

The Wonder of Fanaticism in Football

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Abstract

Objectives:

Current image of a fan is rather one-sided and stereotypical, focusing mainly on the negative and extreme forms of fanaticism. This study focuses on showing the multiplicity of forms that fanaticism really exists in, including a personal side that is not usually visible to other people.

Methodology:

The form of videography was chosen, as it gives the opportunity to show how fans look and act like in their everyday surroundings. Videography provides the most suitable tools in showing all different sides of the phenomenon without interfering too much to the interpretation process.

Key findings:

Fans have created rules for fanaticism, and this has led a high level of brand loyalty that cannot be found anywhere else. People narrate their lives through touching points that happen in their life. These moments must fit into the own life story and their “desired self”. Being a fan constantly provides appropriate moments and touching points to fit to the desired life story.

People want to associate with something bigger, but yet keep some distance and not get too attached to the phenomenon. This closeness experienced afar – phenomenon can take place, for instance, by being part of communities that are situated in a distance. Keeping distance may at times be seen as fans wanting to *disassociate* themselves from other fans, even those that are fans of the same team. Fans want to make difference between “real” fans and others who are not.

Keywords fanaticism, fan, football, consumer behaviour, consumer culture, identity, narrative

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Tiivistelmä

Tutkimuksen tavoitteet:

Faneja on kuvattu tutkimuksissa melko yksipuolisesti ja stereotyyppisesti. Monesti huomio on kiinnittynyt negatiivisiin ja äärimmäisiin faniuden muotoihin ja niihin ihmisiin jotka haluavat kuulua fyysiseen faniyhteisöön. Tämä tutkimus pyrki tuomaan esiin ilmiön moninaisuutta, mukaan lukien monesti piilossa pysyvän, henkilökohtaisen puolen, sekä kuulumisen etäältä vaikuttaviin yhteisöihin.

Tutkimusmenetelmä:

Tutkimusmenetelmäksi valikoitui videografia, jonka avulla on mahdollista esitellä faneja konkreettisesti heidän jokapäiväisissä ympäristöissään. Videografian avulla on mahdollista tuoda esiin ilmiön eri puolia, säilyttäen samalla lopullisen mielipiteen muodostamisen katsojalla.

Tutkimuksen tulokset:

Fanit ovat itse luoneet säännöt toiminnalle, mikä on osaltaan johtanut eriskummallisen vahvaan uskollisuuteen. Vastaavaa brändiuskollisuutta ei löydy minkään muun tuotteen osalta. Tämä on hämmentävää siksi että itse valinta voi tapahtua melko sattumanvaraisesti. Lisäksi, ihmiset haluavat olla osana jotain suurempaa, mutta samaan aikaan säilyttää etäisyyttä ilmiöön. Tämä ”kaukaa koettu läheisyys” voi tapahtua esimerkiksi kun henkilö kokee olevansa osana fyysisesti kaukana sijaitsevaa yhteisöä. Etäisyyden säilyttäminen voi joskus näkyä jopa niin, että fanit haluavat erottautua muista faneista, vaikka nämä fanit kannattaisivat samaa joukkuetta. Faneille on tärkeää erotella ”tosifanit” ja muut fanit.

Ihmiset tekevät elämistään tarinoita, koostamalla sen erinäisistä kokemuksista, tapahtumista ja hetkistä. Näiden osasten on sovittava ihmisen omaan elämäntarinaan ja haluttuun kuvaan itsestä. Fanina oleminen tarjoaa jatkuvasti sopivia hetkiä, joita voidaan sopeuttaa halutulla tavalla omaan elämäntarinaan.

Avainsanat fanius, fani, kuluttajakäyttäytyminen, identiteetti, narratiivi

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1 Introduction

1.1 Research Background

As traditions are losing meaning and individualism gaining momentum (see Heinonen, 2005, 254-255) people are seeking new ways to express themselves and new phenomena to hold on to. Many traditional communities (locality-based, extended family networks) have given room to other sources of community, such as fan cultures. Mass media resources, consumer goods and increase in social performativity, have extended an individual's ability to form links with multiple fluid communities in their everyday lives (Crawford, 2004, 159).

Media provide individuals countless communities as options to choose from, expanding over local boundaries that previously defined the limits of social networks in many ways. This, then, has enabled, as Heinonen (2005) calls it, the "*closeness experienced afar*". What he means by this is that people can act as members of communities that are situated, for instance, in other countries around the world, and nonetheless feel closely attached to them.

So, traditions are no longer strongly connected to local and social interaction, and as the role of free time activities as building blocks for person's identity is growing, being a fan offers a way to keep meaningful traditions in one's life. (Heinonen, 2005, 245-255). As mentioned by Schouten and McAlexander: "*in our consumer culture, people define themselves in terms of activities, objects, and relationships that give their lives meaning*" (1995, 59).

Media plays an important role in the development of fanaticism, especially when we take a look at the phenomenon in global scale. "Individuals can now connect and form affiliations and allegiances to sport via solely electronic means, especially via Internet, at the level of imagination" (Taylor 1995, see Crawford 143). Through mass media, digitalization and Internet, fanaticism, that was before associated with locality, has been "re-invented", as is the case, for instance, with Finnish football fans who are fans of a foreign team.

For many, football fanaticism has become mainly a televisual experience and football itself a televisual text (Heinonen, 2005, 250). Television does not create the event, the football match, but it still tells and visualizes the story. These texts have become crucial (although not compensatory) tools, in helping fans situate themselves into the world, build their identity and differentiate themselves from others (ibid. 250).

1.2 Marketing Perspective

From the perspective of marketing, fans can be considered as extremely loyal customers. In football especially, where changing one's favorite team is considered unfavorable, most fans remain loyal to their team for the rest of their lives. They are also more than willing to buy products related to their team. Though some fans may seek actively to resist over-commercialization of, and within, their chosen interest group, they are at the same time "ideal consumers" (Cavicchi 1998, see Crawford , 2004, 36) as they represent a high level of brand loyalty.

Parker and Stuart (1997, 510) have noticed this as well: *"What other product sectors share brand loyalty approaching that shown by football supporters to their favorite brand? The answer is simple: none!"* There is something truly extraordinary about football fanaticism, as people around the world, from other countries than their favorite teams, bear such loyalty to them.

At a time when co-creation is highlighted, companies put effort in finding the most enthusiastic customers (and how to turn the rest into more loyal ones). Research on fanaticism could provide answers for the marketers searching for improved customer loyalty. The time has passed when customers were seen as passive victims of marketing actions, as the focus is moving from average consumers towards finding active, brand loyal customers. Furthermore, as claimed by Smith (2007, 78): "Classic concepts to build brands based on cognitive and utilitarian factors...have begun to give way to emotional branding, viral marketing, and fan-based marketing that increasingly works in the manner of cults to create impassioned devotees and brand evangelists."

1.3 Research Gap

Research has concentrated strongly on the extreme forms of fanaticism, and often it has looked at the issue from a negative viewpoint. It is understandable to notice why this is so: by looking at the extreme fanatics, the behavior of a fan feels easier to study and recognize. One could say that only the extreme behavior is significantly differing. People want to find out why other people act so strangely, and since other (less-crazy) fans behave more like other people, they are not seen as interesting for study purposes. A similar problem has been noticed also in anthropological research where many times the focus is on the "other" world, i.e. strange cultures in jungles, or as stated by Ruby (2000, 186), "partially clothed brown and black people who live far away from their

audiences". In addition, fanaticism has been viewed mainly as a communal phenomenon, i.e. researched in community contexts. This may have led to a situation where the fans found for research were the ones that wanted to be a part of a fan community, and, as a result, all fans were labeled this way (Seregina, 2011, 80).

All in all, if we are to understand the contemporary nature of fan cultures, we need to understand the contemporary and changing nature of fan cultures and patterns, including those that do not fit to traditional patterns or images of fan activities (Crawford, 2004, 33, 160). This includes extreme fans, hooligans (to some extent), but most importantly, it also includes all those fans that do not fit to descriptions of these groups of individuals. Fans that do not conform to the typical image of a traditional fan are largely ignored in a large number of discussions of fan cultures.

What this does is that it distorts the truth about what is essential about fanaticism, and what being a fan is all about. The relativity of things has gotten out of hands, as media and research look into the far end of fanaticism. If researchers assume fanatical consumption is some distant end of a "normal" consumption continuum, fanatics will become just flawed normals (Redden & Steiner, 2000, 333). As stated by Crawford (2004, 158):

"...a great deal of research and discussion of fans has tended to focus on exceptional forms of fan culture, such as football hooligans or highly dedicated fans, and taken as evidence to support this paradigm. Hence, more ordinary or even mundane everyday forms of consumption have been largely ignored. It is primarily within these ordinary everyday practices that patterns of sport related consumption and fan culture are located...In order to understand fanaticism, one must look into these patterns and how they are located in everyday social patterns, and how individuals play an active role within the creation of these."

1.4 Aim of the Study

My aim is not to state what an average fan is, since that would not be meaningful. Instead, the aim is to shed light on the multiplicity of forms that fanaticism exists in, and maybe bring out some features of what an average fan is not. It is difficult to define exactly what constitutes a fan, since it is not just an objective "thing", but instead a lived experience and source of identity (Crawford, 2004, 49). It is my aim to bring out the true nature of fans, as I claim that focusing on fan communities and extreme forms of fanaticism (hooliganism, etc.) brings out only the tip of the iceberg, as the big picture of fanaticism remains hidden.

This study is founded on the work of Rose & Wood (2005), who look into the world of paradox negotiation and consumption of authenticity through reality television. According to them, *Authenticity is (a function of successfully negotiating the paradoxes inherent in the genre) – a “reconciliation of the tensions between what is subjectively real and fantastic”* (Rose & Wood, 2005, 288)

This reconciliation happens constantly in the lives of fans, as they deal with various contradictory situations and aspects, whether they realize it or not. My aim is to show how fans negotiate paradoxes and, most importantly, make sense of their identity through fanaticism and through various contradictions related to it.

1.5 Research Problem

The main research problem for this study is

What fanaticism consists of: what happens during the fanaticism that keeps the fan going?

Besides that, I am interested in finding out answers for the following questions:

How does fanaticism begin?

What kind of rules and conditions exist for being a fan?

How do fans/individuals connect with others, and how they construct their identity through fanaticism?

1.6 Outline of the Study

I will begin with a short look at the theoretical background. Then I will go through the beginning phase of fanaticism, and the team (object of fanaticism) selection process. After that I will go through the constitutive guidelines of being a fan and lastly delve into the personal level of paradox negotiation and sense making. Finally I will give my concluding thoughts related to theoretical and managerial implications, suggestions for further research, and limitations of the study.

2 Theoretical Background

Fanaticism has been studied quite extensively in such fields as psychology and sociology (Passmore, 2003). The definition of fanaticism is not really clear, since it means different things to different people (Thorne and Bruner, 2006). Chung et al. (2008, 333) defines fanaticism as a “unique form of loyalty characterized by strong, intense, and extreme levels of commitment, allegiance, devotion, passion, emotional attachment, enthusiasm, and involvement” and shortly put as “extraordinary devotion to an object”. This does not give us too much hindsight on what fanaticism actually is. We all have some sort of common understanding of what being a fan means; we all know people who are fans of a sports team or a music genre or a band. It is not enough to define the term based on one community, and even many communities may not give us a straight and comprehensive answer. Redden and Steiner call fanaticism a “fluid concept that must be handled with care” (2000, 323-324). They also put together a collection of various definitions of fanaticism and fanatics, which shows how even more clearly the previous focus on the most extreme and negative forms of the phenomenon (ibid. 325).

As for defining a fan, we need to be careful not to have too a narrow view. Previous studies have defined a fan as “A person with an overwhelming liking or interest towards a particular person, group, trend, artwork, cause, brand, or idea” (Seregina, 2011, 9). Another way to define a fan is simply to ask people whether they see themselves as fans or not. Many times the fan will often self-identify as a fan (see Thorne and Bruner, 2006). This is an aspect (mentioned earlier) of internal involvement, which is essential in being a fan.

Most of the definitions have given more or less negative estimates of fans. As an example, a fanatic has been previously defined, for instance, as a person who is “wildly extravagant in opinion or views, as with religion or politics” (Scribner’s Dictionary; see Passmore, 2003, 212), whereas the concept of fanaticism has originally been created as a label for those who “do not adhere the norm” (Becker, 1963; see Smith et al. 2007, 83). As more research is done on the topic, the definitions will surely get more positive.

3 Methodology

3.1 Videography

Videography is suitable for this specific study for few reasons. First, fanaticism is a very subjective term and it has been defined in multiple ways. It is also understood by almost infinite ways. So, when analyzing, it makes sense to leave some room for the interpretation to the viewers/readers. Videography makes this possible far better than presenting findings in textual form. As stated by Smith et al. (2007, 79) "One of videography's greatest strengths perhaps is that it potentially opens up more avenues to free interpretive play of consumer "texts". "

Second, through videography it is possible to show fans in their (actual) everyday surroundings, acting out as fans, and see them talking about fanaticism and matters related to it. Through this way it is possible to see how people see their own fanaticism as part of their life. I believe it is very necessary to see fans to understand how they actually are (what they look like, how they talk, act, etc.). Since fanaticism is such a personal and subjective experience, it makes sense to let the voices of fans themselves be heard, and their actions to be seen. So, through videography it is possible to really change the image that people possess about fans.

"Films are a very simple and a very narrow form in many ways. You can't say as much in a film as you can in writing, but what you can say with great conviction. For this reason, they are very well-suited to portraying the lives of primitive people whose lives are simply lived and who feel strongly, but whose activities are external and dramatic rather than internal and complicated (Flaherty 1949, see Ruby 86).

Fans aren't exactly primitive people. But still, it is crucial to get into the actual situations, because in reality most of what fans do basically happens in ways that are invisible to other people. The challenge is to make the actions visible and behavior of fans captured to film. And as this study points out, a lot of activity takes place when fans are alone and/or on the personal side of fanaticism. Ruby predicts that the future of ethnographic film lies in the discovery and exploration of the cultural scenarios that reside within the everyday life of ordinary people (Ruby, 2000, 71).

"Culture can be seen as enacted through visible symbols embedded in behavior – gestures, body movements, and space use situated in constructed and natural environments. These elements are arranged into something resembling a film script...The socio-cultural self is the sum of the scenarios in which one participates as a performer and as an audience member... The role of the

ethnographic filmmaker is to discover the scripts and discern which are the most useful and revealing of the aspect of culture under study, and to turn these performances into a film. This general vantage point is, of course, a foundation from which the ethnographer can then proceed to the specific theoretical questions that motivate the research.” (Ruby, 2000, 240-241)

3.2 In-depth Interviews

It is necessary to do in-depth qualitative interviews to really get to the very nature of fanaticism. Being a somewhat private matter, this seems to be the only way to get to a level deep enough for revealing the true reasons behind fanaticism. Moreover, fanaticism has a private side, which is also one of the main focuses of my study. It has been found that fans do not use their time and money on being a fan just for the reasons affiliated with community and group. After all, it is “one of the most subjectively felt and understood experiences of an individual” (Smith, 2007, 78). In-depth and personal interviews are the right tools for addressing this.

Instead of quantity, concerning the interviews, quality is far more important. I decided to conduct altogether eight in-depth interviews. The average length of an interview was 1 h 20 mins, most of them lasting 1.5 hours. I had prepared lots of questions (40-50, see Appendix 1) for the interviews, which I then used varyingly, according to the situation.

My aim was to let the interviewees tell their own views as much as possible, but still guiding the discussion at times to a certain direction. As with life stories (a movement toward acknowledging personal truth from the subjective point of view as well as a movement towards the validity of narrative (Atkinson, 1998, 7), my aim was to create a first-person narrative with the researcher removed as much as possible from the text (ibid. 2). The more I interviewed people, the more natural I became, which meant that I was able to cope with fewer questions. As Atkinson stated, “The key to getting the best interview is in the flexibility and being able to adapt to specific circumstances.” (ibid. 25)

During the last few interviews I clearly noticed that I had reached a saturation point, i.e. there was nothing significant left to gain from making more interviews. Each of the interviews had quite a lot similarity, but yet all included some unique characteristics. Conducting more interviews would

definitely bring more clarity and depth into the analysis, but in the big picture they would only be minor issues and stories.

All of the eight interviewees were male (20-30 years old, except one over 50), as I could not find any female fans that were willing to participate to the videography. Overall, I encountered few refusals, for various reasons (busy schedule, etc). Some people declined because of the video aspect of the interview. My aim was to get individuals with differing backgrounds and ways see fanaticism. Albeit all of them were men, they had still varying characteristics. One was a fan of a Finnish (local) team, one was a fan of the sport in general, one had only one object of fanaticism, whereas some had multiple favorite teams. One had a one favorite team for each sport he followed, and another had multiple favorite football teams. Also, interviewed fans had very different personalities and ways to fanaticize.

For doing interviews, I preferred places, personal or non-personal, that are not only places where people spend time as a fan. In other words, not places where being a fan is normal, and not being a fan is weird, which is usually the opposite of normal situations (home, work places, public spaces vs. fan events, football matches). Fans are often depicted in fan events. This has lead to the broad image of seeing fans as only fans. It is pretty obvious that this is not the case in real life. Although "intrusion into the personal space of the informant", like home of the fans, might cause some negative repercussions, I found it useful to interview people at their homes. Homes might be best places, because they are combinations of a space where people use time doing fan-related things and doing other things.

Most of the interviewed persons were found through friends, mostly being "friends of friends". When interviewing friends of friends, there's a better chance that they agree to be interviewed, and you have certain, but not too close, connection to the interviewed person already before the interview. The study is partly personal, and the more people will tell you about their most personal actions concerning fanaticism, the better. People that are too close to the interviewer in real life might find the situation unnatural. As suggested by McCracken (1988, 24-25), the best manner in which to manipulate the presentation of self for interview purposes is to strike a balance between formality and informality; someone who asks very personal questions out of not personal but professional curiosity.

Next, in three following chapters (4-6), I am going to present my findings, one topic at a time. This way of arranging findings may be slightly different than normally in thesis papers. The reason for this is the different method of videography: For this specific method I found it more appropriate to tell the main findings along the way, instead of sparing them to the end. I used it in the video version, and it thus makes sense to keep consistency in the paper version as well.

4 The Beginning of Fanaticism

Personally I have been a fan of a foreign football team (Arsenal from London, UK), as well as a number of bands, for over 15 years now, and all along fanaticism has been a highly important issue for me. It has molded and developed my identity quite significantly over the years. To have done this is useful, as it, like with Healey and McDonagh (2012, 3) speeds up the “cultural *entrée*”.

What’s special about the form of fanaticism that relates to football is that most people are fans of a specific team. There are some people that fanaticize football as a game (and everything related to it), but football is a team sport and most fans are thus fans of a team. Some can be fans of individual players, but without few exceptions they are simultaneously fans of the teams that those individuals play in.

So, how does one choose a favorite team, in reality? As it turned out during the research and interviews, there is no one clear way for turning into a fan of a certain team. Instead, each individual seems to have a very unique, and at times strange, way to the selection. One pretty popular explanation is to become a fan of the local team, be it at the highest or in lower levels. Still, it is not the only explanation. Parker and Stuart (1997) found out that main reasons for supporting a team were parental and geographical linkage. These, though, don’t apply almost at all in countries like Finland. It is because the focus has been on local fans that the results are so different. Moreover, the communal aspect of fanaticism has been highlighted too much, which has partly diverted the results.

Many interviewees stated that there is no grand story of how it all began. It might have been an individual player, it might have been the success of the team at the right time, it might have been a cool logo, the team’s potential, entertaining style of play, it might represent something special - the list goes on. In any case, there was something about the team that other teams didn’t have. Or

in some cases, other teams “we’re already taken”, as many times individuals chose different teams than their family or friends supported. In any case, for most of the people it is necessary to make a decision about the team. This is derived from the fact that an essential part of the sport narrative is to choose a side.

How come people become fans of teams that they can see neither play nor have ever seen play live? How do people become fans of teams in places they have never even visited? In Finland, as an example, there are many fans of a foreign team, usually playing in the English Premier League, or in some other top class league (Spain, Italy, and Germany). This is quite common around the world; the best teams have fans around the world.

Often, fanaticism gives a chance to be connected to something bigger. People negotiate (by themselves) the situation differently, what is real and what is fantasy. Some people end up becoming fans of more “real” teams, such as local teams, where going to see matches live is a lot easier or even possible, compared to other teams. Others choose teams that possess more ingredients of fantasy; a team playing in another country, a team which you can watch from television. As Žižek points out, “*through fantasy, we learn how to desire*” (1989, 118). In constructing our fantasy-version of reality, we establish coordinates for our desire; we situate ourselves and our object of desire, as well as the relation between.

For some fans, in the beginning, it was more important to be part of something potentially bigger, be part of the world’s best teams. One must keep in mind that many fans choose the team at an early phase of their life, early on before they have a complete understanding of many things. It is in fact quite obvious that people are fans of the world’s best teams and player: they wanted to be part of something bigger, to attach themselves into the team, as their object of desire. At times it can even be so that there is something lacking from the local teams, which will turn the individual into looking for other targets for the fanaticism. It is like being a fan of some world class band versus a local band. Obviously both can be good and entertaining, but the former is recognized worldwide as being talented and skillful. One might go as far as to say that it doesn’t matter which team you choose and why. There are some things related to it that makes it more luring than other teams. Because after one has chosen the team, as I will next go through, different rules start to apply.

5 Rules and Circumstances of Fanaticism

"Football brands rarely deserve loyalty. They have treated supporters extremely badly over a long time period, offered them dreadful facilities, poor customer care and little respect. Despite this, they command the highest level of brand loyalty of any product sector." (Parker & Stuart, 1997, 517)

How fans cope with the lack of control that relates to fanaticism? How do fans create meaning to the situation? Finding out how people can become so attached to a phenomenon like this is an intriguing question indeed. There are some regulations and rules, set by fans, which help make sense of their actions related to fanaticism. Kozinets (2001, 84) states that fans construe fantasy-oriented consumption objects as, in some sense, real: as a real part of industry, media, or entertainment history; as an expression of real universal ethics.

5.1 We'll Support You Evermore?

Fans have previously experienced that the team belongs to them; although in reality they haven't had a real chance to be involved in solutions affecting the team (Giulianotti, 2002, 28). In some sense fanaticism is based on the idea that stars are constructed by their fans and owe their stardom entirely to them (Fiske, 1992, 40). Therefore fans, in a way, feel like they are part of the team.

Once one claims him/herself as a fan of the team, one must stick to that choice. To change the team, the object of fanaticism, is not approved amongst fans. It is a sort of an unwritten rule. Players can change, managers and staff can change and switch into other teams. The style of play can change, success can change, and logo and financial status can change. Basically all things related to the team can change, except the fans. Teams exist for fans, without fans there wouldn't be teams. Yet fans have little to no power to change the game and/or the team. If it would be appropriate for fans to change their favorite teams whenever they chose to do it, the whole point of being a fan would lose its meaning. As Nick Hornby puts it in "Fever Pitch" (1992, 187):

"The players are merely our representatives, chosen by the manager rather than elected by us, but our representatives nonetheless...I am part of the club, just as the club is part of me...and I say this

fully aware that the club exploits me, disregards my views, and treats me shoddily on occasions...The only difference between me and them [players] is that I have put in more hours, more years, more decades than them."

Sports supporter loyalties are more complex than is suggested by the simple conventional wisdom that all fans will support you evermore (Tapp, 2004, 212). Nevertheless, the crucial point here is that the rule still exists and is mostly obeyed by the fans.

Because fans have a lot at stake, they want to influence decision making that concerns the team. As noted by Healey and McDonagh (2012, 5), even though fans do not have an executive role at the football team, they have a desire to control things at club level, in football and commercial terms. Still, many times it can feel as if fans are completely powerless to change or even have effect on the team they support. There are multiple examples of fans getting tired of the management of their teams, and demonstrating their opinion loudly. At the most extreme, they have established their own "fan teams", where the ownership and control of management is at the hands of the fans. In Finland, Tampere United fans have set up their own team, just as Wimbledon fans in UK. But although these actions of resistance are refreshing phenomena, still most fans remain loyal to their teams even at the worst conditions.

5.2 "If You Want Entertainment, Go and Watch Clowns"

For a fan, one has no saying in when the team will be successful. This is one important feature of the whole thing: the fan has no real control over what will happen. But it's not only fans; there are no producers that will define the score of any game. As has always been the case with sports, nobody is in total control of the events. There is always a chance, no matter how small, of any team beating any team at a given match. It is not produced (end results, for instance) like other forms of entertainment, if they can be compared in the first place.

Chance has a big significance in the nature of football fanaticism. It builds up the tension, when one never knows when something major (a huge victory, a last minute goal, the goal of the season) is going to happen. It is partly what keeps fans excited about it. They are in the search of special moments. Nick Hornby (1992) goes as far as to compare the surprise of a last-minute

championship victory to orgasm, the difference being that the championship can become all of a sudden, as a total surprise, after decades of waiting.

At the same time football is something constant, i.e. something with regularity. Game after game, week after week, season after season; many things in people's lives change, but football remains (in the bigger scene of things) unchanged. While the results cannot be predicted, games are quite regularly formed. With only minor changes during the season, the schedule is figured well before the season begins. It must bring some sort of clarity to the lives of fans. Almost every Saturday at a certain time, there's football to be seen, and most often there is some football to be played (and watched) every day. This is also something that fans find beneficial: fanaticism brings regularity and traditions into everyday life, which seems to be even more fragmented. Football does not end. So, even if it is quite uncontrollable and inconsistent, it is at the same time very regular and consistent.

5.3 Who Will Win Football?

"So why do football fans, including some highly intelligent people, who think they take rational decisions in all other ways, stick with a team they know to be under-performing?" (Parker & Stuart, 1997, 513)

Success is something that all teams aim at, but only few will gain at a time. In the league of 20 teams, as is the case with most leagues, only one will be a champion. But success is still a distinctive feature of fanaticism. Like the "rule" of not being able to change the team however one preferred, chasing success makes being a fan significant/meaningful.

One point of being a fan is that no matter what happens, the fan will stick by the team. In a sense, it could be said that success and wins are not important, as in defining whether one remains a fan or not. But they still matter. And they matter a lot. Without wins and losses there wouldn't be really any point in playing. Why would one do it if there were no aim to go to in the end? Success and winning is important, but it is not the main point or the most important issue in fanaticism.

Also, success may have meaning, at least in the beginning. Cialdini et al. (1976) has talked about the phenomenon of "basking in a reflected glory", where people attach to the team when it's winning more than when it is not. For fans, though, this might be a decisive factor when choosing

a favorite team, but it loses its meaning later on, as the “rules” of fanaticism start to apply. Since a fan remains a fan even during and across losing seasons, the fan may have little ability to bask in reflected glory (Hunt et al. 1999, 445).

5.4 Fans as Part of the Product, or Co-producers?

We must not forget that fans are part of the product, but they are also co-producers. At stadiums, people do not come to see the players, but also the audience, to experience the live atmosphere produced not only the players on the pitch but also the fans in the stands. They are the ones who mostly create the circumstances in where to act and how to behave. One example of this is the way fans talk about their team, the players and fans combined, in the form of “we”. “We played, we won, we lost, how did you play?” This could be interpreted in a way that fans do not want to make differentiation between the performers (players) and themselves (Heinonen, 2005, 257-258).

Fans are in fact a really active bunch for most parts, for instance in social media sites. And as being in the role of co-producers, fans won’t just settle for sitting and looking quietly online, just as they won’t settle for sitting quietly at matches. As Crawford (2004, 143-144) claims, “the Internet is not just a medium through which individuals gain access to a particular text, but it is in itself a cultural text, which is not just passively consumed by its users, but created and recreated by a significant proportion of these. So, besides the match event, fans play the part of brand messengers for the team everyday with their actions both in real life situations and in social media.

Meanwhile, Heinonen (2005, 158) claims that keeping up-to-date becomes necessary, in order not to drift out of the community. Before all it is about inner need to keep updated, which brings feel of belonging and control of knowledge. Interviewees showed this during the interviews. It is also something that becomes a requirement for being a fan, due to the “constant football” that is going on.

There is also the side of fanaticism that does not relate directly to the match events. One must keep in mind that fans use time doing fan-related things almost every single day (may it be following news from internet, looking at videos of goals, chatting with other fans and friends, reading discussions of other fans about football, etc.). Actual matches of the favorite team take

only approximately two hours each week. So a lot of fanaticism happens elsewhere than at stadiums or during games. And as is often the case, many have only access to see the games via TV broadcasting and internet streams.

All this considered, it is a bit surprising how little attention fans pay to consumption. As Kozinets (2001) points out, fans may want to distance the text as in this case things related to the team from its superficial status as a commercial product (2001, 67). One way of doing this is to turn the object of fanaticism into a sacred matter, to give it some special meaning, so that the apparent commercialism of football stays remote. Thus, consumption might be something that fans don't want to think about, even if they spend large sums of money into it.

“Consumers who have invested themselves in cultural texts are continually drawn into dialectical interplay with producers, sub- cultures, microcultures, and wider cultural meanings and practices in order to legitimate and express what matters to them.” (Kozinets, 2001, 84)

Being in the role of the co-producer is important for fans, as it brings more meaning to fanaticism. The co-creative nature of fanaticism stimulates fan participation everyday in online and offline environments, in order to augment and increase their cultural production (Healey & McDonagh, 2012. 2). This way their actions and experiences don't feel as non-vicarious, as in done for someone else. This, according to Healey and McDonagh (ibid. 2) is implemented so that fans can utilize resources for protecting their identity from the characteristics of fanaticism that conflict with the desired identity. It also means that they remain loyal better, as they see themselves, to some extent, more as owners as customers.

6 Connection with Others and Personal Side of Fanaticism

“The part of the process of engagement...depends on the viewer's ability to make a personal connection with the human beings participating in the reality program” (Rose & Wood, 2005, 290).

This can be recognized also in fans. They make a connection to the players, to other fans, and in a sense to themselves.

Fans similarly create a connection with players (and managers). There seems to be a trend that in the beginning, single players matter more, and when fanaticism evolves, the team itself becomes more meaningful. The life-span of a fan is longer than that of a player. Many of fans' favorite

players retire, but this doesn't mean that fans stop supporting the team. Overall, still, it seems that at some point in the team becomes more important than the individual player.

6.1 Communities and Association

In some sense, fans are part of the same community ("football fan community"). But at the same time they belong to separate communities, for instance to fan communities of their favourite team. Albeit one might assume that these team fan communities would be most significant to the fan himself, this is not always the case "it is not necessary for a community to be concentrated in a defined territory such as a city. The development of televisions, international transport and the Internet has enabled fanaticism to exist as a community without physical proximity (Bale 2000, 91; see Crawford, 2004, 143). In some sense, the audience live at the stadium has still a role to play, but a different role than what might be expected. Just as Zizek (1989) explains "canned laughter" in situation comedies, the audience is not there to tell when to laugh (in football: cheer), but to laugh (cheer) on behalf of the people watching (the game) through television. People have become accustomed to this by watching sitcoms and talk shows.

Still, the position within the fan community is likely to be defined by the interactions and social performances with others, and the ability to fit with the existing norms of that group of people (ibid. 160). In terms of brand communities (from a customer-experiential perspective), we could say that a community is a fabric of relationships in which the customer is situated in (McAlexander et al. 2002, 38). In the Internet these relationships can take more complex forms, as the members of the community might not know each other at all.

It can be that the most crucial fan community the fan feels most part of is in fact the local (or global) internet community, or a group of friends that follow football and support different teams. For many, it is important to attach to a small community, whom with one has a shared history and a chance to share experiences by discussing and reminiscing (Kuittinen, 2011, 76-77). In most cases people become friends with like-minded people, and often football is the connection.

These communities can be much more significant than the fan team community, which is in a way distant. Overall, there are many communities a fan can be simultaneously part of, and it is pretty much individual how fans connect with them. Their meaning to a fan is different with each fan.

Nonetheless, the “rules of fanaticism” that set circumstances for fan behavior do exist, no matter how an individual is connected to various communities. As with Harley Davidson owners and their different subculture (see Schouten & McAlexander, 1995, 50), also fans are *“committed to the same set of core values, but each community or group interprets them in a manner that is contextually consistent with prevailing life structures of its members”*.

6.1.1 Fan products –recognition and usage

One concrete way of connecting with other fans, whichever community at hand, is to wear football products like scarves, and recognize other people wearing them. Recognizing other fans comes quite naturally for many fans. They automatically take notice on any gear (scarf, hat...) and want to find out which team it is.

Fans have need for both external and internal involvement (Thorne & Bruner 2006), and even though fanaticism is a highly personal matter, it is also important for fans to show it externally to other people (Seregina, 2011, 70) in order to gain social significance, approval, and affirmation (see *ibid.* 78). Individuals will identify with each other through shared lifestyles or shared fantasies, their self-images temporarily shaped by memberships to imaginary clubs and societies, “imagined communities”, “invented traditions” or “neo-tribes” (Gabriel & Lang, 1995, 88).

Richardson and Turley (2008, 35) claim that fans who are not from the local area (fans from other countries) has a stronger dependence on official merchandise and products, to ensure the development and maintenance of self as a dedicated fan. Even if this were true, it must be kept in mind that even for fans from other countries fan merchandise does not play that significant a role in their everyday life. Most of the interviewed fans took football related trips abroad about once a year. For them, various fan products served as souvenirs from football trips. This tourist-like activity did not necessarily mean that they would use fan gear in their everyday lives. For many, it worked as a collection and as memorabilia of the trips, for personal pleasure.

Moreover, highlighting one’s fanaticism is not something fans find necessary to do, in most situations. Once again, for fans it is not the most crucial aspect in being a fan, to let others know about it, as the nature of fanaticism is quite personal. The most important aspect of fanaticism is

not physical and materialistic products or services, but instead, intangible things are the ones that matter the most (Seregina, 2011, 73).

6.2 Disassociation

People who are part of a football community have an interesting way of wanting to be a part of a group but at the same time to be outside of the group. The more or less developed ability to both stand back and to get involved is the existential mode of the modern individual self (Falk & Campbell, 1997, 7). And it is not only about associating and connecting with various communities, but also fans wanting to *disassociate* themselves from others. For fans it might be necessary to make the assertion that “some people are “real” supporters and others are not”. The sacrifices made by ‘real’ fans therefore result in stronger feelings of ownership, and the frequent belief that they are the only ones who truly ‘understand’ (O’Guinn, 1991; see Richardson & Turley, 2008, 36).

Any conflict over the legitimate way of doing it will result in changes in consumption practice, to preserve the necessary inter-group distinctions (see Richardson & Turley, 2008, 34). There are many ways that fans can make difference between themselves as a fan and others: *fans of other teams, fans of foreign teams// local teams, fans watching games from tv // not attending matches live, fans of the same team, "remote fans"*.

This is shown, to some extent, also in fan-related research; there seems to be an intention to separate fans into two or more groups (e.g. Richardson & Turley 2008: inner subculture / wider neo-tribal community (fans from somewhere else than local area); Wann et al. 2001: direct (live viewers) and indirect (via TV etc.) consumers of sport). Of course it is common to distinguish various groups in research, but here it might prevent seeing the situation as it is in the real, everyday life: more complex and less straightforward. Even if fans associate and disassociate with various groups, it does not necessarily mean that researchers would be best of by doing the same.

It can even be the case that one would prefer to distance oneself from other fans of the same team, as this could in a way lead to destruction of the fantasy and uniqueness of the fanaticism. One wants to be attached to the local fans situated abroad, positioning oneself into one of the “real”/authentic fans, and if one comes across with another “remote fan” it will bring one’s own remoteness visible and thus make it more casual, and, as mentioned, less unique. There might be

a fear that when coming across with other fans you lose the feel and image of how you prefer to see your own team. Or it can be that you don't want to identify with real existing fans, but just identify with the team and the players. Therefore one might avoid meeting other fans of the same team, or at least not seeking for contact with other fans.

“To come too close to our object of desire threatens to uncover the lack that is, in fact, necessary for our desire to persist, so that, ultimately, desire is most interested not in fully attaining the object of desire but in keeping our distance, thus allowing desire to persist. Because desire is articulated through fantasy, it is driven to some extent by its own impossibility.” (Felluga, 2003)

6.3 Building the Desired Self – Personal Motives for Fanaticism

So, how do fans position themselves in the middle of all these communities? Often it is not like individuals have only one community that they belong to, but they are simultaneously participating in many communities, with differing levels of interest. And it is also not like you can only be part of one community, but usually in order to be part of one you will need to be part of the others as well.

Fanaticism can be a profoundly personal phenomenon, as pointed out by Chung et al. (2007, 2008). People have very personal views and experiences on their relationship with the team. The ultimate reason why fanaticism is then actually taken on and why it stays as an important part of the fan's life is that it perfectly fits the fan's actual or desired self, eventually becoming an essential part of the fan's identity and self-perception through the value that it represents (Belk and Costa, 1998; see Seregina, 2011, 71). So all this connecting with whomever (players, other fans), it happens because one is constantly building up one's own identity. The identification (paradox negotiation) process is highly personal and is part of one's process of building identity. Seregina (2011) talks about public and private fanaticism: Public fanaticism is the kind that is shown to other people, is influenced by the society, and creates a public self-image for the fan. Private fanaticism, on the other hand, is the kind that the fan experiences in private with little or no knowledge of it given to others (ibid. 78-79).

The act of fanaticism provides the individual tools for reconstructing the life narrative. Constantly happening football gives the person touching points, where from one can choose the things that

fit best with the desirable identity and narrative. An understanding of one's own identity is gained through telling the narrative (Ricoeur 1992, 147; see Seregina 2011, 86). In practice, using the term "we" as in uniting the team and the fans as one is one way to attach the team performance and fanaticism as personal life events. So, the stories that fans tell give very interesting insights on how they perceive themselves among others. The very act of telling one's story is an act of meaning making (Atkinson, 1998, 62). The fanaticism has to become the fan's "own thing" that defines and describes them (Seregina 2011, 71). It is also through the creation of a coherent story that fans (and others) upheld authenticity (Ibarra and Barbulescu 2010, see Seregina, 2011, 86)".

"What may be of greatest interest in the life story is how people see themselves and how they want others to see them" (Atkinson, 1998, 20). This then relates to Zizek's idea of imaginary identification and symbolic identification:

"To put it simply, imaginary identification is identification with the image representing 'what we would like to be', and symbolic identification is identification with the very place from where we are being observed, from where we look at ourselves so that we appear to ourselves likeable, worthy of love" (Zizek, 1989, 116)

Campbell talks about *personal mythmaking*, as "a process of seeing one's story in a recognizable form, finding the universal elements on one's own unique story, and identifying the motifs and archetypes that are found in one's own story and that are also found in the universal pattern of the monomyth" (Campbell 1949/1968, see Atkinson, 1998, 63). Furthermore, according to Giddens, identity is not found in the behavior or others' reactions, but in the individual's ability to maintain a specific narrative. One must attach events that take place in the outer world into this narrative about oneself.

So, "self-identity" is not something given, but instead something that must be steadily re-created and maintained (Giddens, 1991, 52-54). Fanaticism then, not only becomes a part of the identity, but also moulds, affirms, and helps build it (Seregina, 2011, 71). The past is re-constructed constantly for the current moment (Giddens, 1995, 92). It is many times afterwards when fans find significant signs which led to the selection of the specific team. By having appropriate moments, the narrative is developed, and the identity along with it (Heinonen, 2005, 83).

"Symptoms are meaningless traces, their meaning is not discovered, excavated from the hidden depth of the past, but constructed retroactively...Every historical rupture, every advent of a new

master-signifier, changes retroactively the meaning of all tradition, restructures the narration of the past, makes it readable in another, new way” (Zizek, 1989, 58)

7 Conclusions

7.1 Theoretical Implications

Some of the main findings can be generalized to other forms of fanaticism, but one must remember that there are features that make football fanaticism a special form of fanaticism. As Hornby (1992, 178) stated: “in some ways, football isn’t a very good metaphor for life after all”. But still, as researched before, sport fans were found to be similar to fans of other interests (Reysen & Branscombe, 2010). So, in many ways we can expand the findings to concern fans overall. After all, the research on fanaticism has been limited by the incorrect focus on extreme fanaticism, as well the negative viewpoint, through which fans have been viewed as “flawed normals” (Redden & Steiner, 2000, 333). If fanaticism is seen as only a negative issue, it neglects the other (positive) side of fanaticism. As a result, only the negative consequences are highlighted, whereas the reasons remain hidden. With this approach we will never get to the core of fanaticism.

Another lack that was corrected relates to the assumption that all fans are participating to fan communities. Here it was shown that disassociation from other groups of people is almost a crucial part of fanaticism, and that it can even take place against other fans with the same object of fanaticism. This is a clear signal of the fact that we can’t take the aspect of “fan’s interest in the community” as granted. Moreover, something that was not discussed in the video version, but must be mentioned, is that fans possess many different personalities. They are not all loud, nor are they all quiet. What seems to happen, though, is that even the individuals with calmer personalities find themselves reacting more strongly to events taking place during a game than in other situations in life. This just signals the meaning, passion and importance that fans have towards football. *“The consumption of sport may be very ordinary for many people, but for others it can be very important in their everyday lives” (Crawford, 2004, 160).*

One of the main implications of this study is to show the multiplicity of forms that fanaticism exists in. Often, fanaticism has been over-generalized and viewed from an overly simplistic view. We have to understand that some things cannot be explained one-sided, as it will result in a shallow understanding that does not honor the complex and varying nature of fanaticism. Even if the aim in research in general is to make theories and simplify the reality to an understandable form, only by accepting the variety as an essential characteristic of the phenomenon are we able to see fanaticism with the scope that is needed. This is also the best way to see the features that are shared among different fans.

7.2 Suggestions for Further Research

My prediction is that fanaticism and the multiplicity of forms it exists in will be a growingly significant research area in the future. It has an important role in identity building, through stories and touching points it provides. It gives the fan experiences, knowledge, and routines. Moreover, fanaticism is full of contradictions and the way these are negotiated is a process that each fan goes through individually. A lot remains to be studied.

To begin with, the aspect of connecting with others who are situated in distance is still an area of research that should gain more attention. Although the purpose of this study was to deal with fanaticism in football overall, it must be remembered that the Finnish culture had some effect on the findings. As an example, in Finland the domestic league is not very popular, which makes following and connecting with other leagues more common. It would be interesting to see corresponding studies from other cultures with “distant” relations to the object of fanaticism.

Additionally, focusing even more to the gaps of research that were found here would certainly be worthwhile. The positive aspects of fanaticism might bring out more sides of fanaticism that haven’t been discovered yet. As it is getting clearer that fans come in many forms and shapes, existing all around us (and not just in some “strange places” as various fan events are for most), we can get closer to seeing why fanaticism becomes so important for many people.

Also, the private side of fanaticism is an issue that hasn’t been properly researched so far. From the perspective of identity building, one could make some intriguing findings when looking into this rarely seen but yet strongly existing side of fanaticism. It must be mentioned, though, that at the same time this might be quite difficult to execute in practice. The main reason for the lack of

research on private fanaticism, on my opinion, is that for most parts this side remains hidden from others. Finding fans that would be willing to share their personal lives this much is not a simple task, but I believe with the right people private fanaticism would turn out to be a great starting point for a research.

As from the point of videography, looking into various forms of fanaticism would be a fascinating thing to see. For me, it was important to be able to show fans in their everyday life. It provided a way to get rid of some stereotypes related to fanaticism at once. There are still many opportunities and ways to study fanaticism through videography. Overall, I feel that the chances to do research through video are almost limitless. But first my suggestion would be to start with the topics that suits naturally well with the method. Fanaticism is definitely one of these methods.

7.3 Managerial Implications

From the marketers' point of view, there are some implications to be suggested, and also some points that should be thought about. First, the position of fans is a bit different than the ordinary customer. As mentioned previously, fans are in the role of co-producers. This position is fairly important, because it brings more meaning to fanaticism. This is a point that all marketers should become aware of. Fans are partially creating the situation they are in - from paradox negotiation comes paradox (Rose & Wood, 2005), and it might be wise to let them create content for themselves.

Coming up with new ways to enable customers or fans to be part of the creating process seems to be highly recommendable. Although this wasn't clearly proven in my study it still gives some food for thought. To get customers to act more like fans, is it something that should be encouraged? To answer that is easy when one thinks about brand loyalty. Still, there are some aspects that might not make it such an easy question to answer. Moreover, to actually turn customers into fans is not that straightforward either.

Second, one must remember to provide activities for all sorts of fans. Reaching out to those fans that are loyal but less eager to participate in communal events and activities is important. Internet has offered an appropriate and suitable way for many fans to keep up with their object of

fanaticism, and marketers should take it into consideration and put it into practice. These fans are willing to take part online, even if they would not be prepared to do so otherwise.

Third, at times it seems that marketers don't really understand the position football fans are in. It is not really an easy position. As already mentioned, they are the (only) ones who cannot change the team (they support). Giving fans opportunities to make a difference, almost in any way possible, would most likely make fans more satisfied. In addition, football and other marketers would be well advised to pay attention to the prevailing system of cultural capital within the core community, because it provides an excellent guide to consumer perceptions of the 'true meaning' of the 'brand' (Richardson & Turley, 2008, 37).

7.4 Limitations

There are certainly multiple limitations in this study, but as I find videography as a method the most significant aspect of it, I believe it makes most sense to bring out some limitations concerning the method first.

To start with, picturing a phenomenon with a camera is never neutral. The researcher must make decisions along the way, observe and pick main points out from reality, and then set them up in front of the viewer's eyes to *"show that exactly this is worth seeing"* (Heinonen, 2005, 50). And even though this applies to other research methods as well, the way that one must pick and set up points is more unrelenting than with other methods. As the quote below explains, videography is actually quite a delicate form, and it offers multiple ways to convince the audience:

"I was supposed to have a script, and had mislaid it. I was supposed to hear clues, and no longer did. I was meant to know the plot, but all I knew was what I saw: flash pictures in variable sequence, images with no "meaning" beyond their temporary arrangement, not a movie but a cutting room experience. In what would be the middle of my life I wanted still to believe in the narrative and in the narrative's intelligibility, but to know that one could change the sense with every cut was to begin to perceive the experience as rather more electrical than ethical" (Didion, 1979: 12-13; see Ruby, 2000, 252)

Furthermore, viewers' expectations and the large variation of the crowd's knowledge about the topic make using videography as a method a difficult task. Usually academic works are intended for researchers and scholars, many times to those who do research on the area in question. Videography offers a way to reach more than just researchers, but at the same time it complicates estimating the expectations and the appropriate level of information assumed from the audience.

When making a videography one must accept the expectations of the audience. *“In order to succeed, ethnographic filmmakers must oppose the common sense of their viewers – an audience’s pleasure in suspending disbelief that allows it to enjoy film realism”*. (Ruby, 2000, 277)

Otherwise, limitations relate to, for instance, the number of interviewed individuals. For this study, eight interviewees were enough, without a doubt. Still, fanaticism is a complex issue and has multitude of meanings to each fan, so with more individuals interviewed, the better. But as the issue here was quite vast, it made sense to have eight people telling their stories, as that was clearly enough to reach a saturation point.

Also, focusing on football fanaticism has its limitations. As already mentioned, fanaticism in football has some significant differences that make it a special case. To find out even more broader results, one might want to expand into other forms of fanaticism. Still, there were advantages in concentrating on only football fans, as the results and findings would have been less clear otherwise.

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Appendix 1: Questionnaire (in Finnish)

Alkupohjustus

- Terminologia: fani, kannattaja erot. Miksi fani-terminä sopivampi
- Mitä fanitat?

Faniuden alkuvaiheet

- Mistä fanius on lähtenyt liikkeelle (miten saanut alkunsa, milloin alkanut)?
 - o Mikä on sun aikaisin muisto joka liittyy faniuteen?
 - o (...ja miltä maailma näytti silloin?)
- Mitä oli meneillään perheessä, missä asuit, pelasitko itse?
- (Millainen sä ylipäättään olit nuorena, olitko koko ajan menossa, paljon kavereita, liikunnan rooli, ...)
- Oliko kavereilla suosikkijoukkueita, oliko se normaalia fanittaa jotain vai poikkeuksellista, seurasivatko parhaat kaverit jalkapalloa muuten?

Yleiset faniuteen liittyvät asiat

- Kuinka monta vuotta olet ollut suosikkijoukkueesi kannattaja?
- Miten sä kuvailisit itseäs fanina, millainen fani sä olet?
- Mitä käytännössä se meinaa sulle? Mitä teet käytännössä fanina?
- Mitä muita ikimuistoisia hetkiä on ollut, mitkä asiat on jäänyt parhaiten mieleen?
- Onko faniuden luonteessa tapahtunut jotain muutoksia?
- Mistä tunnistaa ”oikean” jalkapallofanin?
 - o Tietämys, tuotteet, ajankäyttö, faniuden ikä?
- Miten pitkään uskot että aktiivinen fanitus jatkuu?
 - o Onko ollut ns. suvantovaiheita jolloin ei oo tullut fanitettua tai seurattua

Lojaalisuus

- Mikä saisi sut lopettamaan tietyn seuran kannattamisen?
 - o tai vähentämään suosikkijengin tai lajin fanitusta niin paljoa?
 - o huonolla menestyksellä/pelillä vaikutusta?
- Joukkueen menestyksen merkitys (häviö hyvällä/viihdyttävällä pelillä vai voitto huonolla)

Jalkapallon ja joukkueen seuraaminen

- Kuinka usein seuraat jalkapalloa? mm. tv:n kautta.
 - o Kuinka usein seuraat suosikkijoukkueesi uutisia?
 - Mitä kanavia käytät seuraamiseen?
 - Viestitkö peleistä tai muusta faniuteen liittyvästä sosiaalisessa mediassa? Millä tavoin? Kuinka usein?

- Tavat seurata jalkapalloa
 - o (Paikan päällä, baarissa, tv, maksukanavat, teksti-tv, radio, lehdet, kirjat, internet: Facebook, Twitter, yms.)
 - o Montako peliä vuodessa: paikan päällä, tv:stä?
 - o Mitä tv-kanavia seuraat?
 - o Mitä lehtiä seuraat? (Tilatut, irtonumerot, ulkomaiset lehdet)
 - o Omistatko jalkapalloaiheisia kirjoja?
 - o Miten seuraat jalkapalloa internetissä? (uutiset, seuran kotisivut, keskustelupalstat, videot)
 - o Mikä on paras tapa katsoa peliä?
 - o Mieluummin kotona vai baarissa? Miksi?
 - o Otteluiden seuraaminen paikan päällä
 - o Miten käyt peleissä: yksin, seurassa?
 - o Miten jalkapallon seuraaminen eroaa jos yksin vs. seurassa?
 - o Oman joukkueen ottelun seuraaminen vs. muu peli?
 - o Paikan päällä vs. tv:n kautta
 - Minkälaisia eroja tv:stä katsoessa vs. livenä katsoessa olet huomannut?
 - o Miten valmistaudut tv-peliin, arvokisoihin, paikan päällä seuraamiseen? Onko jotain rituaaleja tms.? Millä lailla asiasta kerrotaan muille, miten tietoa jaetaan/haetaan?
- Kenen kanssa keskusteleet aiheesta? Pitääkö jossain välttää jalkapallosta intoilua?
- Mikä merkitys sosiaalisilla suhteilla? Seuraisitko jalkapalloa "yksin?" Vrt. kriketti Suomessa tms.

Kulut

- Miksi valmis käyttämään aikaa ja rahaa seuraamiseen? Onko korvannut jotain muuta? Jos tulee ristiriitoja jalkapallo-ottelun ja muiden menojen kanssa, niin miten tilanteet ratkaistaan? Mikä menee edelle? Voiko tallennettuja lähetyksiä katsoa?
- Fanituotteet
 - o Mikä on niiden rooli?
 - o Pitääkö olla tuotteita jotta voi kutsua itseään faniksi?
 - o Käytkö paikan päällä katsomassa matseja?
 - o Miten usein käytät fanituotteita esim. kaulahuivia pelitapahtumien ulkopuolella, arjessa?

Joukkueen tietämys

- Historialla merkitys?
- Miten paljon olet ite perehtynyt joukkueen menneisyyteen?
- Miten paljon fanin sun mielestä pitää tietää ylipäättään joukkueesta?

Yksityinen/henkilökohtainen fanitus vs. ns. julkinen fanitus

- Mikä on tärkein asia mitä fanina oleminen on sulle antanut?
- Mikä on merkittävin asia mitä taas sä oot tehny/antanut faniuden takia?

- Mitkä asiat tekee just _____ (joukkueen nimi) faneista tai kulttuurista erityisen?
- Tulevaisuus
 - Mitä juttuja uskot ettet tuu ikinä unohtamaan faniudesta?
- Miten yksityinen asia fanius tai fanitus sulle ylipäättään on?
- Miten näet muut fanit
- Tuntuuko sinusta että sä kuulut oman jengin fanien kanssa ns. samaan yhteisöön, olet osa jotain suurempaa?
- Mikä merkitys muilla saman joukkueen faneilla sulle on?
- Me-termin käyttö?

Mikäli tuntuu sopivalta jatkolta tilanteessa:

Paikallisvastustaja

- Keskenäiset ottelut, merkitseekö jotain erityistä?
- Tunnetko paikallisvastustajan faneja?

Eroavaisuudet

- Erot nais- ja miesfanien välillä
- Erot fanien ja ei-fanien välillä
- Erot eri lajien fanien välillä

Muut lajit / Muu fanitus

- Mitä sä fanitat/ minkä fani olet jalkapallon ulkopuolella? ”tyyppinä sellainen joka fanittaa”?

Ennen lopetusta: Miksi fanitat?

Lopetus

- Onko jotain mitä sun mielestä ei ole vielä käsitelty, jotain tärkeää näkökulmaa tai asiaa?
- Mitkä fiilikset sulla on nyt koko tästä haastattelusta?