

Cosmopolitans and communitarians in European football

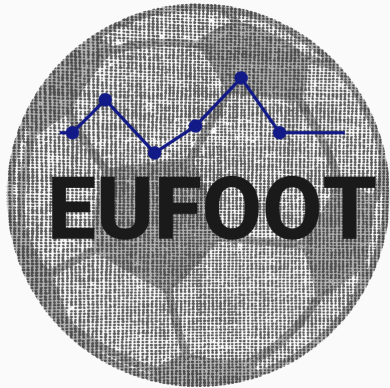
A typology of football fans vis-a-vis Europe

Regina Weber

Online Panel 'Europeanisation of identities through everyday practices' 03 Sept 2020

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, English Premier League and French Ligue 1
- Co-authored paper: Weber, R., Brand, A., Koch, F., Niemann, A., A typology of football fans vis-a-vis Europeanisation of football, *work in progress*

Context and Research Question

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?

Context and Research Question

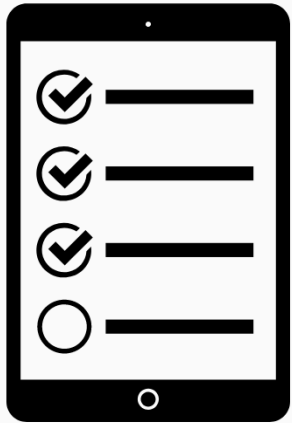
Why football as area of research?



- 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.

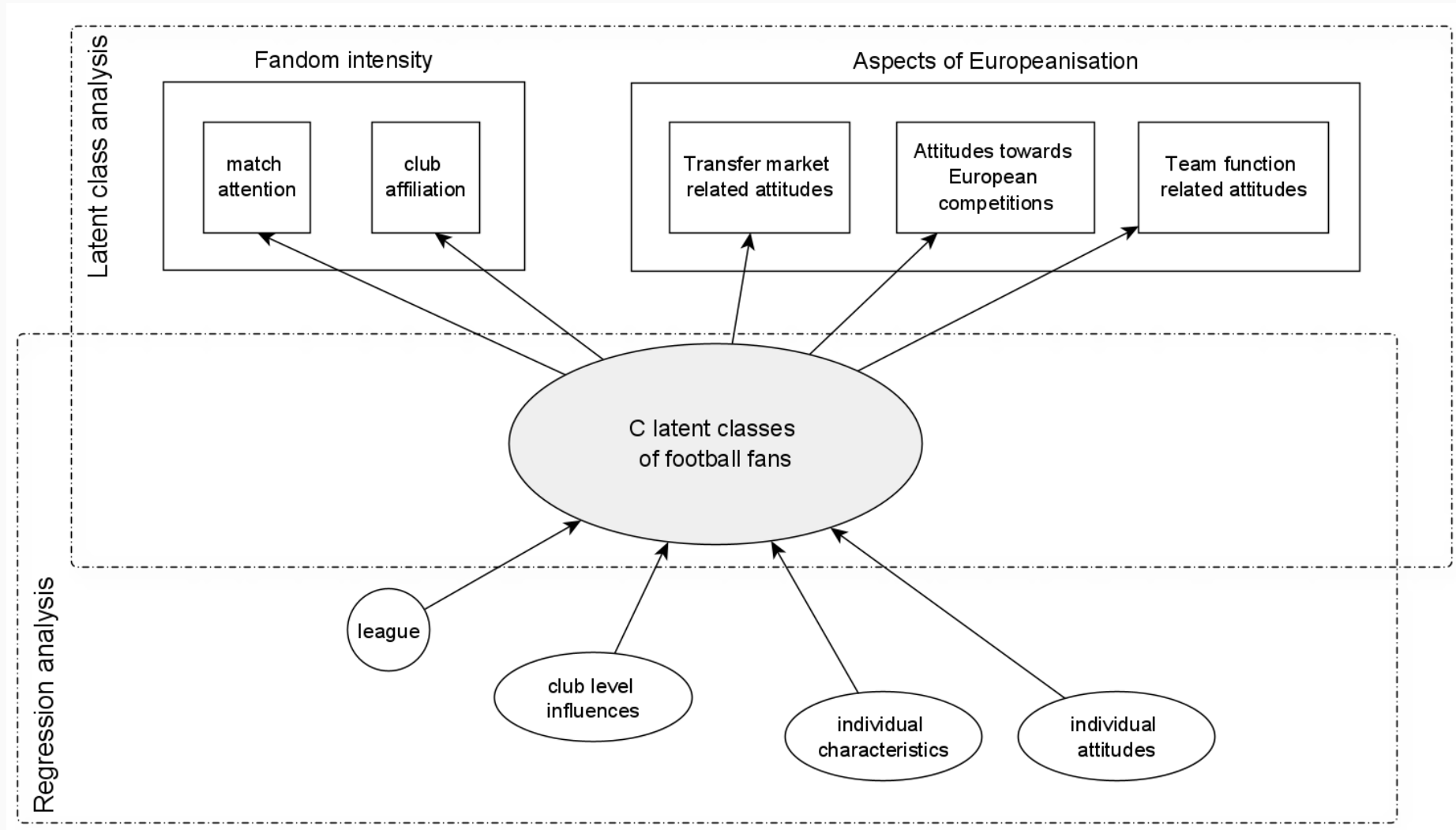
Model and data

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



Part I

Typology of football fans

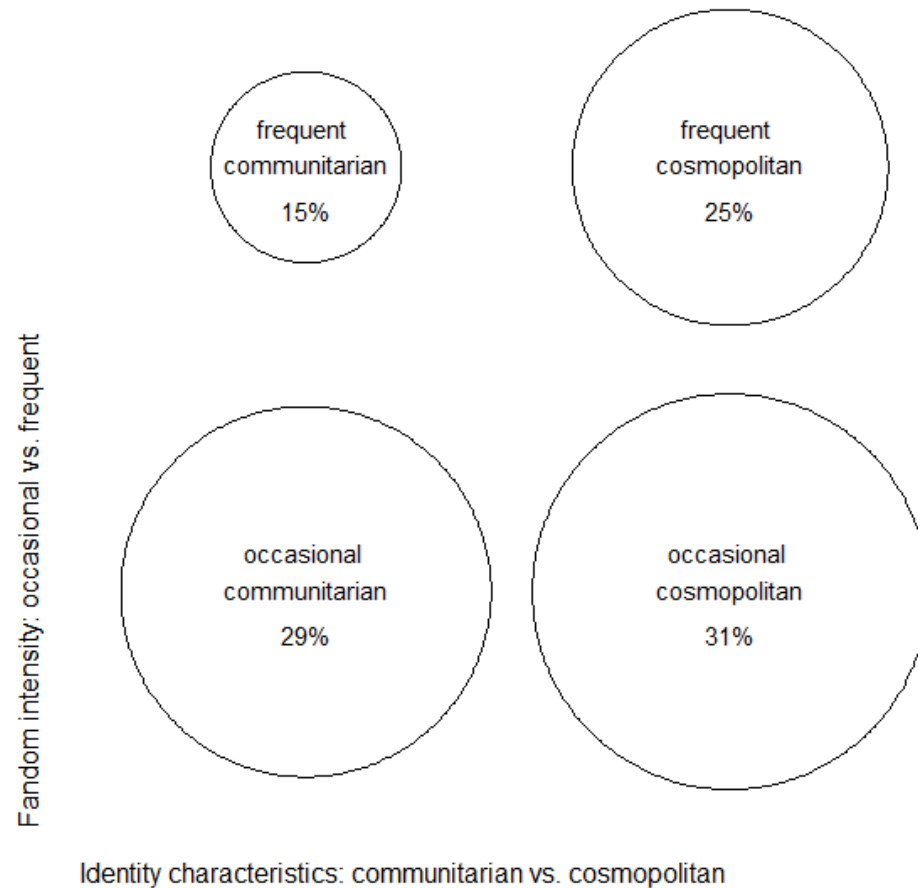
Typology of football fans

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

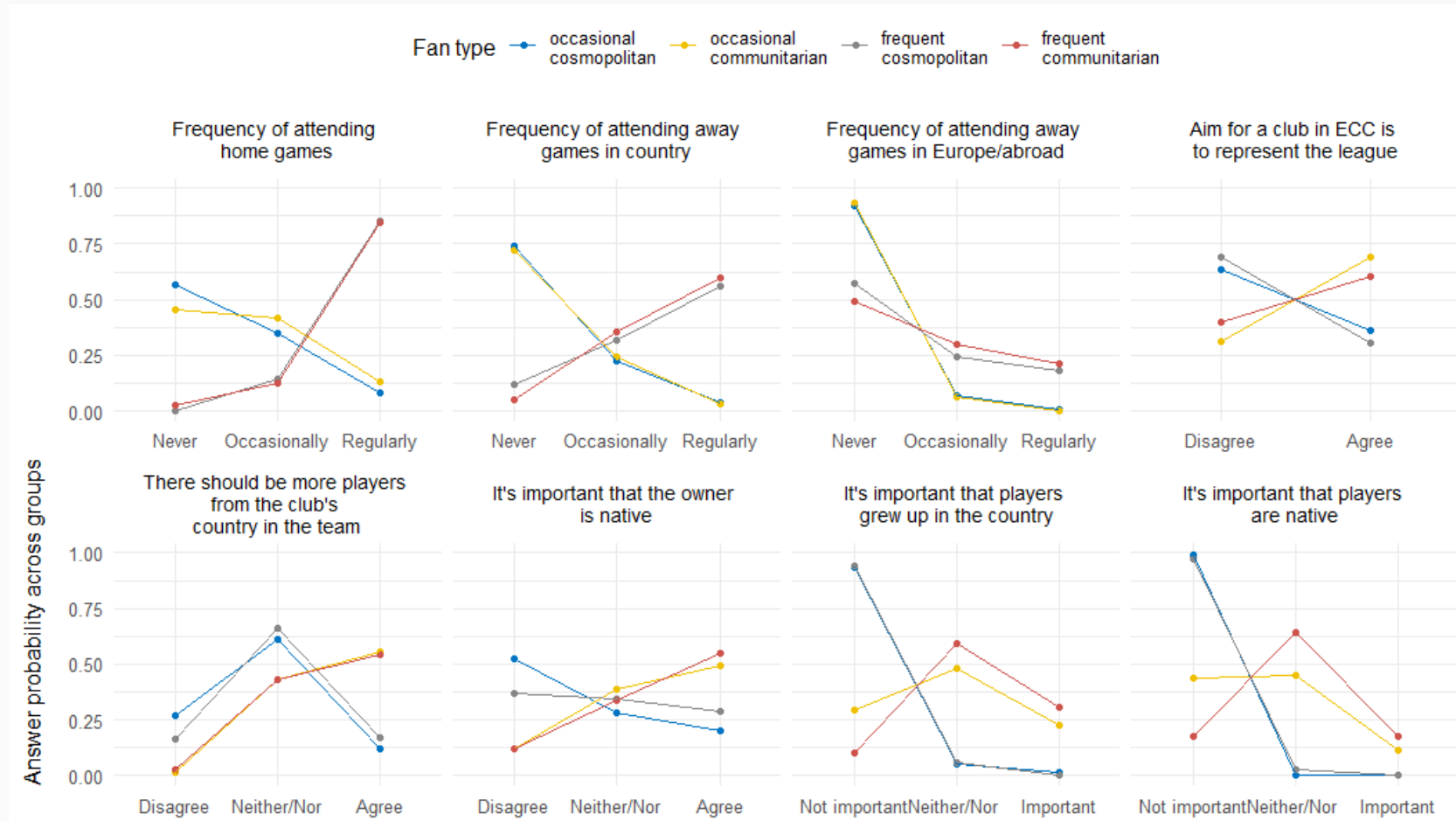
Typology of football fans

Four types of football fans



Typology of football fans

Decisive differences between the types



Part II

Influence factors on the communitarian/cosmopolitan divide

Communitarian/cosmopolitan divide

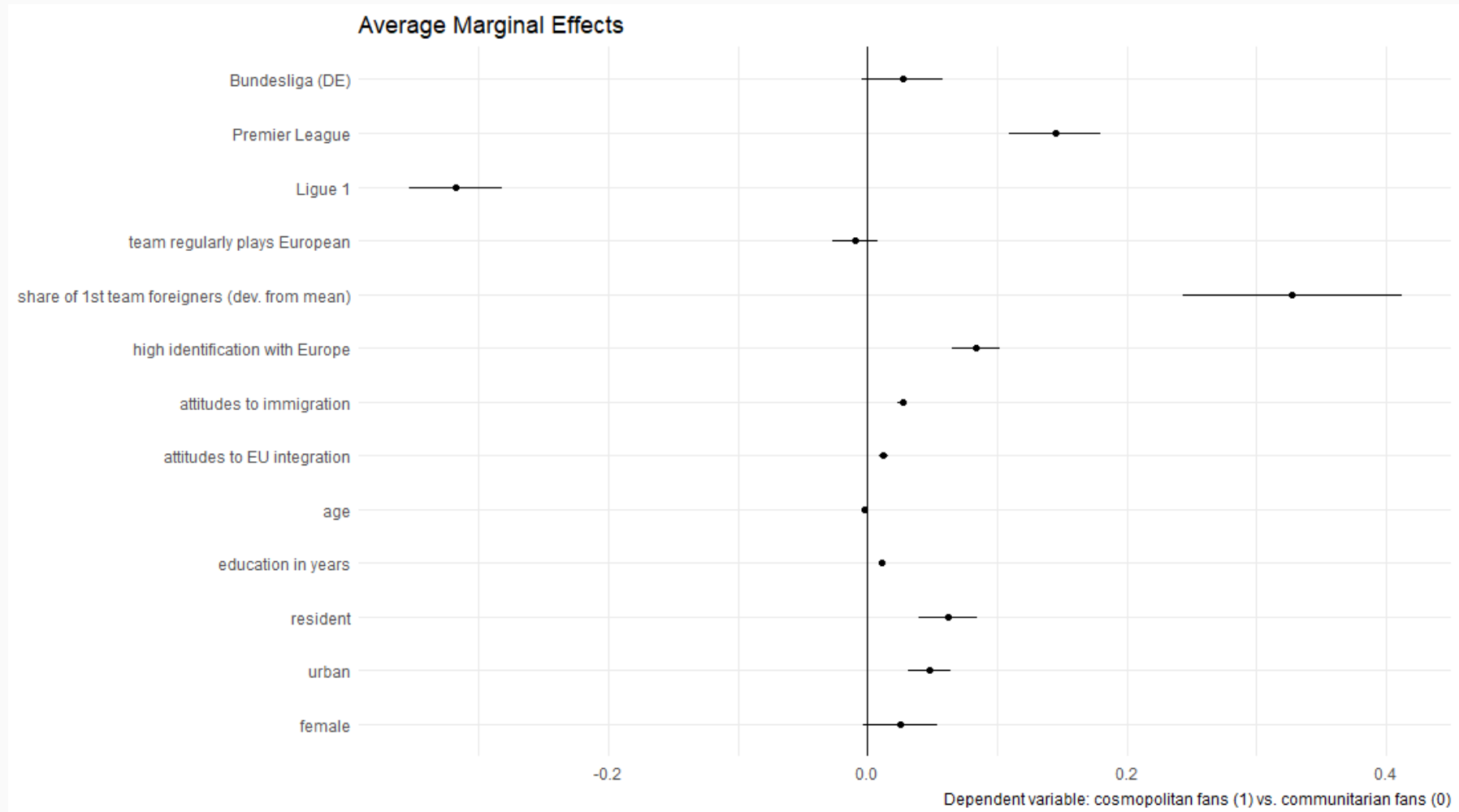
Four different types of potential influence

- **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?



Communitarian/cosmopolitan divide

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

Lifeworld/exposure as influence that outbalances known individual influence?

Thank you!

Personal contact

regina.weber@hochschule-rhein-waal.de
@elisasdottir
reginaweber.github.io

EUFoot Project

@eu_foot
www.eufoot.de