



Open Research Online

The Open University's repository of research publications and other research outputs

Introduction

Journal Item

How to cite:

Woodward, Kath and Goldblatt, David (2011). Introduction. *Soccer & Society*, 12(1) pp. 1–8.

For guidance on citations see [FAQs](#).

© 2011 Taylor Francis

Version: Accepted Manuscript

Link(s) to article on publisher's website:

<http://dx.doi.org/doi:10.1080/14660970.2011.530450>

Copyright and Moral Rights for the articles on this site are retained by the individual authors and/or other copyright owners. For more information on Open Research Online's data [policy](#) on reuse of materials please consult the policies page.

oro.open.ac.uk

Introduction

Kath Woodward and David Goldblatt

In this innovative issue of the journal which breaks away from the traditional academic journal format, publishing many more short pieces and photographs than usual we focus on the capacities of football to create affects. The diverse manifestations of these affects happen through music, sound, art, literature, the mechanisms of communication and through everyday experience. We invited different people, each of whom is affected by football to choose something through which the importance and sensation of football becomes evident and to write a short piece about the object or experience which conveys something of what is so important and exciting about football. These short pieces intersperse the longer articles which also feature in this special edition of *Soccer and Society*.

Our aim is to interrogate the affects of football and some of the ways in which the sport is experienced through different aspects of sensory experience. Objects are central to the experience and in this special edition we propose a focus on the kinds of objects that different people perceive as central or important in some way to their experience of the game. These objects are not only invested with meaning by those who cite them, but also the objects, whether footballing memorabilia, stories, images, sounds or a place where the game is played, the medium through which it is transmitted, radio, television on the internet have their own affects and impact and are affected by each other. Football has the capacities and properties that generate affects through its myriad dimensions. We have given considerable emphasis to sound, because the project was inspired by our research on the medium of radio through the

BBC World Service. Although, in the history of the BBC, the visible and the visual possibilities of sports broadcasting on terrestrial television and later by satellite and on the internet, seemed to supersede the medium of radio. Nonetheless radio remains a powerful vehicle for the communication of sport; sound goes a long way towards re-creating the feeling of football and the rhythms and cadences of 'being there', even when you are not. Sounds are central to the affect of football, for example through audio transmission and chanting at grounds and to the experience of sounds and things. We also include visual and visible experience and those of other sensory experiences of football that are generated by the things, objects and experiences that are the focus of the short pieces.

The sociology of football and sports studies have made major progress in exploring what goes on at the game, the rituals and behaviours of crowds as well as structures of power and money within and between clubs and leagues, and there have of course been extensive reviews of the ways in which media coverage, particularly TV, represents and reinterprets the sport for the wider football public. This special issue of *Soccer and Society* builds on that work but takes it in new directions in order to focus on the many ways in which football is experienced, represented and reinterpreted by the cultures that consume it through an exploration of objects, sensation and affect.

The project was triggered by our BBC World Service Sport Across Diasporas research for the Arts and Humanities Council, theme Tuning In: Contact Zones at the BBC World Service, in the *Diasporas, Migration, Identities* programme and to thinking about the people who make sense of global sport, especially football, when they can't get to the game. We seek to engage with what is so diverse and so exciting

about football and how it means so much to so many different people, in order to explore the paradox that exists in football, as in all commercialised sports. On the one hand, the ninety minutes, the game itself, live and in person at the ground, is the central experience and purpose of a football culture. However, that game is consumed and experienced by many others who are not at the ground, at that moment and the wider culture woven around the games, lives all day, every day, all week; dissected in the press, satirised on You tube, ranted over on phone ins and recreated and represented in memorabilia, images and stories, which create their own affects and are part of the systems through which football is constituted both on and off the pitch, as a dynamic force which endures in different ways and in different places in the contemporary world.

The short pieces in the journal have been written by people involved in football in very different ways; by academics, sports writers and journalists, those who watch and those who sometimes play, but all of whom have deep commitments to football. The material covers art and posters, and places where football is played, transmitted and is part of everyday life, as well as, in the case of the BBC archive, a place where the representation and performance of football are measured, recorded and researched. David Goldblatt describes a particular experience of the relationship between football and the visual and graphic arts. Photographs are objects that have the capacity to create assemblages of what football is, and can, be, as John Foot writes of the photograph of Gigi Meroni which is, and says, so much more than can be contained within the parameters of the frame of the photograph itself, yet it is the image which produces the affects. Images and objects create and make material some of the or others it is the place that endures, whether it is Wembley stadium as in Jack

Woodward's account of the experience of being there commentating or the persistence of place and the material which makes it, which Mattias Marschik demonstrates in his piece on the bottle of Gzira sand which embodies the memories of past football glories at the Empire stadium, which is now closed and secured. Jayne Caudwell, like Jack Woodward focuses on experience, in her case of engaging in the embodied practices of football as a player, although again the spatial dimensions of the experience are central. Jayne's photograph of the team accompanying her Football Fixtures piece is both typical of the team photo and very specific, since it is also personal and situated. Each of the short pieces has this quality of implicating the situation and specific relationship between the writer and the subject of the piece.

Image and place connect in John Turbull's discussion of the representation of Zidane which occupies some of his personal space and raises the importance of the intersections between the ordinary and everyday and the iconoclastic. In Roman Horak's piece it is the sound which accompanies the moving images of film which he uses to demonstrate the synchrony between sound and football in the transformation of cinema at the early stages of the cultural industries in the 1920s. Cinema is also part of the reiteration of football stories, especially its narratives of heroism, and Bob Edelman uses an example of a Russian movie from the 1930s to show how a relatively mediocre film still carries weight as part of social and cultural history through its association with football. Gary Armstrong's piece on the Sheffield United Bing Boys resonates with many of the longer articles in the journal in foregrounding sound and presenting a particular dimension of the social dimensions of football in context. Kath Woodward's experiences of the tail end of the 2010 football season in

the UK also foregrounds sound and suggests both that sound can supersede and occupy space, none more so than when sound is out of place.

Some of the short pieces concentrate on very familiar football objects, for example Anthony King's badge and Steve Woodward's rosette. Each is a memorable piece of football memorabilia which itself constitutes an assemblage of different aspects of the game and of the writer's relationship to the object. Anthony King extends his account more explicitly into wider social narratives, whereas Steve Woodward focuses upon the object itself and the interrelationship between his biography and the football story of the team which is embodied in the object. Each piece demonstrates the endurance of connections and pivotal points with parallels between personal worlds and the social world in which football is situated.

James Wyllie's piece about the BBC archive at Caversham is both a tale of an unlikely treasure and an unlikely object. This is not a place that invokes football, but its treasures reveal the minutiae of history and the fragments of broadcasting history which indicate the social worlds in which the transmission of sport and in this case in particular football is made.

The longer articles in the journal similarly cover a range of aspects of the affects of football as a sport which is made up of diverse and often unexpected things and experiences. Whereas the short pieces are presented largely as speaking for themselves, the longer articles offer critical analyses of different dimensions of the sounds and things that make up football. The articles address some of this range, including history, literature, art and image and sound. Sound and the significance of

soundscapes have been central to our exploration in the journal, partly because the places where football is experienced, whether at the ground or at a distance are often defined by sound and sound is one of the often under theorised dimensions of sensory experience in sport, with the visual and visibility often carrying more weight. Football creates soundscapes that the embodied experiences of sounds and of hearing and of listening are central to the experience of football. Sounds offer powerful mechanisms of identification and attachment and sound is deployed to extend the hegemony and control in football, through club and spatial affiliations expressed in chants. Such identifications are both productive and destructive and exclusionary as several of the articles demonstrate and as is signposted in Kath Woodward's experience with Leeds United fans on the train. Also, in the case of the research which triggered some of our ideas about the special edition, we were motivated by both researching the BBC World Service and its communication of sport across the globe in changing times and our involvement in broadcasting and in being part of the process. Our first article, *Tuning In to Football on the BBC World Service*, David Goldblatt, James Wyllie and Kath Woodward is thus chosen to trace some of where we are coming from in this edition of the journal. The article is prefaced by a short piece, *BBC Archives Caversham: an Unlikely Treasure*, by James Wyllie on the archive as object and as a site of experience, which seems distant from the excitement and exhilaration of 'being there', watching or even of listening to sport in order to demonstrate how the practices associated with presenting football inform and relate to the experience of listening.

Tuning into Football on the BBC World Service focuses on radio as a medium of communication of the experience of sport through the coverage of football on the BBC between 1935 and 1975. The material gathered in this article comes exclusively

from the BBC archive at Caversham, home to thousands and thousands of files on sport which detail the broadcasters' bureaucratic procedures and administrative processes. Scattered amongst these documents are examples of the theory and practice of BBC policy making, revealing through its language and attitudes the social-cultural and political imperatives behind their coverage of sport, and how they changed over time. The politics of sport and of broadcasting are clearly enmeshed and the dominance of the Premier League today is more understandable when you consider the long-term efforts by the BBC and the governing bodies to give the game an international presence.

The aim in this article is to delineate a history of BBC coverage of football in relationship to both the domestic and international audience, and the sport's governing bodies. The written documents are, as far as possible, permitted to speak for themselves, quoting liberally where appropriate, in an attempt to give a flavour and an appreciation of the character, nature and tone of the language used, providing a unique insight into the mindset of BBC decision makers and their negotiations and demonstrating the social life of the archive itself and of the documents it contains.

Playing by the Book: Football in Latin American Literature by David Wood:

University of Sheffield focuses on how sport has long enjoyed a prominent position in Latin American societies, and in recent decades this relationship has increasingly been manifested in the region's literary production. While sports such as boxing, baseball, cycling and long-distance running have all featured in this flowering of sports literature, it is football that dominates this particular scene. This article analyses texts from different periods, genres and nations to consider the ways in which football has

served to explore a range of issues, such as politics, identity, race and aesthetics. The focus is primarily on Juan Parra de Riego's poem 'Polirritmo dinámico a Gradín' (Uruguay, 1922), Antonio Skármeta's collection of short stories *Tiro libre* (Chile, 1973), Arturo Corcuera's collection of visual poetry *La gran jugada* (Peru, 1997) and Javier García-Galiano's novel/ chronicle *Cámara húngara* (Mexico, 2004), a sample of football texts that will enable an appreciation of the ways in which the sport's literary representation has come to constitute an important aspect of the region's cultural landscape.

'Show Us Your Moves': Using Music and Dance to Promote the 2010 Soccer World Cup in South Africa by Nicol Hammond, shifts the cultural emphasis onto music and dance in relation to the men's World Cup in South Africa. In 2010, sixteen years after it became a democracy, South Africa will become the first African nation to host the Soccer World Cup. The event has attracted much negative feeling from both South Africans resenting huge government expenditure on stadia and other infrastructural necessities and foreigners fearing crime and doubting the capacity of an African nation to successfully host this international competition. Nonetheless, many hopes have been placed in the 2010 Soccer World Cup attracting tourism (and tourist dollars) to South Africa and promoting a more positive image of Africa (and South Africa in particular). With this goal in mind, local soccer and tourism authorities have begun rolling out a publicity campaign that emphasizes the country's preparedness to host this event, and also the uniqueness of the experience that South Africa can offer. Online and print advertisements suggest that the familiar trope of "African rhythm" shapes not just South African soccer, but the entire hospitality experience; potential visitors are invited to learn dance moves and become familiar with the Vuvuzela (an

unturned plastic horn), both long associated with soccer in South Africa. But while the 1995 Rugby World Cup, held the year after Nelson Mandela became South Africa's first democratically elected president, successfully showcased the ideals of a multi-racial, uniquely inclusive new nation, the 2010 Soccer World Cup is threatening to reveal the emerging social fissures that "rainbow nation" advertising seeks to erase.

This paper explores the role that the music in 2010 Soccer World Cup advertising plays in constructing an exclusionary South African identity that threatens to alienate many of the people explicitly protected by the nation's much lauded constitution. It begins with a consideration of persistent debates on the possibility of identifying a South African music, followed by a consideration of the often exoticist, primitivist representations of that music perpetuated by the 2010 Soccer World Cup advertisements. It then considers the extent to which this primitivism, which actively undermines attempts to represent South Africa's preparedness for hosting the event, is counterbalanced by the production of a normatively Western gender binary employed to demonstrate social and economic development. Finally, it will discuss the extent to which this rigid binary, reinforced in musical representations of South Africanness, makes invisible South Africa's rich history of gender queer performance in soccer, and raises the question of the effectiveness of the 2010 Soccer World Cup advertising in promoting a positive image of South Africa to the world and encouraging ordinary South Africans to support this event.

You only sing when you're winning: Footballing and musical rivalries in Liverpool and Manchester by Simon Warner explores another aspect of the relationship between sound, space and football. Linked by a largely redundant canal, an ancient railway and

a frequently congested motorway but entwined by a longer economic and social history, Liverpool and Manchester remain the two most significant footballing centres and, arguably, the two key cities in popular music-making in the UK. This chapter explores the roots of these creative cities and consider the part that rivalry has played in shaping a powerful regional identity. From the industrial struggle that would see Manchester bypass Liverpool's harbour taxes by virtue of the 'Big Cut' – the Manchester Ship Canal which turned the inland city into a port in its own right – to the sporting contest that also sees these two cities as the greatest winners in a century and more of football competition, this is a tale of provincial centres constructing a mythology that stresses the strength of the local over the national.

In an era when Englishness is a virtual badge of dishonour, Scousers and Mancunians can parade their intense differences with both pride and venom, even if they share many characteristics: Irish and Caribbean influx, Protestant-Catholic tensions, fiscal decline and thriving student bohemiae. The relationship of their successful football teams – Manchester United and Liverpool FC – has been riddled with barely-contained bitterness for decades. Both clubs have enjoyed unparalleled attainment on the pitch but each has suffered catastrophic tragedy. The passion and the pain attached to each team has become the source of both celebration and sentimentality. Yet devastating setbacks – United's Munich air crash of 1958 and Liverpool's Hillsborough fan deaths of 1989 – have also been used by the rival supporters as sources of dark, sometimes callous, humour, weapons with which they can goad and inflame their oppositional counterparts.

However, amid common pasts and sometimes bitter enmity, the cities' musical output – from Merseybeat to Manchester, from the Beatles to the Smiths, from Echo and the Bunnymen to Happy Mondays, from the Coral to Oasis, from Atomic Kitten to Take That – continues unabated. As LIPA graduates the Wombats seize the NME front-page and the Ting Tings and the Courteneurs promise to be the next national stars to rise from the mean Manic streets, this account will attempt a socio-historical reading of two urban conurbations, 35 miles and a world apart, with particular focus on the way football has shaped and rock music has mediated our interpretations and understandings. On the sporting front, wounds may remain open, but it appears that popular musical associations may be more empathetic than negative.

Çarşı shouting against everything - constructing a football supporter group through its sound by Meri Kytö, also addresses the importance of soundscapes. Her article deals with the sonic meanings of Çarşı. On Saturdays when passing by the Besiktaş square in Istanbul one can hardly avoid the sonic presence of Çarşı, the supporter group of Besiktaş football team. Istanbul is the home of Çarşı (spelled with an anarchist 'a' letter) known for its 132 dB chanting record and placards with up-to-date political slogans. Drawing upon field observations and diaries, recordings and interviews made at the Besiktaş Çarşı Square, the İnönü stadium and the supporters' Kazan bar in March 2009, the study is also supported by a television documentary 'Asi ruh' made about the fan group, virtual fan sites on the internet containing recordings, videos and conversations of the fans.

It can be argued that this supporter group functions as an acoustic community. The marches, chants and sonic rituals draw the supporters together constructing a sense of

a shared space in which there are communally used and interpreted sounds. It seems that this acoustic community is also supported by an electro-acoustic community.

There are multiple ways in which the fans not being able to attend to the matches or pre-match gatherings in situ can share and learn about the acoustic atmosphere. One medium is of course broadcasts on television and radio, but just as important are the supporter sites and video sharing portals in the internet.

Following the idea of acoustemology of anthropologist Steven Feld, sound as a way of knowing the world (i.e. acoustic epistemology) this article seeks answers to the following questions: What can we know about the group by listening to it? What does chanting and sounding contribute to the group and what does the ways it manifests sonically tell about the community? Also questions of belonging, identifications in urban space, masculinity, and counterculture are discussed.

Mediation, Migration and Identity in Football Chants and Fandom by Pieter

Schoonderwoerd examines the particularities of place in relation to soundscapes and the specificities of attachment to expression in the form of football chants. In trying to find positives from Europe's golfing demise in the 2008 Ryder Cup, British journalist Owen Slot reported that 'if there is one department in which Europeans remain superior here, it is in their mastery of football chants. Americans, it turns out, cannot even fathom the basic rhythms'. Slot, though, may be being somewhat disingenuous in suggesting Americans' inability arises from their rhythm miscomprehension.

Responding to comments about the wealth of European chants, in his BBC blog reporter Alex Trickett stated 'I have a theory about that actually. I think that the vast distances in the USA have their part to play in this. Most of our chants come from the

football terraces when home fans and away fans bait each other in a (largely) good natured way. At every match in almost any sport, there will be a reasonable away fans contingent. In the States [on the other hand], there is much less of this in-stadium rivalry (because, let's face it, you can't pop over from LA to NYC for a game). Hence, there are less chants...'

Whether Trickett is 'right' or not, his commentary on the experience of football chanting and its use in other sporting contexts is indelibly tied to the arena in which the sport is performed. As the linguist John Lyons has suggested, in a football stadium, 'despite the morally questionable chants, which are thankfully a decreasing minority, there is bound to be something altogether positive about a group of people singing together on a large scale. Football chants are deceptively creative expressions of identity and history. In a sport where players and coaching staff have such a high turnover, stadiums are demolished and replaced, and teams are bought and sold like businesses, the only constant throughout is the fans. They use their collective voice to define themselves and retain the traditions of their club through shared values in the chants and the melodies that carry them – and whilst this ancient custom still exists, it should be celebrated'.

However, despite Lyons' affirmative evaluation of the fan football chant as a localised representation, the increasing globalisation of the sport needs accounting for. Therefore, this article, investigates the influence of football as a global product / phenomenon on fan affiliation as exercised through chants. This investigation focuses on fan diasporas congregating in pubs and clubs for match day broadcasts away from the ground and national and international fan organisations engaging with their

sporting heroes even though attendance at live events may be problematic. It explores the multiculturalism affecting fan demographics and the ensuing levels and natures of fan chants and the appropriation of chants by differing supporter groups across national and international regions, and the ensuing impact that this has on issues of personal, group and cultural representation and identity / identities. The article presents a multidimensional reading of the fan chant, over and above melodic analysis and socio-cultural examinations to situate fan chants and fandom in their global context(s).

Justice for the ninety six: Liverpool FC fans and Uncommon Use of Football Song, by Ben Power focuses on the role of sound and specifically song in making political points, in this instance to claim justice for the ninety six fans who died at the Hillsborough disaster in 1989. Ben is a life long Liverpool fan, who now lives in the US attended the memorial and the twentieth anniversary of the tragedy and witnessed the reaction of families and friends of the fans who died, to the speech made by the then UK government minister for Media Culture and Sport, Andy Burnham, at which the minister was silenced by the fans' singing. The Justice for the 96 song was sung at the memorial as an example of a demand for justice and an expression of The article explores the polyglot nature of the city of Liverpool and the intersection of social, cultural and political forces within the city and within football. In this article it is the cultural object of the Anfield crowd which is addressed and the event is seen as both an affect and as affective in a situation where sound transforms space. The crowd at the stadium understands itself as singing for justice in a colonization of space with explicit political affects. The article presents a detailed, scholarly critique of the

political and social significance of sound and song in football in an article in which methodologically the author is firmly situated and acknowledged.

The objects and experiences that are cited and explored in this special edition are connected by the ways in which they condense the affects of football in different places and at different times and demonstrates the dynamism of football through the objects and sensations that constitute the sport; the things through what football is and what it means are themselves part of the experience.