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## Bachelor Thesis:

**"How does police behaviour in German professional football leagues  
influence football fans' perception of the police?"**

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## **Abstract**

In the following bachelor thesis, the perception of the police in Germany is analysed with a focus on trust in the police as an institution under various measures using an empirical survey and answers the question: "How does the behaviour of the police in the German professional football leagues influence the perception of the police by football fans?". Representative data was collected through an online survey with 981 participants. The theoretical foundations are based on Tom Tyler's theories of procedural justice and institutional trust. The hypotheses state that demographic characteristics, stadium attendance and personal police experiences influence trust. The results show that older fans tend to have less trust in the police and more frequent stadium visitors report negative police experiences and less trust. Negative personal experiences and the perception of police violence correlate significantly negatively with trust in the police. Measures such as bodycams, external complaints centres and identification numbers are seen as promoting trust. The results emphasise the need for transparency and accountability in the police in order to strengthen the trust of football fans.

## 1. Introduction

“Niemals Freund, Niemals Helfer” and „Ganz Hamburg hasst die Polizei“. These messages can be seen in the north stand of the “Volksparkstadion” on 25 February 2024. They are held aloft by thousands of fans. The response to this action is tremendous, with outrage expressed in many places. One police officer publicly cancelled his membership of the club, while SPD politician Sören Schumacher called the choreography „völlig inakzeptabel“(Welt, 2024). The fronts between police and fans seem to be hardening increasingly. It is undisputed that major events, such as football matches, especially in the top leagues, must be accompanied by the police. However, reporting on the misbehaviour of security forces has recently become more the focus of media attention especially regarding the European Championship in Germany this summer. Reports of excessive use of force, inappropriate behaviour or discrimination against the police and various football fan scenes have triggered discussions about the legitimacy of police security measures (Zentrale Informationsstelle Sparteinsätze NRW, 2023). Trust in the police can be described as tarnished, if not shaken, at least in parts of the German football fan community.

In contrast to the majority of society, football fans often have a dysfunctional relationship with the police. For example, it is primarily the ultra-groups in German stadiums that openly display their disapproval through fence flags and chants (Schiefer & Stichling, 2016). Police work is extremely important at major events to ensure security. And at football matches, it can be observed that police officers are particularly heavily equipped, armed with batons, pepper spray and sometimes even with heavy firearms at particularly sensitive, so-called high-risk matches. It might also be observed that officers are masked beyond recognition, making them unrecognisable to fans. Among other things, this factor could have an impact on the confidence of football fans.

What other factors might influence the trust of fans in the police? What gives rise to this type of potential conflict? To get to the bottom of these questions, among others, the following work will attempt to empirically investigate football fans’ trust in the police and tries to analyse three chosen measures taken by the police, which could influence this public antipathy towards the police. This results in the following question, which will be answered at the end of this thesis:

*“How does police behaviour in German professional football leagues influence football fans’ perception of the police?”*

The aim of this thesis is to investigate these questions and to develop a deeper understanding of the perception of the active fan scene of security measures and police presence in German football. To this end, a scientific quantitative online survey, which is intended to reach the active fan scene, should provide answers.

Regarding the current state of research, it can first be said that there are numerous publications that deal with the trust of citizens or certain societies in the police. Gabriel and Zmerli (2005) should be mentioned in this context. However, these mostly focus on political groups; the group of “football fans” has often been ignored here. A particularly relevant theory within this field of research is Tom Tyler’s Procedural Justice Theory, which forms part of the theoretical framework of this work (Stott & Pearson, 2011). Schiefer and Stichling (2016), on the other hand,

specifically examine the hypothesis that football fans have less trust in the police as an institution compared to most of the society. The present study is intended to take a similar approach, although it is more concerned with analysing the influence of specific measures on the trust of football fans. If reasons can be found for the lower level of trust, possible suggestions for action could then be derived. To achieve this goal, it will be proceeded as follows:

In this bachelor thesis, the theoretical framework and relevant terms are defined and an introduction to the police measures to be analysed is given. The scientific method for collecting and analysing data from empirical survey conducted in this paper is then explained and the data collected is presented and interpreted based on the theoretical framework and the measures mentioned. Finally, the thesis concludes, which is intended to answer the research question in the best feasible way.

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

### **2.1 Trust in institutions**

Trust in institutions plays a decisive role in the stability of modern democracies and the prevention of abuse of power, as it presupposes a relationship of trust between citizens and institutions. Gabriel and Zmerli (2005) describe two theoretical approaches to trust in institutions: performance-based trust and community-based trust. Performance-based trust arises as a reward for the competent fulfilment of tasks by institutions, whereby individuals project both positive and negative experiences from the past onto the future. Community-based trust, on the other hand, is based on belonging to a common political community. Community-based trust focuses on interpersonal trust and emphasises shared values, norms and mutual consideration.

This study combines the theory of trust in institutions with research into the relationship between football fans and the police. Against the background of performance-based trust, individual experiences also play an important role, as the fans' impression of disproportionate police behaviour is reported strikingly often and sometimes to a drastic extent (Lepsius, 1997). Therefore, the "procedural justice" theory of Tom Tyler forms the further theoretical framework of this thesis, in which precisely these individual experiences and their effects on the perception of institutions and the police in particular are discussed theoretically.

### **2.2 Theory of procedural justice**

The theory of procedural justice emphasises that citizens' trust in institutions such as the police as an executive body depends heavily on the fairness and transparency of procedures, decisions and interactions. In addition, individual experiences are a strong influencing factor for perception and trust. Important aspects here are the values of respect, flexibility, trustworthiness, neutrality and participation. The perception that the police acts fairly, respectfully and transparently can strengthen fans' trust and encourage them to co-operate with the police and follow their instructions (Stott & Pearson, 2011). In the context of football events and policing in the German

professional leagues, fans' trust in the police is central to maintaining public safety and avoiding conflict. The focus of this study is therefore on the issue of trust.

### **2.3 Formulation of the hypotheses**

In this bachelor's thesis, two central hypotheses are put forward with the aim of investigating football fans' trust in the police and understanding how this trust is influenced by a range of factors. Both hypotheses are based on the theories of procedural justice and institutional trust and will be empirically evaluated in the course of the analysis.

Hypothesis 1: *"Football fans who go to stadiums more often tend to have less trust in the police."* This may be triggered by negative experiences during such major events. This hypothesis assumes that more frequent stadium visits increase the likelihood of fans experiencing negative interactions with the police, which in turn could affect their trust in the police. By recording the frequency of stadium visits and the assessment of trust in the police, it is investigated whether there is a connection between these variables.

Hypothesis 2: *"Football fans who have experienced police violence themselves during football matches or have witnessed police violence against third parties tend to have less trust in the police compared to those who have not had such experiences."* This hypothesis assumes that direct or indirect experiences of police violence have a negative impact on trust in the police. This hypothesis is empirically assessed by asking respondents to indicate whether they have had such experiences and to rate their trust in the police.

### **2.4 Relevant measures and their verification**

To evaluate the above hypotheses and identify measures that could strengthen trust in the police, three specific measures are analysed in this study. These will be evaluated by means of an online survey to determine whether they could increase football fans' trust in the police. Due to the limitations of the scope of this study, these recommendations for action are only dealt with superficially and are not the focus of this study.

#### **1. Effects of video recording by police officers on football fans' trust in the police**

Bodycams are miniature cameras that are attached to various positions such as the chest or shoulder, allow image and sound recording depending on the configuration and optionally have a monitor that directly plays back the recording at the moment of the incident (Zöller, 2017). Since then, numerous pilot projects have been conducted in the individual German federal states to test the effectiveness of bodycams. Following the completion and evaluation of the pilot projects, almost all federal states decided to purchase bodycams (Klämmt, 2021).

This use of video recordings by police officers at football events could have the potential to influence football fans' trust in the police. This measure could help to make police behaviour transparent and increase accountability. As fans can see that officers' behaviour is documented, they may be more likely to trust the police as this would reduce the risk of police misconduct.

#### **2. The effects of identifying police officers by number on football fans' trust in the police**

Identifying police officers by personal identification numbers on their uniform while they are on duty at football events can also influence football fans' trust in the police. By being able to identify individual officers, football fans may have greater trust in the police as they can specifically name those responsible in the event of misconduct or complaints. This could help to increase trust in the police and promote accountability. In the 2010s, regulations were introduced in many German federal states requiring police officers to wear individual identification while on duty. However, some federal states decided to suspend the obligation again due to criticism from officers, such as the federal state of North Rhine-Westphalia in 2017. This measure was introduced particularly in closed units and is the result of long-standing demands from human rights organisations, including the Humanist Union and Amnesty International. In 2019, both the Federal Administrative Court and the State Constitutional Court of Saxony-Anhalt ruled that statutory mandatory labelling is compatible with the fundamental rights of police officers. These decisions have strengthened the legal basis for the introduction and implementation of mandatory labelling (Bandau & Bothner, 2020).

### 3. Impact of an external complaints body for police misconduct on football fans' trust in the police

The establishment of an external complaints body for police misconduct can influence football fans' trust in the police. The existence of such a complaints centre offers fans the opportunity to turn to an independent body if they feel they have been treated unfairly. Independent police complaints bodies play a significant role in a democratic constitutional state by guaranteeing citizens the right to effective complaints and public scrutiny. In principle, every citizen should have the opportunity to make complaints about police actions, whether to criticise police measures or to report misconduct that falls below the threshold of criminal liability (Töpfer & Peter, 2017). Germany has established independent police complaints bodies relatively late and inconsistently, which differ in their scope of action and powers, both legally and in their practical implementation compared to other European countries. In Germany, the creation and organisation of complaints mechanisms regarding police actions is the responsibility of the federal states due to federal competences.

These measures can be linked to both the theory of procedural justice and the theory of trust in institutions:

**Procedural Justice Theory:** the provision of CCTV footage and the identification of police officers by number at football events can be seen as measures that increase the perceived fairness and transparency of police interactions. By making the police more transparent and accountable, football fans' trust in the police is increased as they can see that police decisions and actions are based on fair and equitable procedures.

**Theory of trust in institutions:** The establishment of an external complaints body for police misconduct is an example of a measure that can increase football fans' trust in the police by creating an independent body to which fans can turn if they feel they have been treated unfairly. The introduction of identification numbers for officers could increase the chance of a fair trial. This measure could help to strengthen trust in the institution of the police, as it shows that there are mechanisms in place to address and scrutinise police misconduct (Gabriel & Zemerli, 2005).

## **2.5 Critical reflection**

The strengths of the theoretical approaches used in this study are that procedural justice theory provides an appropriate framework for understanding how the proportionality of police interactions affects football supporter trust. The emphasis on transparency, accountability and respect in policing procedures is relevant to the study of public perceptions of the police. Institutional trust theory extends this approach by emphasising the importance of institutional trust to the stability of democracies and identifying various sources of trust that are particularly relevant to the police institution in the context of this thesis.

Although the theory of procedural justice and the theory of trust in institutions offer important insights, they also have their limitations. For example, procedural justice theory focuses heavily on the fairness of procedures, but neglects possible structural inequalities or institutional barriers, such as the lack of external complaints bodies for police misconduct, which could affect the trust of football fans.

## **3. Methodology**

### **3.1 Research design**

A quantitative research design was used in this thesis, aiming to develop an in-depth understanding of football fans' perceptions of and trust in the police. Quantitative methods were chosen as they are flexible enough to capture and analyse complex social phenomena such as the social construct around football (Queirós et al., 2017). The quantitative research design was specifically chosen to capture a wide range of opinions and perspectives and to paint a comprehensive picture of football fans' perceptions of the police. By collecting quantitative data, subtle nuances and individual differences in perceptions of the police can be better understood, allowing more accurate and contextualised conclusions to be drawn.

### **3.2 Data collection**

The data collection for the development of the research question of this bachelor thesis was conducted via an online survey. The sample for the survey was selected by distributing an online questionnaire through various channels, particularly social media and football forums. This method was chosen to reach a broad and diverse sample of football fans representing different demographics, locations and experiences. The questionnaire was carefully developed to ensure that it covered the relevant aspects of football fans' perceptions of the police that are influenced by the three distinct factors. The Qualtrics software programme was used to create the questionnaire and associated questions. The questions were designed to match the formulated research question, considering the conceptual model and verify the hypotheses. The closed-ended questions use a Likert scale to capture participants' agreement with various statements, with response options consistently given in a five-point Likert scale, which is an ordinal psychometric measure that can be used to measure attitudes, beliefs and opinions (Likert, 1932). The response options range from "strongly agree", "agree" and "neutral" to "disagree" and "strongly disagree". This scaling method does not force respondents to take a binary position or give a clear yes or no answer, but also allows them to express their level of agreement or disagreement (La Marca, 2011). In addition, respondents have the option of expressing a neutral



or undecided opinion. Creating an online survey is an appropriate method for anonymous data collection in the context of a formal research question, as the questionnaire given to respondents allows the researcher to obtain information from large samples of the relevant population and to collect demographic data from participants (McIntyre, 2013). In designing the questionnaire and collecting the data, the ethical guidelines for scientific research were strictly adhered to protect the privacy and anonymity of the respondents.

### **3.3 Survey conduction and sample population**

The present study is based on a quantitative survey aimed at capturing the perceptions and experiences of football fans regarding police work. The survey was conducted between April and May 2024. It was distributed online to ensure broad and diverse participation. Participants were recruited through various channels, including social media, fan forums and by approaching them directly at football events. The survey comprised several sections, including demographic questions, questions on frequency of stadium attendance and firsthand experiences with the police, as well as specific items measuring trust in the police and perceptions of fairness and justice.

The survey sample consisted of 981 participants, all of whom were football fans and had been to the stadium at least once in the last 2023/2024 season. The demographic profile of the sample was diverse, as will be discussed in the analysis.

This wide spread of stadium visits makes it possible to capture different experiences and perceptions within the football fan community and to identify correlations. By collecting data on personal experiences with the police and perceptions of police work, a comprehensive picture of how various factors influence trust in the police could be drawn. This data provides valuable insight into the dynamics between football fans and the police, particularly in the context of major events and the challenges associated with them.

### **3.4 Methods of statistical analysis**

To evaluate the collected data, the closed questions are analysed using quantitative methods and processed and evaluated using the statistics program R. Descriptive statistics such as mean values, standard deviations and frequencies are used to provide an overview of the distribution of responses. In addition, detailed correlation analyses are conducted to investigate relationships between the different variables, such as the possible change in fans' perception of and trust in the police under the influence of different police measures (Agresti & Finlay, 2013).

The measures selected are conventional measures commonly used in descriptive statistics (Cox & Holcomb, 2021) to summarise information about certain characteristics of a sample population. The mean represents the average of responses to a particular survey item and is a commonly used indicator of central tendency. It provides an important context for typical responses in the sample. The variability or distribution of responses around the mean is measured by the standard deviation of the distribution. It provides an estimate of the deviation of individual responses from the mean (Agresti & Finlay, 2013). The variance, which is determined as the square of the standard deviation, provides additional information about the response distribution beyond the standard deviation by providing a measure of the average

squared deviation from the mean (Vogt, 2005). To assess the validity of the survey's measurement method, the internal consistency metric Cronbach's alpha was calculated. Cronbach's alpha is a measure of the reliability of questionnaire items. It assesses how well the items are linked together to measure a single concept or construct. Higher values indicate a more reliable internal consistency of the scale. Cronbach's alpha ranges from 0 to 1 (Bonett & Wright, 2014).

Initially, a correlation analysis was conducted to evaluate the strength and direction of the relationship between the analysed variables. These variables are first characterised by the demographic variables such as age, gender and frequency of stadium attendance and their relationship to the dependent variable of confidence in the police. Finally, based on the result of the correlation coefficient R, the researcher can formulate arguments in favour of the relationship between the studied demographic variables and the dependent variable. The purpose of this step of the statistical analysis was to determine whether there were statistically significant relationships between the demographic factors and stadium visitors' perception of safety. In this section of the analysis, a correlation study (Senthilnathan & Samithamby, 2019) was used to determine whether these demographic parameters are related to people's individual perceptions of trust in the police. To determine the strength and direction of the relationship between two variables, the correlation coefficient, more precisely Pearson's correlation coefficient R, was calculated. This coefficient covers a range from -1 to +1, with values close to -1 indicating a strong negative correlation, values close to +1 indicating a strong positive correlation, and a value of 0 indicating no linear relationship (Hemphill, 2003).

In addition, the demographic variables were analysed separately in their intergroups by calculating the mean values and standard deviations of these groups. The variable "age" was then divided into four age groups or generations: "Baby boomers" (1946 - 1964), "Generation X" (1965 - 1980), "Millennials" (1981 - 1996) and "Generation Z" (1997 - 2009). The variable "gender" was divided into "male" and "female". Unfortunately, the gender category "non-binary" and the answer option "no answer" could not be included in this part of the analysis, as the sample was not representative with a total of only five respondents. Finally, the variable frequency of stadium visits was divided into five groups with gradually decreasing frequency into "0 - 10", "<10", "<20" and "<30". This differentiated view of the mean values and standard deviations of the groups within the demographic variables enabled the researcher to further analyse the effects on the subjective perception of safety of stadium visitors at high-risk matches.

The interpretation of the correlation coefficients R between the demographic characteristics and the variable perception of trust in the police as well as the mean values and standard deviations of the analysed variable groups should form the fundamental basis for a better understanding of the following analysis section of the possible courses of action investigated in this project and their effects on the stadium visitors' perception of trust. Finally, the absolute numbers and percentages of the answer options within the Likert scale for trust and the police's treatment of football fans under the circumstances of each of the three possible options for action were presented (Table 3). This is followed by the main part of the statistical analysis in this research project.

The primary analysis examined subjective trust in the police in relation to the frequency of stadium attendance and personal experiences with police behaviour. Analysing these variables sheds light on how frequent stadium attendance and direct encounters with police can influence overall trust in law enforcement.

Another key part of the analysis was to examine the correlations between respondents' experiences with the police and their trust in the police, as well as their perceptions of fairness and justice. These two parts of the analysis aim to verify the hypotheses put forward in this bachelor thesis. To better understand the impact of specific measures on trust in the police, the absolute numbers and percentages of responses within the Likert scale for each measure (such as the introduction of bodycams, the establishment of an external complaints office and the introduction of identification numbers for officers) were analysed. This detailed analysis made it possible to identify the levels of support or rejection for these measures among the respondents. The final part of the statistical analysis focuses on comparing the impact of these proposed measures on trust in the police.

### **3.5 Validity and reliability**

The validity and reliability of the survey instruments and methods of analysis will be carefully scrutinised to ensure that the results of the study are robust and reliable. Validity is ensured by using established measurement instruments and the careful design of the questionnaire to ensure that it accurately captures the relevant constructs. Reliability is ensured by using standardised analysis procedures and checking the consistency of the results.

### **3.6 Reflexivity**

The reflexivity of the researcher plays a key role in scientific work. The researcher is aware of her own viewpoints, assumptions and biases and strives to reflect on and minimise these during the research process. This is achieved through regular reflection throughout the research process in which the researcher critically considers her own influences on the research.

### **3.7 Limitations**

The limitations of this empirical research are obvious. Limitations of this study include the fact that not all German football fans can be reached by the survey, which limits the generalisability and representativeness of the results. However, this was not the aim from the outset and is not necessary to answer the question posed. Quantitative research methods, such as questionnaires in this case, entail further limitations. These include, for example, smaller sample sizes and time-consuming procedures. These methods do not always offer deeper insights into the behaviour, motives, perceptions and feelings of the subjects, but only examine trust among selected variables. (Queirós et al., 2017). In addition, certain aspects of police perceptions may not be fully captured as they are difficult to quantify or are influenced by other factors that cannot be considered in this study. Despite these limitations, the study will provide valuable insights into football fans' perceptions of the police.

## 4. Data analysis and interpretation

### 4.1 Demographic profile of the sample population

In this section, the demographic profile of the respondents is presented. The aim of this analysis is to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the socio-demographic characteristics of the sample, which will serve as the basis for interpreting the subsequent analysis results. To ensure the anonymity of respondents, limited demographic characteristics were collected in the online survey. The demographic characteristics collected here include age, gender and the number of stadium visits in the past 2023/2024 season. By presenting these demographic variables, a better understanding of the composition of the sample and identify possible demographic influences on respondents' perceptions and attitudes can be gained. This is particularly important to ensure that the results of the survey are representative and transferable to different population groups.

Analysing the demographic characteristics also provides insights into the heterogeneity of the respondents and allows to identify differences and similarities in the experiences and perceptions of the different demographic groups. The specific demographic characteristics of the sample are presented and analysed in detail below.

#### Age

For the sake of simplicity, the demographic data on age was already categorised in the survey (Table 1). The year spans refer to the categorisation into generations used in the social sciences, which is why only the generational terms are used in the rest of the paper: Baby boomers: refers to people born between 1946 and 1964 who are now staying in the workplace longer, creating a mixed labour force scenario. Generation X: Includes those born between 1965 and 1980 who bring their own work ethic and values to the workplace. Millennials (Generation Y): Includes those born between 1981 and 1996 who are known to value work-life balance and seek meaning in their careers. Generation Z: People born after 1997 who are just entering the workforce and have a unique perspective on technology and communication. Many parts of their lives take place in the digital world and social networks (Grubb, 2016).

Through the online survey, 609 responses can be assigned to Generation Z, 252 are Millennials, 103 are Generation X and only seventeen participants are from the Baby boomers generation (Table 1).

This allocation of participants across the generations could be a result of the distribution since the online survey was spread via social media, particularly via X (formerly Twitter) and thrived on active participation and a snowball system. On the one hand, a large number of young football fans from Generation Z were reached via the platform X, which they like to use, but to a limited extent, as older generations are less likely to be reached via social media.

## Gender

Looking at the gender structure of the sample population in this study, it is noticeable that the proportion of male stadium visitors is far greater than the proportion of females (Table 1). This result was already expected before the start of this research project, as two extensive surveys of German stadium visitors conducted by researchers at the Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität in Münster showed equivalent results (Ziesmann et al., 2017; Dierschke, 2019). The N of the survey conducted by Ziesmann et Al. (2017) was 2622, with 77.1 % male (N=2021), 24.4 % female (N=561) and 1.5 % of respondents who did not provide any information (N=40). Similarly, the gender structure among the valid responses in the study conducted by Dierschke (2019) shows an even larger proportion of male respondents. Of the 6287 valid responses to the questionnaire, 88.8% (N=5584) were male and only 8% identified as female (N=703). The gender distribution observed in the sample population of this research work can be categorised in the middle of the aforementioned studies and thus certainly reflects representativeness. Of the total of 981 responses, 89% (N=865) are male, 11% (N=106) are female. Non-binary (N=0) and no gender information (N=5) is below 0% and therefore not to be considered further in the statistical analysis (Table 1).

## Regularity of stadium attendance in the 2023/24 season

In addition to recording the age and gender of the stadium visitors who took part in the survey, the demographic block of the questionnaire contained an additional question that asked about the frequency of stadium visits in the past 2023/2024 season at all clubs in the German professional football leagues, regardless of the respective favourite club. In order to provide respondents with a range of choices for their stadium visits, rather than requiring an exact count, the number of visits was divided into four frequency categories (Table 3). These categories were based on the thirty-four regular match days in the 1st and 2nd Bundesliga (source). A total of 29% (N=288) stated that they had attended more than 30 matches, 41% (N=400) and thus the largest number of responses had been to more than 20 matches, 18% (N=181) to more than 10 matches and 11% (N=112) to 0 - 10 matches. The mean value of games attended in the 2023/2024 season was 2.12, which means that the average frequency category of games attended is between "more than 10 games" and "more than 20 games". This shows that most respondents tend to be in the medium to higher range of attendance frequency, although there are also many respondents who attend matches very frequently.

| <b>Table 1</b>                      |              |                |                        |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|----------------|------------------------|
| Demographic profile of respondents. |              |                |                        |
| <b>Variable:</b>                    | <b>Item:</b> | <b>Number:</b> | <b>Percentage (%):</b> |
| <b>Age:</b>                         | 1997 - 2009  | 609            | 62.08%                 |
| Mean: 1,52                          | 1981 - 1996  | 252            | 25.69%                 |
| SD: 0,751                           | 1965 - 1980  | 103            | 10.50%                 |

|                                     |             |     |        |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|-----|--------|
|                                     | 1946 - 1964 | 17  | 1.73%  |
|                                     |             |     |        |
| <b>Gender:</b>                      | Male        | 865 | 88.63% |
| Mean: 1.12                          | Female      | 106 | 10.86% |
| SD: 0.373                           | Non-binary  | 0   | 0%     |
|                                     | No answer   | 5   | 0.51%  |
|                                     |             |     |        |
| <b>Frequency of stadium visits:</b> | > 30        | 288 | 29.36% |
| Mean: 2.12                          | > 20        | 400 | 40.77% |
| SD: 0.969                           | > 10        | 181 | 18.45% |
|                                     | 0 – 10      | 112 | 11.42% |

#### 4.2 Correlation between demographics and perception of trust

In the subsequent phase of the statistical analysis, correlations between the demographic variables of age, gender, frequency of stadium attendance and subjective perception of trust in the police were tested. In addition to the correlation coefficient (R), which indicates the strength and direction of the relationship between the variables, the mean values and standard deviations were calculated for various groups within the demographic structure (Table 1). When presenting the results, it should be noted that the mean values for the subjective perception of trust range from 1 (high) to 2 (rather high), 3 (neutral), 4 (rather low) and finally 5 (non-existent).

Analysing the correlations between the demographic variables collected and the perception of trust in the police reveals possible connections. Starting with the age of the respondents, there is a weak negative correlation with a Pearson correlation coefficient of -0.143 (Table 2). Older people may therefore even tend to have slightly less trust in the police. One possible explanation for this could lie in different life experiences over the course of a lifetime. Older people may have had both positive and negative experiences with the police in their lifetime that have influenced their trust in institutions such as the police. This reference to the Procedural Justice Theory and institutional trust could lead to a lower perception of trust in the police as an institution.

Regarding gender, on the other hand, a correlation coefficient of -0.019 is shown, which is close to zero and thus suggests that gender has no significant influence on the perception of trust in the police (Table 2). This observation could indicate that trust in the police is independent of the respondent's gender and is therefore influenced by other factors.

The correlation between the frequency of stadium attendance and the perception of trust in the police is moderately negative with a correlation coefficient of -0.341. This suggests that people who visit stadiums less frequently tend to have a higher level of trust in the police. As with the correlation for age, an explanation could also lie in experiences with the police and security forces during visits to stadiums. People who

attend to football matches more often could be more likely to be confronted with situations that affect their trust in the police, such as altercations or greatly increased police presence at football matches. This could lead to a lower perception of trust.

However, these assumptions can only be speculative, as further research would be necessary to understand the exact causes of these correlations. Nevertheless, these results offer important insights into the complex dynamics of trust in the police and could serve as a basis for further research. Summarising the first part of the analysis, the hypothesis H2: *"Football fans who go to stadiums more often tend to have less trust in the police. This may be due to negative experiences during such major events"*. The second part of this hypothesis will be substantiated in the next part of the analysis with the help of Tom Tyler's Procedural Justice Theory.

| <b>Table 2</b>   |                                  |                 |
|--|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| Demographics and impact on perception of trust:                      |                                  |                 |
| <b>Correlation:</b>  | <b>Correlation Coefficient R</b> | <b>Variable</b> |
| <b>Correlation age /perception of trust</b>                          | - 0.143                          | 1997 -2009      |
|  |                                  | 1981 - 1996     |
|  |                                  | 1965 - 1980     |
|  |                                  | 1946 - 1964     |
|  |                                  |                 |
| <b>Correlation sex / perception of trust</b>                         | -0.019                           | Male            |
|  |                                  | Female          |
| <b>Correlation frequency of stadium visits / perception of trust</b> | -0.341                           | >30             |
|  |                                  | >20             |
|  |                                  | >10             |
|  |                                  | 0 – 10          |
|  |                                  |                 |

#### **4.3 Correlation between trust in the police and experiences with the police**

H1: *"Football fans who go to stadiums more often tend to have less trust in the police, possibly due to negative experiences during such events."*

H2: *“People who have experienced police violence during football matches themselves or through third parties tend to have less trust in the police compared to those who have not had such experiences.”*

In this part of the analysis, the survey results will be analysed regarding Tom Tyler's Procedural Justice Theory. This theory emphasises the importance of the perception of fairness and justice in the procedures and actions of authorities, such as the police, which is crucial for the trust and acceptance of these institutions. The theory identifies four main dimensions of procedural justice: participation, neutrality, respect and trustworthiness (Lindsey, 2022).

The theory of institutional trust deals with citizens' trust in public and private institutions. It emphasises that trust in institutions is based on several factors, including the perceived competence, integrity and reliability of the institutions. Institutional trust is crucial for the functioning of democratic societies as it fosters acceptance and support for institutional decisions and actions (Gabriel & Zmerli, 2005).

Consequently, by looking at the survey results considering these theories, it can be understood how personal experiences and perceived procedural fairness influence trust in the police.

#### Correlation between perceptions of trust and experiences with the police:

The negative correlation  $R = -0.474$  between perceptions of trust in the police and personal experiences with the police suggests that people who have had negative experiences tend to have less trust in the police. This might be a result of negative experiences, such as inappropriate behaviour or discrimination by the police, which lead to a feeling of injustice in police procedures, which in turn affects trust in the police. The dimensions of respect and trustworthiness are particularly relevant in these circumstances, because if citizens feel that they are treated respectfully and fairly, this understandably strengthens their trust. Conversely, negative experiences that are perceived as disrespectful, unfair or even disproportionate consequently lead to mistrust. With reference to the theory of institutional trust, this shows that negative experiences can affect the perceived integrity and reliability of the police.

This survey supports these theories as it indicates that perceptions of fairness and justice in police procedures influence citizens' trust in the institution. This therefore supports both the Procedural Justice Theory and the institutional trust theory.

#### Correlation between perception of trust and experienced violence against third parties:

The negative correlation coefficient  $R = -0.47$  between the perception of trust in the police and witnessing police violence against third parties indicates that people who have witnessed violence against third parties also tend to have less trust in the police. This could be due to the fact that the interviewees perceived the police response to violent situations as inappropriate or unjust, which impairs their perception of procedural fairness and thus



reduces their trust in the police. This highlights the importance of neutrality and trustworthiness. If citizens observe the police using force against other people, they may question the neutrality and trustworthiness of the police (Procedural Justice Theory). Citizens who experience the police as unfair might be tended to question the police competence and integrity (institutional trust theory). Of the 981 respondents in total, 790 people had already experienced police violence against third parties and 617 (78%) of these stated that they felt this violence was unjustified. 84 (11%) respondents said that they felt the use of force by the police was justified and 98 (12%) responded neutrally (Table 3). This finding supports Tom Tyler's Procedural Justice Theory in the influence on trust building by personal experiences of force and the police response.

#### Correlation between perceptions of fairness and justice and experiences with the police:

The negative correlation (-0.357) between perceptions of fairness and justice and personal experiences with police violence indicates that negative experiences lead to a more negative evaluation of police fairness and justice. This confirms the neutrality dimension of Procedural Justice Theory, which emphasises that police decisions should be made without prejudice and on the basis of objective criteria and, as a result, the competence and integrity of the police can be perceived by football fans (institutional trust). In contrast, citizens who perceive the police as unfair may also question their competence and integrity. It is possible that people who have had negative experiences perceive police procedures as unfair or inadequately organised in terms of participation, which influences their perception of procedural fairness.

#### Correlation between perception of fairness and justice and experienced violence against third parties:

The negative correlation (-0.478) between perceptions of fairness and justice and witnessing police violence against third parties suggests that people who have witnessed violence against third parties tend to rate police fairness and justice more negatively. This could be due to the fact that those affected felt that the police's response to violent situations was inappropriate or inadequate, which affects their perception of procedural justice. Witnessing injustice emphasises the importance of voice and neutrality. Citizens want to feel that their perspectives are heard and considered. However, when police use force against third parties without addressing the voices and rights of those affected, this negatively impacts perceptions of procedural justice.

These correlational analyses all support the Procedural Justice Theory and the Institutional Trust Theory by analysing and reinforcing through the Pearson correlation that personal and particularly negative experiences with the police influence the evaluation of the institution and weaken trust. Thus, on the one hand, the second part of the hypothesis analysed in the upper part H1: *"Football fans who go to stadiums more often tend to have less trust in the police, possibly due to negative experiences during such events."* and, on the other hand, the second, more detailed hypothesis H2: *"Football fans who have themselves experienced police violence during football matches and have witnessed police violence against third parties tend to have less trust in the police compared to those who have not had such experiences."* can be confirmed.

| <b>Table 3</b>   |                                   |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| Impact of experiences with the police on the perception of trust.                                    |                                   |
| <b>Correlation:</b>  | <b>Correlation Coefficient R:</b> |
| <b>Correlation perception of trust / experienced violence</b>  | -0.474                            |
| <b>Correlation perception of trust / experienced violence against third person</b>                   | -0.47                             |
| <b>Correlation perception of fair and just treatment / experienced violence</b>                      | -0.357                            |
| <b>Correlation perception of fair and just treatment / experienced violence against third person</b> | -0,478                            |

#### **4.4 Analysis of safety measurements and the perception of trust**

This section of the data analysis focuses on the collected survey data to analyse the formulated hypotheses on the possible measures and to answer the formulated sub-question, if the three chosen measures taken by the police, which could influence this public antipathy towards the police. The influence of various measures on trust in the police will be analysed to identify options for action to strengthen football fans' trust in the police. These police measures include:

1. the measure of video recordings with bodycams
2. the establishment of an external complaints centre
3. the mandatory wearing of an identification number.

The results of the statistical analysis show if these measures influence the trust of the football fans surveyed in the police. The survey results provide valuable insights into the opinions and views of the respondents regarding various measures aimed at strengthening

trust in the police. By applying descriptive statistics, the allocation of responses to each measure is analysed to gain a comprehensive understanding of respondents' attitudes.

#### **4.4.1 The measure of video recordings with bodycams**

Analysis of the survey data shows that 49% (N=477) of respondents fully agree (N=145) or agree (N=332) with the measure of mandatory wearing of bodycams (Table 4). This high approval rate indicates that a majority of respondents believe that bodycams could strengthen trust in the police. The mean value of the ratings is 2.79, which indicates a neutral to slightly positive attitude towards this measure. The standard deviation of 1.224 shows a certain dispersion in opinions, which indicates different perspectives and possible concerns.

##### Advantages of bodycams in police operations

The introduction of bodycams in police operations offers a wide range of advantages. Firstly, they increase transparency and accountability as the behaviour of both police officers and citizens is monitored and recorded. This can increase public confidence in the police. Secondly, the recordings serve as objective evidence in criminal investigations and court proceedings, which improves the accuracy and reliability of evidence. Thirdly, the presence of bodycams can positively influence the behaviour of both police officers and citizens, as both sides know that their actions are being recorded, which could potentially reduce conflict. Fourthly, bodycams protect police officers from false accusations by providing an objective record of events. (Tuma, 2017)

##### Interpretation of the results

The broad support for the introduction of bodycams, as shown in the 49% approval rating, can be seen as confirmation of the transparency dimension of Tom Tyler's Procedural Justice Theory. This theory emphasises the importance of transparency and accountability in the procedures used by authorities such as the police. Citizens believe that bodycams can increase the transparency and accountability of police work, which strengthens trust in the police. The mean score of 2.79 is closer to the neutral centre (3) than to agreement (2), suggesting that there is also a considerable number of respondents who are either neutral or less positive about this measure. This could indicate that while many fans see the potential benefits of body cameras, some may also be sceptical or have reservations. The standard deviation of 1.224 shows a considerable spread in the responses, indicating differing opinions and experiences among respondents. For example, some respondents may have concerns about data protection and privacy, which could lead to a more cautious or negative attitude towards the use of bodycams (Thomas, 2017).

##### Assumptions about the causes of the differences in opinion

A significant factor in the dispersion of opinions could be privacy concerns. For example, some respondents may fear that the recordings made by bodycams could violate their privacy or be misused. In addition, there are reports that bodycams have sometimes failed in the past during important police investigations, raising doubts about their effectiveness.

These incidents could undermine confidence in the actual effectiveness and reliability of bodycams. Opinions could also vary due to uncertainty or scepticism about the practical implementation and use of bodycams. Questions about how the recordings are used, who has access to the data and how long it is stored could lead to the different views expressed (Tuma, 2017).

Overall, the analysis shows that there is broad support for the measure of mandatory wearing of bodycams, as it has the potential to promote transparency and accountability in police work. However, the variance in opinions indicates that there are also significant concerns and reservations, particularly in relation to data protection and the practical implementation of the measure. In addition, there are doubts about the effectiveness of bodycams due to reports of their failure at critical moments, which could further undermine confidence in this technology.

#### **4.4.2. The establishment of an external complaints centre**

The analysis of the survey data shows that 60% (N=592) of respondents consider the establishment of an external complaints body to be suitable for strengthening their trust in the police. This approval rate indicates that a substantial number of respondents recognise the need for an independent body to handle complaints against the police. The mean of the ratings is 2.44 on a scale of 1 to 5, which indicates that the average attitude of respondents is neutral to slightly positive towards this measure as well. The standard deviation of 1.152 shows a moderate spread of opinions, which could indicate different perspectives and possible concerns.

##### Advantages of setting up an external complaints centre

There are several potential benefits of establishing an external complaints body. Firstly, it could increase transparency and accountability within the police by providing an independent body to investigate complaints. This could increase public confidence in the integrity and fairness of the police. Secondly, the existence of such a complaints body could help to improve the behaviour of police officers, as they know that their actions can be scrutinised by an external body. Thirdly, transparent handling of complaints against the police could help to reduce misunderstandings between the police and the public and improve the relationship. (Lind & Tyler, 1988)

##### Interpretation of the results

The high approval rate of 60% for the establishment of an external complaints body reflects the support of a significant number of respondents who recognise the need for independent review and handling of complaints against the police (Table 4). This can be seen as confirmation of the fairness and lawfulness dimension of Tom Tyler's Procedural Justice Theory, which emphasises that the perception of fairness in procedures strengthens trust in institutions (Lind & Tyler, 1988). The mean score of 2.44 is slightly closer to the neutral midpoint (3) than to agreement (2), suggesting that while many respondents support the establishment of a complaints body, some also appear to be sceptical or reluctant. This could be due to concerns about the effectiveness, independence or practical implementation of such a body. The standard deviation of 1.152 shows a moderate spread

in the responses, indicating that there is a wide range of opinions and experiences. Some respondents may have concerns that an external complaints body may not be independent enough or that their complaints may not be dealt with appropriately. This variance in opinions could be influenced by different perceptions of how such a complaints centre should operate, as well as personal experiences with the police.

#### Assumptions about the causes of the differences in opinion

One likely reason for the difference in opinions could be concerns about whether an external complaints body would be independent enough to deal with complaints objectively and fairly. Respondents could also have doubts about the effectiveness of such a measure or express concerns about its practical implementation. Another aspect could be that some respondents may have had negative experiences with the way complaints have been managed by the police in the past and therefore favour an independent body to ensure fairer treatment.

Overall, the results show that the establishment of an external complaints body is supported by a significant number of respondents, which indicates the recognition of the importance of fairness and transparency in the procedures. However, the variance in opinions suggests that there are also significant concerns and reservations, particularly in relation to the independence and practical implementation of such a measure.

#### **4.4.3 The mandatory wearing of an identification number**

Analysis of the survey data shows that 69% of respondents are in favour of the mandatory wearing of an identification number to increase trust in the police (Table 4). This high approval rate indicates that a significant majority of respondents are in favour of the introduction of identification numbers as a step towards increasing transparency and accountability within the police force. The mean of the ratings is 2.19 on a scale of 1 to 5, indicating that the average attitude of respondents is slightly positive but close to the neutral centre. The standard deviation of 1.120 shows a moderate spread of opinions, which indicates different perspectives and possible concerns.

#### Advantages of the introduction of identification numbers

The mandatory wearing of an identification number could offer several advantages. Firstly, it could help to increase transparency and accountability in police operations by allowing citizens to uniquely identify individual police officers. This could help improve police-community relations by making it easier to trace those responsible for certain actions. Secondly, the introduction of identification numbers could increase public confidence in the integrity and fairness of the police by reducing the likelihood of abuse or misconduct, as officers would know that their actions can be tracked.

#### Interpretation of results

The high approval rate of 69% for the introduction of identification numbers reflects widespread support among respondents who recognise the potential benefits of this

measure for transparency and accountability within the police. This supports the fairness and lawfulness dimension of Procedural Justice Theory by demonstrating that perceptions of fairness in procedures enhance trust in institutions (Lind & Tyler, 1988). The mean score of 2.19 is slightly closer to the neutral midpoint (3) than to strong agreement (2), suggesting that while many respondents support the introduction of identification numbers, some may also be sceptical or reluctant. Possible reasons for this could be concerns about data protection, practical implementation or the actual impact on policing. The standard deviation of 1.120 shows a moderate spread of responses, indicating that there is a wide range of opinions and experiences. Some respondents may have concerns that identification numbers may not be sufficient to prevent misbehaviour or that implementation would not be effective. This variance in opinions could be influenced by different perceptions of how the identification numbers should be used, as well as personal experiences with the police.

Assumptions about the causes of the differences in opinions

One reason for the mixed responses could be concerns about whether wearing identification numbers would lead to more transparency and accountability, as some respondents feared. Privacy concerns could also play a role, as some people may be concerned that police officers' personal information could be jeopardised. Furthermore, there may be doubts as to whether the identification numbers would help to improve officer behaviour or reduce misconduct.

Overall, the results show that the introduction of identification numbers is supported by a significant majority of respondents, indicating a recognition of the importance of transparency and accountability in policing. However, the variance in opinions suggests that there are also significant concerns and reservations, particularly in relation to data protection, practical implementation and the actual impact on police behaviour.

| <b>Table 4</b>  |                      |                 |           |                            |                                 |
|---|----------------------|-----------------|-----------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Survey results:<br>“ ... will strengthen my trust in the police.” |                      |                 |           |                            |                                 |
| <b>Measurements active:</b>                                       |                      |                 |           |                            |                                 |
| <b>Variable</b>   | “Ich stimme voll zu” | “ich stimme zu” | “neutral” | “ich stimme eher nicht zu” | “ich stimme überhaupt nicht zu” |
| Bodycams  | (145)                | (332)           | (190)     | (219)                      | (96)                            |
| External complaints centre  | (216)                | (376)           | (180)     | (158)                      | (52)                            |
|   |                      |                 |           |                            |                                 |

|                        |       |       |       |       |      |
|------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|
| Identification numbers | (312) | (367) | (147) | (118) | (37) |
|                        |       |       |       |       |      |

## 5. Conclusion

This bachelor's thesis provided significant insights into the trust football fans have in the police and answered the question: "How does the behaviour of the police in German professional football leagues influence football fans' perception of the police?". By conducting an online survey in which 981 responses were collected, the results of the analysis are based on a representative population. Based on the fundamentals of this research project, the author has created a theoretical and definitional framework based on which the hypotheses were formulated. The theoretical foundations of the work are based on Tom Tyler's theories of procedural justice and institutional trust, which were used to interpret the results. The centre of the study is the hypotheses that demographic characteristics, frequency of stadium visits and personal experiences with the police have significant influences on trust in the police and thus support the basic idea of Tom Tyler's Procedural Justice Theory. The quantitative approach of this study paved the way for analysing the impact of measures on the trust of stadium visitors and the extend to which three different measures were endorsed.

The demographic data shows that the sample is made up of younger Generation Z football fans, reflecting the high use of social media and the associated distribution of the survey. The gender distribution shows a significantly higher proportion of male participants, which has been similarly observed in previous studies on the football fan scene. The frequency of stadium attendance varied considerably, with most participants attending between 20 and 30 matches per season.

The initial results of the statistical analysis of the demographic data have shown that there appears to be a correlation between the age of the participants and their trust in the police, which in this case means that older people tend to have less trust in the police. This finding supports the hypothesis that demographic factors influence trust. In terms of gender, there was no significant correlation, indicating that men and women have similar levels of trust in the police and therefore the hypothesis of a gender difference in trust was not confirmed. Furthermore, there was a moderately negative correlation between the frequency of stadium visits and trust in the police. This implies that more frequent stadium visitors tend to have less trust in the police, which supports the hypothesis that more intense fans who are in the stadium more often tend to have negative experiences and therefore less trust in the police.

The examination of the hypotheses revealed that negative personal experiences with the police and witnessing police violence against others correlate significantly negatively with trust in the police. These results are consistent with the theories of procedural justice and institutional trust. The theory of procedural justice emphasises that the perception of fairness and justice in police procedures is crucial for trust in the police. The results show that unjust or violent actions by the police significantly undermine trust, which supports the hypothesis that personal negative experiences and perceptions of police violence have a strong negative impact on trust.

In the final part of the analysis, it becomes clear that measures such as the wearing of bodycams, the establishment of an external complaints centre and the mandatory wearing of identification numbers are seen by many respondents as promoting trust. The introduction of external complaints centres in particular was rated positively by the majority of participants. This confirms the hypothesis that increased transparency and accountability of the police can strengthen the trust of fans. In particular, the introduction of external complaints bodies, which was rated positively by most participants, is in line with the theoretical assumptions regarding the promotion of trust through independent review mechanisms and increased accountability.

The results of this thesis clearly show that trust in the police among football fans is influenced by several factors, including demographic characteristics, personal experiences with the police and perceptions of police behaviour at major events. The negative correlations found between frequency of stadium attendance and negative police experiences and trust in the police emphasise the need for measures that promote transparency, accountability and fairness in policing procedures. The measures analysed in this study can be derived from the positive response to the survey as possible courses of action and recommendations for the German security authorities, which could strengthen the trust of football fans in the police if implemented uniformly and across the board:

1. Improving police presence at football events: The police should rethink their strategies in approaching the planning of Large-scale operations at football matches. Regular evaluations and feedback loops with fans should also be integrated to review and adjust the effectiveness of these measures.
2. Promoting transparency and accountability: Measures such as the wearing of bodycams and the mandatory wearing of identification numbers could help to increase the transparency and accountability of the police. However, these measures should be implemented with data protection and privacy concerns in mind to further strengthen public trust.
3. Establishment of external complaints bodies: The establishment of independent complaints bodies could enhance trust in the police by enabling impartial investigation of complaints and improving the perception of fairness and justice in police procedures. The work of these bodies should be communicated transparently to promote the confidence of football fans in the effectiveness and impartiality of these institutions.

This paper lays the foundation for a deeper understanding of the dynamics of trust between football fans and the police. Future research could focus on investigating further influencing factors as well as the long-term effects of the proposed measures. Long-term studies and qualitative approaches could help to gain an even better understanding of the complex interactions between fans and the police and to develop further recommendations for action. It would also be interesting to conduct comparative studies in other contexts of major events such as music festivals or demonstrations to examine whether similar dynamics of trust exist, and which specific measures could be successful in these contexts. It would also be interesting to carry out a survey that differentiates between different "types of fans" and collects even more detailed demographic data than this research only collects on age, gender and frequency of stadium attendance.



Finally, this research project can be concluded with an attempt to provide a concise answer to the research question: "How does the behaviour of the police in German professional football leagues influence football fans' perception of the police?". The results make it clear that the behaviour of the police has a considerable influence on fans' trust. Negative individual experiences and witnessing police violence against others have a significant negative effect on trust in the police. At the same time, the survey shows that measures such as the wearing of bodycams, the establishment of external complaints centres and the mandatory wearing of identification numbers are seen by many fans as promoting trust. These measures could therefore help to strengthen trust in the police and positively influence the perception of fans.

## 6. Literature

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