

# **Playing the Game: a Study of Transnational Turkish Football Fans, Imaginations and the Internet**

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Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy,  
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## **Abstract**

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This thesis is about transnational Turkish football communities and how they come to be imagined through internet technologies. The research is based on an ethnography of one particular group of Turkish football fans in Europe. The team is Beşiktaş, one of Turkey's top teams, and the fans make up Çarşı Berlin, their largest supporters' club in Europe. Founded in 2003 in Berlin, the group has grown to consist of 600 members, with branches from London to Switzerland.

The thesis explores the internet and its effects at a specific historic juncture on the fashioning of Çarşı Berlin. I approach the topic via three routes, namely, the effects of internet technologies on: football fandom; the spaces in which it occurs; and the cultural forms and practices by which it is instantiated. In the process I contribute to current scholarly debates across sub-disciplines both within and outside anthropology: those of sport and globalisation, enchantment, publics, personhood and the imagination. I argue that football communities are increasingly imagined in ways that are distracted, ephemeral and playful and that, contrary to common conceptions, fun, affect-laden imaginings can have the power to alter conceptions of concepts such as the nation or family. In the process, I contribute greater appreciation of the experience of being a diasporan football fan and its salience for broader understandings of how we imagine belonging in the twenty-first century.

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## Glossary of Turkish terms

*Ağabey* (frequently abbreviated to '*abi*'). Big brother. Commonly used to refer to non-family members.

*Arkadaş*. Friend.

*Beşiktaşlı*. A Beşiktaş fan.

*Bölge*. Region. The formal word used to describe the different regional branches of Çarşı Berlin.

*Deli*. Crazy.

*Dernek*. An association or society, usually officially registered. The noun also refers to the space in which the society meets.

*Deplasman*. Away match

*Fenerbahçe* (also *Fener*). Istanbul-based rival football team to Beşiktaş, play in yellow and dark blue.

*Galatasaray* (also *Cim Bom*). Istanbul-based rival football team to Beşiktaş, play in gold and red.

*İnönü stadı*. İnönü stadium, the home ground of Beşiktaş in Istanbul. Named after former prime minister of Turkey, İsmet İnönü

*Kahve*. Coffee shop or Tea house. A traditional, male-only space.

*Kapalı Tribün*. Roofed terrace. The name of the stand at the Beşiktaş home ground, İnönü stadium, where Çarşı members watch the games.

*Kardeş*. Brother. Not to be confused with *ağabey*.

*Kartal*. Eagle.

*Mekan*. Space, place, locale or hangout.

*Memleket*. Relational category of home used by Turkish speakers to refer to countries, cities and village

*Renkli*. Colourful. Used to refer to Fenerbahçe and Galatasaray fans whose kits contain colours not in the monochrome black and white of Beşiktaş

*Tayfa*. Crew or gang. The more colloquial descriptor for the regional branches of Çarşı Berlin.

*Tribün.* Terrace. The name given to the raked steps of a football stadium where fans sit or stand to watch the match.

*Üç büyükler.* The big three. Collective term for Galatasaray, Fenerbahçe and Beşiktaş, the three largest football teams in Turkey.

# Introduction

***Wednesday 25th November 2009***

***Manchester, England***

Beşiktaş were in Manchester to play Manchester United in the Champions League, Europe's premier football tournament for club teams. Manchester United were already through to the next round, Beşiktaş already out. But still I wanted to go to the game. It was three months since I had been in Turkey, and I was suffering withdrawal symptoms. I had spent the entire summer in Istanbul studying fans of Beşiktaş – one of Turkey's largest football teams.<sup>1</sup> It was part curiosity, part nostalgia for a sunny summer of fieldwork that drove me to get in touch with my Beşiktaş contacts in Istanbul, asking if they knew anyone attending the game.

They passed on a few names. No one from Turkey, it seemed, but a guy was going to the game from Germany, Özgür<sup>2</sup>, and another guy they knew from London. I dropped them a line on Facebook<sup>3</sup> – how everyone seemed to keep in contact with everyone – and arranged to buy my ticket from the fan in London.

On the Sunday before the game I travelled to Dalston, an area of east London

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<sup>1</sup> The full name of the team is Beşiktaş Jimnastik Kulübü (Beşiktaş Gymnastics Club), reflecting its origins as a gymnastics organisation. The team is frequently abbreviated to BJK.

<sup>2</sup> All names have been altered to protect the identity of my interlocutors.

<sup>3</sup> Facebook is an internet-based social networking service. It is the world's largest, with over 1.4bn monthly active users. See p.107 and p.252 for a more detailed description of both Facebook and social networking services.

with a high proportion of Turkish speakers. Along with another thirty Beşiktaş fans I handed over fifty quid and was passed a ticket for the game. I had no idea where it came from. On the day of the game, I got the train from Oxford to Manchester by myself, clutching my ticket. I got off at Manchester train station and wasn't really sure where I was going or how I would get in touch with anyone. I walked into the centre. In the central square, I spotted about 150 Beşiktaş fans standing around, huddling from the cold.

I went over and asked if any of them knew Özgür, the person I had contacted on Facebook. I was quite surprised when the first person I asked said 'yes' and pointed to a tall, bulky fan in his mid-twenties standing a little way off. I went and introduced myself. Özgür was very welcoming, although he also expressed surprise at my appearance ('I thought you would be a tall, large football hooligan!' he confessed. I am a rather skinny 5ft 9in). I was introduced to a host of other people – far too many to remember by name – and fielded a host of questions about why, exactly, an English person spoke Turkish and was attending the match. Özgür lives in a small city in western Germany between Cologne and Frankfurt. Gesturing around, he explained to me that the 150 or so fans shivering and sipping from beer cans were part of a large Beşiktaş supporters group with branches across Europe. From what I could see, everyone present seemed to have come from Germany, with some even chatting German amongst themselves. I followed Özgür and his group for the rest of the evening: traipsing round Manchester, taking photos, getting taxis to the game, taking more photos, grabbing some food, queuing up outside the stadium, entering the stadium...

We went into the ground a good two hours before kick-off. Özgür's group were keen to commandeer the best position in the section for away fans. This meant being at the front where their banners could be seen and they could lead the chanting. Over the next two hours, I watched as the couple of thousand seats that had been allocated to Beşiktaş fans began to fill up. Not long after we arrived, the guys who had sold me my ticket in London turned up. I greeted them and we chatted before they took a place in the stand. Then another group, then another. Soon there were too many people to monitor what was going on. Some had banners or scarves announcing where they were from – Dutch Eagles<sup>4</sup> (*Hollanda Kartalları*), Downtown London (*Çarşı Londra*) – others didn't. Everyone was wearing some sort of Beşiktaş-related merchandise. Dotted among the crowd were even some fans wearing the shirts of Galatasaray and Fenerbahçe, Beşiktaş's fierce rivals in Istanbul, something that agitated a lot of the guys with Özgür. Well in advance of kick-off, the away section was packed. There was some chanting, swearing, nervous conversation, and even a few scuffles over incidents that I couldn't really understand. Indeed, by this stage, I had given up trying to comprehend what was going on – there were just too many people doing too many things.

The rest of the stadium filled up eventually – 76,000 people congregating to watch a football match – and the game got underway. Beşiktaş were the underdogs and played like it. Manchester United were mostly on the attack, Beşiktaş mostly trying to avoid conceding. But then a rare breakaway. Beşiktaş found themselves on the edge of the Manchester United penalty area, one player shot and... whoosh! I felt myself picked up as the crowd of Beşiktaş

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<sup>4</sup> The Eagle (*kartal* in Turkish) is the symbol of Beşiktaş.

fans broke into delirium. Beşiktaş had scored. People grasped one another and screamed. Someone was banging a drum like crazy. Someone else set off a flare. The chanting increased in intensity. This was quite something, I thought to myself.

The fans rode this wave of jubilation into half time, when events took a well-needed pause. The second half saw a resumption of festivities – screaming, chanting, smoking (despite being banned), although the atmosphere turned increasingly tense as the minutes wore down. Surely Beşiktaş weren't in a position to win this game, were they? Nervousness turned to worry, worry to frightened paralysis as they rode every Manchester United attack, pinned back in their penalty area, desperately trying to hand onto their one goal lead. Deafening whistles from the fans in the last five minutes and then what felt like a collective exhalation, a massive sigh of relief when the referee blew his whistle. Beşiktaş had won! The rest of the stadium emptied in a flash, but the Beşiktaş fans lingered, taking photos and videos of themselves, trying to preserve the moment, texting and calling up friends to boast, laugh and share.

The entire experience fascinated me. When every Beşiktaş match can be watched live on Satellite TV (or illegally on an internet stream), when fans discover and interact with each other online, why this compulsion to come together? Fans had taken precious holiday from work, flown across Europe and spent above the odds on tickets to have their emotions stretched and manipulated by a game, by people running around on a pitch. Moreover, how were they doing it? In Istanbul, fans come together every week or so. But how do you organise when the matches are a few times a year and the location is constantly shifting? Who produces all the different scarves, hats, shirts I saw

around me? Who organises the tickets? How the hell had I attended? Why the fights? Who, here, is actually Turkish? Does that even matter? The origins of this DPhil can be traced back to that game, and what follows is an attempt at an answer.



Figure 1. Beşiktaş crowd at Manchester United v Beşiktaş 25 November 2009 (author's photo)



Figure 2. A full stadium – 76,000 – to greet the arrival of the teams onto the pitch (author's photo)



Figure 3. Fans from London huddle for a post-match photo to celebrate a 0-1 victory (author's photo)

For over half a century, the intermittent practice of going to watch a Turkish football match live has been a part of migrant diaspora life, particularly for men. Turkey joined UEFA – the Union of European Football Associations, the body that organises the game in Europe – in 1962, a date roughly coeval with the advent of mass migration of Turkish speakers to western Europe. Yet it is only since the year 2000 that Europe-specific fan clubs have emerged, offering supporters outside Turkey the chance to formalise and intensify the experience of being fans. What led to their emergence? Over the course of the thesis I argue that the experience relies on a shift in imaginative practices prompted by the internet. I shall not be arguing deterministically. Rather than viewing internet technologies as dictating the scope of fans' imaginations, I suggest they simply open up 'spaces of indeterminacy' in social and cultural life that the imagination occupies. Within these spaces, fans play with differing concepts of belonging and support for a football team.

Whilst there are hundreds of European supporters' groups for tens of professional Turkish teams, I base my argument on ethnographic fieldwork with one particular group. The team is Beşiktaş, one of Turkey's top teams, and the fans comprise Çarşı Berlin, their largest fan club in Europe. Founded in 2003 in Berlin, the group has grown to approximately 500 to 600 members. Roughly half are migrants from Turkey, the other half were born and raised in western Europe to Turkish-speaking parents. There was only one person heavily involved in Çarşı Berlin who had no familial link to Turkey – me. For this reason, it seems appropriate to think of members of Çarşı Berlin in part as

diaspora football fans.<sup>5</sup> Its members are almost all men, the majority between the ages of eighteen and thirty, and predominately working-class in background and occupation. Çarşı Berlin is transnational in scope, with branches from London to Switzerland, and is the most active of all the groups of Beşiktaş fans in Europe.

My findings are based on fieldwork from 2009 to 2014 with members of Çarşı Berlin. During that period I criss-crossed Europe with fans watching Beşiktaş play. I sat in bars, coffee houses and supporters clubs as fans watched games on television. I became a member of internet messageboards and befriended hundreds of fans on Facebook. I interviewed over a dozen supporters more formally. I hung around as best as possible with fans in their everyday lives, keeping them company at work, attending parties, political demonstrations and even weddings. My aim was to arrive at greater understanding as to how the experience of being a European Beşiktaş fan impacts on all aspects of life and what its salience might be for broader understandings of how we imagine belonging in the twenty-first century.

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A central element of the thesis concerns the role of internet technologies on transnational Turkish football communities and how they help these communities to be imagined. This focus is prompted by the large importance Çarşı Berlin members place on their usage. On match days fans spend equal – if not more – time communicating with those not physically present via their

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<sup>5</sup> I engage more substantially with the idea of diaspora in chapters 1 and 2.

smartphones, mobile phones that possess an operating system that allows them to function like computers.<sup>6</sup> Watching games on television involves keeping abreast of the commentary on Facebook as much as the action on the screen. Often my only contact with fans away from 'live' games would be through postings on internet messageboards.<sup>7</sup> It seemed the entire process of being a Beşiktaş fan was pulled through the kaleidoscope of internet media, their affordances shaping the tenor of the experience.

This is not a DPhil about fan violence or subcultural disorder. For readers familiar with existing social science work on football fans, or tabloid headlines about clashes between British and Turkish fans, it may well be expected that I engage with this topic.<sup>8</sup> The question of football-related violence, whether exploring its roots (Dunning, Murphy, and Williams 1988) or suggesting that it's overblown (Armstrong 1998), has been the central concern of many scholarly studies of football. This is especially the case in England which, during the 1970s and 1980s, was seen to have a 'hooligan problem' (Marsh, Rosser, and Harre 1980; Burford 2001). I do not deny that violence – more commonly the threat of violence – was at times part of the experience for Çarşı Berlin (see chapter 5). Yet a focus on disorder would see my subject matter laden with the connotations of this heavy history, most of which refers to a completely different time and place, namely England between 1970 and 1990. My ethnographic particular is better characterised by new, emergent elements of fan support: diaspora fan clubs, internet-mediated support and questions of intra-group coalescence across a string of different countries. In

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<sup>6</sup> For more on smartphones see chapters 8 and 9.

<sup>7</sup> An online messageboard is a site where people hold conversations in the form of posted textual messages. See p.105 for a detailed description.

<sup>8</sup> See Ridge (2012).

light of this exciting, largely unexplored terrain, the question of violence seemed tired, over-examined and beside the point.

It is with reference to Turkey that the European Beşiktaş fan experience is continually defined. The practices of fan groups in Turkey stand as the exemplar that Çarşı Berlin attempt to replicate. Turkey is seen as the 'homeland', even for fans born in Europe who never visit, and an important reward of being involved in Çarşı Berlin is to feel a sense of connection with a Turkish ancestry or birthplace. Diaspora Beşiktaş fans feel both a privileged part of Beşiktaş and also left out. EU passports allow a greater ability to move and follow the team than enjoyed by Turkish nationals, yet they do so in much smaller numbers and in an environment where few appreciate their significance. Their proficiency in multiple languages allows them to engage effectively with a wider footballing world, but the size and scale of their activities are rarely of a magnitude to make a successful intervention. But perhaps the most crucial distinction between Çarşı Berlin and fan clubs in Turkey is this: whilst Beşiktaş fandom at large is not reliant on the affordances of the internet, transnational fan clubs such as Çarşı Berlin very clearly are. Compared to their fellow fans in Turkey, the experience of diaspora fans is coloured by a greater sense of both dizzying possibility and existential angst that is frequently prompted and fuelled by internet technologies. Fans join Çarşı Berlin as a result of a felicitous Google search. They can mobilise support at any Beşiktaş event, from Portugal to Israel, courtesy of a few messages on Facebook. But group tensions and disagreements follow fans home from the matches, now that they are in contact with each other all the time through Facebook. Supporters leave the group in droves because the group's

messageboard is moved to a new software platform that they cannot access on their smartphone.

The close imbrication of football fandom with internet technologies resonates with what scholars have argued about mass media more generally: that they play a large role in providing both the material and affective means by which individuals and societies imagine themselves (Benedict Anderson [1983] 2006). Media are the technical infrastructures, the tubes, pipes, documents and radio waves that direct so much cultural transmission and circulation (Blum 2012; Larkin 2008). But media are also tied up in the most intimate of practices, the means by which we communicate with family and friends, a source of everyday pleasure and affective engagement (Miller and Madianou 2012). In the current 'round' of globalisation (Thrift et al. 2014), electronic audio-visual media in particular are frequently awarded privileged status. They are both the 'infrastructural means and... privileged signs' behind so much diffusion of music, news, entertainment and sport that comprises contemporary popular culture (Mazzarella 2004, 348).

Nonetheless, a media-centric approach to the phenomenon of transnational Turkish football support would be severely limiting. Many have argued that media are simply the most evident edge of a more fundamental process of 'social envisioning' through which societies make themselves imaginable (Peters 1997). Migration from Turkey, education, leisure practices and, of course, interaction with football are just a few of the other 'social mediations' through which members of Çarşı Berlin inhabit and imagine their

social worlds.<sup>9</sup> Indeed, some scholars have argued that mediation goes to the fundamental roots of the anthropological project, namely, the investigation of ‘culture’ as shared meanings and relations of powers (H. A. Horst and Miller 2012, 24; Boyer 2012; Eisenlohr 2011). The constitutive effects of mediation are so tightly wound with ideas of imagining and belonging they are frequently naturalised in substantialist constructs like ‘society’, ‘nation’ or ‘culture’. What is true of collective life can also be glimpsed at the personal level. Once we peel away the gloss of ‘identity’, notions of selfhood can equally be conceived as a mediated relationship woven from intimacy and distance in which ‘the self recognizes itself by returning to itself, renewed and once removed’ (Mazzarella 2004, 357).

We come, then, to a methodological impasse: capturing how Çarşı Berlin comes to be imagined requires addressing a wide set of issues (or ‘mediations’) beyond mass media, yet to address such a broad set in detail would be impossible. There is often a lingering sense of holism haunting anthropological studies, implied by such ideas as a ‘thick description’ (Geertz [1973b] 2000, 3–30) and a methodological approach that frequently equates length of ethnographic fieldwork with quality. A fieldwork trajectory that begins with ‘settlement’ in a community leading to rapport, epiphany, and subsequent cultural fluency retains a strong hold (see Berg 2011, 27–38). My project began, then, with a great deal of angst. As a good anthropologist I was meant to be capturing it all, but found myself overwhelmed: should I be in England or Germany? Watching games with the fans in the flesh, or with those watching on TV? When at the

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<sup>9</sup> By social mediation, I mean ‘social transaction in its broadest sense of the movement of images, discourse, persons and things’ (Boyer 2012, 412).

matches, should I be attending to what fans do here, with their arms and bodies, or what they are doing elsewhere, with their phones and cameras? It seemed as if both were equally salient. And if my time and location was to be divided, divided how?

Attempts at 'capturing' the experience foundered on the diversity, diffuseness and mutability of the phenomenon in hand. To quote Marilyn Strathern, 'neither the individual case nor the broad generalization, neither ethnography alone nor analysis alone, neither umbilicus nor globe, seems sufficient...to the intellectual ability to analyze, generalize, expound, in short the activity of description' (Strathern 2004, xv). What fans were 'doing' – both with and without media – seemed forever partial, fleeting and ephemeral. My opening onto proceedings was limited to skims and glances, making a 'proper' explanation seem unattainable.

There have of course been plenty of ethnographies in recent times that have departed from the standard trope, instead following a particular object (Appadurai 1986; Foster 2008) or people (Ong 1999) as they move around the world, or rejecting the very notion of an ethnographer exploring a field site (Riles 2000). Others have reached into the past to show that innovative approaches such as 'multi-sited fieldwork' or the study of networks has taken place for quite some time (Hage 2005). A 'default' has been thoroughly critiqued and binned. Nevertheless, anthropologists are often not explicit enough about how ethnography is at best a 'contingent window onto complexity' (Candea 2007, 179) or that, when taking the decision about where to 'cut' the network (Strathern 1996a), we knowingly and arbitrarily exclude certain elements from analysis whilst focusing on others.

But what if this continual inability to get 'beyond' the glance was less a failure of my ability as ethnographer and more a fault deriving from the set of assumptions behind the study? The more time I spent with fans, the more I came to understand just how intrinsically co-constituted media was with professional football. If media use was characterised by distraction and ephemerality, then perhaps football imaginings and the communities they bring about are best conceived as partial and contingent. I came to view transnational football support as a product of the gap between determinacy and potential, emerging out of a recursive back and forth between media and imaginations through which individual 'fan' and the wider 'fan organisation' become figured. The experience can be a powerful means of understanding how popular culture, imaginations, desire and belonging interact in a contemporary moment characterised by widespread internet use.

### **An ethnography of gaps**

There are three ways in which this work contributes to anthropology more widely. It is firstly an anthropological exploration of a particular media technology – the internet – and its effects at a specific historic juncture on the fashioning of transnational communities, that is the linking of people across the borders of nation states.<sup>10</sup> The thesis approaches this topic via three routes, namely, the effects of internet technologies on: football fandom; the spaces in which it occurs; and the cultural forms and practices by which it is instantiated. In the process I contribute to existing scholarly work across a range of

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<sup>10</sup> For a more substantial definition of transnationalism, see p.78.

subdisciplines: on the internet, football and sport, media, globalisation, enchantment, publics, personhood and the imagination. I develop the argument that the style in which football communities are increasingly imagined is distracted, ephemeral and playful, and that, contrary to common conceptions, fun, affect-laden imaginings can have real power to alter the imagining of other communities such as the nation, family or diaspora.

Second, the work stretches the parameters of what can be glossed as ‘Turkish diaspora studies’. It is commonly accepted that there are approximately four to six million people domiciled in western Europe who can trace their recent ancestry to Turkey.<sup>11</sup> In recent years, the study of these Turkish-speakers<sup>12</sup> has broadened to consider the circulations of migrants (Çağlar 2010) employment opportunities (Pasztor 2012), the creation of music and media (Kaya 2002; Kosnick 2007a) and political mobilisation (Akcapar 2012). Nevertheless, it is a field concerned overwhelmingly with two themes: the barriers to and debates surrounding the integration of minorities and the role of Islam in diaspora communities (Mandel 2008; Diehl, Koenig, and Ruckdeschel 2009; Özyürek 2014; Sunier and Landman 2014; Doomernik 1995; Verkuyten and Yıldız 2009; Weller and Yilmaz 2012; Yükleven 2012). Football is conspicuously absent, despite the huge popularity of football both in Turkey and among Turkish-language diasporans. A third of the current Turkish national squad were born and raised outside of Turkey, the sport is

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<sup>11</sup> There is no precise figure, in part due to the difficulty in tracing those who have adopted citizenship or were born and raised in a western European country. The figure of four to six million is a triangulation based on census data and the figures from many of the works quoted throughout.

<sup>12</sup> I will be using the term ‘Turkish-language’ or ‘Turkish-speaking’ rather than the perhaps more common ‘Turkish’. Placing emphasis on language avoids homogenising what is in fact a diverse community containing many ‘non-Turks’, most commonly Kurds and those from North Cyprus.

omnipresent on diaspora satellite television stations and there existent hundreds of overseas fan clubs and associations such as Çarşı Berlin.<sup>13</sup> This work is not a systematic critique of the existing approaches. Instead of engaging in debates over Islam and integration, I align myself with scholars who argue for the importance within diaspora communities of other affect-intensive realms of life, grouped loosely under the label of ‘popular culture’ (van Nieuwkerk 2011; Toynbee and Dueck 2011; Hodgson forthcoming). Recently, research on popular culture in Turkey has engaged effectively with questions of affect, intimacy and belonging (Saktanber and Kandiyoti 2002; Özyürek 2006; Stokes 2010; Sehlíkoglu 2015). The scope of this trend needs to be widened – firstly to include football fans, secondly to encompass Turkish-speaking communities in Europe.

Finally, the difficulties I faced deciding how best to ‘do’ research on this type of phenomenon leads me to posit a different approach to anthropological analysis. Rather than seeing gaps as something to be filled, I attempt to reconfigure the ethnographic approach so that it pays more attention *to* the gaps – in both human experience and scholarship. Anthropology can do this, I argue, by centering studies on processes of mediation. Mediations are the jumps and stretches by which actors endeavour to bridge gaps, the attempts to hold steady indeterminacy and craft an ‘identity’. That the gap between determinacy and potential is fundamentally unbridgeable is, in William Mazzarella’s phrase, a ‘ground rule of cultural politics’ (Mazzarella 2004, 360). Hence the ethnographer need feel no tension when their analysis – another

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<sup>13</sup> From a squad of twenty-two playing for Turkey versus the Netherlands, 6 September 2015. The players (followed by country of birth) were: Hakan Balta (Germany), Oğuzhan Özyakup (Netherlands), Hakan Çalhanoğlu (Germany), Gökhan Töre (Germany), Olcay Şahan (Germany), Ersan Gülüm (Australia) and Mehmet Ekici (Germany).

attempt to bridge gaps, this time to produce a unity of anthropological argument – seems able only to offer insight in fragmentary resonances. Indeed, a methodology full of gaps is perhaps the only way for anthropology to move closer to studying complexity in the twenty-first century.

In speaking of gaps, my starting point is Marilyn Strathern and her study of ‘partial connections’ (Strathern 2004). Strathern argues that rather than taxonomies, genealogies or maps, the anthropological conception of knowledge and argument is best captured by the idea of the mathematical fractal – an infinitely repeating pattern that is visible at every scale. Her key metaphor is the idea of Cantor Dust, a pattern introduced by Georg Cantor.<sup>14</sup> Just like the bursts of dust that divide and divide, so each answer at a question generates more than the answer requires (fig. 4). That something more is a ‘remainder’. Leftover material prompts further questions requiring further answers, and this continues *ad infinitum*. The comparison and differentiation that the anthropologist undertakes has a ‘replicating, self-similar pattern’, but crucially this pattern is based around revealing intermittency and discontinuity: always producing remainders and revealing gaps.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> See <http://www.britannica.com/topic/Cantors-theorem> (accessed 17 August 2015).

<sup>15</sup> The intrinsic partiality of the anthropological account has been acknowledged for quite some time. For different takes see Clifford (1988) and Wikan (1992).

*The image originally presented here cannot be made  
freely available via ORA because of copyright*

**Figure 4. Cantor Dust**

Crucially, these gaps are at every level of our analysis. Just like a fractal, the discontinuity repeats itself at whatever scale the anthropologist is investigating. Whether talking ‘globally’ or ‘locally’, with the Cantor image in mind, we retain awareness of the endlessly repeating gaps that nestle within the strategies by which anthropologists organise their accounts.

Strathern’s metaphorical invocation of the fractal is designed to capture the need for the contemporary anthropological project to abandon the requirements of completeness in favour of partiality. She is not alone in advocating such an approach (see Zeitlyn and Just 2014). Knowledge that an anthropological argument is not a flowing whole but is instead ‘made up of jumps over gaps’ (Strathern 2004, xxiii) is not a superficial realisation but throws into relief the aesthetic that underpins western pluralist cultural life. Suddenly ‘certainty itself appears *partial*, information *intermittent*. An answer is another question, a connection a gap, a similarity a difference, and vice versa. Wherever we look we are left with the further knowledge that surface understanding conceals gaps and bumps’ (Strathern 2004, xxiv emphasis added).

Yet I wish to go further and consider what it would mean to conduct an ethnography based around the active exploration of gaps. When Beşiktaş fans say that ‘they are close as brothers’ there is a gap between the actual (they are not blood relations) and the experience (we behave to each other as if we are blood relations). When one group of fans attacks another for waving a Turkish flag at a match there is another gap, this time between a relational mode of belonging to a football team and one structured by larger determinacies of nation.

I do not try to bridge these gaps. Indeed, Mazzarella captures the key paradox: it is impossible to bridge this gap *but necessary for us to try*. That is, social actors ‘try to manage or fix indeterminacies and provocations by means of reified schemes of cultural identity and cultural difference’ (Mazzarella 2004, 360). As ethnographers our task is not to philosophically reconcile these paradoxes but look out for the gaps and pay attention to how interlocutors deal with them. The gap becomes the object of enquiry – where it emerges, how it emerges, or, rather, the practices by which fans interact with the gap – the attempts to elide it, to accentuate it, to use it to fulfil potential or re-establish determinacy. The resulting ethnography avoids lending undue force to the powers of marketing and politics to fix certain identities as naturalised. Nor is it a paean to the revolutionary potentials of continuous movement and immanence (cf. Hardt and Negri 2005). Rather, it reveals social process to be an on-going mediation between virtual and actual realities, potentiality and determination.

If the focus is on gaps – between social formations or within identification practices – then much time will be spent investigating

imaginative practices, for the way most fans mediate these gaps is through recourse to footballing imaginaries. As I use the term, imaginaries are not a holistic background to experience but a focused practice, distinguished from other phenomena by contingency and open-endedness. I suggest that mediated football is particularly suited to stoking practices of imagining, as it provides uncommonly large spaces of indeterminacy in which to dream and craft. The football fan can dress up in different clothes, lose themselves physically in the mass of a crowd or digitally in the real-time stream of material produced by the game. The *diaspora* football fan, in particular, has yet more latitude to imagine and dream, courtesy of already being versed in mediating gaps between their country of residence and a concept of Turkish 'homeland', real or imagined. As will become clear, when trying to generate an overseas Turkish fan collective this open-endedness can often be a hindrance as well as a help.

The intensity with which fans elect to take part in footballing imaginaries of course differs from moment to moment and fan to fan. Yet it's possible to broadly adumbrate the quality of engagement with the imaginary of Çarşı Berlin as fleeting, momentary and ephemeral. Much (but by no means all) of the reason behind this lies in the affordances of the media through which those imaginings are interacted, that is, the quality of interaction prompted by internet technologies. As has been argued elsewhere, cultural interactions are increasingly shaped by tactile gestures, the logic of calculation and the open-endedness of topographic mobility (Thrift 2008b; Lury, Parisi, and Terranova 2012). European Beşiktaş fans discover each other in part when a Facebook algorithm suggests they add each other as 'friends'. They communicate through platforms that require them to pinch, tap and rotate their phones.

To be absolutely clear: this is not a reworking of the populist argument for the internet leading to a diminishment of attention spans and concurrent attenuation of communal relations (Carr 2011; Maggie Jackson 2008; Turkle 2011). On the contrary, practices such as skimming and glancing carry great power to reconfigure notions of subjectification and animate the relationality of being (see Taussig 1991). Furthermore, wrapping these processes in the context of sport and thrusting them into the parameters of a game ensures that they are characterised by a sense of fun. Placing such emphasis on something which does not matter is, in its own way, a political act, 'drawing attention to the exuberance with which it permits the freedom to live reality as really-made up' (Taussig 1993, 255).

Through their support for Beşiktaş, members of Çarşı Berlin *play* with an imaginary of belonging that is frequently open-ended, indeterminate and, despite attempts to do so, cannot be indexed readily to existing categories, such as a nationality or ethnicity. Football fandom equips diaspora Beşiktaş fans with a conceptual lens to train back on their experience as diasporans: if fandom is such an under-determined imaginative mix of story and reality, drama, illusion and play, then conceivably it helps fans reflect on the over-determined labels which, as Turkish speakers in Europe, they find readily ascribed to them. 'Turk', 'migrant', 'Muslim', 'ethnic minority': perhaps these imaginaries, too, hold the potential to be equally made-up – and re-made-up.

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I begin in **Chapter 1** by introducing the fans. I explain what it means to be a Beşiktaş fan living in Europe and how this differs from the experience of being a

fan in Turkey. I describe how Çarşı Berlin emerged, and spend time explaining the workings of the organisation and the fans I came to know – their characters, occupations, backgrounds and supporting practices.

**Chapter 2** situates the work within the field of scholarship that has influenced its production. In order to make sense of the experience that I witnessed in Manchester, I embarked on a search for appropriate intellectual traditions and debates. This culminated in thinking about the phenomenon of transnational football communities in five overlapping areas: the instantiation of imaginaries; the social impact of technologies; representations of virtual and actual space; the impact of globalisation; and selfhood. The chapter explains how these literatures help me to understand varying elements of my study. Yet they are not without their problems. I show how drawing on work both within and outside of anthropology, and combining the debates in new ways can help move beyond some of their limitations and shed light on my ethnographic particular.

**Chapter 3** describes my process of entering the field – the methodologies I adopted and the ethical and practical concerns I faced when conducting my research. For a project focused on transnational football fans dispersed across Europe, practical questions of logistics were particularly acute. The four-fold method that arose out of these considerations reveals much about my ethos for conducting twenty-first century anthropology, namely, the importance of an ethnography that transforms the actor's difficulties into the ethnographer's through the concept of the mediation of gaps.

The thesis switches tone with **Chapter 4**, the first wholly ethnographic chapter and one of two devoted to exploring how and why diaspora Turkish

speakers join Çarşı Berlin. The chapter critiques the stock image of the ‘football fan’ as a fanatic in a distinct subculture, showing fans to be drawn to Çarşı Berlin for a much broader range of reasons, such as a sense of family, connection with Turkish ancestry or birthplace and an opportunity to engage in playful behaviour. The chapter then considers the practicalities of how fans ‘do’ this fandom. Working from a material culture perspective, it explores the diverse array of objects and practices that fans use to invoke and reach towards these intangible rewards of involvement. It concludes by arguing strongly for a conception of fandom that views it as intrinsic to the everyday.

**Chapter 5** explores the experience at the heart of Çarşı Berlin, the away match (*deplasman*), around which most of the other elements of fandom are constructed. I draw on various anthropological conceptions of ritual to explain why and how the practice is formative to Çarşı Berlin’s construction of fandom. Nevertheless, I highlight the need to pay more attention to questions of embodiment in order to temper the symbolist tendencies of this literature and bring out the diversity of the Çarşı Berlin community. The away match should be characterised as both a site of *communitas* and of distinction, argument and tension. I find in actor-network theory the conceptual vocabulary to hold these two seemingly disparate thoughts together.

The next two chapters investigate the effects that media technologies have on the fan experience. **Chapter 6** takes an historical approach, tracing the inception of a European Beşiktaş imaginary to the emergence in the 1990s of Turkish satellite TV. By allowing Turkish-speakers abroad to watch games live, it increased a notion of the simultaneity of fandom and prompted the creation of public venues in which to engage in this practice collectively. Frequenting

these venues led to an expansion in the imaginations of fans, allowing them to conceive of themselves ‘transnationally’. This is a crucial waypoint on the road towards the formation of the transnational organisation Çarşı Berlin. Yet without a requisite alteration in interaction amongst diasporans, the group cannot yet emerge.

**Chapter 7** describes how it is with the arrival of the internet that Çarşı Berlin is born. Fans use internet technologies to generate new spaces on social networking sites and messageboards. These spaces are intertwined with their previously existing Beşiktaş places. How fans make – and unmake – ideas of a transnational footballing community is best conceived as a process of mediating between the virtual and actual, or potential and determined, realities of environments. Fans conceive of internet-mediated spaces as more real and more false, more convivial and more divisive than actual environments, as they negotiate the contentious process of fashioning an effective (and affect-laden) sodality out of diverse, dispersed, multi-national communities of diasporans.

The final two chapters explore how best to situate the imaginaries of Beşiktaş fandom in a globalised, internet-mediated world. **Chapter 8** considers the way that Çarşı Berlin – a hyper-connected, transnational group – fits in with other globalised cultures and trends. I devise the concept of ‘parochial global’ cultural forms. Following these forms as they circulate reveals the instigation of parochial interaction to be as much the aim of multinational internet businesses as it is the wishes of the fans. Yet fans roam playfully and imaginatively within these restrictions. Çarşı Berlin consequently should be conceptualised as many publics forming peripatetically and ephemerally around assemblages of objects, people and conversations. This realisation allows us, at the chapter’s close, to

update the politics of recognition for contemporary Turkish diaspora fan communities, along with the skills needed to make an incursion and the constraints on interaction.

**Chapter 9**, the final ethnographic chapter, assesses the impact of being a Çarşı Berlin fan on wider, non-football life. I suggest the explosion in smartphone ownership has generated a contemporary environment replete with opportunities for distracted interaction. Involvement in Çarşı Berlin results in the 'Beşiktaş' fraction of many Turkish-language diasporans' lives distracting from other elements. This process can have very real benefits as Beşiktaş can be brought into heretofore inaccessible spaces, such as in the car or under the bedcovers. Yet precisely because football can be so exciting and omnipresent, the footballing facet(s) of a fan's identity can crowd out other associations to work or family, disrupting and dominating social gatherings. I draw the chapter to a close by asking speculatively if involvement in such a collective ultimately helps to forge self-reflexivity about all categories of belonging and their socially constructed nature.

The thesis **concludes** by suggesting that the phenomenon of being a diasporan football fan, of imagining through internet technologies being part of an overseas community, is best characterised as a constant, playful improvisation. I argue that the ephemerality and speed of these improvisations (that is, of computer-mediated life more broadly) pose perhaps the greatest challenge for anthropologists wishing to document – and influence – the study of the social and cultural in the twenty-first century.

# Chapter 1

## Meet the fans

This chapter introduces in more detail the fans who form Çarşı Berlin. As befits a group dispersed across multiple cities and countries, Çarşı Berlin members come from a range of backgrounds, ages, ethnicities, occupations and migration histories, although not genders – they are almost exclusively male. Some fans are born and raised in Germany, England or the Netherlands, others have moved to Europe from Turkey, some as recently as a few months ago. They stretch in age from sixteen to sixty. Their occupations also vary widely, from regional sales managers in big firms to electricians to bar owners and students. Frequently the only element they have in common is their support for Beşiktaş.

To understand who these people are and how they come to find themselves participating in a transnational diasporic Turkish football fan club requires some context. The chapter consists of five short sections, each a different route towards this understanding. The first provides a general explanation of Turkish football and those who follow it, both in Turkey and Turkish-speaking communities in Europe. I then look in more detail at the structure of Beşiktaş-specific fan groups in Turkey, for it is in relation to the experience of being a football supporter in Turkey that Çarşı Berlin defines itself. The third section shifts focus to the European context, considering the landscape of Beşiktaş fan groups and the experience of attending matches. This

is the broader vista in which Çarşı Berlin operates. The final two sections are concerned exclusively with Çarşı Berlin, describing the group's emergence in 2003 and its operation at the time of my fieldwork, from 2009 until 2014. By its close, I will have constructed a sturdy outline of my interlocutors, ready to be fleshed out and studied as the thesis progresses.

### **Who or what is a European Beşiktaş fan?**

In Turkey, football is dominated by the *üç büyükler*, the big three Istanbul clubs of Galatasaray, Fenerbahçe and Beşiktaş. Founded in the Ottoman era, the clubs are older than all other sides in Turkey, and divide almost all the trophies and media coverage amongst them.<sup>16</sup> As a result, they exert an influence far beyond Istanbul. Living in Ankara in 2008, I was kept awake one night by cars honking their horns when Fenerbahçe won an important European cup match. Climbing into *dolmuş* buses and taxis far from Istanbul I have often spotted the insignia of one of the big three teams dangling from the rear view mirror.

Although impossible to quantify accurately, the amount of media coverage devoted to football, its preponderance in daily conversation, and frequent mention in politics suggests that the majority of Turkey's population of seventy-five million people actively define themselves as football fans (*futbol taraftarı*) or football lovers (*futbol severleri*).<sup>17</sup> According to one survey, 88% of football fans identify with one of the 'big three' teams, with 19% being Beşiktaş

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<sup>16</sup> For a history of football in Turkey see Gökaçti (2008). There is no single English-language history, although an overview can be pieced together from Okay (2002), Akın (2003, 2004) and Nuhrat (2013).

<sup>17</sup> During election campaigns, it is common for the candidate to have draped around his shoulders (it is normally a man) the scarf of the local professional team.

fans.<sup>18</sup> This roughly correlates with years of my own research in Turkey; nearly everyone you speak to turns out to support one of these three, with Galatasaray and Fenerbahçe surfacing in conversation more frequently than Beşiktaş. It is safe to say, then, that Beşiktaş lays claim to millions of fans in Turkey.

But what about in Europe? The lower exposure of Turkish football on European sports channels coupled with poorer quality of performances compared to English, Spanish or German sides means it's incredibly rare to come across a fan of Turkish football who has no affiliation or claim to Turkey. Occasionally, one of my interlocutors would bring along a 'non-Turkish' friend – from work, school, or a local football club they themselves play for – to watch a game either on TV or in the flesh. These people, however, would attend just one or, at the most, a few games and would not refer to themselves as 'proper' fans, nor be viewed as such by the rest of the Beşiktaş crowd. This in itself forms an important distinction with overseas supporters of English, Spanish or German teams. Whereas these leagues have become 'globalised', picking up millions of supporters in markets from the USA to Indonesia, Turkish football overseas remains a resolutely Turkish affair.<sup>19</sup> 'Turkish football fan', then, frequently operates as a placeholder for an ethnic identity: Turk. Football moments are by default codified as Turkish moments. This is a problematic elision, given the fact that not every Turkish native speaker is ethnically Turkish. A sizeable number of Beşiktaş fans are Kurds, and a smaller proportion Cypriots or people from various central Asian Turkic states.

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<sup>18</sup> <http://www.habervitrini.com/haber/iste-il-il-turkiyenin-taraftar-sayisi-592403/> (accessed 20 August 2015).

<sup>19</sup> For the globalisation of the Premier League see Millward (2011). For the German Bundesliga see <http://www.espnfc.com/story/464163> (accessed 22 August 2015). For Spanish La Liga see: <http://www.totalsportek.com/football/spanish-la-liga-tv-channels-broadcasting-worldwide/> (accessed 22 August 2015).

In 1961, Turkey and West Germany signed an agreement that started the German *gastarbeiter* (guest worker) programme to temporarily recruit foreign labour. Agreements with other western European states shortly followed.<sup>20</sup> Before that date, the number of Turkish speakers in western Europe was nominal. When the agreement was curtailed in 1973, there were over 700,000. By 1980 there were an estimated 1,765,323 Turkish speakers in Europe as families were brought over and children born.<sup>21</sup> Western European governments had to adjust to the reality that these workers and their families were going to stay. The 1980s onwards has seen a pluralisation of these communities, as the number of European-born Turkish speakers increased, and further movements between Turkey and Europe took retirees back to Turkey and brought new waves of Turkish speakers, particularly Kurds seeking asylum from the civil war in the south-east of Turkey (Abadan-Unat 2011, 17–23).<sup>22</sup>

‘Turkish-speaking’ or ‘Turkish-language’ suggests itself as the least-bad option for categorising this mix of ethnicities and nationalities that I will be referring to in this thesis. By the time of my fieldwork it had become impossible to accurately count the total number of Turkish speakers in western Europe, the figures having been skewed by rigid census questions and an increasing number who do not have Turkish passports. The common estimate is that there are between four and six million people in western Europe who can trace their recent family ancestry back to Turkey. Extrapolating crudely from the

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<sup>20</sup> For dates see Table 1.2 in Abadan-Unat 2011, 11.

<sup>21</sup> (Abadan-Unat 2011, 14). Turkish speakers are also found in Bulgaria, Greece and the western Balkans, territories which spent centuries under Ottoman rule. See Poulton and Taji-Faouki (1997), Neuburger (2004), Öktem (2010). During my fieldwork I did not meet any Beşiktaş fans from these nations, although a fascinating project would be to explore the role of Turkish football in the region. Accordingly, the phrase ‘Turkish speakers in Europe’ in this thesis refers to those who arrived in western Europe from the 1960s onwards.

<sup>22</sup> For more on the Kurdish war see Öktem (2011, 88–96).

percentages in Turkey and allowing for those who do not like football, that would put the number of Beşiktaş fans in Europe at around a million. All of those that I encountered spoke good Turkish, and Turkish is the lingua franca for all diaspora Beşiktaş engagement. Placing emphasis on language allows for a summative epithet whilst avoiding homogenising ethnic diversity.

As explained in my description of the Manchester United away match, my first contact with Beşiktaş fans in Europe came via the recommendations of previous research participants of the Çarşı group in Turkey. Consequently, I started off being introduced disproportionately to the heavily committed. Compared to roughly one million Europe-based Turkish speakers who identify as Beşiktaş fans, or even the 2,000-3,000 tickets usually allocated for the team's fans at European football matches, the number of highly motivated supporters remains small. I would quantify it as somewhere between 300 and 600 individuals. Going back through years of fieldwork photos, I am struck by how many people I now recognise in the early photos but whom, at the time, I had yet to meet properly.

Once contacts in Turkey brokered the initial contact they slipped into the shadows. The way I moved between different groups in Europe was by following the contacts and recommendations of other Europe-based fans. These groupings were not discrete. It was a network, but one difficult to define. Individuals were scattered across western Europe and mostly self-affiliated with Çarşı Berlin, the most active of the many fan-created supporters clubs for Beşiktaş. The majority (perhaps 300-400) were living in dozens of cities in Germany and Austria, with smaller numbers in London (thirty), The Netherlands (twenty to thirty across various cities) and Basel in Switzerland

(thirty to forty). Yet there were also ‘outliers’, individuals or small groupings who were living in Grenoble and Lille (France), Copenhagen (Denmark) Brussels and Antwerp (Belgium), Vilnius (Lithuania) and even Kiev (Ukraine) and Tel Aviv (Israel). A key aim of the research was to uncover who these fans were and how they imagined themselves related to one another. In order to arrive at that point, it is necessary first to understand the history and structure of Beşiktaş fan groups in Turkey, for it is in reference to Turkey that the European fan experience is defined.

### **Beşiktaş fan groups in Turkey**

The biggest group at Beşiktaş matches in Turkey has historically been Çarşı. From the Turkish for ‘market-place’, ‘bazaar’, ‘shopping centre’ or ‘downtown’, Çarşı is an unofficial fan group set up by a group of teenaged Beşiktaş fans in the early 1980s. It is not to be confused with ‘Çarşı Berlin’, its transnational offshoot since 2003. In the early years, Çarşı was a small group of boys who lived nearby to Beşiktaş, attended all games, sung passionately, and were willing to fight for the team if challenged by rival fans. By the time of my fieldwork, it had grown into a national organisation with thousands of members and a particular role in the currents of popular culture in Turkey.

Çarşı’s formation and evolution is linked to the divisions and shifts within Turkish society from the 1970s to the present: the extreme leftist-rightist political violence of the 1970s, a military coup and martial law in 1980 and, since the mid-1980s, the liberalization of the political system and the growth of civil society activities (see Öktem 2011). Founded in 1982 with the

aim of generating greater support for Beşiktaş, Çarşı became coloured by the iconography and ideologies of the leftist cause during this period – a unique development among the top Turkish football fan clubs. ‘The imagery and ideology of the group became peppered with anarchist and socialist philosophy and iconography: its logo contains the anarchist ‘A,’ and its tongue-in-cheek rhyming mantra *Çarşı her şeye karşı* (Çarşı is against everything) captures its part flippant, part confrontational stance toward orthodoxy in Turkish society’ (McManus 2013, 7).

The attitude fits well with the history of the Beşiktaş football team as the least successful in Istanbul, trailing behind Galatasaray and Fenerbahçe in terms of fan numbers and trophies, and adds to the idea of Beşiktaş as an institution that stands outside the mainstream. The attitude was solidified through the well-publicised involvement of Çarşı in the Gezi Park protests of June 2013 against the neoliberal, mildly Islamist government of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, which resulted in the arrest of dozens of prominent fans.<sup>23</sup> Nearly everyone in Turkey, even those indifferent to football, knows the name Çarşı. The actions of the group regularly make the news and it is the punch line in many contemporary aphorisms and jokes. One of the most well-known, *Çarşı kendine karşı* (Çarşı is [even] against itself!) was coined by the fans, illustrating a self-awareness of the irony of being part of an anti-establishment establishment.

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<sup>23</sup> ‘Çarşı Grubu ‘darbe’ suçlamasıyla hakim karşısında’ in *Radikal*, 16 December 2014, [http://www.radikal.com.tr/turkiye/carsi\\_grubu\\_darbe\\_suclamasiyla\\_hakim\\_karsisinda-1252321](http://www.radikal.com.tr/turkiye/carsi_grubu_darbe_suclamasiyla_hakim_karsisinda-1252321) (accessed 20 August 2015).



**Figure 5. Çarşı during the Gezi Park protests, June 2013. Copyright Ekin Özbiçer, printed with permission**

In 2009, when undertaking research for my MPhil thesis, I spent three months researching Çarşı. I spoke to some of the founders, men such as Cem Yakışkan and Alan Markaryan, both now in their forties. I hung around with the younger fans that make up the bulk of the crowd. I attended matches, interviewed journalists and academics. These experiences revealed that there is no formal membership requirement, such as a monthly fee, or system of registration. What is more, I spoke to many people who felt ‘sympathy’ for Çarşı, or said that they belonged but who had neither met the leaders nor had any intention of ever doing so. Clearly there was no easy way of attributing belonging.

Given the amount of coverage and attention Çarşı receives in the Turkish media, it would not be unreasonable to assume its members alone make up the Beşiktaş crowd. In reality, however, Çarşı is one group amongst hundreds that stand on the Beşiktaş terraces. Some other groups have their own identities, such as being ‘conservative’ (*Karağümrükler*, *1453 Kartalları*), based around students (*Universite kartalları*) or women (Ladies of Beşiktaş, see Erhart 2011).

Nor does Çarşı reflect the views of all – no organisation can speak for the diversity of millions of individual supporters. There are many Beşiktaş fans who dislike the references to sensationalist leftist politics, or feel Çarşı dominates the discourse about Beşiktaş, with the club or team relegated into second place.<sup>24</sup>

The ambiguities and arguments over what, exactly Çarşı is and who belongs to the group are telling. Whilst divisions between teams are clear-cut, embodied in the colours of the football kit or the fences and police keeping fans apart, there is far more indeterminacy and confusion within a particular club. It stems largely from an inability to pin clear distinctions on the labile, affective intimacy of crowds. This is not a phenomenon limited to Beşiktaş. Fenerbahçe and Galatasaray have equivalent fan groupings, as does nearly every professional football team across Europe. All are enveloped in a certain ambiguity as to who the members are and how they belong to the collective.<sup>25</sup> During the current round of globalisation this ambiguity has gone into overdrive, as football affiliations have been spun into wider global currents, stoked through the ability to follow proceedings on the pitch or in the transfer market simultaneously from anywhere in the world. Keeping in mind the complexity among Beşiktaş fans in Turkey, the next section introduces how intra-Beşiktaş imaginaries jostle for attention within the larger and more diverse setting of Turkish diaspora communities in Europe.

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<sup>24</sup> This was in evidence when I spoke to a twenty-something accountant in Istanbul in June 2013 after the Gezi Park protests. Talking about the surge in Çarşı's national profile and support, he lamented: 'Everybody loves Çarşı at the moment... Çarşı will be in front of Beşiktaş, and that's a bad thing. Right now, people love them. Just one month before they were saying Çarşı are thieves, murderers but now they are calling them knights. But they are lying!', interview with author, 7 June 2013.

<sup>25</sup> See Burford (2001) for an insightful, amusing account of the vagaries of football fan collectives and how to inveigle oneself into a prominent position.

## **Beşiktaş fan groups in Europe**

In Turkey there are thirty-four league games each season, as well as cup competitions, at least half of them played ‘at home’ in the club’s own stadium in Istanbul. The games played in European competitions, by contrast, number ten matches per season at most. More often it is only a handful.<sup>26</sup> Because these matches are part of cup competitions, there is little predictability as to where they will take place. The dominance of teams from Spain, Germany, England, Italy and France means that European games are played in these countries more often than others, but the greater Europe conceived by UEFA – its fifty four member nations include the likes of Israel and Kazakhstan – means matches can also take place far from western Europe. As a result of these factors, the make-up of the crowd at Beşiktaş matches in Europe shifts dramatically depending on the location of the game.

The two most common considerations that Europe-based Beşiktaş fans weigh up before attending a match are cost and visa regulations. For shorter trips, fans pool cars and chip in for petrol money. A match taking place in a country with a large Turkish diaspora, such as Germany, Holland, the UK or Austria, means many can attend for little or no cost, eliciting crowds in the thousands. If required to fly, travel is exclusively on budget airlines such as Ryanair, Easyjet and Wizz Air. Match locations that double as tourist destinations (during my fieldwork this included Madrid, Porto and Sienna) allow fans to take advantage of established tourist infrastructure, whereas

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<sup>26</sup> This calculation is based on the Europa League schedule, which see a possible qualifying round, three group stage matches and then five further knock-out matches (round of thirty-two, last sixteen, quarter-final, semi-final and the final). The Champions League is the same, minus the round of thirty-two. It is rare for Turkish teams to progress beyond the quarter-final stage, meaning a ‘good’ season sees six or seven matches in Europe.

those which are more far-flung and expensive to reach from western Europe (such as Tel Aviv or Kiev) receive far fewer attendees. During fieldwork I travelled to over a dozen games in European competition, by all the above means, at an average transport cost of £70 (see Table 2, p.102).<sup>27</sup> For many, the ability to travel to a match for such an amount is a crucial determinant in the decision to attend.

The second important element is the passport that the fan holds. Many Beşiktaş fans who live in Europe only possess a Turkish passport. This is especially the case in Germany, where historically a *jus sanguinis* approach to citizenship has resulted in many German-born Turkish speakers being ineligible for German citizenship (see Mandel 2008; Abadan-Unat 2011). Most Turkish passport holders residing in mainland Europe have a Schengen-area visa, granting the same rights of movement within the Schengen area as those with EU passports. Consequently there is no experiential difference between being a Turkish or EU national in the context of intra-Schengen football fan travel.<sup>28</sup> Travelling outside of the Schengen area, however, requires a separate visa. Given that visa application processes can be costly, time-consuming and contain no guarantee of acceptance, many Turkish passport holders decide it is not worth the hassle for a two-day trip to a game. As a result, the crowd at games in the non-Schengen United Kingdom, such as Manchester United v Beşiktaş in November 2009 or Stoke City v Beşiktaş in September 2011, often

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<sup>27</sup> Travel took place between October 2011 and June 2013. The £70 includes travel to and from airports and public transport whilst away.

<sup>28</sup> Of course this is not the case more widely. Tax forms, benefit payments, employment documentation – the experiential difference of having a Turkish or EU passport in non-footballing contexts is no doubt very large.

misses a swathe of 'regulars' who would ordinarily attend games in European competition.

Visas and large transport costs are two considerations absent from supporting practices in Istanbul but which are integral to the European Beşiktaş fan's ability to take part in the chief activity of cheering the team on at a match. The final crowd that comes together on the terrace is consequently a diverse grouping, made up of assorted passport from different countries of residence. As with the Beşiktaş crowd in Turkey, there are varying groupings with differing motivations for attending – from friends going on holiday together to Turkish students on an exchange in the vicinity. My interest is in the one grouping which attempts to coordinate and bridge this diversity; a grouping that is always at the front, leading the crowd in the chanting, trying to recreate the experience of going to a game in Turkey at whichever European outpost Beşiktaş are playing: Çarşı Berlin.

## **The emergence of Çarşı Berlin**

### From fieldwork diary, 5 June 2013, Berlin, Germany

I am in Berlin to meet with Emrah, one of the founders of Çarşı Berlin. After work, Emrah and his wife pick me up in their car and give me a short tour of Berlin. Emrah is in his forties, is of average height and build, but sporting a bit of a middle-aged 'döner-belly', probably from eating too many kebabs. He has a welcoming face that occasionally breaks into a sly smile, and very alert eyes, which sometimes cancel out the welcome by darting about distractedly when someone is speaking. He speaks passable – if halting – English. My Turkish is better, but he doggedly persists in speaking in English to me, whether out of pride or perhaps to make me feel more welcome. His wife is largely silent. She is Bosnian and speaks fluent Turkish; they were both born in Berlin, have two children who are in their teens, and are trying for a third.

Midway through our tour, Emrah leans back and says 'I'll show you now where Çarşı Berlin was founded'. We pull up in the shadow of a massive block of flats in the neighbourhood of Schöneberg. Emrah gestures at a shop selling baby apparel. 'That used to be a sports bar. And the first six people of the Çarşı Berlin they meet here'. Including you? I ask. 'Yes, yes. I'm the founder of this group' he says in broken English, then switches into Turkish to explain how it happened: 'I mean, I founded this group.

Six people by coincidence came together. We didn't know each other at first. I used to come here with my brother. There were Beşiktaş-Galatasaray matches shown ten years ago. I was singing, then I looked around: others were also singing! I say "OK" and then we spoke. Then we decided. We'll form Çarşı Berlin.'<sup>29</sup>

Crucially, Emrah signals the importance of the link to Çarşı in Turkey:

I'm the only original one who grew up in Istanbul. In my young years. If it wasn't for me, the group would never be [a] real group. Because of me, the people in Istanbul [took] interest in this group and said: 'this is our number one group outside from Istanbul' .... onlar beni biliyor. Ben onları biliyorum (I know them and they know me).

Emrah had explained to me earlier that, although born in Berlin, he lived in Istanbul from the ages of eight to sixteen before returning to Germany. I decide to test his connection to the Çarşı group in Turkey:

'So do you know people like Cem Yakışkan and Alan Markaryan [the founders of Çarşı]?' Emrah replied: 'if you ask Cem who I am, he would say to you I'm his son...I grew up with him. He was my leader.'

In my fieldwork I was surprised by how few of the people I met in Çarşı Berlin had met personally the 'leaders' of Çarşı in Turkey. I realised that I had taken the opposite trajectory to the one most Çarşı Berlin fans were following – I went from being in the heart of things in Istanbul to being on the margins in London. Yet perhaps trajectory is the wrong word, for there aren't simply two: from Turkey to Europe or Europe to Turkey. Asking supporters about their fan practices is a wonderful way of opening up the complexity of the migration experiences of individuals. At the outset I assumed that most people in Çarşı Berlin were European citizens of the country they lived in. Yet as Emrah's story, and those of countless other members of Çarşı Berlin showed, for many, the

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<sup>29</sup> Conversation with author, 5 June 2013. 'Bu grubu ben kurdum yani. Orada altı kişi tesadüfen bir araya geldi. Birbirimizi tanımıyoruz. Ben geldim kardeşimle buraya. Kardeşimle geldim. Beşiktaş, Galatasaray maçı vardı. 10 years before. Baktım. Ben şarkı söylüyorum, sonra baktım: öbürleri de söylüyor! Dedim "Okey". Sonra konuştuk. Ondan sonra karar verdik: Biz Çarşı Berlin'i kuracağız'.

migratory experience was anything but straightforward. Indeed, it's through the back-and-forth, the being both 'here' in Europe and 'there' in Turkey that the organisation could be imagined:

Emrah: Our first game was Sparta Prague against Beşiktaş [22 October 2003]. We six, we decided to go to Prague. And my boys from Istanbul said to me 'make a placard and write "Çarşı" and the city "Berlin"'. And it was the first time where we made a Çarşı Berlin placard on the *tribün* [terrace]... After this Prague game, everybody talked about this. But we were only six people. Still everybody talked about it! Because our boys and other Beşiktaş fans, they saw from the TV this Çarşı Berlin placard, yes? It was the first time that this group, that the name of the group...was at a game outside of Turkey. Me: I understand. Before then there was no Çarşı in Europe?  
Emrah: [There was] only people who live in Europe... Because in the nineties nobody outside of Turkey had money to go to away matches. Only in Turkey to the outside [travelling from Turkey to matches] but not outside of Turkey. And this was the special thing. And so, çoğaldık, büyüdük, büyüdük, büyüdük, büyüdük [we multiplied, we grew, grew and grew] and now everybody loves this group in Turkey, yeah? And here.

As Emrah describes, the organisation grew from its early beginnings in a Berlin sports bar to the form in which I encountered it, as the premier Beşiktaş fan group in Europe. The next section will give more detail about what the group looks like and how it operated during the period of my fieldwork (2009-14).



**Figure 6. The founding location of Çarşı Berlin, now a baby store in Schöneberg, Berlin (author's photo)**

### Çarşı Berlin today

At the time of my fieldwork, Çarşı Berlin was the most active and largest fan club that attended Beşiktaş matches in Europe. Çarşı Berlin subdivides itself by geography into 15 smaller groups, referred to as *bölgeler* (regions) or the more colloquial *tayfalar* ('crews' or 'gangs'). Ten of the fifteen groups are based in Germany, with the remaining five in the UK, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Denmark and Austria. The group lay claim to around 500-600 members, although I estimate the number who were regularly involved to be approximately 390 (see Table 1). The inability to give a definitive number stems from the mutable nature of the organisation: there is no official subscription or membership card at the supra-national level<sup>30</sup>, meaning individuals could easily lay claim to (or deny) being a member. During fieldwork my contact with most of these groups was limited to a couple of visits, making it hard to judge accurately how many people were part of a branch's larger catchment area. Of those groups I did know well, numbers would wax and wane dramatically depending on the day, week or month. When watching a derby match in an association (*dernek*) or attending an away match, as many as 100 people would say they belonged to the 'Nuremberg crew' or 'Swiss Eagles'. Yet the daily number from those branches posting on the Çarşı Berlin messageboard would be in the tens, whilst the number who meet up on a cold February evening to watch Beşiktaş play on TV might be even smaller.

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<sup>30</sup> In January 2013 the group attempted to institute a €10 a month fee through its internet messageboard. Many fans did not pay it (including myself) and, despite warnings, there was never any attempt to make me pay.

**Table 1. List of Çarşı Berlin regional branches (*bölgeler*)**

| <b>Tayfa name</b>         | <b>Location</b>                    | <b>Number regularly involved<br/>(author's estimate)</b> |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| Çarşı Londra              | London, UK                         | 30                                                       |
| Berlin Bölgesi [region]   | Berlin, Germany                    | 30                                                       |
| Viyana Tayfası [crew]     | Vienna, Austria                    | 30                                                       |
| Köln Tayfası              | Cologne, Germany                   | 6                                                        |
| MekAn Darmstadt           | Darmstadt, Germany                 | 20                                                       |
| Kommando Duisburg Tayfası | Duisburg, Germany                  | 40                                                       |
| Stuttgart Tayfası         | Stuttgart, Germany                 | 10                                                       |
| Mannheim Kartalları       | Mannheim, Germany                  | 60                                                       |
| Frankfurt MekAn           | Frankfurt, Germany                 | 10                                                       |
| Hannover Tayfası          | Hannover, Germany                  | 20                                                       |
| Dainmarka Kartalları      | Copenhagen, Denmark                | 6                                                        |
| Nürnberg Tayfası          | Nuremberg, Germany                 | 40                                                       |
| Hollanda Kartalları       | Various locations, The Netherlands | 20                                                       |
| Kuzey Tayfası             | Bremen & Hamburg Germany           | 6                                                        |
| İsviçre Kartalları        | Basel, Switzerland                 | 59                                                       |
|                           | <b>Total</b>                       | <b>387</b>                                               |

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**Figure 7. The location of Çarşı Berlin branches across Europe**

It is hard to give a summative description of the members of Çarşı Berlin, for every statement sees itself contradicted by the group's diversity. The group is overwhelmingly male, yet the few women involved are some of the more prominent. The majority of fans are in their late teens and early twenties, although the 'leaders' are in their thirties and above. It has in roughly equal number fans born in Europe and those born in Turkey, Turkish passport holders and those with European passports. Those who left Turkey did so at varying ages and for different reasons. Some were asylum seekers, others were joining relatives already living in western Europe. It was also not uncommon for fans to be going back and forth between Turkey and western Europe. Some had gone to high school in Turkey, others had come from Turkey to England to improve their English for just six months. Others still were planning on trying their luck in the Turkish labour market upon graduation. Given this variety, I have interposed throughout the main textual description short vignettes of a number of important interlocutors in order to bring a sense of colour to my more sociological descriptions of the group.

Çarşı Berlin is as mixed ethnically and religiously as the wider Turkish-speaking communities in Europe. It comprises fans who are Turkish, Kurdish and Cypriot. It is not an openly religious organisation. Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning that although all are Muslims, a disproportionate number are Alevi, a more mystical, Shia-infused branch of Islam distinct from Sunnism. Alevis make up roughly a sixth of the population of Turkey, but a greater proportion in

diaspora communities, perhaps because many Alevis are ethnically Kurdish, an ethnicity over-represented in Turkish-speaking communities in Europe.<sup>31</sup>

The occupational background of members is predominately working class. The bulk of fans I came across worked in restaurants, as electricians, delivery drivers or builders. Yet I also met fans who had been to university (normally in Germany or England) and had white-collar jobs as regional salesmen, advertising executives or lawyers. A large number of those in the group were students, either at high school or university.

Linguistically, all fans could

#### Yiğit

Yiğit was born in 1970 in a village outside Konya, a city in central Turkey. He grew up in a house without television, radio or a telephone. His first exposure to Beşiktaş came from listening on the radio of another family. Aged ten he moved to Nuremberg, Germany. The first Beşiktaş match in Europe he attended was in 1991; he argued with his wife as the game took place two weeks after the birth of his son. Since then, he estimates that he has been to 90% of Beşiktaş's European matches. His son is now in his early twenties, a rap singer in his spare time, and attends matches with Yiğit. The first time I visit Nuremberg, Yiğit invites me to dinner at his place. His wife answers the door in a headscarf, but shakes hands when I introduce myself. He has a kind glint in his eye, and is hospitable in the extreme: paying for me and another fan from England to stay in a hotel when we visit. Yiğit speaks German well but is more comfortable speaking Turkish. When he speaks, it is quick, mumbly and hard to understand. His parting shot when we first say goodbye is 'I'll like everything you post on Facebook!'. A day doesn't go by without a comment, photo or video from Yiğit appearing in my newsfeed. True to his word, whenever I post anything, he is one of the first to interact.

converse fluently in Turkish. For fans who moved to Europe as adults, conversation would be exclusively in Turkish, as usually their German, English or Dutch would be comparatively poor. Those born and raised in Europe are best described as bilingual: they would be equally happy talking in German, English or Dutch. Some fans would mix two languages without even realising it, others were adept at switching between the two. With some fans who were born and raised in Europe, their written Turkish was frequently error-prone. The linguistic hodge podge meant I fitted in fine with my good-but-not-perfect

<sup>31</sup> For more on the Alevi religion and culture see Shankland (2003); Tambar (2014).

Turkish. On many occasions older fans would dismiss my apologies for making a mistake with the words ‘you’re much better than many young Turks’!

Membership of Çarşı Berlin is highly gendered. The organisation is most commonly perceived as a male association, in keeping with the view in both Turkey and Europe that football is predominately a man’s game.<sup>32</sup> This reality poses many difficulties for female Beşiktaş fans. In order to participate fully, women need to engage in activities that assume a male body: using the chest to bounce off strangers standing around you on the terrace, taking off your top and waving it around, or taunting the

#### Emre

Emre is a teenage Beşiktaş fan in London. He was born in Gaziantep, a city of 1.5 million in southern Turkey, but moved to the UK with his parents when he was four years old. He is in the first year of a degree in computer science at a university in the home counties. He lives at home, but owns a car, which he uses to drive to university and to meet up with friends. He is a native English speaker, his accent a prime example of what has been dubbed Multicultural London English, a mix of West Indian, South Asian, Cockney and Estuary English that characterises the speech of the Beşiktaş fans who grew up in the capital (see *The Economist* 2013). Its chief marker is an elongated ‘aah’ sound instead of ‘I’, producing ‘lahhhke’ for ‘like’, ‘gahhhhy’ for ‘guy’. Emre is the most fanatical of half a dozen or so London Beşiktaş fans in their late teens. Dubbed ‘the young ‘uns’, they are friendly with the older fans but frequently sit in their own group to watch the match, slipping in and out of English and Turkish: ‘Bruv bruv, check out this sick bit of skill, çok güzel! [very nice]’ Emre has a mature, sunny demeanour, and never has a bad word to say about anyone. He is a pivotal member of the group, acting as a bridge between younger and older fans.

opposition to ‘suck my cock’.<sup>33</sup> Female fans who are fanatical about the game are routinely viewed by men as *bacı* (sister) a term which comes from the peasant tradition, popularised in the 1960s and 70s by Turkish Marxist groups.<sup>34</sup> A *bacı* is a women ‘they would enjoy watching the game [with] but never go to bed with’ (Erhart 2011, 91). Female fans who are active members of Çarşı Berlin often possess a thick skin and great deal of stoicism to weather the exclusion and jibes of being ‘man-like’ (*erkeksi*). I am aware that I could have

<sup>32</sup> For studies that explore the gendered nature of Turkish football see Nuhurat (2013); Erhart (2011).

<sup>33</sup> An example song is the *Fener’e Opera* (Opera for Fenerbahçe), see <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jqDwVh-op34> (accessed 26 April 2012).

<sup>34</sup> Conversation with Dr Laurent Mignon, October 2013.

explored questions of gender and belonging much further. For instance, the socialisation within Çarşı Berlin could be examined wholly in terms of the opportunity it affords for a particularly macho, male type of bonding, as has been explored elsewhere (see Gutmann 1996). It would have been difficult, however, to explore the subject with any satisfaction at the same time as investigating questions of media, imaginations and play. Consequently treatment of gender in the thesis is in passing, leaving the topic for perhaps more systematic examination in the future.

There is large variation across regions in the experience of what it means to 'belong' to a Çarşı Berlin sub-group. In London the group does not have its own place, but around ten to twenty members meet weekly in the same bar in north London to watch the Beşiktaş match on television. A similar number will attend most away matches in western Europe, and a handful attend games even further afield. The group in Basel has fifty-nine 'active' members,

#### Zeynep

Zeynep is halfway through her studies at the University of Cologne. Her family are from the Thrace region of Turkey, the small bit of land to the west of Istanbul, although she was born in Germany. She does not have German citizenship, making games in the UK difficult to attend. Unlike many in her situation, though, she always makes the effort: cancelling school trips to Spain, getting doctor sick notes and bunking off university to attend away matches. She has been involved in Çarşı Berlin from her mid-teens, attending away matches in Portugal, Italy, Spain, England and Germany. Zeynep chain smokes, regardless of location, and has wild, frizzy hair that bushes out on both sides, or is tied back in a bun. She is fluent in Turkish and German, and speaks excellent English and Spanish. When I interview her (in English) she uses an app on her phone to translate words she doesn't understand. She always translates into German rather than Turkish. Zeynep's fandom underlines the extra difficulties female Beşiktaş fans face: she has to overcome the unwillingness of her dad to attend away matches and of the male-centric Çarşı Berlin to accept her fully.

each of whom pays thirty Swiss Francs a month (£20) subscription as a fee.<sup>35</sup>

This has allowed the group to rent its own place, equipped with a data projector, pool tables, fridges stocked with beer and even a replica football terrace on which to sit and watch the games (see p.225). Similar numbers travel

<sup>35</sup> Exchange rate as of 27 August 2015, <http://www.xe.com> (accessed 27 August 2015).

abroad, wearing T-shirts and hoodies and waving banners all declaring ‘Swiss Eagles’. In stark contrast is the Köln *tayfa*. Upon arriving in that city for five months’ fieldwork, I discovered that the ‘Cologne crew’ exists more as an epithet than a tangible organisation. No fans gather to watch games on television, the ‘leader’ of the group was based eighty-five kilometres away in Aachen, and the group has no T-shirt or banners.

Fans fraternize in the flesh most frequently in their regional group. Given the diversity and transnational distribution, it is often only the ‘pull’ of the away match that gets them to meet en-masse. In order to provide more fixed points to meet up, Çarşı Berlin instituted an annual football tournament in 2008. Each *tayfa* takes it in turns to host the others for a day of football, food, drinking and songs (figs. 12-14). Nevertheless, attending the 2013 version made me aware how this remains mostly a German affair. But being physically proximate is,

#### Ali

Ali is in his late twenties, married with two small girls. He works in his uncle’s fast food restaurant in Watford, an outer suburb of London. It serves English-style greasy food: full English breakfasts, burgers and chips, the deep fat fryer going all day. He moved to England aged fifteen in the wake of the 1999 Marmara earthquake that damaged the family home in Istanbul and spooked his mum. Ali’s love of Beşiktaş developed from England. He sought out other London-based members online and has as a penny jar in which he’s saving up for football trips, although with two small children and a wife who doesn’t work they cannot have a lot of spare cash. He is extremely fanatical in his support: he owns fifty-three Beşiktaş kits and frequently argues with his wife about prioritising the team over other commitments. Because of the hours of his job and his location, (further removed from the east London spots where the rest of the London lot meet) Ali never watches the televised games with the rest of Çarşı Londra. He frequently attends away matches though. Most of the time he has a tired expression. He frequently rubs his eyes and tousles his hair – jet-black but flecked with white, mirroring the colours of his beloved Beşiktaş.

of course, not necessary for generating imaginings of belonging, especially in the ‘modern’ age (Habermas [1962] 1991; Benedict Anderson [1983] 2006; C. Taylor 2004). Indeed, given the infrequency of occasions for fans to meet physically, their enactment of transnational belonging to Çarşı Berlin is mediated by other means; most frequently communication media, specifically

the internet. Çarşı Berlin have an online password-protected messageboard; a 'transnational backstage' (p.248) in which to exchange gossip and rumour, to organise travel and accommodation to matches, to plan fan displays or to discipline members. Members of Çarşı Berlin also frequent a host of other internet-mediated spaces: Facebook group pages and individual profiles (p.252), WhatsApp conversations (p.331), Turkish sports news websites, the webforum for Çarşı in Turkey ([www.forzabesiktas.com](http://www.forzabesiktas.com)), and transnational Ultra forums, to name only those discussed in this thesis. These spaces and occasions for interaction augment the less frequent physical gatherings. The breadth, flexibility, contingency and ephemerality of environments available to fans is at the heart of the sense of play and fun that drives football fan attachments.

It is important to follow, document and examine as many of these actors and interactions as possible. Doing so reveals how transnational imaginings become instantiated in material structures, how diverse groups of people are called into coalescing and, ultimately, how one of the most powerful and enchanting of contemporary phenomena – the football crowd – comes to be produced. As is becoming clear, the answer is clearly not found in dialectical opposition but in the admixture and mediation of various elements: of proximity and distance; of potentials and determinations. It means balancing, on the one hand, embodied affect and on the other speech and social practice, of taking in Turkey, Europe, Beşiktaş and Çarşı. Perhaps it is in mediating these gaps that an ontology and ethics of how to relate to each other in a transnational world comes to life.



Figure 8. Members of Çarşı Berlin posing for photos, Magdeburg, Germany, 9 February 2013 (author's photo)



Figure 9. Members of Çarşı Berlin at Braga v Beşiktaş football match, Braga, Portugal, 14 February 2012 (author's photo)



Figure 10. Members of the Swiss Eagles branch (İsviçre Kartalları) watching a Beşiktaş match in their club house (dernek), 30 September 2013 (author's photo)



Figure 11. Members of Stuttgart gang (Stuttgart Tayfası) eating pizza and watching Beşiktaş, 23 February 2013 (author's photo)

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Figure 12. Online poster from the sixth annual Optik Başkan Tournament, Frankfurt, Germany, May 2013



Figures 13 and 14. Images from the Optik Başkan tournament, 25 May 2013 (author's photos)

## Chapter 2

# Surveying the field

This chapter will locate the dissertation within a field of scholarship that has influenced its production. Whilst the ethnographic particular of Çarşı Berlin represents a new and original object of study, the broader issues and themes that it engenders have been explored by a number of scholars, both within and outside of anthropology.

When I started my PhD project in the autumn of 2011, I began with what I knew, namely, that thousands of Turkish-speakers living in Europe would meet up whenever their cherished Beşiktaş were playing a match in Europe. I started my intellectual journey with literature that helps to make sense of this phenomenon such as work on diaspora communities, the study of crowds and scholarship on sports. I knew that ‘the internet’ was also important – it was how I discovered and communicated with the groups I had met in Manchester – and had begun to explore how the technology was being researched by academics. Nevertheless, upon starting fieldwork in earnest in August 2012, I realised that the study of online-mediated communication would have to assume a larger role. It was on internet forums, Facebook profiles and through instant-message conversation that fans were mostly interacting. Even when they would meet physically – weekly to watch a televised match or once a

season to travel to a game – my time would be spent watching people crouch over phones in pubs or hold them in front of their bodies, filming proceedings.

The experience of imagining oneself a member of Çarşı Berlin was clearly an amalgam: of frequent internet-mediated communication and occasional physical proximity; of being part of a grouping based around sport, but equally feeling a sense of family or a connection with a 'homeland', be that actual or imagined. There was a necessity, then, to craft a schema adaptable enough to allow this experience to cohere intellectually in the way it clearly was for participants practically.

As mentioned in the introduction, my attempt at establishing a suitable theoretical framework crystallised around five overlapping areas of scholarship: the study of imaginaries, the social impact of technologies, representations of virtual and actual space, globalisation scholarship and work exploring selfhood and subjectivity. Approaching the topic through these fields helps illuminate the associations and links through which elements of a heterogeneous experience are connected. It reveals my overall philosophy, namely, that the best way to theorise a hyper-connected transnational grouping is to retain the spirit of emergence, the partial connection, incongruous alliance or confusing relation that is intrinsic to the experience. This schema preserves such complexity of association.

The chapter is structured as a progression through these five topics. Within each section, I discuss the arguments and scholarship that is of central significance to my study and work that is of more distant influence. I also assess what is (or is not) peculiarly 'anthropological' about the conversation within each as part of the process of operationalizing the insights to the ethnographic

method. By the end, it will be clear how the dissertation will draw from, interpret and make an original contribution to these debates through the ethnography of the central chapters.

## **Imaginaries**

This thesis is an investigation of how a transnational Turkish footballing community imagines itself through internet technologies. It seems appropriate, then, to start by formulating a suitable concept of ‘imaginaries’. During the 1990s and 2000s, something happened to ‘the imaginary’ in anthropology. Once the more or less exclusive preserve of cognitive or mentally-focused anthropologists, the concept became enlarged, invested with associations and ideas more akin to familiar anthropological staples such as ‘culture’ or ‘ideology’ (see Strauss 2006). Studies emerged organised around concepts such as ‘the diasporic imaginary’ (Axel 2002) ‘spatial imaginary’ (Handler, 2004) ‘technoscientific imaginaries’ (G. E. Marcus 1995) and ‘tourist imaginaries’ (Salazar and Graburn 2014). Suddenly and with speed, the imagination seemed to become *the* crucial instrument for unpicking configurations of modernity ushered in by a new round of globalisation (see also Appadurai 1996a; C. Taylor 2004).

Whilst there is much to be commended in these works, such as a strong de-essentialising spirit, much of the argumentative strength is undermined by the broadness with which ‘the imaginary’ is figured. The imagination is frequently cast as a holistic backdrop to experience, what Claudia Strauss dismisses as ‘just *culture* or *cultural knowledge* in new clothes’ (Strauss 2006,

322 emphasis in original). David Sneath, Martin Holbraad and Morten Axel Pedersen share her misgivings: ‘all that is accomplished by [this]...seemingly radical move is that a fixed totality of explicit meanings (“culture”) has been substituted with a fluidity of implicit ones (“the social imagination”). In other words, the imagination is not a “whole” in the same way that culture once was, but it is just as holistic’ (Sneath, Holbraad, and Pedersen 2009, 8). Strauss’s way out of the bind is to suggest a more person-centred approach, ‘respecting the difference between psychological processes and social ones, and drawing on psychological theories regarding the processes by which cultural models are learned, mentally represented, and used’ (Strauss 2006, 337; see also Strauss and Quinn 1997).

Although I share the desire to explore the means by which imaginative effects are triggered, cognitively-focused explanations such as Strauss’s have a tendency to privilege the mental and posit the mind/brain as the locus of imaginative capacities (see also D’Andrade 1995). This jarred with what I was witnessing ethnographically. Rather than being incidental to the investigation, spaces, objects and bodies seemed to be the primary means through which Çarşı Berlin members were making imaginings tangible. Ritual congregation in unknown, foreign cities was the most important activity the group undertook (chapter 5). Fan objects – banners, scarves, videos, pictures, football shirts – would be waved, worn, exchanged, fought and cried over (chapter 4). Great significance was placed on how fans should be spaced, ordered and corralled on the terraces or in the TV room (chapter 6); and the bodies once in these spaces would imitate and replicate, be held in unusual configurations, rubbed, bounced or interlinked with those of strangers. It seemed sensible to rework

conceptions of the imaginary so that it spoke to this wider array of practices on display.

The first stage in broadening ideas of the imaginary is to conceptualise the imagination as an intrinsic element of all human apprehension. I base this idea on the work of Sneath et al., who in turn take inspiration from Kantian philosophy: 'rather than some special... form of cognition, we are dealing with a capacity involved in everything from the basic perception of objects to our engagement with entirely immaterial knowledge' (Sneath, Holbraad, and Pedersen 2009, 12). If the workings of the imagination are involved in a heterogeneous range of phenomena then it seems sensible to widen the focus of study to consider environments, people and things. It also leads on to my second point: instead of trying to define and grasp at an indeterminate, inchoate thing ('the imagination') the focus can be on the variety of social and material means by which imaginaries are generated (practices of imagining). Talking about focused practices rather than a large category of meaning leads us away from philosophising back towards the stable ground of anthropological analysis, for these imaginative practices can be empirically identified and ethnographically explored.

An example of work that subscribes more or less to this approach is Benedict Anderson's study of 'imagined communities' (Benedict Anderson [1983] 2006). Anderson's thesis is that nations are generated imaginatively as a result of people sharing coherence in events by simultaneously consuming the same media. He traces empirically the emergence of technologies such as the printing press, showing how crucial these developments were in producing an

imagined sense of togetherness for actors within ‘the nation’ (Benedict Anderson [1983] 2006, 24).

Although focused on the historical rise of the modern-nation state, Anderson’s work has plenty to offer contemporary studies of imagined communities. He shows a media-oriented approach to be a profitable route to investigating the generation of community, an argument that resonates with my media-saturated research field of smartphones and social networking software. Secondly, by beginning with the assertion that ‘communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the *style* in which they are imagined’, Anderson places the weight of emphasis on heterodoxy in processes of imagining (Benedict Anderson [1983] 2006, 6 emphasis added). Imaginations hold the potential to be differently instantiated, possessing variations and differing in characteristics from ‘style’ to ‘style’, an important *a priori* stance in explaining the extreme variation and disputation in Çarşı Berlin imaginaries across Europe.

Yet Anderson’s work is not without fault. In his strict focus on the printing press and newspapers he displays an assumption that the technologies that help bring imaginations into being are instruments that determine how it operates. This seems an unnecessarily prescriptive conception of the relationship between technologies and the imagination. Take, for example, football. As a game, football is a field of human activity in which the outcome is deliberately *underdetermined* – we do not know before kick-off who will win.<sup>36</sup> It seems prudent to view interaction with the sport – through technologies or otherwise – as potentially as open-ended. I return to this idea shortly.

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<sup>36</sup> For a detailed explanation of the under-determined nature of games see Malaby (2007).

More importantly, as Birgit Meyer has noted, the Andersonian argument is strangely lacking in capturing the affective force and ‘rigor’ with which members of a community experience their imagined connections (Meyer 2009b, 5). The problem occurs because the argument is articulated through debates over the shifting status of language. Anderson suggests that the difference between pre-modern and modern communities is when sacred languages, such as Latin, Arabic and Chinese, become replaced with vernacular ones, which no longer possess the same claims to ontological truth. In contrast to previous conceptualisations, modern understandings of language rest on relativity and an arbitrariness of the sign (Benedict Anderson [1983] 2006, 43; Meyer 2009b, 4–5). Confined to the realm of symbols and signs, Anderson’s argument remains stuck in the mentalist frame of reference mentioned above.

There have been varying attempts to go a step further and investigate how imaginaries are embodied and made tangible in the wider world. An excellent example is Birgit Meyer’s sensory-driven study of how religion and media entwine in ‘aesthetic formations’ of body and environment (Meyer 2009b). What remains under-explored is how sports scholarship can speak to, critique and develop the Andersonian approach to practices of imagining. Due to heavy emphasis on bodies and, in recent years, on transnational flows and global media, I suggest the anthropological study of sport is ideally suited in helping develop a more robust concept of how imaginaries are felt.

*Sporting imaginaries*

Before the late 1980s, sport was a peripheral topic in anthropology, examined along lines far removed from those in my project. Strongly shaped by paradigms of modernization theory, its study was characterised by an elemental separation between 'traditional' and 'modern' sports, the former a tangential concern of some anthropologists (see for instance Culin 1907; Mooney 1890) whereas the latter were largely left to the preserve of sociologists (Elias and Dunning 1966; Loy and Kenyon 1969). Anthropologists devoted a lot of energy to definitions, such as the difference between sport and play or whether 'sports' were just a western creation or if the moniker could refer to the play of 'traditional' societies (see Besnier and Brownell 2012; Dyck 2000).

Over the past three decades, however, anthropology has bestowed increasing importance onto topics of study such as the body, gender, nationalism and globalisation. Sport's intimate involvement with many of these topics means it has moved closer to the centre of the discipline. Ethnographies began to emerge in significant enough numbers to form the basis for a nascent anthropology of sport that provided a novel angle onto many of these debates (Alter 1992; Klein 1997; Armstrong 1998; MacClancy 1996).<sup>37</sup> Two foci in particular are of great importance for my study.

Firstly, sport has helped show the fruitfulness of viewing the body as not simply a biological entity but an important site of cultural construction (Butler 2011; Csordas 1994). Bourdieu's theory of the 'habitus', in particular, provided

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<sup>37</sup> In addition, a clutch of works have emerged that return to the question of 'traditional' games and sports, albeit shaped by these larger disciplinary shifts in focus. See Zogry (2010); Whittington (2001).

an inspiration for many studies as a central question became how sporting 'habits' are inscribed with the divisions and distinctions of everyday life (Bourdieu 1993; Robson 2000; Alter 1992).<sup>38</sup> In a similar vein, the function of sport as 'a highly visible forum in which male and female bodies are literally "built"' rendered it a productive site for exploring practices of gendering (Messner 2005, 314; Gutmann 1996; Gutmann 1997). Sporting imaginaries, then, are very clearly and self-consciously embodied imaginaries. As Thomas Csordas has argued, the huge variation in how bodies look, feel and act means notions of the corporeal can be used to foreground indeterminacy in cultural analysis – a crucial requirement in capturing the inchoateness of Çarşı Berlin fan imaginaries (Csordas 1993). Throughout the thesis, the body will be used to problematise established ways of analysing the imaginings of football fans (in particular chapters 4, 5 and 9).

Sporting imaginaries are also increasingly global and transnational. In 1988, an international conference was organised around that year's Seoul Olympics, exploring 'Cultural Exchange in the World System' (Kang, MacAloon, and Dematta 1988). Amongst the participants were key thinkers in the emergent scholarship on globalisation, such as Ulf Hannerz and Arjun Appadurai. Out of the proceedings emerged work that significantly helped to consider sport in light of transnationalism, colonialism and globalisation (Appadurai 1996b; Hannerz 1990; Bourdieu 1988; see also MacAloon 1984; Besnier and Brownell 2012, 448–50). Over the next few decades, their key theorisations began to seep into the study of sports, particularly the

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<sup>38</sup> Bourdieu himself has written about how different sports stamp social class onto the body, see Bourdieu (1978, 1999).

investigation of global sporting mega events, such as the Olympics and World Cup (Kelly and Brownell 2011; Horne and Manzenreiter 2006). Football, in particular, increasingly requires a transnational frame of reference: Manchester United have more fans in Indonesia than in all of England, let alone Manchester; the big club teams play across Europe weekly, and their games are broadcast to every continent of the world (Armstrong and Giulianotti 1997; Armstrong and Giulianotti 2001).

My intervention is to contribute to efforts to distribute sporting imaginaries beyond the nation state, into more transnational and global frames of reference. Whilst scholars have begun this process in the sociology of sport (Giulianotti and Robertson 2009; Millward 2011), the literature remains heavily focused on the English Premier League (Ben Porat 2000; Hognestad 2006; Hognestad 2009) and there is far less work in anthropology and/or from an ethnographic perspective.<sup>39</sup> Taking my lead from Giulianiotti and Robertson's study of the Scottish diaspora (Giulianotti and Robertson 2006; Giulianotti and Robertson 2007), I suggest the dynamics of transnational fandom can be greatly enriched by turning to supporters associated with less prominent leagues and countries, not least by helping build up a more robust framework for comparative analysis.

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This section has shown that an exploration of imaginings cannot remain in the realm of the mind/brain or language but needs to move out: into the flesh and

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<sup>39</sup> An important exception is Rachel Joo's work on transnational sport in South Korea (Joo 2012).

blood of the body and global and transnational currents of culture. This, then, was the empirical task of fieldwork: investigating the wide array of practices through which Çarşı Berlin imaginaries were made tangible. The intellectual traditions and debates that help to make sense of these practices are not those that are concerned with 'the imagination' as philosophical subject or mentalist topic. Instead I had to cast the net outside anthropology, into fields such as science and technology studies, phenomenological geography, and globalisation theory. The next section begins this broadening through a focus on the scholarly study of technologies.

## **Technologies**

The second field of scholarship that I have drawn inspiration from is Science and Technology Studies (STS). This label comprises a variety of work taking place at the nexus between sociology, anthropology, media, philosophy, gender and cultural studies (Harvey 2012; Hackett et al. 2008). I introduce the field here for two reasons. Firstly to contextualise my exploration of a particular technology – the internet – within the historical dialogues in which scholars have debated the study of technologies. Yet the question of how technologies affect our lives is also an accessible route into theoretical claims at the heart of the anthropological project. Arguably the greatest trend in anthropology since the millennium has been to problematize the idea of a privileged human subject. It can be glimpsed in such disparate fields as environmentalist and ecological anthropology (Escobar 1999; Kottak 1999; D. G. Anderson and Berglund 2003; West 2006), the increased adoption of the idea of the

Anthropocene (Latour 2014; A. Moore forthcoming), of medical anthropology blurring the boundaries between bodies, diseases, medicine and culture (Mol 2002; Good et al. 2010; J. S. Taylor 2008) and the emergence of the subdiscipline ‘anthrozoology’, devoted to rethinking the relationship of humans and animals (Hurn 2010; Kirksey and Helmreich 2010; Dugnoille 2014). The study of technology contributes to this decentring of the human through greater emphasis on technical infrastructures and objects, as well as critiquing western knowledge practices of science. I wish to show that the dialogue between anthropology and STS, although often generating tension, is productive at helping us better understand how technologies such as the internet affect the imaginaries of Çarşı Berlin.

Work in STS is frequently categorised based on the answer it gives to the question ‘do technologies shape us or do we shape them’? Historically speaking, a substantial amount of work slots into two competing schools. On one side is the view that technology shapes people. Often labelled a ‘technological determinist’ stance, at its most crude it is summarised by Karl Marx’s famous epithet: ‘the hand mill will give you a society with the feudal lord, the steam mill a society with the industrial capitalist’ (quoted in McLellan 1995, 124). In opposition to this approach is a ‘social constructivist’ position, where technologies are simply the tools of humans, exerting no influence other than the one humans wish: ‘what matters is not technology itself, but the social or economic system in which it is embedded’ (Winner 1999, 28). The debate surfaces throughout social science research and not just in works that consider media and technologies. In anthropology the discussion between ‘literate’ and ‘non-literate’ societies or the ‘autonomous’ versus ‘ideological’ model of literacy

is premised on a similar paradigm (see Goody and Watt 1963; Goody 1986; Street 1993). The determinist/constructivist cleft also extends far beyond academia, influencing politics (Humphrey 2005), science and knowledge creation (Latour 1993) and culture at large (Graeber 2015; Carr 2011). In its wide occurrence, it seems to go to the very root of questioning what it is to be human.

Yet, for me, the most interesting work within STS is that which challenges this traditional binary distinction. Perhaps the most radical and influential of approaches has been actor-network theory (ANT). Pioneered by Michel Callon (1986), Bruno Latour (2005) and John Law (1992), the manoeuvre through which ANT scholars dissolve the determinist/constructivist binary is by recourse to the idiom of the network (see also Law and Mol 2002).<sup>40</sup> The impact of technologies is neither due to their intrinsic qualities nor the sociology of the situation but rather a networked combination of the two. Facts, truth, knowledge and technical capacity are all a combination of elements held together in a heterogeneous network. A large part of what makes ANT creative (and challenging) is its insistence that alliances through which networks stabilise the social are comprised of human 'actors' and non-human 'actants'. In other words, humans are de-centered, viewed symmetrically with objects, such as door closers (Johnson 1988) and cat flaps (Ashmore 1993), animals such as scallops (Callon 1986), even diseases (Mol and Elsmann 1996; Garrety 1997). ANT's slogan is to 'follow the actors themselves'. Doing so reveals 'the ways in which worlds

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<sup>40</sup> An extensive list of ANT scholarship up until 2000 has been compiled by John Law. See <http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/fass/centres/css/ant/ant.htm> (accessed 18 August 2015).

appear and transform, to follow how things teeter between stabilization and collapse, and to trace the negotiations through which specific outcomes emerge' (Harvey 2012, 116).

Philosophically the ideas of ANT are most closely associated with Gilles Deleuze. As Casper Jensen and Kjetil Rødje summarise: 'the basic elements of Deleuzian thought are not static but entities in becoming. Consequently, the question to be asked is not what something is, but rather what it is turning into, or might be capable of turning into' (Jensen and Rødje 2010, 1). This viewpoint is of paramount importance for understanding the phenomenon of Çarşı Berlin. The organisation itself is continually in the process of becoming. The practice of fieldwork hence became a process of trying to describe an entity rapidly changing in form and status: thousands may be physically present at a match in London, to be replaced by tens having a debate on Facebook a day later (see chapter 7). In such a context, what is emerging is arguably more important than what is there (Latour 2005, 37).

ANT begins to free up the idea of 'technologies' by overturning conventional subject/object distinctions. Loosening the hold on a normative idea of objects seems essential to understanding Beşiktaş fans' interaction with them. From football shirts to fan videos, both physical and media objects were frequently the source of deep affective attachment, be that passionate adulation or angry disagreement. As chapter 4 will argue, this suggests that relations to objects are best conceived as inseparable from ideas of the self and its relation to others. Things are used to reach towards a messy concatenation of imaginings – of family, links to 'homeland' or of enchanting play.

Furthermore, by suggesting *all* relationships, networks and associations emerge through a process of translation (or ‘mediation’<sup>41</sup>) ANT guards against over-privileging the affordances of technology or mass-media. As argued in the introduction I conceive of mediation as evident in social transactions more broadly. Taking a term associated predominantly with ‘media’ and expanding its meaning helps counter what Boyer has labelled the ‘fissile tendency of subdisciplinarity’ (Boyer 2012, 412). In doing so, I take inspiration from scholars of media who use their work to speak to debates in anthropology more broadly, such as Gabriella Coleman’s exploration of law and liberalism through computer hackers (Coleman 2012), Brian Larkin’s work on global cultural circulations through his ethnography of film censorship in Nigeria (Larkin 2008), or Birgit Meyer’s work on colonialism and religion in Africa through the lens of cinema (Meyer 2014). I make the same move, using football to speak outside of media anthropology to wider questions of diasporic imaginings and the cultural significance of play.

Central to anthropology’s history has been a commitment to exploring human worlds not built around western understandings of epistemology or ontology. Much work in STS holds such critique of western knowledge practices as equally central – it simply goes about it in a different way. Instead of moving out into other societies and cultures, using their ontologies to reflect back on ‘us’, STS looks at how scientific practices and technologies frequently represent a Trojan horse within – containing clear evidence that ‘we have never been modern’ (Latour 1993) and pointing to the fallacy of hard separations of nature

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<sup>41</sup> The term Latour uses most frequently is ‘translation’. I prefer ‘mediation’ due to its links to media.

and culture, politics and science. Elements of ANT have been engaged by a host of anthropologists, revealing compatibility with the ethnographic method (Riles 2000; Oppenheim 2007; Zaloom 2003).

***‘Technologies of the imagination’***

I finish this section on technologies by feeding some of the language and insight garnered through STS back into ideas of the imaginary. Where imaginaries, technologies and football all converge, I argue, is in their capacity to posit indeterminate forms of existence. Such a move transforms indeterminacy from a problem that needs ‘fixing’ into an intrinsic element of existence – an important move that has to be grasped in order to understand the variety and diffuseness of Çarşı Berlin imaginaries.

I begin by returning to Sneath et al. and their idea of ‘technologies of the imagination’. The authors offer an alternative to the instrumentalist take on technologies by flipping the ontology behind the position: rather than viewing technologies as determining the scope of an imagination (pace Anderson), they argue that certain technologies simply open up ‘spaces of indeterminacy’ in social and cultural life which the imagination occupies (Sneath, Holbraad, and Pedersen 2009, 24).

Such a stance is predicated on viewing imaginaries as essentially indeterminate in character, a line of argument with an established philosophical heritage (Kant 1978; Castoriadis 1987). Viewing the imagination as intrinsically indeterminate sharpens the criteria by which we distinguish ‘imagining’ from ‘technologies’. It is only the emergence of phenomena that are

not fully conditioned that can be labelled ‘a technology of the imagination’.

Sneath et al argue that ‘some “technologies” are particularly effective at being ineffective (so to speak), i.e. they are particularly good at opening up spaces in which the underdetermined outcomes that we call imagination emerge’ (Sneath, Holbraad, and Pedersen 2009, 25). I argue throughout the thesis, especially in chapters 7 and 9, that internet technologies are a particularly successful ‘technology of the imagination’ to have emerged in recent times.

Indeterminacy is also a specific character of footballing identities. Football is most frequently viewed (and studied) as regards its role in defining barriers and categories. The literature is replete with studies illustrating how football clubs represent a nation (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1992), a city (Armstrong 1998) or a social class (Robson 2000). I do not discount this approach; indeed, I echo elements of it later on (pp.197-201). What I argue here, however, is that disproportionate emphasis on football’s divisionary role has blinded many to its equally strong function as an universal idea, dream and scheme of being.<sup>42</sup>

I take the idea of ‘universals’ from the work of Anna Tsing (2005). Tsing explores how ideas and processes, such as capitalism, science, and politics, become globalised through aspirations to fulfil ‘universalist dreams’. These dreams are never completely fulfilled but when rubbing against the specifics of the time and place in which they are deployed generate ‘friction’ which is possible to explore ethnographically (Tsing 2005, 1). Tsing’s concept of universals is formed at the nexus of capitalism, science and the politics of

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<sup>42</sup> A further critique of ANT is that it similarly ‘side-track[s] the notion of a shared humanity’ by giving primacy to the ways humans are separated (Berliner, Legrain, and Van de Port 2013, 444).

environmentalism in Indonesia. Her study consequently focuses on three rather 'serious' universals: prosperity, knowledge, and freedom. Is it not important to cast football, too, as a global practice? I believe the desire to have fun, to play, and to enjoy should equally be defined as an 'universalist dream'.

Football is arguably one of the most successful universals ever created. The game is perhaps the most mass-mediated of contemporary cultural practices, consumed by billions through television, computer games, websites and social networking platforms and 'intermediated' with pop, fashion and lifestyle culture (Lash and Lury 2007b). Engagement with the game triggers the movement of great amounts of capital, people and affect around the globe. Here is where I train my analysis, arguing that the 'intermediation' of football with web technologies produces an indeterminacy of great affective power. Football and media go together hand in glove, their imbrication opens up a large vista of potential outcomes and spaces in which people can dream, imagine, fanaticise and craft.

Indeterminacy hence becomes transformed from a problem that needs reconciling into a phenomenon that we can investigate empirically. An ethnography of gaps operates through paying attention to how informants mediate indeterminacy – that is, how they deal with gaps in cultural experience – through recourse to 'reified schemes of cultural identity and cultural difference' (Mazzarella 2004, 360). Chapter 5 looks at how this mediation takes place through the body at the away match, whilst chapter 9 looks at the role of the smartphone in this process.

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Scholarship on technologies has helped me better articulate my project in a number of ways. ANT theorists have aided me in developing a vocabulary capable of articulating the emergent, ever-changing status of Çarşı Berlin, whilst the idea that certain technologies encourage an indeterminate view on experience helps explain how and why internet technologies seem so important to the phenomenon of transnational football support: when imbricated with football, internet technologies can influence emotions and environments, not so much by regulating but by under-determining outcomes.

This still leaves open, however, the question of how these environments are structured. So far in my discussion I have used metaphors such as 'vista' and 'landscape' when trying to conceptualise the terrain in which these mediations occur. It is necessary, then, to pursue this thought further and formulate a proper conception of (imaginary) space.

## **Space**

Standard conceptions of space need reconsidering because they come up short when assessing Beşiktaş fan practices and imaginings. During fieldwork fans never seemed to reside simply 'in' one space. By this I do not mean that they travelled frequently (although they did). Even when physically in one place, their practices and imaginings would be roving outwards into other environments. Sat watching a game in a bar in London, or a members club in Basel, attention would be both on the physical environment and the action on the screen (fig. 15). Whilst stood on a terrace in Portugal or Istanbul, thoughts

would frequently drift to home, resulting in text, voice or video conversations with those not physically present (fig. 16).



**Figure 15. Beşiktaş fans waiting to watch Beşiktaş v Galatasaray, London, 26 August 2012 (author's photo)**



**Figure 16. Fans from London at a match in Turkey taking a photograph of themselves to send to a friend back home, Istanbul April 2014 (author's photo)**

As these examples hint, my attention was alerted to this phenomenon through observing fans' use of media, especially 'social media', internet-based applications that allow for the creation and circulation of user-generated content. In order to unravel what was going on I was drawn to scholarship on 'media places', particularly the work of Sean Moores (Moores and Metykova 2010; Moores 2012a; Moores 2012b). Moores argues that media settings or environments should be thought of as places. He draws on other media theorists to argue that when using media there are two 'theres' there: the physical location and the location generated by the media (Moores 2012a, 20; Scannell 1996; Schegloff 2002).

Yet Moores skilfully shows how this debate in media studies is one thread in richer discussions about space that have been taking place in the

social sciences for decades. As part of what has been labelled a ‘spatial turn’, the argument has been taken up across disciplines that the production of space should feature more explicitly in analysis – no longer a mute background to experience but playing a key role in the accomplishment of social processes (Lefebvre 1991; Thrift 2006; Low and Lawrence-Zuniga 2003). From within this work, the thread Moores gestures to – and in which I place my own work – is decidedly phenomenological in bent: from experiential anthropology (Pink 2009; Michael Jackson 1996; Ingold 2000), to non-representational theory (Thrift 2008c; Ben Anderson and Harrison 2010), the work of certain geographers (Tuan 1996; Seamon 1979), back to Heideggerian notions of *Dasein* (being-in-the-world) (Heidegger 1927). I am interested in how Çarşı Berlin members perceive and create spaces through their bodies, their movements and their media use. Rather than limiting myself to the idiom of one particular disciplinary debate, my work is influenced by and speaks to this wider conversation, all the while letting the ethnography drive proceedings to ensure it retains its distinct anthropological foundation of conveying the everyday, lived dimensions of the experience.<sup>43</sup>

A counter-trend in scholarship argues that the growing simultaneity of media consumption is symptomatic of an increasing homogenisation of experience. ‘Placenessness’ is proffered as an inherent characteristic of modernity, with the growth of putative ‘non-places’ such as airports and motorway service stations given as evidence (Relph 2008; Auge 2009).<sup>44</sup> Multi-sited fieldwork across western Europe, however, proved the exact opposite.

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<sup>43</sup> See Lash and Lury (2007) for an excellent example of the productivity of a cross-disciplinary synthesis of ideas when assessing popular culture.

<sup>44</sup> For a more systematic critique of this position see Moores (2012a, 65–68); Cresswell (2006); Tomlinson (1999).

The only constant across location was support for Beşiktaş. As chapters 5 and 6 show, every other element of the experience was customised, from standing arrangements on the terrace to the colour of the walls in the pub. Furthermore, spaces were differently occupied each time they were frequented, contributing to the elicitation of vastly differing imaginaries of 'Beşiktaş', 'Turkey' or 'Turkish football'. Rather than carbon copy replications of homogeneity, the phenomenon seems better captured by the metaphor of a kaleidoscopic reconfiguration of elements that comprise the environment, a process taking place *in medias res* as subjects move through the world (see Ingold 2007).

### ***Internet space***

In the internet age, the idea of 'doubling of place' is arguably easier to conceptualise thanks to increased interactivity in communication (Fattal 2014). In the 1990s when the internet first emerged as a mass communication medium, theorists seemed enthralled by the potentials of this doubling: the ability to 'be' both sat at home but also a 'cybernaut', propelled by links on websites into other dimensions, at first seemed to capture the imagination for dazzling potential (see R. Rogers 2012). Scholars and the wider public saw in the web the emergence of a global 'network society' (Castells [1996] 2010)[1996] or post-human digital age (Hayles 1999), perhaps best encapsulated in John Perry Barlow's infamous 'Declaration on the Independence of Cyberspace'.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>45</sup>'Governments of the Industrial World...I declare the global social space we are building to be naturally independent of the tyrannies you seek to impose on us...Cyberspace does not lie within your borders', <https://projects.eff.org/~barlow/Declaration-Final.html> (accessed 19 August 2015).

Yet there was a problem: not all online interactions saw the user adopt another personality or engage in different behaviour. Furthermore, as the internet matures, there has been increasing consolidation of government controls and the development of business models that prioritise making online environments 'sticky', trapping users in particular spaces and practices (Gladwell 2002). A subsequent pushback was undertaken to 'provincialize' digital media (Coleman 2010, 489). To paraphrase Miller and Slater, scholars chose to work from the assumption that online spaces are a part of offline contexts, with both the potentials and drawbacks that realisation prompts (Miller and Slater 2000, 5–8). This position has become the dominant trope in 'digital anthropology' (H. A. Horst and Miller 2012), especially since the emergence of what is often labelled 'web 2.0', a perceived shift towards more interactive and collaborative 'social' media such as wikis, blogs, embedded videos and social networking sites (Coleman 2010, 489). Many of these services encourage or assume a continuity between 'online' and 'offline' self. It became quite obvious that there was no universal 'logic of practice' and that users inhabit a multitude of internets (see also Postill 2011).

An important way that this thesis makes an original contribution to anthropology is to capture internet spaces at the time of my fieldwork. Whilst avoiding any epochal claims about a 'web 3.0', the growing importance of mobile and locative media, media that takes advantage of the location-aware aspects of the smartphone (see de Souza e Silva and Sheller 2014) has resulted in many of these social media sites and platforms operating differently to when much of the cited research was conducted, not to mention giving rise to entirely

new programmes and interactions.<sup>46</sup> There was no ‘digital divide’ between haves and have nots: every fan in Çarşı Berlin that I met had a smartphone, a mobile device capable of tasks associated more with computers.<sup>47</sup> Most fans accessed the internet through these devices more frequently than with computers. Some did not even own computers. We cannot consider internet spaces, then, without thinking about movement.

### ***Movement space***

In 2006, John Urry and Mimi Sheller could argue for the need to ‘mobilise the spatial turn’ in social science, pointing to an increasing convergence between transport and communication into what they called ‘mobility systems’ (Sheller and Urry 2006, 208). By the time of my fieldwork, the argument no longer needed to be made. The entire phenomenon of transnational Turkish football support is predicated on mobility: the communities from which Çarşı Berlin derives exist as a result of mass migration from Turkey to western Europe; away match attendance is dependent on the affordability and ease of transnational air travel; the affective power and organisational accomplishment

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<sup>46</sup> This is not a criticism of the research but a reminder of the pace of change in how internet environments are experienced. Danny Miller’s exploration of Facebook published in 2011 was based almost entirely around users who access the site via computers (Miller 2011). By the main point of my fieldwork in Autumn 2012, computers were already less important than mobile devices. Examples of applications that did not exist when I started fieldwork but which, by the time I had finished, were part of fans’ media practices include (in no particular order): WhatsApp, an instant-messaging app that operates over a smartphone’s internet connection, Voxel, an app that turns your phone into a walkie-talkie, and Uber, a taxi service that uses a phone’s GPS to connect drivers directly with passengers (<https://www.whatsapp.com>, <http://www.voxel.com>, <https://www.uber.com>, accessed 19 August 2015).

<sup>47</sup> By ‘digital divide’ I refer to a broad literature that explores those for whom access to the internet – or modern information and communication technologies – is restricted or non-existent (H. Horst and Miller 2006, 10; Mazzarella 2010a; Srinivasan and Ramani 2008; Benitez 2006; Mossberger, Tolbert, and Stansbury 2003). There has been much excellent work, not only in ‘developing’ countries but also showing how many places and people in the West do not have access to the internet (see Warschauer 2004). Nevertheless, the debate is not relevant to my ethnographic particular where all fans had access to the internet, often through multiple means.

of the fan collective requires communication to move across borders and around networks instantly. Thirty years ago, ANT scholars faced resistance when trying to argue for the ‘social as mobility’ (Urry 2000, 2; H. M. Collins and Yearley 1992). Today there are journals, books and degree courses devoted to exploring the increasing play between notions of culture, people and place (Cresswell 2006; Tomlinson 1999).<sup>48</sup>

Within this literature, I am drawn to work that focuses on the growing prevalence of mathematical procedures within social and cultural practices (Kockelman 2013; Lury, Parisi, and Terranova 2012; Badiou 2005). In particular I find compelling the argument that the increasing computation of social processes has led to a new sense of movement. Nigel Thrift argues that ‘numerical calculations are being done and redone continuously, so that static representation becomes subordinated to flow’ (Thrift 2004, 590). Such theories move us on productively from the previous discussion of ‘technologies’, sharpening the analytical lens by lifting the bonnet: it’s not simply the technologies themselves that we need to be aware of but also the calculative logic within. The final two chapters of the thesis explore how football fandom is imagined by Çarşı Berlin in this ‘qualculative’ world (Callon and Law 2005). Chapter 8 investigates how algorithms in social media platforms affect the coalescence and visibility of various footballing publics, whilst Chapter 9 explores how mobile, locative technologies alter the sensorium of fans and hence the enchanting effects of football support. There is a link between work within this ‘mathematical turn’ or ‘algorithmic approach’

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<sup>48</sup> See for instance the journal *Mobilities*, founded in 2006 (<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rmob20#.VdSJ1tYtdKo>, accessed 19 August 2015) or the Master’s degrees in Mobility and Urban Studies at the University of Aalborg or in Migration Mobility and Development, at the School of Oriental and African Studies.

and the actor-network rendition of human and non-human assemblages. Both act as important evidence supporting the need to distribute agency within a social world that extends far beyond the human.

### ***The virtual and actual***

Returning to Moores and his 'non-media centric' approach to media (Moores 2012a, 103), I wish to argue that a doubled perception of space is not something limited to media. Instead, I view this doubling as intrinsic to human imagining more broadly, and consequently the process is perhaps best conceived as mediation between potential and determinacy or virtual and actual realities.

In this theorisation I am influenced philosophically by the work of Gilles Deleuze (Deleuze and Guattari 2004; Massumi 2002). Deleuze forges a concept of virtuality in which the virtual stands as a conceptualisation of the intangibles of existence, 'social facts' which cannot be reified permanently or completely but which are widely felt (Deleuze 2002; Colebrook 2006, 7). Rob Shields gives some examples: 'community', 'the public', 'gender' or 'the global' (Shields 2006, 284). Just as these concepts are frequently felt as 'real', so the virtual should be conceived of as an intrinsic part of the real, as one of its multiple dimensions.

This contradicts the dominant trend in internet scholarship which, through a focus on computer-generated worlds and concepts such as 'virtual reality', has established the idea that 'virtual' refers to simulation and pretence. This position has been unwittingly lent greater weight through a tendency to conceptualise internet spaces in dialectical relation to physical spaces. Across

the social sciences much work divides its study into some sort of binary, be that 'online/offline' (Sessions 2010) 'physical/virtual' (Sumiala et al. 2014), or 'online/onground' (Cool 2010). I take this to be the wrong analytical distinction for my work.

If virtuality refers to immanent, intangible dimensions of reality then there is a long historical precedent of anthropologists engaging ethnographically with virtual worlds. Take for instance William Stanner's ethnographic descriptions of the Dreamtime of Australian Aborigines (Stanner 2010) or numerous works on belief systems that involve parallel worlds populated by spirits (Evans-Pritchard [1937] 1977; Luhrmann 1989). Even studies of how 'wealth is constituted...as an unseen world that has authority over the everyday lives of the dynastic rich' can be viewed as explorations of virtuality (Marcus in Boellstorff et al. 2012, xv; G. E. Marcus 1998; Ho 2009). The study of internet-mediated virtuality should be seen as a continuation – and tweaking – of this long anthropological tradition rather than a brave new course. Conceiving of virtuality at its most broad, I believe, is an approach more in keeping with the anthropological method in that it provides a well-rounded, detailed and open-ended gesture that is redolent of – perhaps essential to – participant observation. Rather than a metonym for 'the internet', virtuality is more broadly a 'doubling', the drawing on both the real and the possible, the potential and the determined.

Chapters 6 and 7 stand as my contribution to these anthropological explorations of virtuality. It needs noting that one of these chapters, chapter 6, does not even mention the internet. This is because I view the phenomenon of Çarşı Berlin as intrinsically of broader processes of doubling: of Turkey and

Europe; of satellite TV images of football and the standing on a terrace; of internet instant message and physical meeting. Çarşı Berlin continually draws on aspects of the real and possible. It spins its own myths, it is comprised out of events and the imaginings or dreams of events. To be sure, internet-mediated communication takes particular prominence in these doublings, but to properly understand its role – to avoid what Steve Woolgar dubs ‘cyberbole’ (Woolgar 2002) – requires simply being ethnographically present, whether that is in the bar (chapter 6) or on the web forum (chapter 7), sensitively recording fans’ practices as they make and unmake the constellations and web of relations that they call a space, a friendship or community.

Keeping a broad focus prevents the lazy assumption that the effects of internet-mediated communication are always ‘positive’, contributing towards the expansion of certain potentials. As chapter 7 shows, it is just as likely for fans’ actual use of internet technologies to deny *virtual* offline potentials, such as the overzealous moderator of a web forum who demands all Beşiktaş fans post in Turkish, despite many fans being bi or tri-lingual (p.269).

Many anthropologists see it as a badge of pride that their discipline uses the minutiae of daily, lived experience as the grit in the eye of more bombastic attempts at fixing social life (Clifford and Marcus [1986] 2010; Rabinow and Marcus 2008). In this regard, my concept of the virtual is a key tool. The virtual destabilises by introducing multiplicity into ideas of the real. Through its lens, we grasp that social life is inherently unstable, that we are all in a process of continual becoming, of balancing potential and determinations through ‘doubling’ or ‘mediation’.

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I find the debate surrounding the 'spatial turn' in social science research fertile ground in which to think about the practices of Çarşı Berlin. Paying attention to how fans engage with their wider environments is easier to chart empirically, leading in turn to the development of a sturdy theory of a 'doubling' of virtual and actual space that is rooted firmly in the ethnographic experience. Having developed this theory, the remaining two sections of the chapter see a shift of focus back to my contribution to debates in anthropology and elsewhere. In other words, the trajectory will show how mediations between the virtual and actual can help unpick the complexity of the Çarşı Berlin experience. I begin with perhaps the thorniest of issues: where to locate Çarşı Berlin in the wider debates over the 'globalisation' of culture?

### **Globalisation**

The operations and workings of Çarşı Berlin have the potential to help anthropologists rethink the way they approach the study of globalisation. Since the 1980s, much energy within 'the anthropology of globalisation' (Xavier Inda and Rosaldo 2008) has been spent developing a conceptual language to capture the process whereby the circulation of 'universal' global forms produces 'local' networks. Amongst other ideas, global cultural forms have been examined in terms of their ability to 'produce locality' (Appadurai 1995), as 'hybrids' of culture (Hannerz 1996) or the 'friction' they generate when butted up to particular contexts (Tsing 2005). Much of this work has been very successful at problematising the relationship of culture and place. It has rightfully

foregrounded the paradox that the current round of globalisation seems to have led to a greater sense of indeterminacy and possibility at the same time as seeing the consolidation of many structures in predictable ways (see for instance Mazzarella 2004).

Nonetheless, the activities of Çarşı Berlin do not accord neatly with any one of these explanations. They instead seem comprised of a confusing amalgam of elements of the above, as well as exhibiting characteristics that none of the authors address. A Çarşı Berlin sticker that had been produced in Istanbul is stuck over a Fenerbahçe sticker in Amsterdam, photographed and uploaded to Facebook to be seen and commented upon by fans in London and Berlin (chapter 8). A meme – an activity or catchphrase that spreads by replication – washes through Beşiktaş fan interactions, cropping up in Facebook posts, conversations down the pub and celebrations at matches. It dominates all interaction in the group for hours or days then is never referred to again (chapter 9). Global forms seem to be penetrating, influencing and dissipating at dizzying speed, and via routes and pathways that simply did not exist when the scholars above first began to explore globalisation processes. An update on this literature is needed to properly make sense of where and how Çarşı sits in wider culture.

Casting around for the most productive way to understand these new realities of globalisation, I found myself drawn to two different conversations. The first emerged out of literature on transnationalism and diasporas, most of which was concerned with migration and the movement of people (Basch, Glick Schiller, and Szanton Blanc 1994; Kearney 1995; Rouse 1995; Hannerz 1996; Ong 1999; Vertovec 2009). The second is what I dub literatures on ‘circulation

and publics'. This label covers an eclectic mix of scholars and disciplines, perhaps best summarised as work concerned with the movement of things – be they discourses, objects or ideologies (Lee and LiPuma 2002; Lash and Lury 2007b; Beer 2013b; C. M. Kelty et al. 2008). Each on their own remains limited in helping explain Çarşı Berlin – a hyper-connected transnational grouping built out of the movement of both people and things. But I bring them into closer conversation through pulling both fields through the idea of virtual and actual mediations. The result is what I term the 'parochial global', a way of describing contemporary cultural production that holds together indeterminacy and determinacy, global and local. The parochial global has two key characteristics – it is intrinsically ephemeral and, precisely because of this, fun to engage with. Pulling ideas of ephemerality and fun into talk of globalisation gets us closer to understanding initially puzzling elements of the Çarşı Berlin experience: why do fans spend significant time and money to come together physically, only to then ignore each other whilst their heads are buried in their phones? Why do Çarşı Berlin stickers adorn the metro in Kiev (chapter 8)? How is it that the Maya civilisation of southern Mexico dominates all talk at the weekly Beşiktaş match in London (chapter 9)? The rest of this section will unfold this argument in more detail.

### ***Transnational and diaspora***

In 2014, a conference was held to mark the twentieth anniversary of Linda Basch, Nina Glick Schiller and Cristina Blanc's work, *Nations Unbound* (1994). The conference framed the book as marking the start of the 'transnational' era

in migration research, and the conference organisers were using the anniversary of its release to evaluate the state of the field. Some may take exception with the importance of this particular work. What is less contestable is that the debate over globalisation was coterminous with a similarly productive discussion within the anthropology of migration over how and where 'migrants' fit into new patterns of movement and circulation (see Kearney 1995; Clifford 1994).

As with globalisation debates, much of the emphasis was focused on generating new terminology. The concept of 'transnationalism' was coined, offering researchers 'an alternative cartography of social space' (Rouse 1991, 9). Instead of *inter*-national ties, the *trans*national offered a form of interaction that transcended the nation state (Vertovec 1999, 447). The decade following the publication of *Nations Unbound* saw a blossoming of ethnographic research illustrating how entities from villagers (Levitt 2001) to families (Miller and Madianou 2012) to television stations (Aksoy and Robins 2000) were increasingly operating within parameters which paid scant regard to 'the national'. Existing concepts, too, were refashioned: the term 'diaspora' was freed from strict association with the dispersion of Jews and came to refer to any grouping located outside of a 'homeland' (Safran 1991; Brubaker 2005; Clifford 1994). Scholars refused to discriminate between a connection to 'home' as a historically-traceable migration and a purely imagined connection.

It is useful to think of the actions of Çarşı Berlin from within this schema, not in order to establish Çarşı Berlin as definitively transnational or diasporic, but because it provides another idiom by which to productively hold still the continual mediation of cultural life that I have so far referred to in terms of

‘determinacy’ and ‘indeterminacy’ or ‘virtual’ and ‘actual’. Just like we saw with these terms, diasporic conviviality or transnational association are contingent, indeterminate states. When fans huddle around a phone to take a photograph, post it on Facebook and share with their Turkish-speaking friends and family, it is productive to think about the activity as, in part, a diasporic claim to belonging. If fans switch into English to fraternise with Portuguese locals, or to post pictures of their flare shows on international fan messageboards, it is better to speak of assertions of transnational belonging and conversation. Participation in Çarşı Berlin, I argue, allows members to entertain multiple – often conflicting – notions of belonging: to Turkey, to a European nation state and to a wider global footballing family. Chapter 4 shows this process on an intra-group level by investigating how Çarşı Berlin members interact with each other. Chapter 5 extends the focus to look at how, as a collective, Çarşı Berlin positions itself within the wider Beşiktaş crowd at away matches. Chapter 8 sees the broadest articulation of this idea when I explore how Çarşı Berlin members interact globally with strangers and make claims to be part of a larger ‘footballing family’.

### ***Circulation and publics***

The practices of Çarşı Berlin also suggest new ways to think about circulation of cultural forms and the composition of publics in the twenty-first century. In the past decade or so, cross-disciplinary scholars have begun to argue that circulation should be seen as the defining character of contemporary cultural life. For Lee and LiPuma, processes of circulation and exchange do not simply

transmit meanings but are 'constitutive acts in themselves' (Lee and LiPuma 2002, 192). Scott Lash and Celia Lury argue that, in the contemporary world, value derives from distinctiveness, a quality that comes through the twin forces of branding and circulation (Lash and Lury 2007b, 135–52; see also Gaonkar and Povinelli 2003; Spyer and Steedly 2013; Fattal 2014).

Many of these scholars argue from the same anthropological starting point of classic works on gifts and exchange (Mauss [1954] 2002; Malinowski [1922] 2014). For an anthropologist, I thought this would provide a rich historical lineage in which to situate any discussion of circulation. I was disappointed, however, that much of the literature is dominated by a rigid dualism between static notions of 'gift' and 'commodity' (see Weiner 1985; Graeber 2001; Godelier 2004) or divides its exploration into distinct spheres labelled 'market', 'state' and 'domestic' (Godbout and Caille 1998). Whatever the exchange practices and actions of Çarşı Berlin, they are certainly not capable of being defined so rigidly: a Beşiktaş football shirt is bought by a fan on eBay<sup>49</sup> and then handed as a gift to his friend. The friend, already owning the top covertly sells it on. Consequently, a better starting point for me was the book, *The Social Life of Things*, edited by Arjun Appadurai (1986). Appadurai managed to successfully blur the gift/commodity dualism, pointing out that things can 'move in and out of different conditions of identification and alienation' being both gifts *and* commodities at different points and times in their 'social life' (Appadurai 1986; Miller 2005, 7).

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<sup>49</sup> eBay is an online shopping website that allows users to sell items, either for a fixed prices or by an auction. Started in the US in 1995, it is now a global multi-billion dollar business with a presence in over thirty countries (see <https://www.ebayinc.com/our-company/our-history/> accessed 4 September 2015).

The briefest encounter with Çarşı Berlin confirms the importance of a sense of movement to the generation of a transnational fan club. Chapter 5 argues that the entire phenomenon of Çarşı Berlin is predicated on the ability of fans to physically coalesce a few times a year at Beşiktaş away matches. Chapters 8 and 9 reveal that the movement of objects is equally intrinsic to generating groupness – from posting scarves to distant fans, to the memorialisation of the group's reach through endless giving and receiving of photographs. Nevertheless, there is the need to update and qualify this work on exchange, all of which speaks to a world before smartphones (sometimes even before the internet). As already argued, I see internet-mediated technologies as playing a decisive role in opening up imaginative spaces and facilitating the actions necessary for a transnational fan club. It is productive to feed this idea into scholarship on exchange. Doing just this in chapter 8, I argue that what Çarşı Berlin members are exchanging most of all is not 'things' but interactivity itself.

In trips to away matches, conversations in bars and life story interviews, fans would frequently suggest – unprompted – that internet technologies have increased the ease and frequency of interacting with other Beşiktaş fans. Chapter 7 reveals that many members of Çarşı Berlin only found out about the group by plugging search engine keywords into Google. Chapter 8 looks at how members found out about others through algorithmic 'suggestions' based on existing connections in Facebook. Indeed, in that chapter I argue that, whilst fans are frequently circulating digital objects such as photos or videos, circulation is driven not by the desire to consume the image but to be part of the interactive exchange it has prompted – to be able to click 'like' under the

image, to comment on it and receive an instant update whenever anyone else does the same.

It is profitable to think about these interactions in the idiom of publics. By 'public' I refer to the concept of public spheres, defined most broadly as arenas where individuals come together to discuss various issues (Habermas [1962] 1991; Arendt 1999; Calhoun 1992). In chapter 8, I engage with writers in anthropology and beyond who argue that the internet has allowed for the formation of new types of publics (C. Kelty 2008; C. Taylor 2004). Building on their work, I suggest that Çarşı Berlin represents not so much a single public as multiple publics, forming and reforming around 'assemblages' of materials, ideologies and beliefs (DeLanda 2006).

There are two important characteristics of these publics. The first is their ephemerality. The objects used to generate the public do not last: a flare that fans hold aloft whilst chanting goes out after thirty seconds; the video of the flare is buried in Facebook news feeds before a week has passed. Rather than a negative, this is actually what attracts fans. Transience is desired: it lowers the burden of involvement at the same time as generating greater exclusivity – 'Why not comment or like this?' goes the thinking. 'It won't be here tomorrow'. The second quality to these publics is their playfulness. Some fans find it enjoyable and fun to skip from one topic to the next. Attention is only demanded in passing. You can become involved in contrasting conversations, frequently at the same time, and then move on.

Of course not all fans enjoy this state of affairs. As chapter 7 shows, some are alienated or overwhelmed by the continual giving and getting of internet environments. They misplay their hand, posting on the wrong person's profile

and receiving a torrent of abuse in reply. Others wed themselves more firmly to associations and identities that can't so easily be 'played' with, such as an attachment to a nationality or ethnicity. Chapter 9 is devoted to exploring this tension between a malleable association to a transnational fan club and bonds to less flexible organisations such as a workplace or family. I develop this thought in more detail below, in the section on distraction in this chapter.

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In the fine grain of a transnational fan collective it is possible to glimpse how twenty-first century globalisation is felt and lived. Participation in Çarşı Berlin does not involve parsing the 'global' and 'local', choosing when and how to dwell in either. As with the idea of 'virtual' and 'actual' realities, to engage is to become briefly entangled in a particular assemblage of the two, before moving on in the flow. Digital media are intrinsic to the process as they proliferate the chance of interaction with these 'parochial global' forms: a joke is no longer just shared over a drink but also as a text message, or a video shared on Facebook. The process is transient and playful, but these conditions generate their own tensions and concerns. If people are brought together in different ways by the internet, then it follows that also at stake are notions of who a person is and where their boundaries should be drawn. This is the final topic which will be explored below.

## Selfhood

The thrust of the chapter so far has been on introducing literatures and debates to make sense of the ways that Turkish-speaking diasporans imagine themselves part of Çarşı Berlin. This final section brings the chapter to a close by turning the lens back around on itself: how does the idea of being part of Çarşı Berlin impact on a fan's wider, non-footballing life? Loosely grouped under the label of 'selfhood', I assess a disparate collection of literatures and debates that help explain the effect of involvement in an internet-mediated fan collective on notions of self and relationships with others.

Whilst not denying the usefulness of psychological or philosophically-derived explanations of how selfhood or subjectification is achieved, a specifically anthropological take requires 'reviv[ing] the theoretical potential of all ethnographic insight' (Da Col and Graeber 2011, vii). The behaviour of fans and the way they organise the social for themselves should assume the central role in generating new (anthropological) knowledge as to how selfhood is figured. Prioritising the ethnography in this manner, I have come to view the involvement of fans in Çarşı Berlin as encouraging three important perspectives or interpretations of existence more broadly: of a dividual mode of belonging, of the importance of enchantment in modern life, and of distraction as central to process of subjectification. The rest of this section sees a progression through these perspectives in turn.

*Dividuated self*

One of the most intriguing elements of fieldwork was witnessing how and when personal autonomy would dissolve into a sense of collective belonging. This most frequently occurs on the terraces at games, where the individual Beşiktaş fans suddenly become a crowd. Bodies are cast in the same colours, their movements coordinated. Voices fall into collective song, the lyrics frequently portraying the individual as incorporated into the Beşiktaş collective ('You, the blood in my veins, my destiny, my glorious Beşiktaş'<sup>50</sup>).

Casting around for a means to make sense of this process, I first turned to writings on crowds (Le Bon 1896; Canetti [1962] 1984; Mazzarella 2010b). Yet much of this work was light on ethnographic detail and frequently written from an outsider's perspective.<sup>51</sup> Another course involved writings that questioned and challenged the very premise of distinguishing between 'individual' and 'society' (Strathern 1996b). I have already introduced some of the authors who have explored this topic in my discussion of STS and ANT (pp. 58-63). Within anthropology, the writer with perhaps the strongest influence has been Marilyn Strathern. Throughout her career, Strathern has immersed herself in loosening the dynamics of relationships through which ideas of self and alterity are established. More importantly, her writings span a wide range of locales, from the 'traditional' anthropological domain of Papua New Guinea (Strathern 1988), to kinship in an English town (Strathern 1992) and the institutions of western academia (Strathern 2000). I see her work as an

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<sup>50</sup> Sen benim damardaki kanım, alnımdaki yazım, şanlı Beşiktaşım (Nuhrat 2013, 218).

<sup>51</sup> For a notable example that bucks this trend, see Burford (2001). Although written as a popular book, Burford's thoughts on crowds come through direct participant observation with football crowds over many years. He manages to capture the heady allure of involvement that I witnessed and felt during fieldwork, and which many academic works omit.

excellent example of the way that, amongst the social sciences, anthropology is perhaps best positioned to bring the familiar continually into question.

Following Strathern's lead, I suggest that football fandom can help us to rearrange preconceived notions and categories of self. In *The Gender of the Gift*, Strathern famously argues that 'Melanesian persons are as dividual as they are individually conceived. They contain a generalized sociality within' (Strathern 1988, 13). Taking inspiration from this insight, I argue it is productive to think about football fandom as based around a dividual sense of belonging.

This argument seems alien – perhaps mystical – because the literature on fandom is still overly based on a western conception of participants as individual 'fanatics' or 'obsessives'. This notion was cemented by the first wave of fan studies in the 1970s, which battled to establish the fan as a legitimate object of academic study (Fiske 1989; Jenkins 1992; Hebdige 1979). It still retains a hold on the common perception of fandom, even if the academic debate has seen successful attempts to establish fans as more ordinary and everyday (Gray, Sandvoss, and Harrington 2007; Sandvoss 2005; Crawford 2004; Hills 2002).

Paying close attention to how Çarşı Berlin members conceive of their relationships to each other reveals the dissolving of individuality whilst physically gathered at the match (see Chapter 5). Yet perhaps more interestingly I noted a dividual, relational sense of fandom being established by fans within everyday life. Chapter 4 argues that fandom should consequently be conceptualised within the warp and weft of everyday relations to friends and families. It investigates the materialities and practices through which this

dividuality is invoked, from tattoos on the skin to the singing of songs and sharing of photographs.

Yet I go further. The second half of the thesis suggests that engagement with internet technologies has sharpened awareness of the dividualated, relational aspects of selfhood. Chapter 7 looks at how the tagging of individuals in Facebook photos reveals a profile on the site (and hence the 'person' behind it) to be not an individual construction but instead assembled through the relationships of the fan. Chapter 8 investigates the phenomenon of internet memes, collections of images, video and text whose existence is predicated on circulation through networks of related people. Chapter 9 focuses on the way that fans stuck at work or home use their smartphones to transport themselves into the midst of the away match experience. Taken as a whole, I suggest internet-mediated communication reminds us of our relationality, our ability 'to partake of each other's sufferings and joys, sharing one another's experiences ... and feel the effects of each other's acts' (Sahlins 2013, 28).

My intervention under this heading can hence be summarised as a cross-pollination of anthropological notions of dividualated personhood with ideas of distributed agency developed by scholars within STS. An anthropological take on selfhood helps 'humanise' appreciations of how the social is comprised of distributed elements. We understand that this distribution is not simply of circuitry, networks and infrastructures but contains a real sense of the self as composed of the parts of others.

***Enchanted self***

A second important insight into the notion of selfhood arrives through the great amounts of passion and playfulness that I witnessed in Beşiktaş fandom.

Supporters frequently said that the chance to engage in joyous and playful behaviour was an important motivation for involvement in Çarşı Berlin. I witnessed plenty of examples, such as the singing of deliberately stupid, profane or melancholic songs, taking and sharing photos of memorable Beşiktaş numbers, or mischievously speaking to uncomprehending locals in Turkish.

A productive way of understanding this element of the experience is to consider fans' behaviour in light of a recent multidisciplinary turn towards a 're-enchantment of modern life' (Bennett 2001; Saler 2012; Meyer and Pels 2003). Anthropology can articulate this claim with a richness that comes from its historical consideration of the topic of 'magic' or 'enchantment' (Frazer [1909] 2007; Malinowski [1909] 1935). The topic recently regained conceptual clarity as a clutch of scholars began to argue that magical or enchanted perceptions of the world are intrinsic to modern life (Geschiere 2013; Pels 2010; Greenwood 2009). I work out of – and contribute to – this position by suggesting that football fandom is a peculiarly modern form of enchantment, one that helps to revivify the lives of participants and perhaps even to politicise.

Chapter 5 argues that this enchantment is particularly tied to the frequent opportunities fandom provides for imitation. Fans wear the same colours, move in the same way, shout in a similar register and sing simultaneously in organised chants. Scholars outside of anthropology have argued for some time that affective imitation sits at the heart of fundamental social principles and processes (Canetti [1962] 1984; Bhabha 1984; Tarde

[1903] 2009). With its attention on moments of contact between selves and others, anthropology is well-suited to exploring processes of imitation, as the work of Michael Taussig shows (Taussig 1993). In his historical-ethnography of ‘first contact’ in Latin America, Taussig makes the argument that mimesis is a universal cultural trait, through which humans ‘copy, imitate, make models, explore difference, yield into and become other’ (Taussig 1993, xiii).

Importantly for the current discussion, Taussig argues that there is a ‘magical power’ to imitation (Taussig 1993, 2; see also Taussig 2003). My work adds to his enterprise in a number of ways. In chapter 5 it shows this magical power in the very different milieu of Beşiktaş chants on the terraces. Chapter 9 then looks at a digitised corollary of this idea, such as the imitation of memes. In this latter instance, my contribution takes the form of updating the technological infrastructure through which mimesis is frequently enacted. In 1936 Walter Benjamin famously argued that the newly-emerged phenomenon of cinema had transformed ‘seeing’ into a more sensual, captivating, experience (Benjamin [1936] 1999). I draw on more contemporary scholarship – most notably Nigel Thrift – to argue that a similar alteration of the senses is occurring as a result of the smartphone (Thrift 2008b; Elliott and Urry 2010).

The smartphone has become the fastest-selling technology in history. There are over two billion in existence. By 2020, it is predicted 80% of adults will own one. Every member of Çarşı Berlin is already there. Dispersed across Europe, atomised into regional gangs, the fans are seldom physically co-present in large enough numbers to generate a sense of wonderment through large-scale imitation. Consequently, the smartphone assumes great importance as a technology that can transport enchantment across time and space. Wherever I

would look, fans would be filming themselves performing the ‘imitative’ aspects of fandom – singing, marching, celebrating.

Pushing the discussion of technologies through the anthropological lens of magic, imitation and enchantment helps to colour in more of the motivations that lay behind Çarşı Berlin’s use of devices such as the smartphone. Fans use technologies as part of their practices of imagining, but only because the process is fun, and exemplifies an already-existing notion of enchantment-through-imitation. My contribution stands as one example of how an anthropological take on technologies can add affective depth to their study.

### ***Distracted self***

My final reflection on selfhood comes through returning to the notion of ‘doubling’ mentioned in the third section of this chapter (p.73). Concentrating on the quality of the action, I argue that this practice of doubling – of mediating between virtual and actual realities – is profoundly distracting. Furthermore, because of the high prevalence of such practices within Çarşı Berlin, this distraction colours many scenarios, relationships and perhaps even how the Çarşı Berlin community should be conceived overall.

When I would meet with fans, they would frequently be simultaneously engaged in a text or voice conversation on their mobile phones. When waving arms and singing a chant on the terraces, they would be attempting to hold a phone aloft to record proceedings. Fans were continually multitasking through internet devices, specifically the smartphone. My journey to productively theorise this phenomenon started with authors whose work explores questions

of technologies, attention and distraction. There was a surprising amount of material. Some was written by academics in the humanities (Lanham 2006; Maggie Jackson 2008), but most was outside the academy, written by journalists (Carr 2011) or observers within the technology industry (Lanier 2011). The topic seemed to tap into a popular unease with the emergence of new technologies, a process which David Graeber has astutely parodied with his comparison of the emergence in the nineteenth century of the postal service with that of the internet (Graeber 2015, 162). I was disappointed, however, that few of these works considered notions of distraction and attention without challenging its negative connotation.<sup>52</sup>

It was again in anthropology – and the work of Michael Taussig – that I saw a glimpse of a different convention. Building on Walter Benjamin, Taussig suggests that distraction is not a negative consequence of, but intrinsic to, the human experience of the world. We should ‘assume a distracted collective reading with what I call, by way of shorthand, a tactile eye’, he argues. Distraction, ‘the type of flitting and barely conscious peripheral-vision perception’ is not the exception but the default (Taussig, 1991, p. 152).

In articulating this position, Taussig explicitly rejects the ‘allegorizing’ mode of cultural analysis that has, for decades, been a default, a priori approach of anthropology. Perhaps best typified by Clifford Geertz, such an approach views surface phenomena as ciphers which can unlock deep systems of meaning. That is, ‘how symbols operate as vehicles of “culture”’ (Ortner 1984, 129; Geertz [1973b] 2000). Yet as Taussig points out, such a position assumes a

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<sup>52</sup> The titles of some of the books reveal their bias: *The Shallows: How the Internet is Changing the Way We Think, Read and Remember* (Carr 2011), *The End of Absence: Reclaiming What We've Lost in a World of Constant Connection* (Harris 2014), *Distracted: The Erosion of Attention and the Coming Dark Age* (Maggie Jackson 2008).

contemplative individual. It stems from a metaphor of 'culture-as-text', which assumes the quality of mind behind cultural understanding to be that exhibited when reading a book. As already mentioned in my discussion of space, I prefer a more phenomenological argument when considering how meaning is acquired (pp.66-7). Whilst Taussig does not reference this literature explicitly, his argument is redolent of scholars such as Sarah Pink who investigate the sensory dimensions of contact with technologies (Pink 2009; Pink 2013; see also Michael Jackson 1996).

Working from distraction rather than contemplation seems to throw most light onto the practices of Çarşı Berlin. As Chapter 9 explores, when everyone in a group has a smartphone, the tactile, mobile, distracted form of interaction prompted by these devices becomes the norm. This distraction produces very real benefits for fans wanting to feel part of Çarşı Berlin: the sociality of the fan experience becomes accessible everywhere, a crucial weapon in the armoury of tactics used by diasporans to negotiate boring jobs, irritating bosses and a slew of other everyday tribulations. But precisely because football can be so exciting and omnipresent, the footballing facet(s) of a fan's identity can crowd out other associations to work or family. It can be disruptive, cultivate obsession and dominate social gatherings. This can result in fans alienating those around them or even falling short of fulfilling the host of requirements expected of an active participant in a transnational fan collective.

I have separated the three elements of this final section for heuristic reasons but it is their combined effect that is most noticeable. Taken together, they convey a sense of consciousness, of selfhood smeared across a wide universe of people and things. Football scarves, banners, Wi-Fi waves, fibre

optic cables and internet bytes all contain the traces of belonging, relation and connection. This reality shapes fans' understanding of how they are related to other supporters and, ultimately, to themselves.

## **Conclusion**

The five areas of scholarship I have delineated above stake out the scholarly ground upon which the experience of Çarşı Berlin is best understood. The discussion of imaginaries transformed the concept from an inchoate cognitive faculty to a practice in the world – instantiated in flesh, circulating in global currents of culture and, importantly, capable of being researched ethnographically. Scholarship on technologies, especially the work of actor-network theory, equips me with the vocabulary to properly articulate the reality of Çarşı Berlin as emergent and ever-changing. In combination with the literature on imaginaries, this work also helps to develop the idea that both football fandom and the internet posit under-determined forms of existence, leaving plenty of space for participants to craft their own understandings of belonging.

Debates over space, media, movement and virtuality aided me in conceptualising the 'doubling' of experience whenever Çarşı Berlin seemed to meet. By drawing on anthropology's deep history of engagement with 'virtual worlds', this doubling is viewed as a practice intrinsic to human imagining more broadly. Consequently, the process of generating Çarşı Berlin is best conceived as comprising continual mediations between virtual and actual realities, only some of which take place on the web. Anthropological approaches to

globalisation assisted in developing my concept of the ‘parochial global’ – a notion to capture the ephemerality and playful dimensions of Çarşı Berlin’s interaction with wider footballing culture. Finally, combining literatures on relational belonging, dispersed selfhood, enchantment and magic, imitation and distraction helped to comprehend the peculiar importance of objects, smartphones and the idiom of family to Çarşı Berlin.

Taken as a whole, these fields illuminate what it means for fans to be involved in Çarşı Berlin. They pull together the threads of ideas and positions that allow the thesis to cohere intellectually, whilst at the same time preserving the sense of openness, partial connection and confusing relation that is an equally innate part of the experience. In the next chapter I put methodological flesh on these theoretical bones by defining empirically the object of study and the methods used to undertake my research.

## Chapter 3

### Entering the field

A project centred on the transnational imaginaries of a group of football fans becomes, in part, a question of how to define the ethnographic field. I argued previously for an ethnography built around the exploration of gaps, paying attention to how informants mediate the tensions and fissures they face in processes of making culture. Here I explain how this theoretical stance translates into a viable research strategy.

At its most simple, my method was to ‘follow the actors themselves’, be they people, objects, places or things, and ‘finding out as much about them in as many places in time and space from as many points of view as possible’ (Lash and Lury 2007b, 20). Talk of ‘following’ recalls George Marcus’s famous ‘tracking strategies’ for multi-sited ethnography (G. Marcus 1995). In many ways my project embodies the spirit behind that treatise: to problematize notions of locality by extending notions of fieldspace. I develop this thought, complicating notions of a single unitary phase of fieldwork by cutting one part of the process into discrete trips undertaken over a longer period of time (see p.98 below).

Where I am less comfortable with the ‘multi-sited’ lexicon is in its tendency to hold onto an idea of holism, by which I mean the possibility (and desirability) of ethnography attaining a ‘comprehensive study of wholes’

(Falzon 2009, 12; see also Thornton 1988). That it is not possible to follow a person or thing fully is as true of the culture-maker as the ethnographer. Informants, too, 'write culture', wield determinacies in order to manage the intrinsic complexity of social life. The best way to put ourselves at the locus of that mediation is to engage in it ourselves; that is, to adopt a method that is equally multimodal, trying to follow in all realms, but paying particular attention to where we fail or find it difficult, for that is often where our interlocutors, too, are struggling.

In effect, then, my method was based around transforming the actors' difficulties into the ethnographer's through replication of their behaviours. For example, by spending most of my fieldwork time socialising with fans through electronic media I was copying the strategies supporters had themselves devised to overcome their lack of physical contact during the working week. My approach was based around four strategies of following: at European Beşiktaş matches, at physical spaces in their 'home' countries, in virtual spaces 'online', and through life-story interviews. As is immediately apparent, the online/offline binary dismissed in the previous chapter has re-emerged. Its presence here, however, is as an heuristic to make the explication of my method easier to follow rather than a claim of ontological validity. This goes for each approach in general: none is distinct but simply a different way of framing the ethnographic field. Chief among my reasons for drawing on all four is the belief that it is only by coming at the topic from multiple points of view that we can account properly for the invocation of Beşiktaş imaginaries, which arise out of a multiplicity and mediation of gaps.

## **Participant observation at European Beşiktaş matches**

### ***Football***

The first of my 'following strategies' focused on participant observation at all of the 'away' legs of Beşiktaş football matches in Europe. I attended my first away match in November 2009 before I even had the plan to do a DPhil. I attended my most recent game in October 2014 when deep into the process of writing up my research. An episodic approach was chosen because it replicated participants' own experience. Fans themselves would only meet up en masse once or twice a year. At five years, the period of time that I joined these episodes was unusually long for an ethnographic study, for two reasons. The first was the infrequency of matches. Beşiktaş have on average three or four matches in Europe each season. I had to extend fieldwork over multiple years to build up a large enough stock of experiences to be able to speak about the phenomenon more broadly.

Secondly, I was keen to challenge the idea of fieldwork as consisting of protracted, sustained, uninterrupted period of time 'away'. Such an approach unwittingly privileges the synchronic in anthropological analysis, making change over time hard to discern and research.<sup>53</sup> Yet the potential for change is central to Çarşı Berlin's character. Few of the fans who were present when I started fieldwork were still active five years on. The devices used to interact went through several iterations. Photos went from being taken on digital cameras to being snapped with smartphones; internet messageboards fell out

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<sup>53</sup> See the work of John Postill (2002; 2009) for discussions on the anthropological study of time.

of favour and were replaced by Facebook and instant-messaging services.

Without the long timeframe, these changes would not have been so clear.

In total I attended nine professional football matches for Beşiktaş during the course of my research. As a general rule, those sides that finish in the top four positions in the Turkish Premier League (*Süper Lig*) receive a berth in one of the two European footballing competitions, the Champions League and the Europa League. Since 1992, Beşiktaş had finished outside the top four only once (in the 1997-98 season). My research strategy might have been more 'risky' if I had been following teams in German or English leagues, where there is slightly more competition for the European places, but in the Turkish league, where success is skewed overwhelmingly towards the *üç büyükler* (big three) of Beşiktaş, Galatasaray and Fenerbahçe, there are always European games to attend. Or so I thought.

### ***Basketball***

In May 2012, whilst gearing up for a full season of following Beşiktaş in Europe, UEFA announced that the team was to be banned from European competition for the next two seasons. The reason given was for 'violation of the UEFA Club Licensing and Financial Fair Play Regulations'.<sup>54</sup> An appeal by the club was rejected, leaving me aghast at the potential hole this left in my research strategy. Keeping in mind my intention to 'follow the actors', I decided that the best response was to watch how fans responded to this development. I was pleased to see that Çarşı Berlin almost immediately came up with a way to

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<sup>54</sup> <http://www.uefa.org/protecting-the-game/integrity/news/newsid=1803680.html> (accessed 21 August 2015). The ban for 2013-14 was later overturned on appeal, meaning Beşiktaş only spent one season out of European competition.

continue the annual pilgrimage to away matches. They would attend basketball matches instead.

Beşiktaş is a sporting club, not simply a football team. Whilst the football branch is the most widely supported, the club also has teams in a host of other sports, including a basketball team. Basketball is the second most popular team sport in Turkey. There are professional leagues and the Turkish national team is considered one of the best in the world (McDermid 2010). Basketball in Turkey has become infected by the strictures of football support, partly at the encouragement of the clubs as part of a bid to bolster revenue and attendances. The 'big three' all have basketball teams and there is a wholesale importation into basketball of the rivalries, chants and behaviours from football. In 2012, a wheelchair basketball match between Galatasaray and Beşiktaş was abandoned amidst clouds of tear gas and violent confrontations between the two sets of fans (Yaycılı 2012).

Many Beşiktaş football supporters are also keen basketball fans. Fans frequently talk of 'arma aşkına', love of the crest, the black and white shield that adorns all Beşiktaş kits. As one fan explained to me: 'the occasion isn't football for us, it's Beşiktaş. We've been to training camps, handball matches, basketball matches...if there's a table tennis match [we'll go] – the important thing is the crest. Behind the crest, we go everywhere.'<sup>55</sup> Whilst the Beşiktaş football team was banned from European competitions for the 2012-13 season, the basketball team had a heavy schedule of games, thanks to being part of the 'Euroleague' competition, the basketball equivalent of football's Champions

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<sup>55</sup> Interview with author, 27 April 2013. 'Olay bizde bir futbol değil. Olay Beşiktaş. Kamplara gittik, hentbola gittik, basketbola gittik... Masa tenisi de olsa, mühim olan o arma yani. Armanın peşinde, her tarafa gittik yani'.

League. Prior to the 2012-13 season, Çarşı Berlin members had been attending basketball matches. Nevertheless, in that season the lack of football meant basketball took on greater prominence. In total I attended five basketball matches with members of Çarşı Berlin.

*The image originally presented here cannot be made freely available via ORA because of copyright*

**Figure 17. Çarşı Berlin members talk of devotion to Beşiktaş that goes beyond football. The banner says 'love of the crest' (*arma aşkına*)**

Although forced by circumstance, the inclusion of basketball lent a number of serendipitous and important benefits to the study. It allowed me to counteract the tendency within existing anthropological works to concentrate solely on one sport, be it cricket (Werbner 1996), football (Armstrong 1998) or wrestling (Alter 1992). Scholars have for a while begun to lever the notion of fan affiliation out of a reified model and instead posit a more processual, contingent notions of belonging (see Crawford 2004). But surprisingly little of this work has looked across multiple sports. Multiple affiliations lend weight to the idea of play as a disposition rather than a distinct activity, an important reconfiguration of leisure activities that I will develop as the thesis unfolds. Attending basketball matches also allowed for a comparative element to be

brought out in the ethnography. Being part of both football and basketball crowds, or watching both games on television, allowed me to discern that it was the size of the grouping, rather than the sport, that most affected the tenor of the experience. As a result, my ethnographic examples of crowds, away trips and fan practices do not distinguish between football and basketball. The observations are based on the similar behaviour I glimpsed across the two sports.

During fieldwork I attended other events that fall outside the first two categories. The majority of these were Beşiktaş matches that did not involve the professional football or basketball teams, such as a handball match and an under-twenties football tournament. But I also attended games that involved the Turkish national team and Beşiktaş's rivals, Galatasaray and Fenerbahçe (see Table 2). As with the games above, I attended these events because other members of Çarşı Berlin were attending. A full list of matches that I went to can be found in the table below.

**Table 2. List of away matches attended during fieldwork**

**Professional Football (Beşiktaş)**

| Date         | Match               | Location              | Competition    |
|--------------|---------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| <b>2009</b>  |                     |                       |                |
| 25 November  | v Manchester United | Manchester, UK        | Champions      |
| <b>2011</b>  |                     |                       |                |
| 29 September | v Stoke City        | Stoke-on-Trent, UK    | Europa         |
| 20 October   | v Dynamo Kiev       | Kiev, Ukraine         | Europa         |
| 1 December   | v Maccabi Tel Aviv  | Tel Aviv, Israel      | Europa         |
| <b>2012</b>  |                     |                       |                |
| 14 February  | v Braga             | Braga/Porto, Portugal | Europa         |
| 8 March      | v Athletic Madrid   | Madrid, Spain         | Europa         |
| <b>2013</b>  |                     |                       |                |
| 3 March      | v Fenerbahçe        | Istanbul, Turkey      | Turkish League |
| <b>2014</b>  |                     |                       |                |
| 27 August    | v Arsenal           | London, UK            | Champions      |
| 2 October    | v Tottenham         | London, UK            | Europa         |

**Basketball**

|             |                    |                    |            |
|-------------|--------------------|--------------------|------------|
| <b>2012</b> |                    |                    |            |
| 24 January  | v Fuenlabrada      | Madrid, Spain      | Euroleague |
| 18 October  | v Brose Basketball | Bamberg, Germany   | Euroleague |
| 25 October  | v Barcelona        | Barcelona, Spain   | Euroleague |
| 8 November  | v Lietuvos Rytas   | Vilnius, Lithuania | Euroleague |
| <b>2013</b> |                    |                    |            |
| 28 February | v Olympiakos       | Istanbul, Turkey   | Euroleague |
| 28 March    | v Maccabi Tel Aviv | Tel Aviv, Israel   | Euroleague |

**Other**

|             |                                              |                        |                                      |
|-------------|----------------------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <b>2013</b> |                                              |                        |                                      |
| 9 February  | SC Magdeburg v Beşiktaş                      | Magdeburg, Germany     | Handball<br>European<br>Championship |
| 12 March    | SC Schalke 04 v<br>Galatasaray               | Gelsenkirchen, Germany | Champions League                     |
| 20 May      | Beşiktaş Under-20 team<br>(multiple matches) | Ennepertal, Germany    | Under-20 Football<br>tournament      |
| 28 May      | Turkey v Latvia                              | Duisburg, Germany      | Friendly match,<br>national team     |
| <b>2014</b> |                                              |                        |                                      |
| 1 October   | Football<br>Arsenal v Galatasaray            | London, UK             | Champions League                     |

Trips to matches were the most intense aspect of fieldwork. On most of them I would be 'observing' for over twenty hours a day and would have little or no time to myself. I would write provisional research notes on my mobile phone, a method of notation chosen because of its unobtrusiveness. I would also take photographs and videos of proceedings, using other fans as my cue: if they were taking pictures of an occasion then I deemed it acceptable to do so myself. Because these trips involved sustained contact with fans, I would usually have no chance to type up my notes into more fully-formed ethnographic diaries until I returned home.

## Online research

Perhaps the foremost methodological challenge facing my project was, as Hine puts it, ‘transferring the ethnographic tradition of the researcher as an embodied research instrument to the social spaces of the internet’ (Hine 2008, 257). In this I am not alone. From a standing start, there has in recent years been a surfeit of books aimed at delineating appropriate methods for anthropologists to research ‘virtual’ or ‘online’ interactions (Boellstorff et al. 2012; H. A. Horst and Miller 2012; Underberg and Zorn 2013; Hine 2015; Pink et al. 2015).<sup>56</sup>

My approach worked from the position that ‘the relevant sites for understanding online interactions are not necessarily to be found online’ (Hine 2008, 266). There is a school of thought that argues that online domains can be seen – and studied – as social spaces in their own right. This position was formed largely to argue for inclusion in the anthropological canon of ‘new’ communities that would not exist without the internet, such as those formed around role-playing computer games or online messageboards (Correll 1995; Boellstorff 2008; Nardi 2010; Boellstorff et al. 2012). My project, however, was about investigating the effects of the internet on a pre-existing group – diaspora football fans. Consequently, it made sense to spend time interacting with participants physically as well as in internet environments.

Nevertheless, this still left open the question of how to study internet-mediated environments and engagements. Following the actors singled out two particular internet-mediated spaces in which members of Çarşı Berlin

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<sup>56</sup> I list only the most recent work. For summaries of earlier method-based work see the bibliographies of the titles listed here.

frequently interacted: the group's messageboard and Facebook. As a result, the 'online' for me consisted mostly (but not exclusively) of these two spaces.<sup>57</sup>

Yet these two spaces were not stable. The emergence of smartphones added further complexity to the sites of ethnographic research. Accessing Facebook through a smartphone is commonly by means of an application, a self-contained software program, rather than a web browser as is the case on a computer. Fans would use both computers and smartphones, hence the experience (and environment) would operate differently from one hour or day to the next. The mobile, ephemeral nature of internet-mediated environments will be discussed at length in the thesis (especially chapter 9). Here it pays to flag up that studying the contingency and potentiality of media use is perhaps the main way that I contribute back to the methods of online research.

### ***Messageboard***

A messageboard (also known as a 'board', 'web forum' or 'forum') is an online discussion site where people hold conversations in the form of posted textual messages. Çarşı Berlin members generated their own messageboard housed on the group's website. This board was private and required registering in order to view or post messages. I joined in August 2012 at the start of my main period of fieldwork. Having already physically met members of Çarşı Berlin, it was not hard to provide a reference and be accepted. My route into the space mirrored that of most members – I was alerted to its existence through physical interaction with fans who identified themselves as part of Çarşı Berlin.

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<sup>57</sup> Other online spaces in which I interacted with fans include blogs, news articles and messaging software (WhatsApp). These feature in my analysis as and when they are relevant.

My participation in the site also was in line with how most other members of Çarşı Berlin used the space. That is, by contributing to organisation of games, gossiping about transfers and other footballing stories, or not posting at all but rather logging in and 'lurking' to see what others had written. Some scholars have ethical and epistemological concerns with such an approach (Beaulieu 2004; Boellstorff 2008, 80) and, whilst I agree it should certainly not be thought of as ethnographic due to the lack of participation, Hine notes that lurking can be considered 'a useful part of the virtual ethnographer's repertoire when it mirrors the practices of ordinary members of a group' (Hine 2008, 262). This was certainly the case for many Çarşı Berlin members. My overall approach could thus be defined as 'mixing' the methods of the intrusive and unobtrusive.

### **Facebook**

Facebook is the largest social networking site in the world with over 1.3 billion users. Founded in 2004, two years later it was opened globally to anyone with a valid email address who declared they were aged thirteen or over. Individuals register with the site, which is free to use, and create a personal profile that they use to connect and interact with others. Facebook is available in Turkish and is the primary social networking platform used both in Turkey and amongst Turkish diaspora communities. Because Facebook started in the US, most of the research on its impact is concentrated there, despite the fact that today over seventy per cent of its users live elsewhere (Gershon 2012; Turkle 2011). Research has begun to emerge that explores ethnographically how

Facebook operates in non-western contexts (Miller 2011; McKay 2010). I add my work to this endeavour. Although research was in the UK and Germany, the focus on Turkish-speaking diasporans represents a new community and hence helps build a kaleidoscope of studies to allow for comparison and investigation of the heterogeneity of Facebook.

‘Participant observation’ within the world of Facebook was a multi-media affair. The nature of the site meant that interactions and conversations with fans took many forms, from profile posts, instant message conversations and comments on photos and videos through to ‘likes’ and ‘pokes’.<sup>58</sup> There was also the same possibility for lurking as described above. By default, users can only see and interact with a network of Facebook ‘friends’.<sup>59</sup> The longer I was part of Çarşı Berlin, the more people fans added me as their friends, exposing me to more and more interactions. The result was a lopsided accumulation of data, with diaries towards the end of fieldwork richer and longer than those at the start.

I would like to draw this second section to a close by briefly engaging with the topic of data capture. Computer-mediated research often results in more data than the ‘traditional’ ethnographic method, a reality that has led to the recent rise, both in academia and in marketing, of the concept of ‘big data’ – datasets that dwarf previous data collection and processing capacity. This development has led to many interesting new research strategies, as well as a

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<sup>58</sup> The ‘like’ button on Facebook appears under any post by a user. By clicking it, another user can express that they ‘like’ the post in question. The ‘poke’ gesture is similarly activated by clicking on a button marked for that command. It is a more ambiguous gesture that enables a user to garner the attention of another for an unspecified reason, akin to a physical prod. In both instances, the user can see which user it was who has ‘liked’ their content or ‘poked’ them.

<sup>59</sup> A Facebook friend is someone who is added to a user’s network and can view and interact with their contributions. See Chapter 7 for more on the category of Facebook friend.

regrettable positivistic zeal that any question can be answered or solved definitively with enough quantitative information.<sup>60</sup> After investigation of some of these methods, I chose not to engage with this line of research. The way I catalogued my ethnographic examples in internet environments was not much different to my research strategy when out and about. I would browse Facebook and the Çarşı Berlin messageboard daily, often contributing myself, and taking notes on whatever caught my interest. I would then type these notes into a more comprehensive diary entry. Perhaps the largest difference was in the amount of visual research data I acquired in internet environments. Both computers and mobile devices can take a snapshot of the screen at a certain moment. Along with an archive of the web pages I visited, I used this feature to build up a large library of images of conversations and interactions amongst Çarşı Berlin. These images are used liberally throughout the thesis in an attempt to attenuate the text-based nature of the work. Giving a flavour of the experiential dimension of the online environments in which fans interacted is an important way in which I build the argument for an anthropological theory that moves beyond text-based metaphors. Because usernames on the messageboard and Facebook are based on real names, I have changed them in the text in order to protect the anonymity of my interlocutors. Where screenshots are used in the thesis, sensitive details have been blurred for the same reason.

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<sup>60</sup> For an example of work produced in the 'big data' paradigm, see the journal *Big Data and Society*, <http://bds.sagepub.com/> (accessed 21 August 2015). For critiques of Big Data see boyd and Crawford (2012); Harford (2014). For a specifically anthropological critique see Boellstorff and Maurer (2015).

***Participant observation in two different bölgeler***

Much of the emotion, fun and sense of belonging that comes from being 'in' the Çarşı Berlin community derives from attending matches and being active in Çarşı Berlin spaces online. Yet I knew that fans also met up in their own local branches because I had experienced this in 2009 when I went to collect my ticket for the Manchester United versus Beşiktaş game outlined at the very start of the thesis. The third strand of my methodology, then, was to access this local-level experience through participant observation with two different Çarşı Berlin regional branches (*bölgeler*).

Before I started fieldwork I knew there existed multiple groupings across Europe affiliated somehow to 'Çarşı Berlin', although I had no idea of how many. Some element of 'multi-sited' ethnography seemed necessary in order to draw out the networked aspect of the phenomenon (G. Marcus 1995). By choosing to investigate in detail only two groups, I was conscious of Matei Candea's view that ethnography in practice means setting up 'arbitrary locations' chosen by the ethnographer (Candea 2007). Nonetheless, I decided to split my time between two groups, one in London and one in Germany, based on a series of considerations and research aims. London was chosen because it was the group that I already knew, having contacted them and watched games in their presence. As a result, I knew I would be able to gain access. Yet whenever hanging around with the London fans, I couldn't escape the nagging feeling that I was on the periphery of the European Beşiktaş fan phenomenon. Turks in Germany vastly outnumber those in the UK, with approximately three to four million versus around 500,000 in Britain. Furthermore, the umbrella under which groups were gathering was called *Çarşı Berlin*; Germany was

clearly of large importance. Finally, an academic motivation for adding a German dimension stemmed from a frustration with the meagre amount of comparative literature on Turkish communities in Europe. Whilst there is detailed work on Turkish speakers in England (Demir 2012; Aksoy and Robins 2001), Holland (Crul and Doornik 2003) and especially Germany (Pratt Ewing 2008; Mandel 2008; Çağlar 2010; Özyürek 2014), there is less work that spans and explores these divides.<sup>61</sup>

With all these ideas in mind, I chose the 2012-13 football season as my opportunity. Running from early August 2012 until late May 2013, I would attempt to watch every live televised Beşiktaş match with members of Çarşı Berlin. The thirty-four league matches played by Beşiktaş each season, combined with European and cup games and basketball matches, provided a weekly focal point for fans to meet to watch their team. This gave me a regular opportunity to participate with supporters in an unobtrusive manner. I resolved to spend the first half of the season in London, and the second somewhere in Germany. I had contacts with a few fans who lived in the Ruhr area and I was annoyed by the Berlin-centric notion of most scholarship on Turkish speakers in Germany (Pratt Ewing 2008; Çağlar 2001; Hinze 2013; Kaya 2001; Mandel 2008). Accordingly, I opted for Cologne (*Köln* in German and Turkish), a large city with good transport links to other cities close by.

In London the plan worked as hoped. Fans met up consistently to watch games and I joined them. Spending a protracted period of time with the same group allowed me to pick up on the subtle changes from week to week. Perhaps

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<sup>61</sup> Many of these studies contain excellent comparison between Turkey and a specific European country – what is more sparse is cross-European work. For exceptions see Doornik (1995); Fleischmann and Phaet (2012); Yükleven (2012).

the most important revelation was that the only person who watched every single match in a public place was me. Everyone else missed at least a couple of matches due to some other commitment. The Cologne leg of the research was less successful. Upon arrival I discovered that the group I expected to attach myself to did not in fact exist. There were only three members of the *Köln Tayfası* (Cologne Gang) who actually lived in the city. The 'leader' was in reality based in Aachen, eighty-five kilometres away. What is more, they met up only infrequently.

Towards the end of my fieldwork I found myself deciding to travel regularly further afield, trying to watch at least one game with each of the other branches of *Çarşı Berlin* that I had, by this time, uncovered. I would try to combine these trips with a formal life story interview (see next section) to make the most of my time. I managed to reach all but two of the *Çarşı Berlin bölgeler*, although the fact that I could not possibly spend a protracted amount of time with all fifteen groups helped prick the often tacit notion of holism that haunts ideas of 'multisitedness' (Hage 2005, 464–467; Falzon 2009, 12–13). In the end, I spent the most time with the group based in Duisburg, seventy kilometres from Cologne and less than an hour on the train. They were as active as *Çarşı Londra*, meeting up weekly to watch games on television and playing an important role in coordinating with the wider *Çarşı Berlin* group for travel to away matches. They regularly met up with the other *Çarşı* gangs from around Germany. This contrasted strongly with the experience of the *Çarşı Londra* group, which was comparatively isolated due to the absence of other *Çarşı* branches around Britain.

With hindsight, this German strand was the most costly in terms of time and money. I moved to a Turkish neighbourhood in a city home to many Beşiktaş fans in order to feel ‘closer’ to the research, yet was only able to meet up with fans for a couple of hours a week, if at all. In London my routine more closely mirrored the Çarşı Londra members themselves: for cost and ease I did not live in the Turkish swathe of northeast London but in Stratford, where I had friends and cheap accommodation. I had a link to my normal life and ‘travelled in’ to Dalston for the games. Very few fans lived in the Turkish area of London – a salient reminder not to assume that an ‘ethnic neighbourhood’ corresponds to a cultural phenomenon under consideration (see Baumann 1996, 5). All the same, this aspect of fieldwork provided valuable information about the spaces where fans watch televised football (see chapter 6), as well as the infrequency of their gatherings. My method of recording information when in these spaces was similar to when I was attending away matches, that is, I would take notes, pictures and videos on my phone which I would write up into diary entries back at home.

### ***Life story interviews***

My final research strategy was to conduct life story interviews with members of Çarşı Berlin. The life story has been defined as a method of research that elicits personal narratives from interviewees in their own words, with as little guidance or interference from the interviewer as possible (Crapanzano 1984; Langness and Frank 1985; Watson and Watson-Franke 1985).

The concept of the life history is an ethnographic research method dating back to the 1920s (Brettell 2003, 25). Whilst initially the emphasis was on producing 'typical' or 'representative' life histories in which a single individual reflected a social group (Radin 1926, 384; Dyk 1938), the method was reconfigured by feminist anthropology in the 1980s to try and understand one person's life and its meaning in the context of broader historical and cultural processes (see Brettell 1995).

Since the 1990s, the life story has been appropriated by many researchers of migration who have seen it as a key method for uncovering the 'private, intersubjective context of migrants' and their descendants' lives' (Olwig 2007, 16. See also Zeitlyn 2008). For Karen Olwig, life stories are the research method par excellence, providing 'insight into the foundational narratives that give substance to, and define, the particular sites of origin and notions of relatedness that relatives in these networks claim for themselves' (Olwig 2007, 16). I adopted a broad conception of life stories similar in nature to Olwig. By viewing the life story as a 'creative social practice' rather than merely an offshoot of semi-structured interviews, the interaction can be interpreted in terms of maintaining and reshaping ideas of space, relatedness and belonging – anthropology's meat and drink – as much as about 'telling' the story of a life.

Over the course of my project I interviewed nineteen fans. These interviews were a mixture of one-on-one and group interviews. They ranged in length from less than ten minutes to almost three hours, and took place in a range of settings as varied as bars, cafés and participants' homes, as well as over the phone. The selection of interviewees followed no set format other than

an attempt to give voice to as much of the diversity of the group as possible. By diversity I refer to such elements as age range, geographical location, ethnic background and family history of migration. The interviews were heavily constrained by setting. It was often quite hard to sit fans down and talk formally when they had met up for footballing purposes, and equally hard to get them to make a special effort to meet up at another time.

Life story interviews were extremely useful at moving beyond the limitations of fieldwork and bringing into the analysis a sense of diachronic change over time. Important elements in the history of Çarşı Berlin and of the lives of the participants would possibly never have emerged through participant observation. The interviews were also useful in generating a 'moment apart' from the rough and tumble of trips to away matches and the watching of games in bars. In a more sedate setting, stories of life as a child in Turkey, of family histories, of hopes, fears and aspirations would sometimes come to the surface. The four fan vignettes contained in chapter 1 would not have been possible without the life story interviews.

Sometimes the life story interviews had the opposite effect than intended. Rather than a chance to move beyond football and hear about the rest of a fan's existence, putting down a microphone and referencing 'a project about football fans' caused some to go into overdrive about their fanaticism. Many interviews at some point descended into a monologue about how many games a fan had seen, all the club shirts they owned or how much they loved Beşiktaş. In keeping with the method I treated this, too, as valuable material. The ethnography of chapter 4 (exploring fandom) is replete with rich material courtesy of this outcome. Yet by the same token, it meant that when I was

trying to evaluate the impact of football fandom upon wider life I could not draw as much from this research method. Consequently in chapters that deal with this subject (mainly chapter 9) analysis was more reliant on participant observation, with the outcome that the ethnography perhaps does not benefit from the same fully-rounded feel.

Roughly half the interviews were conducted in English and half in Turkish. Participants signed an agreement form, which was available in Turkish and English. The life-story interviews were then recorded on two devices, my smartphone and a dedicated Dictaphone to guard against any technological malfunctions. Interviews were transcribed in their original language, with the Turkish interviews then translated into English. All quotes in the thesis are given in English for ease of reading. The reader can discern the original language of the quote by my use of footnotes; if the conversation took place in Turkish then the original Turkish is given in a footnote after the quotation.

### **Taking sides**

The debate on 'taking sides' in ethnographic research assumes a new layer of meaning when engaging with football fans (Armbruster and Laerke 2010; Welsch and Endicott 2012; Caplan 2003). Fandom involves the self-conscious adoption of one 'side' as opposed to another even if, as chapter 4 will show, in reality this distinction is not so clear-cut. Unlike Tom Boellstorff, who 'worked to avoid being identified with any particular subset of residents' (Boellstorff 2008, 79), my previous fieldwork with Çarşı in Turkey revealed that attending matches and interacting with fans on a daily basis renders it impossible to

maintain an impartial position regarding affiliation. I found that the number of hours spent with fans meant that the group began to view me as a Beşiktaş fan myself.

This was not in itself a terrible thing: being seen as an outsider would have limited my access to individuals, and participant observation by its very nature involves a certain degree of co-option into a group. Furthermore, I was not arriving 'new' at the subject. I had been to more Beşiktaş matches in Turkey than the majority of diaspora fans, and my record of match attendance was often trotted out by those who introduced me to strangers as a sign of my commitment.

Nevertheless, starting an ethnography from the position of 'insider' or participant naturally comes with a host of ethical concerns, as explored by anthropologists both in relation to a 'typical' research locale (Abu-Lughod 1988; Winegar 2006) and one mediated by the internet (Baym 2000). Chief among these is the reorientation needed to become an ethnographer within a familiar field. I explained to all fans I met that I was undertaking a university project researching Çarşı Berlin. Most were aware that I was wearing two hats, participating in fandom but also studying it, although I was seen almost universally as a fan first and a researcher second.

I was surprised by how little the fans were interested in or enquired after my project. With strangers, the topic would inevitably arise upon meeting, although after a few sentences of description they would often change the subject. The life story interviews were a useful tool to remind fans that I was not simply there to watch the game but also studying their behaviour. On more

than one occasion, a fan I had known for months would express surprise upon being confronted with an interview permission form: 'Are you doing a project?'

In contrast to their nonchalance for my research, fans were very keen to hear how I became a Beşiktaş fan, and I had to tell the story repeatedly of my master's project in Istanbul in 2009. My presence at Beşiktaş events seemed a case of needing to assimilate me into the world of Turkish football in order to comprehend who I was and what I was doing. There was absolutely no room for ambiguities in my affiliation or for a dispassionate, detached stance. Indeed, the response each time I reached the end of my own 'story of fandom' was often a loud cheer or affectionate embrace. My abiding memory of my time with Çarşı Berlin will be one of hospitality. Fans were genuinely delighted that I had 'chosen' Beşiktaş and 'chosen' them – whether as a fan or a researcher – and made every effort to make me feel comfortable and at home. Where I worried there would be some suspicion or uncertainty, I found warmth and openness. People were more than willing to invite me in, sit me down and talk about themselves, their organisation and Beşiktaş. This made the research both easier and far more enjoyable to conduct. I therefore am deeply grateful to all these fans.

On this note of thanks I bring to an end the preliminary part of the thesis. The first three chapters were designed to set the scene. I introduced the fans who comprise Çarşı Berlin, the academic debates that informed my project and that I contribute to and, in this chapter, the methodology I devised to undertake the research. The remainder of the thesis – chapters 4 to 9 – will develop in full the argument that, through internet technologies, Turkish diaspora football fans *play* with imaginaries of belonging in an open-ended

fashion. And so I move onto the first wholly ethnographic chapter, which will explore how and why diaspora Turkish football fans join Çarşı Berlin.

## Chapter 4

### Fandom

Beşiktaşlı olunmaz Beşiktaşlı doğulur Beşiktaşlı olmayanlar orospu çocuğudur

You don't become a Beşiktaş fan, you're born a Beşiktaş fan. All those who aren't Beşiktaş fans are sons of bitches

This popular Beşiktaş chant – aimed at fans of rival teams – lays bare the ‘typical’ view of football fandom. Like social class or religion, for better or worse it is something you are born into. But many members of Çarşı Berlin weren't born in Turkey, let alone as Beşiktaş fans. Some have switched to supporting Beşiktaş from another side, or support multiple teams. Yet fans sing the song regardless. Why? This chapter will attempt to unpick this puzzle by investigating why and how diaspora Turkish speakers join Çarşı Berlin.

I suggest that the traditional academic treatment of fans misrepresents the nature of football support for Turkish speakers in Europe. The stories and practices of Çarşı Berlin members reveals fandom to be a mutable category of belonging, appealing for a host of reasons, most of which derive from the everyday or mundane. To understand what compels Turkish-speaking individuals in Europe to become involved in a transnational fan club requires staking out a wider set of debates, drawing on notions of kinship and dividuality, diasporic imaginings of ancestry or homeland and enchantment and

play, not to mention comprehending the material and affective means through which desires for belonging become instantiated in a fan club.

As befits the first ethnographic chapter, I introduce a number of themes that will be explored in more detail as the thesis progresses. They are structured in three parts. The first section of the chapter compares standard academic explanations for involvement in fandom with the motivations for members of Çarşı Berlin. I use life story interviews of European Beşiktaş fans to unravel enduring myths of fandom. Contrary to the song lyrics above, we see how fans regularly choose their own team, may support more than one, and are open about less ‘fanatical’ periods of their lives.

The prevalent view of fandom dismantled, the second section moves to construct a more realistic model of explaining what fandom ‘is’ and the rewards it offers to fans. It might sound surprising to a newcomer, but the primary motivation for becoming part of Çarşı Berlin members is not always football. Of course there are some who love the game. But a mere love of football could be easily fulfilled with a satellite TV subscription, giving live access to every Beşiktaş game from the comfort of home. Members of Çarşı Berlin frequently annoy other Beşiktaş fans at matches, their exaggerated body movements distracting attention from the action on the pitch or their banners blocking the view. And, as discussed below, when the Beşiktaş football team were banned by UEFA, the group switched its focus to travelling to basketball matches instead. Consequently, for both passionate devotees of the game itself and those with more lukewarm feelings towards it, a key question is what compels them to join and stay part of the Çarşı Berlin collective? Whilst accepting a panoply of reasons, I centre on three main motivations suggested by my ethnographic

material: gaining a sense of community, strengthening a connection with a Turkish ancestry or birthplace and enjoying the chance to express passion and playfulness.

The final section then explores the objects and practices that help forge and cement this trio of factors. Through chants, banners, photographs, numbers and familial epithets, fans cultivate a feeling of togetherness, explore 'Turkish culture' and delight in the more light-hearted aspects of football fandom. While on the surface this transnational, diasporic, multiply-mediated fan collective may appear to be a relatively 'new' form of grouping, it is in fact better explained through 'old' approaches to relationality; namely, notions of kinship, imaginings of ancestry or homeland and a sense of playful, magical behaviour. Approached from this perspective, the forms of Çarşı Berlin fandom become more familiar, both as an object of anthropological enquiry and as a facet of an individual's make-up.

### **How do fans get involved in Çarşı Berlin?**

There are two ways of approaching the question of how fans become involved in Çarşı Berlin. One is via extant literature on 'fandom', both academic and popular, the other is through life story interviews with fans. The two approaches, however, produce very different answers.

#### ***The literature answer***

In popular culture the conversation about fandom is dominated by the tiny percentage that is 'obsessed'. Books and films such as Nick Hornby's

autobiography *Fever Pitch* (1992) and the movie *Green Street Hooligans* (Alexander 2005) tell stories of all-consuming football fandom and have established the tenor of the debate. With excessive displays of devotion, sacrifice and violence, they inevitably generate the most compelling stories. The success of these works – *Fever Pitch* has been translated into 26 languages and sold millions of copies<sup>62</sup> – underlines the appetite for such treatment of fandom.

The default conception of the fan as a hardcore devotee has also been encouraged by the first wave of academic literature on the subject. At its inception in the 1970s, fan studies was part of a larger incursion by the new discipline of cultural studies to legitimise ‘the fan’ and his or her practices as thoughtful and creative vis-à-vis mainstream culture, the government, or authority figures more generally (Fiske 1989; Jenkins 1992). The inspiration for many scholars was Michel De Certeau’s eulogy to the skills and tricks of the ‘ordinary man’ (de Certeau 1984). De Certeau cast the individual’s everyday practices as ‘tactical in nature’; talking, reading, moving about, even shopping became activities of playful resistance, devised in the face of the forces of late twentieth century capitalism. Also influential was Dick Hebdige’s work on ‘The Meaning of Style’ (Hebdige 1979). Drawing on Levi Strauss, Hebdige cast ‘subculture participants’ such as Punks and Mods as canny *bricoleurs*. They appropriate commodities (safety pins, scooters), placing them in new contexts and giving them new countercultural, subversive meanings in the process. Academics in Turkey largely stood apart from this Anglo-focused debate. Yet the Turkish literature on fandom also reads like a partisan and romantic

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<sup>62</sup> See Eamonn Walsh, ‘Fever Pitch and the Rise of Middle Class Football’, *BBC News*, 6 March 2012, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-17213383> (accessed 24 August 2015).

statement of support. Books have titles such as *Kârhanede Romantizm* (Romanticism in the Home-of-Profit<sup>63</sup>, (Bora 2006)), and academic conferences are dominated by papers applauding left-wing fan groups like Çarşı.

An important outcome of these works was the successful validation of the fan as an object of study. But it came at the cost of reifying fan communities into the idea of a 'subculture', 'neotribe' or simply 'other' outside mainstream society. The remnants of this approach help sustain the image of fan as an uncommon obsessive. Projected through this prism, European Beşiktaş fandom could easily be portrayed as highly dramatic and emotional: we see men pulling their tops off in wintry weather or weeping uncontrollably after a goal (figs. 18-19). Sometimes this excess crosses the line of legality: breaking chairs and throwing them at opposition fans, skirmishing with the police or daubing the sides of buildings in graffiti (figs. 20-22). We hear of fans who are *deli* (crazy) or *sağlam* (robust, solid) in their support for Beşiktaş. There is the fan who owns fifty-three different Beşiktaş kits or the university student who almost failed high school because she missed so many lessons for her beloved club. We get the colourful stories, the banter, and the proud boasts. The image of the Beşiktaş fan as obsessive and hardcore is so engrained within the group that it is hard to move beyond the exceptional to explore how fandom can be understood in more quotidian terms. Nonetheless, this is what must be done.

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<sup>63</sup> The title is a play on words around *kerhane*, which means brothel in Turkish. *Kâr* means profit, so *kârhaneye* loosely means the 'home of profit', with the suggestion that football is 'selling its love' like a sex worker.

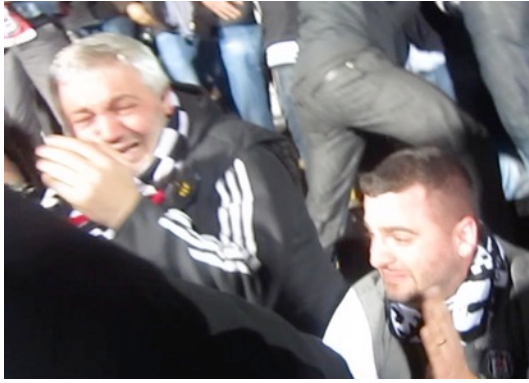


Figure 18. Çarşı Berlin fans could easily be depicted as highly dramatic and emotional. Here, a supporter weeps after his team scores against Fenerbahçe, Istanbul, 3 March 2013 (author's photo)

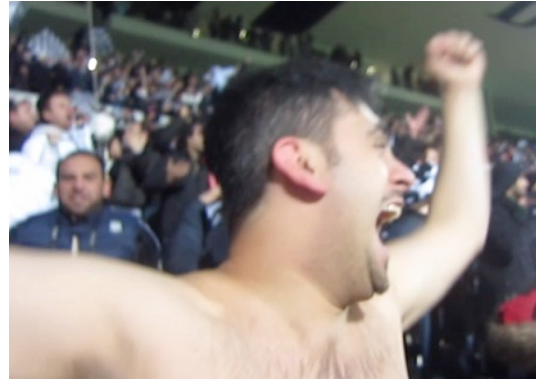


Figure 19. At the same game, a fan takes his top off in celebration (author's photo)



Figure 20. Sometimes behaviour turns violent, throwing chairs at rival fans, Kiev, 20 October 2011 (author's photo)



Figure 21. Fans skirmishing with the Spanish police, Madrid, 8 March 2012 (author's photo)



Figure 22. One Beşiktaş fan decided to daub graffiti on a wall during a break in a journey, stating 'Çarşı Berlin motherfucker', Germany, 9 February 2013 (author's photo)

### *The ethnographic answer*

In the 2000s, a new generation of fan scholars emerged that was troubled by the subculture idiom. Dissatisfied with the perceived exceptionalism of their subject of study, they tried to shift the conversation to speak to the ordinary

nature of fandom (Crawford 2004; Gray, Sandvoss, and Harrington 2007; Hills 2002; Sandvoss 2005). They were prompted in part by its encroaching ubiquity: the 1990s and 2000s witnessed the rise of 'celebrity culture'. TV shows emerged that dealt solely with entertainment news, whilst celebrity guests drove audience figures on prime-time television and magazine sales. In this context, using the term 'subculture' to refer to these viewers or readers would lend fan groupings a coherence and stability that belied a messy concatenation of ages and preferences as well as jarring with the huge popularity of these genres. Rather than highlighting uncommon obsession and exceptionalism, fandom seemed better placed to explore more mundane questions, such as understanding the formation of emotional bonds, or the organisational harnessing of affect in an increasingly mass-mediated environment.

It is from within this frame of reference that the fandom of Çarşı Berlin members is best understood, as it allows for the exploration of more subtle manifestations. It is through this lens that I embarked upon my fieldwork. Whilst exceptional moments or obsessive behaviour can be a feature of the group, greater weight needs giving to the more quotidian aspects that made up by far the bulk of the time I spent with the group and its members. Acts of 'everyday fandom' might mean wearing the team jersey at work, organising trips to games via social networking sites, customising a pair of glasses, a mobile phone or your desk at work with the team logo (figs. 23-24) – practices that are easily sandwiched into the habits and routines of normal life.



**Figure 23.** Fans engage in acts of ‘everyday fandom’. This supporter wears the team jersey to work at a café in Watford, England (author’s photo)

*The image originally presented here cannot be made freely available via ORA because of copyright*

**Figure 24.** Another fan customises the desk at his office in Eindhoven, the Netherlands

My experience also revealed that the fans are not necessarily the obsessives or the born fans that they themselves often claim to be. Upon first glimpse, Çarşı Berlin members seem to cling to notions of permanency, fixity and obsession when discussing their fandom. Family relations and ancestry is frequently evoked to give the impression that affiliation was not chosen but inherited. Yet lurking behind these narratives is a great deal of autonomy and choice. Like many fans, Cenk was at pains to point out that his whole family is committed to Beşiktaş. However, in his life story he went on to speak about visiting Turkey as a six-year-old and being asked by local boys what team he backed.

I asked my mother, ‘which team do I support?’ ... And my mother said ‘Football, football, soccer: what team? Galatasaray? Fenerbahçe? Beşiktaş? Who do you support?’ I asked my mother ‘Which team does my father support?’ and she said ‘Beşiktaş’. ‘Which team do you support?’ I asked my mother. She said ‘Beşiktaş’. So I went to the, to the boys, to the little boys there playing football and I said ‘Beşiktaş’.<sup>64</sup>

The affiliation is framed as a choice by Cenk’s mother: he could have chosen Fenerbahçe or Galatasaray but went with the affiliation of his parents. Fans also

<sup>64</sup> Interview with author, 9 March 2013.

admitted to switching allegiances as children. Unlike in later life, it is viewed as permissible to not be under the full 'sway' of a team until one is at least a teenager.<sup>65</sup> Indeed, admitting to having previously supported another team can paradoxically help boost a fan's credentials. It creates a redemption story with a narrative of how they came to 'see the light' of Beşiktaş rather than merely inheriting the association without thinking.

Perhaps surprisingly, Çarşı Berlin members are not exclusively interested in one team. Most members regularly watch and invest emotion in non-Beşiktaş games. It is relatively uncontentious to follow both Beşiktaş and a non-Turkish team, as the chance of the two being pitched against each other is small. Many European Beşiktaş fans have attachments to 'local' clubs where they live. Yusuf from London is an Arsenal fan. Cengiz, from Cologne, is a FC Köln fan and he attends games, including away matches. Deniz does the same for Fortuna Düsseldorf.

The most problematic affiliation for a European Beşiktaş fan to express is sympathy or support for the team's historic rivals, Galatasaray or Fenerbahçe. But that does not mean it never happens. When these teams play in European competitions against clubs from other countries, some (though not all) Çarşı Berlin members will want them to do well. A sense of pride and loyalty for Turkey is seen as overriding the usual club enmity. It must be emphasized that this is an area of significant contestation within the group. Some Çarşı Berlin members consider such support akin to treason. Rivalry between supporters is so intense that violence commonly breaks out. Some,

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<sup>65</sup> It is interesting to note the parallels with the German law on citizenship, where it is acceptable to hold dual nationality only until you reach the age of twenty-five when you must make a choice (Mandel 2008, 15).

however, argue that patriotism should trump partisan team support. One prominent Beşiktaş fan in London named Önder would never call himself a fan of Fenerbahçe. In fact, he would respond aggressively to such a suggestion. But he would regularly join his friend Engin, a Fenerbahçe supporter, to watch the team's matches together. The Beşiktaş fan would root for Fenerbahçe to the extent that, if they scored, he would jump up and cheer.<sup>66</sup> Similarly, when a Fenerbahçe player was knocked unconscious during a Europa League semi-final, a legion of Beşiktaş friends on Facebook posted status updates wishing him a speedy recovery. Clearly, to understand the relationship between Çarşı Berlin members and Beşiktaş, we need to situate their support for the club within the wider framework of their football-following lives.

The final assumption that must be challenged is that everyone involved in Çarşı Berlin sees themselves as a fanatic. While the group revels in its image as the most loyal and most obsessive group of diasporan Beşiktaş supporters, the reality is more complex. A great deal of Çarşı Berlin members draw a distinction between the notion of an everyday 'fan' and the more committed and passionate 'fanatic'. People were open and frank about periods when they were simply 'fans'. Adi, an Israeli Beşiktaş fan, admitted that, for a period of her life, she 'wasn't so fanatical...I followed the team when they were winning'. Serkan, who grew up in Turkey but now works as a software engineer in Ireland, stated that, as a child, 'I was not as fanatic as I am at the moment'. Fandom is better viewed as a process through which individuals wax and wane in their interest rather than a static category of belonging. Episodic fieldwork

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<sup>66</sup> The arrangement would often work in reverse, with Engin watching Beşiktaş matches with Önder, though he wouldn't cheer quite so loudly.

over a long period threw this trend into stark relief: very few of the fans who were active in the group in 2009 were still in prominent roles when I finished research in 2014.

In my interviews I sought to elicit key determinants that tipped people over into describing themselves as ‘fanatical’. As Rachel Spronk has noted, when trying to discuss the intimate aspects of our lives, ‘a crucial element of what people were trying to say evaporated the moment they tried to verbalise it’ (Spronk 2014, 8). I found this to be the case with describing motivations for becoming ‘fanatical’ about Beşiktaş. It was an intimate thing and something that most people found very hard to articulate. They would instead fall back on platitudes, on merely describing events or simply dismissing the question with ‘I dunno’.

Motivations and explanations varied considerably but a common theme that seemed to run through the fan narratives was that shifting into a more fanatical state was seen as linked to live attendance at a football match. The away game was a seminal part of becoming a devoted fan. For this reason, chapter two is dedicated to exploring the experience of attending away matches. But the conclusion to be reached from this brief tour of my ethnographic material on fans’ relationship to the team is that it would be wrong to see the motivation for joining Çarşı as simply obsessiveness about football or about Beşiktaş. Instead, the fans are finding other rewards from being part of the group. I turn to some of these now.

### What do the fans get out of fandom?

What is it about Çarşı Berlin that makes involvement so compelling? Many answers could be given: the group provides a chance to show off, for fans to bind themselves closer to existing friends, to make new friends, to escape from commitments and difficulties of normal life, to perform a sense of 'Turkishness'. Whilst accepting there are myriad reasons, three main 'rewards' of joining and participating in the group emerged from fieldwork: a sense of community, connection with Turkey and the chance to express passion and have fun. I discuss each in turn.

### *Beşiktaş as family*

Many of my interlocutors spoke of their involvement with Beşiktaş and Çarşı Berlin as being part of a family:

Cengiz, Cologne,

We just wanted a big community where we all can arrange a game together, arrange a *deplasman* [away match] and be together and celebrate together... I dunno- if we have to fight then we fight together! [Chuckles] ...it's like a hobby, you know? It's kind of like a family, I would say.<sup>67</sup>

Zeynep, Cologne, Germany

It was really cool in Manchester. It was really cool 'cause every time it's getting us together and it's – I don't know how to say... the relation that we nurse is getting stronger every time and that's why I... it's more than Beşiktaş for me right now – it's a family. I cannot describe it but it's a family for me.<sup>68</sup>

Ömer, Mannheim, Germany

When I go there [to Turkey, to Beşiktaş games] I'm relaxed. I'm relaxed because there is a big family. A big family. But in that family [it is] just like they are your brothers, other brothers, cousins, everyone with different thoughts.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Interview with author, 27 May 2013.

<sup>68</sup> Interview with author, 18 February 2013.

<sup>69</sup> Interview with author, 11 May 2013. 'Oraya gittiğim zaman ben rahatım. Ben rahatım. Çünkü orası bir büyük aile. Büyük aile. Ama o aile içinde nasıl bir senin kardeşin var, başka kardeşin var, kuzen var, herkesin fikri değişik'.

Given the importance of this feeling of family for fans, it makes sense to broaden the analysis to consider literatures that investigate questions of relatedness. Anthropology is especially rich in this area, with kinship – the web of social relations between individuals – being a fundamental area of study throughout the history of the discipline (Levi-Strauss [1949] 1969; Schneider 1984; Carsten 2000; McKinnon and Cannell 2013).

Building on the work of Marilyn Strathern and Marshall Sahlins, I believe that involvement in Çarşı Berlin affords fans a sense of relationality and personhood that involves the incorporation of others into the self. Many fans see themselves as a composite being. Both Strathern and Sahlins have managed to radically reframe how to think about relationality. In *The Gender of the Gift*, Strathern famously argues that: ‘Melanesian persons are as dividual as they are individually conceived. They contain a generalized sociality within’ (Strathern 1988, 13). The idea of dividuality is an active deconstruction of the Western notion of individualism, and stems from a rejection of the dichotomy of ‘individual’ and ‘society’ as useful anthropological abstractions (Strathern 1996b).

For Sahlins, Strathern’s concept of dividuality is, in effect, the same as a kinship system. Sahlins disagrees with the ‘standard’ notion of kinship as having its roots in biology or birth relations, metaphorical or otherwise. Instead, kinship is simply a ‘network of mutualities of being’. Kinsfolk are ‘persons who belong to one another, who are parts of one another, who are co-present in each other, whose lives are joined and interdependent’ (Sahlins 2013, 20–21). Co-residence, co-working, sharing food, adoption or friendship

can all be constructed forms of kinship, as can football support.<sup>70</sup> Both theories challenge the western binary of subject and object, freeing up the possibility that objects have agency and that people can interact with them as they would other humans. This is an important ontological idea that I will return to in the third section of the chapter.<sup>71</sup>

Both Sahlins and Strathern lean heavily on the notion of the ‘small scale’ grouping in order to make their arguments. The tropes they formulate – of personhood as ‘dividuated’ and kinship as a ‘mutuality of being’ – still have explanatory power when applied to a series of diaspora groups dotted across Europe and communicating mostly through electronic media. Yet in order to work fully, the concepts need allying with other rewards derived from membership.

### ***Connection with Turkish ancestry or birthplace***

A second draw for fans involved with Çarşı Berlin is a sense of connection with a Turkish ancestry or nationality. Many Turkish-speakers who moved to a Western European country as an adult said that football support was a way of maintaining a link with what they felt was home’:

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<sup>70</sup> Indeed, Sahlins begins his book with two epigraphs, one a quote from EB Tylor published in 1865 about South American tribes, the second from a 2012 *New York Times* piece by Colin McCann entitled ‘what Baseball Does to the Soul’: ‘We become the children of our children, the sons of our sons. We watch our kids as if watching ourselves. We take on the burden of their victories and defeats. It is our privilege, our curse too. We get older and younger at the same time’ (Sahlins 2013, [v]).

<sup>71</sup> Sahlins makes this argument through privileging an animistic ontology, quoting Viveiros de Castro’s work on the similarities of gift exchange, kinship and marriage (Viveiros de Castro 2009). Strathern’s take has more in common with the ontological symmetry of ‘actors’ and ‘actants’ proposed under actor-network theory (see Harvey 2012; Latour 2005).

Serkan, Dublin

Serkan: When you're abroad you really miss your home, like home culture, home town. Your football team, and you want to see the simple games as well...

Me: So it reminds you of home?

S: Yeah I think that's a kind of, a kind of motivation in everyone's...conscience. It keeps you attached with home, it keeps you attached with your, your culture or your...childhood, um, habits, you know, the hobbies.<sup>72</sup>

In other cases, membership of Çarşı Berlin was seen as a way of retaining a connection with Turkey for those born and raised in Europe:

Emrah, Koblenz, Germany

They can't show pride in a[nother] country in Germany or something like that. They have no chance to go into the street and say 'Ehh! I'm Turkish! I'm Turkish! I'm Turkish!' all the day. So they think: 'OK, there is a match, it is a Turkish team. OK! Let us go and swear and shout in Turkish, something like that.' It's a kind of nationalism, and I personally don't even like it so much.<sup>73</sup>

Rather than kinship, it is literatures and debates under the rubric of 'diaspora' or 'transnationalism' that help to situate this function of the fan club. Beginning in the 1980s, migration studies began to move beyond push-pull models of movement, the problematic idea of 'modernisation theory' and the teleologies of origin/return (D. S. Massey et al. 1998, 1–16). As a more recent round of globalization gathered pace, scholars felt the need to describe and explore ideas of displacement, emplacement and movement in an idiom that maintained the complexities and ambiguities that they were witnessing in the lives of their interlocutors. Instead of *inter*-national ties, the *transnational* was coined, offering a form of interaction that transcended the nation state (Vertovec 1999, 447). The idea of a 'diaspora' was expanded and refashioned to refer to any grouping located outside of a 'homeland', imagined or otherwise (Safran 1991; Brubaker 2005; Clifford 1994). The malleability of both concepts frees up the conceptual space to fold together the experiences of Turkey-born and

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<sup>72</sup> Interview with author, 25 October 2012.

<sup>73</sup> Interview with author, 4 May 2013.

European-born members of Çarşı Berlin, albeit while still appreciating differences in their experiences and motivations. They also reflect the nature of the group.

Describing how Çarşı Berlin functions requires sensitivity to transnational or diasporic imaginings and movements – what James Clifford calls ‘decentered, lateral connections’ (Clifford 1994, 306) – just as much as connections with Turkey. Çarşı Berlin footballing imaginaries contain multifaceted, and often conflicting, notions of belonging: to Turkey, to a European nation state, to a wider global footballing family. Perceived thus, Beşiktaş imaginaries can be both ‘transnational’ and ‘diasporic’. Using the concepts in this way seems the best approach to pulling out the incommensurability and ambiguity of cultural production and location in Çarşı Berlin:

*From Fieldwork diary, 11 May 2013*

At the Mannheim association (*dernek*) of Çarşı Berlin, I meet a Beşiktaş fan whose brother is a youth player with TSG 1899 Hoffenheim, a German first division club. ‘Maybe he’ll play for the national team!’ I say. ‘Yes’, he replies, ‘but in Germany not in Turkey’. This comment is very categorical. He explains that in Germany it’s all about the youth. ‘Look at Philip Lahm [a German player], he’s done so much and he’s only 28. Youth youth youth’ he says. ‘Look at Turkey – Volkan is 32, Emre is 35...’ he trails off but the point has been made: his brother would be daft to throw in his lot with Turkey.

### ***Passion and playfulness***

A third reward of being in Çarşı Berlin is a chance to express unbridled of passion and playfulness. When interviewed about their fandom, fans frequently delight in explaining how joyous the organisation is: ‘Everyone is together, everyone is just eating, drinking, singing songs, making jokes and... it’s a

different atmosphere', says Emre, a teenage fan from London.<sup>74</sup> Another teenager named Cengiz, from Cologne in Germany, describes his first encounter with Çarşı Berlin:

We were behind the Çarşı Berlin *tribün* [terrace] ... I was really in a good mood, of course I was. It was passionate. It was because of the Çarşı fans maybe- because they are always passionate. And then you're like going with them in, in like a river flow, you know? And then they took you with them. I mean, I wasn't close to them but you see how the *tribün* is, how the fans are.<sup>75</sup>

It is beneficial to think about this passion and playfulness vis-à-vis recent literature on 're-enchantment' in modern life. (Bennett 2001; Bond and Ciekawy 2001; Meyer and Pels 2003; Saler 2012). Whilst historically forming a central pillar of anthropology, the study of 'magic' spent the latter half of the twentieth century ostracised from the progressive stream of the discipline due to connotations of delusion, primitivism and backwardness (Frazer [1890] 1922; Durkheim [1912] 2001; Malinowski [1909] 1935). But in the last decade or so, anthropologists have been at the head of an interdisciplinary trend concerned with reassessing notions of magic and enchantment in 'modern' life. Far from a phenomenon distant or distinct from the west, anthropologists argue that magic or enchantment are concepts intrinsic to our times (H. L. Moore and Sanders 2001; Geschiere 2013; Pels 2010; Greenwood 2009). This is where I embark, making the case for football as an example of how 'modernity [has] generated its own enchantments' (Meyer and Pels 2003, 35). Unlike Birgit Meyer and Peter Pels, however, I eschew the term 'magic'. As I have already argued, football fandom has suffered from exceptionalist treatment in academia. Viewing fan practices as 'magical' does little to dispel the image.

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<sup>74</sup> Interview with author, 1 January 2013.

<sup>75</sup> Interview with author, 27 May 2013.

Instead, the term ‘enchantment’ captures more accurately the sense of wonder expressed by Çarşı Berlin fans.

In choosing enchantment I align myself with Jane Bennett, who says that ‘*enchantment* entails a state of wonder, and one of the distinctions of this state is the temporary suspension of chronological time and bodily movement...it is to be transfixed, spellbound’ (Bennett 2001, 5 emphasis in original). I adopt Bennett’s idea of enchantment for several reasons. Firstly, its emphasis on a moment out of time shares much in common with Turner’s idea of ‘*communitas*’ (V. Turner [1969a] 2007), which will form an important part of chapter 5. Using the term ‘enchantment’ in this regard reinforces the notion of a momentary suspension of the chronological order, as well as tapping the affective dimension of fandom that I wish to draw out throughout the thesis. Secondly, divinity is not a necessary component of the enchantment process. The third and most important reason is the foregrounding of the everyday. For Bennett, enchantment resides amidst the familiar and quotidian, it manifests itself as ‘the marvellous erupting amid the everyday’ (Bennett 2001, 8). This is the best model for studying football’s relationship to the quotidian of Turkish diaspora life. Fans are frequently captivated by, and play with, ways of interposing football with work or home life.

I have singled out the three key dividends that fans receive from their involvement in Çarşı Berlin: a sense of community, a connection with a Turkish ancestry or birthplace and the chance to express passion and playfulness. I introduced the literatures important to these strands: works on kinship, diaspora and transnationalism and enchantment and magic. There will be more systematic engagement with these debates as the thesis unfolds. The rest of the

chapter will concern itself with showing how these rewards are accrued through fan materials and practices: the chants, banners, photographs, numbers and familial epithets that envelope the Çarşı Berlin experience.

### **How fans ‘do’ fandom**

I have chosen to approach the question of how Çarşı Berlin members ‘do’ fandom from a material culture perspective (Miller 2005). The orientation is prompted by the large importance Beşiktaş supporters place on ‘things’ in the practice of being fans (Henare, Holbraad, and Wastell 2007). Members of the group would often direct my attention towards physical objects. They showed me T-shirts emblazoned with their names. At games, disputes would break out over the best way to wave scarves and flags. The walls of Çarşı Berlin bars and associations are adorned with Beşiktaş banners (see chapter 6). Yet equal importance is placed on media objects: videos of fans at games; photoshopped digital images; clips of chants recorded on mobile phones; screenshots of websites. There is an aliveness to objects when in Beşiktaş mode. On a hot spring day in Duisburg, a fan’s jacket falls to the floor. Another fan points it out. ‘Ah, leave it’, says the owner dismissively. ‘What?! But isn’t it a Beşiktaş top?!’ responds the first, ready to erupt. ‘No, it’s just Nike’, replies the fan. ‘Ah, then leave it’, agrees his friend. They also can be defiled: the burning of a Beşiktaş scarf by Dynamo Kiev supporters sends the Beşiktaş fans into paroxysms of rage, prompting them to smash up seats and hurl them in retaliation (see fig. 25 and fig. 20). When a Kurdish member of Çarşı Berlin in London is ostracised for

apparently holding a Beşiktaş flag amongst a group of PKK<sup>76</sup> sympathisers, the comments on Facebook revolve around the flag remaining inviolate: ‘The Beşiktaş flag: Don’t use that sacred emblem!!!’, ‘Don’t use that sacred crest! Don’t infect us!’<sup>77</sup>



**Figure 25. Dynamo Kiev fans burn a Beşiktaş scarf, an act that prompts a furious response, Kiev, 20 October 2011 (author's photo)**

Scott Lash and Celia Lury have argued that, in recent decades, the cultural superstructure has ‘collapsed’ into materiality (Lash and Lury 2007b, 7). As a result of movements and circulation ushered in by the economics of globalisation, culture has become ‘thingified’. When this happens, ‘we enter a world of operationality, a world not of interpretation but of navigation. We do not “read” them [cultural objects] so much as “do” them...or do with them’ (Lash and Lury 2007b, 8). This seems to explain the lack of discrimination in Beşiktaş fans’ use of objects: media have become thingified and physical objects

<sup>76</sup> The PKK (Kurdistan Workers Party) is a Kurdish political and military group that has been fighting an armed struggle against the Turkish state since 1984. It is classified as a terrorist organisation by the Turkish government and most governments in Europe.

<sup>77</sup> Fieldwork diary, 2 May 2013.

‘mediafied’ (Lash and Lury 2007b, 4). Any object, materialised image or physical scarf, can be worn, exchanged or revered as part of attempts to establish who belongs to Çarşı Berlin.

This position does not preclude exploring immateriality. On the contrary, the depth of emotion unlocked by fan objects hints that supporters view them as ‘something more’ than simply material things. The focus of this final section can hence be defined further: it will examine forms of materialisation to understand how they are used to reach the notions of ‘something more’ explored earlier in the chapter. That is, fandom as dividuated being, fandom as connection with ‘home’ and fandom as enchantment.

### ***Epithets and photographs***

The sense of family in Çarşı Berlin is reinforced by a wider cultural practice among Turkish speakers of addressing strangers and friends by familial epithets. The epithet is determined by the sex and ages of the two parties, hence it would not be unusual for a man in his forties to address his elderly shopkeeper as ‘older brother’ (*ağabey*), his young hairdresser as ‘daughter’ (*kız*) and the retired neighbour as ‘aunt’ (*teyze*). The practice is equally prevalent in diaspora communities and pervasive amongst members of Çarşı Berlin. As the majority of fans are male and aged between eighteen and forty, the most common familial expressions are ‘brother’ (*kardeş*) and ‘big brother’ (*ağabey*, abbreviated often to *abi*). Printed on fan-produced merchandise is the phrase *Çok sevdik be abi* (‘Oh but we loved so much, didn’t we big bro?’), a commemoration of the death of a much-loved fan in Istanbul (fig. 26). Those

who fall outside this spectrum have different terms: a child can be called ‘son’ (*oğul*) by those old enough to sire him and a man in his fifties or sixties may be referred to as ‘uncle’ (*amca*). Usage of the terms is imprecise yet expected, thus containing a latent potential for tension or hurt through misappropriation. Failure to use any epithet is often seen as disrespectful. One fan in his late forties called me an arsehole (*göt*) for referring to him simply by his first name, Bora, rather than as Bora *abi*. The use of familial epithets explicitly reinforces the sense of family described by some of the fans above, whilst the shifting notion of the titles underscore the relationality of being between supporters.



Figure 26. The phrase 'Oh but we loved so much, didn't we big bro?' (*çok sevdik be abi*) adorns a t-shirt, commemorating the death of a prominent fan in Istanbul (author's photo)

An important object in shaping the notion of family is the photograph. Susan Sontag notes that 'through photographs, each family constructs a portrait-

chronicle of itself – a portable kit of images that bears witness to its connectedness'. She goes on to suggest that a family photo album is 'generally about the extended family' (Sontag 2008, 8). This is the case for Çarşı Berlin. The vast majority of 'family' photographs – that is, those framed around showing relationality – take place when strangers are present, such as when fans from elsewhere are visiting (figs. 27-28) or when multiple groups are meeting up at a football match (fig. 29). As Sontag argues, 'photography came along to memorialize, to restate symbolically, the imperilled continuity and vanishing extendedness of family life. Those ghostly traces, photographs, supply the token presence of the dispersed relatives' (Sontag 2008, 9). For Çarşı Berlin members, there is no need to continually photograph the members of their own crew (*tayfa*) but there is a desire to memorialise 'dispersed relatives', fans they have never met but with whom they are said to have a shared bond. Consequently, fans are much more excited about taking photos when there is a 'distant' Çarşı Berlin member present.

A key prop in this memorialisation is the banner. Banners are a stock item amongst football supporters across the world, used to display a variety of symbols or messages. In this instance it is banners codified with a geographical location that evoke the idea of dispersed family connections, for instance a city or a gang (figs. 27-29). Whilst the geographical location distinguishes, shared iconographic motifs generate connection – the black and white colours of Beşiktaş, repetition of fonts or use of the anarchist A that features in the Çarşı logo. Fans often paint a new banner for each occasion or pay for one to be professionally produced. The banner functions like a clapperboard on a film set, allowing any photographs taken during an event to be readily indexed to a time

and a place. I shall return to questions of family and photography in chapter 7, when I talk about how internet technologies have affected the process of taking and swapping pictures transnationally.



Figure 27. 'Nuremberg Beşiktaş Club' (*Nürnberg Beşiktaşlılar Derneği*) taken on occasion of visit to Nuremberg, Germany by four guests, 17 October 2012 (author's photo)



Figure 28. 'Swiss Eagles' (*İsviçre Kartalları*) taken on occasion of my visit to Basel, Switzerland, 30 September 2012 (author's photo)



Figure 29. 'We came from Bournemouth to make [Beşiktaş] even stronger' (*gücüne güç katmaya geldik! Bournemouth*), taken before Stoke City v Beşiktaş, Stoke-on-Trent, England, 29 September 2011 (author's photo)

### Colours

Another way fans invoke Beşiktaş is through the use of black and white – the team colours. Across Europe I would find extraordinary devotion to this monochrome palette. Beşiktaş fans insist on driving black cars, paint the rooms of their newborn babies black and white, or insist on buying white sofas for the living room. When interviewing fans on how they became Beşiktaş supporters,

several said something along the lines of: 'I fell in love with the colours'. When asking if they could expand on their answer, some fans became deeply emotional:

Ali, Watford, England

I love the colour. I don't say it's brilliant... but it just has meaning, very deep meaning. White line and black line. It's one of my- black side and white side. I don't have it every day. Pure white life [*bembeyaz hayat*] you know? Like, white life. Like, very shiny life. Sometimes we get black life, you know, like dark life. It's the same thing – we're not champions every year, we're not brilliant every year, we don't support Beşiktaş because they're winning or losing, we just support them because it's black and white.<sup>78</sup>

Writing about colours and the sacred, Michael Taussig notes how, across cultures, colours are conceived by more than their visual properties: 'Color vision ... [is] less a retinal and more a total bodily activity to the fairytale extent that in looking at something, we may even pass into the image' (Taussig 2009, 6). Colours become the edge through which fans often 'pass into the image' of Beşiktaş. The process of attending a Beşiktaş match is a passage from a multicolour world to one of black and white. Jerseys, facepaints, banners and flags are all cast in the two tones. 'Colourful' (*renkli*) has become a term of insult in Çarşı Berlin. Fans survey crowds and sigh before exclaiming that it is *çok renkli* (very colourful). The colours of Beşiktaş's two big rivals, Fenerbahçe and Galatasaray, are blue-yellow and red-yellow respectively and sometimes fans of opposing teams attend Beşiktaş matches wearing their team's top or scarf. The rationale behind the practice is to show that they are Turkish first and foremost, coming to support the Turkish team ('we are all brothers' in the words of one campaign, see fig. 31). Not all members of Çarşı Berlin agree. Chants in retaliation include 'We don't want colourful fans' (*Renkli taraftar*

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<sup>78</sup> Interview with author, 6 December 2012.

*istemiyoruz!)* or the more provocative slogan used to introduce this chapter:

‘You don’t become a Beşiktaş fan, you’re born a Beşiktaş fan, all those who aren’t are son’s of bitches’ (*Beşiktaşlı olunmaz Beşiktaşlı doğulur Beşiktaşlı olmayanlar orospu çocuğudur*).

Sharing this obsession with others feeds into a sense of familial closeness. Çarşı Berlin consists only of those passionate and willing enough to confront such egregious behaviour, demanding *renkli* fans cover up their shirts and backing up the demand with threats of violence. The tensions thrown up by the phenomenon of rival fans attending Beşiktaş games are explored further in chapter 5.



Figure 30. A supporter wears the unmistakable yellow of Fenerbahçe on the terrace at Arsenal v Beşiktaş, 27 August 2014 (author’s photo)



Figure 31. A photo opportunity to counter conflict amongst fans of different Turkish teams. The banner reads, ‘we are all brothers, why this strife?!’ (*Hepimiz kardeşiz: bu kavga ne diye?!*). Taken before Turkey v Latvia international friendly, Duisburg, Germany, 28 May 2013 (author’s photo)

Even when far away from games, fans of Turkish football are hyper-sensitive to the use of colours. Beşiktaş fans avoid writing in blue pen on yellow paper lest it brings bad luck to the team (Nuhurat 2013, 35). In a clothes shop with one fan, I hold up a green jacket. The fan shakes his head: ‘I’m strict on the colours, like

all Turks'. In my fieldwork diary at the time, I wrote that it seemed the fan was 'giving the anecdote with both pride at being this passionate yet also the realisation that it's silly to be so obsessed with the colour of a top. He seems to be suggesting it's a cultural trend that Turks have which, perhaps because he's lived in England for so long, he already knows will be seen in a silly light by a non-Turk such as myself'.<sup>79</sup> Devotion to this world of strict colour schemes can also be a means through which diaspora fans connect with Turkey, a land where football partisanship requires you to reject coloured notepaper and eschew blue pens.

### ***Chants***

Another important method for evoking a connection with Turkey is the use of songs and chants. Whilst fans express 'love' for their team in songs the world over, the love expressed in Turkish football is decidedly different to the Anglo-centric conception that guides many studies of football fans. Yağmur Nuhurat, a scholar on Turkish football, has pointed out that fandom in Turkey is inflected by two different types of love: *aşk* and *sevda*. *Aşk* refers to romantic love and means 'falling in love', but it is the notion of *sevda*, love tinged with fatalistic melancholy, that is arguably more alien to English and German terrace culture. Its adjectival form, *Sevdalı*, is translated better as 'lovesick'. In Beşiktaş songs, love often takes the form of *sevda*:

You, the sadness of my every night, the tears in my eyes, the smoke from my cigarette  
 You, the blood in my veins, my destiny, my glorious Beşiktaş  
 Right in the middle of my heart is a big fire, all in flames  
 Beşiktaş, I swear to you, your love will never die, not even in my grave

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<sup>79</sup> Fieldwork diary, 14 February 2012.

*Sen benim her gece efkârım, gözümdeki yaşım, sigara dumanım  
 Sen benim damardaki kanım, alnımdaki yazım, Şanlı Beşiktaşım  
 Kalbimin en orta yerinde, büyük bir yangın var, alevler içinde  
 Beşiktaş sana yemin olsun, bitmeyecek sevdan, mezarımda bile  
 (Nuhurat 2013, 218)*

In Turkey, *sevda* emerges from the *arabesk* Turkish music genre, which is characterised by references to death, suffering and hopelessness. Arabesk music emerged in the 1960s and was wildly popular in the following decades. The genre is based on Turkish folk music, yet is very much music of the city. It is the soundtrack of the massive rural to urban migration that took place in Turkey, from the 1950s. For the millions who left their ancestral lands to squat in temporary, illegal housing on the edge of the city, the music captured the dislocation, difficulties and hopelessness of life. The same goes for the millions who skipped a stage, moving directly from Turkish village to European city, mostly through the German *gastarbeiter* (guest worker) programme (Mandel 2008; Abadan-Unat 2011). The sensibility has informed other art in Turkey, most noticeably films, making it possible to talk more broadly about an ‘arabesk culture’ (Stokes 1992). Fatalism, a sense of failure and ‘a protagonist bound by his or her unchangeable, grim fate’ are the defining components (Nuhurat 2013, 219). These emotions translate easily into footballing culture. As the lyrics of the song above suggest, some Beşiktaş chants are filled with misery, sacrifice, suffering and a sense of loss.<sup>80</sup> Diasporan Beşiktaş fans are perhaps more receptive still to this mood, sometimes suffering a ‘double’ loss, both through the team and a reminder of their position outside of Turkey.

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<sup>80</sup> The sentiment is not consigned to Beşiktaş fans. One Galatasaray song is a reworking of a popular Arabesk tune, ‘Let those who don’t love you die’ (*Seni sevmeyen ölsün*), see Nuhurat (2013, 220).

Diaspora fan chants can also speak to the playfulness of supporters. In March 2013, when Galatasaray play German side FC Schalke 04, the Galatasaray fans modify the words of the main Schalke chant, replacing the word ‘Schalke’ with a rhyming counterpart *scheiße* (shit). Thanks to this modification, instead of the words ‘Schalke zero four!’, echoing round the streets of Schalke’s hometown, they were filled with the chant: ‘shit zero four!’<sup>81</sup> This corruption is used by other teams in Germany to taunt Schalke fans, but I don’t believe it is known outside of Germany, as it requires a certain (basic) knowledge of the German language and German football chants. Turkish-speaking diaspora fans thus also inevitably set themselves apart from their counterparts in Turkey, mocking the ‘home’ team in a way that Beşiktaş fans in Turkey could not. It adds an extra tool to their armoury, allowing them to throw elements of German footballing culture back at rival fans.

### ***Inscriptions***

All three of the ‘rewards’ that accrue to individuals who join Çarşı Berlin (community, connection with Turkey and the chance to express passion and have fun) can be glimpsed in fans’ use of inscriptions. By this I mean the practice of marking objects and the body. Passion is expressed through inscribing hyperbolic song lyrics onto fan-produced T-shirts – ‘No-one can understand this love’ (*Anlayamaz kimse bu aşkı*) – or on banners hung at away games – ‘True love is experienced on away matches’ (*Gerçek aşklar*

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<sup>81</sup> The ‘04’ in the club name refers to their year of foundation, 1904. See: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TtTNi0wvVUI> for a video of fans chanting the original song (accessed 26 August 2015).

*deplasmanda yaşanır*, figs. 32-33). Considerable effort goes into planning and making these items.



Figure 32. Çarşı Israel T-shirt with the lyric 'No-one can understand this love' (*Anlayamaz kimse bu aşkı*) (author's photo)



Figure 33. Banner from Çarşı Berlin Nuremberg reading 'True love is experienced on away matches' (*Gerçek aşklar deplasmanda yaşanır*) (author's photo)

A sizeable minority of Çarşı Berlin members go further, displaying their passion by inscribing the club into the body by means of a tattoo (figs. 34-36). The practice of football-themed tattoos can be seen as part of what Arnold Rubin has labelled a 'tattoo renaissance' in western cultures in recent decades (Rubin 1988). Perceptions of tattooing have followed a similar trajectory to 'fandom'. Once the preserve of particular groups such as sailors or biker gangs, tattooing is now a widespread practice. It is figured as an art-form, the iconography increasingly customised and the clientele expanding to include many from the middle and upper classes. Samantha Cameron, the aristocratic wife of the Conservative British prime minister, has a tattoo of a dolphin on her ankle, underlining how acceptable, ordinary and everyday the practice has become. Diaspora Beşiktaş fans are privy to two contrasting contexts: this western European milieu where the tattoo's ability to cultivate 'deviant' status has

diminished (Schildkrout 2004, 337) and a Turkish environment in which it has increased, courtesy of the religious governance of the ruling AK Party and the tattoo's association with secularism (see Zalewski 2010).

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**Figure 34. Beşiktaş fan tattoos. On the left an Eagle, the symbol of the club. On the right, the club crest in its Ottoman form**

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**Figure 35. Beşiktaş fan tattoo on forearm displaying the year of the club's formation (1903) and the words 'We were the first team' [lit: When there was no-one, there was [only] us' (*Kimse yokken biz vardık*)**

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**Figure 36. Emre, a fan from London, has the logo on his arm**

Although specific designs vary widely, a recurring motif in the tattoos chosen

by diaspora Beşiktaş fans is the club crest in its Ottoman form (fig. 34).

Arguably the Ottoman script speaks to the growing ubiquity of 'oriental' tattoos in western Europe, in Japanese, Chinese or Arabic script, but in this case amplifying a sense of Turkish exoticism. Fans know that most in their country of residence will not be able to read the writing. The fan will know what it

means, even if they cannot read it themselves.<sup>82</sup> Even tattoos of Turkish in the modern Roman script are unfathomable to most western Europeans. One member of Çarşı Berlin chose to ink the year of the club's foundation into his skin, with the words we were the first team' [lit: 'when there was no-one, there was [only] us'] (*kimse yokken biz vardık*, Fig. 23). Another simply has the word 'Beşiktaş'. If colour aside from black and white is to be used, it is most commonly the red of Çarşı (Fig. 24). Alfred Gell refers to tattooing as a 'double skin folded over itself' (Gell 1993: 39). If unadorned skin itself acts a visual mediator between individual identity and cultural difference, then the process of inscribing skin through a tattoo draws extra attention to the mediation between notions of self and other. With a tattoo, 'the body multiplies; additional organs and subsidiary selves are created; spirits, ancestors, rulers and victims take up residence in an integument which begins to take on a life of its own' (Gell 1993: 39). Tattoos are the edge, hooking the fan up to wider relations, be that Ottoman Turkishness or a familial-like fan grouping. Dividuality is inscribed on the skin as fans show that they are part of Beşiktaş, and Beşiktaş – 'spirits, ancestors, rulers and victims' all – is a part of them.

### **Numbers**

My final example of the playfulness of being a Beşiktaş fan surrounds the use of symbols that represent the team. Perhaps the most enigmatic and omnipresent is the number 1903. The number holds special meaning for Beşiktaş fans. It is

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<sup>82</sup> Ottoman Turkish contains Persian constructions and is written in Arabic script. It was replaced by the Latin script in 1928 as part of a series of wide-reaching language reforms (see G. Lewis 1999). As a result, the majority of Turkish-speakers cannot read or understand pre-reform era texts.

the year the club was founded and marks Beşiktaş as the oldest in Turkey.<sup>83</sup> The founding date acts as a numerical synecdoche for the team, and has become a totem with emotional resonance. It is inscribed on the skin, adopted on car number plates (figs. 37-39) and frozen in screenshots taken on phones at three minutes past 7pm– 19:03 on a 24 hour clock (figs. 40-42).



Figure 37. (author's photo)



Figure 38. (author's photo)



Figure 39. (author's photo)

A numberplate containing the Beşiktaş founding year of 1903 is a prize possession for fans. Here are some examples from Germany

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Figure 40.

Figure 41. 'The time is Beşiktaş time... EMIRATES [stadium, the home of Arsenal] HERE WE COME!!!'

Figure 42. 'Birthday for two legends ©'(both Beşiktaş and the fan share the same birthday)

Fans love to capture screenshots with their phones displaying the time 19:03. Note also that all three choose some sort of Beşiktaş photo as the phone's 'wallpaper'

<sup>83</sup> Beşiktaş was founded not as a football but a gymnastics club. Whilst older as an institution than rivals Galatasaray (1905) and Fenerbahçe (1907), the club only began playing football in 1911 (Gökacı 2008, 64–66). Most Beşiktaş fans choose to omit this detail.

This practice is associated with quotidian moments in life far from football. As one fan notes of a recent holiday: ‘We went to Thailand. In the hotel we had a safe, yeah? We made the safe number 1903 [laughs]. Most of our friends’ bank cards have the number 1903...look, my card too...the last numbers of the telephone number [are also 1903].... I mean, everything’.<sup>84</sup> The club reinforces the mythologisation of the number. In 2013 the decision was taken to hold a celebration marking the club’s 110<sup>th</sup> year at three minutes past 7pm on the 19<sup>th</sup> of March (19:03 on 19/03). At this time, the live broadcast panned away from the stadium where the event was taking place, to focus on the clock face of the nearby Dolmabahçe clock tower, just to underline the importance of the time (fig. 43).<sup>85</sup>

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**Figure 43. A still image from the television coverage of the Beşiktaş 110-year anniversary celebration, showing the clocks (both analogue and digital) poised at 19:03**

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<sup>84</sup> Interview with author, 23 February 2013. ‘Tayland’a gittik, izne gittik. Bizim safe var ya. Safe numarasını 1903 yaptık [laughs] Arkadaşlar çok- arkadaşların çoğunun banka kartı 1903’tür. Bak bizim de kart... Telefon numarasının sonundaki rakam... Yani her şey’.

<sup>85</sup> Such strict coordination of timing was not a one-off. Events run by both the club and fans are often scheduled to start at 19:03, such as the league victory celebration on 14 July 2009.

## Conclusion

Polat, Berk and Tuna, Stuttgart, Germany

Polat: You see, what I am saying is that we are *close like brothers*, if one of us needs something or anything happens. See, he moved house and we all went to help. I moved and they all came...

Berk: Help, togetherness, solidarity-

P: It has nothing at all to do with Beşiktaş. Do you understand? I mean-

Tuna: it provides unity, togetherness

B: If there wasn't Beşiktaş how would we meet? I mean, together also there's that. I met Polat, I met Tuna. Thanks to Beşiktaş we're all together (my emphasis).<sup>86</sup>

Ultimately, as Polat confesses above, fandom often has 'nothing at all to do with Beşiktaş'. It is not about the team winning, or even the game itself. Fandom is driven primarily by the desire to 'partake of each other's sufferings and joys, sharing one another's experiences ... and feel the effects of each other's acts' (Sahlins 2013: 28). To the outsider, or the reader of pre-twenty-first century academic work on 'fans', this may come as a big shock. Yet the stories and practices of Çarşı Berlin members reveals fandom to be a mutable category of belonging, appealing for more everyday or mundane reasons such as gaining a sense of community or strengthening a connection with a Turkish ancestry or birthplace.

Whilst on the surface this transnational, diasporic, multiply-mediated fan collective may appear to be a relatively 'new' form of grouping, it is in fact better explained through 'old' approaches to relationality, such as notions of kinship and dividuality, diasporic imaginings of ancestry or homeland or a sense of magical enchantment from being physically present in large crowds. It

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<sup>86</sup> Interview with author, 23 February 2013. 'Şey söylüyorum bak, bizimki abi-kardeşlik, birimizin bir ihtiyacı olur, bir şeyi olur; bak bu taşındı kaç kişi gittik, ben taşındım kaç kişi gittiler, geldiler...

-Yardım, birlik, beraberlik..

-Beşiktaş'la hiç alakası yok. Anlıyor musun, hani...

-Birlik-beraberlik sağlıyor

-Beşiktaş olmasa nasıl tanışalım yani beraber, bir de o var yani. Polat'la tanıştım, Tuna'le, Beşiktaş sayesinde hep beraber.

is through calling each other ‘brother’ and ‘sister’, inscribing lyrics of passion onto a T-shirt or the team logo into the flesh that the value of Beşiktaş ‘congeals’, is stored and evoked (Lambek 2013, 148).

Fandom needs to be stripped of its exceptionality in order to locate it properly within the everyday of Turkish-speaking diaspora lives. An unintended consequence of this approach, though, is for exceptional and passionate behaviour to be downplayed or drained of its affect. Whilst not as prevalent as some might argue, exceptional behaviour is of great importance to why and how Turkish-speaking diasporans are involved in Çarşı Berlin. As a result, it is important in these opening ethnographic chapters to establish a proper theory of the ‘exceptional’ in fandom. The central ritual through which a lot of these materials and practices are enacted is the extraordinary experience of attending an away match. In an attempt to reintroduce an element of the exceptional, it is to that topic that I now turn.

## Chapter 5

### The away match

Between 2009 and 2014 I attended a total of fifteen Beşiktaş away matches in Europe. Most were football matches, although for reasons discussed in chapter 3, some were basketball and one a handball game (see Table 2, p.102). The matches took place at all points of the year and ranged in location from Portugal to Israel. Despite the variations in sport, location, weather or crowd size, I identified a strong sense of repetition in the journeys to and from the games, the pre-match conduct and the behaviour of supporters on the terraces. I realised the acts I was witnessing are important means by which European Beşiktaş fan imaginaries were being created and membership of the Çarşı Berlin community ritualised. This chapter is devoted to describing these acts and explaining their importance. I begin with a composite ethnographic description, to give a flavour of what it looks, feels and smells like to attend a European Beşiktaş away match (*deplasman* in Turkish).

*I would arrive bleary-eyed at a budget airport in the early hours and meet up with the handful of fans with whom I had arranged to attend the match. Some wouldn't even bother sleeping but stay up drinking and chatting excitedly about the trip. In the airport I would grab some food. Some would grab alcohol. Pictures would be taken alongside the banners, and there would maybe even be a bit of*

*chanting. I would pile onto the aircraft with the others. Here there would be lots of shouting to get a clump of seats together. I would note the sinking hearts of other passengers when they realised they were sharing the flight with a football party. Their fears were usually well-placed. The flight over would consist of loud talking, chanting and boozing.*

*Upon landing, the border guards would look on amusedly as the group filed through immigration, all dressed in the same kit and chanting. A couple of people would pore over subway maps whilst the rest scattered like stones dropped on a tin tray – some browsing the shops, some smoking outside. Finally a route would be discerned and the group would be rallied. Instructions would be passed around about which stop was needed, and money handed over to a long-suffering train attendant who would issue everyone a ticket. On the platform waiting for the train we would come into contact with the first other group of Beşiktaş fans – they would have flown in from another western European country and announce their presence with a loud chant, to which our group would respond excitedly. When they came closer we would greet them and ask where they were from.*

*The train would arrive and we'd pile in. Our numbers swelled, the chanting would have more of an effect. I might chuckle when making eye contact with a friend who surreptitiously gestured at someone in the new group to suggest he's a bit of a dickhead. We would reach our stop and get off, almost leaving half our group behind as they weren't paying attention. Once out on the street there would be more looking at maps and a bit of wandering before the hotel was found. Whilst a couple of fans would deal with the booking, the rest would slump in the chairs in reception. The receptionist would look uneasy but hand over the keys. There would be lots of arguing about who was in which room. Most would have*

*three or four beds in them. People would plug in phones to charge; they would shower, shit, shave. Some would be ready in twenty minutes but inevitably the wait would be closer to an hour before everyone was ready to leave.*

*If we had arrived the day before the game, it would be time to do some aimless wandering around the city. If it was game-day, then phone calls would be made to fans who'd already arrived and plans made to meet up. After much shouting of directions down the phone, we would emerge in a square where there were already a couple of hundred Beşiktaş fans gathered. Some in our group would know some of them, but most would not know anything about them other than that they're from Switzerland judging by the logos on their matching tops. Consequently they would greet them a little impersonally before falling back into chatting amongst themselves. After a short while, the larger group would move on into another square where there would be even more fans. It would be lined with bars and tables piled with large numbers of empty glasses. Suddenly someone might call my name. I'd spin around to see a fan from Holland who I met at a match about a year ago. He'd greet me warmly, even though interaction since we last met would have consisted of a few comments on his Facebook wall. After a few minutes we'd both run out of things to say and, after a little bit of awkward silence, each turn to speak to other fans around. More often than not I'd be really hungry but the guys 'in charge' of our small group would be deep in conversation with what looked like other older fans governing proceedings. A couple of my mates might also be hungry, so we would sneak off together to try and find a McDonalds close by. We'd eat and then come back. Nobody would notice that we disappeared.*

*We might sit down and have a drink, or buy some cans from an off-license. Perhaps speak to some of the hundreds of fans I'd never met before, or they would speak to me (especially if the alcohol was taking effect). Mostly, though, I would mooch around with the guys I knew, who would comment on the other groups – sometimes bitchily, sometimes in awe. As mid-afternoon turned to early evening, the meeting point would fill up with Beşiktaş fans. Eventually a person would get up and shout that people were starting to head to the stadium. He'd want people to form a cortege behind a Çarşı Berlin banner.*

*The mass of people would stir. The idea of a nicely-ordered cortege was never realised, but the group would shift and stop, shift and stop as a semi-autonomous blob, moving down side streets in the direction of the stadium. Sometimes this process would require getting on public transport, platforms thronged with Beşiktaş fans, cramming themselves on board each available carriage or bus. Sometimes we could just walk. Most of the time the police seemed indifferent, but maybe this would be the match where they'd spot a scuffle and wade in with truncheons. Perhaps they'd hit a few fans and the atmosphere would suddenly take on a darker tone. Or it might be one of those games where the policemen look so indifferent I could probably hit them and they wouldn't flinch.*

*The crowd would get to the ground eventually, although the process could take as long as a couple of hours. Our group would have not been able to drink in all that time and so would begin to sober up. Fans could chain-smoke though, each cigarette making them more wired. Eventually the stadium would loom out of the landscape. The chanting would increase in volume as people realised they were almost there. There would be a massive hold-up whilst the police frisked fans, checked tickets and held the crowd back so it could enter in an orderly*

*manner. Eventually we would get into the ground. I would reunite with my group and head out onto the terrace to try and grab a good place.*

*Often we would be disappointed to see that the main spot had been commandeered by people who were more aggressive and older. Rather than remonstrate or try and butt in, we would end up standing off to the side. Someone would hang the banner up near where we would be standing, although it probably wouldn't be visible on TV. There would be a few hours till kick-off. We would sit around on the chairs, fiddle with our phones, take pictures of each other in silly poses. When the players would come out to warm up, the fans would get excited and start chanting their names.*

*When the game kicked off there would often be confusion and anger as to who was leading the crowd in the chanting. It would eventually become organised around one fan who I would follow, along with everyone else. The chants would be shouted, screamed at the top of voices. Many would involve coordinated jumping or waving of arms and scarves. Attention would be fixed on the organiser, who would beckon manically, trying to keep the crowd in time. Emotions would run high and the atmosphere would be tense. Everybody would stand on the plastic seats. I would frequently fall off amidst surges of bodies in response to a close chance, or a foul. At one point perhaps a man behind would crash into my back. I would feel the warm dampness of his sweat, his T-shirt like a saturated rag rubbed down my arm. If Beşiktaş had won, there might be a bit of extraneous cheering afterwards whilst being held in our seats by the police waiting for the home fans to disperse. If Beşiktaş had lost then the behaviour wouldn't really be any different.*

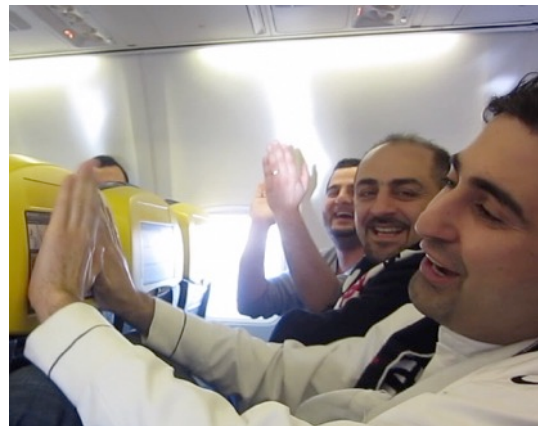
*Eventually we would be let out of the ground. I would say goodbye to some of the fans who were not part of our group – some might be new, others old friends – and we would head off back into the city. Maybe our group had acquired or shed a few faces. Either way, the game wouldn't feature widely in conversation, which would revolve around gossip about other members, other football teams, lives at home, the local women. Depending on the hotel's proximity we might go back and change out of our 'game' attire and into smarter clothes for a night out. We would no longer be 'Beşiktaş fans', more just a group of guys going out in a foreign city.*

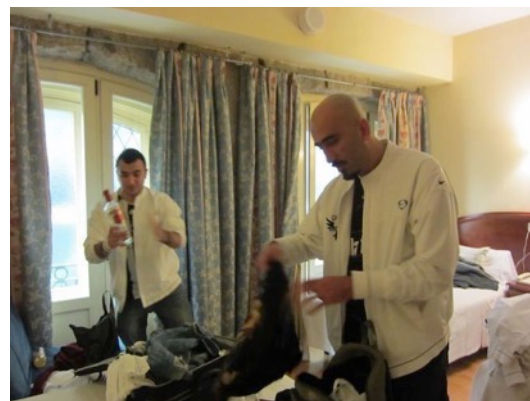
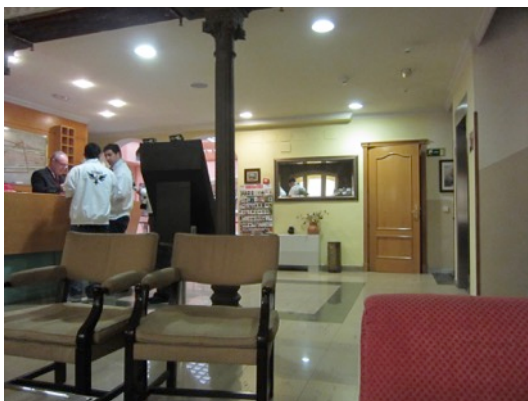
*We would go for some food and some drinks. Some would inevitably drink more than others, to the extent that they might get involved in a fight with some locals. Some fans would go off in search of prostitutes. I was never interested and so would hang around with the others who felt the same, although I would hear later that the group managed to find what they were looking for. I would be completely exhausted, having been awake for almost an entire 24 hours. So would everyone else, but they'd be fighting it through copious amounts of Red Bull and booze. We would go to some clubs and pay too much for entry. Some in the group would be in their element, but I was always relieved to see a few who, like me, could just about summon the energy to stand at the bar. Eventually one of the tired guys would suggest heading back and I would agree. We would leave the party people to it and head back. I would have the key to one room – not mine – and me and the other tired ones would just climb into whichever beds were available.*

*We would be woken at 6am when the others returned. There would be a bit of bed swapping and faffing but I would eventually drop off again. I would*

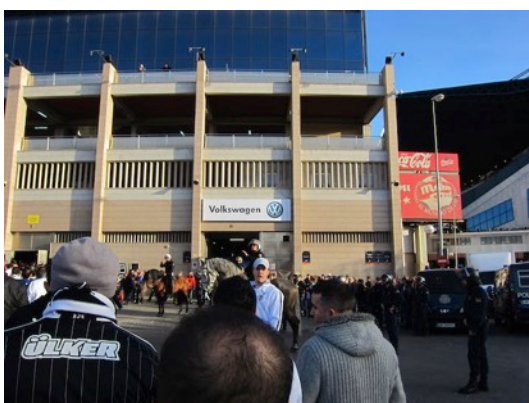
wake mid-morning, although looking around I would realise I was the only one awake. If we were to fly home that day, I would need to rouse everyone and get them into showers and packing, which always takes forever. In their tired, hungover state people couldn't be bothered with the underground so we would all just order taxis to take us to the airport. There wouldn't be any drinking today. Nor chanting, and no one would be wearing Beşiktaş kit. We would file quietly onto the plane and spend the flight asleep. We'd arrive back in the UK and head through immigration. There would be hugging and a few goodbyes then some climb into cars, others onto the tube and head home.

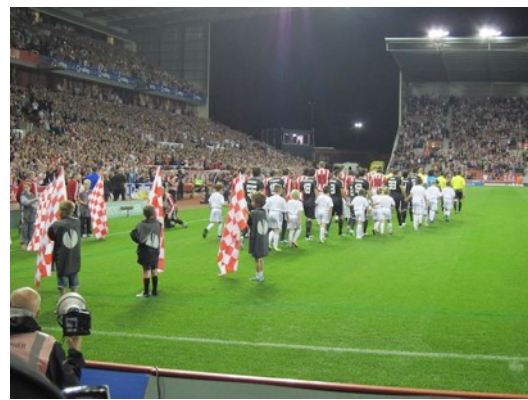
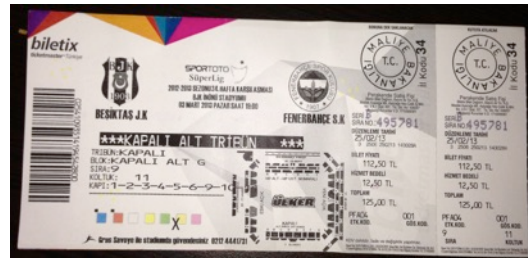
**Visual vignettes of the away match experience, from trips 2009-2014**  
(all images © 2016 by John McManus. All rights reserved)

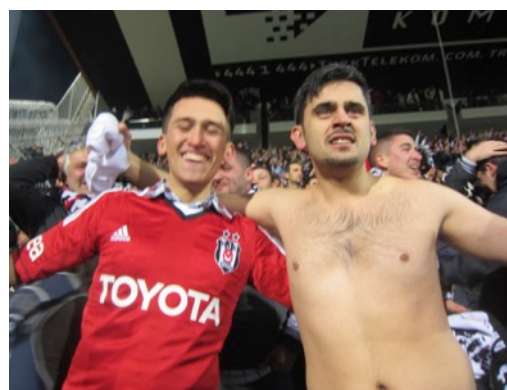
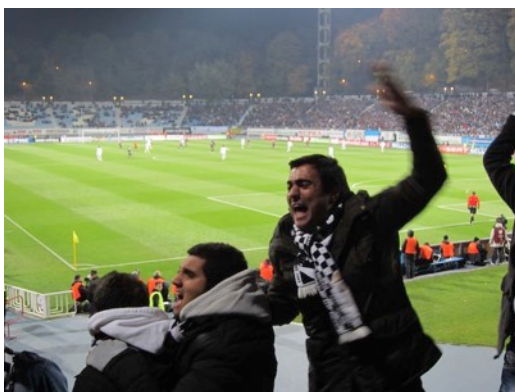


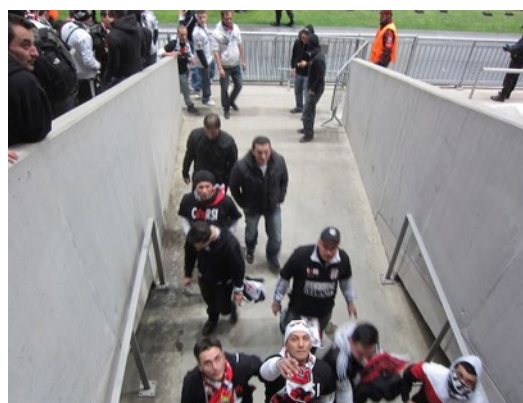
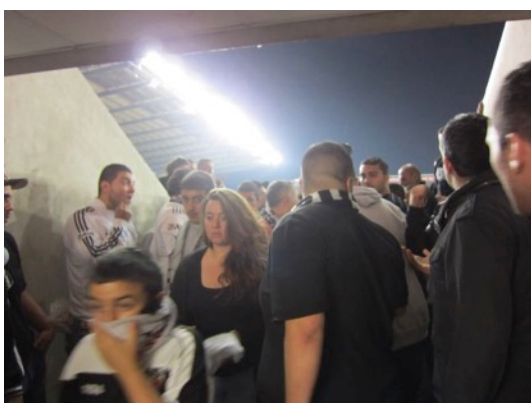
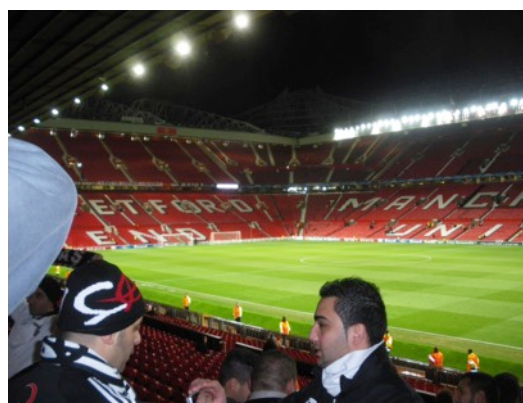
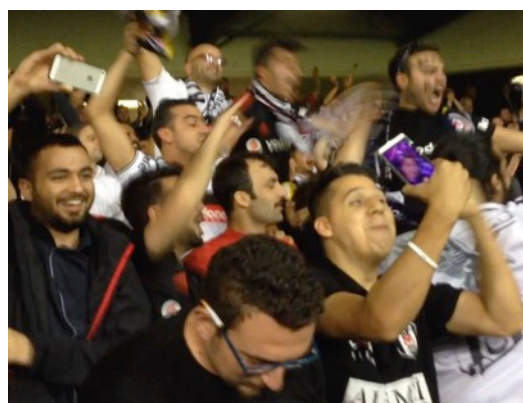
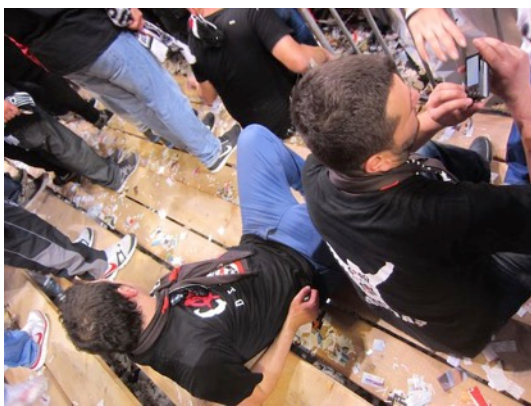




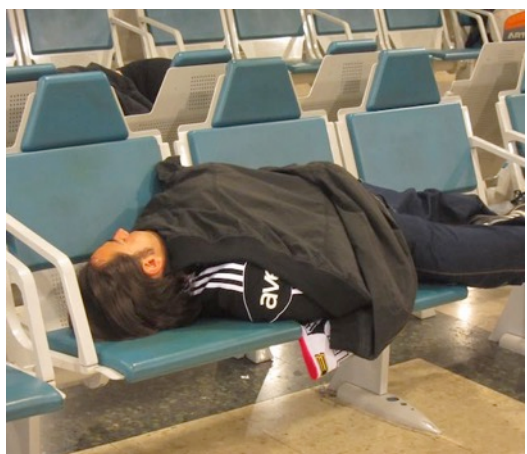
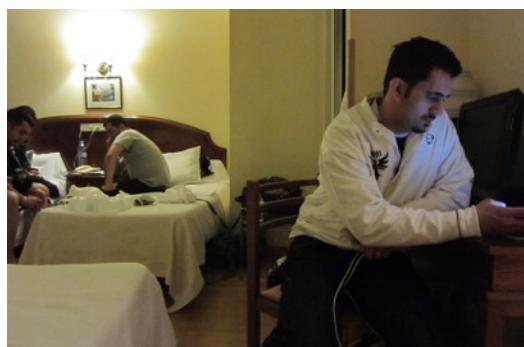












*The image originally presented here cannot be made freely available via ORA because of copyright*

This chapter is the second of two devoted to exploring the fandom of Çarşı Berlin. Whilst the previous chapter concentrated on situating fandom within the everyday of Turkish-speaking diasporans lives, here I focus exclusively on the opposite: the exceptional moments in which football stands apart from the ordinary. The experience of the *deplasman* (away match), travelling to watch Beşiktaş play in Europe, is unmistakably the most important of these exceptional moments.

The description and photographs above convey the distinct arc that the *deplasman* experience follows – from home to away to back home again. In my attempt to explain and situate the experience, this chapter follows another arc, this time theoretical: from ritual analysis, through embodiment theory to the emergent, processual claims of Actor Network theorists. These movements convey a central argument of the thesis, that the explanation of complex, forever moving phenomena like the away match requires an equally fluid method of analysis.

The ceremonial nature of fan practices means that theories of ritualization are the best place to start. Drawing on various analyses of ritual practices, I show the away match is well explained by important tenets of ritual theory, in particular Victor Turner's notion of liminality and Michael Taussig's work on imitation (V. Turner [1969b] 2007; Taussig 1993). The experience functions as a crucible in which the meaning and behaviour of Çarşı Berlin, their very ontology of being, is established. Removed from ordinary routines, the *deplasman* affords a rare chance for fans to feel part of a larger, transnational whole. This feeling is most often evoked through bodily practices, such as drinking, fighting, swearing and chanting.

Yet when shifting attention to the body, the Turnerian ritual framework begins to jar with the behaviour witnessed. The differences of the bodies themselves – small, large, male, female – and the diverse ways in which they enact fan practices begins to problematise views of the experience as a unified rite of passage. What becomes manifest instead is the diversity of the community from which Çarşı Berlin is drawn. Scattered across tens of nations, flecked by ethnic, social and linguistic diversity and marked by decades of differing migration trajectories, it is remarkably hard to ‘unite’ elements of the Turkish-language diaspora in Europe, even those who self-select as Beşiktaş fans. An embodiment lens shows more clearly this latticework of divisions, and allows the away match to be characterised as a site of argument and tension.

I find actor-network theory contains the concepts to hold these two apparently disparate thoughts together (Latour 2005; Harvey 2012; Law 1992). Its emphasis on tracing the means by which participants order the social for themselves lifts the lid on how the terrain of the experience looks and feels: namely, as a battle between categories (*Turkey, Kurd, Beşiktaş, Çarşı*) and the subsequent imaginaries they evoke, whether inclusive or exclusivist. I conclude by returning to the similarities with another enduring system of social organisation, the extended family, as part of a round up of this chapter.

### **Exceptionality**

That the *deplasman* is instrumental in generating meaning for Beşiktaş fans is evident by their behaviour and the language they use to describe the experience. Whilst many fans meet up regularly in their ordinary life to watch

Beşiktaş matches on TV (see chapter 6), away match attendance is seen as more critical to building group cohesion and belonging. As Koray from London exclaims: 'If we're all separated, if we're all doing our own thing, we're gonna forget each other. I could've forgot your name over there, on the snooker table for instance [gestures at Sincan] – but I know it's Sincan because we've been away together! ...We've all got to be together. You know, go [to] away games. I'd have had much more to say but the Foster's messed me up!' Koray knows another fan well and can joke with him, 'because we've been away together'. His reference to beer ('I've had much more to say but the Foster's messed me up!') hints at the centrality of bodily practices to processes of ritualisation. I return to these practices shortly.

The prospect of fulfilling the archetypal fan obligation – cheering the team on in the flesh – kickstarts a frenzy of increased interest in *being* a fan: what games to attend? How will we get there? What will we wear? Sing? Do? Attendance is also highly performative. There is no better emotional and physical demonstration of fanaticism than rearranging work schedules and taking substantial financial hits in order to take part. The romance of the away match is captured in popular fan songs, with Beşiktaş invoked as a lover that fans must visit ('For you I'm kept from sleep / there are lots of away matches to go on' *Bölünür senin için uykular / Gidilecek çok deplasman var*). The experience's significance is also underlined by the range of devices used to record and capture the *deplasman*: on the plane travelling to the destination, in bars once there, and in the stadium fans will hold cameras or phones aloft, recording proceedings (figs. 44-47). These media act as 'affective storage' (Elliott and Urry 2010), the experiences accessed at later points- through the

circulation of a video, or nostalgic reminiscing at another meeting amongst initiates.

**Fans use digital photos for 'affective storage' of their away match experiences**



**Figure 44. Braga, Portugal, 14 February 2012 (author's photo)**



**Figure 45. Stoke-on-Trent, England, 29 September 2011 (author's photo)**



**Figure 46. Tel Aviv, 1 December 2011 (author's photo)**



**Figure 47. Tel Aviv, 1 December 2011 (author's photo)**

What is it about the away match that makes involvement so compelling? I wish to argue that many of the justifications for attending can be folded into the fact that the experience is rare, ostentatious and removed from ordinary life.

Circumstances or practices that are exceptional have commonly been explored in anthropology through the paradigm of ritual. Rituals have been conceptualised as providing a glimpse into the important values and 'inner workings' of the groups or individuals taking part. Some of the earliest

anthropological works reflect this elementary idea in their schema, such as James Frazer's study of 'psyche's task' or Alfred Radcliffe-Brown's exploration of weeping and joking (Radcliffe-Brown [1922] 2013; Frazer [1909] 2007). Nowadays, rituals are discussed more commonly as a practice and performance rather than an ideal or fixed state (Crain and Hughes-Freeland 1998). Yet even the subsequent process of 'ritualisation' (C. Bell 2009) is defined most often in terms of practices that give special value to actions, what Pamela Stewart and Andrew Strathern call 'intensifying strategies' (P. Stewart J. and Strathern 2014, 2). Indeed, ritual theory has helped establish a strand of anthropological tradition that views exceptional events as instrumental in defining the values of a society or group, and hence argues that they should form the prime object of enquiry (V. Turner [1969b] 2007; Radcliffe-Brown [1952] 1965; Fortes 1987; Lambek 2013). There are two particular concepts from this literature that I feel are pertinent to unpicking the away match experience, namely, notions of liminality and imitation.

### ***Liminality***

Perhaps the most well-known investigation of liminality is Victor Turner's book on 'The Ritual Process' (V. Turner [1969b] 2007). Building on the work of Arnold Van Gennep (1961), Victor Turner argues that all rites of passage are marked by three symbolic phases: separation, margin (limen) and aggregation. Freed from the constraints of the everyday environment, which Turner labels 'social structure', the participant passes into a liminal state that opens up creative possibilities. In this 'anti-structure', new types of behaviour are

possible, such as the formation of egalitarian social bonds labelled 'communitas'. Not to be confused with the 'comradeship' that emerges at work or between friends, communitas is 'a transformative experience that goes to the root of each person's being and finds in that root something profoundly communal and shared' (V. Turner [1969b] 2007, 138). In its purest form it is existential and spontaneous, although Turner concedes it often suffers a 'fall' into a more normative configuration typified by hierarchy and organisation. Once the ritual subject has experienced the transformative effects of communitas, they pass to the final stage, returning to their 'stable state' with new rights, obligations and responsibilities.<sup>87</sup>

This schema bears more than a passing resemblance to the arc of the *deplasman*. Indeed, the Turkish word *deplasman* comes from the French *déplacement*, one of which meanings is 'displacement' or 'shifting'. In travelling to games European Beşiktaş fans displace themselves, putting hundreds of miles between the game and their normal set of cultural conditions. They spend their time in a liminal state, wandering around foreign cities, unable to speak the language, part of 'a cultural realm that has few or none of the attributes of the past or coming state' (V. Turner [1969b] 2007, 94). At its heart is an event of pure synchronic communitas as fans gather in a purpose-built venue, separated further still from the 'home' fans, and spend ninety minutes enacting behaviours and states that are not easily obtainable in everyday life – standing, touching, shouting, singing, hugging or crying with others. Upon return, a fan's status is enhanced, objectified in photographic evidence, recalled and revoked in 'banter' amongst a select group who also went through the experience.

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<sup>87</sup> See Leach (1971) for another important and related work on liminality.

### ***Imitation***

The second idea I wish to introduce is the importance of imitation to acts of ritualisation. Historically speaking, there is a multi-disciplinary array of arguments for taking seriously the role of imitation in social processes (see Tarde [1903] 2009; Canetti [1962] 1984; Mazzarella 2010b; Bhabha 1984). From within anthropology the best-known is probably Michael Taussig's study of replication within 'first contact' in nineteenth century Latin America (Taussig 1993). Taussig argues that mimesis is a universal cultural trait with enchanting qualities: 'This is where we must begin; with the magical power of replication, the image affecting what it is an image of, wherein the representation shares in or takes power from the represented' (Taussig 1993, 2).

Football stands as an excellent corollary to what Taussig highlights as imitation's 'magical power'. At the away match, Beşiktaş fans engage in imitative acts that, both in frequency and size, are unachievable at home. Fans wear the same colours, move in the same way and shout in a similar register. Many Beşiktaş chants take the form of call and response that normally see the crowd divide into two groupings; one of which contains your 'self', the second of which is 'othered'. The replication between groups is multi-sensory, the oral sounds, '*Kartal gol gol gol!*' (Eagles goal goal goal!) accompanied by the movement of the arm in the direction of the chant, tying in with Taussig's notion of mimesis as a two-stage affair: first copying, then contact, 'a palpable, sensuous, connection between the very body of the perceiver and the

perceived' (Taussig 1993, 21) figs. 48-49).<sup>88</sup> Imitation is not specific to Turkish-language football crowds. In English grounds the chanting is often directed at different sections of the crowd in turn ('The right stand, the right stand, give a wave!'), whilst a global example could be the 'Mexican wave', which sees fans coordinate to stand up out of their seats with their arms aloft, producing a 'wave' effect around the stands. It seems plausible, then, to view in the imitation of football crowds a second important allure to Beşiktaş fans' attending away matches.



**Figure 48.** One half of the crowd performing the chant *Kartal gol gol gol* (Eagles goal goal goal!), Braga, Portugal, February 2012 (author's photo)



**Figure 49.** The second half of the crowd replicating the chant both aurally and physically (author's photo)

To summarise so far: the Beşiktaş *deplasman* is figured by fans as a crucial element of the fan experience. Previous anthropological works on ritual can help attune us to some of the processes by which this exceptionality is generated, in particular through the twin processes of liminality and imitation. The prevalence of these practices at away matches does not 'explain' the entire

<sup>88</sup> It is worth mentioning that here, too, magic is serving as the analytical category. Taussig's scheme for mimesis is explicitly modelled on Frazer's two-layered approach to magic, wherein Frazer addresses separately 'the Law of Similarity' and 'the Law of Contact or Contagion' (Frazer [1890] 1922, 11; Taussig 1993, 44–58).

phenomenon, but it can help tease out some of its significance, in particular how the values of Beşiktaş and Çarşı are created through participation in the event, a topic the next section will take up.

### The ontology of fandom

It's October 2012 and Beşiktaş are playing in a Euroleague basketball match in Bamberg, a town in Bavaria, Germany. Before the game a crowd of roughly 350 Beşiktaş fans gathers outside the arena. They have colonised a set of picnic tables, drinking alcohol, chatting and chanting (fig. 50). As game time draws closer, a handful of senior fans climb onto a picnic table, gesturing and shouting for everyone else to hush and crouch down. Once the crowd falls quiet, one of the older fans standing on the table launches into a speech (fig. 51):

I want to welcome you on behalf of Çarşı Berlin. Many of you are new friends, many are old acquaintances. Three things are very important for us. First, a sense of solidarity on the terrace. Second, sharing love and respect together. Third, showing a moral attitude that is appropriate for Çarşı, being a Beşiktaş fan. But in order to this, you must listen to what is being told. Know your rank. You have to earn your stripes. We have our traditions. We have our structure. Not everyone who wears a Beşiktaş t-shirt is one of us. If you're gonna behave however you wish, then don't come to Çarşı. Don't go around as a Çarşı member, hanging out with Çarşı Berlin if you're not going to heed the words. Judge yourself: if you just wanna have good time here, then don't come. People have put in effort here for thirty years. I mean, it's cool, all of you have worn the jerseys, cool, thanks but there is ten year-old effort here....We have been to matches with [only] three people so please don't take what we have today for granted. So many people have left behind their money, time, or job, so give credit where it's due or don't come at all. We don't endeavour to be crowded [quality, not quantity]. On the terrace Bobo [fan standing next to speaker] will be in the front and three people will stand next to him. No one else should be in the front! No one should jump!... We shall celebrate our 10th anniversary, so behave accordingly.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> 'Arkadaşlar önce Çarşı Berlin adına hoşgeldiniz. Tüm bölgelere sesleniyorum. Birçoğunuz yeni arkadaşlar. Birçoğunuz eski tanıdıklar. Üç şey bizim için çok önemli. Birincisi, birlikte beraberlik tribünde sağlamak. İkincisi, sevgiyi ve saygıyı birlikte paylaşabilmek. Üçüncüsü Çarşı'ya uygun ahlaki bir duruş sergileyebilmek. Beşiktaşlı olabilmek. Ama bunun için biraz laf dinlemenizin gerekiyor. Burada herkes general olmuş hiç asker yok ortalıkta. Eskiden bizlerde adet vardır. Yapanlar var, bilenler var, öğretenler var. Bizim de kendimize göre organizasyonumuz var, yani her tişört giyen bizden bizden değil. Her Beşiktaş forması giyen de bizden değil. Ya adam olacaksın, uyucaksın, ya da gideceksin arkadaşım. Kafana göre takılacaksan, gelme bizim çarşı grubuna. Takılma Çarşı Berlin olarak. Laf dinlemeyeceksen hiç



Figure 50. Beşiktaş fans before a match versus Brose Baskets, Bamberg, Germany, 18 October 2012 (author's photo)



Figure 51. An older fan urges the group to show 'a moral attitude that is appropriate for Çarşı...' (author's photo)

The content of the speech and its delivery, perched on top of picnic tables, shows that part of the process of forging Çarşı Berlin's values at away matches is by lecturing. Within the already liminal experience of an away match, a further moment of detachment is created as activity is paused and the leaders embark on a strategy of discursive ritualisation – in both senses of the word. The fan attempts to impart the history of the organisation, the sacrifices people have made and the right moral attitude fans need to show at the game. The components of this attitude (literally 'stance', *duruş* in Turkish) are expressed but kept vague: showing 'solidarity' (*beraberlik*) and 'love and respect' (*sevgi ve saygı*). The elements also contradict each other: equality is stressed but at the same time fans are warned to obey those in charge.

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gelme. Kendine bak. Eğlendireceksen, kendine tatmin edeceksen, gelme. Burada otuz yıllık bir emek var. Yani, hepiniz giymişsiniz sağ olun, Çarşı Berlin, güzel. On yıllık bir emek var. .... Biz üç kişilik maça da gittik. Ama bu emeği lütfen mirasyedi gibi yemeyin. Bir sürü insan işinden olmuş, parasından olmuş, zamanında olmuş. Ya hakkını verin, ya da gelmeyin. Bizim kalabalık olmak gibi niyetimiz yok. Gelelim diğer konuya. Tribünde Bobo önde olacak. Üç arkadaş da Bobo'nun yanında olacak. Onun dışında kimse öne çıkmasın! Kimse zıplamasın. ... onuncu yılı kutluyoruz bugün. Onun da hakkı veririn'.

In his conception of what the group stands for, the speechmaker is taking a cue from the behaviour of the Çarşı group in Turkey. Beşiktaş is perceived in Turkey as a working-class football club, an identity solidified since the 1980s through the actions of Çarşı.<sup>90</sup> The group's socialist iconography and involvement in high-profile anti-government events and demonstrations has established Çarşı – and by association Beşiktaş – as leftist and anti-establishment. The situation accords with many examples from elsewhere of football teams becoming associated with political positions that serve to exemplify rivalry and opposition (Kuper 2003; Armstrong and Giulianotti 2001; Lowe 2013).

Çarşı should be located more towards the diffuse – yet active – end of the spectrum. Its 'politics' operate less as a specific doctrine and more a set of ethics, that is, framed around moral principles deemed fundamental to humanity (see McManus 2013). It is expressed in part through slogans and phrases espousing general 'moral' ideas – 'a nuclear-free Turkey', 'Çarşı is against war' – but more importantly in coordinated material actions, such as donating gifts to a home for disabled people or marching during the 2013 Gezi Park protests (figs. 52-55).

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<sup>90</sup> As I argue elsewhere, this notion is at odds with its actual fanbase as exists now, which far too large and diverse to be limited to one social demographic (McManus 2013).

**The main Çarşı group in Turkey adopt political stances and do charity work**

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**Figure 52.** 'A Nuclear-free Turkey, Çarşı 25 years' banner, hung in İnönü Stadium, Istanbul, 2007



**Figure 54.** Members of Çarşı visiting a care home for the disabled, 1 September 2011 (author's photo)



**Figure 53.** Çarşı marching in the Gezi Park protests, Istanbul, June 2013 (author's photo)



**Figure 55.** Çarşı handing out gifts during care home visit (author's photo)

Fans in Europe recreate – we could say ‘imitate’ – these material practices, bringing their bodies into alignment with the chanting they view on television; constructing and their own banners at games, marching in support of the actions of the group in Turkey (figs. 11-12). Consequently, Çarşı fan practices are perhaps better conceived in line with Henri Bergson’s notion of ‘open’, as opposed to ‘closed’ morality, the Çarşı identification becomes a moralistic skein flexible enough for individuals to stretch in a variety of directions (in V. Turner [1969b] 2007, 110).

### Çarşı Berlin recreating similar acts



Figure 56. Çarşı Londra banner: 'They shall not pass', a phrase made famous by the siege of Madrid in the Spanish Civil War (1936-9). Banner displayed at Stansted Airport, London, en route to Madrid, March 2012 (author's photo)

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Figure 57. Çarşı Berlin protest against the arrest and trial in Turkey of thirty-five lead members of Çarşı on charges of an attempted coup 'Çarşı is this country's [Turkey] conscience! We are the people! We are in the right! We will win! Our cause will continue until the end!', Cologne, Germany, December 2014<sup>91</sup>

In Bamberg, the speaker tries to establish the attitude of Çarşı Berlin as different from Beşiktaş fans at large ('Not everyone who wears a Beşiktaş t-shirt is one of us'). Yet this position is confused at various points due to the speaker collapsing 'Çarşı' into 'Beşiktaş' ('a moral attitude that is appropriate for Çarşı, being a Beşiktaş fan') or exhorting fans to 'show the real Beşiktaş attitude' (Beşiktaşlı duruşunu sağlayın). This overlap reveals a key dynamic to the away match experience: there is no way of separating clearly Çarşı Berlin and Beşiktaş.

Here we reach the crux of the argument: whilst belonging to Çarşı Berlin is an identity manifested mainly in everyday life, the nature of what it entails to belong to the organisation comes disproportionately from experiences whilst in the liminal state of being 'away'. Being in a condition of liminality allows notions of equality and communitas to be espoused more readily ('Everyone is

<sup>91</sup>See <http://www.muhabirce.de/2014-09-21/berlin-Çarşı-iddianame-komik-ve-sacma> (accessed 17-05-15).

a commander here, nobody's a soldier') and, more importantly, experienced directly, through bodily practices such as drinking, singing, and swearing. The message conveyed – more by actions than words – is that being a fan is a mode of existence based around a different set of parameters.

The message of fandom-as-equality is strong because it is conveyed with great affective potency. This potency stems from the importance that fans place on the body and what it can do in the stadium: chairs snap under the weight of multiple people, chests are bared, leaders hoist themselves on the shoulders of their friends, and fans grasp the arms and t-shirts of others whilst jumping to songs. The fan's autonomy is subsumed into coordinated mimetic acts of movement and singing. Upon scoring a goal, hierarchies dissolve in the flailing of bodies and arms, a process of 'leveling' and 'stripping' which 'flood[s]... subjects with affect' (V. Turner [1969b] 2007, 128, figs. 58-62).

**Fans use their bodies to express communitas and a sense of exceptionality**



**Figure 58. Fans baring their chests, Magdeburg v Beşiktaş, 9 February 2013 (author's photo)**



**Figure 59. Fans standing on seats, Dynamo Kiev v Beşiktaş, 19 October 2011 (author's photo)**



**Figure 60.** Fan leaning on friends and leading the chanting, Dynamo Kiev v Beşiktaş, 19 October 2011 (author's photo)



**Figure 61.** Fans jumping arm-in-arm, Stoke City v Beşiktaş, 29 September 2011 (author's photo)



**Figure 62.** Fan standing on the advertising hoarding and leading the chanting, Braga, Portugal, 14 February 2012 (author's photo)

The importance Çarşı Berlin members place on the terrace experience reveals that organisations require both ‘communitas’ and ‘structure’, or what Mazzarella calls ‘affect’ and ‘articulation’, in order to endure (Mazzarella 2009, 298). Perhaps Çarşı Berlin’s primary concern as a collective, then, is ‘affect management’. The group has to appeal to fans on two planes – both as a formal organisation and as an collective comprising ‘embodied members of a sensuous social order’ (Mazzarella 2009, 293). These two planes are fundamentally incommensurable yet are mediated – made to ‘cohere’ – through speech and social practice: lecturing on picnic tables and jumping around hugging one another.<sup>92</sup> To paraphrase Mazzarella, that this task is both impossible and

<sup>92</sup> The idea of two planes comes from Brian Massumi’s idea of social life taking place simultaneously in two social registers, the relation between them being ‘not one of conformity or correspondence but rather of resonance or interference, amplification or dampening’ (Massumi 2002, 25).

necessary is a ground rule of cultural life – the unresolvable ‘gap’ at the heart of things. In the face of this paradox, categories become the tools with which to attain strategic compromise, to hold things temporarily ‘still’:

The manner in which we are interpolated in our lives as citizens, consumers [or football fans]...requires that we take these categories (‘self’, ‘citizen’, ‘subject’ etc.) not only as vitality-denying ideological obfuscations but as affectively-imbued, compellingly flawed social facts. When we are thus addressed, when we are offered such identities, our identification always ‘fails’, and that which we experience as our desire (a dialectical movement across the gap between affect and articulation) is always thwarted. But precisely this failure is the condition of our continued engagement (Mazzarella 2009, 299).

I will shortly investigate ethnographically the categories used at the Beşiktaş match to try and solidify the experience. The point I wish to make here is that this ‘gap between affect and articulation’ is the primary mediation by which the group is instantiated. This important insight emerged through the research strategy outlined in the thesis introduction, that is, paying attention to interlocutors as they try and ‘fix’ gaps. It was only through travelling with fans to games that I grasped that Çarşı Berlin views itself as a transnational institution (self)tasked with generating this affect, making it available for Beşiktaş fans living in Europe.

The risk of mishandling this role is forever present. I already noted the contradictory notion of being told that no one is in charge by means of a lecture. Behaviour can dwell too often in discursive articulation (lecturing), appealing to structure whilst ignoring the gut. The rules and apparatus of control can be such that no affection is conjured and consequently the opposite effect is generated: fans fight, membership atrophies, the organisation is mocked

Attention on the body in ritual moments can open up and reveal the nature and purpose of groups. But embodiment theory can also nuance and complicate the very process it helps to illuminate. Thomas Csordas makes an argument that bodies help foreground the indeterminate in anthropological analysis. It is not the metaphor of texts (cf. Geertz [1973b] 2000) but what Csordas calls 'somatic modes of attention', that will 'le[a]d us to a principle of indeterminacy that undermines dualities' (Csordas 1993, 152). Indeed, once we start considering the complexity of bodies at the away match – the ways they are differently articulated, labelled or positioned – their presence jars and grates with the declarative nature of Turner's argument. Is this a rite of passage for all? In the person supping his pint slowly in the corner, or the female fan whose grin seems a little forced, closer attention on fan material and bodily practices reveals the kinks, warps and gaps in the production of 'togetherness' amongst Çarşı Berlin.

Throughout the thesis, the corporeal will be used, as it has in this section, to problematize established ways of analysing football fan behaviour. At this juncture, the turn towards embodiment is designed to tilt the analysis away from viewing the experience solely through the anthropological lens of symbolic ritual. I would like to accompany this theoretical movement with a disciplinary shift into the sociology of sport, a literature that has further insight that can be brought to bear on my ethnographic material.

### **Producing togetherness**

In *No One Likes Us, We Don't Care* (2000), Garry Robson uses a Bourdieu-inspired notion of embodiment to explore how working class identities have become a powerful part of the 'collective imaginary' of Millwall football club, a team from South-East London. Robson suggests that fans respond to 'the gradual tightening of bourgeois cultural hegemony' primarily through their bodies, right down to the way fans walk 'the bowl', an exaggerated, confident style of walking, on their way to the game (Robson 2000, 4).

In a similar vein, the bodily practices of Beşiktaş fans at the away match can also be interwoven with larger questions of ethnic and class positioning. The *deplasman* for many men serves as a countervailing experience, providing the opportunity to post an alternative 'solid' or 'hegemonic' notion of masculinity to counter discrimination or responsibilities faced when at home.<sup>93</sup> Two bodily practices, in particular, are integral to invoking a sense of togetherness when away: violence and alcohol consumption. I turn now to exploring these each in turn, paying particular attention to how precarious and problematic the attempts are at generating communal collective imaginaries.

### **Violence**

The prospect of violence is integral to many experiences of attending a Beşiktaş match as an away supporter. Fans are outnumbered, in unfamiliar territory and aware of the historical precedent for violence. During fieldwork, I found myself in the midst of numerous violent situations, receiving indiscriminate truncheon

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<sup>93</sup> This point is explored further in Chapter 9.

blows from the Spanish police, witnessing Beşiktaş fans brawl with each other outside a pub in England's Stoke-on-Trent, and standing among Beşiktaş fans as they smashed up chairs and threw them at home fans in Kiev. Rather than seeing violence as something to avoid, many fans enjoy the sense of transgression and danger promised by confrontation. Some actively court it. A number of academics have shown how travelling football fans across Europe, especially English fans, are often associated with violence and disturbance (Treadwell 2014; Williams, Dunning, and Murphy 1989).<sup>94</sup>

Such academic accounts of violence whilst 'away' are a tributary to the wider stream of research concentrating on criminal or hooligan behaviour of football fans at matches (Marsh, Rosser, and Harre 1980; Dunning 1999; Dunning, Murphy, and Williams 1988). Much of it was shaped by Norbert Elias's work on the 'civilising process' (Elias 1978; Elias 1982) and views supporters through a schema that explained violence as a result of working class alienation fostering 'subcultures of aggressive masculinity' (Murphy, Dunning, and Williams 1990, 12–13). But what much of this writing fails to pay attention to is the liminality of the experience of attending a game. The away match especially is a site removed from the everyday, where norms can be inverted and reprehensible behaviour sanctioned.<sup>95</sup> In line with Vincenzo Ruggiero, I believe it not so much a case of 'inappropriate' behaviour that is on display as *excessive* socialisation (Ruggiero 2000, 10). Beşiktaş fans explicitly tie affection and brotherhood (*muhabbet, kardeşlik*) to the experience of fighting together. The

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<sup>94</sup> Of course not all traveling fans are associated with violence. For a contradictory position see Giulianotti (1991; 1995) which shows how Scotland fans deliberately eschew violence and concentrate on conviviality to distance themselves from England fans.

<sup>95</sup> This is not to deny that violence is present in much of everyday life (see Graeber 2015, 45–103). The particular forms of violence seen at football matches, such as mass brawls, is a less common occurrence however.

spectre of violence acts as a highly potent affective force, impelling those who otherwise have no connection to each other to feel close, risking their own safety to rescue others from the jaws of danger. A fan in his forties who lives in Mannheim, Germany, described to me an experience he and a friend went through at an away match against Lazio in Rome in 2001:

We know that Lazio fans are fanatics... we go there and... we go to the stadium as normal. And Lazio gave us a good game. After the match, there was this street and we had to run fast down it. A fan fell down and the Lazio fans came with a knife and they stabbed him... we didn't know anyone [else among the Beşiktaş fans]. It was the first time in my life we'd met, the first time that we saw each other... [but] we weren't scared. We went and rescued him. Courage, loyalty... I go [often] to Beşiktaş matches. I know this but I often think, 'Why is there so much brotherhood?' [*Kardeşlik*]<sup>96</sup>

In the excitement with which Beşiktaş fans relate these stories, we see more than a glimpse of the affective pull of danger, of Turner's pronouncement that 'a touch of sin and evil seems to be necessary tinder for the fires of communitas' (V. Turner [1969b] 2007, 183).

Yet it is important to question whether it is the violence itself that is the attraction. A revisionist wave of football scholarship suggests that it's not violence per se that motivates confrontation but the thrill of danger and the desire to assert status through humiliation (Armstrong 1998, 234; Brown 1998; King 2002). Marsh et al. distinguish between aggression and violence – symbolic displays of the former are central to many fans' practices at matches, whereas 'violence is a consequence but by no means an inevitable consequence of aggression' (Marsh, Rosser, and Harre 1980, 128). Moving outside of football,

<sup>96</sup> Interview with author, 11 May 2013. 'Biz biliyoruz, Lazio taraftarı fanatik.... Biz oraya gittik ve ... normal[de], stada gidiyoruz. Ve Lazio'lular bize büyük maç yaptılar . Maç[ta]n sonra, böyle bir yol var, biz mecbur hızlı koştuk. Bir arkadaş düştü ama Lazio taraftarı da geliyor bıçakla ve orada o arkadaşla bıçak vurdular, bıçak. Bıçakladılar... kimse kimseyi tanımıyor. Hayatında ilk defa buluşuyoruz. İlk defa görüşüyoruz... Korkmadık gittik kurtardık yani ve o, bir şey, bir cesaret, bir, eee, bir bağlılık... Beşiktaş maçlar[ına] gidiyorum. Aynı şey[i] biliyorum ama düşünüyorum niye o kadar... bu kadar... kardeşlik?'

Martin Stokes notes how the fights at a wrestling contest in Turkey ‘were more social than physical, since they only ever took place in front of a large audience, which could be relied on to register the event and pull the protagonists apart before either got hurt’ (Stokes 1996, 34). Even amongst those who are seemingly drawn to the violence or aggression, it is actually more performed than physical. I commonly saw fans square up to one another, yet very rarely did the activity result in anyone actually fighting. Like Stokes, I noticed how other fans were always on hand to separate the protagonists before either had to throw a punch (figs. 63-66).

Furthermore, individual proclivity varies greatly. The diversity of the European Beşiktaş fan community means fans’ idea of ‘violence’ is strained through the varying migration experiences and norms of social interaction where they live. ‘It’s always Çarşı Berlin who start those fights. They’ve been doing it for years’, sighs one fan from London when justifying his aloofness. Here ‘Çarşı Berlin’ refers to all fans who aren’t London-based. Serkan from Dublin told me: ‘The guys from Germany, they’re more aggressive and I feel like the guys from London they’re more educated and more friendlier and just more interested in supporting the teams, not fighting against someone else’. He continued: ‘I know Berlin [branch] has issues with Munich because they come from the same country... I don’t like those kind of internal fights. You [should] spend your energy and your power against the other teams, against the foreign teams, not internally, you know?’<sup>97</sup> Finally, there are many fans who will not travel to certain games because the prospect of violence is too high, such as a

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<sup>97</sup> Interview with author, 25 October 2012.

basketball match in 2012 in Belgrade, Serbia (see p.356). Taken in sum, we see how violence – or its prospect – binds fans but also causes divisions.



**Figure 63.** Confrontation amongst members of Çarşı Berlin, 08 March 2012, Madrid, Spain (author's photo)



**Figure 64.** Skirmish between Çarşı Berlin member and other Beşiktaş fan, 29 September 2011, Stoke-on-Trent, UK (author's photo)



**Figure 65.** Angry encounter between Çarşı Londra member and other Beşiktaş fan, 27 August 2014, London, UK (author's photo)



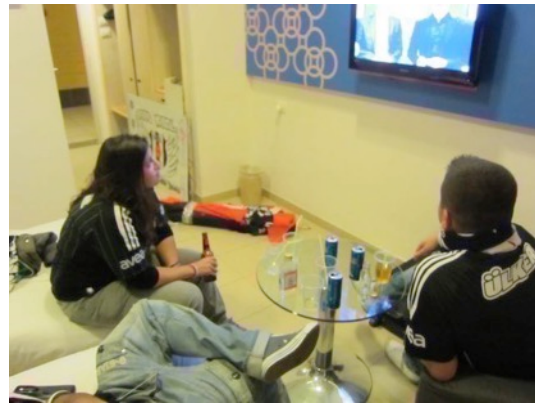
**Figure 66.** Skirmish amongst Beşiktaş fans over whether to throw seats at the home supporters, Kiev, 19 October 2011 (author's photo)

### ***Alcohol***

Another bodily practice integral to the away match experience is the consumption of alcohol. On every trip taken during fieldwork, a majority of Beşiktaş fans would be drinking: sipping beers in the sun by the river in Porto, engaging in all night sessions the day before a match, or downing a hasty vodka and Red Bull in a hotel room before heading to the game (figs. 67-70).



**Figure 67.** Fans sipping beers, 13 February 2012, Porto, Portugal (author's photo)



**Figure 68.** Vodka and red bull in hotel room, 1 December 2011, Tel Aviv, Israel (author's photo)



**Figure 69.** Vodka and beer in the early hours before a game, 18 October 2012, Nuremburg, Germany (author's photo)



**Figure 70.** Beers in an English beer garden, 29 September 2011, Stoke-on-Trent, UK (author's photo)

In summarising the anthropological study of alcohol, Michael Dietler casts it as 'embodied material culture...created specifically to be destroyed, but destroyed through the transformative process of ingestion into the human body' (Dietler 2006, 232). Alcohol consumption throws emphasis on the body, but crucially on its ability to be transformed from its 'normal' state.<sup>98</sup> Alcohol's psychoactive properties have historically rendered it central to many acts of ritualization. 'If there's no beer, it's not a ritual!' summarises one Tanzanian informant (in Dietler 2006, 232; see also Douglas 1987; Heath 1987; Wilson 2005). Deploying

<sup>98</sup> For alcoholics the 'normal' state is of course far more problematic. See the growing literature on the anthropology of addiction (Raikhel and Garriott 2013; Singer 2012).

a different lexicon, sports scholars in other disciplines have noted alcohol's importance at sporting events, viewing it as 'a mechanism for highlighting specific times and places where the consumption of sport takes on increased social significance' (Crawford 2009, 279; Palmer 2014; T. Collins and Vamplew 2002; Dixon 2014).

The consumption of alcohol is a key practice in marking the away match as 'exceptional'. On a match day, it is not in the stadium but in the bar ordering drinks, or the square passing around the bottle of vodka that the first chants will get going. Yet as Dietler has written, the flexibility with which drinking practice can be indexed to different facets of identity renders it frequently a site of contestation, even among relatively homogenous groups (Dietler 2006, 235–7). With Çarşı Berlin, a group mixed by class, gender, geography and ethnicity to mention only the most obvious, consuming alcohol distinguishes, discriminates and excludes as often as it fosters the onset of *communitas*.

A key division that alcohol consumption accentuates is between male and female fans. Many Çarşı Berlin members see the presence of women as an unwelcome intrusion into 'their' space. It is common to hear male fans state 'I don't think it's a suitable away match' or 'as for girls, please don't join the crew (*tayfa*). Even if you do, then please stand on the edge – don't stress people out for no reason! (*boşuna milleti germeyin!*)'. By tying alcohol consumption to masculinity – viewing 'holding their beer' to be a measure of manliness – Beşiktaş fans can accentuate their difference from women, who labour under the social expectation of drinking less or abstaining completely. Yet the performance is intricate. Female fans can be respected for downing male-like amounts, and males mocked for 'not drinking like a man' (*adam gibi içmemek*)

and getting too drunk: ‘all of the Beşiktaş fans were laughing at him. It was embarrassing. He was lying on the floor’, snorts one fan when describing the behaviour of another.<sup>99</sup>

Being a Turkish-speaker in Europe also means being affected by the fierce divisions and battles over alcohol in Turkey. Despite the proscription of alcohol in Islam, a sizeable proportion of the population – and the majority of those who attend Beşiktaş matches – drink. Since 2002, and the election of the Islamist AKP government, the legality of alcohol sales and consumption has been challenged, meaning drinking practices carry the added signification of opposition to the ruling party (White 2013, 132–3, 212n75). Fans often lose out from this conflation of alcohol and politics: drinkers who are not political find their actions inflated in importance, whilst the abstinence of pious Beşiktaş fans is interpreted as tacit support for the AKP. Because both Çarşı in Turkey and Çarşı Berlin have strong secular and anti-establishment identities, the few European Beşiktaş fans who do not drink can be seen as opposed to the group’s politics or disapproving of their practices. Consequently, it is extremely difficult for a pious fan to occupy a high ‘rank’ in the group,

Even if a fan turns their back on Turkish debates, European drinking practices retain just as much potential to divide. Upon hearing that I am living in Cologne, one Çarşı Berlin fan asks excitedly: ‘You drink the Kolsch? [A Cologne beer]. In Frankfurt we drink the Apfelwein! [apple wine]’.<sup>100</sup> At the moment when we’ve come watch a Turkish football team play, the conversation is redolent of the exchange between any Frankfurter and Cologner away from

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<sup>99</sup> Life story interview, 25 September 2012.

<sup>100</sup> Fieldwork diary, 2 March 2013.

home. The way fans approach drink when away can cause emphasis to fall not on the commonalities but the distinctions among supporters – be they ‘Turkish’ or ‘European’.

I wish to bring this section to a close by suggesting the diversity in drinking practices or differing responses to violent confrontation are not simply something to be overcome but intrinsic to the affective potency of being part of Çarşı Berlin. Turner notes that whilst intimacy is a crucial ingredient for *communitas* to be generated, so is the ‘mystery of mutual distance’ (V. Turner [1969b] 2007, 139). To ensure the communal event is profound and transformative, what must be set up is a sense of the usual barriers setting people apart. The diversity of Çarşı Berlin members, their different languages and locations across Western Europe contain the potentiality for potent *communitas*. This is where the insights and approach of actor-network theory (ANT) can again be helpful. Being sensitive to the full complexity of associations that permit Çarşı Berlin to come together ensures that any instances of *communitas* are situated more accurately. The away match experience is reliant on many successful mediations: of travel, tourism and media infrastructures; of materialities from the colour of merchandise worn to the size of banners; of bodies and voices being brought into alignment.

When it works, the result is a wondrous – even magical – sense of unity in diversity: ‘we went there and we saw – “ahh!” – fans from Istanbul, fans from England, [Turkish] students in Italy. Such affection!’<sup>101</sup> Yet from an ANT perspective, failures to achieve *communitas* are neither surprising nor require

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<sup>101</sup> Interview with author, 11 May 2013. ‘Biz oraya gittik, ve orada işte, aah, baktık, İstanbul’dan gelen var, İngiltere’den gelenler var, İtalya’da öğrenciler var. Böyle, muhabbet’.

explanation. Group creation is intrinsically provisional, a mediation of many gaps, hence it is no surprise that the whole edifice comes tumbling down when a fan accuses another of racially abusing him as a Kurd, or when members from rival groups throw punches at a party. We start to perceive more clearly the contours of the bind in which Çarşı Berlin are stuck: Çarşı Berlin needs its diversity in order to make the experience powerful enough to enchant people to take part. But it's this very diversity that frequently puts *communitas* in danger, resulting in gaps which are too numerous and large to overcome.

### **Çarşı Berlin's position amongst away fans as a whole**

So far I have concentrated exclusively on the actions of Çarşı Berlin at the away match. This was necessary to establish how its morals and purpose are forged through the experience. In this final section, however, I wish to broaden the perspective and look at the *deplasman* Beşiktaş crowd as a whole, as the dynamic between Çarşı Berlin and other fans plays an important role in whether its aim of generating an affect-heavy fan experience is successfully achieved.

At low-key fixtures that have less appeal to the average fan, Çarşı Berlin may be the majority – or even entirety – of the away crowd. More common, however, is for the hundreds that comprise Çarşı Berlin to be subsumed amidst a crowd of thousands of Beşiktaş fans. This is especially common at football games in countries with large populations of Turkish speakers living locally, such as Germany, England, Netherlands and Switzerland (figs. 26-28). The largest, most impressive Beşiktaş events are big football matches in western

Europe. Conversely, they are also the games that Çarşı Berlin members describe as their least enjoyable. Zenyep from Cologne bemoans how:

Everyone comes! Fenerbahçe fans come, Galatasaray fans come, all the people who just think Beşiktaş is something [small]... I mean, I can understand that people- they're not living it like we do. They want to be with us or with the team when the team comes to Germany. I have nothing against it but I don't like it for myself, you know? I just like it to go to other countries with my friends from all over... that's what I prefer actually.<sup>102</sup>

Çarşı Berlin's activities at away matches can become conservative and restrictive as they seek to impose their values onto the away crowd at large. For example, a match ticket is viewed by Çarşı Berlin as simply securing entry to one section of the stadium; you stand wherever you find space. Such an attitude is copied from the behaviour of Çarşı in Turkey and permits Çarşı Berlin to rush to occupy the terrace at the front, where one of the leaders can hoist themselves onto the advertising hoarding and lead the crowd in the chanting. This attitude clashes with the ticketing etiquette in most European countries where the row and seat number on the ticket is commonly respected. The result is frequently fractious, as fans approach the Çarşı Berlin coterie to occupy the seat assigned on their ticket only to be turned away. The situation becomes most problematic when a greater segment of the Beşiktaş crowd objects to Çarşı Berlin's position, or when this objection is expressed aurally. Such difficulties frequently emerge around the question of Turkish nationalism.

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<sup>102</sup> Interview with author, 18 February 2013.



Figure 71. Çarşı Berlin as the entire crowd, handball match v SC Magdeburg, 9 February 2013, Magdeburg, Germany (author's photo)



Figure 72. Çarşı Berlin as the majority of the crowd, basketball match v Brose Baskets, 19 October 2012, Bamberg, Germany (author's photo)



Figure 73. Çarşı Berlin lost amidst the masses, v Stoke City, 29 September 2011, Stoke-on-Trent, UK (author's photo)

### *Turkishness*

Many who attend away games in Europe view the event as a 'Turkish' experience first, and 'Beşiktaş' second. Some bring Turkish flags to the game, which they drape around their shoulders or hang over the advertising

hoardings. It is common to see supporters in jerseys of the Turkish national team or of other Turkish club sides. Banners proclaiming '*ne mutlu Türküm diyene!*' (how happy it is to be a Turk!<sup>103</sup>) are sometimes unfurled and nationalistic chants, such as *Türkiye!* (Turkey!) or the more jingoistic '*şehitler ölmez vatan bölünmez*' (martyrs never die, the nation is indivisible), are sung (figs. 74-77).



Figure 74. Turkish flags at Maccabi Tel Aviv v Beşiktaş, 1 December 2011 (author's photo)



Figure 75. Turkish flag on fan's shoulder, Stoke City v Beşiktaş, 29 September 2011 (author's photo)



Figure 76. 'This is all of our homeland. Here we will sacrifice ourselves for you: how happy it is to be a Turk' banner, Dynamo Kiev v Beşiktaş, 19 October 2011 (author's photo)



Figure 77. Turkish flag being waved, Arsenal v Beşiktaş, 27 August 2014 (author's photo)

<sup>103</sup> This phrase is a famous aphorism of Atatürk, the founder of the Turkish republic, and adorns public buildings, appears in school textbooks and is emblazoned on mountain sides across Turkey. For more on Atatürk's influence on Turkey see Özyürek (2006).

By contrast, most in Çarşı Berlin do not want the event to be seen as primarily Turkish. Not because they dispute the presence of signs of Turkishness: many are Turkish, express their Turkishness frequently in other realms and, of course, a latent 'Turkishness' undergirds the entire proceedings of expressing belonging to a team from Turkey. Explicit evocations of Turkishness, however, downplay the role and importance of Beşiktaşness (*Beşiktaşlılık*) that Çarşı Berlin see themselves as guarding, and do so vigorously by jostling for the key place in the stadium, chanting and waving Beşiktaş banners.

Expressing discontent with displays of nationalism, however, is a complicated process, not least due to the historical and cultural privileging of Turkishness to the detriment of the country's non-Turkish minorities.<sup>104</sup> As a result, the critique of 'nationalist' fans is most frequently couched in criticisms of fans of other Turkish club teams, normally Beşiktaş's rivals Fenerbahçe and Galatasaray. This criticism is usually verbal, taking the form of offensive chants such as the one in chapter 4 describing rival fans as 'sons of bitches' (see p.118). But Çarşı Berlin members are outnumbered at many of these games and most of the crowd interpret this aggressive exclusion of fans of rival Turkish teams as shameful. At a game between Stoke City and Beşiktaş in Stoke-on-Trent, England, in September 2011, the aforementioned 'sons of bitches' chant is sung by Çarşı Berlin outside the ground. It gets boos from elsewhere and other fans respond with chants of '*Türkiye!*' (Turkey!). This prompts the fanatical Beşiktaş fan group to start another chant:

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<sup>104</sup> For an overview of nationalism in Turkey, see White (2013, 54–79); Pope and Pope (2011).

Here is Beşiktaş / We don't take you seriously  
 Don't mess with us / Fenerbahçe arsehole boys  
 Here is Beşiktaş / Of course one day it will all be over  
 We are your grim reaper / Fenerbahçe arsehole boys

*Burası Beşiktaş / Alayına Gider*  
*Uğraşma Bizimle / Göt Oğlanı Fener*  
*Burası Beşiktaş / Elbet bir gün biter*  
*Azrailin Biziz / Göt Oğlanı Fener*

With the confrontation between the chant of 'Turkey' and 'here is Beşiktaş' we see how 'Turkey' and 'Beşiktaş' are temporarily being manoeuvred into diametrically opposed positions. The names become terms taken up by either side to argue two different conceptions – one inclusive, the other more exclusive– of who should be attending Beşiktaş matches abroad.

A member of Çarşı Berlin from Germany who is fluent in English pleads with the nearest policeman not to allow fans of rival teams into the stand: 'If somebody wants to go in, please [tell them] "take your shirt off", yeah? You can say "for your own safety"' ... We don't want any trouble but... nobody can guarantee that somebody doesn't freak out and goes and hits him'. But the policeman moves barely five metres before he's accosted by another Beşiktaş fan arguing the exact opposite. This fan, in a native London accent, exclaims: 'These guys are from Berlin and what they are arguing, it is not right'. He explains that the rival fans are Turks from 'near here'. He continues, 'They come [to the game] when a Turkish team come down so what they are asking, it- it's wrong.'

No one mentions it explicitly but it seems as if the 'official' nationalities of individuals are structuring the conception of the space and who has the right to determine the rules within it. The 'English' fan sees Çarşı Berlin as German first and Turkish second. Those are 'guys from Berlin', stopping people who are

‘from here’ (Britain) from doing what they want to do. Momentarily, all potential for contingency or relationality is sucked out of categories of belonging as they become solidified, manoeuvred into a binary opposition which is then used to try and assert control: Beşiktaş/Turkey, Germany/England. The gaps have emerged, the illusion is shattered. The small prospect of *communitas* is extinguished in the process.

### ***The Beşiktaş memleket***

Yet among Turkish speakers, there is a cultural concept frequently deployed to express belonging without invoking nationalism, that of *memleket*. *Memleket* is loosely glossed as ‘home’, yet as a category it is not fixed but relational, able to refer to the soil that a nation-state occupies, or to a particular region, or even to a small town or village. I remember my confusion at this relationality when first commencing fieldwork. Outside a bar in Stoke in 2011, trying to make conversation with some Holland-born teenage fans, I asked in broken Turkish where they were from and I received a host of Turkish cities: Sivas, Antalya, Mersin. I rephrased the question: where do you live, where did you come from today? The answer changed: Oh, Holland, of course.

In her work on Kurds in London, İpek Demir highlights how the idea of *memleket* is used to balance conceptions of Turkey that are at once both affective and antagonistic. Whilst battling the Turkish state and political regime, individuals can affirm a non-nationalistic sense of belonging to Turkey through the concept of *memleket*. This balancing can lead to what, on the surface, appears to be nonsensical behaviour:

On the television in a North London café, he watched his team – Galatasaray, an Istanbul-based football team – win a match against an Italian team. Later, as he and his Kurdish friends left the café and went out on the streets to celebrate, they started throwing stones at passing cars which were celebrating Galatasaray's victory by waving Turkish flags. In other words, they reacted to Turkish symbols and expressions of Turkish nationalism whilst also supporting an Istanbul-based Turkish team in an international competition (Demir 2012, 826).

It is telling that Demir uses a footballing example to prove her point. For diaspora fans, identification with a Turkish football team can operate along similar lines as *memleket*; that is, as a 'distinctly non-nationalist mode of expressing homeland and belonging' (Demir 2012, 826). Concepts of Beşiktaş or Çarşı Berlin can express a relationality that brings affective closeness. For example, some fans in Çarşı Berlin wield the category of 'Beşiktaşness' (*Beşiktaşlılık*) as a sticking plaster to mediate disputes. When one member accuses another of racially abusing him as a Kurd – a position associated with right-wing political parties in Turkey – one of the older fans attempts to mediate: '[He] has his own politics and everyone knows this, but for him the identity of Beşiktaşness always has come above everything'. He continues: 'There won't be racism in the Çarşı Berlin family!'<sup>105</sup>

Two key points stem from the ethnographic examples above. The first is that categories of belonging always remain contingent. One moment it is hugely important how well you speak Turkish or what your ancestry is, only for such distinctions to melt away when a goal goes in, when all that matters is an ability to jump and scream. ANT, with its schema of a social that is continually in the process of being formulated, dissolved and reformulated, lends itself to capturing the multiplicity of experience latent in every moment or act.

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<sup>105</sup> '[Onun] kendine göre bir politik duruşu vardır ve bunu da hepimiz biliyoruz ama onun için Beşiktaşlılık kimliğini her zaman her şeyin üstünden gelmiştir... Çarşı Berlin ailesinde ırkçılık olmaz!'

Secondly, perhaps engagement with categories that are particularly flexible and open (such as 'Beşiktaş') can help fans to develop a greater self-reflexivity about how imaginaries of belonging are generated. Most fans do not believe that it is possible for their entire existence to be based on the enchanting sense of togetherness they sometimes feel at matches. Nevertheless, even dwelling momentarily in an imaginary where all that matters is the colour of your jersey can help nurture a critical conceptual lens to train back onto non-footballing experiences in life. Catching glimpses of the idea that fandom is an under-determined imaginative mix of story and reality, drama, illusion and play, may expose the constructed nature of other labels that Turkish speakers in Europe find may be applied to them, such as 'European citizen', 'father' or 'Turk' (see chapter 9).

## Conclusion

The away match is the *sine qua non* for Beşiktaş fans living in Europe. Attending the event is the ritual around which a strong imaginary of belonging is constructed. Most fans who take part in the away match– including those within the main group Çarşı Berlin – want the experience to be defined by equality. As the impromptu lecture in Bamberg put it: 'Everyone is a commander here, nobody's a soldier'. On a conceptual level, the labels of 'Beşiktaş' or 'Çarşı' are meant to provide a common touchstone, emptied of distinctions or hierarchy and representing communal equality. On a physical level, the body is used to generate this equality: plying it with alcohol, coordinating its movement with other bodies.

Switch the viewpoint, however, away from ritualisation and towards the associations of participants, and the away match becomes characterised by failed mediation, dislocation and incomprehensibility. The participants hail from different European countries. They possess dissimilar body forms, varied linguistic abilities and differing migration trajectories. The reasons for their presence are equally diverse: to show off, to bind themselves closer to friends from home, to meet friends they only see at games, to escape from commitments and stigmatisations of normal life, to perform a sense of 'Turkishness'. And the practices they engage in whilst at the match are equally varied, displaying different alcohol tolerance thresholds, wanting to sing different songs, stand or sit in different places or ways. The categories of 'Beşiktaş' and 'Çarşı' groan under the weight. Aside from brief moments of convergence – such as a goal or a joke – they are too inflexible to hold all of these aims at once. The entire experience is turned into a tinderbox of potential confrontation and division.

Whilst capturing an important element of the experience, Turnerian notions of liminality and *communitas* get us only so far. Listening out for 'indigenous' terms of belonging (*Beşiktaş*, *memleket*, *Çarşı Berlin*), and tracing their deployment reveals how fans define and redefine the social for themselves (Latour 2005). Even amongst the smaller collective of *Çarşı Berlin* there are moments of incomprehension and difficulties of translation. 'John!' calls a fan from Holland who is struggling with putting up a banner. *Schaar var mi?* He asks with urgency, eyes wide with stress. 'Do you have...something?', the question is in Turkish (*var mı?*) but the noun is Dutch. I look at him blankly.

*Schaar! Schaar!* He repeats in frustration, miming a cutting action. He doesn't know the Turkish word for scissors, and I don't know the Dutch one.

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I wish to summarise the argument of this chapter and the previous one by suggesting that, out of all the reasons why Turkish-speaking diasporans seek involvement in Çarşı Berlin, perhaps foremost is a sense of family. As the ethnography of the previous two chapters has shown, the organisation is in many ways akin to an extended family. Both consist of smaller units, often dispersed across nations, which come together into larger wholes only periodically. Fans derive a sense of passion, playfulness and belonging from their encounters, yet also inherit the frequent incomprehension, frustration, disagreements and tension that go along with being part of a small collective built around emotion ('There won't be any racism in the Çarşı Berlin family!'). With this awareness of why Turkish-speakers become involved in Çarşı Berlin, the focus of the next two chapters shifts to explore 'how' this involvement comes about – through football's imbrication with media.

# Chapter 6

## Satellite spaces

This is the first of two chapters exploring the character of 'Beşiktaş spaces'. I shall argue this is an insightful route towards understanding how technology use among Turkish-speaking diasporans made possible the creation of Çarşı Berlin. In recent years, certain academics have attempted to foreground notions of space as part of a larger project redressing what they see as a lack of attention to the material characteristics of processes of subjectification, the mediating of social relations, or the wielding of power (Thrift 2008c; Low and Lawrence-Zuniga 2003; D. Massey 2005). One of the more influential critiques has been the work of Nigel Thrift. In an article simply entitled 'Space', Thrift offers a succinct example of how this line of thinking can be applied to the formation of communities:

The spaces in which humans can be together have progressively increased in scale as new forms of materials, which are also new forms of spacing, have allowed new kinds of social relations to exist... in turn, various kind of political projects have begun to come into existence that communicate with distant others on the premise that they are (or can be made) contiguous that before would have been more difficult, perhaps even impossible (Thrift 2006, 143).

Across these two chapters, I shall argue that Çarşı Berlin stands as ethnographic grist to Thrift's supposition. The organisation did not exist in the 1980s or 1990s, in part because it could not be conceived. With the emergence of satellite television and subsequently the internet, there was an expansion of

environments – ‘new forms of spacing’ – in which diaspora Beşiktaş fans could perform acts of fandom. Occupying these spaces, fans came to think of themselves and the community they inhabit in a different light. A new kind of transnational, pan-European organisation, Çarşı Berlin, subsequently came into existence.

This chapter is concerned with the first half of this story: the effects of satellite television on the supporting practices of diaspora Beşiktaş fans. The starting point is Benedict Anderson’s *Imagined Communities* (Benedict Anderson [1983] 2006). Anderson famously illustrated how various media, chief among them the newspaper, contribute to the construction of a new ‘temporal coincidence’ around which an idea of the nation can coalesce (Benedict Anderson [1983] 2006, 24). Individuals never meet all of their fellow citizens but nevertheless have ‘complete confidence in their steady, anonymous, simultaneous activity’ courtesy of sharing in a coherence of happenings generated by the media (Benedict Anderson [1983] 2006, 26).

Anderson’s analysis is formed around the temporal and spatial practices of eighteenth century nationalism and colonialism. It speaks to some of the early practices by which Europe-based fans followed Beşiktaş, such as reading newspaper articles. But it starts to creak when juxtaposed to the different rhythms of late twentieth century labour migrations, electronic media, airlines and federated European states. In this environment, the ‘simultaneous activit[ies]’ that bind people in imagined communion take on different forms (Benedict Anderson [1983] 2006, 26).

Accordingly, I turn to other scholars for whom these ‘modern’ assemblages of space, materials and media are the primary concern (Thrift

2008a; Pink 2012; Scannell 1996; Moores 1996). Taking their lead, I single out the emergence in the 1990s of Turkish satellite television as of particular salience. By allowing Turkish-speakers abroad to watch games live for the first time, satellite TV increased the simultaneity, intensity and regularity of fandom, prompting the creation of public venues in which to engage in this practice collectively. Frequenting these venues led to an expansion in the imaginations of fans, allowing them to conceive of themselves ‘transnationally’.

Taking inspiration from a cross-disciplinary selection of work on media and space, I adopt a phenomenological approach. I move beyond the Andersonian conception of imagination as (merely) mental imagery and instead explore how bodily practices, emotions and the materiality of environments feature in processes of imagining (Csordas 1993). I argue that the practice of watching Beşiktaş live on television constitutes an inherent ‘doubling’ or ‘pluralisation’ of place. Space is not simply occupied physically but emotionally and experientially inhabited. Armed with this conceptual lens, I move to examine three new spaces in diaspora Turkish communities that emerge as a consequence of this doubling: the *dernek* (association), the bar and the *kahve* (coffee house). I compare and contrast the materialities of these environments, noting how the objects and persons they contain play important roles in helping fans reaching towards varying notions of a greater, transnational, Beşiktaş community.

By ‘transnational’ I refer to processes of ‘acting across spaces’ (Aksoy and Robins 2000). Refuting the ordering of behaviours into reified categories of ‘diaspora’ or ‘migrant’, I show how acting transnationally – responding physically and emotively to simultaneous televised images from elsewhere –

entails complex, often problematic, process of making choices on the part of fans: should we watch in a Beşiktaş-only environment or one shared with non-Turkish speakers? Is it acceptable to cheer or swear in this trendy bar?

These choices sharpen the self-consciousness of supporters. Fans possess both the desire to engage in fantastical imaginings of a transnational Beşiktaş brotherhood, but also the awareness that these imaginings snag and catch on the reality of the diverse diasporic groupings that comprise ‘Turkish-speakers in Europe’. These are two pivotal shifts in the beliefs and practice of Beşiktaş fans. Together they constitute a crucial waypoint on the road towards the formation of the transnational organisation Çarşı Berlin. Yet without a requisite alteration in interaction made possible by the internet, the group cannot yet emerge.

## **Beşiktaş media**

### ***Telephones, newspapers and radio***

For the first migrants from Turkey to Europe in the post-war era, following Beşiktaş was difficult. Mass media was patchy, meaning many got their news – sporting or otherwise – from phone calls with relatives in Turkey. ‘Turkish airliners used to bring some newspapers but when it was reaching us, it was three days old or something like that. Actually it was difficult keeping in touch with the fresh news or the people playing football or whatever it is.’ So says Zafer, who arrived in London in 1980.<sup>106</sup> Daily newspapers in Turkish only became widely available in Europe in the late 1970s when some Turkish

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<sup>106</sup> Interview with author, London, 20 January 2015.

newspapers established German or European editions, the largest being *Hürriyet*.<sup>107</sup> Like their Turkish counterparts, these papers contained a sports section, predominately devoted to football in Turkey.

Another means to follow the fortunes of the team was through the radio. A fan in his forties, who migrated to Germany in the 1980s, mentioned how he used to follow the Beşiktaş news, both through segments on German regional public broadcasting aimed at ethnic minorities and private Turkish diaspora radio stations that began to crop up. A Cypriot Turk who moved to London in the 1970s described how occasionally it was even possible to pick up Turkish radio signals in the UK with a longwave transmitter: 'You had to have a good radio, medium wave or longwave usually. Sometimes – when the weather was good – you used to get some [of the broadcast].' He nevertheless confesses that Turkish football interested him less than English football because 'there wasn't much means to follow it'.<sup>108</sup>

The emergence of video cassettes reconfigured habits of football consumption. Gunnar Roters writes about the explosion in the Turkish video rental market in Germany as migrants would rent tapes of material recorded and imported from Turkey (in Kosnick 2007b, 28). Football matches were part of this economy. Fans in London in the late 1980s used to watch derby matches on video cassette: 'You'd rent them [the tapes] and watch them. Then two days or so later you'd return them and someone else would borrow it', recalled a fan, now in his fifties. Importantly, the viewing experience was not collective or public but undertaken at home: 'At that time there weren't lots of things. There

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<sup>107</sup> <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/avrupa/>, accessed 28 April 2015.

<sup>108</sup> Interview with author, London, 20 January 2015. For a good overview of the growth of migrant radio in Germany, see Kosnick (2007b).

weren't cafes and the like. I would rent the videos and watch them at home. It was normal at that time to watch games [on video] at home', added the same fan.<sup>109</sup>

### ***Satellite TV***

The 1990s saw a sea change in how diasporans could follow Beşiktaş, courtesy of a new media technology – satellite TV. In 1990, the state-backed Turkish Radio and Television Corporation or TRT (*Türkiye Radyo ve Televizyon Kurumu*) started transnational satellite broadcasting. Securing agreement with German authorities, the channel was accessible via both satellite and cable throughout Germany that year, and subsequently becoming available elsewhere in Europe (Aksoy and Robins 2000). For the first time, Beşiktaş fans in Europe could watch their team play live on television. But only occasionally – TRT just showed a small selection of important matches live.

Coeval with TRT's international expansion was the emergence of private Turkish television in Europe. January 1990 saw the (illegal) broadcasting of the first privately-owned TV channel, Star 1, from Germany into Turkey, offering an alternative to the state-backed approach. Over the next eighteen months, a host of new private television companies followed in its wake (Sahin and Aksoy 1993). Behind the decision of TRT to broadcast transnationally was the Turkish state's desire to 'connect together the imagined community of Turks at a global scale' (Aksoy and Robins 2000, 347). By contrast, private TV was not interested

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<sup>109</sup> Interview with author, 19 January 2015. 'Derbi maçlar oluyordu – Fenerbahçe Galatasaray derbisi. Onları kiraliyordu, seyrediyordu. İki gün falan sonra geri gönderiyordu. Başkaları kiraliyordu o dönem... o dönem fazla şey yoktu. Kahve de yoktu. Ben kiraliyordum evimde seyrediyordum. Normal o zaman evde'.

in diaspora communities; the programmes only reached Turkish-language audiences in Europe unintentionally as a result of overlapping satellite signals (Aksoy and Robins 2000, 346–7).

The popularity of football meant the rights to broadcast games were highly sought after. Whilst TRT held the rights from the pre-satellite age, in 1992 the Turkish Football Federation, a sub-structure of the Ministry of Youth and Sports, entered into an agreement to sell the broadcasting rights for Turkish league matches to Star 1, with ‘devastating consequences for TRT’s ratings’ (Sahin and Aksoy 1993, 34). The emergence of digital broadcasting in the twenty-first century has deepened the reach and importance of football. In 2000, the Doğan group, a Turkish media conglomerate, founded the digital channel Digiturk. Digiturk hold the exclusive rights for broadcasting live matches in the Süper Lig (the Turkish premier league). With a subscription to the service (costing £449 in England for the 2015/16 season) it is possible to watch every Beşiktaş league match live – thirty four in total – from wherever you are located on the globe. In 2014 Digiturk had over 82,000 overseas subscribers and projected users of over 365,000.<sup>110</sup>

The arrival in Europe of live Turkish television recalibrated links to Turkey. From 1990, Beşiktaş fans who had been previously restricted to listening to games on the radio or receiving reports over the phone or in the paper could become wrapped up in a simultaneity of images and sounds. They were able to be in what Kevin Robins and Asu Aksoy call ‘synchronised [visual]

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<sup>110</sup> <http://www.anten.de/d-smart-ve-digiturkun-ne-kadar-uyesi-var/> (accessed 27 August 2015). This figure also does not include those who purchase the (cheaper) domestic subscription and use various technologies to mask their overseas location. I came across both individuals and establishments in Europe who engaged in this practice, suggesting the real number of consumers to be higher.

contact' with events in Turkey, inserting new dynamics into 'the management of separation and distance' (Robins and Aksoy 2002, 7). In her overview of Turkish broadcasting in Germany, Kira Kosnick cites statistics showing a rapid increase in the 'extent and intensity' of television consumption after the introduction of satellite TV (Kosnick 2007b, 28). As will become clear, the 'media-related change' accompanying the arrival of live television had greater purport than the introduction of previous media (Postill 2013).

### ***Media and place***

There is a line of scholarship that has read the growing simultaneity of media consumption as symptomatic of an increasing homogenisation or placelessness of experience. Edward Relph sees changes in 'mass communications' as leading to the advent of a placeless geography, whilst David Seamon argues that 'technology and mass culture destroy the uniqueness of places and promote global homogenization' (Seamon 1979, 91; Relph 2008; Auge 2009). Yet multi-sited fieldwork across western Europe proved the exact opposite – every element of the experience was customised, as I will show shortly. Consequently, a better paradigm for the relationship of media to environment is Sean Moores' idea that media use 'pluralis[es] social settings' (Moores 2012a, 6).

Moores is one of various scholars to have argued that media settings or environments should be thought of as places. When watching TV, the viewer is in two 'places' at once – the physical location and the location generated by the media (in Moores 2012a, 20). Paddy Scannell imbues this process with wonder and enchantment, an idea that will be developed in chapter 9 of this thesis,

suggesting that television provides viewers with the ‘magical... possibility of being in two places at once’ (Scannell 1996, 91). When watching a match, the Beşiktaş fan is ‘in’ both a physical place and the place of the game on the screen (Scannell 1996, 79). Consumption of televised football hence exercises the viewers’ notions of time and location: ‘television “double[s]” reality and in so doing create new communicative entitlements, new structures of expectancy, new ways of being in the world’ (Scannell 1996, 173).

Conceiving of media as a place requires a larger reconceptualisation of how we formulate space. As mentioned, the argument has been taken up that space needs to be conceived not as a mute background to experience but a key part of the accomplishment of social processes (Tuan 1996; Low and Lawrence-Zuniga 2003). Whilst a physical space may exist, as Henri Lefebvre notes, ‘space considered in isolation is an empty abstraction’. Space needs to be experienced – produced – in order to be registered (Lefebvre 1991, 12).

I have mentioned already that the roots of this argument lie in Martin Heidegger’s concept of *Dasein* (being-in-the-world) (Heidegger 1927) and that it has been differently reworked by phenomenological thinkers across anthropology, geography and sociology (Michael Jackson 1996; Thrift 2008c; Tuan 1996). A common trope among many of these works involves distinguishing ontologically between merely occupying a space and inhabiting it. Tim Ingold captures this position when he says there is ‘more to dwelling than the mere fact of occupation’ (Ingold 2000, 185): ‘it is through being inhabited...that the world becomes a meaningful environment for people’ (Ingold 2000, 173). Some scholars prefer to map the categories of ‘space’ and ‘place’ onto this distinction, such as Yi-Fu Tuan who argues that ‘space becomes

place as we get to know it better and endow it with value' (Tuan 1977, 6). I find maintaining a strict typology between 'occupying' and 'inhabiting' or 'place' and 'space' less useful than simply ensuring mention of space is always accompanied by sensitivity to the way it is being occupied and the forces involved in its production.

On the whole, geographers have tried to keep a distinction between physical activities and media when conceptualising space, perhaps in part to delineate 'their' area of expertise. But as Sean Moores has noted, if place is 'made' through repeating practices, there is no reason to see the places generated by habitual media consumption as any different to those created by physical activities. Television equally 'is a location or a setting that can be transformed into place through "habitual use"' (Moores 2012a, 32). For Beşiktaş fans, frequenting the 'space' of live football on satellite TV has imaginative and emotive consequences. Across all the works cited, it is possible to glimpse a common touchstone in a shared importance on material practices in the accomplishment of place, especially when those practices are habitual or recursive (see also Bourdieu 1993).

To summarise, I have argued that watching satellite television transforms notions of space for Turkish diasporans. This media-related change generates not homogenised placelessness but an increase in the frequency and intensity of fans' encounters with 'doubled' experiences. This reality points to the larger intellectual project of reshaping space along phenomenological lines, to see locations as made familiar and meaningful through practice. Consequently, media environments can equally be conceived as places. Equipped with an understanding of satellite TV in this context, the focus can

now shift to consider the other half of the ‘doubling’ process: the physical environments where satellite TV is watched.

### **New Beşiktaş spaces**

The most common place Turkish television is watched is in the home. Yet of the more than fifty games I watched on television with fans, no more than a handful were at peoples’ houses. This is because my research questions focused on the transnational cooperation of fans. The subsequent methodology resulted in limited exposure to the ‘private’ television practices of European Beşiktaş fans. I do not wish to downplay the importance of these practices: more people undoubtedly watch at home than in public venues, and research is needed into their bindings to their teams and other fans (see Rowe 1999). Yet these people are not commonly the ones who participate in the creation of transnational supporters groups such as Çarşı Berlin. Being with Çarşı Berlin fans meant football viewing on television was almost always a public process, one in which processes of socialisation and interaction were often more important than consuming the sport. Throughout fieldwork, numerous fans would tell me – often sheepishly – that what compelled them to congregate in a physical place was not the watching of the game but the chance to be with other fans.<sup>111</sup>

The ability post-1990 to watch Beşiktaş play live every week resulted in the emergence of spaces geared towards providing this conviviality. Across Turkish-speaking communities in Europe, physical spaces were rejigged. Coffee houses began to purchase subscriptions and show games; sports bars sprung

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<sup>111</sup> This calls to mind the ‘specific conviviality’ afforded by cafes bars and clubs (Deeb and Harb 2013, 27).

up offering a chance to drink alcohol and watch; new Beşiktaş associations emerged, providing an environment to meet fellow fans. These spaces offered diasporans the regular experience of watching the football collectively, and going to these places had wider significance than simply frequenting a physical space. Daniel Dayan and Elihu Katz label migrant TV watching a 'diasporic ceremony' in which 'small groups congregated around the television set [are] ...keenly aware that myriad other groups are doing likewise' (Dayan and Katz 1992, 145–6). By attending these venues, diaspora Beşiktaş fans reworked their emotive and imaginative links to Beşiktaş and to each other. For the first time Beşiktaş fans could start to imagine themselves as a transnational community.

Before articulating this argument fully, I wish first to compare and contrast the arrangements of the physical environments in which fans watch. Revealing the diversity of these experiences pushes back against the notion of transnational practices leading to increasing homogenisation. At the same time, I want to ground the Andersonian conception of 'the imagination' more firmly in the materialities through which community becomes concrete and tangible. The result is a better idea of how places 'press hard upon and into our bodies and minds, complexly affect[ing] our moods, our sensibilities' (Macfarlane 2013, 341), or, put another way, how the transnational community of Beşiktaş fans comes to be 'felt in the bones' (Meyer 2009a, 5).

### ***The kahve***

One of the first venues where it became possible to watch Beşiktaş play in Europe was the *kahve* (tea house). The word comes from the Turkish for 'coffee'

and refers to a traditional male-only space where men socialise.<sup>112</sup> In Turkey every village, town or city district has at least one *kahve*. Most serve tea and coffee (not normally alcohol), and act as a place for men to chat, smoke, play and gamble on backgammon or card games. These places usually also have a television, ordinarily left on all day but turned down to an unobtrusive level. If a particular programme catches the attention, the TV will be turned up. The weekly football matches fall into this category.

In London, *kahveler* (pl.) begin to emerge in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The period was coterminous with the advent of satellite television, but also the first mass arrival of migrants from Turkey, most of whom were Kurdish. These migrants added to the small extant Turkish-Cypriot community, rendering the Turkish-speaking population of London large enough to make offering leisure spaces for Turkish speakers a viable business. As one fan in his sixties, who came to England in the 1980s, notes: 'Football obviously is the most important thing for people for the weekend. That is the most important thing. To go to *kahve[ler]*. Don't forget, everybody didn't own satellite television.' In Germany there was a large Turkish-speaking community earlier, in the 1960s and 70s, meaning in some cities *kahveler* already existed by the time they arrived in Britain. The impact of the arrival of satellite TV here was more in terms of an alteration in layout and the times at which fans would frequent the establishment.

In the early years of satellite TV, fans who wanted to watch their team relied on *kahveler*. But as the cost of a satellite dish fell and the breadth of

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<sup>112</sup> For extant works on the drinking of tea and coffee in public in Turkey see Houston (2001). For the Ottoman roots of the practice see Leezenberg (2012).

Turkish establishments increased, other places to watch emerged. At the time of my fieldwork (2009-14) *kahveler* were best characterised as a familiar environment for older men who migrated to Europe as adults. Many people who watch the football in a *kahve* would be there socialising regardless. It is less common for them to act as venues that people specifically frequent to watch a game.

Every *kahve* I visited was geared to serving Turkish-speaking men. They are not designed to attract passing trade. From the outside the windows are usually covered, the activities obscured from a wider anonymous public. Nevertheless, the name of the venue or the clientele entering means it is 'obvious' to any Turkish speaker what the venue is. The paradigm of a male-only sphere, plus a clientele of mostly men over fifty marks these venues as unappealing environments for Çarşı Berlin, many of whom are born in Europe, under the age of thirty and often want to watch games with girlfriends or female friends. In the Cologne area the most active fan in Çarşı Berlin is female. On my first weekend in the city, another fan took me to a *kahve*, apologising that his choice of venue meant she could not come and join us. Choice of venue constrained the congregation of fans, in this case by excluding the girl.



Figure 78. In a *kahve* in Cologne, some customers watch a match while others play cards, May 2013 (author's photo)



Figure 79. A *kahve* with a projector, Cologne, Germany (author's photo)



Figure 80. The outside of a *kahve*, Cologne, Germany. The plain colours and covered windows are not designed to attract passing trade (author's photo)



Figure 81. Exterior of another *kahve*, Cologne, Germany (author's photo)

### ***The bar***

Bars were the most common environment in which I watched televised games with Beşiktaş fans. In this Beşiktaş supporters are not atypical: frequenting a bar to watch a live sports broadcast is a mass leisure pursuit in western Europe that predates satellite TV. As mentioned earlier, it was a Berlin sports bar where the Çarşı Berlin founders met by happenstance in 2003 (see p.36).

Bars differ from *kahveler* in that they are usually a more cosmopolitan environment, open to women and non-Turkish speakers and serving alcohol. Yet there is much variation as to how bar venues operate: in the city of

Duisburg, in Western Germany, the Duisburg *tayfa* (gang) watch their matches in a Çarşı-themed hookah bar.<sup>113</sup> There is a mosaic of the Çarşı logo by the entrance. On the walls are framed pictures of places in Turkey that look cut out of a tourist brochure. The toilet door is covered in anti-fascist stickers, most of them in German. Although it remains open to general customers during matches, the raucousness and chanting of the thirty or so fans normally deters them. In London, by contrast, the Çarşı group watches games in a bar that tries to appeal to both Turkish football fans and a non-Turkish clientele. The back half contains a big screen and is used to broadcast the matches, whilst the front is often left to try and lure in hipsters – a subculture of men and women in their twenties and thirties, mostly middle class, who are keen to project an ‘alternative’ lifestyle and prevalent in East London, including parts home to Turkish communities.<sup>114</sup> Nothing in the venue is football-themed; the ambience consists of stressed wood furniture, chart music and posters advertising drink offers (figs. 82-89).

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<sup>113</sup> A hookah, also known as nargile, shisha or waterpipe, is an instrument for smoking flavoured tobacco where the smoke is passed through water. The instrument originated in the Middle East but has spread around the world, with thousands of cafes across Europe offering the chance for their clientele to use such an instrument.

<sup>114</sup> For more on hipsters and their integration (or lack of) in London see Wessendorf (2013).



Figure 82. Exterior of the Çarşı Café, Duisburg, Germany (author's photo)



Figure 83. Çarşı mosaic inside the Çarşı café, Duisburg, Germany (author's photo)



Figure 84. Anti-establishment stickers on the toilet door, Çarşı café, Duisburg, Germany (author's photo)



Figure 85. Photos of Turkish tourist imaginaries, Çarşı Café, Duisburg, Germany (author's photo)



Figure 86. Çarşı Londra watching a game in a bar, Dalston, London (author's photo)



Figure 87. Front half of the Dalston bar with customers talking business (author's photo)



Figure 88. Beşiktaş fans watching in a bar, Cologne, Germany (author's photo)



Figure 89. Fans watching in a snooker club, London (author's photo)

The rise of Turkish-owned sport bars is part of a larger shift in the 1990s in employment opportunities for Turkish speakers, away from manual labour and into service industries. As the owner of a *kahve* in London summarised: 'First there were factories. The Turkish places were the factories [for] fabrics, chocolate, dresses. Then they closed. After that, those who left the factories opened restaurants, mini-markets, kebab shops... now everywhere in England there are Turkish work places. Wherever you go, you see a Turkish kebab shop!'<sup>115</sup>

Occasionally, formal systems of segregation are put in place by bar owners. For the final match of the season, a sign stuck on the Duisburg cafe door read 'closed because of football match (Beşiktaş)', although the Çarşı Berlin group could just push open the door and walk in (fig. 90). On derby match days in London, the large spike in visitor numbers means bars operate a system of paying a few pounds for entry, rather than the normal arrangement of free entry with the obligation to buy a drink or two.

Compared to *kahveler*, 'space' in bars seems more of an economic concern. Fans are more often cast as 'customers', subject to the shifts and pitches of a multi-use environment as it subscribes to a logic of profit generation, rather than offering the transplantation from Turkey of a cosy *heimat* (homeland). Fans consequently can feel frustrated at their powerlessness. During a meeting of the London group, one supporter bursts out in frustration: 'Look here, the [bar] girl here keeps asking when our meeting is over so she can turn the music back up!' It is common for venues to appear

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<sup>115</sup> Interview with author, 19 January 2015. 'Zaten önce fabrikalar vardı. Türk yerlerini beş yüz fabrika var. Fabric, confection [chocolate], elbise. Sonra, kapandı. Sonra fabrikadan çıkanlar, restoran açtı, market açtı, kebab açtı...şuan Türk iş yerleri [var]. nereye gitsen Türk kebab var!'

and disappear rapidly, leaving fans to cast about for an alternative viewing space. In the five years I have been following Çarşı Londra, the group have called six different bars their *mekan*, a Turkish word with Arabic roots which means broadly 'space', 'place', 'locale' or 'hangout'.

Yet being part of the churn of different people and place can be exhilarating. The process of attending a bar contains far more potential to revivify excitement of the unknown and open oneself to new experiences. Fans frequently express enthusiasm at attractive women in the venue, be they the Polish bar staff or customers. They try to hit on them, usually with little success. Even in complaints you can often detect a note of mirth: 'can you believe that last week, there were twenty or so ponces who paid to watch *Scream*<sup>116</sup> in here?!' says one fan, in amused incredulity 'For Halloween. They closed these curtains and they watched *Scream*. Paid to watch it in there.'<sup>117</sup> The presence of non-Beşiktaş fans provides another topic of conversation, something often needed when the football clientele is the same and the match is proving boring.



**Figure 90.** Sign on the door of the 'closed' Duisburg social. Text reads 'closed because of a football match (Beşiktaş)' (author's photo)



**Figure 91.** Taking over the venue. Fans watching Galatasaray v Beşiktaş in a snooker club, London (author's photo)

<sup>116</sup> *Scream* (Craven 1996) is a 1996 US horror film that has since attained status as a cult classic.

<sup>117</sup> Fieldwork diary, 4 November 2011.

### *The dernek*

The final venue I consider are Beşiktaş *dernekleri*. Coming from the Turkish word for an association, club or society, a *dernek* is the most ‘formal’ environment in which Beşiktaş fans congregate. In Turkey there are over 100,000 officially registered with the Ministry for Dernek Associations (*Dernekler Dairesi Başkanlığı*).<sup>118</sup> *Dernekler* (pl.) cover almost every conceivable interest and play an important part in structuring civil society activity and daily life. The official Beşiktaş website lists hundreds of *dernekler* that have officially applied for and received the right to be associated with Beşiktaş. Of these, twenty two are listed as overseas (*yurtdışında*), and range in location from the USA to Australia. Two of these twenty-four – Nuremberg and Mannheim – correspond with Çarşı Berlin *bölgeler* (regional groups). In addition, two further Çarşı Berlin *bölge* (in Basel and Duisburg) operate an unofficial *dernek*. During fieldwork I visited all four of these locations, which represent roughly a quarter of the total number of Çarşı Berlin groups.

The *dernek* is the most recent type of space adopted by overseas Beşiktaş fans. The Switzerland *dernek* was established in 2007, the Mannheim *dernek* in 2009, and the one in Nuremberg in 2012. These spaces are privately rented space and ‘only for members’, as the sign on the front of the Mannheim *dernek* warns in both Turkish and German (fig. 92). All the *dernekler* I visited were located on the outskirts of the city, in places that are hard to reach by public transport and had virtually no footfall from passers-by. This could be an active choice to increase separation from European surroundings. I suspect,

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<sup>118</sup> <http://www.haber7.com/guncel/haber/1143983-turkiyedeki-dernek-sayisi-100-bini-asti> (accessed 27 August 2015). For more on the history and role of the *dernek* in Turkey, see White (2002, 201–209).

though, it is more a consequence of the ‘political economy of place’ (Molotch 1976). The price of land and the occupations of most of the clientele (manual or unskilled labour) results in a limited budget for generating and sustaining a space. The location stands in interesting contrast to the ‘publicness’ of other self-styled Turkish spaces where fans watch games – *nargileh* bars, restaurants, *kahveler* – which can usually be located in migrant neighbourhoods and even sometimes city centre locations.



Figure 92. The door of the Mannheim Beşiktaş dernek (Mannheim Beşiktaşlılar Derneği). Text underneath reads 'only for members' in Turkish (*üye olmayan giremez*) and German (*nur für Mitglieder*) (author's photo)

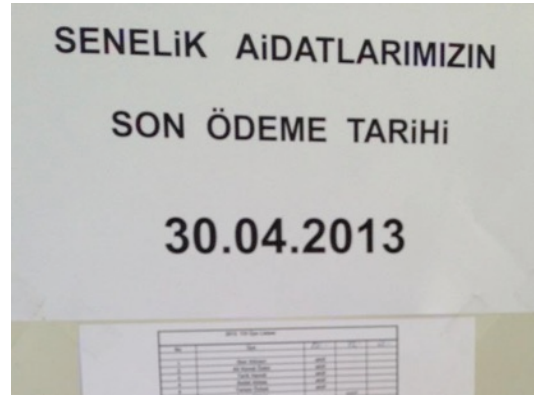


Figure 93. Posted notice on the inside of the Mannheim door, reminding members of the renewal date for their annual subscription (*senelik aidatlarımızın son ödeme tarihi*) (author's photo)

The *dernekler* I visited were all funded by a member payment system (*aidat*). The Basel *dernek* charged thirty Swiss Francs a month (£20), the Mannheim one 120 Euros a year (£87).<sup>119</sup> Stuck on the back of the entrance door in Mannheim was a printed list of the members of the club and a warning of the cut-off point for paying their member fees (fig. 93). *Dernekler* are not designed to turn a profit. All funds go towards the running costs and any club

<sup>119</sup> Exchange rate as of 27 August 2015, <http://www.xe.com> (accessed 27 August 2015).

activities.<sup>120</sup> It is often hard to make members pay on time. In Basel, Peter, the treasurer, points to a figure of over 4,000 Francs (£2,691) at the bottom of the sheet of dues. ‘That’s how much profit?’ I ask. ‘No!’ he replies with a laugh.

That’s how much they’re owed.<sup>121</sup>

Because the space is privately owned it allows for a greater display of customisation than a bar or *kahve*. The *dernekler* I visited contained the most elaborate football materialities and infrastructures. Walls are painted black and white and hung with scarves and banners. One *dernek* contains a mock terrace, made out of wood but with plastic black and white seats attached to replicate the seats of the *Kapalı Tribün* (Roofed Terrace) where Çarşı watch games at Beşiktaş’s İnönü stadium in Istanbul. Top-of-the-range projectors or televisions glisten, signed shirts and silver plates adorn the walls and branded Beşiktaş soap sits atop of the sink in the bathroom (figs. 94-102).

It takes a lot of time, energy and cash to run an association. A formal role is not appealing to most members, many of whom have full time jobs and families. Peter became treasurer of the Basel group by default and there is no rotation of duties. ‘It costs money to build this place’ says Peter to me. ‘Two thousand Francs alone for the beamer’. He adds: ‘Also money from the inside’. I clarify – ‘your own money?’ He nods. When commenting on the occupation of the president of the Mannheim *dernek*, I am shocked when a fan replies, ‘he doesn’t have a job, he just does this’ and gestures at the place. He elaborates by saying that the president’s wife works, freeing him to run the *dernek*.

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<sup>120</sup> In Turkey, the legislation governing the setting up of *dernekler* explicitly excludes them being run for a profit.

<sup>121</sup> Exchange rate as of 27 August 2015, <http://www.xe.com> (accessed 27 August 2015).



Figure 94. The front door of the Basel *dernek*, reading 'Kapalı upper mother fucker!' (author's photo)



Figure 95. Beşiktaş sign on the side of the Mannheim *dernek* (author's photo)



Figure 96. Beşiktaş soap in the bathroom, Basel (author's photo)

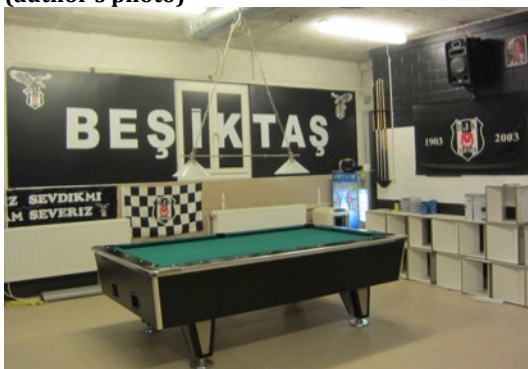


Figure 97. Interior of the Basel *dernek* (author's photo)



Figure 98. Beşiktaş shirts hung on the wall of the Nuremberg *dernek* (author's photo)



Figure 99. Wall decorations in the Koblenz *dernek* (author's photo)



Figure 100. Mock terrace based on the *Kapalı Tribün*, Basel (author's photo)



Figure 101. Basketball match projected from the 'beamer', Basel (author's photo)

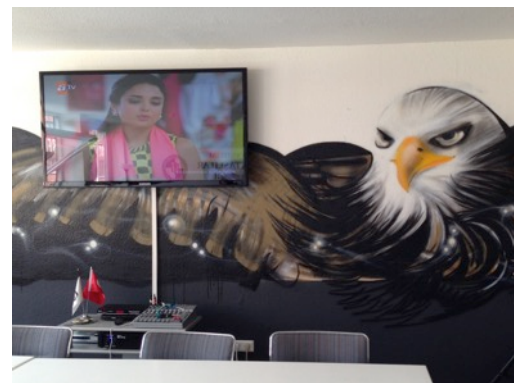


Figure 102. Television on the Mannheim *dernek* wall, enveloped by a painted eagle (author's photo)

*Dernekler*, *kahveler* and bars are results of the expansion of Beşiktaş space afforded by the rise of satellite TV. Along with the possibility to watch matches live came a reorganisation of physical places. Previous establishments such as the *kahve* altered their spatial arrangement, while new *dernek* organisations were established, both changes facilitating fans coming together. Today across Europe, Beşiktaş fans have available all manner of places in which they can watch live Beşiktaş matches together.

These spaces are best conceived not as a mute background to the viewing experience but rather ‘a volatile participant – a fellow subject which arches and bristles at us, bristles into us’ (Macfarlane 2013, 255). A *kahve*’s frosted windowpanes, its cigarette smoke and soundtrack of tinkling teaspoons; a bar’s posters of alcohol offers, its shouty exuberance punctuated with the loud crack of snooker balls connecting; a *dernek*’s quiet hush, its walls covered in scarves and shirts and its furniture painted black and white – these spaces contribute to the invocation of different imaginaries of ‘Beşiktaş’, ‘Turkey’ or ‘Turkish football’.

The importance of materials calls to mind Birgit Meyer’s notion of ‘aesthetic formations’, a term designed to advance beyond the notion of ‘imagined community’ as an abstract representation. Defining aesthetics along Aristotelian lines as corporeal capability, Meyer argues that what produces community is formations of image, text, sights and smells that ‘induces a shared sensory mode of perceiving and experiencing the world’ (Meyer 2009a, 9). The environment becomes an active partner in the doubling of imaginative space. Along with the televised images, it plays an important role in fans reaching towards varying (often contradictory) notions of a greater – transnational –

Beşiktaş community. In order for that argument to embed thoroughly, I need first to give a flavour of the experience of watching a Beşiktaş match in these spaces

### **Acts of fandom**

It is important to bear in mind that these spaces are only occupied by Beşiktaş fans for a couple of hours once a week. We thus return again to the importance of moments of 'exceptionality' in the construction of fandom (see chapter 5).

'Satellite spaces' can be viewed as a corollary to the away match, offering liminality and *communitas* at a more frequent interval, albeit in smaller doses. Yet perhaps the salient characteristic of the experience – like the away match it mirrors – is that these spaces are occupied in different ways each time they are frequented by fans.

Fans are attracted to gathering in part by the possibilities held within the twin states of ephemerality and difference. What will take place will only take place once, for a short period of time, and is incapable of exact replication. Each game shuffles the pack. The emotions and moods generated by this logic themselves vary each time, part of a multifaceted, recursive back-and-forth between actions on a pitch, televised images and those physically present. Consequently, any description of the process needs to pay sufficient attention to this unpredictability and impermanence. 'Attention' is not solely mental but also somatic, 'culturally elaborated ways of attending to and with one's body in surroundings that include the embodied presence of others' (Csordas 1993, 138). The following is a composite textual and visual vignette, aimed at

capturing the experience of fans held in these moments of ephemerality and difference, as well as contrasting the experience of watching in a *kahve*, bar and *dernek*.

*Fans turn up early; fans arrive at kick off time; fans come late. Fans wear official Beşiktaş kits – £60 a pop; fans wear home-made T-shirts; fans wear work clothes; fans wear a tracksuit.*

*They grab seats; they rearrange seats; they mould their presence around the screen. The screen is a projector screen fifteen feet across; the screen is a fourteen inch TV in the corner; the screen is fixed to the back wall; the screen hangs by the door and is obscured whenever punters enter the venue.*

*The clientele is just Beşiktaş fans; the clientele is a mix of Beşiktaş fans and hipsters; there are no Beşiktaş fans, save one guy and his mate. Beşiktaş are playing Galatasaray or Fenerbahçe and there are too many fans to count. There are two female fans; there is one female fan; there are no female fans.*

*Fans dominate the venue – it is theirs, they are in charge. They take beers and forget to pay for them; they are hounded by the owner, wanting them to buy another drink, shoved in a small alcove, forever asking for the TV to be turned up so they can hear what's going on.*

*The lights go off – it's like the cinema; the lights stay on – the other customers need to see the pool tables. Kick off. Fans can see the action in high definition; the picture descends into a crackle and lines; fans can see perfectly but wish they couldn't, Beşiktaş are playing awfully.*

*Fans drink beer; fans drink coke; fans drink rakı – the aniseed liquor that is Turkey's national tippie; fans drink so much that they attempt to hit on bar staff a third of their age; fans don't order a single drink but stay squashed in the corner, hoping the owner doesn't notice.*

*Fans cry, fans scream, fans swear. One fan unfurls the longest continuous stream of expletives ever heard – orospo çocuğu, amınyı koyayım, siktir 'lan! (son of a bitch cunt fuckwit mother fucker) – rolling the r's in order to propel one word into the next. Fans talk about their shopping, the news, the weather. Fans sit in silence, fans fall asleep.*

*German is spoken, English is spoken, Turkish is spoken. Fans grow excited and slip between the two. Teenagers keep forgetting the older guys don't really know German. Beşiktaş score; Fans jump up, fans hug, fans start a chant.*

*The opposition score: fans shake their heads, fans swear, one fan launches his chair across the room in a fit of rage.*

*At half time fans get up, piss and smoke. At half time fans are too numb to move. At half time fans go for a kebab, dally and miss the first fifteen minutes of the second half.*

*In the second half fans sing more, fans sing less, fans don't open their mouths. They grow bored, they grow enchanted, they can't stand it anymore – why has the coach brought HIM on?! – and leave ten minutes before the end.*

*The final whistle blows. Fans breathe, fans swear, fans laugh. A fan goes over the Beşiktaş goal eight times with a friend; a fan argues the penalty three times with a stranger he's never met. A fan wants to instantly forget it all. There's a ringing silence; the Turkish adverts ring out over the speaker; the music channel the owner just switched to blares out.*

*The chairs are put back, the chairs are left in a mess, the chairs remain where they were thrown. Car keys are grabbed, dregs are drunk, cigarettes dragged. People leave.*

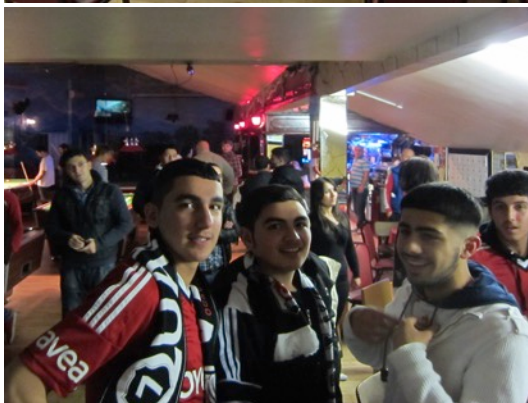
*Next week? Definitely! Perhaps. Maybe. Busy. After that performance? Don't think so...*











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### **Expansion of the imagination**

The acts of fandom described above – such as wearing a Beşiktaş kit, swearing at a television, hugging a stranger – reveal a central truth about the experience: fans are somewhere ‘more than’ a physical venue. Attention and emotion is being invested in multiple places, in the physical surrounds of a English bar or German Beşiktaş association but also in the images they are receiving of activities on a Turkish football pitch. In this final section, I will pursue this argument to its conclusion: engaging in this simultaneous ‘doubling’ of experience reworks imaginative links to Beşiktaş, allowing them to conceive of themselves ‘transnationally’.

By ‘transnational’ I do not mean deterritorialised. There have been various efforts to use the concept of transnationalism to move away from bounded concepts and entities that characterised early theories of migration (Appadurai 1996a; Basch, Glick Schiller, and Szanton Blanc 1994). Whilst supportive of such deconstruction, it is important not to congregate at the other end of the spectrum and view ‘transnational migrants as deterritorialized, free-floating people’ (Guarnizo and Smith in A. Rogers 2004, 166). Introducing the ‘doubling of place’ concept from media studies into transnational scholarship is a way of grounding discussions of transnationalism in material environments, including the materiality of media. Holding in mind the idea that spaces are continually experienced as doubled – that multiple places are occupied simultaneously – works heuristically to undercut any assumptions about fixity or boundedness of categories such as ‘nation’, ‘local’ or ‘global’.

Accordingly, a transnational conception of being is tied up in what Robins and Aksoy call the process of 'thinking across spaces' (Aksoy and Robins 2000). The way I use the term, however, does not privilege a cognitive-centred approach to practices. As Appadurai notes, transnationalism 'not only involves the creation of imagined communities through the workings of print capitalism as Anderson has suggested, but it also involves the appropriation of agonistic bodily skills that can then further lend passion and purpose to the community so imagined' (Appadurai 1996b, 112). The shouts, swearing and bodily movements of fans watching games on TV suggest they are not so much thinking as acting across transnational space. These bodily skills, muses Appadurai, 'may be the special contribution [to transnationalism] of spectator sport (as opposed to the many other forms of public culture)'. When I refer to fans beginning to think and act transnationally, I mean an expanded sense of corporeal and sensate practices as much as an expanded 'mental geography' (Csordas 1993).

### ***Diasporic engagement***

The frequent involvement of diasporans in the simultaneities of elsewhere has led many to question diasporic participation in the culture of the 'host' society (Grillo 2007). Through this lens, diaspora television viewing is conceptualised, both critically and sympathetically, as a barrier to integration (Aksoy and Robins 2000). Yet acting transnationally – interpreting and responding to simultaneous televised images from elsewhere – is a complex, often problematic, process.

On one hand, fans feel connected to the Beşiktaş fans in Turkey they can see but have never met. They feel pride when they see they are chanting loudly, anger when the police are treating them badly, or embarrassment at the small attendance. The practices of diaspora fans appear on the surface to be exact replications of fan behaviour in Turkey. As one fan in London notes with exasperation, ‘especially if you are in a *kahve*, you have people that they don’t know how to have manners, how to watch a football match. They start arguing, they start swearing because they are two oppositions. They start fighting’. After a Galatasaray-Beşiktaş match in 2012, arguments between the fans spill over into violence on the pavement outside. A Beşiktaş fan aims a kick at a Galatasaray supporter, prompting a large scuffle. The fans are separated, amid shouts and swearing. As he’s pushed away, the instigator switches into English: ‘I don’t care. He’s NOT my friend. Naa bruv’.<sup>122</sup>

These experiences seem to reinforce a sense of parallelism: at the same time as the fight the street is full of hundreds walking about, enjoying a warm August bank holiday weekend. They pause and watch, or cross the street to get out of the way, as a group of football fans burst onto the pavement, physically harming each other based on conceptions of loyalty and belonging imported from Istanbul. Yet the instigator’s linguistic move – slipping into English to express his distaste with his opponent – reveals that, far from being erased, the wider environment that these fans inhabit is intimately implicated in events as they unfold.

When choosing to ‘be’ Beşiktaş fans, diasporans are faced with choices: whether to watch in a cosmopolitan bar or Beşiktaş-only members club;

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<sup>122</sup> Fieldwork diary, 26 August 2012.

whether to speak English or Turkish. Even if the footage consumed is exactly the same as that broadcast in Turkey, it prompts decisions through dint of being consuming in a 'place' abroad: if we score, is it acceptable to cheer in this East London bar? The process of watching is never seamless. Satellite boxes frequently malfunction, English hipsters walk in front of the screen and obscure the footage, fans get so worked up they slip out of Turkish and accidentally swear in German. Kinks form in the Beşiktaş imaginary. The result is not an unproblematic transplant of 'Turkish' space into London or Mannheim but a far more ambiguous realisation of the expansive diversity of the Beşiktaş community. As this note from my fieldwork diary conveys, fans are always alternating between multiple spheres of influence:

Fieldwork diary, 8 April 2013

I am watching Beşiktaş play Bursaspor in a bar in London. A Bursaspor player touches the ball and the Turkish commentator says 'Ferdinand!' A fan lifts his head up excitedly: 'is that Anton Ferdinand?' His friend concurs, prompting a chat about his prospects in Turkey. The presence of an English player in Turkey always elicits great excitement, even if, as in this case, he's only there because no side in the English top flight would take him.

Satellite television allows for synchronised, simultaneous contact with Beşiktaş in Turkey, yet simultaneity can make people feel more detached and alienated from the experiences they are viewing. Aksoy and Robins describe this process with regard to watching the news, but their comments are just as applicable to football: 'the very thing that is desired, to bridge the emotional distance from Turkish everyday life, can also at the same time involve experiences of distantiation' (Aksoy and Robins 2000, 361). In supposed moments of unadulterated Beşiktaşness, fans would frequently express affinity – either

consciously or not – towards another attachment. Such moments snag and jar with the reality of why they have congregated to watch.

From fieldwork diary, 20 May 2013, Ennepertal, Germany

Hakan is next to me. He says 'nice tackle' in English after one guy wins the ball. What's tackle in Turkish? I ask him. He pauses but doesn't know. He then turns and asks the others in German: 'what's tackle in Turkish?' Everyone looks blank. Nobody knows!

## Conclusion

Emrah, Berlin

Our first game was Sparta Prague against Beşiktaş [22<sup>nd</sup> October 2003]. We six, we decided to go to Prague. And my boys from Istanbul said to me 'make a banner and write "Çarşı" and the city "Berlin"'. And it was the first time where we made the Çarşı Berlin banner on the *tribün* (terrace)... After this Prague game, everybody talked about it. We were only six people but everybody talked about it! Because our boys [in Istanbul] and other Beşiktaş fans, *they saw on the TV this Çarşı Berlin banner*.<sup>123</sup>

Cengiz, Cologne

The first time I heard about Çarşı [in Turkey] was around 2005-6. *Maybe on the television I saw them*. And I thought to myself 'is there any Çarşı in Europe?'<sup>124</sup>

The quotations above reveal the central role of satellite television in the process of 'acting across spaces' for diaspora fans. Emrah reveals how the Çarşı Berlin phenomenon was predicated in part on other fans being able to see the group's banners on TV, whilst Cengiz is galvanised to search for a European fan organisation after seeing images of the Turkish Çarşı on television.

By allowing Turkish-speakers abroad to watch matches live, satellite TV inserted an experiential simultaneity into practices of fandom, and prompted the creation of public venues to engage in this experience collectively. Frequenting these venues led to an expansion in the imaginations of fans, allowing them to conceive of themselves 'transnationally'. Like the rotations of a kaleidoscope, every game sees a new configuration of people, place and

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<sup>123</sup> Interview with author, 5 June 2013.

<sup>124</sup> Interview with author, 27 May 2013.

things, prompting different acts of fandom to arise, recasting the imaginative and fantastical links between those present, others watching elsewhere and the figures on the TV. The ability to be simultaneously enchanted by the experience but also aware of its contingency is a crucial development on the road towards the formation of Çarşı Berlin.

Yet despite this state of affairs, the media-related changes caused by satellite TV were not enough on their own to generate a daily working transnational community. Whilst fans imaginatively conceived of themselves as part of a larger community across nations, the requisite ability to locate each other quickly and easily was not there. Fans were still reliant on knowledge of the geographical layout of a city neighbourhood, the location of Turkish bars and clubs or the recommendation of a friend or fan they already know to meet up and watch the football. Even if a connection with a fan overseas was made – at an away match, say – it would be difficult to maintain a frequency of communication sufficient to invoke a supporters club.

Whilst imaginatively fans conceived of transnational fandom, the ability to organise easily – to make a community contiguous along these lines – was absent. Fans would turn up, watch the game, and then go home, aware that many thousand others were doing the same thing, but taking it no further. For Çarşı Berlin to emerge, one further media-related change was needed: the rise of a new socio-technological assemblages based around the internet. It is to that story that I now turn.

## Chapter 7

### Virtual spaces

This chapter, the second of two devoted to diaspora Beşiktaş spaces, looks at impact of the emergence of the internet. It picks up the threads of the previous chapter – the role of media in community formation, the generation of diasporic Beşiktaş imaginaries – and moves to consider them in light of the emergence of the web. It will argue that the internet provoked another expansion of Beşiktaş spaces, generating new possibilities for the organisation of fans and the articulation of their support. Fans utilised these potentials to realise a new kind of transnational, pan-European fan organisation, Çarşı Berlin.

Çarşı Berlin did not surface at first on the internet. On the contrary, it emerged out of the arrangement of space mentioned in the previous chapter, a chance encounter of six Beşiktaş fans at a Turkish sports bar in Berlin in 2003. Furthermore, a connection with the Çarşı group in Turkey was crucial to its formation: ‘I’m the only original one who grew up in Istanbul in my young years’ says Emrah, one of the founding six. ‘If it weren’t for me, the group would never be real group. Because of me, the people in Istanbul were interested in this group and said “this is our number one group outside of Istanbul”’.<sup>125</sup>

I introduce this information at the outset to demolish any notion of the internet carrying sole explanatory burden for the group’s emergence and

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<sup>125</sup> Interview with author, Berlin, 5 June 2013.

operation: migration patterns between Turkey and Germany, physical co-presence and satellite TV are all key elements in the mix. Yet the arrival of the internet did make a difference. When I ask Emrah how the group grew, he responds: ‘first of all we made a webpage. This was the most important thing. And then other people started to see it on the internet’. The arrival of internet technologies clearly had an effect on the expansion of the group, from a handful of fans in a Berlin bar into a transnational organisation hundreds strong. What difference did it make? That is the question this chapter will explore.

### **Which internet?**

Whenever asking fans about the group’s emergence and operation, a common feature of the conversation would be phrases such as ‘our friend here in Stuttgart, he met with the guys from Berlin on the internet’ or ‘he was one of the first! They communicated with Emrah *abi*<sup>126</sup> and Hasan *abi* on the internet’. A preliminary task was to understand what fans meant by ‘on the internet’.

Scholars who focused on early versions of the internet tended to overstate its potential. Universalist claims for the emergence of a global ‘network society’ (Castells [1996] 2010) or post-human digital age (Hayles 1999) gained much credence, contributing to a view of The Internet as a monolithic entity or giant network.<sup>127</sup> In response, certain scholars – anthropologists chief among them – argued that from the user’s perspective there is no such thing as a singular internet, only ‘the aggregate of its regional

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<sup>126</sup> *Abi* is short for *ağabey*, big brother. See Chapter 4 for a discussion of its usage among Çarşı Berlin.

<sup>127</sup> For exceptions to this position see Miller and Slater (2000); Kendall (2002).

and particular usage' (Miller 2011, 163; see also Coleman 2010; H. A. Horst and Miller 2012). In many ways, this position can be seen as the digital corollary to the previous chapter's argument about mediated space: users inhabit a multitude of internets, many of which are just as, if not more, restrictive than non-internet mediated environments. This stance has been lent more credence as the internet has matured and users become more familiar with navigating across a 'polymedia' landscape (Miller and Madianou 2012).

Proceeding from this starting point, the chapter introduces the two most important internet spaces in which fans of Çarşı Berlin interacted between 2011 and 2013: a messageboard and Facebook. Fans do not distinguish between these 'online' spaces but intertwine them with previously existing Beşiktaş spaces. The middle section of the chapter is devoted to developing a conceptual lens appropriate to capturing how fans are crafting the transnational Beşiktaş community of Çarşı Berlin. I rescue the term 'virtual' from strict association with computer-based simulation and recast it more broadly as potential. Drawing on Gilles Deleuze, I argue for a model of social process based around a constant mediation between virtual and actual, or potential and determined, realities. This move allows the particular study of internet spaces to be connected to the larger intellectual premise behind the thesis – of rejecting static, structural explanations of social relations in favour of 'processual' theories of knowledge creation and production

The final sections of the chapter illustrate ethnographically how interaction with this dialectic works in practice. It is not only a case of expanded online potentialities clashing with offline determinacies (although this does occur). Through the enforcement of rigid distinctions and rules on messageboards and

social networking platforms, fans' actual use of internet technologies just as often denies virtual potentials of the physical world, such as the linguistic and ethnic diversity of the group. I conclude by suggesting that the sum difference the internet makes to fandom is to institute an ongoing 'crisis of mediation' (Eisenlohr 2011, 4). Çarşı Berlin members are reliant on the affordances of the internet to generate the frequency and strength of affect required to sustain the notion of an active transnational organisation. This dependency, however, leaves them subject to frequent argument and disagreement, provoked through being shackled to environments that change daily and where the norms are continually mutating. The end result is a fan club in a continual state of antinomy: both playful and restrictive, riven by anger yet equally characterised by acts of gentleness and affection.

### ***Messageboard***

When fans talk of Çarşı Berlin's early days online, they invariably are referring to one specific space: the Çarşı Berlin messageboard. Before the arrival of social networking sites, messageboards were one of the few socialisation spaces of the early internet.<sup>128</sup> Created in 2003, the Çarşı Berlin messageboard is housed on the group's website, [www.berlin-carsi.com](http://www.berlin-carsi.com).<sup>129</sup> The site itself is poorly maintained, containing a small number of pages, some pictures of Çarşı Berlin

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<sup>128</sup> The other would be chatrooms, spaces that allow for a form of synchronous text communication amongst users. For an excellent ethnography of an early internet chatroom see Kendall (2002).

<sup>129</sup> In the last few months of fieldwork, the Çarşı Berlin website was closed and a new one opened at [www.carsi-berlin.com](http://www.carsi-berlin.com). I discuss this change, and what it shows about the ephemerality of internet spaces, as part of the conclusion to the thesis. The description and analysis of the site in this chapter is based on the old version of the messageboard, as that formed the environment throughout most of research. I retain the present tense for ease of explication.

and a little information in Turkish about Beşiktaş. Click the link to the messageboard, however, and the scaffolding of old news is replaced by a dynamic space frequented by tens of fans daily.

Accessing the Çarşı Berlin messageboard is unusually difficult. Many online messageboards are public, allowing any internet user to read the threads, although to participate it is common to need to register with the owner of the space. The Çarşı Berlin board cannot even be entered until users have been verified as legitimate. Users must provide a name, date of birth, city, telephone number, a reason for wanting to join Çarşı Berlin and the name of a known Çarşı Berlin member who will provide a reference (fig. 103). The username of a member must be the real name of the person – both first and last – and users must post a photograph showing their likeness. These rules are to ensure a stranger cannot ‘join’ the messageboard or lurk to find out what the group are discussing. I was told frequently during fieldwork that the police scour Facebook and insecure websites to learn about the activities of football fan groups. The board’s requirements are tightly policed by moderators who send private messages to users, warning of non-compliance. Users are only allowed one character on the forum, one that accords exactly in name and image with an offline person.

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**Figure 103. Membership form for joining the Çarşı Berlin messageboard**

### *The Transnational backstage*

After negotiating the hurdles of registration and verification, a user can log in to the board. Once inside, it feels very much like being in the ‘backstage’ area of the Çarşı Berlin group (Goffman [1959] 1990). The dramaturgical metaphor – and Erving Goffman’s approach to self-presentation as performance – seem particularly fruitful, as so much of the ‘public’ front of Çarşı Berlin is built around extrovert production of unity and fanaticism on the terraces in sports arenas. Goffman has highlighted the necessity of these private, hidden spaces in the creation of groupness, most famously in his analysis of the role of the kitchen for staff in a Shetland Hotel. The backstage is a multipurpose space in which teammates prove they are a ‘loyal, well-disciplined performer’, where ‘performers will have to sustain one another’s morale’ and ‘poor members of the team...can be schooled or dropped from the performance’ (Goffman [1959]

1990, 131, 115). The messageboard makes available these characteristics of privateness and hiddenness on a global scale. It presents the branches of Çarşı Berlin dispersed across Europe with a 'transnational backstage', a shared, private space to come together in a way that is not possible in the flesh.

Messageboards function by allowing a user to post a topic which, if other users respond, develops into a conversation 'thread'. The Çarşı Berlin messageboard is divided into twelve sub-forums, each containing tens of threads discussing different aspects of the fan experience – from 'organisation', in which fans plan events and travel to matches, through to spaces to chat about 'Turkish and world football', 'Çarşı Berlin products' or just gossip in the 'Eagle Cafe' (fig. 104). Fans flit between these different forums, posting and taking part in conversation in multiple threads. As one fan explains: 'Everyone goes on that site. For instance [to find out] match dates, match days, match places, addresses... fans from all the cities go there [and say] "OK, from Nuremberg we'll be 10 people", "from Stuttgart they'll be 15 of us attending" ...We organise flight tickets, hotels – we all stay in the same hotel... I mean, we act en masse... The biggest factor in our growth is the Çarşı Berlin forum. That's had a big effect'.<sup>130</sup> I have been given various estimates as to how many people use the messageboard. The moderator was not willing to help with my research, but the general consensus is that around 400-600 people are registered, although the number using the board regularly is much lower.

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<sup>130</sup> Interview with author, 23 February 2013. 'Herkes o siteye giriyor. Mesela maç tarihi, maç günü, maçın yeri, adresi, oradan... Bütün şehirlerdeki arkadaşlar da oraya girip "Tamam biz Nürnberg'den 10 kişi geliyoruz", "Stuttgart'tan 15 kişi geliyoruz" ... uçak bileti ayarlanıyor, oteller ayarlanıyor. Aynı otelde toplanıyoruz... Büyümenin en büyük etkisi, o Çarşı Berlin forum var ya, onun çok etkisi var'.

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**Figure 104. List of subforums within the Çarşı Berlin messageboard. From top to bottom: Introduce yourself; Çarşı Berlin home forum; Basketball and other [non-football] branches; Turkish and world football; Events; Çarşı Berlin regions; Optik Başkan tournament 2012<sup>131</sup>; Çarşı Berlin products**

A key organisational practice on the board is the compilation of lists. Lists are assembled for almost anything that needs to be organised: those who have paid to attend a game; attendees of a party; number of tickets required by region; the names and telephone numbers of the contact for each region (figs. 105-106). Making lists is an important strategy through which organisations operate, be they ancient civilizations (Goody 1986) or modern governments (Barry 2001). Compiling lists allows organisations to generate summaries and draw conclusions, 'to circumscribe and to enlarge their capacities through synoptic facts' (Thrift 2004, 588).

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<sup>131</sup> The Optik Başkan tournament is a football tournament organised by Çarşı Berlin. It takes place annually and provides an opportunity for all the different regions (*bölge*) of Çarşı Berlin to come together. It is named after a famous deceased member of Çarşı in Turkey.

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**Figure 105.** List documenting those who have paid to take a bus from Vienna (*Viyana*) to Belgrade for a *deplasman*. The user has added underneath: 'come on friends, let's expand this list...' (*haydi arkadaşlar, şu listeyi kabartalım*)

**Figure 106.** List of attendees at Çarşı Berlin party

List generation plays an important role in the abstraction by which the group is imagined. In their study of 'the machine at work', Keith Grint and Steve Woolgar mischievously invert the well-known paradigm of 'user configuration', arguing that machines are equally at work 'configuring the user', setting the parameters for their interpretation and actions (Grint and Woolgar 1997, 73). What Çarşı Berlin members are accomplishing by compiling electronic lists is a virtual conceptualisation by which the group is organised. The electronic list – capable of being copied and pasted, added to, deleted or commented upon from any location – can be seen to offer Çarşı Berlin a 'solution' to the difficulty of generating a transnational organisation. The forum helps bring people together in one spot; the list allows them to be counted, organised, categorised.

Commands and interactions on the messageboard reveal many clues as to how fans conceive of knowing and belonging to each other. When registering, the site states that fans need to provide a 'reference from a member of Çarşı Berlin who knows you' (*Referans-Sizi tanıyan bir Çarşı Berlin üyesi*), yet the instructions do not specify whether this person has to be known in the flesh or if an exclusively online acquaintance would suffice. The lack of specificity underlines a key motif that will resurface throughout the chapter: for the most part, fans do not feel the need to strictly distinguish interaction as taking place 'offline' or 'on'. This is despite being a collective that views physical congregation at games as the most important requirement of membership (see chapter 5). Even with this privileging of live attendance, online interactions are not denigrated or seen as 'less real'. The fan's quote above ('everyone goes on that site. For instance [to find out] match dates, match days, match places, addresses') reveals online space of the messageboard is being used to facilitate greater offline interaction by making it easier for fans to find flights, hotels and organise the other requirements to be physically present. Of course fans draw distinctions between spaces, but rarely do they do so in order to separate ontologically notions of selfhood or authenticity. A continuity of sorts is conceptualised across environments. I return to this theme in due course.

### **Facebook**

#### Zeynep, Cologne

I don't actually like Facebook but because of Beşiktaş I cannot close it. That's why I actually have Facebook! [chuckles]... Cause I don't have everyone's number, I can just communicate with them via Facebook.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> Interview with author, 18 February 2015.

The second online space in which Çarşı Berlin members frequently interact is the social networking site Facebook. Facebook operates by allowing users to create a profile populated with information and photos about themselves. Users can then connect and communicate with others. Members of Çarşı Berlin communicate more frequently on Facebook than on the messageboard. Unlike the latter's backstage feel, the 'friends list' for most fans includes family members, work colleagues and many non-Beşiktaş friends. Facebook acts as a social hub for supporters to interact with differing, overlapping networks that make up their social life (see Miller 2011, 202–4). Despite comprising over a billion users in its entirety, the average Facebook user is only connected to a couple of hundred others. The default privacy settings mean that one user cannot read the profile of another unless they agree to be 'friends', limiting the circulation of the information. Consequently, the Facebook public is better conceptualised as 'an aggregate of private spheres. It consists of all the people one knows privately, but in one place and open to each other' (Miller 2011, 175). When referring to Facebook it is the 'Facebooks' of a few hundred Beşiktaş fans in Europe to which I refer.

As well as individual profiles, Facebook allows for the formation of common-interest user groups in the form of 'pages'. Creating Facebook pages is commonplace and millions exist. Çarşı Berlin's Facebook page has over 16,000 'likes' (fig. 107).<sup>133</sup> Given the size of the group's 'membership' of five to six hundred (taken as the number of people enrolled on the forum) this is a significant amount of attention and traffic. Unlike a user profile, a Facebook

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<sup>133</sup> This means that over 16,000 people have clicked the 'like' button on the Çarşı Berlin Facebook page (see p.107n58). Number correct as of 29 August 2015.

page is public, accessible to anyone with an internet connection. It is hence often used for 'official' pronouncements from the group to a wider audience.<sup>134</sup> At the time of my research, these took the form of open letters in English bemoaning Beşiktaş fans being denied tickets for an away game, or protesting a Turkish court case against Çarşı members in Istanbul. In addition to the Çarşı Berlin page, sub-branches also have their own pages (figs. 108-109). The public nature of these pages is an important factor in the recruitment of new members:

Ali, Watford, England

Me: How did you hear about Çarşı Londra?

Ali: I was searching 'How can I get tickets?' In haber1903.com [a Beşiktaş forum in Turkey]. Somebody put a comment: 'if you want to have a group to go with [in London] you can always find Çarşı Londra' and I just Facebook searched it and I added it and they accepted it and I've been talking to it, then that's how we're going to meet. And then once I added them, they invited me to the Braga game. I said 'yeah I will come, definitely!'<sup>135</sup>

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**Figure 107. The Çarşı Berlin Facebook page, 29 August 2015**

<sup>134</sup> Facebook allows users to animate the avatar of the organisation, hence these pronouncements can be made as 'Çarşı Berlin'. The functionality raises interesting questions as to who controls the avatar – it could be an individual or multiple people – and whether the tone of announcements changes accordingly. For more on avatars see Manning and Gershon (2013).

<sup>135</sup> Interview with author, 6 December 2012.

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**Figure 108. Facebook page for the Mannheim  
bölge of Çarşı Berlin, 29 August 2015**

**Figure 109. Çarşı Frankfurt sub-branch  
Facebook page, 29 August 2015**

During fieldwork it was extremely rare to come across a fan who did not have a Facebook account. The diversity of interactions that Facebook allows, combined with its ubiquity of use, means its presence has percolated into almost all aspects of the fan experience. Photos of fans are uploaded to Facebook; Facebook walls, threads and private messages are used by fans to socialise and organise; words relating to Facebook functions – ‘Like’, ‘untag’, ‘to friend’, ‘post’ – crop up in offline conversation (‘My mum’s not going to see this, is she?’ Says a fan in response to a photo I take. I say ‘I dunno, are you friends with your mum on Facebook?’ He replies ‘Yes! Untag, untag!’). One of the most predictable questions asked after a few minutes of chat with a new fan would be ‘do you have Facebook?’ Upon saying yes, the conversation would break so the fan could locate my profile and add me. The conversation would then resume, doubled; the fan able to explore my Facebook pictures, posts and comments simultaneously with the words and glances as part of the procedure of ‘getting to know’ a new member.<sup>136</sup> Even those fans who do not like Facebook – such as

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<sup>136</sup> See Miller (2011) for how Trinidadians similarly use Facebook to check people out. There have been many news stories about the practice of firms examining the Facebook profiles of

Zeynep, who wishes she could leave – find they have to retain a presence on the site for the purposes of socialisation within Çarşı Berlin. As the examples intimate, it is neither productive nor possible to try to establish where social networks on Facebook end and those offline begin.<sup>137</sup>

I would like to posit that the sum ‘difference’ Facebook makes is to expand notions of space and time. To do so, I draw on Danny Miller’s comparison of the culture of Facebook with the culture of the Kula Ring, as explored in Nancy Munn’s *The Fame of Gawa* (Munn [1986] 1992; Miller 2011, 205–15). Miller focuses on one claim of Munn’s in particular: the involvement of Melanesians with the exchange of objects taking place in the Kula Ring leads to an expansion of intersubjective spacetime. In other words, ‘the scale of the world within which people can live and gain Fame’ is enhanced and expanded through involvement in the Kula Ring, a system of ceremonial exchange taking place in Papua New Guinea, made famous by Bronislaw Malinowski (Malinowski [1922] 2014; Miller 2011, 208). Grounding his analysis thus, Miller can argue that it is not Facebook alone that possesses the power to grow and contract time; rather, it is a characteristic of culture more broadly: ‘culture exists in the human capacity to expand worlds towards distant horizons and more complex outcomes of life’ (Miller 2011, 215). In 1980s Melanesia, this capacity finds itself realised in the ‘fame’ of the Kula Ring; in twenty-first century Trinidad it occurs through friends on Facebook. This dissertation can be seen as an articulation of this argument in another ethnographic particular,

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prospective job candidates (see Davidson 2014). Instant checking is obviously reliant on mobile devices that allow internet access.

<sup>137</sup> This is not to say that a complete focus on Facebook is inappropriate for all research projects, merely that the activities of Çarşı Berlin ruled this out as a productive research strategy.

showing how diaspora Beşiktaş fans draw on different media to 'expand their worlds towards distant horizons' of Turkey and beyond (Miller 2011, 215).

This feeling of being part of a wider world is of course not a result of Facebook alone. Nevertheless, affordances of the Facebook environment, combined with its ubiquitous frequentation, means it is not overblown to assign the platform a large role in helping transform the notion of Beşiktaş transnationalism from something experienced for a few hours in a bar into a daily, transnational experience and routine. It largely does this by generating a space in which a user can feel part of a wider sphere in real-time but without any direct communication. If the messageboard resembles a type of transnational backstage, then Facebook is akin to a transnational version of the pub (Kendall 2002) or coffee bar (Habermas [1962] 1991): 'each individual posting is essentially inconsequential but the overall effect is the gift of virtual co-presence in real time – ambient intimacy' (Miller 2011, 212).

It is important to reiterate the transnational dimension of these interactions: one fan from London found out about the London group through visiting a Turkey-based messageboard. His first recourse was then to use the new-found group to attend a Beşiktaş match abroad. These cross-border movements and connections are a reminder that fans do not seek out Çarşı Berlin members simply to interact with them online. Fans use Facebook to realise the larger potential of attending a Beşiktaş match as part of a collective – 'to have a group to go with', in the words of Ali, the fan from Watford.

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The arrival of web technologies provided Beşiktaş fans with another tranche of spaces in which they can interact. I have concentrated on the two most frequented environments during fieldwork – the messageboard and Facebook – although fans frequent a multitude of other online spaces, such as blogs, other messageboards, video-sharing sites and other social networking platforms.<sup>138</sup> These spaces do not replace but augment existing Beşiktaş spaces. I invoke once again the idea of media ‘doubling’ place, except this time it is a computer or phone screen rather than a satellite TV image. Because Çarşı Berlin privilege the physical gathering of fans, internet-mediated Beşiktaş spaces are never self-sealed environments. Frequenting the messageboard or Facebook drives greater physical interaction, facilitating its occurrence. The next section moves to develop a conceptual lens appropriate to exploring this interlacing of virtual and material.

### **How do virtual and material spaces interact?**

In the previous chapter I introduced the idea of ‘doubling of place’ in the context of ‘pre-internet’ media (Satellite TV) to protect against charges of exceptionalising internet-related change. By suggesting that all media use involves an inherent doubling of place, I intended to unload the weight of revolutionary potential heaped onto internet technologies and avoid Steve Woolgar’s ‘cyberbole’ (Woolgar 2002). At this juncture I would like to extend

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<sup>138</sup> Conspicuous by their absence are Twitter, a micro-blogging service and WhatsApp, an internet-based messaging service. Whilst an important part of the ‘web 2.0’ architecture, during my fieldwork neither were actively used by fans. The growing popularity of WhatsApp during the final months of fieldwork underlines the speed with which infrastructures are adopted and discarded. The consequences of this, along with the increasing smartphone-dependent nature of Beşiktaş fan interactions, are explored in chapters 8, 9 and the overall conclusion.

this thought. I return to the idea first outlined in chapter 2 that human interaction more broadly involves a doubled perception of space, and that this doubling is best conceived as a mediation between the virtual and actual dimensions of reality.

Whilst informed by philosophy, in particular the work of Gilles Deleuze, it needs noting that this concept is not imposed a priori on my research. On the contrary, it was fans' description and interaction within Çarşı Berlin that helped to cure me of a latent bias in my exploration of media practices:

Adi: in 2008 Beşiktaş first came to Israel, the basketball team. And I had some friends that had told me about Çarşı, 'Çarşı is everywhere' [*Çarşı her yerde* – a famous slogan] and all that. And they told me. One of them from Germany–

Me: Turkish friends or?

A: yeah Turkish friends. One of them from Germany, one of them from Istanbul. And they told me like–

M: Online friend or real?

A: Online. Online. And they told me, 'do a sign or something.' I said 'OK. I will do'.<sup>139</sup>

This conversation with a member of Çarşı Berlin who lives in Israel was typical. For Çarşı Berlin, friends of all kinds are referred to simply as friends, whether on Facebook or in the flesh, whether they communicate in cafés or on a social networking site. The exchange reveals how damaging it is to impose distinctions, as opposed to letting actors themselves define and order the social. Who was I to say that an online friend isn't real?

My starting point in theorising what is going on in the exchange above requires rescuing the term 'virtual' from its strict association with a particular type of computer-mediated interaction. In common parlance, 'virtual' is used to broadly refer to something 'not physically existing as such but made by software to appear to do so' (Oxford University 2010). Over the last decade it

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<sup>139</sup> Interview with author, 29 March 2013.

has become progressively rare to see ‘virtual’ used to describe interaction with internet technologies, in both academic and common language. This tail-off is commensurate with the increasing permeability and everyday nature of internet use. Given the ordinariness of most internet technologies, many see it as anachronistic to use a term that foregrounds simulation or illusion, and hence reifies internet spaces as ‘apart from the rest of social life’ (Miller and Slater 2000, 4).<sup>140</sup> The term ‘virtual’ – along with once in-vogue terms such as ‘cyberspace’ (Hakken 1999), ‘cyber’ (Escobar 1994) or ‘posthuman’ (Hayles 1999) – has largely been supplanted by the broader-sounding ‘digital’ or ‘digital media’.<sup>141</sup>

Yet the term ‘virtual’ comes from the Latin *virtus*, meaning manliness, virtue, virility and virtuosity (Farman 2012, 37). Consequently the term ‘virtual’ need not simply be linked to notions of simulation. These additional connotations seem useful in particular for theorising the football fan experience, which was shown in chapters 4 and 5 to be a predominately male activity based around the performance of certain of these characteristics.

Even if wishing for ‘virtual’ to retain a sense of real versus unreal, this definition has an intellectual heritage that outstrips its application to computers. Jason Farman has illustrated that in the sixteenth century the term was used to refer to the metaphysical facets of Christian ideology (Farman 2012, 37). Others have posited that the virtual is an important element of the

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<sup>140</sup> The exception would be studies of online ‘virtual worlds’ (see Boellstorff 2008; Nardi 2010; Boellstorff et al. 2012).

<sup>141</sup> The Anthropology department at University College London offer a Master’s in ‘Digital Anthropology’, and many media departments advertise lectureships in ‘Digital Methods’ (See for instance the University of Leeds). A good example of this shift away from the virtual can be traced in the work of Christine Hine. Her 2000 landmark study on the methodologies of internet research was titled *Virtual Ethnography* (Hine 2000). Her most recent in 2015, by contrast, is called *Ethnography for the Internet: Embedded, Embodied and Everyday* (Hine 2015).

seventeenth century philosophy of Baruch Spinoza (Massumi 2002) or Henri Bergson's early twentieth century works (Grosz 2005). It is this broader heritage that has led some scholars to reject the virtual-as-simulation in favour of another tradition: considering the virtual in terms of potentiality. Although some trace this belief to Aristotelian arguments about the changes in state of beings, or Leibniz's concept of possible and impossible worlds, the position owes most to the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze (de Souza e Silva and Sutko 2011; Massumi 2002; Deleuze 2002; Leibniz 1934).

As already mentioned, having a vocabulary that allows discussion of both what something is but also what it is becoming, or holds the potential to become, is crucial for describing the labile nature of Çarşı Berlin (p.61). Crucially, this conception is not limited to the realm of philosophising. In colloquial English, the adverb 'virtually' represents less simulation and more a sense of essence beyond materiality. When a friend is introduced as 'virtually my sister', or a child claims to have 'virtually completed' their homework, it is not to simulation or resemblance but actualisations of potential that they refer. There is a gap between the actual (she is not a blood relation, I haven't completed my homework) and the experience (we behave to each other as if we're blood relations, it is as if I've completed my homework). Through highlighting and playing with these gaps, informants themselves are destabilising the real, pushing against its rigid boundaries and positing the idea that multiple conceptions and outcomes are possible.

To return to the Beşiktaş fan from Israel, her language evinces a broad, open conception of what constitutes a real friendship – in this example, one more broad than the ethnographer's! The fan uses the potentials of internet-

mediated communication to be in conversation with a fan in Germany and one in Istanbul. The virtual is not walled off from the actual but intrinsically part of it, one of its multiple dimensions. From virtual interactions emerge new realities: a transnational conversation, the production of a Çarşı banner and ultimately the foundation of a Çarşı Branch in Israel.

Adopting such a broad conception of what constitutes virtuality and the way that fans play with its potentials makes me better placed to focus in on the difference 'the internet' is making to this process. As will become clear, keeping an open focus protects against the supposition that the effects of internet-mediated communication are always positive. As the next section will show, the internet-mediated virtual can be both a more true and more false dimension of reality, either more cordial or more divisive.

### ***The virtual is more true***

Just as relations within Çarşı Berlin can be seen as more 'family-like' than fan's bonds with their own blood relations (chapter 4), so the virtual is often seen by fans as 'more true' than the actual. A good example is the crafting of false names on Facebook. I frequently came across fans who had altered their profile name to invoke Beşiktaş. Common alterations included changing a surname to 'eagle' (*kartal*) or making the letter 'a' in their name into a capital, mimicking the typography of the Çarşı group in Turkey, which frequently writes its name as çArşı. Once I caused a fan to roar with laughter when I mentioned another Beşiktaş fan by his doctored Facebook name, which I had taken to be his birth name (figs. 110-112).

**Figure 110. Altered Facebook name to include 'Beşiktaşk' as middle name. The word is a pun. *Aşk* in Turkish means 'love'. Like in this example, many fans add the letter 'k' to Beşiktaş to produce 'Beşiktaş love'.**

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**Figure 111. Altered Facebook surname to 'kartal' (eagle)**

*The image originally presented here cannot be made freely available via ORA because of copyright*

**Figure 112. Altered Facebook surname to 'kArtal', also replicating the typography of *çarşı* in Turkey<sup>142</sup>**

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Scholars are ready to concede greater 'malleability of self' in certain online spaces such as virtual worlds or games (Boellstorff 2008; Nardi 2010). Yet running to the other end of the spectrum and declaring 'Facebook as a productive new media inverse of [game] avatars...in which online and offline practices are seamlessly intertwined' seems a hasty generalisation (Manning

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<sup>142</sup> It is worth noting that in addition to changing their names, all three fans have altered their personal information to include Beşiktaş references. In Figure 110 the fan says he studied 'haYAT okULU' ('the school of hard knocks') at Beşiktaş J.K. (*Jimnastik Kulübü*, the full name of the team). In Figure 111 and Figure 112, the fans have altered their work information to say that they work at Beşiktaş J.K. and the *Çarşı* café respectively.

and Gershon 2013, 126). It is true that Facebook discourages the practice of generating ‘unreal’ names or profiles (see Alptraum 2015). Yet despite their best intentions, as many as sixty-seven million daily ‘users’ of the site are believed to be ‘fake’ (O’Hagan 2015). Moreover, the circle of entities involved in crafting and inventing on social networking sites goes far beyond the individual football fan: marketing bots, public relations firms, big business, politicians and government intelligence agencies have all been exposed working as ‘cyber magicians’, conjuring legends to deepen their own.<sup>143</sup>

In his ethnography of Facebook use in Trinidad, Miller notes that many of his informants saw a Facebook profile as ‘much closer to the truth of a person than what they happen to possess naturally through birth’. He continues: ‘The true person comes with her careful cultivation of *who she could be*, if circumstances were otherwise and allowed this imminent self to be manifest in the world’ (Miller 2011, 50). Although not explicitly invoking Deleuze, in arguing for the truth-bringing power of Facebook, Miller shifts weight onto the explanatory richness of the virtual/actual paradigm. ‘Truth’ is found not in delineating determinacies but by invoking and trying to realise potentials. The host of popular stories of people confecting legends about themselves on social media hints that such ontologies of virtual ‘truth-bringing’ are not limited to Trinidad – or the technology we use – but perhaps redolent of a wider shifts in conceptions of how personhood and reality are increasingly narrated. The benefits of such tactics – from virtual name-crafting to boosting friendship numbers from ghost accounts – bleed back into the actual, in the

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<sup>143</sup> The term comes from a leaked GCHQ document entitled *The Art of Deception: Training for a New Generation of Online Covert Operations*. ‘We want to build cyber magicians,’ intones the report, which describes how operatives can hack and alter a user’s Facebook account to discredit them (see O’Hagan 2015).

case of Beşiktaş fans, prompting the physical congregation of fans in a number of unlikely and innovative ways. Emre explains how he first met another fan in London:

You know how you put your alternative name on Facebook? I put 'Çarşı Londra' there for my alternative name... He must have searched something about Çarşı and I must have come up. And he was like: 'are you from London?' and I was like 'yeah' and he was like 'come along' and that's how we got in touch and first met each other.<sup>144</sup>

The alteration of a name in the online space of Facebook expands the gap between virtual and actual representations of a person.<sup>145</sup> Yet this expansion makes the prospect of a physical meet-up more, not less, likely. An important difference the internet makes, then, is increasing the potentials for 'twenty-first century happenstance' like described above. Such felicitous virtual contact is not contained within an online environment. On the contrary, it flows back into its actual counterpart, helping fans to overcome the geographical boundaries of London, to circumvent communication black holes and come together to support Beşiktaş.

### ***The virtual is more false***

The broadness of virtual potentials and the latent immanence contained within means the argument of the previous section retains the ability to be completely inversed: in certain ways fans' actual use of internet technologies denies virtual offline potentials, such as realising the geographical and linguistic diversity of the group. I give two examples to illustrate this process.

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<sup>144</sup> Interview with author, 13 January 2013.

<sup>145</sup> Nicknames are an established physical-world counterpart to this process (see vom Bruck and Bodenhorn 2006).

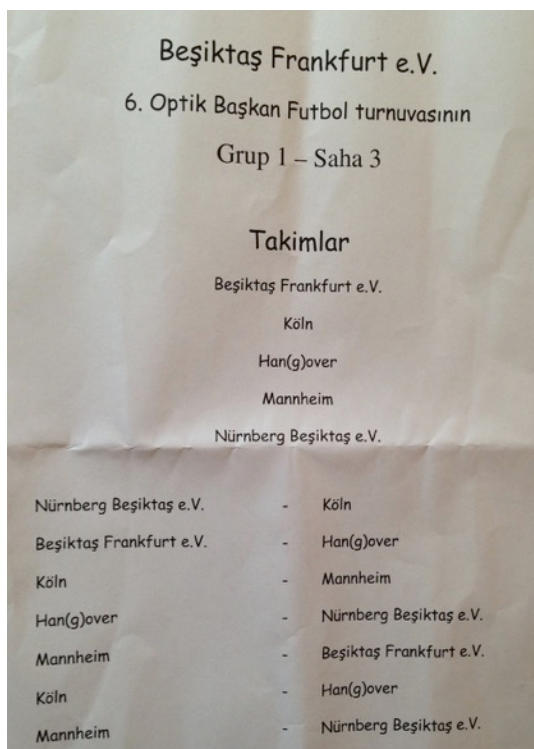
### Regions

Inside one particular subforum on the Çarşı Berlin messageboard, each of the fifteen regional branches (*bölgeler*) comprising Çarşı Berlin are allocated their own thread. The majority of distinctions are by city (Berlin, Cologne, Vienna, Darmstadt, Duisburg, Stuttgart, Mannheim, Frankfurt, Hannover, Nuremberg, London, Bremen) but a few non-German based branches are classified by country (Denmark, Holland, Switzerland). Çarşı Berlin's choice of categories for mapping out the virtual space of the forum seems a prime example of what De Nicola calls the increasing 'instances where media have become "landscaped", ordered in meaning according to some quite traditional spatial sensibilities' (DeNicola 2012, 93). Despite the transnational membership, Çarşı Berlin's website moderators decide to cast interaction in the traditional idioms of cities and countries (fig. 113).

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**Figure 113. Çarşı Berlin subforum divided according to the different regions (*bölgeler*). From the top, the threads read: 'Announcement', 'Berlin region', 'Vienna crew', 'Commando Duisburg crew', 'Holland Eagles (Çarşı Berlin)', 'Cologne gang', 'London Eagles, Eaglesgate', 'Mannheim Eagles', 'The North gang'**

This categorisation affects interaction when fans come together physically. At the 2013 version of the annual Çarşı Berlin members' football tournament, all the regions came together at a large indoor five-a-side complex in Frankfurt. In the corner of the facility there was a table manned by a Çarşı Berlin member with a laptop. He had in front of him sheets of paper with all the different groups and team names on them and a red pen, and attempted to keep track of the scores (fig. 116). A glance at the sheets revealed that teams were based on geographical region, a selection corresponding almost exactly to the online list of regions/branches.



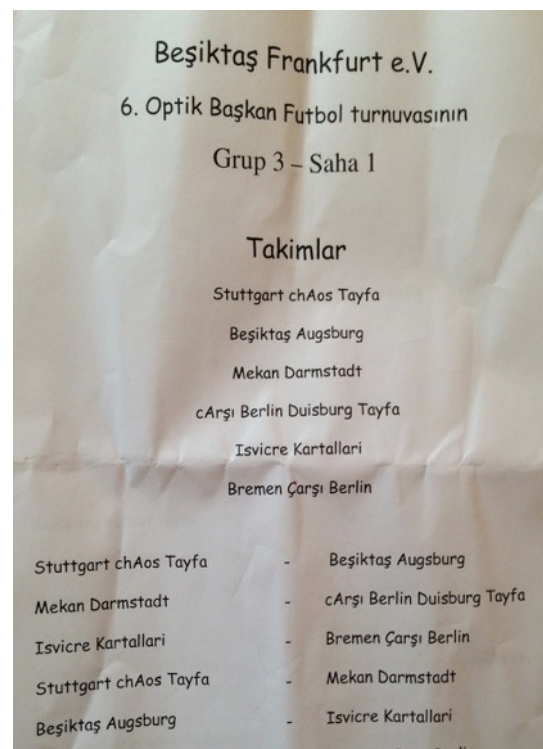
Beşiktaş Frankfurt e.V.  
6. Optik Başkan Futbol turnuvasının  
Grup 1 – Saha 3

**Takımlar**

Beşiktaş Frankfurt e.V.  
Köln  
Han(g)over  
Mannheim  
Nürnberg Beşiktaş e.V.

|                         |   |                         |
|-------------------------|---|-------------------------|
| Nürnberg Beşiktaş e.V.  | - | Köln                    |
| Beşiktaş Frankfurt e.V. | - | Han(g)over              |
| Köln                    | - | Mannheim                |
| Han(g)over              | - | Nürnberg Beşiktaş e.V.  |
| Mannheim                | - | Beşiktaş Frankfurt e.V. |
| Köln                    | - | Han(g)over              |
| Mannheim                | - | Nürnberg Beşiktaş e.V.  |

**Figure 114.** Team list for the first group (*Grup 1*) at the Optik Başkan tournament (author's photo)



Beşiktaş Frankfurt e.V.  
6. Optik Başkan Futbol turnuvasının  
Grup 3 – Saha 1

**Takımlar**

Stuttgart chAos Tayfa  
Beşiktaş Augsburg  
Mekan Darmstadt  
cArşı Berlin Duisburg Tayfa  
Isvicre Kartallari  
Bremen Çarşı Berlin

|                       |   |                             |
|-----------------------|---|-----------------------------|
| Stuttgart chAos Tayfa | - | Beşiktaş Augsburg           |
| Mekan Darmstadt       | - | cArşı Berlin Duisburg Tayfa |
| Isvicre Kartallari    | - | Bremen Çarşı Berlin         |
| Stuttgart chAos Tayfa | - | Mekan Darmstadt             |
| Beşiktaş Augsburg     | - | Isvicre Kartallari          |

**Figure 115.** Team list for the third group (*Grup 3*) at the Optik Başkan tournament (author's photo)



Figure 116. Organiser at the tournament keeping track of the scores (author's photo)



Figure 117. A game taking place at the tournament (author's photo)

The landscaped virtual world was reflected back again, into the actual composition of teams at the football tournament. Except the process was not particularly neat. As many as five of the sixteen teams listed did not turn up. Sometimes the members of a *bölge* arrived but not as a team; that is, not in the format the tournament had catered for. These 'anomalies' required the hasty re-drawing of leagues in order to try and maintain equal groups and to give everyone the same number of games. The diversity of the collective also affected the character at team level. To take the Cologne team: there were very few fans present from Cologne, so the ranks were filled with keen youngsters from the Darmstadt *bölge* (based only thirty kilometres away) who had too many for their team. In addition, a fan from Koblenz turned up halfway through and was co-opted onto the side, and a good player from the Duisburg group was pinched for one match when he was not playing with his own side. The virtual delineations of space – in the printed team sheets as much as online – belied a messy concatenation of people and places. This was captured neatly in the chopping and changing of players in the tournament but is at work whenever multiple 'branches' of Çarşı Berlin come together physically.

Language

Although it represents a multi-lingual transnational organisation, the space of the messageboard is codified as exclusively Turkish. The menus, registration process and forum topics are all displayed in Turkish. In 2008 a post on the forum by an administrator<sup>146</sup> reminds users of the site to post in Turkish. The post takes the form of a digital image of Mustafa Kemal (also known as Atatürk), the founder of the republic and the Turkish flag with the words: ‘They are making us accept that Turkish is an inadequate language! Wake up! Protect your language and your culture!’ (fig. 118).

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**Figure 118. Post by moderator, reminding users on the forum to write in Turkish. Text reads: ‘They are making us accept that Turkish is an inadequate language! Wake up! Protect your language and your culture! The Turkish people, who have managed to protect their country and their honourable freedom must liberate their language from the yoke of foreign languages. — Glorious M. Kemal’**

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<sup>146</sup> An administrator (abbreviation: ‘admin’) is a person responsible for the management of the forum space. They are usually responsible for technical maintenance of a site and the creation and enforcement of its rules. As with owners of pages on Facebook, the ‘administrator’ account can be controlled by more than one individual.

By yoking Beşiktaşness tightly to the use of Turkish, the Çarşı Berlin messageboard generates hierarchies and distinctions amongst fans. For instance, it implicitly privileges those who have moved to Europe as adults over those born in western Europe whose Turkish is normally less good. It also expands the gap between the virtual organisation of the group (exclusively in Turkish) and the actual fluidity of language, ancestry and family make-up, illustrated in chapters 4 and 5. Indeed, under the admin's post, a twenty-six-year-old fan from Germany says: 'I try as much as I can to write Turkish correctly but of course when you are born and brought up in Europe (Germany) people still find it a little difficult'. In his post, he spells a few words incorrectly. This prompts an older fan to post below, correcting him in a friendly fashion: 'My dear: Not "yasma" but "yazma" it's not "gine" but "yine"' (fig. 119). Later on in the thread, an older fan posts: 'I've seen some Turkish teens on the street, one of them is a supporter of Beşiktaş, and he asked me, "*Wie gehts, abi*<sup>147</sup>?' I was immediately offended by this. Oh, where is this world heading to?!' In these comments, it is possible to glimpse how the oft-celebrated hybridity or *bricolage* of diaspora identities is discouraged (Hannerz 2010). Virtual space is being used to impose cultural norms that are not required in other spaces.

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<sup>147</sup> The German for 'what's up?' followed by the Turkish for 'big bro'.

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**Figure 119.** A German-born fan writes a post in poor, incorrectly spelt Turkish and is gently rebuked by another

Not all virtual spaces are so reified. In Beşiktaş spaces on Facebook, for instance, London-born Beşiktaş fans readily interweave their ‘Londonness’ and their fandom, posing for pictures in front of Tower Bridge and using English heavily. A post about a fan’s new personalised Beşiktaş iPhone case institutes a written comment that is a mixture of English and Turkish: ‘*Bi de gerçekte* [sic] *görsen* it’s even better’ (If you see it in the flesh it’s even better). The potentials of virtual spaces can be used to rewrite conditions of representation, in this case through the playful recombination of snippets of Turkish and English.

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**Figure 120. London-born Beşiktaş fans use a mix of Turkish and English in Facebook posts: 'beklediğimden güzel çıkmış bro' (it turned out better than I expected bro), 'bide gerçekte görsen it's even better, I'll show you when we buck up' (and when you see it in the flesh, it's even better, I'll show you when we buck [meet] up)**

### ***The virtual is more cordial***

Sometimes fans' use of internet technologies fosters a closer sense of attachment amongst members of Çarşı Berlin than actually exists. A good example can be found in the way that Facebook has expanded the conception of friendship. The Facebook platform labels every connection one user has as a 'friendship'. There is no hierarchy in this process – your best friend, your mother and someone you have never even spoken to in person are all considered 'friends'. This can lead to a sense of inclusion and equality, as there is no way of telling on the platform who is a friend to someone else and who is a simply an acquaintance or even a stranger. In Turkish there is a habit for people

to address a group of strangers as ‘friends’ (*arkadaşlar*), a linguistic trope closely related to the use of titles such as big brother (see chapter 4). Such practices act as a reminder that virtual attempts to broaden notions of friendship are not restricted to the internet.

Facebook also increases a sense of amity by making users more frequently aware of how they are linked to others. In chapter 4 I explained how photographs are used to generate a sense of extended Beşiktaş family. Here I expand the thought by suggesting that the advent of internet technologies has allowed this sense to be broadened to a transnational European level. When a fan uploads an image on Facebook they are launching it into a world of relationality: alongside the visual data, the image requires descriptive tags, often including a caption, and will usually be displayed both on the fan’s profile and in their friends’ news feed. Drawing on Marilyn Strathern, Deidre McKay suggest this process reveals your profile (and hence ‘you’ in Facebook) to be not an individual construction but an assemblage of their relationships: ‘It follows that the digital images provided by friends on the ‘friends list’ are akin to the partible-person parts of Melanesian dividuals’ (McKay 2010, 486).

McKay does not pick up the notion of speed, but I feel it is crucial. It is the potential of the digital image to animate relationality in real time that provides a sea change with the analogue. Instant notifications when others post a comment or ‘like’ the image remind the user of the aliveness of the relationships. Such aliveness allows a mutuality of being to be visualised among members of Çarşı Berlin who are Facebook ‘friends’, even if they never directly contact each other. The ‘token presence of the dispersed relatives’ that Sontag sees in the photograph album (Sontag 2008, 9) has been replaced by the stream

of news and photos on Facebook. 'Individuals will commonly observe the postings of this wider sphere...this seems to convince them that they once again know these people' (Miller 2011, 182).

A good example of this process occurred on 21<sup>st</sup> April 2014. Beşiktaş were playing Fenerbahçe. Before the game, the Çarşı Berlin page on Facebook uploaded in quick succession images of the individual *bölgeler* watching the game, along with a picture of the few fans who travelled to Turkey for the occasion (figs. 121-124). The tactic generated what Anderson terms the 'temporal coincidence' necessary for dispersed groupings to imagine they belong together (Benedict Anderson [1983] 2006, 24). Many of the fans do not know the members of other *bölgeler*, but by being tagged in a photo, they are being told that they belong, that they should be perceiving and describing their relationships with other Çarşı Berlin members as 'friends' or, as Figure 124 stresses, 'brothers'.

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**Figure 121.** Photo uploaded to Facebook by Çarşı Berlin. Text reads: 'Berlin crew in the square before the derby match', 21 April 2014

**Figure 122.** 'Barikat Nuremberg crew before the Fenerbahçe derby match'

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*The image originally presented here cannot be made freely available via ORA because of copyright*

**Figure 123. 'Mannheim eagles watching the Fenerbahçe match in their space (*mekan*)'**

**Figure 124. 'Çarşı Berlin's *abis* [big bros] at the Forza Cafe in the neighbourhood [of Beşiktaş]'**

### ***The virtual is more divisive***

Despite these bonding elements, the virtual also holds the potential to be more fractious and polarising than a physical situation. In September 2012, a group of approximately fifty Beşiktaş fans from Nuremberg in Germany formed a Nuremberg Beşiktaş fan club (*Nürnberg Beşiktaşlılar Derneği*). By spring 2013, there had been a falling out and fifteen or so members of the collective left to set up their own rival group, called *Nürnberg Barikat* (Nuremberg Barricade). This split required a reshaping of many landscapes, the first of which was the location where fans would watch games. My contacts were part of the group that split away under the *Barikat* name. In April 2013, unaware of the split, I stopped in Nuremberg on an unscheduled visit. Instead of going to the old clubhouse, I was taken to a bar owned by a Turkish speaker in his late fifties to watch that evening's Beşiktaş match. On the way, we stop at a fan's house in order for him to get the banner of the new group.

The banner consisted of black and red spray-paint on a cotton sheet and read *Barikat* (Barricade). The two letter 'A's were stylised as the anarchist A, referencing again the main Çarşı fan group in Turkey. I was told how the banner was itself interwoven in the dispute. 'We stole it from the *dernek*!' says one fan. 'Who stole it?!' retorts another, objecting to the use of the word 'steal'. 'That's what they're saying about us!' responds the first. Those in the *Barikat* group felt it was their property. At half time in the match, one of the group marshalled everyone outside to be photographed alongside the banner. The photo was uploaded to Facebook. Within minutes, fans were posting comments underneath the image, mostly in the form of light-hearted banter. The comments slowed down after a few hours and stopped altogether by midnight, a reminder of the ephemeral nature of most social network interactions (see chapter 8). But three days later the photo exploded back to life. Mehmet, a member of the original Nurnberg group posted an angry comment under the photo, referring to the split and lambasting one fan in the photograph for his perceived duplicity. He in turn was attacked by a series of others.



**Figure 125. Photograph of Nuremberg Barikat group with the banner they were accused of stealing from the rival group (author's photo)**

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**Figure 126. The picture as posted on Facebook, with the dispute it provoked in comments on the right-hand side**

I would like to dwell on the form that the critical comments took. Mehmet, who posted the first angry comment, is attacked not for his opinion but for choosing the wrong medium for airing it. One commenter listed a hierarchy of mediums available to him ('If you believe what you said act like a man – we will meet and speak face to face. You know our phone numbers, our addresses!'<sup>148</sup>). He was suggesting that posting on Facebook was inferior or inappropriate to these other options. Masculinity was pulled in, as speaking face to face was cast as 'acting like a man' and contrasted with 'pissy' commenting on Facebook.<sup>149</sup> Here, the expanded notion of virtuality was again at work. Manliness – 'virtue' – was being intertwined with the 'virtual' media selection; men display their virtue by selecting the appropriate medium for an interaction.

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<sup>148</sup> 'Bi derdin varsa adam gibi çıkacaksın karşımıza konuşacaksın telefon numaramız adresimiz belli!'

<sup>149</sup> 'Adamın kafasını bozma varsa problemin ya sen buraya gel... Face'de sallamaya olmuyor'.

One further 'difference' that the internet makes is that it allows fans to be haunted by disagreements and arguments. A dispute that emerged in the flesh has transformed and transposed. It has multiplied from its origins, becoming mediated in activities such as banner pinching, and manifested in new places such as a catty exchange of comments on Facebook. Arriving home from watching a match does not provide any respite in the way that it might from a physical fight – the comments keep coming. Furthermore, unlike when fans square up in a bar or in the street, there is no one grabbing their shoulders and pulling them back.

A further change brought by the internet is a multiplication of the requirements that accompany the occupation of Beşiktaş spaces. Rather than supplant or attenuate existing rules, the growth in virtual football space simply elongates the chains of requirement that need to be fulfilled to be considered a 'proper' fan. Not only are Çarşı Berlin members expected to be physically there at games but also virtually present in interactions on Facebook. It should come as no surprise, therefore, that miscues like the one above are increasing in frequency.

## **Conclusion**

Whilst it is clear that Beşiktaş fandom is not reliant on the affordances of the internet, Çarşı Berlin undoubtedly is. I have shown how the organisation depends upon the potentials of online environments in order to emerge. The materials of these environments – electronic lists in online messageboards, real-time postings of photos on Facebook – allow new kinds of social relations

to form and develop. Without such practices, the frequency and strength of affect required to sustain the notion of an active transnational organisation would be impossible.

A tension lies at the heart of this state of affairs. Çarşı Berlin relies on the internet in order to exist, yet the group sees its foremost purpose as coming together physically to support the team. The mediation of the gap between virtual and actual is of paramount concern yet, for precisely this reason, provokes the most contention. For a small group of close-knit fans it can be hard to find consensus on what a fan club should 'be' or what activities it should undertake. Try to fashion an effective (and affect-laden) sodality out of a diverse, dispersed, multi-national, multi-linguistic group of diasporans and it becomes even more fraught. As shown, some relish the opportunities and potentials the entire process presents. They slip through the interstices of physical and virtual: they change their name, combine and recombine languages and roam across environments. Others stand dismayed and scared, all too aware of the labile terrain on which the group stands: change the colour scheme, or impose strict rules on language and they might never come back.

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Chapters 4 and 5 explored why and how the fan is seeking involvement in Çarşı Berlin. Chapters 6 and 7 have added to the endeavour by exploring the technologies that made Çarşı Berlin possible. First satellite television and then the internet substantially altered notions of space for Turkish speakers living in western Europe, allowing them to forge new imaginations of belonging. Until

this chapter I spent considerable energy ensuring the thesis was not dominated by discussions of the internet. This was important background work to sensitively situate the effects of internet technologies and set out the online spaces created by fans. Having established this, I will turn next to investigating the impact of internet technologies on the wider world of fans' lives.

## Chapter 8

### The parochial global

The previous two chapters were concerned with introducing the range of physical spaces and online places where Çarşı Berlin members come together and enact fandom. Throughout, the focus was on Çarşı Berlin themselves, their practices, beliefs and associations with one another. Yet as well as being part of their own transnational group, many in Çarşı Berlin want to tap into wider currents of culture. In turn, these currents influence and impact upon them. This chapter expands the dissertation's focus by investigating the wider actors and influences that are at work in the process of generating a transnational football collective.

At the heart of this theme lies a paradox that I encountered doing fieldwork: while the culture of European Beşiktaş fans is global in reach, their communications are frequently limited to a small audience. Many of the tools and devices used to construct Beşiktaş fandom derive from an internationalised, pan-European footballing culture. Yet fans would often deploy them not to take part in a cosmopolitan conversation, but to build or reinforce an image of authenticity among a small group of local fans. The chapter begins to explore this apparent contradiction by sifting through the extensive anthropological debate on globalisation, exploring how various concepts – from ‘assemblages’ to ‘publics’ and ‘infrastructures’ – have been

used by scholars to address the global/local paradox in different guises. Cross-pollinating this conversation with scholarship on digital media, I settle on describing things responsible for the shifts of scale I encountered among fans as 'parochial global' cultural forms. The organisation of Çarşı Berlin should be seen as emerging from mediations with such forms, the debates they prompt and the circulations they compel.

The bulk of the chapter is focused on illustrating this process ethnographically by investigating one particular form adopted by fans within Çarşı Berlin, that of the 'ultra'. The ultra is an inflection of football fandom based around notions of strict organisation, fanaticism, politics and often violence. I trace the 'life-cycle' (Gell 1998) of three specific items associated with ultra culture – a flare, a sticker and an acronym. Following these forms as they circulate and transform reveals how internet technologies have increased the possibilities for actors to generate the parochial global themselves. Çarşı Berlin members are active participants in making culture – altering, adapting and circulating it in publics of all different scales. However the skills needed to make an incursion and the limits on interaction mean this process is often constrained. More importantly, fans do not always want to interact on a truly global level, preferring instead to borrow global themes in order to play at being ultras in their own local collectives. I suggest that Çarşı Berlin is best conceptualised not as one large public but many publics, forming peripatetically and ephemerally around assemblages of objects, people and conversations.<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> For a complementary approach to circulation in a different ethnographic setting see Larkin (2013a).

I conclude by suggesting, perhaps contrary to expectations, that Çarşı Berlin's awareness of the complexity of global cultural interaction generates less despair or angst and more a 'provocation to play' (Lash and Lury 2007b, 152). Fans experiment with creating both the parochial and global connection, dwelling in neither for very long. Their interactions are frequently transient and ephemeral. Supporters test the water, have a bit of fun and then forget about it. The importance of 'transient play' paves the way for the subject of the next chapter, where I investigate the impact of Çarşı Berlin membership on more enduring aspects of daily life, such as family and work.

### ***A preface: mobile phones***

Before commencing it is necessary to speak briefly of the smartphone, for it is this device more than any other that has affected how Çarşı Berlin members interact with global trends. It is estimated that two billion people globally use smartphones –mobile devices with an internet connection and a touchscreen (or equivalent) as an interface.<sup>151</sup> When starting fieldwork I realised that every fan in Çarşı Berlin had one of these devices, and that they served as the primary tool for capturing and sharing material. Before Beşiktaş games, mobile phones are held aloft, waved in a panorama or attached to the end of sticks designed to record self-portraits. During matches, mobile phones are used to record proceedings – whether an amusing or dramatic chant on the terraces or action on the pitch, such as a penalty. Smartphones continue to be important even far away from the terraces. Fans use them to keep track of events at away matches

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<sup>151</sup> 'The Truly Personal Computer' in *The Economist*, 28 February 2015, <http://www.economist.com/news/briefing/21645131-smartphone-defining-technology-age-truly-personal-computer> (accessed 2 September 2015).

they cannot attend, to fill in time when bored, and keep up to date with the news of what is going on in the fan club or at Beşiktaş (figs. 127-132).

Academic study of mobile phones has been desperately trying to keep up with the pace of change. Scholars had barely begun to analyse, understand and situate the emergence of mobile phones in the late 1990s and early 2000s when, at the end of that decade, the 'smartphone' emerged (Ling 2004; H. Horst and Miller 2006; Ito, Matsuda, and Okabe 2005). Its different affordances have led to the device being used in dissimilar ways to its predecessor, posing a further set of research questions that are only just beginning to be explored (Farman 2012; Goldsmith 2014).<sup>152</sup> One way in which this thesis makes an original contribution to this field is to offer up detailed ethnographic examples of the smartphone's impact in a transnational, sporting context, broadening the scope for comparative analysis. The bulk of my scholarly engagement with smartphones takes place in chapter 9, as part of my investigation of the impact of Çarşı Berlin membership on wider, non-footballing life. I introduce the subject at this juncture to provide context to the discussion that follows, for smartphones are intimately bound up in the recording, dissemination and circulation of the cultural forms that will be discussed below.

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<sup>152</sup> Perhaps foremost amongst research topics is the question of 'locative media', media devices which are capable of being located in physical space and subsequently provide the user with information about their environment (see de Souza e Silva and Sheller 2014; Goggin and Wilken 2014; Frith 2015).



Figure 127. Çarşı Londra member deploying his selfie-stick<sup>153</sup>, London, England (author's photo)



Figure 128. Member filming the march to the ground with a selfie-stick, Arsenal v Beşiktaş, 27 August 2014 (author's photo)



Figure 129. Beşiktaş crowd filming a penalty, Tottenham Hotspur v Beşiktaş, 1 October 2014 (author's photo)



Figure 130. Beşiktaş fan filming the subsequent celebration (author's photo)



Figure 131. Fans filming on phones, Bamberg, Germany, October 2012 (author's photo)



Figure 132. Fans on their mobile phones in a hotel room, Tel Aviv, Israel, March 2013 (author's photo)

<sup>153</sup> A selfie stick is a retractable length of tubing with a clamp for a mobile phone. It is a response to the rise of the selfie photograph – a self-portrait ordinarily taken at arms length. For more on the selfie stick and selfies, see Rettberg (2014); Stallabrass (2014).

## Theories of globalisation

How best to theorise Çarşı Berlin's engagement with global cultures and trends? Any explanation needs to account for the organisation's transnational character and its manifestation in different local contexts. It must explore the imaginaries instantiated in Çarşı Berlin as well as the material objects through which those imaginaries are enacted; how those objects are momentarily appropriated and held still, as well as the circulations by which they move. A way to keep all of this in mind, I argue, is to think about Çarşı Berlin less as a single community and more as varying publics that form and reform around certain 'parochial global' cultural forms. In this section I will explain this theory in more detail.

The idea of a 'parochial global' is based in part on the concept of assemblages, an analytical framework that balances the notions of emergence and heterogeneity with order and structure (G. E. Marcus and Saka 2006). One of its foremost proponents is Manuel Delanda, who spins Deleuze and Guattari's brief treatment of assemblages into a systematic philosophy based around tracing the actualisation of virtual causes (DeLanda 2006). George Marcus and Erkan Saka summarise his position: 'Assemblage is a topological concept that designates the actualizations of the virtual causes or causal processes that are immanent in an open system of intensities that is under the influence of a force that is external (or heterogeneous) in relation to it' (G. E. Marcus and Saka 2006, 103). The concept hence builds on the theorisation of the previous chapter, allowing us to expand the virtual/actual dialectic into wider frames of movement.

For DeLanda, the very ontological composition of an assemblage – ‘wholes whose properties emerge from the interactions between parts’ – renders it able to account for ‘the complexity of that forgotten territory between the micro and the macro’ (DeLanda 2006, 5). Anthropologists have built on the ontological foundations laid out by DeLanda, using the concept of ‘assemblage’ to structure ethnographic-driven works on topics as diverse as science studies (Rabinow 2003), the emotional qualities of everyday life (K. Stewart 2007) and globalisation (Collier and Ong 2005). The concept seems particularly suited to the study of globalisation, a topic that frequently requires the ability to address both the structural and the fluid, often dubbed the ‘global’ and the ‘local’.

Yet whilst retaining an efficacy to bundle disparate elements into a loose matrix, on its own the language of assemblage theory can unwittingly remove agency from the actors as emphasis falls on describing the forces and materials of the flows rather than on the individuals and collectives doing the gathering and assembling. Echoing Latour, my interest is ‘to see how the assemblages thus gathered can renew...[a] sense of being in the same collective’ (Latour 2005, 249). The best way of doing this, I argue, is to see assemblages as the blocks around which publics coalesce.

The idea of a ‘public’ comes from the notion of public spheres, social arenas where people can mix and discuss issues (Habermas [1962] 1991; Arendt 1999; Calhoun 1992). The most influential of recent conceptualisations of the ‘public sphere’ or ‘public’ eschew monolithic claims or associations with physical space, preferring instead to view them as social imaginaries (C. Taylor

2004; Michael Warner 2002). We return to the concept of imaginaries, then, but via a route that emphasises ideas of 'private' and 'public'.

Christopher Kelty suggests that the internet has allowed for the formation of a new type of public, best thought of as 'recursive' (C. Kelty 2005; C. Kelty 2008). A recursive public possesses the characteristics of 'classic' publics, but with two distinctive elements. Firstly, there is an added reflexivity as to the materials that afford its construction. Secondly, the interactions within the public are layered, 'the meaning of which layers are important develops more or less immediately from direct engagement with the medium' (C. Kelty 2008, 50). In Kelty's sensitivity to balancing imaginative and technological practices (or what he refers to as 'operating systems and social systems' (C. Kelty 2008, 38)) he presages the emergence post-2010 of an incipient 'anthropology of infrastructure' (Larkin 2013b). Work that has emerged under this rubric does not concentrate simply on the technical functions of infrastructures but instead argues for the importance of their 'poetics', or what has been labelled elsewhere as their 'enchantment' (Harvey and Knox 2012).

Writing in 2013, Brian Larkin argued that, whilst roads, film and metro systems have been productively rethought through the lens of infrastructure, a suitable ethnographic and theoretical framework for internet infrastructures 'has yet to be devised in anthropology' (Larkin 2013b, 339). Kelty's 'recursive publics', I suggest, fills the hole to which Larkin refers. Kelty places equal attention on the infrastructure and the public linked therein. He hence preserves the unusual ontology of infrastructure ('things and also the relation between things' (Larkin 2013b, 329) but also includes an idea of social imaginaries that allows the poetic, affective, moral dimensions to be stressed.

Kelty seems to be suggesting that the intellectual ethic of internet technologies is for an 'always on' notion of publicness: users 'recurse' through layers of infrastructure, 'maintaining its publicness at each level without making it into an unchanging static, unmodifiable thing' (C. Kelty 2008, 62). When it comes to communities like Çarşı Berlin that are frequently reliant on internet infrastructures, it is necessary to modify – or possibly drop altogether – classic notions of public and private.

### ***The parochial global***

To speak of the parochial global is to invoke many of the concepts outlined above – the balancing of emergence and structure, a sense of ephemeral gathering in publics, and an appreciation of the affective dimensions of the infrastructure that make such gathering possible. Parochial Global cultural forms are capable of being plucked out of the global stream and held momentarily in the orbit of Çarşı Berlin, where they both adapt fans and are adapted by them. Examples include internet memes, images, songs, drug culture – anything that has been altered, copied, experimented with or collected as it moves internationally. With a transnational football collective these items are typically football themed, as I will show in the next section.

Internet technologies have increased the ways in which actors can generate the parochial global themselves. Çarşı Berlin are active participants in making culture and altering, adapting and circulating it in publics of all different scales. Here is where I diverge from Kelty who, perhaps because of his focus on users with higher-than-average technical knowledge, is overly positive about

the latitude that users have to tinker, change and shape the public to their will (C. Kelty 2008, 61–62). Whilst Çarşı Berlin do ‘recurse’ through the parochial and the global, I show shortly how this recursion is constrained and frequently unsuccessful.

Interaction with parochial global forms should be characterised ultimately by a sense of ‘partial connection’ (Strathern 2004). Concepts of publics and infrastructures can unwittingly suggest permanency, a sense of containment within a totality of the sphere. The parochial global form, by contrast, should be seen as akin in nature to a computer ‘plug in’, a circulating assemblage of cliché and competency that offers the promise of subjectification for as long as the participant can subscribe to it (Latour 2005, 207). This engagement is never intended to be complete and eternal. Indeed, because it provides both ‘the relativizing effect of multiple perspectives’ and ‘the recurrence of similar... bits of information’ (Strathern 2004, xx) actors are fully aware of its ephemerality. It is this sense of fleetingness that means Çarşı Berlin members’ engagement with the parochial global is characterised foremost by a sense of pleasure and play.

Having outlined the concepts I will use, I can now progress to show ethnographically the way that Çarşı Berlin, itself a hyper-connected transnational group, adopts other transnational and globalised cultures and trends. To illustrate this, I will concentrate on one particular parochial global cultural form: the ultra. In keeping with my overarching research strategy of ‘following’, I track the progression of three essential items associated with this culture: a flare, a sticker and an acronym. By doing this, I will illuminate the

ways that Çarşı Berlin members are influenced by others and influence them in turn. That is, how they participate in the parochial global.

### The ultra

The term 'ultra' emerges from post-war Italian football (Podaliri and Balestri 1998, 88). Coined in the 1970s, it was adopted by groups of Italian fans that wanted to establish an entirely new form of fan organisation. The ultra is male, politically engaged, predisposed to displays of fanaticism for his team and part of a tight-knit, organised group of like-minded ultras. For many the term is synonymous with 'hooligan', the epithet coined to describe a similar demographic in Britain.<sup>154</sup>

The Italian groups that first used the term were driven in part by a desire to replicate elements of the English hooligan culture (Podaliri and Balestri 1998, 89–90). An unadulterated ultra culture is thus a fiction – the concept is entangled in the recursive global flow of influence and replication across footballing cultures long before the recent turn towards 'globalisation'. The journey of the ultra concept from Italy to Turkey is hard to discern. In Turkey the term was not in common use until the foundation in 2001 of *ultrAslan* (ultra Lions),<sup>155</sup> a Galatasaray supporters group. Behaviour associated with the ultra, such as choreographed displays of banners, flag-waving and flare use, has for decades been a staple at matches but is more commonly referred to

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<sup>154</sup> Whilst there is overlap in notions of 'ultras' and 'hooligans' (for instance, the spectre of violence is never far away from either grouping) the word 'hooligan' emerges from nineteenth century court reports on petty criminals, louts and street gangs ([www.oed.com](http://www.oed.com), accessed 11 September 2014). Possessing a political edge is thus associated with ultras, not hooligans (Testa and Armstrong 2010, 3; Foot 2007, 335).

<sup>155</sup> The lion is the symbol of Galatasaray.

as a 'fan show' (*tarafdar şov*). The desire by many outside Turkey to fold Turkish fans into an international schema has led to the increased adoption of the term.<sup>156</sup> Whilst 'ultra' is now an established part of the lexicon, most Turkish speakers prefer *fanatik* ('fanatical'), *sağlam* ('solid') or *deli* ('crazy') to describe hardcore fans.

Internationally, the last decade has seen the emergence of a host of web sites, clothing ranges, and books that invoke ultras in one context or another. Websites include the Polish ultra fashion shop sklepTMK, the German web forum [www.ultras.ws](http://www.ultras.ws), and the Turkish website *Tribun Dergi* (Terrace Magazine, [www.tribundergi.com](http://www.tribundergi.com)). English-language films such as *Green Street Hooligans* pick up the theme (Alexander 2005), while books either analyse ultras from outside (Burford 2001; Parks 2003; Vos 2011) or are written by ex-ultras who describe their exploits (Brimson 2002; D. Jones and Rivers 2002). A result of this opening out of the concept is that it has lost the explicit political edge the word 'ultra' first conveyed. Indeed, so broad and indiscriminate is the usage of the term in contemporary football fan conversation that it is impossible to pinpoint one single source of inspiration. The term thus comes to Çarşı Berlin members shorn of precise meaning and ripe for creative interpretation. It reaches them via a host of routes, both online and in the flesh – be it from reading Turkish websites or chatting with German friends – with the result that the concept forms part of a 'culture of circulation' (Lee and LiPuma 2002). To understand how that circulation works, I consider three items in turn and consider their life cycles

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<sup>156</sup> See for instance *die Rolle der Beşiktaş-Ultras bei den Protesten von Istanbul* [the role of the Beşiktaş Ultras in the Protests in Istanbul], <http://www.11freunde.de/node/275878> (accessed 15 June 2014).

## The flare

The flare (*meşale* in Turkish) is an archetypal ultras object. Setting off flares from a packed terrace is an established practice for those who consider themselves ultras, perhaps due to the ostentatiousness and illegality of the act (all football stadiums ban the use of flares). Football crowds in Turkey regularly feature flares, as do many terrace cultures across Europe (Foot 2007, 337). Given the handful of Beşiktaş games in Europe each season, opportunities for Europe-based fans to deploy flares are few and far between. As a result, occasions for their use are manufactured far away from the football stadium. During my fieldwork, a Beşiktaş handball match in East Germany, an annual football tournament organised by Çarşı Berlin and a normal Saturday evening down the local bar were all turned into opportunities to use flares (figs. 133-134).



Figure 133. Beşiktaş fans using flares before a handball match, Magdeburg, Germany, 9 February 2013 (author's photo)



Figure 134. Flares set off at the annual Çarşı Berlin football tournament, Frankfurt, Germany, 25 May 2013 (author's photo)

I will focus on the final example. It is April 2013 and the Duisburg *tayfa* (gang), the Çarşı Berlin regional-group based in that German city, are planning to do a flare show (*meşale şov*) after a televised Beşiktaş game outside the café where they watch the matches. The cafe itself is located on a drab pedestrian arcade on the outskirts of the city centre of Duisburg. It shares the street with a betting shop, a casino, a newsagent, a hookah bar and a few takeaway places serving soggy pizza (figs. 135-136). Passers-by are few and far between, and so from the outset the show is being conceived for an audience who will not be physically present. Great importance is attached to the filming of proceedings, so much so that at half time the entire collective pours onto the street for a fifteen-minute planning session before the game resumes. As soon as the match ends, the group rushes out onto the street. There is a further five minutes of organisation and lots of shouting. Then comes a messy countdown that is only partially obeyed before fans begin setting the flares alight. Red flames spurt into the evening air, clouds of smoke billow, and there is a prickling excitement amongst the dozen participants as the street is transformed into a sea of red.



Figure 135. The Çarşı cafe in Duisburg (author's photo)



Figure 136. Beşiktaş fans planning a flare show in front of the Çarşı cafe, April 2013 (author's photo)

Amidst the smoke I see ten flares held aloft. Fans jump around chanting 'La la la la la... oooh Beşiktaş!' (fig. 137). The chanting is continually interrupted by the explosion of loud bangers. Amid the noise, one fan retreats up the road towards where I am standing, throws his flare away and puts his fingers in his ears. Another fan is flitting between members, recording proceedings on his mobile phone. The first lot of flares goes out and a new round is lit. By this point the show has already gone on for over three minutes. A guy in front of the café next door shouts '*allo?!'* (hello?!') but no one listens. A banger goes off. He tries again: '*Yeter, ayıp be!*' (Come on guys – shame on you!). A few more bangers go off and the cycle of songs returns to the original chant. It is unclear whether or not they can hear the perturbed onlooker, but either way his warnings go unheeded.

Around twenty people are physically present to observe the show: the shopkeepers and clientele of the surrounding establishments, a few other Beşiktaş fans who have been watching the game, and a handful of passers-by who were sufficiently curious that they paused to take in the display. One of these passers-by takes out a camera and starts taking pictures.



Figure 137. Image of the flare show (author's photo)

### ***Photography***

The photographing of the event represents the item's first translation – from a thing to a 'media-thing' (Lash and Lury 2007b, 9).<sup>157</sup> As Martin Hand has noted, in the western world photography at such events has become 'ubiquitous'. For Hand, there has been an explosion in the last decade of visual content, as 'communications and social relations are increasingly mediated through or accompanied by digital images' (Hand 2012, 1). As many scholars have independently argued, mediation as a process is not something that emerged with digital media (Boellstorff 2008; Mazzarella 2004; Miller and Sinanan 2012). Yet under that rubric, I believe, like Hand, that there has been unprecedented growth in the importance of visual mediation. Even in non-football settings, fans still take and share pictures – of their breakfast, of someone goofing around, of any passers-by who particularly amuse them – reinforcing the quotidian nature of the practice.<sup>158</sup>

One way of contemplating this preponderance of visual sharing is through Miller and Sinanan's idea of a 'theory of attainment'. The authors deliberately use the word 'attain' to wrest agency away from the object itself and instead suggest that the use of a technology – in this case, photography – is best understood as 'the achievement of something that was previously frustrated'. This view is predicated on the notion of humanity as an ongoing process containing latent potentials that the advent of certain technologies can 'realise' (Miller and Sinanan 2012, 4). In this vein, it is possible to argue that in many situations, individuals prefer to use pictures rather than words to express

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<sup>157</sup> For another good example of the study of image circulation see Spyer and Steedly (2013).

<sup>158</sup> For a more quantitative, data-driven take on the increasing visualisation of popular culture see Beer (2013a).

their thoughts and communicate with others. This has sometimes been the case at other points in history, as Karen Strassler shows in her historic-ethnography of twentieth century photography in Indonesia (Strassler 2010). The contemporary elements, those that have not existed previously, coalesce around a few factors.

The first is the emergence of digital camera devices, which – aside from the initial purchase price – have largely removed cost and portability as constraints on taking a picture. The second change is in ease of dissemination. The advent of digital image files, combined with the rise of mobile phone data networks, smartphones and social networking sites removes many of the remaining barriers towards sharing photos. For Strassler's subjects in early twentieth century Java, to share a picture of their supper with a friend abroad would involve a host of obstacles – of film costs, processing times, envelopes, stamps and postal delivery schedules. The idea of going to such lengths to share an image of a plate of food sounds absurd. The ease of doing it with modern communications technology has opened a new avenue of exchange – or perhaps tapped into an existing impulse that was hitherto too difficult to indulge. For Çarşı Berlin members barriers do, of course, remain. I will spend time below considering the obstacles. Yet for many, the desire to communicate and share images can be accomplished simply by picking up a phone, taking aim and executing a few movements of the finger.

### ***Authenticity***

Hand notes that this increasing visualisation of communication has an important knock-on effect for how 'authenticity is understood and practiced' (Hand 2012, 22). This is a very important consideration, although I would suggest adding to authenticity notions of obligation, originality and authorship, given that all of them are increasingly mediated through the domain of the visual. Returning to the flare show, the entire act can, on one level, be seen as a ploy to establish the authenticity of this group of Beşiktaş fans as ultras.

In this instance another social form is interacting with the ultra, that of a mini-film. The Duisburg fans are not trying to broaden notions of how ultras are represented, but simply recreating the formulaic genre of fans waving flares and chanting. A deep awareness of future audience shapes the event throughout, and great care and attention gone into ensuring it is properly executed. Filming angles are extensively planned, a basic narrative is established (where to start, what to do, where to finish) and film terminology is used to coordinate its filming, such as shouting 'cut!' (*kes!*) when it is done. The conservatism of the set-up succeeds in yoking the Duisburg *tayfa* to what Appadurai and Breckenridge call the 'disturbing... sameness' of cosmopolitan cultural forms (Appadurai and Breckenridge 1988, 5). The film enacts enough clichés to ensure most viewers would recognise the Duisburg group as ultras.

Yet the primary public that the group members are trying to convince of their authenticity is not physically present. An underlying motive, then, is to visually communicate authenticity across time and space. There is nothing new in this desire. Benedict Anderson notes the historic role of newspapers and maps in the process of authenticating the nation state (Benedict Anderson

[1983] 2006). The differing technological and social set-up, however, should make us pause to consider the particular tactics used in this instance to convey authenticity. To do this, I 'follow' the thing (G. Marcus 1995), paying close attention to the infrastructures through which it moves and the publics it generates.

### ***Circulation***

Once the flare show and its filming is finished, those who took part go their separate ways. A couple of fans slink off into the metro stop at one end of the street, the rest start walking in the opposite direction. I leave for the train station with Cengiz, my interlocutor who, like me, needs to get back to Cologne this evening. The instant dispersal surprises me. After other comparable displays of fandom those present would usually immediately gather around to watch the resulting film on a phone. Cengiz, though, tells me that people are worried the police might come and so are keen to not be caught at the scene.

Less than thirty minutes later, we are in a fast-food sandwich shop, grabbing some dinner whilst waiting for our train. I hear an 'Ah!' and lift my head to see Cengiz showing me a video on Facebook. It is of the flare display and is three minutes long (fig. 138). I ask who took it and Cengiz replies that it was him. It must be him that I saw during the show, running around recording the event with their phone. He talks me through proceedings. 'There is me throwing a banger!' he says as the camera pans to the floor whilst an arm comes and chucks something into the street. 'There's Umut!' he remarks, as the camera pans to show a hooded figure who shields his head briefly from the flare. 'Look

at him – he’s scared of the flare!’ says Cengiz derisively. Umut then comes and chants directly down the camera. ‘Look he’s publicising!’ says Cengiz. The video then finishes with Umut shouting, ‘Cut!’ ‘Cut!’ (*‘Kes!’ ‘Kes!’*).

### ***Facebook-defined friendship***

After the event I added Umut as a Facebook friend. Shortly after he accepted me, the video popped up on my news feed. This is how most of those who watched it would come across it. Similar to a home page, the newsfeed displays a select snippet of what friends are up to, ordered according to time and importance as deemed by Facebook. The user does not decide which posts should take priority, nor (directly) do Facebook employees. Instead the calculation is carried out by an algorithm named EdgeRank. This formula sifts through all of a user’s interactions, from uploading a photo to clicking a ‘like’ button, before ranking them according to three paradigms: objects (such as a photo), users and ‘edges’ (interactions). Depending on the timeframe and how interconnected the viewer is with the edge creator, it will decide where to place the object in the news feed.<sup>159</sup> Umut and I had no prior communication on Facebook. The reason his video appears in my Facebook newsfeed as soon as I add him is because we have fourteen ‘mutual friends’ on the site. This interaction, too, is dictated by an algorithm, named the ‘friend of a friend’. It recommends people for the user to add as Facebook friends based on how many they already share (Bucher 2012, 483).

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<sup>159</sup> For more information on how Facebook uses algorithms see Blue (2010); Bucher (2012, 484); Madrigal (2010).

The example speaks specifically towards the actor-network rendition of assemblages, which places great emphasis on how, in any given social situation, actors can be a combination of human and non-human elements (Harvey 2012, 121). Algorithms are generated by humans, but then responsibility for their function and implementation is ‘delegated’ to the non-human, much like in Bruno Latour’s example of the door closer (Johnson 1988)<sup>160</sup> or Malcolm Ashmore’s catflap (Ashmore 1993). Circulation of the video, then, is defined in a large part by the algorithms; more specifically, the quantitative operations – based on models of Bayesian inference – designed into the algorithm. The user is the one clicking and selecting, yet the algorithm acts as a strong ‘suggestive force’, ‘pushing’ users to connect with specific people (Bucher 2012, 486). Constructing an inchoate ‘anthropology of the equation’, Paul Kockelman has no hesitation in ascribing algorithms with agency (Kockelman 2013, 48).

It is important to bring politics in, in the sense of highlighting who – or what – is wielding the power to call upon and assemble people (Meyer 2014, 13). Facebook’s rationale in designing algorithms is not to altruistically contribute to the generation of a transnational footballing community but to generate data and, in turn, revenue. This data helps refine the algorithms further and is also sold to advertising agencies in the form of ever more sophisticated targeted adverts (Bucher 2012, 488; T. Jones 2014). My connection to Umut, the sharing of a flare video by users, its likes and comments are all shaped in part by the wider contingencies of expanding data caches to feed an advertising-driven business model.

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<sup>160</sup> The article was originally published under the pseudonym ‘Jim Johnson’, although Latour later admitted to being the author.

**Figure 138. Flare video posted on Facebook. The text reads: 'Who gives a damn that we lost to Akhisar<sup>161</sup>, we had sworn that for the sake of Beşiktaş we would set the world on fire because: DUISBURG IS ONLY FOR BEŞİKTAŞ: KOMMANDO DUISBURG GANG!!**

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**Figure 139. The flare video three days later, with likes, comments and shares. Comments from top 'Burn it down, yo!' / 'Çarşı Berlin in Europe!' / 'Good job, guys!' / 'Good stuff guys. If only the team had the eagle spirit as much as you guys do – things would have been different then' / 'Kudos!' / 'Black eagle for the win!'**

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<sup>161</sup> Akhisar Belediyespor were the team Beşiktaş were playing in the match before the flare show.

***Publics***

At this juncture, it is worth examining the character of the public the video is addressing. It is, in part, a global public. I can see from the list of likes that people I know residing in Turkey, the Netherlands and the UK have all watched it. Yet it is a *parochially* global public. The video is framed in Turkish, rendering its precise meaning opaque to non-Turkish speakers (fig. 138). While scattered across the world, the users who see and interact with it are all part of a network of Beşiktaş fans. There is an in-built limitation to the audiences the video can reach as a result of being visible only to Facebook friends. The 'Facebook public' is a highly orchestrated arena, with the news feed engineered to reinforce what Facebook wants friendship to entail. I make no claims for this to be inferior to interaction in offline public spheres (see Bucher 2012), but simply gesture towards the forms of orchestration and control that occur within this particular online social networking realm.

The last few decades have seen a clutch of scholars argue that 'circulation' should be viewed as the defining character of contemporary publics (Appadurai 1996a; Gaonkar and Povinelli 2003; Lee and LiPuma 2002). For Lee and LiPuma, processes of circulation and exchange do not simply transmit meanings but are 'constitutive acts in themselves' (Lee and LiPuma 2002, 192). Scholars have suggested circulation is constituted through various social activities. These include buying and selling for markets (Ho 2009) and 'reading' if you adopt the metaphor of the public sphere-as-text (Habermas 1987). I suggest that in our contemporary age, interactivity in itself constitutes a public (Yang and Calhoun 2007).

The growth of interactivity as a social action is driven in part by internet-mediated communication. Michael Fattal's work on propaganda in Columbia concentrates on the idea of digital interactivity. He argues that in online communication, interactivity 'becomes a facet of circulation itself, as...comments, likes, dislikes, favorites, and flags invite audience participation' (Fattal 2014, 321). It is apposite to consider which particular element of the video is doing the talking a day or two after it is posted. It is no longer (perhaps never was) the spectacle of the moving image, but instead the 173 likes, thirty seven shares and six comments listed alongside the file (fig. 139). Circulation is driven not only by the desire to consume the image but to be part of the interactive exchange it has prompted.

Within the Duisburg gang, the desire to participate revolves partly around wanting to be recognised as ultras. The inherently multivalent structure of diasporas – communities built out of multi-locale attachments and travel across nations – arguably amplifies the longing for recognition: to be seen not only 'here' but also 'there'. The flare show in-the-flesh was not well attended by locals. In German-language Duisburg there is little knowledge as to what a Turkish ultra should look like. Social networking websites allow the activity here (where it is unappreciated) to be glimpsed there (where it makes sense). Books, newspapers, radio and TV all accomplish a similar conveyance. Where social networking signals a change is in the 'unprecedented simultaneity' of interaction it affords (Miller 2011, 208). Harry Jenkins has noted how digital media compress the gap between production, circulation and reception (Jenkins 2006). Danny Miller goes a step further, suggesting Facebook has led to 'a positive transformation in the expansion of intersubjective spacetime'

(Miller 2011, 208).

A key reason for the shorter lag on interaction is the fashioning of successful digital alternatives to physical communication ‘short cuts’. Take, for instance, the ‘like’ button. Facebook has captured the dynamic present in phatic communication – of communication for the sake of sociality – translating it into a tactile, visual gesture. The like button reduces friendship interaction to ‘a one-click sentiment’, an important labour-saving device in a setting where the average user has over 200 friends (Bucher 2012, 485; Peyton, n.d.). That users often prefer the phatic to the informative is illustrated by the flare video. I analysed the interactions it generated. 97% fell into the ‘phatic’ category.<sup>162</sup>

Fans want to convey authenticity in the realm of a social networking site, but the panoply of possible communicative practices is boiled down by Facebook to a few select options – posting a video, clicking a button marked ‘like’. The process is a dance back and forth between users and designers, taking place in a middle ground where the desire to invoke the cultural form of the ultra meshes with the rationale of constructing a software platform to stimulate interactions which generate ‘valuable’ data. The combined result of both logics is parochialism. Global software applications and international images of fandom are deployed for local ends. For the fans, it is both the easiest option and the one with the lowest cost on reputation management – much safer to play the ultra to those you know. For Facebook, interaction amongst friends is more likely to lead to richer and more sustained conversation, and hence generate a greater quantity and quality of data. The powerful constraint

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<sup>162</sup> I took as phatic any traceable interaction that did not involve words. On Facebook this falls into two categories: either clicking the ‘like’ button or sharing the item with others. Of the 215 traceable interactions, 173 were ‘like’s and thirty-seven were ‘shares’, a total of 210 which equates to 97%.

on cosmopolitan interaction is not deterministically set by the software nor constructed by the users but emerges in part as a marriage of convenience between the two. If they had wanted the flare show to be available to the widest possible audience, the fans could have chosen to upload it onto YouTube<sup>163</sup>, added subtitles and posted the link in an array of ultras forums. That they did not reflects that this was ultimately a performance inspired by a global cultural phenomenon but intended for a limited audience.

### **The sticker**

Some in Çarşı Berlin do not want to be known as ultras only amongst friends. Social networking websites, constructed by the logic of advertising-through-friendship, encourage connection only with known people. Other networks, then, are needed. One practice used by Çarşı Berlin members to communicate 'ultraness' to strangers is 'stickering'. Stickering works in a similar way to graffiti, based on tagging locations with a logo. The difference is that the tagging is by means of a small, pre-made sticker (Dorrian, Recchia, and Farrelly 2002). The activity is more discreet than graffiti and less likely to draw serious repercussions. Within the Çarşı Berlin group, I have witnessed fans stickering in a host of locations: on the Kiev underground, on the streets of Amsterdam and at the football pitches of an amateur team in Frankfurt (figs. 140-142).

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<sup>163</sup> YouTube is the primary video-sharing website on the internet. Founded in 2005, it allows users to upload, share and view videos. Over a billion people use the site every month, see [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/03/21/youtube-stats\\_n\\_2922543.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/03/21/youtube-stats_n_2922543.html) (accessed 4 September 2015).



Figure 140. Çarşı Berlin stickering in Kiev, 20 October 2011 (author's photo)

Figure 141. Çarşı Berlin stickering in Amsterdam, 22 May 2013. The text reads 'Çarşı Berlin Holland Branch in Amsterdam :)'



Figure 142. Çarşı Berlin stickering in Frankfurt, Germany, 25 May 2013 (author's photo)

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The practice of stickering is also used by a host of European ultras groups. Over the course of my fieldwork, I came across stickers whilst on the terrace at a match in Duisburg, in the toilets of a ground in Portugal, even on a train in rural Baden Wurttemberg (figs. 143-146). Through stickering, Çarşı Berlin members are engaging in this 'general' global practice and conversation, which functions as a mobile, disjointed call and response across and between different groupings and locations. This particular ultras assemblage is directly related 'to ambulatory movements to, from and around physical locations' (Moore 2012a, 104), be they stadiums in Portugal or trains in Germany.



Figure 143. Stickers of the Duisburg Kohorte Ultras (Ultras Cohort) on the terrace at the Duisburg stadium, 28 May 2013 (author's photo)



Figure 144. Sticker on train window in Baden-Wuttemberg, Germany, 11 May 2013. Text is in Italian and reads: 'The blue and whites of the curve'<sup>164</sup> (author's photo)



Figure 145. Different stickers in the male toilets of FC Braga, including Swiss (Bern) and some in Spanish, 14 February 2012 (author's photo)



Figure 146. More stickers, including from English side Birmingham City (author's photo)

### *Offline to online: ultras forums*

Stickering, like graffiti, is 'an expression of both impotence and a kind of power – the power to disfigure' (Hebdige 1979, 151). This power to disfigure, to draw attention to actions has gained added force with the advent of the internet. The

<sup>164</sup> The sticker possibly refers to Napoli or Lazio fans, the two Italian teams who play in blue and white. The unusual wording of the sticker (normally *bianco azzurro*) suggests it could even be an imitation by non-Italian speakers.

primacy of the web in the circulation of images and symbols is such that the importance of the impact of the physical sticker has diminished. The moment of applying the sticker to a surface often acts as an ephemeral springboard, its function merely to propel the image into a more sustained digital life-cycle of circulation (see Mason 2008, 121; Shifman 2014, 23).

The forums for sharing images online are continually shifting – early photo-sharing sites such as Flickr now coexist with messageboards and social networking software such as Facebook and Snapchat.<sup>165</sup> The last decade has seen the emergence of websites that survey the ultras movement from a supranational focus. One of the largest is *Ultras Tifo*<sup>166</sup> (Ultras Fan). The site is a public sphere designed to glorify and dissect the behaviour of ultras football fans across the world, commenting on the different inflections of hooligan culture.<sup>167</sup> Key to this process is the circulation of images and accoutrements that set trends for ultras. There is an entire section of the website devoted to stickering ('Same as graffiti, stickers are very popular with ultras. Check our big gallery with total 130 photos'). There are also hundreds of images and references to both 'flares' and 'pyro' (a synonym). Its Facebook page has 388,447 likes, signalling that participation in ultras culture is not a niche affair, although one that is still tiny in comparison to pop (the singer Rihanna has

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<sup>165</sup> Snapchat is a photo messaging application that allows users to set a limit on how long the picture is visible before it is hidden from the recipients' device. See <https://www.snapchat.com>.

<sup>166</sup> *Tifo* is the Italian for 'fan' or 'supporter'. Like the word *ultra*, it has become known in football circles outside of Italy, where it usually refers to an elaborate fan-produced choreography. See <http://www.theguardian.com/football/blog/2012/jun/28/portland-timbers-seattle-sounders-tifo-display> (accessed 04 September 2015).

<sup>167</sup> A sample interaction: under a video showing disturbances after an English Premier League match between Newcastle and Sunderland, someone posts: 'English style, many bottles and scums [sic], no fighting' (accessed 14 April 2013).

almost ninety million likes) or football fandom more broadly (Manchester United have fifty seven million likes, Beşiktaş over five million).<sup>168</sup>

### ***Stickers informing the parochial***

An actual and virtual call and response with the internationalised ultras community can also serve a parochial purpose. Turning again to the Çarşı Berlin stickering, in Figure 141 the Beşiktaş sticker is being stuck over a Fenerbahçe sticker. Writing about graffiti, Les Back, Michael Keith and John Solomos argue that it ‘tells by visualizing: the I that is here, the we that tagged this place, the presences that must be erased, and the erasure that must be overwritten’ (Back, Keith, and Solomos 1999, 87–8). The same seems to be the case with stickers.

Placing a Beşiktaş sticker over one belonging to the team’s rivals on a lamppost in Amsterdam is a visual manifestation of the overlapping coexistence of the Turkish sides in the diasporic spaces of European cities. The parochial rivalries of Turkish football become overlaid in a recursive game of advertisement and defacement. The majority of people who pass these stickers in the Dutch capital will have no understanding of their meaning. Yet the parochiality stretches beyond borders and physical location. My knowledge of the sticker did not arise from visiting Amsterdam but from a picture popping up in my news feed, posted by a member of Çarşı Berlin in Amsterdam. Whilst stickering predates social networking sites, in an internet-mediated world the stickering practice is often undertaken so that it can be transposed to the

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<sup>168</sup> Number of likes accurate as of 15 September 2014.

digital, consumed by a group of friends on Facebook who are there not physically but virtually. Even so, the sticker cannot help but be present as a marker in the physical world. It leaves open the possibility of a 'general global', of an unscripted and unpredictable connection with the unknown on an Amsterdam street.

The first item, the flare, revealed the importance of parochial interaction for fans wanting to prove themselves as ultras within Çarşı Berlin. The sticker revealed another important tactic, casting an item into circuits of interaction where its mobility is paramount and the other participants are to some extent unknown and unknowable. The internet provides adequate publics for both. Not all fans are content to settle for parochial notoriety on Facebook. *Ultras Tifo* is just one of many resources open to those who want to be involved on a more cosmopolitan level. For the few who are enticed, there is the opportunity for greater spoils, such as being accepted as an ultra on a bigger stage. Sometimes such activities come with greater risk. En route to a Beşiktaş handball match in Magdeburg, Germany in February 2013, a fan was handed a fine of 1,500 Euros (£1097<sup>169</sup>) after spraying the side of a building with the words '*Çarşı Berlin ulan!*' (Çarşı Berlin motherfucker!) He was left out of pocket and never got to propel the act into the online world. For others, however, the kudos of seeing their stickering shared and discussed on global forums offers rich rewards. A third strategy for proving authenticity is linked to the final item I wish to consider: the acronym ACAB.

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<sup>169</sup> Exchange rate as of 11 September 2015, <http://www.xe.com> (accessed 11 September 2015).

## The acronym

Standing for 'All cops are bastards', the acronym ACAB is the final ultras item I consider. I have noticed the ACAB slogan in a variety of settings throughout fieldwork: on the stickers of a Polish anti-fascist group on walls in central London; as a phrase on the scarf of a Beşiktaş fan; as graffiti daubed on bike holders in Germany; and in self-produced memes on Facebook (figs. 147-152). I have also heard the phrase ironically reworked in conversation ('Fuck the police! All cops are beautiful!') or, upon its mention, witness the Turkish police manhandle a fan. It has become tied up in protests, featuring in the unrest in Egypt since 2011 (fig. 152) and also in Turkey around the Gezi Park protests of 2013 (fig. 149). It is safe to say it manifests itself visually and orally, physically and virtually, and is transnational in reach. Its origin is unclear, although it is probably British, given that the first verifiable use of the term is the title of a 1982 song by London punk band the 4-Skins (The 4-Skins 1982). Since then, it has been taken up by 'anti-establishment' groups the world over, becoming part of prison tattoos, used by members of anarchist groups and featuring as the title of an Italian film (Sollima 2012). I mostly came across it as part of ultras football culture. As with the flare video, the acronym is not circulating by being 'exchanged' in the traditional sense as either a 'gift' or a 'commodity'.

In mentioning circulation, my starting point is *The Social Life of Things*, edited by Arjun Appadurai (Appadurai 1986). Whilst a long anthropological debate on gift and commodities predates this work, it mostly takes the form of a rigid dualism between static notions of 'gift' and 'commodity', rendering it ill-suited to my ethnographic particular (Godelier 2004; Mauss [1954] 2002; Weiner 1985; Graeber 2001). The Appadurai volume managed to successfully

blur this dualism, pointing out that things can ‘move in and out of different conditions of identification and alienation’ being both gifts *and* commodity at different points and times in their ‘social life’ (Appadurai 1986; Miller 2005, 7). The ability to ‘be’ multiple things at different times is certainly a key trait of the ACAB acronym, as is the case for the accoutrements of ultras culture more broadly. Nevertheless, the gift/commodity framework alone does not seem to capture accurately the phenomenon at hand. What seems to be taking place is less an ‘exchange’ in a literal sense than spatial and temporal marking.



Figure 147. ACAB acronym spray-painted onto a bike stand in Cologne, 1 June 2013 (author's photo)

*The image originally presented here cannot be made freely available via ORA because of copyright*

Figure 148. ACAB acronym as a meme, posted by a Beşiktaş fan, 2 June 2013. Text reads 'Send in all your bastards, Tayyip [Erdoğan, the PM]... There are sons of Çarşı all over Europe. If you are going to get us over there by making us quit our jobs, then fine. We challenge you!'



Figure 149. ACAB acronym as graffiti in the Gezi Park protests, Istanbul, 6 June 2013 (author's photo)



Figure 150. ACAB acronym on scarf of Beşiktaş fan, Bamberg, Germany, 18 October 2012 (author's photo)



Figure 151. ACAB acronym on sticker of Polish anti-fascist group, London, 12 October 2013 (author's photo)

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Figure 152. ACAB acronym on wall in Cairo during Egyptian revolution (Montague 2013)

### **Memes**

Whilst the acronym cropped up at many points across my fieldwork, the highest concentration of its occurrence was during June 2013, at the height of the Gezi Park protests in Istanbul. The protests were triggered by a heavy-handed eviction of peaceful protestors from a park in the centre of the city that was due to be demolished. Years of pent-up anger at the police, the media and the government erupted into nationwide protests. Across Turkey, hundreds of thousands took to the streets in the largest example of civil unrest since the 1970s. When it finally subsided after nineteen days, thousands were left injured and six people were dead (David and Toktamis 2015).

Most members of Çarşı Berlin followed the Gezi events keenly. Nearly all were against the Turkish government and watched the news with a sense of excitement and anger. Fans attended local protests and became involved in many of the online conversations and activism that the movement spawned. During this period the occurrence of the ACAB phrase exploded. Protesters in Turkey adopted this global current, and in turn Turkish-language diasporans

did the same in a cascade of global sharing. The acronym appeared in Facebook news feeds (fig. 148), on the streets of Istanbul (fig. 149) and in conversations at solidarity protests.

The quick rate of imitation and replication of the phrase seems to subscribe to what Limor Shifman has labelled as the ‘hypermeme’ logic of the contemporary era (Shifman 2014, 23–24). Could it be helpful to think of the ACAB acronym as a meme? A meme (from the Greek *mímea*, meaning ‘that which is imitated’) can be loosely defined as a group of items sharing common characteristics (OED Online 2015). These items are created in awareness of each other and passed on by imitation, transformation and circulation. The term was first coined in the 1970s to refer to the replication, adaptation and fitness of genes to certain environments (Dawkins 1976). However it reached popular consciousness when it became stripped of its biological meaning and used to describe the propagation, reproduction and diffusion of cultural products more widely.<sup>170</sup>

By taking part in the circulation of the ACAB meme, diaspora Beşiktaş fans were able to feel that they were playing a role – however small – in the historic unfolding of events. They could do something by making and crafting – practices which help to alleviate a sense of helplessness. Beyond the meme, other diaspora fans supported the protests in other ways: texting encouragement to friends in Istanbul and arranging and attending solidarity demonstrations in European cities. These latter events attracted thousands and were reported in the Turkish press, showing that their actions could enter the conversation in Turkey

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<sup>170</sup> For a history of the meme see Shifman (2014).

### ***Ephemerality***

An important characteristic of cultural memes is their ephemerality. Whilst many memes are archived digitally, the way most users come across them is by happenstance, during the few days or weeks when they ‘trend’ across the internet.<sup>171</sup> As such, they seem an important example of the shift in the production of value that has taken place within contemporary patterns of globalisation. Scott Lash and Celia Lury argue that value is no longer conceived in terms of price (‘as a mark of exclusivity’) or origin (‘as a mark of authenticity’), but in relation to ‘information...that is, as a mark of distinctiveness’. This distinctiveness emerges by privileging the temporal as a category: ‘What gives both free gifts and branded products value, what makes them special, are the temporal and spatial conditions of their accessibility for someone, their occurrence in a culture of circulation’ (Lash and Lury 2007b, 141–143).

The ultras’ objects are not valued for their durability but for their ephemerality: the flare goes out after thirty seconds; the video of the flare is buried in news feeds before a week has passed. Web entrepreneurs have latched onto the merits of the production of ephemerality,<sup>172</sup> yet the draw is not simply that objects only last for a given period. If distinctiveness is yoked to duration then those actors attempting to propagate exclusivity (whether a

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<sup>171</sup> There has been growing awareness of the ephemerality of digital content, manifested most often in the inability to access digital content created decades ago see ‘Only the Digital Dies’ in *The Economist*, 26 January 2013, <http://www.economist.com/news/leaders/21570728-newest-technologies-look-most-likely-vanish-oldest-may-always-be-us-only> (accessed 25 January 2015).

<sup>172</sup> See Lash and Lury (2007a). A contemporary example would be Snapchat, where a photo is only visible for between one and ten seconds before it is hidden from the recipient’s device. As of 4 September 2014, it has a market valuation of ten billion dollars (Chamorro-Premuzic 2014).

business marketing a product, or football fans trying to generate a sense of the ultra) have a stake in the multiplication of the times and places for consumption.

The result – contemporary public spheres – can be characterised as an ‘unlimited finitude of occasions of giving and getting’ (Lash and Lury 2007a, 150). The debate has moved on from what Pierre Bourdieu said about the importance of the gaps between giving and receiving for the articulation of agency (Bourdieu 1993). There are no gaps any more: the giving and getting is so constant that it does little apart from ‘maintaining the channels of communication, in short, sustaining the flow’ (Lash and Lury 2007a, 140).

Digital media help feed the construction of ephemerality by multiplying the times and places in which the objects can be consumed. If ultra items are not designed to last, then the public they bring into being and the networks they generate are also temporary. Rather than being an unfortunate consequence, the example of the ACAB meme shows that transience it is often the desired effect – people do not want to participate in the public indefinitely. The next chapter will consider in more detail the interplay between information and distraction in the contemporary globalised world, what Richard Lanham calls the ‘economics of attention’ (Lanham 2006). For now, it pays to highlight that the ACAB meme becomes a device for capturing attention through ephemerality. The Gezi Park protests would not go on indefinitely; a meme is only momentarily ‘funny’; the parochial global moment is designed to pass. Participation in twenty-first century publics does not involve parsing the ‘global’ and ‘local’, choosing when and how you want to dwell in either. To engage is to have your attention held for a minute, becoming briefly entangled

in a particular assemblage of the two, before moving on in the flow. Digital media increase the value of ephemerality by improving the chance that fans will encounter these ‘parochial global’ forms. Not only is graffiti on a bike stand in Cologne seen by passers-by, but it also morphs and translates around networks of Facebook friends. Such is the logic of the hypermemetic environment.

### ***The reluctant ultra***

On the Ultras Tifo message board mentioned earlier in this chapter, I searched for interactions involving Beşiktaş and Çarşı Berlin. I found a few materials uploaded, such as videos of the crowd at a friendly match with German side St Pauli and Çarşı Berlin members bragging in the web forum about their group’s power (figs. 153-154).

Perhaps the international ultras website is where the diasporan Beşiktaş fan is at an advantage to his Turkey-based counterpart. The Europe-based fan is acquainted with at least two national footballing cultures and also has varying degrees of linguistic competence in one foreign language or more. For example, in a post on Ultras Tifo a Çarşı member with the avatar of Doner<sup>173</sup> displays a fluent command of English and ability to hold his own in the rough and tumble of the forum argument (‘Carsi Berlin HUMILIATED Ultras-Lev<sup>174</sup> by fucking their asses in their own local’, fig. 153). If categorised alongside the interaction with strangers on the away match abroad (see chapter 5) it is possible to construct a list of examples of what Mary Louise Pratt has termed ‘the...arts of

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<sup>173</sup> Although not directly invoking Çarşı or Beşiktaş, the fan’s choice of ‘doner’ (after the kebab, perhaps the preeminent symbol of Turkishness in Europe) can be interpreted as an attempt to establish himself as Turkish.

<sup>174</sup> Ultras Leverkusen, the ultras group associated with the German Bundesliga team Bayer Leverkusen. See <http://www.ultras-leverkusen.de/> (accessed 15 September 2015).

the contact zone' (Pratt 1991). The notion of a 'contact zone' is a reformulation of the concept of public sphere, one that depicts interaction less along the lines of the cosmopolitan *communitas* and more in terms of an unequal clash and grappling of cultures. Pratt continues, 'bilingualism, mediation, parody, denunciation, imaginary dialogue, vernacular expression – these are some of the ... arts of the contact zone' (Pratt 1991, 37). Doner's post exhibits almost all of Pratt's list of tactics, suggesting the diasporan is well-placed to make a successful incursion on behalf of his team in the public of the 'unknown global'.

*The image originally presented here cannot be made freely available via ORA because of copyright*

**Figure 153. A Çarşı Berlin member displays his fluent command of English in the Ultras Tifo forum**

*The image originally presented here cannot be made freely available via ORA because of copyright*

**Figure 154. Picture of Çarşı Berlin on Ultras Tifo, from St Pauli v Beşiktaş match, 16 July 2013**

Yet very few do. Perhaps the case for cosmopolitan conversation has been overplayed. The price on successful interaction in the Ultras Tifo environment is high – fans must have a good command of English and, crucially, possess material or a standpoint that is sufficiently impressive to be taken seriously. The Duisburg flare video was nowhere to be found on the site. I suggest this is because the act is deemed not suitably impressive for consumption outside of a network of friends and relatives.

The interlocutor who introduced me to the site says that some people use Çarşı Berlin nicknames to post, but he does not. He likes to be anonymous so that he can ‘spy’ on those people, he says with a grin. His comment reveals yet another constraint: worry about being viewed from within as an incompetent broker between the Beşiktaş community and the wider world. Within publics that allow for cosmopolitan conversation, there are some who want to be seen as taking part in ‘spreading the brand’ of Çarşı Berlin. Others, like my interlocutor, possess the skills but want to escape attribution, preferring the anonymity afforded to simply browse and lurk.<sup>175</sup>

## Conclusion

To study the life cycle of an Ultras item is to consider: the globalisation of a specific Italian political and cultural association (Ultra); a transnational football supporters group (Çarşı Berlin); the increasing visualisation of plays of authenticity; the economics of social networking (Facebook); and the politics of recognition within a particular diaspora community (Turkish-language). It is

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<sup>175</sup> For more on lurking in internet environments see Hine (2008, 262); ‘Lurking Theory’ (2013). See Amin (2002) for more on the role of diaspora community brokers.

challenging to reflect on all of these dimensions at once – the parochial, the global and their interplay. Objects are part of a media of flow, a ‘culture of circulation’ (Lee and LiPuma 2002). The twin processes of globalisation and digital media allow items to be translated, imitated and circulated as part of the politics and economics of twenty-first century recognition. Individuals are entangled – sometimes snared – in the process: producing and being produced upon.

I would like to conclude by returning to a key theme of the thesis: that of playfulness. Fans’ realisation of the complexity of global cultural interaction, I suggest, generates less despair or angst and more a ‘provocation to play’. Lash and Lury view objects as ‘tantaliz[ing] our capacity to deal with wholes and parts, continuity and discontinuity, synchrony and succession. They extend and disrupt the space and time in which we move’ (Lash and Lury 2007b, 152). Through the ‘parochial global’ cultural form, fans are wilfully engaging in a constant shifting of scale (Strathern 2004). Naturally this exercise is constrained by certain factors, and sometimes highly charged; yet that does not preclude it also often being a fun process. As Jodi Dean notes, ‘much ink has been spilled lamenting the effects of the surveillance society but relatively little on the enjoyments that may accompany the sense *that one is known, that people know who we are, that we are somebody*’ (in Spyer and Steedly 2013, 31 emphasis in original). Fans play with scale: one minute the flare justifies Ultra behaviour by mobilising all of international football hooliganism, the next the flare (or the video of the flare) is brandished to generate a local compromise vis a vis another Turkish team or even simply another individual.

Fans find it enjoyable to be reminded of both how partial everything is ('the relativizing effect of multiple perspectives') and also how everything is connected ('the recurrence of similar... bits of information'), to 'plug in' for a few minutes, hours or days to a circulating assemblage of cliché and competency (Strathern 2004, xx; Latour 2005, 210). The choice of tools adopted by Çarşı Berlin members to circulate their memes is revealing: often they do not want to take part in a giant global conversation. They want to test the water, have a bit of fun and then forget about it. Thus the update I offer to the opening paradox – why global cultural items often reproduce parochial issues – is mainly to drain it of its initial seriousness. Whilst pointing out the larger constraints, I have shown that fans seem able to create both the parochial and the global connection. That they choose mostly to dwell in the former is perhaps not symptomatic of being 'stuck' but ultimately because they find it more enjoyable to play 'the Ultra' with those they already know.

## Chapter 9

### Distraction

In this final ethnographic chapter, I return to an idea I set out in the first (chapter 4), namely, the importance of seeing fandom in the context of the everyday. In that section I asked what it was about Çarşı Berlin that attracted diaspora Beşiktaş fans to join and remain involved in the group. Here, I look through the lens from the opposite direction: what is the impact of this involvement in Çarşı Berlin on diasporans' wider, non-footballing lives? I argue that taking part in the group often results in the 'Beşiktaş' fraction of fans' lives distracting from other elements. This 'distracting fandom' can be both positive and negative. A further corollary may even ultimately be that it helps to generate self-reflexivity about the constructed nature of social groups more broadly, helping fans to see all categories of belonging with a new, more critical perspective.

I start by returning to the idea posed in chapters 4 and 5 that much of the enchantment and playfulness derived from fandom comes from the opportunities it presents to imitate others. Diaspora Beşiktaş fans, however, are seldom physically co-present in large enough numbers to generate a sense of wonderment through imitation. Away matches offer a rare convergence but are often months apart. Accordingly, greater importance accrues to technologies that can transport the enchanting aspects of imitation across time and space. In

articulating this position, I argue out of a wide literature that has investigated the role of technologies in producing mimesis: from eighteenth century mechanical automata to books, flags and cinema cameras.

How would some of the writers who studied these previous technologies approach mimesis if writing in 2015? They would, I believe, be extremely interested in new forms of mobile internet-mediated communication. The explosion in smartphone ownership mentioned in the previous chapter has generated a contemporary environment that makes imitation and consumption easy and quick. The affordances of smartphones, however, ensure contemporary enchantment processes take rather different forms to more established mediums, becoming more tactile, mobile and multi-mediated an experience.

The effects of these trends on the everyday life of European Beşiktaş fans can be summarised under the broad rubric of distraction. Unlike a personal computer, a smartphone sits in its owner's pocket or on the table in front of them. It is never turned off but accompanies its owner everywhere. Despite the prevalence of scientific studies and media articles warning of the impact of such technologies on the attention spans of children, teenagers and employees, I do not begin from a negative starting point. I draw on the work of Michael Taussig and Walter Benjamin to strip the word 'distraction' of its negative connotations and see it as a more fundamental truth about existence: humans make meaning not by contemplation but through a distracted mediation of existence, *in medias res*.

This 'enchanting distraction' can have very real benefits. As the sociality of the fan experience becomes accessible everywhere, it allows for the creation

of imaginative cultural objects like the meme. These become crucial weapons in the armoury of tactics used by fans to negotiate boring jobs, irritating bosses and a slew of other everyday tribulations. But precisely because football can be so exciting and omnipresent, the footballing facet(s) of a fan's identity can crowd out other associations to work or family. It can be disruptive, cultivate obsession and dominate social gatherings. The result can be that fans alienate those around them or fall short of fulfilling the host of requirements that stem from being an active participant in a transnational fan collective.

I conclude by asking speculatively if involvement in such a collective helps to forge self-reflexivity about all categories of belonging and their socially-constructed nature. Enchantment can be said to help politicise fans, in the sense of shining a spotlight on how groups are called into being. If subjective existence as Beşiktaş fans results from an enchanting mix of material realities and imaginary constructions, then perhaps other existences – as 'men', 'Muslims', 'workers' or 'Turks' – are equally made-up.

### **Technologies and the production of mimesis**

As mentioned in chapter 5, fandom provides many opportunities for fans to imitate one another: from dressing up in the same colours to coordinating bodies and sound in call and response chants on the terraces. I showed the processes that create this imitation, as well as the enjoyment derived from it. Yet whenever a game takes place, it is only a very small minority of the larger community of Beşiktaş fans that gets to partake in this imitation physically – mere thousands out of millions. Diaspora Beşiktaş fans fall into this category.

They are located thousands of miles from Turkey with only a handful of opportunities each year to attend matches in the flesh. Members of groups such as Çarşı Berlin rarely come together in large enough crowds to forge enchantment-through-imitation on a grand scale. In the absence of such gatherings, technologies that can create and transmit a sense of wonderment take on greater importance. The previous chapter touched upon the role of photography in terms of generating and conveying authenticity. Here I wish to emphasise the camera's role in the capture and transportation of enchantment.

Being enchanted or captivated by recorded images is, of course, not a recent phenomenon. Drawing on Walter Benjamin's writing on cinema and cameras, Taussig has famously argued that 'modernity has ushered in a veritable rebirth, a recharging and retooling the mimetic faculty' through 'the invention of mimetically capacious machines such as the camera' (Taussig 1993, xviii–xix).<sup>176</sup> The camera, for Taussig, institutes a different way of viewing the world. Its eye is both more aggressive and sensual, it allows for close-ups and cut-aways, the instant and exact replication of the image. Taussig devotes much of *Mimesis and Alterity* to ethnographic examples of this 'recharged' mimetic faculty in the context of late nineteenth and early twentieth century colonialism in South America (Taussig 1991; Taussig 1993).

Jane Bennett makes a similar argument for the enchanting power of technology but in the very different context of a 1990s commercial for GAP jeans. Like Taussig, her focus is the camera, specifically the ability of video

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<sup>176</sup> In doing so, Taussig adopts a similar argument to one espoused by Marshall McLuhan nearly thirty years earlier. McLuhan argues that 'electric media' such as television and radio were destroying the absolutism of text over feelings, thoughts and senses. Individuals could finally escape the shackles of the printed page and communicate anew in the 'global village' (McLuhan 1962; McLuhan [1964] 2003).

cameras and editing suites to generate techniques such as ‘freeze-frame’ and ‘stop and pan’. These techniques play with making alive things seem dead and then bringing them back to life. She consequently views the GAP advert as ‘expressive of a different ontology; in it, the liveliness of matter itself is once again apparent, this time by the grace of cinematic technology rather than God or the Spirits’ (Bennett 2001, 118).

It is not only the moving image that contains the potential to enchant. Martha Kaplan notes how flags and printed documents in colonial Fiji are seen to embody the magic of the modern nation state (Kaplan 2003), whilst Jojada Verrips points out the magical content of the modern medical discipline (Verrips 2003). We can also broaden the argument historically. Elizabeth Eisenstein has shown how the printed word, when it first emerged in Europe, was seen ‘as sufficiently remarkable to suggest supernatural invention’. Booksellers were run out of town on suspicion of being in league with the devil (Eisenstein 1980, 50). There has been writing on the imitative aspects of animal automata (Riskin 2003), chess playing machines (Voskuhl 2007), dolls (Marina Warner 2014) and mirrors (Miller and Sinanan 2012, 4) – all things that humans have historically used to ‘copy, imitate, make models, explore difference, yield into and become other’ (Taussig 1993, xiii). Taken together, the examples illustrate how common it is for objects to replace people as the other half of the mimicry mirror.<sup>177</sup> Indeed, the enchantment could be said to derive added force from being uncoupled from a human agent, further mystifying the means by which the replication is made possible.

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<sup>177</sup> The best overview of the historical and geographical breadth of this topic is (Riskin 2007).

## Enchantment in the age of the internet

How would Bennett view enchantment or Taussig approach mimesis if writing in 2015? Mobile internet-mediated communication would almost certainly appeal to them. Whilst elements of the Beşiktaş fan experience can be adduced to support their analysis – using cameras at matches to record mimesis and generate enchantment – other facets of twenty-first century fandom require the paradigm to be revised. Critically, the camera that fans are using is part of the wider assemblage of the smartphone. Recalling the circulation of the ultras items in the previous chapter, the treatment of the footage produced by smartphones is very different to Taussig's projection of film on a cinema screen, or Bennett's adverts on television. From recording through to dissemination, the footage is shaped significantly (but not deterministically) by the logic of mobile internet-mediated communication. Perhaps the most important feature is that anyone possessing one of these devices can make and circulate a film. No formal training is needed and professionals are not in charge of the process.<sup>178</sup> In addition to this breadth of access, three interrelated features of the medium stand out for particular attention: its increasing tactility, convergence and mobility. I believe the combination of all three instils a new operational character into enchantment. They make enchantment more potent and far-reaching, able to forcefully haunt fans during everyday non-footballing experiences. I spend this section expounding on each of these features in more detail.

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<sup>178</sup> This is not to say that the process is free from constraints, as my discussion of the flare video in the previous chapter illustrated. There has been much writing exploring the putative democratic potential of new media. A lot is gathered together under the concept of 'citizen journalism', the broadcasting of news by the general public. (Allan and Thorsen 2009; Postill 2014). Some of this literature is itself an outgrowth of media and visual anthropology concerned with 'indigenous media production' (see Ginsburg 2011; T. Turner 1995).

### ***A tactile medium***

Writing in 1991, Taussig suggests that visual perception has a material, tactile quality, courtesy of the new filmic techniques of the camera, ‘the eye acting as conduit for our very bodies being absorbed by the filmic image’ (Taussig 1991, 150). Everyday knowledge comes not through reading the semiotics of a situation but through a form of touch, of prioperception, a habitual tactility in the now-ness of things. He suggests a more appropriate way of understanding experience is to ‘assume a distracted collective reading’ of the everyday, what he calls ‘a tactile eye’ (Taussig 1991, 152). Seeing is not about absorbing or interpreting, but touching.

I will come to the question of distraction shortly, but here I wish to concentrate on Taussig’s suggestion that the sense of touch has become more important in modern life. Arguably, his position is easier to substantiate nowadays because of the explosion of interfaces that require from the user a very explicit tactile interaction. Take for instance the touchscreen, an electronic display that is controlled through gestures of touch. While early devices were navigated by a miniature keyboard or a pen, virtually all of today’s tablet computers and smartphones are operated by applying the fingers directly to the screen.<sup>179</sup>

Interactions with touchscreens seem to confirm what Nigel Thrift wrote about the new sensorium ushered in by internet technologies: ‘the set of experiences gathered under “touch” will therefore become a more important

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<sup>179</sup> Other examples could be the capacity of nearly all mobile phones to ‘vibrate’ or the ‘pivot’ function of tablets and smartphones, whereby the orientation of the content can switch between landscape and portrait as a result of tilting the device.

sense, taking in and naming experiences which heretofore have not been considered as tactile and generating haptic experiences which have hitherto been unknown' (Thrift 2004, 598). My fieldwork was full of incidences of new haptic experiences, not least my own as I came to familiarise myself with the capabilities of the devices fans were using:

From fieldwork diary, 8 November 2012

He hands me his iPhone and heads down to the side of the court. I look at him through the camera and think to myself, 'I really need to zoom in'. He must have had the same thought as he gestures with his fingers, making a 'beak' with his forefinger and thumb. Instead of bringing the forefinger and thumb together to close the beak, he pushes them away, separating them. This is the movement you make on the iPhone to zoom in to take a photo. I pause for a moment: how strange it is that my friend makes a beak shape with his fingers and I know that it's a code for how to operate his device.

The touchscreen is one example of how enchantment's 'hit' (Bennett 2001, 4) has become all the more assaultive – delivered via the finger prodding the screen or discharged in the vibration of the smartphone in the pocket.

### ***A meta-medium***

Secondly, the internet has become established as a 'meta-medium' for media consumption. That is, it has 'taken over' as the primary means through which many people watch television, listen to music and make phone calls. Marshall McLuhan argued that the emergence of a new medium is a violent process, where the new 'never ceases to oppress the older media until it finds new shapes and positions for them' (McLuhan [1964] 2003, 237). His paradigm – coined in the 1960s – seems equally applicable to the emergence of the web, as Nicholas Carr describes: 'When the Net absorbs a medium...it not only dissolves the medium's physical form; it injects the medium's content with hyperlinks, breaks up the content into searchable chunks, and surrounds the content with

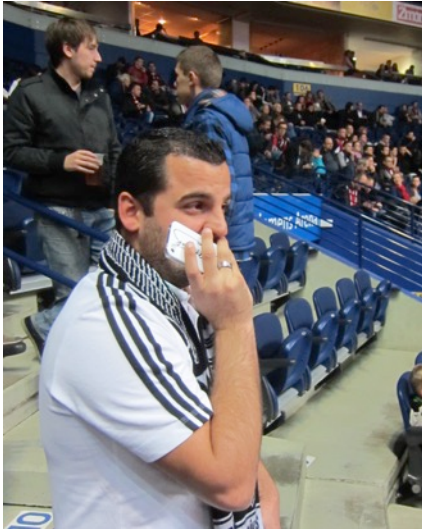
the content of all the other media it has absorbed' (Carr 2011, 90). Many Beşiktaş fan interactions emerge out of this 'surrounding' of content. Text conversations on WhatsApp are interspersed with screenshots; posts on Facebook link to websites; text comments on Facebook are responded to orally as posts in Voxer – an app that turns a phone into a walkie-talkie (figs. 155-157).

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**Figure 155.** A multi-mediated fan interaction. A Beşiktaş fan includes screenshots of the weather application from his iPhone within a WhatsApp conversation, highlighting the temperature difference between Ayvalık in Turkey (18 degrees) and Aachen in Germany (-2 degrees). This prompts the text exchange below the images: 'Ayvalık is my home!' to which the fan replies 'is this justice [the disparity in temperature]? Ayvalık is my second home, I go there every year'

**Figure 156.** A Beşiktaş fan posts a link on Facebook to a German newspaper article about Turkish Çarşı's role in the Gezi Park protests of 2013. The fan's post reads 'The Role of Çarşı in the Gezi Park incidents, from a German perspective'



**Figure 157. A Beşiktaş fan at a basketball game responds to a text message via the Voxer voice app, Lithuania, November 2012 (author's photo)**

A major reason behind the convergence of media online is the intellectual premise behind internet technologies.<sup>180</sup> Whilst clearly containing variation, it is possible to argue that undergirding much interaction on the internet is the ethic of greater relationality. This recourse towards relationality – functioning as a meta-medium – helps users to ‘attain’ a greater interactivity, searchability and multi-media stimulation than they could with previous media such as TV or radio. The multimedia nature of this thesis as a whole could stand as an example of this process. Additional possibilities for enchantment rest in the potential that fans have to interact with the gaps between media. An internet environment provides the sand box in which users can play with virtual potentials of combination: media can be differently accentuated, elided, imbricated with each other. Enchantment is capable of emerging out of the process in greater force and frequency than with previous mediums.

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<sup>180</sup> For a good summary of the idea of ‘media convergence’ see Jenkins (2006).

### ***A mobile medium***

The final characteristic of the media use of Beşiktaş fans is its increasing mobilisation. A new infrastructure assemblage of phone masts, 3G data networks and wireless routers has given rise to a specifically mobile form of computing. What was previously only achievable at home on the machine in the corner of the room is now possible out and about in the world. This means that those who are not physically present are drawn into the footballing experience. Most scholarship to date has concentrated on how such interactions recast notions of place and space (Farman 2012; de Souza e Silva and Sheller 2014). I would like to push that thought further: new concepts of place and space allow for the emergence of a wider enchantment that allows people who would ordinarily been left out of an experience to be drawn into its orbit.

#### From fieldwork diary, 20 October 2012

In October 2011 I was sitting with three interlocutors, having a coffee in Kiev on the morning of a match. Deniz hands his phone to Volkan sitting opposite us and says to me 'look strong'. I pull a silly face, as does Deniz. He is happy with the result, his first comment being 'This is going on Facebook'. The photo is uploaded immediately, given a caption and added to Deniz's Facebook wall. We three around the table continued with our conversation. Yet the photo in Facebook now is generating another set of interactions with Facebook friends who were not with us. Each comment announces itself as a notification in a user's Facebook account, manifested as a bleep and vibration on the fan's phone. At these interruptions, Deniz duly kept picking up his phone and relaying these comments back to those of us gathered around the table.

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**Figure 158. A photograph on Facebook of author and a fan pulling silly faces, Kiev, 20 October 2012. Comments read 'this must be photoshopped. Look, Deniz in a T-shirt and in Kiev?!' / 'John is everywhere'**

One of the comments left under the post of the silly photo was a circumcision joke: *'John'da selam en kısa zamanda sünnetini yapalım'* ('Say hi to John. let's hold his circumcision ceremony soon'). The gag was suggesting that I spoke Turkish and was such a committed follower of Beşiktaş that I should surely be circumcised to complete the job of making me into a 'proper Turk'.<sup>181</sup> When interrupted by the beep, Deniz read the post and roared with laughter. He then relayed the joke to the others who were equally tickled. Volkan started acting out stock elements of the Turkish circumcision ceremony, pretending to place a sash across my chest and shouting *'Maşallah!'* (marvellous!).

The movements that the smartphone, Wi-Fi connection and social networking software provided allowed this joke to arise out of a type of distributed ether in the wider circle of relations on Facebook (see Miller 2011, 208). The marvellous can 'erupt amid the everyday' (Bennett 2001, 8) of a fan going about his routine at home in Germany or a group of supporters in Ukraine, in the midst of the carnival of the away match. None of us gathered round the table in Kiev had any idea where the particular fan was when he wrote the comment – he could have been at work, at home or out shopping. I did not even know the person in question, although it seemed that we had met previously. Nevertheless, thanks to Facebook he was drawn into the experience. We found ourselves in stitches at a joke from a fan we could not see, would not converse with in any other medium and, ultimately, barely knew. Such is the enchanting power of the 'Facebook friend'.

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<sup>181</sup> Note again the categories of belonging assumed by the joke. The expectation is that Beşiktaş fans are both Turks and Muslims. This highlights the difficulties that might be encountered by a Christian or a Kurd seeking to be accepted as a 'proper' Çarşı Berlin member.

### **Distraction: the impact of being a Çarşı fan on wider life**

I have highlighted three aspects of mobile technology that are increasingly defining Beşiktaş fan interactions: increased tactility, the convergence of media and the increased mobility in its production and consumption. I move next to consider the effects of these trends on the everyday life of Beşiktaş fans. As mentioned in the introduction, I wish to gather together the consequences under the label of ‘distraction’.

What prompts my use of this term is the behaviour I was witnessing with Beşiktaş fans and smartphones. Fans were continually multitasking using these devices by filming a chant whilst also taking part, or interacting with someone on Facebook at the same time as chatting with the person next to them. Fans often seemed ‘distracted’ by this process: when they had their heads down in their smartphone there would frequently be long pauses, or pleas to repeat what had just been said verbally by the group physically present; the filming of the chant would become jerky as the fan attempted to both swing his scarf like all the others and hold a smartphone aloft (figs. 159-161)



**Figure 159.** A Beşiktaş fan simultaneously films and takes part in a call/response chant, Braga, Portugal 14 February 2012 (author's photo)



**Figure 160.** The same fan gets swept up in the chant and fails to keep his phone focused (author's photo)



**Figure 161. Beşiktaş fans play on smartphones while chatting and drinking coffee, Istanbul, 2 March 2013 (author's photo)**

Many of the pejorative connotations of distraction stem from assuming a priori that humans gain meaning primarily through contemplation. Amongst social scientists this belief frequently leads to what Taussig labels as the standard 'allegorizing' mode of cultural analysis, whereby surface phenomena are viewed as symbols or ciphers which can unlock the deep systems of meaning that lie within (Taussig 1991). In anthropology perhaps the most famous and influential proponent of such a stance is Clifford Geertz ([1973b] 2000), although examples could be found elsewhere in certain symbolic anthropology or cognitive-based descriptions (V. Turner 1967; Fernandez 1974; I. Lewis 1977). Yet along with Taussig I feel that contemplation is the wrong metaphor for how fans make sense of the world. Walter Benjamin famously suggested that film 'abolishes the space where contemplation moved and all but hits us between the eyes with things as a car, growing to gigantic proportions, careens at us out of a film screen' (Benjamin [1955] 1986, 86). Building on Benjamin, Taussig suggests we need to 'assume a distracted collective reading [of

experience] with what I call, by way of shorthand, a tactile eye'. Distraction, defined as 'the type of flitting and barely conscious peripheral-vision perception' is not the exception but the default (Taussig 1991, 152).

I have articulated variations on this position throughout the thesis, such as in my phenomenological argument for how the satellite spaces of Beşiktaş are each time generated anew through practices of watching (chapter 6), or how circulation has become a process of continual giving and getting (chapter 8). I wish here to extend the thought: if Beşiktaş fandom arises in part out of a distracted composition then should the Beşiktaş fan community be thought of as, in part, a 'distracted' entity? As mentioned above, this is not a pejorative suggestion. Indeed, the remainder of the chapter is devoted to taking this idea in three different directions. Whilst one route proposes that distraction can damage elements of the everyday, another argues that it contains the possibility to enliven and revivify, and the final avenue suggests that perhaps this distraction-through-enchancement may be strong enough to politicise. It is to this task, then, that I now turn.

### ***Enlivening the everyday***

Being involved in Çarşı Berlin can enliven the everyday in many ways, not just through the technological media mentioned above. For example, I came across two couples who got married after meeting through Çarşı Berlin. This seems the ultimate manifestation of the idea of the fan group as a form of family that I set out in chapter 4. It is important not to be too prescriptive in exploring

internet technologies. Before the advent of smartphones, fans told me that they would be glued to Beşiktaş news in other ways:

Özgür, during a discussion about perpetually checking his smartphone

Me: So, say, three years ago what did you do?

Özgür: All the time on a laptop. At work on my notebook. When I'm at home also on the notebook. The most time I spend on the notebook was when I was waiting for

Quaresma<sup>182</sup>. It was all night.

Özgür's wife: Horrible. All day, all night on the notebook!<sup>183</sup>

Before he had a mobile that could access the internet, Özgür could check the news on his notebook computer. Before that, perhaps Özgür had to resort to a large PC in the corner of one room. But as the devices get smaller they become more portable. Özgür can now check his phone under the bedclothes or on the toilet if he wishes. The always-on nature of smartphone technologies has an impact on the everyday experiences of diaspora life:

Emre, London

Me: In an average day, what amount of time and attention do you devote to Beşiktaş?

Emre: Ooooh. Pfff. 90% of my day. Probably.

M: 90%?

E: 90%. That's how I am. 90%.

M: Wow. So in what form? How are you-

E: Like, um, you could even check my phone – half the music in my phone is all the Beşiktaş chants. And, like, I'll just jump in the car; as soon as I start the car it's Beşiktaş chants blaring out. My ringtone is Beşiktaş chants; and, like, everyday it's like you're-even now [early January] there's no games, it's the first half of the season. But first thing you wake up, as soon as, you just click on the LigTV iPad app.<sup>184</sup> And you're just watching; click on 'Beşiktaş' – seeing if there's any new transfers. That's the first thing you think of.

M: So. Is it mostly using your phone?

E: Yeah, yeah. Mostly using my phone. Just- watching, er, following Beşiktaş, seeing what transfers made, what's going on, training and stuff...you know like that.<sup>185</sup>

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<sup>182</sup> Ricardo Quaresma, a Portuguese winger whose acquisition by Beşiktaş in 2010 caused much excitement.

<sup>183</sup> Interview with author, 4 May 2013.

<sup>184</sup> The playing schedule in the top Turkish league includes a mid-season break from late December until late January. Lig TV is the name of a sports channel that has the rights to broadcast live Süper Lig matches. The company also have an app for smartphones and tablets that is very popular with fans. See <http://www.ligtv.com.tr> (accessed 8 September 2015).

<sup>185</sup> Interview with author, 13 January 2013.

In this anecdote, we see a host of tactics that the twenty-first century Beşiktaş fan uses to bring the footballing experience in the everyday. The habitual tasks of life, such as waking up or commuting, have been penetrated by notions of Beşiktaş. Once again, the argument is not that enchanting the everyday is new; rather, I wish to suggest that the capabilities of internet technologies make this enchantment more forceful and ubiquitous.

The fan describes several activities: listening to chants, reading and watching the news on an iPad and watching the games on TV. All are practices that fans undertake in addition to physically attending matches. As chapter 6 showed, reading about or watching the team at a distance has been available to diaspora fans for decades. What the internet allows is for more mimesis-heavy fan activities to be brought into the everyday. It is of note that Emre lingers most on Beşiktaş chants, the most transformative and enchanting activity involving a heightened sense of contact and copy. Via the digital file or video sent by WhatsApp, the chant extends its reach. No longer is it just an echo in the memory but a replicable sound (and often image), an accessible reminder of community that is triggered whenever someone rings his phone.

The notion of internet-mediated mimesis is perhaps best encapsulated in the internet meme. Memes forcefully grab the attention and are capable of being replicated or circulated by anyone. As such, they subscribe to what Bennett highlights as the dual qualities of enchantment, namely, ‘something that we encounter, that hits us’ but also ‘a comportment that can be fostered through deliberate strategies’ (Bennett 2001, 4). Beşiktaş fans’ combination of football with social media, especially the meme, is one ‘deliberate strategy’ to foster, prolong and prioritise states of enchantment and play.

A significant amount of my fieldwork was devoted to documenting the ebb and flow of global internet memes within the Çarşı Berlin network: November and December 2012 saw fan interactions liberally laced with references to the Gangnam Style music video. By March 2013 it was the Harlem Shake that had captured everyone's attention (figs. 162-164).<sup>186</sup> This phenomenon can be seen as part of the 'parochial global' that I explored in the previous chapter, allowing fans to tap into and contribute to a worldwide trend. One particular mimetic example is worth dwelling on because it richly demonstrates the way that the intertwining of football, internet technologies and global pop culture can enchant and enliven the everyday.



**Figure 162. Beşiktaş fans dancing their own version of the 'Harlem Shake', Duisburg, March 2013 (author's photo)**

<sup>186</sup> Gangnam Style is a single by the South Korean musician Psy. Released in July 2012, it went viral in late-autumn of that year, the first YouTube video to reach one billion views <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9bZkp7q19f0> (accessed 22 May 2015). The Harlem Shake went viral as an internet meme in February 2013, as groups of people published videos of themselves dancing to a short excerpt from 'Harlem Shake' by Baauer in a range of weird and wonderful locations. See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OtJDBX4LQt8> for a representative sample (accessed 22 May 2015).

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**Figure 163. The Gangnam Style meme in Beşiktaş Facebook comments. The posting of a picture by a fan on a night out prompts a flurry of comments: 'wow bro...' / 'are you getting laid bro?' / 'living it up in the bar tonight ☺<sup>187</sup> / from what I heard, Arda [the fan who posted the picture] did gangnam [sic] style that night ☺<sup>188</sup>, November 2012**

**Figure 164. Beşiktaş fan posting a Gangnam Style jpeg meme and tagging two Beşiktaş friends in his post, December 2012 'Oppa gangnam style' is a line from the song**

It was 21<sup>st</sup> December 2012 and the global news agenda was full of stories about the end of the world. The day apparently marked the point at which the ancient Mayans predicted the end of civilization. It happened to also coincide with a Beşiktaş match versus Kayserispor. As such, the prediction became folded into the normal Beşiktaş-related chat on social media. 'Judgment day' or 'doomsday' in Turkish is the word *kıyamet*. It is often used in the phrase *kıyamet koptu* (all hell broke loose). What was fascinating was the variety of creative ways that the event was referenced and worked by fans in their status updates on Facebook.<sup>189</sup> A common motif that emerged was people changing the lyrics of

<sup>187</sup> These are the lyrics to a popular old song: *Bu gece barda gönlüm hovarda*. See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xSNmVB-c20o> (accessed 16 September 2015).

<sup>188</sup> 'Gangnam style' is probably being a dysphemism for having sex (like 'scoring').

<sup>189</sup> A Facebook status is a feature that allows a user to share a small amount of content on their profile and in the news feed. Facebook encourages the regular posting of statuses via a bar placed at the top of the user's homepage entitled 'Update status'. It is common for users to use this feature to publicise how they are feeling, what they are up to or to post links to websites, videos or photos.

the song *Beşiktaş seninle ölmeye geldik* ('We came to die with you Beşiktaş') to *Kıyamet seninle kopmaya geldik* ('We came to make chaos with you, judgement day'). The verb *kopmak* means both to break/snap and also to hang out. Many posts contained puns within a pun, piling on the parody, *kopMAYA* being written in capitals to emphasise the evocation of the Mayan prophecy (figs. 165, 166, 168).

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**Figure 165. 'We came to wreak hell with you Beşiktaşsss :)) yaa Kayseri yaa Kayseri :))'**

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**Figure 166. 'Good morning Mayans. We came to wreak hell with you'**

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**Figure 167. 'They say the end of the world will come at 12:15 in the afternoon, they even say the exact time. The Mayans are flocking to Sirice [sic] at the moment.<sup>190</sup> There is a tourism boom at Sirice [sic] :-) Anyway, if the end of the world does come, burn us all in the fires of hell o black eagle ;-)'**

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<sup>190</sup> Şirince, the Izmir village that became popular before 21 December 2012 for being 'immune' to the apocalypse.

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**Figure 168. 'F\*\*\* the Mayans, it's on the day that I don't come to you, the day I don't think about you, my Beşiktaş, that all hell will break loose'<sup>191</sup>**

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**Figure 169. 'Let the end of the world come, and this fake world come to an end... I have a tempest within me, who even cares!!!!'**

The key characteristic of this memetic mimesis (or mimesis through memes) is its unrestrained nature. Each iteration sees a different fantastical working as fans pull the prediction into tropes of loved ones, fuse it with the idea of sinners, jumble it in with personal state of minds – there seems to be no limit to how the meme can be creatively reworked.

As such, memes stand as an excellent example of what Taussig calls 'mimetic excess', a process where imitation and contact go into overdrive. Taussig was writing in the very different context of the mid-1990s but his words seem perfectly-suited to describe the Facebook environment, which is characterised by 'endless mobility one step ahead of interpretive discharge' (Taussig 1993, 249). Taussig argues that, when experience is characterised by such excess, mimesis develops the potential to be more transformative. Imitation can 'creat[e] reflexive awareness as to the mimetic faculty, an

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<sup>191</sup> I star the word 'fuck' not to prevent offence but because in the original the Turkish equivalent, *amina koyayım* (shove it in a cunt), is written as an acronym (*amk*). In its acronym form, the phrase is more prevalent (and less offensive), even going so far as to lend its name to a Turkish daily sports paper: <http://amkspor.sozcu.com.tr> (accessed 8 September 2015).

awareness that can reconstellate' (Taussig 1993, 254–5). Bennett mirrors Taussig's position, suggesting a similar power to 'reconstellate' lurks within the enchanting moment. Enchantment for Bennett, 'might just help to induce the kind of magnanimous mood that seems to be crucial to the ethical demands of a sociality that is increasingly multicultural' (Bennett 2001, 32).

Whether considering enchantment or mimesis, both authors point to the same end result: the two processes can inspire greater reflexivity or, cast in the idiom of the thesis, an expansion of the imagination. Nigel Thrift goes even further. For Thrift, the 'reconstellation' of relationality ushered in by modern technology is a complete rewiring of subjectification: 'in contrast to the idea of the romantic subject with a deep inner core, we now find subjects being built who rely on the onflow of information in motion to comprehend their place in the world' (Thrift 2011, 16).

We find ourselves brought back to an idea first espoused in chapter 4, namely that fandom involves conceiving of oneself as a composite being. This time, greater emphasis is placed on the imitative and enchanting dimensions of that experience. Instead of Strathernian dividuality we have a more STS-inspired subjectification through the recombination of 'information in motion': a 'primitive' society, an erroneous prediction, a Beşiktaş song, an ode to sacrifice, the imagery of lovers, the diacritica of hell – all are combined in the meme. Artifice is foregrounded, as the self is momentarily constructed out of an array of information which is deliberately designed to overload reason and come across as self-consciously absurd.

In twenty-first century social networking, it's possible to glimpse the power unleashed through repeated contact with others. Crucially, this power is

no longer contingent on situations where people physically meet up. It can now emerge at home or at work, anywhere that the user can glimpse the ephemeral reworkings of text or image, self and other, amongst the continuously-updating Facebook feed. As such, social networking can be said to increase enchantment's percolation into everyday moments and spaces of life, enlivening the everyday:

From fieldwork diary, 12 December 2012

A fan in North London listens to Beşiktaş chants on repeat whilst at work. He works the night shift at Morrison's – one of the large supermarket chains in the UK – replenishing the stock between 10pm and 6am. One Saturday, whilst sitting in a bar in North London watching a game, he takes out his phone and plays a Beşiktaş chant for me that he had downloaded from somewhere. He explains that, one evening at work, he just listened to this same song for the entire eight-hour shift.

From fieldwork diary, 20 May 2013

Whilst waiting for friends, Hakan passes the time by showing me some pictures on his phone. A lot of them are modified Jpegs of football situations from Facebook. They're all in English. Hakan flicks through about six to eight of these things. Where are they from? I ask. He says 'Soccer memes'. I Google it and find their Tumblr account.<sup>192</sup>

We see how the smartphone acts as a 'technology of the imagination' (Sneath, Holbraad, and Pedersen 2009), expanding imaginative capacities, allowing for a greater gambit of joking and enchantment in the lives of Çarşı Berlin members. While this can be viewed as a 'positive' aspect of the distractive nature of being part of Çarşı Berlin, the combination of group membership and the smartphone can also undoubtedly have more harmful consequences.

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<sup>192</sup> <http://soccer-memes.tumblr.com/> (accessed 8 September 2015). Tumblr is an image-based micro-blogging platform. For a good overview of how it works and its place within the internet social networking landscape, see Rifkin (2013).

***Damaging the everyday***

Özgür, Koblenz, Germany

Me: In an average day, how much time do you think you spend...[devoted to Beşiktaş]

Özgür: I wake up and, before I go to the shower I first go with my mobile phone on the Beşiktaş news... When I'm in the shower I turn on the sports radio and on my way to work I'm listening to Beşiktaş radio.

M: you can listen in the car?

Ö: yeah, on my mobile phone and headphones. Then I start at work and around 10 o'clock or something like that, when it's the breakfast break, I go on the internet and look for [laughs] new news! The same thing at lunch. And shortly before leaving work again. After that I go home. If there is a match I'm going to watch the match. If not, I'm always looking at the news. That's all....

M [to his wife]: Do you agree? That he spends a lot of time-

W: sometimes it's too much! We go to breakfast. The first thing is Beşiktaş. Sometimes Beşiktaş radio.

... Ö: it's easier with the phone [as] I can check it right now. If I had no iPhone I couldn't check it right-<sup>193</sup>

From fieldwork diary. Koblenz, Germany. January 2013

I need a piss. I ask Özgür where the toilet is. He leads me out to the corridor and then to the head of the steps. There is a door on the left. He tries the handle. It's locked. We'll have to get the guy from downstairs to open it up, he says. He then spots the guy walking round and shouts to him to bring the key. There's a middle-aged man out here on the steps having a smoke and we talk to him whilst we're waiting. He's telling us how his son has learnt to swear like a trooper. He can say '*Amina koyayım!*' (Shove it in a cunt) He says with a smile. All the man needs to do, he explains, is say '*Fenerbahçe*' and the kid responds: '*Amina koyayım!*' '*Galatasaray?*' '*Amina koyayım!*'. '*Beşiktaş?*' He then mimes someone scrunching up their face and fists and going '*grrrrr!*' – a cross between a growl and a yes. It's quite an amusing image. I ask how old his son is. Two years old, he says. That's pretty young to know how to say 'cunt', I think to myself.

I asked the same question to many fans: how much time in an average day do you devote to following Beşiktaş? Earlier in the chapter, we heard that, for Emre, following the team and the lives of fellow supporters could brighten a dull commute. That interview was conducted one-on-one. The one above, by contrast, took place with a different fan in the presence of his wife. Her interventions undermined the braggadocio of her husband, as she declared his fixation on Beşiktaş to be 'too much!' and revealing how 'horrible' it is for her that he is so obsessed. The result is an impression of how enchantment can be to the detriment of others. As an aside, this accidental arrangement reflects not

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<sup>193</sup> Interview with author, 4 May 2013.

only my argument in chapter 4 about viewing fandom in the context of ordinary life, but also underlines the insights that can be gained by meeting interlocutors in their 'home' setting with others present. A regret from fieldwork was that these glimpses into non-footballing life remained rare and fleeting.

Once again, when discussing how involvement with Beşiktaş can have a malign effect on other aspects of life it pays not to load all the argumentative weight onto internet technologies. The father teaching his two year-old to swear has nothing to do with the internet. Likewise, as mentioned earlier a fan from Germany told me she had bunked off school many times to attend Beşiktaş matches, missing language exchange trips and important exams.<sup>194</sup> Life story interviews, too, were replete with stories of how fans' fanaticism had led to lies, anger and frayed relationships. These stories were normally told with a giggle and a boast rather than remorse – a consequence, perhaps, of the setting of an official interview to discuss 'their fandom', or perhaps an attempt to impress me:

Berk, Stuttgart

I went to the doctor's to get a medical explanation [to take sick leave]. So I get the papers and I'm at home, I make a plan to go to the match. I'm married. I can't tell the missus, if I say I'm going to the match, she'll say that I am sick and I can't go. She also works. So on that day [of the match] I say to her, 'I'm going to my mum's' – she lives 100k away. 'You go to work, and I'll go there' I say. 'Fine,' she says. 'You're not going to the match, are you?' she adds. 'No, I'm not.' My brother, Mert, is also a Beşiktaş fan. I go there. 'So bro, we going or not?' I have two other friends there. 'We are, we are going!' They shout. So we pile into the car and we are on the way to the match. I tell my mum and dad, 'If the missus calls, tell her I've gone to the coffee house, I've gone to drink something with my brother.' I also have a sister, and she didn't know about [the plan], you see? She comes home, and the moment she comes in, my missus rings. She answers, missus says 'Where's your brother?' and she says my brothers are at the

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<sup>194</sup> Interview with author, 18 February 2013. 'I got the ticket for the flight. ... and then I came to school, I saw that we were gonna write an exam on that day. And I told him [the teacher] and he said "no you cannot go". And then he told me I had to cancel my flight, I had to cancel everything. And then he asked me if I had did it and I said "yeah I have". But I didn't! So, on that day, my mum called my school and told them "yeah my child is sick. She can't come to the exam"'.

game, she doesn't know anything yet. Then I get a message [from my wife], 'I hope you lose [the match] – you lied to me.'<sup>195</sup>

At the same time, the interview of Özgür and his wife provides a glimpse into an important downside to the entanglement of internet use with football fandom. Successful involvement in a twenty-first century fan network requires the prioritisation of new forms of interaction that can conflict with those needed to fulfil one's responsibilities at work or home. The result is fans falling short, making it harder to be both an accomplished fan and to balance being a fan with being a successful family member.

Being a committed member of Çarşı Berlin requires, in effect, being everywhere at once. The creation of a transnational Beşiktaş fan group has formed an entire ecosystem of environments where fans can interact such as messageboards, Facebook groups and WhatsApp conversations. As already mentioned, the emergence of a new medium is often one of oppressive reorganisation of the existing landscape (Carr 2011, 90). Bars, coffee houses, club houses and stadiums still retain importance as sites for fans. What changes is that they become interspersed with these new places. Mediations are doubled, virtual potentialities increased. As the possibilities for play increase, so too are the requirements and expectations. The devoted member of Çarşı

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<sup>195</sup> Interview with author, 23 February 2013. 'Şimdi evdeyim, maça gitmeye plan yapıyorum, ben evliyim. Hanıma diyemiyorum, maça gideceğim dersem "Raporlusun gidemezsin" diyecek. O da çalışıyor. Ben de o gün dedim ki "Annemlere gidiyorum", annem de 100 km. "Sen çalışıyorsun, ben de oraya gideyim" dedim. "İyi" dedi, "Maça gitmiyorsun değil mi" dedi, "Yok maça gitmiyorum". Kardeşim de Beşiktaşlı, Yalçın. Oraya gittim, "Abi gidiyoruz mu?" Orada 2 arkadaş daha var "Gidiyoruz, gidiyoruz!" arabaya atladık, maça gidiyoruz. Annemle babama dedim ki "Hanım ararsa, hanım ararsa, ben kahveye gittim, ee, bir şeyler içiyoruz kardeşimle". Bir tane de kız kardeşim var, o bilmiyor tamam mı? [laughter] O eve geliyor, Belma, o eve geliyor, o geldiği anda benim hanım telefon açıyor eve. Kardeşim çıkıyor, hanım diyor ki "Abin nerede?", benim için, o da diyor abimler, diyor, maça gittiler, o bilmiyor daha. Sonra mesaj geldi, "inşallah kaybedersiniz bana yalan söyledin".

Berlin is simultaneously in Ukraine and on Facebook; at work but up to date with the goings on at Beşiktaş.

To fulfil these demands – to ‘be a fan’ successfully – requires a different skillset to that of twenty years ago. The more fandom becomes entwined with processes of calculation and computation (Thrift 2004), the more the experiences absorb the affordances of those media. An important one is the ability to be a quick multi-tasker. Computer users have become accustomed to an environment comprised of multiple windows and tabs. Interacting successfully in webspace requires shifting rapidly and frequently between different windows, juggling multiple tasks simultaneously.

The skill of multitasking is hardly new. What is novel, however, is the speed of interaction encouraged by web environments. Clicking a link opens a new window in seconds. Sending an instant message takes a mere moment (the name itself is a clue) and carries the expectation of a similarly ‘instant’ reply. On social networking sites such as Facebook or Twitter, speed has become a core component of the interaction. A look at the time stamp of the average fan Facebook exchange among fans shows how a user receives an intense – almost constant – reminder of the simultaneity of existence with other fans, setting up expectations for rapid responses on multiple fronts (fig. 170). Beşiktaş fans are having to become *quicker* jugglers.

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**Figure 170. Facebook comments prompted by the Kiev photo. Note the timestamps on each post – many are just a minute or two apart. From top: ‘Turns out John is an away match guy, wow! Best regards from me, take care and come back with three points’ / ‘John scored a hat-trick, we already got the three points, but we don’t know what’s going to happen in the game’ / ‘Don’t come back without three points...best regards to John, let’s hold his circumcision ceremony soon’ / ‘You went to Kiev for the match? I loved the Kiev away match last time... if I recall you went to that game as well? God, Kiev, I think this is a great away match!’ / ‘Mate, you should come next time or it’ll be a shame. The atmosphere is great’ / ‘If we come home with maximum points, I want a scarf!’ / ‘what a look Deniz! Have a good deplasman’**

As Carr points out, the affordances of this skillset prioritise continual involvement and distraction. Engaging with web technologies for any length of time plays a part in ‘redirection of our mental resources’ from single-minded concentration to ‘processing a multiplicity of fleeting sensory stimuli’ (Carr 2011, 122). Moreover, this process is extremely compelling: touch, sight and hearing are all engaged simultaneously in net content, be it the tap of a keyboard, chime of a new message, or flash of a pop up window. The net engages the senses forcefully and simultaneously, ensuring ‘positive reinforcements’ accrue and actions are repeated (Carr 2011, 117).

If interaction with other Beşiktaş fans is only (or mostly) available through the internet, and net interactions ‘command our attention with far greater insistency than our television or radio or morning newspaper ever did’, then this has important implications for non-Beşiktaş elements of life (Carr 2011, 117). It can be hard for family and work to compete with the pull of

Beşiktaş, and for fans to fulfil the requirements of being a successful fan, hardworking employee and loving family member:

Ali, life story interview

I always buy games through PayPal. like, [on a] digital website.<sup>196</sup> And my boss, he used to get angry with me: 'Just do your work!'. He used to argue with me. I was good worker but- anyway we sold the shop. Then we owned a shop and nobody could tell me anything. I wasn't the boss [another family member was in charge] but I wanted to watch my games. I used to always take my laptop. There wasn't an iPad, iPhone, apps and all that back then. I would take my laptop, and watch LigTV in there at work. So... that was only the way I was following it.

The sensory thrill of being part of a fan community – of keeping up to date with the arguments, banter and plans – can overwhelm the ability to detach. Beşiktaş can become the meta-lens through which all other associations – to family, to friends – are pulled. Fans dress their families up in Beşiktaş kit; they make their children predict the score of tomorrow's game and interpret their child's behaviour as linked to Beşiktaş (figs. 171-176). Family members themselves become the content of the Beşiktaş meme – photographed and circulated to bolster fan loyalty to the club. Often this is done in a humourous or ironic fashion, part of a wider play of aggrandisement or bravado. Yet in the internet environment especially, what Saler calls 'the rational detachment of the ironic imagination' can fail to fire (Saler 2012, 18). During fieldwork I came across fans who refused to speak to family members as a result of them making anti-Beşiktaş jibes on their Facebook wall, or who had sunk thousands of Euros into debt as a result of hosting other Beşiktaş fans when they come to town. One fan's wife divorced him, in part as a result of his involvement with Çarşı Berlin and accrual of debt. These experiences underline Saler's fitting warning that

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<sup>196</sup> PayPal is a widely-used online payments system. See <https://about.paypal-corp.com> (accessed 9 September 2015).

‘the price of living with enchantment was always the possibility of being captivated by it’ (Saler 2012, 20).

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**Figure 171.** Two daughters of a Beşiktaş fan give a prediction of the score of Beşiktaş's next game on their fingers (4-2). Text reads: ‘The result of tomorrow's match’

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**Figure 172.** A Beşiktaş fan shows off the baby gear he has bought. Text reads: ‘The preparations are complete. [Now] we expect my baby eagle... :)’

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**Figure 173.** A baby in a Beşiktaş babygrow. The text reads ‘A manly man doesn't support a colourful team!’ in reference to Beşiktaş's rivals Fenerbahçe and Galatasaray (see chapter 4)

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**Figure 174.** A newborn baby is dwarfed by his father's Beşiktaş kit

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**Figure 175. One fan's entire family is clad in Beşiktaş kit**

**Figure 176. The same family a couple of years later. The text reads 'we are ready. Come on BEŞİKTAŞ'**

### **Self-reflexivity**

I have shown the ways in which the enchanting elements of the fan experience are brought – via internet-mediated communication – into the folds of everyday life. I suggested this process distracts, and that this distraction can both brighten up the everyday, but also overwhelm or crowd out attachments to non-footballing relationships. I would like to finish by suggesting that this enchantment can be powerful enough to politicise. Football's wonder-inducing properties can help fans develop greater self-reflexivity as to the socially constructed nature of communities. This realisation in turn could powerfully reshape fans' conception of other labels that are applied to them in their lives.

I start by returning to the notion that football fandom is a 'modern' channelling of mimetic excess. In twenty-first century football, the inherent enchantment-through-imitation that Taussig describes finds itself doubly transposed – first to the shouts, touches and smells of the terrace and then into the videos, soundtracks and memes of the online world. Modern football

fandom spins imitation and contact with others to an apotheosis: watching together involves both prodding a phone and jumping arm-in-arm; being together requires frequent and rapid activity on Facebook as well as with those present in the stadium. The experience generates a surfeit of mimetic excess, 'an excess creating reflexive awareness as to the mimetic faculty, an awareness that can reconstellate' (Taussig 1993, 254–5).

The idea of mimetic excess can be seen as highly political. I use the term not to refer to explicit political stances, to support for political parties or policies. I instead locate the political at a more general level as bringing attention to how groups are called into being. 'Doing politics', suggests Bruno Latour, is 'collecting or composing what the common world is made of' (Latour 2005, 256). Similar to Bennett's idea of 'crossing' or Turner's notion of 'communitas', mimetic excess has the power to reconfigure how we view the world by teaching greater self-awareness. That is, by suggesting new ways of conceiving of what the world is made of and how human beings relate to one another.

Returning to the earlier conversation about memes and self-reflexivity, I am taken in particular with Taussig's idea that *excessive* imitation draws attention to artifice. If you see 1,000 fans take their shoes off and wave them at the opposition, or watch each iteration of a Mayan meme become more and more ridiculous, a natural conclusion is that the phenomenon in hand is not 'ordinary' and does not 'really' matter. Yet the very not-mattering is precisely why it is so compelling. Placing such emphasis on something which does not matter is, in its own way, a political act, 'drawing attention to the exuberance

with which it permits the freedom to live reality as really-made up' (Taussig 1993, 255).

Michael Saler argues that what defines a specifically modern enchantment is being fully aware of the artifice of the enchantment with which one is captivated. His argument is a defence of those who engage in fantasy fan practices, such as the Harry Potter books or role-playing computer games. These people are not deluded, argues Saler. Instead, they are pushing against a strong current of rationalism in modern life that frequently distances fantasy to a realm of unimportance and frivolity – fans of fantasy are 're-enchanting an allegedly disenchanted world' (Saler 2012, 6).

The world of Çarşı Berlin fans accords with Saler's thesis. Football is very self-consciously 'play' which, as Johan Huizinga has noted, constitutes 'a stepping out of 'real' life into a temporary sphere of activity with a disposition all of its own' (Huizinga 1949, 8). Fans frequently make deliberately excessive, rude or scandalous statements in order to subvert the logic of a strict separation between work and leisure, life and death and mock the prioritisation of one over the other. Take, for instance the popular song sung at most games: 'We came to die with you Beşiktaş' (*Beşiktaş seninle ölmeye geldik*). If questioned very few fans would admit to actually wanting to die for Beşiktaş – they play with the gap between virtual and actual realities in order to thumb their nose at convention, to instil an enchantment into the experience by distancing it from the everyday.



**Figure 177.** A Beşiktaş banner in English proclaims, 'We are here to die for U!', Kiev 20 October 2011<sup>197</sup> (author's photo)

Such play becomes all the more evident when the parameters of the actual situation push close to the edge of the illusionary. In November 2012, Beşiktaş were playing a basketball match against Partisan Belgrade in Serbia. Serbian fans have a reputation for violent hooliganism and the Serbian police and Beşiktaş club officials advised Beşiktaş fans not to travel to the game. A few hundred fans headed to Belgrade regardless.<sup>198</sup> In the context of a physical trip that contains the potential for danger, the line 'We came to die for you Beşiktaş' took on new meaning. The line was folded into Facebook updates, fitting the statement into an imaginary of going to war, a frequent trope in hardcore football fan groups across Europe (figs. 178-180).

<sup>197</sup> The use of English suggests the intended audience is the Dynamo Kiev fans and/or greater televised public.

<sup>198</sup> For more on football hooliganism in the Balkans see Kuper (2003, 227–235); R. Smith (2013). For how the Beşiktaş match was presented on Beşiktaş fan websites, see <http://www.kartalbakisi.com/gundem/taraftar-tarih-yazdi-basin-ne-ise-yarar-h16198.html> (accessed 17 November 2012).

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**Figure 178. 'Good luck to all my brothers who are heading on the Belgrade away match. You're all in my hearts. Even though they don't have tickets, they're heading there because we came to die with you Beşiktaş'**

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**Figure 179. Peace upon all my brothers who are heading to Belgrade from Istanbul! And for Çarşı Berlin's soldiers who hit the road today, let your journey be smooth my bros!**

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**Figure 180. 'We came not for the match but to die. We came to fuck you Partizan!'**

Yet at the moment when the slogan 'we came to die for you Beşiktaş' becomes a feasible (if remote) possibility, the illusion begins to creak. Under the final comment, a fan travelling to the game says 'I don't approve of the dying part, but the rest is great!' (fig. 181).

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**Figure 181. Fan responding to the post suggesting they have come to die for Beşiktaş. 'I don't approve of the dying part, but the rest is great!'**

The stakes of the 'real' situation are such that the joke wears through. As Huizinga puts it: 'by withdrawing from the game he reveals the relativity and fragility of the play-world in which he had temporarily shut himself with others. He robs play of its *illusion* - a pregnant word which means literally "in-play" (from *inlusio*, *illudere* or *inludere*)' (Huizinga 1949, 11). Fandom is frequently misunderstood because the observer fails to realise that the behaviours on display are playful reworkings of illusion, rather than cast-iron statements of reality. Even those who self-identify as hooligans do not want to 'go to war' or even particularly to hurt one another. As Gary Armstrong has noted of football 'hooligans' in Sheffield, such illusionary tropes are evoked as part of the tactic of humiliating one's opponents, 'a victory greater than any involving actual physical violence' (Armstrong 1998, 234).

Like fans of fantasy fiction, television shows or music groups, Çarşı Berlin members are trained to 'perceive one's subjective existence as resulting from the dynamic interaction of material realities and contingent stories, a "mixed reality" combining the virtual and the real' (Saler 2012, 19). I now

progress to the final point in the argument: members of Çarşı Berlin can subsequently train this lens of understanding back onto the experience of being a diasporan. If the fan community is so clearly 'imagined' through messageboards, Facebook pages and sporadic mass conglomeration, then perhaps the concepts of nation, diaspora or migrant are brought to life through similar imaginings. I base this supposition on experiences during fieldwork.

Ben Guirion Airport, Tel Aviv, Israel, November 2012

I'm on a trip with two fans from London to watch Beşiktaş play in Israel. When we arrive at Ben Guirion Airport we join the long queue at the passport windows. When it is our turn to be called, the rather bored looking woman on security looks at my passport, asks a few cursory questions and waves me through. Not so for the other two. Upon seeing that they had Turkish names (Koray and Eren) my travelling companions were pulled out of the line and taken to another room for further questioning.

After waiting for almost an hour in the baggage hall, my companions emerge, giggling. They relate to me what happened. The border staff said to Koray 'Are you from Turkey?' He replied straight away: 'Cyprus'. They then asked Eren: 'Are you Turkish?' He replied straight away 'Kurdish'. Their answers were deliberately intransigent and mocking. Koray's family is indeed from North Cyprus – a territory not recognized as a nation anywhere save Turkey – although Koray is born and raised in London. Likewise, Eren is Kurdish and grew up in South-Eastern Turkey but there is no official 'Kurdish' state.

Koray and Eren might have responded in a similar way if they were heading to Israel on holiday or for work, although I do not think so. That we were wearing football tops, had drunk some alcohol, and were going to *be* football fans in Israel transformed the mood and deportment of our group and the character of our journey. In short, it made the fans more playful, more willing to query the absurdity of a situation where three people have the same document but only one is allowed through while the other two are made to wait. It helped them bat away labels and attempts to classify and categorise. This, for me, is one of the most interesting upshots of football support. Activities such as the passport check at the airport, or the census that requires ticking 'Turkish' in the ethnic origin box, melt and shift in form: no longer timeless, reified 'just so' activities,

but a questionable ‘as if’ tale of imagining a community (Saler 2012, 21). I would like to conduct further research on this topic to explore whether the glimmers of self-reflexivity that I witnessed can be said to be more redolent of wider change.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has set forth how football both fits in and jars with the demands of everyday life for Turkish diasporans. Whilst such elisions and tensions have been present since the 1960s when Turkish-speakers first arrived in Europe in great numbers, I suggested that internet-mediated communication, particularly through the smartphone, provides fans with a powerful new means to replicate exceptional, enchanting elements of the fan experience within their ordinary existence. This process holds the potential both to enliven and overwhelm the everyday, and perhaps even ultimately can help generate greater self-reflexivity about the constructed nature of groups and categories of belonging.

Accordingly, at the close of the thesis I arrive back at the importance of seeing fandom in the context of the everyday, this time looking through the prism from the opposite direction. At the start of the dissertation I pursued questions of how and why fans are drawn to Çarşı Berlin. Here, the emphasis has been on how membership of the group becomes part of the wider lives of diaspora Beşiktaş fans. Viewed from this perspective, an important hue emerges: footballing experiences are frequently defined by prevalence of distraction and a dispersal of attention. The character of imaginings is shaped partially (though not deterministically) by the means through which they are

evoked. Unlike a personal computer, a smartphone is omnipresent and always functioning. Is it reasonable to conclude by suggesting that, if these devices are increasingly important in the consumption of football, then perhaps the Beşiktaş fan community is built out of distraction?

Throughout the thesis, I have been drawing attention to the indeterminate and improvised nature of much of transnational football fandom – pointing out how this indeterminacy is in part a result of football's global universality, the ambiguities of diaspora life, the wide spaces of indeterminacy the internet can open up and the intrinsic open-endedness of practices of imagining. It seems apposite to add the smartphone to this list, considering it a 'technology of the imagination' that is, 'particularly good at opening up spaces in which the underdetermined outcomes that we call imagination emerge' (Sneath, Holbraad, and Pedersen 2009, 25). The smartphone builds on the earlier incarnation of mobile phone, eroding further the need for forward planning and regimentation of interaction. The use of the device by Çarşı Berlin members shows how it encourages and permits more of existence to take place in medias res, 'co-ordinating things on the fly rather than in advance' (*The Economist* 2015), whether that be locating a friend in a football crowd or contributing a variation to a meme circulating through Facebook.

'In contrast to the idea of the romantic subject with a deep inner core, we now find subjects being built who rely on the onflow of information in motion to comprehend their place in the world' (Thrift 2011, 16). What needs adding to Thrift's pronouncement – and what I have shown ethnographically in this chapter – is that this process can be profoundly distracting. It seems unnecessarily closed to accept the notion of distraction as a wholly negative

state. Perhaps the distracting act – at least in the assemblage of smartphone and Çarşı Berlin – stems from the will to be part of a collective, to instil the sociality of the ‘football family’ into moments when it is sorely needed: at work, on public transport or even stuck at home with ‘real’ family. At the close of the thesis, we have returned to a notion of family with which we began, but with greater awareness of some of the negative aspects of that association.

## Conclusion

Be ready for anything – that perhaps is wisdom. Give ourselves up, according to the hour, to confidence, to skepticism, to optimism, to irony, and we may be sure that at certain moments at least we shall be with the truth – Joseph Ernest Renan<sup>199</sup>

In April 2013, when I only had a few months of fieldwork remaining, the Çarşı Berlin messageboard underwent a significant redevelopment. The old board as described in chapters 3 and 7 was closed for over a month and a new one was established, built on an entirely new web platform. All users had to re-register. Although based around the same system of forums and threads, the experience of logging in and using the new board was very different. It had a different colour scheme and icons, and all the previous material had been ‘lost’. The administrator had replicated the same forums and threads exactly as before, but instead of containing the digital traces of conversations over previous years they stood empty. The experience was akin to setting foot in a brand-new, unfurnished house.

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<sup>199</sup> Quoted in James ([1902] 1985, 38).

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**Figure 182. The old Çarşı Berlin website**

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**Figure 183. The new Çarşı Berlin website. Note the small number of topics (*başlıklar*) and messages (*mesajlar*) when compared to the old site**

From the outset the new board had nothing like the same number of people involved. This was still the case nearly eight months later at the start of 2014 when, after a period of absence, I logged in to check up on it. When navigating around, I was surprised at how little activity there had been. In my browsing, I encountered a thread started by one fan entitled ‘What is this silence?’ (*Nedir bu sessizlik*). I clicked to read what it was about:

We are saddened by the fact that this forum is no longer active. We do not understand what the problem is.

What do you say, everyone share their opinion and we discuss the subject?

What's the problem?

- We couldn't get used to the new forum?
- It's easier to share topics on social websites like Facebook and Twitter?
- Is there a problem in the group? Between different crews?

Let's talk about this...<sup>200</sup>

I was intrigued by what I read. In his bullet points, the fan debates whether the silence stems from a question of medium ('Is it easier to share topics on social websites like Facebook?') or is redolent of larger issues in social relations amongst the group ('is there a problem in the group? Between different crews?'). In the post I glimpsed the germ of an idea I was trying to articulate: the very existence of Çarşı Berlin rests in the tangle of material internet infrastructures and the social relations they afford. Just like Chris Kelty's 'geeks', the system of order for Çarşı Berlin mixed up 'operating systems and social systems' (C. Kelty 2008, 38).

Reading further, I noted how the responses to the post also contained the same ready elision and rapid movement between 'technical' and 'social' reasons:

The gossip has become crazy, this man doesn't like the other, one cannot stand the other, etc. This shouldn't happen, we should all prevent this from happening. Our cause is definite, we all follow Beşiktaş. ... In a nutshell, I ask everyone to stand united and together once again. It is my wish that our only means of communication is this forum.

[why the silence?]

- Many of the 'abi's in the forum have left...
- The comforts of social media...
- That we are not represented in Europe in football... and we don't devote as much time as we should to other sports...
- The new recruits are not well acquainted...

Facebook is our main problem because some groups have their own Facebook subgroups, and there are discussions there that only people from their own groups can see... We are part of the problem as well, since someone shares something on Facebook

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<sup>200</sup> Bu forumun izlenmemesi üzüyor bizleri. Sorun nedir anlayamadık. Herkes fikrini söylesin ve burada bu konu hakkında konuşsak nasıl olur? Sorun nedir? Yeni foruma alışamadık mı? Facebook, Twitter gibi sosyal siteleri paylaşma konusunda daha mı rahat? Grup içinde bir sorun mu var? Tayfalar arasında gruplaşma mı oluyor? Konuşalım konu hakkında...

it immediately notifies us on our phones and this is convenient for a lot of people and they do everything on Facebook...  
Now, if there was an app of the Çarşı Berlin forum maybe more people would visit, but that's another topic...<sup>201</sup>

In trying to come up with an explanation, the fans were going round and round in a game of existential chicken and egg: 'The silence is because Facebook is easier to use'; 'No, it's because there are no European football matches this season'. 'Or is it because there's too much gossip?' 'Well, there's too much gossip because Facebook is easier to use!' The posts seemed to encapsulate what I have argued in the thesis as a whole: whilst Beşiktaş fandom is not reliant on the affordances of the internet, Çarşı Berlin very clearly is. The internet makes it possible to forge a hyper-connected transnational grouping of football fans in a way that would have been impossible twenty years ago. What is at stake is not just the medium in which to converse but the very being of Çarşı Berlin.

In chapters 4 and 5 I showed the attractions and rewards that draw fans into the group, such as a sense of familial-like community and a link to a sense of ancestry or homeland. As the thesis progressed I also demonstrated what involvement does to them in turn, in the form of distraction in all its various guises. An important theme running throughout has been the importance of

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<sup>201</sup> Dedikodu almış başını gidiyor, o onu sevmiyor, o onu çekemiyor vs. Bunun olmaması lazım, buna engel olalım hep birlikte. Amacımız belli, hepimiz Beşiktaş peşindeyiz...Uzun lafın kısıası, herkesi tekrardan birlik beraberlik olmaya çağırıyorum. Tek iletişim yerimiz bu forum olmasını diliyorum.

– grubun çoğu abilerinin geri çekilmesi / – sosyal medya rahatlığı / – futbolda Avrupa'da olmayışımız / – diğer branşlara hak ettikleri değeri veremiyoruz / – yeni arkadaşlarının birbiriyle tam kaynaşmamaları...

Facebook baş sorun çünkü bazı grupların kendi aralarında Facebook'da grupları var, ve kimsenin görmediği sadece kendi grupların gördüğü bir konuşmalar geçiyor... biz dahil nedeni Facebook'da biri bir şey paylaştığında telefonda gözüküyor maalesef çoğu kolaylığa gidiyor ve her şeyi Facebook üzerinde yapıyorlar...belki Çarşı BERLIN Forum olarak App olsa daha mi çok girilirdi o da bir ayrı soru...

playfulness. I have shown how a sense of play imbues the interactions of Çarşı Berlin members with each other and with the wider world, whether through creative chants, dressing up in team colours or circulating memes on Facebook. Yet I have not engaged fully with what might be labelled the 'anthropology of play'. This avoidance has been deliberate. 'Play is an occasion of pure waste: waste of time, energy, ingenuity, skill, and often of money', states Roger Callois, summarising the dominant view historically (Caillois [1961] 2001, 5–6). For many decades play was seen as a form of activity separable from the everyday. It was 'non-work' and therefore given relatively meagre treatment in comparison to 'work', despite the fact that a number of societies make no distinction between 'work' and 'play' (Schwartzman 1980; Lancy 1980). In the 1970s, Clifford Geertz helped posit a more sympathetic conception of play. Working from a symbolic representational position, scholars countered that play was, in fact, 'deep' (Geertz [1973a] 2000), that games are 'serious' (Ortner 1999), acting as metonyms of a culture more broadly – the story that a group tells itself about itself.

The preceding chapters illustrated the limitations of both approaches. Attempting to restrict football to non-working situations does great violence to an ethnographic reality where its presence leaks into interactions at work and at home – more so in the age of mobile internet media. By the same token, viewing the activities of Çarşı Berlin members as affirming the grander meaning of the group renders fans as one-dimensional symbols. Play becomes purposeful, an object for reflection and interpretation but at the expense of losing the sense of indeterminacy and open-endedness that also characterises the experience.

Here, in the conclusion, I wish to suggest that a more productive way to understand the playfulness on display is to view play as a disposition, cultivated and charged by involvement in football fan group. I base this suggestion on the work of Thomas Malaby, who argues that play is ‘an attitude characterized by a readiness to improvise in the face of an ever-changing world that admits of no transcendently ordered account’ (Malaby 2009, 206). Play for Malaby is a mode of human experience divorced from any particular setting or type of activity. He suggests it is characterised by three main elements. The first is that it is totalising, ‘in the sense that it reflects acknowledgement of how events, however seemingly patterned or routinized, can never be cordoned off from contingency entirely’ (Malaby 2009, 211). The second factor is a readiness to improvise as you go along. The third sees the play actor as an agent within social processes, an explicit rebuff to Geertzian symbolism: ‘The actor *may* affect events, but this agency is not confined to the actor’s intent or measured by it. Rather it allows for unintended consequences of action’ (Malaby 2009, 211 emphasis in original).

Malaby’s list of characteristics accords well with the actions of Çarşı Berlin. From a materialistic perspective, many of the actions that I have written about could be seen as very silly or irrelevant: fans taking off their shoes and waving them above their heads; taking screenshots of their phone clock at 19:03; developing a child-like obsession with stickers. From a Geertzian, symbolist standpoint they could become *over*interpreted, seen as crucial code that, if deciphered properly, will reveal a broad vista of otherwise hidden systems of meanings (Taussig 1991). But figured as a disposition, the actions of Çarşı Berlin members retain a spirit of pragmatism and open-

endedness, actors recover their agency and the task of researchers is no longer mindreading but simply recording sensitively the mediations by which this disposition emerges. I believe anthropology should pay more attention to the 'play element' in experience (Huizinga 1949), and be less dismissive of work that explores it. As my treatment of the behaviours of Çarşı Berlin shows, imaginaries of belonging do not have to be accepted or resisted but can be *played* with in more or less reflexive or open-ended ways. If this is the case amongst a diasporic football collective reliant on the internet, might it also be true of diaspora communities or internet users more broadly?

Indeed, one important insight the thesis suggests is that, however we wish to conceptualise the internet, it should certainly not be thought of as 'still'. As the example of the messageboard shows, internet-mediated environments are continually changing. Çarşı Berlin's dependence on these environments in turn leaves them subject to frequent 'crises of mediation' (Eisenlohr 2011, 4) as they try and hold steady indeterminacy, to construct something secure over the ever-present gaps. In such an environment, we need theoretical frameworks that are concerned with the potential of becoming as much as with what already exists, a questioning disposition that refuses to take for granted a priori distinctions between subjects and objects, placing ourselves at the locus where informants are grappling with determined and potential outcomes.

The thesis was an attempt to do exactly this. Following closely a football team from a country with which you have ancestral links involves doubling across cultural environments and occupying unfixed spaces. I have shown how football, alongside its ability to sharpen distinction, possesses a large hinterland of more indeterminate, 'universal' elements of belonging. I showed also how

practices of imagining are frequently open-ended, becoming instantiated in the wearing of particular clothes or unstable shouting of categories ('Turkey!' 'Beşiktaş!'), and that internet technologies bring about spaces or interactions that leave unanswered as much as they close down and determine. Accordingly, being a successful part of Çarşı Berlin – that is, being a diasporan football fan imagining a community through internet technologies – requires a strongly playful disposition. Fans are involved in a process of continual improvisation, trying to keep the grouping of Çarşı Berlin rolling with and responding to the indeterminacies of the experience.

Thematically, I see two directions in which the ideas set forth in the dissertation could be productively developed and built on. The first would be to explore whether transnational groupings are more predisposed towards play than others. This could be investigated by studying groups in a transnational milieu not orientated towards games. Is the disposition particularly noticeable in, say, the work of employees in global corporations or multinational aid organisations? Such a study would go a long way to trying to ascertain whether playfulness is provoked solely through exposure to games or whether those already privy to an acute 'doubling' of belonging, through work or migration, are instinctively more playful.

The second is to investigate how the play element of existence has been expanded and monetised. Malaby suggests 'the disposition of play is, in many ways, the latest sentiment to have been turned into the object of institutional desire' (Malaby 2009, 216). He could have cited as evidence a computer games industry that has become more valuable than the film industry, or of sponsors paying ever-increasing sums to broadcast football or have their logo

emblazoned on a particular kit.<sup>202</sup> Beyond 'games', many business and governments are developing strategies for managing affect and mediating appeal: social media campaigns; advertising; building the brand (Thrift 2005; Lury 2004; Foster 2007).<sup>203</sup> Harnessing play for profitability seems a trend likely only to increase in importance. Understanding the inherent indeterminacy of games, how institutions try and instrumentalise them, and their ability to baffle prediction and frustrate this desire will be questions that concern more and more anthropologists. Given enough time and resources, researching both of these topics would help greatly to either deepen or refute the idea of play as a disposition.

But perhaps there is a wider way in which my findings can affect the approach of future anthropological studies. Could the insights garnered make anthropology itself a more playful discipline? As with academia more broadly, much anthropological work seems to treat both its subject matter and its conclusions with the utmost solemnity. If we truly take to heart the idea that we should learn from our participants, then an important lesson that I derived from football fans was to not take myself – or what I was doing – with too much gravity. Theories of divided belonging or the enchantment of mimesis, for all their explanatory salience, are proffered less as a definite fact and more in the spirit of a contingent observation. I am willing for others to subvert as much as confirm my interpretations through future research.

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<sup>202</sup> 'Premier League TV rights: Sky and BT pay £5.1bn for Live Games' in BBC, 19 February 2015, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/0/football/31357409> (accessed 11 September 2015). See also McGurk (2014).

<sup>203</sup> See also the Behavioural Insights Team (also known as the 'Nudge Unit') jointly owned by the UK government and an innovation charity: <http://www.behaviouralinsights.co.uk/about-us/> (accessed 16 September 2015).

There are some, no doubt, who view this suggestion as anthropology relinquishing yet more of its tenuous grip on claims towards explaining reality or being a 'social science'. Yet in response I would ask: why are we studying the human? Not simply, I hope, to 'know' what he or she is or does. I would like to believe that most anthropologists wish to use the knowledge they acquire to help increase understanding and acceptance, to work, however incrementally, towards a more dignified world. Wielding knowledge in a playful manner is a crucial move towards achieving this aim. It leaves open the possibility of debate being undertaken in a less agonistic fashion. Through being playful, we give knowledge's intrinsic indeterminacy and contingency the space to breathe. It dilutes the risk of feeling backed into a corner or under threat. We mediate gaps rather than attempt to fill them, in the process generating greater self-reflexivity as to how best to relate to one another. Not so much an 'anthropology *of* play', then, but a playful anthropology. The spirit behind the gesture is important. The spirit should be playful.

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I would like to finish by returning to the example of the messageboard. As well as prompting reflection over the imbrication of media and community, further salience lies in the way it calls attention to the ephemeral nature of internet-mediated environments. It was in June 2013 that I finished the bulk of my ethnographic research. This DPhil was completed two years later, in the summer of 2015. When writing it up, many of the practices to which it referred were already out of date. Like the old Çarşı Berlin messageboard, they had

disappeared, prompting another crisis of mediation, this time for the anthropologist: what use is research that is out of date before it is even published?

The ephemerality of the internet is a topic that exercises minds beyond academia. The vice president of Google, Vint Cerf, recently warned internet users that the best way to store their digital photographs was to print them out. For the head of one of the most successful businesses of the internet age to make such an argument was thought-provoking to say the least. His speech is worth quoting at length:

Future generations will wonder about us but they will have very great difficulty knowing about us. When you think about the quantity of documentation from our daily lives that is captured in digital form, like our interactions by email, people's tweets, and all of the world wide web, it's clear that we stand to lose an awful lot of our history... We don't want our digital lives to fade away. If we want to preserve them, we need to make sure that the digital objects we create today can still be rendered far into the future.

We are nonchalantly throwing all of our data into what could become an information black hole without realising it. We digitise things because we think we will preserve them, but what we don't understand is that unless we take other steps, those digital versions may not be any better, and may even be worse, than the artefacts that we digitised. If there are photos you really care about, print them out.<sup>204</sup>

Cerf's words reveal that a practice-theory, actor-network-inspired worldview is not confined to the academy. Cerf admits that the digital is not stable but needs to be continually 'rendered'. In doing so, he recalls the words of Bruno Latour: 'If you don't have the festival now or print the newspaper today, you simply lose the grouping, which is not a building in need of restoration but a movement in need of continuation' (Latour 2005, 37). It is in the rendering – the en-actment – that entities acquire their meaning. If the tools used to

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<sup>204</sup> <http://www.theguardian.com/technology/2015/feb/13/google-boss-warns-forgotten-century-email-photos-vint-cerf> (accessed 09 July 2015).

accomplish that rendering alter rapidly and grow anachronistic, then the entities fall mute. The materials of the digital world present a more quotidian example: I cannot access data stored on a floppy disk. It is impenetrable to my MacBook Air laptop. Unreadable. Inaccessible.

By painstakingly recording the digital lives of Çarşı Berlin fans between 2013 and 2015, I hope to have contributed in a small way to preserving a snapshot of popular internet technologies in that window of time. But the experience raises major questions about the role of scholarship in the twenty-first century. If, as Cerf warns, the digital ‘fades away’ with alarming speed then how can the anthropologist of the digital ensure their work continues to speak? Will the anthropological project evolve to be more akin to that of the historian or archaeologist, raking over the materials of a recent past? Do scholars perhaps have to be more inventive and speedy in their strategies of research and dissemination lest they are condemned to producing out of date work? Or has it always been thus? In prompting such questions we see how the study of internet media allows us to consider not just how humans bond and bind in our time, but also how startlingly fragile and difficult it is to convey and learn from that experience.

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