

1 **Beers and Blurred Boundaries: The Spatial and Gendered** 2 **Organisation of Pre-Match Venues for English Football Fans**

4 ***Abstract***

5 Academic research into sports fans has grown in recent years with studies examining a
6 variety of aspects associated with fandom. However, recent changes in the professionalisation
7 and commercialisation of sport have resulted in the creation of new spaces for fan
8 experiences. In this paper, we examine one of these created spaces, the fan zone. Through a
9 case study on match going fans of Everton Football Club we explore how this new space sits
10 alongside traditional pre-match gathering places such as the ‘pub’ and examine the gendered
11 organisation of these spaces. Drawing on Bale’s concept of boundaries within sports fan
12 communities we show that traditional venues for pre-match activities enhance, maintain and
13 legitimise masculine boundaries within sports fandom. We argue that fan zones provide an
14 alternative match-day atmosphere and experience that is centred on a family friendly or at
15 least family inclusive culture.

16 ***Keywords***

17 Sports Stadiums, Football, Space, Ethnography, Gender, Fandom, Sportscape

18
19 Football stadiums have been described as emblems of local identity that are inherently
20 influenced by norms of masculinity (Giulianotti & Armstrong, 2002 see also Armstrong,
21 1998; Armstrong & Harris, 1991). As a site, they have long been cast as masculine spaces
22 (Bradbury, 2011; Hughson, 1999; Rubin, 2009; Wenner, 1998), and spaces for the
23 construction and maintenance of masculinity (King, 1997; Levant, 1997; Pearson, 2012;
24 Pope, 2010). However, changes made to spaces in and around football stadiums have
25 disrupted this masculine tradition. Clubs are increasingly marketing their brand as family
26 friendly, or at the very least family inclusive (see Cashmore & Cleland, 2012; Hughson &
27 Poulton, 2008; Tapp & Clowes, 2000). The development of new sporting spaces that these
28 fans engage with *en route* to a stadium then challenges the naturalised and taken-for-granted
29 hyper-masculine discourse traditionally associated with match-day culture. The creation of
30 official fan zones, we suggest, provides alternative experiences for some fans where pre-
31 match entertainment is used to engage and maintain fans’ interest (and generate income)
32 before they take their seats in the stadium (Gladden & Milne 1999). However, these spaces

1 remain on the periphery of football culture, which still promotes a conventional ‘masculine
2 space and image’ (Pope, 2017: 171).

3 In this study we consider how these new spaces coexist within traditional masculine
4 football cultures through physical and cultural gendered boundaries instituted by male and
5 female fans alike. Through a qualitative case study of Everton Football Club (hereafter
6 Everton), this paper explores two popular pre-match locations that highlight how the spatial
7 dimension of the sport environment remains crucial to understanding match-day fan
8 behaviour. In doing so we aim to show that the spatial and social environment of match-day
9 influences and encourages various types of sports fan behaviour within particular locations
10 through physical and cultural boundaries. The concept of boundaries describes the complex
11 structures – physical, social, ideological which establish differences and commonalities
12 between women and men, among women, and among men (Gerson & Peiss, 1985). Applied
13 to the sporting context, we consider how the symbolic and physical spaces within the match-
14 day setting reaffirm localised, heteronormative and gendered boundaries that naturalise
15 football as a ‘male preserve’ (Dunning, 1994). However, we also explore how the creation of
16 new match-day spaces can challenge traditional forms of (hyper) masculinity and male
17 gatekeeping within the sporting context.

18 **Conceptualising (Gendered) Boundaries in Sports Fandom**

19 This use of the concept of boundary within a sports fan community has been applied by Bale
20 (1993a, 1993b, 1996, 2000, 2002a, 2002b), who highlighted that sport with its enclosures and
21 rivalries is an important site for spatial analysis. Bale recognised that although sports fans
22 may support the same team, a categorical and physical distance separated different groups of
23 fans inside the stadium. The focus of boundary in his work remained predicated on social
24 class, where fans from primarily the working classes were spatially segregated from other
25 fans as the more socially and economically desirable groups of spectators were located in
26 corporate boxes (Bale, 1993b). We broaden his perspective to account for the continuity,
27 shifts, and strains in the construction of gendered boundaries in the contemporary football
28 crowd. This focus builds on recent academic interest in how physical and social spaces can
29 reflect gendered norms within society (Carr, 2017; **Mowl & Turner, 1995; Pavlidis, 2018;**
30 **Van-Engen, 2003; Waite, 2008**). Recently, an edited collection by Koch (2017) explored the
31 issue of sport, space, and power and advocated the importance of advancing a critical
32 geography of sport. Turcott (2018) suggested that the collection provided a much needed 21st

1 century rendition of Bale's work. Written as a diverse set of case studies from a wide range of
2 sports, the collection foregrounds gender and the role of sporting spaces in (re)producing
3 gender hierarchies (Koch, 2017). Building on such work, this paper also extends Bale's work
4 in response to socio-spatial and cultural changes to the match-day routines of football fans.
5 'New' spaces such as official fan zones remain largely absent in his work, but which we
6 consider as inscribing an alternative experience to match-day that celebrates 'family friendly
7 entertainment value' (Myrdahl, 2009: 294).

8 Scholars exploring the relationship between space and gender within a sporting
9 context have built on Bale's (1993a, 1996, 2002b) concept of sportscape, which refers to the
10 monocultural space within a city that is devoted to sporting practices. This includes the
11 football stadium and also the immediate material surroundings that encompass the sports
12 field/stadium (Bale, 1996). The sportscape is often the focus of intense power struggles over,
13 for example, the building of stadiums and/or the temporary or permanent closing of public
14 space for sporting events (John, 2015). In the modern context of football, the sportscape
15 includes the stadium as well as 'spaces' such as public houses (pubs), take-away shops, and
16 the streets that surround it that are frequented and transformed on match-day. Traditionally, it
17 has been the local pub that has provided the setting for pre-match gatherings of fans which, as
18 detailed by Collins and Vamplew (2000) has a long association with football. Fans
19 (predominantly males) have gathered at pubs for many years (both pre and post-match) and
20 these spaces have been described as 'an enduring site for fandom practice' (Dixon, 2014:
21 382). More recently, pubs have also become venues for watching 'live' sport on the
22 television, particularly for those without access to sport on subscription television (Weed,
23 2006; 2007; 2008), further highlighting the importance of this space and the evolving nature
24 of fandom.

25 However, the need for football clubs to improve aspects of safety following stadium
26 tragedies such as the Hillsborough disaster and the Taylor report in the UK (Turner, 2014)
27 has necessitated changes in the built environment of sportscape (Malcolm, Jones &
28 Waddington, 2000; Finnegan and Rookwood, 2008). Recent stadium developments have also
29 been driven by commercial imperatives with a desire for venues to be used for a variety of
30 business activities and even other sports (Church & Penny, 2013; Kennedy & Kennedy,
31 2010). Weed (2006) has argued that this 'sanitising' of stadiums has resulted in a culture of
32 'pub supporting', with pubs assuming greater importance as a male-oriented 'third-space'. As

1 a site, the pub is considered a public space where men can ‘mobilize and exert forms of
2 control’ (Campbell, 2000: 564). Yet these developments are also shaping stadium spaces for
3 fans to frequent. Subsequently, new spaces such as official fan zones are considered in this
4 paper as legitimate sites of match-day engagement. It should be noted that Bale remains
5 somewhat critical of changes to traditional football stadiums, charting how the earlier
6 suburban ground is slowly being replaced by new multipurpose football stadiums, what he
7 describes as the ‘tradium’ - a commercialised space centred on mass consumption (2002a:
8 135). He considers such landscapes to be ‘inauthentic’, warning that modern football
9 stadiums may become synonymous with concrete bowls or bland forms of container
10 architecture (Bale, 1993b: 128). However, we argue this criticism only applies when
11 describing the atmosphere favoured by those whom follow the traditional match-day routines
12 discussed earlier.

13 Whilst fan zones have received some scholarly attention (Brannagan & Rookwood
14 2016; Klauser, 2012; Lauss & Szigetvari, 2010; Schnitzer & Stickdorn, 2012), the large
15 majority of this work focuses on mega-events and international football competitions.
16 Hagemann for example, investigated the UEFA European Football Championship in Zurich
17 and describes fan zones as extensions of the carnival where ‘the streets chosen as routes for
18 visitors, referred to as ‘Fan Miles’ or ‘Fan Boulevards’, carefully stage-manage the walk
19 through each downtown area to the fan zone’ (2010: 725). Fan zones at English football
20 stadiums, however, are tailored towards a family match-going crowd, where offerings appeal
21 particularly to young children. In these spaces, fans often partake in activities that include
22 football-related games for children, jumping castles and other inflatable obstacles, and ‘meet
23 and greets’ with players prior to the match. Therefore, we define fan zone as *bounded spaces*
24 *external to the stadium that are set aside for family friendly fan engagement activities.*

25 We suggest that as football has been institutionally organised with a focus on
26 ‘competition and hierarchy amongst men and the exclusion or domination of women’
27 (Connell, 2005: 54), further consideration should be paid to the gendered nature of the
28 football sportscape. More specifically, how masculinity is not only constituted through fan
29 behaviour inside and around the stadium, but also how the spaces where these engagements
30 take place actively encourage or discourage particular fandom performances. In English
31 football, these behaviours have included violent and exaggeratedly aggressive practices in
32 resistance to authority and the use of language that is often sexist or homophobic (Jones,

1 2008). Jensen (1992:15) paints a colourful image of typical fan behaviour being ‘drunken
2 destructiveness, a rampage of uncontrollable masculine passion that is unleashed in response
3 to a sports victory or defeat’. Such behaviours have forced female fans to downplay their
4 gender identities (Jones, 2008) for fear of being labelled as ‘inauthentic’ sports fans (Pope,
5 2014a). Sport is considered a crucial site for the demarcation of gender as it ‘serves to
6 reproduce males as the standard and hegemonic hyper/masculinity as the norm’ (Mean, 2010:
7 144). Each of the spaces, traditional and new, explored in this article will be shown to have
8 created boundaries that mark belonging and exclusion. This study contributes new insights
9 into match-day experiences of sport fans and gender relations in society more widely,
10 demonstrating that space is political and contestable. We contend that the dynamics of gender
11 power relations exert control over who belongs in particular spaces as well as the nature of
12 particular interactions that occur within these spaces,

13 **Method**

14 An interpretivist, qualitative case study method was adopted for this study. Case study
15 research is a stand-alone method that involves an in-depth investigation of a phenomenon
16 within its ‘real-world’ context. Multiple sources of evidence are used and the case study
17 method is often seen as synonymous with qualitative research (Edwards & Skinner 2009). In
18 this instance, an ethnographic approach was adopted, utilising participant observation and
19 qualitative interviews. Drawing on data generated for a study that focused on the match-day
20 experiences and spatial location of Everton fans, this paper describes the process of travel to
21 and subsequent engagement in spaces surrounding Everton’s home stadium of Goodison Park
22 (hereafter Goodison).

23 Participant observation has been used to study marginalised subcultures in sport, with
24 a particular focus on dysfunctional fans and hooligans (Armstrong & Harris, 1991;
25 Giulianotti, 1999; Hughson, 1999;). Fieldwork data was collected over three Premier League
26 football seasons. In total, 20 matches were observed at Goodison by the lead author. Each
27 match generated approximately 4.5 hours of observation (including travel time), which
28 totalled approximately 100 hours in the field. The field consisted of Goodison and various
29 sites that fans favoured on match-day. In this way, observations extended to the streets
30 leading up to Goodison, food and merchandise stalls, as well as the pubs and fan zones. Due
31 to the confines of a research article, we have chosen to discuss observations of a typical pub
32 on County Road and Everton’s fan zone. The selected pub is a large white building that is a

1 5-minute walk (0.2 mile) to Goodison. It has eaves painted in the blue of Everton's club
2 colours, with some black paint forming a perimeter at the bottom of the building. The bright
3 and dominant colours of blue, white, and black, are associated with Everton and act as
4 symbolic markers (Cohen, 1985) to reaffirm to local residence that this is a 'blue pub'.

5 Recording fieldwork notes would have been impossible to do whilst in the field and
6 so the researcher wrote them after match-day observations, usually on the night of the match.
7 A mobile phone was often used to write 'buzz words', or what Bernard (2006: 389) refers to
8 as 'jotting notes' during observations. These in effect were short sentences or words that
9 would later act as trigger material and assist in recalling events that had happened during the
10 observations (AUTHOR A, 2016). The use of mobile devices by sports fans is now relatively
11 common at sports matches, with many teams and stadiums offering free Wi-Fi and
12 encouraging the use of mobile devices (Turner, 2014). Therefore, using devices to make
13 initial observations and thoughts did not need to be furtive, and was seen as acceptable fan
14 behaviour by those around the researcher. Using a mobile device with in-built photographic
15 capabilities had the added benefit of allowing events to be recorded 'in multiple modalities'
16 (Yin, 2011: 161).

17 This research also involved 25 semi-structured interviews with participants aged
18 between 20 and 70. Of those interviewed, fifteen were male and ten were female. One
19 participant had a physical disability, and two of the participants were mothers to young
20 children. The participants were all season ticket holders (club members), apart from two who
21 attend Goodison regularly with friends. In this way, the research subscribed to 'purposeful
22 sampling' where suitable participants were sought out to discover, understand, and gain
23 insight about a particular phenomenon (Merriam, 1998). As the research became more
24 refined in its focus, the maximum variation purposeful sampling technique was applied to
25 refine and guide the types of participants that were recruited.

26 What became apparent was the diversity in the football crowd with notable
27 differences in fans that were not entirely influenced by just gender and age. As a result of this
28 observation, the researchers shifted to recruiting fans, such as family fans (identified as
29 mixed-gender groups of adults and children), whose match-day experiences have often been
30 overlooked (AUTHOR A, 2018 in press). This adaptability enabled the research to expand on
31 the typical framework of sports fandom that homogenises the sports crowd as a single unit.
32 The aim of utilising this approach was to build on such work, by examining a wider spectrum

1 of fans on match-day, rather than focusing primarily on one fan type. Whilst this approach
2 has limitations, including lacking Geertzian's (1973) 'thick description' of one subcultural
3 group that is favoured by many football scholars, in many ways its breadth, as will be
4 explained later in this paper, gave a voice to fans that have typically been silent in academic
5 literature.

6 **County Road: Beer and Banter**

7 I met Angus's wife tonight at the pub. I sat with her and their two children
8 before the match at the tables near the window. Angus didn't really hang
9 around, but left me there while he spoke to some of his friends near the bar. I
10 can't remember her name, but we spoke about her son playing football this
11 weekend. I asked why she comes to the pub but does not attend the matches.
12 She remarked that it was 'his' [referring to Angus] domain. She noted that she
13 enjoyed coming to the pub and hanging out with everyone but really had no
14 interest in football, and was actually, if anything, because of her family was a
15 Liverpool fan. But I was told in a joking matter to not remind Angus of this
16 fact.

17 **(Fieldwork Note: 1/11/2014 vs. Norwich City)**

18

19 County Road sits just behind Goodison and is an iconic and revered space for Everton fans.
20 The street is lined with pubs and a variety of takeaway shops, grocery stores and
21 gambling/betting agencies. Observations on County Road revealed fans that spent time here
22 pre / post-match were very familiar with the site. No one appeared lost, no one asked for
23 directions, and no fans were observed taking photos of the landscape. Perhaps this is not that
24 surprising considering it is not a particularly attractive streetscape. In fact, some fans actively
25 avoided the street due to its unappealing nature or because it was considered to be 'too busy'
26 and/or 'full of young drunk people'. As Cathy notes,

27 If my plan was to drive in, well there's nowhere to usually go in Walton¹, you
28 know. Whereas in town, you know, you can go to the coffee shop or
29 whatever...but you know, let's face it, Walton's not a gentrified area and I
30 think, well I'm gentrified now (laughs).

31

(Interview: Cathy, 50-60).

¹ Walton is the area where Goodison and County Road are located.

1 immediately around the bar dominated by mostly male fans. Female family fans were
2 observed to be more likely to take on primary childcare responsibilities in the pub setting,
3 reflecting how gendered norms pertaining to motherhood and parenting remain in match-day
4 settings. Male family fans were observed to be more fluid, moving between sitting/standing
5 at the tables and standing around the bar located in the centre of the pub. **They were not**
6 **bound by the space and had the ability to move freely between sections.** This fluidity of
7 movement between social groups and locations was not afforded to female family fans during
8 observations. In this way, gendered spaces do not just simply exist, but are produced through
9 the expectations of gender stereotypes inscribed into space. **As females had the primary**
10 **responsibility for caring for children they are confined to this peripheral space and**
11 **become marginalised.** Put simply, the front section of the pub was designated as the family
12 space and therefore this is where **females** were ‘expected’ to sit. As a result, family fans were
13 located in a peripheral position of the main bar and overall space of the room, seated at the
14 front tables. From observations, female family fans used this space to socialise; football was
15 secondary or sometimes completely absent from discussions.

16 Female family fans often sat with others at the front of this pub where groups of
17 young children would play, at times unsupervised. As such the front section of the venue is
18 an example of a feminine community of practice, where children were taught localised
19 masculine and feminine practices through the constant production, reproduction, and
20 negotiation of what it is (or what it means) to be a male or female in this environment
21 (Paechter, 2003). As the vignette at the start of this section reflects, Angus took his young son
22 into the middle standing section where he was encouraged to interact with other older,
23 ‘traditional’ male fans. This group were distinguished by the longevity of their support and
24 their in-depth sport knowledge associated with Everton. His daughter (of similar age) on the
25 other hand, remained seated with his wife and the (female) researcher at the table. Therefore,
26 his son was introduced to the masculine and engaged space of football and being a football
27 fan, while his daughter remained on the fringes by being seated with her mother and the other
28 family fans in this front section of the pub.

29 I think it’s the culture of the game. It’s how it happens in England. It’s a case
30 of the way families are perceived. It’s like the boys go with their Dad’s to the
31 game and the girls go shopping with their Mum but you know on the day of
32 the game. That’s how it has always been sort of thing but I think it’s starting to

1 break, you know, you can see a difference but it's slow in coming. But I think
2 that's the only reason why it's just a habit, nothing more.

3 (Interview, Alison 30-40)

4 Paechter (2007) argues that relations within and between localised masculine and
5 feminine communities of practice underpin strict gender relations. As the above quote
6 reflects, this resonates with how fans perceive the gendered landscape of football culture in
7 England. This assumption is further supported when juxtaposing the family section of the bar
8 with the area behind it. The section behind the group of tables that family fans occupied was
9 a standing area (there were no seats and tables) where mostly male fans formed a tight
10 circumference around the bar that was at times five people deep. Although some females
11 were present in this section of the pub, fans here embodied hyper-masculine displays
12 regardless of their gender (Butler, 1988, 1990).

13 I overheard a male fan decline a beer, with his friend calling him 'soft' and
14 'weak' and suggesting that he was 'unworthy' of being an Everton fan.

15 (Fieldwork Note: 1/2/2014 vs. Aston Villa)

16 This accusation aligns with working class masculinities discussed above, where
17 through the public performance of drinking alcohol, dominant understandings of legitimate
18 masculine behaviour are reinforced and defended (Campbell, 2000; Connell, 2005). This type
19 of fan behaviour is described as a masculine celebration of community, displaying strong
20 forms of local identification and an equally strong tendency to denigrate other (opposing)
21 suburban communities by means of songs and chanting (Bale, 2002b: 18). It was observed
22 that female fans who stood in this section were always in a group, and the **group's**
23 composition was mostly men. Wenner (2009: 214) describes this as one of the core features
24 that makes the space of a pub a masculine domain or a 'symbolic site where women are
25 excluded, marginalised, or required to be accompanied by men'. **Significantly, even when**
26 **these female fans were not physically marginalised and restricted to the front section,**
27 **they are symbolically marginalised as will be detailed below.**

28 The power dynamics of sports knowledge, as Messner (1988) has suggested,
29 reproduces hegemonic masculinity of which gender difference is shown to be a key part. For
30 example, in interactions in spaces such as pubs, females are more likely to be 'interrupted and
31 contributions undermined by men' (West and Zimmerman 1977 in West, 1996: 359). On
32 multiple occasions the explanation of simple rules to some female fans (including the

1 researcher) was imbued with unnecessary jargon. Interactions such as these positions male
2 fans in a privileged, powerful position in the Everton community. This type of ‘sport talk’,
3 further reinforced boundaries that worked to exclude females from the culture of football.
4 These boundaries translate informally into influence and authority that further strengthened
5 the masculine boundary that exists in this space (Cohen, 1985). However, this is not to say
6 that some female fans were not knowledgeable or capable of ‘sports talk’. As Jones (2008)
7 found, some female fans in this setting adopted traditional performances of masculinity, such
8 as excessive drinking and criticising female fans who embodied femininity. On occasion,
9 these female fans would call their presence on match day ‘a waste of a ticket’.

10 Well, I go as a woman, but I feel I probably behave like a man...I enjoy talking
11 football at the level that men talk about football...I am the only girl and I like
12 that. Because generally, I suppose I think the girls who go to Everton are
13 scouse girls² and I don’t identify with them. You see them, women tossing
14 their hair around and in their high heels and I don’t ... that isn’t me. So I think
15 you’re here not doing women who understand football any credit

16 **(Interview, Samantha, 30-40)**

17 In observations, these ‘**Scouse girl**’ fans and their male peers would usually arrive late to
18 the match, a practice which remains synonymous with post-all-seater stadium culture. They
19 would seek to stay as long as possible in pubs where they were able to consume alcohol in a
20 less regulated environment compared to the stadium (Pearson, 2012). The behaviour of these
21 fans on the walk up to Goodison reflected a socio-spatial transition from an unregulated
22 environment (in so far as Everton was not affiliated with the pubs) to the stadium
23 environment. This transition was marked by distinctive changes in behaviour, where fans
24 were observed to conform to what they perceived to be strict regulations around intoxication
25 within and around the stadium. As the following fieldwork note illustrates, this was mostly
26 achieved by pretending to be sober before entering into the stadium.

27 On the walk up tonight, one of the lads remarks- ‘oi, sober face on
28 lad, you’ve got to just get through the gates’.

29 **(Fieldwork Note: 1/02/2014 vs. Aston Villa)**

30 However, prior to entering into the stadium, most fans would bypass or transition
31 through the carpark that surrounds Goodison. This location hosts the official fan zone that is

² ‘Scouse Girls’ is a term commonly used to describe women and girls who are born in Liverpool that adopt hyper femininity.

1 organised and run by Everton and Everton in the Community (charity affiliated with the
2 football club). Although Bale does not discuss this type of landscape in his work, we consider
3 the fan zone as a space that prescribes and advances his conceptualisation of the sportscape.

4 **A Different Kind of Atmosphere: The fan zone of Goodison**

5 Stacey tells me today that you just can't be drunk in the fan bit because there
6 are children everywhere. She described and then actually took me to the
7 entrance of the fan zone, near the van, and points to the Main Stand entrance
8 and says that drunk people walk past all the time to get into Goodison, but she
9 had not seen anyone drunk in there [the fan zone] before. She then commented
10 on how she hated that people smoked inside the confined area of the fan zone,
11 saying that she didn't think it was good and that smokers should move outside.

12 **(Fieldwork Note: 6/1/2015 vs. West Ham United)**

13

14 The Everton fan zone on match-day is a small partitioned off space inside Goodison's car
15 park. During the week this space functions purely as a car park, but on match-day it is
16 transformed into a location where fans can partake in a variety of activities, games, and
17 purchase official Everton products from merchandise vans. Framing the fan zone are food
18 stalls, where fast food offerings similar to that inside of the stadium such as burgers and fish
19 and chips are available prior to the match. It was observed to be mainly occupied by male and
20 female family fans that transition through this space *en route* to Goodison, usually interacting
21 with the zone for one to two hours before kick-off. Given this space is primarily created for
22 families and children, inclusion remained predicated on women and girls performing a
23 particular type of femininity, mostly in the capacity of a nurturing feminine role (AUTHOR
24 A, 2016).

25 Although there were some male fans present in this section, compared to the
26 observations made in the pub, there was a stronger female presence. On one hand, official fan
27 zones can be seen as breaking down the traditional gender-bound divisions of weekend time,
28 and replacing the masculine pre-match ritual of drinking in local pubs before the match with
29 more family orientated fan engagement. On the other, this introduction ensures that the
30 existing culture of football is upheld with family fans separated from the traditional locales of
31 masculine football culture and spaces interacted with on match-day.

32 Twenty-first Century football has been accused of lacking atmosphere, attributed to
33 topographical changes in football stadiums and the commercialisation of sport (Charleston,

1 technology inside of the stadium are less well understood (Tapp and Clowes, 2000). As the
2 quotes above reflect, Everton fans are conscious of a perceived change to the demographic of
3 the football crowd, but spoke generally in favour of these changes in making football more
4 inclusive. However, Pearson (2012) notes that for some hyper-masculine fans the act of
5 taking photos and videos through mobile phone technology during matches was considered
6 the type of activity a ‘tourist’ or non-authentic fan would engage in. According to some
7 traditional fans, authentic fans ‘should be merely supporting the team’ and not engaging in
8 that type of activity (Pearson, 2012: 179). As a consequence, official fan zones remain on the
9 ‘other side of the boundary’ (Cohen, 1985) of what has been considered traditional football
10 culture and hence peripheral to the game’s masculine ethos (Williams, 2006). Exploring how
11 behaviour in and around the official fan zone was policed by the club and also the match-
12 going crowd who frequent this space illustrates how boundaries were created and reinforced
13 to ensure this space remains safe for families and young children.

14 Unlike the spatial arrangements of fans inside the pub, male family fans were
15 observed to stand in a small section at the rear of the fan zone that serves alcohol. Although
16 this also involved them then being physically separated from female family fans and children,
17 they were now marginalised away from the focal point of the space – the main stage. Female
18 family fans were again observed to be more engaged with their children and involved in the
19 activities offered in the fan zone. Although traditional match-day food and alcohol
20 consumption is encouraged in this zone, all fans are under much tighter regulations and
21 surveillance than those in pubs not only by the club’s official security, but also by others fans
22 within this space. In this way, family fans are not perceived as passive or delicate objects that
23 need protecting. This finding stands in contrast to how female fans particularly have been
24 perceived within the sporting context, especially within sport crowds (Pope, 2014a). Rather,
25 it was observed that female family fans were the ones doing the protecting and gatekeeping,
26 especially when it came to their children – a practice of self-policing that is becoming more
27 common amongst fans (Millward, 2008). The female family fans that took part in this study
28 deemed intoxication, smoking, and other supposed ‘anti-social’ activities as not appropriate
29 behaviour within this part of the sportscape, as exemplified in Stacey’s comments at the
30 beginning of this section.

31 The fan zone is a space that is dominated by family fans that were observed to
32 maintain (and at times defend) the boundary between themselves and other fan groups. The

1 symbolic expression and affirmation of this boundary heightens awareness of and sensitivity
2 to fans within this space (Cohen, 1985). Members of other fan groups were observed to
3 respect this boundary, by actively avoiding it to not cause a disruption to its ‘social script’
4 (Goffman, 1959). In the context of this study, this moral standard and reference group refers
5 to family fans and the creation of a boundary between their behaviour, or what they deem to
6 be appropriate match-day behaviour, and the boisterous, alcohol-fuelled behaviour of other
7 fans that was discussed above. By keeping this behaviour outside of the official fan zone, the
8 moral standard of the space is upheld. We are not postulating that family fans are inherently
9 critical of hyper-masculine fan behaviour on match-day, but rather they create an alternative
10 form of match-day atmosphere that does not rely on traditional (masculine) practices and
11 performances of fandom.

12 **Conclusion**

13 This article has explored the spatial configuration of the match-day routine for Everton fans,
14 and positioned this discussion within the broader framework of sportscape. It considered how
15 traditional practices of a match-day still remain popular and attractive for Everton fans, whilst
16 also discussing the creation of new spaces that fans can engage with before they enter the
17 stadium. We suggest that the variety of fan types that locate themselves within the sportscape
18 allows the meanings and significance tied to the match-day routine to shift, adapt and change
19 with the currents of social, cultural and commercial influences. Whilst football remains in
20 many ways a masculine ‘preserve’, we discussed how clubs have made a stronger attempt to
21 encourage a more diverse fanbase, namely that of family fans. However, for both male and
22 female fans inclusion into the sportscape was shown to have limits. Instituted through social
23 and cultural boundaries, this inclusion remains based on gendered norms that, depending on
24 the location, privileges **traditional versions of** either masculinity or femininity.

25 The various spaces fans chose to frequent on game day greatly contributed to the
26 behaviours they exhibited. Match-day became a way for fans to distinguish themselves as
27 members of a particular fan type within the Everton fan community. As such, the areas
28 surrounding the stadium were shown to enhance, maintain and legitimise particular sports fan
29 behaviours, where within particular spaces the idealised fan norms for the group were
30 embodied and realised. Spaces such as County Road remained a part of the sportscape that
31 encased an interlocking web of localised ideologies and **traditional** masculinity. The fans
32 observed in this space typically were drawn to it with an expectation and understanding of the

1 cultural traditions and carnival atmosphere it celebrates. **The gendered spatial boundaries**
2 **within the pub ultimately result in both the physical and symbolic marginalisation of all**
3 **females. Even when they are ‘permitted’ into the masculine spaces, females continue to**
4 **be disempowered as they are ‘forced’ to adopt tenets of orthodox masculinity or are**
5 **devalued through the use of male-privileging practices such as ‘sport talk’.**

6 The fan zone, however, created a bridge for some fans between traditional
7 (masculine) fan practices and family or community-oriented culture. Family fans,
8 particularly, were able to create a distinction or boundary between themselves and the
9 undesirable elements of hyper-masculine fan culture. In this way, they created an alternative
10 match-day atmosphere and experience that remains centred on a family friendly or at least
11 family inclusive culture. In doing so, family fans create social solidarity amongst its members
12 and carve out the space where their performance and embodiment of fandom is not
13 marginalised or ridiculed, but rather protected and upheld by the other members of the
14 Everton fan community. Unlike the pre-match activities that take place on County Road, the
15 fan zone celebrates new types of fan engagements and commercial artefacts. Although this
16 type of engagement can be seen as problematic in literature, it is set to increase in the
17 contemporary game, due to the large amount of financial investment football clubs are
18 putting into developing fan zones. Whether or not the fan zone will become cemented in the
19 match-day routine for football fans remains uncertain, as does the vitality of this particular
20 fan zone if Everton were ever to be relocated to another stadium.

21 Perhaps more importantly it reveals how the social and physical landscape of space
22 remains bounded in gendered norms which influences behaviour and sets expectations. With
23 the creation of new spaces, those who inhabit them will develop their own norms and
24 boundaries which can marginalise traditional practices and create alternative inclusive
25 environments. **While this explanation appears to binarise these two sites as (traditional)**
26 **masculine and feminine spaces the situation is much more fluid. As with any spaces,**
27 **these locations are in a state of flux due to the complex human relations that take place**
28 **within them. They become sites for resisting, overcoming and negotiating power.**

29 To conclude, this paper illuminates the largely overlooked socio-spatial element
30 inherent to sports fandom. **In doing so, we have also addressed a gap in our**
31 **understanding of spatiality – namely the geography of sport (Molw & Towner, 1995;**
32 **Pavlidis, 2018). Hopefully this paper will inspire other researcher to focus on the**
33 **geography of sport in urban settings.**

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