

# Module 1. Fan v Customer: A Love Based on Friction, Emotion and Irrationality

## Unit 1.1

### 1.1.1 The history of the fan

Everything we are studying in this course is in the context of growing the emotional bond between the fan and the club (or national team). So, it is important to reflect on the origins of fandom: how they have evolved and how things are today.

In this module and in other parts of the course, we have examined these factors and their meanings in the context of fan engagement. **What we are learning is that it is insufficient to hold a 'general view' of what fans are or may be, because that leads the industry to make mistakes, whether in failing to recognise the many different manifestations of fandom or in failing to correctly anticipate and respond to the changing needs of these groups over time.**

Of course, as your professor looks back on the beautiful game, it seems that the idea of football having fans has always been with us. However, that is not necessarily the case.

Football has its beginnings and its roots at the end of the 19th century in most parts of the world. In England, where it all began to take formal form in the second part of the 1800s, it quickly became a major part of the club's culture. The success (or otherwise) of the national team has always been a talking point, and, when you add it to rugby and cricket, you have the national 'holy trinity' of sports. In other countries, this is not always the case.

In Estonia, for example, the work being done by UEFA as part of their GROW programme<sup>1</sup> aims to promote the sport. It does this through providing support in four areas: image, engagement, participation and commercial planning. In a Nordic country where long winters hinder outdoor spectator sports, it is natural for football, as we know it, not to have the profile it enjoys in other countries. **So, it is important not to base our assumptions about the profile of the game in other countries on the way it is in England.**

The history of the football fan in the UK shows that the concept is always fluxing. A fan of the game just 25 years ago would fail to see why his or her local club would be developing

---

<sup>1</sup>You can find more information about the article entitled 'UEFA Grow committed to growing European football' in <https://www.uefa.com/insideuefa/football-development/grow/>



a digital engagement strategy now, while one from 75 years ago would think nothing of sitting on a high wall overlooking the field of play to get a good view.

This is, in fact, how FC Barcelona fans got their nickname. As it is explained in an article of La Liga official website, the club played games in the early 1900s at a ground in Calle de la Industria (a street in Barcelona located in an industrial area).

The article goes on to explain where the nickname came from:

The Catalan side had more fans than their stadium, with a two-tier stand, could comfortably hold. Due to the over-crowding, some fans started sitting on the walls that surrounded the pitch. The first image that passers-by had as they neared the stadium was of the backsides of the fans sitting on the wall watching the games. From that time onwards, the supporters of the 'Azulgranas' came to be known in Catalan as 'Culers' (or 'Culés' in Spanish), which means those that show their backsides. (Why are Barcelona players called 'Culés'?, 2016, para. 2)

Atletico Madrid fans' nickname comes from the mattress factory, of course, while we would never finish compiling a list of nicknames for clubs or fans based on the industry or circumstances applicable when the club first played with fans watching.

An excellent source for learning about the history of fans is provided by the partnership of the University of Leicester, De Montfort University and Leicester City Football Club in their course: English Football: A Social History.

The course explains that there is little reliable information about those first earliest fans of the game, going to state that, while many clubs were formed in England towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, only a few were still in operation as we entered the 20<sup>th</sup>. According to the course, most historians of the game say that the clubs who survived were located in areas of greater affluence where 'skilled and semi-skilled workers would have Saturday afternoon off work and would be able to afford to spend money on attending football' (University of Leicester, n. d., para. 1)

The evocative and lyrical way the course introduction traces the evolution of fandom is wonderfully engaging, and this is at its best in this remarkable short film of the crowd at a Sheffield United v Bury game in 1902 (The British Film Institute, 2008):

**Video 1:** Sheffield United v Bury (1902) | BFI  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7UkVZZnrC4E>

As the narrator explains, it is not possible to know if women were watching the game, because the area in the film may have been a standing section (whereas seated areas may have been provided for women). However, the dress and demeanour of the people watching may help you to understand more about them. Do you think that these people are skilled workers? What clues does the film give you about the earliest recorded fans in history?



The author of the course explains that middle class men and women would have watched games at that time, but probably from seats in the stand. He also goes on to point out that there is evidence of women watching games from as early as 1887 at an Everton FC game, while other historians have found research confirming the attendance of women (for free) in the 1880s and 1890s. For those interested in researching more this area, it is recommended that you check the references at the end of this module for more information on the above Social History course.

That is what helps us to understand the evolution of the football fan. In England, when the FA Cup Final was played (usually in the late spring), Londoners were shocked to find lots of 'northerners' (from the north of England, the home of the industrial revolution with its mines, factories and, as William Blake described them in the famous hymn 'Jerusalem', the 'dark satanic mills')<sup>2</sup>.

**Perhaps this and the rivalries that naturally evolved help us to understand the heightened passion of the game:** something that you do not find in middle-class sports in England, like cricket and rugby, which have always been defined and characterised by their polite 'gentlemanly' behaviours. As the author of the Social History course observes, northern working-class fans were often seen by Londoners as 'Barbarians' (University of Leicester, n. d.).

Video 2: Have a look at the video *The Secret in Their Eyes - Passion*

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zq\\_bKjgaKEo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zq_bKjgaKEo)

The next generation of fans are likely to be those our grandparents or parents had real live knowledge of, because they were part of them.

'My father, Michael Bradley (1934) attended games at Sunderland and often heard other fans talk of travelling to games on the bus with the players' (Mark Bradley's experience).

This would be remarkable now, certainly at the higher levels of the game that Sunderland played at in the 1940s and 1950s in England, and it goes some way to show the extent to which the social divide between fans and players has increased. This is both one of the benefits of grass roots or lower league football (where you can still enjoy a drink with the players after the game) and one of the reasons many people enjoy it so much these days.

It is also one of the reasons football experiences so many negative external perceptions, since, put simply, the working-class people who traditionally represented the English football fanbase are now using their low wages to pay for professionals who they will never be able to socialise with. **One of the ways in which fan engagement can narrow the gap between fans and clubs is by showing players as approachable people, 'just like us', and this is something that the advent of digital services can, to a certain extent, do.**

---

<sup>2</sup> From the hymn 'Jerusalem': the lyrics for which were written by William Blake (1757-1827), a Georgian poet, writer and illustrator.



So, taking an interest in the history of the fan and the ways that it has evolved in the different countries where it is played will help us better appreciate the friction, emotion and irrationality embedded in the motivations of fans; and, by definition, for those of us working in the industry (or with the ambition to do so), this will help us to build stronger relationships with them.

### Exercise

Undertake some brief research into the **origins of football in your own country**. From the clues that you can find, how would you characterise the earliest fans of the game where you live?

## 1.1.2 Societal attitudes to fans

As we have touched upon in the above theme, **societal attitudes to football fans are important, as they can help to influence external/public perceptions of the game.**

We therefore need to understand how they are formed, the extent to which they influence the way people see our game and how we can use fan engagement to influence them.

The Fan Experience Company work has been very conscious of the ways that fan engagement (and the different thinking that follows) can help to soften external perceptions. Right now, in the UK, football fans have wondered why, as we exit the Covid-19 pandemic and begin to contemplate the return of fans to stadium, some other sports have been prioritised ahead of football.

Many have speculated that the relationships between certain politicians and certain sports have led them to be favoured over them, with some sports being able to hold 'pilot events' before football.

To understand this, we have to consider the concept of social identity (explained in course 'Why Fan Engagement? Definition, Principles & Rationale') and consider the specific ideas of Tajfel's '**in-groups**' (McLeod, 2019). These are **social groups to which a person psychologically identifies**. Naturally, football can be viewed this way, and it is clear that people will identify with their team via a wide variety of phenomena.

**Tajfel (1979) proposed that the groups (e.g. football team) which people belonged to, were an important source of pride and self-esteem. These groups give us a sense of social identity and make us feel like we have a place in the world and a feeling of belonging.** So, argues Tajfel, we view the world as 'them' and 'us' and we categorise people.

McLeod's article explains that stereotyping (i.e. putting people into groups and categories) is based on a normal cognitive process: our tendency to group things together. Psychologically, in doing this, we tend to exaggerate the differences between groups and the things that connect people in the same group. This underpins Tajfel's '**in-group**' and '**out-group**' theory. McLeod (2019) states the following:



'The central hypothesis of social identity theory is that group members of an in-group **will seek to find negative aspects of an out-group**, thus enhancing their self-image' (para. 5).

We know from history that prejudiced and conflicting views between different cultures and countries can lead to genocide, war and huge social struggle, and we know that, when we apply this to football, we can have hooliganism and other anti-social and inflammatory behaviours prevalent in some ultra groups, like racism, homophobia and misogyny.

Societal attitudes can seriously encumber the football industry's efforts to convey its positive contribution to society itself. We may see our sport as a positive form of exercise –either we participate in it or attend to a game– that positively impacts on mental and physical health, self-esteem and positive social interaction. We may describe the many forms of 'giving back' that the game has created and the huge impact these initiatives have had.

**However, as Tajfel (1979) and others have shown, it can also mean that for those who do not psychologically belong in our group, everything is seen in a negative light. So, when the social class of politicians is alien to the traditions of the game of football in certain countries, it can make it difficult to grow a club or interest in the national team. Fan engagement, with its emphasis on growing the emotional bond with fans and the local community, can be an antidote to this.**

For example, look at this example from Everton Football Club (2020). Instead of using their usual design to communicate the team lineup via Twitter before an important Premier League game, they instead invited a group of children at a local primary school to provide the artwork.



Figure 1: Everton lineup designed by primary students



Source: Everton Twitter profile [Everton tweet of a lineup by students from a primary school] (n. d.) Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/Everton>. Screenshot by author.

If any sporting organisation did this, it would be welcomed, but when an industry like ours creates such emotional contrasts in the way it is perceived by society, with such imaginative and inspiring gestures, the impact on external perceptions can be significant. 'I didn't know football clubs did things like this' would be a typical response.

It is believed that there is some substance to believing that football in England suffers from perceptions that were created around the time of the Second World War (1939-45), where the British Government, fearing Communism and gatherings of large groups of

working-class men, began to apply heavy security presences wherever they met. Naturally, one of the obvious areas was football matches, and there is, understandably, a school of thought that the heavy-handed security approaches many fans abhor have their roots in an intrinsic suspicion that football fans were a part of a revolutionary Communist threat!

So, when we trace the history of the football fan in England, and factor in this often expressed rationale for heavy-handed security measures, we can see evidence of how societal attitudes to football have formed and evolved in a negative direction.

At the moment, for many countries around the world and for the many clubs, leagues and associations championing the game, this represents a very big barrier to fan engagement, because, unlike with other customers outside of football, we start with a level playing field—a blank piece of paper. **But when it comes to building a relationship with football fans, we start from a position of negativity.**

Of course, anti-social behaviour continues to be a problem in football, with some countries experiencing huge problems, with stadium closures, fines and real difficulties. Nevertheless, as football is simply a microcosm of the wider society, it is not true of all clubs, leagues and associations. The reality is that there are issues, but that, overall, football is a safe and welcoming place and the game 'gives back' to society in some imaginative, remarkable and effective ways.

So, if you are developing a fan engagement strategy for a club, league or association, how can it be enhanced in ways that will begin to soften, improve or overturn negative external perceptions? Both widening our focus beyond traditional football fans to embrace specific groups such as women, children, families and disabled fans, and welcoming visiting fans do not only help us to diversify and grow our own clubs but also help to challenge the stereotypes that continue to dog our efforts today.

Exercise:

***In your country, do you think societal attitudes are largely negative or positive towards football? Can you support your hypothesis with evidence? How is your National Association (FA) addressing this? Please include an example of this work in your working.***

### **1.1.3 The evolution of the relationship between fans and their club.**

While courses 'Why Fan Engagement? Definition, Principles & Rationale' and 'Delivering Fan Engagement' have explored the concept of the fan in detail, in this course we are going to look at the application of this knowledge in some real situations, to help the student apply the theory to the real business/football world.



In this theme, we are going to look at the relationship between fans and their club and see how taking a fan engagement approach can help to strengthen the relationship and how it can also reduce the distance between some fan groups.

First of all, we must acknowledge again that fans are not simply a generic group of followers. The truth is –especially now, in our more equal and diverse world– that the fanbase of a typical club, especially in western Europe, where your professor lives and works, will be much more representative of the community in which the club operates.

Having said that, football fans' relationship with their clubs and national teams is still characterised by being a more distant type than that of the relationship between a business outside of football and its customers. Of course, this is because of the emotional nature of the connection, but it does not mean that it always has to be remote or detached.

**Different groups of fans have different relationships with clubs.** Ultra groups, as we will study in other sections of this course, may have evolved as a result of negative perceptions of the game, such as the overly heavy and unnecessary security measures applied to them or the rapid commercialisation of the game in the late 90s and into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Others, as we have seen in Poland and Germany, for example, are inspired by political motives and can be either far right or Antifa in their beliefs.

In Italy, for example, a member of these groups becoming too closely connected with the club can lead to a sense of betrayal. For example, if a club sees the value of consultation and invites a representative of the ultra group to work with them, this can be perceived as betrayal by more fundamentalist members of the club's ultra movement.

But these matters are rarely simple, and to generalise is dangerous. English author Tobias Jones, in an interview in 2019 about his book *Ultra: The Underworld of Italian Football* (Jones, 2019), placed ultras in context by accepting that he could never truly understand them without actually being with them and experiencing their lives.

**The following extract is very instructional in understanding not only what drives ultra groups but also in why they are often inscrutable, not fully understood and, as a result, often seen as a totally negative influence when much of what they do has positive and socially beneficial outcomes.**

In many ways this story isn't about football at all, but a portrait of an enduring Italian subculture inspired by it. For more than 50 years, the ultras have turned the *curve* (the "curved" ends behind the goal) into fairground mirrors of Italian society, offering both a reflection and a distortion of the country. **The ultras are a fascinating way to understand not football as such, but why it means so much to people and why a mere rectangle of grass can inspire religious fundamentalism.** They are often compared to punks, Hells Angels, hooligans or the South American *barras bravas*, and there are elements of all those groups within the evolving movement. But in truth, it's a thoroughly Italian phenomenon, drawing on much deeper influences within Italian history.



It is, though, the antithesis of a national movement. The foundation stone of every ultra group is topophilia (love of place) or *campanilismo* (the attachment to one's local bell-tower). An ultra is a patriot of his or her patch, of a specific town, city or suburb. It's about rootedness and belonging: the sort of pride that persuades people to boast that their forgotten nowhere is actually *caput mundi*, the "capital of the world".

For decades the ultras have been connected to murders, missing persons, bank jobs and drug-dealing, quite apart from the almost routine punch-ups and petty thefts that happen on match days. Yet those *cronache nere* – "black chronicles" – are only partially representative of the ultra world. I actively sought out a *curva*, or terrace, which might balance the scales, which might even offer some "white chronicles" as well.

I had heard that Cosenza, a small, ignored city in the deep south, was a place where the ultras squatted buildings confiscated from the mafia, giving beds to hundreds of immigrants and destitute Italians. The Cosenza ultras had opened a food bank for the poor and created Italy's first playpark for disabled children. One of the most influential fans in the *curva* was a Franciscan friar. In an era when so many terraces find inspiration in fascism, Cosenza was devoutly anti-fascist. If anyone was looking for a place to find a counterbalance to the ultra stereotype, Cosenza was clearly it. (At home with Italy's ultras, 2019, para. 2-4)

So, in the above example, there is no real evolution of a relationship, but simply a need for clubs to understand these fans and their motivations,, and, when possible, to build on the positive activities and to celebrate the 'love of place' that connects them.

In countries without a strong ultra culture, such as in England, the evolution of the formal relationship between fans can be more easily traced, although its origins are still questioned.

In an interview with sports academic Sean Hamil in 2020 (see course 'Delivering Fan Engagement'), we discussed how the need to administer the sale of tickets for 'away' matches (where fans travel to watch their team play at different club's stadia, not just their own) in the 1950s emerged, perhaps, when clubs and fans were first obliged to engage with each other, especially as money was changing hands and needed to be accounted for. **The establishment of independent fan groups, supporter councils, supporter trusts and support-run clubs all have their origins in these fairly unspectacular transactions.**

Clubs, therefore, have to operate in many different environments, ranging from the extremist ultra cultures of Italy to the more commercial relationships of the Premier League, and **students need to appreciate that different strategies will need to be adopted in different cultures.**



### Exercise:

*How would you characterise the relationship between your club and its fans? Identify one barrier to improving the relationship.*

#### **1.1.4 The 'modern fan'**

In course 'Delivering Fan Engagement', we explore the modern fan and the fact that it can no longer simply be defined as someone who attends matches to support their team or even follows them on TV.

The characteristics of fandom are so varied these days that it is a very difficult task to even list them, never mind begin to understand how to engage them all effectively.

My introduction to football began with bus trips to games two or three times a season with my father. However, my connection with my club began even earlier than that. I was a small child when Celtic and then Manchester United became the first British clubs to win the European Cup (now the Champions League) and even though I was only 3 when it happened, but the members of the English team that won the 1966 FIFA World Cup became my first heroes. I wanted a West Ham shirt to reflect my love for Geoff Hurst. I wanted a Manchester United shirt with the plain white collar to show how much I like Bobby Charlton and I also loved to read about the Lisbon Lions: mostly local Glasgow boys whose famous victory in 1967 is still talk about there today.

These were all stories of glory, not of defeat or disappointment. My Dad's team (Sunderland) were nowhere near glory and didn't win many matches further. But he loved them and, in 1969, my uncle offered to drive us both to a game at Roker Park against Chelsea. In that period, we played poorly and the 0-0 I saw was a fairly prescient moment in a season that ended with relegation to the Second Division.

The day after the game, my Dad was disconsolate. This was my first game and he'd hoped it would be a good one and that the 6-year-old me would choose his team to follow. Upon seeing how sad he was, I reportedly told my mother that I should also become a Sunderland fan, to be able to sympathise with him and that's how it all began for me.

My son was born in 1995 and, at the time, my team Sunderland was building their new Stadium. So, when it opened in 1997, I purchased a commemorative brick, so that his name and date of birth would be forever connected with the club I hoped he would follow. But he was born in Bradford, Yorkshire, some 150 km away. Over the years, he has always shown solidarity with his father's cause, but he believed that it was more important for him, like the Italian fans described in this Module, to show his 'love of place' by following his local club.



Step forward 25 years and he continues to enjoy attending matches. He will travel hundreds of kilometres to see his team play and his love is not conditional upon the team winning, but on the connection it gives him to the town of his birth.

But each of his best friends has a different relationship with football. They describe themselves as fans, as supporters, but the nature of their relationship with football is different.

One of his friends watches them on his mobile phone, MacBook, desktop or tablet. He watches them at home. He watches them in the bar with his friends. He watches them when he's at his college. He doesn't go to the game. He's not a match-attending fan. He's simply someone who streams football.

Another one of my son's friends actually plays FIFA 20. He plays that with his other friends. He plays remotely with other people in other parts of the country and other parts of the world. But he still describes himself as a football fan.

And he then has a friend who plays fantasy football. So, each week he's looking at the results and following the matches because it's important to him that his goalkeeper keeps a clean sheet, his defenders too and that his forwards either create goals or score them. But all of those kids describe themselves as football fans. In the past, we could engage with our fans through match day interactions, PA announcements and, even earlier, when travelling with players on the bus, in person! (Mark Bradley's experience)

The modern fan may do some or all of the following activities:

- **Attend matches**
- **Watch them on TV**
- **Stream games**
- **Play fantasy football**
- **Play FIFA**

But, in the different sections of Copa 90 'Modern Football Fan 2.0' report (2019), we can truly see how both the concept of fandom and the role of football in changing the way we consume, follow and share our team's fortunes have changed immensely in recent times.

There are two key areas: the rise of women's football and the development of fandom.

Although women's football has been with us since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it has been prevented from emulating the development of the men's game by the traditional barriers that the equality movement had faced over the decades. From its banning in England in the 1920s to the modern day with FIFA's barring of Keramuddin Keram (the President of the Afghanistan Football Association) for life after reports that he had threatened and sexually assaulted players, the women's game is renewing itself with vigour and determination and its followers revelling in this new-found strength.



In a more general sense, the following **represent developments observed in the game at the time of the Copa 90 report (2019):**

1. Fans want more immersion whilst watching football. They want to 'experience' it like never before. Clubs like Doncaster Rovers, who invite loyal fans to sit in the dug out during the pre-match warmup are responding to this, but we have yet to see football embrace the things that Formula E is doing (with fans able to digitally 'supercharge' the racing cars to give their drivers an advantage).
2. Some fans are being turned off by certain instances of discriminatory language and aggressive behaviour. Where this may have been tolerated (leading to negative external public perceptions of the game) it is now being challenged by fan groups themselves, with clubs emboldened by this and able to use social media to 'reject' fans.
3. Fans are now demanding accountability from clubs, leagues and associations with the purpose of driving out negative elements from the game.
4. Football's ability and potential to bring together different elements of society is now being actively pursued. The match day is now welcome to people of different backgrounds (ethnic, socio-economics, etc.), and even groups like families are now seen as a key segment with specific needs. Players are now overtly supporting the Black Lives Matter movement by 'taking the knee' before games, and this is being supported by broadcasters and commercial sponsors (witness the changes some TV companies are making to create more diverse commentary and punditry teams), with the result that real change is now possible and happening every day.
5. While the Rainbow Laces campaign (pro-diversity) has helped to strengthen acceptance, there is now much greater awareness of the need to address the masculinity intrinsic to the game. In the Premier League, for example, we still do not have a player who has declared his homosexuality publicly.
6. There is an emergence now of new fraternities, which are being redefined and are different from the traditional diehard fans. You could even describe these as 'new ultras', and a good example would be the 'high quality fans' that Bohemian FC of Dublin have acquired by growing the club on community engagement and solid authentic meaningful values.
7. China's domestic game has seen tremendous growth, and this is likely to continue. Whereas at present some of the greats of the European game are playing out their careers in China, we will soon see young talented starts opting to have their best years in the Far East.
8. There is now more empathy and appreciation of a player's heritage. Rather than a player being simply 'African' or 'Black', people are interested in where the player came from, what his or her path was, and in what the elements of the culture of their ancestry are. The way young players from different countries have been



accepted in schools in Estonia as part of their UEFA Grow programme as an opportunity to learn about culture and diversity is a great example of this. As for FC Nordsjælland, its commitment to giving young African players not just a football career but also, in the event that they fail, a professional education.

9. Football is now becoming 'fashion's hottest muse' and inspiring new fashion trends, particularly among women. Clubs and designers are now creating apparel that appeals way beyond the fans of the club. We even have what Copa 90 (2019) calls 'entrepateurs' (based on 'entrepreneurs'), to refer to those setting up businesses alongside their careers. The Manchester United player Jesse Lingard is working with young Depop fashion entrepreneurs to promote his own range of clothing while David Beckham was possibly the first to have his own clothing and perfume brands.

Naturally, there are some challenges for those administering football. For example, the editors of the Copa 90 report remark that they found it difficult—in 2019—to find sufficient images of high profile women's players to illustrate their document – **so it is important that, if associations, leagues and clubs wish to engage the modern fan, they understand and act on these new movements and ways of thinking.**

Exercise:

***Choose one of the above examples from the Copa 90 report and illustrate how this manifestation of the modern fan is present in your club, league, association or country. Describe what is happening and show how it is reflecting positive change.***

# Unit 1.2

## 1.2.1 Who is the fan and what is fandom/support? Developing identity

In 2019, shortly before the UK general election, a chairman and owner of a club in the 3<sup>rd</sup> tier of English football declared that, unless the fans of the club voted for the party of his choice, then the club would die (McGreavy, 2019).

To some students, aware of the despotic and often criminal activities of people in football (see Blatter, Platini, etc.), this will be no surprise, but in England, the land of 'gentlemanly conduct' (respectful behaviour) and tolerance, telling a fan which way to vote seems highly controversial.

As it happened, that party did go on to win the general election and the owner did not take all of his money out of the club, but it did make me think a lot about how club ownership can have a very narrow view of the people supporting club and how important fan engagement is in helping to show the truth of the diversity of support a club enjoys.

**Clearly, some owners view their stewardship as a fiefdom and do what they want, as if running some medieval kingdom. However, this is not consistent with growing a club, since (apart from running in the face of democracy) it isolates some groups and creates divides, where the true objective of a club owner should be to use the power of the club to bring local groups together under a clear set of beliefs or values and a clear sense of place.**

FC Codru Lozova<sup>3</sup> is a Moldovan football club based in Lozova, Moldova. The team plays in the Moldovan National Division, the top tier of football in this part of the world. Unfortunately, while constructing their new stadium, they have had to play in another stadium, more than an hour's drive away. This has meant that the club has found it difficult to encourage fans to support the team in person.

Traditionally, clubs experience their highest attendance in Moldovan games when the club is challenging for the title, playing against their greatest rivals (Chisinau's FC Zimbru v FC Sheriff Tiraspol, for example) or playing in UEFA matches, so FC Codru's Community Development Officer Mihai Burciu (as part of the UEFA Grow programme<sup>4</sup>, described elsewhere in this certificate) is creating a strategy to address this.

He began by undertaking perceptions research and found that people were not interested, not just because the team played so far away, but because they always lost. He is now looking to build other connections, based on place and engagement, including

---

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/CSCodruLozova/>

<sup>4</sup> You can find more information about the UEFA Grow committed to growing European football in <https://www.uefa.com/insideuefa/football-development/grow/>



inviting local residents to come and help to paint, decorate and clean up the new stadium, into which the team will soon move.

Having promoted this activity on Instagram, Mihai was delighted to find 300 new followers in a town with only 6,000 residents, with many more attending. Their new connection to the stadium is hoped to create a form of fandom based on love of place rather than on team or team performance.

Key to this process is engaging the local town hall, the mayor and the local civic administrators and showing them how the club can represent the area well and provide activities to improve the physical and mental health of its residents.

Mihai is using his experience to create a form of fandom that is not traditional, but which is going to have to become the norm for clubs where success on the pitch is not going to be the key driver of attendance.

We have already studied the concept of fandom and the definition of a fan in course 'Why Fan Engagement? Definition, Principles & Rationale', but how do we act on this knowledge? How do we use this information to engage people and to grow our clubs?

**Engaging people is key. Talking to people about their perceptions of the club, matching these perceptions to reality and then acting on it is very important.**

Dan Lambert of Bohemian FC and Stuart Fuller of Lewes FC both found themselves in situations where change was needed, and, in both cases, their approach was to recognise the absence of key drivers of support and attendance (winning, success, reputation, etc.) Each of them can be heard talking about this in The Fan Experience podcast.

Here is a link to have access to such podcast:

<https://fanexperienceco.com/resources/podcasts/>

In Bohemian's case, the club suffered from negative perceptions, resided in a stadium with, effectively, two sides condemned and unfit for spectators. Association football is not the first sport in Ireland either: both rugby union and GAA (Ireland's native sports, hurling and football) predominate both in numbers of spectators and social standing. Football is not the game of the professional but, as Fran Gavin once told to Mark, Chief Executive of the League of Ireland, 'the activity of those who live in the 'back-to-backs''<sup>5</sup>.

There is also the concept of the fact that English clubs have always been supported by Irish fans. The best Irish players usually leave their homeland to play club football in England or Scotland with very few playing out their careers at home while playing for the national team too. Bohemians needed a different proposition, so with the advantage of the club being owned and run by its supporters, it set about creating a club defined by its beliefs and values and positive community actions.

While the club has sometimes achieved on-pitch success, its current stratospheric levels of growth (the stadium is sold out, commercial and ticket income is at all-time-high levels

---

<sup>5</sup> Low cost, terraced housing, common in poor and/or working class areas of the main cities of Ireland.



and external perceptions have never been higher) have led to the concept of what Dan Lambert describes as **'the high quality fan', that is, the fan who is motivated by being part of something, rather than on the superficial and ephemeral contribution of the team.**

Lewes FC, of which Stuart Fuller is currently chairman, is a club at the 7<sup>th</sup> tier of English football in a town close to the sea, near to Brighton in the south of England. As we have already explored in this certificate, it has the usual challenges of a community-owned-and-run small non-league club. They included the fact that many fans in that part of the world would support a Premier League team like Arsenal, Tottenham Hotspur or Chelsea, or, since their new stadium was opened in 2011, perhaps they would be tempted a few kilometres down the road to Brighton and Hove Albion, where they could join 27,000 other fans in watching a new Premier League side.

There is even the attraction of a day at the seaside, not too far away. So, the club had to recognise that the football alone was not going to be sufficient to attract, engage and retain sufficient fans to make the club viable or self-sustaining. They did this by creating a strong unique identity that transcended the football and led to today, where the club is known for the first one to set equal budgets for its men's and women's teams. The club is now known as 'Equality FC' internationally, even if it is still Lewes FC to its fans.

**In these approaches, you can clearly see a new form of fandom developing: one built on being part of something more than the football. Whether that be a set of beliefs, values or support for a cause or simply a way of doing things, it offers a real and achievable opportunity for clubs (especially outside of the elite) to draw attention and interest and to build a fanbase.**

Understanding the nature of fans and fandom need not necessarily be a reactive task. As these examples have shown, you can proactively create it in different ways with less of a reliance on football results too.

#### Exercise:

*Which of the clubs in the league system of your country have developed an identity that offers new fans more than just football?*

*Describe exactly what they are doing to differentiate and explain how this is helping them to attract, engage and retain fans in ways that do not rely on the team's performance.*

## **1.2.2 The supporter spectrum: Fan segments/types**

In pure business terms, if you can understand what is important to a customer and are able to deliver this day in day out, you are likely to find that customer's levels of engagement increase over time. **It would, of course, be wrong to 'second guess' what matters to fans without asking them, as (1) there are complex reasons for connecting to**



**a club and for attending matches, and (2) there are many different types of fans in our fanbase and they are likely to have many different motivations for attending.**

Therefore, understanding the **make-up of your fanbase is vital for a club** or national association that wish to prosper. This theme looks at this from a couple of angles, gives an example of how one national association has addressed one particular aspect of this challenge and clearly sets out the **benefits, in terms of increased levels of retention, re-purchase and advocacy, that such an approach may bring.**

**It is first important to note that this is a cultural task as much as it is a strategic one.** Sure, everyone appreciates the importance these days of having a grasp of CRM (customer relationship management) –see course ‘Delivering Fan Engagement’ and the example (below)–, but this is not simply a matter of data management. It is also about developing a culture in which clubs and national associations **do not make assumptions about what may matter to fans. There are also leadership implications here which also impact on things** like the way we interact with fans when they have questions, problems and improvement suggestions.

One area capable of helping clubs to grow revenue is the opposition team’s fans: those who follow their team around the country and who could come to your club’s stadium for at least one match per season.

**This is a very good example of the need to combine strategy with culture because, while a full ‘away end’ (the opposition tribune/stand in the stadium) can bring a lot of revenue, it is also associated with all of the contradictions of rivalry.** Of course, the noise, colour, flags and songs of the away fans can make for a fantastic immersive experience, but the antipathy between home and away fans can also damage the experience for other key groups (including disabled fans who may be followers of the home team, but because of a lack of facilities in the home club’s stadium –still a big issue around the world–, they may find themselves at the front of the away fans).

What we do not want is for clubs not to attempt to engage away fans because of these risks. **What we actually need is a tempered balance that recognises the importance of away fans, attracts, engages and retains fans, and manages any incidents of anti-social behaviour well.**

In England, for example, host clubs retain up to 95% of ticket revenue generated by away fans, so why would a club with limited resources forego the extra income a full away end could bring?

A good strategy would be to research away fans’ needs. That is something the EFL (English Football League) has done over the last decade via collecting feedback from away fans on the travelling experiences and sharing this with the host clubs. This helped to identify those areas over which the host club had control or influence and which mattered most to visiting supporters (it included the warmth of welcome, the quality of the social and refreshments experience, in-stadia comfort and view, and the freedom to organise so that banners, flags and centres of passion can be established without the intervention of security forces).



This has had the result that clubs now have a more refined understanding of what matters to supporters who, in actual fact, are amongst the most loyal of them all.

What this has shown is there are, in effect, **three types of away fans in the EFL in England:**

1. those who try to attend every single away game,
2. those who pick and choose games according to a range of factors (some controllable and some not), and
3. those who do not travel to away games.

While it is important not to take the first group for granted (especially now, when away support is not yet permitted under Covid-19 regulations in the UK at this level of the game), the second two groups offer opportunities: firstly, to use 'word of mouth' from group 1 to encourage those in group 2 to come to stadia where fans can have the best away fan experiences, and, secondly, by recognising clubs and sharing best practices, to make it clear to those who have never contemplated attending away games that it is a fantastic thing to do –especially at your club!

Let's look at another view of the spectrum of fandom: those who are members of the National Association and those who participate (i.e. players, coaches, referees and other volunteers). Could a geographical appreciation of where these people are based allow a national association to identify opportunities?

Sports Data Management consultant and author Fiona Green undertook such an exercise in Poland (Green, 2018), where, through data analytics, she was able to show the PZPN (the Polish Football Federation) the location of its former members and then overlay the location of its participants.

Because membership of the PZPN guaranteed access to tickets for the men's national team games, the former data showed the regions of the country where there was stronger or weaker interest in this; the participation map showed where all of the volunteers lived.

The comparison allowed the PZPN to identify two regions where there were opportunities to increase participation through the development of more coaches and the establishment of community/grassroots football clubs.

It also allowed them to identify two areas that Green (2018) described as 'prime target areas for sales of membership', as there were high levels of PZPN membership in those areas.

This example shows just how powerful segmentation can be and why it is vital for clubs, leagues and national associations to consider this from the many different angles that the fan spectrum allows.

Again, if you wish to really understand fan engagement and make it effective in your association, league or club, you need to marry a determination not to fall for traditional assumptions with a keen interest in segmentation.



### Exercise:

*You have been asked by your club to go into local high schools with the objective of understanding how to encourage more kids from that age group (11 to 15) to attend matches. In setting out to understand their motivations, behaviours, interests and perceptions of the local football club, what questions would you ask?*

### **1.2.3 The evolution of fandom (who/what do you support?)**

This theme offers us an example of the need to create a **'culture of enquiry'** when it comes to fans. Simply finding out who the fans are is simply not sufficient to inform an engagement strategy. Equally, basing your understanding of them on isolated factors, such as purchasing records, may also lead us to miss opportunities that a fuller appreciation of their motivations would help us to fulfil.

One final area that we have touched upon throughout the learning is another application of the idea of social identity: **that of cultural capital** (Bourdieu, 1984).

In the 1970s, Pierre Bourdieu, a French sociologist, developed the idea of cultural capital as a way to explain how power in society was transferred and social classes maintained. He argued that it is not only money that gives the wealthy power, but cultural assets too, and this is a concept that can also be seen in football, fandom and the (consumer) behaviour and attitudes of fans.

Studies of two fan communities (Richardson & Turley, 2007) showed that systems of cultural capital were used in football to maintain social distinctions between 'real' fans and 'day trippers' or 'barstool' fans. **What was happening was, in effect, that fans were deciding who belonged and who did not.**

One of the distinctions pointed out by the researchers was that those who see themselves as 'the inner circle' reject commercialisation of the game of football while those rejected from this group, but still fans of the club, would actively use this commercialisation (purchasing shirts, etc.) to feel themselves to be part of this group.

One way of explaining this would be asking the student to compare attitudes to match-attending, locally resident Premier League club fans and those following the clubs from other parts of the world. Bourdieu's cultural capital can easily be seen at play here with the locally resident fans inhabiting the inner circle and those buying shirts and displaying aggressive support on social media being 'plastic fans'.

Finally, one should also emphasise that the traditional generational way of segmenting customer (and therefore) fanbases is now thought to be no longer relevant. The idea of Generation X, millennials and boomers has, in recent times, been a subject of controversy, as it tends to divide rather than unite. Football has the capacity to unite all groups (Gillezeau, 2020).



By better understanding the complexities behind fans' individual motivations for supporting a club, we can uncover factors that will allow us to develop effective fan engagement strategies and to strengthen relationships with all of our fans.

A good example of this would be my own allegiance: how it was born and how it has evolved as I have grown older. If, at any given point in my life, I was asked the question 'why do you support your team?' the answers would undoubtedly change.

As a child it was an exciting day out with my father where he would spend his Saturday free time with me & I would get to experience the sensory explosion of the live football match in the early 1970s: the smell of cigarettes and fried onions; the wall of noise from the Fulwell End and the blazing bright green of the pitch, once glimpsed as I entered the Paddocks.

Later on, albeit at a different club, I have attended matches with my own son too. I guess this is natural, as this is part of the work we do, but there is a distinction for us between attending a game to undertake an assessment and attending a Bradford City of Sunderland game together.

It's rare that I attend a Sunderland match these days, because I am usually working at another game, here in the UK or in Europe, but when I do, that same sense of 'family' – those memories of childhood and place – still fill my mind.

Back when I was a young man, I could name every member of the team from every season I'd experienced. I could associate dates with results. If someone showed me a photograph, then I would be able to tell them who Sunderland were playing and what the score was. As I became a father and had to work Saturdays, I attended less, but could still perform that 'magic trick' of associating events, dates and particular family members were doing. That is why it is so important for the student or practitioner of Fan Engagement to have this open enquiring attitude.

Kevin Rye, the UK Fan Engagement expert<sup>6</sup>, once told me that support of a football club is love for 'a collection of memories' and I find that a very useful way of ensuring that your Fan Engagement strategy is not simply based on behaviours, purchases, age or demographic. The Millennial, the Boomer and the Generation X kid all experience the love – it just evolves over time according to circumstances.

When, back in 2011, I undertook some private research for Sunderland AFC into their fans' perceptions, one of the exercises we did was to use a 'word cloud'<sup>7</sup>. We did this to try and understand the emerging themes in response to the question 'why?' – why do you support the club?

---

<sup>6</sup> [www.faninsights.co.uk](http://www.faninsights.co.uk)

<sup>7</sup> An electronic image that shows words used in a particular piece of electronic text or series of texts. The words are of different sizes according to how often they are used in the text.



Of course, the intention was to go beyond 'to see them win' and to better understand some of the more intrinsic drivers of attraction. The results underlined this. The word cloud we completed afterwards showed that notions of 'family' abounded and best explained the connection.

Now, this does not mean that everything the club does needs to be filtered through this concept, but it does offer the club a clue about one element that should be reflected in its identity, decision-making and marketing.

When I think of Sunderland, I think of my dad, I think of my mum, I think of my sisters. I think of my son, who I tried to make a Sunderland fan. So, I think if we're really going to improve relationships with supporters, we need to ask these questions. (Mark Bradley's experience)

If we make assumptions that the people out there follow us because they want to see the team win (understandable because we know we lose supporters when the team loses), we ignore a fundamental fact about the fan-club relationship. For fans like your professor, the connection was not born out of a glorious moment, victory or world class player, but of a habitual family activity.

Being a fan of a club is like a human relationship. We will occasionally have problems, but they will usually make up. **It is an emotional process.** So, if we ask fans questions about the nature of their relationship, we will understand that they follow their team for a much more complex set of reasons than we imagine.

**If football is to truly embrace fan engagement, it needs to recognise that fans are, at heart, emotional creatures and football attachments are not always down to success.** This is a fundamental point because it challenges the age-old belief that, to be successful and (by definition) to grow attendances, reputation and external perceptions, a club has to win.

However, as we have examined in this theme, you can win by signing good players and having a great team mentality, but you can also win by recognising the emotional value of the habit of attending and recognising it, perhaps with match days when you recognise your club's oldest fans, its youngest fans and the bonds of the heart that tie us all together,

#### Exercise:

*Set out a club which could demonstrate its understanding of the emotional ties that bind a fan to it. Consider something that could be done to engage those who regard themselves as being in the 'inner circle' and something that would appeal to those who cannot attend.*



## 1.2.4 The fan as a critical partner and stakeholder

One of the themes that has run through the subtext of this certificate is football's tendency to distance itself from its fans.

We have examined the possible reasons for this (which range from country to country and culture to culture) and considered the following: embedded negative social attitudes to football fans, periods of anti-social behaviour which –while now decades behind us– still seem to be driving security approaches, the beliefs of some club owners who believe fans' duty is just to turn up and support the team, and, importantly, the fact that clubs may fear that if they engage too closely with fans, they will not be able to deliver what they want, with the consequent effect that fans will only be driven even further away.

This final theme in this module looks at the notion of the fan as a critical partner and stakeholder and shows how approaches reflecting different elements of fan engagement can help the club to more closely connect with a continuing source of improvement information and emotional support.

**We need to begin by recognising that there is one common denominator in successful fan consultation and dialogue initiatives, and it is 'trust'.** As our research in 2019 showed, this is such an important currency in football. Because of the lack of pro-active engagement strategies and supportive fan-focused culture, the 'arm's length' attitude to supporters means that it is often in very short supply. Our recent research into the factors relating to fan engagement (Cox, 2019) revealed that practitioners are clearly aware of this.

Because, according to the research, football clubs tend to see engagement as 'transactional', the more emotional drivers of engagement or, as Yoshida would term them, the 'non-transactional' behaviours are either largely misunderstood or, if they are appreciated, not factored into engagement strategies.

**Our research identified three key non-transactional elements that, according to the research participants, drive fan engagement:**

- Transparent communication
- Community engagement
- Sincere relationships

A couple of the actual practitioner comments were very revealing in this regard:

Football fans in this country are incredibly cynical and can smell and sense very quickly when engagement is disingenuous or with the sole purpose of being transactional to get money out of the supporters. So, for me it's about creating honest relationships.

'Trust is Vital. Absolutely vital.'



Our research was backed up by others who also assert the power of trust in fan engagement (Doney and Cannon, Hennig-Thurau, Gwinner and Gremler, and Bee and Kahle, whose works are mentioned in Shuv-Ami, Vrontis and Thrassou's research paper<sup>8</sup>).

You can therefore apply the most progressive techniques to obtaining feedback from fans. You can create the most representative group of supporters possible. You can ensure that the right people sit in on the meetings. You can share the outputs via multiple club communications channels and you can advertise the changes that have resulted from the dialogue you have invested in. But if trust is lacking, all will come to nothing, and, when I look at the wreckage of several failed attempts at supporter engagement, mutual distrust was usually the cause.

After having participated in many fan panels in recent years, the concept is still fairly new to football, given its decades-long culture of keeping fans at an arm's length. Nonetheless, we can offer some guidance to clubs contemplating going down this path (as all should) in the hope that two steps forward are always followed by another two steps forward (rather than a protest outside the ground on a match day).

It may seem obvious, but any investment in dialogue requires clear objectives. What do the club and, more importantly, the fans see as the benefit of working together? Do they do it to deal with a specific opportunity or issue (creating a better atmosphere in the stadium, for example) or, more generally, to create better relations between the club and its supporters? The clearer the objectives, the easier it is to see if they are being transparently delivered.

If, as it is sometimes the case, the objective of the meeting is simply to give fans an opportunity to ask questions of the CEO or chairman, there is a risk that it only ever becomes a forum for 'holding the club to account'. There is nothing inherently wrong with that, if that is what you are after, but you cannot expect the atmosphere in the room to foster a partnership approach to change.

Who should attend? Good question. From the club's perspective, the answer is 'those fans we find easy to deal with.' Fair enough, but that will erode trust from the wider fanbase if it is seen that the more strident or opposing voice are not given an airing. For a start, this is a game of passion, so, unlike customers emailing their local bank to complain about charges, football supporters might be guilty of some strong language when raising issues with the club. They may even criticise the club in strong terms on social media. They may even criticise individual club representatives on social media. **But if they are the link to a constituency who feel undervalued or under-represented, then we have to look beyond that.**

There may even be fan groups who relate well to each other (sometimes because one perceives another to have undue influence over issues that affect them or because they may be perceived to have privileged access to club officials). This again reflects the manifestation of cultural capital in football, as different 'inner circles' vie for authority.

---

<sup>8</sup> Shuv-Ami, A., Vrontis, D. & Thrassou, A. (2017). Brand Lovemarks Scale of Sport Fans. *Journal of Promotion Management*, 24(2), pp. 215-232. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10496491.2017.1360824>



Regardless of 'positions', we have to create a forum that embraces **both of these perspectives** if we wish to position the fan as a critical stakeholder.

Clubs often fail to put themselves in the shoes of fans who, among their peers, are often seen as leaders or opinion formers. If, for example, there has been a history of mistrust and a lack of engagement over several seasons, then these fans are likely to have been writing letters to the local newspaper and/or challenging the club's integrity in other high-profile ways.

If some of these fans are seen to embrace dialogue with the club too hastily, this can create a decline in *their* profile and negatively affect *their* influence in the supporter community ('cultural capital' again) when clubs desperately need these individuals on their side. Engagement was never won through isolation.

**Dialogue does not follow a clear structure, although it will only prosper if it is supported by clear objectives. So, it is important not to put too many constraints on the process and be equally prepared to run several meetings before a clear path forward emerges.**

The number of meetings is also very important, as this can always undermine trust. If, say, you are gathering fans to look at how pricing initiatives could influence attendance at games, then plan in sufficient meetings with supporters to be able to arrive at some conclusions before you go to press with season ticket pricing, for example. If you have earnestly gathered fans together to have a discussion about this and the next thing *they* see is something that only vaguely reflects what was discussed, be prepared for unrest and to see your plans unravel.

It is also possible that **survey fatigue** is kicking in at a few clubs. This is a well-documented phenomenon that occurs when survey participants become tired of the task and the quality of the data they provide begins to deteriorate. It **occurs when participants' attention and motivation drop toward later sections of any questionnaire or survey they are asked to complete.**

For example, let's take a club who, through e-mail questionnaires, have built up a good understanding of how fans think, what the current issues are and what could be done to address them. For clubs new to this process, that first survey usually gets a good response, but for clubs with a record of dialogue, it is important to keep things fresh, to alternate approaches, build in hiatuses from time to time and to ensure that it never becomes tiresome. Social media polls, independent message boards and other forums are all valid hunting grounds, but we need to start thinking differently about how we tap into the wider supporter perspective.

**Transparency is key too.** Clubs must quickly convey the key points from supporter meetings and, when changes happen, clearly attribute them to supporter input.

If the process of communicating results is held up by endless reviews of minutes, for example, then the lost momentum will start to infect supporter opinion, which is why it is always recommended to have a quick post-meeting communiqué of key action points



and also the development of a section on the official club website updating fans on what the dialogue is achieving (admittedly rare in football).

Where the club is not supporter owned, I think it is important that the CEO and/or leadership team representatives attend every meeting, not just because it shows commitment, but also because of the practical benefits. If there are going to be difficult issues to overcome, we need to know the context.

Progress is much quicker when all the various supports and barriers are known and clearly set out.

**The biggest barrier still remains ‘the past’. The legacy of decades of disparaging at football fans still echoes. This can manifest itself in any number of ways (‘you never did this in the past so why should we believe you now?’). So, if there were one thing I would urge from both clubs and supporters, it is constancy.**

No genuine dialogue ever sprang from a one-off meeting. Success is all about trust. Our supporter engagement and consultation processes need to be designed around this principle, and all of the available research points to this to be a critical factor if a club wishes for its fans to be constructive and supportive stakeholders.

Exercise:

*Research the supporter consultation/dialogue activities of a club in your country (or one whose website gives you sufficient detail to undertake an analysis).*

*Constructively critique their approach, giving one strength and one weakness in regard to the potential to create and maintain trust.*



## References

**At home with Italy's ultras: 'It isn't about watching football, but watching each other' Interview with Tobias Jones.** (2019, 15 September). *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2019/sep/15/at-home-with-the-italian-ultras-football-fans-cosenza-tobias-jones>

**British Film Institute.** (2008, July 1). *Sheffield United v Bury, 1902*. [Video file] Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7UkVZZnrC4E>

**Camensky.** (2014, 30 June). *The Secret in their eyes*. [Video file] Retrieved from [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zq\\_bKjgaKEo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zq_bKjgaKEo)

**Copa 90.** (2019). *The Modern Football Fan 2.0*. <https://copa90.media/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/ModernFanReport19.pdf>

**Everton Twitter profile.** [Screenshot of an Everton tweet] (n.d.) Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/Everton>

**Gillezeau, N.** (2020, 6 September). Marketers should kill Boomers, Millennials and Generation Z. <https://www.afr.com/companies/media-and-marketing/marketers-should-kill-boomers-millennials-and-gen-z-20200828-p55qbp>

**Green, F.** (2018). *Winning with Data: CRM and Analytics for the Business of Sports*. Routledge Press.

**McGreavy, K.** (2019, 11 December). Fleetwood owner threatens to pull funding from the club if Labour win the general election and says it would see them drop out of the Football League. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/sport/sportsnews/article-7780981/Fleetwood-owner-threatens-pull-funding-club-Labour-win-election.html>

**McLeod, S.** (2019). Social Identity Theory. *Simply Psychology*. <https://www.simplypsychology.org/social-identity-theory.html>

**Richardson, B. & Turley, D.** (2007). It's Far More Important Than That: Football Fandom & Cultural Capital. *Association for Consumer Research*, 8, pp. 33-38.

**University of Leicester** (n. d.) English Football: A Social History. <https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/football-lcfc/0/steps/40367>

**Why are Barcelona players called Culés?** (2016, 3 March). La Liga Official Website. <https://www.laliga.com/en-GB/news/why-are-barcelona-called-the-cules>

