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Social anthropology of football fan culture: Activism, breakaway clubs, and commercialisation

vorgelegt von

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List of Abbreviations

CAS   Court of Arbitration for Sport

DFB   Deutscher Fußball Bund

DFL   Deutsche Fußball Liga

ESL   European Super League

EU   European Union

FCUM   Football Club United of Manchester

HFC   Hamburger Fußball Club

HSV   Hamburger Sport Verein

PRC   Peoples Republic of China

SGBs   Sport Governance Bodies

UEFA   Union of European Football Associations

WADA   World Anti-Doping Agency

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1. Introduction

In spring 2021, 12 major European football clubs announced to establish the so-called European Super League (ESL). The league would break away from UEFA's cup tournaments and establish a rival competition. The ESL should be privately owned and promised larger income for the participating clubs. Sports federations, other clubs, some players, and some politicians promptly rejected the idea and announced potential sanctions. The most visible response was protest from football fans in numerous cities. Without Covid-19 restrictions, their response would have likely been even bigger. After 48 hours the six English clubs as well as those two from Milan withdrew their participation, assuring they had listened to the fans' response. It cannot be clarified whether the withdrawal was caused by fans' response or that of other stakeholders[1], but fans certainly played a role in it (Doidge et al., 2023; Meier et al., 2022; Welsh, 2023).

Furthermore, during the Covid-19 pandemic German football fans started a campaign named *Unser Fußball* [trans: our football] gathering signatures of 2,668 fan groups and 14,053 individual fans (Unser Fußball, n.d.) demanding changes in football's governance. As a response, the German Football League (DFL) created a task force to discuss the sport's future. The alliance *Zukunft Profifußball* [trans: The future of professional football] elaborated suggestions for the future of football governance in four working groups named *football as a public sport, integrity of competition, clubs as a democratic basis, and social responsibility* (Zukunft Profifußball, n.d.). The suggestions should be an inspiration for the DFL task force that includes fan representatives besides club representatives, players, politicians, journalists, and consultancies. The task forces discussed and elaborated suggestions for a more sustainable football governance. Fans had been disappointed by the results of the task force, but in 2023 the DFL announced to strengthen the 50+1 rule which was one key demand of fans in recent years (Sportschau, 2023). Similar to the ESL case fans' voices influenced the decision.

Both examples show that fans, or at least visible groups of fans, care about football governance and whish at least to have the possibility to participate in decision-making, which numerous

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[1] Stakeholder is an economic term describing a person or group influencing the destiny of an organisation (Freeman 1984). Parallel, the dissertation uses the term actors (Giddens 1984, 1990) for a person or groups as subject of reflexivity. Which term is used depends on whether it is more related to governance or reflexivity, although the transitions between both are fluid.

publications emphasise (e.g. Brandt et al., 2023; Doidge et al., 2020; García & Llopis-Goig, 2020; García & Welford, 2015; Numerato, 2018; Uhrich, 2021). Interestingly, dissatisfaction with football governance is higher among fans with a stronger emotional attachment to the sport (Gong et al., 2015), and football fans wish more participation as fans of music, movies or literature (Rose & Schäfer, 2010). Dissatisfied fans often criticise dynamics in football as *Modern Football*, which is an umbrella term summarising various transformations and phenomena including e.g. rising ticket prices, sponsors' increasing influence or security measures (Numerato, 2015b). An alternative term describing the business-related dynamics is commercialisation. There is a vast body of literature on the dynamics of commercialisation in football (Biscaia et al., 2018; Duke, 2002; Giulianotti, 2016; Giulianotti & Robertson, 2004; A. King, 2001; Millward, 2011; Morrow, 2003; Numerato & Giulianotti, 2018; Putra, 2019; Slack, 2004; Tinson et al., 2023; Weimar et al., 2022) and other sports (Næss, 2018; O'Brien & Slack, 1999; Slack & Amis, 2004). Andreff (2000) discussed weather commercialisation undermines sports values and Gammelsæter (2021) posed the question of whether the increasing commercialisation of sports could ultimately threaten its survival. Most scientific contributions conclude that these dynamics of commercialisation have negative consequences for fans. The most (potentially) negative effect for fans is a transformation of their role in sports (Winell et al., 2023) – the transformation of fans with a high emotional engagement and loyalty into costumers (García & Welford, 2015). Fans' demands for participating in sport governance is a contrary development to this transformation.

The phenomenon of commercialisation and its dynamics is not limited to football or sports, it also exists in other parts of society. From a sociological perspective, commercialisation belongs to a specific historical era, which continues until today and has been described as post- (Giulianotti, 2007), second (Beck, 1986), liquid (Bauman, 2000), or reflexive modernity (Beck et al., 1996). Beside definitory differences, the era is characterised by transformations on diverse levels, including technological changes, like new ways of transmitting information. On an economic and political level, the power of the national state decreased as international governance became more important. This dynamic has been characterised as globalisation, which is closely related to commercialisation. Baumann (2000) remarks that power has shifted to those who are globally mobile. On a social level, the most important change is the break-up of 'traditional' communities and a resulting individualism (Baumann, 2000). This includes the disruption of institutions like class or family, which already changed during the first modernity

(Beck, 1986). Bauman (2000) points out that the life span for social institutions, in general, is becoming shorter and, or as he calls it liquid. The erosion of institutions and reflexivity of individual or collective actors provoke new demands of political participation including so-called new social movements. These are usually characterised as single issue based and are often linked to lifestyle and leisure time (Giulianotti, 2007).

Football fan activism against commercialisation, like protests against the ESL or calls for better governance, exemplifies single-issue, leisure-focused movements. Cleland (2010) detected a change of fan behaviour in the UK towards greater activity post-1985. Ziesche (2017) dated back a change of fan behaviour in Germany towards more activity to 2012. That year German fans protested against the introduction of a new security concept (Brandt & Hertel, 2015). The emerging fan activism caused responses in scientific literature. Early scientific literature on fans focuses on hooliganism (Giulianotti & Grau, 2017; Heyde, 2018; Kotthaus, 2017; Winands, 2015), and deviant behaviour is still the most popular topic in German research on fans (Brandt, 2021). However, research on fan activism has established as one additional scientific trend.

Numerous publications on fan activism depict activism as a response of supporters who strive to safeguard the essence of their beloved sport from the adverse consequences of commercialisation. But the development is much more dynamic. Commercialisation changes the power relations between different stakeholders but it also transforms them. These transformations are relevant for sport governance. The recent examples of fan activism at the begin of this section emphasise the urgency of these dynamics. Internal transformations could change stakeholders' and relations to other stakeholders, as expressed in fan activism. They could cause, intended or unintended, a transformation of the whole system, and effect wider parts of society.

Therefore, this dissertation researches fans' reflexions on and reactions to commercialisation as a phenomenon of sport governance and social practise. It researches fans' reflexion and (potential) transformation of rivalries between fans, which was been a major characteristic of fans in past research (Armstrong & Giulianotti, 2001; Benkwitz & Molnar, 2012; Dmowski, 2013). It investigates fans' perceptions, attitudes, and practises towards commercialisation and their reflexions on sport governance, specifically at a breakaway club – a relatively new phenomenon of fan activism. The approach includes theoretical aspects of economic (mainly

governance), sociology and social anthropology. It is based on four case studies, with a focus on German fans, but also from Scotland and the Peoples Republic of China (PRC), which allows a more comparative approach. Thereby the dissertation aims to provide a better understanding of contemporary dynamics in sport governance, mainly related to commercialisation and football fans' social practices.

To enable these insights, a general understanding of commercialisation, including effects for each stakeholder is helpful. Furthermore, a theoretical understanding of reflexivity and its dynamics including fan activism is needed. Both will be provided in the following chapter. Afterwards, the methodological approach will be reflected in a separate chapter with a specific focus on the perceptions of the researcher prior to his research. This reflexion is especially needed as three studies follow an ethnographic research approach. The results of the four studies will be introduced separately and finally, the implications of fan-related sport governance will be discussed.

2. Commercialisation dynamics and fans' reflexivity

In the introduction, commercialisation is already described as a dynamic, changing power relations and provoking transformations of stakeholders in sports. It is a process or dynamic affecting ample parts of the society, including leisure activities (Spracklen, 2022) such as music (Kuppens & van der Pol, 2014), tourism (Cohen, 1988; Gnoth & Wang, 2015; Hinch & Higham, 2005), or professional, and amateur sports (Byers, 2018; Naglo, 2018; Naglo et al., 2020; Naglo & Porter, 2020; Slack, 2004).

Related to sports, different definitions of commercialisation exist, which could be divided into two types. A first cluster of definitions understands commercialisation as a process of transforming something, which was not commercialised before, into a good, which can be sold for profit (Heinemann, 1992; Horch, 2014; Pöttinger, 1989; Westerbeek & Smith, 2003). One example from sports is that spectators need to pay entrance fees to watch sport activities. This transformation provokes a fundamental change in sports, which enables professionalism (Gerrard, 2004; Robinson, 2010). This process has already been described as commodification (Cohen, 1988; Moor, 2007), a process Karl Marx (1983/1867) already described for goods, and e.g. Horkheimer and Adorno (2006) used for music. Slack (2004) remarked that sport has always been related to business. Therefore, this understanding of commercialisation seems to

be imprecise to describe transformations in sports in recent decades. That's why some scientists use another definition.

The second cluster are definitions describe changes in the already commodified sports. They describe a modification towards a prioritisation of profit-making and changes in resource allocations towards greater use of (neoliberal) market mechanisms (Clausen et al., 2018; Dubal, 2010; Ma & Kurscheidt, 2022; Winell et al., 2023). The definition refers to a variety of changes in sports during recent decades, which are related towards each other, and affect sport governance in many ways. This definition could include aspects of the first set of definitions – the commodification of some aspects of sports, like selling stadium names. Gerrard (2004) developed a model on sports transformation from a historical non-commercial sport into commercial sport. The third and last step of the model is called commercialisation – in line with the second cluster of definitions. The period is characterised by the growing influence of broadcasting companies (mostly pay TV), and teams' orientation became to generate profit not success. The biggest clubs transform into transnational enterprises with international brands, acting in numerous countries to gain attention and revenues from media, sponsors, and spectators (Giulianotti & Robertson, 2004). They diversify their income (Moor, 2007) and their turnover increased (Gońda, 2013), but in football most clubs did not make profit, as they pass their revenues to players, caused by an arms race for the most promising talents (Barajas & Rodríguez, 2010). Teams and club ownership structures changed towards market mechanisms. The first British club listed at the stock exchange was Tottenham Hotspur from London in 1983 (Williams & Hopkins, 2011). In Germany, clubs are allowed to spin off their professional teams to commercial enterprises since 1998 (Ward & Hines, 2017). In Great Britain, many clubs have international owners, including multi club ownership, meaning two or more clubs, in different leagues, are owned by a company or person (Pastore, 2018). Some owners control the club to achieve economic or political benefits outside the sport (Bresemann & Duttler, 2017; Chadwick et al., 2022). As a result, inequalities, especially on the national level rise, between the most successful and other clubs, reducing the game's uncertainty of outcome (Andreff, 2000; Numerato & Giulianotti, 2018).

The described processes already show that commercialisation needs to be understood as a dynamic in sports governance. Manifold definitions of governance exist, as the concept has its roots in different scientific disciplines mainly economics and social sciences (mostly political

science), and additional in development aid (Möltgen-Sicking & Winter, 2019). In the context of this dissertation governance means a mode of decision-making, defining common goals, and guidance (Lam, 2014). Different to older approaches, which rather focus on central leadership e.g. of government, no central leading body exist. Instead, governance means a network of interdependent stakeholders, which influence decisions. This process mostly follows institutionalised rules and structures, which could be formal or informal (Goodwin & Grix, 2011). In the context of this dissertation governance means an analytic concept, for researching practises in sports. It is not a normative concept in the meaning of good governance. Governance in the following description is understood systemic, meaning the whole network of sports stakeholders. Different to that understanding study three in the appendix research governance of a single organisation, in this case a single football club. Both research levels (systemic and organisational) exist parallel, and are linked towards each other, as the organisational governance is part of the general governance (exit), and therefore organisations part of general dynamics like commercialisation.

Commercialisation in football has resulted in the establishment of a global labour market (Numerato & Giulianotti, 2018), especially after the so-called Bosman rule in 1995, and related deregulation of the market. In recent decades, top leagues import players internationally and regions at the global periphery trying to export them (Bond et al., 2018; Giulianotti, 2007; Giulianotti & Robertson, 2004). In Europe's top leagues clubs have only a few national or even regional players (Morrow, 2003). Some, especially talented players benefit from the mobility, as they could offer their work globally to the best-paying club. Their wages increased in recent years (Gerrard, 2004) – including players earning a multiple a day as some supporters earn in a year (Morrow, 2003). The example of Kylian Mbappé at Paris Saint-Germain shows that these players use their emerging power beyond wage negotiations, as Mbappé also influences decisions on hiring employers or days off (Menuge, 2023). Less skilled players do not financially benefit in the same way. The global player market increases the pressure, as they could easily be replaced if they do not perform, which increases the probability of doping or other unfair methods (Andreff, 2000).

The power of associations, as one main sport's governing body (SGB), is decreasing during commercialisation, especially in relation to big clubs. Clubs could threaten to create competitions outside association's structures (Forster, 2006; N. King, 2017), as happened in the ESL case. In general, sports became deregulated (Gerrard, 2004), as federations and

associations needed to organise around marketing and selling of their sport to satisfy teams' demands (Doidge et al., 2020; N. King, 2017; Millward, 2011). Commercialisation of associations means professionalisation – metaphorically they transform from volunteers meeting at the kitchen table to professionals working in a headquarter (Kikulis et al., 1992; Mittag & Nieland, 2016). This process includes an increasing number of employees, bureaucracy, a diversification of revenues and a change in the relationship towards its members, who became close to consumers (Clausen et al., 2018; Croci & Forster, 2004; Enjolras, 2002; Hoye et al., 2020). On national levels transformations towards clubs' independence happen, e.g. by the formation of the Premier League 1992, or the DFL in 2001. In both cases, clubs gain more influence on leagues organisation and marketing, while the association loses influence (Boillat et al., 2014). Besides associations, SGBs also include state or European authorities (Mittag, 2020), and translational organisations like, World Anti Doping Agency (WADA) or Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS). In general, SGBs are the organisations that could limit or moderate the influence of commercialisation (Forster, 2006). For example, on the continental level the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) implemented so called financial fair play rules determining club's revenues. On the national level the German 50+1 rule limits takeovers by investors. Or authorities could directly intervein as Boris Johnson did in the ESL case. State authorities mainly became active due to governance failure related to commercialisation (Meier & García, 2021). Sports fans often demand further and proactive regulation of commercialisation's dynamics (Chang & Kwak, 2021).

Fans are one important stakeholder in football (Senaux, 2008; Winskowski, 2022) and a driver of commercialisation, as they buy tickets, merchandise, or broadcasting. They attract further spectators and are the target of sponsoring (Anagnostopoulos, 2011; Biscaia et al., 2018). Meanwhile, numerous negative consequences for fans occur by commercialisation (Winell et al., 2023), including developments like increasing ticket prices (Gońda, 2013; Putra, 2019; Webber, 2017) or splitting of the matchday including non-traditional kick-off times, which are detrimental for fans attending the stadium (Adam, 2016; Bresemann & Duttler, 2017; Numerato, 2015b). These developments affect their practices of following football directly. Displaying sponsoring, including stadium names or jerseys, affects their emotional relationship (Adam, 2016; Boronczyk & Zarins, 2020; Chang & Kwak, 2021; Slack & Amis, 2004). Additionally, two developments decreased fans' power in football's system. While in the past, entrance fees paid by people attending the stadium were the main income of clubs, nowadays

broadcasting revenues guarantee multiple revenues. This process implicates a shift of power towards broadcasting stations and TV spectators (Morrow, 2003). Meanwhile, the structure of fans changes in some locations, including global fans, which replace so-called traditional fans (Numerato & Giulianotti, 2018). In general, the role of supporters changed, and they were turned into customers, while they still feel like clubs' moral owners (Giulianotti, 2005; Hognestad, 2015; Numerato, 2018; Porter, 2014). *Table 1* provides a short summary of the main consequences of commercialisation for stakeholders. It also shows that fans are limited in moderating sports commercialisation directly.

Tab. 1. *Consequences of commercialisation for four stakeholders in sports*

Stakeholder	Main transformation	Power	Capability to limit commercialisation
Player	increased mobility/ wages	increased	not intended
Teams	professionalisation, spin-offs	Same (increased vs SGBs, decreased vs player)	minor
SGBs	Professionalisation	decreased	set rules
Fans	became customers	decreased	minor

In this dissertation, commercialisation is understood second interpretation of commercialisation. It has become "an indelible driving force" in sports (Chang & Kwak, 2021, p. 17), causing dynamics which are summarised in *Table 1* and are described as a paradox (Smith and Stewart, 2013, 53) or a risk for the future of sports and its values (Andreff, 2000; Gammelsæter, 2021; Gammelsæter & Loland, 2023). Commercialisation influences the power relation between altered stakeholders. These dynamics go along with general transformation of society and provoke transformative dynamics of supporters turning them "from passive to active" (Cleland, 2010).

Activism

Different approaches on researching active fans and their protests exist. In the early 2010s, social scientists publish first contributions, mainly focusing on single cases studies. Some of them describe fans as a social movement (Doidge, 2015; Millward, 2011; Millward & Poulton, 2014; Testa, 2009). Social movements are collective actors, uniting for a common goal, which

is to induce, prevent or withdraw a social transformation. Social movements are understood as timely limited, although some movement successfully institutionalised (Mittag & Stadtland, 2014). Recent studies still use the term social movement for fans engagement (e.g. Perasović & Mustapić, 2017; Turner 2021; Hill et al. 2018). While, Perasović & Mustapić (2017) reflect the scientific history of emerging fan movement, Tuner (2021) and Hill et al. (2018) uses network theories as background of their research. Tuner (2021) applied relational sociology following Crossley (2011), while Hill et al. (2018) analyse fans based on Castells (2015) network theory. In the late 2010s, first comparative studies on fan protest occur (Brandt et al., 2017; Cleland et al., 2018; Doidge et al, 2020; García & Zheng, 2017; Numerato, 2018). Parallel, a terminological shift happens, moving from social movements to fan activism. Fan activism means that an already existing fan community started civic engagement. This could be related to their fan object, or beyond – meaning social and political issues. Different to social movements the degree of institutionalisation is irrelevant for fan activism (Jenkins 2012). By using the term fan activism, the scope of related activities became larger, as they do not directly need to strive for or against a social transformation. For example, fans gathering aid for people in need belong to activism but not necessary to social movements (Brandt et al. 2023).

Numerato (2018) transfers Beck's (1986) and Giddens' (1984; 1990) concepts of reflexivity to fan activism. In this concept reflexivity is related to social practises and social transformation. In general, Numerato (2018) follows the assumption of Giddens (1984; 1990), that actors (individual or collective) can intervene in the social world through their social practises. They contribute to the reproduction of social structures or cause their transformations. In both cases, the intervention can be intended or unintended. The potential for intervention is related to people's activities (Giddens, 1984). The power, as a transformative capacity, of an actor depends on their capabilities. Actors with more capabilities and more resources (command on objects or actors) have bigger potential transformative capacity than actors with few resources but those still have some power. In that context, it needs to be mentioned that actions depend on knowledge additional to capabilities. If knowledge is related to actions Giddens called it knowability, which he defines as "[e]verything which actors know (believe) about the circumstances of their action and that of others, drawn upon in the production and reproduction of that action, including tacit as well as discursively available knowledge" (Giddens, 1984, p. 414). Actors monitor their practices and their context – in other terms they subject it to a reflexive examination about them. Reflexivity means that "social practices are constantly

examined and reformed in the light of incoming information about those practices, thus constitutively altering their character" (Giddens, 1990, p. 38). Therefore, reflexivity can cause transformations by action. The potential of this transformation is influenced by knowability and capability – which meanwhile influence the reflexivity and are influenced by reflexivity as shown in *Figure 1*. Additionally, actors and their social practices are influenced by structures and institutions including their dynamics.
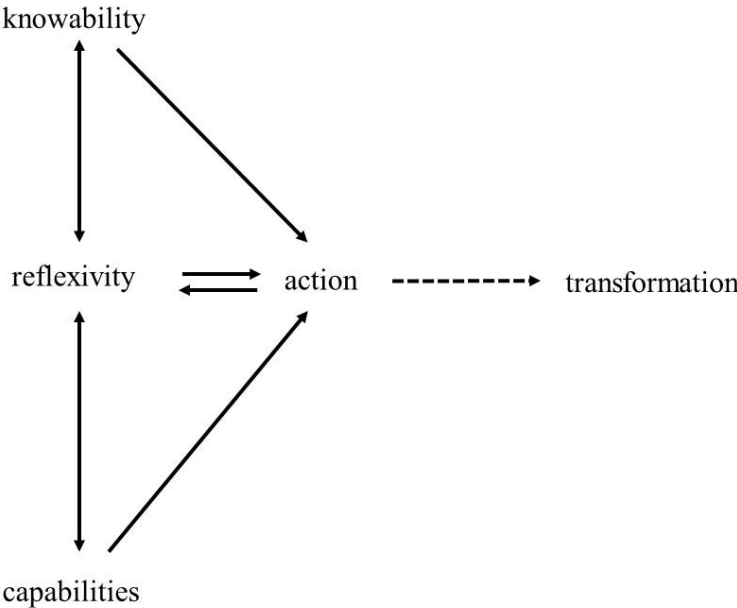

Fig. 1.   *The process of reflexivity (according to Giddens, 1984, 1990)*

As reflexive subjects, fans examine their relation to and activities in the football system. Fans' perspective is nostalgic and directed against authorities. Numerato (2018) locates the reflexive subjects in the middle-class, who are meanwhile part of the criticised change. Reflexive subjects can keep the reflexion for themselves, but they can also share it. In that case, reflexivity has the potential for subversive activities aiming to transform the system. The subversive potential of reflexion depends on its context. In post-modernity, reflexivity can also be directed against change with the aim of preserving something. Reflexion can cause unintended transformations, as these are integrated into macro contexts with their own dynamics. Processes of increasing commercialisation could also be the result of reflexions e.g. on a lack of competitive balance in

a league, which should be countered by increasing commercialisation. It is important to note that reflexivity is a dynamic process. It can also examine the reaction to the reflectivity, for example of authorities, or how the changed the relationship between the reflexive subject (fans) and the reflexive object (football's governance). Therefore, a closer look at the potential reflexive subject, the fans is necessary.

Fans are no monolithic group, that's why various typologies of fans exist (Weber et al., 2022), including typologies on diverging attitudes towards governance (García & Llopis-Goig, 2020). The most cited typology is that of Giulianotti (2002) based on fans investment in a club (modern vs traditional) and the extent to which the club plays a central role in shaping the individual's self-formation (hot vs cold). In the context of this dissertation, fans are understood as traditional fans, having a longer and mostly locally rooted identification with their club, which increases the potential for reflexivity and football related activism. These supporters see themselves as an important stakeholder in football, as the most stable and most emotional one (Hognestad, 2012). They reject to be customers, while the celebrity players have alienated from them (Dubal, 2010). They rather describe themselves as moral club owners because employees like players and managers, or even investors leave the club if other promising opportunities occur (Porter, 2014). Customers can change their club/brand as they like, while supporters, in Giulianotti's (2002) meaning, are loyal toward their specific club. This limits their ability to choose an exit and leave the club, and increases the option to response by activism, if they are dissatisfied (Giulianotti, 2005; Kiernan, 2017, Kaden et al. 2023).

Numerato (2018) listed eight issues causing concrete activism – including governance as a key aspect. In Germany governance-related issues had quantitatively been a major concern in fans displayed protest (Brandt et al., 2023). Besides reasons, tactics are a relevant parameter for fan activism (Cleland et al., 2018), which could also become an object of reflexions. Tactics are social practices fans choose to achieve transformations in football – strongly connected to capabilities. Many scientists (including Brown, 2007; Giulianotti, 2007; Porter, 2011) detect roots of fan activism in the emergence of fanzines, produced by fans independent from the club, sometimes including reflexions on football. Further activism usually occurs on one specific issue at one club. Transmitted via media (fanzines or sports media) fans become aware of activism at other clubs. Fans examine on similarities to developments at their own club and

other clubs. They show solidarity or could even establish networks and more official structures (Cleland et al., 2018; Numerato, 2018; Zheng & García, 2017).

Fan activism includes numerous tactics, which are also known from other social movements like stickers, graffiti, rallies, demonstrations, or direct actions related to the issue. Fans also use media, petitions, or appeals to provoke attention for their concern (Cleland et al., 2018). Fans could also boycott football, which means stopping following matches or attending matches in the stadium without support. The most common activism is to show banners sometimes combined with chants (Brandt & Hertel, 2015; Brandt et al., 2023; Cleland et al., 2018; Doidge et al., 2020; Perasović & Mustapić, 2018). But there are also tactics, which are more related to football governance, where fans try to establish alternatives and directly influence football's governance.

One of these alternative ways are supporter trusts, mainly known from Great Britain. Ward (2013, p.23) defines them as "an independent, non-profit democratic organisation that seeks to influence the governance of their football club". In those cases, fans examine and think on their lack of power at their club and buy shares of it, organising their votes in the trust. By founding supporter trusts, fans try to increase their capability for influencing the club's governance. But supporters' trusts accept fan participation only when they became shareholders. Fans are not accepted as stakeholders in general. Trusts offer an option for wealthy fans, while other traditional fan groups are excluded (Martin, 2007). Cleland and Dixon (2015) criticise the relative powerlessness of supporter trust in Premier League due to the power of other stakeholders, while trusts have more influence in single cases in Prague (Numerato, 2015a, 2017, 2018) or Split (Glaurdić, 2020; Tregoures, 2017). These and further problems made a second more radical opportunity of involving oneself attractive.

The second possibility is the founding of a new club by reflexive fans, which they fully control. Porter (2019) distinguish these clubs as phoenix clubs, founded by fans after the abolishment of the old club, and breakaway clubs, where the old club still exist and fans break away from this club. Enfield Town FC from Greater London is known as the oldest example of breakaway clubs (Porter, 2019), founded in 2001. FC United of Manchester (FCUM) is the best-researched example. FCUM was founded in 2005 after the failed protest against a takeover of Manchester United by Malcolm Glazer, an American businessman (Porter, 2008). FCUM has been

described as democratic, representing the interests of its supporters (Poulton, 2013). The club was established on a one member one vote system (Brown, 2008), to counter the exclusion of less wealthy fans. This allows more fans to participate in club decisions. But much more clubs exist. Porter (2019) counted 36 fan-owned clubs (including phoenix, breakaway clubs, and successful takeover by trusts) in England and Wales. Further examples are also known from Austria (Kennedy & Kennedy, 2015), Croatia (Hodges, 2019; Vukušić & Miošić, 2017), Israel (Galily & Samuel-Azran, 2020; Ha-Ilan, 2018; Papineau, 2017; Rapoport & Noy, 2019), Italy (Androus & Giudici, 2018), Poland (Drozda et al., 2020), Romania (Chen & Rocha, 2022), and Spain (Griñán, 2021). An example from Germany is the HFC Falke founded by (former) fans of the Hamburger Sportverein (HSV), after failed activism to prevent a transformation of their club in 2014 (Prigge, 2019).

Numerato (2018) describes four general dynamics in fan activism limiting their transformative potential. First, fan activism often remains bonded to the fan milieu. The preference of activism mainly in football stadiums is an example for that (Brandt et al., 2023). Therefore, difficulties occur in transmitting their reflexion to other stakeholders, like the association. Numerato (2018) calls this *auto-referentiality*. Instead, distrust and false images of the counterpart occur. The second dynamic called *strategic approbation*. Here the subversive potentials of reflexions are minimised other stakeholders e.g. by co-opting demands. In this process the meaning of the reflexion slightly changed and so-called mainstream logics hijack reflexions. This dynamic force processes of fusing the reflexion to one specific issue, leaving other issues beside. Additionally, reflexive processes are undermined by *anti-reflexivity*, which means counter reflexive arguments. Finally, in case of successful changes, the meaning of reflexivity could uncouple from the original reflexion – called *alternation*. This means the risk that newly established institutions strive to survive and thereby forgetting their transformative potentials or fans uses them to secure their individual benefits. At NK Zagreb 041, a Croatian breakaway club, some members distance from the original ideas of the club, as their priority became to apply for EU founding (Hodges, 2019). At FCUM the board even investigated supporters critically reflexive on developments at their club (Porter, 2019). These are examples why García and Welfort (2015) demand for further research on fan governance.

Therefore, this dissertation further researches the dynamics and reflexions of fans related to governance, which are mainly caused by commercialisation. The results are divided into four

papers. Differences between the specific research approaches exist, but the general background of the research approach is reflected in the following chapter.

3. Methods

Numerato (2018) remarked that reflexivity can never be fully scientifically measured. In a methodological article (Numerato, 2016) he indicates that researching online content is not adequate in that context and needs to be extended with data from the field.

The reflexion of fans is related to transformation in sport governance and a transformation of the fans themselves. Transformation of stakeholders and their practises are a relevant topic for sport governance. A systematic review on sport organisations' governance practises investigates used methodological approaches (Parent & Hoye, 2018). The results show that the majority of included articles use document analysis, interviews, questionaries or, in most cases, a combination of these as a data base. Two studies (Bayle, 2005; Ferkins et al., 2009) use participant observation, which is the specific method of ethnographic research. The existence of only two studies is surprising, given the fact that Watson (2011) remarked that what is really happening in organisations could only be understood by observation. Fine et al (2009) emphasise the appropriateness of ethnographic research especially in this dynamic process, which typically cannot be fully verbalised by social actors (Hirschauer, 2001). Skinner and Edwards (2005), Kitchin and Howe (2013), or Skinner et al. (2021) emphasise the advantages of ethnographic approaches for sport management research. *Table 2* provides an overview of the three leading sport management journals, as Shaw and Hoeber (2016) did for qualitative methods in general. Additionally, publications in other journals exist, like Kitchin (2017) or Torchia (2016, 2020).

Tab. 2. *Overview of articles researching sport governance by ethnographic approaches*

Reference	Title	Method
Skinner et al., 1999	Amateurism to Professionalism: Modelling Organisational Change in Sporting Organisations	Participant observation, semi-structured interviews
Caza, 2000	Context Receptivity: Innovation in an Amateur Sport Organization	Participant observation
Kitchin & Howe, 2014	The Mainstreaming of Disability Cricket in England and Wales: Integration 'One Game' at a Time	participant observation, semi-structured interviews
Walters & Tacon, 2018	The 'Codification' of Governance in the Non-Profit Sport Sector in the UK	non-participant observation, interviews, document analysis
Feddersen et al., 2021	A Longitudinal Study of Power Relations in a British Olympic Sport Organization	2 participant observations, focus groups, document analysis, interviews
Piggott & Matthews, 2021	Gender, Leadership, and Governance in English National Governing Bodies of Sport: Formal Structures, Rules, and Processes	Semi-structured interviews, participant observation

Note: Included journals are *Journal of Sport Management, Sport Management Review* and *European Sport Management Quarterly* (excluding digital or Netnographie).

Table 2 shows that ethnographic research on governance related issues is mainly a combination of participant observation and interviews. Due to its appropriateness, a similar approach was chosen for three of four articles of this dissertation, which meanwhile reflects the author's training as a social anthropologist. Two differing ethnographic approaches were chosen which will be introduced in the following part.

Originally, ethnography means long-term holistic research, based on fieldwork, which means in people's natural settings instead of laboratory settings. This approach was chosen for researching the German breakaway club HFC Falke. During fieldwork, various kinds of data are gathered mostly by participant observation, documents or artefacts. Traditionally ethnographies follow an unstructured and open research approach on one or few cases (Bernard, 2011; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Participant observation, as a central method, means to immense in a community and to "experiencing the lives of the people you are studying as much as you can" (Bernard, 2011, p. 344). Meanwhile, it means to distance yourself from the experiences to reflect on them and write about them in a scientific manner. Interviews provide another data source, which could complement own participant observations. During interviews, people of the researched community tell something about their perceptions and interpretations

of relevant phenomena, practises, or dynamics. In particular, their knowledge and reflexions could become visible. Interview data as well as own observations can never be taken as face value. They are always influenced by dynamics and need to be reflected (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). An ethnographic research approach particularly promotes the reflexivity of the researching subject – in this case, the author of the dissertation. Their own expectations, experiences, knowledge, and feelings influence the study's results in manifold ways, as they become the research instrument (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Heyde, 2018; Skinner & Edwards, 2005). Therefore, a brief reflection of the researcher, his expectations, and how they changed during the research should be provided.

The researcher has a personal interest in football. He was never a fan of a specific club but followed football matches on TV and in stadiums. He informs himself about developments in football regularly. He is also interested in developments off the pitch – in management and on the terraces. His own limited footballing abilities may be one reason for this. Before he entered the field he already published on football (Brandt et al., 2012) and its fans (Brandt & Hertel, 2015).

A second reason for the specific interest in fans' reflexion on commercialisation is his personal desire for social transformation and the question, which role football fans could play in this. Sini (2012) already described the role of football fans in social movements in Israel. Football fans and ultras also played a major role in the protests in Istanbul's Gezi Park (Battini & Koşulu, 2018; Göksoy & Yilmaz, 2017; Irak, 2018) or the revolutions in Egypt (El-Zatmah, 2012; Jerzak, 2013; Woltering, 2013) and Ukraine (Brandt et al., 2023; Krugliak & Krugliak, 2017; Ruzhelnyk, 2018). Brown (2008) postulated the goal of social transformation also for FC United of Manchester.

Because of this interest and knowledge, a risk of romanticising the field, and the community of HFC Falke exists. But the researcher's expectations were confronted by reality in the field. One expectation was that debates and ideas for social change would play a major role in the field. However, this was scarcely the case. Some people positioned themselves on the socio-political left, but the majority does not. Nevertheless, individual actors emphasised the impact of their activism for change in football, especially at the beginning of the research. They saw themselves as a blueprint for other clubs that reflexive fans might establish. However, this aspect became

less important over time, as many activities aim to ensure the club's success and survival required members' attention.

A second expectation, based on the first expectation and the fact the researcher lived in Hamburg already for ten years, was that a habitual closeness between him and the field would exist. However, differences emerged at the first meeting. The researcher expected that meetings started after the scheduled time, as he was used from political or academic meetings. This was not the case with HFC Falke. Therefore, he was already late when he attended the first meeting.

Thirdly, the researcher had expected that HFC Falke would be a project for fans with roots from different clubs, who reject football's developments and would now support HFC Falke as a project against football's commercialisation. However, this was not the case. Most of the members had a history with HSV and belonged to its milieu. Critique on commercialisation barely occurred, often in a modest and pragmatic way. The researcher expected more practises of direct democracy. He was surprised by the power of the club's board. The first conclusion was that this was not the "Goldmine of the next revolution", as Sini (2012) suggested.

Therefore, the researcher needs to adjust his romanticised image of the club at the beginning of the research. Nevertheless, a feeling of belonging to the community and a friendly closeness to individual members developed during fieldwork. This happened mainly through shared experiences during voluntary work for the club, the common alcohol consumption and chats about life and football. The closeness was expressed in the fact that the researcher celebrated one of his birthdays with club members in 2017. The same year, a friend who did not belong to the club expressed his assumption that the researcher would then become a board member after finishing his research.

This did not happen for two reasons. Individual members address him frequently as researcher, e.g., by his nickname *Doktor*, or when he does not show the appropriate emotions (Brandt & Wetzels, 2022), which reminds him of his role in the field. Additionally, he constantly participated in a fieldwork supervision from 2015 to 2021. Through supervision, the researcher repeatedly reflected on his relationship to the field. Methodologically, the supervision followed the approach of Balint-groups, which means a reflection by peer researchers, doing ethnographic research in other fields. During the group work the other researchers elaborates on what already latently exists in the research data. Important in that context are relational

dynamics and their meaning in the field. Thereby an oscillation between empathic-identificatory rapprochement and reflexive demarcating is used, to reflect the researcher's entanglement in the field (Bonz et al., 2017). This helped in various situations during the research, by ensuring one's own actions, role, and ultimately by interpreting the research data.

Study two and three of this dissertation are based on a long-term field work of 27 months. As *thick participation*, it includes observing, experiencing, and empathising (Spittler, 2014). Therefore, it offers a deeper understanding of fans' reflexions, related knowledge, and how they are embedded. Additionally, their practices of activism and reflexions on these practises became researchable. The reflexivity processes do not completely become measurable but as ethnographic research also includes emotional components, a deeper understanding of these processes and their dynamics is possible. Study three discusses the benefit of the approach compared to a focused ethnography in more detail.

Study one researched fans in a broader setting and compares at least fans of four clubs in Glasgow and the German Ruhr region. The chosen approach followed a *focussed ethnography.* Focused ethnography includes short-ranged field visits in several intervals (Knoblauch, 2001). During these visits, data for a specific prior chosen topic is generated. Researchers are less interested in general experience, which limits the understanding of the field, but allows a precise collection in an appropriate time. This allows to research a topic at varying spaces and with differing communities or organisations (Næss, 2020). For an adequate focussed ethnography, background information is necessary to know where and when the topic can be researched (Knoblauch, 2001; 2005). Concerning fans Bromberger (1995) suggests considering the macro and micro level, the stadium and micro interaction e.g. in a pub, for researching fans social practices. The research in Glasgow is based on three different pillars. First, ethnographic data from 2011 was used, where the research took place in varying football-related pubs, including watching the cities derby called Old Firm on TV. Second, semi-structured interviews with six fans of Celtic FC and Rangers FC were recorded. Third, publications and reports for actions were analysed, mostly online. The documents date back from 2012 to 2014. This data was later compared to those from fans from the German Ruhr region. Here focused ethnography was used including visits to the stadium, meetings of fan clubs, or a country-wide congress. Six additional interviews were conducted and again (online) publications especially of two ultra groups analysed. On a methodical level, the studies from Glasgow and the Ruhr region show

large congruence, which is one quality criterion for compression in social sciences (Kelle & Kluge, 2010).

The fourth article follows a differing approach, as a quantitative survey was chosen. Another ethnographic approach was not possible due to language and security issues. Tan and Bairner (2010) remarked that in an authoritarian regime like the PRC interviews seldom tell the truth, as people are afraid of repression. An ethnographic approach needs trust, which can hardly be generated in a regime with totalitarian control. A quantitative approach, based on paper and pencil promises the biggest possible anonymity in that case. The approach follows the paradigm to be appropriate for the specific research context (Strübing et al., 2018). Meanwhile, a quantitative survey means a triangulation of methods for the whole dissertation process. The use of a contrary method in a contrary setting allows further insights, abstraction, and generalisations on fans' reflexivity on commercialisation in football. The background of each study and a summary of its results are introduced in the following chapter.

4. Studies

The dissertation combines an ethnographic perspective with those from sport governance. The chosen journals reflect this transdisciplinary approach, as they include one journal from social anthropology, one from sport management, and two transdisciplinary journals. The *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* is the leading German journal for social anthropology. The first article was published in a special issue on sport in that journal. The second article was published in the open access journal *Sustainability*, which publishes articles from various disciplines. The special issue on sport was chosen to promote the aspect of social sustainability in a sport context a from fans perspective. The third article was submitted to the one of the leading sport management journals: *Sport Management Review*. While writing these lines the article is in the second review after a rework based on the first review round. *Managing Sport and Leisure*, which is another sport management journal, was chosen for the fourth article. The following section introduces each article briefly and emphasises its contribution to the overall research project.

4.1. Study 1: In den Farben getrennt. In der Sache geeint? Solidarität und Kooperation rivalisierender Fangruppen im Ruhrgebiet und in Glasgow

This study focuses on changes of tactics in fan activism based on their reflexivity. While other studies emphasise the relevance of rivalries as one central element of football fandom (Armstrong & Giulianotti, 2001; Bromberger, 1995; Gabler, 2010), this study focuses on cooperation between fans. Cooperation is the result of fans' reflexions, as they (partly) stop their traditional rivalry and transform the rules of being a fan. This process increased their capabilities. The study followed a comparative approach and compares Scottish fans from Glasgow to fans from the German Ruhr region. The comparison is based on the assumption that these two settings are comparable. Both regions grew during industrialisation, but the industry in both collapsed including a loss to welfare and the regions needed to transform. In both regions football, or specifically football clubs are an important source of identity and belonging. In Glasgow, the clubs are Celtic FC and Rangers FC in the Ruhr region mainly FC Schalke 04 and BV Borussia Dortmund 09. In both settings, an intensive rivalry between fans exists. Fans, or at least parts of the fans criticise what they call criminalisation (police intervention in stadium, ban of sectarian songs) and dynamics of commercialisation (ticket prices) and became active against authorities in state, federation, and club. While a certain solidarity or cooperation between active fans in the Ruhr region exist, this was absent in Glasgow.

The study is based on the theoretical concepts of conflict ethnology and belonging. Conflict ethnology is based on a rational choice paradigm explaining group behaviour on rational benefits this acting has (Schlee, 2004, 2006). The concept of Belonging belongs to a post-structuralists paradigm. It explains that people belong to an in- or out-group based on experiences, practises, and emotions, which in- or excludes individuals or groups (Anthias, 2008). Brandt and Wetzels (2022) recently showed how these emotions and related practises create belonging for football fans.

In the Ruhr region, the cooperation happens mainly in larger networks. In this setting, fans do not just cooperate with their specific rival and instead of that as part of a nation-wide alliance. This large alliance allows gathering a relevant number of fans, which means an increase of capabilities based on increased visibility, legitimacy, and power. One fan group alone is too marginal to be recognised on the national level. In this alliance, fans create a belonging as fans per se and not related to a specific club. They perceive themselves as being affected by similar

developments and meanwhile sharing the same goal. They created a belonging as fans. In Scotland the situation is contrary. Here only two big fan communities exist – Celtic and Rangers. Only a few fans follow other clubs. Even a nation-wide cooperation would mostly be a cooperation of the two communities. An alliance would increase power to a smaller extent than in Germany. The second obstacle for cooperation in Glasgow is related to belonging. Both fan communities could not create a shared belonging, as they have contrary identities. Put simply, Celtic has an Irish-catholic identity, while Rangers are British-protestant, and both identities are related to historical conflicts mainly in Northern Ireland. The contrary belonging creates a perception, that the opponent fan group protest is only for themselves and not fans per se. Instead, they perceive that the opponent fan community is not harmed by repression in the same way. Additionally, they demanded that certain songs of the opponents should be banned as they, in their perception, glorify terrorist or nazis.

The study shows that fans' reflexivity in similar settings can result in contrary activism. Whether they perceive a common goal, as in the Ruhr region, or not, as in Glasgow, depends on specific reflexivity. This reflexivity is rooted in specific knowledge e.g. about contrary identities as in Glasgow. Additionally, tactics could be reflected, and larger alliances founded or rejected based on knowledge of the specific setting. Thereby the study shows that various conclusions could be drawn from reflexivity based on the specific setting. In 2017 a study likewise describes a lack of cooperation of Scottish fans but remarks small steps towards cooperation recently (Huddleston, 2017). While the study from Glasgow and the Ruhr region investigates fans' reflexivity on tactics, the following one researches reflexivity on commercialisation per se, by fans who have chosen a specific tactic in a differing setting.

4.2. Study 2: Striving for Social Sustainability of Football Commercialization: An Ethnographic Case Study of the German Fan-Governed Club HFC Falke

The second study focuses on a single case to understand fans' reflexivity on commercialisation at a micro level and to discover their potential for transformations towards a more sustainable football. The study focusses on the club HFC Falke, as one example of breakaway clubs. Davis (2015) characterises these clubs as the most radical response to football's commercialisation. Meanwhile, they compete in classical competitive football, organised by the DFB, which means

they also follow their logics. Against this background, the study researches how reflexive fans deal with commercialisation of the club. It focusses on two phenomena, namely player's wages and sponsoring, as these are also present in amateur football.

The study provides a theoretical approach on commercialisation in sports, by borrowing scientific insights from tourism studies, and its concept of authenticity as opposed to commercialisation (Cohen, 1988; Wang, 1999). Authenticity and commercialisation are understood as two opposing sides of a continuum, and people judge, based on their knowledge where they locate something at this continuum. Therefore, commercialisation and authenticity could be negotiated in a community.

The results show that player's wages and sponsoring are critical issues at HFC Falke, which they reject and meanwhile use them in an alternative way to guarantee authenticity in their perception. They use a euphemising terminology, established a payment system depending on players' engagement and transparency, and established moral guidelines for advertising. Sponsors need to be local, have personal relationships to the club, or engaged in football for a longer period. Specific taboos like no sponsor on the jersey or no selling of stadium naming rights exist. Sponsors should be presented discretely. Again, they try to establish alternative ways of sponsoring e.g. for fans' benefits. The overall aim of these practices is to keep up authenticity and especially prevent commercial actors from taking over symbolically charged objects.

Falke's fans did not reject commodification but rejected some aspects of commercialisation. Numerato (2018) might perceive the openness to sponsoring and payment as alternation. But Falke perceives them as necessary to survive in competitive football. They experiment with alternative modes with more sustainable potential, which, in their perception, did not undermine their authenticity. They are not radical, as Davis (2015) sees them. They are rather practical searching for alternatives in niches. The results show how commercialisation and authenticity are negotiated in a constructivist understanding. Falke's social practices on sponsoring depend on their reflexivity and related knowability. Meanwhile, their knowledge on both issues changes after founding their own clubs, they adapt it to the new situation. This dynamic is also relevant for the next study.

4.3. Study 3: Researching Fan Participation in Football Clubs' Governance: Conceptualisation and Results of an Ethnographic Approach

García and Welfort (2015), plead for a governance turn in football fan research. They argue to research democratic processes and their social dynamics of fan participation in practice. The third study uses the case of HFC Falke to contribute to that question. Democratic participation is one key issue for breakaway clubs, and several studies praise the democratic control of breakaway and other fan-owned clubs. However, dynamics following a management approach emphasising the necessity of efficiency in decision-making also occur at these clubs, which bear a latent risk of undemocratic practises including alternation of board representatives or fans.

Following the understanding of Lam (2014), the study identifies governance as a process of formal and informal decision-making. In a first step four institutions of decision-making at HFC Falke are introduced, to provide an overview of the clubs understanding and practices of democratic participation. The presentation including their size of attendance, their character and contribution to decision-making. The articles focus is the detailed investigation of management and governance dynamics related to one strategic, meaningful decision in detail – the introduction of the player's wages from study two. The steps of the internal negotiation and involved institutions of decision-making are presented. Afterwards, members' reflexions of the process are described and if it fits their expectations of democratic participation or not. As a result, some fans suggested a new structure of decision-making, which was not implemented.

The study shows how decision-making processes, as institutionalised social practise, could become part of reflexivity processes at breakaway clubs. Some fans felt in a similar situation as at their prior club, as they felt excluded from the processes. Other fans see benefits in flexible efficient decision-making processes and or felt that their interests are considered during the process. The results demonstrate the potentials, risks, and social dynamics of decision-making, specifically for fan participation but also beyond. This shows how perception, reflexivity and knowledge can tear apart a fan community during activism. Results are grounded in a long-term ethnographic process and draw out the development of social situations in time passing by. The article elaborates a model for the struggle to balance management and participatory governance elements at clubs. As the article is still under review it might a reworked and the message slightly change.

4.4. Study 4: Transnational Excursus: Supporter attitudes towards league governance in emerging football markets: evidence from fans of the Chinese Super League

The three mentioned studies focus on dynamics in fan communities as results of reflexions on football's commercialisation in Western-European countries - Germany and Scotland. One critique on scientific discourses on football fans and their activism and commercialisation is, that they are Euro- or even British-centric (Cleland et al. 2018; García & Welford, 2015; Mittag, 2019; Zheng & García, 2017). To face this critique the final study of this dissertation risks an excursus to a contrary setting. The fourth article researches the attitudes of football fans in the emerging market of the People's Republic of China.

Since 2010 governance of Chinese football transformed drastically (Ma & Kurscheidt 2019). These changes could be understood as a Chinese way of commercialisation. Market logics have been implemented, international stars recruited, new sponsors and owners entered the field and a new league called Chinese Super League established (Gündoğan & Sonntag, 2018; Ma & Kurscheidt, 2019, 2022; Ma & Zheng, 2022). This transformation is followed by increasing financial turnover, attention, and success at international club competitions. Nevertheless, Chinas Communist Party still controls Chinese football's governance and did not share any power. China has a relatively young and emerging fan community (Jiang & Bairner, 2020; Qian et al., 2017), which is limited in expressing dissatisfaction due to the country's authoritarian regime. This setting provides the background to conduct a study on reflexivity of fans on commercialisation in a contrary setting.

The results of the paper pencil survey conducted prior to five matches of the Chinese Super League, show that Chinese fans have a much more positive attitude towards commercialisation, including elements European fans criticise like show elements or profit making. This could be understood as a response to prior insufficient organisation, which a survey of Gong et al. (2015) detected. Additionally, fans matter more in the commercialised system than in the prior one, which is the opposite to the description in Western Europe. Nevertheless, a minority of fans expressed negative attitudes to commercialisation, which means they agree that commercialisation harms the fans. Here the transfer fees and players' payment statistically influence critical attitudes towards the transformation positively. Concerning intended behaviour in the future those critical minority expressed to be even more enthusiastic in the

future, which marks them as highly loyal against all odds. Interestingly, those fans who prefer high comfort in stadiums are more critical.

These results emphasise the benefit of transnational comparisons. They show that reflexions on footballs' governance and processes of commercialisation highly depend on the specific national setting. Developments that fans reject in the European context are, perceived more positively in the PRC's context. This shows the influence of setting and knowledge on reflexing processes of fans on commercialisation.

5. Discussion

Football fans are a virulent topic in social sciences. One recent trend is researching fan activism, mainly against dynamics related to commercialisation. For existing literature on that subject Cleland et al. (2018) discussed the British-centric nature and García & Welford (2015) criticises a lack governance related research. By focusing on Scottish, Chinese but mostly German fans, this dissertation contributes to an understanding of fan activism and their governance beyond Great Britain. It specifically focusses on the influence of fans' reflexivity on their activism and governance practises, including perceptions of commercialisation. Study one compared fan activism in Germany and Scotland investigating cooperation of rival fans in Germany, as an outcome of their reflexivity, which Scottish fans reject. Study two explored fans' reflexions on commercialisation contrary to authenticity, their related social practices on player wages and sponsoring. Study three focuses on processes of decision-making within a club owned by fans, including diverging on reflexions on these processes and perceptions of alternation. Study four contrasts the European results with insights on Chinese fans, who rather welcome commercialisation, as their interests are better considered compared to prior sport governance.

The dissertation demonstrates how knowability and capability influence the dynamics of fan reflexivity, which could provoke activism (Numerato, 2018). The comparison of German and Scottish fans showed that contrary reflexions influence fans' practices during activism. The reflexions are influenced by specific capabilities, like the size of the communities, and knowledge about one's own and the opponent's community. The comparison to China displayed that the perception of governance, commercialisation, and therefore (potential) reflexions differ from Germany based on the specific knowledge. The specific history of

Chinese sport governance is the reason behind this contrary perception. The two case studies from HFC Falke indicate the relevance of time and experiences during activism (action) influencing knowledge and reflexion processes. Original, all fans acted in the same direction. They decided to break away from their old club and established a new one. During the debate on wages and club structures, reflexions on commercialisation and participation diverged, as differing knowledge emerged during the researched period. The results of the four studies culminate in *Figure 2*, showing the interconnectedness of the described elements of reflexivity and activism. Commercialisation influences governance, as described in chapter two, but it meanwhile influences peoples' knowability as is shown in study two. The experience during activism influences the knowability and reflexions can affect capabilities e.g. by increasing the active group. These processes then provoke further reflexions on football and changes of practices. *Figure 2* describes the dynamics as a cycle, which stresses the processes' perpetual character. These processes did not stop as long as fans were interested in football and did not stop reflexive processes on issues that were important to them. The dotted line at the bottom symbolises the transformational potential of fan activism for governance, that might occur in ways that were not intended.
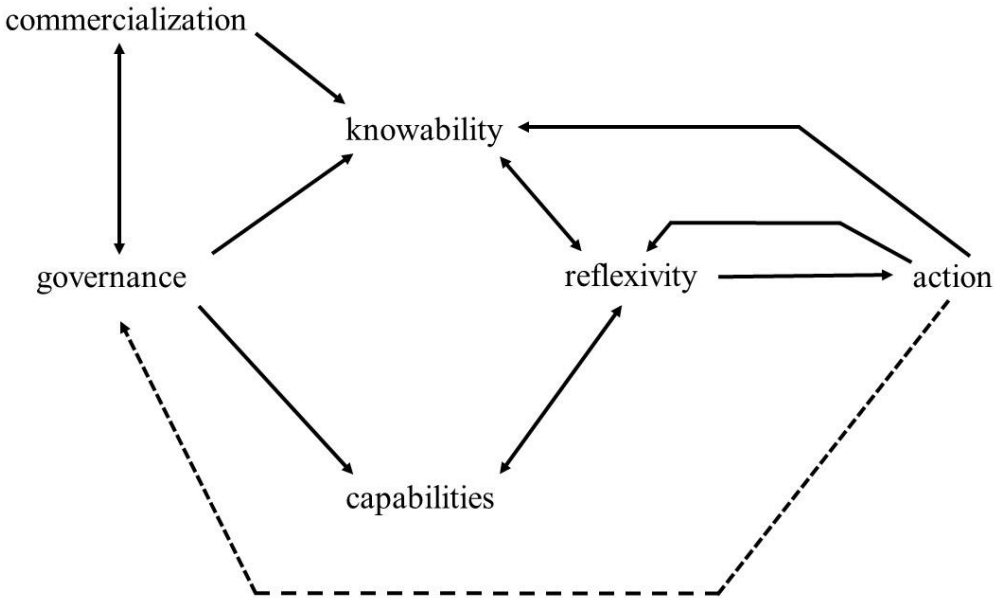

Fig. 2.   *Fans' process of reflexivity and activism*

The importance of knowability and setting for the reflexion process could also explain the lack of transnational activism, although some European-wide associations exist (Cleland et al.,

2018). The differences in reflexivity are an explanation for that. Fans united under the slogan Against Modern Football (Numerato, 2015b) but this umbrella term allows enough flexibility to follow individual regional or national approaches. The aforementioned protest against the ESL is a rare exception. The lack of cooperation generally limits the power and capabilities of fan activism. In Numerato's (2018) contribution, fans and SGBs are opponents. However, it can be assumed that individual processes of reflexivity take place at SGBs, which differ from those of fans. For Germany, there are clear enemy images. But as study one shows even enemies might cooperate if a common goal exists and they might create a shared belonging.

Meanwhile, the results of the study emphasise the importance of success on fans' reflexivity, which is often negated by fans. At HFC Falke debates on paying players, which are followed by general debates, occur as they wish to remain successful in the 7th division. They experiment, in a niche, with alternative ways of payment, but they do not reject the idea of being successful in general. In study four commercialisation in China is perceived more positively, which could also be related to international success. On a rational level, it is logical that transformations are perceived as positive when they create a positive impact on certain issues. And success is a relevant – but not the only relevant issue. Transformations towards a more sustainable governance of football risks to be criticised if at the same time, the team does not perform on the pitch, even if no direct relation exists and sporting success is influenced by several short-term factors. The demand for success meanwhile limits the potential for reflexivity.

Most recent studies see disadvantages for fans caused by commercialisation (Winell, 2023). But study two in particular suggests a more pragmatic view. Study four shows a prevalence of commercialisation in China. This is due to better integration compared to the previous governance model. Although commercialisation in its current understanding is negative for Western European fans, it does not always have to be so. Even at HFC Falke fans show a pragmatic attitude towards aspects of commodification and commercialisation, as long they have the capabilities to control the process. Descriptions of fans in opposition to commercialisation are therefore simplified. This dissertation has shown that differences between specific settings exist. Even within one community, the perception of aspects of commercialisation can change, based on reflexivity. The results of the study emphasise the relevance of a differentiation of fans' demands.

Governance, especially with recourse to stakeholder theory, is usually simplifying group's demands, to describe dynamics between stakeholder groups. However, this work has shown that processes within a group are also relevant for the governance of football. Further studies could follow up on this. Other stakeholders in sport governance are by no means uniform monolithic blocks with the same interests. In addition to a plurality in the perspectives of the examined groups, this dissertation pleads for plurality in research methods and theoretical approaches, including sociological and economic (governance) perspectives, but also beyond. Especially study one, using the theoretical concepts of conflict ethnology and belonging from social anthropology, shows the benefit of including theories from various disciplines to sport governance. On a methodological level participant observation as the method from social anthropology offers further opportunities in sport governance. *Table 1* already showed the promising results of other approaches from this perspective.

Beside all relevant insights some methodological limitations need to be mentioned. The articles follow three differing research approaches, thus limiting their comparability. While ethnography focuses on the micro level, the quantitative survey follows a macro approach, and focused ethnography oscillates between these two. The approaches also differ in epistemological perspective, following Weber (1921/2013) divided in those striving for understanding, mostly addressed by qualitative approaches, and those striving for explaining social phenomena, mostly addressed by quantitative approaches. Although the studies deal with a comparable topic, they differ in type of data, level of analysis (micro vs. macro) and epistemological perspective (understanding vs. explaining). For such comparisons Schulz and Ruddat (2008) suggest a qualitative, understanding perspective – especially when more qualitative studies are available. The dissertation follows their suggestion particularly as the quantitative article follows an explanatory perspective. Following their suggestion insights provided by contrary methods in a contrary setting enable a broader generalisation on football fans' reflexivity. Nevertheless, limitations in terms of comparability remain.

Critically, it could be questioned whether the concept of reflexivity can be transferred to authoritarian regimes like the PRC. The result that critical fans support their team against all odds might emphasise this limitation. Giddens (1984; 1990) developed his concept regarding western societies. Following the idea of globalisation, the second modernity swept to other countries as well. But the PRC followed a different approach than most intellectuals expected

during the 1990s, and the results of this dissertation emphasise the relevance of specific settings. Therefore, it can be questioned if reflexivity exists in the same way, and if it could be measured or if the concept needs to be adapted.

Besides all limitations, the dissertation provides relevant insights about fans and reflexivity. These results might serve as a starting point for fruitful further research, especially if it includes comparative elements. With respect to study one on cooperation of fans, the author already published an edited volume, which is not part of the original dissertation project. *Football Fans, Rivalry and Cooperation*, published in 2017 with Routledge, compares case studies from eleven countries on the cooperation of football fans (Brandt et al., 2017). The contributions emphasise that antagonistic cooperation is also known from other regions. The comparison shows that the initial point of the cooperation, belonging of the cooperating fans are connected (Brandt & Hertel, 2017). During the comparison, it is noticeable that many of the cooperations are related to fan activism. While the edited volume compares single events, the article by Brandt et al. (2023) compares fan activism in Germany and Ukraine over a span of eight years. The results show that cooperation exists in both counties, more stable in Ukraine and more dynamic in Germany. But it is framed differently in both cases. In Germany, a focus on governance in fan activism exists, while Ukrainian fans frame their activities politically – which is related to the Russian invasion. These results emphasise the relevance of the specific setting once more.

The dissertation shows several gaps for further research. One of them is how breakaway clubs or other fan-owned clubs act in a competitive setting. Which strategies do they develop to be successful and remain loyal to their founding values? Or do they adapt them after reflexions? Study one and four show the benefit of comparisons. Study two and three compare HFC Falke mainly to literature on FCUM and Zagreb 041. But as previously mentioned many other cases exist. Therefore, a comparison of numerous breakaway clubs on governance and their negotiations on commercialisation is another interesting approach. In that regard, two projects are currently in progress. One compares 17 European breakaway clubs based on interviews. The second project uses data from ethnographic research on HFC Falke to compare the club to results from an ethnographic approach on NK Varteks Varaždin (Croatia). The latter club was founded as a breakaway club in 2011. The comparison will be published with Routledge under the title *Against Modern Football: Understanding Clubs Founded and Operated by Supporters* The book provides the opportunity of deep and detailed comparison.

The second study shows how amateur football is affected by dynamics of commercialisation. This emphasises the need to research dynamics of amateur football, which is part of social practises for many people (Naglo et al., 2020). Therefore, Christian Brandt together with Kristian Naglo and Jochem Kotthaus edited a special issue on amateur football in the emerging German journal *Fußball und Gesellschaft*. In amateur football, paying wages to players is sometimes related to patrons, who dominate clubs by providing money. The so-called *Mäzene* are barely researched in the German context. An interview-based article of the author and his co-author Kristian Naglo towards a typology of Mäzene will be published in a special issue of Soccer and Society under the title *Patrons in German lower league football: a qualitative case*.

The dissertation's fourth article shows the benefits of quantitative research on fans' perceptions of and attitudes towards commercialisation. The dissertation with its four articles therefore forms the basis for further research that will contribute to a better understanding of football fans, especially in international comparison. The international dimension of football is one aspect of a social anthropology of football fans.

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Appendix I

This appendix consists of four articles:

Study 1: In den Farben getrennt. In der Sache geeint? Solidarität und Kooperation rivalisierender Fangruppen im Ruhrgebiet und in Glasgow

Study 2: Striving for Social Sustainability of Football Commercialization: An Ethnographic Case Study of the German Fan-Governed Club HFC Falke

Study 3: Researching Fan Participation in Football Clubs' Governance: Conceptualisation and Results of an Ethnographic Approach [no re-print included]

Study 4: Supporter Attitudes Towards League Governance in Emerging Football Markets: Evidence From Fans of the Chinese Super League [no re-print included]

Study 1

Brandt, C., & Hertel, F. (2016). In den Farben getrennt. In der Sache geeint? Solidarität und Kooperation rivalisierender Fangruppen im Ruhrgebiet und in Glasgow. *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie, 141*(4), S. 19-40.

In den Farben getrennt. In der Sache geeint? Solidarität und Kooperation rivalisierender Fangruppen im Ruhrgebiet und in Glasgow

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Abstract. Rivalries among groups of supporters are a prominent feature of football fan culture and often an object of research. However, this article strives to exhibit that forms of solidarity and cooperation between rival supporters are under researched but may also be expressions of this fan culture. We compare the situations of the German *Ruhrderby* and the *Old Firm* in Glasgow to gain knowledge on the preconditions for the degree of solidarity and cooperation. Although supporter groups of rival teams in Glasgow as well as in the *Ruhrgebiet* feel marginalized by increasing ticket fees and the criminalization of football fan associations, levels of solidarity and cooperation among rival groups vary to a great extent. Whereas expressions of solidarity and cooperation can be found between supporters of *FC Schalke 04* and *Borussia Dortmund*, those expressions are absent between the rival groups of *Celtic FC* and *Rangers FC*. This article points out, that beside the size of the groups, a common regional identity and a belonging based on supporters values among rival fans of Dortmund and Schalke supports mutual solidarity and cooperation in the Ruhrgebiet, while historical formed differences are stressed between supporting groups of Celtic and Rangers.
[anthropology of violence, belonging, football, fan culture]

Einleitung

Die gesellschaftliche Dimension des Fußballs wird wesentlich durch seine Zuschauer*innen mitgeprägt. Seit einigen Jahren besuchen pro Saison rund 13 Millionen Menschen in Deutschland die Spiele der 1. Bundesliga der Männer (DFB o.J.). Dabei sind sie nicht nur passive Konsument*innen, sondern als Fans ein elementarer Teil des Fußballs. Organisierte Fangruppierungen nehmen beispielsweise Einfluss auf die jeweilige Vereins- oder Verbandspolitik und tragen somit auch zur Identitätsbildung ihres Clubs bei. In den letzten Jahren traten der Fußball und seine Anhänger*innen daher vermehrt in den Fokus sozialwissenschaftlicher Forschung (Hebenstreit 2012). Die Rivalität zwischen Fußballfans verschiedener Vereine ist dabei ein weit verbreiteter Topos. Bereits in den 1980ern und 1990ern kam Christian Bromberger zu dem

Schluss: „There is no need to stress that football, in its current organizational format […] provides a forum for the expression of collective identities and local or regional antagonisms" (1995:302). Diese Sicht ist heute weiterhin aktuell, wie ein Zitat Jonas Gablers unterstreicht: „[E]ines der zentralen Merkmale der europäischen Fußballfankultur […] ist der von den Fans gelebte krasse Gegensatz zwischen zwei sich gegenüberstehenden Mannschaften und ihres jeweiligen Anhangs" (2010:302).[1]

Jedoch, so soll dieser Beitrag zeigen, kann neben Ablehnung auch Solidarität und Kooperation zwischen rivalisierenden Fanlagern ein Ausdruck des Fanseins darstellen. Ziel unseres Beitrags ist es herauszuarbeiten, unter welchen Voraussetzungen rivalisierende Fans zusammenarbeiten, beziehungsweise was diesem Verhalten entgegensteht. Dazu vergleichen wir die Beziehung bestimmter Fans des sogenannten Ruhrderbys zwischen Borussia Dortmund (BVB) und FC Schalke 04 (S04) mit der Beziehung bestimmter Fans im Glasgower Old Firm[2] zwischen Celtic FC und deren innerstädtischen Kontrahenten Rangers FC. Wir wählen diese Derbys, da beide Duelle in einem ähnlichen strukturellen Rahmen – dem Niedergang der einst für die Region sowie den Fußball identitätsstiftenden Schwerindustrie – stattfinden.

Das Theoriekorsett unseres Beitrags bildet die Konfliktethnologie nach Günther Schlee. Wir ergänzen diese durch das Konzept des Belongings, wie es gegenwärtig Floya Anthias prägt. Anhand dieser Theorien analysieren wir das Verhältnis der Fans des Ruhrderbys und des Old Firms. In diesem Zusammenhang erläutern wir die Probleme, mit denen Fans konfrontiert sind. Dabei tritt Kooperation in Konfliktfällen mit dritten Akteur*innen auf. Zu diesen Konflikten zählen in beiden Feldern Ticketpreise sowie die Kriminalisierung[3] durch Verbände, Polizei und Politik, die demnach die Position des Dritten einnehmen könnten. Anschließend vergleichen wir den Umgang der Fans mit diesen Problemen und analysieren, mit wem und unter welchen Voraussetzungen Zusammenarbeit auftritt beziehungsweise sich nicht finden lässt. Dadurch möchten wir einen Beitrag zum besseren Verständnis von Fußballsupporter*innen leisten.

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[1] Den Begriff der Fankultur nutzen die Supporter*innen zur Beschreibung und Legitimierung ihrer Praxen im Fußballkontext selbst. Deutlich wird dies in Stadien anhand von Slogans wie ‚Fankultur erhalten'.

[2] Ironischer Name aus der Sportpresse, da beide Vereine für eine Professionalisierung eintraten und kommerzielle Aspekte des Fußballs für sie wichtig waren und sind (Murray 2000:5f.).

[3] Dabei handelt es sich um eine emische Sichtweise. Die Frage inwieweit Maßnahmen und Verhalten sowohl der Supporter*innen als auch der Politik oder der Polizei etc. sinnvoll und gerechtfertigt sind, soll nicht Thema dieses Artikels sein.

Fans, Konflikte, Identitäten

Fans sind nicht gleich Fans, sondern gliedern sich in verschiedene Gruppierungen auf. Richard Giulianotti grenzt in seiner Fußballfan-Typologie Supporter*innen von anderen Fans ab. Zentrale Merkmale der Supporter*innen sind der *heiße* Grad ihrer Identifikation sowie die traditionelle Beziehung zum Verein. Sie hegen ein

> „long-term personal and emotional investment in the club […]. [T]he individual has a relationship with the club that resembles those with close family and friends. […] supporting the club is a lived experience, rooted in a grounded identity that is reflected in an affectionate relationship to the ground that is regularly revisited" (2002:10).

Zu den Supporter*innen zählen auch Ultras. Erkenntnisse unseres Artikels gelten für Supporter*innen nach Giulianottis Definition, also sowohl für Ultras als auch andere Supporter*innen. Eine Quantifizierung der Supporter*innen ist aufgrund oft unklarer Mitgliedschaft schwierig. Wir gehen jedoch davon aus, dass jeder der Vereine mehrere Tausend Supporter*innen hat.

Wie von Bromberger und Gabler beschrieben, so sind im Old Firm und im Ruhrderby verbale und symbolische Abwertungen des jeweiligen Rivalen durch Supporter*innen verbreitet. In Konfrontation mit dritten Gegner*innen jedoch besteht die Möglichkeit der Zusammenarbeit auch unter Rival*innen. Dies sind die Ausgangspunkte unserer Analyse. Edward Evans-Pritchard beschreibt ein ähnliches Phänomen bei den westafrikanischen Nuer. Diese charakterisiert er als segmentäre Gesellschaft, die sich durch die Abwesenheit einer zentralen politischen Organisation auszeichnen. Sie gliedern sich ferner in immer kleiner werdende Segmente, die in Opposition zueinander stehen. Dennoch vereinen sich die Segmente in Auseinandersetzungen mit Dritten. Entscheidend bei all dem ist eine gemeinsame unilineare Abstammungslinie. Dadurch ergebe sich als politische Organisation ein System „[…] of fission and fussion […] of relativity and opposition of its segments" (1940:296). Nach Evans-Pritchard sind die Kooperationspartner*innen immer aufgrund der Abstammungslinie vorgegeben. Dies entspricht auch der Idee der mechanischen Solidarität nach Durkheim (1947). Die Richtigkeit dieser Generalisierungen zweifelt Frederik Barth (1959) nicht an, ergänzt aber, dass weitere Kriterien bei der Wahl von Kooperationspartner*innen relevant sein können. Die von ihm untersuchten Yusufzai Paschtunen Nordpakistans berücksichtigen neben den Verwandtschaftsbeziehungen auch strategische Faktoren bei der Wahl der Kooperationspartner (ebd.:6f.). Seine These stützt er mit der Spieltheorie (ebd.:15). Günther Schlee merkt ebenfalls an, dass die Wahl von Kooperationspartner*innen auch durch nicht rationale Faktoren beeinflusst wird (2006:27). Zur Beantwortung der Fragen, „who is fighting whom and why? How and why do people draw the distinction between friend and foe precisely where they do?" (2004:135) bedient er sich ebenfalls der Spieltheorie sowie der Rational Choice-Theorie. Er stellt zwei Faktoren heraus:

Gruppengröße: Je größer die eigene Gruppe, desto geringer die Notwendigkeit Kooperationspartner*innen zu finden. Dies ist unmittelbar einleuchtend, denn je mehr Kooperationspartner*innen zum Erreichen eines Ziels beitragen, auf desto mehr Akteur*innen muss der Ertrag respektive Einfluss verteilt werden (Schlee 2005:80).[4] In Bezug auf unsere Forschung bedeutet dies zu klären, wie groß und einflussreich die jeweiligen Gruppen sind, um festzustellen, ob eine Kooperation zum Erreichen eines spezifischen Zieles sinnvoll erscheint.

Soziale Identität: Besteht die Notwendigkeit einer Kooperation, ist die entscheidende Frage, entlang welcher Kriterien die Linie zwischen Freund und Feind gezogen wird. Neben strategischen Erwägungen (Ressourcen, Stärke von potentiellen Partner*innen/ Gegner*innen) können laut Schlee bei der Wahl der Kooperationspartner*innen soziale Identitäten ausschlaggebend sein. Akteur*innen (als Individuen oder Gruppen) kooperieren eher mit Akteuren*innen, mit denen sie ein Gefühl der Zusammengehörigkeit teilen. Ob sich dieses erzeugen lässt, hängt von Faktoren wie Religion, Geographie, politischen Kategorien, Klassenzugehörigkeit, Sprache und gemeinsamer Geschichte sowie einem ähnlichen Wertekatalog ab (2005:78).

Für die Supporter*innen im Ruhrgebiet und Glasgow stellen wir dar, welchen Einfluss die Geschichte auf die Wahl möglicher Kooperationspartner*innen hat. Ergänzt wird dies durch ein weiteres theoretisches Konzept.

Neben dem Konzept der Identität hat sich das Konzept des Belonging in den letzten Jahren in den Sozialwissenschaften etabliert, das bisher jedoch nicht einheitlich definiert wurde (Bogner/Rosenthal 2009:9; Youkhana/Sebaly 2014). Dies liegt unter anderem an der Verwobenheit zwischen Identität und Belonging. Anthias bietet Entwirrung an: „Identity involves individual and collective narratives of self and other, presentation and labeling, myths of origin and myths of destiny with associated strategies and identifications" (2009:8). Belonging dagegen „is more about experiences of being part of the social fabric and the ways in which social bonds and ties are manifested in practices, experiences and emotions of inclusion" (ebd.). Demnach orientiert sich Belonging stärker an Praxen als dies Identitätskonzepte tun. Des Weiteren schreibt Anthias „to belong is to be accepted as part of a community, to feel safe within it and to have a stake in the future of such a community of membership. To belong is to share values, networks and practices" (ebd.).

Es ist möglich sich mit einer Gruppe zu identifizieren, aber nicht zu ihr dazuzugehören. Auf der anderen Seite ist es möglich zu einer Gruppe zu gehören, aber sich nicht mit ihr zu identifizieren (Pfaff-Czarnecka/Toffin 2011:xvi). Belonging kann auch als Ressource (Youkhana/Sebaly 2014) gesehen werden, denn es hat das Potential zur sozialen und politischen Mobilisierung (Pfaff-Czarnecka/Toffin 2011:xii). Auch beim Belonging geht es um Grenzziehungen, um die Frage von Inklusion und Exklusion, aber hier wird der wechselhafte Charakter dieser Zugehörigkeit betont (ebd.:xiv). Bei

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[4] Vgl. auch Helbling (2006:499ff.) Dieser geht jedoch nur auf Gruppengröße/Stärke in unterschiedlichen Konstellationen ein.

der Gestaltung sind dem Individuum jedoch Grenzen gesetzt, die abhängig sind von seiner Biographie, seiner Familie und größeren sozialen Zusammenhängen (Bogner/ Rosenthal 2009:14). Während wir die Identität der Supporter*innen unter dem Aspekt der Geschichte betrachten, geht es bei Belonging um geteilte Erfahrungen der unterschiedlichen Supporter*innengruppen im Umgang mit Institutionen wie Polizei und Vereinsführung sowie geteilte Praxen. In der Kooperation zwischen eigentlich antagonistischen Gruppen gegen solche Institutionen offenbart sich der wechselhafte Charakter des Belongings: Während am Spieltag Rivalität herrscht und das Belonging zur Eigengruppe betont wird, könnte sich das Belonging im Konflikt mit der Polizei oder der Vereinsführung auf den Rivalen ausweiten. Des Weiteren gehen wir darauf ein, in wie weit ein geteilter Supporter*innenwertekatalog Einfluss auf ein Beloning hat. Werden Werte geteilt, Erfahrungen als gemeinsam wahrgenommen, wird soziale Identität geteilt und ist der Ertrag höher als der Verlust, der beim Teilen des Gewinns entsteht, dann liegt eine hohe Wahrscheinlichkeit zur Kooperation vor.

Diesen theoretischen Annahmen folgend analysieren wir, wen und unter welchen Voraussetzungen Supporter*innen als Verbündete in ihren spezifischen Konfliktsituationen wählen. Wir beschreiben die Konfliktfelder der Gruppen im Ruhrgebiet und in Glasgow sowie den Umgang der Supporter*innen mit diesen Problemen. Wir analysieren, warum die Rival*innen im Ruhrgebet kooperieren und die des Old Firm nicht. Zunächst jedoch erfordert eine ethnologische Forschung unter Fußballfans besondere methodologische Vorüberlegungen, die wir im Folgenden darstellen.

Datenerhebung unter Fußballsupporter*innen

Bromberger liefert eine methodologische Orientierung für die Fußballfanforschung. Er fordert für eine erfolgreiche ethnologische Datenerhebung unter Fußballfans, die Feldforschungen der Mikroebene mit jenen der Makroebene zu kombinieren (1995:300). Die Mikroebene sind einzelne Fanclubs oder Bars, in denen sich organisierte Fans und Individuen treffen. Die Makroebene ist das Stadion, in der bis zu mehrere zehntausend Akteur*innen auf vielfältige Weise interagieren.

Auf der Mikroebene bedeutet dies für unsere Forschung im Ruhrgebiet, dass wir jeweils in eine Gruppe eintauchten. Wir besuchten Stammtische, fuhren mit der jeweiligen Gruppe zu Spielen und nahmen aktiv an weiteren Veranstaltungen teil. Bei der Interaktion mit den Supporter*innengruppen, dem Eintauchen in das Feld, war es notwendig, fundiert über Fußball und Fanbelange sprechen zu können (Krauss 2006:198). Auf der Makroebene besuchten wir Spiele der Vereine. Gekoppelt wurde diese teilnehmende Beobachtung, zu der informelle Gespräche gehörten, mit offenen, leitfadengestützten Interviews. Des Weiteren nutzten wir eine Variation der Pile Sort-Methode. Wir forderten unsere Gesprächspartner*innen auf, die Wappen aller Vereine nach eigenen Wünschen in eine Stecktabelle einzusortieren. Danach befragten wir

unsere Gesprächspartner*innen nach der Begründung für die jeweilige Platzierung, um den Grad an Zuneigung respektive Abneigung gegenüber bestimmten Vereinen zu messen. Darüber hinaus lasen und werteten wir systematisch Fanzines aus. In Dortmund war dies vor allem die Zeitschrift *Vorspiel* welche *The Unity* (TU) herausgibt, in Gelsenkirchen der *Blaue Brief* der *Ultras Gelsenkirchen* (UGE). Die Daten zum Ruhrderby erhoben wir kontinuierlich während der Bundesliga-Spielzeit 2013/14. Nach dem gemeinsamen Festlegen einer Strategie, der Entwicklung des Forschungs-Frame und des Leitfadens, teilten wir die Forschungseinheiten auf. Dass Christian Brandt unter den Supporter*innen von Borussia Dortmund sowie Fabian Hertel unter denen des FC Schalke 04 forschte, entschied sich aufgrund des jeweiligen besseren Zugangs zur Gruppe. In regelmäßige Debatten evaluierten wir unsere Teamarbeit und führten die Ergebnisse zusammen. In einem frühen Stadium der Forschung stellten wir beide ein methodologisches Problem fest: Der Zugang zu dem delikaten Feld Supporter*innen.

Während Bromberger in den 1980er und 1990er Jahren unter den Ultras der Vereine *Olympique Marseille*, dem *SSC Neapel* und *Juventus Turin* forschte, seine Gesprächsparter*innen als auskunftsfreudig und gegenüber seiner Forschung aufgeschlossen beschrieb (1995:300), stellten wir Gegenteiliges fest. Zwar gab es durchaus aufgeschlossene Supporter*innen, der Kontakt zu den organisierten Supporter*innen war dagegen schwierig. Die UGE lehnten per Beschluss zunächst jede Zusammenarbeit mit uns ab. Diese Vorsicht ist auf das Verhältnis von Medien sowie Öffentlichkeit und Supporter*innen zurückzuführen. So folgert Konrad Langer, dass die mediale Berichterstattung von den von ihm untersuchten Ultras „durchweg als überzogen und stigmatisierend angesehen wird" (2009:95). Almut Sülzle schreibt, dass sie zu Beginn ihrer Forschung als Spitzel oder Journalistin wahrgenommen wurde (2011:67). Ähnlich wie Sülzle hatten wir anfangs mit Vorsicht und Ablehnung zu kämpfen, aber durch aktive Präsenz im Feld gelang es uns, das nötige Vertrauen zu einzelnen Support*innen aufzubauen. Trotz der Ablehnung war es uns aus forschungsethischen Überzeugungen wichtig, dass wir unseren jeweiligen Gruppen trotz der zu befürchtenden Ablehnung unsere Rolle als Forschende verdeutlichen.

Unsere Glasgow-Daten basieren auf einer Feldforschung zu einer anderen Fragestellung zum Old Firm aus dem Jahr 2011 (Brandt/Hertel 2012). Damals forschten wir gemeinsam vor allem auf der Mikroebene, vorwiegend in Pubs, die direkt einem der beiden Vereine zuzuordnen waren. Auch hier führten wir ergänzend leitfadengestützte Interviews durch. Diese Daten werteten wir bezüglich unserer neuen Fragestellung erneut aus. Darüber hinaus führten wir leitfadengestützte Online-Interviews mit Supporter*innen, die wir damals bereits als Schlüsselgesprächspartner*innen kennengelernt hatten. Bereits damals fühlten sich Supporter*innen von Phänomenen des *Modernen Fußballs* bedroht.

Konflikte der Supporter*innen mit dem Modernen Fußball

Giulianotti definiert Supporter*innen als leidenschaftliche Anhänger*innen ihres Vereins, die für traditionelle Werte wie Treue oder Gemeinschaft stehen. Als solche sehen sie sich in einem Kampf gegen den Modernen Fußball. Darunter verstehen unsere Gesprächspartner*innen eine weitere Ökonomisierung und eine Ausrichtung auf kurzfristige Gewinnmaximierung ihres Sports zulasten von emotionaler Wärme, traditionellen Werten ihres Vereins und dem (vermeintlichen) Ausschluss weniger zahlungskräftiger Zuschauer*innen (vgl. Numerato 2014).

Ein Phänomen dieses Modernen Fußballs sind steigende Ticketpreise. Beide von uns untersuchten Gruppen im Ruhrgebiet sehen sich davon betroffen. Bei S04 war diese Diskussion eng mit dem Ticketanbieter *Viagogo* verbunden. Viagogo bezog von Vereinen ein Eintrittskartenkontingent und bot diese Tickets zu höheren Preisen auf dem Zweitmarkt an. S04 und Viagogo profitierten von diesem Geschäftsmodell zum Nachteil der Käufer*innen (Eckl/Zellin 2014). Dortmunder Supporter*innen sahen sich vor allem mit den in ihren Augen unverhältnismäßigen Topspielzuschlägen konfrontiert. Ähnlich wie die Ruhrgebiet-Supporter*innen sehen auch die Supporter*innen in Glasgow die Ticketpreise als ein Problem an. Die günstigste Karte für das Old Firm kostete 52 Britische Pfund. Der Rangers-Supporter Gascoigne[5] betonte, dass dies gerade für jüngere Fans aus der Arbeiter*innenschicht problematisch sei: Fans würden aus finanziellen Gründen nicht ins Stadion gehen.

Neben dem Protest gegen überteuerte Ticketpreise wehren sich Fans gegen eine in ihren Augen zunehmende Kriminalisierung von Fußballfans. Darunter subsumieren sie etwa als grundlos oder als überzogen wahrgenommene Polizeieinsätze, die zunehmende Überwachung durch Sicherheitsorgane im und um das Stadion sowie Einschränkungen der Rechte von Fans. In Deutschland sorgte in den letzten Jahren das Konzept *Sicheres Stadionerlebnis* für viel Kritik von Seiten der Supporter*innen. Dieses 10-Punkte Programm wurde am 12. Dezember 2012 von der Deutsche Fußball Liga (DFL), Veranstalterin der 1. und 2. Bundesliga, verabschiedet.[6] Darin wurden Maßnahmen beschlossen, die zu mehr Sicherheit in Stadion führen sollen. Beispielsweise wird die Möglichkeit eingeräumt, *Nacktzelte* zu errichten, in denen sich Stadionbesucher*innen zur Leibesvisitation entkleiden müssen, damit sie keine verbotenen Gegenstände mit ins Stadion nehmen. Supporter*innen fühlten sich dadurch in ihren Grundrechten beschnitten.

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[5] Wir anonymisieren unsere Gesprächspartner*innen durch Namen arrivierter Spieler ihres jeweiligen Vereins.

[6] Das Papier kam auf Druck der Innenminister des Bundes und der Länder zustande. Denn laut Polizei wurden in der Saison 2011/12 bei Spielen der ersten beiden Bundesligen, des DFB-Pokals und im Rahmen der UEFA-Club-Wettbewerbe 8.143 Strafverfahren eingeleitet, 1.142 Personen verletzt und mehr als 1.888.000 Arbeitsstunden durch die Polizei geleistet (LZPD/ ZIS 2012:3). Die Frage inwieweit die Erfassung und Interpretation dieser Daten ausreichend ist, soll nicht Gegenstand dieses Beitrags sein.

Ähnliches in Schottland: Am 14. Dezember 2011 verabschiedete das dortige Parlament den *Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications (Scotland) Act 2012* (OBFTCA). §1 (2b) des Gesetzes, verbietet bestimmtes Verhalten bei Fußballspielen: „The behaviour expressing hatred of, or stirring up hatred against, a group of persons based on their membership (or presumed membership) of a social or cultural group with a perceived religious affiliation" (Scottish Parliament 2011:2). Sowohl Rangers- als auch Celtic-Supporter*innen verfügen über ein Liederrepertoire, das sie gemäß dem Gesetz nicht mehr im Stadion singen dürfen. Gascoigne/Rangers betont, dass die Lieder eine wichtige Rolle für die Supporter*innen spielten. Das gemeinsame Singen der Fans im Stadion, auf dem Weg dahin oder im Pub sei elementar für die eigene Kultur. Viele Fans würden durch das Gesetz kriminalisiert, weil sie ihre Kultur auslebten und ihr Team unterstützten.

Sowohl die Supporter*innen des Old Firms als auch die des Ruhrderbys sehen sich mit ähnlichen Problemen und Gegner*innenschaft konfrontiert: Die Unterdrückung ihrer Lebenskultur durch den Modernen Fußball sowie die Restriktionen durch das Duo Staat/Ligaverband.

Proteste gegen Ticketpreise

Gegen den Ticketanbieter Viagogo formierte sich, initiiert von unterschiedlichen Schalker Supporter*innenclubs, die Initiative *ViaNOgo*. Die Initiator*innen sahen durch diese Partnerschaft ihr „Leitbild mit Füssen (sic!) getreten, die soziale Verantwortung gegenüber den Mitgliedern und Fans ist mit diesem Partner nicht gegeben. […] Wir sind ein Arbeiterverein und wollen dies auch bleiben" (Eckl/Zellin 2014). Mit Protesten und Unterschriftenaktionen erreichte die Initiative, dass S04 am 09. Juli 2013 Abstand von der Vereinbarung mit Viagogo nahm. Supporter*innengruppen anderer Vereine schlossen sich dem Schalker Weg an und erreichten Ähnliches (ebd.).

Die Schalker-Initiative ViaNOgo fand auch von Dortmunder-Supporter*innen Anerkennung. Viagogo verfügte über keine offiziellen Kanäle, um an BVB-Tickets zu kommen. Dennoch war im Dortmunder Supporter*innenblock der Schriftzug ‚ViaNOgo' zu lesen. Im Vorspiel, die Zeitschrift der Dortmunder Ultragruppe TU, positionierte diese sich zum Erfolg der Kampagne:

> „Besonders prominent protestierten unsere ungeliebten Nachbarn gegen den sogenannten Zweitmarkt. […] [u]nd so erzwang ‚ViaNOgo' immerhin eine Probeabstimmung, bei der sich 80% der Anwesenden gegen den Vertrag mit Viagogo aussprachen. Nur eine Woche später kündigte der Verein den Sponsorenvertrag außerordentlich. Ein Riesenerfolg für die Fans und trotz Fehlfarben auch ein Signal an uns alle, wie mächtig wir Mitglieder im Verein sind" (2013b:10).

Auch auf Dortmunder Seite formierte sich eine Initiative gegen hohe Ticketpreise. Sie trägt den Namen *Kein Zwanni für'n Steher*. Ausgangspunkt waren die Aufschläge, die die Dortmund-Fans beim Auswärtsspiel auf Schalke 2010 zahlen sollten. Bei diesem wurde ein so genannter Topspielzuschlag erhoben. Supporter*innen riefen dazu auf das Spiel zu boykottieren

Es folgten Boykotte weiterer Spiele, Demonstrationen und Choreografien während der Partien. So wurde ein öffentliches Bewusstsein gegen die „Ausgrenzung unterer Einkommensschichten aus den Stadien" (Kuzorra/S04) geschaffen. Die Initiative verzeichnete Erfolge. So verzichtete S04 im Juni 2012 nach Gesprächen mit Vertreter*innen von Kein Zwanni auf Topspielzuschläge für Stehplätze. Dadurch reduzierte sich der Preis für die günstigste Karte beim Revierderby um über 25 Prozent (Kein Zwanni 2014a). Inzwischen schlossen sich Fans 25 weiterer Vereine der Initiative an (Kein Zwanni 2014b), Supporter*innen von Schalke 04 sind jedoch offiziell nicht darunter. Zunächst war die Reaktion der Rival*innen aus Gelsenkirchen gegenüber Kein Zwanni verhalten. Es gab den Vorwurf, dass sich die Aktion nur gegen den Verein S04 richten würde. Diese Einschätzung änderte sich schnell. Ricken/BVB berichtet, dass es nach der Aktion auf informellem Wege von Schalker Supporter*innen Anerkennung gegeben habe. Später bekundete die UGE offiziell ihre Solidarität mit der von den BVB-Supporter*innen initiierten Kampagne. Auf der Webseite der UGE wird verkündet: „Bei aller Rivalität wünschen wir der schwarz-gelben Anhängerschaft viel Erfolg sowie das nötige Durchhaltevermögen bei ihrer Aktion Kein Zwanni für'n Steher. Wir als Ultras Gelsenkirchen werden dieses Vorhaben mit dem nötigen Respekt begleiten" (UGE 2010). Unser Interviewpartner Kuzorra/S04 bestätigt das:

> „Insgesamt eine gute Aktion, um auf die überteuerten Kartenpreise aufmerksam zu machen. Wir Fans müssen derartige Aktionen öfter bringen, auch wenn wir dabei höchst wahrscheinlich von den Offiziellen belächelt und als *Fußballromantiker* bezeichnet werden."

Hier müsste der Kampf gegen hohe Ticketpreise in Glasgow thematisiert werden. Doch während unseres Aufenthalts im Feld war dieser Aspekt zugunsten der Kriminalisierung in den Hintergrund getreten, sodass wir uns im Folgenden auf diesen konzentrieren.

Proteste gegen Kriminalisierung von Supporter*innen

Moderner Fußball wird häufig auch mit dem Ausbau von Sicherheitsstrukturen und aus Sicht der Supporter*innen damit einhergehender Kriminalisierung zusammengedacht. In Glasgow formierte sich sowohl im Vorfeld des OBFTCA, als auch nach der Verabschiedung Protest von Supporter*innen der beiden großen Glasgower Mannschaften. Am 27. September 2011 entrollten die Rangers-Supporter*innengruppen

Union Bears und *The Blue Order* zu Spielbeginn gegen den *FC Kilmarnock* drei Banner: ‚SNP[7]– Weak on criminals tough on Fans‘, ‚Football Fans not criminals‘ und ‚Undefinable laws against supporters‘. In der Stellungnahme dazu heißt es:

> „The criminalisation of football supporters threatens the game which we all love. Supporters attending a football match will now be met with fear of arrest, losing your job and being named in newspapers despite not yet having your court case heard […] The Union Bears and The Blue Order would like to make it clear we are against Sectarianism and Racism in all forms“ (Scotzine 2011).

Gewöhnlich unterstützen die Supporter*innen der oben genannten Gruppe ihre Mannschaft bei den Spielen lautstark. Doch vier Tage später, beim Spiel gegen Hibernian Edinburgh, blieben sie stumm. Viele hatten sich die Münder zugeklebt. Sie hielten Absperrbänder der Polizei in die Höhe. Wieder wurden Banner entrollt, diesmal mit der Aufschrift: ‚Guilty until proven innocent‘, ‚Police – don‘t cross‘ und ‚Al-Megrani[8] sits at home football fans sit in jail‘. Die Stellungnahme der Gruppen zu diesem Tag endet mit dem Satz „Supporting your team is not a crime“ (The Blue Order 2011).

Auf Seite der Celtic-Supporter*innen gründete sich 2011 die Initiative *Fans Against Criminalisation* (FAC). In ihrem Statement zur Gründung schrieben sie:

> „The proposed new legislation criminalises football fans for being football fans. [...] We will not stand idly by as fan culture and football fans are criminalised. Over the coming weeks and months we will be mounting a campaign against the Offensive Behaviour at Football Bill“ (FAC 2011).

Die FAC organisierte Demonstrationen, Spruchbanner sowie Unterschriftensammlungen. Eine der jüngsten Aktionen der Initiative war die sogenannte *Roll of Honour Download Campaign*. Das Lied *Roll of Honour* wurde 1982 komponiert. Auf der Seite der FAC findet sich ein Statement der Band *Irish Brigade*, in der sie ihr Lied folgendermaßen beschreibt: „[I]t was to commemorate the sacrifice of ten young men who died in the Hunger Strike of 1981. They, too, were protesting against Criminalisation“ (FAC 2014a).[9] Das Lied gehört zu den nach dem neuen Gesetz verbotenen Liedern. Fans, die es im Stadion sangen, wurden bestraft. Im Zuge der Protestaktion wurden Supporter*innen aufgerufen, das Lied zwischen dem 9. und 15. Februar 2014 bei Internetmusikplattformen herunterzuladen. So wurde zum einen Geld für die Gerichtsko-

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[7] Die SNP (Scottish National Party) besitzt seit 2011 die absolute Mehrheit im schottischen Parlament.
[8] Al-Megrani (1952 bis 2012) war ein libyscher Geheimdienstoffizier, der 2002 wegen des Lockerbie-Anschlags zu lebenslanger Haft verurteilt, 2008 aber wegen seines schlechten Gesundheitszustands entlassen wurde.
[9] Dabei handelt es sich um einen Hungerstreik von Mitglieder*innen der in Großbritannien und Irland als terroristisch verbotenen Gruppen *Provisional Irish Republican Army* (PIRA) und der *Irish National Liberation Army* (INLA), die im nordirischen Maze Gefängnis unter anderem für das Tragen von Zivilkleidung kämpften (Kandel 2005:233ff.).

sten der bestraften Supporter*innen eingespielt, zum anderen wurde der Song gezielt in die *Top 40 Single Charts* im Vereinigten Königreich gehievt (FAC 2014b).

Beide Glasgower Supporter*innengruppen protestierten einzeln gegen dasselbe Gesetz. Anders die Supporter*innen im Ruhrgebiet: Konfrontiert mit der Kriminalisierung kooperierten sie.

Am 21. August 2013 stürmte während des Champions League-Qualifikationsspiels S04 gegen *PAOK Saloniki* eine Polizeihundertschaft die Nordkurve auf Schalke. Der Polizeiangriff auf die S04-Anhänger*innen evozierte die Solidarität der Rival*innen aus Dortmund. Beispielsweise schrieb der User unblau in einem Forum: „Ich bin definitiv kein Blauer […]. Aber: Das geht definitiv nicht! [Es wird] einer angeblichen Provokation nachgestellt und eine Art Rammbock in die Nordkurve geschoben" (Bock 2013).

Beim Bundesligaspiel gegen *Werder Bremen* bekundeten die Dortmunder Supporter*innen ihre Solidarität mit dem kriminalisierten Rivalen deutlich sichtbar. TU entrollte ein Transparent mit der Aufschrift: ‚Das wahre Gesicht der Polizei NRW – sonntags bei uns, mittwochs bei GE[lsenkirchen]' (siehe unter TU 2013c). Koller/ BVB sagte dazu:

> „Was man jetzt ja gesehen hatte, also dass sich zum Beispiel gegen die Polizei die Ultragruppen so leicht Sympathien für einander entwickeln. Aber dann nur sozusagen gegen die Polizei direkt. […] Weil es halt kein Verein war, sondern halt die Obrigkeit war mit der man schon, sag ich mal, öfters Auseinandersetzungen hatte auch und da verbrüdern sich dann auch die Feinde."

Dieses Handeln der Polizei wurde von den Supporter*innen als Kriminalisierung empfunden und bewirkte die Solidarität der Rival*innen. Nach einer Durchsuchung der TU durch die Polizei befragt, hielt Kuzorra/S04 es grundsätzlich „für problematisch, ganze Gruppen aufgrund der Fehltritte einiger weniger festzuhalten." Während die Polizeieinsätze die Solidarität beim Rivalen bewirkten, führte das Konzept Sicheres Stadionerlebnis dazu, dass sich, abgesehen von zwei Ausnahmen, die Supporter*innen aller größeren deutschen Vereine zu der Initiative *12:12 Keine Stimme – Keine Stimmung* zusammenschlossen (N.N. 2013:18). Neben Demonstrationen erregten Stimmungsboykotte in den Stadien Medienaufmerksamkeit. Die Supporter*innen schwiegen an mehreren Spieltagen die ersten 12 Spielminuten und 12 Sekunden, um auf die Beschneidung ihrer Rechte durch das Konzept aufmerksam zu machen. An dieser bundesweiten Aktion beteiligten sich auch die rivalisierenden Supporter*innen aus Dortmund und Schalke (UGE 2012; TU 2013a). Vertreter*innen der Gruppen kamen für ein gemeinsames Treffen zusammen, koordinierten eine gemeinsame Öffentlichkeitsarbeit sowie ein einheitliches Auftreten für den Protest und stimmten ihre Aktionen miteinander ab. Für die Kampagne ließ sich somit eine Kooperation feststellen.

Für *12:12* konnten die Supporter*innen bereits auf jahrelange Erfahrungen in der bundesweiten Kooperation zurückgreifen. Denn die Kampagne wurde auch von zwei bundesweiten Bündnissen mitgetragen: die *Interessengemeinschaft Unsere Kurve* und

das Bündnis *Pro Fans*. Erstere ist laut Selbstverständnis „ein vereinsübergreifender Zusammenschluss der organisierten Fußballfans in Deutschland" und tritt für den Erhalt der Fankultur und der Freiräume für Supporter*innen ein (Scheurer 2014). Mitglied sind sowohl die *BVB Fan- und Förderabteilung* als auch der *Schalker Fan-Club Verband e.V.* Die jeweiligen einzelnen Supporter*innen-Gruppierungen sind Mitglieder*innen der entsprechenden Dachorganisationen. Mitglieder*innenschwächer und bezüglich der Inhalte supporter*innennäher ist Pro Fans (Pro Fans 2010). Anfang 2014 veranstalteten beide Zusammenschlüsse einen Fankongress in Berlin. Hier konnten wir zwischen Schalker und Dortmunder Supporter*innen konstruktive Interaktion im Rahmen von Diskussionsrunden wie auch informelle Dialoge beobachten.

Gründe für (Nicht-)Kooperation

Die Rival*innen des Ruhrderbys kooperierten gegen Bedrohungen ihrer Lebenswelt durch Vereinsführung und Staat. In Glasgow herrschten ähnliche Bedrohungen. Trotzdem kooperierten die Fans des Old Firms nicht. Um zu verstehen, warum es im Ruhrgebiet zu dieser Zusammenarbeit kam, beim Old Firm jedoch nicht, muss man über den Fußballzusammenhang hinausblicken. Die unterschiedlichen Entwicklungen lassen sich anhand der Faktoren Schlees – Gruppengröße und soziale Identität – erklären.

a. Faktor: Gruppengröße

In Deutschland findet Kooperation vor allem im Kontext bundesweiter Bündnisse statt. Ein Grund für die Akzeptanz zur Mitarbeit bei übergeordneten Bündnissen ist das Bewusstsein, nur im Verbund eine einflussreiche Masse darstellen zu können, um bei Konflikten Bedrohungen von außen abzuwenden. Selbst große Supporter*innengruppen wie Schalke oder Dortmund verfügen nicht über genügend Einfluss, um sich auf Bundesebene Gehör zu verschaffen. Auf eigens abgehaltenen Konferenzen begegnen sich die unterschiedlichen Supporter*innengruppen trotz Rivalität auf Augenhöhe. Die Anwesenheit des damaligen DFL-Geschäftsführers Andreas Rettig, der sich auf dem Kongress den Diskussionen stellte, ist als ein Zeichen für den Erfolg dieser Bündnisse zu werten. Durch das Bündnis erreichen die Supporter*innen Einfluss auf fußballpolitische Entscheidungen. Der Gewinn an Einfluss wird nicht einer einzelnen Gruppe angerechnet, sondern der Bewegung im Allgemeinen. Ricken/BVB merkt in Bezug auf die ‚ViaNOgo'-Initiative an:

> „Dass die das in Schalke mit zuerst gemacht haben, das fanden wir gut. Also da wäre es halt egal gewesen, also da wär es auch egal gewesen, wenn das die Münch-

ner gewesen wären oder was weiß ich. Das hat im Fußball nichts zu suchen und zeigt ja auch wieder wie gestärkt Fangruppierungen oder generell die Fans halt auftreten können und solche Sachen zusammen erreichen können."

Ein Erfolg der S04er Supporter*innen wird so für Ricken/BVB auch zu einem Erfolg der Supporter*innen des BVB, obwohl sie nicht direkt von Viagogo betroffen sind. Er liest diesen Erfolg als einen Erfolg gegen den Modernen Fußball. Wenn Supporter*innen in einem anderen Verein einen Sieg verbuchen können, bedeutet das auch in Dortmund einen Zugewinn an Einfluss im eigenen Verein für die Supporter*innen, die sich solidarisiert haben. Zwar bedeutet eine Kooperation mit vielen Partner*innen kaum Gewinn an Einfluss für eine einzelne Gruppe. Ohne die Wahl dieser Kooperationen allerdings hätte die einzelne Gruppe gar keinen Einfluss.

Anders verhält es sich in Glasgow. Hier können wir keine Kooperation feststellen, hier gibt es keine landesweiten Bündnisse. Gascoigne/Rangers kann sich eine Zusammenarbeit generell nicht vorstellen. Nicht nur eine Kooperation zwischen Rangers-Supporter*innen und Celtic-Supporter*innen, sondern generell mit Anhänger*innen anderer schottischer Mannschaften schließt er aus. Dies liegt seiner Meinung nach weniger an den Rangers-Fans, als viel eher an den anderen: „Rangers are the most hated team in Scotland." Auch unser Gesprächspartner O'Neills/Celtic wirkte irritiert bei der Vorstellung eine Aktion gemeinsam mit anderen schottischen Fans durchzuführen. Dies hängt mit der Struktur des schottischen Fußballs zusammen. Er ist dominiert von den beiden großen Vereinen. Supporter*innen von Celtic FC oder Rangers FC erhalten keine nennenswerte Stärkung ihrer Position durch die Kooperation mit Supporter*innen anderer Vereine. In Schottland entscheidet man sich entweder für Celtic oder Rangers. Gemessen an der Gesamtbevölkerung (knapp vier Millionen Einwohner*innen) erreicht jede der beiden Fangruppierungen einen so hohen Anteil an der Gesamtbevölkerung, der in Deutschland undenkbar wäre. Die einzige Kooperation, die eine nennenswerte Stärkung der eigenen Position zur Folge hätte, wäre die mit Supporter*innen des Rivalen. Mit diesem scheint eine Zusammenarbeit jedoch undenkbar. Stattdessen beziehen sich die Supporter*innen auf ihre eigenen Erfolge, wie die der Celtic-Fans, die ihren Protest-Song alleine in die Charts brachten. Die Erfolge der jeweiligen Aktionen müssen die Supporter*innen nicht mit Rival*innen teilen – jede Gruppe führte diese auf ihren Einsatz zurück. Das Gesetz konnte dieser Protest der Supporter*innen jedoch nicht verhindern.

b. Faktor: Soziale Identität und Belonging

Die Rival*innen des Ruhrderbys kooperieren. Die des Old Firms nicht. Wie mit Schlee dargestellt, entscheiden sich Gruppen für Partner*innen mit denen sie ein Zusammengehörigkeitsgefühl kreieren können. Für Schlee ist Geschichte „a giant factory" (2005:83) zur Etablierung dieses Gefühls; ebenso ist ein geteilter Wertekatalog ein

Kriterium für Zusammengehörigkeit. Wir analysieren zunächst die soziale Identität der Ruhrrival*innen entlang des Kriteriums Geschichte und den daraus erwachsenen Werten. Ein geteilter Supporter*innenwertekatalog ist ebenfalls Bestandteil eines Belongings, welches darüber hinaus auf geteilten Erfahrungen fußt. Dieses Belonging analysieren wir in einem weiteren Schritt. Soziale Identität und Belonging analysieren wir aufgrund ihrer Verquickung in einem Abschnitt und obwohl dort nicht kooperiert wird, wenden wir diese Analyse auch auf das Old Firm an, um daran die Abgrenzung zwischen den beiden Gruppen hervorzuheben.

Unsere Gesprächspartner*innen aus Dortmund und Schalke beziehen sich auf eine gemeinsame Ruhrgebietsidentität. Etwa wenn Kuzorra/S04 über die eigenen Fans und die des Rivalen sagt: „Wir lieben alle den Fußball und wir lieben alle das Ruhrgebiet." Diese Ruhrgebiets-Identität wird auch von Gesprächspartner*innen geteilt, die keinen familiären Bezug zu der Region haben. Auch sie teilten das relevante Wissen über die Region und die Bewohner*innen. Wiederholt wurde auf die Ruhrgebietsgeschichte verwiesen, die wir hier kurz skizzieren.

Die Herausbildung des Ruhrgebiets begann mit dem Einsetzen der Industrialisierung. Die Region wurde von nun an überregional als Abbaugebiet für Steinkohle und Eisenerze wahrgenommen. Gestillt wurde der mit der Industrialisierung wachsende Durst nach Arbeitskraft durch den Zuzug von Arbeitssuchenden aus anderen Regionen. Trotz religiöser, politischer, sprachlicher und ethnischer Differenzen prägte sich eine gemeinsame Identität entlang der Erfahrungen unter Tage aus. Es habe sich eine Verbundenheit unter den Bergleuten entwickelt, begründet durch das gemeinsame stetige Risiko im Bergbau, das Aufeinander-Angewiesen-Sein und das gemeinschaftliche Entlohnungssystem; der Arbeitsplatz stiftete also Identität (Jäger 2000:44f.). Dies unterstrichen exemplarisch unsere eigenen Erfahrungen auf einem Schalke-Supporter*innenfest. Es wurde uns das *Steigerlied* beigebracht, ein Bergmannslied, das heute von Supporter*innen des FC Schalke gesungen wird.

Danach gefragt, was denn charakteristisch für das Ruhrgebiet sei, wurde uns immer wieder von einfachen aber ehrlichen Arbeiter*innen berichtet, in Abgrenzung dazu seien etwa Düsseldorfer*innen versnobt. Dass S04 ein Arbeiter*innenverein ist, ist ein Mythos. Der Entzauberung dessen nimmt sich Stefan Goch (2007) an. Bereits bei der Gründung 1904 seien die meisten Mitglieder*innen bessergestellt gewesen und auch für die 1920er Jahre stellt er fest, dass nur eine Minderheit der Mitglieder*innen Proletarier*innen waren (122ff.). Für den deutschen Fußball im Allgemeinen stellt Oliver Fürtjes (2009) fest, dass in den deutschen Stadien sich schon immer tendenziell ein (bildungs-)bürgerliches Publikum zusammenfand, zumindest war sein Anteil größer als in der Gesamtgesellschaft. Fußball als Proletarier*innensport ist daher ein Mythos; ein wirkmächtiger allerdings, der bis heute für die Identitätsbildung Bedeutung hat.

Auch in den beschriebenen Aktionen gegen die Ticketpreise fällt auf, dass sich die Supporter*innen im Ruhrgebiet auf ein gemeinsames ‚Wir' beziehen. Auf die BVB-Aktion Kein Zwanni angesprochen sagt etwa Kuzorra/S04: „Wir Fans müssen derartige Aktionen öfter bringen." Dies ist bemerkenswert, sind doch seine Schalker nicht

an Kein Zwanni beteiligt. Trotzdem wird hier ein ‚Wir' betont. Auch auf Seite der Dortmunder Gesprächspartner*innen findet sich dies. Etwa, wenn Ricken/BVB die Zusammenarbeit in den Bündnissen charakterisiert: „Da sitzen dann auch Dortmunder und Schalker zusammen, die sich für die Fankultur generell einsetzen. Aber das passiert dann generell als Fans. Das ist dann dieses ‚getrennt in den Farben, vereint in der Sache' gegen den Modernen Fußball." Diese vereinsübergreifende Wahrnehmung als Support*innen fußt auf einem geteilten Supporter*innenwertekatalog, der etwa den Einsatz für niedrige Ticketpreise umfasst. Als Anhänger*innen ihrer jeweiligen Vereine sammeln die Supporter*innen die identischen Erfahrungen mit dritten Akteur*innen wie Polizei und Vereinsführung. Die Supporter*innen im Ruhrgebiet können sich in die jeweils andere Gruppe aufgrund dieser Erfahrungen hineinversetzen. Diese geteilten Erfahrungen waren laut Koller/BVB der Grund für das Transparent im BVB-Block gegen den Polizeieinsatz in Gelsenkirchen. Auf kooperativen Treffen werden darüber hinaus neue gemeinsame Erfahrungen gesammelt. Dieser Erfahrungshorizont äußert sich in einem Belonging als Supporter*innen.

Nichtsdestotrotz ist Rivalität das vorherrschende Beziehungscharakteristika zwischen den Supporter*innen, das lediglich situativ aufgebrochen wird. Ricken/BVB fasst zusammen: „Preise Ja. Polizei ja, aber bei anderen Sachen ist das echt schwierig." Unser Gesprächspartner Chapuisat/BVB ergänzt, dass Supporter*innen der beiden Vereine auch gemeinsam gegen den finanzrechtlich bedingten Zwangsabstieg des MSV Duisburg aus der 2. Bundesliga demonstriert hätten. Die Beispiele, in denen Supporter*innen gegen den Modernen Fußball einstehen, sind für mehrere Gesprächspartner*innen das einzige denkbare Feld einer Kooperation. Ein Ergebnis, das sich auch in unserer Pile Sort-Stecktabelle widerspiegelt. Dort rangieren die Rivalen zwar meist auf den niedrigeren Rängen; aber selten auf einem Abstiegsplatz. Falls doch, dann mit der Erklärung versehen, dass sie in der nächsten Saison wieder aufsteigen sollten. Dauerhaft sollten die Sinnbilder für den Modernen Fußball absteigen, der *VFL Wolfsburg* und die *TSG Hoffenheim*. Die Kooperation mit dem Rivalen ist demnach kein Phänomen, das den Wertevorstellungen der Supporter*innen entgegensteht, sie ist vielmehr Ausdruck derselben Supporter*innenwerte. Dies wird auch deutlich, wenn Ricken/BVB die Supporter*innen beschreibt, die in den Bündnissen die Arbeit vorantreiben:

> „Wobei man sagen muss, bei den Ultragruppen oder bei den Leuten, die in der Szene vernetzt sind, sowieso die Extreme vorherrschen. In die eine Richtung, also sprich also das ist dann unser Feind und der Rivale. Aber auch halt. Wir wissen dann auch, wann es mal ernst wird, wann wir zusammenstehen müssen für Fanrechten oder so. Der Otto Normalfan auf der Tribüne da, sagt halt, ich kann Schalke nicht leiden, die sind doof aber das ist halt einfach das Spiel so. Aber da passiert halt einfach nix. […] Aber da passiert halt auch genauso wenig in die andere Richtung; dem ist das auch egal, dass die Polizei beim Saloniki-Spiel in den Schalke Block marschiert."

Wo die Grenzen zwischen Inklusion und Exklusion gezogen werden beziehungsweise welches Belonging aktiviert wird, ist demnach von der jeweiligen Situation abhängig. Es gehört jedoch zum Wissen von Supporter*innen, wann die Grenzziehung zu Rival*innen angebracht ist und wann nicht – wann also kooperiert wird und wann nicht.

In Glasgow konnten wir keine Kooperation feststellen. Auch unter den dortigen Supporter*innen ist das Wissen über die Geschichte ihrer Stadt verbreitet. Im Verlauf der Industriellen Revolution entwickelte sich Glasgow zu einer Metropole für Schiffsbau und Schwerindustrie. Der wachsende Bedarf an Arbeitskräften wurde durch Zuzug unter anderem aus Irland gestillt. Bis hier ähneln sich die Entwicklungen von Glasgow und dem Ruhrgebiet. Anders als im Ruhrgebiet entstand daraus in Glasgow keine geteilte soziale Identität. Denn es wurde getrennt nach Protestant*innen und Katholik*innen gearbeitet, gewohnt und gelebt. Die katholischen Ir*innen wurden von den protestantischen Schott*innen häufig als Fremde abgelehnt und angefeindet (Maurer 2008:243ff.). Sectarianism ist bis heute ein Thema in der schottischen Gesellschaft, auch wenn die Intensität religiöser Grenzziehung abgenommen hat (Moorhouse 1999). Beim Old Firm ist dieser Antagonismus lebendig. Seine Geschichte ist eng mit den beschriebenen historischen Entwicklungen verknüpft. Giulianotti identifiziert „[...] traditional ‚sectarian‘ rivalry between fans of two Scottish football clubs, Rangers (with a strong Protestant Unionist and anti-Catholic history) and Celtic (founded by Irish Catholics and with many Irish nationalist followers), both based in Glasgow“ (2005:7). Nach einem von uns beobachteten Old Firm im Jahre 2011 skandierten die Rangers-Supporter*innen ‚Fuck The Pope‘. In der Celtic-Kneipe Brazen Head wurde die Band Eira Og, die den Kampf der IRA glorifiziert, gespielt. Laut Gascoigne/Rangers ist das Old Firm das intensivste Derby der Welt, gerade weil es dabei auch um Politik gehe. Das spiegelt sich in O'Neills/Celtic Aussage. Er sah unüberbrückbare politische Differenzen als Grund für die Rivalität im Old Firm: „It relates to The Troubles in Ireland. Celtic fans being in favour of supporting Ireland against British rule in Ireland. While Rangers fans support the occupancy of British troops in Northern Ireland.“ In eine andere Richtung ging die Aussage von Boyd/Rangers, mit dem wir uns in einer Glasgower Rangers-Kneipe unterhielten: „It means more than football“ sagte er, „it is about religion.“ Er bezieht sich auf die stereotypische katholische beziehungsweise protestantische Identität der Fans.

Nach den Erkenntnissen aus dem Ruhrgebiet liegt die Vermutung nahe, dass auch in Glasgow ein Belonging zwischen den rivalisierenden Supporter*innen aufgrund identischer Erfahrungen und des geteilten Wertekataloges entsteht. Dem ist nicht so. Die beschriebenen Aktionen beider Gruppen sprechen nur für die eigenen Fans. Gascoigne/Rangers kommentiert die letzte FAC-Aktion: „Roll of Honour romanticises Irish Republican Terrorists, some of who killed civilians.“ Er spricht sich dagegen aus, dass der Song im Radio gespielt wird. „It would not be allowed for *Al Qaeda* so why should it be allowed for *PIRA* and *INLA*?“ Die gesamte Initiative sei nur für Celtic-Supporter*innen und nicht für Fußballfans im Allgemeinen. Sie ver-

teidige nur die Celtic-Lebensweise und sei gegen die der Rangers: „I show no solidarity with them because they want that Rangers songs are banned." Dies hängt auch mit den jeweiligen Gruppenzielen zusammen. Im Erfolgsfall wäre die gegnerische Supporter*innengruppe legitimiert, die eigene Gruppe durch das Liedgut zu erniedrigen. Die Gesprächspartner*innen beider Seiten betonen jedoch, dass es nicht einfach um Beleidigungen ginge, sondern, dass das Liedgut der Rival*innen terroristische beziehungsweise faschistische Gruppen huldige. Für die Akzeptanz des gegnerischen Liedgutes einzutreten scheint demnach undenkbar. Doch auch in Bezug auf die Ticketpreise erscheint unseren Gesprächspartner*innen eine Kooperation undenkbar. Lediglich McCann/Rangers konnte sich ein Szenario vorstellen, in dem er mit Celtic-Supporter*innen kooperieren könne: Bei einer Bedrohung Glasgows durch islamistische Terroristen.

Unser Gesprächspartner O'Neill/Celtic bestätigt, dass es bei FAC vor allem um Celtic-Fans gehe: „Only Celtic fans seem to be targeted by this law." Nach der Reaktion der Rangers-Supporter*innen auf die FAC-Initiative befragt, berichtet er: „I'm not too sure on the reaction of the Rangers fans to the FAC. Laughing, maybe. Because their fans aren't targeted the same as Celtic fans are. […] The police in Glasgow always have been in Rangers favour." Nach O'Neills/Celtic Meinung gibt es also keine Zusammenarbeit, weil beide Gruppen im ungleichen Maße von dem Gesetz betroffen seien. Demnach sieht er eine größere Nähe zwischen der Polizei und den Rangers Supporter*innen als zwischen den beiden Gruppen. Demensprechend gibt es keine subjektiv geteilten Erfahrungen im Umgang mit der Obrigkeit, die Grundlage eines Belongings sein könnten.

Schlussfolgerungen

Der vorliegende Artikel thematisierte, inwieweit rivalisierende Fußballsupporter*innen kooperieren und Solidarität mit rivalisierenden Supporter*innen zeigen. Dieser sogenannten antagonistischen Kooperation näherten wir uns durch ethnologische Datenerhebungen in zwei Feldern. Unter den Rival*innen des Ruhrderbys identifizierten wir antagonistische Kooperation, während wir sie unter den Supporter*innen des Old Firm nicht feststellen. Dies ist bemerkenswert, da beide Settings hinsichtlich der urban-industriellen Entwicklung und des Wertekatalogs der Akteur*innen vergleichbar sind. Folgt man der Theorie Schlees zur Gruppengröße, lässt sich diese Beobachtung wie folgt erklären: Durch die Kooperation der diversen Supporter*innen in Deutschland entsteht für diese ein nennenswerter Zugewinn an Einfluss gegenüber Akteur*innen des Modernen Fußballs. In Schottland hingegen existieren nur zwei nennenswerte Supporter*innengruppen. Für keine von beiden könnten durch eine Kooperation Erfolge erzielt werden, die die damit einhergehenden Nachteile relativieren würden.

Im Verlauf unserer Analyse erarbeiteten wir anhand der Faktoren Geschichte, Erfahrungen und Wertekatalog, dass eine soziale Identität beziehungsweise ein Belonging zwischen den Supporter*innen im Ruhrgebiet erkennbar ist. Wir verdeutlichten konträr dazu, weshalb diese Faktoren zu Exklusion zwischen den Supporter*innen des Old Firms führten. Im Ruhrgebiet besteht eine gemeinsame regionale soziale Identität, die auf eine geteilte Migrations- und Arbeitsgeschichte rekurriert. Anders ist dies bei den Supporter*innen des Old Firms, sie betonen die trennenden Elemente ihrer Geschichte. Darüber hinaus sind es im Ruhrgebiet vor allem geteilte Erfahrungen und ein geteiltes Supporter*innenideal, bei dem gemeinsame *traditionelle Werte* gegen den Modernen Fußball verteidigt werden, was situativ zu einer Inklusion, also einem Belonging, der Rival*innen führt. Zwar fühlen sich beide Gruppen des Old Firms auch dem Supporter*innenideal und dem Kampf gegen den Modernen Fußball verpflichtet. Sie gehen aber davon aus, dass die andere Gruppe nicht im gleichen Maße wie sie selbst durch den Modernen Fußball bedroht wird, weshalb sie keine Erfahrungen teilen. Dies steht einer Kooperation entgegen.

Wenngleich die hier dokumentierten Ergebnisse nur für Fußballsupporter*innen gelten, könnte solche Zusammenarbeit auch in anderen Bereichen, etwa zwischen verfeindeten Jugendgangs oder in politischen Konflikten festgestellt werden. Einen Beitrag hierzu kann besonders die Ethnologie, durch ihre Nähe zu den Akteur*innen, leisten, um die bisher unterschätzte Perspektive möglicher Solidarität und Kooperation zwischen verfeindeten subkulturellen Gruppen zu verstehen. Die Ethnologie kann durch langfristige Teilnahme solche sich wandelnden Strukturen kontextuell und aus emischer Perspektive herausarbeiten.

Interviewliste

Name	Verein	Alter	Beruf	Gesprächsort/-datum
Nemec	S04	Mitte 50	Ehemaliger Bergmann	Ehemalige Zeche 13.07.13
Anderbrügge	S04	23	Handwerker	Kneipe 09.01.14
Boyd	Rangers	30	Angestellter	Pub 17.09.11
Chapuisat	BVB	25	Student	Park 18.07.13
Eigenrauch	S04	34	Handwerker	Park 17.05.13
Gascoigne	Rangers	31	Angestellter	Online 08.02.14
Koller	BVB	19	Student	Privat 28.09.13
Kuzorra	S04	25	Student	Erstmalig Café 25.09.13
O'Neill	Celtic	24	Student	Online Februar 14
Ricken	BVB	26	Student/PR-Berater	Biergarten 07.06.13 und 23.03.14
McCann	Rangers	Mitte 40	Selbstständiger Gastronom	Pub 17.09.11

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Study 2

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Article

Striving for Social Sustainability of Football Commercialization: An Ethnographic Case Study of the German Fan-Governed Club HFC Falke

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Abstract: In several European countries, a new football fan type has emerged in recent years—the post-consumer fan. These fans break with commercialized football by founding their own clubs in order to incorporate their vision of football. This vision is antagonistic to commercialized "modern football". However, the newly founded clubs compete in the existing commercialized structures and need to generate financial capital. To date, little is known about how clubs deal with these contradictory goals. Based on a 27 month long ethnographic participant observation and ten semi-structured interviews, this article investigates how the members of the German club HFC Falke negotiated sponsoring and players' wages. It highlights how the clubs implement alternative practices in order to remain close to their values while being competitive. As a result, they emphasize the democratic process, and implement normative guidelines. Some of the strategies are known from previous research on other clubs but during our research we also detected new strategies. The club and its members experiment with new practices, such as transparent payment based on effort and sponsoring used for the fans' benefit (e.g., subsidies of beer prices on matchdays). Through these normative guidelines and practices, the clubs strive to establish a more sustainable football in commodified structures. The discussions in the club and its practices might also inspire debates on the future of professional football.

Keywords: commercialization; commodification; post-consumer fans; fan culture; breakaway club; authenticity; belonging; sponsorship; ethnography

1. Introduction

Processes of commodification and (over- or hyper-) commercialization are crucial topics in European professional football that have been discussed over the past 20 years. On the one hand, football benefits from its commodification and commercialization. Advantages include better infrastructure, more professional employees and, as the result of both, better performance on the pitch [1]. On the other hand, several scientists agree that increasing commercialization negatively affects footfall and its fans [2]. Commercialized football is associated with high-risk transactions jeopardizing several clubs' existence [3], as well as undermining social values and responsibilities by partnering with unethical sponsors or owners and illegal practices. Additionally, fans criticize commercialization transforming their authentic emotions into a business [4], turning fans into customers, while they see themselves as the clubs' moral owners [5]. They feel alienated from the sport and 'their' clubs [6,7], which is a point to be considered since fans are a crucial stakeholders in sports [8]. Akin to social movements [9], they protest against football's commercialization inside and outside the stadium in many countries, even cooperating with rival supporters [10].

Beyond classical protests, some fans choose a new approach. They leave the realm of professional football and establish their own clubs. Androus and Giudici [11] describe

this phenomenon as the fifth phase of the ultra movement, which emerged after previous unsuccessful and thus frustrating protests failed to limit the influence of commercialization on their clubs. These fans leave the commercialized stadiums to "exit the consumer game" and set up their clubs as "the most radical response to the commodification of the game" [12]. These clubs are owned by supporters and compete in the existing sports system, mainly in lower local leagues. They exist in different European counties, such as Belgium, England, Croatia, Israel, Italy, and Spain. These new clubs have been founded to incorporate the supporters' normative vision of football [13]. Meanwhile, they refer to the parent club's identity, e.g., by using the same colors as the club they followed in the past or using club names related to this club or its history. Davis named these fans post-consumers, a term also used in discourses on social change. Post-consumerism is an idea to transform society and its economy into a more sustainable one [14]. The idea of a post-consumerist society develops in niches [15], but interaction with a commercialized environment, such as professional football, is necessary.

So far, little is known about the post-consumerist fans' vision of sustainable football and the clubs' practices. The existing literature, mainly on FC United of Manchester (FCUM), reflects the clubs' formations and proclaimed values or their democratic structure and participation [3,13,16–23]. The literature barely deals with the interaction of the post-consumer clubs and their commercialized surroundings. The contributions mention different values but do not reflect how the clubs behave based on these values. Moreover, they do not reflect if these values are tested in the leagues' competitive surroundings. Based on this background, this article will focus on the following question: How do post-consumer fans deal with issues of commodification and commercialization with regard to their clubs? The results provide a better understanding of football fans' expectations of a more sustainable football and explain how post-consumer practices work in football.

This paper focuses on one club as a case study, the German HFC Falke. This club was founded in 2014 by (former) supporters of the Hamburger Sport Verein (HSV). They broke away after the club's professional teams had been spun-off from a non-profit organization towards a stock company [24]. HFC Falke's claim "grateful backwards, brave forward" refers to the HSV's founding history and emphasizes their ideal to create something new. In their "fundamental thoughts", the club criticizes commercialization. They argue that "[t]he modern professional football has [become] more and more alienated and developed into an event and capital monster. Someday you reach the status where the last acceptance limit is broken, and you ask yourself, what shall I do" [25]. Thus, fans founded HFC Falke, hoping to create a more sustainable future. In 2015 the club started playing in the lowest local league, the ninth division—real, authentic football. In the two following seasons, they were promoted twice.

This article reflects their striving to create a club beyond commercialization while playing football successfully. It focuses on players' wages and sponsoring, two aspects of commercialization that had become virulent at HFC Falke during the time of research. The following section reflects the concepts of commercialization, the related term commodification, and the contrary concept of authenticity. Afterwards, the methodological approach will be outlined, introducing the process of participant observation. The results chapter introduces the members' knowledge and perceptions of both topics. The club established different practices in order to strive to be a successful and non-commercial club. The results chapter introduces these practices, which will be reflected in the discussion. Insights into this case provides a better understanding of commercialization and authenticity in football and post-consumer fans' vision of football.

2. Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

Manifold literature on the processes of commodification, (over- or hyper-) commercialization and authentic fandom exist. This extensive volume results in contradictory findings and understandings of the matter. Therefore, crucial concepts, such as commodification, commercialization and authenticity, need further clarification. This section also offers a

review of the existing literature on commercialized football and post-consumer fan-owned clubs with a focus on their relation to commercialization, players' wages, and sponsoring.

2.1. Commodification, Commercialization and Authenticity

Commodification is sometimes used synonymously with commercialization. Moor pointed out its diluted use, as commodification is defined as a process in which former free objects are transformed into goods for market exchange [26]. From a historical perspective, Gerrad characterized players' wages as commodification and as the first step towards commercialization, having "a profound impact on the nature of sport" [27], as teams were transformed to financial organizations, selling their product to spectators, and excluding those who did not pay. Nowadays, a team's performance also depends on the ability to buy and pay the best players available [28].

Commercialization is an even more diffuse concept. It summarizes different aspects affecting the sports industry as well as both professional and amateur sports [29]. Ma & Kurscheidt characterize it as "a change process of the structures of resource allocation toward a greater use of the market mechanism" [30]. Dubal agrees when he describes commercialization in football as "the post-1970s infusion of a loose set of market-driven ideals that have pushed profit-making to the foreground of the global game, affecting fans and fan culture from São Paulo to Manchester, from Tokyo to Moscow" [6]. Direct effects on fans are increasingly high ticket prices, which price out traditional working-class fans and replace them with new customer fans [6,7,31–33], kick-off times complying with the broadcasters' and sponsors' interests [1,32] and 'new' investors replacing older governance structures [23]. Indirect effects are increasingly high player salaries [34], resulting in fans feeling alienated, [6] and sponsors' increasing influence [35,36]. These developments go along with the growing security management, which supporters perceive as criminalization [1,4,37]. These aspects are connected.

Commercialization is defined contrary to another concept: authenticity [38]. Authenticity is a romanticized imagination articulated in opposition to rationalized modernity and its commercialization [39]. It is "some sort of ideal, highly valued and sought by individuals and groups as part of the process of becoming" [40]. Different authors relate fans' authenticity to loyalty, class and geographical locations [12,41,42]. However, authenticity is a diffuse and complex concept [43]. To provide a short overview: objects are judged or perceived as authentic if they have a uniqueness based on a specific history and traditions [44]. People are authentic when they go beyond public roles and express their "true self" in opposition to these roles [45]. Experiences are perceived as authentic if they are extraordinary, including sensory and symbolic effects (intra-personal authenticity), or if they enable the creation of bonds between people of a community based on shared emotions (inter-personal authenticity) [46]. A football club is related to all three of these ideas.

From a constructivist's perspective, authenticity is not a natural property. Instead, authenticity is developed within the subject, the people. It depends on people's knowledge of their "own beliefs, expectations, preferences, stereotyped images, and consciousness" [46]. Commercialization could be understood in the same way—as a contrary category. People can judge or perceive objects, people, or experiences as authentic or commercialized. How they classify something depends on their knowledge and expectations. Consumer fans may perceive a football jersey as an authentic object related to their first stadium visit, while post-consumers may judge it as an inauthentic object produced by a global sports brand under poor working conditions, displaying commercial advertising. Authentic and commercial are extremes on a continuum. People may also classify the terms somewhere else along this continuum.

Understanding commercialization and authenticity in that way has two implications. First, commercialization does not necessarily destroy authenticity. Specific groups may judge differently as they focus on specific aspects and judge according to their specific knowledge [38]. Second, people can judge whether something is either commercial or

authentic, and they can adapt their knowledge. Former authentic objects can become judged as commercial after negotiations within a relevant community take place and the other way around. Most adaptions might be unconscious and happen unnoticed. However, during conflicts, they become visible—also to researchers. During the fieldwork, these topics had been players' wages and sponsoring, which are also common in commercialized (amateur) football.

2.2. Commercialized Football

In Germany, professionalism in football has been officially allowed since 1963 [47]. Nowadays, top players have become modern celebrities, highly paid by their clubs and personal sponsors. They are globally mobile and only stay at 'their club' for a few years, signing new contracts depending on sportive and financial aspects. Meanwhile, fans are often locally rooted, receiving a much lower income and less attention. Fans and players live in different worlds, which could result in fans' alienation [6]. In the 2019/2020 season, Germany's top team Bayern München paid its players an average salary of USD 8.12 million per year [48], while the average employee earned around USD 52,000 in the same year. Supporters found themselves in an identity dilemma, expressed in a 'love the team, hate the club' dichotomy. Here, fans separate between their colors and the business, including players and managers, to continue their team support [13]. Supporters see themselves as the authentic, true and moral club owners, while players, managers, investors and customers leave if they find better opportunities elsewhere [13].

In order to be able to pay players, clubs need to generate money and push commercialization forward. Sponsoring is one crucial source of income in football. Between 2016 and 2019, the 18 clubs of the German Bundesliga, the highest national league, generated more than EUR 840 million in revenue via sponsoring, which is exceeds match day revenues of approximately EUR 500 million [49]. Sponsoring is an exchange between sport (its associations, athletes and teams) and commercial enterprises. It is not a philanthropic gift. Sponsors affect sport in different ways. They affect athletes' behavior, rules, locations, spectator structure, competitive balance, emotional attachment, and fan alienation [35]. Hognestad offers an example to illustrate sponsors' influence. In 2012, the supermarket brand Rimi used a match for a marketing event (with musicians and subsidized tickets sold in their shops), naming the match the 'Rimi bowl'. While some fans welcomed additional revenues, others criticized it as a 'circus' and experienced cultural alienation. They boycotted the match [36]. Sponsoring is also a critical issue in German football. Displaying a sponsor on the jersey was officially prohibited until 1974/75 [47]—nowadays, it is common even in amateur football.

2.3. Post-Consumer Fans Football

Post-consumer is a term for specific political activists. It is an umbrella term that summarizes different groups and initiatives that criticize Western (hyper-) commercialization and strive for the robust growth of a consumption-driven economy. They elaborate alternative practices for commercial processes in niches, hoping to transform the economy and society. Examples of post-consumer initiatives are community-energy schemes, agro-food cooperations and worker-owned cooperatives. The groups differ in their purpose, but they share ideas of 'mindful spending' and 'collaborative consumption' [15]. Davis [12] picked up the term and transferred it to football fans who left the commercial game and established alternative practices in a niche—the clubs they founded. We call these clubs post-consumer clubs.

The most popular of these clubs is FC United of Manchester (FCUM). Kiernan describes the club as a "consequence[s] of a casino football model. In establishing a new club with a cooperative social enterprise business model and which could also retain an appeal to 'the authentic' fan experience [. . .] the new FCUM could become an ideal Manchester United, albeit at the lowest level of the football league" [3]. Other examples for clubs are Austria Salzburg [50], CS Lebowski [11], Hapoel Katamon Jerusalem [18], NK Zagreb 041 [17,51] or

to a lesser degree AFC Wimbledon. The latter club already reentered commercial football by reaching the English third league, but the fans still control the club [41]. These clubs are dominated by a "discourse of social entrepreneurship [that] replace[s] investment for profit with investment for expansion" [50]. They strive to be an authentic, sustainable alternative to commercialized football [50].

Meanwhile, these clubs must interact in football's commercialized surroundings, as commercial practices and dynamics are also present in lower leagues [52]. Sometimes, they need to adapt their vision on post-consumer football [23]. An example is when FCUM built a new stadium for itself and needed the municipality's support and millions of pounds to construct it. The members negotiated their priorities, including disputes and conflicts, after which some members left the club [41].

Another example is that FCUM pays its players' salaries, but they are lower than those of competing clubs. Most players are amateurs, only earning a bonus if they play, while some are semi-professionals [22]. FCUM had a main sponsor printing its logo on the club's program, pitch-sides, and website. Nevertheless, the club's jersey remains clear of commercial advertising due to the club's values, which is unusual even in amateur football [22,41,53]. The sponsor itself reported that they do not sponsor FCUM to receive a return of investment. Instead, they sponsor the club as they identify with the club and its values [22]. CS Lebowski from Italy also criticizes football's commercialization and generates money by sponsoring. Its first sponsors were companies belonging to the club's community. This overlap increases the relationship between the club and its community [11]. Hence, sponsoring is not necessarily in opposition to the post-consumerist club's values. Table 1 summarizes different aspects of commercial and post-consumer football. Both are commodified but differ in categories, such as the fan–club relationship or the investment goals of clubs.

Table 1. Commercialized versus post-consumer football based on the literature.

Categories	Commercialized Football	Post-Consumer Football
Relationship fan–club	Consumer	Club owner, DIY
Investment goals of clubs	For profit	For expansion
Players	Paid, transferred, sportive and financial aspects	Amateurs, semi-professionals
Sponsor	Exchange; external	shared values (Identify with club)
Perceived authenticity	Low	High

The table and the existing literature did not reflect paradoxes and implications to the practice of these aspects. We chose the following research approach to provide such insights through discussions at HFC Falke.

3. Materials and Methods

Similar to previous studies on football fans [5–7], post-consumer clubs [11,13,22,23,53] and the ambivalent relationship between commercialization and tradition/authenticity in sport [54], the study followed an ethnographic research approach, mainly based on participant observation.

The first author joined HFC Falke for participant observation in August 2015 during the club's first official match and stayed for 27 months until the general assembly in November 2017. The club had around 400 members. The average matchday attendance during the season 2016/17 was 415 for the first team [55] and 105 for the second team [56]. He became a volunteer and attended official and unofficial meetings, including other non-football leisure activities, such as private parties. Based on participant observation, he took 123 field notes. Additionally, 10 semi-structured interviews between one and two and a half hours were recorded with different members in different roles: board, management, players, fans and a member of the so-called 'opposition'. Based on his previous research,

personal relations exist with all interview partners. The interviews have been embedded in the ethnographic research to contrast data, as Watson [57] suggests. The interviews are structured around personal background, the process of founding and joining HFC Falke and the club's specifics, aims and inner conflicts. Additionally, two internal group messenger chats have been archived and analyzed. All names are anonymized in this article.

As is typical for an ethnographic approach, the research followed an iterative process, which means a returning cycle of collecting, analyzing and interpreting data in order to refocus the research [58]. All data were uploaded to a qualitative data analysis software and carefully iteratively coded. The second author accompanied the interpretation process as a senior researcher and football fan in order to minimize the bias of the interpretation.

The first author was not a fan of or did not play for a specific football club before the research. He was interested and informed on football through various media outlets and attended different matches occasionally. He published three scientific publications on football before the research and benefited from his knowledge, which facilitates access to the field. During the research, different members asked him about his football background and knowledge in order to prove that it was appropriate for him to conduct research on football fans. Additionally, he benefits from being a native German who had been living in Hamburg for almost ten years, resulting in perceptions as an autochthon, even if the fan background was missing. Nevertheless, the field was aware of his scientific interest, expressed by calling him "Dr. Falke" and asking about his approach. Experiences, emotions and relations towards the field were reflected during an external supervision group parallel to the research, in which peers helped in reflecting the research.

The research can be divided in two parts. During the first period, the club itself constructed a new community and developed a new belonging. The club was quite open, and a positive atmosphere existed. On the pitch, they were dominant. No salary was paid to its players. The club's incomes exceeded their spending. People enjoyed their club, and its spirit, values or normative guidelines were not discussed. During the second season, at least in February 2017, the situation changed. The performances on the pitch were successful but not as dominant. Inner conflicts manifested and commercial issues were discussed, as players' wages became a virulent topic. The atmosphere had changed and became more hostile. People began to discuss their club and its values. The debate continued until the general assembly in November 2017. The club asked the first author to moderate that meeting as he understood the club, including its conflicts, and was perceived as respected and neutral. The insights discussed in the article relate to this second phase.

4. Results

This article wants to answer the following research question: How do post-consumer fans of HFC Falke strive to establish practices beyond commercialization at their club? The following section provides evidence on how HFC Falke and its members negotiated and dealt with players' wages and sponsoring as a commercial practice. Both topics are presented separately, following the same structure. A first paragraph provides background on the topic and when it arose within the club. Afterwards, the members' ambivalent knowledge of and opinions on these topics are introduced. The alternative practices of the club take up the central part of the section, as they are presented in more detail.

4.1. Player Wages

The club did not pay any money to individual players for the first two seasons. It spent money on the team's matchday and training kit, including laundry, two pre-season training camps and subsidies for a trip to the party island Mallorca at the end of the first season. The club started a debate on players' wages in preparation for the 2017/18 season, in case the club would be promoted to the seventh league. The coaches planned to train three times a week—previously it had been twice a week. The topic was brought up at a meeting in February 2017.

Most HFC Falke members already knew about wages in amateur football, but that knowledge differed between members. Most knowledge was related to single cases, based on their own experience. They shared rumors on single players earning thousands of euros or a single team that would not pay their players at all—both in the fifth division. The coach, manager, and players reported on their experiences at previous clubs. They shared their knowledge on how complex wages in amateur football are. First, the club's internal system is non-transparent: in most cases, players would not know if and how much their teammates earned. Second, the wages could also include diverse bonuses and non-monetary benefits. Third, in some cases, sponsors or private patrons pay the players. Patrick, a member with experience in amateur football, declared: "I the Bezirksliga, [seventh division] 90%, and in the Landesliga [sixth Division], 95% of the clubs pay. And even in the eighth division, some clubs pay". He pushed towards player wages, arguing that it would be common. He hoped this strategy would help to sign skilled players. Other members argued that some players were students with no income. If they received compensation, they would be able to concentrate on football four times a week without the need to work elsewhere. Patrick could not convince all other members. They argued that Falk's players already received a lot of support from the club –preparing and washing training and matchday kits, a physiotherapist and support for social activities. It can be concluded that the knowledge and perception of the existing support and the necessity to adapt it differed. However, the major dilemma for the club was a different one.

"On a rational level, I would agree to the wages, but on an emotional level, I would reject it" (Fieldnote 3 March 2017). This quotation from Sebastian from one of the meetings expresses the club's ambivalence on player wages. The members agree that paying the players is a step towards commercialization, which they reject since it opposes their fundamental ideas. That is why they decided not to pay the players for the first two seasons. Meanwhile, they accepted the necessity of paying players in order to become successful in the future, which they wished for. During the first two meetings, no member expressed a fundamental opposition to wages. Nevertheless, they reflected on wages as a part of their club's commercialization. Table 2 lists arguments for and against the introduction of player wages. Sebastian's quote emphasizes an inner split, as he holds pro and contra arguments, similar to most other members.

Most arguments against the introduction of player wages do not express a fundamental opposition. Most argue against the timing of the introduction, as the following quotes emphasize. In a debate, one member said: "Three years ago, when they sat together and founded the club, its values were clear. We do not pay any transfer fee or any salaries. We should not abandon them too fast." The quote argues against wages, but its final part shows openness for wages—in the future. Here, this means not to start in the seventh division, as Steven expressed: "Additionally, I think you should not pay in the Bezirksliga (7th division!!!). It is still hobby-football (on a certain level)". They pleaded to enjoy their experiment as an authentic, non-commercial club a little longer. They wished to stick to their original plan the even if they knew they couldn't hold onto the dream forever. This argument was related to feelings or emotions, even if they knew they must adjust their dream one day and even if they agreed on the necessity of wages in higher class amateur football.

One strategy to minimize emotional problems regarding wages was a linguistic one. Officially, HFC Falke uses the term *Aufwandsentschädigung [allowance]*, a term borrowed from tax vocabulary. It means compensation for voluntary work. They reject using terms such as salary or wages. When people around the club use the latter terms, others correct them. The result was the same; HFC Falke pays its players, but the members could see a difference to other clubs, as they do not pay a salary. Asked to explain the difference, they stated that the players did not have a contract with wages guaranteed.

Table 2. Pro and contra arguments on player' wages at HFC Falke sorted by themes and quotations based on fieldnotes.

Argument	Themes	Quotations
Pro	Caring for players	"If you have to come to training three times a week, you may give up your part-time job" (Fieldnote 25 March 2017).
	Appreciation	"It was emphasized several times that the players also had to be seen. Job, family and then three or four Falke appointments a week" (Fieldnote 3 March 2017).
	Success	"The hope is that greater participation in training will lead to more automatisms, which in turn will lead to better results" (Fieldnote 3 March 2017).
	Common	"There was always a hint that this would be a small incentive to get good players" (Fieldnote 3 March 2017). "Unfortunately, the fact is that amateur football is also contaminated with money. At some point we have to pay" (Fieldnote 3 March 2017).
	Fairness and transparency	"Ben countered that it would be like other clubs, where no money was officially paid, but then players received money from sponsors. And that it was unfair if some received something, and others did not" (Fieldnote 3 March 2017).
Contra	Not necessary	"Unimportant for many current players" (Fieldnote 3 March 2017). "I know a lot of Bezirksliga [seventh division] players, none of them train three times a week and none of them receive money" (Chat).
	Other benefits	"[We] have other things to offer than money: laundry, fans, physiotherapists" (Fieldnote 3 March 2017).
	Too fast + values	"We started with certain values that should not be thrown overboard so quickly, against modern football" (Fieldnote 3 March 2017).
	Kind of players	"Sebastian asked whether they wanted such players at all" (Fieldnote 3 March 2017).

The club tried to find solutions beyond a terminological level. To strive for the club's vision of better football, they used two practices of handling wages different from other clubs. They stressed that three larger meetings took place and that potentially all members were included in the debate. Every member could influence discussions at the meetings and vote on the final decision. During the debate, Tobias expressed: "The very fact that people discuss would be different from other clubs, where the board decides alone, and it is not transparent" (Fieldnote 3 March 2017). He argues that this process marks a uniqueness, regardless of its outcome.

Finally, HFC Falke implemented a system in which each player received EUR 5 per training session they attended. The money was only paid if they attended two-thirds of that month's sessions. Injured players training with the physiotherapist were counted as present. This system was also published on the club's website to guarantee transparency. They described it as equal, as any player had the same chance to get paid, independent of further factors, such as age, performance or coaches' preferences. Instead, engagement became the relevant category. The members perceived that their system differed from other clubs' untransparent wages systems. Tobias marked the difference by the following expression: "Here, everything is transparent, and each supporter knows what each player earns. It is still the Falke way. For me, it is rather a value update, like an update of computer operating systems" (Fieldnote 3 March 2017). To continue the Falke way means to remain authentic. During the debate on player wages, a second topic arose, also related to commercialization. To fund players' wages, HFC Falke discussed increasing its revenue through sponsoring.

4.2. Sponsorship

HFC Falke had different sponsors, even during its first season. Advertising existed on banners, in the matchday magazine, on training jackets and gym bags. Sponsoring was perceived as necessary and was mentioned during different debates as a possibility of funding. Beside player wages, sponsoring emerged during debates on youth teams, when planning an international tournament or an investment in a ground. In most of these cases, sponsoring was taken for granted and needed no further explanation, as Table 3 shows. In an interview, Timo explained: "You won't keep an amateur club alive for a longer period without sponsoring. Maybe in the lowest division, if there are just mates and friends, but otherwise, it is not possible."

Table 3. Pro and contra arguments on sponsors at HFC Falke by themes and quotations, as they are mentioned in interviews or during fieldwork.

Argument	Themes	Quotations
Pro	necessary	"So, without sponsors it doesn't work." (Steven)
	Taken for granted	"Having a sponsor, that's what we have. That can't be compared to the reason why I left HSV" (Steven)
Contra	values	"Keyword sponsors. Ivonne asked if that is compatible with the club's ideology?" (Fieldnote 30 October 2015)
	Selling oneself	"We don't really want to search for or sponsors. We want sponsors coming to us. Who already know our approach and say 'Yes, we think what you're doing is so cool' " (Yannick)
	dependence	"You only really realize that relying on a person as a sponsor is a big risk when he or she doesn't want to do it anymore" (Christopher)
	banner	"We have a banner culture among the fans. This must not be compromised by sponsored banners" (Fieldnote 28 June 2017)

Only in a few cases individual members questioned whether sponsoring is consistent with the club's fundamental ideas—but the questions were ignored, and no debate emerged. As the club wants to be successful, they accept sponsoring as a necessary evil in modern amateur football. The contra arguments, listed in Table 3 under themes banner and dependence, are not contrary to sponsoring. However, the fans emphasize the negative aspects of sponsors. Additionally, they accepted the necessity of sponsorships, and they started a debate on how authentic sponsoring would be possible, which would allow them to stay true to their own values.

Similar to when speaking about player wages, club members use specific terminology; officially, they use the term *backer* [Unterstützer] when talking about sponsors. During a debate on sponsoring, a board member explained that they have no problem using the term sponsor. However, the term backer was still used parallelly and dominated in debates and official communication.

HFC Falke also tries to do sponsoring differently and establish rules for sponsoring along two questions: who suitable sponsors are, and what sponsoring should look like in order to continue the Falke way.

The main normative guideline for sponsors is that they should relate to the club, which could be implemented in three ways. The first one is that the potential sponsor could be embedded locally. During an interview, Ben elaborated: "Small enterprises or especially enterprises that are local or from the city of Hamburg, if, for example, the corner shop in Stellingen [quarter around the training pitch], for example likes to sponsor the tracksuit". However, there are sponsors they reject. The board proudly repeated several times that the club had rejected a sponsoring offer from a large insurance company, as it would undermine the club's fundamental ideas. The two examples show how HFC Falke's post-consumer fans perceive enterprises. They divide them into small local companies that are welcomed at the club and larger international companies that they reject.

In his interview, Collin also introduced a second opportunity. A sponsoring company could have a personal relationship to the club, if the club members owned the enterprises or the members worked for the company. Collin said: "If my company, my employer says 'Hey HFC Falke is an excellent thing.' He likes to engage. He sponsors some trainings t-shirts. That is a good thing. This is how I imagine sponsoring. Sponsors who really identify with our club and are not just oriented to make a profit or be present on the market." During the research period, three companies had the aforementioned personal kind of relationship, displaying their advertisement on banners or track jackets. One of them is a joinery and two are logistics companies. A personal relationship was also one of the requirements members agreed on during the general debate on sponsoring.

The third kind of relation to the club is that the company could be engaged in football for a longer period of time. One of HFC Falke's sponsors belonging to this category is the manufacturer Erima, which describes itself as Germany's oldest still existing sporting goods company, established in 1900 [59]. Erima was present on the jersey, the balls, two banners on matchdays and on the club's website. To a lesser degree, a local sports distributor also belongs to this category of football relations. HFC Falke's members accept sponsoring along the normative lines, if a personal relationship exists, the sponsor is locality rooted, or has a football background. These are three ways how HFC Falke members could combine sponsoring and authenticity.

The second question is what sponsoring should look like. Here, again, normative guidelines were expressed that should guarantee to keep authenticity alive. The most mentioned issue was the jersey. In an interview, Yannick explained: "Err, it was always clear that we do not sell the chest. We shall not have an advertising partner on the front of the jersey. And I think this is something where most people agree." Most German professional and amateur clubs have a sponsor on their jersey. However, the jersey is also a crucial identification symbol for the fans, expressing the club's identity. Most HFC Falke members reject a sponsor on the jersey, which the ethnographer notes as one outcome of the meeting on that topic. Similar to that, the club's statutes prohibit any change in the stadium's name for sponsoring reasons. Nevertheless, in smaller groups or in interviews, individuals expressed openness towards jersey sponsors in the future. For example, they joked about a sock manufacturer named Falke or the brewery Holsten as potential sponsors. The latter was a long-term (for 75 years until 2014) sponsor of the HSV [60] and football fandom relates to drinking beer. In a way, the brand has become part of the HSV identity. One fan club (Ohnsorg Falken) combines the Holsten and HFC Falke logos in their emblem. That is why Holsten seems to be an appropriate authentic sponsor.

The rejection of sponsors on the jersey underlines that the jersey expresses the club's identity, and a blank chest would be the best way to express opposition to commercialized football. During the meeting on sponsoring, the members agreed to an advertisement on the tracksuit, as that is not an expression on the club's identity in the same way as the jersey. However, as one member mentioned, the players should not end up being advertising pillars.

The third question reflected the way sponsors are presented. At a meeting, someone explained that he dislikes if a sponsor is presented: "YEAH we have a new sponsor, and publish a picture on the homepage where the board and sponsor are shaking hands" (Fieldnote 28 June 2017). At the meeting, most people agreed with that remark. A sponsor should not dominate HFC Falke's perception. The club should not play a role but rather remain authentic, as Berger [45] would call it. Presenting a sponsor in the aforementioned way would turn HFC Falke into a commercial product, which would destroy its authenticity. The post-consumerist fans agree to sponsoring as commercial practice but try to prevent moments that symbolize the practice.

HFC Falke implemented 'new ways' of sponsoring, similar to their approach to paying players. New, here, means that individual members introduced them as new. One idea was to use sponsors to increase the club's community and thereby the member fees. Christopher explained in the interview:

"You raise money, but not for the team. Instead, it is for a fan party, free beers after a match, or an end-of-season party with fans. In any case, you should try to do something for the members, as, from my point of view, nowadays, healthy clubs grow by the number of their members. They do not grow by external money being pumped into the club or the squad."

During the first two seasons, Holsten sponsored HFC Falke. The brewery gave beer to the club, which resulted in a reduced beer price for home matches of the first team. The fans directly benefited from this subsidy, but it is impossible to measure the effects on the number of total fans. Meanwhile, the beer price is an example of the concept's boundaries. During the third season, HFC Falke stopped the beer subsidy and sold the Holsten-sponsored beer at the second team's matches, generating a higher direct revenue. The beer price at first team's matches rose. Fans complained about this development and that they had not been involved in the decision. This example emphasizes how the club tries new ways to combine commercialization and authenticity, and how difficult of a task that is. The patterns of this process will be discussed in the following chapter.

5. Discussion

This article explores how post-consumerist fans at HFC Falke deal with issues of commodification and commercialization at their club. During the research period, two commercial aspects had been virulent topics at HFC Falke—player wages and sponsorship. The ways the club dealt with both issues show several similarities. Both have been described as contrary to HFC Falke's fundamental ideas. Both were perceived as necessary, as both practices are common in German amateur football, and the club strives to be successful. In the case of wages, knowledge about their dispersion was negotiated. In the case of sponsorship, knowledge was shared, and it was perceived as common. Even if HFC Falke accepted both practices, they tried to implement both differently, different from their experiences in professional football and different from regular amateur football. They tried to find, in their own words, a more sustainable way—the Falke way. This way includes several written and unwritten rules.

The first of these rules are different taboos—commercialized practices the club generally rejects. Members expressed them during the debates or interviews. They are: depending on a single sponsor, enthusiastically presenting a sponsor, having a sponsor on the jersey and hiring players who are solely interested in earning money. HFC Falke tries to prevent any symbolic takeover of their club. Therefore, symbolically charged objects that express the club's identity should remain void of commercial takeover. They should never be commodified. Additionally, HFC Falke strives to stay financially independent. However, HFC Falke accepts commodification in general. They accept commercial practices to a certain degree. Sponsoring is allowed on objects that are not symbolically charged. Here, additional normative guidelines exist, which HFC Falke's sponsors should fit into. These include local, personal, or long-term football relationships.

Additionally, they are looking for unusual concepts, allowing them to be different and more sustainable, such as beer sponsoring in order to increase membership numbers, or the different wages system, in which a player's salary depends on their effort, not on skills, goals or star status. The club emphasized that the wages system is equal and transparent. These differences allow them to continue their image as being against modern (amateur) football even if they engage in certain financial practices. In both cases, they highlight members' participation in the discussion, which marks a difference from professional and amateur clubs in which a small group decides on the matter. The wish to be different is also expressed in the use of different terms than those used in commercial football, for instance *Aufwandsentschädigung* [allowance] instead of salary and *Unterstützer* [backer] instead sponsor.

HFC Falke claimed that the club was founded for its community. Its members reject being customers; instead, they like to remain those who decide. To guarantee members' satisfaction, the club must remain authentic. The club and its symbolically charged jersey

should only represent the members' interests, which means not representing the role [45] of an exchangeable advertising medium. The second way to create authenticity is based on acting different from other clubs in terms of sponsorship and wages. This perception allows them to perceive their club as authentic, as it marks a uniqueness, as Benjamin [44] described. HFC Falke is commercialized to a lesser degree than professional clubs and most amateur clubs, although by paying players wages, they went beyond the first phase of commercialization defined by Gerrad [27]. That is why they perceive themselves as remaining authentic. Additionally, members' participation in negotiation and decision making represents the Falke way.

Other post-consumerist fan clubs share some of HFC Falke's beliefs and practices. FCUM perceives locality as a characteristic of football's authenticity as they reject international capital [50]. At CS Lebowski and FCUM, sponsors are also tied to the community by personal relationships. [11] FCUM's jersey also remains void of advertisement in order to be authentic [22,41,53]. The similarities underline the general tendency identified at HFC Falke. Meanwhile our research detected practices and strategies that have not been covered in the existing literature. They did not report on practices, such as using different terms, or the special wages system, even if FCUM's wages are also lower than those at competitive clubs in their league. It could mean that other clubs use them as well, but that it has not been noticed in the scientific community, or that these are specifics of HFC Falke. Further research could investigate the practices at further clubs, to see if similarities exist.

To sum up, player wages and sponsoring are not automatically perceived and judged as inauthentic commercialization if the practices follow certain rules. HFC Falke accepts that commodification and on-pitch competitiveness are interrelated, but they strive to act differently. They negotiate how these differences look and which practices are acceptable to them, as the perception as either commercial or authentic depends on their knowledge. This approach is full of experiments, which could also fail. Similar to M. J. Cohen's [15] description of post-consumers, they do not seek a revolution. They act in a (smooth) transition process in football, a more sustainable way guided by normative lines. Older ideas of community and authenticity influence these lines. Meanwhile, they go beyond authenticities' old definitions of locality or class, in that personal relationships have the potential to create authenticity. The club's claim "grateful backwards, brave forward" is a synopsis of this process. Nevertheless, the club risks adapting too much to the commercialized system until the differences fade and the club loses its potential to become part of a post-consumerist transformation.

6. Conclusions

HFC Falke members are an example of what Davis [12] describes as post-consumer fans and Androus & Giudici [11] conceptualize as the fifth type of ultras. These fans and their clubs strive for a new type of governance in football by navigating between commercialization and authenticity along normative lines. Following a constructivist approach, these lines are never set. They need to be re-negotiated from time to time as perceptions and judgments on authenticity and commercialization change. It would be interesting to see if research on other clubs, sports or beyond show similar dynamics. Such research would benefit from a long-term perspective, as our research of 27 months shows. Similar research in other clubs or fields would help to detect patterns in the negotiations on values and to improve the empirically based understanding of authenticity, commercialization and associated dynamics.

HFC Falke is proud to be a democratic club. The decision to pay wages was made at an assembly. The culture of decision making likely influences the struggle between authenticity and commercialization. Therefore, a better understanding of HFC Falke's governance is needed to be able to compare its processes to those in other clubs with different structures. Further research should include the category of success in the analysis, as success influences fans' emotional perceptions and thereby the (potential) negotiations. Social sustainability and success can be called twin aims; they are contrary yet intertwined,

similar to environmental or economical sustainability and success in sports. Negotiations of these aims are relevant for sport fans and sport clubs in general. Do they abandon their sustainable values in cases of failure? Do they protect or adapt them according to the club's commercialized environment? These are highly relevant questions for social science.

Further research on football fans should not try to construct a general opposition of fans towards commercialization. It should have a detailed look at where normative lines and boundaries exist. One of the latest campaigns by the fan association SD-Europe and six national organizations strives for a football characterized by democracy, cooperation, solidarity (fair competition) and sustainability. They wish to negotiate these issues with the football establishment [61]. Additionally, these organized fans do not seek a revolution; rather, they aim for a smooth adjustment of normative lines. For instance, they call for a more even competitive balance which would conserve or even increase commercial football's attractiveness. Even at post-consumerist, fan-owned clubs, "the most radical response [to football's commercialization]" [12], most members act pragmatically. Looking at these clubs might uncover pragmatic and sometimes unconventional suggestions to modify the football industry towards more social sustainability. These results are also relevant for other sports in which social or environmental sustainability conflicts with success or revenues.

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Study 3

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Study 4

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The article could not be included in this dissertation free of charge. But it could be found online by using the doi.

Article's abstract

Purpose/rationale
Chinese football governance has dramatically changed during the last decade. Consequently, the organisation of the top-tiered Chinese Super League (CSL) developed from a rigid communist, state-governed model to a commercialised market, though still under governmental influence. Football fans became a key stakeholder group following this organisational change. Therefore, this study examines supporters' attitudes towards the governance of their domestic league.

Design/methodology/approach
Active fans of the CSL (N = 453) were surveyed via clustered intercept sampling outside the stadium gates at five matches with ten different teams involved to ensure the reliability, validity and variance of responses. The data were analysed by (ordered) logit regressions with respect to attitudes towards the commercialisation of the CSL with nearly fifty explanatory variables.

Findings
A key finding is that supporters tend to appreciate commercialisation as evidence of progress of the Chinese professional football. This attitude can be attributed largely to past governance failures of the CSL and the positive connotation of increased market orientation as a counterbalance to governmental control. Regression analyses, however, reveal the emerging characteristics of the Chinese fan culture and provide evidence of contradictions in the attitude patterns as well as a likely increase in fans' resentment of more commercialisation.

Research contribution
The empirical insights into Chinese fan culture extend the understanding of the governance and commercialisation of professional football beyond the more researched European markets.

Keywords: China, soccer, supporters, sport development, commercialisation, consumer culture