A study of how a Community Sports Trust communicates with football supporters

A case study of Brentford Community Sports Trust

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Abstract

This thesis seeks to investigate the importance of the average football supporter in relation to its football team's Community Sports Trust, and how a Community Sports Trust can efficiently communicate with these supporters. This is examined by doing a case study of Brentford F.C. Community Sports Trust (hereinafter called CST).

The CST find that the fanbase of Brentford F.C. shows a lack of engagement and interest in their work. Furthermore, initial findings through a Focus Group with Brentford F.C. supporters found that the supporters consider the current content dissatisfactory. This inspired the research question of this thesis:

Why do Brentford F.C. supporters not show interest in the CST's online content?

Furthermore, how can the CST meet the Brentford F.C. supporters' expectations of the online content?

To best measure the problem put forth by the CST, this thesis investigates empirical data representing the average Brentford F.C. supporter (focus group) and the CST (interview). It was found that the Brentford F.C. supporters, to some extent, felt neglected in the current content patterns of the CST. Furthermore, during the interview with Tomas Abreu, head of Marketing and Promotions at the CST, it was found that Brentford F.C. supporters were, as a stakeholder, not considered especially important.

A stakeholder analysis is conducted based on the interview data with the Salience Model of professors Ronald K. Mitchell, Bradley R. Agle and Donna J. Wood as the theoretical approach. Here it is found that Brentford F.C. supporters are a Dominant stakeholder and, therefore, should be considered important regarding the CST's external communication.

Content from the CST's four external communication media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Newsletters) is then briefly analysed based on the methodological approach of Content Analysis by Klaus Krippendorff. The analysis argues that the current content is not targeted at the Brentford F.C.

supporters as a stakeholder. This is quite paradoxical as the stakeholder analysis revealed that the Brentford supporters are indeed an important stakeholder.

A survey was conducted of 144 Brentford F.C. supporters in relation to their use of social media in general and in relation to the CST. The theoretical approach for this analysis was based on the Uses and Gratifications theory by Professor S. Shyam Sundar and Professor Anthony M. Limperos. Through this analysis, we identified five prominent, and thus important, gratifications that the Brentford F.C. supporters seek on the various platforms: Community-building, Discussions/Debates, Information, Entertainment, and Identity. The U&G analysis shows that the CST must consider the different gratifications in terms of what type of content should be posted on which platforms.

Before concluding this thesis, a practical recommendation for the CST is then written to possibly influence their communication strategy moving forward.

Conclusively, it is found that the supporters do not show interest in the CST's online content since the content was seldom in relation to the Brentford F.C. supporters and that the CST appears not to consider Brentford F.C. supporters as an important stakeholder. Furthermore, it is found that there is a significant mismatch between what type of content the supporters seek versus the type of content they get. This issue can be solved by considering the gratifications identified in the Uses and Gratifications analysis and incorporating these into the content.

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1. Introduction

Brentford F.C. is a professional English football club based in the small suburban town of Brentford, in West London. The club was formed in 1889 and played its first game on 23rd November 1889 against local side Kew. In 1904, Brentford F.C. played the first game at their new stadium, Griffin Park, where they played their home games for 116 years. In 2020, the club moved to its new stadium, Brentford Community Stadium, after 116 years at Griffin Park (BrentfordFC.com n.d. A). The new stadium is located about a mile East of Griffin Park, on the border of Brentford town and Chiswick. For a long time, the club was to be found in the lower divisions of English football, but in the 2020/2021 season, they were able to secure promotion to the top division of the English football league system, the Premier League, where they still play as of October 2022.

The club often brands itself as a "community club", and as mentioned, their new home stadium is called Brentford Community Stadium. This branding is not without reason. In 1987, Brentford F.C. created a trust called "Brentford Football in the Community", which made them one of the first football clubs to create a community programme. Initially, the trust aimed to improve the image of football itself as it had received a negative reputation due to the rising levels of hooliganism (BFCCST.com n.d. A). The trust's mission was to "bring football to the heart of the community" (BFCCST.com n.d. A), especially in the underprivileged parts of West London. The trust was very successful and started expanding into non-football-related projects such as health, disability, and education. In 2005, it was decided that all of Brentford F.C.'s community initiatives should be unified into one organisation, which paved the way for the creation of what is now known as "Brentford Community Sports Trust" (hereinafter called CST). Today, the CST is one of the leading football charities in the U.K., helping thousands of people each year (BFCCST.com n.d. A). Their headquarter is at the Brentford Community Stadium, but they offer most of their programmes out of their facilities at Gunnersbury Park, just north of the stadium.

However, despite the club branding itself as a community club and the fact that the CST is a pioneer and one of the leading football charities in the U.K., the CST struggles to engage with the average Brentford F.C. supporter. This problem was presented to us in an initial Zoom call with Lee Doyle, the CEO of the CST, and Stewart Purvis, chairman of Bees United (the official supporters' trust).

A quick scroll through the CST's various social media pages shows how little engagement they get. For example, as of 3rd May, the four latest Facebook posts have only one *like* combined, and the four latest posts on Twitter have five combined. Furthermore, an interview with the Head of Marketing and Partnerships at the CST was conducted to identify their key stakeholders and why they believe these stakeholders are important. In this interview, Tomas said that most Brentford F.C. supporters know of the CST but know very little about what they do (Appendix 2, p. 8, ll. 14-21). This statement was also supported by many of the Brentford F.C. supporters participating in the focus group for this project. This focus group was conducted to verify the problem put forth by the CST regarding a lack of interest. Most of the supporters in the focus group knew of the CST and followed them on social media or subscribed to their newsletter, but they also struggled to learn more about what the CST does based on the content from the various channels. Some said they often skip the newsletter and scroll past the social media content "because it is just about kids' football" (Appendix 1, p. 8, ll. 12-13).

Two primary theories were applied to analyse the problem and the empirical data. The project first applied a stakeholder theory. Professor R. Edward Freeman is generally perceived to be the founding father of Stakeholder Theory (Mitchell et al. 1997, p. 853), but this project has applied a more recent theoretical approach to stakeholder theory, namely the Stakeholder Salience Model by Professors Ronald K. Mitchell, Bradley R. Agle and Donna J. Wood from their article from 1997, *Toward a Theory of Stakeholder Identification and Salience: Defining the Principle of Who and What Really Counts*. This stakeholder theory was applied to identify the CST's key stakeholders and why they are important to them. Afterwards, the project examined the content from the CST's different communication channels, such as social media and newsletter. The examination of these different content pieces is used to verify the gap between the Brentford F.C. supporters' expectations and the actual content from the CST.

Furthermore, the project applied a Uses and Gratifications theory, which is an approach to understanding why and how people use different media to satisfy their specific needs. The exact origin of the theory is uncertain and often debated among scholars. However, scholars seem to agree somewhat that it started as a sub-tradition of media effects research in the 1950s (Ruggiero 2000, p. 5). As with the stakeholder theory, this project will apply a more recent approach to the theory. Therefore, this project will apply the theoretical approach of Professor S. Shyam Sundar and Professor Anthony M. Limperos in their article from 2013 *Uses and Grats 2.0: New Gratifications for New Media*. This approach, which will be elaborated in section 4.2, is a revised approach to U&G that considers new media and new technology as sources of new gratifications. For this particular theory, we conducted a survey with Brentford F.C. supporters to examine the expectations of the average Brentford F.C. supporter in terms of media use.

As illustrated in this introduction, the subsequent data collection verified the problem presented by Lee Doyle and Stewart Purvis. Therefore, the research question for this project is as follows:

1.1 Research Question

Why do Brentford F.C. supporters not show interest in the CST's online content? Furthermore, how can the CST meet the Brentford F.C. supporters' expectations of the online content?

2. Literature Review

Before deciding on the exact theoretical framework, methodological approach, and data types, we reviewed other researchers' and academics' work within the same research fields. This was done both to find inspiration and figure out what this project could contribute with. The literature review is separated into three main sections, Football in the community, Stakeholders, and Uses and Gratifications. These sections reflect the project's general research fields.

2.1 Football in the community

As previously mentioned, this project is a case study of why Brentford F.C. supporters do not show interest in the CST's content. This means that the project is concerned with football supporters and a so-called *Football in the Community* organisation (the CST). Much research already exists on the topic of *Football in the Community* organisations. However, the vast majority of this research is concerned with the effects of these organisations' activities in the community. For example, in the article, *Making a difference: The power of football in the community*, Sanders et al. seek to understand how football can be a platform to support inclusion in various arenas (Sanders et al. 2014, p. 41). This paper shares many similarities to our project as it is a case study that seeks to examine a *Football in the Community* organisation. The case of Brighton & Hove Albion is also quite similar as they too are pioneers within the charitable side of football. However, this is also where the similarities end. Sanders et al.'s paper is concerned with the effect of such charitable programmes and how "*increasing separation between the 'business' of football and the 'service' of community is a viable pluralistic form that offers strong and sustainable connections between local communities and their football club*" (Sanders et al. 2014, p. 41).

Furthermore, in 2000, Neil Watson published the paper *Football in the community: 'What's the score?'*. In this paper, he seeks to examine the type of work these organisations undertake, for what reason and for whose benefit (Watson 2000, p. 114). He also examines how the tasks of these organisations have changed over time since the justification for their existence has changed drastically since its beginning (Watson 2000, p. 114). Once again, this research is concerned with the programmes and activities of the organisation, which is very different to what our project aims to do.

Another example of *Football in the Community*-related research is Curran et al.'s *Ethnographic engagement from within a Football in the Community programme at an English Premier League football club* from 2014. In this article, they seek to explore issues concerned with participant recruitment, engagement, and retention within a range of *Football in the Community* programmes (Curran et al. 2014, p. 934). This paper is also similar to our project in many ways. In fact, this is arguably the most similar of all research reviewed for this project. Curran et al. examined the *power* and *pull* of football and how football clubs can use their salience to attract people to physical activities. Based on the findings in the paper, Curran et al. recommended to other *Football in the Community* organisations how they should capitalise on the club's brand to develop a marketing strategy for promoting health information and messages (Cuuren et al. 2014, p. 944). Although this is not exactly what we aim to do in this project, and the approach is different, the paper is very similar in that we seek to find a way for *Football in the Community* organisations to engage with the ordinary football supporter of the specific club. We do so based on a case study of Brentford F.C. and the CST. Curran et al.'s paper is also very similar to that of Parnell et al. from 2012, titled *Football in the community schemes: Exploring the effectiveness of an intervention in promoting healthful behaviour change*. This paper too seeks to examine the effectiveness of a football club's *Football in the Community* programmes in promoting health information and messages (Parnell et al. 2012, p. 35). While this paper does not aim to do the same as our project, Parnell et al. utilise a similar data collection approach, namely focus groups, which is also applied in our project (Parnell et al. 2012, p. 35).

However similar some of this research was, none of the research on *Football in the Community* applied stakeholder theories or uses and gratifications theories. Therefore, we broadened the search criteria and searched for football, or sports, related research that did apply these theories.

2.2 Stakeholder

As with *Football in the Community*, much research also exists on stakeholders related to football. Much of the research reviewed for this part of the literature review is in many ways very similar to this project. For example, Benoît Senaux's paper *A stakeholder approach to football club governance* from 2008 in which he adopts a stakeholder approach to analyse the complex environment of professional football clubs and why many goals of a football club are not always shared by the various stakeholders (Senaux 2008, p. 5). To do this, Senaux applies Mitchell et al.'s Stakeholder Salience Model from 1997, which this project will also apply. While Senaux's paper does not focus on a *Football in the Community* organisation (non-profit) but rather on a professional football club (profit), it raises some similar questions about the stakeholders of an organisation and to whom the organisation's management should really give their time and attention to. In the conclusion of Senaux's paper, he argues that "*the overly high attention paid to players is often at the expense of other stakeholders who are quite significant though less visible*" (Senaux 2008, p. 16), which is very similar to what our hypothesis is for this project: The CST pays much attention to their consumers at the expense of the average Brentford F.C. supporter who is also an important stakeholder.

Another reviewed research paper sought to explain the strategic benefits a football club can gain by implementing CSR initiatives specifically related to the community trust model of governance. This paper, written by Geoff Walters and Simon Chadwick in 2009, is not only concerned with the *Football in the Community* aspect, but it is also applying a stakeholder analysis, and last but not least, the paper draws from qualitative primary and secondary data gathered from Brentford F.C. and Charlton Athletic (Walters & Chadwick 2009, p. 51). The main aim of their paper is "*to consider how corporate citizenship in the football industry can deliver strategic benefits for a football club*" (Walters & Chadwick 2009, p. 52), which is relevant to our project as their findings emphasize that it is important to both Brentford F.C. and the CST that the supporters' needs are also met in terms of the CST's content. Walter and Chadwick's paper includes a stakeholder analysis, but it is not used to examine the salience of each stakeholder but rather to identify and map the stakeholders (within the local community) of the two beforementioned football clubs.

Finally, this project also reviewed an article that used stakeholder theory to examine three major CSR issues in the context of the UK football industry: Stakeholder definition and salience, firm actions and responses, and stakeholder actions and responses (Walters & Tacon 2010, p. 566). Geoff Walters and Richard Tacon's paper *Corporate social responsibility in sport: Stakeholder management in the UK football industry* from 2010 illustrates how football clubs can implement CSR through stakeholder management strategies. The stakeholder theory in this paper was less focused on identifying/mapping stakeholders in terms of salience but rather on how football clubs should engage with specific stakeholders. They briefly applied the Salience Model by Mitchel et al. as our project will, but this part of the analysis was relatively short and vague. However, they identified the supporters as the most salient stakeholder, and thus the rest of the paper focused on how football clubs should engage with them. This approach is very similar to that of our project as we also apply the Salience Model to determine whether the supporters are a highly salient stakeholder. The project continues to examine how the CST should engage with them (Walter & Tacon 2010, p. 582).

2.3 Uses and Gratifications

The final topic of this literature review is Uses and Gratifications research in the context of football. This proved to be impossible to find, which is why the search criteria were broadened to *sport* and *uses and gratifications*. However, this research field seems to also be somewhat scarce, with only a minimal number of academic articles, primarily by master's or PhD students from across the world. The first article reviewed is called *Professional Team Sport and Twitter: Gratifications Sought and Obtained by Followers*, and it was written in 2014 by Chris Gibbs, Norm O'Reilly, and Michelle Brunette. Three professors from Ryerson University, Ohio University, and Laurentian University respectively. In this paper, they seek to examine what motivates and satisfies Twitter followers of professional sports teams. To do so, they applied a uses and gratifications theory to measure the gratifications sought and the perceived gratifications obtained (Gibbs et al. 2014, p. 188). They identified four gratifications sought by Twitter users: Interaction, Promotion, Live game updates, and News. Furthermore, they conclude that "*Professional sport teams can improve strategic fan engagement by better understanding how Twitter followers use and seek gratification in the social-media experience*" (Gibbs et al. 2014, p. 188). While these findings and their approach are not entirely similar to that of this project (professional sports teams versus charitable organisations), the audience they examined is very similar to this project, which is why this paper was used as inspiration.

Additionally, in 2013, Ann Pegoraro contributed to the Routledge Handbook of Sport Communication with her research titled *Sport fandom in the digital world*. In this research, she provides insight into how different stakeholders of a sports organisation interact and engage in fandom in the digital world. The research first examines how people become sports fans, but the most interesting part of the research is when she examines how sports fandom manifests itself in the digital world. This is interesting because she does so by applying a uses and gratifications analysis of fans on digital platforms such as social media (Pegoraro 2013, p. 248). The research concludes that "*It is important for sport organizations to know what drives individuals to participate and create content, what types of content sport fans are producing and how is this changing the world of online sport fandom. Globally, sport fans in the digital world are making their voices heard by athletes, by teams, and by other fans*" (Pegoraro 2013, p. 255). These findings somewhat reflect our hypothesis that it is important that the CST knows how and why the Brentford F.C. supporters use different types of online media.

Finally, the last reviewed article on the topic of uses and gratifications in the context of sports is a master's thesis from 2013 by Hyungmin Kim from Temple University. This thesis, titled *The Uses and Gratifications of Sports Media Audiences*, aims to examine five different topics: "*1) sports media audiences' motivations to watch live NFL game broadcasts with others, 2) their gratifications as a consequence of the group watching, 3) their motivations to use sports Twitter while watching live NFL game broadcasts, 4) their gratifications as a consequence of sports Twitter use while watching the game broadcasts, and 5) the level of gratifications as a consequence of the group watching and sports Twitter use*" (Kim 2013, p. ii). The uses and gratifications analysis identifies that interactivity, identity, entertainment, and personal utility are the gratifications sought during group watching. In contrast, interactivity, information seeking, fan identity and entertainment are the gratifications sought when sports fans use Twitter (Kim 2013, p. 76). These gratifications are very similar, not to say identical, to the ones identified in this project.

2.4 Summary

The literature review demonstrates that much of the existing research within this project's research fields is similar to what this project does. Other researchers have, for example, applied stakeholder theory, let alone the Salience Model, in the context of the U.K. football industry. However, none of the reviewed research has combined all three research fields. Furthermore, the research often seems to focus on the fans in relation to the sports team and not the fans in relation to the charitable organisations of the sports teams. As mentioned in the introduction, both Brentford F.C. and the CST find it challenging to get people interested in the charitable work the CST does. This is quite paradoxical as the club brands itself as a community club, and that many Brentford F.C. supporters take pride in this. Therefore, this project will examine why Brentford F.C. supporters are not showing interest in the CST's work and how the CST can make their online content more appealing to the supporters to increase engagement across their platforms. To do this, the project will do research within the fields of *Football in the Community*, Stakeholder theory, and Uses and Gratifications theory. As mentioned, much research already exists within these fields of research, but after having reviewed much of the existing literature, it becomes clear that not much research has sought to examine all these fields as a combined field.

3. Methodology

This section will cover the approach to science undertaken in this project as well as the methodological considerations. The section will begin by elaborating on the researcher's theory of science and how it helped determine the methodological approach. Second, how mixed methods was used in conducting a focus group, interview, content analysis, and survey. Finally, we will highlight how coding was applied and to what types of data.

3.1 Theory of science

Theory of science is, according to Andreas Beck Holm, author of 'Videnskab I virkeligheden' and PhD in Philosophy at Aarhus University, the systematic examination of how scientific knowledge, as he often refers to, is found, justified and practically used in society (Holm 2018, p. 14). This distinction or definition of how Holm sees theory of science is relevant to how he puts forth this project's chosen paradigm, namely Positivism.

Auguste Comte, who lived from 1798 to 1857, is considered the founder of theory of science. This esteemed title is due to his development of positive philosophy, which has since then been called Positivism. Holm argues that 'positive' in this context is not only the opposite of 'negative'. However, Positivism argues that science only reaches recognition when researching factual or concrete data. Furthermore, Comte believed that all knowledge and science are achieved through examinations of what we can sense with our senses (Holm 2018, pp. 28-29). Therefore, Positivism is a theory of science built on classical empiricism, which means that scientific revelation is only achieved through systematic collection of empirical data (Holm 2018, p. 28).

Science is, according to positivists, characterised by the inductive method. This means that the researcher first and foremost examines the phenomenon the researchers wish to examine. This should first be done completely independently of any theory, as the observations and examinations ought to be completely open-minded. When any collected data is seen to be adequately gathered, a researcher then combines its research with a theory of relevance. Hereafter, according to some positivists, one can use a deductive method by attaining more relevant theory-driven data and then narrowing the data down to what is relevant to the researcher's research. Holm argues that the supplementary data collection aims to prove the theories in play. He goes on to say that the goal of science is to verify (Holm 2018, pp. 30-31).

Positivism is seen as a set of rules for researchers since, to Comte's understanding, it was the only true way of acquiring knowledge. According to Comte, Positivism is a normative theory of science and not a descriptive. His ambition back then was not to merely describe how researchers worked, yet he wanted Positivism to normatively establish rules for how researchers had to work in order to obtain "actual" science. Metaphysics was a concept that Comte first wanted to be removed from the debate surrounding his work. As mentioned earlier, he believed science had to be based on concrete, sensibly attainable areas of work. Therefore he wanted metaphysics removed from the conversation as metaphysics, according to Holm, is a worldview which is not based on empirical observations (Holm 2018, pp. 29-30).

No matter how against metaphysics Comte seemed to get, he always understood that the metaphysical and theological way of thinking was once the only and best way of perceiving the world, relations and science in general. He believed that going from theological ways of accepting the world to metaphysical was human's natural evolution, and to that he believed that his point of view, namely positive philosophy, was a historically irresistible destination since humans, little by little, would become used to thinking scientifically instead of the theological or metaphysical way of thinking. This realisation that Comte did would become a cornerstone in Positivism in that science is cumulative. Holm defines cumulative science as "*Videnskaben udvikler sig gennem en ubrudt akkumulation af viden opnået gennem observationer og eksperimenter*" (Holm 2018, pp. 29-30). Holm argues that this cornerstone is Positivism's significant optimistic contribution to science since knowledge is always accumulated through time which means that we as academics, researchers and humans become wiser with time.

3.2 Method

3.2.1 Mixed methods

For this project, we found that choosing between qualitative and quantitative methods would be impossible with the views of a positivist. Through our case study of the CST, we came to understand early in the process that the CST saw a problem with the interactions with the football club's supporters. The club believed that the supporters were not responding to their work in a manner that they would have hoped. However, was this due to the club's communication with the supporters, or was the problem with the supporters themselves? As positivists, we as researchers aim to maintain complete objectivity throughout this project and during empirical data collection. Combining this viewpoint with the idea that science is cumulatively gathered and that the first collection of data should also be theoretically independent was what led to the realisation of using mixed methods in this project.

Alan Bryman, former Professor of Organisational and Social Research at the University of Leicester, defines mixed methods research as a methodological approach for conducting research that involves collecting, analysing, and integrating both qualitative and quantitative research methods. He writes, "[…] *using both quantitative and qualitative research should involve a mixing of the research methods involved and not just using them in tandem*" (Bryman 2012, pp. 628-629).

Before moving on with this project, one issue needed clarification. As positivists, it is unusual to conduct data using qualitative research methods. This is due to the nature of qualitative research method in that it is usually associated with somewhat subjectivist-positioned researchers, which, as mentioned earlier, positivists are not. According to Ning Su, Associate Professor of General Management, Strategy, and Information Systems at the Ivey Business School, who specialises in qualitative research methods, the positivistic paradigm can actually coexist with qualitative research method. He argues that,

"Ontologically, positivist qualitative research assumes the existence of an objective, external reality that can be apprehended and summarized, although not readily quantified. Epistemologically, positivist qualitative research focuses on searching for, through non-statistical means, regularities and causal relationships between different elements of the reality, and summarizing identified patterns into generalized findings"

(Cassell et. al 2018, pp. 18-19).

Su further argues that when combined with care, positivism and qualitative research method form a synergistic relationship. He believes that the combination manifests itself in four distinct ways. First, qualitative research method expands the scope and reach of positivistic research. Second, that qualitative research method can extend the depths of a positivist's research. Third, qualitative research method enriches the context of research, as it enables researchers to explore social processes and dynamic embedded phenomena. Lastly, and perhaps most importantly for this project, positivistic qualitative research method can be combined with quantitative research method (Cassell et al. 2018, pp. 19).

These four distinctions all had meaning for this project's data collection process. After finding that mixed methods would not necessarily contradict the viewpoint of positivistic researchers, the data collection could then be started.

First, the problem brought forth by the CST, namely that supporters of Brentford F.C. appeared to have no interest in the work of the CST, would have to be verified. For this project, it was chosen that a focus group with supporters of the football club would be the best way to verify the problem and also a method for obtaining data of possible interest. This focus group was, as Positivism suggests, conducted without prior theoretical influence. The distinct focus group method will be further elaborated in section 3.2.3.

Second, to maintain complete objectivity, an interview was conducted with a member of the CST. The questions asked in the focus group should, in some way, be asked to a representative of the CST in order for the data to be as objective as possible. By conducting an interview, it was ensured that both sides of the same story were told. This interview was then coded, and it was found that stakeholder theory would best suit this part of the analysis. From this point forward, data was collected with theoretical consideration. However, any theory chosen was in relation to data collected in an attempt to maintain complete objectivity as positivists. The method behind the data collection through an interview will be further elaborated in section 3.2.3

Third, a relevant content analysis was done in order to compare the initial data collected from the focus group to verify the relevance of the focus group data. The method behind the content analysis will be further elaborated on in section 3.4.

Lastly, the findings showed a pattern of misconnection in communication from the CST to the relevant supporters. The research methods up to this point have been of a qualitative research method nature and had gone from theoretically uninfluenced to theoretically influenced over time due to the cumulative nature of the mixed method. This meant that the last method of data collection for this project would be influenced by previously collected data. The content analysis showed that the CST varied their content depending on the medium, and that the supporters' engagement differed in relation to both topic and medium. Therefore, the Uses and Gratifications theory was applied in conducting a survey. The method behind the survey will be further elaborated in section 3.5.

3.2.2 Research design

To answer our research question satisfactorily, we found through our data collection process that a stakeholder analysis based on Mitchell et al.'s Salience Model would be the best approach to determine whether or not the Brentford F.C. supporters should be considered an important stakeholder and warrant attention in the CST's online communication.

Furthermore, to understand the reasoning behind the lack of engagement from the Brentford F.C. supporters regarding the content of the CST, the most recent content from the CST will be examined in relation to the findings of our focus group. The methodological approach to the content analysis was inspired by Klaus Krippendorff (2019). As mentioned in the previous section, Johnny Saldana's (2013) Descriptive Coding will be applied early in the process to the focus group and interview data.

To determine how the CST can improve the engagement of the Brentford F.C. supporters, a U&G analysis will be carried out based on the findings from a survey with 144 Brentford F.C. supporters. This analysis will examine the supporters' general media habits and why they follow the CST specifically across all online platforms (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and newsletters). These findings will show what the Brentford F.C. supporters look for across said platforms, which will then be compared to the findings of the content analysis to illustrate the mismatch that causes the low engagement rate.

The findings of the project will then lead to a recommendation section which is the practical recommendation that will be handed to the CST. This recommendation will present the findings and provide the CST with tangible and applicable propositions that the CST should consider incorporating into their online content.

Finally, the collective findings and examinations of this project will lead to a conclusion that will answer the research question of this project.

3.2.3 Focus group method

A focus group, essentially a group interview, is a method of interviewing more than one person at a time. Usually, in focus groups, there must be more than four interviewees. For this project, the focus group consisted of nine Brentford F.C. supporters.

According to Bryman, there are, however, some distinctions between the methods of group interviewing and focus groups.

Focus groups typically emphasise a specific topic or theme, which is then explored in depth. Group interviews are somewhat more loosely performed and often span very widely in thematic. Furthermore, researchers often carry out group interviews to save time and money due to the ability to interview multiple individuals simultaneously. According to Bryman, focus groups are never carried out with this goal, which is also true for this project (Bryman 2012, pp. 501-502).

There are also cases where the researcher is interested in seeing the various individuals discuss specific issues as group members rather than simply as individuals. A focus group practitioner will be interested in things such as how people respond to each other's views. For this project, these notions all have great applications as to why the focus group method was chosen in the first place.

By conducting a focus group with Brentford F.C. supporters, it will become evident whether there is any agreeableness regarding each other's opinions. Individuals in a focus group will often challenge each other's views. This means that the individuals might be forced to revise their views, which might leave the researcher with a more realistic account of what the people think (Bryman 2012, pp. 501-504).

3.2.3.1 Conducting a focus group

As discussed in the previous segment, a focus group with several Brentford F.C. supporters was conducted as empirical data for this project. This segment will enlighten how the focus group has been conducted from start to finish. Prior to constructing the focus group, we, as researchers, had first to acknowledge our role. With our focus being a qualitative approach, our role as interviewer, hereinafter called moderator, would be primarily for guiding reasons. As the moderator, the job is to provide an unstructured setting for extracting various views and perspectives whilst not being too intrusive in the debate (Bryman 2012, pp. 501-503).

The work of Bryman laid the basis of our focus group method, but the process from start to finish varied compared to how he envisioned it. The relevant elements he mentions are selecting participants, level of moderator involvement, size and number of groups, recording and transcription, and beginning and finishing. Each of these elements inspired our approach to conduct a focus group.

3.2.3.1.1 Size and number of groups

The first thing that was determined was the size of the focus group and the number of focus groups. For this project, it was decided that one focus group should be conducted with nine individual participants.

Bryman believes there is no best answer regarding the size of a focus group. He suggests that one focus group should be about six to ten people and that being closer to ten would be ideal due to the possibility of people not showing up or engaging that much with the other focus group individuals (Bryman 2012, pp. 505-508).

3.2.3.1.2 Selecting participants

Selecting participants is essential to getting a focus group survey conducted in the best way possible. Bryman suggests that basically anyone for whom the topic is relevant can be a participant but getting the participants as close to the source of a topic as possible was important for this project (Bryman 2012, pp. 509-510). The overall theme of this project is arguably football fans' interest in community work. As for this case, it could be argued that football fans, in general, might have sufficed. However, we wanted to go a few steps further and only get Brentford F.C. supporters, as the case is of that particular football club. Furthermore, it was quite important to get individuals who varied in their engagement and connection to the football club. In theory, it would give the focus group a greater variety of opinions.

Through our sources within both Brentford F.C. and the CST, we were able to put together a focus group consisting solely of Bees United board members. At first, there was a concern that the variety of these supporters would be next to none. This issue was quickly resolved by differentiating between the available Bees United board members. The focus group comprised both young and old, new and long-term fans and both genders. Furthermore, it was important to have variety regarding how these participants had become fans. Some were "born" a Brentford F.C. supporter due to their family being fans or due to being raised in close proximity to the football club. Others had recently moved to London and had only been a supporter for less than a year. This diversity in the relations from fans to Brentford F.C. was important for this research to confirm whether opinions differed amongst different types of supporters.

3.2.3.1.3 Level of moderator involvement

When conducting the focus group, some rather basic moderator approaches were taken. As a moderator, one's job is not to only ask questions and then leave the debate altogether. The job of a moderator is to control who speaks. At times it might become relevant to shut down excessive talk due to the inability to record properly. Alternatively, even make sure to come back to an individual later in a conversation who had a point to make (Bryman 2012, p. 509).
In qualitative research, it is the perspective of those studied that is of most interest to researchers. Therefore, to the extent that it was possible, the focus group was conducted with minimum possible moderator involvement. However, this quite quickly became an issue during the focus group. The Brentford F.C. supporters, who would be expected to know something about the CST, knew next to nothing about what work the CST is doing. Bryman argues that, "*One way in which the moderator may need to be involved is in responding to specific points that are of potential interest to the research questions but that are not picked up by other participants*" (Bryman 2012, p. 508). Therefore the moderator involvement became quite extensive in a quest to keep the debates going. Not so much in directing a debate towards relevance, but it seemed the supporters' lack of

knowledge prohibited them from debating. In relation to this, we allowed the focus group sometimes to move off-topic for various reasons. One reason was to balance the over-involvement from our side as moderators. Another reason was the fact that moving off topic slightly provided us with new and unexpected findings.

3.2.3.1.4 Recording and transcription

Bryman argues that recording and transcription are the most common method of obtaining data from a focus group. The focus group for this project is no exception. There are various reasons for doing this, and although it might seem somewhat logical, it is still important to be aware of why one is doing something as an academic.

First, by recording and transcribing, one is never left with the question of "Who said what and when?". One can always go back and trace exactly who said what and who said more than others, which might have relevance for a study. Lastly, recording and transcribing instead of note-taking allow the focus group discussions to take place undisturbed. Thereby one allows, as the focus group method is intended for, the focus group participants to collectively construct meaning around specific topics (Bryman 2012, pp. 504.505).

3.2.3.1.5 Beginning and finishing

As Bryman suggests, for this focus group, we, as researchers, introduced ourselves and what our master's thesis was about. Then we also discussed the role of the participants and how the focus group, in general, would proceed. All participants were familiar with the concept of focus groups, and therefore the conventions of focus group participation were not outlined as it was assumed that the participants had sufficient knowledge on this matter. Lastly, the participants were thanked for their time and satisfactory involvement (Bryman 2012, p. 513).

3.2.3 Interview method

Of the various qualitative methods, interviewing is considered the most widely employed, which is supposedly for a good reason. The flexibility the interview possesses is the main reason for the method's popularity. Bryman argues that various researchers choose interviewing due to how easily the collected data can be accommodated into researchers' personal lives, however time-consuming the various processes can be.

3.2.3.1 Qualitative interviewing

An interview functions, to many extents, like a normal conversation between two parties. Human beings are used to interactions, so there was no problem with the cooperation with Tomas Abreu. Using the semi-structured interview method also helped in conducting the interview as this method reminds the interviewee more of an everyday conversation than quantitative interviewing.

The overall most significant consideration in conducting the interview for this project was whether to go for an unstructured or semi-structured interview. According to Bryman, there are many differences between structured and unstructured/semi-structured interviews. The unstructured/semi-structured approach to interviews tends to be much less structured as the researcher's interest is more in the interviewee's point of view, which the structured interview method has little to no interest in obtaining. This is partly due to having the interviewee somewhat lead the direction of the interview. Bryman argues that "*In qualitative interviewing, 'rambling' or going off at tangents is often encouraged – it gives insight into what the interviewees sees as relevant and important; in quantitative research, it is usually regarded as a nuisance and discouraged*" (Bryman 2012, pp. 470-471).

However, in structured interviewing, the researchers aim to structure interviews in a way that helps them maximise the reliability and validity of measurements of their key concepts. In structured interviewing, the interviewers are limited in back-and-forth communication during the interview. An interviewer of a structured interview method should not depart from any schedule or guide and is not allowed to ask follow-up questions. This is highly encouraged when conducting an interview using a semi-structured interview method. Thereto, it is also encouraged that interviewers use their interview guide to help them remember important questions. Whether the guide is followed from start to finish or asked correctly in regards to the wording on the interview guide is of very little importance when doing a semi-structured interview (Bryman 2012, p. 470).

For this project, the semi-structured interview method was chosen. For the most part, due to the differences, Bryman argues there are, but also due to the nature of this project. In order to maintain as much objectivity as possible, the focus group data was used to create the interview guide. Additionally, the semi-structured interview method was chosen due to its flexibility so that the topics Tomas Abreu found most important would be focused on, which in turn would maintain the objectivity.

3.2.3.2 Semi-structured interview

According to Bryman, there are two major types of qualitative interview approaches: Unstructured interview and semi-structured interview. These two approaches are similar in many regards when the interview is underway. Both approaches want to see the interviewee go off in tangents to see their true point of view on the subjects. The main difference is how researchers prepare for the interview. Doing a semi-structured interview means creating an interview guide, which is a list of questions or specific topics that need to be covered. In this case, the interviewee still has a great deal of leeway in how they choose to respond (Bryman 2012, p. 471). For this project, the semi-structured interview method was chosen primarily because the interview had to cover quite a few topics but also some specific questions that directly relate to the focus group. Therefore, some moderator involvement had to take place and using a semi-structured interview method with an interview guide gave the best possible advantage to this project. To further strengthen the reasonings behind doing a semi-structured interview in this project, an argument made by Bryman was taken into consideration. Bryman argues that "*If you are doing multiple case study research, you are likely to find that you will need some structure in order to ensure cross-case comparability*" (Bryman 2012, pp. 471-472).

3.3 Coding

This segment will specify the reasonings for doing coding schemes on some of our empirical data as well as elaborating on what coding is, the selection of an appropriate coding method, and Descriptive Coding method.

With a mixed methods research design consisting of a focus group with Brentford F.C. supporters, an interview with Tomas Abreu from the CST, external content from relevant media outlets of the CST, and a survey of Brentford F.C. supporters as the empirical data, it could easily become confusing. Therefore, coding schemes will be made in relation to the focus group and interview to help identify themes relevant to the CST's case proposition to do a refined thematically correct research question and objectively decide the theoretical approach. Saldana mentions that some data are simply not meant to be coded. He writes, "[…] *there are times when coding the data is absolutely necessary, and times when it is most inappropriate for the study at hand*" (Saldana 2013, p. 2).

We have been rather selective in opting for coding schemes for our interview and focus group. This is simply due to the need to enhance the accessibility to the right points in the data and the increase in efficiency it will create for the project. Saldana writes, "*I prefer that you yourself, rather than some presumptive theorist or hardcore methodologist, determine whether coding is appropriate for your particular research project*" (Saldana 2013, p. 2).

Saldana argues that his work is primarily supposed to be for reference. There are many ways in which a researcher can engage their data with coding, and he argues that various studies could all have different coding approaches. For this project, Saldana's version of coding will be used due to its adaptability and his stature within the coding regime. Saldana is a predominant researcher in the field of coding.

3.3.1 Selecting the appropriate coding method

According to Saldana, selecting the appropriate coding method can be extensive work, yet it will always, to some degree, remain a selective choice. Each academic project is distinct, and thereby the use and/or need for coding of data is different. For this project, coding schemes were done on two data sets. The first through a focus group survey and the next through an interview. There were also data in the form of selected content from the CST's social media pages and a survey of over 100 Brentford F.C. supporters. However, this does not mean that a coding scheme is required for these sets of data.

As mentioned previously, the positivistic viewpoint meant no theoretical influence when conducting the first two sets of data. Having no clear distinction between these data, other than that of a prior conversation with Lee Doyle from the CST, the two early data sets were overwhelming. In order to follow the cumulative idea of science in going from data collected *without* theoretical influence to data collected *with* theoretical influence, it was found that coding the first sets of data would be beneficial in finding the most important aspects and points of the data.

Saldana argues that a research question or a wondering in general sometimes decides the method of coding for one. He writes, "*The nature of your central and related research questions – and thus the answers you seek – will influence the specific coding choice(s) you make*" (Saldana 2013, p. 60). During the initial meeting with Lee Doyle from the CST, he put forth a problem, which was that the supporters were not engaging with the CST's content. Saldana argues that such a question, namely an epistemological question, is best revealed by selecting a coding method such as Descriptive Coding method. The reasoning behind this is that questions of this type suggest, according to Saldana, "[…] *the exploration of participant actions/processes and perceptions found within the data*" (Saldana 2013, pp. 60-61).

For this project, it was found that Descriptive Coding was best suited for the purpose of enlightenment, as mentioned earlier. The Descriptive Coding should, in theory, help us gain a better understanding of the thematics and opinions surrounding the presented problem. Not only did Descriptive Coding on the focus group and interview better enable the following data collection, but it also provided topics such as information and entertainment, which would later be the basis of the survey used for the Uses and Gratifications analysis.

Saldana argues that "*Descriptive Coding assigns basic labels to data to provide an inventory of their topics. Many qualitative studies employ Descriptive Codes as a first step in data analysis*" (Saldana 2013, p. 83). The basic nature of Descriptive Coding was part of the reason for why it was chosen for this project. It needed to start the scientific journey, and in many ways creating the first coding scheme was the first data analysis to which this project was subject.

3.4 Content analysis

In 1961, Webster's Dictionary of the English Language defined the term *content analysis* as "*analysis of the manifest and latent content of a body of communicated material (as a book or film) through classification, tabulation, and evaluation of its key symbols and themes in order to ascertain its meaning and probable effect*" (Krippendorff 2019, p. 1). However, Klaus Krippendorff, Professor of Communication and Gregory Bateson Term Professor for Cybernetics, Language, and Culture at the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School for Communication, argues that the roots of content analysis can be traced back even further. It does, however, matter slightly as today's content analysis is significantly different in aim and method. He argues that content analysis has three distinct characteristics.

First, content analysis is exploratory in process, an empirically grounded theory, and predictive or inferential in intent. Most notably, Krippendorff further explains some of the reasonings behind researchers still doing content analysis. Content analysis is meant to examine data, whether it be printed matter, images, or sounds (texts), to understand what they mean to people and what the information conveyed by them does (Krippendorff 2019, pp. 1-2).

Second, Krippendorff says that "*contemporary content analysis transcends traditional notions of symbols, contents, and intents*" (Krippendorff 2019, p. 2). He argues that the concept of communication has undergone quite an evolution. Furthermore, he says that media technologies have developed significantly and that the role of culture has changed in a matter that it now takes part in assigning significance to what is being analysed. All of these aspects go back to his statement mentioned above. He argues that these play a main part in why content analysis has developed to transcend traditional notions. In his newest edition (fourth) of this book, *Content Analysis: An Introduction to its Methodology*, he argues that our awareness of communication has undergone six conceptual revolutions in recent years. These six conceptions are the idea of *messages, channels, communication, systems, computation* and *reality.* Compared to the second edition of his book, where he argued there were only four but with a fifth in the midst. The evolution of communication and, thereby content analysis is quite clear (Krippendorff 2019, pp. 2-4)(Krippendorff 2004, pp. 2-4).

Krippendorff questions the validity and usefulness of any distinction between qualitative and quantitative content analysis. Ultimately, he believes that all reading of texts is qualitative, even if specific characteristics would later be converted into numbers. He argues that qualitative approaches to content analysis share some characteristics, which are: Close reading of relatively small amounts of textual matter, interpretation of given texts, and that the analyst acknowledges working within hermeneutic circles (Krippendorff 2019, pp. 21-23).

3.4.1 Content analysis in this project

As positivists, there can be no subjective interpretation from our side as researchers, which is why the content analysis of this project will be formed, as mentioned, in relation to our focus group and interview data. Krippendorff argues that texts always mean something to someone. He writes, "*The crucial distinction between text and what other research methods take as their starting point is that a text means something to someone, it is produced by someone to have meanings for someone else, and these meanings, therefore, must not be ignored and must not violate why the text exists in the first place*" (Krippendorff 2019, p. 25). This distinction will be kept in mind during the analysis of the various posts by the CST on various media. This means that no content published by the CST can never be neglected in its relevance seeing as there will always be meaning behind a text.

For this project and content analysis, the relationship between us as researchers and the CST's texts will be based on the opinions and findings found in our empirical data. Krippendorff argues that "*Recognizing meanings is the reason that researchers engage in content analysis rather than in some other kind of investigative method. A content analyst must acknowledge that all texts are produced and read by others and are expected to be significant to them, not just to the analyst*" (Krippendorff 2019, p. 27).

Therefore, the approach to the content analysis was to find patterns in the content published by the CST on all their active social media and their newsletter. These patterns were shown to us through our focus group data and the subsequent coding of those data. The research found that the supporters were rather unhappy with the current content shown in both a lack of information and a lack of entertainment value. These two distinct contextual definitions will be checked for in this analysis. Furthermore, this content analysis will attempt to establish a general understanding of what kind of content the CST produce for each medium and verify whether or not there is some variation.

3.5 Survey Design by Kasper Møller Hansen

The survey in this project is based on Danish professor Kasper Møller Hansen's methodological survey design guide from the book *Metoder i Statskundskab* from 2012 by Danish professors Lotte Bøgh Andersen, Kasper Møller Hansen, and Robert Klemmensen. In this book, Hansen dedicated an entire chapter to surveys and the critical considerations researchers must make when creating a survey. This section will discuss Hansen's chapter and demonstrate how this chapter has been applied to this project's survey.

The first, and perhaps the most important thing to consider when creating a survey, is that an unclear and/or ambiguous problem statement for the project can lead to a problematic survey that does not go in-depth with what is actually important, which can make it very difficult to answer the problem statement properly. In other words, the more precise one's problem statement is, the easier it is to appropriately focus the questions of the survey (Andersen et al. 2012, pp. 304-305). This factor was also considered in this project as the survey was one of the last elements added to the project. The survey was added after multiple revisions of the problem statement and the complete overhaul of the project that happened after the interview with Tomas Abreu. Therefore, the problem statement at the time of creating the survey was, more or less, the final one and was as clear and unambiguous as we felt was possible at that time.

3.5.1 Phrasing and formulation of the questions

The next factor Hansen lists is the phrasing and formulation of the questions. For this factor, he lists eight important elements one should do or not do: Reduce the possibility of multiple interpretations, make the questions as clear as possible, consider what the respondents are able to remember, avoid implicit assumptions, avoid asking multiple questions at once, avoid negations, avoid leading questions, and avoid superlatives (Andersen et al. 2012, pp. 307-311). Although all of these were taken into consideration, this section will only go into three of them as these were the ones that were explicitly applied in the survey of this project.

3.5.1.1 Reduce the possibility of multiple interpretations

According to Hansen, one should always attempt to reduce the possibility of multiple interpretations of the questions. The more unequivocal and unambiguous the questions are, the higher the chances of all the respondents interpreting the question in the same way, leading to more useful answers. Hansen argues that this is done using language related to the respondents' vocabulary. He advises against introducing words or expressions that may seem unfamiliar to the respondents. Therefore, one must obtain an understanding of the respondents prior to creating the questions and then apply the appropriate language (Andersen et al. 2012, pp. 307-308).

The target respondents for this project's survey were fans of Brentford F.C., a relatively broad definition that includes people of all ages, professions, and levels of education. Therefore, we decided to apply a relatively colloquial but professional language. No intricate words or sentences were used, but nor did we use slang, foul language etc.

3.5.1.2 Make the questions as clear as possible

In continuation of the previous element, Hansen argues that the questions must be as clear and concise as possible and avoid vague phrasings (Andersen et al. 2012, pp. 308-309). This element was important throughout the process of creating the questions. However, within this element, Hansen mentions follow-up and transition texts, which were equally important to the process.

Hansen argues that it is a good idea to complement the questions with follow-up and transition texts such as "We will now ask some questions about your media habits" (Andersen et al. 2012, pp. 308-309). These follow-up and transition texts have been applied every time the overall theme of the questions changed. For example, we wrote, "*At this point of the survey, we would like to know more about your media habits in regard to the Brentford Community Sports Trust (CST). Therefore, in the following questions, you must indicate how much you agree with each of the following statements*". This was done when the questions went from being about media habits in general to media habits in connection to the CST specifically. This was done to avoid confusion by making it clear to the respondent that the following questions differed overall from the previous ones.

3.5.1.3 Avoid implicit assumptions

Hansen argues that one must avoid assumptions in surveys. He uses the example, "*To which degree do you agree that community, which is a natural part of a well-functioning democracy, strengthens social cohesion in the society?*" (Andersen et al. 2012, p. 309). In this example, it is assumed that there is a community and that the community is part of a well-functioning democracy. In a situation like this, the respondent may evaluate the hypothesis or the degree of social cohesion. Not only can this frustrate the respondent, who may close the survey, but it also affects the validity of the answers as it is uncertain whether the respondent evaluated the implicit assumption or to which degree he agrees with the hypothesis (which was the target of the question) (Andersen et al. 2012, p. 309).

In our survey, we actively attempted to avoid implicit assumptions, e.g., by asking the respondents whether or not they use the social media platform in question before asking further questions about the platform. However, when making a survey about media uses and gratifications, it is difficult to completely avoid assumptions as we list different uses and gratification, thereby assuming the respondent can relate to one or more of them. Therefore, we attempted to meet this challenge by adding the option to type in their own uses and gratifications in the comments.

3.5.2 Likert Scale

Scales are often used in surveys to measure the ranks of various values. There are many different types of scales one can apply in a survey. However, the one applied in this survey, which is also the most common scale used in surveys, is the Likert Scale. It is a one-dimensional scale that is used to measure, for example, to what extent respondents agree with, are satisfied with, or accept a given statement. In this survey, the Likert Scale is used to measure to which extent the respondents agree with statements about why they follow the CST on social media and are subscribed to their newsletter. Hansen argues that the Likert Scale is easy to understand for the respondents and that it is easy and tangible to measure the responses: "20% of the respondents completely agree with…" (Andersen et al. 2012, p. 312).

However, the Likert Scale also presents a problem. The respondents may not necessarily make a concrete assessment of the individual statements and, therefore, merely click “Agree” for every statement. This will reduce the variation of the answers, thus making it much harder to explain the variables (Andersen et al. 2012, pp. 312-313). For example, in the survey of this project, the overall question was why the respondent follows the CST on social media, which is followed by seven statements in the form of a Likert Scale. The respondent might click “Agree” with every single statement because they do agree with them, but the respondent may not properly assess to which extent they agree with each individual statement. Hansen proposes a way to force the respondent to assess the statement: “[...] *this can, for example, be done by asking the respondent whether they agree more with statement A or statement B*” (Andersen et al. 2012, p. 313). However, we did not believe such an approach would produce the data needed for this project as it would be difficult to interpret how important each individual statement (use/gratification) is to the respondent.

Furthermore, Hansen argues that a Likert Scale may include five, seven or eleven categories. The fewer categories, the easier it is to comprehend for the respondents. More categories will increase the variations and perhaps get a more accurate picture, but it can also confuse or frustrate the respondents, which in turn may result in counterproductive data. It is, therefore, important to find a balance that fits the target respondents (Andersen et al. 2012, p. 313). As the target respondents for the survey of this project is quite broad, it was decided to “play it safe” and go with only five categories to avoid confusion.

Finally, sometimes a “middle category” is used in Likert Scales. This middle category is for those with a neutral view of the statement. However, by removing the category, the respondents are forced to make up one’s mind about the statement. This may result in the respondents whose view is neutral picking a random category as none of them fit (Andersen et al. 2012, p. 314). Therefore, for this survey, we decided to include the middle category in the form of “Neither / or” as we believe even a neutral view is useful data when identifying uses and gratifications.

3.5.3 The order of the questions

The order in which the questions are asked is another important thing to consider when creating a survey. Hansen argues that respondents wish to be consistent in what they answer. Therefore, the order in which the questions are asked creates a frame of interpretation for the following questions in the survey. The respondents' answers may alter depending on which order the questions are presented to them. Hansen argues that this "problem" can be solved (online surveys only) by using a feature that randomises the questions (Andersen et al. 2012, pp. 317-318). However, for the survey of this project, we decided against using any randomise feature as it would not make sense because there is a relatively clear line and common thread throughout the survey that makes it easy for the respondents to navigate through. Furthermore, this consideration is more important in surveys examining people's opinions, whereas this survey is more about habits. Therefore, there should be a much smaller degree of bias. That said, the order of the questions was considered, but the reasoning was based on the navigability and logic of the survey rather than potential outcome bias.

3.5.4 Length and difficulty

The final important consideration, according to Hansen, is the length of the survey and the difficulty of the questions. As a rule of thumb, it will take the respondents twice as long to complete the survey as the ones who created it. If the survey takes five minutes for us to complete, it will take the respondents around ten minutes. Not only does the length affect the respondents' concentration throughout the survey, but it is also important for whether the respondents want to participate or not. Hansen argues that removing five minutes from a 20-minute-long survey can increase the participation rate by almost ten per cent (Andersen et al. 2012, pp. 318-319). Furthermore, he argues that one should not inform of a shorter completion time but rather strive to make the survey as concise as possible (Andersen et al. 2012, p. 319).

In addition, Hansen also argues that the respondents will gradually get more tired, perhaps even frustrated, as the survey progresses. It is, therefore, a good idea to leave the easy questions, such as demography and other background questions, until the end of the survey. However, it is also important not to start the survey with hard questions, which would leave the impression that the entire survey will be difficult, which may cause some respondents to quit early on (Andersen et al. 2012, p. 318). This is, generally, the idea we followed in the survey of this project. Therefore, the background questions are at the end of the survey, and the survey does not start with questions that require too much cognition.

3.6 Empirical data

In this final part of the methodology section, the incentives for selecting the empirical data will briefly be outlined. There are three pieces of primary empirical data: An interview with the CST's Head of Marketing and Partnerships, a focus group with Brentford F.C. supporters, and a survey. In addition to this, the project will also examine multiple social media posts and newsletters from the CST. All the data will be further elaborated on in section 5. The following are the reasons for selecting the data.

Having established through an initial meeting with Lee Doyle and Stewart Purvis that the CST was having issues with engaging with the Brentford F.C. supporters, it was decided to do a focus group with multiple Brentford F.C. supporters. This would ensure detailed qualitative data representing not just one supporter but multiple, which would then provide us with a better overview of the problem and what the supporters would want from the CST.

Wanting to examine both sides of the case, it became clear that an interview with their Head of Marketing and Partnerships was necessary to fully understand the full scope of the issue. This interview would provide insight into the CST's communication strategies and help us identify the stakeholders of the CST and to whom the CST allocate the most time and attention.

The results from the interview and the focus group provided us with an understanding of the problem. We then wanted to examine the, at the time, current content from the CST to examine whether the problem was valid and legitimate. To do this, we examined the eight latest posts from the CST on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, as well as the six latest newsletters from the CST. The only selection criterion was that the posts had to be the eight latest posts. This was to ensure a representative sample of the content and to ensure there would be no bias from us if we had had to handpick the posts to fit our hypothesis.

After having understood the problem from both sides and establishing that the problem was valid and legitimate through the examination of the current content, we wanted to identify why the Brentford F.C. supporters use the different media and what they expect to see on the different media. To do so, a survey would be the best option as this would provide us with tangible numbers that would, in turn, reveal behavioural patterns among a large and representative number of Brentford F.C. supporters.

4. Theoretical Framework

In this section, professors Ronald K. Mitchell, Bradley R. Agle and Donna J. Wood's *Salience Model* and Professors S. Shyam Sundar and Professor Anthony M. Limperos' *Uses and Gratifications theory* will be elaborated. Thereto, the model and theory are highlighted to give the reader a detailed understanding of the *Salience Model* and *Uses and Gratifications theory* applied to the data.

4.1 An Introduction to Stakeholder Theory

Professor Robert Edward Freeman is generally credited as the founder of Stakeholder theory as he was the first to introduce the concept of stakeholders in his book, *Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach* from 1984 (Mitchell et al. 1997, p. 853). This concept has since become very popular and has paved the way for the extensive research field of stakeholder theory. Stakeholder theory is, at large, concerned with how managers of organisations should deal with the entities that actually matter to the organisation (Freeman 2010, p. 42). According to Freeman's definition, a stakeholder is "[…] *any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization's purpose and objectives*" (Freeman 2010, p. 46). Many other researchers and scholars have since given their take on who is a stakeholder and what a *stake* is. However, as professors Ronald K. Mitchell, Bradley R. Agle and Donna J. Wood argue in their article from 1997, *Toward a Theory of Stakeholder Identification and Salience: Defining the Principle of Who and What Really Counts*, the definitions of stakeholders are often too broad and vague, which can make it difficult for managers to actually identify whom they should focus on (Mitchell et al. 1997, pp. 855-863).

4.1.1 The Salience Model

With their article, Mitchell et al. revolutionised the stakeholder research field by developing a new stakeholder identification theory known as The Salience Model. Mitchell et al. believed that the many definitions of stakeholders were far too broad and virtually made everybody a stakeholder of any organisation. Therefore, they took it to themselves to create a definition that could separate stakeholders from non-stakeholder and also a theory that could identify the stakeholders of an organisation and to whom managers should pay attention (Mitchell et al. 1997, pp. 853-855).

To better understand who and what matters to an organisation, Mitchell et al. start by defining stakeholders' attributes, of which they argue there are three: Power, Legitimacy, and Urgency (Mitchell et al. 1997, pp. 865-867). Mitchell et al. did not coin these attributes and were not the first to apply them in stakeholder theory. However, they were the first to use them all together to create a model that can help scholars and practitioners identify stakeholders and the salience thereof. While each attribute is different from one another, Mitchell et al. argue that they all share three common features: The attributes are all variable, not constant, they are matters of perception, i.e., and finally, consciousness and wilful exercise are not necessarily present (Mitchell et al. 1997, p. 868).

4.1.1.1 Power

To define Power, Mitchell et al. use the definitions of other researchers such as Weber and Pfeffer. They argue that Power is the ability to get the outcomes one wants. Or in other words, someone who possesses Power has the ability to get another actor (e.g. person or organisation) to do something that the actor otherwise would not have done. Mitchell et al. recognise that Power can be difficult to define as Power can be physical resources of force, such as violence, it can be material or financial Power over another actor, or it can be based on symbolic resources. They define these three types of Power as *coercive*, *utilitarian*, and *normative,* respectively. Furthermore, they also note that Power is not a constant state but rather a variable that can be acquired and lost (Mitchell et al. 1997, pp. 865-866).

4.1.1.2 Legitimacy

As with the definition of Power, Mitchell et al. use other researchers to define Legitimacy. However, they argue that much of the previous research that includes Legitimacy is often coupled with Power when the researchers attempt to evaluate the salience of stakeholders. In addition to this, they also argue that many scholars seeking to define stakeholders also assume that legitimate stakeholders are powerful, which Mitchell et al. argue is not always the case. They acknowledge that when combined, Legitimacy and Power create Authority, but this is not an attribute. They see Legitimacy and Power as two distinct attributes and thus apply Suchman's definition that says Legitimacy is "[...] *a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate* [...]" (Mitchell et al. 1997, p. 866). They accept and utilise this definition but argue that it is imprecise and hard to apply practically. Nevertheless, they recognise that the definition implies that Legitimacy is a desirable social good and that it is something larger than a self-perception (Mitchell et al. 1997, pp. 866-867).

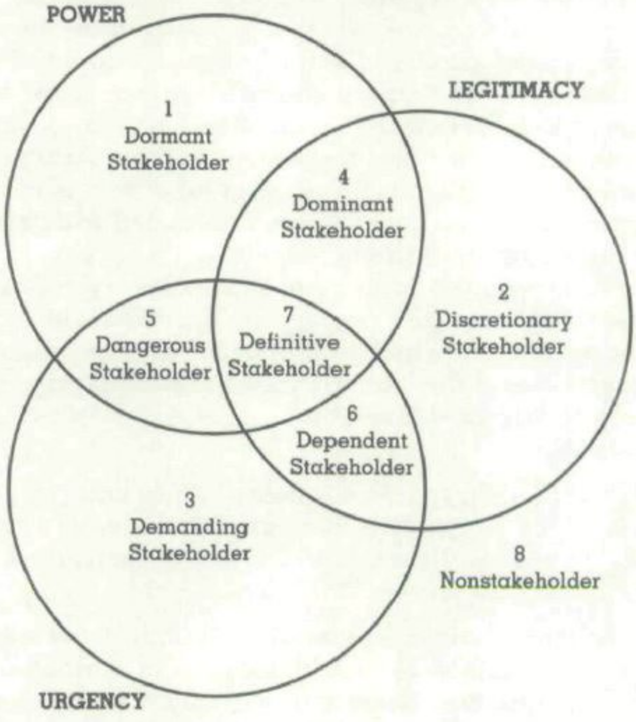
4.1.1.3 Urgency

The attribute of Urgency is what really sets this theory apart from other stakeholder identification theories. Urgency is what highlights the dynamics of stakeholder management. Mitchell et al. define Urgency as "calling for immediate attention" (Mitchell et al. 1997, p. 867). They argue that Urgency only exists when two criteria are met: "*(1) when a relationship or claim is of a time-sensitive nature and (2) when that relationship or claim is important or critical to the stakeholder*" (Mitchell et al. 1997, p. 867). In other words, Urgency is concerned with time sensitivity and criticality. It is the degree to which a stakeholder's claim requires immediate attention. Note that time sensitivity is a necessity of Urgency, but it is not the only criterion. In addition to time sensitivity, one must also consider to which degree the stakeholder views its claim on the firm or its relationship with the firm as critical or important (Mitchell et al. 1997, p. 867).

4.1.1.5 Stakeholder Classes

Thus far, Mitchell et al. argue that one can identify who and what matters to an organisation by examining the various classes of stakeholders that can be identified based on the possession of the three attributes: Power, Legitimacy, and Urgency. This all leads up to the model that they present in their article, *Qualitative Classes of Stakeholders*, or as it is commonly referred to as, *The Stakeholder Salience Model*:

FIGURE 2
Stakeholder Typology:
One, Two, or Three Attributes Present



(Mitchell et al. 1997, p. 874).

As illustrated in the model above, there are seven stakeholder classes based on the possession of the three attributes. Three of the stakeholder types only possess one of each attribute: Discretionary, Dormant, and Demanding. This stakeholder class is called *Latent* stakeholders. Furthermore, three of the types possess two attributes: Dangerous, Dominant, and Dependent. This class is called *Expectant* stakeholders. Finally, one stakeholder type possesses all three attributes: Definitive, which is also the name of the stakeholder class. In addition to the seven stakeholder types, there are also *Nonstakeholders*, which are entities that possess no Power, Legitimacy, or Urgency in relation to the organisation (Mitchell et al. 1997, p. 873). These stakeholder classes will now be elaborated on.

4.1.1.5.1 Latent Stakeholders

As mentioned, the types in this stakeholder class only possess one of the three attributes; thus, the stakeholder salience is low. Therefore, managers often do nothing about this class and often do not even recognise their existence. Similarly, the stakeholders of this class do not pay much attention to the organisation (Mitchell et al. 1997, p. 874). Each stakeholder type within this class will now be discussed to illustrate why the stakeholder salience is low.

Dormant stakeholders

This stakeholder type only possesses Power. They possess the Power to impose their will on an organisation, but they lack a legitimate relationship and an urgent claim. Therefore, as long as they remain a dormant stakeholder, their Power is useless in relation to the organisation. Mitchell et al. give the following examples of dormant stakeholders: "[...] *power is held by those who have a loaded gun (coercive), those who can spend a lot of money (utilitarian), or those who can command the attention of the news media (symbolic)*" (Mitchell et al. 1997, p. 875). Dormant stakeholders do not interact with the organisation, but because they have the potential to acquire one or more attributes, managers should remain vigilant and keep an eye on such stakeholders. Note that the Salience Model is dynamic and Dormant stakeholders may become much more salient should they acquire either Legitimacy or Urgency (Mitchell et al. 1997, pp. 874-875).

Discretionary stakeholders

These stakeholders possess Legitimacy but lack the two other attributes. According to Mitchell et al., this type is interesting for scholars of CSR and performance because they are most likely to be recipients of corporate philanthropy (Mitchell et al. 1997, p. 875). Because this type lacks Power to influence the firm and urgent claims, there is no pressure at all on managers to engage with these stakeholders. Mitchell et al. provide the following examples of discretionary stakeholders: "[...] *beneficiaries of the Take-A-Taxi program in the Twin Cities, in which the Fingerhut company picks up* *the tab for anyone who feels they have consumed too much alcohol to drive, and nonprofit organizations, such as schools, soup kitchens, and hospitals, who receive donations and volunteer labor*" (Mitchell et al. 1997, p. 875).

Demanding stakeholders

This type of stakeholder only possesses Urgency. They have urgent claims but do not have either Power or Legitimacy to do much about the claim. Therefore, this type is often called the *mosquitoes buzzing in managers' ears*. They are bothersome but not dangerous. However, the model is dynamic, and these stakeholders may acquire either Power or Legitimacy, making them much more salient. However, as long as they remain within this type, they do not warrant much attention from managers, if any. Examples of this type are: "[…] *a lone millenarian picketer who marches outside the headquarters with a sign that says, 'The end of the world is coming! Acme chemical is the cause!' might be extremely irritating to Acme's managers, but the claims of the picketer remain largely unconsidered*" (Mitchell et al. 1997, pp. 875-876).

4.1.1.5.2 Expectant Stakeholders

The stakeholders within this class possess two of the three attributes. This changes the momentum compared to the *latent* stakeholders. These stakeholders are moderately salient and will expect something from the organisation as the combination of two attributes leads to an active vs passive stance (Mitchell et al. 1997, p. 876). Therefore, managers must engage more with the stakeholder types in this class, which will now be described.

Dominant stakeholders

Dominant stakeholders are both powerful and possess legitimate claims. This combination of attributes creates the *dominant coalition*, making them highly salient and influential to an organisation. They have legitimate claims and the ability to act on them, which indeed calls for managerial attention. Dominant stakeholders could, for example, be "*owners, significant creditors, and community leaders*" (Mitchell et al. 1997, p. 876). These stakeholders typically expect annual reports, proxy statements, and CSR reports from the organisation. According to Mitchell et al., these stakeholders expect and receive much of managers' attention (Mitchell et al. 1997, pp. 876-877).

Dangerous stakeholders

Mitchell et al. argue that a stakeholder who possesses Urgency and Power, but no Legitimacy will be coercive and possibly violent, which would make the stakeholder dangerous. As previously mentioned, coercion is a form of Power, and this form of Power often accompanies illegitimate status or claims. Examples of dangerous stakeholders could be "*environmentalists spiking trees in areas to be logged and religious or political terrorists using bombings, shootings, or kidnappings to call attention to their claims*" (Mitchell et al. 1997, p. 877). As mentioned before, failing to identify this type of stakeholder could potentially result in missed opportunities to mitigate dangerous situations. Although this type is rare to many organisations, it is crucial for managers to identify potentially dangerous stakeholders (Mitchell et al. 1997, pp. 877-878).

Dependent stakeholders

These stakeholders possess Urgency and Legitimacy but lack Power. This means that they depend upon other stakeholders to carry out their will. Therefore, to carry out their will, they depend on the advocacy of other powerful stakeholders or on the goodwill and voluntarism of the organisation's management. Examples of this stakeholder type could be local residents. However, as previously mentioned, the model is dynamic, and stakeholders can move into another type or even class. This is also the case for Dependent stakeholders as their urgent and legitimate claim can be adopted by Dominant stakeholders, which would give them all three attributes, thus moving them into the final stakeholder class, *Definitive stakeholders* (Mitchell et al. 1997, p. 877).

4.1.1.5.3 Definitive Stakeholders

This stakeholder class possesses all three attributes, Power, Legitimacy, and Urgency. Therefore, stakeholders within this class are the most salient and have the highest degree of managerial priority. Stakeholders within this class are typically when a Dominant stakeholder's claim becomes urgent. An example of this could be when shareholders feel the organisation is not meeting their interests, and the value of their stocks start declining. However, it is not only Dominant stakeholders who can become Definitive. According to Mitchell et al., all Expectant stakeholders (i.e. those who possess two attributes) can move into this class as explained with the Dependent stakeholders (Mitchell et al. 1997, pp. 878-879).

4.1.1.6 Summary

The theory of stakeholder identification and salience is used to identify and map out the stakeholders of an organisation. Mitchell et al.’s theory suggests that one must account for Power, Legitimacy, and Urgency to examine the salience of each stakeholder. Based on these three attributes, one can map out each stakeholder and determine which of the seven stakeholder types they are. It is important to note that the model is dynamic, which means stakeholders can become another type should they lose or acquire one or more attributes. The model is useful for scholars and practitioners to identify an organisation’s stakeholders and figure out how to manage said stakeholders (Mitchell et al. 1997, pp. 881-882).

4.2 Uses and Gratifications Theory

Uses and gratifications theory is a mass-media communication theory that seeks to understand why and how people use specific media to satisfy particular needs. The exact origin of the theoretical approach is often debated, and no one seems to agree on when and who first developed it. However, there seems to be a somewhat agreement that it started as an offspring, or sub-tradition, of media effects research (Ruggiero 2000, p. 1). In the early 1940s, Professor and sociologist Paul F. Lazarsfeld examined patterns among radio listeners and sought to understand why they listened to the radio (Lazarsfeld 1940, pp. XI-XVIII). While this is not exactly the same as what we now know as uses and gratifications theory, it is an early sign of a consumer-behaviour approach, an early precursor of U&G. In 1942, Professor and former psychologist at Princeton University, Hadley Cantrail, developed an approach to studying the gratifications that draw in the audience to different media and what content satisfies their needs (Ruggiero 2000, p. 1). This social-psychological audience-centred approach to understanding mass media is what later became known as Uses and Gratifications theory. U&G is different to most other media effect approaches as it poses the question “what do people do with media?” and “why do people use specific media?” rather than asking “what does media do to people?” (Ruggiero 2000, p. 7). Therefore, most U&G research assumes an active audience who makes an active and conscious decision to select which media to use (Ruggiero 2000, p. 8). However, as Levy and Windahl argued in their 1984 article *Audience activity and gratifications: A conceptual clarification and exploration*, audience activity is a variable concept that "[...] *varies across phases of the communication sequence*" (Levy & Windahl, 1984, p. 73). This means that different people may display different types and amounts of activity in different communication settings and at different times in the communication process. Audience activity is not the only variable researchers must consider. According to Ruggiero, one must also consider interactivity (how the audience can interact with one another or the medium itself), demassification (the ability of the media user to select from a wide menu of different media), and synchroneity (the concept that messages may be staggered in time) (Ruggiero 2000, pp. 15-16). These variables and all the other aspects of U&G are subject to revision every now and then when a new type of media emerges.

Ruggiero wrote his article *Uses and Gratifications in the 21st Century* because he believed U&G called for a revision due to the emergence of the internet. However, this article is now 22 years old, and a lot has happened since. Since the media this project is concerned with include social media, which did not exist when Ruggiero wrote his article, this project will apply a more recent approach to U&G, namely that of Professor S. Shyam Sundar and Professor Anthony M. Limperos from their article from 2013 *Uses and Grats 2.0: New Gratifications for New Media*.

4.2.1 Uses and Grats 2.0: New Gratifications for New Media

In 2013, Sundar and Limperos wrote the article *Uses and Grats 2.0: New Gratifications for New Media* in which they argue that new media calls for a revision of U&G. They open the article with the line, "*Thanks to the Internet, the concept of 'active audience' has now reached a pinnacle*" (Sundar & Limperos 2013, p. 504), which coincides with what Ruggiero argued in his article from 2000. However, the level of audience activity has only risen since Ruggiero's article with the emergence of social media especially. As Sundar and Limperos argue, we no longer use the term *audience*; instead, we use the term *users* to refer to those interacting with (using) the media (Sundar & Limperos 2013, p. 504). This shift implies volitional action instead of passive reception and is mainly caused by the nature of many modern media: "*The tools offered by modern media have expanded the range and scope of our interactions with media content.* […] *current-day media* *technologies (e.g., the computer) offer a wide variety of action possibilities for the user—the keyboard invites us to type, the mouse to point, the hyperlink to click, the joystick to navigate, the haptic sensors to scroll, and so on*" (Sundar & Limperos 2013, p. 505). American psychologist and professor James J. Gibson defined these '*actionable properties*' as 'a*ffordances*', which Sundar and Limperos also use (Sundar & Limperos 2013, p. 505). They argue that these affordances allow internet users to experience media in new ways and actively contribute their own content as well.

Furthermore, Sundar and Limperos argue that, in earlier U&G research, the notion of *media* referred to but a few mass communication tools such as newspapers, radio, and television. However, they argue that the current notion of *media* is now broader and ranges from devices to channels, to venues on those channels and/or devices, which now allows users not only the ability to interact with the media, but also to interact through the media to communicate with other users (Sundar & Limperos 2013, p. 505). In addition to this, they also argue that it is problematic to view convergent media, such as the Internet, as one single type of source. Instead, it is better to separate such media into their constituent affordances and study the uses and gratifications obtained thereof (Sundar & Limperos 2013, p. 505). This is a shift from the highly audience-centred approach that U&G has had historically to now considering how the technology itself influences the users' selection of media. Because of this shift, Sundar and Limperos sought to review 20 U&G studies to discuss the possibility that technology itself could be responsible for creating new gratifications. To do this, they discuss potential gratifications suggested by four classes of affordances: Modality, Agency, Interactivity, and Navigability, which will be further elaborated on in sections 4.2.1.1 – 4.2.1.4 (Sundar & Limperos 2013, pp. 505-506). To begin with, they examined the gratifications that have been identified in previous U&G research. In this examination, they found many different gratifications depending on the media. For example, they found that:

> "[...] *people use the Internet for interpersonal reasons, to pass time, information-seeking, convenience, and entertainment purposes* […] *and found that people view and share YouTube videos for convenient entertainment, interpersonal connection, convenient information-seeking, escape, co-viewing, and social interaction*"
> (Sundar & Limperos 2013, p. 507).

They then argue that many of these gratifications from new media are almost identical to those of traditional media, such as radio and television. When comparing the gratifications from traditional media to those of new media, one may feel that newer media do not really afford new gratifications. Sundar and Limperos argue that this is because most previous U&G research has applied too broad and vague categories that are not specific enough to identify the gratifications obtained from newer media (Sundar & Limperos 2013, p. 509). Sundar and Limperos argue that this is because gratifications, according to the original tenets of U&G, are rooted entirely in social and psychological origins of needs. This perception is limiting when articulating new gratifications from new media. U&G has historically used two terms to distinguish types of gratifications: 1) *Content gratifications*, obtained from media content. 2) *Process gratifications*, obtained from using the media (Sundar & Limperos 2013, p. 510). Sundar and Limperos argue that neither of these types cover the gratifications obtained from just browsing through websites. Instead, they reference Stafford, Stafford and Schkade from 2004, who claim that this calls for a third type of gratification relating to the use of media as a social environment (Sundar & Limperos 2013, p. 510). Sundar and Limperos argue that gratifications derived from media are not necessarily driven by basic human needs but could be triggered by features the users experience while using media (Sundar & Limperos 2013, pp. 509-510). Therefore, in order to understand and embrace the diversity of gratifications being obtained by new media, U&G must broaden the focus beyond social and psychological origins of needs and consider technology itself as a source of gratifications as well.

As previously mentioned, Sundar and Limperos identified four different classes of technological affordances in new media: Modality, Agency, Interactivity, and Navigability. They argue that these affordances can trigger mental heuristics in the users of the new media. Therefore, these affordances can lead to certain expectations, or rather gratifications, that can affect the fulfilment users receive by using these media. These four classes will now be elaborated on:

4.2.1.1 Modality-based Gratifications

Modality refers to how a medium presents the content, for example, audio and pictures. The internet, and new media hereof, possess the ability to provide content in multiple modalities, which many of the traditional media do not have. According to research, presenting content in multiple modalities is not only convenient, but it is also perceptually and cognitively significant. People process information differently from one modality (Sundar & Limperos 2013, p. 512). Furthermore, modality also serves as cognitive heuristics for the quality of the content. Sundar and Limperos argue that visual modality is more trusted than text. For example, people tend to think that if something has been photographed, it must be more real than when it is merely written about (Sundar & Limperos 2013, p. 512). They list four possible new modality-based gratifications: 1) Coolness, which is "*the gratification that we have now come to seek with new interfaces released by Apple*" (Sundar & Limperos 2013, p. 513). 2) Novelty, which is the gratification we seek in getting the newest version of a phone, game console etc. 3) Realism, which is the gratification we, for example, obtain from seeing live video feeds. 4) Being There, which is the gratification we obtain from, e.g., virtual reality, or a Zoom video call which allows the user to both see and hear the person they are talking to (Sundar & Limperos 2013, pp. 512-513).

4.2.1.2 Agency-based Gratifications

Agency-based gratification refers to how all users can now be agents or sources of information. Sundar and Limperos list four agency-based gratifications: The first is Agency-Enhancement, which is seen in, for example, blogs, YouTube videos, social media posts etc. These new media have changed the perception of the traditional sender-receiver understanding of communication as users often take on the role of both sender and receiver, e.g., in forums, commenting on posts, blogs etc. (Sundar & Limperos 2013, pp. 513-514). The second gratification is Community Building, which means that users of these new media may be motivated to build communities, for example, through forums, commenting on blog posts, and collaborative filtering applications (Trustpilot or reviews on Amazon). Studies have shown that people often favour user-generated content over content created by professionals (Sundar & Limperos 2013, p. 514). Sundar and Limperos argue that these two gratifications are "[...] *driven by affordances that (a) let users to serve as sources of content, both individually and collectively, and (b) convey others' reception of their postings*" (Sundar & Limperos 2013, p. 514). The third gratification they list is Bandwagon. This gratification is concerned with the information given to users about what others bought, what the most read news story is etc. Not only is this a mental heuristic in terms of persuasion, but it is also a gratification as people have come to expect this *feature* and would feel disadvantaged when it is unavailable. This gratification is very similar to the fourth gratification, Filtering/Tailoring, which is more concerned with users' consensus information about a product or service in the form of ratings and reviews (Sundar & Limperos 2013, p. 514).

4.2.1.3 Interactivity-based Gratifications

Interactivity is the affordance that allows users to make real-time changes to the content by interacting with and through the medium (Sundar & Limperos 2013, p. 515). This could be the ability to leave comments on a news article, an interactive map on a website etc. As the spread of interactivity across media has increased, users have come to expect a certain degree of interactivity, more choice and control. Therefore, Sundar and Limperos argue that new media have brought four Interactivity-based gratifications: Interaction, Activity, Responsiveness, and Dynamic Control (Sundar & Limperos 2013, p. 515). However, they also argue that interactivity can be a mixed blessing. Users expect interactivity, and studies have shown that interactivity has a positive effect on user impressions, but too much interactivity is just as bad as no interactivity at all (Sundar & Limperos 2013, p. 515). In addition, users expect media to be responsive to their actions in real time and provide them with dynamic control. However, the media must be careful not to overdo it as it can have a negative effect (Sundar & Limperos 2013, pp. 514-515).

4.2.1.4 Navigability-based Gratifications

Navigability refers to how the users are able to navigate through a medium. As the internet, and the media hereof, is more like a space rather than a window, one must consider architectural and interior design as part of the communication as navigation is a critical aspect of the user's experience (Sundar & Limperos 2013, p. 516). A very common activity on the internet is to just "browse" and seek variety. Sundar and Limperos argue that this is an essential navigability-based gratification. If the ability to freely navigate and check out different links and content is limited or taken away from the user, it will lead to great dissatisfaction. In addition to this, users also expect to be aided through their navigation on a website. They call this gratification, Scaffolds/Navigation Aid. Users expect warnings before making commitments, such as purchasing products or services. Users expect to be guided through any process, which makes it an important gratification that would lead to complaints if taken away (Sundar & Limperos 2013, p. 516). Finally, the third and final navigability-based gratification Sundar and Limperos list is the Play/Fun gratification. This gratification is the entertainment element of moving through spaces. This gratification is best obtained "[...] *when the navigational structure of the interface affords a continuous sense of exploration and smooth transitions*" (Sundar & Limperos 2013, p. 516).

4.2.2 Summary

To sum up, Sundar and Limperos argue that previous U&G research has often taken a too broad and vague approach to gratifications. Instead, they recommend that U&G research should adopt a technological affordance-based framework for identifying gratifications sought and obtained from media. They argue that technological innovations have created new affordances, resulting in new user needs that they seek to gratify from their media experience. These new-media gratifications can be categorised into four different typologies: Modality, Agency, Interactivity, and Navigability. However, with that being said, Sundar and Limperos' approach is not only concerned with the technology and its affordances. Researchers must still consider content- and process gratifications as in previous U&G research (Sundar & Limperos 2013, pp. 521-522).

5. Empirical Data

The following section elaborates on the primary data (Focus Group, Interview, and Survey) and supplementary data (posts from Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Newsletters) used in this project.

5.1 Primary empirical data

The primary empirical data for this project consists of a focus group with Brentford F.C. supporters, an interview with Tomas Abreau from the CST, and a survey that was sent out to Brentford F.C. supporters.

5.1.1 Focus group with Brentford F.C. supporters

On Wednesday, 6th of April, a focus group was conducted with multiple Brentford F.C. supporters. The focus group consisted of nine people, excluding ourselves. These people were Stewart Purvis, Sharon Wright, Keith MacInnes, Jeff Dent, James Walsh, Kate Hiscox, Alan Ruffian, Colleen Wong, and Don Tanswell. Most, but not all, of the participants are board members of Bees United, the official supporters' trust of Brentford F.C.. The Bees United board is intentionally elected to be as diverse and as representative of the Brentford F.C. fan base as possible, and thus there are new fans, old fans, season ticket holders, people who only watch the games on TV etc. Therefore, this focus group represents the opinions and views of the average Brentford F.C. supporter.

The focus group lasted approximately 45 minutes, which is usually not considered long considering the number of participants. However, many of the participants said next to nothing, making it rather difficult to keep discussions and conversations going for a long time as it was the same people who talked the whole time. The focus group focused primarily on the content and communication efforts of the CST. In addition to questions and topics, three social media posts from the CST were shown to get concrete feedback on specific posts instead of the content in general.

Finally, the transcription of the focus group is attached as Appendix 1.

5.1.2 Interview with Tomas Abreu

On Thursday, 21st of April, an interview was conducted with Tomas Abreu, Head of Marketing and Partnerships at the CST. The interview was supposed to be in person while the group was in London to collect the data, but unfortunately, it was changed to a later date and was thus done via a Zoom meeting. The interview lasted approximately 35 minutes and covered topics such as the CST's communication and marketing strategies (including communication channels, target audience, and types of content), and the CST's key stakeholders and how they work with these different stakeholders.

The interview followed a semi-structured interview guide, as explained in Section 3.2.3.2. The interview guide included seven questions that were prepared prior to the interview, but the group also asked questions, and follow-up questions, based on what the interviewee was telling.

Finally, the transcript of the interview is attached as Appendix 2.

5.1.3 Survey

A survey was distributed to Brentford F.C. supporters to examine their uses and gratifications from social media and newsletters. The survey was posted in the Facebook group "Brentford FC Loyal" on the 6th of June 2022. With more than 6700 members, "Brentford FC Loyal" is the largest Facebook group of Brentford F.C. supporters. On the 15th of June, 2022, we posted again in the group to remind people that the survey would close by the end of the week. With 144 respondents, the survey was closed on Sunday 19th, 2022.

The survey consisted of 11 to 43 questions depending on the answers given to specific questions. The questions were a mix of checking boxes to indicate which attributes are fitting to them, Likert Scales for indicating to which degree they agree with specific statements, and questions where the respondent must type their answer. All questions were categorised into five/six main topics:

1. If and why the supporters use social media in general (Facebook, Instagram and Twitter)
2. If and why the supporters subscribe to newsletters in general
3. If and why the supporters follow specifically the CST on social media (Facebook, Instagram and Twitter)

4. If and why the supporters are subscribed to specifically the CST's newsletter
5. Demographics
6. Finally, we asked if they had any suggestions as to how the CST could improve their online communication

Although there were some outliers, the responses seemed to indicate specific patterns. These will be examined in section 6.3. The entire survey and the responses are enclosed as Appendix 4.

5.2 Supplementary data

In addition to the three sets of primary data, this project has also examined various social media posts and newsletters from the CST. Eight posts from Twitter, eight from Facebook, eight from Instagram, and seven newsletters, to be more exact. As mentioned in section 3.6, these posts and newsletters were selected based on a few criteria and function as the data for the content analysis that will examine the status quo; how the CST is communicating on these platforms as of the day of examination. These posts will all be attached as Appendix 3.

5.2.1 Facebook posts

The eight Facebook posts are all posted between the 18th of May and the 28th of May. Five of the posts inform people about upcoming events and programmes and where they can sign up, for example, a grassroots tournament called The Gunnersbury Cup. The remaining three posts tell about recent past events, such as when Brentford F.C.'s striker, Ivan Toney, visited a local school for a Premier League - No Room for Racism session. The engagement of the posts ranges from zero likes and comments to six likes and no comments.

5.2.2 Instagram posts

The eight Instagram posts were all posted between the 12th of May and the 26th of May. Four of these posts are identical posts as on Facebook; the only difference is that the engagement is much higher ranging from zero likes to 148 likes, with some posts having a few comments. The four posts that are unique to Instagram are about an upcoming Post 16 women's exhibition match, a follow-up video from the Post 16 women's game, a video from the previously described school visit from

Ivan Toney, and finally, a video from when BBC visited Brentford F.C. to showcase the positive impact of the CST's work.

5.2.3 Twitter posts

The eight posts from Twitter were all posted, or rather "tweeted", between the 24th of May and the 29th of May. Once again, a couple of these posts are the same as the ones on either Instagram or Facebook (some both). The unique posts from Twitter are about an Adult Female Recreation Session, an event called Game Changers, and information about where to sign up for the next round of Boys Post 16 trials. Two of the posts are about the same event as seen on both Instagram and Facebook, the Book Drop Campaign. However, these two posts are different from those on the other platforms. The engagement rate for all the Twitter posts ranges from one like to 15 likes and several retweets.

5.2.4 Newsletters

Finally, the seven CST newsletters are from the 28th of January, the 4th of March, the 25th of March, the 22nd of April, the 29th of April, the 6th of May, and the 13th of May. The design of the newsletter is quite simplistic and does not contain much text but is rather dominated by visuals such as animations, graphics and images. Every image functions as a link where the user can read more about what the headline of the image says. For example, the first image and headline of the January issue says, "Narrow win for Women's First Team. Click here to read more." Overall, the majority of the content is about upcoming events and programmes. Every newsletter ends with advertisements from their partners as well as links to the CST's social media.

6. Analysis

The following sections will constitute our analytical work. First, the analysis will be carried out by analysing the data gathered from the interview by using the Salience Model. Second, a brief content analysis will be made on various content from the CST. Lastly, an analysis of the data from the survey will be made in relation to the Uses and Gratifications theory.

6.1 Stakeholder Mapping

This project will now attempt to identify all the key stakeholders of the CST and examine why they are important and whether the Brentford F.C. supporters are even important to focus on. Therefore, this part of the analysis will be carried out by applying Mitchell et al.'s stakeholder identification approach, the Salience Model.

6.1.1 Who are the stakeholders of the CST?

To identify the most important stakeholders to the CST, one must first identify all the stakeholders and then map them in accordance with the Salience Model. An interview with Tomas Abreu, Head of Marketing and Partners at the CST, was conducted to identify the CST's stakeholders. Throughout the interview, he mentions multiple stakeholders that he believes are some of the most important ones to the CST. These stakeholders will be examined and supplemented with additional stakeholders. Therefore, this analysis will examine the following stakeholders:

- Local Community (the consumers)
- Restricted Funders
- Unrestricted Funders
- Brentford F.C.
- Brentford F.C. Supporters
- The Press
- Potential Volunteers and Employees
- Current Volunteers and Employees

6.1.1.1 Local Community (consumers of activities)

According to Tomas, the local community is the target audience for the majority of their external communication. He says that "[…] *our target audience are the local community. So, within that, we have sub-audiences, or different segments within that audience*" (Appendix 2, p. 4, ll. 17-18). This means that the local community, as a whole, is a stakeholder. However, one can dig a deeper layer and specify the local community's individual parts that make it a stakeholder. Tomas mentions that parents with children who are looking for sports activities are one of the key parts that make up the local community stakeholder as they are a key audience for much of the CST's communicative efforts (Appendix 2, p. 4, ll. 19-25). Additionally, he mentions less-privileged people in the local community who many of their programmes aim to help (Appendix 2, p. 4, ll. 25-29). As Tomas argues, most of their programmes, and thereby also their communication, are targeted towards different audiences within the local community. Therefore, instead of calling this stakeholder group "the local community", they will be referred to as the consumers of the CST's activities, or merely "consumers". However, just how important are the consumers? This project will now examine the Power, Legitimacy, and Urgency of the consumers to get a clearer view of just how important this stakeholder really is to the CST.

Power

The consumers undoubtedly possess Power as they are the whole reason for the existence of the CST. If there were no people to sign up for the CST's programmes and activities, the CST would not have anything to do and would, therefore, not exist for very long. Additionally, they also possess Power over the CST as their claim cannot be ignored without damaging the reputation of both the CST and Brentford F.C.. Let us elaborate on that:

As Mitchell et al. argue, Power is the ability to get the outcomes one wants (Mitchell et al. 1997, p. 865), which in this case means that the consumers have the ability to get the CST to act in a way that they otherwise would not have done. For example, if the consumers are unhappy with the quality of the activities, or if they feel there is a lack of activities that suit their needs, etc., they could impose their will on the CST by using their Power. Mitchell et al. propose three types of Power: *coercive*, *utilitarian*, and *normative*. The consumers are not perceived to have *coercive* Power as they are very unlikely to use physical force to impose their will. Nor do the consumers have direct *utilitarian* Power as they are not the ones who fund the activities and thus cannot directly stop the funding. However, one could argue that the consumers have *in*direct *utilitarian* Power as they could stop coming to the programmes or voice their discontent to the funders and corporate partners, which could potentially make the funders retract their funding. This may sound as though the consumers depend on other stakeholders to carry out their will (and thereby classifying them as Dependent stakeholders), but this is not necessarily the case. As the CST exists to help these people, it would significantly damage the names of both the CST and Brentford F.C. if the consumers' claims were ignored. This is what Mitchell et al. refer to as *normative* Power.

Legitimacy

The consumers also possess Legitimacy as their claim will, in most cases, be appropriate. As mentioned, these attributes are dynamic and may depend on the context/situation, which makes it rather difficult to examine if there is no current claim being made by the stakeholder. However, as with most other organisations, when the customers or consumers make a claim, the cause is often legitimate and should be taken seriously. Take the previously used (hypothetical) example of consumers being unhappy with the quality of the activities. As they are the consumers of the activity and, therefore, the ones that are affected by the, according to them, poor quality, the claim is very much appropriate and should be taken seriously. However, the question of Legitimacy is, of course, highly subjective. It, therefore, also depends on how the CST views the situation and whether they think the consumers' action is appropriate.

In short, the consumers possess the attribute of Legitimacy by default, but it is very much situation- and context-dependent.

Urgency

This attribute, similar to Legitimacy, is also situation- and context-dependent, if not more so than Legitimacy. Therefore, it is impossible to say whether the consumers possess this attribute as there is no current claim from their side. Mitchell et al. argue that Urgency only exists when two criteria are met: "*(1) when a relationship or claim is of a time-sensitive nature and (2) when that relationship or claim is important or critical to the stakeholder*" (Mitchell et al. 1997, p. 867). As neither of these criteria are met as of right now, the consumers do not possess any Urgency. However, this can easily change should the situation change.

Expectant stakeholder

By examining the attributes of the consumers, one can conclude that at the time of writing this project, the consumers only possess two of the attributes but can relatively quickly obtain all three. The consumers can, therefore, be categorised as an Expectant stakeholder or, more precisely, Dominant stakeholder. The Dominant stakeholder is both powerful and possesses legitimate claims. This combination of attributes makes them highly salient and influential to the CST, which indeed calls for managerial attention. Their high salience is further emphasised by the fact that Dominant stakeholders can easily become a Definitive stakeholder (the most salient of all) if their claim becomes urgent. According to Mitchell et al., Dominant stakeholders should receive much of the managers' attention.

6.1.1.2 Restricted Funders

The unrestricted funders are also stakeholders to the CST, according to Tomas. This entity provides the CST with the majority of the funding necessary to execute their many initiatives and programmes: "*Those stakeholders, those partners allow us to have the core programmes that we have*" (Appendix 2, p. 7, ll. 5-7). This stakeholder group includes organisations such as the Premier League (the EFL when the club was in the Championship and below), local councils and local entities. Tomas emphasises that this stakeholder is different to corporate partners as corporate partners provide unrestricted funding, whereas the funders and local councils only provide restricted funding. Unrestricted funding means that "*we* (the CST) *don't have to spend it all or spend it on something specific, whereas funding from the beforementioned stakeholders* (funders and local councils) *has to be spent on specific things and we can't keep some of the funding*" (Appendix 2, p. 7, ll. 14-16). These unrestricted funders will be examined in section 6.1.1.3.

Power

The restricted funders do indeed possess Power, perhaps more than any other stakeholder. This is because they are the main source of funding, and without them, the CST would not be able to offer their core programmes and activities: "[...] *local councils, local entities, Premier League, EFL, they are the main stakeholders from a restricted funding point of view. They help drive the core programmes that we have*" (Appendix 2, p. 7, ll. 17-19). This type of Power is exactly what Mitchell et al. define as *utilitarian*, and unlike the consumers, this *utilitarian* Power is direct. The restricted funders can tell the CST exactly what they want and how they want it, and if the CST does not provide, they can and will cut the funding. Not only can they cut the funding if their requirements are not met, but the CST must also apply for the funding:

"*So, let's say Hounslow Council has a pot of GBP 100,000 which organisations and charities can apply for. We will apply for it if it has to do with disabilities, and our disability department will prepare the application. If it's granted, you have to follow basic, but comprehensive, project management monitoring evaluation. You have things to report back, you have a timeline, you have a report to do. So, it's basically just reporting back on how the project went*"

(Appendix 2, pp. 7-8, ll. 25-1).

Therefore, the restricted funders possess Power by deciding whether the CST should get the funding in the first place and whether they should continue the funding based on a range of requirements. Unfortunately, we were unable to obtain the CST's annual budget to examine how much of the funding comes from this stakeholder. However, in the interview with Tomas, he mentions that "*For a number of years, they* (the restricted funders) *have helped us providing a fixed amount of funding every year. […] More recently, corporate partners, from a fundraising point of view, has been increasing*" (Appendix 2, p. 7, ll. 7-11). This could indicate that the restricted funders have made up a significant percentage of the funding but that the funding from the unrestricted funders is starting to increase and perhaps even overtake the restricted funders. However, Tomas also emphasises that the restricted funding exclusively covers the programmes and activities. Not the staff salaries, rent and utilities. These expenses are covered by Brentford F.C. and the unrestricted funders, which will be covered later. To summarise, the restricted funders possess Power over the CST as they fund the core programmes and activities, but as the restricted funding does not cover all the CST's expenses, they are not all-powerful. The CST could, in theory, exist without them, but they would be a very different organisation.

Legitimacy

The restricted funders also possess Legitimacy as their potential decision to decline the CST's application for funding, or a potential decision to cut the funding would, in most cases, be appropriate if they feel like their criteria are not being met. Once again, this attribute is difficult to examine without an ongoing claim/situation, but as Mitchell et al. argue, Legitimacy is, "[...] *a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate [...]*" (Mitchell et al. 1997, p. 866), which in this case would mean that there would be a general perception that the actions of the restricted funders, e.g. threatening to cut funds if certain criteria are not met, are appropriate within specific systems, e.g. contractual breach. The CST and these funders will both enter into a contractual agreement. If this contract is somehow breached, the funders have the right to pull out, or in the worst case, sue the CST. In our society, such action is very much proper and appropriate.

Urgency

More or less any claim this stakeholder may have would be an urgent matter as the funding is the CST's bread and butter. If the restricted funders inform the CST that they will cut the funding unless they fix a specific issue, this claim will be of the utmost urgency as the CST cannot continue the programmes without the funding. However, as of writing this project, and to our knowledge, there is no such current issue, and therefore, the restricted funders do not possess Urgency at this moment.

Expectant stakeholder

Having examined the three attributes of the restricted funders, it is apparent that they, similar to the consumers, possess two out of three attributes, which makes them Expectant stakeholders. By possessing both Power and Legitimacy but not Urgency, the restricted funders are Dominant stakeholders. This means they can easily become Definitive stakeholders should an urgent matter occur. Therefore, managers of the CST must dedicate a significant amount of attention to this stakeholder. This also seems to be the case already, as this was one of just three stakeholders that Tomas actually mentioned without being asked directly. In the interview, we asked Tomas to name the CST's stakeholders, to which he named *restricted funders*, *unrestricted funders*, and *the club*. This indicates that, to him (and him representing the CST), these three *funders* are the most important ones.

6.1.1.3 Unrestricted Funders

As mentioned, the corporate partners of the CST, or the unrestricted funders as they will be called in this project, are another stakeholder. The corporate partners include organisations and companies such as Hollywood Bets, SafetyCulture, Utilita, the University of West London, and many more (BFCCST.com n.d. B). This stakeholder is very similar to the previously described but is treated as a separate stakeholder due to the different types of funding. The approach to this stakeholder is, therefore, also different. The unrestricted funders not only fund some of the different programmes, but they also help fund the CST as an organisation, i.e., salaries, rent, utilities etc. These funders do not have the same requirements and criteria as the restricted funders do, as the CST is welcome to spend the money on whatever they want and as much of it as they want: "[…] *we don't have to spend it all or spend it on something specific, whereas funding from the beforementioned stakeholders has to be spent on specific things and we can't keep some of the funding*" (Appendix 2, p. 7, ll. 14-16).

Power

Similar to the restricted funders, the unrestricted funders have Power over the CST as they are the ones funding both programmes and the CST itself. However, as this funding is unrestricted, they do not have the Power to tell what the CST must spend it on, which decreases the Power that they hold over them. However, the two parties have still entered into a contractual agreement with specific requirements and criteria, which means they can still decide to cut the funding if the contract is broken. Furthermore, if the unrestricted funder does not feel that they are getting their money's worth, they may decide not to extend their partnership, which would put the CST in a tricky situation when the contract is due to expire. As with the restricted funders, the unrestricted funders possess *utilitarian* Power but to a lower degree as they do not have the same say about what their money must be spent on.

Legitimacy

Once again, this attribute is similar to that of the restricted funders, as their actions would most likely be appropriate and legitimate in case of a contractual breach. However, the criteria/requirements in said contracts would be very different to those of the restricted funders as these funders are less strict about what the funding must be spent on. Instead, a contractual breach could, for example, be about exposure and publicity. For example, suppose the corporate partners feel as if they are not getting the publicity and exposure (e.g. logo on the coaches' tracksuits or promotion in newsletters) that was agreed on in the contract. In that case, they may decide to terminate the contract. It would then be up to a lawyer to decide whether this action is legitimate. Therefore, the unrestricted funders do possess Legitimacy by default.

Urgency

Once again, Urgency depends on the situation. As of writing this, no known claims are being made by the unrestricted funders. However, were they to make a claim, it would likely be of high urgency as they fund both the programmes and the CST itself. Mitchell et al. argue that time is not the only criterion for Urgency. The managers must also evaluate how important the relationship is with the stakeholder, and as funding is one of, if not the, most important parts of a charity organisation, the relationship with this stakeholder is significant. Therefore, the unrestricted funders would possess a great degree of Urgency should a situation occur.

Expectant stakeholder

As with the restricted funders, the unrestricted funders also possess two attributes and are likely to obtain the third, Urgency, should a situation occur, which would make them Definitive stakeholders. As they only possess two attributes at the moment, they would be categorised as Expectant stakeholders, or more precisely, Dominant stakeholders. This stakeholder was one of just two that Tomas mentioned by himself when asked to name the stakeholders of the CST. Therefore, it could be perceived that this stakeholder is of particular importance. However, as the unrestricted funders possess a lower degree of Power due to the more lenient funding criteria, they will not be deemed to be just as important as the restricted funders. Therefore, the unrestricted funders require less attention from the managers but are still very important to the CST.

6.1.1.4 Brentford F.C.

In addition to the two previously examined funding-related stakeholders, Tomas mentions that the club itself, Brentford F.C., is also a stakeholder. This is because the club also provides funding to the CST: "[…] *secondly the club. For a number of years, they've helped us providing a fixed amount of funding every year*" (Appendix 2, p. 7, ll. 7-8). Furthermore, the club is also a stakeholder as it functions as the link between the CST and Brentford F.C. supporters. The supporters as a stakeholder will be discussed after this, but the role of the club in regards to being the link between the supporters and the CST is quite interesting. The CST is not legally a part of Brentford F.C., but they share the same logo, colours, and branding in general. The club also uses the CST in their branding and vice versa. Without Brentford F.C., the CST would just be another charitable organisation, and without the CST, Brentford F.C. would not be the same club. The club is, therefore, an interesting stakeholder of the CST.

Power

As the CST is its own legal entity that is separate from Brentford F.C., the club does not have the Power to dictate what the CST must do. The CST has its own management that makes its own decisions, most likely in cooperation with the club, but not dictated by the club. However, Tomas mentioned in the interview that the club provides funding to the CST that is both unrestricted and restricted (Appendix 2, p. 7, ll. 17-21). This means that the funding from the club is not entirely unrestricted. The CST must allocate some of the money to certain things while they can keep the rest and do with it as they wish. We have not been able to identify how much is restricted and how much is unrestricted. However, being a funder, regardless of whether it is restricted or unrestricted, the club will possess some degree of *utilitarian* Power, just like the two previously mentioned funding stakeholders. Since some of the funding is restricted, the club also has the ability to control certain decisions. If the club's requirements and criteria are somehow not met, they have the ability and Power to cut the funding.

In addition to this, Tomas also mentioned that every CST funding initiative targeted towards Brentford F.C. supporters is done through and with the club. They do this because, "*One, to try and engage with the Brentford fans. Two, to also educate people about what we do. Three, to maximise results, because obviously, they are Brentford fans, they are part of the local community, so they will be the most likely to give their time and money, and maybe encourage more people to support the cause of our good work*" (Appendix 2, p. 8, ll. 23-28). Therefore, the club is not only an important funder but also an important channel through which the CST can engage with the Brentford F.C. supporters, both to get more funding and to strengthen their stature among the supporters. This channel only exists because the supporters love the club. Therefore, the club also possesses *normative* Power over the CST.

Legitimacy

The club has legal backing to cut funding if the CST does not meet the criteria stated in the restricted funding contracts. Furthermore, although the two organisations are separate, the CST uses the club's logo, colours, even the name, etc. in their branding. The two organisations are interconnected. Therefore, if the club has a claim, it would have to be highly legitimate and critical should they wish to act on it. The club has, in most cases, appropriate legal backing behind its claim, but it would be reluctant to act on it as it could potentially hurt the CST and, therefore, also hurt themselves. Therefore, it can be concluded that the club does possess Legitimacy but would, in most situations, be reluctant to act on it.

Urgency

As mentioned several times in this analysis, Urgency very often depends on the situation and whether the stakeholder has a claim. This does not seem to be the case at the moment, and the first criterion of Urgency, Time-sensitivity, is therefore not met. However, the second criterion, Criticality – the importance of the claim or the relationship between the stakeholder and the organisation, is very much being met at all times. As mentioned, the CST and the club are interconnected, which also means that the relationship between them is very important. Therefore, the club is only one criterion away from obtaining Urgency. However, as the club does not have a current claim, it does not possess the attribute of Urgency as of right now.

Expectant Stakeholder

We argue that Brentford F.C., the club, possesses two attributes: Power and Legitimacy. This makes them a Dominant stakeholder within the class of Expectant stakeholders. However, the club can easily obtain the third attribute, Urgency, should they make a claim. This is because one of the two criteria of Urgency is already met, Criticality, as the relationship between the CST and the club is very significant. This means that it is important that the management of the CST dedicate much time and attention to satisfying the club as they can easily become a Definitive stakeholder, the most salient of all. However, the club is also unlikely to make claims (except if the contractual requirements are not met) because the two organisations are so closely interconnected, and the relationship is of the utmost importance to both parties. Therefore, the club may not require as much attention and time as other Dominant stakeholders.

6.1.1.5 Brentford F.C. Supporters

As mentioned, Tomas sees the club as a stakeholder as it is the link between the Brentford F.C. supporters and the CST. The Brentford F.C. supporters themselves are also a stakeholder: "*From a fundraising point of view, and even marketing point of view, Brentford fans are one of our key target audiences*" (Appendix 2, p. 8, ll. 10-11). He believes that the Brentford F.C. supporters are important to engage with as "[...] *they are part of the local community, so they will be the most likely to give* *their time and money, and maybe encourage more people to support the cause of our good work*" (Appendix 2, p. 8, ll. 26-28). However, Tomas also believes that the club's recent success also brings opportunities that the CST can tap into. For example, the club is now experiencing support from South Africa, Denmark, Spain etc., rather than just West London, which was the case not many years ago (Appendix 2, p. 9, ll. 19-20). These new supporters potentially allow the CST to "[...] *achieve results that we never have before from a fundraising point of view but also from a fanbase and target audience point of view as well*" (Appendix 2, p. 9, ll. 20-22). Furthermore, Tomas does not only see the supporters as a stakeholder because of the potential funding. He also believes it is important to educate them about what the CST does (Appendix 2, p. 8, ll. 24-25), and to engage with them as the CST is an important part of the Brentford F.C. brand (Appendix 2, p. 9, ll. 11-17). However, Tomas also says that "[...] *it's an audience that we haven't really solved the issue in terms of engaging with them*" (Appendix 2, p. 8, ll. 11-13).

Power

The Brentford F.C. supporters are quite different from the other stakeholders, as they have multiple functions to the CST. They are, for example, funders, volunteers, consumers etc. Furthermore, the better the relationship the CST has with the supporters, the better deals they can make with corporate partners as they wish to tap into this strong relationship.

In the interview with Tomas, he mentioned that the CST has now taken over various initiatives from the club that were used to fund the club some years ago when they were struggling financially. As the club is now playing in the Premier League, they are not struggling financially, which means the CST has taken over these initiatives to now fund their programmes. Tomas mentioned the *Kit Sponsor* initiative as an example of this: "[…] *the club did this for a number of years where in the matchday programmes, you could pick a player, pay GBP 500, or 300 at that time, and you'd have your name in the matchday programmes featured on every single home game*" (Appendix 2, p. 9, ll. 3-6). Instead of that money going to the club as it did some years ago, it now goes to the CST. Tomas argues that the Brentford F.C. supporters are delighted with the fact that their money now goes to a good cause: "[…] *long-standing fans that care about the club and care about the community,* [...] *were really pleased to know that the money now goes towards the trust*" (Appendix 2, p. 9, ll. 14-

17). Furthermore, Tomas also argues that Brentford F.C.'s recent success has resulted in a growing international fanbase that can open doors to the CST and help them achieve unprecedented results (Appendix 2, p. 9, ll. 19-22).

In addition to the funding perspective, the supporters can also become volunteers, which is another important asset to the CST. The more funding the CST gets, the more programmes they want to run, but programmes require volunteers. As Tomas argues, the Brentford F.C. supporters are the most likely target group to sign up for volunteering as they care for the local community and support the club, which is, as previously mentioned, interconnected with the CST: "[…] *they are Brentford fans, they are part of the local community, so they will be the most likely to give their time and money, and maybe encourage more people to support the cause of our good work*" (Appendix 2, p. 8, ll. 25-28). This quote also emphasizes that the supporters are more likely to donate money than most other people. Furthermore, as the vast majority of Brentford F.C. supporters are also a part of the local community that the CST is trying to help, the supporters are also very likely to sign up for the programmes, which also makes them potential consumers.

Finally, as mentioned at the beginning of this section, the better the relationship between the CST and the supporters is, the better deals they can make with corporate partners as they wish to tap into this strong relationship. Tomas also mentions that the corporate partners are becoming a much more significant part of their strategy as both parties can tap into each other's markets (Appendix 2, p. 10, ll. 7-15).

By having all these functions (funders, volunteers, consumers, strengthening corporate partner deals), the Brentford F.C. supporters possess a great deal of Power, primarily *Utilitarian* Power, but also *Normative* Power. They can decide not to donate any money if they are unhappy about certain things within the CST. They can decide not to sign up for volunteering and the programmes themselves. They can also weaken the CST's leverage in corporate partner deals. Furthermore, suppose the supporters are unhappy about something. In that case, it is very likely to be adopted by other stakeholders as well, for example, the club, as they do not wish to have unhappy supporters. If the supporters have a claim and decide to make use of their Power, it can have tremendous consequences for the CST.

Legitimacy

If the Brentford F.C. supporters have a claim and decide not to donate money, it is entirely socially acceptable. Donating money to a charity is not obligatory, and people are completely entitled not to do so. The same goes for volunteering. While volunteering has a very positive social status, it is by no means mandatory, which the word *volunteering* emphasizes as it comes from the word *voluntary*, which means "[...] *proceeding from the will or from one's own choice or consent*" (Merriam-Webster n.d.).

Of course, Legitimacy is very often context-dependent. The only current claim the supporters have is very much connected to this project and came to our attention during the focus group: They do not feel like the content from the CST is very engaging, and they think it is rather difficult to learn more about the CST and what they do. If they do not know what their money goes to, they may be more reluctant to donate, and if they do not know what the volunteers help with, they may decide not to volunteer. These are very legitimate claims and reasonable precautions. Therefore, the Brentford F.C. supporters do possess a great degree of Legitimacy.

Urgency

As the Brentford F.C. supporters occupy so many functions, their claim can affect many sides of the CST. Not only does this make the relationship between the CST and the supporters important, but it also means that most claims the supporters may have would be either critical or time-sensitive. The current claim, which was mentioned before, is arguably neither time sensitive nor critical. It is something the CST must consider and should do something about before the supporters take further actions, but as long as the supporters are not taking any actions, it remains a rather uncritical and non-time-sensitive claim. However, as mentioned, many claims from the supporters can affect many sides of the CST, which would make them both time sensitive and critical. Therefore, the supporters do not possess Urgency as of right now, but they could obtain it.

Expectant stakeholder

As the Brentford F.C. supporters possess two out of three attributes, they are part of the Expectant stakeholder class. As the two attributes they do have are Power and Legitimacy, they are a Dominant stakeholder. They are both powerful and have legitimate claims, which makes them a highly salient stakeholder to the CST. The CST must, therefore, dedicate much time and attention to the supporters and make sure their needs and expectations are being met. Furthermore, the supporters are only an urgent claim away from obtaining Urgency, which would make them a Definitive stakeholder - the most salient of all stakeholder types.

The fact that the supporters are so highly salient is not entirely reflected in the interview with Tomas. In the interview, we asked him to name the CST's most important stakeholders. To this, he only mentioned the restricted funders and the unrestricted funders. It was not until we asked him directly about the supporters that he agreed they were important. However, he initially seemed a little reluctant about calling them a stakeholder and stuck with calling them "a key audience". However, later in the interview, he did call them a stakeholder but focused mainly on the funding perspective of the supporters. This tendency of neglect, or perhaps disregard, is further emphasized when examining the CST's content. This will be further examined and elaborated on in section 6.2.

6.1.1.6 The Press

Furthermore, Tomas also mentions the press as a stakeholder. He does not explicitly say that they are a stakeholder to the CST, but he does mention that the press has been incorporated into their new branding and PR strategy: "[...] *lately from a strategy point of view, we're trying to maximise the awareness through club channels and through their strong relationship with the press as well*" (Appendix 2, p. 4, ll. 9-11). The CST has previously used the press to promote upcoming events, for example, through radio stations, local newspapers etc. However, it seems that the press is a much more integral part of the CST's new branding strategy, and it is, therefore, justifiable to count them as a potential stakeholder.

Power

The press, both local and national, does not possess any significant degree of Power. They do have the ability to bring negative stories about the CST and thereby damage the brand/reputation. However, such bad stories would most likely be self-inflicted and would probably come out one way or another. The press could also decide not to help the CST promote events etc. by not allowing them to buy advertisement space or decide not to write stories about them. However, this seems more like a petty move and would most likely not happen. Therefore, the press does not possess Power to any significant degree.

Legitimacy

The press does possess Legitimacy. At least to some extent. If the press is unhappy with certain things about the CST, they are in their full rights to write articles etc. about it. Furthermore, the press can also function as a medium for other stakeholders to broadcast their claims. This is a completely legitimate and appropriate action as it is the job of the press to inform its audience about the ups and downs in their respective covered areas. Therefore, the press does possess Legitimacy.

Urgency

The press does not possess Urgency. Not only is there no current claim from the press' side, but even if there was, the press would not possess Urgency. This is because the two criteria of Urgency, time-sensitivity and criticality, are not met. The time-sensitivity criterion may be met if, for example, the press wishes to bring a negative story about the CST. However, the relationship with the press is not critical, nor would the claim be.

Latent stakeholder

The press falls under the category of Latent stakeholders as they only possess one attribute. As the only attribute they do possess is Legitimacy, the press is a Discretionary stakeholder. Because this type lacks Power to influence the firm and urgent claims, there is no pressure at all on the CST's management to engage with this stakeholder. However, the management may decide to engage with this stakeholder as it can serve as a good partner to have, for example, in using the press to promote upcoming events or to create a positive narrative around the CST.

6.1.1.7 Potential Volunteers and Employees

Potential volunteers and employees are also a potential stakeholder to the CST. As the CST is a charitable organisation, they rely on people giving their time. In the interview, Tomas mentions that when the CST sent out a survey to determine what people wanted to hear from them, many people indicated that they would like to hear more about volunteering and job opportunities (Appendix 2, p. 5, ll. 4-10). This was also something that was discussed during the focus group with Brentford F.C. supporters. It seems many people are interested in helping the CST or working for them. This is further emphasised when one looks at the CST's website where there is a "Get Involved" tab that takes the user to a page where they can learn more about volunteering, job vacancies etc. (BFCCST.com n.d. C).

Note that this potential stakeholder may consist of people from other stakeholders too. As Mitchell et al. argue, the Salience Model is dynamic, and one must consider how stakeholders can both become another stakeholder and can be multiple stakeholders at the same time. Potential volunteers and employees can, and are very likely to, exist in any other stakeholder, for example, consumers, Brentford F.C. supporters etc.

Power

Potential volunteers and employees do not possess any Power over the CST. Unlike current volunteers and employees, they do not have the ability to, e.g., go on strike if their claim is not being heard. Their claim could, for example, be that they feel the CST's hiring process is not unbiased. However, they would not be able to do much about it except not applying, which in certain situations could become critical for the CST, for example, if they desperately need new employees or volunteers. One could also argue that as there is a global staff shortage, an organisation (including the CST) should always allocate some attention to this stakeholder via employer branding. It is important for an organisation to maintain a good reputation as a workplace to attract new workers. However, this is perhaps more related to Urgency rather than Power.

Legitimacy

The potential volunteers and employees are, of course, in their right not to apply for work or volunteering if they do not believe the CST is a good place to work. They could also voice their discontent in the media and hope another stakeholder adopts their claim. Therefore, in some situations, this stakeholder could possess Legitimacy. However, when there is no current situation between them and the CST, such actions would seem rather strange and illegitimate.

Urgency

Once again, there is no current situation between this stakeholder and the CST, which means the potential volunteers and employees do not possess any urgency. However, in the event that the CST desperately need new people, and this stakeholder somehow feels they have been done wrong, then their claim would become rather urgent. Although, until such a thing happens, this stakeholder remains without Urgency.

Non-stakeholder

As argued, this stakeholder could potentially obtain one or more of the attributes, but as of writing this, they do not possess any. According to Mitchell et al., this makes them a non-stakeholder at the moment, but should they obtain one or more attributes, they will become one. As mentioned above, they have the ability to obtain both Legitimacy and Urgency if the “conditions” are just right, which would make them a Dependent stakeholder as they would depend on the advocacy of other powerful stakeholders or on the goodwill and voluntarism of the CST’s management. However, at the moment, they remain a non-stakeholder, and they do not require any attention from the management, except perhaps the usual employer branding.

6.1.1.8 Current Volunteers and Employees

The current volunteers and employees at the CST are also a stakeholder. The people behind an organisation are the very backbone of any organisation. They are the cogwheels that keep things running, and they must be kept happy to keep them at the organisation and for them to deliver what is required. Tomas did not mention the current employees and volunteers in the interview, but as in any other organisation, employees (and in this case also volunteers) are essential to acquire the necessary funding, to plan the programmes, to execute the programmes etc. Without this stakeholder, the organisation simply would not exist. The importance of this stakeholder is also emphasised by the three attributes that will be discussed below. However, before getting into that, we should point out that Tomas briefly mentioned something that could indicate that the CST recently had a situation with this particular stakeholder. He said that the communications and marketing department was undergoing some changes at the time of the interview because the time during Covid had been disproportionally stressful for him while others had had a nice long holiday (Appendix 2, pp. 12-14, ll. 26-4). He said that they are now bringing in new people as a result of that period, which could indicate that he, and perhaps others, were unhappy about the work balance and that the management solved the issue by hiring additional people.

Power

The volunteers and employees of the CST possess a high degree of Power. They have the ability to apply *utilitarian* Power in the form of going on strike if they are unhappy about certain things, such as wages, work environment, hours etc. In addition to this, they can also use *coercive* Power by, for example, blocking the entrance to the building and thereby preventing the management from going to work and doing their job. They have, more or less, free access to the management and can, therefore, easily discuss the issues with them. Not all stakeholders have this ability. Should the employees or volunteers decide to go on strike or stop volunteering for the programmes, the CST would be in significant trouble and could not go on for very long without these people. Therefore, the volunteers and employees possess a great deal of Power.

Legitimacy

While strikes often get a negative reputation, they are a legitimate tool workers can use to get the desired results. It is at least legitimate in some countries, primarily where workers' unions exist, which includes the UK. It is also highly legitimate and appropriate for employees to discuss their discontent with the management. The employees have all signed a contract, and if the CST somehow breaches this contract, the workers have the full rights to act. Furthermore, as volunteers are not hired and thus have not signed contracts, they can decide to stop volunteering from one day to the other. Therefore, the volunteers and employees possess a great degree of Legitimacy.

Urgency

As there is no ongoing situation at the moment, the volunteers and employees of the CST do not possess Urgency. However, this could easily change as any situation involving this stakeholder would involve either (if not both) time-sensitivity or Criticality (the importance of the claim or the relationship to the stakeholder). As mentioned, the CST would not be able to run for very long if the employees decided to go on strike or if the volunteers decided to stop volunteering. There would be no one to keep the wheels turning. Furthermore, the relationship between the CST and the employees and volunteers is of the highest importance, and managers must attempt to keep them as happy and motivated as possible to get good results. However, as mentioned, as there is no claim being made by this stakeholder as of right now, they do not possess Urgency, but in accordance with Mitchell et al.'s argument that the Salience Model is dynamic, this could quickly and easily change should a situation occur.

Expectant stakeholder

The volunteers and employees of the CST possess both Power and Legitimacy, but not Urgency as of right now. Not only does this put them in the stakeholder class of Expectant stakeholders, but it also means they are Dominant stakeholders. As mentioned, most of the claims this stakeholder will make will be rather urgent, which means they will have all three attributes and thereby become a Definitive stakeholder. The management of the CST must therefore allocate much of their attention to this stakeholder. However, as this project is mostly, not to say exclusively, concerned with external communication, this stakeholder is not interesting for us to examine further because all communication with this stakeholder will be internal.

6.1.2 Sub-conclusion

This stakeholder analysis highlights that the CST has several stakeholders, some more salient than others. Eight different stakeholders were identified and examined according to the Salience Model. Those eight stakeholders were: The local community (the consumers of the CST's programmes), Restricted funders, Unrestricted funders, Brentford F.C., Brentford F.C. supporters, The Press, Potential volunteers and employees, and Current volunteers and employees. The CST may have more stakeholders than those eight, but it was determined that such stakeholders would be a little too speculative and somewhat irrelevant for this project to discuss.

By examining each stakeholder's attributes (Power, Legitimacy, and Urgency), this analysis found that the potential volunteers and employees are, in fact, non-stakeholders as they do not possess any of the three attributes. Furthermore, the press possesses only Legitimacy, which makes them a Discretionary stakeholder. This means that they do not warrant any attention, but the management of the CST may choose to do so anyway. However, the most salient stakeholders of the CST, as of writing this analysis, are the Dominant stakeholders. The consumers, restricted and unrestricted funders, Brentford F.C., Brentford F.C. supporters, and current volunteers and employees are all Dominant stakeholders as they possess both Power and Legitimacy but not Urgency. These stakeholders all require much attention and time from the CST's management as they have the Power and Legitimacy to carry out their will. Interestingly, the Brentford F.C. supporters are to be found within this stakeholder class. This analysis has identified them as one of the most salient, and thereby important, stakeholders of the CST, but this does not seem to be reflected in either the interview with Tomas or the content that the CST is currently posting on their social media and newsletters. This will be further examined in the following section.

6.2 Content Analysis

As found in the previous analysis, both consumers of activities and Brentford F.C. supporters are both Dominant stakeholders. As both of these stakeholders are communicated with through external communication compared to the rest of the stakeholders, a relevant, however brief, content analysis will be done on the CST's external communication.

6.2.1 Facebook

Throughout the eight Facebook posts chosen as the content for this analysis, five were centred around getting consumers of their activities to sign up (Appendix 3, 1). The engagement, or rather impressions, on these posts, was not of a particularly popular nature in comparison to the other posts. On Facebook, 36 impressions are seen, which counts likes, comments and shares of the posts (Appendix 3, 1). Eluding to the fact that the posts regarding sign-ups took minimal part in these impressions can be verified by highlighting the three slightly better performing posts. The posts were about activities such as book donations, environmental responsibility in local communities and football, and a No Room for Racism campaign, which Ivan Toney, professional footballer and starman of Brentford F.C., took part in (Appendix 3, 1, A, E & F). These three posts were responsible for 20 of the 36 total impressions. This showcases that the Brentford F.C. supporters are more likely to be engaged when the content is not directly focused on consumers as a stakeholder. In the stakeholder analysis, it was found that Brentford F.C. supporters have just as much salience as that of the consumers, yet the pattern of communication on Facebook seems to focus more on consumers as a stakeholder. This is undoubtedly confusing, as the posts with content more aimed at Brentford F.C. supporters are doing better engagement-wise. This could, however, be a strategic choice in how the CST wants to use Facebook as a medium. Nevertheless, Tomas Abreu argues that the CST is still to determine the best approach in communicating to the Brentford F.C. supporters in terms of getting more engagement with them. He says that "[...] *it's an audience that we haven't really solved the issue in terms of engaging with them*" (Appendix 2, p. 8, ll. 11-13).

6.2.2 Instagram

There are well over 500 impressions combined throughout the eight Instagram posts, which is undoubtedly a significant increase in engagement compared to their content on Facebook (Appendix 3, 2). Furthermore, five of the posts had seven or more photos attached, while three posts were videos. This shows that Instagram is a visual-based medium. However, the use of more visual content might not suggest better engagement. Kate argues that "[...] *looking at their Instagram, the pictures just aren't very exciting. They could be so much more exciting, because I know they've got some amazing stories, because I've heard stories about what they've done*" (Appendix 1, pp. 8-9, ll. 28-1).

This, compared to the content on Facebook, shows that a variety of content is considered within the CST. This is partly due to the fact that on Facebook, as mentioned earlier, the CST had five out of eight posts centred around getting people to sign up for their programmes, whilst on Instagram, they had one post out of eight (Appendix 3, 2, D).

Two posts included Premier League football players from the Brentford F.C. first team. This is a slight increase in focus on the Brentford F.C. side of the CST compared to Facebook. Three posts showcased collaboration with other organisations, and two posts referred users to check out the CST website for more information (Appendix 3, 2). The variation in content from the CST on Instagram compared to Facebook was considerable. It shows that the CST is leaving the sign-up posts for Facebook and Twitter, which can be considered communication targeted toward the consumer stakeholder group. In contrast, the content produced for Instagram seems to have the Brentford F.C. supporters more in focus. This, in turn, leaves this medium with higher engagement.

One post, in particular, stood out by quoting a member of the CST talking about a female football match. The post said, "*We spoke to Amber Lloyd our Female Football Development Manager to get her view on the girls' first year* […]" (Appendix 3, 2, G). Here they draw on the work of one of the employees, which correlates with what was found in the focus group to be somewhat missing. Stewart Purvis said that "*But what I think they lack is, it's a bit of a cliché nowadays, but it's storytelling, which is actually using examples of human beings doing interesting things to illustrate their work. I think there's far too much kind of fixture lists of things you can sign up for* (Appendix 1,

p. 7, ll. 18-22). Arguably, the supporter's point of view is further verified in that the post had the most impressions out of the eight Instagram posts. The fact that the post did so well in terms of impressions could be down to the fact that, as Stewart argued, this type of communication is more concerned with the Brentford F.C. supporter as a stakeholder.

6.2.3 Twitter

On Twitter, the CST saw a little over 50 combined impressions on their content, which is slightly more than they got on Facebook, yet not even close to what they got on Instagram. Similarly to Facebook, five out of the eight posts were centred around getting young people to sign up for various activities and programmes (Appendix 3, 3). As mentioned earlier, a fan in the focus group said, "[…] *I think there's far too much kind of fixture lists of things you can sign up for"* (Appendix 1, p. 7, ll. 20-22). This is considered communication that particularly focuses on the consumers stakeholder. However, some content within the eight posts is arguably targeting the Brentford F.C. supporters as well.

One post said, "*Over 2500 unwanted books have been donated and will be giving to local schools in our community*" (Appendix 3, 3, B). This post tells of their work and a story, which might directly influence the higher level of impressions. In part due to the nature of the post, which can be argued to, in theory, relate to a variety of important stakeholders and not in the least the Brentford F.C. supporters. A short and concise post which brings forth something slightly relatable and story-driven for the Brentford F.C. supporters. As mentioned in the previous section, Stewart Purvis eluted to this in arguing that the content needed variety in terms of using actual examples of human beings doing their work on behalf of the CST to best illustrate what the CST is about.

Another post that did well in terms of impressions was a post putting female football in focus. In this post, the CST got the message out that every Wednesday, females over the age of 16 were welcome to participate in their free recreational football session (Appendix 3, 3, G). As mentioned earlier, the posts centred around getting people to sign up for their activities can be considered communication with consumers. This, however, did well in terms of impressions, which contradicts the previous trends. An argument could then be made that the content of this post resembles communication, which could target both consumers and Brentford F.C. supporters, thereby satisfying both stakeholders at once.

What the two well-performing posts have in common is precise and concise information sharing. The posts are by no means on a need-to-know level of communication. As an average person, one would not need extensive knowledge on areas to understand what donating books locally and enabling enthusiastic first-time female footballers is about. In contrast, posts such as their Game Changer post are communicated on a slightly less precise premise. They write, "*Young people will work toward creating social action projects that benefit their local community*" (Appendix 3, 3, E). When reading this, it clearly states that they are performing benefitting programmes for the local community, yet it is unclear what they are doing. This is a case where Brentford F.C. supporters as a stakeholder are somewhat neglected in the communication.

6.2.4 Newsletter

A newsletter is considered a different medium than Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Newsletter content will not get mixed up with other content in the same way that one's feeds do so on Social Media. However, the newsletter is where people interested in the CST sign up. Thereto the content on the newsletter should consider the average Brentford F.C. supporter, and the data from the focus group found that, evidently, the content does not. Sharon Wright said, "*I don't think the newsletter gives the whole story of what they do, because I think as Stewart said, they do some really interesting work with lots of different and diverse groups and they work all across West London, not just in Brentford* "(Appendix 1, p. 7, ll. 6-9). The content within the newsletters from the seven provided to us by Tomas Abreu showcases little to no change in content (Appendix 3, 4). It mostly consists of images and designs only providing the minimum information and therefore urging the readers to click the links in the newsletter. These links either send one to the CST's website or Brentford F.C.'s website. Furthermore, each of the seven newsletters promotes about six to eight activities intended for the consumer stakeholder. These activities include "Mini Bees Football Sessions", "Post 16 boys trials", and "Girls Development Centre trials". (Appendix 3, 4). These activities are recurring activities promoted in each newsletter. Sharon mentioned this trend of the newsletter content herself when she said, *"So, I'm not sure that people really understand the depth and reach that the Sports Trust has. And the weekly email tends to be about young people playing football, which I don't* *think necessarily tells people everything about who they are and what they do. Which is a shame, I think*" (Appendix 1, p. 7, ll. 9-13). This point was further verified by Kate Hiscox, who said, "*I get that email like Sharon mentioned. I've been getting that email for years. To be honest, I don't normally read it, because it is about kids' football, and my kids are teenagers now, so it's not really relevant to me"* (Appendix 1, p. 8, ll. 11-13). This shows a somewhat trending pattern that some supporters find the content on the newsletters from the CST to be quite one-dimensional. The variation in content, in general, needed a change altogether, according to Kate, who went on to say that "*They should be diversifying their content. They should talk more about what they actually do, because that would be more interesting to a lot more people, particularly Brentford fans. I don't know exactly what they do, and I've been getting their emails for over six years*" (Appendix 1, p. 8, ll. 16-21).

6.2.5 Sub-conclusion

As mentioned throughout this project, Lee Doyle of the CST considered a lack of engagement of Brentford F.C. supporters in relation to the work done by the CST a problem. It was found in the Salience Model analysis that Brentford F.C. supporters, in fact, should be considered an important stakeholder to the CST. However, this content analysis, coupled with the opinions and thoughts from the focus group with Brentford F.C. supporters, has showcased a somewhat mismatch between the current content from the CST and Brentford F.C. supporters. Their current content arguably favours another stakeholder than the Brentford F.C. supporters, namely the local community, i.e., the consumers of the relevant sporting and charitable activities. However, as mentioned in section 3.4.1, Krippendorff argues that any communication will always be important to someone. Therefore, any content the CST has produced or will produce in the future can never be considered conclusively inaccurate or out of place. It can, however, be concluded that the current trend of the CST's content is not aligned with the interests of the typical Brentford F.C. supporter.

6.3 Uses and Gratifications

After having determined that the Brentford F.C. supporters are an important stakeholder to the CST and that they require a lot of both time and attention, the project went on to examine whether this high salience was reflected in the CST's current content. The content did not seem to indicate that the CST think of the supporters as an important stakeholder, which was further emphasized in the focus group with several supporters in which they expressed how they feel neglected and that the content is by no means interesting to them. Based on these findings, this part of the analysis will seek to identify what exactly the supporters wish and expect to see from the CST on social media (Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram) and in newsletters. This will be done based on a thorough Uses and Gratifications analysis.

6.3.1 Brentford F.C. Supporters' Uses and Gratifications

For this part of the analysis, we created a survey that would help us identify not only why the Brentford F.C. supporters use Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and newsletters but also why they follow the CST on these platforms. The survey asked the respondents about each platform's visual and technological, social, and informational features. The respondents were then asked to indicate which of the statements for each type of feature that was applicable to them. For example, "It (Facebook) allows me to connect with others" (Appendix 4, p. 2, Q.3), which 72% of the respondents ticked off. The results indicated various patterns. For example, Brentford F.C. supporters tend to use Facebook as a way of being connected to others and being part of communities, whereas Twitter is primarily used to gather information and have debates about different topics. This analysis will, therefore, be divided into the five most prominent patterns: Community-building, Discussions/Debates, Information, Entertainment, and Identity. These five patterns are, in fact, the five most prominent gratifications, and they vary depending on the platform. These gratifications are mainly inspired by the 16 gratifications presented by Sundar & Limperos in their research. Additionally, the affordances used in the survey to identify the respondents' gratifications are, more or less, taken directly from Sundar & Limperos' research. However, some affordances were omitted, and some were combined into one affordance as they were very similar. The gratification of Community-building is taken directly from their research, while Information is a gratification identified and coined by us. This gratification is made up of affordances from Sundar & Limperos' gratifications of Filtering/Tailoring and Browsing/Variety-Seeking (Sundar & Limperos 2013, pp. 519-520). It was decided to create this gratification as the survey clearly indicated that many Brentford F.C. supporters use specific platforms to find relevant information, and because Sundar & Limperos did not have a specific Information gratification but rather various gratifications that included information-related affordances. Similarly, the gratification of Discussions/Debates is a gratification we identified and coined as the survey indicated a clear desire for discussions and debates on specific platforms. Once again, Sundar & Limperos did not offer a specific gratification for this but instead several related affordances scattered among other gratifications. This gratification is, therefore, made up of affordances from Agency-enhancement and Bandwagon (Sundar & Limperos 2013, pp. 518-519).

Additionally, the gratification of Entertainment is also coined by us and is made up of affordances from the two gratifications from Sundar and Limperos' research, Browsing/Variety-seeking and Play/Fun (Sundar & Limperos 2013, p. 520). This was done because the survey indicated a significant need for entertainment, which neither of the two mentioned gratifications fulfilled on their own.

Finally, we have chosen to include the gratification of Identity. This gratification is a little different to the others. Sundar & Limperos do not have this gratification in their research, nor do they have many affordances related to this, and the ones they do have scored relatively low in the survey. However, when the respondents were asked specifically about why they follow the CST on social media and the newsletter, some interesting results relating to identity came forth. This will be further explained in section 6.3.1.5.

6.3.1.1 Community-building

One of the most prominent gratifications among the responses from the survey is *community*, or *community-building*, as Sundar & Limperos calls it in their research. This gratification includes the affordances of connecting with others, expanding one's social network, realising that one is part of a community, and building social capital (Sundar & Limperos 2013, p. 518). This gratification is prominent on Facebook, Instagram, and newsletters. It is especially prominent on Facebook with 72% of the respondents indicating that connecting with others is important to them (Appendix 4, p.

2, Q.3). Furthermore, 61% indicated that it is important to them that Facebook allows them to be a part of one or more communities (Appendix 4, p. 2, Q.3). It makes sense that Facebook seems to be used for the community aspect. Facebook provides many community-enhancing features such as groups, pages, and group chats. Facebook groups allow people with the same interest to connect with each other and post relevant content. However, it is impossible for users to tailor a feed exactly to their needs and preferences as Facebook's algorithm will recommend content, show paid promoted content, and show content from strangers because a friend interacted with it. This can create a rather messy feed that makes it easy for users to miss content from the communities they are a part of.

On Instagram, only 38% said that it is important that Instagram allows them to be a part of a community, but 71% said that connecting with others is important (Appendix 4, p. 5, Q.7). This is most likely because Instagram does not have the same community-enhancing features that Facebook does. It is, for example, not possible to create groups on Instagram. However, Instagram still allows users to follow other users and pages, and users can create group chats. Furthermore, the feed on Instagram only includes content from the accounts the user follows. This means that users will not see content from strangers just because someone they follow has commented on or "liked" it. This allows the users to tailor the feed exactly to their needs or preferences, which is a good way of creating a community, contributing to a community, and staying up to date with a community.

The respondents also indicated that community aspects are important to them in newsletters with 52% of the respondents saying that it is important to them that newsletters allow them to be a part of a community (Appendix 4, p. 11, Q.15). This may, at first, seem rather strange as newsletters typically do not allow for interaction, especially not between the users, and newsletters often include information and news stories rather than opinions of others. However, when thinking about it, newsletters often tell relevant stories and information specifically about the organisation publishing the newsletters. Brentford F.C.'s newsletter will include stories and information about the football club. An international trade organisation's newsletter will include stories and information about international trade. The subscribers will, therefore, feel like they are a part of that community as they get all the relevant stories and information about the community. That is probably why so many respondents indicated that the community aspect is important to them when it comes to newsletters. This is also further emphasised when the respondents were asked to indicate why they subscribe to the CST's newsletter specifically. Here, 76% of the respondents agreed (and strongly agreed) that they are subscribed to the CST's newsletter because they feel proud of the club when they see and read about the work they do (Appendix 4, p. 17, Q.20A). Additionally, 88% of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that they are subscribed because they wish to educate themselves on the club's community work. This indicates that the respondents like to read stories and information about this specific community and everything that comes with it. People will feel part of a community when they read stories from and about it. However, as identified in section 6.2, it appears there is a significant lack of this particular gratification across all the CST's platforms.

Finally, the survey results indicate that the community-building gratification is not as important to the respondents on Twitter. 41% of the respondents indicated that the affordance of connecting with others is important to them (Appendix 4, p. 8, Q.11). Similarly, 41% indicated that being part of a community is important (Appendix 4, p. 8, Q.11). These numbers are not as high as those of Facebook and Instagram, which makes sense as users cannot create groups on Twitter, nor can they share long posts as Twitter has a limit of merely 280 characters per post (tweet).

Sundar & Limperos argue that there are four types of technological affordances created by new media, such as social media. The community-building gratification identified in the survey can very well have been created by these affordances that Sundar & Limperos identified in their research. For example, many respondents said that they like how Facebook and Instagram allow them to connect with others and be part of a community. When the respondents were asked specifically to reasons why they follow the CST on social media, 85% of them either agreed or strongly agreed that it is to be part of the community. This indicates that Brentford F.C. supporters want to see content from the CST because it makes them feel like they are a part of the community. They want to not only read the stories but also share the content with others, comment on it and like the content etc.

According to Sundar & Limperos, these are all examples of Agency affordances as they are concerned with being agents or sources of information. In fact, Sundar & Limperos argue that the community-building gratification is an agency-based gratification. Users act more agentic and assume the role of senders as they share their opinion or share information about specific topics. Furthermore, users are also motivated to build community, for example creating Facebook groups, connecting with like-minded people, post comments on others' Instagram posts etc. This gratification is, therefore, a process gratification as it is obtained through using the media rather than from consuming the content. Users have to actively participate in the community-building to obtain this gratification.

6.3.1.2 Discussions/Debates

Another prominent gratification identified in the survey results is the Discussions/Debates gratification. As mentioned earlier, this gratification is made of multiple affordances from two of Sundar & Limperos' presented gratifications. This gratification seems to be highly prominent on Twitter and, to a lesser extent, on Facebook. However, the survey indicates that this gratification is not important to the respondents on Instagram and newsletters.

For Facebook, the survey results indicate that the discussions/debates gratification is important to the respondents as 59% said that they like to know the thoughts and opinions of others (Appendix 4, p. 2, Q.3). However, other affordances, such as being allowed to have a say on things and being allowed to send their thoughts to many others, did not seem to be very important to the respondents with only 33% and 23% indicating significant importance respectively (Appendix 4, p. 2, Q.3). As previously mentioned, Facebook allows its users to create groups where people with the same interests can have debates and discussions about different topics. This is probably the reason why this gratification is somewhat important to the respondents on this platform.

For Twitter, however, the story is quite different. No less than 76% said that the affordance of knowing the thoughts and opinions of others is important to them (Appendix 4, p. 8, Q.11), and 59% said that it is important to them that they can compare their own thought and opinion to those of others (Appendix 4, p. 8, Q.11). These numbers all indicate that the respondents like to use Twitter to have discussions and debates with other people with the same interests as them. It makes sense that, on this platform, affordances such as sharing and comparing thoughts rank very high, as Twitter offers various tools to do so. Users cannot create groups on Twitter, but it is easy to find and follow other people who share (and post about) the same interests as themselves. It is also easy to search for hashtags (often used to identify topics) and thereby find these like-minded people and have debates about specific topics. Twitter has a limit of merely 280 characters per post (tweet), which would suggest that people cannot have proper discussions as messages are limited to such short forms. However, with the comment- and retweet system, users are able to create *threads*, which allows the users to write longer messages and thereby have proper discussions/debates. Furthermore, Twitter is often used by its users as one big debate/discussion forum, which is also reflected in the results of the survey.

In addition to this, many respondents also indicated that sharing opinions with others was important when it came to why the respondents follow the CST on social media, albeit slightly less than when asked about their general media use. With 40%, the majority of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that they follow the CST on social media because it allows them to share their opinion, whereas 15% disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 34% said "neither/or" (Appendix 4, p. 16 Q.18J).

Finally, as previously mentioned, this gratification comprises affordances from Sundar and Limperos' gratifications, Agency-enhancement and Bandwagon. These two gratifications and the affordances hereof are all agency-based. The discussions/debates gratification is, therefore, concerned with how the media allow the users to be agents and sources of information, or rather let users act as sources of content, both individually and collectively, and convey others' reception of their content (Sundar & Limperos 2013, p. 514). Furthermore, this gratification is a process gratification as it is obtained from using the media. Therefore, the user has to actively participate in the discussion to obtain this gratification. This is important for the CST to keep in mind when creating content for Facebook and especially Twitter. The survey indicates that people seek to engage with content rather than just consume it. The CST could, therefore, benefit from posting content that encourages discussions back and forth, and perhaps the CST could even engage in the discussions themselves.

6.3.1.3 Information

Another prominent gratification identified from the survey is *Information*. As previously mentioned, the Information gratification is made up of affordances from Sundar & Limperos' gratifications of Filtering/Tailoring and Browsing/Variety-Seeking. The Information gratification is prominent on Facebook, Twitter, and especially on newsletters.

For Facebook, 53% find it important that Facebook allows them to obtain a wide variety of information, and 52% find it important that they can share information with others (Appendix 4, p. 3, Q.4). It makes sense that Facebook seems to be used for information gathering and sharing. Facebook provides the ability to follow pages that post information relevant to the user, and the users are able to connect with others with whom users can share information. As mentioned in previous sections, the feed from Facebook is made up of Facebook's recommended content, paid promoted content or stranger's content because a friend interacted with it, which can make the feed somewhat disjointed. However, even though the feed on Facebook quickly becomes disjointed with what a user mostly wants to interact with, no less than 63% of the respondents either agree or strongly agree that they follow the CST on social media to find information about upcoming events/programmes (Appendix 4, p. 13, Q.18C). This shows that, even with some interference in the feed, those interested in information from the CST still go to social media and specifically Facebook.

Additionally, the survey indicated that Instagram is not used for information. At least not to the same extent as with Facebook, Twitter and newsletters. Only 12% said that the affordance of being allowed to sort through information is important to them on Instagram (Appendix 4, p. 6, Q.8). Similarly, only 35% indicated that being allowed to obtain a wide variety of information is important to them on Instagram (Appendix 4, p. 6, Q.8). These low numbers could be because Instagram is a much more visual-based medium in forms of images and videos rather than text, which makes conveying information rather difficult.

For the third social media platform, Twitter, no less than 70% of the respondents find it important that Twitter allows them to obtain a wide variety of information (Appendix 4, p. 9, Q.12), and 51% find it important that they can share information with others (Appendix 4, p. 9, Q.12). This shows quite a big difference compared to the data on the use of Instagram. Arguably, Twitter seems a more important medium for the Information gratification. Twitter allows users to follow other people and organisations and thereby influence their own feed, which is probably why 70% find that a wide variety of information can be found on Twitter (Appendix 4, p. 9, Q.12). Thereto, more than half of the respondents also find the ability to share information important. Again, this goes back to how Twitter enables users to design their own feeds. If a user of Twitter becomes uninterested in information from a particular person or organisation, then the user can unfollow or even block content from that party.

Furthermore, one respondent specified that “up-to-date information” is an important visual and technical feature. Even though the response is somewhat misplaced on this specific question, it is nevertheless interesting. This respondent did not find Twitter at all important on other visual and technical features. The respondent cares not for this aspect but only for the information that Twitter enables the respondent to get (Appendix 4, p. 7, Q.10).

Interestingly, 47% either agree or strongly agree that they follow the CST on social media to find information about how to help them. Compared to the 6% who disagree or strongly disagree, it shows that quite a large proportion of followers of the CST are interested in helping and looking for information on this topic (Appendix 4, p. 13. Q. 18D). In addition to this, the focus group showed that many supporters find it difficult to find the information about how to help the CST (Appendix 1, p. 10, ll. 2-8). This is rather critical as the stakeholder analysis showed that the Brentford F.C. supporters are potential significant funders and volunteers. However, if people do not know how and where to help, this could potentially be an entire “market” that the CST is missing out on.

Additionally, 69% of the respondents either agree or strongly agree that they follow the CST on social media to find general information about the CST (Appendix 4, p. 14, Q.18E). This emphasizes that the Information gratification is important to the Brentford F.C. supporters on social media.

With newsletters, a staggering 77% find it important that newsletters provide the most relevant news (Appendix 4, p. 12, Q.16). This makes sense as a person subscribes to a particular organisation for news and content in relation to the work done by said organisation. There is next to no ‘noise’ from this medium as there could be on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter due to inconsistencies in how one’s feed is presented. Furthermore, no less than 62% said that it is important to them that newsletters allow them to obtain a wide variety of information (Appendix 4, p. 12, Q.16). Also, 54% found that newsletter is a convenient news channel (Appendix 4, p. 12, Q. 16). Thereby, newsletters from the CST seem to be the most sensible choice for medium to go to for relevant information. When asked about why the respondents subscribe to the CST's newsletter, 75% agreed or strongly agreed that it is to find information about upcoming events/programmes (Appendix 4, p. 18, Q.20G), and 76% said it is to find general information about the CST (Appendix 4, p. 18, Q.20G).

Again, one respondent specified that obtaining specific information is more important than various visual and technical features when it comes to newsletters. There seems to be a pattern forming with how information is being highly regarded as a gratification amongst some respondents (Appendix 4, p. 10, Q.14). This pattern only grows stronger with the following question in the survey. To the question "Which of the following social factors matter to you when using Newsletters?", one user specified that "*Get the info I am interested in*" was again the most important even though this question was not particularly focused on such a response (Appendix 4, p. 11, Q.15).

As previously mentioned, this gratification comprises affordances from Sundar and Limperos' gratifications Filtering/Tailoring and Browsing/Variety-Seeking. Filtering/Tailoring is an agency-based gratification, while Browsing/Variety-seeking is a navigability-based gratification. This means that it is concerned with how the media allow the users to create content themselves and act as sources of content. However, in this situation, content means creating their own filters that suit the users' preferences in terms of what content they wish to see. By being allowed to customise and set up these filters, the users only see the things (in this situation, *information*) that they wish to see. Additionally, this gratification is also concerned with how the media allow users to move through the medium. By being allowed to freely browse and being able to surf through a variety of information, links etc., the user can obtain a broader range and scope of information. This gratification is, therefore, an essential process gratification, which, if taken away, may lead to great dissatisfaction.

While this can be difficult for the CST to incorporate into the content, they must consider which platforms users use for information versus those they use to merely seek entertainment. The survey indicates that the gratification is prominent on Facebook, Twitter and newsletters, meaning that there is a need for information on said platforms, but the gratification seems to be of particular importance on Twitter and newsletters. Furthermore, the CST must also consider the navigability aspect of their content, as it can lead to complaints if not considered. For example, in the focus group, a participant argued that Twitter has a great disadvantage as posts easily get lost in the stream and can be difficult to find again (Appendix 1, p. 12, ll. 14-28). This can, for example, be solved by utilising the different platforms' tools, such as pinning the most important information as the top post on Twitter, or using Instagram's option to categorise *Instagram stories* which both saves them and makes them easier to find again.

6.3.1.4 Entertainment

The fourth prominent gratification found in the survey is *Entertainment.* As mentioned, this gratification has to do with affordances such as escaping reality or simply just enjoying a good time and having fun by browsing for specific content one enjoys for great fun and entertainment value. This gratification is somewhat prominent on all platforms, but especially on Instagram.

On Facebook, the survey showed that 79% say Facebook is easy to use, and 41% said that Facebook is fun to use (Appendix 4, p. 1, Q.2). While the latter number may not be the majority, it is by far the second highest ranked visual/technical affordance for Facebook, which indicates that it is rather important to the Brentford F.C. supporters. This could, in part, be due to the algorithm Facebook has invented, which allows for targeted content toward any user. Thereby, if one user has a trend of watching rather comical football highlights videos, this said user would get shown more of these types of videos. However, Facebook is not a medium such as YouTube where one can search for very specific types of content. On Facebook, one can search for pages or groups with which one shares a common value. This could by any means be groups about Brentford F.C. where a supporter of the football club could come to read others' opinions, watch highlights from the latest match and read rumours about potential transfer signings. All things could be presumed to be of entertaining and fun value for a Brentford F.C. supporter.

On Instagram, the survey found that 62% find that Instagram is fun to use and explore (Appendix 4, p. 4, Q.6). This is quite a jump in percentile if you compare it to users of Facebook. This is partly due to the nature of Instagram as a social media platform. Here one, as a football supporter, gets the possibility of following professional football players, teams, and leagues rather closely. Not only that, but Instagram is also relatively simple in its interface and possibilities. As mentioned earlier, Instagram does not have the same features that Facebook does, or rather, it is not possible to create groups, events etc., on Instagram. The medium is kept simple, and one user specifically pointed it out by saying, "*I basically use Instagram for comic strips. It has a nice interface for things such as that*" (Appendix 4, p. 4, Q.6).

Furthermore, the feed on Instagram only includes content from the accounts the user follows. 59% of respondents find it important that Instagram allows them to surf for things they are interested in (Appendix 4, p. 6, Q.8). By allowing the users full control over the content they receive, the users are then more in control of the purpose for which they use Instagram. As mentioned earlier, 62% find Instagram fun to use, which tells us that a majority of Instagram users are using Instagram for affordances, such as letting them play around and having fun while exploring. Hence, entertainment is a gratification very much shown amongst users of Instagram.

The respondents who use Twitter showed similar results to that on Facebook. 43% find that Twitter is fun to use and explore (Appendix 4, p. 7, Q.10), and no less than 78% said that it is easy to use (Appendix 4, p. 7, Q.10). As with Facebook, the 43% saying that it is fun to explore may not be the majority, but it is the second highest ranked visual/technical affordance for Twitter, which indicates that it is rather important to the Brentford F.C. supporters.

Additionally, with 94%, almost everyone indicated that they follow the CST on social media because they wish to read stories about their work (Appendix 4, p. 15, Q.18G). This all indicates that the Brentford F.C. supporters wish to read interesting and fun stories from the CST, or rather, they seek the entertainment gratification on social media.

Finally, the gratification is also prominent on newsletters, even though the initial numbers about general media use do not show this. These numbers, for example, only indicate that 15% think that it is important to them that newsletters are fun to use and explore (Appendix 4, p. 10, Q.14). However, when the respondents were asked why they are subscribed to the CST's newsletter, 100% either agreed or strongly agreed that they want to read stories about their work (Appendix 4, p. 15, Q.18G). In addition to this, in the focus group, multiple participants argued that they wanted to read more stories about the CST's work, and not just information about children's football etc. For example: "*They could be so much more exciting, because I know they've got some amazing stories, because I've heard stories about what they've done. Like that thing about the women's prisons, just something like that to just engage people in it*" (Appendix 1, pp. 8-9, ll. 29-3), and "*There's no lack of stories really, but they seem to approach publicity as just getting people to sign up for the programmes, which of course is partially what they do, but they just need to widen the way they present themselves*" (Appendix 1, p. 17, ll. 11-14). A participant also mentioned the CST's newsletter in particular and argued that it had a significant lack of good stories:

"*I get that email like Sharon mentioned. I've been getting that email for years. To be honest, I don't normally read it, because it is just about kids' football, and my kids are teenagers now, so it's not really relevant to me.* […] *it's all about children's football, and I know that that's not all they do. They should be diversifying their content. They should talk more about what they actually do, because that would be more interesting to a lot more people, particularly Brentford fans*"
(Appendix 1, p. 8, ll. 11-20).

This all indicates that the Brentford F.C. supporters seek interesting and fun stories, or rather, they seek the entertainment gratification. Finally, another participant in the focus group mentioned that the CST lacks storytelling: "*But what I think they lack is, it's a bit of a cliché nowadays, but it's storytelling, which is actually using examples of human beings doing interesting things to illustrate their work. I think there's far too much kind of fixture lists of things you can sign up for. I understand why that's needed, but I don't think it captures imagination*" (Appendix 1, p. 7, ll. 18-22). This also emphasizes that even if the CST do post stories every now and then, they must be far more entertaining if they wish to increase the engagement from the Brentford F.C. supporters.

This gratification is made up of Sundar and Limperos' gratifications Browsing/Variety-seeking and Play/Fun. These two gratifications are both navigability based, which of course, makes the Entertainment gratification navigability based as well. The gratification concerns the fun element of moving through spaces, the immersion when the navigational structure of well-thought-out interfaces affords a continuous sense of exploration and smooth transitions (Sundar & Limperos

2013, pp. 516-517). Using Sundar and Limperos' definition of the classifications of gratifications (content, process and social), we would argue that this gratification can be both content and social. The user can obtain the gratification by consuming an entertaining piece of content, but the gratification can also be obtained by freely browsing through content on different platforms. This is, perhaps, the most critical gratification for the CST to consider as it seems to be where most of the Brentford F.C. supporters' issues with the content lie. The supporters do not feel entertained by the content, and there is a distinct mismatch between how sought for the gratification is and what type of content they get (primarily information-based content, as identified in the content analysis).

6.3.1.5 Identity

Another prominent gratification identified is *Identity*. As previously mentioned, this gratification is slightly different from the others in this analysis. Sundar & Limperos did not have an Identity gratification in their research, but they did present a few affordances that are related to identity. "It allows me to assert my identity" is a very obvious example of such identity-related affordance, but it was not ranked highly by the respondents on any platform. Other relevant affordances will be discussed in this part of the analysis, but as will be illustrated, neither of them ranks highly in the results. The identity gratification, therefore, does not seem to be very prominent on any of the platforms when the respondents were asked about why they use the different platforms in general. However, multiple identity-related affordances appeared when the respondents were asked specifically about why they follow the CST on the different platforms. For example when 76% of the respondents said that they are subscribed to the CST's newsletter because they feel proud of the club when they read stories about the community work (Appendix 4, p. 17, Q.20).

For Facebook, only 6% of the respondents said that the affordance of asserting one's identity is important (Appendix 4, p. 2, Q.3), which would indicate that perhaps the gratification of Identity is not sought on this platform. Furthermore, another identity-related affordance is customising and tailoring a feed to reflect the user's interests. However, this affordance did also not seem to be very important to the respondents, with only 21% indicating that it is important to them that Facebook allows them to customise what they want to see (Appendix 4, p. 1, Q.2). Additionally, 43% said that it is important to them that Facebook allows them to surf for things that they are interested in

(Appendix 4, p. 3, Q.4). While this number is higher than those of the beforementioned affordances, the majority has still not ticked this off as being important to them. This may not mean that the majority do not find it important at all. They may just have found other affordances more important. However, the gratification of *Identity* does not seem to be prominent on Facebook.

For Instagram, 15% of the respondents said that asserting their identity is important to them (Appendix 4, p. 5, Q.7), which is still not a lot, but it is higher than that of Facebook. This increase could be because Instagram is often used to show off one's lifestyle, holiday photos, the food they are having etc., through photos or short videos accompanied by a brief sentence. However, this does not seem to be very important to the Brentford F.C. supporters who participated in this survey. Furthermore, 21% of the respondents indicated that the affordance of being allowed to customise what they want to see is important to them (Appendix 4, p. 4, Q.6).

The respondents also seemed to indicate that the gratification of Identity is not important to them on Twitter. Once again, only 5% of the respondents said that they use it to assert their identity (Appendix 4, p. 8, Q.11), and 46% indicated that the affordance of being allowed to surf for things that are interesting to them is important (Appendix 4, p. 9, Q.12).

As illustrated, when the respondents were asked about their general media use, they did not seem to attribute the Identity gratification much importance. However, this perception was different when they were asked about why they follow the CST on the different platforms. The respondents were asked to which extent they agreed or disagreed with statements as to why they follow the CST on social media as well as why they subscribe to the CST's newsletter. No less than 88% either agreed or strongly agreed that they follow the CST on social media because they want to show their support (Appendix 4, p. 14, Q.18F). This is not exactly an affordance, but it does resemble the affordance presented in Sundar & Limperos' research: Asserting one's identity. By showing one's support, one also asserts their identity by declaring, "this is who I am, and this is something I believe in or like". Furthermore, no less than 94% agreed or strongly agreed that they follow the CST on social media because they feel proud of their club (Brentford F.C.) when they see the good work that they do (Appendix 4, p. 15, Q.18I). This is another example of an identity-related statement that is not exactly an affordance in itself, but could resemble the affordance of "featuring content that is a true reflection of oneself". The Brentford F.C. supporters follow the CST on social media because they post content that truly reflects parts of their identity. Something they care about and take pride in. This statement also ranks high when asked why they are subscribed to the newsletter. 76% either agreed or strongly agreed that they are subscribed because they feel proud (Appendix 4, p. 17, Q.20A).

Additionally, in the focus group with the Brentford F.C. supporters, one of the participants said: " *I've been getting that email* (the CST newsletter) *for years. To be honest, I don't normally read it, because it is just about kids' football, and my kids are teenagers now, so it's not really relevant to me.* [...] *They should be diversifying their content. They should talk more about what they actually do, because that would be more interesting to a lot more people, particularly Brentford fans*" (Appendix 1, p. 8, ll. 11-20). In this quote, the respondent says that she is subscribed to the CST's newsletter because she wants to see and read more about what the CST does, which the participant also claims other Brentford F.C. supporters would like. Despite not meeting this need, the participant claims that she is subscribed for this affordance, which resembles the affordance of being allowed to surf for things that one is interested in.

The identity gratification is, as mentioned, based on multiple affordances from Sundar & Limperos' research. As previously mentioned, only between 5 to 15 per cent of the respondents indicated that it is important to them that the medium allows them to assert their identity or that the medium features content that is a reflection of them. According to Sundar & Limperos, this particular affordance is agency based, but the gratification as a whole is not limited to agency only. For example, the affordance of being allowed to surf for things that interest one. This affordance is navigability based and was ticked off by 43% for Facebook (Appendix 4, p. 3, Q.4), 59% for Instagram (Appendix 4, p. 6, Q.8), and 46% on Twitter (Appendix 4, p. 9, Q.12). This affordance is navigability based as it is the medium's architectural and structural design that allows the user to freely navigate through content to search for content that suits their interests and preferences. Furthermore, this affordance is closely related to the affordance of being allowed to customise what the user wants to see (Appendix 4, p. 7, Q.10). This affordance is agency based rather than navigability based as it is more focused on what the user chooses to do rather than what the medium allows them to do.

Although these affordances did not seem to be important to the respondents in terms of their general media use, we would argue that the respondents showed signs of attributing importance to the gratification when asked why they follow the CST on the different platforms. For example, when asked why they follow the CST on social media and their newsletter, many respondents indicated that it is because they feel proud of their club when they read stories about the community work (Appendix 4, pp. 15-17, Q.18I & Q.20A). This shows how the respondents use the CST's content to reinforce their identity. Therefore, despite the low percentages of the initial affordance at first glance, we would argue that this gratification is evidently important to the respondents, who may not even be aware of it. The CST should, therefore, attempt to incorporate this aspect into their content and strongly utilise what the Brentford F.C. supporters identify with. For example, the Brentford F.C. brand, the local community etc.

6.3.2 Sub-conclusion

In this analysis, five different gratifications were identified in the results of the survey: Community-building, Discussions/debates, Information, Entertainment, and Identity. Where the respondents sought these gratifications varied greatly from medium to medium. The Community-building gratification was prominent on Facebook, Instagram, and newsletters, but especially on Facebook. This gratification is about the need to build and partake in a community. The Discussions/Debates gratification is highly prominent on Twitter and, to a lesser extent, on Facebook. This gratification is about how the media allow the users to be agents and sources of information, and thus participate in discussions about relevant topics. The Information gratification was prominent on all but one medium, which is Instagram. The Entertainment gratification was somewhat prominent on all platforms, but Instagram was shown as the medium where the Entertainment gratification was most prominent. Finally, the Identity gratification was also prominent on all platforms despite the initial numbers from the survey telling a different story. This gratification is about asserting one's identity and using a medium that features content that reflects one's identity. Conclusively, the analysis based on the survey has shown that the stakeholder, Brentford F.C. supporters, uses various media depending on which gratification they need fulfilling, and that the CST must consider these gratifications when creating content for the different media.

7. Recommendation

Through the analysis of this project, we found that the Brentford Community Sports Trust should consider the following recommendations to increase the engagement from the Brentford F.C. supporters:

First and foremost, we found that Brentford F.C. supporters are to be considered a stakeholder of equal importance as that of consumers of the activities and funders (restricted and unrestricted). Therefore, this recommendation should be considered important as it appears there might be quite an opportunity of interest if capitalising on the needs of the Brentford F.C. supporters.

During a focus group, some supporters spoke about the lack of interesting content (in the eyes of a Brentford F.C. supporter) as well as a general confusion about what the CST does.

No content can ever truly be deemed wrong for any medium, but the following recommendations highlight why the Brentford F.C. supporters are using various media to begin with. Keeping their use of a medium in mind whilst creating content should help obtain better engagement throughout the different media.

Brentford F.C. supporters seem to enjoy building and participating in communities. This means that users actively participate in community building and, therefore, use the media rather than consume the content. The CST should, therefore, be aware of the importance of creating content related to communities, as this will strengthen the Brentford F.C. supporters' feeling of being part of the community.

The Brentford F.C. supporters act as sources of content, or rather it indicates that people seek to engage with content rather than just consume it. This is important for the CST to keep in mind when creating content for Facebook and especially Twitter. The CST could benefit from posting content that encourages discussions back and forth, and perhaps the CST could even engage in the discussions themselves.

It is important that the CST considers which platforms users use for information versus which ones they use to merely seek entertainment. According to the Brentford F.C. supporters, the information they seek is centred around interesting stories that closely follow the CST or the people it helps. In other words, content that is more story-driven as opposed to factually driven. Furthermore, the CST must also consider the navigability aspect of their content, as it can lead to complaints if not being considered. For example, utilising the different platforms' tools, such as pinning the most important information as the top post on Twitter, or using Instagram's option to categorise Instagram stories which both saves them and makes them easier to find again.

In relation to what is mentioned earlier, the supporters do not feel entertained by the content, and there is a distinct mismatch between how sought for entertaining content is and what type of content they get. The Brentford F.C. supporters appear to use Instagram, more so than other media, for entertainment purposes. However, this does not mean entertaining content should only be posted on Instagram.

The focus group found that the Brentford F.C. supporters use the CST's content to reinforce their identity. Therefore, the CST should attempt to incorporate this aspect into their content

and strongly utilise what the Brentford F.C. supporters identify with. For example, the Brentford F.C. brand, the local community etc. The supporters want story-driven content to in some way "brag" about Brentford F.C. as a football club in relation to the work done by the CST. However, as mentioned earlier, the majority of supporters have little to no knowledge of the work. Consider story-driven content posted on the appropriate medium and the supporters' identity would be reinforced as well as engagement levels should rise.

8. Conclusion

This project sought to examine why the Brentford F.C. supporters are not showing much interest in the CST's online content and how the CST can change this by meeting the Brentford F.C. supporters' expectations of the online content. Through a stakeholder analysis based on Mitchell et al.'s Stakeholder Salience Model, we identified eight stakeholders of the CST. These stakeholders were then examined to determine their salience and whether or not attention to them and their potential claims is warranted. This examination revealed that the Brentford F.C. supporters are, in fact, a salient stakeholder with both Power and Legitimacy. This makes them a Dominant stakeholder with a genuine possibility of becoming a Definitive stakeholder (the most salient of all) should they obtain Urgency. The project poses that the CST does not consider the Brentford F.C. supporters a salient stakeholder as the representative from the CST did not mention them when asked to list the stakeholders of the CST. This hypothesis was then carried on to a content analysis of the CST's online content in the form of the eight latest posts from Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, as well as the seven latest newsletters. The content analysis confirmed the hypothesis that the salience of the Brentford F.C. supporters was not reflected in the content as it was, more or less, exclusively targeting the consumers of the CST's programmes and activities. This answers the first part of this project's research question of why the Brentford F.C. supporters are not showing interest in the content. They are simply not seen as important, and thus the content is targeted at another important stakeholder.

Having established that the Brentford F.C. supporters are indeed an important stakeholder and that their salience should be reflected in the CST's content, which it is not, we proceeded to examine how the CST can change this for the better. This was done by conducting a Uses and Gratification analysis based on Sundar and Limperos' work from 2013. This analysis aimed to understand why the Brentford F.C. supporters use Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and newsletters, as well as why they specifically follow the CST on the same platforms. Through this analysis, we identified five prominent, and thus important, gratifications that the Brentford F.C. supporters seek on the beforementioned platforms: Community-building, Discussions/Debates, Information, Entertainment, and Identity. The U&G analysis shows that it is critical that the CST considers the different gratifications in terms of what type of content should be posted on which platforms. The

U&G analysis indicated that Brentford F.C. supporters seek the gratification of Community-building on Facebook, Instagram, and newsletters. Discussions/Debates is prominent on Twitter and, to a lesser extent, on Facebook. Information is prominent on Facebook, Twitter, and especially on newsletters. Entertainment is prominent on all platforms, but especially on Instagram. Finally, identity was prominent on all platforms despite the initial numbers from the survey telling a different story. These gratifications, and where they are prominent, must be considered and incorporated into the CST's content if they want more engagement from the supporters:

The Community-building gratification indicates that users are motivated to build community, for example creating Facebook groups, connecting with like-minded people, post comments on others' Instagram posts etc. This gratification is obtained by using the media rather than consuming the content. Users have to actively participate in the community building to obtain this gratification. The CST should, therefore, be aware of the importance of creating content related to communities, as this will strengthen the Brentford F.C. supporters' feeling of being part of the community.

The Discussions/Debates gratification indicates that users act as sources of content, or rather it indicates that people seek to engage with content rather than just consume it. This is important for the CST to keep in mind when creating content for Facebook and especially Twitter. The CST could benefit from posting content that encourages discussions back and forth, and perhaps the CST could even engage in the discussions themselves.

For the Information gratification, it is important that the CST considers which platforms users use for information versus which ones they use to merely seek entertainment. Furthermore, the CST must also consider the navigability aspect of their content, as it can lead to complaints if not considered. For example, utilising the different platforms' tools, such as pinning the most important information as the top post on Twitter, or using Instagram's option to categorise *Instagram stories* which both saves them and makes them easier to find again.

The Entertainment gratification is, perhaps, the most critical gratification for the CST to consider. The supporters do not feel entertained by the content, and there is a distinct mismatch between how sought for the gratification is and what type of content they get (primarily information-based content, as identified in the content analysis).

The Identity gratification shows how the respondents use the CST's content to reinforce their identity. Therefore, the CST should attempt to incorporate this aspect into their content and strongly utilise what the Brentford F.C. supporters identify with. For example, the Brentford F.C. brand, the local community etc.

Therefore, this project can conclude that the Brentford F.C. supporters do not show interest in the CST's content because it is not targeted at them and that there is a significant mismatch between what type of content they seek versus the type of content they get. This issue can be solved by considering the gratifications identified in the U&G analysis and incorporating these into the content. Furthermore, it is important that the content varies depending on the platforms, as not all platforms are used for the same purposes.

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