

Globalised Football Fandom: Scandinavian Liverpool FC Supporters

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Abstract

This article considers the nature of 'globalised' football fandom, specifically Scandinavian supporters of Liverpool FC, addressing loyalty and identity, relations with local fans, and how such fandom connects with the new political economy of English football. Some brief comments are also offered on this as a case of 'globalisation'. It is argued that Scandinavian fans are engaged in a search for authenticity, that their fandom is becoming more 'mature' and connected to wider contexts than simply the football clubs, highlighting how contradictory messages and values can be transmitted to 'globalised' fans.

Introduction

The relationship between modern sport and globalising processes has been much discussed (Goldberg & Wagg, 1991; Harvey & Houle, 1994; Houlihan, 1994; Sugden & Tomlinson 1998; Whannel, 1992). Joseph Maguire (1999) highlights in particular the connections between global capital, media industries and sport. One consequence of this, as John Williams argues (1993), is that media companies increasingly seek out cheap ready-made programming, expanding the amount of TV sport, particularly football. The result, and key to the agenda of top European football clubs, is that certain clubs become global brands, deliberately exported for consumption to create worldwide fan-bases, with obvious important consequences for fandom (and football) in the 'host' countries. English clubs have never been more pro-active in this market: Manchester United have a three-year joint Asian marketing deal with Pepsi, have opened merchandise stores worldwide, and sell their official (local-language) magazine in 27 countries, while Liverpool FC (LFC) sell merchandise in over thirty countries. Simultaneously an objective and a consequence of these processes, top English clubs now have thousands of overseas fans, particularly in Scandinavia. What might be considered a simple extension of previous de-localisations of support for English sides throughout Britain is considerably more complex.

The Liverpool Scandinavian Supporters' Club and the Danish Supporters Club

While English clubs started touring Scandinavia in the early 1900s (Andersson & Radman, 1999: 68) Scandinavian support for English clubs on the modern scale can be traced to the late 1960s. when Scandinavian TV began weekly

coverage of English football (Goksøyr & Hognestad, 1999: 206). In 1998, 60,000 fans were members of 46 Scandinavian supporters clubs (SCs) of English clubs (SBK, 1998: 30), compared to 20,000 in the Association of Norwegian Supporters Clubs. Formed in 1980, the Liverpool Scandinavian Supporters' Club (SSC) boasted 10,000 members in 1994, 20,000 in 1997, and 21,634 in 1998. The Danish branch of the LFC International Supporters Club (ISC) had 1,600 members in 1998. Importantly, this includes an active travelling element visible at all LFC's games, that makes Scandinavian fandom worthy of analysis. Both were formed to disseminate news about LFC, later moving into organising tours to Liverpool. The aim here is to explore the nature of foreign supporters' fandom. Maguire (1999: 145-6) notes the importance of how 'recipients' deal with globalising forces as these move from one social space to another. Within that context, what implications are there for fan identity? Which traditions do Scandinavians buy into? What is their relationship with locals? More widely, *what* is being 'globalised' here?

De-localisation of fandom may previously have been an 'accident' of television coverage, but it is now central to top English clubs' profit maximisation, whose relationships with their communities decline as they consciously seek out the most lucrative markets for tickets and merchandise (non-local fans spend the most per capita per visit [Lee, 1999: 89]). LFC's crowds have changed markedly since the switch to all-seater stadia in 1994, with the crowd more affluent and ticket prices up 300 per cent. The relationship of many locals with LFC is thus increasingly marked by social exclusion, with match-day at LFC's ground Anfield characterised by the grey economy (including ticket touting) and a scramble for scarce tickets, a reality far detached from the welcome offered to the fortnightly Scandinavian arrivals. The post-Fordist and capitalist agenda identified respectively by Anthony King and Simon Lee within English football's recent transformation (King, 1997b; Lee, 1998) is clearly visible in LFC's approach to global and local fandom, and the regularised supply of match tickets to the SSC (and its access to high-level club personnel) testify to LFC's search for active support beyond Merseyside. One SSC official (who preferred to remain anonymous) revealed how obtaining tickets, and accessing club personnel, became much easier after the SSC informed LFC how much merchandise members purchased (84 per cent of this sample bought merchandise from LFC's shop). Appealing to LFC's commercial agenda directly produced the 100 tickets the SSC can currently buy for each league fixture. Apart from producing a members' magazine, the SSC owns season tickets and club shares, sells official merchandise, arranges fan tours to Liverpool, and runs a huge website. It employs four workers, its phone match commentary service reportedly made £80,000 turnover in one evening in 1996, and its Oslo shop sold £30,000 of merchandise in two days before season 1999-2000. Two SSC employees have also produced a history of LFC in Norwegian (Hansen & Flatin, 2000). The Danish branch, by contrast, has

limited access to LFC personnel, and must apply for tickets like any other International Supporters' Club (ISC) branch, getting blocks of tickets three times a season.

Members in Denmark and Norway were surveyed via SC magazines and Internet sites, in person at Liverpool's two Scandinavian games in 1998, and at the SSC's Oslo party; key personnel in both clubs were interviewed, plus fans who launched fanzines in Danish and Finnish in 1998 and 1999 respectively, while four groups of SSC members were interviewed while visiting Liverpool in 1999. The use of the Internet raises some specific research issues. Selwyn and Robson argue that it is increasingly less stratified by class and gender (1998: 2), but despite the huge growth of free Internet providers, this particular online community is still mediated by access to money (as discussed below). Thus, the 240-strong Internet sample may be demographically unrepresentative. In addition, 136 fans were surveyed directly.

Demography and Origins of Scandinavian Support

Joy Standeven and Paul de Knop (1999: 226), and Gibson (1996: 16.5) postulate a relationship between active sports tourism (of which this is a type) and social cleavage. This view is broadly supported by my sample: 95 per cent of respondents were male, along with nearly everyone in SSC tour parties, although women comprised maybe thirty per cent of those at the Oslo party. SSC estimates put actual female membership at five per cent. The cost of travelling to Liverpool – the basic SSC one-match weekend package costs £450 each, £400 with the Danish branch – suggests that the travelling element are in regular employment. Indeed, a noticeable number of interviewees reported that difficulties getting time off work limited their visits to Liverpool. Twenty-eight per cent spent over £300 per trip (plus travel), although 63 per cent cited money as the main limitation on visiting. Many fans made the trip their annual holiday, and saved up months in advance. Forty-eight per cent visited Merseyside once or twice a season, while only 1.6 per cent made more than five trips. Additionally, 54 per cent travelled to watch increasingly expensive away games while in England. Internet respondents offer further indicators: 72 per cent had home-based connections (primarily the Norwegian 'Online' and Danish 'c2I' servers, that charge a monthly fee), with the rest split between work and student addresses, locating these fans within higher economic categories.

Given the easy access across Europe to live and recorded world football, it could have been assumed that Scandinavian support for LFC formed part of a wider interest in European football. Yet, 36 per cent followed no other leagues, 29 per cent did so only via TV, and only two per cent traveled to watch other football, emphasising again the *active* support for LFC. Indeed, when Norwegian state TV withdrew English coverage in favour of German football in the late 1980s a storm of protest ensued. Television was clearly a primary force (contrary to Matti Goksøyr & Hans Hognestad's [1999: 206] wider

assessment), with 78 per cent of fans and all bar one interviewee first becoming interested in LFC through TV coverage; nineteen per cent were influenced by friends or family, and two per cent when visiting England. As the Danish SC official noted, 'when TV coverage started in Denmark . . . everybody picked up a team to support: as LFC were winning a lot at that time, everyone chose LFC. Now it's United, because they are winning a lot'. Other important factors included LFC's style of play (the most 'European' of British clubs in the 1970s and 1980s highlighted by 22 per cent), individual players (16 per cent) and European successes (29 per cent).

Loyalties Towards Local and English Football

A crucial issue is the 'contradictory' nature of Scandinavian fan identity, described by Goksøyr and Hognestad as a 'collision of worlds' (1999: 207), with fans torn between simultaneous support for local and English teams. It is historically a key discourse of European fandom to support only one club and sustain rivalries against others. To support a club 1,000 miles away in a foreign country would be the mark of 'glory-hunters', problematising Scandinavian support for LFC. Goksøyr and Hognestad argue Scandinavian fans avoid this because their support for LFC 'runs parallel' to that for local sides, such that these loyalties exist in 'different universes' (1999: 7), rarely 'colliding' (as in 1997 when Liverpool played Norwegian side SK Brann).

For these fans, however, the English club is far superior, and actively prioritised, with support for LFC simply far deeper and personally felt than any interest in local football. Ninety-seven per cent of fans would support LFC against their local team, as would 78 per cent against their national side. All group interviewees were at best lukewarm about their local football, some totally disregarded or despised it, and all felt that it simply fell so far short of the Anfield experience as to be non-comparable. Seventeen per cent of fans and a minority of interviewees took no interest in it at all. The overwhelming view was, as one fan suggested, 'we have an interest in local football, but we all recognise LFC as the "real thing"'. Local football is more of a summer pastime'. Given Norway and Denmark's successes in the 1990s the unimportance of national sides and leagues is evidence of a deep loyalty to LFC that does not, in reality, compete with local loyalties, but simply obliterates them. Essentially, the 'great moral dilemma' felt by some LFC/Brann fans (Goksøyr & Hognestad, 1999: 207) is not visible amongst these supporters.

Central to Scandinavian support for Liverpool was English football's fan cultures and traditions, its excitement, communality and participation. Actively following LFC therefore is a genuine 'experience' that local football simply cannot offer. A key element in this was the total lack of, and antipathy towards, participation in Scandinavian football fan cultures: one fan noted how 'you can shout in Norway, but [the locals] think you are stupid . . . they look at you and tell you to shut up . . . I feel more allowed to do it here [in Liverpool]'. Another

felt that local football had 'really no atmosphere, the fans don't sing together, they just sit there . . . [some] possibly came by mistake', and he preferred following LFC away precisely because of the communal participation. Therefore, what may appear to be simultaneous support for two clubs, in reality amounted to support for LFC and an *interest* in local teams that, ultimately, can neither threaten nor rival the former. Rather than parallel, or colliding, social worlds, these fans have a hierarchy of social worlds, their support for LFC providing participation, glamour and history, compared to an interest in local football that involved markedly less interest, money and time. Indeed, it is possible to apply traditional English conceptions of 'genuine' fandom, where Scandinavians considered themselves *fans* of LFC and *followers* of local sides, with supporting LFC being an essentially non-negotiable personal commitment of time, money and energy and local football representing a mere, optional pastime. That SSC and Danish branch membership expanded when English football was clearly 'better' than local football is significant. One SSC official suggested that the lack of 'many good [Norwegian] teams on a European scale' in the 1980s and 1990s increased LFC's importance. Therefore, younger Scandinavians who become interested in English clubs as Scandinavian football improves may take a different attitude, investing lesser emotional (and other) resources in their support for English clubs. However, just as Scandinavian football is deemed inferior to English football, so English football remains inferior in technical terms to Italian football, yet these fans had no interest in Italian games at all, fore-grounding the importance of the English 'experience' *in toto*.

The 'genuine' nature of this fandom was also enhanced by Scandinavians' strong interest in LFC's reserve and youth teams, the club museum and visitor centre, their shrine-like conception of Anfield, and almost insatiable desire for news, information, autographs etc. There was also (a more limited) interest in the city and region, which suffers from strong and unpleasant stereotypes (Belchem, 1997; Scraton, Jemphrey & Coleman, 1995). Such stereotypes had clearly reached these visitors, with many coming to Liverpool with very negative expectations, but these soon fell away, and visitors fully intended to return (financial considerations notwithstanding). The loyalty generated is most visible from the numbers who would move to Liverpool if employment was available: 67 per cent of active visitors would consider moving, along with 33 per cent of those yet to travel. Some admitted trying to persuade their partners to study in Liverpool, one spent an entire year on Merseyside following a lottery win, and another wanted his expectant wife to give birth in Liverpool. This seems a strange case of Arjun Appadurai's 'ethnoscape' (1990: 297), rooted not so much in the distorting and disruptive flows of modern capitalism as in a willed desire to be closer to the 'temple' (Anfield) and its social context (Merseyside). This is also redolent of his 'mediascape' (1990: 299), as the flows of images of Liverpool as a city lead

to the creation of imagined lives in Merseyside for these distant fans, and hence a desire to move. It is unclear, however, how these images or fantasies are created. The dominant images of Merseyside that have reached Scandinavian fans are hardly appealing (however inaccurate they actually are), yet there is nonetheless a clear element of fans who would drop everything and move if the chance arose. It would be strange indeed were support for LFC (and interest in certain key symbols of Merseyside, like the Beatles etc) sufficient to create the imagined lives that underpin this ethnoscape. The city thus has a totemic quality not normally expected to follow from supporting a team, suggesting a growing 'depth' to Scandinavian fandom beyond a simple focus on matters on the pitch, also evidenced by a nascent political aspect (discussed below) and the doubling of SSC membership in the 1990s (when LFC declined significantly).

Relations between Local and Scandinavian Fans

Having suggested that LFC increasingly tolerates local exclusion from active attendance (partly underpinned by their prioritisation of overseas fans), the issue of the relationship between local and Scandinavian supporters becomes significant. One potential response of locals to foreign arrivals would be hostility based on a common local view that visitors not only receive preferential treatment from LFC but are 'taking' tickets from Merseysiders. Individual Scandinavians are obviously in an impossible position, since their own access to tickets would disappear were LFC's preference for the SSC removed, yet some still saw this as problematic. Two officials disliked LFC's focus on Scandinavians, and partly blamed it for Anfield's declining atmosphere. But the consensus was that the tickets available to the SSC formed only a small proportion of Anfield's capacity. Importantly, one fan suggested that Norwegians were 'supporters as well', so legitimating their access to tickets, ironically underpinned by English concepts of 'genuine' fandom. This attitude also underpinned much of the disappointment (and anger) at LFC's failure to send representatives to the 1998 SSC Oslo party, as if that implied that these fans were not valued as genuine supporters. There was also little concern for the exclusionary implications of the processes behind the Scandinavian arrivals, again based on the view that they have as much right to attend as anyone else.

Instead of hostility, Scandinavian fans actually found a strong communal ethos with local fans, who treated them as simply another type of supporter. The Danish official noted that 'when the fans [on tour parties] go into a bar with a LFC shirt on and [the locals] hear you are from another country, they start chatting to you. Many times I have been offered a beer with them'. Partly, this may be due to Scandinavian attempts to eliminate difference. One suggested 'most of us try to get in touch with the "local lads" when we're on Merseyside. While at Anfield, I've under-communicated my Norwegianness on several occasions, pretending not to understand the Norwegian spoken next to

me and look as English as possible'. Despite being part of processes central to football's new political economy, Scandinavian fans avoid being implicated in their exclusionary effects on sections of LFC's fan base, primarily because of their obvious genuine commitment. To this extent, the lengths Scandinavians go to 'prove' their loyalty to LFC cannot be explained as a defence against local criticism, and instead (as discussed below) can be seen as attempts at authenticity, to connect with symbolic practices, traditions and discourses that specific local cultures define as 'genuine'.

Widely recognised as an additional factor in these relations are LFC's Scandinavian players, which raises some potentially important issues, illuminating the nature and depth of Scandinavian fandom. Scandinavians could be expected to draw on these players as important symbolic elements that inform and deepen their fandom, reinforcing their identity as *Scandinavian* Liverpool supporters; logically, were this true, these players' departure would reduce fans' emotional connections to LFC. However, such impacts were in reality limited. Only a quarter of fans developed a greater interest in LFC, identified more with it, or took greater pride in it following the Scandinavian arrivals. For fully 66 per cent, these players made no difference, and they actually reduced pride in LFC for twelve per cent, reflecting perhaps a minority sense of 'shame' that their countrymen were contributing to LFC's decline. However, visiting patterns did appear to play a role. Active visitors were 38 per cent less likely to be affected either way by LFC's Scandinavian players. This was despite Danish and Norwegian media discourses widely held to tailor coverage of English clubs around their Scandinavian players. One fan noted how 'when [Danish midfielder] Molby joined Liverpool, the press did more stuff on Liverpool and of course people then started supporting Liverpool ... the papers never wrote anything on Rangers and no one supported them. But then came [Danish striker] Laudrup and suddenly you could see loads of kids wearing Rangers shirts'. The Danish official suggested 'we could get a lot more members [if Laudrup signed], but if he left two or three years later, we would have kept some of them, but many would have left again'. Fans' rejection of discourses of common national identity with Scandinavian players, subordinated to technical considerations of ability, is maybe key to gaining the symbolically crucial recognition of being genuine, denying a sense of national identity as part of the process of establishing the right to be considered genuine.

Indeed, employing technical discourses, Norwegian fans were highly critical of LFC's Norwegian purchases. One representative view was, for instance, that '[English football] lost its aura when it become possible (or even usual) for Norwegians to play in your league', and the criticisms of the abilities of Norwegian players were openly and bitterly expressed. These technical discourses were routinely contrasted with Scandinavian Manchester United supporters, whose focus on United's Norwegian players was striking. The Liverpool fans, who substituted national identities/symbols for club-focused

considerations of ability, attributed this to United SC members' average age (twelve years old). Many Danish fans were harsh towards the Norwegian players (and supporters), but again expressed no desire to see Liverpool's team filled with Danes. Indeed, one suggested that 'it's good to see local people (Scousers) in the Liverpool side . . . Liverpool is an English side, a Liverpool side, and should have at least one Scouser in the team. Some people support for instance Manchester United because of [Norwegian striker] Solskjaer, but then you are not a real fan. I love the club and not the players!' A number of interviewees expressed this desire to have Scousers in the first team, arguing (based on traditional English fandom) they can be expected to care more because they understand the club's significance. Equally, there was little place for national rivalries. As noted, Danish fans expressed considerable hostility towards their Norwegian counterparts, but for the latter, national identities did not inform their approach towards other Liverpool fans, nationality was subordinated to common fandom. One suggested that 'I hate Germany, but if I met a German [Liverpool fan], it doesn't extend to the individual level'. The Internet, of course, can foster such attitudes, and some fans noted a range of users of diverse nationalities discussing LFC without regard to such concerns.

English and Scandinavian Schools of Fandom

It is important to consider how far Scandinavian fandom extends beyond the team, and what wider fandoms can be sustained by fans 'organically' detached from LFC ('organically' in the sense of connected in an incremental, socially concrete fashion to local information and social networks). Central to the fandoms supporters can buy into are information sources: 35 per cent of fans primarily relied on the SSC magazine (the 'Kopite'), or the Danish branch magazine, for information about LFC. This is significant in view of the refusal or inability of either magazine to address the more political, 'controversial' issues found in fanzines, limiting them to player interviews, match reports, competitions, adverts etc. This also applies to the nineteen per cent who primarily relied upon Scandinavian media, again held to have highly restricted conceptions of what is newsworthy about LFC. Only two per cent relied on British contacts for information.

As indicators of the scope of their fandom, supporters were asked how much interest they took in political issues visible around (and inside) LFC and Anfield, primarily the 1989 Hillsborough disaster, and the 1995-98 Mersey docks dispute. Seventy per cent took 'a little' interest, eighteen per cent 'a lot', and nine per cent 'none'. Similar attitudes were expressed by interviewees, and the view that fans have an *obligation* to be interested was clearly a minority opinion. Information sources is a crucial limiting factor on the scope of fandom here, with many interviewees noting the paucity of accurate detail in Scandinavia on these issues. One directly linked this to the relative lack of interest in them, suggesting that 'core [Norwegian] Reds support the

Hillsborough campaign, and some of us the dockers as well, but... most don't have a clue of what goes on outside [sic] the pitch. It's not an important topic in the *Kopite*, for instance'. One guide, indeed, consciously sought to educate his tour groups on these issues, while another volunteered to help the Hillsborough campaign while in Liverpool. The Finnish fan intended to use his SC's independence from LFC to address and discuss such issues and, importantly, highlighted the role of English fanzines (alternative information sources with alternative discourses) in constructing this agenda. 'A Liverpool fan in Finland probably wouldn't know why he shouldn't buy the Sun [newspaper]' (a key issue in the aftermath of Hillsborough, cf. Scraton *et al*, 1995). The Danish official suggested that most of his members would confuse Hillsborough with the 1985 Heysel disaster. A connected issue is loyalty to Liverpool the city, and Merseyside. Five per cent said they had none, 42 per cent had a little, and 49 per cent a lot. It is clearly possible that respondents were reluctant to appear disloyal, but nonetheless, these figures are strikingly high, since distant fans would not normally be expected to generate a loyalty to the city from their support for LFC. Yet clearly, Scandinavian fans do develop a loyalty to Liverpool (expressed in travel where 39 per cent of visitors travelled around Merseyside, interest in its history, architecture etc) that deepens fandom beyond its standard, de-politicised core (the team).

Loyalty and interest in contentious political issues, are significant, indicating how globalised fandom can become more 'mature', genuinely connected with Liverpool as a real lived place. Interest in the history and culture of Merseyside can be transmitted to people initially attracted by a football team, reinforcing a minor regional culture through apparently straightforward processes of globalisation of football fandom. It was noticeable that visiting patterns were again important. Eighty per cent of fans who took 'a lot' of interest had already visited Liverpool, as had 69 per cent who felt 'a lot' of loyalty, while 71 per cent who took 'no' interest and 83 per cent who felt 'no' loyalty had yet to travel. This might reinforce the centrality of information sources, that visiting Liverpool exposes fans to different information, experiences and viewpoints from those of Scandinavian media or official publications. These factors suggest a shift from fandom centered around team performance to a deeper, socially-rooted fandom that offers at least the prospect of creating a genuine belonging to the socio-cultural universes of English sides.

Another key issue is the rivalry and tribalism historically central to English fandom. Goksøyr and Hognestad argue that Norwegian football culture generally lacks these tribal identities and oppositional discourses (1999: 208), and instead is marked by a 'middle-class' sporting ethos. Yet, the evidence here suggests the penetration of Scandinavian supporters' fandom by English rivalry. Sixty-six per cent declared themselves hostile to other clubs, with Manchester United cited by nearly everyone, followed by Arsenal, Chelsea, and LFC's neighbours, Everton. Hostility to United was particularly strongly

expressed in the pub before the Randers game, when the Liverpool fans collectively chanted ‘f*** Man United’, while the Liverpool end against Rosenborg frequently sang ‘stand up if you hate Man United’. Indeed, after Liverpool played United in May 1999, some Norwegians even wanted to get involved in anticipated confrontations with United fans. This non-negotiable, ubiquitous dislike was usually scatologically or sarcastically expressed, and was clearly an important element of these fans’ interactions with the English game. It also usually revealed *some* knowledge or information, and cannot therefore be dismissed as a knee-jerk, shallow attempt by fans to align themselves with Anfield’s ‘authentic’ values. Crucially, this rivalry does bring them within these values, away from Scandinavian norms where rivalry is taken much less seriously. Moreover, rather than simply just admiring such rivalries from afar, many fans were keen to transcend ‘tourist’ discourses and become actively involved. It therefore fundamentally shaped their behaviour and attitudes while in Liverpool (even if there is little evidence that it affects pre-existing relationships these fans may have had with Scandinavian Manchester United fans), and to this extent, represents a penetration of Scandinavian fans’ core values, rather than peripheral aspects of their fandom (Houlihan, 1994: 357). Combined with their participatory behaviour, hopes for a ‘masculine’ match-day atmosphere (King, 1997b), and the Kop’s totemic qualities, this suggests a penetration of Scandinavian fandom by English terrace values, an important normative re-alignment of Scandinavian attitudes that legitimates, celebrates and, indeed demands, ‘dynamic negativity and militant support’ (Goksøyr & Hognestad, 1999: 208). Connected to these discourses was the universal contempt expressed for switching club allegiances, another key concept in terrace fandom (some interviewees had Norwegian friends who became United supporters once LFC declined). The strength of feeling against fans prepared to switch club loyalty because a team was under-achieving is another indicator of the penetration of English fandom discourses, the centrality of loyalty, and investment of personal emotional and psychological capital.

All this could be seen as Scandinavian fans simply attempting to align themselves with English ‘masculine’ traditions (participation, social interaction around games, alcohol, rivalry, opposition, and loyalty; [Kelly, 1992]), in order to engage with key symbolic practices deemed genuine by dominant local tradition. While not necessarily deliberate or conscious, it represents a significant discursive practice, negating the possibility of being dismissed as mere tourists, and identifying them as ‘real’ fans. The symbolic power to confer this quality evidently rested with locals steeped in these specific traditions, who (consciously or otherwise) were made the ‘benchmark’ for their fandom by visiting Scandinavians. The pursuit of the genuine was central to the new Finnish SC/fanzine, with the founder hoping to ‘find out if there are any real fans out there . . . some of the fans are not as fanatical as they should be’, and to create a space for genuine supporters to interact. Phrases like ‘real fans’

themselves suggest the penetration of Scandinavian fandom by English concepts of the authentic, a view reinforced by reported antagonisms *within* SSC tour parties. The more experienced 'genuine' regular travellers were openly hostile to the 'tourists', refused to drink in the same pubs as them, and avoided the obvious tourist destinations they visited. Such divisions were also clear over merchandise. The more experienced element were contemptuous of the 'tourists' focus on buying official new merchandise, and would often either not wear any club colours or would sport 'authentic' traditional 1970s designs (that lack any sponsors' logos). There is a clear sense of a progression, where tourist destinations and official merchandise are fine for the novices, but the more experienced (and, in their own minds, most loyal) traveller transcends such fripperies and moves onto 'real' or 'authentic' territory (including spaces where local fans routinely go) or connect with traditional kits untainted by transient sponsorship or design. Such progression, even maturity, clearly supports the suggestion that English concepts of fandom and fan behaviour have been passed onto Scandinavian supporters, an element of whom strive to avoid the tourist tag by making themselves ever more authentic, thereby also avoiding stock local images of Scandinavian fans' behaviours. To this extent, these hardcore fans make themselves even less Scandinavian.

While creating (and being able to demonstrate) authenticity was a key concern, however, it was, inevitably, mediated by distance from Liverpool. While English authenticity generally requires regular active attendance, there was a consensus that distance and cost meant Scandinavians yet to visit Anfield could still be considered 'genuine'. What was non-negotiable, though, was the participatory culture, oppositional identities, interest in LFC's history and, especially, supporting LFC regardless of performance. Participation and atmosphere were crucial elements. One noted that 'you heard all the singing [on TV] and you wanted to be there'. Eighty-two per cent of visitors joined in the singing (although 96 per cent would only follow the lead of locals), and some complained that the atmosphere in the seated Kop Grandstand was poor compared to what it had been on the Kop terrace, and that the pubs were much noisier and more communal. This focus on atmosphere and participation drew fans towards the most totemic pub around Anfield, the legendary 'Albert' (a shrine to LFC, where the terrace songs were written, with a noted tradition of carnivalesque expression). The Danish official reported how LFC's club lounge (open to ISC members) was considered sterile, and instead Danish fans wanted to visit the Albert (and the 'Arkles') to 'see what it's like to be a real Liverpool fan'. This included meeting or observing English fans, rather than supporters from across the world found in LFC's lounge (visited by only 21 per cent). The Liverpool end against Rosenborg sought to recreate these carnivalesque traditions, standing, waving flags and scarves, signing and participating in an ecstatic fashion, practices often not found in Scandinavia. The importance of atmosphere (and authenticity) is also clear from the 71 per cent who preferred

to buy tickets for the Kop (with its totemic reputation and tradition for independent ecstatic expression and participation). Significantly, many interviewees were also actively interested in obtaining Liverpool song-sheets, so they could join in with the songs on their next visit. The search for the authentic, the practices of the *cognoscenti*, is clearly visible.

Anfield itself carried significant symbolic weight, often described as a shrine (Percey & Taylor, 1997). One fan noted feeling ‘we are on holy ground’ approaching the Kop, and that his group walked all around Anfield to ‘sniff in the atmosphere’. Others invoked notions of worship and an all-pervading sense of peace: ‘it was just, like, calm. I felt like, this is the place I’m now in, and I don’t want to go anywhere else’. For these fans, Anfield was not simply the home of their team, but a place they wanted to be able to tell their Scandinavian colleagues they had actually visited. Many also felt that first-time visitors *should* visit Anfield’s museum, to ensure that LFC’s history and traditions are not lost. This desire to connect with tradition is historically central to delineating schools of fandom. Buying into the symbolic practices of Anfield’s legendary terrace culture locates these supporters within ‘authentic’ traditions. This explains why the SSC hired a Liverpool folk band to play at the Oslo party which, alongside LFC songs, played traditional 1920s Merseyside folk tunes that are rarely heard even in Merseyside, connecting these fans with traditions much wider than football. Such attitudes were equally visible in Randers, where the Danes sang along to Beatles songs for the best part of an hour. Two years running, the SSC also paid for a well-known English LFC fan to lead the singing at the Oslo party. At that party, fans who discovered that the researchers lived in Liverpool treated them not just as insiders with privileged knowledge of events at Anfield, but as visiting dignitaries, to be shown enormous hospitality and whose opinions were treated very seriously indeed. Similar attitudes were expressed in Randers, where the local fans were desperate for ‘inside information’ from researchers, and treated their opinions as the final word. The Danish official reported similar attention from members yet to visit Liverpool, who found it ‘just unreal’ to actually meet people who live in Merseyside, reinforcing the sense that Scandinavian fans imbue Liverpool, club and city, with religious, semi-mystical qualities, and that those who have experienced Liverpool simply *must* know the inside story.

Historically vital to terrace discourses is a flow of stories, experiences and rumours, a reservoir of shared talk, that the *Kopite* avoids. Due to the SSC’s need to maintain relations with LFC (on whom it relies for its core activities (namely access to match tickets and officials, Anfield tours, player interviews), plus a view of what interests its members, the *Kopite* presents a de-politicised, glamourised, commodified, ‘star-system’ culture (Whannel, 1992); it avoids material damaging to LFC’s reputation (like stories of players’ drinking), therefore protecting its relationship with LFC, and connecting (in no small part) with its political economy (advertising club merchandise etc).

Although the SSC website and *Kopite* did cover the Hillsborough disaster, for instance, they ignored angles that would expose the role of LFC to scrutiny and criticism. However, these restricted discourses were popular, and so cannot be seen as a simple accommodation with LFC's political economic agenda. Only one interviewee wanted to know the less salubrious details of LFC's daily operations. Many fans in Randers and Oslo wanted to avoid hearing such 'dirt' and were dismayed that their pure image of LFC was perhaps inaccurate, while everyone felt fans must 'get behind' the team and its players during fixtures (even Steve McManaman). Some were surprised and dismayed at the attitude of local fans. The Finnish supporter suggested even though 'I hate what he [McManaman] did, I'm not going to boo him during a game... yesterday, there were some Scousers shouting abuse at McManaman, it's not on! We should be above that'. Such attitudes are central to distinctions between fanzines (bought by 64 per cent of visitors) and other information sources like the *Kopite* (Haynes, 1995). These discourses obviously shape attitudes towards fanzines' much more critical material, and although some disliked the *Kopite's* blandness (one fan demanded greater 'honesty'), interviewees more generally objected to fanzine discourses. Norwegians selling such titles in Norway reported disquiet amongst supporters at their trenchant attacks on LFC, while the Danish official noted their minimal appeal to his members. One fan wondered whether one fanzine editor actually supported Liverpool at all, so heavily did his title attack LFC. This construction of criticism as treachery suggests a deep 'zealousness of the convert', whereby many visitors deliberately avoid the inevitably 'mixed' reality of LFC, preferring a sanitised picture that cannot damage their exalted notions of it. When researchers expressed negative opinions about LFC at the Oslo party, SSC members became upset, and indeed confused, that life-long Liverpool fans could openly criticise the object of their affection. Partly, this was a desire not to hear negative opinions, but also a simple non-comprehension of how Liverpool fans could speak in such ways. At least one Liverpool fanzine recognises this problem, explicitly warning overseas enquirers that criticism of LFC is commonplace.

Playing Deep or Playing a Role?

Reference has been made throughout to genuineness and authenticity. There are two ways of conceptualising this, firstly as Clifford Geertz outlines (1973) whereby some Scandinavians 'play deep' within Anfield's genuine traditions, actively participate in its rituals, and are seen to do so by those with the symbolic right to judge. The focus on atmosphere, rivalry, opposition, the abusive language, expressions of loyalty, the acceptance of key discourses and rules held to mediate or regulate the social space in question (Anfield, the Kop etc) can all be seen as playing within authentic traditions, constructing supporters' status as genuine. Just like Geertz's cockfight, football matches can be seen as 'a means of expression' (1973: 444) a display of social passions.

Through their response to local tradition, Scandinavians affirm the value they place on a culture that, until recently, dominated Anfield's social space and public image. As well as allowing them to demonstrate to non-active colleagues their acceptance as genuine, this discursive practice deepens the fan experience. The tensions within SSC tour parties noted previously reinforces this, with deep players contemptuous of the peripheral 'tourists' who neither understand, sustain, or care for, the rituals of the genuine. For the deep players, connecting with these traditions is key to their fandom, behaviour while in Liverpool, relations with other Scandinavians, and construction of Anfield as a social space with rules, expected modes of behaviour and forms of interaction, not a tourist attraction. In seeking out the rituals of the authentic, deep players expose their right to authenticity to external scrutiny.

Deep Scandinavian players have to *consciously* connect with the genuine, however, since they were not 'socialised' into it by family or peers (the standard view of how such values are passed from generation to generation). It is debatable whether they can, through such play, ever attain the same status as those 'born' into these traditions. Geertz's analysis primarily concerns levels of play amongst those *already* within certain value systems, and so does not need to consider whether progression to insider status is possible for outsiders. This is not to suggest that Scandinavian fans cannot successfully play deep within terrace fandom, simply that their outsider origins impact on their 'strategies', no matter how close to English norms they get. However, there is no reason to believe that locals thought visitors ungentle, their zeal instead tolerated, gently mocked and even respected for its excessive nature. Geertz notes the condemnation handed out to inveterate gamblers at the cock-fight (1973: 434-5), a point of departure here. Few Scandinavians condemned their particularly obsessive colleagues, those who re-mortgaged their house or ended relationships in order to visit Liverpool. Their excesses were instead viewed with an amused respect, their obviously 'warped' priorities the product of a laudable, if exaggerated, love for the club.

There is also scope to employ Erving Goffman's work on actors and settings (1959); while it has been heavily criticised (Burns, 1992: 115-6) and some aspects (secrets, cycles of belief) are not applicable here, his notion of acting out a role within specific settings can illuminate these fans' practices. While a stadium is not a total institution, it can be seen as a mini-'society', with rules, forms of interaction and a variety of settings. Fans develop a sense of expected behaviour within Anfield's stands, of what will make them an accepted part of such settings, and move them (in the eyes of locals, Goffman's 'audience') beyond the category of 'tourist', with its negative implications of a lack of affective investment. Role-playing can explain visitors' connections with the historically defined practices of the genuine. The suitability of these conceptions also lies in the fact that, by its very nature, participation makes the Kop (or Anfield) places of drama, ritual and ceremony. In this context all fans

have to adopt *some* role, with Scandinavians facing the additional problem of their distance from Liverpool and LFC as lived places, creating a further legitimacy gap in the drama within which they seek a role. Conceptualising the desire to participate in local traditions as purely a role, or attempt at genuineness or level of play would, however, be incomplete. The complaints of many interviewees about the absence of participation at local football suggests a desire to indulge in these practices *for themselves*, to enhance the 'experience'. Meeting the expectations of dominant local traditions is not *purely* a mechanism for creating authenticity, limiting the applicability of role-playing, at least for fans who do seek such settings at their local football. For the rest, maybe the sense of playing the 'front-stage' roles expected within Anfield is one that more generally explains their desire to participate, and the sustaining of traditions not especially common or accepted within their own football settings (the ubiquitous wearing of replica kits, participation, rivalry etc, generating Goffman's 'personal front'; 1959: 21). However, sustaining these traditions can fulfil wider, more personal objectives than simply role-playing (these images of Anfield traditions were clearly central to many fans' desire to visit Liverpool, and not new and alien contexts and practices that require role- playing). Both Geertz and Goffman offer insight into the actions of fans seeking insider status, as conceptualisations of the interactive elements of fan behaviour, and the depth and nature of the roles they adopt.

The Nature of Scandinavian Fandom

This analysis has highlighted some key features of Scandinavian fandom for English clubs, an entirely uni-dimensional cultural flow, since English fandom takes nothing from its 'cultural encounter' (Grew, 1993: 243) with Scandinavians fans and values. More generally, it would seem to reinforce Maguire's insistence on the *contingent* nature of local interactions with globalising forces, and the capacity of cultures not only to engage with each other, but to merge. He also highlights homogenisation and intentionality as key issues (1999: 15). Intentionality can only be found in LFC's response to this pre-existing diaspora of support, which they consciously seek to commercialise and exploit but did not create (as European clubs now do much more consciously in the Far East). Born from a deep interest in English football and specific Scandinavian 'uses' of it by pools and TV companies, this fandom has existed for three or four decades, a long-standing phenomenon with social and cultural (rather than economic) roots. LFC's responses and strategies for it are much more recent, an attempt to exploit the revenue opportunities arising from these fans' constructions of loyalty, 'rewarding' those who spend more per visit with easier access to tickets, and to profit from their all-encompassing desire to learn and absorb as much about LFC as possible.

More importantly, what sort of globalisation is this? Evidently, homogenisation theories are inadequate; to argue 'what is often lost in this

commodification of culture is a sense of local and regional cultural differences' (Standeven & de Knop 1999: 227) is inaccurate. The complex interaction of multiple economic, political and cultural forces that Barrie Houlihan stresses (1994: 357) is clearly in evidence, as there is a multi-dimensionality of potentially contradictory and colliding cultural flows impacting on Scandinavian supporters (official club norms, older local working-class traditions, LFC's history of success, specific political issues, Liverpool/Merseyside as lived places) that fundamentally affect considerations of the key forces in operation, and the 'outcome' of this globalising encounter. Elements of what is dispersed, and attractive, to Scandinavian fans, do not serve LFC's capitalist interests, and instead deepen interest in 'local and regional cultural differences', confirming Maguire's view of 'contradictory cultural practices and patterns that cannot be explained with reference to some over-arching economic theory' (1999: 127). One such point of divergence is Scandinavian fans' oppositional rivalry and participatory bent, increasingly outside official club discourses, often suppressed inside Anfield, which there is little reason to believe LFC want to see sustained. Ultimately, LFC can only shape a certain proportion of these flows, and even this is under long-term threat from the developing links between Scandinavians and locals (thirty per cent of these fans have formed friendships with Merseysiders, and all the LFC fanzine editors are well known to Scandinavians), potentially exposing active visitors to more varied messages and practices. SSC access to LFC players and training ground, and the growth of the Internet, create other flows of information, rumour and news that cannot be controlled by LFC, nor serve their political or economic interests.

This 'globalisation' simultaneously spreads key elements of LFC's political and economic agenda, and practices and attitudes opposed to it. The Scandinavian focus on merchandise, consumption, and personalised star-systems clearly serve LFC's capitalist agenda; yet, many Scandinavians also seek to connect with (often older working class) fan traditions outside it. While it would be an exaggeration to suggest that all buy into these traditions, the symbolic importance attached to them is noticeable and significant. Additional noteworthy aspects include a growing interest in Liverpool the city (with which LFC's relationship has historically been strained) political issues LFC are keen to steer clear of, and a focus on merchandise that included unofficial products well outside key club discourses. Some of LFC's interventions in these 'globalising' processes are therefore successful, but others fall when confronted with other practices and traditions. This contradicts Goksøyr and Hognestad's assessment that 'with the increasing commodification of football . . . the two worlds [Scandinavian and English fandom] may be joined in an increasingly disciplined and middle class based ethos in which autonomous displays of support are continuously restricted and criminalised' (1999: 210), though this sample may not be representative of the totality of Scandinavian fans.

Moreover, the terrace traditions Scandinavians seek to connect with are no longer 'organic' or spontaneous, but must be pro-actively sustained by determined groups of fans against physical and structural constraints, and club attempts to redefine fandom in other directions. Scandinavians are therefore buying into *images* of fandom, not necessarily King's 'invented traditions' (1997a), but traditions that must be consciously sustained against a changing crowd demography and club opposition. Also significant is the retention of certain Scandinavian norms in the face of English fan discourses. One was a view of footballers as professional athletes, leading to expectations of 'appropriate' preparation for fixtures. This sits awkwardly with traditional English discourses in which fans generally accept that social interaction amongst players will centre on alcohol and other non-athleticist practices. Many Scandinavians were outraged at stories of players' drinking, and other indiscretions that suggest a non-professional approach towards their 'work'. One pointedly asked LFC officials at the 1997 Oslo SSC party when greater discipline would be imposed on players. This, and supporters' active interest in matches not involving LFC, stand out as normative positions outside traditional English values, highlighting how this cultural encounter does not result in homogenisation, but can generate an essentially new fandom drawn from multiple sources, maybe an example of Appadurai's 'indigenisation' (1990: 295). As Goksøyr and Hognestad argue, 'Norwegian football's historical British hang-up does not seem to have lead to a copying of everything in British football' (1999: 210). Globalising forces centred around sport can thus disperse a variety of traditions, political messages and fandoms that neither necessarily create a logically coherent whole, nor serve or sustain the economic forces on which they are centred.

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