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German ultras as political players? An analysis of the protest against the ‘Secure Stadium Experience’³

In 2011 in Egypt and in 2014 in Ukraine, ultras became a fundamental part of the protest that led to the change of the government. In Germany, protest of the ultras also became a public topic at the end of 2012. They rebel against and act called *Secure Stadium Experience*. We are looking for the reason of their protest. As football is highly related to identity, we stress the theoretical concepts of a struggle for recognition. We would like to show how they express their protest and how prominent the reasons for their struggle are. Therefore we analyze three different spheres: official statements, actions, choreographies, and banners they show, and finally, how they see themselves.

Key words: Germany, football, politics, ultras

Introduction

This article is based upon a speech we held during the ninth annual conference on sport, politics and social policy in Durham from January the 7th–8th 2015, and our recent research on antagonistic cooperation in football supporter contexts. The conference showed the importance of the research regarding football supporters and their protest against what is commonly described as ‘modern football’ (cf. Canniford et al., unpublished: 9). Within this issue we did and for the further research we still concentrate on the German ultras as political protagonists. We do so as empirically focused social anthropologists. In this paper we want to discuss the parts of this research about German ultras; but to begin, we start elsewhere.

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2011 saw the Egyptians struggling for a political change. 2014 witnessed the Ukrainian uproar for transition. Both movements have been under strong influence of football supporters. In Egypt the ultras Ahlawy of the club Al Ahly Cairo supported the revolution on Tahir-place (Woltering 2013). Dynamo Kiev Ultras and ultras of other clubs advocated the revolutionaries on the Ukrainian Maidan (McArdle, Veth 2015). In both cases ultras are protesting – from their point of view – against a tyrant who was ruling and running the country. In most European countries ultras are protesting against ‘modern football’. The word ‘modern’ should not be understood in sociological terms, but in a common way. It is a protest against the neo-liberalization of football: ‘In particular, pay TV, the increased costs of attending football matches, kickoff times based on mass media and advertising needs, and security and risk management technologies are viewed as the vehicles that have transformed an enchanting authentic *passion* into a disenchanting neo-liberal *business*’ (Numerato 2015: 121). The supporters defend a ‘traditional football culture’ based on ‘disappearance of passions, emotions, the “real” atmosphere, authenticity, spontaneity, history, tradition, rivalries, rituals, and attachment to local communities’ (Numerato 2015: 126). To analyze these protest some scientists used theories from the scale of social movements, for example Peter Millward and George Poulton (2014) or Chris Porter (2008, 2012) in Manchester, Benjamin Perasavic and Marko Mustapic in Croatia (2013, 2014), Matthew Guschwan (2013) or Dino Numerato (2015) for Italy. In Germany the engagement of ultras and further supporters became a public issue at the end of 2012. At the first glance, the supporters protest against the inauguration of an act that should guarantee more security in the stadium. The directors of the clubs and the Football Association, as well as many journalists, were confused by the harsh protest of the supporters. They argue that the security measures are just optional; that it will harm only violent supporters, not the masses.

This article is going to fill the gap of misunderstanding and give an explanation of the motivations of the protest, as well as provide a deeper understanding of one of Germany’s most attractive youth culture (Ruf 2013: 24).

To conduct this we take a look at the environment of the ultras. This includes the German view on football, its popularity and legislative. We will give a brief overview of the German ultras and their struggle to reinforce their culture against the abovementioned development towards ‘modern football’ and the circumstances they have to cope with by living their culture. We consider the ultra-movement as a consistent body, which is an artificial simplification. By giving concrete examples of their way of coping with their problems, we try to derive an answer to the question of the motives for the struggle of the German ultra-movement and how it can be characterized.

Germans and football: institutions and protagonists

Football has a huge influence on the German society. This is not really surprising, but the dimensions are astonishing. Since 2008, the overall audience per season in German stadiums of the 1. Bundesliga topped the 13 million line every year (Kicker 2015). Football surrounds Germans all the time, for example in the media, advertisement, gossips, pop culture, and it also influences the field of politics and vice-versa (Mittag, Nieland 2007). Football reaches as many as eighty millions of Germans. Such a powerful institution has to be structured and organized.

German football itself is therefore a very well working institutionalized body. With seven million members of the DFB (German: Deutscher Fußballbund; English: German Football Association), it is the biggest national sport association worldwide. It organized German football matches from the lowest class up to the national level. Due to their relevance, in contrast to the lower divisions, the first two professional divisions are outsourced and organized by the 'Deutsche Fußball Liga' (German Football League, DFL). The DFL is the union of the first and second league clubs who elect a managing board. The function of that board is to enforce the interest of the 36 top level clubs. To ensure this, it is its responsibility to organize the product 'German professional league football' including the highly profitable TV rights. It organizes the first and second division championships, not only the matches, but also the issues like safety of the audience (DFL Deutsche Fußball Liga GmbH 2015).

It is evident that the DFL also influences the spectators, including the ultras. Since the ultra-movement spilled over from Italy in the 1990s, today every German club has at least one ultra-group (Gabler 2010: 54). All of them refer to a common ethic, which is the true and solely love for one club, strong critical engagement to club related topics and the awareness to be the only true supporters of the club. They are the supportive heart in the stadium. Their support is coined by highly creative, protracted and financial engagement, and it also shows the bond to its locality and the tradition of the club as they are celebrating club founders and ancient heroes. Besides choreographies, they support their team with sing-alongs and pyrotechnics. To be an ultra means full time engagement for the club that includes interfering in club issues (Pilz et al. 2006: 212). This is the common ethic, the shared cultural domain, of the German ultras. Besides that, every group is different. There are groups with a clear political belonging, some are left winged (e.g. USP in St. Pauli or Deviantes from Münster) and some are right winged (e.g. Karlsbande in Aachen). Tobias Wark explained in his article *Ultras und Politik (Ultras and Politics)* that some groups like Ultras Frankfurt, Ultras Nürnberg or Commando Cannstatt in Stuttgart see themselves as politically neutral. Neutral means that they do not see themselves as left winged or right winged; their main issue is football and the members of their groups have different political positions. They fear secession if they proclaim a position in a political debate (2012: 78). These ultras also have values and they are in a struggle against the so-called 'modern football', too. So Wark asks

if they might be political as well (2012: 85). The sociologist Gerd Dembowski also deals with the possibility that ultras are political actors. He hopes that the ultras in Germany may have a 'resistance identity' (2012: 59). Dembowski borrowed the term 'resistance identity' from Manuel Castells. Castells defines 'resistance identity' as: 'generated by those actors that are in positions/conditions devalued and/or stigmatized by the logic of domination, thus building trenches of resistance and survival on the basis of principles different from, or opposed to, those permeating the institutions of society' (Castells 1997: 8). This identity is in opposition to a legitimizing identity which is the dominant accepted identity. In a historical process parts of the resistance identity became a part of the legitimizing identity, but in general they are excluded and/or exclude themselves from the dominant society.

Dembowski sees every match day as a kind of rebellion against the modern (football) world. This rebellion has currently the function of an outlet. As they reflect their stadium experiences, ultras could extract a general critical position regarding the entire society (Dembowski 2012: 59). The social technique of the culture is an 'organized provocation' (Dembowski 2013). So Dembowski sees the ultras in an opposition/rebellion against what they call 'modern football', which is organized by the club, the DFB/DFL and also a rebellion against the police, which is a representative of the state. This rebellion could have the potential for a broader political understanding. It seems that Jonas Gabler agrees with Dembowski's assumption. In his monography *Die Ultras (The Ultras)* he listed the ideals of the ultras: preservation of tradition, preservation of ultra-typical way of expression and support, refusal of the authoritarian police control. He also listed two ideals which are not shared by all ultras but by many groups. These are: the pursuit of autonomy and a more or less intense critic of consumption and/or capitalism. The last two elements could include elements of a counter culture, which might tend to a radical disclaimer of the (majority of) society and the political system (Gabler 2010: 180). But he also argues that 'vast majority of the ultras would like to change objects inside the existing frame of the existing rules' [own translation] (Gabler 2010: 181). They react to the current political and legal system of the Federal Republic of Germany (Gabler 2010: 181).

Anyway, due to their presence and critical influence, and their pyrotechnics, ultras are not well received by authorities. Another aspect that place ultras often in a negative context in the media is violence. Every team has traditional enemies and friendships with other teams (Leistner 2008: 111). The most famous rivalry is probably the one between Borussia Dortmund and Schalke 04 and their ultra-groups: The Unity and UGE (Ultras Gelsenkirchen).

The DFL knows about the importance of the fans and especially the ultras. On the contrary, the 'modern football' that is promoted by the DFL is contrasted by violence, the use of pyrotechnics, offensive sing-alongs, and the like. So ultras may be considered ambivalently: somehow considered as 'cool', as they guarantee high emotions and the special atmosphere at the stadium due to their support, but also feared due to their violent behavior. In 2012 the DFL inaugurated an act called

Secure Stadium Experience to prevent typical behavior; an act that is interpreted by ultras as oppressive towards their culture.

At first we will outline the *Secure Stadium Experience* act, because it is the reason for the 12:12 protest. Afterwards, we will introduce the theoretical frameworks and methodological aspects that need to be mentioned before entering the continuation with the empirical part.

Implications of the Secure Stadium Experience Act⁴

Due to the real or supposed increase of football related violence, the 17 secretaries of the interior demanded more security around football matches (Vorstand des Ligaverbandes 2012: 1). This was a requirement that was implemented by the DFL with the inauguration of the so-called *Secure Stadium Experience* act on December the 12th 2012. Before the act was launched, there were several reports in the media about football and violence.

In September 2012 the head of DFL presented the first draft of the paper. The concept was forwarded to all 36 clubs of the first two divisions for a discussion. After ongoing discussions, round tables and modifications, 35 clubs agreed to the concept. The key concept of the paper is to further enable a secure but still emotional 'Bundesliga' product for all customers. The paper imposed tasks on the clubs, such as protecting architecture, filling the gaps between different supporters and enough educated people. Moreover, a closer cooperation with the local police to speed up the clarification of misbehaviors (5), as well as placing video controls in front of and inside the stadium (13). Also, a directive on how spectators should be dressed was planned. Forbidden clothes are face masks and the like. Similarly, the consumption of alcohol was set under a strong prohibition. Clubs are granted with a stronger power of domestic authority to exclude every person they want out of their stadiums. Clubs were also entitled to control spectators intensively to detect dangerous things like pyrotechnics, weapons and the like. This tight to control people includes the use of naked security checks (21). On December the 12th 2012 the DFL and 35 out of 36 clubs accepted the concept and it became an act.

Approaching German ultras in theory and empirically

Since the 12:12 movement was founded as a movement against the inauguration of the *Secure Stadium Experience* act, it might seem obvious that its motivation was to prevent the act; but in our article we would also like to focus on other motivations. Therefore we would like to introduce the concept of 'struggle for recognition'

⁴ In this chapter we show how the DFL sees its concept and the approach to the concept. It differs from the perception of the ultras, which will be shown in the following chapter.

as coined by Axel Honneth. Currently he is the head of the Institute of Social Research in Frankfurt/Main (IfS undated). The Institute has been famous for mixing sociology, philosophy, economy and history (Horkheimer 1988). Honneth's book *The Struggle for Recognition* has to be seen in this tradition. The author picks up ideas from the philosopher Friedrich Hegel, the psychologist Herbert Mead, and mixes them with ideas of others and himself. His work could be seen as a philosophical approach, but it has also been used as a sociological background for the analysis of social movements. Honneth himself claims that his concept is just an addition to other concepts he did not want to replace (265). The sociologist Andreas Pettenkofer argues that the advantage of Honneth's concept is that it explains protests which follow the logic of identity and self-respect. The concept explains why some objects in a conflict become more important and why some conflicts take an unexpected course (Pettenkofer 2010: 165). We use this concept because for supporters, football is highly related to emotional issues and issues of identity.

The core of Honneth's concept is the assumption that it is necessary for men – as social beings – to be recognized by other humans. For the author, this is an anthropological constant. He develops three forms of recognition. The first form is love and friendship. Its earliest form is the emotional relationship between a born child and its parent(s), which begins when both sides accept that they are two different human beings and recognize each other (Honneth 1994: 153–172). The second form is legal relations, which means having equal (legal) rights as other members of the society (Honneth 1994: 173–195). The third form is social appreciation: honor, prestige. It means that an individual and its group are respected as they are and that they have a positive effect on the *Gemeinschaftswohl* (wealth of the community). The appreciation of groups can be different from the view of other groups and there can be a gap between the self-determination and the determination of others (Honneth 1994: 196–210).

Honneth also develops three forms of disrespect which are the opposite of the forms of recognition. The most fundamental form of disrespect is abuse and rape. In those cases, one loses the control of their body and is at somebody's mercy. It leads to a social shame, the loss of self-confidence and confidence in the world (Honneth 1994: 196–214). The second form is the denial of rights. The structural exclusion from rights which other members of the society have leads to the feeling of not being an equal partner, without the same moral judgment as others. It leads to a loss of self-esteem (Honneth 1994: 196–215). The third form is denigration, insult of individual or collective ways of life. A group or a person lose the social esteem which leads to the loss of personal self-esteem (Honneth 1994: 196–217). These forms of disrespect can lead to a struggle for recognition, but they do not necessarily generate the struggle (Honneth 1994: 196–224). It is also important to mention that there is a second motivation to bring up in Honneth's theory. The struggle itself enhances the self-esteem of the struggling group (Honneth 1994: 196–262).

This concept was transferred to the ultra-culture by the social anthropologist Jochen Bonz who worked within the ultra-group called the Infamous Youth which

supports the German club SV Werder Bremen. Bonz sees the ultras in a struggle for recognition (2010: 123). He argues that each ultra-group refers to a lot different actors like other ultras groups, other fans, the police, and the officials of a club (2010: 124). He provides the example of the Infamous Youth who are disappointed with the cancellation of the dialogue with the ultras – regarding a behavior codex – by the club officials (2010: 122).

We have to mention that Honneth's struggle for recognition and Dembowski's resistance identity must not necessarily be in opposition to each other. For example, it is possible that a group with a resistance identity begins to struggle for recognition. In both concepts the motivation of resistance is produced by the stigmatization and/or exclusion through others.

With this theoretical background we analyze the protest against the *Secure Stadium Experience* act. What are the reactions of the ultras? How do they express their protest? And what does it tell us about their motivation for the struggle?

Originally, it is a duty of social anthropologists to describe things while they are happening – basing on the firsthand observation. As we were involved in another research during the 12:12 campaign, we now have to make a retrospective research. Therefore, we evaluate several materials which have been produced during the short time of the protest, like official statements, leaflets, articles in fanzines, pictures, and videos from match days. We also added information collected from informal interviews.

The campaign 12:12

The next step we wanted to know about was the ultra's reaction towards the act. They rejected the whole pamphlet (12doppelpunkt12 2012a) due to the following reasons: they criticize the way it was developed (that it was in a rush) which makes discussion and participation difficult. They criticize the general meaning and particular paragraphs. The main initiative against the act, which is going to be in the focus of our attention in the article, is the campaign '12:12 No atmosphere without influence' (abbreviated 12:12). The DFL drafted the confidential concept and forwarded it to the clubs, but some clubs were not satisfied with it. From there the draft was handed over to supporters and the public. The officials of the Union Berlin invited other clubs' officials and representatives of supporters⁵ organizations to meet in Berlin. This was also the starting point of 12:12. The fanzine *Erlebnis Fussball* describes the beginning with the following sentences:

'On November the 1st there are two meetings in Berlin. In the VIP-tent at the stadium An der Alten Försterei representatives of clubs and fans meet to discuss about developments and the "paper" [Secure Stadium Experience]; in a youth

⁵ The second campaign, was the web based signature collecting called 'I feel save'. Both initiatives work close together. A lot of supporters are involved in both campaigns at the same time.

center, just a few hundred meters away from the Union stadium, leading figures of many ultra-groups meet to plan the counter offensive' [own translation – the original German text is written in the footnote] (Janni 2013)⁶.

Ultras groups of all 1st and 2nd division clubs, as well as many other groups from lower divisions joined the campaign. Only two ultra-groups are known that refused to participate: 'Ultras Aachen' and 'Filmstadtinferno Babelsberg'. Babelsberg argued that they are not victims of the concept and that they will not cooperate with groups which are open to right wing ideology (unknown 2013: 18). It is important to notice that the meeting in Berlin was not the first cooperation among the (rivaling) ultra-groups in Germany; such gatherings have a longer history. In 2001 the first collective demonstration for the 'preservation of fan culture' took place. Similar demonstrations were organized in 2005 and 2010. They also organized several conferences where the ultras discussed several topics, and the campaign 'Pyrotechnik legalisieren! Emotionen respektieren' ['Legalized pyrotechnic! Respect emotions'] (Sommerer 2012: 34). But none of these actions became a topic of the public debate as 12:12 did. This is the reason why we analyze this case.

The campaign was organized mainly by local groups who perform actions on a local level. '12:12' has a common logo, a central website and some activists doing the common press work. Furthermore, in Berlin the ultras agreed to a common style of protests, which is going to be analyzed later.

Our analysis about whether the 12:12 protests could be seen as a struggle for recognition will have four main points of interest: the official statements from 12:12, the banners and choreographies that were shown during the matches, other actions that took place, and finally, statements where ultras reflect themselves.

Official statements

In this chapter we will analyze official statements of the initiative '12:12 No atmosphere without influence'. We analyze them to point out which argumentative direction they use. Official statements have the advantage of being, more or less, the bottom; the essence of the diversified positions of the ultra-groups. The first statement of 12:12 was published on the 1th of November 2012. This statement is addressed to all supporters, encouraging them to join the actions of 12:12. In the first part of the paper they state: "The DFL has crossed the line with its concept *Secure Stadium Experience*. The German fan culture – as we know it – is threatened. It seems that we are on the way to English conditions [own translation]"⁷

⁶ Am 1. November gibt es zwei Treffen in Berlin. Im VIP-Zelt des Stadions An der Alten Försterei treffen sich Vereins- und Fanvertreter, um die Entwicklungen und das "Diskussionspapier" zu reden; in einem Jugendzentrum, nur wenige hundert Meter vom Union-Stadion entfernt, treffen sich führende Köpfe vieler Ultragruppen und planen eine Gegenoffensive (Janni 2013).

⁷ "Der Ligaverband DFL hat mit seinem Konzept "Sicheres Stadionerlebnis" Grenzen überschritten. Nun ist die deutsche Fankultur bedroht, wie wir sie kennen. Der Weg in Richtung englische Verhältnisse scheint bereitet zu sein." (12doppelpunkt12 2012a).

(12doppelpunkt12 2012a). Further, they exemplify in three bullet points the consequences of the concept: reduction of entrance tickets, intensive security check (done naked), and stadiums without the standing areas. They continue that the concept is ‘a deep attack on the human and civil rights of football supporters’ [own translation]⁸ (12doppelpunkt12 2012a). They accuse the ‘DFL and the police of faulty playing. A fair dialogue has not taken place until now’ [own translation]⁹ (12doppelpunkt12 2012a). According to the ultras, their statistics regarding violence at the stadiums is not objective. Finally they call all supporters to actions.

‘Would you like to pay a lot of money to become the background scenery for an event, without dignity and with your freedom stolen? Fans are the fundamental part of football, they should be treated fairly! Fans are not the part of the problem, they are the part of the solution. The colorful and loud fan culture in this country can be preserved only with us! We are counting on you!’ [own translation]¹⁰ (12doppelpunkt12 2012a).

In the second statement, published on the 6th of December 2012, they repeat their willingness to open a dialogue. They call the club officials to vote against the concept and to join the discussion. This statement is addressed to the club officials. They write: ‘Reasons for this the always expressed postulate and the belief according to which it is necessary to integrate fans into the process of forming an opinion, and decision processes. This process requires time, so it is impossible to keep the 12th of December as a deadline. We are showing the willingness to open a dialogue and consider a joint way of the Solidargemeinschaft Fußball [Mutually Supportive Group Football] to which associations, clubs and fans belong, as the only possible way’ [own translation]¹¹ (12doppelpunkt12 2012b).

In both official statements we found the central ways of argumentation which repeat several times. They argue that the concept would be an attack on civil rights, for example those related to the security check, which is a denial of rights, because it spares people who do not go to the stadium. In their opinion the act will kill the fan culture, for example by reducing the entrance tickets or closing off standing

⁸ “Das Konzept “Sicheres Stadionerlebnis” beinhaltet noch viele weitere solcher Beispiele, die tief in die Rechte und Menschenwürde von Fußballfans eingreifen” (12doppelpunkt12 2012a).

⁹ “Die DFL und Polizei spielen falsch. Ein ehrlicher Dialog hat bis heute nicht stattgefunden!” (12doppelpunkt12 2012a).

¹⁰ “Willst du viel Geld bezahlen, um die Hintergrundkulisse für ein Event zu bilden, ohne eigene Würde und deiner Freiheit beraubt? Die Fans und Zuschauer sind ein wesentlicher Bestandteil des Fußballs und sollten auch fair und gerecht behandelt werden! Die Fans sind nicht das Problem, sondern Bestandteil der Lösung. Nur mit uns kann die bunte und laute Fankultur in diesem Land bewahrt werden! Wir zählen auf dich!” (12doppelpunkt12 2012a).

¹¹ “Die Gründe hierfür liegen in der stets geäußerten Forderung und Überzeugung, dass eine Einbindung der Fans in den Meinungsbildungs- und Entscheidungsprozess unerlässlich ist. Dieser Prozess ist die erforderliche Zeit einzuräumen, sodass der 12. Dezember nicht einzuhalten ist. Wir signalisieren absolute Dialogbereitschaft und erachten den gemeinsamen Weg der Solidargemeinschaft Fußball, bestehend aus Verbänden, Vereinen und Fans, als einzig gangbaren Weg.” (12doppelpunkt12 2012b).

areas. They argue that stadiums are already safe for the whole audience and also proclaim that they are the part of the football and its Solidargemeinschaft and should be treated fairly, which means treated with respect. They point out several times that they would like to open a dialogue with the officials from the DFL. As they are also members of the world of football, they would like to participate and be treated with respect.

In the next step we will analyze what they express at the banners they show on match days.

Banners and choreographies

Manuel Castells describes two areas where the dispute of the movement takes place: a central public place and on the internet (Castels 2012). In our case the main combat zone of the fans was the stadium. Banners and choreographies are for the ultras a form of expressing themselves at the stadium.

Gabler wrote that the ultras have a banner culture. Through them they can support their own team, thank single players, blame their club management, express their hate against rivals or show solidarity (Gabler 2010: 62). During the main time of the 12:12 protest, six match days were played in the 1st and the 2nd division. Ultras used these match days to show their protest. As banners in the stadium are a part of the ultra-culture, it is not surprising that there were also choreographies connected with the 12:12 protest. In this chapter we would like to analyze the banners and choreographies. Do they express the same way of argumentation that we can find in the statements? To prove this we made an overview of the banners used during the protest. Our sample consists of 161 banners which can be found on the official website of the campaign.

All of the banners connected with 12:12 are addressed to the public. We did not count the banners with the sign of the group or similar. If the same banner was shown at two different match days, we counted it twice. Our sample is not representative and sometimes it was quite difficult to fit a banner into one of four categories. Our sample gives an idea of why the ultras protest.

Table.

Topic	Numbers	%
12:12	78	48,45
Protection of fan culture	31	19,25
Security	21	13,04
Legal rights	3	1,56
Rest	28	17,39

Source: own elaboration.

The category '12:12' means that the banner shows the logo of the campaign and/or its name. It has to be mentioned that some groups show the banner on all

match days. The category ‘protection of fan culture’ includes various topics, for example ‘for protection of the fan culture’, empty stands and the banner ‘this is how the future might look’ or, like our later example shows, could discuss the death of fan culture. The category ‘security’ includes promotion of the ‘I feel safe’ campaign, the simple message that the stadium is safe, or distrust against the crime statistics of the police. The category ‘legal rights’ includes just 3 banners. Two of them are ‘for the preservation of fan rights’ and one is a banner from the supporters of the FC Erzgebirge Aue which says ‘Sorry we are still at the Ganzkörperkontrolle’ [security check which includes the control of all parts of the body – which could be done naked]. Finally, the category ‘rest’ includes all the other banners such as the message ‘keep silent’, ‘refuse the concept’ and many others.

The table shows that there are just a few cases where the banners are related to an exclusion of legal rights. The second category, which is relevant to our topic, the ‘protection of the fan culture’ is more prominent. It should be mentioned that the first banner on the 12:12 website which has the topic of the protection of the fan culture was shown on November the 27th, but this topic becomes much more prominent in the later pictures (12doppelpunkt12 2012c). The banner of the campaign could be interpreted in several ways, for example as an upgrading of the own group, but it is not directly related to the topic of disrespect. It is not surprising that it is the most common banner as it is the symbol of the whole campaign. The message that the stadium is a safe place is to counter the way the DFL legitimizes the act, claiming that there is an increase of violence in the stadiums. The supporters argue that this is not true. This implies that the officials do not play fair and that the ultras are not violent slobs. So in a way it is also a process of defending the ultra-groups against the stereotypes.

To give one example of how such choreographies look like and how they work, we chose one example from the category ‘protection of fan culture’. This example is the picture, which was taken at the match Hallescher FC (HFC) against Karlsruher SC on December the 8th 2012. The HFC supporters wore black clothes. In German culture black is the color of mourning and it is common that people wear black clothes at funerals. Even the banner in the background is cloaked with a black frame. A few supporters showed white crosses. The symbol of the cross is also quite common in the Christian death ceremony. There was also a cross on the prominent banner in the center of the picture. The banner looked like an obituary published in the newspaper by the family or friends of a deceased. These obituaries have a wide black frame, a picture, often a cross or a bird. The dead person's name is written in bigger letters and the date of his or her birth and death are usually written under the name. There are short texts on the notice, sometimes personal statements, sometimes quotations from the Bible. Usually the authors, for example children, colleagues or friends of a deceased person put their names underneath. At the bottom of the notice you can find the date of the burial so that other people can join the ceremony as well. The HFC supporters wrote included all of this on their banner. Only the date of birth is missing. They wrote:

Cowardly and malicious, through media agitate, political pressure and arbitrariness of the police, died our loved and mainly lived

FANCULTURE

† December 12, 2012 Frankfurt/Main

In deep dolefulness, love and shock, your two-poled banner, your flag your banner, your voice, your bengalo, your emotion and all your companions.

The burial is on the 12th of December 2012 at the DFL assembly in Frankfurt/Main [own translation].

(unknown 2012)¹²

The message of the banner is quite clear. If the *Secure Stadium Experience* concept was signed on December the 12th 2012, it would cause the death of the fan culture. What the supporters mean by fan culture is listed under the name of the deceased: banners, Bengal flare, acoustic support and emotions. This is the kind of support the ultras provide. It shows that the ultras see their culture under attack. On their banner the supporters also named institutions which they blame for the attack on their culture: press, politicians and the police. If we have a look at the diction of the banner, we can find a bipolar setting. On the one side there are the mighty institutions, media, police and politicians, and those do not play fair. They agitate, they are arbitrary and they put things under pressure. On the other side there are the victims of the act: the supporters and the fan culture. They love their football and their culture, and they are shocked and doleful. This way of the bipolar view of the world can be found often in the supporter's explanations, as well as the feeling of being unjustly punished.

In this chapter we have seen how affectionate and time-consuming the preparations of such choreographies can be. The quantitative analysis of the banners has shown that banners that are related to the preservation of fan culture are more prominent than banners related to the exclusion from rights.

Other forms of protest

Apart from the banners, the ultras used several other forms of protest. We would like to give several different examples of these actions.

On December the 1st 2012 the 'Fialova Sbor Gonzo Ultras' from FC Erzgebirge Aue, a second division team, protested against the restriction of civil rights caused

¹² „Feige und hinterhältig, durch Medienhetze, politischen Druck und Polizeiwillkür, stirbt unsere geliebte und vor allem gelebte Fankultur † 12.12.2012. Frankfurt/Main. In stiller Trauer, Liebe und Erschütterung dein Doppelhalter, deine Schwenkfahne, deine Zaunfahne, deine Stimme, dein Bengalo, deine Emotionen und alle Weggefährten. Die Beisetzung findet am 12.12.2012 bei der DFL-Vollversammlung in Frankfurt am Main statt!“ (unknown 2012).

by the *Secure Stadium Experience* concept. In front of the stadium they built two pavilions. In front of them there was an inscription ‘Ganzkörperkontrolle’ [security check which includes the control of all parts of the body – which could be done naked]. In one pavilion you could find the information about the 12:12 protest and the *Secure Stadium Experience* concept. In the second tent there were three dummies, two of them naked and with the hands raised. The third dummy wore a waistcoat from the DFB (unknown: undated). There was also a fake new stadium order with exaggerated paragraphs. For example they wrote in §3 clause 5 that it is forbidden to stand up during the game or in §6 clause 1 that it is forbidden to carry keys or coins to the stadium because they could be used as projectiles (unknown: undated). The exaggerated character of this action shows that the ultras see the concept as an exaggerated reaction from the DFL. But the main message of this action is that the concept excluded football fans from general human rights and brought them into unpleasant situations.

As a part of the 12:12 campaign several demonstrations before matches took place. We want to analyze the demonstrations that are presented on the 12:12 website (12doppelpunkt12 2012d). In brackets we document the banner in the first row of protestants that expresses the main message of the demonstration: Cologne (for the preservation of fan culture [own translation]¹³), Dortmund (for the preservation of fan culture [own translation]¹⁴). In this context it is important to mention that in some cases groups of both opponent teams take part in the same demonstration, like Paderborn (no atmosphere without influence [own translation]¹⁵) and Hertha BSC Berlin (to the preservation of fan culture football lives through its fans [own translation]¹⁶), Bayern Munich and Augsburg (both: to the preservation of fan culture [own translation]¹⁷), Leverkusen (12:12 No atmosphere without influence and this is not the end of our way fan culture will not become a legend [own translation]¹⁸) and Hannover (No to the DFL paper – for a fan friendly football), Union Berlin and Kaiserslautern (preserve the fan culture 12:12 refuse the DFL paper) [own translation]¹⁹. There are 10 banners in our list. Two of them show the logo/name of the campaign, one has a general message (rejection of the concept) and seven are related to the preservation of fan culture. In our sample we could not find any demonstration banner related to civil rights.

The most impressive form of the protest was a 12 minutes and 12 seconds silence after the tingler. Afterwards they began their sound and visual support. During the meeting in Berlin in November the ultras agreed that this form of pro-

¹³ Zum Erhalt der Fankultur (12doppelpunkt12d).

¹⁴ Für den Erhalt der Fankultur (12doppelpunkt12d).

¹⁵ Ohne Stimme keine Stimmung (12doppelpunkt12d).

¹⁶ Zum Erhalt der Fankultur Fußball lebt durch seine Fans (12doppelpunkt12d).

¹⁷ Zum Erhalt der Fankultur (12doppelpunkt12d).

¹⁸ Ohne Stimme keine Stimmung, unter weg ist hier nicht zuende Fankultur wird nicht zur Legende (12doppelpunkt12d).

¹⁹ Fankultur bewahren 12:12 DFL Papier ablehnen (12doppelpunkt12d).

tests should be the main way to express their protest. In some cases the ultras also stood outside of the stadium during these 12 minutes. Some of them also rolled in their banner or covered it with black banners. They did the same with flags. Players complained that it was frightening to play in this atmosphere. On December the 18th the management, the coach and the captain of the BVB published an open letter where they said that they accept and respect the protest of their fans, even if it was hard to play in these unusual conditions. But they asked that the fans return to the usual support during the next match (Kehl et al. 2012).

No match report was broadcast on the TV or published in print without the mention of the silent protest – it became a public topic. The press had been briefed previously so they knew the context of the protest. The ultra named Janni recognized that ‘the wind has changed. Now journalists have begun to write critical comments’²⁰ [own translation] (Janni 2013) while politicians demanded harder punishment for supporters. The fight for the public opinion took place also in the social media, the Facebook profile of 12:12 has more than 28 000 likes (12doppelpunkt12 2012e), but the main goal was to be present in the traditional media like TV and newspapers. Therefore the ultras established a professional public relations department. They briefed the newspaper’s correspondents, radio stations, free TV and even the pay TV station Sky. This involvement is even more remarkable when the media’s prior repressiveness towards the ultras is taken into consideration. The cooperation with the press was not uncontroversial. After the protest the fanzine *Blickfang Ultra* printed articles which discussed the further cooperation with the media (Tim 2013, Mirko 2013).

Anyway, with the silence protest the supports showed that they are a part of the game, and they showed how powerful they can be if they remain silent in an organized way. They gave an impression of what German football would lose if the ultras were banned from the stadium or if their culture was banned. The clubs were informed about the protest and, as in Dortmund’s case, they respected it. The ultras are looking for the respect of the media, officials and players, to persuade them of the value of the ultras for the football.

Finally on Wednesday, December the 12th, the fans tried to enter the high security zone which was built around the Hotel Frankfurt where the final voting of the DFL was taking place. Nearly 1000 fans gathered in front of the Hotel, singing, waiting, discussing, protesting. But in the end they got the news that the concept was signed (Alex 2013: 12). After the meeting, the officials declared that on that moment there was a time for a dialogue. Later discussions between supporters and the DFL officials took place. Until the end of the year, some groups continued their protest. Again, teams like Bremen or Nürnberg remained silent for 12 minutes and 12 seconds. The ultras of Kaiserslautern or Mainz remained silent for 90 minutes and the Coloniaca from Cologne boycotted the whole game. During the

²⁰ “Der mediale Wind drehte sich. Kommentatoren schreiben nun kritische Kommentare” (Janni 2013).

winter break the ultras had also internal discussions. Should they continue the silent protest? Various aspects have been discussed. They met for a discussion in Kassel and finally they decided to return to normal support (unknown 2013: 20).

How do the ultras see themselves?

How did they see their protest, do they see it as a struggle for recognition, and what do they tell us about their motivation? We would like to give two opinions which have been printed in the fanzine *Erlebnis Fussball*. In the first article it is written:

Moreover the DFL has realized that it needs the fans, which has strengthened the position of the fans in a significant way. Finally this is the bottom line of our protest. The fans have been recognized as an important, critical mass – we have not been considered mass murders anymore [own translation]²¹.

(Janni 2013)

In this interpretation the protest was successful, because the ultras have been recognized by the DFL and the media. The ultras are not the victims of insults anymore (mass murders) and officials are looking for a dialogue. This means to Janni that they are accepted. He also remembers the insults of the summer 2012, an issue which seems to be still present in his memory. He remembers that the talk master Sandra Maischberger called the ultras ‘Taliban of the football fans’ or the comedian Werner Scheyder compared choreographies with fascist rituals (Janni 2013). But he does not refer to the exclusion from rights. In the same fanzine a different standpoint was present as well. The article criticizes the 12:12 protest:

The murderers of the ultras are hiding behind the call for dialogue. (...) Dialogue, dialogue, dialogue – this word can be found as an internal and external calling again and again. But with whom? With those who had been addressed by a big “Fuck you?” [negative example form, official, police, politicians]. This conformity in the choice of instruments (...) means finally what the “enemy protagonists” wish, namely to minimize the radical moment of our own movement, to integrate with support and choreographies, and if there is a problem, there will be a dialogue – on everyone’s conditions [which means on the conditions of the opposite sides] [own translation]²².

²¹ “Außerdem hat die DFL erkannt, dass sie die Fans braucht, was die Rolle der Fans deutlich gestärkt hat. Genau das ist letztendlich die Quintessenz des Protestes – wir Fans wurden als wichtige, kritische Masse wahrgenommen und eben nicht mehr gleichgesetzt mit Massenmördern”.

²² “Hinter dem Ruf nach Dialog verschanzen sich die Mörder der Ultras [Dialog, Dialog, Dialog – immer und immer wieder findet sich dieses Wort als interne aber auch externe Aufforderung. Doch mit wem eigentlich? Mit denen, denen man zuvor noch ein dickes “Fick dich” entgegenwarf [zählt negativ Beispiele auf] Diese Angepasstheit in der Wahl der Mittel (...) bedeutet letztendlich das, was die „feindlichen Protagonisten“ wollen, nämlich den radikalen Moment der eigenen Bewegung zu

(Conoscenza 2013: 23)

This piece expresses a lamentation that a dialogue with officials is a treason of the radical subversive potential of the ultras. The author insults the people who negotiate with the DFL under current conditions as murderers of the ultras. He calls for a resistance identity and to say ‘fuck you’ to the system and the ‘modern football’. He complained that the ultras are in a struggle for recognition, not in a fundamental opposition.

Conclusion

The aim of this article was to understand the motives of the struggle of the German ultras movement during the 12:12 protest and how it can be characterized. As Jochen Boze has already done it for German ultras in general, we borrowed the theoretical concept of a struggle for recognition from Axel Honneth. We would like to see if the protest can be explained by Honneth’s three areas of disrespect.

Therefore we analyzed the motivations the ultras expressed during their struggle. We took a look at official statements, actions, and how they value their struggle afterwards.

In official statements we can find references to the protection of civil rights as well as to the perception of the fan culture. It is striking that they mainly call for a dialogue and cooperation. So, in this chapter we found two motivations for the struggle, namely exclusion from rights and insults. If we take a look at the choreographies and banners, we can claim that the vast majority of them is related to the preservation of the fan culture. We obtained an overview of four different types of actions that took place: the security check, two types of demonstrations and the silent protest. Especially the silent protest is, from our point of view, highly related to the perception of fan culture; it shows the benefits the ultras bring to football. The banners at the demonstrations were also related to the prevention of the fan culture. Just the *Ganzkörperkontrolle* (security check) was related to the exclusion from rights. So if we look at the actions of the ultras, they are more related to insults and the respect for the own community. The same if we look at the statements at the end of this article.

Our conclusions need more validation. Judging from the data collected, we state that the movement tends to try to become a recognized partner in the club and that they want to have a corrective function of selling the value of the product Bundesliga, if it is in danger. Our impression is also that they tend to care more about what they call fan culture than defending the human rights. If they see their own culture or identity under attack, they unite to protect this culture and they unite even with their biggest rivals in the scene to become active. Even if the Se-

minimieren, sich einzugliedern mit Stimmung und Choreografien, und wenn es ein Problem gibt wird geredet – zu wessen Bedingungen auch immer”.

cure Stadium Experience concept is an attack on the legal rights and football fans should be excluded from some human rights, the most prominent area of the protest is, for the fans, the preservation of their fan culture that should be respected more by the society. We can find the same interpretation in the discussions after the meeting in Kassel when the ultras met and discussed the outcome of their protest and whether or not they should have continued. On the other hand, others argue that the officials had to return to dialogue, that the protest was successful, that they had become recognized partners (even if legal discrimination continues). From Honneth's perspective this position means that there was an upgrade of the position of the ultra-culture by officials, media, and the society in general. Even if some pleaded to continue the silent protest, finally they agreed to return to the normal support.

For an outsider the protest of the ultras and especially the great effort they put in it is hard to understand. But if we take into consideration that they are fighting for recognition, it might be easier to understand. The motivation of the struggle was not only the deletion of rights. It was the description of the ultras as violent slobs, which was the message of the act, which motivated the struggle. But we also have to mention that the struggle for participation could also be seen as motivated by the exclusion from rights and the conviction that supporters have the same rights to decide how the football should be organized.

So from our point of view the 12:12 movement in Germany is an excellent example to show the benefits of a struggle for recognition as an analytical concept. It could also be helpful as a frame for the analyses of the total subculture. But since our approach includes a lot of simplifications and numerous empirical validations, it should be considered merely a preliminary result.

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