Football’s fairy stories, memories, histories
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1. Introduction

'Did I really do all that?' he said at last.
'Well,' said Pooh, 'in poetry - in a piece of poetry - well, you did it, Piglet, because the poetry says you did. And that's how people know.'


The complex meaning of Pichi Alonso

It all started with Pichi Alonso. I was watching a Swedish cup final between Malmö FF and IFK Göteborg in 2013. It was early November, cold and windy, and there were only around 3000 supporters watching the match. We were at the standing section and a big part of the Swedbank Stadium, where MFF plays, was closed. The game was quite slow and everybody felt it was rather meaningless. At one point a person who accompanied me pointed out a rather big flag in MFF colours, with a big clear text ‘Pichi Alonso’ written on it. ‘Do you know who he is?’ a question came. ‘He is an important part of our history.’ And I had no clue who the mysterious person might be. During the last minutes of the match I was lectured about Pichi.
Pichi Alonso was a Spanish football player. He was in a squad of FC Barcelona in 1986 when they played against IFK Göteborg. The first match took place in Sweden at Nya Ullevi, and attracted 43.000 spectators. IFK Göteborg won 3-0 and was very close to reaching Europa Cup Final. However, the replay happened a month later in Spain and then Pichi Alonso scored a hat-trick and the match went to penalties that Göteborg lost. Hence, MFF remained the only Swedish club that reached a final of that level of competition (which happened in 1979). (Check the details from sources) Pichi Alonso dramatically altered Göteborg’s expectations and their future, and sent them packing back home. He humiliated the club and became a symbol of unbelievable defeat that shattered its dreams for the final match, in my informants’ words.

The banner with Pichi’s name was a terrible yet subtle and intelligent insult displayed at MFF stadium. This football player was brought back to remind players and supporters from Göteborg that they were not good enough, that they experienced something painful, something horrible that they would prefer to forget. History can hurt, but one has to be able to make sense of it and understand the context, not only that MFF reached the final at one point, but also that Göteborg was very close to being better and that historically speaking IFK Göteborg has been MFF’s mortal enemy, and then one has to be able to identify Pichi Alonso. This requires work and some learning. History of the enemies is as important as own history. In turn, the opponents will have their interpretation of this and that has to be acknowledged, in order to be challenged. This Spanish player might be quite surprised how many fans he has had in Malmö FF.

Historical narratives around football clubs are plentiful. Winners or not, one needs to have history. This little Pichi flag has disappeared from the stadium (though it comes back from time to time), but the picture lives still on the internet. It might still appear again in material form, ready to mock IFK Göteborg. It is important to see the time frame and interpretation of this narrative. MFF stresses that they were better in an overall picture, but it could be quite possible to concentrate on a fact that the team from Göteborg was very close, which is an amazing achievement, that they won 3-0 against Barcelona, and that they fought bravely, showing the spirit and quality of Swedish football. Further, competing in 1986 was probably very different from playing in 1979. In other words, Göteborg would be able to have another, daring narrative around this event. MFF makes sure that they remember their version as well.
These complex and deep historical discussions happen all the time. Football is able to accommodate such ideological struggles. References to historical figures, symbols, events, clubs’ histories and their myths and legends are produced, performed and reworked all the time. Football rarely ends. When the season is over it is time to evaluate it, then preserve some of it and move to expectations for the next year, together with new and old actors that appear on the new or old stadiums. The plethora of interpretations and the ocean of information contribute to it being a creative, innovative and unpredictable environment. For that reason, it seems only just to plunge into the football context and its historical maze.

Jörn Rüsen writes in the preface to *Western Historical Thinking* that the historical research becomes more and more focused on cultural aspects of societies. He writes: ‘there has been a global wave of intellectual explorations into fields that are “historical” in their very nature: the building of personal and collective identity through “memory”, the cultural, social and political use and function of “narrating the past”, and the psychological structures of remembering, repressing and recalling’ (2002: i). This research shows how history is used and abused, performed and played with, in other words produced, in a non-academic setting, a place where everything can be employed to help one’s club, where nothing is sacred, but much is accepted. A place where average citizens can make history and become history on weekly basis.

History plays different roles in football and also in this thesis. It is the tool, the process, and the end product. Supporters or club officials do not shy from using historical arguments and thus my analytical toolbox overlaps with their rhetoric. The historical perspective suggests putting current processes in the background of change, fluidity and flexibility. ’The History’, the official monotonous listing of seasons played and trophies won, is not left in peace but opened to interpretations, which makes historical narratives vulnerable to mythologization.

An interviewed former player, when asked about popularity of football, gave such an answer:

> So football is about emotions, passion ... commitment. The passion to work with people, develop. Like you almost get the goosebumps when you talk about it (laughing). Just talking about football... (...) I think it's so important ... that's emotional sport. One can be very happy and then despaired the next minute. (...) I think ... if you want to be here, you want to experience this and you want to feel like this and not like this. So just the feeling of feeling, crying and laughing or you ... plus that football is simple, it's easy to understand. The ball needs to go into the goal (laughs). (...) and you come every week and sit there on the stands so you live in another way. (...) it's like a theater, a little bit (interview with Åke, 2015). Do something with this quote.
There has been a lot of research into football history, its sociological implications, its various nationalist faces, and also violence and all the trouble-makers to be found at stadiums (reference, reference). However, ethnographic studies have often been limited to certain spectator groups or problematic issues (reference, reference). The research presented here puts four Swedish clubs in a context of ongoing historical discussions and exchanges that happen among them. History is constructed here in relation and with help of other participants. Further, here are included not only various groups of supporters but also clubs’ managements and present and former players. Football needs to be taken from different angles to show its complex structure and possibilities that it presents.

**Aim, Methodology and Theoretical Perspectives**

*It is not what has been done that disturbs people, but what is said about it.*

Epictetus

Skriv in er i historien – write yourselves in history. Tifo made by AIK fans. There is a profound notion, often expressed during matches, that history is being made ‘here and now’.

**The Aim**

The aim of this project is to analyse how history in football clubs is produced and performed, and the implications this process has in a broader context. This thesis presents narratives mainly from four Swedish clubs: Malmö FF, Helsingborgs IF, AIK and Djurgårdens IF. I shall present them in more detail in the following chapter.

I intend to look at both performing history and at the historical context of performing history, as this is an ongoing, cyclical and organized historical experiment. Therefore, detours into the
past and comparisons with former structures and expressions in Swedish football will appear throughout the text. The project concentrates on the present constructions, but it needs to be situated in a time frame in order to provide a better context to the observed phenomena.

The historical perspective does not mean an attempt to reconstruct clubs’ propaganda from the past in a linear order. Rather, this should put current processes in the perspective of change. An additional layer of historical application could be seen in self-proclaimed projects of ‘making history’ that clubs, players and supporters are eager to stress in the context of modern football.

Since football expresses strong traces of magic, and it is able to transform a collective phenomenon into individual experience (see Mauss 1974, Herd 2013), the second dimension of the aim deals with a question what is needed to perform history, what is required for historical writing and how individuals construct a personal relation to it. As local football identity overlaps with the other categories, such as gender, ethnicity, age, class, or family connections, it does trigger cultural and emotional exchanges within groups affiliated with clubs. The analysis of making individual stories while participating in creating football’s histories can highlight alternative interpretations of this field.

Football is a widely recognized social context and it attracts a lot of attention, emotional and financial, and it triggers plenty of cultural activities. Being a football supporter is often a strong part of an individual identity, but it has to be merged with other features that build one’s personality and it connects strongly to personal life stories, relationships, and opinions. Thus, one’s narrative cuts across a club’s story; one’s memories are those of thousands who attended a match.

The aim of the thesis is based on the following core questions:

- *How is history produced, performed and materialised in football?*
- *What historical elements and references appear in modern clubs?*
- *How are different groups of people (officials, supporters, players) involved in producing and performing history?*
- *What impact does this active production have on history as a concept?*

The cyclical character, intensity and speed of events around a football club make it into a captivating field. At the same time, this socially constructed space is not as sensitive or
problematic to conduct a research as other dimensions of social life. Nevertheless, the analysis stirred by questions mentioned above could provide deeper understanding how such collective environments are established, maintained and also contested by using history and historical narration. It also problematizes history as a specific socio-cultural construct and transformations it can undergo.

It should be stressed that the main focus is not on football itself but on the ongoing social processes concerning history making that are visible in this particular context. In that sense football is viewed as background that encapsulates processes and emotions reoccurring in a certain pattern. As a part of global sport activity, football has been influential and it has become, together with other games and disciplines, a major factor in shaping values and attitudes in Western cultures (Hourihan 1997, 14). Further, there is special focus on male activities, and connects a construction of masculinity to authority and power in historical context (Hourihan 1997, 15). The constant presence of the past keeps the present perspective.

To summarize, there are two angles into the research. First, the very concept of history, its production, usage and flexibility are probed by various examples from the fieldwork. Second, the liberal usage of history and historical narratives in various physical forms is analysed, as it has lasting effects not only on the clubs, but also on broader social context of the participants. The historical dimension of using history, bringing back memories and personal narratives provides depth into investigating both angles.

As the aim centres on producing and performing history, methodology has been chosen to obtain relevant material. The selection of participants, the scope of the study and various methods are presented in the following section, together with some critical thoughts about the material obtained.

Methodology

This chapter consists of three approaches on methods. It discusses analytical implication of researching this particular field, presents fieldwork material gathered, and also problematizes historical perspective as a method.

Since the field is vast and diverse, so are the possibilities of exploring various methods. At the same time, fieldwork has depended on trust, access and familiarity. The choices of subjects and informants were not only mine. They were negotiated and mediated. Swedish football scene is generous and open, but it is nevertheless based on trust and familiarity. Although
sometimes it required patience, usually help was not refused and all the clubs included in this study assisted me with finding informants, getting access to footballers and matches, albeit to a different degree. In this section, I shall briefly present the clubs, followed by the description of fieldwork and methods applied.

**MFF, AIK, DIF, and HIF – participants in the historical discussion**

For the purpose of this study, four clubs that play in Swedish highest league, Allsvenskan, have been selected. **AIK**, abbreviation for **Allmänna Idrottsklubben**, was founded in 1891 on the 15th of February by Isidor Behrens in Stockholm. Their current stadium is Friends Arena where the club moved in 2012 from Råsunda Stadium, which was demolished in 2013. Supporters still describe the almost-annihilated Råsunda as ‘an open wound’. The club claims to be the biggest in Scandinavia in terms of attendance and fans. It has several supporters’ organizations, including Black Army, Ultras Nord, Sol Invictus, AIK Tifo, La Garra Negra, hooligan firm Firman Boys, ASK, and several others.

**DIF, Djurgårdens IF**, or even **Djurgår’n**, is another club from the capital. It is named after an island in Stockholm, which used to be a Royal Hunting Park. This provides a background for an impression that the club regards itself as a bit better, because of the royal connection, and thus attracts better-off, snobby spectators. DIF was founded in 1891, on 12th of March, and because it is a month younger, AIK calls it a ‘kid brother’. DIF used to be placed at the Stockholm Olympic Stadium until 2013, when it was moved to Tele2 Arena, which it has to share with another Stockholm club, Hammarby.

**Malmö FF – MFF** is a club from Malmö, southern Sweden, established in 1910. Its mortal rival used to be IFK Malmö, a club that attracted upper, educated classes, while MFF was considered a working-class club (according to the present myth). It has been the most successful Swedish club as it reached the final of Europa Cup in 1979 in Munich, where they were beaten by Nottingham Forrest. It has also won the most titles. MFF has a strong ultras supporters’ group called Supras Malmö. Unlike the Stockholm clubs, MFF does not have a separate hockey team or women’s football team. In 2017 they have won Allsvenskan for the 20th time.

**HIF, or Helsingborgs IF**, was established in 1907. It uses a nickname ‘Skånes stolthet’, the pride of Skåne. Before, it was referred to as ‘milky cow’ (Mjölkkossan) because when playing away it attracted many spectators in other cities, making it very profitable for their opponents.
In 1968 HIF went down from Allsvenskan and played in lower leagues for 24 years, which is referred to as ökenvandring (wondering in the desert, after Israel spent 40 years trying to reach the Promised Land). HIF’s stadium, Olympia, has been recently renovated, but in 2016 the club went down from Allsvenskan again (after 24 years).

**The fieldwork arrangement, clubs’ selection and why not Hammarby**

In this research, narratives from four Swedish big, so to say dominant teams were selected\(^1\). The choice was influenced by their geographical locations, as well as the social space that these clubs occupy. The elite clubs in Sweden not only occupy considerable social space, they also have histories and a plethora of narratives build around them. Big clubs provide centres of gravity that organize spaces around them. That also means smaller or younger clubs find themselves as satellites with various possibilities to influence the fields of force around the big institutions. Thus, it is impossible to omit some of the story-telling that is produced outside the four main clubs I worked with. In other words, one is able to obtain more (and perhaps more diversified) material when concentrating on big clubs, but other actors are always present. The interactions among them are rich and emotional, and the exchanges result in mutual building of images.

The problem often expressed when I presented my research was why oh why I have not included Hammarbys IF, another Stockholm team. This is a question of material selection but it also gives a glimpse of football as a category that is ever-present in the society. This question about why Hammarby is not included was posed almost every time I presented my project…. More

There are also some international points of reference introduced throughout this book. However, a European-scale comparison was not intended, mostly due to quantity and variety of material and the general focus of the thesis. Nevertheless, Swedish football is framed within European developments and a swift zooming into international historical context provides an additional layer for analysis. Such references bring contrast and point to different dimensions, as examples from the other countries help to highlight special flavours of the Swedish history-making.

\(^1\) Although HIF went down the league during the time of the study, it remains one of the most popular and influential clubs in the Swedish scene. Further, many clubs are vulnerable to degradation, and both Stockholm teams spent one season in the lower league during the first decade of 2000s.
Katarzyna Herd
Manuscript for the final seminar 2017 – Football’s fairy stories, memories, histories

I was granted access and possibility to conduct my research within elite football. It required time and patience, and building trust. Once contacts were established, the ‘snowball’ effect provided many informants, one person recommending another. Although not without problems, hindrances and rejections, conducting fieldwork in football was a daring experience, full of warmth and laughter. This project was not short of methods nor ethnographic material. On the contrary, there came a flood of sources, themes, important figures and matches to consider. Methodologically then it is a rather excessive form of bricolage, taking up all the possible sources and engaging with any material available, which strengthened the perspective of searching for modes of history-writing and looking for culturally meaningful practices in football (Ehn & Löfgren 2001, 147).

For the purpose of this project I also used some of the fieldwork conducted previously for my MA thesis in 2011 and 2012. This includes (3?-check) observations and 4 interviews with Jonatan, Jan, Marta, and Linus.

**Attending matches**

I have observed 19 matches between 2014 and 2017. I was able to conduct observations from varied places at stadiums: the pitch, standing section, sitting section in the middle, family space, media centre, and the section for away fans. Basically, you name it – I have been there. The football crowd is arranged at the stadium according to ticket prices, proximity to the club, age, and also the expected behaviour, which comes with specific prejudice or expectations.

When on the pitch I was usually granted a special admission as a photographer. I became included in the experience, so to speak, as to the onlookers I was an incorporated element with privileged point of entrance. I was also on the pitch shadowing, but I ended up sitting on the narrow strip between the grass and the stands. At the same time I was observed too. I was filmed by fans and clipped in a movie that documented the match. It provided a sudden realization that when ‘out there’ it is easy to become a usable element.

Observations from media section come with special seats that are right in the middle of the stadium which allows journalists to have a good view of a match. There sit clubs’ officials, sometimes injured footballers and scouts searching for talented players. One also gets coffee and sandwiches. This particular set of seats is one of the most secluded and professionalized.

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2 My own position will be discussed further in the last chapter of the thesis
On several occasions, I had company. These were friends or colleagues, who fancied seeing a match. Watching football with somebody changes it into an ongoing commentary that includes unrelated trivia about other teams, dead players, the city, and personal feelings about a team. Thus, an observation turned out to be more like an unstructured interview. The conversation notes acquired in such a way are described as football chat.

I have also travelled with HIF fans to an away match in Malmö. I asked the supporters organizations how it could be arranged, but since I would make just for another supporter there were no direct issues about it. I became a member in the organization and purchased the bus ticket and match ticket from their web page. Although most of the supporters on the bus clearly knew each other well, there were also some lone individuals like myself. This trip was an attempt to see another part of supporters’ life, travelling to see their team, arranging transportation etc. Yet again, I was allowed to play a role I chose.

**Observations at DIF camp**

When doing fieldwork in Stockholm I spent a day with DIF officials and players at their training grounds. The intended activity was an interview with a player, but a supporter liaison officer generously agreed to just take me there and show me around a bit. While waiting for an interview I got lunch, wandered around the place, watched people come and go performing their mundane routines. This was an unexpected but rewarding experience. Again, it was a different part of backdoor activities that happen around football. This observation turned into football chat as well at times, with many people sharing their football narratives.

**Interviews in various forms**

I have encountered 43 people during interviews and two focus groups with 19 fans, six players, three former players and eight officials working for the selected four clubs. I had an opportunity to talk to a former referee as well, two policemen and one security guard. Three of my informants were women. The voices presented in this thesis belong to Felix, Hubert, Anton, Martin, Erik, Maria, Marta, Arvid, Theo, Arne, Otto, Alex, Tom, Robin, Adam, Bengt, Leif, Olle, Krisian, Jonatan, Oskar; players Gustav, Kristof, Sixten, Jacob, Matias and Peter; old players Jesper, Åke, Sune; former referee Wilmar; working for clubs Filip, Carl, David, Alma, Joel, Linus, Jan; tattoo artists Henrik and Håkan, security and police Albin, Kaspar, and Benjamin.
Out of those, 28 were formal interviews; two were focus groups (with three and four people - recorded) and one double interview – all recorded either on the phone or by taking notes and transcribed; three were phone interviews; one was a Facebook interview; two officials were interviewed during shadowing.

The club officials were contacted directly and most agreed to talk to me, some delegated me to their more knowledgeable colleagues. Most of the players were selected for me by my contact persons, only two were my first choices. Fans were pointed out to me by officials, or by my own acquaintances or friends, but some contacted me directly, as in ‘you should talk to me, I know a lot’. For the focus groups, the supporter organizations delegated people that would talk to me. Interviewees had very varied occupations and life-stories. From university staff, PhDs, entrepreneurs, young professionals, security workers, to manual workers, tattoo artists and retired teachers. I did not have to strive for variety or look for specific groups. As football attracts all layers of a society, they were all to be found there.

Although there were only three women interviewed, many were encountered during informal conversations. Thus, women would share their stories in short, direct exchanges, when I would encounter them on the field. Certainly, men were eager to tell their tales in this way as well, but then they also covered majority of interviews. I have not reflected upon it while conducting fieldwork, but although the female presence is strong and growing, my interview material does not reflect that directly. When contacting supporter organizations, I was usually directed to a male informant. Female supporters and clubs’ workers are strong and assured of their positions, but the established structures of power might still hinder them from being the main sources of football narratives.

The majority of interviews were in Swedish, but there were also some in English and Finnish, and then translated by the interviewer. Interviews lasted from around 25 minutes to a bit over an hour. The shorter meetings were with players and officials, as both groups appear pressed for time and sometimes I was ‘squeezed’ between their routine activities. Although one can argue that such short meeting could not provide much in-depth material, it was the entire arrangement and situation that were interesting too. Thus, interviews were also good situational observations.

One of the challenges was that more often than not people hold several positions simultaneously. Those working for clubs are often strong supporters; players can turn to be supporters or work for a club in other form, while supporters play football in their spare time,
coach or do voluntary work for clubs. Because of this, my informants could change roles. Sometimes it came with a clear warning, as in “speaking as a supporter…”. In the project the classification of interviewed persons follow the first category that they were approached through: a supporter, a club official, a player.

The interviews were semi-structured. Questions oscillated around clubs, Swedish football, personal experiences and memories, evaluations of other clubs and their histories. One interview with a player was sort of ‘monitored’ but a club official who found it interesting to listen. As the interview took months to arrange, I felt I had no power to say no. I can only speculate how the presence of another, familiar person, influenced the footballer, but the arrangement was rather curious.

I met with organized fans of all the clubs. The interviewed groups were Supras Malmö (MFF), Kärnan and HIF Vänner (HIF), Järnkaminerna (DIF), Allmänasupportersklubben-ASK and Black Army (AIK).

I had two focus groups and representing supporters from organized supporters’ clubs. These were perhaps more representative for collective identities than individual experiences, but it is also a valid angle as interactions among specific groups are an important part of creating football and its history. The group dynamics during those interviews was also an interesting factor, framing individuals not only within the club’s structure but also organization’s and its hierarchies and agendas.

Interviewed supporters presented a broad spectrum of age, gender, education, and class, and even style of support and attendance patterns. Some individuals have not seen life matches for years, yet still they claimed their admiration and devotion to clubs. Sport sociologist Richard Giulianotti observed same phenomenon in British football when ‘occasional’ fans would describe themselves as devoted nonetheless (reference). To protect identities of my informants their names were changed and their age is not revealed unless necessary for highlighting generational differences in the understanding of football.

**Football chat**

I introduce football chat as a method here. It turned out to be incredibly useful for getting small glimpses of people’s relationship with football. It can be described as a short, informal, spontaneous interview. It was not developed intentionally from the beginning, but it came to life because almost always when I mentioned what my research project was about people
have opinions, stories, clubs they love. It shows what an acknowledged and wide-spread topic football is. As more and more information were scribbled down in such situations I have decided to include ‘football chat’ as a resource and also paid more attention to such situations. On many occasions, it proved to be a very good source of information as people were usually willing to engage in the conversation and the informal context made it into a relaxed setting. It was about the links, networks they operated in, and such chats highlighted paths they used.

It happened both outside and inside of the football context. For instance, every shadowing of supporters’ liaison officers (SLOs) resulted in a chat with random people. Often, I did not know the name or exact position of my sudden informant, though. As one person remarked in such a football chat ‘I’m not into football but you just cannot avoid it’ (2015). However, even a meeting during lunch could provoke a football discussion with opinions, facts and emotions flying around the table. Certainly, not all of such instances have been recorded and often they were connected to other forms of fieldwork, like shadowing or observations.

Shadowing

I shadowed SLOs from all four clubs during four matches, two in Stockholm, one in Malmö and one in Helsingborg. We went around, checked on away fans, chat with medical personnel and police, fetched something from the office, looked for troublesome supporters etc. A match day is a sort of a routine for them. They communicate constantly with fans, security, officials and police. They have a vast network of contacts. It should be acknowledged that shadowing attempted there turned out to be a hybrid construction including football chat a sort of go-alongs/observations. Several times upon learning about my agenda, people would volunteer their contact information to be interviewed later.

This possibility to go after individuals strongly affiliated with clubs was by far the most exciting and in my opinion the most relevant in terms of provided material. Somehow the mix of walking, chatting, observing and following seemed natural. The informality of the situation and the routinized activity helped to facilitate an alternative form of sharing stories.

(put some ethnography theory here)

Internet ethnography

It is relatively easy to follow clubs and supporters’ organizations online. They are very eager to show their involvement, recent tifos or football trips online. Almost everybody has
Facebook pages, Twitter accounts etc. where their share comments and photos, some of which has been used in this thesis. It is a short-cut fieldwork, as the others present material for you. Obviously, posts and pictures have been selected by groups with specific interests. It is another way for supporters and clubs to have a voice and show their versions and interpretations of history. This method has been useful when concerning tifos and banners adoring matches, as good-quality, scaled photos retell the glorious moments of pride. These short internet reports also present a specific interpretation, different from newspaper reports, as they are not shy of pumping emotions into them and clearly stating their sentiments and agenda. The grand narrative acquires personal characteristics instantly. (Taylor Blank and internet; associated online researchers for ethics…)

The social space around football is created with the narratives floating around it and feeding of it. Newspapers like Aftonbladet, Sydsvenskan and Helsingborgs Dagblad have digitalized archives and produce text concerning football on daily basis.

Because of the ethical considerations I avoid in general blunt direct quoting and rely mostly, though not exclusively, on referring the content of chat forums or Facebook comments. These internet pages are not closed or restricted and their participants were not aware of my presence in a character of a researcher. As their statements are placed in a particular research context and then analysed, I feel they should be granted a degree of anonymity. Thus I have chosen not to keep their forum nicknames when quoting, and present only the date and page name where the data was taken from.

The visual material and popular literature

Throughout this book I present considerable amount of the visual material. These are more than just illustrations, although they also work well as such as football relies heavily on what can be shown quickly and swiftly. Further, in hectic, rushed situations an act of taking a photo substitutes for writing down field notes. Taking a photo is thus less controversial in a sense and does not disturb the flow of the reality as a black notebook with a pen.

Through banners and slogans fans communicate their agendas and make historical short-cuts. Also, they are well aware of media attention and they also have an audience in mind. Their spectacle around matches has to be visually captivating, has to look good. After the game they will upload their own pictures on various social media and also look at those taken by others, not least in newspapers. In this act, spectators become audience and vice versa, depending on
a situation, and their produced material becomes a piece of a puzzle in a club’s identity and history.

One should take into consideration a critique of the presupposed objectivity of photography, presented for example by Susan Sontag (doing anthropology book!). For that reason, the photos that are treated as ethnographic sources in this thesis come with a contextual description. Further, photos are treated as texts. Their textuality provides a version of historical narratives present in the clubs. The visual material includes also several You Tube videos posted by fans.

Moreover, the material includes printed publications and novels. These consist of jubilee albums, books written by journalists, and semi-fictional texts based on clubs’ history mixed with personal experiences. These sources present interesting ethnographic material. Among others, Johan Höglund’s account of his involvement in AIK’s hooligan firm provides a captivating read of his relationship with the group and the club, and his understanding of football. Hooligans’ stories, so called ‘hit-and-tell’ literature, has found its niche among other literature genres (Radmann 2015). A book by Erik Bengtson about a club from northern Sweden called Degerfors IF is a publication written by a devoted fan, and presents an interesting historical perspective.

A short narrative on limitations – gender and personal involvement

When explaining my PhD project in various circumstances, I was usually confronted with several issues. First, people asked about ‘masculinity’ and the display of masculinity. Although initially I was reluctant to acknowledge the strong presence of gender issues, I ended up exploring and using it on many different levels. I do not evoke it directly in discussing females and their involvement though. For better or worse, most of my informants were males. Women make nowadays roughly 25-30% of football-attending supporters. A quantitative study from 2006 from Sweden, presented by Kim Söderberg and Jens Horsner, gives a number of 28% for women present at the standing section during a match in Malmö (Horsner & Söderberand, 2006). Other European studies present similar percentage of female supporters (e.g. Pflister, Lenneis & Mintert, 2013)\(^3\).

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\(^3\) The practice of going to live matches does not directly translate to being a supporter. The statistics that were available to me dealt with match attendance. I encountered several people that would stretch the understanding of football fandom from attending the matches to just caring, watching it at home, or just stating the interest.
The gender perspective employed in this thesis is then exploring popular opinions on masculinity as contrasted with *gender expectations*. Since football is so strongly associated with men, it becomes out of reach for women (Bourdieu 2001) as the outside evaluation of their behaviour if often biased and based on an ideal constructed outside of the football context. The collective expectations and evaluations work the other way round as well. Men are not free from bias, harsh opinions and control just because there are many men in one place, which in turn affects how women there are treated. It is then possible form me to investigate how popular ideas about femininity and masculinity influence historical picture of football.

As already mentioned, most of my informants were men. Out of 43 people only three were women. I encountered many women in other fieldwork situations, i.e. not in formal interviews and such meetings often resulted in short conversations used in this thesis as football chat. I have realized this once the fieldwork itself was finished. In other words, I have met and talked to many women, yet providing a male-oriented picture of football. Men hold positions that are more prominent while women are often backstage. These are important issues craving further investigations as they deal with power, access and social recognition, but they do not fit with the scope of this study, as my female informants expressed the same understanding of football history and same emotional engagement as men. The gender perspective used here includes hegemonic view of history as *his-story* opposing history coming from alternative sources – *her-story*.

The last issue that I would like to raise about emotionality and my own journey and involvement.

Researchers who took up those subjects struggled with positioning and the usual questions around being an insider or outsider, and the degree to which they feel included or excluded certainly varies. Pia Karlsson Minganti’s reaserch on religiously engaged young Muslim women living in Sweden seems to have strongest parallels to my own writing. Minganti entered an environment that was foreign for her, she had a clear position as a researcher, and had little possibilities to be regarded as an insider, being a native Swedish non-Muslim. I can relate to the situation, as my first contact with Swedish club football was as an international student who had not seen football live. Thus, just like Minganti, I had a rather clear ‘outsider’ marker when entering the research field.
There is, however, a strong difference in formalities and group acceptance between mine and Minganti’s fieldwork. Officially accepting a religious standpoint presupposes a rather complex official process that is connected to social evaluation. Becoming a supporter might be very meaningful for an individual, but it does not invite any specific requirements. One can put a scarf, or just simply declare one’s sympathies. One is also free to stop active support should a life situation demand so. As one of my informants commented, football is not ‘a mafia’ and one can decide how much one wants to invest (interview with Jonatan, 2013). I would presume that there would be more social pressure on people declaring religious conversion.

Pia Karlsson Minganti encountered a field that seemed rather closed, as she aimed to research young Muslim women. Her position as a researcher and an ethnic Swede, in contrast to her informants, was openly discussed and commented on, and her informants every shared some of the concerns their families had about taking part in the study (2007, 43). Karlsson Minganti was even openly questioned about becoming a Muslim herself, to which she replied, in her own words, that no, but one never knows (2007, 41). Her answer was accepted, Minganti recalls, with an exclamation ‘God’s will’ (Inshallah) and thus making the researcher open to God’s plans for her. Thus, Minganti had to positon herself and she chose to accept an emotional connection that was made available for her in the field. It did not mean stating any sentiments, but expressing empathy seemed to come naturally from the researcher.

My own fieldwork encountered same emotional dilemmas. The most asked questions were “what do you support?” or “are you a supporter?” After a while, I realized that this was to put me on a map of those engaged in the sport. A category as ‘a researcher’ seems secondary to the accepted obviousness of having a link to a club. Stating an affiliation to a group would make me recognizable, readable for my informants. Football lies in the realm of magic rather than religion, which I have shown in an article analysing the magical elements in the field (Herd, 2016), but at the same time it invites similar group affection. One feels, experiences together.

Further, I would think that rather than undermining a position, it would prove understanding of the emotional connections already at play. Although my informants were divided into different groups and clubs, they all shared the football context and could sympathize with fans from other cities as they all were familiar with the pattern of being a supporter and supporting. I did not have any affiliation from the start, and I was learning the field slowly, but as
Minganti stated, I have also begun to like it very early on. Minganti wanted to provide an alternative picture of her informants, who face stigmatization and prejudice, and I found myself thinking (and writing) along the same lines. This of course opens up a discussion of engagement in one’s own research.

I have though stated ‘we’ several times when referring to my fieldwork experiences. But ‘who are we?’ I would not identify myself with one particular club in this thesis, but rather with the whole field, although one has become dear to me. There are then, in a sense, four different ‘we’. The experience from this research has certainly affected the way I write and the general tone I employ, as I am unmistakably positive towards the environment (Ehn & Klein 1994, 10). As Billy Ehn and Barbro Klein state, there is a distinction between a fieldworker and a writer (1994, 26). This difference should not be treated as a goal for pure objectivity, but as a methodological advantage and working with and analysing the collected data.

Such agenda might be there from the beginning, but it also might be acquired. A researcher might be from the start driving a political goal, when being aware of inequalities and problems in a given group or personal involvement in the scene (like for example in the case of Bremer and the transsexual community, or Svensson and the homosexual community). But one can be also affected while doing fieldwork. For instance, Lars-Eric Jönsson’s choice of a study object for his PhD was not stirred by any immediate connections, but he also reports in his methodology the strong effects it has had on him personally (see Jönsson, 1998). My own research has been proceeding according to similar pattern. I started as an almost complete outsider, not once attending a football match\(^4\). As my knowledge of the field expanded, so did my appreciation for it. Thus, I have slowly become emotionally involved.

With that, one enters the discussion of how close one can or should get, without jeopardizing the study. Anna Johansson expressed it as a ‘risk of going native’ when she experienced self-identification with her informants (2010, 27). Thus, Johansson briefly acknowledges the risk. Yet the fear she expresses is balanced by her notion that this closeness and emotions attached to it helped her understand the cultural processes manifested by self-destructive scarring. She seems torn between already being a native, trying to work with it, and also rejecting it. I have encountered on several occasions a direct warning on ‘going native’, as it would compromise my research. Still, I have to acknowledge the journey from being an outsider to someone more involved.

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\(^4\)I started researching football in 2011/2012, when I did my internship with Malmö FF.
The 'risk of going native' seems to be a curious construct. In the case of aforementioned research done by Johansson, she declares herself as a native to the environment and its cultural context, and on many levels, not to mention the Swedish side of things. Only then she puts herself out of it and contemplates how not to go native. I do understand the concerns of undermining one’s research when declaring that one is the same as an informant, but I think one could go deeper with acknowledging one’s links and thus highlighting the analytical process. I also struggled with positioning myself, with closing a gap with my informants etc. For all the reluctance of ‘becoming a native’, Johansson feels that it helped rather than obstructed the analysis, and yet she needs to put her thoughts in the accepted lines of being careful with it. Are we objective when we prove to the world that we have remained outsiders? Is having feelings, developing feelings in the field a sign of subjectivity that one should avoid?

First, I would like to flip the question and ask if anybody can actually stay neutral in any field that involves emotionally invested groups. As ethnologists, especially researching phenomena within broadly understood popular culture, we cannot completely snap out of it. Thus, I would suggest, the ‘risk’ is not an appropriate term here. Rather, one could talk about different stages (or steps) of immersion in the fieldwork (Löfgren when published). I have experience both sides of the football narrative – from being helplessly lost in this context, to enthusiastically participating in matches, and then connecting emotionally to one of the teams. It should be stress though that the experience of fieldwork presupposes various degrees of immersion too. It is not only connected to my personal journey.

The term ‘immersion’ is used widely in video game research, but it is even used by Beverley Skeggs (2002, 7) when she discusses her fieldwork among working class women and simultaneously touches upon production of respectable knowledge. The immersion point she made was rather on the side, yet it gave an impression of a deep ethnography of the field. Qin, Rau and Salvendy write about immersion in video games that ‘To be immersed is to be involved in the context, not only physically but also mentally and emotionally’ (2009, 112). Within the traditional understanding of ethnography, after fieldwork one leaves to write down obtained knowledge (see also Ehn & Klein, 1994). This ties to Sara Ahmed’s understanding of a researcher as ‘professional stranger’, with emphasis on ‘translating’ the strangers/informants into ethnography, hence to the academic knowledge (2000, 58-59). Ahmed calls then to acknowledge the debt to informants, not least masked in referring to them as ‘co-writers’, which simultaneously deprives them from agency and marks them as
strangers by the author (Ahmed 2000, 63-64). Thus, Ahmed discusses ‘strategically framed friendship’ (2000, 65) and friendship as a strategy for knowledge (2000, 66). In her own words, ‘Within the ethnographic discourses of cultural translation, knowing strangers is the transforming of those who are recognised as strangers into knowledge’ (2000, 73).

Yet, this understanding presupposes that one enters a field as ‘unfamiliar’ and then leaves in ‘unharmed’. It also gives a picture of a very controlled researcher, not engaging in emotional exchange with the field. If one knows, understands and participates, should one not be described as a ‘familiar’ rather than a stranger? Folklorist Jakob Löfgren in his study of fandom has suggested the concept of ‘professional familiar’, where he is both a researcher and a fan (when published). The concept is further developed with immersion and degrees of immersion. One is never completely out, and one can have different depth of being in, especially when dealing with fields that border broadly understood popular culture that we experience every day, like for example football.

It could be further pointed out that closeness to the subject of study does not necessarily finishes with the finished study. One affects and one is affected. Post-fieldwork reflections do not erase the immersion, the emotional engagement that was once gained. Further, it should be pointed out that, as in Johansson’s analysis, emotions can be acknowledged as a part of cognitive process and become a part of our practice while doing fieldwork. Anthropologist Monique Sheer discusses in her article how bodies are involved in experiences, and how emotions are forms of cognition:

Access to emotion-as-practice – the bodily act of experience and expression – in historical sources or ethnographic work is achieved through and in connection with other doing and sayings on which emotion-as-practice is dependent and intertwined, such as speaking, gesturing, remembering, manipulating objects, and perceiving sounds, smells, and spaces (Sheer 2012, 209).

It would seem that those PhD theses who openly sided with one party, who tried to support the troubled communities, delivered better, more engaging text. The acknowledgement of emotional connection made it possible to explore another dimension of analysis. This could also be related to Sheer’s conviction that emotions do help us understand what we study, rather than cloud our vision. As Sheer writes, ‘we are sometimes simply confronted with an emotional setup’ (2012, 209). This is not to say that one should just follow the heart, as any analysis requires reflexivity and awareness of one’s position. In the case of my thesis, how man feels for certain clubs, and how engaged one is, seems more important than generally
understood objectivity. As mentioned above, a popular question addressed to me has been ‘what do you support’. Its intention was perhaps not to undermine my credibility with revealing which side I would be on, but rather to position me in the emotional vortex created by the Swedish football league. For many of my informants it seemed obvious that one would support something.

I have not anticipated it, but I have become a part of a story, and thus a part of their journey, and it affected me. I found the field welcoming and captivating. There I encountered humour, openness and will to share. I have become affected. Starting from 2012, I could not deny that I was curious, surprised, mesmerized by it, and admitting that I liked participants and their strong feelings. While being in the field physically, I learned how to interact with it, how my body would enact and perform different meanings depending on context and situation, how I was being read while I tried to read others. Paraphrasing Sheer (2012, 198) one can say that emotions are not about two layers, inner and outer. The distinction appears later, but in the act of experiencing there are emotions, letting us learn from it through doing it. Thus, the entire body with all its reactions should be included in the cognitive process, and that would include emotions that shape our experiences (Sheer 2012, 196). In short one could say that how we feel let us learn something crucial about our field, ourselves, and the meaning of our research.

As I learned my field, it learned me. Unaware of my noticed presence, I was filmed and clipped into a report from a match during shadowing in 2015. My body occupies about 15 seconds in a YouTube clip that shows the highlights from a derby match from Stockholm. I can only speculate why I appeared there. But I interviewed a person involved in a group making those video clips. When I mentioned that I appeared there he laughed and said: “Well where is your objectivity now? You are in our clip!” (interview with Krisitian, 2016). This comment made me laugh, but it also made me worried. Have I lost objectivity? I felt that my position as a researcher made a good buffer zone for me, and that my declared sympathy for the field was in a way ‘under control’. Yes, just being there physically, my body interacted with the social structure and I have produced something that was interpreted by others as they incorporated me in their emotional display (Sheer 2012, 199). The field acted and reacted, and I did too. My journey from an outsider to, let me spell it out, a supporter, has happened within the professional working frame. The first instance – Norrköping – AIK (4-1); anger and pain in the stomach. The second instance – AIK-MFF, goal in the last minute, total anger, angry messages to the MFF worker who was cheering on the pitch (shall I issue an apology here?) write more, develop, make a point.
Pia Karlsson Minganti comments that it is not possible to distinguish between a researcher and a private person, as even such elements as those what a researcher does or says become a part of the study (2007, 43). It is the interaction between the two, the one asking and one answering, that makes the material. It is chemistry of a person that makes connections possible. It is, in the end, a dialogue. Not even literal in various forms of interviews, but also participations and observations require a sender and a receiver, and sometimes it quite openly works in both directions. Minganti acknowledges that her informants might have had an agenda in presenting Islam in a specific way, they wanted to win something. They were, in the end, engaged in a movement to spread the knowledge of their faith.

I became aware that I embarked on writing a particular kind of history as well, one that was going to serve somebody, one that would be considered useful by some groups. One of my informants was very straightforward stating that he considered my research good for supporters, that I would contribute in painting a better picture of them (interview with Otto, 2016). In a sense, that is true. I do react against crude stereotypes and misrepresentations of football culture. I value an idea of presenting an alternative story. Thus, I have chosen a side, much like Karlsson Minganti who wanted to show different possibilities Muslim women have to gain agency. That would then mean approaching the ‘natives’ and accepting their agency considering our research. In a way, if a researcher felt engaged, passionate, inspired, that would also work in the other direction, binding ‘the natives’ to us even more.

In this section I declare that I am found of my field of study and I identify with it. As I have shown, this is not unknown when conducting ethnography. Yet, this affection presupposes positive response from the field. Many of the researchers referred to state that the groups they interacted with were caring, loving, good people that one wanted to get closer to. I have experienced that too. But I have also experienced derogatory comments, questioning of my abilities, harsh treatment from the security. Football is based on oppositions, and thus if you with one team, you are an enemy for others. Further, parts of the field were off limits for me as a female. This does not only refer to the players’ changing room, but some fan organizations ban women from joining. In short, I have met people who I could not relate to. This did not prevent me from engaging emotionally with football. It saved me from a kind of naïve working enthusiasm that is not uncommon. Yet, this research has not been friction-free and both my position and gender, as well as my understanding of my position and gender, created fiction and caused reactions.
Theoretical frame – collective memory, materiality, emotions and folklore

The theories present a rather diverse tool box, but circulate around the idea of creating and performing a narrative, of memories becoming stories and histories. A stage, props and actors are needed. Thus, the core theories could be arranged in categories of collective memory, emotions, materiality, and folkloristics.

Collective memory, social memory, communicative-cultural memory

Collective memory connects individuals to a group and helps to create communities. Individuals have to share somethings to feel connected, and history can be squeezed so that it would produce a sense of ‘commonness’. The broader social context around football nourishes the past around it and keeps it alive. Maurice Halbwachs (1992), in his classic work on the subject, discusses the collective memory in the context of family and religion. He points out repeatedly that ‘no memory is possible outside frameworks used by people living in society to determine and retrieve their recollections’ (1992:43). The reproduction of memories coincides with the reproduction of beliefs, logic and a nation of rationality and reality specific for a certain society.

Thus, ‘a sense of our identity is perpetuated’ (Halbwachs 1992, 47). In other words, we can only understand individual memories if we locate them in a context of a broader group. We remember because a group helps us to keep our recollections alive. An individual mirrors the perpetual circle of events within a social surrounding and treats them as his/her own. Halbwachs even notices the creative element of these processes. Memories do not just get refreshed; they can change ever so slightly, altering our relationship with the past. Halbwachs points out how ‘family recollections reproduce nothing other than circumstances in which we have established contact with this or that parent’ (Halbwachs: 55). This is very much in line with football, as the perpetual and cyclical character of the game produces similar circumstances ready to be included in the line of memories.

Historian Jan Assmann, together with his wife Aleida Assmann, developed further Halbwachs’ concepts and introduced terms ‘cultural memory’ and ‘communicative memory’. Assmann’s pointed out that there is a transition happening when memories grow old, when it is not possible to transmit them orally (reference). Thus, he described the type of memories passed from one generation to the next as ‘communicative’. It would have a life span of about
90 years, and then it would be transformed into ‘cultural memory’ as memory now required traditions, rituals and rites to be alive. When individuals pass away and human actors cannot guarantee that past events are honoured, communicative memory turns into cultural one (reference, reference). Both Assmanns stress different forms of commemoration as crucial to cultural memory. Such descriptions come close to the folklore and its analysis of rituals.

In a publication called *Social Memory* (1992), James Fentress and Chris Wickham also analyze memory in social context. They point out that the grand, written histories are always chosen and need special care to be established. No narrative is automatically important to any group. They include in the analysis fairy tales and their transmission, and then built-up cultural meaning that changed with changing narratives. Memory and oral transmission is crucial in the study of folklore, as well as in history, which I return to later in this chapter.

**Materiality**

Bla blab la bla bla

The connection and interplay of emotions and materiality is also very interesting and highlights the process of exchanging, or supplementing. Both emotional and material structures (for example stadiums) depend on each other, but at the same time they can work as a sort of substitute for each other in the times of need. Feelings can in certain circumstances replace bricks and steal, as when clubs have to demolish their old arenas and move to new grounds. Materiality is thus treated in the processual, performative connection to emotions.

DeMarrais, Castillo and Earle write in an article called *Ideology, Materialization and Power Strategies*: ‘Materialization is the transformation of ideas, values, stories, myths, and the like, into a physical reality – a ceremonial event, a symbolic object, a monument, or a writing system’ (1996:16). Ideology takes shape; ideology’ might not be the best term to describe what is being visualized and communicated, but the concept of materializing ideas is rather interesting. Shreds of history become materialized in various forms at stadiums. Such treatment of material culture leads the way to folklore as well, which will be described below.

**Emotions**
Emotions fill football stadiums to the brim. The display of emotions is quite specific and understood within the football framework. Raising your scarf can be a happy and proud moment. Showing anger has to be swift and immediately understood. While at the stadium, one is well aware that the perspective can change instantly from being a subject to an object, from being the watching one to the one being watched. Gestures, screams, routines are meant to evoke emotional responses. They help to create a community and they are created by a community, and they also display strong performative characteristics.

Barbara Rosenwein coined a term ‘emotional communities’ (reference), which refers to a very specific method of counting emotional words and phrases in manuscripts. Although it was meant for text analysis, it captures well the character of a football phenomenon when emotions are taken into consideration. There is a specific level of emotional display, there is a choreograph performance of feelings, and an orchestrated way of behaviour in general. Further, the unusual mix of emotions and ability to accept drastic mood swings within minutes makes it a very peculiar emotional space. The performative element seems rather strong.

William M. Reddy, the William T. Laprade Professor of History and professor of cultural anthropology, is critical of performative interpretation of emotions and that an emotional statement is not a ‘mere report’ (1997,31). While watching a match people do become genuinely angry, upset, or overjoyed but emotions shown in a football environment have a peculiar quality of being over-the-top, of seeming staged, learned, and drilled in a crowd.

This could be related to the analysis of a ritual, and participating in a match is rather ritualistic. Catherine Bell wrote about approaches to study rituals, synthesizing Durkheim’s, Turner’s and Geertz’s main points:

Theoretical descriptions of ritual generally regard it as action and thus automatically distinguish it from the conceptual aspects of religion, such as beliefs, symbols, and myths. (...) Ritual is then described as particularly
thoughtless action – routinized, habitual, obsessive, or mimetic – and therefore the purely formal, secondary, and mere physical expression of logically prior ideas (Bell 1996 (1992), 22).

But:

By recognizing the ritual mechanism of meaningfulness for participants, the theorist in turn can grasp its meaningfulness as a cultural phenomenon. Ritual activity can then become meaningful to the theorist. Thus, a cultural focus on ritual activity renders the rite a veritable window on the most important processes of cultural life (Bell 1996 (1992), 26-27)

Also, like with any community, these peculiarities make it different from any other environment, especially since the substantial lack of feminine elements makes masculine forms of expressions much more varied as their acquire female characteristics as well (see for example Jesper Fundberg, 2003). Anthropologist Monique Sheer analyses emotions as practice (develop….)

Rosenwein remarks further that while working on sources expressing emotions, one has to be quite aware of what message those emotions are going to convey, what was the purpose of writing about such emotions? Who is standing behind those emotions? (2010, 12) Labelling of groups while using emotions is quite clearly marked in mass media, when angry hooligans are displayed on the cover page. Also, there are emotions ascribed to the past. Showing over and over again particular selected images with happy or alternatively grieving footballers, are supposed to trigger new emotions in current fans. Pride, shame, feeling of superiority or hate, appear and disappear with changing sheets of football’s history.

Another important aspect of emotional display are cultural politics of emotions (Ahmed, 2004). Sociologist Sara Ahmed analyses different emotions like hate, fear and love, and shows how certain vocabulary and images work in creating ‘we’ in a political context, for example when one deals with immigration issues. ‘I’ can become ‘we’ and how people can swing in their understanding and performing of a group and an individual. Theories of politically constructed emotions by Ahmed could be used to deconstruct the processes involving strong, almost theatrical feelings surrounding football.

_Folkloristics: textuality, intertextuality, performance, myths, rituals and actants_
Since the tradition of oral communication is established within the football environment, as well as singing and chanting, this context benefits from looking at it as a display of folklore. Folklorists identify folk-lore as ‘expressive communication within a particular group’ that is ‘taught informally, through one’s presence within that group (Sims & Stephens 2011, 6). Further, folklore is often set on ‘empirically traceable instances of performance’ (Noyes 2012, 14) rather than belonging by default to a certain social or ethnical group. This ongoing social interaction helps to build a group, and that process can be pinpointed in my field of study. The definition I find the most useful definition from Dan Ben Amos (1971, page), who describes folklore as “artistic communication in small groups”.

There might be a wall of cultural differences that a researcher just has to accept. However, all the ethnologists mentioned above report a strong emotional connection that they experienced, which made them feel for and with the informants (see for example Johansson 2010, 27). There is a will in those academic texts to stress similarities rather than differences, to inform the wider public (not least academic) about those groups who suffer injustice in terms of cultural marking when compared to an accepted social standard. Thus, it would seem that ethnology strives to give voice to those who are in the lower parts of the social power structure.

Since the oral transmission, performativity and narrativity take a lot of space in football history, theories regarding narratives, textuality, intertextuality and resituating are employed here as well.

Narrative, in other words, is a basic human strategy for coming to terms with time, process, and change – a strategy that contrasts with, but is in no way inferior to, “scientific” modes of explanation that characterize phenomena as instances of general covering laws (Herman 2009, 2)

More than this, narrative is a cognitive and communicative strategy for navigating the gap, in everyday experience, between what was expected and what actually takes place. Thus Bruner (1990) characterizes narrative as the primary resource for “folk psychology” – that is, people’s everyday understanding of how thinking works, the rough-and-ready heuristics to which they resort in thinking about thinking itself (David Herman 2009, 20

Folklorist Camilla Asplud Ingemark defines these processes in such words:

All texts are considered mosaics of quotations, being the absorption and transformation of other texts. As a consequence, intersubjectivity disappears and it replaced by intertextuality (Kristeva 1978: 85), signalling the emergence of an entirely textualized universe (2004, 23). (develop)
Conversely, social events can be seen as "textual" in that their borders, contents, and results are a matter of convention and interpretation that are themselves subject to the ongoing social process. The interpretive work that we accomplish is "reading" any given social situation is analogous to the interpretive work associated with reading any other text (Stewart 1989, 13).

I am therefore interested in social events as texts and texts as social events: in the event as accomplished through members' interpretive work in the work and in the text as a product of social interaction, contingent upon social process. Again, the social world is assumed to be an interpreted world (Stewart 1989, 13-14).

Each level of textuality - realism, myth, irony, and metafiction - stands at an increasing distance from common-sense procedures and thereby decreases in realism. And each level depends upon the previous levels for both its content and its method (Stewart 1989, 21).

Folkloristic character of narratives in football can be understood as a sort of informal communication and learning. Chants, songs and stories have also different roles to fulfill. They are performed to praise, shame, or hurt, and these categories are brought forward in classifications of folktales (for example Arvidsson, 1999). Especially mockery and irony, so strongly present in football-related tales and texts, can be brought forward. Several ethnologists have written about humour and laughter (Lars-Eric’s book). It is also a category developed and presented within the folklore field. Trevor J. Blank has written about online humour in tragic circumstances (2013?). (develop)

One additional dimension ties folklore with theories of materiality and agency. It is not only humans that ‘act’ as scarves, banners, stadiums and even seats acquire agency. Thus, the term actant seems appropriate in this context, which comes from linguistic studies and was introduced by linguist Algirgas Greimas. His theory, based in structuralist narratology, categorizes how different characters participate in the narrated stories or actions. David Herman, quoting Rimmon-Kenan (1983: 34) in The Routledge Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory provides such definition of actants: “actants are general categories [of behaviour or doing] underlying all narratives (and not only narratives) while [actors] are invested with specific qualities in different narratives” (2005, 1). Further, Louis Hérbert in his book Tools for Text and Image Analysis states that from the standpoint of natural ontology an actant can be an anthropomorphistic being, a concrete element, or a concept (2011, 73).

Since folklore is preoccupied with narratives and constructed forms of artistic expression, it comes fairly close to the view of history presented by both Jan Assmann and Hayden White.
Assmann, when writing about cultural memory, used terms like rite, ritual, commemoration. All this vocabulary resembles very much folkloristics. Further, historian Hayden White wrote his famous, and also controversial book, *Metahistory*, about constructing historical narratives like any form of fiction or poetry (1973). I shall elaborate more on the understanding of history in this thesis in the following chapter.

**Previous studies**

Since this thesis is eclectic in many respects, it floats within three different fields of research, namely football, history and ethnology/cultural studies.

**History of it all**

The use of history I’m engaging with takes it into a ‘folk’ level. Certainly, clubs as institutions do apply history in various forms and manners, but it is the fans, every-day media and social media that make history a tool and a point of reference. This research points also into the processes that take place in history and how the concepts of past can be reshaped when they are used in this socially constructed space. Write about Hayden White and both Assmanns and then the Social Memory bit about national histories.

Research in history in Sweden has been very productive in the field of using history. Different modes of engaging history and incorporating its elements in various aspects of social life has been written about. Peter Aronsson and *historiebruk*; Samuelsson too; Klas-Göran Karlsson and cultural history, and Jörn Rusen too.

Rüsens syn på historiekultur liknar Maurice Halbwachs och Pierre Noras syn på kollektivt minne, men skall inte i första hand ses som uttryck för en samhällevlig minnesfunktion utan snarare som dess kollektiva historiemedvetande (Aronsson 2000)

Rüsens avsikt med begreppet ”historiekultur” är dock inte enbart att skapa en teoretisk förståelse, utan även att detta skall möjliggöra empiriska undersökningar av hur historiekulturens meningskonstruktioner kan relateras till olika samhällsfärer. Denna process yttrar sig i tre skilda dimensioner: en kognitiv, en estetisk och en politisk sfär (Aronsson 2000)

Historical perspective is used, obsessively, by clubs and their supporters. One has to be aware that presenting history is always framed with an agenda, a desired picture that should be adjusted and trimmed according to requirements. Thus, history is used and it has become a rather fashionable item, not only in football but in many aspects of contemporary culture and
consumption practices (Jerome de Groot. 2009. *Consuming history*). In that way, history is not a goal on its own, but a tool for other means. History is not just the objective narrative of the past events but an actively created perspective that serves current purposes, and Swedish football has become preoccupied with history. The past has become a good resource rich in meaning and both emotional and economic capital. History has become a commodity (reference, reference). Reinventing it, making selective choices and bringing forgotten heroes back to the public attention contribute to building of clubs’ current images, as well as setting a mood for the future.

David Lowenthal. 2015. *The Past is a Foreign Country*:

We furnish our homes with things that consciously evoke the past, adorn walls with family photos and mantels with memorabilia, convert city streets into ‘Memory Lanes’, archive personal memories. The Internet flogs digital retention of total recall from cradle to grave, every Facebook twitterer his own autobiographer (Lowenthal 2015, 26).

In this thesis history is treated both as an analytical tool and an analytical resource. Objectivity and ‘what has actually happened’ is not the main goal, as history in itself is not the object of this study, but the processes of producing and performing it. The focus is on narration, on making a good story and presenting it in the best of ways. Using past narratives in this way creates a specific point of entrance to the present. It is not only me as a researcher who use it, but the clubs themselves, fans and also players learned how to draw handfuls from this type of historical capital. In other words, history is a theoretical concept that helps framing cultural activities around clubs.

There is an established tradition about researching the use of history on the macro level, when grand ideas are discussed in a public space, by individuals with access to power. In the Swedish tradition Klas-Göran Karlsson has written numerous publications about the use of history in the connection of the World War II and using history as a weapon (for example Karlsson 1999). There has also been research about ‘use and abuse of history’, for instance Margaret MacMillan in her book’s entitled *The Uses and Abuses of History*. The writer refers to several high-profile instances from political history that deal with applying selected historical references. These examples deal with the official history ‘up there’. Rosenzweig’s and Thelen’s publication *The Presence of the Past. Popular Uses of History in American Life* (1998) is a study of historical consciousness among average Americans. The study was based on phone interviews and provides insights how people connect personal stories to bigger,
national stories. My thesis also takes history from the abstract level to the every-day use, from academic discussions to daily chats in informal situations.

MacMillan’s publication on use and abuse comes in a line with similar publications, starting with Nietzsche’s *On the Use and Abuse of History for Life* (1874), Pieter Geyl *Use and abuse of history* (1955) and Marc Ferros *The use and abuse of history* (1984). There is a fear of letting history out. Far too often differently coloured propagandas twisted ‘facts’ to serve their needs. It also inserts moral discourse into the discipline.

Historians’ reliance on the written word reflects the modern discipline’s derivation from scriptural chronology and remains hardly less extreme than that of biblical fundamentalists (Lowenthal 2015, 378).

Today’s academic fixation on original documents contrasts starkly with prior (and popularly persisting) conflation of oral with written, folkloric with fact-based account (Lowenthal 2015, 378).

His-story and her-story – queer theory.

A connection between learning/familiarizing history and storytelling. Michele Barricelli – German historian dealing with didactics stated in numerous publications that we can know history only by narrating.

Further, I am writing a sort of history too. Some of my informants have realised it before I did, positioning me in the field and stating plainly that they would like to use my work later on (e.g. interview with Otto, 2016). In a sense, it is a fair exchange. I have used their narratives, they are going to use mine. (more)

Shopenhauer – history is as permeated with lies and falsehood as is a common prostitute with syphilis (*Parerga and Paralipomena* (1851) in *Short Philosophical essays* (Oxford 1974), 2: 447. (Lowenthal 136)

**Football studies**

There has been a plethora of publications about football, varying from sociological aspects of the game, to economic developments, to gender issues. Jesper Fundberg has written about masculinity in youth football (2003). Christian Bromberger is one of a few ethnologists who deal with the football world. He has written about football as ritual, bringing forward notions of religious devotion and ritualistic behaviour (Bromberger, 1995). My previous contribution was on analysing football as an expression of magic (2013, 2016). Other disciplines engaged
in ethnographic studies of football. Sociologists, anthropologists, sport scientists, criminologists, economists, journalists and even lawyers have published various books and articles considering different aspects of football. *Soccer and Society* is an established journal of any football-related research in article form. Indeed one is spoiled for choice when browsing through its publications.

In the context of history, Torbjörn Andersson from Malmö University has contributed immensely into researching the past of Swedish football. His publications, including *Spela Fotboll Bondsjävlar* and *Kung Fotboll, volume I and II*, are brilliant sources of information and inspiration. It is also an account how history of football can be written. Jesper Fundberg has provided an important ethnographic account of youth football in Sweden (2003).

There has been a substantial contribution considering hooliganism and violence at stadiums, and also different forms of fandom and classifications of supporters, not to mention a plethora of journalists producing a variety of books (see Testa, Armstrong, Kennedy and Kennedy, Radmann, Wilson and all the various others). Sociologist Richard Giulianotti has provided important contributions concerning British football, from classifications of fans to economic factors, and even more globally framed accounts of the ways in which football has developed over the years.(reference, reference…). Although international references are not used to a great extent, it is important to keep that dimension in mind as developments in football are triggered by international contacts and exchanges.

This thesis contributes to research of football in its social context. Focusing on a specific factor, like in this case production of history, makes creative use of this context as a background for social engagement. At the same time, it is a research of football and it highlights different dimensions that people find meaningful and important. This thesis points further into ways in which individuals, and even clubs, stripped of power or with hindered influence, still can claim positions and importance. Such positioning is interesting from socio-cultural perspective, as it is an example of contesting and negotiating social markers.

*Ethnology and Folklore*

Although ethnological studies of football environments are not that common, there is a well-established tradition of researching environments that are sensitive. There has been a stream of publications of theses that dealt with ethnography within specific groups of people that forged cultural connections. For example, young Muslim women (Karlsson Minganti 2007),
HIV-affected gay men (Svensson 2007), people with a genetic disease (Hagen 2013), people undergoing gender correction (Bremer 2011), self-harming young women (Johansson 2010) are all ethnological theses that provide insights into communities that can be faced with prejudice, unfair judgements, stereotypes.

First and foremost, this is a research dealing a folk group of football-engaged individuals. The arrangement of participants and spectators and their rites, rituals and traditions could be interpreted with a definition provided by Dan Ben Amos as ‘artistic communication in small groups’ (1973? reference!).

Cultural researcher Tara Brabazon describes football as a kind of popular culture, and ascribes this characteristic of the game to its not getting full academic attention:

Football, like most popular culture, has a problem. Because it is life, and not only part of life, it embeds itself into daily conversations, clothing choices, meals and metaphors. (…) There is no barrier or separation between self and sport (2006, 41).

What Brabazon describes here as popular culture could be also viewed as folklore, also because football allows plethora of individual creative engagements and interpretations. It does belong to the people, no matter how much control the official institutions try to gain.

Further, the way I engage narrativity and textuality and intertextuality, which are leading terms in folklore studies, has not been done on a large scale in the football context. On the whole this thesis contributes to seeing elements of folklore in pop culture, as a valid and interesting field of study and it could be seen as adding to redefining pop culture as modern folklore5 (see Storey 2003).

As already discussed in the methodological sections, many ethnologists embarked on research among emotionally invested groups. And develop this. Johansson, Miganti, maybe Sandberg criticism…

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5 A footnote on the conflict? Folkloresque vs. pop culture is folklore?

Medievalist Caroline Walker Bynum expressed the connection of both disciplines:

Traditional historians are fond of the cliché that anthropology seeks to delineate general laws, history to describe particular events. But the more venturesome in both fields have sought a marriage of the two disciplines. The anthropologist Evans-Pritchard repeatedly argued that good history is good anthropology and vice versa, and dubbed eminent medieval historians such as Marc Bloch and F.W. Maitland the best of anthropologists (Bynum Walker 1996 (1984), 72).

Geertz’s take on ethnography – insider-outsider:

Inside/outside, first person/third person, emic/etic, experience-near/experience-distant (after Heinz Kohut – 56-57)

‘Clearly, the matter is one of degree, not polar opposition’ – Geertz 1983, 57

‘The trick is not to get yourself into some inner correspondence of spirit with your informants. Preferring, like the rest of us, to call their souls their own, they are not going to be altogether keen about such an effort anyhow. The trick is to figure out what the devil they think they are up to. – Geertz 1983, 58

In one sense, of course, no one knows this better than they do themselves; hence the passion to swim in the stream of their experience, and the illusion afterward that one somehow has. But in another sense, that simple truism is simply not true. People use experience-near concepts spontaneously, un-self-consciously, as it were colloquially; they do not, except fleetingly and on occasion, recognize that there are any “concepts involved at all – Geertz 1983, 58

The structure of the thesis

The aim of the following analytical chapters is to demonstrate how history is produced and performed in various forms in the event of a football match. Different observations have been
chosen to introduce chapters, and they all happened in various football stadiums. Although the manifold of creative activities, or explanations of such, need to be taken outside of those specific spaces, it would appear that all starts there. The chosen points were selected to show multitude and breadth of history-making. Thus, the purpose of presenting first an observation accounts is to provide a context for the narratives and information flow. Folklorist Barbara Kirshenblatt- Gimblett points out that situational context is as important as cultural context, especially when it comes down to performance, which is always tailored according to the audience and situation (1975, 106-107).

In her article, Kirshenblatt- Gimblett refers back to Bronislaw Malinowski’s account and his ethnographic theory of language (1935). While writing about Coral Gardens of the Trobrians, Malinowski chose to provide thorough descriptions first, and his linguistic analysis was published as the second volume of the study. It was a deliberate move not to hinder or obstruct the flow of the narrative (Malinowski 1935, 3-4). He further sets language as an integral part of any performance, stating that the immediate use of words and phrases does affect their meanings and interpretation. As he states, ‘(…) side by side with this context of culture or context of reference, as it might also be called, we have another context: the situation in which the words have been uttered. (…) The whole character of such words is different when they are uttered in earnest, or as a joke, or in a narrative of the distant past’ (1935, 52). This becomes intriguing when applied to football. Statements of hate, violent screams and gestures acquire different meanings when they are performed in this specific context.

This ‘contextualization of meaning’ (1935, 37) developed by Malinowski is definitely applicable in a moment of a football game. Here, the common words and symbols undergo a specific transformation and are used pragmatically for different reasons. Thus, setting a scene first, with all its chaos and confusion, aims to stress the immediate context that shapes and influences interactions at stadiums. Further, the flow of it is equally important, and the seemingly random events are structured around the common goals. Although Malinowski’s approach is concentrated on linguistic terms, I take the overall performance into consideration. All of the chosen observations had several elements that were reaffirmed and especially intriguing, and these were chosen for deeper analysis, as well as being supplemented with further examples. I am aware of controversies surrounding Malinowski and his bold approach towards being native that did not hold up in the private view he gave in
his diaries (Geertz 1983, 55-70), and his struggle between inside and outside makes it actually more relevant to include his account (do I need more?)

Historical narratives are not random and they are selected because of their pragmatic value (Malinowski 1935, 73), either by my informants, or by me, as the selection of material takes two forms. They choose pieces of information, dead heroes, historical facts that are displayed, sung about or talked about. As a writer and ethnographer I also make a selection of the material, thus making the context of the utterances, the scene of action with all the mayhem around it even more important. Because of the shortcomings of the written word, time frame and structure of work it is impossible to present the entire picture. By employing the zooming technique and focusing on very different element, I aim to show the depth and creativity that exists in this field.

The decision to keep the narratives was also aimed to demonstrate the ritualistic character of activities around stadiums and by default, matches. Their established rites and routines keep coming back. At the same time, there is always a possibility that a match is going to be remembered for something special or unusual. It is up to the participants to create that particular element that is going to make it to the history of the club. Who and how can write history during those 90 minutes? What references are the most persistent? What is the point of ‘making’ this history?

The second chapter, Historical recycling, begins with four big, known Swedish clubs that cherish their history. They are all more 100 years old and through pride themselves in being old. The discussion in this chapter includes the genealogy of the clubs, their strive for a ‘mythic beginning’. It is followed by a section on different time flows. The historical construction needs a time frame. One can talk about four different ways in which time can be observed in this environment: linear, cyclical, timeless ‘pockets of time’ and cosmogonic ‘mythic’ time. The last part focuses on the importance of numbers. Clubs and their supporters are obsessed with numbers marking birthdays, years in Allsvenskan, years between winning titles, number of titles, matches played, matches won etc. In short, there is magic about the numbers, and although they are presented as ‘facts’, hard data supporting evaluations around clubs, they can quickly become a sort of ‘numerology’.

The third chapter, Cultural capital of 100 years, explores the connection to history through the participants. It is about recycling the already existing material, applying it creatively. People transfer some of their ‘history’ to football and back. One such aspect, rather strong in
the Swedish context, is the working class/middle class narrative. Next, this chapter engages in the question of history versus money, as the historical capital of being old provides counterweight to good capital or international success. Being old, staying in the same city for decades, is already a sort of measurement of success.

With the idea of time comes change, and clubs are very unstable institution that can claim outstanding stability. This is because of the curious change-and-preserve system that works there. People change, stadiums disappear, but colours and shirts make up an image of stability. In this chapter I discuss how players are used in different modalities – football shirts based on them are intended to live longer that they are in clubs.

The following chapter, *The Northern Stand is not just songs – our history is engraved in concrete*, focus in on the historical exploration of geographical regions, stadiums and grass in the narratives around the clubs. The first part consists of a discussion of historic-geographical elements that are used by clubs and their supporters. One of the strong references is the Skåne-Sweden one, used to differentiate the clubs in the south of Sweden from the rest.

The following section deals with stadiums. These enormous structures, built from steel and concrete, are also vulnerable to time and change. Their apparently strong materiality does not protect them. Using examples from all four clubs, AIK, DIF, HIF and MFF, I show how arenas are reworked into intertextual symbols and how they can acquire life after death. The last part is about grass. Although quite essential to the game in the physical sense, it is also historical and it has its own history. The tension between real grass and artificial pitches is a marker of discussion about the current developments in football, the global impact and economic issues. It also marks history.

The fifth chapter, *Our history – our identity*, zooms to group identity produced through history, and in the historical context. As examples, a club identity is takes (AIK) as the hatred expressed towards AIK has historical reasons, and the club embraced it, producing historical narratives and events based on it. The club and different supporter organizations take the shameful concept of hate and apply it creatively on themselves. In other words, they take pride in something that should be shameful.

The second example is the ultras, also a group constructing its image with help of history. They are viewed through a lens of narratives about hooligans and the ‘English ideal’ of football, although the current outbursts of violence are much more symbolic. Their
productions have historical effect as they are recorded, distributed, commented on and reproduced, having an impact in form of the digital footprint as well.

Next chapter, *We want to see you sacrifice blood sweat and tears*, zooms to individuals that are used to produce history. An example here is players, a hero, a villain, those swinging in-between, and further the grey mass of possibilities. Henrik Larsson, a top player from Helsingborg, is analysed as an example of constructing a hero. The villain is represented by Miiko Albornoz, a player connected to a case of child molestation.

There is a considerable number of players who at times fit to either or category, and also Larsson and Albornoz are not fixed characters. One can list several examples of players who could swing from heroes to villains and back. The positioning of hero-villain is not stable, but rather it fluctuates.

The last chapter, *So what about this violence*, engages with the questions of violence and attached to it picture of masculinity. I discuss common evaluation of crowds and men in sport environments. I move then to symbolic violence that is present during matches in exchanges between standing sections, choosing the away section as the point of departure. Further, I engage with the dynamics between supporters and police/security.

The thesis ends with Hopefully many and good ones.
1. Historical recycling

This chapter starts with a tour of a football stadium, which ended up in a small spaces designed as a museum for the club.

In March 2013 I took part in a guided tour of the Swedbank Stadium, arena used by Malmö FF. We started in the media room, could see the changing room for away teams, even put the shirts on and be photographed in them on the pitch. The tour finished on the highest floor which also contains a small museum. Paraphernalia from different decades were kept in glass cabinets. A former player who showed us around pointed out a strange, blue vase, a souvenir from a match against Wisla Krakow in 1979, which, in his words, was the ugliest thing ever. The thing might have been unpleasing aesthetically, but it is a part of history, frozen in blue crystal, taken care of and displayed in a tiny museum that is also a stadium. Clubs usually collect their victories carefully, and if they appear in forms of trophies it is even better. One can display them neatly, turning a club’s ground into a storage for memories.

On another occasion I was in the same spot, and a world map with various colourful pins was pointed out to me. An official explained that these were the places MFF visited during various world tours over the years. The team, he said, travelled a lot: “this team have it in their blood” (observations, 2013).

This chapter explores how the clubs revere in their histories, building museums around themselves. These constructions work as cocoons, protecting them from the outside dangers like failed seasons, degradations, leaving stars. As a certain form of institutions, clubs claim and sustain history, using it and reinventing it as well. Clubs show their history off. “We are Malmö from the olden days” is the beginning of a popular chant.

We shall open up the box of historical narratives in the football context. It begins with the approach to history that the clubs display. The approach in this chapter concentrates on questions of how the general view of history and its value is present and promoted in the Swedish clubs, and how their narratives are tailored with the idea of time and memories in mind. History is under construction here, and it requires creative recycling. This chapter begins by looking at the ‘birth point’ of clubs, and the stories of their beginnings and zooms
into the elements that keep the club ancient and yet rejuvenated season after season. Clubs tend to be able to maintain a sense of stability and a rather coherent image because time seems to run in a bit different way than outside the football context. Time is, after all, an artificial system of representation (Hubert 1999) and the mode that currently dominates in the westerns society is not the only one. Further, this space is full of time-capsules preserving emotions and feelings that build up an image of a club. There is a hero story, there is a traitor, there is the worst season ever, there is the shock of going to a lower league, but there is also a title, there is the legendary coach. Season after season the perspectives change as well. It can look like the golden time, or you see trouble ahead, and with that in mind different references from the past are applied. Further, the ongoing cyclical character does not let the process stop, and it also seem to stress feeling of ‘history in the making’. What sorts of narratives are built around clubs? Is it only glory that shines through? What role all the numbers and statistics play? How narratives build continuity?

(...) the history of sport is a relatively autonomous history which, even when marked by the major events of economic and social history, has its own tempo, its own evolutionary laws, its own crises, in short, its specific chronology (Bourdieu 1978, 821).

**Football genealogy**

History is carefully arranged and displayed around football clubs. Dates of establishment, preferably going back to late 19th century, adore many football crests. Everton from England claims 1878, Liverpool 1892, German FC St Pauli has the year 1910, Olympiakos from Greece 1925, Swedish AIK has 1891. Being old, and being able to state that, is a desirable quality to have. It seems fashionable to have history and thus, clubs and their supporters are at pains to show and perform their narratives.

Those dates inserted in crests, embroidered on scarves and shirts, point towards the genealogy of clubs, the mysterious beginning of things when they were created. While interviewing two different AIK supporters the first thing I was told was almost exactly the same: “AIK was established in 1891 by Isidor Behrens on Biblioteksgatan 8. Its birthday is on 15th of February” (interview with Martin 2015). My interviewees displayed a sense of pride because he club was very old, dating back to the 19th century. A real relict from the past that somehow stayed forever young. Isidor Behrens still features proudly in AIK’s marketing strategies. For instance, 2016 was filled with a campaign to build a new and special monument on his grave.
Yet, for all the obsession with its founding father there is very little information about him. A book commemoration AIK’s 100 years of history, published in 1991, mentions Isidor and gives a couple of trivia about him, but there is little about his life or position. His brother was the first secretary of the club here, yet the supporters mention only Isidor (reference to Allmänaklubbens 100 år). He seems to have the function of a divine demiurge (source). He made AIK happen and that was his role. He had hardly any meaning before or after. His work and importance are joined with the club’s birthday and this is how his mythical time is created – in this one event creating a specific world.

As historian Jan Samuelsson notices, in the time of fast changes one looks for some form of connection, an anchor in the past which is displayed in food industry, for example of beer labels (Samuelsson 2014, 151). The beer companies have noticed marketable qualities in history and use old dates and images to its advantage (Samuelsson 2014, 153). Football has not stayed behind. Those involved in the football context use history not only to strengthen their own image, but also to validate the club and football as such. Supporters and clubs learned that there is a value in history that broader social context can recognize and relate to, but that since there are many groups involved in football (not only different fans fractions, but also management, players, media, security) and they tend to view themselves as co-creators of this context, one history can take a form of several narratives.

Historian Jerome de Groot comments about the increasing consumption of history, fuelled by new possibilities and technologies. As he phrases it, history is consumed, sold and digested in specific way across the society, from popular programmes to quasi-scientific publications, and certainly used by many companies to strengthen their market brand. This, in turn, triggers discussions in the academic context about the role of history and the changing perception of it (de Groot 2009, 2).

De Groot also comments on the so called ‘non-academic or non-professional history – what has been defined as ‘public’ history’ (de Groot 2009, 4). His book provides a statement that this sort of take on the discipline has not been investigated enough by historians. He also points out the dynamism and complexity of the phenomenon. History has many faces and can be used in many ways. It is recyclable and renewable – a perfect source for energy to build, sustain and maintain identities, both individual and collective. Yet, it is not an innocent game and the engagement with history changes it. The four clubs included in this study gladly
employ historical references whenever suited. As a result, there is, among others, a lingering feeling of nostalgia surrounding those institutions seemingly overfed with the past.

The ‘obsession’ with the history and preservation of the past has been noticed among wider population. Family photos and different kinds of memorabilia have filled our houses, and the digital footprint of our past experiences also fill different digital platforms, like Facebook or Twitter (Lowenthal 2015, 26). The seemingly fast pace of changing reality, globalization and rapid destruction of the familiar (often for the purpose of making space for the new infrastructure), makes nostalgic encounters popular. Nostalgia, it would appear, ‘today’s favoured mode of looking back’ (Lowenthal 2015, 31). In that sense, the past becomes a different, imagined space to be visited. It offers an escape from pains of the present and fear of the future. Over there, decisions were made and actions taken (recorded and transmitted too), becoming reassuringly solid and thus attractive (Lowenthal 2015, 52).

Further, Lowenthal notices that the past needs not to be painful or tragic to poison the present. On the contrary, glorification of the past might end up in the present never reaching the standard one wishes for. As he puts it, “A past too esteemed or closely embraced saps present purposes and engenders apathy (…). Obsession with roots and relics, heirlooms and mementoes, pre-empts concern for the present” (Lowenthal 2015, 132-133). Some of the clubs are very much preoccupied with their historical narratives, and they are also eager to display their special roots and origins.

The cosmogony of a club would seem a plain story to tell as usually it presents a fact, a date, like in the case of AIK it is 15th February 1891. Nevertheless, the search of the origin myth is prone to many interpretations. Establishing genealogy of things is never a straightforward process of finding out facts in the past. As Foucault remarked commenting on Nietzsche’s text

*On the Use and Abuse of History for Life:*

Genealogy does not pretend to go back in time to restore an unbroken continuity that operates beyond the dispersion of forgotten things; its duty is not to demonstrate that the past actively exists in the present that it continues secretly to animate the present, having imposed a predetermined form on all its vicissitudes. (…) it is to discover that truth or being does not lie at the root of what we know and what we are, but the exteriority of accidents. (Foucault, 1977, 81)

Foucault’s essay was a commentary to Nietzsche’s criticism of employing historical narrations for various purposes. Nietzsche pointed out ‘monumental history’ that serves as empowerment, provides justifications for contemporary actions and aims at creating
‘greatness’ (1874, 10). Genealogy is one of the daughters of monumental history. It does not strive to find the ultimate origin. Instead, the fabrication of continuity serves a purpose and it is goal-oriented as it needs to prove the descent and time lines. Genealogy does not purify the picture of the past; on the contrary, it seems very eclectic and messy. Foucault wrote that ‘genealogy is history in the form of a converted carnival’ (1977, 94). The selected narrative of the origin is constructed through genealogy and the shaky time lines are supposed to connect the past with the present in an organic, unbroken fashion.

One could ponder what sorts of institutions thrive in recollecting their past, trying to portray stability and reliability. Banks, family corporations (especially those connected to food like breweries, bakeries etc.) tend to adorn themselves with ancientness, ‘established in a year so and so’ or ‘feeding you since so and so’. The globalized reality of our every-day lives has displayed a need for stability and reassurance, which can be, at least partly, produced by history and producing history. Thus, the past has acquired a cultural dimension that has become relevant in the economic terms. These banks, breweries, bakeries do not just decorate their packages and logos. There is value in doing so, cultural capital based on historical narratives that help to promote the product while emphasizing its longevity and thus its established position in the social scene (Bourdieu 1984, page number).

Willingly or not, football clubs found themselves being rich in such elusive and flexible genealogical narratives, with many different angles to select from. Further, clubs shamelessly rejuvenate themselves, and quite literally so, with young blood of new players, management and supporters. Thus, supporters are able to make curious statements, saying that ‘the team is there forever’ but then stating that that one can just change everything, meaning the management or players, and you will still have the club, because it is ‘larger than life’ (interview with Felix 2015; interview with Martin 2015). My two interviewees Felix and Martin support different teams, HIF and AIK respectively, but their statements were extremely similar when it comes to describing the clubs. The protagonists seem replaceable, and indeed they need to be replaced every now and then, but the club shall continue regardless.

This mixture of historically grounded nostalgia and necessity is strongly present in football and it has been applied to the Marxist interpretation of football as industry. Kennedy & Kennedy presented the case of Everton supporters and their reactions to the ‘proposed ground move’ (2012, 181). While analysing fans’ reactions, which again manoeuvre between
emotional attachments to the stadium and economic necessities, Kennedy & Kennedy write that “The football industry is one in which the dominance of capital is still relatively weak and where, as a consequence, the commodity structure is highly unstable and so open to interpretation, manipulation and, on occasion, outright challenge” (2012, 184). The meaning of capital here is a very straightforward use of economic, financial understanding of it. However, understanding history in terms of capital as presented by Bourdieu (1984) emphasizes the strategies supporters and clubs can employ to balance out the money issue in football. The instability of the football commodity, mentioned above, is also a result of different cultural capitals applied to it, historical narratives being one of them.

In the Swedish context, the cultural capital behind old age allows clubs to contest each other and even mock. In one interview an AIK supporter remarked that Djurgårdens IF were a ‘kid brother’ because the club was established one month later than AIK. Further, in his opinion another Stockholm club, Hammarby IF, was a ‘spoiled baby’ since ‘they were established in 1915, come on they are nothing!' (laughs loud) (interview with Martin 2015). Not only Stockholm clubs use the date of origin in evaluating their opponents. A Helsingborgs IF’s representative remarked:

We are the best team in the region. The team has strong history, it is not one of the big cities but the history is like one of the biggest. We were formed 1907, three years earlier than MFF. Many teams see us as one of the biggest opponents (interview with Filip 2014).

Curiously enough, those three years meant something. Being older means more traditions, more heritages, but also prestige. Helsingborg cared for football three years longer than Malmö. One could argue that in the absence of titles and trophies that would be comparable to MFF’s list, as Malmö team has won more so far, HIF refers to something they cannot argue about, namely their age. Not surprisingly, there exists a counter-narrative to the boasting of being older, and MFF can claim more triumphs. Whenever an opportunity to exchange opinions arrives, supporters argue on which history counts the most, the story of success or the story of longer continuous existence. Being called a ‘little brother’ sounds like a grave insult for many fans.6

Having deep historical roots seem to help along the way. It can even serve as a peculiar justification why a club needs to exist, why it needs to play in the highest league, why it

6For example see a discussion on a blog called hif1907.se, which tend to bring up the fact that Helsingborg as a city has longer and richer history than Malmö, and so does its football club. http://www.hif1907.se/2008/09/27/tre-dagar-till-matchen/
Katarzyna Herd
Manuscript for the final seminar 2017 – Football’s fairy stories, memories, histories

deserves financial backing. This logic has been employed by different clubs. It secured HIF’s future when the city agreed to help the club out of bankruptcy. The club fell deep into financial troubles after 2000. As Torbjörn Andersson retells the story, HIF was granted loans and financial backing from the city of Helsingborg. Multimillion investments in a club with overpaid players was not an anonymously popular decision. Nevertheless, there seemed to be a feeling that letting the club go busted would cost even more. Also, HIF succeeded in presenting itself as a part of the city’s cultural heritage together with other cultural institutions like theatre or opera, which also need financial backing from the state mentions (Andersson 2011, 74-75; 80). The club and its stadium, Olympia, meant too much for the local politicians to just let it go. Since the club was there for so long, it deserved rescuing with tax payers’ money. HIF regarded itself as a strong commercial brand for the city as well which would mean having a club, no matter how badly off financially, would still be better than not having one at all (Andersson 2011, 78-80).

When it comes to the financial issues that are so tricky round football, researchers question the ‘origin myth’ and its pure, gentleman-like character stripped from the desire to make money. It would indicate that the narrative constructed around the present developments in football has been set in contrast to the past, but this contrast could be challenged and that, in turn, could change the perspective on what it was and what it has become over the decades. History is very flexible and lends itself to whoever needs it.

**Assembling the past**

The mystic beginning firmly placed in ancient history is an important element of the grand narratives that are carefully produced and displayed in different forms and make up the official histories of football organizations. Clubs eagerly produce year books, especially beautiful when it comes to hundred years, but fifty or seventy five are also welcomed. Inner spaces are decorated with trophies, pictures of victories, heroes who fought for their teams. Peter Aronsson’s definition of using history stresses that it is a process in which bits of culturally framed history are used according to present needs, which is regulated by the perception of the past, present and future. This production of meaningful connections between the three time categories, Aronsson means, is established and reproduced in the process of using history (2004, 17).

Cups, medals, various artefacts that differ in shapes and sizes are usually gathered together to strengthen the idea of power and success. MFF shows of its trophies on the top floor of the
stadium and in a media centre, and organizes ‘historical trips’ around the stadium, with a former player talking about the club’s past (field notes, 2013). AIK’s new office space close to Friends Arena could accommodate only a part of their rich history, stuffed in a dark, wooden cabinet close to where ‘all the important guys in suits sit’ (field notes, 2015).

Even the Swedish highest league, Allsvenskan, has a web page devoted to the history of Swedish football (www.allsvenskanmuseet.se). Memorable figures and moments are collected in a bricolage manner. The text on the web page states that this is a loving tribute to the rich football history in Sweden. At the same time it displays a fragmented picture, not a comprehensive narrative from the beginning to the end. Football stretches far beyond the stadium walls and includes many spheres of the society in a variety of manners. This digital museum is a collection of images that are loosely stitched together to form a flow of collective memories and cast them into the future.

Thus, it is a mix of what Jan Assmann calls communicative and cultural memory (1988). Communicative memory can be transmitted from generation to generation while cultural memory needs other mediums to reach new listeners. In the Allsvenskan museum, just like in material displays arranged by clubs, very recent events are placed next to those from early 1900s. Last year’s victory and a goalkeeper from 1920s make an image of one’s club. Both memories connect in a blank point of making this history meaningful. This creates a certain confusion of images, so important in any kind of magic that allows participants to mould the past, present and future (see Mauss, 1972?).
All four clubs included in this study have published jubilee books celebrating hundred years of their histories. Big and heavy slabs of history are adorned with many pictures and filled with narratives of love and sacrifice, glory and bright future to come. As folklorist Henry Glassie states, “History is not the past; it is an artful assembly of materials from the past, designed for usefulness in the future” (1995, 395). The push for continuity makes it necessary to focus on the upcoming seasons. It resembles fortune-telling. The collected elements, thrown together in an enthusiastic assemblage, foretell hope, victories and glories. Examples of such use, and simultaneously, construction of history is to be found in publications like 100 years with Swedish Football (Alsiö 2011). A mix of clubs’ profiles, statistics, and interviews with “football heroes” is presented as a thorough research into history of the Swedish highest division. Yet, several kilos of printed text is a bricolage of ‘hard data’ and emotions. Columns of numbers are juxtaposed by nostalgic pictures of fans and arenas. It is a version of a past that tries to take all of it in, in a somewhat desperate ambition (not uncommon among writing about football) to present all points of view, all important events (for whom, one could ponder) and yet stay objective, factual, with just a hint of nostalgia. Hidden behind the forest of statistics is the collective memory of many clubs, as tears of joy or grieve disappointment followed the 100 years of football seasons.

The clubs also publish collections about recently won titles. Such an example is DIF’s book called Golden Year which came out in 2002. It is a story of one season when Djurgården, after carefully counted 13 153 days, became not only Swedish champion but also won the Swedish cup in the same year. The book includes reports from every match, pictures and profiles of players and supporters. It is in itself a specific museum, carefully arranged display of matches that lead to a spectacular victory. Tara Brabazon in her publication Playing on the periphery notes that although sport encourages nostalgia, it is hard to stop emotional engagement from being washed away from institutionalized memories (2006, 36-39). Football as a context relies heavily on the passion of a crowd, thus a book like DIF’s Golden Year emphasizes strong emotional reactions not only of a crowd but also of footballers, as photos of suffering or overtly happy faces of players are displayed.
Next to HIF’s stadium in Helsingborg there is a sport museum, and a large part of the display concentrates on football, players, coaches and chairmen that influenced the club. Glass cabinets are full of photos, old shoes and balls. There is even a wooden statue of the former HIF player, and its current coach, Henrik Larsson, although of rather questionable aesthetic qualities (field notes, 2015). Brabazon comments that “Museums are intellectually interesting because they are cramped presentations of pressure-cooked history, made by the winners and viewed by the losers” (2006, 43). The display organized in Helsingborg leads its way through HIF’s history to its finest moment in shape of a great player with impressive international career and a promising new coach that grew up to his full glory while playing in Helsingborg. Memories are then organized around photographs and material culture visible there (2006, 46).

The persistence in displaying and reassuring one’s grand past highlights the flexibility of evaluations when it comes down to success in football. AIK calls itself the biggest club in Scandinavia; MFF calls itself the most successful club in Sweden (spring 2015). Success does not taste the same every time, and it does not have the same impact either. Strong history can illuminate a club’s position, but it can also harshly contrast present misery.
The written publications about football can also include various material objects connected to memory and nostalgia. One such example is *Football Memorabilia. Evocative Artefacts of the Beautiful Game* (1999). This big and heavy album presents photographs of medals, caps, shirts, trophies, programmes, posters, prints, photographs, books, sculptures, ceramics, and ‘general collectibles’. Memories and emotions attached to them are encapsulated in very different artefacts. It is like a collection of pictures from a museum that displays all of it at once. Yet, it also gives auction prices that said artefacts reached when they were sold. The personal attachment expressed by a material object is then commodified. Because of the price tag the memorabilia are no longer markers of individual expression of emotions once they enter the auction house, but before and after they most certainly are. In other words, they begin and end as gift, but in between, when being assessed and arranged by an auction house and put on sale, they become a capitalist commodity. From an emotional, ‘evocative’ as the book says, memorabilia, it changes to a profit-oriented material thing (Tsing 2013). But it ends up on an auction where its value ties to emotions and personal will of memory, hence it is negotiated (Baudrillard 1981). Memories and emotions are for sale, and judging from the final auction prices, there is money to be made on the positive collective memory and will to connect to it, albeit by money.

It comes as no surprise that clubs show off the best bits of their history. Won titles and trophies make up most of the narratives that are cherished by supporters. However, even tragedies can be used successfully to enchant one’s identity. Such a ‘negative’ story is to be found in Helsingborg. The club, after very successful decades, plunged down from Allsvenskan in 1968. It took them twenty four years and eleven days to get back to the highest league in 1993, with detour to lower leagues on the way.

This long process of going back to Allsvenskan is referred to in HIF history as ‘the wondering through the desert’. Like the punished Jewish tribes, HIF were trapped in the limbo of less prestigious football, although knowing that they belonged in the group of the best clubs. For almost a quarter of a century HIF’s story was not connected to the top league, but the struggle to find home again became a powerful and established narrative. Instead of trying to get rid of this unhappy story, HIF supporters and the club embrace it, point out for example that even in the lower divisions they had many spectators, that the average number for football attendance in Helsingborg was unusually high and that worked it favour of the supporters, who did not abandon their struggling club but stick with it through thick and thin (focus group with HIF Vänner, 2015; focus group with Kärnan, 2015).
The narrative lifts up the traumatic time and patient waiting which is rewarded by the final victory and a place in Allsvenskan. A former HIF player, who played during 1993 season, could recall the moment when the team was met by supporters at the train station in Helsingborg.

Kasia: I think it had to be very emotional when HIF came back to Allsvenskan after such a long time.

Åke: Yes, that was absolutely amazing. There is a lot written... so we were ready for Allsvenskan and traveled to Knutpunkten ... and there were 5-6000 there. And that was ... we were not prepared for it really, not the players either ... we watched and it was just ... aaaa! And we were presented one by one ... it's something you can never forget. It was nice. Great. That's the way you live, an instant where you'll find ... you'll find it even at the lower level ... in football ... it's the moment you think shit we were there, it's ours, it's ours forever. It's hard to forget. (interview with Åke, 2015)

The historical event of qualifying back to Allsvenskan is mixed in Åke’s story with memory of emotional response to the situation. It was the experience of it that made it unforgettable. Åke pointed out those ‘pockets of time’ that mark your life.

The book 24 years...

And going down after 24 years.

The official censorship of embarrassing memories is well known. What is in need of investigation is their unofficial suppression or repression, and this topic raises once more the awkward question of the analogy between individual and collective memory. (Peter Burke 1989, 109)

The time frame that serves to present the events is crucial. It is rapid, yet also slow. It is linear but also submits to the seasonal character of the game. In the following section, I shall discuss the different ways in which time flows in football.

**History of collective memory**

Football clubs like to embrace their past and show off with their museums, but there is a constant negotiation what would be preserved and what could fade into oblivion, as the accumulation of material goes on through the seasons. Recording my informants’ recollections made in, in turn, write a version of their history. They have filtered collective memory through their individual experience, and I have transcribed and used one version of it. Even referring to facts, dates, statistics have been selective and the principles of selections are bound to differ based on time frame, social situation, broader context.
This selection shapes memories (Peter Burke 1989, 100). Some of the motifs that exist in football – memorable win, away game, player, season, defeat – are fitted with changing content, acquiring mythical qualities, and thus becoming more prone to be remembered and recalled. The current need (or stereotype) of a certain character or event drives a selection of available material, and football is overflown with historical references. In other words, there is a ‘demand and supply’ chain that matches the mythical mould with particular elements of the past, creating a fit (Peter Burke 1989, 104).

An example of an activity that builds on traditions and produces stories is travelling to away matches. A former player stated that during 1970s hardly anyone would go to a match on the other side of Sweden (interview with Sune, 2014). Yet, nowadays away supporters tend to travel a lot, gaining attention from the media. The away section at Swedish stadiums is rarely empty. Different supporter organizations hire own busses and arrange their own tours of Swedish Allsvenskan fans. The big matches attract bigger crowds. When DIF came down to Malmö in 2015 I counted 10 busses waiting for away crowd, and there were some who came by train as well, not to mention those living in Malmö. For all the modern technology, it is not easy to go around Sweden, and it is not cheap either. One supporter, Martin, said:

I try to see 10-15 matches a year, and also 10-15 away matches. It is pretty expensive. And I used to work in a night club, and after work we drove with my friend to Stockholm, one sleeping one driving, got there around noon, went to see a match and then drive back (interview with Martin, 2015).

The history of a club, enjoying victories on away grounds, it made up of all those small narratives of people willing to give up sleep and rest, and embark on a journey that might end up in anger and frustration. While this travelling is also filled with traditions and different forms of history-making (develop – en av grabbarna and the shed they burned on the way), I want to concentrate on the activities inside the stadiums.

Stickers, flags and banners were mentioned before, and they are essential for a good away team display. Every time some visiting fans appear, they come with bags filled with fabrics. It takes some time to attach everything, they use tape and strings. Sometimes they need to adjust their banners. Some are ready-bought, but some are self-made. Every little supporter group wants to be visible, strives to have a good message for the home crowd. In short, they are decorating their temporary home. It will bear the colours and crests of their teams, their supporter clubs, even individual names. This activity is rather intimate. In the outside world, it
is the activity of women to make home ‘homey’, to make it beautiful and cozy so that the family members can feel in a certain space ‘at home’ (source, e.g. the one about crafts).

The context of historical production of the space, home-like space, has been gendered, as it has been looked upon as feminine (source, crafts again?). Here, it is mostly young men who sacrifice their time, effort and resources to produce decorative fabric. During one of the matches, I watched a well-dressed man who came a bit late, took a carefully folded small white banner from his bag, and spread it on two empty chairs. Then he disappeared into the crowd. After the match, he came to fetch it, and folded it back carefully again (match observations MFF-DIF, 2016).

The materiality that is supposed to mark the space makes a whirlpool of history. The displayed messages are typically decorated with historical references. In May 2016 a team from northern Sweden, Gefle IF, came to play against Malmö FF. They represented a real underdog. They had a very bad season, not nearly as much money as MFF, and just a handful of supporters – about 10. Still, they brought big banners with them. There was a flag of their region, Norrland. Further, a name of their former arena that they do not use anymore (Strömvallen), and a banner of a supporter organization called Blue Boys.

Both teams, MFF and Gefle IF, share almost exactly same shade of blue as their official colour, and the nickname for both is the ‘Skye Blues’. However, Gefle fans brought a message about differentiation, based on history. They had a text stating ‘the oldest Skye Blues 1882’ (in the picture below). Gefle was established that year, Malmö ‘only’ in 1910, being
thus much younger. They could not differentiate themselves from Malmö by colour only, but they could do it through history. Gefle could not boast being as successful or as rich as the Skåne club, but they could write that they were considerably older, and present that message to the home crowd.

Further, as I was a photographer on the pitch during that game, I sat on the Gefle supporters’ side. The beginning of the game was slow and the home crowd was not singing much (due to a strike from the ultras groups, as it turned out later), and I was not much occupied. One of the Gefle fans handed me his phone and asked to take a couple of pictures, which I did and made him very happy. I learned later that those pictures ended up on the supporter clubs web page, commemorating their excursion to Malmö. The historical production, based on a historical reference, made it into their history.

There was a contest of histories. Malmö won the match, and made a successful bit of their ‘new history’, but Gefle managed a happy display of ‘who is the oldest here’. You confront your history with another in an open contest. The presented selection has also been used to the best effect. The fact that both clubs use the same colours highlighted the age difference between them. Yet, in the reality of a weak performance, lack of success, closure of the old arena, and actually the change of official football kit colours has shaken the mythical cohesiveness of the club. The only one that stands firm is the precious date of birth that becomes the anchor with the past. It should be mentioned that angered Gefle supporters, when not informed nor consulted about the change of football shirts’ colouring, were absent from the standing section for one season, to mark their protest. But the 2016 they were back, marking another turbulent season, and watching their club tumble down from Allsvenskan to the lower league. Then one braces oneself and waits for the next season that might bring some long-awaited joy.

*The agricultural rites of football*

Time does not seem linear completely as the football season runs through a pattern of yearly seasons, in Sweden starting in spring and ending in autumn, usually around the beginning of November. Thus, the football context acquires agrarian qualities. It runs along a set time line

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9 The issue was about the official football kit, and the club moved in 2009 to have white shirts instead of light blue, without talking to the supporters first, which angered the more prominent fan groups as they wanted their voice to be heard - http://www.arbetarbladet.se/fotboll/allsvenskan/gefle-if-byter-farg igen
10 Get the link
11 Reference?
that always comes round. Further, one successful season does not mean brilliant spring the following year. At the same way, things can start with many wins but then something happens and the seeds do not feel that strong. Crop failure comes. Just like with agricultural activities, one cannot fully predict how the season is going to be. The best seeds possible conditions help, obviously, and still they cannot guarantee unproblematic autumn.

About Herder: Time did not threaten him, because he did not take time seriously. Things pass away when their time has come, not when Time requires it of them. Time is internalized in the individual; it exercises no hegemony over organic nature. (White 1973, 75)

The spring for MFF in the 2015 league was rather bumpy with some wins but also painful losses. Considering their previous season, good matches in Champions League and all the money earned, supporters wondered on internet forum how such resources could be wasted just like that and instead of gliding through the Swedish league MFF struggled with, in their own opinion, mediocre opponents (from svenskfans.se). Before the matches have begun, on paper, MFF seemed to be the richest, most balanced, having very good new players and hungry for more success. One of the supporters said in February:

Now they are better than before. Absolutely. You are quite negative when you are a MFF supporter. It is just so. Never happy, never satisfied. But on paper we have a better team than last year. (interview with Erik, 2015)

This constantly changing evaluation that depends on applied time-frames was noticed by Jonas Grethlein, a German classical philologist. He develops a term *future past*, which was originally coined by Reinhart Koselleck (Grethlein 2014). Grethlein translates it into English and puts it in singular. By doing this, Grethlein says, he gets a term that is flexible, richer and ambiguous, and then he applies it to analyse historical material from ancient Roman writing (reference). With *future past* he means that the future described previously is past from present perspective and the understanding of this prediction of future is quite important to understand the past and the past-present as well. Grethlein points out that how a historian or historical agent sets the time frame (telos) has strong impact on the narrative and can change how the past, present and future is evaluated. Erik in the interview set the telos in 2014 season, which was very successful and happy for MFF, and with that frame in mind he evaluated the new squad’s possibilities. Unfortunately, the past glory did not translate directly to 2015 season and frustration was clearly visible in the comments after Malmö was placed
fourth on the table before the short summer break in June (from svenskafans.se, MFF’s Facebook page).

Grethlein shows that fluidity is not only unavoidable, but also necessary when constructing a historical narrative. The concept of future past emphasizes the flexibility of the football context, as shifting telos can show how evaluations of clubs’ histories change through various narratives. Nevertheless, those evaluations are also in a cycle of wins, losses and draws, of success and failure. As dates from the past are used to strengthen the image of a present club, so do past glories become brighter when illuminated with present trophies and titles.

The dragon eating its tail, Ouroboros, the symbol of eternal return and cyclicality, seems to be a good metaphor of the process at work here. Not only the producers consume their product simultaneously, but it happens in a never-ending cycle, as seasons progress, finish, and start again. This, in turn, strengthens the mythology of a club. Henry Hubert wrote about the concept of time in magical and religious activities: “Thus myths are rejuvenated in history, drawing on elements of reality which consolidate the belief of which they are the object as myths” (Hubert 1999, 48). Football offers a perfect context for producing and performing myths constantly, as the spiral of visualizing historical elements is merged into the present ‘history-making’ during a currently happening game, which in turn can get mythical qualities if it produces strong symbols like dramatic wins, superb support, new chants, unexpected heroes of villains on the pitch etc. When the match is finished and frozen in time, it is almost immediately taken apart, transformed and produced again in forms of short video clips, internet comments, pictures, media reports and sport analyses, statistics, interviews, etc. A new narration, enriched with a proper doze of fresh, still breathing mythology, is constructed and ready to use whenever needed.

There two other kinds of time that could be identified here. One of them is cosmogonic time. Geographer Yi-Fu Tuan gives Australian aboriginal mythology as an example of such a time that “leaves its mark on space, thereby sanctioning it” (Tuan 1977, 132). Such construction of time makes a direct link between how it was before, and how it is, or supposed to be, now. This cosmogonic time marks creation and the world, but at the same time, it relates to the present and to the future. The myth is a fluid mold that can accommodate different elements that come with ongoing seasons and can be used to strengthen the first mythical creation that resulted in the present character/spirit/collective structure of a club. I shall return to this thought in further chapters, as myths sustain the club in a form of very unstable continuity.
The mythical time could be reinterpreted as “pockets of time” (Nils Kayser Nielsen 1995, 30). These pockets, according to historian Niels Kayser Nielsen, are created around special places, like stadiums, that “sustain history” and sustain “objective memory” (Kayser Nielsen 1995, 30). Because those places stand outside of the normal social context, the time flow in them is also different, a bit unusual. Nielsen stated that since this pocket time is “above the time of every day” it is able to archive historical material (Kayser Nielsen 1995, 30).

I interpret Nielsen’s statement as recognition of the special, individual elements that mark crucial events that shaped a special character of a club. Some happenings are unique. The places Nielsen refers to are stadiums. They provide institutionalized time in a sense of providing a very specific experience, based on time, location and structure. Although seasons are repeated and football is an ongoing process, it does exist on the outside of normality, so to speak. Yet, I would object to Nielsen’s use of “objective memory”, in any context (Halbwachs date; Burke 1989). The elusive combination of strong emotions, personal involvement, and repetitiveness of football seasons results in this ‘pocketness of time’, but its feature is not objectivity. Rather, it is the ability to sustain ‘time outside time’ that is both unique and repeated in a somewhat restricted space.

In short, there are different perceptions of time in the football context that can operate simultaneously. Those time structures work almost like varied fits that help to cater to the present. Uniqueness, continuation, or repetition are all possible modes of operation. Time does not have a stable function in the algorithm that builds football. When putting history on show, the recycling of narratives happens. The past has to shine through the present and also point towards the future. The consumption triggers production, as events provide new memories based on previous patterns and future expectations.

One example of Ouroboros effect could be a striking tifo, often a huge sheet of fabric with pictures, texts or emblems that are used to mock the enemy or glorify own team. In 2003 MFF came to Helsingborg to play against the local team, and they decorated their section with such picture and text ‘slakta mjölkkossan’ – butcher the milk cow:
This tifo came up in an informal chat with a HIF supporter, who remembered this horrible picture MFF did. He admitted though that it was funny and recommended that I should look it up as that was such a big thing back then (football chat, January 2015). The picture above comes from the archive of MFF Support which storages pictures from 1993 on. This particular illustration refers to a nickname of the HIF team, which was Milk Cow, Mjölkkossan. One interviewee explained: ‘Well it used to be called the milk cow. Because they always used to attract a big audience, when they played I think in 1940s or 1950s’ (interview with Felix, 2015). Thus, the cow symbolizes HIF in its glorious years, and obviously an MFF player is going to end its miserable life. Although that nickname is not used much anymore and most of my interviewees would say ‘it used to be called’ that, the cow got her second life as a part of the tifo and an insult constructed by MFF and made up using Helsingborg’s own mythology. It is a history of using history while making history.

Further point with this particular match, MFF-HIF regional derby, is that it is going to happen again the following year, and the following year and so on. By those constant repetitions, although always different, are also repetitions of itself, with the same structure and basic idea of playing a match. Henry Hubert commented further on the character of the flow of time in magic and religion:

When all possible equivalences have entered into play, time ends by being represented as a sequence of points which are equivalent to each other and to the intervals which separate them, these intervals themselves being equivalent; and as a sequence of parts of unequal length, nested within one another and
equivalent in the same way, each point and each period studying respectively for the whole. In this way, religious and magical actions can cease without being completed, be repeated without changing and be multiplied in time while remaining unique and above time, which is really nothing more than a sequence of eternities (Hubert, 1999: 60)

This peculiar cyclical renewal of old and simultaneous introduction of the new is also visible in religious calendars. For example the Catholic Church has many fixed dates of celebrations, with exactly same ceremonies, gestures, readings, but the repetition of dogma always happens in slightly different circumstances. Memories of those celebrations blend, as one occasion reminds of the previous ones, and yet it can feel new and different, as participants, personal situation, even the weather change slightly from year to year. Football provides similar patterns. It is a never-ending story decorated with pockets of emotional memories. As Halbwachs stated:

The frameworks of memory exist both within the passage of time and outside it. External to the passage of time, they communicate to the images and concrete recollections of which they are made a bit of their stability and generality. (…) depending on the direction we have chosen to travel, whether we go upstream or pass from one riverbank to the other, the same representations seem to be at times recollections, at times notions or general ideas (1992, 182).

As a socially constructed institution, football clubs offer a rich background, almost a playground, for toying with symbols, dates and people who left behind any kind of historical blueprint. Since the basic structure – playing matches at stadiums with 22 footballers and an audience – does not change, it is a solid frame for memories and recollections to grow and thrive. It allows individual memories to enter this background, as they would always fit. As a result, one match turns into many, and many turn into one, in a reassuring pattern of the cyclical flow of time. Quite a few times my interviewees could recall a match or a player, but they were unsure which season it was, what match, or what year. But they knew it was their club, and their stadium. Memories needs to be framed against a firm background, that allows them preserve some details and elements that can be brought back from the abyss and reworked and reshaped in new circumstances.

Mjölkossan is an example how myths are recycled. This kind of history usage makes football sustain. However, supporters tend to be rather free and eclectic when it comes to symbols and references and they are not restricted to football scene only. For instance, two ultras groups in Sweden, one attached to MFF and another to AIK, are called Rex Scania and Sol Invictus respectively. Rex Scania give an explanation to their name in an official declaration on their
web page and state that this phrase means ‘Kings of Scania’ (Kungar över Skåneland in Swedish). This is, from linguistic point of view, a completely wrong form. Rex Scania means literally King Scania (Skåne), and to make it into the meaning the group wishes to communicate it would have to be Reges Scaniae in correct Latin (reference.). In an interview a former member of Rex Scania laughed when I asked if people knew the name was not exactly correct and added: ‘I don’t think they know and I don’t think they care’ (interview with Otto, 2016). There is also another ultras group, affiliated with AIK and formed in 2004, called Sol Invictus – Unconquered Sun (reference).\(^\text{12}\)

Still, both groups are in line with centuries long tradition of forging of faking links with the Romans and their civilization which has had recognizable and far-reaching connotations and can still claim rich cultural capital. This could be described as an example of cosmogonic time (Tuan 1977, 132). The idea of a divine beginning, a creation of a certain structure, reflects on the present state of affairs, no matter how distant it is spatially, culturally or temporally.

The names of ultras groups seem to be a low-key version of a centuries-old custom of creating ad-hoc connections to an admired past civilization. An example of that angst can be still visible in Vasa Ship Museum in Stockholm. King Gustav Adolph was presented with a title Augustus and placed, somewhat awkwardly, in the company of Roman emperors. It was to strengthen the king’s position and his geopolitical ambitions of the time. The magnificent ship on display in the museum had figures of the emperors engraved, making them decorations of the Swedish royal house’s political agenda\(^\text{13}\).

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\(^{12}\) Sol Invictus means “Unconquered Sun” and it was the official sun god of the late Roman Empire and a patron of soldiers (reference). Both groups, Rex Scania and Sol Invictus, are active on the stands, promote Italian-style support and opt for the usage of flares and smoke bombs. Two rather informal organizations of young men, who could be classified as trouble-makers in some social circles, choose to be named in Latin, with references to late Roman Empire. The AIK group has another intertextual level of reading, as the club is located in Solna, a Stockholm municipality, thus neatly incorporating it in their name (Sol-na).

\(^{13}\) The official museum webpage gives such description: ‘Motifs came from Greek mythology, the Old testament, Roman history and from 17th-century Sweden’s fascination with its royal ancestors. On Vasa, Roman emperors, Greek gods, and Gothic warriors meet beautiful mermaids, angels and grinning demons.’ (http://www.vasamuseet.se/en/The-Ship/Sculptures/ 26.08.2015).
A poster from Vasa museum referring to the king Gustav II Adolf by the title ‘Augustus’ that applied to Roman Emperors and providing a list of the emperors that proceeded the Swedish king. On the right a picture of the ship decorated with the wooden sculptures. (pictures taken in March 2015).

The ultras groups follow in the king’s footsteps when they try to steal a bit of the cultural capital that the Romans still represent. Their usage of symbols is quite straightforward and even the wrong form in case of Rex Scania should not be that surprising. Latin is not a popular language nowadays, and hardly anybody would know the meaning of Reges Scaniae. However, Rex Scania is a fine borderline between deeper historical context and half-baked modern knowledge of the long-gone civilization. What it does illustrate is the creative recycling of the past. It might not be the correct form, but it is a form that would be commonly recognized as referring to the ancient users of Latin. In that sense, the intertextual value of using Latin language would be wasted, should the translation be perfectly correct. To keep it understandable on a broader social lever, the name had to be modified. Richard Bauman and Charles L. Briggs in an essay on intertextuality and social power comment that… (get the comment!)

Even time can be granted with some flexibility in the football context, and it also provokes individuals to take upon themselves the burden of social memories they have never shared. Or rather, those that have not any anchor in their personal experience. The little museum Malmö FF has inside its stadium plays the same role. The important bits are there, carefully arranged in glass cabinets. The opening observation contains a quote where one official said, “This team has it in its blood” (interview with Linus 2012). It referred to the international, travelling spirit on the players. He made a connection between the past, mostly glorious 1970s, and the present squad. But how could they have it in their blood? Players are, usually, not related. Moreover, the current trend is to have rather many footballers from abroad. Yet, the biological connection, thus a claim of continuation and stability, was made. Certainly, my informant was
just referring to it metaphorically, but the genealogy of things came to the fore. It was necessary for him to reassure me that the past glory has some sort of connection to the present. The awareness of those past, travelling players would then trigger something in the present team. In the following section I reflect upon such memories.

From The Presence of the Past. Popular Uses of History in American Life:

Using the past to serve interpretation in the present, respondents assembled isolated experiences into patterns. From these narratives they could project what might happen next, set priorities, take responsibility, and try to shape the futures – (Rosenzweig & Thelen 1998, 68)

By creating narratives from experiences that could yield many meanings and revising them to meet changing needs – to imagine how they wanted those narratives to end – the people we talked with tried to understand how they could make a difference – (Rosenzweig & David Thelen 1998, 76)

“Déjà vu without the original vu”

Sir Terry Pratchett, in one of his Discworld14 novels has football as a main theme. Wizards from the Unseen University wish to understand what a game of foot-the-ball is all about, a game seemingly belonging to lower classes and appealing to people expressing disregard for fine culture. A female kitchen worker then gives a speech about attending matches at a local ground referred to as ‘the Shove’:

… you talk about some Master of the Music to make a new chant, and that’s not how it goes. The Shove makes up the chants. They just happen. They just, like, come out of the air. And the pies are pretty awful, that is true, but when you’re in the Shove, and it’s mucky weather, and the water’s coming through your coat, and your shoes are leaking, and then you bite into your pie, and you know that everyone else is biting into their pie, and the grease slides down your sleeve, well, sir, I don’t have the words for it, sir, I really don’t sir. There’s a feeling I can’t describe, but it’s a bit like being a kid at Hogswatch, and you can’t just buy it, sir, you can’t write it down or organize it or make it shiny or make it tame. (…) You must have known it, sir. Didn’t your father ever take you to a game? (Unseen Academicals, 182-183).

The wizards, aged academic scholars, were moved by this speech. Pratchett finished this scene with a discussion among them:

‘Tell me, Doctor Hix,’ said Ponder, ‘did you experience anything unusual when that young lady was speaking so eloquently?’
‘Well, yes, I had a pleasant moment of happy recollection about my father.’
'So did we all, I am sure,' said Ponder. There was a sombre nodding around the table. ‘I never knew my father. I was brought up by my aunts. I had déjà vu without the original vu.' (page 190)

The exchange in a fictional world presented here touches upon a rather un-fictional phenomenon. Memories are transferable and adoptable. Arenas are socially constructed spaces that are heterotopic, neither here nor there, also in the sense of time (Nielsen 1995, 30). The idea of timelessness seems to work wonders for memories. The repeated, ritualized structure of a match, performed on a stadium, gives memories even more flexibility. The example from Pratchett’s novel is perhaps a bit simplistic, but it provides a strong picture of the processes that can be observed there. The cultural notion of a collective experience has been around for a long time, for at least one hundred years, and the intertextual pattern of providing and performing that experience already exists. Fentress and Wickam suggest that memories could be treated as texts containing ‘specific pieces of information (1992, 5). After all, memory is structured by an intersection of factors, like language, collectively held ideas, observations too (1992, 7).

In a sense, football has evolved to work like fairy tales. They are anchored in something real, carried through memorization and oral transmission. There are patterns, embodied functions to be played, and there is a certain freedom of a given script (Fentress & Wickam 1992, 65). Because of the familiarity of the script one understands an event of a match textually and intertextually. Even Pratchett’s fictional world that, placed in somewhat ‘pre-industrial reality’, drives on an understanding that readers are going to recognize a pattern of a game and become emotional, just like the tribe of wizards did upon hearing about the experience of watching a match.

Some of the phrasing there – being cold and wet, eating something resembling cheap fast-food, and at the same time being a raw experience, not for sale, not possible to just reproduce by money – provides a romantic, idealized picture of early football. It also ties into the current economic tension and the criticism of creating teams for and by means of money. I shall go back to this issue in the following chapter.

Still, the intertextuality of the experience is rather present in the society. John Frow, in an essay on intertextuality and ontology points out that texts are shaped by repetition and transformation of textual elements that contribute to its composition (1990, 45). In tune with modern folklorists, who advocate textualization any event, I would say that experiencing football could be described as a text, and the intertextual elements of it point strongly for such
interpretation. There has been enough media coverage and publications to teach the general public what to expect from football. From a historical perspective, that picture has been changing, of course, but certain traces became embedded in the collective memory. As a modern version of a folk tale, it provides a pattern ready to be filled with existing memories, providing in turn a pattern for future memories. A community that shares memories shapes standardized versions (‘oikotypes’) that emerge as crucial for a given community. It is the group that remembers that “decides which version is acceptable and which not” (Fentress & Wickam 1992, 74).

This is also a process that Roland Barthes ascribes to creation of myths. To become one, it has to be full enough and empty enough at the same time (reference). In the context of football, highly ritualized and established ways of performing it help to create a structure for remembering. In the words of Maurice Halbwachs: “society will abandon its ancient beliefs only if it is assure of finding others” (1992, 187). The time-loop created in football storages myths and allows many different symbols and references to nest snuggly together, but also allows its creator to change heroes, symbols, warriors without drastically changing its character. On the contrary, this process of keeping myths alive goes alongside the creative search for new symbols and new ways of expression.

The connection of place and memory is strong. Often people remember and recollect their past not with help of exact dates, but rather physical locations. Topography and places organize memory and construct a narrative, for example when one talks about one life story (Nylund Skog 124). And when the experience of a particular space is repeated on the regular basis, it takes a firm place in shaping an individual (Bale & Gaffney 2004, 25). Football histories start with activities at stadiums. Certainly, one can have different points of departure, but the most basic event necessary is eleven men on a pitch, kicking a ball. And yet, that would be only a physical exercise. Add some people watching, and suddenly life in various forms and shapes in injected into it. It begins to breath. A performance, mode of communication, transmission, memories, symbols, myths and written accounts spring from it. The spatial end of things help to reconstruct and organize memories.

It should be noticed that the historical football maze seems dense and confusing, yet it is also very logical and based on facts, namely numbers. There is a profound obsession with putting

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15 One of such persistent pictures is the one of violence and the emergence of a term hooligan from the activities from previous decades.
things in numerical understanding, and in turn making bigger and smaller claims of fame, victory or failure. The following section shall deal with translating history into digits.

**Numerology in football history**

It has to be mentioned that it seems that time runs fast when it comes to the football league and heroes, victims, winners and losers are made on a constant basis, from match to match, which sometimes mean a break of 3-4 days in between unconditional love and admiration to booing and utter disappointment. MFF’s coach of 2015 season Åge Hareide said in an interview that time goes fast here: “Inget blir historia så fort som i fotboll” – Nothing becomes history as quickly as in football\(^{16}\). However, there is a slower undercurrent that steers the flow of the unstable surface. If one looks for example at Allsvenskan table from the beginning of its establishment, it becomes apparent how slow changes are.

A quick look at the Allsvenskan Maratontabell\(^ {17}\) 1924-2014 shows that it is not, in all aspects, easy to change orders of things. Every season there is only one winner. As the league has been running from 1924, there were teams having more seasons throughout the century than the modern clubs that are present there now. Teams that have disappeared from the main Swedish football scene still occupy quite high positions in the ‘all times’ table. It takes time to climb up and time does not help newer teams with the statistics. Further, as stronger teams have been there from the beginning, and they obviously earned more merits, they can also focus the attention on the past, already mythical matches and victories, when the current situation on the fast-changing surface does not favour them. The slow undercurrent of time is used when it is needed. The statistics also reveal that the peak of spectators was in the early 1950s, when the average attendace was more than 12.000\(^ {18}\)

In 2016 their club, Gefle, was far from successful, and the entire season was difficult. Yet, their club made it into international news because of the away victory. After losing many matches in a row (check how many), the team travelled about 600 km to play against Kalmar. There was only one away supporter present, and the team won. The lone fan enjoyed all the attention from happy, victorious players. This even was noticed by Swedish press, but there were also international publications, for example in Great Britain\(^{19}\). Somehow the general

\(^{16}\) (interview from Sydsvenskan, 13.02.2015)
\(^{17}\) https://www.allsvenskan.se/maratontabell/ (17.10.2017)
\(^{18}\) https://www.allsvenskan.se/publiksnitt-genom- tiderna/ (17.10.2017)
\(^{19}\) http://www.gd.se/fotboll/allsvenskan/ensam-var-stark-i-kalmar-har-ar-gif-supportern-som-tog-laget-till- seger
public rejoiced with one hoping fan, with one that still would support a weak and troubled, losing team. His commitment was all the strongest because he ended up being the only one there. This tiny story got into a broader, even international history of football. Further, being away with his team contributed to the glorification.

Here is a picture that circulated internationally, the team thanking the lone supporter.

This idea to depart and fight on the foreign ground is rather typical for heroic tales. Margery Hourihan, when analysing popular constructions of heroes, mentions quests far away as a typical element of such narratives. She states: “The hero’s departure from home to venture into the wilderness is the basic component of the hero tale” (Hourihan 1997, 22). As mentioned before in this thesis, heroes can be constructed and reconstructed in football on weekly basis, and the time flow is favourable for myth-making. Hence, the away games fit into the pattern of creating narratives suited for comparisons with heroic quests and wins. In this case, it was both players and the supporter who could participate in the ‘killing of a giant’, an underdog winning.

This sort of victory does happen, but the event described above also included a member of a crowd who did not lose faith, which seemed to be appreciated by media even more. Why would it be so? It might be just a modern version of a folktale, and people appreciate a good tale. William Boscom wrote about folktales:

They are not considered as dogma or history, they may or may not have happened, and they are not to be taken seriously. Nevertheless, although it is

often said that they are told only for amusement, they have other important functions, as the class of moral folktales should have suggested (Boscom 1984, 8).

A folktale has a purpose. It is used to make a point. In the case presented here, it is the story of a one believer rewarded for his faith, a football ‘miracle’ when a weaker team surprises everybody. That restates the belief that in this game anything can happen and no one can guess the outcome. The aim of this thesis is not to provide a genre analysis. Rather, these categories “(…) are not formal but cultural cognitive categories of verbal expressions” (Ben Amos 1976, 40). In other words, in the cultural analytical context they could help to unpack phenomena rather than put them in boxes.

Arthur Asa Berger’s presents a view of recognizing Greco-Roman myths (as intertexts) in modern media creations like novels and films, which allows people to live "mythically" (2013). I argue that it is more about recognizing a story in the making and participating in making of this story. In this particular case of the Gefle fan, even the journalists took part in creating the story, as in needed to become a digital footprint. It needed to be transmitted and thus became a part of tradition (McNeill 2013). In the similar fashion, my pictures transmitted a small splinter of history of the Gefle group in Malmö. They lost the match, but their performance travelled further than the walls of the stadium.

This story also contains the warming notion that not everything is about money, that people follow teams because they are committed and attached, not because there are victories and trophies. In modern football, which has segregated itself into overpaid hyper-game and the ‘local football’, this message is needed. One of the reason for it is the myth, which desperately needs rejuvenation, that in the olden days football was the game of working classes, and that it was about the sport, not profits. That is a questionable point of view (Torbjörn Andersson, Richard Giulianotti).

There is magic in numbers. Football is filled with numerical representations. The amount of won titles, years in the top league, numbers matches won or lost in a row, minutes played when leading, just to lose in the end. The official Swedish league web page, Allsvenskan.se, provides all kinds of statistics. Develop. And maybe Peter Pels and statistics and magic article.

Arithmology means number symbolism

Concluding remarks
The main focus of this chapter was on the general awareness that the clubs have history. This, in turn, is used by clubs as institutions, but also by individuals involved. Narratives are produced in printed forms of books; they are also displayed on tifos during matches. Further, people incorporate their own stories with the ongoing football developments, making some elements, myths and legends appear and survive the tide of time. To keep such unstable environment running for such a long time one has to be able to establish strong links and anchors that would allow continuity to be woven.

There are several themes presented in this chapter that deal with the clubs’ and supporters’ view of their history and their pragmatic approach to historical narratives. Football is extremely fluid in terms of changing participants and social circumstances. Historical references help to produce an image of a stable institution adorned with heritage and traditions.

The way history circulates in football reveals complex structures of time. Time as a category is a social construct (Hubert year). (develop)

Emotions tell us a lot about time; emotions are the very ‘flesh’ of time. They show us the time it takes to move, or to move on, is a time that exceeds the time of an individual life. Through emotions, the past persists on the surface of bodies. Emotions show us how histories stay alive, even when they are not consciously remembered; how histories of colonialism, slavery, and violence shape lives and worlds in the present. The time of emotion is not always about the past, and how it sticks. Emotions also open up futures, in the ways they involve different orientations to others. It takes time to know what we can do with emotion. Of course, we are not just talking about emotions when we talk about emotions. The objects of emotions slide and stick and they join the intimate histories of bodies, with the public domain of justice and injustice. Justice is not simply a feeling. And feelings are not always just. But justice involves feelings, which move us across the surfaces of the world, creating ripples in the intimate contours of our lives. Where we go, with these feelings, remains an open question (Sara Ahmed 2004, 202).

This fast change and slowness that appear in the football context further bring the notion of agriculture, of farming. One needs time and patience to see the crops grow, and they are always vulnerable to the elements, as a catastrophe can come with sudden frost, hail, flooding, drought, and diseases. As players suffer injuries, teams unexpected defeats, and clubs end up on a brink of bankruptcy, the everlasting worry shared by both contexts becomes quite apparent. But in all the chaos, the notion of just being there for one hundred years makes it
worth to fight for clubs and their existence. History often is strong enough fertilizer to make clubs continue in spite of economic losses and bad performance. History makes football sustain.
3. Cultural capital of one hundred years

Ibländ klagas det över en historielöshet bland svenskarna (Peter Aronsson 2000)

The opening observations come from the 2017 season, when a new and young club, AFC Eskilstuna (previously AFC United) entered Allsvenskan. The club was with a lot of resistance and criticism from other Swedish clubs. During a match against Djurgårdens IF at the end of May 2017, DIF fans organized a complex display protesting AFC Eskilstuna’s admission to the highest league.

About 10 minutes into a game a banner appears on the standing section: Money can’t buy me love. The SLO accompanying me says ‘Oh, that is from the Beatles’. Later, I find leaflets attached to seats all over the stadium. They point out that AFC is a threat to Swedish football. There are about 17,000 DIF fans, with only a handful of AFC supporters.

DIF makes a goal and after initial joy comes an angry, rhythmic scream: ‘Horungar, horungar, horungar!’ – children of a whore.

After the half-time break the banner is moved to the side. The standing section displays then a number of stern messages, one of them about sending Swedish football to its grave. AFC goalkeeper seems to be wiping tears after the ball went in for the third time. DIF supporters also have a banner saying Sofialäktaren, referring to a section at their previous stadium – Stockholm Stadium – historically known for its connection to the Olympic Games that took place in 1912.

The game drawing to its end, with 4-1 for Djurgården, another chant: ‘AFC, you are nothing (ni är ingenting)!’ The tune is ‘Go West’ (match observations, May 2017)

With the idea of time comes change, and clubs are very unstable institution that can claim outstanding stability. This is because of the curious change-and-preserve system that works there. People change, stadiums disappear, but colours and shirts make up an image of stability. Another strong theme is one of money. Clubs use their histories quite creatively to counterweight affluence in some of the relatively new clubs that do not have birthday back in the 19th century, but substantial financial backing.
This is followed by a brief discussion of the class issue. Such perspective is not in focus in this thesis, but the historical understanding of class appears in the material gathered throughout fieldwork. The presented perspective problematizes how class as a category plays a role in composing a historical narrative. What can carry the feeling of continuity in an unstable, crisis-ridden, ever-changing environment? How can be history used pragmatically?

Printscreen from a web page of Athletic FC United, March 2015, when the club was in Superettan. In 2017 it advanced to Allsvenskan, changed location and name again, settling on AFC Eskilstuna. The club also changed the location to Eskilstuna. After one season in Allsvenskan, the club went down to the lower league.

**What money cannot buy**

Swedish clubs can make some pragmatic use of their 100 years long histories, and they apply those narratives to balance out the monetary capital with cultural capital. The reoccurring theme in the interviews was ‘money is not enough’. While zooming into the illusive ideas of ‘traditions’, ‘golden ages’, ‘olden days’, being able to ‘go back in the history’, my interviewees created narratives that helped them show a distinction between the real, traditional clubs and the new commercial, ‘artificial products’ of modern-day football.

Considering the economic changes in football, its globalization and commodification, one could expect the personal involvement and regionalism not to play such an important role anymore (Kennedy & Kennedy, Giulianotti). More money means better arenas, better players and of course more success, and to be able to win is the ultimate goal for all clubs. The privatization of club football has not happened in Sweden as it did in for example England. Although this is linked to fewer investors and investments, Swedish supporters and club representatives are generally proud of this state of things, as they can still claim ownership of
their clubs and say that no rich oligarch or sheik would be able to turn their clubs into personal toys\textsuperscript{20}. One supporter said ‘we don’t need another Chelsea’, frowning on the developments in English top league and criticizing its money-oriented approach (football chat, 2013).

A Djurgården’s fan from Stockholm said that the English Premier League was attractive in the 1980s and he and his friends would travel there several times a year to watch matches. Then it become a rich men’s league and his group turned instead to lower divisions, the Championships, League One and League Two (interview with Joel, 2015). A name of a sponsor, banking and financial services company Barclays, as added to Premier League, prompting more criticism as it defines the shift of powers. Many interviewed fans and even representatives remark that money came with the prize of identity, which historically, one wants to believe, was working-class, lower-class related. In any way, it was more local. But football tried to be more than simple common entertainment and entered the premises of experience economy (Van Uden 2005).

Another Djurgården fan, Hubert, quite aware of commercial pressures in the modern world remarked about the lack of club ownership in Sweden:

\begin{quote}
Oh but should that happen in Sweden so we would lose some of the soul. On the other side it is an entertainment industry… So if you don’t have the capital, the money, you cannot buy players, you have to be more dependent on the club’s network, so it is more challenging perhaps to grow and get better (pause). But then you cannot just buy all that … because it is about the soul too (interview with Hubert, 2015).
\end{quote}

The use of the word ‘soul’ makes a connection to something that is alive. Interestingly, supporters often use the vocabulary that would make the distinction between organic and artificial. Roughly speaking, old clubs with history, traditions etc. would be associated with concepts like ‘a living organism’, ‘family’, ‘family feel’, ‘born into the club’, ‘our birthday’, ‘born supporter’, and even a stadium being one’s ‘wife’. On the other hand, privately owned clubs from the big western European leagues, most explicitly Paris Saint-Germain F.C. and

\textsuperscript{20}Like in Germany, there is a 51\% rule in Swedish football, which means that a private investor cannot own more than 49\% of a given club. Thus, at least theoretically, clubs are owned and ruled by supporters who secure their place as club’s members. Although generally supporters are very positive of this rule, some call it a fake democracy that does not matter in the end and prevents Swedish football from a needed influx of money.
Chelsea being the prime examples given in interviews, were described as ‘artificial products’, having ‘no heart’, being ‘just for the money’, being ‘unreal’ and ‘untrue’. This striking difference emphasizes how supporters feel about the new successful clubs. They don’t see the organic growth that they emphasize so much, but a calculated and controlled environment designed to win titles. Yet again, this referred back to money. Money ‘makes it easier, but it is not enough’ (interview with Jesper 2015). Losing a soul makes one dead, lifeless. And selling a soul implies making a pact with a devil and enslavement, a theme popular in the European folklore (reference). Because of the emotionally loaded descriptions of the ‘real’ and ‘artificial’, there is an emphasis on resisting the economic developments.

Hubert, my interviewee, certainly appreciated the style and character of the English league. He attended a Chelsea match in London and liked the atmosphere, liked that it was so family-friendly and not frightening at all. He also referred to the US and praised their hockey and American football for being just fun and entraining, seeing it as a model for development. Still, there was a fair bit of nostalgia in his interview, referring to his older brother that introduced him to football. Throughout the interview Hubert referred to his club as ‘entertainment’ and pondered about its ‘entertainment value’ in the context of the more outspoken supporters with flares and offensive chants. The more polished look of football appealed to him, but even he was afraid of losing something should there be a price tag attached so explicitly. Hubert confessed that he has not really seen a live match in Sweden since 1990s, but would still describe himself as a supporter who cares and keeps an eye on what is happening to his beloved club.

Supporters do not want to feel this is all about money, and history helps them to position themselves and their clubs. The stress put on age and the date of origin reflects the need to fight somehow whose economic evils that take football away from supporters to rich investors interested in results only, at least according to the Swedish supporters. Displaying one’s heritage is a way to affirm their existence. MFF’s journey to Champions League in 2014 took a curious shape of a struggle between tradition and heritage versus ‘new money’. One of their opponents was Red Bull Salzburg, an Austrian club bought, renamed and remade by Red Bull. When MFF won in the final match and qualified for Champions League, internet forums exploded with a sense of relief that a ‘traditional’ club went through and not this ‘new money’ hybrid without soul, which showed that money is not everything, and somehow that was a

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21 The names of those two clubs always came up spontaneously in the interviews as the prime examples of the issue.
sign of historical justice (nethnography, 2014). Even supporters from other Swedish clubs expressed their joy that MFF won. Entries from fans of, among others, AIK, DIF, IFK Göteborg, IFK Norrköping, GAIS and Sundsvall praised MFF for not giving in, for making Sweden visible, but also commenting that even Salzburg style of play was unnatural and plastic, just like their club (entries from svenskanfans.se, 05.08.2015). Moreover, on MFF’s Facebook page appeared comments from other countries, for instance Austria and Germany, thanking them for winning this match, for example an entry stating: ‘Thank you sooo much malmö Greetings from Austria’ (original spelling, netnography 2015). What were they thanking them for? A good match, unexpected result (RD Salzburg won the first match) or the fact that it was them and not Red Bull that was going to play in the Champions League? Seeing this particular team suffer seemed to unite supporters.

The action that you should not buy Red Bull drink in Malmö in 2014?

After the game such stickers appear around Malmö, mocking the Austrian club and their new logo:

![DeadBull logo](image)

The crude devaluating of those clubs as not having history came from MFF’s side. Certainly, Salzburg owners and fans would oppose such interpretations and they have their own evaluations of their past. Swedish supporters forum referred to the club playing ‘corporate football’ in an effort to differentiate themselves from this symbolic shift in European football. Red Bull owns a club in Germany as well, called now RB Leipzig, founded in 2009 and with a logo unmistakably linked to Red Bull’s original logo. Also, the energy drink company owns another football club in the USA called these days New York Red Bulls, founded in 1994. Like with Salzburg and Leipzig, their logo has just a different city name on the crest. This is a new take on football, focused on economics and results, these are clubs made to win, which would then mean profit for their main sponsor and more cans of their energy drink sold:

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22 Same joy whe RB Leipzig lost the German cup final in 2016, expressed online.
The uniformity of this enterprise, commodification in the purest form, seems to erase all that the fans care about: heritage, traditions, regionalism, history and all the small differences that make clubs special and unique. Obviously, one has to start somewhere and these clubs, in the absence of one hundred years of existence, concentrate on the assets they have now, which is a substantial investment and working their way up the league systems in all those countries. They have begun writing their own histories. Further, these logos are obviously based on a characteristic name and design of their main sponsor, and that name is recognizable globally and thus it fills a somewhat empty crests of clubs that are relative newcomers into the football family.

It is a far-fetched form of heritage, but one that fulfils the purpose of adding depth and meaning to those clubs. For example, rather than being just another German club from former DDR, Leipzig is now connected to a global brand that is strongly connected to extreme sports and thus it connotes some desirable sport-related qualities like toughness, strength, or stamina and claims association with sports like surfing and skateboarding\textsuperscript{23}. On the other hand, the traditional clubs are at pains to strengthen their branding and make their logos recognizable and marketable. The commercial idea of ‘branding’ or ‘brand content’ is then no news in the football world\textsuperscript{24}. In several interviews I was told that MFF is the strongest brand in Malmö. Also HIF has been described as a good brand for Helsingborg, as recognizable as the ferries across the Öresund to Denmark or the medieval tower called Kärnan (Andersson 2011, 75).

One could also argue that those uniformed logos of Red Bull-run enterprises represent nothing more than football clubs, and these are organized and run in a similar way everywhere. Same goes for playing football. The rules do not change from club to club. As much as clubs want to be unique, they are also clones of the same basic idea. Thus, the uniformity is not anything


\textsuperscript{24} That reference to brand content.
shocking from the organizational perspective. During one interview a former player, who was active in 1970s and 1980s, refused the idea of clubs having different characters:

- A football club is a football club… they are there to play football (he laughs)
- But isn’t there like a specific character to certain clubs…?
- You talk about supporters now. Do you mean supporters or clubs?
- Well I mean…
- You speak like they are one. Like Hammarby supporters are cheerful so Hammarby plays cheerful football.
- Yes I see… but in a way…
- No you cannot have it. That is what I mean that it feels like, like you are thinking, that it means the same thing and that there is an identity like that. I can see that but I cannot accept it (…). And because of this… there is a like in this between ‘us’ and ‘them’. But it is not just football, it is political, linguistic and historic, all goes together. (interview with Sune, 12.11.2015)

What is a club then? Sune reduced the idea of a club to just technical objectives and organizational issues. One can obviously mention terms like an institution, association, organization, even business as such vocabulary appears often in the context of clubs. But this entity has also characteristics of a social movement as it requires individual involvement and it attempts to write its own history. Further, it would be possible to call those gathered round the club’s influence as a folk group. There is a profound amount of oral communication, informal knowledge, that helps one to get accustomed and familiar with the environment, special narratives, and special songs and routines that need to be performed in specific time and space, to name just a few characteristics (Arvidsson 1999). And in turn all those activities work to consolidate a group, to make it into a strong folk group.

From the purely organizational perspective my interviewee had a valid point. A football club is there to play football and they are built on one standardized pattern. That blueprint, nevertheless, is stretched and contested as rather often supporters, club officials and players would try to differentiate themselves from the others using, like Sune observed, other social categories that would mark one’s identity. He questioned how those could apply to the actual football, to 11 men running on the pitch, but this is just a part of the picture as this activity needs spectators and is situated in time and space that are going to influence the club. Throughout our conversation time and again Sune refused to be a nostalgic former football player, as he downplayed importance of matches or supporters involvement. Instead, he talked about his family, children, and work.
It seemed that the realization how flexible and unpredictable this social context could be made Sune retreat to the very mechanical level of the game, to the rules and standard organization. Did he only play football? What would that mean? Back in the 1970s, he studied and worked as well, attending trainings and still having full working hours, first dealing with customers during week days in his ‘normal’ job and then entertaining them on weekends when scoring goals. He also confessed that he felt like an extinct species, old and not connected to the modern world, upset with technology and youngsters.

Obviously he was more than just a player, having quite successful career after his years on the pitch and earning a university degree. His reluctance to romanticize the past was also mixed with his evaluation of the presence. He did not particularly like the rather modern, Italian-style support and ‘ultras’ with their flares who demanded attention and claimed influence on the club. He mocked the understanding of football I learned from other supporters and his laughter created uneasiness during the interview. At the same time, he knew and, as presented in the quote above, listed other factors that influence football and stretch meanings that football can have. Consciously or not, Sune romanticized the past as well, albeit in a different way. His narrative showed a different club, established by different social connections that, in his opinion, had differed dramatically from those I was exposed to while doing fieldwork in contemporary clubs. The past seemed to be as entangled in webs of cultural evaluations and meanings.

Although later on in the interview Sune said that football could never be separated from the rest of the society, he did not want to accept that the other social markers could stick to it as well as the exchange goes both ways. A club influences its surroundings, but it is influenced as well. Using history by commercial brands have become very popular, and football have become quite fixed on its history.

From the perspective of for example MFF fans, their history and traditions become a counterweight to financial investments when it comes to football. One of the supporters commented on those matches:

Salzburg... yes let’s talk about Salzburg. They say ‘oh we had support on the stands’ but when they came to Malmö, those ‘devoted fans’ (makes with his hands a sign for quotation marks)... and it is 100 years old club, MFF is. They were shocked. They think they know what support is. (interview with Theo 02.02.2015)
For Theo, Malmö’s age and traditions contributed to its success and clearly contrasted with the commercial club from Austria. In his opinion it was only right for MFF to win as they belonged to the traditional European football with lots of strong support, tifos, flares and chants. Although you can buy new grounds, players, paint new beautiful logos, you cannot fake history around them, just build them up little by little. Theo watched MFF since a small child; his personal story is also strongly connected to the club as he grew up with football culture and participated in the changes. Throughout the interview he would stress the ‘organic’ character of it, changes coming almost naturally, as if shaped by fate and MFF’s glorious history. What bothered him the most was the unapologetic and commercial approach of Red Bull, changing crests and colours and demanding attention and recognition, for which normally you would need decades if not centuries (interview with Theo 2015).

Certainly, not everybody is as critical of what Red Bull does to football. Two researchers in sport management in an informal conversation expressed their deep respect to those developments and how quickly the clubs from Leipzig and Salzburg were moving up in the football hierarchy. They were familiar with the common evaluation and the ‘dead bull’ sticker, to which one commented ‘that is such bullshit’ (football chat 2015). In their opinion there was nothing wrong with a bright new club that paves its way to success. Nevertheless, for many fans and those working in football things like deep regional roots, traditions, and loyalty to the club are as important ingredients of the game as players on the pitch. Success is welcomed, but it is not exactly necessary. This tension stresses magical character of football that allows co-creation of the phenomenon. Supporters want to feel that they are an important part of it, that they create football as well.

Thus, economical issues in various forms were never far away from the football environment. Sociologist Richard Giulianotti presents a counter-narrative to the notion of money being a fairly recent ideological problem. He writes:

> Football has been a serious business since at least the 1890s; directors have almost always protected their investments rather than pursue the fans’ interests by over-spending on players or ground facilities. (1999, 42)

What comes at play here as well is also the deep-rooted myth that football, in its glorious origin years, was not about money. Already in 1892 in England there was a price list for players that were currently for sale (Andersson 2002, 52). Further, football from the start encapsulated some of the class divisions, for example the push for amateurism was partly due
to the ‘gentleman’s ideology’ as a ‘real gentleman’ would lose money on his hobby rather than earn it (Andersson 2002, 46). Also, money was viewed by some as remedy for unruly behaviour as early as 1910s. Torbjörn Andersson presents cases from Swedish football crowds’ disturbances when officials tried to raise prices of tickets to stop thugs (understood as lower classes with limited income) from attending matches (Andersson 2001, 6).

As mentioned above, money is considered partly as a threat, as it tends to overshadow passion and devotion for the club. And such criticism, not surprisingly perhaps, applies often to players. Since they are allowed to change clubs as they please, money has become very important. Still, even players can associate money with problems and moral degradation. One interviewed footballer expressed strong feeling in his evaluation of Swedish football:

- What you think is the best about football in Sweden?
- In Sweden? I think there is not as much filth because of the money as in other countries. It is something about passion; I’m speaking about the players. It is easy when you go to other countries; it goes over (interview with Gustav, 30.10.2014).

It somehow feels more genuine when money is not the first thing on the agenda, and history is a good decoy that shifts the main focus from the financial situation. The interviewed player counterweighed money with passion, and he later mentioned that it is history that makes Malmö special. Gustav associated money with filth, with dirt. Since Sweden did not have privately-owned clubs, it avoided the ‘pollution’ that was a threat to football. Traditions, heritage, history all appear as markers of ‘healthy’ and good football. It is not to say that Swedish football is a charity-based with local players only, quite to the contrary. But since success is very much based on the size of one’s wallet, the counter-narratives are handy and one hundred years of history, of being a part of the social developments, is well suited to be used against failures and discontent.

The criticism towards Red Bull clubs was reflected in a way many Swedish clubs reacted to AFC (previously United) of Eskilstuna. The observations opening the chapter provide just one example of various matches when the young club, first time in the highest league, was viciously attacked. The criticized club is a hybrid of different clubs merging together. It started as Café Opera… (get this history). Right after being promoted to Allsvenskan, it changed the name and home grounds to Eskilstuna, and merged with the club from Eskilstuna in the beginning of 2017.
The picture taken in May 2017. The banner is a protest against AFC Eskilstuna, a club that is driven by capital rather than history, tradition, or strong support.

The supporters of big, old clubs that dominate Allsvenskan took AFC’s presence in the league almost as an insult, something that should not happen. That club, coming from nowhere, having almost no support, changing names and locations, seemingly, every other year, delivered an underlying message that no-one wanted to hear: that money is enough to have good level football, in the sporting sense. That money, and not traditions, heritage, prestige, organized support, flares and songs, would take a club to victory. In short, it would seem that a thick wallet could destroy it all, and just buy the experience.

Hence, the protest organized by Djurgården stated the opposite: *Money can’t buy me love.* The distributed leaflets had a message of threatened supporter democracy, praised the 51% rule that makes it possible for fans to have democratic influence over the club and provide beautiful support during matches. The text stated that these factors were viewed with envy by other European football nations, and not the actual athletic level of performance. Thus, AFC was accused of jeopardizing everything Swedish football stands for, because all they have is money, no support and no history. The assault was strengthened, as mentioned in the opening observations, but chants with stern messages. To the joy of the rest of Allsvenskan, the disliked club performed poorly. It seemed that the spell worked – other clubs were proving to AFC that something else was needed than an assembly of freshly purchased footballers. This
resentment towards a new club has then been another way of voicing fear that football might exist without its supporters, fear translated to the money problem.

This narrative has been based on a presupposition that it is the love for the club that makes this context happen. And one cannot buy love. If you attempt it, it can be categorized as prostitution. Selling oneself to the highest bidder. There is a strict line here: success can bring money. Yet money should not bring success. Perhaps one could go back to the folk belief that money cannot buy you either love or happiness. The collected fairy tales are full of narrations about wisdom, strength and patience winning over artificial power or wealth. (theorize it a bit)

During an interview with a former player, we also talked about economic issues. He was also in favour of the Swedish model, and tried to point out that mystical ingredient that money just cannot buy:

Åke: But then - with members you can work long term but less money. Privately owned so ... hmm. Unfortunately, this sport, too, is about too much money. Then you just start thinking about how much money I can earn. It's lost a bit about what the football is about. Heart, loyalty ... those values are really important if you're going to form a team. There are the clubs so have such money and (inaudible) successes of course ... but ... football is much, much, much more than just money and success ... it's fun with success ... but then it's much cheaper when you find such a feeling in people .... To do something together. I now sound like the Social Democrats ...

I laugh.

Åke: So ... to me it’s difficult to see why you would buy a player for millions .... Why? (Laughing). There are so many who can perform. (...) But I know that the world is very selfish. And has always been and will always be (interview with Åke, 2015).

Åke was aware that this social context is, and has always been, based on money and profit. Yet he points out that it is not the trophies as such, but the emotions and being a part of something, that are most important. In other words, the official history that needs numbers, victories, titles, that clubs themselves can provide, is deemed as secondary to the memories and personal narrations that does not come from the centre of power, but from those who should be only consumers, spectators, yet become by their own proclamations, co-producers and co-owners. They are the club, by means of magic and myth making25 they forge emotional connections.

25 See my fantastic article
This sense of loyalty and building something together means that clubs rely on individuals and their involvement in spreading the stories filled with meaning and emotional engagement. It is the voluntary work that keeps clubs going. Although many have their museums and collect pieces of glorious pieces of history, but to transmit joy, anger, despair, years of hope and disappointment, other kinds of institutions have to be formed – human museums. In the following section I shall look into the strategic position oral (and nowadays digital) transmission plays in sustaining football fairy tales.

One could point out that this obsession with age, heritage and tradition is also a translation from patterns that exist in broader social context. ‘Old money’ versus ‘new money’, established aristocracy, however impoverished and living in dire straits, still claims a better position than those who just set on earning cash. Literature provides examples of this process, for example *The Great Gatsby* (1925) by F. Scott Fitzgerald. Social differences and class distinction is not about cash but taste and aesthetic choices (Bourdieu) and those are often based on age, hereditary titles and items.

Anthropologist Kate Fox stated in a book about English society that the upper classes do not buy furniture, they inherit them (year page). Clubs’ usage of history, heritage and tradition refers to a similar method of establishing distinction and hierarchy. Like the use of Latin phrases, it is a practice translated from the outside, also known, acknowledged and not questioned much. But because it happens if football context, context of play and its own sense and nonsense, it can be interpreted as being out of place. However, it also highlights the ‘common’ dimension of the practice that becomes disturbed because of the translation to football.

**Human Museums and the class question**

Cultural scholar Tara Brabazon writes that time in a museum “is not linear. It is not chaotic. It is circular, like a conversation, assembling linked ideas that mushroom into bigger narratives about the self and society” (2006, 47). This observation about traditional museums could be applied to football in general. Because it lives through conversations, it glues together many different perceptions and ideas about the society, from won titles, through economy issues to working class narratives. This helps to create a specific museum whenever football is happening, attracting views, ideas and images like a magnet, ready to be used whenever needed. The effect could be described as specific *oral museums*, carried around by fans,
official and officials. Whenever one affiliates him/herself with a club, a curtain is drawn to reveal an individual, yet collective, display of a football-framed life journey.

There are some popular interpretations why people are so invested in football and why they it is so popular. One MFF official connected it to the luck of personal success. He though the collective success of a club made it for many appealing to become fans. In this own words:

And for many people this might be …perhaps it’ll sound a bit harsh, but it might be the only thing that there are proud in their lives. It might be where they feel that they are successful. They are cheering for the right team and the team is successful. (…) but the main thing with MFF is that we have long proud history, being the most successful team in Sweden, and of course for a city like Malmö with its background as the fourth biggest city in a region (…). Yeah, you can say whatever you want but we are still the best. (…) We’ve always been the region team, since we are the biggest team in the region and the region has, like I told you before, we have a history of being a bit different from the rest of Sweden, we have history of being Danish, we are looked upon a bit from above, when you speak with people from Stockholm making fun of our dialect, and this is something we are proud of course. (Interview with Linus, 2012)

No matter where you turn, the clubs never fail at showing how their history fits perfectly to their strong, successful images, and makes their new victories all the more logical. It was like that in the past, and then surely they are bound to win again. For Linus, the club meant strength and threat to those outside of Skåne. He was also keen to produce a narrative based on ‘us versus them’ dichotomy on several layers – us in Skåne against the rest of Sweden, our dialect and the Stockholm dialect, our successes versus other teams’ titles.

As a club representative, he tried to build a strong facade around it, the official version of history that takes into consideration all that would make the club stronger, more unique and special. History helps to construct an image that is very important for framing the club against other competitors. Further, the process works both ways, as Linus explains it, as the club’s image reflects back on the city and then individuals who find themselves within the circles of MFF’s glory. Since MFF has been in Malmö for more than one hundred years, it seems that the two share and exchange memories.

One of my informants said that “Football is a traditional sport. (…) You can pass it from generation to generation” (interview with Jan, 2012). MFF, HIF, AIK and DIF are all more than hundred years old. It is a long period of time encompassing several generations. It is not only about fathers bringing their sons to matches, which of course happen as well. Also, those
clubs try to represent something stable in ever-changing social reality. Samuelsson comments that employing history has a stabilizing effect to some extent (2014, 151). Profound and dramatic changes around clubs rarely manage to damage them deeply. Leaving players, fired coaches, and demolished arenas seem to be transformed into threads that weave the turbulent history without shaking supporters’ faith and devotion too much.

Thus, a feeling of continuity is being established. For Arvid, MFF supporter, history seemed very important and the club, the city and social developments blended together:

It is very important for Malmö. And...yes... I think it is very important. And there are two sides of it. First of all, the one of the two, if not the one most successful teams in Sweden. We have a history of winning, and we are always talking about that and always proud to mention that, especially to other teams you know, we thrive on that. The late 80s, the 70s, the 50s, that sort of thing. That history is very important. But also there is the history of Malmö FF as a part of Malmö, the working class club. I’m not sure that the kids of today would understand that, would get that. But at least my generation... I was born in 1972... and the old ones... I think we understand... we understand the connection to the working class movement and the harbour and the industries and all sort of this. Kockums... you know the ship yard? That connection is very strong. Or was very strong. Now it’s not like that anymore, because MFF has the hegemony in the town. So it is the club for everyone. (…) So that’s sense of history has perhaps lost its meaning, but to me, at least to me personally, it’s still an undercurrent all the time. (interview with Arvid, 30.10.2014)

Maurice Halbwachs wrote about class identity: ‘It is apparent that those who inherit a bourgeois fortune acquire along with it bourgeois virtues, under the influence of education and environment’ (Halbwachs 152). Some elements are bound to go together and since MFF started as a working class club certain qualities and virtues, certain sets of collective recollections stick to its image. These narratives have a universal positive character. Being from a working class background carry desirable qualities for all the clubs who can claim such descend. Further, it also brings those clubs closer to the origin, to the working-class cities of Manchester, Liverpool and Newcastle that are cradles for modern football. The commercialization of the game also contributed to changing perception of it, and sales for money what was the creation of people. As Pierre Bourdieu put it: “In brief, sport, born of truly popular games, i.e. games produced by the people, returns to the people, like ‘folk music’, in the form of spectacles produced for the people” (1978, 828)

Fentress and Wickam (1992, 87-143) provide a whole chapter discussing memories based on class, and actually women’s memories. Certainly, working class identity has been recognized and written about, and thus it does carry some memories that would contribute to the
construction of such identity, especially dramatic events like strikes that were later retold and romanticized. Referring to Maurice Halbwachs, Fentress and Wickam state that there used to be a prediction of “factory-based patterning of memory of the working classes” (1992, 120). Thus, the memory has been connected to a specific place – factories. Would there be then a structural connection between experiences of factory and football? In my master thesis I called a football club ‘dream factory’ (2013)\(^{26}\). The emerging point here would be that the working class ethos so cherished nowadays in football might be also strengthen by the possible pattern of creating narratives based on historical events. The difference could be one of scale. Unforeseen drama in football can happen any day, with profound intensity, and repeatedly throughout the year.

In the interview quoted above Arvid was unsure how the working-class background would be reflected in contemporary MFF, with pricy tickets, new shiny stadium and VIP lounges. Yet, since it was so in the past, the created mythology carry on those images and Arvid stressed his personal connection to this disappearing aspect of MFF. This narrative, based on collective memories of class divisions within the city, seems to transfer tensions from the history of the club through personal experiences. It refers to the beginning of 20\(^{th}\) century when MFF had a local opponent, IFK Malmö that was considered a bourgeois club, while MFF would attract the working classes. Thus, the history of the clubs reflects to some extend the history of changing demographics.

IFK Malmö went down from the top league in 1960s. MFF became a club for everyone, simply because there was no alternative when it came to elite football (interview with Theo 2015). The working-class narrative is very visible in the MFF storytelling, especially because it can be contrasted with IFK Malmö, which has been commented on as recruiting players with ‘a bit more bourgeois background’ (interview with Jesper 2015). It is curious though how IFK Malmö still exists in local imagination. It has been in lower leagues since 1960s and lost its connection to MFF. Still, people carry the display with them. While shadowing in Stockholm during Djurgården’s match I was told about a person in Malmö who so hated IFK Malmö he refused to buy yellow dresses for his daughters, yellow being the colour of IFK (football chat, 2015). When MFF was going to play against PSG in the qualifications for the

\(^{26}\) One of the most famous stadiums in the world, home to British team Manchester United, has been called the Theater of Dreams (reference). Bråka med den - they are not a passive audience.
Champions League in 2015, there appeared a Facebook page stating a match between PSG and… IFK Malmö. Sport journalist from Malmö, Max Wiman, wondered in his blog entry how such mistake could be even possible, but some fans commented that fans don’t mess with each other by accident, reference to IFK being a clear sign of trying to annoy MFF (field notes, 2015).

The ghost of the former rivalry is still around, and it is nourished by unexpected personal stories. In a way, MFF needs this narrative to have a contrast. As IFK Malmö disappeared from front pages and is not out there competing for top titles, their memory is carried through MFF fans who actually keep the story alive. It allows them to differentiate themselves from the ‘bourgeoisie club’ and also keeps that bit of history up in the air. Otherwise it would be hard to do in Malmö of the 20th century, with most of heavy industry disappearing and poverty associated mostly with immigration. There is something curious about this narrative, as 50 years on, it is that reference that is lifted and discussed by my informants. In other words, it would seem that they took the roles of story museums rather seriously. Keeping the badge of ‘working class’ makes MFF less about money, less about the modern rich club with sound investments and a healthy budget. Something that they have become.

All interviewees associated with MFF referred to the club’s roots in working class, working class movement, social democrats and Eric Persson, a former MFF chairman and an outspoken social democrat as well (Tapper, Sjöblom & Andersson 2013). Making a contemporary connection, one person stated that football ‘is still a sport for working men’ (interview with Erik 2015). Being a working man himself, Erik incorporates MFF with his personal story, at the same time weaving a certain understanding of the club’s past to his private life story. In that way, he manages a specific display of connected identities, his personal museum of football history.

The city has been transformed and lost its working-class dimension, and so did MFF. Yet, the mythology behind it is still carried by the club and used to differentiate Malmö from the new type of football that does not have its roots in hard-working quarters from the turn of the last century.

The personal narratives connected to football can take on the more general way, as already seen above, and incorporate the story of social class and social change. The football myth of

27 http://blogg.sydsvenskan.se/wiman/2015/09/03/gult-far-bla-fans-att-se-rott/ 10.09.2015
creation is torn between middle and working classes’ ideals. On the one hand, it was established as an activity for English boarding schools but derived from earlier forms of folk games and activities (Andersson 2002, 41-48). Working classes quickly found themselves attracted to the ‘new’ invention (Andersson 2002, 51). Football also became a recommended activity for office-bound middle class men, but for those from working class background as it offered a good mix of rules and regulations that would help to develop characters while engaging in physical activity (Andersson 2002, 83-84). Thus, slowly but surely, football became more concerned with gender rather than with class, as the activity was described as manly and prescribed to boys only (2002, 76-77).

Considering the Swedish clubs, it seems they still carry badges on working-class whenever applicable. In an informal conversation while explaining my project a person asked why I chose predominantly working-class clubs (football chat, 2014). From the historical perspective one can see this as a development than a pre-existing category. As Andersson remarks “The middle class gradually pulled away from the football field itself and instead handled the ideological control through football federations, judiciary and sports journalism. The situation was actually similar to that in England, where bourgeoisie tended to leave active participation in the wake of the working classes’ invasion” (2002, 87).

Such narratives bring forward the merging of class influences and almost a sort of hybrid more than two struggling collectives. The working-class remark is particularly strong within Malmö FF, as it can confront itself with the more ‘upper class’ IFK Malmö that used to be its rival up to the 1960s. The conflict of ideas here seemed to be about money as well. One of the supporters related this:

Yes... we... because that was the polarization in Malmö, and that was the... the err... rich boys’ club. And I don’t know if you know the story from the 30s because then they told on Malmö... because then we had amateur rules, you could not pay the players. Everybody did, but under the table. MFF also did, but they put it down in the books, so it was sort of in the open, and they were pretty open about it. And then IFK Malmö told the Swedish Football Association about it. So MFF was relegated for a couple of years. So the chairman, the person who built the club, the legendary Eric Persson, he never never got over that. Cause he also thought it was this upper class against the working class. (…) So that’s one of those crucial little moments also to, affirmative thing that created what MFF is today. It goes deep. We are who we are because we are not who you are (interview with Arvid 2014).

It would seem that the narrative is accepted and the specific trace of character of the club assumed even now, although the story happened decades ago. The image is built on the
principle ‘we are not you’. The imaginary of what being working class means some to live when contrasted with ‘the other’.

The working-class narrative around Malmö FF has become a part of the oral textuality and so its meaning is audience-dependent and its interpretation is performed and actualized within the club’s context (Seitel 2012, 77). Simply, referring to the working-class adds to the coherence of MFF’s image since it tights it to the city and its former social structure, but it also requires that this narrative is a part of the ‘vernacular’. The vernacular, ‘developed in person-to-person interaction without the mediation of institutional codes or controls’ (Noyes 2012, 18) allows a group to perform their identity as it is understood within a certain cultural frame. The working-class performance cannot happen in a cultural void, it needs the context of a group familiar with it and acknowledging it (Seitel 2012, 101). Referring to Kockums, docks, and manual workers established a mode of communication and understanding within Malmö. Thus, when forced to move outside the frame, my interviewees see the lack of balance in what was and what now is, the working class.

Torbjörn Andersson questions the ‘purely’ working-class or bourgeois character of clubs and shows tides of influence depending on geographical location or political orientations in different cities (2002). When writing about AIK and Djurgårdens IF Andersson states that both clubs are presented as based on working-class ethos, but their beginnings were a bit finer and more sophisticated than the urban myth would have it (2002, 101-102). Va för jävla packe ni and disco and punk and fintfolk questions. What comes forward still is the working-class ideal that clubs would like to have. And this ideal turns into a weapon against clean, well-fed and well-trimmed corporate football. The pride of being at least partly from the lower parts of the society could be again contrasted here with shame. As queer theory goes, it is about deconstruction of identities and categories (Jagose 1996). Lifting up and bragging about not-so-noble origins is curious in itself. Rather than striving to reach the ‘rich and famous’, clubs manifest their humble connections. At the same time there is a distinction between the city and village. Many times Djurgården fans showed a banner saying ‘Hej Bönder’ – Hello Farmers to almost everybody who is not from Stockholm (field notes 2015). This was commented on by a HIF supporter who said that the capital thinks everything else is just one massive village (football chat, 2015).
Katarzyna Herd
Manuscript for the final seminar 2017 – Football’s fairy stories, memories, histories

One can also point out that current economic developments resulted in romantic attitudes towards the working class that built up the country with their bare hands. MFF supporter Arvid, already quoted above, expressed those feelings well:

But also there is the history of Malmö FF as a part of Malmö, the working class club. I’m not sure that the kids of today would understand that, would get that. But at least my generation... (…) That connection is very strong. Or was very strong (interview with Arvid 2014).

The notion of the connection is important because it also stresses continuity. These men were tied to the spot where they worked all their lives. The social or working mobility were minimal and thus they literally constituted the city. At the same time one has to consider the strength and persistence of the myth. Both former players from MFF that I interviewed received university education, one becoming a lawyer and one a historian (field notes 2014). Such positions are not exactly in tune with the working-class image. However, they too referred to the lower-class character of MFF. The constant production and performance of historical bits and references keeps such categorizing alive and this recycling strengthens the myths behind.

It should be noted that modern Malmö is associated with high immigration, with an estimate of 43% of people with foreign background in 201528. Certainly, the squad of MFF is very international, but migration does not take on a ‘historical’ narrative like the working-class does. If mentioned, it usually is connected to racism, and fighting against it. Clubs like MFF and AIK praise themselves for being best integration projects in the country (field notes 2015), and AIK attracts young players and supporters from Stockholm’s suburbs (interview with Carl and David 2015). But it is still the working-class reference as identity marker that is more important. It might be that the cultural capital embedded in lower classes balances out the stigma of humble origins. In other words, one gains a sort of heritage and traditions with that image. On the other hand, no-one wants to remember that there have been neo-Nazi followers on the stands before the ethnic diversity has been acknowledged and welcomed (football chat 2013). It still seems to fit uneasily within the greater football club story. Any museums are selective, and so are the human museums.

Another anchor in working class also comes from the discussion provided by Fentress and Wickam:

28http://malmo.se/download/18.6fb145de1521ab79c0a7f349/1460644990500/Malm%C3%B6bor+med+utl%C3%A4ndsk+bakgrund+2015.pdf; http://malmo.se/Kommun--politik/Statistik/Befolkning/Utlandsk-bakgrund.html
Nations do not remember spontaneously and collectively any more than smaller groups do. Essentially, the bearers of national memory since the arrival of capitalism is each country are the upper middle classes and the intelligentsia, who have inherited the mantle from the aristocracies, lawyers, and clergy of pervious epochs (1992, 127).

Thus, the writers ascribe the grand, hegemonic narratives as designed and composed by those in power. This would be hardly a surprise, as those in the upper strata in the society have resources and access to different modes of cultural capital that are out of reach for the working classes. However, this football discussion presents an interesting twist. Would claiming working-class origin, and thus perspective, mean that the narrative of a club would also be acquiring a desired origin? Representing masses and being composed by them? Pierre Bourdieu pointed out the tension between participation and consumption in popular sports (1978, 823) when this kind of engagement (like many others) is ‘discovered’ among lower classes and then repacked as elite endeavor then taught and sold back:

It seems to be indisputable that the shift from games to sports in the strict sense (…) took place in the educational establishment reserved for the ‘élites’ of bourgeois society, …the English public schools, where the sons of aristocratic or upper-bourgeois families took over a number of popular – i.e. vulgar – games, simultaneously changing their meaning and function in exactly the same way as the field of learned music transformed the folk dances – bourrées, sarabands, gavottes, etc. – which it introduced into high-art forms such as the suite (Bourdieu 1978, 823).

The commercialization also meant that the nostalgia of amateurism and voluntary engagement was set in place, further alienating the experience from its original users/makers (Bourdieu 1978, 824). Going to your roots in the form of class question is an attempt to reclaim the original character of sports, when it was supposedly pure in its form, i.e. have more meaning that commercial meaning. Bourdieu’s evaluation, however, carries rather grim prediction for the future. Commodification – alienation – emptiness seems to be the path. Perhaps the macro-structure perspective that he represented did not include human resourcefulness in building connections based on emotional engagement. Football of today is commercial and focuses on profits, yet there is space for emotions.

If supporters can claim very stable and defining position in clubs, how can ever changing players be of any importance? Certainly, one needs to have a squad to have a game. Yet, their position is not straightforward. Supporters manage to capture and preserve narratives that are stimulated by players, and the ever-renewable content of the team makes the stories spin. The

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29 Jean Baudrillard expressed similar grim views in an essay about sport and violence called The transparency of evil.
following section explores the dichotomies of old and young, as well as stable and unstable elements that appear in a club composition. To have a creative and lively environment things have to happen, yet there needs to be a preserving ingredient. Even though clubs’ rate of change (of anything there really) is extremely high, they manage to pull a picture of stability and continuity, and that is a trick worth exploring. The provided examples include football shirts and colours.

**Hundred years old and forever young**

In this section I also deal with the attitudes supporters have towards players as bearers of a changeable yet historical items – shirts.

Modern clubs strive to present themselves as a synonym of stability in ever-changing social context. But football also offers an interesting mixture of ephemeral and immortal, and in that it is not different from other institutions and socially constructed spaces. However, in this context things tend to have their own rhythm which flows parallel to the ‘every day’ matters and thus it needs to have more straightforward discourses to break through to the popular imagination. As one supporter remarked, football is everything, but it can evaporate to thin air if everyday life does not go how planned (football chat, 2013).

One of the interesting factors in football is that the most stable elements of it seem the most transient or vulnerable, like the name, crest or colours used by a team. These come with a birth of a club and adorn it throughout its existence. It would appear also that because those most stable elements are so delicate it is possible for a club to go through the worst upheavals without losing too much of its confidence or good humour. The teams tend to be referred to by the colours that they use. Malmö is then ‘himmelsblå’ – the Sky-Blues, HIF are di Röe – the Reds. This is an international phenomenon as for example Manchester United carries the nickname of the Red Devils. Those colours are not free from discussions either. For example Gefle IF has also a sky-blue shade as their colour of choice, but their club has officially started earlier than Malmö, already in 1882. Because of that when they came to play against MFF they had a banner saying ‘The oldest sky-blues’ (field notes 2016).

Although the colours are important, their origin is not always known even to the devoted supporters. A Djurgården fan could expressed his own surprise that he was not familiar with the story behind the colour scheme:

Me: Where do your colours come from?
Katarzyna Herd
Manuscript for the final seminar 2017 – Football’s fairy stories, memories, histories

Anton: I don’t know actually. I think… I should know this. They were chosen so… (laughs)… I sort of guess it has something to do with the sun and water… something like that.
Me: OK.
Anton: It is nothing that… I should know about this… It is not anything we talk a lot about. There is no… mythology around it. And the first crest was just like silver… square really. Then they changed it and got the colours. But I actually don’t know.

Certainly, it might very well be that specific colours are chosen ‘just because’ without any deeper meaning. Such reading can appear later and so seems to be the way with Djurgården’s colours. The club states that there is no agreed explanation why red-yellow and blue were chosen to represent them, but apparently it happened in 1896. The explanation of this arrangement was then expressed in romantic-nationalistic poem from 1908 written by Johan af Klercker, that presented yellow and blue as the colours taken from the Swedish flag, and red was supposed to represent love (from dif.se, retrieved April 2016)30.

The colours are usually reflected in teams’ home kit patterns, and accordingly they are blue, or red, or black. This usage of colour zooms then on a football shirt that players wear during matches. Their style has of course changed under the last century, but the colours stayed (more or less, one cannot exclude the change of shading) the same. There is a certain level of mythology when it comes to the shirts. Many supporters cherish those bought in the past during or after an important event and wear it when going to see matches. The modern shirts are quite expensive, approaching a price range starting at around 60 euros (about 600 Swedish crowns). Quite often they are personalized, with supporters putting their own names on them.

The commercial battle over football is also happening on shirts, as quite often they tend to look like canvas of advertisement. One player commented that it felt much better, for example, in Malmö, because their match shirts did not have an overflow of different ads (interview with Peter, 2012). Also, sometimes fans can sense economic trends through the sport gear, as one person remarked that Real Madrid’s numbers on shirts look a bit funny because they change the fond so that it would appeal to the Asian market (football chat, January 2015).

The value of such shirts goes up (at least theoretically) when they bear players’ signatures. Such pieces can be acquired as souvenirs as well, sometimes simply bought from the shop. It happened once that such shirt was lying on a table, waiting to be signed, while I was waiting

for an interview with one player. Footballers were eating their lunch. Around them moved an elderly lady who worked for the club, and she made sure that they had enough food and that everything there was in order. She even gave me some lunch. As I waited, she strolled at one point to the shirt on the table, casually picked up a pen and signed it. I held my breath. Did she really do it? Somebody sitting close to me also noticed and exclaimed: 'hey did you just sign this shirt?' to which she replied ‘yes, I always do’ (observations, 2015).

This simple act of signing a name on a shirt seemed very bold and unexpected to the onlookers. First of all that woman clearly did not belong to the playing squad, but her evaluation of her role and position in the club let her have the confidence to place herself among the team ‘stars’. She transgressed the symbolic space and became a member in the “time honoured male preserve” (Welford 2011, 365). She stretched the understanding of an insider, and gained symbolical access to the exclusively male team.

It seemed that there was another level of controversy in the lady’s action and that was the shirt itself. Simply put, it is a piece of historical evidence. Those colours represented the club for more than one hundred years. Since the football reality is rather unpredictable and unstable, the shading on a piece of cloth becomes a firm pillar of clubs’ identity. Through that they can claim that they have been there and unchanged for a century, and that means that several generations cared for this institution, spent money and time attending matches and cheering for them. Claiming such longevity is a bold statement and clubs want to see and present themselves as a stable element in ever-changing social contexts (interview with Linus, 2012). Obviously such statement works very well even on commercial level, and ease and quantity of produced shirts, or different paraphernalia that bear club’s colours help to maintain the image of a stable, well-rooted and traditional institution.

Obviously, the style of the shirt has changed and garments used 70 or 80 years ago do not resemble their modern counterparts. However, clubs realize that history is a good commodity and that it sells. It has become increasingly popular to make retro-shirts or retro-inspired shirts. This is another twist on producing history, and quite literally. The old-new commodities are based on nostalgia and awake the glory of the past while serving its purpose as commercial mass-produced goods that generate income for the clubs. The modern
interpretation of the past is strengthened by selective visualizations of the by-gone.

MFF players from 1940s in their team shirts and Magnus Ericsson, who played in Malmö in 2013-2014, (? Check! Was it only 2014?) wearing a modern reproduction.

While editing the past and tailoring it according to present needs, almost all the clubs can get some sort of ‘former glory’ – the past golden days’ reference. Thus, almost all big clubs have nowadays their versions of retro-shirts, binding past and present, dreams and myths together. Fans get to re-enact the past and they even seem to become each other’s historical recollections.

AIK’s and Djurgården’s versions of their retro-shirts.

Although they are material objects, they are, as Tine Damsholt put it, ‘materializing’ (2014), morphing and shifting while being used, worn, or put on display. A shirt can acquire historical meaning by itself when something out of the extraordinary happens. Sometimes such action
requires only a change on the main sponsor, as new shirts have to be provided immediately and
the old ones suddenly become ‘wrong’ or irrelevant, and they stop portraying the present and instead start referring to the past realities of a club. Sometimes players who had been previously celebrated leave in somehow ‘shameful’ circumstances and thus shirts bearing their names cannot be worn again as they start to represent unwanted elements of the past. It does not have to be a spectacular betrayal of a given club, but quite often in interviews people state that they used to like or even adore some players who would then leave ‘as Bosman’31, after just half a season, thus disappointing the club and fans, showing them that money meant more than the local sense of belonging and being loyal. What would anger fans the most would be of course choosing its main enemy as the next work place, and such instances are not unheard of.

Further, a shirt can produce an interesting historical context too. Such examples are not common, but they happen. One such episode took place in 2012 when AIK played a European qualifier match against a Russian team from Moscow. AIK was forbidden from using the name of their main sponsor on their shirts, Åbro, because it is a brewery and such advertising is forbidden in Russia. AIK and Åbro made them a creative move and gave that space for this one match to Amnesty International, thus making a bold political statement32.

I was told about this one-match campaign by a supporter who admitted that it was an interesting and brave move. I was told about that event several times because it was special, and because the shirt created something unforgettable during that match. Although the general discourse about that match was positive, some fans raised their objections to mixing a club in a politically-charged activities, although Amnesty itself carries a badge of not being political and UEFA accepted the request33. Caring a message of human rights to a country that is continuously criticized for not respecting them has strong political connotations even though it is framed in a neutral narrative.

Moral implications aside, this match became memorable for many because of the unusual shirt that players wore. It has been woven into the mythology of the club that praises itself in being big, strong, and not afraid of bold statements. When my informants told me to look up for this match it was because of the shirt and not the score or the actual meaning of the game itself. The space on the shirt that was strictly commercial before acquired suddenly a political

31 An explanation of the Bosman case and its consequences
or moral dimension. Amnesty International has a history of its own. Its actions are not without controversies and Amnesty is both praised and criticized and praised for giving the voice to issues that are viewed as delicate or controversial in some states. The white fabric of AIK shirt served as canvas for mute criticism of the other team’s country.

One should not forget that this was, in a way, a good commercial move indeed. Covering one’s sponsor let to ‘revealing’ of it in a wake of having the unusual name on display.

As seen on pictures above, a shirt in itself would probably not be quite enough. It needs a piece of flesh inside it. Shirts need to be enacted. Generation after generation, players not only compose their personal narratives but also weave the ‘grand history’ of the clubs they play in. Obviously, that is where the heroes come to the picture, those players that help to adorn mythologies around clubs. As the shirt becomes important, is not only enacted, but it acts too, and it could be described as the ‘actant’ in the understanding of Greimas (develop)

Another interesting history-telling done with a help of a shirt was presented by AIK in 2016. That year the club celebrated 125th birthday and during that season money was collected to make a special monument to commemorate its founder Isidor Behrens. An entire campaign called ‘Res Isidor’ was established (field notes 2016). As one element of those effort there appeared a special shirt, called retro. Its special features were the old club’s crest on the breast and its grey colour, as seen on the advertisement photo below. The shirt is a bit peculiar though. It looks like a normal, modern sport gear, and it is not stylised on the past models of football shirts. Its uniqueness comes from its being grey as it is a bow to AIK’s mythology.
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As the story has it, AIK always played in black shirts but in the 1920s the club was very poor and the players had to use same shirts over and over again. The constant usage and multiple washings affected the black colour making them grey (interview with Maria, 2015). This, in turn, is one of the possible explanations why the nickname of AIK is ‘gnaget’ – a pack (mischief) of rats. A rat is an official symbol of the club, and its grey colour is said also to refer to the washed off black shirts. It is then an intertextual connection that is not easy to understand unless one know the history and the folklore surrounding the club (reference reference reference). The grey shade of the shirt does not automatically connect to AIK, but once the textual layers are peeled, it becomes an iconic representation of the club’s history. Yet, it is not a ‘natural’ process, it has to be understood and transmitted. It also reveals some of the structural elements of history that AIK hopes to build, like ……… (tropes and that stuff and Hayden White).

One could interpret this new retro shirt as not being driven by history as such, but by a myth, an oral narrative that materialized in a piece of fabric. The story behind the nickname and the rats involved make up an interesting narrative that is living its own life. David Herman wrote about narratives being a “basic human strategy for coming to terms with time, process, and change – a strategy that contrasts with, but is in no way inferior to, “scientific” modes of explanation” (2009, 2). The story being this commercial manifestation is one of harsh conditions and struggle, of being tough and not giving in. It is a contribution to creating a certain image based on not glorious, but heroic past, and the cultural capital encapsulated in the times of despair. It is then a kind of explanation how AIK came to be what it is today.

34 The translation to English is not easy here. Gnaget comes from ‘gnawing’, a verb. It clearly refers to a rodent. The name Rodent – Gnagare, is also used by supporters.
AIK’s players thank their fans, their black group continues to jump and chant. Players are there clapping. One young player takes his match shirt off; he is encouraged by others to give it to the crowd. He does that, and then joins his group again, laughing and chatting. It seems like he did it for the very first time (observations, MFF-AIK 09.04.2015)

The importance of the shirt, the wearable history, came to light in the time of trouble. In 2016, Helsingborg went out of Allsvenskan to the lower league, Superettan. In the dramatic last match HIF lost to Halmstad. Present on the pitch was Jordan Larsson, son of Henrik Larsson, former HIF player, an international star, and then coach of HIF. After the match a group of angry, masked fans went over to Jordan Larsson and tried to take the red and blue shirt off him.

The news about the incident were reporter abroad, for example Daily Mail and The Guardian wrote about it, providing pictures as well\(^\text{35}\). A one minute long clip on You Tube shows the event. The print screen shot comes from the aforementioned video\(^\text{36}\).


\(^{36}\)https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9z6q4IzlEt0 (retrieved 09.06.2017)
The whole drama actually took only 49 seconds. A group of about 20 people came on the pitch, and tried to strip Jordan of his shirt. The action, though aggressive, was also highly symbolic. They tried to take back the colours, as Jordan, failing to help the team stay in the league, was not worthy of them. With the anger and frustration mounting, they went to humiliate their star player, because he did not rise up to their expectations. They lost, the club was going down. The shirt did not belong to Jordan Larsson, he was just trusted with it, when he was first admitted to the club and presented with it. When joining a new team, players often get a special photo session when receiving and putting on their new colours, with their name and number on. It has a ritualistic character. A newcomer becomes one of us, he belongs from that day on. The dramatic incident concerning Jordan was the reverse rite – he was marked as the other.

Yet again, the shirt fulfils a certain role in the narration, it becomes a protagonist, an actant (Greimas… Herman…).

**Our boys – for a while**

The reference to shirts once worn comes often in the connection to players. For example, when saying farewell to one player on their official Facebook page, Djurgårdens IF wrote: ‘Tack för den här gången Nyasha. Det har varit helt fantastiskt att ha dig i vår förening och vi
hoppas att vi snart får se dig igen i den blårandiga tröjan!’ (translate) It is the time spent wearing that shirt that counts, it is when the shirt activates a player’s presence, but also when he activates the shirt and the club.

Sometimes players are rewarded by fans with shirts made by supporters groups and featuring their names or nick-names. These players do not have to become key elements in the clubs’ narratives, quite often they are foreigners and they stay in those clubs for relative short periods of time. One player commented on changes: ‘it is of course a big change in a team. And actually… during the four here, if I were to guess a number, surely around 30-40 players left and new ones came. So the change, in this work the change is constant. In the… in the football team’ (interview with Peter, 2012).

Still, considerable effort, time and money are put into making shirts commemorating footballers that are gone the following week. Although many fans expresses their reluctance in getting attached to any players, stating that one just cannot trust them, or that they can disappoint any time, they are needed to have the story going and they are the key element that keeps turning the wheels of football history. AIK, DIF and MFF had some of their players turned into commercial merchandise, AIK using its Finnish striker Eero Markkanen before he was sold to Real Madrid, DIF supporters displaying the nickname of Nyasha Mushekwi who played half a season in 2015, and MFF commemorating Guillermo Molins, the former captain who got a serious knee injury in 2014.

38 Eero Markkanen’s career did not set off in Madrid, and he returned to AIK for the 2016 season, which made supporters happy and making yet another shirt with his name on it (field work, 2016).
It would seem then that supporters concentrate on the fact of wearing the shirt, their shirt, and trying to make as much myth from the players as possible. Those shirts are quite short-lived and a DIF supporter said in an interview that he ‘needs to wear the Mush shirt as much as possible now, because it will be irrelevant soon’ (interview with Anton 10.08.2015). These one-season wonders might be read as rather clumsy attempts to connect to footballers that quite often openly care more about their careers than any particular club. Nevertheless, they are used very rather efficiently, even before they have time to act. Willingly or not they become active parts that warm up the clubs’ old bones, they help to rejuvenate the myths with their flesh and blood.

Mush, Nyasha Mushekvi, played in Djurgårdens IF for just half a year.

Sociologist Dorothy Smith…

…the teller of the tale has to do rather a lot of contextual work to show how the behaviour can read as m.i. type – Dorothy Smith, 1978, 39

For there is nothing that holds the alphabet together as an ordered series of letters except customary usage – Dorothy Smith, 1978, 42

The actual events are not facts. (…) A fact is something which is already categorized, which is already worked up so that it conforms to the model of what that fact should be like – Smith 1978, 35

G.H. Mead has described how ordinary material objects – tablets, chairs, etc. – as well as more complex social forms, are constituted by socially organized responses which refine and elaborate their uses out of the possibilities given by their sheerly physical properties (Mead, 1934: 75–82). The object itself, the cultural object so defined and constituted, may this also be understood as yielding sets of instructions for how to act towards it, how it may be inserted into human programmes of action. And as which occasions and situations a failure to act within the terms provided by these instructions displays the actor as failing to recognize the object as it is for any one else – Smith 1978, 46

It resembles a rapid sacrifice. Everybody knows or expects the players to leave at any time, any time a transfer window opens there is a risk, especially since they know they are not the top league, that there is more money and prestige abroad. Since both fans and the
management do refer to players as tools\textsuperscript{39}, they also treat them as such. And this attitude does not consider only scores, wins and titles, but means to make their own history as well. Although staying with a club for a short period of time and unable to become significant in the club’s narrative, they are used to create tiny folktales that strengthen the image of the organization.

Using another metaphor, one could go back to agriculture and see the rapidly developed emotional connections as a specific \textit{greenhouse effect}. Everybody knows that players are likely to disappear after just a couple of seasons, nobody expect them to end their lives in the aforementioned clubs. Yet, there is a longing for affectionate relationships, and those are developed rapidly, grown in a greenhouse conditions, raping quickly but perhaps not having as much taste, as much depth. It is as good as it gets though, and all parties are willing to reap the fruit obtained in this way.

As Halbwachs comments on preserving a sense of continuation through various figures in religious memory: ‘Their appearance becomes transformed, but it was necessary to preserve their nature as gods, at least for some time’ (1992, 87). Those players are ‘free to go’ in a sense, because the collective force around the club managed to use and freeze their presence in a form that strengthens the club. For a moment, the focus zooms on them and makes them one-day heroes, but their importance is not limited to those brief encounters, as it can serve as the binding point between the past and presence and most importantly keeps myths and memories alive. These are small bricks of collective memory that keep being re-shifted and replaced, but they are necessary. Quoting Halbwachs, ‘even at the moment that it is evolving, society returns to its past. It enframes the new elements that it pushes to the forefront in a totality of remembrances, traditions, and familiar ideas’ (1992, 86). Like cells in an organism that are replaced every week or every day, those short-lived players nevertheless do something for the grander picture and add other, albeit small, tastes and textures while wearing a blue, read, black-and-yellow, or a stripy shirt.

\textit{Concluding remarks}

A humble piece of fabric can be thus used as a steel-strong historical canvas that is able to accommodate hundreds of young athletic bodies that would enact it and make it materialize in many different forms. But to have a club one also needs other elements of materiality,

\textsuperscript{39} See Herd, Dream factory – magic and myth-making in football.
preferably arranged as an oval structure with a rectangular made of grass. Football stadiums are massive constructions, both physically and emotionally, as they take a lot of visual space, but they claim social space as well, becoming meaningful and storing emotions, memories, and hopes. The following chapter thus zooms out to concentrate on bricks and concrete that is transformed into narratives. The interplay of past-present-future is very important and visible in football and clubs are filled with time-jumps and overlaps when presenting their narratives.

Being one hundred years old also means that there is a substantial capital in form of traditions, stories, heritages and collective memories that can be used as advantages by the clubs. The very visible dichotomy that has sprung to living deals with money vs. history and is used to highlight the ideological differences between football based on money and football based on heritage and emotions.

Also, in this chapter I discuss how players are used in different modalities – songs and shirts based on them are intended to live longer that they are in clubs, producing a special kind of history, or in a sense staging the engagement.

The emphasis is put on the value of history that is framed in a broader social context and the cultural capital that it represents (Bourdieu, 1984). The strong presence of economic factors that exist in modern football in various forms, from rich investors to lucrative sponsors and sky-high prices for the best players, has created the need for a counter-narrative that could emphasize other advantages and capitals that clubs can have, should they lack the financial backing. History is used as one such example. Also class discussion, success and failure stories have their place in the stories that circulate around the clubs.
4. The Northern Stand is not just songs – our history is engraved in concrete

The opening ethnography comes from shadowing done during a match between AIK and Djurgårdens IF. It exemplifies how a space made of concrete becomes animated with overflow of emotions.

A bit of black smoke appears. There are some official announcements, some about the security, through the speakers, but the crowd that shouts through them, they are just not listening at all. A new banner appears: ‘Ni är inget utan Bajen’ – you are nothing without Bajen (Hammarby IF). A response is raised on the other side of the stadium: ‘Firman Bajs’ – Firman Poo, referring to the hooligan firm called Firman Boys. The black and yellow AIK crowd is not happy. ‘Fuck you’ is heard and shown in the general direction of DIF supporters.

DIF have a beautiful tifo prepared. When the players march on the pitch supporters wave the flags making colourful lines, then a picture of a man in a crown appears, and then a slogan ‘kings of Stockholm’, and then yellow, red and blue serpentines. AIK is getting angrier with every step of DIF performance. Then finally DIF open smoke cans and blue-yellow-red clouds fill
the stadium. A minute later a thick fog covers everything. Players leave the pitch and security announcements come that this sort of behaviour is not allowed at stadiums. Nobody listens. People are just booing and screaming. My contact person smiles faintly looking at AIK ultras raging in their section. ‘Our tifo group is on strike’ he says. ‘They don’t have anything, there is something going on with Friends owners’. Apparently there was some disagreement between the tifo makers and the owner of the arena, as AIK does not own it. Their working space was raided by police and there were some hurt feelings. Thus, AIK people just watched DIF performance.

The match is postponed about twenty minutes. The crowd screams like crazy ‘play the match!!’ Everybody’s waiting for a ‘go ahead’ from the security. They cannot play if the visibility is too poor, one guy explains. When the ball starts rolling, chanting gets even stronger. The familiar ACAB – all cops are bastards – sign appears in the crowd. DIF’s SLO is very proud that DIF players have red socks, but I have no clue why and get no opportunity to ask about it (shadowing, August 2015)

This chapter’s focus is on the historical exploration of geographical regions, stadiums and grass in the narratives around the clubs. History is produced in a geographical and local context, and it requires a space to happen. As already mentioned in the previous chapter, memory is often arranged geographically rather than with dates (for example Nylund Skog year, Nielsen 1995). References to regions or stadiums do not only place narratives, but also help with their creation. History needs space to happen. How is physical space important for making ‘daily’ history? What is necessary and what can be omitted or forgotten? What elements of the spatial historical narratives are useful in this context?

"Skåne Team” or "Stockholm Pride”

Football clubs often state in their names their location. A town or a city district ties a club to a specific, geographical community, marking insiders and outsiders on a physical level. In this chapter, I shall discuss the meaning and functions of historical references that are based on the locality of MFF, Helsingborgs IF, AIK and Djurgårdens IF. Clubs and their supporters use actively traces of history to promote or re-forge the links with their physical surroundings. Further, the chapter’s focus zooms to the stadiums and the material side of emotions, finally shifting to the discussion of the grass, one of the most basic elements of a football game. How is geographical location used in creating history? What kinds of references can be used? What happens when a space disappears, when a stadium is dismantled? How are stories transformed, and how stories transform the space?
The clubs presented in the study are located at two different spectrums. Two of them are from Stockholm and two from the Skåne region. This constructs a specific atmosphere that surrounds them. AIK and Djurgården are the key players in the Stockholm derby, whereas HIF and MFF have a ‘Skåne derby’, which is referred to by Stockholm fans as a ‘fake derby’ (interview with Joel, 2015). The polarization becomes also visible on another level, as the capital is positioned in contrast to the southern-most region in Sweden. Thus, Malmö and Helsingborg share a geographical region while Djurgården and AIK share a city.

The most common historical reference that is used and binds together all clubs is the origin of Skåne. Now a part of Sweden, it was in the possession of the kingdom of Denmark till 1658 when after a series of military conflicts it final surrendered to Sweden (get a reference). Although the narrative is more than 350 years old, it is used eagerly by the supporters. MFF has a chant referring to this heritage:

We are from Skåne, red-and-yellow Skåne  
Here blooms rapeseed and poppy  
We have never chosen to be Swedish  
Free Skåne from Svea-state

The chant is perhaps not the most popular, but it is known and eagerly performed. In 2009 Malmö supporters were filmed singing it boldly and loudly at the central train station in Stockholm. Shouting in the middle of a capital that you would like to free yourself from the Swedish occupation, the fans dance and jump, to be surrounded by policemen trying to separate them from a handful of approaching Djurgården supporters. The seriousness of the message is contrasted by the crowd behaviour. Men are jumping and dancing happily, and they are aware of the scene they are creating as big Skåne flags are waving above their heads.

It is quite common for teams from both Helsingborg and Malmö to have Skåne flags rather than Swedish ones. Those are then popular in Stockholm, and sometimes names of organizations or districts are painted on them. MFF team actually has tiny Skåne flags at the back of their shirts (field notes, 2015). The political separatism in this message might surprise, but many clubs agree with MFF fans that the region does not belong to Sweden proper. For example supporters of IFK Göteborg made such a picture available online:

\[40^{40}\] My translation  
\[41^{41}\] The clip is available on Youtube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NXwKrIqfRJg
The message is quite straightforward – remove Skåne from Sweden. The arrangement can be linked with the specific team from Göteborg because of the colour scheme used in it. This particular shade of blue and white stripes are connected to IFK and its supporters. The supporters of Stockholm teams shared the feelings about Skåne and its place. Maria said in the interview that she was going to ‘northern Denmark’ and referring to Helsingborg. Another supporter, Joel, was mocking the local dialect and saying that he did not understand a thing when attending matches in Malmö because it as just Danish. Hence, both sides play with the same reference, using it simultaneously as a point of pride and an insult. This double-edged attitude was illustrated in a sprayed message nearby castle ruins called Brahehus:

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42 Brahehus is located close to Jönköping, almost exactly half way between Malmö and Stockholm
The picture was sent to me by a friend and features a sprayed signature of a MFF supporter organization (ultras Malmö) which is spelled with the Danish ‘ø’ that does not appear in the Swedish alphabet, making a strong connection to Skåne’s Danish past. But another interesting component of this picture is a small text ‘Dansk jävlar’ – Danish bastards, and an arrow pointing to the larger text. This is a political discussion taken to the folk, informal setting. Having Danish spelling evokes separatist tendencies, but it is embedded in a very specific football context which influences how the message is interpreted. There is also another level of intertextual reading in this photo. The ‘Danish bastards’ phrase is commonly associated with a Swedish TV series *Riket* where one of the characters played by Ernst-Hugo Järegård shouts those words in many episodes, the most famous one happening during his monologue on a roof. The phrase has a cult status, and it also connects this act of vandalism (as the photographed cultural exchange was performed by devastating historical heritage) to popular culture and intertextual reading that is possible in the Swedish context. In other words, the intertext is visible here as one work contains reference to other sources that build up possible and more complex meanings (Worton & Still 1990, 19).

The textuality of MFF’s supporter organization, its geographical location, the location’s historical developments and also a popular culture reference make up an intertextual monument of four words and an arrow. The physical place is then also of interest. The message was sprayed on castle ruins, and the structure was completed in the mid-1650, which would place it around the time when Skåne was being transferred from Denmark to Sweden and both countries were at war. The physical relict from the past, the monument built in 17th century has been brought back to play a part in the modern-day ideological and political discussion that are expressed through football fandom. The Stockholm-Skåne exchange highlights the flexibility of evaluating an event from the past. Inclusion and exclusion are not fixed but float around and are applied according to current wishes. Certainly, this is not the only dichotomy present in Swedish football, but it is perhaps the most outspoken one.

This contrast and apparent rivalry is performed within a context of sport, where us vs. them mentality tends to be taken for granted (Giulianotti here). The supporters also use another dimension as words also have history (Worton & Still 1990, 18). The names of regions and nations especially so. It is quite obvious, but it adds the extra layer of the textuality that is possible here, as they employ heavy, loaded categories to their advantage. Ambiguous historical events and rivalry are compressed in some terms that cannot be used without activating a whole network of meanings and symbols. They would not work in just any
context, but the specific structure and characteristics of football allow such uneasy terminology to flourish and gain firm ground.

The discussion of the Danish-Swedish boundaries is used to mark borders and exclude. The curious trips in the depths of history are selective and could be considered shallow, but they have a purpose. As long as the reference can be used pragmatically, it is going to be performed. Especially this particular historical border and connection exists in the textual Swedish narrative. It is widely understood and that is why it is successful, people can read its historical context and it can be applied to create the markers that could enchant one club or hurt another.

Recalling the past can be messier than just associating spaces with dates. One can mix clubs, regions, cities, Swedish and international contexts. Commenting on beer labels, Samuelsson writes: (translate) 'Tavlor och texter från kronologiskt och geografiskt skilda miljöer blandas i en salig röra, utan att det görs klart på vilken sätt de hör samman, om de överhuvudtaget gör det. (…) med eller utan större historiekunskaper, kan skapa sin egen konstruktion av det förflutna' (Samuelsson, 2014: 144). Such messy displays appear often at stadiums where protagonists and events from different decennia are pulled together to make an image of a club. The image below is a picture from Olympia stadium during a match between HIF and AIK on 19th July 2015.

Although not that clearly visible, the flags on display included, among others, the flag of Skåne (red with a yellow cross), a flag of Freetown Christiania43 located in Copenhagen (red flag with three big yellow dots) and also a blue banner with a white cross. I had to ask HIF’s SLO that I was shadowing that day what the flag was. To me it resembled the flag of Scotland, but he laughed and said that it was representing Luggude härad, a ‘hudred’ which had been an old Germanic geographic division and which had been located in that area of Sweden, dating back to the 13th century (reference). In an article from 2006 published in Helsingborgs Dagbladet (30.08.2006) the local flag expert Kennet Karlsson said that the Luggude härad banner had not existed before, and the flag was designed based on a sigil from 1524. Thus, Helsingborgs IF supporters presented a unique mix of geography and history during the match.

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43 Explain a bit about the Freetown Christiania
Such display requires high degree of intertextual reading. For me it was a total mystery and I could not find any connection between a white cross on blue background and the club. But for those schooled in the context it was making sense, rather than being a random flag. At the time I did not think of asking any AIK fans if they understood the message, but some of the asked HIF supporters did not know the story behind it. How much does one need to know? How important is it for the collective? This particular historical reference might be of some interest to HIF fans since there is rivalry of claiming Skåne as their region. That one fabric pushes the local reference back in time and points to another historical geopolitical arrangement that predates the idea of Skåne as a political unity. It might serve to differentiate one Skåne team from another.

One man’s “reality” was another man’s “utopia”, and what appeared to be the quintessence of a “realistic” position on one issue might represent the quintessence of “naiveté” from a different perspective of that same issue. (White 1973, 46)

When it is a matter of choosing among these alternative visions of history, the only grounds for preferring one over another are moral or aesthetic ones. (White 1973, 433)

There is a constant creative search for references that could be used. In 2015, fans from Malmö came to play against Djurgårdens IF at Tele2 Arena with a banner saying that Stockholm’s bloodbath was the best thing that ever happened:

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44 HIF supporters refer to the club as ‘Pride of Skåne’ and MFF ‘Skåne team’. Malmö claims wide support from southern and eastern parts of the region (field notes, 2015)
This refers to a tragic event from 1520 when after the invasion on Sweden Danish king Christian II promised amnesty at first, but then on the 8th of November 1520 about 80-90 people were executed, mostly clergy and nobility supporting the regent Sten Sture the Younger. MFF supporters reached back to a very tragic event in Swedish history and aimed it against a Stockholm club. Once again the history was played in the Danish-Swedish tunes. One could discuss the moral value of bringing up such a shocking and cruel reference to the modern day sports, but the aim of such display is a quick and easily recognizable insult with, possibly, a witty or double meaning attached to it.

Old wounds still fester. Inherited pain persists. Ancient injuries sap the pride, shrink the purse, cripple the power, and constrain the will even of remote putative posterity, who ‘too easily accept the story that they and their kind were always good for nothing’, and blame themselves for their subordination (Lowenthal 2015, 132).

Time travel’s temptations are manifold: to enjoy exotic antiquity, to inhabit a happier age, to know what actually happened, to commune with forebears, to reap the rewards of being modern among ancients, to correct the past or to improve the present (Lowenthal 2015, 63).

One has to verify this strong statement in its context. Its meaning is produced there on the spot on the stadium (Worton & Still 1990, 17). The meaning of it is stretched and applied outside the supposed settings, making a historical event into a football reference. It is shaken from its comfort zone, taken out of a memory museum and shown around like a dug-out skeleton. And like a decaying body this reference has a strong stench of being inappropriate and un-sporty. It is the immediate context that is somewhat unfitting and yet breathes new life into the reference, and it stirs how it becomes a part of the football tale on this occasion.

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45 Do find a source for this
In all the examples above location is given historical perspective that positions the clubs in the present and reflects on the future. The communicative process described above is dependent on possibilities of performance, immediate context of those expressions as well as linguistic elements and historical references that need to be activated while being performed (Ben Amos and Goldstein 1975, 5). The context in football can be very precisely narrowed to particular material structures that hold their power over the game and supporters and over the memories and narratives that are shaped inside their walls. They also have an impact on their own, which means they are not only becoming history, they can write it as well.

**Stadiums – materiality of emotions**

Stadiums are very specific spaces. They are mythologized by clubs; they are referred to as homes. They are places of glory, infrastructures for storing memories and emotions. This specific architecture, an oval shape surrounding a pitch, is a vital element for every football club. It can, as Tara Brabazon puts it, “visualize power, providing a link between visuality and authority” (2006, 23). Certainly, the big arenas that can host twenty, thirty, forty thousand people evoke awe and respect. Clubs are judged on the quality of their home grounds; if it is nice looking, modern, comfortable, have good facilities, or if it is historical, if it means anything. (field notes 2015-2016).

This chapter deals with question how locality and materiality are used and performed in the football context, what kind of narratives they stimulate, and how loss or crisis of identity is worked out creatively and innovatively. The four clubs are not represented here evenly, but as their voices in this matter differ from whisper to screams, but they all have their own positioning, historically and geographically, that needs to be taken care of.

A stadium can be describes as a liminal, heterotopic construction that allows people to participate in certain rituals and engage in a behaviour that would be not accepted, or not appropriate, elsewhere (Herd 2013). But it is also a historical place through its relative longevity, as stadiums are not changed often, and through personal connections that tie it to human lives. In other words, stadiums house memories. Aleida Assmann takes a closer look on a phrase “the memory of places” and concludes that it ‘is both convenient and evocative. (…) it is evocative because it suggests the possibility that places themselves may become the
agents and bearers of memory, endowed with a mnemonic power that far exceeds that of humans’ (Assmann 2011, 281).

This agency that Assmann mentions takes interesting shapes in the time of crisis (Kristofer’s book, develop!). When football homes start crumbling, disappearing and given drastic makeovers, they enter different narrative contexts, provoke reactions and stir emotions. In the following section I shall present two stories of challenged and abandoned stadiums. The concrete structure acquired characteristics of living organisms and became important elements in creating artistic expressions of football fandom. Sport sociologist Richard Giulianotti introduces a term ‘topophilia’ to describe the ‘deep affection of people towards particular social spaces, or “places”’ (1999, 69). Giulianotti stresses that there is psychological connection with the places, sport being a good example, that let them be entrusted with meanings and emotions (1999, 69).

“In hell, you Råsunda’s murderer!”

In 2012 Stockholm clubs AIK and Djurgårdens IF were faced with harsh reality of being evicted from their home grounds and moved do new arenas that they did not own. The moved prompted anger and disappointment, also hard criticism towards the governing bodies of football.

AIK played its matches since 1937 at Råsunda stadium which the club partially financed (Hagström, Johansson & Jurell 2010 page number). From the historical perspective it should be acknowledged though that the Stockholm clubs never occupied fixed places. Both AIK and Djurgården changed their home arenas during their long histories and battles with city councils and presented a challenge for city planning. AIK supporter commented:
And you have to know, AIK used to have Stockholm Stadium and moved to Råsunda, and DIF had the Stockholm Stadium but could not play high-risk games at their own place, so they played them all at Råsunda (interview with Martin 2015).

Quite simply, three mighty clubs in one city is a tight squeeze. The decision of closing it down and then dismantling Råsunda was not taken lightly. Carl, when referring to the decision process, said:

But our arena where we played so actually everybody loved it. Eh… we can say that people complained about that arena too because it was quite old, and cold, it needed to be freshened up… there was a lot that happened on the way during the process, there were some violations and corrupted politicians, and people who sat on many different stools at the same time… bit like that. (interview, 2015)

The situation described here by Carl was the one of chaotic approach that was not focused on the best result for football or the club. Rather, the question of where the matches should be played got classified as a problem for municipality, taking into consideration money and issues of urban planning, and not feelings or preferences of fans or the club. Yet again the solidarity to the club and ‘real football’ was jeopardized, in Carl’s opinion, by money in a form of corruption, involving corrupted politicians. The last match and what followed then came through in many interviews, making a dramatic narrative of a lost home. Maria became emotional when referring to the last match:

There were flowers and a minute of silence… I have never seen so many men cry! (...) The last time we played at Råsunda I was working as a steward, not security exactly but being there to help, and I was by the eastern stand, so with Firman Boys and the like. And there were 27,000 at Råsunda. (...) And it was Thursday and they were supposed to come on Sunday to just take bits of the stadium, like you know, like memories, like you do when you close an old stadium. But then seconds after the match everybody was so emotional and I hear all this noise ‘frrum, frrum, frrum!!!’ and then I look around and they are ripping off the seats one by one. And then there is this huge noise and I look and just think ‘oh my God they took the door!!’ (interview, 2015)

Flowers, farewell words and tears accompanied Råsunda on its last day of being a football arena. It was treated like a lost member of a family that was escorted in its last journey. Maria also described a rather common practice of allowing supporters to get a piece of the arena before its annihilation. The same happened to another Stockholm club Hammarby (reference). When their home grounds got closed, fans helped to dismantle it. Maria also referred to those bits and pieces as ‘memories’. A piece of plastic or concrete became loaded with spiritual powers. Also, fans did not dare to wait those couple of days when they were supposed to
come and partake in the demolition. It happened right away after a match, with the air still filled with singing and chanting.

Moreover, there is nothing abstract or antiquarian about popular historymaking. In these interviews, the most powerful meanings of the past come out of the dialogue between the past and the present, out of the ways the past can be used to answer pressing current-day questions about relationships, identity, immortality, and agency (Rosenzweig and Thelen. 1998, 178).

The tragedy of losing an arena is connected to losing a storage for memories that is able to accumulate many individual connections over long periods of time. As Aleida Assmann puts it:

Even if places themselves have no innate faculty of memory, they are of prime importance for the construction of cultural memory. Not only do they stabilize and authenticate the latter by giving it a concrete setting, but they also embody continuity, because they outlast the relatively short spans of individuals, eras, and even cultures and their artefacts (Aleida Assmann 2011, 282).

The term cultural memory that Aleida Assmann and her husband Jan introduced is a stage after transition from communicational, face-to-face, every-day memory transmission (Assmann 2011, and Assmann 1988). Once it is not possible to share the memories between generations, the society, Jan Assmann states, construct cultural memory that lives in form of rituals, monuments, ceremonies or written accounts (Velicu 2011). But the way Jas Assmann describes this concept shapes it into popular understanding of folklore. In his own words cultural memory ‘preserves the store of knowledge from which a group derives an awareness of its unity and peculiarity’ (Assmann 1988, 130).

The stadium, because of its longevity and purpose becomes an agent in storying and preserving memories and emotional connections. The arena is granted with special power for being displaying collective memories because it does tie to family histories and long-established ties to individuals, which makes it into a ‘generational place’ (Aleida Assmann 2011, 284). Sure enough, supporters do not shy from taking about Råsunda as a member of a family and a living being. Martin commented in an interview: “Friends Arena… (signs). Råsunda, I mean Råsunda is your wife. We lost Råsunda, so we lost the wife. I strongly work and support that they should have their own arena’ (interview, 2015). In another interview Kristian said ‘About Råsunda – I was not like… that worried. But we understood what we lost when we went to the new arena. Then it hit us” (phone interview 2016).
Both Kristian and Martin had technical arguments why the new Friends Arena is not good, mostly due to the acoustics, size, and the fact that the club does not own the space. Still it was the personal connections, emotions and memories that were connected to Råsunda and got torn apart by bulldozers together with the concrete structure. The narrative constructed around the losing of Råsunda could be described as a ‘basic human strategy for coming to terms with time, process, and change – a strategy that contrasts with, but is in no way inferior to, “scientific” modes of explanation that characterize phenomena as instances of general covering laws’ (Herman 2009, 2).

Thus, moving to the new stadium is not about moving to new changing rooms and facilities, but about transporting a whole emotionally loaded invisible museum of personal narratives that were produced, performed and then woven into the bricks and steel that made Råsunda. The stadium went through ‘generational chain’ (Aleida Assmann 2011, 284) as fathers introduced their children to the ‘beautiful game’ and ushered in new magicians ready to cast new spells. Some supporters spoke with pride about how they became members of the club within hours of being born, or registering their children immediately as well (field notes, 2015). Several generations, many thousands of people got connected to football during one hundred years of AIK’s history, and the space for the connection was Råsunda.

Danish historian Nils Kayser Nielsen wrote about historial experiences of a stadium: “Both as a place of objective remembrance and as a communicative everyday memory, the stadium performs its part as an inward object of identification in relation to the local users” (Nielsen 1995, 31). The repeated experience of football contributes to creation of identity, and it
becomes a lasting element of reference that ties together a large group of people. It is, as Nielsen puts it, “a meta-social comment on being a citizen of a city” (1995, 31).

Stadium a ‘space-island’ not only ‘time-island’ (Nielsen 31)

With closing and then dismantling of Råsunda the continuation got broken. The stadium which was like a storage box or a family album, disappeared. The space itself became history. It had to be then saved. Thus, banners and flags commemorating the stadium appeared.

There came for example a banner with a text ‘Råsunda’s grass grows in heaven’ (left up corner in the photo). A place then became animated, treated as a person, and sent to heaven. The treatment of the former stadium indicates a creation of ‘emotional community’ (Rosenwein year). Develop this.

Get into history and emotions more, with materiality. Monique Sheer and performing emotions…

I have suggested that emotions, which respond to the proximity of others, do not respond the way that they do because of the inherent characteristics of others: we do not respond with love or hate because others are loveable or hateful. It is through affective encounters that objects and others are perceived as having attributes, which ‘gives’ the subject an identity that is apart from others (for example, as the real victim or as the threatened nation) (Sara Ahmed 2004, 52-53).

Ritual and belief (?)
Theoretical descriptions of ritual generally regard it as action and thus automatically distinguish it from the conceptual aspects of religion, such as beliefs, symbols, and myths. (…) Ritual is then described as particularly *thoughtless* action – routinized, habitual, obsessive, or mimetic – and therefore the purely formal, secondary, and mere physical expression of logically prior ideas (Catherine Bell 1996 (1992), 22).

That is, ritual participants act, whereas those observing them think. (…) By recognizing the ritual mechanism of meaningfulness for participants, the theorist in turn can grasp its meaningfulness as a cultural phenomenon. Ritual activity can then become meaningful *to the theorist*. Thus, a cultural focus on ritual activity renders the rite a veritable window on the most important processes of cultural life (Bell 1996 (1992), 26-27)

Further, the stadium became a tattoo motive. I interviewed two tattoo artists from Stockholm and both named Råsunda as a popular choice among football-interested clients. The arena came also up when bigger tattoos were designed on arms and backs and being interwoven with other symbols, like AIK’s founder Isidor Behrens and the angry rat that is used by some of the supporter organization. One of the artist stated that he had one client requesting a tattoo of a sign from the specific section at the stadium where he used to sit (interview with Håkan, 2016).

The pictures were retrieved from AIK’s Facebook page, from a photo album entitled ‘AIK tattoos’. It contains more than 400 photos.

Shirts commemorating Råsunda were also printed, and in 2013 an impressive photo album was published, where the demolition was closely documented in large, beautiful photos. Thus, the arena got new life as a form of intertext, which suggests it is not just a former sport facility, but acquired a number of textual meanings and then itself it is used to mark belonging, commitment, memory, nostalgia, group identity, ideological protest etc. As John
Frow presents the concept, he writes that ‘intertextuality requires that we understand the concept of text not as a self-contained structure but as differential and historical. Texts are shaped not by immanent time but by the play of divergent temporalities’ (1990, 45-55). By text I understand here Råsunda, as the idea of textuality could be applied far beyond written or printed sources (Worton & Still 1990, 1-44). It becomes a reference to the past, a symbol of former glories, and the lost home that was dear to many. It was also transformed into yet another blow to the club that AIK survived and in the end it will make it stronger. Further, modern technology allows the former stadium to live its life as a digital footprint, for example at AIK’s Facebook page. Nostalgic pictures and videos are shared regularly, including footage from 1930s when it was being built. Tara Brabazon sums up the complex meanings around spaces like Råsunda:

While sport is trivial, it has a powerful symbolic significance and consequence. For disempowered communities, sport is able to carry popular memory from week to week, from season to season. The shirts, scarves, songs and humour incubate a sense of place, even when terraces are lost, stadia are demolished and television coverage discards local sensitivities for globalized coverage (Brabazon, 2006, 35).

Råsunda was born in the popular mythology and through narratives that grew around it; it died then and was resurrected in various forms of creative fandom art. In other words, Råsunda’s meaning was not exactly given in its form or function, in its physical existence. Rather, the structure got its strength and agency because it was able to accumulate memories through emotions and allows the performance of memories through commemorating it (Sheer 2012). It is also ‘talked to live’ in a quite specific way. It exists as a monument and a holy place. It was a sacrificial stone that was sacrificed itself and mourned. The textualities that were acquired during the seventy five years of its existence were able to lift it to a reference of its own. Not surprisingly, the number 75 is also been tattooed on quite a few arms (interview with Henrik, 2016). To understand the meaning one has to be able to recognize the textuality of Råsunda and its history and its emotional transformation. When Råsunda ‘got killed’, figuratively speaking, it became a ‘sticky sign’ (Ahmed 2004, 92). Because of its history and the way it has been used, it acquired certain values that help to stick it to hold other identity markers together. Ahmed writes about ‘stickiness’ in its negative form as certain insults stick to certain bodies (2004, 92), but the process could be applied to the grief and nostalgia carried by the former glory of Råsunda.
To be sure, an idea of football and the material culture around it has had some resonance in archaeology. Archaeologists Rick Peterson & David Robinson did some excavations around the football stadium Peel Park in Accrington, Lancashire (2012). While carefully classifying all the material culture found, including plastic and remains of food consumption, they attempt to breathe life into the experience of watching football in the past on those grounds (2012, 276). They notice that football has been present in that spot for more than hundred years and produced manifold of material culture. In the Swedish context archaeologist Håkan Karlsson contemplated football as a failed project in cultural heritage (2004). Karlsson notices that although football has been present for a century, attracted a lot of public attention and financing, its structures, like stadiums, are treated as recyclable entities rather than spaces of cultural heritage. Could it be that the pop-cultural character of football, that Tara Brabazon stresses, prevents football to become recognizable as worth preserving as a heritage of the people?

Brabazone writes that ‘Heritage sanitizes and sandpapers the weathered textured surfaces of the past’ (2006, 38). Sport in general and football in particular evades this sanitization because it is so strongly connected to the personal connections performed in regular basis. In other words, according to Brabazone, ‘Football, like most popular culture, has a problem. Because it is life, and not only part of life, it embeds itself into daily conversations, clothing choices, meals and metaphors. (…) There is no barrier or separation between self and sport’ (2006, 41). It is possible to point out that this ‘pop culture’ category could be rephrased simply as folklore, as it is a part of everyday experience, informally learned and transmitted, with artistic and creative dimensions that include both objects and group practices (Sims & Stephens 2011, 6-11).46

AIK is not unique in commemorating its former arena. At least one more group of supporters, of Gefle IF, have produced banners with the name of their former arena, Strömvalleen, and the time frame of its existence, 1923-2014 during a match against MFF in Malmö in 2016 (field notes 2016). It should be noticed that such ‘memory resurrection’ is not a given pattern that is always followed when a stadium is changed. MFF moved, although a mere 50 metres, to a new arena in 2009, but the old stadium does not represent the same emotional or nostalgic capital as Råsunda have had for AIK. MFF supporters would say that the new one is so good nobody really cares about the old one, or that it could be demolished anyway, because it just

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46 The argument here enters a broader discussion of popular culture and folklore, as there are researchers willing to redefine pop culture as modern type of folklore. See for example: title here
stays in the way to Swedbank stadium (interview with Arvid 2014; interview with Theo 2015). Still, some of the fans do not appreciate the name of the sponsor (Swedbank) attached to their home arena, and refer to it as ‘New Malmö Stadium’. Such a phase was also used when MFF played group matches in the Champions League in 2015 because Swedbank is not an official UEFA sponsor and the name could not be used (field notes 2015). The games were officially at New Malmö Stadium\(^47\).

Nevertheless, the old arena in Malmö did not capture the emotional investment. Perhaps the move did not cause that much trauma as the Swedbank Stadium is used almost solely by MFF. The club is more invested with the key figures like Eric Persson, their legendary chairman, but the physical structure failed to be granted immortality. One can say though that MFF is the only top club in Malmö and as such can claim the entire space. AIK, Djurgården or Hammarby compete over the Stockholm territory, making it more meaningful to have special, own sanctuaries. In the same way, history of the urban space is not challenge by other clubs, while the capital teams engage in discussions involving physical locations in particular periods of time (Hagström, Johansson, Jurell 2010, page number).

On the other hand, there is a historical reference to the Malmö stadium that MFF fans would like to forget. In 1992 AIK won the league after 55 years\(^48\), and they secured the title when winning against MFF at the Malmö stadium. AIK supporters came all prepared, and after the match invaded the pitch. Some of the most iconic photos from that year were taken after that match:

\(^{47}\) In late 2017 came a message that the stadium will not be called Swedbank from the new year on (source, and wait what it is going to be called).

A person working for MFF said in an interview from 2012 that it was a painful experience. It was a kick for Malmö supporters to get better organized as AIK just took over Malmö. In short, a strategic place in MFF’s history got a connection to AIK and their narrative became embedded in that stadium. In a sense then, their space became contaminated. As my interviewee, Jan, remarked during our conversation, after the unfortunate event MFF fans got more organized, the support got better, there was kind of a vow taken that this should never happen again. One could say that what happened in 1992 could be classified in terms of
cosmogonic time (Tuan ….). A single event changed the relationship, the structure and physical property of that stadium. A form of creation happen, in AIK’s context, but Malmö saw symbolic destruction of their arena, as black and yellow crowd changed it into an icon representing their long-deserved victory. Certainly, this is not to claim that a single event claimed Malmö stadium away from Malmö, but it has created an image and it has had a lasting effect on supporters.

AIK supporters brought the reference back during a match in Malmö in 2017. The game took place in late October and MFF already secured its 20th title, leading by 10 points over AIK that was in the second place. MFF fans presented beautiful tifos and flares, bragging about its amazing result. AIK crowd responded with a banner saying that it was in 1992 when they came to Malmö that they showed them how support should be done, thus giving them a lesson in being supporters (match observations, 2017). AIK brought up a historical reference to undermine MFF’s glory and in somewhat classical case of using history they seek to poke a hole in MFF’s legitimization of power (Aronsson 2004, 62-63).

One the other side, it is not necessary to lose an arena to get emotionally attached to it. Olympia in Helsingborg is a cherished, mythical construction that currently (years 2015-2016) undergoes another renovation. Olympia is an interesting example of a changing structure that has occupied the same spot since the beginning of Helsingborgs IF. A book about the arena, published in year pays tribute to the historical space of sport competition, but also tells the story of the city from the perspective of a physical space with a very specific purpose. One could risk a comment here that since the club had a turbulent history, going up and down the different series, struggling financially, not being able to go back to Allsvenskan for 24 years, its stadium became a stabilizing element, an anchor of continuity.

As the club went down again in 2016, after 24 years in Allsvenskan, Olympia was being finished. The new season, in the lower league, was opened in grand style as it also was a reopening of Olympia. The iconic arch was gone and the arena got the look of the modern fashion.
New Olympia and Old Olympia…

Develop!

Because Råsunda’s narrative was based on emotional engagement, it helped to construct a specific emotional community around AIK supporters. The term ‘emotional community’ has been introduced by Barbara Rosenwein and refers to a specific set of norms that control and sanction emotional behaviour within a certain group. Their habitus thus contributes to establishing a certain pattern of expressing emotions, at the same time allowing some and disregarding others (Rosenwein year page number; Scheer 2012, 216). The grief after the lost arena can be seen as exaggerated or artificial, but it is already an established way to forge a connection with a club. As emotions appear in practices, they help to glue the distressed football community together. Although Rosenwein uses the term in a very different context, it is rather visible that supporters build together an emotional community that is rather universal among all the clubs. They do understand what reactions and what performance is acceptable and praised. Men can cry, hug and display emotions (get Lutz here!) even in the highly masculine environment because the specific code of behaviour, of expressing emotions, is accepted and currently performed.

AIK might have lost a place build of concrete, wood and brick, but gained a resurrected symbol of pain, evil faith and endurance that is able to enchant AIK and its present supporters. The past has been used to scaffold the present and build the future. In other words, the memory that became cultural mutated to be a tradition (Glassie 1995). The creative expressions which saved Råsunda strengthened the image of the club and added another brick in solidifying its identity.

Using the past to serve interpretation in the present, respondents assembled isolated experiences into patterns. From these narratives they could project what
might happen next, set priorities, take responsibility, and try to shape the futures (Rosenzweig and Thelen 1998, 68).

**Tele 2 – home of homeless souls**

The earthquake in Stockholm football that happened around 2012 meant that all the big clubs, AIK, Djurgårdens IF and Hammarby IF had to move their home grounds and play home matches at different, bright new and emotionless stadiums. AIK supporters expressed a unified view that they have had it the hardest way. As David and Carl expressed it:

Me: How was it with moving to Friends Arena?
Carl: With what?
David: Moving here, the stadium…
Carl: Moving here was very difficult for AIK. It is still very very hard. Many of our supporters… not all… some have matured to like it…
David: It goes like from two sides.
Carl: It was so… with the other Stockholm clubs… we had the toughest move. It was of course difficult for Djurgården and Hammarby… well it was easy for Hammarby because they moved just fifty metres…

David and I laugh.
Carl: So they stayed put in their area. Of course so did we. We are two kilometres away from where the arena used to be. Djurgården moved from one part of the city to the part where they have played hockey for some time now. But our arena where we played … everybody loved it.

Although hard and emotional, once Råsunda disappeared, the club and supporters were given an opportunity to mourn it, made a closure, and use it to no end in expressive, creative ways. In other words, AIK was allowed to bury its dead man of concrete. Also Hammarby supporters, as mentioned above, tore to pieces its old Söder Stadium, taking away chairs and bricks49. Such situation did not take place with Djurgården. The club just moved to Tele2 which they now share with Hammarby. This is far from a desired situation and caused a lot of friction.

Still, many fans express healthy pragmatism when it comes to changing arenas. Anton explained both pros and cons of the move:

Me: What do you think about the new stadium that you have, Tele2?
Anton: In the beginning it was rather… it felt wrong somehow. Stadium… our previous stadium… that is where you felt at home. I can say so that I still feel that it sucks that we cannot have our own stadium, but if you see past this so you see that it supports Djurgården as an organization. And supporters as well. Because there are more spectators, better, it is easier to create a good atmosphere. You can see

49 Get the link here
it as boost… we have become better too, we were maybe not that present at the old stadium… it was almost nostalgic in the end there. There were very few… almost no new people came to watch football there.

Me: Oh OK…

Anton: It was inconvenient to go there, difficult for families as well. (2015)

Thus, the change has had some positive impact visible in numbers and statistics, but Anton would still say that Tele2 does not feel like home. It is very difficult to mark it as a specific territory as well, as neither Hammarby nor Djurgården formally own the grounds. Thus, when the match is a home game for DIF, the arena is lit in the club’s colours, blue, yellow and red, as seen on the picture below.

Modern technology makes it possible to stretch the meaning of belonging. The lights provide an impression of inclusion and ownership. Just as AIK with Råsunda’s memories, Djurgården supporters bring with them banners that represent their old arena, Stockholm Stadium. For example, there was a banner with a text ‘Sofialäktaren’. Alma, who worked for DIF explained to me that it was a name of the part of the previous stadium, because there was Queen Sofia’s street right next to it, hence the name of the stands, was Sofialäktaren. In her own words, it was to create a ‘feeling of home’ at the new place (shadowing, 2015).

The contrast between the old and new arena is staggering. Djurgården’s previous home stadium was a historical construction erected in 1912 for the Olympic Games in Stockholm that took place that year. Its peculiar brick structure is to some extend outdated and not comfortable for modern-style support, for example the track-and-field tracks put the stands quite far away from the pitch. Yet, it is magnificent and beautiful, representing a specific
architecture from the beginning of the 20th century, with vines and roses growing around its walls (observations, 2015). Martin, AIK supporter even said about DIF’s losing their stadium: ‘and now they lost their soul’ (2015). Yet again, the old structure is given animated features and makes up a part of a ‘soul’ of a club. Djurgården was then endangered with losing something very precious, decades of memories anchored in their former arena.

The new Tele2 is modern; it has a roof and has bright new facilities. But it is removed from Djurgården’s traditional territory, which is Östermalm, and plunged deep into Hammarby kingdom, with their former arena, Söder Stadium, being just a short distance away from the new one. Hammarby fans do call Tele2 their New Söder Stadium, to the annoyance of Djurgården (football chat, 2015).

An actor and Hammarby supporter Olle Sarri partook in a fake TV programme that was describing Djurgården’s move to Tele2 as a gracious gesture from Hammarby to let them play at their New Southern Arena50. Sarri played a TV-reporter representing a stereotypical DIF supporter who is from an upper class, very polite and timid, and has no clue how Stockholm’s underground works51. One should mention that although the mockery and insults towards both clubs were common, supporters of other teams understood gravity and discomfort of this

51 The programme is available on Youtube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BJHfDqbQGx4 (retrieved 19.06.2016)
situation. AIK fan even commented about them having the same arena: ‘Tele 2 arena looks good… but it looks cheap actually, they both deserve better’ (interview with Martin 2015).

Unfortunately for Djurgården, changing to the new arena prompted sarcastic reactions from other clubs, making them the prime target for abuse. When IFK Norrköping came to play in Swedish cup against DIF, their supporters had a banner saying ‘We would rather share a pool with Elfsborg that move together with Bajen’ (shadowing 2015). This display let into a discussion that there was an apparent friendship between Norrköping and Elfsborg clubs and their supporters. One person commented that it was the strangest friendship situation, not possible to comprehend (football chat 2015). Still, Norrköping had a good reference for mocking DIF, as becoming ‘brothers’ with Hammarby was foretold several years before.

In 2009 there was a joke going around on internet that the two aforementioned Stockholm clubs would be merged and become one entity. Martin referred to it in the interview:

> There was this page hifdif.se and people spread the rumour that they were supposed to merge, and some journalists bought it. The video is so funny. DIF supporters all stuck up and in suits and then Hammarby hobos, singing together. The media bought it and it was just a big joke. But then when it happened for real everybody cracked. And yes they share a stadium. (2015)

The web page mentioned by Martin does not exist anymore, but the video made for this purpose is to be found on YouTube. It is made in the style of charity videos when different artist sing together for a common cause. Elegant and clean-shaved DIF supporters embrace hippy-looking Bajen fans that have long hair, beer cans in their hands and wearing sweat jackets. The song, accompanied by ringing bells and emotional hugs, features a refrain saying: ‘Blue and blue, green and white, together it shall go; together we will be bigger than AIK’.

The colours refer to the stripes on their shirts, two shades of blue for DIF and green and white for Hammarby. In short, the video is a ridiculous mockery of the two clubs in an apparent attempt to become bigger and stronger than AIK.

The strength of this over-the-top display also comes from creatively playing with pop culture and the genre of the pop music being used for charity purposes. Slamming together stereotypical Stockholm supporters with highly emotional and teary music style produces a surprising hybrid. But there is something very interesting happening here. The local lore about

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52 Bajen is a nickname for Hammarby. Elfsborg is another team from Borås.
53 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fhTOYGg90SA (retrieved May 2015)
54 ‘Blått och blått och grönt och vitt, tillsammans ska det gå, tillsammans kan vi bli fler än AIK’.
the folk interested in football has been applied to a certain artistic genre, to a specific type of music. There needs to be understanding of both elements and its original positioning for the joke to work. Borrowing a term from folklore studies one could see this as a process of re-situation (de Caro & Jordan 2004; Löfgren 2012 This re-situation means that there is a process of taking elements of folklore from its sociocultural context and applying them in an artistic one, which might also have a playful dimension (Löfgren 2012, 29). The established mythology around Stockholm clubs loaned the folk characters for the song, making it a chain process of transferring references from reality to fiction, and quite astonishingly, back to reality again.

The song was uploaded in 2009. Needless to say, when the move to Tele2 was announced by both DIF and Bajen in 2013 all of a sudden the joke became reality to the endless amusement of many football supporters in Sweden. People were quick to make funny pictures and comments, especially on Facebook. Terms like DHIF, HIFDIF, or South Brothers (Söderbröder) became common. During the derby match between AIK and Djurgården in 2015 one of the favourite chants was ‘Söder family – Djurgården and Hammarby’ (shadowing, 2015). In other words, the reference became popular and prompted a lot of creativity to mock, hurt and ridicule the situation.

One blogger wrote in 2013 about Djurgården moving to southern parts of Stockholm: ‘When poem became reality’55. In a rather unexpected way, the past was created in the future. The reshuffling of the clubs around Stockholm prompted a lot of creative engagement and entertainment around Sweden. The move was far from a technical issue. It became a symbolic exchange of insults but it also stretched the limits of identity and inclusion. The space that should be the most important, home arena, has become extremely symbolic and ephemeral. Its physical existence does not guarantee any identity markers, on the contrary, it challenges the clubs and instead of offering a safe haven, makes both DIF and Hammarby work to protect their character and uniqueness in this new uncomfortable situation.

Something that was not a historical happening, but an imaginative and well-executed joke became a widely used reference and became an intertext (Worton and Still year, pages) as the motive, the knowledge of the joke and applying it to the current situation happened in many forms and on many platforms. As an intertext, the reference underwent a transformation over

a time period when it was appropriated for the use in the broader context. It was decontextualized in a sense that although in 2009 nothing out of extraordinary was happening such a video with a claim of DIF and Hammarby merging was considered funny and worth making. Then it was textualized as it really happened and was laughed at. Finally, the real-life event got connected to the online joke and became recontextualized as a cruel fairy-tale that came true (Arvidsson 1999, 173). Thus, the narrative constructed around this move had to have connections in the two realities and two different events, the published video and the sharing of the arena, in order to be used to the best effect.

The described jokes and hints were drawn from the fact that the video foretelling the event existed, and not only that DIF and Bajen started sharing Tele2 Arena. In other words, it became a specific kind of folklore that became reality and the folklore again. Dan Ben Amos described folklore as artistic communication in small groups (1971, 3-15). Such definition emphasizes the interaction among people and effort to make certain messages come through.

The swirl that happened around the Stockholm clubs managed to build up folklore around itself. The song used artistic expressions, a certain media of communication, and a message comprehensible to a specific group, football fans. Further, it was already loaded with cultural meanings, like the stereotypical representations of supporters from two different clubs. It was they contextualized as a reference to the new arena. The way of talking and referring to the sharing of the Tele2 was possible because of the peculiar intertextuality of the event. The spell composed and performed in 2009 worked so well it got connected to a historical decision of DIF sharing the arena, which further enriched its mythological character. In a sense, Tele2 acquired a new meaning rather quickly because of this unexpected connection to the Stockholm football folklore that was in the making when it was being built.

Thus, what appeared in this instance could be called ‘cross-fertilisation’ (Worton & Still, 1-2). This particular narrative of pain and shame is performed through the additional, historical reading of the developments within Stockholm football scene and additional meanings are brought once the narration happens. The imagined and the factual world interfered with each other allowing the overflow of creative expressions done and performed by the supporters.

Another interesting point of discussion with the arenas is the pitch and the grass that grows on them. AIK moved from real grass of Råsunda to real one (although described as bad) of Friends Arena. DIF though was forced to move from natural to artificial. As Joel commented: ‘Grass…a delicate question…especially in Helsingborg (laughs). They think we have chosen
it, we had no choice really’. The issue of grass makes the arenas and clubs rather emotionally loaded. Thus, in the next section I shall look into how the pitch influences production of history.

**The history of grass**

The football pitch is a specific construction, designed for one purpose only – playing football. Because of the climate and season structure (football season in Sweden is through spring to autumn, unlike most of European countries that play autumn – spring) early spring months are filled with worried discussions about pitches, their quality and colour.56

In the recent years a conflict developed within Swedish club football, as several first league teams started playing on plastic, artificial grass, for example Elfsborg in Borås, Hammarby IF and Djurgårdens IF in Stockholm. The logic behind the move has been first and foremost that Sweden is a cold country and artificial grass makes it possible to play outside even in February or March. The counter-narrative is usually constructed around the notion that all clubs used to have real grass before all over Sweden and it was fine even without modern technology.

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56 In the popular culture a reference to sizes measured in football pitches is not uncommon. This visualizes the magnitude for broader public. In 2017 farmers in Skåne appeared in an add comparing the size of their fields to that of football pitches (observations, 2017).
Nevertheless, it is problematic to grow a good pitch even in southern part of the country. Before the season of 2015 Malmö FF imported its grass from Holland (field notes 2015). Further, modern arenas are somewhat not grass-friendly. In several discussions with football officials I heard that the shape of stadiums that are closed structures prevent grass from growing evenly. One person said it was because wind could not sweep the place freely, and he pondered how one needed that to have grass growing (interview with Linus 2012).

Audience of the specific historical writing (White 1973, 5).

The quality of a pitch is of course vital for football and criticizing another club’s arena is a common insult. The dichotomies of real-artificial, traditional-new, natural-plastic are strongly spelled in the grass discussions. The ideological conflicts present in football are then stretched on to the pitch. A slogan ‘football is played on grass’ appears often. Before a league match against Elfsborg, AIK’s supporter club Black Army posted this on their Facebook page:

![Information for Elf-whining; football is played on grass! (Retrieved 26.04.2016)](image)

Interestingly, AIK’s grass on Friends Arena has been criticized a lot as being poor, brown and making the game horrible. A player from DIF brought up the subject in an interview:

Me: How do you feel about DIF’s new arena?
Kristoff: Tele2?
Me: Yeah.
Kristoff: It is a fantastically good arena. One of Europe’s best in its class. Also with the acoustics… comparing to Friends Arena…
Me: So the sound is better here?
Kristoff: Oh yes. And of course there is the thing about the grass… but I would rather have the artificial grass we have at Tele2 than the grass at Friends that is never good really. So we have a much better arena than AIK have actually.

Kristoff mentioned sound quality because it is very important for songs and chants, a feature of modern football that is regarded as necessary for a good match. He also talked about grass
and AIK had nothing to be proud of, according to him. The picture presented above also shows the ideal that does not exist anymore. Grass is not grown on stadiums. It is brought there in wide stripes and assembled inside before a season begins. Black Army’s witty insult is based on an ideal that is impossible to achieve, but it is how it used to be. AIK’s relation till grass, meaning AIK’s supporters as well as officials, was influenced by the loss and annihilation of their home arena Råsunda, which was discussed in the previous section. One of the banners at their new arena has a text ‘Råsunda’s grass now grows in heaven’.

When the stadium was officially closed and then turned to rubble, Råsunda emerged as this nostalgic spiritual hybrid of resistance and memory, as discussed in the previous chapter. The mentioning of grass connects strongly materiality with spirituality. Grass in a sense is immortal. As long as natural conditions are favourable, it will just keep growing. You can cut it and it will continue growing. The metaphor is both simple and powerful. The organic component of the stadium structure, both immortal and very vulnerable, is said to grow now in heaven, being again immortal yet non-existing.

One hears quite often about fans buying small pieces of the pitch after the season. I have heard in a random conversation that a person had a friend with such a piece of grass that got planted in their garden and it is carefully taken care of (football chat 2016). Also, it is not unusual that players would touch the pitch when starting the game or make a sign of a cross when stepping on the grass. They sometimes kiss it after a scored goal. In other words, there are certain rituals embedded in the very function of the pitch. Sport sociologist Richard Giulianotti writes about football in African context: ‘The rituals include wearing charms on fingers or toes, urinating on the field, smearing players’ faces with the blood of sacrificed animals, or burying the latter beneath the pitch’ (Giulianotti, 1999: 20).

The traditional, old clubs with history and heritage use those elements as a form of capital to be weight against new rich clubs bought by rich investors and representing the new, ‘plastic’ form of football that is money-centred and quick success-oriented. Grass in the Swedish context is used to a similar effect. It needs time and care, it is a living organism and it connects players to the environment. It also stresses the ‘olden days’, the mythical time when grass was green naturally all over Sweden. In other words, the clubs who fight for their grass keep traditions up.
I was told that when Elfsborg got their artificial pitch fans from MFF came to the away match with seeds and threw them on the arena thus making a strong point in contrasting the growing, living thing with plastic, factory-made structure (football chat 2014).

One should take into consideration that the pitch is most important to players. Kristoff brought grass again to the fore:

Me: What would be good to change in Swedish football?
Kristoff: Purely so that more Swedish players would get to Europe and play there… so we need to have grass at all the arenas in Sweden.
Me: Real grass?
Kristoff: Oh yes. Entire Europe plays on real grass. We also have to do that. Then we have to have the same match tempo and same season like in the rest of Europe. We should play like most of Europe autumn-spring instead of spring-autumn. And not like having the vacation in December and January when the national team plays. Then they are in full season and we are on vacation. I think we need to do that.

In other words, Kristoff, as well as many of the supporters, was critical towards historical developments in Swedish football. The new artificial pitches are discussed, criticized, and framed in a narrative that relates to the past ideal. Although the clubs choose artificial grass because it is supposed to save money, supporters look at it differently. Members of HIF supporter club Kärnan regarded grass as one of the principles in modern football:

Alex: But it is important to us anyway that football should be played on real grass.
Me: And it is really common right now, the artificial grass.
Alex: Yes, and it is just horrible. But we have a clear stand about it (…).
Robin: I think you lose something; you lose some value in football, something that you probably cannot describe in purely economic terms.
Alex: And we actually think often, that other supporters… that they just accept without protesting really. If you would hear that together with renovations Olympia would get plastic grass then you would have demonstrations outside the arena (laughs). You would have 100 people screaming in front of the city hall that they cannot do it.
Robin: One cannot really put it so that it cannot happen in Helsingborg.
Alex: No no… of course not.
Robin: It is an important principle for us. And you need principles in football as well.

(focus group 2015)

The ethical, moral meaning of the pitch was spelled out strongly. Grass becomes an objective in the ideological struggle between old and new, natural and artificial. Nature in the form of green stalks is transformed into a surface of cultural meanings (Damsholt 2009, 17). Still,
football used to be played in mud and snow, even on quite high international level. I interviewed separately two former MFF footballers who played in 1979 when the club reached the final of Europa League\textsuperscript{57}. When asked about semifinals they both referred to the quality of the pitch:

\begin{quote}
Me: Is there anything special you remember about the match against Wisla Krakow?
Jesper: I remember quite a lot… from the away game against them… that there was horribly bad pitch (laughs). The weather was very bad, just that. It was a disgusting, grey pitch.
(interview with Jesper 2014)
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
Me: Is there anything that comes to your mind about the match against Wisla Krakow?
Sune: Comes to mind? The only thing that comes to my mind is the really bad pitch.
So much snow. (interview with Sune 2014)
\end{quote}

Interestingly, Jesper began to talk about the away match in Cracow, Poland, while Sune’s answer referred to their home win. Those two matches were important for the club; they paved the way to their biggest international success. Memories expressed in interviews circulated around grass, or lack of it, stressing toughness and difficulties of those encounters. Nowadays, clubs are punished by UEFA if their pitches do not meet required standards, but in the 1970s rules were not as strict. From the match described by Sune comes an iconic photo of three players celebrating a goal in deep snow that was lying in piles around the pitch. It has been described as ‘iconic’ by many of my informants, and also presented as such in the local press (field notes 2016).

\textsuperscript{57} MFF played the final against Nottingham Forrest, and the semifinals were against Wisla Krakow, the first one played in Poland, the second in Sweden.
This image narrates glorious past, toughness and difficulties. It was a victory over another club and also weather and elements. The materiality of the pitch takes on processual, relational and performative character (Damsholt 2009, 14). It is not only a surface required for playing a match, but it is an element in the network that influences history and is influenced by history. It contributes to the narrative-making as a pitch can enhance a victory (like with MFF in 1979) or be blamed for failure. In the season of 2016, some teams were already playing better on the artificial grass than the others. Thus the disappointed comments based on the statement that ‘football is played on real grass’ contributed to the framing of this rather new challenge in Swedish football\(^\text{58}\) (field notes, 2016; article in Aftonsbladet…. 2016). In other words, the grass, or lack of such, could potentially influence match results, thus influencing the final results and the table and in turn the fresh-made history.

On the other hand, the pitch is affected by the technological and structural developments that have entered modern football. Clubs take into consideration international requirements the responsibility for the playable pitch stretches far beyond stadiums’ walls. For example, when clubs enter European competitions they can be fined if their grass is not up to UEFA’s standards. Also, playing cup and training matches is tricky in early spring and the surface has to be acceptable. As artificial component on the pitch has become gradually more and more acceptable, more clubs considered this option, provoking judgements and opinions based on historical references.


\(^{58}\) The article in Aftonbladet was rather provocative and caused plenty of discussions among fans. It proposed that clubs should be punished financially for having artificial pitches.
The grass is an active actant, influencing the complex network that is present around it and generating new impulses that cause disturbance and action. The agency given to the grass comes up in the narrative form, grass is ‘talked to life’ (Hérbert 2011, 73; Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory 2005, 1). The term has been used in narrative theory to describe the relation of the subject and object of a tale and the possible exchange of their positions. When agency is attributed to the pitch, it becomes an active element in the network, contributing to the speed, style of the game, to making and losing goals, at least on the opinions of my informants (interview with Kristian, 2016). Part of the tense history-making that is attributed to grass comes from the fact that it is alive. It grows; it needs soil, water and sun. It is vulnerable to the seasonal changes and weather. Just like players, it is always there, always performing the same function, and yet different, renewed and replanted, rejuvenated from one season to another.

According to linguist Algirdas Greimas, the total of six possible actants in narratives can be arranged as three oppositions. The grass in the football narrative could follow the distinction of helper-opponent (Hérbert 2011, 71). Because the material analysed here is neither a printed text nor a tale per se, it might be tricky to set it in the perfect shape for Greimas’ system of actants and roles, but the grass does help or creates problems, enhances or threatens. It is given life in the way it is described and referred to.

The pitch acquires its characteristics through the narratives as it needs to play a special role in constructing failure and success, glory and suffering. The pictures painted in interviews make a clear distinction between genuine and artificial, real and unreal, for example. Quoting sociologist Dorothy Smith one can comment that ‘the rules, norms, information, observations, etc., presented by the teller of the tale are to be treated by the reader/hearer as the only warranted set’ (Smith 1978, 35).

Still, it is not natural for grass to grow evenly and nicely in football conditions. When closed behind stadium walls, trampled match after match, it needs all the possible technological help to stay green and strong. As Smith says, ‘The actual events are not facts. (…) A fact is something which is already categorized, which is already worked up so that it conforms to the model of what that fact should be like’ (1978, 35). It is a hybrid of the ideal, of nature’s

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59 Actant is a term associated with STS field (science, technology, society) and used by ANT founding fathers Latour and Callon (Johannes Beetz, 2013; retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/11233971/Latour_with_Greimas_-_Actor-Network_Theory_and_Semiotics).

Ivanche’s source?
possibilities and limitations, and of game’s requirements. It is interesting to notice that the so-called hybrid grass, for example Desso Grass Master\textsuperscript{60}, stating on their home page that they are perfecting natural sport pitch. It is considered a great thing, craved by fans in Sweden. One person very strongly advocated for it and asked rhetorically why clubs would be so stupid not to invest in such pitches, as it was not more expensive than the plastic carpets they had already (football chat 2016). That grass is a mix of artificial stalks and real ones being planted around them. The degree of ‘realness’ or ‘naturalness’ is disputable and it is contested in this environment.

It would appear that as the relationship between the humans and the grass takes the form of the relationship between fans and players and seems to be ‘greenhouse produced’, thus having a specific ‘greenhouse effect’ on the connections established in the modern football context. These connections are quick, intense yet shallow and possible to be substituted by another footballer next year, like with artificial light and strong fertilizes that let plants grow quick and become ripe fast, though not developing much taste. But in the globalized world based on consumerism it might be as good as it gets.

Even when the pitch is made of natural grass, it is often surrounded by patches of artificial one, making a patchwork of green shades and different structures:

![Picture taken from MFF’s arena Swedbank Stadion, 2016. Different shades of grass.](Image)

The hybridity of this arrangement is produced with layering of old and new, real and factory-made. Interestingly, the artificial surfaces stay green. In theory they could be any colour or shade, but it stubbornly imitates naturally grown stalks. This layering exemplifies the very character of football, its hybridity that connects the real with the unreal, the artificial with

\textsuperscript{60} See for example: [http://www.dessosports.com/hybrid-grass](http://www.dessosports.com/hybrid-grass) (retrieved May 2016)
genuine, emotions and economy. The meaning of grass stretches far beyond the pitch. It ties to the discussions of modernization, historical developments, and the intrinsic character of football. Dorothy Smith remarks that ‘social rules and definitions of situations can be viewed as if they provided a set of instructions for categorizing responses’ (1978, 38). While talking about grass, fans also talk it through, make it an actant that is relevant and displays agency. It can be both a chivalric figure and a villain, depending on the narration and on the produced narrative.

**Concluding remarks**

The dimensions presented in this chapter – regions/cities, stadiums and grass, are all used in as a historical reference and in historical perspective to build up the traditions of the future (Glassie, 1995). The produced narratives come from emotional engagement and creative, artistic expressions that are possible in the football context. Every story needs a stage on which it takes place, through which emotions are conveyed. At the same time, this unapologetic usage of history, even national history, reveals flexibility of narratives and shows some structures in their constructions. Thus, a context like this can be treated textually and the process in transferring intertext can travel from reality to fiction and back is possible to observe. That, in turn, opens up questions of how and why particular references emerge in the football-related stories, that then are connected and created in a broader social context.

A stadium is Liminal, Heterotopic, Panoptical, Material, Gendered, Politicized, Historical, Performed, Narrated…

Location and home stadia are very important in the football world. Tribalism that has evolved around clubs is often described as dependent on the space and belonging to a specific group, district or town. Location influences the character, attitudes and evaluations of clubs. Further, with location comes history, borders, and ‘us versus them’ mentality. Narratives about locality are embedded in the collective memory and mythologies that have grown around the physical placement of the football game.
Another interesting feature is how material culture gains agency and they are talked to life. Bricks and buildings carry emotions and memories, but their role does not disappear with their physical destruction. Rather, they can be re-situated in a textual process as symbols and references, getting new forms as texts, banners, songs or even tattoos. The stage, particular event or character, that are needed to make a narrative, can then be exchanged as a stadium can play all those parts.

But the way the steel and bricks are talked to life is also pragmatic in another way. It lets the participants, supporters, to build up their identities and establish links with their beloved clubs. David Herman refers to a narrative as a ‘primary resource for “folk psychology” – that is, people’s everyday understanding of how thinking works, the rough-and-ready heuristics to which they resort in thinking about thinking itself’ (Herman 2009, 20). The way national history, stadiums, and the grass are situated in the narratives and used, is an interesting glimpse how stories can be reworked to strengthen or to hurt.

The next chapter’s focus is on a particular match and the history-making practices that appear there.
5. Our history – our identity

The observations come from a tense and emotional match that opened the season in 2015. Flares were galore, and so was hatred.

There are huge banners and many flags. Stockholm supporters communicate that they shall crush Malmö, they have Swedish flags, Stockholm coat of arms a flag saying and that their former arena was Råsunda. (...) When standing on the MFF side I see a small flag hanging on the AIK’s end, but I can see only four big letters spelled ‘HATA’= hate. I wonder what they hate right now, so I do my pilgrimage around the arena again. It actually said ‘HATA ALLA’ – hate everyone.

Just as the players march in and Malmö crowd gets up, lifts their flags and start singing the MFF anthem called ‘Oh we love Malmö FF’, AIK puts up a huge, dark, dirty and old banner saying Gnaget, and starts the flare frenzy. A minute into a match, it has to be postponed and players hide in the dressing rooms as thick smoke lingers around the stadium. Throughout the entire match flares appear on either side, something is burning all the time. (...) The arid smell is constantly in the air. My eyes hurt and my nose becomes itchy. (...)

I am so happy when it is half-time, I am very cold. I’m one of the first to get to the media room. It is quiet, warm, and so peaceful. Almost not a sound. The match is shown on a big TV screen here. Two people stroll in. ‘Is it a good match?’ the man asks. ‘I think it is a bit boring’ says an old lady. (...) On the pitch again, it is now MFF’s turn to make some smoke and fire. Again, the visibility is disturbed, the stink is horrible, and the firemen need new buckets and fresh sand. The noise is constant and I feel like my head starts to vibrate. From either side come songs, chants and deafening noises. (...)

Booing and whistling suddenly breaks the melody, just to resume after the crowd has finished commenting loudly on the referee’s decision. As MFF attacks the goal on AIK’s side, the Stockholm supporters eagerly rewards sky-blue players’ every mistake, thanking them for missing, slipping, shooting over the goal etc. They scream and shout at them, trying to disturb their efforts, and then bursting into exaggerated laughter and clapping fiercely when MFF’s actions end nowhere near their goal. Then there is another chant on MFF side: ‘Ut med Gnaget!’ – ‘Out with Gnaget’.

This chapter zooms to group identity produced through history, and in the historical context. As examples, a club identity is takes (AIK) as the hatred expressed towards AIK has historical reasons, and the club embraced it, producing historical narratives and events based on it. The second example is the ultras, also a group constructing its image with help of history. Also, their productions have historical effect.
This chapter explores collective identities built on historical references and on the will to produce history. How are historical narratives visible in different groups? How do they influence the construction of group identity in this context? The two identities discussed are a product of historical selection as well as the answer to evaluations and opinions presented by other parties. As stated before, it is a constant discussion and one’s identity is a result of positioning of one’s vision, other clubs, media, security, social expectations as well as collective memory. I shall deal with violence a separate chapter, but those two examples circle around a tough image, symbolic (and sometimes physical) conflicts and persistent negative evaluations of the previous decades. In a somewhat stubborn move against common sense (Stewart 1989), individuals building those collective identities do not try to negate the dark, negative connotations, but rather thrive in using them in a new historical context. They embrace a counter-story.

‘Ut med Gnaget!!!!’

The narrative presented above comes from a very specific perspective and it exemplifies how many possibilities those involved in football have to communicate with each other. The verbal and written messages are further strengthened by visuals and by gestures. Nevertheless, one of the most important features in this meeting was an emotion, the display of hate. That match was incredibly tense and as it opened the 2015 season it was also an important test for two big clubs. MFF won the previous year, and AIK, as usual, claims to be the biggest and best61. Perhaps because of the unapologetic attitude that cannot be supported with historical

61AIK has had the most members, around 20,000 registered people (source)
evidence, AIK is quite often selected as the club nobody sympathizes with. Several interviewees bluntly stated ‘we hate AIK’ (interview with Erik, 2015). Supporters from Helsingborg and Malmö would comment that the local Skåne derby matches are the most important, but they would point out to AIK as the most troublesome. As one person put it:

Felix: Eh… I really don’t like this team but I think it is actually… AIK it is probably… the most… dedicated. I don’t know actually if they are the most dedicated fans but… it seems to be… there are interesting matches and what do you say… the… ambiance around the game seems to be quite nice.
Me: Why don’t you like them?
Felix: I don’t know… probably because they are from the capital, and quite aggressive, self-righteous, that sort of thing (laughs). Being from the small city in the country, you know, it is hard (laughs). Because we are HIF supporters and we should really hate MFF but I really do not care about them. I am … but I don’t like AIK. I don’t like Stockholm teams actually. And I mean things like that normally don’t make much sense but like… they are probably very nice people (laughs). But you have to have protagonists, I guess. In all the sports (interview with Felix, 2015).

Felix started evoking AIK as an example of a Swedish team with solid support that means a lot for its fans, but his narrative slipped into ‘not liking them’. Such feelings are especially visible among fans of other Stockholm teams. When attending Djurgården match I was actually approached by a person who heard that I was writing about football, asked me if that was true, told me to take notes and delivered such statement:

‘I hate AIK. My hatred for AIK is bigger than the love for my girlfriend. My hatred of AIK is bigger than my love for Djurgården’ (football chat, 2015).

What followed was an informal exchange of the levels of hate towards AIK in a small group standing around me, which many of them enjoyed. One of the supporters had a narrative of celebrating AIK’s relegation from Allsvenskan to Superettan. He said that this was the only time he bathed in champagne. He poured the liquid to the bath tub and dived in, but did not realize that is was going to be rather cold, then tried to stay there and just drank as much as he could, presumably by still laying in it (football chat, 2015). Some of the men standing with us smiled and laughed, most likely it was not the first time they heard the story. Bathing in champagne is a part of modern mythology surrounding the rich and famous. It suggests excess and lavishness (Barthes and wine and champagne). At this point the story is as important as the actual event. Obviously, my informant might have been exaggerating, but he has chosen a
very specific form of mocking and shaming AIK. That supporter did not celebrate his own team’s victory, but the mortal enemy’s defeat. He did not celebrate own club’s glory but rather their shame.

Historically speaking, AIK is a strong and visible club in the Swedish context. They have won several titles, they have an active and big group of fans, and they could claim to be a club with most members (source?). One of the supporters group affiliated with AIK is called Smokinglirarna – Tuxedo MVPs (really weird translation). They present themselves as a more serious version of t (than playing with fire ultras or Black Army with shadowy past). They refer to the ‘finer’ part of AIK’s history, when it was associated with the upper part of the society. The club’s image could be more refined, associates with upper classes and richer folk, as it was, apparently so, during the 1930s (va för jävla pack e ni?).

A different narrative is possible, as AIK’s history is long and rich, and certainly, those ‘finer’ elements are used. Still, there is often a dark undertone concerning a club. An example of attitudes towards AIK appeared in Aftonsbladet:

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62 There has been numerous publications in popular press stating that some members of the Swedish royal family support AIK. They were photographed during matches, and Prince Daniel, husband of Crown Princess Victoria was used in an ad AIK had on their web page. There is some discussion into what club the king supports. In one publication, newspapers Expressed stated that although the king is the honorary member of AIK (as were kings before him) he actually truly supports Djurgårdens IF (reference).

63 http://www.aftonbladet.se/sportbladet/fotboll/sverige/allsvenskan/aik/article15504101.ab
The statistic came in 2012, close to finishing the season. The short message accompanied it was rather straightforward – AIK is not liked. A player quoted in the article attached said that either you are a part of AIK or not, in which case you are going to hate it. Thus, players also seem to repeat the narrative about the uneasy character of the club.

AIK can provoke strong reactions, which, like Felix in the interview above pointed out, might stem from the capital –vs. the rest of the country dichotomy. On the other hand, this Stockholm club claims glory and greatness that is not based on any evidence. Interviewed AIK associates remarked:

Carl: AIK has always the attitude to win. Many AIK supporters are like that. It does not matter if we have the worst team in the world; we are going to win this shit. And of course it presents unrealistic expectations, but the AIK world is a bit unrealistic. We are the best and that is that. Maybe we have players that have two left feet it does not matter, we still should win.

David: And that is a bit of that mentality that we are the biggest, the cockiness…

Carl: We have no statistics to prove this. We are not the club that has won the most, but we think like that anyway.

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64 [http://www.aftonbladet.se/sportbladet/fotboll/sverige/allsvenskan/aik/article15504101.ab](http://www.aftonbladet.se/sportbladet/fotboll/sverige/allsvenskan/aik/article15504101.ab)
As Carl said they, the club, have no statistics, no proof in trophies or titles, that they have actually been successful. But they have a collective ego and attitude to behave as such. Historical facts and data cannot be completely omitted, but they can be ignored. It is not easy to compose a myth of success when the reality offers no support for such claims. Although my usage of the term ‘myth’ is not as precise as in the traditional folklore studies, where the distinction of myth, folktale and legends has been debated at length (see Bascom 1984), it takes a narrative that is being forged and twisted in its natural habitat. I would say that this is an example of a living myth. Myth studies used to refer to indigenous societies without formalized history (Eliade 1984; Malinowski 1984), but some of the modern contexts, like in this case football, present a mix of collective memory and more established official history (Halbwachs, …Assmann…). AIK’s narrative choices illustrates the use of history directed at reflection and sense-making of life processes through experience (Jörn Rusen 2005, 2-3).

It seems that the myth of AIK’s greatness could be created as an example of a ‘living myth’, ‘where myth, far from indicating a fiction, is considered to reveal the truth par excellence’ (Eliade 1984, 138). In my informants’ narratives, AIK has been great (although the scale of success could be debatable) but the firm belief in that state of affairs let them to claim so. Indeed, the ‘living myth’ lets them contradict any statistics at will. The recent loops of time seem to pass close to the remote past, making sure that the myth lives close to the present (Dardel 1984, 231).

‘What the word supplies to myth is an historical reality, defined, even if this goes back quite a while, by the way in which men have produced or use it; and what myth gives in return is a natural image of this reality.’ Barthes 1972, 142

‘A conjuring trick has taken place; it has turned reality inside out, it has emptied it of history and has filled it with nature, it has removed from things their human meaning so as to make them signify a human insignificance.’ Barthes 1972, 143

‘it abolishes the complexity of human acts, it gives them the simplicity of essences (…) things appear to mean something by themselves.’ Barthes 1972, 143

Myths are prose narratives which, in the society in which they are told, are considered to be truthful accounts of what happened in the remote past. They are accepted on faith, they are taught to be believed, and they can be cited as authority in answer to ignorance, doubt, or disbelief. Myths are the embodiment of dogma, they are usually sacred, and they are often associated with theology and ritual. (Bascom 1984, 9)
AIK vs. Not-AIK – Vergangenheitsbewältigung

Denna vändning mot vad tyskarna kallar Vergangenheitsbewältigung, hanteringen av det mörka förflutna, har fått en påtaglig och framträdande plats i modernt eller postmodernt historiemedvetande – (Bo Lindgren 2012, 16)

The match described in Malmö was proclaimed beforehand as important and tough because it was AIK coming, although, as stated by several people, AIK was at least in theory much weaker than the previous year’s champion and proud Champions League participant MFF (football chat, 2015). Still, they came to mess up with history and went back with fairly acceptable result (for them) of 0-0. This dark narrative and dangerous undertone displayed by AIK is not only their own marketing decision, but it goes hand in hand with the evaluations, based on historical encounters, provided by others. As Carl and David elaborated:

Carl: AIK has much harder tone in … how to say… how people see AIK. Even how many AIK supporters perceive themselves. This is the picture that AIK has itself built up. And of course media contribute to this. They write about AIK supporters that are horrible and so on. And sometimes they get it right but more often than not it is just… (…)

David: But… but… one could read that Black Army, that was so dangerous… and they were like that in 1980s, but they are not like that at all nowadays. If you write about them now so…

Carl: Or actually that it is now quite marginalized in our supporter world. They still exist, they organized trips and so on, but this is now more like an open supporter organization, everybody can join really, girls can be there too. But it was not like that, probably not at all like that in the 1980s.

The club has found itself associated with dangerous movements and even an active hooligan firm that became known as Firman Boys. Their mythology was partly cemented by a book written by a former member Johan Höglund and called En av Grabbarna – One of the guys. Further, one of the leading supporter organizations called Black Army also carries a darker image⁶⁵. As Carl and David said, it refers mostly to the past⁶⁶. But once establish, the myth tends to be reused. The broader lining of AIK story has been a result of interpretations of the past provided by written publications and popular press. What arises around the club (trouble) is then treated as something coming from within, rather than a combination of factors that are contextual (Smith 1978, 38). When put like that, AIK becomes a not-liked club by the power of its own history, although that history is always written in relation to others and not in a

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⁶⁵ In a publication from 2006, a journalist and photographer Sannös
⁶⁶ As in 2017 the firm still exists and there has been some troubles occurring in Stockholm, but the scale and social meaning is much different comparing to the 1980s.
void. Thus, the club can become the reason for its own bad behaviour. It seems it cannot be explained by situations, contexts, cultural and social expectations. Rather, the explanation is really an instruction how to read and interpret the textuality of AIK’s character (Smith 1978, 38).

Neither the public nor other clubs would let go of this narrative of the ‘big bad wolf’ AIK seems to be. It is not to say that this particular club is so dangerous, but it is portrayed as such. Thus, AIK somehow is branded as the club one should hate, prompting even creative shoe decorations:

![Picture taken in March 2015. Picture from the match MFF-AIK April 2015](image)

Those involved in AIK, as supporters or working for the club, are very aware of the situation and of the common evaluation they are getting from several different clubs. One cannot be friends with AIK; one has to have it as an enemy. One could ask how a club could overcome such negative opinions, and how it should be counterweight. As presented in the match observations above, AIK supporters did what seemed the best solution and stated that in turn they too hate everybody.

The usage of hatred is one of the many possible shades of identity one could have. As a club, AIK’s identity went from aristocratic to poor working class. Thus, it is an example of omitting something while concentrating on something else. One should point out that the stories of violence and misbehaviour surrounding AIK’s supporters has not just been pure imagination. One person narrated an account from the time that he was around eight and attending a match of a local team and AIK. After the game Black Army was chasing local supporters and throwing stones, and my informant remembered running away with his father (football chat, 2016). The event took place in the early 1990s, when the dark pages of Black Army’s
dealings were written. Such personal account of individual memory ties with an established narrative of bad and dangerous supporters united around a club with questionable morals. Black Army’s mythology does not have to stretch to AIK as such, but the somewhat controlled unruliness appears on all the levels, including official accounts (some example/source?) without much questioning. The myth rejuvenates itself by reproducing the content that fits the collective expectations.

This emotionally loaded display of hatred, as on the shoe above (and matched by a blunt response of hating everybody), could prompt questions why anybody would like to be associated with such a club. Individual narratives and memories connected to clubs also go back to childhood and for many interviewed fans social boundaries and ‘othering’ already started then. One supporter in this way explained AIK’s popularity:

- **What brings people to AIK then?**
- Traditions, I think. At school it was already like that: you were AIK and not AIK. When we played football it was always AIK vs. not AIK. (Interview with Martin 2015)

Interestingly enough he pointed out at something illusive, difficult to explain and evaluate. It was not about AIK being successful as such, but having traditions in being successful, claiming a degree of collective imagination that lingered in streets of Solna when Martin was a child. AIK itself embraced the image of a serious opponent to virtually everybody in Sweden, and in 2014 their commercial campaign was called ‘AIK vs INTE AIK. VI ÄR INTE NI’- AIK vs NOT AIK. We are not you (06.06. 2015 [http://www.lindqvist.com/aik-vs-inte-aik/](http://www.lindqvist.com/aik-vs-inte-aik/)). Even tickets had only written ‘inte AIK’ instead of the names of various clubs:

Halbwachs comments on retrieving memories as they basically need a group as a frame: ‘To recall them [memories] it is hence sufficient that we place ourselves in the perspective of this group, that we adopt its interests and follow the slant of its reflections. Exactly the same process occurs when we attempt to localize older memories. We have to place them within a
totality of memories common to other groups, groups that are narrower and more lasting, such as our family’ (Halbwachs, 52). You relate to the feelings of the group since the groups helps you to remember them. It is a curious choice for heritage on display, to remind one’s fans and adversaries that generally the club is being hated, and that it does not respect much their opponents either.

Preservation is also stridently collective. Every state strives to safeguard its historical monuments (Lowenthal 2015, 27).

Den andra nya insikten är nämligen att historien inte bara verkar på distans, som ett hjälpmedel för forskare och andra samhällsintresserade att kritiskt och analytiskt studera generella och unika drag i utvecklingen, utan också utgör ett effektivt redskap för individer och grupper som >>på plats<< vill påverka samma samhällsutveckling – Karlsson 1999, 25

När vi talar om historia, syftar vi ibland på själva det förflutna, ibland på olika representationer av och föreställningar om detta förflutna. I vardagspråket gör vi sällan någon åtskillnad mellan dessa olika innebörder av begreppet – Karlsson 1999, 34

It is also interesting to identify a ‘traditional’ thread in this narrative, as described by my interviewee. Although hate is not a positive emotion in a way it works here, as AIK affirms its unpopularity among Swedish population and somewhat proudly so. This ‘hate rhetoric’ and accepting ones’ unfavourable position is also displayed by the club. On the arena currently used by AIK, there is a slogan curved above the entrance the clubs’ officials and players use: ‘Må de hataoss, blott de fruktaoss’ – let them hate us as long as they fear us, which is a variation of a quote ascribed to Emperor Caligula from the 1st century AD (in Latin Oderint, dummetuant get the reference). The phrase is also used by supporters and is said to exemplify AIK’s attitudes (field notes 2015).

When one starts to look at AIK’s narrative through the lens of folk tales, then it is possible to see another aspect of its curious popularity. Ethnologist Alf Arvidsson writes in his book Folklorens Former that one of the most common elements that make popular stories that spread in a society is not the epic as such, but clearly demonstrated ‘us-them’ dichotomy that can be actual for listeners (1999, 32). Arvidsson explains further that the more typical stories of mythological character define ‘we’ as an eternal category in contrast to other categories (1999, 33). Thus, AIK’s attempt to use commercially an already old story of hate fits snuggly in the centuries-old traditions of making ‘us’ not like ‘them’. However, this narrative has to be fed and cared for and so it is produced and performed regularly by the club its supporters and
‘the others’. Digging up such stories helps to establish them as ‘the stories’, those that matter the most.

One person associated with AIK remarked that ‘historically, traditionally, there were problems’ with AIK supporters, and that their history is ‘not that flattering’ (interview with Carl and David 2015). He also mentioned the AIK vs. INTE AIK campaign and then commented that ‘there is a mentality in AIK that we don’t like anybody. (...) Now we have some groups that have some sort of friendships with some foreign clubs. But it was like...hmm... “no one likes us we don’t care”. That sort of mentality oozes throughout the entire club. We are rather strong in our mentality’ (interview with Carl and David 2015). This campaign then was already history, a historical display of hate that turned out to be extremely successful. It built on a notion that, historically speaking, AIK is not liked. AIK performed well memories of this particular feeling and re-established the notion with a reassurance of continuity and tradition. Having a defined target group that already identifies itself with the club helped to create this peculiar idea, and it should be stressed that this was in the end a commercial idea aimed to attract spectators and to earn money. Although the advertisement seems extremely grave and serious in style, there is a hint of irony there, just as in the interview with Carl and David ended in laughter.

The universe of discourse calls for a "set towards the message," a procedure for manufacturing meaning consistent with a situation and purpose at hand. (...) The universes of discourse are involved in borrowing from one another and transforming one another at every step as they are employed in an ongoing social process (Stewart 1989, 15).

Each level of textuality - realism, myth, irony, and metafiction - stands at an increasing distance from common-sense procedures and thereby decreases in realism. And each level depends upon the previous levels for both its content and its method (Stewart 1989, 21).

**Pride and shame**

The sense of pride expressed here could be related to the elements in queer theory. There is an interesting connection here between pride and shame. ‘Queer’ as a term used to have very abusive connotations within the gay community (Jagose 1996, 74). It is rather problematic to define queer, as almost by definition it escapes precise definitions. Annamarie Jagose, a scholar in feminist studies, describes queer as a term which ‘marks a flexible space for the expression of all aspects of non- (anti-, contra-)’ (1996, 97). One can see how curiously fitting such approach is when applied to AIK’s attitude to its bad reputation across Sweden. The club and its supporters simply embrace the not so flattering evaluations and instead make it into
their vanguard statement. Rather than trying to change the smudged picture, there is a ‘in your face’ approach that refuses to apologize for what it is. It got to the point that a beautiful and stylish book about the former stadium of AIK, Råsunda, is promptly called Everybody Hates Me (Alla Hatar Mig).

Such statement is emotionally loaded and quite provocative. Being hated does not bring positive feelings to mind, it shames a person, or in this instance a group, a club, and it is a specific, politically constructed emotion in a larger social context (Ahmed 2004). The queer theory is also about the dichotomy of pride and shame, as one goes together with the other (Jagose, 1996). What is more, shame is a community-related feeling. As Sara Ahmed writes:

> Shame becomes felt as a matter of being – of the relation of self to itself – insofar as shame is about appearance, about how the subject appears before and to others (…). Shame as an emotion requires a witness: even if a subject feels shame when it is alone, it is the imagined view of the other that is taken on by a subject in relation to itself (2004, 104-105).

While writing about ethnic minority groups from Estonian-Russian border, AuneValk and Taive Särg stress that the concepts of pride and shame are quite strong in such small communities, as they are identified by larger national contexts and have to place themselves against them (2015). Such situation is not far from a football club. Reworking of categories is indeed necessary for a group in order to survive culturally. This process translates to football as well. Being pride of something that should make you ashamed of yourself makes a good example of ‘a critical relation to standards of normativity’ (Jagose 1996, 106) that queer theory describes. This not a claim that AIK’s approach is a conscious case of post-modern development, but it certainly shows how such processes can happen in different environments and be used for various purposes. AIK’s aim is not necessary any social justice, but rather a commercial approach to the damage in its image.

This narration of hate is exaggerated, but it is also embraced by other clubs, as presented below in the picture that was taken at HIF office at Olympia in Helsingborg in November.

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67 The idea to hate other is obviously not uncommon in football, and in a curious fashion that seems to illustrate Foucault’s idea of anarchistic struggles (1994), hate is distributed in very many directions and for different reasons every season. Apart from rival clubs, specific fan organizations are hated; also the police and the Swedish Football Association, SvFF, and even UEFA are targeted from time to time, depending on the current social and political situation (field notes, 2015). The reasons for such outburst are not always clear, and sometimes it is a shock wave from the past events. For example, during a cup match between DIF and Norrköping in March 2015, Djurgården supporters started chanting that SvFF is a football murderer. Some people standing with me could not figure out why they would turn against the organization now, and one person said that the chant is quite old (observations, 2015).
2014. This is a mocking display of what is going to happen to AIK when they are going to play against HIF. This poster requires intertextual reading. The rat in a mouse trap has to be recognized and framed as an acknowledged symbol for AIK, otherwise it will be nonsense (Stewart, 1989). Susan Stewart in her book on making sense…

The black rat has been gradually adopted by the supporters and the club to symbolize AIK.®. Apparently, a drawing of an angry rat from around 1940s was discovered in the players’ dressing room at Råsunda stadium, when the structure was being renovated (interview with Maria, 2015). The rat started to be associated with the club through the supporters, as later, Black Army adopted the rat as its symbol and having the drawing on banners and merchandise. Also the nickname Gnaget, which AIK supporters use so eagerly, refers to gnawing rodents. During the interview AIK’s fan Maria also referred to the olden days in AIK when the club was small and poor but really tough, gnawing its way through. AIK narrates a story when they did not have money to wash clothes very often nor to replace shading shirts, so the black shirts were looking greyish, and rat-like.®. The explanations given sustains the myth of AIK’s darker side by feeding it with eagerly reused image. It also makes the myth safe, as it is not stuck with one finished image, making the form flexible to different meanings, chosen from historical reality (Barthes 1972, 110; 117-118).

®From an article about the rat’s history from the web page http://17124solna.svartgul.se/2012/09/12/okejsanningen-om-black-army-rattan/.

Råttan fanns alltså ursprungligen på en stor plansch uppklistrad på en träskiva I AIK:s omklädningsrum under östra läkaren med de bevingade orden ”Må de hata oss blott de frukta oss” Den arga Råttan höll i en fotbollsplan vilket gjorde att ena handen var skymd dvs syntes ej. Vi tyckte texten och Råttan var skithäftiga förstås och Roger Nilsson kalkerade av fotot eller möjligen på frihand återgav den. Grunden blev hyfsat bra men bilden var liten så den tälde med tanke på den ritutrustning Roger hade inte att forstoras, tror Rogers ”orginal” bara var några centimeter hög.

Rats are not exactly noble animals. As HIF promptly demonstrated on its match poster, rats are pests and they are killed and removed to sanitize a space. What is interesting is the persistent usage of the rat-related symbolism that AIK uses. The image of the small rodent shifted from a tough team to overly confident supporters. The angry and ugly rat, dark colours, and violent past make up a sort of dark heritage that AIK seems to thrive in. Instead of focusing on the positives, AIK was forced to live with its demons and successfully performs a picture of a survivor of its own past. Also, the newcomers to historical traditions are often eager to preserve and sustain the parts of history regarded as meaningful or important by the present users (Lowenthal 2015, 85).

… timeless quests for identity and immortality that have moved people through the ages. Families both connected individuals to the larger world and protected them from it, reaching toward and blending cultural traditions – Rosenzweig & Thelen, 1998, 62

The hate around AIK has a special function, as both the hating and the hated stay in a symbiosis and use the image simultaneously. A MFF supporter had a narrative about his trip to an away game at Borås in central Sweden. He disliked many clubs, especially IFK Göteborg, the most notorious rival for MFF, but he was eager to state how other supporters can find common grounds with hating AIK:

I have a story here. It was so fun when we went to see Elfsborg away. I went with ultras by buss and then it was… I and another bloke and my son. And we are like 10 minutes driving away from the arena. But ultras were going to meet some friends there, like Elfsborg friends. (…). So I, this bloke and my son started hich-hiking and one guy took us and he was so funny. He went often to see matches and it was so fun chatting with him. And he said it is always so fun when a football team is coming to Borås, except AIK. There are fights, helicopter up there all the time, they behave horribly. We hate AIK. He was saying. So it is so tiresome that it is so but it is so. And for us he was so fun and saw us with MFF shirts on and just said ‘yeah come I will give you a lift’ and it was all really nice. And this is how it should be. I think. (interview with Erik, 2015)

Although it is mainly AIK’s history-in-the-making, it is also performed by supporters of other clubs and it helps them to position themselves not only in connection to AIK but in the broader context of Swedish football. It is also an interesting example how a myth slowly consolidates to become reality. One is used to searching for the actual historical events that gave birth to myths, but perhaps it goes in wave-like motion, when something sparks a myth, which in turn acquires more and more recognition, and starts being treated as a truth that triggers new myths. As Testa and Armstrong observe, ‘Myths did not describe things. Their function was to determine action via mass inspiration. The myth was the immediate
expression through images of the will that waited to be transformed into accomplishment’ (Testa & Armstrong 2008, 478). The construct of AIK’s hate proves to be a fertile addition to the creativity and manifold expressions on Swedish stadiums. But the myth is not a steady entity either and it can be replaced whenever needed.

Picture of Black Army membership card features the rat, while IFK Göteborg uses an angel, which refers to its supporter group called the Angels (Änglarna). The same image is to be found on merchandise in IFK Göteborg’s official store, as is the rat, in various forms, in AIK’s shop. A figure of a boy with a scarf on one of the Black army cards also signals a difference in narrative. Such a picture was used by the organization before (pictures taken in 2017).

The choice for a dirty rat and a ‘dangerous’ image happened … Some of the other big, established clubs tend to choose symbols with more positive connotations. While
By staging the unflattering history they not only perform it but they also help with its evolution. Once a reference is brought from the past it is removed from its own historical frame of past-present-future and it is re-established with new linings around its edges. Perhaps in that sense continuity can be kept intact. Historian Hayden White writes that while presenting a historical narrative one does not only investigate the past, but one also composes it (1973, 12). The ‘artistic’ aspect of this process does not mean changing the facts as such, but rather tailoring the story to a specific audience that is the target group for the narrative in question (White 1973, 5). It is placed between ‘realism’ and ‘fantasy’ as well as between ‘seriousness’ and ‘joke’ or ‘entertainment’, and as Arvidsson states it is a constant social process how the story is developed (Arvidsson 1999, 40). The shifting depends on a situation, the audience, the planned effects and also the social context. Like any folktale, this narrative has the freedom to move within the frame of a historical reference.

The play of seriousness/joke is very present in football. Alf Arvidsson explains that ‘one narrative can with small changes in the choice of words and in paralinguistic (tone, mimics) shift from one category to another (1999, 40). The apparent seriousness of hatred and threats can disappear with one gesture. To give an example, during one interview I asked about a meaningful match:

Me: And which is your favourite opponent?
Erik: Like you mean that I hate the most? (he laughs loud)
(interview with Erik, 2015)
Because Erik laughed at his own response he took part in this serious/play exchange that happens if football. This is a sort of tool that helps to keep it together. It has to be meaningful to function, as it is based on emotional connections and voluntary participation, but it has to have an open door for making it a make-belief environment as well. The emotions come here with practice, they constitute the performance. Some informants talked about the intensified feelings and ‘over-the-top’ displays that work only in this context. Certainly, one can feel how the crowd can get angrier when people watch each other using their patience. Anthropologist Monique Sheer writes that practice can be viewed as not only generating emotions, but as a way in which emotions let individuals act in the world (2012, 193). Having emotions means expressing them in our body language and in our actions. This emotional engagement, Sheer writes further, is very much context-dependent and relies on the interpretational abilities of the actors, as the success of the performance needs skills on the performer’s side, but also it needs to be interpreted correctly by the participants (Sheer 2012, 214). And so during the same match raging groups of ultras can scream abuse at each other from the far sides of the stadium in the mutual exchange between the two most engaged parties, while supporters of both teams are able to just share the space in between, without police escort, fights or troubles.

Curiously enough, in her article Sheer uses a phrase ‘I hate you’ as an example of an emotional performance, that is bound to mean different things depending on how, when, and where it is uttered (2012, 213). Such free flow of attitudes loosens up the rigidness of historical accuracy, especially when the current evaluation of the past-present-future combination begins to influence how we view the by-gone events. Hayden White writes: ‘What is “progress” to one is “decadence” to another, with the “present age” enjoying a different status, as an apex or nadir of development, depending upon the degree of alienation in a given ideology’ (1973, 25). AIK’s traditions of being seen and violent and unpleasant are framed rather romantically or tragically, as a badge of honour. Nobody denies that such events took place; nobody even tries to provide a different narrative. On the contrary, it is made almost grotesque as it is shamelessly placed to represent the club that is proud of something one should not be proud of. Is there a better way to annoy your opponents?

Folklorist and ethnologist Dorothy Noyes writes that while ‘emphasizing the conscious application of folklore to situations in performance, scholars also were able to look at the intertextual relations among performances and the effects of textual appropriation’ (Noyes 2012, 27). In this chapter I demonstrate that historical references, even not the nice ones, can
be applied and used to strengthen the image and community feel in the context of a football club. Those references are modern folk tales, and when they are performed over and over again they in turn help to consolidate a particular version of history that is relevant and applicable in the society at this given moment.

Further, the intertextuality of this performance, that is the borrowing and layering and borrowing of elements that makes it up, stresses the idea of fluidity in this pattern that appears stable, and yet it can shift and twists and adapt to a current situation. In other words, quoting Shuman and Hasa-Rokem: ‘Intertextuality provides means for recognizing a particular performance’s similarity to other performances of the same genre and for identifying and producing social and historical value without dependence on the stagnating effects of classificatory systems perceived as stable’ (Shuman & Hasan-Rokem 2012, 69). One could say that restating of the darker passages of AIK’s history makes it a cohesive narrative and it is a choice to do so. But what becomes very apparent in this narrative is the need for another party to be present and play its role. This history cannot be written by AIK only, the other clubs are needed.

One should point out that this sort of hatred-performance happens in predominantly masculine groups, which prompts questions (yet again) about the display of masculinities. In a sense, this hard-spoken, unreflexive picture brings to mind a rather old-fashioned, stagnated version of masculinity. Yet, the irony and humour visible there and expressed openly in the interviews, point out to a more diverse picture.

How much of it is what we expect to see, how much is a media fascination with violence.

Shame is put on them.

Being a large group of predominantly white men, can one be oppressed? And denying the right for such stance and feelings, isn’t it a severe kind of oppression?

Antireflexivity – they are reflexive to the point of becoming anti-reflexive.

‘Nature seems (the more we look into it) made up of antipathies: without something to hate, we should lose the very spring of thought and action. Life would turn to a stagnant pool, were it not ruffled by the jarring interests, the unruly passion of men’ (Hazlit 2004, 105)

Love turns. with a little indulgence, to indifference or disgust: hatred alone is immortal (Hazlit 2004, 105)
How loth were we to give up our pious belief in ghosts and witches, because we liked to persecute the one, and frighten ourselves to death with the other! (Hazlit 2004, 106)

I mentioned already that AIK has had a royal connection, with kings of Sweden being its protector and first honorary member (source). In the 1920s it was also seen as a club for sophisticated middle class, although working class roots, a feature similar to their twin club, Djurgårdens IF (Andresson 2016, 229; Hagström, Johansson, Jurell. 2010, 18). This somewhat secure position within the upper social echelons allows AIK, so to speak, to twist its image and play with symbolism. After all, they can always return to the image of power and success and of royal connections. This security makes it easier to explore the darker side as well. There is little danger of being stuck only with it – and that might also shed light why other dislike AIK. Shapeshifting in that manner is not available to everybody.

The performance of hatred has certainly developed and changed during the last decades and so one more historical dimension should be brought up here. The older supporters usually expressed surprise and discomfort on the levels of aggression presented by younger generations. While talking to members of Kärnan, all elderly retired men, I heard numerous times that the younger ones were all about the flares and screaming abuse and not respecting the opponents (focus group, 2015). Time and again I was reassured that it was not so before, in the 1960s or 1970s. The support has changed. It has become more acceptable to express such emotions more openly but also more intensely. As Sheer remarks, the dominant style is always challenged by the countercultures, even when it deals with the displays and interpretations of emotions (2012, 217). One could say that a new and specific ‘emotional community’ has been created (see Barbara Rosenwein date; Monique Sheer 2012). They uniformity across the Swedish football scene allowed some forms of behaviour to flourish while borrowing heavily from historical narratives. Those individuals, although small in numbers, managed to steal the show and they attract the attention of other supporters, clubs and media. They call themselves ultras.

‘Liberta Pergli Ultras’ – Freedom for ultras

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70 Torbjörn Andersson comments that Stockholm clubs won only 13 Allsvenska titles from all the 91 seasons (2016, 224). Allsvenskan was established in 1924, thus the 11 titles AIK claims go back to times when the league did not yet exist.
The match that opened this chapter was one burning and stinky business. It was as much a competition on the pitch as it was a contest of support on the stands. As mentioned in the match description, the ultras groups from both clubs took over that particular game. Flares and smoke bombs galore, they made sure nobody was breathing properly for almost entire ninety minutes. Such groups, whose focus is on fire-driven loud support, are now firmly established in Swedish football scene, but they are quite young, appearing about early 2000s. Supras Malmö for example were celebrating their 10 year birthday in 2013 (field notes, 2013).

Perhaps because they are quite new in the football context, they need to make a bit more fuss to establish themselves. In other words, taken just as groups established in early 21st century they do not have much past to draw from. However, they can and indeed use narratives from other generations and countries, as well as the clubs’ who of course have plenty of stories to lend. Thus, apart from their dramatic and picturesque football involvement, they exemplify a process of building up a folk group that takes, interprets, uses and produces scraps of history. The story of Swedish ultras is not a long one, but it is built parallel to the story of the club and incorporating the narratives of the previously dominant groups. In a sense it is what could be called ‘her-story’, as opposed to ‘his-story’, the official version of the past presented by clubs (reference! Brabazon?). These groups are tightly connected to the football institutions, but tell a slightly different tale, one preoccupied with ‘average’ fans, with people outside the circles of power who become visible and acknowledged in this context. They also incorporate historical references that the clubs would rather leave in peace in the ever darker past.

The past renders the present recognizable. Its traces on the ground and in our minds let us make sense of current scenes. Without past experience, no sight or sound would mean
anything; we perceive only what we are accustomed to. Features and patterns become such because we share their history (Lowenthal 2015, 86).

Although the display tends to be interpreted as very masculine, there are some feminine threads woven into the picture, namely the engagement in fabrics and production of materials that has signs of handicraft that is traditionally associated with women. Especially needlework, embroidery and sawing have been associated with females, also historically young girls’ activities oscillated around thread-based crafts (Ilmakunnas, 2016). Susan Luckman, professor in cultural studies, writes about current boom in all kinds of knitting, sawing and crocheting, that has females as majority participants (2015).

Young boys associated with tifo groups are proud to craft flags and banners, are not shy of being seen with a sewing machine (field notes 2013). The activity is re-contextualized here and appropriate for young males that are often pictured as aggressive, unruly crowd. There is a distinction between tifo-groups and ultras as such. The gigantic pieces of fabric sawn together are prepared by fans, who are responsible only for those, and they do not belong to ultras groups by default, but there is a lot of movement between them and lines are blurred. Otto commented in an interview that he started as ultras member being only 14, and then liked the idea of doing something more tangible, not only flares, and so he joined the tifo-group (interview, 2016). Still he would travel with ultras to away matches. He also remarked that making a tifo requires time and patience, and attracts less people, while being ultras-only is relatively easier, as holding a flare does not require hours of preparation.

Picture from a book Black Army (1998). Photographer Per-Olof Sännås, followed the members of Black Army of several years. In his book, Sännås present pictures full of energy and also aggression and violence, but he also includes images of affection and care, and also of emotional engagement with flags and banners that they produce themselves. In the middle of the book one finds such image for example: a young person patientley
The aesthetics of those groups are uniformed: flares, big flags, lots of banners, mostly black clothes and masks, drummers keeping the rhythms of the chants, sometimes only male members allowed, and smoke bombs being the latest addition (field notes, 2013-2015). This style of support comes from Italy but the name dates even later in time. As Alberto Testa refers, ‘The word finds its etymology in French political discourse. During the Restoration period (1815–1830) the word ultrá-royaliste indicated partisan loyalty to the Absolute Monarchy. The ultrá-royaliste championed the interests of property-owners, the nobility and clericalists’ (2009, 54). With time, while football in Italy was developing, so were its supporters. Testa presents his account beginning in 1950s when ‘violence in the stadium was not correlated to notions of a ‘social problem’. Acts of supporter intemperance and aggression were explained as individual predispositions or as a result of the match events’ (2009, 55).

Political situation in Italy during 1960s and 1970s also played a role in the development of the ultras current character. Disappointment and disillusionment towards politics are described as key feature of Italian youth at that time which would trigger ultras largely apolitical and at the same time confrontational character but also moved the confrontations from streets to sport arenas (Testa 2009; Testa & Armstrong 2008). Thus, the term ultras have come to describe ‘hard-core fans that manifest behaviours that exceed those considered normal and traditional’ (Testa & Armstrong 2008, 476). As Testa further remarks, ‘the youthful pursuit of collective identification, excitement and conflict were to be satisfied henceforth in the football context via identification with colours, symbols and territories of football-related belonging’ (2009, 55).

The Swedish ultras are Italy-inspired. They also have names that use Latin language, like Sol Invictus (AIK) and Rex Scania (MFF). The ultras group in Stockholm has made shirts saying Liberta Pelgri Ultras – freedom for ultras. They are not huge in numbers (Supras Malmö was estimated to be 40-50 persons strong in 2013) but fixed on their flares and drum, which makes them visible and audible at stadiums. Thus, one could say that they are organized on a notion, on the idea borrows from another cultural context and applied to their home ground.

Using the past to serve interpretation in the present, respondents assembled isolated experiences into patterns. From these narratives they could project what might happen next, set priorities, take responsibility, and try to shape the futures – Rosenzweig & Thelen 1998, 68.
Dorothy Noyes states that ‘common descent or history ceased to be a criterion of folkness for many scholars’ (Noyes 2012, 22). The ultras in Sweden are an example of fearless attempt to produce history openly and from the scratch. They all rather young groups with members estimated to be teenagers to late twenties, but they are eagerly drawing on other stories and traditions, in the lack of their own. The usage of Latin or Italian phrases helps to build up a cultural heritage around them. Also, clubs’ histories are out there for grabs, and they freely use elements that they fancy. At the same time, the members of those groups come from very different backgrounds. In an interview from 2013, two members of Supras Malmö stated that the guys came from different locations in Malmö which also meant different social statuses and ethnic background. They were very proud from their anti-racist stands. Women, however, were banned from joining the group.

**Italy vs England**

Literature that deals with Italian ultras involvement stresses its violent rhetoric and high degree of organization (e.g. Testa 2009; Testa & Armstrong 2008; Kassimeris 2011). One look at their Swedish counterparts confirms how organized and structured they have to be to be able to make the performance they deem necessary during matches. Ultras arrival to Sweden was not an easy ride though. Carl, my interviewee, expressed a notion that many of my informants talked about, namely the cultural and generational clash of supporters:

And there was a cultural difference between our supporters… the new groups were just popping up and it was a big culture shock between the older claque supporters and the ultras supporters when they started to organize themselves. It took quite a few years actually… also for them to grow up and become a unified group (interview with Carl, 2015).

When the younger supporters began to draw inspirations from the southern Europe, it meant that tifos, flares and banners entered the arenas. They took the stadiums by storm and sparked a discussion about their quasi-illegal activities. Arvid, MFF supporter, commented on the ultras organization when asked about the different groups at the standing section in Malmö:

(…) they’ve done so much for MFF and for the atmosphere and so on. Ahm... so I like them a lot. Having said that I think they take themselves too seriously. I miss the old days when you had much more sense of humour in the terrace. You know the chants and so... they are a bit too ideological at the moment. And they should loose up and have fun, so to speak. (…) I understand the fascination with ultas culture and all that. Cause I had the same. You know in the 90s we were watching Italian football on telly and you saw that and you thought ‘oh I wish it
could be the same in Malmö’. And now it is like that and I like that, I just think that sometimes they are too serious about themselves (2014)

This movement arrived to Sweden around year 2000, when commodification and commercialization of the British football was already long on its way. Frame this historically, EU and the year 2000 and the like. Vaförjävla pack e ni.

Carl and David from AIK contrasted the new Italian-style with the older version:

Carl: The thing that is so curious is the standing section because that just shifts like crazy. 10 years ago there were no ultras.
Me: No?
Carl: No… little more… it says 02 right?
David: Yeah, 02. So 2002 like…
Carl: But so ultras culture is rather young here. (…) So it needs just a bit of thinking, because there are some different opinions and strong opinions, organized opinions that differ from the traditional supporter who has been here in Sweden before. So they were more England-inspired: you go to see match and you drink beer, punch some people and go home… (laughs).

The visual effects aside, ultras behavior has triggered some conflicts, condemnation from media and police because of the security concerns. Interestingly though majority of my informants were rather positive towards the young men's efforts to create a good atmosphere. It touches more upon the ideal and the issue of control. Like Arvid in a quote above, most people were complaining about apparent seriousness and lack of humour among some of the ultras organizations. As he points out, ‘it used to be funnier’. When conducting a focus group with HIF Vänner, the oldest supporter organization in Sweden which has mostly retired, older men as its members, the main issue with the new supporters was again their stiffness, and as one man said, that they take themselves too seriously (focus group, 2015). Although fires and smoke caused considerable disturbance, they were not the main concern but rather the attitudes that the fans expressed.

As Carl remarked, the style of support has shifted considerably from the British to Italian/southern. English football was the source of inspiration for decades, but it has also carried with itself a disturbing notion of unruly drunk hooligans, which he also hinted in the quote above. There is a clash of ideas on the stands. Curiously, when the English league was becoming ‘more civilized’ and shook off the badge of thug paradise, it somehow lost the appeal for many, as it also became more serious, more business-like and money-oriented. England was once famous for its hooligans and its troubled football (Brabazon 2006).
Although ultras behaviour sparks some concerns, I was told that they do not seek trouble which means they would not seek other fans to arrange a fight, but they might through some stones if the possibility comes (football chat, 2014). Consciously or not, they apply an image from the past, the sense of danger and violence that has surrounded football in the previous decades.

As mentioned above, they openly oppose racism and fascism, but at the same time they do clash with the law when coming with flares, they wear masks and create an atmosphere of an almost secret society around them. Dark clothes and established rituals set them apart from the majority of supporters. They are performing what Alf Arvidsson calls the ‘living historical narrative’. It is based on the perception of self, yet closely related to the collective patterns and values.

It is difficult to assess how influential the English skinhead – far right movements were in Swedish football, but all in all there are narratives about far-right and racists occupying Stadiums in many cities. I was told for example that MFF Support was established in early 1990s to reclaim the standing section from racists (interview with Jan, 2012). AIK had similar problems with its spectators (interview with Carl and David, 2015). Further, AIK’s supporter organization Black Army, which used to be more like a hooligan firm, was established in England when some of the AIK fans went there to see a match and became inspired (Sännås 1998, page). Thus English football was not only a beautiful sporting event, but specific ideological movements that was present during matches.

Both HIF and DIF claim to be more British-inspired. Members of supporters’ organization Kärnan in Helsingborg said:

Robin: (...I know that there are many who are inspired by England. We are a club that has the most classic English supporter culture. And we have many that have watched extremely many matches in England.
Alex: It is English football that we grew up with.
Robin: It is not that crystal clear anymore, we are like the last...
Alex: The last bastion

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Robin: No I thought like… the last to have the simplest… like Djurgården they don’t have a drummer either, but we don’t have ‘klacken’, we don’t have a person with a megaphone. I think there is still this ambition to have it like this, I think Djurgården have this ambition as well. Malmö is different, they have that… Agron…

Alex: Ah yes of course

Robin: Agron who has never seen a match because he has his back towards the pitch.

Alex: It can almost become… ah no… I cannot understand that.

Robin: We are probably closest to the English and Malmö probably to the southern style.

The British inspiration does not mean hooligan-like preferences, but more aesthetic choices when it comes to routines during matches. To be fair, both HIF and DIF have fractions that do come with flares and smoke, but the lack of drummers and ‘conductors’ with megaphones marks the difference between them and for example AIK or MFF. Further, Djurgården decorates the stands with Union Jacks with colours changed to the Swedish club's colour scheme. This Unionist nostalgia comes from the time when English Premiership was the league to be watched. As already mentioned in the previous chapter, DIF fans talked about flying to England to see the league in the 1980s. As it was time of glory for Liverpool, it is perhaps not that surprising that I have seen DIF fans with Liverpool tattoos (field notes, 2015). It would seem that the ‘inspiration’ that fans talk about is a selected set of references which also means omitting others, like for example the unflattering hooligan image.

Displaying Union Jacks though, with all its historical narratives, is not without problems either. It enters a deeper level of political history and the troubled relations between England, Ireland and Scotland, not to mention the colonial encounters. One supporter said in a quick chat that he confronted a person holding a Union Jack about Northern Ireland (football chat 2015). His conclusion was that people are blind to the context, that holding such a sign of imperialistic power does nothing good. Still, the ‘Jacks’ seen in the Swedish football context are often changed to match the colour schemes of the teams, DIF being one example, but also Halmstad BK (observations, 2015). The selectiveness is interesting here. One could say that the English nostalgia is one of the reasons for such display. Also, the Union Jack has become a popular sign, visible in different kinds of merchandise. It has been stripped from its political connotations and applied to fashion for example. Would it be a fashion statement in football too? The reminiscence of the raw, vintage football one used to have on the island, before money and profit took over?
The traces of this past English football paradise are to be found in the novel written by the former member of AIK hooligan firm, Johan Höglund, describing his time with Firman Boys, complains about the way in which DIF monopolized the 'British look'. He was particularly annoyed that DIF supporters wore clothes similar to their British counterparts, a style he liked as well. In the book he refers a story when he comes home from England with newly bought clothes, and he is especially proud of a Tottenham Hotspur, a London football club’s jacket: ‘Sure, I had expected some comments that there was a Tottenham jacket, but what the guys despised even more was that I looked like a member of Djurgården’s group ( ... ). I was considering even to go home to change clothes, but it just felt silly because I would probably get even more crap for it’ (Höglund 2005, 106 – my translation).

Höglund also writes that already in early 1990s when he began his career in the hooligan firm there was a persistent myth about violent AIK supporters, and that a fight was ‘more a rule than exception’, almost as if it was expected to happen. He also connects it to English football and describes the whole ritual – singing, drinking beer and fighting – that one needed to perform. It was a decision, he claims, to follow this particular style to the letter (2005, 103). The ideal was dictated from somewhere else, it was the English supporter culture that was applied to the Swedish context.

As Höglund’s examples show, almost nothing appears there by accident. The routine is learned and followed, the clothes are carefully chosen, and there is an ideal mythical pattern that they wish to re-establish. Nevertheless, this exchange creates an interesting image. A guy has a cool jacket and is mocked for looking like the enemy, ‘the other’. There is a strong contrastin this picture – dangerous, violent young men carefully choosing their clothes and making sure that the group looks good and coherent. (Lars-Erics bok on skratt; the last laugh)

Clothes and other football-related paraphernalia have history on their own. Before the clubs realized the commercial win from the souvenirs, supporters made and arranged their own clothes. They could not use the official crests for example and so they used dates the clubs were established etc. (interview with Jonatan 2013). Back in the 1980s or 1990s there was not that much merchandise at all, and supporters started making things on their own. Hagström, Johansson and Jurell retell a story when about 300 they prepared disappeared in under half an hour (2010, page).
As for the modern-days ultras they do follow a dress code as well, which is mostly black. Thanks to this characteristic one is able to spot the ultras in almost every football club in Sweden. Nevertheless, they do put a lot of effort and creativity into making their own shirts, scarfs and hats, as well as stickers. Some of the t-shirts are prepared especially for some matches, some commemorate current players. The Liberta Pelgri Ultras shirt mentioned earlier is an example of a very target-specific design. Also, AIK supporters made shirts before Stockholm derby with a text 100% anti-DIF (100% against Djurgården, field notes 2015). These designs are not exactly home-made as the groups embrace the opportunities in the globalized consumption market. I heard for example that Swedish ultras use Polish printing houses to get their stickers quick and fast (interview with Maria, 2015).

**Ideology of symbolic violence**

One could ponder if the connection between English football and right-wing politics would then connect the ultras with the other side of the spectrum, namely the political left. Tim Parks in his novel based on his engagement with the Italian club Hellas Verona during the 2003 season, presents very straightforward divisions in political markers in different clubs. According to him, Bologna was seen as the leftist team and thus the one could abuse them with a statement ‘comunisti di merda’ – bloody communists (Parks 2003, 301). Lazio, on the other hand, had been known for Nazi sympathies, with Nazi symbols decorating the stands. To give another European example, Polish football also expresses far-right tendencies, which are connected to the idea of Nazi-fighting patriotism and the Second World War (field notes, 2014). The blueprint of ultras groups makes it then possible to be filled with different ideologies and messages.

Swedish clubs tend to avoid straightforward political messages, and so do often supporters. Black Army, one of the biggest supporters’ organizations attached to AIK states on their web page that they are ‘ideal and apolitical and disassociate from almost everything’². Stadiums offer a possibility for discussing even political issues. An informant remarked in an interview that when Supras Malmö became very left-oriented, which was not appreciated by some, and so a new fraction broke from them, calling themselves Brigada (interview with Otto, 2016).

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² Quote from [http://www.blackarmy.se/blackarmy.html](http://www.blackarmy.se/blackarmy.html), 20.02.2016
Although many state that they would like to see the clubs completely neutral when it comes to politics, the same standing section can accommodate very different views. While avoiding strong political messages, many clubs see themselves as very including, and thus integrating. AIK was referred to as Sweden’s best integration programme (football chat, 2015). Also, when talking about the structure of the club, Carl and David mentioned several times the power of democracy and how youths learn to function in a democratic society, how to enforce changes and organize themselves (interview with Carl and David, 2015). My interviewees mentioned as well that they had known people who could be described as violent, who then learned to express their opinions and make changes in the democratic way by becoming active members of the club. In that way the organization seems to be a politically-schooling entity, producing desirable citizens rather than drunken thugs.

Thus, the narrative went upside-down, so to speak. From a nest of trouble-makers and a trigger for anti-social tendencies in the 1980s, football emerged as the prime example of democratic social involvement. Perhaps because the Italian-inspired style of support needed a high degree of organization, it also prompted to some extend the awareness of social structures around football. Still, football remains a socially constructed space where boundaries are tested. By bringing flares and smokes, the groups break the law. Their persistence to smuggle the flares to the arena, despite sniffing dogs and frisk searches, is intriguing.

A policeman interviewed in 2017 pondered about the flares:

There are a lot of young guys who just want to spend time together in a group. You want to have a kick. It is a bit problematic, like no firm culture here, but ultras yes. And it is good. Some things are problematic, but some are not.

And it is about the law we have in Sweden. In Sweden you are not allowed to touch people in the sensitive areas, we are not allowed to touch the crouch or breasts. So yes. If people wonder oh how do they smuggle flares – well like this, you put it down in your pants, or in your bra, we have seen it. Abroad – nothing, because they know they would be checked everywhere, so you are not as willing

73 The only club in Sweden which allows the display of political agendas is Degerfors IF. There is an online discussion from 2006 which focuses on the ‘new phenomenon’ of ultras groups at Swedish stadiums. It is claimed by one person that Degerfors definitely has communistic tendencies and that only there would one become a communist (for still quite a mysterious reason to me). As the team currently does not in the highest division they enjoy less media attention, but the supporters keep popping up with banners featuring Lenin, calls to free Gaza and also to unite Northern Ireland with the Republic (field notes, 2016). The selectiveness and intertextuality of this political engagement highlights the ever-present societal antagonisms and problems that ooze to the football zone.
to try. And what is going to happen to you in Sweden – you pay a small fee, that’s it. So as long as you have this kind of the law in Sweden, you have to live with the flares. It is that simple.

It is made into a problem in a way. But how you handle it actually matters. Like the supras in Malmö do it quite well. I cannot say it is good because it is illegal, I am not saying it is good. But at least there is a thought in it. they go to the front, not in the crowd, just burn them and leave them on the ground. So they think about it (interview with Albin, 2017)

Engage with the quote, comment

It should be noticed that such visual displays are costly. Otto remarked that a flare costs about 100 Swedish crowns (about 10 euros). Also the tifo groups live off donations and good will. The logic is that you get what you paid for. Should people wish to see nice choreography and impressive displays then they should chip in with some cash. They do not want to be sponsored or financed as that would somehow compromise the engagement (interview with Otto 2016). Before matches one can see young guys going around and collecting money. In a way then they are ´publicly financed´, avoiding ownership and expectations that would come with it. Simply, if there is no money there will be no tifo.

There is also a mythical already story of a person who designed tifos for every home match for MFF when the club was turning 100 years in 2010. Admittedly, he worked extra time all year in 2009 to be able to quit job for a year devote all this energy to MFF in 201074 (interview with Otto 2016, football chat 2014). One person working for MFF added that when he was offered some soda when working. He asked who paid for it, and when hearing that it was the club, he refused to accept it (football chat 2014). This could be described as extreme, but this situation highlights the complex relationship people have with clubs, yet again making profit of any kind an issue. Perhaps what is threatened then could be described as ‘personal capital’. That display still belongs to this one person or group; it has not been bought up by the club. Yes, it is framed by it and happened because of it, but there is still a distinction and the specific form of fan-art is kept separated from the narrative that started it (Löfgren, forthcoming). This separation, attaching the display to one group rather than the whole club, also presents an alternative history of football, one told by flame and smoke.

The players are drawn into tifo and ultras spectacle, as matches are nowadays dependent on how the spectators-turned-actors behave. One interviewed goalkeeper said:

74 There is a photo album with pictures of all the tifos, published in ...
Kristoff: I do like the flares, but those that make so much smoke that go down the pitch... those they could stop with. (…) We had something like that at the derby here... so much smoke you could not see a thing.

Me: And players leave the pitch then?

Kristoff: Yes we had to leave. But... it is a part of the game. You just have to accept it. When it is derby so you just know that it is going to happen and it is just so. If it burns then we have to go in. It is nothing to be sad about. I think it is cool how much time they spend to make something cool. So it is like we play for them and they do it for us. So they have flares or a tifo. I am usually taken by such things, it is really cool. Maybe some don't think it is so good but I think it is nice, it is fun. (interview with Kristoff, 2015)

The smoke that he refers to can be very thick, especially if the ‘pyro inferno’ display happens on the new arenas with a roof, like Friends Arena or Tele2 Arena, as the smoke cannot escape that quickly. Some supporters tend to think that players are banned from saying anything positive about the flares, since clubs are fined for them.

The smoke can delay a match for up to half an hour. Stockholm in August 2015.

Younger players usually like the ultras style. Kristoff has already accepted it as ‘a part of the game’. It feels modern, European, it is visually captivating as well. The former players were generally positive, but they were also twitchy about the issue of control, not flames in itself. They understood though that the ultras were stealing the show, that they were having demands, that they tried to influence the clubs and their politics, and that the former players had little patience with (field notes, 2014-2015). The ultras represent for them the new ideal, where connections and devotion are staged and performed openly. Their experience was
curiously different – that of relative closeness to the rest of the society, as they were not professional players and they had to work and study, but that also helped to protect football from outside influences. This goes in line how supporters feel as well. Several interviewees stated that now the connection between them and players is closer than before, although the gap has been growing with less and less ‘own boys’ and rather limited interaction outside the match context (field notes, 2015).

Perhaps, as the intimacy stopped being personal and started to be more and more about two groups meeting sporadically when matches are played, it has to be restaged and almost violently re-established with smoke and fire and quasi-illegal behaviour. As Kristoff said in a quote above, it feels like they do it for the players while the players play for them. It would seem an almost natural exchange of favours, but one has to ignore then the obvious economic difference that one group pays and the other is paid. Is this ‘happy together’ fantasy performed as the rite to re-establish a connection that otherwise would disappear in thin smoke, much thinner than the one ultras make?

Any kind of pyrotechnics are forbidden in Sweden, and clubs face fine whenever there is something burning at their home arenas. As a result, there is a specific mouse-and-cat game going on during matches. Lengthy checks and frisk search is conducted rather often, with bags searched and dogs brought to sniff for flares. It can take up to 40 minutes to get to the stadium (field notes, 2015). And yet, once inside, flares are lit and smoke bombs promptly opened. The constant announcements that this sort of behaviour is forbidden are simply disregarded. One of my informants, Otto, said that he thought of being in those groups was like being a part of ‘urban disorder’ from time to time. He stressed that they did not look for fights, but one was expected to defend the group and its banners if needed. Such attitude was also described in the book about Stockholm clubs Vaförjävla pack e ni?. There, the authors remark that the ultras are something ‘of a gray zone between choreography at the stands and a form of latent hooliganism’ (2010, 146; my translation).

That does not stop people to see positives in such behaviour and even claim that clubs profit from it, because it is a show. At the same time, many recognize that media has presented diametrically different opinions about the issues. The history of ultras has become a history of the media as well. As Carl put it:
Carl: There is a classic video clip, it should be in Youtube; it was the derby, AIK-Djurgården… And so there are burning flares, and then the commentator says, and that was like 15 years ago, what a fantastic atmosphere. So it was almost like ‘have you seen this, this is like the international class here’. But then there was not many spectators back then, very few were going to matches and it has just begun to grow. And a lot of was about the fact that there were tifo made, choreographies, pyro too. And then there is a clip… they have put those clips together… with the same commentator, the same clubs facing each other, it looks almost exactly the same at the stands, and there are flares, but it is about 10 years later, and the commentator says ‘how disgusting that they disturb this event like this’.

David: (laughs loud)
Carl: So it is very clear that the picture in the media has changed a lot.

The video Carl describes comes from putting together footages from 2001 match between AIK – Hammarby, and 2011 DIF – AIK. The result is that presumably the same person first praising and then harshly criticizing the exactly same thing. The change in evaluation happened within 10 years. One of my interviewees, Jonatan, described himself as a former hooligan, admired ultras, although understood mixed emotions following them. As he expressed it:

It’s like… when you are young I think you can be a bit radical. If all the rules are followed it is really boring. It is a big part of the experience when you have people on the arena burn the…what do you call them…flares. Of course I understand the security risks when there are people with fires, of course. But I think… I think MFF would not have that many people coming to a game without that, I think that. It is a part of all this… sometimes you scream at your opponents and it is a part of football, and if you don’t want to be a part of it, when in you in the outside of the arena, and you can just have a seat, so you can choose, everyone can choose. (…) honestly, when MFF gets a fine for like 50 000 for the flares, I’m sure they made millions because of more media, more people coming to the arena, so I think the fines are very little price. Without them I think it will be much lower. It’s these people that… like… drive the supporter culture, come up with the new songs, go to away games, make flags, make everything happen. (interview with Jonatan, 2013)

For Jonatan, ultras were an extension of the hooligan world he knew. He did not find his past that controversial either. He referred to a certain code of behaviour that exists even there. There are proper ways to be a hooligan and that context has its own rituals that are supposed to be obeyed. The justification of violence expressed by Jonatan ran along the lines described

for example by Aage Radmann (2015), with claims of fighting only those who wanted to fight, and reflexivity about the moral stands in the society. Jonatan remarked:

I just thought it was fun; I was in fights at school too. I never wanted to hurt anybody. I never fought anybody who did not want to hurt me. Honestly, I never did. But if anybody liked it, then I liked to have a fight. Some people go on the plane and jump with a parachute. I would never do that, I’d be so afraid. But this was my excitement in life. (…)But then… I always thought… if we take the gloves and go to the ring it is legal, if we don’t – it’s illegal. It’s some kind of double-moral from the society, I think. I don’t think it is about racism, it is about being in a group, connecting to something. (...) And if it leads to fighting… some people learn to like it. Most violent football supporters are not really violent; some … most grow up, and grow out of it. Stopping is not difficult. It is not a criminal gang that you cannot leave. It is just ‘OK, fine’. And many of them are still my friends.

Jonatan was an engaging and polite informant. We laughed a lot during this interview. His approach was very pragmatic, he was also aware of the negative evaluations, of the problems and issues with the picture of football supporters. Tara Brabazon comments that it is ‘far easier to blame alcoholic hooligans than the police, poorly funded facilities or conservative and inappropriate laws’ (2006, 26). Although ‘hooligan logic’ expressed in ‘hit-and-tell’ literature, and here by Jonatan as well, is problematic and challenging, it points out that violence is just another expression of commitment and emotional engagement. As Jonatan left the scene, it was the ultras groups that gained more power and found new creative ways to show their devotion. It was not in the fists anymore, but in the big flags and banners. The display became more aesthetic, yet the evaluations from the past stuck to it anyway.

Although the firms still exist, it is the symbolic violence in forms of abusive chants and banners, flares and smoke bombs that shape the idea of ‘problematic’ or ‘controversial’ football scene. As the ultras groups seized the public attention and got into the spotlight, they also started executing their power and claiming influence in Swedish football.

**Power and responsibility**

There is another video from Stockholm derby from 2011 which shows a ‘quiet protest’ against the Swedish Football Association. Supporters from AIK and DIF were absolutely quiet for the first 10 minutes of the match. They had a banner saying ‘this is now the football sounds without supporters’. They protested against the media and the SVFF. The commentators start by saying that they were unsure if the supporters could organize themselves in such way, especially in such emotional derby, and they talk about what happens

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76[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3xBhnsbDpTo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3xBhnsbDpTo) The clip was retrieved 18.02.2016
on the pitch, but they keep saying how strange, how weird it feels to be entirely quiet. They almost cannot concentrate on their job but keep referring to the scary silence at the stands. At one point the commentator says ‘well we will try to get through those ten minutes’. When finally the fans rise up with flags, songs, massive tifos, flares and smokes, there is a sign of relief: ‘welcome to Stockholm derby’.

The commentator went on saying for example ‘From maximum quietness to the maximal volume’. ‘One needs the support’. And finally that after those 10 quiet minutes the game changed ‘from a training match to a real one’. This might be the prime example of folklore redefined by Dan Ben-Amos as ‘artistic communication in small groups’ thus omitting the need for common ancestry (Noyes 2012, 14). What the ultras communicated, while being completely quiet, was that they are a force to be reckoned with, but also that they are established and taken for granted. The commentators were supposed to focus on the pitch and running athletes, but instead they paid a tribute to a group of supporters.

Crowd-life does not equal chaos, but order. But it is a different kind of social order from the common strategic one, inasmuch as the Other emerges from the bodies’ restructuring of the city’s landscape and a new social experience of space of a practical-bodily kind is created, which – albeit temporarily – puts an end to the placelessness of city space (Nielsen 1995, 33).

‘The ambiguity of the modern stadium: joy behind the fences’ (Nielsen, 34)

The crowd may be a historic product, yet in its crowding together – such as at the stadium – it dismisses this product-likeness and recreates it(self), not as mere distributed nitwits, but as a historic being making its presence known and making a great fuss about it (Nielsen 1995, 34).

Oakley’s Football Delirium

One could point out here that ultras were being intertextually read by TV commentators into the context as their significance becomes apparent (Malinowski 1935, 9). The ultras play with highly intertextual messages. For example Sol Invictus not only uses the name of a Roman deity, Invincible Sun, but also plays up anarchistic tunes and displays a banned with the text Kärlek och Uppror, which is also a title of an album by a Swedish punk band Ebba Grön. That then plays on a popular myth that AIK was more punk while DIF used to be more disco (Hagström, Johansson, Jurell 2010, page). On the new level of intertextuality, they make a recognizable sign for football and for modern support. In a way, they are football since the narrative got so entangled and dependent on their choreographies. intertextuality of the messages David Herman
As Salamon and Goldberg point out, after Galit Hasan-Rokem, ‘folklore is created through a mutual movement involving the talents and cognizance of singers and audience alike, of storytellers and listeners – in a manner that blurs the distinction between them (...)’ (Salamon & Goldberg 2012, 119). In this instance presented above, the audience became quite literally the singers and influenced the spectacle to an unbelievable degree. They coordinated and orchestrated the derby. After the initial silence up came not only flags and banners, but also flares and smoke, and the match was paused and the players left the pitch in a thick fog.

All this performance becomes a history as well. As seen from the interviews above, very often my interviewees referred me to so special, unusual or just fun examples of the support on the stands, spectacular flares or massive tifos or a witty chant. They get used just as incredible goal and unforgettable matches. What is more, the video clips and pictures make it visible on the internet for years after they took place, helping to sustain and develop the digital footprint of the fans. (develop – picture of supras Malmö at friends arena)

But the ultras are not only the fire and black masks, but also flags and banners with a fully developed folklore around them. The manifold of messages on them aside, they have history and agency of their own. During one shadowing I was told that different groups always take their banners away because there is a thing about stealing them. Other groups always try to nick it (field notes 2015). Apparently in Italy, the homeland of ultras movement, if your group’s banner is stolen the group cannot be continued, it has to be closed down. Johan Höglund also describes a situation when during the hockey derby Djurgården supporters showed a stolen personalized AIK banner to their supporters (2005, 44). The insult was grave and Höglund describes feelings like fury, hatred and anger. Because it was a Swedish flag, it would not be burned, he explains. But the unlucky group who lost it was forced to defend their honour by trying to reach Djurgården section, meaning trying to get past the police and security, and fight to get the banner back.

Historically speaking, Höglund’s time was before the ultras even entered the collective Swedish imagination, yet the system of operation is similar. The flag with a name of a particular group appears to become a sort of materialized ideology (develop, article from Kenth). The fragile pieces of fabric gain agency and stir the action, as presented in Johan Höglund’s account above. The banners represent a variety of messages and symbols. One can find a griffin representing Skåne, Stockholm’s coat of arms…(develop).
This staged derby protest has not been an isolated incident. Engaged, creative supporters tend to be in conflict with different participants. In 2015 AIK’s tifo group was on strike for quite a long time since they were not communicating well with the owners of Friends Arena (football chat, 2015). The version I have been told was that police was called to check their place, looking for illegal flares and any illegal substances. The group got furious. They did not prepare any nice displays for the derby, which meant Djurgårdens IF fans outdid them on their home grounds (shadowing, 2015).

Another protested I witnessed took place in Malmö in May 2016. During a match against Gefle IF the crowd was surprisingly quiet. It turned out ultras were furious at the police action that took place some days before. The target were people involved, presumably, in some fighting months earlier when a Danish club came to play Malmö in early spring. The ultras present at the stands were not singing, they did not have their drum, they did not wave flags. Instead, they hanged a small batter saying ‘Freedom for Ultras’. The result was quite baffling as 15,000 people could not break into a song together without the drums, or without a kapo conducting them. It highlighted how much of the atmosphere relied on the ultras. Thus, the two narrated incidence were aimed against arena owners/the club policies, and police actions/club policies – develop, history of the conflict.

The historical account of the ultras in Sweden exemplifies yet another interesting aspect of the football context, namely how stable it is in its instability. Would that not be a contradiction in term having an unstable institution? As Carl said in the interview quote earlier, ‘it shifts like crazy’ and they are just amazed how quickly the scene changes and wondering where it is supposed to go next. The clubs presented in this book are all adorned, as presented in the first chapter, with phrases full of heritage, traditions and continuous history, so stabilizing ingredients that prevent drastic changes. And yet around 2000 ultras launched a rather successful revolution, a break from the past by using the past, and now they are the major force to be reckoned with, just like the violence-interested individuals from 1980s and 1990s, they wrecked and challenged the image of football clubs. The supporters’ scene was developing parallel to football clubs, finding was to responding to changes there, thus providing an alternative history of the same social context.

This is also a dimension that can be seen as somewhat similar to a folk movement. Small yet determined groups of loosely organized individuals, on a local level and not started by an official organization, enforced profound changes in their social context at the same time as
they created themselves and their folklore. As Dorothy Noyes points out, the ‘empirically traceable instances of performance’ has started to be viewed as the connection between people and folklore, and not an abstract ‘group’ that they would belong to (Noyes 2012, 14). The football context offers here a good opportunity to see profound voluntary involvement in performing and producing historical references through rites and rituals that in turn serve as the historical base for the new historical narratives.

**Concluding remarks**

The folk tale that ultras compose in front of their audience is a very interesting one. They are redefining and re-establishing social order at the stadiums, and that brings to mind the class perspective that appears in folk tales when peasants and beggars can become kings (Arvidsson 1999, 55). These young men appeared out of nowhere and claimed a position in Swedish football. They snatched the collective attention and managed to become almost irreplaceable. Now this is a fairy tale because as presented throughout this chapter there are many different stories that could be used and performed. Ultras appearance was not a logical continuation, rather an illusion of such developments. But they do rather successfully ‘talk a group’ (Arvidsson 1999, 29-30). That means they have talked, or sang it, into existence by entering the spectrum of collective memory which was also based on previous groups. The commentator in 2011 could not imagine his football without ultras. This analysis also shows how folklore tool box is activated in this specific context and how it generates new possibilities for the analysis.

Behaviour which doesn’t fit is behaviour which isn’t provided for by the instructions either way – Dorothy Smith 1978, 38

But this is not all: class habitus defines the meaning conferred on sporting activity, the profits expected from it; and not the least of these profits is the social value accruing from the pursuit of certain sports by virtue of the distinctive rarity they derive from their class distribution (Bourdieu 1978, 835)

Thus, most of the team sports (...) combine all the reasons to repel the upper classes. These include the social composition of their public which reinforces the vulgarity implied by their popularization, the values and virtues demanded (strength, endurance, the propensity to violence, the spirit of ‘sacrifice’, docility and submission to collective discipline...) Bourdieu 1978, 837

Sport is not the only area in which ordinary people are reduced to fans, the extreme caricatural form of the militant, condemned to an imaginary participation which is only an illusory compensation for the dispossession they suffer to the advantage of the experts (Bourdieu 1978, 830)
So it would not be possible to understand the popularization of sport and the growth of sports associations, which, originally organized on a voluntary basis, progressively received recognition and aid from the public authorities, if we did not realize that this extremely economical means of mobilizing, occupying and controlling adolescents was predisposed to become an instrument and an objective in struggles between all the institutions totally or partly organized with the view to the mobilization and symbolic conquest of the masses and therefore competing for the symbolic conquest of the youth (Bourdieu 1978, 831).

Historical narratives, as demonstrated by historian Hayden White (1973), are never stable. The ongoing change of the future to present and then to the past influences how the past that has been already past is written about. It is also a balance of power. Who is able to write history? Who has the right to assemble the past into a neat and presentable whole? The ultras, in their enthusiastic assembly of narratives managed to provide the clubs with an extra layer of history-making. The clubs, in a sense, own their history, and so groups such as ultras managed to bring to the fore an alternative, so to speak her-story (Helena Tolvhed; Tara Brabazon).

In other words, for all the lack of their past, they can show of an impressive history. They managed to establish folklore around themselves, unified and recognizable, yet making it possible to distinguish one ultras group from the other. Their narratives zoom out to include the international context to then zoom in to the specific spaces and clubs, which helps to paint a picture of cohesiveness, continuation and tradition. This in turn makes up expectations for the future, as one needs proper support, and so one needs ultras.

Generations of commentators have assumed that the history of our nation-state is the history people have been most likely to know and use – or at least is the history they ought to know and use – Rosenzweir & Thelen 1998, 123.

Our respondents did not share historians’ assumptions about the nation-state. When forced to say whether the past of their family or the past of the United States was most important to them, Americans chose family history more than three times as often as their country’s history – Rosenzweig & Thelen 1998, 123-124.

To learn about the bridges people constructed between their personal pasts and larger historical stories, we asked respondents to name an event from the past that had affected them – Rosenzweig & Thelen 1998, 115.

Conservatives may be alarmed at how our respondents referred to patriotic narratives. Liberals and leftists (especially historians) may be unsettled by another of our survey findings: when Americans thing and talk about the past, many of them avoid collective frameworks like ethnicity, class, region, and gender – categories close to the hearts of professional history practitioners. Some of our respondents did reach more directly for pasts beyond the world of
their family and friends. Religious communities and religious narratives, for example, turned out to be a powerful way of understanding and using the past. And respondents also offered larger narratives of change and continuity about crime, discipline, and popular culture. But these popular historical narratives veered off in different directions from the textbook narratives of linear progress associated with capital “H” history. Americans engaged pasts on their own terms. – Rosenzweig & Thelen 1998, 116

The concerns about who and how can use history are visible in the official, academic discussions on history. There has been several publications on use and abuse of history, including Nietzsche’s on use and abuse of history for life; Pieter Geyl ‘Use and abuse of history 1955; Marc Ferros The use and abuse of history 1984, Margaret MacMillan The uses and abuses of history 2009.

Signalling a change – fading nationalistic approach? About victory and glory? (Rosenzweig, page 180). Embracing a different story?

The official censorship of embarrassing memories is well known. What is in need of investigation is their unofficial suppression or repression, and this topic raises once more the awkward question of the analogy between individual and collective memory. (Peter Burke 1989, 109)
6. “Vi vill se er offra – blod, svett och tårar”

The match observations below provide a glimpse into the emotional response on the pitch. For the purpose of this thesis, players as a zooming point were chosen to exemplify how history is constructed with and around selected individuals.

Then, Malmö standing section started a chant “Framåt Malmö!” (forward Malmö) with the intended result of making the rest of the stadium answer with “Heja di Blåe” – “Go the Blues”. However, now there were a couple of thousands HIF supporters prepared for the occasion. When “Framåt Malmö” hit the air all the people around me respond loudly: “Pedophiles!!” At first I got startled by the term, trying to searched my memory for the reason of that abuse. Then the episode with a player Miiko Albornoz, which happened in 2012, came to my mind. Malmö tried several times, but the only thing you could hear is a deafening “pedophiles” filling the space. After that MFF fans did not try it again. (…)

The men in the crowd responded fiercely to what is happening on the pitch: “what do you play?? It is not women’s football!!!!!” People screamed at players and commented their movements. There was a lot of nervousness here. Our side clapped vigorously when HIF players tried to do something; Malmö clapped at the same time, but thanking own players for stopping HIF’s attempts. It was a bit bizarre, both sides happy with contradictory evaluations. (observations 2015)

This particular chapter explores the position and possible narratives based on players. Footballers are a sense in a liminal sphere. They are not automatically woven into the history of a given club; they have to ‘happen’. Further, very few manage to make enough of an impression to be granted individual characteristics. Many end up as faint traces of collective memory, blurred across matches, seasons and generations. The main questions for this chapter deal with the idea of contrasting, clashing stories and varied need for heroes and villains. The second chapter of this thesis deals with idea of rejuvenation exemplified by players as well; how supporters can use footballers that represent the club for only a short period of time. This chapter’s focus is on cultural performance of physicality, strength, and narratives built around activities on the pitch. Some players manage to get quite firm positon in the ever-changing football pantheon but there seems to be a fair amount of commuting between different categories. While writing their personal stories, how do players contribute to creating collective identities based on historical references? How are past heroes present in the modern
football? What are the cultural implication of years and seasons of varied quality pitch-running?\footnote{In the quote above appear a reference to women’s football. I deal briefly in this chapter with construction of masculinity in sport, and the following chapter embarks on the discussion on perceptions of masculinity in football. As I do not include women’s football in this study, I do not engage in deeper discussion about the distinctions and their cultural meanings. To comment briefly, I see such statements exemplify the quick construction of ‘the other’ rather than an assessment of female physicality (I think...) although it does have normative connotations and establishes a distinction, which is gender-based.}

\textit{Get your heroes right}

‘We can make new history here’ – said Emil Forsberg, the former player in MFF, referring to his transfer from Malmö to a football club in Germany. This headline from his interview appeared in the local newspaper and it exemplifies one of the many uses of history in football. It is not only about grave-digging in the past in search for symbols and references, but also the profound conviction of making history here and now, from match to match, from defeat to victory.

The narrative presented above includes several layers of historical involvement, form the local HIF-MFF rivalry, through the actual game-making, to the story of violent encounters between fans and policemen’s evaluation of football crowds. What struck me after that match were live comments about players, the polarized position of Larsson and Albornoz (the pedophile context) and the blurry existence of twenty plus athletes moving on the green grass. While Henrik Larsson was lifted as a ‘good player’, matured, experienced and wise, while Albornoz marked the opposite characteristics: he was young, got involved with a young girl, and appeared oblivious to possible consequences for his actions. Yet, they were ‘good’ and ‘bad’ at this specific moment in history, concentrating on, again, very specific historical references that have been attached to both individuals. This chapter begins with a general discussion of the evaluations footballers have faced, moving to a figure of Henrik Larsson as a \textit{temporary hero}, and continues with discussing Miiko Albornoz as a specific villain character, finally discussing fluidity of this categorization and rapidly changing social roles of players depending on the context.

The idea of contest, winning and losing, is strongly associated with sports. It builds a picture of physical strength and skill, which in turn affect how we perceive and construct masculine identities in connection to power (Hourihan 1997, 15). Players make football happen and their position is not neutral, but is continuously evaluated. From all the necessary elements of the game, one could drop all but them. You need somebody running after the ball. But in the
modern, glamorous, profit-oriented football, the general public is cautious about getting attached to players who change every season. During a focus group with members of Kärnan the topic was discussed:

Kasia: Do you have a favourite player?
Alex: Eeee…
Robin: I don’t like having any favourite players, because it is so easy to get disappointed.
Tom: No….
Alex: There are of course many good players…
Robin: When they stop playing, then you can like them or have a favourite one.
Alex: I think … I had… I can narrate this thing eh, Lindström anecdote? (looks at the others). Lindström was my favourite player when I was like 15, I was in gymnasium. Mattias Lindström, he is from Helsingborg, liked same music as I did. And he was like my total favourite. And then he played a couple of seasons and went away as ‘Bosman’. And I had never been so disappointed. Since then I have never had a favourite player.
Robin: You can like players because they are good for the team, make a good team. Then you can like them as a person, but not like the favourite player.
Alex: If they play good for the team then you like them. But not like your favourites.
Tom: No.
Robin: You can like them, like how they are, the character.
Alex: And then how they are in the pitch of course. I like that they play for HIF but like that is that.

This has been a common attitude expressed by supporters, or even management. One cannot just like a player, because it is impossible to know what they will come up with next. In a few interviews, fans seemed quite disconnected from the idea that the team meant much, considering supporters the main and most important participants. One fan, Markus (interviewed 2013), seemed surprised when I asked about the team:

Kasia: Is MFF a good team?
Markus: Good team? How do you mean? In what way?
Kasia: Well… like are they good? You support them… right?
Markus: Yeah, I guess. They are OK.

He seemed perplexed when I wanted to discuss the players with him, which in turn confused me. To my still untrained, student eye, a team was a key part of the structure. Markus thought we would concentrate solely on supporters and the management, which in his mind did not include men on the pitch, as they were changing every season. However, there has been a general confusion as what my project is about, as very often it was taken for granted that I was writing about ‘supporter culture(s)’. It tends to require some explaining that I include management and players as well. This goes back to the general issue what a club actually is. The way I phrased my question to Markus suggested that the team was Malmö FF, but could
that be really claimed? With the fast pace of football slave market, who can represent the club, who can actually become part of the history?

_Footballers – tools for creating the future and our memories_

‘They are just tools’. That is how one of my informants, a supporter working for a club in its communication team, described players (interview with Jan, 2012). When collecting material for my Master thesis, it became apparent how little devotion or nostalgia there were towards footballers. Mistrust, cautiousness, or sometimes – just lack of time necessary to have a bond, resulted in mixed feelings towards them. Players are necessary, but their position is far from strong or straightforward. Very few make it to the top, in terms of success, but also in terms of making a real impact in the club, becoming memorable and important for supporters for longer than a couple of seasons. The attitudes supporters express were also introduced in chapter two, where I discussed how they learn to use and reuse ‘average players’, which keeps the club rejuvenated. Here, after presenting the polarized ends of using stars/legends and villains, I would like to give voice to the players that find themselves in the middle of the spectrum.

There are several angles that one could take and analyse the exchange between fans, players, clubs, and media, but when it comes to constructing history, the memories of the past are forged anew, and they feed on the notion of the present, which is unfavourable to modern players. Their narrative, the history that spins around them reflects on the past, constructing a specific history of the olden days of football, which in turn reflects on how the players of the present are viewed. The complicated wheels of football time-machine are turning.

First, players are aware of the constant surveillance under which they are. Fans and clubs watch over them, control them, and school them in good behaviour. Players know there is a strong emotional interaction among the fans that is based on footballers, yet they do not participate in this exchange. Jacob, a young player from AIK, said:

> Well I think it is pointless to read other people’s comments about your performance, even if you think you are strong it will always get to you. It is better just to do your own thing, and maybe when you finish your career then get into it (interview with Jacob, 2016).

Another player, Peter, also talked about endless comments about his performance, not only by fans on various social media, but in the press too. He said he did not read about himself, as he knew well enough if he played well or not (interview with Peter, 2012). One look at club
forums at svenskafans.se is enough to see that supporters can be brutally honest in criticizing players. Peter also talked about fans supervising players in their free time:

Peter: Yeah, if you do something stupid then you hear it immediately. I haven’t been in such a situation myself, but I know that if some guys were out late at night then you hear about it, somebody makes a call. It doesn’t have to be anything stupid really, just that you were there, and then it can just be that somebody reports you, calls or sends an email, perhaps not at all negative, but sends just an information that for example Markus was yesterday at 3 a.m. out. No more. So I’ve heard that such things happened, not to me but I’ve heard they happen.

Kasia: Is that so?

Peter: Yes, I know it happens.

This is a very strong yet curious event of surveillance, of openly claiming a person. As I pointed out previously, supporters claim strong ownership of their club, and that includes players. As long as they are a part of the team, they are objectified; there become ‘tools’. As such, they must be used as well as possible, and one takes care of one’s property by making sure it would not be damaged or misplaced. On the other hand, one could notice the phrasing in the presented quote. Peter said, “so I’ve heard”, which would suggest that it is a part of players’ folklore. Nevertheless, there is a feeling that one is watched, judged, ranked all the time. One has to be really careful with what one says and what one does. This cautiousness is connected to constant fear of “saying something stupid” as the general public does not credit footballers with a lot of intelligence.

Players, from my personal experience, are all cautious with words, just so they would not be misinterpreted. On one occasion, while interviewing a player, a person working for a club came in and sat close to us, listening to the conversation. When I paused the recorder expressed surprise, he said it was just interesting to listen, and a player in question replied that it was fine, because he had nothing to hide (fieldnotes, 2014). This might be so, but I felt supervised during this interview, and could not help but wonder if I had got different answer should there be no-one else with us.

Still, players seem to be used to this kind of supervision, and they adjust their behaviour to public expectations. I would suggest that part of the problem is the common agreement that players are not that smart. Gustav was wondering about ending his career, he was injured, and he was not sure what the future had in stock for him:

Kasia: Does that put a lot of stress on you?
Gustav: Yes, I have three small kids... As you said, players are not believed to be the smartest, and now I think I just turned 26, probably I will have no more than 10 years, if I’m lucky. 10 years if I’m lucky. Normally maybe 6-7. And with two serious injuries, you will never know (interview with Gustav, 2014). In this passage, Gustav referred to my comment before the actual interview happened, I explained my research and he was intrigued that I wanted to interview players too. I said I met opinions that players are not that bright, to which he laughed, but he did not contest that. It seems to come with a job description. There is to be an agreement that players are not smart. In numerous interviews there were comments that boys are too young when starting playing professionally, that they do not continue education, develop poor social skills, have restricted social circles and too much money. Further, they have questionable role models, as the superstar players are unique and usually impossible to match in achievements and lifestyle, and in turn, their behaviour, written at length in media, does not strike as profoundly reflexive or intelligent. However, all the individuals I came across were bright, aware of the ambiguity around them and pleasant to talk with.

Yet, there is an ongoing theme about “saying something stupid”. Peter said:

And of course sometimes it happens that somebody [another player] says something stupid to the media, like for example that he doesn’t understand why I play and he doesn’t. So there can be these little things. (...) but when the guys are about 20 and they appear a bit on TV, and it get to their heads and they say something stupid. So yeah, the young guys sometimes don’t know how to handle this that they play in the first team, and that they play all the time under the scrutiny of the media, so to speak. So all of a sudden they can write something on Facebook, for example, something like... stupid.

This ‘knowledge’ about who does what, who says what and who knows what is rather vague. Rumours are an important source. But the underlying notion is that modern players are not known for the depth of their thoughts, as expressed by many interviewees. A former player interviewed in 2014 commented on the fact that they, players active in 1970s and 1980s, had more freedom of expression:

Journalists have to build this credibility with the clubs, the organizations, and the football association. So that we understand what they do and they understand what we do. And nowadays it is all so immediate, it all goes ‘live’, and it is a big pressure on reporters to be able to deliver live interviews and situations. Before you had maybe 5 hours to prepare everything and edit, now it is all live, right now. And also it is possible to be a failure, there is this danger all the time. And
this twitter and sms… it all goes like immediately. And it is a big difference if you think about the past. It means also that you have to be very careful all the time what you are saying. Spontaneity, which I think is a gift of sorts, to be spontaneous, within a certain frame of course, and not to be punished for it, that it important I think. And also the questions, those about the players, best players, best teams, those questions circulate there all the time, and they belong to this comfort zone. If you ask them something outside the comfort zone so they will become incredibly scared. If you ask them about the feminist party, or about problems in schools (interview with Sune, 2014).

When comparing himself, a player from the 1970s, to men playing now, Sune was quite critical. There is a hint of nostalgia when he refers to the past, and a kind of disillusioned present, and rather fearful future. By explaining the hindrances of today’s social/mass media, he pointed out that footballers are not able to be spontaneous and speak their mind, which they, the old generation, could. Not being able to formulate one’s thoughts in the public eye without extra pressure seems to strip players from engaging in critical thinking. They, the young players, are in the danger zone of saying ‘something stupid’. This kind of fear was reproduced by another interviewed former player, Jesper, albeit in a bit different form:

- So you studied and played at the same time?
- Yes, I studied. And all that I played with worked also, or studied. There was nobody who could have played football only.
- But it was not difficult to manage?
- No, not at all, we trained a lot, we trained as much as the guys today do.
- But they do nothing else these days.
- (laughs) Yes, they are paid not to do anything else. But maybe even here there is a bit of a tradition… those that play abroad really don’t do anything else. Nothing at all. And you apply that to your own football, in one way or another. But there is time… you can train just that much, but there is time, surely they have a lot of time. So it is a pity that you don’t take the opportunity and do something… study… you can study like half time, or even ¼ time as well, that is not an issue. But there are not that many who do that. Unfortunately. And if you begin playing and have so much money… maybe you can save a bit on the side. And of course you can do that, but this is… there are not so many that can support themselves just with that. The problem is when you are 35 and you stop playing, and you don’t have as much money so that you could avoid working more. But actually I don’t think the question is really about the money. You are 35 and you stop playing and all of a sudden you lose your status. Nobody applauds you anymore; you end up in normal working conditions. Your name is not recognized as much. And if you have been a professional all your life then it becomes difficult. For some it is more difficult than for the others (interview with Jesper, 2014).
Jesper presented a similar evaluation to Sune’s. He referred to ‘tradition’ of not doing much more than training – something established through experience and time. The story of today is based on the construction of the past. When saying what players do not do these days, they also stress what they did, how they were, how much more complex, difficult, yet more rewarding it was in the past. Current players accept the public evaluation of not being the smartest, that opinion then helps to produce the picture of the ‘perfect past’ when men were able to multitask, play, work and think, and of course, they were mostly local boys, not shopped talents from other continents. That history is constructed with help of the presupposed stupidity that is now displayed among players, and in turn it determines the expectations one has of them. Hence, one does not ask for too much. One is grateful that they are quiet rather than saying something stupid. Their level of intelligence has been reduced to silence, and that silence is even more profound when one think about sport interviews.

There are already popular representations about them, appearing for example in social media. In 2013, this picture, published by Reddit, was circulating on Facebook 78.

This is entitled ‘Every sports interview ever’. It gives a good picture how such exchanges seem to general public. They are about nothing. The questions are very similar, they are very general. To contrast it, I shall quote the end of the interview with Jacob:

78http://imgur.com/gallery/gUgkpTx
Katarzyna Herd
Manuscript for the final seminar 2017 – Football’s fairy stories, memories, histories

Kasia: Thank you for the interview.
Jacob: That’s nothing. It’s actually nice to say what one think, to say what one has been pondering about, like about football here and stuff.

Jacob, like all other players interviewed between 2012 and 2016, was very reflexive, careful with his answers, but having developed opinions and stands about his status, football in general, problems that occur in Swedish clubs. He enjoyed being asked what he thought, not how he was feeling about a match just played. His comment surprised me, but I think I can say that in all those interviews, after a while players relaxed and engaged in reflexive discussion. They realized it was not the classic journalist interviewing them, looking for controversies and juicy gossip. The intersection of categories defining me helped to create an environment where players could actually express some of their thoughts. I shall not claim that they cannot speak intelligently to the press. Rather, it is rarely expected because of the dominant narrative that is based on the construction of the past that is the base for constructing the present, which then reflects on the future expectations.

Jesper, in the quote presented above, made a straightforward connection between modern players and economic developments: “Yes, they are paid not to do anything else”. Money then disrupts the structure again. (develop?) Jesper, like Sune, talked about nostalgic past, disillusioned present and fearful future. This is of course one of the modes of creating a historical narrative that Hayden White lists as tragic mode of emplotment (1973, 29). The good time was already there in the past, and then there is a slow process of decay. Still, it is one of many possible narratives build on the fact that footballers enjoyed a different work structure in the past. As White wrote:

What is “progress” to one is “decadence” to another, with the “present age” enjoying a different status, as an apex or nadir of development, depending upon the degree of alienation in a given ideology (1973, 25).

All the interviewed footballers knew the main narratives about ‘the stupid player’, and knew the public expectations and could engage in a performance that would be more or less sanctified by media and popular interpretations. In a sense, they use the main story because it is the only one really functioning presently. One has to be able to talk oneself into any field, and in football there seem to be rather limited resources, at least on the surface, how one is a player. The tools for creating football narration are given to them through the models of the game, successful starts, and the media, which swings from high praise to damnation. The disruption of the pattern can be successful, but also it is risky.
This category of not a ‘smart’ or ‘educated’ player is already a part of football’s textuality and helps to establish the borders between sense and nonsense between that context and everyday life. In a book entitled *Why England Lose*, journalists Kuper and Szymanski list reasons for England’s poor international performance, and list exclusion of the middle social classes as one reason (2009, 19-26). Because most of the players come from working-class background, there seem to be an aura of exclusion, they write, preventing a wider selection of talented player to enter English pitches. Their analysis suggests that there are established, almost traditional, structural problems with including educated classes. Still, the journalists list several well-known footballers that continued their education beyond 16 or even attended university (Bergkamp, Socrates, Kaká) (2009, 24). Certainly, the distinction here is between England and the rest of the football world, but the woe seems to be that boys with drive for education are not finding an easy way to football pitches.

In the conducted interviews, players were outside of the established pattern, and could afford an extra bit of reflexivity. Their role in the football drama was performed with broader audience in mind. It could be remarked that their narratives, although had distance to the established character of a player, operated within the same story. Providing a definition of reflexivity, Hutcheon remarks: “Reflexivity or textual self-consciousness makes the storytelling itself part of the story told” (Linda Hutcheon, RENT, 494). Footballers are familiar with the evaluation and do not represent a position of power to challenge it. For all the physical agency granted when on the pitch, players do not own their stories. They are bought and sold, used and discarded. The storytelling happens with them as characters, actants in the narration (Greimas year) of the necessary the good, the bad and the ugly, but they cannot step outside of the tale like for example supporters can, even though they do have life outside of football, and also before and after it. In other words, they are actants, but not active actors. They fulfill necessary roles.

There is still a more sensitive issue – match fixing – that makes footballers puppets in the hands of business, money, clubs or even supporters. An interviewed referee considered it a big problem in modern football.

But if we talk about problems, then selling matches… fixing matches. And for this we had directions, if something strange was happening how we should react and what we should do. For example if a goal keeper does something strange or other player, so we had a way to behave. And also, there is always one person who checks everything, watches the game and takes notes. For example if the goal keeper throws the ball straight to the other team’s player or something like
The practice of fixing matches is condemned all around and presents a threat to sportsmanship and fair play, not to mention that it comes back to the money question. However, Tim Parks in his book about Hellas Verona presents the account when his team was on the border of being relegated to the lower league. They had to win a match against a team considered friendly, Parma. As the narrative goes, all of a sudden both fans and media realized that maybe Parma could help them and let them win. Parks writes:

Over the next few days, interviewed by the press, all the Parma players swear they’re going to do their best, just to show they’re not corrupt. ‘Pastorello’ [Verona’s owner], make that phone-call!’ the fans start writing to the website. ‘Call him. Call him!’ And they mean Stefano Tanzi of course [Parma’s owner]. ‘If we are buying the match,’ writes my Caporetto friend in London, ‘please do send me the bank details so I can make my contribution.’ (2003, 409).

If you knew a game was fixed, you would hardly want to watch it, would you? But the suspicion that it might be fixed only makes it all the more fascinating (2003, 411).

Verona won this match. Was it just the determination of the team, or was there money involved? The author leaves the question open. He does not know. He does not know what to believe. What I find interesting is the revers of moral guidelines surrounding football. Fixing matches is bad, but in this instance, players are supposed to just go along with the plan (should one exist) and thus save the club and its fans. Yet, they would be hardly recognized as heroes, but their actions, although questionable, would produce a desired result. In such situation players’ position is not only compromised, it is sharply escaping the normal routine of fair-play, tactics, stamina or will to win. The drama becomes a farce, actors become dummies.

Yet, football is filled with heroes. And villains. How do we know this? We are told. For example, a popular football magazine Offside dedicated its first issue of 2015 to folk heroes, and so was the title on the cover (Offside 2015). Although referring to the national team, the author Jesper Högström tries to decipher what makes a folk hero. He states plainly: "It is difficult to become beloved of the people" (2015, 44). There is no doubt though that over the years Swedish football has produced heroes, different yet similar to each other. Characters that reproduce the ideal while adding to, or changing the established portray.
The hero tales, as a specific genre, “are narrated from the hero’s point of view, and because he occupies the foreground of the story, the reader is invited to share his values and admire his actions, although many heroes do things which most present-day readers would find questionable if they were presented differently” (Hourihan 1997, 39). In such tales, the hero has the central stage from the beginning, as if it was designed like that, as if the place was just made for the hero to show his full potential (Hourihan 1997, 41). The fairy tales of old are already composed so that the hero is the centre of attention. Players have to fight for it, their stories are being rewritten every season.

It would appear that because of the structure of football nowadays players are very mobile workforce. There is also tough rivalry that makes clubs constantly hunting for good footballers. It is not that obvious that they would constitute a solid image of any club. Only some manage to leave a mark, sometimes for good and sometimes for bad reasons. Being proud of one’s hero seems quite obvious, but what happens if a player goes over a line? How can one use a dark narrative, a one that does not speak of glory, but of shame?

When producing history, different temporalities play a strong part. The stories acquire slightly different meaning. They evolve over time (Grethlein year). Heroes constructed like Henrik Larsson can work well, but the image can quickly lose its value.

Oral tradition is a sort of library (Krinka Vidakovic Petrov 1989, 78)

Memory, therefore, can be passive, implying the preservation of a given message in order to have it reproduced fairly accurately. Active memory, on the other hand, is creative; it involves the utilization of the ‘grammar’ one must know in order to produce and change messages, thus allowing the singer to ‘speak the language’ of the tradition (Krinka Vidakovic Petrov 1989, 79)

The following section will engages with the stereotypes of hero and villain and the fluidity of both.

*Icons, heroes, legends, Larssons*

There are some players one can admire and Henrik Larsson is such an example in Swedish club football. He became a star in Helsingborgs IF as a young player, had successful international career, and he was in the national team that won bronze in the football world
championships in 1994. However, he did more than become an international star. He came back to his mother club.

Larsson’s position was achieved by his physical abilities, but also personal choices of clubs and career management. However, another important bit was how he was talked into his narrative. An important piece of work was done by fans making sense and building sense into the situation while using historical perspective. My informants from Kärnan stressed that fact during the focus group meeting:

Kasia: So what do you think about Henrik Larsson, that now he is the coach?
Robin: Extremely good.
Alex: It is good, cool.
Robin: Well we have to look at it from a bit different perspective. He was a player and is a coach now but he is a symbol for the entire city of Helsingborg. Strong symbol. I don’t know how to say it… he represents… well almost the entire Sweden, I think you can say.
Alex: He is legend. Sweden’s…
Robin: Probably the biggest player in the modern times. Successful and so on. And he is a legend for HIF, he did not disappoint, he came back and… and now he is back as the coach.
Alex: And he has the heart for the organization and the team. And we also need to take into consideration what is happening right now. That we are… the club is in a difficult financial situation, and one needs somebody that can… how should we put this… be like OK, not fantastic, and still go away with it. Because the expectations… every year the requirement is to be at the top, every year. Anything below top three is worthless. It is just so. Top three is like OK
Robin, Tom: Yeah
Alex: Then people moan about it.
Robin: Some people see it as a weakness but I think this is our absolute strength, like this. Because we can actually compete with Stockholm, Göteborg and Malmö. Not many can do that. Helsingborg can have a longer time perspective. Others can have like short periods of brilliance.
Alex: And this… this is what I mean. If you need this sort of ‘building up’ season, when the economy is really bad, when you renovate the arena and that lowers the attendance figures and so on… so when you need a season like that so there is no one else but Henke that people can have so much patience for. He is a legend. He says ‘we will be like 6-7th’ and people say ‘ah it’s gonna to be OK’. He gets the credit… time to build it up for the next year. In a completely different way than any other coach would have. People trust Henke. And I think it’s good, it’s really good (focus group, 2015).

Alex described Larsson as a ‘legendary’. This could be seen as a popular understanding of the term, rather than scientific. Yet a legend, or being legendary, ties to the genre that describes a certain narrative that has given functions. Legend is, according to the Routledge Encyclopedia
of Narrative Theory, “a traditional narrative that provides as aitiology (i.e., an account of the origin or cause) of some extraordinary local detail or the narrative of a person, place, or event as if it were based on historical actuality” (2005, 276).

The narrative presented above happened at a certain point in time – when Henrik Larsson, former star player, embarked on leading his former club as a coach. The fans were aware of the difficult financial situation in the club, and lack of a strong playing troop. Larsson was a glimpse of hope. In a sense, this hope was constructed in the narrative, as Larsson as a hero figure is a direct result of a need for such a figure. In other words, he might not have intrinsic qualities to be a hero, but he acquires such characteristics through the narrative being constructed (Smith 1978). This is illustrated by comments from the focus group, for example “there is no one else but Henke”, “he did not disappoint”, “he gets the credit”. The intersection of a character with a successful career and a need for a positive symbol, brought Larsson the coach to life.

There are at least three different histories attached to Henrik. His own career, which could be described as a version of a fairy tale, “a narrow road of the hero walking through the world and does not dwell on the figures meeting him” (Luhti 1974, 24). Then there is Helsingborgs IF’s narrative, which makes Henrik more into a legend, as according to definitions given by Max Luhti “the legend looks fixedly at the inexplicable which confronts man” (1974, 24). Finally, as mentioned before, his story combined with the long and rich history of the club, and his own family genealogy makes up a local mythology.

The quest is not an option; it seems to be a bare necessity: “The need to struggle for ‘success’ has come to seem equally axiomatic. (…) But it is probably in sport to win is most intense and victory most celebrated” (Hourihan 1997, 14). At the same time sport in various forms, as recognized and established frame in culture, has the ability to influence values and attitudes, (Hourihan 1997, 14), for example presenting the ethos of fair play, fair win or even the historical capital of its existence.

Larsson had a journey, grew in skills and wisdom, and openly expressed feelings for the club. However, it is his journey back home that built an extra layer of mythology around him. None would questions Larsson’s character or devotion to the club, none of my informants did, even if not directly HIF fans. These are taken at face value; it is just believed to be true. This puts Larsson in the realm of mythology. William Bascom defines myths as “prose narratives which, in the society in which they are told, are considered to be truthful accounts of what
happened in the remote past” (1984, 9). Myths have authority and represent dogma, as they need to be believed in at face value, hence they are sacred and connected to rituals (Bascom 1984, 9).

Henrik Larsson is a connection between the ideal football hero and a local boy. He is believed to be the best, no matter what. In other words, the current evaluation of him and his decisions can be seen through a prism of his historic achievements. So much of his life and career has been done, finished and consolidated; it can serve as a safe ground for continued admiration.

Even the older generations of fans stressed how much Henrik meant for HIF. The oldest supporter organization in Sweden is called HIF Vänner. They had a list of important players throughout the club’s history, and Henrik was one of them.

Kasia: Could you name a person that was very important for HIF?
Adam: A player… would be… the one that has the most meaning attached would be Kalle Svensson. Everybody knows… I think everybody knows him.
Bengt: It is him whose statue is outside the stadium.
Kasia: Ah yes…
Adam: And then if you go back one generation
Olle: Yes exactly, Sigge Lindberg.
Adam: Yes him…
Olle: I think every generation has its idols.
Adam: Knut Kroon.
Bengt: Oh yes Knut Kroon.
Adam: Exactly. It is the name that you get familiar with, keep reading about it.
Bengt: Yeah, but then Henke Larsson is an icon.
Olle: Jaaa… he is ‘number one’ for me at least.
Kasia: So what do you think of him as a coach?
Adam: That he is a coach?
Kasia: Yes…
Adam: Well…
Olle: It is very good.
Adam: Many have expected him to return and act in football still, even after ending the career as a player.
Bengt: But it is not given that he would be successful.
Adam: No no, oh no.

My informants were able to recall many strong players, Larsson’s predecessors, who established a line of talented individuals making up HIF’s identity. It also enchants the mythology constructed around the club. Larsson sits in a constellation of stars and reaffirms the construction of a HIF hero. Since heroes exist in mythical time, the link between them does not have to be direct or linear. The past structures the present, so certain characteristics
of a mythical hero are brought forward and sought in different people separated by time, social positions, or cultural and political context.

Because Larsson’s status as a legend, myth in the club, has been established so firmly, he could take on bold endeavours like coaching his previous team, coach his own son, without risking much damage. Or rather, the risk has been always there, but Larsson’s daring devotion to HIF overcame all the obstacles, even when the final season became a disaster. The two focus groups quoted above were from 2015. The future did not look grim back then, and Henrik was given a lot of emotional credit to lead the team to a better, more stable position. When thinking about the upcoming seasons, my supporters could predict them based on Larsson’s mythical status, their devotion and belief that the magic would work.

Not all the comebacks to clubs, like Henrik’s are smooth and celebrated by fans. Sometimes the comebacks are messy and create more distrust than reassurance. One such example was the understanding of Mohamed Bangura’s journey, referred to by Maria.

“Bandura was sold to Celtic, but that did not turn out well, and then he wanted to come back but wanted too much money and so he signed up with Elfsborg, but then minutes after that he says in an interview that he prefers AIK. So he upset just everybody, now he is back and for free, but we will see how he’s going to be” (interview with Maria, 2015).

And develop…

**History of the genes – sons and fathers**

During the match against Malmö FF described in the beginning of the chapter, HIF supporters were commenting not only on Henrik, but also on his son Jordan, now a player too, representing Helsingborg in 2015 and 2016.

Then MFF fans thought there was a goal, but it was a close miss. Still, some in the Malmö standing section managed to put their flares out. Helsingborg started to laugh. They chanted “did you think there was a goal???” The mockery was loud. They applauded Jordan Larsson. I heard a comment that Jordan was good. People around chatted about him and his father Henrik, comparing them, praising both. I wondered how strange that his father coached the team. (observations, 2015)

It is a rather unique situation when a father, an acknowledged football star, coaches his son, who is a promising player, in a top team. This family connection rarely happens, and talent does not follow automatically with sharing genes. However, the fact of this interesting
situation seemed to soothe fans’ expectations and add a point of pride and uniqueness to the club. My interviewees were willing to accept worse results because Henrik would be there, because people trusted him. Also, the Larsson clan grew strong in Helsingborg, and somehow Helsingborg could participate in the family as well. Felix discussed that connection:

Felix: I think it is hard not to mention Henrik Larsson. Of course there are also other people, like Rio Kalle Svensson, he got the nickname Rio because he was the goalkeeper of Sweden and he was pulled to play the exhibition games and competition games in Brazil. He saved all the goal... ahm... attempts from the Brazilian team, if I remember correctly. So he was like the national goalie of Sweden. In the 1950s? So he was an important character in the HIF history as well. But Henrik Larsson is of course like the main character.

Kasia: If you were to mention an important person or player from HIF?
Felix: Yes that’s right. Nepotism. (laughs) No, no... he was actually there before Henrik arrived. His son Jordan Larsson. Which is interesting because everybody in Helsingborg knew about Jordan since he was born. And now he plays in the team and it is interesting. He was named Jordan after the... the basketball player, Michael Jordan. Yeah, he was Henrik’s biggest idol.

Kasia: And his son now plays in HIF right?
Felix: Yes. (laughs) No, no... he was actually there before Henrik arrived. His son Jordan Larsson. Which is interesting because everybody in Helsingborg knew about Jordan since he was born. And now he plays in the team and it is interesting. He was named Jordan after the... the basketball player, Michael Jordan. Yeah, he was Henrik’s biggest idol.

Felix remarked on small family details that were known to Helsingborg fans. The Larssons became a symbol in Helsingborg. There has also been an agreement that they both handle the situation very well. Åke, a former player in HIF, expressed deep respect for ‘Henke’ and his son:

Kasia: It is special that Henrik Larsson is now the coach and his son plays there too.
Åke: Jordan, yes ... Yes ... if there is someone who could handle that situation so it's Henrik. Both of them stand with both feet on the ground. They have ... just like my dad they have those old values (laughs). As my dad also had this ‘it is how it should be’. No discussion, respect for the elderly ... and the two ... Henrik and Jordan are such people that ... you have never asked 'why does Jordan play'. So that ... it's handled well. Had I come from outside and not known Henrik ... I would not think they are dad and son. They are a coach and a player. Then at home they are dad and son. (...) Then Jordan needs to be a bit stronger, tougher, more selfish. And that's what Henrik knows. The first year he came here from Division 3 he scored 49 goals and made 30 assists. First year. He has ... ’it’. And it's hard to say that Jordan has ‘it’. But then ... you do not develop the same way. (2015).

The sentiments towards Larsson gave him a lot of credit, but sadly the team went out from the highest league in 2017, after 24 years of being there, which was proceeded by 24 years of trying to go back to the top league. The last dramatic match was followed by some angry,
masked fans who tried to get the HIF shirt off Jordan Larsson\textsuperscript{80}. The gravity and drama of this situation was noticed by media abroad\textsuperscript{81}. Nevertheless, even after losing, and then quitting as a coach, Henrik Larsson gave one more reason for supporters to respect him: he did not want to take salary for the following year he was entitled to by his contract, as he decided to help the club economically\textsuperscript{82}. However, he did disappoint, his coaching skills were not enough to save the club from falling down from the highest league. The (as for now) final bit of history written by Larssons for HIF has been painful and tragic. Because football is football, there is always a next season, new hope, and new hero on the horizon.

Yet, it would seem that Larssons’ saga was done, ready for wrapping up and consolidating in its specific, narrative form. The last couple of seasons were an example of constructing history in the sense of Hayden White (1972). The ‘golden age’ was at first the 1990s with Henrik in the club. There was a potential of it to shift to the present, 2015-2016 seasons when the Larsson duo was present, but it did not get a chance. Still, Henrik’s own story was strong enough to survive the fall. The evaluation of his professional life as a player and then coach would differ depending on the time frame chosen (see Grethlein, 2014). Further, Henrik Larsson has different narratives spun around him. They interact with each other, but they differ depending if one looks at his career, his interaction with HIF, and his relationship to his son. David Herman points at narratives as a form of ‘folk psychology’ (2009, 20), the mundane attempt to understand the world and events that occur. A narrative bridges the gap between the expected and the actual process. It could be claimed that clinging to Henrik Larsson and his own, private mythology, acted as a balm to soothe sour present of HIF, and helped explain why one should embrace for not-so-good future, but could keep the hope up.

\textsuperscript{80} Source, reference, I shall include the shirt episode in the 2\textsuperscript{nd} chapter, cause it is about shirts and materialized emotions

\textsuperscript{81} Get a couple of references

\textsuperscript{82} \url{http://www.dn.se/sport/fotboll/henrik-larsson-lamnar-helsingborg/}
The narrative attached to the event of (let us spell this out) unsuccessful coaching, highlights something different that just a sporting failure. Once again, it brings a figure of a hero, who with one final move shows his love and devotion to the club. When resigning from his employment as the head coach, Larsson gave up his salary, saying that he would still like to support the club financially. That provided the twist in the narration, and it was not about him, but about ‘saving the club’. Helsingborg attaches special value to the figure of its former coach and player. Such pattern of ‘coming back’, and even having a son continuing the football traditions successfully, is rather rare. The genealogy of Larsson’s family is closely tied to Helsingborgs IF and their history. A narrative of blood and genes is woven into a long story of green grass and concrete stadiums.

Arthur Asa Berger, researcher in media and communication, pointed out ‘mythical patterns’ that appear in almost all popular culture, making it possible to trace parallels to antique narratives of gods and heroes. In his book Media, Myth and Society (2013), he has selected several strong characters, like Prometheus or Hercules, that have their counterparts throughout the history of western literature, cinema and television productions. As he writes:

> I will deal now with various aspects of narratives and I will suggest that, in essence, all stories are variations on the narratives that we find so intoxicating when we are young – myths and fairy tales (Berger 2013, 5).

When applying Berger’s idea one could describe Henrik Larsson as Ulysses. Larsson had his mystical journey outside of Sweden, he was successful, he became famous in many clubs on his way, making an impact and leaving behind him stories. In addition, at the end of this journey, like just the Greek Ulysses, after staying home for some time he travels again, he leaves his harbour of HIF and sails away for, hopefully, new adventures. Perhaps even more striking resemblance would be achieved when one takes Jordan into consideration – the mythical son of Ulysses, Telemachus, a loyal and brave son who stood by his father’s side.

Although Larsson’s Odyssey fits rather neatly in Berger’s frame of copying myths, I would argue that it is not about recreating myths or making ‘modernized versions’, but creating own mythology. Certainly, we are schooled in ancient stories, Greeks and Romans being used widely as a point of reference, but I would not state that it is about recreating to old. The first ‘myth’ that Berger talks about it is probably not the first myth, but the version that survived or became particularly popular. It might have been regarded as the ‘popular media’ or ‘high culture’ structure that he refers to. It is the structure, not the content of a particular myth that oozes out.
In other words, we are not copying the myths, but we are recognizing the structure. Does a myth have to be old to be classified as such? Was a myth “myth” in ancient Greece? Most likely not. Berger says in his book that the word itself means ‘a story’.

I believe that if you scratch deep enough beneath the “surface” pf many texts you can often find a myth – an example of intertextuality (that is, the relation of a specific text or work of art to other texts that preceded it) that may explain one of the reasons that certain texts resonate with us (Berger 2013, 11).

I do agree that one can point out connections to different myths and narratives, and certainly many could be described as “mythic cultural dominants” (Berger 2013, 13), as coming from Judeo-Christian or Greco-Roman traditions. However, I would argue that it is not the main reason why the ‘new stories’ resonate with us, as Berger writes. It is not the fact that one recognizes Ulysses in Henrik Larsson that makes his a captivating character. Rather, one sees a good story in the making.

Obviously, some authors and artists deliberately base their work on previous narratives. Nevertheless, there is a pattern, a set of ingredients available to make a captivating story out of any life. Some, like football, are more prone to produce good characters, because of the environment itself. Players have individual journeys within a broader context; they can become visible or vanish into thin mythical air. I do understand that football is not a traditionally understood composed story, but is a specific kind of narrative, one that allows mythical heroes and villains to happen, and since it is a sport, it might be regarded as popular culture (Brabazon 2005). What might be interpreted as “unconsciously connecting to ancient myths” while immersing in popular culture (Berger 2013, 15), I would call intertextual reading (Asplund Ingemark, Stewart).

I would say that people do not connect to ‘ancient myths’, they connect to the idea of participating, creating one. Again, football’s peculiarity allows many to find themselves in the middle of a narrative, voluntarily or not. In other words, those invested in football, players or supporters, do not ‘live mythically’ because there are myths reenacted, but rather because they are creating narratives that are based on some patters, yet they are unique and have their quirky twists. The flexibility of the field requires a minimal blueprint with endless possibilities for details. Yet again, footballers, their status and type or position allow others to use their stories and participate, connect, on different levels.

Larsson’s glory not there anymore, not completely. Based on results, his status is. HIF needed the ideal leader and Larsson’s story has been adjusted to fit history in the making. As clubs
are used to the cyclical character of their time, they prepare every year for new production of
history. When interviewing HIF supporters before the season in 2015, I encountered the
preparation for the production. Henrik was ascribe with a hero role, Jordan fitted in the
mythical structure of the family quest. Towards the end of 2016 the picture got shattered,
hope, good will and faith did not manage to hold. Fans’ and the club’s eagerness to produce
and performed a certain version of history was halted by the teams’ physical inability to
deliver. And their coach inability to guide them. As both Larsson’s left the club, their story
was cut short.

Henrik and Jordan are a recognizable father-son duo in Swedish football, but there has been
others. Jonas Thern was a successful player in Malmö FF and his son, Simon, played in
Helsingborgs IF before moving to MFF, for which he was symbolically lynched by the fans\textsuperscript{83}.

Henrik Larsson rises as an example of an ancient hero, while Miiko Albornoz represents a
different narrative, a very dark, yet amusing one. The next section explores an event when a
player crossed the line outside of the football context, yet the public opinion and possibility to
shame his club happened in the frame of the Swedish league.

Alvaro Santos

In whose eyes hero or villain? Context and a quick change of status.

Henke own hero status turned bad, Miiko became the bad guy for others, he is still ‘an OK
player’ for MFF.

Hero on the pitch – idiot outside of it – different arenas?

\textit{Paedophile from Malmö FF – what translates on to the pitch}

Towards the end of 2012 football season, a story appeared in local press in Malmö that one of
the players from Malmö FF had sex with a girl that was 14,5 years old. The girl made a
contact via Facebook, according to official sources they met once in November, and then he
was reported to the police for sexual abuse of a minor. He was sentenced to community
service\textsuperscript{84}. The sentence was quite lenient on the player since the judge saw it was not a
repeated offence, and apparently, he made sure that she was willing to have sex, which, as the

\textsuperscript{83} I used this story in my master thesis \textit{Dream factory- magic and myth-making in football} (2013)
\textsuperscript{84}http://www.sydsvenskan.se/2013-02-13/albornoz-nojd-med-dom
local newspaper reported, was documented. His public profile, young age, and punishment from the club’s side (he was banned from playing two months and ten days) were also taken into consideration.

This is the brief background, the basics of the story, which resulted in an extraordinary explosion of creativity among supporters. There has been many discussions in press; the club was criticized for being too lenient, many MFF supporters were unhappy with the whole thing. Yet, the legal side of things, if the player was actually guilty or not, was of little concern to many fans from other teams. The important element was that other clubs got something to mock and attack Malmö. They had someone sentenced for sexual abuse of a child. That translates to being a paedophile. That would then mean the entire club could be described as paedophiles.

The instance from the fieldwork opening this chapter is an example of such a fast reaction. When Malmö tried to chant “Malmö Malmö…FF, FF…” the immediate, loud response from the away section was “Pedofiler!” Still, this would be one of the last possibilities to use that insult against Malmö. Albornoz was not playing there anymore, and it was already two years after the whole affair. The insult has become old, although still making a painful impact and a remainder of a rather ugly history.

As already mentioned above, a variety of creative creations based on Albornoz’s case appeared. In May 2013, Helsingborgs IF came to Malmö prepared to take the full advantage of then still fresh situation. They gathered at Malmö’s stadium in impressive numbers, and carrying a banner saying in English “If you tolerate this then your children will be next” (fieldwork 2013). They also had smaller banners with the number 14 written on it.

Further, there was a chant made especially for the occasion. I have seen material with fans of AIK, Hammarby, IFK Göteborg, Djurgårdens IF, and Halmstad using it. For example, there is a video clip showing AIK crowd in August 2013, screaming loudly at Malmö:

Miiko is a paedophile
He rapes small children in his car
Everybody knows, everybody knows
Everybody knows he is a paedophile

85http://www.sydsvenskan.se/2013-02-13/albornoz-nojd-med-dom
86http://www.sydsvenskan.se/2013-04-10/mff-later-albornoz-spela-match
The melody is the well-known, old tune of *The Entertainer*. It is catchy and rather happy in style. The gravity of the subject was in sharp contrast with the chosen singing style. Trevor J. Blank comments repeatedly in his book about digital folklore and humour that internet invites interaction because it works well as a psychological outlet with a much wider social circle (2013). I would suggest that environment such as football works in the same way. When 15,000 people from different background, ages, classes, meet together in one space, the message spreads across the social boundaries like it could not in other social circumstances. Blank writes as also that in’oral traditions of “tasteless”, “sick”, or “gross” humour before the digital age, the majority of jokesters were male adolescents’ (2013, 5). Although women participate actively in football, there are young males that make the most noise during matches. It is their expression of humour that comes through. Certainly, one could discuss if it would be male humour, or just one associated with, or socially accepted as such, but the point stands that the result here is a humorous comment on the event, rather than an attempt to criticize it seriously. Further, much of this humour already lives online in various forms of digital print in social media. (Lars-Eric’s book on humour!)

The Albornoz case was reported widely in media, and the gravity of the situation was gradually soothed by emerging circumstances. In other words, he was not portrayed as a sexual predator exploiting little girls. Rather, he was a young, unexperienced player who did not handle well the pressure of being in the public eye. Blank points out that humour is often an expression of clashing opinions, and using humour can help to express more
The jokes were an act of rebellion against the media’s coverage of the event, with sordid punchlines aimed at the “unspeakable” dimensions of the tragedy (…). Indeed, many forms of humor (including those pertaining to race, ethnicity, or regional/national identity) do not arise out of aggression, conflict or threat, but for playful purposes (2013, 35-36).

The same traces appear in other instances that were aimed against this footballer. Some of the ways to attack Malmö and its unfortunate player were less demanding, yet inventive. When MFF came to Stockholm to play a match in 2013, Djurgården supporters greeted Miiko waving and shouting rhythmically “Paedophile, hello!!”88. Again, the contrast of a friendly greeting and the usage of the term, which in itself symbolizes the most evil deed many can imagine – hurting an innocent child. According to Blank, this process of ‘displacement’ has soothing or therapeutic effects when a tragedy strikes (2013, 25). One could certainly understand this pattern appearing here. Yet, the insult was aimed at the club with a direct purpose to mock and laugh at Malmö FF. Supporters that engaged in those creative activities understood the manifold of categories that Miiko Albornoz could represent. In media, he was created and described as a young male, who happened to be also a player, who happened to be in Malmö. For fans from other teams, he represented players in general, players in Malmö club, and Malmö at large. That shift of categories gave them a permission to brand the entire club and its supporters as paedophiles, mocking MFF’s efforts to have a good moral stand in the case.

Further, this history allowed clubs to position themselves against Albornoz and his conduct. It took a narrative form of ‘it would have never happened with us’. For example, I raised the issue during a focus group discussion with HIF supporters:

Kasia: OK so I should ask maybe about Miiko Albornoz and his case. How do you think Malmö took care of this?
Alex: (Laughing a lot and loud)
Robin: Very badly.
Alex: They did not do anything at all!
Tom: Really bad.
Alex: Well what can you say? A convicted child molester. I think we would have not accepted it. I hope we would have not accepted it.

88https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H51Di6la3nI (online in January 2017)
Robin: I have an example of a player from last year, Modou Barrow, and we from Kärnan contacted the club directly and discussed it and they said that no, they would not buy him.

Alex: And we were very clear that we don’t want this sort of a player in our club.

The player Robin referred to was convicted of domestic violence in the early stages of his career, but he became a professional player in England and was offered a spot in the Swedish national team, a rather controversial move, which Swedish Football Association had to explain to the wider public. It is yet another example of unacceptable behaviour. The interviewed guys were adamant that a player with such a record would have no place in HIF. Both cases, with Albornoz and Barrow, refer then to representation and categorization. In the quote above, they become the same character; they become intertextual because they provide a reference, a short-cut example of a ‘bad player’, someone we do not want to become one of us. Alex in Robin in the interview quote above used that intertextual characteristic when they explained one case with another. They did not have to refer in detail what happened to Barrow, it was already assumed that he was the same category as Albornoz. They also become contagious as their demeanour oozes to their clubs, supporters and teammates. This puts them in the category of a magical tool. In a magical rite, a part can symbolize a whole: ‘a symbol will create an object, and a part will create a whole, a word, the event and so on’ (Mauss 1972, 154). In other words, one person gets to exemplify the entire group, becomes a usable blueprint for interpreting and contextualizing others that might belong to the same category.

Some examples travel better than others, and are more usable. Barrow was a player in a lower league, his crime more straightforward, and his sentenced very clear. With Albornoz, working first of all for a top, well-known club, the circumstances were blurry, the gravity of his actions not as clear-cut. He became, then, a better material that Barrow for a mythical character, an archetype. Roland Barthes wrote about the making of a myth as a symbol that empties itself to crystalize its form:

> The meaning is already complete, it postulates a kind of knowledge, a past, a memory, a comparative order of facts, ideas, decisions. (…) When it becomes form, the meaning leaves its contingency behind; it empties itself, it becomes impoverished, historically evaporates, only the letter remains. (…) the meaning loses its value, but keeps its life, from which the form of the myth will draw its nourishment (Barthes, 117-118).

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Katarzyna Herd
Manuscript for the final seminar 2017 – Football’s fairy stories, memories, histories

Albornoz as a child molester was both complete and empty enough to become an intertextual reference. At least for the time being, he has been the mythical villain of Swedish football. Certainly, with time, there shall come others, but his case fitted so neatly, and fulfilled the requirements for a myth to happen. Supporters’ actions and creative engagement with the case also helped, as Miiko has been used almost immediately against his club and his team; he gained another meaning, another category that was independent of himself.

But why would a social context like football be in dire need for myths and mythologies? Bronislaw Malinowski wrote in a text called *The Role of Myth in Life*: “The myth comes into play when rite, ceremony, or a social or moral rule demands justification, warrant of antiquity, reality, and sanctity” (1984, 203). Evil examples are as necessary as good ones. One needs a form that provides a structure of conduct and importance. Football stands in the fringes of common social sense. It is the ‘ordinary extraordinary’, a heterotopia that has its own logic, like many other environments in the modern world. Creating and sustaining its own myths works like in any society, ancient or modern, and justifies its unique existence. Albornoz then ‘rejuvenated’ it again, he provided fresh blood in the narrative of a ‘bad player’, and participants punished him severely while at the same time applying his newly-created meaning.

In 2017 the chants about Albornoz were reused when another player employed in MFF, Kingsley Safro was arrested on suspicion on sexual harassment. During a match in Malmö in October, AIK supporters sang the ‘Albornoz chant’ just changing the name, and displayed many banners with messages about MFF attracting pedophiles and Malmö not being a safe city for young girls (observations 2017). The myth received more nourishment.

The examples presented in this chapter so far are very polarized; a hero and a villain swirl in total oppositions. However, many others occupy the field, the literal pitch of football. I would now like to turn to the average players, those who are alive in the public imagination for a short while, and become blurred images in the collective memory of football crowds.

Because a myth is taking shape right there on the spot, shape-shifting narration, regular, yet random, and not all the precise elements are distinguishable. Rather, this galloping, ongoing history-making and hero-making leaves a sticky trace of suggestions, symbols, and meanings.

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90 https://www.sydsvenskan.se/2017-10-03/aflagaren-risk-att-utredningen-skadas-av-att-mff-spelaren-ar-pa-fri-fot
Because readers have experienced similar texts before they know that the hero will triumph and the story will assert the traditional dualism, and so they have no difficulty in decoding it (Hourihan 1997, 46).

**Hero today, villain tomorrow**

In an older interview from 2013, my informant Jonatan named Albornoz as his least favourite player, because of the ‘issues’. However, he also named another footballer, an average guy who unfortunately did not win his heart. 

And the worst… well Albronoz. Good player, but a lot of issues around him… And I really didn’t like Daniel Larsson. I don’t think he should have played as much as he did. He may be the player in Allsvenskan with the top speed, and he works a lot and I admire his mind, always works a lot, but his first touch of the ball – I can do better than him. He cannot score, he cannot pass. So he is fast and makes good work without the ball… so is that a football player? 

*(We stare at each other and both start laughing)*

But now we don’t have him, so I’m happy. (*He chuckles*)

I have a vague memory what sort of player Daniel Larsson was; I cannot really recall his looks, just a silhouette of a man running with a ball, which could be none and all of the men that played for MFF in the last five seasons. Jonatan had a personal connection with him because he did not like him. His frustration took a humorous turn during the interview, an example of ‘reflexive anti-reflexivity’ (...), or ‘over-reflexivity’ that is often expressed in the football context (reference, develop!). One knows it might sound as exaggeration when one bursts with emotions over a person who is not even in a club anymore.

My informant navigated between two contexts – the ‘real life’ that has stricter moral rules, and football, that has its own sense and hierarchy of importance. Obviously, Albornoz received the patch as the villain of the year (with a lot of help from other clubs), but other players could be criticized and stigmatized by the quality of their play. This need to navigate highlights the construction of sense and nonsense in the football context (Stewart 1989).

Fulfilling their hero status on the pitch does not necessarily translate into the ‘real’ world, and the other way round. An intersection of other categories influences the final shaping and evaluation of players’ narrative, and one of them is the time frame – hence history.

In oral history, memory becomes not simply a source for the investigation of the past, but an object of study in its own right. The way that memories are narrated, connected to each other and to other events, the way that they struggle against and absorb parts of wholes of collective or public memories, the way that their notions of chronology are bulging with inherent meaning are integral to how
historians use them; these slippery aspects of memory are what make it hard to work with, but enormously satisfying, for the insights it can bring to understanding the past are profound. (Lindsey Dodd 2013, 47)

Interview with Matias (played for HIF): about the mental bit, it’s always there, it sits back in your mind, difficult to process; when career not going well, injuries and such, there is hope and disillusion too (2015).

Halsti, Turina, Robert Pritz, Malins, Igor Sypniewski, Paul Gascoigne, George Best, Eric Cantona, Mush through the time frame.

As Lopez points out ‘we create wolves’ (Lopez 1978: 203). Every perception of reality is a cultural construct and Western culture constructed in the ‘wolf’ a monster so powerful that we could not see beyond it (Hourihan 1997, 126).

Villains not just villains, like in Great Expectations perhaps?

In hero stories, however, criminals who are perceived as threatening the establishment are not analysed but condemned. While Dickens, in Great Expectations, shows how the homelessness and poverty into which Magwitch was born made it inevitable that he would break society’s laws and then become a scapegoat for the injustices which made him a criminal, the behaviour of Conan Doyle’s criminals is not explained in any social or psychological context (Hourihan 1997, 145).

Observations, Halmstad – Degerfors 2016:

Red card! Rrrred!!!
Kids change sides all of a sudden – Degerfors!
Filming, players are filming
Degerfors woke up a bit. The pitch and everything looks weirdly small
Number 20 is ‘own product’
Are they having a drinking pause?
We can hear players arguing with the referee.
And to the left! And to the left! Somebody says ‘are we talking politics now?’ People laugh
Lasse… buuu!!! Starts coughing
Brrrra Rrrronni!
Sätt den in Rrrronni!
One guy knows all the names, good Sebastian, good Markus etc… he is a father of one of the players
A guy from Melodiefestivalen plays for DIF, number 13 (observations, Halmstad-Degerfors IF, May 2016).

Observations MFF-DIF:
Jag kommer att döda dig! Hahahahaha! Din jävla fitta!!!
-what are you paid for???
Another change for DIF, do something
‘Oh heaven is the place on earth!’ – they sing
‘Ta ett steg!!!’
Small victories… orka… springa!!!
Not happy with their team
But that is it. I like being a minority, it is something I understand.
Poor DIF. We see it totally differently.
You can always distance yourself, the players will go away. Danska jävlar, hahahahaha
You learn how to react, you learn how to be here.
Rakip simulant? Din jävla fitta!!!! Taken away from the pitch just to run back the next second. Bastard! (observations MFF-DIF 2016)

Interview with Sune, 2014:

Kasia: Do you have like an important memory from your time as a player?
Sune: Yes, when my first child was born. (pause, he stares at me) Well you are after a match or something like that?
Kasia: Well yes…
Sune: It is so easy to say ‘I played in Europa Cup final in 1979. And yes it was a big thing in terms of sport. But really, somewhere in your daily life is the most important life.

Interview with a former referee:

And another thing… the players sometimes come to you and say ‘you gave me a yellow card there and then’ and I have absolutely no recollection of that. I usually ask ‘oh really?’ I do not remember. Especially like 5-20 years ago, they all blend. And then with some of the good-natured players… you do become friends with them, and you can ponder about the olden days, when the careers are over (interview with Wilmar 2014)

In the literature on sport, celebrity and Olympism it is not unusual to find each being credited with attributes commonly ascribed to religion. Justine Digance and Kristine Toohey 2011, 345

players and fans’ (communitas); sport fans bearing witness (pilgrims); and actualisation and transformation by experiencing ultimate reality (Justine Digance and Kristine Toohey 2011, 346)

The Games also have other ceremonial religious trappings: hymn-like anthems, prayers and torch relays which begin with the lighting of the ‘sacred’
Olympic Flame on the Altar of Hera in ancient Olympia. (Justine Digance and Kristine Toohey 2011, 346)

Pre-industrial heroes usually acquired their extraordinary powers by divine intervention in that they were either born a hero or a demi-god, or by the hero earning such powers by enduring harsh trials and tribulations (such as Ulysses or Hercules) (Justine Digance and Kristine Toohey 2011, 349)

– but supporters… give them that power; physical exercise has no meaning otherwise

Even when the spurt towards professionalization occurred in the twentieth century and players began to be recognized and rewarded for their ‘star’ quality, ties between sports celebrities and communities were cogently stressed. In soccer, stars like Stanley Matthews, Nat Lofthouse, Tom Finney, Johnny Haynes, Wilf Mannion and Stan Mortensen did not merely play for, respectively, Stoke City, Bolton Wanderers, Preston North End, Fulham, Middlesborough and Blackpool. They were the apotheosis of the culture of their cities, symbolizing not only the heart and soul of the spectators who watched them but the spirit of the associated community. Perhaps their wages were higher than most of the people who watched them from the terraces, and they certainly relished the superior status of achieved celebrity. Notwithstanding this, there was no sense of a lifestyle chasm between them and spectators, no implication that both followed the same game but lived in entirely different economic and cultural worlds.

Now, in an era where the salaries of top players are not measured in thousands but millions, and where politicians compete with each other to be photographed in the presence of the cream of the sporting crop, the situation has been transformed. Elevation is the process by which individuals of accomplishment are raised from the ranks of ordinary men and women into the echelons of achieved celebrity culture. The process usually involves dedicated teams of cultural intermediaries, who protect the financial interests of the player and seek to establish a monopoly position over the celebrity’s image as a system of representation. (Chris Rojek 2006, 684)

In societies based around the meritocratic ideal, sport is also one of the paradigmatic institutions that articulate and elaborate the meritocratic ideal and reinforce achievement culture. In sport the value of individual discipline, training, teamwork, endurance, determination and ambition is potently stressed. Chris Rojek 2006, 680

Sports celebrities are now at the vanguard of popular culture Chris Rojek 2006, 683

1. Concluding remarks

The discussion presented here also highlights the different types of time that one can observe in football, and it could be visualized by players. As mentioned previously in the second chapter, there is the linear time, the arrow moving forward, a straight line of development from the birth of the club to the present age. Yet, there is also agricultural time, cyclical revival, the seasonal character that makes football deconstruct and reconstruct itself year after
year, player after player (see Hubert, 1999). Next, there are instances of “timelessness” together with “placelessness” that come from the character of football (Nielsen 1995). Some events and characters become isolated instances. Since football happens in isolation, in certain heterotopic place of sacrifice⁹¹.

Finally, there is cosmogenic time, referred to by geographer Yi-Fu Tuan, who said that cosmogenic time “leaves its mark on space, thereby sanctioning it” (1977, 132). In other words, it explains a feature of the past and sanctions an element of the present. Giving Australian aboriginal population as an example, Tuan writes that “topographical features are a record of “who were here, and did what”. They are also a record of “who are here now””. (1977, 132).

It would seem that such ‘time islands’ happen to characters in those narratives as well. Henrik Larsson has enjoyed several individual threads of narration as he has developed his own quest. These would be the cosmogenic stories, as his past greatness featured in the present, still great, character of the club. There is also the cyclical, as he has become the reincarnation, in a way, of past heroes in the context of HIF. Miiko Albornoz one strong ‘timeless’ episode. Individual players might enter any of those modes, but en-masse, they constitute the linear time, the never-breaking continuation of history that just changes its little wheels every season. At the same time, together with heroes and villains, they contribute to the grand history, which defines what is and what is not a good football player.

The forgotten ones- do something about them… videojuggar, MFF tifo with 3 brothers

Stupid player? maybe more emphasis on the term?

Peter Sagan interviews

Questions after stories? what was this story about? Epilogues?

7. “So how about this violence?”

One of the most common questions I encounter, when talking about football, is about violence and hooligans. I have not been afraid of fans, but I got scared of the security, which left me bewildered and shaking. The following observations come from a Skåne derby in Malmö in 2015. I travelled with HIF fans from Helsingborg to Malmö.

Once in Malmö, we saw a huge crowd of people waiting in front of the stadium. There was only one line for away section, separated by fences and going in serpents, which lead to security checks where people were frisk-searched and their bags investigated. People became concerned, there was muttering around: “we won’t get in on time”. It was not a friendly welcome, rather a wartime camp. As we moved slowly forward, one after another through the narrow passage, some guys behind me started commenting the situation: “like cattle to slaughter”. All of a sudden I heard a loud “amuuuu!!” behind me. People started laughing, I was laughing too. The police were not amused, just kept staring at us with grave faces. (…)

During half time something happened. Many young guys dressed in black, who had been at the bottom of our section, rushed inside to the facility area with small shops and toilets. I followed them, although I had to use a different exit. There were lots of people, many policemen and security guards. Half of the crowd was grey-bright yellow (the security forces). The young Helsingborg supporters made like half a circle and just stood still there. Hardly anybody was talking, the atmosphere seemed incredibly tense, but it was also very still, seemed frozen almost. There were some 4-5 people standing in the middle, talking to themselves. It did not take long to notice earpieces that they have, and unnaturally thick clothes. They had to be in a secret police force of something. They made an odd scene in the middle of this.

One security guard was standing a bit to the side, the others talked in a big group. I kept thinking that there were more members of the police force than there were supporters. One supporter asked the lone guard what had happened. He just said ‘I cannot talk now’ and ignored the person, a young male. I wanted to take a photo of the policemen and I took a step forward, raising my mobile phone. In this instant, the lone security guard grabbed me by my shoulders and pushes rather violently. I almost fell down. I was extremely surprised but instead of walking away, I started reasoning with him.

- What did I do?
  I said it in English because the shock completely cleared Swedish from my head.
- It is a closed area, he said.
He replied in Swedish. I did not see any tape, any markings, anything.
- You can just tell me you don’t have to push me.
Then he stared at me, almost as if he suddenly realized that I spoke in English. I was very upset but also, to my surprise, I turned almost confrontational. I did not want to move from there. Finally, I went to the side, where other people stood, chatted and
watched. Slowly, the policemen and guards left, supporters slowly moved back to the stands. Secret police kept talking to themselves. When the movement began, I could move towards that ‘closed area’. Behind a pillar, there lied a broken, fallen soda machine. Was this what happened? I went back to the stands too but I felt overwhelmed. I started feeling scared. Legs were shaking and I felt teary. I had to leave.

This was not my first time at the away section, but it was certainly the most memorable one. For about two weeks I could not think of going back there. I wrote to Malmö FF and to police trying to find an explanation for this situation. The answer I received included statements that HIF supporters have had a history of aggressive behaviour (which seemed to justify tough approach), and that it was security from Helsingborg and not Malmö that was operating there. The away section brings with itself a risk of violence. It is that end of the stadium that is heavily protected/restricted when ‘big’ teams come to town.

After a while, I did join away supporters again, this time smarter in my approach, more familiar with the context, and not that surprised at unfriendly policemen. One can learn what sort of treatment one can expect. I have seen people being escorted or even dragged out by security, while the onlooking supporters tried to make sense of the scene, i.e. what prompted this particular action. As Bale and Gaffney comment on attending matches regularly:

> The more individuals repeat the form of experience in particular place, the more heavily that place and that type of experience will figure in the construction of the individual (Bale & Gaffney 2004, 25).

The experience of the away section has its own logic. One needs to learn to understands boundaries that are not visible, recognize security that tries to look like fans, yet one knows they are not. The rules of make-belief are somewhat condensed and sharper there. As a group of away supporters, we were protected from the home crowd, yet we were kept in a tight grip of various security measures. Although such environment does not ooze friendly atmosphere, the away crowd has it as a temporary home and involves a range of practices to make it their own.

The violent, unruly picture of support, football being a place of social conflict, is often produced when two sides face each other, when ‘we against them’ comes at its strongest. Yet, it is not only two groups of supporters, as police and security are both friends and foe, depending on the ongoing match. This chapter zooms into different aspects of symbolical and physical aspects of violence that appear in the football context. The away section provides an
environment for testing the boundaries. Further, stickers and songs mark territorial and ideological struggles. The last point is about the direct interaction between supporters and police, taking more of the police’s perspective into focus.

**Men (mostly white and young) in large groups**

Picture taken at the standing section in September 2014 in Malmö during a match against Mjällby. The version of the slogan, in different colours, appeared in many clubs. AIK and IFK Göteborg had their own banners with it too.

I shall open this chapter with a broader discussion on violence connected to men, as the image of a supporter is closely attached to men, and a particular version of masculinity is taken for granted. Despite my solemn and repeated claims that my research does not engage much in gender perspective, that particular point has been raised on endless occasions. There tends to be an understanding that the display on football stadiums is problematic, connected to violence, described as ‘masculine’ and even dangerous. It is not uncommon to hear comments of ‘frustrated males’, ‘aggressive behaviour’, and football stadiums being ‘an outlet for anger so they don’t beat up their wives at home’ (football chat, 2016). Thus, the general opinions
are not favourable when introducing the field, and rather often comes a reference to ‘masculinity’. I have witnessed various audiences trying to count visible women on the stands, complaining that it is so male-dominated, even questioning why I have not felt threatened or misplaced since I am a woman. It all boils down to “it is so masculine”.

I have to confess that I have started to react with irritation to such comments, not only because the aim of the research is not on gender issues. There is something disturbing in keeping the term ‘masculine’ in singular and applying it to the whole field. However, I usually talk or show a particular type of behaviour related to football. During short presentations I tend to use catchy examples, which often include the ultras groups, who engage in displays that could be described as symbolic violence. This does not mean that the quiet, or not so engaged supporters are omitted in this study. Yet, one could say though that in a way I am promoting the behaviour that the loud ultras groups prefer, since I give them much space, though at the same time trying to show shades and different interpretations, different patterns and motivations behind half-naked, screaming young men with huge flags and holding burning flares.

Yet, the focus usually stays on the half-naked, screaming young men with huge flags and holding burning flares, and any attempt to deepen the understanding or problematize the display seems futile. Thus, there is a need for discussion how ‘masculinity’ is understood in this context, and how it is constructed over and over again without much reflection. In an informal conversation one person referred to a singing crowd of football supporters as “uncomfortable” and “bringing to mind Nuremberg and saluting German Nazis” (football chat 2017). This reflect the general attitude to crowds being seen as having direct link between totalitarian regimes (Oakley year). First, it seems that ‘masculine’ is applied to a very limited, macho-like meaning to a narrow margin of football culture that tends to get all the attention. Second, for all the accusations of danger and violence, football stands ooze love, friendship and inclusiveness. This results, I would claim, in confusing images and invites polarized opinions about this context.

A football match can be a tense experience. Emotions are strong and clearly on display. Stands during an important game, at a boiling point, have been describes as being in crisis, needing attention or discipline. The vocabulary used to describe frustrated supporters include ‘senseless’, ‘irrational’, ‘out of control’. Perhaps it is particularly scary in the eyes of the

92I return to this aspect in a further chapter
onlookers, because if it is bunch of men guided by their emotions, and not their reason. Masculinity has long-established connotation to being logical, while the focus on a body, emotions and lack of self-control has been ascribed to female bodies (Johansson 2011, 95). Also, Connell writes:

A familiar theme in patriarchal ideology is that men are rational while women are emotional. This is a deep-seated assumption in European philosophy (1995, 164).

Anna Johansson, when describing the attitudes towards female bodies, commented that they are more problematic because they are considered more accessible, uncontrolled, and unrestricted (2011, 95). This, she points out, is built on a contrast with masculine bodies that are considered logical and rational. One can notice thought that this presupposition does not apply to a football crowd. The gender construction that happens there is based on male bodies, and, as Connell points out, ‘True masculinity is almost always thought to proceed from men’s bodies – to be inherent in a male body or to express something about a male body’ (1995, 45). Certainly, that sparks comments about masculinity mentioned above. Unmistakably, there is ‘masculinity’, its essence almost, on display. And yet, the way it is framed, talked about and presented in a larger social context resembles the description of unbalanced young female that is harmful for itself and for the society, that is a victim of her own crisis that needs attention from ‘grown-ups’ or the state (Johansson 2011, 55).

Johansson gives interesting examples, for example from psychiatry, how young girls tend to be described as vulnerable and out-of-balance, which would make them more prone to the phenomenon of self-hurt, whereas boys would turn violent. She also contemplates that girls are treated individually, while boys would be taken more as a collective, and also that girls would hurt themselves while boys would become destructive towards the society (2011, 55). Constructing gender in those terms made me consider my research and the picture of a sort of ‘uber-masculinity’ that oozes from the images of football stadiums. In other words, it is not considered good or proper that it is masculine, meaning that it should be criticized. At the same time, the environment is very diverse, fluid, colourful, and a term ‘gender hybrid’ might have explained it better.

It is a good example how the construction of gender does not have to be connected to the biological bodies, but to the general consensus how a given environment is performed. The bodies of supporters at stands during a match could be described in the same way, against the normative picture hold in the society, like the young women’s bodies described by Johansson.
Her reflections about it made me consider my own ethnographic material in a different way, and maybe it would be a good way to approach this ever-present gender issue. In other words, it would be the hybridity of evaluations of masculinity-femininity-masculine bodies.

Pierre Bourdieu wrote in *Masculine Domination* that collective expectations, ‘positive or negative, through the subjective expectations that they impose, tend to inscribe themselves in bodies in the form of permanent dispositions’ (Bourdieu 1978, 61). Because football has occupied so much of media time, because it has become so popular, so has its problems. The immediate, short-cut associations are thus not positive. Seeing a large group of shouting men can be intimidating and then branded as ‘masculine’ while not taking into consideration diversity and relations that exist within the masculine discourse (Connell 1995, 37). Further, because football is a heterotopical and magical social construct, the abilities of a handful of individuals (commonly referred to as hooligans) are activated because the society believes in their powers (Mauss 1972). This is not to negate that violence appears, or that narrow-minded and aggressive individuals are not interested in football. Rather, very narrowly understood concept of masculinity is applied to a wide and diverse group that actually largely breaks the pattern of behaviour ascribed to ‘manly men’.

Another problem with representation here comes with the widely accepted fact that it is men and not women who are passionate about football. Football is acknowledged, treated and described by many scholars as an example of a ‘malestream’, an environment built by men for men and further still studied by men even in the modern research (Welford 2011; Dixon 2015; Richards 2015). As Mintert and Pfister put it:

Up to now, football research has been a predominately male domain. Male scholars conduct research on men’s football on male fans. (…) Football is a game invented by and for men. Until 1970, the national and international football federations did not support women’s football teams and games (2015: 406).

Welford (2011, 365) even refers to it as “time honoured male preserve”. Thus, the field I operate in puts women outside the core cultural capital on many levels and situates them in the margins. The current football research has acknowledged the presence of female spectators, yet it also acknowledges that access does not mean equality (for example Welford 2011). Women, no matter what position and interest they might have, encounter evaluations based on the established connection between football and masculinity. Female supporters are faced with prejudice not only from their male counterparts but also form other females (Mintert &
Pfister 2015). Kevin Dixon (2015) and Carrie Dunn (2014) point out, referring to older categorizations that women still tend to be branded ‘new fans’, not authentic and not traditional, but civilizing, in contrast to aggressive, authentic and norm-making male fans.

The descriptions of purely ‘masculine’ or ‘feminine’ behaviour seem to monopolize popular understanding of gender performance. Connell (1995, 70) points out that majority of men do not fit with the dominating picture of masculinity in Western societies. It is possible to problematize this further as both women and men experience the ‘hegemonic’ way of being a loud and slightly abusive supporter, but they do not necessarily intend to reproduce it. Certainly, because the biological majority consists of men, there is a trap of viewing their behavior in terms of ‘masculine’ (Connell 1995, 79).

Mintert and Pfister bring forth the notion that the idea of femininity within the football context might get a different evaluation outside that context, as still the majority of participants are biological males. Still, male performances of the gender could undergo similar processes of evaluation, albeit in a different way. Their femininity is judged on a strict model in the broader social context that discriminates against flexible gender performance (Mintert & Pfister 2015: 417; Skeggs 1997, 107-116).

Although football context includes more male bodies, I would argue that nevertheless it offers a different dimension to how gender is constructed and also evaluated. One could put more attention into the performative characteristics and the conscious shifting between masculine and feminine norms (Welford 2011, 367).

The public seems still focused on the idea that football is not a place for women, thus reestablishing a sort of ‘socially imposed agoraphobia’, symbolic exclusion from a public space (Bourdieu 2001, 39). Far too often there is just one-sided form of presenting football through specific masculine performance that fits with the established mainstream evaluation of football as violent and dangerous. Other researchers, especially dealing with gender/sexuality issues show how and what sort of emotional space one can negotiate within the framework of established behaviour, like Signe Bremen’s study of transgender individuals (2011), or Ingeborg Svensson’s account of burial practices of HIV-infected men (2007). Both Bremen and Svensson show how the daily practices are used to challenge the patterns in the society. As bodies cannot belong to neat, straightforward categories, they can become active markers that explore presupposed clearness of evaluations who is who, who belongs where, or how individuals choose to refer to themselves. I would suggest that football does offer women
and men possibilities to transgress and challenge the one sided view of femininity and masculinity. It is not as profound as a strive for equal rights for gay and transgender communities, but the struggle of fitting/challenging gender categories that apply to all of us takes, in my opinion, on an interesting twist in the football context.

The issue then seems to be that ‘masculinity’ is applied to a group of supporters is not neutral, it tends to have a judgement attached to it and it marks a problem. I have certainly reacted to it as to an insult. Further, the discussed behaviour pattern is ambivalent. Stands are a place where men are allowed to feel. Certainly, men shout, display their naked torsos, scream abuse, test police’s patience. But they also express empathy, suffer together, cry of joy or frustration, collapse with euphoria, make irrational decisions to take on heavily armed policemen, risk bruises and broken arms for their teams, emphasize the importance of football family, of help, trust and caring for each other. They spend days preparing beautiful pictures on canvas, engaging creatively with the environment. Although it would be extremely stereotypical to say that such behavioural pattern is feminine only, it is certainly not applied automatically to manly acts of power. Perhaps it is the ‘hybrid gender’ on display that causes so much confusion in treating and evaluation emotionally engaged spectators.

The crowd behaviour in the arenas make up a paradox. Connell points out that the construction of masculinity, based on the straight middle class ideal, is connected to sports, like football, and that activity is then perceived as very masculine, hegemonic almost (Connell 1995, 166-167). This would be then connected to power position, as masculinity, usually white, middle-class and straight, is. However, the football crowd is being disciplined, it is controlled and taken care of, cause otherwise there is a presupposed danger that it would end in chaos (see Oakley, 2007). When entering a football field then, one is faced, especially as a female researcher, with presupposed hegemony, that is actually very vulnerable and shaky, aware of its weak position through constant supervision by police, security, clubs and media.

Gustave Le Bon and the psychology of crowd based on his personal experience from dramatic upheavals in France in the end of the 18th century:

To-day the claims of the masses are becoming more and more sharply defined, and amount to nothing less than a determination to utterly destroy society as it now exists, with a view to making it hark back to that primitive communism which was the normal condition of all human groups before the dawn of civilization – (1896 (2002) xi)
We see, then, that the disappearance of the conscious personality, the predominance of the unconscious personality, the turning of feelings and ideas in an identical direction by means of suggestion and contagion, the tendency to immediately transform the suggested ideas into acts; these, we see, are the principal characteristics of the individual forming part of the crowd. He is no longer himself, but has become an automation who has ceased to be guided by his own will. Moreover, by the mere fact that he forms part of an organized crowd, a man descents several rungs in the ladder of civilization. Isolated, he may be a cultivated individual; in a crowd, he is a barbarian – that is, a creature acting by instinct. – (Le Bon 1896 (2002) 8)

A crowd is not merely impulsive and mobile. Like a savage, it is not prepared to admit that anything can come between its desire and the realisation of its desire. – (Le Bon 1896 (2002) 12)

The psychological crowd is a provisional being formed of heterogeneous elements, which for a moment are combined, exactly as the cells which constitute a living body form by their reunion a new being which displays characteristics very different from those possessed by each of the cells singly – (Le Bon 1896 (2002) 4) (or because they are treated like that?)

Supporters make claim for power where there are no real resources for power (Connell 1995, 111). Their flares and flags can do little to change the outcome of the match, their shouts of disapproval are easily ignored by clubs’ officials, they undergo panoptical surveillance, they experience economic inequality, their cocky performance in front of the police is met with batons, arrests, pepper spray and even dogs (observations, 2014). Do they then represent a hegemonic display of masculinity? Hardly, I would argue.

Masculine domination means a ‘certain domination’, branded and constructed on a visual expression of male physicality. It is not to say that there are no accidents or unfortunate encounters in the football context. They do happen, as it swirls with emotions which eventually might take physical forms. However, men at the stands are more vulnerable than the popular opinion would have it. There is a shift of power and football supporters, as they are mostly men, cannot control the narratives spanned around them. They become dangerous, unruly, unpredictable, erratic, a danger to a society. This is a construct based on historical and economic structures that hold football together, and discourses that has been consolidated over the years.

The margins of the society have always been dangerous, yet also allowing for some movement and change (Frykman 1977). ‘Masculinity’ here is taken as a group identity. It is a large group that expresses it, not individuals. Tara Brabazon comments that ‘Throughout
history, a crowd is viewed with either fear or political aspirations and opportunities. Both readings view the crowd from above’ (2006, 31). Indeed, the popular fear of crowds seems to be deeply rooted, and football means crowds, beer, and unrestricted feelings, which might mean an open confrontation with authorities. Chris Oakley writes in his book *Football Delirium* that an evaluation of crowds usually offered are positioned within the frame of recent history, meaning that mass gatherings in fascist Italy, communist Russia and Nazi Germany are lurking in the background, allowing for moral statements and concerns about mental health of the crowd (2007, 89). The book is a light-version of psychoanalysis done on football, using personal examples and broader social evaluations. Oakley points out further:

By and large psychoanalysis bought the story that, principally as an effect of imitation, behaviour in a crowd would invariably sink to the lowest common denominator. Crowds suggest and are eminently suggestible. The moment of the gathering into a crowd will create a collective into which the individual will be submerged, all swept up by unconscious process. And unconscious processes are linked to the more primitive or, following the claims of a progress narrative, earlier stages of our development. Crowds are regress. And it is contagious (2007, 88).

This evaluation of crowds is rather common when it comes to football environment. I wish not to engage in psychoanalytical analysis, but this is worth a thought. Yet, it is precisely the ‘informal ethnography’, possibility to observe and engage with the individuals in the field, that provides a distinction between ethnology and other disciplines psychology or sociology, and allows an ethnographer to contest the common evaluations that are taken for granted (Agar 1996, 245).

Danger here seems to be created by the sheer fact of thousands of bodies united in song and movement. One becomes a different person at a stadium. It does not matter that the group consists of many various individuals with families, jobs, hobbies, average members of any given society, in this case Swedish one, known for order and stability. And yet, once inside the concrete structure, most of the usual social markers are ignored, and the emotionally engaged crowd spells out danger. People dance, sing, embrace each other, openly express strong emotions. It is OK to hug your mates; it is OK to cry when viciously disappointed. Some of this behaviour in other context could be described as not ‘manly’. Why are those strong emotions expressed by (mostly) male bodies so disturbing yet captivating? Is this, again, the miss-match of images, of presumably rational masculinity being swept away by uncontrollable feelings? Oakley comments on the fascination with violence that one associates with football:
Some may claim that concealed beneath the baggy trousers of academic rhetoric is a considerable hard-on, drooling over further fetishized details of the violence (2007, 93).

Oakley presents this bold and provocative statement that summarizes the ongoing circle of despising yet not letting go of the curiosity that surrounds the unruly football crowds. Certainly, there are a lot of conflicts going on, anarchistic in their manner as there is no one fixed enemy, rather the focus of a fight changes constantly (Foucalt, 1994). Thus, outbursts against authorities, economical developments, media, and social inequalities are possible, all framed in a football context. The power structure is in a curious balance. Those who make the most of the display and noise do not have a real claim for power: their voice is ignored, their wishes not prioritized, their security comes second to that of a material property. The alleged ‘masculinity’ is treated as ‘femininity’ by those with real power (like police or media), because bodies become “symbolic objects” that are “being-perceived” – like physical female bodies in different social contexts. This then “has the effect of keeping them in a permanent state of bodily insecurity, or more precisely of symbolic dependence” (Bourdieu 2001, 66).

‘Masculine domination’, as presented in the quote above, is actually a structural domination over a number of bodies cramped together and branded as ‘masculine’. There is a paradox here, one that probably prevents many from separating the evaluation of what is ‘masculinity’ in this context. Connected to power, viewed as hegemonic and violent, a certain display of masculinity gained an interpretation that does not go beyond seeing it as something different than not-femininity (Connell 1995, 70). Yet, a crowd is monitored, controlled, treated harshly, and described in crude terms. And that is problematic, because the repertoire of a football crowd, consisting of both men and women, their rationale and agenda are not limited to violent outbursts of too much physical energy, which I intend to show in this thesis.

Thus, one could consider the persistent ‘irreducibility’ of gender/sex of football and the specific affection it is associated with (get to Butler?). Criticizing it for displaying ‘masculinity’ ends up in tautology, as it does not problematize the impulsive, almost intuitive evaluation along the lines of football – crowd – men – macho – danger – problem. The image is too readily accepted without a second thought. Sexed bodies, of both men and women, are ascribed qualities based on popular evaluation of football, becoming a reproduced image of power. It is the hybrid of images and gender performance, caused by cramping together of all

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This applies to women too, as they have been criticized conforming to the masculine norm, largely based on the idea how femininity should be, thus reaffirming both categories (e.g. Dixon, 2015).
possible classes, roles and groups, and resulting in a nutshell of condensed and tightly packed society.

Another twist to this issue could be provided by including Bynum’s criticism of Victor Turner’s liminality term. (women always liminal when contrasted with men, hence not granted a ‘full story of transformation’ – football crowd – double liminality?).

**The away section – Home away from home**

History writing happens a lot during matches, not only in the home crowd, but it happens also in the away section, where the narrative is flavoured by going to the enemy’s land. It represents also another level of commitment. As indicated above, it is a learned behaviour. There are traditions to follow how and what one displays. Further, the expressions take on almost comical form, self-reflexive to the point of ridiculousness and mockery. I shall begin with looking at the stadium from a bit different perspective than in the third chapter, namely the away section. There is already a history behind going to away matches, yet it is not an old one. A former player remarked that in the past, 1970s for example, not many went to away matches (interview with Sune, 2014). On the other hand, there are legends about, for example, AIK supporters damaging property while travelling through Sweden. Below is a schematic picture of MFF’s arena, Swedbank Stadium.

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94 This is an account from *En av grabbarna*. The writer recalls burning a shed while going to an away match (check details, page etc)

95 Insert the source.
This is a rather generic picture of almost any football arena in Europe. The colours mark different sections that differ in prices. Places for away supporters are light purple and marked with the number 17. If the expected crowd need more space, the section can be extended to numbers 18 and 19 as well. Right next to this area is the family section, coloured on the picture in light green. It is a bit puzzling that families with children are placed next to away supporters who are not short of strong words and gestures. One club representative explained that often the thought was that families require cheaper tickets anyway so they were assigned to worse places (interview with Carl and David, 2015). This sort of thinking was now questioned, and some of the clubs put family section in the middle, with a prime view of the game. Another explanation I heard was that tough away crowd, ready for a fight, would melt and be pacified when seeing small children. This logic was applied to the entire stadium, and bigger groups of women and kids were supposed to have a relaxing effect in football (source, Dixon 2015).

Historian Niels Kayser Nielsen wrote about football arenas, expressing the curious character of that urban space that is not easy to define. His comments about a stadium as a whole could be taken to the phenomenon of the away sections as well:

At the stadium, one is both at the home ground, but also out in deep waters, where one must probe forward innovatively, exposed to the double condition of safeness and searching, (...) in a continuous interpretation of life as a ‘city-zen’ – in the area of tension between being exposed and being comfortable, and between placelessness and a ‘homely’ sense of locality (Niels Kayser Nielsen 1995, 42).

The away section is needed, but it is loathed as well. Supporters enter a space that is not theirs, yet it is design for them. A sign from Olympia stadium, home arena of HIF, says ‘Welcome visiting supporters’, yet it does not spell out warmth. The sign has also been abused by various stickers and many attempts to remove them. It is also hung on a fence that separates stadium and away supporters from the rest of the world. In the top of the picture one can see barbed wire. This is more a danger zone rather than a cosy spot to enjoy football. Often, especially before popular matches between big teams, the security checks for away fans are extensive and long. Frisk search and bad search are common, together with sniffing dogs and ‘secret’ police. One reason for it is the ban on pyrotechnics in Sweden, which is commonly ignored by some supporter organizations. Yet, that does not prevent the forbidden activity, which was explained in more depth in chapter five.
The entrance to away section at Friends Arena could not be described as charming either. Massive doors have no decorations, the sign announces ‘Away fans’ and nothing more. It looks like an industrial piece of architecture, leading to a warehouse rather than a stadium. Certainly, Friends Arena has not been described by home fans as exactly friendly, a theme appearing in many interviews, but this entrance stood out as particularly emptied from feelings. Other doors actually looked like doors one can open and close. These were beyond control from the supporters. Their sleek surface make them unreachable. Not far away though someone put a DIF sticker on a glass door. Away supporters are going to challenge the space no matter what, stickers being a popular artefact allowing them to state their presence.
The experience of an away match is usually described as more tense. This came through in several interviews. One of my informants, Arvid, commented that he did not go to away matches and thought going back with a defeat would be just unbearable (interview with Arvid, 2014). However, many football fans like the travelling. Maria said:

Most tense are the away games with true true supporters. Those who travel are the true supporters. (...) Away game – you get to know the people, we don’t like the lounges, we are not the VIP people, we don’t like the lounges, we are not the VIP people in AIK, it is Djurgården, they are the VIP people (interview with Maria, 2015).

Her narrative pointed out towards the difference between the ‘true supporters’ and those described as ‘VIP’. To be sure, all the clubs have lounges and all cater to their sponsors, yet Maria chose to use the away matches to stress a crucial difference. The ‘away crowd’ in her story was used to harsher conditions than the nice and warm rooms prepared for the rich. A narrative needs to be made sense of by paying attention to the context. The interpretation of a given “storyworld” needs “textual cues” that structure how the narration is presented (Herman 2009, 17).

The fact that Maria used the narrative to enter the rich vs. poor is thus of importance. She stretches her story into a realm of modern economic developments, tensions in the society, class segregations. In short, social history is introduced. Football has become an arena for discussing such issues, as introduced in chapter two. Still, when talking about travelling to matches Maria raises the point that it is true fans who do that, who are prepared for harsh conditions.

Maria did not follow only football, but hockey as well. She recalled one amazing race when she went to watch AIK hockey in Luleå (a lot of kilometres north from Stockholm), then went down to Stockholm and embarked on another journey with football fans to Helsingborg (about 600 kilometres from Stockholm). I did not ask if they had won that day but I sincerely hope they did. She was rather proud of her travelling, her efforts were very visible and tangible, she supported the beloved club and voluntarily travelled around Sweden.

Maria also remarked on the safety during away matches. For her, it was the safest spot ever. As she said:
But as a woman you feel safe here, cause if the guys see you at away matches and so on they look after you, they make sure that you are safe (interview with Maria, 2015).

The difference in my experience described above was that I was, in the end, alone (develop here). Further, the general feeling of ‘taking care of one another’ does not have to be connected to gender (e.g. Maria being female). Once a person is routinized into being a supporter, the common emotional investment integrates individuals. I have experienced it also. I accompanied a person working for MFF to an away match in Åtvidaberg. While waiting for the match to start, on the away section, a policeman inquired why I was taking notes. MFF security guard whom I just met was quick to respond ‘she is with us’, preventing further questions (field notes, 2013). (develop) Also, men take care of each other. When someone is searched by the police, others stand and wait. If a person is forced out, others question the security. They are aware that categories that are important outside of a stadium fade away during a match. Policemen do not protect ‘us’, they protect property. I will return to the discussion about police's role in history-making later in this chapter.

**Conflicting tunes – chants of violence and unrest**

The following quote comes from Tim Parks' book about an Italian football club Hellas Verona. Parks spent a year following the team he loved, providing an account of difficult emotional engagement with a rather bad team. When attending an away match in Udine, one Hellas supporter tried to come up with a good way to annoy the home team:

He has an impish grin. ‘So,’ he says, ‘what insult can we use for the Udinesi?’

It’s a tough question. (...) But what can we say of these respectable northerners way out on a limb near the Slovenian border?

(...) ‘It has to be something that will drive them completely mad. Something will get the afternoon of to a roaring start.’

Nobody knows. We’ve no idea.

‘Terremotati!’ he declares.

It’s obvious. A *terremoto* is an earthquake. *Terremotati* are the victims of an earthquake. In 1976 the region of Friuli Venezia Giulia, of which Udine is the capital, was devastated by a severe earthquake that caused thousands of deaths. So, in stark defiance of the standard contemporary rhetoric of compassion, we are going to insult these people by reminding them that they have been unlucky, that they have suffered. (...) ‘This’ll get them going,’ Forza laughs.

(...) His voice is huge. The tune is the ever serviceable ‘Guantanamera’. Now! ‘Ter-re-mo-ta-ti!’ he sings and shouts together. ‘Voi siete terremotati. Terremota-a-a-a-ti, voi siete terremotati.’

(...) We have barely started a second round of the song before the place explodes with rage. ‘*Merda siete, e merda resterete!*’ Forza rubs his has. ‘That’s
set the ball rolling,’ he laughs. And I realise he’s actually done the Udinese fans a favour. They are feeling properly angry. The game will mean more (Tim Parks 2003, 301-302).

Inventing a good insult engaged both sides, made a game more meaningful. The away supporters volunteer to be a nuisance, to play the part of bad guys coming to town and insulting the home crowd. As Fentress and Wickam put it, "A society needs its villains too – if only to keep the heroes busy" (1992, 202). The adversary is necessary not only on the pitch, but also on the stands, to produce a meaningful emotional exchange that can result in creative narratives. If football's premises are kept within the green grass and 22 athletes, it becomes a physical exercise, a show of strength and stamina, which is a necessary component of any fairy tale. Yet, the commentary is provided from the edges. Without it, the content is meager and scarce. It is the space around the pitch, filled with stories and emotions, that, according to so many of my informants, produce 'real' football.

The necessity, or rather qualities, of this structure, becomes visible when there is a glitch in the system. In May 2016, during the match between Malmö FF and Gefle FF, Malmö supporters were unusually quiet. Drums were silent, the crowd was passive, especially the middle of the standing section that normally buzzes with songs. Banners and flags disappeared. A single sheet of fabric hanged from a protecting net. It stated 'Freedom for Ultras'. After some questions during half time, and looking through football forum it turned out that it was a silent protest against an action police took against some fans involved in a brawl earlier the same year with a team from Copenhagen (match observations, 2016). A conflict arose between various groups of supporters and the club.

The effect of this action was eerie. It was strangely quiet, the crowd was not involved. In a way, all the elements were in place, but the story was not happening. One could apply here William Labov's structure of a narrative.


... folklorists consider questions of the permanence of form to be intertwined with questions of interaction, producing an understanding of genre in terms of a dialectic of stability and fluidity in folklore. (...) The fluidity or flexibility of folklore genres is also a dimension of oral forms, in contrast to written literature (2012, 62, Amy Shuman and Galit Hasan-Rokem. 2012. The Poetics of Folklore. In A Companion to Folklore.).

Published on 27 Aug 2017
"För gnaget står vi enat, 
då, nu och för alltid, 
tillsammans ska vi segra - än en gång! 
Genom hela landet, över hela världen, var du nu än spelar - är vi där! 
Vi vill se er offra, 
Blod - svett och tårar, 
Framåt Gnaget framåt - gör ett mål! 
Tjalalalalalala"

"Hörungar!!!” (28.05.2017, Stockholm, DIF-AFC Eskilstuna)

“Martin ska råna era kiosker” (AIK to DIF)

Martin har rånat era kiosker, Han har hotat er med kniv hugga DIF! Han har meckat upp en fet, Han har brutit sina ben, Och så rullar showen vidare igen! - https://www.fanchants.com/football-songs/aik-solna-chants/martin-har-ranat-era-kiosker/ (11.10.2017)

"Miiko är pedofil"

"Vi är överallt, och det är inte ni, för ni är Djurgårdsjävlar”

"Malmö Malmö – pedofiler”

“Tina lagar äcklig mat” (MFF to HIF)

A mock war on stickers

I was actually thinking of having the pictures only, with longer texts under, and an intro.
Both pictures taken in Malmö, 2017, the first one in the toilet for visiting fans.

Picture taken in Helsingborg in 2017, minutes before the first match of the season in Superettan.

In winter we sell at Hovet, mostly stickers and scarves, now we sell more t-shirts, spring is coming. We also can have special prints for special games, like we would order 100 shirts, for example when we play against Göteborg. We order stickers from an ultras shop in Poland, we ordered 26,000 stickers last year, they are very good, quick and cheap. We must have stickers! (interview with Maria, 2015)
Picture taken at MFF’s arena in April 2016. It was taken during the match against DIF and it is a warning/reminder that DIF will be charged for cleaning the stickers. There is a sticker on the note.

An older sticker photographed in a pizzeria’s toilet close to Olympia stadium in Helsingborg (2017). Coca Cola logo is appropriated and the picture features fighting fans.
Picture from the toilet at the away section in Malmö, April 2017.

Malmö 2016
The Others – police and security
In order to interpret the message in ‘snuten e huligan’ – cop is the hooligan – you need to have both the reference to hooligans, which in a way is historic, since most would only use it jokely. And allude to historic ‘battles’ with the cops. Yet it is pretty grim. Picture taken in Malmö, 2017

This part of the chapter zooms into those who are not in the categories of fans, players or club officials, yet they are strongly connected to the experience of Swedish football. These include, among others, security, media, and referees. Because of the research constraints, and availability of informants, I concentrate on one group: security, mainly police. These are very present, yet not in the forefront of events. They are always there, they are needed to perform football, but they do not belong to the core of the game. Also, in the interviews encounters with the police were a common theme, and provided framework for supporters, their clubs, and interactions with the others. It is also a group that is ‘the most present’, in a sense, and it produces actively its own version of history, based on an official sharp division of legal and illegal, of good and bad. Supporters and policemen do not spar over space only, they spar over narratives.

Problems … well you can say hooligans, but it sinks and there are not that many incidents, it is history mostly, it used to be like that in the past… so why this dark picture? (interview with Kristian, 2016).

There is a tradition of having hooligans⁹⁶. And connected almost exclusive to football. The article about violence in American football (refer to it) that this calmness and

commercial/happy character is just a façade. Finnish example – that there are twice as many incidents in hockey, but they are not classified as hooliganism (source source source!!!). Narrative shapes public expectations (Dorothy Smith). Referring to history – justifies present attitudes (Lowenthal 2015).

The popular imagination is quite obsessed with hooligans, and also quick to define them. Criminologists Anders Green also presented in his PhD thesis a compressed list of possible explanations offered by different schools of thoughts, including for example Marxism, Norbert Elias’ civilizing process, masculinity connected with excitement, postmodernism, neotribalism, or youth (2009, 41). Rather often in small conversations ultras groups, or even those present at the standing section, were referred to as hooligans, or potential hooligans. Usually, a mix of sport (football), unrest, young males and media attention creates a term hooligan. However, it is not easy to define hooliganism as activity, for example in legal terms. There is no offence called ‘hooliganism’ that would be defined by law in Sweden or anywhere else (Green 2009, 29). Broadly speaking, the term hooligan marks a social space of sport event and violent outbursts of the public, but it has been pointed out that the term gained popularity in media and authorities when the actually hooligan-like activities were dwindling away (Green 2009, Armstrong 1998). Different classifications of violently inclined and football-interested individuals were offered (Green 2009, Andersson & Radmann 1998).

Green’s study includes only policemen’s voices and no active ‘hooligan’ participants were involved in it, but he presents how nuanced the issue is and how its complexity is not addressed in media or public discussions. The worst decades of area unrest were 1970s and 80s, and should be put into context of social upheavals in Britain. Young hooligans were referred to as “Thatchers children” (2009, 34-35). However, a very specific historical and also political reality that fostered hooliganism is forgotten, but media frenzy and moral panic stays (Green 2009, 43-46).

The violence surrounding football matches have baffled many. Some thinkers produced more philosophical approach to the matter. Jean Baudrillard analysed the phenomenon in the

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97 Green includes also a school of thought that he defines as ‘cultural studies’, which he presents as such: Inom ‘cultural studies’ utgick man istället från den, möjligen något nostalgiska, symbios mellan arbetaklassen och de lokala fotbollsklubbarna och har genom det ett slags vänsterorientering. Huliganismen har således ur detta perspektiv sina rötter i läktarkulturens kamp för att få äga sin fotboll och där de enskilda individerna inte består av ett aggressivt patrask, utan av engagerade supportrar som med stolthet kämpar för sin klubb (2009, 41)

98 Black Army, Bajen Fans, Blue Saints – grundades 1981-51

99 Refer to the article pointing out that American football is just as affected, just the popular picture is different.
context of post, or hypermodernity, and contrasting it with a historical reference of how violence used to be:

The violence of old was both more enthusiastic and more sacrificial than ours. Today’s violence, the violence produced by our hypermodernity, is terror. A simulacrum of violence, emerging less form passion than from the screen: a violence in the nature of the image (Baudrillard 1990, 75).

‘but what no police could ever guard against is the sort of fascination, of mass appeal, exercised by the terrorist model.’ Baudrillard 1990, 76

‘The violence of football hooligans is an aggravated form of indifference, one which has such resonance only because it is based on a lethal crystallization of this kind. Fundamentally, such violence is not so much an event as the explosive form assumed by an absence of events. (…) We are dealing, therefore, not with irrational episodes in the life of our society, but instead with something that is completely in accord with that society’s accelerating plunge into the void.’ Baudrillard 1990, 76

‘the logic of attempted role reversal’: ‘Now is this not precisely what is expected of the modern spectator? Is he not supposed to abandon his spectatorish inertia and intervene in the spectacle himself?’ Baudrillard 1990, 76

‘good’ participation ends where signs of participation begin. Of course, things do not always work out that way.’ Baudrillard 1990, 77

‘Soccer hooligans are merely the most extreme manifestation of this transpolitical conjuncture: they carry participation to its tragic limit, while at the same time daring the State to respond with violence, to liquidate them. In this respect they are no different form terrorists. The reason why such tactics fascinate us, quite apart from moral considerations, is that they constitute a paroxystically up-to-the-minute model, a mirror-image of our own disappearance qua political society – a disappearance that ‘political’ pseudo-events strive so desperately to camouflage.’ Baudrillard 1990, 79

‘There is always the danger that this kind of transition may occur, that spectators may cease to be spectators and slip into the role of victims or murderers (…) that is why the public must be simply eliminated, to ensure that the only event occurring is strictly televisual in nature.’ Baudrillard 1990, 80

Still, this:

Say, if you like, that men ought to be less primitive, less violent, less mesmerized by pain and injury. Say, if you like, that football dramatizes what is worst in the human breast and ought, like pornography, to be refused public benediction. Football makes conscious to me part of what I am. And what football says about me, and about millions of other like me, is not half so ugly as it is.
beautiful. Seeing myself reflected in the dance, the agony and the ritual of a heated contest, I am at peace (Novak 1994, xx)

Michael Novak: “Sports are as old as human race. Sports are the highest products of civilization and the most accessible, lived, experiential sources of the civilizing spirit. (…) play is the fundamental structure of the human mind. Of the body, too. the mind at play, the body at play – these furnish our imaginations with the highest achievements of beauty the human race attains. (…) Sports are their fundament, their never-failing life source. Cease play, cease civilization. Work is the diversion necessary for play to survive (1994, 43).

When attending a derby in Stockholm, I spent some time sitting on the thin strip of artificial grass between the actual pitch and the stands. I was between two main participants in lively football discussions. But the small space I occupied was busy too. Apart from club officials there were public wards, security, media in various forms, a medical team, and firemen. It was buzzing with its own specific life. All of a sudden I realized that I could not see any policemen around. This was puzzling because during matches in Malmö there was always a lot of securing visible around the stadium. AIK’s supporter liaison officer said that this was a conscious decision to hide the police forces. They were just under the stands, just seconds away, yet hidden. This was supposed to create better atmosphere of trust, a feeling that things would be solved internally first, then involving the police. Also, the club officials did not want to provoke the crowd. One had to be careful with handling all the parts of the football family, and tensions between fans and security were easily created.

Security forces, policemen and the heavily guarded entrance during the MFF-HIF match in 2015. They contrast sharply with their heavy equipment, weapons and massive helmets. Supporters have scarves, shirts, and sometimes smoke with them.
Hillsborough disaster – 96 dead – that police was announced guilty in 2016; waited for the verdict since 1989

Aage Radmann. 2015. Hit and tell – Swedish hooligan narratives:

English scholars have shown that hooliganism and supporter culture violence are becoming increasingly visible in popular culture (2015, 203)

A hooligan narrative exists already in the collective memory, strengthened by media attention and popular culture, as such controversial memoirs are being digested by the society. In a way, this has entered a more public space and points out into a strange expression of attitudes. On the one hand, the slightest use of even symbolic violence is met with swift condemnation (and not once ultras groups were classified as ‘hooligans’ in conversations that I encountered), but on the other hand such t-shirts in children sizes are sold in the city centre:

Get a better picture of this shirt (maybe). Encountered in central Stockholm in 2015.

"It is not a walk in the park"

There have been numerous publications in popular press about unruly supporters, but also about over-eager police forces. Numerous publications in popular press deal with the issues of hatred at stadiums, and security. In a debate article sent to Aftonbladet in 2015, Björn Enjebo, an AIK supporter and programledare i Radio Råsunda, wrote that a discussion on safety during matches is a sure sign of spring, and criticized media for providing unreflective and
negative picture of all supporters. In short, according to Enjebo, media were just interested in short-lived flashy news than in real journalism. And that, in turn, did not contribute to a good debate between the fans, the general public and the police.

Matches in the Swedish highest league involve not only fans and players, but also a variety of other professions. Police and security are heavily present during more tense fixtures, when big clubs play against each other. The relationship between the groups is far from peaceful. One of the more popular slogans appearing in the football context internationally is ACAB, or 1312. It is an abbreviation from ‘all cops are bastards’ and the same referring to the first, third, first and second letters of the alphabet (observations, 2015). In the interviews, questions about police usually triggered comments about the lack of understanding and misconceptions from police’s part. During a focus group I asked directly about it:

Kasia: What do you think about the police and how they are handling matches?
Robin: Ha! (snears) It not good. Most of the time it is the police that is the problem.
Tom: They have little knowledge and they are not organized.
Robin: Not organized at all.
Alex: And they don’t know… they just… they often have a wrong picture… often they react… they react on their own recommendations… during matches when nothing is going to happen there are masses of them, and then when 3000 from Djurgården in the premier match comes to the city they just cannot control it. They seem to be badly organized and badly informed. They have very bad understanding of what is happening in the sport environment. (Kärnan16.02.2015)

In general, the members of the police and security are treated with suspicion. They are not to be trusted and cooperation is tricky. Alex from Kärnan commented:

Alex: I had an experience with the police that did not want to report… Ah the thing is… the police strengthens all the time this feeling that they are not there for us. The most recent example I have is… were you there when somebody was pointing with the light from a flat? Somebody had this sort of green laser and was pointing at the stands. And it can be dangerous, eye sight damage and so on. And it was going on for like five minutes or so. And we could actually see from which flat this laser was being pointed. So after the match I went with a few mates to this policeman and said ‘hi, can we report something? There was somebody pointing at us with a laser. And we know from which apartment the light came’. And this policeman just stands there and says that we should speak to somebody else, to the security chef. Ok, so where is he? And we went to speak to that one and he was just having arguments why no he could not take the report from us… they just refused. And that was such a clear signal that they are not there for us. They are there… well (Kärnan16.02.2015).

100Football season in Sweden starts in spring and continues through summer. http://www.aftonbladet.se/debatt/debattamnen/sport/article20643718.ab
The short description from the beginning of the chapter also relates the security - supporters relationship. I was caught in the middle of it before I realized that I crossed the line. The security guard informed me about it, he said that the area was closed, but I did not see it. I did not comprehend the logic in place there. As many supporters I began to think that they were there not for my protection. They were protecting, most likely, properties. I was naive in thinking that I would be treated individually. I had a football scarf on, I was representing the crowd.

When one enters a direct confrontation like that the story writes itself. I considered myself innocent, I met a ruthless villain disguised as a lawful society member. I expected help and service, I was met with physical force. The narrative went upside down. Those employed by the state to protect the public from evil happened to act against me, a member of the public. Although unexpectedly, I constructed for myself a 'Robin Hood' type of a tale- law and order becomes the oppressor. This is also an element coming from interviews. All those loving their clubs are rightful members of the public. They are entitled to that position and do not expect to be branded as villains just because of the space they enter. However, the strong counter-logic of heterotopia makes possible for anarchistic struggles to emerge (see Foucault, date).

Duality is at play here. "The most simplistic of the dualisms implicit in popular hero stories is the good/evil opposition" (Hourihan 1997, 32). Supporters who need policing, somehow chaotic and unpredictable, are juxtaposed with the uniformed, established, and presumably, logical police squads. They obey orders. It becomes a classic myth of order and chaos, of civilization and wilderness (Hourihan 1997, 17-21). Police and security enter the scene of the historical drama as the civilizing force. The supporters are unpredictable mass. Such notion is strengthened by the established evaluations of crowds in general In the public imagination, crowds are often portrayed as bringing regress, and it is contagious (Oakley, xxx).

Margery Hourihan mentions the duality of reason and emotions that was firmly established in the ancient Greek tradition and then became the ideal of the Western culture (1997, 18). She writes further:

Here the materials of the early Greek hero myths which expressed the dualisms of human/nature, culture/nature, reason/irrationality are used to encode the Christian dualism of good and evil, the dragon is defined as the incarnation of Satan, and this additional layer of significance is attached to the symbol as it coils its way through the forests of Western imagination (Hourihan 1997, 117).
Such a narration exists in the history of supporters’ encounters with the police. Throughout the decades the press produces more or less apocalyptic visions of the chaos forces of evil at stadiums, and the warriors of order who tried to bring civilization to the enraged, fanatic masses upset with a lost match (for example). Still, from a fan perspective the narrative can be flipped, as already mentioned. The presupposed forces of good can be tricky to handle. A Swedish football magazine Offside made violence against supporters its core theme in the second issue of 2016 (pages 46-57). The main point - never any policeman was found guilty of violence against fans, although numerous instances and cases exist. Supporters of AIK, Djurgården and Malmö shared their stories about abuse, but none of them could prove in court that police overstepped their powers. It seems that violence is taken as flowing in one direction. The bad ones are only on one designated side. It is good versus evil, like in Hourihan's analysis on dual oppositions. Although it is possible to distort the picture and provide a counter-narrative, it is not believed in.

There are elements here that defend heroes in blue uniforms with weapons and helmets, sometimes accompanied by dogs and horses. Supporters are already framed as a dangerous, unruly group. They signal their evil character by being where they are - at a stadium. They have agreed to play the part of the bad guys. Thus, they brought it to themselves. This is not a unique narrative. Many minorities and groups denied power need to struggle with such a story.

An SLO working for Djurgårdens IF, Lena Gustafson Wiberg was interviewed in the same issue. She actually got one policeman convicted but more on the grounds of harassment. When during a hockey match she confronted one aggressive officer, he slapped her butt and was told to just watch a match. She was employed by the club. Although her case was successful, it was not about violence as such and as according to her that policeman still works during matches close to DIF standing section, even waving to her (Offside 2016, 50-51). Policemen’s word has more weight than one of supporters. Also, harassment was punishable. Hitting someone over the head seems harder to proof. (maybe get the DIF case when the policeman hit a supporter and fans distributed a pieces of law how they can hit (like legs, not heads) and police was positive about it. Was it from Tobias..?). History provides a frame here that is hard to break, but in the tales from the stands policemen can be as dangerous as the firms of the opposite team.
The line of sense-nonsense, of what is allowed and what is not becomes fluid. In my own little story referred above, I was the trespasser. I could image the guard saying that I disobeyed, that I crossed the line, that I made myself recognizable as a supporter (with a scarf and being at the standing section). Hence no words were necessary, just a violent push. What would my answer be? I did not know that I was doing anything. Football is a social context, so its rules are dependent on the interpretative skills of participants (Stewart 1989). The guard continued his role, I snapped out of mine. Thus, the "manufacture of common sense and the transformations by which nonsense is made out of common sense belong to the same social universe" (Stewart 1989, 7).

Thus, there is shape-shifting in the history and the roles of villains or heroes are fluid, depending on the narration. This is though based on historical accounts. Benjamin, a security guard who has spent 22 years working for a club mentioned that when he started working, the instances of fights between fans and police were not that unusual (interview with Benjamin, 2017). Nowadays, he commented, were just flares mostly, and that was the biggest difference for him. Yet, the image of trouble and physical violence has remained. Hubert, interviewed in 2015, admitted that he had not attended a live match for many years, due to rumours of unrest. He seemed content with the folklore around it and did not try to check how it really was. History became a myth. - develop with Barthes and the feeding of a myth

Although bitter about police encounters, fans also understand it is about structures and rules, not individual policemen. Martin, AIK supporter, said: "Police… well it is not a walk in a park. If you think that they can be rough here [Malmö] you should go to Stockholm. The problem is the laws and how they are enforced at stadiums" (2015). This theme also came up with interviewed policemen and a security guard. Although firm about what is legal and what is not, they mentioned the joy of away matches, the fun of going with supporters, the chants and laughter, the stamp of approval from fans. One policeman, when asked about so-called hooligans mentioned that physical assault was illegal in Sweden. Yet, he could understand it was not a black-and-white issue:

Well the hooligan firms fight with each other, and fighting is forbidden in this country, that is clear. It is a problem that they bring that violence capital with them to a restricted urban area. It will be a problem and we have to address it. But then in a forest (he pauses), it is tragic, but then it is about belonging, and there are positive feelings even there. So we try not to just judge individuals. It is about here and now. What is your agenda here? Look there, he is a hooligan firm guy. He came to a match with his kid. So what are we supposed to think about him? (interview with Kaspar, 2017).
As the interview happened during a match, the policeman pointed out a person walking to the stands. The problems, conflicts between an officer and a member of a public, were contextual. The invisible lines were drawn between them, but it shifts. As Hourihan writes:

By setting up the binary opposition of hero and criminal and stressing the separation between them these stories are simultaneously reassuring and disturbing. By splitting off the dark side of the psyche and reconstituting it as a separate being they reassure their readers that they belong comfortably to the class of the non-criminal, that they do not have the capacity to commit a crime (Hourihan 1997, 145).

This is a description of a hero tale, one to be found in old or modern fairy tales. Although football supplies greatly to both categories, the boundaries are fluid. As already seen in the previous chapter concerning players, the myths in that context are reworked almost on a daily basis. Football is a game, and it is balancing constantly on the serious-not serious line (Brabazon, year). So are its protagonists and groups. One can almost agree to have an open social conflict, there and then. Or then not, behave nicely and greet each other. The actants in the narrative are actively constructed from one teller to another. David Herman defines actants as a way in which "characters participate in the narrated action" (Herman 2005, 1). He further writes, quoting Greimas, that the articulation of actants and their structure constitute a particular tale and a genre respectively (Herman 2005, 1).

Thus, story of danger and violence is structured through the characters and how their tale is told. Fans' encounters with the police forces are seemingly straightforward. The duality is designated and they are even dressed in respective uniforms - police need to look like police, and 'dangerous' supporters should look their part too. Sometimes, as in my case, a scarf is enough to provide identification that would lead to confrontation. The media feed largely on this very simple dualism. The intertextual content is understandable by the larger public, as we are already familiar with the idea of what a hooligan is, and certainly with the armed, mounted policemen adorned with large helmets. Supporters' accounts provide a twist to the hegemonic narration. The police are used to construct a specific story and also to view the history in an alternative way.

Supporters can bring a broader context to this structure. They do not dwell in the basements of the arenas, waiting to be released during matches to bring chaos, like berserks on a battlefield. They come from all the classes and groups of the society. It is the emotional involvement that unites them, not an agreement to make trouble. Policemen are also aware of the nuances. Still, supporters are not have much access in transmissions of stories. The complicated picture
delivered to the public is simplified and filtered, and written from a specific point of view, just like the ancient hero tales. Hourihan identifies the process as gradual development into a polished demonstration of "natural' superiority of Western patriarchy" (1997, 21). The feeding of the myth, the morphed history, seems to be more important than the nuanced picture that could be provided. It gives a reassuring picture that good and evil can be identified, and combated by certain institutions in place.

In other words, there are words, expressions, assumptions in the present that reflect how history of football in Sweden has been constructed and used. The historical context might be then dismantled like a field of linguistics (White 1973, 30).

and the violence that is described as meaningless, thus indescribable and lacking value as such. Contrary to what the policeman said.

Not nostalgia –

The allure of time travel mirrors that of reincarnation. That the past should be irrevocably lost seems unbearable. We crave its recovery (Lowenthal 2015, 55).

‘Once an event has happened’, Thomas Hardy echoed Stoic philosophy, it ‘enters a spacious realm containing all times where it goes on happening over and over again’. (Lowenthal 2015, 56)

Supporters about here and now

Police about history of things

Think values

*The cake and communication issues – violence in the city*
One could refer to this margin of football as the struggle of narratives as much as people. An interviewed policeman, Kaspar, was open about the uneasy communication with supporters. He assessed Ultras groups as not that keen on dialogue, at the same time being aware that the supporters cannot be aware at times what was the mechanism behind the police's behaviour. He was not explicit if that was a desired effect. He was also keen on stressing that the best matches were those with "no hidden agenda" from the supporters' side, yet he knew that both groups had profound effect on each other (interview with Kaspar, 2017). As Fentress and Wickam put it, a society "needs its villains too – if only to keep the heroes busy" (1992, 202).

The swirly patterns of communication were revealed during shadowing which happened in August 2015 in Stockholm. The following passage was recorded before the actual match, when I followed AIK's supporter liaison officers:

Something happened in the town. "It melted there", there was a fight, apparently AIK started. They walk in front of me and I get an impression they don’t want me to hear everything. I keep a bit of a distance. I hear shreds of conversations. Police there, something closed, something blocked, they are coming here anyway, but from where, nobody is sure. Police was tipped? "A good old-fashioned tip" somebody says and people laugh (shadowing, AIK-DIF 2015).

Throughout the shadowing people were informing each other that something happened, that supporters clashed, involving the police too. There was uncertainty in the air, scraps of information were gathered on the way. One person expressed the opinion that since it happened already the match is going to be calm because that was already done. The will to fight was fulfilled (shadowing, AIK-DIF 2015). In the passage above there appeared a
reference to a tip as well, commented by laughter. This is still a valuable source of information for the police. A tip, a rumour, a shred of information that can spark some action. Kaspar, a policeman, stressed several times that there should not be any surprises. A security ward said that in his opinion the contact with supporters was good but "you cannot force them to talk" (interview with Benjamin, 2017).

It is not only the fans who test the police, or do not openly cooperate. Sometimes officials question how police behaves, or try to protect own supporters. In 2013 MFF official complained about treatment in one of the small towns and a discussion he had with then about snus, small doses of tobacco popular in Sweden, an alternative to cigarettes. Once a tiny bag of tobacco is used, it is often dispatched on the sidewalk, like a chewing gum – a behaviour not exactly polite, but very common. The said official recalled that a policeman saying that he would be arresting people for throwing snus on the ground since it is illegal (football chat, 2013). Further, when attending an away match with MFF in Åtvidaberg, I saw policemen selecting individuals from the crowd waiting to enter, twisting their hands, taking them to the side and frisk-searching them. MFF officials watched and shook their heads. A big, dangerous Malmö came to town (observations, 2013). On another occasions baseball bats were hastily put aside as I walked into a room at one of the stadiums. The official that I was meeting explained that they were confiscated before the police came, so fans would not be in trouble (observations 2017).

Similarly, after a game in Helsingborg against AIK in 2015 (HIF winning 3-0), police was heavily present in the town centre. On my way to the train station I encountered policemen escorting a group of AIK supporters. Some HIF fans stop and watch, also start singing. One of them tried talking to a policeman, but he just twisted the fan's arm and started to dragging him away. The young man became very surprised, shouted "Are you joking? What are you doing, are you joking?" His friends stick around and watch. He was finally released, clearly confused and upset (observations, 2015). About 200 metres away from that scene, three young AIK supporters were asked by an old man who won the match. They answered "HIF, unfortunately". All of them laughed and joked for a while. Danger is very limited and seemed to need the attention of the officials to fully blossom.

The make-belief of such situation, sense and nonsense of them, is highlighted often when the away supporters leave premises. It is rather usual, if one leaves as a 'bid dangerous crowd',

101 MFF won 0-3, no incidents were recorded, no flares fired (April 2013).
one cannot just go out. In Malmö, the area is blocked and one needs to walk an extra hundred metres, watch by a substantial number of policemen. After that, one is free to mingle. The danger zone ends. Susan Steward writes in her book *Nonsense* about children establishing rules of a game. If one says 'I am a princess', the surrounding needs to react accordingly to make the game happen.

The moments of meeting supporters with the police exemplifies the sense and nonsense making in this context (Stewart 1989). Transformation needs to happen to justify behaviour of both sides. Average citizens need to become potentially dangerous supporters. Police needs to become oppressors, not protectors. Further, two narrations run parallel to each other. One being the more established, branding the fans as dangerous and justifying actions and measures against them. The other one has policemen as dubious characters and justifies behaviour that challenges them. One could say it is an example of her-story challenging his-story. Those with official authority have with them an established myth of danger at stadia, which is based on certain history-writing referring to the 1980s mostly. Supporters do not have the cultural capital nor the official position that would give their version enough credibility. The cited text from Offside exemplifies the hegemony of one narration and its consequences - even if fans are victims, their history is contextualized with the history of past trouble.

The security often act based on assessments from previous matches. After my unsettling encounter with the security guard I wrote emails demanding explanations. MFF official replied that it was so namely because HIF supporters have a history of violent behaviour. Since there were problems before, security was justified in preparing for open conflict. Kaspar also commented that there was a difference in work between smaller and bigger communities. As he expressed it, in the smaller towns one had to be more communicative, whereas in a big urban environment they could just show their strength. Further, there are evaluations of police in different cities. There are also regional differences, according to some, as visible in the following passage from shadowing:

> A police car is passing, and two police horses follow. A small circle around me starts commenting the police. Apparently the more north you go the better it gets, from their point of view. "Norrland police is the best" one person says, "they just have this 'it will be fine' attitude." I hear a story that one group of AIK supporters called Black Army sent once a cake to a retiring policeman from Gävle because they got to know that he was working his last match when AIK was there. Apparently the policeman was very touched and happy. Everybody agrees that it was nicely done (shadowing, AIK-DIF 2015).
The described situation was reported in the national press. An article was published in Aftonbladet and made history:

Mitt i alla negativa rubriker om fotbollsallsvenskan kommer här en solskenshistoria.

Björn Orrsten, 65, supporterpolis på Gefles hemmamatcher, fick en tårta – av Black Army.


Two emotional communities - Rosenwein

During a match between MFF and Djurgårdens IF in May 2017 I attended the match with DIF supporters. When MFF made a goal a small group of MFF fans sat next to the area separating the two groups, first came some shouts, and then one of them just sat there grinning. A bunch of DIF fans moved in their direction. They could not reach them. A protective net covered many rows of chairs, there were SLOs, police, secret police, security personnel... all possible sorts. Shouting continued. Upset Djurgården fans pointed out the grinning individual and demanding some action. Then policemen appeared on the other side and asked the smiling individual to change his seat. Reluctantly, the group moved. DIF crowd relaxed (observations, 2017).

In the story above, the police developed into caretakers, making sure that both groups of supporters had equal stands. They supervised the crowd and were called in when there was a tense situation - a person smiling and annoying the other part of the crowd. This is like children in a kindergarten. A group is upset and calls in a supervisor to provide order. It can be referred again to Susan Stewart and the sense-making during every-day activities. As she puts it:

Thereby attention is focused initially upon boundary making, on interpreting the frame that marks off the "playground" from the ground of nonplay discourse. (...) Once the boundary of the game is established, it is kept intact until closure. Breaking the boundary of the game by running off, by throwing down one's bat or racket, or by not paying attention, is poor sportsmanship, just as any return to the "madness" of the real world was a traitorous gesture among the dadaists (Stewart 1989, 91-92).

When entering a stadium, one travels from one universe of discourse to another, so to speak (Stewart 1989, 47). The common sense of everyday life is translated, yet twisted and adjusted.

102 http://www.aftonbladet.se/sportbladet/fotboll/sverige/allsvenskan/gefle/article18666804.ab
The modifications allow the new context to produce its own logic and its own historical reality (Stewart 1989, 47-48). One could point out the strong connection between the presented incident and interpretative skills of its participants. What makes sense, like here getting upset and calling on law and order officers to stop one person from grinning, needs to be interpreted and contextualized. In other words, everybody needs to play their parts. I pointed out some intertextual elements here - that such behaviour exists in other discourse realities. So as Stewart puts it, "Intertextuality is considered here as a relationship between universes of discourse" (1989, 48).

The interpretative character of, for example, football, and thus its history, can become visible when someone stands outside of the game.

AIK gets a red card, one player is sent off. There is an outburst of fury. Everybody around me is just livid. But…there is one big man from rescue services in a yellow outfit and a yellow helmet that seems just tired and bored out of his mind, totally uninterested in anything that happens on the pitch or stands. He just stares blankly at screaming fans. (…) I sit on the plastic grass close to a photographer. Suddenly there is a loud bang behind me. I jump up and it scares me, then I look up and see a smirk on the big bored räddningsvård’s face. He turns around with a pleased expression. My reaction amused him (shadowing, AIK-DIF 2015).

The everyday reality of that member of the rescue team was screaming crazy men, gathering in large groups to abuse referees and opposite teams. But unlike most of the staff and people around, he was not affected by the atmosphere, he did not feel it, he did not belong to the 'emotional community' created at the stands. Although the place was packed with tension, the air vibrated with joy and anger, he stood outside of it. It seemed he watched something behind a glass wall. Yet he reacted to my, seemingly unexpected, fear. I happened to be an anomaly in his universe.

The common-sense construction of reality takes place in contexts of everyday life situations. Common sense underlies and is an outcome of the interpretations created in and by these situations; it is rooted in the reality of this everyday world. These interpretations depend upon the immediate situational context, on such features of the interaction as "settings, participants, ends, act sequences, keys, instrumentalities, norms and genres" (Stewart 1989, 27).

Conversely, social events can be seen as "textual" in that their borders, contents, and results are a matter of convention and interpretation that are themselves subject to the ongoing social process. The interpretive work that we accomplish is "reading" any given social situation is analogous to the interpretive work associated with reading any other text (Stewart 1989, 13).
I am therefore interested in social events as texts and texts as social events: in the event as accomplished through members' interpretive work in the work and in the text as a product of social interaction, contingent upon social process. Again, the social world is assumed to be an interpreted world (Stewart 1989, 13-14).

Grupper som tar plats i offentliga rummet - några klarar sig själva, det skulle känna sig trygg
Glad att känna att nån som var på drift kan komma tillbaka - på individnivå
Tillsammans hjälpa individer
Den bästa... he thinks long- stark engagemang, många supportrar till fotboll som håller inte
kvalitetsmässigt. (Kaspar, 2017)

Now the referee is on our side and the crowd is happy with the decisions. It is ten minutes left. The ball went from the pitch, the SLO tried kicking the ball but almost fell over, guys at the stands laughing and clapping now. DIF is attacking and it is rather tiring. It seems to be going forever. I get affected by this tension. Most of the security and medical team are swept by it as well. The men from the medical team jump from their chairs whenever AIK is close to scoring. And now it is over. AIK wan. And now a violent chant comes: ‘såg ni vad hände??????’ Did you see what happened???? (shadowing, AIK-DIF 2015).

But nowadays the clubs would actually come and take you straight to the pitch, and then back after the match. So it comes… 10 years ago when I started it was still very peaceful, but now… and all the social media makes it so easy. People just write whatever. Especially football fans. Futisfoorum for example, they write horrible things about referees. My wife reads it from time to time and she had a laugh when I was still there. I never had a situation that anybody would threaten me physically, but sometimes, especially when it is a cup match, people recognize you. Some of them come to chat with you. And rather often it becomes so that you hear, as a referee, that ‘wow I would not have believed what a nice guy you are’. A referee, when working, gets this role to play, and it has to be the one and it is difficult to accept that he can be also something different than... well... a punisher really (laughs). Although in his civil life he can be just anything. This is the difference that people don’t notice. That when I am done and take the shirt of and take a shower then I am a dad and I work here or there... and they don’t notice that, especially perhaps those uneducated fans (interview with Wilmar 2014) – former referee

Coaches lie. After every match referees and a coach meet up and watch the game on TV and the cards are explained and all the situations and then when they go to talk to the press they can just plain lie that they have no idea why the situation was like that and so on. So some of them are very bad and just like (Interview with Wilmar 2014)

How much is it a real need for violence, and how much collective expectations based on history and traditions?

An enactment of the past 'glories' of the 'hooligan' culture of 'good ol' days' England. A performance of the past?
Then of course there is the actual firms, but the majority of the stands are only symbolic in there violence
6. Conclusions!!

The clubs have gone through communicative memory to cultural memory - tensions in their positions as merely a nuisance and then a heritage.

Human museums - individuals carrying the blueprint of narratives, folklore of football, folklore genre emerging in new shapes, the processes seem similar

an expression of mythical thinking in that space

dichotomies contesting history - old vs new, stable vs unstable, local vs global, serious vs. playful, meaningful vs. meaningless

Historical narratives to generate economic capital, but also to counterweight such.

Individual vs group level of historical engagement

Elements of narratives that resemble older sources - the mock war, the mock army, battle of slander, conflict as a spectacle - not a total war

The structure of football leagues resembling medieval monasticism (?) local and international level, the national can be omitted.

The categorization of history that happens on the daily basis in the football context differs from academic history. The presented analysis also points out that average users of history do gain depth and understanding of what happens around them through investigating the connections between the past, present and the future. It is not only a case of automated applying of the best historical bits. A certain level of creativity is required, and with that also comes a degree of reflexivity that made my informants apt users of varied histories.

Klas-Göran Karlsson and rather ‘academic’ classification of the users of history.

Reflexivity to the point of antireflexivity.

It exemplifies difficult relationship with money. Yes, sport is dependent on it and everyone wants a comfortable and quality experience, but there are a lot of issues surrounding it and the frictions show how people question, stretch and negotiate and make sense of the economical history. At the same time it becomes apparent that it is not the only possible story that is out there. Applying historical references can be a catalyst in showing that a different arrangement
of things is possible that the economical development is not ‘unavoidable’. There are many stories that can make sense, not the only hegemonic one.

Sport is not the only area in which ordinary people are reduced to fans, the extreme caricatural form of the militant, condemned to an imaginary participation which is only an illusory compensation for the dispossession they suffer to the advantage of the experts (Bourdieu 1978, 830)

So it would not be possible to understand the popularization of sport and the growth of sports associations, which, originally organized on a voluntary basis, progressively received recognition and aid from the public authorities, if we did not realize that this extremely economical means of mobilizing, occupying and controlling adolescents was predisposed to become an instrument and an objective in struggles between all the institutions totally or partly organized with the view to the mobilization and symbolic conquest of the masses and therefore competing for the symbolic conquest of the youth (Bourdieu 1978, 831)

‘modern assumption of a strict division between written and oral communication’ (Polly Low 2013, 79)
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en saga i sig att vi funnits varann – AIK’s tifo during 125 – years birthday
(Elliott Oring states that folklore is that part of culture that lives happily ever after.)

Här har du passagen du har refererat till. "Oderint, dum metuant."

Den kommer från Suetionus' kejsarbiografier, biografin över Caligula. Kan vara rätt kul att läsa hela faktiskt. I noten skriver du så här:


Och i litteraturlistan såhär: