AN EXPLORATORY QUALITATIVE STUDY OF THE PROJECTION OF IMAGES BY ORGANIZATIONS OPERATING WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF A PROFESSIONAL SPORT LEAGUE

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Abstract

An exploratory qualitative study of the projection of images by organizations operating within the context of a professional sport league

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This study is an exploratory qualitative analysis of the projection of images by organizations operating within the context of a professional sport league. The main objective of this research is to investigate differences and changes in organizational images as a function of the external environmental context of organizations. In doing so, it will examine how different environments may demand different images based on different stakeholder pressures. The research will use a professional sport league as the organizational setting (i.e. cultural industry) for investigating and analyzing the particularities of English football (soccer) clubs' images, operationalized as they are presented on club websites. This research will also establish relevant theoretical relationships between the identity of organizations, the images that these organizations project and the environment in which they operate. In doing so, the analysis will attempt to contribute to our understanding of what types of images professional sport organizations (PSOs) must manage in order to be perceived as attractive to different stakeholders that control the resources on which PSOs are dependent on for functioning.

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INTRODUCTION

The main objective of the research presented in this thesis is to investigate differences and changes in organizational images as a function of the external environmental context of organizations. In doing so, the study will examine how different environments may demand different images based on different stakeholder pressures. Organizational image has attracted considerable attention in defining and understanding the concept in different organizational settings (see Abzug & Glynn, 2002; Scott & Lane, 2000). The research will use a professional sport league as the organizational setting for investigating and analyzing the particularities of football[1] clubs' images, operationalized as they are presented on club websites.

On a theoretical basis, this study will add to the slim body of knowledge that exists on cultural industries because it explores the way in which organizations in such industries manage their projected organizational images. Despite their continuously growing commercial and societal significance, management research still continues to ignore the importance of cultural industries by primarily focussing on the more traditional industries. The research presented in this thesis thus attempts to identify specific and unique theoretical and methodological approaches that reflect and cater to the distinctiveness of the chosen context.

On a more practical basis, the setting of this thesis will contribute to helping professional sport teams manage and organize their organizational images in order to maximize the satisfaction of their stakeholders. The last two decades have witnessed the increasing commercialization of professional football teams, where these organizations

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[1] In this study, we will be using the term "football" in the European perspective as opposed to "soccer" which is more commonly used in a North American context.

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are today operating like any other competitive business organization. As a result, this research can help these organizations become more competitive in their fields, by improving their understanding of how to respond to demands emanating from their environments.

The remainder of this thesis is structured in four sections. It will first provide an overview of the context in which the research takes place and introduce the theory that describes the specific elements that typify cultural industries. This thesis will then examine the concept of organizational image as well as identify the different facets that are relevant to the communication of projected images unique to football clubs. Third, this paper will elaborate on a research methodology as data will be analysed using a cross-sectional approach. Lastly, this paper will present the key findings and examine the implications of this study for both research and practice.

Context

The dynamics of organizational image will be investigated in the context of the *English Football League*. Football has grown to become the most popular sport in the world (Bondy, 1991). The wealthiest nations, as well as the most underdeveloped countries have established leagues with attendance reaching tens of thousands of spectators. Football's popularity is nowhere more evident than in England, which is generally credited as being the mother land of modern football (Bondy, 1991). In England, the *Football Association* (FA) has segmented the clubs into four professional levels: Third Division, Second Division, First Division[2] and the Premier Division (also

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[2] The First Division's name has changed in the 2004-2005 season to the Nationwide Conference.

known as the Premiership). These divisions are characterised by different skill levels and the Premiership is home to some of the best players in the world.

Even though football is still a very small industry compared to others in the UK, the financial position of the Premiership has become considerable. The explosion of the financial aspects of the game has also brought a greater need for professional skills in areas such as legal knowledge, marketing, accounting and finance. Football clubs have therefore not only become impressive sport organizations, but they are now important financial assets considering that managers work to facilitate the strategic exploitation of various financial opportunities.

The English football league. Prior to 1992, the *English Football League* was composed of four divisions, where the first division was the top performing division. Resulting from an unstable environment, where top football clubs were demanding administrative reforms with the objective of acquiring increasing financial accountability for partnership deals, such as broadcasting, the *English Football League* was forced into restructuring. In 1992 with the *FA* abdicating some responsibility for the wellbeing of the game, football fans witnessed the beginnings of the Premier League. This restructuring enabled the top 20 clubs to take full financial control for themselves in the Premier League, while the remaining 72 formed the new Divisions 1, 2 and 3 (*The FA Premier League Annual Report and Accounts 2001/2002*).

Since then, the Premier League has confirmed its position as the world's best domestic league competition, because at the *FIFA 2002 World Cup Finals*, it was best represented with some 85 players representing 21 different nations (*The FA Premier*

League Annual Report and Accounts 2001/2002). According to the *2001/2002 FA Premier League Annual Report and Accounts,* attendance records were broken in 2001/2002 with some 13 million fans watching 380 *FA Premier League* matches, which accounted for a 4,6% increase from the preceding season. In addition, the demand for televised Premier League football has continued to grow domestically and internationally.

In parallel to the Premier League, the *FA* also organizes a championship that runs independently to the league. This *FA Cup* was established in connection with the *FA,* for which all clubs belonging to the association are invited to play. This thus gives the opportunity to any *FA English football* club to participate in a tournament regardless of their divisional status. The first *FA Cup* competition in the 1871-72 season had 15 entries, as opposed to the 2003/2004 season, when more than 600 football clubs attended. This competition is one of the oldest football traditions in England and its prestige is every year targeted by England's top football clubs.

The growing football industry offers an ideal environment to investigate variations in an organization's communicated images. First on an organizational level, the league's differentiation into different divisions provides several environmental contexts, as the distinction between the Premiership and the other divisions furnishes a particularly salient stratification in terms of resources, prestige, stakeholder involvement, and performance levels. Second, the functioning of the league is based on a relegation process, where at the end of each season, the three last clubs (the clubs that have failed to perform) from the Premier Division are automatically relegated to the First Division for the next season. This same process is also applied to the First, Second and Third

divisions. The opposite is also true, as the top three performers of the First Division are promoted to the Premiership to replace the clubs that have been relegated. This same process applies to the other divisions. In this analysis, in order to create a basic analytic design, I will be focussing on the different environmental attributes existing between the Premiership and the First Division.

Environmental disparities. There are important distinctions in the environmental contexts that encompass both the Premiership and the First Division. Such differences will be explained in terms of status through quality, exposure, and financial viability.

In terms of quality, and resulting from the relegation process, there is a clear distinction in recognition that exists between the Premiership and the First Division. The Premiership is recognized as one of the most dominant and successful football divisions in the world. As previously stated, this division is home to some of the best players in the world, where such players are compensated with attractive contracts as well as world wide recognition. Since its debut in 1992, the Premiership has developed into a football phenomenon for the players as well as for the international football community.

The Premier League's commercial and broadcast deals have funded over £1 billion of investment in stadiums and facilities, providing a massive transformation in stadium safety and comfort (*The FA Premier League Annual Report and Accounts 2001/2002*). These improvements have thus lead to the increase in the quality of match day experiences. Many clubs have in recent years moved into new stadiums since average attendances have risen to an all time high of 34,324 in the 2001/2002 season (*The FA Premier League Annual Report and Accounts 2001/2002*). Broadcasting deals have

allowed Premiership matches to be followed by fans all over the world, where athletes such as David Beckam (former Manchester United midfielder) and Thiery Henry (Arsenal striker) have become highly marketable celebrities for sport apparel companies such as Nike, Reebok and Adidas. The English Premier Division has therefore positioned itself as one of the strongest football divisions in modern football.

On the other hand, the First Division, even though recognized as a high caliber football division, has not reached the level of quality of the Premiership. This comes as no surprise as every year, less competitive clubs from the Premiership are relegated to this division. Even though this division has also seen an influx of attention and investments, average attendances, player contracts as well as general exposure through broadcasting can not be compared to those of the Premiership. For instance, in terms of financial effects of upward movement, promotion into the Premiership in 1999/2000 was worth £10 million extra income per club, whereas relegation had quite the opposite effect, costing clubs an initial £6-7 million (*Sir Norman Chester Centre for Football Research*). In addition, when taking into account the range of other income benefits in the longer run, the promotion prize to the Premiership in 2001 was worth at least £23 million, which is much more than the total value of many First Division clubs (*Sir Norman Chester Centre for Football Research*).

In the early twentieth century most football clubs were privately owned and administrated by their chairman. With time however, some of these clubs became publicly owned with Tottenham Hotspur being the first club offering a Stock Exchange quotation (Dobson & Goddard, 2001). According to Dobson & Goddard (2001), Millwall raised £4.8 million in a flotation in 1989. Unfortunately, Millwall's share price

drastically plummeted as the club was relegated from the Premiership in 1989, when it was still called the First Division. While in the Second Division, investors drastically scaled back the assessment of Millwall's value as an organization.

Even though professional football clubs have faced financial instability in very recent history, propagated by stadium redevelopment, spiraling player salaries as well as increasing transfer fees, Premier Division clubs have turned to broadcasting partnerships as a new source of finance. The financial situation of both divisions has become distinct in the way that Premiership clubs have today reached the status and recognition of successful financial conglomerates, as certain Premier Division clubs have now diversified into flourishing business organizations offering a multitude of goods and services. Such goods and services include hotels and conference centers, club credit cards, mobile phone services and club shops offering anything from leisure wear to household items. These diversification efforts are mainly aimed at creating revenues that would not be overly affected by weakened television, gate or sponsorship revenues that materialize when clubs fail to perform and get relegated to a lower division. As we will later see in the analysis, the types of services offered are distinct to a club's divisional context.

According to the *2000 edition of Deloitte and Touche's annual Football Finance Review*, the turnover of the top five Premier League clubs was larger in 2000 than the whole turnover of the seventy-two other clubs in the football league. This same report claimed that the three highest Premiership spenders on player salaries were greater than the entire wage bill of all the forty-eight clubs in the Second and Third Divisions. This review also suggested that many football clubs, in recent years, have experienced

enormous monetary losses. Such financially unstable clubs often owe their cash flow tribulations to relegation, as clubs like Sheffield Wednesday and Nottingham Forest are accountable for owing £15 million after having experienced relegation in recent years. In another example, according to the *Sir Norman Chester Centre for Football Research*, in 2001 a club such as relegated Coventry City faced a penal drop in television income from £23 million in the Premiership to £7 million in the First Division. There thus exists a considerable partition between top Premiership clubs and clubs in the First Division, which in turn creates substantial variations in the context in which these clubs operate.

Football clubs. When it comes to professional sport organizations (PSOs), it is important to make a distinction between the terms 'team', 'administration' and 'club'. To begin with, the term 'team', refers to a social entity, where players, coaches and other members interact with the intent of entertaining through on-field successes. The different members of a team interrelate and cooperate with the objective of accomplishing common tasks in order for the organization to properly function in its environment. On the other hand, the 'administration' or 'administrators' refer to the individuals who work towards efficiently supervising and managing the more financial and administrative aspects of the organization. This face of the organization has, in recent years, become increasingly important, since efficiency and economic viability have become critical elements to manage. The objectives of administrators are geared towards profits and feasible returns. Thus based on this interpretation, whereas a 'team' is a cultural and expressive entity, the 'administration' or 'administrators' is best looked at as an economic entity.

Lastly, a 'club' can be understood as the common social unit, which encompasses all aspects of both the 'team' and the 'administration'. These distinctions will become more important further in the analysis of image communication, where a PSO can often express several images based on the diverse needs of the organization and on the different demands of its stakeholders.

Organizational characteristics. In addition to differences between divisions, there are also key variations in the elements that distinguish individual football clubs. These basic characteristics will be examined in terms of age and on-field successes.

Football has become a tradition in many countries across the globe. From South America to Africa and across Europe, football has become very organized as the implementation of different professional leagues exists in nearly every country. More specifically, when analyzing the historical foundation of the *English Football League*, football clubs were introduced at different times and through history, some have flourished in competition whereas others have been pushed out and have subsequently perished. By analyzing historical data from various clubs' websites, I have identified four historical epochs that have generated various football clubs.

Historical data from these websites has shown that football clubs in England first emerged from the sport of cricket. Professional cricket leagues were, throughout the ninetieth century, attracting considerable attention from sport fans for their organized and spirited competition. Resulting from this success, many cricket organizations established football clubs with the objective of recreating the competitive context in which cricket was practiced and played. In consequence, many football clubs originated in the late

ninetieth century with the establishment of clubs such as Stoke (1863) and Rotherham (1870). This time period can be recognized as the birth of organized football in England even though the sport remained in fact quite disorganized. Prior to 1871, there were still significant problems to overcome as to the rules because many disagreements existed between the *FA* and *The Rugby Union*. This in turn led to a split because the FA was left to develop its own game with its own rules. Prior to the time that professional football leagues were established, many of these clubs competed at an amateur level with very little recognition.

In 1871, the then *FA* secretary Mr. C.W. Alcock introduced knockout competition, which attracted considerable attention from the international football community since clubs competed for the *FA cup* for the first time. This led to major changes in the way the game was played where in 1872, the size of the ball was fixed for the first time and in 1875 the solid crossbar was introduced, which replaced the formerly used tape. These changes and reorganizations led to an influx of professional football clubs such as Aston Villa (1874), Blackburn (1875), Middlesbrough (1876) and the now famous Manchester United (1878).

Unfortunately, by 1888 the game was once again in desperate need of reorganization. Fixtures were never guaranteed as football matches were often cancelled due to injuries and/or transport difficulties. At this point in time, football had become increasingly popular and these conditions left many fans unsatisfied and often times even furious. Consequently, in 1888 after a meeting of the then twelve most prominent clubs in England, a structured league was adopted where each team was to play each other within a home an away league format. This restructuring led to the creation of the

English Football League, where two points was given to the winning team and one point to each team in the event of a draw. Such reorganization again led to an influx of new football clubs such as Walsall (1888), Sheffield United (1889) and Liverpool (1892).

As popularity for the sport grew at an impressive pace, particularly with football becoming an Olympic sport in 1900, the early nineteen hundreds saw the last influx of football clubs in England. This era witnessed the birth of several other football organizations such as Chelsea (1905), Charlton (1905), and Leeds (1919). This wave emerged as a result of the growing demands for professional competition as fans began to identify with their clubs through feelings of recognition and association. Also, resulting from London's growing population and expansion, Arsenal could not cater to the city's growing demands for competitive football. This meant that new clubs, such as Chelsea (1905) Charlton (1905) and Crystal Palace (1905), were formed in and around London with their own football stadiums and infrastructures. Football quickly became a way of life as the successes of some clubs transpired into economic gains and feelings of pride for entire communities. See Appendix 1 for the segmentation of football clubs in terms of their age.

Football's popularity as a competitive sport in England became mostly apparent after the Second World War. At a time where much public attention was directed towards international political instability, many in England turned to football for distraction. This sudden attention created a competitive football environment as clubs such as Arsenal, Manchester United and especially Liverpool, with its 14 championship seasons between 1946 and 1991, quickly became well-known across England. These three clubs have triumphed by together winning 23 league championships between 1946

and 1991. In addition, since the expansion of the Premiership in 1992, Manchester United and Arsenal have together held 10 additional championships. Such achievements have thus lead to segmentation within the Premiership as clubs such as Arsenal, Manchester United, Liverpool and to a certain extent Everton, have segmented themselves from other clubs in terms of achievements and status (see Appendix 2).

As evolution in telecommunication technologies became accessible, these football clubs gained worldwide recognition and quickly became obvious marketable entities. This reengineered the sport into a new age of scouting, expensive contracts, transfer fees and multi-million pound broadcasting deals. In England, football organizations have turned their orientations toward generating revenues and profits from considerable growth in the value of sponsorships, advertising and broadcasting deals. These developments have further segmented English football by detaching the financially more successful clubs from the less successful ones in a battle aimed at acquiring the greater share of television revenues (Conn, 1997). Much of the domestic as well as worldwide attention was given to football clubs that had developed a reputation based on accomplishments, successes and championships.

These successful clubs are today operating like organizations of international importance and attract attention from different stakeholders from all over the world. Successful business entrepreneurs are also involved in the game and as a result brought a new level of financial opportunities and commercial interests. For instance, Roman Abramovich, a wealthy Russian businessman who made his fortune through oil export deals in the early 1990's recently purchased Chelsea and paid $400 million (American) for the football club. Such financial liberties can assist clubs in acquiring more talented

players by offering them more attractive contracts, thus increasing the probabilities of on-field success. The on-field successes of these clubs are today related to millions of pounds in club revenues. This in return has greatly influenced the communication patterns of clubs in their objective of satisfying the demands of their multiple stakeholders. In recent years, there have also been some efforts to reduce the pressures of on-field successes through commercialization strategies, as football clubs view their fans as consumers, offering them various goods and services as well as elaborated match day experiences. Thus, certain clubs must today cope with greater demands and pressures from particular stakeholders that have developed vested interests in the on-field and off-field accomplishments of these football clubs.

As previously mentioned, PSOs have today become complex entities, characterised by multifaceted activities and often times conflicting needs and interests. Such an analogy is especially applicable to financially and culturally powerful modern day football clubs, as environmental pressures affect the manner in which these clubs manage and communicate their organizational intentions. Football clubs are part of a unique industry that relies heavily on satisfying the consumers' expressive needs. This industry, which research has identified as a cultural industry will be more profoundly described in the next section.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Cultural Industries

Management research has typically neglected the dynamics of cultural industries as an important context for investigation. This has been done despite the industries' economic, social and political significances (Lawrence & Phillips, 2002). Such neglect has lead management theory and research to become less relevant and less applicable to the context of cultural production, which is today a growing segment of the new business community.

Cultural products are often described as artistic products and usually include music, theatre and book publishing. Cultural industries are composed of networks of organizations, from creators (artists, musicians, actors, writers) and brokers (agents), through cultural product producers (publishers, studios), distributors (wholesalers, theatres), and media outlets (Hirsch, 1970). Nevertheless, football clubs can be classified as cultural producers in the way that they offer consumers nonmaterial goods with no clearly utilitarian purpose (Hirsch, 1970). According to Hirsch (1970), a cultural product is nonmaterial in the way that it embodies a live and unique performance and/or a unique set of ideas. Consumers therefore purchase cultural products for their 'meaning' as opposed to their usefulness at accomplishing a specific task (i.e. their 'utility'). Football fans purchase tickets to matches with the goal of satisfying their expressive needs by cheering a particular club's performance. This is especially true in a country like England, where the football culture is highly visible and exerts a considerable amount of influence on consumers' values, attitudes and life styles. This football culture is also well entrenched in local communities.

Lawrence and Phillips (2002) identified two types of cultural products: entertainment and fashion. Entertainment products include theatre, sporting events, novels and compact discs. On the other hand, fashion products put more emphasis on aesthetics such as designer sunglasses. Such products are often associated with image construction, where for instance a consumer will purchase designer sunglasses in an attempt to communicate a certain image. Entertainment products are quite complex in the way that they span from a high to low culture continuum. The success levels of such products are dependent on different measures, where the success or quality of professional wrestling will not be appraised on the same standards, principles and/or values that will be used to measure the success or quality of a theatrical play, for instance. More specifically, success can be measured in terms of profit and economic viability for lower cultural products, such as professional wrestling, and on a small but dedicated artistic community based on critics and knowledged consumers for higher cultural products such as ballet (Lawrence & Phillips, 2002).

Nevertheless, such a continuum is subject to interpretation since football for instance can be easily perceived differently in diverse settings. For example, as we move from a Canadian context to an English context, perceptions of the game will change on the cultural continuum, as the sport itself will attract different supporters and different attention in both environments. For instance, football has developed into a way of life in England as stadiums offer various hospitality packages aimed at supporters from a wide variety of socio-economic classes. The way by which this large English audience identifies to football as a symbol of national pride demonstrates that football transpires

much higher on the cultural spectrum than it does in a country like Canada, since the symbolism of football relevant to the national identity is less.

Interestingly, the classifications of these products are not mutually exclusive because certain cultural products can overlap and be consumed for both entertainment and fashion purposes. Lawrence and Phillips (2002) provide the example of the *Wall Street Journal*, where consumers purchase the newspaper for both its editorials and to construct a certain business-based image. A newly appointed accountant will often want to project a well-educated business image by purchasing a reputed business-minded newspaper to read at the office or in public transportation. In a football context this overlap can also exist as a football enthusiast can attend a football match with the attempt of satisfying his or her expressive needs, while simultaneously attempting to communicate a certain image by wearing the colours of a particular club.

Cultural products also have different consumption patterns than other products. When looking at Warde's (1990, 1991) analysis of consumption and on his focus on commodities, he argues that commodities in general can be analyzed in terms of three characteristics: exchange value, use value and identity value. The exchange value of a commodity refers to its monetary value. The use value on the other hand, refers to how the product is actually used, and identity value refers to the way in which the commodity contributes to the constitution of a social identity (Warde, 1990). Even though cultural products are nonmaterial goods with very little exchange value and no clear use value, they are often consumed entirely for their identification value, as consumers identify with different types of music or different sport teams. This can also be explained in the way

that a consumer will purchase designer clothing with the goal of contributing to the creation of his or her social identity affiliated with a certain status group.

When looking at football however, the social meaning of the sport has transpired into more of a leisure experience, as consumption of the product itself is today competing with other leisure activities such as artistic performances and movies. Thus, this competition exists because consumers purchase tickets to football matches with the objective of satisfying their expressive needs, similarly to the way that other individuals will purchase movie, ballet or theatre tickets to satisfy those same expressive needs.

Interestingly however, consumption patterns for cultural organizations are very difficult to predict and understand. For instance, while high-tech companies will produce custom goods with defined intentions of meeting the needs and demands of specific sets of clients, a book publisher will release a high variety of books, of which only a few will succeed by becoming attractive to a segment of consumers. Accordingly, Knights and Morgan (1993) argued that from the area of political economy, producers are entering a new era of what they refer to as 'flexible specialization', because consumers require a wide variety of products. For a football club this analogy is also relevant in the way that consumers can demand success and achievement on the field as well as a sense of community integration, where the club is highly visible and well accepted within the community.

Another important and very distinguishable characteristic of cultural industries is that heavy expenditures are required for product promotion and marketing (Hirsch, 1970). It is then not surprising that the development of mass-communication technologies such as radio, television and the internet has created a context in which

cultural organizations are today growing at an impressive rate. This is evident in different cultural industries, but it has become especially obvious for professional sport leagues. For instance, the broadcasting of football matches in England by *Sky TV* has played an important role in increasing the demand and popularity of the professional football leagues.

This is especially true for the *FA Premier League*, because today millions of viewers tune in to watch football matches. *FA Premier League* websites have been designed to drive global awareness for the league and its clubs as these websites attempt to both meet and build on the ever growing demand for information. In addition, both television and the internet are used to market and advertise matches and league activities, as well as to communicate club images. These technologies have been established as effective sources to augment awareness and demand. As a result, these technologies have helped marketers in influencing consumer perceptions and willingness to purchase certain products based on their 'meaning' instead of their 'utility'. More will be said on the use of websites to communicate a football club's image intentions in the methodology and key findings sections of this paper.

Resulting from this necessity to advertise and market cultural products through means of mass communication, cultural organizations such as record companies, movie studios and, to a lesser extent, football clubs will target their advertising and promotional campaigns to specific individuals in strategic positions. More specifically, according to Hirsch (2000), these individuals are what he describes as gatekeepers and include disc jockeys, film critics and book reviewers that are employed by mass-media organizations to act as fashion experts and opinion leaders for their respective constituencies. Such

gatekeepers become crucial in connecting the creators to the consumers in popular culture.

Arguably however, the influence of such gatekeepers is diminishing as consumers, through innovation in technologies, are increasingly able to access cultural products and can therefore depend to a lesser extent on these middle men for information and opinions. Such technological innovations include the use of the internet to download music as consumers can rely on their own tastes and judgements instead of relying on a disc jockey's opinions. Within the football context, these middle men are less important, yet still influential. These opinion leaders can take various forms, but mostly include match commentators (television, internet), match analysts (television, newspaper and internet) and sport journalists (television, newspaper, internet, magazines).

It is however essential to delineate differences that can exist between PSOs and other cultural producers. For instance, in the music industry, it is extremely difficult for consumers to identify and establish clear standards of quality because these standards represent abstract ideals rather than specific product attributes (Lampel, Lant & Shamsie, 2000). This therefore suggests that the quality of a musical group for instance is very subjective, since tastes are unstable and can change over time. On the other hand, when it comes to PSOs, the value of the product is less subjective, because the quality of any football club will essentially be based on its winning record. For example, the Los Angeles Lakers (i.e. NBA) and the New York Yankees (i.e. MLB) have seen their fan base increase considerably resulting from their consecutive championship seasons. This in no way suggests that a club's winning record is the lone facet that influences the perception of its supporters, as other club characteristics such as its popularity,

geographic situation, history, traditions, on-field tactics and strategic decisions [such as player transfers] could also affect a football fan's decision to support a particular club.

The Premiership and the First Division are particularly appropriate for investigating changes in projected images because PSOs derive much value from subjective experiences that rely heavily on using symbols in order to manipulate perception and emotion (Lampel et al. 2000). Managers are therefore put in a context where their organizations are not capital or knowledge intensive, but more specifically, their organizations are symbol intensive. Image is therefore conceived as a symbol, since an organization's image constitutes a key target for managers to control. This symbolic world is complex and dynamic because symbols are shaped by environmental pressures. Managers in cultural industries are not always able to entirely control their symbolic world, but they can become masters at observing and reacting to trends while influencing them to whatever degree they can (Lawrence & Phillips, 2002).

For football clubs, the effectiveness of this influence can be measured on different foundations. As a starting point, it can be measured on the increase number of supporters for a particular club, such as the increase fan base, in the last decade, for Manchester United. In addition, it can also be measured on the increase level of acceptance by a large number of sport fans for football as a sport through a common proliferation in the popularity of football in general, such as if the playing style of Manchester United is able to captivate the broad-spectrum of sport fans by influencing an increase in football supporters.

In order to investigate the particularities of football clubs in projecting various images, I will now examine the concept of organizational image and identify the different facets that are relevant to the communication of images unique to football clubs.

Organizational Image

Defining organizational image. Organizational image examines how an organization presents itself to outsiders (Albert & Whetten, 1985). These projected or desired images (Whetten, Lewis & Mischel, 1992) often play a critical role in constructing an organization's reputation (Bromley, 1993) by influencing external perceptions of the organization. In this research I define organizational image as the way in which, through the use of language, an organization presents itself to others with the objective of generating favourable perceptions among key stakeholders.

Organizations communicate about their projected images by way of symbols, language and information in order to produce favourable perceptions and emotions among stakeholders. As distinct environments are composed of different stakeholders, with different amounts of power, placing different demands on organizations (Scott & Lane, 2000), variations in communicated images can be expected. As a result, image communication efforts must meet the demands of key stakeholders while also conforming to defined industry norms. These industry norms must be considered by organizations in order to guarantee their survival. Such industry norms include competing organizations, customer requirements, as well as societal expectations (Gordon, 1991). For instance, football clubs have recently engaged in organizational re-engineering as a response to the new financial requirements of their environment.

In past literature, many organizational identity scholars have established theoretical links between organizational identity, culture and image (Hatch & Schultz, 2000, 2002). More specifically, what is core and distinctive of an organization tends to be affected by the norms, values and status perception of a given environment (Gordon, 1991). The projected images of an organization are closely associated with organizational identity and culture, as image corresponds to an expression of identity (Hatch & Schultz, 2000). This means that organizations communicate images that are representative of their organizational cultures and identities, while at the same time are catered to satisfy external pressures. Resulting from the close conceptual ties that exist between image, identity and culture, it becomes important to compare and contrast these theoretical concepts.

According to Hatch and Schultz's (2002) model of organizational identity dynamics, theoretical inferences can be made of the way image interacts with both identity and culture. Their model establishes conceptual interactions between these concepts as image expresses cultural understandings whereas identity is embedded in cultural understandings. Through another conceptual relationship, this model argues theoretical links between identity and image, as expressed identity leaves impressions on others and thus shapes the images that are communicated to the external publics. On the other hand, identity mirrors the perceptions of others in a way that an organization's identity becomes the partial product of how various audiences perceive the organization. In their research, Hatch and Schultz (2002) argue that it is the interplay of all four processes that together construct organizational identity as an ongoing conversation or dance between organizational culture and organizational images. These processes thus

emphasize how audience perceptions and environmental pressures affect all three components of organizations.

When PSOs' project images to their particular environments, such images derive from a variety of facets, such as the characteristics of the sport, the personalities of its leading exponents, its system of awards, ect. (Ferrand & Pages, 1999). Professional sport as a social phenomenon encompasses a rich range of values and symbols, where these values and symbols can be expressed through the communication of different images. According to Ferrand and Pages (1999), in a sport context, image is a social representation, where they defined a social representation as an image construct and as a language because it symbolises behaviour and social situations. Managing this symbolic world has become increasingly demanding for managers of PSOs, as careful attention must be given to what images organizations should project, in order to satisfy their external publics. Making a firm more appealing can be accomplished through innovation as well as through identity and image construction (Parent, 2003). Therefore, in terms of PSOs, image can be looked at through the conceptualization of projection, since these organizations are today increasingly dependent on the perception of others in terms of resources.

Through image management, PSOs have common goals to create loyalty amongst members, to increase the number of their spectators and to manage their sponsorship relationships (Ferrand & Pages, 1999). These common goals are dependent on communicating a sense of organizational value by using symbols in constructing images. As a result, sport organizations need to manage both the symbolic (to have feelings of fun and entertainment) and functional (to support a competitive team) dimensions to

highlight their competitive advantages (Ferrand & Pages, 1999). By doing so, a PSO can create value amongst its stakeholders, as stakeholders in return, value the PSO in terms of its reputational assets. In accordance, Lamertz, Heugend and Calmet (forthcoming) looked at how organizations attempt to differentiate themselves from the crowd by claiming identity attributes that are held or valued by specific stakeholders or by pursuing moral legitimacy by adopting identity attributes that cohere well with norms and values held by society at large. By doing so, organizational value can be created and only then can an organization attract attention from its environment and increase the acquisition of available resources.

Understanding how value can be created will become pivotal in analysing how different environments can affect the types of images that football clubs communicate. In continuing the analysis, I will now illustrate the context of this research by presenting both its organizational concepts and their relationships. This next section will thus present a model representing my perception of the relationships that exist between the three central components of this study: identity, stakeholder pressures and the projected images of organizations.

Theoretical Framework

Based on the work that has been presented thus far, a model (figure 1) was constructed with the objective of illustrating the theoretical framework of this research. This model will be presented and explained with the purpose of understanding the setting (professional sport league) of the research, the organizational concepts presented thus far (identity and projected image), as well as the interconnectedness that exists between both

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the setting and the organizational concepts. Much focus will then be given to explaining

different aspects of the model and how the relationships between its components can help

in understanding how a PSO projects different images to different stakeholders.

Figure 1: The duality in identity, stakeholder pressures and projected image model.

Resource Claims and Core Capabilities

| **Cultural Entity**

Entertainment/
Expressive
claims | → | DUALITY
IN
IDENTITY
(Club) | ← | **Economic Entity**

Utilitarian &
Legitimacy claims |

Organizational characteristics

STAKEHOLDER
PRESSURES:
-Media
-Government agencies
-Sport governing
bodies
-Community
-Domestic supporters
-International
supporters
-Privately owned
businesses (sponsors)
-Shareholders

COMMUNICATION
OF DIFFERENT
MESSAGES

PROJECTED
IMAGES

The theoretical analysis will continue by using the model illustrated in figure 1 to

guide the research. Several key parameters will be considered in order to more

accurately explain certain components of the proposed model. More specifically, these

parameters will delineate key differences in the projection of images by football clubs.

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These modifications in the communication of images will be investigated by way of variations in audiences and actors.

Variations in actors. When investigating organizations operating in a cultural industry, it is important to consider that some organizations include different actors with different interests. In the focal industry context, these different actors include administrators, who are concerned with the economic well-being of a particular club (club owners) and the artisans (coaches or managers and players), who are more concerned with the on-field quality of the game. In a European football context, club coaches are also considered managers as their tasks also include administrative duties. Thus, resulting from different actors, organizations project varying images emerging from the duality that exists within these organizations' identities.

When analyzing duality in an organization's identity, Albert and Whetten (1985) looked at two different types of duality: ideographic and holographic. An ideographic identity is an organizational identity, where different internal units emphasize their specific identity. This analogy was supported as most cultural institutions have identities composed of contradictory elements because they contain actors (artisans and administrators) within the organization who come from different professions (Glynn, 2000). This leads to different groups of actors promoting different aspects of an organization's identity. In a sport context for instance, an ideographic organization could be a football club where the owner and administrators emphasize economic gains through core capabilities of profit generation, whereas the managers and players identify to personal growth through core capabilities of success by means of a good winning record.

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On the other hand, a holographic identity exists when each internal unit exhibits the properties of the organization as a whole (Albert & Whetten, 1985). For example, all members of a football organization would communicate identities using the joint criteria of on-field success (operational criterion) and economic growth (commercial criterion).

When examining the role of various actors within the context of a PSO, coaches and players are often the most visible members. As organizational members they often give a face to their organizations, whereas outsiders view these members as the organization (Scott & Lane, 2000). Therefore these visible members are often used to represent their organizations through different forms of discourse such as advertisings, newsletters, interviews and public speeches. In consequence, resulting from escalating player salaries, organizational leaders expect such members to express personal values that are in line with organizational goals. Players can therefore be transferred after publicised stories associating them with illegal activities or questionable statements. In spite of their importance as organizational front runners, players will often have no decision-making power, as strategic decisions are taken by managers, owners and other administrators. Consequently, tension and conflict can erupt as different actors make different identity claims and more specifically, as one identity element is emphasized over another. This situation creates discrete identity fields which, as defined by Hunt, Benford and Snow (1994), are sets of actors clustered around socially constructed identities. Such identity fields can often affect an organization because different identity elements championed by different groups shape conflicting identity claims. The construction of different organizational resources and capabilities are shaped and articulated by an organization's distinct identity claims, because players will control

intangible reputational resources as opposed to administrators who will claim the more tangible financial resources (Glynn, 2000).

The messages communicated by the segmented inter-organizational professional groups that segments an organization in distinct identity fields will be a partial product of not only their resource claims, but of what their core capabilities are. For instance, within the context of a PSO, an owner and his administrators can define their core capabilities as being a low cost, community responsive football club, whereas players and coaches can describe their core capabilities as being the best football club offering the highest quality of football to its supporters. These core capabilities as well as resource claims are therefore based on divergent identity claims, which may influence administrators to express different images by communicating different messages to their audience.

In figure 1, the resource claims and core capabilities of both administrators and artisans segment the organization in distinct identity fields. These distinct identity fields can be distinguished between utilitarian/legitimacy versus expressive claims. As the model illustrates, the 'administration' can be best looked at in terms of an economic entity that strives towards efficiency and economic viability. Thus, resource claims and core capabilities will aim towards maximizing utility, as the primary concern is to win championships while operating as economically as possible (Arnold, 1991). This utility maximization has reached new heights, as some football clubs are today attempting to maximize their profits regardless of their success on the pitch. As a result, attention is now given to other components such as merchandising and community involvement with the objective of both acquiring available resources and establishing legitimacy among the

communities in which these clubs operate. The model thus associates utilitarian and legitimacy identity claims to the 'administrators'.

Conversely, and based on how I previously defined 'teams' as social entities where players, coaches and other members must interact, inferences can therefore be made on how resource claims and core capabilities of a team can be associated with articulating the more expressive identity demands. In this case, the resource claims and core capabilities can be linked to a club's efforts in striving towards on-field successes, such as league championships, through the acquisition of better and more expensive players and the need for better and more modern infrastructures to cater to player needs. Consequently, the model associates expressive identity claims to the 'team' component and its members.

As expressed in the model, these distinct identity claims therefore create, what Albert and Whetten (1985) describe as, duality in identity. Consequently, as I previously defined a 'club' as the foundation that encompasses all aspects of both 'team' and the 'administrators', a club itself can be looked at as an organization composed of distinct professional groups with distinct identity claims. Such an organization expresses duality in identity resulting from the pressures of both identity fields interacting within the same system. Resulting from such pressures, both professional groups will compete to communicate their specific messages to their stakeholders (Glynn, 2000).

In the next section, I will turn the attention to the audience of PSOs. As the model illustrates, stakeholders considerably affect the types of images that PSOs decide upon for projection.

Variations in audiences. According to Baum (1996), the prominent approach in organization and management research has emphasized adaptive change in organizations as opposed to emphasizing environmental selection processes. To understand the behavior of an organization, one must understand the context of that behavior, as this becomes important for those who seek to understand, manage and control their environments (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). This external perspective to the functioning of organizations is an important aspect of this research because many organizational troubles stem from inaccurate perceptions of external demands, or from patterns of dependence on the environment (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). In the chosen context of this research, football clubs are highly dependent on available resources offered by stakeholders interacting within their environments. These football clubs tend to be influenced by those who control the resources that they require. Analyzing the complexities that exist in these relationships will become essential to understanding what images organizations communicate to whom.

As expressed in figure 1, a single environment may contain different audiences. These audiences tend to be different stakeholders who have a vested interest in the continued operations of the organization (Scott & Lane, 2000). Freeman (1984) defined a stakeholder as any group or person who can affect or who is affected by an organization's actions. In a football context, a stakeholder can be looked upon as a person or an organization that has some amount of control over resources that are wanted or needed by a particular football club. Each stakeholder may have different demands and /or different amounts of influence over the organization. Thus, organizations are linked to environments by federations, associations, customer supplier relationships,

competitive relationships, and social-legal apparatus that control and limit the nature of their relationships with their environments (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). Consequently, it can be expected that stakeholders exert different pressures on organizations, which in return will force them to respond by adapting their organizational facets accordingly. For instance, both Gordon (1991) and Phillips (1994) have argued that the social reality of organizations is founded on industry-based assumptions about customers, competitors, and society, which influences the creation of an organization's culture. This conception is also in accordance with Scott and Lane (2000), who constructed a model of organizational identity that places identity within the broader context of manager-stakeholder relationships. In addition, Albert and Whetten (1985) noted that a switch from passive to active processing by managers in constructing an organizational identity occurs when managers view the current organizational image as important for the organization's future performance. This performance is dependent on resourceful support by key stakeholders.

Scott and Lane (2000) looked at image communication based on an assessment of an organization's audience, such as their expectations, goals, and beliefs as well as on situational characteristics, where it is through managerial decisions and actions that an organization can project variations in images to their audience. These decisions and actions are thus determined by the particular context and/or situational contingencies that an environment offers to a particular organization (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). The image constructions are also founded on the core values of an organization and expresses what is unique and distinctive about an organization. As a result, image constructions by an organization are derived from the institutional environment in which an organization

operates as well as on an organization's identity claims. These two components are critical to an organization, in terms of deciding on the types of images to project.

Hence, organizations, in their specific environments, must decide on strategic actions to build perceptions of legitimacy. Through these strategic actions, organizations will aim to avoid negative impacts on their reputations, which can arise from negative perceptions by their stakeholders. Such strategic actions emphasize the maintenance of legitimate images for purposes of resource acquisitions (Scott& Lane, 2000), because legitimacy represents a relationship between an organization and its audience (Suchman, 1995). Many organizations have gotten into difficulty by failing to understand those groups or organizations on which they depended upon for support or by failing to adjust their activities to ensure continued support (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). Accordingly, Ahlstrom and Bruton (2001) identified legitimacy-building strategies that firms can employ in order to succeed in challenging environments that have seen many firms struggle. The importance of legitimacy in managerial decision-making has been deemed by researchers as "an anchor-point of a vastly expanded theoretical apparatus addressing the normative and cognitive forces that constrain, construct, and empower organizational actors" (Suchman, 1995: 571).

Managers therefore choose certain organizational images to present to stakeholders for strategic reasons. Consequently, managers will be forced to adjust the packaging of projected images based on the expression of the audience's needs, beliefs and knowledge (Scott & Lane, 2000). This packaging can often be expressed through advertising to accelerate the pace at which exchanges and decision-making procedures foster more generalized attribution of good disposition (Aldrich & Fiol, 1994). If well packaged,

image can have the power to influence the perceptions and behaviours (Ferrand & Pages, 1999) of all those involved with a sporting organization such as its members, its supporters, the media, its sponsors, ect. The fact that different people, groups, or organizations may have different criteria for evaluating a particular organization creates problems for the organization, as these problems derive from the fact that the criteria may in fact be incompatible (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). If well packaged and well presented, image can therefore create significant value for PSOs.

In addition, by accurately adjusting the packaging of projected images, a football club can succeed in catering to the demands of its stakeholders in a way that its stakeholders, by means of association, will use a football club's identity as an extension of their own (Scott & Lane, 2000). By communicating distinctive values, an organization will attract attention from potential sponsors because these sponsors will use the organization as a focal organization through which it can identify with and support, resulting from an overlap between the organization's identity and the identity of its sponsors. This in turn benefits the sponsors in terms of reputational assets, through association as well as in terms of financial assets, through exposure. Accordingly, Stuart (2000) looked at how relationships between stakeholders and organizations can lead to strategic alliances, because these alliances are more than pathways for the exchange of resources and know-how as they also convey social status and recognition, which can eventually lead to reputational assets. These relationships must therefore be managed accordingly, given the amount of time and resources required (Sheppard & Tuchinsky, 1996). According to Foster (2003), professional sport teams will present different organizational images to different stakeholders such as local government agencies,

domestic and international supporters, sport governing bodies, privately owned businesses (sponsorships), local communities, shareholders and the media.

According to Parent's (2003) research on image and identity construction in mega-sporting events, variations on images can be presented to different stakeholders. For instance, a football club is likely to present itself to government agencies and sport governing bodies as being an organization that is well-organized and competent, working towards on-field success as well off-field community success (Parent, 2003). On the other hand, when it comes to privately owned businesses, a football club is more likely to present itself as being highly visible to the football community as well as other target markets. This in return will attract sponsorship opportunities, since these privately owned businesses will value exposure as well as brand visibility as a commercial opportunity.

As I previously discussed, some English football clubs are today publicly owned, and attracting shareholders has become crucial to their subsistence. Thus, these organizations must attempt to present themselves as being economically viable in order to guarantee their stakeholders a return on their investments. When it comes to supporters and their expressive needs, football clubs must also present themselves as being entertaining and fun, because within their cultural industry such clubs are competing with other consumption patterns of entertainment and leisure activities. Local communities on the other hand, will have specific demands and interests as such communities will identify to their football club's efforts towards community integration via programs such as football schools and clinics.

Based on disparities in stakeholder demands and interests, football clubs must express different images to their environment. In accordance, Lawrence and Dyer looked at stakeholder relationships through interaction where "the environment sets conditions that help shape the organization even as the organization shapes and influences its environment" (1983: 295). Therefore, through this conceptualization, image becomes a partial yet considerable product of environmental demands, since a football club can face different pressures from different stakeholders.

Figure 1 is thus based on the notion that football clubs are likely to present themselves differently to various stakeholders in order to be perceived as attractive (Scott & Lane, 2000). This presentation of the organizational self to others will be affected by the pressures that different stakeholders impose upon the organization, as owners and administrators will adapt the projection of organizational images for strategic reasons (Scott & Lane, 2000). The types of images and their construction will therefore need to be decided upon, managed, and controlled if the organization wants successful partnerships with all of its stakeholders. Also, this model establishes a relationship between stakeholder pressures and the organizational context of the focal organization. In figure 1, the double arrows interpret the interaction that exists between the two, as identity claims from both professional groups are partially based upon the environment in which a football club operates. In return, stakeholders exert pressures on the focal organization's identities through means of association as they can specify for themselves and for others who they are (Scott & Lane, 2000).

Research Questions

I have proposed a theoretical framework in figure 1. By doing so, I have posited relationships between the major components of this study: duality in identity, stakeholder pressures and the projection of images. This conceptual integration allows us to understand how varying images can be communicated by football clubs operating in different environments. Based on this conceptualization, the following research questions were posited to explore the applicability of the proposed relationships.

RQ1: Based on their websites, what are the most commonly projected image communication attempts by football clubs operating in the Premier Division?

RQ2: Based on their websites, what are the most commonly projected image communication attempts by football clubs operating in the First Division?

RQ3: How will images communicated by recently relegated football clubs differ from those communicated by clubs in their former environmental context (i.e. Premiership)?

RQ4: How will images communicated by recently promoted football clubs differ from those communicated by clubs in their former environmental context (i.e. First Division)?

Following the important distinctions that I have previously described in the environmental contexts that encompass both the Premiership and the First Division, these research questions will enable us to identify to what extent different environments (i.e. different stakeholder pressures) will affect the projected images that football clubs attempt to communicate. In addition, some research questions have also been raised with the objective of identifying moderator variables that can potentially affect the types of images communicated by football clubs. These moderator variables are based on specific organizational characteristics that can affect the projected images of organizations.

RQ5: How do the *on-field successes* of football clubs influence the projected images that these clubs convey to their external publics?

RQ6: How does the *age* of football clubs influence the projected images that these clubs convey to their external publics?

The answer to these research questions will enable us to guide an exploratory investigation on the theoretical relationships that I have outlined in the model. Even though this research has put more emphasis on the relationship between image projection and stakeholder pressures through RQ1, RQ2, RQ3 and RQ4, some attention has also been given to pertinent organizational characteristics through RQ5 and RQ6. By answering these questions, I will be able to draw more practical conclusions of how cultural organizations communicate their projected images to their environments.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The nature of this research demands a research design that will enable the investigation of organizations in a natural setting. In order to analyse how football clubs use specific identity claims to communicate images to their external publics in relation to the pressures that stakeholders place upon them, a case study will be used. Through a case study, I will compare the projected images of football clubs in the Premiership with those of the First Division. These two environments are composed of different environmental conditions with different stakeholder pressures conveying different demands and pressures for image projection.

The official websites of the investigated football clubs will be analyzed, where I will measure the projection of images by using content analysis. This analysis will be exploratory, where data will be collected by coding website categories and subcategories into different image dimensions. These image dimensions will be classified under three organizational identity claims: utilitarian, expressive and legitimacy. In addition, to examine inter-organizational differences, I will also explore variations among clubs in each division based on their on-field success levels, and age. By including these variables, I will be able to determine whether such organizational characteristics affect the projection of images for football clubs.

Content Analysis

Content analysis is a widely used technique that can be employed to make inferences by systematically and objectively identifying specific characteristics of messages (Holsti, 1968). These messages can emerge from a variety of communication formats such as verbal communication and written communication. According to Pfeffer (1981), through communication and language use, organizations manage to create positive images for both internal and external publics on whom they are dependent for the flow of needed resources. Language therefore becomes the component that organizations can manipulate in order to communicate the messages that they attempt to convey to their stakeholders (Gephart, 1993). Accordingly, language gives organizations an opportunity to express themselves because "the inherent ambiguity of language provides organizational members with a great deal of flexibility in the reporting of events,

allowing them to represent events in ways that contribute to the on-going maintenance of organizational images" (Duimering & Safayeni, 1998: 58).

There are a variety of media that are used to communicate various messages through language such as the written media, television and in this case the internet. These messages are elaborations of information as content analysis can be used to identify different dimensions of communication intentions. According to Whitley (2002), the process of content analysis can be described in four steps: deciding on sources of data, sampling, coding, and measurement.

Deciding the Source of Data

In this research, the source of data will be the football clubs' websites. The internet is today widely used by organizations in their attempts to maximize institutional goals (Lin & Jeffres, 2001). According to Abrahamson (1998), the historical development of other forms of media, such as magazines and broadcasting can offer somewhat of a parallel for envisioning the internet's future in terms of development and accessibility. In this analysis, the objective will be to identify to what extent football clubs project their different images through their online ventures.

Research on the content of websites of *Fortune 500* companies by Maddox, Darshn and Duhek (1997) as well as Esrock and Leichty (1999) elaborated on the way that websites enhanced public relations, attracted users to browse products and services and addressed various issues such as social responsibility and community involvement. Resulting from such research efforts, I can make conjectures of how football clubs should strategically develop their cyberspace information to communicate their identities

through the projection of images, to attract their established, new and future audiences. Therefore, I chose to collect the data from websites, because the information on websites is rich in the way that it portrays different aspects of an organization.

Websites were also chosen as the source of data because of the amount of information that they can produce. This information is not only easily accessible, but it is rich in content. Through their websites, organizations can not only generate a large amount of information, but they can also control the information and hence control the messages that they want to communicate to their specific audiences.

Accordingly, Lamertz et al. (forthcoming) chose to collect data from websites because the information represented a rich and appropriate information context to investigate organizational image communications. In addition, there is limited control by governments and other bodies when it comes to the internet, which implies that football clubs as well as other types of organizations may continuously strive for innovative ways of designing their websites and presenting their web contents to best express their strategic image communication attempts to their audiences (Lin & Jeffres, 2001)

Websites therefore not only offer diversity in communication patterns, where the multifaceted identity claims are well represented, but they are also frequently updated, guaranteeing accuracy and relevance. Websites have become a technology that can be integrated to provide content in the most attractive and absorbing manner and can even potentially raise the visual literacy of an entire generation (Lin & Jeffres, 2001).

Sampling

The second step of content analysis is sampling. The sample used in this research is composed of English football clubs operating in two distinct divisions. For several reasons, I chose to limit this research to football clubs in the Premier Divisions and in the First Division. To begin with, the clubs within these divisions are representative of the population (i.e. sports organizations) in the way that sporting organizations have today become multi-faceted and highly dependent on available resources. Second, as England can be credited for being the motherland of professional football, it is home to some of the worlds most financially demanding and competitive clubs such as Manchester United, Arsenal and Liverpool. Finally, the functioning of the *English Football League* is based on a relegation process where, every year, clubs are relegated and promoted from one division to another. This is a unique attribute in professional sports because a club can one year interact with one environment whereas the following year, this same club can face a different one.

The Premiership is composed of 20 clubs while the First Division is composed of 24, where at the end of every season, 3 promoted clubs as well as 3 relegated clubs switch divisions and are forced to face the characteristics of their new environments. In time, different promotion/relegation patterns can arise as some clubs can become repeat movers (i.e. promoted one year and then relegated the other or vise versa) whereas others remain unique movers (i.e. relegation or promotion). This relegation process is non-existent in the North American context of professional sports and is relevant to this research because on a more practical level, this research can assist promoted and/or relegated football clubs to better adapt to their new environment.

My main concern in selecting football clubs from two closely related environmental contexts (i.e. two football divisions from the same country that are directly related through a relegation/promotion process) is that there could be an overlap in environmental attributes from one environment to another. As a result, I have identified variables that will enable me to make some key distinctions between football clubs. On-field successes will be an important variable to consider in this study because of the way that past on-field successes can affect organizational reputation. As I have previously discussed, clubs such as Manchester United, Arsenal and Liverpool have developed winning records, which in return have positioned them into a unique group of instantly recognizable clubs with the ability to generate considerable value from sponsorships and broadcasting deals. These revenues have created an enormous gap between top clubs and the rest of the English game.

Age is another important organizational characteristic to consider in this study, not only because it can affect identity (Albert & Whetten, 1985), but because it can affect the types of projected images that clubs attempt to communicate. As previously documented in the contextual description, the emergence of football clubs in England can be linked to four historical epochs: pre-1871, between 1871 and 1888, between 1888 and 1900, and post-1900's. These football eras are unique to the evolution of the sport and can be recognized as the birth of organized football in England. By investigating the age component, I will be able to explore how age affects image projection.

Coding and Measurement

The third step of content analysis is developing a coding scheme for the content of material to be analyzed. In this research, and similarly to Lamertz et al. (forthcoming), specific categorization of information dimensions were identified and defined in order to investigate what projected images football clubs attempt to communicate to their external publics. This exploration emerged from the data itself based on theoretical concepts. The first step in this process was to analyze the websites and their different categories, which became the main unit of observation. The different categories were composed of subcategories, each communicating specific information on the football club. For instance, when visiting the Chelsea website, the website is composed of a variety of categories. One of these categories is entitled "The Club", where within this category emerges a variety of sub-categories, such as "Club Info", "The Players", "The Management" ect. These categories and sub-categories were thus thoroughly analyzed to get a sense of how to classify the text communicated therein. Subsequently, the relevant literature was reviewed to first assist in the classification of different image dimensions and second, to reanalyze the data and to develop theoretical as well as operational definitions for each image dimension.

Hence, based on the categorization of the sampled websites, I developed an inductive coding scheme by exploring the messages communicated within each of the categories. Each website had two or three levels of categorization. For instance, the Wigan website has 12 categories with a total of 30 subcategories. In analyzing the websites, observations were made on how some categories were common throughout many of the websites, whereas other categories were unique to one or to only a few of the

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websites. Such variations will be discussed next as some clubs have standard website designs while others have customized website designs.

Through this analysis, I quickly observed that some of the websites had different properties. These differences can be categorized in terms of layout and information content. When it comes to variations in information content, the coding and measurement processes revealed the distinct means through which football clubs accentuated different images. When it came to website designs, I was able to identify two types of layouts; standard and customized. The standard websites were common and often communicated similar information through a standard categorization design, where the information was presented in a comparable fashion. On the other hand, some football clubs featured unique website designs, which expressed efforts of customization and personalization. These uncommon website layouts were more complex and lead to a more intricate coding process. In the more common websites, the information was presented in a way that facilitated the coding process resulting from the already established categorization of information existing within the websites. In accordance, the customized websites were much more time consuming and special attention had to be given to atypical communication attempts. Such websites usually held considerably more information and communication patterns, which made the coding process more vulnerable to idiosyncratic interpretation.

In analyzing these messages, and as previously expressed, language became the central component in recognizing communication patterns. By analyzing the language component of the categorization scheme, the image dimensions were defined according to three general questions: "Who are we as football clubs?", "Who are our key

stakeholders?" and "What images do we want to communicate to these stakeholders?".

Also, based on the theoretical framework, these image dimensions were identified and classified according to distinct identity fields that distinguish utilitarian, expressive and legitimacy claims. By reviewing the data several times, I was able to identify and fine tune these common themes and classify the image dimensions into their appropriate themes.

I was then left with eleven image dimensions classified into three distinct identity fields. These identity fields are based on the expression of a football club's utilitarian, expressive and legitimacy identity claims. To begin with, the utilitarian identity claims refer to messages about "values of economic rationality, the maximization of profit, and the minimization of cost" (Albert & Whetten, 1985: 281-282). On the other hand, the more expressive identity claims refer to messages about normative values of a football club by emphasizing on-field success, fun and entertainment rather than financial capabilities (Glynn, 2000). Lastly, football clubs also attempted to express organizational legitimacy by emphasizing activities directed towards the well-being of other groups in their organizational environments.

Even though this analysis cannot directly link these identity fields to specific actors, it can establish relationships between identity claims and identity fields. Thus, this analysis will not emphasize who is saying what, but instead, it will emphasize what is said. In all, I was left with four image dimensions in the utilitarian identity field (commercial opportunities, administrative, international and fan recruitment), four in the expressive field (entertainment, transactional, performance & competition and prestige & tradition) and three in the legitimacy field (community involvement, social responsibility

and leadership). Appendix 3 includes all dimensions and both their theoretical and operational definitions. This classification effort was essential to the research and can be considered as the central component of the analysis.

The objective of this analysis was to classify text into the established image dimensions. The websites were therefore carefully read and when a website category or subcategory communicated a certain image, this category was coded into its appropriate dimension. For instance, when a football club communicated its desire to help the community through study centers and education, the website category or subcategory composed of this information was coded in the *"community involvement"* image dimension. In another example, when a football club communicated its efforts to accommodate wheelchair access and related services in its stadium, the category or subcategory that composed this information was coded in the *"social responsibility"* dimension.

It is also relevant to mention that some categories and/or subcategories were coded several times in different image dimensions. For instance, Manchester United's "club membership" category, which is a communication effort oriented towards conveying a link between a club and a sense of entertainment through patterns of association by means of participation, was first coded into the *"entertainment"* dimension. However, this activity also expressed a transactional component as supporters become embedded in a subculture of consumption patterns through membership fees, emphasizing a commodity's use and identity values as I have previously defined them. As a result, Manchester United's "club membership" category was also coded in the *"transactional"* image dimension. This overlap of information into the various image dimensions was a

common aspect of the coding scheme and was verified for reliability purposes through inter-rater reliability.

This study will also look at the promotion and relegation status of clubs, by analyzing images of football clubs' that have recently moved from one division to another. In doing so, four years of historical data was collected from the clubs' websites to determine which clubs had moved up from the First Division to the Premiership and which clubs had moved down to the First Division from the Premiership (Appendix 4). Such analysis will enable me to discover differences in the projection of images of promoted and relegated football clubs.

In addition this research will also consider on-field successes as a possible moderator variable. The measurement of on-field success will be based on historical data collected from football clubs' websites. This parameter will be defined based on the number of league championships as well as *FA Cup* victories that a club has won between 1947 and 2004. As previously mentioned, the *FA Cup* is a championship to determine the best club in England, which is played in parallel to league play. Even though league championships is an important factor in a club's level of success, the play-off format of the *FA Cup* gives *FA* football clubs an opportunity to compete at the highest level independently of their success in league play. Such stratification will be handled by grouping clubs based on their level of past and present successes.

This grouping will divide the clubs in three groups from successful to semi-successful to not successful and will be based inclusively on Premiership as well as *FA Cup* victories after the Second World War (Appendix 2). The reason that I am ignoring the First Division results stems from the fact that a First Division championship leads to

promotion. If a club has more than one First Division championship, this would automatically signify that that club has been promoted and then relegated again in order to win a second First Division championship. Thus, resulting from the relegation/promotion process of professional English football, such grouping would not be a good indication of past and present successes. As a result, for this variable I have decided to only include Premiership and *FA Cup* championship victories. More specifically, clubs with no divisional championships and/or no *FA Cup* victories will be classified as not successful, whereas clubs with at least one divisional championship or one *FA Cup* victory will be classified as being semi-successful. As for successful clubs, this group will include clubs that have won more then three divisional championships and/or *FA Cup* victories. See Appendix 2 for the segmentation of the football clubs based on the on-field success variable.

Age as a variable will also be used in the exploration of projected images. Hence, the age variable will be measured on the basis of when a club was founded (see Appendix 1). These different historical periods will be used to investigate whether older football clubs emphasize different image dimensions than younger ones.

Reliability

Resulting from the research design as well as the method of analysis, the reliability component became an important aspect because I had to measure the degree of consistency obtained from coding the data. This level of consistency was measured through inter-rater reliability, where another rater coded 6.8% of the sample (three football clubs out of the forty four that were analyzed). Two of these football clubs were

from the Premiership, whereas the other was from the First Division. Through inter-rater reliability, we were able to establish some consistency over the coding process. To begin with, Arsenal was used as a template, as its website was simultaneously coded by both coders. The coding of Arsenal was such that agreement was reached on certain discrepancies in the way that the data were interpreted. This therefore allowed me to make some final decisions on the definitions of certain image dimensions.

The websites of Tottenham and Wigan were then individually coded and the results were compared. The inter-rater reliability for the Wigan (standard website) website yielded a reliability coefficient of .85, as opposed to .75 for the Tottenham (customized website) website. These correlation coefficients were obtained through frequency counts of each dimension, as each relevant website categories and/or sub-categories were counted into their appropriate dimension. The Wigan website demonstrated minor discrepancies mainly emerging from the *"administrative-service"* as well as the *"performance & competition"* dimensions. These inconsistencies resulted from the fact that one coder coded the information in the "news" category on the website whereas the other left this section un-coded resulting from its constantly changing nature. Agreement was then reached and the information in the "news" section was included in the analysis if it was consistent with the established definitions. This was settled based on the logic that some websites had "news" categories that communicated information that was consistently about performance and competition even if the content was regularly updated and changed.

When it came to the Tottenham website, some inconsistencies materialized from the *"administrative-associated services"*, *"community involvement"* as well as *"leadership"*

dimensions. These differences transpired from interpretation disparities and were settled through discussion and based on conformity to the established definitions of the image dimensions. Nevertheless, these discrepancies came as no surprise resulting from the rich volume of information and the atypical communication patterns that can emerge from customized websites.

Based on standards for reliability, the inter-rater reliability coefficients for both websites can be looked upon as adequate according to Bakeman and Gottman's (1989) minimum suggestion of .70. This can consequently support that the data was coded across forms in a consistent and reliable manner and that the definitions of the various image dimensions are well construed and leave limited space for interpretation disparities.

KEY FINDINGS

Results Overview

In conducting the analysis, different aspects were looked upon in order to draw practical conclusions from the coding scheme. The aim of this analysis is to present a set of results that will enable me to make relevant inferences on how organizations interact with their environments. In this research setting, two environments were identified in order to determine the extent to which organizational activities and outcomes can be accounted for by the context in which an organization is embedded.

The tasks of coding and measuring the images that football clubs project to their stakeholders have revealed important components. The first component from which one

can draw conclusions is the coding process. Through observations, a coding scheme was developed and the relevant websites were thoroughly coded. Based on differently emphasized identity claims, I was able to identify to what extent football clubs in both Premiership and First Division accentuated the projection of some images over others.

The second component from which one can draw conclusions is the website designs and layout differences. These differences affected the coding process and enabled me to make distinctions in the way that some football clubs can use their websites to differentiate themselves from other clubs.

The third component that was analyzed was the movement by football clubs from and towards the Premiership. This movement, based on processes of relegation and promotion, instantly became important to the analysis as historical data was collected to determine to what extent football clubs, in time, had the capacity to adapt to their new environmental context. This will help explore the effect of time, in terms of promotion and relegation, on the images that football clubs choose to communicate to their stakeholders.

The fourth component that emerged from the analysis is whether or not the projection of images can be linked to organizational characteristics. By identifying potential moderator variables, this analysis will enable the exploration of different facets that are external to a football clubs contextual environment, but that are still relevant to the way in which a football club chooses the types of images to project. These variables will be used with the objective of better interpreting the data as well as explaining some of the discrepancies that may exist in the data.

Subsequently, I will discuss the findings by establishing appropriate relationships between the projection of images, identity claims, organizational characteristics and the contexts in which football clubs operate.

Utilitarian Image Dimensions

The first set of results that will be presented in this analysis will look at the communication attempts expressing utilitarian identity claims. These image dimensions are based on football clubs' specific resource claims and core capabilities that are oriented towards maximizing utility, profit and economic viability. As expressed in Appendix 5, the five image dimensions that emerged from utilitarian claims accounted for 25.33% of the communication efforts in the Premiership as opposed 23.16% in the First Division. Some Premiership clubs such as Manchester United (31.33%), Leeds United (32.43%) Birmingham (30.77) and Bolton (30.12%) as well as some First Division clubs such as Ipswich Town (31.17%) Reading (45.92%) and Coventry (32.84%) dedicated considerably more categories and/or sub-categories to this identity claim. Such claims are thus important to a football club's survival and this section will analyze to what degree and in what manner these claims are expressed through different image dimensions. In analyzing the utilitarian image dimensions as well as both the expressive and legitimacy ones, I will present data in both absolute frequency and percentage format. This will be done to reduce the frequency effect, resulting from the sometimes conflicting nature of these formats in terms of interpretation, since in some instances the frequency count can be misleading.

Commercial opportunities. As previously expressed, PSOs are today operating like any other business organization. In order to afford player salaries, transfer fees and other expenses, these organizations must aim towards earning revenues through a positive return on their investments. In addition, and resulting from augmentations in such expenses, football clubs are increasingly attempting to earn money through means other than attendance, such as sponsorship and broadcasting deals. As a result, this dimension targeted any communication attempts from football clubs that were directed towards potential commercial partners. In the websites, when a category or a sub-category presented information on potential sponsorship opportunities such as match sponsorship, programme sponsorship, match ball sponsorship and/or player kit sponsorship, such categories were identified as belonging to the *"commercial opportunities"* dimension.

In table 1 of Appendix 6, the absolute number of coded categories and/or sub-categories show that based on the percentage of the total communication attempts, the two contexts do not differ enormously in terms of this dimension. In the Premiership for instance, *"commercial opportunities"* communication attempts account for 4.18% of the overall communication attempts as opposed to 4.06% for the First Division. This is surprisingly very minimal when considering the importance that sponsorship deals have on PSOs. However, the types of sponsorship opportunities that are communicated on these websites are based on match to match opportunities and are often in relation to corporate hospitality. Consequently, football clubs do not use their websites to communicate large scale sponsorship opportunities, since such information is not usually targeted towards the general audience that use websites to gather general information on football clubs.

When looking at the frequency effect of this image dimension, I noticed a difference between both environmental contexts, where the Premiership has a total of 79 communication attempts as opposed to 60 for the First Division (table 1 of Appendix 6). This results in certain Premiership clubs such as Manchester United (7), Tottenham (8) and Leeds (14) communicating many more commercial opportunities, in terms of frequency, than their other divisional rivals. When considering Reading (15) in the First Division and Leeds United (14) in the Premiership as outliers, the difference in standard deviations in terms of frequency for both Premiership and First Division on this image dimension is not considerable; 3.24 for the Premiership and 3.13 for the First Division (Appendix 7). Similar results were also found for the standard deviation in terms of percentage data with 3.82 for the Premiership and 3.36 for the First Division (Appendix 7). Thus, variance between contexts was quite minimal, as football clubs communicate fairly similar information in terms of commercial opportunities.

When looking more closely at these outliers (Leeds United and Reading) by targeting their websites, explanations were found clarifying the reasons why these football clubs dedicated such a considerable amount of categories and/or sub-categories to this specific dimension within their contexts. For Reading, much of the information was presented in a way that was considerably different than most other websites. More specifically, the hospitality, advertising and sponsorship information was presented in a format of sub-categories, where these sub-categories represented a specific kind of information. In contrast, other football clubs would tend to combine these types of information and present it within one sub-category. As a result of this, Reading is an outlier within the context of this dimension.

As for Leeds United, the design of the website is personalised and unique when compared to other websites. As we will see in a later section, such websites are much more difficult to code do to their customized natures. In this specific instance and similarly to the Reading website, the information presented on the Leeds United website that was coded within the context of this first utilitarian image dimension is presented in a format of sub-categories whereas other websites were more prone to combine this type of information and present it within one sub-category. In consequence, resulting from its website design particularities, the Leeds United website is substantially different in terms of the way certain information is presented.

Administrative. This image dimension was divided into two sub-divisions in order to make a distinction between what I labeled as internal and external services. As I coded the data, I quickly noticed that football clubs offered a multitude of different types of services. As I further analyzed the types of services that were offered, I became aware that some services were associated with the clubs' name and/or logo, whereas others were not. As a result, I segmented this dimension into two related yet separate image dimension.

Associated services. This dimension can be looked upon as taken an internal perspective to administrative services. Many of the services in this sub-dimension were based on the communication of appropriate infrastructures and services that suit specific administrative needs, such as the infrastructure that is needed to hold conferences and business banquets, where these services are associated with a particular club's name

and/or logo. In this dimension, I thus coded the text that offered any type of club related services. Table 2 of Appendix 6 suggests variation in the data, as football clubs in the Premiership dedicated a total of 231 categories or sub-categories to the communication of associated services as opposed to 94 for the First Division. The standard deviation for this dimension in terms frequency for the Premiership is 7.23 as opposed to 4.98 for the First Division (Appendix 7). In terms of the percentage data, the standard deviation of this dimension for the Premiership is 5.11 as opposed to 5.97 for the First Division (Appendix 7). In particular, Premiership clubs such as Manchester United, Arsenal, Southampton and Everton had respectively 32, 19, 19 and 18 categories or sub-categories dedicated to *"associated services"* (table 2 in Appendix 6). For the Premiership clubs, such communication efforts are considerable considering that the average communication attempt for clubs in the Premiership for this dimension was 12.22% as opposed to 6.36% for the First Division (table 2 in Appendix 6).

First Division clubs therefore put much less emphasis towards the communication of *"associated services"*. The average communication attempt for First Division clubs for this dimension is 3.92, where three clubs can easily be distinguished with considerably large scores (table 2 in Appendix 6). In this same table, Sunderland, Reading, Coventry and Westham, all former Premiership clubs, can be considered as statistical outliers with their higher emphasis towards the communication of associated services; respectively 10, 20, 16 and 8.

On a contextual basis, there consequently exists a considerable difference between Premiership and the First Division clubs in terms of communicating about *"associated services"*. For instance, a Premiership club such as Manchester United dedicated close to

20% of its coded categories or sub-categories to *"associates services"* as I have defined

them (table 2 in Appendix 6). In contrast, a First Division club such as Norwich

dedicated a mere 1.5% of its coded categories or sub-categories to this same dimension

(table 2 in Appendix 6). This discrepancy between the Premiership and the First Division

is quite evident as Premiership club, in their websites, emphasize a certain level of

commercial diversification in terms of service offerings.

Services. In contrast to *"associated services"*, this dimension takes a more external

perspective to service offerings. More specifically, this image dimension measures how

football clubs' communicate different services to the football community, as these

services are not associated with club logos and/or names. For instance, such services can

include betting, car rental and/or insurance. These service offerings were very common

to many First Division clubs, but less to Premiership clubs. In fact, many clubs such as

Manchester United have diversified their business operations to include these services in

a club-related fashion.

Table 2 in Appendix 6 demonstrates that within the context of the Premiership, an

average of 3.6 categories or sub-categories were coded in this dimension as opposed to 5

for the First Division. In terms of the percentage data, this same table also reveals that an

average of 3.81% of categories and/or sub-categories in Premiership clubs are devoted to

this image dimension as opposed to 8.12% in First Division clubs. More specifically, in

terms of frequency, this image dimension was the only dimension that expressed a

reversal effect, since more categories and/or sub-categories were coded for the First

Division compared to the Premiership; 120 and 72 respectively (table 2 in Appendix 6).

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The results can therefore confirm that First Division clubs are more likely to outsource their services, while Premiership clubs have a wider range of diversification.

International. As I analyzed the websites, I quickly noticed that all of the football clubs associated themselves with activities of international orientation. Such activities were sometimes in terms of language options for foreign supporters. This orientation towards audiences other or beyond a particular club's local reach was fairly common, but did not constitute a considerable communication attempt.

In table 3 of Appendix 6, the absolute number of coded categories or sub-categories for the Premiership in terms of this image dimension was 49, which constitutes 2.59% of all coded categories and/or sub-categories for the Premiership. Similar results were also found for First Division clubs as a total of 36 categories and/or sub-categories were committed to this image dimension, which represented 2.43% of all coded categories and/or sub-categories in the context of the First Division (table 3 in Appendix 6). In terms of contextual averages, football clubs in the Premiership dedicated an average of 2.45 categories and/or sub-categories to this image dimension as opposed to 1.5 for the First Division (table 3 in Appendix 6). Standard deviations for both contexts expressed a considerable level of variance. More specifically, in terms of frequency, the Premiership had a standard deviation of 1.39, which is twice as large as the First Division's 0.66 (Appendix 7). In terms of the percentage data, the results expressed less variance with standard deviations of 1.25 for the premiership and 0.98 for the First Division (Appendix 7).

Even though this image dimension had a marginal impact on making distinctions between both divisional contexts, it is still worth mentioning that for some clubs this dimension clearly expressed the existence of an international fan base. For instance, Manchester United offers a Japanese language option, which enables a website user to change the language of the entire website. Such language options were not very common and literally inexistent for clubs in the First Division. Such a website characteristic clearly demonstrate that some clubs, in addition to their local supporters, have large and defined universal fan bases and not just broad international audiences composed of re-located supporters.

Fan recruitment. This image dimension represents a club's efforts to increase its fan base through activities and practices oriented exclusively toward potential future fans. This is usually done by influencing outsiders of the potential benefits associated with supporting a particular club.

In coding the websites, much consideration was given to appropriately defining and describing this dimension in order to make a clear distinction between this image dimension and the *"entertainment"* dimension. As a result, the emphasis of this dimension is based on the notion that the communication patterns coded in this dimension were oriented towards outsiders that are not yet fans of the club. Thus, this denotes that any membership offer characterised by a reduction in ticket price will not be considered in this dimension and will be accounted for in the *"entertainment"* dimension because it mostly targets established supporters. This approach is based on the logic that only established fans would consider purchasing tickets and especially season tickets to

support a particular club. The *"fan recruitment"* image dimension will however include any promotions characterised by prizes and draws. These will be included here resulting from their objective of attracting the attention of general football fans that are not committed to a particular club.

Most websites included a "supporter's club" sub-category, which was in some cases composed of information directed towards potential future fans. However, these sub-categories will not always be coded in *"fan recruitment"* because some websites make no communication efforts to attract new supporters; they only attempt to identify to their current supporters. In this case, the information in a "supporter's club" sub-category will be coded in the *"entertainment"* dimension only.

Table 4 of Appendix 6 clearly indicates that football clubs do not emphasize the recruitment of supporters. According to the data, only 2.54% of the coded categories or sub-categories in the Premiership were dedicated to this image dimension. Similar results were also found in the First Division as 2.17% of the coded categories or sub-categories were dedicated to this image dimension (table 4 in Appendix 6). This same table indicates that Premiership clubs on average only devote 2.4 categories and/or sub-categories to this dimension. Similar results were also found for the First Division as clubs devote an average of 1.3 categories and/or sub-categories to this dimension (table 4 in Appendix6).

In terms of frequency variance, the Premiership data expressed some variation with a standard deviation of 1.60 as opposed to a smaller 0.87 for the First Division (Appendix 7). When it comes to the percentage data, standard deviation results were however much different as the Premiership, in terms of this dimension, had a standard deviation of 1.21

as opposed to 1.29 for the First Division (Appendix 7). In terms of frequency, certain clubs in the Premiership such as Arsenal, Tottenham, Manchester United, Everton and Fulham had slightly more communication attempts in respect to this dimension with respectively 6, 5, 4, 4 and 4 (table 4 in Appendix 6). In terms of the percentage data, these clubs respectively devoted 4.08%, 3.97%, 2.41%, 3.05% and 3.57% of their categories and/or sub-categories to this image dimension (Table 4 in Appendix 6). Interestingly, with the exception of Fulham, these football clubs are historically successful football clubs in terms of how I have defined them (see Appendix 2). This therefore establishes a potential relationship between the *"fan recruitment"* dimension and on-field success. Successful clubs are thus more prone to communicate this type of information as compared to less successful clubs.

The general results, with the exception of the above mentioned clubs, were to a certain extent expected, considering the developed football culture in England. More specifically, most clubs in England based on their demographics as well as their history have already shaped their fan bases, where loyal supporters are expected to maintain their support for their clubs despite factors, such as winning records. Interestingly however, many fan recruitment efforts that were observed in the coding process targeted young prospective supporters. These supporters are often visible targets resulting form their lack of commitment to any specific club. In addition, children and adolescents are considered to be a large group of internet users.

Expressive Image Dimensions

The analysis will now focus on image dimensions that are based on expressive identity claims. Such image dimensions emphasize a football club's specific resource claims and core capabilities that are oriented towards associating senses of fun, leisure and excitement with supporting a particular club. Similarly to utilitarian claims, expressive identity claims are crucial to an organization's survival, but in this case, in terms of fan support.

As I first observed the websites and the content of the categories and sub-categories that structure them, I quickly noticed that in terms of frequency, football clubs put considerably more emphasis on their expressive claims as opposed to either their utilitarian or legitimacy ones. In consequence, this coding process has thus demonstrated that the content of the websites are composed of information that is targeting supporters by attempting to cater to their expressive needs. Thus, this confirms the position of PSOs as organizations operating in a cultural industry, as these organizations primarily work towards satisfying their consumers' aesthetic and expressive needs.

More specifically, the four image dimensions that emerged from expressive claims for the Premiership included a total of 1,056 coded categories and/or sub-categories representing 55.84% of all coded categories and/or sub-categories for this context (Appendix 5). In terms of the First Division, the findings revealed similar results with a total of 827 coded categories and/or sub-categories representing 55.99% of all coded categories and/or sub-categories (Appendix 5). Certain football clubs such as Arsenal (61.22%), Chelsea (67.57%), Liverpool (69.77%) and Leicester City (65.575) in the Premiership and Wigan (66.66%), West Bromwich (63.165), Nottingham Forest

(63.38%), Cardiff (61.545), Crewe (64.525), Derby (60.94%), Walsall (64.79%) and Wimbledon (63.89%) in the First Division devoted a considerable amount of their categories and/or sub-categories to expressive identity claims.

Entertainment. The *"entertainment"* image dimension was identified with the objective of establishing a relationship between the sense of fun and leisure, and football clubs. In terms of this dimension, such a relationship can be established through patterns of association by means of participation. These participation means are, however, not based on patterns of consumption such as a club shop. For instance many of the football clubs communicated club membership and supporter's club membership opportunities, as well as fanzone and fantalk categories. To avoid confusion with the previous image dimension (fan recruitment), it is worth noting that this dimension is oriented toward established fans exclusively and not toward potential future supporters.

In table 5 of Appendix 6, the absolute number of coded categories or subcategories for this dimension in the Premiership was 288 as opposed to 232 in the First Division. This represents an average of 15.23% of the total communication attempts in the Premiership compared to an average of 15.71% in the First Division (table 5 of Appendix 6). Interestingly, the percentage data expresses the fact that Premiership clubs devote, on average, less categories and/or sub-categories to this dimension. This is worth noting as the frequency data can sometimes be misleading. In terms of standard deviations for the frequency data, this image dimension expressed a considerable amount of variance in the Premiership with a standard deviation of 7.35 as opposed to much less variance in the First Division with a standard deviation of 2.91 (Appendix 7). When it comes to the

percentage data, the standard deviations were more similar with 4.40 for the Premiership and 3.36 for the First Division (Appendix 7).

When segmenting and calculating the averages for Arsenal, Manchester United, Everton, Chelsea and Liverpool in terms of frequency on this dimension we can then easily identify the source of variance. In terms of averages, these clubs commit 25.8 categories or sub-categories to the *"entertainment"* dimension as opposed to 10.6 for the rest of the Premiership, which is even less then the overall average of the First Division. In terms of percentage data, these results are also considerable since the segmented group (Arsenal, Manchester United, Everton, Chelsea and Liverpool) dedicates 19.25% of its categories and/or subcategories to this dimension as opposed to 13.61% for the rest of the Premiership.

These results are therefore conclusive in demonstrating the extent to which these top Premiership clubs accentuate with noticeably more emphasis this *"entertainment"* dimension. This thus confirms the commitment that such clubs have towards satisfying the expressive needs of their supporters. The amount of categories and/or subcategories devoted to this image dimension is a testament of the larger, more complex and more diversified group of supporters that these clubs are pressured to cater to. At the same time, a relationship can also be established between the *"entertainment"* dimension and a club's level of success. The segmented group, in this specific analysis, is composed of large and successful football organizations. Considering the results of the previous dimension (fan recruitment), I can now make inferences on how larger more successful clubs put more emphasis on recruiting supporters and are consequently forced to entertain

them through different means of participation. Such a strategy could therefore help football clubs become recognizable and more economically successful.

Transactional. This image dimension stems from the notion that football clubs attempt to lead individuals to become embedded in subcultures of consumption, each with their own established practices, rituals, norms and member expectations. These consumption patterns emphasize a commodity's use value, which is how the product is actually used, and/or identity value, which is the way in which the commodity contributes to the constitution of a social identity (Warde, 1990). These products and services are not only offered by the clubs, but are also associated with them through club themes, logos and colors. Supporters will consequently purchase such commodities resulting from strong feelings of identification.

In order to eliminate any potential confusion between this image dimension and the *"associated services"* image dimension, important distinctions must be made. To begin with, the later dimension considers uniquely services that are offered as opposed to both products and services in this case. In addition, in the case of the *"associated services"* dimension, particular emphasis is put on administrative needs, whereas the *"transactional"* dimension will not include administrative elements, such as conferencing, because these elements are not based on specific consumption patterns emphasizing a commodity's identity value (the way in which the commodity contributes to the construction of a social identity) (Warde, 1990). The "transactional" dimension thus refers to consumption patterns that lead individuals to become embedded in a subculture of consumption with its own established practices, rituals, norms and member

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expectations such as club jerseys. These products and services are instrumental because they are used as a means to some other end, where purchasing such products or services can lead an individual to satisfy his or her expressive needs.

Table 6 in Appendix 6 indicates that, for the Premiership, some 257 categories and/or sub-categories were devoted to *"transactional"* communication patterns as opposed to 173 in the First Division. In terms of percentage data, this represents 13.59% of all communication patterns in the Premiership as opposed to 11.71% in the First Division (table 6 in Appendix 6). In comparison, when eliminating the frequency effect, both Premiership and First Division offer comparable results. In terms of frequency, the standard deviations of the Premiership and the First Division are respectively 5.96 and 2.06 (Appendix 7). When it comes to the percentage data however, the relative difference is less considerable yet still substantial as the standard deviations of the Premiership and the First Division are respectively 3.91 and 2.60 (Appendix 7). Similarly to the *"entertainment"* dimension, this image dimension expresses variability in the context of the Premiership. More specifically, clubs such as Arsenal, Manchester United, Chelsea, Liverpool, Tottenham and Manchester City are quite distinguishable and can be once again credited as the source of variance for this dimension.

These results can support the earlier argument that some football clubs can be segmented resulting from their more profound and elaborate supporters and their efforts towards constantly recruiting new ones. The previous dimension demonstrated this trend in terms of patterns of association by means of participation and this dimension adds to the argument in terms of consumption patterns through fan identification. It is of no surprise that a larger more significant and diversified fan base will compel a football club

to offer a more profound line of commodities that are associated with the football club. This is a highly visible phenomenon as certain club colors and logos have become quite recognizable.

Performance and competition. As I first thoroughly observed the football clubs' websites, I became aware that much attention was given to communicating current on-field activities through statistical information as well as qualitative descriptions. Such communication attempts were frequent and aimed at informing as well as updating supporters of current performances through various discourses.

From table 7 in Appendix 6 we can notice that, in terms of frequency, football clubs in both the Premiership and First Division committed a considerable amount of categories or sub-categories to this dimension. In fact, the information in this dimension was the most frequently expressed type of information. For instance, clubs in the Premiership devoted a total of 347 categories or sub-categories to the *"performance & competition"* dimension which represented 18.35% of all communication efforts for that division (table 7 in Appendix 6). In the case of the First Division, a total of 311 dimensions were devoted to this image dimension, which represented 21.06% of the total communication attempts for this context (table 7 in Appendix 6). This therefore signifies that First Division clubs devote a greater percentage of categories and/or subcategories to this image dimension.

Similarly to the *"entertainment"* dimension, the frequency and percentage data tell a slightly different story. For instance, in terms of percentage data, Arsenal (25.85%), Newcastle (20.78%), Southampton (22.68%), Fulham (23.21%), Leeds United (20.27%),

Portsmouth (32.43%), Wolverhampton (24.53%) and Leicester (22.95%) devoted a considerable percentage of their categories and/or sub-categories to this dimension (table 7 in Appendix 6). However, in terms of the frequency data, Wolverhampton devoted 13 categories and/or sub-categories as opposed to Manchester United's 30, but in terms of the percentage data this represented 24.53% of all categories and/or sub-categories for Wolverhampton as opposed to 18.07% for Manchester United (table 7 in Appendix 6). The results expressed a similar scenario for the First Division, where clubs such as Wigan and Sunderland both devoted 10 categories and/or sub-categories to this image dimension and where in return, this represented 30.30% of all categories and/or sub-categories for Wigan as opposed to 11.76% for Sunderland.

It is however worth noting that this image dimension covers a broader spectrum than the other dimensions. For instance, some clubs such as Manchester United and Arsenal include their youth as well as their women's team results as opposed to clubs such as Leicester City and Bolton who do not. In such cases, those former football clubs are likely to score much higher on this dimension when comparing them to clubs that do not have this information in their websites. Also, in some instances, a particular club can have a women's team, where such information is presented on a completely independent website. Resulting from such possible discrepancies in the way information is presented, the standard deviations of the frequency data for both the Premiership and the First Division were considerably high; 7.06 and 4.53 respectively (Appendix 7). When it comes to the percentage data, both the Premiership and the First Division expressed the highest standard deviations in terms of their contexts with 5.26 for the Premiership and 6.25 for the First Division (Appendix 7). It is also worth noting that the percentage data

demonstrates that First Division clubs are more likely to communicate about their performances (table 7 in Appendix 6). This can be explained by the way that football fans will be more likely to watch and discuss Premiership matches, therefore depending less on websites for scores and results as Premiership matches are more widely broadcasted and talked about by the sport media.

Prestige and tradition. This image dimension identified the communication patterns that emphasized information associating a club's name, culture, identity and image as a clear signal of prestige, tradition and heritage. Such communication patterns were expressed through categories and/or sub-categories that often contained historical information. This information communicated a variety of different historically symbolic events and news. For instance, the Manchester United website has a sub-category that invites supporters to join historically significant events such as the *United and Scotland legends dinner at Old Trafford.* Such events are fairly symbolic in terms of expressing the heritage of the club through symbols of prestige and tradition.

As compared to the other expressive image dimensions, the *"prestige & tradition"* dimension was much less emphasized in terms of frequency. More specifically and according to table 8 of Appendix 6, this dimension accounted for 8.67% of all coded image communication attempts for the Premiership. Similar results were also found for the First Division, as this dimension accounted for 7.52% of all the coded communication attempts for that division. Nonetheless, in terms of variability, the Premiership featured much more changeability. More specifically, in terms of frequency, the standard deviation for the Premiership was 5.69 as opposed to 2.41 for the First Division

(Appendix 7). Similar standard deviations were also found for the percentage data with 4.46 for the Premiership and 3.07 for the First Division (Appendix 7). There is therefore considerably more variability in the Premiership data compared to the First Division data in terms of this dimension. In particular, clubs such as Arsenal, Manchester United, Newcastle, Everton, Chelsea, Liverpool and Manchester City dedicated an average of 14.57 categories and/or sub-categories to the communication of prestige and tradition in comparison to 4.77 for the rest of the Premiership clubs. As to the percentage data, a similar scenario arises where the before mentioned clubs dedicate 12.43% of their categories and/or sub-categories to this dimension compared to 5.95% for the rest of the Premiership clubs.

We can again easily notice segmentation between the top Premiership clubs and all of the other Premiership as well as First Division clubs. As expressed in Appendix 2, the clubs that are more likely to communicate this type of information are the football clubs that have had a considerable amount of on-field success, with the exception of Newcastle. In particular, successful clubs such as Arsenal, Manchester United, Everton and Liverpool are very likely to communicate prestige and tradition because of their rich heritage of on-field successes. These symbolic, prestigious and traditional claims are thus perceived as being legitimate, as supporters can easily make references to the proud winning traditions of their football clubs.

Interestingly however, the data does not express any relationship between the *"prestige & tradition"* image dimension and a club's age. More specifically, when referring to Appendix 1, older clubs in the Premiership are not necessarily more prone to

communicate this image dimension in their websites. Age therefore does not seem to be a source of symbolic significance.

Legitimacy Image Dimensions

This last set of results for this first step of the analysis will focus on communication attempts expressing legitimacy claims. Based on their audience, football clubs will attempt to foster the perception of legitimacy through the communication of strategic managerial decisions and actions. Such actions are crucial to an organization's survival in terms of competing for available resources. As expressed in Appendix 5, the three image dimensions that emerged from legitimacy claims accounted for 18.83% of the overall communication efforts in the Premiership as opposed 20.85% in the First Division. Football clubs in the First Division were thus more prone to communicate, on their websites, information relevant to legitimacy claims. As expressed in Appendix 5, some Premiership clubs such as, Charlton (30.68%), Tottenham (30.95%), Fulham (33.93%) and Blackburn (30.85%), were outliers which considerably raised the overall average of the Premiership. On a general basis, the First Division percentages in terms of this dimension were much more consistent across all football clubs. This section will thus measure to what extent legitimacy claims are communicated through different image dimensions.

Community involvement. As I first observed the websites and the contents of the categories and sub-categories that structure them, I quickly noticed that in terms of frequency, football clubs put considerably less emphasis on their legitimacy claims as

opposed to their expressive ones. However, in terms of *"community involvement"*, certain Premiership clubs seem to emphasize this image dimension more then others. This image dimension includes club activities that are oriented towards the well-being of the community in which they operate. Such efforts can be executed through financial means as well as through physical involvement.

The results presented in table 9 of Appendix 6 demonstrate that certain Premiership clubs put much more emphasis on communicating their involvement in their communities. In general, 160 categories and/or sub-categories were coded in the Premiership, which represents 8.46% of the total communication attempts for this division. In terms of the First Division, 139 categories and/or sub-categories were coded, which in this case represents 9.41% of the total communication attempts for that division. In terms of variance, the data in the Premiership demonstrated more variability with a frequency standard deviation of 5.76 compared to 2.72 for the First Division (Appendix 7). Similar standard deviations were found in terms of the percentage data with 4.56 for the Premiership and 2.83 for the First Division (Appendix 7).

Some clubs devoted a considerable amount of categories and/or sub-categories to communicating their involvement in their communities. In the Premiership, these clubs include Arsenal, Manchester United, Everton, Charlton, Tottenham, Fulham and Blackburn with respectively 13, 10, 11, 13, 22, 17 and 16 communication attempts (table 9 in Appendix 6). When looking at the percentage data, these clubs together allocate 10.93% of their overall website categories and/or sub-categories to this dimension as compared to 6.51% for the rest of the clubs in the Premiership. There were also First Division clubs that emphasized their community involvement. These clubs include

Reading, Cardiff and Coventry with respectively 12, 10 and 11 communication attempts for this image dimension. When looking at the percentage data, these three clubs including Westham United together devoted 13.39% of their overall categories and/or sub-categories to this image dimension as compared to 8.24% for the rest of the First Division clubs.

There were various types of community involvement activities such as charities, football schools, and after school programs. All of the observed football clubs communicated some type of community involvement. These efforts were orchestrated by the different clubs with the objective of identifying themselves as part of the community that they belong to. Every club attempted to identify to its own specific community through processes of integration.

Social responsibility. In contrast to the *"community involvement"* image dimension, this dimension accounted for a considerably small communication attempt. In this dimension, I coded all the efforts that are made by football clubs towards individuals or groups that require specific social needs. It is also important to note that these individuals and/or groups are not direct stakeholders of a particular club and these efforts are implemented with the objective of being perceived as helpful to societal groups with special needs such as disabled supporters.

As expressed in table 10 of Appendix 6, and in terms of frequency, clubs in the Premiership devoted a mere 87 categories and/or sub-categories to this image dimension, which represented an average of 4.60% of their overall communication attempts. Similar results were also found for the First Division, where a measly 58 categories or sub-

categories were dedicated to this dimension, which accounted on average for 3.93% of the total communication attempts for this division. In addition, the data for both contexts demonstrated very limited variance with frequency standard deviations of 1.98 for the Premiership and 1.53 for the First Division (Appendix 7). In terms of percentage standard deviations, similar variances were also found with 1.61 for the Premiership and 2.37 for the First Division (Appendix 7). In both contexts, two outliers were identified in Charlton (Premiership) and Stoke (First Division) (table 10 in Appendix 6).

Thus, clubs did not differ in terms of this dimension on both a contextual as well as an inter-contextual basis. The coding process has also demonstrated that some First Division clubs, such as Westham United and Preston, showed no communication attempts in terms of this dimension. Much of the categories and/or sub-categories that contained information that was relevant to this dimension were however not explicitly dedicated to it. For instance, several coded categories or sub-categories included fan chat, customer charter and ticket information because the information made reference to disabled supporters and anti-racism campaigns.

Leadership. This last image dimension was used to measure a particular club's attempts to convey its administrative structures with the objective of communicating openness and candor. This *"leadership"* image dimension includes leadership at both administrative and team levels. In terms of the administrative level, any information on how to contact the administration of a particular club was coded in this dimension. On a more team level, all information pertinent to a club's manager and/or coaching staff was also coded

in this dimension. Even though such information was not plentiful throughout the websites, it was still given some attention by all of the clubs in both divisions.

In table 11 of Appendix 6, the results demonstrate that the Premiership dedicated only 5.76% of its total communication attempts to this dimension. Similar results were also found for the First Division, where 7.52% of all categories and/or sub-categories were devoted to this dimension. Interestingly however, First Division clubs devoted more attention to communicating leadership structures than did Premiership clubs. In terms of variance, the data expressed some amounts of variability with frequency standard deviations of 2.44 for the Premiership and 1.35 for the First Division (Appendix 7). Slightly different results were found for the percentage data as the standard deviation for the Premiership pertaining to this dimension was 2.19 compared to 2.35 for the First Division (Appendix 7). As the frequency data illustrates, Tottenham and Fulham with respectively 10 and 12 communication attempts, attributed more importance to communicating leadership structures.

This image dimension was not emphasized by most football clubs in both contexts. Nevertheless, efforts to communicate openness and accessibility were deemed important in terms of legitimacy. Premiership clubs were perhaps less reluctant to communicate this type of information resulting from their already established exposure as football clubs and as large PSOs.

Website Properties

As I first observed the websites, I noticed that there often were common characteristics between them. In fact, some websites were structured very similarly with

common categories, sub-categories and overlapping information. The above analysis has shed a considerable amount of light on categorical differences in terms of information presented across the websites. However and in terms of layout design, some websites such as Newcastle, Wigan and Wimbledon were very similar with standard categories and sub-categories. In contrast however, other websites such as Manchester United, Arsenal, Everton and Chelsea were considerably different, thus expressing efforts of customization.

The customized website designs were much more complex in the way the information was presented and in the type of information that was presented. Such websites included categories and/or sub-categories that were unique to the club, with layouts expressing personalization and distinctiveness. On the other hand, the standard websites held more predictable information with common categorizations of information.

In terms of frequency, the uncommon websites were much more present in the Premiership where 11 of the 20 websites were identified as being customized as opposed to 2 out of the 24 websites in the First Division. The reasons behind such discrepancies are not quite clear. However, considering the fact that 55% of the football clubs in the Premiership had customized website designs as opposed to only 8.3% in the First Division, one can assume that this is part of a segmentation effort where top professional football clubs in England aim towards being perceived as unique through differentiation. Interestingly, the two clubs in the First Division with customized websites (Westham and Sunderland) were relegated in 2003-2004 (Appendix 4). This could therefore suggest that some Premiership clubs customize their websites with the objective of

communicating distinctiveness and individuality in order to distinguish themselves from less successful or less recognizable football clubs.

As expressed in Appendix 8, the results indicate that in terms of frequency mean, customized websites were more likely to communicate less information on all dimensions with the exception of the *"services"* dimension. This comes as no surprise as I have previously documented that First Division clubs were more prone to communicate this type of information and as 91.7% of these clubs have standard website designs. As for percentage means, a much different situation arises since standard website mean scores for half of the dimensions (services, international, entertainment, performance & competition, social responsibility and leadership) are higher than those of the customized websites (Appendix 8).

In terms of frequency standard deviations and as envisage, customized websites expressed much more variability in the data especially for the *"entertainment"* (8.10) and *"performance and competition"* (8.20) dimensions (Appendix 8). As for the percentage standard deviations, the results are again somewhat different with customized websites having more variability on eight dimensions (commercial opportunities, international, entertainment, transactional, prestige & tradition, community involvement, social responsibility and leadership) (Appendix 8).

These results are therefore representative of the findings expressed in the first component of the analysis. The football clubs that have designed customized websites present much more information than the ones that have standard designs because customized designs are more often used by Premiership clubs. The results in Appendix 8 express these findings as frequency means are much higher within customized website

designs. In terms of the percentage data however a different story unfolds as dimension means for customized websites are not always higher than standardized ones. In fact as this analysis has already shown, many dimensions are more emphasized in standard designs than they are in customized ones, in terms of percentages. These results are therefore indicative that clubs with customized websites communicate more information in terms of frequency than clubs with standard websites. This in return enables these clubs to communicate more messages to their stakeholders.

Promotion and Relegation

The third component of the analysis on which I can draw conclusions is the movement of football clubs from one division to another. As previously explained, each year a number of football clubs are relegated from their current divisions while others are promoted to new divisions. Four years of historical data were collected to determine which clubs, in the last four years, had been promoted to and relegated from the Premiership (Appendix 4). This analysis will first look at the promoted clubs to explore how theses football clubs, adapt to their new environmental context.

As previously expressed in tables 1 to 12 of Appendix 6, one of the major differences that has emerged between both contexts can be expressed in terms of frequency. More specifically, the Premiership websites have shown to include more categories and/or sub-categories in relevance to most of the established image dimensions. This was also supported in the previous section with the analysis on website designs. In fact, the only exception to this trend is the *"services"* dimension, where the First Division has shown to devote more categories and/or sub-categories to this image

dimension. The general trends and tendencies of the data in terms of frequency and percentage for promoted and relegated clubs are shown in the form of figures in Appendix 9. This comparison between promoted and relegated clubs and their current divisions is exclusive, where the analysis will first focus on the frequency data followed by the percentage data. These findings become relevant to this section because I will attempt to use these findings to monitor whether or not clubs adapt to their new environments in terms of both frequency and percentage trends.

Promotion in terms of frequency. When analyzing the football clubs that were promoted to the Premiership after the 1999-2000 season, in terms of their average scores on each image dimension, we can notice that their general scores are quite similar to the ones of the Premiership. In particular, figure 1 indicates that in terms of frequency, the utilitarian image dimensions (1, 2, 3, 4, 5) are almost identical to the overall averages of the Premiership. Some slight discrepancies do exist in terms of the expressive dimensions (6, 7, 8, 9), where the promoted clubs' scores materialize between the Premiership and the First Division averages. Interestingly however, in terms of the legitimacy dimensions (10, 11, 12), the results are similar to the utilitarian ones, since the scores are once again nearly identical to the average scores of the Premiership.

Through figures 2 and 3 we can examine, in the same fashion, the average scores of the 2000-2001 and 2001-2002 promoted clubs. These figures express much more discrepancies between the promoted clubs' average scores, the Premiership clubs' average scores and the First Division clubs' average scores. For instance in figure 2, there exists considerable divergence in the scores of the *"associated services"* dimension

between all three groups, since the average score of the promoted clubs is situated between the scores of the Premiership and of the First Division for that dimension. Also, in terms of the legitimacy dimensions (10, 11, 12), figure 2 expresses a considerable level of fluctuation. In fact, the promoted clubs seem to devote an unusual level of attention to these image dimensions. These results are perhaps indicative of a large scale effort to express their new position to their communities by way of involvement.

Figure 3 also expresses a considerable amount of fluctuation between all three defined groups. Interestingly however, the average scores of the promoted clubs appear to be much more similar to the average scores of the First Division. For instance, dimensions 1, 5, 6, 8, 11, 12 and 10 [to a lesser degree] for the promoted clubs are nearly identical to the averages of the First Division for those dimensions. Also, from figure 2 to figure 3, we can see considerable movement when it comes to the legitimacy dimensions (10, 11, 12). More specifically, the attention given to these three dimensions by the promoted football clubs in figure 3 seem to be much less than in the previous figure.

As we turn our attention to figure 4 and the 2002-2003 promoted clubs, we can notice that the averages of the promoted clubs are very similar to the averages of the First Division. Indeed, in figure 4 dimensions 6, 10 and to a lesser degree 9 are even below the averages of the First Division. An explanation for this can lie on the fact that the relegated clubs can be responsible for augmenting the averages of the First Division and because of this, the newly promoted clubs' averages can in fact fall under the First Division averages on certain dimensions.

In terms of movement, through figures 1 to 4, we can detect a trend where football clubs promoted at the end of the 1999-2000 season have image dimension averages that are much more similar to the dimension averages of the Premiership (figure 1). In contrast, clubs promoted at the end of the 2002-2003 season have image dimension averages that are more closely related to the dimension averages of the First Division (figure 4). Through figures 3 and 4, we can observe considerable fluctuations in the dimension averages of the promoted clubs. This thus leads to the understanding that in terms of forward movement, football clubs seem to adapt the frequencies of their communicated image dimensions with time. Even though figures 2 and 3 described some unusual movements, particularly with dimensions 2, 10, 11 and 12, the results are still indicative of a process of adaptation, where through increase interaction with a particular context, clubs adjust their projected images to cater to the different demands of their new environments.

Promotion in terms of percentage. This analysis will attempt to support the previous findings through the analysis of trends and tendencies in terms of the percentage data. Similarly to figure 1 and the 1999-2000 promoted clubs, figure 5 expresses parallel results. More specifically, when comparing the average Premiership and First Division scores to the promoted clubs' scores, some limited discrepancies exist with dimensions 2, 6, 8, and 10. However, the scores on these dimensions are still more representative of the average Premiership scores than they are of the First Division ones. Again here, we can notice some limited differences with the expressive dimensions (6 and 8).

As to the 2000-2001 and 2001-2002 promoted clubs, comparable findings are also expressed in terms of percentage data through figures 6 and 7. More specifically, a considerable amount of fluctuation between all three defined groups can be documented. Again, in terms of the legitimacy dimensions (10, 11, 12), figure 6 expresses a substantial level of fluctuation. In fact in figure 6, the promoted clubs seem to once again devote an unusual level of attention to these image dimensions. These results are again indicative of a large scale effort to express their new position to their communities by way of involvement. As to the utilitarian dimensions (1, 2, 3, 4, 5) and again similarly to figure 2, the promoted clubs' averages on those dimensions in figure 6 are considerably similar to the First Division. Figure 7 also expresses interesting results that support once again the initial findings. From figures 6 to 7, we can see considerable movement when it comes to the legitimacy dimensions (10, 11, 12). In fact, the attention given to these three dimensions by the promoted football clubs in figure 7 seem to be much less than in the previous figure.

It is important to note that when in comes to the percentage data, the most profound difference amongst Premiership and First Division averages are utilitarian dimensions 2 and 3. As previously documented in the literature review and the methodology section, these dimensions pertain to specific identity claims and identity fields that are made up of actors that emphasize profit maximization and economic welfare. Through these utilitarian dimensions, I was able to segment the two environmental contexts, where through only one of these contexts (the Premiership) the *"associated services"* dimension is emphasized as opposed to the other context (the First Division) where the *"services"* dimension is emphasized. As we shift from figure 5 to figure 8, we can notice a

movement as to dimensions 2 and 3, since in figure 5 the average scores of the promoted football clubs are considerably similar to the averages of the Premiership on these two dimensions. In addition, as we move to figure 6 and 7, we can again notice some fluctuations as to those two dimensions, with the promoted clubs' average scores being more in line with the First Division in figure 6 as opposed to figure 7, as these two dimensions are more representative of the Premiership. Interestingly however, figure 8 clearly demonstrates, as did figure 4, that there is a process of adaptation, because through increase interaction with a particular context, clubs adjust their projected images to cater to the different demands of their environments.

Relegation in terms of frequency. When analyzing the results of the relegation process as to the frequency data, the findings indicate a much different yet interesting scenario. For the 1999-2000 relegated clubs in figure 9, we can detect a high level of similarity between the averages of the relegated clubs and the averages of the First Division. As the figure indicates, the average scores of the relegated clubs are often below the averages of the First Division. This is an interesting aspect of the current findings because it would indicate that clubs that were relegated in the 1999-2000 season have not only well adapted to their new environment, but they are in fact bringing down the average dimension scores of the First Division in terms of data frequency.

Figures 10 and 11 illustrate a high level of data fluctuation pertinent to various image dimensions. In particular, the 2000-2001 relegated clubs in figure 10 illustrate an unusual data trend, as the average scores of some image dimensions for these clubs are in accordance with the average image scores of the Premiership while others are more in

agreement with the First Division. For instance, in figure 10, the relegated clubs' scores for dimensions 2, 3, 7, 9 and 11 are closely aligned with the Premiership, while dimensions 1, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10 and 12, which are mostly expressive and legitimacy claims, are more concurrent with the First Division. This thus illustrates a certain tendency that supports the notion that these relegated clubs are operating within an adaptive context, since they have not yet fully adjusted the projection of their images to their new environment.

In comparison however, figure 11 conveys somewhat of a contradiction. In figure 11, relegated football clubs seem to have attuned themselves more profoundly to their new environment. As the figure illustrates, the relegated clubs' dimension averages appear to be more in agreement with the First Division. I categorize this as a contradiction because when considering the time line, these results are not expressing a sequential tendency. More specifically, even though the 2001-2002 relegated football clubs' average scores on some dimensions in figure 11 are more in concordance with the Premiership, while others are more aligned with the First Division, figure 11 still communicates more signs of compliance with the First Division. This would therefore imply that the 2001-2002 relegated football clubs are expressing more adaptability in less time.

Figure 12 also conveys interesting results. These newly relegated football clubs' images are much more aligned with the First Division than they are with the Premiership. This again is somewhat contradictory to the adaptive processes that I have documented in the previous sections with the promoted clubs. However, when focusing on the specific 2002-2003 relegated clubs, many possible explanations can help clarify these results. For

instance, in 2001-2002 Sunderland had a difficult season where they just avoided relegation by finishing in 17th place. In consequence, Sunderland had perhaps already begun its adjustment process through various organizational changes, resulting from factors such as decreases in sponsorship revenues. West Bromwich had been promoted at the completion of the 2001-2002 season to the Premiership, where its already low scores on various image dimensions perhaps negatively affected the overall averages of all three relegated clubs. In addition when looking at Appendix 2 and the success level of all Premiership and First Division clubs, West Bromwich, Sunderland and Westham United have shown limited success as they are categorized in the semi-successful segment of the Appendix. In consequence these marginally successful clubs perhaps never shared the same Premiership statuses that other more recognizable clubs. Even though some of these results are not as apparent as the outcomes that were documented for promoted football clubs, the effect of time on these clubs, in terms of adjustment and adaptation, is still relevant to this analysis.

Relegation in terms of frequency. This analysis will again attempt to support the previous findings through the analysis of trends and tendencies in terms of the percentage data. The relegated clubs' averages in figure 13, similarly to figure 9, expresses resemblance with the First Division pattern. This is of no surprise as these clubs have been relegated for some time now and as the results express similar communication patterns as other clubs in their environmental context. This is once again a clear sign of adaptability resulting from some level of interaction.

In relation to figures 10 and 11, the 2000-2001 and 2001-2002 relegated clubs in figures 14 and 15 express common characteristics. More specifically, even though to a lesser extent, figures 14 and 15 conveys somewhat of a contradiction. In figure 15, relegated clubs seem to have attuned themselves more profoundly to their new environment. In fact in this figure, the relegated football clubs' averages are almost identical to the First Division averages with the exception of dimension 9, which is positioned marginally lower. Again, I categorize this as a contradiction because when considering the time line, the results are once again not expressing a sequential tendency.

As we more specifically look at image dimensions 2 and 3, and the contextual environments that are characterized by them, figures 13 to 16 convey interesting results. As we shift from figure 13 to 16 we can notice a movement, where in figure 13 the average scores of the relegated clubs are considerably similar to the average scores of the First Division on those two image dimensions. As we continue the analysis, through figures 14 to 16, we can again notice some fluctuations as to those two dimensions, with the relegated clubs' averages being more in line with the Premiership in figure 14 as opposed to figure 15, where these two dimensions are more representative of the First Division. Interestingly however, figure 16 clearly supports a process of adaptation, because through limited interaction with a particular context, clubs maintain the projected images that they were originally accustomed to communicate.

Organizational characteristics

The fourth element that transpired from this research is whether or not the projection of images can be related to other variables that are external to a particular

football club's divisional context. In consequence, I have identified two potential moderator variables that can segment the football clubs in terms of organizational characteristics: on-field successes and age. These variables will be used with the objective of better understanding the results as well as identifying inconsistencies that may exist in the data.

On-field successes. I have identified on-field success as a possible moderator variable resulting from the segmentation that exists within both the Premiership and the First Division between highly successful football clubs, semi-successful clubs and less successful ones. More specifically, there seems to be considerable differences within the Premiership context in the emphasis that some football clubs ascribe to certain image dimensions and I believe that these discrepancies can be partly accounted for by on-field status. This analysis will also include First Division clubs, ensuing that some of these clubs have experienced some level of success. This is possible resulting from the relegation and promotion processes that typify the *English Football League*. In Appendix 2, I have divided the clubs into three categories of on-field success levels: not successful, semi-successful and successful. This categorization is based on the number of league championships and/or *FA Cup* victories that a club has won between 1947 and 2004.

As Appendix 2 demonstrates, the successful category includes all of the clubs that have won more then three league championships and/or *FA Cup* victories within the defined time line. The semi-successful category includes those clubs that have won three or less championships and/or *FA Cup* victories and the not successful category comprise

those clubs that have not won any championships and/or *FA Cups*. As we can easily notice from Appendix 2, there are more unsuccessful clubs then there are semi-successful clubs and there are more semi-successful clubs then there are successful ones. In fact the ratio for this segmentation is 19 to 18 to 7. The successful segment can thus be characterised as a unique and elite set of clubs that have established themselves as triumphant and recognizable. These clubs have therefore developed reputation assets that distinguish them from all other clubs.

In analysing the general trends of the segmented groups, the frequency data in figure 1 of Appendix 10 demonstrates that there are considerable differences between all three segmented categories. More specifically, the data demonstrates that successful football clubs emphasize the communication of dimensions 2, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10. In terms of expressive dimensions 6, 7, 8, and 9, there is a substantial gap between successful clubs and both less successful and not successful clubs. In terms of dimension 2, figure 1 of Appendix 10 expresses an interesting pattern, where successful clubs scored considerably high as opposed to not successful clubs who scored considerably low. In addition, the segment of semi-successful clubs scored between both not successful and successful segments. This trend therefore supports the original findings that Premiership clubs emphasize the *"associated services"* dimensions, whereas this dimension is often neglected by First Division clubs as they emphasize the *"services"* dimension resulting from their need to outsource their services.

In reducing the frequency effect by analysing the percentage data, figure 2 of Appendix 10 demonstrates that successful clubs have a different image dimension pattern than both semi-successful and not successful ones. In addition, we can also observe,

similarly to the previous figure, that both semi-successful and not successful football clubs, when reducing the frequency effect, have similar image projection patterns. Again in this figure, we can notice that successful football clubs emphasize some image dimensions over others. For instance we can examine that, one again, successful clubs emphasize the *"associated services"* dimension, while discounting the *"services"* dimension. I have previously established that these dimensions were inversely correlated, since a football club will emphasize the communication of one dimension while at the same time neglecting the other.

Other image dimensions that are emphasized by successful clubs compared to semi-successful and not successful ones include *"entertainment"* and *"prestige and tradition"*. This is an interesting component of the analysis, because both of these dimensions can be directly linked to on-field successes. In particular, the *"entertainment"* dimension includes activities that are oriented toward fans with the main objective of satisfying their expressive needs. Thus, if on-field successes can be linked to an increase fan base, then a larger emphasis on such activities is rational. Also, in terms of *"prestige and tradition"* and a club's efforts to communicate prestige and tradition through the use of historical symbols, it is not surprising that such historical symbols are also linked to on-field success levels.

Interestingly, figure 2 of Appendix 10 also illustrates that, when reducing the frequency effect, successful football clubs place less prominence on legitimacy (10, 11, 12) image dimensions compared to both semi and not successful ones. In fact, unsuccessful clubs are the ones that emphasize these dimensions the most. These results express a certain level of comfort by successful clubs in terms of legitimacy. More

specifically, successful clubs seem to have established their legitimacy as their communities and supporters do not have to be reminded of their constant efforts, since these efforts have become highly visible and accepted. On the other hand, semi-successful and especially not successful clubs must put more emphasis on these image dimensions in order to establish themselves in their communities since they cannot rely on the prestige of their on-field successes.

Age. I have also identified age as possible moderator variable resulting from the historical foundation of English football. I will analyze this variable with the same objective of identifying and explaining some of the trends and tendencies that exist in the data. Contrarily to the previously analysed organizational characteristic, age will be analysed within contexts as opposed to across contexts. More specifically, I segmented the football clubs within their divisional contexts in terms of four historical epochs (pre-1871, between 1871 and 1888, between 1888-1900 and post-19000) each characterised with their specific features. Earlier in this research I have defined these historical epochs, by emphasizing the particularities of each. Thus, this analysis will consist of examining possible differences in the projection of images resulting from the historical foundations of the different football clubs. I will first examine the effects of age in the projection of images within the context of the Premiership.

As Appendix 1 demonstrates, football clubs originated at different times, as the majority of clubs were founded between 1871 and 1888. In fact, the segmentation ratio for the Premiership is 0 to 15 to 2 to 3 in terms of their historical foundation. In terms of the frequency data and as illustrated in figure 3 of Appendix 10, the frequency trends of

the segmented groups are quite sporadic in terms of all twelve image dimensions. In fact, no real inferences can be made as to the frequency data. When focussing on the *"prestige and tradition"* dimension, all three segmented groups have similar if not identical scores. This is quite interesting considering that I have defined this dimension as communicating prestige and tradition through the use of historical symbols. Therefore, this was the dimension that I expected to see considerable fluctuation as to the three segmented groups, and in fact it shows less variability than all the other image dimensions.

In terms of the percentage data in figure 4 of Appendix 10, clubs that have emerged between 1871 and 1888 and after 1900 share common image projection characteristics, whereas clubs that have emerged between 1888 and 1900 seem to express some level of differentiation. More specifically, clubs in the 1888-1900 segment seem to score low on some of the utilitarian (1, 2, 5) and legitimacy (10, 11) dimensions while scoring high on the expressive ones (6, 7, 8). These are interesting findings, and can possibly even be correlated to the characteristics that typify this historical era. More specifically and as previously stated, the 1888-1900 historical epoch has been described as a time where the game was still considerably disorganized, as many matches were cancelled due to injuries and transportation difficulties. This in return often left supporters unsatisfied and furious, which can in fact be related to these findings in such a way that clubs from this period still emphasize the projection of images that are catered towards satisfying the expressive needs of their supporters. However, it is also worth mentioning that most of these clubs are at least one hundred years old and that such a considerable length of time diminishes the validity of these findings.

In terms of the *"prestige and tradition"* image dimension, the percentage data also supports what I have previously argued. More specifically, this dimension was expected to express considerable variation as to the different historical periods. Once again however, this dimension expresses almost identical scores across all segments, which reaffirms the findings that this image dimension is in no way correlated to the age of a particular football club.

Let us now turn our attention again to Appendix 1, which also illustrates the historical segmentation of the First Division. Interestingly, the three oldest clubs in the sample at the time of this research are all in the First Division. Again in this case, the majority of clubs were founded between 1871 and 1888. The ratio for the First Division in terms of this variable is 3 to 12 to 5 to 4. We can notice that the First Division offers a more equal distribution in terms of this variable. The findings here are however not as revealing as in the previous case. As to the frequency data, some slight discrepancies exist between time periods but no major inconsistencies can really be documented. Figure 5 of Appendix 10 show some slight variations in dimensions 2 and 8, whereas in terms of the percentage data, figure 6 of Appendix 10 express some minor fluctuations in dimensions 2, 8 and 11. Again, as to the *"prestige and tradition"* dimension, both the frequency and percentage data express very little variation between all four segmented groups. It is again worth mentioning that the large time frame that exists between the time this research was conducted and the last historical period of foundation is substantial, which again impedes on the validity of these results.

Interestingly, in both the Premiership and the First Division, the communication of prestige and tradition does not seem to be linked to the age of a particular club, but to its

level of on-field successes. This is an interesting finding considering that in other industries, age could possibly have a more profound effect on the types of images that an organization projects to its audience. In the next section, I will discuss these findings in terms of the theoretical framework with the objective of establishing relationships between the projection of images, identity claims, the contexts in which football clubs operate, and the organizational characteristics that were just discussed here.

DISCUSSION

This thesis sought to expand our understanding on what images PSOs project to their contextual environment. This research made several contributions to our understanding of what types of images PSOs must manage in order to be perceived as attractive to different stakeholders that control the resources on which PSOs are dependent on for functioning. Research in organizational theory has shown that many organizations have gotten into difficulty by failing to understand those groups or organizations on which they are dependent on for support or by failing to adjust their activities to ensure continued support (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). Understanding the process by which organizational members combine to create identity fields with specific identity claims is central to PSOs as these organizational members compete in shaping the perception of outsiders.

Theoretical Framework and Research Questions

Based on the proposed theoretical framework, this thesis has posited six research questions to test the applicability of the projected relationships. In terms of RQ1 and RQ2, the most common projected image communication attempts, in terms of frequency, by football clubs operating in the Premier Division were the *"associated services"*, *"entertainment"*, *"transactional"*, *"performance & competition"* and *"prestige & tradition"* dimensions as opposed to the *"services"*, *"entertainment"*, *"transactional"*, *"performance & competition"* and *"community involvement"* for the First Division. One of the more important limitations of this research is the fact that both of the defined environments were closely integrated. However, the analysis has still succeeded in identifying some contextual variations. As we have seen, both of the *"administrative"* dimensions (associated services and services) are inversely correlated and can in fact be credited as an important difference between the Premiership and the First Division. In the analysis, Premiership clubs expressed considerable efforts of diversification by offering a wide range of goods and services. On the hand, First Division clubs relied more heavily on outsourcing their services, depending more on other organizations, through partnerships, for service offerings.

The objective of the proposed theoretical framework in figure 1 was to shed some light on the conceptual relationships that lead organizations, and more specifically PSOs, to manage and project images to organizational outsiders. The analysis on the eleven established image dimensions has confirmed my understanding that PSOs are composed of different organizational members, each with their unique core capabilities. These core capabilities—being a low cost, community responsive football club for administrators

and being the best football club offering the highest quality of football to its fans for coaches and players—are conflicting claims that divide the identity of PSOs. These claims are conflicting because the quality of a football club can today be measured in terms of resources, since the best performing clubs are often the ones that allocate more resources to player salaries, transfer deals and stadium infrastructure. In terms of the image dimensions, this segmentation in identity was evident as clubs projected messages from both cultural and economical perspective. On the cultural side, the analysis has shown that the expressive identity claims are quite important for football clubs as they try to communicate their expressive claims of entertainment and prestige. In addition, the research has also demonstrated that the economic side of football clubs is also well represented as football clubs attempt to express their utilitarian and legitimacy claims of commercial opportunities, services, social responsibility and community involvement.

The combination of these identities thus leads to different communicated messages that are also affected by organizational characteristics. In this research I have identified two organizational characteristics, on-field successes and age, where only one of these characteristics has proven to impact the communication of different messages in the research context. This is to say that other organizational characteristics could also be considered in future research with the objective of detecting differences and alterations in the types of messages that emerge from the organizational context. These organizational characteristics are context sensitive, as the *English Football League* offers a much different contextual environment than the *National Hockey League* for instance. These different environments are subject to interpretation as hockey is unique to Canadians, the same way that football is unique to the British. The way in which a knowledgeable

Canadian audience identifies to hockey as a symbol of national pride demonstrates that hockey transpires much higher on the cultural spectrum than it does in a country like England. As a result, the uniqueness of the context can considerably affect the impact of different organizational characteristics on the projection of messages by PSOs.

In terms of on-field successes and RQ5 however, the results expressed that successful clubs communicated different messages to organizational outsiders. Thus, as an organizational characteristic, this research shows that the success of PSOs, in terms of their on-field performances, can be credited as a moderator for the types of messages that PSOs express. Success levels therefore relate to the nature of cultural industries in the way that organizations that operate in cultural industries derive much value from subjective experiences that rely heavily on using symbols in order to manipulate perception and emotion (Lampel et al. 2000). A football club's winning record is thus very symbolic, since administrators, coaches and players can use a club's good performance level to manipulate the perceptions and emotions of its supporters in a way that these supporters can become entertained in a manner that their expressive needs are well satisfied. As opposed to the quality of a musical group, which is very subjective in nature, the results support the notion that the quality of a PSO is much less subjective, as its winning record becomes quite symbolic for supporters.

This finding thus suggests a relationship between performance and reputation, as an intangible asset. More specifically, reputation is described as an economic phenomenon that deals with differences in perceived or actual quality or merit that generate earned, performance-based rewards (Washington & Zajac, forthcoming). Thus, as the analysis demonstrated, successful clubs have build a certain reputation amongst supporters and as

a result are now working towards maintaining their reputational asset by communicating prestige and tradition through the use of historical symbols that are geared towards on-field successes. Such an asset becomes important for PSOs as they create organizational value and attract resources from key stakeholders, such as sponsors and supporters. Historically successful clubs' colors such as the colors worn by Arsenal, Manchester United, Liverpool and Chelsea players are quite recognizable by football supporters from all over the world and as a result, this analysis demonstrates that these clubs must put more emphasis toward satisfying their supporters' expressive needs through entertainment. This analysis thus reveals that off-field efforts towards maintaining and protecting reputational assets are also necessary as clubs cannot always exclusively rely on their on-field winning traditions.

In addition, some successful clubs have also developed into high socially ranking football organizations based not only on their on-field performances, but also on their historically consistent association with the top football league in England. In their research, Washington and Zajac (forthcoming), theoretically posited and empirically examined the concept of status and identified three mechanisms; historical legacy, the accumulation of positive association, and the accumulation of negative association, that can affect the evolution of status. Certain football clubs through historical legacies and constant association with the top English league have developed into high ranking social entities. In fact, the analysis illustrates that successful clubs were more likely to place less prominence on legitimacy image dimensions compared to other less successful ones. These findings can perhaps explain a certain level of comfort, resulting from the higher status of these organizations, as these organizations seem to have already established

their legitimacy and now face certain privileges that are exclusive to higher status organizations. These privileges can extend to the way that more successful clubs offer a wider range of club related services *("associated services")* and also are more likely to communicate prestige and tradition through the use of meaningful historical symbols.

The results also express that successful clubs not only communicate considerably more image dimensions in terms of frequency, but also emphasize the importance of expressive dimensions in their websites in order to cater to a larger more diversified group of supporters. This thus reaffirms that consumers purchase cultural products for their 'meaning' (success in this case) as opposed to their usefulness at accomplishing a specific task (i.e. their 'utility'). If supporters purchase football match tickets with the objective of satisfying their expressive needs, these supporters will thus express feelings of satisfaction and content in the event of a victory from the club that they support.

Interestingly and in terms of RQ6, the results have also shown that age did not affect the projection of images for football clubs. In particular the findings suggest that age is not even linked to communicating prestige and tradition amongst clubs, whereas the results indicate that prestige and tradition is in fact linked to on-field successes. More specifically, younger and more successful clubs have shown to communicate more prestige and tradition than older and less successful ones. This would therefore suggest that a prestigious club is viewed by football fans as one that is rich in winning tradition. The analysis thus proposes that a club's high on-field success level enables the administrators of that club to exploit the external perception of outsiders by communicating prestige and tradition. This in return reinforces the clubs position as a prestigious and traditional PSO.

A PSO's success level can also be linked to its actors and to its audience. More specifically, successful PSOs are usually composed of better more talented players and coaches. This research has described the competitive and resource dependent environment in which football clubs are today operating, as these players and coaches become significant assets for football clubs. The manner in which these organizational assets can be retained is through the allocation of considerable resources. Administrators are therefore compelled to spend capital on these organizational assets to increase the chances of success. In doing so, these PSOs also need to communicate the economic value of their organization in a manner that it will attract attention from potential stakeholders that control the resources needed for these PSOs to function. A winning tradition that leads to strong reputational assets can therefore help PSOs financially in terms of funding their organizational assets.

In terms of stakeholders, the results also propose that the analysed websites target three general stakeholder groups. To begin with, the utilitarian image dimensions targets privately owned businesses for short-term sponsorship opportunities through visibility and exposure, as well as both domestic and international supporters in terms of recruitment and service offerings. A football club's expressive image dimensions are very specific in targeting the expressive needs of domestic and international supporters through communicating the sense of entertainment. The legitimacy dimensions' aim, on the other hand, is towards the community in which a club operates. In terms of communication priority, the data has demonstrated that the football clubs are highly pressured by their supporters and in turn are forced to use their websites as a strategic tool to communicate with them. The three main stakeholder groups; privately owned

businesses, domestic and international supporters and the communities were thus the main targets of the football websites in this research context with the supporters being at the forefront. Even though more direct attention is given to these important groups, this does not signify that other stakeholders are completely ignored. For instance, by targeting the three stakeholder groups, clubs are also targeting its shareholders (if the club is publicly owned) and the media with pertinent club information, while at the same time creating legitimacy amongst sport government bodies and government agencies as well-organized and competent organizations working towards on-field as well off-field community success. The analysis also suggests that football clubs do not use their websites to communicate large scale sponsorship opportunities such as the multimillion pound deal between Manchester United and *Sky TV* for broadcasting rights. These opportunities are not expressed on the websites, while the deals themselves are quite visible in exposure. Stakeholder relationships must be managed accordingly, if a PSO intends to properly function in its environment. This analysis supports Forster et al. (2003), as PSOs must present different organizational images to different stakeholders. Managers therefore choose certain organizational images to present to stakeholders for strategic reasons.

Based on the findings I can therefore conclude that indeed, as to RQ3 and RQ4, recently relegated and promoted football clubs project images that are still catered to their former environmental contexts in the short-run, while engaging in adaptive processes in the long-run. This paper makes several contributions to our understanding of organizational interaction. In this research I have applied the concept of adaptation at a contextual level, using it to explain how organizational activities and outcomes can be

accounted for by the context in which an organization is embedded. In this adaptation process, communicated images were altered in the long run to match the pressures and the requirements of the new environment. The findings about adaptation suggest important aspects of the dynamic processes involved in adaptation, as a football club, after shifting environment, initially projected images that were catered to its original environment. As interaction with its new environment became more important, the findings suggest that a football club, over time, shifts its emphasis towards the new demands of its new stakeholders. These new requirements became critical to the financial and cultural survival of the promoted and/or relegated football clubs as these clubs are eventually forced to cater their projected images accordingly.

Managing their symbolic world has grown increasingly difficult for PSO's as they face the challenging task of raising capital to support rising player salaries, transfer fees, scouting costs and infrastructures. Even supporters are increasingly demanding as they insist on quality match day experiences through on-site activities and comfort. Ticket sales can no longer support the budgetary demands of these football clubs as they are forced to turn towards other sources of revenue, such as financial support from various stakeholders. As a result, PSOs are today facing the challenges of creating organizational value by projecting images catered to the demands of different stakeholders. Only then will a PSO succeed in attracting attention from resourceful external parties.

This research contributed to image theory by first establishing a relationship between an organization's projection of images and its key stakeholders. The analysis has demonstrated that certain key stakeholders are targeted by football clubs' websites, where these football clubs will project symbols, in order to manipulate the emotions and

perceptions of their stakeholders. In addition, resulting from the relegation and promotion processes, this analysis has also suggested that organizations face adaptation challenges as they change their current contexts and face new environments. Overtime, organizations must find effective ways in which to cater their images to the new pressures of their key stakeholders.

On a more general level, I hope that this research can influence others to consider cultural industries as important and interesting business settings that can offer quite a unique approach to studying organizational theories. The organizational attributes of organizations operating within these industries are distinctive and can give new perspectives on the implications of certain organizational concepts such as image, identity, reputation and status.

This research has also contributed to understanding the complexities of the environments in which cultural organizations operate. Even though the main objective of cultural organizations is to satisfy the expressive needs of their customers, other key stakeholders are quite pivotal to the functioning of these organizations. Cultural organizations are thus forced to create value and project it through different images in order to attract key stakeholders. These stakeholders are often not as visible as the supporters, in the context of professional sport leagues, but they in fact control much of the resources that are needed and wanted by PSOs.

FUTURE IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH AND CONCLUSION

Limitations and Future Implications for Further Research

In drawing attention to the potential contribution of this research to PSOs and to the way that they respond to the demands of their environments, I must specify that this analysis has limitations.

To begin with, this qualitative research utilized websites as the unique source of data. Even though other studies have been conducted in a similar fashion, this content analysis was somewhat limited, where other sources of data could have added to the reliability of the coding process. In consequence future research should include other sources of data such as press releases and structured interviews of relevant professionals in the field.

In addition, I do acknowledge that, even though websites are rich in their information content and very accessible, they are often updated as information is constantly changed. In fact I have noticed this throughout the analysis, as some websites were often inaccessible for a short period of time due to the fact that they were being modified and tailored with new information. This is considered an important limitation as the categories and/or sub-categories of information on these websites were the main unit of observation.

I also acknowledge that the image dimension data was collected within a single year timeframe. Even though this analytical framework was sufficient to make relevant inferences about the chosen contextual environments, future research implications could include historical website data to support the findings as projected images derive from a long-term assessment of stakeholder pressures and identity attributes.

In addition, I do acknowledge that this exploratory research includes limited organizational characteristics. As previously mentioned, these characteristics were not only limited, but they specifically catered to the context of the *English Football League*. Consequently, future research considerations should more profoundly include organizational characteristics, as they have shown to impact the results. Such other organizational characteristics could include whether or not PSOs are publicly or privately owned, the financial position of PSOs, in terms of budgetary details on the availability of resources directed towards player contracts and transfer fees, and the geographic location of PSOs.

Finally, I do realize that this research constitutes only a small step towards understanding how PSOs interact with their environments and how they react to the pressures that are placed upon them by their stakeholders. More rigorous research attention is needed to examine in more details the way in which PSOs, by means of language, react to their dynamic environments within the context of their identity attributes. This would assist in understanding the way in which organizational actors account for their actions differently to different audiences. This research can in no way be generalized to all other cultural industries as these industries are specific in the way in which they are composed of stakeholders and inter-organizational actors with specific attributes. However, the way in which organizational actors must use symbols to create perceptions among outsiders is undeniably an important aspect of any cultural organization. Future research implications should thus concentrate on this symbolic aspect of cultural industries by including in their analysis other organizational concepts such as impression management, reputation and status.

Conclusion

This thesis has worked towards making contributions to our understanding of PSOs and the types of images that they project to organizational outsiders. In doing so, this research chose the context of a cultural industry with the objective of enhancing the clarity of three related organizational components: identity, stakeholder pressures and projected image. In considering this, I have developed a theoretical model that draws connections to these components with the purpose of exposing relevant relationships. The way in which images are projected by PSOs was the main contribution of this research as conflicting identity claims and stakeholder pressures create a context in which managers must manage and control the types of messages that they convey to organizational outsiders.

In this research I have also applied organizational characteristics as an important component that can explain the way in which messages are affected by the particularities of organizations. There is indeed a relationship between the characteristics of organizations and the types of messages that they convey to their outsiders. I believe that this is an important contribution of this research as these organizational characteristics, such as on-field successes, become quite symbolic in the context of PSOs as well as in the overall context of cultural industries.

Organizational theories have emphasized the way in which organizations function within the broader context of their industries. As to cultural industries, this research also attempted to emphasize some of the specific particularities that are unique to cultural organizations. As symbols become key in influencing perceptions and emotions, cultural

organizations such as PSOs, must learn the importance and the potential of manipulating these symbols to create perceived value among key stakeholders. With this synthesis of ideas, I believe that cultural and economical success for these organizations can be achieved.

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PREMIERSHIP

Pre-1871	Between 1871 and 1888	Between 1888 and 1900	Post-1900
	Arsenal (1886) Manchester United (1878) Newcastle (1881) Birmingham (1875) Aston Villa (1874) Fulham (1879) Middlesbrough (1876) Tottenham (1882) Southampton (1885) Bolton (1874) Everton (1878) Blackburn (1875) Manchester City (1887) Leicester (1884) Wolverhampton (1877)	Liverpool (1892) Portsmouth (1898)	Chelsea (1905) Charlton (1905) Leeds United (1919)

FIRST DIVISION

Pre-1871	Between 1871 and 1888	Between 1888 and 1900	Post-1900
Stoke (1863) Nottingham Forest (1865) Rotherham (1870)	West Bromwich (1878) Sunderland (1879) Millwall (1885) Ipswich Town (1878) Reading (1871) Coventry (1883) Preston (1881) Crewe (1877) Walsall (1888) Watford (1881) Derby (1884) Burnley (1882)	Sheffield United (1889) Westham United (1895) Cardiff (1899) Gillingham (1893) Wimbledon (1889)	Wigan (1932) Norwich (1902) Crystal Palace (1905) Bradford (1903)

PREMIERSHIP AND FIRST DIVISION

NOT SUCCESSFUL 0 championships and/or FA Cup victories	SEMI-SUCCESSFUL 1 to 3 championships and/or FA Cup victories	SUCCESSFUL 4 or more championships and/or FA Cup victories
Middlesbrough	Manchester City (3)	Arsenal (14)
Fulham	Aston Villa (2)	Manchester United (23)
Birmingham	Leeds United (3)	Everton (7)
Leicester	Portsmouth (2)	Liverpool (20)
Wigan*	Blackburn (1)	Chelsea (4)
Sheffield United*	Burnley (1)*	Tottenham (8)
Millwall*	Ipswich Town (2)*	Wolverhampton (5)
Norwich*	Derby County (3)*	
Reading*	Nottingham Forest (2)*	
Cardiff*	Southampton (1)	
Preston*	Newcastle (2)	
Crewe*	Charlton (1)	
Crystal Palace*	Bolton (1)	
Stoke*	West Bromwich* (2)	
Walsall*	Sunderland* (1)	
Watford	Westham United* (3)	
Bradford	Coventry* (1)	
Rotherham	Wimbledon* (1)	
Gillingham*		

*clubs that are in the First Division

CODING SCHEME

Image Dimensions	Theoretical Definition	Operational Definition
	UTILITIRIAN	
Commercial Opportunities	**Efforts made by a club to express commercial opportunities in order to attract sponsors and financial partners.**	Any communication that is directed to potential commercial partners. This is done by demonstrating that the club offers commercial opportunities to potential sponsors and/or partners.
Administrative		
A-Associated Services	**The offerings of appropriate infrastructure and services by a club to attract the business community.**	Offering infrastructures and services that suit specific administrative needs. This is done by communicating the infrastructural capacity to hold conferences and other events, as well as any other club related services, **where the service is associated with the club's name and/or logo.**
B-Services	**A club's efforts to communicate different services to the football community that are not associated with the club in question.**	Offering different services to the football community. Such services are offered by a club or by any organization associated with the club. These services are not community related and are not offered for legitimacy reasons. These services **cannot be associated with a club's name and/or logo** even if they are offered by the club in question.
International	**Orientation toward audiences other or beyond the local reach.**	Associating clubs with activities of international orientation.
Fan Recruitment	**Engaging in a type of communication based on convincing outsiders of potential benefits associated with**	A club's efforts to increase its fan base through activities and practices oriented exclusively toward potential future fans.

	supporting a club. Efforts made by a club to appeal to outsiders and attract them to its fan base.	

EXPRESSIVE

Entertainment	**Making a visible link between a club and entertainment. Communicating the sense of fun and leisure associated with supporting a football club. This must be done by associating a club's name to the sense of fun and leisure.**	Activities which are oriented toward fans with the main objective of satisfying their expressive needs. This is done by fans through **patterns of association by means of participation and not through match/club/team/player related information** nor through consumption based activities such as club shop, tickets and/or match day hospitality.
Transactional	**Activities that lead individuals to become embedded in a subculture of consumption with its own established practices, rituals, norms and member expectations (identification).**	Transactions based on specific consumption patterns emphasizing a commodity's use (how the product is actually used) and/or identity (the way in which the commodity contributes to the constitution of a social identity) value. Such commodities lead individuals to satisfying their expressive needs and are associated with the club.
Performance and Competition	**A club's attempt to communicate to football fans its team's or its player's current performances through various discourses.**	A club's efforts to communicate its current on-field activities through statistical information and/or more qualitative descriptions.
Prestige and Tradition	**Highlighting prestige and tradition by associating a club's name, culture, identity and image as a clear signal of prestige, tradition and heritage.**	Communicating prestige and tradition through the use of historical symbols.

LEGITIMACY

Community Involvement	**Club activities that are directed towards the community in order to be perceived as legitimate.**	Any activities that are directed towards the well-being of the community in which the club operates. This can be done financially, through facilities or

		through physical involvement.
Social Responsibility	**Efforts made by a club directed towards individuals or groups with specific social needs. This is done by football clubs for legitimacy reasons and to communicate an image of social responsibility.**	Activities directed toward special public needs. These individuals are not direct stakeholders of a particular club and these efforts are done by a club with the objective of being perceived as helpful to societal groups with special needs.
Leadership	**A club's attempts to communicate its administrative structures with the objective of being perceived as legitimate through organizational accountability.**	A club's efforts to communicate to outsiders its leadership structure and decision-makers. This is done by football clubs to communicate openness and candor to outsiders.

APPENDIX 4

PROMOTED TO THE PREMIERSHIP

1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003
Charlton	Fulham	Manchester City*	Portsmouth
Manchester City	Blackburn	West Bromwich*	Leicester City*
Ipswich Town*	Bolton	Birmingham	Wolverhampton

*repeat mover

RELEGATED FROM THE PREMIERSHIP

1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003
Wimbledon	Manchester City*	Ipswich Town*	Westham United
Sheffield Wednesday**	Coventry	Derby	West Bromwich*
Watford	Bradford	Leicester City*	Sunderland

*repeat mover
**now in the Third Division (not the same club as Sheffield United that is presently
  in the First Division)

APPENDIX 5

DATA SEPERATED BY IDENTITY CLAIMS IN TERMS OF FREQUENCY AND PERCENTAGE

Premiership	Utilitarian Frequency	Utilitarian %	Expressive Frequency	Expressive %	Legitimacy Frequency	Legitimacy %
Arsenal	34	23.1292517	90	61.2244898	23	15.6462585
Manchester United	52	31.3253012	90	54.21686747	24	14.45783133
Newcastle	18	23.37662338	46	59.74025974	13	16.88311688
Everton	35	26.71755725	73	55.72519084	23	17.55725191
Chelsea	24	21.62162162	75	67.56756757	12	10.81081081
Liverpool	27	20.93023256	90	69.76744186	12	9.302325581
Charlton	25	28.40909091	36	40.90909091	27	30.68181818
Tottenham	25	19.84126984	62	49.20634921	39	30.95238095
Southampton	30	30.92783505	46	47.42268041	21	21.64948454
Middlesbrough	21	27.63157895	41	53.94736842	14	18.42105263
Manchester City	27	27.83505155	58	59.79381443	12	12.37113402
Fulham	19	16.96428571	55	49.10714286	38	33.92857143
Aston Villa	20	29.85074627	37	55.2238806	10	14.92537313
Leeds United	24	32.43243243	43	58.10810811	7	9.459459459
Birmingham	20	30.76923077	35	53.84615385	10	15.38461538
Bolton	25	30.12048193	43	51.80722892	15	18.07228916
Portsmouth	8	21.62162162	22	59.45945946	7	18.91891892
Blackburn	20	21.27659574	45	47.87234043	29	30.85106383
Wolverhampton	14	26.41509434	29	54.71698113	10	18.86792453
Leicester	11	18.03278689	40	65.57377049	10	16.39344262
Total	**479**	25.33	1056	55.84	356	18.83

First Division	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Wigan	6	18.18181818	22	66.66666667	5	15.15151515
West Bromwich	11	19.29824561	36	63.15789474	10	17.54385965
Sheffield United	13	16.25	50	62.5	17	21.25
Sunderland	22	25.88235294	47	55.29411765	16	18.82352941
Westham United	16	27.5862069	33	56.89655172	9	15.51724138
Ipswich Town	24	31.16883117	36	46.75324675	17	22.07792208
Millwall	10	20.40816327	27	55.10204082	12	24.48979592
Norwich	18	26.47058824	36	52.94117647	14	20.58823529
Reading	45	45.91836735	34	34.69387755	19	19.3877551
Nottingham Forest	15	21.12676056	45	63.38028169	11	15.49295775
Cardiff	12	15.38461538	48	61.53846154	18	23.07692308
Preston	10	20.40816327	28	57.14285714	11	22.44897959
Burnley	17	24.63768116	33	47.82608696	19	27.53623188
Crewe	10	16.12903226	40	64.51612903	12	19.35483871
Crystal Palace	10	20.40816327	29	59.18367347	10	20.40816327
Coventry	22	32.8358209	27	40.29850746	18	26.86567164
Stoke	11	18.33333333	33	55	16	26.66666667

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Derby	12	18.75	39	60.9375	13	20.3125
Walsall	13	18.30985915	46	64.78873239	12	16.90140845
Gillingham	9	18.75	30	62.5	9	18.75
Watford	10	18.51851852	32	59.25925926	12	22.22222222
Bradford	9	17.64705882	30	58.82352941	12	23.52941176
Rotherham	11	25.58139535	23	53.48837209	9	20.93023256
Wimbledon	6	16.66666667	23	63.88888889	7	19.44444444
Total	342	23.16	827	55.99	308	20.85

APPENDIX 6

Football Clubs	Commercial Opportunities	Total Communication Attempts	% on Total Communication Attempts
Premiership			
Arsenal	3	147	2.040816327
Manchester United	7	166	4.21686747
Newcastle	3	77	3.896103896
Everton	6	131	4.580152672
Chelsea	1	111	0.900900901
Liverpool	2	129	1.550387597
Charlton	1	88	1.136363636
Tottenham	8	126	6.349206349
Southampton	7	97	7.216494845
Middlesbrough	3	76	3.947368421
Manchester City	4	97	4.12371134
Fulham	6	112	5.357142857
Aston Villa	3	67	4.47761194
Leeds United	14	74	18.91891892
Birmingham	2	65	3.076923077
Bolton	2	83	2.409638554
Portsmouth	1	37	2.702702703
Blackburn	3	94	3.191489362
Wolverhampton	1	53	1.886792453
Leicester	2	61	3.278688525
Total	79	1891	4.177683765
Average	3.95	94.55	4.177683765
First Division			
Wigan	0	33	0
West Bromwich	1	57	1.754385965
Sheffield United	2	80	2.5
Sunderland	7	85	8.235294118
Westham United	4	58	6.896551724
Ipswich Town	2	77	2.597402597
Millwall	2	49	4.081632653
Norwich	5	68	7.352941176
Reading	15	98	15.30612245
Nottingham Forest	3	71	4.225352113
Cardiff	3	78	3.846153846
Preston	0	49	0
Burnley	3	69	4.347826087
Crewe	1	62	1.612903226
Crystal Palace	1	49	2.040816327
Coventry	2	67	2.985074627
Stoke	1	60	1.666666667
Derby	0	64	0
Walsall	2	71	2.816901408
Gillingham	1	48	2.083333333
Watford	2	54	3.703703704
Bradford	1	51	1.960784314
Rotherham	2	43	4.651162791
Wimbledon	0	36	0
Total	60	1477	4.062288422
Average	2.5	61.54167	4.062288422

Table 1: Football clubs and commercial opportunities

Football Clubs	Administrative-Associated Services	Administrative-Services	Total Communication Attempts	% on Total Communication Attempts Associated Services	% on Total Communication Attempts Services
Premiership					
Arsenal	19	3	147	12.92517007	2.040816327
Manchester United	32	4	166	19.27710843	2.409638554
Newcastle	8	3	77	10.38961039	3.896103896
Everton	18	3	131	13.74045802	2.290076336
Chelsea	13	2	111	11.71171171	1.801801802
Liverpool	16	4	129	12.40310078	3.100775194
Charlton	17	3	88	19.31818182	3.409090909
Tottenham	6	5	126	4.761904762	3.968253968
Southampton	19	3	97	19.58762887	3.092783505
Middlesbrough	10	4	76	13.15789474	5.263157895
Manchester City	15	3	97	15.46391753	3.092783505
Fulham	4	1	112	3.571428571	0.892857143
Aston Villa	10	2	67	14.92537313	2.985074627
Leeds United	6	2	74	8.108108108	2.702702703
Birmingham	11	3	65	16.92307692	4.615384615
Bolton	7	12	83	8.43373494	14.45783133
Portsmouth	1	4	37	2.702702703	10.81081081
Blackburn	8	4	94	8.510638298	4.255319149
Wolverhampton	7	4	53	13.20754717	7.547169811
Leicester	4	3	61	6.557377049	4.918032787
Total	231	72	1891	12.21575886	3.807509254
Average	11.55	3.6	94.55	12.21575886	3.807509254
First Division					
Wigan	1	4	33	3.03030303	12.12121212
West Bromwich	3	4	57	5.263157895	7.01754386
Sheffield United	3	5	80	3.75	6.25
Sunderland	10	3	85	11.76470588	3.529411765
Westham United	8	1	58	13.79310345	1.724137931
Ipswich Town	7	9	77	9.090909091	11.68831169
Millwall	2	4	49	4.081632653	8.163265306
Norwich	1	8	68	1.470588235	11.76470588
Reading	20	7	98	20.40816327	7.142857143
Nottingham Forest	3	6	71	4.225352113	8.450704225
Cardiff	2	4	78	2.564102564	5.128205128
Preston	1	6	49	2.040816327	12.24489796
Burnley	1	8	69	1.449275362	11.5942029
Crewe	1	5	62	1.612903226	8.064516129
Crystal Palace	1	6	49	2.040816327	12.24489796
Coventry	16	2	67	23.88059701	2.985074627
Stoke	1	5	60	1.666666667	8.333333333
Derby	2	5	64	3.125	7.8125
Walsall	3	6	71	4.225352113	8.450704225
Gillingham	2	4	48	4.166666667	8.333333333
Watford	2	5	54	3.703703704	9.259259259
Bradford	1	4	51	1.960784314	7.843137255
Rotherham	2	5	43	4.651162791	11.62790698
Wimbledon	1	4	36	2.777777778	11.11111111
Total	94	120	1477	6.364251862	8.124576845
Average	3.916666667	5	61.54167	6.364251862	8.124576845

Table 2: Football clubs and administrative

Football Clubs	International	Total Communication Attempts	% on Total Communication Attempts
Premiership			
Arsenal	3	147	2.040816327
Manchester United	5	166	3.012048193
Newcastle	2	77	2.597402597
Everton	4	131	3.053435115
Chelsea	6	111	5.405405405
Liverpool	2	129	1.550387597
Charlton	2	88	2.272727273
Tottenham	1	126	0.793650794
Southampton	1	97	1.030927835
Middlesbrough	3	76	3.947368421
Manchester City	3	97	3.092783505
Fulham	4	112	3.571428571
Aston Villa	2	67	2.985074627
Leeds United	1	74	1.351351351
Birmingham	2	65	3.076923077
Bolton	2	83	2.409638554
Portsmouth	2	37	5.405405405
Blackburn	2	94	2.127659574
Wolverhampton	1	53	1.886792453
Leicester	1	61	1.639344262
Total	49	1891	2.591221576
Average	2.45	94.55	2.591221576
First Division			
Wigan	1	33	3.03030303
West Bromwich	2	57	3.50877193
Sheffield United	1	80	1.25
Sunderland	1	85	1.176470588
Westham United	2	58	3.448275862
Ipswich Town	3	77	3.896103896
Millwall	1	49	2.040816327
Norwich	2	68	2.941176471
Reading	1	98	1.020408163
Nottingham Forest	2	71	2.816901408
Cardiff	2	78	2.564102564
Preston	2	49	4.081632653
Burnley	2	69	2.898550725
Crewe	2	62	3.225806452
Crystal Palace	1	49	2.040816327
Coventry	1	67	1.492537313
Stoke	1	60	1.666666667
Derby	3	64	4.6875
Walsall	1	71	1.408450704
Gillingham	1	48	2.083333333
Watford	1	54	1.851851852
Bradford	1	51	1.960784314
Rotherham	1	43	2.325581395
Wimbledon	1	36	2.777777778
Total	36	1477	2.437373053
Average	1.5	61.54167	2.437373053

Table 3: Football clubs and international

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Football Clubs	Fan Recruitment	Total Communication Attempts	% on Total Communication Attempts
Premiership			
Arsenal	6	147	4.081632653
Manchester United	4	166	2.409638554
Newcastle	2	77	2.597402597
Everton	4	131	3.053435115
Chelsea	2	111	1.801801802
Liverpool	3	129	2.325581395
Charlton	2	88	2.272727273
Tottenham	5	126	3.968253968
Southampton	0	97	0
Middlesbrough	1	76	1.315789474
Manchester City	2	97	2.06185567
Fulham	4	112	3.571428571
Aston Villa	3	67	4.47761194
Leeds United	1	74	1.351351351
Birmingham	2	65	3.076923077
Bolton	2	83	2.409638554
Portsmouth	0	37	0
Blackburn	3	94	3.191489362
Wolverhampton	1	53	1.886792453
Leicester	1	61	1.639344262
Total	48	1891	2.538339503
Average	2.4	94.55	2.538339503
First Division			
Wigan	0	33	0
West Bromwich	1	57	1.754385965
Sheffield United	2	80	2.5
Sunderland	1	85	1.176470588
Westham United	1	58	1.724137931
Ipswich Town	3	77	3.896103896
Millwall	1	49	2.040816327
Norwich	2	68	2.941176471
Reading	2	98	2.040816327
Nottingham Forest	1	71	1.408450704
Cardiff	1	78	1.282051282
Preston	1	49	2.040816327
Burnley	3	69	4.347826087
Crewe	1	62	1.612903226
Crystal Palace	1	49	2.040816327
Coventry	1	67	1.492537313
Stoke	3	60	5
Derby	2	64	3.125
Walsall	1	71	1.408450704
Gillingham	1	48	2.083333333
Watford	0	54	0
Bradford	2	51	3.921568627
Rotherham	1	43	2.325581395
Wimbledon	0	36	0
Total	32	1477	2.166553825
Average	1.333333333	61.54167	2.166553825

Table 4: Football clubs and fan recruitment

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Football Club	Entertainment	Total Communication Attempts	% on Total Communication Attempts
Premiership			
Arsenal	22	147	14.96598639
Manchester United	26	166	15.6626506
Newcastle	14	77	18.18181818
Everton	26	131	19.84732824
Chelsea	25	111	22.52252252
Liverpool	30	129	23.25581395
Charlton	13	88	14.77272727
Tottenham	14	126	11.11111111
Southampton	8	97	8.24742268
Middlesbrough	9	76	11.84210526
Manchester City	11	97	11.34020619
Fulham	7	112	6.25
Aston Villa	13	67	19.40298507
Leeds United	12	74	16.21621622
Birmingham	11	65	16.92307692
Bolton	13	83	15.6626506
Portsmouth	4	37	10.81081081
Blackburn	13	94	13.82978723
Wolverhampton	7	53	13.20754717
Leicester	10	61	16.39344262
Total	288	1891	15.23003702
Average	14.4	94.55	15.23003702
First Division			
Wigan	6	33	18.18181818
West Bromwich	8	57	14.03508772
Sheffield United	13	80	16.25
Sunderland	18	85	21.17647059
Westham United	7	58	12.06896552
Ipswich Town	11	77	14.28571429
Millwall	9	49	18.36734694
Norwich	12	68	17.64705882
Reading	8	98	8.163265306
Nottingham Forest	10	71	14.08450704
Cardiff	13	78	16.66666667
Preston	10	49	20.40816327
Burnley	11	69	15.94202899
Crewe	10	62	16.12903226
Crystal Palace	7	49	14.28571429
Coventry	5	67	7.462686567
Stoke	11	60	18.33333333
Derby	13	64	20.3125
Walsall	11	71	15.49295775
Gillingham	9	48	18.75
Watford	8	54	14.81481481
Bradford	9	51	17.64705882
Rotherham	7	43	16.27906977
Wimbledon	6	36	16.66666667
Total	232	1477	15.70751523
Average	9.666666667	61.54167	15.70751523

Table 5: Football clubs and entertainment

Football Clubs	Transactional	Total Communication Attempts	% on Total Communication Attempts
Premiership			
Arsenal	15	147	10.20408163
Manchester United	20	166	12.04819277
Newcastle	6	77	7.792207792
Everton	12	131	9.160305344
Chelsea	19	111	17.11711712
Liverpool	28	129	21.70542636
Charlton	7	88	7.954545455
Tottenham	19	126	15.07936508
Southampton	14	97	14.43298969
Middlesbrough	12	76	15.78947368
Manchester City	19	97	19.58762887
Fulham	12	112	10.71428571
Aston Villa	7	67	10.44776119
Leeds United	13	74	17.56756757
Birmingham	8	65	12.30769231
Bolton	11	83	13.25301205
Portsmouth	4	37	10.81081081
Blackburn	14	94	14.89361702
Wolverhampton	6	53	11.32075472
Leicester	11	61	18.03278689
Total	257	1891	13.59069276
Average	12.85	94.55	13.59069276
First Division			
Wigan	4	33	12.12121212
West Bromwich	10	57	17.54385965
Sheffield United	10	80	12.5
Sunderland	10	85	11.76470588
Westham United	7	58	12.06896552
Ipswich Town	9	77	11.68831169
Millwall	7	49	14.28571429
Norwich	7	68	10.29411765
Reading	11	98	11.2244898
Nottingham Forest	8	71	11.26760563
Cardiff	10	78	12.82051282
Preston	4	49	8.163265306
Burnley	5	69	7.246376812
Crewe	6	62	9.677419355
Crystal Palace	8	49	16.32653061
Coventry	9	67	13.43283582
Stoke	6	60	10
Derby	7	64	10.9375
Walsall	6	71	8.450704225
Gillingham	6	48	12.5
Watford	6	54	11.11111111
Bradford	7	51	13.7254902
Rotherham	4	43	9.302325581
Wimbledon	6	36	16.66666667
Total	173	1477	11.71293162
Average	7.208333333	61.54	11.71293162

Table 6: Football clubs and transactional

Football Clubs	Performance & Competition	Total Communication Attempts	% on Total Communication Attempts
Premiership			
Arsenal	38	147	25.85034014
Manchester United	30	166	18.07228916
Newcastle	16	77	20.77922078
Everton	21	131	16.03053435
Chelsea	12	111	10.81081081
Liverpool	19	129	14.72868217
Charlton	15	88	17.04545455
Tottenham	18	126	14.28571429
Southampton	22	97	22.68041237
Middlesbrough	12	76	15.78947368
Manchester City	11	97	11.34020619
Fulham	26	112	23.21428571
Aston Villa	12	67	17.91044776
Leeds United	15	74	20.27027027
Birmingham	13	65	20
Bolton	12	83	14.45783133
Portsmouth	12	37	32.43243243
Blackburn	16	94	17.0212766
Wolverhampton	13	53	24.52830189
Leicester	14	61	22.95081967
Total	347	1891	18.35007932
Average	17.35	94.55	18.35007932
First Division			
Wigan	10	33	30.3030303
West Bromwich	14	57	24.56140351
Sheffield United	18	80	22.5
Sunderland	10	85	11.76470588
Westham United	13	58	22.4137931
Ipswich Town	14	77	18.18181818
Millwall	9	49	18.36734694
Norwich	8	68	11.76470588
Reading	10	98	10.20408163
Nottingham Forest	20	71	28.16901408
Cardiff	22	78	28.20512821
Preston	11	49	22.44897959
Burnley	11	69	15.94202899
Crewe	17	62	27.41935484
Crystal Palace	10	49	20.40816327
Coventry	10	67	14.92537313
Stoke	9	60	15
Derby	18	64	28.125
Walsall	24	71	33.8028169
Gillingham	12	48	25
Watford	13	54	24.07407407
Bradford	10	51	19.60784314
Rotherham	9	43	20.93023256
Wimbledon	9	36	25
Total	311	1477	21.05619499
Average	12.95833333	61.54167	21.05619499

Table 7: Football clubs and performance & competition

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Football Clubs	Prestige & Tradition	Total Communication Attempts	% on Total Communication Attempts
Premiership			
Arsenal	15	147	10.20408163
Manchester United	14	166	8.43373494
Newcastle	10	77	12.98701299
Everton	14	131	10.6870229
Chelsea	19	111	17.11711712
Liverpool	13	129	10.07751938
Charlton	1	88	1.136363636
Tottenham	11	126	8.73015873
Southampton	2	97	2.06185567
Middlesbrough	8	76	10.52631579
Manchester City	17	97	17.5257732
Fulham	10	112	8.928571429
Aston Villa	5	67	7.462686567
Leeds United	3	74	4.054054054
Birmingham	3	65	4.615384615
Bolton	7	83	8.43373494
Portsmouth	2	37	5.405405405
Blackburn	2	94	2.127659574
Wolverhampton	3	53	5.660377358
Leicester	5	61	8.196721311
Total	164	1891	8.672659968
Average	8.2	94.55	8.672659968
First Division			
Wigan	2	33	6.060606061
West Bromwich	4	57	7.01754386
Sheffield United	9	80	11.25
Sunderland	9	85	10.58823529
Westham United	6	58	10.34482759
Ipswich Town	2	77	2.597402597
Millwall	2	49	4.081632653
Norwich	9	68	13.23529412
Reading	5	98	5.102040816
Nottingham Forest	7	71	9.85915493
Cardiff	3	78	3.846153846
Preston	3	49	6.12244898
Burnley	6	69	8.695652174
Crewe	7	62	11.29032258
Crystal Palace	4	49	8.163265306
Coventry	3	67	4.47761194
Stoke	7	60	11.66666667
Derby	1	64	1.5625
Walsall	5	71	7.042253521
Gillingham	3	48	6.25
Watford	5	54	9.259259259
Bradford	4	51	7.843137255
Rotherham	3	43	6.976744186
Wimbledon	2	36	5.555555556
Total	111	1477	7.515233582
Average	4.625	61.54167	7.515233582

Table 8: Football clubs and prestige & tradition

Football Clubs	Community Involvement	Total Communication Attempts	% on Total Communication Attempts
Premiership			
Arsenal	13	147	8.843537415
Manchester United	10	166	6.024096386
Newcastle	5	77	6.493506494
Everton	11	131	8.396946565
Chelsea	4	111	3.603603604
Liverpool	5	129	3.875968992
Charlton	13	88	14.77272727
Tottenham	22	126	17.46031746
Southampton	11	97	11.34020619
Middlesbrough	5	76	6.578947368
Manchester City	5	97	5.154639175
Fulham	17	112	15.17857143
Aston Villa	3	67	4.47761194
Leeds United	3	74	4.054054054
Birmingham	3	65	4.615384615
Bolton	6	83	7.228915663
Portsmouth	2	37	5.405405405
Blackburn	16	94	17.0212766
Wolverhampton	3	53	5.660377358
Leicester	3	61	4.918032787
Total	160	1891	8.461131676
Average	8	94.55	8.461131676
First Division			
Wigan	2	33	6.060606061
West Bromwich	4	57	7.01754386
Sheffield United	7	80	8.75
Sunderland	7	85	8.235294118
Westham United	7	58	12.06896552
Ipswich Town	8	77	10.38961039
Millwall	5	49	10.20408163
Norwich	7	68	10.29411765
Reading	12	98	12.24489796
Nottingham Forest	4	71	5.633802817
Cardiff	10	78	12.82051282
Preston	5	49	10.20408163
Burnley	8	69	11.5942029
Crewe	4	62	6.451612903
Crystal Palace	4	49	8.163265306
Coventry	11	67	16.41791045
Stoke	6	60	10
Derby	7	64	10.9375
Walsall	5	71	7.042253521
Gillingham	2	48	4.166666667
Watford	5	54	9.259259259
Bradford	4	51	7.843137255
Rotherham	3	43	6.976744186
Wimbledon	2	36	5.555555556
Total	139	1477	9.410968179
Average	5.791666667	61.54167	9.410968179

Table 9: Football clubs and community involvement

Football Clubs	Social Responsibility	Total Communication Attempts	% on Total Communication Attempts
Premiership			
Arsenal	4	147	2.721088435
Manchester United	7	166	4.21686747
Newcastle	4	77	5.194805195
Everton	5	131	3.816793893
Chelsea	4	111	3.603603604
Liverpool	4	129	3.100775194
Charlton	8	88	9.090909091
Tottenham	7	126	5.555555556
Southampton	4	97	4.12371134
Middlesbrough	4	76	5.263157895
Manchester City	3	97	3.092783505
Fulham	9	112	8.035714286
Aston Villa	3	67	4.47761194
Leeds United	2	74	2.702702703
Birmingham	3	65	4.615384615
Bolton	4	83	4.819277108
Portsmouth	2	37	5.405405405
Blackburn	5	94	5.319148936
Wolverhampton	2	53	3.773584906
Leicester	3	61	4.918032787
Total	87	1891	4.600740349
Average	4.35	94.55	4.600740349
First Division			
Wigan	1	33	3.03030303
West Bromwich	2	57	3.50877193
Sheffield United	3	80	3.75
Sunderland	3	85	3.529411765
Westham United	0	58	0
Ipswich Town	2	77	2.597402597
Millwall	1	49	2.040816327
Norwich	1	68	1.470588235
Reading	3	98	3.06122449
Nottingham Forest	3	71	4.225352113
Cardiff	2	78	2.564102564
Preston	0	49	0
Burnley	6	69	8.695652174
Crewe	3	62	4.838709677
Crystal Palace	2	49	4.081632653
Coventry	4	67	5.970149254
Stoke	6	60	10
Derby	2	64	3.125
Walsall	3	71	4.225352113
Gillingham	2	48	4.166666667
Watford	2	54	3.703703704
Bradford	4	51	7.843137255
Rotherham	2	43	4.651162791
Wimbledon	1	36	2.777777778
Total	58	1477	3.926878808
Average	2.416666667	61.54167	3.926878808

Table 10: Football clubs and social responsibility

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Football Clubs	Leadership	Total Communication Attempts	% on Total Communication Attempts
Premiership			
Arsenal	6	147	4.08163265
Manchester United	7	166	4.21686747
Newcastle	4	77	5.19480519
Everton	7	131	5.34351145
Chelsea	4	111	3.6036036
Liverpool	3	129	2.3255814
Charlton	6	88	6.81818182
Tottenham	10	126	7.93650794
Southampton	6	97	6.18556701
Middlesbrough	5	76	6.57894737
Manchester City	4	97	4.12371134
Fulham	12	112	10.7142857
Aston Villa	4	67	5.97014925
Leeds United	2	74	2.7027027
Birmingham	4	65	6.15384615
Bolton	5	83	6.02409639
Portsmouth	3	37	8.10810811
Blackburn	8	94	8.5106383
Wolverhampton	5	53	9.43396226
Leicester	4	61	6.55737705
Total	109	1891	5.76414595
Average	5.45	94.55	5.76414595
First Division			
Wigan	2	33	6.06060606
West Bromwich	4	57	7.01754386
Sheffield United	7	80	8.75
Sunderland	6	85	7.05882353
Westham United	2	58	3.44827586
Ipswich Town	7	77	9.09090909
Millwall	6	49	12.244898
Norwich	6	68	8.82352941
Reading	4	98	4.08163265
Nottingham Forest	4	71	5.63380282
Cardiff	6	78	7.69230769
Preston	6	49	12.244898
Burnley	5	69	7.24637681
Crewe	5	62	8.06451613
Crystal Palace	4	49	8.16326531
Coventry	3	67	4.47761194
Stoke	4	60	6.66666667
Derby	4	64	6.25
Walsall	4	71	5.63380282
Gillingham	5	48	10.4166667
Watford	5	54	9.25925926
Bradford	4	51	7.84313725
Rotherham	4	43	9.30232558
Wimbledon	4	36	11.1111111
Total	111	1477	7.51523358
Average	4.625	61.54167	7.51523358

Table 11: Football clubs and leadership

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MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF FREQUENCY AND PERCENTAGE DATA FOR BOTH PREMIERSHIP AND FIRST DIVISION

Image Dimensions	Premiership				First Division			
	Frequency		%		Frequency		%	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D
1	3.95	3.24	4.18	3.82	2.5	3.13	4.06	3.36
2	11.55	7.23	12.22	5.11	3.92	4.98	6.36	5.97
3	3.6	2.19	3.81	3.23	5	1.84	8.12	3.03
4	2.45	1.39	2.59	1.25	1.5	0.66	2.44	0.98
5	2.4	1.60	2.54	1.21	1.33	0.87	2.17	1.29
6	14.4	7.35	15.23	4.40	9.67	2.91	15.71	3.36
7	12.85	5.96	13.59	3.91	7.21	2.06	11.71	2.60
8	17.35	7.06	18.35	5.26	12.96	4.53	21.06	6.25
9	8.2	5.69	8.67	4.46	4.63	2.41	7.52	3.07
10	8	5.76	8.46	4.56	5.79	2.72	9.41	2.83
11	4.35	1.98	4.60	1.61	2.42	1.53	3.93	2.37
12	5.45	2.44	5.76	2.19	4.63	1.35	7.52	2.35

MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS OF FREQUENCY AND PERCENTAGE DATA FOR BOTH STANDARD AND CUSTOMIZED WEBSITES

	Standard Websites				Customized Websites			
	Frequency		%		Frequency		%	
Image Dimensions	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D
1	2.23	2.63	3.17	2.76	5.38	3.52	5.50	4.70
2	4.58	4.79	6.64	5.95	14.08	7.55	12.80	5.11
3	5	2.1	8.27	3.10	2.85	1.14	2.62	0.86
4	1.61	0.67	2.63	1.02	2.69	1.65	2.45	1.31
5	1.45	0.93	2.19	1.30	2.69	1.8	2.29	1.16
6	9.71	2.66	15.69	3.10	16.84	8.10	15.19	5.38
7	7.58	2.57	12.13	2.81	15	5.9	13.80	4.20
8	13.16	4.02	21.64	5.92	19.23	8.20	17.58	4.98
9	4.55	2.43	7.21	3.06	10.31	2.82	9.22	4.85
10	5.52	3.24	8.40	3.28	9.85	5.52	9.15	4.67
11	2.74	1.41	4.33	1.99	4.62	2.53	4.12	2.34
12	4.68	1.28	7.70	2.08	5.77	2.92	5.27	2.39

APPENDIX 9
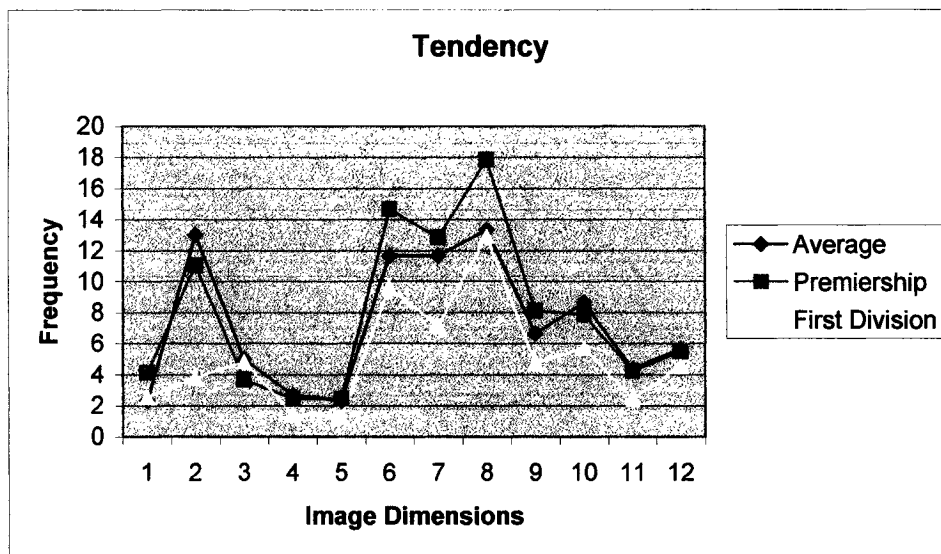
Figure 1: 1999-2000 promotions in terms of frequency

Image dimensions

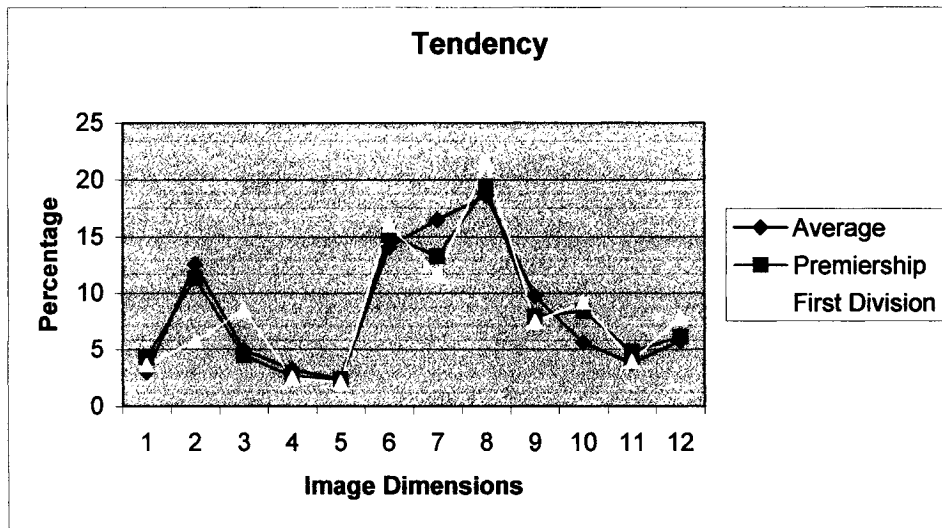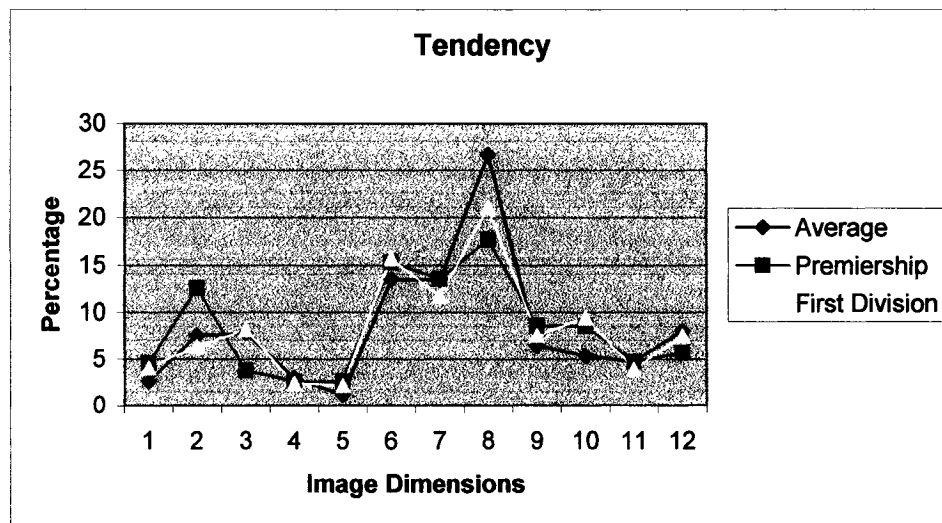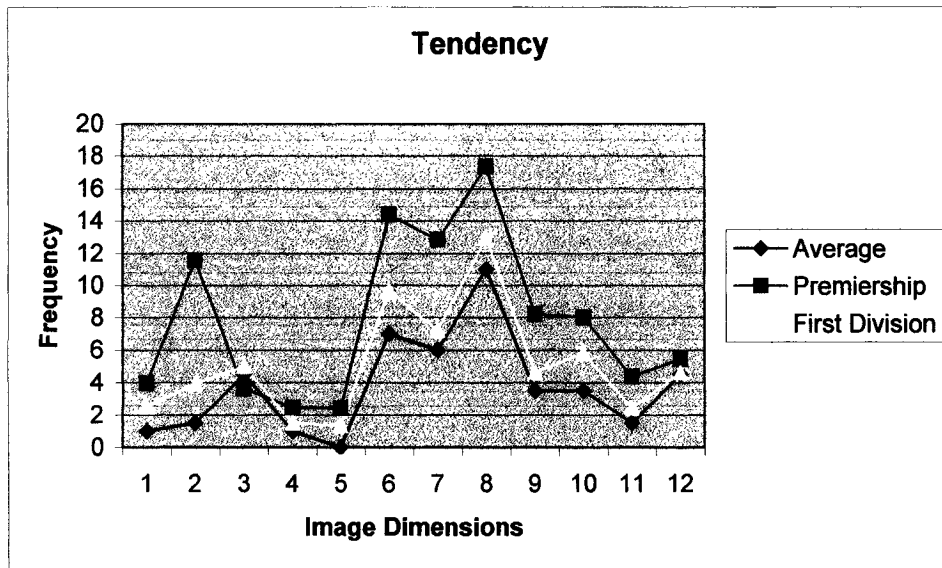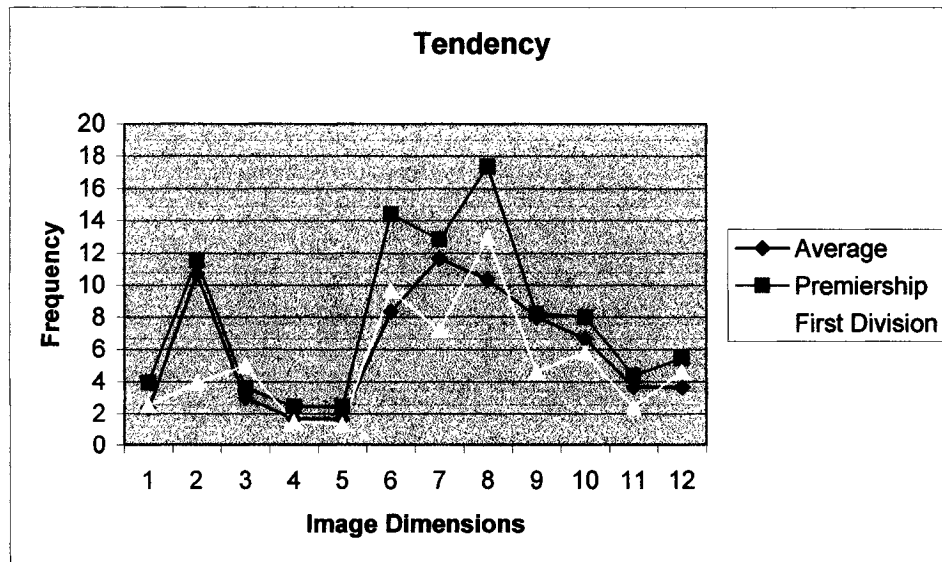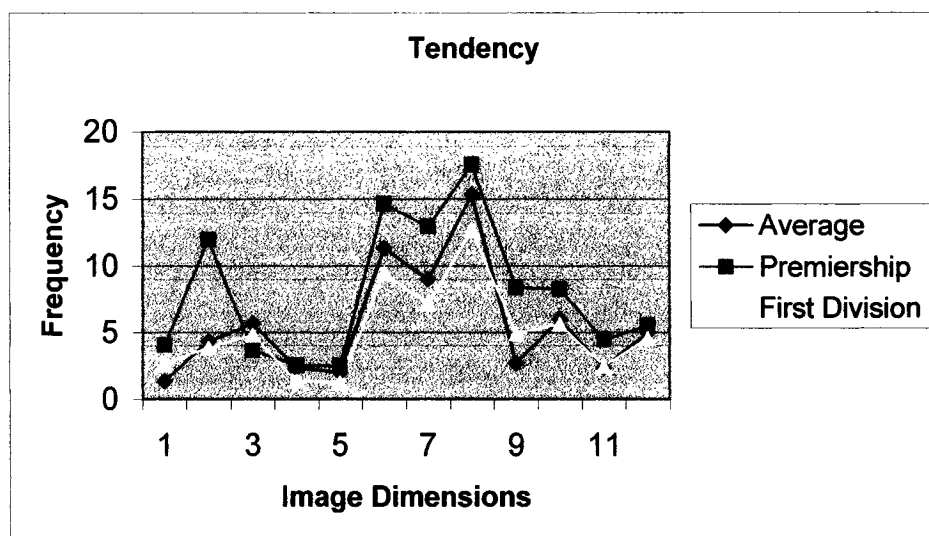|	
1-commercial opportunities	7-transactional
2-associated service	8-performance & competition
3-services	9-prestige & tradition
4-international	10-community involvement
5-fan recruitment	11-social responsibility
6-entertainment	12-leadership
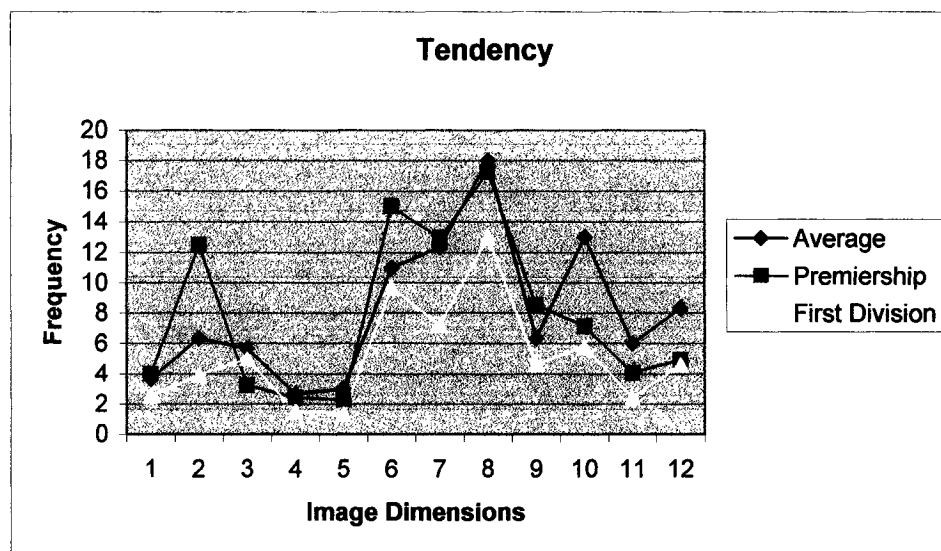
Figure 2: 2000-2001 promotions in terms of frequency

Tendency
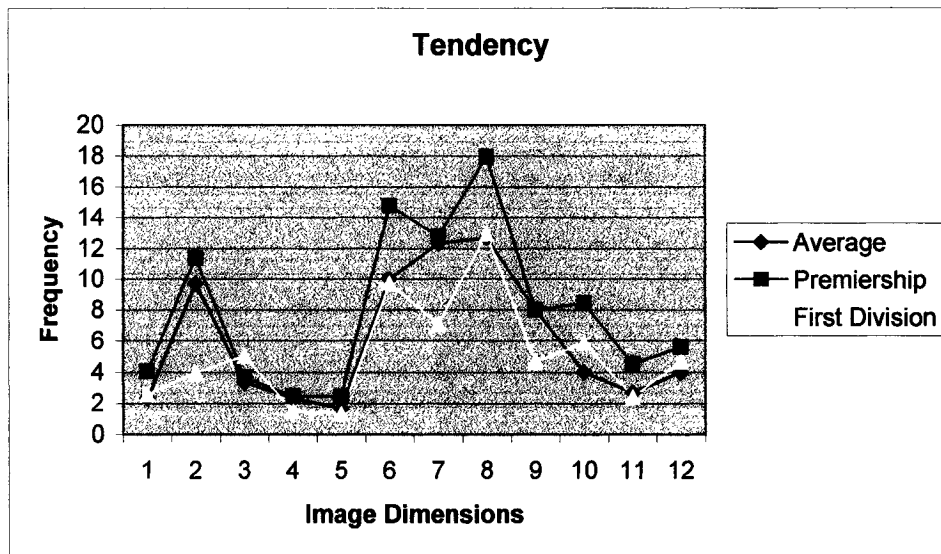
Figure 3: 2001-2002 promotions in terms of frequency

Image dimensions

1-commercial opportunities	7-transactional
2-associated service	8-performance & competition
3-services	9-prestige & tradition
4-international	10-community involvement
5-fan recruitment	11-social responsibility
6-entertainment	12-leadership

Tendency
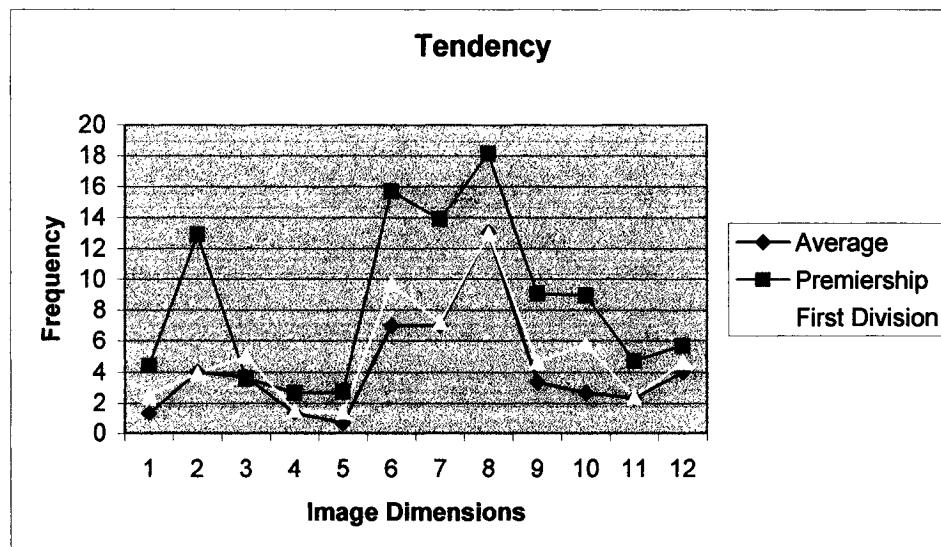
Figure 4: 2002-2003 promotions in terms of frequency

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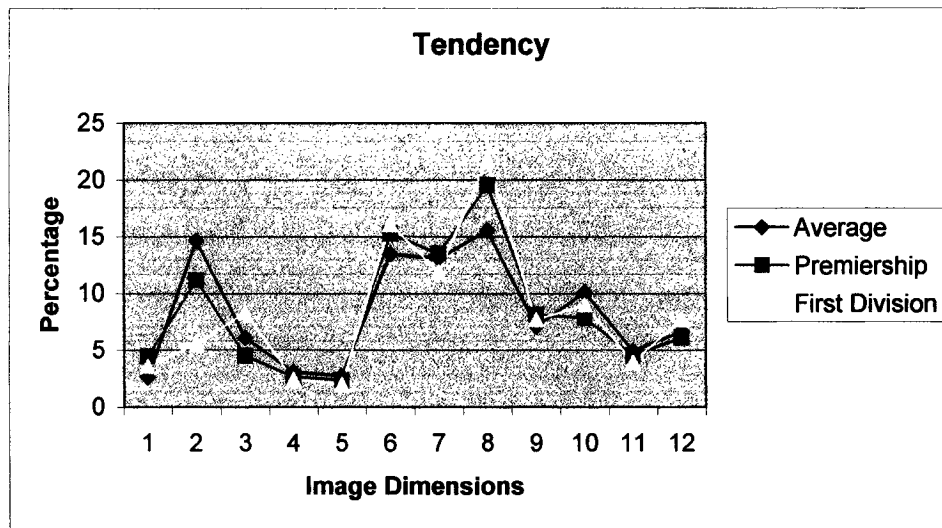
Figure 5: 1999-2000 promotions in terms of percentage

Image dimensions

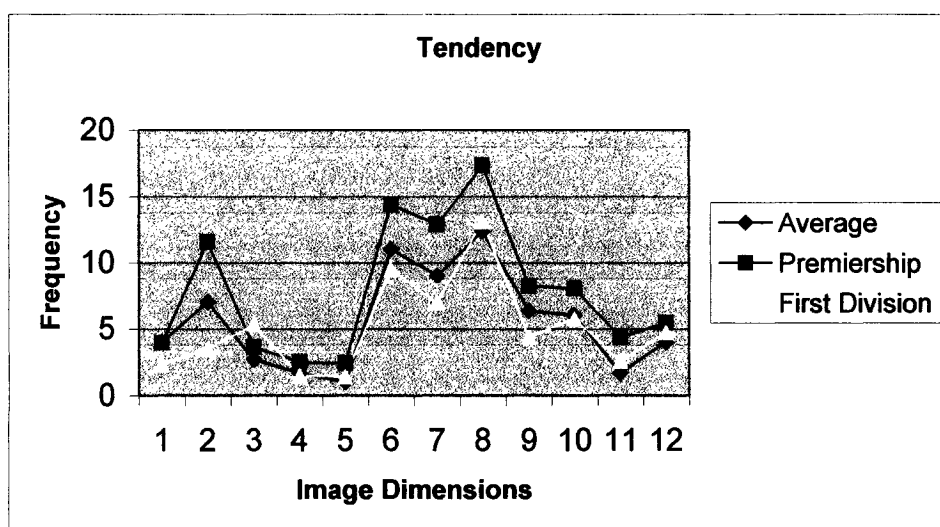|	
1-commercial opportunities	7-transactional
2-associated service	8-performance & competition
3-services	9-prestige & tradition
4-international	10-community involvement
5-fan recruitment	11-social responsibility
6-entertainment	12-leadership
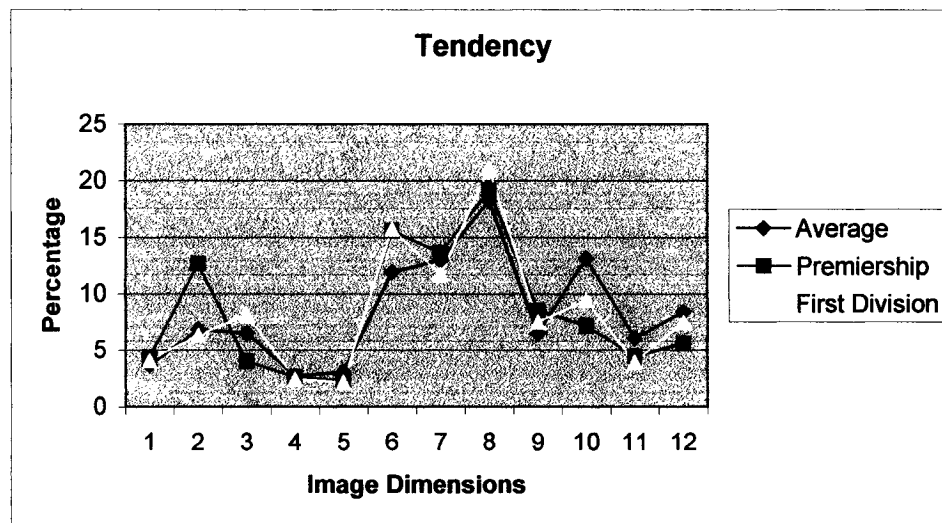
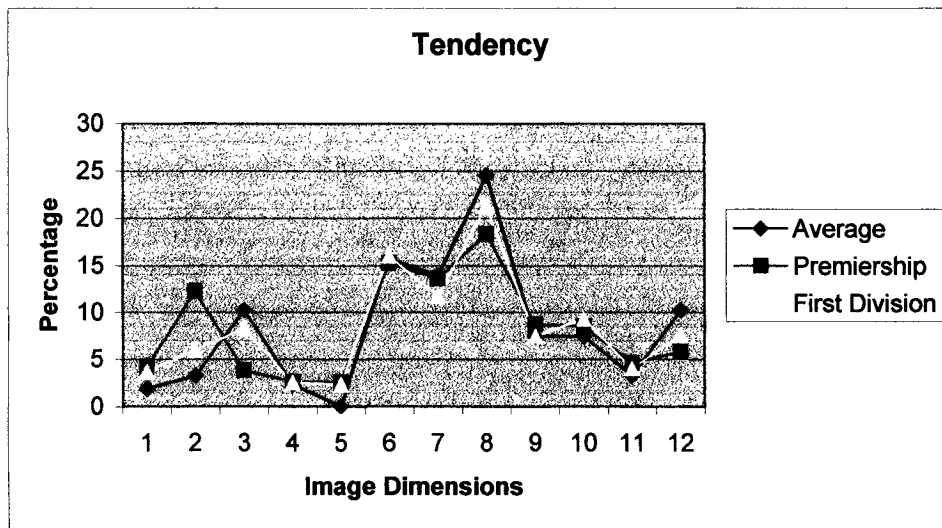*Figure 6: 2000-2001 promotions in terms of percentage*

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Tendency

Figure 7: 2001-2002 promotions in terms of percentage

Image dimensions

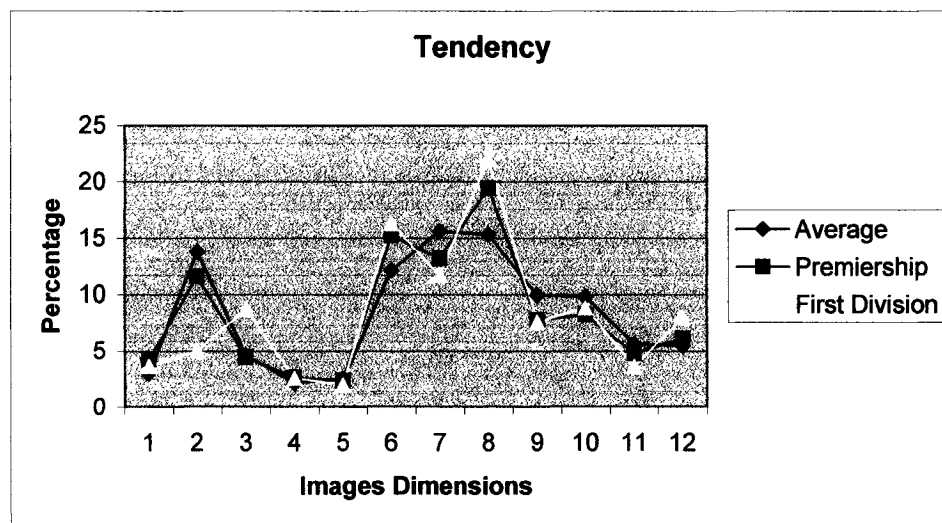|	
1-commercial opportunities	7-transactional
2-associated service	8-performance & competition
3-services	9-prestige & tradition
4-international	10-community involvement
5-fan recruitment	11-social responsibility
6-entertainment	12-leadership

Tendency

Figure 8: 2002-2003 promotions in terms of percentage

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Figure 9: 1999-2000 relegations in terms of frequency

Image dimensions
1-commercial opportunities
2-associated service
3-services
4-international
5-fan recruitment
6-entertainment

7-transactional
8-performance & competition
9-prestige & tradition
10-community involvement
11-social responsibility
12-leadership

Figure 10: 2000-2001 relegations in terms of frequency

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Figure 11: 2001-2002 relegations in terms of frequency

Image dimensions

1-commercial opportunities	7-transactional
2-associated service	8-performance & competition
3-services	9-prestige & tradition
4-international	10-community involvement
5-fan recruitment	11-social responsibility
6-entertainment	12-leadership

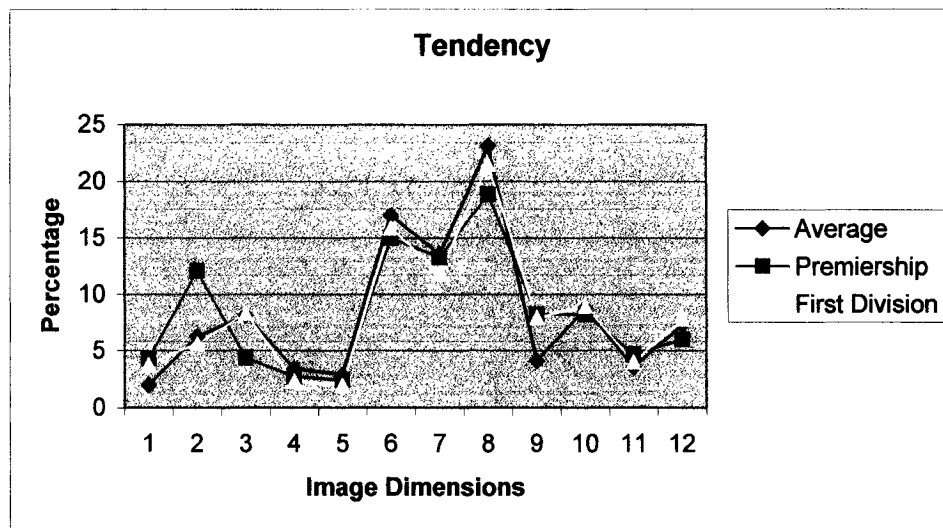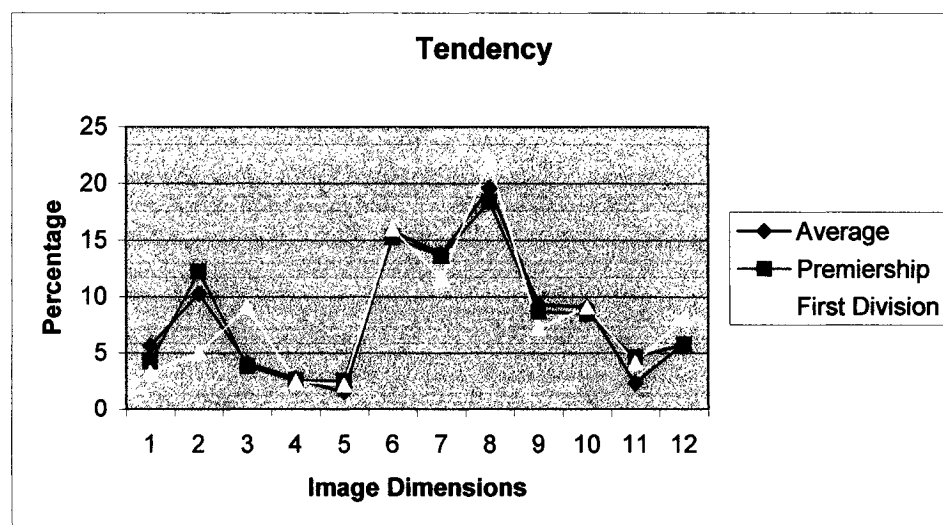*Figure 12: 2002-2003 relegations in terms of frequency*

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Figure 13: 1999-2000 relegations in terms of percentage

Image dimensions	
1-commercial opportunities	7-transactional
2-associated service	8-performance & competition
3-services	9-prestige & tradition
4-international	10-community involvement
5-fan recruitment	11-social responsibility
6-entertainment	12-leadership

*Figure 14: 2000-2001 relegations in terms of percentage*

Figure 15: 2001-2002 relegations in terms of percentage

Image dimensions

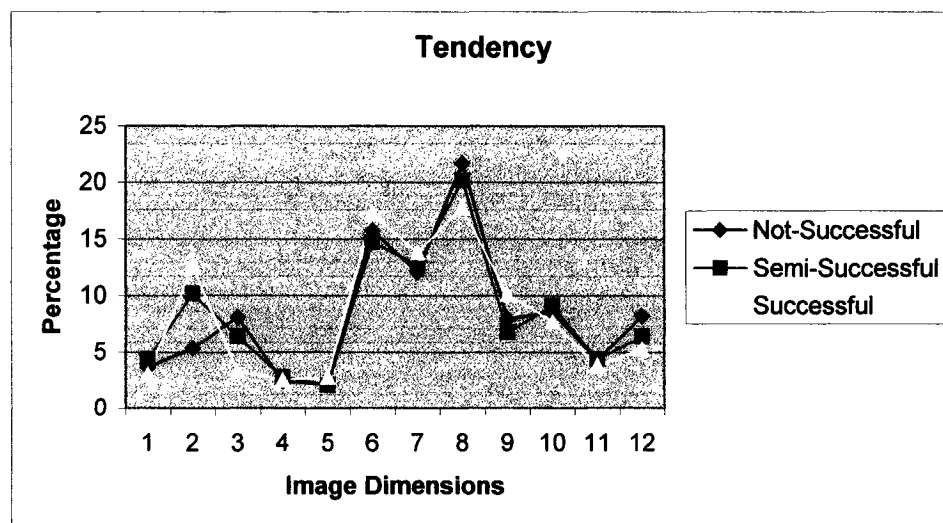|	
1-commercial opportunities	7-transactional
2-associated service	8-performance & competition
3-services	9-prestige & tradition
4-international	10-community involvement
5-fan recruitment	11-social responsibility
6-entertainment	12-leadership

Figure 16: 2002-2003 relegations in terms of percentage

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APPENDIX 10
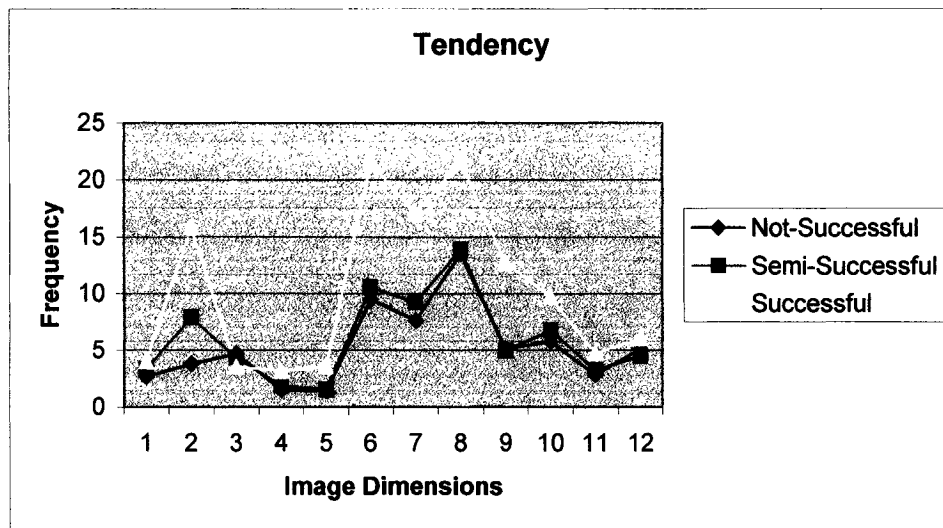
Figure 1: The segmentation of not successful, semi-successful and successful football clubs in terms of frequency

Image dimensions	
1-commercial opportunities	7-transactional
2-associated service	8-performance & competition
3-services	9-prestige & tradition
4-international	10-community involvement
5-fan recruitment	11-social responsibility
6-entertainment	12-leadership

Figure 2: The segmentation of not successful, semi-successful and successful football clubs in terms of percentage
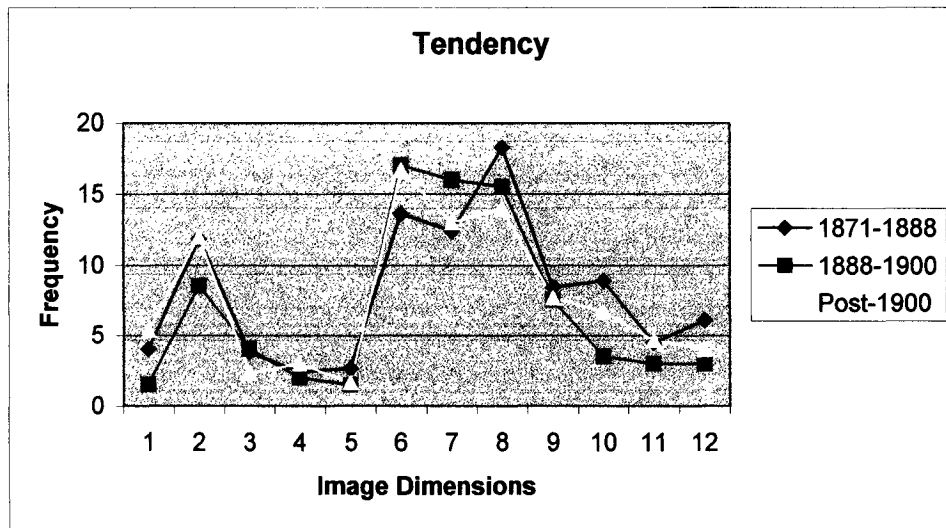
Figure 3: The segmentation of Premiership clubs as to their historical foundations in terms of frequency

Image dimensions
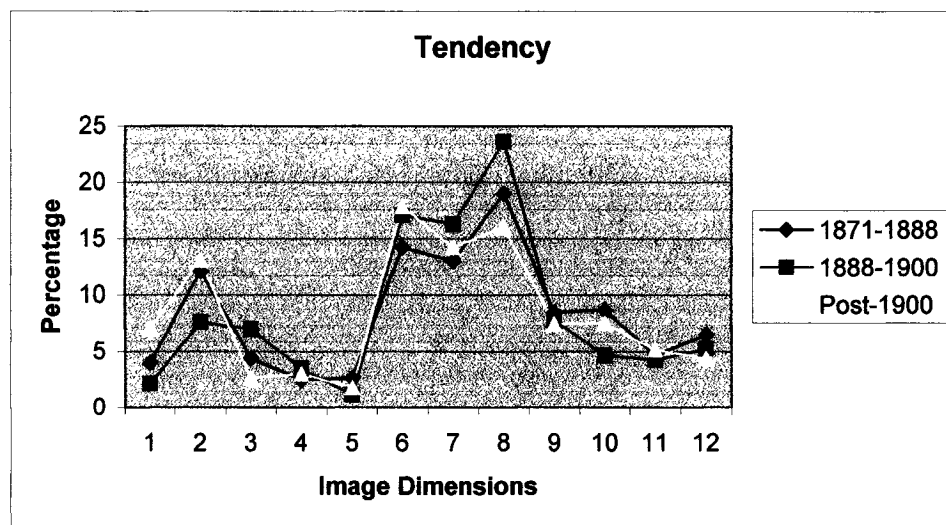|	
1-commercial opportunities	7-transactional
2-associated service	8-performance & competition
3-services	9-prestige & tradition
4-international	10-community involvement
5-fan recruitment	11-social responsibility
6-entertainment	12-leadership

Figure 4: The segmentation of Premiership clubs as to their historical foundations in terms of percentage
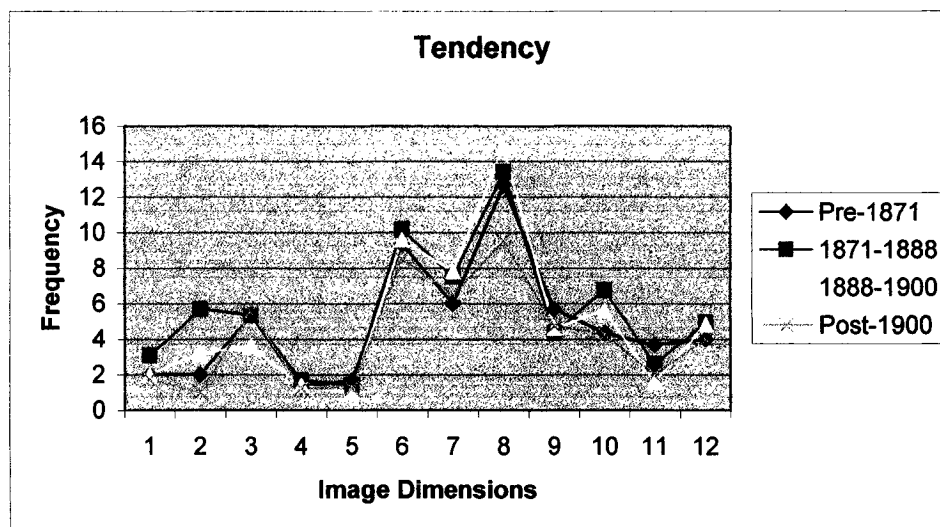
Figure 5: The segmentation of First Division clubs as to their historical foundations in terms of frequency

Image dimensions
1-commercial opportunities   7-transactional
2-associated service   8-performance & competition
3-services   9-prestige & tradition
4-international   10-community involvement
5-fan recruitment   11-social responsibility
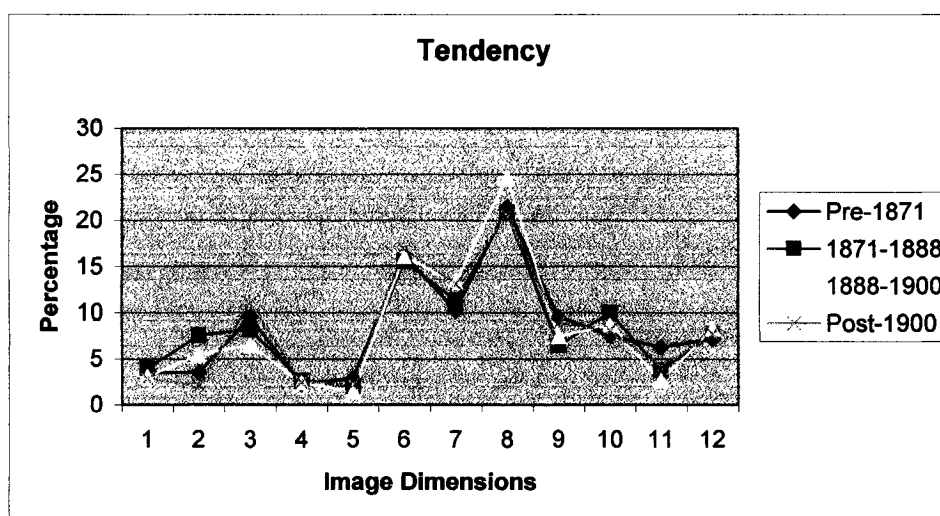6-entertainment   12-leadership

Figure 6: The segmentation of First Division clubs as to their historical foundations in terms of percentage

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