'I mainly come for the pies'

An ethnographic study of contemporary football culture.

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Abstract.

This thesis endeavours to develop a more nuanced understanding of contemporary football culture. As such my research adopts a consumer-oriented cultural studies approach to analyse the ways in which modern 'consumer' fans negotiate their position within football culture and the power operating upon them as they do so. Drawing on data from unique ethnographic research I argue that modern fans engage in processes of complex discursive negotiation, constructing their identities at the juncture of the hegemonic discourses that surround football culture: capitalism and tradition, but also their individual understanding of how they are *expected* to enact fandom.

I argue that modern fans are able to negotiate the discourses of capitalism and tradition operating upon them to enact their own power and identity within football culture. As such, this thesis seeks to advance debates about collective identity formation and the scope of representation within contemporary football culture. In doing so, my research contributes to football scholarship's long tradition of making perceptive social commentaries, drawing on football culture to contribute to wider debates concerning capitalism and collective identity formation.

Chapter 1: Introduction.

> Millions of people in our county love their football and love their football clubs. Our national game will only succeed in the long term if the voices of the fans are heard… and they are given the chance to play their part. (Ed Miliband 2014)

#YouAreFootball

As I exited the tube at Fulham Broadway to conduct my pilot study with Chelsea fans (27/9/11), employees of Barclays Bank approached me. As the official sponsor of the Premier League, Barclays had just started its '#YouAreFootball campaign,' an initiative started by the bank to 'thank real football fans' (Barclays 2011) by giving them the opportunity to win match day tickets and recoup travel expenses. To be in with a chance of winning tickets, I was asked to tell Barclays what football meant to me to 'help them celebrate the passion of real fans' (Barclays 2011).

Barclays (2011) emphasise the centrality of the fan to football culture as suggested by the branding of their campaign '#YouAreFootball,' a slogan that along with their rationale of engaging with the individual passions of fans, positions fans as active agents within football culture. The epigraph similarly encapsulates this idea of autonomy, Miliband (2014) positioning fans as active agents that exercise their voice and 'play their part' in shaping football culture.

Taking the Barclays campaign into account, this idea of an active, participatory fandom seems constitutive of Barclays' (2011) conception of a 'real football fan,' yet there is a slight caveat to this. To identify as a 'real fan,' and to take part in the competition, participants had to be in possession of a match day ticket. While the campaign would seem to acknowledge the constitutive role of the fan within football culture, it is required that the fan is active *in consumption*, 'buying into' football's culture of capitalism and supporting its affiliated companies.

The bank's definition of the 'real football fan' works with the assumption that fans accept contemporary football's culture of capitalism, 'real' fans acknowledging their position as consumers within the culture. Barclays' (2011) conception of the 'real football fan' looks to

naturalise the game's[1] modern capitalism and the relationship of producer and consumer between fan and football club, however the concept of the 'real football fan' is shrouded in conflicting discourse within football culture. Indeed, while Barclays (2011) clearly recognise modern football as a developed capitalist industry, there is significant opposition to the game's modern capitalism and the subsequent consumer fan identities that have developed as a result of this process.

Explaining my thesis to 'Richard' (19/6/12)[2] a contact I made conducting research in 'MG's,' a popular sports bar in Norfolk[3], he questioned its significance and representativeness:

> Your research is looking at those that can afford to go to football matches, not fans. The real fans can't afford to go to games anymore and have been put off by the circus surrounding it these days. Real football fans don't go to matches anymore so I don't think there's much point (in you) going to matches (to conduct research) it'll all be the same thing (2012).

Barclays (2011) use rhetoric that alludes to the active consumerism of fans within football culture yet 'Richard' denies their fandom, positioning them as passive consumers, 'your research is looking at those that can afford to go to football matches, *not fans* (emphasis added).' Similarly, while Barclays implore consumer fans to 'share their passions' about football, 'Richard' denies consumer fans' individuality and subjectivity. He suggests that their fandom will be figured by their relationship of consumerism to their clubs and thus my ethnographic observations within the stadium will 'all be the same thing.' My research operates against the assumption that football culture has historically operated free from capitalism[4] and subsequently looks to understand the individual pleasure and motivations of modern consumer fans, exploring how they understand the way in which they are positioned within football culture, how they articulate their fandom and negotiate the ways in which they are narrowly represented.

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[1] 'The game,' is a term used throughout the thesis. 'The game' is used as an umbrella concept to capture the idea that live football is an 'event' that extends beyond the action on the pitch. The participants suggest that they have different motivations for attending live matches; pleasures are found in club catering, in socialising with like-minded people, meeting family, drinking and in purchasing merchandise. It is this wider idea of football as an 'event,' as a leisure industry that I draw upon in use of the term.
[2] See appendix A.
[3] 'MG's'was recommended to me as a site for analysis by self identified 'pub fans'. See chapter seven.
[4] See Literature Review for expansion.

Fundamentally 'Richard' (2012) mobilises the concept of the 'real football fan,' in opposition to Barclays (2011) and the concept of the consumer fan. He argue that 'real fans don't go to matches anymore,' insinuating that they have become both economically and ideologically disenfranchised; 'Real fans can't afford to go to games anymore' they are 'put off by the circus surrounding it these days' (Richard 2012). This notion refers to the cultural changes that have happened within football culture since the early 1990s, said to mark football cultures' assimilation with modern capitalism, when the FA made concerted attempts to attract new demographics to the sport: women, families and the middle classes (see Fynn & Guest 1994; Lee 1998; King 2002; Imlach 2005). To achieve this, the terraces were removed and an all seating policy was introduced while ticket prices were increased concomitant with the game's embourgeoisement, to assimilate football with wider leisure industries. 'Richard' encapsulates the idea that this cultural reorientation of the game precipitated alterations in the physical experience of watching live football matches but also, significantly, the 'type' of fan that these changes attracted. Fundamentally he argues that as consumers, contemporary fans cannot be considered 'real,' with individual fan identities.

A tension is apparent within football culture. While the game has developed through different phases of capitalism[5], 'Richard's' (2012) understanding of modern football culture as 'capitalist football culture' is demonstrative of a large counter discourse that decries the loss of the traditional experience of attending football matches and the traditional fan identities of the working class men that occupied the terraces. This tension is reflected in the way in which Barclays (2011) and 'Richard' mobilise the concept of the 'real football fan'. As suggested, while Barclays emphasise the centrality of consumer fans within the culture, framing their fandom as active consumerism, 'Richard' juxtaposes their passive consumption to the knowing abstinence of the 'traditional fan' (see Ingle 2005), framing consumer fans as hollow, ersatz and corporate dupes.

The way in which 'Richard' (2012) creates opposition between consumer fans and traditional fans emphasises the centrality of both capitalist and traditional discourse to contemporary football culture, indicating that he has an understanding of the cultural developments that have happened within the game, yet it is clear that he recognises the

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[5] As outlined in the Literature Review.

aura that continues to be associated with traditional football culture and the identity of the traditional fan.

'Richard's' (2012) response to my research is indicative of much of the literature surrounding football culture. Like 'Richard' both popular and academic texts proficiently identify the commercial and economic changes that have happened within football culture as the game has developed through different phases of capitalism, yet these texts predominantly focus on the way in which these changes have affected the fandom and identity of 'traditional fans.' I argue that many contemporary texts, particularly those written by self-identified traditional fans, pundits and former players, seem dramatically overpowered by an emotional sense of loss (Bale 1998; Brimson 1998; Burgess 2005; Conn 2005; Ingle 2005). Similarly, while more rigorous academic critiques such as King's work (2002) demonstrate appreciation of the complexities and contradictions of football's modern capitalism, much of the empirical work surrounding football culture still refers to a 'traditional fan experience' as a starting point for research, positioning the authentic 'fan' in opposition to an imagined disingenuous modern 'consumer' of football (see Brown 1998; Williams 2000; King 2002; Pearson 2012).

'Richard's' (2012) quotation encapsulates the idea of loss associated with traditional fan identities within modern football culture. He rejects the identity of consumer fans for reflecting the processes of the game's modern capitalism. This is indicative of the popular literature, not taking into account the legitimacy or nuances of consumer fan identities or the influence of capitalism on the game's early development. Similarly while the academic literature makes a significant contribution to the new agenda for football scholarship (see Guilanotti 2002; King 2002; Pearson 2012), it similarly ignores the identity of consumer fans, helping to create a binary between the 'authentic' traditional fan and the 'disingenuous' consumer fan.

If as I suggest, agents of the game's modern capitalism act with an agenda of naturalising the relationship of consumption between fan, club and affiliated industries, then I argue that both popular and academic literature surrounding football culture naturalises the 'traditional' relationship between working class fans and football culture helping to maintain the aura (see Benjamin 2008) associated with traditional fan identities. 'Richard's' (2012) response to my research and his 'othering' of consumer fans is indicative of this in which he

demonstrates his identification with the traditional discourses surrounding football culture. Indeed his disregard for my research seems indicative of his disregard for the identity of consumer fans, 'Richard' discrediting their role within football culture.

Taking this into account, consumer fans appear to be trapped within discourses of representation, with their identity as consumers explicitly constructed by both agents of the game's capitalism and the game's tradition. Barclays (2011), as an agent of the game's capitalism, look to reward fans for 'buying into' the capitalism of the sport. This is the genius of the capitalist system, with its discourse permeating into the products that embody its hegemony. The relationship of consumption between fan and club is naturalised by agents of the game's modern capitalism in which fans are encouraged to self-identify as consumers. Marcuse (1991: 9) encapsulates this idea outlining the way in which capitalism encourages identity formation thorough patronage:

> People recognise themselves in their commodities, they find their soul in the automobiles, hi-fi sets, spirit level home, kitchen equipment. The very mechanism which ties the individual to his society has changed and social control is achieved in the need that it has produced.

Barclays (2011) in their campaign suggest that consumption legitimates the identity of the fan making them 'real.' Indeed as I suggest, the opportunity Barclays (2011) provide fans to describe their passions and enact their identity can be considered as a reward for their consumption: the bank providing fans with a platform to enact identity through the purchase of match tickets. On the other hand agents of the game's tradition, self-identified traditional fans, pundits and academics, negatively frame fans as consumers 'othering' them in relation to the concept of the 'traditional fan' indicative of a time when football culture was (wrongly) considered to be free from capitalist interest. The consumer fans that have replaced the traditional fans within the stadium are presented as the embodiment of these processes, depersonalised and denied subjectivity.

While both agents of the game's modern capitalism and agents of the game's tradition disseminate discourse that looks to naturalise the relationship between fan and football culture, it is of note that despite being aware of both discourses 'Richard' (2012) identifies with the discourse associated with traditional football culture. While the businesses and

institutions responsible for the game's modern capitalism disseminate discourse to naturalise the fan's position as consumers within the culture, self-identified traditional fans largely disseminate the discourses associated with the game's traditional culture. The personal accounts of the traditional fans frame their identity in opposition to the game's modern capitalism, presenting a cause and effect relationship, in which capitalism is presented as the cause of their exclusion from contemporary football culture (see Bale 1998; Brimson 1998; Burgess 2005; Conn 2005). This creates a dichotomy of 'them and us' in which agents of the game's modern capitalism are positioned in opposition to self-identified 'real' football fans.

I argue that these emotional, individual narratives of fandom are more accessible than the discourse disseminated by major corporations. The individual narratives of traditional fans successfully expand upon the romanticised and nostalgic images of the terraces popularised within popular culture both by 'hooly lit' and 'hooly film'[6] (see Brimson 1998) while similarly tapping into anti-consumerist discourse epitomised by Marcuse (1991). In doing so these texts appeal both to the popular imagination of the wider audience, while helping to generate support for the traditional fan's claims of authenticity, positioning them as underdogs in opposition to the collective hegemony of capitalism and its embodied consumer fans.

In documenting the ways in which the game's modern capitalism has affected the identity of the 'traditional fan,' a binary is created between the 'good' traditional fan and 'bad' agents of capitalism. In doing so, football's capitalism is presented as fundamentally negative, exclusively associated with the game's modern era. I argue that this has twofold significance in relation to the way in which football culture is studied and analysed. While traditional fans have a platform within football culture to disseminate counter discourse to the game's capitalism, consumer fans, framed as embodied agents of the game's capitalism, have limited representation within football culture. As I suggest, consumer fans are positioned

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[6]There has been a range of texts documenting the culture and hooliganism of the terraces such as *Congratulations You Have Just Met The ICF* (Pennant 2003), *Good Afternoon Gentlemen* (Gardner 2012) and *Running with the Firm* (Bannon 2013). The popular image of the terraces is similarly fictionalised in film: *The Football Factory* (2004); *Green Street* (2005); *The Firm* (2009). My research indicates that these texts influence the participant's expectations of fandom. See Chapters four and seven.

both positively as consumers by football's governing bodies and negatively as consumers by self-identified traditional fans, trapped in discourses of representation without a platform to articulate their own fan identity. Secondly, while football is both a cultural phenomenon, 'millions of people throughout the county love their football and love their football club' (Miliband 2014) and a culture of contestation, it seems significant that cultural studies approaches, particularly consumption-oriented cultural studies approaches to football culture, are rarely enacted (see King 2002; Sandvoss 2003).

While consumption-oriented cultural studies accept capitalist orthodoxy (see Fiske 1986; 1992; Barker 2004; Sandvoss 2005; Lash 2007) the different phases of football's capitalism are ignored and disavowed by self-identified traditional fans. Indeed their identity is framed in opposition to the game's modern capitalism and its consumer fans. Adopting a consumption-orientated cultural studies approach to football culture would take the game's capitalism as a natural starting point and as suggested, self-identified traditional fans are loath to accept this.

The traditional fan's critiques of football's modern capitalism and the 'othering' of consumer fans work with the assumption that commodities carry embedded ideological meaning that serves the interest of capitalism[7]. However it is significant that contemporarily this perception of identity formation within capitalist society has been challenged. Barker (2004) argues that firstly it should not be taken for granted that commodities necessarily carry ideological meaning that supports the capitalist system. Indeed he suggests that commodities alternatively, may encourage resistance and transgression (Barker 2004). Secondly he suggests that it needs to be recognised that consumers are active in consumption, attributing their own meanings to the commodities that they consume (Barker 2004). In other words Barker (2004) argues that consumers do not passively accept the meanings that critics have suggested are invested within texts but are capable of creating their own meanings through the interplay of texts and their individual consumer needs.

It is the way in which traditional fans exercise power over consumer fans limiting the boundaries of football culture that has encouraged me to adopt a consumer-oriented cultural studies approach to my research. Subsequently I take the capitalism of the sport as

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[7] Marx in the 1850s, Adorno in the 1940s and Althusser in the 1970s have made such arguments.

the starting point with my literature review outlining the way in which the game has progressed through different phases of capitalism. In the acknowledgement of capitalist orthodoxy, consumer–oriented cultural studies as a discipline looks to examine the idiosyncrasies of identity, exploring the individuality and creativity of collective formations of people by analysing the ways in which they can oppose, challenge and find pleasure in capitalist texts. Sandvoss (2005: 9) encapsulates this notion describing contemporary fandom as a practice in which individuals emotionally engage with the products of capitalism. Barclays' (2011) campaign seems to work with this premise. Taking football's capitalism as the starting point, the campaign asks fans about their identification with their club and their passion for the game that have been enabled through their purchase of match day tickets. As suggested, the rhetoric of the campaign frames the process as active consumption, concomitant with the premise of consumer-oriented cultural studies in which it is taken for granted that fans construct meanings and their identity from their engagements with capitalist texts. While consumer-oriented cultural studies accepts that production remains in the hands of multi-national corporations, a premise concomitant with 'late capitalist' theory (see Mandel 1975; Jameson 1997; Targ 2006; Harvey 2014), it argues that meanings are created, managed and negotiated at the level of consumption.

My research adheres to this idea, with the findings of my ethnographic research indicating that the fans of the three clubs selected for analysis[8] are aware of the discourses operating on them both within football culture and in capitalist society more generally, challenging the idea that they are merely corporate dupes and passive consumers. Indeed my unique argument is that the fans' levels of engagement and understanding of these discourses produce different expectations of how they *should* identify as fans.

Rather than being trapped within discourses of representation, my argument is that consumer fans engage in processes of complex discursive negotiation, constructing their identities at the juncture of the hegemonic discourses that surround football culture: consumerism and tradition. Fans from each club enact unique hybridised identities in which they self-identify as consumer fans while similarly looking to authenticate their fan identity by enacting rituals associated with traditional football culture. My research indicates that

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[8]Norwich City, Milton Keynes Dons and Chelsea were selected as case studies. Norwich City was selected as 'a family club,' Milton Keynes was selected as a 'franchise' football club. Chelsea was selected as a 'tourist attraction' club.

these complex articulations of identity differ in relation to the unique culture of their club and their individual identification with the discourses of traditional football culture, producing unique expectations of what it means to be a modern football fan. While the hegemonic discourses surrounding the culture, tradition and capitalism work to create a binary between the traditional fan and the modern consumer, my research suggests that in practice this is not the case with the fans drawing upon both discourses in their enactment of fan identity challenging the simplistic binary that has been created.

At no point am I suggesting that the pervasiveness and power of capitalism should be ignored or even accepted, however my argument is that by effectively denying the fandom of consumer fans, positioning them as 'others' to be feared we are effectively denying ourselves the opportunity to understand their negotiations of capitalism or consider their individual motivations for fandom upon which consumer-oriented cultural studies thrives (see Jameson 1991; Fiske 1992; Hills 2002; Barker 2004; Sandvoss 2005).

Consumer-oriented-cultural studies as a discipline examines the idiosyncrasies of identity formation to assess the creativity and individuality of consumers offering readers examples of ways in which we as consumers, can oppose, challenge and find pleasure in products of capitalism, providing us with opportunities to further consider our position with the capitalist system. As Barker (2004) indicates, consumer-oriented cultural studies looks to analyse how texts carry meanings that articulate collective identities and their objective and subjective position within society. Taking football culture as the 'text' this thesis looks to develop a more nuanced understanding of contemporary football to situate it with consumer oriented-cultural studies that looks to understand the individual pleasure and motivations of consumers, exploring how consumer fans understand the way in which they are positioned within the culture, how they articulate their fandom and negotiate the ways in which they are narrowly represented.

To accomplish this I draw upon the moral values of participatory research. From a philosophical stance the principles underlying participatory research are based on the recognition of human subjectivity and the social construction of reality (Reason & Rowan 1981). Again I argue that this is largely unique in contemporary football culture with my research adopting a scholarly approach rarely applied to football culture, while my research focuses on a 'type' of fan that is largely denied subjectivity.

This thesis seeks to advance debates about collective identity formation and the scope of representation within modern football culture. In doing so my research contributes to football scholarship's long tradition of making perceptive social commentaries, drawing on football culture to contribute to wider debates concerning capitalism and collective identity formation. My research not only helps to address the power imbalance within contemporary football culture, but also assimilates football scholarship with consumer–oriented cultural studies, endeavouring to assess the pleasures and 'exceptional readings' audiences conduct with capitalist texts (Sandvoss 2005: 48) ensuring that consumer fans are 'given the chance to play their part' within football culture and that their 'voices are heard' (Miliband 2014).

Chapter 2: Literature Review.

**The People's Game? :
Contextualising Football Culture's Historical Development and the Changing Identity of its fans.**

<u>**Kick off**</u>

> A fan returning to these shores (in 1996) after a four-year absence would not recognize the game he left behind. The players, their strips, their wages, the tactics, the stadia, the TV coverage, the transfer fees, the media attention, the club owners, the admission prices, the crowd make up and the merchandising would perplex anyone who hadn't actually lived through the change (Fynn & Davidson 1996: xiii).

In his nostalgic text *My Father and Other Working-Class Football Heroes* (2005) Gary Imlach draws on his experience as a *NFL* commentator in the late eighties mid-nineties to celebrate the 'integrity' and 'authenticity' of English football. Imlach (2005: 213) describes the culture of American professional sport as a synthetic 'cash fuelled soap opera…an entirely indigenous phenomenon' without parallel in England. Perpetuating this juxtaposition, Imlach (2005: 213) creates a binary between 'commercialisation' and 'authenticity,' a romantic, idealised version of sports culture that he explicitly attributes to English football. In characterizing American sport as decadent and excessive, manifest 'pure commercialisation,' Imlach (2005: 213) draws on the history and tradition of English football to depict it as a pursuit of higher cultural importance and integrity, sport not as a multi-billion dollar, multi-national industry but as a 'game of the people.'

As indicated by the quotation, a significant part of this binary relates to the role of the fan. American franchise culture dictates that teams can be uprooted at an owner's will; fandom he argues is merely an arbitrary choice following the logics of rapacious American consumer society in which fans are 'basically rooting for jerseys.' On the contrary football clubs are described as institutions with proud histories representative of the character of local communities, fandom governed by long standing familial lineage, geographical ties and indefinable emotional attachment (Imlach 2005: 213). This argument still holds much significance both in academia and to fans themselves in relation to traditional ideas about what football culture *should* be about.

It is ironic that during his time in America, football in England started to succumb to the influence of the 'transatlantic drift,' a cultural shift in which football clubs explicitly embraced commercialisation, professionalisation and rationalisation, transforming themselves from the cottage industries he describes to fully fledged multinational businesses indicative of the *NFL* franchises that he had grown to loath, this process is the shift to which Fynn and Davidson (1996) refer in the epigraph, documenting the characteristics of football's modern capitalism. A significant body of intellectual response to these changes is highly nostalgic and melancholic, the past is idealised, the present is criticised and the future is feared (Carrington 1998; Williams 2000; King 2002; Burgess 2005; Conn 2005; Redhead 2007; Platts & Smith 2010). This literature echoes Imlach's (2005) lamentation of the *NFL* in which heightened commercialisation is said to sully the sport's 'purity of existence,' and 'communal tradition.' On returning to England in the late nineties, Imlach (2005) documents his feelings of disorientation, his inability to embrace contemporary football culture, and his prevailing desire for reorientation.

His recollections succinctly encapsulate the wider feeling of powerlessness and loss associated with football's modern era of capitalism, with the following quotation alluding to both the compromised purity of the 'traditional game' and importantly its alleged disenfranchisement of the male working class 'traditional fan.' As he suggests: 'The stridency of the brash, relentless circus surrounding the game …made it seem increasingly remote, *like someone else's sport'* (Imlach 2005: 213 My emphasis).

This quotation encapsulates the major opposition posited against modern football, that the game's contemporary capitalism has precipitated alterations in the physical experience of watching live football matches and subsequently the relationship between the game and its fans. This concern is raised by both academic and popular literature; how can fans maintain their undying devotion to a team when the clubs themselves are doing everything in their power to transform them into consumers (Fynn & Guest 1994; Bale 1998; Brimson 1998; Giulianotti 2002; King 2002; Ingle 2005: Barr 2009; Pearson 2012)? Indeed, Brimson (1998) suggests that having been re-positioned as consumers, 'traditional' fans respond in a manner befitting the natural conditions of capitalism, rejecting live football, and refusing to 'consume' the sterile 'product' on offer. King (2002) argues that this protest is figured as necessary but fundamentally impossible; necessary as the 'traditional fan' experience is debased and disavowed by the changes within the culture but impossible as abstaining from

live football, merely aids the process of implementing a new middle class crowd culture, attracting new demographics to the game, further disenfranchising the 'traditional fan.' As King's (2002) work demonstrates, some of the academic literature is able to intellectually evaluate the nuances and complexities of football's modern capitalism (see Sandvoss 2003) yet many contemporary texts particularly those written by self-identified fans, pundits and former players seems dramatically overpowered by an emotional sense of loss (see Bale 1998; Brimson 1998; Burgess 2005; Conn 2005; Ingle 2005). Similarly while more rigorous academic critiques such as King's work (2002) demonstrate appreciation for the complexities and contradictions of football's modern capitalism outlining the way in which the game has progressed through different stages of capitalism, much of this work still refers to a 'traditional fan experience' associated with a time in which the game was considered to be free from capitalist interest. This works to maintain the binary that I have identified, positioning the authentic 'fan' in opposition to an imagined disingenuous modern 'consumer' of football.

Gilroy's concept of 'Melancholia' (2004) seems pertinent to tease out the tensions and defining features of contemporary football culture. *In After Empire: Melancholia or Convical Culture?* (2004) Gilroy argues that an insecure, melancholic mood has become part of the national infrastructure, product and symptom of neo-liberal consumer society. The concept of 'Melancholia' provides an ideal framework to contextualise both the fear evoked by the perceived loss of the sport's traditional folk culture and the animosity directed at its new consumer fans, as well as explicating the referential and self-perpetuating relationship the two have on the culture.

Losses of identity, autonomy and the debasing of community have been discussed rigorously in relation to the establishment of neo-liberal capitalist orthodoxy (Marcuse 1991; Adorno 2001; Graham 2006; Schiel 2008). It is this sense of loss, referenced by Gilroy (2004) that I argue is evoked by much of the literature surrounding modern football culture, decrying the loss of 'traditional' fan identities as a result of the sport's continued capitalism. With this being said, it is in this context of modern capitalism that Sandvoss (2005: 9) outlines his conception of contemporary fandom as the practices in which individuals emotionally engage with the products of capitalism. Indeed, it is significant that he uses the notion of consumption to explore his definition, fandom at a basic level defined as 'a form of sustained affective *consumption*.' With the products of capitalism and modern fandom

defined symbiotically, Sandvoss (2005: 3) suggests that modern fandom has become reliant on the products of capitalism; indeed he suggests that 'fandom mirrors conditions of popular culture.' It is the totality of capitalism and its constitutive role in modern life that has continued to evoke fear and scepticism, accounting for Gilroy's (2004) prevailing melancholy. Similarly it is for this reason that I argue that such feelings of loss surround modern football culture, with contemporary fans acting as mirrors to self-identified 'traditional fans' reflecting the developments that have happened within the culture.

Returning to Gilroy's 'Melancholia' (2004: 15) he argues that societal melancholy is articulated in relation to key themes: invasion, war, contamination and loss. He uses the metaphor of WWII to explore this notion, arguing that an 'anti-Nazi war,' has become a touchstone for the perceived decline of Britishness and the certainty that identity provided in the imperial period. With this in mind, the role of the 'Nazi' is played by 'Folk devils' (see Cohen 1972), in this case the consumer fan, defined as a threat by wider society (traditional fans), while the feared decline of 'Britishness,' the idea of a stable way of life (traditional fan culture) is threatened and requires protection. The following quotation expands upon this idea:

> That memory of the country at war against foes who are simply, tidily and uncomplicatedly evil has recently acquired the status of an ethnic myth. It explains not only how the nation remade itself through war and victory but can also be understood as a rejection or deferral of its present problems. That process is driven by the need to get back to the place or moment before the country lost its moral and cultural bearing. Neither the appeal of homogeneity nor the antipathy towards immigrants and strangers who represent the involution of national culture can be separated from that underlying hunger for reorientation. Turning back in this direction is also turning away from the perceived dangers of pluralism and from the irreversible fact of multiculture. (Gilroy 2004: 97.)

It is these stock themes of 'invasion' 'war' 'contamination' and 'loss' that I argue feature most prominently in critiques of modern football culture, once again emphasising the game's assimilation with modern capitalism, but also how new consumer fans are treated with contempt, taking the role of the 'Nazi' or the 'other.' In the way in which much of the literature surrounding football culture fails to acknowledge the complexity of modern

football and the heterogeneity of the modern fan, I argue that attempts are made to position consumer fans like the 'Nazi' as 'simply tidily and uncomplicatedly evil' (Gilroy 2004: 15). The need of the traditional fan to engage in conflict with the game's new consumer fans can be assimilated to the ways in which the nation looked to remake itself through war and victory, with fans hoping to solidify their sense of identity 'turning away for the perceived dangers of pluralism' (Gilroy 2004: 97), or the changes engendered by the games current era of capitalism to a time in which the culture was considered to be 'of the people.' The fear of the Nazi, like the fear evoked by new consumer fans has led to an idealisation of the past, critique of the present and fear of the future.

It is my argument that ignoring the identity of modern consumer fans is not so much a protest against the modernisation of the sport and a rejection of its modern era of capitalism as it is a denial of the collective identity and centrality of consumer fans within football culture, bought about by the fear and sense of threat they pose to the identity of the traditional working class fan. As I will explore in this chapter, football is not, and never has been a culture associated with a single demographic, or a sport free from capitalist interest. It is for this reason that I argue that it is possible to analyse the animosity directed towards modern consumer fans in relation to the wider social theme of melancholia, however up until its modern era, it is notable that accounts of football culture have always made attempts to understand the motivations of fans and place them within wider social contexts. Indeed previous studies analysing the game's fan culture have been celebrated for making vital contributions to the understanding of wider social change with the broad range of literature surrounding hooligan culture in the late 1980s-mid 1990s frequently discussed as a symptom of the social discontent of the working classes in Thatcherite Britain (Ward 1990; Armstrong & Harris 1991; Redhead 1991a; Buford 1992; Giulianotti, Bonney & Hepworth 1994; Pearson 1999; Stott & Pearson 2007).

Developing a better understanding of contemporary football fandom will further improve our understanding of collective identity formation and fandom under modern capitalism, about how modern consumers exercise autonomy and experience constraint. As suggested the current literature within football culture, particularly texts written by self-identified traditional fans increasingly looking to pathologise modern consumer fans, depicting them as the embodiment of the culture's dysfunction. The pathologising of fans has a big tradition within fan studies (see Jenson 1992) but has largely been discredited for ignoring the agency

of the fan and the heterogeneity of roles permitted to them under capitalism. Indeed, this shift in fan studies can be associated with consumer-oriented cultural studies in which scholars look to identify the way in which consumers negotiate their own meanings with products of capitalism (see Barker 2004). As suggested there is a long history of this within football culture but not in its modern era largely considered to represent the game's era of capitalism.

Correspondingly this thesis seeks to advancing debates about collective identity formation and the scope of representation within modern football culture, bringing football studies in line with wider cultural studies and complementing the work of Ang (1982) Radway (1984) Jenkins (1992) Spence (2005) and Modleski (2007) that endeavour to understand the pleasure fans garner from engaging with products of capitalism and their wider understanding of the power operating upon them as they do so. As De Certeau (1984) argues, everyday life in industrial capitalist society is a site of struggle in which people develop their own meanings with that which is imposed upon them.

This understanding of power is crucial my research. As indicated, while consumer-oriented cultural studies explores the multilateral power relationship between producers and consumers, much of the literature surrounding football culture particularly the texts written by self-identified 'traditional' fans exert power over consumer fans (see Bale 1998; Brimson 1998; Burgess 2005; Conn 2005; Ingle 2005). While hierarchies within fan cultures have been written about extensively (Thornton 1995; Abercrombie & Longhurst 1998), in which fans look to authenticate themselves with displays of cultural capital, the enactment of hierarchy within contemporary football culture seems unique particularly in regard to the level of animosity directed towards modern consumer fans.

Taking this into account, it is my argument that modern consumer fans' role within the culture is highly complex and in need of further analysis described in relation to two opposed but ironically complimentary discourses. Consumer fans are positioned positively as consumers by the Football Association, the chairmen of their chosen teams and the CEO of the multi-national corporations that invest within the culture in which fandom is presented as a something to be garnered from a transaction[9], the idea being that need fulfilment and group affiliation can be obtained and signified with acts of consumption (see

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[9] See Barclays' #YouAreFootball campaign 2011.

Sandvoss 2005). Then negatively as consumers by self-identified traditional fans, that resent their consumer attempts to 'buy' into the popular image of fandom upheld and disseminated by football's controlling bodies that look to exploit the capital assigned to ideals of the game's traditional culture[10], despite their obvious agenda to engineer the cultural shift towards the game's capitalism, epitomised by the abolition of the terraces and rise in ticket prices (see Brimson 1998; Williams 2000; King 2002; Barr 2005; Conn 2005).

To develop a more nuanced understanding of contemporary football culture and as suggested to contribute to consumer-oriented cultural studies that looks to understand the agency and motivations of consumer, I argue that it is vital to analyses how consumer fans understand the way in which they are positioned within football culture, how they articulate and understand their fandom, and negotiate the ways in which they are narrowly represented. As Sandvoss (2005) argues in endeavouring to explore the ways in which fans assimilate products of capitalism to the particulars of their lives, cultural studies celebrates exceptional *readings* of texts to develop a greater understanding of the texts themselves. With this being said, this chapter documents the different stages of English football's capitalism, outlining its origin as a ritualistic leisure pursuit before its formal professionalistion, charting the formation of the bureaucratic system that defined football culture for nearly a century, before the ideological shift that ushered in the game's modern capitalism.

'Futeball,' Feudalism and the Factory Floor.

For hundreds of years a barbarous form of 'futeball' flourished in feudal and pre-industrial villages, unregulated until its rules were officially codified in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Ironically before this period of regulation, football resembled a primitive version of rugby; handling the ball was sanctioned, with the objective to ground it within the opposing goal area. Unlike contemporary football, participation was unlimited with historical accounts stipulating that whole villages would congregate to compete against each other in unsanctioned chaos (see Rafferty 1973; Holt 1989). Raffety documents a vivid description of an early contest:

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[10] Sky Sports crowd montage advertising their coverage of the 2013/2014 Premier League season, is a prime example in which the company look to associate themselves with the 'traditional' culture associated with the terraces.

The men at the parish assembled at the cross, the married on the one side and the bachelors on the other. When the ball was thrown up the game carried on from two o'clock until sunset. The game was this: he who at any time got the ball into his hands ran with it until overtaken by opposite party and then, If he could shake himself loose from those on the opposite side who seized him, ran on, if not, he threw the ball from him, unless it was wrestled from him by the other party. The object of the married men was to hang it, or put it three times into a small hole on the moor, which was the drool, or limit, on the one hand; that of the bachelors was to drown it or dip in three times in a deep place in the river, the limit on the other. The party who could affect either of these objects won the game (1973: 2).

Despite its 'warlike potential[11]' (Taylor 2007: 58) played strictly by 'the men' of the parish, futeball was more than a simple leisure pursuit. As Raffety (1973: 2) insinuates, it was a ritualistic means through which collective identity and status were expressed within the community. Indeed Murray (1998: 2) indicates that contests were often celebrated as part of fertility rights or to punctuate the changing of the season. As suggested, Imlach (2005) associates football's 'authenticity' with its representation of local community and 'futeball' explicitly revolved around familial, geographical and community representation corresponding to the discursive images of 'traditional' football culture. Murray (1998: 2) argues that futeball was also a pursuit through which class identities were established. Essentially futeball was a popular game, the name referring to any ball game that was played on foot rather than horseback. Due to its simplistic, physical nature, futeball was looked down upon by those who could afford more salubrious pursuits, a notion that feeds into the discursive association of traditional football culture with the working classes. However as Murray (1998: 3) indicates it was not exclusively a game of the people and included among its aficionados countless clergymen, local dignitaries and individuals such as Oliver Cromwell, Walter Scott and Mary Queen of Scots. As suggested both academic texts documenting the historical changes within football culture and those written by self-identified traditional fans describe traditional football culture as male and working class, (see Bale 1998; Brimson 1998; King 2002; Barr 2005; Conn 2005: Pearson 2012). Mary Queen of Scots' fandom problematises this gendered essentialism while the literature similarly ignores the early endorsement of the sport by the middle and upper classes,

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[11] This has been evoked throughout the games development, most notably in the context of hooliganism and contemporarily in the evocation of melancholia.

particularly trivialising their role in regulating the sport and disseminating it in its regulated form to the working classes.

As Britain changed from an agrarian to an industrial society around 1750, the change to football culture was profound. 'The people's game' played in the open fields of the countryside were adapted to suit the narrow streets and the unforgiving concrete of urban society. Leisure time once determined by sun, season and feudal obligation was replaced by restrictions decreed by the artificial lights of the factories and the demands of their owners. From being a communal ritual, football was transformed into a 'recreation indicative of industrial society,' disciplined and controlled (Murray 1996: 2). This early example of the influence of the middle classes within football culture seems microcosmic of the changes that multi-millionaire entrepreneurs have facilitated in the game's modern era, yet this stage of football's foundational history, its early capitalism, is consistently treated as a separate entity. This seems indicative of the wider attitude to contemporary football culture, particularly with texts written by self-identified traditional fans, keen to promote the simple opposition between the 'bad' artifice of the modern era and the 'good' tradition of the past, ignoring the links established by historical texts that contextualise the changes within football culture to the changes happening within wider society.

Football's embourgeoisment was indicative of the wider status of sport in industrial society. Improvements to roads and public transportation enabled contests to be played outside the locality of the village. Expanding transport networks provided the middle classes with a greater sense of mobility encouraging them to compete at a national level. These developments encouraged them to formulise rules and establish national standards. National rules were established initially for the bourgeoisie pursuits, horse racing in the middle of the eighteenth century, golf and cricket soon followed, 1754 and 1788 respectively. It was in the mid-nineteenth century that the trend accelerated to wider leisure pursuits; mountaineering in 1857, track and field in 1866, and football in 1863 marking the inception of association football.

While popularised by feudal workers, the 'old boys' of the public school system facilitated football's codification. Before its standardisation, each public school contested the game with individual rules. The boys from Rugby School, with its expansive field encouraged hard tackling and running with the ball, at Winchester the field was narrow, dribbling was

encouraged and there was no goal (Murray 1998: 3). With modernisations to transport networks and a growing culture of competition, it became necessary to establish common rules to enable interschool competition. The first serious attempt to create a national standard was enacted at Cambridge University. These rules provided the basis of the laws of association football that were formalised officially in 1863.

The 'old boys' of the public school gave the world the rules of association football but importantly they also fostered the spirit in which they intended it to be played. While football continued to operate on an amateurish level, like football's modern capitalism I argue that association football operated with an ideological imperative. It is evident that the old boys recognised the canonical power of football and were keen to exploit their power as facilitators to maintain their social privilege and bestow certain values upon the engaged mass. This notion is epitomised by an article published by *In the field* (1964), cited by Murray (1998: 5):

> In the ethics of education, books and book learning are now universally admitted to be far from everything. Writers of the day, who have brought great wisdom to bear upon the subject, have even gone so far as to declare these to be only subordinate items of the great system by which the youth of a nation is so trained that when the time arrives it is prepared to command a division, lead a cavalry charge, bear the brunt of battle, the hardship of the field, or accept the responsibilities of developing upon the men whose hands is entrusted the government of the nation. The education of the playground, and the lessons learned from schoolfellows and college friends are, apart from the physical advantages gained in the former, of the highest practical value.

This highly loaded political statement is antithetical to the 'sport for sports sake' ideal associated with traditional football culture. The article reads as a class statement setting the rules and agenda by which the nation's self-appointed leaders would rule the association entrusted to their care. Sport was not just a leisure pursuit but also a mechanism for building character, morality and discipline. In the latter part of the nineteenth century association football was disseminated among the working classes in correlation with the Victorian ethic of self-help, it was particularly encouraged by industrial bosses, keen to promote healthy pursuits to the workers, engendering teamwork and camaraderie,

providing them with an escape from the drudgery of routinised labour. As Devine (2012: 361) suggests:

> To the worker with magic in his feet, football offered a way out of the industrial system; to him for whom the magic was in the mind it offered a few hours of escapist release.

The notion that football provides an 'escape' from the 'real world' has permeated the sport's history and Rafferty (1973: 82) notes how the government promoted the value of football as a distractions from the perils of World War II. Similarly the promotion of football helped to diffuse political anxiety in British society brought on by mounting threats to the country's industrial supremacy from Russia and the USA. In both the latter societies sport had generated widespread competition. In Russia gymnastics had become a vehicle for militant nationalism, while in the USA sport expressed the social Darwinist philosophy of American capitalism (Wagg 1984: 4). Industrial entrepreneurs exploited this premise and worker teams abounded by the 1880s, teams composed of employees from particular firms financed by paternalistic employers[12].

While developing the culture of English football, it is vital to acknowledge that like the public school alumni, the entrepreneurs who sponsored football among their employees displayed a shrewd appreciation of their own self-interest. John Holding the founder of Liverpool (1892) owned several pubs in the area and used the football club to promote his businesses and attract regular working clientele; while Samuel Hill-Wood chairman of Arsenal (1929-1949) used his profile and position with the community to engender support for his political aspirations (Wagg 1984: 5).

The 'old boys' and industrialists did not dramatically *financially* re-structure football like the entrepreneurs of the modern era and the game still operated with an 'amateurish'

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[12] West Ham United, Arsenal, Manchester United, Stoke City, Millwall, Coventry City, Sheffield United, Crewe Alexandra, Leyton Orient, Reading and West Bromich Albion, teams with rich histories all originated this way.

sensibility, yet I argue that football was colonised by middle class establishment, operating with a capitalist imperative long before its contemporary phase. The changes within the culture reflect the wider societal shifts from agrarian to industrial society, the improvements to national transport links, the wider embourgeoisement of sport and the initial realisation the game had value beyond simple competition. What once had been a chaotic free-for-all was by the 1870s studiously authenticated by a vigilant bourgeoisie. The football association founded in 1863 by a group of former public school boys was intended above all to provide the burgeoning national ritual with a rule book, set of protocol and significantly a moral attitude, explicitly structuring the culture and agenda of English football. The way in which workers were encouraged to participate in the sport by industrial entrepreneurs is an early illustration of the way in which football culture has developed through different stages of capitalism.

The Magic of the Cup?

Until the FA Cup was established in 1871 teams engaged in 'friendlies' or 'ordinaries,' sporadically organised by club owners, presumably when it became necessary to boost their public profile, inspire or reward their work force. Significantly these 'friendlies' attracted sizable crowds. It is overlooked by the literature that presents football's capitalism as a modern phenomenon, but such contests were highly profitable. Ross (2005) cites the first officially recognised international match between England and Scotland to emphasise the idea that there was a sizable audience willing to pay to watch live football. Queen's Park answered a challenge from Charles Alcock the secretary of the English FA to represent Scotland in an event to celebrate St Andrews day. The West of Scotland Cricket Ground was selected to stage the contest explicitly for its ability to regulate and charge for attendance. Ross (2005: 15) suggests that fans reacted angrily to this and many 'hung from trees and climbed railings to gain a suitable vantage point,' yet the match was still played out in front of a crowd of 4,000 paying spectators.

While friendly matches were popular Crampsey (1990: 3) describes them as 'haphazard arrangements.' The sporadic nature of these contests had a dramatic effect on attendance figures and significantly gate receipts. Attendance fees were becoming a significant source of secondary income for the industrialists but crowds became increasingly frustrated at their inability to stage contests on specified dates. Both academic texts and those written by self-

identified traditional fans celebrate the amateurish tradition of football culture (Wagg 1984; Bale1998; Carrington 1998; King 2002; Conn 2005; Imlach 2005; Platts & Smith 2010), yet I argue that it was the consumer demands of the fans to watch more live matches that fundamentally lead to the process of the game's professionalisation.

The FA Cup was created in an attempt to regulate a set fixture list to alleviate the discontent of footballs growing audience and capitalise financially on its popularity. It is poignant that the establishment of the Cup ushered in a further series of rationalisation further distancing the game from its casual folk culture. Shin pads were introduced in 1874, the cross bar was implemented to the goal structure in 1875 and in 1882 touchlines structured the arena of play. Subsequently much of the literature written retrospectively by traditional fans laments the symbolic damage caused by the Cup to football's amateur legacy. Wagg (1984: 6) rebukes the 'milk and water players' of the era, citing the shin pad as an example of football's loss of 'brutish masculinity,' in which the allure of the prize associated with winning the competition damaged the 'integrity' and 'soul' of the game. These texts critique the formation of the Cup with a nostalgia influenced by the discontent harboured towards modern football culture yet this discontent does not account for the ways in which fans actively sought these changes. As suggested, crowds were exasperated with the spontaneity of 'ordinaries,' and the initial FA Cup contests attracted some of the biggest crowds in English history. In 1901 a crowd of 110,820 *paid* to watch Tottenham and Sheffield United contest the final at Crystal Palace[13] (Murray 1998: 9).

Ross (2005: 15) claims that fans accustomed to unregulated 'ordinaries' resented paying to attend the more structured competition a point that correlates with the contemporary arguments in which traditional fans claim to be economically excluded from attending live matches. It is my argument that this can be considered as a retrospective reaction to the game's contemporary capitalism with the changes to the sport once again brought about by wider changes happening within Victorian society, particularly the fan's desire to watch more matches. Murray (1998: 8-9) suggests that in the early 1880s the cup regularly attracted 50,000 paying spectators. Rather than resenting the financial determinant of regulated competition, he suggests that fans capitalised on the luxury of their shorter working week, the free Saturday afternoon they enjoyed in the late part of the century that effectively gave birth to the British weekend. He argues that football provided the

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[13] This is inconceivable in modern football culture.

workingman with an opportunity to realise a higher standard of living. It is significant that this argument has been used by Ken Bates (1994 cited by King 2002) former chairman of Oldham, Chelsea and Leeds United, a rare example in which football's capitalist development has been linked to changes within wider society:

> The customer in any business pays for what he gets. I've been converted to all seating. I mean the working class no longer go to Blackpool for their holidays, they go to Spain or Madeira and Phuket and the Caribbean, they go on cruises. They no longer have Blackpool rock and cloth caps and handkerchiefs on their head and their stockings rolled up while they're packing in to Brighton. And the other thing is that when they go to the pictures, the working class, they don't go in and stand in the rain with water running down the back of their fucking neck with their cloth cap and a muffler. They go into a warm place where they can sit down. Somewhere to hang their coats up. They can get a cup of coffee or ice cream or popcorn or whatever and they sit down for two or three hours comfort.

Like Murray (1998), Bates (1994 cited by King 2002) advocates the continued rationalisation and commercialisation of the sport and does not consider the changes to be detrimental to the culture or to the status of the working class traditional fan. Instead, like Murray (1998) he links the changes that have happened within the game to the profound social and cultural changes that go back to the development of leisure time in the Victorian era and the development of affluence in the 1950s in which the working classes had more time and money to expend on leisure pursuits. In this context Bates (1994 cited by King 2002) suggests that rather than disenfranchise the fan the changes to the culture simply look to address their needs and changing social status epitomised by the way in which he assimilates the experience of attending matches to visiting the cinema or going on package holidays. Significantly in his argument the fan is described both in mode of address and in categorisation of need as a 'consumer.'

Bates' (1994 cited by King 2002) argument mirrors the premise of consumer-oriented cultural studies in which it is taken for granted that we fulfil our needs by engaging with products of capitalism (see Fiske 1986; 1992; Barker 2004; Sandvoss 2005; Lash 2007). Conversely the texts surrounding modern football culture, particularly those written by self-identified traditional fans broadly refute this assimilation, ignoring the early phases of the

game's capitalism to create a binary between an idealised concept of the game's traditional folk culture and its modern era of capitalism, in which traditional football culture and the traditional fan are discussed as separate entities to modern football culture and consumer fans. Murray's (1998) work challenges this notion in which he astutely recognises 'traditional' fans as consumers, in which the changes to football culture correspond to their changing social status. Indeed Murray (1998) suggests that the fans ability to pay to attend football matches became symbolic of a better quality of life.

Like 'futeball,' the Cup had a ritualistic and symbolic role in the development and assertion of self-identity. While it is fair to suggest that the changes were beneficial to the industrialists improving worker morale and productivity, a notion that challenges the idea that football culture could ever be considered as a flat 'folk culture,' free from capitalist interest, it is significant that the historical literature looks to outline the way in which changes to the culture correspond to changes within wider society, explicitly looking to understand the ways in which fandom relates to identity formation in Victorian society. While I argue that the changes to the culture described by Murray (1998) illustrate the game's early capitalism, both popular and academic literature, analysing contemporary football culture, largely fail to link the changes happening within football's modern capitalism to the life and identity of the consumer fan.

Professionalisation- The Establishment of Football's Bureaucracy

The popularity of the FA Cup lead to the organisation of regional supplementary competitions organised to capitalise financially on the improved social status and leisure time afforded to the working classes. However the nature of knockout competition dictated that on defeat teams were eliminated finding themselves dormant for months. Attempting to successfully navigate the early stage of the competition, it emerged that club owners tried to entice gifted players to join their teams with cash incentives. Crampsey (1990: 6) develops this notion:

> Players were being paid in England and many of those who were receiving money were Scotsmen. Their skill and straitened working circumstances made them prime targets for the great northern English clubs and the 'Scottish professors' as they were known, became the sporting equivalent of the seventeenth century mercenary

soldier…the financial incentive of English football exercised the same lure for Scots players as the West End did for English provincial theatre.

Despite being considered as an era of the game unsullied by capitalism, I argue that parallels can again be established with football's modern capitalism, particularly the role of entrepreneurs like Roman Abramovich and Sheikh Mansour who are accused of trying to 'buy success' for their respective teams, Chelsea and Manchester City with squad investment from their personal fortune. Abramovich is reported to have spent £740 million since his take over in 2003 (Kelso 2011) and Mansour is claimed to have invested a staggering £800 million since 2010 (Conn 2011). Evidently this level of investment is significantly greater than that of the 19th century industrialists, emphasising the need to recognise modern football as an industry of late capitalism, yet the ambition of the industrialists still combats the folk ideals of 'sport for sports sake,' associated with the era, again illustrating football's early capitalism.

Indeed, the different levels of involvement shown by the 19th century industrialists and modern football's entrepreneurs are indicative of different phases of capitalism as identified by Mandel (1975). Mandel (1975) describes early capitalism as 'monopoly capitalism,' a period characterised by the development of national markets and intra-society competition, while late capitalism has as its dominant features, globalised markets and the rise of multinational corporations. Rather than viewing modern football culture as 'football's era of capitalism,' it is important to recognise that football like society, has developed through different phases of capitalism.

In 1885 following complaints about competitors receiving cash performance based rewards a committee was established to punish proven transgression. After stringent investigation the FA legalised professionalism under a myriad of constraints, in correlation with the assumption that football should be more than mere business (see Taylor 2007). The FA demanded that attendance money should be equally distributed throughout the association, preventing the demise of teams who were unable to attract high attendances, the better players or challenge for competitive prizes. They introduced a maximum wage to prevent the rich teams monopolising the talent pool, and the 'retain and transfer system', which dictated that once a player had registered with a particular team he could not leave

without explicit permission. This prevented gifted players leaving smaller teams in search of greater success (Taylor 2007).

Once again these cultural developments precipitated significant alterations to the culture of the sport particularly the identification of the fans and their experiences of fandom. The rules imposed upon professionalism served to create a strong sense of communal cohesion. The equitable sharing of gate receipts served to limit the financial inequality between teams and the maximum wage regulation endeavoured to foster a relatively competitive playing environment. In conjunction with the 'retain and transfer system,' the maximum wage operated to restrict player flow. As wages were relatively commensurate across the country, players had little incentive to relocate for financial betterment. In comparison with the modern game, teams tended to be comprised of players from their locality, while the league overwhelmingly consisted of British players (see Taylor 2007). This contrasts significantly to the modern Premier League; Austin and Slater (2008) suggest that teams currently have an average of thirteen foreign players in their first team squad, whereas two decades ago, there were only twelve players from outside the Common-Wealth operating within the entire league. Again I argue that this corresponds to the game's development through different phases of capitalism with English football embracing global capitalism and expanding into international markets (see Mandel 1975).

The regulation of the era is described explicitly in relation to fan identity, in which clubs fortified notions of national and local pride, widely understood by their supporters as representations of the local community (Crampsey 1990; Devine 2012). The maximum wage and the retain and transfer system not only meant that players were likely to sign for their local club, but that they were likely to represent them for the majority of their career. A sense of rationalised time underpinned the identification between fans and club, a premise that is incongruent with the modern game. In *The Culture of the New Capitalism* Richard Sennett (2006) argues that the rise in bureaucratic institutions during the second half of the nineteenth century had a fundamental effect on the way that individuals began to conceptualise their lives. He argues that the average person, endowed with neither exceptional talent, nor excessive ambition, makes sense of their life by believing that the accumulation of experience in their job not only makes them better at their specific task, engendering a sense of self pride and 'usefulness' but also adds value to their worth as an individual within society, demanding the respect of others. This sense of security provided

by bureaucracy in opposition to the volatility of modern capitalism enabled individuals to imagine their lives as a narrative, encouraging workers to plan their lives on a long-term basis. With football clubs prevented from transfer activity, Taylor (2007) describes how it was mandatory that they deployed business strategies that were long in duration. A successful club depended on investing time and effort into innovative training methods, nurturing talent over a number of seasons to gradually foster improvements on the pitch. It is argued that this process enabled rapport to develop based around a long-lasting sense of familiarity between the club, player and fan (Crampsey 1990; Devine 2012).

Taking this into account it could be argued that the bureaucratic system helped to foster community and as Devine (2012: 362) stipulates part of football's appeal lay in the fact that teams by their very nature reflected the individual character of their local community. Football again was more than ethereal entertainment or a leisure pursuit; it elicited great emotional investment, enthusiasm and local pride from fans based around the reciprocal assurance of their club that the long-term future of their team was assured. This sense of fandom corresponds to Imlach's (2005) concept of traditional fan identification, engendered by a sense of shared geography and imagined community. However, while it could be suggested that the bureaucratic period fostered specific conditions for fandom (see Crampsey 1990; Devine 2012) the historical literature particularly still acknowledges the active role of the fan within the culture. Indeed Hutchinson (1997: 39) suggests that while the wider culture of football was defined by bureaucratic regulation, the fan experiences of the late 19th century were idiosyncratic and developed organically. Using a case study of Newcastle United, he suggests that fans autonomously started to evaluate their relationship with their club to develop their own unique fan identities:

> During the late 1890s the Newcastle crowd had turned… into fans. It was a transformation that was taking place all over Britain and would become the foundation and the lifeblood of professional soccer throughout the next century. While once the paying customer plainly preferred just to stand and watch two sides play football of a certain quality…Suddenly he was supporting a cause. The customers began to recognise and enjoy their own power to affect a match and create atmosphere. They had begun to use their voice. (Hutchinson 1997: 39)

Hutchinson (1997) acknowledges the way fans established their sense of identity not through their affinity to their team, but through active fandom. In a period of cultural stability football was still defined by different fan experiences and different fan identities unique to each club. It is my argument that parallels can again be established with the game's modern capitalism. Like contemporary football culture, the period was still defined by strict regulation and the norms of early capitalism, engendering a specific form of identification between the fan and their team. Despite this highly structured, albeit different form of regulation to contemporary football culture, Hutchinson (1997) identifies the ability of the fan to enact individual fan identities, unique to different communities.

The Fall of Football's Bureaucracy.

With the popular perception of the 1950s as a period of stability and contentment, much of the historical literature describes the decade as the utopian spell of football culture (See Murray 1998; Ross 2005), as Imlach (2005: 152) suggests:

> The 50s have been filled in the collective memory as football's heyday: black and white photos of Lowry paintings, with gapless terraces of endlessly repeating hatted heads with the occasional locked-out stick figure climbing over the fence.

The idea that the 1950s represented the final period in which 'ordinary working class men' watched 'ordinary working class men' challenge each other in the spirit of fair play and amateurism has gained much academic saliency (see Murray 1998; Ross 2005; Imlach 2005). As suggested, the strict legislation imposed by the FA upon the game's professionalisation is said to have encouraged passionate fan identification based on shared geography and imagined community (see Crampsey 1990; Hutchinson 1997; Taylor 2007; Devine 2012). It is the abolition of these rules that are said to have dramatically altered the relationship between football and the 'traditional fan.' While the 1950s is said to represent a utopian football culture, the 1960s can be considered as the juncture in which the stability of the bureaucratic system and football culture started to evolve with the foundations being established for its era of modern capitalism, facilitated by the abolition of the maximum wage and the retain and transfer system. It is significant that the historical literature emphasises the wider cultural context of the era particularly the rise of leisure industries

and global communication systems to explain the changes in fandom, with hooliganism significantly analysed in relation to wider social contexts.

In 1901 the wage cap for footballers was set at £4 a week, 'twice the average pay of a works foreman and four times that of a farm labourer' (Ewen 2010: 87). Despite opposition from the PFA[14] and Trainers Union, this had risen to only £10 by 1940. In 1958 the year of the World Cup, the PFA negotiated a rise to £20 but this was only marginally more than the national average wage (Ewen 2010: 87). Players were enticed by lucrative moves abroad but the retain and transfer system prevented them from realising their ambition. In 1952 the English Striker Tom Finney was denied the opportunity to sign for Palermo in Italy that would have garnered him a £10,000 signing on fee. The historical literature insinuates that this was beneficial for the 'character' of the game (see Ross 2005; Ewen 2010), yet with developments in global communication indicative of modern capitalism, players themselves were becoming increasingly aware of their limited opportunities and voiced frustration at the system.

In 1960 George Eastham challenged the 'retain and transfer system' when his club Newcastle United, denied him the opportunity to move at the end of his contract. Despite multiple transfer requests, Newcastle to all intents and purposes owned Eastham (Murray 1998: 13). After a hiatus from the game, he appealed unsuccessfully to the Football League Management Committee; finally his move was sanctioned but he remained aggrieved, taking his complaint to the High Court an act of defiance that lead to the dissolution of the system. The Court found the law to be an unreasonable restraint on trade, advising that if a club did not wish to retain the services of a player at the end of his contract then he should be permitted to leave without a transfer fee.

As previously outlined the retain and transfer system is cited by historical literature as a mechanism through which fans developed their fan identity and experienced a sense of communal representation via a 'reciprocal relationship,' with their club (Crampsey 1990; Hutchinson 1997; Taylor 2007; Devine 2012). Certainly with the communal emphasis of the bureaucratic period, attendance at live matches peaked, particularly after the Second World War. As Ross (2005: 65) illustrates:

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[14] Professional Footballers' Association

1948-1949 was the highest watermark for football attendances in Britain. Documented evidence from the football league showed a total attendance in England of over 41 million.

The abolition of the retain and transfer system, and the eradication of the maximum wage cap in 1961 had a detrimental effect on attendance figures. This dramatically affected the financial stability of the game as Hutchinson (1997: 184) illustrates with Newcastle United:

For years Newcastle had money to spend; there was no doubt about it…in the summer of 1960, Newcastle invested £6,000 in a big ultra-modern medical room, which was built on top of a swimming pool… But by 1962 the club had debts tolling £100,000; the average gate had dropped below 30,000.

Newcastle's relegation the previous season undoubtedly influenced their ability to attract fans, but declining attendances was a staple of 1950s/1960s football culture. The historical literature suggests that the dissolution of football's bureaucracy, and its strong communal emphasis had detrimental effects on fan identity (Hutchinson 1997; Devine 2012), but Ross (2005: 75) similarly cites the social transition from a period of early to modern capitalism characterised by a growing leisure industry and new consumer choice as a major influence on the changing relationship between fans and the game. Ross (2005: 75) particularly emphasises the allure of television[15]. The premise that television has altered the relationship between football and the fan is a common theme in both academic and popular texts with the idea that watching football in the home domesticates and feminise football fandom, converting the fan into a passive, docile viewer (see Bale 1998; Brimson 1998; Weed 2008). I argue in accordance with Ross (2005), that television provides the fan with a greater extent of choice and different fan experiences, but in the 1960s it is fair to suggest that its novelty significantly affected attendance figures at live matches.

In the years after the Eastham case football suffered a palpable decline. The game slowly deteriorated into a deep malaise as wages and transfer fees spiralled out of control and attendances declined dramatically. Football became engulfed in a destructive oscillating cycle; clubs were left with little money to restore dilapidated stadia from the early 19th

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[15]Ross (2005) notes the popularity of shows such as Dixon of Dock Green and This Is Your Life suggesting that they were increasingly given priority by fans over attending live matches.

century, which further deterred fans from attending matches. Symanski and Zimbalist (2006: 6) develop this idea:

> The gradual decay of stadiums in England… discouraged supporters and between 1950 and 1985 total attendance fell by more than half (41 million per season to 18 million)…The audience for soccer became concentrated among young men on low income who were increasingly involved in violent confrontations with fans from rival teams.

As suggested there is a vast body of literature focusing on football hooliganism (see Taylor 1971; Ward 1990; Armstrong & Harris 1991; Redhead 1991a; Buford 1992; Giulianotti, Bonney & Hepworth 1994; Pearson 1999; Stott & Pearson 2007). While the literature largely deplores the violence of the era, much of the literature astutely recognises the complex mismanagement of the game by football's hierarchy engendering a specific fan experience in which they argue that fan identity was enacted by the way of a violent self-fulfilling prophecy. One of the most perceptive commentators on the issue is Stuart Hall (1978). Hall (cited by Ingham et al 1978: 15-36) criticises the reactionary tendency of the British media to label the perpetrators as 'savages' in a 'verbal reduction of hooligans to the level of animals.' He suggests that branding fans as 'irrational' acted as a form of 'ritual degradation' to eschew the complex cultural problems and wider social issues that lay behind their action. Andrew Hussey (2005) develops this proposition:

> It is easy to forget what a violent and unstable place Britain was in the early 1980s and how poor the conditions were for football fans during this period. Since the early 1970s English fans had been wreaking havoc in Europe and at home on each other. Their behaviour was received with platitudes and inertia from the media and the government. Those who ran the game, those who could do something about the bad grounds, the lousy security, the climate of hate and racism, invariably looked away. Everybody who attended a match during this period knew that something was deeply wrong.

Hussey's (2005) quotation is taken from an article outlining the Heysel disaster of 1985, involving Liverpool and Juventus fans. Hussey (2005) documents how both sets of supporters were separated by a matter of yards and flimsy chicken wire that was

subsequently ripped down and turned into missiles. Terrified bystanders desperately stampeded trying to escape the escalating conflict but were enclosed by perimeter walls, one of which collapsed, killing 39 innocent spectators on the other side and maiming 600 more.

Hussey (2005), a Liverpool fan, like millions around Europe watched the chaos unfold on television. He happened to be in a Parisian bar:

> As the match finished a window in the café was smashed. We walked out of the bar to face a small mob of locals. We tore into the pack. We weren't psychopaths or even normally football hooligans. But we fought as hard as we could. Even 20 years on, I find it difficult to explain this. How could anyone justify violence in the immediate wake of a televised massacre? The simple reason is that we refused to be ashamed of who we were. Many of those in Heysel that night have told me they felt the same emotion. Guilt was inextricably linked to defiance, which in turn created more violence.

To punctuate this idea Hussey (2005) cites Baudrillard's (1993) work on the Heysel disaster, published in *The Transparency of Evil.* Baudrillard (1993: 75-80) describes Heysel as a primitive but devastatingly effective form of 'interactive television,' attributing blame to Thatcher's conflict with coal miners, a battle he describes as 'state terrorism.' Baudrillard (1993: 75-77) suggests that Thatcher's actions were certain to lead to violence at public 'pseudo events,' and therefore Heysel did not happen by chance, it was the result of disenfranchised individuals turning themselves into actors. He states that the nature of violence itself, crude, tribal and pointless, was a cultural reflex conditioned by society.

Hutchinson's (1997: 39) work echoes Baudrillard's (1993) argument that fans enact their identity in relation to the cultural conditions of the period. In the bureaucratic era Hutchinson (1997) argues that fan were vocal and passionate in accordance with the feeling of security they received from the game's communal emphasis. The Heysel disaster seems to punctuate the inverse of this with fans rampaging against the dissolution of the stability they previously enjoyed both within football culture and wider society. Their actions were destructive and deplorable but arguably enacted with the same intention of exerting their individual fan identity, displaying their affiliation to the game through affirmative action in

response to their sense of betrayal from football's ruling bodies and government officials (Baudrillard 1993; Hussey 2005). While the issue of hooliganism defined football culture until the late 1980s the literature still insinuates that the acts of violence perpetuated by the fans can be considered as unique rituals of identity formation.

Like contemporary football culture, the game's era of hooliganism is largely criticised and deplored by the existing literature but rather than looking to outlaw the hooligan as is the case with modern consumer fans, it is significant that academic studies of hooliganism largely look to understand their actions explicitly linking their behaviour to the wider social context and significantly framing the hooligan as active agents within football culture. As Baudrillard (1993: 75-77), suggests hooliganism was seen as the result of disenfranchised individual *turning themselves into actors* (emphasis added), the nature of violence a cultural reflex conditioned by society. I argue that this notion has two-fold significance.

Firstly I argue that parallels can be established between hooligans and traditional fans. As Baudrillard (1993) and Hussey (2005) suggest, hooligans felt a need to re-establish themselves as agents within football culture in response to their sense of betrayal by football's leading bodies and their inability to control the changes affecting them in wider society. Similarly I argue that the contemporary discourses perpetuated by self-identified traditional fan operate with a similar agenda, with the fans making active attempts to emphasise their legitimate stake within the culture in response to the game's increasing assimilation with modern capitalism and its campaign to attract consumers. Again this is something traditional fan have no sense of control over.

Secondly it is of note that Baudrillard (1993: 75) describes hooligans as 'disenfranchised individuals.' I argue that this emphasises the scholarly tradition surrounding football culture, with the concept of the 'disenfranchised individual,' discursively evoking the image of a specific 'type' of fan; the white working class man, with contemporary studies (see Brown 1998; Williams 2000; King 2002; Pearson 2012) continuing to draw on both the discourse surrounding 'traditional football culture' but also that the discourse associated with the crisis of identity suffered by working class men in modern capitalist society (see Hayward & Mac an Ghail 2003; MC Dowell 2011; Syal 2013). Again I recognise that these studies make significant contributions to football culture yet the emphasis on a highly specific type of

fandom indicates that in the context of modern football culture the disenfranchised fan can be considered as the modern consumer.

By the mid-1980s football was nearing a crescendo of violence. Barnes (2007 cited by Mortimer 2012: 49) punctuates this by outline a trio of disasters:

> The first was at *Bradford city's* Valley parade in May 1985, when 56 people were killed after a dropped fag-end set alight to 20 years of accumulated rubbish beneath a football stand. Eighteen days later 39 *Juventus* supporters were killed at Heysel…Then in April 1989, 96 people were killed at Hillsborough…The sport itself was despised and the people that followed it were considered canaille…Football Stank. You couldn't give it away with a packet of *Rice Krispies*. The game was something to do with the dregs of society.

Beset with financial and cultural issues, football in England was on its knees. The trio of disasters and the plague of violence that consumed the game symbolised the end of football's bureaucratic era ushering in the removal of the terraces, the cultural shift widely considered to represent the onset of football's modern capitalism. Once again this engendered a new set of social and cultural relations to the game, precipitating alterations to the identification of the fans and their expectations for fandom.

Harvey (2014: 9) argues that crises are essential to the reproduction of capitalism, as it is in crisis that the shortcomings of capitalism are addressed and confronted:

> Much gets torn down and laid waste to make way for the new. Once productive landscapes are turned into industrial wastelands. Old factories get torn down or converted and working class neighbourhoods get gentrified.

The crisis of the late eighties bought about the reorientation of football culture with the game's ruling bodies finally confronting the issues that lead to the games near collapse in the late eighties. It was clear that the game's early capitalist model was incongruent with the modern capitalism of wider society and the removal of the terraces can be seen to symbolise an attempt to bring football in line with more established modern leisure

industries. The terraces like the factory Harvey (2014) describes[16] were 'torn down' traditional stadium were 'converted' and football became 'gentrified.'

While both academic and popular texts continue the Marxist tone within football culture of analysing the way in which the changes to the game affected the identity of traditional fans, the new consumers attracted to the game and their fan identity is ignored.

Modern Football Culture.

From the early 1960s to the late 1980s football was considered 'damaged goods' (Baudrillard 1993; Hussey 2005; Barnes 2007) and many club chairmen became disillusioned with the game's deteriorating public image. This enabled a new generation of club owners such as Ken Bates (Oldham 1962-1968) David Dein (Arsenal 1983-2007) and Irving Scholar (Tottenham 1982-1991) to take over. These men were heavily inspired by the free-market philosophy of modern capitalism shaping western society, and sought to radicalise football by encouraging investment and professional management. To recall the previously cited quote from Ken Bates (1994 cited by King 2002), these chairmen strived to change the perception of football, a measure to combat the tragic self-fulfilling prophecy that was enacted in its post war years and importantly to cater to the changing needs of the working classes accustomed to the provisions of the expanding leisure industry. As previously suggested, with the active attempt to cater to the changing needs of the working classes, it was the intention of the chairmen to re-position football culture, disassociating it with the 'dregs of society' (Barnes 2007 cited by Mortimer 2012) and positioning it more explicitly in line with wider leisure industries. In doing so football culture started to attract new demographics: women, families and the middle classes. Modern consumer fans.

Scholar was the first to initiate Bates' strategy taking tentative steps to change the perception of football in the early 1980s when hooliganism was rife, actively embracing commercialisation, rationalisation and professionalisation, further characteristics that Mandel (1975) associates with modern capitalism. As soon as he became chairman of Tottenham in 1982, Scholar made the club property of a holding company and floated it on the stock exchange generating £3.2 million in revenue. Using this capital, Scholar employed Alex Flynn of Saatchi and Saatchi to launch a multimedia advertising campaign to attract

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[16] Spaces associated with the working classes.

new fans to the club implementing initiatives from more enlightened customer service industries (Horrie 1992: 100).

As teams like Tottenham looked to implement a business model owing to the logic of modern capitalism, the FA seemed to acknowledge both the financial opportunities and ideological changes engendered by this approach. With the backdrop of Tottenham's commercial success the Football League agreed a deal worth £2.6 million with the BBC in 1983, to screen ten live games out of a season of four hundred and sixty two (King 2002: 59). The broadcasting of football marked a colossal evolution in the game's market worth and social status something that has intensified to the present day. The sale of the latest television rights epitomise this idea, sold to Sky in 2012 for £3.1 billion, giving them the privilege of televising 116 matches a season until 2016 (Sport on the Box 2012).

Despite the financial contribution television has made to modern football culture the literature debases the fan experience of watching football on television juxtaposing the alleged passive experiences of 'arm chair fandom' to the kineticism associated with traditional terrace culture (see Bale 1998; Brimson 1998; Weed 2008). Hopcraft (2006: 188) describes the terraces as a 'privileged place of working class communion.' When he describes the experience of being 'trapped for a couple of hours in a swaying crush of bodies, frequently forced off his feet in a delirious surge of mass movement, coming away with bruises and stains' he is not debasing it but rhapsodising a physical, emotional, quasi-religious experience that he suggests has been denied to fans in post-Hillsborough modern football culture.

It is significant that Hopcraft (2006) refers to the Hillsborough disaster. While it brought an end to the dangers and violence of the 1980s it also symbolises the loss of the physical and emotional camaraderie nostalgically evoked by images of the terraces in contrast to the perceived sterility of new all-seater stadia, irrevocably associated with consumer fans and modern capitalism. The experience of the modern stadium is again described as passive consumption akin to 'sitting back' in an armchair and 'watching' rather than 'engaging' with the live spectacle (Bale 1998; Brimson 1998; King 2002; Hopcraft 2006). Wilson (2006) develops this premise:

The past three World Cups have been increasingly supporter friendly events and it has been noticeable that fans are becoming ever more sociable…Now you see many more wives, girlfriends and families with children. The World Cup is being watched by different people as opposed to past tournaments, so much so that the atmosphere at games, while always noisy and vibrant, has often lack the hard edge and physicality that big international crunch games ought to have.

While Wilson (2006) acknowledges the diverse demographic attracted to modern football, the reference to 'wives, girlfriends and families with children,' emphasises the loss of the traditional' experience associated with terrace culture, its kinetic involvement and 'physicality.' This sense of loss operates to preserve the assumption that football's traditional and 'authentic' fan is the working class man, who attends matches to bond with others of a similar demographic. Wilson's (2006) work seems indicative of the academic literature in which he proficiently identifies the commercial and economic changes that have happened within football culture and the demographics attracted by these changes while using traditional football culture as his starting point.

Walsh and Giulianotti (2001: 62) epitomise this idea arguing that modern changes to football have given rise to a complex new set of social and cultural relations surrounding the game in which traditional 'community centred ties are endangered.' The academic literature acknowledges the potential impacts of these processes discussing the scope for social exclusion resulting from these changes looking to address how traditional fans have been disenfranchised, marginalised and excluded from active spectatorship as a result of football's modernisation (see Fynn & Guest 1994; Bale 1998; Brimon 1998; Giulianotti 2002; King 2002; Ingle 2005: Barr 2009; Pearson 2012), corresponding to the way in which anti-capitalist scholars argue that modern capitalism produces a backdrop of increasing differentiations of wealth between the working classes and the better off (see Mandel 1975; Jameson 1997; Targ 2006; Harvey 2014), yet as suggested the narrow focus of much of the empirical work ignores the heterogeneity of modern football culture and the new fan experiences engendered by football's modern capitalism.

Here is where the tension lies; as outlined, the historical literature acknowledges the nuances of football culture analysing the diverse fandom associated with each stage of the game's development and different phase of capitalism, exploring fan identity in a wider

social context. However, both academic literature and popular texts written by self-identified traditional fans focus on the specific fan identity and fan experiences of the working classes and how football's assimilation with modern capitalism has disenfranchised their fandom. As suggested modern consumer fans are 'othered' and treated with contempt for reflecting the processes that have led to the game's contemporary capitalism without considering the legitimacy or nuances of their fandom. The literature does not look to understand their position within the culture or how they negotiate their explicit positioning as consumers both by football's governing bodies and self-identified traditional fans. As Morley (1994) suggests those that hold a reified nostalgic image of their fandom as something necessarily stable and unchanging are those who are hostile to newcomers who are seen to be both cause and symptom of change.

The central issue with contemporary football culture is that a specific fan identity and fan experience is used as the standard of critique. The more rigorous academic studies (see Brown 1998; Williams 2000; Giulianotti 2002; King 2002; Pearson 2012) proficiently identify the commercial and economic changes that have happened within football culture that have led to the game's modern capitalism and subsequently the new consumers that these changes have attracted, however the literature does not consider in depth the fan experiences that these changes have facilitated or the identity of the consumer fan. I argue that this supports the claims of authenticity made by traditional fans keen to maintain their centrality to the culture. As indicated, the literature focusing on football culture has consistently operated with a broad scope making highly perceptive links between changes within football and changes within wider society, situating their arguments within wider social contexts. My research looks to continue this tradition adopting a consumer-oriented cultural studies approach to contribute to wider debates concerning collective identity formation in modern capitalist society, exploring the tensions between autonomy and constraint, while providing consumer fans with an opportunity to conceptualise their own fan identity.

Chapter 3. Methodology.

Changing Formation.

Participatory research is traditionally celebrated for its inclusivity, democratic value and moral imperative. The moral and political dimension of participatory research is reflected in the belief that all participants regardless of age, gender, level of education and in this context different fan identities have a right to participate in decisions that claim to generate knowledge about them (Heron 1981; Lather 1986; Singer 1993; Van der Riet 2008). It is my argument that contemporary football culture operates incongruently to this ideal.

Sandvoss (2005: 42) argues that cultural studies has undergone a cultural shift, no longer focusing on the exclusionary relationship between particular demographics and objectively identifiable textual structures but:

> The subjectively constituted readings and appropriations of texts that reflect the contemporary multi-polar distribution of power in the complex connectivity between class, gender and ethnicity.

In other words he argues that rather than looking to understand the limited meaning inscribed in texts by their producers, textual meanings need to be considered in the interaction between the text and diverse readerships. Van der Riet (2008) develops this principle, arguing that the ontological assumptions of a static, constant, predictable culture has become outdated, opposed by cultural pluralists that argue that cultural stability is constantly challenged by societal change and development. It is in this context that my research adopts a consumer-oriented approach.

It is my concern that football culture does not adhere to this cultural shift. While wider cultural studies looks to deconstruct and challenge the dominant discourses inscribed within texts, analysing the ways in which their meanings are variously interpreted and internalised by diverse audiences, football culture explicitly revolves around an essential relationship between the text (football culture) and its archetype (the traditional fan).

While Sandvoss (2005) describes the need to understand the way in which texts are interpreted and imparted in acts of fandom by different classes, genders and ethnicities,

these reading are restricted within football culture, with different identities within the culture considered to deviate from the traditional identity of the 'traditional' working class fan, threatening the aura associated with football's traditional culture. I argue that the active agents within football culture, particularly the self-identified traditional fans operate to control the boundaries of the culture in a way that speaks to their self-interest, denying consumer fans subjectivity. Indeed consumer fans through both their positive and negative positioning as consumers within football culture are denied the opportunity to self-identify as fans, something that is considered a perquisite in fan studies (see; Jameson 1991; Fiske 1992; Hills 2002; Barker 2004; Sandvoss 2005).

Rosenberg (1988) argues that social science should operate to understand behaviour by rendering it intelligible. To develop a more nuance understanding of modern football culture I argue that it is vital to challenge the aura associated with traditional football culture, giving consumer fans an opportunity to articulate their fan identity and engage in negotiation with the discourses operating on them within the culture. Not only is this a more ethically aware approach to research, but also inclusivity is vital to establish a valid insight into the true complexity of a culture. Appropriating the idea of Thornton (1995) cultures need to be considered as a multi-dimensional social space rather than flat folk cultures, with the role of the 'other' more than merely the bottom rung of a linear social ladder.

Thornton (1995) argues that cultures are not stable but are constantly in flux. In collaboration with Gelder (1997), Thornton (1997) writes extensively about hierarchies within cultures yet the pair recognise that power is enacted multi-directionally between different agents. Within football culture power is predominantly exercised 'over' consumer fans to deny them agency. However, Thornton (1995) suggests that power is constantly exercised 'within' cultures, arguing that those perceived to be at the bottom of the cultural hierarchy, prescribe their own meanings to their actions helping them negotiate the powers operating upon them in a way that demonstrates their agency.

With these factors in mind, ethnography was used to conduct my research. The term 'Ethnography' has its provenance in Greek, a fusion of the terms 'Ethnos' (Tribe) and 'Graphia' (writing). Literally translated it means 'writing about people.' The central aim of ethnography is to provide rich holistic insight into the participant's views and actions as well

as the locations in which they inhabit through the collection of detailed observation and interviews. Hammersley (1992: 18) develops this idea:

> The task of the ethnographer is to document the culture, the perspectives and practises of people in these settings. The aim is to 'get inside' the way in which each group of people see the world.

Rather than pathologising the object of study, ethnographic research places a strong emphasis on exploring social phenomenon rather than looking to prove predetermined hypothesis, something that seems prevalent within wider football culture. Ethnographers typically gather participant observations necessitating direct engagement and immersion into the culture in which they are studying. I argue that in the context of football culture this can be seen as empowering. Indeed the ethnographer's objective of 'getting inside' the culture of study corresponds to my aim of exploring the ways in which power is enacted within the culture by consumer fans. As Fay and Moon (1994: 33) suggest:

> Understanding human action requires identifying the rules and structures under which human actions fall, and the role they occupy in the system of *which they are part* (emphasis added).

Fundamentally ethnography acknowledges the role of the participants within the culture of study. As de Garis (1999) notes, it is a kinetic, active process rather than a passive recording of the researcher's beliefs and predispositions. This is significantly different to the way in which football culture is usually studied with ethnography recognising participants, in this context consumer fans, as cultural agents. Immersing myself into modern football culture enabled me to present a more objective depiction of the experiences of modern fandom, providing fans themselves with opportunities to articulate their fandom and discuss their representation within football culture as active agents engineering their own cultural space.

Subsequently I argue that the central tenants of ethnography correspond explicitly with my research aims to assess:

- How consumer fans understand the ways in which agents of the game's capitalism and agents of the game's traditional culture position them within football culture.

- The ways consumer fans enact agency and experience constraint within football culture
- How consumer fans engage with the hegemonic discourses of 'tradition' and 'capitalism' that define football culture.
- The ways consumer fans conceptualise their own identity within football culture.

It is vital to recognise that ethnography has never been a neutral term, or a neutral tool for collecting data. Scott-Jones and Watt (2010) argue that classical ethnographic studies were largely ideological, serving as tools to justify colonisation, imperial ambition and reinforce long-standing discourses of the 'racial other.' This discourse is explicit in Malinowski's (2014: 7) account of his study *Argonauts of the West Pacific:*

> Proper conditions of ethnographic work…consist mainly in cutting oneself off from the company of *other white men*, and remaining in as close proximity to *the natives* as possible.

Despite my intentions to maintain the validity and objectivity of my research adhering to the participant centrism and morality of modern ethnography, it would be disingenuous to suggest that the method was selected without an agenda. As Thornton (1995) suggests, perceptions of culture depend upon the filters that are placed upon the lens of examination and I am striving to wider the lens and sharpen the filters. I believe that the participant centrism of ethnography will enable me to do this, giving consumer fans a platform to frame their own identity. In doing so it is fitting that my research mirrors the 'proper conditions' (Malinowski 2014: 7) of ethnographic work, in which I look to separate my research from the discourses associated with the culture of the 'white man' (the working class traditional fan) to analyse the culture of football's new 'native' (the consumer fan).

Sands (2002) argues that conducting successful ethnography requires the selection of the right populations. In the context of my research this refers to the selection of the right fan groups and the right clubs that would allow me to address my research questions and make perceptive generalisation about contemporary football culture.

To achieve this I conducted a range of pilot studies throughout the 2011/2012 football season attending live matches at different clubs within each echelon of the football league. I

became a 'complete participant' of the football event (see Reed-Danahay 1997; Bryman 2008; Scott-Jones & Watt 2010) arriving at matches at least two hours before kick-off to experience the atmosphere outside the stadium and within the catering areas. When matches were in progress I took my position within the stadium, observing the behaviour of the fans and participating in conversations happening around me both within the stadium and catering areas. King (2002: 151) suggests that talking about football is a natural part of fandom, and it was easy to both join and prompt discussion with fans in close proximity.

My pilot studies enabled me to develop an insight into the culture of each club and the demographic of fans that they attract. Pilots were undertaken at Gillingham (League 2), Northampton Town (League 2), Scunthorpe United (League 1), Milton Keynes Dons (League 1), Bolton (Championship), Peterborough United (Championship), Norwich City (Premier League) and Chelsea (Premier League). I rationalised these choices with the notion that clubs from different levels of the football league would enable me to pick up on relevant discussions concerning collective identity particularly in relation to class, commercialisation, gender and ethnicity. The selection was made to reflect different regions of the country, to account for the north, south divide but also different levels of commercialisation and vested interest by subsidiary consumer industries.

Considering the data from my pilot studies, Milton Keynes Dons, Norwich City and Chelsea were selected as case studies. While I am aware that these selections do not reflect the north, south divide or allow me to validly look at fandom throughout the football league system, I maintain that the clubs suitably reflect the diversity of modern football culture with each club promoting a fan experience that corresponds to different characteristics of the game's modern capitalism.

Norwich City has been selected as 'a family club,' a club that actively looks to attract families and young supporters. In the club's recent history, 2006, 2007 and 2010 Norwich City has been awarded prizes from the Football League for their creative 'Community and Family' initiatives. In 2008 the club won the prestigious title of 'Best Family Club in English Football,' while the fans were deemed the 'Best behaved' in the Premier League for the 2011/2012 and 2012/2013 season. The appeal of the game to families is considered to reflect the civilization process of the sport with 'family culture,' antithetical to the game's tradition of machismo associated with working class fans.

Milton Keynes was selected to represent a 'community building' approach to football fandom. The MK Dons are considered to represent the first example of a 'franchise football club,' starting life as Wimbledon before being purchased and relocated by venture capitalist Pete Winkelman, re-branding the club to maximise its commercial potential and appeal to the largely un-serviced population of the city. The departure of the club from its locality and its subsequent re-branding is condemned for threatening the 'blood and soil' relationship between fan, football club and local community. The club purposively assimilates itself with wider leisure industries, looking to attract fandom as repeat patronage and consumer loyalty.

Finally Chelsea have been selected to represent the 'entertainment' approach to football fandom where attending live matches is promoted as an 'event.' Foreign ownership and investment in English football is now commonplace, but Roman Abramovich's take over in 2003 and the significant cash injection he has put into the club can be considered a watershed moment. The world class players and subsequent success brought to the club in the decade of Abramovich's ownership has attracted enthusiastic 'football tourists,' with the club making active attempts to position themselves as a London monument to appeal to a cosmopolitan global fan base.

Sandvoss (2005: 6) offers caution with participatory research using the metaphor of a map:

> A map that colours in only a small section of territory maybe accurate as far as these sections are concerned, yet a lesser value in navigating through the territory at large.

My research focuses on a small section of 'the map,' namely the southeast of England. I am cautious that my work is geographically limited and does not account for the north, south divide or indeed represent the hierarchal structure of the football league, with my research omitting the identity of fans of League 2 or the Conference divisions clubs. I am not suggesting that my research has enabled me to navigate football culture in its totality, however I maintain that the selection of my case studies has permitted me to collect a significant amount of rich, in-depth data that has enabled me to interrogate my section of the map with strong validity.

While pilot studies were conducted with clubs throughout the football league system the case studies were selected in spite of their geographical limitation due to the way in which the culture of each club explicitly represents different characteristics of the game's capitalism. Indeed, my research indicates that the culture of each club is foundational to the way, in which the participants negotiate their identity, with their identification with their club, producing different expectations for fandom. While I argue that this vindicates their selection for analysis, I do not dispute the fact that further research is required to analyse the true complexity of contemporary football culture and the nuance identity of consumer fans throughout the football league.

Due to their different marketing strategies and club cultures, my pilot studies indicate that Norwich City attracted a significant number of family groups; the MK Dons attracted a sizable number of middle aged, middle class fans, while Chelsea appealed to a global fan base from around the world. Breaking this down into themes for analysis Norwich City was initially selected to interrogate gender, Milton Keynes was selected to analyse class and Chelsea was selected to analyse ethnicity.

My selections were based on the idea that each case study would enable me to assess different ways that modern fans are positioned as consumers, while similarly contributing to debates concerning gender, class and ethnicity applying a consumer-oriented cultural studies approach to my research to analyse the ways in which different demographics engage with the culture of their club in the substantiation of their identity. Despite this idea, after an extended period within the field, it became clear that the themes that I identified where not concomitant with the way in which the participants articulated their own identity. While the participants discussed at length their understanding of the game's wider culture, self-identifying as consumer fans, they largely failed to articulate their fandom or sense of identity in relation to my themes of analysis: gender, class and ethnicity.

My research indicated that participants did not engage with the specific attributes of their identity or articulate them in relation to their fandom but instead framed their collective identity as consumer of their club. Appropriating the term from Sands (2002: xxvi) the participant's identity as a fan was articulated as their 'core identity.' Sands (2002) uses the terms in his study of college level, American Football players, in which he suggests that the 'core identity' of the athletes comes from their shared identification as American football

players and the shared behaviours and motivations that inform their identity as athletes. In the context of my research I argue that the shared identification of the participants as 'consumer fans' informs their 'core identity' with their mutual engagement with the culture of their football club informing their identity to a greater extent than the attributes of identity that I had initially selected.

After this realisation, I abandoned my categorisations and adopted a grounded theory approach concurrent with my desire for the participants to direct the research, to assess the ways in which different fan groups articulate their identity in relation to the culture of their club. Returning to Sandvoss (2005: 42) he argues that rather than looking to understand the limited meaning inscribed within texts by their producers, textual meanings need to be considered in the interaction between the text and diverse readerships. Ironically the notion of a limited meaning inscribed within texts not only refers to the way in which football culture is largely framed and defined by agents of the game's capitalism and agents of the game's traditional culture but similarly corresponds to the selection of my initial themes and my attempt to map my categorisations onto the participants.

With methodological freedom I approached my research with a fresh perspective. Indeed, I argue that this change of focus helped me frame my research in-line with consumer-oriented cultural studies. As suggested the clubs were selected for analysis for the way in which their culture corresponds to different facets of modern, capitalist football culture. The way that the participants frame their 'core identity' in relation to the culture of their club, could be seen to confirm their status as consumers within the culture however this is not to suggest that they are passive in their consumption or that their consumption was based on the same shared sense of need.

Indeed my initial research indicated that fans construct their identity in relation to the unique culture of their club and the way it meets their individual needs as consumers. This prompted me to consider each club as individual 'texts.' As Sandvoss (2005) suggests cultural studies looks to explore the 'exceptional readings' audiences conduct with capitalist texts. Analysing the 'exceptional' and different ways that each fan group negotiates and understands the culture of their club enabled me to develop a more nuance understanding of contemporary football culture exploring the different ways in which collective identities are enacted in relation to three distinct case studies.

Operationalising the term ethnography for my research, it was a method in which I:

- Immersed myself into a social setting (the modern stadium) for an extended period of time. Attending 4 live games at each club.
- Made regular observations of the behaviour of members of that setting, both within the stadium and catering/communal areas.
- Developed an understanding of the culture of the group and the individual's behaviour within the context of each club.
- Complimented my observations with semi-structured interviews (8 for each club), informal chats and auto-ethnographic reflections.

In the stadium when matches were in progress I took a covert research position as a matter of practicality as it was virtually impossible to inform everybody in the stadium of my research intentions. This was not raised as a concern by the internal ethics board and I do not consider this a major ethical issue. My observations focused on the experience of the football event engendered by the culture of each club in conjunction with the participant's understanding and enactment of fandom within the cultural environment. I adopted the role of the 'complete participant' (Reed-Danahay 1997; Bryman 2008; Scott-Jones & Watt 2010) as a member of the crowd, looking to embrace the sensory experience of the stadium. While this enabled me to develop an understanding of the culture of each club, my role as a 'complete participant' similarly helped to reduce the hierarchy between myself and the participants challenging the dichotomy of the 'objective researcher' and 'subjective researched.' Despite my attempts to identify with the fans, it is important to note that I conducted my research with a level of distanciation, to ensure that I was not distracted by the spectacle or overawed by the atmosphere, to maintain the validity and objectivity of my observations.

While 'the other' is still the central preoccupation of ethnographic research (see Comaroff & Comaroff 1992; Kuper 1999; Scott-Jones & Watt 2010), contemporary ethnographies are mindful of the power dynamic between the researcher and the participants, with researchers careful to ensure that their work is ethically reputable and bias is accounted for (see Denzin 1997; Klein 1997; Sands 2002; Bolin & Granskog 2003). The implementation of auto-ethnographic reflection is often part of this (see Ellis 2004), in which the researcher acknowledges their role within the culture of observation. This helps to reduce the idea of

hierarchy that can emerge between researcher and participants (see Reed-Danahay 1997). Schrijvers (1991: 169) argues that research cannot be valid if the power differential between the researcher and participants is too large and my auto-ethnographic reflection are included to further reduce the hierarchy between myself and the participants, yet it would be disingenuous to pretend that I was another fan solely engaging with the sensory spectacle of the match. The inclusion of auto-ethnographic reflection enables me to address this issue, helping me to evaluate my role within the research process. Indeed I document throughout the thesis instances when I believe that my status as a researcher may have influenced responses from the participants or prompted them to act in a way that may have been seen as 'what was expected' of them.

As suggested it was practically impossible to inform all of the fans within the stadium of my research intentions yet four weeks prior to conducting my research I made contact with fan groups I had established communication with conducting my pilot studies. They were notified of my intention to attend matches for research purposes and I asked them to disseminate this information to other members of their group. I also posted regularly on popular fan sites and message boards associated with each club informing users of my research intensions, the matches I would be attending and where I would be positioned within the stadium, promoting the awareness of my research as much as possible. For my research with Norwich City details of my research was printed in fanzine *Good Feet for a Big Man*, while my contacts with MK Dons and Chelsea help disseminate information on other online forums that I did not have the 'subcultural capital' to penetrate (Thornton 1995). I offered to pay the necessary financial cost of this process.

This snowball approach had been enacted with success in my pilot studies. Prior to my visit to Milton Keynes vs Carlisle (27/3/12) I contacted a friend from the area who put me in touch with a member of the club's supporters group. He was enthusiastic about the research and happy to participate in future interviews and helped disseminate word of my research to other members of the group. I am aware that this does not fully solve the power imbalance of my in-stadia observations, yet I argue that this is a suitable ethical compromise to a significant research impracticality.

Interviews at each club[17] were conducted in communal catering areas before kick off. This provided me with a self-selecting research sample. Approaching individuals at convenience I clearly illustrated my intentions, outlining my research aims and assuring the participants of complete anonymity[18]. I ensured that informed consent was obtained before starting the interview process and that participant were aware of my intention to safely store their responses letting them know that their names would be replaced by pseudonyms. The participants were told that their responses would only to be used for the benefit of my research.

My categorisation of each club: Norwich- family club, MK Dons- community club and Chelsea- tourist attraction, prompted my selection of participants to take part in my research. As suggested my pilot studies indicated that each club operates with a clear business strategy that cultivates a unique fan experience. I was keen to assess the validity of my categorisation and to the extent to which the culture of each club affects the fan's sense of identity. As a result a purposive sampling method was used in which I approached participants that seemed to correspond to my perception of family, community and tourists fans. For example I looked to approach fans in family groups at Norwich City, groups of middle aged, middle class fans at MK Dons (those drinking wine instead of beer, dressed in smart clothes not leisure wear associated with traditional fans), and fans dressed in merchandise and carrying cameras at Chelsea.

The selection of the participants was based solely on my judgement and categorisation. The subjective and non-probable nature of the selection of participants means that I cannot make claims as to the representativeness of my sample to the entire fan community of each club. Unlike the various sampling techniques that can be used under probability sampling, the goal of purposive sampling is not to randomly select participants to create a sample with the intention of making generalisations from that sample to the wider population of interest but instead the main goal of purposive sampling is to focus on particular characteristics of a population that are of interest which will best enable the researcher to answer their research questions.

In the context of my research this refers to fans that correspond to the categories that I have associated with each club, enabling me to analyse the ways in which the different

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[17] Eight at each club over the period of four matches.
[18] See appendix A for details of each participant included.

cultures of each club inform the participant's fan identity. Purposive sampling is used as a method when the research questions that are being addressed are specific to the characteristics of a particular group of interest. In the context of my research this group is consumer fans. Purposive sampling enables the researcher to examine identified groups in detail, so while my research may prevent me from making generalisations about each club's wider fan community, my research does permit me to make generalisations from the sample that is being studied; consumer fans associated with each football club selected as a case study.

Interviews were loosely guided by an inventory, with initial conversation framed around the impending contest in an attempt to demonstrate my identification as a football fan and my understanding of the culture associated with each club. It was vital that I developed a level of rapport with the participants[19], to ensure that the data that I obtained was as valid as possible. As an outsider to the community, I expected that I would be treated with a level of suspicion, particularly in relation to the way in which much of the literature written by 'outsiders', to contemporary football culture has an agenda of disenfranchising the consumer fan. I was keen to present myself as more than a researcher but as a self-identified 'researcher fan', who identified with the participant's understanding of capitalist football culture. By positioning myself as a 'researcher fan' looking to share the experiences of the participants, I believe that I was treated with a level of openness that facilitated the collection of fascinating, in-depth valid data. I believe that I was able to largely achieve a reciprocal and dialogic relationship with the participants.

After an initial level of rapport had been established, participants were given as much autonomy as possible to articulate their fan identity and direct the conversation. Indeed, the initial period of establishing identification with the participants seemed to create a 'cascading effect', with the participants engaging in dialogue with me based on a rapport and sense of reassurance that had been established previously in the conversation (Lindlof & Taylor 2002: 182). The participant's responses were vital to the research process and subsequently I offered to buy them snacks as a gesture of gratitude[20]. Again, I think it is important to maintain parity and reduce the power imbalance between the researcher and participants, and wanted to 'give something' to them in return for their participation (see Mc Neil 1997), however I was cautious that this process could have been interpreted as

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[19] Appendix A indicates instances when this was the case.
[20] The cost of a pie and pint at each club is document in appendix B

'giving them a reward,' for what could be perceived to be the 'correct answers' (see Alderson & Morrow 2004). As a result I thanked the participants upon completion and offered them refreshments after the interviews had been concluded to try and ensure that the gesture did not influence their responses.

Talking about football is a natural part of the culture; indeed fans seemingly unaware of my research often approached me wanting to talk about the game. I argue that these spontaneous conversations are a central part of the football event that helped me establish a valid insight into the culture of each club. Subsequently extracts from these informal conversations are cited throughout my research, as I believe that they provide me with a valid insight into the fan's identification with the culture of their club. Similarly some of these conversations helped me to contextualise the ideas articulated by participants that I had previously interviewed.

I indicated on the checklist that I submitted to the internal ethics board that my research may involve 'vulnerable groups,' and I engaged with children, particularly at Norwich City matches in my analysis of 'family football.' Children were not approached on their own and were only interviewed in the presence of an adult or family member. Parents concerned about the research were given the opportunity to decline participation or stop the interview at any stage. It was essential that the participants experienced no stress or harm from taking part in my research and it was made clear that interviews could stop if the participant felt uncomfortable. While many fans refused to participate and some conversations were cut short due to fans wanting to take their place within the stand, at no stage of my research did participants ask to halt an interview or ask for responses to be removed from my research.

I also signalled to the ethics board that discussions with participants might focus on 'sensitive topics.' I did not direct interviews or discussions to explore sensitive themes yet I occasionally became privy to crude, sexist and racist language both happening around me as part of the football event and used in conversation by participants. I did not stop these conversations or intervene. As suggested my research is participant centric with ethnography employed as a method explicitly for the way in which it attempts to 'look within' culture to provide consumer fans with opportunities to articulate their fandom and engage in negotiation with the discourses surrounding them within the culture. To ensure

that I achieved this aim I continued to let the participants direct the agenda of the interviews even when it veered into provocative territory. While the behaviour of the participants was occasionally reprehensible it has to be recognised that the motivations underpinning these expressions relate to the participant's fan identity or importantly their *expectations* of how to enact and articulate their fandom identity. While some of these responses were uncomfortable to hear and thus maybe uncomfortable to read, I argue that they provide significant insight into the participant's fan identity and their understanding of the discourses surrounding the culture, the game's capitalism and tradition.

Throughout the research process, I was occasionally asked by participants to be sent updates on my work; these participants were curious how their views were represented. After certain extracts were analysed, copies were sent to these participants. On two occasions participants suggested that I make changes in relation to my discussion of some of the more sensitive issues relating to the use of sexist, racist or gendered language.

Taking these concerns into consideration, some discussion of these instances has been removed if I do not consider them to contribute to the wider argument that I make in each chapter. However, the vast majority of these discussions remained with concerned participants who were reminded that their true identity would be protected by pseudonyms. Largely the participants accepted my interpretation of data and seemed appreciative that I had honoured their requests. I believe that this relates to their understanding of the aims of my research, to promote the inclusion and acknowledge the identity of consumer fans within football culture. My attempt to achieve this is reflected in the way in which participants were directly involvement in each stage of the research process, my pilot study, collection of data and the analysis of data.

While my research recognises consumer fans as active agents 'within' football culture, I recognise that my analysis of meaning is only applicable to the fans of the three clubs that were selected as case studies. Subsequently my analysis of their identity and importantly my identification of the complex processes of negotiation in which the participants substantiate their identity cannot be considered representative of consumer fans more generally. Indeed, while it was my intention to provide consumer fans with a platform to articulate their fandom and participate in debates to construct their identity within football culture, I am cautious that my research only provides this platform to a limited number of fans. I am

aware that this limits my ability to generalise to the wider identity of the fans associated with each club used as a case study. Despite this I maintain that the research that I have conducted has enabled me to develop a more nuance understanding of contemporary football culture, assimilating my work with consumer-oriented cultural studies to provide an insight into the ways in which consumer fans understand their position within football culture, how they articulate and understand their fan identity and negotiate the ways in which they are narrowly represented.

Chapter 4. Norwich. 'The best pies in the league'.

Introduction.

As a longstanding football fan I have developed relationships with fans throughout the football league. On September 15th 2012 Norwich City were to host West Ham United at Carrow Road, a match I was planning to attend. Two days preceding the contest I received a series of texts messages from 'Joe' an away season ticket holder with West Ham, a contact I had met previously at Upton Park.

Norwich City was selected for analysis as 'a family club,' a club that markets its self to attract families and appeal to women and children. While 'Joe' (2012) predicts West Ham's victory on the pitch, the exchange continually refers to the market orientation and culture of Norwich City, with 'Joe' juxtaposing the family culture of the club with the perceived traditional culture associated with West Ham. The exchange revolves around this subtext of tradition, and legitimacy with the concept of victory associated with the status of each club within the culture as much as the result. The binary 'Joe' creates between the clubs: Norwich/capitalism and West Ham/tradition, draws upon the discourses that I have highlighted in the literature review, emphasising the centrality of capitalism and tradition to modern football culture but also the idea of hierarchy in which traditional football culture is perceived to be more legitimate than capitalist football culture.

In our exchange West Ham becomes metonymic of the game's traditional culture while Norwich is presented as the embodiment of the game's capitalism. This seemed significant, vindicating my categorization of Norwich City as a 'family club,' but also my argument that the perception of football culture and the identity of its fans continues to be shaped by these hegemonic discourses and importantly the fan's understanding and negotiation of these discourses. 'Joe's' (2012) conception of each club epitomises this idea in which he explicitly frames the culture of each club and their associated fan identities in relation to the discourse associated with football's tradition culture and its modern capitalism.

'Joe': Can't wait for Saturday we (West Ham) are going to smash the Canaries COYI (Come On You Irons).
Oliver: 2-1 Norwich mate, it will be close but City will just sneak it.
'Joe': Haha did you see how they played against Fulham!? We are going to destroy them 6-0.

Oliver: That was away though, a one off. The crowd will be really up for it on Saturday. It's a sell out and it will be a big atmosphere. It's a bit of a fortress Carrow Road.

'Joe': Oh I bet it's a GREAT atmosphere [sarcasm]. Norwich is a club for pussies mate. I bet all the families and day-trippers there with their children make it really intimidating!

Oliver: The stadium is sold out every week and the fans are really passionate. I think you will be surprised.

'Joe': Doubt it, mate I'm West Ham. You want REAL atmosphere you come to Upton Park again. You know we're a proper football club.

Oliver: What do you mean, a 'proper football club'?

'Joe': We've got history, we've got tradition. West Ham are respected. We won the World Cup[21], we've got the best academy[22] and we've got the best firm[23]. We are a proper, working class football club.

Oliver: So that makes you a *proper* club?

'Joe': We *are* a proper football club. We're respected. Talk to fans about West Ham and they will tell you, 'West Ham are a proper club.' Ask them about Norwich and they will tell you they're small time, there's no tradition, no atmosphere it's a 'nice,' little 'family club.'

'Joe' (2012) positions himself in opposition to Norwich's 'day-trippers', perpetuating a carefully considered fan narrative that correlates with the traditional 'ideals' of football culture as described by Imlach (2005). As documented in the literature review, Imlach (2005: 213) argues that traditional fan identity is defined by long standing familial lineage, geographical ties and emotional attachment encouraged by the knowledge of club history and its reflection of local community. In his attempts to construct his 'traditional' identity 'Joe' describes West Ham as a 'proper' football club explicitly drawing upon these themes.

'Joe' (2012) focuses on the sporting success of the football club, as referenced by Bobby Moore (history) and the club's academy[24] (history, local community, family lineage, emotional attachment). This idea of local representation seem foundational to 'Joe's' fandom in which he continually draws on the club's geographical anchorage in the traditionally working class, East End of London (geographical ties, history) and the clubs

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[21] Reference to Bobby Moore, England's World cup winning captain
[22] For producing young players.
[23] Hooligan fans.
[24] This reference to the clubs academy alludes to the continued relationship between the club and the community. Notable players from the local community to come through the West Ham academy including Frank Lampard, Joe Cole, Rio Ferdinand and Mark Noble.

history of hooliganism with their 'firm,' the ICF, infamous within football culture (history, local community).

I argue that 'Joe' (2012) looks to frame his fan identity in relation to the discourse surrounding the club emphasising its traditional culture in opposition to what he perceives to be the less legitimate culture associated with Norwich City. There has been a range of texts documenting the hooliganism and terrace culture of West Ham such as *Congratulations You Have Just Met The ICF* (Pennant 2003), *Good Afternoon Gentlemen* (Gardner 2012) and *Running with the Firm* (Bannon 2013). 'Joe' looks to frame his fan identity by drawing upon the nostalgic ideals perpetuated by these texts, using the discourse to accentuate West Ham's traditional culture. As he indicates, the discourse surrounding Norwich City does not hold the same subcultural capital (see Thornton 1995). The club is situated in the middle of an out-of-town retail park, indicative of modern football's symbiotic relationship with wider leisure industries. Similarly the club's affiliation with consumer industries and the awards that it has obtained for it family initiatives[25] has led to the club developing the reputation of being a 'nice' football club.

While 'Joe' (2012) presents West Ham as a 'proper, working class football club,' Norwich City are defined as a 'club for pussies.' This binary produces certain expectations about the demographic attracted to each club and the identity of the fans. Pearson (2012) suggests that working class narratives of hooliganism and 'capers' from the terraces act as badges of honour to modern football fans keen to associate themselves with the machismo of the terraces to position themselves in opposition to the game's modern capitalism. In the context of our exchange the game's capitalism is represented by Norwich City. I argue that 'Joe' looks to frame his fan identity in a similar fashion, in which he attempts to associate himself with West Ham's traditional culture. In this context it is poignant that he personifies himself as the embodiment of the club, 'I am West Ham', constructing a profile for himself indicative of the 'traditional' working class fan or as I suggest his *expectation* of what it means to be a traditional fan.

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[25] In 2006, 2007 and 2010 Norwich City have been awarded prises from the Football League for their creative 'Community and Family' initiatives. In 2008 the club won the prestigious title of 'Best Family Club in English Football.' The fans were deemed the 'Best behaved,' in the Premier League for the 2011/2012 and 2012/2013 season.

I suggest in the literature review that consumer fans are trapped in discourses of representation, positioned positively as consumers by agents of the game's capitalism and negatively as consumers by agents of the game's tradition. This complex orientation of the modern fan is reflected in 'Joe's' (2012) fan identity, positioned as a consumer via his status as a home and away season ticket holder with the club while self-identifying as a traditional fan, framing his fan identity in relation to the traditional discourse associated with West Ham. If as I argue, consumer fans are 'trapped' in discourses of representation then it is to be expected that fan identities are similarly trapped in the confines of these hegemonic discourses, yet it is significant that while drawing on these discourses 'Joe' *actively* ignores his relationship as a consumer to the club, knowingly framing his identity as that of the working class fans traditionally associated with West Ham.

While 'Joe' (2012) evidently exercises power over Norwich fans, his lamentation of their identity emphasising the hierarchy within the culture between traditional fans and consumers, I argue that 'Joe' similarly exercises power within the culture in the active creation of his own identity. This provided me with foresight to a pattern that would emerge as I continued my research. Participants that I engaged with continually enacted processes of active discursive negotiation, constructing their identities by drawing on the hegemonic discourses that continue to surround the culture: capitalism and tradition but also their individual understanding of how they *should* identify as fans of their specific teams. Indeed my unique argument is that fans construct their identity based on their different perceptions of what is *expected* of them within the culture.

This chapter analyses the way in which Norwich City fans negotiate their fan identity. While 'Joe' (2012) denigrates their fandom this chapter explores the ways in which Norwich fans exercise their own power within the culture, engaging in 'exception readings' (Sandvoss 2005) with the family culture of their club. The chapter argues that Norwich fans constitute their identity in relation to their different consumer needs as fans. I argue that the different needs of the fans correspond to their identification with the club's family culture and importantly their desire to frame themselves as a specific *type* of fan.

'**You just feel part of something**'

While 'Joe' (2012) actively looked to position himself as a traditional fan, the participants that I interviewed on my preliminary trip to Carrow Road (Norwich City Vs Fulham December 31st 2011) 'Roy' and 'Pam', in attendance with son 'Chris' aged 10[26], explicitly identify as modern consumers. The participants frame their fan identity in correlation with the club's marketing strategy, describing the way in which the club caters to their need as a family, providing an environment to both experience live football and enact family identity.

Oliver: So how are you feeling about the match today… optimistic?

'Roy': Cautiously optimistic, we were outclassed the other night (against Tottenham) but sometimes you have to hold your hands up and say the better team won. She (indicates to 'Pam') couldn't make it the other night, but we are all back together so I think we will do the business tonight. They usually do all right when we are all together.

'Pam': Yeah I was disappointed to miss the game the other day, I really wanted to see Gareth Bale, but I was at the sales (shopping) …It's the best bit about Christmas, so many games in a short space of time… it's nice to be back and make up for it today. I think the team will get things going again.

Oliver: That's the best thing about football over the Christmas period, there are so many games in a short space of time you can move on from a bad result and get it out of your system with a quick win a couple of days later…. So you are a good luck omen are you? (Directed at 'Pam')

'Pam': (Laughs) I don't know about that, but when I come with the boys they are usually good games.

Oliver: Are you all season ticket holders?

'Roy': 'Chris' and I are. I use to come a few years ago but had to stop with work and with 'Chris' and everything, but then he started to get into football and started playing it at school so I took him to a couple of games and it went from there.

'Pam': They would be going off every Saturday without me and I felt like I was missing out (Laughs).

'Roy': You really love it don't you? (Directed at 'Pam') She felt like she was missing out so we managed to get her a ticket for a game one week and now she's hooked. I'm always trying to get her tickets; she's on the season ticket waiting list (for next season).

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[26] See appendix A for further details

Oliver: Was there anything particular that you enjoyed about the matches that made you want to keep coming back or is there anything specific you really enjoy about coming here?

'Pam': Delia's pies (Delia Smith TV Chef and Norwich's majority shareholder). They are the best pies in the league. I mainly come for the pies. No, it's really good to see the superstars and the big team but I just wanted to spend time with the boys and see what all the excitement was about. Once you come a few times you get a taste for the atmosphere, you get hooked.

'Roy': It is just a really good atmosphere; it's something that's fun to be part of. With the teams doing well, the ground has a good bit of noise about it and you just get caught up in it, it's exciting.

'Pam': But it's not an intimidating atmosphere is it? It's passionate but it's not threatening. I was a bit nervous about coming to start with, especially bringing 'Chris'. I didn't really know what to expect and just thought it would be drunken men looking for trouble, but once I got here and on the walk up (to the stadium) noticed the amount of children and families I knew it was going to be ok.

Oliver: Well Norwich has that reputation for being a family club and…

'Roy': That's right, you only have to look around the place, there are loads of youngsters, women and elderly people. That's one of the nice things about the club, everyone is welcome and I think that is why the stadium is packed every week.

'Pam': I think the club tries really hard to please everyone, there are the mascots going around the ground for the kids, and things like that over there [points to a display board with coloured pictures by young fans] to show you that children are important to the club. I think that's it, when you come it's like you are part of something; everyone is made to feel welcome.

In the literature review the question was posited: how can fans maintain their fandom when clubs are doing everything in the power to transform them into consumers (See Fynn & Guest 1994; Bale 1998; Brimon 1998; Giulianotti 2002; King 2002; Ingle 2005: Barr 2009; Pearson 2012)? 'Pam' and 'Roy's' (2011) responses provide a possible solution. Positioned as consumers by the football club, the participants self-identify as consumers accepting the club's business strategy and consumer culture. This notion is epitomised by 'Pam's' playful suggestion that she 'mainly' attends football matches for 'Delia's pies', explicitly aligning her fandom with processes of consumption, with the reference to celebrity chef Delia Smith evoking football's modern assimilation with wider leisure industries. This idea is supported

by her reference to the January sales explicitly framing herself as a consumer to highlight the symbiosis between consumerism and modern football culture.

Despite this idea I argue that the humorous tone of her response subverts the idea that her consumption makes her fandom passive. On the contrary, I argue that she is active in her consumption as suggested by the way that she presents her choice, whether to consume the products of the sales or the performance of Gareth Bale. I argue that this understanding of choice emphasises 'Pam's' (2011) active and flexible conception of fandom. Self-identified as a consumer she alludes to the idea that she is free to make decisions within the market, her fandom 'a form of sustained affective consumption' (Sandvoss 2005: 9). Contemporary fan studies argues that fandom is reliant on the products of capitalism (see Jameson 1991; Fiske 1992; Hills 2002; Barker 2004; Sandvoss 2005). I do not dispute this idea, but 'Pam's' acknowledgement of her choice and awareness of the powers operating on her as she does so suggests that she enacts fandom with an autonomy rarely afforded to consumer fans by self-identified traditional fans (see Bale 1998; Brimson 1998; Burgess 2005; Conn 2005; Ingle 2005), who like 'Joe' (2012), position consumer fans as corporate dupes.

The exchange indicates that the participants are both aware of the culture of the club and the wider capitalism of the sport. 'Roy' (2011) explicitly makes this connection, describing the club's agenda to appeal to a large demographic: 'families, women, elderly people' and their success in 'filling the stadium every week.' It is this rapacious marketization that is said to lead to the loss of identity, autonomy and community within football culture, concomitant with larger anti-capitalist discourse (see Marcuse 1991; Adorno 2001; Graham 2006; Schiel 2008). On the contrary, I argue that the exchange emphasises the autonomy of the fans in their self-conception of identity. As Bates (1994 cited by King 2002) suggests, rather than disenfranchise the fan, football's modern capitalism addresses their developing needs as consumers. I argue that the participant's 'need' relates to their desire to enact rituals of family.

'Pam' (2011) suggests that she started attending matches to spend time with her husband and son: 'They would be going off every Saturday without me and I felt like I was missing out', suggesting that her fandom originates from the shared family experience afforded to her by the culture of the club. 'Roy' (2011) develops this idea forming associations between the team's success on the pitch and the cohesion of the family within the stand: 'Pam

couldn't make it but we are all back together tonight so I think we will do the business.' 'They usually do all right when we are all here.' Like 'Joe' (2012), 'Roy' personifies the family as a reflection of the club to create a unique and personal fan narrative. 'Roy' assimilates the victory of the team on the pitch with the family's ability to come together and share leisure time, creating a link between the success of the team and 'success' of the family. If 'Joe' (2012) presents himself as an archetypal traditional fan, 'Roy,' presents the family explicitly as modern consumers, 'buying' into the culture of the club and the overall narrative of family that it promotes and helps to stage. It is evident that the participants have internalised this narrative with the idea of communality evident throughout the exchange. As 'Roy' suggests: 'when you come it's like you are part of something.'

While the culture of the club is largely dictated by the norms of modern consumerism, the club creating an inclusive experience concomitant with the 'catch all' dictates of capitalism, the participant's fandom revolves around the affordance permitted to them by the culture of the club to develop and engineer their own staging of family. This indicates that despite the overall commercialisation of the sport and the explicit marketing of the club to attract family fans, the participants are still able to create their own meaning within the cultural parameters afforded to them by the club. Indeed the exchange indicates that the participants knowingly 'buy' into the club for the way in which it enables them to enact family. 'Pam's' (2012) decision to consume the products of the sales over the performance of Gareth Bale seems microcosmic of the fan's active consumerism. Her choice was one she exercised knowingly in the market.

Despite my argument that the participant's fandom can be considered as active consumer choice, it is significant that 'Roy' (2011) suggests that the family's fandom was encouraged by the way in which they were made to feel like they were 'missing out.' While I am keen to emphasise the agency of modern fans, I am not ignoring the power of capitalism. The quotation epitomising the imperialism of the system, with its discourse permeating into the products that embody its hegemony, constantly creating need through an anxiety of exclusion, or 'alienation' (See Marx 1930). As Gasper (2005) argues, capitalism requires a constantly expanding market to keep selling its products. To do so, it continually creates a need for consumer goods. This is the argument made by both popular and academic text, framing the consumer fans as a profitable market for football clubs to exploit (see Fynn & Guest 1994; Bale 1998; Brimon 1998; Giulianotti 2002; Ingle 2005: Pearson 2012).

In this context the participant's consumer fandom could be considered as a further example of the wider capitalisation of society, with 'Pam's' (2011) assimilation of football and the sales epitomising modern football's attempts to 'turn fans into consumers.' However I dispute Gasper's (2010) argument that the further capitalisation of society 'robs people of their creative potential.' Indeed my exchange with the participants indicates that they engage in an active consumption, in which they conceptualise their position as consumers within the culture in relation to their needs as a family. Subsequently I argue that the exchange indicates that the participants accept their relationship of consumption with the club for the way in which its culture enables them to engage in rituals of family.

Evidently the participants were aware of the power operating on them in their enactment of fandom, describing it as a transaction, in which buying into the culture of the club both financially and ideologically facilitated their enactment of family identity. This enables them to experience both the interpersonal: 'they usually do all right when we are all together' (Roy 2011), and wider feeling of collectivity: 'when you come it's like you are part of something; everyone is made to feel welcome' (Pam 2011), promoted by the club. Like the participants in Ang's (1982) research I argue that the participants are aware of the powers acting upon them in their adherence to the culture, and their adherence to the capitalist system. Schickel (1986) argues that fandom is a product of mass culture compensating for a lack of intimacy in contemporary society. Taking this in to account I argue that the participants have developed a unique way of engaging with the text, creating a link between the culture of the club and their family identity in an attempt to re-create this intimacy, in the enactment of family. I argue that this demonstrates their autonomy within the culture actively 'buying into' the culture of the club for the way in which it enables them to constitute their family identity.

This link between the culture of the club and the enactment of the family is evident in the way in which 'Pam' (2011) explicitly rejects the norms of traditional football culture, allying her initial fear of attending live matches to the stereotypes of traditional fandom. In doing so she creates a binary between 'drunk men' (traditional football culture) and the family (modern football culture). I argue that this emphasises her motivations for fandom and corresponds to the idea that the participant's fandom can be considered as consumer choice. Indeed she suggests that her fandom was encouraged by the security she feels within the stadium as part of the club's wider 'family' (Pam 2011). However it is significant

that the binary that she creates similarly demonstrates her understanding of the discourses surrounding the demographic of fan associated with different eras of football culture, emphasising the way in which the discourse surrounding football culture helps to create impressions and expectations of fan identity.

I was keen to explore the wider identity of Norwich fans, assessing the ways in which they engaged with the family culture of the club. To explore this I started my larger data collection by positioning myself within the Aviva Community Stand. My research vindicates my argument that the club's family culture has a significant impact on the participant's fan identity and motivations for fandom, however it became apparent that the family culture of the club had not been totally embraced by all sections of the club's fan base. Appropriating the label from Pearson (2012), I encountered a large sub-sect of 'carnival fans' participants that actively looked to substantiate their identity by negotiating the game's capitalism and also the family culture of the club. The later part of the chapter documents the way in which these supporters use the culture of the club as a base culture from which to transgress, engaging in carnival to construct their identity in opposition to the club's family culture to enact identity in keeping with their expectations of what it means to be a traditional fan.

'Bugger off to the Snake Pit.'

I identified this alternative fan identity when Norwich hosted Leicester City in the 4th round of the FA Cup (18/2/12). Cup games usually function as entry-level games for new fans, providing those without season tickets rare opportunities to attend live matches. With this in mind, the match seemed the perfect opportunity to engage with, what I presumed to be new enthusiasts. I was keen to explore their motivations for fandom to determine what attracted them to Carrow Road.

The first group I approach refused to be interviewed, while the second group seemed to take exception to at the idea that they might be 'new visitors' to Carrow Road, informing me proudly that they had been season tickets holders for 'longer than they could remember' and were not 'jumping on the bandwagon', an attitude that I was not expecting having discussed with 'Roy' and 'Pam' (2011) the way in which the club fostered a sense of community. Such responses allude to the wider attitude towards consumer fans within culture (see Brimson 1998; Bale 1998; Burgess 2005; Conn 2005; Ingle 2005). Initially I

interpreted this as the group's scepticism towards me as an outsider to their 'family.' As suggested in the methodology, I expected that I would be treated with a level of suspicion, due to the way in which much of the literature written by 'outsiders' to capitalist football culture operate with an agenda of disenfranchising modern football consumers. On reflection these exchanges typified the day's events, with a distinct sub-set of fans looking to constitute their identity in opposition to the club's 'nice' family culture.

I approached 'Jack' (2012) who had brought his young son 'Ben' aged five with him to see his first match. 'Jack'[27] was not a new attendee, describing himself as a 'casual,' he was clearly excited about bringing his son to his first match:

Oliver: Are you looking forward to the game today?

'Jack': Yeah mate I'm really looking forward to it. Should be a cracking game, expecting a load of goals and some good entertainment.

Oliver: Me too, we never seem to do well in the Cup but this should be a great opportunity to get a bit of a run going, get to the next round and keep the confidence up with a win.

'Jack': You're right, it would be nice to have a bit of a Cup run, got my good luck mascot with me today, [Indicating to 'Ben'] so we'll be alright.

Oliver: Do you get to many games?

'Jack': Not really. I try and get to a game every now and then. I was here for the Burnley cup game (7/1/12) and Sunderland (26/9/11) at the start of the season but I don't get here as much as I would like. And today, well today is 'Ben's' *first* game.

Oliver: Oh cool are you excited [to 'Ben']

[He Nods]

Oliver: So it's quite a big day for you then, it must be special brining your son for the first time?

'Jack': Oh it is mate, I've wanted to bring him for a while, he's still quite young, he's 5 so I haven't known if he's too young really or he'll enjoy it but yeah it's a good one for me.

Oliver: Was there a reason that you decided to bring him with you today?

'Jack': Well we could both get tickets for a start. And yeah I came to the Burnley game the other week and sat here and there were so many kids I just thought why not, they seemed to be having a good time, and there was no bother or anything. I remember going to

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[27] See appendix A

football with my Dad when I was young and I want to do that with 'Ben.' I just hope he enjoys it and gets into it.

Like 'Pam' and 'Roy' (2011), 'Jack' (2012) associates his motivations for fandom with the orientation of the club, Norwich's family culture encouraging him to share the experience with his son: 'There were so many kids I just thought why not, they seemed to be having a good time.' Significant parallels can be established between the participants. 'Jack' similarly describes his motivations for fandom in relation to the affordance permitted by the club to enable him to enact rituals of family, to re-live the experience of attending matches with his father, something he remembers fondly and was keen to replicate with 'Ben.' Despite the similarity in the way in which 'Jack' frames his fandom in relation to the club's family culture, it seems significant that he self-identifies as a 'casual' fan. This emphasises his motivations for fandom, alluding to the idea that he looked to enact fandom not through a sense of emotional attachment or communal representation, framed as the way in which fans establish traditional fan identities (Imlach 2005: 213) but for the way in which the culture of the club corresponded to his sense of consumer need, his desire to engage in a traditional ritual of family with his son.

His excitement was palpable emphasising the fact that it was 'Ben's' *first* game' (Jack 2012). I argue that 'Jack's' excitement came from the meaning that he attached to the ritual of attending a match with his son rather than the match itself, a proposition emphasised by the intonation in his voice but also his self-identification as a 'casual fan.' Taking this into account I argue that like 'Pam' and 'Roy' (2011), 'Jack's' fandom can be considered as consumer choice, the culture of the club, prompting him to use the event to enactment rituals of family with his son. Again, the culture of the club corresponded to his consumer need.

Ironically there is a tension in this idea, in his desire to re-enact an experience he had with his father, 'Jack' (2012) uses capitalist football culture to re-stage an experience that he presumably experienced in football's traditional period. This serves as an analogy to the complex positioning of modern fans, encouraged by traditional discourses to reject the game's capitalism to enact traditional fan performances as demonstrated by 'Joe' (2012). Conversely it is 'Jack's' acceptance and understanding of the game's capitalism and the culture of the club, that he recognises as a 'casual' fan that encourages him to enact a

fandom that he experienced as a product of the game's traditional culture. This compliments my argument made in the literature review that football's modern capitalism should not be considered as separate from its traditional era (see Williams 2000; King 2002; Imlach 2005), while emphasising the ability of the fans to negotiate the discourses surrounding the game's capitalism and traditional culture to construct their own self-narratives within football culture.

This emerging pattern supports my agenda to analyse contemporary football culture with a consumer-oriented cultural studies approach. Sandvoss (2005) argues that modern cultural studies analyses how texts carry meanings that articulates fan identities and their objective and subjective position within society. I argue that this idea is manifested in 'Jacks' (2012) articulation of fandom with the family culture of the club enabling him to objectively and subjectively enact traditional rituals of family, macrocosmically as part of the community fostered by the club and microcosmically in the re-staging of the family ritual that he experienced with his father.

It is significant that like 'Roy' (2011), 'Jack' (2012) creates a link between the family and the outcome of the football match, describing 'Ben' as a 'good luck mascot.' Again 'Jack' assimilates the team's success and his ability to enact family. Like 'Roy,' this indicates that 'Jack' has unique motivations for fandom that extend beyond the football event itself. I argue that the link that the participants create challenges the way in which consumer fans are seen as passive within the culture. It is significant that they assimilate themselves with the action occurring on the pitch, perpetuating the idea that like the players that they are active in their relationship with the game. In this context, their active involvement with the event supports the idea that their fandom is an informed choice, that they are *active* in their consumption.

Like 'Pam' and 'Roy' (2011), 'Jack' (2012) demonstrates his awareness of the game's capitalism, like 'Pam,' he knowingly uses humour to suggest that his fandom was encouraged by the fact that he 'could *actually* get tickets.' This indicates that he recognises his fandom as a transaction, the process, a norm of modern consumer society in which he willingly pays for the service and experience that he associates with the club. Taking my seat, slightly further towards the back of the stand, it was fortuitous, that 'Jack' and 'Ben' were sitting two rows in front of me. As the match started there was a general feeling of

optimism with the Barclay, home to Norwich's most vocal fans starting the chant of 'On The Ball City' with the young fans adjacent to me attempting to join in. As I looked down towards 'Jack' and 'Ben', both were transfixed on the game, 'Ben' mimicking his father in applauding good periods of play. On the five minute mark Leicester scored against the run of play, a moment that changed the pattern of the game and the atmosphere around the stadium. Symbiotically the Barclay fell silent and the quality of play on the pitch started to deteriorate. By the ten minute mark each misplaced pass became punctuated by load groans, most of which seemed to originate from the opposite end of the stadium, however, audible sighs could be heard coming from the a group of middle aged men adjacent to me on the other side of the concourse.

Despite their general sloppy play Norwich managed to equalise in the 23rd minute, 'Jack' (2012) leapt to his feet and had 'Ben' in has arms swaying and bouncing to the music played over the PA system. The jubilance of the celebration belied the quality of the game and the skill of the strike. I argue that the celebration was more to do with the occasion than the goal itself. As 'Jack' suggested he was keen for 'Ben,' to 'get into' the game and 'enjoy it.' The goal was an opportunity for the pair to engage in collective celebration, the staged celebration corresponding with his desires to experience the ritual he enjoyed with his father and enact family.

As insinuated by the interview before kick off, the quality of the match seemed incidental to 'Jack' (2012). Very little time was spent discussing the match or specifics of the team. The day was significant, as he had chosen to engage in the ritual of attending the match with his son. My questions were open ended to enable 'Jack' to direct the conversation, yet it is significant that the majority of the exchange focuses on the relationship he has with his son and the significance of bringing his son to the match rather than the match itself. In other words I argue that the conversation revolves around the family ritual that was facilitated *by* their fandom, rather than his fandom *with* the club. This correlates to 'Jack's' identification as a casual fan. I argue that this again demonstrates 'Jack's' agency as consumers in which he emphasises the way in which his fandom corresponds to the way in which the culture of the club meets *his* need. I argue that 'Jack's' individual identification with the culture of the club is replicated in his celebration, his fan performance an individual expression that seemed to relate to his experience with his son more than the football event happening on the pitch.

The rest of the stand had taken to their feet and responded to the equaliser with muted applause, the general mood was epitomised by the exasperated group adjacent to me who had audibly become more frustrated throughout the game. 'Tom' (2012) glancing towards his friend and puffing his cheeks signalling his relief, a gesture I acknowledge with laughter. Hearing this and catching me out of the corner of his eye 'Tom' turned and mouthed his assessment: 'we're crap.' I found it significant that he only mouthed his judgement, rather than openly verbalise it. I interpreted this as his internalisation of the club's culture. There are numerous signs around the stand warning fans about the club's family ethos, instructing them that as a 'family club,' that bad language would not be tolerated

My conception of his fandom was compounded by a brief chat I had with him at half time:

Oliver: We aren't good are we?

'Tom': No we're bloody terrible

Oliver: I don't know how we got back into it to be honest

'Tom': Me neither, we don't deserve to, I haven't seen us play this bad under Lambert (Paul Lambert Norwich manager at the time of research).

Oliver: I could hear you getting frustrated; some of the play is so sloppy today.

'Tom': It's bloody awful. I'm doing well to bite my tongue; if it weren't for all the bloody kids around here I would be going mad.

'Tom' (2012), describes his efforts to curtail his behaviour, acknowledging that his natural response would be incongruent with the club's family culture, likely to cause offence to children around him and potentially lead to his rejection from the stadium. While the interviews that I had previously conducted indicated that the culture of the club facilitated a sense of community, 'Tom' alludes to the idea that the family culture of the club prohibits outbursts of anger or frustration, leading him to censor his natural responses.

There is an interesting tension here, Pam and Roy (2011) suggested that the club's allure relates to the way in which it appeals to a diverse demographic making 'everyone feel welcome.' My exchange with 'Tom' (2012) contradicts this idea, suggesting that the club values a specific *type* of fan that enacts with a specific type of fan identity. Sandvoss (2005: 9) argues that contemporary fandom is the process of emotionally engaging with products of capitalism. While I argue that the club undoubtedly values 'Tom's' fandom as patronage,

his emotional engagement is not valued by the club with prohibitions being placed upon his behaviour to ensure that it conforms to the club's family culture. This notion corresponds to discourse that suggests that modern football has become sanitised and panoticised (see Bale 1998; King 2002; Weed 2008).

I argue that 'Tom's' (2012) fandom evokes Fromm's concept of 'authoritarian conformity' (1963), the idea that dominant cultures manages to obtain consent despite its subject's awareness that its agenda is likely to impinge upon their freedoms. Fromm (1963: 159) describes the knowing consent to culture like the 'protective colouring animals assume,' describing conformity as a defence shield against cultural alienation. 'Tom' faces the prospect of exclusion if he does not conform to the norms of club culture. So to engage in fandom, 'Tom' submits to the norms of the market and the culture of the club enabling both systems to perpetuate.

'Tom's' (2012) choice to manage his fan identity indicates that like the other participants that his fandom relates to a sense of need that is addressed by attending live football matches, yet his needs and motivations for fandom do not correspond with those of 'Pam,' 'Roy' (2011) and 'Jack' (2012). While this made me reconsider the way in which I had operationalised the club's 'inclusive' family culture, I believe that this supports my consumer-oriented approach to research with the participants indicating that their fandom relates to their different needs as consumers. While 'Roy,' 'Pam' and 'Jack's' fandom can be considered in terms of a negotiation between the culture of the club and their individual needs as consumers, their fan identities correspond with the family culture of the club. Conversely, 'Tom's' identity seemed to be enacted almost in spite of the culture of the club, offering an indication of that way in which consumers can engage with capitalist texts while still opposing their agenda (see Barker 2004).

The second half started in similar manner to the first, Norwich were careless in possession with Leicester dictating the play. The atmosphere heralded by 'Pam' and 'Roy' (2011) was flat. With sixty-five minutes on the clock, Norwich had not managed a shot in the second half; 'Jack' (2012) remained glued to the game, and the group adjacent of me were silent. In the 71st minute, Leicester inevitably took the lead. The reaction around the stand was minimal. A few fans started to head for the exit while 'Tom' (2012) slammed his fist into his leg. 'Tom's' reaction was poignant, while an aggressive action it was personal, another

example of his attempt to control his emotions alluding to the idea that like 'Jack' his fandom had become personalised, separate to the wider culture of the club, but as suggested incongruent with the club's 'nice' family culture.

As the final twenty minutes were played out, it was clear that much of the stand had lost interest, particularly 'Ben' (2012). By the 75th minute, he had stopped watching the game and could be seen staring at the floor swinging his feet back and forth under his chair. A couple of minutes later, he turned his back on the game and started climbing around his seat. 'Jack' (2012) noticing this tried to focus his attention back on the contest, giving him a running commentary. This had been ongoing for five minutes when 'Tom' (2012) finally lost his composure:

'Jack': Oh look its Fox, He has it and he gives it to Adam Drury. He gets it and gives it back to David Fox. Fox tries to pass it to Jackson but he doesn't get the pass right and gives it to one of the Leicester players Oh no! I hope they don't score again. The Leicester player, he gives it to his friend on the left, where are our midfield players? Oh yes, Hoolahan with a tackle, Hoolahan… what a funny name! He scored our goal, but he has lost it and its back with Leicester.

'Tom': Jesus mate give it a rest, this has been painful enough I don't want a bloody commentary. If I did I'd put my radio on or something.

'Jack': come on mate; I'm with my son. I'm just trying to…

'Tom': Just keep it down. He has eyes doesn't he? Let him watch the game and let us watch it without you prattling for the last ten minutes.

With 82 minutes on the clock, 'Jack' (2012) got out of his seat, taking 'Ben' by the hand making his way along the row to the concourse. Allowing 'Ben' to lead the way until he was out of direct earshot, he paused for a moment in front of 'Tom' (2012):

> What's your problem pal? Look around, there are kids everywhere. If you've got such a problem why are you here? You're a dinosaur mate, if you're going to be such a prat why don't you bugger off to the Snake Pit. (Jack 2012)

I'm a proper 'Naaarwich' fan boy.'

The Snake Pit, to which 'Jack' (2012) refers is a nickname given to the stand in the Thorpe corner infill that connects the Barclay to the City Stand[28]. The Snake Pit was colonised by 'hardcore' fans in an attempt to recreate the community described as a facet of terrace culture (Walsh & Giulianotti 2001: 62). The Pit was where songs would emanate housing the club's traditional fans as the club transitioned from bureaucracy to capitalism. It is this 'traditional' conception of what the Snake Pit represents that 'Jack,' evokes in his rebuke of 'Tom' (2012), suggesting that his behaviour is incongruent with the family culture of the club and football's wider civilisation process.

Having witnessed the rebuke, I was keen to develop a further understanding of the way in which the Snake Pit is understood by the club's modern fans and to test my assumption that the culture of the club facilitates the enactment of different identities. After speaking to a contact I made, through my contribution to fanzine *Good feet For a Big Man*[29]*,* I was put in touch with a family, 'May,' 'Pip' and their teenage sons 'Lee' and 'Nick'[30] (2012) who had season tickets in the stand. In accordance with the literature that documents football's historical development (Fynn & Guest 1994; Wilson 2000; Giulianotti 2002; King 2002; Taylor 2007; Barr 2009; Pearson 2012), the group indicate that the modernisation of the sport and the family orientation of the club had seen the traditional fans associated with the Snake Pit deterred from attendance, the stand becoming subsumed into the club's family culture. The boys seemed to find my questions amusing, 'Lee' mockingly suggesting that having a ticket in 'the Pit' meant that he was 'well hard,' using match days as an excuse 'to get pissed.' Getting in on the joke 'Nick', adopted a stereotypical Norfolk accent[31] playing the role of a traditional fan typically associated with the stand: 'oh yeah boy, you 'h'aint a proper fan; coz you h'aint there in that ol' Snake Pit boy…. I'm a proper 'Naaarwich' fan boy.'

While humorous, the exchange mocks the nostalgic idea of what it means to be a traditional football fan. The humour is in the idea that traditional fans are out of touch with modern football culture, as implied by the highly unflattering and dated Norfolk accent. It was this

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[28] The name became commonplace in 1992 when an all seating policy was introduced.
[29] A fanzine in which I publicised my research.
[30] See appendix A
[31] Words pronounced with a twang similar to the stereotypical Somerset accent

idea that 'Jack' (2012) evoked in his lamentation of 'Tom's' (2012) fan identity; his outburst was incongruent with the culture of the club and subsequently he was perceived to be 'out of touch', a 'dinosaur'.

After witnessing the incongruity of 'Jack' and 'Tom's' fan identity I sought to experience a match within the Snake Pit. After some negotiation and suitable remuneration had been agreed with 'Meg' and 'Pip' (2012) I managed to obtain tickets for three matches, Norwich against Wigan (10/03/12), Wolves (24/03/12) and Everton (7/04/12).

While families were present within the Snake Pit the dynamic of the stand was significantly different to the Aviva community stand. The vast majority of the inhabitants were male aged between twenty and fifty. Approaching a group before the Wigan match, 'Rob' 'Stu' and 'Paul' (2012)[32] it was evident that they attempted to frame their identity in a way that was explicitly different to the participants that I had previously engaged with in the Aviva Community stand, giving their fandom different meaning.

Oliver: Looking forward to the game guys

'Rob': Alright mate, yea I'm buzzing.

'Stu': Yea mate, feeling good, 6-0 City.

[Group Laugh]

'Paul': Fuck off will it be 6-0

Oliver: I'd be happy with 6-0, but whatever the score, we should win today.

'Paul': We should win every week. I'm not one of these types that turn up for a nice day out. I come here wanting a win *every* week

Oliver: I know what you mean. I just meant if you look at Wigan's form we should be well in this week.

'Rob': Yea Wigan are shite, you were right 'Stu' it is going to be 6-0.

[Group laugh again]

'Stu': The funny thing is they know it as well. We went to the away game at the start of the season and they were singing 'we are Wigan we live in mud huts.'

[Group Laughs]

Oliver: I went to that game too; I thought we were pretty lucky to get a point, Moses could have scored a couple and we did well to hang on that day.

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[32] See appendix A.

'Rob': We've come a long way since then though, it was first day of the season and you could see the players were nervous, Wigan have got worse too, it's not like they will have that start of the season optimism now.

'Paul': Piss off 'Rob,' don't act like you're a football expert, you're pissed.

Oliver: Is that your normal pre-match routine, a few drinks and…

'Stu': I like a few, just walked up from Weatherspoons and we'll have a couple here before half time.

'Paul': That's football… a few drinks with your mates.

'Stu': It's how it is right? …A day when you don't think about anything else; work or kids or whatever.

Oliver: Can I ask you what you guys do?

'Stu': 'Rob' and I are teachers, 'Paul' is a business consultant.

While the participants indicate that match days provide them with a shared experience as suggested by the participants within the Aviva Community stand, their collectivity is not described as their motivation for fandom. Contrarily I argue that their fandom challenges the family culture endorsed by the club. The group swear throughout the interview, constantly make jokes, emphasise their drinking rituals and recall stories from away days, explicitly constructing their fandom in correlation with to the norms of traditional football culture, evoking the themes Pearson (2012: 38) identifies in his ethnography of 'traditional' Manchester United fans: swearing, 'bantering,' singing and drinking.

Like the fans that I previously interviewed, I argue that the group are highly aware of the discourses surrounding both traditional and capitalist football culture. Like 'Joe' (2012), I argue that their fandom reflects the dual way in which modern fans are encouraged to both positively and negatively identify as consumers. While the group present their identity in opposition to the club's family culture, it is significant that as attendees to both home and away matches, the group still have a relationship of consumption with the club.

While the group appear to have different motivations for fandom than the participants that I had previously engaged with, I argue that they similarly draw upon the culture of the club and the wider capitalism of the game to substantiate their identity. McKinley (1997) argues that resistance in fan cultures can only arise is there is discontinuity between the hegemonic culture and its producers. Significantly the group's fandom draws on both hegemonic

discourses surrounding the culture, tradition and capitalism suggesting that it would be problematic to make a case that their fan identity is resistive in the wider sense. However, as Jenkins (1992) suggests, while there may not be anything empowering about the texts fans draw upon, empowerment can be found in the things that fans they do with these texts. Indeed like the self-identified consumer fans that I had previously engaged with, I argue that the group construct their identity, negotiating the way in which the family culture of the club corresponds to their consumer needs. In this context I argue that ironically their *consumer* needs relates to their desire to enact *traditional* identities.

While the previous participants frame their fan identity in correlation with the club's family culture, I argue that the group construct their identity in opposition to the club's family culture providing them with a base culture from which their transgression can be measured and comprehended. Correspondingly I argue that the way in which the group draw upon both dominant discourse within the culture; the game's tradition and its capitalism in the construction of their fan identity challenges the complex positioning of the modern fan, with the group both positively and negatively presenting *themselves* as consumers. The group acknowledge that they have a consumptive relationship with the club (negative consumption), yet they do so knowingly in a way that enables them to construct their fan identity against the dominant conception of the consumer fan within the culture and the 'family' fans synonymous with the club.

Throughout the exchange the fans self-identify as traditional fans in opposition to the club's family culture, this indicates that the group construct their identity in relation to their understanding of the discourse surrounding traditional football culture and importantly their perception of what constitutes 'traditional' fan identity. As Sandvoss (2005: 44) argues fan performances are always constituted between text and context. Taking Norwich City as the text I argue that the group construct their identity in negotiation of Norwich's 'nice' 'family club' reputation. The concept of carnival can be used as a tool to assess the complex negotiation of the group's identity. Like modern football culture, carnival allows a level of autonomy while regulated by wider constraints. As Foust (2010: 12) argues:

> While raucous, carnival is nonetheless sanctioned by the social order. Transgressions ultimately uphold the dominant regime, even though carnival temporarily violates this.

Bakhtin (1965: 147) can be used to expand upon this ambiguous idea, arguing that the carnival is the place for working out 'in a concretely sensuous, half-real and half-play acted form, a new mode of interrelationship.' While I argue that their identity draws on the norms of both traditional and capitalist football culture, their identity is formed in negotiation at the juncture of these discourses creating to a 'new mode of interrelationship,' with their club in a manner that demonstrates their agency within the culture.

Bakhtin (1965: 147) describes carnival as the people's 'second life' a highly distorted mirror image of their 'official' life, fashioned from their desire and need for change. I argue that this corresponds to the desire of the group to change the perception of the club[33] but also their intention to enact an identity incongruent to their professional identity. Bakhtin (1965: 148) suggests that carnival is the world 'turned upside down,' where rank is suspended and roles are redistributed. This notion of carnival relates to the discontinuity between the participant's fan identity and their social and economic identity. It is their enactment of traditional fan identities that I consider as the participant's 'second life,' a carnival role that they have adopted that belies their everyday position within society with its associated responsibilities as 'teachers' and as a 'business consultant' (Rob 2012). 'Stu' (2012) develops this notion indicating that football is a time 'when you don't think about anything else, work or kids or whatever', enabling the group to leave behind their roles within society to engage in a carnival transgression, that belies the culture of the club and their wider social identity.

Parallels can be established between the embodied acts of carnival and the practices of traditional fandom associated with the terraces. Bakhtin (1965: 72) describes the carnival not as a spectacle but as a lived experience evoking the arguments about the legitimacy of the kinetic terrace experience in opposition to the panopticisation of the modern stadium.

Burke (2009: 255) suggests that the two main components of carnival celebration are singing and excessive drinking; 'Todd' and 'Mike' (2012)[34] participants that I interviewed before the Wolves match (24/03/12) help me to develop this association. 'Todd' had a bottle of Carling in his hand and it was clear from their expression and smell that both men had been drinking prior to the interview.

Oliver: So how many are we going to win by today?

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[33] 'A club for pussies' (Joe 2012).
[34] See appendix A.

'Todd': 2 I reckon, Wolves are fighting for their life at the moment but we should do'em

'Mike': It might be tougher than you think though; the team are going to need us today.

Oliver: Yea we should get a good atmosphere going today; we are playing well so I imagine it will be noisy.

'Mike': There's good noise coming from us (Snake Pit) and the Barclay but you never hear anything from the Jarrolds or the N and P (Norwich and Peterborough) stands. They join in with 'On The Ball City' at the start then you don't hear a thing. It annoys me that the whole ground don't get behind the team.

Oliver: Why is it, do you think that certain areas of the ground are much quieter, is there a reason, or is just the fans want to be inspired by what is on the pitch?

'Mike': Probably that people turn up and want to be entertained, they come and expect a show, but it doesn't work like that. The team do their best to perform and win for you but you have to perform for them you know what I mean?

Once again I initiated conversation by asking the participants about the impending game, yet 'Mike' (2012) reoriented the conversation to talk about the wider experience of the football event, supporting my argument that fandom serves as a conduit for the participants to address their individual needs. It is the idea of need fulfilment that demonstrates the agency of the modern fan, indicating that their relationship to modern football is negotiated rather than exploitative. Once again, I argue that the participants 'need' correlates to their desire to enact carnival. Like 'Rob' 'Stu' and 'Paul' (2012), 'Mike' constructs his fandom in opposition to the club's family fans that merely 'turn up and wait to be entertained,' evoking the idea that modern fans are passive consumers.

'Mike's' (2012) suggestion corresponded with my observations that the Aviva Community stand and the Norwich and Peterborough stand are quiet area of the ground, not areas from which songs emanate. As he suggests fans from all around the ground join in with the customary chorus of 'On The Ball City' the club's official anthem, yet they largely remain quiet until they become enthused by the performance of the team. My interviews indicate that the family fans are far from passive, the football event enabling them to enact rituals of family, yet 'Mike' positions them as consumers that sit back and wait to be entertained. In creating the binary between (his) active traditional fandom and their passive consumer fandom. 'Mike' correlates his fandom with the action of the players on the pitch, describing

them symbiotically: 'The team do their best to perform and win for you but you have to perform for them.'

A common theme throughout the chapter has been the way in which the participants create a link between their fandom and the kinetic activity of the players on the pitch. 'Mike,' (2012) again articulates this idea, indicating that the football event requires both a successful performance by the players and the fans. I argue that this relates to the agency of the modern fan, and significantly the idea that they construct their identity knowingly. As Lancaster (2001) indicates, fans articulate their status and autonomy by turning texts of consumption into an activity. In other words Lancaster suggests that while fans engage in consumptive relationships with texts, they are not passive consumers. On the contrary he argues that fans have interactive, personal relationships with fan texts in which they actively shape their meanings.

I argue that the link established by the participants epitomises this concept, in which the association made by the participants demonstrates their ability to construct their own identity within the culture. By associating themselves with the players on the pitch they suggest that they are responsible for the active creation of the football event rather than its consumption. This corresponds to my argument that fan engage in active processes of negotiation in which the football event and the significance attached to it by the fans corresponds to their individual need and sense of self-identity.

At this point we can return to Hutchinson's (1997) historical work surrounding Newcastle United that I document in the literature review. Hutchinson (1997: 39) acknowledges the way fans established their sense of identity in the game's bureaucratic era, not just through their sense of affinity to their club encouraged by the game's regulation but through their active fandom.

> During the late 1890s the Newcastle crowd had turned... into fans. It was a transformation that was taking place all over Britain.... The customers began to recognise and enjoy their own power to affect a match and create atmosphere. They had begun to use their voice.

The correlation between the ways in which both sets of fans constitute their identity in the active association with the players on the pitch, again supports my argument that contemporary football culture should not be treated as a separate entity to traditional football culture.

‘We are the Snake Pit we do what we want.’

With the significance the participants placed on the ‘lived experience’ of fandom and their active relationship with the club, I was surprised that a significant minority of the fans within the Snake Pit did not join in with ‘On The Ball City’ before the start of the Wigan match. I had not noticed this the previous week and it seemed significant. I was keen to explore this to see if it related to the identity of the fans in the Snake Pit. Before the kick off at the Wolves match (24/3/12) I attempted to quiz fans about it. Even in the Aviva community stand, everyone around me had taken to their feet and had joined in with the anthem. I had taken it for granted that this would be replicated throughout the stadium.

Oliver: You know at the start of the match when the PA signals the start of ‘On The Ball City,’ it’s always makes me really excited for the game, everyone is on their feet and singing, but I noticed last week that a few people in the Snake Pit don’t join in. Do you join in and do you know why that is?

‘Gaz’: Well I join in, I can’t speak for anyone else but that is the only song that a lot of the fans know, ‘On The Ball City’ and some of the songs about the players. I don’t know if it’s a thing not to sing the song [in the Snake Pit] but yea most of the crowd do.

While ‘Gaz’ (2012)[35] admits to singing the song, his response provides a possible answer to my question. As he suggests ‘It is the only song that a lot of the fans know.’ The chant is recognised by the Football League as the oldest football song on record, dating the song to 1902 (see Eastwood & Davage 1986: 24), subsequently, the chant is well known throughout football culture. The club are very proud of this and seem to have incorporated it into their family culture, using the song as a way to unify the fans through a shared sense of history. I recall on a previous visit I made to Carrow Road that there were placards tucked into seats throughout the stadium providing the words to the song for new season ticket holders,

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[35] See appendix A.

giving them the 'tools' to join in, presumably as 'Pam' (2011) suggests to make new fans 'feel part of something,' and share in the wider feeling of family that the club looks to foster.

Once again, before the kick off at the Everton match (7/04/12) the opening lines of 'On The Ball City' were played over the PA system. While the majority of the stand was on their feet, there was a minority not joining in. I propose that the rejection of the song relates to 'Gaz's' (2012) suggestion that 'it is the song that everyone knows,' endorsed by the club and recognised by the football league as the club's 'official anthem.' In his study of Manchester United fans, Pearson (2011: 41) suggests that carnival is found in the rejection of club initiatives as their incorporation and perpetuation by the club prohibits their powers of transgression. Following this argument, the rejection of the ritual can be interpreted as a metaphorical rejection of the club's family culture and the club's attempts to enforce the culture throughout the stadium. I suggested previously that 'Tom's' (2012) fan identity could be considered in terms of 'authoritarian conformity' (Fromm 1963), with his knowledge of the culture of the club encouraging him to censor his natural expression. I argue that the fan's rejection of the club's official anthem can be interpreted as the inverse of this notion, with their abstinence marking their rejection of this club's family culture in which they refuse to curtail their expression. Indeed the longer I spent within the stand the more it became apparent the many of the inhabitants actively enacted fandom that was incongruent to the club's family culture, framing their identity in opposition.

The Snake Pit had their own anthems but unlike 'On The Ball City,' these anthems were not created with the intention of them being incorporated throughout the stadium. I argue that the fans created these songs knowingly in an attempt to emphasise their transgression, juxtaposing their identity to the family fans largely attracted to the club. Parallels can be established with 'Joe' (2012), who knowingly framed his fan identity by drawing on the traditional discourses associated with West Ham to construct his identity in line with his understanding traditional fan culture. As suggested Norwich City does not have the same traditional discourses associated with them so to position themselves as traditional fans, participants within the Snake Pit had to engage in rituals that not only emphasise their opposition to the culture of the club but also show their engagement with the discourses surrounding traditional football culture. While the fans that I engaged with in the Aviva Community stand looked to engage in traditional rituals of family, facilitated by the culture of the club, the fans that I encountered in the Snake Pit looked to engage in traditional

rituals associated with the terraces, like 'Joe' (2012) constructing an identity for themselves in negotiation of the club's family culture.

The majority of the songs featured swearing and threats of violence. One such example was the song dedicated to Norwich striker Grant Holt. As indicated by 'Gaz' (2012) songs referring to specific players are generally popular and well known by fans and refer to the player's skill. When a particular player impressed the crowd it was customary that their song reverberated around the stadium. When Holt scored a late equaliser to earn Norwich a point against Everton, his song could be heard emanating from the Barclay:

> He scored three goals against the scum, Grant Holt. Grant Holt.
> He scored three goals against the scum, Grant Holt. Grant Hot.
> He scored three goals against the scum and Wesley scored the other one.
> Super Grant Holt Norwich number nine.

While playfully referring to Norwich's rivalry with Ipswich the song is largely inoffensive. After a couple of minutes the song had died down, at this point the Snake Pit voiced their appreciation:

> Grant Holt. We fucking love Grant Holt.
> We fucking love Grant Holt.

This song ignores the signage around the stadium asking the fans not to swear, with its crudeness challenging both the family culture of the club and the 'nice' impression of the club upheld within football culture. There were other, more extreme examples of this in which aggressive songs were adopted to abuse rival players and officials. When Wigan striker Victor Moses was awarded a cheap free kick for what look like an elaborate dive, his actions we greeted with boos from the Barclay and City stand, while those close enough to witness the action in the Snake Pit ferociously lambasted him with song: 'Moses you're a c*nt. Moses, Moses you're a c*nt.'

I was particularly surprised to hear a chant of this vulgarity considering the stand still housed a number of children, however this collective abuse was common throughout my research within the Snake Pit, notably directed at a lineman at the Wolves match (24/03/12) when his inability to spot an offside decision resulted in a goal for the opposition. Evidently

the chanting represents a total rejection of the club's family culture and I was keen to engage with the fans to develop an understanding of their motivations for their performance. At half time at the Wigan (10/03/12) match I approached 'Dom', 'Tony' and 'Aaron' (2012)[36]. After a brief chat about the events of the half I progressed to the subject of Moses, his dive and the subsequent chant.

Oliver: How bad was that dive by Moses

'Dom': Shocking.

'Tony': Cheating c*nt

Oliver: The fans let him know it too

'Tony': too right, that was well funny. He looked well upset.

Oliver: There are quite a lot of kids around the stand. The chant was hardly 'family friendly.'

'Aaron': Mate it's the Snake Pit, they shouldn't be there is they can't handle a bit of swearing… what do they expect?

'Aaron' (2012) seemed surprised by my question, with the retort 'what do they expect?' Seemingly directed at me. The intonation in his voice put emphasis on the fact that it was 'the Snake Pit,' drawing on the stereotypes associated with the stand to accentuate the 'natural' association between his fan identity and traditional football culture. I argue that this relates to 'Aaron's' intention to construct his identity as a traditional fan. The question was posed almost knowingly, leading me to believe that his response was influenced by my presence as a researcher. I argue that his knowledge of my research and his desire to construct his identity as that of a traditional fan influenced his response encouraging him to frame his identity in correlation with his understanding of traditional football culture and the recognition that as a self-identified traditional fan that he would be expected to oppose the club's family culture. The way in which 'Aaron' frames his identity supports my argument that modern fans establish their identity in negotiation, with his identity influenced by both his knowledge of the game's tradition and capitalism but also his personal understanding of how he should enact fandom as a self-identified traditional fan.

It is evident from my observations within the Snake Pit that creating an impression and having their identity recognised was a fundamental part of the participant's fandom. As previously suggested, while carnival fans may oppose the family culture of the club, I argue

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[36] See appendix A.

that they fundamentally rely on its order and stability from which their identity can be seen to transgress. Like the carnival itself, I argue that participants rely on the stability of the outside world to experience the excitement of transgression as suggested in relation to 'Rob' and 'Stu's' (2012) fan identity and their desire to oppose their social and economic identity.

While 'Aaron' (2012) seem particularly keen to emphasis the culture of the Snake Pit in our exchange, it was evident that many of the songs emanating from the stand were sung with the intention of creating an impression of the Snake Pit. When Norwich opened the scoring against Wolves (24/03/12) the Barclay started a chorus of 'On The Ball City.' Rather than join in with this chant, a significant number of the Snake Pit took to their feet to chant their own anthem: 'We're the Snake Pit, we're the Snake Pit, we're the Snake Pit over here.' I argue that the Snake Pit rejects the club's official anthems to promote their own collective identity. Again this epitomises the way in which consumer fans both identify and reject their position as consumers within football culture, yet it is significant that the Snake Pit seemed desperate for their transgressions to be acknowledged by the club's family fan groups. Indeed, throughout my time within the Snake Pit, I encountered numerous examples of fans attempting to emphasise their transgression. When Norwich took the lead against Wigan (10/03/12) a large group of fans remained on their feet. Noticing this a group of stewards made their way up the concourse to ask them to sit down, their polite requests were ignored and the stewards were lambasted with a choruses of defiant song: 'we are the Snake Pit… We do what we want,' in protest against modern football's all seating policy and directed against the official custodians of the club's family culture.

Pearson (2012) suggests that 'banter,' 'piss taking' and 'wind ups' define carnival football culture, with fans constantly coming up with new ways to insult others and make football a place where societal norms of politeness are suspended. This seems particularly relevant in relation to the chants emanating from the Snake Pit, with the fans enacting their identity knowingly in transgression. The more time I spent in the Snake Pit, the more it became evident that the fans were keen to create an impression of their fan identity, their songs directly corresponding to the key themes of traditional terrace culture and significantly the key themes of carnival.

Other songs of significance related to sex and violence: 'There's only one Tony Martin, One Tony Martin…We shoot buglers, say, we shoot burglars[37]'. 'Snake Pit boys we are here Fuck your women and drink your beer.' The songs evoke the stereotypical machismo associated with the terraces and the fans within the Snake Pit mobilise this discourse associated with violence and virility to frame their identity in opposition to the club's family culture. Despite efforts to transgress the culture of the club, fundamentally I argue that like the consumer fans that I engaged with in the Aviva Community stand; the fan identity of those within the Snake Pit is still enacted in negotiation with the club's family culture. As indicated by my exchange with 'Aaron' (2012), I argue that Snake Pit fans seek recognition from the family fans of the club, keen that they comprehend and acknowledge their behaviour to recognise its incongruity. As suggested, for this to be achieved, the Snake Pit fans engage in a consumptive relationship with the club, becoming part of the club's 'family' to construct their identity in opposition. Again I argue that this emphasises the way in which Snake Pit fans both positively and negatively identify as consumers.

While the idea of carnival serves as an effective epistemological concept to interpret the motivations of the fans within the Snake Pit perhaps its relevance here is best articulated by Stallybrass and White (1986: 44) who suggest complexly that the carnivalesque both humiliates and mortifies, but also rewards, a duality that Bakhtin (1965: 119) encapsulates In 'the primary carnavalistic act, the mock crowning and subsequent decrowning of the carnival king.' For the fans in the Snake Pit, their transgression gives them the feeling that they are active within the culture, with the enactment of traditional fan identities enabling them to negotiate the 'nice' family culture of the club and their social responsibilities (see Rob and Stu 2012). The carnival image presented by Bakhtin (1965: 119) is highly ambivalent, capturing the complex way in which the fans construct their identity. While their identity revolves around the transgression of the club's family culture, their patronage ensures that it is fundamentally a sanctioned transgression.

While I argue that the Snake Pit can be considered as a carnival space within the stadium, it is significant that these fans are corralled in to a specific area of the stadium, indicating that the club are happy to sanction this transgression as long as the fans maintain their relationship of consumption. Similarly, while the fans are active in the construction of their identity, this is not to suggest the family fans necessary interpret their identity in the way

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[37] A song in reference to Norfolk farmer Tony Martin who shot and killed a young burglar that he caught trying to break into his house.

that the Snake Pit fans may have intended. Indeed, rather than being feared, recognised or respected for their deviant behaviour, 'Lee' and 'Nick,' (2012) the teenagers I shared a joke with and 'Jack' (2012) in his lamentation of 'Tom's' (2012) identity, indicate that they consider the Snake Pit to be a joke, indicative of an era incongruent with modern football culture and the community fostered by the club.

Negotiated Identity.

It is significant that both the family fans and carnival fans that I engaged with enact their identity in negotiation with the culture of the club and the discourses surrounding the game's traditional culture. While this may not challenge the hegemony of the game's modern capitalism or help to shatter the aura surrounding the game's traditional culture, I argue that the way in which the fans negotiate their identity emphasises their agency within the culture.

The chapter emphasises the significance of analysing contemporary football culture with a consumer-oriented cultural studies approach, treating Norwich City as a 'text' to analyse the different ways in which fans substantiate their identity in patronage of the club. The fans demonstrate that they are active in their consumption, using the culture of the club as a conduit to address their individual consumer needs. While the family fans and the Snake Pit fans indicate that they have palpably different motivations for fandom, the chapter argues that the fans engage in a similar process of identity formation in which they substantiate their identity by negotiating the hegemonic discourses surrounding the culture: capitalism and tradition, with the unique identity of the fans similarly influenced by their different levels of identification with the club's family culture and their individual needs as consumers.

My argument is that the different ways in which the fans negotiate their identity corresponds to their desire to enact a specific type of fan identity, the family fans identifying with the culture of the club for the way in which it enables them to engage in rituals of family, while the Snake Pit fans recognise that to substantiate their identity as traditional fans, they need to emphasise their transgression, 'buying into' the club's 'wider family' to emphasises their incongruity.

Chapter 5. MK Dons. Fear and Loathing in Milton Keynes: Community Building and Cultural Appropriation.

<u>**Introduction**</u>

> As if you're looking at 'Franchise United.' If you are researching football fans why are you looking at them? They aren't even a real football club, they don't have *real fans*. No one takes them seriously do they? (Craig 24/11/11)

Milton Keynes Dons have been selected for analysis as they are said to represent the first example of a 'franchise football club', starting life as Wimbledon before being purchased and relocated by venture capitalist Pete Winkelman, re-branding the club to maximise its commercial potential and appeal to the under serviced population of the city. Wimbledon were without a stadium base in South-West London and had very few active fans, but the departure of the club from its locality and its subsequent re-branding is condemned by sport's scholars and rival fans for threatening the 'blood and soil' heritage of football culture and the deep historical traditions of the game as outlined in the literature review (Crampsey 1990; Imlach 2005; Devine 2012). The commercial imperative informing the relocation and re-branding of the club has seen the club continually cited as a metaphor for the cultural reorientation of English football and the game's assimilation with capitalism.

The club has become the target of much animosity, with the criticism directed towards the Dons following the imperative of the nostalgic literature that Winkelman actively looked to replace the 'fans' associated with Wimbledon with affluent new 'consumers' in Milton Keynes (see Fynn & Guest 1994; Bale 1998; Brimon 1998; Burgess 2005; Conn 2005; Ingle 2005; Pearson 2012).

The epigraph, a quotation from 'Craig' a Chelsea fan that participated in my research (see the following chapter) epitomises the general way in which the club and their fans are presented. Indeed, it is my argument that Dons' fans can be considered as the most marginalised group within football culture. In correlation with the social justice element of my research and my aim to assimilate football scholarship with cultural studies, this chapter looks to provide Dons fans with a platform to articulate how, as fans of a 'franchise football club', they comprehend and actualise their *own* fandom, in a culture that largely rejects and despises their existence.

This chapter analyses the complex fandom of the participants in response to their unique position within the culture. Firstly, I explore the ways in which the fans have developed a strong sense of communality, embracing the club's attempts to 'build community.' The fans internalise the idea of community perpetuated by the club, developing strong internal bonds with fellow fans to create support networks in the face of the constant adversity they face from the game's wider culture. The fans are aware of the business decisions that lead to the club's inception, accepting the club's commercial origins and articulate their appreciation of Winkelman's (2012a) vision to provide the city with a 'world-class stadium,' a 'focus of the community for sport and music.' I argue that the football club acts as totem for the city, serving the function that Winkelman had envisioned by becoming a monument around which community is enacted and formed.

It is significant that the fans accept the commercial origins of the club but largely refuse to acknowledge it's associated with Wimbledon emphasising its status as a 'new football club.' I argue that this tension corresponds to the complex ways in which modern fans are both positively and negative positioned as consumers, with the fans positively self identifying as consumers in support of Winkelman's community building project, while denying the club's association with Wimbledon as a defence against the way in which they are negatively positioned as consumers by wider football culture.

The second part of the chapter focuses on the explosive derby between the Dons and AFC Wimbledon the team established by the Wimbledon Supporters Association, considered to represent the rebirth of Wimbledon. The teams met for the first time in the second round of the FA Cup (2/12/2012). The contest created frenzy within the game's wider culture in which the match was presented as a moral contest between the game's tradition (AFC Wimbledon) and the game's consumerism (MK Dons). While the Dons fans that I initially engaged with tried to downplay their association with Wimbledon, the derby match saw the fans actively drawing on the association of the clubs, again mobilising the idea of 'community,' to demonstrate their support of Winkelman and the commercial decisions that lead to the club's inception while also goading AFC Wimbledon about the processes that resulted in the dissolution of *their* club and *their* community.

There is fascinating tension here that involves the fans both engaging with and ignoring the history of their club and its relationship to Wimbledon that revolves around the conflicting

ways that the fans draw upon the idea of community, evoking the nostalgic idea that football clubs 'belong to' and reflect the character of the local community. In doing so the fans both emphasise their legitimacy as a 'new football club,' and status as a franchise. I argue that the Dons fans have a flexible fandom, effortlessly slipping between the roles of both victim and aggressors within the culture, at one moment making passionate arguments for the club to be viewed in its own right, about the unique community fostered by Winkelman, the next making jokes about the collapse of the community surrounding Wimbledon drawing on the processes that lead to their club's creation.

I argue that the way in which the fans seem to both ignore and embrace the way in which their club came into being relates to the complex positioning of the modern football fan in which they both positively and negatively identify as consumers. This chapter explores the complex relationship between Dons fans as agents and the structural confines of the game's capitalism and tradition, the first discourse leading to their club's creation, the second influencing their constant marginalisation and exclusion form the games wider culture. Lash (2007: 59) argues regarding the concept of hegemony that 'the preponderant influence or domination of one nation over another,' was the concept that crystallised cultural studies as a discipline. Indeed part of the rationale for selecting MK Dons for analysis is the way in which the club are marginalized within the culture. I argue that the discourses of capitalism and tradition still exerting 'power over' the modern fan, however as indicated with Norwich fans in the previous chapter, I argue that fans are able to negotiate these discourses and impart them in the construction of their own fan identity, an idea I explore in relation to the Dons fans and their different engagement with the 'community' culture of their club.

'You Dirty Franchise Bastards.'

In the 1990s, the FA made a concerted effort to encourage the middle classes, modern families and young women to watch live football. In the wake of the Hillsborough disaster and the terrible reputation of the game developed throughout the 1980s (see Baudrillard 1993; Hussey 2005; Symanski & Zimbalist 2006; Barnes 2007), the FA were aware of the financial and cultural gains clubs could make by attracting families and women to the sport, recognising their improved social stake, financial independence, and decision making role within the family (Williams 2000; 99). King (2002; 91) associates these developments with the commercial logic of wider leisure industries, suggesting that attracting new fans,

significantly improved attendance figures, generating more revenue for clubs in terms of merchandising and the sale of ancillary branded products, while also helping to implement new middle class club cultures. It is against this backdrop of football's modern capitalism that the relocation and the re-branding of Wimbledon was posed and subsequently sanctioned. The club was sold to Pete Winkelman in 2002, who for many years harboured the vision of introducing league football to Milton Keynes[38]. Winkelman's proposal to make the club the focus of the community for world-class sport and music events corresponded perfectly with the FA's commercial logic and desire to position football in line with wider leisure industries. The newly built Stadium MK has notably hosted Olympic Football as part of London 2012, was selected as a venue to host the Rugby World Cup 2015, selected as host venue for England's 2018 failed World Cup bid, while annually chosen as the site of *Collectormania*, an internationally renowned sci-fi convention.

Fundamentally, Wimbledon was unprofitable as a football club. With the team well established in the Premier League attendances peaked at 18,235 in the 1998/1999 season, however paying attendance declined dramatically, falling by two thirds over the next two seasons, the club attracting an average crowd of 6,961 the season of their relegation in 2000/2001. Before the club's relocation in 2003, Wimbledon was averaging only 1,145 fans. The fate of the club can be considered a 'Phantom Menace' (Sandvoss 2005; 150) the breakdown of the projective relationship between fan and fan object. The move was sanctioned on cultural grounds with the belief that the creation of the club would enrich the city of Milton Keynes, providing the inhabitants with more leisure opportunities and create jobs while also generating more revenue for the FA and local businesses.

While it is fair to suggest that the origins of the Dons are commercial, this is not to suggest that the relationship between the club and its fans becomes a purely market-based relationship without complexity. A key feature of football's new capitalism, and its targeting of a diverse middle class fan base has been the widespread adoption of 'community initiatives,' which involves clubs seeking to promote themselves as a positive feature of the local community. A year after the club's inception, Winkelman created the Mk Dons Sport and Education Trust with the aim of substantiating the club within the community,

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[38] The nearest league clubs to the cities catchment area, 18 million people living within ninety minutes of Central Milton Keynes, are Luton Town and Northampton FC. The city's population is constantly increasing and has grown from 225,000 at the time of the clubs purchase in 2002 to 260,000 ten year later at the point of my research, a population growth of roughly 18%, highlighting the lucrative and expanding market for the club to serve.

developing 'quality, innovative and inclusive sporting, educational, social and healthy lifestyle opportunities' (Mk Dons Sport and Educational Trust 2014), something that has garnered the club and Winkelman much recognition. In 2012 the club was awarded the accolade of 'community club of the year,' while Winkelman was awarded an honorary doctorate in 2013 for his commitment to 'education and community building through football' (The Open University 2013). Indeed it was the promise of 'community building' that acted as rational for the Dons' creation.

Falcous and Rose (2005: 12) are highly sceptical about these initiatives, describing them as ideological projects to 'mask and legitimise the reformulation of the community-sport relationship,' generalising and naturalising the interests of private capital to appear in the public good. Indeed it is this argument that was posited against the club by the Wimbledon Supporters Association, they argue that the communal 'benefits' of the club's relocation to the people of Milton Keynes comes at the expense of the community already established around the club, causing its community in Wimbledon to disband. The association evokes the nostalgic principle that a football club is about a natural sense of community and collective meaning. That fandom is formed spontaneously around a shared geographical rootedness not in response to a shared consumer demand (see Crampsey 1990; Imlach 2005; Devine 2012).

Current chairman of the Scottish FA Neil Doncaster (cited by Williams 2006) develops this principal and has often been openly critical about the creation of the Dons, again evoking nostalgic discourses of community. Doncaster suggests that the vitriol directed towards the club stems from the fear they inspire in wider football fans, that after decades of clubs establishing community and 'proud histories,' it could all be eradicated in the pursuit of greater financial gains and commercial opportunity. Evoking Imlach's (2005) binary between sports culture in England and America documented in the literature review, he suggests that:

> (English Football) is in a dangerous and frightening time when as in the USA rich men like Winkleman can easily buy and sell clubs and use them as investments and their playthings…. What happened with Wimbledon and the dispersal of their community should never be forgotten (Doncaster cited by Williams 2006: 119).

Doncaster (cited by Williams 2006) encapsulates the feeling of powerlessness associated with the collapse of Wimbledon. While his argument focuses on the club, he speaks nostalgically about the wider deterritorialisation of contemporary football, the relocation of the club becoming analogous for the reorientation of the game and how power has been stripped from the fans to reside in the hand of the wealthy owners like Winkelman. The Wimbledon fans were powerless to stop the demise of their club drawing upon the argument that 'traditional' fans are powerless to stop the commercialisation of wider football culture.

It is significant that Doncaster (cited by Williams 2006) suggests that 'What happened to Wimbledon and the dispersal of their community should never be forgotten.' If, as I argue Wimbledon is analogous for traditional football culture, then his rebuke of the processes that resulted in the creation of the Dons can also be considered as a celebration of traditional football culture, when power was said to reside with the fans. Following this argument I maintain that fans within the wider culture look to enact power by opposing the existence of the Dons engaging in traditional fan performances by verbalising their opinions and making symbolic gestures such as sustained protests that I have witnessed on each of my visits to the Stadium MK. The fans look to enact a level of autonomy rarely afforded to them in modern football culture by mobilising themselves against the Dons.

Cherry (2002) argues that being a fan in contemporary consumer society requires commitment in the face of dominant opposition, in football culture this can be seen as both the dominance of capitalism and the discourse of 'traditional' football culture that is mobilised by those that oppose the club's existence. 'Steve' (2012), a participant in my research, outlines his concerns about bringing his young son to matches due to fears of recrimination from away fans there 'just to have a pop' at them, suggesting that the atmosphere outside the ground could at times seem hostile and intimidating (Steve 2012). By engaging in such protest, I argue that the fans send a constant reminder to the ruling bodies of English football that they still have an active role within the culture and as 'Doncaster' (Cited by Williams 2006: 119) suggests, the history of Wimbledon and the dispersal of their community will 'never be forgotten.'

While fans mobilise in opposition to the Dons, as suggested Wimbledon was failing as a business incurring huge debts and continually operating with losses due to the

disintegration of the community surrounding the club. In the two seasons preceding Winkelman's take over, Wimbledon had incurred losses of over £8 Million (Mk Dons Supporters Association 2014). While the relocation of the club is used to exemplify the deteratorialisation of modern football and the powerlessness of traditional fans, it could be argued that in their falling attendance, the fans symbolically relinquished their stake within the club handing both the incentive of relocation and power to the clubs owners, a principle that is developed later within the chapter. The independent commission ordered by the FA to assess the sale and relocation of the club vindicate this argument, suggesting that there was no longer a stable sense of community associated with the club. Accordingly relocation was deemed the only viable option for the club's continuation:

> We do not believe, with all due respect, that the clubs links with the community around the Plough Lane site or in Merton are so profound, or the roots go so deep, that they will not survive a necessary transplant to ensure Wimbledon's survival. What is unusual about Wimbledon fans is that they do not seem to come from a single geographical area. Indeed, the vast majority of Wimbledon fans do not live in Merton or Wimbledon. 20% of current season ticket holders live in Merton and 10% in Wimbledon. We do not accept that Wimbledon will die if the club relocates. The club has been in Croydon for 11 years (almost half its Football League history). There is no stadium which is a focus for the community in Merton, and has not been for 11 years' (Walmsley 2010).

While the ways in which football's capitalism has affected traditional fan communities is an important consideration and has a strong scholarly tradition, particularly with studies addressing the dispersal of the communities formed within the terraces (see Taylor 1971; Redhead 1991b; Giulianotti 1993; Taylor 2007), I argue that the Dons are a unique case. While Falcous and Rose (2005) consider community building initiatives as negative attempts to 'reformulate' the community-sport relationship, it is equally possible to interpret the inception of the Dons as an attempt to create, re-establish and save the community associated with the club. The Dons fans that I Interviewed were adamant that the club should be considered unique in its own right, the Dons a separate club with a separate history to Wimbledon. In this context it would be wrong to suggest that the establishment of the Dons 'reformulated' or disbanded the community-sport relationship established

between Wimbledon and its locality but rather the creation of the club can be considered to mark the onset of a sporting culture within Milton Keynes.

Secondly, Falcous and Rose (2005: 12) suggest that these projects 'mask… and naturalise the interests of private capital,' however my research suggests that the fans accept and understand the processes that lead to the club's creation and appreciate football's capitalism for enabling league football to be established in the city. The fans have a 'particular commitment' (Cherry 2002) to the club and its community building project in which their knowledge of the processes that lead to the club's creation are foundational to their fandom.

The Community Project.

Rather than being oblivious to the processes Falcous and Rose outline (2005), my research suggests that the Dons fans identify with the club's attempts to build community, recognising the club's need to establish communality, figured in patronage to secure its long term financial future and vindicate the decisions that lead to the clubs creation. 'Matt' (2012) articulates these ideas, demonstrating both an appreciation of the business strategy of the club, tapping into the largely un-serviced local community, but also the unique sense of community that the club have fostered as a 'franchise.' Having initially been attracted to the club as a consumer and lured in by cheap ticket prices, 'Matt' suggests that he has subsequently become a season ticket holder, regularly taking his son to matches.

Oliver: What attracted you to the Dons? Was there something that made you want to come to live matches?

'Matt': Well I've always been a big fan of football, but around here there is only Luton and I was never that bothered with them, I just watch the live games on TV…. Most of my friends have other teams, and go into London to see West Ham and Arsenal, but I've never had a team really.

Oliver: So the creation of the club gave you a team to support?

'Matt': Well sort of, I was interested when the idea of the club was first talked about, it caused a bit of excitement around the city but to be honest I wasn't as if I got caught up in it or really thought about being a fan or getting involved at that point.

Oliver: Why was that?

'Matt': Well I hadn't really gone to many games before and you know how it is. I was comfortable watching on telly. Then with all the controversy and that surrounding it, I didn't really know how I felt about it.

Oliver: Do you mean the processes that lead to the club's creation?

'Matt': Well there still is a lot of anger directed towards the club, and I didn't really know how I felt about it… I didn't want to get caught up in the hysteria.

Oliver: In that case what happened? I have been speaking to some fans who were saying that you get a lot of away fans here looking to cause trouble and at times there can be a bit of an aggressive atmosphere around the place. What changed your mind to make you want to come here?

'Matt'- It was curiosity really. I was coming to Ikea (On the retail part adjacent to the stadium) and saw a billboard advertising tickets for a fiver or something and thought why not. For the price it was a good opportunity to watch football.

Oliver: Did the game ease your concerns? Or was it more a case of just enjoying the experience.

'Matt': It was both really, the game was really poor, I think we lost 3-1, but yeah it was good to be there. It wasn't the atmosphere I was expecting…the club works hard to get the community behind the team and you get a lot of young children and families. I think it gives the place a good feel to it. There is so much negativity surrounding the club but when you come here it's the opposite really and people just seem happy to be here and watch football.

Oliver: Walking around the stadium I saw posters offering 'Kids for a quid' (ticket deals) and I have noticed a lot more women and children than at other clubs I have been to.

'Matt': The club does deals like that all the time. If it's a mid-week game or one of the smaller teams in the division, they usually do the cheap tickets and it definitely helps to boost the attendance. A couple of months ago they did a ladies day, and did a deal for a ticket, a champagne party with a meal and karaoke after the match… I've never seen anything like it at a football match.

Oliver: Do you think the club actively looks to attract more young families and women? Is there a strategy behind it?

'Matt': At the end of the day I think it is about getting people into the stadium. If you think about it, it was a business decision to bring the club here… If you think about it, this is a new club; people are just really keen for it to work out and to get behind it…. Especially by trying to get the kids into the club, it's like the club are trying to secure its long-term future. Get

them in at an early age and get them passionate about the club to build their allegiance. As I said it worked with me. I brought my boy to one of these cheap nights and he loved it, he comes to games with me now, and has the kit and all the merchandise.

'Matt' (2012) astutely identifies the commercial orientation of the club, referring to the process the lead to the club's inception, recognising the need for the club to justify its creation and appeal to the large catchment area unserved by league football. Throughout the conversation he assimilates the club with wider capitalism demonstrating how he understand and identifies with the club's commercial initiatives: 'I saw on the billboard tickets being advertised for a fiver,' 'the club works hard to get the community behind the team and attract a lot of young children and families with cheap deals,' 'at the end of the day I think it is about getting people into the stadium,' 'If you think about it, it was a business decision to bring the club here.'

'Matt' (2012) self identifies as a 'consumer fan,' outlining how he was attracted to the club, not by an 'indescribable sense of emotional attachment,' or 'family lineage' the 'traditional' ways in which fandom is conceived (see Imlach 2005), but by an advertisement on a billboard in a retail park. However, far from being a 'corporate dupe' (see Brimson 1998; Lee 1998; Conn 2005; Ingle 2005), 'Matt' recognises that his patronage and particularly that of families and young supporters are vital to the club's existence and future prosperity. 'Matt' (2012) punctuates this with the example of his son, recognising that it is in the club's interest to cater to younger fans, both to secure the long-term future of the club to 'get them (children) in at an early age' and 'build their allegiance', but also to increase their revenue by appealing to the lucrative family market, with potential for greater expenditure: 'he comes to games with me now and has the kit and all the merchandise.'

Sandvoss (2005: 13) argues that while fan texts may be commodities fundamentally generating revenue for capitalist industries, they are appropriated by fans for their use value. Rather than feel exploited by the ways in which the club look to generate revenue, I argue that 'Matt' (2012) accepts the business strategy of the club and the capitalism of the game as part of the process in which the community have been afforded the chance to watch live football. The Dons fan's comprehension and acceptance of the games capitalism is something that I have not encountered before and seems unique to them as a club, something that I believe relates to their status as a 'new' football club, conceived and

created as a product of the game's capitalism. Gasper (2005) argues that capitalism has become an all-encompassing framework for modern life. 'Matts' responses show an appreciation of this notion, indicating that he accepts the capitalism of modern football, internalising the club's commercial agenda and imparted it in his understanding of fandom.

In correspondence with the arguments of wider fan studies (see Jameson 1991; Fiske 1992; Hills 2002; Barker 2004; Sandvoss 2005), 'Matt' (2012) describes his fandom as fulfilling a function, figuring the relationship between the club and the community as mutually beneficial. He indicates that the creation of the club provided him with *his own* club to support providing him with the incentive to leave the house, 'I just use to watch it on TV', and experience live matches. Bale (1998) and Weed (2008) explicitly assimilate the modern stadium experience to the 'passive' process of watching football on television, yet 'Matt' describes his fandom as an active process, both in support of the team, physically engaging with the live experience, and in patronage to the club, presenting his fandom a form of financial support. In this sense 'Matt' evokes the discourses surrounding the disbanding of Wimbledon, creating a juxtaposition between his active, consumptive fandom and the passive 'traditional' fandom that resulted in the club's dissolution. However it is poignant that 'Matt' creates this distinction without making a direct reference to the club itself.

Following this argument it is significant that the terms used by 'Matt' (2012) throughout the exchange draw upon the sense of collectivity and community engendered by the club's creation: 'The club works hard to get the community behind the team.' 'You get a lot of young children and families here,' ' It is about getting people into the stadium,' 'its like the club are trying to secure its long-term future,' 'it caused…excitement around the city,' 'I think people are just really keen for it to work out and to get behind it' (Matt 2012). These expressions accentuate the active attempts of the club to 'work hard' and foster collectivity around the club, while 'Matt' indicates that the community are similarly active in their coalescence around the project, 'keen…to get behind it.' This idea is encapsulated by his description of the atmosphere within the stadium:

> There is a lot of negativity surrounding the club but when you actually get inside the ground it's the opposite really and people seem excited to be here and watch football (Matt 2012).

Seen as the 'Bastard franchise' of Wimbledon, the club is scorned as the antithesis of the game's tradition yet as suggested the Dons fan's self-identify as consumers, recognising their fandom as a product of the commercial processes that lead to the club's inception. 'Matt's' (2012) enthusiastic description of the club's 'Ladies day' can be used to explore this binary. The nostalgic literature openly criticises the influx of women in contemporary football culture for 'feminising' and 'sanitising' the game (Brimson 1998; Hopcraft 2006; Wilson 2006). As Thornton (1995: 135) argues, in fan culture there is always a double articulation of the low and the feminine, in which 'other' cultures are continuously characterised as feminine, and feminine cultures are devalued as imitative and passive. Yet 'Matt' recognises the commercial intent informing the event, as an opportunity for the club to build community, describing it as an opportunity to 'get more people to the football club.' 'Matt' (2012) describes the event like nothing he had 'seen at a football match before.' In doing so I argue that he acknowledges the unique position of the football club, with the uniqueness of the event microcosmic of the club's position within football culture.

The club, like the event, operates with a capitalist agenda; without an established fan community to draw upon, the club look to implement commercial strategies that help to garner support from the local catchment area, directly marketing themselves as a commodity and leisure resource evoking the way in which fans are positively positioned as consumers. I argue that the ways in which the club look to create community is central to the participant's understanding of their fandom, in which their awareness of the processes that lead to the club's creation gives them a sense of responsibility with community formed in support of project and figured in sustained patronage. I argue that this exemplifies the complex relationship between the fans and the club in which their fandom while active and informed operates within the structural confines of capitalism and the processes that lead to the clubs creation (see Jenkins 2001; Hills 2001; Sandvoss 2005). While the capitalist orientation of the club may require a 'particular commitment' (Cherry 2002) from the fans, as Fiske (1991) questions, are pleasures of fandom necessarily constructed in opposition to the dominant power system?

'Kate' (2012) helps to develop this point; she is aware of the commercial agenda of the club, assimilating it with the retail park on which the ground is situated, acknowledging the way in which the fans are targeted as consumers yet stating that she is happy to support the club for providing the community with enrichment, describing her relationship with the club as

mutually beneficial. Her response suggests that like the participants in Ang (1982) and Radway's (1984) studies, her pleasure as a fan comes as a result of the capitalist orientation of the text, in this case, the football club. This vindicates my argument that 'support' of the club relates to the players on the pitch but also the processes that lead to the club's creation:

> The club is trying to build something. It's a new club and it is trying to create its own history. As a new club it has nothing to fall back on, so it is really important that the club creates that feeling of togetherness with the supporters, it's always trying to bring new people in and establish ties with the surrounding communities…. The club has always been honest with us. We know how the club came to the city and Pete (Winkelman) is an entrepreneur at the end of the day. The club is part of his empire and fits with the retail park surrounding the ground, but you have to remember that it was a risk to bring football here. You know all the controversy it has caused and Pete stuck his neck out to do this…. Just look at the crowd. You can see that it gets good support from the fans…we get around 13,000 every week. I think people are just really happy to have something like this in the city…. there's nowhere I'd rather be every other Saturday and despite all the stick we get, the fans rally round the club and show our support (Kate 2012).

Like 'Matt' (2012), 'Kate' (2012) possesses an astute understanding of the commercial processes that brought about the club's creation. She demonstrates her comprehension of the nostalgic arguments posed within contemporary football culture acknowledging modern football's association with wider commercial and leisure industries by reference to the retail park in which the club is situated and 'fits perfectly,' and entrepreneurial ownership, accentuating the idea that the club is merely a part of 'Pete's empire.' While framing the commercial origins of the club she similar indicates that the club receives wide support from the local community '13,000 every week,' indicating that the fan community of the Dons accept and appreciate the commercial origins of the club for providing the city with a valuable leisure resource and somewhere to be 'every other Saturday.'

It is significant that like 'Matt', (2012) 'Kate' (2012) speaks openly about the club striving to *create* community. The critics of the Dons draw upon the negative way in which fans are positioned as consumers assimilating the attempts of the club to build a fan base to

companies striving to create brand loyalty (see Fynn & Guest 1994; Giulianotti 2002; King 2002: Barr 2009; Pearson 2012), but both 'Matt' (2012) and 'Kate' (2012) suggest that the club serves an important function to the local community, catering to a specific gap in the market by administering 'convenient' and 'inclusive' entertainment. This compliments my argument that the fans knowingly define themselves as consumers with their fandom directly inspired by the corporate orientation of the club. As I have previously argued, the fact that the fans find pleasure from capitalist texts does not mean that they are corporate dupes; indeed de-Certeau (1984) describes life under capitalism as the constant struggle to make meaning from that, which is imposed upon us. Taking this in to account I argue that Dons fans can be assimilated with Radway's (1984) participants who immersed themselves in romance novels to create an 'autonomous temporal space,' to achieve a form of emancipation and escape from their everyday routine. Similarly I argue that Dons fans can be considered to engage with the club to help develop a space of communality, a focus for the community in which they can coalesce while largely 'autonomous,' both ideologically as a franchise and temporally as a 'new club' from wider football culture.

'Kate' (2012) emphasises the idea that 'the club has always been very honest' with the fans. I argue that the fans in their articulations of fandom reflect this honesty. By being transparent about the business decisions that lead to the creation of the club and the complete re-branding and relocation of Wimbledon, the club perpetuates the idea constantly promoted by Winkleman in his media appearances that the Dons are a *new* club looking to create their own history (see Hayes 2013). The club took the sensible measure of handing all memorabilia associated with Wimbledon back to the Supporters Association, symbolically severing all ties with their history, a particularly astute part of the club's business strategy. Firstly by severing all ties with Wimbledon and emphasising the infancy of the project, as something *new* and *unique* to Milton Keynes, the club effectively helps to ease any sense of guilt or unease away from the fans, who are constantly told by the wider culture that they are ersatz with disingenuous claims to fandom and football culture. As 'Matt' (2012) suggests, he was initially deterred from engaging with the club due to the controversy surrounding it and the fear of recrimination. Secondly, by accentuating the infancy of The Dons*,* the club perpetuates its connection with the community. The club is no long associated with Wimbledon or the borough of Morden but perceived to be a unique club established to cater *specifically to* Milton Keynes and the surrounding community, something that they can take ownership of, help to build and develop.

I believe that this accounts for the way in which the fans explicitly ignore the existence of Wimbledon in our exchanges, with the narrative of struggle helping fans to establish a sense of solidarity with the club; as 'Kate' (2012) suggests, 'Pete stuck his neck on the line to get the club here….' and subsequently 'the community get behind it.'

Sandvoss (2005) argue that Fans develop strategies and tactics, enabling them to construct their own meanings from the objects of their fandom. In this context, I argue that accepting the commercial origins of the club enables the fans to psychologically take ownership of the Dons. The way in which the fans recognise the need of the club to 'build community' suggests that they are aware that the failure of Wimbledon's fan community to support the team resulted in the club's dissolution, yet it is key that the supports do not directly reference this. In the statement issued by the Wimbledon Supporters Association outlining their opposition to the disbanding and relocation of the club, they use the arguments perpetuated by those that oppose football's modern capitalism that the identity of a football club is bound up in its community:

> The basis on which British football was founded is the affinity between the club and the locality in which it plays. A Club…is the property of its community and its fans (White 2003).

I argue that the fans astutely draw upon this idea, playfully drawing on the games traditional culture while similarly emphasising their status as a 'capitalist' football club. By engaging with the commercial origins of the Dons internalising it as a 'new club' I argue that the fans are able to accept it as something intrinsic to Milton Keynes. The transparency of the process enables them to take ownership of the club and help it to stabilise, in this context they are active in the establishment of community. By accepting the idea that the club is 'new,' the fans internalise the idea that there is an affinity between the club and the community, a point that is reinforced by the narrative of struggle that underpins the creation of the club.

Fisk (1991) argues that fans engage in polysemic readings with the texts of their fandom enabling them to distinguish themselves from 'normal audiences.' I argue that the fans that I interviewed engage in 'strategies and tactics' (Sandvoss 2005) that enable them to accept the commercial origins of the club, despite the opposition they face from the game's wider

culture or 'normal audience,' the fans clearly experience a sense of togetherness based on their association between the club, and the service it provides. I argue that it is this mutual understanding of the processes that led to the creation of the club and the fan's willingness to support the project that has encouraged the fans to accept the community-building project of the club. In his study of Bruce Springsteen fans, Cavicchi (1998) argues that fans create community not through shared experiences but through a mutual shared expectation of experience, that leads to fans engaging in a shared appropriation of their object of fandom. In the context of the Dons, I believe that fans share an expectation of the opportunity afforded to the community resulting from the club's creation with the inception of the club providing the city with a world-class leisure venue. Similarly the Dons fans are unified in the animosity that they face from wider football culture in which they are assimilated with the clubs as 'Nazis' within the culture (see Gilroy 2004). It is this shared sense of expectation and positioning by the wider culture that has encouraged the formation of the tight-knit community around the club. As Cavicchi (1998: 38) suggests the shared expectation and positioning of the fan 'shapes the tenor and quality of interactions not only with each other but with other non-fans.'

The 'W' word.

It is refreshing that the fans possess a pragmatic view of commercial football culture, yet I am cautious not to overstate the representativeness of their response and the validity of my interpretation. As Falcous & Rose (2005: 12) stipulate, criticism of traditional fandoms and resistance to more rational approaches to capital accumulation as reactionary and anachronistic is often the retort used by those seeking to justify transformations within sport cultures. Equally the responses I received could have been measures used to defend the integrity of the club and the legitimacy of the participant's fandom towards an outsider to their 'community,' someone that does not share the same 'expectations' and positioning within the culture (see Cavicchi 1998). While 'Matt' (2012) and 'Kate' (2012) engage with the commercial origins of the club to substantiate the idea that the Dons are a 'new' football club, it is problematic that they rely on the past narrative of how the club was formed to substantiate these claims. While they do not make references to Wimbledon specifically, I argue that any reference to the club's origins and the 'efforts' made to bring the club to Milton Keynes implicitly and uncomfortably evokes the history and demise of Wimbledon. Consequently, while I have highlighted the strategy implemented by the club to

promote the separatism of the clubs and infancy of the Dons encouraging certain expectations from the fans, it is significant that the participants seem to go out of their way to ignore the existence of Wimbledon. Indeed many of the fans I approached, particularly preceding the derby match with AFC Wimbledon, were very uncomfortable talking about the club and were very assertive in the protest. At the more accommodating end of the scale I was playfully reprimanded for using the 'W Word' (Kane 2012) while a significant number of fans refused to talk to me if I made reference to the club. It became clear that this was an uncomfortable topic for the fans with a few groups particularly aggrieved that I formed the association. I was told to 'fuck off' on several occasions. To an extent I expected this. As suggested the fan constantly face criticism from wider football culture and as an outsider I understand why I was treated with a level of suspicion. Again this alludes to their strong sense of insular community, to which my attempts to engage with the fans about a 'grey area' (Steve 2012) in their history were seen as a threat and challenge to their community, an example of the way in which Cavicchi (1998) suggests that a sense of community affects the way in which fans engage with outsiders.

'Steve's' (2012) use of the term 'grey area' is very fitting, encapsulating the uneasy tension in the way in which the Dons fans seem to both simultaneously engage with and ignore the history and community of Wimbledon in their enactment of fandom. Indeed the more I immersed my self into the field the more I started to pick up on a fascinating tension. It became increasingly apparent that the fans seemed to have an interactive and flexible relationship with their club's history, or lack of, choosing to identify with it and distance themselves from it interchangeably. This notion is exemplified by a conversation I had with 'Fran' and 'Greg' (2012)[39].

Oliver: So what do you think about the argument that, football clubs are about community? You know, like the argument the Wimbledon Supporters Association made, was that the club was the property of the community and it was wrong to take that away from them?
'Fran': That's rubbish. Fans need to understand that with the big investment in football now, like Abramovich at Chelsea, they, or 'the community' don't own anything. It's Abramovich that buys the players and success, not the fans. Abramovich owns Chelsea he owns the club he buys the players, he's the man with all the power there. They love him when they do

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[39] See appendix A.

well, they won loads when they got (Jose) Moruniho didn't they, he's the man that made the decisions and brought him to the club.

Oliver: That's interesting, a lot of the fans that I have been speaking too, have been saying that the Dons are a 'community club', that Winkelman has gone out of his way to bring it to the city and make it something for the community to get behind and be proud of. Do you think this is the case, or are you suggesting that like Abramovich, it's really his club and the idea of community isn't important?

'Greg': Well we have a community but the club has worked really hard to attract fans and develop a strong sense of community…. but the club is not *reliant* on it or *owned* by the community. When a club depends for its finances on its gate receipts, it's merchandising, then the fans are the paymasters and in a way own the club…. But when a club accepts massive financial investment from outside it can no longer be considered as the same as a club, which relies on its community.

Oliver: Like Chelsea you mean? They get loads of money in from shirt sales and ticket prices, merchandise but at the end of the day Abramovich is still the owner and he is so rich he doesn't need the money?

'Fran': He's talking about Wimbledon. You're right about Chelsea but it's the same as what happened with them. They use to get really good attendance, around 9,000 fans even when they were a non-league club, and even when they went to Crystal Palace they had good attendance, I think it was around 20,000 fans for the first few years of them being there, but then the club started to slip down the league and the numbers kept dropping, I think they went from 20,000 average crowds one season down to 6,000 in the space of a year.'

'Greg': That's right, there's no doubt about it, without the fans, there was no money coming in. They said it was about community and its wrong to move the club, but they already moved it across London, it wasn't in its original borough the time they were in The Premiership, and 'the community' weren't exactly coming out to support the club. Clubs these day have to make money and by not turning up, in my mind the fans basically gave control to the owners, they stopped putting money into the club so they have no the right to decide on its future. Pete (Winkelman) came in with the money and he saved the club from bankruptcy so he's entitled to do what he wants in my book.

Like 'Matt' (2012) and 'Kate,' (2012), 'Fran' and 'Greg' (2012) address football commercial culture in a highly astute manner relating to their position as fans of a franchise football club but what is fascinating about the conversation is the way in which the pair initially approach

the origins of the club in a manner that both demonstrates their comprehension of Wimbledon's history and similarly their reluctance to engage with it, using Chelsea as an analogy to accentuate their knowledge of the culture without having to step into the provocative territory of discussing Wimbledon directly. Significantly this was the second time that I had conversed with the participants and subsequently we had started to develop a rapport. This seems to come through in the conversation, with the exchange marking the point in which they lowered their guard and started to open up about the unavoidable link between the clubs.

I was surprised that the themes of 'guilt' and 'blame' became prominent features of conversation with the pair attributing blame for Wimbledon's dissolution upon their fan base. As they suggest, in most cases commercial arguments would deter clubs from relocating and re-branding themselves. It would not make economic sense to relocate a team from its established community without even considering the moral argument, but the alarming decline of attendance figures that punctuated Wimbledon's temporary residency at Selhurst Park[40] are interpreted by 'Fran' and 'Greg' (2012) as a symbolic transfer of power away from the fans and into the hands of Wimbledon's investors.

It is poignant that while the Dons fans are scorned for their supposedly disingenuous relationship with their club, 'Fran' and 'Greg' (2012) explicitly question the integrity and passion of the Wimbledon fans, echoing the argument made by Winkelman (cited by Conn 2012), who has described his amazement that Wimbledon fans did not fight harder or coalesce to buy the club and prevent its relocation. The exchange is multidimensional, in which they convincingly challenge the moral argument upheld by those that resent the creation of the Dons, shrewdly emphasising the significance of capitalism to contemporary football culture in a manner than aims to legitimate the origins of their club and their fandom, situating it within the norms of modern consumer society. In doing so the fans constitute their self-identity as consumers in relation to their understanding of the culture of the club, this supports my interpretation of the way in which community is established around the club.

It is telling that towards the end of the conversation 'Greg' (2012) had a wry smile on his face. I left the pair with the impression that they were almost disappointed that I did not

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[40] The average crowd for the 1998/1999 season was 18,235. This decreased to a mere 7,900 for the 2000/2001 season and 6,900 for 2001/2002 season.

react to their provocations. Despite the fact that there is a lot of reason in their argument, it was almost as if they were purposefully trying to get a reaction from me. Fiske (1991) famously compared the negotiation of jeans in everyday American consumer society, approaching the clothing as a polysemic text. While a standardised mass commodity, he argues that they allow for a variety of different uses by different audiences. Similarly, I argue that the Dons can be considered as a standard commodity, used by traditional fans to embody the capitalisation of football culture (see Gilroy 2004). Like Fiske's (1991) study of jeans, I argue that the club has different meanings and use values to the fans. While I argue that 'Matt' (2012) and 'Kate' (2012) use the 'transparency' surrounding the creation of the club to present the Dons as a 'new club,' resisting the moral arguments against them by accepting their role as consumers, 'Fran' and 'Greg' (2012) fully engage with The Dons 'secret history,' evoking the cultural shift from a period of tradition and bureaucracy to capitalism.

I argue that the two different articulations of the club's history relate to different ways in which fans draw upon the idea of community in their fandom. 'Matt' (2012) and 'Kate,' (2012) deny the link with Wimbledon, internalising the idea that the Dons, are a new club, as a staple of the local community. As a club born from capitalism, the fans support the club's 'community building project,' through sustained patronage. Conversely 'Fran' and 'Greg' (2012), focus on the disintegration of Wimbledon's fan community questioning their commitment and ability to move with the times and embrace how football's consumerism fosters new modes of fandom. The fans have a sophisticated way of mobilising traditional ideas of community, both emphasising their knowledge of traditional football culture and the ties between football clubs and the local community while seemingly revelling in their role as 'pantomime villains' within the culture, knowingly engaging in self-fulfilling prophecies and playing the role of capitalist fans of a franchise football club that have been the beneficiaries of the games cultural shift, enabling them to appropriate the identity of Wimbledon.

'No One Likes Us and We Don't Care.'

The knowing fan performance enacted by 'Fran' and 'Greg' (2012) was something that became prevalent at the explosive derby match Between The Dons and AFC Wimbledon (2/12/12) with the fans evoking the 'traditional' association between football club and

community to emphasise the ways in which the creation of The Dons came both as a result and led to disbanding of the community formed with Wimbledon.

In the weeks preceding the match, both the mainstream media and football blogs were helping to create frenzy within the culture with a barrage of hyperbolic headlines[41]; in the context of this frenzy Pete Winkelman appeared as a guest on Talk Sport Radio (2/12/12) three hours before kick off appealing for calm from the fans. With the controversy surrounding the club Winkelman has made numerous media appearances defending the Dons, this interview followed suit, with Winkleman emphasising the significance of the club to the local community, indicative of the responses that I received from 'Matt' and 'Kate' (2012) supporting my argument that the participants had internalised the capitalist orientation of the club and imparted it into their fandom.

> What I've learnt in this whole process is how important the supporters are. The community is at the heart of everything we do here at Milton Keynes Dons…The most important thing we've created over the last eight years is our home. We have brought the community together and at the end of the day that is what the whole debate is about (Winkleman 2012a).

To this statement, the presenter Paul Hawsbe (2012) asks Winkelman while this may be the case, how would he respond to the claim that the creation of the community in Milton Keynes has come at the expense of the community formed around Wimbledon. I have heard Winkelman respond to this type of question before, with his response drawing on the report made by the independent commission that ruled in favour of the relocation, the idea that there was not an established community associated with the club, with relocation the only viable option to ensure the club's symbolic continuation (see Walmsley 2010). This time, seemingly cautious of the frenzy surrounding the contest Winkelman (2012a) made a remarkable backtrack admitting to feelings of guilt and regret in relation to processes that led to the club's creation:

> I've learnt a hell of a lot from the process and I'm sorry. I can't say I'm particularly proud of my intent at the beginning…What happened should never happen to a club…they should never have become homeless. (Winkelman 2012a)

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[41] 'The Bitterest of Grudge Matches' (The Independent 1/12/2012,) 'More Than Just a Game' (The Telegraph 30/11/12) 'The Game That Should Never Happen' (Life's a Pitch [Website] 30/11/12.)

I found this admission both fascinating and highly astute. Like the fans that I interviewed, Winkelman seems to both ignore and engage with the club's association with Wimbledon, emphasising the benefits the Dons as a 'new' club have brought to the local community but also a sense of guilt about the processes that led to the club's inception and the pain that it caused. Winkelman centres the conversation around the fans of both teams seemingly trying to deflect animosity away from the two sets of fans and direct it upon himself. He continues suggesting that both clubs have 'fantastic supporters,' who will create a 'fantastic atmosphere' and ensure that they 'get behind their teams in the right way' (Winkelman 2012a).

In conclusion to the interview Winkelman is asked about his hopes for the match:

I just want to see a good game of football played in the right spirit. The two teams have great supporters and I know they will get behind their respective teams and make the match a great occasion. At three o'clock I hope that we are in the next round…. I just want to put this behind us; I'm sure Erik [Samulson, AFC Wimbledon Chairman] is the same. I suppose it was inevitable that the teams would meet at some point but I'm looking forward to getting it over with and concentrating on securing promotion to The Championship (Winkleman 2012a).

At this point Hawksbe (2012) interjects once again, asking that if he is so keen to 'put it behind him,' and has 'learnt from the process,' then why not make a gesture of good faith and drop 'the Dons' moniker from their name, giving it over to AFC Wimbledon. 'The Dons' nickname was famously associated with Wimbledon, the 'Don' coming from the suffix of Wimbledon and is considered to be the last remaining connection between the two clubs[42]. Again I have heard Winkelman respond to this question before on BBC Look East (15/11/12.) with his previous response a bullish denial:

We are the MK Dons but we can't change the history of what it was (Wimbledon)…. It's my gift to the community (the club) while recognising the history of the club that came before us. (Winkelman 2012b)

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[42] Erik Samulson has been campaigning for the club to 'drop The Dons' for a number of years suggesting that the title is an uncomfortable reminder of how the club came to fruition.

His response seems problematic; in the same interview Winkelman emphasises the idea that the Dons are a new club striving to make 'their *own* history,' yet he suggests that the club have incorporated the name to pay tribute to the history of Wimbledon and how the Dons came to fruition. In this context I can see why the name could be seen as antagonistic to AFC Wimbledon fans, and as a 'new' club see little benefit in keeping the title. Once again Winkelman backtracks on his previous statements, again responding to the question with caution, in a manner that shows his engagement with the issue while simultaneously distancing himself from any decision. Again, Winkelman emphasises the role of the community in the operation of the club, suggesting for the first time that he would be open to the name change 'but only if it was something the supporters wanted' (Winkelman 2012a).

After my conversations with 'Matt' (2012) and 'Kate' (2012), in which they were keen to emphasise the deep affinity between the club and the local community, I presumed that the move to 'drop the Dons' would be welcomed by the fans. The 'Dons' tag is an uncomfortable reminder of the processes that led to the club's creation and the fans, along with Winkelman, seemed particularly keen to emphasise the legitimacy of the Dons as a 'new club' with a 'new history.' Having listened to the interview, I was encouraged that Winkelman seemed to express a level of sympathy for the AFC Wimbledon fans. Subsequently I presumed that after the match had been played, that Milton Keynes would likely drop the Dons from their title, a symbolic gesture that would help to ease relations between the clubs and aid in the club being accepted within the culture, as the participants suggests, as a new club reflecting the conditions of modern consumer society. With this in mind I set out before the derby match to canvas the opinions of the fans. I was not expecting the responses I received.

Approaching the stadium it was apparent that there was a larger police presence than usual, with a blockade formed around the away stand, prohibiting fans from tracing the circumference of the stadium. Similarly there was a significantly higher media presence that I had previously encountered as Stadium MK. The match was being televised live on the BBC and broadcast on Radio 5Live and as the standout fixture of the second round, seemed to have captured the attention of the wider culture. As 'Steve' (2012) had suggested, the atmosphere around the ground could be at times hostile, but this was not a particularly intimidating atmosphere, largely due to the large police presence, but rather an unnerving

atmosphere in which I felt the sensation of constantly being watched. It was the first time that I had experienced this sensation, with police and television cameras seemingly tracking your every move and watchful eyes of suspicious fans tracking you from beneath black jackets. I believe that this intense atmosphere contributed to the reluctance of some of the fans to engage with me and accounts for some of the aggressive responses I received in relation to the fan's willingness, or lack there of, to 'drop the Dons' from their name:

Oliver: I was listening to Pete this morning saying about 'dropping the Dons' from the name, so it would just be Milton Keynes FC.

'Ralph': Did he? He can fuck off with that idea, no way.

Oliver: Yeah he was saying that he wouldn't be against it but he would leave the decision up to the fans.

'Ralph': I'm against it, there's no way I'd back that idea, the fans won't go for that. Not a chance.

Oliver: Why do you think that would be the case?

'Ralph': Why the fuck would we? It's our name. That would just be letting those hypocrites (AFC) win.

I was taken aback at the strength of 'Ralph's' (2012) opposition to the idea, his response was aggressive and assertive and he seemed to be agitated at the mere suggestion. What was interesting about the response was the idea that dropping the Dons would be like 'letting AFC Wimbledon win' (Ralph 2012). Initially I almost discarded the response interpreting it as an emotional reaction to the conditions of the day, the tribalistic 'them and us' perpetuated and encouraged by the media and enacted by the fans in response to the way in which the club have been disenfranchised within football culture. However the more people I engaged with, the more 'Ralph's' response seemed representative of the larger fan base. 'Kim' (2012) indicated that the name change would be like 'them getting one over on us,' while 'Levi' (2012) suggested that a name change would be 'like admitting to the world that we are ashamed.' The most revealing response came from 'Sam' (2012):

Oliver: I was listening to Pete this morning saying about 'dropping the Dons' from the name, so the club would just be Milton Keynes FC.

'Sam': Yea I heard that, he's changed his tune a bit hasn't he.

Oliver: Yea just a bit. It seemed like quite a smart move though to try and ease of bit of the tension.

'Sam': Oh yea, I think he knew what he was doing. He's a very smart man Pete, he knows the fans will never support the idea but it gives the impression that he's making an effort and extending a bit of an olive branch.

Oliver: You seem to be right, I thought that the fans would support the idea, but everyone I have spoken to today has been completely against the idea

'Sam': Why would we ever support the idea, it doesn't make sense to me?

Oliver: Well the club seem to go out of its way to emphasise the fact that it is a 'new' club, trying to make 'new history.' But the Dons tag is the last remaining link to Wimbledon. I understand how important the club is to the community so why keep the tag when it just reminds people of the past and is used as a stick to beat the club with by other fans?

'Sam': It *is* a new club, we gave all the trophies and memorabilia back to them (AFC) and the Football League saw that as us breaking all ties with the past so to me we *are* a new club the name isn't going to change that. The club started out as MK Dons and it is going to stay as MK Dons.

Oliver: But having given everything else back and getting recognition as a new club, why is the name so important?

'Sam': I suppose it's not *that* important but I just don't see why we should. They (AFC) have a problem with it, not because it reminds them of the way we supposedly took over their club but it reminds them that they *let* us take over the club, they knew the owners were looking to sell and it nearly got moved to Dublin didn't it, but they failed to get behind the team and they lost it…. They see what we are building here and they are jealous that we are successful. That's the best bit about the name. It winds them up so much. We should keep it to piss them off if nothing else. You've read the stories (surrounding the game) and everyone keeps hammering us so why should we bow down and do what they what us to do?

As his final remarks suggest 'Sam's' (2012) response seems emotionally influenced by the occasion, directly referencing the adverse publicity surrounding the club with the build up to the derby, so I am cautious not to overstate its significance, however I argue that there is validity to his statement. Like 'Fran' and 'Greg' (2012), he is keen to emphasise the moral failing of the Wimbledon fans, looking to legitimate his own fandom and the community's

support of the club by creating distinction between the active mobilisation of community by the Dons fans and the passivity of the Wimbledon fans.

The key idea that I have taken from the conversation is that he is not overly concerned about the name and does not provide much of a justification for keeping it apart from the pleasure it provides him for the way in which it antagonises the opposition, suggesting that the club should keep the name to 'piss them off if nothing else' (Sam 2012). It is significant that he refers to the way in which the club faces constant criticism from the sport's wider culture, describing the use of the name almost as a form of retaliation and in which he plays upon the way in which the Dons fans are continually presented as ersatz. Sandvoss (2005: 44) argues that fandom is constituted between text and context, in this instance the Dons fans explicitly draw upon the processes that lead to their clubs creation positioning themselves as consumer fans while creatively demonstrating their autonomy within the culture in opposition to Wimbledon's dispersal.

'Sam' (2012) suggests that AFC fans have a problem with the name because it reminds them that their lack of support enabled Wimbledon to be taken over. Subsequently he believes that they see the way that the community in Milton Keynes are supporting the project and have become jealous of the Dons' success. In doing so he perpetuates both the idea that the club have become successful as a 'new club' and that the club was able to experience this success due to the inability of the community to support the club as Wimbledon. Taking this into account I argue that while the name may be an uncomfortable reminder of how the club originated, the title is important to the Dons fans as it constantly reminds them of their need to support the project and the significance of community both to the clubs history and its future prosperity. I argue that this shared knowledge helps fans form a community around the club, encouraging their patronage.

Evidently the fans were aware of the debates surrounding the campaign to 'drop the Dons,' making their feelings known inside the stadium. In correlation with Lancaster's (2001) work the stadium had become a 'site of performance,' with the fans becoming active participants in the football event. Before kick off, a huge banner was unveiled with the slogan 'We Are Keeping The Dons Get Over It', which was met by loud boos from the away fans.

The fans continued their antagonism with sustained choruses of 'MK Dons, Mk Dons, Mk Dons,' and 'We will always be the Don, always be the Dons,' emphasizing the suffix much to their rivals irritation. The standard of play was poor, but there was a palpable sense of excitement with the bar of the East Wing stand full of loud voices, antithetical to the tense feeling of panopticisation that I experienced before kick off. Keen to develop an understanding of the atmosphere I approached a group for their half-time assessment.

Oliver: The atmosphere is electric today; I haven't experience anything like this here before.

'Zack': Its top isn't it that was a great half; the footballs not that special but the atmosphere is something else today.

Oliver: The response, that banner ('We are keeping the Dons get over it') provoked at the start was unbelievable.

Hugo: That was magic, I can't believe how loud the boos were [Laughs].

'Zack': They (AFC) are so uptight about it, every time we would chant MK Dons they are getting furious, it's like they didn't expect us to sing or anything.

Oliver: I'm surprised how wound up they are getting, they surely didn't expect us to just take the abuse and sit in silence.

'Zack': That's it, we get it every week, the away fans come and slaughter us with all that 'franchise crap'… the whole of the country seems to be watching today hoping we get turned over but we aren't taking it, we're fighting back… I'm loving it mate.

Fiske (1991: 47) argues that fandom is subversive by design with pleasure rooted in its ability to enable fans to produce their own meanings with their texts to avoid social disciplining. I argue that this relates to the fandom of 'Sam' (2012) who like 'Zack' and 'Hugo' (2012) describe the sense of excitement that they experience, antagonising the opposition. I argue that parallels can be established between their fandom and that of the fans in the Snake Pit at Norwich City[43]. Similarly I argue that the Dons fan community draw upon the club's tradition and 'secret history' (Steve 2012), developing unique customs relating to their status as a franchise football club to transgress the norms of the games wider culture. In the context of the derby, wider football culture and specifically AFC Wimbledon represent the dominant culture. As suggested the Dons in their very existence are seen to challenge and threaten their order and traditions, and 'Sam', 'Zack' and 'Hugo'

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[43] A Fan group that have formed a tight knit community, knowingly constructing their identity in opposition to the family culture of the club (see previous chapter).

seem fully aware of this notion, revelling in the liminal position of the club and their fan community.

Cavicchi (1998) argues that the symbolic and ideological core of communities imagined by fans is structured via their appropriation of texts. I argue that this is figured in the ways in which the fans look to appropriate the customs and identity of Wimbledon. This is initially encapsulated in the fan performance related to the 'drop the Dons' campaign. It is fascinating that the fans seem to embrace the tag for the way in which it perpetuates the club's own lack of history and artificiality inspiring hatred from the wider culture for the history that it evokes. The way in which the fans goad the opposition with the name demonstrates their ability to engage with the moral arguments of the culture from which they are largely excluded, demonstrating an understanding of its traditions. I argue that this grounding and understanding of the culture from which they look to transgress is foundational to their fan performance and can be considered as another example of the ways in which Dons fans seem to both engage and distance themselves from their history.

In their perpetuation and celebration of their name 'the Dons', I argue that the fans actively embrace their role as villains within the culture, actively engaging in self-fulfilling prophecies as consumers of football, who revel in the fact that they have 'consumed' the identity and community of Wimbledon. If, as I suggest, the fans emphasise the significance of the name to accentuate the ways in which they oppose the traditions of football culture for their own amusement and as suggested as 'retaliation' (Sam 2012) against a culture from which they have largely been rejected, then it is possible to interpret their performances as self-aware celebrations of the community's liminal status within football culture.

Another example of this is the fans appropriation of the song 'No one likes us and we don't care', a song made famous by Millwall in the 1970s but appropriated in the 1990s by Wimbledon fans in relation to the team's aggressive direct tactics. The fact that the fans have appropriated one of Wimbledon's most famous songs alludes to the awareness that the fans have of their club's history and their wider understanding of football's commercial culture. The fans seemed to take pleasure re-appropriating one of the most famous songs associated with Wimbledon, to shock and antagonise their rivals. This not only suggests that the fans experience pleasure from embracing their role as villains within the culture, but also that their wider knowledge of football culture belies their position as disingenuous

ersatz. Like the Dons title itself, I argue that the song is used as a tool of communal resistance, what once was indicative of Wimbledon's unique status as football's great amateur underdogs is transformed into a reminder of the commercial process that led to the club's non-existence, and to the creation of the Dons, the 'new' club that attracts admirable loyalty from the local community, who support it both financially and passionately within the stands. In doing so I argue that the fans actively position themselves both positively and negatively as consumers, literally 'buying into' the commercial community building project of the club while appropriating the traditional culture and identity associated with Wimbledon, demonstrating their awareness of traditional football culture to emphasise their incongruity as fans of a franchise football club.

Chapter 6. Chelsea. 'Champions of Europe. We Know What We Are.'

<u>**Introduction**</u>

> I can't believe 'Chavski' won that. I was screaming at the screen when (Arjan) Robben missed the penalty, because you just knew the scummy bastards were going to go on and win it. Everything about the club just reminds me why I don't give a shit about modern football. The captains a convicted racist, the fans are c*nts who are the loudest to shout when they are winning but call for the managers head as soon as they lose a game, then they spend a fortune on players, throwing money around everywhere and still can't play good football. They hardly strung two passes together tonight or against Barcelona in the Semis', and just sat back behind the ball. They were two of the most boring games I have seen all season and they still go and win it. It wasn't good for the English game it was a fucking disaster' ('Marco451', Red Café [Message board] 2012).

On May 19th 2012, Chelsea beat Bayern Munich on penalties in their own stadium the Allianz Arena to win the Champions League for the first time in the club's history. I started my research with Chelsea six month prior to the final, taking in the tumultuous events leading to the team's eventual success. In the aftermath of the match, England coach Gary Neville wrote in his article for the Daily Mail (19/5/12) that the club was 'destined' to win the Champions League as it had been 'written in the stars.' While the quotations can be discarded as exuberant responses to victory, the Chelsea fans that I engaged with throughout the research process harboured similar beliefs about the 'destiny' of the club, with the fans accustomed to success and expecting victory. Indeed it is my argument that self-identifying as winners within the culture is central to the participant's fan identity.

Like the Dons, Chelsea are said to epitomise football's modern capitalism, the club having severed its ties with its traditional fan base (see Crampsey 1990; Imlach 2005; Devine 2012). It is claimed that the club's traditional fans have been priced out of attendance, usurped by enthusiastic football tourists drawn to the club by the prospect of seeing entertaining football played by a cast of the world's best players, bankrolled by Chelsea owner, Roman Abramovich's fortune. The club positioning itself as a 'tourist attraction,' a 'London monument' (see Rolls 2014). With the club explicit in its market orientation as '*Champions* of Europe,' the '*Pride* of London,' drawing on its location in the salubrious borough of

Fulham, associations are formed between the club and the wider opulence of the area, emphasising the idea that Chelsea is a successful team for 'winners.' I argue that this relates to the way in which the fans are positively positioned as consumers by the club, attracted by the prospect of sharing the club's success in which their patronage enables them to associate themselves with the players on the pitch and the wider opulence of the borough. In patronage fans are given the opportunity to identify with the success of the club, evoking the ideas of wider fan studies that need fulfilment and group affiliation can be obtained and signified with acts of consumption (See Jameson 1991; Fiske 1992; Hills 2002; Barker 2004; Sandvoss 2005).

This conception of fandom relates to Vass' concept 'cheering for self,' (2003) a premise that he developed through his ethnographic study of American college basketball fans. Vass (2003) suggests that when basketball fans 'cheer for self,' they financially and emotionally invest in their team imparting them into their everyday life so the team becomes an extension of the self. In the context of Chelsea, I argue that fans similarly invest in the club for the opportunity that it provides them to experience the feeling of victory. By forming a link with the club, the fans internalise the success of the team as their own, enabling them to identify as winners.

As discussed in the literature review, modern fans are said to lack identity, depicted as indiscriminate consumers (see 1994; Bale 1998; Brimon 1998; King 2002; Ingle 2005: Pearson 2012). As indicated by the epigraph, Chelsea fans are considered by rival fans as the epitome of this, desperate to emphasise their status within football culture but lacking the 'cultural capital' (Thornton 2005) or knowledge of 'traditional' football culture to do so in authentic ways. On the other hand, the way in which Chelsea fans identify as consumers is seen to reinforce the negative discourses surrounding the club. Dyer (1999: 28) argues that the consequences of representation are significant to the way that individuals are treated and I am keen to establish how Chelsea fans perceive themselves in relation to others within football culture.

While Chelsea fans are positioned as consumers within football culture, it is significant that the fans seem to embrace this position, as their 'othering' within football culture as a result of their knowing consumerism helps reflect their status as 'winners.' Indeed I argue that fans knowingly 'buying into' the culture of the club for the opportunity the club provides

them to 'cheer for self,' as part of a winning club. The fans largely rely on this sense of hierarchy and 'othering' to substantiate their identity in opposition to rival fans. This is a communality shared between the participants throughout my research, with fan identity constructed and enacted in relation to the participant's desire to be perceived a certain way, as a certain type of fan. As such, expressions of identity are largely informed by the concept of an opposite or an imagined 'other.'

The Chelsea fans that I engaged with at the start of my research, like the Dons' fans in the previous chapter, describe their fandom as active consumption, suggesting that their relationship with the club is mutually beneficial, with the club remunerated for the opportunities that it affords the fans to 'cheer for self,' and establish a hierarchal relationship with rival fans. However, as my research progressed I was privy to numerous disconnects between producer (club) and consumer (fans) with the club failing to achieve success, preventing the fans from identifying as winners. I argue that this had a tangible impact on the way in which the participants articulated their identity.

This chapter analyses the way in which Chelsea fans articulate their identity in relation to a shifting conception of the 'other'. My research indicates that when the club are successful the fans identify as consumers to position themselves in opposition to wider football culture 'buying into' the successful status that Chelsea markets itself on. However when the club fails to provide fans with opportunities to identify as 'winners,' the fans become mindful of the way in which they are perceived within football culture (see Dyer 1999: 28) and negotiate their relationship with the club. I argue that this negotiation in figured in the different ways in which the fans construct concepts of 'us and them.' As suggested, when the club provides fans with opportunities to 'cheer for self,' and establish hierarchy, the fans identify with the culture of the club. Conversely, when the club fails to figure the relationship that the fans expect, I argue that the Chelsea fans frame their fandom in opposition to the culture of the club, particularly its capitalist business strategy, with the fans drawing on the discourses surrounding traditional football culture that they had hitherto ignored.

The different sections of this chapter explore how the concept of 'us and them' is constructed and mobilised by the fans. I argue that the concepts of opposition are continually shifting based on the fan's perception of the club's success and subsequently the

fan's self-perception within football culture. The chapter subsequently analyses the different ways in which the fans construct their identity in negotiation with the manager, the players, the owner and rival fans.

AVB: 'He's Turned Us Into a Laughing Stock'

Since Abramovich's takeover in 2003, Chelsea had amassed an impressive array of silverware, winning the Premier League three times (2004/2005, 2005/2006, 2009/2010), The League Cup Twice (2004/2005, 2006/2007) and the FA Cup three times (2006/2007, 2008/2009, 2009/2010). With the clubs continued success key to its business strategy, the club is active in the management of its image and identity as 'winners,' within the culture. Correspondingly Abramovich is ruthless in his pursuit of success with mangers rapidly fired if they fail to achieve his objectives. Since his purchase of the club in 2003 the club has experience 11 managerial changes[44]. Prior to the commencement of my research in September 2011, Chelsea sacked Carlo Ancelotti, after two seasons in charge of the club. In his first season he had lead the team to a League and Cup double, but after failing to deliver success in his second season he was replaced by the young and dynamic Andre Villas Boas (AVB), who had risen to prominence in the previous season by winning both the League title and UEFA cup with FC Porto. The firing of Ancelotti and hiring of AVB was ridiculed within football culture. Doyle (2011) epitomises this sentiment, deriding the appointment as short-termist, a brash attempt to form association between the club and AVB's personal success as a 'winning' manager. The managerial change was said to epitomise the club's modern capitalism and short-term business strategy, with Abramovich's 'hiring and firing policy' depicted in correlation with the wider instability, volatility and lack of identity of modern football culture (see Fynn & Davidson 1996; Williams 2000; Imlach 2005).

I started my research analysing the fan's reaction to AVB's appointment. With the negativity surrounding the sacking of Ancelotti, I was expecting the fans to react with caution to my enquiries yet I was surprised by the overwhelming support for AVB. I argue that this support comes from his status at the time of my research as a winner within football culture, enabling fans to confer his success upon the club and by extension, associate it with themselves. My exchange with 'Bruce' (2011)[45] emphasises this idea:

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[44] During my nine months of research I was privy to three.
[45] See appendix A.

Oliver: So what did you think about the appointment of AVB then?

'Bruce': I think it's another quality appointment. He looks like a proper Chelsea manager; he's one of us.

Oliver: A proper Chelsea Manager? You mean that he fits the role well.

'Bruce': Yeah, you know just that he fits the role. He is the real deal. He has a big reputation, he's exciting he's sharp and he's a winner.

Oliver: He did have a very successful season with Porto; do you think he will be able to replicate that success here?

'Bruce': Absolutely. He's proved what he can do; He's a winner already. What is he now 34? Look at what he's achieved already, people can't question his record.

Oliver: I'm not questioning his record, but Ancelotti had a great record too and he's now out of a job.

'Bruce': Carlo (Ancelotti) was great for us but what did he achieve last year? Yes he won the League and Cup double the year before, but we have to keep moving forward, there's no room for sentiment at the top level.

Oliver: I know what you mean but isn't there a danger that hiring and firing managers all the time could be a step backwards?

'Bruce': No, we are not hiring and firing managers all the time, we fire managers when, they fail to deliver the goods, simple as that. It's not like we just go and give the job to anyone, we always appoint the best coaches in the world that will get us back to the top.

Throughout the exchange, 'Bruce' (2011) constantly aligns himself with the club as indicated by the constant use of 'we' and 'us'. In doing so it is poignant that he constantly evokes the club's successful reputation within the culture, vindicating my argument that the perceived success of the club is foundational to the fan's sense of identity. This notion is evoked in the opening exchange, with 'Bruce' describing AVB as a 'Proper Chelsea manager…one of *us*' (emphasis added). In doing so it is poignant that he lists his characteristics, he 'has a big reputation, he's exciting, he's sharp and he's a winner,' facets of his personally that seem to correspond to the ways in which Chelsea associates itself with success and correspondingly, how the fans perceive the club.

Fundamentally, 'Bruce' (2011) indicates that a 'Proper Chelsea manager,' is successful, accentuating the idea that AVB is a winner; 'he's a winner', 'He's proved what he can do; He's a winner already', 'people can't question his record,' presenting him as one of the 'best

coaches in the word,' that will 'bring the team success.' This highlights the significance that 'Bruce' places upon the status of the club. Correspondingly, the exchange suggests that he has internalised the business strategy of the club, rationalising the sacking of Ancelotti for his inability to deliver success in his second year in charge. As indicated, wider football culture strongly criticised his dismissal, yet 'Bruce' (2011) recognises the need for the club to 'keep moving forward,' and that there is 'no room for sentiment at the top level.' His use of capitalist rhetoric indicating that he has internalised and accepted the club's business strategy, complimenting my argument that he self identifies as a consumer of the club.

'Bruce's' (2011) responses allude to his status as a consumer fan. He has an astute understanding of the sport as a business, evoking the language of rapacious capitalism in the idea that the club needs to 'keep moving forward.' Similarly the idea that there is no 'room for sentiment at the top level' can be considered as a direct challenge to the discourses of traditional football culture, that harbour a nostalgic image of the past without moving with the times. In the literature review, I document how a 'rationalised time' approach to business is presented as a cultural ideal, encouraging fans to establish emotional connections with clubs cultivated over a period of time (see Sennett 2006). It was in the context of traditional conceptions of 'rationalised time' that the club were rebuked for the dismissal of Ancelloti for challenging the stability valued within traditional football culture.

Poignantly 'Bruce' (2011) prioritises the success of the club over its stability as indicated by his defence of Abramovich's 'hiring and firing' policy, suggesting that managers are replaced when they 'fail to deliver the goods.' This epitomises the way in which the promise of success is foundational to the fan's identity, with 'Bruce' (2011) speaking proudly of the way in which the club 'always appoint the best coaches' to get the club 'back to the top.' Rather than the emotional connection said to develop over time between club and fans (see Crampsey 1990; Hutchinson 1997), 'Bruce' describes the excitement and draw of success, knowing that the club will constantly appoint the best coaches, to compliment their squad of world class players, described by 'Bruce' as part of the club's allure, helping Chelsea to cement their status as a global brand and London attraction. I argue that this identification with the club corresponds to Lancaster's (2001) notion of the 'fantasy frame,' the idea that fans immerse themselves into the fantasy of their fan texts to the extent that they 'become part of the frame' encouraging the fans to believe, and become part of the fantasy. I believe

that the fantasy offered to the fans by Chelsea is the idea that they can identify as winners, something that 'Bruce' literally looks to 'buy into' in his endorsement of the clubs business strategy.

My exchange with 'Bruce' (2011) encapsulated the excitement of AVB's appointment, his 'big reputation,' 'sharp' looks and successful record, encourages him to accept the club's business strategy and identify as winners after their lack of success the previous season, yet despite this optimism AVB was struggling to fulfil the clubs promise and by November as my research intensified, Chelsea were languishing outside the coveted top 4 positions. Reports started to emerge in the media about a 'player revolt,' and 'anarchy' within the dressing room and with just two months of the season gone, the fans that I engaged with had lost faith in him.

As I took my position within the 'Shed' end, to watch the team lose 2-1 to a spirited Liverpool side (20/11/11), I was privy to fans questioning his tactics: 'Why the fuck is he playing Ramirez on the left, he's right footed for fuck sake;' his squad selection, 'how can he keep playing Torres, When we've got Drogba on the bench, he's fucking clueless,' and man management skills, 'Look at him, just standing there, he needs to tear into them, he needs to fucking change it.' Audible boos punctuated the full time whistle with the team unable to break down Liverpool's resolute defence. This was my first experience of an emerging disconnect between producer and consumer, club and fans. Without achieving success on the pitch the fans were unable to self -identify as winners and instead became unsatisfied consumers.

Chelsea's inconsistent league form was replicated in the Champions League, narrowly qualifying out of the group stage. For qualifying, the team were rewarded with a daunting double-legged knockout tie against Napoli. While Chelsea were struggling in the league, Napoli were enjoying a successful season, sitting second in Serie A. I visited the club three days before the away leg of the tie to watch Chelsea host Birmingham City in the fifth round of the FA Cup (18/2/12). Despite Birmingham's lower league status, they outplayed Chelsea controlling possession. Birmingham took the lead on the 20th minute and hung on for much of the game before Sturridge was called off the bench to earn Chelsea a replay. Once again, the fans were furious with audible boos punctuating the final whistle. Engaging with the fans after the game it was clear that they had lost faith in AVB.

While the conversation I had with 'Bruce' (2011) at the start of the season encapsulated the optimism of the appointment, the idea that AVB was a 'proper Chelsea manager' who would 'get (Cheslea) back to the top,' 'Harry' and 'Ali' (2012)[46] looked to disassociate themselves from him, presenting him as an outsider to the club and harmful to their identity as 'winners' within football culture.

Oliver: They got away with that today didn't they?

'Harry': Too right they did, what a load of garbage that was

'Ali': Bloody awful, I swear he hasn't got a clue what he's doing that manager.

Oliver: At least they are still in the cup; surely they won't play that badly against them (Birmingham) again.

'Harry': Well they're not going to be in the Europe after Wednesday trust me.

'Ali': (laughs) It'll be a mauling. I wouldn't be too sure they will beat them (Birmingham) either, they were the better team today, the defending was shocking and they should have had a couple more goals, before AVB *finally* woke up and made some changes.

While 'Bruce' (2011) actively looked to associate himself with the previous success of AVB, using collective terms 'we' and 'us' throughout the conversation to emphasise AVB's affiliation with the club, it is significant that 'Harry' and 'Ali' (2012), constantly use the term 'they,' creating distance between themselves and the club under AVB's management. As indicated at the time of his appointment, AVB had status as a winner within the culture, something that 'Bruce', looked to identify with as indicated by his use of collective language. However, since the appointment, his status had declined dramatically to the point that 'Ali' and 'Harry' consider him detrimental to the success of the club and significantly their identity as 'winners.' This is epitomised by the contrasting ways in which the participants present him. In September 'Bruce' (2011) described him as a 'proper Chelsea manager,' looking to assimilate his success with the club as a resource upon which he could draw to substantiate his identity, yet two months later 'Ali' (2012) disparagingly de-personalises him, referring to him simply as 'that manager.' While I argue that 'Bruce' (2011) actively attempts to capitalise on his 'winning' attributes, his 'big reputation', 'sharp' looks and successful record, 'Ali' purposefully attempts to downplay his association with the club, AVB becomes 'othered', depicted as incongruent to the club's success and 'Ali's' identity as a fan. The idea that AVB 'hasn't got a clue what he's doing' seems significant encapsulating the fans

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[46] See appendix A

scepticism of his ability to deliver the club success, while 'Ali' (2012) 'hasn't got a clue what he's (AVB) doing', at a club that promises the fan opportunities to 'cheer for self.'

I argue that the change in the way that AVB is presented corresponds to the change in optimism surrounding the club, influenced both by the team's performances on the pitch and the wider perception of the club within wider football culture. The excitement generated by the appointment of AVB encouraged 'Bruce' (2011) to suggest that he would get Chelsea 'back to the top', yet two months into the season the expectations dropped to the extent that 'Ali' (2012) questions whether the club will even beat Birmingham with 'Harry' (2012) indicating that that the club would face a 'mauling' against Napoli. I argue that this epitomises the importance of success to the participant's identity. When AVB was considered successful within football culture, the fans strongly identified with him, keen to assimilate his success with the club, yet when his status as a 'winner' within football culture started to be questioned the participants looked to create distance between him and the club, downplaying their association.

As 'Harry' (2012) had predicted Chelsea were 'mauled' by Napoli losing 3-1 (21/2/12.) There was inevitability about the result with 'Harry's' prediction materialising. Fans and pundits wrote off the team's chance of progression, and AVB's chance of keeping his job. I watched the match with a group of Chelsea fans in a popular sports bar. While harbouring little hope of a positive result, the fans were exasperated by the team's level of performance and manner of defeat, attributing blame to the naivety and inadequacy of AVB. 'Fred' (2012) encapsulates this idea:

> Disappointed doesn't cover it mate, I'm disgusted…No honestly disgusted. I didn't really think that we would get anything out of it, but they embarrassed us. Everyone can see that defending has been our problem. Everyone has been moaning about the highline, but what do we do, play a highline and they were catching us every time. It must be true about all the fighting at training because they can't be doing much work. They aren't playing like a team are they? The jobs just too big for AVB and for the sake of the club he's got to go. We're a laughing stock at the moment the papers are going to be full of it again tomorrow and I'm sick of the club being a laughing stock you know.

While passionately demonstrating his disappointment, 'Fred's' (2012) comments epitomise my argument that the fan's identification with the club relies on its 'winning' status. Subsequently I argue that the club's inability to achieve success has a tangible impact on the way in which the fans present their identity. Like 'Ali' and 'Harry' (2012), 'Fred' attributes blame for the failure with AVB, looking to distance him and his 'failure' from the club. 'Fred' (2012) looks to achieve this by emphasising his 'disgust' and 'embarrassment': 'Everyone can see that defending has been our problem'. 'Everyone has been moaning about the highline, but what do we do, play a highline and they were catching us every time.' Similarly, the exchange emphasises the significance the fans place on the perception of the club in wider football culture, 'Fred' (2012) suggesting that the club had 'become a laughing stock', fearing further recrimination from the press; 'the papers are going to be full of it again tomorrow.'

In the introduction to this chapter I introduced Vass' concept of 'cheering for self' (2003) to illustrate my argument that Chelsea fans invest in the team to the extent that the club become a natural part of their everyday life, as a key means through which they construct their self-identity. I argue that in patronage, fans buy in to the business strategy of the club to associate with its 'winning culture.' This corresponds to Sandvoss' (2005) idea that fans seek texts that allow for particular creations of meaning, based on its ability to correspond to fans, wishes, desires and sense of self. Taking this into account it is my argument that if fans invest in the club to 'cheer for self,' presumably when the club is failing in their objectives, like Chelsea under AVB, fans in their protests are effectively decrying themselves.

Sandvoss (2005) suggests fandom is based on the capacity of a text to carry meanings that articulate fan's identities as well as their objective position within society. Taking this into account, I argue that the clubs perceived failure is also going to be internalised by the fans as a reflection of self. This would account for the level of anger and embarrassment the fans seemed to express towards AVB, in which his failure is seen as a negative reflection of the club and by association, themselves. Not only were the performances unsatisfactory, but also the consistent ridicule the team were receiving from the wider culture seemed to be internalised by the fans as personal attacks on their own identity. It was like the Chelsea fans were stuck in an abusive relationship.

In his rebuke, 'Fred's' (2012) repetition of 'everyone' seems poignant, encapsulating the feeling of wider unrest among the fans but significantly their collective opposition to AVB. I argue that his use of collective rhetoric works to isolate the manager in which he, and his personal failure, is presented as incongruent to the collective identity of the club. I argue that this demonstrates the significance of the perception of the club to the identity of the fans. 'Fred' (2012), suggests that collectively the club is 'a laughing stock at the moment,' the collective term 'we' encapsulating the club and by association the fans. Throughout the exchange 'Fred' (2012) looks to combat this and change the perception of the club, isolating AVB, dissociating him from the club in an attempt to confer the ridicule and failure on to him, as suggested by the idea that 'the jobs just too big for AVB'. By highlighting AVB's unsuitability for the job, 'Fred' (2012) insinuates that his sacking would improve the team's quality of football, 'for the sake of the club he's got to go', enabling the team to establish themselves again as winners within the culture. While the quotation emphasises AVB's position as the 'other' in relation to the collective image 'Fred' constructs of the club, it similarly alludes to the idea that his sacking would again enable the club to fulfil the expectation of their consumer fans, helping them re-substantiate their identity as 'winners'.

This interpretation of 'Fred's' (2012) exchange relates to my argument that the way in which the club is perceived within football culture affects the way that Chelsea fans present their fan identity. Noticing a pattern in the way that 'Ali,' 'Harry' (2012) and 'Fred' (2012) looked to distance themselves from the recent 'failure' of AVB, I looked to gauge the wider reaction of the team's defeat to Napoli by analysing a popular Chelsea online forum 'TheShedEnd' recommended to me by one of the participants. Of the 76 posts published in the 'Post-Game' thread twelve hours after kick off (22/2/12), 33 posts either featured the term 'embarrassed', 'embarrassing' or strongly insinuated feeling of shame, as epitomised by poster 'ChechMeOut86:' 'I'm dreading going to work, I'm just going to keep my head down' (22/2/12), a post that highlights the significance that the fan's place on the status of the club in the wider culture and their sense of shame at AVB's perceived failure. As my interaction with 'Fred' suggests, the idea of embarrassment seemed to encapsulate the wider feeling of the fans. Unable to identify as winners, the fans were desperate to confer the failure of the club onto the manger, positioning him as an outsider to Chelsea's collective culture of success.

An interesting comparison can be made between the articulations of fan identity for Chelsea and MK Dons fans. In the previous chapter I argued that like Chelsea fans, the Dons fan's sense of identity materialised from their consumptive relationship with the club and their perception within the wider culture. While I argued that Dons fans seemed to revel in the negative reputation of their club, engaging in fandom that emphasised their liminality within football culture, my research with Chelsea fans indicates that they felt shame at the way in which the club was perceived within the football culture. I argue that the Dons fans revel in their position and engage in humorous behaviour to combat their liminality, similarly I argue that Chelsea fans engage in an astute negotiation of their identity in which they look to absolve themselves from ridicule, redefining the collective idea of the 'club' to preserve their winning identity and create a dichotomy of 'them and us', to emphasise their opposition to their own manager.

Di Matteo: 'It's Like I Have My Club Back.'

After a comfortable victory against Bolton (25/2/12), Chelsea lost 1-0 at home against West Brom (3/3/12) the first time the club had beaten Chelsea since 1979. AVB was sacked the following day, only 8 months into his three-and-a half-year contract. At the same time it was announced that former Chelsea Midfielder Roberto Di Matteo would replace him as the club's new manager. As soon as the news broke I called two participants I had developed a rapport with. While I expected 'Jim' and 'Tim' (2012) to express their pleasure at the departure of AVB, the majority of the conversation revolved around the appointment of Di Matteo, with both participants indicating that the appointment would unite supporters and restore a sense of pride:

Oliver: What do you think about the appointment of Di Matteo then? I wasn't expecting them to give him the job if I'm honest, the team are obviously struggling and he doesn't have much managerial experience?

'Tim': I weren't expecting it either, but I tell you what, it's a smart move…. He's a legend isn't he and will get the full backing of the fans. Think about it, the football can't get much worse but with him in charge, it will get the fans pulling in the right direction and improve the atmosphere around the place.

'Jim': I think it's a great shout to be honest. There as been such a strange atmosphere around the place the whole season…. Di Matteo is such a legend here and him in charge will

just unite the fans you know? Robbie is 'Chels' through and through and will be breaking his neck to get things back on track…it just feels like I have my club back you know.

In the weeks preceding AVB's sacking, several of the national papers described the job as a 'poison chalice' speculating as to which high profile coach would be next to take the hot seat. Mc Nulty's (2012) article for BBC Sport (5/3/12) encapsulates the sentiment, deriding the approach and using it as an example of the club's lack of identity. I was expecting the participants to be disappointed with the appointment. Under Abramovich, Chelsea have been managed by a succession of world-famous managers[47], with the club paying astronomical fees to both hire and fire them in quick succession. As 'Bruce' (2011) suggests, this is largely considered part of their attraction and fantasy. While Di Matteo is rightfully considered 'a legend' of the club, he had left Chelsea the year before Abramovich had taken over. While famed for scoring the winning goal in the 1997 FA Cup final he was not considered a global superstar like the team's current squad of players. Taking this into account, along with his lack of managerial experience, I was sceptical if the fans would approve of the appointment, perceiving it as another example of the club's failure to maintain its status as 'winners' within the culture. Significantly, the participants supported Di Matteo's appointment.

At the start of my research 'Bruce' (2011) endorsed Abramovich's 'hiring and firing policy', citing the need for the club to 'keep moving forward,' Yet 'Jim' and 'Tim' (2012) explicitly chose to look back at the club's history evoking Di Matteo's status as a 'club legend' recalling an era before Abramovich's take over. In doing so I argue that the participants could be seen to position themselves in opposition to the clubs hiring and firing policy, evoking the stability of the club before his takeover and 'win at all costs' business strategy. By endorsing the appointment of Di Matteo, rationalising it as a way to 'unite the fans' and 'get everyone pulling in the same direction,' I argue that the fans evoke traditional ideas of community insinuating that Di Matteo's appointment represents a more sustainable business strategy.

Throughout the conversation the participants evoke the traditional, nostalgic ways in which fans are said to identify with their club, through the representation of community: 'He…. will get the full backing of the fans' (Jim 2012), 'it will get the fans pulling in the right direction'

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[47] Claudio Ranieri, Jose Moriniho, Gus Hiddink, Phil Scholari, Carlo Ancelotti, Andre Villas Boas.

(Tim 2012), '(he) will just unite the fans you know?' (Jim 2012). Historical rootedness: 'He's a legend isn't he' (Tim 2012), 'Di Matteo is such a legend here' (Jim 2012). And emotional attachment: 'Robbie is 'Chels' through and through' (Jim 2012), 'it just feels like I have my Club back you know' (Jim 2012) (see Crampsey 1990; Imlach 2005; Divine 2012).

This encapsulates a significant tension in the fan's identity. The participants happily identified with the club's business strategy when the club were experiencing success, indeed as 'Bruce' (2011) indicates the constant appointment of 'world class managers' was considered a part of the club's allure. However, when AVB had failed to achieve the success his appointment promised, 'Harry' and 'Ali' (2012), and 'Fred' (2012) construct their identity in opposition to AVB, while 'Jim' and 'Tim' (2012) look to position themselves against Abramovich's 'unsustainable hiring and firing policy.' I argue that this relates to the self-awareness of the fans, constructing their identity in constant negotiation of the culture of the club and its status within football culture, the participants again constructing their identity by negotiating the discourses surrounding both capitalist and traditional football culture.

With the club not supplying them with reasons to substantiate their identity as 'winners', I argue that 'Tim and 'Jim' (2012) seek validation from the wider culture, again looking for opportunities to 'cheer for self' (Vass 2003). In this context I interpret 'Jim' and 'Tim's' endorsement of Di Matteo as an attempt to demonstrate their cultural capital, demonstrating their knowledge of the club and its traditional culture before Abramovich's take over. In a period of instability when the fans are unable to identify as winners in the culture, I argue that 'Jim' and 'Tim' look to position themselves against Abramovich and his capitalist business strategy by demonstrating their understanding of the game's traditional culture.

The participant's comments emphasise the reflexivity of their fan identity and complements Sandvoss' (2005: 112) argument that heavily invested fans are prepared to adjust their identification with texts of fandom to suit their individual need. I argue that the culture of the club adds an important level of context to the participant's comments. 'Jim's' (2012) suggestion that he has '(his) 'Chels' back' seems poignant and can be used to explore the dual ways that the participants look to construct their identity. 'Jim' (2012) evokes the traditional idea of community, indicating that the appointment of Di Matteo and his long

association with the club would help restore a sense of communality. 'Di Matteo is such a legend here and him in charge will just unite the fans you know', 'Robbie is 'Chels' through and through'. Conversely, I argue that his comments also relate to the club's contemporary status and correspondingly his expectation that the club is successful. As previously indicated, a significant number of the participants that I engaged with stated that they started identifying as fans after Abramovich's take over, 'buying into' the status of the club within the culture. Taking this into account the idea of 'Jim' (2012) having '(his) Chels back' can be interpreted as his excitement at the prospect of engaging with a winning team once again. The animosity was so strong towards AVB that I argue that simply sacking him would have been enough to appease the fans, however the appointment of Di Matteo was fortuitous for the opportunity that It provided the fans to demonstrate their cultural capital, recalling his status as a 'club legend' in a manner that allowed them to legitimate their 'traditional' identity providing them with the opportunity to re-construct their identity within the culture when their status as winners was under threat.

The way in which the fans negotiate their identity in relation to the status of the club is explicated when considering the opposing ways in which, 'Bruce' (2011) and 'Jim' (2012) depict a 'Proper Chelsea manager'. 'Bruce' focuses on AVB's 'winning' characteristics, with his status is conferred upon the club, something that the fans share in patronage. 'Jim' (2012) similarly evokes the suitability of Di Matteo for the job by suggestion that 'Robbie is *Chels* through and through,' indicating that 'he will be breaking his neck to get things back on track'. 'The idea that Di Matteo is 'Chels' thorough and through,' alludes to his association with the club before Abramovich's take over, enabling 'Jim' to evoke the ideals of traditional football culture, particularly a strong sense of community associated with the club while similarly helping to emphasise his knowledge of the club's history.

While 'Bruce' (2012) suggests that there 'is no place for sentiment at the top level', 'Jim' and 'Tim's' (2012) responses directly challenge this idea exemplifying the way in which the fans both engage and distance themselves from the club's history in relation to the way that the team are playing on the pitch and corresponds to their status in the wider culture, reflecting the complex ways in which the fans both identify and reject their positions as consumers but also the significance the participants place on the perception of the club, with the fans constructing their identity in a manner that continues to provide them with opportunities to 'cheer for self' (Vass 2003).

'Mourinho, Ferguson, Wenger, He's Better Than All of Them, He's 'Chels''

While 'Jim' and 'Tim' (2012) look to associate the appointment of Di Matteo with the club's move to a more traditional business strategy, significantly Di Matteo made the team win again. I was in attendance for his third home game in charge against Wigan (7/4/12) and the change in atmosphere around the ground was palpable. Di Mattteo's name was chanted throughout the match, something I had not witness with AVB even at the start of the season when his reputation as a 'winner' was intact. I interpret this as another example of the way in which the fans enact different identities in relation to the perception of the team in the wider culture. At the beginning of the season, the fans did not vocalise their support for AVB as they were *expecting* him to be successful. Contrarily with the appointment of Di Matteo the fans seemed keen to emphasise the idea that the appointment represented a change in Abramovich's business strategy. By generating such an atmosphere the fans were able to challenge the idea that as modern consumers, they merely turn up and expect to be entertained (see Hutchinson 1997).

Despite the change in atmosphere, I struggled to notice improvements on the pitch. As suggested, both fans and pundits had become exasperated with the team's defending and while Chelsea emerged victorious, beating Wigan 2-1, the team struggled to play with fluency, conceding possession cheaply while leaving space at the back for the opposition to exploit.

Walking back to the tube after the game I engaged in conversation with a group of fans about the game. I was surprised at their satisfaction with the performance. It is poignant that the fans were agitated with the way that I questioned the performance, as if my perceived negativity was impinging on their opportunity to 'cheer for self'.

Oliver: Well they got the job done in the end didn't they?
'Kat': Yeah, that was a great performance; I was so good to see Didier (Drogba) and Frank (Lampard) back out there.
'Dan': You can see the difference they make, they are always looking forward, always trying to create chances or shoot…we had a real bit of danger about us today.
Oliver: Yeah I know what you mean, Drogba is so direct and powerful, but the defending still doesn't convince me.

'Dan': We didn't concede today and we won the game, what more do you want? I thought we were great today, it was like the shackles had been taken off and the players could just express themselves.

Oliver: Yeah we looked good going forward, but against better strikers I think we would have lost today, Wigan could have easily won it playing on the break.

'Kat': [Laughs] What are you moaning about? We won today, and I thought it was a really entertaining game; we were passing it around better than we have in weeks.

If as I suggest the participants internalise the status of the club as part of their fan identity, I ague that 'Dan's' (2012) suggestion that 'the shackles' had 'been taken off' can equally be considered in relation to the fans; the appointment of Di Matteo provided them with new opportunities to substantiate their identity in opposition to Abramovich's hiring and firing policy, but significantly, once again, the victory provided them with the opportunity to identity as winners.

Initially I was surprised that 'Kat' and 'Dan' (2012) refused to acknowledge the team's poor defending. As suggested, the team's inability to defend was considered to be AVB's main tactical failing and with little over a week to implement his football philosophy Di Matteo had to rely on the same tactics. Despite this, the participants engaged in a passionate defence of the team 'they are always looking forward, always trying to create chances or shoot…we had a real bit of danger about us today' (Dan 2012). 'We didn't concede today and we won the game, what more do you want?' (Dan 2012). I believe that this corresponds to their support of Di Matteo rather than the quality of the football itself. I argue that the participant's agitation at my lack of enthusiasm exemplifies the significance of the club's success and significantly the perception of success to their fan identity, with the participants keen that I appreciate and recognise the victory. In this context 'Dan's' (2012) question 'what more do you want?' seems significant encapsulating both the primary motivation of the Chelsea fans, the need to engage with a winning team but also the desperation that their success is acknowledged within football culture.

With the team trailing so heavily after the first leg with Napoli, the participants, like the pundits gave the team very little chance of qualifying to the next round. Once again I watched the match in a local sports bar (14/3/12). Despite the optimism engendered by Di Matteo appointment, Chelsea were given very little chance of progression. Subsequently

the fans seemed to have a strategy in place for viewing the match that would alleviate blame or criticism away from Di Matteo:

Oliver: How are you feeling about tonight?

'Scott': I'm not nervous really; I'm just not expecting anything [Laugh].

'Dean': I'm expecting us to get beat

Oliver: So after the weekend you don't think the team can turn it around?

'Dean': I was encouraged by the way we played Saturday and I think we will go get into the top 4 now, but he's not a miracle worker, you can't really expect us to win tonight after that first leg.

'Scott': Yeah, like I expect us to pick up in the league and turn that around but, after the way we played in the first leg, you could have Mourinho, Ferguson Wenger[48], all of them on the touch line and they wouldn't get us out of the mess he (AVB) left us in.

It is significant that the participants make a distinction between the team's chances of success in the Premier League, and the Champions League. With eleven games remaining in the league, the fans present Di Matteo as the retuning hero, coming back to the club to 'salvage their season' and propel them towards the coveted top four positions. On the contrary, the possibility of him guiding the club to a second leg victory over Napoli and overturning a three goal deficit were regarded as next to impossible, but significantly, not due to Di Matteo but the defeat the team experienced under the guidance of AVB. 'Scott' and 'Dean' (2012), like 'Ali' and 'Harry' (2012) were looking to isolate AVB from the collective image of the club in an attempt to confer blame onto him for what they perceived to be an impending defeat.

Once again I argue that this relates to the fan's desire to manage the perception of the club and self identify as winners. As suggested the appointment of Di Matteo enabled the fans to distance themselves from Abramovich's business strategy, his hiring and firing policy leading to the appointment of AVB. While the fans look to accentuate Di Matteo's 'traditional' association with the club, in opposition to Abramovich I argue that the fans are still keen to construct Di Matteo as a 'winning manager', something I would experience two weeks later with 'Kat' and 'Dan' (2012) encouraging me to recognise the quality of the performance

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[48] Jose Mourinho- Chelsea's most successful manager and fan favourite. Alex Ferguson- Highly successful former Manchester United manager and Arsene Wenger- Arsenal manager longest serving manager in the Premier League.

against Wigan; 'What are you moaning about? We won today, and I thought it was a really entertaining game' (Kat 2012).

While the participants are keen to promote Di Matteo as the returning hero; 'I was encouraged by the way we played Saturday' (Dean 2012), 'I expect us to pick up in the league and turn that around' (Scott 2012). I argue that their responses similarly highlight their expectations that the club once again establish themselves as 'winners' that Di Matteo will 'go get (Chelsea) into the top 4' (Dean 2012) to provide them again with opportunities to 'cheer for self.' In doing so the emphasis of his credentials as a 'winning' manager contradicts the idea that his appointment represents a more sustainable 'traditional' business model, in which the club are not looking for instant success. This notion is vindicated by the way in which the participants continually emphasise the failings of AVB, alleviating Di Matteo from blame for what was seen to be an impending defeat in an attempt to maintain his status as a winner. 'You could have Mourinho, Ferguson Wenger, all of them on the touch line and they wouldn't get us out of the mess he (AVB) left us in' (Scott 2012), 'He's not a miracle worker, you can't really expect us to win tonight after that first leg' (Dean 2012).

While this helps to maintain Di Matteo's status, the juxtaposition between the 'successful' Di Matteo and the 'failure' AVB serves as a reminder of the ruthless action the club are willing to take to maintain their success. The simplistic opposition between the 'good' (Di Matteo) and the 'bad' (ABV) is problematic. While 'Tim' and 'Jim' (2012) heralded the appointment of Di Matteo as a return to the ideas of community and stability associated with traditional football culture, 'Scott' and 'Dean' (2012) provide a reminder of the ways in which AVB was ruthlessly hounded out of the club for his inability to deliver success accentuating the significance of success to their fan's identity.

The perceived failings of 'AVB' were so great that the club was left requiring a 'miracle' (Scott 2012) to progress. On the night Chelsea were exceptional beating Napoli 4-1 to win the tie 5-4 on aggregate. The defensive highline the team had struggled to implement had been abolished with the team sitting deeper in their own half, allowing Napoli to keep possession in front of them but prohibiting them space to run in behind. The team were set up to frustrate Napoli with all eleven players behind the ball when the team were not in

possession only for them to counter attack, catching them on the break when they had committed players forward.

'Scott' and 'Dean' (2012) were ecstatic at the final whistle.

Oliver: I'll be honest; I have to admit that I was unconvinced by the appointment of Di Matteo, but tactically tonight he got it spot on. That is the best I have seen Chelsea all season.

'Scott': How could you not be happy with the appointment? We played like *that* tonight and he's a Chelsea legend.

Oliver: I can't say anything about tonight, the performance was fantastic. He's a club legend but it's dangerous to presume that someone is going to be a great manager just because they had a good career as a player.

'Dean': After what I've seen tonight, he is a great manager. There was all that talk at the start of the season that AVB was the next Mourinho, the next big thing, but that performance was better than anything he gave us. I think that's the problem with Chelsea fans these days, they want the big names all the time, but Drogba continues to show that he is better than Torres and Di Matteo has already done a better job than AVB… the grass isn't always greener.

Oliver: You said before that he's not a miracle worker and lets be honest you were saying before kick off that you thought the team had no chance tonight so you can't have been totally convinced by him?

'Scott': Having seen that tonight, he is a miracle worker! To turn the team around like that in the little time that he's been here and get us out of the mess AVB left us in it's nothing short of amazing. Honestly, he is class. We could go all the way now. There is no one we couldn't beat if we play like we did tonight.

Oliver: Well you did say it could be Mourinho, Ferguson and Wenger all together in the dug out and we still couldn't win tonight, so I guess Di Matteo must be good?

'Dean': He's 'Chels' Mate, better than all of them.

The conversation epitomises the tension in which the fans both use the appointment of Di Matteo to oppose Abramovich's business strategy evoking his 'traditional' association with the club while dually revelling in their status as 'winners' that his appointment has helped to re-establish. I argue that this is highly significant representing the participant's unique fan

identity as consumer fans attract to the club by its culture of success, while being highly aware of the perception of the club in wider football culture. While I argue that the successful perception of the club largely contributes to the identity of the fans, the dual way in which the participants use the appointment of Di Matteo, to establish opposition, indicates that the fans are similarly aware of the way in which their consumer identity is perceived within football culture. This notion is epitomised by the way in which 'Dean' (2012) looks to distance his fan identity from the club's 'consumer fans', attributing blame on them for accepting Abramovich's 'hiring and firing' policy. As he suggests 'Chelsea fans these days… want the big names… the grass isn't always greener.'

While keen to demonstrate his legitimacy as a fan, challenging the consumer stereotype, it is significant that 'Dean's' (2012) rebuke again came as a response to my perceived lack of enthusiasm towards Di Matteo. Consequently I interpreted his remark as a derision of my fan identity, in which he attempts to position me with consumer fans that 'demand instant success.' One again I argue that 'Dean' engages in complex negotiation, placing me in a position of the 'other', to his identity that he constructs in opposition to Abramovich's capitalist business strategy and the club's consumer fans. However, I argue that it is 'Dean's' insistence that I recognise the ability of the manager and the magnitude of the victory that compromises his attempts to position himself against the club's consumer fans. Having outlined AVB's failure to alleviate Di Matteo from blame for what was expected to be an impeding defeat, the conversation revolves around the juxtaposition between the success of Di Matteo and the failure of AVB: 'he is a great manager' (Dean 2012), 'having seen that, he is a miracle worker' (Scott 2012), 'there is no one we couldn't beat' (Scott 2012).

It is ironic that having made a plea for consistency, lamenting consumer fans for constantly yearning for 'greener grass', 'Dean' (2012) contradicts his statement emphasising how the clubs fortunes dramatically improved by sacking AVB, Di Matteo, rescuing the club from the 'mess' he left behind. Significantly, like Di Matteo, AVB had also won his first two games in charge, a point I tried to raise with the participants, before being rebuked. Despite their lamentation of the frivolity of Chelsea's consumer fans with which I was associated, it was evident that the participants placed a premium on victory that belied the identity that they had fashioned for themselves. While it is understandable that the fans would be elated after such a impressive victory, once again like 'Kat' and 'Dan' (2012) I engaged with after the Wigan game, there was almost a desperation to emphasise the significance of victory,

seemingly in an attempt to convince me of the team's quality, as if my accordance validated their identity as winners. Again, I argue that this demonstrates the significance the participants place on the way in which the club are regarded within football culture, with the participants keen for me to recognise and validate the success of the club to enable them to 'cheer for self' and constitute their identity as winners.

'Dean's' (2012) final remark 'He's the best. He's 'Chels', seems significant and encapsulates the overall tension of the conversation. The appointment of Di Matteo was used by the fans that I engaged with to reflect the club's 'tradition' and 'history' indicative of a move to embrace a more stable business strategy, in opposition to Abramovich, at a time when his appointment of AVB failed to bring the fans the success they expected and tarnished the successful perception of the club within football culture. Significantly, Di Matteo had made the team win again, and at that moment of my research, represented the fan's ideal image of the club, as victorious and highly successful and achieving a result that would garner them respect from wider football culture. It is poignant that like 'Bruce's' (2011) description of ABV in the opening exchange, Di Matteo is personified by 'Dean' (2012) as a reflection of the club, 'He's 'Chels'. While Abramovich's hiring and firing policy and AVB are presented as incongruent to the successful culture of the club, 'Dean' looks to assimilate Di Matteo with the club's culture of success, an association he looks to establish by emphasising Di Matteo's evocation of club history and his ability to deliver the club's sporting success.

'There's Only One England Captain.'

When AVB had stopped achieving the necessary victories he was hounded out of the club, with the participants deriding his appointment as another 'quick fix'. Accordingly, Abramovich's hiring and firing policy was criticised by the fans for 'making the club a laughing stock' (Fred 2012). With the club failing to provide fans with opportunities to 'cheer for self' (Vass 2003), the fans, constructed concepts of 'us and them' to isolate AVB and Abramovich from the club's culture of success and tradition. With the appointment of Di Matteo and the team's return to winning ways, again I noticed a shift in way in which the fans negotiated their identity, assimilating Di Matteo with the club culture of success to mobilise a sense of hierarchy upon which the club markets itself. The way in which the fans enacted collective identity in opposition to wider football culture was explicitly in the way in

which the fans rallied around Chelsea captain John Terry and fellow player Ashley Cole after the pair become embroiled in a controversial racism scandal.

On October 24th 2011 the football world was thrown into chaos as footage emerged of John Terry, Chelsea and England Captain, racially abusing QPR defender Anton Ferdinand. While Terry was given a four game ban and fined £90,000, he escaped punishment in the court of law largely due to the testimony of black defender Ashley Cole. Terry was severely lambasted within football culture, criticised by fellow black professionals and stripped of the England captaincy while Cole faced similar criticism for 'defending the indefensible', supporting Terry and preventing the service of justice[49]. Both players were seen to bring the game in to serious disrepute. Already unpopular for various misdemeanours in their private lives[50] the pair became hate figures within football culture jeered by rival fans whenever they touched the ball. I witnessed this first hand when Newcastle visited Stamford Bridge (2/5/12), the notoriously vocal Newcastle fans chanted more songs directed at the pair than in support of their own team. Highlights of the repertoire included choruses of 'Scum, Scum, Scum', 'You know what you are, you know what you are, oh John Terry you know what you are' and 'John Terry hates you', directed at the team's Black players Didier Drogba, Ramirez, Jon Obi Mikel and Ryan Bertrand. While football culture was quick to vilify the pair, significantly the Chelsea fans that I engaged with refused to admonish their behaviour and even cited Cole's defence of his captain as a way in which the club had developed a great team spirit and sense of cohesion under Di Matteo. 'Craig' and 'Sheena' (2012)[51], encapsulate these sentiments. I approached the couple as 'Craig' was wearing a 'Terry is innocent' shirt being sold by bootleggers outside the stadium.

Oliver: I saw them selling your shirt up the road you must have wound a few people up with that?

'Craig': I'm not trying to wind any one up, it's about supporting him (Terry) when he's getting so much stick at the moment.

Oliver: I know he's such a big player for the club but come on, do you *really* think he's innocent?

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[49] Cole was notably condemned by high profile black players, Jason Roberts and Rio Ferdinand for supporting Terry over a fellow black professional
[50] Cole notably cheated on his Ex-wife and national sweetheart Cheryl Tweedy. Terry had an affair with team mate, Wayne Bridge's wife.
[51] See appendix A

'Sheena': He swore at him but it was in the heat of the moment, everyone knows how passionate he is and to say he is racist is just stupid, Ash (Cole) came out and said he's not a racist and if he was as bad as what everyone's saying then the black players would refuse to play with him wouldn't they? It's just been made into such a big deal by the media and everything because he's one of us.

'Craig': Players abuse each other on the pitch all the time but because its JT (John Terry) because it's one of ours, it's easy for people to try and make an example out of him, it's just another part of the media always having a go against our club. Everyone knows JT is vital to the success of this club and they are trying to bring him down.

Oliver: But he was caught on camera, it's a bit different from the normal banter you get on the pitch.

'Sheena': He's our captain for fuck's sake, he's been at the club his whole life, and put his body on the line week in, week out for us and you can't get over it and support him? I don't care what he's like as a person but when he's wearing the shirt and giving his all he'll get our support and that's how it should be, you protect your own don't you?

The participants engage in a passionate defence of the players, and while I did not feel threatened, it became clear as the encounter progressed that the pair were becoming increasingly annoyed that I continued to question Terry's morality. Significantly neither of the participants argued Terry's innocence, indeed apart from wearing the t-shirt, they carefully avoid answering the question. I argue that Terry's 'innocence' is of little importance to the participants, with the final exchange indicating that they accept his guilt and applaud Cole for 'protecting (his) own' (Sheena 2012). Fundamentally the pair's defence of Terry relates to his importance to the team as 'Craig' (2012) suggests 'JT is vital to the team's success'. This indicates the participants prioritise the success of the team over Terry's racism, and the way in which his action damages the perception of the club within football culture. Again a tension is apparent, the participants that I had previously engaged with looked to 'other' AVB and Abramovich, distancing them from the wider image of the club when their individual failings were seen to negatively affect the reputation of the club within football culture. While the team were struggling on the pitch, fans that I engaged with, described their sense of embarrassment, keen to ingratiate themselves to the wider culture by demonstrating their engagement with the club's tradition. Ironically, at a time when they should feel a sense of embarrassment at the actions of their captain, the figurehead of the club, the participants defiantly recognise his centrality to the club's

sporting success. This seems to be the fan's motivation behind their support of Terry and Cole. With the appointment of Di Matteo the team had been achieving good results, particularly in Europe, beating Benfica (4/4/12) and tournament favourites Barcelona (18/4/12) on route to the Champions League final helping to restore a sense of pride and communality around the club. Problematically the partisanship created by the appointment and the way in which Di Matteo has been able to galvanise the crowd with good result seemed to have pacified the participants into tolerating racism.

There are numerous indications throughout the conversation that the participant's defence of the players relates to the team's success. As 'Sheena' (2012) indicates she has little interest in Terry's misdemeanours as long as he gives his all for the team. Similarly 'Craig' (2012) forms associations between supporting the players and the success of the club as he suggests: 'everyone knows JT is vital to the success of this club and they are trying to bring him down', evoking the idea that the animosity directed towards Terry by wider football culture relates to the team's success and their subsequent jealousy.

A song adopted by the Chelsea fan's after winning the Champions League final encapsulates this notion, emphasising the way in which the fans support of the players during the scandal, relates to their recognition of their importance to the club's success. After the Champions League final as the players paraded round the pitch there were audible chants of 'We know what we are, we know what we are. Champions of Europe. We know what we are', the fans appropriating the song adopted by away fans in protest of Terry's actions. The song vindicates my argument that Terry and Cole were considered as vital elements to the team's success, the song both evoking the scandal and goading the wider culture to re-substantiate the idea that Chelsea are 'champions'. Similarly important is the use of the term 'we', while the song evokes the incident and importantly the reaction of wider football culture in response to the incident, the use of collective rhetoric recalls the way in which 'Bruce' (2011) uses collective rhetoric to construct his identity in association with the culture of the club.

The song works in a similar way, with the fans accentuating their constitutive relationship with the club[52] to self-identify as champions. As I have previously suggested, in cheering for the self, fans invest in players to the extent that they become part of their identity. By

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[52] Terry as its figurehead

refusing to condemn Terry, but instead recognising his ability as a player concomitant with his figurehead role as captain of the club, the fans were able to cheer for him, maintaining their total investment in the collective image of the club. This would allow them to feel at one with the celebration as part of the collective while absolved of guilt for his personal misdemeanours.

Once again there are indications throughout the conversation that the participants are aware of their status as consumers within football culture[53], with 'Sheena' and 'Craig' (2012) drawing upon the way in which they are perceived due to their self -identification as winner within the culture. They suggest Terry was an easy target due to his association with the club and his status as a winner: 'It's just been made into such a big deal… because he's *one of us*.' 'Because it's JT (John Terry) because it's one of ours, it's easy for people to try and make an example out of him.'

Rather than Terry or Cole it is significant that I became the 'other' in 'Sheena' and 'Craig's' construction of their identity. I was positioned in correlation with the 'jealous' media and rival fans, with the participants looking to deny my association with the club and subsequently my opportunity to share the clubs success; this idea is encapsulated by 'Sheena's' (2012) final comment:

> He's our captain for fucks sake, he's been at the club his whole life, and put his body on the line week in, week out for us and you can't get over it and support him? I don't care what he's like as a person but when he's wearing the shirt and giving his all he'll get our support and that's how it should be, you protect your own don't you.

Abramovich: 'I Wish He Would Just Fuck Off and Take His Money With Him.'

As I made my first trip to Stamford Bridge three weeks into the start of the new 2012/2013 season, to watch the team play Newcastle United (25/8/12) it was evident that the club had gone to great lengths to emphasise their status as 'champions' within the culture. As I approached the main gates at the entrance of the stadium, I was met by a huge banner

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[53] Something that has not been helped by their unwavering defence of Terry.

displaying scenes from the Champions League victory celebrations, accompanied by the slogan 'Welcome to Chelsea, home of the European Champions', a welcome that has been adopted by the public announcer greeting the fans before each home game. Even the club's new kit pays homage to the victory; labelled 'The Champions edition' the customary white marking had been replaced with gold. While it is customary for fans to get the name of their favourite player printed on the back of their shirt, it seemed poignant that overwhelmingly the fans had opted to get 'Champions 12' printed in homage to the team's success. These initiatives taken by the clubs marketing team are highly astute, complimenting my suggestion that the club purposely look to promote themselves as an attraction to a global audience. The banner can almost be interpreted as an advert greeting fans as they enter, reassuring them that they are associating themselves with winners and champions, helping fans to recognise the clubs capacity to fulfil their desires and consumer needs. The shirts also indicate that the club are highly aware of the need of their fans to be recognised as winners, with the gold shirts manufactured to signify their status and giving the fans an opportunity to revel in the team's success every time they wear it.

Adopting these initiatives the club must have been aware of the backlash they were likely to receive from wider football culture, with popular football blogs particularly quick to judge the tacky, gaudy and self-aggrandising shirts. Indeed the gold embellishment were used as an example to support the idea that the fans were 'football chavs', obsessed with status and self-promotion without class or the cultural capital to back it up (see Ahmed 2004; Hayward & Yar 2006; Walker 2008).

While attacks on chav culture are described by Hayward and Yar (2006: 16) as 'a top down attempt to maintain social order' indicative of the attacks on football's consumer fans made by self-identified traditional fans, it is significant that Cook (2000: 73) suggests alternatively that chav culture can be interpreted as a bottom up assault on the norm of middle class society. It is my argument that there is self-knowingness in the clubs promotion of the gold 'champion' shirts that evokes this idea, particularly Eco's (1976) concept of Semiotic guerrilla warfare, the way in which symbols of status can be re-appropriated and knowingly used to antagonise wider culture. As Aden (1999) argues, fandom is always based on acts of textual and social discrimination articulated via taste, and as previously suggested I argue that Chelsea fans are attracted to the club for the way in which fandom enables them to construct their identity in opposition to wider football culture.

In the previous chapter I analyse the ways in which Dons fans appropriated songs and customs associated with Wimbledon in celebration of their liminality, embracing their role as consumers within the culture. While I argue that the 'Champions edition' kit enables the Chelsea fans, like the Don's fans to play on their role as football consumers and 'chavs' within the culture, this has not been adopted by the fans as an act of protest, but instead seems to be a clever marketing idea by the club that enables the fans to 'cheer for self' and perpetuate their status as champions directly evoking the hierarchy that the fans buy into.

Despite the club's Champions League success, three months into the season the decorum of Stamford Bridge changed again. Less than a year after taking over, uniting the fans after AVB's tenure and delivering the best result in the clubs history, Di Matteo was sacked after the team's performances were deemed unsatisfactory by Abramovich. It was announced at the same time that former Liverpool boss Rafa Benitez would take over for the remainder of the season. As soon as the news broke I rang 'Jim' and 'Tim' (2012b), the participants I conversed with when Di Matteo was first appointed. Both participants were disgusted with the decision:

Oliver: Have you heard the news?

'Jim': Mate, I am disgusted, truly disgusted. I truly can't believe it. 6 Months ago he goes and wins us the European Cup and after a couple poor results he's sacked. It's a bloody Joke.

'Tim': I have but I can't believe it to be honest with you. I suppose I should never be surprised with Abramovich in charge but it's an embarrassing decision. He's made us a laughing stock again.

Oliver: What about Rafa getting the job.

'Jim': What a bloody joke that is. You have a man that loves the club like Di Matteo and you replace him with someone who has come out and criticised the club and the fans in the press before. Like I say I'm disgusted, we just won the European Cup, the place has been buzzing every week and this will completely kill it.

'Tim': Its embarrassing, this is the guy that has come out in the press before when he was Liverpool boss and was on about how his team were going to win it for their 'real football fans' and went on this rant calling us a plastic club. I can't stand the guy. Di Matteo was loved here, he was a god and to get rid of him for this guy (Benitez)…. Honestly mate I've had enough of Abramovich now.

Oliver: Really? He makes some very controversial decisions but without his investment the club wouldn't have won any of its success the last few years.

'Tim': I know but I just don't care anymore, his decisions are making the club a laughing stock. Everyone is going to be hammering us again tomorrow and I can't blame them. What more does he want, we won the Champions League, you can't do better than that but on a whim he goes and fires the most successful manager we've ever had. This is my football club and he's just treating it like his toy. I wish he would just fuck off and take his money with him at this point.

It seems highly significant and indeed emblematic of modern football culture that in my research period the fan's construction of identity had become cyclic. The most obvious indication was in the choice of language used by the participants. Evoking my exchange with 'Fred' (2012), 'Jim' and 'Tim' (2012b) describe the club as a 'joke' with which they are 'embarrassed' to be associated. As suggested the appointment of Di Matteo was highly astute encouraging fans to form cohesive bonds with the club after their identity had been 'tarnished' by AVB's 'failure' while their success in the Champions League enabled them to once again self-identify as winners. The exchange emphasises my argument that despite their almost antagonistic relationship with wider football culture, Chelsea fans are highly concerned about the way in which they are perceived. Now that they feel that their identity has been challenged they again appear vulnerable. Under AVB, 'Fred' (2012) suggested that he felt a sense of embarrassment, that the club's lack of success had tarnished their identification as 'winners.' Ironically now 'Jim' and 'Tim' (2012b) are embarrassed that having established themselves as winners, Abramovich would do something to harm their status, inviting criticism and supporting the negative stereotypes upheld about the club within the wider culture.

This notion is alluded to by the way in which the fans lament the appointment of Rafa Benitez. While Di Matteo had encouraged the fans to identify as winners again, it is important to note that Di Matteo also provided them with a perfect counter argument to the suggestion that the club prioritised victory and status at the expense of tradition. As 'Tim' and 'Jim' (2012b) indicate the appointment of Benitez seemingly holds a mirror to Chelsea fans. Accepting Benitez into the community surrounding the club can almost be considered as an acceptance of the idea that he perpetuated, that Chelsea should be considered as 'plastic', artificial and emblematic of the game's capitalism. Their level of

grievance at Benitez's appointment is such that I argue that the fans are fully aware of how it will be perceived in the wider culture, and importantly how the appointment significantly contradicts their claims of legitimacy or self-identity as infallible champions.

With this in mind it seems significant that the 'Tim' (2012b) makes such a point of venting his anger at Abramovich, blaming him for the way in which the club will be perceived in wider football culture. As a fan group that accentuate the importance of winning to their identity, this is significant, as Abramovich has provided the club with the resources that have enabled them to experience success, defining the winning culture that the fans look to identify with. Subsequently I argue that there is a knowingness about the anger directed at Abramovich, in which 'Tim's' (2012b) lamentation of his control of the club, can be interpreted as a ploy to emphasise his 'legitimate' fan identity, that demonstrates that he is not a 'plastic' consumer as suggested by Benitez.

I strongly doubt that any of the Chelsea fans that I have engaged with throughout the research period would truly want Abramovich to leave the club, particularly as a significant number of the participants admit to being drawn to the club after he took charge promising them world class footballers, entertainment and the chance to experience victory. Indeed I argue that the opportunities Abramovich provide the fans to 'cheer for self' are too great for them to truly wish for his departure. While 'Tim' (2012b) makes a passionate case that Abramovich is treating '*his*' club like a 'toy', I believe he has the relationship the wrong way round. Fundamentally it is Abramovich's club and he has the financial capacity to do with it as he pleases. This corresponds to the astute argument made by 'Fran' (2012) in the previous chapter:

> Fans need to understand that with the big investment in football now, like Abramovich at Chelsea*,* they, or 'the community' don't own anything. It's Abramovich that buys the players and success, not the fans. Abramovich owns Chelsea he owns the club he buys the players, he's the man with all the power there. They love him when they do well, they won loads when they got (Jose) Moruniho didn't they, he's the man that made the decisions and brought him to the club.

It is the awareness that the fans have of their status within wider football culture that I argue accounts for their attempts to emphasise their engagement with the discourse surrounding traditional football culture, particularly when the team are not giving them reasons to 'cheer for self' on the pitch. However, despite their knowledge of their reputation as consumers with the culture I argue that the need to 'win' and self-identify as winners always seems to override their attempts to 'legitimate' their identity within football culture or engaging in acts of protest. As 'Tim' (2012b) states '*right now* I wish he would just fuck off and take his money with him *at this point*' (emphasis added), a quotation that seems to epitomise my argument. Abramovich was criticised and scorned *at this point* in time when his actions were seen to have affected the clubs reputation and the fans ability to identity as winner.

Positioning himself in opposition to Abramovich and his control of the club 'Tim' (2012b) take ownership of the club: 'This is my football club and he's (Abramovich) just treating it like his toy.' As a fan attracted to the club for the way in which it enables him to experience success and identify as a 'winner,' within football culture it could be suggested that the club is in fact his 'toy,' however it is significant that 'Tim,' looks to emphasise his deep emotional connection with the club, drawing on the discourse associated with the ways in which traditional fans form identification with their club (see Crampsey 1990, Imlach; Devine 2012), in opposition to Abramovich's frivolous relationship with the club established through capitalism.

I argue that 'Tim's' (2012b) attempts to distance Abramovich for the club epitomises the fan's desire to 'cheer for self.' When the team were experiencing success, Abramovich was heralded by the fans for ruthlessly disposing of AVB and hiring Di Matteo, transforming them once again into a winning team that they could be proud of. A week into Benitez's tenure (28/11/12) there was a poll on a popular message board 'The Shed End' asking fans to vote on who they wanted to succeed him as their next manager. If Abramovich appoints fan's favourite Jose Mourinho for his second spell in charge[54], once again I argue that Abramovich would be lauded as a hero. In this context I speculate that the opinions of wider football culture would be of little relevance to Chelsea fans with Mourinho likely to be presented, like Di Matteo as a 'returning hero' another Chelsea legend back to create a sense of communality and cohesion around the club, while his managerial record virtually

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[54] This became reality (3/7/13) when Mourinho was appointed Chelsea manager for the second time

guarantees the club silverware, providing fans with promises of 'entertainment' and opportunities to cheer for self.

Chapter 7. Pub. 'MG's': Conducting Ethnography In The 'Virtual Terrace'.

<u>**Extra Time.**</u>

While the preceding chapters document the unique ways in which consumer fans enact fandom in relation to the specific culture of their club, the chapters similarly present a commonality between the ways in which the fans construct their identity. I argue that the fans engage in a process of complex discursive negotiation, constructing their identities by drawing on the hegemonic discourses that continue to surround the culture: 'capitalism' and 'tradition', informed by the cultures of their club, and their engagement with popular and academic text. My unique argument is that the fan's levels of engagement and understanding of these discourses produce different expectations of how they *should* identify as fans. Indeed I argue that fans construct their identity based on their different perceptions of what is *expected* of them within the culture.

I document the way that participants self-identify as consumers within the culture, 'buying into' the culture of their club for the way in which it is seen to address their consumer need, yet as indicated the fan's identification as consumers does not mean that they consume passively or that they fail to identity with discourse of the games tradition. Indeed In each chapter I acknowledge the ways in which participants similarly construct their identity in opposition to the culture of their club to enact a fandom culturally recognized and associated with traditional football culture. The more I considered my data, looking to identify themes between participants, the more I started to pick up on this tension. It became increasingly apparent that the participants exercised interactive and flexible fan identities that explicitly manifest in their relationship with the culture of their clubs choosing to identify and distance themselves from it interchangeably based on their individual expectation of the *type* of fandom that each situation required.

On one hand this would suggest that the identity of consumer fans is 'trapped' in discourses of representation, the game's capitalism and tradition; however I argue that the expectations for fandom produced by these discourses varied in relation to the culture of each club and the degree to which the participants engage with popular and academic texts. I argue that this accentuates the agency of the fans 'within' the culture, engaging in interactive 'exceptional readings' (Sandvoss 2005). Acknowledging the communality in my

data I felt compelled to conduct further ethnographic research, taking my research into 'extra time'. While presenting a unique insight into the ways in which self-identified consumer fans construct their identity, I was keen to assess the way in which self-identified 'traditional fans' enact identity, to see if they engage in similar discursive negotiations and to assess whether their identity is similarly shaped by their expectations of what it means to be a 'traditional fan.' I believe that the inclusion of this chapter operates to further explicate the nuances of identity within contemporary football culture while similarly helping to promote cohesion between 'consumers' and 'traditional' fans within the culture. I looked to achieve this by approaching both self-identified fan groups with methodological parity, conducted further ethnography within the 'virtual terraces' of 'MG's', a popular sports bar in Norfolk.

Contextualising the 'Virtual Terrace.'

A significant proportion of historical literature documents the affinity between the public house and football culture (see Williams 2000: King 2002; Hopcraft 2006). This literature predominantly describes the ritualistic significance that the pub has had in the life of the fan, providing them with 'the holy trinity, beer, football and male bonding' (Weed 2008: 189), a space to read about football, talk about football and meet with friends before attending live matches. However, since the sale of rights to televise live matches to BSkyB in 1992 and the implementation of stadia modernisation in correlation with the Taylor Report, much of the contemporary literature has argued that the role of the pub within the culture has developed, the pub described as a significant and regular venue to watch live matches (Brimon 1998; Bale 1998; Williams 2000; Weed 2008). Much of this contemporary literature argues that the pub provides the 'traditional' fan with a 'more authentic' alternative to the modern stadium, with the pub on match days becoming a 'virtual terrace.'

Citing evidence from market information source Mintel and Keynote, Weed (2008) outlines the contemporary popularity of pub fandom in England. He suggests that in 2002 9.1 million chose to watch live football in the pub, a figure notably higher than the 8.7 million that paid to attend a match in the modern stadium. This figure is equivalent to 19% of the population. Taking into account the increasing popularity of the pub as a regular venue to watch live football, in correlation with the literature that considers the pub as stadia in its own right, this chapter explores pub fandom as a unique cultural experience.

The first literature that acknowledged the changing role of the pub within football culture described the fan's patronage in terms of a necessity. With the sale of Premier League broadcasting right to BSkyB and the relatively low penetration of satellite and cable TV services, Weed (2008) estimates that between 5% and 8% of the population would have been able to access the first year of BSkyB's Premier League coverage at home. Subsequently it is suggested that this lead to an increased number of fans keen to watch live matches but deterred by the modern stadium, being forced to watch matches in the public house. While the idea of 'necessity' still surrounds the pub, in the suggestion that the increased ticket prices and the wider gentrification of the game has made attending live matches virtually impossible for 'traditional' working class fans, it is generally accepted with the high uptake in satellite subscription, that while the culture of pub fandom may have largely developed out of necessity, it has now developed into an event that is attractive in its own right. Weed (2008) estimates that over a third of men in the UK visited the pub to watch a live game for the 2011/2012 season due to the way that it is said to afford a 'participatory fandom' indicative of the terraces and traditional football culture. Williams (2000) encapsulates this idea suggesting that Sky offers young male fans, at least, the prospect of collective and participatory pub TV coverage, the 'new terraces' in an age of what are, for them sanitised and atmosphere free all-seater stadiums.

I argue that this discourse surrounding pub fandom produces certain expectations for fans that are fundamentally different than those of the modern stadium. To refer back to the quote from Ken Bates (cited by King 2002), he argues that consumer fans expect the modern stadium to reflect football's assimilation with modern leisure industries in which fans expect a level of comfort and amenity, a proposition that is vindicated by the participants in the previous chapters, describing the ways in which the modern stadium addresses their needs as consumers. 'Roy' (2011), the Norwich fan, addresses the way in which his fandom enables him to 'come together' with his wife and son to 'enact family.' Conversely the construction of the pub as a 'virtual terrace,' evokes the traditional image of the terraces as encapsulated by Hopcraft (2006: 188), ' trapped for a couple of hours in a swaying crush of bodies, frequently forced off his feet in a delirious surge of mass movement, coming away with bruises and stains.' I argue that this construction of the pub as a 'traditional' space helps to produce certain expectations about the demographic attracted to the pub, the atmosphere engendered within the pub, and the types of behaviour expected within the pub, making the pub attractive to a generation of fans

enticed by the collective images of revelry and the discursive idea that the pub enables the enactment of a 'more authentic' participatory fandom that has been outlawed in the modern stadium.

In this context, while the modern stadium is described as a regulated space, I question whether the pub is similarly regulated with the culture of the pub, produced and maintained by the discourses perpetuated by self-identified traditional fans that construct it as a 'traditional' space, managing expectations in the same way in which the game's modern capitalism and the culture of each club helps to produce expectations for consumer fans in the modern stadium.

With the growing popularity of pub fandom and the proliferation of literature that describes the pub as a legitimate alternative to the modern stadium, this chapter approaches the pub as stadia in its own right. Accordingly ethnography was conducted in the same manner as the previous chapters, in which 'MG's', a popular sports pub in Norfolk was selected as site for regular analysis. The impetuous for this selection was inspired by a fortuitous encounter with my neighbour 'Toby' (2012)[55], who invited me to join him and his group of friends to watch England's Euro 2012 matches[56]. This provided me with access to a regular venue from which to conduct my research as well as the opportunity to engage with him and a group of his friends, self-identified traditional fans, as a 'complete participant' (Reed-Danahay 1997; Bryman 2008; Scott-Jones & Watt 2010). In correlation with the previous chapters I positioned myself within the 'arena,' to observe the behaviour of his group as well as the wider patrons of the pub, sharing their sensory experience. Like my research in the modern stadium, I complimented my observations with a series of semi-structured interviews, conducted both with 'Toby' and his friends as well as other 'pub fans' attracted to 'MG's' for the tournament. While the use of ethnography enabled me to consider the pub, as a legitimate modern venue in is own right, the use of the method helped to maintain the continuity of my work to ensure my comparisons between the collective identities and experiences that I document in each chapter are as valid as possible.

Like the fans within the stadium, the patrons that frequented the pub provided me with a self-selecting research sample. In my attempt to maintain methodological parity, I

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[55] See appendix A
[56] France Vs England (11/6/12); Sweden Vs England (15/6/12) England Vs Ukraine (19/6/12); England Vs Italy (24/6/12)

conducted eight semi-structured interviews concomitant with each case study, with eight conducted throughout the tournament. Interviews were again guided by an inventory and conducted largely before kick off. However on particular occasions when I encountered something interesting when the match was in progress, I purposefully looked to engage with the discerning participants at a suitable stop in play, half time or upon the final whistle. Concomitant with my in-stadia ethnography, participants were fully informed about the aims of the research, informed consent was obtained, anonymity was assured and participants were aware that their responses were to be safely stored.

Invited to the pub by 'Toby' (2012), the chapter similarly features extracts from informal conversations that I had with members of his group. Again the behaviour of the group was occasionally reprehensible but I did not intervene. I justify this in my methodology chapter by suggesting that the motivations underpinning these expressions relate to the participant's fan identity or importantly their *expectations* of how to enact and articulate their identity. This seems explicit in relation to 'Toby' and his friends, indeed I argue throughout the chapter that there was an element of performativity to our exchanges with the group acting in a way that related to their expectations of what constituted a 'traditional' fan identity. Again while reprehensible I argue that the more unsavoury elements of the group's fan performance provided me with a range of valid data that provided me with an insight into the wider way in which the group looked to construct their identity.

While I was invited to the pub by 'Toby' (2012), I obtained permission to conduct my research from the landlord. Before commencing my research, two days before each match I publicized my research and my attendance at 'MG's' on the pub's Facebook page. Knowledge of my position as a 'researcher fan,' seemed to spread by word of mouth, and patrons within the pub approached me frequently to chat. I am again, aware that this does not fully solve the power imbalance, with perhaps some of the patrons unaware of my research intentions, yet as suggested I was keen to maintain methodological parity with my research conducted within the modern stadium. In the modern stadium not everyone I observed or engaged with were aware of my intentions.

While I am aware that this may raise ethical issue, I document throughout the thesis, instances when I believe that my status as a researcher may have influenced responses from

the participants or prompted them to act in a way that may have been seen as 'what was expected.' As such I argue that my engagement with participants that may not have been aware of my intentions as a research, can be considered as a valid counterpoint to this, enabling me to test assumptions or ideas suggested by other participants without the fear that their responses may be influenced by my status as a researcher. Again auto-ethnographic reflection is included throughout the chapter to reflect on this and evaluate my role within the process.

While an analysis of pub fandom around a specific team would have enabled me to compare the way in which collective identity is enacted in contrast to the modern stadium, I opted to conduct my research around England's Euro 2012 campaign. There is a range of ethnographic research that analyses the role of the pub in screening major international tournaments (Bale 1998, Brimson 1998; Weed 2008), and in keeping with much of the literature, these studies predominantly position the pub as the space of the 'traditional' fan, framing the experience in accordance with the terraces. However it is poignant that a different strand of literature, written by different sources, authors that do not self-identify as traditional fans, frame international matches as contests that attract more 'casual' fans whose interest is promoted by a sense of national collectively and sporting grandeur (Carrington 1998; Bondy 2010; Brown 2014). These texts similarly suggest that fans are attracted to the pub to watch live matches, but not for its association with the game's traditional culture or relive the terraces, but to experience a sense of 'togetherness' and collectivity that the semi-public nature of the pub facilitates. Carrington (1998: 109) suggests that different agents prompt this 'casual' fandom: 'the media,' 'neighbours' and 'work mates.'

The different ways in which international matches are said to attract a different 'type' of fan with different needs emphasises the discursive *construction* of the pub as a 'traditional' space. Brimson (1998) describes the pub as the traditional fan's 'natural' home, yet the different literature surrounding the pub and international matches indicates that there is nothing 'natural' about the relationship between the pub and the traditional fan with the second strand of literature indicating that pub is equally attractive to 'casual' fans. This tension suggests that different agents frame the football event in a manner that produces different expectations for fandom. With this in mind I rationalised this choice with the idea

that international matches would provide me the opportunity to consider the ways in which 'traditional fans,' construct their identity, and frame the pub as a 'traditional' space.

Despite my intentions to frame the pub in the same way I consider Carrow Road, Stadium MK or Stamford Bridge, there are fundamental differences that the different discourses surrounding international matches alludes to. Fans from the previous chapters indicate that they share a collective identity that is engendered by the culture of their club that is mobilised in support of the same team. While the literature describe those that frequent the pub as 'pub fans,' the different ways in which the pub is framed indicates that patrons are not likely to share a collective identity in the same way as the fans suggest in the previous chapters. For example, while both strands of literature describe how fans are attracted to the pub to watch international matches, they indicate that the fans have different expectation for fandom that are framed by different agents. While the Snake Pit fans may enact a different fandom to the family fans that I engaged with at Norwich City, It is important to note that their fandom is still prompted by their shared engagement and negotiation of the culture of their club. Conversely the appeal of the pub is said to derive from the fact that it does not operate with a unified culture, something that becomes manifest for international tournaments, with the pub attracting fans with different identities and expectations for fandom.

The screening of England's Euro 2012 matches at 'MGs' attracted a particularly diverse clientele, challenging the 'traditional' construction of the pub. I have argued throughout the thesis that the fan's sense of collective identity is substantiated in negotiation of the two main discourses of contemporary football culture: the game's capitalism and the game's traditional culture that produces individual expectations as to how to enact fandom. The international matches that I experienced at 'MGs' seemed to attract fans that embodied these discourses, both self-identified 'traditional' fans (traditional football culture) and 'casual fans' (football's capitalism). Observing the interaction between the different types of fans that I encountered in 'MGs', enabled me to assess this negotiation with the 'traditional' fan's expression of collective identity tempered by the presence of 'consumer' or 'casual' fans, within the pub. Indeed the presence of 'casual' fans within the pub seemed to compromises the group's expectations of the pub as a 'traditional' venue, emphasising the way in which their fandom is enacted in negotiation but also the way in which their expectations for fandom had been constructed in highly specific way.

'‘MG's' is quality… It's just like the darts.'

A couple of hours before England were set to kick off their campaign against France (11/6/12) I caught 'Toby' (2012) my neighbour coming out of his house in a Hawaiian shirt with an inflatable guitar under his arm. I did not consider that he was going to watch the match.

Oliver: You are out of work early, are you going to a party?

'Toby': Yeah kind of, I'm going to 'MG's' to watch the England game, I booked the afternoon off so I can get down there early and get a good spot.

Oliver: I love the shirt and the guitar, is it fancy dress down there?

'Toby': Haven't you been down 'MG's' for the footy? Its like a massive party, the place is always packed out and it's a right laugh. You know like at the darts at Ally Pally (Alexandra Palace) when you see everyone in the crowd all pissed up in fancy dress? It's like that down there. I made an event on Facebook, so all the boys are coming down for it. You can come if you want?

From our initial conversation, it appeared that 'Toby' (2012), was keen to emphasise the carnival of 'MG's' framing his fandom in terms of 'a party', the football event providing him with the opportunity to 'get pissed', 'dress up' and engage in a collective revelry, something that Bale (1998) indicates is synonymous both with the terraces and contemporarily the 'virtual terraces' of the pub. The exchange suggests that 'Toby' identifies with this discourse surrounding the pub, with the culture of 'MG's' central to his fan identity, drawing on the idea that the pub has become a carnivalesque space. The exchange provides an early indication of 'Toby's' conception of 'traditional' football culture. In the literature review I document how 'traditional' football culture is historically associated with the game's bureaucracy, in which fandom was defined by 'communal representation', 'family lineage' and 'indefinable emotional attachments' (see Crampsey 1990; Imlach 2005; Devine 2012). However 'Toby's' conception of traditional football culture, like the Snake Pit fans at Norwich City seems to be influenced by the contemporary texts that associate traditional football culture with the participatory fandom of the terraces as described by the self-identified 'traditional fans,' that I argue produce these texts in an attempts to enable the continuation and validation of their identity within the culture.

By making this association between the pub and the terraces I ague that these texts produce certain expectations about the demographic attracted to the pub, the atmosphere, and the types of behaviour associated with the pub. The exchange with 'Toby' (2012) supports this idea: he alludes to 'MG's' andocentric culture 'all the boys are coming down' (Toby 2012) and how the venue is 'always packed' and promises to be 'a right laugh,' in which he forms associatation between the revelry of the pub on match days and the darts at Alexander Palace, an event with a similar raucous, andocentric culture (Toby 2012), this association seems poignant. While 'Toby's' fandom is indicative of a 'traditional fan identity', with the revelry that he associates with the pub in keeping with the nostalgic depictions of the terraces, he does not make this association, instead describing his motivations for fandom in relation to the opportunity that matches provides him to 'get pissed' and be part of a 'massive party,' to experience collective revelry as described by the literature rather than the conscious continuation of a cultural tradition.

While the discourse that presents the pub as 'virtual terrace' may have been produced with the intention of maintaining traditional terrace culture, this does not necessarily mean that this discourse will be internalised by the fans and imparted into their fan identity. Indeed, while Toby (2012) identifies with the culture of the pub and the carnivalistic affordance that pub fans *expect*, there does not seem to be a political or transgressional element to his fandom. While the literature describe those that frequent the pub as 'traditional fans,' Toby does little to identify as such, instead presenting himself as a fan of the culture that the pub is said to represent. This notion is vindicated be the way in which he assimilates the pub experience to the darts at Alexander Palace rather than the terrace experience as outlined by the literature.

Comparisons can be made between 'Toby' (2012) and the fans that I engaged with in the Snake Pit with the participants drawing on the same themes of 'getting pissed', 'partying' and 'having a laugh' to self-identify as traditional fans[57]. Like 'Toby' the fans suggest that their identity is informed by their understanding of the culture of their club/pub; however it is significant that unlike the pub, that the culture of Norwich City is incongruent with their sense of identity, meaning that their traditional identities opposes the culture of the stadium and is enacted in negotiation with the club's family culture. Indeed it is the feeling

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[57] See Chapter four

of opposition that the fans have to the club's wider culture that produces their sense of identity.

The previous chapters document the way in which fans from Norwich, MK Dons and Chelsea heavily identify their fandom, in which the culture of their club is central to their fan identity. Similarly the exchange indicates that the culture of the pub is foundational to 'Toby's' (2012) identity, yet the literature associated with the pub suggests that the pub fans self-identify as traditional fans (Brimon 1998; Bale 1998; Williams 2000; Weed 2008). I argue that the exchange alludes to the idea that 'Toby' identifies with the pub for what it opposes as much as what it represents. It is suggested that the pub fulfils the need of fans keen to experience a participatory fandom indicative of the terraces. Indeed I argue that the discursive construction of the public house is attractive to 'Toby' due to the expectations that are produced; the idea that pub fandom affords a participatory experience considered to be more 'authentic' than the modern stadium, an experience that he significantly associated with the darts.

Taking this into account, it is my argument that 'Toby' (2012) self identifies as a 'traditional fan,' to enact a fandom that is considered incongruent with the modern stadium. Like the fans that I have engaged with in the previous chapters, I argue that the pub addresses his individual need, providing him with the opportunity to experience a participatory fandom with link minded people of a similar demographic. Like the Snake Pit fans, I argue that his desire to enact a fandom that is incongruent with the modern stadium emphasising the way in which his fandom is enacted in negotiation, with his identity informed by his understanding of commercial football culture and his expectation of the pub as a traditional space.

'For Fuck Sake I put all the details up on Facebook'

Disregarding a couple of family groups that subsequently left upon completing their meals at the pub, we were the first to arrive at 'MG's' for the match. 'Toby' (2012) was initially satisfied that his objective of securing a 'prime position' had been achieved, claiming a space at the back of the venue. Pearson's (2012) ethnography of 'traditional' Blackpool fans describes the measures that fans would take to get time off work to attend away days and the premium they place on the 'perfect spot' within the terraces, like 'Toby' arriving early to

ensure that they secured the best place within the stand. 'Toby' seemed aware of this ritual and was satisfied he had taken the time off to 'mark his territory' with an England flag. After twenty minutes without any of his friends turning up and few notable England fans taking their place, he started to get agitated, perturbed that his friends did not share his commitment to the ritual.

The following quotes emphasises the significance 'Toby' (2012) places on the collective experience of the pub and the way that his expectations as a fan are associated with the shared recognition and identification of his friends: 'I can't believe none of them have turned up yet, I told them I was going to get down here early and it looks like they can't be bothered. They better dress up or I am going to be really pissed off.' 'I can't believe how quiet it is this place is normally packed. We are going to look like right pricks if its empty and we are here dressed up trying to party on our own.' 'I don't get it, it's England's first game and I thought everyone would be down here. Everyone was buzzing about it on Facebook, and now it looks like they can't be arsed. I took time off work and everything for fuck sake but where are they? Probably sat on the sofa shovelling shit into their mouths.'

Like many of the heavily identified fans that I have engaged with in previous chapters, 'Toby' (2012) looks to perpetuate his legitimacy as a fan, emphasising the commitment that he has made 'taking time off work,' 'getting down early,' and organizing the meet up on Facebook, accentuating his commitment by framing himself akin to the traditional Blackpool fans described by Pearson (2012). In his self-affirmation it is notable that 'Toby' recalls the argument posed against 'modern football fans', insinuating that those that do not share his commitment or 'can't be arsed,' have a passive less authentic fan identity (see Bale 1998; Brimson 1998; Hopcraft 2006; Weed 2008). This notion is particularly explicit in his anger at those 'buzzing about' the match on Facebook but seemingly can't be bothered to engage in active fandom. 'Toby' draws on the discourse that juxtaposes (his) participatory, traditional fandom with passive consumer fandom, as encapsulated by the idea that his friends are 'probably sat on the sofa shovelling shit into their mouths' (Toby 2012), in which he draws upon the discourse that describes the lethargy of armchair fans, emphasising their passivity 'sat on the sofa' and ill-consumption 'shovelling shit into their mouths.'

While the quotes indicate that 'Toby' (2012) has an understanding of the debates within football culture, I argue that his grievance is multifaceted, while he attempts to create

distinction between 'traditional' and 'consumer' fans; he similarly highlights the importance of collectivity to his fan identity. His desire for communality is emphasised throughout the exchange: 'I can't believe none of them have turned up yet.' 'I can't believe how quiet this place is.' 'This place is usually packed.' 'I thought everyone would be down here.' Large crowd numbers are synonymous with a 'good experience,' both within the terraces and within the virtual terraces of the pub. Hopcraft (2006: 188) describes how the kinetic and sensual experience of the terraces were at their optimum when the fan was part of a enthused crowd, 'Packed in, swaying and singing in unison,' while Brimson (1998: 166) describes the appeal of the pub in terms of the sociality of 'the same group of geezers' packed into the pub together. 'Toby' (2012) acknowledges the centrality of the crowd to traditional football culture, framing it as a vital part of his identity. Citing the importance of the crowd helps 'Toby' frame his identity as a traditional fan. As Brimson (1998) suggests, crowds have a transformative ability, with their convergence and collective need transforming the pub into stadia in its own right. 'Toby' seems aware of this; fearful that 'MG's' may not fulfil his need to experience participatory fandom. 'We are going to look like right pricks if its empty and we are here dressed up trying to party on our own.'

Again I argue that parallels can be established with Norwich City fans that I engaged with in the Snake Pit. The fans seemed fully aware of the traditions of football culture and like 'Toby' (2012) imparted effort to try and replicate elements of terrace culture in their fan performance in attempts to combat what they perceived to be the inauthentic family image of the club. It was my argument in the correlating chapter that the identity of the Snake Pit fans was complex, with their identity construct by the expectations of how they thought they *should* act as traditional fans and subsequently how the club's family fans interpreted their fandom. Similarly I argue that it is the effort made by 'Toby' to enact a traditional fan identity as indicated by the effort made to actively foster collectivity and transform 'MG's' into a virtual terrace that emphasizes his expectations for fandom and importantly his desire to be recognized as a traditional fan. Like the Snake Pit fans, I argue that it is his expectations of what it means to be a traditional fan and his desire to be recognized as such that inform his performance. Yet while the Snake Pit fans, construct their identity in opposition to Norwich's wider fan culture, 'Toby's' fandom requires the transformative power of the crowd and the convergence of *like-minded* people to authenticate his identity transforming the pub into a terrace. Here the fact that it was an international tournament becomes significant. As suggested international matches are said to attract more casual

fans, yet the pub requires the convergence of like-minded traditional fans to transform it into a 'virtual terraces.' I argue that casual fans threaten the transformability of the pub, and 'Toby' seems aware of this, desperate for his friends to join him to frame the culture and dictate the identity of the pub, enabling him to enact his traditional identity.

As indicated, the first literature documenting the emergence of the public house as a regular venue to watch live football, described its appeal in terms of necessity, that with low satellite penetration and the gentrification of the stadium, 'traditional fans' were 'forced' to descend upon the pub to watch live matches and as such a culture of pub fandom 'spontaneously' developed, again described as the convergence of likeminded fans (Bale; 1998; Brimson 1998; King 2002). While Weed (2008) argues that the necessity has been removed from pub fandom, I argue that so too has the spontaneity. While 'Toby' (2012) describes the efforts he has made to foster collectivity around the event, 'posting about the event on Facebook', 'taking time off work', and 'securing the best position' (Toby 2012); I argue that this effort emphasizes his role as an agent in constructing the football event, again alluding to his individual need to enact a traditional identity, and be recognized as a traditional fan.

This need for recognition is alluded to throughout the exchange, with 'Toby' 'marking his territory' (2012) with an England flag and encouraging his friends to 'dress up,' helping their self-identification, making the group distinct from other groups, particularly the casual fans within the pub. While Brimson (1998) indicates that pub fandom mirrors the terraces in the way in which the same group of 'geezers' naturally congregate together, this research indicates that the congregation of the lads and their colonization of the venue was not the result of the natural or spontaneous continuation of traditional terrace culture in which like minded fans gravitated, but the product of organization and effort on 'Toby's' (2012) behalf to bring people together and actively foster collectivity, to engineer an experience in keeping with his expectations of the terraces. After finally losing patience, he decided to call his friends reminding them of their promise to join him: 'you better be on the way and don't bother coming if you're not dressed up' (Toby 2012). This quotation seems to encapsulate, my argument about 'Toby's' fandom, seemingly of little meaning if enacted individually or the collective identity of his friends as 'traditional fans' is not tangible to the wider patrons of the pub.

Complexly, while collectivity is central to his identity, like the fans from the previous chapter, I argue that collectivity relates to his *individual* need. In this context I argue that parallels can similarly be established with the Chelsea fans that I engaged[58] with in which their collective identification with the club relates to their personal need to establish themselves as winners within the culture, to create distinction though hierarchy. Like the Chelsea fans I engage with in the previous chapter I argue that despite his desire for collectivity, 'Toby' (2012) has an individualistic relationship with the game in which, the idea of cohesion is a conduit to his *individual* pleasure, as indicated by the effort that he imparted to create the match into an event, and personally construct the identity of his group. While many of the heavily identified fans that I engage with in the previous chapters, particularly the fans of MK Dons and Norwich's family fans describe the pleasure they get from engaging in acts and of mutual fandom, it is my argument that 'Toby' like the Chelsea fans relies on the collective aspect of fandom to establish his individual sense of identity. In this context I argue that for 'Toby', unlike Norwich or MK Dons fans, group association is not a product of his fandom but rather inspires his 'fandom.'

I argue that 'Toby' (2012) recognizes the importance of the group to his personal need for fulfillment, in the same way in which Chelsea fans relate the success of the team to their individual status, both 'Toby' and the Chelsea fans looking to engage in collective fandom for the way in which it enables them to enact their individual identities. Yet while Chelsea fans satisfy their needs by engaging with the culture of their club, as suggested the pub is unique as a venue as it operates without a unified sense of culture. As suggested I argue that this accounts for the way, in which 'Toby' actively tries to create sociality around the football event, aware of that the pub requires the convergence of likeminded fans to transform it into a 'virtual terrace,' to establish its 'traditional culture.' I have previously suggested that 'Toby' seems aware of the way in which international matches are said to appeal to more casual fans, this may account for the importance that he places upon framing the culture of the pub, aware that the traditional experience associated with the pub and subsequently his identity as a traditional fan may be threatened by the casual fans drawn to the pub for international matches (see Carrington 1998; Bondy 2010; Brown 2014). His attempts to construct the fan experience associated with 'MG's' emphasise his engagement with the discourse surrounding the pub; indeed our exchange indicates that 'Toby's' fandom embodies the discourse that he engages with. Taking this into account I

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[58] See previous chapter

argue that his active fandom has a similar function to the texts that he engages with, with his attempts to construct and frame the culture of 'MG's' positioning him as a discursive agent of the football event.

'**Everything you need is here and we know it's going to be a good time.**'

I argue that 'Toby's' (2012) choice of 'MG's' as a venue was not born out of necessity or that his identity development spontaneously from engaging with likeminded people within the pub (see Bale 1998; Brimson 1998; Weed 2008), but instead, like the fans from the previous chapters, I believe that his identity is constructed in negotiation, with the discourse surrounding the culture informing his choice of 'MG's' as an arena for the way in which it meets his needs as a fan. As Sandvoss (2005: 33) argues, choices of fandom are based on the objects capacity to carry meanings that articulate the fan's sense of identity. I have suggested that 'Toby' (2012) has an understanding of commercial football culture, with his identity-constructed in opposition as insinuated by the way in which his compares his active fandom 'taking time off work' and 'securing a prime position' (Toby 2012), to the perceived passivity of his friends 'probably sat on the sofa shovelling shit into their mouths' (Toby 2012). Indeed I argue that his patronage of 'MG's and his willingness to transform the venue reflects his negotiation of the discourses surrounding both commercial and traditional football culture, with his choice of 'MG's' as a venue reflecting his intention to position himself as a traditional fan.

While the pub is predominantly presented as a 'traditional venue', I think that it is important to recognize it as a central part of contemporary football culture. With this being said, while the pub is said to have its own culture, my initial exchanges with 'Toby' (2012) indicate that it would be naive to suggest that the pub operates in a vacuum, independent of capitalist football culture. Indeed it is of note that Weed (2008) describes how a whole industry has developed around pub fandom, with pubs aggressively marketing themselves as venues to watch live matches, Weed (2008: 79) indicates that pubs increasingly rely on match days to cover losses they incur throughout the week. Similarly, like the 'consumer fans' from the previous chapters, I argue that their patronage of 'MG's' correlates to 'Toby' and his group needs, as (traditional) fans. An exchange I had with him and his friend 'Chad' (2012) builds upon this idea in which the pair implicitly describe their fandom as a product of consumer choice.

Oliver: So why do you guys like coming here ('MG's') for matches?

'Toby': It's quality look at it. There's loads of floor space to pack people in, it's a big screen, its cheap beer, trust me come kick off it will be bouncing.

'Chad': The atmosphere Is class, the low ceiling is good for the sound so it keeps all the noise in, its like how you see on the films you know, like with beer flying everywhere and people jumping about, its great to be part of it.

'Toby': He's right, I work round the corner so came to watch one of the Champions League matches and it was full of United fans. I'm a Norwich fan, but fuck me the atmosphere was good. I was like I want to bit of that you know. It was something I wanted to be part of.

Oliver: You haven't been tempted to check out any of the other pubs around here?

'Chad': What's the point? Everything you need is here and we know it's going to be a good time. 'Toby' said it was quality and it's right on our doorstep.

'Toby': We've been coming here for a while now, there's a bunch of us and we always dress up and that so people know us here, we don't need to try anywhere else.

Both 'Chad' (2012) and 'Toby' (2012) are keen to vindicate their choice of 'MG's' as venue to watch football matches, 'Chad' suggesting that the venue provides they with 'everything they need' and 'Toby' arguing that they 'don't 'need to try anywhere else.' Indeed the entire conversation revolves around the participant's appraisal of the venue outlining the ways in which 'MG's' corresponds to the documented image of the virtual terrace and subsequently meets their needs as 'traditional' fans. The participants outline how the structural orientation of 'MG's' helps the pub transform in to a virtual terrace with the participants citing the 'big floor space to pack people in', 'the big screen', 'the cheap beer' (Toby 2012) and the 'low ceiling' that keeps all the noise in' (Chad 2012). Bale (1998) in his ethnography of pub fans notes how fans favored pubs with big standing areas, as the experience of a large crowd packed in together is indicative of the terraces. Indeed the image 'Chad' creates of 'beer flying about, and people jumping every where corresponds to Hopcraft's (2006) description of the terraces that I have previously cited, in which he describes the kinetic and sensory experience. While Bale (1998) makes connections between the participatory nature of the pub and the terraces, the participants similarly form associations between the atmospheres. The participants in Pearson's (2012) ethnography, celebrate the sensory experience of the terraces, in which fans describe the lingering smell of beer, and the 'deafening roar' so loud 'you couldn't hear the person next to you'. Indeed the fans suggested that the low tin roof housing the fans amplified the chants of the crowd. 'Chad'

and 'Toby' seem to identify with this discourse, citing the significance of beer 'flying everywhere' (Chad 2012) and importantly like Pearson (2012) the low ceiling that helped to amplify the noise and generate atmosphere.

While the exchange illustrates the way in which 'MG's' resembles the experience of the terrace, meeting the fan's collective need, I argue that the exchange also emphasizes their individual needs as fans, demonstrating the complexity of their identity. While there assimilation of 'MG's' with the terraces demonstrates their knowledge of terrace culture, it is poignant that 'Chad' (2012) compares the experience to 'like how you see on the films,' indicative of the way in which 'Toby' (2012) had previously compared the experience to the darts. Despite making association between 'MG's' and the terraces, it is poignant that again, 'Chad' does not explicitly correlate the experiences, instead comparing it to his *expectations* of terrace culture, comparing it to the tangible experience that he has encountered in filmic depictions. While there has been a upsurge in nostalgic literature produced by self-identified traditional fans documenting the culture of the terraces, as suggested there has similarly been a proliferation of films[59] that look to profit from the nostalgia surrounding the terraces but like the literature helps to maintain the aura associated with the game's traditional culture and contribute to the discourse that works to frame the idea of the traditional fan experience.

While the nostalgic texts help to maintain the centrality of the game's traditional culture, it is important to recognize the like the pub, a whole industry has developed around the preservation of the culture, with the texts attractive to fans like 'Chad' (2012) and 'Toby' (2012) that identify with the nostalgic images that they produce. Subsequently I argue that like the fans from the previous chapters, that the participant's fandom reflects the complex ways in which fans are positioned as consumers within football culture. While traditional discourses encourage fans to stand in opposition to capitalist football culture, to boycott the modern stadium, and distance themselves from the 'passive' corporate dupes that frequent them, they similarly encourage fans to 'buy' in to the images and culture of the terraces that they present. 'Toby's' description of his first experience of 'MG's' encapsulates this idea. Despite his lack of identification with the majority of the fans within the pub, 'Toby' a

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[59] See *The Football Factory* 2004; *Green Street* 2005; *Cass* 2008; *The Firm* 2009: *Away Days* 2009.

'Norwich fan', 'MG's' 'full of united fans,' he still indicates that he identified with the culture and atmosphere within the pub, with the experience evoking his sense of (consumer) need. Indeed the following quotation is indicative of the identification that fans have as consumer in which their needs are addressed in their identification with capitalist texts (see Jameson 1991; Fiske 1992; Hills 2002; Barker 2004; Sandvoss 2005).

> It was full of United fans. I'm a Norwich Fan, but fuck me the atmosphere was good. I was like *I want to bit of that* you know. It was something *I wanted to be part of.* (Toby 2012)

It is feasible to suggest that his engagement with the discourse surrounding the pub as a traditional space helped condition his identification and prompted his desire to engage with the experience that he encountered, producing his expectations of what it means to be a traditional fan. Despite the fact that the pub was 'full of United fans' (Toby 2012) people he did not share an affinity with, the atmosphere conformed to his expectations of the 'virtual terrace,' something he 'wanted to be part of' (Toby 2012). In this context the exchange can almost be read as a check list, with the participants both acknowledging the ways in which 'MG's' conforms to the culture of the terrace while also addressing their (consumer) needs, with both participants indicating that it is close to home 'its right on our doorstep' (Chad 2012), 'I work just around the corner' (Toby 2012), that it provides refreshment 'it has cheap beer' (Toby 2012) and that they feel part of the community that has formed around the venue, 'we've been coming here for a while now, there's a bunch of us and we always dress up and that so people know us here' (Toby 2012).

Despite their identification with 'MG's' for the ways in which it opposes the modern stadium as a virtual terrace, I argue that the needs of the fans correlate to those of the consumer fans that I have previously engaged with. It seems significant that given the choice of pubs within the region that the fans remain loyal to 'MG's' as a venue. I argue that this sense of loyalty and repeat patronage can be assimilated with the fans from the previous chapters.

Associations can be made between the ways in which the locality of 'MG's' and MK Dons influences the participant's fan identities. The MK Dons fans that I engaged with describe the significance of the club to the local community[60]. I have outlined how the fans

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[60] See Chapter five

demonstrate fierce loyalty to the club, in which Winkleman's attempts at community building are recognized in the stands with the fans coalescing in support of the club in response to the rejection they face from wider football culture. Similarly the participants, patronage of 'MG's' seems to relate to their position within the local community, in which they show loyalty to the pub for the way that it meets their needs, acting as a space to enable them to enact their traditional identity.

Similarly while the MK Dons fans suggest that the locality of their club if pivotal to their collective identity, I argue that the locality of 'MG's' also helps the group establish their identity, helping the group become known (as traditional fans) within the community, as 'Toby' (2012) suggests, 'We've been coming here for a while now, there's a bunch of us and we always dress up and that so people know us here.' The MK Dons fans are known and scorned by the wider culture for the way in which they are considered to reflect the 'artificial' culture of the club, as insinuated by the clubs nickname 'Franchise United'. Similarly In their sustained patronage of 'MG's' 'Toby' indicates that the group has started to become known locally, with the group recognized as 'traditional' fans due to their behavior and presumably their matching costumes, yet importantly he indicates that their association with the pub stratifies their identity helping to make their identity 'known.'

Having previously considered the way in which the fan's identity draws on their understanding of the game's traditional culture, indicative of the Snake Pit fans, it is ironic that despite their attempts to position themselves in opposition to contemporary football culture that the things that inspire and direct their fandom correlate to the choices informing the fandom of the 'consumers' discussed in the previous chapters, notably the importance of collectivity (Norwich), the significance of the locality and the way in which it aids the formation of community (MK Dons) and the importance of hierarchy and distinction (Chelsea). While the previous chapter indicates that the culture of each club helps to foster a unique collective identity among their fans, it seems poignant that elements central to the collective identity of each group inform 'Toby' (2012) and 'Chad's' (2012) fan identity.

Throughout, the thesis I argue that fan identity is constructed in negotiation of the two main discourses of football culture, with the participants explaining the ways in which the game's traditional discourses act as counter points to the culture of their clubs. My research indicates that 'Toby' (2012) and 'Chad' (2012) engage in similar negotiation with the

discourses of contemporary football culture informing their fandom. 'Toby' demonstrates his understanding of the debates surrounding the game's commercial culture in his initial attempts to frame himself as a traditional fan, while I maintain that the participants have a relationship of consumption with the texts that frame the pub as a virtual terrace, as evidence by the way in which the participants outline the ways in which 'MG's' fulfils their consumer needs as 'traditional' fans. However, unlike the fans from the previous chapters, it is significant that they do not consider this negotiation, or their engagement with the game's consumerism in our interviews or discussions.

'I can't … spend the whole day worrying about football.'

After the necessary phone calls had been made, 'Toby's' (2012) friends slowly started to arrive, with just over an hour to kick off the 'whole band' had turned up. 'Toby' joined by seven of his friends, all dressed in Hawaiian shirts, each with their own inflatable instrument. Having engaged in conversation with 'Toby' and 'Chad' (2012) gaining an insight into the way in which they considered their fandom I was keen to engage with other members of the group to see if they identified as traditional fans in a similar manner, the significance they placed upon collectivity and their conception of 'MG's' as a venue.

Oliver: It's good you guys could make it, 'Toby' was worried that you guys weren't coming.

'Wayne': He needs to have a drink and calm down. We told him we were coming after work. I can't just take the day off like him, and spend the whole day worrying about football.

'Owen': It's meant to be a laugh; I don't know why he takes everything so seriously.

Oliver: He was saying he created an event about this on Facebook and had been trying to organize the meet up for a few weeks.

'Wayne': Yeah he did, I don't see the point really though, we come down for matches anyway. We usually send some texts round or whatever the night before so I don't get why this has been turned into some big event.

'Owen': He's given it the big build up and tried to get us all down early but I don't get the point, it's meant to be a laugh.

'Toby' (2012) suggests that the collective-identification of the group is a central to his fan identity, yet the exchange indicates that 'Wayne' and 'Owen' (2012) have a different fan identity to 'Toby' and 'Chad' (2012). This is encapsulated by 'Wayne's' suggestion that unlike

'Toby' he has more important things to do than 'spend the whole day worrying about football' (Wayne 2012). While 'Toby' previously emphasizes the effort that he put in to organizing the event, both 'Owen' and 'Wayne' ridicule his efforts insinuating that the organization of the event hampers the experience as 'Owen' suggests, 'I don't get the point, it's meant to be a laugh.' 'Wayne', similarly questions why it has been 'turned into some big event.' Previously I compared 'Toby's' fandom to that of those within the Snake Pit, in which his understanding and expectations of terrace culture, prompted him to try and construct the culture of the pub. It was my argument; both in the context of the Snake Pit fans and with 'Toby' that it is their effort in presenting themselves as traditional fans that emphasizes the complexity of their fan identity in which they demonstrate their understanding of both contemporary and traditional football culture. Indeed I argue that 'Toby's' attempts to engineer the experience of the pub relates to his understanding of the way in which international matches are considered to attract more casual fans, emphasizing his understanding of the debates with contemporary football culture. 'Owen' and 'Wayne's' comments on the other hand indicate that they do not share 'Toby's' engagement with the debates within football culture, with the participants suggesting that the effort that he imparted transforming the match into an organized social event lessens their sense of enjoyment, 'Owen' bemoaning the fact that 'Its meant to be a laugh.'

The exchange similarly vindicates my argument that the congregation of the lads and their colonization of the venue was not the result of the 'natural' or 'spontaneous' continuation of traditional terrace culture in which likeminded fans gravitated but the product of organization and effort on 'Toby's' (2012) behalf to bring people together and *actively foster* collectivity, to engineer an experience in keeping with his expectations of traditional football culture. This compliments my argument that 'Toby' can be considered as an agent of the football event, working to frame the fan experience of 'MG's.' However it seems significant that 'Wayne' suggests that the group *did* spontaneously congregate at 'MG's' on match days. Indeed he notes his surprise that 'Toby' would place special emphasis on organizing meet ups for the England matches when the group 'come down for matches anyway' (Wayne 2012).

With this in mind 'Wayne' poses the question 'I don't get why this has been turned into some big event,' this seems poignant. If members of 'Toby's' (2012) group regularly congregated at the pub on match days anyway, indicative of the spontaneous process that Brimson (1998) describes, then why did 'Toby' feel the need to create an event around the

experience and accentuate the effort he had made to foster a sense of collectivity? I argue that one possibility could have been 'Toby's' desire to impression manage with his responses and performance influenced by my presence as a researcher. As suggested, I argue that my interaction with 'Toby' indicates that he has a strong knowledge of the discourses surrounding both traditional and commercial football culture, and is keen to identify as a traditional fan by associating himself with the tradition and culture of the terraces. Aware of my research, I argue that his attempts to perpetuate his identity as a traditional fan could have been prompted by my presence. I argue that the identity of the group and the recognition of the group are foundational to his fandom. My research may be seen by 'Toby' as a platform to promote his identity, with my work helping to vindicate and reflect his self-identity. 'Toby' was very welcoming to me, inviting me to share the experience of his group, while we were cordial; we were not on a friendly basis. It seems significant that he was so welcoming to me when I was not part of his 'tight knit' group. I argue that this may have been due to my use value, with the idea that my acknowledgement of the 'traditional' identity of the group could help validate his sense of identity.

Again I argue that parallels can be established between the identity of MK Dons fans 'Fran' and 'Greg' (2012). The heavily identified consumer fans of MK Dons were the first participants to discuss the commercial decisions that lead to the dissolution of Wimbledon and the formation of their club[61]. I argue that they broached the issue to demonstrate that they possessed a highly astute understanding of the game's commercial culture. I discuss this in the correlating chapter, indicating that the level of understanding and honesty that they demonstrate combats the idea that they are merely ill informed consumers or disingenuous ersatz. I argue that 'Toby' (2012) had a similar intention, introducing me to the experience of 'MG's', encouraging me to recognize his traditional fandom with my research reflecting his fan identity.

However, this still leaves the question that if the fans 'spontaneously' congregated for football matches together, why would 'Toby' (2012) go to the effort of tuning England matches into event? As previously suggested, 'Toby' seems aware of the way in which England matches attracted a more diverse, causal crowd challenging the discursive construction of the pub as a 'traditional' space. As previously indicated I argue that 'Toby's'

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[61] See Chapter five

fandom relies on the collectivity of the crowd and the shared identification of the group to transform the pub into a traditional space. With the perceived threat of the casual fan to the pub I argue that 'Toby' may have felt a need to actively bring together a large group to ensure that 'MG's' housed the correct 'type' of fan necessary for it to maintain its 'traditional' character, complimenting my argument that 'Toby' can be considered as an agent of the football event, working to frame the fan experience, and culture of the venue.

This may account for the emphasis 'Toby' (2012) placed on the fancy dress, to ensure that they group were recognizable as a collective of 'traditional fans' but also to maintain their interest with the exchange above indicating that some of his friends did not share his motivation for fandom. This notion is supported by an exchange with other members of the group in which they indicate that they do not possess a particularly strong awareness of the debates in football culture and surprisingly a lack of awareness concerning the England team:

Oliver: So why do you think 'Toby' made the 'event' on Facebook to try and get people down here for the matches? Don't you normally all watch matches together?

'Simon': I'm not sure really, I've come with them for a couple of Premier League games and it's always been pretty lively, but it's not like I come here every week or anything. 'Toby' and me haven't watched that much football together to be honest but we've been going to the darts the last few years and that's quality. 'Toby' was saying that this is like that, you know, with us all wearing fancy dress and just drinking; he said the atmosphere was like that so I'm well up for it.

Oliver: So by coming together in your fancy dress and everything you are hoping to recreate the experience that you all had together at the darts.

'Bob': Yeah, if the drinks are flowing and we can get the singing going then yeah it'll be just like it I reckon. Let's face it, England are pretty shit, so you've got to have fun with it don't you? Everyone goes to the darts to get pissed and have a laugh. I don't think people care who wins or anything; it's just a casual day out with your mates.

Oliver: So are you saying that you are not too bothered about the score today or England winning? There has been a lot written about the pub suggesting that it has become the place where the heavily identified or 'traditional' football fan goes to watch games.

'Simon': No it's not that we don't care about the result, but it's not like it's the most important thing you know? You come to have a good time and the result is what it is you

know? Obviously you want England to win, but like he said we never win 'Jack.' Like I don't think Bale is in the squad, or Beckham. It's a joke. I think most people that come here are up for a laugh and want a drink. If people were really into it they would be out there for the tournament wouldn't they?

Once again, 'Simon' and 'Bob' (2012), indicate that their fandom, revolve around the opportunity that it provides them to 'have a laugh,' 'dress up' and 'get pissed.' While these behaviors are continually associated with the terraces, again it is poignant that the pair does not form this correlation, instead accentuating their desire to replicate the experience of being at the darts. This suggests that their fandom is non-politicized. Indeed throughout the exchange the pair indicating, unlike 'Toby' (2012) that they have little knowledge of the arguments surrounding football culture arguing those traditional fans 'really into it,' would be at the tournament. These remarks, demonstrates that the participants are not aware of the debates happening currently within the culture, with match attendance considered to be economically impractical and ideologically unappealing to traditional fans (See Brown 1998; Williams 2000; Walsh, & Giulianotti 2001; King 2002; Pearson 2012). Similarly the reference to Welsh International Garth Bale and the retired David Beckham suggest that the participants have a limited interest in the England team, or as they suggest that the team achieves success.

I argue that 'Toby' (2012) and 'Chad' (2012) create an impression of 'MG's', describing the way in which it meets the need of their group as a traditional fan, however the exchange with 'Simon' and 'Bob' (2012) challenges the collective identity of the group, with the exchange compromising their identity as traditional fans and similarly challenging the construction of the pub as a virtual terrace, acknowledging the idea that the pub similarly houses casual fans that do not identify with the football event, 'Bob' suggesting that 'people don't really care who wins,' and 'Simon' arguing that the result is 'not the most important thing in the world.' While 'Toby' (2012a) emphasizes the effort imparted to book time off work, arrive early at the venue, and organize the 'event' in a manner that frames his traditional identity, the exchange indicates that the participants do not perceive his actions this way, with 'Simon' 'not sure,' why he would go to the effort of staging a 'piss up' or as 'Bob' suggest for a 'casual day out with your mates.' I argue that this indicates that the pair do not even assimilate the experience of 'MG's' with terrace football, with the participants suggesting that the tournament merely provides them with an opportunities to engage in a

collective celebration or as 'Bob' states a experience like the darts, a chance to 'get pissed and have a laugh.'

The response of the participants produces a tension. While 'Toby' (2012) and 'Chad' (2012) acknowledge how England matches attract more casual fans, keen to present the identity of their group and frame the culture of 'MG's' in opposition, It is problematic that 'Simon' and 'Bob' (2012) while identifying with the rituals of the terraces, the 'piss up' and 'having a laugh,' implicitly identify as casual fans. It is poignant that 'Bob' explicitly describes that the congregation of the group as a '*casual* day out with (his) mates' while 'Simon' suggest that he has gone with the group to watch 'a couple of Premier League games' 'but Its not like I come here every week or anything' (Simon 2012).

I had previously provided the group with the opportunity to acknowledge the association of the pub with the terraces and traditional fandom by posing the following comment: 'there has been a lot written about the pub suggesting that it has become the place where heavily identified fan goes to watch games', yet the pair ignored my prompt, With 'Simon' (2012) suggesting that he had been drawn to the pub by the way in which 'Toby' (2012) associates it with the experience of the darts: ''Toby' was saying that this is like that, you know, with us all wearing fancy dress and just drinking; he said the atmosphere was like that so I'm well up for it' (Simon 2012). This seems significant. While 'Toby' accentuates the collective identity of the group, 'Simon' suggests that 'Toby', has helped to create and fashion the identity of the group, helping to foster a shared experience around the event by constructing the experience of 'MG's' in a manner that produces certain expectations of the event. In this context association can be formed to the way in which the existing literatures constructs pub fandom, producing discourse that speaks to a demographic like 'Toby' creating expectations for pub fandom. This vindicates my argument that both the literature and 'Toby' draw upon these discourses with similar intentions, acting as agents that frame pub fandom to their audience in a manner that enables the continuation and validation of their identity and culture.

As previously indicated I argue that 'Toby's' (2012) fandom relies on the collectivity of the crowd and the transformability of the group to change the pub in to a virtual terrace, providing him with the opportunity to enact his traditional fandom. I argue that this highlights the tension that I document in the way that communality is needed to meet his

individual need. This notion is unique to pub fandom. I have argued how the culture of each club helps to foster a sense of collectivity, with the collective identity of the fans established in their shared identification with the club and in support of the same team. My research compliments the existing literature that pub fans have both different levels of identification with the England team and different identifications with the culture of the pub, but significantly 'Toby' seemed aware of this, framing the match as a social 'event' on Facebook to encourage the participation of a range of his friends with different fan identities. The exchange indicates that he has done so by producing different expectations for different members of the group, appealing to their individual needs in a way that brings them together in a way that gives the wider impression of collective identity.

Returning to the previous exchange with 'Chad', he indicates how 'Toby' (2012) had introduced him to the venue: ''Toby' said it was quality and it's right on our doorstep' (Chad 2012). Throughout the exchange, 'Chad', like 'Toby', indicates that he wishes to be considered as a traditional fan, yet in doing so it is poignant that he associates the experience of 'MG's' with that which he has seen in films. This illustrates the way in which his understanding of traditional football culture was influenced by the discourse surrounding football culture. I argue that 'Toby' may have drawn upon his identification with these films, presenting 'Chad' with images of 'beer flying every where like what you see in the films', framing the way in which he presented the experience to 'Chad'. Similarly while 'Simon,' and 'Bob' (2012) are less identified as fans, like 'Chad' they acknowledged the way in which 'Toby' created their expectations around the event, framing it akin to the experience that they shared collectively at the darts.

I argue that the way in which 'Toby' (2012) looks to establish the collective identity of the group can be equated with the way in which the clubs I analyze in the previous chapters establish their fan base, by marketing themselves to different demographics with different consumer needs. Norwich City appeal to family fans providing them with the opportunity to enact and establish rituals of family as articulated by 'Jack' (2012) in chapter four, but also the Snake Pit fans who have been sanctioned a stand within the ground to enact their 'traditional' identities that produces pleasure for the fans in the way in which their fandom is perceived to challenge the club's wider culture. 'Toby' seems to engage in similar practice, tailoring the expectations of the group to their different expectations and needs as fans. Like the clubs, I argue that 'Toby' can be considered as the major beneficiary of this, with

the collectivity providing clubs with financial resource and 'Toby' with the 'physical' resource to transform the pub, from a local drinking hole into a thriving virtual terrace. I have acknowledged how the chairman of each club works hard to foster the culture of their club and attract fans to the stadium; with Pete Winkelman a relevant example, 'Matt' (2012) acknowledging the way in which he was attracted to MK Dons games through cheap deals advertised on a bill board. I argue that 'Toby' similarly works hard to cultivate the culture of the pub, not only in the manner in which he frames the experience to me as a researcher, but also to ensure that enough of his friends are in attendance to validate his presentation of that culture and to ensure that his expectations of the pub as a traditional space are fulfilled, and uncompromised by the casual fans who are attracted to the international tournaments.

'You've got to build atmosphere and get people in the mood to get things going.'

Sandvoss (2005) argues that fandom is the process of buying into a text and forming an emotional connection with it, in doing so he suggests that the way in which fandom is enacted, accentuates fandoms assimilation with capitalism. Correspondingly I argue that 'Toby' (2012) looks to foster this relationship between his friends and 'MG's' encouraging them to 'buy into' the culture of the pub that he presents, appealing to their consumer needs. While members of the group suggest that they have different identifications with the pub and thus different consumer needs, he manages to draw upon the same 'catch all logic' of capitalism in orchestrating collective image of the group. Again I argue that this emphasizes the way in which fans are both positively and negatively framed as consumers, with 'Toby' drawing on the discourses of consumerism to create the impression that his group ironically opposes the game's consumerism. This seems to accentuate the way in which the participants enact their identity in negotiation, with 'Toby's' understanding of the game's capitalism, both prompting and encouraging him to frame experience of the pub, and his friend's engagement with wider leisure industries particularly with film and the darts informing their expectations of the terraces. Again this relates to Cavicchi's (1998) argument that fans create community not through shared experiences but through a mutual shared expectation of experience.

I looked to address the different identifications of the group with 'Toby' (2012)

Oliver: You were saying earlier that the group of you all come down for the football. I was just speaking to 'Simon' and he was saying that they aren't particularly regulars with you.

'Toby': Yeah, they don't come down all the time, but he's come a few times and likes the atmosphere and gets involved and that. He's here today though so that's the main thing.

Oliver: Yeah he seems pretty up for it, but more because he thinks it's going to be like the darts than the match itself.

'Toby': [Laughs] That's because I told him it was like the darts! We always have a good time at 'Ally Pally' so I thought that it would get him going you know.

Oliver: But why do you need to get him going? You were saying before that it is a good place to watch matches and that it has a good atmosphere

'Toby': It does but its important to keep it up you know, you've got to build atmosphere and get people in the mood to get things going. `

Initially 'Toby' (2012) tries to present 'Simon' (2012) as a traditional fan suggesting that like the heavily identified members of the group that he 'likes the atmosphere and gets involved,' creating a distinction between, 'Simon' and the image of the 'passive' casual fan. While initially validating his fan identity, it seems poignant that he then acts to distance 'Simon' from the group, seemingly aware that his remarks may harm the group's collective identity, suggesting that 'he's come a few times' before continuing again to validate his identity suggesting that he is 'here today though so that's the main thing' (Toby 2012). This compliments my argument that 'Toby' is cautious in the way in which he manages the identity of the group, constantly negotiating the discourses surrounding the culture in his perpetuation of their identity. In this sense his performance can be assimilated with that of the Chelsea fans that I engage with in the previous chapter. I argue that their fandom is constantly in flux depending on the status of the club in the wider culture and the success of the team on the pitch.

Distancing 'Simon' (2012) and his 'casual' fandom from the group helps to solidify his identity and the status of the group as a traditional fan, while similarly the fact that he is with the group helps to authenticate his identity by affiliation. Indeed this tension is evidenced by the way in which 'Toby' (2012) purposefully told him that the experience was like that of the darts, with the idea that it would 'get him going'. I questioned that if 'MG's' is as he suggests, a place in which traditional fans congregate, why it was necessary to try

and encourage his fandom and frame his expectations of the event. His response to my query seems to provide the answer:

Oliver: But why do you need to get him going? You were saying before that it is a good place to watch matches and that it has a good atmosphere
'Toby': It does but it's important to keep it up you know, you've got to build atmosphere and get people in the mood to get things going.

While indicating that it has a good atmosphere 'Toby' (2012) suggests that it is important that it stays that way, alluding to the idea that he encouraged the participation of his friends to maintain the atmosphere of the pub. Again I argue that the idea of 'building the atmosphere' of 'MG's' and managing the culture of the pub relates not only to his desire to enact terrace culture but also to the way in which it is suggested that England matches attract casual fans. While collectivity is vital to transform the pub, to give the pub its traditional identity, the *right type* of fan is required. 'Toby's' friends fit the demographic of the traditional fan and strongly identify with facets of the culture, which 'Toby' suggested in our initial conversation that he valued, namely the feeling of collective revelry, the party atmosphere and the idea of 'getting pissed.' In their adherence to this profile his friends are vital to the transformation of the pub in the sense that they help to maintain its culture and identity.

In this context the fancy dress 'Toby' (2012) demanded, becomes poignant. To 'Simon' (2012) it is attractive as he associates it with the experience of the darts, however it is also a way of creating a collective identity for the group, ensuring that their association was recognizable to other patrons within the pub. In this way the casual association of 'Simon' and 'Bob' (2012), could similarly be obscured by their affiliation to the group with their identity stratified by properties of their fandom such as the singing, drinking and raucousness that corresponds to the profile of the traditional fan. In this context even if the pub did attract more casual fans, the collectivity of the group and their obvious association would continue to enable them to transform the pub into a virtual terrace and differentiate themselves from the wider patrons.

'If you are looking at football fans why are you running around with that lot?'

With all of 'Toby's' (2012) group taking their place in 'MG's' an hour before kick off, the pub slowly started to fill up, with more fans turning up the closer it got to kick off and people finishing work. Despite the fact that it was England's first game of the tournament, the pub was roughly three quarters full. Several observations could be made about the demographic. The majority of fans were male, as the game started I counted 11 women in attendance and most of the fans seemed to be in groups, there were very few fans noticeably on their own. With kick off at 5 pm there were fans that presumably had come straight from work, with several wearing suits and formal office attire. The pub also seemed to attract two distinct age bands: those that were the age of 'Toby's' group in their late teens to early thirties, and middle aged fans aged forty plus.

My exchanges with 'Toby's' (2012) group indicated that the participants had not experienced the terraces first hand and subsequently that their expectation of the terraces and their desire to enact its culture had been prompted by the discourse framing the culture. My exchanges with the group compliments the more contemporary idea that the pub has become attractive to a new generation of fans (see Bale 1998; Brimson 1998: King 2002; Weed 2008). However, it is important to remember that the literature argues that the pub originally functioned to accommodate 'disenfranchised traditional fans,' who had been outlawed from the modern stadium (Bale 1998; Weed 2008). Observing the demographic within the pub and taking the literature into account, I questioned weather the middle aged fans within the pub, could be identified as this diasporic group with their age and group association helping them fit the profile. Like 'Toby's' group, they consumed beer and engaged in chants of 'EN-GER-LAND' and 'Footballs Coming Home' throughout the match.

While the atmosphere and demographic within 'MG's' resembled the depictions of terrace culture, it was poignant that there were disconnects between the groups within the pub, particularly between 'Toby's (2012) group' and the middle age participants. While both the literature associated with the pub and 'Toby' describes the importance of collectivity to the identity of the traditional fan and the transformation of the pub, I argue that the virtual terrace of the pub did not seem to cohere in the same way in which historical accounts depict the terraces (see Crampsey 1990; Hutchinson 1997; Hopcraft 2006).

Weed (2008) describes the traditional stadium as a microcosm of the town, with terraces akin to individual neighborhoods, each with their own customs, indicative of the inhabitant's position within the community. While the pub is transformed into a terrace by the convergence of likeminded individuals, the pub does not account for the different communities formed within the terraces, with the pub providing fans with a single space. The semi-public nature of the pub ensures that they attract a mix of people, making it difficult for patrons to re-create the idiosyncrasies of the different communities within the terraces or to create the idea of hierarchy that was established in the stadium. While I have previously argued that 'Toby' (2012) looks to create his identity in opposition to modern 'consumer fans,' my observations indicate that fans within the pub similarly look to create distinction between themselves, perhaps indicative of their attempts to re-establish the idea this distinction within the terraces, with different groups within the pub engaging in different forms of fandom. I argue that traditional fan identities were enacted in different ways by 'Toby's' friends and the middle-aged fans within the pub.

With 'Toby' (2012) arriving early to get 'the best spot', his group was positioned towards the back of the venue, equipped with their inflatable instruments. While I suggest that this helped the group's self-identity and ensure the recognition of their group, the instruments seemed to correspond to their role, assuming the duty of 'house band,' regularly trying to create chants and encouraging other patrons within the pub to join them. As the match began chants of 'EN-GER-LAND' filled the pub, with the low ceiling helping to generate an impressive atmosphere. Yet, with the match a stalemate and England struggling to produce chances the group were finding it harder to inspire participation or as 'Toby' previously suggested to 'generate atmosphere'. 'Owen' (2012) tried to start a song about 'Steven Gerrard' with little response from the other patrons. A few minutes later, French player Frank Ribery went down injured promoting 'Toby' to start a chorus of 'Dig a Hole and Fucking bury him', again this received minimal response from the crowd. Aggrieved by the lack of participation 'Toby' vented his frustration, 'my god this is embarrassing, it's a pub for fuck sake.'

'Toby's' (2012) rant illustrates both his expectations of pub fandom and his desire to enact a particular type of fandom, shocked that more patrons where not joining in with his chants, presumably angered that the lack of participation from the other patrons compromised his idea of the 'traditional' pub experience that he had promised his friends. As previously

suggested, I believe that 'Toby' was keen to promote the experience of 'MG's' to me to validate his identity as a traditional fan, yet despite the effort he put into organizing the event and 'generating atmosphere,' the collective party he depicted was localized. Similarly it seems significant that while there was chanting in the pub, that it was the chants that his group had tried to start that were ignored by the wider patrons. I have argued that 'Toby' can be considered as an agent working to frame the experience of the pub to his group, yet it is significant that his attempts to dictate the fan experience and the atmosphere within 'MG's' extended only to his group. I argue that this emphasizes the lack of cohesion within the pub vindicating my argument that the fans had different expectations for fandom.

With Rooney hitting a shot just past the post, the group started chanting his name, 'Rooney Rooney Rooney.' This prompted a response from a middle age fan in front of the group, 'Alf' (2012) turning to engage with 'Toby's' (2012) group: 'Christ lads pack it in for a bit, we are getting fucking headaches.' Associations can be made with the encounter between 'Jack' (2012) and 'Tom' (2012) in the Aviva Community Stand at Norwich City, with 'Tom' reprimanding 'Jack' for giving his son 'Ben' (2012) a running commentary[62]: 'Just keep it down. He has eyes doesn't he? Let him watch the game and let us watch it without you prattling for the last ten minutes, I'm getting a bloody headache' (Tom 2012). Even the use of language is similar with both participants suggesting the constant noise of their adversary was giving them a headache.

In the corresponding chapter, I suggest that 'Tom's' (2012) fandom was incongruent with the family culture of the club. Indeed 'Jack' (2012) called him a 'Dinosaur', indicating that he was out of touch with the modern game and that he should 'Bugger off to the Snake Pit,' (Jack 2012) the stand that houses the traditional Norwich fans. While 'Tom' and 'Jack' had different fan identities, both of the groups within the pub self-identified as traditional fans. This compliments my argument that the different groups within the pub had different expectations for fandom.

On the 30th minute mark England scored, there was a roar of excitement within the pub with beer flying into the air, a scene indicative of that suggested by 'Chad' (2012) 'like what you see in film'. In that moment, 'Bob' (2012) and 'Toby' (2012) bounced from the back of the venue towards the group that confronted them earlier, jumping up and down and

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[62] See chapter four

slapping them on the back. While a couple of the group took it in good spirits punching the air and hugging the participants, 'Alf' (2012) notably gave 'Bob' a shove, telling him to 'fuck off.' While the participants in our early exchanges emphasised the collective revelry of the pub, again, the middle-aged patrons rejected their fandom.

I was keen to talk to the group to establish their opposition to 'Toby's' (2012) group, and looked to engage in conversation with them after the match. At first I was treated with a level of hostility due to my perceived association with the group yet after explaining my research, 'Mark' (2012), while unwilling to have a proper discussion, offered me some advice:

> If you are looking at football fans why are you running around with that lot? I've been going to matches since I was a kid, I use to stand on the Kop every weekend, then a bunch of whippersnappers in fancy dress who have watched too many Danny Dyer films try and tell me how to act... bloody kids.

The way that 'Mark' dispels the identity of the group can be assimilated to the way in which 'Craig' (2012) looked to reject the identity of the MK Dons fans that I engaged with:

> As if you're looking at 'Franchise United.' If you are researching football fans why are you looking at them? They aren't even a real football club, they don't have *real fans*. No one takes them seriously do they?

Both 'Mark' (2012) and 'Craig' (2012) question the legitimacy of researching their fan identity, insinuating that both groups are incongruent with 'real' football culture. In doing so both participants look to legitimate their fandom is opposition, with 'Mark' emphasising his status as a 'proper' traditional fan 'Standing on the Kop at every weekend.' While this vindicates my suggestion that the older patrons within the pub may have first-hand experience of the terraces, 'Mark' draws on this to distance himself from the groups aspirations to enact a 'second hand' fandom, mocking their desire to be part of the culture as insinuated by reference to 'Danny Dyer films' (Mark 2012). Indeed it is poignant that 'Chad' previously suggested that his desire to enact a traditional fan identity was promoted by watching films. I argue that 'Mark' positions the group as consumers within the culture, in which he suggests that they have constructed their identity in relation to the impression

that they have of the terraces from engaging with the discourse surrounding the culture, while conversely he has lived the experience. Again it seems poignant that he mobilises the discourse surrounding the 'active' traditional fan and the 'passive' consumer. The tension between 'Alf', Mark and 'Toby's' group demonstrates the way in which the concepts of 'traditional fandom' and the culture of the pub are constructed by different groups. Indeed I argue that their identity is the product of different discursive negotiations, complimenting Sandvoss' argument that 'the object of distinction in fandom is no longer the text but the meaning that is constituted in the interaction between the text and reader' (2005: 42).

The literature celebrates the autonomy of the pub, that as a semi-public space it operates without regulation in contrast to the modern stadium (see Bale 1998; Brimson 1998; Weed 2008). Contrarily I argue that the pub still has a hegemonic culture and is similarly exclusionary with a culture that like the stadium, is maintained and reinforced by the behaviour of those that are occupying its space. Again I return to the idea of hierarchy, I argue that the confrontation between 'Toby' (2012) and 'Mark's' (2012) group corresponds to the idea of distinction that Weed (2008) associates with the terrace and the different ways in which it is mobilised by the group in their expectations of fandom. As suggested 'Toby' was keen to legitimise himself as a traditional fan, creating distinction between himself and modern consumers with his fandom based on an expectation of how he should enact fandom in opposition. Indeed it seems poignant that he values the revelry associated with the terraces, aware that such fandom has been outlawed from the modern stadium. On the other hand 'Mark' as a fan with experience of the terraces seems keen to create distinction between his group and what he perceives to be 'Toby's' mimetic attempts at authenticating himself within the culture. Cook (2000) describes mimesis as the process in which 'those at the top of the hierarchy determine what is good taste, and those lower down imitate what has been decided by those above them', further suggesting that mimesis 'comes from the desire to emulate what is felt to be superior,' yet it really 'works to reinforce social hierarchy' (2000: 107). I argue that this emphasises 'Toby's' engagement with the game's consumerism as much as it does the game's traditional culture, his fandom and the experience that he frames to his group, reflecting his perception of what it means to be a traditional fan.

'Mark's' (2012) attempts to create distinction between the groups again correspond to Weed's (2008) argument that the terraces were organised hierarchically with different

terraces resembling the fan identity of the inhabitants. The virtual terrace does not facilitate this sense of separation and consequently I suggest that distinction becomes enacted in fandom, 'Mark' considering the group as 'Whippersnappers' that should know their place. In this context it could be argued that the pub resembles the modern stadium as much as it does the terraces. Like the modern stadium I argue that participants are attracted to the pub by the different ways in which it is imagined to meet their needs, supporting my argument that the fans engage in a discursive negotiation to develop their own conception of the pub that relates to their own sense of identity. However, like the modern stadium I argue that the pub operates with a culture that is regulated and enforced by hegemony, in this context the middle aged fans with first-hand experience of the terraces.

'This is a football match not a family day out.'

England's second match of the tournament was against Sweden. With the relative success of the first match, the more favourable kick off time and the expectation in the media that England would win, 'MG's' housed a larger crowd, yet significantly the demographic had changed, while there were notably fewer groups of middle aged men, the pub had attracted more family groups, with a significantly larger group or women and children in attendance.

The groups seemed relatively unhappy about this, with 'Toby' (2012) emphasising the need for the group to make sure that atmosphere was right. While the terraces are celebrated by much of the literature as the 'authentic' way to experience live football, there is a minority voice that argues that the terraces were fundamentally dangerous, threatening and uncomfortable in which they were largely unsuitable for women and children (see Armstrong & Harris 1991; Horrie 1992; Giulianotti 1993; Hopcraft 2006; Stott & Pearson 2007). As suggested, while the public house is largely celebrated for enabling the continuation of the positive facets of terrace culture, the group took it upon themselves to facilitate the recreation of its less favorable attributes. Again I argue that this relates to the participant's expectations of the terrace experience and the way that is was challenged by the presence of more casual fans.

The match started similarly to the France match, with 'Toby's' (2012) group starting chants and the rest of the patrons joining in. Indeed the participation was greater than the previous match with the children in attendance eagerly looking to participate. 'Toby' had previously

described the need to maintain the atmosphere within the pub in spite of the attendance of causal fans, yet unlike the previous match, his chants were encouraging the participation of the crowd, firing their enthusiasm At half time I engaged with 'Toby' to assess his enjoyment of the first half.

Oliver: It's buzzing in here today; there are way more people than the other night and everyone is joining in with your songs.

'Toby': See I told you it was quality, there weren't enough people (the other night) but this is what it's like when it's jumping,

Oliver: It's a different crowd too, a lot more families and children.

'Toby': That's why the atmosphere is so good today, we have had to step it up and make sure the place keeps its atmosphere.

Oliver: They are helping to build the atmosphere you can hear the kids singing along.

Initially the group seemed to disregard the attendance of the more casual fans with 'Toby' insinuating that their attendance helped to improve the atmosphere using it as another excuse to emphasise the group's role in atmosphere building, that the attendance of casual fans had encouraged the group to 'step it up'. 'Toby' seemed surprised that the casual fans were engaging with his group's chants and then seemed to recognize the implications of this.

After half time, the group noticeably started to sing more vulgar songs, subjecting a young female glass collector to choruses of 'get your tits out for the lads', this time they were alone in song. Later 'Bob' (2012) started to chant of 'two world wars and one world cup', a song that was met with disapproving glares from families in close proximity. After the referee failed to call for a foul on Lampard, 'Chad' (2012) screamed 'Fuck off you c*nt'. This was met with anger with a number of fans turning to remonstrate with him, which resulted in the group targeting a particularly angry women and subjecting her to a chorus of 'Sit down Shut Up.' What had been a party atmosphere had turned into something nasty and I was wary of my contribution to this, with the conversation I had with the participants at half time seemingly prompting their more aggressive, confrontational fan performance.

I broached this with 'Toby' after the match:

Oliver: That turned nasty pretty quick guys, what was that about?

'Toby': There were just too many families trying to hi-jack the match, I was getting pissed off and thought we needed to get the atmosphere going again.

Oliver: But at half time we were saying how good the atmosphere had been.

'Toby': Yeah but it was fucking soft, this is a football match not a family day out. I said there were more people but the kids were killing it, we are not bloody kid's entertainers.

Oliver: Of course not but you don't have to ruin it for them either.

'Toby': They were ruining it for us though, why should we act a certain way and not do what we want just because a bunch of kids are here. It's a pub, why would parents bring kids to a pub to watch football? They know everyone's going to be drinking and fucking around, it's not a place for them.

The idea that it is not a 'place for' children seems poignant, drawing on 'Toby's' (2012) expectations of the traditional pub experience and the way that he framed the experience in our initial conversations. I fear that the exchange we had at half time, may have prompted him to consider the way in which the engagement of the casual fans with his group's fandom may have tarnished their identity and the status of 'MG's' as a virtual terrace. The exchange demonstrates 'Toby's' attempt to re-establish the identity of the group as traditional fans, and the traditional culture that he associated with 'MG's.' In doing so 'Toby' questions the sensibility of bringing children to a pub, the home of the traditional fan, in the same way in which 'Aaron' (2012) questions the sense in allowing children into the Snake Pit[63]:

Oliver: There are quite a lot of kids around the Snake Pit; the chant was hardly 'family friendly.'

'Aaron': Mate it's the Snake Pit, they shouldn't be there if they can't handle swearing... what do they expect?

'Aaron' seemed surprised by my question, with the retort 'what do they expect?' directed at me. The intonation in his voice putting emphasis on the fact that it was the Snake Pit. Similarly 'Toby' (2012) looked to draw upon the discourse associated with the pub, suggesting that its culture was inappropriate for children and like 'Aaron' that the group should not curtail their behaviour in a traditional space. However like 'Aaron', I argue that

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[63] See chapter four.

there was a knowingness in his remarks, with his response influencing both by my questions at half time and more widely his knowledge of commercial football culture and the expectation that as a traditional fan, he should oppose its culture and create distinction from its 'casual fans.'

The group, look to distance themselves from the family fans within the pub for the way in which they are perceived to be incongruent with the pub's traditional culture, adopting the role of the hegemon to reject the fandom of the casual fans in the same way in which the middle aged fans, 'Alf' (2012) and Mark (2012) looked to create distinction between themselves and 'Toby's' group. In both contexts, the group perceived to be 'casuals' or consumers were rejected for the way in which their attempts to 'buy' into traditional football culture, was seen to compromise the identity of the self-identified hegemons, and the culture of the pub. This vindicates my argument that traditional fandom is enacted by negotiating the game's capitalism as much as it is in understanding the discourse associated with the game's traditional culture.

As the chapter argues, the fandom of 'Toby's' (2012) group relates to their sense of need, particularly their desire to disassociate themselves from their game's capitalism. However as suggested throughout the chapter I argue that the fans similarly engage in a consumptive relationship with football traditional culture, engaging with the discourse surrounding the terraces to construct their identity in line with their expectations of what it means to be a traditional fan. 'Mark' (2012) alludes to this idea in his rebuke of the group as consumers, suggesting that they have been attracted to the pub for the way in which it enables them to engage in an experience reminiscent of a 'Danny Dyer movie.'

I argue that like Norwich City, Mk Dons and Chelsea, that pub fandom attracts regular patronage for the way in which it corresponds to an individual need and desire to enact collective identity. In the previous chapters I argue how fandom through consumption, enables fans to 'buy into' the culture of their club, yet unlike the modern stadium, I argue that fans are attracted to the pub by their expectations of its 'traditional culture,' for the way in which pub fandom is said to oppose the game's capitalism. While the culture of each club is carefully cultivated to address the fan's consumer needs, the culture of the pub is defined as a 'traditional space' by self identified traditional fans keen to maintain the aura and sense of authenticity associated with 'traditional' football culture.

The discourse associated with the pub operates to attract a different demographic to the modern stadium producing different expectations for fandom, however my research indicates that the identity of pub fans is similarly complex and enacted in negotiation. The fans that I engage with in the previous chapters largely self-identify with the culture of their clubs positioning themselves as consumer fans constructing their identity in negotiation of the discourse associated with the game's traditional culture. Similarly, I argue that 'Toby's' (2012) group identify with the discourse surrounding the pub to position themselves as 'traditional fans,' yet It is clear that their understanding of the game's capitalism and their perceived need to oppose it as 'traditional fans' influences their fandom. Once again, this indicates that their identity is constructed in negotiation and influenced by their expectations of what it means to be a 'traditional fan.'

While this chapter focuses on fans with a different sense of self-identity, with research conducted in a different environment to the modern stadium, this chapter suggests that there is communality between the ways in which fans construct their identity within contemporary football culture. Indeed I argue that 'Toby's' (2012) group of pub fans like the participants that I had previously engaged with at each club actively negotiate their identity in relation to capitalism, tradition and their expectations for fandom. Taking this into account, I argue that my research has provided me with a framework to analyse the ways in which fans establish their identity in capitalist football culture.

Chapter 8. Conclusion.

They think it's all over.

My research started with the premise that consumer fans are trapped within discourse of representation. I argue that agents of the game's capitalism position consumer fans positively as consumers, in which their fandom is presented as something to be garnered from a transaction. At the same time I argue that consumer fans are negatively framed as consumers by self-identified traditional fans that resent their consumer attempts to 'buy' into the popular image of fandom upheld and disseminated by football's capitalist industries.

Through both positive reinforcement by agents of the game's capitalism and rejection by agents of the game's traditional culture, I initially outlined the way in which the identity of consumer fans was explicitly framed in relation to their status as consumers. It is my argument that this ignores the idiosyncrasies of their identity. As indicated, while consumer-oriented cultural studies analyses the multilateral power relationship between both producers and consumers of capitalist texts (see, Jameson 1991; Fiske 1992; Hills 2002; Barker 2004; Sandvoss 2005), football culture operates in opposition to this premise with much of the literature, particularly the texts written by self-identified 'traditional' fans (see Bale 1998; Brimson 1998; Burgess 2005; Imlach 2005; Conn 2005) denying consumer fan subjectivity.

Taking this into account, I argue that consumer fans are defined as an exploited mass, as corporate dupes and victims of what Marx described as false consciousness, hollow ersatz to the lost emotional qualities of traditional football culture. The idea that consumer fans are victims of a false conscious, epitomises the hierarchy that defines contemporary football culture, with consumer fans framed as passive dupes to the game's capitalism. The implication is that self-identified traditional fans that largely define the identity of consumer fans within football culture can do so due to their higher perception, and 'authentic' relationship to football culture unmediated by capitalism. Not only does this naturalise the 'traditional' relationship between working class fans and football culture, helping to maintain the aura associated with traditional fan identities, but this notion of hierarchy is similarly represented in the way in which football culture is studied and analysed with the

game's traditional culture and the identity of the traditional fan taken as a 'natural' starting point for research.

Consumer fans are 'othered' for reflecting the processes that have lead to changes within football culture, without considering the nuances of their fan identity. As indicated throughout my research and explicated with 'Toby' (2012) and his friends in the previous chapter[64], self-identified, traditional fans frame their identity in opposition to the game's capitalism, and their perception of the consumer fan. This raises a poignant question. 'Toby' indicates that he constitutes his identity in negotiation of the discourses associated with both the game's capitalism and traditional culture. In this context I posed the question, why is it taken for granted that consumer fans do not engage in a similar process of negotiation, engaging with both capitalist and traditional discourses in the process of their identity formation? This inspired my research question. What does fandom mean to consumer fans and how do they articulate their own identity within football culture?

To develop a more nuance understanding of contemporary football culture and to contribute to consumer-oriented cultural studies that looks to understand the agency and motivations of consumers (see Jameson 1991; Fiske 1992; Hills 2002; Barker 2004; Sandvoss 2005 Lash 2007), my research has endeavoured to analyse how consumer fans understand the way in which they are positioned within football culture, how they articulate and understand their fan identity, and negotiate the ways in which they are narrowly represented. In doing so each chapter draws upon unique data from ethnographic research to analyse the way in which fans of different clubs both understand, and respond to their representation within football culture both by their club, as an agent of the game's capitalism and agents of the game's traditional culture. Subsequently my research can be considered as a study of consumerism and pleasure, unique in taking the game's modern capitalism as a starting point, operationalising football culture as a 'capitalist text.'

While I argue that the participants that I engage with enact different identities in relation to the culture of their club, there is a clear commonality between the ways in which the participants conceptualise their identity as consumers. Positioned positively as consumers by agents of football's capitalism such as the chairmen of their club, the FA and football's affiliated companies, then negatively as consumers by agents of the game's tradition, in

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[64] The self–identified pub fans that I engaged with throughout England's Euro 2012 campaign.

particular self-identified traditional fans, my research indicates that the consumer fans define themselves as *active* consumers.

Self-identified traditional fans that I engaged with such as 'Joe'[65] (2011) and 'Toby[66]' (2012) explicitly framed their identity in opposition to their perception of the identity of the consumer fan. The pair's arguments against the consumer fan corresponds to the discourse of the popular literature (see Brimson, 1998) that criticises consumer fans for 'buying into' the popular image of fandom upheld and disseminated by football's capitalist industries, without understanding the traditions of the culture. While my research indicates that participants engage in active consumer relationships with their clubs, identifying the ways in which the culture of their club meets their individual consumer needs, I argue that consumer fans similarly 'buy into' the game's traditional culture, negotiating its discourse and using it as a resource in the substantiation of their identity. This challenges the simplistic binary that has been created between the 'traditional fan' and 'modern consumer' that still looms large over contemporary football culture.

In each chapter participants demonstrate their understanding and acceptance of the game's capitalism, articulating the ways in which the culture of their club corresponds to their consumer needs. My research indicates that consumer fans similarly engage with football culture's traditional discourses, leading me to argue that their identity as consumers extends beyond their relationship with their club. Indeed I argue that the fan's consumption of the game's traditional culture works in the same way in which the participant's identify with the culture of their clubs, with traditional football culture becoming a resource that fans can appropriate in the substantiation of their identity.

This idea is epitomised by the identity of the Mk Dons fans that I analyse in chapter five. I argue that the Dons fans actively engage with the traditional culture associated with Wimbledon, appropriating the traditional rituals famously associated with the club to actively emphasise their status as consumers within football culture, playing on the fact that the club has 'consumed' the identity and community of Wimbledon. I argue that fans of the Dons appropriate the traditional culture of Wimbledon in self-aware celebrations of their own liminal status within football culture to emphasise their collective identity as consumer fans of a franchise football club.

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[65] Chapter four in relation to Norwich City fans.
[66] Chapter seven in relation to 'casual' England fans.

This leads to my unique contribution, in which I argue that the identity of the participants that I engage with in my research is influenced by their expectations of *how* they should enact fandom. Again using the MK Dons fans to punctuate my argument, I argue that participants engage with the discourse associated with Wimbledon[67] in retaliation to the way in which the club and the fans are perceived within football culture. I argue that the knowing performance of the Dons fans challenges the expectations that their rivals have of them. The idea being that as 'passive' consumers of a 'new' franchise football club, they should not understand or engage with the game's traditional culture. This notion is indicated by 'Chris' (24/11/11) in the epigraph of chapter five[68]. The way in which Dons fans enact traditional rituals associated with Wimbledon not only emphasises their identity as consumers but also challenges the rival fan's power of definition, enabling the Dons fans to subvert the expectations they have of their identity.

My argument is that the consumer fan's levels of engagement and understanding of both the game's modern capitalism and its traditional culture enables them to enact different types of identity. Rather than being trapped within discourses of representation, my research indicates that consumer fans engage in processes of complex discursive negotiation, constructing their identities at the juncture of the hegemonic discourses that surround the culture: consumerism and tradition, but also their individual understanding of how they are *expected* to enact fandom. In the context of the Dons, I argue that the fan's understanding of the culture of the club and the way in which the club are perceived within football culture, motivates them to enact fan identities that challenge the expectations upheld of them within football culture. The fan's understanding of the business process that lead to the creation of the club, demonstrates their understanding of the capitalist orientation of the club, and its operation as a leisure industry. Similarly, their active appropriation of the traditional rituals associated with Wimbledon demonstrates their engagement with traditional football culture. The fans are aware that it is their ability to negotiate the discourse surrounding traditional football culture that challenges expectations, particularly the idea that they are passive consumers. Chapter five argues that the Dons fan experience pleasure from this. Indeed, throughout my research I document the

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[67] As suggested in chapter five the club are considered to be metonymic of the games traditional culture.

[68] 'As if you're looking at 'Franchise United.' If you are researching football fans why are you looking at them? They aren't even a real football club, they don't have *real fans*. No one takes them seriously do they?' ('Chris' 24/11/11)

ways in which participants experience pleasure in negotiating expectations rival fans have of their identity.

While I outline how fans construct their identity in negotiation of their status as consumers, I acknowledge that this could be seen as problematic, the fan's adherence to both hegemonic discourses surrounding the game, could be seen as demonstrative of the limited boundaries for identity formation within football culture. Conversely the fact that the participants are able to negotiate these discourses indicates that consumer fans are starting to enact their own unique hybrid identities within the culture, encouraging us to reconsider the scope of representation within contemporary football culture.

As suggested my research indicates that consumer fans substantiate their identity at the juncture of the discourses surrounding football culture, in negotiation of the game's capitalism and tradition. In doing so I argue that fans actively attempt to expand the boundaries of representation within contemporary football culture with their identity oscillating between affirmation and rejection of these discourses. I interpret this as the participant's attempts to engineer their own representational space within football culture; a culture that largely struggles to accept and adapt to the changes that they represent. Thornton (1995: 201) argues that understanding culture is fundamentally a question of epistemology and my research vindicates my argument that it is necessary to analyse football culture with new epistemological approaches. I have looked to do this be adopting a consumer-oriented cultural studies approach to my research taking into account the unique ways in which consumer fans engineer their own frames of representation within contemporary football culture. This emphasises the need to widen the lenses of cultural examination currently deployed within football culture.

It is significant that the participants that I engaged with throughout the research process enact their identity in a similar process of negotiation. As suggested, the way in which the participants of each club actively negotiate their identity in relation to the game's capitalism, tradition and their expectations for fandom is the communality between the participants and the theme that binds my research. Taking this into account, I argue that my research has provided me with a frame work to analyse the ways in which consumer fans establish their identity which can subsequently be used in further research to explore the

ways in which fans of different clubs, or indeed fans with different conceptions of their self-identity enact fandom.

It was my acknowledgement of this frame work, coupled with the recognition that my work focuses on a specific type of fan experience within the modern stadium that encouraged me to apply my frame work of analysis to pub fandom, engaging with self-identified traditional fans. I was keen to assess the way in which traditional fans enact identity, to see if they engage in similar discursive negotiations and to assess whether their identity is similarly shaped by their expectations of what it means to be a specific 'type' of fan.

As suggested, I opted to conduct research within the pub around the screening of England's Euro 2012 matches. The tournament was selected explicitly to test the application of my framework in relation to a different fan experience, but also for the way in which screenings of international matches are said to attract a diverse range of fans with different conceptions of their self-identity (see Carrington 1998; Bondy 2010; Brown 2014). The research that was conducted around the tournament supported my assumption that the identity of the self-identified traditional fans was similarly enacted in negotiation, with the 'traditional' fan's expression of collective identity tempered by the presence of 'casual' fans within the pub. Indeed the chapter indicates that the presence of 'casual' fans within the pub compromised the traditional fan's expectations of the pub as a 'traditional' venue, emphasising the way in which their expectations for fandom had been constructed in a specific way.

While I maintain that the inclusion of the chapter operates to further explicate the nuances of identity within contemporary football culture, exploring the ways in which different agents influence fan's expectations of how they *should* constitute their identity as a specific *type* of fan. I argue that the chapter similarly demonstrates that my framework of analysis can be successfully applied to different fan experiences within contemporary football culture and to the analysis of fans with different identities within football culture.

To continue to develop a more nuance understanding of contemporary football culture, I maintain that it is vital to 'shatter the aura' surrounding traditional football culture. While I do not consider my work to have achieved this objective, I believe that my work has started to chip away at its aura, providing consumer fans with an opportunity to articulate their

identity and negotiate the discourses operating upon them within football culture. I intend to continue in my pursuit, using my framework to continue to chip away at this aura associated with traditional football culture, analysing the way in which fans of other football clubs throughout the football league negotiate their identity as consumers.

A good place to start would be with fans of a team in the northern part of the country. To refer to Sands (2002) again he states that successful ethnography depends upon the selection of the right populations. I maintain that I have selected the right fan groups and the right clubs as case studies to enable me to address my research questions and make perceptive generalisation about contemporary football culture. Having said that I am cautious that I am only able to make generalisations in relation to fans from the southeast of the country. My research conducted within the public house indicates that my framework of analysis can be successfully applied to different fan experiences and to fans with different self-identities and I am keen to apply my framework to fans from different regions of the country. At present I am aware that my research 'colours in only a small section of territory' and subsequently has 'lesser value in navigating through the territory at large' (Sandvoss 2005: 6) something that continues to be my wider research aim.

As indicated in my methodology[69] my initial pilot studies were conducted with clubs throughout the football league system with clubs situated in both the north and south of the country. As suggested, the final case studies were selected irrespective of their geographical location due to the way in which the culture of each club corresponds with different characteristics of the game's modern capitalism[70].

As outlined, the different marketing strategies and cultures of each club attracted different demographics: Norwich City attracted a significant number of family groups; MK Dons attracted a sizable number of middle aged, middle class fans, while Chelsea appealed to a global fan base from around the world. The clubs were selected as case studies for analysis in the recognition that the fans shared a communality of identity. When considering the data obtained from my pilot studies conducted at clubs from the northern part of the country: Northampton, Scunthorpe and Bolton I was unable to identify a discernable

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[69] See chapter three.
[70] Norwich City was identified as 'a family club,' Milton Keynes was identified as a 'franchise' football club. Chelsea was identified as a 'tourist attraction' club.

communality between the fans that would act as an index for analysis[71]. In hindsight, I failed to recognise that fans of northern clubs are bound by geography. In 2012, the year in which I conducted my ethnographic research, The Economist (2012) argued that the gap between the south of the country and the north, in life expectancy, political inclinations and in economic trends were growing to the extent that they could be considered as separate countries.

Stuart Maconie (2007) can be used to develop this idea, arguing that like a separate country, the north of England has a different cultural and political landscape to the rest of Britain. Maconie (2007) argues that the majority of the country can be consider as centre-right in political orientation where as the north of England has a strong history of socialism a divide that he suggests corresponds to the economic divide between the north and south of the country. He continues arguing that the different economic conditions and different political orientation of the north have led to the development of a folk culture discernable to the south of the country: 'The north means, home, truth, beauty, valour, romance, warm and characterful people, real beer and proper chip shops' (Maconie 2007: 2).

It is significant that Maconie (2007) mobilises the same discourses associated with traditional football culture, which in both instances are associated with the integrity, authenticity and community of the working classes in opposition to the soulnessness of capitalism. Taking this into account I speculate as to whether that fans of northern clubs would be receptive or accepting of modern football culture, a culture that is fundamentally opposed to the folk culture of the region. A culture that has been developed in opposition to the capitalism that modern football represents.

It would be fascinating to apply my framework of analysis to fans of a northern football club to analyse the extent to which the unique character of the region influences their fan identity, their understanding of contemporary football culture or perhaps influences their expectations of what it means to be a fan of a northern football club. It would also be interesting to assess whether the idea of a shared geography influenced the participant's fan identity to a greater extent than the shared characteristics that I initially identified with fans from Norwich, Milton Keynes and Chelsea.

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[71] Norwich City was selected to analyse gender, Milton Keynes was selected to analyse class and Chelsea was selected to analyse ethnicity.

It is important to remember that cultures are constantly in flux. My research was conducted around the 2011/2012 football season. Subsequently my analysis can be considered a valid interpretation of the participant's identity at that moment in time. The categories of identity that I associated with fans from clubs in the south of the country were abandoned after it became clear that the themes where not concomitant with the way in which the participants articulated their own fan identity and while it would be interesting to assess whether the shared geography of the north had a more significant impact on the participant's fan identity, it is important to remember that my research focuses on a small sample of fans associated with each club and this is not to suggest that the way that they articulate their fandom is constitutive of the club's wider fan base. With this in mind I think that it would be beneficial to return to conduct further research at each club to see if different participants constitute their identity in relation to my initial themes of analysis; gender, class and ethnicity, to analyse whether these characteristics of identity contribute to the fan's negotiation of the culture of their club or similarly influence their expectations for fandom. If I was to complete this follow up research, I think that it may act as a fascinating counterpoint to the research that I propose to conduct with fans from the north of the country.

At the end of the Chelsea chapter[72], I speculated that if Jose Mourinho was appointed for a second term as Chelsea manager the fans would develop different expectations for fandom, affecting the way in which they identity with the culture of the club. Two years later, my prediction seems poignant with Mourinho two years into his second spell with the club. As I write this, the club is eleven matches into the 2014/2015 season and currently sit top of the table, unbeaten in the league (17/11/14). It would be fascinating to return to the club to analyse the way in which Mourinho's return has influenced the fan's ability to 'cheer for self' (Vaas 2003), and the way that their current status as 'winners', within football culture, influences how they negotiate their identification with Abramovich, the players and rival fans.

Since the completion of my fieldwork, there have similarly been significant developments at Norwich City and the MK Dons. In the 2013/2014 season Norwich City were relegated from the Premier League, they subsequently sacked Chris Hughton as their manager and promoted academy coach Neil Adams, a move that corresponds to the club's attempts to

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[72] Chapter six

foster a collective family culture. Despite this popular move with the fans, the club have had a poor start to the season and are currently sitting tenth in the Championship table (17/11/14), comfortably outside the coveted, automatic promotion and playoff spots. Conversely the MK Don have had a positive start to the season, famously beating Manchester United 4-0 in the Capital One Cup (26/8/14), and currently sitting sixth in the League 1 table. Their successful start to the season had encouraged pundits to predict that they might achieve promotion, while the quality of the team's performance have garnered the club a new level of respect (see Calvin 2013; Lewis 2013; Gruffudd 2014). However once again the Dons were drawn to play AFC Wimbledon in the Capital One Cup (13/8/14). A meeting that saw wider football culture once again mobilise in opposition to the Dons, positioning them as a franchise.

It would be fascinating to return to the clubs to assess whether the changes that have happened within the culture of each club have impacted upon the way in which the fans enact their identity. This would serve as a fascinating counterpoint to the research that I have already conducted, providing me with further data to consider the ways in which consumer fans constitute their identity in negotiation of the culture of their club and the game's traditional culture. It would be fascinating to discover whether the changes that have happened at each club encourages the participants to enact different types of identity, enabling me to analyses the way in which consumer fans constitute their identity at different cultural moment in their club's history.

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Appendix A.

Information about the participants included in each Chapter.

Norwich City.

Names: Roy, Pam and Chris (10)

Date: 31/12/11

Match: Norwich City vs Fulham

Type of discussion: Semi-structured interview

Area of discussion: Catering area, Aviva Community Stand.

Reason for selection: Purposively selected as 'family fans.'

Other relevant information: Family self-identify as consumer fans. The football event enables them to enact rituals of family. Pam 'Mainly comes for the pie' compares live football matches to shopping.

Names: Jack and Ben (5)

Date: 18/2/12

Match: Norwich City vs Leicester City (FA Cup)

Type of discussion: Semi-structured interview

Area of discussion: Catering area, Aviva Community Stand.

Reason for selection: Selected as father and son

Other relevant information: Jack encouraged to bring his son due to clubs family culture. Self-identifies as 'casual' consumer fan. Keen to re-live a ritual of family he experienced with his father. Confronted by Tom, clash of fan identities.

Name: Tom

Date: 18/2/12

Match: Norwich City vs Leicester City (FA Cup)

Type of discussion: Informal chat

Area of discussion: The Aviva Community Stand.

Reason for selection: Observed self-censoring his behaviour.

Other relevant information: Admitted censoring his behaviour due to the club's family culture. 'Bloody kids.' Attends matches with friends rather than family. Confronted Jack. Jack and Ben subsequently leave the stadium. Prompted my research within the Snake Pit.

Names: Meg, Pip, Lee (16) and Nick (14)

Date: 26/2/12

Match: N/A

Type of discussion: Informal chat

Area of discussion: The Forum, Norwich.

Reason for selection: Acquiring tickets to attend matches in the Snake pit.

Other relevant information: Lee and Nick mocked the traditional ideas associated with the Snake Pit. Mocks the idea of a traditional fan identity. Family self-identify as consumers yet are all aware of the discourse associated with traditional football culture.

Names: Stu, Rob, Paul.

Date: 10/3/12

Match: Norwich City vs Wigan Athletic

Type of discussion: Semi-structured interview

Area of discussion: The catering area, Snake Pit

Reason for selection: Group clearly different from the previously identified family fans.

Other relevant information: Group made active attempts to position themselves as traditional fans. Behaviour challenges the culture of the club. Group swear and joke throughout interview, emphasise drinking rituals, smell of alcohol. Group have middle class jobs, teachers and business consultant. All in possession of home and away season tickets.

Names: Dom, Tony, Aaron.

Date: 10/3/12

Match: Norwich City vs Wigan Athletic

Type of discussion: Semi-structured interview

Area of discussion: The catering area, Snake Pit

Reason for selection: To gauge the reaction of the fans to Victor Moses, and the chant inspired by his dive in the first half.

Other relevant information: Group made active attempts to position themselves as traditional fans. Group look to emphasise the 'traditional' culture of the Snake Pit. 'It's the

Snake Pit, what did you expect.' Knowingness to the participant's responses. Keen to adhere to expectations of what it means to be a traditional fan.

Names: Todd and Mike.

Date: 24/3/12

Match: Norwich City vs Wolverhampton Wanderers

Type of discussion: Semi-structured interview

Area of discussion: The catering area, Snake Pit

Reason for selection: The pair were drinking and laughing loudly in a manner similar to Stu, Rob and Paul.

Other relevant information: Todd had been drinking heavily before kick-off. Group construct binary between their traditional fan identity and the identity of the club's family fans. Create a physic link between their fandom and the players on the pitch. Emphasise their 'active' fandom.

Name: Gaz

Date: 24/3/12

Match: Norwich City vs Wolverhampton Wanderers

Type of discussion: Informal chat

Area of discussion: The Snake Pit

Reason for selection: Convenience, positioned next to him in the stand.

Other relevant information: Identified 'On the Ball City' as the official club anthem, 'The only song some fans know.' Suggested a rejection of the song may relate to a rejection of the club's family culture.

Mk Dons

Name: Steve.

Date: 27/3/12

Match: MK Dons vs Carlisle

Type of discussion: Informal chat

Area of discussion: The East Wing Stand.

Reason for selection: Positioned next to him in the stand

Other relevant information: Made me aware of the animosity directed at the fans by rivals. Fear prevented him from attending matches for a number of seasons. Refused to talk about 'the grey areas' of the club's history.

Name: Matt

Date: 27/3/12

Match: MK Dons vs Carlisle

Type of discussion: Informal chat

Area of discussion: Bar inside the East Wing Stand.

Reason for selection: Convenience stood next to him in the bar.

Other relevant information: Identifies with the business strategy of the club. Considers the club as leisure resource for the local community. Community fostered by the club as a 'franchise.' Attracted to the club as a consumer, lured in by cheap ticket prices.

Name: Kate

Date: 31/3/12

Match: MK Dons vs Brentford

Type of discussion: Semi-structured interview

Area of discussion: Bar inside the East Wing Stand.

Reason for selection: Standing on her own drinking wine. Fit my criteria for selection.

Other relevant information: Assimilates the club with the retail park it is situated on. Self-identifies as a consumer. Relationship to the club 'mutually beneficial.' Support of the team related to the club's role within the community.

Name: Kane

Date: 2/12/12

Match: MK Dons vs AFC Wimbledon (FA Cup)

Type of discussion: Informal chat

Area of discussion: Outside stadium MK.

Reason for selection: Convenience, fit my profile for selection.

Other relevant information: Playfully reprimanded me for using 'the W word.' Refused to talk about the history of the two clubs.

Names: Fran and Greg

Date: 2/12/12

Match: MK Dons vs AFC Wimbledon (FA Cup)

Type of discussion: Semi-structured interview

Area of discussion: Bar inside the East Wing Stand.

Reason for selection: Had chatted with the participants previously and had established a rapport.

Other relevant information: Recognise the club as a franchise. Approach the origins of the club in a way that both demonstrate their knowledge of Wimbledon's history but also their reluctance to engage with it. Use Chelsea as an analogy to demonstrate their knowledge of capitalist football culture. Lower their guard and blame Wimbledon fans for not saving the club from relocation.

Name: Ralph

Date: 2/12/12

Match: MK Dons vs AFC Wimbledon (FA Cup)

Type of discussion: Informal chat

Area of discussion: Outside stadium MK.

Reason for selection: Convenience. Keen to assess the reaction of fans to Winkelman's pre match interview and the 'Drop the Don's campaign.'

Other relevant information: Interpreted the club dropping the Don's suffix as 'Letting AFC Wimbledon win.' Indication of the fan's opposition to the change.

Name: Kim

Date: 2/12/12

Match: MK Dons vs AFC Wimbledon (FA Cup)

Type of discussion: Informal chat

Area of discussion: Outside stadium MK.

Reason for selection: Convenience. Keen to assess the reaction of fans to Winkelman's pre match interview and the 'Drop the Don's campaign.'

Other relevant information: Dropping the Don's as 'them getting one over on us.' Another female fan at the match alone.

Name: Levi

Date: 2/12/12

Match: MK Dons vs AFC Wimbledon (FA Cup)

Type of discussion: Informal chat

Area of discussion: Outside stadium MK.

Reason for selection: Convenience. Keen to assess the reaction of fans to Winkelman's pre match interview and the 'Drop the Don's campaign.'

Other relevant information: Dropping the Don's would show the world that the club were 'ashamed.' Had been drinking pre-match.

Name: Sam

Date: 2/12/12

Match: MK Dons vs AFC Wimbledon (FA Cup)

Type of discussion: Informal chat

Area of discussion: Outside stadium MK.

Reason for selection: Convenience. Keen to assess the reaction of fans to Winkelman's pre match interview and the 'Drop the Don's campaign.'

Other relevant information: Not really concerned about the name. Wants to keep it to antagonise the opposition. 'The club should keep the name to piss them off if nothing else.'

Names: Zack and Hugo

Date: 2/12/12

Match: MK Dons vs AFC Wimbledon (FA Cup)

Type of discussion: Semi-structured interview

Area of discussion: Bar inside the East Wing Stand.

Reason for selection: Keen to gauge the halftime reaction. The group were loud and jovial; this was not in keeping with the atmosphere before kick off.

Other relevant information: Enjoyed goading AFC Wimbledon Fans. Actively draw upon their history and status as a franchise. Similarities to the Snake Pit fans. Behaviour as 'retaliation' against wider football culture.

Chelsea

Name: Bruce

Date: 20/8/11

Match: Chelsea vs West Bromich Albion

Type of discussion: Semi-structured interview

Area of discussion: Catering area of the Shed End stand.

Reason for selection: Was clad extensively in merchandise. Fit my categorisation for selection.

Other relevant information: Assimilates him self with the winning status of the club. Identifies AVB as a 'Winner... one of us.' Identifies with the business strategy of the club. Approves of Ancelotti's sacking.

Names: Harry and Ali

Date: 18/2/12

Match: Chelsea vs Birmingham City (FA Cup)

Type of discussion: Semi-structured interview

Area of discussion: Outside Stamford Bridge.

Reason for selection: Convenience. Overheard the pair discussing the match.

Other relevant information: Disassociate themselves from AVB. Presenting him as harmful to their identity as winners. 'That manager.'

Name: Fred

Date: 21/2/12

Match: Napoli vs Chelsea (Champions League)

Type of discussion: Semi-structured interview

Area of discussion: 'MG's' Spots bar.

Reason for selection: Wearing Chelsea merchandise. Fit my categorisation for selection.

Other relevant information: 'Disgusted' and 'embarrassed' by the result. Disassociates AVB from the club. Places blame for defeat solely with AVB.

Name: Jim

Date: 21/2/12

Match: N/A

Type of discussion: Informal chat (Phone call)

Area of discussion: N/A

Reason for selection: Rapport previously established. Telephone numbers exchanged.

Other relevant information: Uses the appointment of Di Matteo to position himself against Abramovich's hiring and firing policy. Presents himself as a traditional fan.

Name: Tim

Date: 21/2/12

Match: N/A

Type of discussion: Informal chat (Phone call)

Area of discussion: N/A

Reason for selection: Rapport previously established. Telephone numbers exchanged.

Other relevant information: Describes Di Matteo as a 'club legend.' 'Feels like I've got my *Chels* back.' Multifaceted idea relating to the status of the club within wider football culture.

Names: Dan and Kat

Date: 7/4/12

Match: Chelsea vs Wigan Athletic

Type of discussion: Informal chat

Area of discussion: Walking to Fulham Broadway tube station.

Reason for selection: The pair initiated conversation.

Other relevant information: Anger that I questioned the team. 'We won what more do you want.' Keen to 'cheer for self.' Wanted me to recognise their status as winners.

Names: Scott and Dean

Date: 14/3/12

Match: Chelsea vs Napoli (Champions League)

Type of discussion: Semi-structured interview

Area of discussion: 'MG's' Sports bar.

Reason for selection: Convenience recognised the participants from previous research.

Other relevant information: Participants had strategy for what they perceived to be the teams impending defeat. Blame with AVB not Di Matteo. 'You could have Mourinho, Ferguson Wenger, all of them on the touch line and they wouldn't get us out of the mess he left us in.' Di Matteo made the team win. The pair 'cheer self', associating him with the club's traditional culture while emphasising his status as a winning manager.

Names: Craig and Sheena

Date: 2/5/12

Match: Chelsea vs Newcastle United.

Type of discussion: Semi-structured interview

Area of discussion: Outside Stamford Bridge

Reason for selection: Craig was wearing a 'Terry is innocent' T-shirt.

Other relevant information: Passionately defend Terry. Pair carefully avoid the question and do not suggest that he is innocent. 'JT is vital to the team's success.' Prioritise winning over the club's reputation.

Name: Jim (b)

Date: 21/11/12

Match: N/A

Type of discussion: Informal chat (Phone call)

Area of discussion: N/A

Reason for selection: Rapport previously established. Telephone numbers exchanged.

Other relevant information: Describes club as a 'Joke.' Blames Abramovich for damaging the reputation of the club within wider football culture.

Name: Tim (b)

Date: 21/11/12

Match: N/A

Type of discussion: Informal chat (Phone call)

Area of discussion: N/A

Reason for selection: Rapport previously established. Telephone numbers exchanged.

Other relevant information: Describes the club as Abramovich's 'Toy.' '*Right now* I wish he would just fuck off and take his money with him.' Abramovich blames for damaging the perception of the club in wider football culture.

'MG's'- The Virtual Terrace.

Name: Toby

Date: 11/6/12

Match: N/A

Type of discussion: Informal chat

Area of discussion: Outside my house.

Reason for selection: Chance meeting, Toby wearing England shirt and fancy dress.

Other relevant information: Invited me to join him and his friends at local sports bar 'MG's' for the tournament, 'It's like a massive party.' Presents himself as a traditional fan. Compares the atmosphere to the darts at Alexandra Palace.

Name: Toby

Date: 11/6/12

Match: England vs France (European Championships)

Type of discussion: Informal chat

Area of discussion: 'MG's' Sports bar

Reason for selection: Invited to join him as a complete participant of his group.

Other relevant information: Arrived early to claim the 'best spot.' Took time of work. Organised an event around the match on Facebook. Presents himself as active in fandom. Fan identity based on the collectivity of his group and the recognition of his 'traditional' identity. Group recognition key to his individual fan identity. Aware of the discourse surrounding the pub in football culture.

Names: Toby and Chad

Date: 11/6/12

Match: England vs France (European Championships)

Type of discussion: Semi-structured interview

Area of discussion: 'MG's' Sports bar

Reason for selection: To assess the collective identity of Toby's group.

Other relevant information: Vindicate 'MG's' as a choice of venue. Construct the pub as a virtual terrace. Aware of the discourses surrounding the virtual terrace. Choice of venue as consumer choice. Chad compares the atmosphere to 'like what you see on the films.' Pair have expectations of the pub as a traditional venue. Do not mention the game's modern capitalism.

Names: Wayne and Owen

Date: 11/6/12

Match: England vs France (European Championships)

Type of discussion: Semi-structured interview

Area of discussion: 'MG's' Sports bar

Reason for selection: Continuing to assess the collective identity of the group.

Other relevant information: The participants have different fan identities to Toby and Chad. Challenges the collective identity of the group. Not heavily identified as fans.

'I have more important things to do than spend the whole day worrying about football' Ridicule Toby's effort to turn the match into an 'event.' 'I don't get the point; it's meant to be a laugh.'

Names: Simon and Bob

Date: 11/6/12

Match: England vs France (European Championships)

Type of discussion: Semi-structured interview

Area of discussion: 'MG's' Sports bar

Reason for selection: Continuing to assess the collective identity of the group.

Other relevant information: Identify the rituals of terrace culture 'Piss up' 'Having a laugh.' Pair unaware of the debates within football culture, their fan identity is non-politicised. Football as a 'casual day out with mates.'

Names: Mark

Date: 11/6/12

Match: England vs France (European Championships)

Type of discussion: Informal chat.

Area of discussion: 'MG's' Sports bar

Reason for selection: Keen to assess the clash of identities between fan groups.

Other relevant information: Questions the 'authenticity' of Toby's group. Attempts to legitimise his own fan identity 'I use to stand on the Kop every weekend.' Presents Toby's groups as consumer fans that have watched 'Too many Danny Dyer films.'

Names: Toby

Date: 15/6/12

Match: England vs Sweden (European Championships)

Type of discussion: Informal chat.

Area of discussion: 'MG's' Sports bar

Reason for selection: To assess Toby's opinion of the change in atmosphere and demographic within the pub.

Other relevant information: Took credit for the louder atmosphere inside the pub. Discarded the role of families and children in building atmosphere. Change in tact. Recognised the implication of 'family fans' joining in with the group. 'We are not bloody kid's entertainers.' Attempts to create distinction between the groups by singing increasingly crude songs. Interviewer effect, I am cautious that our chat influenced the participant's performance of identity.

Names: Richard

Date: 19/6/12

Match: England vs Ukraine (European Championships)

Type of discussion: Informal chat.

Area of discussion: 'MG's' Sports bar

Reason for selection: Approached me asking about my research.

Other relevant information: Creates binary between consumer fans and traditional fans. Recognises centrality of capitalism and tradition to contemporary football culture. Aura around traditional football culture. Questions my research. 'Your research is looking at those that can afford to go to football matches, not fans.'

Appendix B

The cost of being a fan of each club selected for analysis for the 2011/2012 season.

Norwich City.

Season ticket in the Aviva Community Stand - £423.43

Under 17s season ticket in the Aviva Community Stand - £281.50

Match day programme - £3.50

Replica shirt - £45

Child's shirt - £35

Pie - £2.50

Pint - £3.50

Mk Dons.

Season ticket in the East Wing - £324

Under 17s season ticket in the East Wing - £24

Match day programme - £3

Replica shirt – £40

Child's shirt - £33

Pie - £3.20

Pint - £3

Chelsea.

Season ticket in the Shed End Upper - £880

Under 17s season ticket in the Shed End Upper - £425

Match day programme - £3.00

Replica shirt - £55

Child's shirt - £45

Pie - £3.60

Pint - £3.50