International Journal of the Sociology of Leisure (2024) 7:45–66
https://doi.org/10.1007/s41978-023-00137-x

ORIGINAL PAPER

A Comparison of Football Fan Activism in Ukraine and Germany

Christian Brandt[1] · **Maryna Krugliak**[2] · **Robert Warnecke**[1]

Received: 25 February 2023 / Accepted: 20 May 2023 / Published online: 24 June 2023

Abstract
During the last decade, football fans in Germany and Ukraine have become increasingly active in the struggle for their interests. This article compares their respective activism based on reasons, tactics and spaces of activism over a span of eight years. The comparison shows that national politics are a dominant motive for Ukrainian fan activism, especially after the so-called Revolution of Dignity (Euromaidan) in 2014, including the Russian invasion. Politics is so important that activism is politically framed in this context even if non-political players like club management or the football association are addressed. In Germany, football's governance is the major reason for fan activism, as fans strive to preserve or extend their influence on clubs' and associations' decisions. This difference emphasises the influence of national settings on fan activism. Concerning space and tactics, the samples show similarities, as in both countries ultras are the dominant type of fan group, an intersection of global ultra culture and activism tactics exists and activism mainly takes place in football stadiums. Therefore, fan activism can be understood as a globally connected movement that is nonetheless highly determined by the respective local context.

Keywords Ultra · Governance · War · Politics · Modern Football · Sport

1 Introduction

Playing football and even more so watching football are common leisure activities in many countries of the world. Fans do not only watch their teams' home matches on weekends. They consume content, travel to away matches, and often engage with their community and their club during the week. Fans feel highly committed to football and their leisure activity becomes a source of belonging and identity

✉ Christian Brandt
christian.brandt@uni-bayreuth.de

[1] BaySpo - Bayreuth Center of Sport Science, Universitätsstraße30, 95447 Bayreuth, Germany

[2] Department of Tourism and Hotel and Restaurant Business, Zhytomyr Polytechnic State University, Zhytomyr, Ukraine

(Spracklen, 2022). Thereby, sport is related to different symbolic struggles for power and has developed into a subject of scientific analysis during the last decades (Klein & Meuser, 2015). Globally, football and its fans are affected by similar dynamics, like the game's commercialisation (Dubal, 2010; García & Zheng, 2017) – criticized as *Modern Football* by fans (Numerato, 2015). Doidge et al. (2020) characterise football fans as the largest international social movement. Fan activists connect globally via the internet, relating to each other's struggles and expressing solidarity with active fans across borders. They often feel that they contribute to an abstract common struggle (Millward, 2011). Meanwhile, fans' protests are locally rooted. They are related to individual clubs and their communities or national sport governing bodies, influenced by national and regional conditions – they are, in Robertson's understanding, glocal (Giulianotti & Robertson, 2007), since there is an interplay of local and global dynamics.

Choluj et al. (2020) described national differences of fans' understanding of Modern Football in Poland and Western Europe, which also seems to be relevant for further post-socialist states. While Modern Football in Western Europe is mostly related to commercialisation, i.e. developments of increasingly short-term revenues for teams including an increasing influence of advertising companies and investors, leading to a feeling of disrespect in and an alienation of some parts of the fans (Brandt & Kurscheidt, 2022). In post-socialist contexts, Modern Football is mainly related to security regulations (Choluj et al., 2020). Most studies on fan activism are based on activities in one national context at a specific time, like temporarily limited protest campaigns. Zheng and García (2017) emphasise the necessity of understanding differences in fan activism in different national settings. To understand the character of fan activism, further comparative studies are needed, as systematic long-term studies beyond one national context are still rare, even in the European context.

This article compares football fans' activism in two European countries to understand the local and global dimensions of their activism and how they are connected. The study includes two countries with very specific settings during the same period. The first case is Ukraine, a post-socialist country founded in 1991, belonging to Europe's economic periphery. Some of its clubs and the national team are successful but the first division, called Premyer Liga, does not belong to the continent's biggest leagues. All Ukrainian clubs are owned and dominated by oligarchs, who also use football as a tool to gain political influence (Veth, 2014, 2016). In 2014, Ultras played an active role in the Revolution of Dignity which ended with the dismissal and escape of the pro-Russian president (Krugliak & Krugliak, 2017). The second case is Germany, Europe's largest economy, 20 times bigger than Ukraine's according to their 2021 GDP (World Bank, 2023, February 11). Germany's first football league is one of the so-called big five leagues and the national team has been successful in the past (e.g. winning four World Cups). One distinctive feature of German football is that the 50 + 1 rule guarantees the consideration of fans' interests, as clubs must be owned by non-profit organisations that hold the majority of voting power (Sonntag, 2018). This brief introduction already exemplifies the (football-related) differences between both countries and demonstrates that this case study provides an interesting opportunity to compare fan activism in order to analyse the national and global influence of said activism.

Hence, the next section will reflect relevant insights on fan activism in Europe, providing the analytical framework for the empirical section of this paper. In order to allow for a comparison, both cases have been researched by similar methods, which will be introduced in the methods section. Afterwards, both countries are introduced separately, analysing activism related to the national, association and club levels. Finally, the results from both countries are compared and discussed against the background of existing international literature.

2 Fan Activism in Europe

Football and fandom as they are known today are results of transformations of modernity including increasing leisure time, urbanity and an erosion of traditional social institutions (Dunning, 1972; Spracklen, 2022). During late-modernity (Giddens, 1990) continuing social transformations took place, including an increasing commercialisation, globalisation, and individualisation. Commercialisation and globalisation changed the footballing world in manifold ways, i.e. clubs becoming international enterprises and players becoming globally mobile employees (Giulianotti, 2016). Doidge et al. (2020) consider the post-1990s processes of commercialisation in football as moral shocks causing fans to take up activism. The third transformation, individualisation, enables self-identity and its reflexivity (Giddens, 1990) and meanwhile requires new sources of belonging which can be found in leisure activities, one of the latter being football fandom (Spracklen, 2022). These processes changed the relationship between football (mainly the teams and associations) and (parts of) its fans. The latter, as self-reflexive agents (Dixon, 2011) have become more active and nowadays engage at different levels of their sport (Cleland, 2010). As a result, supporters influence football's governance in different ways (García & Zheng, 2017). The most visible expression of their engagement are protests, which is why fans are described and analysed as a social movement (Cleland et al., 2018; Dubal, 2010; Millward, 2011; Millward & Poulton, 2014; Perasović & Mustapić, 2018), although some of them reject that term (Numerato, 2018).

Numerato (2018) understands fan activism as an example of late-modern reflexivity, during which fans reflect on developments in football and their own role. He describes the fans' perspective in that context as notoriously nostalgic. This ability to reflect can result in activism with the goal of influencing football for one's demands. Numerato offers a detailed systematisation of reasons for fan activism consisting of nine categories. *Political issues* mean that their activism is related to (inter-) national politics and ideologies. These could also be related to *social issues* such as unemployment or racism. Furthermore, Numerato identified three issues directly related to football matches. These are *atmosphere*, including campaigns for legalising pyrotechnics; *experience,* including lower ticket prices or fan-friendly kick-off times; and, finally, *performance* of the team, other club members or referees. *Security measures and policing* include different activities fans describe as criminalisation, limiting their freedom and rights such as fan-ID cards (the obligation to submit personal data in order to buy tickets) or stadium bans, when individuals, sectors or all fans are not allowed to attend matches as punishment for deviant

behaviour during prior matches. A key issue is *governance,* which is related to the other categories, as it includes fans' demand for participation, ownership, or anti-corruption measures. Finally, diverse *sociocultural aspects* can provoke activism, as they affect the fans' objects of identification. Examples would be struggles to preserve traditional club colours, emblems, or locations. Depending on the reasons for their activism, fans address different counterparts like other fans, their team, club management, associations, politicians or police and security forces.

Fans use diverse structures and tactics in different spaces (Cleland et al., 2018). Structures can be loose and spontaneous or more stable, planned, and professionalised. Usually, fan activism arises in a local space, at one club. Later, broader networks or official associations might establish. The latter are more stable, professional, and sometimes standardised, like the English Football Supporters Association (Numerato, 2018) or Football Supporters Europe as a Europe-wide network (Cleland et al., 2018).

Typical spaces of fan activism are stadiums, supporters clubs, and pubs (Cleland et al., 2018). Moreover, other public places like stores of sponsors (Porter, 2008) or (federations') headquarters (Brandt & Hertel, 2015) are sometimes entered. During last decades, virtual places have become increasingly relevant as they allow fans to meet, exchange ideas, and mobilise but also agitate (Cleland et al., 2018). Additionally, fans sometimes create alternative spaces, when they take over established clubs or found new ones (Millward & Poulton, 2014).

Tactics include different methods fans use to express their dissatisfaction and to achieve their goals. They use various typical protest forms of social movements like media campaigns, pamphlets, petitions, demonstrations and rallies, public meetings, graffiti and stickers in public spaces, messages on clothes, boycotts, direct actions, or even physical confrontations. Specific for fans are banners and choreographies, displayed mostly inside and sometimes outside of stadiums (Brandt & Hertel, 2015; Cleland et al., 2018; Perasović & Mustapić, 2018). Protests can easily be incorporated into fan culture. Ultras, as one relevant fan type, emerged from Italian protest movements during the 1970s. During recent decades, they became the most visible type of fans in many European countries. Ultras have established a global culture, inspiring each other via the internet and via visits to groups in other countries. They can be characterised as highly devoted and loyal to the club's community. Ultras support their team visually and acoustically during matches, assuming the role of leaders of the support in the stadium. Ultras strive to act according to their own set of values and rules. Based on these values, they often act against other stakeholders in football and society. The struggle against 'Modern Football' became a relevant part of their demands and activities (Doidge et al., 2020). Therefore, they are also prominent in this article.

This brief overview shows that there are different categories to analyse fan protests. Some publications already compared fan activism in different countries. Zheng and García (2017) comparisons of activism in 12 countries emphasise the differing involvement of fans in football's governance. They also describe a difference between post-socialist countries, where corruption, bureaucracy and transparency are major issues for fans, while in Western countries, commercialisation is a major issue. The authors detect a tendency of rivalling supporter groups cooperating in

order to archive higher goals against a common enemy. Brandt and Hertel (2017) compared fans' cooperation in 11 countries. The results show that the reason for cooperation is relevant for creating belonging of the movement. The group might understand themselves as part of the society striving for citizens' rights, as during the Maidan protest in Ukraine. They might defend their environment as supporters against other interests, or they might see themselves as a specific group of fans struggling against other fans. How they perceive their group is influenced by the reason for protest but also has effects on the organisation of activities. Numerato (2018) compares fans from three countries. He concludes that authorities have become more aware of fans in recent years but fan influence on football is limited as it partly depends on specific abilities to organise and the willingness of authorities for dialogue.

This brief review shows relevant results in the field of comparative fan research. Nevertheless, Cleland et al. (2018) as well as Zheng and García (2017) call for further studies in different political and national settings, as only a few communities have been compared thus far. This article aims to explore the reasons and dynamics of fan protests in two specific national settings over eight years (2014 – 2021). In order to investigate this rather long period of time, the following approach was chosen.

3 Methods

The article's evidence is based on an analysis of publicly available documents – most of them found online. One source on Ukrainian fans is ultras.org.ua, a website that provides information about football matches and interviews with ultras from different clubs. Additionally, websites and public social media channels of individual groups were used. More than 20 Facebook pages of ultra groups were analysed. Additionally, different books by ultras and journalists were used.

For the German case, we used the online fanzine Faszination Fankurve. This website displays a certain closeness to German supporter movements and reports on different fans' activities. The oldest entry dates back to 2004. The website is privately owned and urges fans to forward statements or reports on activities in order to document them. From 2014 until 2021, their volume consists of more than 16,000 fan-related contributions which are related to choreographies, the founding, disbandment or anniversary of groups as well as clashes and activism. Relevant entries were transferred to a qualitative data analysis software and deductively coded by year, space of activism, tactics used, and reasons for activism. Due to the organisation of the website, some documents describe different accounts of the same event, e.g. by home and away fans. In those cases, different sub-codes were used in one document. The final corpus consists of 2,087 documents and includes 3,493 codes on tactics, 3,282 on locations, and 3,282 on reasons. After the process of coding, basic descriptive statistics (Table 1) were calculated. On average, 261 entries were considered per year. 2020 (86) and 2021 (118) are the years with the least entries as football, including fan activities, was limited by the COVID-19 pandemic in this period especially.

Table 1 Overview of the three most relevant categories and the distribution of subcodes

Reason for activism	%	Space	%	Tactics	%
Governance	21	Stadium	84	Banners/Choreographies	69
Sociocultural and symbolic aspects	17	Street	4	Collecting donations	11
Social issues	15	Online	3	Boycotts	6
Atmosphere	12	Misc	9	Statements, flyers	3
Security measures and policing	10			Demonstrations/Marches	3
Experience	10			Petitions	1
Performance	6			Misc	7
Political issues	4				
Misc	6				

In addition to traditional ethical principles, ethics of online research were regarded. Therefore, only publicly available information that was considered to be meant for publication was gathered for this study. All the information gathered was deemed harmless and the process of gathering unintrusive (Convery & Cox, 2012).

Table 1 displays a strong preference for the stadium space and banners/choreographies as a tactic of fan activism. Due to the large sample, not every finding can be reflected in the empirical part in detail. Instead, we will present typical examples for national, association and club levels as the main settings. Both the German and the Ukrainian case start with a brief introduction into the respective context.

4 Results from the Ukrainian Case Study

Football is the major sport in Ukraine (Krugliak & Krugliak, 2017). Since the 1980s, active supporters have been organising in the part of the Soviet Union that became Ukraine in 1991. Ukraine is an almost unique case, as football fans have been involved in different revolutionary changes since the Granite Revolution shortly before the collapse of the USSR (Ruzhelnyk, 2018). In 2014, Dynamo Kyiv's ultras called for a truce among Ukrainian fans in order to unite against pro-Russian activities. After the agreement, fans defended the so-called Euro-Maidan protesters and played an active role in the fight against separatism with regard to the Russian-supported proclamation of the so-called People's Republics of Donetsk and Luhansk and the Russian occupation of the Crimean peninsula (Krugliak & Krugliak, 2017; Ruzhelnyk, 2018; Verbytskyi, 2022). However, the fan truce did not last long. Already on September 5, 2015, clashes between fans broke out in the city of Rivne related to a second league match between Veres and Arsenal Kyiv. Rivne ultras argued that Arsenal fans should be excluded from the truce as they are situated on the left-wing of the political spectrum while the majority of Ukrainian ultras are rather right-wing oriented (Krugliak & Krugliak, 2017). Concerning their activism Ultras Dynamo Kyiv member Nestor said in an interview: "That's why I consider football fanaticism as one of the most powerful components for developing patriotism. From the patriotism of my street or district

to the patriotism of the state. This is how civil society and the concept of citizenship are formed. […] That is why so many ardent, determined, and hardened fans went to the front" (Almashyn, 2021, p. 9–10). Football fans formed the backbone of volunteer regiments like "Azov" during their formation (Ruzhelnyk, 2018). Azov was originally founded by right-wing activists and later subordinated to the Ukrainian Ministry of Internal Affairs (Umland, 2019). Many ultras also joined other regiments of the army to serve their country.

4.1 National Level

Beside those ultras engaged in actual fighting, others were also engaged in national politics, as the following examples show. On July 2, 2018, about a thousand fans gathered at Olimpiyskiy stadium in Kyiv and displayed a huge banner reading "Oleg Sentsov, Ukraine with you!" in honour of a Ukrainian film director imprisoned by Russia's secret service in Simferopol, Crimea (Ultras Tavriya Simferopol, 2018, July 3). On their Facebook page, the ultras of Tavriya Simferopol constantly posted about Oleg Sentsov and urged citizens to support the political prisoner by writing him letters (Ultras Tavriya Simferopol, 2017, June 20).

This is just one of many examples of the activities of Ukrainian ultras relating to the occupation. In the stadiums, blue and yellow Ukrainian flags and even the black-red flags of the nationalist Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UIA), which fought in the Second World War, were present. Fans' chants changed from football orientated chants to political ones after 2014, insulting Putin or Russia and glorifying Ukraine and its struggle. Ultras organised blood donation campaigns for soldiers in the country's east and participated in nationalist demonstrations. Their political commitment also referred to developments in other countries. In the summer of 2020, when presidential elections were met with protests in Belarus, Ukrainian ultras sided with the protesters.

However, moves made by ultras can also turn against institutions of the own state, for instance when these institutions are perceived as corrupt. Corruption was one of the reasons for the 2014 Maidan protests. On July 4, 2020, Ultras Dynamo Kyiv took part in actions to support three war veterans who were accused of being involved in the murder of journalist Pavlo Sheremet in 2016 (WBC Ultras Dynamo, 2020, July 2). The three veterans did not belong to the ultra-movement, but Ultras Dynamo Kyiv explained their involvement as follows: "We have always supported and continue to support those who are unjustly convicted. Those who are imprisoned by the political order of the authorities, not by law. Times, politicians, parties, and even the names of 'law enforcement' agencies change, but the values on which our movement rests remain unchanged. Mainly, the right to self-defence, the right to a fair trial and the duty of the authorities to respect these rights" (WBC Ultras Dynamo, 2020, May 24). The ultras showed distrust of state authorities and questioned whether these had changed after 2014. Rather than putting faith in the authorities, the ultras see themselves as protectors of citizen rights who impose their own definitions of right and wrong.

4.2 Association Level

At the association level, Ultras stressed their role as defenders of democracy, when the Football Federation of Ukraine (FFU) planned to implement a rule requiring a passport check in order to buy matchday tickets. On September 25, 2017, Ukrainian fan groups published an appeal to Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko with the following words:

"We draw your attention, as a guarantor of the constitution of Ukraine, to the rights and freedoms of man and citizen. […] Forcing people to show their passports to buy tickets shows contempt for the constitutional rights and freedoms of citizens. After all, according to the constitution of Ukraine, no one can force citizens to do what is not prescribed by law. We demand to ensure compliance with the legislation of Ukraine" (Ultras Tavriya Simferopol, 2017, September 25).

The appeal was supported by representatives of 25 fan groups. Their protest against this fan identification rule also included other forms of activism. On May 9, 2018, a joint march of fans of Dynamo Kyiv, Shakhtar Donetsk and FC Dnipro was held in Dnipro city (WBC Ultras Dynamo, 2018, May 7). On August 11, 2018, former bitter enemies, fans of Dnipro and Metalist Kharkiv, organised a united demonstration (Rupor Pivnichnoyi Trybuny, 2018, August 6). When they were forced to show their passports to buy tickets, Dynamo Kyiv fans declared that they would not show their documents and stormed the stadium. They threw pyrotechnics onto the pitch to cause an interruption as a show of force (Ultras.org.ua, 2017, September 4). The ultras' rejection of the need to display a document of personal identification also refers to their role during the Revolution of Dignity. When FC Shakhtar announced the need for an identification document in order to enter the guest sector, the club's ultras published a statement in which they refused to provide data to the administration out of fear for their safety (Ultras Shakhtar Donetsk, 2019, March 4). Dynamo Kyiv fans argued similarly when they opposed the introduction in 2021. They rejected the identification model especially because they considered the unofficial club owner Hryhoriy Surkis to be a Russian collaborator who might hand over the ultras' passport data to Russian secret services. Hryhoriy Surkis is a deputy of the pro-Russian party OPZZh. In 2014, Russian special forces searched pro-Ukrainian activists in Donetsk and Luhansk. Fans reported that their data was passed on to these forces (WBC Ultras Dynamo, 2021, July 16).

Activities of Premyer Liga and FFU outraged ultras on various levels. Another example is related to the Ukrainian national team. In the spring of 2015, Andrii Pavelko, a businessman from Dnipro was elected as head of the FFU. One of his pre-election promises was to introduce a representative of the fan movement into the federation's executive committee. He appointed Vadym Kostyuchenko as one of his vice-presidents, who was once involved in Dynamo Kyiv fan movement, but later tried to create an artificial alternative structure to existing ultras. Following Kostyuchenko's appointment, the FFU created another alternative fan association called "Loyal to the national team". Kostyuchenko became its ideological inspiration while a brewery served as its sponsor. Most people who joined the new association were hardly involved in existing fan movements. Some were dressed in yellow jackets given out by the brewery and scarfs with its emblem. In the fan community,

the organisation "Loyal to the national team" was quickly ridiculed and mockingly renamed "Loyal to the beer". A campaign with the name "Kostyuchenko – out!" swept through Ukrainian stadiums. Dynamo Kyiv ultras published and forwarded a statement to other fan groups in which they recommended staying away from what they called "pseudo fans" (Ultras.org.ua, 2015 September 10) as it was assumed that they were supposed to replace ultras and other fans. Furthermore, the ultras reported on problems they had had with Kostyuchenko in the past and stated that a rumour of Kostyuchenko being involved in the recruitment of agent provocateurs (Titushkas) against the Maidan protest was going around (Ultras.org.ua, 2015, September 10; 2017, February 2; Verbytskyi, 2017, November 3).

Other issues related to the association are the financial instability of clubs and the matchday schedule. Fans of FC Polissia Zhytomyr and Prykarpattia Ivano-Frankivsk protested when their match was scheduled on a weekday afternoon, a time when most fans were at work (Prykarpatski ultras, 2016, October 31; Zhytomyr Lads, 2018, May 8). In terms of financial stability, ultras of FC Stryiky demanded stricter licensing practices for the Ukrainian championship (the country's 2nd division). The licensing process should, in their opinion, prohibit clubs financed by cities or regions to participate in the championship, as Stryiky ultras demanded in a proclamation (Stryiky, 2017, August 16).

4.3 Club Level

At a club level, instability in terms of the financial situation is a crucial issue for fans. In this regard, ultras typically aim to save their club. One example of this is Tavriya Simferopol, originally located on the Crimean peninsula. In 2016, the club was re-stablished and moved to play in the Oblast of Kherson. In November 2019, Tavriya Simferopol ran out of money and could not travel to an official match in Kramatorsk. Fans started collecting funds for the team's trip. They blamed the club's board for putting the club in this position. Mainly, president Volodymyr Konovalov, who was accused of corrupt activities, and the passivity of the club's honorary president Serhii Kunitsyn were criticised. The ultras wrote letters to the league's management, the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports of Ukraine, journalists, the general sports community, and the government of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea. The latter is an official Ukrainian governmental organisation, which continued its work although the peninsula has been occupied by Russian forces since 2014. In their plea, the fans demanded not to "allow FC Tavriya Simferopol to disappear from the map of Ukrainian football. Instead, conditions must be created that allow for a normal functioning of the club, even with the possibility to move to Kyiv or another location and transferring the FC into the hands of new owners" (Ultras Tavriya Simferopol, 2019, November 19). Simferopol's case is connected to national politics as well, since the club's history, as the forced relocation due to the annexation of its hometown shows. Moreover, ultras addressed political players and the public in their effort to save the club. Meanwhile, fan activism also includes ultras' activities against the club owners, as in the two following examples.

Since 1997, the oligarch Ihor Kolomoisky is involved in the club FC Dnipro. After he entered politics and became head of the Dnipropetrovsk regional state administration, he lost interest in the club and left the team to its own devices (Verbytskyi, 2022). Dnipro became associated with debts, rude attitudes towards former players and coaches, and non-fulfilled financial commitments (Rupor Pivnichnoyi Trybuny, 2017, May 21). The fans blamed the oligarch for the club's decline and displayed their frustration in various ways. One example was May 31, 2017, when Dnipro played against Volyn. During that match, Dnipro ultras burned a large portrait of Kolomoisky and showed a banner reading "Kolomoisky – motherfucker". They disrupted the match by throwing firecrackers and smoke bombs towards the pitch. (Ultras FCMK, 2017). The same year, Kolomoisky and others founded a new club, SC Dnipro-1. Almost the entire coaching staff and some players moved to the newly created club, while the ultras categorically opposed the creation of SC Dnipro-1 as an act of treason to their club and its traditions. They considered the creation of a team with a similar name to be a scam designed to avoid paying debts and sanctions and, thus, an illegal and corrupt practice. In 2019, SC Dnipro-1 qualified for the first division, while the original Dnipro club was relegated twice, went bankrupt and disappeared in that same year (Ultras FCMK, 2017, May 31; Schwarz, 2017, November 26). Dnipro's fans organized the campaign *#DniproMustLive* for their old club. Fans of most Ukrainian clubs joined them, as well as fans from Gomel and Mogilev (Belarus), Púchov (Slovakia), and Sofia (Bulgaria). Ultras of these clubs displayed banners in support of FC Dnipro at their respective matches, using the claim "Dnipro must live" (Rupor Pivnichnoyi Trybuny, 2019, July 28, August 5, 11, 16, 18, 19).

However, political and sociocultural aspects do not only concern fans of troubled clubs but are relevant for fan activism against owners and management at successful clubs such Dynamo Kyiv as well. Since 2020, Dynamo's first team is coached by Romanian coach Mircea Lucescu, who previously coached Dynamo's main rival Shakhtar Donetsk. In the summer of 2020, the Dynamo Kyiv fan movement decided to abandon active support as long as Lucescu remained head coach: "The reason for this decision is not the Romanian's professional qualifications, but his human qualities, which we are absolutely not satisfied with. Accordingly, this decision will not change regardless of the number of trophies won. Even if Dynamo wins the Champions League for Kyiv, 'Lucescu, Go Away!' will be heard from the stands" (WBC Ultras Dynamo, 2021, April 22). The ultras displayed banners against their coach in the stadium reading "1 goal, 1 point, 1 ticket to Bucharest" (Ultras.org.ua, 2021, December 12), or "No Gypsies, please"[1] (WBC Ultras Dynamo, 2021, March 12), associating Romanians to stigmatised Sinti*zze and Rom*nja.

The ultras' protest also addressed the club's owners, who had hired Lucescu. Ultras displayed banners like "Surkis is a disgrace" (Ultras.org.ua, 2021, March 9). On August 5, 2020, they published the following demands: "Either the Surkis brothers find a new owner for Dynamo, who is determined to make real changes, or they

[1] The authors would like to distance themselves from this derogatory and discriminatory wording. It is merely replicated in order to portray reality.

hire a team of professional managers who will remove kickbacks, nepotism, and lazy people from the club, and they leave the club's management. But first, Lucescu must go away!" (WBC Ultras Dynamo, 2020, August 5). Besides Lucescu's hiring, the ultras also accused the Surkis brothers of being corrupt and pro-Russian.

All three examples of club-related fan activism are caused by perceived mismanagement, including corruption and nepotism. The fans see themselves as defenders against these developments. The struggle against corruption was also an important issue during the Maidan protests, in which ultras participated. This indicates again that the realms of sport, politics and societal issues are connected. The example of Dynamo Kyiv shows how opposition to the club owners can be framed nationalistically. After reporting on findings on fan activism in Ukraine, the following section will reflect on fan activism in Germany to contrast it with the Ukrainian case.

5 Results from the German Case Study

Football is the most popular sport in Germany and watching football is one of the most popular leisure activities. Before the Covid-19 pandemic, more than 13 million people per season watched the male first-division matches (DFL, 2020). In Germany, fans' participation in football's governance is relatively high compared to other countries due to the 50 + 1 rule which guarantees the fans' influence on their respective club. The rule states that more than 50% of the voting right of the club must belong to a membership-based non-profit organisation. That organisation is open to everyone including fans. Its members have several rights including the election of the supervisory board (Merkel, 2012). The 50 + 1 rule is seen a 'holy grail' for sustainable football governance by many Germans and people in other countries alike (Ward, 2013). Additionally, German fans have established organisations to express their interests, such as *Pro Fans* (abolished in 2023) or *Unsere Kurve* [Our Terrace]. Beside these official structures, informal networks exist where, fans swap ideas on their activities and coordinate protests. 2012 marks a turning point for organized fan activism in Germany (Ziesche, 2017). That year, fans organised a nationwide campaign, mostly using a support boycott as a tactic, in order to prevent a new security concept called Secure Stadium Experience from being implemented by the German Football League (DFL), which organises the league in an agreement with the German Football Federation (DFB) (Brandt & Hertel, 2015).

5.1 Club Level

Fans in Germany address mostly clubs with their activism, the club the respective fans support themselves (1,675 entries) as well as other clubs (440 entries). The most prominent reasons for activism concerning the own club are sociocultural and symbolic, often related to the club's history, either past glory or remembering deceased members, including players (23%). Performance (17%) is mostly related to the team on the pitch. Fans also directly intervene in club governance (17%), as

in the following example where Ultras Essen (fans of a fourth division team at the time) announced:

"'Him or Us' […]. 'Him', that is Dr. Uwe Harttgen [sporting director], who single-handedly extended the contract between [coach] Marc Fascher and the club Rot-Weiss Essen [RWE] behind the back of the first chairman and against the vote of the supervisory board. 'We', that is the group Ultras Essen and hopefully many more RWE fans who will join this boycott. […] As a group, we will not attend any more matches of our first team until Dr. Uwe Harttgen is no longer in charge at Rot-Weiss Essen. […] This boycott is valid without time limit" (Faszination Fankurve, 2015a March 21).

While the protest seemed to be aimed at a single person, Dr. Uwe Harttgen, at first glance, it really is related to the balance of power in the club as a whole. The ultras described the management ignoring the advice of the supervisory board, which was elected by members of the aforementioned non-profit organisation. This case thus relates strongly to the aspect of governance, and the 50 + 1 rule specifically. Meanwhile, this example shows a dilemma many ultras find themselves in. They perceive themselves as guardians of fan interests, but they require the support of other fans to act powerfully. This process is typical for a lot of fan activism, which is initiated by highly organised ultra groups, who also organise the support in the stadiums.

The most addressed opponent team is RB Leipzig, with 145 entries. In many fans' perception, RB Leipzig represents football's commercialisation. The club was founded in 2009, when the Red Bull company bought the licence of a 5th division team, invested in new players and established an image that mostly represents the company's brand. Fans of other teams opposed that development, as an inauthentic marketing tool became a symbol of Modern Football. When Leipzig went on to be promoted through Germany's leagues, especially fans of teams in the league Leipzig were currently in became active. A poignant example is the match Nürnberg vs. RB in 2014. Here, the online fanzine Faszination Fankurve reports as follows:

"Actions of the Ultras Nürnberg against Red Bull: Yesterday, 1. FC Nürnberg fans showed a choreography reading 'Use the chance for tradition and clip the wings of the bulls'. In addition, numerous banners against RB Leipzig were shown and the anti-commercial drink Dead Bull was sold. The choreography showed the Nürnberg Ultras' logo chopping off the wings of the Red Bull. The Nürnberg Ultras also offered a game of darts on Red Bull's logo. Flyers and speeches informed the fans about RB Leipzig. The banners were directed against RB Leipzig, Red Bull, Dietmar Mateschitz and Ralf Rangnick" (Faszination Fankurve, 2014, October 17).

Mateschitz was the owner of the Red Bull company at the time while Rangnick served as RB's sporting director. Both were also verbally attacked during other matches. The activism towards Leipzig includes banners and choreographies in 66% of the cases found in our research. Many fans judged Leipzig and their fans for a lack of tradition, made jokes with the brand slogans or simply insulted RB and its fans. Banners and choreographies are used in fan activism against many teams. Remarkably, in the case of RB Leipzig opposing fans also made use of boycotts. In 17% of the entries on activism related to RB, fans of the opposing team boycotted away matches in Leipzig. While ultras often act alone in activism at the club level, involving other fans of their club at most, this is very different on the association level.

5.2 Association Level

At the association level, fans' protest addresses FIFA (0,5%) and UEFA (4%), but mostly the national governance associations DFB (40%) and DFL (51%). In many fans' perception, no clear difference between the latter two can be made out. Protest addressing DFL and DFB is mostly related to two issues: Governance (29%) and experience (e.g. lower ticket prices or fan-friendly kick-off times (21%). A common example is the fans' struggle for the preservation of the so-called 50 + 1 rule as a subject of governance.

"Whether in front of the South Stand in Dortmund, the North Stand in Freiburg, the North Stand in Nürnberg or in the visitors' blocks in Hamburg, Leipzig or Dortmund: on the last match day, messages such as '50 + 1 remains! Without ifs and buts!', '50 + 1 must stay!', '50 + 1 remains!", 'If Kalle Rummenigge [president of Bayern München] is against it, 50 + 1 can only make sense. Drive out investors! War on the FCB [FC Bayern München]!', 'No discussion—keep 50 + 1!', 'Together for the preservation of 50 + 1' or 'Your half-empty arenas are the result of the privatisation of football! 50 + 1 must stay! RB must go!' could be read. […] More than 2,600 fan clubs, fan groups and fan organisations from 127 different clubs have already signed the '50 + 1 stays' appeal. Fan clubs can still sign the appeal before the DFL meeting" (Faszination Fankurve, 2018, March 19).

This short example from Faszination Fankurve shows three different insights into German fan activism. First, a combination of different forms of activism can be observed, banners in stadiums a well as an online campaign collecting signatures for a petition. Second, a level of cooperation between different fan groups exists when a common goal is shared. Fans of different clubs participated in the petition, despite existing rivalries. This cooperation of German fans has also been described in other cases (Brandt & Hertel, 2016). Third, the topic of 50 + 1 is also related to other issues like the fans' experience in half-empty stadiums, protests against RB Leipzig or criticism of Bayern München, the country's most successful club.

Another important issue for fans is the matchday schedule. The traditional kick-off time in Germany was 03.30 p.m. on Saturdays, allowing away fans a relatively comfortable trip that does not interfere with most fans' working hours. During the last decade, changes have been made to kick-off times, mainly due to broadcasting interests. Fans criticised matches on Sunday afternoon and mainly on Monday, as in the following example from March 2019. Members of Ultras Frankfurt, the fan association Nordwestkurve, and the association of all fan clubs of Frankfurt published an appeal including the following statement:

"But we want to continue to take a stand as fans. Even though Monday matches are supposed to be abolished in 2021—we will only believe that once it's realised. This time, however, we are varying our protest. We will not offer the game its usual setting in the first half, instead leaving the terrace empty, even if this hurts us the most. But it is vital to continue to show that these games are not accepted by us fans. We will not be lulled to sleep! This shit needs to be abolished immediately!" (Faszination Fankurve, 2019 March 05).

The example shows a tactic of German fan activism, the support boycott. This tactic is considered to be effective by many ultras as their support is used as an important

marketing tool for German football by the DFL and DFB. This way of protest had been used in 2012 as well, creating huge media attention. It is mainly used for activism caused by the category of experience (e.g. concerning lower ticket prices or fan-friendly kick-off times—27% of all boycotts), security measures and policing (32%) and, as in the aforementioned example, governance (34%). In order to show what was missing in the first half, the ultras aimed to be even louder than usual in the second half. The quotation also hints at a success of fans' struggle, as the DFL announced in 2019 to abandon matches on Monday for the first division from the 2021/22 season onwards. Although this could be understood as a victory, fans continued their protest, as they did not trust the associations (DFB, DFL) to keep their promises. As a response to failed negotiations between fans and the association, some fans declared a symbolic war on the DFB in 2017, in which fans of different clubs participated. To kick off the campaign, thousands of Dynamo Dresden fans joined an away match in Karlsruhe in camouflage, displaying a large banner with the DFB's crossed-out logo. In a statement the fans published afterwards, they explained: "As already mentioned, the big problem is that the DFB and the active fan scenes have not been talking to each other for several years" (Faszination Fankurve, 2017, May 15). The relationship to club managers, as in the example from Essen, where fans participated in decisions, seems to be more trustful, even if conflicts occur, than that of fans and associations. On a national or societal level, the situation is more complex.

5.3 National Level

Activism related to the national level mainly includes the codes of politics (13% of the related codeings), security measures and policing (21%), and social issues (36%) as reasons for activism. A typical example for the latter is that fans organise donation campaigns to aid agencies supporting marginalised groups like homeless people, or health services, such as a campaign supporting the registration for leukaemia aid. Sometimes, fans provide services by themselves, as when Frankfurt fans offered food for homeless people (Faszination Fankurve, 2015b, July 13). But mostly, fans serve as an intermediator, collecting money or other donations inside or outside the stadium, as in the following example.

"Unfortunately, the pandemic still has a full grip on our lives and all members of society must continue to accept restrictions in everyday life. […] [E]ven during the pandemic, or especially because of it, there are still people who need support. Even if we are not able to carry out our annual 'Donate Mugs—Save Lives' campaign in the stadium as usual, we still want to and will carry it out with your support. This year we are collecting donations for '*Kolibri* – Help for kids with cancer', which supports seriously ill children in their daily lives and makes it easier for them" (Faszination Fankurve, 2021b, March 02).

The excerpt refers to a repeating campaign by fans of Hertha BSC. Many fan groups organise annual campaigns – especially in the pre-Christmas period. Additionally, singular campaigns are initiated. One common example would be the support of fans with health issues. Another instance are multiple fan groups that organised shopping services for vulnerable people during the COVID-19

pandemic, an action they perceived as a service to society as a whole (Faszination Fankurve, 2021a, February 24). Donation campaigns are mostly related to social issues. 10% of the documented donation campaigns are related to atmosphere, for instance when fans collect donations for choreographies etc.

Actions that are directly related to politics, for instance addressing politicians, parties or the parliament also occur in Germany, but to a lesser extent than in Ukraine, as the number of 100 codings show. One example would be the introduction of new police laws, which is also related to the category of security measures and policing. It is relevant to know that some football fans, especially organised fans such as ultras, are in a long-lasting conflict with the police over various security issues. Laws have been implemented by each federal state separately but show similarities in that they provide the police with a larger room for manoeuvre. Different social groups participated in the protest, fearing a restriction of their citizen rights, as is shown in the following article reflecting on activities in the state of Baden-Württemberg:

"How football fans participated in NoPolGBW [a neologism consisting of the word "No" and the acronym of the law] rallies. […] On Saturday, more than 1,000 people marched through Stuttgart Bad Cannstatt [a specific area of the city] with the slogan 'Defend freedom rights—prevent police laws'. In addition to a representative of Commando Cannstatt [Stuttgart's largest ultra group], a person from the White-Green Help Fund [an organisation that helps fans when they have legal problems] from the fan scene of Spielvereinigung Greuther Fürth [situated in Bavaria] spoke in Stuttgart on Saturday. Moreover, greetings were forwarded from the fan lawyers' working group, who were unable to be present themselves. At the final rally in Stuttgart, a representative of 1. FC Heidenheim's ultras also had his say. Ice hockey fans from Villingen-Schwenningen, another city in Baden-Württemberg, were also present in Stuttgart." (Faszination Fankurve, 2019b, October 16).

The article on Faszination Fankurve continues with a description of demonstrations in the cities of Freiburg, Karlsruhe, Stuttgart, again, and Reutlingen. In the quoted section fans joined a demonstration that was also attended by other social groups. Here, cooperations with groups outside of the footballing world exist. However, Faszination Fankurve only documents fans' activities, including their speeches. Interestingly, around 23% of documented politically motivated activism is not related to the stadium. This figure differs from all other categories, where only a mean of 16% of activities have taken place outside the stadiums. This shows that fans take their activism to other spaces, but only to a certain degree. The stadium as their symbolically charged emotional home and as a space of community remains the most important location.

The display of a political ideology is less visible in the German sample compared to the Ukrainian case, a fact that might be rooted in the proclamation to "keep politics out of football" that many fans, and potentially fanzines such as Fanszination Fankurve, follow. The latter might therefore be hesitant to document activities related to politics. This must be acknowledged as a limitation of this study.

6 Comparison and Discussion

This article aims to compare fan activism in two different countries, Ukraine and Germany, between 2014 and 2021. We found that the activism of Ukrainian fans, mostly ultras, is often related to national and nationalist politics. Fans joined the fighting forces, but they also organised solidarity campaigns for detained activists, blood donations for soldiers, and participated in nationalistic marches and activities. The fans' presentation inside the stadiums changed from football-related to politic-related themes. They began to insult Russia and its representatives and to glorify their own country. They also solidarized with nationalist figures, who many fans perceived to be victims of an unfair justice system. Furthermore, activism addressing the football association, as in the fight against the requirement of personal identification to buy tickets, was framed by national politics. Additionally, fans engage against the sport's commercialisation, as in the case of a brewery sponsoring a fan organisation. Furthermore, they engaged in the struggle to save traditional clubs like in Dnipro or in Kyiv, where fans protested a coach who was affiliated with their rival team in the past. The fans also framed these latter examples with national politics.

For German fans, issues related to football governance are especially important (see Table 1). On the national level, activism can be related to social aid activities and security laws. The latter category mainly refers to new police laws. On the association level, German fans mainly address the national football organisations DFB and DFL. These are related to the categories of atmosphere, mostly concerning kick-off times and governance, here, mainly the preservation of the 50 + 1 rule. However, various other governance-related topics occur. Due to a lack of trust between fans and the associations, the former declared war on the DFB in 2017. On a club level, the fans engage with their own club as well as other clubs. RB Leipzig can be considered to be the most addressed club, as German fans reject the club for being a marketing tool of the enterprise and a symbol of the commercialisation of football. Activism towards the own club as the main addressee of fans in Germany is often related to traditions and rivalries from the past, governance, and performance, both on and off the pitch.

The results from both cases show several similarities in the reasons for activism. In both countries, kick-off times are an issue as they directly influence the experience of highly devoted fans who want to be able to travel to away games. These fans also reject security measures, whether they are introduced by the federation or the state. The desire to preserve their own and even other clubs' traditions and identities is another similarity between fans in both countries. Concerning the reasons for activism, the biggest difference is related to politics. Political themes dominate activism in Ukraine at least since 2014. Furthermore, issues from other societal fields are often politically framed. In Germany, the idea of keeping politics out of football is very present. This, however, does not mean that fans do not respond to political decisions, but the importance is not comparable to Ukraine. In Germany, fans frame their activism in opposition to processes of commercialisation, which they identify as the driving force of their decreasing influence and regrettable

changes in sports. These results are in line with Zheng and García (2017) or Choluj et al. (2020), emphasising the different meanings of Modern Football in Western and post-socialist Europe.

Similarities exist in the tactics and means used by fans. Banners, demonstrations, direct actions, or the collection of donations are found in Ukraine and Germany. Fans in both countries also use boycotts, including support boycotts. But our data suggest that the latter are more present in Germany – which might be the case because the German fans' support became part of the commodified product (the match), whose commercialisation they criticise. Another explanation could be that German fans became aware of the power of that tactic during the aforementioned 2012 protests. However, banners and choreographies are clearly the most used tactic. Only on social issues, donation campaigns are more prominent. Another similarity is a certain level of cooperation by fans of different clubs, although a general rivalry between certain clubs remains. Similar to the results of Brandt and Hertel (2017) this cooperation mainly occurs when fans face a common, strong enemy and/or are united by a common goal. Nevertheless, most groups tend to exclude certain fans from this cooperation. In Ukraine, these are fans of Arsenal Kyiv in Germany those of RB Leipzig. The narratives that create boundaries in these cases are based on specific (nationalistic or traditional) values, respectively marking these fans as representatives of an opposite group.

Most tactics used in fan activism, like banners, flags, demonstrations, or announcements, are also relevant in other social movements, so is the oscillation of groups between cooperation and rivalry. One unique feature of fan activism is space, as fans in both countries mainly protest inside stadiums. Thereby, they mainly reach a football-related public, which makes sense for football-related issues. For other issues like national politics, this could also be helpful, as football is a major sport in both countries and therefore an issue of general public debate. Nevertheless, it can be questioned whether all activities are recognised outside of one's own community when they take place in stadiums. Furthermore, the question can be posed whether all football fans actually engage with political issues as addressing these issues could also be interpreted as a self-referential act in some cases, assuring oneself of one's own rebellious attitude. However, fans are aware of the limitations of the stadium space and activism outside of it. For instance, they take to the streets more often in relation to political issues than they do relating to other categories.

Similarities in reasons, space and chosen tactics show the global dimension of fan protest, as fans influence each other, often via the internet. This reflects the formation of a global ultra culture since ultras are the dominant fan movement in both Ukraine and Germany. The aforementioned tactics are related to a global ultra style (Doidge et al., 2020). Fans can exchange sub-cultural elements, tactics or even symbols easily, as these can be adapted and reframed in different settings. The same holds true for other social movements. A preservation of elements perceived as tradition is yet another similarity among fan activism within the global movement, even though the points of reference and the meaning of said traditions differ locally.

Nonetheless, our samples show differences in fan activism. This can be understood as a matter of local influence, which is likely to differ even further between Germany and Ukraine since the Russian occupation in 2014, and even more so since

the recent invasion in 2022. Besides national politics, football's governance influences fan activism as well. German fans protest for the preservation of the 50 + 1 rule, which also guarantees more leverage on their side. Interestingly, this does not seem to lead to less club-related fan activism. Our data suggest that it is rather the other way around, as most activism is related to the own club, since the fans know that their voices matter in the club. In the Ukrainian ownership system, fans have no official say. They reject certain activities of club owners, like the hiring of a certain coach, but the fans did not challenge the private ownership model in general as a reason for their relatively small influence. Therefore, our study shows that certain similarities in fan activism in Germany and Ukraine exists, mainly referring to a general attitude. Meanwhile, national sports governance and national politics influence fan activism, establishing a national fan culture expressed in this activism. In accordance with existing literature, our sample shows increasing activism and an increasing societal awareness of this activism over time (Numerato, 2018; Zheng & García, 2017), as well as fans' cooperation when a common goal is identified (Brandt & Hertel, 2017; Zheng & García, 2017). Such cooperation of antagonistic groups in social movements can consist for a period of several years, as the Ukrainian truce shows, or be rather fluid and temporally limited, as in Germany, where cooperation is mainly limited to certain campaigns. It will be interesting to see whether the Ukrainian supporter movement will stay as united as it currently is in the future.

Nonetheless, there are limitations to our results. Both studies are mainly based on social media or the website Faszination Fankurve. Here, a certain bias exists, as fans represent themselves to the public through these outlets. Statements can therefore be seen as a presentation to a specific audience. Additionally, ultras as a specific type of fan often occur in our data. They are highly organised and, therefore, highly visible, but only represent a small share of football fans. Ultras often see themselves as the avant-garde of football fandom and it is important to them to document their activities, as can be seen in the sources used for this article. It is to be assumed that the activism of other, less organised fans, often goes undocumented. Thus, our sample does not reflect all activities in stadiums adequately.

Nevertheless, the study shows similarities and differences between fan activism in Germany and Ukraine and points to the benefits of comparative studies as they offer insights into the global and local dimensions of fan activism. It is noteworthy that issues like kick-off times or contracts with coaches provoke fan activism in both settings. These topics do not directly affect people's quality of life or their human or democratic rights, besides exceptions related to security measures. From the outside looking in, football fandom is just a leisure activity that fans engage in. However, this leisure activity has become an important part of many people's identity and facilitates a sense of belonging. Hence, fans reflect on developments in football and feel affected. That is why they are willing to invest time and other resources into their struggles. This occurs in both countries, beside existing socioeconomic differences, and despite a different framing of their activism.

The importance of said research can be considered even higher if we reflect on the aspect of longevity. The research considered a period of eight years. The authors were able to document continuing activism during that time period, which declined

but did not come to an end even during global crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic. During the pandemic, fans acted in a broader context, for example launching fundraising campaigns with no direct link to football. It seems that fans wanted to stay connected to their community even if their activism took place outside of the footballing world. After the time period considered in this study, Ukrainian society was hit by another crisis – the Russian invasion of further parts of Ukraine starting in February 2022. Now, many fans fight on the front lines and are not able to attend their respective clubs' matches. The ultra groups' social media accounts no longer display fans in stadiums but pictures of group members at the front. Despite the ongoing war, the significance of football as a leisure activity manifested in August 2022, when the Premyer Liga started into the new season. As we were able to show, football and football fandom continue to be important activities even in times of crisis. Therefore, the study of these leisure activities will remain important research areas in the future. Further research might compare football fan activism to other leisure related activism to figure out whether the same dynamics exist, or if football as a resource of belonging is a singularity in terms of activism in many countries.

Funding Open Access funding enabled and organized by Projekt DEAL.

Declarations

Conflict of Interest No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

References

Almashyn, V. (2021). *Bilshe nizh gra. Don't stop*. Zaliznyi tato.

Brandt, C., & Hertel, F. (2015). German ultras as political players? An analysis of the protest against the 'Secure Stadium Experience.' *Miscellanea Anthropologica Et Sociologica, 16*(4), 64–82. https://doi.org/10.5604/20842937.1189813

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), 19–40.

Brandt, C., & Hertel, F. (2017). Final remarks. In C. Brandt, F. Hertel, & S. Huddleston (Eds.), *Football Fans, Rivalry and Cooperation* (pp. 185–195). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315455211.

Brandt, C., & Kurscheidt, M. (2022). Striving for Social Sustainability of Football Commercialization: An Ethnographic Case Study of the German Fan-Governed Club HFC Falke. *Sustainability, 14*(15), 9230. https://doi.org/10.3390/su14159230

Choluj, K., Gerard, S., & May, A. (2020). The interdependence between a football club and its ultra-fandom in relation to "Modern" football: A case study of Legia Warsaw. *Managing Sport and Leisure, 25*(1–2), 64–78. https://doi.org/10.1080/23750472.2019.1684836

Cleland, J. A. (2010). From passive to active: The changing relationship between supporters and football clubs. *Soccer & Society, 11*(5), 537–552. https://doi.org/10.1080/14660970.2010.497348

Cleland, J., Doidge, M., Millward, P., & Widdop, P. (2018). Football Supporters Across Europe: Cooperation and Solidarities in Networks of Fan Movements. In J. Cleland, M. Doidge, P. Millward, & P. Widdop (Eds.), *Collective Action and Football Fandom* (pp. 161–180). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-73141-4_7.

Convery, I., & Cox, D. (2012). A review of research ethics in internet-based research. *Practitioner Research in Higher Education, 6*(1), 50–57.

DFL (2020). *Wirtschaftsreport 2020*. DFL Deutsche Fußball Liga. Retrieved February 15, 2023, from https://media.dfl.de/sites/2/2020/02/DE_DFL_Wirtschaftsreport_2020_M.pdf.

Doidge, M., Kossakowski, R., & Mintert, S. (2020). Ultras: The passion and performance of contemporary football fandom. *Manchester University Press*. https://doi.org/10.7765/9781526127631

Dubal, S. (2010). The neoliberalization of football: Rethinking neoliberalism through the commercialization of the beautiful game. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport, 45*(2), 123–146. https://doi.org/10.1177/1012690210362426

Dunning, E. (1972). *The Development of Modern Football*. In E. Dunning (Ed.), Sport: Readings from a Sociological Perspective (pp. 133–151). University of Toronto Press. https://doi.org/10.3138/9781442654044-014.

Dixon, K. (2011). A 'third way' for football fandom research: Anthony Giddens and Structuration Theory. *Soccer & Society, 12*(2), 279–298.

Faszination Fankurve (2014). „Dead Bull" Dartspiel, Marsch, Flyer und Reden. Retrieved February 24, 2022, from https://archiv.faszination-fankurve.de/index.php?head=Dead-Bull-Dartspiel-Marsch-Flyer-und-Reden&folder=sites&site=news_detail&news_id=8029.

Faszination Fankurve (2015a). Unbefristeter Boykott der Ultras Essen. Retrieved February 24, 2022, from https://archiv.faszination-fankurve.de/index.php?head=Unbefristeter-Boykott-der-Ultras-Essen&folder=sites&site=news_detail&news_id=9324.

Faszination Fankurve (2015b). Ultras Frankfurt arbeiteten für Obdachlose. Retrieved February 24, 2022, from https://archiv.faszination-fankurve.de/index.php?head=Ultras-Frankfurt-arbeiteten-fuer-Obdachlose&folder=sites&site=news_detail&news_id=10265.

Faszination Fankurve (2017). Videos: „Krieg dem DFB": Dynamo-Fans in Karlsruhe. Retrieved February 24, 2022, from https://archiv.faszination-fankurve.de/index.php?head=Videos-Krieg-dem-DFB-Dynamo-Fans-in-Karlsruhe&folder=sites&site=news_detail&news_id=15745.

Faszination Fankurve (2018). Botschaften für 50+1 in Deutschland & Kroatien. Retrieved February 24, 2022, from https://archiv.faszination-fankurve.de/index.php?head=Botschaften-fuer-501-in-Deutschland-amp-Kroatien&folder=sites&site=news_detail&news_id=17960.

Faszination Fankurve (2019a). Fanszene Frankfurt boykottiert bei Montagsspiel 1. Halbzeit. Retrieved February 24, 2022, from https://archiv.faszination-fankurve.de/index.php?head=Fanszene-Frankfurt-boykottiert-bei-Montagsspiel-1-Halbzeit&folder=sites&site=news_detail&news_id=19876.

Faszination Fankurve (2019b). Wie sich Fußballfans an NoPolGBW-Demos beteiligten. Retrieved February 24, 2022, from https://archiv.faszination-fankurve.de/index.php?head=Wie-sich-Fussballfans-an-NoPolGBW-Demos-beteiligten&folder=sites&site=news_detail&news_id=20924.

Faszination Fankurve (2021a). „Gemeinsam helfen–Gemeinsam stark–Gemeinsam für Stuttgart!". Retrieved February 24, 2022, from https://archiv.faszination-fankurve.de/index.php?head=Gemeinsam-helfen-Gemeinsam-stark-Gemeinsam-fuer-Stuttgart&folder=sites&site=news_detail&news_id=22468.

Faszination Fankurve (2021b). Ultras von Hertha BSC sammeln wieder Spenden. Retrieved February 24, 2022, from https://archiv.faszination-fankurve.de/index.php?head=Ultras-von-Hertha-BSC-sammeln-wieder-Spenden&folder=sites&site=news_detail&news_id=22565.

García, B., & Zheng, J. (2017). Introduction. In B. García & J. Zheng (Eds.), *Football research in an enlarged Europe. Football and supporter activism in Europe: Whose game is it?* (pp. 1–5). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-48734-2_1.

Giulianotti, R., & Robertson, R. (2007). Forms of Glocalization: Globalization and the Migration Strategies of Scottish Football Fans in North America. *Sociology, 41*(1), 133–152. https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038507073044

Giulianotti, R. (2016). *Sport: A Critical Sociology* (2nd ed.). Polity Press.

Giddens, A. (1990). *The Consequences of Modernity*. Polity Press.

Klein, G., & Meuser, M. (2015). Fußball, Politik, Vergemeinschaftung. Zur Einführung. In G. Klein & M. Meuser (Eds.), *Ernste Spiele: zur politischen Soziologie des Fussballs* (pp. 7–16). transcript. https://doi.org/10.1515/9783839409770-001.

Krugliak, M., & Krugliak, O. (2017). The unlikely alliance of Ukrainian football ultras. In C. Brandt, F. Hertel, & S. Huddleston (Eds.), Football Fans, Rivalry and Cooperation (pp. 170–184). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315455211

Merkel, U. (2012). Football fans and clubs in Germany: Conflicts, crises and compromises. *Soccer & Society, 13*(3), 359–376. https://doi.org/10.1080/14660970.2012.655505

Millward, P. (2011). *The global football league: Transnational networks, social movements and sport in the new media age*. *Global culture and sport*. Palgrave Macmillan. http://www.loc.gov/catdir/enhancements/fy1210/2011024437-b.html.

Millward, P., & Poulton, G. (2014). Football Fandom, Mobilization and Herbert Blumer: A Social Movement Analysis of F.C. United of Manchester. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, *31*(1), 1–22. https://doi.org/10.1123/ssj.2013-0132

Numerato, D. (2015). Who Says "No to Modern Football?" Italian Supporters, Reflexivity, and Neo-Liberalism. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues, 39*(2), 120–138. https://doi.org/10.1177/0193723514530566

Numerato, D. (2018). *Football fans, activism and social change*. Routledge.

Perasović, B., & Mustapić, M. (2018). Carnival supporters, hooligans, and the 'Against Modern Football' movement: Life within the ultras subculture in the Croatian context. *Sport in Society, 21*(6), 960–976. https://doi.org/10.1080/17430437.2017.1300395

Porter, C. (2008). Manchester United, global capitalism and local resistance. *Belgeo, 8*(2), 181–192. https://doi.org/10.4000/belgeo.10271

Prykarpatski ultras (2016). *Prykarpatski ultras*. Facebook. Retrieved January 24, 2023, from https://www.facebook.com/ultras.if.

Rupor Pivnichnoyi Trybuny (2017). *Rupor Pivnichnoyi Trybuny*. Facebook. Retrieved January 24, 2023, from https://www.facebook.com/dnipro.rupor.

Rupor Pivnichnoyi Trybuny (2018). *Rupor Pivnichnoyi Trybuny*. Facebook. Retrieved January 24, 2023, from https://www.facebook.com/dnipro.rupor.

Rupor Pivnichnoyi Trybuny (2019). *Rupor Pivnichnoyi Trybuny*. Facebook. Retrieved January 24, 2023, from https://www.facebook.com/dnipro.rupor.

Ruzhelnyk, O. (2018). Ukraine. In J.-M. de Waele, S. Gibril, E. Gloriozova, & R. Spaaij (Eds.), The Palgrave international handbook of football and politics (pp. 311–326). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-78777-0_16

Schwarz, C. (2017). Der ukrainische Fußball & die Krise: Klubs aufgelöst, Abgänge, Zuschauerschwund. Retrieved February 24, 2022, from https://www.transfermarkt.de/der-ukrainische-fussball-amp-die-krise-klubs-aufgelost-abgange-zuschauerschwund/view/news/293688.

Sonntag, A. (2018). Germany. In J.-M. de Waele, S. Gibril, E. Gloriozova, & R. Spaaij (Eds.), *The Palgrave international handbook of football and politics* (pp. 61–83). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-78777-0.

Spracklen, K. (2022). Sports Fans and Fan Culture: A Critical Reflection on Fandom as Communicative Leisure in a Commodified World. *International Journal of the Sociology of Leisure, 5*(3), 283–295. https://doi.org/10.1007/s41978-021-00093-4

Stryiky (2017). *Stryiky*. Facebook. Retrieved January 24, 2023, from https://www.facebook.com/Skala Stryi.

Ultras FCMK (2017). Ultras FCMK. Facebook. Retrieved January 24, 2023, from https://www.facebook.com/ultras.metalist.

Ultras Shakhtar Donetsk (2019). *Ultras Shakhtar Donetsk*. Facebook. Retrieved January 24, 2023, from https://www.facebook.com/ultras.shakhtar.donetsk.

Ultras Tavriya Simferopol (2017). *Ultras Tavriya Simferopol*. Facebook. Retrieved January 24, 2023, from https://www.facebook.com/ultrastavriya1958.

Ultras Tavriya Simferopol (2019). *Ultras Tavriya Simferopol*. Facebook. Retrieved January 24, 2023, from https://www.facebook.com/ultrastavriya1958.

Ultras Tavriya Simferopol(2018). *Ultras Tavriya Simferopol*. Facebook. Retrieved January 24, 2023, from https://www.facebook.com/ultrastavriya1958.

Ultras.org.ua (2015). *Ultras.org.ua*. Facebook. Retrieved January 24, 2023, from https://www.facebook.com/ukrultras.

Ultras.org.ua (2017). *Ultras.org.ua*. Facebook. Retrieved January 24, 2023, from https://www.facebook.com/ukrultras.

Ultras.org.ua (2021). *Ultras.org.ua*. Facebook. Retrieved January 24, 2023, from https://www.facebook.com/ukrultras.

Umland, A. (2019). Irregular Militias and Radical Nationalism in Post-Euromaydan Ukraine: The Prehistory and Emergence of the "Azov" Battalion in 2014. *Terrorism and Political Violence, 31*(1), 105–131. https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2018.1555974

Verbytskyi, I. (2017). *Ultras proty FFU: na stezhyni viyny*. Retrieved January 24, 2023, from https://tyzhden.ua/ultras-proty-ffu-na-stezhyni-vijny/.

Verbytskyi, I. (2022). *Prygody naipopuliarnishoyi gry*. Tempora.

Veth, K. M. (2014). The Berlusconization of Post-Soviet Football in Russia and the Ukraine: Money Scores Goals, Goals Win Titles, and Titles Win Popularity. *Journal of Sport History, 41*(1), 55–72.

Veth, K. M. (2016). *Selling the People's Game: Football's transition from Communism to Capitalism in the Soviet Union and its Successor State* [dissertation]. King's College London. February 15, 2023, from https://kclpure.kcl.ac.uk/portal/files/61101227/2016_Veth_Manuel_1142220_ethesis.pdf.

Ward, S. (2013). *A critical analysis of governance structures within supporter owned football clubs* [dissertation]. Manchester Metropolitan University. Retrieved February 15, 2023, from http://e-space.mmu.ac.uk/332940/1/JAN%202014%20Sara%20Ward%27s%20PhD%20FINAL%20SUBMISSION%20with%20CORRECTIONS.pdf.

WBC Ultras Dynamo (2018). *WBC Ultras Dynamo Status*. Facebook. Retrieved January 24, 2023, from https://www.facebook.com/wbc.kyiv.

WBC Ultras Dynamo (2020). *WBC Ultras Dynamo*. Facebook. Retrieved January 24, 2023, from https://www.facebook.com/wbc.kyiv.

WBC Ultras Dynamo (2021). *WBC Ultras Dynamo Status*. Facebook. Retrieved January 24, 2023, from https://www.facebook.com/wbc.kyiv.

World Bank. (2023). *GDP (current US$) | Data*. Retrieved February 11, 2023, from https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD.

Zheng, J., & García, B. (2017). Conclusions: The Rising Importance of Supporter Activism in European Football. In B. García & J. Zheng (Eds.), *Football research in an enlarged Europe. Football and supporter activism in Europe: Whose game is it?* (pp. 277–285). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-48734-2_14

Zhytomyr Lads (2018). *Zhytomyr Lads*. Facebook. Retrieved January 24, 2023, from https://www.facebook.com/ZhytomyrLads.

Ziesche, D. (2017). Well Governed? Fan Representation in German Professional Football Clubs. In B. García & J. Zheng (Eds.), *Football research in an enlarged Europe. Football and supporter activism in Europe: Whose game is it?* (pp. 89–120). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-48734-2_6