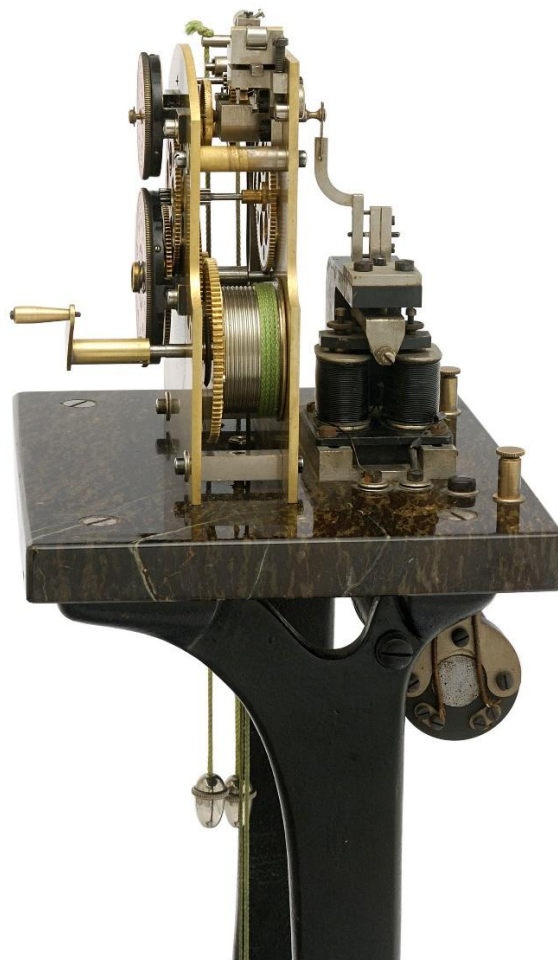


XXXI INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE

EMPIRICAL STUDIES IN PSYCHOLOGY

MARCH 28 – 30, 2025

FACULTY OF PHILOSOPHY, UNIVERSITY OF BELGRADE



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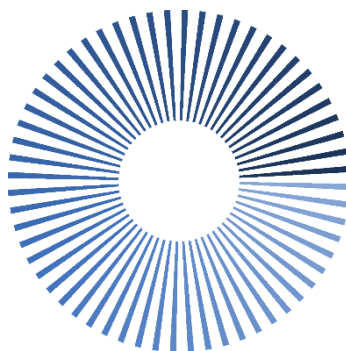
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BELGRADE, 2025

NO MATTER WHO WINS, ONLY THAT THEY LOSE: EMPATHY, SCHADENFREUDE
AND GLUCKSCHMERZ IN FOOTBALL FANS**Marija V. Čolić***

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Schadenfreude, pleasure in others' misfortune, is a counter-empathic response common in competitive intergroup contexts like sports and politics. Schadenfreude research aligns with intergroup empathy bias findings showing reduced empathy toward outgroups' distress compared to ingroups'. Its counterpart, Gluckschmerz, displeasure in others' fortune, remains understudied. We examined empathic and counter-empathic (Schadenfreude and Gluckschmerz) responses to emotional displays of ingroups, rival outgroups, and neutral outgroups in sports, and their relationship to dispositional empathy, social dominance orientation (SDO) and social identification. Red Star and Partizan fans ($N = 134$) rated 60 real-game photographs of ingroup, rival outgroup and neutral outgroup players displaying positive and negative complex emotions indicating success/failure (e.g. disappointment after missing), and completed fan identification and dispositional measures. Images were rated on emotion intensity and participants' positive and negative emotional responses on a 7-point Likert scale. Emotion ratings were recoded as situation-congruent ("empathic") or incongruent (positive to negative events – Schadenfreude; negative for positive events – Gluckschmerz) and then analysed concerning event valence and player identity. Ratings were significantly higher, $F_s > .42$, $ps < .01$, and group differences more pronounced, $F_s > 14.20$, $ps < .01$, for positive emotions. Ingroups' emotional displays were rated as most intense, followed by rival and neutral outgroups, $F(1.65, 262) = 99.39$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2p = .43$. Ingroup emotions elicited the strongest congruent response, followed by neutral and rival outgroups, $F(1.27, 262) = 192.48$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2p = .60$. In contrast, incongruent responses were strongest for rivals, but lower for neutral outgroup and lowest for ingroups, $F(1.19, 262) = 71.49$, $p < .01$, $\eta^2p = .35$. Group biases correlated positively with fan identity but not with dispositional empathy or SDO. Our study shows Gluckschmerz and Schadenfreude manifest similarly in intergroup dynamics. Ingroups being most influential in stirring congruent, and rivals incongruent emotions, follow intergroup emotions theory predictions that in relevant group situations, distinct and differentiated emotions are felt on behalf of the group, depending on group goals and group identification. Stronger group effects for positive emotions and group effects on emotion intensity suggest mechanisms requiring further study.

Keywords: Schadenfreude; Gluckschmerz; empathy; bias; sport fans

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