A GAME OF THREE HALVES

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Publication: University of Copenhagen, 2020

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Acknowledgements: I want to express my gratitude to my main supervisors for their continuous support for my dissertation, even though it took far longer than expected. Also, I thank David Morley and John B. Thompson for their feedback on writings and ideas. Lastly, finishing this dissertation in my spare time was only possible thanks to my supporting family.
CHAPTER 1: BEING PART OF THE GAME 5

Introduction 5

Dissertation overview 11

CHAPTER 2: A REVIEW OF FOOTBALL AND FANDOM 13

Football and its fans 13

Football fandom as communication 26

CHAPTER 3: THE COMMUNICATION OF FOOTBALL CULTURE 34

What is communication? 35

The symbolic forms of football culture 43

CHAPTER 4: THE WEB AS MEDIUM 63

The web and medium theory 64

The web as a medium of communication 72

CHAPTER 5: FIELD ANALYSIS: METHODOLOGY AND METHODS 74

Methodology 75

Methods 84

INTRODUCTION TO PART III 94

CHAPTER 6: THE RISE OF DANISH FOOTBALL CULTURE 96

Between amateurs and professionals: the differentiation of the field 97

Football fandom in Denmark 105

Football media in Denmark 109

CHAPTER 7: NEW MEDIA, NEW OPPORTUNITIES 114
Introduction 115

The background stories: embedded football sites 115

Another perspective: the football portals 119

Behind the scene: the club sites 122

We are united: the fan sites 124

New forms of communication about football 128

CHAPTER 8: THE THIRD HALF 132

Broadcasting as key differentiator 133

A typology of Danish football fans 146

The web in the life of a fan 165

The cultural practices of Danish football fans 199

CHAPTER 9: CONCLUSION 217

An agenda for football fandom research 218

The momentum of old media 219

The emergence of a new form of football fandom 220

Old and new media: the failure of partofthegame.tv 222

LITERATURE 223

APPENDIX 230

DANSK RESUME 231

ABSTRACT 232
CHAPTER 1: BEING PART OF THE GAME

Abstract:

How will football become digitalised? What once seemed like a question about a possible future, now seems more like a reminiscence of a particular state of being where we thought digital technology would change all existing cultural practices. Yet, we see that digital technology does impact, if not all, then most cultural forms in society. Not necessarily by transforming the cultural object itself, however, but rather the communicative practices by which the meanings and discourses preconceive and form the object. For now, football has proven to be one of those cultural forms for which digital media have shaped the future, but not in any linear or predetermined way. To really understand how digital media are important to football, and perhaps also to other similar cultural forms, we must ask how communication or communication media are important in forming the cultural context in which football exist.

This chapter begins by asking why the strategy of the commercial football website, partofthegame.tv, failed. I will then take on the discussion about digital technology and digital media, and attempt to debunk the almost inevitable impact that digital technology is often ascribed – without attention to context and prehistory. Instead of seeking any simple answer to how digital media transform football culture, I ask how we can develop an empirical approach to studying digital media in relation to a specific cultural form like football. I end the chapter with an outline of my approach to studying football and digital media, and how each subsequent chapter in the dissertation will follow and expand the thread of research questions and arguments.

INTRODUCTION

In 2008, by coincidence, I went to a presentation where the CEO of a media company presented a new project: ‘Partofthegame.tv’. The project, financed by Carlsberg, had a strong agenda; it was supposed to become the main platform for sharing football fandom – throughout the entire world. As part of Carlsberg’s marketing campaign towards football fans, the website was not supposed to be biased towards any nation or any specific football club. Fans were supposed to share, talk and chat despite cultural and national differences; they were supposed to create a global fan community. In 2009 the website was launched and I began writing my PhD on this new and exciting form of community in the making.

At that time, large companies were already beginning to withdraw money from experimental marketing projects. Nevertheless, considerable resources were spent on banner ads to ensure a steady flow of visitors to partofthegame.tv, and the main concern to the people in charge of the project was rather one of too many visitors than too few visitors. I talked with both the CEO and the project manager from the company in charge of making and maintaining partofthegame.tv, and we agreed that I would get access to data, and they would get feedback from me about my insights into the behaviour of users on the website.
When the tracking software was set up correctly, I sat down with the project manager to look at the data. However, when we began to look at the tracking data, we had one major concern. A huge number of visitors were drawn to the website through different ad networks, but the engagement and loyalty of visitors was worrying. What is more, very few visitors signed up for the newsletter, and the newsletter was supposed to be the main channel of communication whereby Carlsberg could connect different marketing platforms with partofthegame.tv. At some point in the analysis of tracking data, we calculated the price for each newsletter signup to be around £2,000! And this amount was calculated on online advertisement money only, without taking into consideration the money spent on developing the site and hiring professional journalists to make video clips for the site; and not in any way considering the actual loyalty and engagement of those sign-up visitors – which was not impressing to say at least.

By the end of 2010, Carlsberg decided to cut down the financial support to the project to a level which only allowed the site to continue as a YouTube channel (no longer updated). In attempting to understand what went wrong, I began to reflect on the relation between football fandom and media, and I realised that partofthegame.tv might have failed because the project did not succeed in thinking about the relation between old media practices and new media practices. To put it more bluntly, partofthegame.tv failed by trying to create an online visual spectacle based on the communicatively naïve assumption that the new digital environment would abolish all existing fan practices and create entirely new ones. We should of course not conclude that the web and other digital media cannot in any way change and transform existing practices, but partofthegame.tv demonstrated indirectly that new cultural practices almost always take their departure in existing ones. As a consequence of these insights, I began to wonder whether the web is really a ‘part of the game’ at all and if so, which practices fans then use the web for.

While partofthegame.tv was not a huge success, my research into the early documentation of football fans’ use of the web shows that the use of the web for communication about football dates many years back in web history. Already in 2002, German journalists gave us an interesting historical testimony to the widespread adoption of the web in communicating football. In the publication “Fußball im Internet: 5000 von Sportjournalisten recherchierte Fußball-Internetlinks” (Brendel, 2002), the authors divided existing football websites and links into different categories. If we take a closer look at the different categories inside the book, we see that these websites are divided into subjects as for example ‘Football in Germany’, ‘International tournaments’, ‘Football in TV’, ‘Football organisations’, ‘Persons’, ‘Transfers’, ‘Stadia’, ‘Fun zone’, ‘Chat / Forums’, ‘Rules’ and ‘History / Archives / Specials’ (Brendel, 2002, p. IV). While these categories do not tell us anything about what these websites are used for and whether they are used at all, other sources document that football websites, even in the early history of the Web, were used by a huge number of people.

I shall mention a few sources to document this trend. In 1998, the official website for the World Cup in France had a daily 68 million page views, and the numbers for the 2000 Euro Championship show that these page views were not generated by a few visitors, since the official website had 129 million unique visitors (Lappe, 2005, p. 31). Yet, while these numbers are a clear testimony to the popularity and interest for using the web for communication about
football, they tell us little about why fans use these sites. And even if we assume that fans use these websites for communication about the same things they have always communicated about, we still need to investigate how and why these practises are digitalised and what consequences this process will have for their continuous reproduction. Only in this perspective can we begin to understand how partofthegame.tv took the wrong direction and failed to support existing football practices.

**THE DIGITALISATION OF GRASS AND BEER**

Until now, I have spoken about the web as a means of communicating football. However, many of the first studies on the impact of the Internet and other digital media focused on how digitalisation would change football culture and fandom in a much more encompassing direction. Some studies emphasized the new worlds of virtual fandom without stadia (Bale, 2000), while other studies focused on how digital media would radically change the relation between clubs and fans through for example the virtual management of clubs (Hutchins, Rowe and Ruddock, 2009) or the united voice which the Internet would provide supporters with (Gibbons, 2010).

However, one thing is transformation of the actual game of football and how digital media might impact this game by new technologies; another thing is how the fans communicate about the game. In this perspective, digitalisation may refer to the way the game is played (e.g. rules), how it is broadcasted to audiences and which media audiences choose to use in the game. These are quite different meanings of digitalisation of football, and the distinction between these is, in my opinion, central to how we study this transformation; and not very well articulated in the above studies.

Yet, we may find inspiration in one of the strongest empirical studies of the digitalisation of the book industry made by John Thompson (Thompson, 2005; Thompson, 2010). One of the most important arguments in Thompson’s work is that digitalisation may imply very different processes. When we speak about the digitalisation of books, we often assume that what is meant by digitalisation is the transformation of the book from paper to digital form. However, what Thompson draws our attention to, is that the digitalisation of the process of producing physical books has had, at least until a few years ago, a much more profound impact on the book market than the actual digitalisation of the paper itself. The digitalisation of the words in the book may change how we use or read the book, but the change in selling books through the Internet may very well be at least as important as whether we are reading the book on a digital device or in printed form.

If we return to football, we can observe some of the same trends that characterised the early years of research on digital books. We might, at some point, experience that digital cameras on players and 3D rendering of the game might transform how we watch games, but for the moment digitalisation has only to a very limited degree transformed the actual way the game is being played. And in dire contrast to the grand visions of football played by virtual figures on empty stadia, the live broadcasting of short text updates on websites has already had a profound
impact on how football fans follow matches (Sandvoss, 2004). Some might ask whether short text updates messages or online fan discussions really make that much of a difference. After all, short text messages can hardly be said to provide anything which old printed newspapers could not; not to mention live pictures with spoken commentary. Others might argue that the possibility for fans to raise their voice through online fan forums is nothing more than a continuation of the old fanzines (football magazine) culture which rose in the 1980’s (Haynes, 1995).

Following Thompson’s perspective, another line of argument (Auty, 2002) runs through the idea that the main impact of digitalisation on football fandom is a result of the lower production costs when using these new digital media. I believe that these perspectives are all important in discussing how and why the Web is used by football fans. Yet, they all seem to stray away from the most evident consequence of using the Web; the actual ways in which the Web makes it possible to send and receive communication about football.

To sum up this discussion, the use of the Web does not necessarily transform what football audiences communicate about (i.e. the game itself) or even the format of communication (e.g. how audiences describe what is happening in the game), but more essentially; where, when and how fans are able to communicate about football.

As I have no intention to prophesize or further discuss the ‘futurescapes’ (Bale, 1998) of football, I suggest that, at least for now, we dismiss the idea that beer and grass have been digitalised on the Web. Indeed, the popularity of computer football games like ‘FIFA’ and manager games like ‘Hattrick’ cannot be dismissed. Nonetheless, I find no argument supporting the idea that these games are challenging football as played on physical stadia. Rather, as I shall later suggest, these games might be used to enrich the experiences of watching the game on television or on stadia. What digital media is used for, however, is for example to communicate about the experiences of being on the stadium or to look up a statistics on the pub to settle an argument.

What fans really care about, is the communication about football and it is in this process that they become ‘part of the game’. Among football fans, the term ‘the third half’ is sometimes used to describe the events taking place after the match is finished; the time where people perhaps talk most about clubs, match events and important players. It is in being able to do these things that football fan cultures thrive, and this might exactly be why the Web has been embraced by so many fans and fan groups in the football world.

RE-SEARCHING FOR FOOTBALL FANDOM

I have argued that digitalisation is much more about changing ways of communication than the actual transformation of the game itself. Put otherwise, I need to look at how digital media transform football in its entirety, as a culture. Yet, football is an immense form of culture, encompassing most of the world. Both by the number of official fans, the number of active players, the number of watched games, the number of people who wear merchandise, the size of stadia around the world, traffic on the largest sport websites and search engine searches,
Football is the most popular sport in the world. Football has an estimated 3.5 billion ‘fans’ worldwide, and Manchester United alone has more than 450 million fans around the world. Although these figures can be questioned, I do not think there can be any doubt about the popularity of football as a culture. However, the widening of the study to reach out for an entire culture or way of life calls for reflection on what we mean by the concepts of culture and media. And while I shall not follow any argument that considers football as a main historical force (Foer, 2006), I will nevertheless argue that football can be used to illustrate how new media can change the communication of cultural forms.

The study of football culture shows us that football fans have always been keen to embrace new media in their communication of fandom; from cigarette cards to fan radio. Football fans’ desire for new media in which to express their fandom, has even led some to conclude that modern football clubs should be run as media companies (Schwier and Fritsch, 2003, p. 16). Whether this statement might be an exaggeration or not, there can be little doubt that modern sport, and in particular football, and modern media were born together (Crawford, 2004, p. 130; Rowe, 2004). Moreover, the analysis of football and media is also imbued with questions of consumption and commercialisation which, from the 1960s onwards, became a central force in driving media agents and football clubs (as well as the counteractions from fan sub-cultures) to create new ways of experiencing football and increasing the ubiquitousness of football in everyday life. And while these trends have partly led to an increasing globalisation of football (Sandvoss, 2003), they have also increased the diversity of ways of expressing fandom and for example experiencing local football club culture.

To move beyond historical studies and comparisons of football fandom, I shall argue that football culture does possess some general characteristics that allow us to speak about football as a particular form of culture. Yet, we also need to recognise that any empirical study of football culture needs to be delimited in both space and time. To meet this challenge, I have taken some careful decisions in order to limit the constantly changing practices whereby football fans use these media.

First of all, I have chosen to limit my field of study to Danish (professional) football. While some clubs might have a global audience, it seems to me that fans still develop their fan practises in relation to their local environment and language. Moreover, I believe it to be important to examine how different digital media forms are used interchangeably to create fandom; and the sheer number of relevant digital media in relation for example the English premier league, as far as my limited early research could establish, is simply too overwhelming for me to investigate.

1 http://wiki.answers.com/Q/What_is_the_most_popular_sport_in_the_world
http://www.mostpopularsports.net/

2 http://wiki.answers.com/Q/What_is_the_most_popular_sport_in_the_world

3 We should not forget that football is also a platform for expressing more serious matters: (http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/feb/01/egypt-football-match-violence-dead)
thoroughly. Consequently, I have chosen to limit my investigations to the Danish league in order to get a more complete picture of how fans use different types of websites. Second, the study will predominantly focus on the web, and how different websites have changed how football fans communicate. I have also included other media in the analysis, but since my interest is to understand how the web is used, my data has been collected with the Danish football websites as the focal point.

Following this, I have therefore put forward three main research questions to be answered in my analysis chapters:

- *How did Danish football fandom come into being, and what are the special characteristics of Danish football culture?*
- *How is the web used by both professionals and fans to produce new types of football culture?*
- *How and why do football fans use the web to reinforce or change their engagement in football culture?*

Or to put it into **one main research question**:

*Why do Danish football fans use the web and does the web change the way fandom culture works?*
DISSEYATION OVERVIEW

While my dissertation is mainly empirical in understanding what fans actually use the web for, I find that the existing literature on both fandom and football culture does not really provide a framework for analysing how media enables fandom. Hence, I begin my dissertation with three chapters where I attempt a theoretical reconstruction of the relation between football culture, fandom and communication (Part II). In the middle of the dissertation (Part III), I show how this theoretical reconstruction can be used in practice in terms of specific methods for collecting and analysing data about the Danish football websites. In the last part (Part IV), I begin my analysis with a review of the historical sources and then move on to analyse my collected data from Danish websites and Danish football fans. Below is a detailed overview of each chapter:

PART II – Theoretical reconstructions

In Chapter 2 (‘A review of football and fandom’), I review the existing literature on both football fans and fandom in general, and I argue that both traditions have had interesting discussions and insights that we can use in the study of football fans. Yet, the discussions within football fan studies as well as fandom studies are difficult to systematise and convert into practical research. I argue that by understanding fandom as something which results from particular forms of communication and meta-communication, the discussions in the theoretical literature become much easier to apply to modern football fandom. As a result, I use this chapter to reconceptualise what football fans do as social and communicative practices.

In Chapter 3 (‘The communication of football culture’), I continue the discussion of football fandom. If fandom can be understood as particular forms of communication, we still need to understand what it means that football fans communicate about football and not something else. To answer this question, I return to a more fundamental discussion of what communication is and how it should be studied, and I argue that communication about football can be studied by using the concept of symbolic forms. In this perspective, I argue that football culture can be understood as three separate symbolic forms; the match, the club and the icon. And each symbolic form has its own historical developments and media of communication which I then review.

In Chapter 4 (‘The Web as medium’), I discuss the importance of media in analysing communication. I introduce the thinking about media as ‘media of three degrees’, and argue that this perspective provides us with a general understanding of the relation between media and communication – which can then later be deployed to articulate how media matter to what football fandom is and how it can be communicated. In the second part of the chapter, I discuss the particular characteristics of the web as a digital medium, and argue that it is the communicative properties of the web, rather than the format itself, that makes it so different from other media.

PART III – Methodology and Methods
In Chapter 5 ("Field analysis: methodology and methods"), I present my methodology and the methods for my analysis. In the first part of the chapter, I introduce the concept of a social field as an analytical tool which helps me to analyse the social contexts of football fandom culture, and I discuss how communication can be analysed within this perspective. In the second part of the chapter, I present the actual methods used in my analysis. I have used surveys and interviews to collect data, and I thus present these methods and my use of these. Moreover, I have used the statistical method of correspondence analysis which I also introduce here.

PART IV – Analysis

In Chapter 6 ("The rise of Danish football culture"), I reconstruct Danish football fandom as a field. I review the existing literature on Danish football fans and begin by a historical account of how football culture emerged in Denmark. I then explore how different institutions came into being and clarify the historical processes in which it happened. From this perspective, I focus on how the field split between an amateur game and a professionalised game, and how the later professionalization conditioned the vitalisation of fandom within the field; as well as the different logics guiding different fan groups. Lastly, I attempt to clarify how different media are important in the constitution and reconstitution of the field and to which institutions and people. By setting the scene for how the field works, I thus prepare the analysis of the actual use of the web to produce new forms of communication about football.

In Chapter 7 ("New media, new opportunities"), I analyse how the web is embraced within the field to produce new forms of communication between producers and fans, as well as between fans and other fans. To understand how the web is used to produce football communication, I mapped all Danish football websites and requested an interview with the producer(s) behind each website. Using the interviews, I analyse how the people responsible for each website use the specific affordances of the web to communicate football culture in a way not possible before, and how this communication works within the specific institutional context in which it happens. My perspective here is guided by the concept of affordances which redirects our attention away from the specific format and content of the web to the actual way in which the web changes our communication.

In Chapter 8 ("The third half"), I analyse how Danish fans receive the communication on football culture that the producers, as analysed in the preceding chapter, offer to them. Based on both a survey, data from interactions and comments on websites, this chapter forms the core of the field analysis by presenting a relational and visual representation of the structure of the field. Analysing the data, I am able to map the field in terms of how different media are used in combination. Moreover, I discern four different types of football fans in the field and specify their specific social background, media usage and fan cultural practices. Lastly, I review the actual practices of football culture in Denmark and analyse how the web supports and changes these practices.
CHAPTER 2: A REVIEW OF FOOTBALL AND FANDOM

Abstract:

In this chapter, I begin my theoretical reconstruction of football fandom with a review of the existing theory about football fandom. The problem with current theory is that it is too preoccupied with what football fans are and the problems they create for others – or themselves. I argue that we should focus our attention to the specific ways that people communicate with each other and how specific forms of communication can then be classified as fandom or football fandom. In particular, the concept of meta-communication, by which fans communicate about the communication made for fans, can be used as a central position to understand the differences between ‘normal’ audiences and fans.

This reconstruction also serves as a bridge between traditional football fan studies, which have often been sociological in outlook, and fandom studies, which have traditionally been located within media studies. My reconstruction thus seeks to provide a framework from where we can understand what football fandom means as a specific form of communication. In many traditional football fan studies, the media have been analysed as some kind of agent with a specific agenda. I do not rule out that such agendas might exist, but in order to understand what the web means to football fans, I find it essential to see media as vehicles of communication.

This chapter begins with a presentation and discussion of the concept of meta-communication, and how this concept can be of use in the review of football fan theory. After this presentation, I review the theoretical positions within football fan theory and present an interpretation of these positions as discussions on particular forms of meta-communication.

I end the chapter with a recategorization of what types of meta-communication football fans engage in – based on the theoretical review of football fan studies and the central concepts of productivity, conversation and identity.

FOOTBALL AND ITS FANS

“I think I’ll give up following football, or at least give up telling people I follow football.” (Davies, 2003, p. 294). In this sentence we find an important distinction in understanding what fandom is. Fans do not just spend huge about of time (and perhaps money) following their ‘object’ of fandom, they also tell others about this ‘object’. The ‘object’ does not need to be football; it can also be a TV-series, a rock band or something entirely different. Some have even argued that subjects like operas and academic books can be the object of fandom (Gray, Sandvoss and Harrington, 2007).
Yet, just spending a lot of time on something does not in itself qualify people to be called fans in terms of how we usually use the word. Fans do something specific which makes us aware of their existence. They tell people about their object of fandom. The ‘telling’ does not need to be a verbal expression. Some fans dress up; others join marches or post pictures on a social network. What is essential is that people communicate to other people about their relation to the fan object. Watching a match can be understood as a form of communication, but what is particular to fans is that they not only watch a match (or something else) but also tell others that they watch this match. What should we call this “communication about communication” (Bruhn Jensen, 2010, p. 85) that is so intimately connected to the ways in which fans understand and experience the fan object?

In this chapter, I shall use the concept of meta-communication, introduced by Gregory Bateson and contextualised by Klaus Bruhn Jensen. I use the concept to reinterpret the theoretical literature on football fans and fandom by taking the perspective that 

fandom should be conceptualised as particular forms of communication. This is not a new perspective, much of fandom studies grew out of communication studies. However, I want to stress two points that are unique to how I understand fandom in this perspective. First, I use the concept of ‘meta-communication’ as an overarching concept to grasp what fans do in contrast to audiences. Second, I apply this perspective to the field of football fandom studies where there has been little focus on communication as a core concept to understand football fans. What comes out of this theoretical exercise are some theoretical ideas that can be used to identity and explain what football fandom is in terms of different types of communication; which I shall later put to use in my analysis.

It is important for me to emphasize that everybody watching for example a football match can be understood as a part of a football audience who receive communication about football, but as soon as they begin to ‘tell’ others about this communication, they begin to meta-communicate and thus engage in a form of activity I call fandom. And in this perspective, the word fan can be apprehended as people who for a longer time engage in fandom communication and accept this as part of their identity. Before I examine how we can use this approach to systematize different discussions and themes in fandom studies, I shall briefly review and clarify my way of interpreting and using the concept of meta-communication.

**COMMUNICATION AND META-COMMUNICATION**

Basically, the concept of meta-communication was introduced to bring attention to the fact that the meanings derived from our communications extend far beyond what is immediately apparent by for example an analysis of what we say. Everything from bodily language to the broader social context in which every form of communication exist must be taken into account when trying to interpret what is being said. In many instances the actual words being uttered are less important than the social context in which they exist. In my view, the idea of fandom is based on the same distinction. While we can describe for example a movie or a football match on its own, it is actually
more important to describe the way that people watch the movie or the match together and the specific meanings that arise from how people communicate with each other when doing this.

In this perspective, the movie or the football match is an initial form of communication which spawns other forms of communication about this initial communication. And the specific thing about fandom is that the meanings that was originally produced by the director of for example a movie or the players in a football match are less important than the communication about this original communication form that fans produce. In contrast, audiences simply receive this primary communication and they do not ‘use’ this communication to produce new meta-communication about this communication (e.g. when just viewing a movie, but without actually talking to anyone about this). In other words, my use of the concept of meta-communication is specifically directed at understanding what makes fans different from ‘normal’ audiences; to understand how the initial communication is taken into new contexts to produce new meanings by fans and therefore an explicit form of meta-communication about communication that happens in other contexts.

The concept of meta-communication thus works to present fandom as a specific activity whereby people communicate about communication taking place in other contexts, but where the meanings derived from this communication does not directly refer to the original context of communication. So while for example a scholarly text will always be important in itself to everyone interpreting this text and the meanings concerning this text, the same cannot be said of a fandom object as for example a football match. The meanings fans produce in their communication about a football match does not need to refer to the original context of production, but has become autonomous in that fans decide for themselves why and how this match is important. My specific point in interpreting meta-communication is that the concept can be used specifically within the context of fandom studies to understand how fans communicate about communication in other contexts.

The term meta-communication is taken from Bateson’s discussion of how the mind works and how it communicates. Bateson argued that while Freudian theory upheld the idea that unconsciousness was the mystical force which had to be explained and accounted for, it was really the other way around, i.e. it was what we usually understand as the normal conscious mode of communication that was the difficult thing to explain and account for (Bateson, 1987, p. 145). He continued the argument by discussing the relation between what we say and what we mean, and Bateson argued that often the unconscious component of the message is more important to what we mean than what we actually say (Bateson, 1987, p. 146); what others have later termed practical consciousness. To make sure others understand us, we therefore send out “metamessages” (Bateson, 1987, p. 146) – additional messages that support the main message.

Bateson expanded this idea to the concept of communication, where he used the concept of “metacommunication” to denote communication where “the subject of discourse is the relationship between the speakers.” (Bateson, 1987, p. 183). Bateson used ‘playing’ as an analogy to explaining meta-communication (Bateson, 1987, p. 185). In playing
there are meanings or signals beyond what we actually say or do which needs to be applied in interpreting what we say and do. Meta-communication can be verbal and non-verbal, conscious or non-conscious. What is important in Bateson’s basic idea of meta-communication, is that “meta-communication is an aspect of any communicative practice in any medium” (Bruhn Jensen, 2010, p. 85). In other words, we cannot understand communication without taking into account the context of the communication and “the roles of the communicators.” (Bruhn Jensen, 2010, p. 85). To sum up this perspective, we can say that meta-communication “frames” (Bateson, 1987, p. 187) or “prefigures” (Bruhn Jensen, 2012, p. 198) communication as well as the social context and relationships which are being maintained by communication (Bruhn Jensen, 2012, p. 196).

In this original sense of the concept of meta-communication, it was used to clarify or extend the relation between communication and context and included almost “anything that contextualizes communication” (Baltzersen, 2013, p. 130). However, as several have noted (Baltzersen, 2013; Demiray; Mann, 2003; Perlmutter and Hatfield, 1980) the concept also has value in another sense where the concept describes a secondary process in which the original communication is commented on or evaluated (Baltzersen, 2013, p. 130) - though for example “talk about ‘talk’” (Baltzersen, 2013, p. 131). One interpretation of this perspective was Perlmutter’s idea of “Intentional metacommunication” (Perlmutter and Hatfield, 1980, p. 19) which was defined as a form of meta-communication where people “begin to talk consciously about the relational context of their messages” (Perlmutter and Hatfield, 1980, p. 19). What is common to this expansion of the concept of meta-communication is thus a focus on meta-communication as communication which works as an important disclosure and clarification of the meanings of existing communication.

META-COMMUNICATION AS FRAME FOR FANDOM STUDIES

In my interpretation of meta-communication the concept can be used as a frame to understand the communications that fans make to expand the original form and meaning of the communication of a cultural product like for example professional football. When we look at fandom studies, the idea of people communicating about existing fan objects communicated to audiences, corresponds very well to how these studies describe the relation between fans and their object of fandom. The fan object, for example a match, a club or a movie, is communicated to fans by professionals. Some people might just watch a movie and then do nothing else in relation to this communication (these would be what we could call audiences). However, at some point people begin to talk about the movie with others who have seen the movie; perhaps with the intention to understand what the movie was all about.

We could call this communication a form of meta-communication in that it is intended to create communication about watching the movie. Just discussing a movie for a short period might not yet make us use the term fans to describe the people discussing. However, it is a form of meta-communication about the movie, and the more relative permanence of this activity when externalised in other media (producing meta-communication about the same movie again and again by writing fanfic for example) resembles the way we usually speak of fans. What is important
here in relation to football fandom is that especially football fans produce many forms of externalised meta-communication – from stadium activity to blog writing. Moreover, it is particular relevant to football fandom since we all find many people watching football as audiences but without much communication about their activity of watching. So applying the concept of meta-communication to football fandom makes particular sense when seen as a continuum of more and more particular forms of meta-communication which derives more and more from the original form of communication – but which nevertheless in many cases has been incorporated into the original form as part of their meaning. The best example here is probably the stadium activities that fan clubs create. While not really influential on the match in any way, these activities are nevertheless part of the symbolic meaning of the match to other fans.

With the preceding discussion in mind, I shall use the concept of ‘fan meta-communication’ to describe communication about the ‘communication of a fan object’. By meta-communicating, fans become part of negotiating the meanings of the fan object. In addition, due to the open ended nature of fan objects as popular culture, fandom meta-communication becomes a central and often dominant interpretative frame in the ‘communication of the fan object’. I therefore use the concept of fan meta-communication to make the following arguments. First, fans intentionally produce communication about the communication of the fan object to expand its existing meanings. This communication is not something which is part of the initial communication, but something which extends and expands the meanings and context of the initial communication far beyond the meanings and context which are part of this communication (extra textual aspect). One example of this could be commentary on a match played on an online newspaper board. By doing this fans wants to change the interpretation of the match (as communicated by the newspaper) to other users, by for example pointing out how a specific player actually performed better than what was written in the match report.

Second, fans relate to each other through meta-communication. When fans communicate about their fan object, the intention is not to clarify meanings or to be equal partners in this communication, but to communicate with other fans by meta-communicating. This social aspect of fan communication is central to how fans are different to audiences. Third, fans use meta-communication to relate to their fan object, as for example by saying ‘I attended match x’ or ‘I watched movie y several times’. Yet, fans’ relation to the fan object is rarely part of the original communication, and often irrelevant to the production of the fan object (identity aspect). Perhaps, football is an exception here. But even in football the producers of the fan objects only incorporate a strongly framed version of fans’ participation within the production frame.

In the following, I shall use the concept of fan meta-communication to argue that we can frame the existing literature on fandom as discussions of fan meta-communication; different types of communication by which fans communicate about their fan objects. Moreover, this approach can help us build a bridge between fandom studies and the literature on football fans. Historically, football fans studies have been separated from fan studies, but the concept
of meta-communication allows us to analyse some basic forms of (meta-)communication which characterise fan activity, and to relate these forms of meta-communication to the particular discussions within football fandom.

Hence, the concept of meta-communication allows me to show that football fandom can be analysed as a particular form of fandom through the similarity in the way in which all fans communicate. In this way, I believe that the concept is useful in joining the different traditions of fandom research and the different types of studies about football fans. In the following sections, I will show how the early studies on football fans and hooliganism as well as the studies on football fans and identity can be reframed if we understand hooliganism and discussions on identity as forms of meta-communication whereby fans intend to take control of the meanings of the cultural products of professional football by specific forms of communication. Moreover, it is also interesting that the discussions of different waves of fandom studies can also be framed in this line of thinking. In other words, we may identify three overarching ideas and discussions of different types of fan meta-communication going again in the literature of fandom as well as the literature on football fans.

In the first line of thought, we find football fan studies focused on the creativity and (sub)cultural struggle which is essential to understand the phenomenon of hooliganism and football violence – as well as the people who produces these events. This perspective corresponds very well to the first wave of fandom studies which was occupied with understanding productivity as the main characteristic of fans. In my view, both lines of thinking goes very well hand in hand, and I therefore introduce the concept of meta-productivity to grasp a general way of thinking about fans which can be identified in both the early football fan studies as well as the early studies within media research on fandom.

In the second line of thought, we find several studies of how football fandom serves as a point of identity for people in a world of rapid transformation and economic crisis. While the most prominent signs of football fans in the media was still violence in the 80'ties and 90'ties, where these studies were conducted, they identified how violence was perhaps merely a bi-product of a tightly bound community with strong identities. The research in what was identified as the second wave of fandom research took a similar line of thought by focusing on for example how these communities would themselves work as social fields with different types of recognition and their own unique distinctions. To grasp the general line of thinking here, I therefore introduce the concept of meta-identity as a frame whereby we can understand that the meta-communications which fans make also serve to create identity through communication about the fan object.

In the third line of thought, we find that football studies began to focus on the new possibilities that new media introduced in how football was communicated and how much of football fandom also concerned the ordinary conversations about football, and not only the struggles and fights related to football violence, fan fractions and the identities build upon these. The same line of thought, what was identified as the third wave of fandom studies, began to look into how fans became both producers and consumers of fan objects through the new media. I introduce the
concept of *meta-conversation* to pinpoint the recent attention in both football fan studies and fandom studies to show fans become part of the communication and production of meaning to the fan object.

To sum up, I introduce the three concepts of *meta-production*, *meta-identity* and *meta-conversation* to point to the forms of meta-communication that fans produce. In the following, I will review the studies in communication theory on what fandom is and the studies on football fans with the purpose of bridging these two traditions and as a result produce a coherent frame of interpretation about what football fandom means and how we can identify and analyse football fandom.

**The directions of fan and fandom research**

I will begin by considering the recent attempts to divide fandom research into different ‘waves’ or generations (Jenkins, 2006; Gray, Sandvoss and Harrington, 2007) of thought which on the one hand serve to classify different aspects of what fandom is and, on the other hand, serves to distinguish between different agendas within the academic world in relation to fans; from trying to legitimate fan research as an academic subject to cooperation with commercial enterprises to create new fan media.

In short, the first wave of fandom research (Lewis, 1992; Fiske, 1994; Radway, 1984; Jenkins, 1992) came from cultural studies and semiotics, and the researchers here were occupied with how fandom could be analysed as a particular form of communication about mass-produced cultural products. The second wave (Harris and Alexander, 1998; Abercrombie and Longhurst, 1998) can be seen as a Bourdieu-inspired sociological perspective on fandom as an internal hierarchy of taste and power; and to some extend also inspired by the discussions on sub-culture and resistance in cultural studies. Lastly, the third wave began as an investigation into the relation between fans and their ‘fan object’ (Hills, 2005) but later expanded this into a discussion of the influence of (new) media on fandom (Gray, Sandvoss and Harrington, 2007; Sandvoss, 2005; Jenkins, 2006). While this categorisation can certainly be contested, I believe that this categorisation encapsulates the main trends and ideas which have evolved within the media studies tradition on fandom, and that these ideas are important in my interpretation of football fandom since they emphasise the communicative aspect of fandom and how we can enrich existing discussions within football fan research by these ideas. In other words, I use these fandom research waves as an interpretative frame for understanding football fandom – as a research tradition and analytical perspective.

**Fandom as meta-production**

The word fan is probably connected to the rise of spectator sports in the late 19th century and while there has been some dispute to the exact etymology of the word, some would say (on for example etymonline.com) that the term originates from boxing (1889) and was probably linked to the word ‘fanatics’. Other, and particular fans themselves, would rather see the term fan to be linked with the word ‘fancy’. Whatever explanation is right, Jenkins is probably correct in arguing that it does not matter much since “the connotation of excessive worship is still stuck to “fan” in a certain way” (Jenkins 2006, p. 17). The first wave of fandom studies was partly a defence of fandom as a legitimate
cultural activity, but it was also directed at analysing fandom as a distinct form of cultural activity. What was particular about fans is that they have a particular object or text they care about; in contrast to for example audiences where it is the flow between and consumption of different objects that counts (Abercrombie & Longhurst 1998, p. 33). What is more, fans often enjoy being together and doing things together with other fans. These two discussions were central to the first wave of fan research.

The first fan research was mostly preoccupied with how fandom could be understood from a semiotic and cultural studies perspective. The first inspiration, from semiotics, was used by fan researchers to argue that fandom could be read as a form of text (Fiske 1994, pp. 146-7). And they argued that fan objects were exactly the kind of mass-produced industrial objects which lay open many different interpretations and uses. Thus, instead of adhering to any authoritative interpretation, fans interpret fan objects in many different ways depending on the particular circumstances under which they live; thereby creating an "interface between the cultural resources provided by capitalism and everyday life" (Fiske 1994, p. 129). Moreover, these researchers (Fiske, 1994; Jenkins, 1992) used the French philosopher Michel de Certeau (de Certeau, 1990) to argue that the everyday is not only the spaces which cannot be classified as something else, but rather the spaces which become central in the ‘poaching’ and creative reading of the meanings related to the materials of capitalism (Fiske, 1994, p. 32).

The second inspiration came from cultural studies which included many different theoretical perspectives. The first fan researchers drew on many different ideas and concepts from cultural studies and particularly in relation to discussing the counter-cultures within fandom; cultures which defined their identity in opposition to other (dominant) cultures. Moreover, the inspiration from cultural studies also led Fiske to make a distinction between ‘semiotic productivity’ and ‘enunciative productivity’ (Lewis, 1992, p. 37), thus saying that the meanings fans create are not only internal to the person ‘reading’ the text but are also, in relation to fans, negotiated and produced within the fan community and fans thus become "active participants within fandom as a social, cultural and interpretative institution" (Tulloch & Jenkins 1995, p. 23).

What was important in this first wave, in relation to football fandom (with has its own traditions of research, as I shall show later), was the insistence on thinking about fan objects as mass produced polysemic texts; even with all the problems this perspective entails. The advantage of this perspective in regard to football fans, is that it becomes clearer that football is something which can be understood as mass production removed from the actual everyday life of fans; but that it is within the everyday life of fans that the meanings generated in relation to football is negotiated and ‘produced’. In this view, fandom is a cultural activity where different materials acquire meanings which can be radically different from the meanings derived from the processes of production in which these materials were made, and many of the meanings generated within fandom are a result of the inherent contradictions which come into play when fans and football producers meet in for example stadia. Moreover, the first wave gave us the insight that fans engage in a particular form of meaning production which includes both the interpretation of texts but also communication about this interpretation, understood as a social activity.
One of the central concepts in the first wave of fan research is *production*. Hence, companies produce materials for fans (as a movie) which are moreover produced as communication to fans (in form of a DVD box for example). When engaging with or consuming these materials, fans produce different meanings for themselves and they also produce communication (as for example a blog post about the movie) about these meanings. Using different forms of communication, fans also produce social relations or communities which moreover engage in the production of new fans materials (as for example a re-mix of a movie). The term production thus seem important to understanding fandom, but there also seem to be some confusion in applying this term to all these activities.

First, we speak about the work (Fiske, 1987, p. 96) or the mass-produced products of fandom as for example the book or the football as a physical or material product. However, a specific person might also be ‘produced’ as a fan product in that specific meanings are created around this person. Also, we might speak of events, as for example the football match, as the ‘product’ which is mass-produced. What is particular about these products is that they are produced by professional cultural producers which produce fan objects that invite fans to consume and identify with these (Sandvoss, 2005, p. 102). We might use the term ‘fan object’ to describe both ‘fan materials’ (understood as the physical products produced for fans, as for example a book or a football stadium) and the ‘fan text’ (understood as for example the movie or the football match). An important point to be made here is that fan objects are not produced for fans only and reading a book or watching a football game is an audience activity not restricted to fans alone.

Second, we might speak of the production of fan-to-fan communication. Fan-to-fan communication might include the performance of a fan text, as for example a football match, showing a movie or reading a book. Thus, all fan events must be understood as the communication of the fan text and these events are produced by professional agents (as for example broadcasting of a movie) and consumed by fans (as for example viewing a movie). Additionally, we might note that fan communication is part of the fan object or fan text itself. Fans watching a football game add to the meaning of the game; and we might also say that the fan object is “*not a finished production, but a continuous ‘productivity’*” (Gray, 2010, p. 7).

Third, what is particular about fan objects is that these are, as already mentioned, products of popular culture; meaning that they are open to many different forms of interpretation. In the consumption of fan events (being present at a game) and fan materials (buying a book), fans produce new meanings by ‘*reading*’ and not just by understanding or ‘*deciphering*’ the fan text (Fiske, 1994, p. 108). What is involved in this reading is thus a production of meaning whereby fans integrate the fan object into their everyday life and thus produces different readings from identical fan objects. At this point, we might still speak of a type of production or activity which is not restricted to fans only but are common to all audiences of popular culture.

Fourth, fans produce communication about their fan objects. This communication might be for example fans singing to a football match, fans having a conversation about a book or fans writing fanfic (literature about fan texts written
by fans). In other words, fans produce communication about the fan object and the communication of this object. Fans communicate about fan communication; fans do not only watch a movie or a football match, they also communicate with other fans about it. The third wave of fan research has used the concepts of the ‘extratextual’ (Hills, 2005, p. 131), the ‘paratext’ (Gray, 2010) or the ‘meta-text’ (Jenkins, 1992) (Sandvoss, 2005, p. 133) to describe this form of communication. In my view, however, speaking about the meta-text risks conflating the communication about the fan object with the materials produced to and by fans to communicate about the fan object.

So what are the main ideas presented in the first wave? Basically, we are directed towards the idea that fans produce texts, objects and other materials to support an ongoing interpretation and expansion of meaning relating to what fans do to their fan object; where the term ‘fan object’ itself points to the idea that whatever it more precisely is that fans engage with, it can be objectified in terms of production and consumption.

While the first wave of fan research pointed us towards the idea of fan meta-production, my argument here is that the researchers classified as belonging to this wave did not adequately articulate the social dimension of these activities. And it is exactly the production and circulation of this fan meta-communication which transform audience activity into fandom and which, perhaps, make it possible for us to understand fandom not in terms of exceptional texts but rather in terms of exceptional readings (Jenkins, 1992, p. 284). Thus, we might say that fan communication requires or help to produce a social sphere for the circulation of meanings where the fan products serve to create and maintain different forms of social identification or distinctions within this ‘community’.

Fandom as meta-identification

The second wave of fan studies began to investigate fandom as a social form of audience activity – and to understand how the communications which were seen in one way from the outside of a fan community must be understood rather differently when looked at from the inside. While the first wave of fan studies did discuss fandom as a social activity, whether as sub-culture and community, the second wave began to reflect further on the implications of the social dimension of fandom. First, fan researchers began to investigate why fans choose particular fan objects and how both the consumption of objects and the social community related to this consumption could be traced back to social background and class (Otte in Roose, Schafer and Schmidt-Lux, 2010, p. 69). Second, these researchers began to apply Bourdieu’s concepts of for example taste, distinction and capital to fan studies (Jancovich, 2002); arguing that fandom is an activity where the consumption of fan objects is a social game where the stakes are socially defined in terms of for example recognition, authenticity and belonging. Or in other words: social identity.

What the second wave of fan researchers were particular keen to criticise, was the idea that fan communities consisted of a number of communities with similar minded people who shared the same strange passions. Rather, they argued, fans struggled both viciously and intensely with other fans to defend their own authenticity (Jancovich, 2002, p. 307) and in this struggle they constantly try to increase the value of their own ‘sub-cultural capital’ (Jancovich, 2002, p. 308); a form of capital which in other fan cultures would be without any value (Harris and
Alexander, 1998, p. 5), but which can grow with the right investment of time, money and cognitive resources (Otte in Roose, Schafer and Schmidt-Lux, 2010, p. 79). In this interpretation, fans do not just engage in fan-activity ‘in general’ but engage or disengage with very particular fan objects for different strategic purposes in order to create a specific identity within the social world in which fans engage. Thus, fans are only fans insofar as they are “at least aware of and interested in the behavior and exchanges of other fans.” (Kirby-Diaz, 2009, p. 169) and through the identification and consumption of particular fan objects, “Fans draw sharp and intolerant lines between what, or who, they are fans of and what they are not.” (Fiske 1994, p. 147).

Furthermore, the researchers within the second wave of fan research argued that the taste for or consumption of different fan objects had a particular systematics in that fans was not just reading or interpreting their fan text but also identifying with it; which can take different forms from cognitive identification to identification through collecting fan materials (Otte in Roose, Schafer and Schmidt-Lux, 2010, p. 75). Researchers argued that fans, in contrast to other audiences, develop a sense of identity between the fan object and themselves by “having control and mastery [...] by pulling it close and integrating it into your sense of self.” (Jenkins, 2006, p. 23). Moreover, this identity and identification is established through the development of particular fan languages and fan discourses which fans use to endow fan materials with different meanings. These meanings are a result of the repeated interaction between specific fans or fan cultures and the objects of fandom (often leading to, sometimes problematic, comparisons between fandom, rituals and religion), through fan discourse, with different variations of the same type of fan materials (as a TV-series or a football club).

What is implied here is that fan discourse is often based on the possibility to create oppositional readings and the discourses of fandom are thus based on reading as a form of “interface between micro (reader) and macro (the text and its systems of production)” (Sandvoss in Gray, Sandvoss and Harrington, 2007, p. 30). Thus, the very structure of fan discourse is based on creating an identity between the reader or fan and the mass-produced materials of fandom and this particular discursive praxis is often based or particular forms of positive identifications such as owning the product, dressing like an idol or participating in fan events or negative identifications such as renouncing particular fan materials (a football club or a special version of a music track) or interpretations of these materials.

What we learn from the second wave of fandom research, is that fandom must be analysed not only as a cultural activity but also as a social activity whereby fans create their identity as fans through different, positive as well as negative identifications, with the objects or texts of fandom whereby the fan object come “to be experienced as part of the fan’s fabric of self, fans need to build an intense identification with their object of fandom.” (Sandvoss, 2005, p. 101). Hence, fans do not only read their fan objects. Fans communicate about these objects as well and it is through this communication that fans express different forms of identifications, and in football this might be expressed when a fan identify with a team or sing a song, or when fans write an angry post about a club which they do not like. Thus, taste and distinction have to be expressed through communication. However, as fans began to use digital media, it became clear to fan researchers that different media allowed fans to express their identifications
and consumption or taste for different fan objects in very different ways; and the fact that the identification with a fan object not only happens through owning items or wearing shirts, but at least as much through the daily expressions of opinions or conversations about the fan object.

**Fandom as Meta-conversation**

To understand fandom as a communicative praxis, I shall direct our attention to four central theses about fan communication. First, I shall discuss fandom as a praxis whereby fans produce communication which helps other fans interpreting, evaluating and framing fan objects (As discussed in Gray, 2010, p. 86). Second, I shall discuss fandom as a communicative praxis which seeks to produce a coherent narrative between different fan objects by reassembling meanings from different media. Third, I shall discuss how fan communication is dispersed in time to produce meanings (as for example expectations) in relation to fan communication. Fourth, I shall discuss how fan meta-communication creates a symbolic system through which different meanings and interpretations of the fan object can be embedded.

In the early studies of football fans from the 60’s and 70’s the relation between media, especially newspapers and television, was much discussed (Tomlinson and Whannel, 1986; Ingham et al., 1978). And in later discussions of TV-series audiences the focus on media and media agents was no less present (Lewis, 1992). The first wave of fandom research was often discussing media as the specific effects or logics which different media technologies or agents would impose on fan objects and fandom. The third wave of fan research questioned this logic or view on media and argued that we need to understand media as essential to the communication and thus existence of fandom in a “a modern, mediated world” (Gray, Sandvoss and Harrington, 2007, p. 10).

The attention to media in the third wave provides an insight into the important challenge that new media present, and the third wave have not adequately defined the real issue at stake here; the idea that fandom is most of all something which begins its initial existence through the small daily conversational exchange of opinions on the fan object, e.g. ‘Did you like the episode of the series x today?’ To begin with, these authors put stress on the need to examine how new digital media would influence how fans communicate about their fan objects, and they even turned the argument around saying that modern digital media, and the interactive possibilities following these, would give rise to patterns of fandom to audiences which would normally not be considered fans (Gray, Sandvoss and Harrington, 2007, p. 10). In this perspective what is important to the third wave is that ‘media’ is not something which is added to the fan object but part of its existence or at least always part of how “fan objects are experienced in and through mediated texts” (Gray, Sandvoss and Harrington, 2007, p. 10).

From my position, however, I would rephrase this to say that fan objects are always ‘made’ in communication. They are essentially cultural products which become fan objects through communication, and in this perspective it is not necessary to make the argument that they ‘are experienced in and through mediated texts’. Instead, I would say that the idea Gray, Sandvoss and Harrington are promoting is better understood by saying that the form of
communication (e.g. watching the movie) which we associate with the primary ‘fan object’, the movie, the match or something else, is accompanied by meta-communication as for example analysis of the match or the newspapers anticipating the movie before the release date.

Thus, by speaking of meta-communication we speak about the specific forms of communication which are used to create meanings used in the process of interpreting the fan object or the process of reading or watching the fan object (fans might both speak about what a particular chapter means for the narrative in a book as well as the act of reading the book itself, as a fan or as a non-fan). And this form of meta-communication might be provided by both professional agents and fans (Gray, 2010, p. 143), as for example when commenting or annotating the fan object (Gray, 2010, p. 154) in either fan-produced communication or industry produced ‘extras’.

Moreover, this type of communication is always in dialogue with the fan object, meaning that fan meta-identification produces specific interpretative and social ‘logics’ in relation to the fan object, as for example when inviting to pay “increased attention to a given plot, character, relationship or mode of viewing” (Gray, 2010, p. 146) or to invite fans to specific social responses (as for example shouting) (Gray, 2010, p. 152). And it is though repetition of identical communicative and social responses and flows that fans, within a given social sphere, establish an identity between themselves and the fan objects; an important difference to other forms of audience activity where different content create different responses. Hence, within a given fan sociality, fans create (symbolic) rules for how identity between fan and fan object is established through particular communicative and social acts.

In attempting to understand how the fan object is interpreted through different forms of fan communications, we also need to discuss how media are used to create relations (or intertextuality) between different fan events and fan materials (Gray, 2010, p. 117). What Jenkins and others have argued is that fans use different fragments of fan communication to create their own reading (Jenkins, 2006, p. 39), and that fans do not just passively absorb any fan communication related to the fan object but actively selects and deselect particular forms of fan object consumption (Jenkins, 2006, p. 112) using fan communication to “manage” the fan text or fan object (Gray, 2010, p. 6).

What is involved in how fans define fan objects is thus “inextricably linked with their media of delivery.” (Sandvoss in Gray, Sandvoss and Harrington, 2007, p. 23) since fan objects have a consistency in time which means that they are almost always “constituted and reconstituted across different media” (Sandvoss in Gray, Sandvoss and Harrington, 2007, p. 23) to “to reflect certain interpretations” (Kirby-Diaz, 2009, p. 149). Consequently, media become central in defining the specific social and communicative rules and spaces for how fan objects are contextualised, as well as the particular social and communicative responses which re-contextualise the fan object (Kirby-Diaz, 2009, p. 149). And for this reason, it is not surprising that fan researchers have been particular keen to stress the importance of new media in interpreting the fan object “New tools and technologies enable consumers to archive, annotate, appropriate, and recirculate media content” (Jenkins, 2006, p. 135) as well as transforming the possibilities for producing fan meta-communication and meta-materials (Jenkins, 2006, p. 143).
And this meta-communication or “beginning of meaning” (Gray, 2010, p. 52) is used in many different ways as when fans create annotation or even wikis (Gray, 2010, p. 174) about the fan object. Some have even argued that this proliferation of fan meta-communication has cast doubt on what the actual fan object and fan communication is, as when Sandvoss argues “Fan objects thus form a field of gravity, which may or may not have an urtext in its epicentre, but which in any case corresponds with the fundamental meaning structure through which all these texts are read.” (Sandvoss in Gray, Sandvoss and Harrington, 2007, p. 23).

If this argument is correct, we might even say that there is some type of fundamental symbolic structure which determines how fan objects are connected and read, and it is the understanding of this structure which holds the key to analysing how different fan objects are related and consumed in different “spaces of flow” (Sandvoss in Gray, Sandvoss and Harrington, 2007, p. 23) or “networked practices” (Jenkins and American Council of Learned Societies, 2006, p. 255). Hence, it is this symbolic structure which creates the possibility for the (symbolic) identification and identity, or what Sandvoss calls “congruence”, between the fan and the fan object through communication: “What I mean here by ‘congruence’ is the active construction of parallels, identity and ‘identicality’ between fans and their object of fandom.” (Sandvoss, 2005, p. 102).

Consequently, what is developed by fans as ‘fan cultures’ must be understood as a distinct social and symbolic system of fan meta-communication; integrating the meta-communication produced by professional agents by contextualising this within a particular fan culture. And it is this symbolic structure which “by translating that viewing into some kind of cultural activity” (Jenkins, 2006, p. 41) allows fans to make use of fan objects in their everyday life. Therefore, the symbolic system can be understood as “a set of signs and symbols that fans encounter in their frames of representation and mediation, and from which they create meaning in the process of reading.” (Sandvoss in Gray, Sandvoss and Harrington, 2007, p. 22); pointing toward the fan objects “as frames of realizable meanings that span across single or multiple communicative acts, including visual, sound-based, and written communication.” (Sandvoss in Gray, Sandvoss and Harrington, 2007, p. 22). Yet, it is the embedding of this symbolic system, as for example the representation of the football player on a football shirt, in different media materials and fan meta-materials which create the possibility for the continuous production and re-production of fandom and fan communities.

**FOOTBALL FANDOM AS COMMUNICATION**

Thus far, I have discussed the concept of fandom and used examples from different forms of fandom. In this part, I will use the frame on meta-communication to characterise football fandom as a communicative praxis, and to reframe the discussions in the existing literature in terms of what it says about football fandom as communicative praxis. In the following, I shall therefore make a short review on the particular studies and debates which deal with football fans. I believe these debates to be important in understanding the particular ways that football fans construct and deal with football as objects of fandom.
In many ways, this literature has been preoccupied with understanding what football fans do and compare these actions with other ‘problems’ in society, for example nationalism or violence, trying to explain these phenomena in terms of for example class and gender. I shall try to summarize the debate, but also look carefully at what this literature might tell us about football fans as a particular form of fandom. In the last part of the section, I shall discuss the relation between media and football fandom.

The ‘Problem’ of Hooliganism

The first research on football fandom was more or less preoccupied with the ‘problems’ of hooliganism due to the fact that the money for research was given in order to resolve this ‘problem’. The term hooligans was used from the end of the 1950s (Murray, 1994, p. 182) to describe the huge increase in the number of registered violent incidents (Wagg, 1984, p. 194) involving football fans. Some commentators even argued that it was the opportunity made possible by the broadcasting of matches, for fans to display violence to the world that made fans use violence in the first place (Wagg, 1984, p. 195). Whatever the reason for this increase in violence, there were people who wanted to find out what could be done with these “‘so-called’ supporters” (Wagg, 1984, p. 196).

Not long after, the first official research, the Harrington and Lang reports, examined the nature of football hooliganism from a psychological perspective (Wagg, 1984, p. 196). However, instead of finding a cure for hooliganism and a solution to the problem, Harrington’s team were “much impressed by the amount of knowledge and memory for detail of football possessed by fans of limited education and intellectual background. Their fluency on the subject of football is in striking contrast to their inability to discourse on other topics.” (quoted from Wagg, 1984, p. 196). So instead of a diagnosis, researchers had found a new and exciting phenomenon: football fandom. Not surprisingly, this did not lead to much change in how journalists and politicians saw the problem and the agenda of trying to understand how different problems of hooliganism continued; which had the advantage that the research on football fandom still received money (Giulianotti, 2000, p. 39).

There were of course many different approaches to what hooliganism was and why fans became involved in these ‘incidents’. For Taylor (Taylor i Cohen, 1973), football was a manifest expression of the particular living situation of the working class (Taylor i Cohen, 1973, p. 141), and football hooliganism was, according to Taylor (Taylor i Cohen, 1973, p. 145), a result of the loss of working class values as the game became more commercialized. While Taylor’s analysis seems rather naive and specific to the period of time when it was written, he did have an important point in telling us that football fandom is partly about sub-cultures trying to ‘control’ the fan object through common activities (Taylor i Dunning, 1971, p. 362); producing for example banners and songs (Taylor i Cohen, 1973, p. 157). Moreover, in studying these fans, Marsh, Rosser and Harré also noticed that it is in general difficult to speak of football fans and football culture as one group of people doing the same but must rather be understood as different groups doing different things to express their football fandom (Marsh, Rosser and Harré, 1978, p. 66); adding that each group had its own social roles, terrace-positions, gear and rules (Marsh, Rosser and Harré, 1978, p. 86).
In short, we might note that the first studies on football fandom established that football fans are not just a uniform mass which can (or should) be controlled to a higher or lesser degree. Rather, looking deeper into different fan cultures, the first researchers began to see how football fans create their own worlds with hierarchies, rules and symbolic structures. In other words, football fans create a language for interacting both with the ‘outer’ world and the complex structures of each particular fan world. And in contrast to several other types of fandom, football fans do not just create resistance in reading their fan object differently, but use different means, including political strategies, violence and the creation of fan materials, to express and articulate this difference in opposition to other audiences and football fan cultures. As a result, we the first generation of football fan researchers emphasized that we need to study what types of fan objects different football cultures evaluate as important, as well as the particular fan materials and fan communications they use to create symbolic resistance or distinctions to other cultures and within their own culture or community.

**Football fandom as identity**

The 1980s and 1990s saw a shift in football fandom research. Where hooliganism had before been the most important justification for studying football fans, new identity-related issues, from racism and nationalism to gender and consumerism, began to enter the debates and research agendas; for example spawned by the rapidly rising ticket prices. Thus, racism, nationalism and commercialisation were themes which researchers could connect to different events within football fandom. And perhaps, as football became ‘commercialised’ and popularized, the idea of different sub-cultures or fractions within football had become accepted. As ordinary people became (categorised) as fans, there was a need to separate these from those fans who were potentially violent or involved in violent events. Moreover, there were different developments, as for example the rapid increase in the publishing of fan magazines (fanzines) (Haynes, 1995) which could be analysed as evidence of the many different cultural expressions and the sophisticated language which different sub-cultures within fandom had developed.

Within the literature on football fandom, there have been attempts to classify supporters and the change in supporter types (Giulianotti, 2000) to understand how football became the national game for many countries and how supporters, as a consequence, could be classified in traditional class or location based supporters as well as the new and well off ‘post-modern’ supporter. There are of course several explanations for these changes but one of the most used explanations refers to the rising ticket prizes and the general economic changes within football resulting in a much more commercialized game where the ‘traditional’ fan was only one type of football fan among many. Thus, the significance of standing on the stadium to support the local team came to be seen as a marginal or at least diminishing activity while new forms of interaction took over, and fans, as a result of these changes, changed their behaviour and relation to the game.

Reflecting on these movements, Giulianotti’s argued that “The broad trend in sports identification is away from the supporter model (with its hot, traditional identification with local clubs) and toward the more detached, cool,
consumer-oriented identification of the flâneur.” (Giulianotti 2002, p. 25). However, the argument that fans can categorically be classified as being either the one or the other type of fan might be somewhat problematic (although Giulianotti does to some degree stress that these are ideal types). Conversely, others have argued, in particular Abercrombie and Longhurst (Abercrombie and Longhurst, 1998), that instead of categorising fans according to whether they identify with a particular fan community, or as discussed in the 1980’s, a particular club, nation, class, gender, race or even music taste (Redhead, 1997), we might instead classify different forms of football fan activities along a continuum of different audience activities which might then be categorised as either a form of support, fandom or spectatorship. Following this line of thinking, I think we can speak of three different fan activities which maintain and reproduces the (symbolic) relationship between football as a fan object and football fans.

First, we might speak of identity in relation to being part of a fan community or a fan club. What is particular about football fans and the way their identity is formed is also that they are part or take part of an actual fan club or fan fraction as well as the different events organised within this community or group. And despite the many discussions of the globalisation of football and football fandom, we must not forget that even though football fans do feel some kind of togetherness with fans from other countries (in particular in relation to ‘big clubs’ like Manchester United, Liverpool, Barcelona, Real Madrid etc.) the actual events, as for example watching a game in a pub, take place in the local environment with other football fans or friends.

So while the identity between football fans and their fan objects are not necessarily based on physical proximity, the events and everyday communication is often, at least before the Internet, based within a particular group of people whether it be a fan group or simply friends. What is also implied here is that identifying with football fandom objects is usually done through fan meta-communication with friends or rivals as for example by meeting in a pub (which might be the actual fan meta-communication) or marching to the stadium together with the fan club (which can be understood as fan meta-communication to rival fans – and other fans within the group). Thus, football fans identify with their object of fandom by very basic means, as for example going to many home matches, away matches or down to the pub.

Second, football fans develop fan discourses which, through fan meta-communication, maintain and reproduce the symbolic identity of the fan and the fan community in different ways. Thus, according to the research on football fandom (e.g. Armstrong and Giulianotti, 1997; Armstrong and Giulianotti, 2001) fans develop particular relations between football discourses (for example what it means to support a club) and other discourses (drawing on discourses of masculinity, nationalism etc.). Fan meta-communication thus works to reinforce particular identities between fans and their fan object by being able to being recognised as identical (the same song being sung in the same pub week after week and year after year); and thereby integrating the fan object into their sense of (historical) self-identity (Robson, 2000, p. 38). And fans meta-communicate in certain ritualistic patterns (what have made many researchers to compare football fandom with religion (E.g. Joern, 2006; Schultz and Sheffer, 2015)) to produce a symbolic universe wherein particular actions, events and communication become commonly accepted within a
particular fan culture. In contrast to the first generation of football fan researchers who articulated class in relation to certain economic and social living conditions, this newer research on identity and community accentuated the symbolic and communicative dimension of class-related football fandom.

To sum up, we find many discussions of identity in football fandom research – what I call meta-identity, i.e. the fans’ ways of identifying in new ways with already constructed identities (e.g. the identity of a football club). Football fans communicate with other football fans by displaying their identity through e.g. wearing a banner or having intimate knowledge about the history of a particular club player.

NEW FORMS OF CONVERSATION IN FOOTBALL FANDOM

While the concepts of meta-production and meta-identity attempt to cover the ways in which fans take action or do something which communicates their relation to for example a club or player, fans also communicate their opinions, ideas and views of both football and other fans to each other. This type of communication, which I have termed meta-conversation, has been in existence since the earliest times of football fandom (although the spectators were typically almost silent during the entire match in the early history of football fandom in the end of the 19th century).

Yet, some of the new media, from radio to websites, have expanded the ways in which meta-conversation happens, and it is therefore not surprising that much of recent football fan research (Sandvoss, 2003; Sandvoss, 2004; Müller, 2006; Schwier, 2002; Schwier and Fritsch, 2003; Giulianotti and Williams, 1994; Crawford, 2004; Krøvel, 2012; Bale, 2000) has been devoted to discussing the relationship between football, fans and media and how new media forms change these relations. The main point in much of this research has been that meta-conversation, the conversation between fans about football, may have changed as a result of the advent of these new media. Much less research has been devoted how football fans actually communicate, verbally, about football.

For decades, football fan researchers have discussed the relationship between football and media or as some have coined it: ‘the media sports cultural complex’ (Rowe, 2004). Yet, there has been little consistency in how the relations between media and football have been studied and some media, as for example television (e.g. Crabbe, 2003) and newspapers (Hall in Ingham et al., 1978, pp. 15-36), are often accused of ‘doing’ things with football and fans, while other media, as for example postcards (Davies, 2010) or football fan magazines (Giulianotti in Armstrong and Giulianotti, 1997, pp. 211-231; Haynes, 1995), can be used by football fans to do things of their own will.

While I have no intention to extend the underlying agenda of this distinction between different forms of media as ‘good’ or ‘bad’ for football and its fans, I do believe that the many discussions of the relation between football and television (Bale in Ch. 16 in Brown, 1998; Goldblatt, 2008, p. Ch. 18; Meister in Bündnis Aktiver Fussballfans, 2004, pp. 60-73; Ch. 8 in Murray, 1994; Crawford, 2004, p. Ch. 9; Tomlinson and Whannel, 1986; Sandvoss, 2003; Schwier, 2002) have emphasized the importance of making a distinction between media as tools that football professionals use to broadcast football matches and communication about these matches, and media that fans use to communicate with other fans. Hence, what has been argued is that analogue media, perhaps with the noticeable
exception of fanzines (Haynes, 1995), are primary used to communicate football fan objects, like matches, players, clubs etc., to fans as one-to-many communication and that the possibility of this mass-communication has also transformed the economic and social base of football fan cultures in their experience and consumption of football.

The research on media in early football studies was mostly related to what media, or rather journalists, did to frame football and football fans. Media was thus understood from an organisational point of view or from a purely technical. What was new about the research in the late 1990s and the 2000s was the idea that media was not something or someone which could influence the money and opinions about football, but was rather embedded in the game itself; and the presence of new technologies like big screens and the new digital media changed how football studies saw media (Sandvoss, 2003; Crawford, 2004). What is more, research also began to look at the transformation of the football event itself. While media agents had previously had an indirect influence on the economy of clubs, behaviour of fans and broadcasting of matches, media now became essential to study to understand how football had become standardized, globalised, individualised and so on (Wenner, 1998).

There has of course also been interest for how media, and perhaps in particular new media, has changed how professionals work and produce football players (Danisch and Schwier, 2010) and matches (Fietz, 2007). Furthermore, the literature on media and football also show us that media can bring about many different forms of changes. Thus, on the one hand it would be hard to deny that the increased amount of money, that television has brought into the game, have changed the organisation and production of football and its geographic scale (Ch. 5 in Giulianiotti, 2000; Sandvoss, 2003). On the other hand, some have argued that the consequences of the commercialization of players and fans (Crawford, 2004) or the transformation of viewing experiences (Tomlinson and Whannel, 1986; Ch. 8 in Murray, 1994) is essential to the study of football fandom and how football fandom has been (radically) transformed during the last half century.

To sum up we find the idea of meta-conversation continually present within football fandom studies, but with a complex duality between the media that professionals use to reach audiences (e.g. viewing an event in a match in slow motion) to the media that fans use to meta-communicate with each other (e.g. fanzines). Yet, I find that even through the literature on football fandom agree on the importance of how fans constantly communicate through daily conversations with other fans, surprisingly little attention has been paid to systematise what fans communicate about when they do not communicate about football fandom itself (e.g. displaying their identity to other fans).

**Summary: What is football fandom?**

I began the chapter arguing that the concepts of communication and meta-communication provide us with a strong framework in interpreting what football fandom is. Moreover, these concepts help me bridge the gulf between the ideas developed within fandom studies and the very diverse literature on football and football fans. Before I discuss
the relevance of the theoretical considerations presented in this chapter, let me first present a schematic summary of the discussions on how football fans meta-communicate.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fandom as meta-communication</th>
<th>Meta-communication</th>
<th>Meta-production</th>
<th>Meta-identification</th>
<th>Meta-conversation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What is fandom?</strong></td>
<td>Popular culture is communicated to audiences as (fan) objects to be enriched in meanings through meta-communication</td>
<td>Fan meta-production refers to any products or texts made by fans to support the meanings or interpretations of the mass cultural products made by professionals, e.g. fanfic</td>
<td>Fan meta-identification refers to the actions fans take to communicate their identification with the fan object, e.g. buying the collector’s edition of a DVD-series or getting a book signed</td>
<td>Fan meta-conversation refers to fans expressing their knowledge and opinion about the fan object to other fans, e.g. when attending a fan conference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What is football fandom?</strong></td>
<td>Football is communicated by professionals to audiences; audiences (fans) then meta-communicate about football</td>
<td>Meta-productivity in football fandom refers to for example a fan march or the production of a fan website</td>
<td>Meta-identification in football fandom refers to the manifold ways that football fans have expressed their identity, e.g. wearing a shirt</td>
<td>Meta-conversation in football fandom refers to the discussions on how fans express their knowledge and opinions to other (fellow) fans</td>
</tr>
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</table>

This schematic is not an attempt to produce a grand theory on fandom, but rather a meta-review with the theoretical agenda of presenting football fandom as forms of communication; fandom as something which can be identified and distinguished from audiences through fans particular ways of communicating. The theoretical reconstruction presented in this chapter is thus the first step towards a framework for interpreting the particular role the web plays in communicating football fandom.

I have traced some of the important discussions and trends in fandom theory, based on the manifold studies into groups of people which are typically identified as fans. To me at least, the manifold attempts to characterise the particular activities of these people, whether speaking of particular forms of semiotic activity, para-texts or prosumers, is better summed up in the concept of meta-communication; *enriching, translating and transforming the original meaning of the things people love to watch, read, listen to, attend or in any other way enjoy*. Yet, my attempt to translate the discussions of fandom theory and the literature on football fandom into concepts of communication is only the first step into presenting a framework for examining this communication on the web. I still need three steps in reconstructing a framework for understanding communication about football on the web.
The first of these two steps (chapter 3) will be a reconstruction of the object of communication and meta-communication; that is football. In this step I will argue that to understand communication and meta-communication of football, we need to understand how football has developed into a culture of fandom, and how this culture is built through different symbolic components or forms. In the second step (chapter 4), I will discuss the social contextualization of this culture, i.e. how communication and meta-communication is always contextualised within a particular social field. In the third step (chapter 5), I will consider how we should approach the particular challenges of studying football fan on the web, and how we should approach the web as an object of study. Lastly, to anticipate an answer to the question ‘What is football fandom?’ I will make the following argument. Football fandom are different cultures or social contexts which resembles each other in the particular ways in which people meta-communicate about the cultural or symbolic forms developed within the professional world of football production and communication.
Abstract:

In this chapter, I argue that we can understand communication about football through the analysis of football culture as symbolic forms. The chapter presents the following three arguments.

First, I argue that to understand football culture as a form of communication, we need to understand communication as the sharing of meaning through particular forms of symbols. In this perspective, culture is a result of people sharing meanings within a given social space.

Second, I argue that we can use Cassirer’s idea of symbolic forms to understand how symbols join matter and meaning in different media. This perspective ties into the theoretical and methodological framework of Bourdieu, and I will discuss how this theoretical perspective can be translated into the practical analysis of a social space.

Third, I use this analytical perspective to reconstruct the symbolic forms of football fandom, and I argue that we can speak about three different symbolic forms within football fandom; the match, the club and the icon. Each of these three symbolic forms has developed into particular materials (forms of matter) and discourses (forms of meaning) which are communicated in time and space in particular ways for each symbolic form.
WHAT IS COMMUNICATION?

I have argued that communication is a concept central to understand football culture and football fandom. However, both culture and communication are contested concepts which may be used in many different ways. In what follows, I present a particular line of thought which uses these concepts to understand the process whereby people make sense of the world through the use of symbols. First, I tap into Durham Peters’ analysis of the idea of communication and argue that our use of this concept was guided by the problems of connecting to other people across time and space. What is particular insightful in the analysis presented by Durham Peters, is that it reverses the idea that technology introduces an artificial barrier between minds which would otherwise be in concert and instead argues that meaning exists only in the process of being shared in different media. Consequently, we must understand communication as both the (trans)formation of meaning as well as the extension of meaning in time and space.

Second, I follow Carey’s ‘cultural conception of communication’ as a perspective which challenges us to understand meaning as a system of differences which is established through the use of symbols. In this interpretation, the concept of culture points to how these systems of differences are produced and used within different social forms and practices. To be more specific in how we analyse meaning as a system of differences, I follow Carey in using the term ‘symbolic forms’. However, Carey’s discussion of symbolic forms needs further clarification which I undertake in the second part of the chapter.

COMMUNICATION THEORY

In the history of media and communication science, we find two recurrent trends. First, there has been a tendency towards producing quantifiable and testable theories which could demonstrate the effects or logics of media (McQuail, 2005, p. 16). Second, many researchers, at least until the advent of digital media, made an all too easy distinction between mass-media as a distorted, impersonal and distant form of communication and face-to-face communication as the primordial, personal and authentic form of communication (Peters, 1994, p. 118); thus reinforcing the first tendency with an imperative to demonstrate how mass-media become problematic for democracy or other forms of interaction and dialogue. In my perspective on fandom as a communicative and symbolic praxis, these two tendencies are particularly problematic since they are “especially inadequate to deal with the nature of ‘symbolic systems’ and signification, the process by which meaning is given and taken in varied social and cultural contexts.” (McQuail, 2005, p. 16).

In what follows, I shall examine what could be called a “cultural approach” (McQuail, 2005, p. 20) to communication and media; that is how communication can be understood as “a symbolic process whereby reality is produced, maintained, repaired, and transformed.” (Carey, 2009, p. 19). I shall begin by discussing the concept of communication from this perspective, and why we need to shift our focus away from mass media and the consequences this shift will have for our study of media in general.
While it is obvious to us that human beings have always communicated with each other, the notion of communication theory only dates back to the 1940s (Durham Peters, 1999, p. 9), and is in particular related to the advent of the newspaper, the radio and the television which were termed mass media. Moreover, these new media were mass produced, and as a result a message could therefore reach a mass audience (Bineham, 1988, p. 232). As a consequence of this development, and the actual use to which these media were put during the first and second World War, some people began to fear that these media could be used to ‘manipulate’, ‘brainwash’ or ‘control’ the masses (Bineham, 1988, p. 232). This conception of these new mass media as all-powerful means to control the masses came to be known, as Katz later termed it (Lubken in Park and Pooley, 2008, p. 22), the hypodermic model (Bineham, 1988, p. 232). Although it can be questioned whether any communication researchers actually defended the strong version of this model (Bineham, 1988, p. 236), it became agenda-setting for much of what came later.

Thus, while the idea of mass communication as a direct way to influence people and their behaviour was quickly rejected, if it ever existed, the idea that (mass) communication could influence or have an indirect effect on people was more persistently followed by for example Lasswell and Merton. A further consequence of this discussion was that the concept of communication came to be understood in terms of “the procedures by which one mind may affect another.” (Shannon and Weaver, 1975 [1949], p. 3). The study of communication media could therefore be articulated in terms of how the sending and receiving of information (Shannon, 1975 [1949], p. 4) can be isolated and analysed in term of noise between the sender and the receiver; as well as the specific means by which (mass) media can be encoded and decoded (Shannon, 1975 [1949], p. 4).

According to this model, “the point of studying communication [...] is to understand how we may improve the accuracy or efficiency of the process.” (Fiske, 1991, p. 7). And despite the many attempts to introduce more sophisticated models (McQuail and Windahl, 1996), this conceptualization of communication was perhaps best fitted to the study of mass media and less fit to analyse other forms of communication and communication media. In particular, we might argue that the new digital media have questioned whether this approach is able to analyse the complex networks of digital communication. Not only because mass communication media differ from digital media in many ways, but also because this agenda hinges on the idea that it makes sense to speak of some forms of communication media as more authentic or more real than other forms of communication media; a distinction that might be deeply rooted in our cultural heritage but which nonetheless begins to become problematic when we look at digital media.

Why should digital media be important to our understanding of communication? After all we have always communicated and the idea and problems of communication are as old as our civilisation, and few would disagree that even animals have a system for communicating with each other. In speaking about communication in this way, we usually conflate different historical meanings within the term communication. Thus, if we probe into the different usages by which the term communication has been and is applied, beyond the etymological root of the word communication, “make common to many” (Williams, 1976, p. 72), we might find meanings ranging from
communication as a form of belonging, community, communion or sharing of inner experience to communication as a relation, intercourse, exchange, transfer or transmission (Durham Peters, 1999, pp. 7-8). However, as Durham Peters also points out, what is implied in many of these usages is that communication is a successful sharing of meaning. The important point here is that the idea of communication only became possible when the sharing of meaning began to go wrong, or as Durham Peters puts it: “Miscommunication is the scandal that motivates the very concept of communication in the first place.” (Durham Peters, 1999, p. 6).

Not surprisingly, we find the first discussions of (mis)communication in classical Greek philosophy; from Socrates’ disdain for the written word and Plato’s cave to the perverted speeches of the sophists (Durham Peters, 1999, p. 37). However, it is only with the advent of the technologies of electronic mass media, and the diffusion of existing borders of exchanging meanings in time and space, that communication as the sharing of meanings between separate minds came into the limelight. Nonetheless, we can agree with Durham Peters in that “Mass communication came first” (Durham Peters, 1999, p. 6). What is implied here is that new media, in transforming or changing the rules for sharing meanings in time and space, make people think about existing media and how they create specific possibilities and problems for the sharing of meaning. And the concept of communication is a result of the awareness that all meaning sharing, whether as face-to-face or through ‘twittering’, is dependent on particular media of communication and the particular ways that these media allow symbols to be encoded and decoded, or as Durham Peters notes: “this gap between encoding and decoding, I suggest, may well be the mark of all forms of communication. It often takes a new medium and its accompanying disruptions to reveal the gaps that were already implicitly there.” (Durham Peters, 1999, p. 52). Digital media once again directs our attention to “the gaps of which communication is made” (Peters, 1994) and this is why we once again need to reflect on how we study and examine these gaps, and with what purposes.

What the history of mass communication research reveals then, is “that communication is first of all a set of practices, conventions, and forms” (Carey, 2009, p. 32) used for the sharing of meaning in time and space between members of a society or community. Hence, we could say that mass communication, together with other thoughts on modernity and mass society, brought the dream of the harmonious community or “identical minds in concert” (Durham Peters, 1999, p. 241) into the horizon of social thinkers. A further consequence of these reflections on mass communication, was that the media of speech, gestures and other bodily interactions could no longer be regarded as primordial media with any privileged access to inner states, but were rather media on their own; each with specific restrictions and possibilities for expression and communication or as Durham Peters notes: “Communication’ once meant explicitly the problem of getting messages across a distance via immaterial means. Once applied to the face-to-face setting, ‘communication’ continues to evoke chasm to be bridged and disturbances in contact.” (Durham Peters, 1999, pp. 179-180).

Following this line of thought, new questions arise. Even if we agree that communication is the sharing of meaning between members of a society, we still need to understand how we study and analyse communication. Thus, we
might begin by asking the following questions: *What is meaning? How it is shared? By who is it shared and for what purposes?* My intention here is not to offer any exhaustive answers or even discussion of these questions, but rather to provide a particular approach to dealing with these questions from the cultural approach to communication.

**The Cultural Conception of Communication**

The cultural conception of communication offers us a perspective on communication where communication is not just the process of transmitting culture, but is fundamental to understanding culture itself. In the following, I shall discuss the relation between culture and communication, and why the concepts of communication and meaning cannot be separated from culture and society. What I ask is how communication helps produce and maintain (football) culture.

Drawing on Carey, Williams and Thompson, I first discuss how the cultural conception of communication clarify how the sharing of meaning can be understood as a symbolic process in which meaning and matter join in particular symbols.

Second, I discuss the concept of culture. In my interpretation, the concept of culture concerns the uses and sharing of symbols which have solidified and stabilized as frameworks of meaning (symbolic forms) over time. To understand fandom culture, I therefore argue that we need a symbolic conception of culture which allows us to analyse how social practices are produced and maintained over time through these symbols.

**Communication as Culture**

In the book “*Communication as Culture*” (Carey, 2009), Carey argues that communication is first and foremost a cultural activity. Carey also insists on the distinction between communication as transmissive and communication in a more basic ritualistic sense as sharing, participation, association or community (Carey, 2009, p. 15). In saying this, Carey promotes the view that most forms of communication are a mere continuation or maintaining of existing social relations or an existing social order. And it is the embodiment of this order into material form through for example “*dance, plays, architecture, news stories, strings of speech*” (Carey, 2009, p. 15) which is the main clue to understanding how society or “*reality is brought into existence, is produced, by communication*” (Carey, 2009, p. 20).

To understand communication, we therefore need “to build models or representations of this process.” (Carey, 2009, p. 24). However, these “*Models of communications are, then, not merely representations of communication but representations for communication: templates that guide, unavailing or not, concrete processes of human interaction, mass and interpersonal.*” (Carey, 2009, p. 25). What is presented by Carey is thus a view on communication as a key concept in representing the process in which culture is produced.

In the cultural conception of communication, meaning is understood as symbolic. Meaning is not a deep layer within the spirit, but rather a particular reflection on and evaluation of the uses of symbols and how different symbols can (or cannot) be combined or thrown together or compared (as in the original senses of the word symbol: symbollein or symbolon). Our idea of thought, meanings and feelings must therefore be understood as a way to share and
reflect on the uses of symbols in different contexts. Carey argues that thinking and meaning itself is rather an application and use of symbols in different contexts in order to understand or go on, to use Wittgenstein’s expression, in the world: “Thought is the construction and utilization of such maps, models, templates: football plays diagrammed on a blackboard, equations on paper, ritual dances charting the nature of ancestors, or streams of prose like this attempting, out in the bright-lit world in which we all live, to present the nature of communication.” (Carey, 2009, p. 23).

In this interpretation, communication refers to the entire process of using different symbols to make sense of the world and to share these symbols or meanings to make sense of the world with others. I make sense of a football match because I have learned different symbols which contextualise the events which I perceive (by for example watching). Football is communicated to me (by players playing the game following certain rules), but I may also communicate the meanings which I make of this match by for example telling someone else something about the match. Symbols are thus products of our ability to interact with the world around us and as the only interface by which we have access to this world ‘an Sich’, as Kant would have said. However, symbols do not portray any meaning already in existence, they are our tools to produce meanings out of the world. Hence, humans, as Cassirer says in paraphrasing Aristotle, become symbolic animals. And it is in this capacity that symbols are both constitutive for and constitutive of meaning (Carey, 2009, p. 65).

What the concept of culture adds to our understanding of communication, or vice versa, is that (symbolic) ideas or forms refers to a particular (philosophical or scientific) way of describing social and historical practices related to different ways of living together and the particular means and ends to which symbolic endeavour is endowed, or to quote Carey: “To describe communication is not merely to describe a constellation of enshrined ideas; it is also to describe a constellation of practices that enshrine and determine those ideas in a set of technical and social forms.” (Carey, 2009, p. 66).

In this view, the concept of culture serves a number of different purposes in how we are to make sense of communication and the sharing of meaning. Hence, to “study culture is to seek order within these forms, to bring out in starker relief their claims and meanings, and to state systematically the relations between multiple forms directed to the same end: to render experience comprehensible and charged with affect.” (Carey, 2009, p. 34). Consequently, the study of communication becomes a study of the process in which culture is produced and shared within members of a society “for what we are studying in this context are the ways in which experience is worked into understanding and then disseminated and celebrated” (Carey, 2009, p. 34).

Within this perspective, the analysis of how symbolic forms are produced, shared and used within a social context becomes the real challenge, and the concept of culture thus refers to the processes and practices in which symbolic forms are contextualised within a social space.
CULTURE AS THE SOCIAL CONTEXTUALISATION OF SYMBOLIC FORMS

What already Cooley reminded us, was that “Society – or community – can arise wherever there is a way to exchange symbols.” (Durham Peters, 1999, p. 187). Communication is thus understood as different social practices in which meaning is shared through symbols with other members of society or any social space. As Durham Peters argued, the most basic function of symbolic endeavour is the “one of making contact with the person sitting next to you.” (Durham Peters, 1999, p. 178). The concept of culture, however, refers to a more systematic form of social practices in which symbols are ordered into particular forms which are used for certain purposes and ends within a social context. The study of culture is therefore not just the study of singular practices but the study of how these practices produces an entire “way of life” (Williams, 1958), and this production is facilitated by a communicative process is which “symbolic forms are created, apprehended, and used.” (Carey, 2009, p. 24). Hence, the study of culture becomes the study of how symbolic forms are ‘created, apprehended and used’ within a social context in which this process maintain a particular social system or order. A description which is very close to Bourdieu’s conceptualisation of ‘social fields’.

In this interpretation of communication, we need to investigate the social context for the existence of different symbolic forms and how these forms are embedded in particular media. What we should do is to examine the actual symbolic systems in society; how different symbolic forms come into existence, what makes them distinct from other symbolic forms and how they are produced and transformed by different communication technologies. And we need to build models or representations of the process wherein communication actually produces and transforms these symbolic forms (Carey, 2009, p. 24). As a result, the study of culture becomes the study of how particular symbolic forms are produced historically and why they are maintained for different purposes by different institutions, groups or particular individuals.

Consequently, we can say that the concept of culture directs our attention to how “the pattern of meanings embodied in symbolic forms” (Thompson, 1992, p. 132) are brought to life when entering into a social field of interaction where they are produced, shared and used for particular purposes and ends; and how they “create, nourish, support and reproduce” (Thompson, 1992, p. 7) the social world or field in which they are embedded and dis-embedded through different means of communication. This dialectic process, and the problems which arises from this process, is what the study of communication needs to care about if it is to understand how the study of communication needs to be understood as an analysis of a “social activity which involves the production, transmission and reception of symbolic forms” (Thompson, 1995, p. 18).

THE SYMBOLIC FORMS OF FOOTBALL CULTURE

Using Carey and Thompson, I have argued that culture can be understood as the sharing of symbolic forms within a social context. Hence, I understand football culture as the result of people sharing meaning about football and that we can understand these meanings through the concept of symbolic forms. What is implied in this perspective is
that football is not something which can be analysed apart from these meanings, but something which is constituted in a symbolic process as meaningful. A professional football player is of course a real existing person, but it is only through the understanding of his or her significance for other football professionals, audiences and fans in different contexts that we can grasp what the football player is as a football icon. I use the concept of symbolic forms to accentuate the symbolic and contextual character of meanings within football fandom and to draw some analytical consequences of this perspective.

First, the concept of symbolic forms draws attention to the relations between the materials of football and the discourses which have developed to make sense of and evaluate these materials. Second, the concept of symbolic forms asks us to understand how meaning (symbols) is maintained in time and space through communication and how each symbolic form conceptualizes time and space in a particular way. Third, the concept of symbolic forms challenges us to analyse symbolic forms as different ways to register particular events, objects and people (as an example, a player injury might be interpreted in different ways by fans depending on their perspective). As such, different symbolic forms become different ways of coding (or symbolizing) experiences and events in the world; and the analytical challenge consists in differentiating contesting ways of coding and objectivizing experience as culture.

THE IDEA OF SYMBOLIC FORMS

The concept of symbolic forms was first examined by the philosopher Ernst Cassirer. While much of Cassirer’s work is an epistemological dialogue with Kant, he also did an actual analysis of different symbolic forms in terms of language, art and mythical thinking (Cassirer, 1929). Before I actually present my interpretation on how football fandom can be presented as symbolic forms, I shall first present the background for thinking about ‘reality’ in this way and the analytical consequences of this way of thinking.

Cassirer’s initial discussion of symbolic forms begins with an inquiry into the concept of being. According to Cassirer, one of the great insights, we have learned from Plato, is that we should not search for an understanding of what being is but rather how the concept of being makes being possible (Cassirer, 2010 [1923], p. 2). The answer to this question, in Cassirer’s interpretation, is that being becomes possible through inner ideas, forms or symbols which make it possible to know about the world. In saying this, however, Cassirer also stressed the importance of not confusing this insight with the idea that forms or symbols reflect the world as it is (der Abbildtheorie) but that there is a logical relation between different forms and symbols. Yet, while Plato had stressed that ideas and forms (and symbols) were paramount to understanding being and knowledge, Kant rephrased the question to how it is possible to know at all (Cassirer, 2010 [1923], p. 7).

In short, Kant reframed the metaphysical question to what there is to the question of how we know it is there, and answered that our knowledge is based on a number of specific categories, like e.g. causality, negation and quantity, which are necessary for us to know. Thus, our world might be independent of us but it is only through the specific way our reason works that we can make sense of this world. As a result, we need concepts to know the world,
because it is exactly these concepts that reveals and discloses the world, and the world cannot be represented and articulated except through these fundamental categories (Cassirer, 2010 [1923], p. 4). However, while Kant showed us how different categories were essential to our knowledge and judgement, he did not (want to) ask the question on how these categories came into being.

While Cassirer admired Kant’s analysis, his studies in the history of philosophy and the natural sciences made him aware that the categories Kant had analysed were a product of history. Moreover, Cassirer also researched other cultures and he came to the conclusion that not only were these ways of reasoning results of history but other cultures had very different ways of understanding space and time (which are not actually categories in Kant’s philosophy). In other words: While Kant had the important insight that we need to ask how different concepts and ideas make knowledge possible, we can expand this idea to say that all knowledge is a product of different forms in the world which have a specific symbolic meaning, and since these forms are the products of different cultures (and different material conditions) we need to investigate what forms different cultures use to make sense and order out of the perceptions of the world. To sum up, Cassirer had turned Kant’s departure from the natural sciences and question about how it is possible to know, into the more general question on how the totality of human experience can be possible (Paetzold, 1994, p. 168).

Cassirer stressed that we can only experience the world through different symbolic forms. However, symbolic forms should not be understood as a mirror of the world, but rather as processes in which experience is formed through and reforms symbolic forms. In other words, we should recognize that every symbolic form connects some sensible form with meaning, and that this symbolic form works as the energy to connect experience with signs (Paetzold, 1994, p. 22). Consequently, we need to realize that when we create symbolic forms, like an object of art, we are not just reflecting on existing structures of meaning; we create new categories for experiencing and thinking about the world. What is more, symbolic forms do not need to be conceptualized to be meaningful to us (Paetzold, 1994, p. 22). Rather, symbolic forms are built upon different ways in which we experience the world as human beings, and they are a way to make sense out of different perception and to create rules for us to know how to go on. Hence, a symbolic form can be understood as “the schema in which something is experienced and as such the form in which any experience is always already carried out.” (Luft, 2011, p. 276).

Therefore we also need to conceptualize the structure of human experience in relation to symbolic enabling, and the concept of representation must thus be understood as the relation between single experiences or processes of experiencing and the whole system or region of experiences (Paetzold, 1994, p. 48). Moreover, according to Cassirer, symbolic forms move from the mimetic to the abstract, where the symbols we use to order our experiences thus create many different possibilities for different interpretations (meanings) of what looks to be the same perceptions; thereby presenting different sides of reality (Cassirer, 2010 [1923], p. 6). This does not mean that we cannot maintain perceptions of what is real and what is not, but rather that the systematic ordering of experiences and abstraction from particular instances, and the resulting symbolic forms, creates the possibility to speak about
objectivity and reality as the relational ordering of symbolic forms within a specific domain of the real (Paetzold, 1994, p. 47).

As a result of these reflections, Cassirer came to the conclusion that every culture creates its own forms and symbols to make sense and order out of the world, which consequently meant that he faced a new quest; how to systematise and order the categories of knowledge which exist in the world? For Cassirer, the appealing job of discussing and analysing a limited number of basic categories of knowledge, turned into the more challenging task of categorising all cultural knowledge, or as Cassirer says: “Die Kritik der Vernunft wird damit zur Kritik der Kultur” (Cassirer, 2010 [1923], p. 9). While every cultural product or instance could in principle be articulated as a way of knowing the world (Cassirer, 2010 [1923], p. 9), Cassirer did, for good reasons, stay onto the idea that it is possible for us to categorise different forms of knowledge as having some identical properties. The identity of each form is then dependent on the identity of the symbols used to make sense and order within the world, and from this Cassirer inferred that we could speak of different symbolic forms as different sets of knowledge categories.

Thus, in Cassirer’s understanding, the analysis of cultures should include the analysis of the basic forms of symbolic production within those cultures (Cassirer, 2010 [1923], p. 9). Moreover, while differences from one culture to another culture might be the result of different material circumstances, it is the specific lived experiences which create the categories and concepts which members of that particular culture use to understand and make sense out of being in the world (Paetzold, 1994, p. 2). As a result, symbolic forms can be understood as cultural energy that orders reality into different regions according to specific logics.

This perspective was embraced in another context. That of Bourdieu’s sociology. What Bourdieu did was to actually analyse the social world as different regions with their own logics and try to disassemble those logics in terms of how they produced and reproduced the social world (or social field) they were formed in. Bourdieu thus gave us several examples on how to analyse these fields and several concepts which can be used to understand how the field (or domain of reality) is separated from other fields, as well as concepts to articulate how people (or agents when entering a specific field) use these logics for specific purposes and ends. What Bourdieu did not, however, was to discuss how his analysis of the actual logics (e.g. rules of art) came about, and what these rulesets consisted of. What I shall attempt, before later reviewing Bourdieu’s systematic in actually analysing these social fields, is to present a way of analysing the logics as rulesets which can be applied to a specific field.

**THE SYMBOLIC FORMS OF FOOTBALL CULTURE**

Using the idea of symbolic forms, I discuss how this concept can guide us in understanding football culture. In what follows, I shall argue that football culture can be analysed as meaning through three symbolic forms; each of which capture important dimensions in understanding how different football phenomena are symbolised and made part
of fan culture. What I present here, is thus a theoretical reconstruction of the symbolic structure of football culture which can guide us in interpreting how fans communicate about football. I argue that we can understand the symbolic forms of football fandom through the following three and historically successive forms: the football match, the football club and the football icon.

Perhaps the most ordinary, yet intriguing, example of what is meant by symbolic forms in terms of football fandom is the football shirt. For anyone absolutely ignorant of football fan culture this shirt would just be a shirt, but for anyone who can actually interpret the symbols on the shirt, it can mean different things. Most people would recognise the shirt as signifying some kind of belonging, most probable to a club a national team. However, as knowledge about the symbols on the shirt increases, the symbols can be identified to a specific club, a specific player and maybe even a specific seasonal trend of shirts or in some cases even a particular match. But even more than just signifying something, the shirt, or rather the wearer of the shirt also communicates something – depending on the particular context in which it is worn. In its very most basic outline, the analysis of symbolic forms is the analysis of how different symbols relate to each other and form a coherent world; because saying that the symbols of the shirt relates to a specific club cannot be invoked as a statement without drawing on an entire world of already granted understandings and meanings.

While Cassirer does not provide any form of manual on how to analyse symbolic forms, he presents some important arguments that can help us guide the analysis. What is important here is that the symbolic cannot be reduced to a set of transcendental categories, but have many different forms of material existence which result from different symbolic processes (Freudenthal in Hamlin, 2004, p. 212) and that some forms of materiality have already been ‘written’ as specific materials or products (e.g. paper, a book or a dictionary).

The second analytical clue relates to the question of how symbolic forms order symbols and thus experience within a system of relations. According to Cassirer, every symbolic form has its own way of structuring time and space in relation to how events are perceived and experienced, and it is the specific way of ordering and structuring different experiences in relation to each other that creates the possibilities for symbolic forms to produce a coherence in the many different events and perceptions which the specific symbolic form orders (Paetzold, 1994, p. 9). In other words, we can say that symbolic forms are essential modifiers of perception that allows for the objectivation and representation of experiences within a system of knowledge. And the analysis of symbolic forms thus becomes the analysis of how different logics orchestrate symbols within specific orders and hierarchies. An example of this type of order is the football club which defines the meanings of for example a fan or the significance of a football match. In the study of symbolic forms we need to understand how these different categories or symbols come into being, as well as how they are related to form a coherent experience of football fandom. To analyse this coherence we need a conceptual schema for relating different categories. In what follows, I shall present some of the concepts which might be useful in the analysis of how symbolic forms construct and reconstruct experiences in relation to
different categories, and how we can make sense of the ‘common’ (symbolic) language (Davies, 2003, p. x) that characterise football fandom.

Before presenting my analysis, I have attempted a schematic outline of the three symbolic forms of football fandom, I have identified:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbolic form (configuration)</th>
<th>Origin</th>
<th>Symbols (examples)</th>
<th>Temporal configuration</th>
<th>Spatial configuration</th>
<th>Communications</th>
<th>Fan meta-communications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Match</td>
<td>The Middle Age</td>
<td>Stadium, Fight, Goals, Dribble, Line-up</td>
<td>Match week, match day, game period</td>
<td>Stadium</td>
<td>Producing games / rules, producing leagues and tournaments, statistics</td>
<td>Going to matches, match conversations, winning leagues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Club</td>
<td>Around 1870</td>
<td>Home ground, Support, playing style, history, city-identity</td>
<td>History, season</td>
<td>City, league</td>
<td>Club identity, economy, support requests</td>
<td>Fan events, discussing clubs, replica club shirts, fan support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Icon</td>
<td>Around 1900</td>
<td>Hair style, opinions, skills, injuries</td>
<td>Biography, transfer</td>
<td>Nation, league</td>
<td>Player interviews, Player updates (e.g. tweets)</td>
<td>Posters, player cards, discussing player performances and transfers, player shirts,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the later part of my dissertation where I look at the Danish field of football fandom, I will use the analysis of symbolic forms to serve as a guide to understanding what football fans communicate about and how to analyse this communication.

THE FOOTBALL MATCH AS SYMBOLIC FORM

Obviously, football is a game. The rules of the game have evolved, been institutionalised and modernised, but is to a large extend the same game that professionals, amateurs or children play. However, when the game is played as a match, i.e. when teams play the game in a specific context, the settings under which professionals and amateurs participate are rather different. As a piece or object of fandom culture, the football match is much more than just a game. The match also evolves around what spectators do, what goes on before and after the game, in which stadium it is taking place and so on. More than just an event, the match has become a scene of entertainment; almost a spectacle.

In what follows, I shall use the literature on football fandom to make a characterisation of the symbolic form of the match. In my presentation of the symbolic form of the match, I shall begin by tracing the historical origins and shall thereafter look into how the match is structured in time and space. Lastly, I review the development of the means
of communication of the match. It is important for me to state that this analysis of the match as a symbolic form is not an attempt to produce a full account of the history of the match, but rather a presentation of football culture as forms of communication, and how these forms of communications can be used for contextualising football culture beyond the level of fan activities.

Origins of the Football Match

The history of football can be dated back to games played several thousand years ago (Entertainment 2004, p. Disc 1; Goldblatt 2008, p. Ch. 1) and even if we choose to focus on games which also include goal posts, opposing teams and match dates, we find a significant amount of data on the folk game football played in the middle ages (Elias & Dunning 1984, p. Ch. 1). Moreover, these games were so popular that English kings several times had to declare them illegal (Elias & Dunning 1984) and even the threat of punishment did not prevent people from playing the game. By the middle of the 18th century the games were already so popular that some matches drew as many as 6000 spectators (Harvey 2005, p. 53) and from the beginning of the 19th century organized football became more and more common (Harvey 2005, p. 58).

Traditionally, football historians (and officials) held that football was more or less invented by the play of football in public schools, and while these played an important role in the institutionalisation of football, other (and perhaps more ephemeral) places and settings were at least as important as the public schools in staging matches and creating clubs; as for example military bases, pubs, festivals, town rivalries and so on. Yet, while matches (and even tournaments) were often seen in the beginning of the 19th century, it was the institutionalisation of the rules and tournaments that created the possibility for modern football to take its course and for the production of the match as a symbolic structure with its own unique identity (apart from other games). And although the first years of modern football was still dominated by voluntary workers (Mangan, JA 2008; Mangan, JAH, C. 2008) who arranged the first matches “to improve the health and fitness of the boys, teach them to enjoy games playing for its own sake and develop in them a competitive spirit” (Mangan, JAH, C. 2008, p. 762) one of the consequences of this institutionalisation was a unified (at least to some extent) set of rules which again was the basic condition for playing matches at a new level of organisation across larger distances and timespans with all the consequences of these changes as we know them today.

I have stressed the difference between speaking about the game alone, and all those events happening around the game. However, the game itself has also evolved as a set of interrelated symbols to characterise and give meaning to those events happening in the game, and the rise of terms to give meanings to tactics and strategies (Wilson, 2008). Again, this development has been traced back to the 1870’es and 1880’es where many of the basic concepts and ideas of strategy and tactics emerged (Wilson, 2008). While it can be difficult to discern historically, and perhaps also less important, it is also evident that many of the basic terms to characterise the events and happenings in the game also began to emerge at that time; from ball movements (e.g. a dribble) to bodily postures and rule violations.
All these terms gradually developed and became part of the vocabulary of matches and the responses of spectators. I also want to emphasize the development of leagues and tournaments. While matches were technically also played in the middle ages, the evolvement of a system of leagues and tournaments played an important part in the emergence of the symbolic of the match. Both match dates and the structure of the season (Curry, 2007, p. 191) are translated into different discourses related to the tournament.

As the technical language for the symbolic description of the match evolved, we also saw a proliferation of the very experience of going to matches. Being there, watching the match from the terraces, meant that spectators had to move to the particular place where the match was played as well as being able to watch the match together with thousands of fellow supporters or fans. Thus, the interaction with other fans resulted in a (voluntary or involuntary) necessity of travelling together, moving along the same paths and standing or sitting in close proximity to other people. As a result, the experiences related to these activities were articulated in particular ways that later grew into different discourses on communality and community to a degree where these experiences, for some fans, might even overshadow the actual experiences of watching the game play: “I love going to the match, often more than being there, and most times much more than having been there.” (Davies, 2003, p. 28).

Not surprisingly, developments around the experiences related to matches, e.g. parks and pubs, in particular those close to the playing ground, were often converted into places where the communality of spectators could develop its own identity and discourses: “The pre- and post-match visits to various pubs and restaurants, discussion about the game over a pint, the shared walk to the ground and the conjoined anticipation. All these regular experiences carried out over seasons, over decades, became part of the situated, un-reflexive practices of fans on match days, and wove the stadium into the spaces outside it.” (Frank and Steets, 2010, p. 153).

Thus, both the city of the match where people (especially from other teams) had to travel to in order to watch the match, as well as the places they visited before and after they arrived at the stadium, became places that had to be organised and formatted. And even though people did not necessarily require any particular facilities, the rising expenses related to players, service guards etc. made it logical to expand the revenue through sales of for example beverages and food.

As a placeholder for the match, the stadium is regulated into different zones where supporters, officials, journalists, players and club staff are organized; thus creating specific forms of interaction between people but only within spatial demarcated zones. And rules of behaviour, relating to each spatial zone within the stadium, are reinforced by different institutional settings. On the pitch, the referees are regulating behaviour and within the other spaces of the stadium, different types of professional security regulate behaviour. It is important to note, that it is not only the space zones that are regulated, but also the sounds, heating, movements of people, digestion of beverages and food, whether people are allowed to stand up during the match and so on (Zinganel in Frank and Steets, 2010, p. 87).
In addition to the stadium, the spaces of the city are also important to the match. Besides places where public viewing is possible, it is also important to note that pubs, food-stands, bookmakers, take-aways and streets can fulfil important functions in ‘going to the match’ (Edensor and Millington in Frank and Steets, 2010, p. 147). Moreover we need to add both old and new practices of transportation and the consequences for using the city in relation to the match (ibid.). The use of different places in the city, as for example the uses of meeting points, the choosing of particular pubs as well as walking through particular streets or taking the same bus is often not so much the result of intentional use of these places as the repeated and routinized pattern that develop around the necessity of going to the stadium the same days and times during the week over and over again (Edensor and Millington in Frank and Steets, 2010, p. 153).

However, some routines are not entirely random as the arrangement of the use of particular pubs, parks and fan zones is a testament to (Lauss, 2010). No matter the cause for these uses, it seems evident that certain sensual memories of places, in relation to “touch, taste, smell, texture” (Edensor and Millington in Frank and Steets, 2010, p. 155), have created a sense of identity of these places which are used to arrange and organise certain events around “the meaning and use of the stadium and its surroundings was re-inscribed every match day. Then, areas close to the stadium and connected to it were revitalised, and although these sites were reproduced differently at other times, fans’ presence was marked on space, and these absent presences continue to charge the relatively empty streets and bars with heavy significance for supporters.”(Edensor and Millington in Frank and Steets, 2010, p. 151)

THE COMMUNICATION OF MATCH SYMBOLS

Relatively early in the history of the football match, annuals and other references became quite popular (Hand, 2001, p. 100) and as football grew in popularity, other match media as for example match pennants, posters, stamps (Adedze, 2012), board games, soccer memorabilia and match programmes became very popular (Budd, 2000, p. 79). Since the first programmes were published in the 1870s, technology has evolved a lot (Budd, 2000, p. 80) but the basic function of providing a knowledge of the line-ups and the upcoming matches seems to be rather unchanged.

Furthermore, the programme, and this was the reason for collecting and keeping old programmes, helped fans to remember old matches and tournaments (Budd, 2000, p. 79) and as clubs saw the potential in tournament programmes they also began to expand these both technically (with colour reproductions) as well as information about matches as for example “programmes representing defunct or ex-League clubs, the opening of a ground or a stand, inaugural floodlit matches, a record crowd attendance, a player’s testimonial, and other specially arranged games.”(Budd, 2000, p. 86).

Books were also published about different leagues, thus becoming more far-reached, specialized and analytic in the coverage of the tournament (Budd, 2000, pp. 92-93). In many ways, newspapers were used in the same way as match programmes. With newspapers, much of the materials found in the tournament programmes could be reprinted and updated easily. As a result, the tournament and its relations between matches, clubs and players could
be commented by expert commentators; creating a whole new space for the continual development of a textual vocabulary for analysing games and their significance in regard to the tournament as a whole. Also, newspapers made it possible to follow foreign tournaments as tournament results from distant countries became easily available, but it was not before the advent of live transmissions in TV that the opportunity to follow other clubs and tournaments became an important addition to following national tournaments.

While newspapers and books in many ways expanded the tournament tables and tournament information as they were portrayed or printed in tournament programmes, the new technologies of live radio and TV broadcasting created unprecedented ways of integrating the tournament within the match experience. First, the match was no longer isolated from other matches in the tournament. Before the advent of live transmissions, spectators had to choose one match to watch. However, the use of broadcasting technologies made it possible to follow different matches simultaneously and to keep “up to date with scores from other matches” (Merkel, 2012, p. 370). This integrated the match into the tournament in a new way where the simultaneous arrangement of different matches could insert the game not only as a relation between two clubs but as a relation between all the clubs of the tournament in one instant.

Second, the use of TV, big screens and radio made it possible to extend the game itself into the life cycle of the tournament, for example by use of statistics of events from earlier matches, by commentaries on the consequences of the match relating to the tournament, by showing clips from important matches which might relate to the experience of the current match (as for example in relation to tactics etc.) or by for example “all-day build-up of interviews, quizzes, nostalgic clips and mini-dramas.” (Geraghty, Simpson and Whannel in Tomlinson and Whannel, 1986, p. 27). Hence, TV changed the possibilities for embedding the tournament into the experience of the match by use of the new possibilities of showing interviews, analysing tournament tables and so on.

In considering how different analog technologies have changed the possibilities for communality at the match, it seems evident that the possibilities for experiencing the game itself at a pub or at home with friends have created completely new ways of experiencing communality (fans were of course also in the pub before the advent of the TV, but only before and after the match). Basically, TV has made it possible to follow the game in three different places: in public places (parks mostly), in pubs and in the home. Each place offers unique forms of communality in that it creates different viewing experiences in that the emotions displayed vary depending on the place where the TV match is displayed (Schulke in Frank and Steets, 2010); partly because of stadium rulings on behaviour and partly because the TV shows the match with repeats, close-ups, additional information and special camera angles thus allowing for another type of viewing experience (Schulke in Frank and Steets, 2010, p. 62).

Consequently, the communal places of the city (the pubs and parks) became part of experiencing the match and the traditional time structure of the match, beginning within the travelling into the city and ending with leaving the stadium to party different places in the city. With analog media, the linear structure of going to matches was replaced
by a less segregated space where fans gather in one space and then experience the game itself as part of a larger timeframe beginning several hours before the game and ending several hours earlier; perhaps imitating the more traditional ways of attending football matches in open spaces (Schulke in Frank and Steets, 2010, p. 66).

Already the 1934 World Cup offered as many as 24 cameras (Geraghty, Simpson and Whannel in Tomlinson and Whannel, 1986, p. 21) to film different games and soon after broadcast matches followed. While the first games were broadcasted as they were recorded, new technologies of for example action replay, slow motion and stop motion were introduced already in the 1966 World Cup (Geraghty, Simpson and Whannel in Tomlinson and Whannel, 1986, p. 21), and this trend was continued into the 1970s where we “saw an increase in cameras, multiple angles and instant action replays” (Turner, 2012, p. 4). Thus, while TV gave fans unprecedented possibilities for following the match live as they would have done in the stadium, the new technologies of filming also added important new opportunities in being able to show “replays, previews and post mortems designed to frame and explain events.” (Geraghty, Simpson and Whannel in Tomlinson and Whannel, 1986, p. 21) and at the same time adding commentary to all these events and rulings, thus creating a growing popularity of experts (Geraghty, Simpson and Whannel in Tomlinson and Whannel, 1986, p. 22).

Once these new technologies came into play, specific events during the game, in particular goals, became much more important (Geraghty, Simpson and Whannel in Tomlinson and Whannel, 1986, p. 26). Also, by being able to make close-ups, television was able to present an unprecedented level of drama and emotion during the game (ibid.); both as a result of being able to focus on particular players and events within the game but also by being able to put an emphasis on for example spectacles (like supporter events and atmosphere) during and before the game: “You miss so much detail, being there in the flesh. Things like offside, fouls, penalty, claims and, most of all, goals, happen in a flash, a mad scramble, a blur, so it’s great to have a slo-mo, showing exactly what happened.”(Davies, 2003, p. 6).

As a result of the personal dramas, close-ups and new possibilities for experiencing specific rules and goals, player events and tactics some have even argued that “the televised version of football involves a whole different visual language, a different way of watching to which viewers are becoming accustomed. The ‘real’ experience of watching a match at the stadium is often uncomfortable or at least strange and not always pleasant.” (Coelho, 2007, p. 589). In addition, the televised experience of different game events has changed, partly due to media agents. What is experienced as real and important and show how different new discourses and symbolic constructions are built upon the different experiences of game events relating to different media: “Television may help to elucidate whether something really was offside, whether the ball had crossed the line – the recording serves to demythologize the action.” (Claussen, 2007, p. 657). This new ‘visual language’ of the game thus extends the game events in time as Davies argues: “Then the playbacks, replays, slow motion repeats which we got for the rest of the day, just like every post-match analysis, looking for meanings we missed, players we didn’t notice, actions that didn’t seem important
at the time.” (Davies, 2003, p. 36) and these events can then be incorporated into talking points (Davies, 2003, p. viii) of new matches.

Lastly, the significance of the web in relation to the match has also been discussed: “firstly, it is used to access results and match reports, current news and background information. [...] those with the most intense interest in a particular object of fandom shift their attention from mass media such as radio and television to niche media catering for their particular fan interest. Secondly, the internet is utilised to follow live sporting events in the form of still pictures, live video, audio commentary or live text coverage...” (Sandvoss, 2004, p. 42). Thus, the web is used for both reading news and match reports but also to follow matches live. However, trying to translate this distinction into different types is much more difficult since pictures and live text is often used on general news websites while video streaming is often done using (temporarily existing) illegal sites.

Some have also analysed the use of online forums on the web in relation to the match, where online commentary or conversation expresses different opinions, sometimes in a “chaotic choir of several conversations” (Steensen in Krøvel, 2012, p. 218), by the use of text fields where users can write almost anything. Commentary is often related to articles and is in many ways similar to articles in representing the materials and events of the match. In being able to comment on the match and create a form of conversation with other fans and the agents within the professional field of football production, commentary can express both the discourses on communality as well as opinions about the tournament and game events.

While the portal websites might also facilitate user discussions and chats, studies have shown that participation and user commentary on these websites are rather limited: “The nature of audience participation in this chat can therefore be characterised as rather detached and cautious, since the majority participate only a few times, with short turns at talk” (Steensten in Krøvel, 2012, p. 216). Moreover, conversation analysis also shows that most users on portal websites express no solidarity with a specific club (ibid: 216), and that audiences want to chat with journalists, not other members of the chat (ibid: 222). Yet, this does not mean that audiences in general want gatekeepers (ibid: 226), but assumes that users want different types of communication or websites for different purposes.

As forms of communication, it is thus indicated that many of these websites work to produce one-to-many communication which resembles the forms of communication found in radio and TV. Even though these sites often invite to participation and discussion, most visitors will substitute their use of TV and radio with these sites for other reasons, as for example due to how often information is updated, costs (Rudolf, 2004, p. 131), coverage of lower division matches, access from particular places and so on (Lappe, 2005, p. 33). However, there is another important development following the ‘online broadcasting’ of football news and matches. While the form of communication might resemble traditional mass-communication where professional media organisations produce content to
(passive) consumers, and to a certain degree this pattern also seem to continue, fans do not distinguish between content produced by ‘professionals’ and content produced by ‘non-professionals’ (Lappe, 2005).

To sum up, many of the media and forms of communicating the match goes a long way back. However, the developments in not only a televised experience but also the actual technologies, as for example close-ups, have had a strong impact on the communication and experiences of the match.

**THE FOOTBALL CLUB AS SYMBOLIC FORM**

As matches became institutionalised, so did the conditions for football clubs to arise as symbolic units with their own colours, history, style etc. While clubs cannot be separated from matches, they still command a unique set of logics which are important to evaluate the matches and leagues they play in. Most significantly in the context of football fandom, however, is probably the attachment of fans to a particular club to which they belong or declare their loyalty. Yet, it is important to emphasize that fandom is not necessarily related to a specific club, neither can the symbolic of the club be reduced to the idea of fandom or club support. In what follows, I examine the symbols of the club, and in the same way I did with the match, I begin by examining the origins of the club and then continue to examine the logics and media of club communication.

**ORIGINS OF THE FOOTBALL CLUB**

In the beginning of modern football, the first clubs were founded on the idea that football players needed a permanent place to play football and the necessity of a certain organisational structure in order to participate in the more organised matches and tournament which began to appear during the 1860's and 1870's. What is more, these places were closely connected to the people who played and followed matches since most people were restricted in their means of transportation: “*When football grounds were originally built, the location was not accidental – it often reflected the team’s origins. For instance, Sheffield United’s ground, Bramall Lane, was constructed within ‘easy walking distance of several large employers and working-class residential districts.*” (Mainwaring, 2011, p. 116).

The implication of this physical proximity between the spectators and the club was that spectators began to create different discourses and meanings in relation to the continual attendance to matches; which were to a certain degree a result of a high(er) level of play and players, but also to the historical relation between the club and its spectators. So while the players and the club had a natural inclination to win, for personal prestige or other reasons, it was the sense of identity between the club and its spectators that allowed the projection of the feeling of victory and strength from the club to its spectators. And as this projection and relation grew stronger, so did the inclination of spectators to support the club by various means, usually by buying tickets and show support by different expressions of joy when their team did well. As a further consequence of this support, some supporters argue that the team plays better when seeing and listening to supporters during the match.
As symbolic systems, we saw that from the beginning of the 20th Century clubs began to evolve towards being more than just an organisation unit. In particular, we saw that clubs developed their specific identity through the nexus of style, belonging, support, and economy – and the specific interrelations between, for example, how belonging determined style or how economy and belonging became related, was unique to each individual club.

First, style meant that the team of the club play the game in a particular way, which can be translated into a distinct identity (Dauncey, 2000, p. 336). What we notice here is, of course, that the descriptions of the team style is compared to many different forms of organisation ranging from the world of art to the world of business organisations or even war (Phelps, 2001, p. 47). While metaphors are widely used, there is of course also particular discourses relating to the formation of the team on the pitch as for example the star formation or describing the team as defensive, boring, attacking, creative etc. Additionally, we might speak of a particular organisational form as characteristic for the club. Thus, style might be related to who owns the club and how they manages it, or it might be related to how players are acquired or how talents are employed. And some particular personalities might even come to symbolize the club in such a way that for example new players are bought on the basis of trying to maintain this playing style.

Second, the club forms its symbolic identity through belonging. The club is not only identified through the team, but also through its particular physical place and history. In other words, the club is actively engaged in producing a sense of belonging, emotion and identity through the reproduction of specific football materials (Kennedy, 2012, p. 343). Belonging is thus produced both as the intentional reproduction and communication of attachment to place (e.g. city, city part, stadium) and specific history (e.g. winning leagues), but also through the additional production of “shared symbols (the club logo or colours, for instance), common clothing rules like wearing a club scarf” (Frank and Steets, 2010, p. 235). Today, modern clubs have become professional-led companies with high turnovers (Pierpoint, 2000, p. 29) which engage in many different activities to produce club materials from own-brand leisurewear to first-team strips, conferences, exhibitions and so on (Pierpoint, 2000, p. 31).

Third, the conceptualisation of club economy plays an important role. The football club is represented by an image of its economy, a rich club, a poor club, spending club etc. Changing rules and economic structures are always interpreted in terms of what will benefit the success of the club. The discourses on consumption and club economy have slowly entered discourses of support as the commercialization of football has steadily increased. What is important to note, however, is that consumption, higher ticket prices, commercials and expensive beers does not result in equivocal structures of resistance as was indicated in earlier studies on football fandom (in for example Marsh, Rosser and Harré, 1978). Instead, these discourses relate to the complex relationship between having better and better teams and players and the need for raising income. Almost all fans are very well aware that the rising wages and expenses to better stadia must be paid by the fans in one way or another (Kennedy, 2012, p. 344) whether it be through paying for tickets or beers or it be through higher subscription fees to those TV-channels who shows matches.
Yet, fans do not act as customers in the sense that they are rationally considering their actions, as Lomax explains: “it is too simplistic to view fans in terms of merely being ‘customers’ of the game. Their commitment normally extends to investing a degree of time, energy and loyalty, as well as money, into the club they support. The essence of the ‘customer’ relationship – that a person makes a rational choice in the market place by selecting a product that he or she considers the best value for money – is largely absent from the relationship between the fan and the club he or she supports.” (Lomax, 2000, p. 79).

**THE LOGIC OF CLUB SYMBOLS**

The club organizes different football productions in order to compete in football tournaments and (for most professional clubs) to earn money. Thus, the club needs to produce and control different discourses and productions (players, supporters, playing grounds, sponsors, media agents, merchandise etc.) to provide the necessary means for the match to exist, but it also needs to create a symbolic identity. To structure an identity around the club as symbolic form, the club is usually employing two different strategies of space and time. First, every club creates its own chronology with a story beginning with some important events which led to the constitution of the club, and the club is usually presented as a divine being, thus transcending specific events, players and events (and supporters support this structure). And this deconstruction of time and the existing temporal order is usually accomplished by the production of football materials and discourses that support this strategy (as team colours, style, slogans, legends, discourses on eternal rivalries etc.). Second, every club engages in a strategy to fixate space and thus creating an identity around specific places (often related to the stadium and its locations). In understanding the logics of the symbolic of the club, I want to draw attention to how the location of the club has evolved into a sense of belonging related to the symbolic of these spaces. While already discussed as part of the match, the specific ways in which the stadium has become more than just a spectator space, is important in understanding the symbolic of the club.

Until the 1950s stadia were “large and uncomfortable and thus little more than large receptacles for as many spectators as possible.” (Frank and Steets, 2010, p. 5). From the 1950s, however, clubs began to recognize, perhaps due to the competition with television, that stadia had to be built with “proper toilets, beer stalls and food outlets” (Frank and Steets, 2010, p. 5) and today this idea had been further extended to the level where stadia are produced as theme parks with mass entertainment shops, roofed stands, luxury seating, excellent restaurants etc. (ibid.). As a result, the stadium has become a multi-purpose arena with “Extreme spatial and economic rationalization” (Zinganel in Frank and Steets, 2010, p. 80) where the competitive environment force clubs to produce football spaces within the spaces of the “attention economy” (Zinganel in Frank and Steets, 2010, p. 85). Yet, despite all this, it is still the stadium, with all its tastes, smells, textures and looming shadows (Edensor and Millington in Frank and Steets, 2010, p. 155), that becomes the materiality whereby fans identify the club and to which supporters direct their attention whether it be as a critique of the old corridors, the feeling of homeliness or even as alienation or fear when visiting opposition stadia (Brown in Frank and Steets, 2010, p. 163).
Of course, the stadium and its location in the city are reinvigorated every match day, but for many fans these places become identification points to the club, or as a fan says: “When I drive up Gorgie Road for work every morning I automatically turn my head to catch a glimpse of this wonderful place” (Fan quoted in Hognestad in Armstrong and Giulianiotti, 1997, p. 196). The stadium as home ground thus connects the evanescence of present materials to the history of the city and the club (Kennedy, 2010, p. 567). Moreover, historical events, stars, pubs or even the organisational or political working of the club can also be included in the articulation of belonging and identity, and it is important to remember that the reasoning for different identifications and sense of belonging does not always have any justification in what agents within the professional field of football fandom does or believe, but is more often grounded in the discourses, meanings and beliefs that fans and supporters hold about the club.

It is also the permanence of the locations that creates the discourses on loyalty: “Going to football – that’s the best bit about it, when you actually go. You walk towards the stadium, with your friends and whoever, maybe have a couple of pints, having a chat, just reading, buying a programme, it is a whole experience, it is a ritual.” (fan quoted in Sandvoss, 2003, p. 159). And it is of course not surprising that the stadium becomes the “focal point of stability” in experiencing community, as a supporter remarks (supporter quoted in Kennedy, 2012, p. 346). Loyalty often articulates a non-rational passionate relation to the club when fans for example keep supporting the club despite miserable results, buy tickets for a freezing winter match to keep up the spirit of the team or even buy bonds in the club (Cleland, 2010, p. 542) despite knowing that those money might be more wisely placed elsewhere. The discourses on loyalty refer to the meanings and justifications attached to these actions and arguments, and these discourses are often connected to a moral sense of obligation and relation to the club (Kennedy, 2012, p. 350) which are based in and shaped by local origins and loyalties to the place and people living nearby which in the discourses on loyalty can “now be expressed in an organized form, on the terraces of football grounds.” (Walvin quoted in Mainwaring, 2011, p. 112).

Another discourse springing from the spatial demarcations of the club is rivalry. Rivalry takes its offspring in the stadium and the home ground, and we might even talk about the ‘place-pride’ of stadiums (Kennedy, 2010, p. 556). What is more, the home ground is not just a place but a system of places where for example colour demarcations are used to create a sense of rivalry and opposition (Armstrong, 1998, p. 206), and these spaces are used to display support and rivalry between supporter groups. What is implied here is that rivalry is based upon the identity of supporters of one club and supporters of other clubs (Duke, 2003, p. 62), but this is not to say that rivalry cannot exist in other oppositional structures as in for example rivalry between two different supporter groups of the same club or even between supporters and the club owners or even players (Merkel, 2012, p. 366). The discourses pertaining to each type of conflict or oppositional structure is different however. While internal conflicts between supporters and between supporters and club personnel are often related to the interpretation of certain club materials or events (including for example economic priorities), the rivalry between supporters of different clubs has an important symbolic function in the production of meaning relating to the club. And while internal conflicts are
often temporary and resolvable, the rivalry between clubs are more or less a structural condition of experiencing the club; which is highlighted by the fact that some fans even think that modern stadiums are too peaceful (Williams, 2006, p. 98).

The discourses on rivalry are often produced by combining the identity of club materials with “class, politics and religion” (Duke, 2003, pp. 69-70). As already mentioned, it is difficult to say whether the discourses on these issues, class, politics and religion, does actually have any real substance anymore. What is for sure however, is that former rivalling clubs often merge (Duke, 2003, p. 70) which at least point to the fact that whether these oppositions exist or not, they do not have much influence on the decisions made by the administrative staff. Nevertheless, rivalry itself may take many different forms and may include for example: “inappropriate language, pitch invasions, attacks on match officials, attacks on players, vandalism, fighting between fan groups and incidents away from football grounds.” (Curry, 2007, p. 199).

What is often forgotten, however, is that rivalry often take a much mundane form through for example banners or “rehearsed choreographies” (Merkel, 2012, p. 368). And although “fans who claimed to be generally critical of ‘hooliganism’ believed that hooligan violence against fans of certain clubs could be justified due to the cultural antagonism between the supporters that had arisen from a series of perceived historical injustices.” (Rockwood, 2010, p. 154), it would be wrong to assume that rivalry generally translates into acts of violence. Rather, I would argue, discourses on rivalry are a basic condition of supporting a club but that their main intention is to create a particular identity, and perhaps also “an improved ‘atmosphere’” (Rockwood, 2010, p. 152), through different negative statements about other clubs, supporters and materials and events related to these (as for example a bad position in the tournament).

THE COMMUNICATION OF CLUB SYMBOLS

The symbolic of the club is communicated in many ways and in many different media. As we have already seen, the replica shirt is for example one way in which to communicate the club, while for example “shouts, songs, music and dances” (Curi, 2008, p. 118) are also important to supporters in communicating the club. Moreover, different materials, especially banners and flags, are used for writings that expresses different forms of club identity (Curi, 2008, p. 121) and sometimes face painting provide fans with yet another level of communication (Merkel, 2012, p. 360). One might also argue that example standing in an all-seater area (Williams, 2006, p. 101) or the use of nautical distress flares (Armstrong, 1998, p. 134) should be included as ways of communicating club symbols. Also, fans wearing shirts and other merchandise is essential to how the symbols of the club is communicated: “Wearing football shirts, jumpers, and hats is not only a public demonstration of loyalty and identification: these polyester symbols of belonging also challenge other spectators.” (Merkel, 2012, p. 366).

What is particularly interesting about dancing and chanting is that these forms of communication provide a special stronghold in expressing discourses and meanings on support and rivalry: “Many of United’s popular chants continue
to refer to the glory of fighting their rivals” (Rockwood, 2010, p. 159). Chants might even serve better to produce and reproduce positive and negative identification (Haynes, 1999, p. 124) in that they often reduce the complexity of different discourses and their interrelationships to a simple recipe for repetition, fun and uniformity “Football chants are deceivingly creative expressions of identity and history....[fans] use their collective voice to define themselves and retain the traditions of their club through shared values in the chants and the melodies that carry them” (Lyons quoted in Haynes, 1999). Moreover, song and dance can be used to translate the symbolic divisions between ‘Home’ and ‘Away’ and might even be contextualised in relation to the particular temporal and spatial divisions within the match (Haynes, 1999, p. 133) as for example when they are used to give extra support in the closing moment of play (Mainwaring, 2011, p. 108).

The symbolic of the club has also been communicated in both club programmes which were used in “framing, describing and narrating” the club (Jackson, 2010, p. 507) as well as the quite recent rise of fanzines (Haynes, 1995), i.e. magazines produced by supporters where fans “felt included and could share their fears and ideas about the game” (Cleland, 2010, p. 540). Some have even argued that the match programme was essential to the invention of professional football (Jackson, 2010, p. 506) as well as creating a relationship between the home ground and the club (Jackson, 2010, pp. 506-507). In the beginning of the 20th century the match programmes were important for the clubs to establish identities: “programmes printed sporting gossip, match reports from the week’s previous match and player profiles, alongside the usual team news and advertising.” (Jackson, 2010, p. 508). In addition to the basic match programme, the club is also communicated through books and DVDs to fans (Hargrave, 2007, p. 241). While match programmes, books and fanzines were produced to communicate directly to fans, TV, radio and newspapers were more important in reproducing club symbols through fans; i.e. in filming supporters wearing shirts or banner slogans (Curi, 2008, p. 120). Moreover, the “two-way dialogue” (Cleland, 2010, p. 546) between fans and clubs were in particular maintained by news media and these dialogues have, as such, become part of the symbolic of the club.

Lastly, digital media have been bolded as a place where fans “operate colourful and very professional websites that provide a virtual stage for their subcultural practice and performances” (Merkel, 2012, p. 369). Some have also noticed how clubs play an important role in this communication: “fans' forums with key club personnel and a message board on the official website had been established and were well supported” (Cleland, 2010, p. 546). Websites thus provides an important channel of communicating club symbolics as well as a place to produce new meanings through the invention of for example new songs (Selvidge quoted in Haynes, 1999, p. 136).

The web has also been used to mobilise support (Kennedy, 2010, p. 554; Williams, 2012, p. 434), and many agree that that “web forums seem to play a key role” in maintaining supporter identities (Hornmoen in Krøvel, 2012, p. 150). In addition to maintaining existing identities, some researchers also emphasize how websites create a “kommunikativen Öffnung” to fan audiences (Bieber and Hebecker in Schwier, 2002, p. 217) where supporters can reproduce the symbolics of the club through their own organisation (Aulty, 2002, p. 273). The communication of club and supporter symbolics was examined in Schwier and Fritsch’s comprehensive study (Schwier and Fritsch, 2003) of
the websites of several (critical) fan fractions where they argue that fans use the Web to continue and expand the existing practices of fanzines (Schwier and Fritsch, 2003, p. 67). What is particular about the Web in comparison to other media, is that the Web provides easy access to communicate whatever fans like in a public forum as well as connecting with other fans (Schwier and Fritsch, 2003, p. 124). Moreover, the Web provides better opportunities to express the unique identity of fans fractions (Schwier and Fritsch, 2003, p. 125) and to accentuate the originality, humour, engagement, creativity, solidarity and passion of each particular fraction or fan club (ibid.). It has also been argued that the web makes it possible to keep supporting clubs at a distance and thereby reclaim territory that is not where fans actually live – in what has been termed a “reterritorialisation” (Lestrelin, 2010, p. 345).

But while fans usually use these sites to communicate with like-minded fans, it is at the same time evident that these fraction sites are part of a broader media landscape where communication flows between different websites, television and other media forms (Schwier and Fritsch, 2003, pp. 128-129). Thus, even though fans use the Web to create and expand existing sub-cultural practices, it is clear from this study that the communication which enters these websites also comes from other fan materials provided by football industry (Schwier and Fritsch, 2003, p. 132); or the sub-cultural materials produced by the fan fraction itself as for example CD’s, t-shirts or pictures (Schwier and Fritsch, 2003, p. 143).

THE FOOTBALL ICON AS SYMBOLIC FORM

As the last symbolic form, I will argue that football players produce a particular structure of fandom experiences. Football players have their own personal history and the symbolic production of fan communication is created around the stardom of these players from their emergence (as talents) to their decline (as professional players) and afterlife (as commentators, managers, celebrities etc.). In addition, the communication about these players can be forged around all types of activities relating to the stars which include their personal life, injuries, political statements etc., and even though these football players are not present at games, fans still produce different types of symbolic production based on the materials of that particular star. Much of this communication is not only related to football clubs and matches, but also to where they live, where they play, where they were born and how they move between different places. In other words, these players have become icons.

THE ORIGIN OF THE FOOTBALL ICON

While players in the beginning of modern football were driven by athletic and ethical ideals of the sportsman (Mangan, 2008, p. 656), the advent of professional football also saw a new era to the footballer as a celebrity and possessor of extraordinary powers (McFarland, 2006). Today, the presentation and communication of information about professional football players has been institutionalised by football clubs and media agents to a degree where almost everything we know about professional football players is controlled in some way or another; and to an extent where it makes better sense to analyse the football star as a (symbolic) product of different relations between professional agents rather than as a person (Gilmour, 2010, p. 232).
In applying this idea, I do not draw a distinction between different levels of stardom. Arguably, we might say that some professional footballers would not really be called ‘football stars’, but in terms of the events and meanings that are created by all footballers alike, the difference between more ordinary players and what could be called ‘superstardom’ (Woolridge, 2002, p. 62) seems rather one of degree than of analytical separation. While the origin of the icon was perhaps a result of different economic forces, the result seems that football players have acquired a symbolic meaning beyond matches and clubs, and from the beginning of the 20. Century began to acquire a biography of their own (Künzler, 2012, p. 217).

**The Logics of the Football Icon**

In addressing the discourses on the icon, what is perhaps most striking is the amount of communication produced to give fans an insight into the personal space of the icon. Some football icons have even become brands in themselves and that much of the information, we are provided with, is intended to be articulated and communicated to increase the value and identity of each individual icon; and to some extent the “professional footballers’ personas are determined by a range of cultural expectations generated by economic conditions and then altered by changes in those economic circumstances” (Woolridge, 2002, p. 53). Nonetheless, the character, career path and life trajectory of the star have become central in understanding the star as a human being both inside and outside the pitch: “The consumption of the football star through knowledge of his personal life is a key element in establishing the existence of a more developed and wider stardom, one which potentially invited and enabled a closer and deeper identification between player and spectator.” (Woolridge, 2002, p. 53).

Discourses on star character are created around the personal history of the star including for example country of origin, family relations, pre-professional club and education; and these marks on the star can be quite important in understanding the popularity and identification with the star: “It is not only their performance that people adore about football stars, but also their ability seemingly to fast-track social advancement” (Künzler, 2012, p. 214).

Discourses on character are also formed around the history of attachments that the star has chosen, whatever that means for the star as a professional agent, as for example which clubs the star has played in, the particular transfers and transfer sums related to the star as well as loyalty (Phelps, 2001, p. 53) or different marks of loyalty as for example tattoos. Furthermore, meanings are created in the interplay between the player and club professionals and how transfers since the beginning of professional football placed the player in a subordinate relationship to clubs (Mangan, 2008, p. 658). These discourses also relates to how the star acts as a star; that is how the star for example chooses to reflect on his or her own abilities or whether the star chooses to use his or her money in buying expensive cars or houses (Künzler, 2012, p. 27).

The discourses on character might also relate to the how the star appear physically (looks) or mentally (intelligent, educated, language, opinions). Together, these different characteristics on star personality can create, depending on the specific discourses in play, different forms of coherence in communicating these meanings; and it is of course
important to notice that some fans might create an altogether different characteristic of a star depending on the specific information available to them, or the particular game events that transform their perception of star character as Dauncey notes when one star suddenly enjoyed success: “A goal or a winning a world cup can transform everything for the star “Having been mocked for his provincial accent and his inarticulacy, his refusal to play the communication, and for generally being unfashionable, he now stood for virtues of hard work, modesty, humility, respect, honesty, rigour, simplicity, authenticity, competence, professionalism” (Dauncey, 2000, p. 341). Some have also argued (Woolridge, 2002, p. 54) that stars are often very easily categorised as belonging to a particular cultural type, for example “the ‘hero’, the ‘villain, and the ‘fool’” (Woolridge, 2002, p. 54) and that the star can best be understood as the relationship between a certain personality and the particular role he or she plays (Woolridge, 2002, p. 54).

In addition to discourses on character, discourses on form are related to the meanings generated in relation to how well the star is playing and is fit for play. In articulating the discourse on form, it is also important to note that form can also be influenced by events relating to the star’s personal life (Davies, 2003, p. 238). In discussing form as a discourse, we must also recognize that while fans basically understand that form is related to how well the star is fit for play, the real connecting between playing strength (as perceived by fans) and form (as perceived by fans) is mostly an incomprehensible one, or as Davies notes: “With loss of form, their body tenses, their limbs stiffen, and instead of cushioning the ball and immediately controlling it, they lose it.” (Davies, 2003, p. 239).

THE COMMUNICATION OF THE FOOTBALL ICON

Fans communicate the discourses and meanings of the star both in relation to character, playing form and playing style. Each of these different modalities can express different meanings in different ways, but common to them is that the icon need to be identified by fans to distinguish the star from other players. Before TV coverage of matches began, it was not always easy to identify players and even goals were often assigned to the wrong player and had to be corrected after the game (Budd, 2000, p. 34). As a result, shirt numbering became compulsory in 1939-1940 (Budd, 2000, p. 34) and supporters and fans could then begin to identify stars when they became involved in different events on the playing field.

The uses of printed materials in the form of for example football postcards and player biographies played a huge role in the construction of the icon as a symbolic form; despite their relatively limited significance today, as Woolridge argues: “magazines, cigarette cards, newspaper articles and a variety of sources can be drawn upon to identify stars and to understand the construction and promotion of football stardom.” (Woolridge, 2002, p. 53). While one might think that the frequent reporting of matches would have increased the interest in the style and form it was actually the introduction of cigarette cards around 1892 (Woolridge, 2002, p. 56) which spawned an increased interest in the footballer as a person and player. As a further result, cigarette cards changed the ways newspapers
reported matches. And only ten years after the introduction of cigarette cards, newspapers had a much greater focus on players (Woolridge, 2002, pp. 57-58).

The body of the icon was first and foremost reproduced as still pictures which gradually began to circulate in many different printing modalities which concerned professional football (Woolridge, 2002, p. 57); also including existing printed materials as for example match programmes (Jackson, 2010, p. 508). Soon after the first world war, the “private lives of players became a major concern of reporting” (Woolridge, 2002, p. 59) and after a few decades, the first full-length professional footballer’s autobiography was published in 1945 (Woolridge, 2002, p. 64). And while icon images and newspaper reports were able to portray the character, the opinions and personal background of the star, biographies created new possibilities for the star to articulate football experiences in new ways by interpreting events in a new light (Künzler, 2012, p. 213) or for example by expressing “frustrations about the transfer market” (Woolridge, 2010, p. 534).

In addition to print, television has created new types of icon communications. While television was initially restricted to a limited perspective similar to anyone watching the game, the advancement of technology also provided new and unprecedented insights into the most unnoticeable marks of identity: With the telly you get close-ups of every new haircut, tattoo, scratch, love bite, injection mark, through often they only raise more questions.” (Davies, 2003, p. 6). And as a result of the greater insight into the character of the icon and the events which the icon is involved in on the pitch, fans and audiences were able to get a much deeper insight and development of the personality and character of the icon, as Woolridge explains “the relatively brief moment of the football star’s performance on the pitch is dissected, modified, celebrated and recorded at greater length, in front of a larger audience, in newspapers, programmes, magazines and elsewhere. Audiences also desire other types of knowledge about stars beyond performance.” (Woolridge, 2002, p. 52).

Thus, the television increases the connection between different discourses and meanings in that certain events, for example a missed goal opportunity is more easily connected to a facial expression and perhaps to an event in the private life of the star. What is more, the television changed the possibility for stars to express themselves to audiences “As televised football grew in popularity throughout the decade, the shaking of the hand and pat on the back slowly started to make way for a more elaborate raising of the arm and hugging of team mates.” (Turner, 2012, p. 3). In addition, stars even began to run towards the camera (Turner, 2012, p. 4) as if the camera what the prime audience to their performance, thus indicating that “players began to understand that they now played a critical role within the sporting theatre” (Turner, 2012, p. 4). Consequently, television has not only transformed the possibility of following the life of the star, but the players have also changed their conception of themselves as icons and their behaviour in relation to fans through “the various ways in which a star’s persona is constructed and consumed.” (Woolridge, 2002, p. 52).
Lastly, the advent of digital media has created new ways of communicating the symbols of the icons through for example databases with player statistics, football computer games, betting and marketing materials (Rudolf, 2004, p. 22; Bieber and Hebecker in Schwier, 2002, p. 217). Archives and databases make it possible for fans to retrieve forgotten information and to use this information to change existing discourse. While archives and databases are not necessarily tied to the web, portal websites make them easier to access than ever before (ibid.); which might add to what Sandvoss has called the quantification or calculability of football (Sandvoss, 2003, p. 112).

Before I begin to outline the actual analysis of how the symbolic forms are communicated within the Danish context of football culture, it is important to reflect more on two important questions (which will be the subject of the next chapter):

- What does ‘media’ mean and how can we understand the relationship between the web and other media forms?
- How can we define and understand the web as actual interaction and communication – beyond what is available to the researcher as a visitor to the website?
CHAPTER 4: THE WEB AS MEDIUM

Abstract:

In the preceding chapter, I examined how football culture can be understood through reference to the symbolic forms of the match, the club and the icon. I also examined how these symbolic forms have been communicated in different media, but pointed to the shortcomings of existing research on football culture on the web. In this chapter, I argue that media can be understood through technologies, institutions and discourses, which allow symbolic forms to be programmed and shared through different forms of interaction within a social space.

To understand how media work as a material platform I begin by discussing what is called ‘medium theory’, and continue my discussion of how combinations of materials and technologies can be divided into different degrees, depending on how they work as platforms for communication. In the last part of the chapter, I discuss how the web, understood as particular combinations of materials and technologies, can be programmed with different symbolic forms and how this programming makes interaction possible.
THE WEB AND MEDIUM THEORY

This chapter address four main questions which are important for me to answer before I can analyse how the web as a medium enables communication and meta-communication about football culture:

1. **What are media as vehicles of communication?**
2. **What types of media exist, and what are their specific properties?**
3. **What are the special characteristics of the web as a medium?**
4. **How can we study the web as a medium of communication?**

To answer these questions, I present medium theory as an important way of understanding media as means of extending communication in time and space. However, medium theory does not adequately address the relation between different media and how media are ‘programmed’ with meaning, and I therefore tap into the idea of ‘media of three degrees’ (Bruhn Jensen, 2010).

The essential point in this chapter is therefore to develop a framework for understanding the web and the particular characteristics the web have in terms of being a medium of communication. The insights developed in this chapter are therefore essential to the next chapter where I present my methodology for analysing the web within the Danish field of football fandom.

MEDIA AND MATTER

In combining Cassirer with the idea of media of three degrees, I propose that we understand media as combinations of materials and technologies which allow symbolic forms to be programmed and shared through different forms of interaction within a social space. What is important here is that the capacity to present meanings or symbolic forms across time and space differ when we look at different media. As a result, different media can be used for or create a bias towards different forms of communication. In what follows, I shall therefore discuss medium theory as the idea that communication has material conditions and that these conditions (materials) make a difference in how communication can be extended or shared in time and space using different technologies.

MEDIUM THEORY

Communication has material conditions. Although simplified, this statement encapsulates a line of thought within communication studies which has been known as ‘medium theory’. Even in classical medium theory, associated with the works of Innis (Innis, 1986; Innis and Watson, 2008), McLuhan (McLuhan, 1997; McLuhan, 1967) and Meyrowitz (Meyrowitz, 1986), there is little agreement as to what consequences this statement has. Innis was the first to stress that media are important in extending communication in time and space; and particular materials are thus important
since they are the means of this extension. As a result, Innis argued that different media might produce a bias towards particular forms of communication. What makes this central perspective within medium theory relevant to my account of media is that it explores the relation between materials and technologies and their capacity to make certain interactions and communications possible in a social space; as well as how these interactions and communications might result in different forms of institutionalisations.

Innis argued that one of the dominant functions of communication technologies is to preserve knowledge and meanings over vast areas of time and space, and that the expansion of cultural activity is tightly bound with the power to control space and time (Innis and Watson, 2008, p. 133). Different forms of organisation, Innis argued, would therefore not only benefit from particular communication technologies but their existence in both time and space was dependent on these; and the dialectic between different media technologies, between old and new technologies, would during the course of history transform different power structures between (religious and political) organisations. What is more, Innis made the difference between the technologies of communication (e.g. writing) and the materials of communication (e.g. papyrus) clear to us (Innis, 1986, p. 160) and pointed our attention to the idea that media fold technology and materials into one in different ways under particular historical settings.

And it is the specific uses which humans make of different media, whether for political, religious or other ends, which determine the communicative interaction in time and space which this combination of technologies and materials makes possible. While Innis’ work was less concerned with how people would actually use new forms of media, e.g. writing personal letters or using printed books to tell their life stories, and more concerned with discussing the historical and political consequences of the introduction of new forms of media, he still offered a very important insight in telling us that we need to look at how different materials and technologies actually matter in how we can share our thoughts with other people and how action and interaction becomes possible (Bruhn Jensen, 2010, p. 64). In Katz’s words, we might say that Innis challenges us to “take seriously the more elementary idea that the essential attributes that characterize a predominant medium might affect social order, or, in other words, that the media may tell us both how to think and how to organize” (Katz, 1987).

While Innis provided a comparative account of different historical periods rather than a theory of media, his ideas were used and developed by many others including for example McLuhan, Goody, Watt, Havelock, Ong and Meyrowitz (Meyrowitz, 1986, p. 18). Since my particular focus is the web, I do not wish to continue with discussing these different accounts, but rather to ask how medium theory set media on the agenda in communication research. In my view, the most important call from medium theory is the attention to “the particular characteristics of each individual medium” (Meyrowitz, 1986, p. 16). And these characteristics are interesting to study because they throw light upon how media “reshape large cultural environments and institutional structure [as well as how they] reshape specific social situations or everyday social behaviors” (Meyrowitz, 1986, p. 33), and the particular relation or link between “media characteristics [and] the structure and dynamics of everyday social interaction.” (Meyrowitz, 1986, p. 23).
In attempting to think about how medium theory can be applied to different media forms, we need to consider how we can analyse the material dimension of media without ending up saying (as McLuhan sometimes argued) that the material forms of media trump the contents and social uses to which these media are put. Thus, I shall use the perspective of ‘media of three degrees’ to argue that materials and technologies matter to what can be said and done with different media, but without any determination of what will be said. Rather, I agree that “media are, at once, material vehicles, discursive or modal forms of expression, and socially regulated institutions that facilitate and frame interaction” (Bruhn Jensen, 2010, p. 57). In this interpretation of medium theory, we cannot analyse what media are as means of communication without taking into consideration the material, technological and institutional aspects of different media (e.g. the radio as device, recordings, air waves etc.) as well as the actual meanings (science, news reportage etc.) resulting from different interactions (e.g. listening to radio) and the institutionalisations of these interactions (including for example listening to radio each morning before work or the political perspective that all radio channels have to broadcast news).

Communication thus becomes possible because certain meanings are shared through or result from different interactions using different forms of materials and technologies. This is a complex perspective to understand what might seem rather simple processes of communication, but we should remember that it is intended as an invitation to look at how media enable communication both as a cultural process (interaction, agency) as well as the solidification of these processes as cultural forms (institutionalisation, structure).

MEDIA OF THREE DEGREES

Medium theory presents us with a challenge to consider how the characteristics of different materials can be relevant to how they work as media of communication. In what follows, I shall examine how the idea of ‘media of three degrees’ provides some answers to this challenge in terms of three discussions. First, I discuss what it means that “Matter matters” (Bruhn Jensen, 2010, p. 62). Second, I discuss how we can understand the relation between materials, meanings and institutions. Third, I discuss how the theory of media of three degrees understands each basic degree of media.

MEDIA MATTERS

The idea of media of three degrees draws on the insight by medium theory that “Matter matters” (Bruhn Jensen, 2010, p. 62). In trying to avoid the perspective that media determine or have direct causal effects on how we communicate, we might speak about “determination in the first instance” (Bruhn Jensen, 2010, p. 62). The main idea here is that media as materials forces have consequences (Bruhn Jensen, 2010, p. 64) for how we communicate, but they do not determine or “predict” communication (Bruhn Jensen, 2010, p. 63). So while some materials might potentially be used for certain types of communication, while others do not have these potentials, it is only when these materials are “actualized in a social form” (Bruhn Jensen, 2010, p. 63) that they become media. This process
or transformation where matter as potential is actualized as media can be further explained by the concepts of affordance, emergence and momentum (Bruhn Jensen, 2010, p. 64).

First, the concept of affordance helps us understand “the general question underlying medium theory, namely, how material potentials become actual media” (Bruhn Jensen, 2010, p. 74). While Gibson (Gibson, 1979) was the first to discuss the concept of affordance, the philosophical discussion which frames this discussion goes much further back. Already in Aristotle’s discussion of potential and actualization (Bruhn Jensen, 2010, p. 23), we find some of the key insights into the idea that matter has the dual potential to change its own state or being as well as to produce change in other beings or states (Bruhn Jensen, 2010, p. 24). What the concept of affordance helps us articulate, is that matter or materials might have certain capacities or potentials (what Aristotle would call dunamis) for introducing change or interaction. Hence, we might say that materials afford particular forms of (social) interaction (Bruhn Jensen, 2010, p. 76).

In attempting to reconcile this concept with the idea of symbolic forms, I propose that we understand symbolic forms as “something which caused the movement from potency into actuality” (Bruhn Jensen, 2010, p. 24). Our concept of symbolic forms calls for an analysis of the (symbolic) meanings which can be shared through the materials which can afford or present these meanings. To lend an example from Cassirer’s use of symbolic forms (Cassirer, 2010 [1923], p. 3), we might say that science (as symbolic form) exists through particular forms of representations of nature (e.g. mathematical symbols) and that certain materials (e.g. paper) make it possible to communicate about nature through these symbolic forms. In this perspective, materials afford certain uses and communications when combined with particular ends and purposes for making sense of reality through the use of symbolic energy which maintains the social world; whether we speak of basic means of producing goods or football fandom. What matter does is then to afford or allow “for diverse uses in representation and interaction.” (Bruhn Jensen, 2010, p. 64).

Second, emergence points to how media begin to appear “in specific social and cultural forms” (Bruhn Jensen, 2010, p. 15). And while matter might determine its own uses in the first instance, the particular uses in which matter is transformed into materials of communication and are shaped by the particular needs and purposes (symbolic forms) which these materials are used for in communicating. As a result, “Matter emerges as specific stable and shared resources of communication.” (Bruhn Jensen, 2010, p. 64). In this perspective, the concept of emergence calls for an analysis of the process whereby different materials become means of communication through the uses of these materials within different social and symbolic contexts. It is also important to emphasize that the use of materials for different processes of communication also involves the reflexive modification and reshaping of these materials (Bruhn Jensen, 2010, p. 78). As an example, computer programming languages are not only used for reprogramming or updating software packages, but are themselves refined in terms of the available classes, compiler methods etc. Hence, materials emerge as media forms through a continual and unfinished process of refining and remaking these materials for particular types of communication and symbolic forms.
Third, the concept of momentum points to the idea that certain media forms might gain “[structural impact] over time” (Bruhn Jensen, 2010, p. 15). To understand how different media forms are institutionalised, we therefore need to consider how they become embedded into different social contexts where they acquire their own momentum. Additionally, each medium has been integrated into “social institutions and practices” (Bruhn Jensen, 2010, p. 79) where they acquire their own uses and meanings.

MEANING AND PROGRAMMING

While some materials can be shaped as media which afford particular uses and meanings, I need to discuss how media become embedded with meaning and how meaning is produced and reproduced within a social or institutional context. What is essential within the perspective of media of three degrees (Bruhn Jensen, 2010), is that we understand media both in terms of materials, meanings and institutions. As such, media are means whereby we are able to share meanings but they are so because they are able to join form (matter) and content (meaning) within certain social contexts. Media are thus interfaces between matter and meaning which occupy “a middle ground of communication – beyond matter, before meaning – they are general registers of expression and experience” (Bruhn Jensen, 2010, p. 85).

In this interpretation, we might ask how materials become “discursive or modal forms of expression, and socially regulated institutions that facilitate and frame interaction” (Bruhn Jensen, 2010, p. 57). One way to answer this question is to argue that media are programmable materials which are able to present or represent expressions and experiences (Bruhn Jensen, 2010, p. 57). In applying the idea of symbolic forms to this discussion, we might also argue that the idea of symbolic form represents an analytical perspective on how meaning, as for example expressions and experiences, can be articulated through our use of symbols and their historical constitution in particular (re-cognizable) forms.

The concept of programming might be more familiar from our understanding of computer languages, from TV or radio programs, but here I use it in the broader sense where “Media are programmable, not only in the familiar sense of coding machine-executable files, but as flexible resources of human expression and social interaction.” (Bruhn Jensen, 2010, p. 57). Hence, media are forms of matter which lend themselves to meanings through symbolic writing. Programming thus refers to technologies and processes by which we make matter meaningful whether as writing symbols on a page with a pen or through the use of computer programming languages. As a result, we might also argue that symbolic forms or meanings might be translated or remediated between different media (Bruhn Jensen, 2010, p. 87). The penalty kick might be captured (or programmed) by a camera and thereby translated into a form whereby the meanings of the penalty kick will get another expression (for example focusing on body posture rather than the result of the shot). Hence, we might conclude that symbolic forms or “information can be reprogrammed and remediated across different material media and sensory modalities – books and computers, verbal language and moving images.” (Bruhn Jensen, 2010, p. 57).
The three different degrees basically refer to “the human body enabling communication face-to-face; the technically reproduced means of analog mass communication; and the digital technologies facilitating networked interaction one-to-one, one-to-many, as well as many-to-many.” (Bruhn Jensen, 2010, p. 4). While this distinction taps into the history and development of communication research, it is important to note that it is not meant to separate the analysis of communication into different domains but rather to promote a “systematic which aims as developing a framework for conceptualizing and analyzing an emerging media environment” (Bruhn Jensen, 2010, p. 58). What this systematic offers is the idea that “different media offer different degrees of programmability with respect to the information, communication, and action that they mediate” (Bruhn Jensen, 2010, p. 57). Hence, while each degree of media allows for a great number of combinations of different materials and technologies resulting in different forms of communication, they also have some common characteristics which can be used for understanding and comparing how they enable particular forms of communication.

First, biological media forms depend on the human body to join matter and meanings within a process of communication. The human body itself is a meaningful entity or symbol of communication – even when we don’t say or do anything we still communicate. And the body itself, through the uses of clothing or the ability to make a particular facial expression, thus “become productive and receptive media of communication through socialization and acculturation.” (Bruhn Jensen, 2010, p. 66). Hence, it is “The perceptual, cognitive, and interactive capacities of my body [...which] are the limits of my communications.” (Bruhn Jensen, 2012, p. 5).

In this perspective, the human body affords the materiality which allow us to communicate symbolic forms with each other through different media forms, and we might therefore say that “The human body is a versatile material platform, hosting song speech, song, dance, drama, painting, and creative arts generally” (Bruhn Jensen, 2010, p. 66). Moreover, the human body both presents and limits our possibilities for interaction and representation. The forms of communication which the human body facilitates cannot be reproduced exactly and the means of reproduction this form of communication limits its own possibilities. What is implied here is that the human body, while extremely versatile in its expressions and communication possibilities, is a limit to the expansion of communication in time and space – simply because of its uniqueness; our bodies cannot be present more than one place at a time.

The second degree of media refers to what we could also call analogue media. What is particular about analogue media, is that they are different from biological media in terms of how they enable the “reproduction, storage, and presentation of a particular content” (Bruhn Jensen, 2012, p. 7). In contrast to biological media, analogue media make it possible to program and present meanings in forms which lend themselves to easy replication and distribution across space. As a result, analogue media promote particular forms of communication, where one person makes meanings easily accessible to many other persons through the particular forms of presentation and interactions whereby meanings become embedded in analogue materials as for example film, radio and TV.
While biological media make the dissemination of meaning dependent on the presence of the particular materials in which meanings are embedded, analogue media make it easy to reproduce these meanings in analogue materials. Hence, analogue media “radically extended the potential for dissemination of and access to information across space and time, irrespective of the presence and number of participants.” (Bruhn Jensen, 2010, p. 68). To make this possible, analogue media records biological media, human expressions, voices, writing, and represent these meanings through the use of different analogue technologies, typesetting / copy machines, broadcasting etc. What is particular about this representation is that it is no longer restricted to the uniqueness of biological materials, but can be reproduced to an infinite number of listeners, viewers, readers etc. Thus, by the capacity of reproduction, analogue media allow us to radically extend our ability to represent meanings in contexts where they were not present before; and to present these meanings to many receivers instead of just a few.

The third degree of media refers to media forms as for example the Internet, intranets, smart phones, digital television and radio etc. Digital media forms are enabled by the combination of the uses of particular materials (as for example personal computers, servers, digital cameras, networks, phones and the particular technologies for programming these materials as for example HTML, network layers, device interfaces, browsers and smartphone application frameworks) and their different applications (e.g. websites, smartphone apps, meeting software, computer applications etc.) through which interaction and communication become possible. From the introduction of new programming frameworks to the controlling of the physical network structure of the Internet, digital media are subject to institutionalisations which are perhaps more flexible than those belonging to analogue media forms, but are still defining the capacity for different digital media as means of communication.

Digital media are able to combine existing and new forms of presentation and representation of meanings: “The digital computer reproduces and recombines all previous media of representation and interaction on a single material platform of hardware and software.” (Bruhn Jensen, 2010, pp. 69-70). What is more, digital media not only inherit analogue media’s capacity to distribute and disseminate information in time and space, but they allow us to program digital materials both easily and quickly as well. This capacity enables us to interact with other people through digital media without having to go through the time consuming process of recording and transmitting information in analogue materials. Hence, digital media allow us to represent both biological and analogue media but present new possibilities of communication which are not present in the other media (for example interacting with digital elements and other players in a computer game). The ability to combine materials, for example text with video, is also important in understanding digital media.

The three degrees of media thus represent three radically different ways of being able to extend meanings in time and space. However, the types of media within each degree (e.g. radio and TV) have more similarities within this perspective than media of different degrees. In other words, the main argument here is that while written articles (as an example) might content-wise look very much alike between a printed newspaper and a news website, they are very different in terms of communication in time and space. I use this perspective to shift our attention from
content to communication and to align what is communicated to how it is communicated and how it is used as communication and meta-communication.
THE WEB AS A MEDIUM OF COMMUNICATION

What I have outlined above, is a perspective on how meanings are communicated through media; how particular materials enable us to program symbolic forms in order for us to share these forms. What is more, I have argued that media might be divided into three different degrees, each of which has different capacities for programming meanings and sharing these in time and space. In what follows, I shall discuss how we can understand the web as a digital medium which presents us with new possibilities for action and communication – i.e. the affordances of the web as a medium.

AFFORDANCES OF THE WEB

What is the web and how can we use it for communicating with each other? The web is a particular form of digital medium in that it integrates both media of the first and second degree but also media of the third degree (e.g. computer games) into a specific structure or combination of elements. And while some of these elements might look identical to the media they re-present or remediate, they afford very different communicational uses. Hence, the web can be understood as a digitally “born” (Bruhn Jensen, 2012, p. 199) medium in the particular way it is embedded into the Internet as well as the flexibility of its symbolic programming. In what follows, I first discuss how the computer, as a flexible material platform, is able to present meanings in time and space where they could not or only with difficulties exist in other media. Second, I discuss how the flexibility of the symbolic programming of the web (the software platform) changes the possibility to produce and remediate other media.

THE WEB AS A BORN DIGITAL MEDIUM

The world wide web began to emerge after Tim Berners-Lee and Cailliau developed a “hypertext document system [...] to meet the documentation needs of a large research center in which information is fragmented and decentralized” (Flichy, 2007, pp. 61-62). Although different digital networks had already been used to create different possibilities for communication and interaction since the 1970’s (Flichy, 2007, p. 50), the web provides a particular structure of interaction, which were not present in other networks. In Berners-Lee and Cailliau’s words: “The network of links is called a web [...] a small number of links is usually sufficient for getting from anywhere to anywhere else in a small number of hops. The texts are known as nodes. The process of proceeding from node to node is called navigation [...] Nodes can in principle also contain non-text information such as diagrams, pictures, sound, animation, etc.” (Berners-Lee and Cailliau quoted in Flichy, 2007, p. 62).

What Berners-Lee and Cailliau did was to present a syntax for using or navigating digital media. While other digital media (e.g. computer games and photography) were representations of existing media forms, Berners-Lee and Cailliau tapped into the specific architecture of the Internet to provide a general syntax for navigating between and connecting different digital media. Using the distinction between born and adopted digital media (Bruhn Jensen, 2012, p. 199), we can say that the web is born or embedded into or is a particular way of making use of or navigating
the structure and content of networked computers in the world. While the term ‘the web’ is often used interchangeably with ‘the Internet’, I shall follow Lister in that “The Internet simply describes the collection of networks that link computers and servers together.” (Lister, 2010, p. 164); a kind of a “network of networks” (Flichy, 2007, p. 58) or “Metanetwork” (Flichy, 2007, p. 57).

In this perspective, we can begin to understand and discuss the web as the “high level services” (Lister, 2010, p. 165) or applications. First, the web is interesting in that it is able to combine or compose both old and new media (Finnemann, 2005, p. 180) into a single platform or site. What is more, the web defines a particular way that content can be presented and accessed, and even though some content, for example digital radio, might be accessed from a dedicated device, what the web does is to embed this radio stream into a particular combination with other media (e.g. text or pictures) as well as the possibility to access content in new contexts (e.g. listening to radio from another country). Hence, to borrow a term from Brügger (Brügger, 2012, p. 7), we might say that digital media elements (digital video, digital pictures, digital texts etc.) are “re-born digital” on the web, in that they are inserted and combined into a particular context we might call a website or web application. A website or web application thus creates new meanings through the re-combination or existing media representations of symbols and symbolic content.

Second, the web presents a particular structure of navigation. Although all media can in some sense be ‘navigated’ (Bruhn Jensen, 2010, p. 85), hyperlinks “make explicit, retrievable, and modifiable what might have remained a more or less random association in the mind of either sender or receiver.” (Bruhn Jensen, 2010, p. 91). The web is not only presenting or combining digital media elements into a single context, page or screen, but is also able to link this content to any other content, or nodes in Berners-Lee’s words, on the web. In this sense, the web invites particular forms of communication through the ways that content is linked or ‘weaved’ (Bruhn Jensen, 2010, p. 91) together as text. Through linking, the web not only makes other content easily available but also invites particular uses of related content as well as meta-data about content (even a link name might be considered meta-data).

While meta-data is not adding anything to what the medium represents (a picture does not change by adding meta-data), it transform our interpretation and uses of the media embedded into the web and thus our way of using these media to communicate. In attempting to understand the web as a medium which can be programmed symbolically, we can add that what is particular about the web, is that its technologies allow us to combine and link symbols or symbolic forms into a system of interaction and meaning; and it is the intended programming of websites or apps into tools for sharing meaning which makes the web a medium of communication. While these ‘features’ make the web something rather different as a medium than other media, I believe that the idea of media of three degrees invites us to think of (digital) media more in terms of “communicative practices” (Bruhn Jensen, 2010, p. 165) rather than representation.
CHAPTER 5: FIELD ANALYSIS: METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

Abstract:

In this chapter, I present my methodology and the methods used in the dissertation and the data collection. In the first part of the chapter, I discuss the theory behind my study of the web and how this translates into a field analysis. I continue my discussion of the web from the last chapter with a short introduction to how the web affords particular forms of communication. From discussing the web as an object of study, I continue with the methodology of field analysis, where I show how the communicative affordances of the web can be studied and analysed within an actual social context.

In the second part of the chapter, I present the data collection methods and the statistical tools used for the analysis. Basically, my methods consist of a historical reconstruction of the Danish field of football fandom, a classification of websites and interviews with webmasters, an analysis of tracking data from two of these websites and a survey with Danish football fans which provides the data needed to produce a structural representation of how the web is used for communication in the Danish field of football fandom. The structural representation is created using correspondence analysis, a statistical method presented at the end of the chapter.
METHODODOLOGY

In my introduction, I asked the main research questions:

- How did Danish football fandom come into being, and what are the special characteristics of Danish football culture?
- How is the web used by both professionals and fans to produce new types of football culture?
- How and why do football fans use the web to reinforce or change their engagement in football culture?

Basically, I have structured my analysis according to these three questions which can also be understood as an investigation of the process of communication from sender to receiver – i.e. understanding the sender, the medium in which the information is sent, and how it is used and decoded on the receiving end. My analysis is thus divided into three chapters.

In the first analysis chapter (6), I reconstruct Danish football culture as a field. I review the historical sources to present Danish football culture as a social field with different agents and interest. I analyse how the field was split into two subfields: one field of professional agents who produce football culture (matches, clubs, icons) to the other field – which consists of fans who consume the football culture produced in the professional field. In broad terms, we can also conceptualise these fields as a field of professionals who send communication to a field of fans who receive communication. This does not mean that fans don’t send any communication to other fans, but rather that the communication fans send to other fans have a special form – and this is why I introduced the concept of meta-communication to exactly pinpoint the nature of this form.

In the second analysis chapter (7), I analyse the websites within the field to understand why they exist and how they are used for communication. The chapter makes use of a classification of all Danish websites within the field to understand how and why these sites are used for sending communication about football. After the initial classification, I have interviewed the webmasters from the sites to understand how each type of site is used for communication and which types of communication the web affords, i.e. how new forms of communication in the field of professional producers as well as fan meta-communication from fans to other fans, are introduced by the web.

In the third analysis chapter (8), I analyse what the social field looks like today, with traditional media as well as the web(sites) which are now part of the field. By using my survey data, I produce a visual representation of the field with correspondence analysis. This visual representation forms the core for exploring how the social field looks today, i.e. which types of fans there are in the field and how they consume media. Lastly, I conclude the chapter by an analysis of how the actual symbolic forms, i.e. the football fan practices, are changed or supported by the web.
**THE WEB AS AN OBJECT OF STUDY**

In my view, the web must be studied in three steps. First, the web needs to be classified as objects. Second, these objects are used for communication, and I argue that the concept of affordances help us understand what it means that the web makes it possible to communicate in certain ways – and not in other ways. Third, these affordances are translated into actual communicative practices within a field.

In an article from 2004 “The web as an object of study” (Schneider and Foot, 2004), Schneider and Foot provide an account of the web as a particular set of technologies which make use of the Internet within a certain cultural context. While Schneider and Foot, and later Brügger (Brügger, 2009; Brügger, 2012), were perhaps most interested in reconstructing how websites are related within a cultural sphere, for example in relation to elections (Schneider, 2002), they presented the challenge as to how we study “the internet itself” (Schneider and Foot, 2004, p. 114). Schneider and Foot called this particular approach for web sphere analysis, which they defined as “an analytic strategy that includes relations between producers and users of web materials, as potentiated and mediated by the structural and feature elements of websites, hypertexts, and the links between them” (Schneider and Foot, 2004, p. 118). While there is nothing radical in this position, it nonetheless provides an entry point to begin asking questions about the actual use of websites as the main nodes of contact – a point of view which has been largely ignored in much of the literature on the Internet (in for example Castells, 1999; Castells, 2000; Castells, 2001; Castells, 2002; Slevin, 2003; Bakardjieva, 2005; Gauntlett, 2000; Dijk, 2012). In other words, Schneider and Foot suggested that we begin to analyse actual sites and elements of the web and their relation to producers and users.

While Schneider and Foot emphasized the “ephemerality of the web” (Schneider and Foot, 2004, p. 115), their main point was that websites have some sort of permanence as well, which make it possible for us to study websites as communicative nodes which might have changing content every day, but nonetheless maintain a more permanent presence from a communicative viewpoint. Schneider and Foot proceeded by asking four important questions: “What forms of communicative actions are being inscribed on the web, and how do they change over time? How do the actions of web producers enable and/or constrain the potential actions of web users? What kinds of user experiences are potentiated on, and between, particular websites? How are relations between web producers, as well as between producers and users, enacted and mediated via web texts and links?” (Schneider and Foot, 2004, p. 116). These are questions which ask us how the web works as a medium of communication, and not just as a collection of texts (Schneider and Foot, 2004, p. 117). I believe that these questions can also be translated into four distinct methodological questions which are:

1. What is produced? Basically the first question asks what forms of websites are produced. While each website and webpage is in principle distinct and unique, we can reduce the task of understanding the web sphere by classifying them from a communication perspective. By asking which types of communication are embedded into each type of website, we can classify websites based on the way they communicate (football)
culture to fans. In other words, the question ‘What is produced?’ can be restated in two more operationally questions which are a) Which websites are included in the web sphere? and b) How to classify these websites in terms of their purpose?

2. Why are these websites produced? The second question regards the meta-communication of specific symbols. How does each site enable meta-communication about the symbolic forms of football fandom? We here need to discuss the particular concept of affordances in methodological terms. How do we study affordances, and how are particular symbolic forms afforded on particular websites?

3. Which football experiences / symbolic forms are communicated to fans? This question asks how the affordances which each website enable are actually used in communication, and will be answered in my web analytics methodology.

4. Who are actually using these websites and how? This question asks how the actual communication which each website enables is used by actual fans for specific purposes and in combination with other media. This question will be answered by my field analysis methodology.

In what follows, I will reflect on the methodology of website classification and how the concept of affordances helps me understand how the web works as a medium of communication in terms of enabling certain communicative practices. To put it more bluntly, these questions ask us to analyse the web by categorising all the web services/sites available, ask the people who make these sites why they do it and then analyse what the people who actually use these sites use them for.

THE PRODUCTION OF WEB AFFORDANCES

The concept of affordances makes three aspects of web communication clear to us. First, the web as such affords particular forms of communication. Second, producers choose to realise some of these affordances for a purpose. Third, the actual productions afford particular interactions which recipients then can choose to actualise. What this perspective entails is that the sender of communication may choose to produce communication in a way which does not necessarily corresponds with the way in which the receivers (users) choose to receive this communication.

In the first aspect of affordances, we may say that “Behaviour affords behaviour” (Gibson, 1979, p. 135) in that the producers of websites are able to produce particular forms of behaviour and communication for their intended audiences. In the second aspect of affordances, the intended affordances are embedded as symbols (symbolic forms) into “surfaces” (Gibson, 1979, p. 131) or structural relationships between digital objects which may or may not be used in the intended ways. To understand how the web is used for communicating football culture, we need to examine both how producers or webmasters can communicate in ways not otherwise possible (for example by making a video of a club training session), and how this intended communication is translated into the web as an interface for interaction (for example when the video is embedded into the club website). However, the fact that we may find football culture embedded as communication on the web (the website with the embedded video) still does
not tell us whether or how the users interact with this video (if they watch it, when they watch it and in relation to what other videos or content), and how they use it for subsequent social and communicative purposes. This is therefore the third aspect that the concept makes clear to us; we cannot by looking at the potential actualisation that the web makes possible be able to deduce the actual impact of the web as a medium of communication.

Following this line of thinking, affordances are “programmable” (Bruhn Jensen, 2010, p. 75) in that webmasters are able to produce “affordances for social interaction” (Bruhn Jensen, 2010, p. 76) with audiences and fans. The analysis of intended affordances is thus an analysis of how affordances are produced by webmasters to facilitate particular interactions for users. The analysis of affordances is directed at first understanding what webmasters intend to communicate to audiences and fans: Why use the web to communicate (instead of other media)? Second, the analysis of affordances seeks to establish how webmasters use the web to communicate football culture in particular ways. Third, the analysis of affordances summarises how the web is recruited for communication in ways which other media cannot facilitate for different reasons (production costs, presentation of content, integration of content, audience reach and so on). I use the concept of affordances in the first part of my analysis (‘New media, new opportunities’) to discuss how the producers of communication on the web think of the affordances of the web as a medium of communication.

INTERACTIONS ON THE WEB

To understand how different materials and web content afford communication and meaning, we need to discuss how we are able to interact on the web and how these interactions become meaningful communication. We might begin by noting that the existence of web content does not equal interactions (but as already noted; afford interaction). When stored on web servers, “content occupies a meeting ground between a sender and a receiver, and between reality as possible and manifest” (Bruhn Jensen, 2010, p. 22) and users “may, next, accept or reject (some of) its implications, and act upon them or not, whether in the short or the long term.” (Bruhn Jensen, 2010, p. 22).

One particularly interesting perspective to analyse these interactions is called ‘web analytics’ (see e.g. Kaushik, 2007; Peterson, 2004). What is particular about this perspective or approach is that it takes advantage of the technical possibility and inherent necessity of digital media, and in particular the web, to produce meta-data about itself. Basically, web analytics is a description of a set of tools and statistical techniques that make it possible to track or trace user interactions on the web, i.e. to understand how users interact with other users through an interface, using a single medium or a combination of both biological, analogue and digital media. Web analytics thus extends our understanding of users’ “actual and potential reach” (Bakardjieva, 2005, p. 111), and how users are able to navigate the web as a medium through the use of navigational structures, which make “make explicit, retrievable, and modifiable what might have remained a more or less random association in the mind of either sender or receiver.” (Bruhn Jensen, 2010, p. 91). Through the accessibility of web elements in almost all contexts, the web
redefines the way that users can reach information and communicate with other users and thereby also “potentially accelerate the process of communicative turn-taking” (Bruhn Jensen, 2010, p. 108).

To sum up the discussion of how to conceptualise the web as an object of study, I want to emphasize three points. First, the web consists of many different communicative services, which can be conceptualised and classified according to a specific symbolic domain – for example football related sites and the links between them. Second, the web offers a variety of possibilities in terms of making new forms of content, new ways of interacting with content and new ways of producing content; but from a communication perspective the main difference from other media is not how web technologies makes content look different (or not), but how the process of sending and receiving, i.e. the dispersion of communication in time and space, is different from other media and thus enables new communicative practices. Third, the web must be studied in terms of how web services are actually used as part of communicative practices, and it is only by analysing how receivers use the web in interaction, that the communicative consequences of the web become clear to us.

Accordingly, I have analysed the web in the context of Danish football by first classifying all sites in terms of their institutional and communicative context. After an initial classification, I interviewed the webmasters in charge of the sites to understand why they created the websites in contrast to using other media of communication, and which particular affordances the web creates for them, i.e. which communicative practices are available to them that would not be available had they used other media.

THE SOCIAL FIELD

I have discussed the web in terms of its specific properties as a medium, but we cannot understand the web without taking into account how the cultural practices the web supports are embedded within a specific social setting. To understand this social setting, I have used the methodological approach called field analysis, taken from Bourdieu’s sociology. Choosing Bourdieu’s approach to studying the social context of Danish football fandom was based on theoretical and practical arguments: First, Bourdieu was inspired by Cassirer’s relational philosophy (the philosophy of symbolic forms), as employed in this dissertation, and his approach to studying culture as a relational system of differences (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. 198). Second, Bourdieu presents a number of concepts that are particularly useful in understanding why something gets communicated in particular contexts and between particular people. Third, Bourdieu provides some useful statistical methods (mainly correspondence analysis which I introduce later in the ‘Methods’ part of this chapter), which can be used to study social contexts as fields of differences.

I find Bourdieu’s methodology of analysing social fields particular relevant in analysing communication since Bourdieu is attending not only the major social rules that governs a social context, but the specific dynamics which changes and reproduces this context. Bourdieu actually used the concept of communication in his early analysis of
field dynamics, but in his later studies he rarely returned to using the concept again. In my interpretation this had
less to do with him finding that communication had nothing to do with the production of social relations, but rather
on his emphasis on non-verbal ways on producing and reproducing social relations (which were less associated with
the concept of communication in the 60’ties that it is today). Where his position is strong in this regard, is that he
shows how we can establish a structural perspective on a social field without taking away the importance of actual
communication in the constitution of this structure. Moreover, he also shows how the method of correspondence
analysis allows us to embed communication as dynamics within a systematic perspective on the social structure,
where the social structure (i.e. the actual relation between agents within the social field) is actually constituted by
the way people communicate, and how this communication thus solidifies as a structural representation of reality.

WHAT IS A SOCIAL FIELD?
To begin, we might ask what a social field is. The concept of field works both as a unifying analytical strategy and an
idea of how we are able to represent the social world from a sociological or anthropological position. From Cassirer,
Bourdieu inherits the position that cultures are different, not just in what people do or in the display of
heterogeneous life styles, but in a more all-encompassing sense of reflecting different ways of being in the world. In
other words, “a field is a separate social universe having its own laws of functioning [...] an autonomous universe
endowed with specific principles of evaluation of practices and works [...] endowed with particular institutions and
obeying specific laws.” (Bourdieu and Johnson, 1993, pp. 162-163). Thus, a field is a particular way of delimiting a
space and a history of people, objects, places, etc. – not according to a geographical or historical conception of time
and space, but according to a conception of time and space in which social relations take precedence.

The concept of field thus points us to the idea that we can analyse how and why particular social relations are
extended in time and space. To consider this idea in terms of the how and the why of research, we might say that
the ‘how’ challenges us to think about the relation between agency and structure while the ‘why’ challenges us to
consider the particular meanings which are of value to people within the field. To answer these questions, I will first
discuss the idea that social fields, as sets of social relations, are produced and reproduced through communication;
and I discuss how the symbolic understanding of communication can be found in Bourdieu’s use of the concept of
distinction as well as how distinctions are recognised as cultural forms. Second, I will discuss how we can understand
communication as ‘energy’ in Bourdieu’s sense, which is translated into forms of capital, and which can be used from
different positions (social space) within the field for different purposes when reworked into habitus inside different
biographies (social time). In attempting to grasp how communication translates social energy into capital and vice
versa, I revisit the concept of symbolic forms and argue that it can throw light upon how communication solidifies
as symbolic capital. These concepts form the main basis of my analysis of the social field of Danish football culture,
and the social contextualisation of the web as a medium of communication herein.

DISTINCTION THROUGH COMMUNICATION
What Bourdieu offers us is not just a number of concepts to conceptualise the social world, but rather a line of thought which seeks to represent the social world through the practical operationalization of concepts into statistics and other methods. And although Bourdieu finds inspiration from many different philosophical orientations, we find a consistent aspiration to follow Cassirer in thinking about the social world as a relational system (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, pp. 96-97). In this perspective, “a field may be defined as a network, or a configuration, of objective relations between positions” (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. 97). What is emphasized here is that a field consists of particular positions which have different ‘objective relations’ between them. A position must be understood as a kind of role or place which different people or agents speak from within the field. A person might be a football manager and speak as a football manager when talking to journalists, but in other contexts this person speaks and acts differently (and might for example regard herself as a fan instead).

In his study of French society, Bourdieu shows how class distinctions are recognized in many different ways; as inscriptions on the body (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 190) or in tastes for food, art and other cultural products. In this sense, cultural products are understood as “constituted taste [which] is almost always the work of professionals” (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 231) – whether as art or popular culture (e.g. football aesthetics). Distinctions or cultural differences thus manifest themselves in objects, bodies and the taste for particular events and products. Owning something marks your tastes and consequently your position within a social field, according to Bourdieu. In Bourdieu’s analytical approach, this perspective provides an entry into the statistical analysis of differences; if we know the objects, events and places of value within the field, we may analyse the quantity of consumption of these things from different positions.

Bourdieu thus analyses who owns and likes what types of art and literature (Bourdieu, 1996a) to understand how different positions evaluate different forms of art or literature. What is less clear in Bourdieu’s works is how distinctions are actually made; how the dynamics in producing and reproducing distinctions are translated analytically. In my view, these distinctions are maintained through communication. It is by for example telling someone that a particular taste is vulgar that it comes to be perceived as vulgar. Bourdieu is not blind to the role which communication, language and discourse play in producing and reproducing distinctions. However, his discussions of the social function of language and discourse (Bourdieu, Passeron and Saint, 1994; Bourdieu and Thompson, 1991) as a mean to uphold social reproduction often distracts us from understanding the role of communication in the symbolic production of the social. What Bourdieu does say, however, is that the “symbolic interactions” (Bourdieu and Thompson, 1991, p. 37) within the field are “relations of communication implying cognition and recognition” (ibid.), and that it is these relations which ‘actualize’ the power relations or distinctions between people (ibid.). Although Bourdieu recognizes the importance of communication as dynamic forces within the field, he does not explore the idea of communication as the actualization of symbolic energy (capital) further.

In his analysis of the academic world, Bourdieu showed how distinctions between students were made using different words to characterise their work (Bourdieu, 1996b, p. 33). While Bourdieu’s own concept of
communication in this context was rather much in line with the view of communication as the transmission of code in the most efficient way (Bourdieu, Passeron and Saint, 1994, p. 5), it is clear that Bourdieu also saw communication as a way to uphold and maintain distinctions (Bourdieu, Passeron and Saint, 1994, p. 24). Continuing from this line of thought, Bourdieu argued that “acts of communication” are “functionally related” (Bourdieu, Passeron and Saint, 1994, p. 13), and even simple forms of communication, like showing a photograph to someone can work to maintain or establish distinctions and differences (Bourdieu, 2003, p. 27).

What is implied in this perspective, is that communication is used to maintain “the dialectic of cultural distinction” (Bourdieu and Johnson, 1993, p. 117), and that this cultural distinction is made for particular purposes defined within the field as having value and making sense. What is more, communication might solidify as distinctions, e.g. in a photograph, which might be used for different purposes in different social contexts (Bourdieu, 1996b, p. 37). In this view, communication can be used for actively engaging in a field in order to maintain a particular position of power or influence, and to embed evaluation into particular products, events, places and so on. Communications thus work, within a particular field, to produce systems of classification and identification by making distinctions (Bourdieu, 1996b, pp. 44-45), and communication is at the same time conditioned by the social conditions which allow people to “mobilize” communication (Bourdieu, 1996b, p. 41). In my view, this point is central to understanding the social field. Communication, and thus communication media, are essential vehicles that uphold the relational structure of the field, i.e. the distinctions between different positions in the field. However, symbolic forms also solidifies within the field – as for example a season card or a replica shirt. This is where Bourdieu introduces the concept of capital.

**CAPITAL AND SYMBOLIC ENERGY**

What follows from Bourdieu’s perspective is that communication and the use of language must be analysed as a social practice (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. 141), and it is not enough to look at the formal or grammatical properties of communication to explain meaning itself (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. 142). Meaning is rather the result of a social history and the embodiment of this history in certain people, institutions, objects and places. To elucidate the relation between meaning and social context, we might once again turn to the concept of the symbolic and symbolic forms. While the relation between Cassirer’s conceptualisation of the symbolic and its uses in Bourdieu’s work has not been studied very thoroughly (Lescourret, 2008, p. 286), it is nevertheless clear that Bourdieu understands for example novels or art as symbolic forms within fields (Johnson in Bourdieu and Johnson, 1993, p. 18). However, Bourdieu never conceptualised how social energy works, i.e. the mechanisms which actually transform the social field. In this context, I want to propose that the communication of symbolic forms within the field is what makes social fields change, and it is in accounting for the communication forms within the social field that we understand the actual mechanisms of structural transformation.
Following this argument, we could say that *communication binds social energy as capital when communication solidifies in stable forms*, e.g. in communication products – like for example a football match or a replica shirt. Hence, a football shirt not only symbolises particular relations within the social field of football fandom (e.g. club support), but can also be owned and used by particular agents (fans for example) under certain circumstances. In other words, owning a shirt enables fans to symbolize a particular relationship between themselves and a football club in a particular way which cannot be symbolized if fans do not own a shirt. In Bourdieu’s rendering of this relation between symbolic forms and agents, the concept of capital is used to describe how certain forms of symbolic energy, those forms which make sense within a particular field, are embodied in certain agents; for example as history (e.g. of a club) or knowledge about certain statistics.

Capital can thus be understood as the structural translation of distinctions through communications into identity (a fan have an identity by owning certain fan objects, having attended particular fan events, having bought a season ticket etc.), and identities are therefore what inside a field can be objectified as particular combinations or distributions of capital (having attended particular matches combined with owning a shirt of player number 9 for example). And to understand the value of different forms of capital, we have to analyse the particular situations in which different forms of capital can be translated into symbolic energy, through saying or doing something which is recognized as valuable by other agents within the field (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p. 98).

To sum up Bourdieu’s field methodology, we can say that a field consists of a number of social contexts where people and organisations (both of them agents in Bourdieu’s terminology) fight for recognition in the form of knowledge, money, possessions, participation, etc. (or capital in general to use Bourdieu’s terminology). What is unique to each context is that the things that people fight about only makes sense in this context, i.e. the context is self-contained. This does not mean that the things they fight about are not real, but that the value they have in this context is unique to the context, and that the language used in this context becomes more and more specialised. Another way of putting it, is that a football fan is someone who enters a social relationship with other people, learns to use the language that is specific to football fans, uses money on things that only matters to football fans (e.g. the replica shirt or a match attendance) and communicates in a certain way when being together with other football fans. Moreover, this fan might have a high social rank in other contexts, but when entering the context with other fans, this person may be the lowest in the hierarchy for lack of capital (e.g. he does not have a season card, does not know much about the club he follows etc.).
OVERVIEW – VISUAL SUMMARY

To sum up the methodology and methods briefly, I have outlined the analytical parts that constitute important steps towards gaining a comprehensive understanding of how the field is constituted and how the web plays a part in the communication of football culture within the field.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Methodology</th>
<th>Question 1</th>
<th>Question 2</th>
<th>Question 3</th>
<th>Question 4</th>
<th>Methods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 6</td>
<td><em>How was the field constituted historically?</em></td>
<td><em>How the professionalization of football in Denmark split the field into two?</em></td>
<td><em>How did an autonomous fan culture arise in the field?</em></td>
<td><em>Which role has media played in developing fandom culture in Denmark?</em></td>
<td>Historical analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 7</td>
<td><em>How can we classify all websites related to Danish football into a meaningful typology?</em></td>
<td><em>How does each type of website work and how can we characterise the institutional conditions for their operation?</em></td>
<td><em>Which communicative affordances does the producers use the web for?</em></td>
<td></td>
<td>Classification / website analysis Interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 8</td>
<td><em>What is the basic structure of the field and how are media used to produce and reproduce the field?</em></td>
<td><em>Which social positions exist within the field and what types of fans can be identified within the field?</em></td>
<td><em>How are the match, the club and the icon communicated within the field?</em></td>
<td><em>How is the web used to communicate and maintain different cultural practices within the field?</em></td>
<td>Survey data Correspondence analysis Tracking data Website analysis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

METHODS

In this part I will present the actual methods and tools used. Some of the methods used require some theoretical and technical explanation, but I focus on the application of the methods.

In ‘The rise of Danish football culture’ (Chapter 6), I reconstruct the Danish football field using literature on Danish football fandom and football culture. While this chapter presents a field-analytical view on the existing literature and as such reinterprets specific events and developments to understand what makes out the specific logics and practices of football culture within the field. In ‘New media, new opportunities’ (Chapter 7), I classify the websites and interviews with webmasters from these sites. The classification of all Danish sites into four prototypical categories will be reviewed, and the interview process will be reviewed as well for this chapter. In ‘The third half’ (Chapter 8), I use the survey as a method to collect data about a population as well as correspondence analysis as a statistical method for analysing these survey data. Moreover, I use tools to collect tracking data which also deserve some explanation.
In the remainder of this chapter, I will therefore be concerned with a discussion of the following methods:

- **Website classification**: *How did I classify the Danish football websites and which categories resulted from this classification?*
- **The interviews**: *How were interviews conducted with webmasters and which challenges occurred in this process?*
- **The survey process**: *How was the questionnaire designed and launched?*
- **Web analytics**: *How were tracking data collected from websites and which tools were used?*
- **Correspondence analysis**: *What is correspondence analysis and how was it used to ‘construct’ the field with survey data?*

**WEBSITE CLASSIFICATION**

In my classification of sites, I have used the domain names of the websites, rather than for example Facebook pages or Twitter accounts, as the main entry to understanding how the web is used within Danish football culture. In my investigation of sites as a web sphere, this is an analytical choice based on the fact that Facebook pages, Twitter accounts and web apps are secondary to the main domains of the websites.

While I investigated the sites, and contacted the webmasters of these sites, it was evident that the website related to a unique domain name, was used as the main identity for almost all of the organisations or agents using the web for communicating Danish football culture. However, at the end of my research phase (2009-2013) there was a strong tendency for especially fan sites to move their communication from a website to Facebook pages or groups. And while many of the webmasters I interviewed believe that Facebook (and partly Twitter and apps) is a very good platform to reach fans, the web domain has a great advantage in terms of being an independent (marketing) platform with a high degree of content control and added possibilities of integration.

My classification of sites is thus based upon how agents (fans, fan groups, fan clubs, news organisations, independent football companies and news organisations) use the web as a medium of communication. Moreover, social media (Twitter being a relatively unimportant website compared to Facebook) was in general understood as traffic drivers for the web domain; a place where content can be duplicated to move users to open the web domain. Lastly, the production of web apps is almost exclusively maintained by different organisations (clubs and news agencies) which are already producing a website as their main web platform.

**THE INTERVIEWS**

The interview can be characterised as a form of interpersonal communication, which in social science research is used to collect data by asking people structured questions on themselves or anything they hold an opinion on or have knowledge about. The collection of this data may be structured in such a way that it is possible to quantify the
collected data. In this sense, the interview comes close to the questionnaire as a data collection method (and indeed, the questionnaire may be used in a face-to-face interview or the self-administered questionnaire may even be called an ‘interview’). However, we may also use the interview as a methodology to collect structured data in a way which allows us to perform more detailed interpretations of the collected data.

THE INTERVIEWS USED IN THE DISSERTATION

The interviews were conducted during two periods: 2010-2011 and during a follow-up round in 2013. My general approach to interviewing webmasters was to contact the webmaster or website using the contact link on the website. While most websites had a contact link or mail, a few did not. For those which did not, I tried (mostly with success) to contact the website using their Facebook page. There was no sampling process involved. I contacted every relevant website that I found in the website categorisation process. Out of around 100 websites, the response rate was around 50% (number of interviews = 60). All who responded gave a positive answer (regarding the interview).

All those sites which I regarded as major sites did respond to my initial contact mail (although I had to resend it in some cases). However, many webmasters did not have much time to answer questions. Many asked me to write my questions for them in an email (although I preferred telephone or live interviews), and many email answers were short and not very informative. It should also be noted that some of the webmasters (in particular those of fan clubs or football clubs), seemed to get several requests like mine every week (although most were from school assignments). Also, my hope was that approaching and interviewing webmasters would contribute to establishing a form of trust which could later be used when I wanted to collect data from surveys and tracking software on their sites. And at the end of each interview, I chose to ask the webmasters whether they would help me launch the survey on their website.

When possible, I chose to conduct interviews face-to-face. My second choice would be the telephone, and my last choice was email questions. This choice was based on the fact that face-to-face interviews would usually provide me with longer and more detailed descriptions of what the website communicates. Despite the fact that none of the webmasters were willing to place my script on the site, many of them helped me by linking to the survey on their websites or on Facebook. The interviews pursued different types of questions. In the question typology described by Neuman (Neuman, 1997, pp. 373-374), I used both descriptive, structural and contrast questions. First, I usually began the interview with some descriptive questions like “When was the site created?” or “How do you select content for the website?”. Second, I asked structural questions like “Why do you use videos instead of articles in section x?” or “Does the website allow you to reach users you would otherwise not reach?”. As my experience about the field grew, I also began to use contrast questions more often: “Website xy does this to keep users on the site, have you had any thought about why you do the same?”. Since I did not record all interviews due to confidentiality requests, I have not been able to quote everything. However, those which were recorded in either e-mail format or through a microphone, have been cited as the e-
mail interview (with reference to the interview) or been cited directly from the sound files (with a reference to the particular time in the interview from where the quoting begins).

THE SURVEY PROCESS

To understand how fans and audiences receive communication, I conducted a survey among Danish football fans. The questionnaire was designed to acquire knowledge on how fans consume Danish football and use media (with a special focus on the web) in this context. It was structured according to the logic of the three symbolic forms, i.e. divided into what it means for the respondents to go to matches and to follow clubs and players. The questionnaire itself was distributed using the websites and Facebook pages for those websites I was in contact with (i.e. through my interviews). The actual methods for launch differed from site to site, and on some fan forums for example, I posted the link myself while for example Ekstra Bladet posted the survey as an official link on their Facebook page. This method was not really one of choice, but rather one of practical means, but in the end my methods resulted in 808 responses.

SAMPLING

In my survey, the population is everyone who uses the web to communicate Danish football culture (defined as the symbolic forms of football culture within the Danish field of professional football); whether this communication is simply reading an article on a news website once in a while, or discussing regularly on football discussion boards. We have no population parameters about this population and nor do we have any parameters about similar populations (e.g. all Danish football fans, the Danish web population etc.). My sampling frame would thus be all users of all Danish football websites. In theory, we could compare population parameters from this sampling frame (e.g. browser type) with variables from the questionnaire sample. In practice, however, I did not have access to any parameters from the sampling frame, nor did I have the possibility to send the questionnaire to all users from these websites. Rather, my sampling was restricted to those websites which agreed to help me send out the questionnaire. While we can assume that most users in the sampling frame would have a Facebook account, this does not necessarily mean that they use Facebook for communication about Danish football more. In other words, the sampling techniques were clearly biased towards those users either using Facebook or using discussion boards. How to evaluate this bias in sampling? Using self-administered questionnaires on the web to collect data about a population will in almost all instances be biased. Yet, it is important to note that we do not and cannot know how much it is biased, nor do we have any alternative to this sampling technique.

We have different statistical terms for different sampling techniques (besides random sampling): systematic sampling, cluster sampling and stratified sampling (Donnelly, 2007, pp. 167-173). Yet, all of these techniques rely on some kind of knowledge of (parameters of) the population which I unfortunately don’t have. The last term in use is convenience sampling (Deacon, 2007, p. 56), which is another way to say that we do not have any real way of assuring a random sample, and that we therefore must expect some kind of sampling error (sampling errors might
be any error which results from the fact that we only include a subset of the population (Dillman, 2007, p. 205). In attempting to understand the sampling errors resulting from my data collection, I think three main challenges can be identified. The first challenge relates to the fact that not all relevant websites were included in the data collection. However, since those websites (webmasters) were both very general news websites and very dedicated fan websites, it is difficult to say if or how this bias would result in any sampling errors.

The second challenge relates to the fact that the questionnaire was launched from Facebook pages and discussion boards. The interviews from the news websites all pointed towards the fact (known from Facebook Insights relating to general marketing surveys) that the Facebook users of their football (or sport) pages were in general younger than their website users (which were again younger than their printed newspaper readers). When interviewing webmasters from discussion boards or fan clubs, it was clear that the ‘members’ of the Facebook pages were not the same as those of the discussion boards. However, what was mostly pointed out was that those members commenting aggressively on discussion boards where not present on Facebook; however, when speaking about age or gender, they (the webmasters) were not able to identify any differences between fan websites and Facebook page members. The third problem relates to who chooses to respond to the questionnaire. If I had any population parameters, I could weigh the answers according to these parameters. However, I do not and I can therefore only make some general and rather vague assumptions about this bias based on my previous analysis of response bias in web populations.

As the questionnaire was partly distributed on the fan pages for these clubs, one of the most pressing question to ask is whether the questionnaire adequately reflects the fan distribution between different clubs. Although some clubs have estimates about the number of fans in their fan clubs, we do not have exact percentages of fans from different clubs in the Danish Superliga. If we compare the distribution of the questionnaire (Ax9: PpB: G1) result to another survey conducted via the fan clubs themselves (Havelund et al. 2006), the percentages are not far from each other. In both my sample and that survey, Brøndby fans account for 35% of the entire number of fans.

**WEB ANALYTICS**

Web analytics is based on the idea that user interactions on the web leave traces which can be stored and analysed quantitatively. In a communication research perspective we may say that this method of measurement represents a general tendency to develop “a system for the observation, the measurement and the cataloguing of the audiences.” (Bermejo, 2009, p. 3). One of the particularities of the web is thus that the audience interactions leave traces for us to analyse (Bermejo, 2009, p. 117). The web analytics software is thus made to connect and collect data from events on the web. These events might be activated on mobile apps, websites or within other web applications (e.g. when reading a mail in Microsoft Outlook).
Google Analytics works through placing a Javascript on every event one wishes to include in the tracking. After placing the script, the data is stored by Google and accessed through a web service interface. It is important to note that some events are more difficult to track than others. While placing the script on a HTML page will make Google Analytics able to track all page views of that page, it will not automatically track for example video view on that page. Usually, video events have to be configured separately (and often manually), and most configurations of Google Analytics do not include video tracking.

Google Analytics also allows us to use segmentation in terms of understanding how particular events are related to other events. Google Analytics also provides us with powerful tools to compare historical data. In general, comparing historical data is an important procedure in web analytics (Sterne, 2002, p. 60) since this allows us to understand whether a particular quantification signifies a particular trend in other media.

Through my interviews, I got access to two Google Analytics accounts. One account with access to data from a fan website and forum and one account with access to a news website (the entire website including the football section).

**Correspondence analysis**

Following Bourdieu’s field analysis approach, I use the statistical technique called correspondence analysis to produce a structural and visual representation of the field. This representation can be used to understand how different media are used by different types of fans to communicate and meta-communicate football fandom in the field. By comparing relations between different variables in the questionnaire, it becomes possible to depict different positions (fan types) in the field and to statistically relate these variables to other variables, thus making it possible to see how for example using a specific website is related to a specific age group.

**Introduction to Correspondence analysis**

The theoretical approach of field analysis outlined by Bourdieu is based on a relational way of thinking, and Bourdieu used correspondence analysis in several of his empirical studies (Bourdieu, 1979; Bourdieu, 1988; Bourdieu and Johnson, 1993; Bourdieu, 1996a; Bourdieu, 1996b; Bourdieu, 2000) to show how sociology, as the study of social relations, can use survey data to ‘construct’ social fields from the relations between social agents. While Bourdieu theorised about the consequences of this approach from the perspective of sociology and philosophy of science, the original founder of correspondence analysis, J.P. Benzecri, formulated the relational basis of correspondence analysis in a more simple way: “Those who have considered data tables with some attention know that the relations between numbers are more interesting than the numbers themselves.” (Benzécri, 1992, p. 4).

The interesting thing about Benzecri’s relational approach to data tables was that he found a method for visualising these relations, making it much easier to understand how two persons, entities or variables are related – simply by comparing their visual distance to each other. So the basic idea is that you look at what is called a ‘map’ which is more or less a two-dimensional representation of variance between variables.
INTERPRETATION OF MAPS

In its very essence, correspondence analysis combines a twofold way of thinking. First, correspondence analysis considers each person, row or entity as a profile of characteristics; this could be their age, income, opinions etc. Second, correspondence analysis attempts to visualise these characteristics by considering each characteristic a mathematical dimension. The resulting visualisation (called a map) will then show how identical or different two persons are simply by the distance between them in the map. From a sociological perspective we are not really interested in the relations between the actual persons in the map, but rather in the relation between the characteristics of these persons, e.g. the centre of those with a high income versus the centre of those with a low income, in the map. The final maps thus show how different characteristics are similar or dissimilar in the analysed data, and can thus show us whether for example high income is related to high education.

In the map below we see a typical result where the first and the second dimensions are visualised.

In the correspondence analysis map above, which will be presented and analysed in more detail in chapter 8, there are several blue and red dots. The red dots represent football websites and the blue dots represent the media types (the number of plusses corresponds indicates the number of matches) that fans use to follow matches. The basic
interpretational idea is that we can simply understand relationships by looking at the visual distance between dots. So for example the DR (football) website is used by those fans who often follow matches by listening to radio (as is evident by looking at the distance between these two dots in the lower part of the map and comparing this distance to the distance to other dots).

So the first and most basic rule of interpretation is that two dots, which are near each other, are statistically correlated. If two dots are near each other (within the same axis), it means that they are connected in one way or another. As with other types of statistical analysis, we should of course take care not to confuse connection or correlation with causation. In the map, this translates into being careful not to conclude that two response types (i.e. dots) are necessarily related; it could very well be a third variable being responsible for this relation.

Second, the center of the map designates a ‘normal’ profile, meaning that any dots near the centre will signify a category (e.g. media use) which is common to everyone. This may be interpreted in two senses. In one sense, all practices which almost everybody say they do (let us for the sake of an example say ‘I have access to the Internet’) will automatically result in a dot in near proximity to the center. In another sense, one practice may simply be well balanced amongst the other variables either by chance or simply because the practice has something in common with many different practices within the field.

Third, we may include weights in the interpretation of the map (not included in the map above). The weight of a variable is often called ‘mass’ because it describes how many respondents or people are actually doing this. A dot with high mass will be bigger than other dots, because this category represents more respondents and it is therefore ‘heavier’ as an entity within a field of gravity (and therefore also often closer to the center of the field).

**Technical explanation**

In correspondence analysis any dataset will be considered a set of profiles which mathematically speaking is a set of vectors (Greenacre, 1993, p. 9). Let us illustrate this with some fictive examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Games</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>Income</th>
<th>Opinion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10.000 – 20.000</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10.000 – 20.000</td>
<td>Agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>50.000 – 75.000</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What we see here is three respondents with different profiles. Since a vector is a collection of numbers which indicates a set of directions (dimensions) in a space, we can say that respondent 1 has the vector of \([1, 20, 4, 10.000 – 20.000, \text{Agree}]\). If we think of a coordinate system, this would mean that to place respondent 1 in the coordinate system, we would go one step (1) out on the first axis (x), 20 steps out on the second axis (y), 4 steps out on the third
axis (z) and so on. The position of the respondent 1 in the coordinate system would then be 1,20,4 etc. Two challenges immediately arise from this example.

First, we see that more than three dimensions are actually present here (we have five), and even placing these points in three dimensions only may sound confusing. Fortunately, correspondence analysis is a method for reducing the dimensionality of this vector set (whether 5 or a 100 dimensions) to three, two or one dimension – making the visual interpretation possible. Second, we see that some dimensions do not really agree to our understanding of moving along a coordinate system: it is difficult to move ‘Agree’ number of steps along the x-axis. However, correspondence analysis does not really consider the vector to consist of these numbers, but transforms these numbers into a frequency for that row (Greenacre, 1993, p. 9). The advantage of this approach makes it insignificant what scale the dimensions are used for.

When the row profiles are generated, correspondence analysis reduces dimensionality using vector decomposition. What results from this analysis is that each row will have a position in the resulting multidimensional vector space, where dimension 1 will represent most of the variance or percentage of inertia, as it is called (Greenacre, 1993, p. 48). All row profiles then have a number indicating their position on each dimension, and we can then take any two dimensions and project them into a two-dimensional plane. However, the first dimension is typically representing the highest number of variance, the second the second highest number of variance and so on. So we would usually be strongly inclined to choose the first two dimensions (Greenacre, 1993, p. 72).

What we see in the map above is actually a symmetric plot of the dimensions 1 and 2 (called F1 and F2). The plot is called symmetrical because the distances in the two dimensions have been scaled, and in principle it is therefore not possible to interpret across distances in both dimensions at the same time (Greenacre, 1993, p. 72), which means that even if two dots are closer to each other in one dimension (e.g. the distance on the first axis is shorter than the distance on the second axis) than the other, the relation between the two might actually be weaker than between one of the dots and another one in the other dimension. The second type of information we see in this map is a percentage sign after each dimension which refers to inertia which resembles variance in other statistical methods. In other words, the first dimension represents 32,62% of inertia while the entire map represents 53,95 percent of inertia or variance in those dimension; meaning that of the 17 dimensions representing the entire 100% of the inertia, the first two of these 17 dimensions will represent 53,95% by themselves. However, discussing whether this number meets certain criteria does not make that much sense in itself. We should rather talk about the stability of the map (Greenacre, 1993, p. 193). Stability refers to the idea that removing or adding points (dimensions) to the map will not alter the solution much (Greenacre, 1993, p. 194).

Basically, the vector solution used for displaying the map will change whenever another row or column (dimension) is added to the map. Adding more dimensions to the map will further reduce the stability of the solution. One solution to this is to keep a map of those primary dimensions which are the best (most stable) in the dataset. In this
way the main structure of the space is kept stable when analysing further variables. In practice this would mean that two variables in a survey are chosen (those which provide the most stable solution) and then the positions of the other variables are shown as supplementary information (i.e. mathematically projected into the vector solution resulting from those two primary questions, meaning that they do not alter the structure of existing relations, i.e. the main vector solutions, but is working as a form of overlay upon this structure). In this way, we can begin to characterise entire segments or structures in the dataset by exploring how supplementary questions can be projected into the main map of active dimensions.

**THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE FIELD STRUCTURE**

Based on survey data (questionnaire, register or other types), the field makes it possible to understand what people in particular circumstances, e.g. using particular media, would probably choose to communicate and meta-communicate. Mathematically speaking, any variable can be ‘projected’ into the field. As long as data share the same data structure, we can combine them into one map. Theoretically, there are different approaches to constructing the basic relations of the field (the active variables; those which define the main mathematical structure or vector plane of the field). One is to combine all variables and response categories into one data matrix and let the most significant ones define the mathematical structure without any theoretical preferences (a pure inductive method) as for example used in (Munk 1999). Another is to let theory determine which variables should structure the main relations within the field, as could be argued that Bourdieu did (at least his structuring variables seemed to always refer to social background, while preferences were supplementary variables). Of course, in both cases the stability of the field should always be taken into consideration. In my construction of the field, I have chosen an approach closer to the latter, where I have chosen a construction of the field using the variables of media use.

The resulting map displays an inertia of 53.95%, and the resulting map dimensions are acceptable within the inertia limits given by Benzecri (Benzécri 1992, p. 403). All the specific data for the map can be found in the appendix (Ax9: ExA: G). As such, media use also produced the highest stability of the maps (higher than for example fan demographics or any preferences or possessions). In conclusion, I tested many different constructions and came to construct a very ‘stable’ version of the field using the variables: number of Danish matches followed (seven different media) and football websites used.
There are many different ways we can analyse how fans use the web to communicate about football. As I have outlined in my theoretical part, the way that I approach this question is to tap into Bourdieu’s concept of a social field; which is basically to say that we need to analyse the social contexts in which the websites are used and to understand why and how they are used. My study is an analysis of how people in Denmark communicate with each other about football using media, including traditional media, but with a special emphasis on how they use the web as a new medium, enabling new forms of communication.

In the first chapter of my analysis, I show how the field of Danish football culture emerged from an amateur sport, and how this field split into two subfields with specific interests and stakes. While much of this chapter is based on historical sources, I reconstruct these sources into a unified presentation of the field and focus on the specific role that media have had in the communication of football culture in the field. My main argument here is that we can understand this field as consisting of two subfields: One subfield where the producers seek economic gain from the fans’ time and money, and one subfield where fans fight over knowledge and prestige.

In the second chapter of my analysis, I use interviews to investigate the subfield of production by using the concept of affordances to understand how the web has become a central medium to professional football producers in sending and producing communication about football to fans. The analysis takes its point of departure in my classification of Danish websites and interviews with the webmasters from these sites. On this basis, I analyse the institutional settings in which these websites exist and how the sites fit into the strategies of existing media of communication. By the end of the chapter, I provide a characterization of the web as medium by outlining the specific affordances that the web provides for communicating about the clubs, matches and icons within the Danish field of football culture.

In the third chapter of my analysis, I use statistics to examine how fans actually communicate and consume football in this field. The chapter will be partly based on a survey I conducted among Danish football fans and partly based on the web analytics data I got access to from Danish websites. I present a typology of fans based on a statistical analysis of demographics and media usage. After the initial classification of media forms and fan types, I go on to analyse how the web is used very differently depending on other media use and the users’ life trajectory. I also explore how different media uses are deeply connected to how fans relate to other fans, and I show that different types of football websites serve very different purposes for different types of fans. In conclusion, I present a typology that shows how different types of fans use the web for different cultural practices relating to football.
The following figure provides a visual overview of the three chapters in the third part and the associated methods used for the analysis in each of the three chapters (6,7,8):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analysis</th>
<th>Methods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The rise of Danish football culture</strong>&lt;br&gt;- Historical introduction to the field of Danish football culture</td>
<td><strong>Chapter 7</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Review of literature on Danish football fan culture</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>New media, new opportunities</strong>&lt;br&gt;- Analysis of how the web affords new types of communication about football</td>
<td><strong>Chapter 8</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Analysis of interviews with the webmasters of Danish football websites</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The third half</strong>&lt;br&gt;- Analysis of how fans interact with websites and how they use the web in relation to other media</td>
<td><strong>Chapter 9</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Analysis of user interactions with websites</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>Analysis of survey results</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 6: THE RISE OF DANISH FOOTBALL CULTURE

Abstract:

In this chapter I review the existing literature on Danish football, and show how Danish football developed from a loosely coupled set of practices around the game of football and into a social field with strong agents and clear logics governing the field. Next, I show that the introduction of professionalism into the field actually resulted in splitting the field into two subfields; one concerned with producing and reproducing professional football and the other related to the fans and how they started to create their own ways of consuming professional football.

While the sources here are historical and mostly descriptive, I show that the concept of a social field helps us articulate why some agents do as they do, and how we can begin to interpret the main structural differences between the clubs located in the countryside, compared to the larger clubs centred around the big cities. Lastly, I analyse how the specific use of media within the field contributed to shaping how the field looks today and how different media help reproduce the specific ways in which the field works.
BETWEEN AMATEURS AND PROFESSIONALS: THE DIFFERENTIATION OF THE FIELD

Danish football fandom began to flourish when a sudden break with amateurism sparked the development of fan clubs and fan cultures around the big clubs. In what follows in this chapter, I will review the history of Danish football to make the following arguments. First, Danish football fans found inspiration in other European fan cultures, but Danish fandom also found its own identity in being less violent and more focused on symbolic exchanges of their identity. Second, the division between countryside and cities, and the divided support for multiple clubs when people move around in the country, has created a unique structure of identity which is perhaps more based on following, rather than supporting a specific club, and a lessened feel of socioeconomic belonging to a specific club.

In this chapter, I will show how Danish football developed from being a set of loosely defined practices around playing ball to becoming two interconnected fields of football culture. One field in which football culture is orchestrated, produced and communicated by a number of professionals who are operated by clearly defined economic goals. And one field in which football culture is shared, experienced and consumed by people or fans who can be either deeply enmeshed in social relations with other fans, or simply enjoying a match alone in front of the TV now and then. What is common to both fields is the strong institutionalisation of the how things are working, how things are said and how things are repeated within some clear boundaries. In the following, I will show how these fields came into being.

When we speak of Danish football culture, we typically refer to both the culture unfolded in the everyday context of amateur clubs, in public schools as well as the professionals playing in the best league in Denmark, and the fans who attend these matches. While there is one central organisation (DBU) orchestrating events across both amateur and professional football, it is nevertheless entirely different agents and forms of capital which is at stake in each of these domains. Historically, amateur football culture in Denmark can be conceived as one social field in Bourdieu’s sense. By this I mean that everyone playing and organising football was more or less interacting and relating to each other. But with the advent of some important historical events, which I shall later explore in more detail, this field was differentiated into separate fields with their own sets of logics, forms of capital, institutions and agents. The emerging professional field also brought with it a fandom culture inherited from other European countries where professionalism was established decades before.

In this dissertation, I have used the term ‘the Danish field of football culture’ as a description of the specific field where professionals produce football (players, club owners, news media etc.) and fans consume football (people watching or going to matches, discussing the standing in the Superliga etc.). The field of amateur football culture (non-professional players and all the organisation of matches related to this) cannot be entirely separated from the field of professional football culture, but in terms of the communication of football culture to fans of football culture, these fields are quite different. The professional agents mainly produce football culture as communication to fans
in order to earn money (which does of course not exclude that these agents enjoy the football matches themselves); and the fans who receive this communication are essential to the (economic) reproduction of this field.

In what follows, I trace how the development of the field has resulted in a highly professionalised production of football fandom and a corresponding field of Danish football fans and football audiences. The separation of the production of football culture and its consumption is, however, a distinction which can only be maintained through a historical analysis of the field. If we look at football culture in Denmark around the end of the 19th century this distinction would not make much sense. At that point in time, football was a sport which was, from an organisational point of view, very close to other sports (most football clubs in Denmark also originated as clubs which were organising different sports beside football, for example cricket). And the distinction between audiences and players was rather a matter of football skills than a matter of different purposes and ends.

Additionally, I attempt to create an overview of the social field of Danish fandom and how this field works in terms of the production and consumption of football fandom. Moreover, the discussion outlines how communication has been extended through traditional media (newspapers, radio, television etc.). Later in the dissertation, I shall use this contextualisation to understand the particular uses of the web in terms of the communication and meta-communication of football fandom.

Today, the production of Danish football is a highly professional business and even clubs in the first division (Denmark has a league above the first division called ‘Superligaen’) are managed as companies and players are paid to be able to play as fulltime professionals. In many ways, the history of the Danish field of football culture is not that different from other fields in other European countries. Yet, it is important to emphasize the particular logics and distinctions by which professionals operate in this field and how these professionals work to produce football as cultural forms which can be communicated to fans.

THE RISE OF DANISH FOOTBALL CULTURE

In the beginning of the 19th century, Denmark had a close relationship with Germany. However, in 1862 Bismarck was appointed Minister President of Prussia and shortly afterwards, in 1864, Bismarck declared war on Denmark. Denmark was easily defeated and had to give up large areas of land at the border between Germany and Denmark. As a result of the war, Denmark moved closer to Britain, both economically and socially. As part of extending the relations with the Britain, British workers were invited to help Denmark build its railway system. And although workers did not have much spare time, the British workers introduced the game of football to Danes in the 1870s (Grønkjær and Olsen, 2007, p. 14). Had the game been introduced ten to twenty years later, as it was in other European countries, the professional side of the game would perhaps have been much more pronounced. However, the game which was imported to Denmark was the amateur game along with amateur values (Grønkjær and Olsen, 2007, p. 17). It was also imported along with cricket and in the years up till the turn of the century, cricket and
football were played by the same players and in the same clubs – football being more of a winter sport while cricket would be played in the summer period. Not surprisingly, football and cricket were fighting for the same members as well as for the same spectators (Grønkjær and Olsen, 2007, p. 40) but eventually football turned out to be the most popular game.

The first Danish clubs were also some of the first football clubs on the continent. Already in 1880, the Danish club KB from Copenhagen promoted the game and many provincial clubs were also established not long after. Although football was quickly adopted by most parts of the country, clubs and matches were still attached very locally, even inside cities (Grønkjær and Olsen, 2007, p. 26). At the end of the 19th century, most players could hardly afford to travel to other cities (both due to travel expenses and due to losing payment for work), so football matches were also difficult to arrange – at least on a national scale. As in many other countries, the close attachment to cities or city parts became a strong factor in producing an identity between spectators and clubs. However, there was an important struggle which clubs needed to engage in before hoping to establish an identity between place and people: the struggle for playing ground.

Especially in Copenhagen, it was difficult to find anywhere to play football. Besides using the green areas in Copenhagen (‘Fællederne’) for grazing and for piling up snow in the winter, they were also used for other games as well as military exercises, and for years football clubs had to either apply every time they needed to play or rent the areas for a limited period. Not surprisingly, this was not a good situation for any club that wanted to institutionalise training, teams or matches. Moreover, owning a playing ground was also critical to getting fees from spectators and therefore also to the economic viability of the club (Grønkjær and Olsen, 2007, p. 40). As a result of this situation, the real power in the Danish football world was not with the national football association (DBU) but rather with clubs which owned their own playing ground. An example of the economic importance and the prestige of the first clubs was furthermore established by the fact that the first national match was financed and played by a club (Grønkjær and Olsen, 2007, p. 45).

If we return to the institutionalisation of matches, Denmark was an early adopter of the English rules which were translated into Danish in 1886. Matches between clubs were seen somewhat earlier and most of these matches were a result of clubs challenging KB – although most clubs did not feel that they were strong enough to present any real challenge to KB. Perhaps as a result of the institutionalisation of rules, the first real tournament in Denmark was held in 1888 (’Pokalturneringen’), and this tournament went rather successfully and further contributed to the popularity of the game (Grønkjær and Olsen, 2007, p. 30). Yet, to give tournaments a more permanent significance for clubs, and as a result of watching how the organisation of football in Britain could bring a greater number of spectators to matches, a national football association, DBU (Dansk Boldspil-Union), was established in 1889. DBU did not become an immediate success. Firstly, because the subsequent years were followed by a decrease in popularity of the game(Grønkjær and Olsen, 2007, p. 34)(Grønkjær and Olsen, 2007, p. 34)(Grønkjær and Olsen,
Secondly, because the establishment of local unions, following the constitution of DBU, was sometimes followed by the abandonment of DBU by these local unions.

In the first many years of football the institutionalization of the game meet one major obstacle: money. Not only was transportation expensive, but even basic equipment like balls could be expensive to get. So while amateurism was the ideology in DBU, money still had to be generated in order to pay for basic expenses and to support the many poor clubs. Fortunately for the institutionalization of football in Denmark, a number of changes happened in the beginning of the 20th century which would secure the support of football as one of the major sports in the country. Firstly, the national team had success at international events like the Olympics in the 1910s, and this success contributed further to the popularity of the game (Grønkjær and Olsen, 2007, p. 45). Secondly, the introduction of the 8 hour work day in 1919 gave workers more spare time which could be used to play football. Thirdly, the extension of the possibility for cheaper and faster transportation made it easier to arrange matches and tournaments.

As football grew more popular, the gains from arranging matches also became more attractive to clubs. Especially the clubs which were financially independent and owned their own playing ground were claiming institutional power. And when the football association in Copenhagen (KBU) would not give the large clubs, with their own playing grounds, majority vote, they simply created their own league (in 1911). Not long after, the clubs got the majority vote they wished for. While DBU stood for the values representing football, the first main battle between values and money was decided to the advantage of money. The spectators were of such importance to the economic viability of clubs, that they represented a major influence for those who could attract them to matches.

Not surprisingly, both the economic importance of matches, and the general increase in the popularity of football, made the need for a national tournament obvious to many. In 1912 the first national tournament took place, clearly favouring clubs from Copenhagen (Grønkjær and Olsen, 2007, p. 64), since they believed themselves to be superior to clubs from the countryside. And while matches between English teams and Danish teams were still popular, the national tournament soon attracted great interest and many spectators. However, DBU was strongly attached to the values of amateurism and even though its leaders recognized the importance of elite players, they still saw elite players as intimately connected to ordinary players. But as income grew from spectators, players at least wanted economic compensation for playing and travelling instead of working, and eventually DBU introduced the possibility of compensation for lost work and for travelling expenses – although not without controversies (Grønkjær and Olsen, 2007, pp. 70-71). The general opinion in the 1920s was still that Denmark was too small for professionalism and the provincial clubs were not good enough anyway, but the rising amount of money coming from spectators as well as the introduction of different forms of compensation, however small, would slowly begin to transform opinions about professionalization.

If we take a retrospectively look at the rise of the Danish field of football culture, we can begin to discern some of the distinctions, agents and logics which today dominate the field. First, the economically strong clubs would
dominate the field and even though the national institutionalization of the field (DBU and other unions) was quite strong the structure of tournaments was decided by those in economic power. Second, amateur values, rather than class values (at least after the Second World War) were dominant, although they had to make way for practical and economic considerations and necessities. Third, the importance of spectators for the sport became clear to everyone. Spectators were essential for the existence of the sport as a game for amateurs and elites alike. Fourth, the relation between football grounds and spectators was established in this period. While football grounds would later become symbolically important for how spectators would identify with a particular space, they had a very important practical significance in this period. Fifth, the symbolic forms of football culture were beginning to emerge as independent economic and social spheres with different contradictions, discussions and logics of practice. As a result, we see that the ground for an independent fan scene in Denmark was beginning to emerge, and that the professional agents within the field were also becoming dependent on the growth of a supporter culture and the money that followed.

**Professionalization and its consequences**

The professionalization of Danish football never seemed inevitable, nor did it directly result in the rise of fan culture in Denmark. Yet, when we look at how the symbolic of football culture, both matches, clubs and icons, developed internationally, it seemed that some kind of professionalization, resulting in higher quality matches, more fans attending matches, and fan culture maturing, would have happened sooner or later. Inevitable or not, the transformation that the professionalization began, would result in a much more specialized field of production with its own rules and (main economic) goals, and a field of fan culture inspired by especially the British fan scene but also constituted by the specific clubs and demographics of Danish fans. In what follows, I shall focus on some key developments and the consequences for how the amateur field of football split into the two autonomously fields of football production and fan culture that we know today.

Although the popularity of football increased in the 1920s, professionalism was a long way off. However, the professionalization of the game had already begun as money grew more available and audiences grew larger. Not only did workers associations begin to take an interest in the game, but local and national authorities also began to finance new stadia and facilities for players (Grønkjær and Olsen, 2007, p. 80). They saw the game as both a healthy way to spend the extra spare time which workers had fought for, as well as a mean to strengthen the local community. Moreover, a national betting system (‘Tipskuponen’) for football was established and became so popular in the years after the Second World War that politicians worried whether people could actually afford it. Again, the problems of the way that DBU handled the ideals of amateurism became obvious. On the one hand DBU would use any means to bring more money into the sport and on the other hand, it would deny players the right to get paid from the large amount of money their work would contribute to generating.

Yet, DBU (together with the large clubs) continued to arrange tournaments and matches to secure larger and larger audiences (Grønkjær and Olsen, 2007, p. 78) while still insisting on only allowing amateurs to play in the Danish
league as well as on the national team. As a result, many talents moved to international clubs at an early age and many never played for a Danish team. However, from the beginning of the 1950s opinions began to change perhaps also due to the fact that clubs found new methods to pay players anyway (Lundberg, 1986, p. 9); from cheap houses to extremely high travel expense refunds. In the 1950s, DBU also slowly began to change its view on Danish professionals in other countries. Earlier, Danish players who had chosen the professional road would never be allowed to play for the national team, but DBU first introduced a period of a couple of years of quarantine that was gradually reduced to a very short period. As both the national teams and the strongest clubs in the country were gradually losing ground to other countries (Hjortshøj, 2007, p. 45), the consequences of amateurism became more and more clear to media agents as well as many people within DBU. And although the chairman of DBU in the 1950s was still convinced that the success of the game hinged on the success of football as a sport, and that for example participation in the world Championship was neither necessary nor purposeful, many began to see the separation of amateurs and elites as inevitable (Grønkjær and Olsen, 2007, p. 114).

The 1960s was the turning point in which many agents in the football world began to create their own visions for the game rather than following DBU or the amateur ideals. Hence, in 1969 the first division clubs made their own organisation to promote professionalism, and the idea of an alternative league was promoted by the club AGF already in the same year (Grønkjær and Olsen, 2007, p. 166). However, it was not just agents within the club which initiated the first steps to professionalism (at this time it would probably be safe to say that different people within the large clubs were of different opinion on this issue). DBU itself had, in the struggle for money, begun to allow ads on national player shirts (Grønkjær and Olsen, 2007, p. 162), and ads for sports outfits were becoming increasingly popular in the 1960s (Hjortshøj, 2007, p. 31). As the maximization of profits on player outfits were not enough, the law on spare time (‘fritidsloven’) from 1968, which gave state support to football clubs, gave money to clubs to hire managers and trainers (Grønkjær and Olsen, 2007, p. 152). Not surprisingly, many began to ask why players could not get paid when everyone else could, and many of the big clubs, perhaps without considering the consequences in much detail, began to promote the idea. Moreover, a report on the decreasing number of spectators in the 1960s and 1970s concluded that the main reason for this development was due to many strong players going abroad (Grønkjær and Olsen, 2007, p. 138).

In 1970 DBU took its first step toward allowing professionalism in Danish when it decided to include professional Danish players from international clubs to participate on the national team (although not paid) (Lundberg, 1988, p. 35) – perhaps partly due to a number of losses by the national team in that year. Furthermore, both clubs and the DBU began a close relationship with media agents in the beginning of the 1970s to increase the money from broadcast rights to the game (Grønkjær and Olsen, 2007, p. 162). However, it was only when DBU realised that the plans to make an alternative league was very close to completion in 1977 that they took the final step towards professionalism and accepted the selling and buying of players as well as payment for their work in the same year (Grønkjær and Olsen, 2007, p. 166). At this point, the separation of football into an amateur sport and professional
entertainment was almost complete. Yet, I will argue that neither the clubs nor DBU had much idea about how professionalism would change the field in the following years. First of all, many clubs probably believed that professionalism would make it easy for them to hire the best players at a reasonable wage. What we know for sure, is that many clubs ruined themselves as a result of professionalism (Grønkjær and Olsen, 2007, p. 174); the increase in revenue could not follow the increase in wages.

In the first decade after the introduction of professionalism, the player wages rose sharply (Grønkjær and Olsen, 2007, p. 204). However, it was only the best players who could expect much more payment while many average professionals would have difficulties maintaining a contract. As a result of paying high wages to the best players, many clubs would have difficulties maintaining a healthy economy and even though many clubs survived for years by getting support from fans and rich business men, they were still, and some perhaps still are, in the process of realigning themselves as professional business organisations. Yet, it was clear that while the elites would perhaps struggle to handle professionalism, it was in the process of distancing football as professional field from the amateur sport of football. The professional agents had during the 1980s got completely different interests than the amateurs and their clubs (Grønkjær and Olsen, 2007, p. 200).

The difference between the organisation of professional clubs and teams had simply become much larger (Lind, 1999, p. 53) and while some clubs would keep both the amateurs and professionals within physical reach of each other, the general direction of professional clubs would be to transcend the geographical or organisational structures of more traditional clubs (Lind, 1999, p. 53). Moreover, clubs began to merge with each other to be able to compete in the best league – since the structure of professional football in Denmark was clearly made to favour few but strong clubs. What is interesting about these mergers of old traditional clubs is that they articulated the new values of professionals in the field. While many of the old clubs were seen as old rivals by fans and spectators, these rivalries had to be cast aside by professionals to make way for a viable economic future in professional football for the old clubs (Grønkjær and Olsen, 2007, p. 194). Some might have thought that the new forms of professionalism in the field would somehow benefit the amateurs as well, at least for those clubs which had a reasonable surplus. However, the largest clubs, beginning with Brøndby in 1987, was going to become quoted on the stock exchange, so whatever surplus they would have, would not really benefit the amateurs. Instead, amateur clubs and teams were slowly becoming completely independent from their professional part, and the 1980s also saw a revival of amateurs cups (Grønkjær and Olsen, 2007, p. 200).

While professionalism began in the 1970s, it was the 1980s which really saw the changing face of Danish elite football. The strong clubs would now care less about an ideal concern for football and more about how their economic interests were best taken care of (as well as their ambitions for acquiring prestige within the professional field by winning cups and tournaments), and most of these clubs would rather have one strong league where all the money would go, rather than a system with more economic solidarity (Grønkjær and Olsen, 2007, p. 214). And although DBU would enter the professionalism with some reservations to for example how large sums players contracts could
be agreed to, DBU soon had to realize that the transformation of the field was now headed in the direction of other European countries. Although Denmark would still have its own problems, many of the general developments like open transfer lists, which produced an even more clear distinction between those involved with big money and those who was not (Grønkjær and Olsen, 2007, p. 184). It would perhaps be an exaggeration to say that the professionalization of the field had created a uniform structure of the best clubs in Denmark, but the professionalization of the field had certainly produced a clearer focus on marketing as a driving force behind choices and values in the best clubs.

Even among the clubs from Superligaen, there are still huge differences in both the running of the clubs as well as the particular goals, they have: Some clubs are clearly more dependent on local support as well as political support, e.g. FCN and Brøndby IF (Hjortshøj, 2007, p. 41), while other clubs are much more marketing driven, e.g. FCK and OB (Hjortshøj, 2007, p. 43). Yet others are dependent on rich sponsors (AGF, Lyngby) or strong leaders (AaB, FCM) (Hjortshøj, 2007, p. 44). What is common to most clubs, however, is that the professionalization of the field is a gradual process of adjusting the production of football culture to the increasing expectations and money channelled through clubs. So even though Brøndby FC might still hold to the last remnants of the old values and structure before the advent of professionalism, the turnover in the club is around 100 times higher today than it was in 1985 (Sperling, Nordskilde and Bergander, 2010, p. 19). This does not imply that the largest clubs in Denmark only think of money, but that the success in tournaments and matches must always be interpreted by these agents in terms of their revenue for the club; and this perspective must also be taken into account when we understand how professional agents within the field produce content and deal with spectators and fans.

What consequences did the professionalization of the field have? With professionalization I do not only refer to the accept of professional players, but the whole process of producing a clear distinction between those clubs which produce football culture with the main intention of making money from this process and those clubs which are primarily sport clubs. The consequences of professionalization were many and I shall summarize some of the most important; focusing on how this process reconfigured the symbolic form of the match, the club and the icon.

First, professionalization led to a restructuration of tournaments and matches. Instead of being planned and developed as part of a sport spanning amateurs and elites, tournaments and matches were developed in a direction which produced the highest possible revenue from spectators, transmissions, European tournament participation and other sources. Although not solely a consequence of professionalization, the match slowly began to be produced as an event which could increase the value of each spectator as well as produce the conditions which would attract new spectators to the events. Second, professionalization led to a restructuration of clubs. From being driven by people from the local community and the members of the club, the best clubs were slowly turned towards, either voluntary or from economic necessity, becoming companies with a highly professional marketing driven approach to managing supporters. Some clubs (e.g. F.C. Copenhagen) were even created as ‘constructions’ which were deliberately separated from their amateur base. This professionalization, and the distance between members, club
owners, managers and spectators, would produce the conditions for managing spectators as fans or customers, and to produce football as entertainment rather as a sport following the ideals of the amateur game. Third, the transfer and contractual relationship with players made players more of a commodity which had to be nourished as an investment for the largest possible returns; making the distinction between elite players and amateur players even more pronounced than before. Perhaps most importantly, however, was the way in which the professionalization of the field led to the maturing of how communication about football was produced and consumed.

FOOTBALL FANDOM IN DENMARK

As mentioned, the Danish fan culture arose in the 80’ties; inspired by British fan culture but also different in many ways. In the following, I shall highlight a few central logics specific to the Danish field of football culture. First, we see that fans mostly ‘play by the rules’, being in dialogue with each other and producers, rather than attempting to disrupt the field itself. While oppositions between clubs are accentuated strongly in meetings between fans, these oppositions merely represent symbolic differences, rather than actual differences. Second, demographic differences are more attached to the typical life trajectory of many people in Denmark, moving from the countryside or smaller towns to the main cities. Loyalties are thus typically divided and fans of opposing clubs will find company with each other in daily life. This also means that those who are typically present on stadia are young people while older fans often enjoy football culture with family or friends; taking departure in existing social bonds rather than attempting to create new bonds by joining a fan club. As we shall see in later chapters, this logic is also reflected in the way the web is used for communication.

HOOLIGANS AND ROLIGANS

As in many other countries, football spectators initially looked like everyone else. Some were perhaps wearing their Sunday dress, but otherwise spectators would look rather much alike. Marches through towns became known already in the 1920s and 1930s, but these marches were more a display of the club with for example players and members than fan marches as we know them today (Grønkjær and Olsen, 2007, p. 141). And while tempers could rise during matches, spectators would usually come and leave matches in peace and order – even clapping or shouting during matches was rarely seen in the beginning of the 20th century. Up till the 1950s the coverage of matches developed in many ways, including player interviews and focus on other club relations. Yet, the idea that football, even in the best league, was played for the sake of spectators was still rather strange to the agents within the field (Grønkjær and Olsen, 2007, p. 134).

Whether a direct consequence of the professionalization of the field or not, the Danish national team had success at an international level. As a result, Danish fans began to celebrate and support the national team at major international events in the beginning of the 1980s. At this time, the new fan movement supporting the national
team felt that the tragedies from the English fan scene, perhaps especially the Heysel tragedy, called for a more supportive and peaceful movement (Peitersen, 2009, p. 376), and they thus called named themselves ‘roligans’ in contrast to the English hooligans (Peitersen, 2009, p. 376); the name ‘roligan’ was derived from the Danish word ‘rolig’ which essentially means peacefully or steady. While the roligan movement was attached to a particular time in Danish football, before Danish fan clubs began to emerge, its legacy is perhaps still found in the Danish fan scene in terms of the more humoristic stance towards fan culture (Peitersen, 2009, p. 382). And we might say that even though the Danish fans began to copy fan cultures from other countries in the 1990s (Grønkjær and Olsen, 2007, p. 230), the humoristic ways of interpreting events was and still is central to understanding fandom in a Danish context.

The first official supporter club in Denmark was ‘AaB Support Club’, founded in 1990, and other fan clubs quickly followed in the beginning of the 1990s (Peitersen, 2009, p. 377). The fan culture established in Denmark in the beginning of the 1990s was heavily inspired by English fan practices (Peitersen, 2009, p. 377), which is also illustrated by the fact that many supporter clubs in Denmark have, in contrast to other Nordic countries, an English name (Peitersen, 2009, p. 378). The fast maturing of an institutionalised sphere of fan clubs can be illustrated by two facts: already in 1994, the fan clubs had constituted a fan club association to promote fan culture in Denmark, and not long after the establishment of fan clubs, many fan magazines (fanzines) came into existence “with traditional team talk and reports on various fan activities and some discussion columns, which articulate the voice of the terraces” (Peitersen, 2009, p. 382).

While the match had for a long time been something special for fans, the combined effects of television, high level play, strong player icons in the Danish league and the emergence of the new fan clubs, would transform the match day to something which included much more than just the game itself. Stadia were further modernized and many traditions from other countries were imported into a Danish football context. Cheerleaders became part of the Danish fan culture during the 1990s and the British fans’ use of banners, flags and confetti was imported even more quickly (Grønkjær and Olsen, 2007, p. 232). Also the Italian TIFO (in Italian a tifoso is a supporter and the TIFO refers to any kind of choreography made by supporters), was seen in Danish stadia from 1996. As a result, the match was being transformed into a ritualized sphere with its own structure where fans and spectators are not just invited to watch a particular sporting event but rather to enter a whole setting of interrelated events with the actual game as the central focus. In this perspective, the stadium has slowly turned from being a mere place of observing to becoming a haven with its own rules and where the participants are no longer, at least not to the same degree, under the same obligations and restrictions as other places (Joern, 2006, p. 61).

Using the metaphor of the ‘party’ might help us understand how the match is arranged and structured within a Danish context. The roligan movement introduced this perspective in Danish football culture, and while many of the traditions imported to a Danish context, “songs, tifos and synchro activities (clapping, jumping etc.)” (Peitersen, 2009, p. 378), have more traditional meanings within football fandom (e.g. anti-fandom), many of these...
activities are directed at creating a specific atmosphere of entertainment. This does not mean that rivalry and instances of violence are never seen within a Danish context, but that these are rare enough that most fans would not mind taking their children to a match – even between arch rival clubs as Brøndby and FCK (Madsen, 2002, p. 5). Hence, for most fans, the match day is not only about the match itself, but as much about the communality with other fans, both before and after the game (Havelund et al., 2006, p. 12); and this communality is partly based on discussion and being updated through the events in and around the game (Peitersen, 2004:31).

THE ORGANISATION OF SUPPORT

As already discussed, fan clubs are of recent origin. However, the “supporter associations” (’Støtteforeninger’) date much longer back, but most of these were rather different from the fan clubs of today; often they had about 20-30 members (Peitersen, 2004:12). And while the new fan clubs constituted in the beginning of the 1990s began to support clubs in a way inspired by English, Spanish and Italian traditions, many of these were constituted for the simple purpose of saving money when going to away matches (Damsgaard, Døngsøe and Jensen, 1997:19). However, within 10-12 years from the constitution of the Danish fan clubs, the fan culture and the clubs have developed new ways of supporting (Peitersen, 2004:169).

Fan clubs in Denmark are actively supporting the club and the team and implied in the idea of support is that the fan only supports one club (Damsgaard, Døngsøe and Jensen, 1997:23) and keep supporting the club also when it does not produce results (Magnussen and Storm, 2005:203). And while some of the big clubs have seen increasingly many supporter fractions (Joern, 2006, p. 7), most supporters are members of the official fan club (Havelund et al., 2006, p. 8). In general, supporters are quite young and male, and in contrast to the idea of football culture as a working class interest, surveys indicate that Danish supporters are at least as well educated as the average Dane (Havelund et al., 2006). Many Danes move between different parts of the country during their lifetime, but it seems that many fans keep supporting the same club. We do not have data to support this hypothesis, but surveys have indicated that only about half of the Danish supporters have their favourite team nearest to home (Havelund et al., 2006, p. 8).

Although there is evidence that most Danish teams can achieve success in the Superliga, and that many fans believe that success will come to their club eventually, there are huge differences in the number of supporters and supporter culture in different Danish clubs. The two clubs, Brøndby and FC Copenhagen share most of the fans in Denmark; each club being as large as the total number of fans in Sweden (Peitersen, 2009, p. 377). According to earlier estimations, the number of fans relating to each these two clubs equals the number of fans for all the other clubs combined (Peitersen, 2004:49). As a result of the much larger number of supporters in relation to Brøndby and FCK, the supporter factions for these two clubs display much more heterogeneous values and forms of capital. However, common to most supporter groups in Denmark is the need for visually supportive choreographies inspired by Italian and English traditions and often planned many days ahead (Peitersen, 1991:27). While most fan clubs work
independently from the organisation of the club, many of the events and shows that fan clubs arrange, have to get accepted by the club’s management; even taking a banner inside the stadium is under supervision from the security team (Jessen, 2011, p. 47).

As with many other countries, supporting the club also includes the traditional disdain and ridiculing of other supporters and team. While many traditional oppositions between clubs have been diminished with the merging of clubs in the professional era of the Superliga, Copenhagen still seems large enough to include two major oppositional clubs: Brøndby and FCK (Peitersen, 2009, p. 379). Beside this classical fight, the distinction between countryside and town is also still used as an identity. While many clubs may lack any historical sense of opposition, the supporters still find that anti-fandom is part of supporting and being a supporter (Havelund et al., 2006, p. 13). In the classical fight between Brøndby and FCK, the supporters from Brøndby have often taken pride in that their club is not ‘rich’ or ‘bought’ but part of a local community and local engagement, while FCK supporters usually portray themselves as better educated and well off than supporters from Brøndby. And while FCK is certainly located in a part of Copenhagen with higher real estate prices, surveys have yet to indicate any real or significant difference between the education of Brøndby and FCK supporters (Havelund et al., 2006, p. 14). There are also tones of political identity in some supporter clubs, but it seems that the general opinion within Danish supporter culture is that football and politics should be separated (Havelund et al., 2006, p. 15) – perhaps a legacy from a long tradition in DBU to separate these things. Additionally, most Danish supporters think that physical violence should not be part of the game (Havelund et al., 2006, p. 15) and prefer to attack opposing fans in words and symbolic displays instead.

Within the European fan environment, there have been many discussions among supporters about the commercialization of clubs, the increasing marketing of clubs and the rising ticket prices. While these discussions are also present in a Danish context, it seems that the late origin of supporter culture in Denmark has made fans more accepting of the marriage between money and football culture than in other European countries (Maigaard, 2011, p. 36). While this does not necessarily make supporters embrace the developments of marketing within the professional sphere of the club, it does mean that most supporters accept that modern marketing and money is a condition for success of their club (Madsen, 2002, p. 8); and to some extent also the consequences this has for the running of the club, the organization of matches and the buying and selling of players. On the other hand, clubs in Denmark are, despite the increasing money flow from TV transmission rights, still economically dependent on the number of spectators (Magnussen and Storm, 2005:80). Yet, despite the critical stance of supporters in Denmark, the criticism needs to adhere to the rules of the field in general. Supporters are for example not allowed to make any visual criticism of TV stations or UEFA on any Danish stadium (Jessen, 2011, p. 48). Consequently, we might say that the Danish supporters are indeed critical of the marketing involved in professional Danish clubs, but the forms of communication in which almost all supporters engage is that of dialogue rather than fierce attacks.

This does not mean that violence never occurs between supporters in Denmark. Despite the legacy a being peaceful, several incidences of violence have occurred – both between Danish fans and fans from international clubs as well
as between different fan clubs in Denmark (Rasmussen and Havelund, 2007, pp. 5-8). However, most incidents registered by the police, seem rather innocent compared to the English supporter scene (most incidences involve very small objects thrown at the police or people yelling at the police) and are limited to very few supporters (Møller, 2005, p. 14). Supporters take much more pride in for example songs (Joern, 2006, p. 42) and other forms of ‘symbolic’ violence where the loathing of other fans is communicated in inventive and creative ways. Lastly, it is also important to note that in Denmark the term ‘fan club’ is more popular, but most fan clubs in Denmark would in this terminology be understood as supporter clubs since their explicit purpose is to support a particular Danish football club (and a few of these clubs also commemorate a particular player icon). The really important distinction in the field, however, is probably between those fans who ‘participates’ in matches (e.g. by songs) and those fans who are merely spectators, whether in front of the computer, TV or on the stadium (Peitersen, 2004:17). This distinction is of course a historical distinction, specific to the Danish field of football fandom, and I shall later show how it can be used in the empirical ‘construction’ of the field.

**FOOTBALL MEDIA IN DENMARK**

In the next chapter, I will analyse communication about football in 3rd degree media from the perspective of those people who actually maintain and invest time in these new media. From my perspective, we cannot isolate 3rd degree media from other media forms, and to understand what is happening with the new 3rd degree media, we also need to understand the role played by 1st and 2nd degree media in the field. Different media have contributed to the development of the field and the particular ways in which the symbolic forms have been communicated within the Danish field. The media and the media agents have been important to the popularization of the game and also to the symbolic autonomy of the field of (professionalized) football culture. What is important to realise in this context is that the use of the web is placed in a specific institutional setting where each medium was not only chosen for its specific affordances of communication, but also for specific economic and practical reasons. In the following, I shall focus on how radio, newspaper and TV became relevant and central media to how the Danish field operates – and thereby make it clear why the web as a medium for producing communication about football is used the way it is, as we shall see in the next chapter.

Even late in the 1990s many managers and football professionals (especially within DBU) were afraid that radio and TV would keep spectators away from the terraces (Grønkjær and Olsen, 2007, p. 120). However, the professionalization and increased exposure of games in the 1980s and 1990s actually increased or at least ran parallel to an increase of the number of spectators on the terraces. Hence to a certain extent, it seems that the football star or icon, within a Danish context, was particularly promoted in both Danish newspapers and radio beginning from the 1920s (Frandsen, 1995). It does, to some extent, coincide with a period in which Danish players began to have success internationally. Yet, one must recognize the importance of news media in promoting these players as icons beyond their mere appearance as players in matches. If we look at the symbolic form of the club, the support of
Danish clubs began shortly after the new television agreements which made the Superliga matches available for national transmission.

Television itself does not make people join fan clubs, but the televised matches of Danish clubs and the rising quality of play might have contributed or supported the rise of a fan culture in Denmark resembling other countries. The idea presented by Tomlinson (Tomlinson and Whannel, 1986) that television brought attention to fans and fan support in a way not experienced before, is not evident in the Danish league. Yet, there seems to be a complex number of interrelated events: the professionalization of the game in the 1980s, the buying of transmission rights for the best league at the end of the 1980s by TV2, the remodelling and renaming of the Superliga in 1991 and the constitution of the first fan club in 1991. There is not enough analytical material to support any further conclusions about the relationship between the TV (both as medium and as news agents) and the symbolic form of the club, but it is probably safe to conclude that TV played an important role in the symbolic development of Danish football clubs and the related supporter culture. In what follows, I briefly discuss how newspapers, radio and television began to be used as media for communicating football culture to (new) audiences.

Newspaper coverage of football in Denmark has undergone many transformations. In the first years of football in Denmark, newspaper coverage of matches was mostly notifications about coming matches and about match results. Line-ups and other more detailed information was absent in the beginning, and articles were more concerned about introducing readers to what football was as a game (rules etc.) (Grønkjær and Olsen, 2007, p. 120). However, in the 1910s some journalists began to realise that people were using much time speaking about football at for example the workplace and subsequently began to write about these things, first in local newspapers but quickly followed by columns in national papers (Lundberg, 1986, pp. 130-131). The first daily sport section was introduced by B.T. in 1916 (Grønkjær and Olsen, 2007, p. 120) and in the 1920s the match reports were already becoming filled with details (Frandsen, 1995, p. 87).

The coverage of matches in newspapers had some important consequences. First, the newspapers coverage attracted new audiences to football (Grønkjær and Olsen, 2007, p. 120); perhaps also people who would normally not be members of a club or attend matches on the stadium. Second, the newspaper coverage helped to promote football (or more generally sport) as a symbolic universe with its own autonomy from other fields (Frandsen, 1995, p. 82). Third, newspapers journalists began to report on how the match was experienced as a spectator (Frandsen, 1995, p. 86). Today, it might seem rather obvious that the spectator would experience the game in a certain way, but at that time the idea of football as entertainment was rather strange to the ideals of football as an amateur sport and the ideals about physical exercise and brilliance. The idea that spectators would be part of the game was only slowly beginning to emerge.

Thus, media agents began to understand that they might play an important part in the communication of football and began to understand their role as more active in the production of communication about football and football
experiences and not just reporters of match results (Frandsen, 1995, p. 91); they wanted to place themselves at the centre of football experiences (Frandsen, 1995, p. 90). And while the newspapers began to cover matches more extensively, they also began to pay attention to both clubs (managers, experts etc.) and the players beginning with a column on ‘What they said after the match’ (‘Hvad de sagde efter Kampen’) (Frandsen, 1995, p. 92) but later, in the 1940s, substituted with full-length articles on individual players and experts (Frandsen, 1995, p. 157). The interviews with players and experts was of course meant to provide further details on the match, but also served to add another dimension to the match; that of experiencing the temporal and spatial structure of the match from ‘within’ (Frandsen, 1995, p. 158). This extension of the universe of the match to the symbolic forms of the club and the players, expanding the match as a contest or a game to becoming part of the particular symbolic structures related to both clubs and players was further enhanced by the introduction of the radio in the communication of football culture.

In many ways, radio worked to produce the same effect as the newspaper in terms of communicating football culture. The first match was transmitted by radio in 1926 and it further helped to bring professional football to everyone (Grønkjær and Olsen, 2007, p. 120). And while the newspapers reached wider football audiences, radio perhaps even reached beyond traditional football audiences (Frandsen, 1995, p. 99). Moreover, the radio continued the development of more focus on particular persons and icons within football (Frandsen, 1995, p. 100). Moreover, the radio could support newspaper articles on particular players and in the 1948 Olympic, media agents actively began to combine newspaper and radio coverage in producing a form of idolatry towards players. Not surprisingly, the first Danish player biography was published not many years after when the Danish professional, Carl Skoma’r Hansen, wrote his memories in 1954 (Grønkjær and Olsen, 2007, p. 52). In addition to increasing the attention to players and their individual performances, radio also produced an increased attention to particular events during the match which were dramatized by the speaker (Frandsen, 1995, p. 114) and emphasized by for example pauses (Frandsen, 1995, p. 118). So while newspapers would increase the analytical and contextual understanding of the match, radio enhanced the match as a drama which builds up to certain events and which is finalized in the last minutes of the match (Frandsen, 1995, p. 151). However, radio reporting also began to make many references to past events and matches (Frandsen, 1995, p. 146) as filling time in between important events.

While the first match (a national match) was transmitted on television in 1956 (Grønkjær and Olsen, 2007, p. 154), it took many years for the agents within the football world to accept the idea that matches would be transmitted live. They feared that televised matches would draw spectators away from stadia, and a DBU report from the beginning of the 1960s concluded, to the advantage of the sceptics, that a TV-transmitted game would result in 1/3 less spectators (Grønkjær and Olsen, 2007, p. 154). As the number of spectators fell in the 1960s and 1970s, this fear was perhaps partly justified. Even in the 1980s, the leaders within clubs and DBU were rather ambivalent about whether the transmission of football would attract more spectators to matches on stadia or make them stay at home (Grønkjær and Olsen, 2007, p. 210). Nonetheless, the professionalization of the field was connected to the
transmission of matches; the marriage of television money and expensive players, at least today, seems an inevitable one. What we know for sure, is that the television fees rose rapidly in the 1990s (Grønkjær and Olsen, 2007, p. 226) and that television agents had to invent and produce new audiences for the rising costs that transmission rights would pose to television stations. As a result of this development, the relationship between sponsors, TV-stations and football professionals from clubs and associations grew stronger. So even though media professionals had to keep a critical stance towards developments within the football world, they are not as independent as they sometimes want to be seen (Grønkjær and Olsen, 2007, p. 210) and are dependent on football professionals in order to create the ‘extra’ materials on football which had to be produced to pay for transmission cost.

The quest for making football a profitable business thus transformed the earlier forms of TV transmissions from the national broadcasting organisation (‘Danmarks Radio’) and towards new forms and types of transmission from matches; also inviting for example fans to join commentators in the studio (Grønkjær and Olsen, 2007, p. 211). What has been less explored in research, but is of great importance, is that the quest for expanding transmission time beyond the actual playing time of the match, has further increased attention to both clubs, fans, experts and players and the particular forms of (meta)communication these add to the game. Whatever the reasons, this strategy seems successful. At least it seems like both the number of spectators at stadia and in front of the television have increased as a result of this development (Magnussen and Storm, 2005:26).

**How Media Shaped Danish Football Culture**

If we look at the consequences of televised matches and the collaboration between club agents, association agents and media agents, we can discern a few logics. First, the development of a supporter culture in Denmark has been shaped by the need for a controlled fan environment in terms of transmission. A good example of this is the use of flares which in the 1990s were sold at stadia to fans. But due to the problems of getting good picture quality for TV-transmission, flares were later forbidden (Jessen, 2011, p. 46). Second, an even greater emphasis on particular events has become the standard in TV transmissions (Magnussen and Storm, 2005:107-108) and through replays or slow motions these events can be analysed to a much greater extent than in other media (Frandsen, 1995, p. 177). Third, by for example substituting silent periods in the match with pictures from other events (e.g. fan events) or slow motion replays (Frandsen, 1995, p. 233), TV has put much more attention on feelings and action (Frandsen, 1995, p. 239) in relation to the symbolic forms; increasing the inversion of the temporal and spatial structure of the game into a drama with dynamic peaks and lows.

As a summary of this reconstruction of the Danish field of football fandom, I want to point out that football fandom in Denmark can be understood as a historical development where the production mass-cultural products with high economic value and well defined consumers (fans) is key to understanding the dynamics of the field today. I therefore want to point to the (historical) fact that football in Denmark is produced both as an amateur sport and game that everyone can enjoy as well as a particular way of producing this sport which involves audiences and fans.
as consumers. What I call football (fandom) culture includes both the producers (professionals as club owners, managers, journalists, professional players, police etc.) and those who pay for this production and therefore make it possible: the football audiences and football fans.

In making this distinction, I also argue that football culture, including both professionals and consumers, historically (in Denmark) has developed its own structure which has become more and more autonomous from sport as a game or physical exercise. What is a more complex question, however, is how the field of professional producers is related to the field of consumption, i.e. the fans. The professional field of production is certainly directed towards economic ends. However, the fact that very few Danish clubs have generated any type of economic surplus also points to the argument that economic ends may not always be as important as the symbolic goals. Yet, I would argue that very little in the history of the Danish field(s) of football culture points to the fact that the professional field has been directly influenced in their decisions by the fan culture itself. The idea of prosumers, fans that are both consumers and producers at the same time, cannot be sustained either. As we shall discuss in the next chapter, the use of the web for communicating Danish football was in many cases instantiated by fans, - but also overtaken by the professional field, e.g. Brøndby’s website. I will therefore maintain that it makes sense to see the Danish field of football culture as two subfields, one consisting of producers and one consisting of fans. What makes sense in one subfield does not necessarily make sense in the other, but they are to some degree focussed on the same goal – winning trophies – but not for the exact same reasons and not using the same means.

What follows in the next two chapters is an contemporary analysis of the field of how football is produced and sent to fans by professionals (chapter 7) and how this communication is received and consumed by fans (chapter 8) – with a particular emphasis on the web as the new medium which disturbs or challenges the current order of how things are done and how communication is produced.
Chapter 7: New Media, New Opportunities

We have seen how the Danish football field emerged and how analogue media helped shape the field. But how the web actually used in the field? This chapter is based on a process in which I mapped all Danish football websites and attempted to contact everyone involved with each site. A lot of these sites started out as experiments but were gradually formed by their institutional background. Based on my analysis of how each site communicates with fans, I place all sites into one of four categories: fan sites, portal sites, embedded sites and club sites.

In this chapter, I further show how the websites in each of these categories work according to specific economic and social logics, and what their claim to relevance is. The analysis is based on reviews of the sites and on interviews with the people behind the sites. A key finding is the continuous interplay between the senders and receivers of communication – how the content is created on the basis of what is economically (either in time or money) viable compared to what the users actually want, and what they do with the content.

I end the chapter with an overview of the affordances of each category of site, indicating how the sites are used for communicating specific symbolic forms within Danish football culture.
INTRODUCTION

Based on the research discussed in my methodology chapter, the first part of my analysis presents a categorisation of all Danish football sites. From looking at the institutional and organisational context, as well as the actual content on the sites, I present four categories of Danish football websites: embedded sites, football portals, fan sites or club sites. Basically, these categories correspond to different types of agents in the field: news media organisations, opinions makers, fan clubs and football clubs. Each category is based on a review of the sites, but rather than an analysis of how the sites look, I have attempted to understand the sites in term of the communication and communicational context that takes place on each type of site. The categories is thus presented as practices of football communication within the field and how these practices extends or expand on existing media of communication within the field.

Some fans sites are also maintained by small fan factions, but their way of communicating and the content types of the sites does not in any substantial way differ from the fan club sites. These four types of websites (combined with Facebook pages) thus cover the way the web is used for communication about football and in my review of these four types of sites, I will discuss the institutional purposes and reasons to exist behind these four categories of sites. From this categorisation, I use the second part of the chapter to discuss the actual forms of communication these sites are used for. By tapping into the concept of affordances (as discussed in the chapter on media theory), I discuss what particular communicative affordances the web creates for the producers of communication about football within the field and how this can be used to understand the structure of the field.

THE BACKGROUND STORIES: EMBEDDED FOOTBALL SITES

The embedded football sites refer to those Danish newspaper websites and web apps which provide content about football, but where football is just one among many content forms. Some sites have located football either in a main subsection (e.g. the newspaper ‘Ekstrabladet’, eb.dk) while others have located football in a sub-sub-section (e.g. ‘Politiken’, politiken.dk). However, not all these websites have dedicated a particular space on their website for football. Some newspapers just include football in sports sections (e.g. ‘Sjællandske Medier’, sn.dk) while others

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4 This chapter is based on research on Danish football sites as well as 71 interviews with webmasters or producers of these Danish football sites (from 2011 to 2015). Some interviews are short email interviews while others are almost 2 hours live interviews. The intention of this research was to present an overall analysis of which types of web communication exists in the Danish field and what purposes the web is used for. Most interviews were conducted under a confidentiality agreement, so I use anonymised statements to underline the logics and purposes of different websites. Most importantly, this chapter does not serve as a reference to knowledge on each specific football site in Denmark, but as a pathway to understanding which communicative purposes the web is used for within the Danish football field.
cover football in relation to other subjects (e.g. “Information”, information.dk). While these sites\(^5\) differ much in why they produce football on their sites and how important football is, all of these sites in one way or another include football content into a general news production web platform. If we look closer at the different sites, the inclusion of a particular section on sport or football reveals that the newspaper produces a high number of articles and other football or sport related content. Furthermore, the inclusion of a football or sport section is often combined with particular forms of intra-section navigation as for example boxes with links to other articles or content within the sport or football section.

The football content is mostly sub-divided into tournaments structures as for example the Danish league, the English Premier League and so on. Moreover, several of these sites include a live section (for matches being broadcast on the site in live text streams), tournament tables as well as for example a section on a particular tournament at the moment (for example when the European Championship is played). Many of the embedded sites have included short video streams from televised matches with highlights and so on. Most of these streams are embedded into a dedicated video player (as for example the embedding of a YouTube player on the page), and the video clips are often followed by a short text or article. What is common on these embedded football sites is that the newspaper brand and general design serves to frame the football content, and that content is written or produced from the perspective of professional journalists. While there are certainly other forms of content than journalistic articles on these sites, it is the articles and perspectives on football which are central to these sites. This does not mean that articles or content never look like they have been produced by fans enjoying football, but that the general impression is that content has been filtered by the newspaper brand and professional journalists.

These sites are often owned by large news organisations, and are often integrated into a larger platform strategy. While these news organisations also produce for example televised content or printed newspaper, the website typically enjoys autonomy from other media in terms of production, or stated in another way “the website is an independent ‘leg’ in [the business organisation]” (AP1: INT1: 25:12). Hence, on the one hand the web is an extension of the existing production chain and knowledge resources; supporting existing media channels. On the other hand, the web journalists have to make their own unique identity and business model since “the web is not a place where we get new newspaper readers” (AP1: INT61: 20:20). Consequently, the real advantage of the web for news organisations is not that the web is able to make users return to the analogue platforms and turn the declining profits from producing analogue media, but instead to take advantage of the acquired content and productions on existing analogue platforms and communicate this existing content in new web channels - and perhaps make up for some of the financial loss in analogue media channels.

\(^5\) An entire list of sites can be found in Appendix AP2

116
Surprisingly, this logic does not seem to change much when we move from websites produced by television organisations to websites produced by newspaper organisations. What is more, the particular way in which webmasters from the embedded sites use the web to communicate with existing and new audiences, is also dependent on their particular position within the field. These webmasters need to take advantage of whatever content their particular organisation is producing; from transmission rights to live coverage and brand position. It is exactly the access to these resources which gives these websites an advantage in comparison to the football portals owned by fans or small businesses. By taking advantage of the distinctive communicative affordances of the web, the webmasters thus attempt to communicate and integrate content in ways which existing media do not allow. In analysing these affordances, it is of course important to emphasize that each embedded football site works differently; especially in terms of how important football is to the whole site and what content they have legal access to. Yet, these webmasters do characterize the advantages of web communication along the same lines.

**Affordances of the Embedded Football Sites**

While the embedded sites are used to communicate about everything happening within the football world, it is in particular the communication of the match that webmasters highlight as a new way for them to communicate with their users.

Firstly, the embedded football sites make it possible for webmasters to communicate with users in contexts in which analogue media would not be feasible to use. On the one hand, webmasters take advantage of the possibility to communicate on the web through mobile devices. On the other hand, the web also provides a way to present secondary information like statistics or in-depth analysis for users when they are using analogue media. In terms of reach, the webmasters are able to bring content to users whether they are on the move: “...we wish to give the user news during travel” (AP1: INT9: 1); or just in any situation where users would have five minutes of spare time: “We need to consider where people are in their use of their mobile phones...for example having a large supply of content already at six in the morning” (AP1: INT2: 23:28). In other words, the webmasters try to anticipate the type of information the users want in particular situations, and the use of for example tracking data on devices has made it much easier to understand different contexts. In the words of one webmaster: “Respecting where users ‘are’ has become much more important” (AP1: INT2: 15:01). What is meant here by ‘are’ is not just the actual context, travelling, working, sitting in front of the evening news with the family etc., but also the interests and ways of communicating which relate to these contexts. A particular instance of this context-awareness is the situation where users are following a match in biological or analogue media (on a stadium, in radio, on television etc.). In these contexts, “It looks like many people are using the site as a ‘second screen’ during matches [...] especially tablets and mobile phones are used during the match” (AP1: INT7: 1), or it can work to present information from live matches as text updates in situations where users are not able to follow the match otherwise: “if you sit at home and watch a match, you can get a surplus value by opening your phone and follow the match there [as well]” (AP1: INT3: 7:58).
Also the integration of new forms of content in relation to matches is mentioned as important to web communication in two ways. First, web communication offers a simplified business model where advertisers and ads can easily be integrated into existing content: “we are happy if we can make something which is attractive for advertisers, and sometimes this is deciding whether to do something [make an app was given as an example] or not” (AP1: INT2: 21:53). Moreover, ads can be targeted at different forms of content; betting ads can be integrated on match pages and so on. For the webmasters it is thus possible to get instant feedback on what types of communication it is most profitable to produce, and considering the fact that the web applications and sites need to be profitable this is an important mechanism when considering how to communicate football.

Secondly, the webmasters are quite aware that the web is not just a cheaper way to communicate existing content forms, but that it offers and requires new thinking in terms of how content is communicated: “what works on TV does not necessarily work on the web and the other way around as well” (AP1: INT1: 10:05). While the web might easily be able to present for example articles in a format which resembles a printed newspaper, the webmasters are clearly thinking that communication on the web needs to make use of the particular communicative affordances the web offers: “we do not yet use all the possibilities of the web, graphics and so on, and this is something we would like to do more of, find new ways to present match reviews, less static and more dynamic” (AP1: INT1: 13:09). What is central in understanding how the webmasters understand these new possibilities is that the communication of football culture on the embedded football sites is connected to analogue forms of representation and communication; the main production forms are connected to where the major monetary value of football is located. So while webmasters might wish that primary forms of communication, for example video and pictures from matches or interviews with players, could be produced for the web, in reality these content forms are merely migrating from analogue media to the web.

The integration of content also invites webmasters to present users with the option to meta-communicate matches in the right contexts, for example in the form of polls or comments: “you can put a poll in or ask the users about a penalty kick for example, so to make a bit more interaction” (AP1: INT70: 6:15). Another example of this is the ability to produce entirely new ways of meta-communication about for example tournaments. The manager games, which allow users to manage players from the tournament, produce an increased awareness of matches, clubs and icons. To do well in these games, users have to follow the news and analysis of events even more closely than before: “it makes good sense to mix the game [Superliga-manager] with editorial news...the game increases interest in the Superliga” (AP1: INT5: 3).

The webmasters of the embedded websites thus encourage user-generated content and communications; more users and user activity equals higher revenue. However, while most of the webmasters from the embedded websites examined here have experimented with different types of user interactivity and social media, many have come to the conclusion that user meta-communication on these websites has to be controlled, or as one webmaster says “I believe more in a targeted debate” (AP1: INT1: 19:50). As another webmaster notes, there is simply not a tradition
in Denmark for serious debates about clubs on the embedded football websites (AP1: INT61, 39:10); fans take their meta-communication on clubs to the fan websites. One website once experimented with creating traffic from Facebook but was not able to generate any noticeable amount of interaction or traffic (AP1: INT3: 19:40). Rather, it seems to be the case that inviting users to comment on anything does not contribute to creating valuable content: “the level of discussion might be so low that it is de-motivating” (AP1: INT1: 18:57). What is perhaps more surprising, is that even chat during matches was “not a huge success” (AP1: INT3: 49:50). While some websites don’t allow users to comment on all articles, the general impression is that user meta-communication is an important affordance of web communication, but one which has to be directed and maintained to produce certain results (as for example a poll) (AP1: INT61: 17:45).

If we direct the attention to how the embedded football sites can be used to communicate club stories or icon information the web is not that different from other media, but it does create a stronger sense of continuity through continual updates and the web makes it easier to cover stories from different angles. This is either done through the combination of web content with other media forms or by continual updates within the football section on these sites. Hence, the continuity in a story is secured by taking account (“mellemregninger”) (AP1: INT1, 11:30) of all the events taking place between major events or stories: “what can we present today or tomorrow that enriches the big story of today” (AP1: INT3: 11:15). What is also interesting is that journalists are able or need to be aware of the interest users take in different stories or perspectives (AP1: INT2, 15:10); and thereby produce a higher level of loyalty to the website. This logic also applies to communication which begins in printed newspapers or television, and which may be continued on the web and then later returned to analogue media. Moreover, the flexible structure of web communication makes it possible to quickly shift focus to a particular event: “when there is an event, we make a special ‘event editorial’ [‘event-redaktion’] to promote the event” (AP1: INT3: 4:15). The embedded football sites are thus used to bring attention to matches, by creating, producing and nourishing stories that increase the attention to match events, club happenings and players.

**Another Perspective: The Football Portals**

My second analytical category is ‘football portals’. These are sites dealing exclusively with football (often both Danish and international football). While the embedded football sites are often related directly to a news organisation, the football portals are produced by ‘new’ agents in the field; people who are attached to neither football clubs, news organisations nor fan clubs. These are either individuals or small companies who might have some earlier experience from news organisations, but who for some reason have chosen to produce their own perspective or news on football. What is particular about most of these portals, is that they present the user with a particular type of information about (Danish) football as for example comments, statistics, funny news etc.
Among the football portals we find sites like bold.dk, the most visited dedicated football site in Denmark\(^6\), tipsbladet.dk\(^7\), superliga.dk, footy.dk, danskfodbold.com, indkast.dk, fodboldsnak.dk, kanalsport.dk\(^8\). While the football portals are dissimilar in many ways, they also have some common traits. First, many football portals are more dependent on financing their services through online ads and integration of betting services than for example the embedded football sites. Second, since they are not integrated within a larger news space, they have a larger degree of freedom in integrating different interactional structures such as for example direct entries into league tables or statistics; as well as less serious elements like for example comics. Third, while the embedded news sites are somewhat reluctant to include users, due to the protection of the brand and legal problems, the portals are much more open to user interaction. Even on the largest portal, bold.dk, it is easy for any user to acquire a blog within the domain.

The football portals are typically produced by either small companies (dedicated to producing these portals) or a few friends. Usually, the news on these portals is either written by volunteers or non-professionals with a high level of interest and knowledge about football but without any real need to make a living from their work with the portals. Some of these portals could perhaps also be classified as fan sites since they are written exclusively by fans for ‘fun’ (AP1: INT22, 0:35) and without any intent to compete with general news sites. Even so, many of the editors of these sites work because it is fun or to provide an alternative to the general news provided by the traditional news agencies.

**AFFORDANCES OF THE FOOTBALL PORTALS**

The football portals are typically not directed at producing *match broadcasting* like the embedded sites, since they do not want to (and are not able to) compete with the news organisation in terms of either live updates (i.e. produced by journalists) directly from matches or the presentation of complementary information to match broadcasting. Yet, they often have some information about matches quite quickly after the match or during the match. Moreover, these portals often afford *content integration for matches* with either manager games, tournament tables or other relevant match information.

What is typically presented on these portals, however, is for example club or icon expert analysis. Many of these portals want to communicate with users who look for special interest or perspectives on football, as for example a collection of different articles which can *“offer the user a quick overview of what happens in my club”* (AP1: INT31, 2:35). The portals might also offer the user a view or focus on particular subjects, e.g. Danish football exclusively (AP1: INT14, 3:40), or particular perspectives or types of news (AP1: INT31, 4:10). In other words, the webmasters


\(^7\) Tipsbladet is actually an old magazine from 1947 which was owned by ‘Det Berlingske Hus’ from 1974, but was later bought by independent agents ([http://tipsbladet.dk/content/tipsbladet-i-en-menneskealder](http://tipsbladet.dk/content/tipsbladet-i-en-menneskealder))

\(^8\) These are examples. For a complete list, see AP2.
from the football portals make use of the particular communicative affordances of the web to make a more unique or personalised perspective on football culture. In this perspective, the football portals become ‘portals’ in that they are collecting information or links from many different sources and take advantage of the fact that the web makes it easy for them to integrate many different content forms without relying on professional agents, as for example player tweets (AP1: INT31, 24:50); which makes it possible to connect news on matches with comments from the players involved in those matches.

Also the means to produce club insider stories and player stories is essential to the football portals. One particular feature of football portals is that they are not entangled with other agents within the field (AP1: INT14, 1:15); neither for economic reasons nor as information sources. While complete independence comes at a (economic) price, it is clear that the journalists on these portals value this autonomy: “Journalists on indkast.dk are completely free to write, both in regard to content but also in regard to writing style, and I know for sure that many other journalists are not” (AP1: INT32: 2:20). Yet, the editorial freedom of the web is not just about writing whatever you want, but it is also about experimenting with the web as a process or form of communication: “You could say that the [website] partly began as a leisure project for fun, and partly as an experiment of where the idea [behind the web] could take the website.” (AP1: INT19, 1). The web thus offers football portals the capacity to communicate rumours and stories which are not particularly well-documented and which especially clubs would not be particularly interested in telling: “There are stories which clubs don’t make themselves, for example when Sigurdsson is put on the bench and going back to Norway” (AP1: INT69: 17:20). Another consequence of this freedom to publish other stuff (and more of it), is also that many portals can focus more in-depth on for example talents or more particular content on players, even from a small league as the Danish league (AP1: INT31: 19:05).

By focusing on the supporter, rather than just an average media user, the football portals are also to some degree able to facilitate communication on meta-identity and meta-production. The combination of focusing on a particular subject, as well as the editorial freedom, allows the football portals to produce a particular style which sits between the impersonal news sites and the closed fan groups; being personal without being biased. In other words, the portals allow audiences to communicate with other users but without having to be a supporter or member of a club, or even to make a kind of social network based on general football interest: “the idea was to take football and move in into a friend network” (AP1: INT28, 1:10). Another way in which the portals allow users to feel like being part of a kind of community, is to use ‘funny stuff’ (AP1: INT31, 18:30) like for example manipulated digital photos to present a particular perspective on football culture; and thereby to present an alternative to the (at least traditional) journalistic interpretation of football news and events. The football portals thus allow fans and (semi)professionals alike to present their own symbolic strategy for interpreting and experience events within the football world, and to communicate this interpretation to others.

Lastly, the portals also encourage different forms of meta-conversation on for example clubs and players, e.g. through blogs (AP1: INT31, 32:20). While some portals want users to participate to produce more traffic (and thereby
income from advertisement) and others simply want to have fun. It seems like most of webmasters agree that “we want the users to participate much more...we want reactions from users” (AP1: INT31: 33:38). Many of these webmasters want a debate on football culture which extends beyond club allegiances, or as one webmaster says: “Therefore, the users who sign up for our site is people with all kinds of club allegiance. Everybody from Manchester United fans to Esbjerg fans. As a result, there is a great variety in the form of debate which I believe is the reason why many users are attracted. Users don’t just want to have a debate with fans from the same club, but also with fans from other clubs. It is users who are more interested in debate than just to read a news article and then comment on that article.” (AP1: INT19, 2).

Nonetheless, the reality for many portals is that “users are more lazy than we could hope for...if you guide them by hand, and lead them to a quiz, they will do it, but they do not want to spend an hour or two to make one” (AP1: INT28, 14:23). Instead, many portals “have a small amount of core users who start the debate” (AP1: INT28, 26:20) and while other users are interested in reading what these ‘core users’ have to say, not everyone wants to participate in producing more advanced forms of content (writing a blog compared to participating in a poll). Interestingly, the webmasters from the portals don’t seem to think that the web necessarily dissolves the distinction between those who write and those who read. What is particularly attractive about the web as a platform of communication, is that this distinction is not about formal qualifications or being in a privileged position within the field, but rather having something interesting to say: “we think that it is a part of football, those who wants to say something are welcome to publish their thoughts on [the website]; you don’t need that many qualifications and have a higher degree in football” (AP1: INT31: 32:20).

**BEHIND THE SCENE: THE CLUB SITES**

My third analytical category is ‘club sites’. Club sites refer to the websites which are owned by a Danish football club in the Superliga and which represent the football club brands. The Danish clubs usually have one dedicated football website, one Facebook page, one Twitter account, one official web app and one official YouTube channel. Some clubs, especially those that are not permanently in the Superliga also present information on their website which is not directly linked to their professional team or is related to other types of sport (e.g. efb.dk). Club sites usually present the club with club colours and news from the club, information on matches including for example line-ups, player profiles, video clips, stadium information, merchandise and tickets, links to the official fan club as well as special offers for fans, families and children.

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9 The ‘club website’ refers directly to the club brand, and not the owner of the club. For example is the football club FCK owned by ‘PARKEN Sport & Entertainment A/S’, but the only presence of ‘PARKEN Sport & Entertainment A/S’ on the website fck.dk is a link to the corporate website parken.dk.
Clubs use their main website to present the user with exclusive information about the matches, the club and players which cannot be found on other football websites. This includes for example videos from training and player interviews which the club professions make themselves. This might for example include player blogs posts, e.g. on the club site for OB where players have their own blog on for example hair style\textsuperscript{10}. Moreover, information is (re)produced for fans in the sense that league tables only include information on matches in which the club participates.

The football clubs were slow to embrace the affordances of the web as a medium. When the clubs began to realise the potential of the web as a communication platform, the fans had already established their own sites and habits (and one club even took over a fan website to work as their first website) (AP1: INT63). For the Danish clubs, however, the website is “first and foremost [a way] to sell tickets to [the club’s] home matches and thereby increase the number of spectators and the support for our team.” (AP1: INT35: 1). Obviously, the club websites offer tickets online but many or most users are not necessarily interested in going to the stadium to follow the match there (but would for example prefer to watch it on TV), and the diversity in how club sites are constructed and updated shows that it is not self-evident what and how a club site should communicate with supporters and fans.

**AFFORDANCES OF THE CLUB SITES**

Yet, it seems that the main affordances of the club website is to offer a medium of communication for producing the club insider stories or expert analysis which are important to a specific club and its fans; while not important enough to reach the general news media. Many club webmasters have been given the task to produce a greater interest in going to the stadium and as a result sell the users their actual products: “commercially, we use the website as a channel to sell season cards, tickets and to produce interest for our matches. Moreover, we have begun a process to produce more user interaction – including the use of social media.” (AP1: INT41: 1). While it is not surprising that clubs work as companies in this regard, the real challenge here is for webmasters to use the web as a platform for communication with their existing and potential customers.

The direct communication, which the web enables between the club and the fans, allows the club to control the communication. On the one hand, this allows clubs to have better control over their own brand and the stories about this brand, or as one webmaster notes: “You should be able to read about [the club] on [the club website] before you can read it anywhere else.” (AP1: INT36, 1). Clubs don’t have to rely on other sources and may well produce the news and contents they want or have the resources for. Moreover, clubs are able to produce news for particular events or even to keep users interested in what happens in the periods of the season where no matches are played.

On the other hand, the direct communication with users allows the clubs to build customer databases and reach the customers using newsletters etc. (AP1: INT71, 1:59); and thereby target users in a more personalised way.

The web also offers the club new means for *match content integration* by ticket sales, merchandise sales and commercial sponsors (advertising) with their communication with fans; including both basic match and ticket information as well as exclusive content on for example training, player interviews and other club news (AP1: INT35, 1). Hence, clubs can use the web as a marketing platform where different content productions can be integrated (AP1: INT35, 1), and where content can be converted into value: “we will never just put something on YouTube [channel for the club], which was only placed there, it will always be the idea that it will drive traffic to [the club website]” (AP1: INT71, 13:35). In the end, the clubs want the web to work as a space for converting audiences into active supporters “we want to make people aware of [the club], we move them [people] from awareness to actual interest and to loyalty, to active loyalty” (AP1: INT71, 5:58). Consequently, the web allows clubs to support existing sales through other forms of content (AP1: INT38).

Moreover, content production for the web is not just limited to press releases or short notices on what is happening in the club. Rather, the possibility to produce relatively cheap videos and sound clips, and to communicate these using the web, makes it possible for the clubs to engage audiences and fans in new ways: “It is about making something which creates interest, because it is self-explanatory that those articles [stories] we produce in text, it is not just those we produce for video, we try to take advantage of the TV-medium to make it interesting...also to get closer to players and the club” (AP1: INT71, 15:08). And while “the final goal is to get more people into the stadium” (AP1: INT71, 5:15), clubs find that “[those stories are popular] where you get behind the curtain, where players say something else than in an ordinary interview” (AP1: INT71, 18:03). Although news media have taken much more interest in these types of news (training videos etc.) lately, clubs can reach fans with more videos, and they don’t need to take any critical perspective or any contrasting edges in their production frame. Instead, clubs can use the web to broadcast everything about the club in video and voice with the single intention to increase interest in their products and offerings; and thereby letting users get an unfiltered version of what happens within the club. Some clubs have even considered giving fans the opportunity to produce “a weekly video with the atmosphere from the terraces, but it is sometimes difficult to find the right format“ (AP1: INT71, 20:50). However, as this quote illustrates, clubs do have a particular way of using and presenting video (and other context forms) which have to fit their particular brand.

**WE ARE UNITED: THE FAN SITES**

My fourth analytical category is ‘fan sites’. Fan sites refer to all those sites on Danish football culture which are produced by anyone not seeking to make a profit from their production. These sites (or Facebook pages) include both the sites produced by the official fan clubs (one per club), fan fractions, fan groups and individual fans as well
as individual fans within fan clubs. Many of these sites are not updated on a regular basis, and quite a few sites have more or less ceased to exist (either by not being updated or by being closed completely) during the period of data collection. One explanation for the removal of some of these sites is the popularity of Facebook and the rather simple use of Facebook pages or groups for more simple content structures. However, some of these sites were maintained by a single person only, and the loss of interest or time by this person would mean that the sites would no longer be produced. Some are merely discussion boards while others communicate the activities of the fan club behind it. However, common for many fan sites is the presence of discussions, videos and pictures from different activities. Yet, the fan sites are also often used as mass communication to particular audiences (e.g. members of a fan fraction).

The fan sites thus include mainly two forms of content. First, the fan sites provide content relating to fan activities and events, and might even include digital fanzines available for download. This information is often presented as either news, event calendars or as dedicated sections on away matches. Moreover, many fan sites produce content on fan events which have already taken place, e.g. pictures or video clips from matches; and users are often able to download files – to re-experience the fan club’s attendance to a match (not available in other media). Also, many fan sites produce their own analysis or experience of matches (‘kampreferat’) in contrast to the articles produced by news organisations. Second, many of these sites include discussion boards. These discussions boards are usually presented as a number of predefined topics where each topic can have a few as a single post and up to several hundred thousand posts (AX2: SCR6). Most fan sites are open to all users in terms of reading posts. However, to write a post you have to be a member, and while the procedures for creating a member profile differ, it usually takes a few steps, as well as acceptance from an administrator to be accepted as a member.

Many fan sites began as a very primitive way of sharing photos within a group or between fans (AX4:INT46), or simply because having a website in itself was important to many: “The purpose of the website was that it was very fancy to have one at that time, it was back in the year 2000” (AP1: INT59: 0:40). While many of the website domains that existed in the period from 2000 to 2010 have been closed, there are still many different independent fan websites. One reason why many webmasters choose to close their website, is that the newness of the web slowly declined and that maintaining a website, at least a primary web domain, is not free. Another reason is that some forms of communication were more easily maintained on Facebook. However, it seems that many of the larger websites have survived, even if some of the maintenance costs are financed by ads: “we need to recognize that it is not free to run a website, but we do it [use ads on the website] as non-camouflaged as possible, as nice as possible...it is not a money machine, but we need to pay our bills, we do not earn money ourselves” (AP1: INT66: 6:35).

AFFORDANCES OF THE FAN SITES
The fan sites work as a way to communicate club meta-identity for members of the fan community as well as a face towards the ‘outer’ world. In this regard, having a website, or just a Facebook page, becomes an end in itself. Hence, the fan club or fraction can make use of the web to promote what they are doing, to make their voice, activities and
identity known amongst other fans: “The website worked to promote a very active and well-working fan section, and it has surprised me how powerful a weapon it was within the fan scene” (AP1: INT43, 1). Moreover, the website might also work to produce a united and critical voice of fans in communicating with the ‘outer’ world (AP1: INT32, 2:05). Fans find it important to express this critical voice since even the official fan club communication channels are too controlled to present any real criticism (AP1: INT60, 1:07). However, it is important to note that just having a website, and telling people about the identity of the fan community, is for some the main purpose: “they [the active supporters] see it [the website] as a tool, the rest of us see it as an end in itself.” (AP1: INT60: 3:05).

While the fan websites certainly work to promote the club identity of the fans, this promotion is not worth that much if the fan club or fraction does not also promote the actual events or club meta-productions it makes to manifest this identity, e.g. proclaiming and presenting pictures from a Tifo from a march to a match. An important task in this regard, is to tell other fans (and audiences) that the fan community “does a lot of work nobody sees [...] our opinions and what we do, we try to tell using our news, so [the website] helps telling people that something is going on behind the curtains” (AP1: INT63: 5:44). What is important here, is that fan communities need a position within the field; they need to know that others know where they are in the field and what position or identity they represent to others in the field “[the purpose is] that when people google the name [of the fraction] they find something which represents us” (AP1: INT58: 17:18). As a result, the identity of the fan community is communicated through telling people what the fan community is about: “Sometimes we use the website to make satire or fun, uploading images etc., but also to, more generally, promote the fan fraction.” (AP1: INT46, 1).

Some fan communities even admit that they actually do not need a website for internal communication, but that it merely serves to promote and perhaps strengthen the community: “Why do you use a domain when the need to communicate is not that huge? Then you do it to promote the name [of the fraction]” (AP1: INT58: 4:55). For some fan communities, especially small groups, the web can also serve to maintain the community for those fans who are not able to be present at the match: “we have begun to make match reviews every time [there is a match], it is to make people come and look [at the website], because it is not everybody that can be there every time” (AP1: INT59: 2:01). Again, we see that the communicative meta-identification works both ways: inward towards other supporters and outward towards other fans and the news media. In both cases, the website is “meant to support the active fan culture” (AP1: INT60: 2:55) and to tell others about the activities of the fan community: “we made the website because we were on the terraces, so we might as well tell people we were there!” (AP1: INT59: 1:00). Being a platform for identity and supporting the fan community’s means of meta-identification, the website works to maintain, support and, in some cases, be in control of the fan community and its meta-communication.

However, it should also be noted that while telling others about the activities of the fan club / fraction is important, the web is also used as a tool for planning and practical purposes; as “a communication channel for reaching many people at once, it is used before matches...now it is important for you to remember to dress in red or remember...” (AP1: INT60: 41:52). As a tool for planning and organising daily fan activities, the web is just very easy to use in the
communication between members of a group (AP1: INT59, 4:18). Moreover, the web also serves as a way of maintaining communication across space (members of a group might have moved elsewhere) (AP1: INT43) and time (in reproducing past fan activities). The web thus provides an easy way to plan future activities (AP1: INT51) as well as providing continuity in relation to past activities, for example news about fan events and pictures from a match (AP1: INT60, 6:30). Hence, the web makes it easy to support “life on the terraces and to get more people to be active on the terraces” (AP1: INT60: 6:51), and can be used as “a priceless tool in gaining new members and for them to receive information from the local fan section.” (AP1: INT43, 1).

An important development in discussing how the web works as a tool for communicating about and planning events is the emergence of Facebook as a cheap and easy way to communicate with others. Many planning activities have moved to Facebook “for all practical purposes, it is on Facebook it happens” (AP1: INT58: 3:05). In particular, many small fan communities that consist of close friends have replaced much of the website communication with Facebook communication. Especially when it comes to planning ordinary activities among friends, as for example “who is going to have a beer before [the match] or is there someone who wants to be part of a warm-up event Friday evening or something” (AP1: INT59: 4:50). Facebook is a perfect place to communicate. For larger groups or communities, it looks like Facebook is taking over some forms of practical communication “We have Facebook on the side line which works quite well for daily communication” (AP1: INT59: 4:14). An example of this would be communication about a bus trip where the trip would be announced and promoted on the fan page, but the planning of the details of the trip would take place on Facebook.

Lastly, the fan websites also afford meta-conversation about the club and the match between fans about football culture. This dialogue is of course also connected to having or promoting an identity to those who are not members of the fan community. More surprisingly, the dialogue with other fans work as a way to get people involved in more practical matters or concerns: “if you want people to visit the website to understand what happens on the terraces, we need the other part [a more general debate about what is going on in the club] as well” (AP1: INT60: 18:30). The web affords dialogue with others, both in textual form on the debate forums or through for example polls which ascertain an independent point of view: “[we] added the possibility to vote for Man of The Match [...] It came as a reaction to the decision that Man of The Match would be chosen by the match sponsor instead of the fan club.” (AP1: INT49, 1).

According to some webmasters the dialogue also works to produce a sense or feeling of community: “We meet at our private parties, weddings and so on, which are presented in our newspaper. Now the idea is that the web should take over the [function of the] newspaper with the intention that when you are a member of something it is nice to be able to read something about yourself so that you feel, you are part of a community” (AP1: INT59: 3:33). The dialogue can thus be understood as an invitation for members outside or from other fan communities to be part of an active fan culture: “...our opinions and what happens within [the fan scene], we try to tell these things using our news; so in this way [the website news] are contributing to the impression that something is going on behind it,
something you would otherwise only know if you knew somebody” (AP1: INT63: 6:27). What the web afford fans in this sense, is both a means to reach and invite a broad audience to what a particular fan community is doing, as well as a means to get an independent discussion or debate with other fans about events taking place in the football world and perhaps in particular in one’s club.

NEW FORMS OF COMMUNICATION ABOUT FOOTBALL

I have discussed how webmasters from different types of websites see the affordances of the web. Here, I will attempt to summarise the most important points in terms of how the symbolic forms of football fandom, the match, the club and the icon, are communicated in new ways on the web.

In the communication of the football match, the web’s communicative affordances especially relates to communicating football to fans which would otherwise not be able to follow matches in other media. Some of these affordances present audiences with qualitatively different ways to experience the match; as for example following match events through small text updates. However, other affordances present audiences with more quantitative changes in terms of getting more of the same; as for example being able to read news more often because more stories are produced and because users are able to read these stories in new contexts. To sum up the quantitative changes, more match related news is produced and as a consequence audiences can read and watch more content related to particular matches. Furthermore, the expansions of contexts in which audiences are able to read or watch news related to the match, will (perhaps) have the consequence that audiences become more receptive to match news during all days and times of the week, including contexts in which audiences follow the match live (e.g. on the stadium).

Additionally, the production of more news articles and stories requires that content producers need to either produce articles on subjects which they would not have written or made stories about otherwise or will produce more articles or content on existing stories. Lastly, the affordances of the web in pushing (e.g. push messages) and personalising (e.g. through CRM databases) information on the web means that audiences can access very personalised content; a trend further reinforced by the fact that users are free to choose among many different websites and web services. As a result, audiences can get very detailed information on matches and match events, and follow stories which they find interesting or which adds another (symbolic) level to the match (e.g. player details).

The more qualitative changes to the communication of the match include new ways to communicate symbolic aspects of match. First, audiences are presented with information and communicative options which enrich the match experiences, most notably by club and player information, betting odds, statistics and manager games. These types of information can be used both in relation to for example match stories, but also in relation to communication in media of the first and second degree; as for example when discussing with friends in a pub during a game. Second,
audiences increase the options to meta-communicate with other users. This meta-communication is directed towards particular matches or match events and does not need to be related to club meta-communication, nor restricted to fan club members or friends. Third, audiences gain new possibilities of following matches live through text updates, graphics and simple result messages through mobile apps.

In the communication of the football club, we can say that there is a general (quantitative) change in how much information about clubs, audiences have access to, but also in the forms of communication which are produced about clubs. Audiences get much more information about what is happening around and inside the club. The low costs of production and distribution make clubs willing to produce much more content about what happens with players, training sessions and interviews with club professionals. The trade-off for clubs are that this direct communication with audiences will increase the sales of merchandise as well as providing a platform for selling tickets and other valuable interactions with audiences. Additionally, audiences and fans can use fan boards as well as other websites to discuss club events and club organisation with other fans or commentators. As it has become much easier to gather information about what happens in clubs, audiences and fans can use the web to discuss and meta-communicate about the club as well as produce critical perspectives on different forms of communication (e.g. man-of-the-match). In other words, audiences and fans are to a much larger degree able to gain information about clubs from many different sources as well as meta-communicate about clubs and their communication with fans.

In the communication of the football icon, the web also makes new forms of communication and meta-communication possible. First, the low production cost results in a high number of articles on players, and the ability to upload articles and interviews immediately, also make it possible to for example make quick interviews with players before matches. While analogue media also publishes several articles and interviews on players, the web has increased the number of articles, perhaps especially about less known players or young players (talents). Moreover, the focus on which players might come to particular clubs or leave the club, is also given more attention. A further consequence of the increase of the number of articles on the web is that it is easy for users to follow particular players, and to find, select or share particular forms of communication on these players (articles, pictures, videos etc.). Second, icons have a much more direct line of communication to their audiences. While the professionalization of the field has resulted in a communicative distance between professional players and audiences (broadcasted by clubs and news media agents), the web now bring forth the possibility of personalising the communication between the icons and their audiences; also reinforcing the players as icons or as someone you can ‘follow’. In addition, club websites present videos with players with more personalised player content than in analogue media; for example players talking about living in the city or answering a quiz.

Based on my analysis, I have summarised these affordances in the table below – in relation to how match, club and icon communication are differentiated in terms of my typology of sites. A plus indicates that this type of communication is typically within this site category. A minus indicates that the form of communication is not really present or appreciated by the webmasters from this website type. Note that these are empirical insights, i.e.
actualised communication according to the analysis of webmaster statements; meaning that we might be able to imagine that a fan site could be very useful in the communication of match broadcasting, even if it is not used in this way within the scope of sites, I have examined in my analysis.

**Table of affordances:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affordances</th>
<th>Embedded site</th>
<th>Portal site</th>
<th>Club site</th>
<th>Fan site</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Match communication (e.g. live text updates, statistics, content used during matches)</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>÷</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Match meta-production (coordinating match events)</td>
<td>÷</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>÷</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Match meta-identity (e.g. identification through communicating presence at the match)</td>
<td>÷</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Match meta-conversation (e.g. conversation about match events, e.g. a penalty kick)</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>÷</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Club communication (e.g. video from training session or fan club events, club history, blogs)</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Club meta-production (e.g. fan club coordination or information)</td>
<td>÷</td>
<td>÷</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Club meta-identity (e.g. maintaining a fan website)</td>
<td>÷</td>
<td>÷</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Club meta-conversation (e.g. critical commentary about club management)</td>
<td>÷</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>÷</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Icon communication (icon page with statistics, talents, blogging, transfers, form etc.)</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>÷</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Icon meta-production (e.g. announcing man of the match)</td>
<td>÷</td>
<td>÷</td>
<td>÷</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Icon meta-identity (e.g. making a song about an icon)</td>
<td>÷</td>
<td>÷</td>
<td>÷</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Icon meta-conversation (e.g. discussion on an icon transfer)</td>
<td>÷</td>
<td>÷</td>
<td>÷</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In summary, when we look at what new forms of communication and meta-communication the web offers audiences, according to the webmasters, we can conclude that the web does not afford a single new way of presenting football to audiences. Neither does the web make any existing forms of communication about football dispensable. Rather, the web presents audiences or users with new ways to communicate and meta-communicate about football which seems to increase interest in and support existing media forms and forms of communication.

If we take a look at the field of producers as a whole, we can see that the web serves many different purposes. Common to all producers is that the web must play along with existing media of communication, but in different ways. For the embedded sites it is clear that the web supports producing background info for the match, and that it
is difficult to imagine the website as a competitor for viewing the match on stadium or in TV. However, it is clear that these sites want to fill in the rest of the week in competing for the fans’ time and translating the time spent on the sites into advertisement money. Also, the web is not intended to supplement other media, e.g. printed newspapers or TV. If we look at the other types of sites, the reasons for producing and communicating content differs much more, but they still to some extent compete with each other (in getting the fans’ attention). In some ways the web producers attempt to establish their own position within the field, and to expand or experiment with how the web can be used to enrich the experience of football culture; perhaps mostly inspired by how football is communicated in other media but with the clear intention of creating a unique experience that only the web offers.

In the next chapter, I use web analytics data to see how these sites are actually used, and survey data to understand how fans use these new opportunities for communication within their daily fan practices.
CHAPTER 8: THE THIRD HALF

Abstract:

This chapter shows how Danish football fans use the web to support their existing fan practices. I begin by looking at how different media forms are interrelated and interdependent. Fans use radio, TV, the stadium – and the web – to actually follow matches, but they choose each medium for specific reasons. The web can work as either a supportive medium or as a replacement for the other media.

The chapter consist of an initial outline of the field based on correspondence analysis. Following this, I identify the main positions or segments within the field and analyse the demographic structure of the field. The last part of the chapter investigates how the web is used by these different segments in their daily symbolic practices, and how they use the web for different forms of meta-communication. To illustrate how the sites of Danish football are navigated, I include web analytics data from the portal site eb.dk and the fan forum sso.dk.
**Broadcasting as key differentiator**

From all the variables collected on fans, my statistical analysis shows that how fans choose to follow live matches is the single most significant variable to understanding the fan field in Denmark. What is particularly interesting here is that everyone watches matches on TV, but it is the choice of following matches in other media that really tells us which type of fan you are. I shall therefore begin my analysis by exploring the factor of broadcasting to understand how the field is constituted and which implications and conclusions can be drawn from this insight.

**A visual perspective on the Danish fan field**

The main theoretical question guiding this analysis is how football culture is communicated differently in different media, and how this perspective allows us to dig into the actual social characteristics of fans. The second question I ask, is how the use of the web is placed within the overall structure of the field. Using the base map constructed with correspondence analysis, I examine how the web is used in combination with other media to understand who uses the web, and what this can tell us about how media of different degrees are related to each other. Hence, I look at how fans from different ‘positions’ within the field use the web and for which purposes, and how the communication and meta-communication in different degrees of media are related and can be used to make distinctions between fan groups and their use of the web.

**Match following in Denmark**

This is how my active map looks:
The picture shows a visual ‘map’ resulting from a (simple) correspondence analysis. Let us begin by stripping all reservations and complications and guide the interpretation of the map in one sentence: A map consists of a number of answers to a survey question (the blue dots) which are related by proximity, i.e. the closer the dots are to each other, the more alike are the respondents who have given the answer represented by the dot. To offer an example, those who answer that they don’t follow that many matches on TV (the dot with the label ‘TV+’) are very much alike those who follow some more (‘TV++’). On the other hand, those who view many matches on TV (‘TV+++’) are quite far from those who don’t follow that many (i.e. one or two plusses). The map above will be enriched with additional
data later in the chapter, but the structure represented above will not change and can thus be said to be a fundamental structure (or construction) of the field. Before going into more explanatory detail, I want to offer some of the main insights into the field dynamics resulting from this map. What this map, with the help of some of the additional technical data from constructing the map (as found in Appendix C), offers, is an insight into how fans use media to follow matches and how different types or degree of media complement or substitute each other when fans follow matches.

The first insight here (actually resulting from what we do not see in the representation) is that we do not find many people who do not watch matches. Those who follow matches in radio, text or newspapers typically have a frame of reference from watching matches in some medium. Hence, watching matches somehow seems a prerequisite for making sense of using media not based on watching. If we look at the fans who do not watch any matches, they will typically have a higher education and high income and often use general news websites (as e.g. politiken.dk). This could be fans who might stumble across news about Danish football in surfing general news or in watching general news on TV – and occasionally follow a match in the radio.

The second insight here is that TV occupies a central position in the field. Neither media of the first nor the third degree exists without being complemented by the TV to some degree (which does not preclude the possibility that ‘TV’ is watched on a computer only, or in some cases substituting ‘TV’ with livestreams). When looking at fans that follow many matches, TV, apps, radio and the stadium seems to be substituting each other, but some TV viewing is always included. A deeper look at the data reveals that while watching (TV or stadium) up to ten matches in one medium increases the chance that other media are used more as well, the following of more than 10 matches in either TV or on the stadium decrease the use of the other media. Hence, we can see that one medium (only for TV and the stadium) begins to substitute the other when fans begin to use this medium a lot. What is also indicated in the map, is that a high degree of TV use is (more) closely connected to webtext and (partly) apps, which indicates that the web may work as a strong complimentary medium for TV.

The third insight here is that app and webtext following is clearly related to TV use, while stadium use is partly related to app use and not related to webtext use. If we assume that going to the stadium is more directed towards a community, we can conclude that especially webtext is more used in contexts which are less social in terms of following football matches. Using apps often, however, is correlated to a high degree of stadium use (both located high in the map). Those who follow very many matches at the stadium are therefore also more inclined to use apps rather than webtext; which also makes sense since using an app is much easier than navigating a website when travelling or watching the match on the stadium (where the poor data connectivity also makes it much easier to use an app instead). On the other part of the map, in opposition to the stadium goers, we have webtext and radio; media which you can use in your home and which are to a less degree used in social contexts.
The fourth insight here is that football apps discern quite a special behaviour; as also indicated by their strong correlation to the first axis – the more you move to the right, the more apps are used to follow matches. What the map does not tell, however, is that most people either use apps a little (1-5 matches) or really much (31+ matches). This may be explained by the ability for apps to notify (push information) the user with results and thus make the user aware of matches that he or she would otherwise not have followed. Moreover, the high use of apps is also related to high volume TV use and perhaps even more clearly to the use of web text updates and live streams.

The fifth insight here is that personal match updates are not used very much; only 20% of the population is updated in this way for more than 5 matches. There is a clear relation between watching many matches on TV and being updated by others (perhaps because they follow related matches using apps or web text updates), and also a less clear relation between using apps and listening to radio – which may indicate that you are updated by others because you are not in a situation where it is possible, or you don’t have time to watch the match.

Let’s go into a bit more explanatory detail now. The map consists of two axes (a first and a second axis) that don’t have any numbers or names. Besides the two axes there are blue dots with names as for example TV+ or Interpersonal++. The axes are basically representing variance, meaning that two dots being close to one another on one axis have something in common. If two dots are close to each other on both axes, they have even more in common. Moreover, the further away from the centre you find a dot, the more this dot is deviant from the average of all dots. The dots are actually particular answers from my survey; a respondent might say that he or she follows many matches on radio (radio+++) or only few matches on radio (radio+). So we can imagine that all the respondents would be placed as dots within the map, and their position would depend on whether they would follow many matches on radio (lower part of the map) apps (upper right of the map) or on the stadium (upper left). But what if a fan would follow many matches on the stadium, apps and radio, not preferring a single one of these media? Then he or she would be placed in the centre of the circle between these three dots, i.e. close to the actual centre of the map. However, the fact that these three dots (stadium++, apps+++ and radio++) are placed very far from each other actually means that it is quite unusual to find fans (in the survey) that actually use all three of these media to follow matches.

Complementary or substitutive media?

The active map was constructed using two variables: website use (not shown in the above map) and media use. The variable ‘media use’ used in the map (as one of the active variables) is actually a reconstructed variable consisting of seven different questions. Each of these questions asked the respondent how many matches he or she followed in that particular medium during the season (the questionnaire data were collected at the end of the season). Besides the obvious categories (TV, stadium, radio), the questionnaire contained the possibilities of apps, web text, web
stream and personal updates. If we take a look at the field in its most simple representation as shown in this active map, we can outline a basic structure. Looking at the centre of the map versus the outer edges of the map shows us that following several matches in the radio (radio++) makes up a very particular fan ‘profile’ – and the same goes for the stadium (stadium++) and apps (apps++). The fans using these media a lot to follow matches are not ‘typical’; meaning that they use (and probably substitute) a particular medium to follow football. Nor do any of the fans situated in each of these three ‘corners’ have much in common: If you go to the stadium often, you probably won’t follow many matches on the radio.

The same goes for following matches on apps. You don’t follow matches on both the radio and your app – it is either or. But what about those ‘TV+++’ and ‘Livestream+++’? Does this mean that most fans follow matches in TV and using livestreams? While we cannot judge how many people use a particular medium from its placement in the map (later I will introduce the concept of ‘mass’ to visualise the weight of each dot), we can say that watching many matches on TV is something most people do (and this medium is therefore not particular to any type of fans). Livestream is not as popular as TV, but what is interesting here is that watching livestreams from matches does not actually tell us that much about these fans (since this dot is close to the centre), and we might therefore conclude that watching many livestreams might actually be a somewhat random praxis which may just be a substitution for TV, but not an addition to TV as for example apps, radio and the stadium. However, watching a more moderate number of livestream (livestream++) may signify something entirely different (as it is placed far to the top of the map), which might indicate that a moderate livestream use may be used entirely differently than heavy livestream use.

We also see that ‘Webtext++’ is far away from ‘Stadium++’ (two dots in opposite corners of the maps indicate two very different profiles), while ‘Apps+++’ have something in common with ‘Stadium+++’ (both are located high up on the second axis). This also makes perfect sense; people are at the stadium or travelling to the stadium - if they need to follow another match, they will rather do it on a mobile device than on a desktop computer.

Another interesting finding from the structure of the main active map is the dichotomy between ‘App+++’ and ‘Stadium+++’. I.e. those fans who use apps to follow matches quite often (‘App+++’) are quite far away from those

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11 Apps referred to any apps the user (which he or she could specify in the questionnaire using an open category) would use to follow matches. Web text referred to any match updates in text using websites. Web stream referred to the particular use of the web to stream a match live. Last, I choose the label ‘personal’ to describe the answers to the question of following matches by getting updates from friends or colleagues. Each question of following the matches using a particular medium was possible to answer with the response categories ‘no matches’, ‘1-5 matches’, ‘6-10 matches’, ‘11-20 matches’, ‘21-30 matches’ and ‘31 or more matches’. As a result, I ended up with three levels of use for each medium: low use (1-5 matches, one + sign), medium use (6-10 matches, two ++ signs) and high use (11+ matches, three +++ signs).
fans who goes to stadium quite often (‘Stadium+++’). One interpretation of this structure, as shall be more evident when we go deeper into the different positions in the field, is that those fans that are part of the fan community are less likely to use the web to follow matches as text, but clearly prefer to watch the match in either TV or on stadium.

It is also clear that those who do not use web text updates find the fan community much more important than those who do use web text updates (41.6% of those who don’t use web text find the fan community ‘highly important’). Looking at those non-users of web streams we find that they are negatively correlated with videos, podcasts and Twitter. In other words, if people use videos, podcasts and Twitter, they are also more likely to use web streams to follow football matches. In conclusion, we may say that there are quite few people who are interested in Danish football, but do not watch matches on either the stadium, in TV or using live streams. As stated, the following construction of the field is constructed using only those positive uses of a particular medium – since the non-users of one medium are simply too likely too not use other media as well – which will seriously deform the resulting vector plane representing the field. Another way of putting this conclusion is that media are mostly complementary; one medium rarely substitutes another medium but increases the value and usefulness of other media. Already by this very initial outline of the active map, we begin to see a structure of the Danish field of football fans and how they use different media.

THE MEDIATION OF FOOTBALL

We have seen how people follow matches. Now is the time to ask why we see this structure, and what this structure tells us about the basic principles (what is called doxa in Bourdieu’s terminology) and motivations of people in the field. Also I question why one type of media is typically used with another type of media, and in the end what media usage tell us about Danish football fans and football culture.

In the first findings presented before, I analysed what the basic statistical placement and construction of the field could tell us about how different media relate to each other. An important way to interpret the map we saw before, is to look at the axes and attempt to understand the difference between points at opposite sides of the same axis. In my perspective:

1. The first axis can be interpreted as representing different degree of media in how fans choose to follow football. Second degree media is placed in the middle of the map; meaning that these media are used by (almost) anyone. However, first and third degree media are placed in the left and right side of the map; meaning that the choice to follow football in either of these media makes a strong difference to which type of fan one is. This interpretation is guided by my view of media as categorized into different degrees.
2. The second axis can be interpreted as indicator for the volume of (football fan) capital one possesses. The higher we move up in the map, the more time the users represented in the map will use to follow football.
This interpretation is guided by the view of the field as structured by the volume of capital, i.e. the idea that investment (in this case time) is made to occupy a strong position in the field.

In what follows, I will explain what this means for the role of communication media in the field.

**THREE DEGREES OF MEDIA IN THE FIELD**

In analysing each individual medium, we get an understanding of how it shapes the field. However, instead of attempting to make sense of all seven media dimensions at once, we may mathematically project (as supplementary vector dimensions) a three dimensional vector representation of the seven football media. Using media of three degrees as a theoretical way of regrouping media, I have divided the map into three areas – one area representing media of that particular degree. What this means is that the media forms located in one area tend to be used in combination with each other. As we can see, 2nd degree media occupy the middle area of the map, which essentially means that all types of fans use 2nd degree media, but not everybody uses 1st and 3rd media.

![Active map: illustration of relation between media of three degrees in match communication](image)

Basically, this structure tells us that as we move to the left in the map, and those users / fans found there, we find that they will more typically use 1st degree media to follow matches. As we move to the right in the map, these users
will typically use 3rd degree media to follow matches. From the interpretation of these correspondence maps, we should remember that the middle of the map represents the ‘common’ characteristics to everyone in the map (or field). To put the last point more simply, we may say that most fans will use 2nd media to follow matches – most notably TV. In other words, watching matches in TV does not tell us that much about who the fan is; but watching a match on the stadium or following a match on an app does tell us quite much about who they are (since the more we move away from the centre of the map, the more ‘marginal’ positions are found). In the following, I will place 3rd degree media on the first axis to the right, and 1st degree media to the left side on the first axis. However, before doing this let me make a final point about this interpretation and structure.

As already stated, following that 1st and 3rd degree media are located on each side of the map means that fans are either using 1st degree media or 3rd degree media to follow matches. As a result, we can say that 1st degree media and 3rd degree media substitute each other; fans rarely use both media to follow matches. On the other hand, 2nd degree media are used quite much by all fans (in that the dots for these media are located close to the centre). Consequently, it is plausible that 2nd degree media supplements other media and vice versa – you can check updates on the web while you watch a match in the TV or watch and match in TV and thereafter go to the stadium to follow another match live there. Yet, it is important to emphasize that the map does not show a general relation between media of the first and third degree in the field (since the variables used to construct the map only accounts for how fans follow matches, not for how they use media for other football related purposes), but only the particular use of these football media to follow matches. In the interpretation of the next figure, we shall see that the volume of capital is quite important to which 1st degree and 3rd degree media fans choose to use to follow matches.

THE INVESTMENT OF TIME

As outlined in the chapter covering social fields, the concept of capital can be used to discuss how investments are translated into symbolic recognition in the field. In the field of Danish football fandom, the ability to meta-communicate is a direct effect of the investment of time into either knowledge (e.g. knowing a lot about a player) or experience (e.g. being present at a match). While the concept of capital will be expanded later in the chapter, I shall here show how the second axis clearly reflects the time invested in following matches. In the map below, I have illustrated the interpretation of the second axis as volume of capital:
If we begin by looking at the dots, we find that fans follow more matches in TV, the stadium and apps as we move further to the top of the map. In the lower part, we find less time consuming media as radio and interpersonal communication. The second set of (red) dots indicates the websites used, and we can see that those websites in the bottom of the map (general news websites) do not invite fan meta-communication while those websites in the top do. Basically, this means that the higher we more in the map, the more do fans interact with each other or meta-communicate. As we move down in the map, with those users who for example listens much to radio broadcasted matches, these users typically do not interact much with other fans. In other words, there are essentially a large number who follows matches and clubs using interpersonal communication, radio and TV, and who will more often use the more generic websites, like for example dr.dk to get information on football.

THE MORE, THE BETTER
Above, I concentrated on the interpretation of axes in the field, and I have discussed how different media are used for communication. However, the placement of different websites in the field is of course very interesting, since
they tell us which websites look similar and which look different in terms of communication. Let us take a look at the map again and focus on the placement of the websites:

If we begin with the centre, we find that Facebook, Ekstra Bladet, bold.dk and sporten.dk are all positioned close to the centre. The interpretation of this structure is that these sites are not (very) particular to any specific media use (or fans) – they are average in other words. The position of Facebook here is not surprising since we find both fan clubs, clubs, football portals and general news sites present as Facebook pages.

As the most popular website on Danish football and including many different subjects, it is probably not surprising that ‘Bold.dk’ is found here, although one may note that even though it includes news on Danish football which are quite narrow (e.g. on talents and players only few have heard about) it is still commonly used among fans. The position of ‘Ekstra Bladet’ is also noteworthy. While other general newspapers are clearly located closer to the bottom of the map, Ekstra Bladet is far closer to the specific football websites and fan sites in the upper area of the map. In other words, even though Ekstra Bladet is a general news website it appeals to the more dedicated fans. Lastly, we have ‘sporten.dk’ (which is not integrated with ‘BT fodbold’) in the centre which makes good sense since
it is a more general sport news portal, but still has a high attention to football compared to the more general news sites.

If we move to the four quadrants, we may begin with the quadrant to the bottom left. Here we find the more general news sites (even though many of the respondents here also use the other sites), while the bottom right quadrant includes the more general news sites and in particular those with high attention to sport and football including ‘tipsbladet.dk’, ‘tv2.dk’ (TV2 has quite much attention to football) and partly ‘sporten.dk’. To the bottom of the map, we find the website for the general broadcasting agency DR (Danmarks Radio) on which we find quite little attention to Danish football compared to other news. If we move to the top quadrants, we find more specific football websites like ‘superliga.dk’ (the official website for the best Danish league), ‘onside.dk’, ‘indkast.dk’, as well as the particular websites for fans, fan clubs and football club.

Moreover, we find Twitter and smartphone apps here; which make sense if we take into consideration that these are used as specific football media in this context. While it is clear that there is a marked difference between the top left (the fan and club pages) and the top right (specialised websites, web channels or portals). This insight lays well with the insight we saw before that the longer we move to the top of the map, the more specialised the media used by fans become – since these specialised media (websites) are those where fans can communicate directly with other fans.
In terms of communication, we find that as we move towards the top of the map, we find that fans meta-communicate more, and use websites which facilitate meta-communication, i.e. include more fan to fan communication like posts, comments and fan written articles. In other words, we find that the bottom websites typically provide communication from experts (professional journalists from the large news media) to fans, while the websites in the top are either written by ‘ordinary’ fans (fan forums), writing fans (e.g. ‘bold.dk’, ‘indkast.dk’) or club journalists (club websites). Hence, the quality of being written for everyone decreases as we move towards the top of the map, while the specialised knowledge possessed only by a few experts (fans or club journalists) increase as we move to the top of the map – and the same does the relevance of these articles.

Nonetheless, it is clear that many fans seek out knowledge from many different sites, and that fans, who spend a huge amount of time on football on the web, use both the traditional news sites as well as the specialised sites. In other words, we can say that the consumption of web communication (websites) is not so much determined by the specific prestige (fans do often criticise for example the big news channels and their commentators, but often
because these are still a main source for them) relating to specific sites, but simply in the thirst for more knowledge and football analysis.

**Weights in the map**

Before discussing the relations between the use of football media in following matches and the use of websites, I present the final (active) map of the Danish field of football with the interpretation of the axes and weights of points (‘masses’):

Masses or weights in the map are represented by the size of the dots. The larger the dot, the more answers (i.e. the bigger share of fans) will be represented by the map. Hence, it is evident that many fans will watch a large number of matches in TV (TV+++ is quite large). On the other hand, a site as for example ‘Jyllandsposten’ is a quite small dot; meaning that not many fans use this website for football news.

In the above, I have explained the basic structure of the field through the construction and analysis of the active map. In a mathematical sense, the active map is the basis dimensional structure of the correspondence map. In the
theoretical sense, the active map shows the most important distinctions in the map; here the two distinctions between communication and meta-communication as well as between following matches in 1st and 3rd degree media.

In the remaining part of the chapter, we will see how the distinctions made in this map can be used to analyse different fan positions in the field as well as understand what characterises these fan positions in terms of demographics as well as the fan cultural practices and symbolic structures.

A TYPOLOGY OF DANISH FOOTBALL FANS

In the preceding section, we saw some general tendencies and structures in the field. However, these structures are inhabited by real fans with specific social and demographic characteristics. Some fans may be what is typically called hardcore supporters while others are barely fans in the common use of the word, but merely audiences. While most football fan studies have been preoccupied with the hardcore supporter, I shall take an empirical approach and simply attempt to understand different types of fans from a statistical perspective. It does not mean that for example ‘the supporter’ (one of the types derived from my statistical analysis) will never use apps, but rather that there is another type of fan who is more likely than ‘the supporter’ to use apps. In the later part of this chapter, I shall explore the cultural practices of each type of fan, but here I shall begin by outlining my typology of four types and explore the social characteristics (demography) of each type.

However, to do this we need to ‘project’ further information into the existing statistical maps to enrich our understanding of the map – and consequently our ability to discern more subtle differences in the map. Basically, we ‘just’ put in more variables into the map, but there are some technical details which I shall shortly explain. In the previous maps, we have looked at what we called the ‘active’ map of the field; consisting of the active variables / vectors which constitute the field and structures the space of the field (i.e. the question concerning how respondents follow football matches as well as the question concerning which websites they use). The active variables / vectors are those survey variables which are represented in a reduced 2-dimensional space – displayed as dots placed in a 2-axis coordinate system. The interpretations of the map, i.e. the names attached to the axes will therefore remain during the adding of supplementary information. Remember that in the centre of the map we find those variables or responses that are common to all fans (i.e. to all respondents in the survey). Hence, we find that the left and right axes are called 1st and 3rd degree media since 2nd degree media is in the centre and therefore not very telling about fans (in terms of following football) – since almost everyone in the field use 2nd degree media (mostly TV) to follow matches.

In the maps here and in the rest of the chapter, I project what is called supplementary variables (and I therefore name these maps as supplementary maps). Supplementary variables cannot alter the space of the map since they are simply projected into the existing space constructed from the two survey questions used to produce the map. On the negative side, this means that only a single variable can be displayed in the map, in additional to the main
variables, at one time (in contrast to many other field studies, e.g. Bourdieu’s own studies). On the positive side, this means that the resulting maps are much stronger (significant), meaning that they display much more of the variance compared to other methods. The trade-off is therefore one between having to display several maps (which I have chosen) versus having one single map where the stability or trustworthiness is much lower than in the single maps. However, these supplementary maps can give us additional information and knowledge about the existing spatial structure of the field. This attribute of supplementary data is very valuable since it allows us to slowly gain more and more insight into different media uses by adding data without the alteration of existing relations.

**The investment of time and money**

There are two ways in which fans get recognised in the field. Either by their knowledge of Danish football or by attending matches or the community. Or preferably both. Depending on where we look in the field, the actual attendance seems more or less important while knowledge, opinions are instantly recognised everywhere since those not actually attending any community or matches are still able to translate knowledge into recognition. Interestingly, the youngest fans are more oriented towards friends than actually going to the stadium (partly due to practical reasons). What is common to all, it seems, is that without spending a considerable amount of time on reading up (or getting the information from other media) on football, you are not a fan – not able to (meta)communicate your experiences with other.

To continue the understanding of the interpretation of the second axis as ‘fan capital’, as a form of investment or resource of being a fan, we may project the time people spend every week on following Danish football matches into the map:
What we see here, is that the average time spend on following Danish football matches is 2-5 hours a week (largest green square located near the centre). If we look to the other areas in the map where the time spend categories are present, we see that the top of the map, characterized by a high volume of fan capital, is where people spend most time (which is one of the reasons why we should characterize this area as high volume capital – it requires a huge investment of time to meta-communicate at this level). On the other side of the second axis, to the bottom of the map, we find those users who spend only a half hour, one hour or two hours a week. What is noticeable is the difference between those 2-5 hours in the middle of the map and the 1-2 hours in the lower part (as well as the 0-60 minutes in the left bottom). To really follow Danish football, you need to actually follow matches (one match could in principle be followed in less than two hours, but in practice it would probably come closer to two or three hours), so watching, listening to or reading about one or two matches seems to be the norm within the field; while those who spend longer time, either because they watch matches on stadia or because the follow several or all the matches, are clearly different to the rest.
If we look at the particular characteristics of those who spend more than 5 hours, it is in particular knowledge about players and more detailed knowledge about for example club economy which characterises these fans, and it may also be knowledge about for example detailed statistics (visiting the Danish football statistics site danskfodbold.com (Ax9: ExC)). Furthermore, the meta-communicative practices of debating and commenting on matches are also significantly correlated to high amount of time spend (which shall be discussed later in the chapter).

Another way to understand what we should think of the volume of ‘fan capital’ is to project information about how important people think the fan community is into the map:

![Supplementary map: To which degree do you find the community with other fans important in regard to Danish football matches (for example when watching the match on the stadium)?](image)

From reading this map we can easily discern an unsurprising line from the top to the bottom of the map where the upper left is characterized by those people who watch the match on stadium and believe the community with other fans to be very important. What is more interesting is to analyse the people who find the community with other fans to be important ‘to a large extent’. While these are in many ways average (which is why the dot is relatively close to
the centre), it is interesting to note that this category is clearly correlated to watching 1-5 matches on the stadium, visiting club websites to buy tickets or watch TV with player interviews and meeting with friends before the match - but not to watch the match at the stadium. Moreover, these fans often follow the matches of clubs they don’t like and will often read player biographies (Ax9: ExC).

In other words, we might begin to understand the lower left quadrant (as well as the upper right) somewhat better; these are fans who take a more general interest in the league than for example the supporters and while they are often fan of a club, it does not mean that they find it necessary to only follow that particular club. On the contrary it may look like they watch the matches together with friends, perhaps even fans from other clubs and this might be the reason why for example digital media are more popular amongst these fans.

Lastly, we can also apply our general knowledge of the Danish field of football fandom (from the analysis in chapter 4) to the field of communication about football by looking at which clubs are particularly well represented in different places within the field.

In this map we see that ‘Brøndby IF’ is clearly predominant in the area of the supporters who are especially keen to go to the stadium (47% find the community with other fans very important, which is far more than supporters of any other Danish club) and somewhat less like to use media of the third degree. The ‘FC København’ fans, however, are located to the top right of the map, perhaps indicating that they use the stadium less (which makes good sense, since they are physically not as close to the home ground as for example ‘Brøndby IF’). And while Brøndby fans read fan pages or Facebook pages, the supporters from FC København are more likely to use the web to watch a YouTube video (perhaps a channel from club) or read printed newspapers (Ax9: ExC). In other words, fans from FC København are less dependent on talking with people they know about matches; which corresponds very well to how they (often)
follow matches: using apps or web text updates. In the bottom part of the map, we have all the clubs from smaller cities in Denmark as well as clubs from the countryside. Supporters of these clubs are in particular characterized by not using the stadium and not using digital media as much as the Brøndby and FC København supporters. It is important to note, however, that the access to the stadium as well as the production of digital content from clubs and other fans is lower for the clubs in the bottom part of the map. In other words, we do not know whether the fans placed in the bottom part are less inclined to use media of the first or third degree or are simply not able to use them as much, but not because they don’t want to.

The four segments

Since a field consists of many different people with different purposes, it is relevant to understand how different people when entering different contexts, behaves and think differently. In Bourdieu’s theory, we speak about positions as places in the field from which you think and speak accordingly to your role. However, it is important to emphasize that you are not necessarily determined into a specific position. One many enter the field in one position and then move on to other positions – which is often the case when one gets older for example. It thus seems like the trajectory of many fans follow a specific path between positions – from being young, starting to join a fan community, getting older and having kids (mostly viewing games from home) and then lastly returning to the stadium with old friends and perhaps ones children. It is not a determined path, some people may take other paths, but it is a ‘probable’ (meaning statistically significant) path.

As a starting point for this analysis, I would like to present a segmentation of fans within the field, including four segment names inspired by the fan literature, e.g. (Abercrombie and Longhurst, 1998):
If we take a look at the four quadrants of the field, we may characterize these quadrants as different football fan segments (within the field). Later, we will know more about each of these four fan segments, but let me here summarize each segment.

The supporters often follow football matches on the stadium. While the supporters still follow several matches on TV, they are less inclined to watch the match (of the club they support) on TV and clearly prefer to go and watch it on the stadium. Live streams and apps are also ways to communicate (follow) football matches, but the supporters clearly prefer to meta-communicate in their own communication channels: the home page of the club, the particular apps developed for the club, the fan home page and the fan groups pages (e.g. on Facebook). Most of the supporters also use the more general sites like bold.dk, sporten.dk, tv2.dk and Ekstra Bladet – but to a somewhat lesser degree than some of the other fans.

The spectators do not follow as many matches as the other fans, and are especially characterized by a lower number of matches followed on TV. However, many of these also watch matches at the stadium (but perhaps more on the ‘neutral’ terraces) and the spectators also follow matches as web text (or perhaps rather just results) and on the
radio. While the spectators also prefer the popular football sites like Ekstra Bladet, bold.dk and sporten.dk, it is among the spectators we also find people who like to read about football on the less dedicated websites like dr.dk, politiken.dk and jyllands-posten.dk.

The enthusiasts use very much time on Danish football, but not necessarily on stadia. They often use media of the third degree to follow everything about matches, players and clubs, and in general look to be more interested in the league in general rather than their own favourite club by itself. The enthusiasts use the dedicated football sites but they lust for even more news makes them visit sites like onside.dk and indkast.dk – sites with many football news and articles. Moreover, they clearly prefer apps more than anyone else to follow matches and watch many matches on TV as well.

The connoisseurs also watch many games on TV and also listen to radio, but rarely go to the stadium to watch matches there. Moreover, the connoisseurs are also using the web to follow matches and to a lesser degree apps. The connoisseurs also read sites (e.g. tipsbladet.dk) which are not particular biased towards clubs, but contains a lot of less important articles and information, that does not necessarily surface on TV or more mainstream media.

IN AND OUT OF THE COMMUNITY: THE DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE FIELD

I have constructed the field of communication about football by looking at how media are used. However, we may also begin to understand how the field is structured socially by projecting the demographic variables from the survey into the field as supplementary variables. In the analysis of the social structure of the field, I have projected these variables into the map: age, family situation, education, employment status, income, gender and geography.

The most important conclusions to this analysis are that following football on the stadium is an activity related to either older fans or younger fans, and so is the supporter community – and the club and fan websites. On the other hand we find the very young fans following football in the new web media, especially with text updates and in apps. Moreover, these fans (the enthusiasts) often attempt to get expert opinions on events by the specialised sites, which thereby in some way help form their own ‘expert’ opinions on things. However, it is not only the young, but also to some extent fans living alone and with a lower income – and also those not living in larger cities. So another explanation could also simply be that the TV subscriptions are too expensive and that following matches in apps and webtext is a cheaper option. Then again, the supporters probably don’t care that much for many of the affordances that the web offers in terms of broadcasting, but simply use the web to get basic information which is relevant to them either in terms of going to the stadium or the meta-conversation with other fans in the community.

The first demographic variable is age:
Here we see that there is circular movement around the centre of the map – with the very clear exception with the age groups 40-44 and 50+ years - which are clearly demarcated from all other dots far to the left. Closest to the centre of the map, we find the age group 0-19 years (the youngest respondent was 13). In other words, turning older results in a more specific media use and fan position. The circular movement goes from the upper right to the lower right, then to the lower left and then to the upper left part of the map. We see that people are first de-located to the bottom part of the map and later to the upper left of the map. The most obvious explanation to the age structure of the field, even though it is structured by media use alone, is that people are engaged and have time to follow Danish matches until they are around 25 years. At this time in life, it is likely that many fans will become detached from the fan culture when they get children and then re-join the fan culture, but spend more time on the stadium (which they can now also more easily afford) and less on socially isolated activities (like joining fan club activities), when the children get older.

If we look to some of the older age groups, (50+ especially but also 40-44 years and 45-49 years) they are located far from the centre and they are especially far from the practices of the youngest fans. Some may still be dedicated fans but the uses of media of the first and second degree are clearly predominant, at least in following matches. More generally, we may say that age displays the two main relationships (the two axes) in the field in the following way: Young people will typically use media of the third degree, but will with age substitute media of the third degree.
with media of the second degree and later media of the first degree. And in terms of capital, we see that especially people in the age group between 25 and 30 don’t spend as much time and energy following Danish football and slowly begin to exit (some may exit entirely, but they are no longer part of the field) and then may re-enter the field and accumulate capital (following matches, getting knowledge etc.) when they get older.

The second demographic variable of interest is *family situation*:

Looking at family situation we see that the most usual situation in the field is to live alone or with parents. To the left, we find the dot with people who live with their partner but without any children, while the lower part of the map consist in people who have children, except for the lowest left dot (‘I live at friends / family / collective’). It thus seems like having children is, perhaps not very surprisingly, clearly opposed to fan capital – even if the children are over five years. What is interesting about people having children is that we find people with older children clearly positioned to the left of the map while people with younger children are clearly positioned to the right of the map. In other words, when people get children they become even more pre-disposed to use media of the third degree while older children get pre-disposed to use media of the first degree (which may be explained by the fact that they can follow football together with their children).

The third demographic variable is *education*:
If we take a look at the position of the dots, it is initially difficult to see whether there is any relation between long education and short education. However, if we project a one-dimensional vector (light green) into the map, it becomes easier to read (image the green dots projected straight into the imaginary vector). What we see here is a (vector) movement going from the upper right corner and into the lower left corner. To some degree, this vector (obviously) correlates with age, but not entirely. While just having finished (or perhaps being in) high-school is the most normal profile (closest to the centre), there are clear differences between different parts of the map. Let us begin by discussing the general pattern – the movement towards the lower left bottom. Both media use and fan capital are related to education. The longer or higher education people have, the less energy they will spend on Danish football and the less fan capital they will possess in the field. This is hardly a surprising conclusion but nevertheless important to discuss since much, if not the main part of, football fan studies has been focused on football as a working class sport or activity.

If we look at the dots, we notice that a large part of the field actually consists of people with a quite long education behind them (short, average or long education plus students) – so the data do not in any way support the idea of...
Danish football as a traditional working class activity (although some may argue that the ‘real’ fans or supporters are those with a high volume of capital and thus what in Denmark come closest to a form of working class profile – e.g. skilled workers). What is perhaps more clear, is that the structure of education shows that academics are less inclined to follow football using TV as a medium and more inclined to use radio than fans with shorter education. We should also notice that the supporters, the connoisseurs and the spectators are strongly correlated with short, middle and long term education, and if we look closer at the data (Ax9: ExC), we may depict the usual media behaviour very generally (and simplified) from these three groups: Fans with long term education sit at home, listen to radio and read printed or online articles about Danish football. Fans with middle term education sit with friends or at home and watch TV and take interest in for example statistics and other types of online information. Fans with short term education go to the stadium with other fans to watch the match there, and perhaps read articles and watch sport news when they get home.

The fourth demographic variable of interest is employment status:
Employment status not surprisingly shows that there are many students in the field. What is perhaps more important is the fact that none of the dots are located in near proximity to the centre. In other words, we see that fans, as they get employed (while of course also correlated to education and age) move from the right of the map to the left of the map. We should repeat two discussions from reading this tendency. First, media use is probably dependent on income and particularly going to the stadium and to away matches often is too expensive (the season after the questionnaire was conducted actually saw a decrease in season tickets) for students and people without full-time employment. Hence, fans without the economic means to buy season tickets follow matches using free media (radio, the web, smartphones, live streams). Second, we may actually notice that students are located closer to the bottom of the map compared to full-time employed and thus invest less time (Ax9: ExC) than full-time employed on communication about football.

The fifth demographic variable of interest is income:

The view of income in the field in many ways just confirms the previous analysis. To the left we see that income rises (which it should as age increases, but the income increase is stronger than the age increase as we move to the left).
What is perhaps interesting to notice here is that the line of income from left to right is very much in correlation to the first axis—i.e. the longer we move to the left of the map, the more likely it is that fans earn clearly above average and vice versa. In conclusion, we may say that income (and education) has relatively little influence on fan capital but rather big influence in which media people choose to follow matches. One question which may arise from looking at this map is whether those people who use fan club pages, fan forums and other fan related websites are actually people with high income as the map suggest. However, looking further into the data by t-tests just confirms this tendency. Yet, it is important to note that people who earn clearly more than the average are not necessarily doctors or lawyers, but may also be workmen or salesmen.

The sixth demographic variable of interest is gender:

In this map we can see that men and women are quite different type of fans. While there are much more men in the sample, the green dot for men is closer to the centre and larger in size. Visually, however, we may imagine men being further moved towards the upper right part of the field. Women are clearly located in the area of the spectators and a quick view on data also shows that women use 3rd degree media less to meta-communicate. If we
look closer to the differences between men and women, many may perhaps be confirmed in typical gender stereotypes of fans. However, the differences, while clearly pronounced within the field, are not that huge as some may imagine from looking at the map.

Comparing women to men we see that women are more oriented towards match events and about match experiences; which women like to write about. However, debating online with other fans is not very popular amongst women. Instead, women like to use the web to follow matches they would otherwise not be able to follow. Looking at media use, we see that women (unsurprisingly given that they like to talk about experiences) use Facebook clearly more than men and also like to listen to radio (although some women don't listen to radio at all, which indicates that women listen to radio broadcasted matches less on purpose than men). Moreover, women are more interested in what clubs have to say on their own websites and also prefer printed club magazines more than men. Also, women also like to follow players, especially their private life and opinions about different issues. Men, on the other hand, are more interested in statistics, bets, and tactics about matches. Men use the web for debating stuff and are clearly more interested in economics – whether in relation to player wages or club economy. Men also visit fan pages more and use mobile apps a good deal more than women. Lastly, men seem to be more interested in those webpages which post really many football news, and it may therefore not come as a surprise either that men use the web much more for football news during working hours.

The seventh demographic variable of interest is geography:
In this map, I have projected the place people live. Denmark has postal codes, but they are hard to classify in terms of what type of area people live in. As a result, I have used another terminology (actually, the map with postal codes can be found in (Ax9: PpC)) where people place the area they live in as a large city, outer part of a large city, a smaller city, a village or the countryside. By looking at the map, we can see that there is a movement from the lower right part of the map (countryside, small city) to the upper left part of the map (this movement is also correlated to the clubs which fans support, as displayed earlier). First, we can see that people not living in cities mostly use media of the second degree to follow football. Not surprising, but still important to note. Second, we see that media of the third degree is clearly correlated to smaller cities (club) and this may support another discussion within the field of Danish football; that TV and radio (and newspapers) have usually covered the largest clubs (perhaps not so much match coverage more, but then in expert analysis and commentaries. Moreover, the huge amount of football news
about Danish football produced on portals like bold.dk also brings attention to what happens in smaller clubs and with (less well known) players from these clubs.

THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF THE FIELD: SUMMARY

In the above analysis, I have presented the Danish field of football fandom through a number of statistical ‘maps’. I have used fans’ media usage to make distinctions between different types of fans and their social characteristics. Here, I shall summarize the main findings in the preceding part and attempt to seek answers to some more general questions.

Looking at the social structure of the field, I explored how the positions within the field can be seen as four different segments or fan types. First, we have the supporters who are the more traditional type of supporter; going to the stadium, either older men who have probably returned to the stadium when their children have become old enough or younger men for whom the stadium represents a strong form of community. The supporters are using general football news websites, but are even more using the club sites as well as fan forums. Second, the enthusiasts are young people, often going to school or studying, living with their parents. The enthusiasts are very interested in football generally, and use football websites which are often specialised or debate forums for experts. Moreover, apps are much used by the enthusiasts; which makes good sense given their interest in many different leagues and matches. Third, we find the connoisseur. The connoisseurs are often somewhat older than the enthusiasts, and they might have been fans who had a lot of time to go to the stadium when they were younger but now have less time and are more into football as a discussion topic with colleagues and friends. They often follow matches in TV and sometimes in radio – and still use quite some time on what is happening in the football world. Fourth, we have the spectators who still take an interest in football but have little time and don’t talk much with others about football (probably because many of them have small children).

If we take a look at these four main positions in the field, we see that it resembles a life trajectory where fans go to the stadium and uses forums to discuss with other fans. When they become older, they have less time to engage with a more general football community and they need more time for family etc. However, the analysis also shows that geography is quite important here. Being a fan around a fan community is (still) based on proximity; the longer away you are from your club (i.e. on the countryside), the less likely you are to attend matches at the stadium. Lastly, when fans get grown up kids, they return to the community on the stadium in the attempt to engage their children. Yet, it is difficult to say whether these results reflect a more general pattern or whether they will change when the new generation, using apps and following matches on the web, grows older.

Looking at the field as a positional space, we can say that the positions are in some sense isolated. The supporters have their own forums and places on the web while the other positions are less engaged in particular club communities and more in the football world in general. The web allows other positions (i.e. non-supporters) to
follow particular clubs and discuss what is happening without actually engaging with the existing communities around a particular club. In this sense, the traditional supporter community lives on; fans are welcome to join and leave this community at different stages of their life and this is what they do. Those who choose to engage in the supporter community engage with other fans here and don’t care much about what is happening on the web outside their own channels – and the web supports this practice.

Returning to the concept of capital, we can argue that capital is partly gained from knowledge of (Danish) football and partly gained through the community. I.e. we may say that capital can be manifested as either a position within the fan community, communicated with on fans through media of the 1st degree and supporting this communication by using media of the 3rd degree, i.e. on club and fan club websites. On the other hand, capital can also manifest itself as knowledge of football; where fans within specific communities (onside.dk, indkast.dk, Twitter) are not related to a particular football club. Instead fans gain in-depth knowledge which is valuable among friends when for example watching a match on TV. In this sense, capital manifest itself either as the conversion of time and money (to pay for tickets and bus trips) to become part of the fan community or a conversion of time to become extremely knowledgeable about the football world. However, there are few ‘places’ where fans from different positions speak with each other. While some fans use the general debate forum on eb.dk to discuss football, the field is somehow fragmented in that supporters don’t really participate in forums, except for their own club. On the other hand, fans from the other positions are merely talking about football with the people around them, and don’t seem to have a particular need to speak up themselves, but might just ‘check’ in to see what is happening on the forums.

Another important question I asked earlier was whether the (Danish) football community in the field is in some way imagined? While most fans believe the community to be important, they don’t necessarily feel part of the community but might at one stage or another of their lives have been attending matches at the stadium. Most fans feel that there is a community with other fans, but the community is not necessarily with other fans at the stadium, but are with their friends, family and people around them. This does not mean that fans who don’t attend matches don’t feel a sense of community or belonging, but just in another way than actually being present at matches – which they can always come back to and feel welcome.

Hence, when we look at the web and the significance of the web in the field, we can draw a few conclusions. First, the web is used in different contexts. For the supporters, the web is a forum on which to gain knowledge about what is happening before and after matches, not to actually follow matches. The web has made supporters more aware of what is happening, information is coming cheaper and quicker to fans than earlier, and, as a result, more fans are aware of what is happening in the fan community. Second, other types of fans are now able to get more information on what is happening with their own club – and perhaps even more importantly: with other clubs. While it is difficult to say whether this actually strengthens or weakens the relationship with a particular club, it seems certain that the fans (or new generations of fans) use apps and websites to follow other clubs and the league more generally. The web broadens the scope of what fans (the enthusiast) can follow, but also allows fans who have less time to spend
on football to follow what is happening with their club and the fan community. As a result, the web does not necessarily enable togetherness as a feeling, but rather enable fans to know more about what is happening to be able to attend actual forms of togetherness when able to.

In this part, I looked at the social structure and the types of fans present within the field. In the next part, I will use the survey data and web analytics data to understand how fans actually use the Danish football websites.
THE WEB IN THE LIFE OF A FAN

In what follows, we shall go into more detail by expanding the correspondence analysis to cover how the web enrich the communication of matches, clubs and icons – and how this differs from one fan type to another. Moreover, I dig into the statistics for two of the websites in the field: sso.dk and eb.dk. On eb.dk, I analyse how the web is used during the match week, and on sso.dk I analyse how the transfer of the Danish icon Daniel Agger from Liverpool to Brøndby triggered a number of events and interactions on the fan forum.

THE MATCH IN THE FIELD

How is the web used in football fan communication about matches? In this analysis, I will look at the number of hours fans use to follow matches each week on the web, what type of information interests fans in regard to matches and how fans use media before and after matches. In other words, I attempt to reconstruct the particular function (logic in the field) which the web has acquired and which existing logics it might have changed. As we recall, I defined the symbolic form of the match as the particular set of practices around the actual football game resulting from audience activity in relation to these games, including practices of how to celebrate a beautiful moment in the game (and what characterises beautiful), which type of game information is important in interpreting the game etc.

I have divided my analysis of the match (and the other symbolic forms) into subsections, each of which discusses one particular survey question and shows how different people in the field answer this question.

HOW MUCH TIME DO FANS SPEND FOLLOWING MATCHES?

In my construction of the field, I presented the structure of the field as a result of how fans use different media to follow matches, i.e. to watch the match in TV, to read text updates on the web or listen to match updates in the radio. However, the match as a symbolic form is not just a set of practices related to following games, but also practices related to fan communication and meta-communication about the match; to get an update Monday morning about a match or talk with colleagues about a match at lunch. In the first supplementary map, we see information on how long time fans usually use during a week to follow or get information about Danish football using the web:
In the map we see the supplementary points (green dots) are dispersed around the map. Hence, in the top of the field we find fans who use websites and apps more than 10 hours a week and between two and five hours a week. To the right, we find fans that use the web between 5-10 hours a week, while the bottom left includes those fans that use the web less than two hours a week. What we see here is thus a strong indication that the use of particular media is strongly correlated with how much time fans use on the web. Moreover, it is important to notice that most fans (70%) use the web more than two hours a week to follow Danish football.

In the interpretation of the structure of time used, we can begin by discerning some important insights. While some supporters clearly use much time, many supporters and spectators don’t use that much time compared to the enthusiasts and connoisseurs. If we look at the people spending less time on following Danish football (under an hour a week), some of their characteristics are that they use the web to get information to be used in social contexts (e.g. significant relation to: they talk with friends after the match, use the websites alone at home, meet at friends to follow the match there). Consequently, these fans are in the current life situation not able to follow matches on the stadium (e.g. significant relation to: kids above five years, lives in the countryside). Those fans, that use very little
time, use it to follow the league, e.g. results, interviews with players and statistics (significant relation). These fans usually also watch sports news in the TV. Interestingly, it does seem like using the web less, is strongly correlated to using TV less and radio more. Hence, fans who does not have the time to actually sit down and watch matches, still want to follow these in the radio and still use sport news and websites to get information about league standings. As we saw earlier this type of fans are spectators who are not in a life situation where they can spend much time on (Danish) football, yet they still take interest in what is going on and use the web to get an overview of the most important events.

If we take a look at the rest of the map, we see some important structural characteristics of the field. First, fans in the right part of the map spend quite many hours on the web. While not in the +10 hours group, the connoisseurs and enthusiasts often spend 5-10 hours a week following Danish football. Evidently, these fans don’t use the time on supporter forums or club sites, but rather on news websites which makes these fans extremely knowledgeable about what is going on in the league; and on many different events, including those relating to clubs they do not support. Additionally, it is important that many of the sites in the right side of the map are not discussion forums and the time spent by the enthusiast and connoisseurs are used for reading news.

Reading this information into a broader context we can say that the supporters do not necessarily spend so much time on the web, most read the club websites and main news websites and sometimes come to fan forums to read about what is happening. We also see that a few very dedicated supporters (not correlated with age, but with none-academic education) use a lot of time to read other fans’ opinions. On the other hand, we have the enthusiasts and connoisseurs who use a lot of time reading about Danish football, but without necessarily engaging in the fan discussions for particular clubs.

To conclude, we see that to spend much time following Danish football is clearly correlated with either high fan capital (1st axis) or with digital media (2nd axis), but not in particular any social characteristics (not age nor geography are significantly correlated with high time spend on Danish football). In other words, the fans as well as the enthusiasts spend a long time acquiring knowledge and being updated on news, even if this news (as for the enthusiasts) is not really converted into supporter capital (i.e. it has no particular value within a supporter community) but seems more useful in the daily communications with friends, colleagues and family. While the data shows that some supporters use particularly long time on the web, it seems more ‘random’ who these supporters are, and as we saw in the last chapter, they may be using the forum if something catches their interest, but the time spent on club sites is probably quite low (based on the analysis in the last chapter), so most time, even for the supporters, is probably still spent on reading general news about the league and clubs.

**What is it that makes matches interesting to fans?**

In the next visualisation of the field, I have asked which type of information fans find most interesting in relation to matches.
Basically, the map shows a strong difference in interest from different positions in the field (the green dots are dispersed around the map, and are not in the centre). Some types of information are of interest to most fans (squares close to the centre), like for example the significance of the match to league standings and statements from players or managers. However, we also see that some types of information are quite specific to different media and positions.

In the lower left corner, we find that the spectators read match summaries and also statements and information about the significance of the match. Not surprisingly, we find that the supporters are particular interested in fan related information, as well as (but to a lesser degree) events and happenings in relation to matches are particularly important to supporters. On the right hand of the map (3rd degree comm. media), we find that the enthusiasts are particularly interested in facts about club economy, player injuries, tactics and other details facts. On the lower part, we find that the connoisseurs are particularly interested in statistics as well as analysis and evaluations from football commentators and experts.

The first interesting thing to note here is the strong difference between supporters on the left side and the enthusiasts and connoisseurs on the right side – or between 1st degree media and 3rd degree media. The fans
following football in 1st degree media are to a much greater extent interested in match and event related facts, while the fans using 3rd degree media are to a much larger degree interested in more general facts about the league and matches. This data suggest that using 3rd degree media may change focus from particular matches and clubs to a more general interest in the entire league and all (or many different) clubs. Moreover, the fans using 3rd degree media are more interested in statistics and analysis of game events – and this is made much more easily available with 3rd degree media. If we look at the t-tests, also note that being interested in statistics about matches is positively correlated with many livestream and webtext updates, while negatively correlated to going to the stadium.

The second interesting thing to note is how the upper right corner differs from the lower right corner. As we go down in the map (or people become older according to the earlier life trajectory analysis) the interest does not necessarily shift that much, but as time spend on following the match decreases, fans become more reliant on (or confident of) expert analysis and commentators and less inclined to see things for themselves and to interpret the facts for themselves. In other words, we find that extra time spend and higher fan capital equals an inclination towards attempting to understand and interpret the raw facts about matches, and this translates into for example following more matches on apps, even if this might only be simple statistics and updates – perhaps rather than reading the analysis in the form of an expert review of the match. We can also understand this tendency as a trend towards being more in the ‘flow’ of events as we move higher upwards in the right side of the map; as fans get more time (or choose to spend more time), they use the web to stay ‘live’ with what is happening in matches and to interpret (or construct a frame of interpretation) the actual events themselves or together with friends with whom they follow Danish football – in contrast to the older connoisseurs who perhaps have less contact with other fans and who prefer to sit for example at work and read expert discussions of matches.

To sum up, there seems to be a very interesting contrast between the use of 3rd degree media and 1st degree media in following football matches. While the traditional supporters use the 3rd degree media to get more information on what is happening within the fan scene and the particular events related to the match, the fans who use 3rd degree media to follow matches less often take interest in the fan scene or match events (which makes sense since they don’t go to the stadium to watch the match there), but instead develop a broader and more ‘analytical’ stance towards the match or matches of the league. Yet, as we saw in the analysis of the Danish football field, we cannot say that the number of fans going to watch matches at the stadium is in general decreasing, which means that the traditional supporter does not seem to be replaced by the connoisseurs and enthusiasts, but that these are simply different fan positions existing side by side.

BEFORE THE MATCH

In the next map, we see how fans use different media before the match to get relevant knowledge about the match.
When interpreting this map, we see some supplementary points (green dots) are placed very far from the centre (strongly related to particular positions) and some very close to the centre. If we begin by looking at those uses close to the centre (and thus shared by all fan positions in the field), we see that watching videos, reading news and talking with friends are common practices. However, note that the large dots are typically placed to the left on the map, meaning that most uses are actually performed by those traditional supporters; which makes sense to us now that we know that the positions on the right side on the map are less interested in particular matches. To the far upper left we find ‘Read fan websites’, not surprisingly strongly related to the traditional supporters; followed by ‘Read club websites’, also related to the supporters. When we move towards the bottom of the map, we find that fans use more general news channels, like radio, TV, printed newspapers and podcasts. Especially the placement of podcasts here indicates that these fans still can be very dedicated (downloading a specific podcast on football) – they just don’t have so much time in their daily life; which is why for example listening to podcasts or radio makes sense to them.
What we see here is somewhat surprising if we look back at the literature on digital media and football fandom. First, many of those portals, placed in the right of the map, where fans from different clubs can discuss and produce a common forum are not really used by the traditional supporters. We do see that many fans use these forums, but the traditional fan club members and supporters are to a much larger degree using their own dedicated forum and the club website before matches. The real advantage of the web for the traditional supporters is the ability to be more updated on what is going on within the fan scene and to get news on line-ups and information on the actual matches and how to get tickets etc. On the other hand (the right side of the map), we find the enthusiast who does not really do any fan related communication before the match, but rather talks with friends and others within a close social context.

If we look at the bottom of the map, this is where we see fans use 2nd degree media to prepare for matches. In other words, these fans use the ‘old’ broadcasting media to get information on what is going on. We don’t see these less engaged (in terms of fan capital) fans participate in the discussions on football in digital media. And although we don’t have any specific data to prove why, it seems probable that these fans don’t have the time to engage in these forums – perhaps also proving that to participate in the fan discussions online, you need to have a high volume of capital (i.e. know a lot about the subjects) since this information is very specific to particular clubs and social contexts.

To sum up we can say that many fans get prepared by watching sport news, reading online news sites like bold.dk or Ekstra Bladet, and by talking with friends and family. However, there are also marked differences in how different positions in the field prepare for matches. The supporters look through club websites, fan forums and Facebook groups to see if there is anything interesting related to the upcoming match. However, the other positions are not preparing for specific matches, but are generally interested in what is happening in the league by using apps, reading news websites and talking with friends, family and others about the upcoming match(es). In other words, the supporters typically prepare for matches alone by reading forums and club websites but watch the match with others, while the other positions are discussing matches with others before and after matches while often following the match alone in apps or the web.

**AFTER THE MATCH**

The following map shows what fans do after a finished match:
This map also shows some very strong differences between different positions. While watching sport news or programs in TV are placed close to the centre, i.e. a common praxis for all fans, the remaining green dots are strongly related to specific positions. With the enthusiast in the upper right corner, we find the answer ‘Get information using mobile apps’ – not very surprising given that these fans also use apps to follow matches, but nevertheless important since not all media work identically in following matches and getting information about matches. This finding strongly supports the idea that apps are used to get easy information before, during and after matches.

To the lower right, we find that fans are in particular getting information after matches by listening to radio, but also from printed newspapers. To the lower left, we find that fans are in particular getting information by visiting websites and reading match summaries on the websites as well as talking with friends and family. As this position (the spectators) is not actually following matches in any media, it also makes sense that they, when they visit football specific or general news websites, also read match summaries. To the upper left, we find that the supporters visit the fan forums and club websites to get more detailed information on matches.
Again, we see that the enthusiast and connoisseurs on the right side of the map are perhaps not that focused on particular matches, but are to a greater extent just following (Danish) football on the web rather than using the web to follow a particular match. For the supporters, however, we see that they are very much using the web to find more information on matches – to see if there is anything they have missed or perhaps to see all the details and facts that they did not get when experiencing the match live on the stadium instead of following the match in other media where the detailed information was readily at hand. Hence, the web can work both as an option to get basic summaries or reviews of matches (the spectators) after matches, but for those interested in particular matches and who want detailed statistics and recordings, the web also offers them this option after matches. Furthermore, we also see that supporters check the forums for interesting news after matches, while the forums do not necessarily work, as we saw in the last chapter, as a place to discuss matches afterwards – but rather as a place to find unique pieces of information from the fan scene or on the match which are not available elsewhere.

The match week: An example from how fans use eb.dk

The get a more detailed understanding of what fans actually use sites for, I have used the data from the website eb.dk to show how fans follow matches, and to show what type of content about football the web provides. What we learn from this analysis is that fans use the (news)website for supplementary and background information. Fans go to the site either to read articles in depth or to get a quick overview, and those who use the live text updates will do so as a kind of background activity. Hence, this website plays an important role in constantly providing new information, but less so as a channel of following matches or as a substitution for following matches in other media.

The website eb.dk allows users to follow the broadcasting of live updates from football matches within a particular section on the website (hereafter abbreviated EBf). Following a broadcasted match on the website means two things. First, the user can follow small text updates from minute to minute, written by journalists who views the match live. Second, important events and statistics are updated during the match. The broadcasting of matches is embedded within a particular section on the website called the live section. Besides the actual broadcasting of matches, the live section also contains important information related to the broadcasting of matches: tournament standings, statistics between the two clubs playing, betting information, results relating to a particular club and information on TV broadcasting.

Before I discuss what we can use these different elements within the live section for in understanding what fans use match broadcasting for, I shall show a few screenshots taken from the live section to give a more visual understanding to what is going on within this section. In the screenshot below, we see what the user is presented with when entering the live section on EBf:
In the top part of the window, the user has the option to view three recent articles (going to the articles section). In the live window itself, the user can navigate (on the top pane) between matches, tournament tables, clubs, football in TV, odds and H2H (statistics comparing two clubs). Below the date selector, the user can choose either all matches (‘Alle kampe’) or only the matches that have already ended (today), ongoing matches or future matches (today). Lastly, the user can view the result (or current standing) and click through to the particular matches (here, the match in the Superliga between OB and AaB). If the user clicks on the particular match, the user will be presented with the actual live broadcast window which in the case of the above match, looks like this (the match has ended):
In the screenshot above, we see how the user can follow the match when broadcasted in the live section on EBf. In the top part, the main events are shown using graphics and in the lower part of the window, we see the updates (the numbers, 89, 90, 91, 93, indicate the time of the match) from journalists describing or commenting on what is happening in the match. The text messages are produced by journalists for important matches (which includes all matches in the Superliga), and often begins with an introduction to the match (perhaps beginning ten minutes before the match begins) where the journalist writes about the importance of the match for the clubs and the tournament, and also about important events leading up to the match as for example injuries. When the match begins, the journalist writes small text updates about what happens in the match, and in particular about important events like goals, red cards etc. Moreover, the journalist writes more general comments during the match about for example what happens in other matches or where this result might take the two clubs playing.

The question here is: How can people use match broadcasting in the live section and what do these interactions and the context of these interactions tell us? If we begin by looking at the traffic to different sections on eb.dk, we can see how much of total visits each section counts for – divided into days.

The users visit the article section on all days of the week, but clearly more users\textsuperscript{12} visit the articles section on days before and after match days (the general traffic to the entire website is almost the same for all days). The traffic

\textsuperscript{12} On the selected dates for the analysis, where the matches are all, except one, played Sunday, the number of visits to the Danish article section is just above a quarter of a million one Sunday and Monday, where Saturday reaches 120,000 and Tuesday drops to 76,000. Calculating visits for data for a year, we see that this pattern seems to be confirmed. Monday has the most article traffic while Sunday and Saturday is next. The differences are not that big,
patterns to the Danish articles (average time spend on page, number of pages per visit etc.) does not differ much between days, but there is a higher number of new users visiting the website in the week days, meaning that there are some of the users who don’t normally use the website for reading news on Danish football, but do so right before and after Danish matches. Only a few users visit the actual match pages on non-match days, but many users visit the live section to look for other matches (since non-Danish matches can be found there as well) and especially the overview pages. In general, it looks like most fans following matches on EBf is reading articles during the week. The traffic numbers change much on ordinary days (not including the days where matches are played and the day before and after), indicating that most fans generally go to the news site most days and clicks if there are any (interesting) Danish articles.

The day(s) before the match there is a high number of visit to the betting pages and also an increased traffic to the TV and tournament tables overview pages. In other words, we see that while fans read articles on Danish football the entire week, it is the day before the match that fans begin to take interest in specific matches and prepare to actually follow these matches. We also see an increase of mobile traffic to the articles section which might indicate that fans are together with other fans when reading articles. As the matches begin on match day, fans begin to explore tournament tables and how particular matches may or will change the standings. The traffic for visits to the league tables is rather steady during the day, and tops at around 9.p.m. in the evening on match day (just after the last match is finished), while the overview of live matches tops just before the last match begins (7.p.m.). In other words, fans (probably) go to the specific match they want to follow and after this they end up on the tournament table pages to get the final overview.

Some fans choose to follow the entire match on EBf. Yet, the web analytics data indicates that fans do not follow the match by sitting and watching their screen on their device. Instead, they look at the device at specific times and then read the updates and perhaps view a few related matches or articles. The obvious conclusion is that they use for example their mobile device as a second screen, either because they are actually watching the match in TV or the stadium – or because they are in a social setting where it would not be appropriate to follow the entire match on any screen.

In general, however, it looks like these fans do something else but more or less follow the entire match on screen. While some do follow the entire match (or at least keep their device on with the live section open in a browser or app window), it seems a more common behaviour to check the events in a particular match as the match moves closer to the end (in the second hour of the match). After the match fans look at tournament tables and follow up articles – yet many also leave the site on the particular page of the match they were following.

However. The extra traffic on Mondays is around 50% more than on Tuesdays. We can also see that far more traffic comes from mobile devices on Saturdays, Sundays and Mondays.
To understand how fans actually following the live broadcasting section during matches, I have summarized some of the main trends in the data in the following visual schematic:

In the first following path (A), we find a number of users who view the match in other media but who need to find basic information as line-up and statistics, rather than actually following the match\(^\text{13}\). These users also navigate to articles after getting the basic information, but only rarely\(^\text{14}\). This type of behaviour constitutes around half of the fans use of the live broadcasting section\(^\text{15}\) which mean that a lot of fans simply use the site just before, during or

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\(^{13}\) AX8: In [AX8: AP12] we can see that the percentage of the individual match page views is far less on those who stay for less than 60 seconds on the pages, while the tabs showing line-up and statistics (scrollToTabs=True) is much higher.

\(^{14}\) AX8: We can see this from the low percentage of article views from the ‘less than 60 seconds time on page’ segment in [AX8: AP12]

\(^{15}\) AX8: The segment of less than 60 seconds on page constitutes 1,53% of all users, while all users visiting any of the four matches constitute 3,29%.
after the match to get a quick overview on match results and in some cases also statistics or line-ups. For many fans then, following a match on the web simply means to get match result updates.

In the second following path (B), we find fans who to a much larger degree read the live text\textsuperscript{16} and visit the match pages just before the matches begin\textsuperscript{17}. These are in particular returning users, which probably mean that people who actually follow matches usually do it on EBf and not on other websites or apps. The quite long average visit duration for these users indicates that they will often follow the entire match online. However, even those who follow the matches in live text will usually click between different matches rather than just following one match. We also see that many users stay on the site after the match has finished to read follow-up articles, or to get additional information on the matches being played the remaining day.

The third following path (C) is based on the high increase of users to match pages in the second half of the match. Hence, we know that many users only go to read the text updates on matches. These users are perhaps following the matches online because they are important, but not that important. In other words, there are several fans who may watch a match on TV or on the stadium and want to check (either in real time or before or after the main match, they are following) the main events in the other matches.

To sum up how the website EBf is used for following matches:

A) Fans are following a match in other media (possible TV) and want match results for other matches, or additional information like statistics, line-ups, articles and other match related information on the live section (and the article section).

B) Those fans that cannot follow the matches live in other media open the match pages and follow the text updates live during the match – occasionally.

C) Fans follow a particular match in other media and want more or less detailed updates from the other matches being played (at the same time or the same day).

I shall try to sum up some of the analytical conclusions follow the context data from eb.dk. First, we see that many fans do not look at Danish football in particular during the week. Rather, they come to the site to look at any (football) articles, and if there is any article on Danish football which looks interesting, they click on it. Somehow, fans already know when the important matches are played (from other media) and only the day before the matches are played, they begin to take interest in the more specific details about the matches (when they are played, where to view

\textsuperscript{16} AX8: How or if fans actually ’read’ the commentary text is difficult to know since the scrolling down function is not tracked in the web analytics configuration. In principle it would not be difficult to track this behavior.

\textsuperscript{17} We see that the traffic to match text pages begin the hour before the match begin, which strongly indicates that users prepare for following the match start online (since they already know we the match will begin before they navigate to the particular match text page).
them on TV etc.). We also see a higher interest in articles the day before the matches, so it looks like fans are using the web to look for particular forms of information on matches – which we must assume they get from the web easier than other media. Second, on the day of the match, the web is used, often on mobile devices, to gather information and facts (statistics, tables etc.) on the match day and thereby works as a mean of getting the information necessary to know when the match is actually played and what is important to know about the match.

The live broadcasting of matches provides another form of information, but as communication it still looks more like an asynchronous form of communication where fans look at their device to get some particular piece of knowledge rather than sitting in front of their screen following a match. For most fans, it thus works as a form of communication that can get them additional and important information, also when following the match in other media. In other words, the web does not substitute but complement other media by adding the most essential information on matches. Third, we see that when matches are finished many people read the articles on EBf to get follow up stories, and it is especially important to notice that the day after the matches, the number of visitors to follow up stories is higher than any other day. Hence, the web is used to expand the meanings produced by the match as communication and extend on these meanings, and in this way we can see that the matches for fans begin with a very general view on many matches (and even several leagues) from where the fans take interest in more particular matches, then more particular events and lastly on particular stories on these events.

The analysis of eb.dk shows that fans use the site for additional information on football during the week – articles which cover in-depths topics. Moreover, we see that fans use the site to check tournament tables and standings, but the data also clearly indicates that the site does not work as the primary source of information for many fans. Rather, it is a source of supplementary information where e.g. live results from other matches can be found quickly. Following an entire match (using the text commentary) is rather unusual – suggesting that fans rather read or browse through the site to find facts and perhaps to follow matches which could not otherwise be followed. As such, it does not seem that fans use the site as a medium to follow entire matches as they are broadcasted live, as they do on the stadium, in TV or in the radio.

**The match: Summary**

In the above, we have looked at how the web is used to communicate (the symbolic form of) the football match. Before moving on to the club, I shall shortly summarize and discuss these findings.

As a general trend, we can see that almost all fans use the web quite much every week to get information and updates about Danish matches. Most fans follow Danish matches by reading news on Danish football several times a week and most fans use several hours on getting updates on what is going on in the league. What is perhaps most striking is that fans from all positions use different media as complementary to each other. Those fans who watch the match at the stadium with friends and other fans, use the web before meeting their friends or fellow supporters to know more about what is going on and after the match to see all those particular details which was not the main
focus while enjoying the match with other fans on the stadium. On the other hand, many of those fans who either follow the match in TV or on the web, where much more information is available, talk with friends and family about the match before and after the match. In other words, the use of first degree media seems very much interrelated to the use of the web (3rd degree) while watching the match in TV can be done both with friends and alone. In all cases, the web is used as type of underlying foundation which makes it possible to support the other media, whether as a medium for planning events or to get updated on what is happening – or simply to increase knowledge or capital about the matches being played, for use in 1st degree media communication. However, it is also interesting to note how each particular position use the web for match communication.

The supporters use the web for reading about general news related to matches, but for them the particular websites relating to their club have a high value in that the club sites provide access to specific news which might not be important enough for the general news websites. All detailed information which might be relevant to their club, from the smallest injury to any speculations or just opinions on the match, is relevant for the supporters. Moreover, the supporters are also using the web to know what is going on within the fan scene, but interestingly the information about the fan scene is not, as we also saw in the last chapter, something which all supporters takes an interest in. Transfer rumours or other match related news seems more interesting to the supporters, and using the web before and after matches to catch up on all information which might be relevant (i.e. gives recognition within the social context of other supporters) to the match is the most important communicative function of the web. However, those supporters who use much time on the web use it to read through forum posts and websites to know what is going on within the club supporters.

The spectators use the web to keep updated on matches; most probably because they don’t have the time to watch that many matches on the stadium or the TV. The web is quite valuable to the spectators since it provides them with the possibility to follow the league easily and to read match summaries and news – but also to read about particular clubs and follow the fan scene without having to take the time to be a part of the social context of other fans or supporters. In many ways, the web works in the same way as printed newspapers, radio programs or sport news for the supporters, but give them the extra option of reading more specific news on their particular club or particular area of interest; which might also include statistics and in-depth analysis of particular match events.

The enthusiasts are following football in a more general sense. This does not mean that they don’t follow particular clubs, but that they use the web and in particular apps to follow many different matches simultaneously. The enthusiast are particularly information hungry in that they want to know everything about the matches from a kind of ‘scientific’ perspective like economy, tactics, transfers etc. – rather than the particular stuff happening within the fan scene and fan clubs. It also seems plausible that the social context in which the capital acquired by the enthusiasts makes general knowledge about football much more important than specific fan related knowledge which for the enthusiasts probably only makes sense if it relates to the actual performance of the club. In other words, the
enthusiasts are deeply engaged in the match as part of a general football knowledge which is what makes sense (i.e.
have value as communication from within this position of the field) as capital.

The *connoisseurs* are not really attempting to translate football data into socially valuable capital as the enthusiasts
do. In contrasts, the connoisseurs are merely interested in getting expert analysis on matches, both before and after
– and to watch the match in TV, if they have the time to do it.

THE CLUB IN THE FIELD

We have seen how different types of fans communicate in relation to the symbolic form of the match. *But how do
fans use the web to communicate about the football club and what do the different positions within the field use the
web for?* What we want to ask is also whether the web produces a stronger bond between the club and its fans or
change the communication of club support, club rivalry and club loyalty.

HOW LONG TIME DO FANS SPEND ON THEIR CLUB?

In the first map projecting variables about the communication of the club, we see how many hours fans use on
following their club (notice that this is not equal to the number of hours they use on Danish football in sum):
We see that the green dots for less than 60 minutes are clearly located towards the bottom of the map. In the middle of the map, we find users who use either 1-2 hours a week or 5-10 hours a week. To the upper left, we find users who use 1-2 hours and to the extreme upper left we find users who use more than 10 hours a week (which is actually 8.8% of the users). Again, the 5-10 hours is centred close to the second axis since we both find supporters as well as enthusiasts who use this amount of time on the club. We find a clear line going from the bottom part of the map to the upper map of the map which corresponds to the volume of fan capital. However, the first axis (1<sup>st</sup> degree following versus 3<sup>rd</sup> degree following) does not seem to be that important in terms of how much time is spend on the club. Hence, both those that actually goes to stadiums and those who follow matches online or in TV can use much time on following their club. The only exception to this is the quite large number of fans (8.75%) who use more than 10 hours a week on following the club. These fans are typically also on the stadium watching matches.
As we saw in the last chapter, the interest fans take in their club is quite dependent on the success of the club in the league. However, the overall impression is that fans do still take interest in their own club and follow other clubs. Even those who do not have much time (at the bottom of the map), and who do not actually read club websites or club related websites, still think they use some time following their club. Hence, there can hardly be much doubt that the web is in general used for getting information which relates to also supporting a club. However, there is little evidence to support the idea that other fan positions, outside the traditional supporters who already go to the stadium, are using the web to gain insight into what is happening inside the fan scene or visiting websites for club fans. The club website and the fan forums are communication forums for the traditional supporters; where they work as platforms for sharing knowledge about what is happening within the fan scene as well as opinions and important (at least what the fans think are important) information on players and the club.

**Why use the web for club support?**

In the next map, I have asked the fans what the most important reasons are to why they use websites to get information on Danish clubs.

Not surprisingly, we see that most green dots are located in the upper part of the map since the fans in the lower part of the map mostly read general news or football news websites. Looking at the map, we see that the answer 'I
‘find information not available elsewhere’ is located in the middle of the map (52 % of the fans answer this). On the left side, we find those (65 % of the fans saying this) who think that it is faster to get information using websites (perhaps some of the enthusiasts think that the apps are even faster). Somewhat to the upper left we find the third largest answer (51 %) with those fans who think that the web is especially important since they can get information during transport or work. Close to the TV+++ point, we find those who say that it is important since they can get information while watching the match on TV or the stadium. Those who think that the information found on the web is both more credible than information found elsewhere, as well as those who find that the web is valuable for communication with other fans, are clearly located to the upper left.

Looking more closely at this map, we can answer many of the questions regarding what the web affords in terms of club related information. First, most fans find the web valuable in getting faster information. This is a general trend in the entire field, but it is important to note that those fans who read printed newspapers and watch TV-sport news, in the bottom of the map, also find the web important in being faster to get news. I.e. the need for getting football news fast seems to be a general trend and an affordance which is particularly strong for the web – even though TV and radio are not slow in any sense, these media lack the option of getting particular news on for example the club fans support. This is further supported by the fact that many fans also highlight the use of the web in getting unique content which is not available elsewhere. Going further to the top of the map, we find that a high number of people (especially considering the placement higher in the map) find the option of using the web to get football news in school, on the job or during transport to be very important. In contrast to the social affordances of the web of communicating with other club fans in supporting the club, as pointed to by most of the literature, the main advantage of the web in communication of the symbolic form of the club is probably much more the possibility to get club specific news which can be important for communication in first degree media (i.e. communicating with friends and others). Only those who already seek a specific social context for club support (i.e. those traditional supporters already members of a fan club) find the social function to be important.

Second, using the web to get club related information during matches also seems important to many fans; but perhaps mostly to those watching the match on TV. In other words, the web is also important in providing additional information on clubs and club related information during matches. Yet, it is important to note that this answer is somewhat moved towards the upper right; indicating that especially the enthusiasts find it important to use the web to find club related information during matches; perhaps because they are watching alone or with friends not supporting their club. This finding also makes sense in the light of the traditional supporters spending their time on the stadium where other fans are able to provide the club related information.

Third, the traditional supporters are quite special in that they find the web valuable for reasons of credibility and social communication. Hence, many of the traditional supporters don’t trust the news media on getting ‘objective’ (the supporter’s sense of objective) information on matches. This was also an argument in the fanzine literature, but with the web the supporters can get immediately information, as we will see in the Agger case which will be
presented soon, on what is going on by either relying on better information (other fans) or getting the information and comparing different sources (websites or media). While it is certainly not all supporters who find the higher credibility important (6% of all fans find this important), it is nevertheless a particular affordance of the web which is important to the supporters, and especially to those who hold their own strong opinions they want to express.

The other affordance of the web for the supporters is the possibility to communicate with other supporters. While the supporters might not have much need to communicate with the other fan positions, they like the option of being able to communicate with other fans – although not many supporters actually use the forums for writing. Perhaps the idea of reading others’ opinions and the particular information that other fans have, is one of the most important affordances of the web when it comes to club support for the supporters; and this communication is also available when not on the stadium.

**Why do fans use the club website?**

In the next map, fans have given their answer to what they use the club or club related websites for:

[Supplementary map: What do you use the websites for (club sites, fan club sites or fan fraction sites)? (You may tick all that apply)]
Most supplementary points (green dots) are placed to the upper left of the map in the area of the traditional supporters; which is not surprising given the fact that it is the supporters who use these sites the most. If we look in the centre of the map, we find buying tickets, statistics and player interviews and updates as the most general type of information which all of the positions take interest in. The enthusiasts are those who take most interest because of the statistics available here. From the spectator position, reading blog posts are particularly important (coinciding with the academic education found here) while the connoisseurs often use the club sites to get live updates from matches. The further we more towards the upper left corner (the supporters), the more we find that the social aspect of using these sites is important. What is also important here, is that the total numbers are quite high. More than half of all the fans in the field use the club websites to either get information about players and transfers (64%) and to read interviews with or statements from players (55%). Moreover, 43% use the club sites to follow the club economy.

While it is clear that the (traditional) supporters are using the club sites more than other positions in the field, we see that the clubs have plenty of room for communicating with fans since most fans actually use the club sites once in a while. We can also see that information about players (icons) is especially important for many fans, while the actual support (reading information about fan support for the club) is less important, at least on the web, for many fans. Using club (related) sites to view pictures and get match reports is also a praxis related to the supporters – the other positions use the general news sites for this purpose.

Looking at the spectators, they might also view the club websites for tickets or match reviews, but the interesting thing about the spectators is that they read those deep analyses in the printed newspaper, but also adds the deep analyses from blogs; rather than being interested in discussing with other fans. In other words, we can say that the spectators may not have that much time to update themselves on what is going on, but they prefer to use this time by reading something written (or expert comments in TV) by the experts; rather than engaging in social activity. On the other hand, the connoisseurs, while unable to watch the match on the stadium, use their (spare) time on following the match live on the club sites. Lastly, the enthusiasts are also very analytical in their support ‘mode’. They don’t have a need to engage with supporters in supporting the club, but ‘support’ their club in following it more intensively than other clubs – but in the same ‘analytical’ mode of taking interest in statistics, player transfers etc.

Not surprisingly, the supporters use the club (related) sites for many different purposes; including information on the club itself (economy etc.), how the club is doing (updates, statistics) as well as player information and match highlights. In other words, the club sites, i.e. the actual club websites, the supporter forums and Facebook pages, are used by the supporters to get as much information on the club as possible, and to communicate with other fans before and after matches.

**THE CLUB: SUMMARY**
Both the club and the supporter club as well as general news and football news websites communicate about the club. In the last part, we saw how the site eb.dk is used by fans. We saw how most fans ‘check’ the site for news before matches, and how most fans scan the websites for information. In the case when some important news is happening or when the club is having success, more fans will visit the websites. However, the idea that the web affords a new form of communality and a high social activity can hardly be asserted by this analysis. The web is most important in communicating the club in that it allows fans to find information about the club. Some fans would probably also argue (the traditional supporters) that just visiting the club site and perhaps the fan forum once in a while does not really count as support. Yet, this is exactly the affordance that most fans find about the web in relation to club communication; the easy available information and deep insight into what is happening in the club, allowing fans a greater level of understanding of the club their support without being obliged to actively participate in the fan club and fan scene.

THE ICON IN THE FIELD

As in the case of the match and the club, we want to understand how the web is used to communicate with icons. While the professional agents of the Danish field of football has not (yet) attempted to cultivate dedicated icon media like player home pages and Twitter or Facebook profiles, fans do take an interest in how individual players are doing. In this part, I try to ask how the communication of icons is working in the field, and I analyse which forms of icon knowledge fans are interested in and how these forms are communicated.

WHICH MEDIA DO FANS USE TO GET UPDATED ON PLAYERS?

In the first icon map, I have asked which media fans typically use to get information:
In the centre of the map, we find the answers relating to interviews and analysis on general news and football websites as well as on TV. Important, however, is the fact that these three (large) green dots are placed just below the first axis. These data indicates that while most fans read about players in articles on websites and watch interviews in TV, there is a tendency to not do this as much when we move towards the top of the map. What we find in the top of the map, are more specialised media, as for example online video and player profiles on the club sites – just above the first axis. As we move even further up, we find the players blogs, twitter accounts, and lastly, in the very upper part of the map, we find DVDs. As the only point located in the bottom of the map, we find fans who may ‘just’ read about players in general discussions (i.e. the answer ‘Debate / blogs on news sites’). In attempting to interpret this trend, we can say that as fan capital increase, fans move toward being more interested in the players as icons, worth exploring (through specialised media) in their own right.

WHAT DO FANS WANT TO KNOW ABOUT PLAYERS?
For the next question, I have mapped which types of (symbolic) information fans take an interest in:
If we begin with the player information which seems of general interest to all fans, we see that the dots for transfer rumours and player statistics are located in the very middle of the map. Since no dots are located in the lower part of the map, we can conclude that specific player knowledge typically only becomes relevant to fans when they begin to invest quite much time (in acquiring fan capital) in the field, and the first type of knowledge fans would typically take interest in would be transfers and player statistics. The two positions in the upper part of the map, the supporters and the enthusiasts, take interest in different forms of specialised icon information.

The supporters are particularly keen to get knowledge on player opinions as well as player club history and player timelines. In other words, the supporters take an interest in how players become iconic and part of their club. We might even question if the supporters think of players as icons at all; rather the data suggest that players, to the supporters, are merely an integrated part of the club history and development and everything players do must be interpreted within this context.
On the other hand, we have the enthusiasts. The enthusiasts take a particular interest in the icons fitness level, their wages and their personal life. For the enthusiasts, the players play a part in how matches develop, but are also interesting in their own right. Yet, they don’t, as we saw in the last map, explore individualised player media, but prefer the ‘serving’ of information from 2nd degree media. Also, the map also suggest that the enthusiasts focus on players in their own right – following how particular players move between clubs and how they are doing in their career rather than just the particular club, which fans are interested in. This might also explain the focus on wages, and how players become strategic pieces which can be moved between clubs as part of the larger league game which include club economy (as we also saw their interest in before), development, tactical strategy and so on.

THE TRANSFER: AN EXAMPLE FROM HOW FANS USE SSO.DK

The Brøndby fan forum SSO makes it possible to have a conversation about players with other fans. The particular piece of information, presented on the official club site\(^\text{18}\) as well as most football sites and news sites in Denmark\(^\text{19}\) was that the Danish icon Daniel Agger was bought by Brøndby, which he returned to after having played in Liverpool for around eight years. Already months before the official announcement, fans were speculating about which player was to be bought to strengthen the team (the attacker Makienok was sold not long before Agger was bought). It should also be noted that a player coming directly from Liverpool (which was winning the Premier League in the preceding season) to the Danish league is a rather seldom occurrence, and the transfer sum was also well below the expected amount (£3 million pounds). Daniel Agger himself explained that he made the choice because money did not matter to him as much as loyalty to a club. Let us look at the responses on SSO to the transfer.

The first response to the rumours of transfer was posted about 10 hours before, and late in the night, the official announcement.

\(^{18}\) http://brondby.com/nyhed/2014/08/30/daniel-agger-vender-hjem
\(^{19}\) Including of course EBF: http://ekstrabladet.dk/sport/fodbold/dansk_fodbold/superligaen/broendby/article4991318.ece
Once a fan posted rumours about the transfer from many different websites, both international and Danish. The first response is made the same night, but it is only in the morning we get several responses. The author of the post is stating that it would be crazy if Agger is transferred to Brøndby and then says that the English newspapers seem quite sure about the matter. The last (real) comment to this post is made on the day of the transfer (30.08) at 15.08 – a couple of hours after the transfer is official. As the news about the transfer becomes official the discussion almost ceases. The conversation is almost just positive comments about the transfer until someone makes a critical comment about the economic disadvantages of the transfer – which is then commented by many others (and the critical comment is not getting very much support).

The next post, that was made 16 minutes after the transfer was made official:

This post simply says ‘yesyesyesyesyesyes’, and includes a picture of Agger with the text ‘Welcome home Agger’. The subject of the conversation is moving along different lines simultaneously. First, other fans post their immediate feelings (positive) about the transfer and write how this transfer will make a fantastic atmosphere to the next home match. Second, fans use posts to comment on what Liverpool fans and other media say about Agger. Third, fans comment on what it means to the team and the other players that Agger will be playing together with. Fourth, fans comment on the work done by the management to make the transfer possible. Fifth, fans ask and comment on when it will be possible to buy a replica shirt with the Agger name on it; later evolving into a discussion about which number Agger will play with, since another player already has his favourite number. Sixth, fans begin to discuss the transfer itself and the recent injuries of Agger and the connection between injuries and the contract with Agger.

Furthermore, two other posts were made. One of the posts was made about 23 hours after the official announcement, but only got one reply (it was also a welcoming home to Agger) which may be due to the fact that the post mentioned before was the main lead on this issue. However, another post about what the media wrote about the transfer was much more commented. Here, the author writes about the transfer and the reasons to why it could happen and what it means for the club / team. Moreover, the author comments that other fans in this forum may also have read the traditional Danish news media, but that this story is international news and media all over the world takes interest in this story and the display of loyalty by Agger’s choice of moving to a much smaller club (Barcelona was also interested in Agger). Among fan replies to the post, we find text copied from the Liverpool
debate forum (praising Agger as a player). Moreover, we find a link to sidelinien.dk (the fan forum for the Superliga club FC Copenhagen) where people hope Agger is injured; which results in a conversation in this thread about wishing players from other clubs becoming injured.

To understand how fans actually interacts with and use the forum, I have therefore analysed the data from the interactions with all the posts related to this transfer. Let me start by showing how many percent of all visits actually includes viewing posts related to Agger:

![Total visits / Visits to Agger related posts](image)

What we see here is that on the day where the transfer happens, more than 1/3 of the visits resulted in viewing the post (first) post about Agger. However, the trend goes drastically down, but what is more interesting, the interest still remains even quite some while after. The traditional supporters use the site regularly and they keep discussing different subjects, and which type of action to take on this. Looking at the actual numbers, we see that the forum has quite many daily users:

![Visitors to Agger posts versus all users (per hour)](image)
While on typical days, the forum is visited by around 2000 fans (the graph shows the number for each 8 hour interval). From the spikes in traffic after the transfer (it almost immediately triples the traffic), and the referrer data (i.e. how the users find the site – see table in AP9: xx) shows that those additional people actually knows the site already, i.e. come to the site specifically to browse any (additional) information about Agger. The interesting question here is of course why all these fans suddenly visit the forum and which type of information these fans then look for. In the next graph, I have therefore shown the data on how different posts are interacted with in the forum (with a 5-hour timeline):

![Agger posts users (per hour)](image)

The two first posts (P1 and P7) are the actual posts about the formal negotiations. Later, we see how for example P5 (a post about what the media say about Agger) lives on for some time – only to be taken over by for example P10 (about how to welcome Agger on the stadium).

As soon as somebody hears any rumours about the transfer, however little supported these might be, they mention these on the forum. Sometimes the forum is actually just used to set a ‘dream team’; meaning that fans put together
what they see as the ultimate team playing for the club (with some degree of realism to it). However, about two weeks before the actual transfer, somebody begins to discuss the possibility of Agger coming to the club. While the post is read by a few hundred users [AX8: A3P1: Date], the interest soon disappears (as there are no fans who can support these rumours with serious sources).

Next, we see that the traffic rises rapidly on the morning of the transfer. Even before any posts have been produced on the forum, we see this tendency. These data suggests that many of the fans visiting the forum must have heard about the rumours of the transfer in other media. Later, somebody writes a post about the rumour, posting links to several newspapers, and writing that the English newspapers seem quite certain about the transfer. Most comments to this post are written in the morning between the rumour gets out and the official announcement of the transfer. However, as soon as someone in the thread confirms that the transfer has actually been made, the thread is almost dead. Instead, fans read the new thread being produced as soon as the transfer is made official. We could say that this thread lives around the subject on whether the rumours are true or not (information).

When the announcement is made, on the exact hour, the traffic to the forum rapidly increases [AX8: A3P1]. Even though no posts have actually been posted, fans are aware of the (upcoming) news, and visit the forum to find more information. Fans clearly look for information about the transfer. Interestingly, even though many fans visit the website between 12 pm. and 1 pm. (the transfer is made official at 1 pm.), nobody writes anything. In other words, the use of the forum in this period of time indicates that many fans simply look for information by browsing through many different pages (high pages per visit, but no high average page view duration). Even fans who never visit the forum (many new users [AX8: A3P1]) visit the forum in this instance. This fact is interesting since it indicates that many fans might be aware of the forum, but only visit it on special occasions. After this, we see that most fans actually browse just the main post, and even this post is visited for a time period far too short to read the entire post. However, in the evening we see an increase in the reading time; supporting the idea that most fans just need to check the forum during the day for the most important news, i.e. the details about the transfer. In the evening fans use time to actually read through posts and reply to posts (those few who do that).

After the actual facts (information) about the transfer have been established, fans begin to write about the consequences of the transfer: When will Agger play? What will the new team line-up look like? What about his


21 The ‘new users’ is based on cookie persistence and therefore we know that some of the new users are actually old users who have deleted their cookies.

22 In the entire time frame around the transfer, 7363 (unique) users read any of the Agger posts; while I found 317 replies (some users replied more than once, although most replies was not followed by any other replies).

Moreover, users also begin to discuss what fans should do to welcome Agger to the club\textsuperscript{24}, and whether for example fans should honour his old club (Liverpool) by wearing their colours or shirts. Again, the conversation is driven by a few fans, but they reach out to many other fans. Yet, it is important to note that many of the posts about how fans should react to the transfer are not widely read – compared to the main posts containing the details about the transfer. This suggests that many fans use the site for gathering facts rather than using it for meta-conversation. After the first match, fans go to the forum to browse the main posts to see whether any new information or conversations has come up as a result of the match.

Some of the fans simply want information about the transfer. And the main post about the transfer continues to be the post with most concrete information about the transfer. However, as soon as fans have read the details about the transfer, they begin to write and read about the consequences of the transfer, asking for example: \textit{How will the team look like in the future?}\textsuperscript{25}, \textit{Can we win the championship this season?}\textsuperscript{26}, \textit{What do different media write about the transfer?}\textsuperscript{27}. We can actually see [AX8: A3P7] that the number of page views per session clearly increase in the days after the transfer; indicating that fans read different posts and want to know more about the transfer. Interestingly, fans also begin to read (reinvent) older posts not relating to Agger – since old discussions now have new (important) input with the arrival of Daniel Agger. Also noteworthy is it that some posts almost receive no replies, and these posts also quickly disappear from the traffic numbers. More than a few persons need to be engaged in a post to keep it alive. What we see, when we look at the traffic to the posts with few replies, is that they are usually visited for a short time, and then very few users come back to visit it later – the same users who have created or replied to the post.

While the forum is used to get information about the transfer, there is actually more traffic when we look at the following days (up till match day). What we see is that fans quickly begin to look for and discuss what the consequences are. Again, most fans don’t actually participate in the discussion, but they are nevertheless interested in the thread about how to react (as fans) to the transfer. Hence, the forum is used to discuss what fans should actually do in terms of wearing shirts or making banners. While the discussions on consequences relate to the icon itself (how the arrival of Agger will change the team and the expectations for the season) the threads on the fan scene itself begin to emerge as match day approaches. Additionally, more fans comment on these threads compared to the ‘consequences’ threads\textsuperscript{28}. In other words, the forum is used to plan activities relating to icons; supporting icons. What is important here is that the significance of the forum here is not so much to work as a platform between

\textsuperscript{24} E.g. http://brondbysupport.dk/sso/board_entry.php?id=518252
\textsuperscript{25} http://brondbysupport.dk/sso/board_entry.php?id=518197
\textsuperscript{26} http://brondbysupport.dk/sso/board_entry.php?id=517416
\textsuperscript{27} http://brondbysupport.dk/sso/board_entry.php?id=517935
\textsuperscript{28} Except for the main thread, the thread that produces most responses is the thread on making an Agger song (http://brondbysupport.dk/sso/board_entry.php?id=518364)
the (relatively) few fans who plan the actions relating to the transfer, but perhaps more importantly to work as a medium where other fans (all those fans who do not, and would probably never, participate in the actual planning) are able to read about these activities and support them on the stadium. After the match, the fans also visit the forum after the visit – and in particular to follow up on threads on the fan actions – to see whether somebody has written something new or interesting.

My analysis of the data from the content consumption and interaction on sso.dk have highlighted three points. First, many fans use the forum when need arises. While the supporters check the forum daily, most fans only visit the forum for a limited time period when the transfer happens, neither before nor after. They know that the forum can provide valuable information. Second, the data shows that while the forum makes it very easy to meta-communicate with other fans, replying to existing threads and discussions, relatively few fans actually do this. So it would seem that the communication in the forum is for most fans used as a lever for meta-communication in other media. Third, the content analysis shows how there is a movement in the development of posts on the forum from information, then to interpretation and then to action. While the forum is also used to communicate to other fans and supporters, the forum also plays an independent role in this process.

The fan forum sso.dk is thus used by fans to meta-communicate about football events, including matches, clubs and support as well as icons. The fan forum works as a place where fans can participate in discussions, but perhaps more importantly as a platform of information and exchange. From a symbolic perspective, the fan forum works to enrich the existing discussions on the icon; to go into detail about consequences for the club, e.g. which number the icon will play with on his shirt. While the particular case about Agger produced many new users to the forum, what is evident from looking at the navigation analytics, is that a few supporters sparks communication and use the forum as a place where fans, supporters and non-supporters alike, can get information about what is going on. It is evident that most fans browse the forum – to find bits of information that can be used for meta-communication in other media contexts.

THE ICON: SUMMARY

We saw that fans still follow players very closely and use the web to get player statistics and read articles about players. Also, the web proves valuable to supporters in understanding player opinions and follow players directly through their own web channels (e.g. Facebook). However, few fans do follow individual players and the main trend is clearly (still) to read about players in context, i.e. in relation to the team they play on and their transfer from one club to another. The club websites provide a valuable source of information on players for fans, since the specialised and updated knowledge on particular players is only available here. Yet, there are important differences between different positions in the field. It is in particular the traditional supporters and the spectators who find player information on the club websites, while the enthusiasts and connoisseurs usually find their information about players in general media like news sites and even YouTube. And while the traditional supporters look for information
about players that might be relevant to the club they support, the enthusiasts are more broadly interested in fitness, performance and even private life of players. Yet, it is difficult to discern a general trend towards ‘iconisation’ of the field; fans don’t generally follow players as icons, but rather sees the players as important to either the club (especially the supporters) or the match / league (especially the enthusiasts). And the use of the web in relation to players reflects these interests and forms of communication.

THE COMMUNICATION OF SYMBOLIC FORMS: SUMMARY

In the beginning of this part, I asked how the web works as a medium in the communication of the symbolic forms of football fandom. Here, I shall summarize how the web works to communicate the three symbolic forms of the match, the club and the icon and discuss how the web complements and / or replaces other media in this communication. Instead of iterating the existing summaries for each symbolic form, I have summarized the findings in a table to be able to compare the symbolic forms:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question / Symbolic form</th>
<th>The Match</th>
<th>The Club</th>
<th>The Icon</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How is the web used to communicate the symbolic form?</td>
<td>The web is used both to follow matches live, but even more importantly for getting facts and statistics before and after matches</td>
<td>The web is used to get information about what is happening with the team and the club</td>
<td>Primarily through articles or information with narrow focus on particular players or ‘facts’ (like line-ups) which would be to specialised to face in other media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are the main affordances of the web in relation to the symbolic form?</td>
<td>The web is particularly important in following matches, one would not normally be able to follow, and to get statistics from matches</td>
<td>The web offers very specialised information as for example transfer information and rumours; but also to discuss and coordinate support</td>
<td>Both the speed to deliver up-to-date information and to deliver very specialised information on players. To a lesser degree to deliver specialised channels for players to communicate with fans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How does the web supplement or replace other degrees of media?</td>
<td>The web supplements TV in getting additional information, e.g. statistics. The web makes it possible to follow (less important) matches, fans would not be able to follow otherwise</td>
<td>The web replaces the need for club magazines by adding both specialised facts (e.g. stadium offers) as well as fan debates.</td>
<td>The web supplements other media (printed articles and TV-interviews) with more facts and more specialised information (less interesting stories and players)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has the web produced any new ‘forms’ of communication?</td>
<td>The web has made it possible to either follow results and web text updates from matches; probably matches fans would otherwise not have followed</td>
<td>The communication found on club sites and fan club sites is not particularly new, but reach a broader audience than (for example) traditional fan magazines</td>
<td>The web has given fans more sources for icon information which is used to get deeper into the analysis of individual players – both in relation to tactics as well as players relation to clubs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How is increased time use translated into symbolic capital?

- More time is used to get into match statistics during matches
- More time is used to follow other fans’ opinions and follow club development
- More time is used to get deeper into players personal life, performance and opinions

How does this symbolic form express itself between different positions in the field?

| How does this symbolic form express itself between different positions in the field? | The supporters use the web to get more information about match statistics and practical stuff (e.g. tickets). The enthusiast use the web to follow more matches while the connoisseurs use the web to follow matches, they would (probably) not have followed otherwise | The supporters use the web to get more information about the team and the fan scene. The enthusiasts use the web to get detailed information about clubs, as for example club economy, while spectators use the web to get follow their clubs and the fan scene more than they otherwise would | Clearly, the supporters are more interested in player communication as part of their team and club, while the enthusiasts puts more focus on the players as strategic pieces in the league and match – perhaps also, while not necessarily, understood as icons in their own right |

As a conclusion, we may say that the symbolic forms of football fandom are enabled by the web in quite different ways for different positions in the field. While some forms of communication, e.g. text updates and fan fraction websites, are certainly different from existing forms of football fandom, most of the communication that the web enables looks like existing forms but are communicated and meta-communicated in new ways. In the last part, I shall analyse how the symbolic forms are related to actual cultural practices in the field, and the role of different media in this process.
THE CULTURAL PRACTICES OF DANISH FOOTBALL FANS

In the last part of this chapter, I analysed the cultural practices of fans in the field as the three distinct forms of meta-communication, I identified earlier: meta-production, meta-identity and meta-conversation. Together, I have presented these three forms of meta-communication as the essence of football fandom, and they are therefore essential to understanding what the web contributes with in relation to other media when it comes to football fandom. From this perspective, I synthesize this chapter with a schematic overview of how fans use the web in the Danish field of football fandom for different purposes.

In this section, I draw on the idea of football fandom as meta-communication which emerged from the historical review of how football fandom has evolved around some particular practices of football fandom. I summarized these practices into three categories. First, the concept of meta-production was used to describe those forms of meta-communication involved in the events and artefacts that fans consume and produce in relation to their fan object (football). Second, the concept of meta-identity was used to describe those forms of meta-communication involved in presenting the fans’ relation to or identity with the fan object (football). Third, the concept of meta-conversation was used to describe those forms of meta-communication which fans have with other fans about their fan object (football). To offer an example of football fan meta-communication from the everyday of fan life, football fans arrange to take a bus together when going to a match (production), wear replica shirts to identify with one of the clubs playing (identity) and talk about how ‘we’ should win the match (conversation).

The first question I address in this part, is how the web helps fans accomplish each of these three forms of fan meta-communication. I analyse a number of different football fan practices within the field (using questionnaire responses), what fans do before the match, after the match, how they support their club etc., and I then describe how different media support the communication and meta-communication of these different fan practices.

The second question I address in this part, is how the affordances produced by webmasters and the actual navigations by users can help us understand how the web supports fan practices. I discuss how each affordance is related to different practices and what the measurement of navigations can tell us regarding how these practices work. This final question and analysis brings together findings and insights from all three analytical chapters of the dissertation in order to address the key question of what the web, understood as a medium, contributes to the communication and meta-communication of Danish football culture.

META-PRODUCTIVITY IN THE FIELD

While I have presented meta-productivity as an aspect of meta-communication, the concept of productivity can be traced back to many of the (central) discussions in the literature on football fandom (as I did in chapter 2). Basically, the idea of productivity hinges on both the ‘active’ dimension of football fandom, and how fans attempt to be ‘part’ of the game, as well as the counter culture tied to this activity. In my view of communication, productivity is a
particular result of communication in different media. Attempting to communicate with fellow fans by producing a website results in a permanent presence that might become part of how a club is presented on the web, and doing a choreography on the stadium may change the actual product of transmitting the match. Productivity is thus reflected in media which may (or may not) become part of the professional sphere or field of football production. I have not attempted to actually trace how meta-communication manifests itself as meta-productivity, but rather attempted to look (through the use of my questionnaire) on how fans themselves think of the web as a medium of communication which facilitates meta-productivity.

**The Web as Match Tool**

*How is the web used for preparing and going to matches?* In the following expansion of our understanding of the field, I shall analyse why fans use the web, and how this usage plays a role in their meta-productivity. First, I have projected my question regarding usage into the field structure:
In this map, we see that most fans use the web to find results from matches and look at tournament tables; i.e. to get practical information before and after matches. While these usages are quite basic, we also see that the web is used for more specific purposes – although very different purposes within different positions in the field. If we begin by looking in the lower part of the map, we see that spectators use the web to read expert views on matches (located closest to the lower left corner), which might be interpreted as the use of the web to support their more individualised practices of watching or reading about matches by themselves - and more occasionally when something of interest happens.

With the connoisseurs in the lower right corner, we also find that the web supports a more isolated practice of being a fan. But in contrast to the spectators, with their more occasional interest, the connoisseurs use the web to both stream matches and read blogs about matches. In other words, the somewhat isolated life style of the connoisseurs (isolated from other fans, probably due to family obligations) is powered by the web to actually view matches (when not able to take over the family TV) and continue an in-depth engagement with football productions beyond the simplistic analysis presented in sport news on TV. While the connoisseurs may not be able to join a ‘real’ football community (anymore) by attending the stadium, the connoisseurs are still able to focus their attention and support an active form of fandom by reading into in-depth analysis and following important matches on their smartphone.

If we take a look at the enthusiasts, we find that they use the web for enriching their match experience. While they don’t use the web to actually view matches, the web provides an important medium of communication in preparing for matches – later to be viewed with for example friends or school mates. Their preferences for using the web to view for example odds, line-ups and the time matches are broadcasted, matches this interpretation. The information on odds, line-ups and time of broadcasting fits perfectly into a cycle where the enthusiast view the match together with friends, and ‘prepare’ for matches (viewed in TV) by looking up the odds (or betting on the match online) and getting some additional information on who is actually playing and what to look for during the match.

Lastly, the supporters use the web for different forms of meta-productivity. Not surprisingly, the supporters use the web to buy tickets and find information about players, but they also use it to produce for example updates with their opinions and experiences from matches – as well as to discuss with other fans online. In addition, the supporters keep contact with other fans on the web. In combination, we may say that it is in particular the supporters who, not surprisingly perhaps, use the web for meta-communication that supports their existing practices on doing something together with other fans – as well as a means to show their support directly on the web with updates on for example Facebook.

Again, we see that the fans in the upper part of the map use the web to support social practices (communication in first degree media) as well as using the web to coordinate fan activities – but probably not to a degree where we, as some of the literature reviewed earlier pointed to (Bale, 1998), can argue that the productions placed on the web can compete or challenge existing media. Also, it is noteworthy that the enthusiasts don’t really use the web for
meta-productivity in the more traditional sense of producing something, but rather attempt to enrich the experience of viewing matches together with others.

**Finding the right time**

To better understand how the web supports practices in specific locations and under specific circumstances, I have asked in which places websites and apps are used:

In this map we see that most dots are placed above the first axis. This structure indicates that as we move towards the top of the map (higher volume of fan capital, i.e. more time spent) we find that fans use the web more and more places – while not excluding other places. This said, we also find strong positional dependencies on many answers. If we begin in the lower part of the map, we find that most fans use the web either at home (alone) or at work. Yet, we already here notice some differences. While both the spectators and the supporters have a greater tendency to use it at home (alone), the connoisseurs to a larger degree use the web at work. While age may play a role in this tendency (older fans are typically in the left part of the map), we are again encouraged to conclude that for the
supporters and spectators the web is something which is often used more isolated (to prepare for being with others) – while the enthusiasts and connoisseurs use it as part of their daily social context.

Looking at the upper left corner, we find the supporters who don’t use the web at the stadium. The stadium is the place for meta-communication in other media – for talking with fellow fans and friends. Rather, the supporters use the web before and after the match to get information and data, perhaps also to tell others, outside the social context of fellow fans, that they support the club. Hence, for the traditional supporters the web works as a medium that may be used when other media are not available (this conclusion is also supported by the placement of ‘On vacation’ answer within the sphere of the supporters in the field).

Looking at the upper right corner, we find the enthusiasts who are almost always online. When viewing the match at pubs, with friends or even on the stadium, the enthusiasts use the web to get additional information, and they will usually also check news in all places during the day – both at work / in school and even during transport. For the enthusiasts the web provides a constant flow of information that probably does not relate to any particular club or even league, but is just a way of experiencing football (or perhaps sport in general) that presents itself a daily or hourly news to be available for consumption and used for interacting with friends and family (displaying ones knowledge of different subjects). In other words, the enthusiasts does not really care about meta-productivity in the traditional sense, but instead the web supports the practice of consuming football as a social activity – perhaps even instantiating the social context and the social practices of its use. Also, when actually attending matches, the enthusiasts use the web to support their more analytical approach to experiencing matches, rather than playing along the traditional way of support – analysing rather than singing.

**How does the web support existing practices?**

In the next map, fans answer whether they have taken any actions before or during matches:
Perhaps not very surprisingly, the fans in the lower part of the field are characterised by not really doing any of the mentioned actions. What we see in the other parts of the map probably corresponds quite well to our existing understanding of the field and its positions. Yet, it is worth reinstating these practices and discuss how they relate to different positions. In the very upper left part of the map, we find the answers for those fans who participate in marches to matches or bus trips. While it is perhaps not surprising that we find these answers located in the area of the supporters, we should notice the ‘extreme’ placement of these answers. Few of the other fans do actually participate in these practices – and we don’t find much evidence that the web has changed or extended the range of fans who participate in these practices. So while the web can be used to broaden the scope or reach of fan activities to other fans (those who are not members of a fan club or part of a social context with fellow fans) there is not much actual evidence to support the view that these practices are taken up by other positions. I do not imply that other fan positions are not at all interested in the communication about these practices (i.e. bus trip
arrangements and so on), but just that they probably don’t attend even if they find reading about what is happening in the fan scene interesting.

Looking at the other answers, we find a clear distinction between those fans who meet friends (either at a pub or somewhere else) before the match and then go to the stadium afterwards (primarily the supporters), and those fans who view the match together with friends but do not meet up with friends before the match. In other words, the supporters use the web quite much before the match and after the match, but on match day, the web plays a less significant role. In contrast, the *enthusiasts* and *connoisseurs* use the web most of the time to get information (even when viewing the match with friends), but like to actually watch the match together with friends or other people – without making any ‘big’ thing of the match, as indicated by the practice of meeting with friends to warm-up before the match.

**META-IDENTITY IN THE FIELD**

I have used the concept of meta-identity to describe the idea that fans meta-communicate to express an identity with their fan object. The prime example of meta-identity is wearing a replica shirt to express an identity with a club. In the literature review, I quoted Sandvoss in his use of the term congruence as “*the active construction of parallels, identity and ‘identicality’ between fans and their object of fandom.*”. What is particular to this form of meta-communication is thus the attempt to construct an identity of being a fan through communication with or to other fans. In the example of 1st degree media (wearing the replica shirt), the use of the medium for a specific purpose is the use of the body (as a medium) to communicate with other fans. In other media, the use of the medium as identity can be interpreted as the particular identity that fans express through the use of that particular media. Using a particular website may in itself be seen as a statement of identity, e.g. using the club websites for news instead of a general news website. In what follows, I have attempted to understand why fans use the web as a medium to express meta-identity. Hence, meta-identity is here interpreted as the choice and use of media by fans to express fandom to other fans – or to oneself.

**WHY USE THE WEB?**
In the following map, we can see that the different positions in the field have quite different reasons to use the web.

Interestingly, the (traditional) supporters don’t really find the web particularly important. For the supporters, the web is useful because it provides an easy way to do specific things like buying for example tickets, but the answer ‘Because it is entertaining’ is actually more predominant for the supporters. Hence, the supporters find that the web is more important in supporting the communication of meta-identity in first degree media (e.g. when planning a TIFO they coordinate this via for example a fan forum, as we saw with the analysis of sso.dk) that the actual presence of supporter identity on the web (e.g. using the web to communicate identity with a club). This trend also corresponds well with my interviews – the production of fan websites to display identity was interesting to supporters when the web first appeared as a medium, e.g. small websites for fan fractions, but has gradually lost its importance as a place where fans experiment with different visual expressions. As a consequence, the web seems more important to the supporters as a tools for planning how to communicate meta-identity and maintaining meta-identity in other contexts / media.

On the right side of the map, we find that the web plays a quite different role for the enthusiasts and connoisseurs; for them the web enrich their experience of the match and is also an important source of ‘objective’ information.
and data. The web allows the enthusiasts (and partly the connoisseurs) to be specialists on different subjects matters related to football, and we can therefore interpret the web as an important part of how to be a ‘real’ fan by expressing the ability to interpret data and facts about football – and the particular identity which this capacity as an ‘expert’ corresponds to.

Lastly, we see that the spectators use the web partly because they are entertained and partly because they are bored. Using the web (and perhaps other media as well) to follow Danish football is for the spectator not something which the spectator will use to communicate meta-identity, but rather something which the spectator uses to observe other fans and (perhaps) their expression of meta-identity, i.e. to read about what supporters are doing rather than participating oneself.

ANTI-FANDOM

In the next map, we see how fans react to the club(s) that they don’t like:
In general, we see that the spectators, and partly the connoisseurs, don’t really dislike other clubs (which does not necessarily mean that they don’t support any clubs). However, a few spectators and supporters might actually use general news sites for expressing meta-identity by commenting on general websites (the answer ‘Comment on news about the clubs on general news sites’). If we look at the supporters in the upper left corner, we see that they actually (again) prefer to express meta-identity in other media (i.e. the answer ‘Make comments if you meet fans from the rival club in the street, in town or at work’). Yet, it is interesting that the supporters also read the forums for rival clubs – but without actually writing or doing anything. If we look at the enthusiasts, they are much more prone to follow matches from rival clubs and also write to friends who support other (rival) clubs, suggesting that they are still supporters, but in a redefined form of support.

Looking at the overall picture of how the web is used for expressing meta-identity when looking at this map, we see that the web itself is not very important in expressing meta-identity, but rather support different practices, e.g. figuring out what other fans do (the supporters) or getting information about for example matches that might be relevant when writing friends from rival clubs (the enthusiasts). In attempting to understand what anti-fandom means from these results, we can say that the web in itself is not used for expressing anti-fandom through identity statements (e.g. on general debate forums like eb.dk or on supporter forums), but the web may perhaps rather become a source of inspiration and information for ‘playing’ along the rules of anti-fandom. One may hypothesize that reading forums and getting information might result in a more civilised form of anti-fandom where banter and jokes replace physical violence, but this cannot be inferred from the data of course. What is sure, however, is that the web is used to get insight into what other fans do, rather than (for most fans) being used as a medium for expressing meta-identity.

**Objects of identity**

In the next map, we see how the materiality (and identity) placed in items and ownership relates to different positions (and media usages) in the field:
In this map, we see that owning a club shirt or other club merchandise are quite common practices (large dots) while player cards, biographies, club magazines and posters / pictures are found more rarely among fans. Moreover, it is clear that the higher we move to the top of the map (i.e. higher fan capital), the more objects fans typically own. When we look at the map, we find a very striking contrast between the left and the right side of the map. While owning actual objects is clearly correlated to the supporters, we also see that the spectators to some degree may also own objects (possibly due to their higher income). While this may not be very surprising, it is still noticeable that the owning of material objects is so strongly related to the supporter position. Especially more particular objects like player cards and autographs are only found in the supporter position. Again, this tendency agrees to the conclusion that the enthusiasts are also high-intensity fans, but they are fans in a quite different way than traditional supporters and put much more emphasis on meta-conversation than meta-identity and meta-productivity.

**META-IDENTITY: SUMMARY**


*How does the web support meta-identity?* While the interviews with the webmasters indicated that the early fan sites and fan fraction sites were made to show the existence and identity of the fan club or fan fraction, the results from my survey show that meta-identity is not expressed directly on the web. Rather, the web is used for knowing what is going on, also in rival clubs or fan scenes.

**META-CONVERSATION IN THE FIELD**

Meta-communication of fandom is also, as we have discussed, a conversation about fan objects. *What is the best tactic? Will this new transfer make a difference to the clubs winning chances?* All these questions are debated in a lively manner among fans, but what difference does the web make to the meta-conversation? Moreover, we need to ask whether the conversation on the web can be understood as a form of community or perhaps how the conversation on the web produces a sense of community. The other question, which is important to ask, is whether the meta-conversation on the web is mobilizing new forms of counter culture, or more broadly whether this form of meta-communication is changed by the affordances of the web in communicating fan culture. In my questions relating to meta-conversation, I have attempted to understand which media fans would use for meta-conversation and whether or how different positions in the field engage in meta-conversation.

**THE MEDIUM OF KNOWLEDGE**

In the first map, I have attempted to understand which media fans prefer for meta-communication. I have asked which media or actions fans would take if they were in doubt about a penalty kick in a particular situation:
Again we find that different positions have rather different approaches to which media they will use and how. If we begin by the looking at the most common approaches, we find that looking for the clip on a football website or on YouTube would be a strategy often found, independently of the position in the field. If we look at the supporters, they would often prefer to watch the event on a football website or YouTube and would also debate and discuss it with other fans. On the other side of the map, we find that the enthusiasts may also watch the event on a football website, but are also rather inclined to ‘Read or write about the event (with friends) on my own Facebook profile’. The enthusiasts are thus more inclined to take any form of meta-conversation within their existing social context and use the social media like Facebook where they can communicate with their existing friends. Importantly, the enthusiasts don’t really see much reason to debate with other fans, but find that their own insight into the game provides the necessary information to communicate within their fan context (i.e. their friends, classmates, colleagues and family). The connoisseurs are not really using the web actively to help them understand what is going on. Rather, the connoisseurs rely on experts in newspapers and TV (and on websites, presumably) to understand what is happening. Much the same can be said about the spectators who clearly prefer to leave it to their existing media of choice (i.e. TV news, printed newspapers or general football websites) to provide them with the necessary
information - but may also use YouTube to look it up. Neither the connoisseurs nor the spectators would (probably) take any active actions to seek information about events.

What follows from this analysis is that the web to a large degree supports existing practices of meta-conversation among fans. This does not mean that the web does not change anything. On the contrary, the web further increases the possibility to communicate with others – whether this means other fans, friends or listening to experts. Yet, it is important to note that many fans would also use the web to seek out videos or clips to understand and deeper their knowledge. We can also argue that meta-conversation on the web seems to follow the social context whereby fans follow matches; those parts of the fan group or culture will use the related pages or attempt to gather ‘neutral’ data to judge for themselves, while those who typically follow matches alone or with friends in media of the 2nd or 3rd degree will use their existing lines of communication in 1st degree (i.e. those people with whom they already discuss football with) or view the events on the general football news sites they already use.

**META-CONVERSATION USING THE WEB**

In the next map, I look at whether fans have used the web to produce pictures or video about Danish football:
The first thing we notice in this structure is that most supplementary dots are located far above the centre. In other words, actually producing any meta-conversation for the web is strongly correlated with high fan capital – we may perhaps even say that only those fans who use much time on Danish football would think about actually producing any meta-communication on the web. The most probable activity of most fans would be to make a status update related to a match (located above the centre in the map). For the *enthusiasts*, writing a comment on a football news website or sending pictures / video to friends are the most common practices (located in the upper right corner). For the *supporters*, writing a comment or posting video or pictures online are the most common practices (located in the upper left corner).

What we see here is that it is only a small part of the fans (considering that the answers were not conditioned on a time frame, e.g. within the last month) that use the web actively to produce meta-conversation, while quite many fans use the web to consume meta-conversation (reading the posts of those relatively few fans who actually produce
meta-communication). Again, this is hardly surprising given the data analysed previously, which also showed that quite few users actually write something, compared to how many read or browse content. It would therefore probably be wrong to conclude that the web has fundamentally changed the structure within the supporter community. There are still quite few fans who set the agenda; even if the access to do so is not difficult to obtain. One might speculate that while the traditional fan community had a few people in ‘high’ social positions who could set the agenda, the online community still only has few persons who are able to provide something of interest to others; i.e. who has for example knowledge of transfers from sources not widely available. Yet, the most important finding about meta-conversation is that the web makes it easier to find the stuff that makes meta-conversation possible and interesting.
COMMUNICATION AND META-COMMUNICATION IN THE FIELD: SUMMARY

Before moving on to the discussions and conclusions in the next chapter, I shall shortly summarise the analysis of the Danish field of football fandom as presented in this chapter.

In the first part of this chapter, we saw that the Danish field of football fandom can be divided into four positions, and the main distinction between these four positions is based on how fans follow matches and which websites they use. I argued that the traditional supporter is only one of these four types of positions, and they typically use club and fan club websites as well as the main football news websites. However, other and perhaps new types of fans emerge. We saw the enthusiasts as often young people (men), both from cities and the countryside, who are really interested in everything concerning (Danish) football, and who follow matches on TV, on apps and with live streams on websites – but they don’t go to the stadium very often. While this type of fan does not replace the traditional supporter, it is important to understand that they play a strong position in the field, and that they are not necessarily a person who does not have that much time to follow football, since they are actually using as much time as the traditional supporters, but just use their time differently. Instead of only following one club, they take interest in the entire league and often from a more nuanced and analytical perspective to what is happening and how clubs are playing.

Yet, following the field analysis we know for certain that a number of high knowledgeable fans in their 20s and 30s retire from the stadium entirely, most often to take care of family and small kids. I called this fan type for connoisseurs, and they are still very interested in football and highly knowledgeable about Danish football, but will typically use the web or just listen to matches in the radio due to the lack of time. Lastly we find the spectators who typically are still fans of a club, although mostly on the side line. The spectators typically don’t read the dedicated football sites as much, but are typically interested in football as part of a larger context and are typically also interested in what (other) fans do. In some sense of the word, we might call the spectators for the classical (passive) audience.

In the second part of the chapter, I analysed how fans communicate and meta-communicate the symbolic forms of football fandom. I found that the web is used in rather different ways in the field to communicate the match, the club and the icon. First, the communication of the match is enriched by more information on match statistics, but more importantly, the match is communicated to fans who are not in a social context where they would otherwise be able to follow the match. The traditional supporter is the one fan type who does not really use the web to follow matches, but rather as a medium to get information before and after matches. However, for other fans, match analysis and match updates play a quite important role; not so much for substituting watching the match on TV, but rather to add live information on matches they would not deem important enough to follow in TV or which are played simultaneously with other matches. Lastly, the symbolic form of the icon is also communicated on the web, but not, as we have seen with international football icons, as individual icon to fan communication through Facebook
and Twitter, but rather as additional news articles and club website articles with very specialised information on players as for example injuries or transfer rumours.

In the third part of the chapter, I analysed how fans in the field use the web for the three forms of meta-communication: meta-productivity, meta-identity and meta-conversation. First, we saw that fans use the web to arrange and coordinate meta-productivity, especially communicating about how to meet up with other fans. Fans don’t seem to be particularly interested in using the web to extend their social context; the traditional supporters communicate with other traditional supporters and the other positions in the field use the web to facilitate their existing practices of for example meeting up with friends to watch the match in TV. Rather, the web works to increase the knowledge of matches in terms of knowing what is (going) on.

Second, we saw that fans don’t use the web (anymore) for communicating meta-identity to other fans, but rather as a medium which makes meta-identity in other media easier; e.g. coordinating fan events on the stadium or simply to keep the identification with a club or fan scene more present. Third, we saw that the web is used for meta-conversation, even though the meta-conversation is often, especially as we move higher up in the field, retained within existing social contexts. The web does extend meta-conversation in space in that the fan conversations reach out to fans who would not otherwise be able or willing to participate in the conversation, and extending in time before and after matches when the supporters and enthusiasts have gone home from the stadium or the pub.
CHAPTER 9: CONCLUSION

Abstract:

I began by asking the question: Why do Danish football fans use the web and does the web change the way fandom culture works? In this final chapter, I use the empirical findings from the preceding chapters to answer this question.

The chapter begins with a recap of how I approached the research question from a theoretical perspective. Then follows a summary of how the momentum of old media still shapes the field as well as the usage of new media, and how the web supports existing practices. However, this does not mean that football fandom is ‘business as usual’: My analysis points towards the emergence of a new fan type or new way of being a fan, and how the new affordances of the web support the practices of these fans.

At the end of the chapter, I return to my original case of partofthegame.tv, and I use the insights gained on how the web is used by Danish football fans to propose an explanation on why the project failed, and what could have been done differently – given more knowledge of how Danish football fans actually use the web.
AN AGENDA FOR FOOTBALL FANDOM RESEARCH

RESEARCH OUTLINE

I began my research by asking how the web changes Danish football fan culture, whether digital media will change the entire way football culture works. My interest was initiated by the website partofthegame.tv, which was an attempt to create a new form of global football fan community, but which was no success. As a result, I took on the challenge of investigating the field of Danish football and all the websites related to Danish football in an empirical analysis. In the following summary, I point to some of the most important insights into how Danish football fans use the web, and how my analysis of web communication also brings new insights into fan types that have traditionally been overlooked. Before I do this, however, I briefly note how my theoretical reconstruction supported an analysis of football culture as a form of communication.

FOOTBALL FANDOM AS META-COMMUNICATION

Football fans have been studied within many different disciplines and from many different perspectives. Few, however, have attempted to understand what characterises football fans, except for being part of a supporter community and showing up at the stadium. In this dissertation, I have outlined a perspective where I differentiate between normal audiences and fans by using the concept of meta-communication. This concept builds on the idea that in addition to consuming football as audiences, fans also communicate with each other about the professional communication products they receive. Using this idea, I restated the main discussions within football fandom research as relating to three central activities that makes football fans unique in terms of meta-communication (and different from other types of fans). These three central activities are meta-productivity, meta-identity and meta-conversation, and my specific take on these activities is that they are communicational activities – they make sense to fans because they are directed towards other fans within a specific social setting as forms of communication.

The other central idea in my theoretical reconstruction of football fandom was that football culture can be understood as a symbolic activity within a given social context. I argued that the types of meta-communication that football fans engage in can be related to three distinct symbolic domains of reality, each with its own logics and rationalities. These three symbolic forms are the match, the icon and the club. Each symbolic form commands its own way of interpreting the football products that professional producers make available to football fans, and the domains have different and often competing ways of making sense of the world. This perspective was later used in the reconstruction and interpretation of the structure of the social field. For example, supporters draw heavily on the symbolic form of the club, whereas the enthusiasts place greater emphasis on the logic commanded by the symbolic form of the match when meta-communicating with other fans.
THE MOMENTUM OF OLD MEDIA

THE DOMINANCE OF THE TV
My empirical analysis was divided into three parts. I began looking at the existing social context, in which the web, next, is embedded, and then analysed how the web is used by senders and receivers of communication. The main conclusion, supported by all three parts of the empirical analysis, was that the momentum of especially TV already has shaped the field and the institutional setting of the field to a large degree. While fans can follow matches and football in many different media, TV is still the dominant medium where most fans watch most matches. This fact has also shaped how radio and newspapers provide secondary information about match events and in-depth knowledge. In this context, I showed that the web far from replaces radio or newspapers, but may supplement these in a setting where TV produces both the main economic value and the central experiences for fans.

While TV is still the medium that unites the field and creates a common frame for interpretation of events in the field, the web fulfills several additional purposes that does not fit the format of the TV. However, the flexibility of the web also lends itself to many different uses, and I showed that depending on the existing practices of fans already with existing media, the web supports and extends those already existing practices, and often works more like a secondary source of information or second screen, as some would put it.

The traditional supporters, who often watch the match at the stadium, use the web to make the planning of events simpler, and to get information about clubs and club-related events that would simply be too specific for it to ever surface on TV or other media. However, those who would normally stay home to view the match in TV, or perhaps not even be able to view it in TV, can use the web to follow matches and to start a meta-conversation with other fans or to get very specific knowledge on for example statistics using the web. Also, those traditional supporters who may want to join the traditional community at the stadium, but are unable to do so, for example due to family obligations, can use the web to get a sense of belonging by reading about what is going on in the community and the club. In sum, the web does not substitute other media, but creates new opportunities to follow football and to increase fans' knowledge about football culture in ways not otherwise possible – e.g. during transport or at work.

ELITE PROSUMERISM
One of the widely discussed concepts within fandom theory is the concept of prosumerism – the idea that fans are both producers and consumers of content. Based on my analysis, I suggest that the concept of prosumerism makes sense within the Danish field of football fandom, but only to a small select elite of fans. While everyone in the field can easily create a profile and have a meta-conversation with other fans, I found that this is not a very common praxis. Fans do spread their own interpretation of events, exactly as they have done in fanzines earlier on the web, but while the affordance of democratizing opinions is certainly present on most Danish football websites, the actual
praxis of fans suggests that it is still only the elite that actually make use of this affordance. This may have to do with the fact that fandom is still closely connected to existing social settings. Everyone is of course entitled to make for example a post, but only those who either have very deep knowledge of a subject (as I showed in relation to rumours, for example) or those who are part of the existing community and use the forum (sso.dk) for planning, will actually be taken seriously. The web has surely produced new spaces for experts on the subject matter to claim their voice, but since the web also makes a lot of information available you really need to produce a unique contribution in order for other to listen.

THE EMERGENCE OF A NEW FORM OF FOOTBALL FANDOM

THE ANALYTICAL FOOTBALL FAN

One central finding was that supporters are far from the only fans out there – although the literature on football fan culture has been mainly preoccupied with the traditional supporter. I identified new types of fans, which may have been previously overlooked, but may have (re)surfaced due to the affordances of the web. The enthusiast and the connoisseur are types of fans who rarely show up at the stadium, often because they are too young or old, live far from the site or are in a life situation where they cannot join the traditional fan community – and yet they use a lot of time following Danish football and their club. These fans use the football portals and apps to follow matches, and while much of their meta-communication happens together with family, friends or colleagues, the finer details about everything that happens within Danish football culture still counts as capital to get recognition within their specific social context. I challenge the position that these fans can be called post-modern or flâneurs: My analysis does not support the idea that they do not meta-communicate with other fans or that they are distanced and ironic towards the culture. It can be argued, though, that the web certainly affords a type of fandom in which you can feel much closer to the traditional supporter community, without actually joining this community in the flesh.

These types of fans are also less interested in emotions and loyalty compared to the traditional supporter. All the things that count as essential parts of being a supporter, for example the strong emotions about icon transfers to rival clubs, are not part of this new type of fandom. Instead, these fans place much more focus on finding all the facts and statistics that can be part of the ongoing conversation about football within a close social community – i.e. typically friends and family. While they still watch matches on TV, they often use the web to learn more about everything that happens, including all the important matches in the league. Just knowing how the club they support is doing, is rarely enough for these fans, which also makes sense since their main meta-communication is with friends who may support another club. Many of these fans do not really have any form of meta-conversation with the supporter community or take part in any form of meta-productions. Maybe it is not surprising in itself that these fans exist – they may even outnumber the traditional supporters. In the present context, the interesting point is how the web supports their practices and makes it much easier to be really engaged in Danish football and meta-
communication with similar minded fans. Both the ability to read an immense amount of detailed analysis and follow matches from all clubs in the league, as well as reading everything about what happens in the supporter community, makes it possible to develop a fan position in which football meta-communication becomes objective and academic, rather than passionate and emotional. While it does not (necessarily) exclude the continuous existence of the traditional supporter community, this analysis suggests that fandom, at least in Denmark, is developing along lines for which the traditional concepts of violence and anti-fandom do not make much sense. To put it into the concepts used to describe fandom as a meta-communicative activity, I would say that these fans do not meta-communicate identity and productivity, but rather focus on conversation and analysis.

**The third half and the transformation of the field**

We have seen how traditional supporters have taken on the web to get much more information about their favourite club, and how a new type of fan seems to emerge from the specific affordances of the web. One last question to ask is whether the web has actually changed the communication of football culture in the field?

My data and analysis suggest that there is an important shift happening: Following is becoming more important than supporting. There is no doubt that many fans still support a club, but only within the supporter community do we see that fans still put their emphasis on the traditional supporter values. Instead, we see that many fans may follow a specific club, but still use most of their time following Danish football in general, and putting more emphasis on ‘objective’ analysis and strategic insights than the display of support and identity. While logic suggests that there have always been many fans who never joined the supporter community, the important insight of the present analysis is that the web clearly supports and reinforces these practices by making meta-communication easier through the specialised football portals, but also through getting a sense of belonging by visiting fan forums. While some of these new types of fans need to enforce their analytical identity, for example through writing blogs, most of these fans do not find the need to communicate any form of meta-identity or meta-productivity. Yet, they use as much time as the most engaged traditional supporters, but use their time rather differently, reading for example statistics and details about club economy for clubs they do not even support. If we see a growth in this type of fan in the future, it will certainly change how the field works and will probably also change how traditional analog media are used.

The term the third half-time is often used to describe the party after the match is over, but it may also be used to describe the real function of the web in Danish football. When the match is finished and fans go home, it is time to reflect upon the events – both inside and outside the field. This is where the web comes into play with its many possibilities for reading articles or meta-communicating with other fans; whether as part of a traditional supporter community or simply at lunch with colleagues or friends.
Lastly, I want to relate these conclusions to the project partofthegame.tv, and once again ask why the project failed. First of all, it is important again to emphasize that the web as a medium of communication does not constitute a general challenge to existing media of football culture. Instead, the web supplements interpersonal communication by fans and traditional analog media. Broadcast TV is still a central medium for most fans and supporters and will probably remain so – although possibly embedded within web technologies. The web provides an important resource for knowing what is going on and getting specialised information, but watching matches in front of a television set does not seem to be a practice to be replaced anytime soon.

Reading about and interacting with other supporters and fans was the backdrop against which partofthegame.tv was created. However, traditional supporters, those who go to the stadium, have their own forums to support their existing modes of interaction, and they do not need a general forum for interacting with supporters from other clubs and for enjoying or celebrating being a supporter, as partofthegame.tv had thought. Rather, most supporters use the fan forum to know what is going on with the team, the club and perhaps also with the fan community. However, the fan forum is first and foremost a community of fan experts, fan opinion leaders and fan club leaders writing about the team and the club – and a place to write those stories and insights that no one else wants to publish. It is not a place to celebrate being supporters, but a place to celebrate the match, the clubs and the players – in the supporters’ third half – and the new type of analytical fans that are emerging are not interested in any global community to replace the traditional supporter communities. On the contrary, they are even more local than the traditional supporter community in that the social context of fandom is often limited to friends and family.

If partofthegame.tv had been coordinated with the club or fan fora, it might have worked, but thinking that fans look for a global channel where everyone is just a fan, was a misunderstanding of how fans use the web to support existing practices. This is why partofthegame.tv failed: it did not tie into any existing media, neither the web nor traditional media.


Mainwaring, E. C., Tom (2011) "We're shit and we know we are": identity, place and ontological security in lower league football in England', *Soccer & Society*, 13(1), pp. 107-123.
APPENDIX

There are two appendixes (AP1 and AP2) referenced in the dissertation:

APPENDIX 1:

Appendix 1 are interviews (typically soundfiles, but also text documents from email interviews) which are referenced the following way: AP1: INT: 21: 4:32. This translates into Appendix 1, interview 21 (as found in the file names), reference beginning at 4 minutes and 32 seconds. The files for appendix 1 can be found here:
https://filedn.com/IS1jxF9qoCl7wqTSqc29gif/APPENDIX1/

APPENDIX 2:

Appendix 2 consist of a list of all sites analysed and the actions taken in regard to each site. Link can be found here:
https://filedn.com/IS1jxF9qoCl7wqTSqc29gif/APPENDIX2/

APPENDIX 3:

Appendix 3 contains all the correspondence analysis data and maps. Typically these are referenced as for example ExA, which refers to Excel file A. Moreover, each map have a map code which correspondens to a specific sheet in the excel file (in ExA). These files (including a PowerPoint with original sized screenshots) can be found here:
https://filedn.com/IS1jxF9qoCl7wqTSqc29gif/APPENDIX3/

APPENDIX 4:

The survey itself (original text in Danish) can be found here:
https://filedn.com/IS1jxF9qoCl7wqTSqc29gif/APPENDIX4/
I denne afhandling stiller jeg spørgsmålet: Hvorfor bruger danske fodboldfans internettet, og hvordan forandrer det fankulturen? I min analyse viser jeg, at internettet bliver anvendt til mange formål, men måske ikke så meget de formål, man normalt tænker er nyt ved nettet. Først og fremmest så tillader internettet alle at udtrykke sin mening, men det er faktisk kun de fans, som allerede har en klar stemme indenfor fællesskaberne, som benytter sig af denne mulighed. Jeg viser derimod, at i stedet for at skabe flere stemmer, så giver internettet mange flere mulighed for at lytte med på, hvad der sker i fællesskaberne – og derved for at føle sig som en del af disse fællesskaber. Dernæst viser jeg, at internettet er med til at skabe betingelserne for en ny type fan, som ikke nødvendigvis har særlig meget til fælles med den traditionelle supporter. Selvom denne nye type fan stadig støtter en bestemt klub, så har denne en meget bredere fodboldinteresse, og bruger meget mere energi på at analysere spillet, og opnå dybdeviden omkring spilbegivenheder, som kommer til udtryk i deres interaktion med familie og venner – snarere end i de traditionelle fællesskaber. Sidst så viser jeg, at internettet ikke erstatter TV’et som det dominerende medium, hvor man følger kampe, men at det snarere fungerer på sidelinjen, som et sted hvor man får information, der beriger ens forståelse af spillet og som derved understøtter eksisterende sociale praksisser. Denne afhandling tager udgangspunkt i en empirisk dataanalyse, men indeholder også en række vigtige pointer i forhold til fandom teorien. Afhandlingen er opdelt i tre dele:

I den første del af afhandlingen (Kapitel 1-4) præsenterer jeg min teoretiske position, hvorfra jeg analyserer fodboldkultur og internettet som et medium. Jeg begynder med at argumentere for, at kommunikation, og det dertil hørende begreb meta-kommunikation, kan anvendes som nøglebegreber for at forstå, hvad vi mener, når vi taler om fans og fankultur. Jeg afslutter det teoretiske argument med at præsentere den ide, at fodboldkultur er en symbolisk aktivitet, som har produceret dens egen distinkte virkelighedsform gennem de specifikke måder, som denne kultur er blevet kommunikeret af fans gennem forskellige medier.

I den anden del af afhandlingen (Kapitel 5) præsenterer jeg en metodologi for, hvordan man analyserer et socialt felt, og jeg præsenterer de teknikker og data, jeg har anvendt i min analyse. Dataene i afhandlingen består af interviews med webmastere for de danske fodboldsites (N=68), trackingdata for brugere på websites (cirka 3.6 milliarder besøg) og et survey (N=804).

I den tredje del af afhandlingen (Kapitel 6-8) præsenterer jeg min analyse. Først analyserer jeg de eksisterende kilder omkring dansk fodboldkultur, og præsenterer en genfortolkning af hvordan Dansk fodboldkultur fungerer som et socialt felt. Derefter anvender jeg mine egne datakilder til at analysere, hvordan websites faktisk anvendes af danske fans, og jeg præsenterer efterfølgende en typologi for fodboldfantyper baseret på deres demografiske karakteristika og den måde, hvorpå de rent faktisk anvender internettet i deres fanpraksisser.
In this dissertation I ask: Why do Danish football fans use the web and does the web change the way fandom culture works? In my analysis, I show that the web is used for many different purposes, but not primarily that with which it is often associated. First, the web enables the voice of the many, but it is actually mostly used in this way by those fans who are already the dominant voices of the community. I show that instead of enabling more people to broadcast their opinions, the web allows more people to follow those few who choose to broadcast in order to let the many feel part of the community. Second, I show that a new type of fan may be emerging who has little in common with the traditional supporter. This fan still supports a specific club, but takes a much more general interest in football and uses much more time to analyse the games and gain in-depth knowledge about game events, which is shared among friends and family rather than the traditional supporter community. Lastly, I also show that the web is not replacing TV as the dominant medium for following football matches, but rather works a supplement for enriching the understanding of the game and support existing social practices. This dissertation is empirical in its findings, but also contributes to the field of fandom theory. The dissertation is divided into three parts:

In the first part of the dissertation (Chapter 1-4), I present the theoretical position from where I choose to analyse football culture and the web as a medium. I begin by arguing that communication and the related concept of meta-communication can be used as key concepts in understanding what we mean when we talk about fans and football fandom. I conclude the theoretical argument by presenting the idea that football culture is a symbolic activity that has produced its own distinct domain of reality through the particular ways it has been communicated by football fans in different media and within different social contexts.

In the second part of the dissertation (Chapter 5), I present the methodology of how to analyse a ‘social field’ and I present the techniques as well as the data used in my analysis. The data collected for the analysis consists in interviews with webmasters from Danish football websites (N=68), user tracking data from two selected websites (circa 3.6 billion visits) and a survey (N=804).

In the third part of the dissertation (Chapter 6-8), I present my findings. First, I review the existing data on Danish football culture and present a reinterpretation of how Danish football culture works as a social field today. I then use my own data to analyse how the websites are actually used by Danish fans, and I present a typology of different types of fans, their social characteristics and what use each type of fans actually make of the web.