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Football Grounds: Emotional Attachments and Social Control

Stadia Development: the historical and cultural dimensions

In pre-regulation days, football's limited enclosure of play mirrored the game's weak codification. Folk football was played in village centres and fields where natural obstacles (such as walls and ditches) determined the spatial parameters of play, perhaps with village churches serving as rudimentary goal areas (Bale 1989a: 146; 1993a: 123). Today, the haphazard and imprecise boundaries of play are found in the improvised football of children in yards, parks and streets. Jackets are placed to form goal-posts; the imagined height of the bar is resolved through dialogue; a fence encloses play. However, the ontogeny of young players, it seems, does not duplicate the phylogeny of early football. The use of standard football rules, and relatively fair and equal competition between teams, show that children's games are more modern than folk in their practice.

At the elite level, football spaces have undergone periodic change in every nation. Britain constructed the earliest and grandest football grounds. Of the 92 English league clubs in 1993, 70 were playing at grounds built before the First World War; 34 had been playing 'at home' since the nineteenth century (Duke 1994: 130). Scottish grounds were no less venerable: 28 of the 38 league clubs in 1990 were first ensconced in their ground before 1910 (Inglis 1987: 10). These 'traditional' grounds tended to be built near transport terminals, notably railway stations, allowing supporters to arrive and disperse with ease (Inglis 1987: 12). Building grounds near to major industrial employers encouraged the growth of a large home support (Fishwick 1989: 54). The design of traditional grounds was strikingly classical. UK clubs regularly engaged the architect Archibald Leitch to build three open terraces offset by a two-tiered grandstand running the length of the pitch. The earliest grounds were often elliptical in shape; banked terracing swept round in a baroque variation upon the majestic

Roman amphitheatres. Later, as finance and inner-city space caused constraints, the grounds became rectangular, following the pitch parameters and placing spectators in closer proximity to play.

Class was at the core of the traditional ground's social ethnology. The directors and middle-class audience annexed the more expensive seats in the grandstand; the large, working-class audience stood on the terraces. In northern England, many rectangular grounds possessed elevated terracing behind the goal. The erection of these high, banked ends enabled their working-class custodians to commemorate a senseless tragedy that had befallen their comrades in battle. In January 1900 British soldiers were ordered to mount an uncovered and suicidal assault on the Spion Kop, held by the Boers during that eponymous war. Hundreds of the resulting dead and wounded came from the football heartland of Lancashire. Their memory lived on through the naming of these ends as 'kops' (Bowden 1995: 116).

In Europe and South America, other structural factors influenced the location and architectural ambience of new stadia. In northern Europe, especially Scandinavia, all-purpose sports parks were part of major city-building projects and owned by the local authorities. In the Low Countries, Germany and France, municipal stadia tend to be all-purpose, part of wider sports complexes, and located in the wealthier suburbs (for example, Düsseldorf, Monaco, Vienna). Privately owned grounds or those in smaller cities tend to be more football oriented, rectangular shaped and initially piecemeal when constructed (such as Eindhoven, St Etienne, Brussels). In southern Europe, great stadiums were typically erected during periods of political dictatorship, when public spaces were established to generate nationalist feelings. Mussolini constructed the Stadio Olimpico for the 1934 World Cup finals; Franco built the Bernabéu from 1944 to 1947; Salazar erected the Estádio da Luz in Lisbon in 1954 (Lanfranchi 1995: 127–8). Some provincial municipalities (notably in Italy) erected modest versions of the Olympic-style stadium; others (as in Spain) acknowledged football's sporting centrality by assisting clubs to build rectangular theatres.

Stadia owned by municipalities and leased to football clubs have relatively few opportunities for commodifying spaces. The magnificent stadia completed for Italia '90 lacked the executive boxes that are now mandatory in modern UK grounds. Italian grounds omit the restaurants, corporate hospitality suites, conference chambers, hotel facilities and retail outlets that may also adjoin the standard football theatre. Instead, many Latin grounds are located well away from industrial areas; internally, they house training centres and gymnasia as well as swimming pools, tennis courts or athletics tracks around the pitch. In Iberia and Latin America, these facilities are designed for easy use by the club 'members' (*socios*) as part of their subscription fees.

Within this global setting, the balance of power has shifted in terms of major football ground capacities (Bowden 1995: 139–40). In the 1900s, Glasgow housed the three largest stadia, the 'tribal theatres' of Hampden Park, Ibrox

and Celtic Park. Today, the developing world possesses all but one of the twenty most capacious grounds. The great stadia of Latin America were built on the principle of mass. Brazil's Maracanã is the greatest jewel in the crown though its compatriot structures bear comparison: the Morumbi in São Paulo, holding 150,000; the stadia at Belo Horizonte, Pôrto Alegre, Salvador and Maceio, which hold over 100,000; and those of Curitiba (180,000), Belém (120,000) and Fortaleza (120,000) (see Rachum 1978: 198). Safety restrictions have significantly reduced these capacities, but the spectating principles of informality and mass still prevail.

Global differences in the spectator's environment contrast with the few important amendments made to the accommodation afforded team officials. The track-side 'dugout' was first introduced in Aberdeen in the 1930s, built with a shelter and excavated below ground level to allow the coach a 'worm's eye view' (Webster 1990: 22–3). After Everton took the concept south, the dugout gradually became a ubiquitous feature at all British then overseas grounds. The advantage afforded by proximity to the play was offset by difficult sightlines within a less than panoramic view. Many grounds retain a variation on the 'dugout' through a sheltered 'bench' at ground level. Some managers have retreated to the centre stand, dispensing tactical instructions by walkie-talkie to their trackside assistants, although most prefer to stay close to the field of play. During his tenure at Barcelona, Johan Cruyff introduced a potentially revolutionary measure by having television monitors installed in his dugout for studying the game's progress from a number of angles (Radnedge 1997: xv). The innovation seemed to challenge the professional assumption that management is more intuitive than logical and so has hardly been copied elsewhere.

By the late 1980s, an important cultural hiatus had opened up between the UK and other European nations in terms of stadia development. Germany, Spain, France and Italy upgraded their largest grounds to host major international tournaments. Architectural modernism tended to emphasize the formulaic and undermine ground individuality. Functional exigencies came to dominate architectural thinking: spectator safety, comfort and control; access to parking spaces, toilets and food kiosks; viewing sightlines. Meanwhile, the old UK grounds were proving increasingly incapable of meeting the most basic human needs. Yet just as at the start of the century, other football nations had looked to the UK for geometric aesthetics in play and ground architecture, so towards the new millennium, the English would effectively compel the world to rethink stadium design through the triple tragedies of Bradford, Heysel and Hillsborough. I will look at these and other stadium disasters later in this chapter. However, at this stage it is important to outline some of the key findings by researchers studying football grounds. In particular, I shall look at the social meaning of the ground, and the relationship of crowd composition to stadium geography.

Football Space and the Emotions: topophilia and topophobia

John Bale is the researcher and critic who has done most to legitimize the study of sporting spaces within the academic realm, through his superb series of monographs, edited collections and articles.¹ Bale's work blends the disciplines of social geography and contemporary cultural theory and draws upon worldwide fieldwork. His most significant contribution stems from his use of Tuan (1974) to explain the affective dimensions of sports grounds (see Bale 1991b, 1994). Tuan uses the term 'topophilia' to describe the deep affection of people towards particular social spaces, or 'places'. In contradistinction, people may also have feelings of fear or anxiety towards other places: Tuan (1979) applies the term 'topophobia' to describe such a sentiment. In both cases, a psychosocial relationship to these spaces has emerged, as they acquire an embedded meaning for the people that encounter them.

Tuan's notions have a strong resonance within football culture. For most players who enjoy the game, entry into the football space is a familiar, topophilic experience, no matter where they are playing. The player may be stimulated by the unfamiliarity of the setting, and its mixture of grass and sand, sky and cloud, football stands and terraces or open landscape. Yet, this disorientation is soon counterpoised by the familiar signposts of football; the pitch markings, the goal-posts opposite one another and the ball in the centre circle, evoke images and sounds of previous games, memorably enjoyed or best forgotten.

For players and spectators, an important stimulant is the 'atmosphere' of the game, especially at professional level: the more intense the 'atmosphere', the more pleasurable the game. Baudrillard (1996: 43) states that 'atmosphere is always both warmth and distance'; the interplay of the natural and the cultural and the confrontation of opposites. Football supporters express intense warmth and affection towards their team, but a categorical and physical distance still separates them. Rival teams may express warmth and mutual respect before or after games, but a basic competitive opposition remains during play. Strong rivalry between the two sets of fans typically exceeds their amity. The spatial organization of the ground, in permitting or undermining these relationships, plays an important part in constructing 'atmosphere'. Fixtures lacking this tension of warmth and distance, perhaps where there are no 'away' fans in attendance, where home fans turn up in low numbers, or where the players do not have a competitive edge, are said to lack this atmosphere. The topophilic sensations of participation are markedly reduced. Conversely, when the balance tilts the other way, the match is said to possess an excess of atmosphere, becoming 'poisonous' or 'evil'.

In professional football, topophilic or topophobic sensations are more readily associated with supporter-ground relationships. Supporters harbour topophilic feelings towards their grounds, including those lacking aesthetic or functional refinement. As Hopcraft (1988: 141) explained of the late 1960s,

'Football grounds are not often attractive places in the ornamental sense. Their beauty is the special, environmental kind, appreciable only to people who relate the setting to their emotional attachment'. The ground *qua* place evokes memories and excites anticipation. Its idiosyncratic features are particularly cherished: the sloping pitch, the nearby gasworks, the colour of the brickwork, the architectural folly of one stand. Each signifies the ground's special status relative to other stadia. Accordingly, football grounds are held to possess their own socio-geographical character, emblematic of the fans' community. Nevertheless, football supporters of the modern age belong to an 'imaginary community' of those that follow the same club. They may never encounter these fellow fans, nor even attend the club's home fixtures, yet the sense of communitarianism continues undiminished. So it is with distant supporters and their relationships to the ground. Topophilic sensations will strike when a mere sign of the ground is encountered. These imagined, symbolic aspects may be so strong that an actual visit to the ground proves disappointing; its ordinary 'realness' comes to fix the attention (Eichberg 1995: 323-4).

Equally, topophobic sensations will strike spectators as they anticipate visiting grounds where the home team is commonly successful, or where the fans have notorious reputations. Topophobic relationships may exist between the ground and its neighbours (Bale 1989a: 129-37). On match-days, the social geography of the entire locality is transformed. Streets become congested with cars, football fans urinate in gardens, sporadic fights break out, vandalism occurs, and rowdy behaviour appears (Bale 1980, 1990; Penny 1992; Walvin 1986: 120). These 'negative externalities' may serve to shape an antagonistic relationship between club and the local community, promoting a topophobia towards the ground on match day (see Humphreys et al. 1983; Mason and Moncrieff 1993; Mason and Roberts 1991).²

In England, the club that produces the most extreme ambivalence among local residents and opposing fans is Millwall FC. Based in the working-class heart of south-east London, Millwall's supporters have acquired a violent reputation that far outstrips the club's Second Division status. Their long history of ground closures, fines and reprimands for spectator misconduct goes back to the early 1960s. For many opposing fans, particularly rival hooligans, a visit to 'the Den' generated extreme trepidation, and a deep sense of 'topophobia'. Among local residents, litter and crowd congestion were regular problems on match-day. Yet, profound sentiments of pride and love of place underpinned the Millwall fans' support for the club; the ground was a key touchstone to their football aesthetic, their local 'structure of feeling' (Robson 1996). It would be easy to deride the occasional, 'parochial' outbreaks of disorder involving these fans (Williams 1995: 235). Violence was only one manifestation of the deeply protective and jealous reverence that they felt towards their 'home':

Millwall was like our home. You wouldn't let someone walk in through your front door without interrogating them, would you. You'd want to know what

they were doing there. The Den is the same. Football's a man's thing, and fighting was a matter of pride, pride about your place, your ground. Our ground is a pony little ground, but we love it. Brick for brick, slate for slate, I'd die for it.

(Fan, quoted by Lightbown 1992: 14)

To nurture neighbourly relations, Millwall opened a community development scheme in 1986, offering a range of non-commercial contacts with local people. In the early 1990s, however, economic pressures largely dictated that Millwall should build a new ground near the original Den. The move was deeply unpopular with many Millwall fans; some invaded the pitch and threw mud at directors at the final game in the old ground. After a long residence in one place, moving home can be a traumatic experience.

While UK cultural geographers have carried out the best studies of the local cultural meanings of the ground, continental researchers have produced strong ethnologies of football crowds inside the stadium. Dal Lago (1990: 88) presents a rich social portrait of Milan's San Siro stadium, before its redevelopment for the 1990 World Cup finals. He identifies different kinds of supporter primarily according to their ground location. Hence, the *amatori* (passionate fans) sit at the foot of the stands, near to their idols on the park; the *militanti* (militant fans) stand on the *curve* (ground ends), opposite one another, chanting for their team. However, the cultural peculiarities of Italian fans are best brought out by Dal Lago's identification of the *loggionisti* (theatre-type fans), who sit in cheaper seats above the expensive main stand. Dal Lago compares these fans to the ordinary lovers of Italian opera and theatre, who cannot afford the best seats but still want to be near the optimum vantage-point.

The French anthropologist Christian Bromberger undertook similar qualitative research at grounds in France and Italy. Bromberger (1992, 1995b: 221ff) produces an ethnological picture of ground spectators, detailing their social class, age, ethnicity, home locality within the city, cultural interests, and favourite players. These crowd characteristics are explicable according to the ground section favoured by particular supporters. For example, at Napoli's Stadio San Paolo, the *curva A* at one end comprised working-class *ultràs* from the poorer quarters of the city. *Ultràs* in the *curva B* were more diverse in age, home locality and class background, and included many students and secondary school children. More substantive results emerged from Marseille's Stade Vélodrome. Supporters from northern *arrondissements* favoured the ground's north end (and to a lesser extent the west stand's lower tier); southern inhabitants attended at the south end (and the middle tier of the east stand). The north end is also where the club's *ultràs* made their home, reflecting their localities' ethnic plurality, youthful vibrancy and behavioural freedom. The various ground sections also harboured strong and specific preferences for different players. In the mid-1980s, Bell, the flamboyant Cameroon goal-keeper was the hero of the ethnically mixed north end. The industrious midfielder schemer Giresse was most appreciated by the lower middle classes (self-employed

tradesmen or small businessmen) in the central terraces (Bromberger 1995a: 297).

One thinks here of how such affections are shaped by the sharing of common attitudes and personality characteristics within the football crowd, by its *habitus* to use the term of Elias (1978b) or Bourdieu (1984). In France, the quieter terraces or cheaper stands draw the older manual workers, who appreciate the congruent toughness of a resilient defender or midfield ball-winner. The traditional middle classes in the main stands may use their panoramic gaze in the manner of the defensive *libero* (who always has the play in front of him, and 'reads' it as an expert). Their lower middle-class companions may find a consanguine figure in the overtime worked by the productive midfield playmaker. The spectacular but unpredictable display of wingers and centre-forwards is most likely to dazzle the young working classes in the ends.

The player-spectator homology does make sense in class and masculinity terms. However, it may be a little reductive and underplay the social heterogeneity of football's aesthetic codes. I argue in chapter 7 that the heterogeneity of playing styles is itself eroded by modern coaching and tactical thinking. Homogenization on the park may also relate to an equivalent process in the supporters' terrain. The modern football ground is sculpted to accommodate a less socially diverse and more bourgeois category of supporter. Crowd safety and crowd security issues underlie these fundamental architectural changes. Therefore, before going on to examine the social and cultural aspects of contemporary stadia, it is important to look at the historical background to these ground redevelopments. In the following two sections, I examine, first, the appalling record of disasters associated with football grounds; and, second, the specific events surrounding the 1989 Hillsborough disaster, which pressurized the football authorities at national and global level into standardizing ground facilities.

Football Ground Disasters: global and UK instances

All continents and social systems have experienced football stadium tragedies. The earliest on record are UK disasters, in Glasgow 1902 (25 killed, 517 injured) and Bolton 1946 (33 killed, 400 injured). After that, the major disasters have mainly occurred in the developing world and these may be classified by kind:

- Natural disasters are relatively rare in accounting for deaths. Nine were killed in 1962 at Libreville by a landslide; 70 died after an electrical storm provoked a sudden stampede.
- Poor facilities and overcrowding account for many more disasters. Forty-nine were killed in 1974 at Cairo by a collapsed wall, as were 15 in Ghana in 1978 and 18 in Colombia in 1981. A collapsed roof

killed 10 in Algiers in 1982; a collapsed stand (then stampede) killed 30 in Tripoli in 1988; in Bastia 15 died when a temporary stand collapsed. Eighty-one died in Guatemala in 1996 when forged tickets resulted in severe overcrowding in the cheapest sections.³

- Crowd stampedes killed 24 in Nigeria in 1979, then another 12 in 1989. Stampedes also killed 24 people in Greece in 1981, 40 in the Transvaal in 1991, and 9 in Zambia in 1996. In Mexico City 10 died in 1985 after an attempted forced entry by a large crowd went wrong; in 1982, two separate stampeding incidents saw 46 people killed in Cali. Later that year, 340 fans were reportedly killed on a stairway at Spartak Moscow's home UEFA Cup match against Haarlem of Holland.
- Most disturbingly, some of the greatest tragedies have been precipitated by those ostensibly employed to protect spectators from injury. In Lima in 1964, 318 fans died when a crowd fleeing from police failed to escape the stadium. Similar circumstances at a match in Buenos Aires in 1968 led to the death of 74 fans. In 1990, seven were killed when the presidential bodyguard in Ethiopia opened fire on an unruly crowd.

Tilly (1985: 171) argues that in the developing world, the state may operate as a form of organized crime by inflicting violence on the public and then making it pay taxes for protection. We may apply this notion of the protection racket to 'security' in football grounds. In the developing world, unnatural fatalities on the terraces are more commonly caused by police attempts to control 'violent' fans than by the violence of the supporters themselves. In the developed world, the illusion of security is more elaborately organized, so that police *inaction* can be just as deadly. At Hillsborough, football fans perished through 'safety measures' introduced by the state ostensibly to protect supporters from their own excesses.

The UK has certainly the worst record on ground safety. The first disaster, at Ibrox in 1902, showed that early ground development could not match the pace of football's commercial expansion. During a packed Scotland-England international, one section of a high new wooden stand collapsed, killing 25 and injuring over 500. Wooden stands were discouraged subsequently, to be replaced by banking or reinforced concrete terraces. The huge, accident-free crowds at the 1923 Cup final forced the first Parliamentary report on safety a year later. It recommended the introduction of 'pens' inside ground sections to separate crowds and reduce their movement; major fixtures were to be made 'all-ticket' to control crowd sizes. The Bolton disaster of 1946, which killed 33 and injured hundreds more, occurred when trackside barriers collapsed under the pressure of overcrowding. A parliamentary report called for a more scientific approach in establishing stadia capacities. Still in Glasgow the tragedies continued: 1 death at Clyde's Shawfield ground in 1957; at Ibrox, 2 died and 44

were injured in 1961, with further casualties in 1967 and 1969 (Inglis 1987: 32; Forsyth 1990: 109).

In 1971, the second Ibrox disaster killed 66 and injured 145 fans. Rangers fans were leaving the ground in droves after the loss of what seemed a decisive, last minute goal to Celtic. An unlikely equalizer followed almost immediately; departing fans turned back into the descending crowd; scores were sent tumbling down the notorious Stairway 13. The subsequent Wheatley Report recommended tougher licensing of football grounds and paved the way for the 1975 Safety of Sports Grounds Act. Within a decade, Rangers had diverted their huge pools income to convert Ibrox into an all-seater stadium, but for the terracing at the front of the listed main stand. No other club in the UK could afford such refurbishment though a few – notably Aberdeen and Coventry City – converted their smaller grounds to all-seater status. More commonly, the dilapidated stands and terraces remained, in many cases barely touched since their construction during football's Edwardian boom-time.

In 1985, two disasters struck football on the same day. At Bradford's Valley Parade, 56 died as fire swept through the old wooden stand during a match against Lincoln City. The dropping of a single match or cigarette had ignited piles of rubbish below the seats. Most of the fans killed had sought to flee the blaze, but were effectively imprisoned by locked exit gates. Meanwhile, at Birmingham City's St Andrews, a man was killed by a collapsing wall after a match against Leeds that had been marred by crowd trouble.

By this point, an ecology of fear pervaded many English grounds, as topophobic venues of public disorder that threatened the supporter's safety. Up to one half of hard core club fans had experienced fear or anxiety over personal safety while attending 'away' fixtures (Bale 1989b: 7). Some grounds became footballing metonyms for hooliganism, yet it was in Europe that English fan violence struck its lethal nadir, at the 1985 European Cup final between Liverpool and Juventus in the Heysel Stadium, Brussels. Before kick-off, hundreds of Liverpool fans roamed across one unsegregated end inside the ground, chasing and assaulting their opposite numbers. Panicking Italian fans rushed to one side of the terracing, placing immense pressure on a weak side-wall that collapsed under the strain. Supporters at its foot were crushed under the pile of falling bodies; 39 were killed and 454 injured. It might be argued that none of the fatal injuries were inflicted directly by Liverpool fans. Criticisms might also be levied at the football authorities for their poor ticketing organization, inadequate policing by the gendarmerie, and the crumbling condition of the stadium. Yet there remains little doubt that the deaths remain primarily attributable to the Liverpool fans' reckless assault (Lewis 1989). UEFA and FIFA quickly banned English clubs from playing overseas. The measures might have contravened EC legislation on 'freedom of trade', but were accepted without protest by the FA (Evans 1986).

The Popplewell Report of 1986 provided safety recommendations on these disasters. Licensing restrictions on football grounds were toughened further; a

ban on smoking in combustible stands stood out as *post hoc* wisdom. Popplewell's social philosophy reflected the prevailing Thatcherite *zeitgeist* that was lamentably out of touch with football's culture and infrastructural requirements. Future tragedies could be averted, it was assumed, by squeezing hooligans out of grounds. Closed-circuit television inside grounds was advocated at a time when Belgian police officers were already screening sixty hours of video-tape to find those responsible for Heysel (Virilio 1994: 44). Popplewell also favoured the partial introduction of the government's club membership scheme; perimeter fencing was retained, though gates were added. To pay for these modifications, the clubs set about wooing the 'family audience' in true Thatcherite style. Yet Popplewell failed to discuss the unsafe infrastructure of football grounds: the decaying terrace facilities and the unwieldy 'crowd control' barriers and fences still there to cage fans.

Hillsborough and Ground Redevelopment

Within three years of the Popplewell Report, English football had experienced its worst stadium disaster, in a situation entirely lacking in hooliganism. The Sheffield Hillsborough disaster of April 1989 began with crowd crushing inside the Liverpool end at an FA Cup semi-final against Nottingham Forest, and ended in ninety-six fatalities. Before kick-off, thousands of Liverpool fans, many of them without tickets, had packed outside the Leppings Lane end. Mounted police sought to alleviate congestion by opening the ground's external gates, allowing fans to pour inside. Most headed for the central terracing pen that was already full. As the match began, fans compressed at the perimeter fencing begged police to open the front gates, only to be told, ridiculously, to 'push back'. The commanding officers eventually ordered the opening of the gates and the full extent of the disaster gradually became known.

A quick appraisal of the tragedy's context inspires little confidence in Popplewell's foresight. It occurred within one of the UK's finest football theatres, described by a leading authority as 'a stadium, with all the grand connotations the term implies' (Inglis 1987: 97). The exact site of the tragedy, the West Stand, had been similarly praised for its 'excellent' view and facilities (1987). None of the fans were drinking inside the ground; as testimony to Popplewell's familial inclinations, the victims comprised females as well as males including, with macabre irony, two sisters. Most damningly of all, the ground boasted an excellent CCTV system, which had monitored the unfolding of the disaster from the very start. The commanding police officer had watched from the control room, his judgement clouded by the exaggerated danger of hooliganism and the stereotyped reputation of Liverpool fans. As the disaster unfolded before his very eyes, he steadfastly refused to ameliorate the suffering and open the perimeter gates, fearful that the fans might 'invade' the pitch and attack rival players or supporters. In these fatal moments, the

political war on football hooliganism faced its denouement; the 'counter-measures' against hooliganism were shown to be far more deadly than their targets ever had been. An unsatisfactory inquest into the disaster returned verdicts of accidental death; the new Labour government rejected widespread appeals for a fresh inquiry.

A detailed study of the disaster criticized politicians, police, media commentators, academics and football authorities for exaggerating the importance of hooliganism 'at the expense of crowd management and safety' (Scraton et al. 1995: 17). The researchers attacked the sociologists John Williams, Kevin Young and Ian Taylor, who had published analyses of the disaster that falsely linked it to the English 'football lad' culture of drink, masculinity, tribalism and violence (1995: 294–300). The Hillsborough researchers argued that these commentators had based their analyses on 'sensationalist and unfounded allegations made by the press against Liverpool fans'.⁴

The disaster had more immediate and (in the main) very welcome impacts upon ground redevelopment. Unlike its predecessors, the 1990 Taylor Report into the disaster recommended that major structural changes be made to humanize 'football's ugly habitat' (Walvin 1994: 197). Lord Taylor noted that while modern grounds on the continent offered clean and user-friendly facilities, the old UK grounds had decayed into death traps. He recommended that clubs within the first two divisions in England and in the Scottish Premier Division should convert their stadia to all-seater status by the start of the 1994–5 season, a proposal later enacted by parliament. Standing terraces inside grounds were to be phased out over a four-year period. Taylor viewed the government's identity card scheme as inoperable; hence ministers quietly dropped the plan. To help meet the costs, the government announced a reduction of 2.5 per cent on the football betting levy; the £100 million savings went to the Football Trust for the purposes of club-by-club awards. A maximum of £2 million was available to each club; for most, this covered less than a quarter of total redevelopment costs. The ruling that lower division grounds should convert to all-seater status by August 1999 was relaxed in July 1992, thereby retaining some standing areas (Duke 1994: 131).

In implementing the report, the first measure adopted by all clubs had been the deconstruction of perimeter fencing. For Bale (1993a: 131), this architectural measure represented the beginnings of the 'post-modern stadium' in the UK. It signified also a small, if belated, victory for fans over club directors, police and political authorities, regarding control over ground space. A greater difficulty concerned how clubs should move towards all-seater status. Many clubs had an invidious choice between entering a groundshare agreement with another club, rebuilding their existing ground, or relocating to a newly built stadium (Black and Lloyd 1992, 1993, 1994). Frequently, their decision was a *fait accompli* determined by the club's particular circumstances. Most grounds were in a decrepit condition, but not incongruous to their surroundings of inner-city decay. At the height of *laissez-faire* Thatcherism, the government

had absolved itself of responsibility for redeveloping these districts, leaving local authorities the task of somehow luring private investment. The plight of football clubs, in modernizing their grounds to meet the new requirements, therefore, represented a cultural epilogue to the painful renaissance of Britain's urban centres.

Only a few clubs, such as St Johnstone and Scunthorpe, were able to sell their existing ground to property developers and supermarkets, to pay for relocation. Latterly, television income allowed larger northern clubs like Bolton, Sunderland and Middlesbrough to reflect their elitist aspirations by relocating. 'Ground-sharing' tended to be the least favoured option. If the ground truly was an emblem of the club and its surrounding community, then that socio-spiritual aspect would perish after moving. For example, in 1985, Charlton Athletic entered a ground-share agreement with Crystal Palace, but fan agitation saw their return to the Valley seven years later (Bale 1989a: 89–90; 1991b: 133–4). The most favoured option was to rebuild the ground on its existing site.

This task had no parallel overseas. Stadia in Germany and Italy, for example, were in far better condition and much younger, being on average still under 50 years old (48 and 43 years respectively) (Williams 1995: 221). The grand new stadia at Italia '90 had inspired football commentators and authorities, including Lord Justice Taylor, to argue for a more continental approach towards ground design. The post-Hillsborough period was part of a broader, more pro-European conjuncture in UK football and politics generally. Yet, it is important to note here that major differences existed within Italy, regarding the ideal theatre.

Some Italian stadia had all the architectural qualities of high modernism, in facilities, scale and shiny newness, but succumbed to the Fordist vices of soullessness and instrumentality. In Turin, Juventus abandoned their old Stadio Municipale to move to the Stadio Delle Alpi, constructed for the World Cup finals. The new ground boasted American-style landscaping, suburban location and a unique roof (Inglis 1990: 18–19), but neither players nor fans felt at home. It lacked intimacy while the authorities charged a high lease. Conveying their dissatisfaction, Juventus moved some of their home games to Milan's San Siro during the 1994–5 season (De Biasi 1996: 126). In contrast, the Stadio Luigi Ferraris in Genoa, shared by Genoa and Sampdoria, represents the more user-friendly stadium. The design explores post-modern style: four corner blocks painted in Pompeii red structure an edifice rooted in geometric minimalism (Inglis 1990: 25). Importantly, the stadium stands in central Genoa and reflects the architect Vittorio Gregotti's conviction that such buildings should be at the heart of urban geography, constructed with permanence and utility in mind. Fortunately for most British clubs, rebuilding (rather than relocating) their ground means they retain Gregotti's civic philosophy *de facto*, though they lack its aesthetic refinements.

An important fillip for the rebuilding programme was that the Home Nations

would be free to bid for major football tournaments. These 'mega-events' help to legitimize public expenditure on stadia by boosting local and national economies through the 'multiplier effect'. Playing host to overseas fans for a few weeks or only a few hours can generate large hikes in tourist income from service industries, helping temporarily to reduce local unemployment (see Euchner 1993). Organizers of the 1994 World Cup finals claimed to have inflated the US economy by \$4 billion (Lever 1995). Cities with poor international portfolios can refurbish their image. Conurbations known for deindustrialization, deprivation and crime (for example, Liverpool) may seek to ignite a 'cultural renaissance'. Tournament organizers may cultivate this new civic image, covering up or heavily policing slum areas and channelling foreign television crews towards positive background stories. One danger is that local people may feel excluded from the exposition (Hannigan 1995: 194–5).⁵ Such sentiments of alienation and powerlessness over community events are not just encountered during major tournaments, but arise in more routine football contexts, such as street games and league matches.

The New Politics of Access to Football

In the contemporary football world, the most important spatio-political question concerns access to and control over playing spaces. The least powerful social groups increasingly lose this everyday battle over resources; young people's access to cheap recreation (most notably leisure spaces) is notoriously circumscribed. Urban redevelopment and housing projects reduce the number of designated football pitches (Fishwick 1989: 7). The remaining facilities continue under municipal control, commodified to extract payment from players, and leased out for league matches which are organized by adult clubs and committees. The quality of the facilities typically reflects low public expenditure on UK sports facilities, while the private sector is even less forthcoming. The late 1990s advertising campaigns by companies like Nike sought to elide the deep material inequalities between football's top professionals and park players. But hardly any of professional football's new wealth trickles down to improve the grassroots infrastructure. Meanwhile, the ubiquity of the car and the erection of 'No Ball Games' signs conspire to vitiate the informal association of street football.

A similar battle for resources is routinely fought out within the new, post-Hillsborough football stadium. Redevelopment work has significantly reduced ground capacities, both during and after its completion. Major clubs such as Manchester United, Liverpool, Everton, Arsenal, Tottenham and Celtic have, on occasion, seen their ground capacity limited to around 30,000 or less.⁶ This has placed a premium on obtaining access to fixtures, particularly against the backdrop of football's post-1990 fashionability and its appeal to new markets. Clubs come to view seats as scarce resources, increasing the value of season

tickets, and reducing the opportunity to pay at the gate. Some clubs, such as the northern renaissance ones like Newcastle United and Middlesbrough, find themselves with season-ticket waiting lists. These price rises, and the sharpening of wealth inequalities courtesy of the Thatcher administration, ensure that major grounds are now increasingly unlikely to host their old working-class audience for top games (Horton 1997).

Right-wing figures within English football hold that the average ground's 'gentrification' and gilded prices have clear social benefits. Former England manager, Terry Venables (1996: 136), argues:

Without wishing to sound snobbish or be disloyal to my own working-class background, the increase in admission prices is likely to exclude the sort of people who were giving English football a bad name. I am talking about the young men, mostly working-class, who terrorized football grounds, railway trains, cross-channel ferries and towns and cities throughout England and Europe.

Conversely, football's new social movements interpret the assumption that working-class fans are hooligans as a rhetorical smokescreen for further commodifying the game. Merrills (1997: ix), for example, claims the Taylor Report: 'threatened to sanitize the game to such an extent that the very reason for its existence – the entertainment of the people – was on the brink of being relegated to little more than an afterthought to be afforded cursory consideration by the money men who run the game'.

A key recommendation of the report, often forgotten by both sides, was that ground redevelopment should not be used to price out less wealthy supporters. Fan movements which attempt to redress this process find little support among their *prima facie* 'natural' allies. The Taylor Report received full cross-party support in the House of Commons, especially from opposition Labour MPs who revelled in its criticism of the government's membership scheme. For many political, social and academic commentators, the report crystallized a utopian vision for the 'regeneration' of English football. Purpose-built stadia were to rehost European fixtures, with business and television revenues enriching the playing staff and directors. The call from many ISAs, for the restoration of some football terracing, was stoically resisted by the new Labour government.

The market exclusion of many ordinary fans is, however, a feature of top professional football overseas. FIFA and UEFA inflated ticket prices for the World Cup finals and the European Championships, augmenting these tournaments' fantasy aspect by allowing corporate sponsors (who receive huge tranches of tickets) to give away some of these precious commodities in highly publicized competitions. The new ticketing 'policy' enables businessmen (whether in the black market or legally) to buy blocks of tickets for individual sale at several times their face value.⁷ This perverse multiplication of the match ticket's exchange value makes a mockery of the football authorities' rhetoric

about 'fair play'. It promotes the attendance of wealthy, less passionate spectators at the expense of dedicated fans, and undermines the authorities' own segregation and anti-hooligan strategies by stoking an unregulated market in ticket dealing (see Giulianotti 1991, 1995a, 1996a, 1996b). Finally, a further consequence of ground redevelopment has been the pacification of those supporters that do attend matches.

The Stadium and Social Control: the Foucauldian aspects of football

To examine the downside of ground redevelopment, it is useful to look at the theoretical insights provided by the French post-structuralist social theorist, Michel Foucault. We may begin by exploring how the modern stadium accommodates the spectator's 'gaze'. The concept of the gaze was first used in its full-blown form by Foucault (1975) in his 'archaeological' social history of the clinic. The origins of clinical medicine begin with the new examination, or 'gaze', that its practitioners brought to bear on the bodies of their patients. Medical experts came to 'study their subject' in both senses of the phrase. Throughout the nineteenth century, other professions began to gaze upon their subjects as a way of knowing and exercising power. Psychologists, criminologists, prison officers and factory owners utilized the gaze to observe and regulate the bodies of others. Today, the gaze functions most proficiently at the localist and interactional level, as people seek to know the identity, motives and values of each other by gazing upon their face and body. Its disciplinary aspect is not to be underestimated: 'our behaviour is regulated by the gaze of others and by the gaze of our own self-reflection' (Rojek 1995: 61). Its practical sweep extends into consumer culture and leisure, among tourists, television viewers, high-street shoppers and sports spectators.

Within the football stadium, the spectator's 'gaze' is satisfied technically through an unobstructed view and panoramic 'sightlines', permitting the fullest knowledge of events on the park. Moreover, the 'gaze' enjoins the spectator to adopt a 'critical distance' towards football, as found in bourgeois cultural spaces like opera houses and theatres (Hargreaves 1986). The withdrawn, objective perspective of the modern spectator comes to supplant the subjective participation of traditional fandom. Football becomes less a process to interact with, and more an event at which to gaze. Manchester United manager, Alex Ferguson, noted while writing in the club's programme: 'The growing number of hospitality packages has brought in a different type of audience. They sit and admire the ground and can't wait to be entertained – just as if they were at a theatre or musical' (Brick 1997: 30).⁸

Many early stadia failed to make the grade as venues for the gaze. Only the main stands could guarantee authoritative vantage-points. The vast majority, on the banked terraces, had obfuscated views of the match. More important,

however, was their participation in the terrace events: singing, chanting and flag-waving; or simply swaying inside the packed mass of humanity in accord with the distant, focal events on the pitch. Today, this topophilic experience is commonly banned inside the modern UK ground. Security staff will eject those who stand up out of their seats and obstruct the view of others. Fans who shout out at football matches may be charged with public order offences under recent legislation.

Bale (1993b: 155) locates the surfeit of new family ends at British grounds within Foucault's Kafkaesque world of surveillance and social control. The family is one of the most potent loci of social control, a crucial resource for reproducing labour and a key agency of socialization for the most passive and docile of bodies. The post-war 'leisure society' is now committed to the reproduction of social consumption, with the family a key site for socializing children into future use of the culture industry (including sports events). Within football's family ground sections, parents may reproduce their control over children, while the 'family' of supervisors and stewards ensure that all maintain pacified behavioural patterns. A silent, deathly atmosphere is inevitable, although the retail outlets within the ground do a booming trade. Additionally, we may note how the family ends contribute to the 'privatization of passion'. Giddens (1991: 162–4) argues that, as Western societies industrialized and modernized, the release of intense emotion switched from the public arena of religious ceremonies, to the private family abode through sex with one's partner (see Foucault 1981). A parallel development has struck football, as the quieter, more personal or familial release of emotions in the stands has replaced the old quasi-religious passion of crowd carnival across the terraces.

In the early nineteenth century, the utilitarian philosopher Jeremy Bentham forwarded the 'panopticon' model of surveillance as a utopian vision of social control. To improve the monitoring of prison inmates, Bentham argued that the building's architecture should maximize the visibility of inmates while minimizing the labour of wardens. Ideally, prison interiors should be built in a circular shape. Rows of individualized prison cells were to line the circumference; the internal 'wall' to each cell should consist only of iron bars, rendering its occupant permanently visible. The observatory tower in the prison's centre would allow a handful of guards to scrutinize every activity of all inmates. In its perfect form, smoke-glass windows should encase the panopticon tower, so that inmates may never know if they are being observed by the guards. In the panopticon, vision is the resource of power, and 'visibility is a trap' (Foucault 1977: 200).

Since Foucault's use of Bentham, the panopticon has become a recurring metaphor for modern techniques of social control. Institutions controlled by the professions – such as education, health services, law – are typically housed within buildings where the bodies of the public are individualized and made available for examination. Moreover, the panopticon has been adapted to the control of public spaces. Since the late 1970s, the installation of surveillance cameras has moved from military installations, occupied territories and

industrial plants, to the public high street, car parks and modern shopping malls. The UK alone will have over 500,000 CCTV cameras monitoring public streets by the year 2000.

The panoptical control of public space was first tested under 'normal conditions' in the football ground (Armstrong and Giulianotti 1998b). The 'hoolivan' emerged in the early 1980s, a large, rather conspicuous vehicle with blackened windows and a camera turret for filming the crowds. Football clubs and police units have also hired photographers to film passing crowds. Television camera operators have furnished police with film reels to help identify disorderly fans. Unsurprisingly, fans have attacked the film crews and photographers for the offence of turning in the people that feed them. More commonly, as football crowds arrive and disperse, police helicopters track their movement. On-deck search lights and video-cameras help to illuminate and zoom in on fans, recording their every action. As CCTV systems spread to public thoroughfares, football crowds are on camera many miles from the ground.

Inside the ground, surveillance technology is at the cutting edge. CCTV cameras are linked up to a central control unit equipped with numerous monitors. More advanced devices are enclosed within smoked-glass globes, making it impossible to know at whom the lens is gazing. Prior to the 1996 European Championships in England, the match venues took delivery of 'video faxes' that could transfer recorded film of football fans through ordinary telecommunications lines. In theory, recipients of the data at police headquarters would be able to compare filmed supporters with files on people already 'classified' by police intelligence (see Bale 1993a: 127). More recently, Watford, a tranquil English club playing in the First Division, took receipt of a new surveillance system that can by itself screen football crowds for those held on police file. It is only a matter of time before surveillance equipment screens the irises of fans at the entrances to UK grounds. Generally, then, the surveillance of football fans intensifies the nearer that they get to the football ground. Yet, fatally for this policing approach, football hooligan clashes are taking place well away from the ground, in a deliberate attempt to evade close scrutiny (Armstrong and Giulianotti 1995).⁹ Perhaps the most disturbing aspect of such a surveillance strategy is that it has no equivalent overseas. In mainland Europe and Latin America, the spatial control of violent fans has tended to involve reactive policing on the ground. The military leaders of South America installed moats around the perimeter of pitches, to prevent supporters reaching the field of play; an aesthetically displeasing strategy, but one unlikely to result in mass asphyxia.

Towards a Post-modern Football Environment

In this chapter, I have discussed the major changes at football stadia, particularly at the more venerable structures found in the UK. From this discussion, it

becomes possible to outline very generally the 'ideal type' characteristics of these grounds, according to their historical stage.

The 'traditional' ground was built before the First World War, with open terracing, stylized grandstand and easy access to public transport. As the UK modernized, this ground's locus became more central and acquired an increasingly symbolic or 'topophilic' importance for the surrounding community. In some contrast, the modern stadium sits in a suburban, greenfield site, with easy access to motorways. It features all-seater stands, multi-sport facilities and a functional, somewhat stereotyped design. The modern stadium is found mainly on the continent, constructed specifically for municipal use or to host major tournaments. The age and relative neglect of UK stadia meant that this model was rarely erected before Hillsborough. Instead, the piecemeal redevelopment of UK grounds adhered to this model haphazardly, with the added British emphasis on anti-hooliganism innovations (ground 'pens' or 'cages', segregation fences, television cameras).

In the post-Hillsborough period, UK grounds have come to resemble this model though often within incongruous, dilapidated inner cities. Rebuilding of 'traditional' grounds also allows for their 'post-modernization'. They might retain the old grandstand or introduce some fake gentrification of the new stands. Alternatively, the elliptical design of stands, as at Bolton or Huddersfield, can soften the sharp right-angles of standard, modern grounds.¹⁰ An important aspect of this ground post-modernization involves the increased panoptical control of the football authorities over what supporters may and may not do inside. Accordingly, the uniformity of fan actions means that the old ethnological division of spectators, according to their location within the ground, may become meaningless.

There are other means through which the football authorities exercise a post-modern spatial control over fans. The 'mallification' of football grounds involves available ground spaces being commodified to sell merchandise. Hence, before matches or at half-time, the strolling spectator is no longer a social *flâneur* surveying the rest of the crowd; instead, he or she becomes a window shopper, studying club products. In Ajax's new Amsterdam ArenA, this process has been taken to new heights. Supporters inside the complex must purchase merchandise and refreshments with a special currency that is the only recognized tender. This fiscal arrangement inevitably inflates the profits inside the ground; exiting spectators may retain their unusual change, as a souvenir or 'for next time', while the club retains their Dutch currency. It also enhances the psycho-spatial divisions between the privileged inside the stadium and the greater numbers outside. A further aspect of this post-modernization involves the 'museumification' of grounds. Special museums are constructed within the ground for fans to visit, detailing the club's history, displaying old medals and trophies, and perhaps giving visitors some interactive experiences as well. Responsible parents will in future be able to take their children, to see or experience what an all-standing, packed terracing was 'really' like.

A provocative premonition of the post-modern ground is forwarded by Baudrillard (1993a: 79–80). In a regularly cited analysis, he foresees the occasion when ‘hyperreal’ football matches take place within the ‘vacuums’ of empty stadia. Likewise, the leading Italian football and media magnate, Silvio Berlusconi, has suggested football fans will prefer to watch matches live on television rather than in the stadium, hence the entry gates might have to be thrown open for free admission (Giulianotti and Armstrong 1997: 25). Television is, of course, not a neutral medium for watching football. It constructs a different viewing experience to that found in the stands, one aspect of which may involve withholding coverage of highly controversial or ‘deviant’ events that occur on the field of play (see Gruneau et al. 1988: 274).¹¹ Berlusconi’s point also ignores the continuing commodification of football grounds in late 1990s Europe. The next stage of that process may see European football club owners viewing their cultural properties as potentially mobile sports ‘franchises’ as is the custom in North America. If the stadium is too small and the local authorities do not offer sufficient inducements to stay, the club might move from its original town or city to a larger, more profitable stadium, where another supporter base awaits.

In the longer term, to continue with Berlusconi’s vision, there are trends in football culture which appear to privilege the aesthetics of the virtual (mediated) event over the ‘real’ (ground spectating) experience. First, the stadium’s quality of facilities may be judged not against other models or concepts of public association, but according to the idealized, private leisure space of the family lounge. The armchair fan at the ground looks for the personalized seat, easy access to a diverse larder of hot snacks, quadraphonic music to relieve the tedium of half-time, and a quiet and unmolested viewing environment. The fan will also seek the creature comforts of a running commentary on the game via radio headsets, action replays on the giant screen for reviewing key moments in slow motion, or even enclosed spaces in ‘executive boxes’ that seal off the outside world (from these, the corporate spectator has direct access to a fully stocked bar).

Secondly, there is the match itself, always imperfect, full of uncertainties and human failings. The danger to live spectating comes when the viewer prefers a simulacrum of real football, something which is ‘perfect’ but ‘unreal’. Televised sport has always produced its share of ‘armchair athletes’ who watch sports eagerly but never play them. Today, we are already at the threshold of ‘hyperreality’, where the psycho-spatial division of playing and spectating is disturbingly blurred. The ‘pornography of football’ entails multiple camera angles that enable us to see matches in minute but often useless detail (Baudrillard 1990: 31). Modern computer technology can simulate games by using old video footage of matches to ‘create’ new ones. More commonly, children ‘play’ football on television screens through their games consoles rather than in the streets. By the time of the European championships in 2008, fans will not need to travel to the tournament to enjoy the sensory pleasures of

‘being there’. A combined headset and television decoder will enable the viewer to partake in an interactive experience, ‘as if’ they are there in the stadium (*World Soccer*, February 1997). The ‘paradoxical logic’ of this new technology has a disorientating effect on the senses (Virilio 1994: 63). With a post-modern circularity, football does indeed ‘come home’.