

Consuming Football

The Norwegian Experience, the English Impact, and the Possibilities of Interdisciplinary Research

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Abstract

The article adopts as its point of departure an interdisciplinary approach to sports study, and celebrates the cross-pollination of disciplines. Specifically, it argues that the transformation of English football has served as a model for the modernization of football in Norway. Football is a global sport, and regulation of football and its spectators in other countries are thus of interest when aiming to understand the commitment and consumption patterns of football spectators in Norway. The empirical study surveys spectators (N=394) at two home matches of Rosenborg Ballklubb and investigates the relationship between motives for attending, team identification and direct and indirect consumption. A statistical model was developed, explaining 20 percent of the variance in attendance. The sample containing mostly women and families score higher on social motives and consume less football, both direct and indirect. However, there is little separating the two samples when it comes to team identification and the importance of excitement motives. The stability in motivational pattern, together with the high exchange rate of spectators between matches shows that it is difficult to separate fans from non-fans. It is concluded that viewing the phenomenon of football attendance from different disciplinary perspectives provide a more rounded understanding.

Key words: identification, spectators, football, motives, attendance, law, popular culture, commercialisation

Introduction

Football is the largest spectator sport in Norway, with a steady increase in attendance at top-level football matches during the 1990's and beyond. The total number of spectators reached one million in the top division during the 2000 season, and, during the 2009 season, total attendance was 2 151 831; a significant increase.¹ Developments in Norway could be said to parallel that of the UK, where attendances at football matches have been buoyant in recent years. During 2009/10 total attendance at Premier League games in England was 12,977, 252, equating to an average of 34, 151 at every Premier League match.² This figure is in many ways remarkable. Few would have thought during the dark days of English football that such a recovery was possible.³ When juxtaposed with the unprecedented amounts of money involved in the sale of broadcasting rights, in particular for the Premier League, the fact is all the more striking. This transformation of English football in the 1990s appears to have made an impact on fan demographics, and a key underpinning argument, outlined here, is that the transformation has served as a model for the modernization of football in several countries in Europe, including Norway. Within the Norwegian context, the fans, supporters, or ultras of Norwegian football have received a relatively large amount of academic attention⁴. However, the supporters constitute only a small part of the many spectators consuming football, and in the empirical study we take a closer look at how motives and identifications of spectators in general can help us understand attendance at live football matches.

At the outset it should be noted that this paper is a combination of two perspectives, with authors working in different fields and emanating from different, although related, disciplines. Sport is an ideal field for interdisciplinary and cross disciplinary approaches,⁵ and this paper attempts to marry two different disciplinary fields and very much ties in with the objectives of the Scandinavian Sports Studies Forum itself, and

1 Attendance numbers downloaded from <http://www.rsssf.no/stats/LeagueAtts.html> (date last accessed 20 September 2010).

2 See figures on worldfootball.net; <http://www.worldfootball.net/zuschauer/eng-premier-league-2009-2010/1/> (date last accessed 1 September 2010) and for FA Premier League statistics generally see <http://www.premierleague.com/page/Statistics> (date last accessed 1 September 2010).

3 See also for example the issue of financial instability in English football in Buraimo, Simmons and Szymanski 2006.

4 See Hognestad 2004. See also Hjelseth 2006.

5 See Foster and Osborn 2010.

its purpose of offering a platform for creative cross disciplinary research.⁶ As such, whilst it is an ambitious attempt to marry divergent approaches we feel that its approach and content is important, and justifiable, for a number of reasons. First, it illustrates the inclusivity of law and popular culture and hopes to show that different disciplines can cross-pollinate, and tell us something valid about each other.⁷ Second, the desire, or even need, of the law to embrace empirical work is a pressing and notable one.⁸ Thirdly, the law itself, or at least the effects of law might demonstrate or explain a rationale or reason for shifts identified during empirical research. We attempt to address these questions through the article's key emphasis and findings on football attendance, and the changing viewing experiences of spectators, and, further to this, argue that law may be informed by empirical findings to yield more responsive regulatory frameworks. We argue below that what was discovered in the empirical study has resonances that can be drawn from an understanding of legal responses and trends. First however, we turn to the importance of empirical work in the legal canon.

The empirical turn in law – the need to embrace new modes of analysis

Legal scholarship as a whole has been slow to embrace new approaches to research. There are myriad reasons for this, not all of which can be explored here. In particular, what might be termed a 'black letter hegemony' has manifested itself within Law Schools historically with a conservative approach. Greenfield and Osborn go on to note however that '...not all Law Schools are the same and a number of approaches persist. Often conflicting approaches may reside in the same school, and while the black letter tradition is not all pervasive it still exerts a powerful influence... [t]aking a wider vista, Sugarman notes the position of the law in relation to other academic disciplines, and in particular law's isolation from these disciplines and its reluctance to embrace change'.⁹ In addition other disciplines have also baulked at the law, perhaps underplaying law's

6 See <http://www.sportstudies.org/aims.html>, (date last accessed 1 September 2010).

7 That inclusivity is key is stressed, for example, in the Routledge Series *Studies in Law, Society and Popular Culture* with its celebration of popular culture as a 'broad and inclusive church'. See also Greenfield and Osborn 2006.

8 See Genn, Partington and Wheeler 2006.

9 Greenfield and Osborn 2006, p. 1-2.

significance in many situations – Banakar, for example, argues that disciplines such as sociology have much to learn from the law.¹⁰ That said, there has been a move towards what has been termed the socio-legal over recent years, to the point where socio-legal research has arguably become the norm in UK law schools. In particular what might be termed a ‘law in context’ approach to both teaching and research has appeared to prevail, notwithstanding doubts as to how far some of these approaches have really taken legal study. Banakar detects two approaches:

The first approach, which I call the studies of Law in Context, uses social theory and a broadly conceived notion of what empirical research amounts to in order to study issues which are internal to the processes and operations of law. Studies of Law in Context are neither empiricist nor sociological, yet are conducted against the backdrop of social theory. According to this approach, the ‘socio’ in Socio-Legal studies does not refer to sociological theory or to an empirical understanding of the broader context of social development, but represents “an interface with a context within which law exists”. The second approach is what Travers calls Policy Research, and is concerned with social policy, regulation, enforcement and implementation issues, ie how law effects social behaviour or social conditions. These studies often draw attention to the gap between the intention of legislatures and the reality of law once it is interpreted and enforced by officials. Policy Research is not committed to theory either, but is more empirically oriented than the studies of Law in Context.¹¹

It would be fair to say that research within law has, on the whole, become more contextual notwithstanding the fact that, as Banakar notes, the actual research conducted may not fully embrace other disciplines outside of law to their fullest extent. The conclusion of the Nuffield Study argued that not only should we try to create a generation of researchers both able and willing to embrace empirical research within law, but also that such approaches potentially provided ‘boundless opportunities’ to explore ‘uncharted territories’ and that understanding how things actually *are* in the real world is crucially important and that empirical study will enable us to understand the law better:

Empirical legal research is valuable in revealing and explaining the practices and procedures of legal, regulatory, redress and dispute resolution

¹⁰ Banakar 2009.

¹¹ Banakar 2000, p. 69.

systems and the impact of legal phenomena on a range of social institutions, on business and on citizens.¹²

The focus of the empirical study herein was *not* the law. However, through its focus on sport spectators, it can be argued that the law has a part to play in ‘revealing and explaining practices’, particularly in terms of the role of law in the increased commercialisation and commodification of sport. The need for an empirical turn is noted, and this chapter acknowledges this need. In fact this chapter indicates an interesting twist in approach. Usually, in socio-legal studies, sociological or quasi-sociological findings are used to explain legal responses and legal structures. This study attempts the reverse; using law to explain sociological findings. Before looking at the survey itself, we need to explain the background to Norwegian football and the implications and impact of English football upon this.

Consuming football: The English impact and the Norwegian response

In the United Kingdom, the landscape of football consumption was inexorably changed by the Hillsborough disaster. It is not the purpose of this article to review the terrible events and consequences of this in depth, but to use this as a point of departure to explore some of the specific effects on football attendance, and the role of the law within that, that this engendered. According to King, the tragic incident exemplified a deeper problem in football, that football had not been able to start transforming itself in the light of emergent Thatcherite realities. Describing the transformation of English football in the 1990s, King claims that ‘the Taylor Report, despite its own intentions, did little more than provide judicial legitimacy to the free-market arguments which proposed the easiest line of reform for football in light of the organic development of the sport, on the one hand, and the transformation of British society, on the other’.¹³ It might be said that the law had a number of implications, or effects, upon attendance in the aftermath of Hillsborough. To a certain extent these overlap, as will be seen below.

¹² See Genn et al 2006, p. 1.

¹³ King 2002, p. 106.

Firstly, one of the key aspects of Lord Taylor's Report was the recommendation to remove the terraces and replace these with seats.¹⁴ The implications of this were manifold. The Football Licensing Authority, itself a creature of the *Football Spectators Act 1989*, was already empowered to require conditions in licenses awarded to clubs regulating their admission of spectators at designated football grounds. Post Taylor, The Football Licensing Authority was instructed, for designated football matches, to only issue licenses to clubs where seated accommodation was provided and that spectators were only to watch such a match from seated accommodation. For the Clubs, the implications were initially economic ones. These included the cost of converting relatively cheap terraced stands to enable them to be suitable to accommodate seating. The effect of this was, potentially, a significant reduction in the number of spectators that could therefore be admitted and, by implication, the cost of admission would have to be reviewed.

The transformation of football towards free-market principles also included the creation of the Premier League in 1992 and strategies designed to transform clubs into profit-making institutions. As a result of these strategies the composition of spectators attending matches changed, with family groups and women being important in the composition of the new 'consumer' fans. In Norway, there has been a similar development to that experienced in England with regard to the increasing commercialisation of football. According to Hjelseth, one aspect of the commercialisation is the commodification which implies that '...the game, the club and its relation to supporters and spectators are increasingly expressed as a market relationship. This means that spectators are considered as being first and foremost customers, while traditional supporters were often regarded as part of the club'. Another aspect of this is the spectacularisation of football, which is defined as; '...all sorts of activities, by the club, by the NFF, by spectators in general or by supporters, that are oriented towards making the game a spectacle, something to be attracted to in addition to the game itself. The conscious use of music, screens, cheerleaders etc. are examples, as well as the atmosphere created by the supporters themselves, by singing or the use of visual spectacles (flags, banners, etc.)'.¹⁵ Clearly, there are parallels to be drawn between the development of football in the UK and Norway. However, there are some important differences as well.

¹⁴ Lord Justice Taylor *The Hillsborough Stadium Disaster: Final Report* (1990) Cm 962 HMSO.

¹⁵ See Hjelseth 2006, p. 37.

In Norway, even though football is the one sport attracting the highest number of spectators, both live and via television, football does not result in such strong emotional support. This is largely because Norwegian football culture has been influenced by the ideals of unification and consensus, rather than having an emphasis on rivalry and conflict, as found in football world wide. The sense of positive support has also characterised Norwegian supporter practices, leading to the labeling of Norwegian spectators as passive spectators.¹⁶ The lack of conflict and violence among Norwegian football supporters is one explanation for the fact that there is no specific governmental regulation of spectators, and therefore no equivalent to the *Football Spectators Act* 1989, or similar governmental intervention.

The lack of governmental regulation is one important difference. In Norway stadium infrastructure and spectators are regulated through criteria set by the National Football Association (NFF), which football clubs have to comply with in order to have their licence awarded. According to the NFF, clubs playing in the top division are allowed to have 20% of the total capacity as standing spectators. That spectators are allowed to stand could also be described as a significant difference. However, Norwegian football teams aiming at playing in UEFA competitions need to consider UEFA regulations, requiring stadiums in Category 2 where matches can only be played before seated spectators.¹⁷ Even though some stadiums used in the top division have sectors for standing spectators, new stadiums are built in compliance with UEFA regulations, which have moved towards all-seated stadia requirements. Another important difference, pointed out by Hjelseth, is that tickets are seldom scarce in Norway, thus keeping ticket prices relatively moderate in relation to England. This is an important difference, since some studies have found a positive relationship between economic capital and attendance, partly confirming that the high cost of tickets excludes those with lower incomes from attending.¹⁸

Despite these important differences between football in the UK and Norway, there are also striking similarities concerning the modernisation and commercialisation of football in the two countries. With the transformation of English football serving as a model for Norwegian conditions, football has become an important part of popular culture. The development seems to have added momentum to describing football in

¹⁶ See Andersson & Radmann 1996.

¹⁷ See UEFA 2006.

¹⁸ For the Norwegian context, see Thrane 2001.

terms of a product sold to customers, and have made an impact on spectator demographics, with families and women constituting an important part of new 'consumer' fans. Attempts to categorize spectators of football have included descriptions such as social, focused, and vested fans; high, spurious, latent and low loyalty supporters; followers, fans and flaneurs; customers and fans; partisans and purists; and fans and tourists/consumers. There are undoubtedly other definitions and categories that could have been utilized in addition to these. As is evident, such typologies of spectators have been criticized for being based on subjective criteria.¹⁹ According to Crawford, such dichotomies overlook the fluidity and temporality of many supporter communities, and do not take into consideration how the nature and composition of such communities change over time. Another consequence of creating typologies which promote 'good' supporters and their activities at the expense of 'bad' supporters, is that behaviour deemed inauthentic is largely dismissed:

Fans who buy a large volume of merchandise, those who follow sport via the mass media, those who attend 'live' games in family units, or even those who do not conform to the 'typical' image of a 'traditional' fan (such as women or people with disabilities) are largely ignored in a large number of discussions of fan cultures.²⁰

Even though acts of consumption can be direct and indirect, and more or less structured, it is difficult to find consistent demarcation lines between consumption by fans and non-fans. Greenfield and Osborn noted, when discussing how the regulation of fandom had changed that; 'It is increasingly difficult to describe who, or what, a fan actually is. Traditionally this was far clearer in an age when someone turned up, rain or shine, to support his (usually his) team and regarded those who turned up only sporadically as 'fairweather'. Now supporters have become consumers, and the way in which football can be consumed and, therefore, how a team can be supported has changed'.²¹ In sum, fans and spectators are consumers because fandom is explained through acts of consumption. So, we see above some of the ramifications of shifts created by a new legal and regulatory regime after the Hillsborough disaster. Even though Norwegian football, and its spectators, is not directly influenced by governmental regulation, there appears to be an indirect influence by

¹⁹ For a review and critique of spectator categories, see Crawford 2004.

²⁰ Crawford 2004, p. 33.

²¹ Greenfield and Osborn 2001, p. 197.

legal regulation in other countries. Football is a global sport, and regulation of football and its spectators in other countries are thus of interest when aiming to understand the commitment and consumption of football spectators in Norway. The modernizing of English and Norwegian football, in which legal regulation has played an important part, seems to have brought new groups of spectators to the arenas. The new consumer fans are often described as inauthentic fans, indicating differences in motives and commitment when compared to traditional fans, ultimately having an impact on how sport is consumed including attendance at live football matches.

Explaining attendance

Previous studies have shown that community size, and the quality of the teams playing, are consistently important factors when explaining the total attendance at sport events.²² Other studies have concentrated on the impact of demographic variables on attendance at sporting events.²³ Findings show that education, gender and age are predictors of direct and indirect consumption, indicating the consumption of sport as a social marker. It has also been suggested that indirect consumption of sporting events through mass media is related to spectator attendance, resulting in competing theories of a symbiotic and a competitive relationship.²⁴ One of the key worries of broadcasting live football has been the possible impact this may have upon live attendance. For this reason successive broadcasting packages in the UK have privileged the Saturday 3.00pm kick off time and not allowed any simultaneous television coverage to be shown domestically. Further studies have shown that midweek games, such as in the Champions League, also have an adverse effect on lower league gate attendance.²⁵ One interesting development has been the rise of the pub as a place to spectate. In the UK figures in 2002 showed that more people watched sport on television at a pub or similar venue than actually paid to watch live sport.²⁶

The growing literature on the impact of socio-motivational factors upon the frequency of game attendance, indicates a substantial interest

22 See, eg García and Rodríguez 2002.

23 See the review in Mehus 2005a.

24 See also Pritchard and Funk 2006.

25 See for example Forrest and Simmons 2006.

26 See Weed 2007.

in being able to predict which spectators attend few games and who attend many, in terms of using such information in directing marketing towards different segments of spectators.²⁷ Concepts such as commitment, sport involvement, allegiance, spectator support, and identification with a team, are highly related concepts.²⁸ Team identification involves a fan's psychological connection to, and investment in, a team, and can be explained by social identity theory, which contends that the self is composed of a personal identity and a social identity. Social identity is the individual's feeling of belonging to a group, and is comprised of notable group categories that can be based on demographic classifications (e.g. sex, race) or organizational membership (e.g., religious, educational, social institutions).²⁹

Studies involving team identification show a positive relationship with various aspects of spectator behaviour. Spectators scoring high in team identification are more likely to be high in direct and indirect sport consumption, pay more for tickets, spend more money on merchandise, and stay loyal to the team during periods of poor performance. Identifying with a team may also bring along positive psychological and social benefits, including well-being, social capital, socialization and social integration.³⁰ The relationship between team identification and gender appears somewhat unstable in the literature; some studies have found no difference in the strength of identification when comparing male and female spectators,³¹ while other studies have found male spectators to identify more strongly with their favourite team.³²

Another contradiction found in the literature concerns age. In larger surveys that do not differentiate between sports, there has been a negative relationship between age and attending sport events,³³ leading to expectations of a negative relationship between age and team identification. However, others have found a positive relationship between age and level of support for a team – older fans showed higher levels of support compared with younger fans.³⁴ Since most studies, including the Sport Spectator Identification Scale, are limited to samples of undergraduate students, the relationship between age and team identification

27 Matsuoka, Chelladurai and Harada 2003.

28 See Wann and Pierce 2003.

29 See Tajfel and Turner 1986.

30 For a more thorough review, see Wann, Melnick, Russel and Pease 2001.

31 Wann, Brewer and Royalty 1999.

32 Melnick and Wann 2004.

33 White and Wilson 1999.

34 Murrell and Dietz 1992.

has seldom been an issue. In England, age has been an interesting issue, especially in terms of attempts to capture younger fans, a process that has been made more difficult as ticket prices have increased. The 2007 National Fan Survey showed that in terms of attendance at premier league games, football tended to be supported by 'young 40 somethings'. The average age of a season ticket holder was 44.³⁵

Relying heavily on the work of Elias and Dunning and Allen Guttman, Mehus has previously defined top-level football as an entertainment sport: 'a professionalized event with athletes representing spectators, who in turn identify with athletes and consume sport in order to obtain satisfaction from the social contacts and arousal of affects'.³⁶ The definition suggests that the strength of identification with football teams and motives of sociability and excitement are important when explaining why spectators attend football matches. Several studies have investigated the relationship between motives and identification. Wann et al, found intrinsic motives and extrinsic motives to explain 61% of the variation in team identification. Extrinsic motives added only 3% of unique contribution, emphasizing the importance of intrinsic motives.³⁷ Fink and colleagues found the eight motives of the Motivation Scale for Sport Consumption (MSSC) to explain 72.6% of the variance in team identification. Only motives of vicarious achievement, aesthetics, drama and social interaction were significantly related to team identification, whereas motives of drama, family, escape and physical skill were not.³⁸

Some studies indicate that motives are important predictors of identification and attendance. The strength of the relationships appears to vary according to different measures of motives, identification and attendance, different sports and levels within sports. Motives appear to have a stronger direct effect on identification than on attendance, suggesting that identification have a mediating effect on attendance. However, motives with labels related to that of social motives (family, social opportunities, social motives, group affiliation) appear to have little or no impact on identification. None of the reviewed studies have attempted to estimate the size of the principal relationship between motives, identification and the spectator behaviours of direct and indirect consumption.

35 See Premier League *National Fan Survey. Summary Report 2006/7*, 2007.

36 Mehus 2005b, p. 335.

37 See Wann, Brewer, and Royalty 1999.

38 Fink, Trail & Anderson 2002.

Methodology

Of the sixteen teams playing in the elite series, Rosenborg Ballklubb (RBK) has been the one team consistently attracting the highest number of spectators to their home arena, *Lerkendal*. The stadium, situated in the city of Trondheim, had home attendance reaching a mean of 19,903 spectators during the 2007 season.³⁹ Data was collected from spectators attending the 1st (N=167) and 10th (N=231) home match of the 2002 season. Table 1 provides information about means and standard deviations for central variables and sample characteristics for spectators at the two matches.

Table 1 *Means and standard deviations (in parentheses) for central study variables, and sample characteristics*

	Match 1 (N=164)	Match 2 (N=231)	Total sample (N=395)
Attendance*	7.65 (5.62)	2.68 (3.38)	5.33 (4.86)
Age*	30.60 (11.76)	36.40 (12.21)	33.99 (12.34)
Education	1.97 (1.08)	1.85 (1.13)	1.90 (1.11)
Travelling time*	1.93 (1.14)	3.13 (1.13)	2.63 (1.27)
Team Identification	35.00 (7.91)	36.46 (10.60)	35.86 (9.59)
Social Motives*	4.50 (1.25)	5.25 (1.31)	4.94 (1.35)
Excitement Motives	6.06 (1.02)	5.98 (1.02)	6.01 (1.02)
Media Consumption*	20.71 (4.96)	18.74 (5.60)	19.56 (5.42)
Sample characteristics			
Males (%)	72.6	61.9	66.3
Ticket type ⁴⁰ (%):			
Season ticket	32.9	19.5	25.1
Single match	62.2	70.6	67.1
Family ticket	.6	7.8	4.8

*Difference in means between the two samples were statistically significant, $p < .001$

Instrumentation

As one home match was the first of the season, and the second match one of the last, the frequency of attendance was measured differently at the two matches. At the first match respondents were asked about number

³⁹ 14 626 in 2002

⁴⁰ 12 spectators indicated to have received their ticket through special arrangements not fitting any of the above mentioned categories, leaving 3% not accounted for in ticket type for the total sample.

of matches attended during the previous season. At the second match respondents were asked about matches attended during the current season. Responses were made by filling in the actual number of matches that were attended. In addition, the questionnaire was comprised of three scales: the Entertainment Sport Motivation Scale (ESMS), the Sport Spectator Identification Scale (SSIS), and a scale measuring indirect consumption of sport through mass media. The ESMS consists of 8 items, with two subscales including four items per subscale on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from “Not important” to “Very important”.⁴¹ The SSIS has proved good in terms of internal consistency in earlier studies.⁴² In the original scale of Wann & Branscombe one item reads, “How strongly do you see yourself as a fan of the teams listed above”. In this survey, spectators were asked to choose one of the two teams playing the particular matches, so an adaptation of the item was utilised, reading “*How strongly do you see yourself as a fan of your favourite soccer team?*”. It was also possible to select “*I have no favourite team*”, making it optional to complete the SSIS. Indirect consumption was measured by four items, asking respondents to report how often they “watch sport on TV”, “listen to sport on radio”, “read about sport in the newspaper”, and “read about sport on the internet”. All items were measured on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from “never” to “every day”.

All three scales were subjected to tests of principal component analysis and reliability. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value was above .70, and the Bartlett’s test of Sphericity reached statistical significance ($p < .001$) on all four scales, supporting the factorability of the correlation matrix. Eigenvalues, percent of explained variance, and Cronbach alpha’s were all satisfactory for further analysis.

Table 2 *Eigenvalue, percent of variance explained, and cronbachs alpha for scales when subjected to tests of principal component analysis and reliability (N=395)*

	Excitement motives	Social motives	Team identification	Indirect consumption
Eigenvalue	3.28	1.60	3.81	2.30
% of variance explained	41	20	54	57
Cronbachs α	.80	.70	.85	.71

⁴¹ Mehus 2005b.

⁴² Wann and Branscombe 1993; Wann and Pierce 2003.

The questionnaire also included items related to gender, age, education, and travelling distance. Education was measured on a four-point ordinal variable, ranging from completed secondary upper education or less to more than four years of tertiary education. Travelling distance was also measured on a four-point ordinal variable, ranging from less than 15 minutes, 15-30 minutes, 30-60 minutes, and travelling distance above 60 minutes.

Procedure

Surveyors were randomly assigned a block of the stands where they distributed questionnaires to spectators. The 'VIP' section was not included in this survey. From 90 minutes before the start of the game, questionnaires were distributed and collected until the game started. To ensure that spectators were not distracted from the experience of the game, no questionnaires were administered after the match started. Participation was voluntary, but the surveyor's request was rarely rejected. However, since many spectators arrive at the stadium and find their seats close to the time of the start of the match, such a procedure places limitations on the number of spectators each surveyor is able to make contact with. A total of 550 questionnaires were administered, finding 395 (72%) completed and acceptable for inclusion in data analysis.

Results

Statistical analyses were carried out using SPSS version 13.0 and AMOS 7 for windows. Path analysis was performed in order to investigate the basic relationship between motives, team identification and spectator behaviour. A multivariate regression analysis was used to predict Team identification (DV) from a combined set of predictors (IV), including social and excitement motives, travelling distance to the stadium, and demographical variables of gender, age, education. Education and travelling distance was entered in the regression as dummy coded variables, with lowest level of education and shortest time to the stadium serving as reference categories. Analysis was performed using SPSS Regression and SPSS Frequencies for evaluation of assumptions.

The results showed a significant positive correlation between attendance, indirect consumption, excitement motives and team identification. Attendance and indirect consumption also correlated positively with gender, indicating that men attend more matches and consume more sport through mass media. Education correlated negatively with motives

and team identification, indicating that more highly educated spectators score lower on motives and identification. Social motives correlate positively with age and travelling distance, and negatively with gender.

Table 3 *Pearson correlation coefficients for central variables including whole sample (N=395)*

	Attendance	Indirect consumption	Social motives	Excitement motives	Team identification	Gender	Age	Education
Indirect consumption	.38*							
Social motives	-.09	-.05						
Excitement motives	.28*	.40*	.33*					
Team identification	.32*	.50*	.23*	.66*				
Gender	.15*	.34*	-.17*	.03	.09			
Age	.06	-.07	.25*	.04	-.07	.03		
Education	-.01	-.01	-.20*	-.21*	-.27*	.01	.04	
Travelling	-.32*	-.12	.28*	.05	.06	-.05	.25*	-.25*

*p<.01

Table 4 *Multivariate regression for motives and demographic variables on team identification (N=395)*

Variable	B	SE B	β	t	p
Gender	1.563	.773	.077	2.022	.044
Age	-.080	.031	-.103	-2.568	.011
Education					
Education1	-.336	1.153	-.011	-.292	.771
Education2	-1.873	.997	-.076	-1.879	.061
Education3	-2.827	1.202	-.095	-2.352	.019
Travelling distance					
Distance1	1.052	1.065	.044	.988	.324
Distance2	.178	1.269	.006	.140	.888
Distance3	.616	.958	.031	.643	.520
Excitement motives	5.899	.378	.627	15.610	.000
Social motives	.289	.305	.041	.946	.345
Constant	.878				
R ²	.47				

Understanding Team Identification

A standard multiple regression was performed with Team identification as dependent variable. Independent variables included gender, age, level of education, travelling distance to stadium, and motives of excitement and sociability.

Table 4 displays the un-standardised regression coefficients (B) and intercept, the standardized coefficients (β), and R^2 . R for regression was significantly different from zero, $F(12, 382)=14.01$, $p<.001$. Independent variables of gender, age, education, motives, and excitement motives contributed significantly to prediction of Team identification. Inspecting the standardized coefficients showed Team identification to be the strongest predictor ($\beta=-.63$), followed by age ($\beta=-.10$), education ($\beta=-.10$), and gender ($\beta=.08$). Altogether, 47% (45% adjusted) of the variability in Team identification was predicted by knowing scores on the IVs.

Predicting attendance

Model 1 below suggests an indirect effect from excitement and social motives on indirect consumption and attendance through team identification. The overall fit of Model 1 is poor ($\chi^2=36.32$, $df=4$, $p<.01$, $GFI=.97$, and $RMSEA=.14$), indicating a poor fit with data, see Figure 1 below.

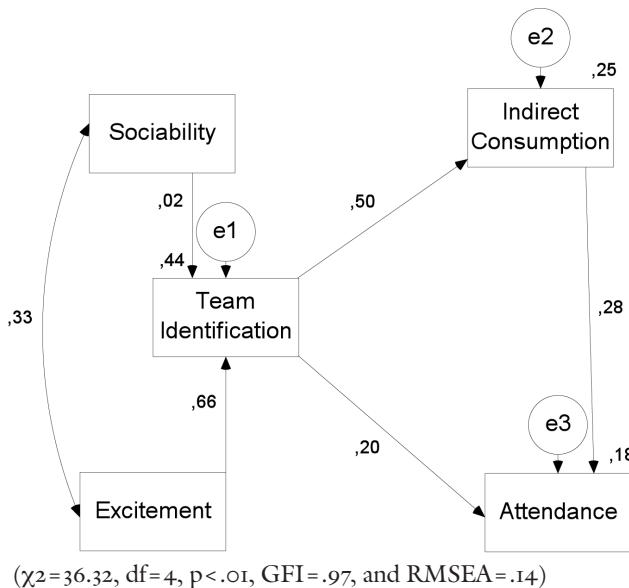
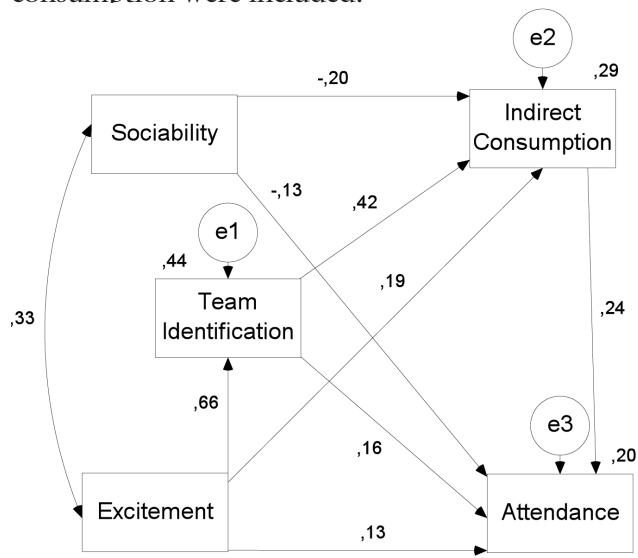


Figure 1 *Model 1: Indirect effect of motives of excitement and sociability on spectator behaviour*

Model 1 explains 25% of the variance in indirect consumption and 18% of the variance in attendance. The path leading from social motives to team identification was not significant. As a result, the path from social motives to team identification was not included in Model 2, whereas paths from social- and excitement motives to attendance and indirect consumption were included.



($\chi^2=0.17$, $df=1$, $p=.68$, $GFI=1$, and $RMSEA=.00$)

Figure 2 *Model 2: Direct and indirect effects of motives of excitement and sociability on spectator behaviour*

The overall fit of model 2 is good ($\chi^2=0.17$, $df=1$, $p=.68$, $GFI=1$, and $RMSEA=.00$). All of the hypothesized paths are significant and in the hypothesized direction. In addition, the model accounts for 66% of the variance in team identification, 29% of the variance in indirect consumption, and 20% of the variance in attendance (see Fig 2). A somewhat surprising result, however, was that paths from social motives to indirect consumption and attendance turned out as negative.

Discussion

50.9% of spectators in this study attended three or less home matches during the season, and 67.1% purchased single match tickets. Considering that the mean attendance at Lerkendal reached nearly 15, 000 spec-

tators during the two seasons in question, the results imply a high exchange rate among spectators at the home matches of RBK. Evidence of a high exchange rate is supported by comparing samples from the two matches included in this study. Spectators attending the first match of the season are dominated by male spectators living close to the arena, with a high percentage of season ticket holders (32.9%). Spectators attending the second match have travelled longer, have a higher percentage of female spectators, score higher on social motives, and relatively few are season ticket holders (19.5%).

To some extent the two samples could be said to represent different types of spectators, where the first sample corresponds to the traditional football fans, whereas the second sample corresponds to the new consumer fans including a higher share of women and families. The two samples clearly differ in spectator behaviour, where traditional fans consume more football both direct and indirect. However, there is little separating the two samples when it comes to team identification and the importance of excitement motives.

Understanding Team identification

One aim of the study was to provide a better understanding of how the demographics of spectators could have an influence on the commitment, as measured by team identification, towards the favourite football team. If the composition of spectators attending football matches changes, will the commitment of spectators toward their team be affected?

The strongest predictor of team identification is excitement motives. The strong positive relationship between the need to experience excitement and team identification is explained by social identity theory, where social identity is the individual's feeling of belonging to a group.⁴³ The favourite football team represent the spectators and the shared social identity is at stake when comparing skills with opponents in a football match. The arousal of affects, described by Elias and Dunning, is achieved by experiencing excitement when challenging the social identity. Thus, results reflect the complementary relationship between spectators and athletes described in the concept of 'entertainment sport'.⁴⁴

Male spectators identify more strongly with their favourite team compared to female spectators. This supports some earlier studies, yet is in contrast to others.⁴⁵ However, in this study gender is only barely a signif-

⁴³ See Tajfel & Turner 1986.

⁴⁴ See Mehus 2005b.

⁴⁵ See eg. Wann et al 2001; Melnick and Wann 2004.

ificant predictor of team identification. Together with conflicting results from earlier studies, results suggest that differences between male and female identification are so marginal that they only sometimes become statistically significant. In the present study, this interpretation is supported by gender being the weakest of the statistically significant IVs.

Age has an influence on team identification, with younger spectators identifying more strongly with their favourite team compared to older spectators. Results indicate that younger spectators attach their social identity to a football team to a stronger degree than older spectators. Establishing a family on their own and getting a job, and thereby increasing the importance of other social identities, could be one possible explanation for a weaker attachment with increasing age. The result is in contrast to other studies showing a positive relationship between age and team identification.⁴⁶ The explanation for such conflicting results could possibly be traced back to different sports and/or level of sports.

'Level of education' shows that highly educated spectators (HES) identify less strongly with their favourite team than spectators with a lower level of education (LES). Results also show that level of education correlates negatively with Team identification, as well as social and excitement motives (Table 3). HES seem to be less committed and attached to their favourite football team. From previous studies in the Norwegian context there is evidence of HES consuming less sport, both direct and indirect, compared to LES. Education also correlates negatively with travelling distance, showing that HES are not willing to travel long distances in order to attend football matches. The evidence points to HES consuming sport in a different way compared to LES, adding to evidence of sport consumption functioning as a social marker.⁴⁷

The present study is not designed in such a way that it can verify a change in the composition of spectators. The study can, however, verify a high exchange rate of spectators between matches. In itself, the exchange rate indicates that many spectators attend few matches during a season, and therefore might not be considered loyal fans. The high exchange rate does not seem to influence the level of team identification and excitement motives in a strong fashion, despite significant differences regarding gender, age, travelling distance and type of tickets bought. The two samples do not differ according to level of education, making the influence of education on team identification more difficult to interpret. A

46 See Murell & Dietz 1992.

47 See Mehus 2005a.

high level of education has a negative impact on team identification, and correlates negatively with social and excitement motives. Results indicate that changing the composition of spectators towards a higher level of education would change the way football is consumed, bringing with it a lower level of attachment to the team. To sum up, results indicate that young male spectators with a low level of education identifies strongly with their favourite football team. However, the strength of team identification varies marginally across social background, and thus confirms problems with separating fans from non-fans.⁴⁸

Predicting attendance

Another purpose of the Norwegian study was to investigate the relationship between motives, identification and spectator behaviour. Model 1 proved an inadequate fit with data, with a non-significant path from social motives to team identification. In Model 2 the path from social motives to team identification was excluded, and direct paths from motives to spectator behaviour were included. Model 2 proved an adequate fit with the data, with all paths turning out as significant. Excitement motives have a strong impact on team identification, explaining 44% of the variance. Social motives have no effect on team identification, supporting findings in previous studies where motives with related labels (family, social opportunities, social motives, group affiliation) have little or no impact on identification.⁴⁹ Thus, results in the path analysis confirm results of the regression analysis on how motives influence team identification.

However, social motives have a direct negative effect on spectator behaviour, indicating that spectators high on social motives attend less home matches and consume less sport through mass media. The relationship between social motives, travelling distance and attendance could offer one possible explanation to this intriguing result. Travelling distance correlates positively with social motives ($r = .28$, $p < .001$) and negatively with attendance ($r = -.32$, $p < .001$), indicating that spectators travelling some distance to reach the stadium attend few matches. When they attend, though, social motives become more important when compared to spectators living near the stadium. Travelling in groups and attending other social activities during the day, perhaps going to watch a film or eating out, could explain the higher importance of social mo-

⁴⁸ See Crawford 2004.

⁴⁹ See for example Wann, Brewer and Ryalty 1999; Fink, Trail and Anderson 2002.

tives, resulting in a negative impact on attendance. If being with friends and family is important when attending a soccer match, such motives probably are important in other contexts as well. Motives of sociability may easily be accommodated outside the frames of entertainment sport, and other leisure activities might present better opportunities to socialize with friends and family, resulting in fewer attended soccer matches. An alternative explanation of the negative impact of social motives on spectator behaviour could be that many spectators find motives of sociability to be better accommodated in other leisure arenas. Data on other leisure arenas are not included in the present study, and further investigations would be needed to conclude in this matter. Perhaps more importantly, the effect is small, arguing that social motives are of little importance when explaining spectator behaviour.

Model 2 shows indirect consumption of sport through media has a positive influence on attendance. The positive relationship is confirmed by a relatively strong correlation ($r = .38$, $p < .01$), indicating that spectators attending many home matches also follow their team through media. Results could be interpreted in support of a symbiotic relationship between direct and indirect consumption.⁵⁰ However, due to the fact that the study only includes spectators actually attending the match, certain reservations are taken. Those who choose to follow their favourite team through media at the expense of attendance are obviously not part of the sample.

Motives and identification explain 29% of the variance in indirect consumption, while only 20% of the variance in attendance is explained. Motives and team identification are better predictors of indirect consumption, indicating attendance as a more complex phenomenon to explain. The community size has already been mentioned,⁵¹ and the relatively long travelling time for some of the spectators would suggest that RBK is dependent on attracting spectators from well beyond the city-limits. Long travelling time is reflected in the high exchange rate of spectators between matches, and adds to the complexity of predicting attendance. Even though the present study predicts a respectable percentage of the variance in attendance, compared to some other studies,⁵² there are obviously other variables that could have an impact. The quality of the teams playing, if the match is a local derby or not, if a championship or a down-

⁵⁰ See Pritchard & Funk 2006; Jeffres et al. above n.30.

⁵¹ See for example García and Rodríguez 2002.

⁵² Mahony et al. explains 15% of the variation in attendance at football matches, see above n.41.

grading to a lower division is at stake, and even how the weather is, are factors not included in the present study that could influence attendance.

Conclusion

As noted in the introduction, this article has attempted to stress the possibilities of inter, or cross, disciplinary approaches. There are myriad ways in which such cross pollination can take place, and as has been noted elsewhere these are not without their own dangers.⁵³ However, we believe that this paper not only tells us something important and worthwhile about sport and spectatorship, but also that it can be seen from a different perspective as adding to a different disciplinary understanding. For legal scholarship, and law and popular culture particularly, this is crucial. As Foster and Osborn have argued previously:

We would argue that sport provides a unique and important platform for multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches. Sport as a context and a field of study allows us to study how all social science disciplines can impact on it. Viewed from a legal perspective the role of formal law is restricted but lawyers need to appreciate the law from within a broader regulatory perspective without privileging the law. Only by such an initially multi-disciplinary approach can lawyers begin to see clearly the law's role, and this requires us to see law both as a form of regulation wider than formal law, and to see law in a pluralistic form so that we are not blind to non-state rules that are vitally important to the governance of sport.

So, by adopting such an approach we are able to begin to analyse how law may be informed by empirical findings, and appreciate the importance of interdisciplinary work. At the same time the law might be seen to have an impact upon other disciplines and help our understanding of those. The changes in the legal and regulatory framework relating to football attendance and spectatorship in England and Wales, for example, might well tell us something about possible future trends elsewhere. Here of course, we see this within the context of football in the case of Norway, as we have alluded to above.

The key findings of the study are undoubtedly focussed upon social psychology, and specifically the experiences of spectators within this field,

⁵³ See Foster and Osborn 2010.

and through this gauze we see a number of important findings. These include the discovery that excitement motives have a positive indirect effect on attendance mediated by team identification, and that the strong relationship between excitement and team identification is reflected in the complementary relationship between spectator and team described in the concept of entertainment sport. Results imply that team identification is marginally influenced by the social background of spectators attending the home matches of RBK. The stability in motivational pattern, together with the high exchange rate of spectators between matches shows that it is difficult to separate fans from non-fans. These results lead to the advice of treating all spectators as consumers of entertainment sport, drawn to the stadium to experience the pleasurable excitement of football. Such a strategy would be beneficial in terms of securing a loyal base of spectators, since spectators high in team identification are likely to attend more matches, pay more for tickets, spend more money on merchandise, and stay loyal to the team during periods of poor performance. Such marketing would be beneficial in terms of drawing less loyal consumers to the arena as well.

When a legal glaze is added we begin to see some other possible issues and implications. For example even though there is little governmental regulation of spectators in Norwegian football, we argue that spectators are indirectly regulated through legal processes in other countries. The present study is not designed to confirm changes in the composition of spectators resulting from the modernising of football. Rather we accept the idea of Norwegian football being in the process of modernising, and add to drawing the picture of who attends football matches and why they do it. Hopefully the study can, in addition, provide a reference point to investigate changes following the ongoing process of modernising Norwegian football, and investigate the effect to direct and indirect regulation of spectators in the future. At the same time we hope we have shown the real potential of viewing phenomenon from different disciplinary perspectives in order to gain a more rounded understanding, and in particular acknowledged that the law may have a role to play in explaining these developments.

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