Cosmopolitans and communitarians in European football
A typology of football fans vis-a-vis Europe

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Context and Research Question

Research context

- Part of the GRF sponsored research project "The identity effect of Europeanised lifeworlds: Becoming European through football?" (EUFoot)
- Focus: football fans from clubs in four leagues: Austrian and German Bundesliga, Englisch Premier League and French Ligue 1
Research question

- Europeanisation of football structures ubiquitous: Transfer market, competitions, broadcasting and institutional settings; high influence of EU institutions (ECJ, EC)

- Differences among football fans a well researched topic (1970s: Taylor, later: Giulianotti, Heitmeyer), divisive lines: involvement, violence and attitudes towards governance/trust

- European identity: Divide between European/nationalist identities: class, education; Strong role of transaction (Deutsch) and exchange (e.g. Kuhn et al.): Causal direction?

- Gap: Influence of lifeworld/leisure activities that include transnational/European exposure?

**Against the backdrop of Europeanisation of club football:**
In how far is Europeanisation reflected in fans' attitudes/identifications and what influences such attitudes?
A lifeworldly arena in which masses invest considerable time, effort and emotions across Europe (and beyond)

Draws in people known for lower levels of cosmopolitanism: hard case for self-identification with Europe

Well advanced Europeanisation of structures and governance in the field (CJEU and EU Commission influence, cross-national coordination of clubs and leagues)

field where cross border experiences/transaction is common, accessible on a low level and for masses; seemingly unpolitical, but with potential influence on identity formation.
Data and methods

- Survey among football fans in the first leagues of Austria (Bundesliga), Germany (Bundesliga), France (Ligue 1), England (Premier League), covering fans of 80 clubs
- Conducted online April-July 2019, N=2950 (convenience sample)
- Key areas: football related questions, political/identification related questions and sociodemographics
Model and data

- **Fandom intensity**
  - match attention
  - club affiliation

- **Aspects of Europeanisation**
  - Transfer market related attitudes
  - Attitudes towards European competitions
  - Team function related attitudes

- **C latent classes of football fans**
  - league
  - club level influences
  - individual characteristics
  - individual attitudes

Latent class analysis

Regression analysis
Part I
Typology of football fans
Typology of football fans

Indicators of the latent class model

- **Fan activity** related items: Affiliation with the club, attention of matches on different levels (home, away national, away abroad)

- **Transfer market** related items: Relevance of local, national and European background of the players

- **Team** related items: Player, manager and owner characteristics (being native, language knowledge) for team functioning
Typology of football fans

Four types of football fans

- Frequent communitarian: 15%
- Frequent cosmopolitan: 25%
- Occasional communitarian: 29%
- Occasional cosmopolitan: 31%

Identity characteristics: communitarian vs. cosmopolitan
Typology of football fans

Decisive differences between the types

[Graph showing different types of football fans with various metrics like frequency of attending games, aim for a club in EOC, and opinions on player nationality.]
Part II

Influence factors on the communitarian/cosmopolitan divide
Communitarian/cosmopolitan divide

Four different types of potential influence

- **league influence** (exposure)
- **club level influence**: share of club foreigners and european competitions (exposure)
- **sociodemographics**: age, education, city/countryside, residency
- **attitudes**: identification with Europe, attitudes towards European unification and immigration

Full model performs best (share of correct predictions 61%).
Communitarian/cosmopolitan divide

What differentiates cosmopolitans and communitarians?
Conclusions

- **Differences between fans:** Fans differ in their involvement and with regard to how relevant they consider the national level. Europeanisation (transnationalisation?) has left a mark differently across the fans.

- **Influence:** Exposure to heterogeneous teams and European wide competition is most relevant difference between cosmopolitans and communitarians, the more normal an international squad is, the less nationality matters.

- Expected individual influences remain intact, though they seem weaker than exposure.

*Life-world/exposure as influence that outbalances known individual influence?*
Thank you!

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