THE BRICKYARD BATTALION’S INFLUENCE ON CIVIC PRIDE AND INVOLVEMENT

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BY
LOGAN L. LANE

SCOTT TRUEX – ADVISOR

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The Brickyard Battalion’s Influence on Civic Pride and Involvement

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Abstract

Creative Project: The Brickyard Battalion’s Influence on Civic Pride and Involvement

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The Brickyard Battalion’s Influence on Civic Pride and Involvement is a qualitative creative project that looks at civic passion for Indianapolis through the lens of soccer, the local club, Indy Eleven, and the local supporter group The Brickyard Battalion. The project aims to understand the Brickyard Battalion’s effect on civic pride and engagement of its members as they cheer on their club, Indy Eleven using traditional supporter group subculture methods from across the world. The project briefly explores the history of global supporter group cultures and how that translates to the United States supporters group culture such as the following. Why do supporters cultures attach themselves to civic symbols and community engagement? What makes supporters group culture different from other traditional American sports fandom? This paper researched what the Brickyard Battalion does to engage in civic pride and community, and if the Brickyard Battalion influences its members to have more civic pride and be more civically engaged due to the Brickyard Battalion’s way of supporting its club, Indy Eleven. In conclusion, the Brickyard Battalion does not cause its members to become more passionate about their community, or be civically involved, but rather attracts people who are already engaged in that space.
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Lastly, I want to thank my wife Abigail Lane who I met on this journey. Thank you for your love and support while I was still in school, and for helping me finish up this project with your incredible editing skills. Lord knows I couldn’t have finished this without your help. I may be forever referred to in the urban planning and community development field as Abigail’s boyfriend, fiancé, and husband, but I am okay with that. I love you!
Introduction

Culture is defined by the New Oxford American dictionary as the customs, arts, social institutions, and achievements of a particular nation, people, or social group. Culture can be seen all over sports. Around the world, sports fans have a myriad of traditions, rituals, and customs to support their teams. In traditional American sports, American Football, basketball, baseball, and hockey fandom is often more individualistic. It could include a group of friends watching the game together with a sudden burst of tribalism once it is gameday. Even in the stadium, fans of these more traditional American sports have individual ways of supporting the team which are, for the most part, not organized as a group. These include face paint, jerseys, dressing up, or singing a few tunes that can create tribalism during the game but doesn’t often spill outside of that time. In soccer’s supporters culture, much of the fandom is organized by a group of people and includes fans who stand in a large group to sing in unison, wave flags, and display hand painted banners in support of the club. This form of mass fandom is unlike anything seen in other traditional American sports. This tribalism often does spill outside of gameday and looks like civic pride, gives back in various ways to the community, and even can form great relationships with other supporter groups from other rival teams. This is what seems to make soccer different.

Supporter groups are a subculture amongst fans of soccer around the world. Soccer culture involves more than just watching a game for ninety minutes; for those apart of supporter groups, it is truly is a lifestyle and love story between fans, their club, and their collective city.

As a budding community developer and someone who belongs The Brickyard Battalion (BYB), the local supporter group, I noticed the sense of place the BYB has created for Indianapolis. They use soccer and our club, Indy Eleven to show love not just for the club itself but for the
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City and State as a whole, and the people in it. I began to look at how the group affects social and cultural capital in Indianapolis through three main elements of the Brickyard Battalion: art and visual display, community engagement, and social events. This report will explain how each category affects the two types of capital above, and gauge how the Brickyard Battalion could improve on making an impact in the City.

What is Social and Cultural Capital?
Social Capital - the networks of relationships among people who live and work in a particular society, enabling that society to function effectively. – (Lexico, 2020)

Cultural Capital - the skills, education, norms, and behaviors acquired by members of a social group that can give them economic and other advantages – (Oxford Reference, 2020)

What is a Supporter?
According to COPA90, a popular soccer digital media company, “A soccer subculture called ultras or supporter groups involves intense coordinated support for a club through vibrant displays during matches, singing in the stands, setting up social events during the week, and highlighting issues affecting the local territory [city] in which the club is located”(COPA90,2017). This unique culture, influenced by the game in Europe and across the world, has brought a tremendous increase in interest in the sport by millennial urbanists and city dwellers and has seen investors start clubs throughout the US soccer landscape from the top division of Major League Soccer (the MLS) to the rest of the pyramid: United Soccer League, National Premier Soccer League, National Independent Soccer Association, and the United Premier Soccer League.
Supporters Culture in The United States vs The Rest of The World

As with many social elements of life in the United States, soccer is a melting pot of soccer traditions from around the world. One thing the US does not have in common with supporters’ cultures around Europe and the rest of the world is violence. Along with the singing and visual displays, supporter groups in other parts of the world can have a negative reputation. They are often characterized as resistance against authority, and violence against other supporter groups, especially if they are a rival group from the same city, or the other clubs’ supporters traditionally are associated with different political, or religious views. Soccer-related violence is called Hooliganism. Hooliganism comes from the root word hooligan meaning (Lexico, 2020), a violent young troublemaker who is often of a gang (Lexico, 2020). Hooliganism refers to group-related rowdiness, disruption, and violence (Merriam-Webster, 2020). This is commonly on display in sports, and especially soccer (Merriam-Webster, 2020; Oxford Reference, 2020).

Political and religious views often get brought into soccer in Europe based on the demographic and socioeconomic makeup of a neighborhood. For example, Tottenham Hotspur, a club in the Tottenham district of North London, has historically been supported by Jews as the neighborhood has been a working-class Jewish neighborhood (Cloake & Fisher, www.thejc.com, 2016). The Star of David can be easily seen at matches not because the club is Jewish, but because the supporters are, and they see the club as a representation of the neighborhood, its people, and culture. This makes the club and its supporters an easy target for antisemitic acts by opposing supporters (Cloake & Fisher, www.thejc.com, 2016).

Politics, like religion, are brought into the sport in the same way. S.S. Lazio’s, an Italian club in Rome, Italy, largest supporters group Curva Nord has historically been not just right-leaning, but Fascist, going back to WWII. Players and supporters used the Nazi Salute after celebrating goals most recently against French club Rennes on October 3, 2019 (The Local, 2019). UEFA, FIFA’s governing body, punished the club for this by forcing the team to play in an empty
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stadium during a key second leg Europa League match, a region club tournament in Europe, against Celtic, a left-wing Scottish Club on November 7, 2019 (The Local, 2019). In the first leg that was played on October 24th in Glasgow, Scotland, away supporters from Lazio could be seen giving Nazi salutes in Glasgow’s city center. The Celtic supporters then unfurled a banner of Benito Mussolini hanging by his feet with the saying “follow your leader” (The Local, 2019). In April of 2019 in a game against A.C. Milan, Lazio supporters paid tribute to the fascist dictator with a banner saying “Honour to Benito Mussolini.” Lazio supporters strategically planned this banner because Mussolini’s dead body was hung in Milan’s public square in April 1945 (The Local, 2019). These well documented violent or racist acts span worldwide soccer club history and often breed more violent instances despite the clubs being punished for their actions (The Local, 2019).

Violence has lessened in recent years in Europe, but “hooliganism” often rears its ugly head from time to time each season. The US soccer scene does not have a history of supporter hooliganism like its European counterparts. However, that does not mean that opposing supporter groups have not had their fair share of issues. New York City Football Club (NYCFC) since its inaugural season has had a problem with far-right extremist groups like the Battalion 49, a small sector of a Majority Latino Skinheads group, being at matches and making opposing and their own supporters uncomfortable with their far-right chants, gestures, and imagery (Silverman, 2019). According to many their leader, Antillon, a member of the now defunct right wing extremist group Proud Boys, was seen in Charlottesville, VA for the “Unite the Right Rally” on August 17, 2017 where a woman who was a part of a counter protest was killed in a vehicular attack by far-right extremists (Silverman, 2019). On October 12, 2018 Antillon and his Proud Boys group attacked protesters outside of a New York City bar. After the brawl, the group took a picture in celebratory fashion. They then turned themselves in to authorities and are now banned from not only New York City FC matches, but all MLS matches (Silverman, 2019). This
type of extremism is not common in American soccer. In fact, the majority of US supporter
groups have a left leaning alignment and support causes like inclusivity, social justice, LGBTQ
rights, refugees.

The US supporters culture often takes on the persona of a rough and tumble crowd like the rest
of supporters’ groups, but is not known for violence as a whole Often, opposing supporter
groups across the country will ban together for a cause, have beers before and after the match,
trade gear on away days, and even become close friends through the years outside of the
ninety minutes their clubs play against each other creating a massive network of soccer and city
lovers across the country. Friendships come in weird ways, according to Peter Evans the
Brickyard Battalion President. One of his best friends through soccer is Patrick Infurna from Indy
Eleven’s archrival, The New York Cosmos, supporter’s group, The Five Points. Evans says they
bond over soccer, supporter culture, and punk rock music (Evans, 2018).

Coming together for a cause is a common occurrence in US supporter culture. A great example
of this is The Annual Prideraiser. This raises funds for LGBTQ organizations in each supporter
group community. The fundraiser works by supporters being able to pledge a dollar amount for
each goal scored by their team, during the fundraising, there is always a friendly competition
across supporter groups about who will raise the most money (Prideraiser, 2019).

Methodologies
Interviewing Brickyard Battalion members from around the state provided qualitative
information needed to complete this report and various other media outlets assisted in the
research of supporter’s culture in the US. Answers given were analyzed and broken into three
categories: art, social, and community engagement.
Lastly, three case studies were used to compare the Brickyard Battalions’ effects on its city to other supporter clubs effects on their cities around the United States. These three case studies were chosen because they are known across the US soccer landscape, are at various levels of the US soccer pyramid, and they all are known amongst the soccer community to have strong ties to their communities. I looked at how each supporters club might affect social and capital culture through membership, merchandise, community engagement, and social events. Each of these elements is a measurement on how The BYB affects its community.

The Timbers Army

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>League</th>
<th>Team</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MLS - Division 1</td>
<td>Portland Timbers</td>
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The Timbers Army prides itself on being known across the world as an elite supporter group. The leaders of the Timbers Army have always said, “If you want to be Timbers Army, you already are”. This inclusive, progressive group has over 32 Regional TA (Timbers Army) chapters across the country and two international chapters, one in Tokyo, Japan, and one in Australia (Timbers Army, 2019). Despite having a free membership to Timbers Army, the group has a paying member option called 107ist which is $25. The non-profit uses these funds to support gameday operations, merchandise, travel and ticket coordination for away days and charitable works. The charitable works rallied volunteers for efforts such as the Operation Pitch Invasion, Oregon Food Bank, Friends of Trees, American Red Cross, Harper’s Playground, CPR training, and Portland Public Schools. Since 2010, the 107ist has donated funds to build playgrounds and soccer fields in the Portland area and for uniforms, soccer equipment, soccer library books, etc. to local schools and charities (Timbers Army, 2019) Members in return get a small membership gift and card as well as discounts on Timbers Army merchandise, and first offer on key matches (Timbers Army, 2019).
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The Timbers Army has long been known for their merchandise being creative and unique only to their club. The merchandise ranges from past Tifo references on shirts, to Timbers Army Jackets, hats, and patches, to numerous Timbers Army scarves, including the famous No Pity scarf. These items are sold out of a van on game days that is branded “The No Pity Van” outside of the stadium, and online at Nopityoriginals.com.

Lastly, the group is unique in the fact that it has a Fanladen near the stadium. A Fanladen is a warehouse space near the stadium where the supporter’s group can paint the tifo banner, conduct meetings and events. This is common in Germany where clubs are fifty-one percent publicly owned, but this is the first of its kind in the US. It could be said that the Fanladen is the main reason why the group’s tifos have been some of the largest and most creative in the United States’ soccer history. The group has a noticeably active community meeting ranging from tifo painting volunteer nights, to board meetings, to futsal tournaments, and watch parties during the season. It is clear along with the group’s noticeable membership involvement in the day to day operations that members are dedicated to making the Timbers Army one of the best supporter groups in the country (Timbers Army, 2019)

Louisville City FC and The Coopers

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<tr>
<th>League</th>
<th>Team</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>USL - Division 2</td>
<td>Louisville City FC</td>
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Table 2

The Coopers are one of the more active supporter groups in the USL, having only been around since 2014, a year before Louisville City even existed, they have made significant strides for their group. Known for their fun-loving atmosphere and free tailgate pitch-in before games, this group knows how to take hospitality and social events to the next level. Just attending one
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tailgate as an away supporter, it is easy to tell that this group is a close-knit community. The group prides itself in dressing up in all purple, Louisville City colors, for games and their supporters merchandise shows it. As with other groups they are one of the best around the USL when it comes to tifos. One of their most memorable was the “Float like a butterfly, Sting like a bee,” honoring the late local Muhamad Ali.

The Angels Share was started as the non-profit arm of The Coopers but has since gone defunct, and the group finds other ways to give back to the community. There is no mistake that The Coopers’ presence is felt in Louisville as they are loud and proud. They are the only professional sports team in Louisville, looking forward to moving from the Louisville Bats baseball stadium downtown to their own stadium just east of the central business district in the Butchertown Neighborhood. The Coopers have a membership option, but much like the Timbers Army, anyone is free to join. This money goes to group operations.

The Northern Guard

<table>
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<tr>
<th>League</th>
<th>Team</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NiSA – Division III</td>
<td>Detroit City FC</td>
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</table>

*Table 3*

The Northern Guard can easily be compared to the Timbers Army. This left-leaning supporter’s group, though supporting a small club (Detroit City FC), that started from a Sunday men’s soccer league, the Northern Guard is much more than that. It could be said that the supporters club itself may be more well-known than the team, this has been a large part of bringing like-minded German club FC Saint Pauli to Detroit to play Detroit City in a friendly in summer of 2018. The group is known for its rough and tumble Detroit attitude, art, and punk rock counter-cultural tendencies. Though this supporter’s group does not play well with others, they are all in for Detroit. The group encourages its members to be involved in civic matters including,
community clean up, clean water initiatives, social services, tutoring, LGBTQ inclusion etc. (Northern Guard, 2019).

Northern Guard, despite being small, has quality merchandise and is a favorite amongst supporters, and on game day equally punches above its small weight with stunning tifo displays, songs, and chants. As with many supporter groups they travel well to games and wear Detroit on their heart wherever they go (Northern Guard, 2019).

**Independent Supporters Groups**

It is important to note that these four groups, including Indy Eleven’s Brickyard Battalion, are independent of the soccer club themselves. All actions by these groups are done in support of the club and not anyway supported by funds by the clubs. Now, this is not to say that these clubs do not collaborate with the front offices of their respected clubs. Still, there is not financial or intellectual control held by the clubs themselves, making these different from other fan clubs across sports that are organized by the team.

Even if clubs are not organized by the teams, soccer supporter’s groups are the lifeblood of club culture for soccer teams on gamedays in their group section, and supporter’s groups know this. There is a lot of power in that for these groups, so clubs often listen to these groups’ demands knowing that if they are not happy, they will hear and see it during the game, and that is not good for the club. This is not the case in other sports across the United States sports landscape. Often what the team says goes, and there is no set section for general admission supporters, so being able to voice concerns publicly to the stadium at games is more difficult. The reality is that the team knows other fans will show up if some are upset so these fans have less bargaining power than soccer supporter groups.
A Brief History of Indy Eleven and It’s Supporters

The Brickyard Battalion
The Brickyard Battalion (BYB) was established out of several social media groups run by eventual founding members of the BYB who had a vision of bringing professional soccer back to the city of Indianapolis despite not having a team. In the fall of 2012, a few of the founding members got word that a widely known soccer executive Peter Wilt was in town and was potentially talking with an investor to bring a lower division professional team to Indianapolis (Brickyard Battalion, 2018). Wilt began holding public meetings with the help of founding BYB members to spread the news about a potential team being established. At this time, the BYB began to ramp up their physical and digital media presence on Twitter ad Facebook, interacting with the hired consultant Peter Wilt on social media, and continued to spread the word about the potential of having a team in the hometown of the Brickyard Battalion. It was at this point that the BYB began to format how to begin different chapters of the BYB that could be established in different neighborhoods around The City and communities around the state (Brickyard Battalion, 2018).
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Figure 1 BYB Chapters across Indiana (Lane, 2020)
Founders made a decision that chapters could be created with eight people symbolizing the eight founders of the BYB. The idea was to establish groups all around the City and State. This meant regardless of a person's proximity to Indianapolis, or their interest in soccer, they would...
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know about Indianapolis Pro Soccer and could learn about the movement. Chapters would eventually serve as a of a social club around Indy Eleven, the name of the soccer team started in Indianapolis, that supporters could gather around in a specific neighborhood or community around the State. These chapters have some geographical tie to them based on where a person might live, but all are welcome to participate. However, supporters often tend to be 20 and 30 somethings who are politically left leaning. There is one Latinx group called the Eleventh Plague that does not have a specific geographic location, but does celebrate the team with Spanish chants that the whole BYB joins along in. To this day anyone can start a BYB group no matter their location as long as they have eight loyal Indy Eleven supporters. Ersal Ozdemir (the owner of the Indy Eleven franchise), Indianapolis, and “Indy Pro Soccer” were officially awarded a North American Soccer League franchise on January 14th, 2013 and began play in the spring of 2014. Upon receiving a franchise the ownership group opened up an online forum to vote for various club names or to submit a suggestion of their own (Brickyard Battalion, 2018).

Names of Chapters
Chapters of the Brickyard Battalion often have community ties in their name. An example is one based in the Broad Ripple neighborhood is called Slaughterhouse-19 in reference to hometown author Kurt Vonnegut and his novel Slaughterhouse-5.
History of the Club’s Name and Timeline

![Image of Brickyard Battalion founders](image)

*Figure 3 The Founders of the Brickyard Battalion (Mason, 2019).*

Racing Indy FC and The Green Scarf Supporters

The Brickyard Battalion had long been using Lady Victory, the statue on top of The iconic Soldiers and Sailors Monument to rally support for a soccer club in Indianapolis, and because of this, there was a big push from supporters for the club to use it as part of team’s crest. The name and colors of the team, however, there was a subject of considerable debate amongst supporters. First, it was whether or not to name the team like a traditional American name, i.e. “City or State name + nickname”, a traditional European name “City Name + FC; or a mix between the two, with “a city-state name + nickname + FC or SC. Secondly, was a debate amongst supporters.

![Image of original Racing Indy Football Club Crest](image)

*Figure 4 The original Racing Indy Football Club Crest (Brickyard Battalion, 2013)*
and fans to name the team “Racing Indy Football Club” or Racing Indy FC. This name references Indy’s racing heritage and plays off of the name of the supporters’ group that had existed for several years before this point. The name was coined by one of the original Facebook groups that eventually became the Brickyard Battalion and was amongst voted on amongst other names. A small run of traditional soccer scarfs was made in green and black colors and was sold to a small group of supporters at the beginning of Peter Wilt’s Campaign to see if a soccer club was possible in Indianapolis, it was these people who strongly believed this should be the name of the club.

Indy Pro Soccer Has a Name
After polling supporters and fans, it was apparent that the number one priority in a name for each group was that it reflected the heritage of Indiana, Indianapolis, and soccer culture. Staff eventually made the final decision to call the club Indy Eleven in honor of Indiana’s Eleventh Volunteer Regiment during the Civil War. The name came about when staff member Peter Wilt visited the Indiana War Memorial in Indianapolis and was given a suggestion of “The Eleventh” by a War Memorial Staff member. Indy Pro Soccer Staff were found of the name because of its subtle soccer reference to 11 players on the field during a game (Indy Eleven, 2019).

The initial reaction from supporters and fans was poor. Many people misunderstood the name and thought it was not thought out but, as people began to learn the history behind the name over time opinions began to change about the name. Supporters found that the number eleven has significance to other Indiana connections: 11 rows of 33 cars in for the Indianapolis 500, Indiana statehood December 11, 1816, Indiana area codes 317 and 812 when numbers added together total 11, and most importantly the Brickyard Battalion was founded in 2011. These accidental meanings of 11 and the use of Lady Victory and checkers slowly won the supporters over (Indy Eleven, 2019).
Significance of Lady Victory
When the founding members of the Brickyard Battalion came together, they began to use “Lady Victory,” the crowning figure on top of the “Soldiers and Sailors Monuments” in imagery for the group. It is often a practice in soccer culture to use a civic monument or other significant visual representations of the city as part of the team’s crest. For BYB members, Lady Victory has become a source of pride. The Soldiers and Sailors Monument is an icon that many citizens knew of but did not necessarily think twice about the history of the monument or Lady Victory. Often known for being the “angel” on top of the Christmas tree during the City’s holiday tradition. It was perfect.
In many ways, the Brickyard Battalion became the stewards of the history of the monument and its crowning figure “Lady Victory” as they began the first season as supporters for the Indy Eleven in its inaugural 2014 season. It was a great honor for supporters to have Lady Victory as part of the official crest, knowing that they were the ones to begin the city movement of soccer in this chapter of Indianapolis soccer history with her.

Checkers
Ever since the beginning of the Brickyard Battalion group members were pushing for checkers to be a part of the club’s logo and jersey. The checkers would symbolize three things for the supporters. First, they would symbolize Indianapolis’ racing heritage as in the checkered flag waving at the end of the Indianapolis 500. It would also symbolize the yard of bricks that lay at Indianapolis Motor Speedway’s finish line and where the group gets its affectionate namesake. Lastly, the checkers express the club and the supporter’s group being built “brick by brick” by the community. The team’s crest dawns the checkers in the background of “Lady Victory,” and for the first three years 2014-2017, the team’s kits had watermarked checkered jerseys. The absence of checkers in the new 2018 jerseys created quite an uproar amongst supports claiming that the club had thrown away tradition in only its fourth year of existence. The club
later released a statement saying that a checkered pattern was not given to them as an option by Adidas. It is the hope by many supporters that one day the checkers will come back as part of the club’s kit.

Stadium
Indy Eleven started its life out in Michael A. Carroll Stadium, built originally for the Pan-American Games that were held in The City in 1987 (Michael Carroll Stadium, 2019). Though the facility lacks many amenities for both players and fans, it was meant to be a temporary home until the club got a soccer specific stadium to call their own. The “Mike” as it was affectionately called by the supports, though not perfect was often sold out. This made the atmosphere electric and made “The Mike” feel like home for the club despite its flaws.

Going into the 2018 season, the club found itself making a last-minute league change after the NASL went defunct and on top of that without a stadium. A last-minute deal with the city saw them move to Lucas Oil Stadium, where the club remains. Though an upgrade in venue quality, many supporters prefer The Coziness of “The Mike”. Playing in an NFL style stadium takes the energy out of the crowd because of its size despite the club seeing its best attendance in its short history.
Art

In the world of soccer and supporters’ culture, art is an important part of what sets the sport apart from any other game in the world. Art comes in the form of tifos, two poles, banners, flags, and smoke bombs. This art form is diverse amongst different cultures, but in many cases the art has something to do with city history, legends, or civic issues. Pieces are handmade with sheets of material that are sewn together to stretch across the crowd or railing of the supporters stand. It is severely frowned upon to make tifos in any other way than this, often you will see supporters’ groups make fun of those peers who screen print their tifos. The amount of passion and effort that goes into completing these works of art is just as important as their intended use. The themes of these tifos vary, but more often than not there is a sense of place component.
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Types of Tifos

Two Pole
A two pole tifo is a very basic tifo that is often only held by one individual and is used throughout the duration of a soccer match.

Figure 6 Always Sunny in Philadelphia Two Pole (Eleventh Plague, 2019)

Banners
Banners are typically hung on the railing of the supporters’ group. These are used to show the different chapters of the BYB, or as a quick way to celebrate a current topic at hand such as pride month or even honoring a player on the team or person in the Brickyard Battalion
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Crowd Tifos
These are the tifos that are most known by general sports fan. These are made up of large sewn together sheets that are then painted on. Some may say you are only as good as your last memorable tifo. This is where the bragging rights come in for groups with others.

Figure 7 The Slaughterhouse-19 Chapter of The BYB's banner on the railing (Higdon, 2016)

Figure 8 An example of a crowd tifo that involves the whole section of The BYB at Carroll Stadium (IndyStar, 2016)
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Flags
Flags are not a traditional made tifo, but they are just as important to the visuals of the BYB during the match. The flags you may see in the group include, Indiana state flag, player country of origin, Indianapolis city flag, Indy Eleven club flag, supporter chapter flag, LGBTQ+ flag and various team color flags as seen in other supporters culture around the world.

![Figure 9 Flags in use in The BYB (Prideraiser, 2019)](image)

Merchandise
Though this is not art in the purest since supporters’ groups like the Brickyard Battalion have their own custom merchandise with group collars and original designs. This takes work effort and creative brain power, so I am going to categories it as art. Merchandise is not used to make money, but to put back into the supporters’ group.

Scarves
Even though the BYB merch store has t-shirts, stickers, and other merch, scarfs are by far the most important accessory in the supporters' section. Scarves are a soccer tradition that has been carried over from Europe and has become a mainstay amongst soccer supporters here in the states. They do not logically make sense in the US due to soccer being played from March - November, but non the less they have caught on and the Brickyard Battalion is full of them.
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Outside the obvious reason as to why they exist for European supporters, they were first used as a unique way to support team colors in a world when clothes were relatively plain in the blue-collar world before jerseys and team stores. In today’s soccer world the scarf is a must have for any match. Scarves can come from the team store, but supporters’ groups often have their own with their colors, which aren’t always the team’s colors. Supporter groups have a similar thought about the scarves as they do with art, a team scarf is great, but a supporter’s scarf is even better. Often times supporters’ groups from opposing clubs will trade scarves as a souvenir for the matchday.

Figure 10 Original green and black Racing Indy FC Brickyard Battalion scarf (Brickyard Battalion, 2013)
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Themes of Tifos

Sense of Place Tifos

President of Slaughterhouse-19 Peter Evans is the head of creating these works of art and when interviewed said that he often flips through speeches from former Indianapolis Mayor Hudnut who he credits for laying the groundwork for what Indianapolis has become today (Evans, 2018). Evans, who is also a capo for the BYB believes that being involved with the organization is his way to get his love letter to the city and a way of release to tell the world about the city he loves so dearly (Evans, 2018). This comes from a guy who grew up in the region part of the state where many people are more attached to the Chicago sports scene than Indianapolis. Evans says he can remember as a kid watching a Chicago Bulls basketball game where they were playing the Indiana Pacers and could not understand why his family who lived in Indiana would cheer for a team in another state (Evans, 2018). Despite having grown up in the northwest part of the state Evans said that he grew up frequently going to the Indianapolis’
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urban core to visit family. He can remember thinking that he would like to live there someday (Evans, 2018).

Indy Folk Sports lore
Often tifos will take an Indy sports heritage moment. This specific type of tifo makes soccer unique in the sense that supporters often think of the sports teams in the city as representing the city as a whole and not just one franchise. For example, there is a story about legendary Indiana Pacer Reggie Miller making a choke sign at super New York Knicks fan Spike Lee during a playoff game where the Pacers came back to defeat the favorite New York Knicks. The BYB took this legendary Indianapolis sports moment and adapted it for use of a tifo against Indy Elevens USL Rivals the New York Cosmos from New York as well.

Figure 12 Cory Miller choke tifo is a reference to a Reggie Miller taunt to Spike Lee during the NBA Playoffs against the New York Knicks. The Eleven formed quite a similar rivalry with The New York Cosmo, hints using this as a tifo (Indy Eleven, 2016)
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Pop-Culture
Soccer often takes well known pop-culture in support for the club. Often this attracts people who would not otherwise watch sports to supporters’ culture. Artist in the group often love the challenge of thinking of something unique and different in support of the team. There always seems to be an unspoken competition between supporters’ groups of other clubs to do unique tifos and often these tifos use pop culture. Indy Eleven is no different.

Figure 13 Brickyard Battalion Tifo referencing "Eleven" character from Stranger things a Netflix Original based in a fictional Indiana town (Gonzalez, 2018)

Civic Matters
The Brickyard Battalion often takes time to make their voice heard when there is a civic matter that is important to them. Most notably the Brickyard Battalion has used tifo art to support the LGBTQ community. In the words of Brickyard Battalion board member Nipun Chopora “everyone belongs to the Brickyard Battalion if they want to be, however if you believe that someone in the group does not belong than you do not belong” (Chopora, 2018). Civic matters
tifos often are in the form of one-off large crowd banners that are doing pride week for example, or they are in the form of rail banners that hang up every match sometimes for multiple seasons.

Figure 14 LGBTQ Indianapolis City flag tifo during Pride Night (French, 2016)

Singing
Singing is an important part of what makes soccer supporter culture unique. Often in the United States various club’s supporter groups use the same tunes and put words to them that fit their club. The Brickyard Battalion is no different however the group does have a few that are unique to just them. There is a constant battle to be more original and this is one of the ways the Brickyard Battalion has done it.

Brick by Brick
Each goal scorer or clean sheet for a keeper gets a Brick from the Brickyard Battalion with the saying “Brick by Brick”. This is not a tradition from the original season, but it has been done for the last four seasons and is a favorite tradition amongst the fans. Other clubs like the Portland
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Timbers and Timbers Army have been doing this with a log slice for a long time and this is a similar tradition.

**Social Gatherings**

Part of what makes the Brickyard Battalion unique from other sports groups is they gather outside of matchdays. A few of the events are soccer related such as Tuesday Slaughterhouse Futsal Club aka TSFC at the Harrison Center, watching other big soccer matches together such as the National team with the Indianapolis “American Outlaws” the national team supports group, the Brickyard Battalion game at the Pacers game, as well as “Hockey Night” at the Indy Fuel game.

It is an important part of the Brickyard Battalion to not only be in support for Indy Eleven, but to also support all of the Indianapolis sports scene. For example, the Brickyard Battalion outing at the Pacers game has become a member favorite, for this game the BYB makes a special order of BYB scarves that are in Pacers colors. The group also has been famous for singing and chanting as if they were at a home Eleven match. This does not go unnoticed and almost works as if it was an advertisement for Indy Eleven matches for those who have never gone to an Indy Eleven match or a soccer match for that matter. The group also has nights at the Indy Fuel.

In the past the group has done a fan euchre tournament on the bases that the players join, and the entry fees go to charity. This was started by a fan podcast called Permanent Relegation when they found out that the players played Euchre while traveling so, they thought it would be a good way for fans to engage with players and raise money for a good cause. Events during the season often happen during away days or bye weeks for the team.
The Bar
Each of the supporter chapters of the BYB have a favorite bar that they congregate when matches are away. These third-place locations are often located in a Central Business District. For Slaughterhouse–19 members that is Broad Ripple’s Union Jack Pub.

![Slaughterhouse-19 Social media advertisement for an Event at The Union Jack](Do317, 2017)

Over the years the social events that are put on as well as the matches themselves have created lifelong friendships with people who would otherwise be strangers without the club. In its six-year existents many people have sat in the same place in the supporter’s section, and this has created friendships amongst supporters.

Away Days
Away days are very important in soccer culture. It is a chance to show the opposing supporter’s group who you are as a group. The BYB is good at making sure that there are people at almost every away day, and they can typically be spotted. Matches that are closer to Indy in proximity are big away days because it means rivalries. Typically, on these days a bus is rented, and it is
an all-out party down to the rival city. These include matches in Cincinnati, Columbus, Louisville, Nashville, and St Louis. If there was a prestigious away day Louisville would be that. When the Indy Eleven joined the USL from the NASL, the USL tried to brand the rivalry as the I-65 derby. In disgust with the league trying to brand a rivalry that frankly had not even existed the supporters decided to rebrand the rebrand and name it the Louisville Indianapolis Proximity Association Football Contest or LIPAFC for short, has a ring to it doesn’t it. The supporters took it further by creating fake history of the rivalry as the greatest rivalry in all of soccer and sport. This caught on and was quite amusing to both supporters’ sections and this continues to this day.

Away days are also a chance to get to know the opposite supporter’s group. This occurrence is unique to the United States soccer scene. The home supporters will invite the away supporters to pre-match drinking or tailgate and get to know each other. There is a curtain comradery amongst supporters of soccer clubs in the US that does not exist in other parts of the world where violence and genuine hate separate them due to political, religious, or neighborhood history separate them. In the US supporters often come from the same mold so they often befriend each other and support each other’s efforts outside of the 90 minutes where their clubs play.

An event that often takes place during away days for supporters is a friendly match between the supporter groups. Though this is not competitive, bragging rights are often still on the line.
Community Engagement

Media

Community engagement is important to every club in soccer just like any sports team, but in soccer community engagement is also done by the supporters’ group. US soccer has long been on the outside of mainstream media. As a result, it up to the fans to cover and interact with the sport in the form of blogs, websites, and podcast. Though this is often still the case for most soccer clubs in the states that are lower division, and small market MLS clubs, some MLS has started to gain some traction with the mainstream media. However, these third-party outlets supporter outlets still exist for the big club with mainstream coverage. These outlets often give a unique view on not just gameday talk, but also the lives of the players. This tradition has carried on from the humble beginnings of pro soccer in the US largely because of the popularity of this form of media and the error of social media has made it even more popular than ever.
Indy eleven has two of these podcasts that are extremely popular amongst supporters. The original BYB podcast is called Permanent Relegation, the podcast is hosted by Andy Baumgater and Chris Ball. The podcast for the most part does not follow any specific format, but that is what makes it so great as a supporter. This show has produced so many laughs because often the show just consist of the hosts just hanging out with the players, team personnel, or BYB members at Chatham Tap in Fishers, and because the podcast is not run by the club they pretty much do and say whatever they want. Some of the more memorable interviews were with Peter Wilt, Brad Ring, and Wojciech Wojcik. The idea for the euchre tournament came from the episode with Woj.

SocTakes is a web page and podcast, it differs from Permanent Relegation because it is more journalistic and focuses on the match coverage itself. Although it originally was focused on Indy Eleven, it now focuses on lower division soccer in the US and other US soccer issues. The podcast was founded by Nipun Chopra and KJ Box both Brickyard Battalion members and their photographer Robbie Mehling who is also a member. SocTakes prides itself on high quality journalism, and the fact that they broke the story on the Indy Eleven going to the USL and
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playing at Lucas Oil Stadium. Often Chopra gets Teased for being an inside job with the US soccer system from other BYB supporters in a lighthearted way calling him a shill and sometimes the heart is not light hearted at all from other supporters across the US soccer landscape, Nipun embraces anything and everything that is thrown his way. It is often joked about by the Permanent Relegation host that they have a “shit” show (Baumgarter, BYB Interviews, 2018) and that SocTakes is a far better media outlet that is educational and superior ran by a PhD. Which by the way SocTakes is not Chopora’s day job he is a PhD and a neuroscientist. SocTakes is a labor of love for him.

Community Outreach

Soccer supporters have long been involved in supporting charitable efforts, causes, and each other. This act comes from the belief that a supporter’s group is not just about soccer. The game of soccer is not just about soccer it is about the city and the people who live in it. The BYB does not have a charitable focus, often creating its own initiatives. An example, Indy for Everyone created by the founder of SocTakes and BYB board member, Nipun Chopra. The program consists of inviting marginalized people in the Indianapolis area to an Indy Eleven match in the supporter’s section and paying for their ticket and giving them a BYB scarf to help them feel welcome in the city. There is no record as to how successful the program was in making this group feel welcome, but the program took place during all 2017 home matches. During one of the Indy for Everyone matches some far-right white nationalist started screaming explicit at the Syrian refugees that were guests of the section and the BYB members quickly moved around their guest to keep them safe and got the group removed from the section.

Causes that are supported are often progressive as with most soccer supporters’ groups in the United States. Though not official, The BYB supports LBGTQ movement, urbanism, Anti-Fascism, and Welcoming refugees and all types of people into its group. However, if you are
opposed to these things many feel they are not welcome. Recently, the BYB participated in the nationwide supporters group fundraiser called Prideraiser which matched goals scored by the team with a pledged dollar amount for each goal scored by the team. The supporters will also support things like Power soccer, The Pride Parade, and A United on the Front in support for human rights along with other supporters.

**Interviews**

As part of my research I interviewed five different members of the Brickyard Battalion that are from different places around the city in the region. I did this to get a broad perspective of how the BYB has influenced them in their involvement in the supporter’s group and The City of Indianapolis.

**Peter Evans**

Peter Evans, the president of the BYB is an Indiana native from “The Region” so naturally he grew up with Chicago sports being his first sports exposure as a fan. Even though Peter watched the Bears, Bulls, and White Sox his first love was hockey and the Chicago Blackhawks. Evans mentioned that there was just something about the “vikingness” about hockey that led him to love the brutal sport (Evans, 2018).

Evan’s who grew up with an uncle in Indianapolis can remember watching the Chicago Bulls take on the Indiana Pacers and thinking “we live in Indiana, why would we ever cheer for the Bulls”. It was from that point forward that Evans began his lifelong love affair with the Indianapolis sports scene. However, Peter can remember thinking when visiting his uncle that he would one day like to live in Indianapolis. Now having lived in Indianapolis for almost half his life he has taken upon himself to indulge in Indianapolis, Indiana state history saying that “it is
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an amazing city that “Mayor Hudnut laid the groundwork for and the current residents are molding the culture of The City that is still forming” (Evans, 2018).

Evans came to soccer by a friend of his who was also a punk rocker like himself who regularly attended Chicago Fire match. His friend told him that it was very similar to punk culture where you would go to your band or your favorite bands show scream your head off in support, singing the songs, wearing the band gear, and just like that Evans had season tickets to the Chicago fire, he was hooked (Evans, 2018).

Peter was involved with the BYB one year before the team began and played an integral part in starting the Slaughterhouse-19 Chapter of the BYB that is known for doing most of the visual artwork for the supporter’s group, and the chants. According to Evans, SH-19 was influenced heavily by bohemian club St Pauli FC in Hamburg Germany known for their alternative culture, and left-wing politics. Obviously, the group was also influenced by the punk culture Evan’s grew up with and still loves. Peter’s most important lessons learned from St Pauli is that size of club does not matter the team still represents the community, and that St Pauli culture is not a plug and chug situation here in Indy. Evan’s has learned that BYB culture forms naturally if you let, and it has done just that. When asking Peter about his experience with tifo he laugh and said, “it is extravagantly stupid” (Evans, 2018). Evan’s went on to say that he often looks at old Hudnut speeches to get inspiration for civic oriented tifo (Evans, 2018).

When asking about the relationship with the club Evans thought it important to note that The BYB is separate from the club, but they support the club and city on and off the pitch but that does not mean we cannot be upset with the things that the club does (Evans, 2018).
In asking what is next for the group Peter was adamant that he cannot do this forever saying that “I’m old” and that it is important to raise up leaders to lead the group into the next generation. I then asked what the reasoning was for getting together on non-matched days and Peter said, “The BYB is family”, and it also gives us the opportunity to recruit others in a non-match day setting which can sometimes be crazy. Regarding social Justice, Peter believes it is SH-19 PC police and that they watch over the group to make sure that everyone is welcome (Evans, 2018).

Nipun Chopra
Nipun Chopra is one of the founders of SocTakes Pod and website as well as a board member on the BYB. Chopra’s soccer story started in India where he grew up in the minority playing soccer instead of cricket the national pass time. Chopra came to Indiana by way of education at Depuaw where he played soccer for three years. Nipun came to Indy by way of continued education at IUPUI. As far as Indy Eleven and the BYB go Nipun has been a part of the seen since the first season, but he sees himself as being more of a behind the scenes guy rather than a capo. According to Chopra the BYB’s purpose is to support growing soccer in the state and to assist growing Indy Eleven. He added that “The BYB belongs to everyone, but if you believe that someone else in the group does not belong then you do not belong” (Chopra, 18). This led to his thoughts about the BYB chapter Slaughterhouse-19 who has some social justice missions outside of soccer that add to their specific chapter (Chopra, 2018).

When asking Nipun if he felt that the BYB played a role in building a sense of ownership with the club he said “Yes, for me specifically Indy Eleven and the BYB is the only thing in this city that is truly belongs to me”. Having been around since the very beginning of the BYB and Indy Eleven Nipun feels a sense of ownership in that despite not being from The City like most
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supporters, state, or even country. This sense of ownership for supporters is what makes this game so beautiful. The passion can be found all over the world (Chopra, 2018).

On the subject of tifo, Nipun believes that it is a creative, fun, and traditional way to engage supporters with each other. He also mentioned he thought it was important that the supporters get together in a non-matchday setting throughout the year to grow engagement and potentially grow the group (Chopra, 2018).

Lastly, when asking him about charitable things the BYB does he made it clear that this is not necessarily a core value. However, due to the makeup of the group many times activity of the pitch consists of civic and charitable matters. It is worth mentioning that Nipun was part of creating a BYB initiative called “Indy is for Everyone”. This initiative was to work with refugee organizations to bring people in their program to the game for free. All game expenses paid for including a scarf (Chopra, 2018).

Andy Baumgater
Andy Baumgater is the co-creator of the Permanent Relegation Podcast. Baumgater is originally from Wabash, Indiana, but went to Ball State for Multimedia, and then down to Indianapolis for work after school. Andy had never used his degree from Ball State in his career and he had always wanted to so when he and his friend Chris Ball got word of professional soccer being a potential in Indianapolis they immediately jumped on the opportunity to start a podcast and cover the movement and eventually the team (Baumgater, 2018).

Though Andy lives just outside the city in Hamilton County, he has always been fascinated with it (Baumgarter, BYB Interviews, 2018). Baumgater, has a very different view of the club and its supporters. Andy believes that in the end the club is just a franchise and that there is no
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togetherness really between the club and the supporters. However, the club makes it seem that way between supporters and franchise via marketing, for the BYB it is different, and it feels more personal (Baumgater, 2018).

Baumgater though technically a part of the BYB is more attached to the relationships he and Chis have made through the PR Podcast through the years. He mentions that many of which have now become personal friends including Brad Ring; a fan favorite, Kristian Nicht; Indy Eleven’s first keeper, John Kuloder; Indy Eleven's first Communications Director, and Last but not least Peter Wilt; Indy Eleven’s first President and GM. Though a soccer fan beforehand these relationships hooked Andy and Chris on the local team. Through personnel changes in the club Andy has lost a bit of the personal touch with the club and feels a bit like it isn’t how it used to be, but still actively follows the team. When asking Andy BYB questions regarding art, civic pride, and engagement all of his answers seemed to have one theme at that was that stuff is for the “young hipsters” (Baumgarter, BYB Interviews, 2018).

Robbie Mehling
Robbie Mehling is originally from Evansville, Indiana and found his way to Central Indiana by way of education at Ball State University. Like Andy Bamgater he also has a Multimedia degree and works at Ball State University doing public relations work (Mehling, 2018). Mehling, volunteers with SocTakes to do photography for their coverage of Indy Eleven. Before Indy Eleven, Robbie was not a sports fan by any means but was engaged with civic matters in Muncie, Indiana. The civic pride of the BYB and the club branding of “The Worlds Game, Indiana’s Team” sucked Robbie into the fandom of supporter’s culture and soccer (Mehling, 2018). Robbie is a huge advocate for Muncie, Indiana and sees Indianapolis as more of the cultural center of the state so his connection to the city in which the club calls home is more about “being a Hoosier” than being from the city itself (Mehling, 2018).
Robbie joined the BYB halfway through the first season and has been a season ticket holder ever since. Mehling describes the BYB as a group of people that stand by, cheer for, and do good stuff for Indy” (Mehling, 2018). Even though Robbie has no real connection with the City of Indianapolis he believes that the BYB has taught him more about the City and that others have also learned. Mehling believes that social justice advocacy is a “huge part” of what the BYB does and that tifos and civic imagery is a way for the BYB to show pride in their club and city. Though Robbie often drives down for match day, because he does not live near Indy gathers outside of Indy are harder to get to, but he says that he tries to make a few (Mehling, 2018).

David Strange

David Strange is originally from Lagottee, Indiana, and serves as the Community Engagement coordinator for the BYB. After graduating college at the University of Southern Indiana David moved to Bloomington (Strange, 2018). It was there where he would get involved in soccer and get involved with the BYB and Indy Eleven soccer movement. Strange intention was to start a BYB chapter in Bloomington called “The Cutters” after the famous cycling movie breaking away which takes place in Bloomington, Indiana and the Famed “Little 500” (Strange, 2018). The chapter even had a motto picked out from the movie “If they want a fight, they will get a fight” (Strange, 2018). This specific Bloomington chapter never happened however because David’s plans changed from all the sudden moving to Alaska where he was planning to help a friend start American Outlaws Alaska, the supporter’s group for the US Soccer National Teams (Strange, 2018). His plans changed again, and he ended up moving to Indianapolis (Strange, 2018).

To Strange, the BYB is an opportunity for people to be involved in something greater than themselves. David went on to say that art in the BYB and the supporters group culture
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separates the casual fan from the diehard supporters (Strange, 2018). When asked about the Brickyard Battalion culture specifically David said that there is a real sense of “Indy is Mine” from everyone that is involved (Strange, 2018). This attitude carries over to how community engagement is done according to strange (Strange, 2018). He believes that the front office is a community has made sure that it is understood that they are a community-oriented group and that trickles down to the supporters who are encouraged to do volunteering in the community. He went on to say “if the BYB succeeds Indy will succeed” (Strange, 2018) and if Indy Eleven for some reason does not exist the BYB will still be here for the community. He believes that “Indy is for Everyone” and that is the key to success of the group (Strange, 2018).

Conclusion

Supporters Culture is only one of three parts of a successful fan market for a club. According to Peter Wilt, former Indy Eleven club president and GM you must also have families and internationals participate in the club in some way. Families are important because in the United States soccer has a high number of youth participates. Indy Eleven supports youth soccer to encourage attendance at games that will hopefully get the whole family involved with Indy Eleven.

The international market is the other market that is needed to build a successful club. This market is often extremely hard to get because many international residents of the Indianapolis community have teams from their home country they follow closely despite being in the US. This makes it difficult for American clubs including Indy Eleven to gain passionate international followers. The hope of many US clubs according to Peter Wilt, is that they can make enough of an impression on the international market to become their second favorite team.
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Though all three markets are important, The Brickyard Battalion, and other supporter groups across the United States are the life blood of the club and its culture. The supporters group with its civic pride on display becomes a marketing tool for the club to draw the other two markets to the games, and it is the hope of the club that those youth soccer players would become devout followers and members of the Brickyard Battalion for generations to come.

The Brickyard Battalion takes its passion in support of the club off the field as well. This especially comes to play when the media bashes the club for their stadium deal with the City when the club often plays to a seemingly empty Lucas Oil Stadium. Members will be quick to point out that even though Lucas Oil looks empty the club has the best attendance average in the league of 15,000 a game. That is 2,000 less then when the club was selling out “The Mike”. The supporters have and always will be Indy Eleven advocates.

In conclusion the BYB does not affect social and cultural capital as much as I expected. Even though the BYB does in fact welcome everyone to the table, often the people that come into the group are like each other already. They provide social capital to each other, but for those that do not fit that stereotype (progressive, urbanist, 20- or 30- something mold) it may be hard to get anything out of the Brickyard Battalion. Secondly, the people who are involved heavily in the Brickyard Battalion are already involved with the city.

The fact of the matter is that the people involved in soccer supporters culture are really just a small sub-culture in the US sports culture. Therefore, there is not much that can be gained by someone as far as cultural capital goes. For example, as a refugee, if you are new to Indianapolis, learning cultural capital from a minor sports sub-culture means that the supporters group culture does not reflect the at-large American culture and therefore may not be useful to
learn norms and become educated about the American way of life. However, the group could point new residents to like-minded people and thus the cultural capital is then gained through the social capital that was first received.

The same result happens to a person that is an American citizen and moves to Indianapolis. If you are not like the majority of the BYB, you may not fit in. However, if you are similar to them you may start to receive some social capital that will create relationships and eventually create cultural capital amongst like-minded people.

With that being said, the above means that those who are heavily involved in the BYB are also involved in civic matters and have civic pride. Those who are recruited by these people are often like-minded and though not involved with the BYB are like-minded with BYB members and gain social and cultural capital and a love for soccer around the BYB community.

The conclusion comes with no surprise as supporters culture in the US is most often 20-30 something progressives. If the BYB is looking to gain more diverse members from different backgrounds it must embrace different demographics. However, this can be difficult because the imagery of the group is progressive-heavy, making other demographics feel as if they are not welcome. Not using or doing some of the things that are seen as progressive in order to get a new demographic would require the Brickyard Battalion to change a lot of their core values, and that is not something that the group is willing to change. This is not to saying being a fan of soccer does not raise civic pride this is just saying that a supporter is more often than not a specific type of person and therefore they are involved.
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