Congregating as a social phenomenon; the social glue that binds

Martin MacCarthy, Ashlee Morgan and Claire Lambert

Faculty of Business and Law, Edith Cowan University, Joondalup, Australia

Abstract

Purpose – This study aims to consolidate and hone existing spectating and crowd theory. This is achieved by marrying socio-cultural ideas and concepts from related disciplines.

Design/methodology/approach – This conceptual review examines what people do when they congregate at an event, and in doing so, answers the question of what they forgo when denied a crowd. Concepts are teased from the literature as to what happens during participatory congregation (in company, *in situ*), punctuated by relegation without it.

Findings – Related concepts are organised into a typology. The metamodel is the essence of the paper and includes four themes: (1) identity construction, (2) interacting with others, (3) producing and co-producing the event and (4) the allure of tribalism.

Research limitations/implications – The paper is conceptual and therefore a typology (not a taxonomy). This implies that while it is likely transferable, it is not generalisable. It is manual and subjective, as opposed to objective and automatic. Notwithstanding future research implications, it is intended to inform those considering running virtual events.

Practical implications – Event organisers are informed as to the "what" and "why" of running community events. It encourages a more circumspect, humanistic view that events are not merely a source of revenue.

Social implications – This review contributes a macro understanding of human nature, complementing a micro understanding of crowd behaviour.

Originality/value – Virtual event management is a relatively new and burgeoning field. Prior to the Pandemic an event without a crowd was almost inconceivable.

Keywords Fandom, Spectating, Event management, Communitas, Crowds, Gigs

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

> We got to be in that moment with her as she tore through a set of evocative, raw and emotional music. [Reminiscing – solo artist Adalita's gig in 2013 – Rowe, 2021]

Why do we crave spectating a spectacle? This review considers the question from a more holistic perspective; what happens when we do, and what happens when we cannot spectate? Comparisons can then be made between an event with and without spectators, which will hopefully assist organisers weighing up the worth of holding an event, without a crowd.

Art, entertainment, education and sporting events have all been relegated in the wake of the global Covid-19 pandemic. Many countries have banned outdoor assemblies. Local, national and international fixtures have been cancelled or postponed, yet the striking anomaly was Japan's reluctance to postpone the Tokyo 2020 Summer Olympics. The symbolic lighting of the flame was held in Greece without spectators. The subsequent relay was cancelled due to concerns over attracting spectators. Commercial interests of reportedly ¥1.56tn (*Coronavirus: Tokyo Olympics, 2020*) and national pride are compelling disincentives to autotelic pragmatism when confronted with a highly infectious disease (Funk *et al.*, 2009; Gallagher *et al.*, 2016; Girginov and Preuss, 2021).

Meanwhile, other countries during lockdowns maintained a sense of community via the nexus of electronic media, sound and song through open windows (Balcony Singing, 2020; NowThis News [*sic*], 2021; see also Van Winkle and Woosnam, 2014). It would appear a poignant display of our irresistible urge for gregarious congregation and our core psychological need for social connection. Between the urge to continue events unchanged and cancel, a compromise emerged – livestreamed virtual events (Vandenberg *et al.*, 2021).

Spectatorless sport at major league level in 2020 has been a worldwide phenomenon. The Argentinian football season has continued without spectators. In Italy, the match between Inter Milan and Juventus was played at Allianz Stadium without spectators. In Australia, the Perth Wildcats played the Sydney Kings, live streaming and spectatorless at Qudos Bank Arena in Sydney [Basketball]. The series later continued spectatorless and with the approval of the Australian Prime Minister, "The goal here is very straight forward – it is simply to slow the rate of transmission of the coronavirus throughout Australia" (SMH Editorial, 2020).

While one acknowledges why the compromise exists, one needs to consider how debilitating the absence of community relegates an event. Turning to one type of event, sport consumer literature has long acknowledged the role that spectator group behaviour plays in an individual's psychological sense of individual self (Funk and James, 2001; Heere and James, 2007; Wann and Brancombe, 1993) and "collective identity" (Kossakowski, 2017). The importance of social identity as a basis for ongoing group development and commitment has also received notable support within social and organisational psychology fields (Hogg, 1992). Coleman and Williams (2015) found that social identities drive consumer attention allocation processes and highlight the importance of an identity-relevant environment, or as Kossakowski prefers, a "symbolic universe" (2017).

For this review, we define participatory as spectating *in situ*, at the venue where the activity is taking place. Virtual spectating, by contrast, is defined as experiencing sport remote from the venue, via a screen at home or a community venue. In considering spectatorless sport, a sporting activity with no spectators, the corollary question then arises, what role does proximity play in sport? How does this relate to the spectating theory, and despite our digital interconnectedness, why is a good old-fashioned crowd such a crowd-pleaser (Vandenberg *et al.*, 2021)?

2. The social connection

A search of the literature reveals a dearth of studies related to the absence of spectators, focussing instead on the importance and nuance of spectator involvement. Relatively new studies include Vandenberg *et al.*'s (2021) study of livestream [music] Raves during Covid; echoing this study's claim that such events require a crowd for "social solidarity". Vandenberg's study, however, focusses on music rather than the propinquity of others as the glue that binds human interaction. There are, of course, descriptive works, including Guttman's (1986) historical study of fandom. The social role spectators have played from ancient Greece and Rome to the late 20th century; what they wore and how they behaved (see also Medieval spectating; John, 2013). Dionisio *et al.* have considered the grassroots cohesion of spectators and the propensity of fans to affiliate (2008). More recently, Click (2019) has noted a propensity to hate celebrities others choose to admire. Politicians, musicians and media personalities are all fair game in what she coins, anti-fandom. Eyestone considered the etiquette of spectators, with particular emphasis on the establishment of guidelines for marathons (2003). Surely, such affiliation has beneficial consequences, as suggested by Wann *et al.* (2006), when investigating the association between team identification and social and psychological well-being.

Furthermore, it has been suggested that developing social connectivity not only improves attendance experience but also enriches team identification (Greenwood *et al.*, 2006;

Koenig-Lewis *et al.*, 2018). Positive relationships have been found between social interactions at sport events and team loyalty (Tapp, 2003), including fan devotion (Pimentel and Reynolds, 2004; Redden and Steiner, 2000). This extends beyond the venue as Uhrich (2014) found that valuable interactive consumptive practices occur within and outside the stadium. Satisfaction through shared rituals, fan culture and social motives occurs outside the stadium, on fan buses and trains. It is evident that highly "identified" sport fans are essential consumers for the sport industry, as they are likely to attend more games, pay more for tickets and purchase more team and sponsor merchandise (Rees *et al.*, 2015).

And, what of social cohorts and their differences? Bahk examined gender differences in sports spectator involvement and the associated difference in behaviours (2000). Geopolitical differences are revealed by comparing the work of Melnick and Wann (2004) with Yoshida's more recent work (Yoshida *et al.*, 2015a, b).

3. Creation and co-creation
Recently, increased attention has been given to the notion of fan-to-fan co-creation of identity and value (Woratshek *et al.*, 2014). Spectators co-producing identity is not a new concept however, with this theme closely related to Holt's (1995) observation of consumers seeking to co-create with producers. As Koenig-Lewis *et al.* (2018) claim, "If a sports event spectator defines the event as a social meeting place where a football match happens to take place, it may be presumed that the emphasis of value creation derives from the social interaction rather than the match" (p. 194). Sharing consumption experiences is vital to driving value. This value is based on the creation of peer-to-peer bonds and socially embedded consumption (Libai *et al.*, 2010).

From a different perspective, one can view the co-creation relationship as a non-sexualised form of scopophilia (meaning pleasure derived from examining [looking]; also implying a substitute for actual participation). One can consider virtual spectating via a screen as a detached version of voyeurism: in technical terms, a one-sided participatory prosthetic. Indeed, a study by Duncan and Brummett (1989) conflated spectating with topics not normally associated with sport, namely, voyeurism, fetishism and narcissism. Freud, in the early 20th century, referred to voyeurism as a two-way phenomenon (Freud *et al.*, 1977). One notes the act of participatory spectating any event as contemporaneous voyeurism and exhibitionism where both the spectators and producers simultaneously derive pleasure from each other's antics – in this respect, spectating is, by definition, coordinated and interactive.

While participatory spectating involves physical segregation between producers and fans, traditional forms of interaction are still valorised. If enough engineered influence is brought to bear, one might believe the outcome can be determined the fans. Physical movement, coordinated posture, swaying, arm-waving, shouting and singing facilitates attention, with the ultimate expectation of manipulating behaviour. Fans cherish the opportunity to talk briefly with their idols, high-fives and palm-slaps as producers enter or leave the event, perhaps even a coveted autograph, "selfie", souvenir or the compulsory "merch" [merchandise]. Then, reflective of the extended-self (Belk, 1988), fans claim affiliation, if not a symbolic connection with respected producers. It would appear [secular] hagiography, or the worship of deities, is alive and well in the 21st century and facilitated by participatory spectating. As John Lennon famously quipped during an interview, "We're more popular than Jesus now" (1966, March).

Hagiography's contemporary connotation as pejorative is deliberate as it often refers to blind adulation. A "vita" or hagiography is a non-critical, reverential biography of a person, which deliberately overlooks any faults or weaknesses. The aim is to spin them into an almost superior being worthy of fandom, and perhaps, even fanaticism (Fuschillo, 2020). One earlier example of hagiography is the *Golden Legend* compiled by Jacobus de Voragine in the 13th

century (de Voragine and Ryan, 1995a, b; Olsen, 2016). The *Legend* is a compilation of Christian saints focussing on their miracles, whereby elevating certain people above the ordinary and serving as a source of fan adulation. Similarly, the mesmerising thrall of being physically close to a special person is a powerful congregative motive. The gathering at the Grotto of Massabielle, Lourdes France. The annual gathering of Australian and New Zealanders at Gallipoli for Anzac Day. The crowds below the Saint Peter's Basilica to receive the Pope's Christmas blessing, and of course the annual Hajj at Makkah al-Mukarramah (Mecca), all in spite of Covid, is a testimony to human nature. The crowd gatherings at the gates of Buckingham Palace to witness the Royal Family mourn Prince Philip, again during Covid, points to the risks some will endure to get close to their idols (Errington, 2020).

Indeed, O'Guinn (1991) noticed the same phenomenon when observing a chapter of the Barry Manilow Fan Club. He concluded we need celebrities. "When heros [*sic*] and gods are reasoned away, a vacuum of anxiety remains" (p. 103). The palpable need to be physically close to, or by extension something they have "contaminated" (Belk *et al.*, 1989; McCracken, 1986), is not new and is observed in participatory spectating. Expanding on Emile Durkheim's early 20th-century religious dichotomy, Belk, Wallendorf and Sherry devised five "domains" of *Sacred* [special] and *Profane* [ordinary]: People, Places, Times, Experiences and Objects (Belk *et al.*, 1989; Durkheim, 1976). By coupling one with another, status shifts from special to ordinary or ordinary to special. The *Sacred* and *Profane* is similar to what psychologists refer to as the congruency theory (Fazio, 1986). For example, an ordinary person can be elevated to the status of special by "contamination" when near or knowing a special person, or at a special experience – a concert perhaps (see *Flow* and *optimal experience*, Csikszentmihalyi, 2014; Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson, 1990). For example, when a crowd gathers outside a hotel or airport hoping to get close to their idol. A baseball is an ordinary ball until being touched by famous players and used in a league match. The opportunity to seize that ball does not exist in the virtual world and requires attendance at the game. Even more, the notion of consumer (fan and brand) devotion is a genre of interest all on its own (Ortiz, 2006; Ortiz *et al.*, 2013; Pichler and Hemetsberger, 2008; Pimentel and Reynolds, 2004; Sarkar *et al.*, 2016).

When viewing the game on a screen, however, there is a vacuum of crucial dyadic [two-way, iterative] interaction. There is no discourse between producers and consumers; consumption is typically non-dialogical, meaning no shared dialogue exploring meanings. The advent of Zoom meetings and live streaming came with high expectations of a suitable proxy to live congregation; however, the social experience of virtual spectating is a pittance of the real thing. Academic conferences are a witness to this. Lonely Planet lists the top 15 international places to hold meeting – punctuating the joy of virtually attend a conference in Paris, Sydney or Vancouver – on reflection, possibly not. To some extent, being physically close to event producers, the artists, the crowd and the location (note the importance of place and context) helps explain the enthusiasm for participatory spectating and the dissatisfaction with virtual spectating.

3.1 Holt's typology of consumption

Holt's (1995) typology of consumption treatise is relevant here. Holt's data comprise a two-year ethnography of baseball at the Chicago's Wrigley Field bleachers [the cheap seats towards the back]. Parsing Holt's model and applying this to spectating, we remove several non-related concepts while adding others. The resulting taxonomy into four themes representing the nexus of spectating: (1) identity construction; (2) interacting with others; (3) producing and co-producing the event; and the allure of (4) tribalism (Figure 1).

Essentially, Holt's model is an organised two-by-two matrix of how and why consumers consume. Subsequent studies have applied this model to diverse contexts such as sport (Andrews and Drennan, 2007), wine (Charters *et al.*, 2000) and, related to this topic, heritage
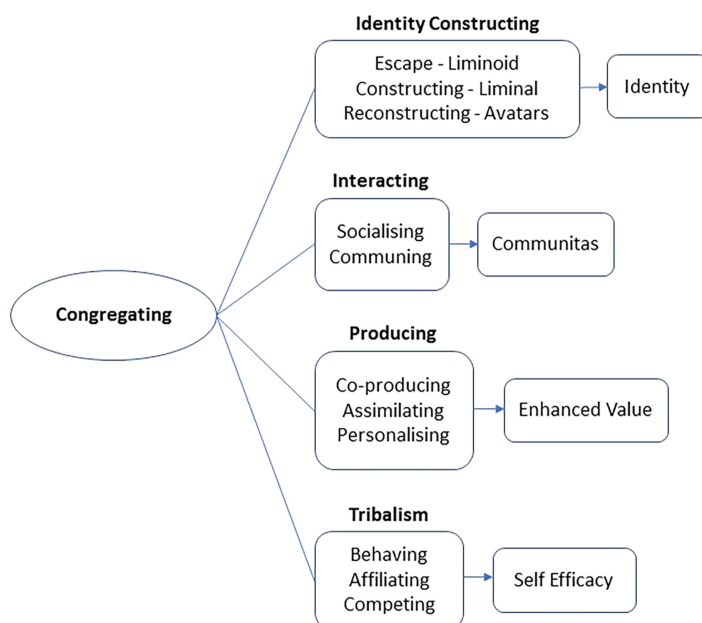
Figure 1.
Congregating as a
metamodel

tourism (MacCarthy, 2017). Holt's model highlights four activities of consuming according to whether the activity is an end in itself (autotelic), or a means to an end (instrumental). Also, according to whether the focus is on the individual and what they are doing (actions), or whether the activity facilitates interactions with others (interactions). When applied baseball the four metaphors detail how fans might appreciate the process (experience), use it to derive a sense of self and meaning (integrate), use the activity to facilitate interactions with others (play) and use the activity to delineate themselves from others (classification).

From a different perspective attending live events provides a temporary period of escape or "flux" (Turner, 1974). In this instance, hedonic, social and emotional value is engineered (Kunkel *et al.*, 2017; Woratschek *et al.*, 2014). This period of escape is accepted by spectators as temporary [liminoid], whereby the fans return to their previous status after the game. "Liminality" refers to a change of mindset during ritualistic behaviour, or a "temporal form of social anti-structure" (Higgins and Hamilton, 2020, p. 1; see also Csikszentmihalyi, 2014; Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson, 1990; Turner, 1974). The hedonic paradigm has long since held sway in consumer culture with events, and more specifically, congregating being no different. For a time, fans willingly immerse themselves in a hedonic treat. For some, enjoying a treat is also a retreat. Related to temporary escape, spectator attendance can be a form of literal escape, from the quotidian [boring, mundane, repetitious] world full of worry, effort and responsibility. Fans look forward to escaping with family or friends to spend quality time together while away from others at the event (Wiid and Cant, 2015).

3.2 Identity construction
Identity construction or formation whereby humans develop a sense of individuation. The component of identity construction most relevant here is that which relates to affiliation. One defines themselves by their uniqueness, their continuity, but also their affiliations to others on several levels: micro (individual interaction with surroundings), meso (e.g. family and friends)

and macro (e.g. national). The literature of identity construction is encompassing, considering subjects such as culture, acculturation, roles, responsibilities, religion, gender, confusion and progress as one develops (Jensen and Arnett, 2012; Hill, 2016; McLean and Syed, 2015; Schwartz *et al.*, 2011).

Attendance at crowded events can be considered from a ritualistic perspective. Indeed, events such as birthdays, funerals, weddings, graduations, coming-of-age gatherings are rituals. As Turner (1974) noted, changes in status can be temporary (liminoid) or permanent (liminal). A rock concert or holiday can be considered a temporary change in status. We seek escape by voluntarily entering a state of "flux" where we are neither our usual self, yet nor will we permanently change. At the end of which, we return to our former selves. We look forward to these occasions to let our hair down, to forget about quotidian lives and responsibilities for a while – to escape with like-minded others. Immersion in a variety of physical forums provides an opportunity to be someone else for a while, a living avatar, to pretend we are different, or at least not ourselves. It is axiomatic that we are not the same status in every forum, and so, we conjure multiple selves, all contributing to a sense of identity.

3.3 Interacting

Interacting refers to our gregarious nature. In a macro sense, *in situ* spectating and congregating reflects the constant desire for social discourse. Venues provide the physical location and opportunity for social congregation. From another perspective, the venue is providing the "excuse" for social interaction. Being forced to watch the game remotely is devoid of such opportunity, unless one invites friends over to watch a screenplay of the event. In that context, it may be satisfying enough to be a suitable proxy; however, the gold standard is attendance at the game. One variation on this theme is the video conference where multiple attendees choose (or not) to show their face and upper torso to each other while typically sitting in a chair. Again, a poor substitute for the noise, smells, weather conditions and visceral pleasure of the biennial UK Farnborough Airshow; as jets streak overhead, the ground shakes, and nearby children scream in delight while clutching their parents.

Communing while congregating is more specific, referring to the synergistic effect of two or more people experiencing the same activity. The energy feeding off each other during an event is palpable. One study of the synergistic atmosphere at sporting events determined by the energy of the crowd is an antecedent to the overall attractiveness of a sports league (Koenigstorfer *et al.*, 2010). Bensimon (2012) refers to the ritualistic behaviour at Middle Eastern protest events whereby spontaneous singing creates a "sonic bond" between attendees. Earlier, Durkheim (1976) referred to a similar "collective effervescence" between attendees at religious events. Contrastingly, attending a movie or visiting a restaurant by oneself is the poor cousin of the same experience with others. The hesitancy of holidaying or enjoying a restaurant meal alone is the corollary phenomenon. One notable exception to this, however, is the lone or solo traveller, who by virtue of travelling alone will interact with strangers along the way and at venues; however, their independence in the journey is deliberate (Hodge, 2016; Seow and Brown, 2018).

Celsi *et al.* (1993) refer to the Turners' (1974; see also Turner, 2012) special bond of membership in a skydiving club as, "communitas" (p. 11). Communitas incorporates a sense of proxy egalitarian family and fraternity while encouraged by the use of language peculiar to the activity. Murray *et al.* (2013) noted the same among members of the sport shooting fraternity; competing with each over who knows more about the technical aspects of firearms and ballistics; meanwhile, revelling in their peculiar arcane language. MacCarthy *et al.* in 2006 observed a similar sense of community among scuba divers. More recently, Higgins and Hamilton (2020) noted a sense of communitas when pilgrims gather at religious destinations or share company enroute. Both socialising and communing are causal concepts in engineering a sense of community. A group of like-minded affiliates who share a modicum of

affinity and perhaps even trust. Communitas is social glue that binds us together in a like-minded activity (Van Winkle and Woosnam, 2014).

3.4 Producing

Congregating through producing assumes a degree of commitment and internalisation. One does this to achieve a richer experience, and on occasion, to realise more value for money. Let us not forget the cost to attend a venue featuring international artists. By doing this, ultimately, one engineers a unique sense of self. A particular community activity becomes a key component of our traditional *extended self* (Belk, 1988). Integrating the spectacle permits fans to become one with the event. Spectators will seek out similar others; spending time thinking, talking and consuming the event, even afterwards. We define ourselves by being associated with the event.

Producing refers to the idea that one derives a sense of control from perceiving we are part of the production process. Holt (1995) observed that even though spectators sitting in the cheap seats at the back were physically remote from the game, that did not stop them from believing they could influence it. Producers of the event encourage such activity by exhorting the fans to get involved. If one is watching the game from a handset or television screen, this perception of influence does not exist. When a pop singer or half-time mascot encourages fans to clap along with the beat, it seems more appropriate this is done at the venue, otherwise on the train or at work becomes performative entertainment of others in the vicinity.

Assimilating refers to how we define ourselves by our affiliations and the "what" and "how" we consume. Attendance at any of the global Fringe festivals is a form of self-expression. Established in Edinburgh 1947 and held annually as an alternative to the more traditional festivals, the movement has grown with an international following. The values of [often] not-for-profit, open access and diversity reflect the audience as much as the performers. The Fringe and what it represents has become the people associated with it – "we are Fringe". Similarly, *Burning Man* [Black Rock Desert, Nevada, 1994–present] espouses ten Bohemian principles, including radical inclusion, decommodification and participation. By the same token sporting, religious, cultural, political and music events provide an opportunity to define oneself. We seek out similarly minded for affiliation, not only at the event, but in the workplace, identifying our club, our community in both conversation and how they personalise themselves.

Personalising refers to the phenomenon of adorning and bedecking oneself to enhance engagement and achieve a richer experience. This often accompanies efforts to delineate partisanship in a crowd. Typical displays include wearing specific colours, logos, scarfs, hats and painting faces with the brand livery of an idol, team or group (Wann and Brancombe, 1993). For the truly engaged, perhaps even permanently tattooing a picture of their favourite team, singer, military unit or sports star on their skin. Showing affiliation, loyalty and simply wearing the right outfit for the event is a crucial part of consuming the spectacle. Whether this is through normative pressure from peers or an independent, internalised decision is largely moot to the significance of personalising to affiliate. One notable example of this phenomenon is the banning of clothing with logos of pro sport teams, which has been used as a proxy for gang affiliation in US high schools (Caballero, 2015; Gantt, 2012).

3.5 Tribalism

Tribalism is defined as a state of being organised into groups, but also includes the notion of advocating (fandom) for groups (teams) or tribes (music genres, political parties and sporting disciplines) (Dionisio *et al.*, 2008; Simon, 2021). Again, this is related to the gregarious nature of humans where being part of a group is the social glue that binds (see Communitas).

Typifying tribalism is language specific to the cohort that serves, among other things, to delineate the fraternity. Underpinning the use of language is the linguistical term "phatic

communion" (Malinowski, 1936), also known as "phatic expression". This is defined as language, including [sports-specific] jargon, that serves a social function, in this case, to bind together a group of like-minded people. If the spectator is alone, or in incomplete company, then a sense of wider community cannot exist. The moral support ordinarily enjoyed with membership of the sporting hive is noticeably absent. One could even doubt their affiliation – their "faith" (Ellis, 2012).

Included in the tribal paradigm is the notion of competition. Extreme examples of loyalty and affiliation are the disorder and violence witnessed in some disciplines and countries (Jones, 2000; Kossakowski, 2017; Lewis, 2007; Maguire, 1986; Spaaji and Anderson, 2010). Violent political protests abound; however, it would appear violence is an effect, and not a need to congregate – even when violence is expected or predicted. Ordinarily however, competition is observed through light-hearted efforts to personalise and vocalise affiliation. The difficulty of displaying affiliation and competing while congregating the gathering remotely is axiomatic.

4. Discussion

The contribution of this study is the referential metamodel of congregating. The aim of which is to ground spectating and congregating in a mashup of cross-disciplinary theory. The implication of this is encouraging a wider, less parochial view of a gregarious activity we all hold dear. Events where people gather are so much more than commercial interests. Given the pandemic has relegated many of our favourite congregational pastimes, it behoves us to consider why we crave a crowd, and what we lose in our virtual efforts to maintain continuity. As the focus shifts from what spectators gain by attendance to what they lose by non-attendance, one cannot help but note the similarity with Jean Baudrillard's (and colleagues) post-modern, post structuralist school of meaning. If meaning is created through difference, or more importantly, other referential objects [*self-referentiality*], then surely, removing context removes meaning. What bland illusion does the virtual spectator endure through the simulacrum of a two-dimensional screen? What humanistic delusion remains when one is denied the opportunity to commune?

Considering this in light of the theory, it is unsurprising initial reactions reported in the popular media bemoan the loss of more than just attendance revenue. "Sport without fans is like sausage without sauce . . . it is dreary and lifeless . . . a poor imitation of its usual self" (Duncan, 2020). Compare that with a crowd.

> [The Quest] I hitchhiked there from Orange; I travelled hours on the train to see Dappled Cities play live – [Communing] You feel so comfortable and included and involved – Everyone was filming him, trying to touch him, feeling the music – [Perception] Beer spilt on carpet; it's quite endearing, in a way; it's very old school – [Identity Constructing] I was really developing my appreciation for dance music – [Temporary (liminoid) escape – avatars] It looks like people are sitting there with the stars; It feels ethereal; As I danced, I jumped up, and my feet came up and out of the boots. And I'm standing in the ankles of the boots, horrified, holding the drink I'd just spilled on myself – [Appreciation] It was beautiful; It was amazing – [Co-production and Fun] The steam was rising up. And we said, "We're going to climb up the poles' Then Ronnie jumps of the pole, onto the roof", –right over the top of Spiderbait . . . slides off down the tent and runs away – [Fraternity] I was by myself, so I started finding people that I knew. One of them was my cousin – [Memories] It was all the best things in life. It was friends, it was music, it was freedom. It was awesome (Names withheld, cited in Rowe, 2021).

Given premier events represent sizable investments of cash and interest, along with representing the socio-cultural fabric of a community the imperative to keep the phenomenon alive and unchanged is understandable. Ensuring continuity in times of crisis regardless of a crowd is a noble, if not desperate, sentiment. For there is something missing in spectatorless events, and it is not just the spectators.

References

Andrews, L.M. and Drennan, J. (2007), "Extending Holt's (1995) typology of consumption to examine the marketing domain in experiential consumption", *Proceedings of the 2007 Australia and New Zealand Marketing Academy Conference*, Dunedin, December, ANZMAC, pp. 3015-3022.

Bahk, C. (2000), "Sex differences in sport spectator involvement", *Perceptual and Motor Skills*, Vol. 91 No. 1, pp. 79-83.

Balcony Singing (2020), "Balcony Singing in solidarity spreads across Italy during lockdown", *The Guardian*, 14 March, available at: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/mar/14/solidarity-balcony-singing-spreads-across-italy-during-lockdown (accessed 16 November 2021).

Belk, R. (1988), "Possessions and the extended self", *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 15 No. 2, pp. 139-168.

Belk, R.W., Wallendorf, M. and Sherry, J.F. (1989), "The sacred and the profane in consumer behavior: theodicy on the Odyssey", *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 16 No. 1, pp. 1-38.

Bensimon, M. (2012), "The sociological role of collective singing during intense moments of protest: the disengagement from the Gaza Strip", *Sociology the Journal of the British Sociological Association*, Vol. 46 No. 2, pp. 241-241.

Caballero, C. (2015), "Sports apparel banned: high school says jerseys are affiliated with gangs", *The CW33*, 28 August, available at: https://cw33.com/news/sports-apparel-banned-high-school-says-jerseys-are-affiliated-with-gangs/ (accessed 24 November 2021).

Celsi, R.L., Leigh, T.W. and Rose, R.L. (1993), "An exploration of high-risk leisure consumption through skydiving", *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 20, pp. 1-23.

Charters, S., Groves, R. and Reynolds, C. (2000), "Imbibing, inscribing, integrating and imparting: a taxonomy of wine consumption practices", *Journal of Wine Research*, Vol. 11 No. 3, pp. 209-222.

Click, M.A. (Ed.), (2019), *Anti-Fandom: Dislike and Hate in the Digital Age*, New York University Press, New York.

Coleman, N.V. and Williams, P. (2015), "Looking for my self: identity-driven attention allocation", *Journal of Consumer Psychology*, Vol. 25 No. 3, pp. 504-511.

Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2014), *Flow and the Foundations of Positive Psychology: The Collected Works of Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi*, Springer, Dordrecht, doi: 10.1007/978-94-017-9088-8.

Csikszentmihalyi, M. and Robinson, R.E. (1990), *The Art of Seeing: An Interpretation of the Aesthetic Encounter*, J.P. Getty Museum, Malibu, California.

de Voragine, J. and Ryan, W.G. (1995a), *The Golden Legend: Readings on the Saints*, Vol. 1, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey.

de Voragine, J. and Ryan, W.G. (1995b), *The Golden Legend: Readings on the Saints*, Vol. 2, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey.

Dionísio, P., Leal, C. and Moutinho, L. (2008), "Fandom affiliation and tribal behaviour: a sports marketing application", *Qualitative Market Research*, Vol. 11 No. 1, pp. 17-39.

Duncan, M. and Brummett, B. (1989), "Types and sources of spectating pleasure in televised sports", *Sociology of Sport Journal*, Vol. 6 No. 3, pp. 195-211.

Duncan, S. (2020), "Sport without fans is like sausage without sauce", *WA Today*, 20 March, available at: https://www.theage.com.au/sport/afl/sport-without-fans-is-like-a-sausage-without-sauce-20200320-p54cao.html (accessed 16 November 2021).

Durkheim, É. (1976), *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, 2nd ed., Allen and Unwin, London.

Ellis, R. (2012), "The meanings of sport: an empirical study into the significance attached to sporting participation and spectating in the UK and US", *Practical Theology*, Vol. 5 No. 2, pp. 169-188.

Errington, A. (2020), "What it means for Christians to be prevented from gathering", *ABC Religion and Ethics*, 11 September, available at: https://www.abc.net.au/religion/when-christians-are-prevented-from-gathering/12654488 (accessed 21 January 2022).

Eyestone, E. (2003), "Spectating as sport", *Runner's World*, Vol. 38 No. 4, pp. 34-34.

Fazio, R. (1986), "How do attitudes guide behavior?", in Sorrentino, R.M. and Higgins, E.T. (Eds), *The Handbook of Motivation and Cognition: Foundations of Social Behavior*, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Mahwah, New Jersey, pp. 204-243.

Freud, S., Strachey, J. and Richards, A. (1977), *On Sexuality: Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality and Other Works*, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth.

Funk, D., Filo, K., Beaton, A. and Pritchard, M. (2009), "Measuring the motives of sport event attendance: bridging the academic-practitioner divide to understanding behavior", *Sport Marketing Quarterly*, Vol. 18 No. 3, pp. 126-138.

Funk, D.C. and James, J. (2001), "The psychological continuum model: a conceptual framework for understanding an individual's psychological connection to sport", *Sport Management Review*, Vol. 4 No. 2, pp. 119-150.

Fuschillo, G. (2020), "Fans, fandoms, or fanaticism?", *Journal of Consumer Culture*, Vol. 20 No. 3, pp. 347-365.

Gallagher, D., O'Connor, C. and Gilmore, A. (2016), "An exploratory examination of the strategic direction of the Gaelic Athletic Association via the application of sports marketing segmentation bases", *Marketing Intelligence and Planning*, Vol. 34 No. 2, pp. 203-222.

Gantt, D. (2012), "Manning jerseys banned by Colorado School District for gang ties", *NBC Sport*, 6 September, available at: https://profootballtalk.nbcsports.com/2012/09/06/manning-jerseys-banned-by-colorado-school-district-for-gang-ties/ (accessed 24 November 2021).

Girginov, V. and Preuss, H. (2021), "Towards a conceptual definition of intangible Olympic legacy", *International Journal of Event and Festival Management*, Vol. 13 No. 1, pp. 1-17.

Greenwood, P.B., Kanters, M.A. and Casper, J.M. (2006), "Sport fan team identification formation in mid-level professional sport", *European Sport Management Quarterly*, Vol. 6 No. 3, pp. 253-265.

Guttman, A. (1986), *Sports Spectators*, Columbia University Press, New York.

Heere, B. and James, J.D. (2007), "Stepping outside the lines: developing a multi-dimensional team identity scale based on social identity theory", *Sport Management Review*, Vol. 10 No. 1, pp. 65-91.

Higgins, L. and Hamilton, K. (2020), "Pilgrimage, material objects and spontaneous communitas", *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol. 81, doi: 10.1016/j.annals.2019.102855.

Hill, R.L. (2016), *Gender, Metal and the Media: Women Fans and the Gendered Experience of Music*, Palgrave Macmillan, London, (Pop music, culture and identity). doi: 10.1057/978-1-137-55441-3.

Hodge, S. (2016), "Travel solo", *Social Alternatives*, Vol. 35 No. 4, pp. 72-72.

Hogg, M.A. (1992), *The Social Psychology of Group Cohesiveness: From Attraction to Social Identity*, Harvester Wheatsheaf, Hemel Hempstead.

Holt, D.B. (1995), "How consumers consume: a typology of consumption practices", *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 22 No. 1, pp. 1-16.

Jensen, L.A. and Arnett, J.J. (2012), "Going global: new pathways for adolescents and emerging adults in a changing world", *Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. 68 No. 3, pp. 473-492.

John, M. (2013), "The accidental sports tourist: travelling and spectating in medieval and renaissance Europe", *Journal of Tourism History*, Vol. 5 No. 2, pp. 161-171.

Jones, I. (2000), "A model of serious leisure identification: the case of football fandom", *Leisure Studies*, Vol. 19 No. 4, pp. 283-298.

Koenig-Lewis, N., Asaad, Y. and Palmer, A. (2018), "Sports events and interaction among spectators: examining antecedents of spectators' value creation", *European Sport Management Quarterly*, Vol. 18 No. 2, pp. 193-215.

Koenigstorfer, J., Groeppel-Klein, A. and Kunkel, T. (2010), "The attractiveness of national and international football leagues: perspectives of fans of 'star clubs' and 'underdogs'", *European Sport Management Quarterly*, Vol. 10 No. 2, pp. 127-163.

Kossakowski, R. (2017), "Where are the hooligans? Dimensions of football fandom in Poland", *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, Vol. 52 No. 6, pp. 693-711.

Kunkel, T., Doyle, J.P. and Berlin, A. (2017), "Consumers' perceived value of sport team games – a multidimensional approach", *Journal of Sport Management*, Vol. 31 No. 1, pp. 80-95.

Lewis, J.M. (2007), *Sports Fan Violence in North America*, Rowman and Littlefield, Lanham.

Libai, B., Bolton, R., Bügel, M.S., De Ruyter, K., Götz, O., Risselada, H. and Stephen, A.T. (2010), "Customer-to-customer interactions: broadening the scope of word-of-mouth research", *Journal of Service Research*, Vol. 13 No. 3, pp. 267-282.

MacCarthy, M.J. (2017), "Consuming symbolism: marketing D-Day and Normandy", *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, Vol. 12 No. 2, pp. 191-203.

MacCarthy, M.J., O'Neill, M. and Williams, P. (2006), "Customer satisfaction and Scuba-diving: some insights from the deep", *The Service Industries Journal*, Vol. 26 No. 5, pp. 537-555.

Maguire, J. (1986), "The emergence of football spectating as a social problem 1880–1985: a figurational and developmental perspective", *Sociology of Sport Journal*, Vol. 3 No. 3, pp. 217-244.

Malinowski, B. (1936), "The problem of meaning in primitive languages", in Ogden, C.K. and Richards, I.A. (Eds), *The Meaning of Meaning*, [1923], Supplement I, Kegan Paul, pp. 296-336.

McCracken, G. (1986), "Culture and consumption: a theoretical account of the structure and movement of the cultural meaning of consumer goods", *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 13 No. 1, pp. 71-84.

McLean, K.C. and Syed, M.U. (Eds), (2015), *The Oxford Handbook of Identity Development*, Oxford Library of Psychology, Oxford University Press, New York, New York.

Melnick, M.J. and Wann, D.L. (2004), "Sport fandom influences, interests, and behaviors among Norwegian university students", *International Sports Journal*, Vol. 8 No. 1, pp. 1-13.

Murray, D., O'Neill, M., MacCarthy, M. and Gogue, J. (2013), "Target shooting as a serious leisure pursuit – an exploratory study of the motivations driving participant engagement", *World Leisure Journal*, Vol. 56 No. 3, pp. 204-219.

NowThis News (2021), *Italian Opera Singer Serenades Quarantined Florence amidst Coronavirus Outbreak*, [Video File], available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dhTjGS3QkYE (accessed 16 November 2021).

Olsen, G.W. (2016), "In search of sacred truth: Jacobus De Voragine and the golden legend", *The European Legacy*, Vol. 21 No. 7, pp. 752-753.

Ortiz, M.H. (2006), "Fan or fanatic: a measure of consumer devotion", *Developments in Marketing Science*, Vol. 29, pp. 16-16.

Ortiz, M.H., Reynolds, K.E. and Franke, G.R. (2013), "Measuring consumer devotion: antecedents and consequences of passionate consumer behavior", *Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice*, Vol. 21 No. 1, pp. 7-29.

O'Guinn, T. (1991), "Touching greatness: the Central Midwest Barry Manilow fan club", in Belk, R. (Ed.), *Highways and Buyways, Association for Consumer Research*.

Pichler, E.A. and Hemetsberger, A. (2008), "Driven by devotion – how consumers interact with their objects of devotion", *Advances in Consumer Research*, Vol. 35, pp. 439-443.

Pimentel, R.W. and Reynolds, K.E. (2004), "A model for consumer devotion: affective commitment with proactive sustaining behaviors", *Academy of Marketing Science Review*, Vol. 5, pp. 1-4.

Redden, J. and Steiner, C.J. (2000), "Fanatical consumers: towards a framework for research", *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, Vol. 17 No. 4, pp. 322-337.

Rees, T., Haslam, S.A., Coffee, P. and Lavallee, D. (2015), "A social identity approach to sport psychology: principles, practice, and prospects", *Sports Medicine*, Vol. 45 No. 8, pp. 1083-1096.

Rowe, Z. (2021), "Meet me at the sound desk", *ABC*, available at: https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-11-12/lockdown-live-music-memories/100573018 (accessed 11 November 2021).

Sarkar, A., Sarkar, J.G. and Phau, I. (2016), "Devoted to you my love: brand devotion amongst young consumers in emerging Indian market", *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics*, Vol. 28 No. 2, doi: 10.1108/APJML-06-2015-0095 (accessed 24 November 2021).

Schwartz, S.J., Luyckx, K. and Vignoles, V.L. (2011), *Handbook of Identity Theory and Research*, Springer, New York, (2011 Springer E-Books). doi: 10.1007/978-1-4419-7988-9.

Seow, D. and Brown, L. (2018), "The solo female Asian tourist", *Current Issues in Tourism*, Vol. 21 No. 10, pp. 1187-1206.

Simon, S. (2021), "Trump's insurrection and America's year of living dangerously", *Survival*, Vol. 63 No. 1, pp. 7-16.

SMH Editorial (2020), "Urgent action needed to keep ahead of the coronavirus curve", 13 March, available at: https://www.smh.com.au/national/urgent-action-needed-to-keep-ahead-of-the-coronavirus-curve-20200313-p549y4.html (accessed 16 November 2021).

Spaaji, R. and Anderson, A. (2010), "Soccer fan violence: a holistic approach: a reply to Braun and Vliegenthart", *International Sociology*, Vol. 25 No. 4, pp. 561-579.

Tapp, A. (2003), "eManaging sport customers", in Beech, J. and Chadwick, S. (Eds), *The Business of Sport Management*, Pearson Education, Harlow, pp. 394-413.

Turner, E.L.B. (2012), *Communitas: The Anthropology of Collective Joy*, 1st ed., Palgrave Macmillan, New York.

Turner, V. (1974), "Liminal to liminoid, in play, flow and ritual: an essay in comparative symbology", *Rice Institute Pamphlet – Rice University Studies*, Vol. 60 No. 3, pp. 53-92.

Uhrich, S. (2014), "Exploring customer-to-customer value co-creation platforms and practices in team sports", *European Sport Management Quarterly*, Vol. 14 No. 1, pp. 25-49.

Van Winkle, C.M. and Woosnam, K.M. (2014), "Sense of community and perceptions of festival social impacts", *International Journal of Event and Festival Management*, Vol. 5 No. 1, pp. 22-38.

Vandenberg, F., Berghman, M. and Schaap, J. (2021), "The 'lonely raver': music livestreams during covid-19 as a hotline to collective consciousness?", *European Societies*, Vol. 23, pp. S141-S152.

Wann, D.L. and Brancombe, N.R. (1993), "Sports fans: measuring degree of involvement with their team", *International Journal of Sports Psychology*, Vol. 24 No. 1, pp. 1-17.

Wann, D.L., Koch, K., Knoth, T. and Fox, D. (2006), "The impact of team identification on biased predictions of player performance", *The Psychological Record*, Vol. 56 No. 1, pp. 55-66.

Wiid, J.A. and Cant, M.C. (2015), "Sport fan motivation: are you going to the game?", *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, Vol. 5 No. 1, pp. 383-398.

Woratschek, H., Horbel, C. and Popp, B. (2014), "The sport value framework – a new fundamental logic for analyses in sport management", *European Sport Management Quarterly*, Vol. 14 No. 1, pp. 6-24.

Yoshida, M., Gordon, B., Heere, B. and James, J. (2015a), "Fan community identification: an empirical examination of its outcomes in Japanese professional sport", *Sport Marketing Quarterly*, Vol. 24 No. 2, pp. 105-119.

Yoshida, M., Heere, B. and Gordon, B. (2015b), "Predicting behavioral loyalty through community: why other fans are more important than our own intentions, our satisfaction, and the team itself", *Journal of Sport Management*, Vol. 29 No. 3, pp. 318-333.

Corresponding author
Martin MacCarthy can be contacted at: m.maccarthy@ecu.edu.au