



Football Passions

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Executive summary

Methods

The Football Passions report summarises extensive sociological research across 18 countries in Europe. The objectives of the study were to capture the emotions of being a football fan and to compare the feelings, expressions and behaviour of fans associated with support of their football teams. Fieldwork was conducted in six of these countries – Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, and Spain – involving observation, recordings of heart rates at matches, interviews and in-depth discussions with fans. In the remaining 11 countries, online and telephone interviews were conducted with fans. A pan-European online poll of approximately 2,000 fans was also conducted.

The research revealed that while there are differences between countries in the way fans express their emotions and behaviour, we ultimately all speak one language, the language of football. The research, however, did unearth a number of quirks and national differences that may challenge our conventional stereotypes.

The Canon European League Table of Football Fans' Emotions

Methodology for the Canon European league table of football fans' emotions is as follows: In addition to the primary qualitative research undertaken by SIRC in six European countries, fans from 17 European countries were asked a range of questions online, 18 of which were specifically related to football emotions and passions. A European average was created from the results of these 18 emotions-related questions, and each country was then ranked according to its variance to the European average.

The Canon European league table of football fans' emotions, in order from the highest ranking to the lowest, is as follows:

Sweden; Norway; Belgium; Britain; Spain; Czech Republic; Germany; Hungary; Slovakia; Netherlands; Switzerland; Finland; France; Denmark; Poland; Italy; Portugal.

Themes of Football Emotions Research

Passion and emotion

Football is associated with passion, emotion, excitement and dedication across Europe. References to extreme emotional experiences at football games characterised all aspects of discussions with fans – some referring to the 'pure joy' and exhilaration of being at football games. Such is the intensity of the experience that two thirds of fans have cried at football matches – mostly through joy, but occasionally because of despair. Football provides for many fans an opportunity to let themselves go emotionally – to release the frustrations of everyday life.

What defines a fan

To be a 'true' fan requires the 'living' experience of football. It is not about being a mere spectator – it is about being a participant. Match attendance is a given, of course, but there is also a duty to engage emotionally in the life of the team in order to impact positively on a team's performance. Attending away games is an important ritual for fans involving a number of psychological and logistical challenges. Away supporters are always out-numbered and mostly out-sung. In our discussions with fans there was a defiant stance against 'fair-weather supporters' – those who only attend matches occasionally or when their team is doing well. Such fans lack dedication and resilience and the detailed knowledge of team statistics, standings, players and history that is characteristic of 'true' fans. Football fandom is seen as a rite of passage involving a process akin to apprenticeship. It involves years of instruction, of 'practice', of dedication and of demonstrating your own knowledge in the presence of others before being accepted by 'real' fans.

The Twelfth Man

Football fans describe themselves as the 'twelfth man' – as essential to the success of the team as the players and coaching staff. It is the actions performed by fans during the game – the ritual chants, songs, banner waving, etc. – that motivates the team, intimidates the opposition players and perhaps even influences referees' decisions. The fans truly believe they must attend the game to 'help the team to win', not just to observe the event.

Rituals

In addition to the actions performed in the stadiums during the match, pre- and post-game rituals are important in creating a sense of community among fans. From meeting up with other fans for a drink before and after the game to the orchestrated

coordination of fabric squares to make up a larger banner, rituals foster a strong sense of belonging to the fan group. What might otherwise be forgettable, everyday actions become as meaningful and important to fans as, say, a church Mass, and generate powerful bonds. These rituals often have a superstitious quality – wearing the same 'lucky' shirt to every game or following the same routine during the build-up – even eating two pies just before the kick-off because that made the team win last time. In many European countries the presence of drummers, horn blowers etc. in the sections occupied by 'true' fans, each performing their rehearsed ritual roles, generates an emotionally charged atmosphere that is unparalleled in any other sport.

Friends and belonging

Football is an important means for people to form and maintain strong friendships that might otherwise not exist. These social bonds between fans are so strong that many describe them in familial, kinship terms – 'my brotherhood' or 'my family'. 'Football friends' are different from friends in other areas of life. Something special is shared and exchanged by them. The football team is also a 'friend' to many fans. Over half of all fans feel that being a fan of the team is like having a long-term girlfriend/boyfriend.

Family

Football plays a key role in family life in much of Europe, linking the shared experiences of family members across generations and creating a lasting sense of tradition and belonging. The strongest of these relationships is that of father and son. Most men become fans because their father would take them to matches as a child, and many older fans still retain strong memories of these formative experiences. As football fandom is socially inherited within the family, matches regularly comprise ritualised days out for all members – toddlers and grandmothers included – and the passion for football is a unifying event that frequently leads to animated conversations at home in front of the television or around the family dinner table. The role that football plays in this context is very important given fears about the break down of the traditional family unit and its values across Europe.

History & national identity

There is a strong commonality among all fans across Europe – football unites rather than divides in this sense. The specific social and cultural role that football plays in any given country, however, is heavily influenced by historical factors. These include whether a major side or national team has won an important tournament at a decisive time in the past or whether the sport was traditionally played by upper or lower classes. Similarly, historically poignant football rivalries between some nations (e.g. Holland v Germany, England v Scotland) play a role in defining specific national football characteristics. These influence how people relate to football in their country and how they support teams at the local, regional, national and international level. Fans in countries with strong local and regional identities have a slightly different relationship to the sport than fans in countries where regionalism is of less importance. In some countries such as Norway and Sweden, allegiance to the local team is much stronger than that associated with the national side. In contrast, in France, Poland and Portugal have stronger allegiances to their national side.

Gender

The large majority of football fans in Europe are men. Both male and female fans acknowledge that football is a largely masculine domain in which the world of the fan is organised around typically male-oriented social spaces – pubs, bars, and large-scale sports arenas. In such spaces, men are permitted to express their emotions and passions – having women present, it is felt can inhibit this sometimes 'unmanly' behaviour. The predominance of males, however, does not preclude the involvement of women in the world of the football fan. Women's participation in and, and their 'consumption' of, the sport has increased significantly over the past few decades. Several fan clubs across Europe are now dedicated exclusively to women and they are increasingly accepted as 'authentic' fans, not just the wives, girlfriends or daughters of male fans.

The Internet

The Internet is now a significant resource in the world of football – fixture schedules, statistics, injuries, purchases and sales of players, team selections, ticket prices and day-to-day news about football politics. European fans spend increasing amounts of their time on football web sites accessing up-to-the-minute information about events specific to their team, keeping abreast of local, national and international developments in football politics and commenting on the play during matches. A minority of very dedicated fans browse such sites for up to 6 or 7 hours a day. In many ways, the fans' use of the Internet is an extension of their activities in the stadium. Online fans constitute fan families – groups of people with close personal relationships that are as strong at home or work in front of a desk as they are at the games themselves. Older fans, however, are not only less likely to access the Internet for these reasons than younger age groups, many see it as inconsistent with being a 'real' fan.

Conclusion

While much of the European media coverage of football fans has, since the late 1960s, focused on the negative – on hooliganism and violence – our research reveals a much more positive side to football and its passionate supporters. Our work, one of the most extensive pieces of research done on European football fans in recent years, highlights the passions and emotions that are associated with the game and the positive role that being a true fan plays in the lives of millions of Europeans. While there are strong rivalries between fans at local and national levels, the striking feature of the research is the high degree to which football unites people from varied backgrounds across the whole of Europe, and undoubtedly beyond.

1 Introduction

Football as a participant and spectator sport has many versions and codes but the one which captures our attention and is the focus of our passions in Europe is Association Football. For us, this is *Our Football*; *Ons Voetbal*; *il Nostro Calcio*; *Nuestro Futbol*; *Notre Foot*; *Unser Fussball* – *The Game*.

Every match day in England more than 650,000 people watch games in the country's Premiership, Championship and League stadiums. A further countless number express equally passionate support for the 'small guys' in the Conference and below. Many millions watch live games and highlights on television while mums, dads and friends all over the country stand on the touch lines of local park pitches to cheer on their embryonic David Beckhams and Michael Owens. The image is repeated across Europe: the German *Bundesliga 1* has the highest following of any European premier division while in Spain just two major leagues attract around 400,000 loyal supporters each week.

Why football?

The game of football is not a modern sport – it has been played in one form or another for at least 2,500 years. The Chinese game of *cuju*, involving attempts to kick a leather ball through a hole in a large cloth, was played during the Han Dynasty. The Romans played *harpastum*, a team game adapted from the Greek version *pheninda*, and the development of ball skills became an essential part of military training in the Roman Empire. Accounts of other recognisable football games since those times have appeared all over the world, but it was in Medieval Europe that the modern game began to take shape – particularly in England and in Tuscany.

This timelessness and universality of football suggests that it may somehow be ingrained in what we take to be human nature. It embraces all those skills that were once essential for our survival as hunter-gatherers – a way of life that until only relatively recently was the norm for *Homo Sapiens* and one which continues to shape much of our behaviour today. Speed, agility and accuracy of aim, coupled with cooperation among men in groups, were the hallmarks of successful hunting tribes – those 'teams' that would survive and prosper and pass on their genes to future generations. However talented an individual might have been, it was nigh impossible to hunt and kill prey alone – one needed to be in a team and devise, as a group, a strategic game plan in which individual talents could be harnessed and expressed and a goal achieved.

Today, we pick up essentials for life at the local Aldi, Auchan or Tesco store rather than chasing after and capturing them. But, like so many other aspects of our daily lives, reflections of our Stone Age past linger on. Football is a clear reminder of our

origins – of those attributes that contributed so much to our success as a species. That is one of the reasons why it plays such an important role in the lives of millions of people for whom it is, as Bill Shankly keenly observed, not just a "matter of life and death" but "much more important than that". When we watch a football match we do not simply observe a 'game'. We witness a replay of our evolutionary heritage.

The project

When Canon first approached us with the idea of conducting social research on European football, focusing not on hooliganism and violence but on the passions and dedication of being a 'true' fan, we were delighted. All too often social scientists are expected to research the downside of human life – problems such as aggression, alienation, poverty and family dysfunction. As a result, we have a peculiarly jaundiced view of 21st century societies. We know a lot about violence and anti-social behaviour, rather less about the basis of civility and good humoured social interaction – things that most people experience in their everyday life most of the time.

In the past, it is true, we have studied football hooliganism in some depth. Even then, however, we were struck by the fact that although problems do occur at football matches from time to time – sometime tragically so – the vast majority of fans we met were witty, intelligent, passionate about their team and, well, just *nice people*. Rarely, however, do they feature in commentary on the world of football. Now is the time to change that.

This project, focusing on the celebration of the most important sport in the world, has been conducted in 15 different languages across Europe. It has involved 3,616 person hours of fieldwork and observation and recording at 19 football matches in six of those countries – the UK, France, Spain, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands. Interviews with fans from an additional 12 countries have also been undertaken.

At the games we gave fans small digital voice recorders to capture their comments and reflections. In small groups in bars and cafés fans provided further insights into their world where football is far more than just a game that they watch once a week for part of the year.

At some games we also fitted fans with heart rate monitors and recorders – the kind that fitness fanatics use to monitor their progress in the gym. In this way we were able to identify the points in the games where emotions were highest, as we explain in Chapter 12. An online poll of nearly two thousand fans was also conducted via the SIRC website to complete the project and provide ways of comparing fans from different countries.

In addition to the SIRC coordinating team of Simon Bradley, Roger Norum, Patrick Alexander and Peter Marsh, 26 'native' researchers conducted field work under the supervision of that team and interviews with fans face-to-face, by telephone and online. Our thanks are due to Carmen Balaguer Ayora, Hubert Bastide, Roberto Bonetto, Sonia Brondi, Gabriela Da Costa, Heid Jerstad, Henning Goranson-Sandberg, Jim Halsey, Anders Sejr Hansen, Stephen Herron, Edward Hewitt, Kate Kingsbury, Gernot Klantschnig, Jenni Kouri, Mathieu Lory, Kristina Mikulova, Aneta Moravkova, Alessio Nencini, Raffaele Nizzero, Alexander Phelan, Maarten Pieters, Adhip Rawal, Ania Szatkowska, Sofia Tillo, Joao Wachelke and Márton Zászkaliczky – and to the thousands of 'true' football fans across Europe without whose help this research would have been quite impossible.

2 Passion and emotion

The levels of pure emotion that are experienced and expressed at football matches is evident in all aspects of fans' commentary about the game. We will see in later sections of this report how it surfaces in the complex rituals that can be observed both inside and outside of the stadiums, in the ways in which loyalties are demonstrated and reinforced and in the strong sense of belonging that goes with being a 'true' fan.

By way of a prelude to these topics, responses to a number of items in the online questionnaire provide concrete evidence of the strength of these emotions, supported by comments from fans on these general issues.

Just under 90% of all fans, for example, agree with what a football insider is obvious – the statement 'I associate football with passion and dedication'. There is little variation across Europe but Dutch and Belgian fans top the league in this context, reaching 100% consensus, followed by Germany at 98%.

"Je n'ai jamais eu un sentiment aussi fort, c'est le sentiment d'amour que j'ai pour mon équipe quand je suis au stade. Je ne pourrais jamais oublier le sentiment que j'ai quand je suis auprès de mon équipe. Quand mon équipe gagne c'est magnifique, c'est incroyable,

c'est si beau que parfois j'ai l'impression de ne plus respirer."

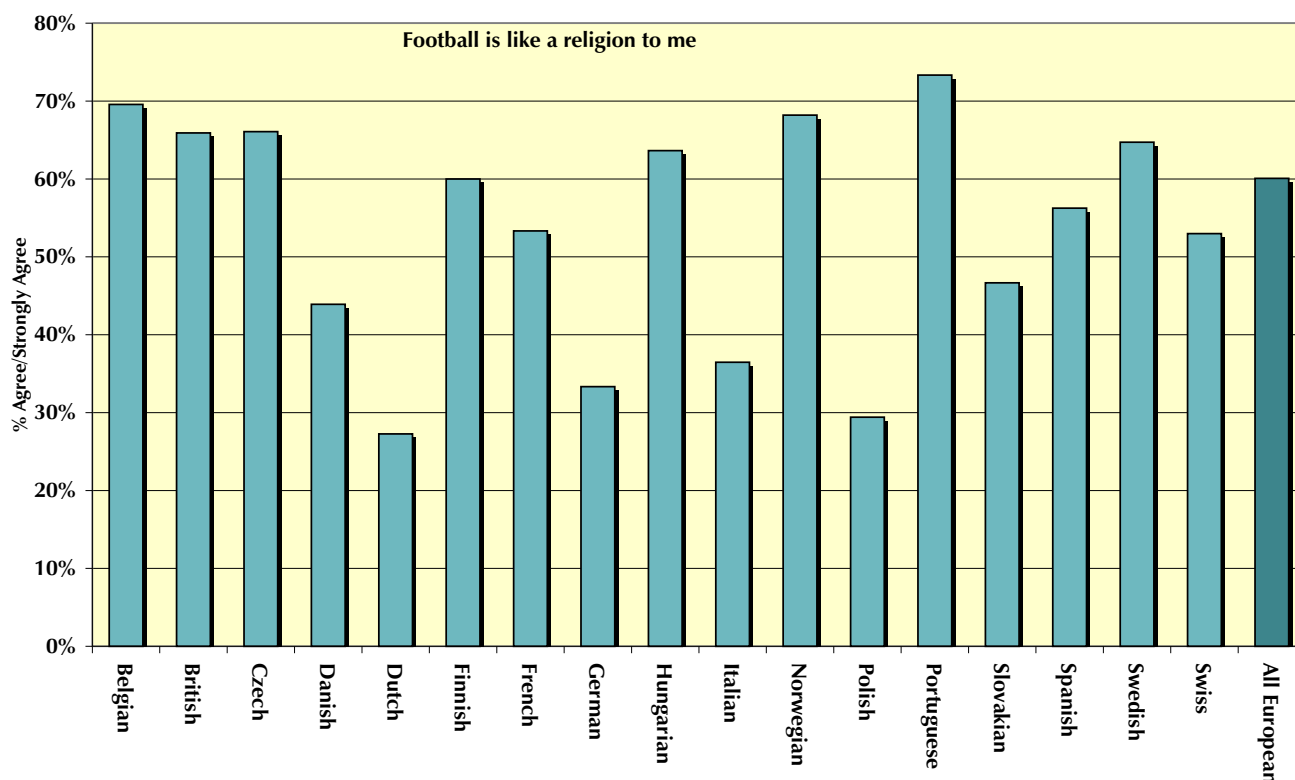
[I have never had such a strong feeling, a feeling of total love for my team as I do when I'm at a game. I can never forget the way I feel when I'm supporting my team. When my team wins, I've never seen anything more amazing, magnificent, it's so beautiful it takes my breath away.]

Excitement

An even greater proportion of fans (93%) across Europe agree that football is also associated with excitement and emotion – again something that is obvious to virtually any fan but worth stressing from the start. So extreme is this sense of emotional attachment to football that, for some fans, it is like a religion – 60% of all European fans feel this way. There are, however, some interesting national differences here, as we can see in Figure 2.1. The most 'religious' in this sense are the Portuguese fans, followed by the Belgians and Norwegians. Polish and Dutch fans, however, are less likely to see football as a religion despite, in the latter case, 100% agreement about the passionate and emotional nature of being a football fan. Their 'secular' approach to the game is equally intense.

"Suomessa peleissä istutaan kuin kirkossa."

Figure 2.1 Percentage agreement concerning comparison between football and religion



[In Finland, going to games is like going to church.]

It was no surprise to find that almost all fans had shouted or screamed at football matches – in fact one wonders how the 4% who were the exception could resist the urge to join those around them in the noisy and emotional atmosphere that is so characteristic of a football match. Perhaps more surprising, however, was the fact that over three quarters of all fans said that they had hugged or kissed total strangers at a football match. German fans, perhaps to the surprise of some, were the most overtly emotional in this sense with 93% expressing agreement on this questionnaire item.

"Du bist keinen Zwängen unterlegen. Du bist völlig frei, völlig losgelöst. Ich bin beim Fussball am emotionalsten. Das was man während der Woche aufgestaut hat, kann man rausschreien. Im täglichen Leben kann man das nicht. Man kann den täglichen Druck loswerden."

[You are not under any constraints. You are completely free, totally untethered. I am the most emotional at football. Everything that has been building up through the week can be released. You can't do that in your daily life. You can release the daily pressures.]

Tears of happiness and despair

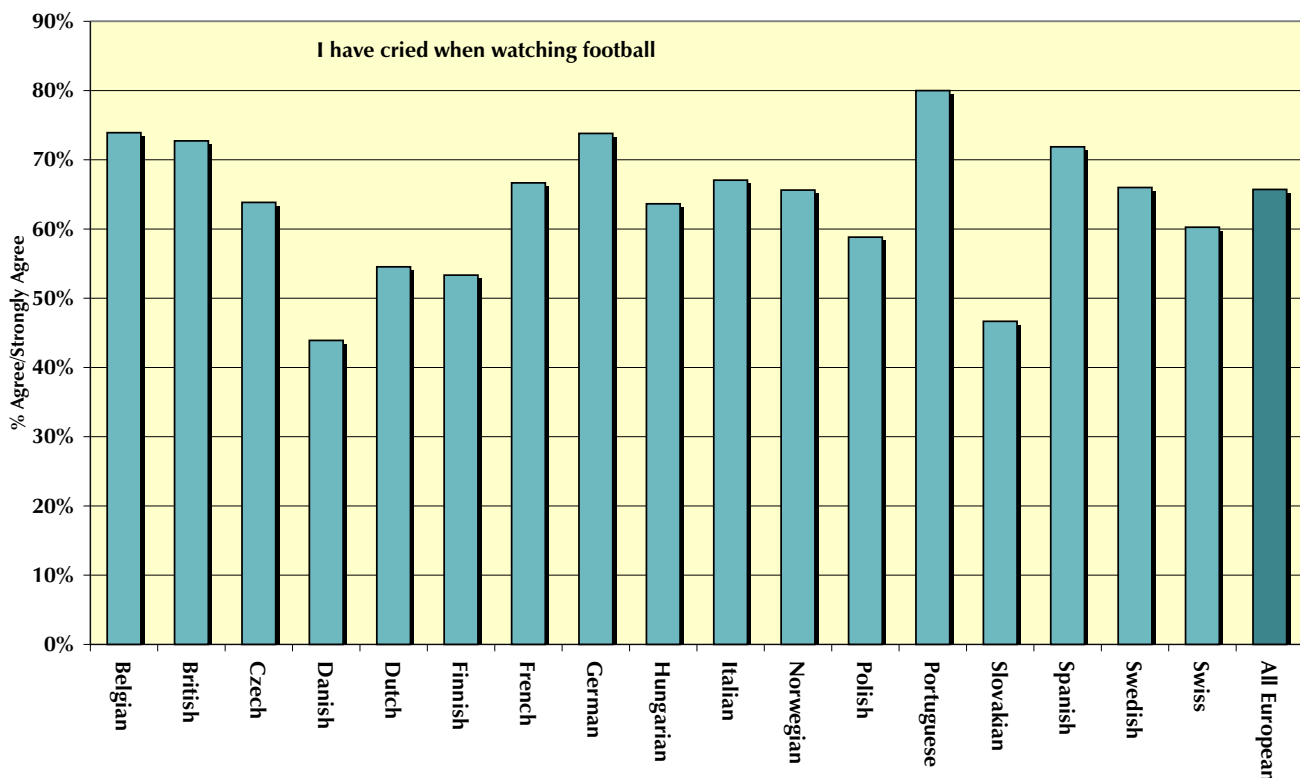
Two thirds of all fans have also cried at football games, as we can see from Figure 2.2. The Portuguese and German fans appear to be the most 'weepy' but even the British, not renowned for their overt emotionality, are above average in this context.

"Als St. Pauli vor einem halben Jahr in die zweite Liga aufgestiegen ist, habe ich vor Freude geheult, hemmungslos. Weil das bedeutet hat, dass wir wieder wahrgenommen werden und wieder dahin zurückkehren, wo wir hingehören."

[Half a year ago when St Pauli got promoted to the second league, I cried uncontrollably because of joy. Because this meant that we would be noticed again and return to where we belong.]

Being able to 'let go' was a key aspect of being a football fan among many of the people we interviewed. In the questionnaire, over half of fans said that it was the **only** occasion on which they could really let themselves go emotionally. The Swedish fans, in particular, took this view – an astonishing 95% – while German and Spanish fans were much less convinced about this. Perhaps in their countries

Figure 2.2. Percentage agreement concerning crying at football matches



other opportunities for 'letting go' are available – not just at football.

"Na een hele week serieus te zijn geweest vind ik het wel fijn om me even helemaal te kunnen laten gaan."

[After a full week of being serious, I like to let myself go.]

"Un match de foot est une sorte de moment de défolement, comme dans le sport où on évacue son agressivité, sa rancœur ou sa frustration de la semaine précédente, être supporter actif permet de "se vider" en chantant, frappant des mains ou en agitant un drapeau."

[A football match is a sort of moment of giving vent to one's feelings, as in sport where one releases one's aggressiveness, bitterness or frustration of the previous week, being an active supporter allows one to 'empty oneself' by singing, clapping or waving a flag.]

The 'pure joy'

The release of emotions in this way and what may fans describe as the 'pure joy' of watching football generate an atmosphere within the stadiums that for nearly three quarters of fans is seen as being as important as the match itself, as we can see in Figure 2.3. Hungarian, German, Swiss and British

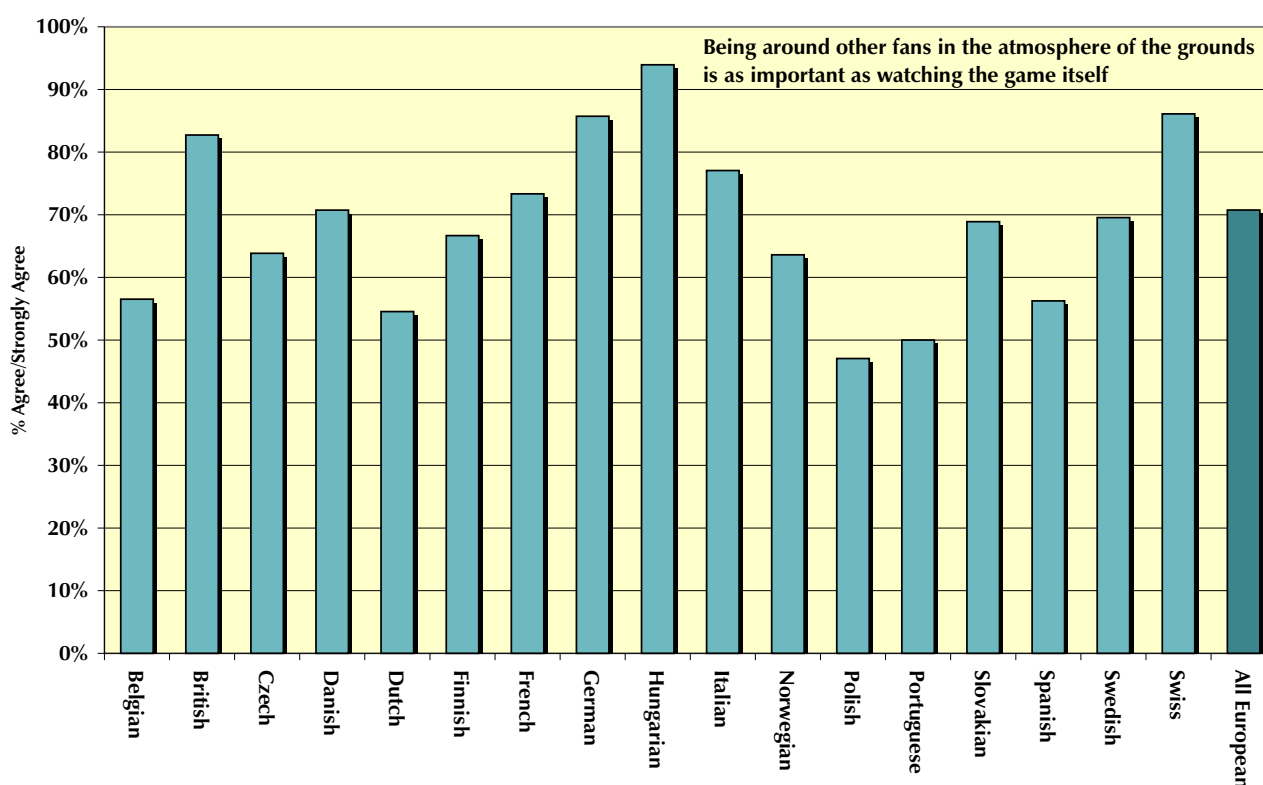
fans felt particularly strongly about this aspect of being a football fan.

Figure 2.4 Emotion on the terraces #1 – 'Pure Joy'. Hamburg SV v Hannover 96, February 02, 2008.



For over 60% of fans, away matches were seen as being particularly emotionally charged – perhaps because of the 'foreign' nature of the setting and the 'home advantage' of both the team and supporters. Italians felt this more strongly than fans in other countries. This may be due to perceived dangers of travelling to away games or because of the particularly high

Figure 2.3 Percentage agreement about 'atmosphere'



emotional charge that is characteristic of the bigger Italian grounds.

Throughout our research, this emphasis on 'atmosphere', whether at home or away games, was ever-present. The passions and emotions associated with the game itself spread like a kind of irresistible contagion through the stands and terraces.

"Si t'as un beau jeu sur la pelouse, forcément, ça se ressent dans la tribune. C'est électrique, ça bouge."

[If you have a beautiful game on the pitch, it is definitely felt in the stand. It's electric, it moves.]

"L'action c'est important. Quand t'as une belle action, toute la tribune bouge."

[Actions are important. When you have a beautiful action, the whole stand moves.]

Figure 2.5 Emotion on the terraces #2 – Despair.
Padova v Foligno, February 04, 2008.



This, then, is the setting in which the seemingly simple business of being a football fan takes place – and some people think that it is just a 'game'.

"Die Freude im Stadion ist wesentlich grösser als zu Hause vorm Fernseher. Es fällt ein Tor und du liegst dir heulend in den Armen, vor Glück, alle jubeln. Du umarmst wild fremde Leute und weisst sie haben dasselbe Gefühl. Alle jubeln zusammen, egal welche Schicht. Millionär und Sozialhilfeempfänger, alle feiern zuammen. Es spielt nur Fussball eine Rolle, alles andere ist egal."

[The joy in the stadium is a lot greater than at home in front of your TV. A goal is scored and you are in tears of joy, hugging other people, everyone is celebrating. You are hugging complete strangers and know they feel the same. Everyone is celebrating together, regardless of class. Millionaires and those on welfare, everyone

partying together. Only football matters, everything else is irrelevant.]

Fan Snapshot : the 'fairytale'

On April 22nd 1999, Cheltenham won promotion to the Football League for the first time in their history with a 97th minute winner against local rivals Yeovil Town. It was an evening match and I remember having a German exam the next day at school but my dad allowed me to stay after the game and celebrate with other fans and the players. The great thing about being a Cheltenham fan sometimes is that there are so few of us, comparatively, so you can get to know the players and it does feel like one big family. I still have the autographs I collected that night with various 'Champions!'-related inscriptions and the players who played in that Championship-winning (albeit a Conference championship) side remain the heroes of many, if not all, Cheltenham fans.

On an even more personal note, I remember the game on 29th January 2000 against Hartlepool United, the day after my father, who was the local MP, was attacked in his office and his best friend was killed protecting him. Since both men were very well-known in the community, and my dad was a season ticket holder and life-long friend of the chairman, the club held a minute's silence and the team wore black armbands. I had gone to the match, with another of my dad's friends, as Dad was still in hospital at his insistence because he wanted life to go on as normal, but we had no idea of the club's plans. Everyone was so kind to me and I was astonished at the numbers of people asking after my father and giving me gifts to pass on to him. The minute's silence was impeccably observed and I cried, not just because I was sad but also because I was so enormously grateful for the love and support shown by all these people to my family. We were all extremely touched, and I still am now, writing about it.

Later that season, I think, away to Shrewsbury Town, when my dad was back attending matches, one of the players, Russell Milton, spotted us during the warm-up and climbed up into the stand to speak to us. He asked Dad how he was doing and he replied that he was getting there and if Russell could score a goal for him, he'd feel a whole lot better. We took an early lead and were winning 1-0 when we were awarded a late penalty. Russell was not the club's regular penalty taker at that point but he took the ball off one of our strikers and scored the penalty. He then looked over and pointed to me and my dad. That is why my football club is the greatest in the world. It does feel, sometimes, as if it's been one long fairytale.

3 What is a fan?

"Myslím si, že každý fanúšik by mal byť fanatikom v dobrom slova zmysle. Na Slovensku sa počíta každý fanúšik. Je to viac než relax, alebo hobby, v skratke, je to môj život. Nepamätám si presne, kto toto povedal – možno to bol Pelé – ale veľmi dobre to vystihuje, ako vnímam futbal: futbal je radosť, vášeň, je to celý môj život!"

[I think that every fan should be a 'fanatic', in the positive sense of the word. In Slovakia, every fan counts. For me, fandom is more than just relaxation or a hobby – in short, it is my life. I don't remember exactly who said this – it might have been Pelé – but it accurately describes how I feel about football: football is joy, passion, my whole life!]

Describing what it means to be a fan involved intense emotional debate among the fans we talked with. While many believed that defining a fan can be a difficult exercise – there are many different degrees of fandom – certain traits and behaviours were mentioned repeatedly in the discussions, any combination of which may indicate true passion for both the game as a whole and their chosen side. The following are some of the key themes that emerged.

Loyalty

The reasons that fans give for supporting a particular team are many and varied. Some opt for their local team because of a strong sense of regional belonging; some, from an early age, might select a team because their best friend likes (or dislikes) them; some 'inherit' a team from their family, while others, perhaps through an accident of birth, might have a team thrust upon them. By whatever route a fan arrives at a selected or preordained club, once there the bond is invariably for life. Echoing marriage vows, 'real' fans pledge, perhaps unwittingly at the outset, to stand by their team in sickness and in health. Unlike a large proportion of all marriages, however, the relationship between club and fan rarely ends in divorce. The key to the perpetuation of this union is loyalty.

"Je demontre la fidélité quels que soient les résultats de l'équipe."

[I am loyal to my team no matter what the results are.]

There was a consensus among fans that a 'real' fan is someone who supports his or her team in good times and as well as in bad – supporters who desert their teams when they are underperforming are simply not 'real fans'. In fact, the 'fair-weather' fan is the most widely derided type of football supporter. For deserting one's team in times of hardship a supporter should be instantly 'red carded'. Being a fan means accepting emotional risk and being prepared to 'suffer'. The

love for a team is likened frequently to a tempestuous relationship; rarely straightforward, often emotionally fraught, but at times the most intense and beautiful of experiences. Unlike other difficult relationships you can, however, never walk away from your team and you do yourself and your team a serious disservice if you feign disinterest or become emotionally detached – you have an obligation, as a 'real' fan, to work at it.

At the far end of the spectrum a number of examples were provided of fans who go to extreme lengths to demonstrate their loyalty to their clubs. Some have become the almost legendary.

"Sheffield Wednesday had the 'tango man' and there was the Newcastle fan who got 'Andy Cole' tattooed on his leg just before they sold him to Manchester United in 1995."

One Portsmouth fan, having covered almost his entire body with club-related tattoos and piercings – presumably still feeling he had to do more – changed his name by deed poll to 'Mr Portsmouth FC'.

Active v passive

Being a football fan is an active, lived experience. Fans talked at length about their role – they are not just there as spectators, they participate in the game and believe that their presence, rituals and involvement impact on their teams performance. There was a consensus that they have not only a desire but also a duty to be a 'good fan'.

Across Europe there is a clear distinction between the passive supporter and the active fan. Although the terminology may change between countries the distinction between active and passive methods of support is consistent. In Norway, for example, the active followers of football would be offended by the term 'fan', preferring 'supporter' as a way of describing their experience. The Italians differentiate between the 'tifosi' and the 'Ultras'. The tifosi are more passive and 'live' the match experience as spectators. Ultras, by contrast, consider themselves to be protagonists, playing an essential and active role. The majority of them also believe that their presence has a significant impact on their team. The following quote is an extract from a conversation with a member of the Drugh, a Juventus Ultra group:

"L'Ultras è quello che segue dappertutto la squadra. Il tifoso normale è quello che gli interessa solamente andare a vedere la partita, in silenzio, indipendentemente da quello che accade intorno allo stadio. Noi invece siamo quelli che, con la nostra presenza, con la nostra passione, la nostra fatica, i nostri

sacrifici, cerchiamo di rendere lo spettacolo, 'Lo spettacolo': la partita diventa lo spettacolo."

[An Ultra is one who follows the team everywhere. The 'normal' fan is only interested in watching the match, silently, independently from what happens all around the stadium. On the contrary, we are the ones who, with our presence, our passion, our efforts and our sacrifices, try to make the match the only and real show.]

From the quote above it is not hard to see why so many fans from other European countries identify with the Italian style of football fandom; his passion is tangible, his commitment and loyalty unquestionable and his role clearly defined. The terms 'tifo', 'tifosi' and 'Ultra' have been widely adopted by fans from other countries, from Scandinavia to Eastern Europe, and are aspirational labels which connote passion and commitment.

Attending matches

Figure 3.1 The 'prestigious' Curva Sud.
Juventus v Roma, February 16, 2008.



Perhaps the most obvious way of showing a high level of dedication to the club is through regular, active attendance at games and participation in the chants, songs, and other rituals that are characteristic of particular groups of fans. Among those who consider themselves to be dedicated fans, attendance at games is a necessary prerequisite for making comments and talking about your team with any degree of authority; going to the game entitles the fan to a legitimate opinion. The views of 'armchair' fans – those who do not regularly attend games and who have not 'earned a right' to comment – are rarely taken seriously by the match-goers. Again the emphasis here is on football fandom as a lived experience; being there, being involved and understanding what being a fan is all about are crucial.

"The bloke in the pub who never goes who starts telling you how [Coventry] City should be playing...It's like people who [talk politics but] don't vote."

What is evident from discussions with fans is that attending matches is more than just a pleasant way to spend a few hours at the weekend; it is a 'duty' and fulfilling this duty requires participation – it is about more than simply showing up and making up the numbers. Members of the Portuguese fan groups the *Diabos Vermelhos* (Benfica) and the *Super Dragões* (Porto), for example, both describe going to the game as a 'responsibility' that they have to the team as well as to fellow fans, but they are also 'entrusted' to bring along the appropriate clothing, produce and display banners and to participate in the event.

Following Northern Ireland's recent 0-1 defeat by Bulgaria, fans from one forum are clearly more disheartened by the performance of the fans than they are about the performance of the team.

"In retrospect though I still expect more but I am not gonna sit and blame the players because...all who are inside the ground have an obligation and a duty to get behind the team, regardless if it's a friendly or not. The players are human without the fans – results in the last 12 months have proved that."

Figure 3.2 Advice to supporters of Paris St Germain
"If you don't sing ...



Figure 3.3 ... then you can't come in."
Parc des Princes, February 23, 2008.



The same forum includes advice to would be match-goers and the message here is clear: if you are not going to participate, then don't bother.

"Everyone I have spoken to about the game last night where talking about how our lads didn't show up and how Healy looked poor and Worthington's decision making is very poor bla bla bla ... Well here's the thing lads, the fans didn't turn up ... If your [sic] going to come along to Windsor Park to watch the boys in emerald green, don't bother. If your [sic] coming along to get behind the team and kick every single ball with them then happy days. If you still have you're voice at the end of the match then don't come back! Support your country with your voice instead of expecting to be entertained! You have a part to play as well."

The stadium – the fans' spiritual home

It is also hard to overstate the importance of the home stadium (and particular sections within it) to the football fan. From the first sight of the 'green' of the pitch, the smell of the terraces, to the sense of history and tradition that are a part of bricks and mortar of the ground, being there is highly emotive. The stadium is much more than just the arena in which the games are played. Experiencing life in the stadium and the passions evoked by it serves to reinforce fans' sense of belonging to their club but also further emphasises the divide between their style of support and that of the 'passives'. As one Grosseto fan suggested:

"Lo stadio è la vita per i tifosi. E' l'unico spazio fisico che identifica una persona come tifoso e che lo differenzia da un semplice sportivo, che segue le partite in televisione a casa o al bar."

[The stadium is the fans' life. It is the only physical space that identifies a person as a fan and that differentiates him or her from a simple spectator that follows matches on television or in a bar.]

Many 'real' fans, of course, are not averse to watching football on television, on the contrary, but to them televised games are as much about reliving the emotions of match day as they are about the game itself. Some even admit watching, and in some instances recording, match highlights to assess the quality of the fans' performance.

The stadium, to them, is hallowed ground. Hanappi Stadion, the stadium of Rapid Vienna – the Austrian club with the fans that are reputed to be most dedicated to their team – is referred to by fans as St Hanappi. In that way, the Rapid stadium is seen as a site of pilgrimage where every week thousands of believers descend. The religious metaphor is very widespread at Rapid.

"Rapid so sagen wir, ist unsere Religion!"

[Rapid, as we say, is our religion!]

Away games:

While the home stadium has particular significance for most fans, attending away games is a further special sign of dedication. Watching a team play a game away from the home ground is obviously more expensive and time-consuming, but it is also psychologically a bold statement – away fans are always outnumbered and out-of-water. Away fans have to sing twice as loud as when they are at home. In spite of, or perhaps because of this, smaller groups of dedicated fans travel large distances to provide support for their teams. Overcoming odds that are not stacked in their favour and contributing to their team's away victory, however, is one of the quintessential highs of being a football fan.

"Manchmal glaub ich mir gehört die Welt, wenn für St Pauli ein Auswärtstor fällt."

[Sometimes I think the world is mine when St Pauli scores an away goal.]

Many fans commented on the heightened sense of passion and sense of community felt at away games and some even described away matches as 'sacred'. They give fans an opportunity to demonstrate their loyalty – both to their team and their town, city or region – and to vocalise their passion and commitment in front of the opposing supporters.

"La trasferta per me è sacra, pochi o tanti, vicino o lontano, non c'è storia: essere presenti. Per far vedere che non sei un tifosotto presente solo in casa quando le cose vanno bene, per rappresentare il gruppo e la città. Essere presenti. Sempre e comunque. ogni Trasferta è una storia a sé."

[The away match is something sacred to me, few or many people, very close or far away, it doesn't matter: what is important is to be there to let the others know that you are not just a 'home fan' that goes only to home matches when things are going well. It's important to be there because you represent the group and the city, always and no matter what. Any away match is a story of its own.]

Away matches play an essential role in promoting social cohesion among fans and supporters' clubs. For some, belonging to a dedicated band of travelling fans is as, if not more important than the team itself. One Norwegian fan, for example, suggested that regularly attending away matches with the same group of fans provides a welcome sense of stability for him and his fellow supporters.

"Du må huske at mye av det å være hardcore supporter er å dra på bortekamp ... det gjør at du bruker hver helg på fotball og drar ofte med de samme menneskene – det er noe med fellesskapet ... Den beste måten å skape et fellesskap på er å ha en felles fiende ... Jeg tror folk opplever dette som det viktigste, for mange ... laget endres hele tiden, du selger og kjøper spillere så det å ha den samme gruppen som drar kan være mer viktig for mange enn selve laget."

[You must also remember that much of being a hardcore fan is going to the away matches ... it means you use every weekend on football and you often go with the same people – it really is a community thing ... The best way to create a community is to have an external enemy ... I think people experience this as the most important thing, for many ... the team is changing all the time, you sell and buy players so having the same gang of people going (to away matches) can be more important for many than the team itself.]

Player transfers are commonplace and are part and parcel of the game; away games, for this fan at least, provide continuity in the face of frequently changing team personnel.

Shared experiences during away matches can also provide fans with the raw material for often colourful tales of 'triumph over adversity'. Fans' memorable away match experiences invariably involve an element of narrative that can, on occasion, resemble the plot of a convoluted drama.

"Oppure quella volta che sempre in 2 siamo andati a Fermo di venerdì sera. Ero uscito da scuola un'ora prima, si parte col treno senza sapere dove sia Fermo e senza quindi sapere che a Fermo non c'è una stazione, la fermata di Fermo è infatti quella di Porto San Giorgio, 6 km a valle rispetto a Fermo. Arrivati a Porto S. Giorgio mezz'ora prima dell'inizio della partita sembrava una città fantasma: di taxi nemmeno l'ombra e gente in giro pari a 0. Alla fine abbiamo 'preso in prestito' 2 biciclette e ci siamo fatti 6 km di salita per arrivare all'inizio del secondo tempo e dimostrare che c'eravamo. Un'epopea memorabile."

[Or another time when, again, two of us went to Fermo on a Friday evening. I got off school one hour in advance, then we took a train without even knowing where Fermo was and then without knowing that there wasn't any railway station in Fermo so that we had to get off at S. Giorgio Station that is 6 Km far from Fermo... We arrived at S. Giorgio half an hour before the beginning of the match and it looked like a ghost city to us: no way to get a taxi or something like that, so we decided to "borrow" (to steal) 2 bikes and rode for 6 Km ... we arrived just in time for the beginning of the

Figure 3.4 Travelling with the Barbarians.
Troyes v Le Havre, February 29, 2008.



second half of the match just to demonstrate that we were there. A really epic moment.]

Going to away games also involves an element of risk, some perhaps tangible, some more imagined. While for many fans the 'threat of violence' at matches has decreased significantly in recent years, the legacy of a more violent era of football perhaps adds a frisson of 'danger' to what otherwise is a largely safe activity. Again, having a story to share with comrades is a useful by-product and further reinforces one's credentials as a 'true' fan.

Club folklore, myths and legend

The stories of fans form an indelible part of a club's history and tradition and like myths and fables of old are passed down through the generations. The following comment from an Anderlecht fan illustrates how shared experiences are assimilated into club folklore:

"We have fans of all ages and generations, every generation has his heroes and stories with good and bad moments just like the fairytales. Older people always tell the stories to the younger ones, so the stories get passed down through the generations. Those story-telling moments are real important for the club as they form tomorrow's generation of supporters who go on to tell the same stories to their children. Often in the stories the truth is not 100%, things may be exaggerated, the way the older ones remember the stories changes as time goes on and the story passes down through generations, sometimes the players in the stories start to seem like miracle-makers. That's how the stories become legends and the players become heroes or baddies."

The advent of new technologies and team TV channels has also given fans a platform with which to impart their experiences to a largely captive audience. The seasoned fans –

often the familiar faces on the terraces – now have the opportunity to disseminate their stories to less travelled, 'trainee fans' who are keen to 'get up to speed' with the clubs history and share in the passion of past successes.

The knowledge

Tied to a sense of dedication and commitment is the notion that 'true' fans have an encyclopaedic historical and statistical knowledge about their team. This is not only proof of the time and effort that a fan has dedicated to his or her team, but also testament to the length of time that they have been a fan, and often also to the number of games that they have watched and/or attended. At the same time, testing this knowledge is a means to ascertaining the dedication of others. One Chelsea blogger, for example, provides a detailed, if light-hearted, downloadable guide to specialist Chelsea-related knowledge, "so you don't look like a complete ponce at games and in the boozer."

When referring to memorable matches fans will always quote specifics – they do not talk generally of 'last season's' match against an opponent. They will refer to the date, the venue, the score, the impact of the result on their league standing and often, the names of the goal scorers, the attendance figures, contentious refereeing decisions and some particularly poignant event that occurred on the terraces.

"It was a Tuesday night game in the late 80s – post Heysel, pre-Hillsborough – about 87 / 88. We played arsenal away. A real full, brimming crowd. Two teams that really wanted it and both sets of fans really wanted it. It wasn't a great game, 1-0 but I just remember it so well... and it was one of the last over-50,000 crowds in a terraced stadium. It felt magical, hooliganism had almost taken a back seat, and it was almost like: 'We don't need to do that anymore'. You could still stand on a terrace and still queue up at the football ground. It was almost like: 'this is how football should be'. It was a Tuesday night and there were 50,000 people! To a league game! It wasn't even the end of the season."

For a fan the devil truly is in the detail and the detail has to be studiously committed to memory. Furthermore, being able to instantly recall the minutiae is an essential skill which must be honed. Most fans, when it comes to football, are master strategists and premiership-winning managers in waiting. While they admire attractive football – and often see their teams as proponents of attractive play – they can also appreciate the 'bigger picture'. To the uninitiated spectator 'grinding out' a result may not produce the most enticing of spectacles, but to the 'true' fan, who understands the game, appreciates the stakes involved and the tactics used, this is a moot point.

Winning v good performance

So is it the winning that is important to the fan or the quality of the performance? Opinion on this is divided. The English Premiership fans interviewed generally appear to put winning before other considerations. A couple of Liverpool fans, for example, emphasised the importance of the result.

"Football is about winning, if you are a 'true' fan I don't think it matters how you win. You can have a series of freaky 1-0 wins and you can win the league."

"It's winning, it's definitively winning. All Liverpool fans will tell you. Some clubs might say it's a performance thing. You'll accept a good performance if you're a Spurs fan, but if you're a Liverpool fan it is about winning. At the end of it all, if you can win 1-0, however you play, you're going to go with that. Anything else is delusional to me. All this nonsense about style...what's the point of having style if you are going to get beaten 7-0 at Anfield like they did in '78?"

One Hungarian fan was similarly adamant in his belief that there could be no aim of a match other than winning:

"A győzelem a legfontosabb. A szép játék az jó ha van, de nem kell. Inkább legyen meg a győzelem. Persze az a legjobb, ha győzelem szép játékkal sok góllal. De az első helyen a győzelem van. Ha egy gól van csak, az tökéletesen elég."

[The victory is the most important. Great if there's beautiful playing too, but that's not a necessity. We would rather have a victory. Of course, it is the best if it is a victory with excellent play and many scores. But victory is the first goal. Even if there is only one goal scored, that is enough.]

Some Italian Ultras, however, suggested that winning is in fact a secondary consideration: more important to them, as Ultras of Juventus, is that they, as fans, perform well.

"C'è una frase che portiamo sul nostro materiale, sulle magliette, che è un po' la sintesi del nostro spirito, che recita: 'la nostra fede oltre ogni ostacolo'. Noi ogni oltre ostacolo che ci viene posto, cerchiamo, al massimo delle nostre forze, finché ci è possibile, di portare avanti la nostra passione e di buttarla in campo, di buttarla allo stadio. Perché per noi, che la Juve vince o perde, conta relativamente."

[There is a sentence that we have written on our shirts. It is a kind of a summary of our spirit: 'our faith beyond every obstacle'. Whatever obstacle that is put before us, we will try, wherever possible, to overcome it with our strength and our passion on the pitch and on the

terraces. Whether Juve wins or loses is beside the point.]

For members of this group a preoccupation with the result is seen as the preserve of the tifosi and indicative of a less active style of support. In other cultures, however, fans of the top-flight teams live to win while for fans of lower league and less successful teams being beaten is an uncomfortable, but inevitable 'fact of life'. Inherent in 'job role' of a fan is an ability to repeatedly put one's emotions on the line and for many, the game's appeal has much to do with this emotional risk-taking. Football fans are prepared for the fact that things do not always go their own way. They accept this; their enjoyment of the game and the act of supporting their team usually outweighs practical considerations such as losing. Apart from the most successful clubs, the reality for most supporters is indifferent results.

"The rest of us have to put up with getting stuffed".

Even among the fans of the top-flight English sides, however, there is still a recognition that defeat is acceptable – up to a point – if they feel that their team has performed well, or failing that have been outplayed, on the day by a more deserving opposition.

Love for the game

Beyond the feelings for their own team, many, but by no means all, football fans seem to have a passion for the game as a whole. This 'love of the game', manifests itself in a number of different ways which, according to our sources, often involves playing the sport, reading up on seminal players, teams and managers, as well as visiting other grounds to watch matches as a neutral. One English fan, for example, described his most positive football experience being at a League 2 play-off which did not even involve his side.

"Watching Shrewsbury Town play Bristol Rovers in League 2 play-off final, 2007. I'm not a fan of either club, but it was fantastic to be a part of two sets of supporters just enjoying the occasion and making the most of their day at Wembley."

In addition to physically playing the sport, some fans' passion for the game extends into the virtual world of football gaming. Interestingly, even on this (virtual) level, fans often remain loyal to their teams and choose to adopt their team colours; perhaps hoping to redress poor 'real-life' performances or bad managerial decisions.

"Og når jeg spiller FIFA 08. Jamen der er jeg jo selvfølgelig træner for Viborg FF."

[And when I play FIFA 08, well then of course I'm the coach for Viborg FF.]

Football is not just for weekends

For the football fan the emotion, passion and preoccupation with the game extend beyond match day and often plays a significant role throughout the 'working' week, as one Brøndby fan explains:

"Jeg er ikke kun fan i weekenden. Jeg er det alle ugens dage. Når sæsonen er i gang, tænker jeg hver dag på den kommende weekend."

[I'm not just a fan in the weekend. I'm a fan all days of the week. When the season is running, I think about the coming weekend every day.]

Match post mortems take place regularly in conversations with fellow fans and the next game is eagerly anticipated. For away games preparations are often made well in advance.

"Die Eintracht stellt immer noch die wichtigste Konstante in meinem Leben dar. Montags bin ich schon heiss auf den nächsten Spieltag und kann das Wochenende kaum erwarten um zum Spiel zu fahren. Am Samstag werde ich wieder, wie viele andere übrigens auch 800 KM auf mich nehmen um die Eintracht in Rostock zu sehen. Das Zusammengehörigkeitsgefühl im Block ist einfach unbeschreiblich. Die gemeinsame Freude, das gemeinsame Leid, das Ausleben der Emotionen. All das kann ich in dieser Form nur im Block."

[Eintracht still represents the most important constant in my life. Mondays I am already eagerly anticipating the next match day and can hardly await the weekend to travel to the game. This Saturday I, just like many others as well, will travel 800km to see the Eintracht in Rostock. The togetherness in the stadium just cannot be described. The shared happiness, suffering, acting out our feelings. I can only experience this on the terraces.]

Even among self-professed football fanatics, the potential for a 90 minute match to occupy one's waking moments days, weeks, months and even years after the event, is still surprising.

"It's amazing how 90 minutes of football can last 5 hours."

"Yeah, we've all been at the same game and you begin to wonder if any of us were watching the same game."

Apprenticeship and fan careers

Emerging throughout these discussions about what constitutes a 'real' fan was the idea that it required both work and the acquisition of knowledge and skills. You can't simply walk into a stadium and immediately be accepted as a fellow fan. There are chants and songs to learn and an appreciation of 'proper'

attitudes and modes of behaviour to be developed. Status positions with the main group of fans need to be identified and respected – your own status will ultimately rely on the extent to which your group membership has been earned in such ways.

"[Being a fan] is about being mentored – being told how to behave – what to do by your elders when you first start attending matches on your own."

"Anche se siamo in una posizione minoritaria, gli altri gruppi ci rispettano per la passione che abbiamo e per il tifo che facciamo."

[Even if we are in the minority, other (fan) groups respect you because of the passion you have, the support we give to Juventus.]

In a very real sense then, the world of the football fan is like that of work, where you enter a job or profession at a lowly level and, through experience and the development of required skills, coupled with hard work, you get promoted. You may also get to 'manage' – and that is exactly what the chant leaders and flag-waving coordinators do among fan groups at football games. To be such a 'manager' requires that not only knowing what you are doing but that having the degree of earned respect that will ensure that others follow your lead.

For many fans football provides an alternative career – one in which success is every bit as rewarding, or more so, as in the mainstream working world. The advantage of this career compared with a normal 'job' is that involves doing what you really love – being an active part of football.

4 The Twelfth Man

As any passionate football fan will tell you the purpose of being at a game is not simply to watch – it is to help the team to win. The 'real' fan is not a mere spectator – he (or she) is the twelfth man on the pitch, without whom the rest of the team (the players) would struggle. Fans see themselves as creating a positive atmosphere in which the games take place and their presence and actions positively influence the morale and motivation of players on the field. And, in turn, the result.

As one Swiss fan explained it:

"Nous voulons participer en étant acteur du jeu et de décisions prises."

[We want to participate as actors in the game and in the decisions that are made.]

Another Dutch fan explained:

"Omdat je weet dat het invloed heeft ga je jezelf er meer toe zetten om een sfeer te creëren. Als je denk dat het toch geen zin heeft gaat iedereen op zijn stoel zitten en wordt het een saaie boel."

[Because you know it has an influence on the game you automatically try to create a good atmosphere. If you would think that (being an active supporter) has no influence everyone would sit down in his seat and it will be a dull business.]

Figure 4.1 Inspiring the team – songs, flags & chants.
Parc des Princes, February 23, 2008.



For fans, creating a 'good atmosphere' involves chanting, singing, waving banners and flags and generally creating an inspirational environment for their home team – and an intimidating one for the opposing team. One fan of FC Brussels spelled out exactly what he and his fellow fans do to influence the quality and outcome of the match:

"Nous influençons le jeu avec des encouragements, applaudissements pour les belles actions. Sifflements ou huées pour des actions fautives répétées de l'adversaire"

ou pour des décisions incompréhensibles ou inappropriées de l'arbitre de la rencontre."

[We influence the game by shouting out encouragements, clapping whenever there is great play. We whistle or boo when we see repetitive fouls committed by our opponents or when the referee makes unjust or nonsensical decisions.]

There is also a strong sense that the actions of fans – not merely their passive presence – can contribute to changes in the play of the match. In Austria, for example, Rapid fans have engaged in a ritualised chant towards the end of every match for nearly a century. This so-called *Rapidviertelstunde* (Rapid's quarter-of-an-hour) is intended to give players the extra motivation they may need to win the match. During the last fifteen minutes of every Rapid game the fans begin to clap and shout, giving their all to push their team to victory. Historically, many important Rapid games have been won during this *Rapidviertelstunde*. It is the ultimate act performed by Rapid fans and forms a very important part of their identity. In the words of one 46-year-old Rapid fan:

"Es bedeutet uns Rapidlern echt viel, wenn wir die Rapidviertelstunde einklatschen. Da steht jeder im Stadion auf und wenn wir so vollgas geben, kriegt man eine Gänsehaut...Die Kids merken instinktiv diese tiefe Verbundenheit zum Verein, spüren die Emotionen auf den Tribünen und die Atmosphäre im Stadion, die Rapidviertelstunde, ist fast schon so etwas wie religiös zu bezeichnen. Glaub mir, auch nach so vielen Jahren Fantum bei Rapid, wenn die letzten 15 Minuten eingeklatscht werden, glauben wir Fans immer an einen Rapidsieg, auch wenn wir hinten liegen. Da wird viel positive Energie freigesetzt."

[It really means a lot to Rapid fans when we start cheering for the *Rapidviertelstunde*. Everyone in the stadium will get up and when we give our full powers, you get goose bumps...The kids instinctively realise the close connection to the club, they feel the emotion on the stands and the atmosphere in the stadium; the *Rapidviertelstunde* can almost be called religious. Believe me, even after so many years of fandom at Rapid, when the last 15 minutes start, we fans always believe in a victory of Rapid, even when we lie behind. There is a lot of positive energy released.]

One 15-year-old fan of Slavia Prague expressed his strong desire to be a member of the Ultras (the most committed and 'extreme' group of fans) because it would allow him access to a particular section of the stadium to which they laid territorial claim. For him, this was the only place where he felt he could

truly demonstrate his commitment to the club. Only with Ultras would his passion have the desired impact on his team.

"Už se nemůžu dočkat až budu moct do kotle, pořádně si zařvat a zafandit! Slavia potřebuje fanoušky a jejich poporu a já jsem připravený jim ji přesně tohle dát."

[I can't wait when I'll be able to go to 'kotel' (the Ultras area). When I will be able to shout my lungs out and cheer for my team! Slavia needs fans and their support and I am ready to give that exactly what they are looking for.]

Such supporters, and the Ultras in particular, are not merely encouraging their team with their presence. They are in fact playing as *part* of the team and their performance is critical to the result. For one such Belgian Ultra of Union St Gilloise:

"Les Ultras sont très important, comme nous sommes un groupe de supporters très actif, il est clair que nous pouvons influencer le match car les joueurs ressentent notre forte présence, nous sommes en effet sur le terrain même en tant que 12ième homme ... Chaque club qui évolue chez lui peut voir le cours du match changé rien qu'avec l'influence des supporter locale envers l'arbitré."

[The Ultras are very important. As we are a very active fan club it is obvious that we can influence the match as the players feel our presence. We are, in fact, present on the pitch itself, we are the 12th player ... Each club whilst on its home ground can watch the game evolve due to nothing else but the influence of the local supporters on the referee.]

For this fan it is obvious that he and others on the terraces can and do influence the match. Such fans believe that their chants, songs and expressions of love for the team will actually have direct and real effects on the outcome of the game. This sentiment was also expressed by this German fan:

"Wir sind der 12te Mann. Gute Fans mit guter Stimmung können den Gegner mürbe machen. Ich bin mir sicher, dass wir Fans dem Verein schon den einen oder anderen Punkt eingebracht haben!"

[We are the 12th man. Good fans with good atmosphere can wear the opponent down. I am sure that us fans have won a few points for the club].

In some cases, there are specific areas of the stadiums that are particularly intimidating to members of opposing teams. In England, for example, a number of city grounds are renowned for being notoriously difficult to play in because of the energy and active support of home fans. These include the Kop at Liverpool, Manchester United's Stretford End, The Holte End at Aston Villa, the Shed at Chelsea and Newcastle's Gallowgate.

These areas that traditionally used to house standing hardcore supporters are still the noisiest and are deemed by home fans to be the places where they can offer the best possible contribution to their team's successes.

Opposing fans, players and managers who have visited these stadiums are well aware that the atmosphere in these sections can often be menacing not only for the visiting team but also to referees. Statisticians have noted that the number of penalties awarded to visiting teams in front of these sections is unusually low.

In the same manner, some clubs and grounds have become well known for the particularly quiet nature of home support. This can provide the opportunity for more vocal away fans to goad their opponents. Arsenal's old Highbury ground was nicknamed 'Highbury the library' in reference to this, and away fans at this ground would regularly taunt the home supporters with hushing noises or chants of "Shall we sing a song for you?"

The perceived ability of fans to alter the course of play at a match through their support and actions is especially significant when a game is at a critical stage – for example, a goal being needed to reverse the pattern of play or to clinch the win. Several Finnish and German fans commented on the ways in which they attempted to affect the game in these critical periods:

"Uskon, että sillä on hyvin paljon vaikutusta pelaajien vireyteen kentällä, kun fanit kannustavat katsomosta. Pelaaja tykkäävät, jos laulamme ja sen huomaa kyllä heti pelaajien aktiivisudessa ja liikkuvuudessa."

[I believe that fans can influence a lot on the activeness of the players on the field when fans cheer for their teams. The players really like it when we start singing and that can immediately be seen in the alertness of the players.]

"Jos faneilla on hyvä meno katsomossa, ei joukkuekaan viitsi laiskotella kentällä."

[If the fans have a really good atmosphere in the stand, the players won't feel lazy in the field either.]

"Ich glaube schon, daß ein volles Stadion zusätzliche Motivation freisetzt. Und das es Momente gibt, in denen eine Mannschaft durch ihre Fans nach vorne gepusht werden kann und damit dieses eine Prozent mehr gibt, daß den Sieg bringt."

[I believe that a full stadium can create additional motivation. There are moments when a team is pushed forward by their fans to give this extra percent which brings the win.]

Just as fans might be able to influence their own team members and heighten their performance, they may similarly

be able to de-motivate opposing team members and make referees nervous about awarding free kicks or penalties to the visiting team.

"Kyllä kannattajat voivat vaikuttaa pelaajiin. Parikin kertaa on vastustajan pelaaja saatu pois tolaltaan ja hermostumaan."

[The fans can indeed influence on players. It has happened a couple of times that we have distracted the players of the opposing team and made them nervous.]

"Fans können durch ihre Gesänge und Aktionen den Spielverlauf entscheidend beeinflussen. Sie geben der Mannschaft Kraft und neuen Mut, wenn es um das Aufholen eines Rückstandes geht; sie verunsichern mit Schmähgesängen den Gegner und Schiedsrichter – die Fans bilden sozusagen den 'Soundtrack' eines Spiels."

[Fans can play a decisive role on the game through their chants and actions. They give strength and new courage when it comes down to chasing a game, they unsettle the opponent and the referee – the fans constitute the soundtrack of a game.]

Figure 4.2 More advice on participation: the PSG singing manual.
Parc des Princes, February 23, 2008.



This last comment, describing the fans as the 'soundtrack' of the game, again emphasises the fact that they are 'co-players' whose role is as crucial as those kicking the ball on the field. They 'score' the music to the match – music which is as essential to the game as the players themselves.

"... Ich glaube das die 40 Minuten die wir nach dem Sieg in Mönchengladbach im Block standen und gesungen haben, bei der Mannschaft dafür gesorgt haben, dass ihnen endgültig klar war, dass nicht nur sie, der Trainer und das Präsidium aufsteigen wollen, sondern noch Tausende von anderen."

[... I believe that the 40 minutes during which we stood singing in the stands after the game in

Mönchengladbach made the team fully realise that it wasn't just themselves, the coach and the chairman that wanted to see them promoted – but also thousands of others].

Union with Players

A number of fans stressed that their ability to influence the game provided them with the sense of being part of a 'sacred union' with their club's players. This palpable sensation of having formed a synthesis with the other fans, the coach or manager and the players is what many fans strive towards.

"Persze, feldobja a játékosokat is. Biztos vagyok benne. Egy olyan atmoszférát teremt, a játékosok is jobban fel tudnak spannolódni. És ez vissza tovább, ha ők tudják spannolni magukat, az jobban spanol minket. Elindul ez a reakció."

[Of course, (our support) excites the players too. I am sure about that. It creates an atmosphere, and the players can be also more animated. And vice versa, if they can motivate themselves, this motivates us better. And a chain reaction starts.]

Elizabeth Skoglund Johnsen, in her published thesis on fan culture in Norway, emphasises the important role of physical activity during a match, when fans dance and jump around in support of their team. This physicality acts as a unifying phenomenon, during which lawyers and teachers rub shoulders with manual labourers and retirees, moving in the same ways and working towards the same goal. Fans in such situations generate a mindset in which they can, and do, have a positive influence on the game. As Johnsen quotes from one fan:

"Jeg har snakket med spillerne også, etterpå og de, de synes det er fantastisk, og lederen for klubben har også sagt dette er positivt . . . Jeg har hørt folk si dette har hjulpet klubben komme opp i eliteserien, atmosfæren har vært så bra ... Og spillerne har også sagt dette, både formelt til medie og i mindre formelle arenaer. Det gjør virkelig en forskjell."

[I have spoken to players and they think [the active support from fans at games] is fantastic, and club heads have also said it is very positive ... I have heard people say that the atmosphere has been so good that it has helped the club move up into a higher league ... The players have also said this, both in formal expressions to the media and in less formal contexts. It does really make a difference.]

Across Europe fans stressed the importance of receiving appreciation from the players in recognition of their efforts as the twelfth man. In Denmark, for example, the president of

one of the country's most revered fan clubs, the Roligans, acknowledged the importance for fans of being recognised by the players for their support.

"Jeg ved også fra spillerne... at det betyder lige at de kan give de der 5 til 10 % ekstra, der kan være nødvendige på banen for at hive en sejr hjem. Det tror jeg fans er ret bevidste om ... Der findes jo heller ikke noget bedre for os fans end når de kommer ned til vores afdeling... og klapper ud til os og siger tusind tak for støtten og kaster deres trøjer ud til os."

[I know from talking to the players as well ... that it just means that they can give those extra 5 to 10 percent necessary to carry the day. I think fans are very aware of that ... There is nothing more amazing for us as fans than when the players come down to where we sit ... and give their applause and offer their thanks for our support and throw their shirts out to us.]

One Swedish fan emphasised strongly the emotions he felt during moments when his team's players express thanks and gratitude for fan support.

"Jag är övertygad om att jag hjälper laget att spela bättre. Det bästa som finns är när laget kommer upp till klacken och tackar oss efter matchen. Då vet vi att båda, laget och supportrarna, har vunnit tillsammans."

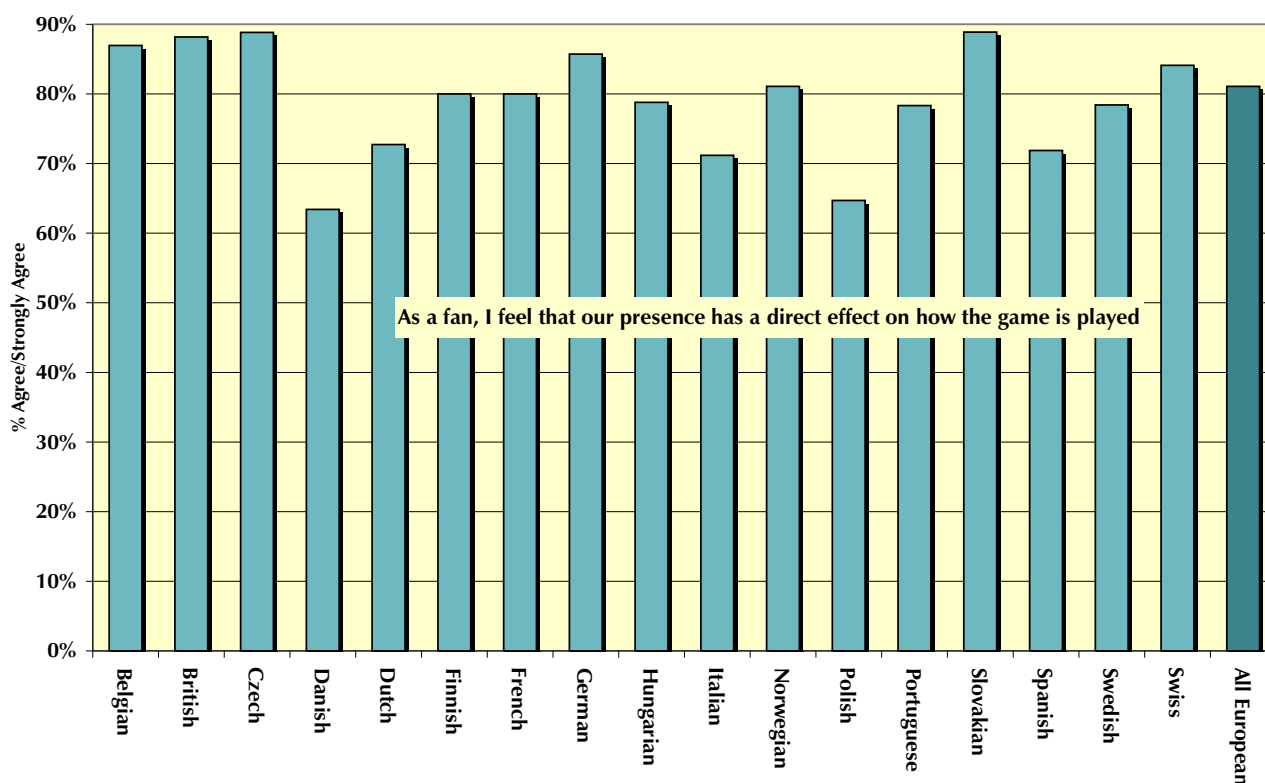
[I am convinced that I help the team to play better. The best feeling is when the team come up to the supporters after the game and thank us. Then we know that the both of us, the team and the supporters, have won the game together.]

Figure 4.3 Fans wait on the rail for players' shirts. Juventus v Roma, February 16, 2008.



In Spain, members of the Peña Javeamigos fan club similarly pride themselves on the level of support that they show for their team during matches. There is an implicit understanding among fans of Jávea FC that their presence has a very real

Figure 4.3. Percentage agreement concerning fans' influence over the game.



impact on how well their players perform. They strive to 'out-support' their opponents' clubs, and they consider this to be a major factor in the club's recent string of successes. An email sent from the head of the fan club out to its members quotes a Jávea player to remind members of the essential role they play in the outcome of the game.

"Your support, as ever, is vital if we are to realize our dream of playing in the 'Third Division' next season. Our young, exciting team have exceeded all expectations this year, and when talking to them individually one unique reason for this success is constantly mentioned to me: 'Our support is incredible, and we feel we owe it to our supporters to perform well'. This Sunday we owe it to the team to cheer THEM on to victory! There are only 11 games left until the end of the season, and 6 of these are at home. This is a unique opportunity for promotion ... Come and support us this Sunday!"

These sentiments expressed by fans were reflected in the responses to our Europe-wide online poll. In this, respondents were asked to express their level of agreement or disagreement with a number of statements. Each selected a radio button which gave a score ranging from 1 (Disagree Strongly) to 5 (Agree Strongly).

In response to the statement 'As a fan, I feel that our presence has a direct effect on how the game is played', over 80% of fans across Europe expressed agreement or strong agreement.

We can see from Figure 4.4 that there were some small regional variations. The British, Czech, Slovakian and Belgian fans felt they had the most influence on the games while the Polish and Danish were slightly less convinced.

The overall pattern, however, very much reinforces the Twelfth Man hypothesis.

5 The Rituals of Football

Rituals of various kinds are a common feature of every known human society, past or present, and they may be performed on specific occasions by a single individual or by an entire community. Rituals serve to express group obligations, strengthen social bonds within the group, state one's affiliation as a member of a group, or just for the sheer pleasure of the ritual itself.

Across European countries and clubs there is a wide variety of rituals in which fans engage, consciously or unconsciously, when they attend football matches. There are, however, some generalised commonalities among the habits of most fans.

The matches are rife with ritualised behaviour such as chanting and flag-waving, but the period immediately before and after the game – what we term 'playing football outside of the match' – also provide numerous examples of symbolic ways in which fans demonstrate their passion for the team and the sport. In general, pre- and post-game fan rituals – as opposed to those during the match itself – are fan-centric and tend not to involve any interaction between the fans and team. Rather, these rituals serve as bonding experiences between fans, 'habitual behaviours' that, in the words of one Italian fan:

"... ti porta ad essere allo stadio sempre un'oretta prima della partita, a trovarti allo stesso posto con la stessa gente, a stare sempre nella stessa zona all'interno della curva, a fermarti dopo la partita a scambiare qualche chiacchiera."

[... always bring you to the stadium an hour before the match; bring you to the same place with the same people; bring you to the same spot along the inside of the 'curve'; and make you stop after the match to chat for a bit.]

This ritualised environment – be it a bar or restaurant, stadium entrance, seats, the snack bar, the pub after the match or the park & ride to meet up for an away game – allows for important social interaction in which fans meet friends, acquaintances and other fans and engage with them, discussing any number of aspects of their own lives.

Pre-match rituals

For many football fans, an element of routine is implicit in time spent both before and after the match. In its simplest form this can involve meeting up at the same bar or waiting for the arrival of fellow fans before entering the stadium. On the whole, the vast majority of fans – both members of fan clubs as well as individual groups of fans unaffiliated with a specific organised club – do consider it standard practice to gather on the day of a match, most often a pub or bar, before heading to the stadium together. The Drughi of Magenta, for example,

meet first at the Orchidea Bar, their common local meeting point, before moving on to the Drughi bar in Turin, which serves as the general headquarters of the group. Meeting at the bar represents the first step of the ritual of match attendance, as one member of the Juventus Drughi explained:

"La domenica allo stadio è un rito: si pranza e subito dopo ci si avvia allo stadio. Lì ci si trova con gli amici sempre allo stesso posto, ci si racconta magari qualcosa di speciale successo in settimana, o il sabato sera appena trascorso, si discute su quanti tifosi ospiti arriveranno, se la tifoseria ospite è rivale si parla dei precedenti o si inizia già a prenderli in giro, si pensa a come reagirà la squadra se magari la situazione non è delle migliori...poi piano piano sale l'agitazione, la si legge negli occhi e quindi ci si avvia verso l'entrata della curva."

[Sunday at the stadium is a ritual: we usually have lunch and then go to the stadium. We always meet some friends there in the same place, where we talk a bit about what happened during the week or on last Saturday; we discuss how many visiting fans will come; or if the fans are rivals, we talk about past experiences with them and sometimes make fun of them a bit. We also think about how our team will play (react) if the situation isn't that good for us ... then slowly the anticipation grows – we can spot it in each other's eyes – and finally we go to the entrance to the 'curva'.]

Naturally, friendship plays a key role in the rituals that precede all matches and fans gathering to 'banter' and to talk about the match and the team as well as other aspects of their everyday lives unrelated to football.

You'll never walk alone

For some, the journey to the stadium takes on ceremonial significance. The following comments from a Slavia Prague supporter conjure a rather romantic image of lone adventurer being joined by 'tributaries' of fellow fans, like-minded compatriots, as he proceeds on his heroic journey.

"Cesta na stadion je báječná. Hlavně když vyjdu sám a po cestě se postupně nabalí mnoho dalších fanoušků. Znamená to že mám okolo sebe vždy někoho blízkého, nebo alespoň lidi, co vím, že myslěj podobně jak já."

[I like the walk to the stadium, especially when you start out on your own and you gradually join up with lots of other fans along the way. There are always friends around, or at least people you know you can relate to.]

In order to display support for their team on match day, fans employ songs, banners, club clothing and other accoutrements.

The level of emotion, ritual and memory attached to these displays of support varies greatly from person to person. Some people generate an almost ceremonial nature in the preparation for matches. Singing is often mentioned by fans as a particularly special way of creating a feeling of unison and friendship which, at times, can become very emotional.

"Adoro entoar o hino do clube no inicio dos jogos mas nao o acho um ritual tipo supersticao."

[I love singing our club's hymn at the start of the game but I am not sure it is a superstitious ritual.]

There is a clear indication that certain behaviours hold a greater significance for some fans. What might otherwise be forgettable, everyday actions take on new meaning when they become ritualised acts in a specific social or cultural context. From wearing the same shirt (or underwear) or a specific combination of clothing, to taking the same route to the stadium, to urinating on exactly the same set of railings prior to each game, fans supplied numerous examples – some considerably more quirky than others – of habits that they believed would skew the outcome of a game in their favour.

"I take my lucky scarf, and every time we get a corner, we all have to touch it."

Even fans who might not otherwise admit to being superstitious are shown to engage in ritualised behaviour.

"Rituais propriamente ditos nao, mas ha um outro adereco especial que por qualquer motivo nos tornamos inseparaveis."

[I don't follow actually lucky rituals but I have a couple of items of clothing from which I have become inseparable.]

Examples such as these further support the notion of the fan as twelfth man – as an entity whose presence and actions off the field can help alter the course of events on it. Why else would this Portuguese fan avoid occupying seats in which he had previously sat when the result had not gone in his team's favour, if not out of superstition?

"Evito ver o futebol em locais que associo como azaretos, tipo onde vi um jogo importante em que perdemos."

[I do avoid watching the game in places which I associate with bad luck, like where I watched an important game which we lost.]

Pre-match rituals also often involve acts that aim to enhance group cohesiveness and shared emotion. Many fans wear scarves, shirts and hats that immediately identify them as members of that group. From a social psychological perspective, they are differentiating themselves from others as clearly as possible while, at the same time, enhancing in-group

homogeneity. On the walk to the stadium, for example, chants and hand clapping are common ways to create and 'tap into' the emotional tone and the motivation of the entire group – particularly in the case of Ultras. Many fans believe that creating a supportive, energy-filled ambience is critical to getting their team off to a good start.

*"Stämningen när 15.000 vandrar mot arenan för match, förhoppningar. En bra publik som agerar som **en** kropp kan vara förbluffande berusande."*

[The atmosphere when 15,000 people walk together towards the arena for a game – all those hopes. A good crowd which acts like **one** body can be stunningly intoxicating.]

Attending matches as a member of a fan club often involves significantly more commitment than simply turning up at the stadium. It is common for groups of fans to meet up during the week prior to the match in order to organise transport, meeting places, schedules, banners, drum beats, choose songs and the order of the chants and, where necessary, appoint instrument players and chant leaders.

Banners and posters also have to be planned, and several of the key members of the fan clubs will often meet before the match to sort out the proper displaying of all the necessary material. Often such organisation takes place at a fan 'clubhouse', which may be a bar. In Italy, for example, strict regulations have recently been introduced governing the wording allowed on banners displayed by fans at matches. These now have to be presented to the stadium stewards hours in advance of the game for approval. There are accounts of many smaller sections of banners – seemingly innocuous when taken out of context – being assembled at the ground to form a more powerful whole when strung together.

Such rituals are of course heavily tied to the idea of the fan as the twelfth man (see Chapter 4). Singing, wearing certain colours, waving banners and flags – even though they may occur before the match even begins – all these acts are believed to have some significant impact on the outcome of the game. For nearly all fans interviewed, showing support to the players, even if they are losing, is the most important goal of all rituals during the match.

"Barwy są najważniejsze bo stanowią identyfikację kibica. Flagi wyrażają emocje, hasła propagowane przez kibiców."

[Colours are the most important because they identify each fan. Flags show emotion and slogans popular among fans.]

For others, rituals while preparing to enter the stadium remain fairly simple and straightforward:

"Rituálem jsou 2 pivka, klobása a zápasový program."

[My rituals are very consistent: two beers, a sausage and the match programme.]

Post-match rituals

Similar trends happen after the match, when fans gather – often in a pub or bar – to analyse the game, chat about what might have gone wrong and relive the 'best bits'. For some fans, it is these post-match discussions that they look forward to as much as the match itself. Discussions after the pub thus often rival the experience of being at a game, as mentioned by one Aston Villa supporter:

"Discussing the game afterwards is half the enjoyment."

Such statements support the idea that there is much more to being a football fan than simply attending matches. Fans who have been thoroughly engaged by the play during the match itself carry this excitement away from the stadium with them when they meet up with their friends for a drink, and can talk about it until long past closing time. Naturally, much of this type of discussion involves drinking, as suggested by this Le Havre fan:

"Quand on gagne ou quand on perd, de toute façon on va tiser. Si on gagne, faut fêter ça, si on perd, faut oublier."

[Whether we win or when we lose, we still go and drink. If we win, we have to celebrate, if we lose, we have to forget.]

The same sentiment was expressed in slightly more deadpan fashion by this Czech fan:

"Jdeme do hospody, a když se vyhraje, tak se pije a křičí, a když se prohraje, tak se jen pije."

[We go to the pub after every match. We drink and celebrate when we win. If we lose, we only drink.]

In Switzerland, post-match rituals often take place at a local pub near the stadium and involve consumption of Eichhof Bier, brewed by an independent Swiss brewery founded in 1834, and one of which the Swiss are particularly proud. On particularly successful days some fans said they would go to a local club to celebrate by dancing the night away.

Still, there are some fans who come to matches for one reason and one reason only: to watch the game and hope their team wins, as does this 24-year-old Polish fan:

"Nie mam takich zwyczajów choć większość kibiców zarówno przed jak i po meczu umawia się na piwo. Mnie osobiście najbardziej interesuje wynik i dobra gra."

[I don't follow the rituals of other supporters: going before and after the game for a beer. For me the most interesting is the result and a good game.]

National variations

In the online poll, around 40% of all European fans said that they follow the same ritual before going to the match. We can see from Figure 5.2 below, however, that there are substantial differences between the various nationalities. The Spanish, in particular, seem to take these rituals more seriously than others, along with Belgian fans, while only a third of French fans have such routines. The least ritualistic of all seem to be the Danish and the Dutch.

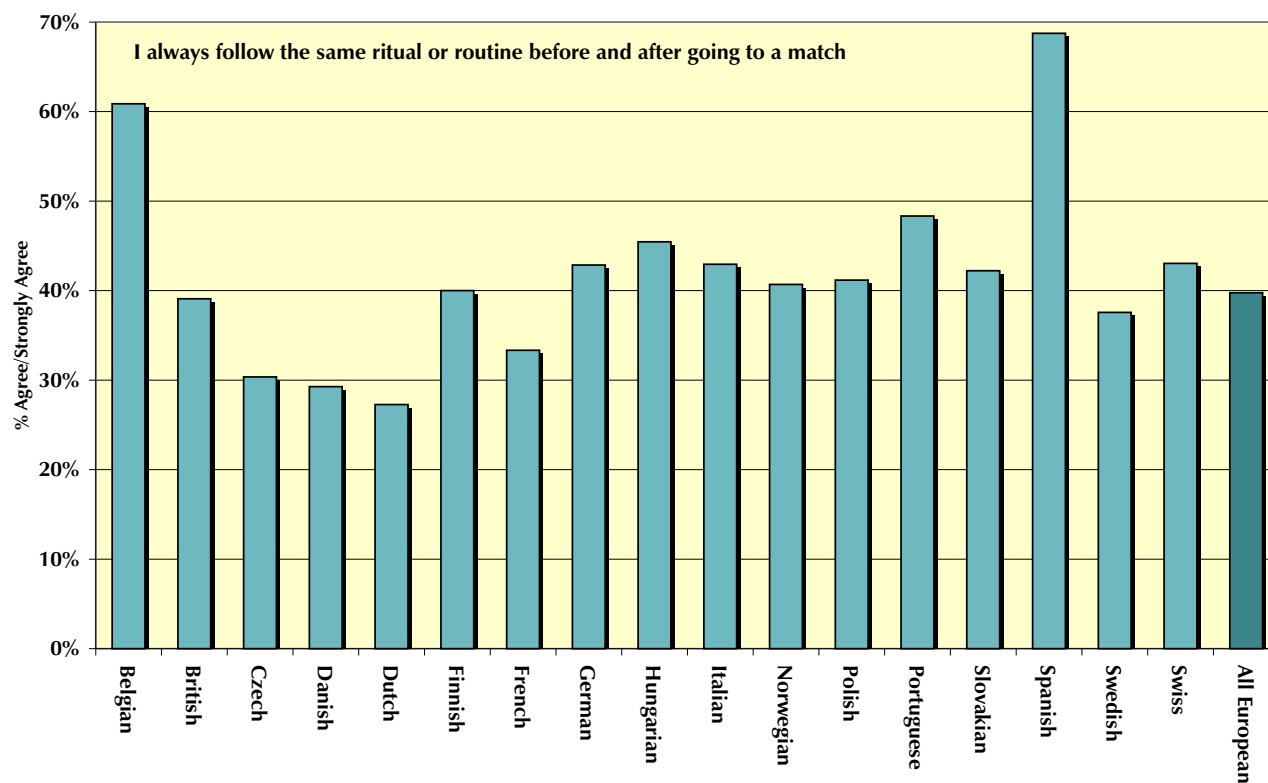
Despite these differences, football matches are often clearly surrounded by superstitious behaviours of one sort or another that are at the heart of many forms of ritual – whether it be in the form of a 'lucky' item or clothing or, as in the case of this English fan, something that may have more long-lasting effects on his life, and certainly his weight.

"I have this one friend who once ate two pies before a match in which Liverpool won 2-0. Since then, he's always eaten two pies before every match to make sure that they are the winning team each time."

Fan snapshot : pre-match superstitions

Andy (43 yrs), who drives to Villa Park for each game from Oxfordshire with his two young sons, badly needed to tap a kidney during his brisk walk from car to ground at the Villa Chelsea game in autumn 2007. He decided to relieve himself against the sidings of a bridge close to the ground. Villa beat Chelsea 2-0 that day, and so he vowed to repeat the habit at each of the next three home games, hoping it would bring similar fate in the games, and Villa duly won. But in October, when Villa lost 4-1 to 'bogey team' Manchester United, Andy gave up his adopted 'lucky pee' - much to the relief of the local residents.

Figure 5 .2 Percentage agreement concerning rituals before and after the game.



6 Friends, community & belonging

"Flere tusen mennesker festet i Lillestrøm i tre dager, og alle kjente hverandre selv om de ikke nødvendigvis hadde sett hverandre før. Vakkert."

[Several thousand people partied in Lillestrøm for three days, and everyone knew each other even though they hadn't necessarily seen each other before. Beautiful.]

"Môj sociálny život je futbal. Podľa neho si plánujem život – celý týždeň sa teším na zápas. Zimná prestávka je trochu problém."

[My social life is football. I plan my life accordingly – I look forward to the match all week. The winter break is a bit of a problem.]

Supporting a football team creates a strong unifying social bond for fans. While fans may come from a variety of social and economic backgrounds and may range in their commitment to the team from occasional supporter to hardcore fan, football fandom remains very important for creating and maintaining bonds among community members. One Danish fan of Liverpool succinctly expressed the role that football has played in his life:

"Jeg lever og ånder for fodbolden og det den giver mig, og det den har givet mig i mit liv. I svære tider uden for fodbolden, har det sammenhold og sociale net man har gennen fodbolden, gjort det lettere at komme igennem disse svære tider. Det har løftet mig som menneske, at der har været fodbolden at være fælles om sammen med fodboldkammeraterne. Det er om man selv spiller... som tilskuer på stadion eller på pubben."

[I live and breathe for football and what it gives me, and what it has given me in my life. In difficult times without football, the solidarity and social network you have through football has made it easier to get through these difficult times. It has lifted me as a human being, that there has been football to share with the football buddies. It's like you yourself play ... as spectator at the stadium or at the pub.]

Being part of a group of football fans does not limit fans to that immediate community, since sometimes events and activities may span multiple communities. In this sense the football fan's life can act like a series of inter-connected social networks. With the stadium at the centre of these networks as the nexus of activities, this is where bonds are forged and emotions are first shared. But such bonds, relationships and emotions are not limited to this space. They expand outwards in multiple directions, interlinking acquaintances, friends, generations, families, communities and societies.

Many fans recognise that they had met many of their best friends through football. Even though they may initially have little else in common, they became 'best friends' every match day and have continued this friendship outside the confines of the ground. Supporting the same team on the terraces is an important way of forging and maintaining very real social bonds.

"Mein Freundeskreis definiert sich über Fussball. Beinahe alle meine engeren Freunde kenne ich über den FC St.Pauli, bzw. über Fussball im Allgemeinen. Auch engagierte Fussballfans von anderen Vereinen finde ich per se interessant."

[My circle of friends defines itself through football. I know nearly all of my friends from St Pauli Football Club or from football generally. I even find other dedicated football fans of other clubs interesting.]

While many fans stressed that they met best friends through football, others suggested that attending matches is a way of keeping in touch with old friends and other people with whom they might have otherwise lost contact. A number of fans suggested that keeping in touch with friends was one of their main reasons for returning to the stands (or television screens) every weekend. Football in this sense is their principal point of social contact. Fans feel a tremendous solidarity and sense of brotherhood with the other fans.

Across various national contexts fans described the particular social groups and public social spaces where they would go to watch football on television. Portuguese fans described how groups of friends generally have several different locations where they prefer watching the game and meet up to watch the match. A common phrase on the lips of young Portuguese men during key stages of the season is "Where are we watching the game later?" On game evenings many families have spare places at their dinner tables as groups of male, university and high school friends commonly pick a home or favourite café to socialise and watch football. Still, as one Norwegian fan explains, sometimes it may be possible to 'talk too much football':

"Har fått mange nære venner gjennom supporterklubben ... Og dama mi og vennene mine gjør jeg ting sammens med utenom kampene. Men det er viktig å ikke prate FOR mye Glimt når en er i lag. Fotball kan diskuteres, men fotball ender dessverre ofte i en heeelt meningsløs debatt fordi den er så personlig oppfattet og at der aldri er noe fasitsvar."

[Have made lots of close friends through the supporter club ... And I do stuff with my girlfriend and friends apart from matches. But it is important not to talk TOO much Glimt when together. Football may be discussed,

but football ends unfortunately often in a meaningless debate because it is so subjective and that there is never one answer.]

Bridging gaps

Many fans believe that football bridges barriers and that only through football are they able to interact with people they would normally have no contact with. Football provides a single common point of reference – a starting point from which friendships can blossom. While not essential for friendship, a shared interest in football can be a direct route to making new friends.

As this Hungarian fan explained, being a fan of the same team may be reason enough to begin a friendship:

"Ha meglátok egy Újpest sálas embert, az pozitívként indul a megítélése, még ha meg se szólalt akkor is ... "

[If I catch sight of a man with Újpest scarf, he is a good man in my eyes, even if he hasn't said a single word.]

Football is a very effective vehicle for bringing people together and supporting the same club, while viewed as a positive aspect in facilitating contact with other fans, is not a necessary condition – although it helps.

"Nao esta propriamente associada, ate porque estaria a ser hipocrita, mas se me dizem ser do FC Porto e uma coisa... se me dizem ser dos outros, nao digo que fujo ou abdicoo de imediato a relacao de amizade, mas as coisas acabam por correr naturalmente de um modo mais lento."

[It's not really related – that would be quite hypocritical – but if someone tells me they support FC Porto it is a special bond. If they support one of the 'others' I would not run away or forego a friendship but things naturally progress in a much slower way.]

Portuguese fans agreed that it is almost always socially acceptable to ask someone you don't know a football-related question, particularly among men. Football provides an 'easy way in', an ice-breaker in what otherwise might be an awkward social encounter.

"(I) sometimes overhear people on flights into Portugal ask a member of the crew or fellow passengers whether they know the score of a home game that happened while they were abroad. This usually leads to lively discussion that might even last after the plane lands."

New & old relationships

Belonging to a fan club or even just supporting a particular team was also seen to create opportunities for meeting new

people who share the same the same passion. This in turn can easily lead to the creation of a new friendship.

"Le foot m'a amené à faire énormément de rencontre, certains de mes meilleurs amis ont été rencontré au stade."

[Football has made me meet lots of people; some of my best friends were met at the stadium.]

Furthermore, because of the long-lasting nature of the bond that ties the fan to the team, friendships created at the stadium or in a football-related environment are also long-lasting. This is helped by the fact that the team's activities are likely to be on a weekly basis, which means there is always some new development to talk about and discuss, strengthening the bond between the fans and keeping it alive.

While it is expected that close friends who support the same team would meet up on a regular basis to watch matches, football often involves different degrees of friendship. Football facilitates particular kinds of social relationships, and while fans did consider themselves to be friends with other football fans, such friendships only occupy a specific and exclusive part of their social lives. Some friendships are made possible through the fan group but extend far beyond, while others end when the play ceases and the stadium empties.

Fans interviewed from the Le Havre Barbarians club, for example, meet almost exclusively for matches and then part company after the game has ended. They rarely meet up when 'outside' of football. Very few club members even have the mobile phone numbers of the others – though they do all have the number of the group's de facto leader and for the individual who usually drives them to away games. Through these two points of contact, the members arrange to meet for regular fixtures but rarely for any other occasion.

Several Portuguese fans also commented that they had peripheral football friends with whom they only have contact through their club. These are more relations of camaraderie than personal friendships but nevertheless they can influence the atmosphere of the game.

"Tenho um lugar cativo na bancada por isso vejo sempre o jogo ao lado das mesmas pessoas. Perca ou ganhe a rotinas sao sempre as mesmas, geralmente informo algumas pessoas do resultado e informo-me doutras coisas. Depois desligo-me ate ao proximo jogo."

[I have a season seat so I always watch the games next to the same people. Whether losing or winning game my routines are always the same. I inform some people about the results and get news about other related issues. Then I disconnect from them until the following game.]

Norwegian fans of Brann were similar in this respect, in that they recognised their 'football' friends as distinct from other social groups.

"Jeg har mange venner som jeg kun ser når jeg ser fotball, enten det er på Brann Stadion, på bortekamper eller bare på stampuben vår (Victoria). Det skjer alltid mye morsom rundt kampene, spesielt når vi resier på bortekamper, da slipper vi oss litt løs og finner på en del sprell. Jeg vil kalle det et slags "brorskap", men det er stort sett i forbindelse med fotball vi omgås. Pils, musikk og fotball."

[I have many friends who I only see when watching football, whether at Brann stadium, at away matches, or just at our pub (Victoria). There is always fun stuff going on around the matches, especially at away matches, then we let go and do some random things. I would call it a kind of "brotherhood", but it is mostly around the football that we meet up. Beer, music and football.]

Brotherhood

Figure 6.1 The 'brotherhood' of fans
Atlético Madrid v Real Betis, April 19, 2008.



This 'brotherhood' referred to in the quote above raises one particularly interesting point that was noted in several interactions with fans. Despite the differences in socio-economic status and levels of fanaticism between football fans, many of these fans feel a strong bond uniting them. This is often expressed as being a member of a 'football family'. In a number of cases, the language used to describe such a connection was in terms of kinship – a 'quasi-blood bond' which exemplifies the strong sense of cohesion among many fan groups.

"Rapidler sind sehr individuell. Was uns verbindet ist das Gefühl, alle sind Teil einer großen Familie und wie es in

Familien so ist, gibt es viele unterschiedliche Typen ... Die Vielfalt der Menschen macht den Reiz als Rapidler aus. Beim Bier jedoch sind alle nur Rapidler, gleich welchen Rang oder Titel alle haben. Rapid vereint nicht nur Generationen, es vereint auch gesellschaftliche Schichten."

[Rapid Fans are different individuals. What unites us is the feeling that we are all part of a big family and as it is common in families, there are various types of members ... The variety of people is very important for Rapid fans. When drinking beer, however, all of them are Rapid fans, despite the rank and title they may have. Rapid unites not only generations, it also unites social strata.]

This fan family exists not only at large clubs such as Rapid but even more so in relation to smaller teams that do not play in the top leagues. One southern Austrian second league team (FC Kaernten), for example, explained it in the following way:

"Da fuer mich Fussball eines der wichtigsten Dinge im Leben ist, ist das Leben in einer Fanfamilie unverzichtbar. Nach einer Woche voller Arbeit freut man sich auf ein Fussballspiel seiner Mannschaft ... Von meiner Mannschaft kenne ich alle Spieler, Trainer, Betreuer und Helfer persoenlich, bin im direkten Kontakt und verfolge Spiele hautnah ... Man wird von anderen Zusehern angesprochen, man diskutiert beim Stammtisch ... "

[Since football is one of the most important things in my life, it is impossible to imagine life outside a fan family. After a week of work, I look forward to a game of my team ... I know all players, coaches, supervisors and assistants of my team, I am in contact with them and follow the games directly ... Other supporters talk to you and you talk about football in the pub...]

This imagined family is a very important and intimate social circle in the lives of fans. When they sit in the stadium, watch their team or merely talk with fellow fans about football, this family relationship becomes very real. One Belgian fan explained how his 'extended family' of fellow football fans often 'mobilised' in support of good causes, some of them deeply personal.

"J'apprécie le petit groupe qui s'est créé et qui est capable de se mobiliser assez vite et de manière plutôt performante pour réaliser une série de projets au profit du club ou d'un groupe de supporters. Ils ont lancé de belles initiatives comme la récoltes de vivres pour une association qui s'appelle "Les Restos du Coeur" qui aide les plus défavorisés. Un tournoi de supporters à la mémoire d'un jeune joueur de l'Union qui est décédé

de leucémie réunit des équipes de supporters belges mais aussi françaises ou italiennes. Les bénéfices sont versés à un hôpital bruxellois spécialisé dans la lutte contre la leucémie et le cancer. J'y suis d'autant plus sensible que mon plus jeune fils a été traité pour un cancer et qu'il a été soigné dans l'hôpital où sont versés les bénéfices."

[I really think the little group we have created around our football team is great. We are able to mobilise ourselves really rapidly to work on projects which help the club or other groups of supporters. We have launched some wonderful initiatives such as collecting funds for an association called 'Restaurants of the Heart' which helps feed those who have very little. We also organised an event where we invited supporters in order to honour the memory of a young player who died of leukaemia. We brought together many groups of supporters, some of them Belgian but others French or Italian. The proceeds of the event were given to a hospital in Brussels which is specialised in fighting cancer and leukaemia. I am particularly sensitive towards this as my youngest son had cancer and was treated in the hospital which we donated to.]

National variations

Several aspects of the social and community football fan culture were explored in the online questionnaire. Across Europe, 59% of respondents felt that being a fan was an important part of belonging to the community. The French felt particularly strong about this (73%) – the Dutch less so (45%).

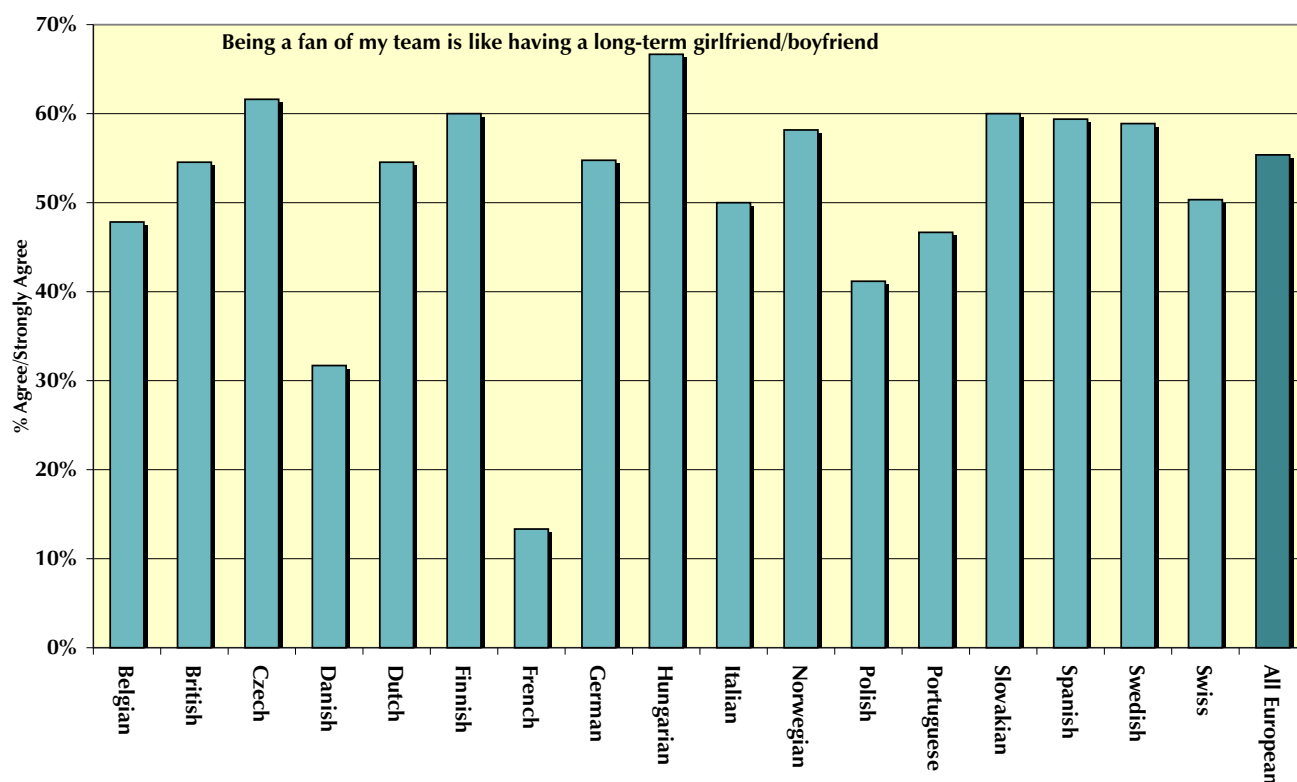
Over three quarters of fans associated football with friendship and camaraderie with the Germans (88%) and the British (85%) feeling this most strongly.

A sense of belonging with other fans as much with the team they supported was felt by two thirds of fans across Europe – most strongly by the French again (93%) and the British (81%).

So strong is the sense of attachment that fans have with their team, and the bonding they have with other fans, that over a half of all fans said that it was rather like having a long-term girlfriend or boyfriend. There were, however, some large cultural differences in this respect with the French having little sympathy with view, as shown in Figure 6.1. The Hungarian fans were most likely to agree with the comparison, followed by the Czechs, Slovaks and Finns.

The sense of belonging revealed here does not, however, generally extend to fans of other clubs. Only just over a quarter of fans said that they had become friends with their

Figure 6.2 Percentage agreement concerning boyfriend/girlfriend comparison



counterparts from other clubs although the level of agreement on this was higher in Spain (38%) and Germany (36%).

When it comes to relationships with other fan groups abroad, just under 20% of were in contact with groups they had met in other countries. Among German fans, this proportion was much higher (45%) and the Spanish too were among the more 'international' groups of fans (31%).

While football clearly provides a strong sense of community and friendship, the social world of the fan is not restricted to other fans of the same team. Only 16% of fans said that they choose their friends according to what team they support. The Dutch, however, were rather more 'choosy' in this context with over a quarter (27%) limiting their circle of friends to fellow supporters.

Regarding the idea that being a football fan is like being part of one big family, nearly three quarters (74%) of European fans felt this way. The sentiment was particularly strong in Hungary and Spain – the Finns and the Danish rather less so (47% and 53% respectively).

Not only is this sense of football as family strong in most European countries, football is also seen as a family occasion in the more conventional sense – i.e. providing opportunities for inter-generation contact and interaction, as we discuss in the following section.

Fan Snapshot : Belonging to a club

For more than 40 years Christer has worked as a forklift driver at Akzo Nobel, a paint company in Malmö. He is a life-long supporter of Malmö FF, the city's largest football club and has held a season ticket (and the same seat in the stadium) since the mid-1970s.

The forklift he drives is one of the oldest in the company, and is decorated with Malmö FF stickers and club-related press clippings taken from local newspapers. Football is 'a part' of him; as much a part of his identity as his Swedish passport.

"Det kanske låter konstigt men ... det är något att svara på frågan 'Vem är du?' Jag är en man, jag har barn och ett arbete som jag trivs med och jag är ett MFF-fan."

[It might sound weird but... it is something to answer the question 'Who are you?' I am a man, I have kids and a job I enjoy and I am a Malmö FF fan.]

Christer has attended nearly every home game since the middle of the 1970s and sees it as an obligation – pure and simple. When asked whether it had only become a habit in the later years, he chuckles:

"En vana? Nej, nej ... ett behov snarare. Det är beroendeframkallande."

[A habit? No, no ... more of a need. It's an addiction.]

After a long pause, he concludes, "Jag bara älskar det." [I just love it.].

Christer began to attend games in the late seventies and early eighties when Malmö FF were in their prime. The team experienced some tough times during the 1990s and they were relegated for the first time in 64 years. When speaking to Christer about this period, his voice took on a sad tone; this was a time of both disappointing performances and declining attendance. Before the team started to do poorly, the number of Malmö supporters in attendance at home games rarely dropped below 10,000 people (the stadium holds approximately 27,000). During the 1990s and into the millennium, Christer could recall occasions when fewer than 5,000 showed up to watch a match. Hearing the songs and chants of hardcore supporters from the opposing teams and seeing empty seats around him made him almost as sad as the results of the games themselves; this was the time when the team needed their support the most. Christer persevered and religiously went to matches, as did the friends who held seats next to him, supporting their team in inclement weather as much as when the sun shone.

Christer has been going to games with a group of ten friends since they got season tickets and also regularly travels to the larger away games. When they are not able to attend an away match, the circle of friends take to one of the many local bars that broadcast the games, where they drink beer and order pizza. Usually, the pizza is brought to the table around fifteen minutes after the start of play. If the first half goes badly the pizzas are usually eaten before half time. If their team is playing well, the pizzas are usually still there until long after the half-time break.

"Går det dålig sitter vi mest och grymtar och skakar på våra huvuden. Då kan vi lugnt sitta och äta våra pizzor i tystnad. Går det bra snackar vi om matchen hela tiden och pizzorna hinner bli kalla innan vi sätter i oss dem. Ölen går dock alltid ner relativt snabbt oavsett hur det går i matcherna."

[If it goes badly we're sitting and mumbling and shaking our heads. Then we have plenty of time to eat our pizzas in silence. If it is going well we'll be talking about the game all the time and our pizzas get cold before we eat them. The beer will always be drunk no matter how the game turns out though.]

7 Football and family

For many fans, football fandom plays a significant role in particular aspects of family life. The sport provides a backdrop against which important family occasions are played out and through which day-to-day interactions with family are facilitated. In this sense, being a fan of a particular team becomes embedded in family history and becomes one of the ways that families are able to establish – and engage with – a lasting sense of tradition and belonging. Just as one's place of birth often defines which team one supports, so too does the family into which one is born. Given heightened concerns across many parts of Europe about the disintegration of family values, this presents one particularly positive way in which football impacts of the social lives of fans.

"El fútbol es un claro elemento de vínculo entre las generaciones. Probablemente es una de las escasas actividades que pueden realizar en común un joven, su padre y su abuelo. La identificación y fidelidad a un club muy raras veces varía entre generación y generación: lo habitual es que los hijos se identifiquen con el mismo club que lo hacían sus padres y sus abuelos. El fútbol tiene una gran potencialidad para fomentar la interacción familiar en España."

[Football is clearly an element of the links between generations. It is probably one of the few activities that create a common link between a young person, his father and his grandfather. Identification with and loyalty to a club very rarely changes from generation to generation: typically, children identify with the same club that their parents and grandparents support. Football has an enormous part to play in fostering familial relationships in Spain.]

Inter-generational ties

While the specific role football plays in relation to the family can vary from country to country, it is on the whole easiest to understand the connection on two levels – first in terms of inter-generational ties and secondly in terms of whole-family participation.

Many fans link their first experiences of attending a football match with a particular family member and in this way football is inextricably tied to family from the start. In England, for example, three reasons stand out as to why most fans became supporters of a certain team. Older members of their family support the same club; they come from the same town or locality represented by their club; or they follow a large club to which they were attracted by early memories of watching a televised game (often with a parent).

The process initiated by the family generally follows a particular pattern. Fans are taken to a game of the local team at an early age, usually by a parent, and most often by the father. The individual would come to love the atmosphere at the game – in part because of the formative associations of football with the family itself – and become a fan immediately.

Football thus occupies a locus of social interaction that brings families, friends and even strangers together at games and at home. Loyalty to a football team and, to a lesser extent, membership of a specific football fan club, can be seen in terms of a framework of affiliation both to family values and to one's origins. This is strongly rooted in a sense of belonging to a place – and to a people. Many of the strongest supporters come from families where football is very important and is passed on from one generation to another. For many, this sense of origin and of belonging is self-evident, as is the case with this Bruges FC fan:

"Je suis fière de mon équipe comme je suis fière de ma famille, de ma ville, de ma culture. C'est mes racines, mes origines."

[I am proud of my team, in the same way as I am proud of my family, proud of my city, proud of my culture. It's in my roots, my origins.]

Corporeal metaphors linked to blood and body are common in references to the roots and process of being and becoming a football fan, as one Porto fan described:

"Pois, isto deve ser um gene de familia, pois ja os meus avos eram portistas, os meus pais sao portistas, a minha esposa e portista e a minha filha vai no bom caminho."

[Well, it must be a family gene because my grandparents were Porto supporters, my parents are Porto supporters, my wife is a Porto supporter and my little daughter is already on the right path as well.]

The passing on of such heritage and culture – putting other family members on the 'right path' – is at times even seen to be so strong an attribute of a person that it may be referred to as existing inherently within one's genetic code.

As part of the family tradition, stories and folklore are passed down from older fans to younger fans – i.e. a father recounting stories of the great players from the team's past – serving to create family lore and strengthen a strong sense of tradition of football playing a vital role in family bonds.

This mysticism and tradition is carried from generation to generation and football comes to exist throughout the repertoire of stories that make up the family histories of certain fans. Illuminating the importance of kinship and family in the social structure of European society, such family connections

provide a backbone of support for local teams and help to introduce the sport, the team and the club to the next generation of fans.

Figure 7.1 The next generation of Feyenoord fans
Feyenoord Rotterdam v Vitesse Arnhem, February 17, 2008.



Unsurprisingly, football often plays a very important role in the inter-generational relationships between male members of families, with the pre-eminent familial tie surrounding football fandom being the father-son relationship. The father is the decisive influence *sine qua non* in passing on traditions which span generations. He has himself most likely been influenced by his own father, and he becomes the next family member to pass on this sense of rootedness and belonging to a bloodline by taking his own son to his first game, recounting to him the history of the team and reminiscing about the 'good old days'.

"Als Papa bist du für dein Sohn der Grösste, ein Vorbild. Die ersten Worte meines Sohn waren Mama, Papa und HSV und das habe ich auch so gewollt. Wenn mein Vater einen anderen Verein unterstützt hätte, dann wäre ich wohl nicht zum HSV gekommen. Wenn er grosser Tischtennisfan gewesen wäre, wäre ich wohl auch einer geworden."

[As a dad you are the greatest to your son, a role model. My son's first words were mama, papa and HSV and that is all I ever wanted. If my dad had supported another team, I probably wouldn't have become an HSV fan. If he would have been a table tennis fan, I would probably be one as well.]

Parents, then, play a key role in fostering a sense of wonder in their children – the future fans of the team. It is common for fathers to take their sons to watch their first football match when they are still quite young – in some cases while they are still infants – and this experience is seen to be overwhelmingly formative for such fans: the first memories of being at the game with one's dad become, for many, defining moments in their lives. Many interviewees mentioned these seminal experiences

Figure 7.2 Football & family – three generations.
Feyenoord Rotterdam v Vitesse Arnhem, February 17, 2008.



with their fathers to be foundational to their experiences as lifelong football fans.

"O meu apoio foi, e e sera sempre incondicional, quer esteja no 1º lugar, esteja no ultimo lugar. Podemos mudar de tudo na vida, ma de clube nao se muda ... nasce-se azul e branco, morre-se azul e branco. Quem me incutiu esta paixao descontrolado pelo FC Porto foi o meu Pai desde muito tenra idade, pois desde tenra idade me habituei a it ver os jogos todos em casa e com isso, fazer crescer a minha paixao pelo FC Porto a cada dia que passa, mais e sentida."

[My support was, is and will always be unconditional whether they are in first place or last. We can change everything in our life except for our football club ... you are born blue and white and you die blue and white. This passion was fostered in me by my father from when I was very young. I got used to going to all the home games with him from a very young age and this made my passion for FC Porto grow, and every day it grows deeper and stronger.]

Such experiences might be just as strong and memorable for the parents. Many fans interviewed said that if or when they had children, they would introduce them to football and hope to instil in them a sense of 'football tradition' and an appreciation of fan values such – most notably respect, loyalty and dedication.

As one Liverpool fan explained – with little sarcasm in his voice – his children didn't really have a choice in the matter, since, as he put it "I forced my kids to be Liverpool supporters." Another fan, also of Liverpool, recounted his most positive football-related experience as follows:

"Taking my boy to his first match. Watching his face as we mounted the stairs and he saw Anfield for the first

time. If I could bottle the emotions I felt then, seeing his face, I would be a millionaire. I knew then, there, I had created a Red who would care as passionately about the team as I do. Poor little sod ... "

Sunday matches and Sunday brunches

While the vast majority of football-related family bonds are between fathers and their sons, this fact does not necessarily exclude uncles, grandfathers, wives, grandmothers and sisters, who participate in their own ways. This may be by attending matches as full-fledged fans in their own right, or merely passing on stories to their children about their dad and his love for the game. Football also plays an important role in the some father-daughter relationships. Two fathers interviewed at UK games (Coventry and Tottenham), for example, had both been regularly attending matches with their daughters for over 15 years.

Family interaction at the match is crucial for building these family bonds and going to see games can be an excuse for multiple generations of a family to get together and have a good time. One Chelsea fan recalled his most memorable experience as young boy as that of "being mentored / told how to behave / what to do by elders when attending as a young fan on my own for the first time." For another impressionable young Le Havre fan:

"Moi, je suis fan depuis tout petit. Mon grand-père, mon père, allaient au stade. Ils me racontaient des histoires. J'ai aimé le foot tout de suite. Je suis allé au stade j'avais dix-douze ans. L'atmosphère, l'ambiance. Je ne sais pas; j'ai accroché. Il y avait quelque chose. Il y avait du beau football, tout le monde vibrait ... "

[I've been a fan since I was a little one. My grandfather and my father would go to the stadium and they would tell me stories. I liked football immediately. I first went to the stadium I was about ten or twelve years old. The atmosphere, the feel. I don't know; I got hooked. There was something about it. There was beautiful football and everyone was feeling it ...]

Discussing the way that fan demographics have changed in Spain over the past thirty years, ex-Valencia player Ricardo Penella Arias agreed that, as viewed from the pitch, matches have now become more of a family event, with more women and young people in attendance. In still smaller, more rural towns with less of an active supporter culture, families will regularly attend matches together on a Sunday. In Portugal, for example, stadiums are full of fathers and sons dressed in matching attire to support their football team. It is actually not uncommon for very small children, even babies of a few months old, to be 'card-carrying' fans of football clubs. Children can generally be enrolled as official fans of a football

club from the day they are born provided that their parents bring a photo and are willing to pay the annual fees.

Football permeates families when support for a team is passed on from one generation to the other, and it is common for fathers introduce their sons to the game and take them to the stadium. At a certain point in their lives, they may let their sons 'fly the coop,' allowing them to move on to sit in the Ultras section, while the father takes his prescribed seat in the family section. While football matches become a regular venue for ritualised 'days out' with the family, allowing busy family members to reconnect with each other in a common, communal space, they also contribute to a sense of generational continuity, as was the case for this Rapid fan:

"Oft sitzen im Stadion ganze Familien, Vater, Mutter, Kind. Mit den Kleinen kommen öfter Opa und Omi ins Stadion, wenn die Eltern keine Zeit haben ... dass Väter ihre Kinder sehr jung zu Rapid mitnehmen und die Stimmung im Stadion den Kids gut gefällt ... Mein Westabo habe ich meinem Sohn 'vermacht'. Ich sitze nun mit meinem Vater und meiner Frau auf der Nord, mein Sohn, 20 Jahre alt, steht im Block West."

[Many times whole families – father, mother, child – sit in the stadium. Grandpa and grandma are coming often with the little ones into the stadium, when parents have no time ... fathers also take their kids at a very young age and the kids really like the atmosphere in the stadium ... I have 'passed on' my subscription to the Western fan curve to my son. I am now sitting with my father and my wife in the North section; my son, 20-years-old, is now standing in Block West (Rapid's most famous fan section).]

This father – who also once played the role of son to his father in the same stadium configuration – passed on his special Block West subscription to his own son once he became too old for the fan curve, continuing and completing the football life cycle.

Once children have grown up and moved away from home, football often serves as vehicle for keeping otherwise distant family members together, as was the case with this German fan.

"Ich studiere im Ausland. Immer wenn ein Trip nach Hause ansteht, um meine Familie zu besuchen, gucke ich mir zunächst die Fussballpaarungen an. Ich versuche dann meine Semesterferien so zu planen und die Flüge entsprechend zu buchen, dass ich möglichst viel Bundesligafussball sehen kann. Es nicht so dass Fussball mir wichtiger ist als meine Familie zu besuchen, im Gegenteil, es ist die schönste Zeit für mich Fussball zusammen mit meinem Vater zu gucken, so wie es war,

als ich noch zu Hause wohnte. Wir sprechen sonst nicht viel miteinander, aber der Fussball hat uns schon immer zusammen gehalten und es gibt nichts schöneres als zusammen beim Fussball etwas zu essen und mit den Spielen mitzufiebern. Auch sonst sind unsere Unterhaltungen meistens über Themen des Fussballs und Nachrichten rund um den Fussball herum. Es ist ein unglaublich wichtiger Teil unserer Beziehung. Ohne Fussball würde uns ein wichtiger Teil der uns verbindet fehlen."

[I study abroad. Every time a trip home is looming to visit my family, I first check the football fixtures. Then I always try to plan my semester breaks and flights so that I can watch as much Bundesliga football as possible. It's not that football is more important than visiting my family. On the contrary, I have best time watching football at home with my dad, like it used to be when I was still living at home. We don't talk much with each other normally but football has always kept us together and there's nothing nicer than eating something during a game of football and enjoying the game together. Besides this, our conversations are mostly about football related topics or the latest football news. It is an incredibly important part of our relationship. Without football we would be missing a major part of what unites us.]

It is most often the case that children in a family will grow up supporting the same team as their elders or their mentors. In fact, most European fans would find it hard to imagine supporting any other team. One Slovak fan was adamant that his and his family's allegiance could be to one team and one team only.

"Ani nesrandujte. Samozrejme ... neni možné, aby v našej rodine fandil niekto inému klubu, ako je Slovan!"

[Don't even joke about that. It would be impossible in my family to support a team other than Slovan!]

While most fans are proud to have a family with a singular tradition of supporting one club, there were indeed exceptions. Some fans did admit to coming from families *"de todas as cores"* [of all colours], meaning that members of the family support different football teams. In some cases, this might be cause for recurring jokes – for instance in a marriage between fans of two different teams, there was almost a guarantee that there would be frequent references to whose team their children would chose. In the case of grown fans, particularly fathers and sons, there was a definite sense of rivalry when they each supported different teams. One Spanish fan, in the presence of his father, expressed his support for Madrid despite his father being a fan of Valencia, where they were both from and where they both lived.

"I mean, I'm a Valencia fan, but I really support Madrid ... Well, they're a better team, they're more famous ... you know, I still support Valencia, and I'm sure they'll get better and better, but for now I support Madrid. They're cooler."

Predictably, his father was scathing – if in a good-natured way – about his son's support for a rival team with a much higher profile than that of Valencia. He complained that his son only supports a team such as Madrid because of the celebrity status of their players and the glamour associated with such a high-profile club:

"Bueno, que te puedo decir? A él le gusta Real porque son todos guapos y el pelo se lo hicieron tan tonto. Yo? Madrid? Nunca!"

[What can I say? He likes Real (Madrid) because they're all good-looking guys and they've all got stupid haircuts (raises his middle finger to his son as he passes by, clearing plates). Me? Madrid? Never!]

Here, then, is an interesting difference in the perspectives of different generations, and a departure from the notion of strong inter-generational allegiances to the same team. The son, perhaps more comfortable with the idea of selective support for a higher-profile, globally-recognised 'brand', did not share the same desire to express a strong sense of regional identity through his choice in football teams as his father did. Obviously, his post-Franco experience of Spain is very different to that of his parents, and it is not difficult to see why today's generation of 50-something fans maintain a more fervent pride in the language, colours and football of their region. This does not, however, imply that one kind of football support is more 'real' than the other, but rather that different generations of fans interpret and express their sense of belonging in different ways.

This example in part provides evidence of the more fluid sense of belonging that younger fans have in comparison with older generations. For younger fans, it may be important to establish a sense of being part of a wider, globalised network of fans for a team that is internationally recognised and more aggressively involved in trends for advertising, mass consumption and celebrity culture. For the older fans, meanwhile, whose lived experiences have remained somewhat closer to home, it is more important to assert an allegiance to a team that is emblematic of a strong local or regional identity. In either case, a difference in allegiance does not often seem to be a cause of genuine concern between fathers and sons or, indeed between members of the extended family. In fact, a sense of rivalry and banter often means that football becomes an even more important social bond. Their team preferences notwithstanding, the son still acknowledged that football

matches were a means of positive social bonding between himself and his father.

"Yes I don't hang out with my dad that much, so going to a game is a nice occasion for it."

Even when members of the same family support teams with long-standing and intense rivalries – the old firm in Scotland, for example – humour and banter usually diffuse any genuine hostilities, as this Celtic fan noted:

"My family is split in half. My dad's side are Rangers supporters. His sister married a protestant. We just wind each other up, they're a lot older so you just wind them up about their King Billy tattoos."

National variations

The online questionnaire explored these issues in more detail. In response to the statement 'I associate football with family', 46% of fans expressed agreement. Nearly 30% of fans also felt that supporting the same team as their parents was important in maintaining family ties and strengthening inter-generational relationships.. There was, however, quite substantial variation between the different nationalities in this context, as we can see from Figure 7.2. The Belgian and Spanish fans were most likely to express agreement here while Danish, German and

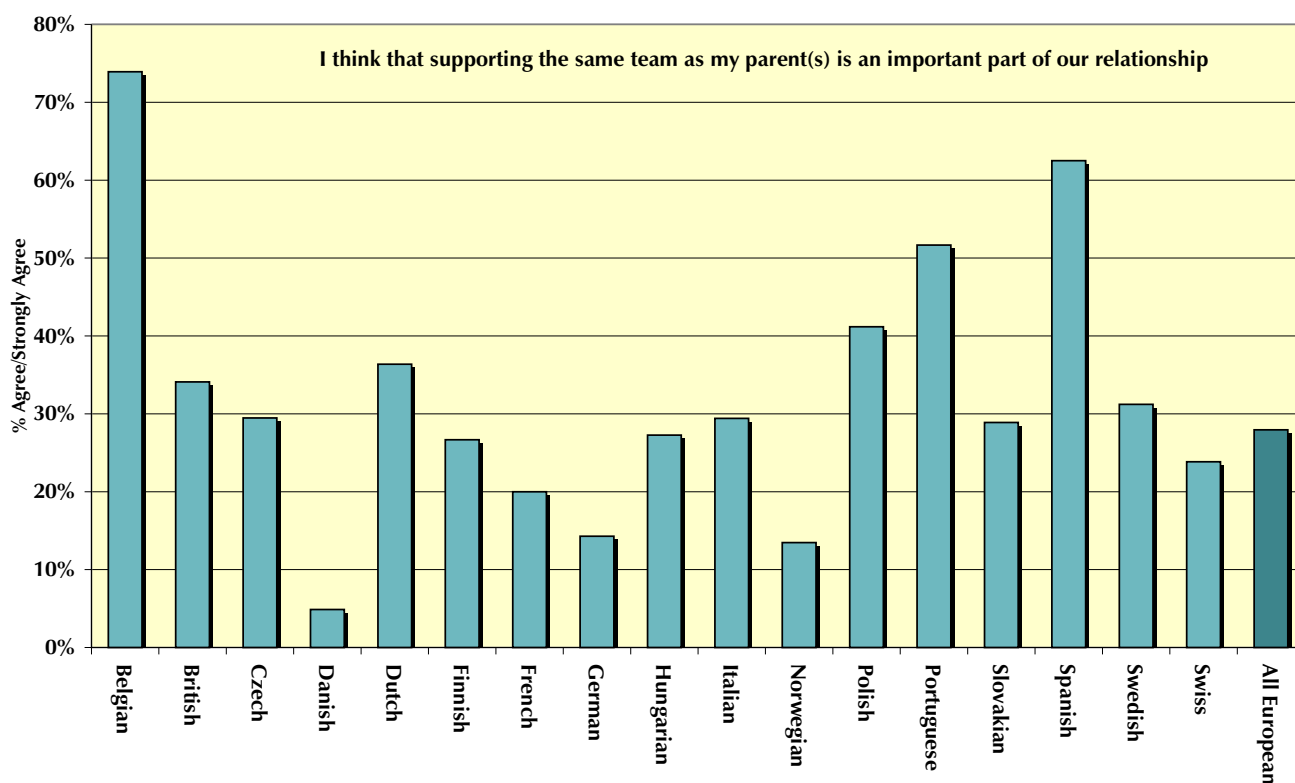
Norwegian fans attached much less importance to supporting the same team as their forebears.

Football was associated with memories of growing up as a child by the large majority of fans across Europe (78%) with the Germans expressing this sentiment most strongly (over 90%).

Football match days were seen as 'family occasions' by over a quarter of all fans across Europe. In Portugal, however, the figure was 60% while in Sweden only just over 10% saw matches in this way. These differences are quite substantial and may reflect significant cultural differences in patterns of familial behaviour.

Nobody, for example, doubts the strength of family ties in Italy, yet here only a fifth of fans saw football as an event involving both them and their parents.

Figure 7.3. Percentage agreement concerning team support and family relationships



Fan Snapshot : Family in Germany

In Germany, football has always existed as a significant family event. Being a football fan is closely tied to family life for many Germans, and it is something that for most individuals has been passed down through generations. Many fans report that football plays a central role in their household and that many seminal childhood memories comprise watching football games with parents, uncles or grandparents. Most interviewees were taken to their first game by their father. Football is an activity often shared between parents and children and, for many, represents a life-long bond between them.

The strong connection between football and family is one of the primary reasons the league has regularly rejected plans to move Sportschau – the programme that has been broadcasting the Bundesliga more or less consistently since 1963 at 6.00 or 6.30pm on freeview – to a later time slot. Such a move would mean more exclusivity to pay-TV channels and hence increase revenue to the Bundesliga clubs. Yet every time this issue is raised, figures from all public arenas in Germany (i.e. politics, entertainment, sport, etc.) become extremely vocal in defending the early TV time slot as it is one of the few opportunities for children to enjoy football with their parents in the home setting. This stands in contrast to most other European leagues and highlights the particular importance that football plays in the family life in Germany.

"Mein Vater ist schon sein ganzes Leben HSV-Fan. Er hat uns (also meinen Bruder und mich) zu unserem ersten Bundesligaspiel mitgenommen. BVB gegen HSV ... Ansonsten liefen die Samstage immer ähnlich ab, zumindest wenn Spieltag war. Im Radio haben wir drei öfter zusammen die WDR-Konferenz gehört und später immer beim Abendessen alles bei Ran gesehen."

[My dad has been a HSV supporter all his life. He took us (my brother and myself) to our first Bundesliga game. BVB against HSV ... Saturdays were always similar, at least on match days. Often the three of us would listen to the radio coverage on WDR and later during dinner we watched it all on Ran (name of the Bundesliga program on TV then)].

"Mein Vater hat mich zum Fußball gebracht. Er schleppte mich schon als kleines Kind über sämtliche Amateurplätze in Hamburg. Außerdem wurde bei uns zuhause wirklich jedes Länderspiel geguckt, jedes Europapokalspiel mit deutscher Beteiligung und natürlich jeden Samstag die ARD Sportschau. Ich bin

Jahrgang 1967, kenne also noch den TV-Fußball aus den 70er Jahren. Verschwommene Übertragungen aus Übersee, Moderation per Telefon ..."

[My father brought me to football. As a little child he dragged me over all amateur grounds in Hamburg. Moreover, at home every game of the national team was watched, every international game with German participation and of course every Saturday the ARD Sportschau (classic Bundesliga program). I was born in 1967, so know the TV coverage of the 70s. Blurred pictures from overseas, presentations via telephone ...]

8 History and national identity

Being a football fan is inextricably tied to ideas of history and tradition, as well as to notions of national and regional identity. For many people, becoming a fan of a team means becoming immersed in the history and traditions of the club and its players, both at a national and international level. Feeling part of a club's ongoing traditions and learning its history is an important part of fan identity in this sense. This can be strongly tied to a sense of political, regional or ethnic identity, as the local football team and its fans become representative of larger political and cultural issues. In Spain, for example, allegiance to a regional team such as Valencia is not only a statement about football, but also says something about the relationship to the Spanish State and an allegiance to a specific regional Valencian identity.

On a broader national level, football becomes a metaphor for national identity and a way for old national rivalries to be played out symbolically on the pitch. In international competitions, the most notable of which is, of course, the World Cup, national identity is of key significance, and, depending on the history of a particular country, can be a complex issue for fans who are normally more comfortable supporting a local or regional team. For some, the national football team always takes precedence over local, regional or club allegiances; for others, supporting the national team raises problematic political and historical issues, as several of the following country specific accounts make clear. By looking at history and tradition at club level, at a regional level and at a national level, then, it is possible to observe how football serves as a predominantly positive means of working through larger social and historical issues.

Club history

Embracing the history of a club and its past is crucial for establishing fan identity. The ability to recount stories about legendary players, hallowed grounds, and historic games all make up part of the rich repertoire that fans develop to establish themselves as members of a particular group. This close connection with history is also linked with passing down fan allegiances through the generations, as one French fan suggests:

"L'histoire c'est du passé mais c'est avec elle qu'on construit l'avenir. Je connais parfaitement l'histoire de mon club en lisant des livres. Je la connais encore mieux depuis que je suis mon équipe partout. C'est mon père qui m'a transmis sa passion pour le club quand j'étais tout petit."

[History is of the past but it is with history that one builds the future. I know the history of my club

perfectly by having read books. I know it even better since I've been following my team everywhere. It is my father who transmitted to me his passion for the club when I was young.]

Thus the club's heritage is an integral part of the club itself, and commitment to the club implicitly involves commitment to and taking pride in its past. All this has the effect of increasing the sense of belonging to the club, as its present activities, of which the fans are an important part, build on a long-established history and traditions.

"Samozrejme ... história klubu je spojená s legendami a úspechmi, o tieto legendy dokázali. Slovan ako jediný klub Československa získal európsky pohár ... Na toto musí byť hrdý každý slovanista."

[Of course ... the history of the club is connected with legends and their successes. Slovan was the only Czechoslovak club to win the European Cup ... Every fan of Slovan has to be proud of this.]

When Polish fans were asked what in particular makes them proud about being a supporter of their club, the most frequent response was the club's history and notable achievements. The following Polish fan even referred to his club as his "little fatherland".

"Czuje że mogę pomóc drużynie, mojej 'małej ojczyźnie', i jestem dumny z tego, że widzę ich postępy z sezonu na sezon. Jestem dumny z tego, że dzielnie walczą z mocniejszymi drużynami i w każde kopnięcie, każdy wślizg, wkładają całe swoje serca."

[I feel that I can help my team, my 'little fatherland' and I'm proud when I see their progress each season. I'm proud that they battle it out with stronger teams and that each kick is so important to them.]

Past rivalries

Besides the prominent personalities and achievements of the past, collective memories of great rivalries also play a role in fan support for a team. It is beyond the scope of this report to attempt to document football rivalries in intricate detail. Suffice it to say that throughout Europe inter-regional and inter-city rivalries are commonplace. The 'local derby' is a great occasion, often emotionally-charged and signifies not only a competition between two local rivals but also a confrontation of histories, tradition, style, class and politics.

In Vienna and Graz, for example, the games between Rapid (Vienna) and Austria (Vienna) and Sturm Graz and Grazer Athletik Klub (GAK) are the annual highlights for local football supporters. In Vienna the rivalry between these two clubs goes back to the beginning of the 20th century, when Rapid grew

out of a working-class neighbourhood, whereas Austria was strongly supported by Viennese coffee house intellectuals. Rapid has also traditionally emphasised a more physical game, whereas Austria is renowned for its technical capabilities. While the two teams' support bases and styles of play may have converged; however, the historical differences have become myths and relived memories that keep these traditional rivalries alive. Rapid fans are particularly proud of their historical socio-economic origins – their working class roots – a fact that has not escaped left wing politicians who align themselves with the team to assert their socialist credentials.

"Früher galt Rapid als Arbeiterverein, steht der SPOE sehr nahe und Gewerkschaftler und SPOE Sympatisanten galten als Rapidler. Auch heute findest du viele Rote bei Rapid."

[In the past Rapid was a workers' club, it stands close to the SPOE (Social Democratic Party); and trade union and SPOE members were meant to be Rapid fans. Also today you will find many Reds (SPOE supporters) at Rapid.]

Political and regional identities

Beyond the history and tradition of club membership, the importance of football as a means of expressing a sense of belonging to a political or regional identity is also a very important component of being a fan. In Spain, for example, football has served as a way to express an intense pride and sense of belonging to specific local, regional and national identities. During the years of Franco's dictatorship for example, the Spanish national football team became an international symbol of the *furia española*, or the 'Spanish fury' – a particular stereotype of impassioned, aggressive, masculine Spanish identity. With the eventual decline of Franco's regime, however, regional football teams, such as FC Barcelona in Catalonia, became emblematic of strong regional national identities. After decades of suppression, fans were eager to openly express a renewed sense of liberty by supporting local regional teams, in regional colours, and speaking local regional languages.

In the case of Belgium, football was both a means of recognising different regional identities and traditions as well as providing a common ground where people from different political, linguistic and regional backgrounds could come together. Most Belgian fans accentuated that football drew communities together rather than apart. This is very important given the current political scission between the Flemish and French communities. No one can ignore politics when looking at Belgian football, for some football is '*un trait d'union*' (a hyphen) between the country's two main linguistic groups, the

Flems and the Walloons. Football, (particularly in the context of teams where supporters or players of Flemish and Walloon origin are of equal number) can provide a neutral territory where all communities can get along and be not Flemish, nor Walloon, but Belgian. The Fleming Yves Leterme, Head of the CDV (Christian-Democrats) continues to send text messages to 'Standard de Liège', a Walloon (French-speaking) football club of which he is a lifetime and unconditional supporter. He provides some proof that Belgian football can go beyond divisions of language, class, and race, even if these markers of identity remain integral and important. As one fan put it:

"Il y a des clubs avec qui nous sommes rivaux, on a des tensions, mais il y a des équipes avec qui nous sommes ami, ça arrive qu'on va boire un verre ensemble."

[There are clubs we are rivals with and we have tensions but we are really friendly with some clubs, we might even meet them for a drink.]

While relations with teams from other regions might be amicable in this sense, this does not detract from the importance of regional identity in deciding which team one supports. A supporter of the relatively small FC Kaernten in Austria expressed this idea most clearly:

"Leute unterstützen den Klub auch hauptsächlich, weil sie aus der Region kommen, würde ich sagen. Das ist sicher wichtig. Weil du hier wohnst oder geboren bist."

[People mainly support the club because they come from that region, I would say. This is clearly important. Because you live here and you are born here.]

In Norway, fans of Brann football club provide another good example of a strong regional identity expressed through football fandom. Frode Grytten, poet and national Norwegian newspaper commentator on football, commented that Brann fans are unusually enthusiastic and demonstrative about their emotions for their team when compared with neighbouring Rosenborg (Trondheim) fans. His opinion is that this connects to the strong feeling of patriotism all inhabitants of Bergen have, that has naturally spilled over into football. Such a strong patriotic sentiment towards the Norwegian Flag as much towards the city of Bergen references the fact that Bergen was once the capital of Norway; since losing this status to Oslo it has come to embrace a very strong sense of local regional identity.

Norway provides a number of other examples of smaller regional teams becoming the focus for local regional identities. Kongsvinger supporters express pride that such a small town in the woods, near the Swedish border should have such a good team. Similarly, for fans of Sogndal – a district with only 7,000

inhabitants – it is a source of regional 'honour' that they can field a side capable of competing in the Adecco league.

In larger urban areas, like Vienna and Graz in Austria, this regional identification is, not surprisingly, less clear, but there is still a perceived identity of clubs and fans as representing certain parts of the city. In the case of Rapid, fans self-identify with the West of Vienna and the district of Huetteldorf. At least in the imagined tradition of these clubs, the link to a certain location has remained.

"In der Tradition war das bezirksregional. Vor 30-40 Jahren waren das die Huetteldorfer Fans. Das hat sich erst spaeter entwickelt, dass andere Leute auch da waren. Dass man zum Beispiel auch aus Favoriten Rapidanhaenger sein hat koennen. Weil Favoriten war immer die Austria. Das ist heute nicht mehr so."

[According to the tradition, it was based on regional (Viennese) districts. 30-40 years ago, they were the Huetteldorfer fans. It only occurred later on that other people could also come. For example that people from Favoriten (Viennese district) could be Rapid fans. Because Favoriten was always Austria.]

National histories and identity

Historical rivalry between countries can play a particularly significant role in football fandom. For example, fans report a strong rivalry between the Dutch and German national teams, based primarily on Holland's World Cup defeat at the hands of Germany in 1974. It is evident from discussions on some forums, however, that the legacy of World War II and continuing national sensitivities may also play a part in rivalries between certain nations. While it may seem inconceivable that these two incomparable events can be mentioned in the same context, one only has to be reminded of the often cited England slogan 'Two World Wars and one World Cup' to realise current international rivalries on the field draw heavily on historical events.

National history plays a crucial role in the perception that many fans have of their club and of football in their country in general. In Germany, once again, football has a special role in the country's history and is now firmly embedded in German culture. Specifically, Germany's first World Cup win in 1954 is a watershed year in the country's history, commonly referred to as the 'Wunder von Bern' (The miracle of Bern). They claimed the title by defeating Hungary, thought by many to be the World's leading side at that time, 3-2 in the final. This win created a sense of euphoria in post-war Germany and is often credited with playing a large role in restoring a sense of self-confidence and national identity following the events of World War II.

Some of the great successes of the Polish national team were of significant political importance during Communism. The most notable successes of the team were the Gold medal in the 1972 Summer Olympics in Munich, the Silver medal in the 1976 in Montreal and in the 1992 in Barcelona. Poland placed third in the World Cup on two occasions – in 1974 and 1982. These results brought a sense of hope during a difficult political period, and provided an outlet for public displays of national pride that were not necessarily connected with the Communist regime in power at the time. The stadium was one of the very few places where one could freely express oneself without fear of persecution.

The importance of national history also plays a large role in the culture of football in smaller countries in Europe. Austrians, for example, have a special relationship with the history of past empires and regimes. The country's Austro-Hungarian past is imagined as great and glorious, whereas, politically speaking, their current global role is experienced somewhat in the shadow of more economically powerful countries. Many fans' understanding of their club and of the national team parallels the view they hold of their country's past. As one Austrian fan put it, "Everything was better and greater back then" – even though he was born more than 50 years after the fall of the empire.

In Denmark, football is one of the only occasions where Danes are 'allowed' to express their national identity and express how proud they are to be Danish. Speaking on what football means to the Danish national identity, president of Roliganklubben Kenn Rønning stated:

"Jeg tror det har noget at gøre med at i denne EU-tid, hvor vi alle skal være så ens, kan danskerne godt lide at fastholde at de er danske."

[I think it has to do with the fact that in this EU era where we all have to be the same, Danes like to maintain that they are Danish.]

Kenn links this to the Danish rejection of the Euro – a 'no' vote that also expressed a desire to 'protect' their national identity from European influence.

National politics play an interesting, if often veiled role in football and there have been occasions when the popularity of the game has been manipulated for political gain. In Portugal during the Salazarista dictatorship, for example, football was very much part of the justificatory discourse for colonialism; the national team featured players from Angola, Mozambique and Cabo Verde and helped to create an illusion of the colonial empire as egalitarian and inclusive. Football in general and Benfica in particular, featured in Salazar's speeches as exemplars of Portuguese fair play.

Club or Country?

When it comes to the 'crunch' where do football fans loyalties truly lie? Do the 'real' fans choose club over country, national success over team trophies or can they be a 'true' fan of both? Can they participate in the game with the same passion and emotional commitment or, does dual allegiance throw up too many compromises and conflicts of interest?

A section of the online questionnaire specifically addressed the issue of support for one's own team and for the national side. From Figure 8.1 we can see that large cross-national differences exist in this context. Overall, just under 80% of Europeans say that they feel a stronger sense of allegiance to their team than to the national side. Among French fans, however, this sentiment is much less strongly expressed (27%). Polish and Portuguese fans are also more likely to be nationalistic in this sense while the Norwegians seem to be most strongly committed to their local teams.

The conversations with fans also highlighted some notable differences of opinion. Talking with fans from English Premiership sides, for example, it is apparent that loyalty to one's club supersedes, by some considerable margin, any concern for the national team. At the recent Champions' League quarter-final between Liverpool and Internazionale, some journalists reported hearing the Liverpool fans chanting 'England' during the closing moments of the match. This enraged some Liverpool fans, some of whom wrote to the publication to complain, some whom expressed their dissatisfaction to members of our research team:

"Any Liverpool fan would tell you that Liverpool fans would rather chop off limbs than sing England at a game. We don't even have St George Crosses or Union Jacks. If someone displays a St George Cross it gets booed. They were actually chanting 'Inter, Inter', because they were playing so awful and we were lucky enough to play them..."

For the fans of top-flight, Champions' League and Uefa Cup contenders, being a fan of a national side may introduce too many conflicts of interest to be tenable. The coaches of leading sides have spoken quite openly about their reluctance to release their most valuable players for international duty – for fear of the risk of injury or being unavailable for selection – and the fans understandably share their concerns. Previous sections of the report have also highlighted the ways in which participating fans seek to influence the outcome of the games. One frequently cited way of going about this is to intimidate the players from the opposing teams: the better the player, the more likely and vocal the banter is likely to be. For many 'real' fans, they are simply unable to suspend their season long hostility to these players for the 2 or 3 games a season in which

they might play in international matches. Conversely, with so many a-list players practicing their club football in countries other than those that they are eligible to represent at an international level, a Real Madrid or Arsenal fan, for example, might conceivably be required to jeer their club hero. Again, for most 'real' fans, unthinkable.

Elsewhere, fans did not seem to have any problem with supporting both a local club and the national team at the same time. One Slovan Liberec fan suggested that football is the 'gate to the big world' for the Czech Republic and that representing the nation should come above all other feelings. Fans agreed that when supporting the nation, all club rivalries go to one side and they support the team as a whole, overcoming all their dislikes of players in rival teams:

"Podporuju jak náš národní tým, tak svůj klub zároveň. Dokonce si myslím, že pokud fanoušci doopravdy milují fotbal, tak podpora reprezentace by měla být automatická.

[I have no problems with the supporting the Czech National Team. More importantly I feel that such support should be automatic for all 'true' football lovers.]

Support of the national team in this way often supercedes local or regional rivalries. In Poland, for example, a country with many domestic rivalries between its cities, watching the national team play is a matter of honour for all Poles – even those not particularly interested in football. At these times, the players on the field represent Poland as a nation and their performance is important for the country as a whole. As one fan put it,

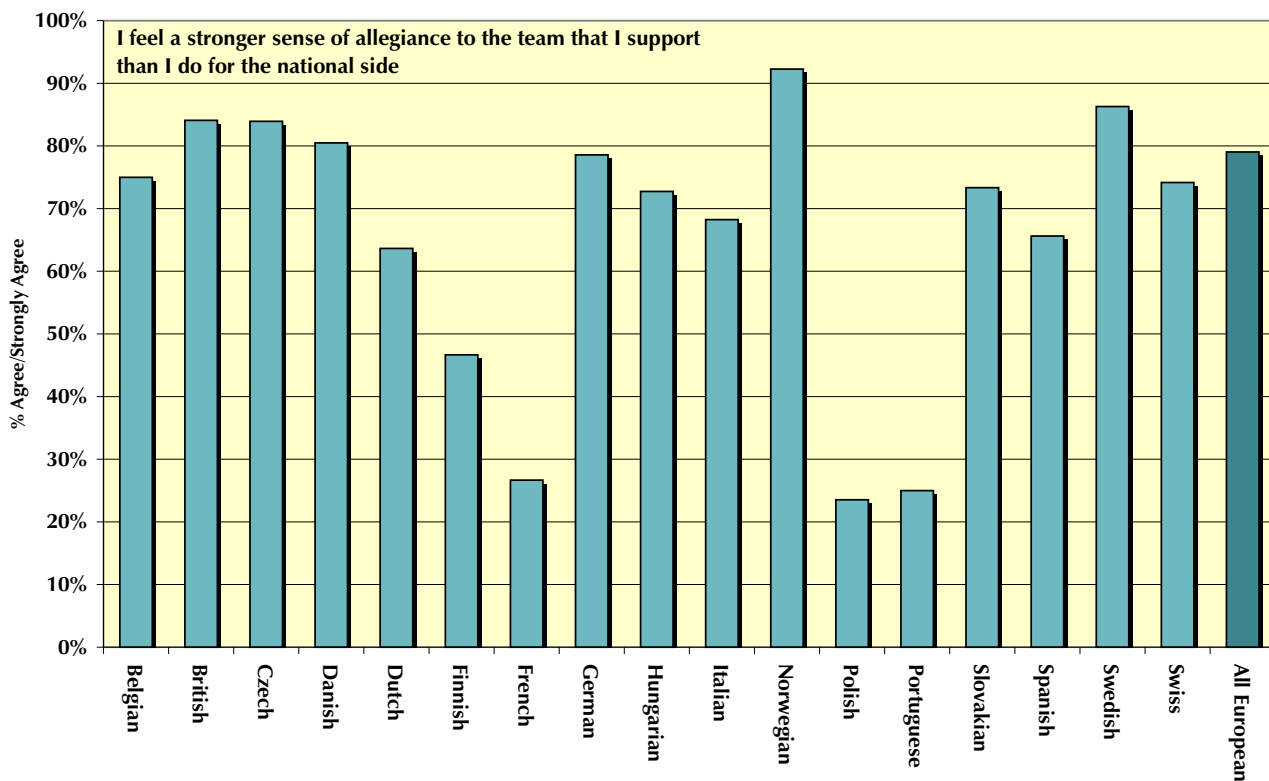
"Dla kibica cena nie gra roli, jeżeli chce obejrzeć mecz swojej ukochanej drużyny w ważnych rozgrywkach. W moim przypadku determinacja aby zdobyć bilety na ostatni Mundial była ogromnym wyczynem a cena 2 dniowej wycieczki na mecz i z powrotem kosztowała tyle samo ile 2 tygodniowe wakacje nad ciepłym morzem w opcji all inclusive. Ale proszę mi wierzyć są to chwile dla których naprawdę warto żyć."

[There are situations in life in which price doesn't play a role. For fans, ticket price doesn't matter. if I want to see my team playing during an important tournament. In my case, the determination to get hold of tickets for the World Cup was a massive effort and the price of a two-day trip cost me the same as a two week all-inclusive holiday. But these moments are well worth living for.]

Many fans in other cultural contexts agreed with the notion of supporting both a national team and a local club, but on a daily basis their allegiance to a local team held precedence,

simply because international games take place less frequently. Many Danish fans, for example consider their local team more important than the national team (in some instances, fans stated they were more loyal to foreign regional teams such as Liverpool or Juventus than the Danish national team). One key difference between national and the regional teams is that the national team only plays every once in a while and in these instances all over the world, whereas during the football season, the regional teams play every week. Still such dual support need not mean any logistical or emotional conflict. In Denmark, as in other countries, Superliga matches are cancelled whenever the national team plays, so fans are able to support their regional team when it plays, and the national when it plays too.

Figure 8.1 Percentage agreement concerning support for team vs national side.



9 The Gender of the Game

Professional league football has traditionally been a male sport. It was founded by males, is played by males and is, on the whole, supported by males. According to sociologist Ramón Llopis Goig, numerous academic studies have shown that women

"have gained increasing access to participation in and consumption of sport during the twentieth century. However, this has not been the case with football. The number of women watching football and attending football matches is at a level far inferior to that of men, which may be indicative of the supposed 'impenetrability' of football for female fans. Football is still considered to be a resolutely masculine sphere."

This observation, made about the case of women in Spain, is in fact applicable to many countries across Europe. Every country surveyed for this report showed an overwhelming majority of football fans to be male. Even in Norway, one of the most gender-equal countries in Europe and one with wage equivalency between men and women and extensive paid leave for new fathers, football is one of the few remaining masculine spheres of public life. As one fan puts it, being interested in football as a male is simply 'what you do'.

"Hvordan jeg begynte å bli det? ... så er det sånn, alle gutter i Norge er interessert i fotball, eller må, å ikke være interessert i fotball, da bryter du med den rollen du er tildelt, liksom."

[How I became interested in football? ... All boys in Norway are interested in football. To not be interested in football means you are breaking out of the role you have been assigned, as it were.]

Even in Sweden, a country which has one of the best women's football teams in the world and whose Swedish league attracts many of the world's best players, supporter culture among women for women is not particularly well developed. On the whole, the attention given to the female football league is much less and attendance at the games is also much lower than the professional male leagues.

Where the boys are and the girls are not

Football is regularly considered by many male fans to be an exclusively male, homosocial domain through which they are able to 'escape' the company of wives or girlfriends and engage in conversation about topics and issues – not just football – about which they presume women to be largely ignorant, or in any event uninterested. This holds especially true with older fans, many of whom cling especially strongly to traditional notions of football as an exclusive and private societal space for men and their male friends. Under such an understanding

of fan participation in football, then, the world of football spectatorship remains a sanctum where men can 'be men' without needing to concern themselves about how they are perceived by women. Similar, it is in such a space that a man need not be "corrupted" by a woman's influence.

"Det er vel i orden de er der. Men i og med klubben for mig også er et fristed fra kæreste med mere, vil jeg aldrig se fodbold med en pige. Fodbold er en maskulin sport hvor fanatisme ikke skal forstyrres af højhælede og eyeliner ..."

[I guess it is okay that they (women) are there. But since the club for me also is a haven from my girlfriend and so on, I would never watch football with a girl. Football is a masculine sport, where fanaticism shouldn't be disturbed by high-heels and eyeliner.]

Many men would similarly argue that their football time is also their buddy time – reserved for social interaction with their friends.

"Alle mine damer oppigjennom livet har måttet stå i andre rekke når det gjelder Glimtkamper."

[All my girlfriends throughout life have had to play second fiddle when it comes to Glimt matches.]

So, being a football fan is an activity which many men keep for themselves, and as such becomes a gendered, gender-specific pastime. A number of younger male fans across fan club communities tend to perceive women as 'false fans' who do not understand the intricacies of the game. Other male fans stressed that women have 'chosen' to play a minor role in fandom – taking care to mention that they value exceptions – or admitted that their spouses or partners often misunderstand what it means to be a fan. In some cases, such beliefs may harbour tinges of misogyny, such as the one expressed by this Slovan fan:

"Myslím, že na futbal patria viac muži ako ženy. Ženy až na výnimky futbalu nerozumejú, nebaví ich to. Keď tak tam idú skôr kvôli fešákom, ktorí budú hrať za ten tím alebo mu fandia."

[I think that men simply 'belong' to football more than women. Women – yes, there are exceptions – don't really understand football; they don't like it. If they go to a match, it is mostly because of good-looking guys, who either play or support the team.]

Beer, cursing and getting emotional

Traditional male involvement with football on and off the pitch may often be tied to what some see as the 'hallmarks' of being a fan of the sport: namely drinking beer, spending hours

buying rounds at the pub, using lewd language, and cathartic release of emotions at stadiums.

Beer has historically been the predominant drink consumed at football games and at rituals surrounding football, and is the primary social lubricant among men engaging as football fans. In Austria, as with most other countries in Europe, the act of beer drinking is infused with decidedly male connotations. As one Rapid fan stated, recalling his impressions of the gender makeup of games during the 1990s

"Die West war groesstenteil maennlich dominiert ... Ich hab' eher das Gefuehl das ist eher eine Maennersache. Das ist so in einer Reihe: Wirtshauspartie, Bier saufen und Fussball; das ist der Dunstkreis von der Maennerpartie."

[The Western section was largely male dominated ... I have a feeling that this is a male affair here. It is all somehow linked: going to the pub, boozing on beer and football; this is the orbit of groups of men.]

This statement involving the issue of alcohol at football games is particularly interesting because the provision and possession of alcohol has been slowly banned from more and more stadiums across Europe and is now outlawed at football matches in Austria, France and a number of other countries. This prohibition notwithstanding, the consumption of alcohol – specifically beer – has become ingrained in the experience of being a football fan. While there were certainly many upset fans when the alcohol bans at stadiums were first enacted, this fact has become incidental to the lives of football fans. Football without drinking beer – a largely male social habit – would plain and simply not be football.

On one level, the application of 'male' peripheral activities (i.e. drinking beer, cursing, etc.) provides a means for the positive construction of a sense of belonging among male and female inhabitants of certain communities. Women may not feel that they have the option to become involved in football, but even their non-participation is a means of coming together – as a social group in their own right – and further serves as a means of their bonding and belonging. Football in this sense serves as a way of delineating between social time spent with family and loved ones and time spent in same-sex groups of friends and relations. A Polish fan from Gdansk summed up the balance:

"Jeśli chodzi o piłkę nożną to rzeczywiście grupa męska jest dużo liczniejsza, jednak są sporty w których to kobiety – kibice dominują myślę, że wzajemnie dobrze się uzupełniamy."

[When it comes to football fans, the male group is much bigger, but there are other sports which female supporters dominate. I think we complement each other quite well.]

Societal changes

While traditionally the domain of men, it is clear that the participation of women in football fan culture is in a state of flux. Society has come leaps and bounds since the days when women would stay at home to prepare dinner while the men of the family attended sports matches together. In many European countries, the number of women present at games has been increasing steadily over the past ten years, and they are now often very well represented in many stadiums. One Danish female FC Midtjylland fan recognised these attitudes among some male fans and provided the following explanation.

"Jeg er enig i at der er kommet flere og flere kvinder på tribunerne. Tror mange er der for hyggens skyld, men der er bestemt også ægte fans iblandt ... Men tror mange mænd har den holdning, at kvinder ikke er 'ægte-fans' og at kvinder ikke har forstand på spillet. Jeg oplever mænd, som ikke mener vi hører hjemme på stemningstribunen fordi vi ikke kan synge højt nok ... Tror kvinder er fans på en mere moderat måde. Vi behøver ikke tænke på sidste nederlag i en uge. Jeg mener ikke, at dette gør os til 'dårligere fans' eller betyder at vi er mindre loyale."

[I agree with there being more and more women on the stands. (I) think many are there just to be sociable, but there are definitely also 'real' fans among them... But I think that many men have the stance, that women aren't 'real' fans and that they don't know about the game. I have experienced men who don't think we belong on the fan stands because we cannot sing loud enough. I think women are fans in a more moderate way. We don't have to think about our last defeat for a week. I don't believe this makes use 'worse fans' or means that we are less loyal.]

Although older women might not participate in football, younger generations of women are very likely to be part of the increasing number of female fans that express their support for football teams in Europe. This was also the case with members of the Union St Gilloise and Genk fan clubs:

"Moi j'ai plusieurs copines dans notre groupe de fans et elles sont toute à fais dans le jeux comme n'importe autre supporter."

[I have several women friends in our fan club and they're just like any other supporter, they're really into the game.]

In northeast London, one Tottenham fan interviewed is a holder of three season tickets. His wife has died and he has no sons, but he attends matches regularly with his two daughters, who are as much a fan of the team as their father.

Some male fans admitted that women whom they knew were stronger fans than they were and believed that women, once initiated into the game, could become active and supportive fans capable of developing a deep understanding of the game and its culture. Several men interviewed claimed that females added to the excitement of the game and were a positive element – possibly even to the extent that they might even inspire envy in other fan clubs with fewer female supporters.

"Kobiety działają jak płachta na byka, sprawiają że skandujemy jeszcze głośniej żeby im zaimponować."

[Women are like the red flag of the matador: they make us scream louder to show off in front of them so that we can impress them.]

This is echoed in other countries as well. Observations from researchers attending a Valencia game provided evidence of the presence of female fans at matches and of their loud support for their team despite their relatively small numbers in comparison with their male counterparts. Norway's Glimt club is another such club; they even maintain a cheerleading group of ten or so women who stand and belt out cheers during matches when the stadium is otherwise quiet.

"Mange jenter ... kanskje 30 prosent? Men det er flere og flere som kommer uten mann, men med egen skjert osv."

[There are quite a lot of girls (in The Clan) ... maybe thirty percent? Yet there are more and more who aren't just coming with their husband, but who have their own scarf and outfit and so on.]

One young woman from Glimt had actually been introduced to football by her grandfather but had since begun attending matches with her aunt.

In several countries, there are all-female fan clubs. In Spain, for example, all-female peñas have developed over the past two decades as a means for women to participate actively in fan communities where they can be feel accepted as 'authentic' fans, as opposed to auxiliary wives or daughters to 'authentic' male fans. Since the inception in 1984 of the first female peña, Peña Valencista Luna de Valencia, a number of similar groups have been established to provide female supporters with a legitimate and accepted platform for expressing their interest in and passion for football.

Ricardo Penella Arias, one of Valencia FC's most venerated and longest-standing players (between 1976 and 1993), provides an interesting view of how the gender balance of Valencia fans has changed over the years. In an exclusive interview for this report, Arias explains how football fandom in modern-day Spain is much more open than in the past, encouraging participation from both women and young people:

"No pienso que el fútbol sea un mundo de hombres, pues me hizo una referencia al porcentaje de mujeres que acudían al campo, y era bastante amplio. Hoy en día la presencia de la mujer en el campo es numerosísima. Pienso que eso también es debido a que antiguamente solo acudía al campo las personas más adultas, y actualmente van todos los grupos de edad, por lo que se abre el abanico de posibilidades. El empuje social que tiene el fútbol ahora arrastra a mucha más gente, incluidas las mujeres. A su parecer, cada vez se está equilibrando más el número de hombres y mujeres que siguen el fútbol."

[I don't think that football is a man's domain. I'm referring to the percentage of women who come to games now...today the number of women in the stands now is huge. I think that in part this is because in the past games were only really attended by adults, but now they're open to all ages, and has opened up new possibilities. The social drive of football today involves many more people (than before), including women. It seems that bit by bit the number of male and female football fans is balancing out.]

Arias' historical perspective shows that the changes evident in the demographic makeup of fans reflect broader societal trends.

Indeed, while there are specific aspects of 'masculinity' or specific traits of machismo behaviour involved with the gender divide, these aspects are clearly not insurmountable.

Tim Parks, author of *A Season with Verona*, kindly agreed to talk to our researchers and offered his thoughts on female fans at the Italian club Hellas Verona. Unlike some clubs in Italy, Chievo Verona, for example (whose women's fan group is called Le Monelle [the Brats]), Hellas Verona has no fan club exclusively dedicated to women, but women regularly attend. In Parks' experience, female fans can sometimes vocalise their support for the team in a more extreme fashion than the males. He believes that many female fans are conscious of being part of a world that is not intended for them, but it is precisely this awareness that makes them – once they are accepted – proud to be able to belong to it, as cognizant as they are of being separate from it. There are means of overcoming the barriers set up for making one's way into a group of committed fans, as one female Padova fan insightfully observed.

"Giustamente dici tradizionalmente il tifo è maschio... e io dico continuerà ad esserlo per molto tempo. Già è difficile trovare una ragazza a cui interessi il calcio, trovarne poi una che abbia il coraggio di andare in curva è quasi impossibile. Diciamoci la verità: i ragazzi in curva bevono, bestemmiano, dicono le parolacce..."

insomma, tutto il contrario di ciò che può piacere ad una ragazza. Bisogna avere un fortissimo spirito di adattamento e di sopportazione. Ovviamente io non bevo né bestemmio, ci mancherebbe, però mi adatto e 'me ne frego' di quello che fanno, magari ci rido su e passo oltre. Gran parte delle ragazze però non ne sono capaci e si 'schifano'. Bisogna inoltre saper dimostrare che non si è lì per cercare un ragazzo (molte lo fanno) ma solamente per la passione che anche loro hanno ... solo facendo così si ottiene il rispetto, si viene visti come 'una di loro' e non si è più una ragazza a cui mettere gli occhi o le mani addosso, ma semplicemente un tifoso come un altro."

[You're right – being a fan is a traditionally male activity ... And I say that it shall continue like this for a long time. It is difficult enough to find a girl that is interested in football; to find one that has the courage to go to the curve (the Ultras' section) is almost impossible. Let's be honest: the boys in the curve drink, curse and swear ... in general, quite the opposite of things a girl would enjoy doing. You must be very tolerant to adapt to such a situation. Obviously, as you might imagine, I don't drink or curse. But I get used to it and I have a sort of 'I don't care' attitude about what they do; I might just laugh about it and move on. A large number of the girls, however, aren't able to do this and so just end up feeling disgusted. You must also know how to demonstrate that you are not there to look to pick up a guy (a lot do come for this reason) but just for the passion that you have ... Only going about it in this way can you obtain respect and be seen as 'one of them' – no longer a girl to ogle or grope, but simply a fan like any other.]

you're always talking about the game with them ... Like, I got to know my current boyfriend at a bar near to the Mestalla stadium - the one by the monument.

One day I was watching the Valencia v Real Madrid game with a big group of friends, and at the table next to us there were some guys sitting and talking. And it was very funny, because during all of the questionable plays throughout the game - the controversial ones - Alex and I would both cry out the same thing at the same time! We'd really say almost exactly the same things, and we'd both hear the other as well.

I remember at one point, he was making some comment about an off-side decision. He asked me for a cigarette and we started to talk about some of the more technical aspects of the game. And so, well, during half time we got up to get more beers and throughout the rest of game we continued chatting - and suffering! - together. When the match ended I asked him for his mobile so that if I came again to watch a match there, I'd let him know. From there it just exploded into love. All from the excitement of our team ... all from our Valencia CF."

Fan Snapshot: Love at first sight

Naturally, any gender divide in fan clubs or in the stands at matches never precludes the possibility of meeting a potential partner. This 26-year-old female Valencia fan recounts one of her more memorable experiences while watching football.

"More than anything it's the people you meet. Even if you've just been introduced to them, you already know that, as someone who supports the same team as you, you're going to have a lot in common with them. Chatting in a group of friends or waiting in the ticket window queue to get in to the match, you get to know lots of people. And you become friends with people who sit in the seats around you - they are always the same people and never change - and

10 The Internet and Football

It is hardly headline news that the Internet has changed our lives beyond measure. Such remarkable advances in technology have become settled deep within football fandom. Half a century ago, of course, keeping abreast of football team events and statistics was significantly more complicated. One seventy-year-old Aston Villa fan recounted his experience, aged 19, as an army corporal stationed in Kuala Lumpur. One Sunday morning, as per his usual routine, he eagerly sought out the local Malay newspaper to check up on the score of a particularly important match between Villa and Charlton Athletic. The score in the paper read Villa 11, Charlton 1. Being a cynic by nature and not one to be easily duped – he later worked as a CID officer in the police force – he risked serious disciplinary consequence by appropriating the emergency operational GPO telephone to ring England in order to check on the results. He was thrilled to learn that the score was not a misprint; his phone call also managed to go unnoticed by his superiors. He is still a Villa season ticket holder today, in his 61st year as a fan.

Today, such information is accessible through a variety of channels, including television, radio, teletext, Internet and mobile phones, and, as generations become more attuned to and comfortable with new technologies, it is being accessed by increasingly large numbers of fans. In Holland, for example, a country with a modest population of 16 million people, the web site of the popular football magazine Voetbal International attracts 60 million page views each month.

Our research shows that the Internet does not exist as a substitute for social activity, but rather that it adds to and engenders new ways of experiencing being a football fan. Whereas fans might once have composed chants and cheers together in a bar or café, now they are more likely to do so at home and subsequently share their 'artistry' online (or later at a bar or café). And while each fan's experience is very individual – 'hardcore' fans might not use the Internet for information access, just as less serious supporters might spend hours surfing online for information but never attend a game – it is clear that role of the Internet itself is changing, and this in turn is altering just how football fans are able to experience being football fans.

What goes online

The Internet serves as a valuable information repository for the schedule of upcoming fixtures, statistics, player lineups, ticket prices and day-to-day news about football teams. The immediacy of the web makes it easy for fans to debate and keep up to date with what is happening in the football world. Many fans spend much of their time on football-related web sites accessing up-to-the-minute information about events

specific to their team, keeping abreast of developments in football politics and hunting around on forums for debate about games. As such, checking for such information is often seen to be integrated into the every day routine of many fans' lives.

"Hver dag når jeg kommer hjem er det første jeg skal lige at kigge herinde, for at se om der er sket noget nyt, derefter er det en tur på bold.dk og derefter vff.dk."

[Every day when I get home the first thing I have to do is just check in here (thegreenpride.dk, a Viborg fan site), to see if anything has happened, and I check bold.dk and then vff.dk.]

With the advent of 3G and push technology for sending data over mobile phones, such activities may take place at home, at work or anywhere in between. For many, the availability of immediate access to football-related information is a welcome addition to their lives – allowing them not only to stay informed, but also to interact in new ways with other fans.

Many fan subjects for this report were initially contacted through forums and blogs. Within these forums, members spend time discussing any number of football-related topics – and non-football related topics. Topics of discussion on forums vary widely, but they tend to revolve around past and future fixtures, management decisions that will affect the team's future and rival teams.

In the case of fan club sites, forums serve as a good organisational tool for leaders to coordinate the fan club's activities, from songs and chants to trips to away games. But they have also become an arena allowing fans to participate in the passion and the emotion of the game by proxy. Posts often included references to the atmosphere at a game and some colourful match-related anecdotes from those in attendance. A Standard de Liège fan related:

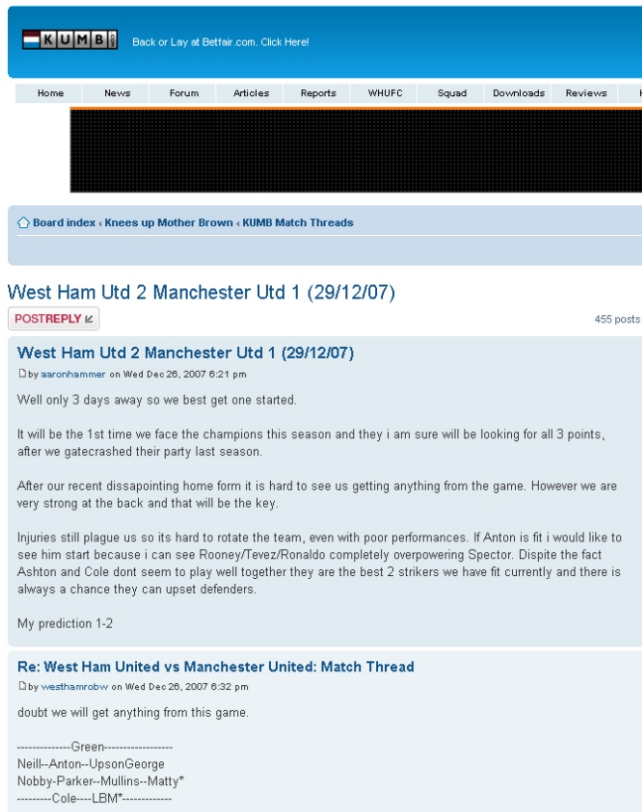
"Même s'il m'arrive de ne pas participer à un match je peux le revivre via notre site et les blogs de mes amis."

[Even if I can't make it to a game I can relive it via our site and my friends' blogs.]

Looking at just one website, taking one game, from one season, from one division – West Ham United v Manchester United – the pre-match predictions, anticipation and team selection discussions begin three days prior to the game (see Knees Up Mother Brown – full thread available at <http://www.kumb.com/forum/viewtopic.php?f=19&t=98578&st=0&sk=t&sd=a8&st=0&sk=t&sd=a>). For those not fortunate enough to be able to attend the match in person, running commentary and banter can be observed, exchanged or engaged in online throughout the match in real-time. Also, examining excerpts from the blogs it appears that many fans

are adept at multi-tasking: listening to radio commentary, watching the match on television, receiving text updates from sports information portals and communicating with families and friends at the stadium.

Figure 10.1 Getting the discussion started
Knees Up Mother Brown (kumb.com)



Such examples of communication could be endlessly analysed in extreme detail of discourse analysis, taking into consideration a number of different social and cultural cues implicit in what is being said. Suffice it to say that as a conversation, this online interaction shows an immense familiarity with the game, the teams, their histories and each other. The statements "Well done boys!!!" and "Well done lads" refer in the most obvious sense to the male players on the team. However, such statements might also be seen to refer to the group of fellow fans which, from their desks at home or work, spend the game rooting on and cheering their team towards a win together – as a team of their own.

Cultural differences

Of course, specific activity inherently must vary from country to country and from individual to individual. In Austria, for example, with a lively variety of official, unofficial and media-related websites, forums and blogs run by football fans, fans online are almost as active as they are in the stadium. Finnish fans, for example, spent time online reading news about their favourite teams and interacting with other fans on

various forums. In contrast, German online activity was more pragmatic and task-based, with most of the fans interviewed participating in online activities primarily as a practical tool for sorting out logistical issues such as obtaining tickets, organising transport to and from away games and trying to raise recognition of their club. Others, such as this Dutch fan, use the Internet to gather football news and movies from teams all over the world.

"Ik kijk bijvoorbeeld of Vitesse, maar ook andere clubs, aankopen van plan zijn, en na de wedstrijd kijk ik vaak op youtube naar de wedstrijd. Ik ben niet alleen een fan van Vitesse maar ook een voetballiefhebber, daarom surf ik het internet ook nogal wat af om naar spelers zoals bijvoorbeeld C. Ronaldo van Manchester United te kijken, en te lezen over ontwikkelingen bij Europese topclubs."

[For example, I look on the internet to see if Vitesse or any other club is looking for new transfers, and after a match I watch the match again on Youtube. I'm not only a fan of Vitesse, but also a big football lover. That's why I surf on the Internet a lot to watch movies of players like Ronaldo from Manchester United for example, or to read about the latest developments at European top clubs.]

All of the football teams looked at in this study have their own web sites, as do nearly all of the fan clubs. In Sweden, for instance, every major club has at least one team page and one official supporter club web site as well as unofficial sites that range in number anywhere from two to forty. Additionally, a nationwide web site at www.svenskafans.se allows every fan club in the country to set up their own community. In Switzerland, all ten Axpo Super League teams have at least one official online forum and several other unofficial ones, which are often the forum of one of the team's fan clubs. Even in countries such as Slovakia, where the instances of both football fandom and Internet accessibility are significantly lower, per-capita, than many other European countries, there are at least several fan sites for every major football club, and at least one for smaller ones. Team sites are regularly updated with news about the team, including the buying and selling of players, injuries, ticket prices and comments made by managers and players. Many also allow fans to maintain their own blogs.

In addition to the communication of practical issues such as bus schedule for away games etc. some fan clubs use the Internet as means of presenting their fan community to the outside world. As such, they are often very organised in their support strategies, regularly encouraging members to submit photographs and pen new cheer lyrics to post on the website for vetting by others and potential use at the games. For

example, one Portuguese fan club of the team Benfica, the Diabos Vermelhos (Red Devils), regularly urges all its members to write songs of support and chants to sing out at games. The following is a typical example of posted chants that are written by fans:

"Benfica somos nos / Benfica somos nos / Benfica somos nos / Benfica somos nos / Por isso vou apoiar-te / Sempre de coracao / Diabos nunca te falham / Benfica es a nossa paixao"

[Benfica is us / Benfica is us / Benfica is us / Benfica is us / So I will support you / Always with all my heart / The devils never let you down / Benfica you are our passion]

Who does it and for how long?

A recent study by TNS found that the British now spend more time online than watching television, with the average time spent online each day at 164 minutes (41 days per year) compared to 148 minutes each day watching TV (37 days per year). Furthermore, statistics published by Eurostat record that 63% of EU firms and 22% of households had broadband access in 2005. Moreover, 48% of households and 91% of companies in the EU25 member states had some form of Internet access.

These statistics are reflected in this research. A large number of fans across a range of forums and countries admitted to spending much of their free time online. While the time spent varied from "some minutes" to "several hours" a week – depending in part on whether it is football season or not – many fervent football fans were proud to state that they spend many hours of their lives online engaging in football-related activities. Sometimes this involved spending up to five or six hours per day online keeping abreast of team news and posting contributions.

"Bajen tar enormt mycket av min sociala tid. Min fru tycker jag är galen som lägger ner så mycket tid att läsa om laget, köpa tidningar, souvenirer, jaga info på nätet osv."

[My team takes an enormous amount of my social time. My wife thinks I'm crazy spending so much time to read about the team, buy magazines, souvenirs, hunt down information on the Internet and so on.]

In one academic study conducted in Denmark, about 70% of Danish fans stated that they searched for news online several times a day. In fact, from the analysis of many online forums across Scandinavia, it is clear that many fans from this region spend vast amounts of their time on club web sites. One Danish interviewee admitting to spending between 40 and 50 hours each week online; another estimated about 6 to 7 hours a day. On the whole, however, the majority of fans interviewed

stated they spend between one and two hours a day online – though not all in one sitting.

The more committed fans consider online forums to be a powerful means of communication of which they make frequent use, though there are of course exceptions to this rule (discussed below). Forums were considered to be a useful way of talking about football and the team with a broader group of people which extends beyond the fan's immediate friends and family.

Prior to or during a major tournament, fans will spend more time online than they might otherwise during a 'normal' season. Two months before Sweden's national Allsvenskan 2008, for example, activity on the Swedish football fan forums were extremely high, with a new post coming in every 5 minutes on the larger, more well-known sites. In Austria and Switzerland particularly, much of the increase in recent Internet activity has been driven by the hype surrounding the hosting of the European Championship, with the Austrians seeming particularly concerned about the quality of the current national side.

Exceptions to the rule

Naturally, there is some level of dissent among fans as to whether the advent of Internet technologies is a positive development for football fandom. One German fan, for example, explained that the Internet had given him to the opportunity to enter the rather closed fan scene and "fully express" himself as a fan. For some 'traditional' or 'hardcore' fans, however, this was problematic. To them, being a fan was about being there and experiencing the highs and lows on the terraces. One Liverpool fan offered this insight:

"The role of the Internet? Good in some ways, like education, but I think it's always been good and bad. It's given easy access to people who some might not consider 'real' fans...a different sort of fan... who maybe haven't learnt the culture. Twenty years ago they would have had to go to games to learn it. Now you can access the club and the culture, learn the songs and think you are a fan."

While for many, online activities have become an important way to express support, passion for the club and offer new ways of expressing their dedication, others consider it to be of minimal importance. In certain countries where the Internet may not be as widespread as in regions such as Scandinavia, some fans describe a decidedly different relationship to online fandom. Football fans who make use of online sources in Portugal, for example, spend time on mainstream professional football websites such as the very popular www.maisfutebol.iol.pt as opposed to local sites.

On the whole, however, Portuguese fans are more likely to actively engage with their friends and family in person than they are to spend large amounts of time online discussing the game. Even the moderators of the blogs contacted for this project, despite emphasising the hard work they put into their websites, stressed the belief that human contact is a key part of the football experience. Several suggested that the Internet is only a means to get more football in one's life, but should not be a substitute for belonging to a group of friends or fan club. When asked about the role of football in their social life not a single Portuguese fan interviewed brought up the Internet.

Another factor that affects fans' relationship with the Internet is age. Fans above 60 years in age are much less likely to access the Internet than younger age groups. While it may be growing in popularity as an avenue for fan interaction and expression of support, online forums are branded with an image problem in certain contexts. While many fans are proud to state that they remain loyal inside the stadiums as well as outside, others were critical of forum users, as was the case with these three Northern Irish fans:

"I haven't time to go on those sort of things, that's only for the super nerd or very sad."

"I am a working man, trying to earn a living, not just wasting my time talking to strangers."

"They [forum users] haven't got much to do with their time."

In cases such as these, the sense is that going to see a match was perfectly laudable, but spending time surfing on the Internet was not something young working men should be spending their time doing. In other national cases as well, certain fans remain highly critical of the Internet as a positive development in the lives of fans.

"Ich halte das Internet für einen Nachteil für jeden aktiven Fan, trotz der besseren Erreichbarkeit"

[I think the Internet is a disadvantage for every active fan despite the better accessibility.]

Online communities as the 'virtual terrace'

In many ways, Internet fan activity is largely an extension of fan activities at the stadium. In the case of certain clubs, this suggests that there exists a very close, very personal relationship between fans online. As with fan support in the stadium, online fans may best be seen as fan families – groups of people comprised of close personal relationships that are as strong on match day in the stands as they are at home or work in front of a desk. While the online interactions of certain fans remain very extensive, many of them strongly prefer maintaining a tight-knit, familial – and private – atmosphere in their virtual spaces. One female Norwegian fan, for example,

explained the difficulty she had in gaining acceptance when first logging on to the forum of one of her team's fan clubs.

"Jeg har aldri møtt noen fra internetforumene men jeg snakker mye med dem og er på kjernen siden minst en time daglig ... ja det er en røff tone å begynne med. De liker ikke de såkaltt, 13-24 åringene som går inn og spør ... også logger av igjen. De vil at forumet skal handle om ordentlige supportere. I begynnelsen var de røff med meg også. Men nå har jeg vært der en stund så nå er det mer ... som å snakke med mine brødre."

[I've never met anyone from the Internet forums but I talk to them a lot and I'm on the Kjernen page maybe for at least an hour every day ... Yes there is a very rough tone to start with. They don't like the so-called, the 13-14 year olds who go in and ask ... and then log off again. They want the forum to be about proper fans. At the beginning they were rough with me as well, being a girl. But now I've been there a while so now it's more ... sort of a bit like talking to my brothers.]

This reluctance to open up to 'strangers', 'foreigners' or anyone else perceived to be an 'other' proved to be especially pertinent in case of Austrian Rapid supporters. Despite the great variety of Austrian football sites available, it is evident that many of the more interactive fan sites invariably remain closed to the outsider. Just as on the pitch, many fans do not always look positively on prying eyes, and 'foreign' interference is often unwelcome; for the outsider looking in, such social interaction remains a world apart. One Rapid fan explained the seemingly exclusive (and excluding) online community in the following terms:

"Du findest im Forum keine Unterstützung, weil du als Fremder giltst. Speziell in unserem Forum kennen sich die meisten persönlich und dort hast du fast alle Hardcore Fans. Durch das Rapiddorf hat sich aus einer anonymen Internet Community eine persönliche entwickelt."

[(If you are not a known Rapid fan) you will find no support in the Internet forum, because you are seen as a stranger. In particular in our forum, most people know each other personally and that is where you have all the hardcore fans. As a result of the Rapid Village (an area by the stadium for supporters to gather), the anonymous Internet community developed into a personal one.]

For a number of fan clubs such a closed, private demeanor may ultimately stem from negative past experiences related to biased reporting or the sometimes exaggerated nature of the press on football hooliganism, and the negative reputation fans as a whole receive after such press. These may also include the

adverse experiences of specific members of the club with outsiders, particularly with researchers and journalists.

"Und die Berichterstattung in den Medien ist nie objektiv, die Reporter nehmen oft Zitate aus den Foren die aus dem Zusammenhang gerissen wurden und bringen sie in den Medien als Tatsachen, ohne darüber recherchiert zu haben."

[And the media reporting is never objective. Reporters often take quotes from the forums, which were taken out of their context and then they report it as if it was a fact, without doing research.]

French fans we contacted had a similarly strained relationship with the press, the police and even academics when it came to discussing being a football fan, a fact evident in the reluctance of many fans to open up to strangers – particularly online.

"Moi je veux bien répondre à tes questions mais tu sais, tout le monde n'est pas comme moi. On se méfie de qui se pointe, comme ça. C'est normal. Après tout ce qu'on s'est pris, en terme d'image et tout. En plus y'a les condés. Si tu poses trop de question, les mecs y vont se dire, direct, celui là c'est un flic ou un journaliste?"

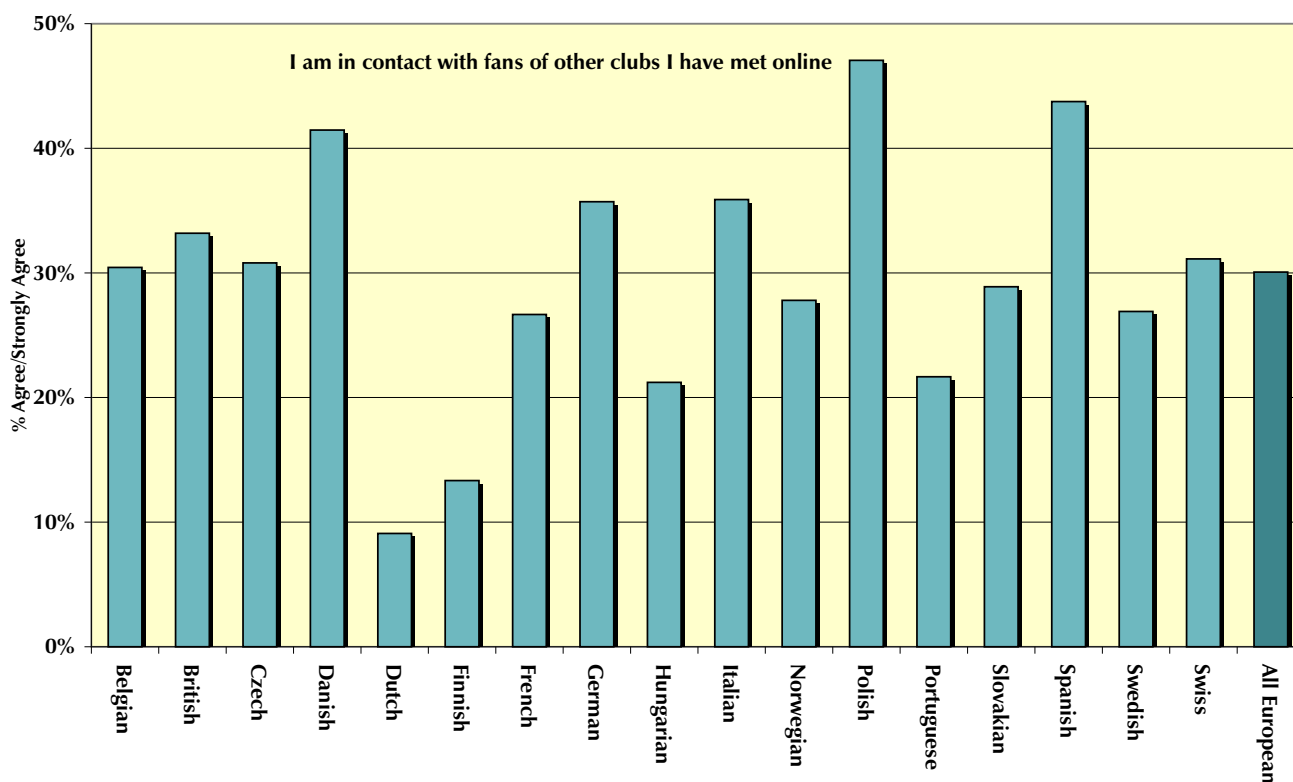
[I'm okay answering your questions, but you know, not everyone is like me. We are suspect of people who just come up like that. It's expected. After all we suffered

with our image as fan and everything. Plus there's the cops. If you ask too many questions, the guys are going to think, essentially, 'Ok, this guy, is he a cop or a journalist?']

Initially, many of the French blogs and forums seemed to be fairly dormant, but as in the 'real' situation of life on the terraces, being accepted as a fan online can often involve a period of apprenticeship in which one 'learns' to be a fan. Our researcher demonstrated his genuine interest in fan culture and spent 19 hours with a group of Le Havre fans, the Barbarians, as they travelled to an away game in Troyes. Following this exhibition of commitment and 'allegiance' he was assured that future access to the fan site would not be a problem. Our researcher was even invited to upload his photo diary onto an area of the site that had previously been off-limits.

In face, such distrust and hesitancy was just as evident in reality at the stadium. Outside a particular match at Paris's Stade de France, one fan, as he was being wired up with a microphone and a heart monitor for this research, half-jokingly expressed fear that that "les gens me prennent par un flic" [people will think I'm a cop]. He recalled a PSG match the previous year when plainclothes policemen had used recording devices to infiltrate fan groups and record their conversations for identifying individuals during a period of extensive hooliganism.

Figure 10.2 Percentage agreement about being in contact with other fans online



National variations

The online questionnaire contained an item focusing on the extent to which fans were in contact with their counterparts at other clubs via the Internet. We can see from Figure 10.2 that there were substantial cross-national variations in this context. While across Europe as a whole, 30% of fans had such contacts, the rates in Poland, Spain and Denmark were substantially higher, ranging from 41% to 47%. The Dutch seemed particularly uninterested in this channel of fan communication.

Fan Snapshot: Galatasaray, fan solidarity and the role of the web

"After the Leeds incident and the Manchester United incident there was obviously a lot of scare mongering, maybe not scaremongering, there was a lot of fear about what could happen. Liverpool were to play Galatasaray in Istanbul. The papers were full of, you know, 'It's all going to kick off: violence, revenge', all these stories were coming out in the newspapers.

There is a lot more solidarity between fan groups than most people realise which can extend across borders. The Galatasaray thing was interesting. Because it was so close to the Leeds thing a lot of us went online straight away - this is when online message boards were really coming into their own - and we approached Galatasaray fans and it turned out that they had set up one big fan organisation quite recently called ultrAslan. There used to be about 130 organisations in the stadium and they had pulled them altogether into one big group with a big committee.

We contacted them and said: 'Look, we're coming over, we are not coming over as English fans, we are coming over as Liverpool fans. That's quite a strong thing with Liverpool, we are an international club, not an English club. We were trying to let this be known to the Galatasaray fans that we were not coming over to avenge the deaths of these two lads, we're coming over to support Liverpool. And they responded: 'No worries, thanks for getting in contact. That wasn't Galatasaray fans - that was a bar owner - and Galatasaray fans support Liverpool!'

Apparently, about 90% of Galatasaray fans are also Liverpool fans, comes from the 1970s and the 1980s. Graeme Souness was manager there [1995-1996], quite infamously, when he planted the Galatasaray

flag on the centre spot of Fenerbahçe's pitch after beating them in their cup final. He grabbed a flag from the away fans and ran on and planted in the middle of the pitch. Possibly the most incendiary act in the history of Turkish football. After that you will always be a hero, and a few Liverpool players ended up playing there.

As a result the ultrAslan said: 'We are Liverpool fans, the majority are Liverpool fans. You'll have no trouble, we'll arrange to meet you'. The Galatasaray thing worked and got a lot of coverage. I did an interview with BBC World Service, telling them what we were trying to do. We met with some of the fans, had a few beers with them and they said: 'We'll organise a trip for you up the Bosphorus', and all sorts. It was so unlike the projections in the tabloids, you know the 'Welcome to hell'. Since then, because the websites have been there, people have used the websites as conduits, to approach opposition fans. Speak to the opposition fans early as soon as the draws are announced and, you know, 'This is who we are, see you out there,' and make initial contact.

Some organise friendly matches with opposition supporters, or if they can't do that meet up for a few beers. Fiorentina have just been in contact regarding the game tonight, but we had to say them it was going to be difficult to meet up because the majority of Liverpool fans will still be in Milan. You get a lot of contact through the sites. We have good contact with German clubs always, they've got good fan groups and the clubs tend to support the fans, fan projects where they provide a bit of space in the club for fan groups to organise their support - banners, flag making, it's a club house as well. Every year two hundred Borussia Mönchengladbach fans will come over to a Liverpool game and Liverpool fans will go over for a Mönchengladbach game - that's been happening since 1977. The relationship has built up. We played them about three times in four years."

11 Fan sub-groups

The online questionnaire generated data that we have summarised in a number of previous sections of this report. We have noted where most European fans share very similar views and where important cross-national differences appear to exist. We have not so far, however, examined whether there are different types or sub-groups of fans, irrespective of their nationality, that might be revealed in their responses to the questionnaire. While all fans have membership of a common culture, are there discernable differences among them?

A standard method of examining such data in the social sciences is factor analysis. This approach is concerned not with responses to single questions but with the patterns that exist in the data – the underlying dimensions. While the mathematics of factor analysis is complex, the principle is quite straightforward and involves examination of how individuals' responses to questions are correlated – if they strongly agree with one item, for example, are they more likely to strongly agree with some other questions.

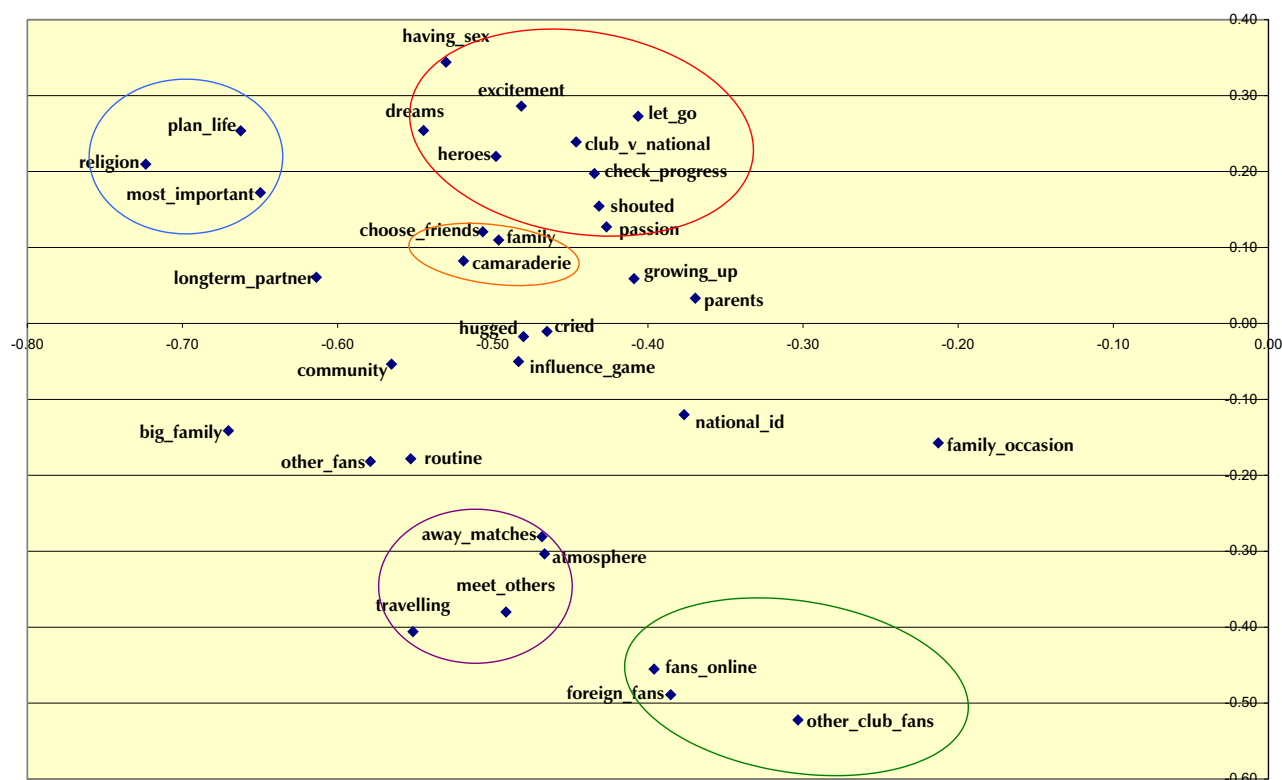
Figure 11.1 shows the summary results of this analysis. The labels on the chart are shorthand references to the various questions, many of which we have already seen. We note that some of these responses cluster together in ways which make sense. At the top of the chart, for example, there is a group of

items indicated by the red ellipse. These are all to do with passion and dedication – football is associated with excitement, passion; fans can let themselves go emotionally; they dream about football and going to the match is preferred over having sex. This excitement and passion spills over into their everyday lives where they check up on the progress of their team at home or at work. It is reasonable, then, to label this cluster as the 'Passionates' group.

Not only do the questionnaire items cluster together in this two-dimensional space, individual respondents also have 'scores' on each of the axes. By examining these we can get a fairly clear picture of the proportion of fans who belong in this group. The result in this case is that 31% of all fans fit into this sub-category as well as having membership of the overarching fan culture. In Britain, there are slightly more Passionates – 33%.

To the left of the Passionates cluster is a group of items indicated by the blue ellipse. This group shares with the first the same sense of passion and excitement – they are similarly high on the vertical axis. But they go further. They see following football as a religious experience, they plan their life around it and for them, football is the most important thing in their lives. We can, therefore, reasonably call them 'Fanatics'. Across Europe 12% of fans fit into this category – rather more in Spain than in Germany

Figure 11.1. Factor analysis of questionnaire data



Slightly lower down on the chart there is a small group (orange ellipse) where we have people for whom football is essentially a social experience. They feel that people around them in the stadiums are like a big family, they revel in the camaraderie and they even choose their friends from the people who support their team. We can label these the 'Sociables' – a small but significant minority (4%) overall but larger (9%) in Germany and Spain.

At the bottom of the graph we have two further distinct groupings. To the left (purple ellipse) are fans who are attracted to football because of the travel to other grounds at away matches and the opportunities to meet people. They also relish the atmosphere they experience in the stadiums as much as the games themselves. We could call these the 'Travellers' and 9% of fans overall fit into this category – again more significant in Spain (18%).

To the bottom right is a grouping which mainly appreciates the contact with fans of other clubs, particularly those in other countries with whom they communicate online. We could call these the 'Internationalists' – 18% of fans across Europe with very little variation between nationalities.

We should note that some responses – such as the one about influencing the game – just float around the middle of the chart in no systematic pattern. This does not mean that they are unimportant – just that there is little variance in the responses. So, both Passionates and Fanatics might equally feel that they influence the outcome of the game to the same extent.

Summary

In this analysis we have, in effect, identified five personality types of European football fans. Each group identified has certain characteristics that are outlined below. Next to each group is a percentage figure assigned to each group. Note that this does not add up to 100% as these groups are the extremes of the fan types and therefore represent only a proportion of all European fans surveyed.

Passionates: 31%

For this group, football is about excitement and passion. These fans would rather go to an important game than have sex. Their greatest heroes are professional footballers. Watching football is the only occasion when they can let themselves go emotionally, and they dream about football. Such excitement and passion spills over into their 'everyday' world outside of football, and they feel compelled to check up on their team's progress at work and at home through the media.

Internationalists: 18%

This group of fans mainly appreciates the contact with fans of other clubs, particularly those in other countries. They are in

contact with the fans of other clubs online, and look to build relationships around football with them.

Fanatics: 12%

This group share with the first group the same sense of passion and excitement, but they go further. They see following football as a religious experience, they plan their life around it and for it. Football is the most important thing in their lives.

Voyagers: 9%

These fans are attracted to football because of the experience of travelling to and from games with other fans. Being around other fans in the atmosphere of the grounds is as important as watching the game itself. They relish the atmosphere and experience in the stadiums, as much as the game. Away matches are particularly emotionally charged for this group.

Sociables: 4%

This group of fans consider football as essentially a social experience. They associate football with family, and in a sense, the people around them on the terraces become their family. They revel in the friendship and camaraderie and they even choose their friends according to which team they support.

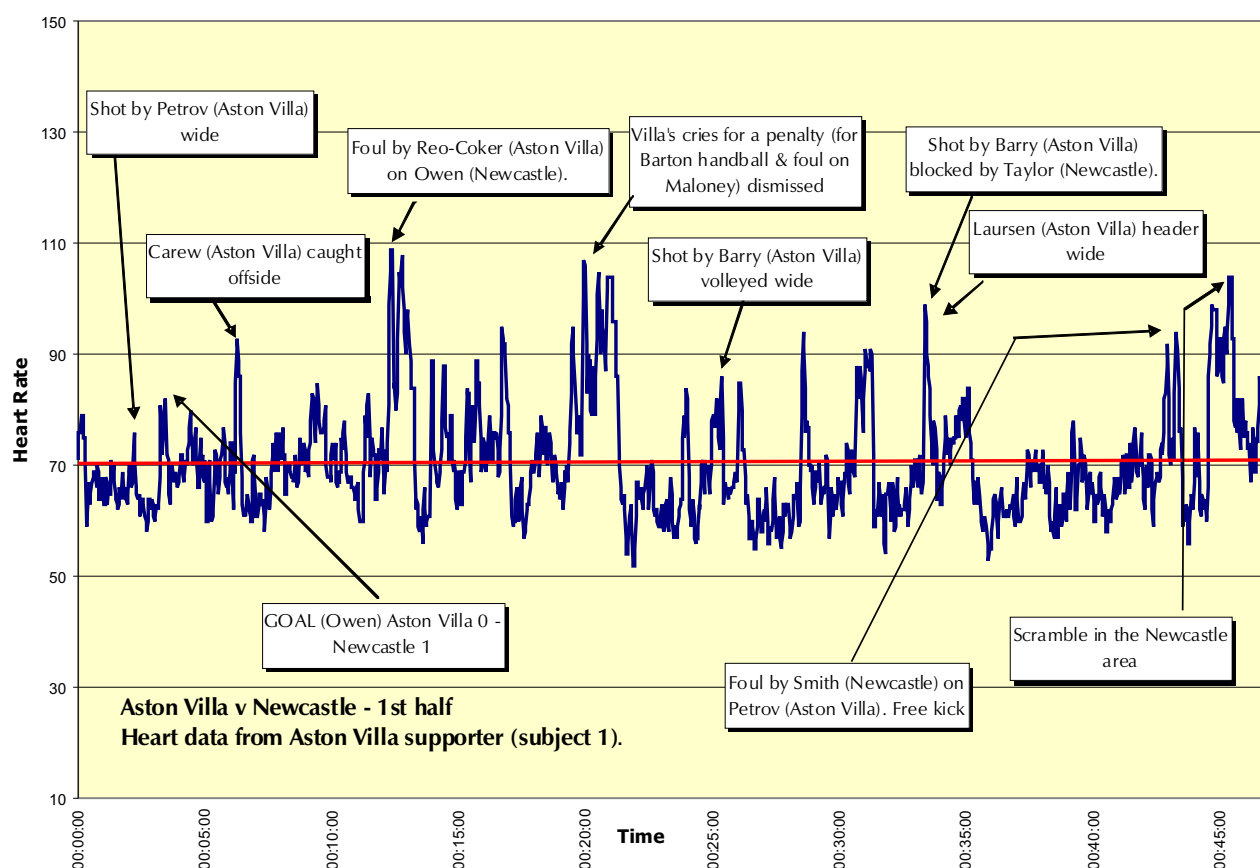
12 Football Passions – human biology

An essential component of the Football Passions project involved sending researchers to accompany groups of fans at selected matches across Europe. In total, SIRC and its research associates attended 18 matches in the UK and the Republic of Ireland, Spain, Italy, France, the Netherlands and Germany. The aim of this aspect of the research was to observe and interact with fans before, during and after matches. A sub set of fans were fitted with Timex Digital Heart Rate Monitors (model T54051) and Timex Data Recorders (model T5G751 S2) to track fluctuations in fans' heart rates while engaged in active support of their teams. The data recorders detect and store information from the heart rate sensors at 2 second intervals. The resulting data can then be exported as a flat data file for analysis. While one might reasonably expect that peaks in heart rate would occur with the scoring of a goal, other notable events before and throughout the game also produced significant increases in heart rate indicating physiological and psychological arousal.

A game of two halves – the disappointment

Fig 12.1 below is the heart data from a male Aston Villa fan during the first and, as a Villa fan, rather torturous, half of the

Figure 12.1 Aston Villa v Newcastle United, February 09, 2008.



game at Villa Park against Newcastle United. In the Holte End, early optimism was scuppered by the arrival of a Newcastle goal in the 4th minute and from that point on Aston Villa were chasing the game. The significant peaks in heart rate from the first half coincided with a variety of events. Interestingly, the highest rate of 109 bpm, accompanied a foul by Reo-Coker on the goal-scorer Michael Owen whose every touch of the ball is jeered suitably by Villa fans. Neutralising a key threat, it would appear, is a source of particular excitement for this young Villa fan, or perhaps he simply feels that Owen is playing for the foul.

In the 21st minute, the home side has, according to the Villa fans, a legitimate penalty appeal denied by the referee. The following extract from soccerlens.com, details the 'crime':

"Replays show that not only did Barton handle the ball earlier in the penalty area, he also threw Maloney to the ground. Villa very unlucky not to get penalty."

At this point the subject's heart rate approaches 110 bpm. A brief attacking spell in the 33rd minute is reflected in a less significant rise just under 100 bpm. During the closing stage of the first half a skirmish in front of the Newcastle goal also appears to stimulate our Villa fan. While the attack is easily dealt with by the Newcastle defence, the prospect and psychological advantage of getting an equaliser at this stage of

the game certainly seems to have an impact on his level of arousal. Following this final opportunity to redress the balance, the subject's heart rate 'normalises' presumably with the acceptance that his team are going back to the dressing room 1-0 down. The subject's heart rate for the duration of the first half averages 71 bpm, with a peak reading of 109 bpm. The arrival of the half-time whistle is met with boos from some Aston Villa supporters who feel their team have underperformed. According to researchers at the game, however, the atmosphere had 'lightened noticeably' by this stage with Villa finishing the stronger of the two sides.

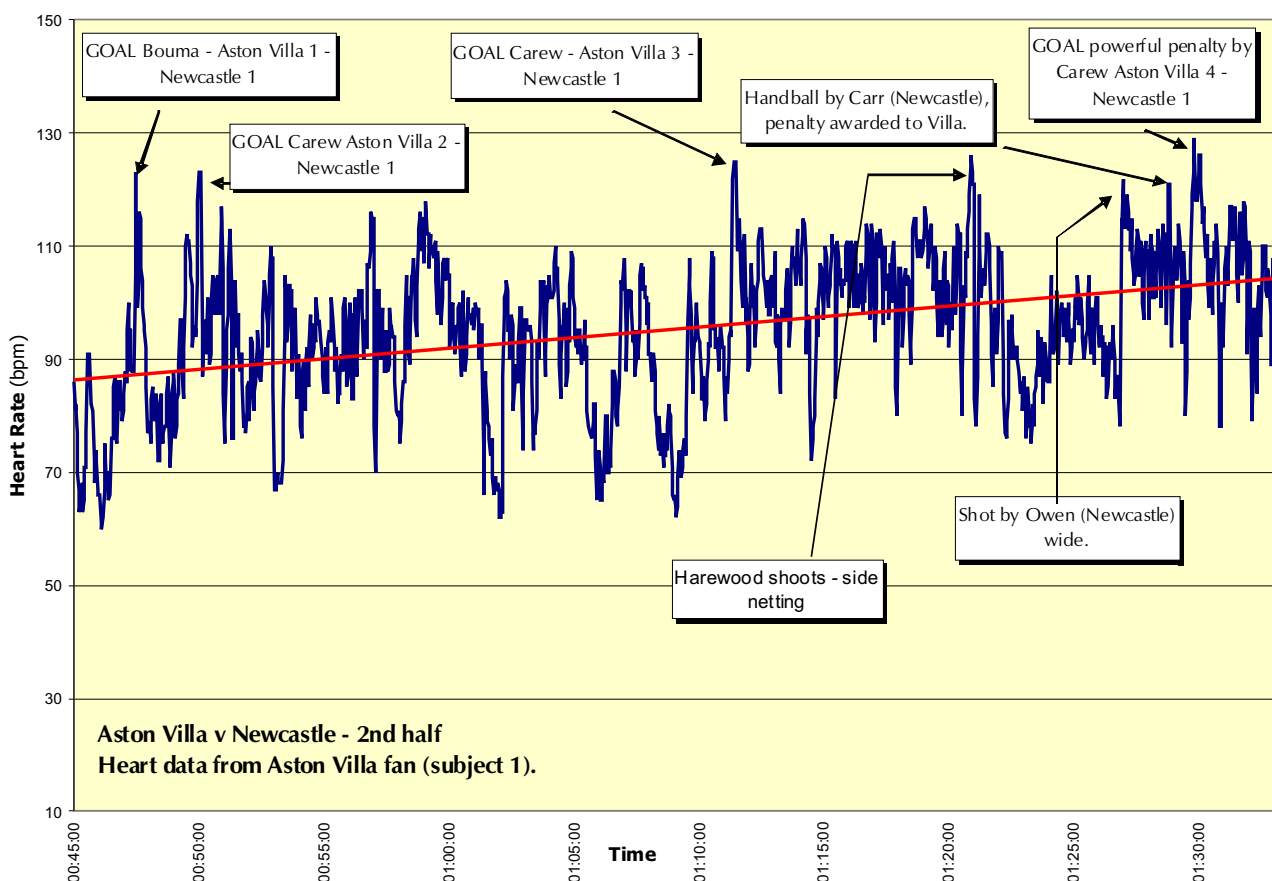
A game of two halves – the comeback

Figure 12.2 illustrates the heart rate of the same subject for the duration of the second half. The trendline on the chart indicates a significant rise in heart rate during this period (in stark contrast to the flat trendline visible in Figure 12.1). At the restart the fan's heart rate (86 bpm) already exceeds the rate recorded at the beginning of the match (79 bpm) – Aston Villa's strong performance in the closing minutes of the first half seems to have given the fan a renewed sense of hope. The subject's faith in his team is rewarded almost instantly as Aston Villa equalise just two minutes into the second half, the crowd

go wild and are still standing and celebrating the goal when a second is added three minutes later. The heart monitors record 123 bpm for both goals.

Two fouls are awarded to Newcastle as a result of infringements by Carew and Reo-Coker in the 57th and 60th minutes and show as minor peaks in Figure 12.2 (115 bpm and 118 bpm respectively). In the 71st minute Carew scores his second, putting Aston Villa 3-1 up and increasing the subject's heart rate to 125 bpm – a peak equalled 10 minutes later when a shot from Harewood (Aston Villa) hits the side netting. The dying minutes of the game are packed with incident and this is reflected clearly in the data from the heart monitor. Owen (Newcastle) creates a shooting chance only to hit the ball wide of the target. Two minutes later Carr's handball results in a penalty being awarded to Newcastle. Carew is handed the opportunity to take the spot kick, scores, claims a hat-trick and sends the subject's heart rate to 129 bpm – the maximum level recorded for the entire match. In a high-scoring half dominated by Aston Villa the major peaks in heart rate clearly coincide with the goals. As in the first half, however, fouls, refereeing decisions and shots – both on and off target – increase the level of arousal in the subject. From Figure 12.2 the fan's level of excitement is palpable as Aston Villa come

Figure 12.2 Aston Villa v Newcastle United, February 09, 2008.



from behind to snatch an entertaining, eventful and deserving 4-1 win.

Losing the advantage

Figure 12.3 charts the heart rate of a St Pauli fan during the second half of his team's match against Carl Zeiss Jena and, similar to the previous graph, shows a steady increase in heart rate.

St Pauli start the second half 1-0 up, but within the first 10 minutes of the period Jena score an equaliser and the fan's heart rate increases to 106 bpm. For the next 25 minutes the most significant peaks in heart rate coincide with the actions of the opposition – perhaps reflecting not only levels of arousal, but also more than a little anxiety as St Pauli 'lose their grip' on the game.

Amrhein's shot in the 61st minute provides a 'heart in the mouth' moment for the St Pauli fan when the Jena player's effort hits the post; sending the heart rate of the home fan to 110 bpm. Jena's fight back is given an additional boost when a penalty is awarded in their favour. Simak scores and sends the subject's rate up to 104 bpm. In the 77th minute his heart rate hits 117 bpm as the Jena keeper is booked for time-wasting; the peak here reflecting an agreement with the officials' decision but also perhaps a certain level of frustration. His

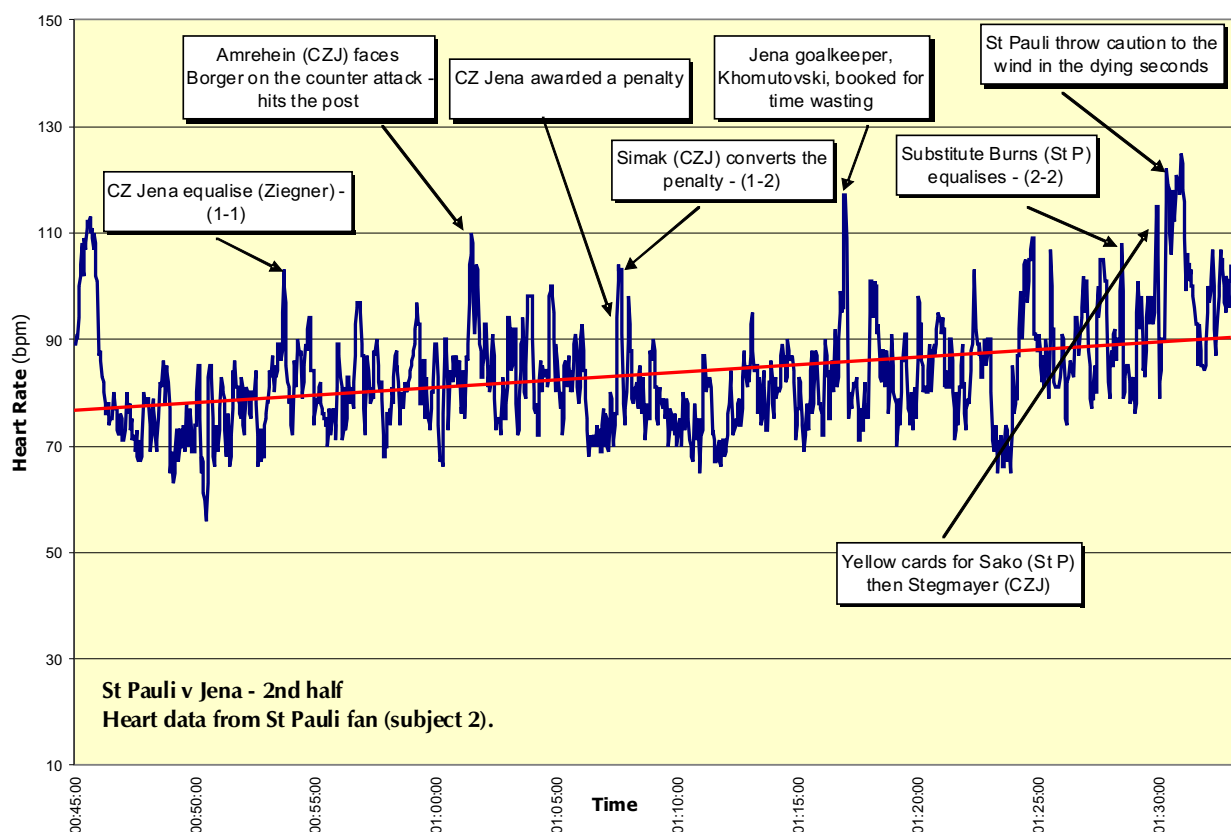
anxiety is relieved somewhat with Burns' equaliser in the 88th minute and as his team 'throw caution to the wind' in the closing minutes of the game the fan's heart rate hits its highest level (125 bpm).

Grinding out the result

While some matches on the fixture list might promise particularly eventful encounters there is obviously an element of luck involved in trying to 'be there' when goals are plentiful, the football is flowing, the fans are on song and the match is packed with incident. The Aston Villa game certainly 'ticked' most of these boxes and it was probably a little fortuitous that we had chosen to 'wire up' home rather than away fans. So how do the fans' emotions and levels of arousal fluctuate during games that perhaps do not necessarily meet these criteria? Fortunately for the project, but perhaps less so for the researchers on the terraces, SIRC was also able to collect data from these games.

Figure 12.4 below highlights fluctuations in the heart rate of a Paris Saint Germain fan during the first half of PSG's clash with Monaco at the Parc des Princes. Again we see the arrival of the players onto the pitch and their introduction to the crowd as an emotional high point of the match experience. The heart rate of this subject reaches an extraordinary peak of 187 bpm at this point, a rate from which it gradually – and perhaps

Figure 12.3 St Pauli v Carl Zeiss Jena, February 08, 2008.



thankfully – decreases until the 40th minute of the game. Anticipation and the 'fan-fare' of the build up to the game play a crucial role here. The context of the match also adds to the intensity of the experience. Fans get immersed in team talk often days before the actual event. By the time match day comes around countless discussions, whether online or face-to-face, would have taken place regarding team selection, tactics, team formation, the current form of players and managers as well as the importance of the next encounter to team's standing in the league. Prior to this match on February 23rd, PSG were perilously close to the relegation zone and Monaco, while lying towards the top of Ligue 1, were smarting from a 6-0 defeat at the hands of Bordeaux.

The game, ending in a hard-fought draw (1-1), saw few real chances in the first half. A total of 34 fouls occurred during the match, over 2/3 of these were in the first half. A number of attacking moves, particularly from PSG, were viewed by the referee to be offside, which also interrupted the flow of play. The heart rate of the subject reflects the rather fragmented nature of the opening period – and perhaps his frustration – and it is not until the 40th minute that the deadlock is broken with Rothen's (a former Monaco player) shot from the left side of the box forcing a save. The subject's heart rate increases rapidly – by 70 bpm in less than 40 seconds – with the attacking move culminating in the attempt on goal. The PSG

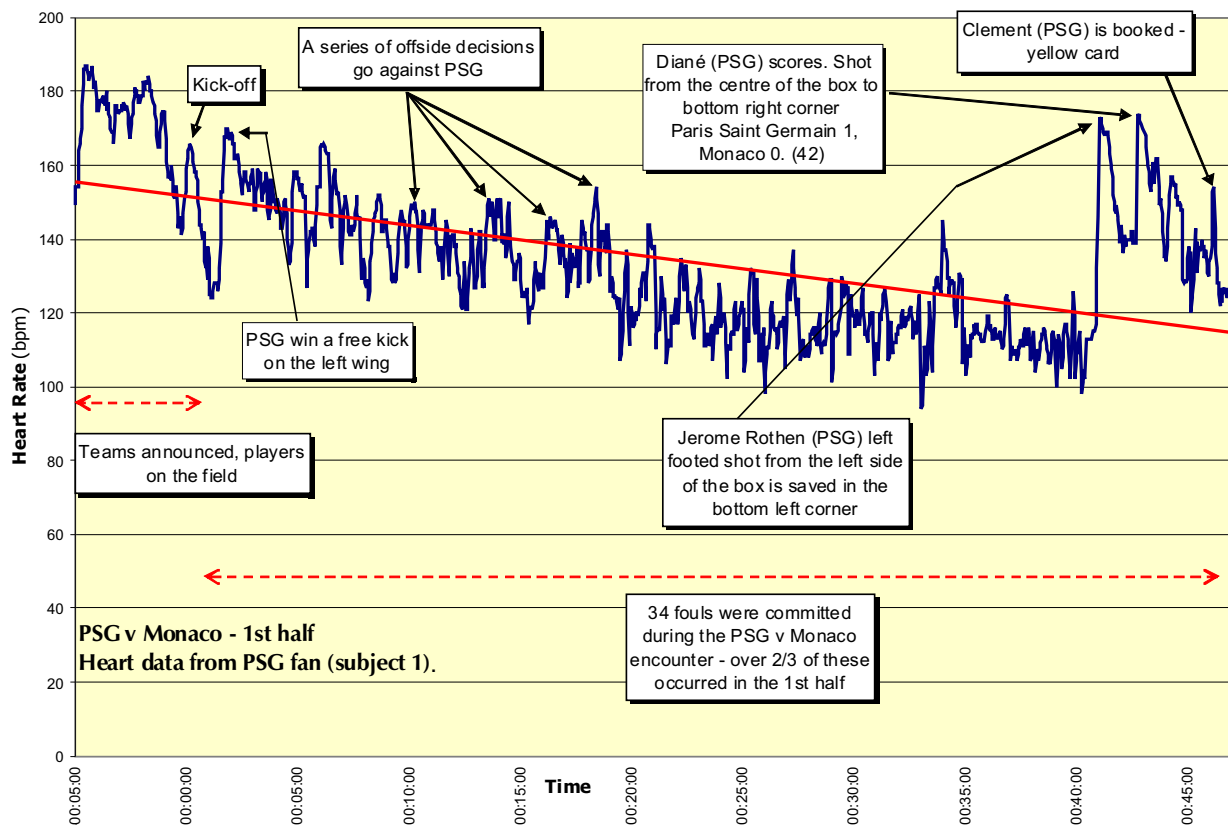
fan's heart rate falls to just below 140 bpm, only to rise again to 172 bpm with Diané's goal in the 41st minute, putting PSG 1-0 in front. Despite the dramatic increases in heart rate towards the end of the first half, the level of arousal in the subject when his team scores is not as high as the rate recorded before kick-off. Consistent to the data from other games, the sense of anticipation prior to the match elevates heart rate to levels equivalent to those accompanying goals.

To the uninitiated spectator 'grinding out' a win or a draw may not result in the most enticing of spectacles, but to the 'true' fan, who understands the game, appreciates the stakes involved and the tactics used, this can be a rather moot point. Tenacity and in some cases good fortune can often mean the difference between finishing towards the top of the league and mid-table, or between mid-table and fighting to avoid relegation. The heart data collected from the Paris St Germain fan clearly indicates that excitement and passion is not always the team playing 'pretty football' and it is not just the taking part that counts.

The away game

For many of the fans interviewed travelling to away matches is a way of demonstrating their true commitment to, and passion for, their team. The most fervent fans attend all away games and this level of support requires considerable dedication,

Figure 12.4 PSG v Monaco, February 23, 2008.



both financially and socially. For those constrained by the inconvenient practicalities of time or money, the choice of away game is often dependent on whether the fixture meets a certain set of criteria; whether the match is important in terms of league position; whether it is against a 'big team' or prestigious side; whether it is a local derby involving historical rivalries; or, from a more practical point of view, whether the match is relatively nearby.

Figure 12.5 is the heart rate data from a Le Havre fan during their away match against Troyes (1st half dark blue, 2nd half light blue). What is immediately apparent is the consistently high heart rate of the subject – averaging 148 bpm and peaking at 186 bpm. The fact that this is an away match may play a part here. The Le Havre fans, the Barbarians, meet at 2.00pm, load their rented minibus with beer and music, place a Barbarian scarf in the front window and embark on their 5 hour drive to Troyes. The journey is time for friends – listening to music, drinking beer, chanting and talking (almost exclusively) football. Travelling to an away match prolongs the experience and perhaps amplifies the anticipation.

By the time the match kicks-off 6½ hours have elapsed, the subject's heart rate is nearly 150 bpm and clearly he is ready for the game. At the stadium the Le Havre fans are seriously outnumbered by the those from the host side. Part of the role of the away contingent is to make their presence felt, both by

the other supporters and the players on the field. For the fifty-strong Le Havre contingent this requires supreme vocal effort aided by the encouragement and direction of the experienced 'Kapo' who coordinates the chants and motivates the fans (see Figure 12.6 below)

Despite early pressure from the home side a Le Havre counter attack produces the first goal of the match in the 22nd minute. Hoarau, the scorer, is unable to capitalise on a further chance 9 minutes later, but the visitors finish the first half in front. The Troyes v Le Havre encounter plays out in a similar fashion to the Villa v Newcastle match. The second half starts well for the hosts but it is not until the 73rd minute that they manage to equalise. The final 15 minutes of the match are disastrous for the Barbarians. In the 79th minute Noro converts a penalty for Troyes which followed a Le Havre handball and just 3 minutes later the home team is up 3-1. The sacking of Le Havre is complete when Obbadi adds a fourth goal in the 90th minute. For the closing 10 minutes of the game the Barbarians stop chanting, despite the best efforts of the Kapo and the fans become less interested in the match. Realising that the game is now out of reach, the heart rate of the despondent Le Havre fan decreases which perhaps reflects a switching of role from an active to more passive style of support.

Figure 12.5 Troyes v Le Havre, March 03, 2008.

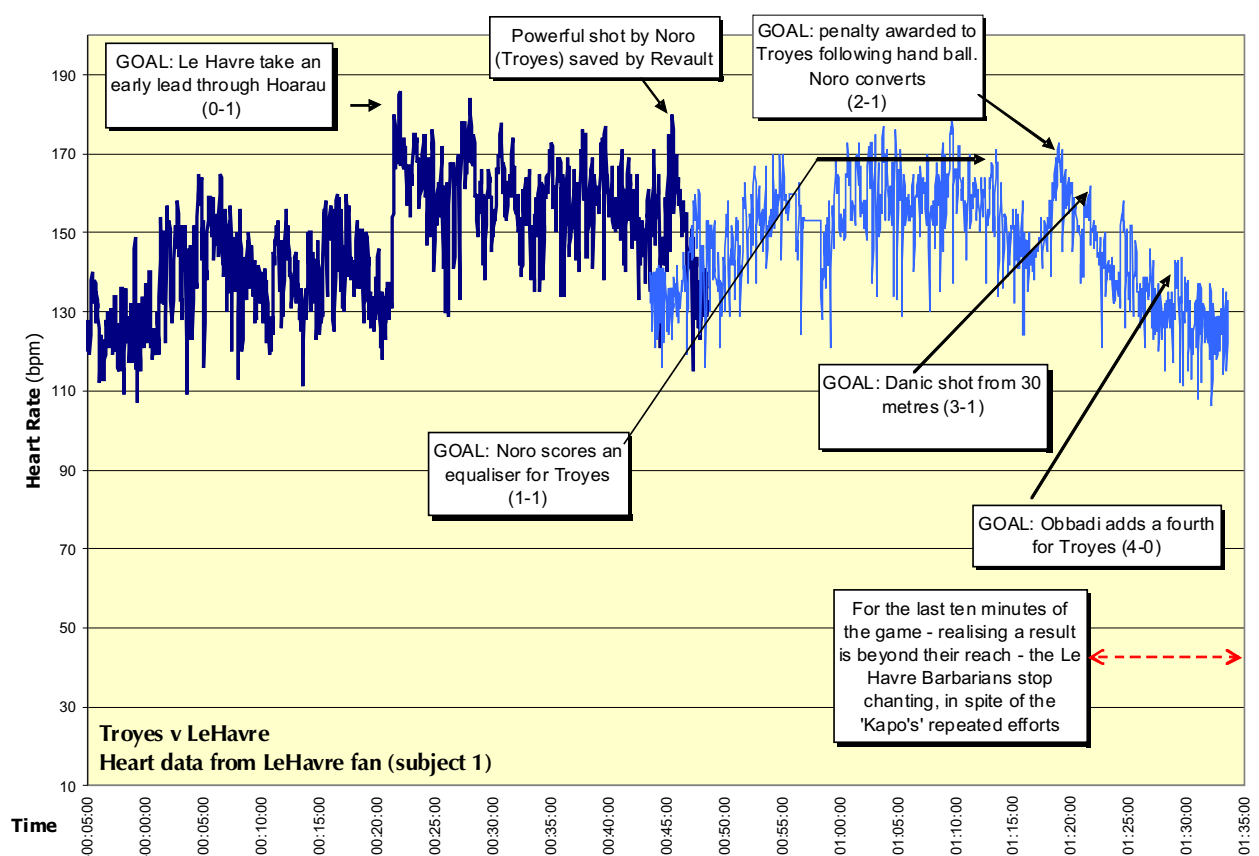


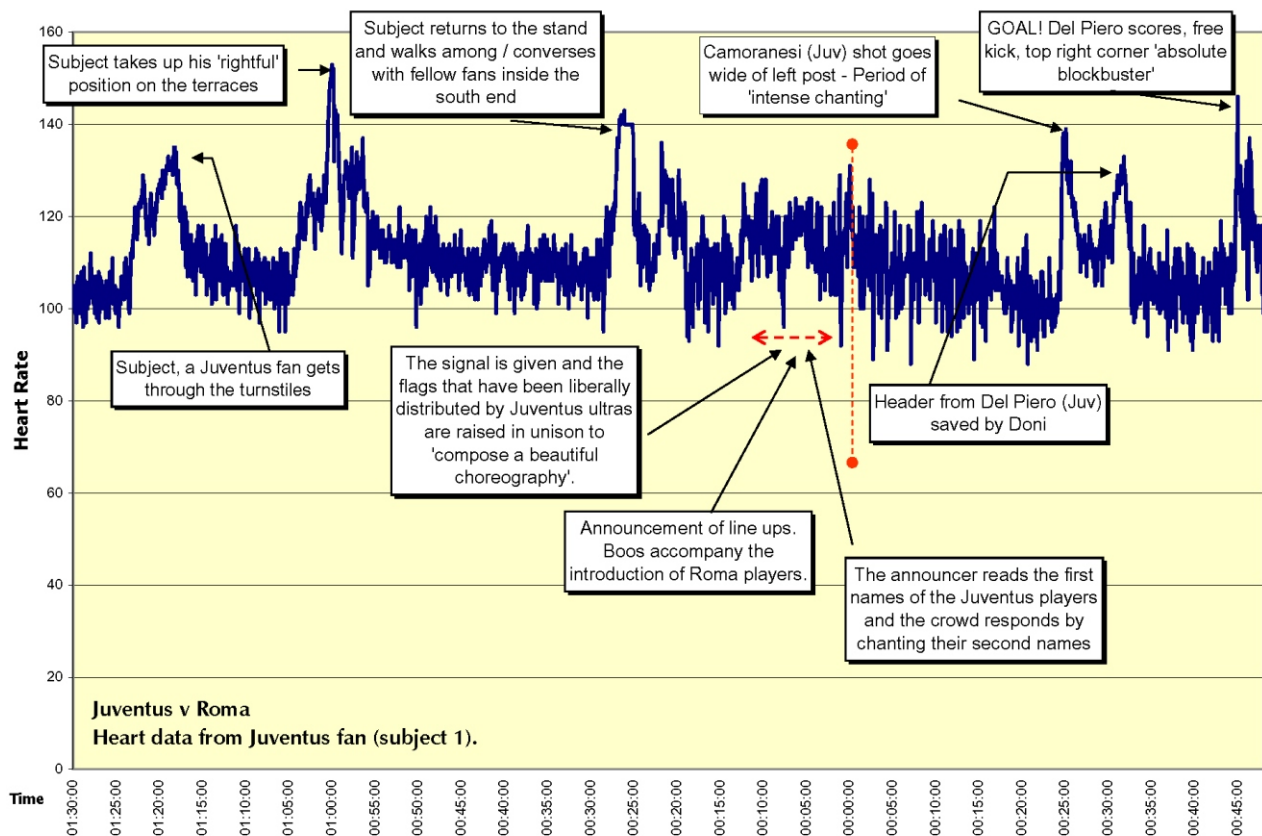
Figure 12.6 The 'Kapo'
Troyes v Le Havre, February 29, 2008.



The allure of the terraces

The previous charts show the heart data of subjects in the minutes before kick-off, but what of the preceding hours? A senior member of the Magenta Drughì, a well established group of Juventus Ultras, agreed to wear the heart monitor and help us find out. Figure 12.7 is a record of his heart rate taken 90 minutes before kick-off until the end of the first half. The first peak coincides with the subject passing through the

Figure 12.7 Juventus v Roma, February 16, 2008.



security checks and entering the stadium through the turnstiles at the South end. At this point the subject's heart rate reaches 134 bpm. The second, higher peak of 152 bpm, occurs when he climbs the steps, takes his rightful place on the terraces and takes in the view (see Figure 12.8 below). Reports from fans across Europe suggest that the first sight of the pitch is a truly magical experience for some.

"The green, seeing the pitch for the first time, it sucks you in."

Having shown the researchers their allocated position on the terraces – the second line, just behind the Magenta banner – the fan left to perform some of his organisational and 'managerial' duties such as selling scarves, hats and shirts for the Magenta group. Seat numbers displayed on the tickets are largely irrelevant. The organisation of places is hierarchical in the Drughì's sector: chiefs and older members occupy the first row, while the others sit in the rows behind. Our subject's position is in the first line.

He returns to the terraces after approximately half an hour and his subsequent increase in heart rate perhaps indicates that, jobs done, he can now get down to the serious business of the game. A designated chant leader has been appointed in the absence of the regular who is unable to attend. He remains on the banister of the second ring, the 'balcony', with his back to

the field facing the other fans: his role is not only to encourage them to sing, but also to ensure that their chants are coordinated with those of the other Juventus fans in the south end.

Figure 12.8 View from la Curva.
Juventus v Roma, February 16, 2008.



A few minutes before the match, plastic black and white flags are distributed: fans are required to raise them in unison only when given the signal by the 'director' – and absolutely not before – to 'compose a beautiful choreography' (see Figure 12.9). Over the public address system the team line-ups are announced: first, the one for Roma, which is ceremoniously booed; then the one for Juventus. The speaker proceeds to shout the first name of each Juventus player and the fans 'answer' the call by chanting the second name. Then the official song of Juventus is played and many fans, our subject included, sing.

The most emotional period for the subject appears to be during the build up to the match and in particular being greeted by the sight of the pitch. Not until the 45th minute when Del Piero scores a magnificent free kick in front of the

Figure 12.9 The 'beautiful choreography'
Juventus v Roma, February 16, 2008.



South End does his heart rate, at 146 bpm, approach that level. The previous peak in the 24th minute of the match, while coinciding with an attacking move by Camoranesi, is also during a period when the Ultras are particularly vocal and the chanting intense.

The heart data clearly demonstrate that football passion is not simply about goals; other events generate as much if not more excitement among the participating fans. Fouls, contentious decisions, goal mouth action, the players coming on to the pitch are all essential components of the spectacle and experience. For some, the anticipation is as arousing as the game itself.