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Watching Football in the Fan Park: Mediatization, Spectatorship and Fan Identity

Karin Becker, Robert Kautsky and Andreas Widholm

Introduction

The football fan park, originally a 'surrogate stadium' for fans without tickets, has now become a live venue in its own right, and a new arena in the culture of football fandom. In these sites of exceptionally high 'media density', football fan identities become flexible and mobile, as participants in these venues interact with an increasingly mediatized social environment. In this chapter, we explore the interlocking issues of mediatization and globalization and their impact on the construction and negotiation of football fan identities, as matches between national teams are broadcast to these public viewing areas. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork carried out in the FIFA Fan Parks in Berlin, Cape Town and Rio during the 2010 World Cup, we argue that the fan park, as a mediatized space, has become a site where fan identities are constructed in new ways, facilitating a cosmopolitan understanding of football.

Public viewing areas first became a success during the 2006 World Cup, spaces where Germans and football tourists could meet and experience 'the beautiful game' on giant television screens. Four years later, when South Africa hosted the World Cup, fan parks were established in nine South African cities and five major football cities across the globe. FIFA counted over six million visitors to the fan parks, evidence that the 'sport-media nexus' (Rowe 2011) has entered a phase of increasingly public, mobile and mass-participatory media practices. At the same time, these arenas have inherited many of the characteristics of the modern sport stadium: they are structured around consumption of authorized merchandise and branding of mediagenic products, and they also serve as important resources for global sport journalism. Thus, the fan parks are not only venues for extensive media consumption, but also places where audiences become increasingly commodified by the media (cf. Crawford 2004).

It is well known that the integration of sport, business and media is the most significant factor behind the accelerating globalization of contemporary sport culture (Rowe 2004, 2011; Schirato 2007). Media and especially television have facilitated worldwide consumption in real time, expanding spectatorship and various practices of fandom across territorial and linguistic boundaries (Giulianotti and Robertson 2009; Rowe 2011). The Internet has taken this development even further, enabling all sorts of audiences to interact in digital social networks, forming de-territorialized fan communities (cf. Jenkins 2008). Further, although the World Cup is a competition between nations, its capacity of fostering national belonging

should not be taken for granted. Instead, the World Cup can be seen as a period where national identity is promoted as well as contested (Boyle and Hanes 2000), and it also opens up for cross-cultural or even cosmopolitan meetings (Giulianotti and Robertson 2009).

The fan park, attracting thousands of participants from all over the world, is an example of a new form of spectatorship that has arisen in connection with global sporting events. As distinct from online fan communities and the conventional television audience, here spectators come together *in real life* to enjoy football together. Yet they are not ticketholders gathered in the stadium, but are experiencing the match exclusively as a mediated event. In this environment of collective spectatorship, participants form and renegotiate their identities as football fans in a complex interaction with other participants, with the events on screen, and with other media present in the fan park. This phenomenon cannot be understood apart from a theoretical framework that is sensitive to how mediatization transforms fandom as a cultural and social practice.

The football fan park or public viewing area is a mediaspace (Couldry and McCarthy 2004) where new forms of spectatorship arise, providing an ideal case for investigating transnational football fandom as performed during the mega sport event of the World Cup. We lay the groundwork for our analysis with a discussion of how identity formations of the football fan have been theorized, focusing on issues of media consumption and nationalism, and following Beck (2006) and Sandvoss (2005), we argue for a situational perspective toward new formations of fandom. We then turn to the mediatization of fandom and consider how the increasing commodification of the fan is related to the globalization of sport. The empirical material is then presented, focusing first on the fan park as a mediaspace, second on the signs of fan identity among spectators, third on their accounts of why they came as expressions of cosmopolitan identity and finally on how the intersecting media flows in the fan park become reflexive which in turn has an impact on the performance of football fandom among spectators in the fan park as well as on transnational television.

The All Consuming Fan?

Research on fans and fan identities has undergone significant theoretical development over the years and can be traced to more general debates within audience studies on the relationship between structure and agency (Abercrombie and Longhurst 1998). As noted by Cornell Sandvoss (2005) early academic approaches to fandom tended to emphasize structure on behalf of agency, depicting fans as obsessed victims of mass culture. The idea that audiences more or less passively accept media messages was opposed by scholars within the second strand of audience research. Hebdige (1979) and Fiske (1991) are examples of scholars whose early work on fandom clearly contested the concept of the 'passive consumer'. In addition to its more open perspective on the audience as active, the new paradigm also involved a shift in focus from production to consumption of cultural products. For scholars such as Hebdige and Fiske, fandom was never just about passive consumption, but offered a research outlook in which the audience was given the opportunity to negotiate and even challenge cultural meanings circulating in the mass media. Without a doubt, making meaningful interpretations of symbols derived from the media industry is key to contemporary formations of cultural identities and thus also to various expressions of fandom, whether among football supporters, Bruce Springsteen fans or opera enthusiasts. However, as noted by Abercrombie and Longhurst (1998) countercultural or 'subcultural' interpretations of media texts can hardly explain all forms of media consumption, and especially not the engagements with texts that characterize the cultural processes connected to fandom more

generally. In their view the audience's active engagement with texts is political only if the individuals involved interpret and manifest their readings politically. They describe the performance/spectacle paradigm as introducing a way to analyse audiences as situated, and where reflexivity, performance and identity are central. Jenkins (1992, 2006) is perhaps the most influential scholar defending this position, and he highlights specifically how new media technologies have transformed the possibilities for participation and interaction with regard to fan cultures.

In an attempt to map different football 'spectator identities' Giulianotti (2003) has distinguished between four different positions, namely supporters, followers, fans and flaneurs. These are the outcome of a categorization based on two binary features: 'hot' versus 'cool' and 'traditional' versus 'consumer'. Whereas the hot versus cool axis describes an individual's emotional investment in the sport, the traditional versus consumer axis defines the extent to which this investment is based on cultural, political knowledge and habits, or if it is based mainly on a market-related relationship. The identity of the supporter, characterized by a longstanding personal solidarity with a specific football club, is rooted in traditions and an intense emotional investment that does not depend on market-related products. The follower, on the other hand, is interested in football in a more general and 'cool' sense, following individual players, clubs or even specific national teams and possibly supporting more than one club. The follower nevertheless upholds, in Giulianotti's terms, several 'nested identities' that do not contradict the traditions and customs embraced by the supporter, and do not depend on consumption. In contrast, the fan translates an intense emotional commitment to a club and its stars into consumption of products. According to Giulianotti, the modern football fan is constituted through his participation in the expanding process of hypercommodification, buying shirts, football magazines, television subscriptions and expensive sports travel arrangements in order to secure his relationship with the club. The final category, the flaneur, illustrates the postmodern form of football spectatorship, a cosmopolitan who acquires 'economic, cultural and educational capital' by collecting experiences, either through interaction with 'cold media' such as television or the Internet (cf. McLuhan 1964) or through travel (Giulianotti 2003). The flaneur has developed a typical tourist gaze towards the game, and is thereby encircled by a set of market-oriented virtual relationships.

Although generally applicable to the participants in the fan parks, certain features of Giulianotti's model of fan identities need to be reconsidered. In particular, since the World Cup is a battle between nations rather than clubs, the relationship between national and cosmopolitan aspects of fandom must be examined, and a distinction drawn between hot and cool forms of nationalism. Following Anthony Giddens, nationalism may be understood as 'symbols or beliefs, which attribute a communality of experience to the members of a particular regional, ethnic or linguistic category' (Giddens 1985: 13). During the football World Cup, hot symbolic articulations of nationhood flourish in the media and fans from around the world actively manifest their identities through rituals connected to national self-expression. However, as shown by Michael Billig (1995), the primary form of nationalism is not explicitly articulated or performed, but embedded in habits of everyday life that promote 'cool' senses of belonging, or what Billig calls 'banal nationalism'. Sandvoss (2005) proposes a definition of fandom that would provide for greater heterogeneity, taking into account its various forms, degrees and motives. From such a perspective, he has shown that football fan groups, for example, are often heterogeneous entities where identification and belonging are manifested quite differently. Some fans draw upon symbols of a football club or a national team in nationalistic terms, whereas others approach the same team from a multicultural horizon. This provides us with interesting examples of how we must understand identity formation in relation to, and as part of fan culture.

Ulrich Beck (2006) sees the globalization of football as indicative of an increasingly cosmopolitan world. Previous research, he argues, has suffered from ontologies of 'methodological nationalism', insensitive to the increasingly multicultural and hybrid identities that characterize late modern societies. For Beck, football fandom cannot be understood in terms of fixed identity positions. In a move consistent with the performance/spectacle paradigm of audience studies, he calls for a more open approach, informed by cosmopolitanism, where the 'either/or' concepts are replaced by a research orientation focusing on multiple identities, affording participants the possibility of 'both/and' identity formations. Fandom is, according to Sandvoss (2005: 47), the 'regular, emotionally involved consumption of a given popular narrative or text', which thus enables us to approach performances or 'articulations' of identities from a situational point of view, and particularly in response to new ways to watch football. Fan parks are unique arenas of cultural consumption and we see them as multicultural spaces that offer new and interesting insights into the cultural field of football fandom and the multiple identities that it entails.

The Mediatization of Fandom

The central role of public viewing in connection with global sporting events signifies a gradual intensification of the mediatization of football fandom. Mediatization refers to the process in which social institutions, cultural processes and modes of interaction change in response to the media's growing influence on society at large (Hjarvard 2008; Lundby 2009). Collectively watching giant outdoor screens is an example of a new form of mass participation, where audiences sometimes in numbers of several hundred thousand gather in public spaces, all aligning their attention towards giant television screens (McQuire 2009). We argue that these practices differ significantly from older forms of television consumption, as individuals and groups together negotiate their understanding of the event while at the same time often producing their own media. Public viewing areas have become mimetic 'live venues' that have clear parallels to the structure, form and participatory practices that take place at modern sport stadiums. Through this process, the audience has become increasingly performative, as they are inserted into the flow of images shown on the screen (McQuire 2009). This raises new questions about the performative aspects of fandom and its mediatization, as spectators become part of the 'spectacle' itself.

Danish media researcher Stig Hjarvard (2008) distinguishes between direct and indirect forms of mediatization. Briefly put, *direct mediatization* refers to practices that have 'converted' or changed character from a non-mediated activity to a mediated one. In the field of sport, for example, television allowed for 'distant participation', as physical presence in a stadium was no longer required to see a match. Today such spectatorship takes place not only in the domestic space, but also, and increasingly, in public spaces such as pubs, hotels and airports.

Changes in fandom as a cultural practice are also connected to *indirect mediatization*, seen for example in the worldwide distribution of symbolic forms provided by the global media industry (cf. Flew 2007). Flags, caps, shirts or 'vuvuzelas' – to use a recent example from the 2010 World Cup – are examples of what Hjarvard (2008: 19) labels 'mediagenic symbols', signs appearing as central mechanisms in the mediatization process. Many of those artefacts are part of the prevalent commodification that characterizes modern football. As shown by Giulianotti (2003), commodification shows itself when an object or social practice obtains a market-centred meaning. As a consequence, the spectatorship of sport is inevitably also a form of 'consumership'.

The commodification of sport has changed the social organization of fan cultures around the world, but it has not diminished the social significance of sport to the formation of collective identity (Sandvoss 2005). According to Holt (1995), consumption can act as a platform for social integration, providing people with symbols that are used as markers of difference and belonging. This echoes a classical argument in cultural studies, namely that people draw upon (popular) cultural representations when forming a collective identity (Hall 1997). These may include social and political symbols of place, in the case of football, including flags, clothing and other attributes in the national colours. However, as part of the mediatization of football, we must also recognize that these signs and symbols refer not only to specific countries, but also to the broader cultures of sport, shaped through the process that Henry Jenkins (2008) has attributed to contemporary 'convergence culture'. As Jenkins suggests, practices of fandom do not exclusively lean on passive consumption but include creative and innovative practices among and by fans, practices that blur the boundaries between producers and consumers of popular culture.

The Mediaspace of the Fan Park

Entry to the FIFA fan parks was free, and for many spectators these sites offered the only opportunity to see a given match in real time together with others. In most ways, however, the fan park is not at all 'free' but highly regulated in ways that affect viewing experiences and social interaction among participants. The structural organization of public viewing areas bears witness to the expanding relationship between football audiences, the global media industry and not least a number of global corporations. Following the logic of hypercommodification, the fan parks are, like most modern sport arenas, centred on various forms of consumption, of which television viewing is just one of several 'acts of consumption' that characterize the entire set of experiences associated with live sport spectatorship. Physical regulation begins at the entrance where fences, security guards and a long list of prohibited objects meet the visitors as they line up to be body searched before being admitted inside. These structures of surveillance protect visitors from potential violence and physical conflicts, but they also safeguard a uniform and standardized set of commercial activities within these areas. In order to control the fan sites, FIFA and the local organization committee (LOC) developed guidelines to secure uniform standards on everything from security to commercial rights. In South Africa, where local vendors had seen the World Cup as an important source of income, the government permitted 'local products in categories other than those of the commercial affiliates to be sold at the official fan park' (City of Johannesburg 2010). However, these products were to remain 'unbranded', meaning that they could not display names of any sponsors including FIFA, in order to safeguard the exclusive rights of the commercial affiliates. In general, this echoes Crawford's (2004) argument that sport stadiums – and in this case 'mimetic' ones – are areas where sport spectatorship intermingles with other commercial activities. The regulation of these activities further underlines FIFA's strategy for maintaining a consistent experience of the official World Cup brands across various platforms and consumption practices. However, each venue also promoted its own local or national culture, seen for example in food stalls of the Berlin fan park or in the souvenir shops in Cape Town, accentuating how these venues are adapted to meet the demands of football tourists.

There was not just one but many big screens in each of the FIFA parks. Images and sounds from the matches were shown simultaneously on all the screens, delivered by major national television channels such as *SABC* in South Africa and *Die Erste* in Germany. In that

sense, what people saw on outdoor screens was practically the same thing as they would see 'at home'. In addition, pre-produced material by FIFA and the official sponsors of the World Cup was also shown on these screens, material that included ads and performances highlighting football fans from different parts of the world in a great show of diversity. The catchy Coca Cola anthem *Wave your Flag* was repeated with hypnotic frequency in every FIFA fan park throughout the 2010 tournament.

The multi-layered media flow in the fan parks included narrowcasting, specific to each venue. Before and after the matches and during half time, artist performances, DJ sessions and other forms of entertainment took place on a stage in front of the largest screen. Many of these local events involved participation from spectators. In Berlin, DJ-led events included dance performances and games. The Sony Playstation FIFA World Cup 2010 Videogame was an onstage event that could be watched on the big screen. People cheered and waved their flags as the player scored for Germany and the Playstation game ended 2–0 to Germany (some compensation, since the real match was a loss to Mexico). A local talent girls' dance troupe performed the official World Cup dance on stage, in front of a FIFA-produced film that showed dancers from different parts of the world performing the same routine, while two cameramen filmed the crowd and the live dancers, whose pictures then appeared on screen.

As a mediaspace, the fan park is also a news site. Each of the FIFA fan parks provided journalists with environments where they can cover different nations and their fan cultures close to home, without the time and expense of travelling all the way to (in this case) South Africa. The structure of the fan park also makes it very easy for journalists to do feature stories on the football public, they can easily move through the crowd and select interesting looking fans to film and interview. This obviously connects this site to other, distant places, but it also has a profound effect on activity within the park.

In the fan park it is easy to direct spectators' behaviours, as we observed many journalists doing. Often they took a few pictures, reviewed them and then gave directions for a repeat performance, which people were typically more than happy to provide. The fan park as a mediatized space includes clear rules and conditions for collaboration between the 'fan' and the journalist in producing a public performance. Both know what it 'should' look like. During these events, a reciprocal relationship was being established between the public and the media within each venue, as the media professionals selected specific audience members or groups to project onto the big screen and ignored or turned away from others. Some performative behaviours were enhanced, as audience members responded to the media presence, vying for a place in front of the camera and watching their performance on the big screen. The media's presence created feedback, encouraging audience members to react predictably to images of themselves on the big screen, which in turn fed back into and sustained the event. The camera itself establishes a kind of liminal space where the media performance can take place (Becker 1995). In Berlin, we observed a boy of about 10 years old eagerly jumping up and down and waving in front of a network camera that was turned off and unattended, a wild performance of his desire to appear on screen. At the same time, there is competition for media attention among members of the public, who may even get in the way of the professional's attempt to film the behaviour or performance of a specific spectator. This reciprocity between the media and participants intensified over the course of the tournament, enhancing the performative aspects of participants' behaviour, a point to which we will return later.

Finally, there was the spectators' own media 'production' in the fan park. Not surprisingly taking pictures, texting and talking on mobile phones were all extremely common activities. The magnitude of the 2010 World Cup had been expected to generate a diversity of images via social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter and through tens of thousands of

blogging supporters. CNN had reported: ‘Social media now connects [sic] millions around the world – 50 million tweets are sent daily while Facebook boasts more than 400 million active users – a development that will allow fans separated by distance to celebrate goals or critique referee decisions together online’ (Horowitz 2010). We anticipated therefore that the ways in which participants in the fan park used their own media would be important to the complex ‘play’ between media representations on the one hand and the performance of fan identities during this mega event on the other.

Signs of Fan Identity

The most obvious signs of identity were, not surprisingly, the national colours that spectators wore into the park in many forms. The preparations often began long before and continued as they travelled through the city to converge onto the fan park entrance. Face-painting in the national colours (or in the closest colours one can find) was not the exception but the norm. Souvenir stands at each of the public transportation entrances and squares sold every imaginable form of hat, scarf, garland and noisemaker. Within the FIFA fan parks, the selection was limited by strict regulations, but even here there was a wide array of souvenir goods that one could drape over the body in a seemingly endless number of ways. The national flag was worn as often as it was waved and everywhere flags were used as capes, picnic blankets and sunshades. Participants had obviously carefully planned what they would wear, selecting clothes in the team colours. The Mexican supporters in Berlin were particularly striking in the creative ways they combined the red, white and green colours of the flag in their attire. Many women were wearing green or red tights and their large earrings were also coordinated with the colours of the flag they had draped around them like a sarong. A German couple, dressed totally in black, had consciously coordinated their clothing, explaining that ‘black is the second colour of the flag’.

We also found many signs of fandom being hybridized, for example through the ways flags and national colours were worn and displayed by male and female fans, as particular ways of draping or dressing appeared to spread among different groups. Young women frequently wrapped the flag around them like a sarong, while men draped it Superman style from their shoulders. Hybridization increased over the course of the tournament, leading up to the finals. An example of this was the *vuvuzela*, the long plastic horn that is an attribute of the specific national football culture of South Africa. In the Berlin fan park during matches in mid-June, vuvuzelas were confiscated at the entrance (a matter of security as it was explained) although a few did make it into the park. At this early stage of the tournament and in this distant venue, the vuvuzela was still a curiosity for most fans. People who had them were ‘practising’ blowing them and exchanging tips on how to make them sound right. Later in the tournament, in the South African fan parks, the vuvuzela was gladly adopted by fans from around the world, as the long plastic horns had been produced in the colours of most participating nations. Another example of hybridization was the *makarapa* that traced its history to a South African miner who began making these fanciful hats in the colours and emblems of local teams. The makarapa had obviously become a highly profitable industry in South Africa as they were churned out in the colours of every participating team, and worn by many participants in the South Africa fan parks.

People adopted the many and various signs of identity and wore them demonstratively, in clearly performative behaviour, encouraged by the cameras and media evident everywhere in the fan park. Through the hypercommodification of this space, they were exhibiting the classic attributes of the Giulianotti’s ‘fan’. Yet they were simultaneously

producing new expressions of fandom. Participants displayed that they were in effect two (or more) places at once, expressing forms of identity tied to one nation while being present in quite a different place, a media space that borrowed visual signs from many other places. The Sony display in the Berlin fan park offered the public just such a space, a selection of South African scenes to be photographed against. Visitors could choose to have their picture taken in front of the stadium or with a giraffe looking over their shoulder, evidence of their (virtual) presence where the match was being played. The visual syntagma available during the tournament were selected and combined in myriad ways by people who came to the fan parks, generating a carnivalesque atmosphere.

Why Have They Come?

With very few exceptions, people came to the fan parks together, with family or friends: young men decked out in the flags of their team entered the park in groups, families brought a picnic basket, couples with small children in strollers and teenage girls in clusters of three or four, taking each other's pictures on their mobile phones – all were common constellations. A Brazilian-Russian couple made a point of coming to the Rio fan park when England was playing, giving as their reason that they had first met while living in London. Coming to the fan park was a social event, with ritual overtones from other kinds of outings, such as a family picnic or an outdoor concert. There were examples of lone supporters, wearing the flag and hat of their team, but they were the exception, with their eyes fixed on the screen, and unresponsive to the crowd around them. For most spectators, a social identity seemed to be at least as important as support for a specific national team.

The World Cup was also an opportunity for emigrants to gather when their home country was playing. A noteworthy example was during the match between South Korea and Argentina, when the small public gathered in the Berlin fan park was dressed almost exclusively in the colours of one of these teams, with the Korean red and white in the majority, despite their small chances of winning. Many of the Uruguay supporters in Berlin appeared to be second-generation immigrants living in Germany. Some participants also adopted the national colours of their group of friends, although their country of origin was different. Football has long been recognized as important among many diasporic communities where support for the old 'home' club or national team continues or even re-emerges as a source of pride and identity. Abell et al. (2007: 144) describe how these football allegiances 'undergo forms of "mini-globalization" along the routes and outposts established by migrant groups', of which we found clear expressions among fans who had gathered to watch the World Cup.

There was also clear support of multiple teams among some members of the public. In Cape Town, huge numbers of people were initially supporting South Africa, but once their 'first' team was eliminated they shifted their loyalty and cheered enthusiastically for Ghana, giving as their reason that Ghana was the only African team left in the tournament. Some people also supported two teams at the same time, and many other combinations, including many apparent contradictions. US citizens living in Germany, for example, frequently wore the colours of both countries. So a majority of the visitors in the fan parks were in the company of family or friends, and wore the national colours of a team they had some personal or cultural bond with. These expressions of a fairly loose multicultural identity appear, following Beck, to contradict concepts of football fandom as anchored in fixed identity positions.

This received further support when we interviewed spectators about why they had come to the fan park and their reasons for supporting a particular team. In addition to citing their

appreciation of a specific player, and that friends were supporting the same team, some categories of participation emerged that provide insights into their behaviour and interest (or not) in football. Spectators can be broadly categorized into three groups: those who focused on the specific match and team, those who expressed cultural interests in one of the participating nations and those who were mainly there for the event.

People in the first category referred to the players and to a style of football that depended upon knowledge of the players' home clubs and histories. A Ghanaian spectator explained his support for Spain (as his secondary allegiance) as, 'They play good football, and I like the players' (Daniel, Cape Town, 7 July 2010). A spectator from South Africa said that he was supporting Germany: 'It's just the way I love the game, the way they play, they are like a machine out in the field' (Ben, Cape Town, 7 July 2010). These participants followed a spectator identity not unlike Giulianotti's 'followers', despite the absence of allegiance to specific local football clubs in this venue. Signs of 'hot' loyal identification with specific football clubs were rare in the fan parks, making it difficult to identify any true 'supporters' in Giulianotti's sense, as applied in a local context.

People in the second group mentioned the country and culture, often in an idealized form, as the reason for choosing a team to cheer for. An example was a South African who said he supported Spain, because 'I love the food, I love the people, I love the country!' (Oliver, Cape Town, 7 July 2010). A majority of the spectators we interviewed, however, came for the event in the first place. They were primarily interested in partying, in meeting people and in being part of a large and spectacular event. The difference between watching the game on TV at home or going to the fan park was, according to one South African spectator, that 'You can interact with other people, you can meet other people, you can't do that at home' (Jessica, Cape Town, 7 July 2010). Two Spanish girls dressed in German colours said they had come for the spectacle, and to meet guys. As for which team she supported, one responded, 'The Spanish guys are really cute, so actually I'm going for Spain'. They came to the fan park because 'it's much more exciting here, and it is nice to have so many people to celebrate with'. (Nicole, Cape Town, 7 July). Her friend agreed, and added: 'It's nice, the mix of all the different cultures, the different countries, we're not used to it, now everyone is here, so we really enjoy it'. When we asked who they thought would win, she said, 'I think Soccer will win today' (Mariam, Cape Town, 7 July 2010).

The extent to which these spectators were interested in football was, in Giulianotti's terms, 'flaneur', that is, enjoying the experience of football spectatorship, like a tourist – even when the event was in their own country. Typical for this point of view is the German visitor who, when asked if he had seen any game at a stadium, replied: 'Not any German match, we were at Japan against Paraguay and Chile-Spain in Pretoria both. It was not so much of a nice stadium, but you know, [we were there] just to soak up the atmosphere and get ready to party at the fan parks' (Markus, Cape Town, 7 July 2010). This enthusiasm for the broader culture of transnational football suggests that these spectators were involved in collecting personal experiences related to the sport in different locales.

All of these spectators were dressed for the event, wearing various attributes of fandom, often in a hybridized form, and displaying their allegiance to a specific nation and team. In the interviews, however, their loyalties emerge as situational and ephemeral, more closely tied to football as a transnational spectacle than to a nation. The exceptions were spectators with identities rooted in diasporic communities and whose fandom was an expression of that loyalty. The people who gathered in the fan parks seemed to be enacting forms of what Abell et al. (2007: 144) identify as 'self-inventing transnational fandoms' that can arise even among football followers who have little or no biographical attachment to the team or nation they favour. They note, further, that transnational media are critical to both the conception and maturation of such fandom (2005: 144). Appiah has identified this phenomenon as

‘a “rooted” or “patriotic” cosmopolitanism’ that can arise when people ‘simultaneously engage with their “home” society and other peoples, places and cultures’ (Appiah 1997: 618) and which includes, as we observed in the fan parks, the culture of football.

These many expressions of place and national identity, both playful and serious, become even more complex when the fan park is seen as a nexus in a cross-flow of media forms and actors and where transnational media play an important role in the formation and experience of fandom. This brings us back to the fan park as a mediatized arena where these new forms of fandom flourish.

Reflexive Media Flows and Fan Identity

In the fan park, the mediated event on screen is itself the context of ‘being there’. A participant in the fan park in Rio commented: ‘The most striking impression I had of watching the game in the FanFest was the sense of belonging in the crowd, not unlike a real football stadium. ... The spectator feels like he is participating in the event, not just watching it’ (Mikael, Rio, 18 June 2010). A South African woman in the Berlin fan park who took a picture of the screen showing a distant crowd of her countrymen with their vuvuzelas was documenting her own sense of being two places at once. She, like other participants in the fan park, photographed the screen in order to establish her own haptic *and* mediated connection to the place where the World Cup was unfolding.

Next to taking pictures of family and friends, the most common subject for spectators’ photography was the screen itself. Usually these pictures were made during broadcasts, when players were on the field, or during a replay following a goal. Perhaps this practice should not be surprising, already during the 2006 FIFA World Cup in Germany, pictures of the screens in the fan parks were the most common postings on Flickr. This response is echoed in other events, such as concerts, where people use their cameras and telephones to take pictures of the screen. An obvious explanation is that they want a close-up of an event that they are in fact watching from a distance. But the photograph of the screen also documents where the participant was at the time the event took place. As we know from our interviews, being in the fan park is not a substitute for being in the stadium, and it follows that watching and photographing what is shown on the screen represents the spectator’s experience of the World Cup. Taking pictures during an event like this is a reflexive practice, as we know, and personal photography often plays a central role in the construction of experience and memory. As spectators in the fan park turned their cameras and other photographic devices on themselves, each other and the screen, they were actively engaged in creating meanings of the event and of their place in it.

Contrary to our expectation, however, spectators’ use of social media in the fan park was quite limited. They did say they would be posting their photographs, many mentioned that they were active on Facebook, and several people mentioned Orkut (more widely used in Brazil), but few were actually online during the event. The promise of instant connectivity that was heard in advance of the World Cup, anticipating the global impact of networks such as Facebook and Twitter among the public, was not born out. The high cost of connectivity was stated by several of the foreign visitors we interviewed in South Africa as the primary reason they did not, for example, tweet or send MMS while in the fan parks. In general, they were less ‘connected’ than in their respective home countries. So, although some South Africans twittered from Cape Town, and some Germans twittered from Berlin, participants’ social media practices remained highly local.

There was, nevertheless, a highly interconnected media use within the park, as the pre-produced films and locally generated live performances filled the screen before, during and after breaks in the broadcast matches, and spectators photographed each other and the screen. The spectators themselves, with their many and varied expressions of fandom, both on- and off-screen, became central to the whole viewing experience, underpinning the notion of fan parks in terms of a self-referential and reflexive experience, where the 'narrow' and place-bound mediation is an essential aspect. The production of 'liveness' and a large, enthusiastic throng of fans on the screen can stand in contradiction to the scattered crowd across a nearly empty fan park, with a few participants gathered in front of an empty stage to watch the match. This performance of fandom on the screen also had implications for the visitors' experience and behaviour over the course of the World Cup.

Visitors entered the fan parks in increasingly more elaborate forms of dress, face and body paint, as the tournament proceeded into the semi-finals. The competition between members of the public for positions in front of the cameras also became more intense. Transnational media broadcasts from fan parks in other cities were fed onto the big screens, which added to the intensity, as spectators saw their counterparts on the other side of the globe. They responded to the presence of the professional media, cheering and gesticulating in increasingly extreme postures, as they vied for the camera to be turned toward them. This reciprocity between the media and the public created a choreographed performance similar to those seen on the large screens in any stadium or concert setting. The cheering public, seeing themselves on screen, respond to their own picture by pointing, waving and gesticulating back. They enjoy being seen as active participants at the event.

The image of the fan from the national and transnational broadcasts from the stadium where the match is being played stands in contrast to the images of spectators from the earlier live narrowcasting of local performers and productions. In the broadcast image, the fan is always of an extreme 'type', decked out in the national colours, expressing either joy or sorrow over an event on the field. This image of national fandom is used to frame and emphasize specific points during the broadcast of the match, such as a goal, a referee's call or the end of a period of play. The picture of the supporter of the national team is inserted to give a specific rhythm to the match as it is transmitted transnationally. Because these images are also narrowcast onto the large screen in the stadium, the national fans' responses to being on screen are also captured and become part of the broadcast. A similar pattern is followed when media select images from the fan parks to broadcast, providing the transnational TV audience with the response from Madrid on Spain's victory, or from Berlin at Germany's loss.

In the fan park, performing to the cameras, as well as to the narrowcasting of images of themselves, creates feedback as the audience reacts predictably to images of themselves on the big screen, which in turn feeds back into the event. Spectators in the fan park have become fans through an intensified media consumption that includes consuming the images of themselves onscreen. The variety of identities and cosmopolitan forms of fandom that we observed during the event has been replaced by a mediatized stereotype. This highly selective image of the 'typical' fan becomes integrated into a flow of media content that continually reverberates between the site-specific, place-bound screen, and what it broadcasts, as a localization of a global audio visual flow. The fan parks established for the World Cup, despite their name, were not venues where fans gathered, but were rather mediatized arenas where spectators learned how to perform fandom.

Conclusion

The power of the sport mega event lies in its capacity to integrate various forms of nationalism, while also facilitating a cosmopolitan understanding of the event itself. Echoing the broader argument that cultural identities are negotiated and performed in relation to an imagined 'opposite' (cf. Hall 1997; Barker 1997), previous research on fandom has suggested that football fans, locally, nationally or internationally oriented, seek to distinguish themselves as distinct from others (Crawford 2004: 125). That is certainly one of the most obvious findings in this study as well. However, when the spectators in the fan parks look upon themselves and their relation to others, the most striking feature is the similarity across the forms and range of symbols used, drawing on an emerging global language of football fandom. In light of this finding, forms of fandom established in FIFA's public viewing areas can be understood as cosmopolitan practices, where cultural and national distinctions certainly play an important role, but in ways that accommodate multiple forms of identification and loyalties on a broader transnational scale.

Football fan identities are simultaneously relational and situational, and consistent with the performance/spectacle paradigm of the participatory audience. Many examples of identities following Beck's 'both/and formations' (2006) were expressed in the fan parks. Spectators had, for example, various reasons for coming to the venue, and these reasons shifted, depending on the location of the park and as the World Cup moved toward the semi-finals. Through the course of the tournament, football 'followers' employed their nested identities linked to specific teams and players to shift their allegiances toward increasingly commodified expressions of national loyalty, if in a carnivalesque form. Notable, too, is the way that the cosmopolitan football 'flaneur' in this mediatized setting increasingly adopted the commodified attributes of the 'fan'. The symbolic forms of national football, circulating worldwide, were taken up and adapted by participants in fan parks, feeding, in turn, into a commodified image of the fan that is recognized transnationally. Tracing this process and, in particular, how the many different fan attributes emerged and were recombined in new formations reveals how indirect mediatization has altered the expressions and experience of fandom. Many fans identify with their national team, but they also develop an understanding of football as a truly cosmopolitan phenomenon through interaction with other people.

The prevalent use of narrowcasting within all the studied venues, together with spectators' own media practices as they took pictures and performed for the media, also accentuates how performative aspects of fandom now are intimately bound to reflexive experiences of media content, similar to the functions of big screens within modern sport stadiums (see also Rowe 2004, 2011). However, the fan park should not be mistaken for a substitute for 'not being there'. Rather it situates audiences in specific ways and where new forms of reflexivity, performance and identity become central to the experience of spectatorship. As an established site for watching football, the fan park is a place that accentuates how mediatization in general and the use of large public screens in particular transform the spatial conditions of 'audience-hood' as well as the cultural dynamics surrounding global football fandom.

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