research into the link between sports and xenophobia. Many football teams have taken step to minimize xenophobia within sports. Some football teams have also made contributions to local ethnic communities and have donated to anti-racism charities. In Germany the players shirts have the slogan my friend is a foreigner to try and minimize the xenophobic behavior seen.

Bradbury says that progress has been made but more needs to be done. We assume that there will be aggression due to its adaptive value and so we must try to reduce it.

Evans and Rowe analyzed 40 football matches in Europe and post match reports and interviews with police and officers showed that more aggression is seen between countries than between clubs. The influence of nationalism and xenophobia are strong at these games when different countries play each other. English clubs have diverse players, which come from different backgrounds so it is less likely to provoke xenophobia, compared to a greater degree of disorder involving the national side.

This theory to group aggression ignores the role of environment. The society and how they are brought up are not taken into consideration when looking at group aggression.