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Biscaia, R, Hedlund, D, Dickson, G & Naylor, M

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1 **Conceptualising and measuring fan identity using stakeholder theory**

2
3 Rui Biscaia, Coventry University, UK

4 Galen Trail, Seattle University, USA

5 Stephen Ross, Concordia University, St. Paul, USA

6 Masayuki Yoshida, Hosei University, Tokyo, Japan

7
8 Author post-print (accepted) deposited by Coventry University's Repository

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22
23 Please address correspondence to:

24 Rui Biscaia

25 Jaguar Building, School of Marketing and Management, Coventry University

26 Priory Street, CV1 5FB, Coventry, United Kingdom

27 Email: rui.biscaia@coventry.ac.uk

28
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34 **Conceptualising and measuring fan identity using stakeholder theory**

35

36 **Abstract**

37 **Research question:** Building on identity theory and stakeholder theory, this study explores
38 the concept of fan identity based on self-perceived levels of power, urgency, internal and
39 external legitimacy, and examines their effects on behavioural intentions.

40 **Research methods:** Data were collected from professional football fans ($n = 532$). A
41 confirmatory factor analysis analysed the psychometric properties of the constructs, and a
42 subsequent structural equation model examined the effects of fan identity on three
43 behavioural intention measures.

44 **Results and findings:** The results indicate acceptable psychometric properties of the
45 multidimensional construct of fan identity composed of power, urgency, internal legitimacy
46 and external legitimacy. Power and internal legitimacy were significantly related to the
47 intentions to attend more games and to purchase merchandise, with internal legitimacy also
48 influencing intentions to recommend games to others.

49 **Implications:** This study provides the first exploration of fan identity as a multidimensional
50 construct. The findings provide sport managers with useful insights on how to measure fan
51 identity. This study serves as a catalyst for future research to understand the linkages between
52 professional sport teams and their fans.

53

54 **Keywords:** Fans; Professional Sport Teams; Identity Theory; Stakeholder Theory.

55

56 **Conceptualising and measuring fan identity using stakeholder theory**

57 Central to the success of any professional sport team is the development and maintenance of a
58 passionate group of fans (Grant, Heere, & Dickson, 2011). While various definitions of fans
59 exist in the sport literature, the term generically refers to individuals who have an interest in
60 or follow a particular team (García & Welford, 2015). The problem sport managers frequently
61 face is that “all sport fans are not the same” (Ross, 2007, p. 22). Authors of previous studies
62 have argued that the success of professional sport teams is bolstered by highly identified fans
63 through increased attendance, word-of-mouth recommendations or merchandise sales
64 (Dalakas & Melancon, 2012; McDonald, Karg, & Vocino, 2013). In this sense, professional
65 sport teams can create a competitive advantage by developing highly identified fans.

66 In the sport management literature, team identification is recognised as a critical
67 element for promoting successful relationships between a sport organisation and its fans (e.g.,
68 Heere et al., 2011; Lock & Heere, 2017; Trail et al., 2012), operating as an attitudinal
69 barometer and predictor of consumer behaviour (Lock, Taylor, Funk, & Darcy, 2012).
70 Through the lens of social identity theory (Tajfel, 1981), a growing body of research has
71 conceptualised team identification as a multidimensional construct related to an individual's
72 identification with a social group or category (i.e., team) (e.g., Dimmock, Grove & Eklund,
73 2005; Heere et al., 2011; Lock & Funk, 2016). Lock et al. (2012) indicated that sport teams
74 represent social categories from which fans derive social identity benefits. Despite its utility
75 to better understand how team identification develops and its broader importance for sport
76 organisations, previous research has not yet explored a fan's role identity. That is, individuals
77 have a personal identity in addition to their social identity (Lock & Heere, 2017). As
78 highlighted by identity theory (Stryker & Burke, 2000), people have role identities
79 representing the characteristics attributed to oneself within a social role (e.g., how a person

80 perceives him/herself as a sport fan), which gives meaning to their past behaviour and directs
81 future behaviours (Trail, Anderson, & Fink, 2005).

82 Lock and Funk (2016) also suggest that sport offers a diverse range of identity-related
83 benefits to individuals. In fact, sport fan identity can either be role-based or category-based
84 (Trail, Anderson, & Lee, 2017) which suggests that fan identity (i.e., role) and team identity
85 (i.e., category) are different and should not be used interchangeably. Although there is
86 comprehensive coverage in the literature relating to the nature of team identification (i.e.,
87 group) (e.g., Lock et al., 2012; Lock & Funk, 2016; Heere et al., 2011), fan identity (i.e., role)
88 and its importance for sport organisations requires deeper exploration.

89 Fans are undeniably one of the most important stakeholders of professional sport
90 teams (Covell, 2005; García & Welford, 2015; Senaux, 2008). The framework proposed by
91 Mitchell, Agle, and Wood (1997) is a seminal contribution to the study of stakeholder
92 identification. The authors categorise stakeholders based on their power, urgency, and
93 legitimacy to the focal organisation, which are attributes that fans possess in sport settings
94 (Zagnoli & Radicchi, 2010; Xue & Mason, 2011). Furthermore, a stakeholder's action
95 expresses their identity (Crane & Ruebottom, 2011) suggesting that fan interactions with the
96 team represent an expression of their role identity. In this sense, stakeholder theory may
97 represent an important concept to explore fan identity because it focuses on important
98 attributes for a fan (i.e., stakeholder) to fulfil their role identity. Problematically, there is no
99 clearly articulated framework for incorporating stakeholder thinking into fan identities. To
100 understand the relevance of fan identity to sport organisations, managers and researchers must
101 holistically analyse the importance of being a fan to the individual (i.e., a fan as an identity
102 role). In the current study, we link identity theory (Stryker & Burke, 2000) and stakeholder
103 theory (Mitchell et al., 1997) to better understand and measure fan identity. The purpose of
104 this study is to explore different attributes of fan identity, by merging domains from identity

105 theory and stakeholder theory, and examine its effects on behavioural intentions towards the
106 team.

107

108 **Conceptual Background**

109 **Identity and Sport Fans**

110 Striker and Burke (2000) note that the “language of ‘identity’ is ubiquitous in different
111 fields of contemporary science” (p. 1). They identify three relatively distinct usages of the
112 term: (1) the culture of people, which often limits its theoretical purpose; (2) a common
113 identification with a social category, thus creating a common culture among its elements (i.e.,
114 social identity theory); or (3) parts of a “self” composed of the meanings that persons attach to
115 the multiple roles they typically play in contemporary societies (i.e., identity theory).

116 Social identity theory underpins much of what we know about team identification
117 (Lock et al., 2012; Lock & Heere, 2017). According to Tajfel (1981), a social identity is “that
118 part of an individual’s self-concept which derives from knowledge of his membership of a
119 social group together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership”
120 (p. 255). Authors of early research on social identity theory examined team identification as a
121 unidimensional construct (e.g., Wann & Branscombe, 1993). However, scholars then
122 reconceptualised team identification as a multidimensional construct, bringing team
123 identification into alignment with social identity theory (e.g., Dimmock et al., 2005; Heere et
124 al., 2011; Theodorakis, Dimmock, Wann, Barlas, 2010). As noted by Ashmore, Deaux, and
125 McLaughlin-Volpe (2004), a multidimensional conceptualisation of team identification fits
126 well within the academic discourse on social identity theory and the process of identifying
127 with a group (Katz & Heere, 2016). In addition, team identification is a key variable in
128 explaining fans’ enduring support for the team even during periods of poor performance
129 (Doyle, Lock, Funk, Filo, & McDonald, 2017).

130 Identity theory is frequently used to explain the choices individuals make about who
131 they are as an individual or within a group setting (Striker, 2007). For example, an
132 individual's identity can be conceptualised as internalised role expectations. People have
133 many role identities, and each specific identity represents a set of beliefs about the importance
134 of that role to the individual (Trail et al., 2017). Wood and Roberts (2006) suggest that role
135 identities represent the characteristics attributed to oneself within a social role, such as how
136 one sees himself as a father or a sport fan. On the other hand, identity theory scholars assert
137 that role choices are a function of one's identity at a particular moment in time, and identities
138 within the "self" are organised in a salience hierarchy (Striker & Burke, 2000). The higher the
139 salience of an identity relative to other "self" identities, the greater the possibility of
140 behavioural choices related to the expectations of such identity (i.e., the role as fan implies
141 certain behaviours such as attending games, recommending games to others, purchasing
142 merchandise, or following the team through media) (Striker & Burke, 2000). Identity theory
143 significantly differs from social identity theory in that the latter emphasises the category-
144 based identities to which people feel attached (e.g., team) (Reed II, 2002), while the former
145 emphasises the meaning attached to social roles (e.g., fan) (Crane & Ruebottom, 2011).
146 Ashmore et al. (2004) noted that "whereas collective identity is explicitly connected to a
147 group of people outside the 'self,' personal identity typically refers to characteristics of the
148 'self' that one believes, in isolation or combination, to be unique to the 'self'" (p. 82).

149 Despite a lack of clarity in recent team identification literature due to the adoption of
150 different labels and conceptual approaches (Lock & Heere, 2017), fan identity and team
151 identity are distinct concepts and should therefore be measured separately. That is, a role-
152 based measure of fandom (i.e., fan identity) should capture perceptions on how important the
153 role of being a fan is to the individual, while a category-based measure of fandom (i.e., team
154 identity) should be more focused on the importance of belongingness and social interaction

155 with other fans of the team (Trail et al., 2017). This means that while social identity theory
156 represents a solid background for understanding team identification, the conceptualisation of
157 fan identification should also be grounded in identity theory. Following this reasoning, Trail
158 and colleagues recently noted that ‘role identity’ increases fans’ intentions to support the team
159 and attend future games. Despite their contribution to understanding fan identity, the authors
160 used a unidimensional construct. A single conception of the “self” can be misleading given
161 that people tend to describe themselves in highly differentiated ways (Gergen, 1991). Thus, a
162 multidimensional approach will enable a deeper understanding of the underlying components
163 of fan identity and its impact on intentions and subsequent team-related behaviours.

164 As noted by Stryker (2007), an identity is linked to internalised meanings that an
165 individual attribute to him/herself. Given that fans are vital stakeholders of professional sport
166 teams (Senaux, 2008), and that the identity of stakeholders is often expressed through their
167 actions (Crane & Ruebottom, 2011), understanding the different meanings fans associate with
168 their role identity may represent progress towards a better management of the relationships
169 between fans and sport organisations. Also, the development of a multidimensional fan
170 identity scale helps clarify the concept of fan identity and its distinction from team identity. In
171 the current research, identity theory is linked to stakeholder theory in order to conceptualise
172 and measure fan identity.

173 **Exploring the role of Fans as Stakeholders**

174 Stakeholder research has a prominent place in organisational performance literature.
175 Most researchers agree that stakeholders are people or groups that can either affect or be
176 affected by an organisation’s actions (Freeman, 1984; Mainardes, Alves, & Raposo, 2012).
177 Stakeholders are important because organisations need to advance the interests of various
178 entities that have a relationship with or are connected to the organisation (Zagnoli &
179 Radicchi, 2010). As the relationship between stakeholders and the organisation strengthens,

180 stakeholders are more likely to contribute important resources, such as time, energy and
181 money to the organisation (Mainardes et al., 2012). Consistent with this view, marketers often
182 credit fans for making the sports industry prosperous by investing time, money, and energy
183 towards their teams (Dalakas & Melancon, 2012), which is an indication of their stake in the
184 continued success of the team. Over time, the success of an organisation depends to a large
185 extent on its ability to identify and satisfy key stakeholders (Bryson, 2004).

186 While the literature offers many approaches for identifying stakeholders (e.g.,
187 Clarkson, 1995; Bryson, 2004; Fassin, 2009), the model proposed by Mitchell et al. (1997) is
188 the most influential framework (Mattingly, 2007; Neville, Bell & Whitwell, 2011). Their
189 model incorporates the attributes of power, urgency and legitimacy and has been utilized in
190 the context of professional team sports (e.g., Miragaia, Ferreira, & Carreira, 2014; Senaux,
191 2008; Zagnoli & Radicchi, 2010) to identify stakeholders and associated actions. Regardless
192 of the sport, fans are consistently highlighted as prominent stakeholders. The rationale for this
193 assumption is that fans are the final consumers of the sport spectacle either directly (i.e., live
194 events) or indirectly (i.e., TV viewers and target of sponsors) (Senaux, 2008). Fans have an
195 important role in the commercialization of sport (Anagnostopoulos, 2011) due to their ticket
196 and merchandise purchases, TV viewership, recommendation of the games to others, and
197 attraction of sponsors' interest. In addition, fans have an important role when supporting the
198 team on the field and co-creating the stadium environment (Biscaia, 2015; Hedlund, 2014),
199 and they also tend to influence organisational decision-making (Senaux, 2008). For example,
200 fans' demand for on-field success often exerts pressure on management decisions to recruit or
201 dismiss players and coaches (Anagnostopoulos, 2011). In line with this view, Zagnoli and
202 Radicchi (2010) found that fans of football teams are prominent stakeholders, and the
203 relationships between these fans and the team need to be managed carefully.

204 To this end, one may argue that the role of a fan can be best discussed as stakeholder.
205 However, prior studies have asked managers to identify their organisational stakeholders
206 (e.g., Parent & Deephouse, 2007). While pragmatic, a manager's perspective leads to only a
207 partial understanding of stakeholders' role to the sport organisations because it is a subjective
208 evaluation (Senaux, 2008). Even though stakeholders may influence an organisation in
209 varying ways (Frooman & Murrell, 2005), no effort has been made to understand sport fans'
210 own perspective of the meaning attached to their role and subsequent intentions towards the
211 sport organisation. This may be problematic because professional sport teams have fans with
212 varying degrees of influence and relational exchange behaviours (Biscaia et al., 2016) who
213 may also believe they have a stake in the organisation (García & Welford, 2015). To aid their
214 strategic thinking, it is important for sport managers to consider how important the role of
215 being a fan of the team is to the individual. In addition, most applications of Mitchell et al.'s
216 (1997) framework base their assessment on only the dichotomous presence or absence of
217 power, urgency and legitimacy (e.g., Agle, Mitchell, & Sonnenfeld, 1999; Anagnostopoulos,
218 2011). This represents a limitation as stakeholders may have varying levels of power, urgency
219 and legitimacy (Mainardes et al., 2012; Xue & Mason, 2011). In this study, the
220 operationalization of the constructs reflects an increasing recognition that power, urgency and
221 legitimacy are best measured as continuous variables rather than dichotomous variables
222 (Currie, Seaton, & Wesley, 2009; Neville et al., 2011).

223 **Proposed Framework of Fan Identity**

224 McDonald and Sherry (2010) call attention to the role of fans-as-stakeholder
225 perspective when analysing sport organisations. Given that fans can influence their
226 organisations (Senaux, 2008), sport managers must not only recognise the importance of the
227 product to fans, but the importance of fans to the product as well (McDonald & Sherry, 2010).
228 The role of a fan can be discussed as that of a stakeholder because fans feel they have a stake

229 in the future of their teams (Covell, 2005; García & Welford, 2015; The New York Times,
230 2015). Zagnoli and Radicchi (2010) highlight that fans are of central importance to the
231 production of the sporting event, and professional sport teams often have diverse groups of
232 fans ranging from single-game attendees to season ticket holders. In many cases, the fan
233 relationship is formalized through subscription of membership programs (McDonald &
234 Sherry, 2010). That is, fans pay a monthly or annual fee to receive benefits such as discounts
235 on the team's goods and services, access to special members-only events, and even voting
236 rights for the board elections (Biscaia et al., 2016; Yoshida & Gordon, 2012). To this end,
237 understanding fan identity represents an important step towards the establishment of enduring
238 relationships. Fan identity is defined in the current study as the meaning individuals attach to
239 their role of being fans of their favourite team.

240 The theoretical foundations for the proposed model are based on stakeholder theory
241 (Mitchell et al., 1997) and identity theory (Stryker & Burke, 2000). Mitchell et al.'s model
242 explains to whom and to what managers should primarily pay attention. Power, urgency and
243 legitimacy are the three vital stakeholder attributes, which are conceptualised and measured as
244 a dichotomy (i.e., stakeholders either have the attribute or not). In this study, we follow an
245 outside-in as opposed to an inside-out (or organisation-centric) approach (Crane &
246 Ruebottom, 2011), and rely on stakeholder theory to further explore fan identity as it helps
247 with understanding the meaning individuals attach to their role as fans of a team. For an
248 individual to fulfil the role of a fan, he/she needs to feel empowered (Katz & Heere, 2015), to
249 have urgency towards the club and to be concerned about to what extent others (e.g., club)
250 acknowledge his/her legitimacy (i.e., external legitimacy). In addition, it is important to
251 consider that role identity implies a process of self-verification (Stryker & Burke, 2000). This
252 suggests that the measurement of fan identity should also capture the individual's own
253 perception of his/her legitimacy as a fan of the team (i.e., internal legitimacy). Understanding

254 how to measure fan identity is important for professional sport teams because not all fans
255 attribute the same value to the organisation, and bridging stakeholder theory with identity
256 theory can help clarify the value of fans for sport organisations. In this study, we
257 conceptualise fan identity with regards to perceived power, urgency, external legitimacy and
258 internal legitimacy, and then examine the effects of each proposed dimension on fans'
259 subsequent behavioural intentions towards their teams.

260 **Power**

261 Mitchell et al. (1997) refers to power as the degree to which a stakeholder is capable
262 of influencing the organisation. The power of fans within a sport organisation is immediately
263 obvious. In membership-based organisations, some fans/members have voting rights for the
264 board elections (Biscaia et al., 2016; McDonald & Sherry, 2010), but the power of sport fans
265 manifests in other ways such as their influence on organisational decisions about building or
266 renovating facilities (Walters, 2011), or even in hiring or firing players and/or coaches
267 (Anagnostopoulos, 2011). For example, despite the poor performance of Chelsea Football
268 Club during the 2015-16 English Premier League season, fans exerted strong pressure on the
269 club owner to retain the coach (Mirror, 2015). Fans are critically important, because in their
270 absence sport teams are unsustainable (Esteve, Di Lorenzo, Inglés, & Puig, 2011). Power is
271 defined in the current study as the extent to which a fan perceives him/herself to be capable of
272 influencing the club. As noted by Peachey, Zhou, Damon, and Burton (2015), fans' power
273 may influence the performance of sport organisations. Rucker and Galinsky (2009) further
274 noted that individuals' feelings of power shape their consumption behaviours. To this end,
275 one may argue that a fan's perception of power influences subsequent behavioural intentions
276 towards the team.

277

278

279 **Urgency**

280 The attribute of urgency reflects the extent to which a stakeholder has a claim for
281 immediate attention by the organisation (Mainardes et al., 2012). Sport fans frequently have
282 claims about ticket prices, merchandise products, service delivery at the stadium, among
283 many other aspects related to the club’s daily life, and most of them are very proactive at
284 manifesting their claims through different available platforms (Xue & Mason, 2011). Senaux
285 (2008) further states that “three or four bad games in a row and the situation becomes critical
286 and a quick response is needed” (p. 14). Fans’ urgency towards their teams is also evidenced
287 by their regular engagement with team social media platforms as events unfold (Telegraph,
288 2015). In the current research, urgency refers to the extent to which a fan perceives that he/she
289 has claims for immediate attention from the club, and is underpinned by a combination of
290 time sensitivity and criticality of the claim (Senaux, 2008). Mitchell et al. (1997) suggest that
291 a stakeholder’s urgency is a catalytic attribute that initiates action towards the organisation,
292 while Eesley and Lenox (2006) argue that the urgency of a request tends to influence the
293 likelihood of response. In consumption-related research, Zinn and Liu (2011) noted that an
294 individual’s sense of urgency tends to affect product purchase behaviours. Taken together, the
295 literature suggests that a fan’s urgency towards the club may influence his/her subsequent
296 behavioural intentions.

297 **External Legitimacy**

298 A legitimate stakeholder is one whose claims are considered appropriate according to
299 social norms and values (Xue & Mason, 2011). The attribute of legitimacy is indisputably
300 present among sport fans. Fans obtain legitimacy when their actions mirror accepted practices
301 (Dowling & Pfeffer, 1975) and align with the expectations of the organisation’s management.
302 Fans generally have external legitimacy because their views are not typically dismissed as
303 irrelevant by management. Sport managers expect fans to express their opinions about team

304 and organisational performance, because they invest time and money to attend live games,
305 watch games on TV, purchase merchandise and other team-related services, and most were
306 committed and faithful to the team since they were very young (Senaux, 2008). To this end,
307 fans' perceptions of how people within the club community assess their claims should be
308 included as a component of fan identity. External legitimacy is defined in this study as the
309 extent to which a fan perceives that the club considers his/her actions to be appropriate.
310 Tsotsou (2011) suggests that stakeholder theory can explain behaviours related to sport
311 organisations, and Neville et al. (2011) mention that legitimacy is related to decision making.
312 In the context of sport, one's perception of legitimacy can influence behavioural intentions
313 (Conroy, Silva, Newcomer, Walker, & Johnson, 2011; Ryan, Williams, & Wimer, 1990).
314 Therefore, one may argue that a fan's perception of external legitimacy will likely influence
315 his/her behavioural intentions towards the team.

316 **Internal legitimacy**

317 An identity is a self-cognition tied to a role (Stryker, 2007), and the way an individual
318 sees him/herself as being a fan of a particular team is pivotal to legitimise his role identity as a
319 fan (Trail et al., 2017). A role identity accommodates the social nature of past experiences and
320 is socially recognised through actions (Ervin & Striker, 2001; Trail et al., 2005). Fans often
321 express how important the team is for them via social media (Filo, Lock, & Karg, 2015) and
322 by wearing team merchandise (Apostolopoulou, Papadimitriou, Synowka, & Clark, 2012;
323 Fetchko, Roy, & Clow, 2013). For fans, exerting the right to vote in board elections, attending
324 games and recommending them to others, or regularly participating in conversations about the
325 team are other examples of actions demonstrating how individuals try to legitimise their role
326 identity as fans of a specific team. Trail et al. (2005) note that identification with the team
327 (i.e., a construct reflecting the meaning of being a fan of the team to the individual) is an
328 important aspect to increase fans' self-esteem, while Ashmore et al. (2004) refer that a

329 personal identity reflects the characteristics an individual believes to have. To this end, we
330 argue that fan identity should also incorporate how the individual sees him/herself as a
331 devoted fan of the team. In the current study, internal legitimacy refers to the extent to which
332 a fan sees him/herself as being a legitimate fan of the team. Considering that the way one sees
333 oneself in a certain role (e.g., sport fan) tends to guide behaviour (Striker & Burke, 2000),
334 fans' internal legitimacy will likely influence behavioural intentions towards the team.

335

336

Method

337 Research setting

338 Data were collected from fans of teams participating in the *Liga Portugal* (LP), which
339 has been recognized as one of the top ten football leagues in the world (IFFHS, 2016). As in
340 most European countries, football is very popular and is rooted in Portuguese culture. The LP
341 consists of 18 teams from 16 different cities. The average attendance of the three top teams
342 was over 31,000 spectators per game (Liga Portugal, 2016), and the reigning champion of the
343 LPFP was one of the largest European clubs as measured by overall revenue in 2014
344 (Deloitte, 2015).

345 Measurement

346 The measures used to capture power (4 items), urgency (4 items) and external
347 legitimacy (4 items) were adopted from Mattingly (2007) and Miragaia et al. (2014) and
348 adjusted to the sport fan context. Internal legitimacy was measured through four items, with
349 three being derived from and Trail et al. (2005), and one from Ross, Russell and Bang (2008).
350 Similar to Trail and James (2016), it is important to note that these items are representative of
351 how a person legitimises him/herself as a fan of the team. All these items were measured on a
352 10-point scale ranging from 'Strongly Disagree' (1) to 'Strongly Agree' (10). In addition,
353 three items adapted from Biscaia, Correia, Rosado, Marôco, and Ross (2012) captured fans'

354 behavioural intentions towards the team (i.e., attend more games, purchase merchandise and
355 recommend games to others). Given that composite measures of behavioural intentions often
356 deal with different fan 'behaviours' (Hedlund, 2014), the three items were used as single
357 measures to better understand the role of fan identity in each 'doing behaviour' and 'talking
358 behaviour' (Söderlund, 2006). For example, a fan may be willing to recommend team games
359 to others but have no plans to attend live games or to purchase team merchandise. The use of
360 single items as outcome variables may also favour researchers and managers, and suffices
361 when the items have good reliability (Kwon & Trail, 2005). Furthermore, Bergkvist and
362 Rossiter (2007) demonstrated that single-item measures are as valid as multi-item measures
363 when testing predictive validity. This procedure has been successfully implemented in prior
364 marketing studies testing behavioural intentions (e.g., Arnold & Reynolds, 2009; Tsiros &
365 Mittal, 2000). These items were also measured on a 10-point scale, but ranging from 'Not
366 Likely at All' (1) to 'Extremely Likely' (10). For descriptive purposes, demographic and
367 consumption data were also collected.

368 Next, a panel of four sport management researchers from different universities and
369 countries conducted a content analysis of the items. All of them received information about
370 the purpose of the study, data collection procedures, a description of each construct and the
371 list of proposed items. Through a discussion and reconciliation process, minor wording
372 changes were proposed and agreed upon for four of the items. A translation and subsequent
373 back translation process was undertaken to ensure the accuracy of the scale items (Banville,
374 Desrosiers, & Genet-Volet, 2000). The survey instrument was first translated into Portuguese
375 by one of the authors. To test the equivalence between the original and the Portuguese
376 instrument, back translation into English was carried out by two other natives of Portugal who
377 are academics and fluent in English. A scholar of English literature, with vast experience in
378 translations in both academic and business environments, verified the accuracy of the

379 translation. The comparison of the two versions led to the conclusion that the instruments
380 were equivalent.

381 **Pilot study**

382 To establish the reliability of the scales, the proposed items for power, urgency,
383 external legitimacy, internal legitimacy, and behavioural intentions were tested in a pilot
384 study. Data were collected through an online survey that was promoted to users of Portugal's
385 most popular sports website (A Bola, 2015). While this type of sampling may limit
386 representativeness, the option for collecting data online was based on the advantages and
387 logistical constraints highlighted in prior studies (e.g., Bech & Kristensen, 2009; Wright,
388 2005). These include higher response rates, reduced overall costs, and improved aesthetic and
389 design capabilities. A banner was activated on the website inviting visitors to access the
390 online survey. To avoid repeat participants, the IP address of each respondent was recorded
391 and used to deny repeat access after the initial submission.

392 The survey was available for two days, allowing 349 people to participate. Participants
393 were excluded if they were under 16 years old, submitted incomplete surveys or provided ten
394 or more consecutive answers ranked on the same scale number. After these data screening
395 procedures, 200 surveys were deemed usable, providing an effective completion rate of
396 57.3%. The age of the respondents ranged from 16 to 70 years ($M = 24.9$ years), and about
397 one-third (36.5%) were in the 20-29 age range. The majority of the respondents were males
398 (92.7%), and about half had finished the high school degree (50.5%). Almost half of the
399 participants (44.8%) were members of the team's "official" fan club, where they paid a
400 monthly or annual fee. The average length of their membership in the "official" fan club was
401 12.2 years. About one-fifth of the respondents were season ticket holders (20.9%), and they
402 had each been buying season tickets for about seven years.

403 The psychometric properties of the items were assessed through an examination of the
404 skewness, kurtosis, and internal consistency using IBM SPSS 22.0. All skewness values were
405 less than 3.0. However, the kurtosis value for one power item was above the threshold of 7.0
406 (Kline, 2005). That item was consequently removed from the analysis. The item-to-total
407 correlations (ITTC) for all items capturing fan identity were greater than the recommended
408 cut-off point of .50 (Zaichkowsky, 1985). In addition, the Cronbach's alpha coefficients were
409 all above .70, indicating that all constructs to measure fan identity were internally consistent.
410 Thus, the final version of the survey included a total of 18 items, with three items representing
411 power, four items each for urgency, external legitimacy and internal legitimacy, plus the three
412 individual items capturing behavioural intentions.

413 **Main study**

414 For the main study, participants were again recruited from the A Bola website. Data
415 were collected during a five-day period and a total of 908 individuals started the survey. The
416 data screening procedures from the pilot test were again used. In addition, an examination of
417 the IP addresses was also conducted to avoid repeat participants from the pilot test. As a
418 result, 532 completed surveys were deemed usable for data analysis for an effective
419 completion rate of 58.6%. Respondents were fans from 11 of the 18 teams from the LPFP.
420 Ages ranged from 16 to 72 years ($M=28.0$), with almost two-thirds being less than 30 years-
421 old (60.1%). The sample was mainly male (95.4%). In terms of education level, 53.1% had a
422 college or post-graduate degree. More than half of the participants were members of the
423 "official" fan club (58.5%), and of those, 53.6% voted in the last board elections. The average
424 length of respondents' membership in the "official" fan club was 13.4 years. Almost one-third
425 of the participants were season ticket holders (32.5%) and like the pilot study, had been so for
426 about seven years. On average, participants attended 12 live games (including home and
427 away) and watched 23 games of their team on TV over the course of the season. Regarding

428 team merchandise consumption, participants reported that during the current season, they
429 spent an average €64.4 on themselves and €29.5 on others. In the previous season, they
430 reported spending about €61.3 on themselves and €27.8 on others.

431 The data were submitted to a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) using IBM AMOS
432 22.0. The fit of the data to the model was examined using the ratio of chi-square (χ^2) to its
433 degrees of freedom, Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), comparative-of-fit-index (CFI), goodness-of-
434 fit index (GFI), and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA). Internal consistency
435 of the constructs was measured through composite reliability (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988;
436 Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2009). Convergent validity was evaluated through the
437 average variance extracted (AVE). Discriminant validity was assessed through the
438 correlations coefficients and AVE tests of discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981;
439 Kline, 2005; Marôco, 2010). Following the identification of reliable and valid items to
440 measure power, urgency external legitimacy and internal legitimacy through CFA, a structural
441 equation model examined the effects of the model on fans' behavioural intentions towards
442 their teams. The significance of the structural weights was evaluated using the Z tests
443 produced by AMOS and statistical significance was assumed at a .05 level.

444

445 **Results**

446 **Assessment of fan identity**

447 The fan identity construct is composed of the four primary dimensions of power,
448 urgency, external legitimacy and internal legitimacy. For the measurement model, fit indices,
449 standardised loadings (Hair et al., 2009; Kline, 2005), the pattern of standardised residual
450 correlation values, modification indices (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988; Kline, 2005), and item-
451 level theoretical rationale (Kline, 2005; Marôco, 2010; Thompson, 2004) were considered.

452 All 15 items were subsequently retained. Construct validity was evaluated by comparing the
453 first-order measurement model with a second-order measurement model.

454 The results of the CFA for the first-order measurement model indicated an acceptable
455 fit to the data [$\chi^2(80)=284.73$ ($p<.001$), $\chi^2/df = 3.56$, TLI = .95, CFI = .96, GFI = .93,
456 RMSEA = .07 (CI = .061 - .078)]. Although the χ^2 was significant and its ratio to the degrees
457 of freedom was above the 3.0 criterion (Kline, 2005), the χ^2 is known to be sensitive to sample
458 size (Hair et al., 2009) so considering other fit indices is important. The TLI, CFI and GFI
459 were all greater than the recommended .90 criterion for good fit (Hair et al, 2009). In addition,
460 the RMSEA was below the .08 criterion for acceptable fit (Byrne, 2000).

461 [Insert Table 1 around here]

462 As shown in Table 1, all items had factor loadings ranging from .65 to .95, while the
463 z-values ranged from 16.14 to 29.07. These results indicate that each item loaded significantly
464 on its respective construct (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). The composite reliability ranged
465 from .85 to .91 indicating the constructs were internally consistent (Hair et al., 2009).

466 Evidence of convergent validity was found because the AVE values ranged from .59 to .73,
467 all greater than the .50 threshold (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The correlation matrix, AVE
468 values and squared correlations are reported in Table 2. The squared correlations ranged from
469 .10 to .70. With the exception of power and external legitimacy ($\phi = .70$) and urgency and
470 external legitimacy ($\phi = .59$), the AVE values for the other constructs were greater than the
471 squared correlations between these constructs and any other. Still, as displayed in Table 2,
472 these two correlation coefficients were lower than the suggested criterion of .85 (Kline, 2005).

473 Additional support for discriminant validity was established by comparing the χ^2 statistics
474 when the correlation between the two constructs was free versus constrained to one
475 (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). There was a statistically significant decrease in the χ^2 value
476 when the correlation was free between power and external legitimacy ($\Delta\chi^2 = 121.46$; $\Delta df = 1$;

477 $p < .01$) and between urgency and external legitimacy ($\Delta\chi^2 = 229.57$; $\Delta df = 1$; $p < .01$). Thus,
478 there was evidence supporting discriminant validity among the dimensions.

479 [Insert Table 2 around here]

480 The fit indices for the second-order measurement model also indicated an acceptable
481 fit to the data [$\chi^2(82)=317.09$ ($p<.001$), $\chi^2/df = 3.86$, TLI = .95, CFI = .96, GFI = .92,
482 RMSEA = .07 (CI = .065 - .082)], but the values demonstrated a worse fit than for the first-
483 order measurement model. In these circumstances, it is recommended to select the model with
484 the lowest Akaike Information Criterion (AIC) and Expected Cross-Validation Index (ECVI)
485 values when examining competing models for the same data (Fassnacht & Koese, 2006;
486 Marôco, 2010). The inspection of AIC and ECVI for the first-order measurement model
487 (AIC=364.71; ECVI=.69) and the second-order measurement model (AIC=393.09;
488 ECVI=.74) indicates a better fit of the former. Based on this evidence, the first-order
489 measurement model was deemed more appropriate for further analysis.

490 **Fan identity and Behavioural Intentions**

491 The higher the salience of an identity, the greater the probability of behavioural
492 choices consistent with the expectations attached to the identity (Stryker & Burke, 2000). The
493 importance of a role identity as a fan of a particular team tends to lead to behavioural
494 intentions towards that team (Trail et al., 2005; Trail et al., 2017). As such, a structural
495 equation model tested the extent to which the proposed fan identity attributes could explain
496 the variance in the intentions to attend more team games, purchase merchandise and
497 recommend team games to others. The goodness-of-fit indices computed to assess the
498 measurement model [$\chi^2(113)=367.55$ ($p<.001$), $\chi^2/df = 3.25$, TLI = .95, CFI = .96, GFI = .93,
499 RMSEA = .07 (CI = .058 - .073)] and the structural model [$\chi^2(116)=570.15$ ($p<.001$), $\chi^2/df =$
500 4.92, TLI = .91, CFI = .93, GFI = .89, RMSEA = .09 (CI = .079 - .093)] indicated an
501 acceptable fit to the data. The skewness and kurtosis values for the three behavioural

502 intentions measures were lower than 3.0 and 7.0, respectively. The correlations between these
503 variables and the fan identity constructs were all significant and lower than the criterion of .85
504 (Kline, 2005), while the mean values for each behavioural intention were above 7.0 (see
505 appendix) suggesting the importance of these measures for participants.

506 The path coefficients for the structural model are illustrated in Figure 1. Power had a
507 significant positive effect on both the intention to attend more games of the team ($\beta = .21$, $p <$
508 $.05$) and to purchase team merchandise ($\beta = .21$, $p < .05$), but was not significant in explaining
509 the variance in the intention to recommend team games to other people ($p > .05$). The path
510 coefficients for urgency were not significant in explaining the variance for any of the three
511 behavioural intention measures ($p > .05$). Similarly, the relationships between external
512 legitimacy and the three measures of behavioural intentions were not significant ($p > .05$). In
513 turn, internal legitimacy had a significant positive relationship with the intention to attend
514 more team games ($\beta = .56$, $p < .001$), to purchase team merchandise ($\beta = .46$, $p < .001$), as
515 well as to recommend team games to other people ($\beta = .51$, $p < .001$). Altogether, the fan
516 identity dimensions accounted for approximately 38% of the variance in the intentions to
517 attend more team games ($R^2 = .38$), 40% of the intentions to purchase team merchandise ($R^2 =$
518 $.40$), and 43% regarding the intentions to recommend team games to other people ($R^2 = .43$).

519 [Insert Figure 1 around here]

520

521 Discussion

522 The purpose of this study was to explore different attributes of fan identity by linking
523 domains derived from stakeholder theory (Mitchell et al., 1997) and identity theory (Trail et
524 al., 2005). In doing so, this study also aimed to examine the role of fan identity attributes for
525 explaining the variance in behavioural intentions towards the team. Considering that prior
526 sport fan research has not provided a clear conceptualisation of fan identity, this study

527 represents an important step in clarifying the fan identity concept and its importance in the
528 development of enduring relationships between sport fans and their teams.

529 The current study embodies a first exploration of fan identity as a multidimensional
530 construct, and a first attempt to tie stakeholder theory and fan identity theory together. Sport
531 fans invest time, money and energy in supporting their teams through different channels
532 (Dalakas & Melacon, 2012) and evidence suggest that more and more people are becoming
533 fans (Laverie & Arnett, 2000). For example, the aggregate annual revenue of the top 20
534 European football teams in the 2015/16 season was estimated to surpass €7 billion, with €8
535 billion expected in 2016/17 (Deloitte, 2016). Notwithstanding, while previous research
536 highlights the pivotal role of fans as stakeholders of sport organisations (e.g., Senaux, 2008),
537 little is known about how individuals perceive their role of being fans of a team. Evidence
538 emerged in this study suggesting the appropriateness of the proposed multidimensional
539 construct of fan identity, given the reasonable psychometric properties of the attributes of
540 power, urgency, external legitimacy and internal legitimacy. Neville et al. (2011) suggested
541 that it is important to understand stakeholder attributes in more normative ways. Considering
542 each attribute in binary terms (i.e., present or absent) is limiting as it fails to capture the
543 complexity of fans' linkages with their teams. Thus, the continuous measures used in this
544 study allow for a more nuanced understanding of how a person sees him/herself in the role of
545 fan of the team.

546 Empirical evidence that power, urgency, external legitimacy and internal legitimacy
547 are distinct from one another has emerged, meeting an articulated need in the literature
548 (Currie et al., 2009; Neville et al., 2011). Nevertheless, it is worth noting that the correlations
549 between power, urgency and external legitimacy were high (see Table 2). This is consistent
550 with the idea that urgency is characterized by the willingness to exercise power (Eesley and
551 Lenox, 2006), and that potential to exercise power underpins the granting of pragmatic

552 legitimacy (Neville et al., 2011). It is also important to note that it was the first time some of
553 the items were tested with sport fans. For example, although the literature suggests that fans’
554 urgency is underpinned by time sensitivity and criticality of claim (Senaux, 2008), one may
555 argue that the items used in this study lack a clear indication of the second (i.e., criticality of
556 the claim), suggesting its inclusion in future studies. Furthermore, because a role identity must
557 be socially recognised (Ervin & Striker, 2001), it is possible that perceived external
558 legitimacy requires fans to feel that other community members (in this study referred to as
559 ‘the club’) see them as legitimate fans.

560 Although the word ‘club’ is appropriate within the European football setting, items in
561 future studies could directly refer to ‘other members of the community’ to better capture the
562 meaning of external legitimacy, its relationships with the other three attributes and the impact
563 on future behaviours. Increased competition and financial pressures behove sport managers to
564 find new ways to develop and nurture sustainable relationships with fans to boost both
565 financial and non-financial outcomes (Esteve et al., 2011). Through examining fans’
566 perceived levels of power, urgency, external legitimacy and internal legitimacy, this research
567 provides academics and practitioners with a novel approach to better understand the meaning
568 fans attach to their role identity, an outcome that may facilitate more customized approaches
569 to strengthening linkages.

570 Even though previous studies have often referred to team identity and fan identity
571 interchangeably (e.g., Agha & Tyler, 2017; Gwinner & Swanson, 2003), we follow Lock and
572 Heere’s (2017) suggestion and conceptually differentiate these concepts by assuming different
573 theoretical backgrounds and associated meanings. As noted by Lock, Funk, Doyle and
574 McDonald (2014), team identification primarily refers to the psychological connection with a
575 team and the emotional value a fan attaches to team support. It has its roots in social identity
576 theory (Tajfel, 1981) and focus on category-based identities (i.e., teams) (Dimmock et al.,

577 2005). On the other hand, fan identity should be mainly grounded in identity theory (Stryker
578 & Burke, 2000) as it is focused on a role-based identity (Trail et al., 2017). A role identity
579 represents the characteristics attributed to oneself within a social role (Wood & Roberts,
580 2006) such as being a fan of the team. We then argue that stakeholder theory (Mitchell et al.,
581 1997) is important to complement the conceptualisation of fan identity due to its contribution
582 for understanding the meaning fans attach to their role identity.

583 While the concept of team identification has been a cornerstone of the fandom
584 literature for some time (e.g., Dimmock et al., 2005; Lock & Funk, 2016), agreement on how
585 best to measure fan identity has been elusive. By bridging identity theory with stakeholder
586 theory, this study represents a first attempt to conceptualise fan identity as a multidimensional
587 construct. Understanding fans' perspectives of how they relate with their favourite team is
588 paramount because fans are among the most influential stakeholders (McDonalds & Sherry,
589 2010). In this sense, the current fan identity model focusing on self-perceptions of power,
590 urgency, external legitimacy and internal legitimacy represents a step forward for advancing
591 the understanding of the importance of fans to sport organisations. This assumes particular
592 importance given that one's identity is a key aspect to understand role related behaviours
593 (Ervin & Stryker, 2001).

594 The results of the structural model suggest that a fan's role identity is important to
595 increase behavioural intentions towards the team (Trail et al., 2017). The current study
596 examined the effects of each unique attribute of fan identity. The results of the structural
597 model revealed that the fan identity attributes accounted for 38%, 40% and 43% of the
598 variance of intentions to attend more team games, purchase team merchandise and
599 recommend team games respectively. Even though Mitchell et al. (1997) have suggested that
600 all attributes of a stakeholder in relation to the focal organisation influence their actions, the
601 attributes of urgency and external legitimacy did not significantly explain the variance in any

602 of the three outcomes measured in this study. This may be related to the wording of the items
603 which did not directly capture criticality of the claim and recognition by other community
604 members, which may suggest the need for item rewording in future studies aiming to further
605 understand fan identity and its importance for sport organisations. On the other hand, internal
606 legitimacy was the strongest dimension explaining the variance in the three behavioural
607 intention measures, while power was significantly related to the intentions to attend more
608 games and purchase merchandise. These findings support the notion that sport can foster
609 identification (Peachey & Bruening, 2011), and suggest that the more one perceives
610 him/herself as being a legitimate fan of the team and capable of influencing the organisation,
611 the higher his/her intentions to act favourably. In this sense, professional sport teams should
612 consider investing in user-friendly social media platforms to promote two-way
613 communication and increase fans' sense of empowerment (Ahn, Hong, & Pederson, 2014).
614 The creation of new licenced kits (e.g., main and alternative jerseys) in a yearly basis
615 (Premier League, 2016), and the development of team brand extensions (Walsh & Ross,
616 2010) beyond traditional items may also increase behavioural intentions, given that wearing
617 the logo and colours of the team may reflect the importance of being a fan of the team to an
618 individual (Apostolopoulou et al., 2012). These results also seem to support previous studies
619 highlighting the importance of membership programs for professional sport teams (e.g.,
620 Biscaia et al., 2016). That is, more than 50% of the participants of this study were members of
621 the "official" fan club and voted for the last board elections, which may give them the
622 perception of power over the club and legitimise their role as fans, and subsequently lead to
623 increased behavioural intentions towards the team.

624 While it is difficult to ascertain whether these results will apply to different sport
625 settings, the development of this multidimensional fan identity construct may serve to guide
626 more customised marketing strategies based on the meaning individuals attach to their roles

627 as fans. It is important to note that the importance of an identity orientation may be a product
628 of its accessibility and fit with a particular situation (Crane & Ruebottom, 2011), and that a
629 particular role identity may change substantially because of role-related experiences (Wood &
630 Roberts, 2006). This suggest that fans' perceptions of their power, urgency, external
631 legitimacy and internal legitimacy may vary over time meaning that sport managers should
632 monitor these variables and should not neglect any dimension as they may risk jeopardising
633 sustainable connections with fans. Given that team losses are an unavoidable component of
634 competitive sports that threaten the strength of fans' connections with teams, managers should
635 both monitor and facilitate the maintenance of strong fan identities (Agha & Tyler, 2017). An
636 understanding of how each attribute of fan identity may vary over time could provide sport
637 managers with accurate perspectives on how to shape fan identity and subsequent reactions
638 toward the team.

639 Taken together, findings from this study indicate that the proposed model of fan
640 identity comprised of self-perceived levels of power, urgency, external legitimacy and internal
641 legitimacy represents a good starting point for understanding the concept of fan identity and
642 strengthen the relationships between fans and professional sport teams. As noted by García
643 and Welford (2015), it is important to go beyond mere patterns of consumption when
644 studying fans. Fans' increased perceptions of power and internal legitimacy seem to be
645 important for increasing behavioural intentions towards the team. For sport managers,
646 understanding the meaning fans attach to their role identity is essential for successful
647 management. In this sense, the results of the current study may represent a valuable
648 contribution towards promoting a stronger link between professional sport teams and their
649 fans.

650 **Limitations and future research**

651 As with any research, there are limitations in the current study that should be
652 considered when interpreting results. There is also the potential for future empirical analysis
653 in the context of sport fandom. First, this study only focuses on fans of one professional
654 league and may lack generalizability to other sport leagues with different cultural and
655 historical characteristics in which the relationship fan-team may be different. Thus, additional
656 samples of fans from different sport leagues and athletic levels should be drawn to further
657 investigate the appropriateness of the multidimensional fan identity construct. Second, data
658 were collected online and this may have influenced sample composition and
659 representativeness. Most participants were men less than 40 years old, which may not have
660 led to a broad representation of the individuals who follow sport teams. Previous studies
661 suggest that demographic characteristics such as gender are vital in understanding the
662 relationship between fans and teams (Trail, Fink, & Anderson, 2002). It is therefore
663 recommended to secure broader samples of sport fans using different data collection methods
664 (e.g., both on-line surveys and paper surveys). Also, sport fandom may be shaped by social
665 interactions with other fans (e.g., Heere, 2015; Katz & Heere, 2015) and other stakeholders
666 (Covell, 2005); thus, the inclusion of related variables in future studies may contribute to
667 better understand how fan identity attributes and subsequent behaviours are shaped. Future
668 research could also examine the role of fan identity on other outcomes such as participation in
669 fantasy games and gambling (Drayer, Shapiro, Dwyer, Morse, & White, 2010; Mahan III,
670 Drayer, & Sparvero, 2012) or processing of sport news (Potter & Keene, 2012) to provide
671 better insight on the decision-making processes associated with fan identity.

672 Another limitation and research opportunity is related to the fact that fan identity was
673 measured at a single moment in time (i.e., cross-sectional research) and perceptions of team
674 performance were not controlled. A longitudinal research design would provide valuable
675 insight into the enduring nature of fan identity. After all, identification is not stagnant (Katz &

676 Heere, 2016) and may depend on one's experiences (Wood & Roberts, 2006). Also, as noted
677 by Mitchell et al. (1997), the attributes of power, urgency and legitimacy are not fixed in time
678 nor are related perceptions. A team's performance often has ups and downs over a season, and
679 this may play a role on fan identity depending on when data is collected. To this end,
680 additional research could assess fan identity at different points in time over the course of the
681 season. Moreover, data could be collected from fans of both successful and unsuccessful
682 teams to better understand how team performance may be related to the salience of fan
683 identity to the *self*.

684 Further opportunities for future research may be focused on improving the dimensions
685 of fan identity and examining its linkages with other constructs. This study represented a first
686 attempt to explore fan identity as a multidimensional construct and therefore some attribute
687 definitions and associated items may require refinements. For example, items measuring
688 criticality of claim (urgency) and perceptions related to other community members (external
689 legitimacy) should be reconsidered to reflect the dimensions more accurately. This is likely to
690 both deepen our understanding of the fan identity construct and shed light on its role as an
691 antecedent. Furthermore, testing fan identity in a higher order structural framework may yield
692 further insights into its make-up and relationships with outcomes of interest.

693 In addition, it is important for professional sport teams to understand how fan
694 perceptions of power, urgency external legitimacy and internal legitimacy are formed and
695 how they might be influenced. Heere et al. (2011) note that individuals possess both a
696 personal and a social identity. Lock and Funk (2016) argue that identifying with a
697 superordinate group (i.e., team) that embodies values deemed central by a consumer (i.e., fan)
698 contributes to extend his/her self-image. While a conceptual distinction between team identity
699 and fan identity was provided in the current study, empirically examining the distinction
700 between these concepts and how they relate to each other would be an important endeavour

701 for future research. Furthermore, recent studies have suggested that sport spectatorship may
702 improve sport fans' well-being (Inoue, Berg, & Chelladurai, 2015; Inoue, Sato, Du, & Funk,
703 2017). To this end, a detailed understanding of how team identification (i.e., category-based)
704 relates with fan identity (i.e., role-based) and subsequent associated outcomes may be relevant
705 not just for a better understanding of the complexities that shape identification, but also for
706 expanding knowledge on how to increase fans' well-being.

707 In summary, this study represents an initial effort to understand how to measure fan
708 identity, and how each attribute influences behavioural intentions towards the team. Grounded
709 on identity theory and stakeholder theory, a multidimensional construct of fan identity
710 including power, urgency, external legitimacy and external legitimacy was empirically tested
711 and revealed acceptable psychometric properties. The results also indicate that the fan identity
712 construct contributes to understand fans' intentions to attend more team games, recommend
713 them to others and purchase team merchandise. The proposed fan identity construct inherently
714 serves as a catalyst for future research that will increase our knowledge of sport fans, while
715 practitioners can use this multidimensional measure to develop better engagement tactics with
716 an existing fan base.

717

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- 970

971 **Table 1.** Psychometric properties of the variables used in the study to measure fan identity.

Constructs/items	Pilot study (n=200)		Main study (n=532)			
	ITTC	α	Loading	Z-value	CR	AVE
Power		.86			.86	.67
I can exert power within the club	.63		.73	18.55		
I can influence the club ^a	--		--	--		
I can impose my will to the club	.70		.83	22.76		
I can impact the direction of the club	.75		.89	25.20		
Urgency		.84			.85	.59
I exhibit urgency in my relationships with the club	.55		.65	16.14		
I urgently communicate my concerns to the club	.66		.85	23.14		
I express my opinion to the club without delay	.74		.74	19.09		
I communicate my requests to the club promptly	.72		.81	21.75		
External Legitimacy		.88			.90	.70
My claims are viewed by the club as legitimate	.69		.77	20.48		
My club considers me a legitimate stakeholder	.71		.79	21.22		
My concerns are viewed by the club as appropriate	.80		.88	25.47		
The club listens to me when I express my opinion	.78		.91	26.61		
Internal Legitimacy		.91			.91	.73
I consider myself to be a real fan of my team	.78		.82	22.84		
I would experience a loss if I had to stop being a fan of my team	.82		.89	25.74		
Being a fan of my team is very important to me	.89		.95	29.07		
I want others to know that I am a fan of my team	.71		.74	19.43		

972 *Notes.* ITTC=Item-to-total correlation; CR=Composite reliability; AVE=Average Variance Extracted; ^(a) Item
973 eliminated after the scale purification procedures of the pilot test.
974 Model fit (main study): $\chi^2(80)=284.73$ ($p<.001$), $\chi^2/df=3.56$, TLI=.96, CFI=.95, GFI=.93, RMSEA=.07 (CI=.061-.078).
975

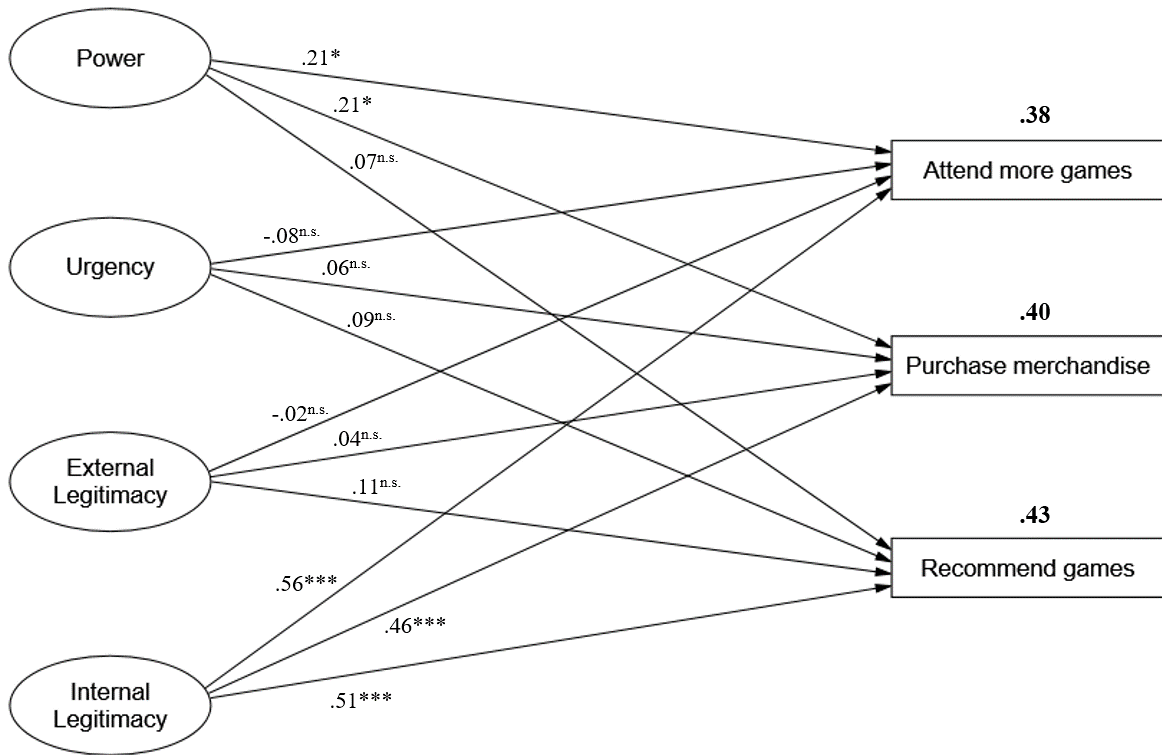
976 **Table 2.** Correlation matrix, AVE values and squared correlations among constructs.

	AVE	Power	Urgency	External Legitimacy	Internal Legitimacy
		.67	.59	.70	.73
Power	.67	1.00	.57	.70	.10
Urgency	.59	.76**	1.00	.59	.24
External Legitimacy	.70	.84**	.77**	1.00	.14
Internal Legitimacy	.73	.32**	.49**	.37**	1.00

977 *Notes:* ** p<.01; Correlations are reported in the lower triangle. Squared correlations are depicted in the upper
 978 triangle.

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Figure 1. Standardised estimates of the structural model.

Model fit: $\chi^2(75)=399.90$ ($p<.001$), $\chi^2/df=5.33$, TLI=.92, CFI=.94, GFI=.95, RMSEA=.09 (CI=.082-.092).

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

986 **Appendix.** Descriptive statistics, CFA item statistics and correlation matrix of the variables used in the structural
 987 model.

Variables	M (SD)	Loading	CR
<i>Power</i>	3.47 (2.50)		.86
I can exert power within the club		.73	
I can influence the club ^a		--	
I can impose my will to the club		.83	
I can impact the direction of the club		.89	
<i>Urgency</i>	4.76 (2.51)		.85
I exhibit urgency in my relationships with the club		.65	
I urgently communicate my concerns to the club		.85	
I express my opinion to the club without delay		.74	
I communicate my requests to the club promptly		.81	
<i>External Legitimacy</i>	4.56 (2.50)		.90
My claims are viewed by the club as legitimate		.77	
My club considers me a legitimate stakeholder		.79	
My concerns are viewed by the club as appropriate		.88	
The club listens to me when I express my opinion		.91	
<i>Internal Legitimacy</i>	8.95 (1.77)		.91
I consider myself to be a real fan of my team		.82	
I would experience a loss if I had to stop being a fan of my team		.89	
Being a fan of my team is very important to me		.95	
I want others to know that I am a fan of my team		.74	
<i>Behavioural intentions ^b</i>			
The probability to attend more games of my team	8.05 (2.69)	1.00	--
The likelihood to purchase merchandise of my team	7.28 (2.87)	1.00	--
The likelihood to recommend my team games to other people	8.30 (2.53)	1.00	--

	Correlation matrix						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Power	1.00						
2. Urgency	.76**	1.00					
3. External Legitimacy	.84**	.77**	1.00				
4. Internal Legitimacy	.32**	.50**	.38**	1.00			
5. Attend more games	.32**	.36**	.33**	.57**	1.00		
6. Purchase merchandise	.43**	.48**	.44**	.54**	.64**	1.00	
7. Recommend games	.36**	.48**	.42**	.59**	.58**	.59**	1.00

988 *Notes:* ** p<.01; (a) Item eliminated after the scale purification procedures of the pilot test; (b) Behavioural
 989 Intentions were measured with three single items.

990