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Local Embeddedness Versus Global Orientation in European Club Football? Exploring Fan Attachment of Schalke 04.

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Date of Delivery
20/02/2013

Abstract

Football has become a global business and most matches are broadcasted worldwide nowadays. Due to these developments, it can be suggested that football clubs are dis-embedding as they begin to lose their local roots. However, research has shown that clubs still depend on local connections. Thus, this study aims at answering the question whether the attitudes of local and distant fans differ as their attachment to the location of the favourite club is supposed to differ. In order to tackle this question, a case study among fans of the German Bundesliga club Schalke 04 was conducted. By using a Mann-Whitney U Test, this study is able to highlight attitudinal differences among the fan base and an archetypal 'global fan' can be identified. It is further shown that football clubs have various options to respond to the emergence of this new fan type. Although clubs are facing new challenges, this study does not reveal a strong process of dis-embeddedness.

Terminology and Abbreviations

BVB – *BV Borussia Dortmund*

DFL – *Deutsche Fussball Liga*

FCB – *FC Bayern München*

Football – Depending on the geographical location, the sport is called soccer or football. Since the expression football is more common in Europe, this term shall be used for the purpose of this study.

FIFA - *Fédération Internationale de Football Association*

NFL – *National Football League*

SFCV – *Schalker Fan Club Verband*

TNC – *Transnational Corporation*

UEFA – *Union of European Football Associations*

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1 INTRODUCTION

Despite the general trend of globalization in all parts of today's society, literature has proven that top football clubs are still influenced by their local contexts (Jakobsen *et al.*, 2009) and local linkages are often intensified. Accordingly, and as will be explored more detailed later, local contingencies between football clubs and localities are still highly relevant.

However, in a world that experiences a rapidly growing degree of globalization, football and all concerned industries with millions of participants face a range of new challenges. Football is a remarkable and well-known "element of popular culture" (Parker, 1995, p.5) that fascinates people all around the globe. The huge public interest as well as "the associated commercialism surrounding the game" (Relvas *et al.*, 2010, p.166) has made professional football clubs act as enterprises that are engaged in maximizing profit (see for example Bourke, 2003) in order to stay competitive. Thus, "football has become an emerging international business" (Jakobsen *et al.*, 2009, p.261). In this sense, Jakobsen *et al.* (2009) argue that football clubs lose their local roots as they stretch their geographical scope.

Since technological progress and global interconnectedness have made football games globally available, football fans are no longer exclusively tied to their local club, but can follow games in other regions and countries of the world. It can hence be suggested that these developments paved the way for the emergence of a 'global fan' who significantly differs from a local fan as he is supposed to not feel strongly attached to the location of his favourite club.

This study is therefore aimed at answering the following main research question:

To what extent do the attitudes of local and distant fans differ?

Four sub-questions shall guide trough this study:

Is the nature of the fan changing?

Is a new type of fan emerging?

How does place attachment differ?

Are football clubs dis-embedding?

In order to find thorough and sophisticated answers, a case study has been conducted among football fans of the German Bundesliga club Schalke 04 and an online survey has been distributed among the Schalke fan clubs. 19 hypotheses are tested by using a Mann Whitney U Test and reveal four significant differences in the attitudes between local and distant Schalke fans.

Such an approach is highly relevant, since it not only contributes to existing literature as there are no comparable investigations available, but also extends the scope of future research on the topic. According to Bauer *et al.* (2005), factors that have an impact on, for instance, attitudinal loyalty of sports fans in general have been studied extensively in the Anglo-American region, but comparatively less in countries like Germany. Similar works focus on the stadium as representation of home (Charleston, 2009), the dis-embeddness of clubs in an organizational context (Jakobsen *et al.*, 2009), or place attachment with regard to national derby-rivalries (van Houtum & van Dam, 2002), but no study has set up a framework for football fan attitude research in the context of globalization, dis-embeddedness, and place attachment.

Most importantly, the results of this study show a tendency towards the emergence of a global fan, but a clear process of dis-embeddedness of football clubs cannot be observed. In order to respond to the emergence of the global fan, several options are proposed; amongst them the establishment of road shows and extended marketing initiatives abroad.

2 THEORY AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 GLOBALIZATION IN A FOOTBALL CONTEXT

Football's cultural globalization can be examined through the concept of 'glocalization' by highlighting the interdependence of local and global processed in professional football. As argued by Giulianotti & Robertson (2004), the leading football clubs can be considered as glocal transnational corporations (TNCs). Spoken from a very sociological perspective, "local cultures adapt and redefine any global cultural product to suit their particular needs, beliefs and customs" (Giulianott & Robertson, 2004, p.546).

By definition, the "TNC is a profit-centred business that crosses national borders in trade and investment, and has relatively weaker connections to its 'home' location compared to prior corporate models" (Giulianotti & Robertson, 2004, p.551) . In other words, the world's major clubs can be interpreted as transnational corporations that drive football's contemporary globalization.

From a historical point of view, there have always been "strong ties between football teams and the communities in which they were formed, and clubs have symbolized pride in neighbourhood, town or city" (Edensor & Millington, 2008, p.177). This finding is essential in understanding the dilemma many clubs are facing as they have strong connections to their local community, but are also bound to global tendencies.

However, it can be responded that the contemporary restructuring of football is eroding such local ties. This view is supported by the assumption "that the internationalisation and professionalisation of an organisational field, such as the football field, implies a one sided process towards geographical dis-embeddedness" (Jakobsen *et al.*, 2009, p.2, see also Ohmae, 1990, Giddens, 1991).

Correspondingly, due to its worldwide popular appeal, football is usually identified as a global industry. A prime example is hereby the UEFA Champions League final. According to a report from Initiative Futures Sports and Entertainment, the 2010 Champions League final between Barcelona and Manchester United drew an audience of 109 Million and has thus replaced the NFL's Super Bowl as the most-watched annual sports event for the first time (BBC, 2010). Moreover, "while the Super Bowl's audience was overwhelmingly domestic, UEFA's product appears to be doing better in the battle for viewers globally" (BBC, 2010).

One can therefore easily believe that on the one hand "a globalized, commercialized football threatens to prioritize the needs of investors or shareholders over those of loyal local supporters and communities" but on the other hand "we should beware of the hype surrounding certain

accounts of globalization, for relatively few teams possess the capacity to construct and sustain global brand status, with Réal Madrid and Manchester United currently the most successful on this scale" (Edensor & Millington, 2008, p.188-189).

It must be taken into account that "local contingencies remain important in shaping the nature of local capital formation within the football industry" (Edensor & Millington, 2008, p.189), which means that the football industry is very labour-intensive (requires many employees) and as Edensor and Millington (2008) continue "stadiums and training facilities are fixed capital infrastructures and clubs depend upon local support for weekly income" (p.189).

The local connections consist primarily between the club and the city in which the club is based. Since the citizens of a city/region dominantly favor the local football team (see Jones, 1997), these fans shape the club's activities despite the increasing global approach of the majority of professional football clubs. Following the line of argumentation by Jones (1997) that locals predominantly support the local club and given that they developed "an emotional, long-term attachment to a sport, a team, or particular athlete" (van Schaik, 2012), they can be labeled as fans who feel attached to a certain place. This can be best described by the term place attachment.

2.2 PLACE ATTACHMENT AND EMBEDDEDNESS

Over the past decades, scientists have become increasingly interested in how people experience place. So they now "focus on the everyday experiences of place" (Tonts & Atherley, 2010, p. 382). Place "is a fundamental, if often overlooked, human need, providing just one source of identity for individuals within wider societies" (Tonts & Atherley, 2010, p.382, cit. Butz & Eyles, 1997). Since the creation of identity mostly involves place, this also involves socio-cultural practices around a certain place.

The term *place attachment* began to appear in the 1970s (Giuliani & Feldman, 1993). Humanistic geography started in the mid-1970s to explore this new concept, especially Tuan (1974) and Relph (1976) were the first in this field to come up with influential writings that pointed to geographical space as being "experienced as place through long-term involvement in a particular location" (Giuliani & Feldman, 1993, p.267).

The main difficulty for research in the past 40 years since the emergence of place attachment has been the wide range "of approaches available at the theoretical level as well as the empirical" (Hidalgo & Hernandez, 2001, p.273). So far, no agreement has been made on a common definition, name, or research approach. Examples of similar terms are sense of community (Sarason, 1974), place identity (Proshansky, 1978), place dependence (Stokols & Shumaker, 1981), sense of place (Hummon, 1992), or place satisfaction. Hence, it is not always clear whether the term place attachment sticks to the same concept, it might even include different

connotations and/or definitions. Lewicka (2011) describes these definitional questions fittingly "as different pieces of a broken jigsaw puzzle which may (and should) be put together" (p.208).

Especially the definition of the term *place identity* is incoherent throughout the literature. Following the line of argumentation by Hernandez *et al.* (2007), Rollero and De Piccoli (2010) list four perspectives on the sensitive relationship between place attachment and place identity: "(1) they can be considered the same concept (Brown & Werner, 1985); (2) place attachment can be a component of place identity (Lalli, 1992); (3) place identity can be a component of place attachment (Kyle, Graefe, & Manning, 2005); (4) both concepts are only dimensions of a supra-ordered notion (Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001)." In addition, and based on their empirical findings, Hernandez *et al.* (2007) even suggest a fifth perspective, where, despite their connectedness, the concepts place attachment and place identity have to be treated as two different ways of being linked to places and must therefore be assessed differently.

Literature also suggests, and thus further shows how sensitive all those constructs have to be treated, that place dependence and place identity are two dimensions of place attachment. Whilst place dependence "reflects the importance of a resource for providing amenities necessary for desired activities" (Kyle *et al.*, 2004, cit. De Carvalho, 2011, p.4), place identity rather refers to "those dimensions of the self that define the individual's personal identity in relation to the physical environment by means of a complex pattern of conscious and unconscious ideas, beliefs, preferences, feelings, values, goals, and behavioral tendencies and skills relevant to this environment" (Proshansky, 1978, p.155; cit. Kyle *et al.*, 2004).

Nevertheless, most attention within this study will be paid to the concept of place attachment solely since that shall not only avoid confusion, but, and as agreed upon by most concerned authors (e.g. Altman & Low, 1992; Giuliani, 2003; Hernandez *et al.*, 2007; Hidalgo & Hernández, 2001; Knez, 2005; Lewicka, 2005), "the concept of place attachment in today's literature lies at the very heart of the studies on people and places"(Rollero & De Piccoli, 2010, p.198).

Although both terminological and conceptual overlapping of place attachment and place identity have blocked crucial advances in this research field, there seems to be consensus to the greatest possible extent on the use of the term place attachment (Hidalgo & Hernandez, 2001) leading to the general definition of place attachment "as an effective bond or link between people and specific places" (Hidalgo & Hernandez, 2001, p. 274). Place attachment is also described as "a multifaceted and complex phenomenon that incorporates different aspects of people-place bonding and involves the interplay of affect and emotions, knowledge and beliefs, and behaviours and actions in reference to a place" (Altman & Low, 1992; Chow & Healey, 2008; in Rollero & De Piccoli, 2010, p.198).

However, the most well-known definitions above as well as others (Shumaker & Taylor, 1983; Hummon, 1992; Low, 1992) are criticized by Hidalgo and Hernandez (2001) as possibly being "appropriate to describe this special feeling toward places", but having "the drawback of being too ambiguous and do not allow us to differentiate attachment from other closely-related concepts" (Hidalgo & Hernandez, 2001, p.274). Hence they seek to further delimit the concept by falling back on the concept's main characteristic, namely "the desire to maintain closeness to the object of attachment" (Hidalgo & Hernandez, 2001, p.274).

To conclude, place attachment is a dynamic process of developing feelings of closeness towards a certain place that result from practices around the place. As a consequence, people are bound to this place, they often feel stronger attached to this place than to other places and most importantly these feelings are stronger than those of people who are not attached to that place.

2.2.1 The development of a new concept: Bringing together place, place attachment and football

As there has been no comparable study that exclusively combines place attachment and football while using an empirical approach, the concept of place attachment shall now be adopted to a sporting (football) context.

Charleston (2009) explored the English football ground as a representation of home with the concept home as main objective in the context of English stadia. Van Houtum and Van Dam (2002) put place attachment in a football context but (1) did not present any empirical findings and (2) investigated place attachment only in the context of derby rivalries between the Dutch national team and Germany/Belgium, although they put much effort in the theoretical part of their study. The most similar work was published by De Carvalho *et al.* (2011) who translated the so-called Place Attachment Scale into Portuguese and "examined the cross-cultural generalizability of the factor structure and psychometric properties underlying responses to the translated scale" (De Carvalho *et al.*, 2011, p.1), and applied this scale by interviewing spectators who attended a football game in Portugal. For the very first time, place attachment to a stadium was measured and the concept was brought to a professional team sports context since previous studies used it in recreational and natural settings most of the times.

This study attempts to go beyond the stadium as place by including other aspects such as the municipality of the club, the region around, the club itself, or the club's sporting and financial performances, which will produce a multi-facetted picture of attachment to places where football clubs are based.

Butz and Eyles (1997) accurately defined place as a source of identity. Assuming that identity creation and the concept of place mostly go hand in hand, this identity-forming process also involves, amongst others, socio-cultural practices around a particular place.

Visiting a football match and being a fan of a football team can therefore be seen as a practice that connects the individual socially and culturally to a place like the stadium and/or the municipality/region of the club, and finally creates identification. By sharing the experiences one makes around the place of the favourite club, one is constantly consciously or unconsciously part of shifting cultural frameworks.

Such constructions are, according to Liepins (2000), malleable and not static. Tonts and Atherley (2010) observed that "intriguingly, […] sport, has had relatively little attention in the literature on rural community and place. That is despite the apparently central role that sport plays in the life of many […] communities" (p.384). Bale (2003) uses the term 'place ride' to describe the situation when citizens' (emotional) attachment to their favourite team captures a crucial component of local life.

Throughout the literature, football teams are dominantly regarded as representations of certain places. This is important to remember, because it involves the suggestion that local fans and local authorities, who feel represented by the club, are supposed to feel strongly attached to the club as it represents the locality and region and is therefore part of a certain identity.

Consequently, especially local football fans identify with the club, they feel attached to the club and at least most locals show identification with the place as well, or in other words they feel attached to this place. Local fans depend more on place factors than distant fans do.

In this respect, Bale (1988) established the first important framework to explore the relationship between sports such as football and the representation of place. He argues that sports "are nowadays seen as major sources for place boosterism, which can be seen as a form of (local) patriotism" (cit. van Houtum & van Dam, 2002, p.235). Football can serve to communicate the local identity.

When football teams compete in matches, these matches are usually distinguished by the terms 'home' or 'away' matches, whereby fans regard places as their own territory, where 'we' compete with 'them' (see also van Houtum & van Dam, 2002). Thus 'we' feel attached to our place and ground, while 'they' feel attached to their place. People's dedication to a certain place is known as Topophilia and reported in a range of expressions in the case of football (Bale, 1993; Tuan 1974; in van Houtum & van Dam, 2002).

Simple examples are the citizens who buy tickets for a football match and turn from citizens into fans when entering the stadium. The group of fans – either 'home' or 'away' - can then be regarded as an imagined community, which is a concept that was first established by Benedict

Anderson (1983) and which describes a community that does not or cannot rely on everyday face-to-face interactions. Although most of the fans do not know each other, they are united by a common aim, namely to support their own team and to feel attached to the same place.

Van Houtum and van Dam (2002) who themselves refer to Giulianotti and Armstrong (1997), specify that "the possibility of association and identification with a team in a closed physical setting has a strong cohesive and binding effect on the supporters of both teams" (p.237); one could add that the lively atmosphere produces feelings of local identity among the fans who also show their emotional attachment to the team.

In the context of sport teams, Kolbe and James (2003) came up with the assumption that the adoption of a sport identity is inevitably needed for a sport fan to develop loyalty to a team or club. However, since Kolbe and James (2003) concentrated in their work on developing a (sport) identity trough internalization, which means that the individual fan integrates the team into his self-concept (see also James & Ross, 2002), they left out the aspect of attitude formation within the process of developing loyalty towards a club.

2.3 ATTITUDE FORMATION AND ATTITUDE IMPORTANCE AS PREREQUISITES TO DEVELOP LOYALTY TO THE FAVOURITE CLUB

Researchers, especially in social psychology and marketing, occupied themselves with the topic of attitude formation for many years. Following the most prevalent definition of Fishbein & Ajzen (1975), an attitude is "a learned predisposition to respond in a consistently favourable or unfavourable manner with respect to a given object" (p.6).

Deepening attitude research to sport fan research leads to the suggestion that attitude-behaviour relationships in the context of sport fans are way more complex than common attitude relationships in, for instance, the area of marketing (Mahony & Howard, 1998). According to Funk and James (2004), "attitude-related research in the existing sport literature has focused on measurement of the affect component to examine existing attitudes towards sport and leisure activities". Since most positive-negative continuums have been investigated in questionnaires that focused only on a single part of attitude behavior such as attitudes towards a sponsor (McDaniel & Heald, 2000), recreational interest (Park & Kim, 2000), or a certain team (Mahony & Howard, 1998), this study is designed to cover the whole puzzle.

The finding that *importance* not only continuously appeared as a determinant of dependent variables but is a good starting point to explore attitude formation in a sport/fan context is of high relevancy for theorizing fan attitudes. Funk and James (2004) further report that within sport research, "importance has been noted to help shape the actions and thoughts of sport spectators" (Funk & James, 2004, p.6), and consequently sport fans. Recent studies (e.g. Funk &

Pastore, 2000) have placed attitude importance as a predictor for the psychological significance someone evaluates his favourite team.

Funk and James (2004) propose that the internalisation of a (sport) identity equals the examination of attitude development based on the property 'importance'. Hence, sport identity corresponds to a person's internalisation of a certain group into the self-concept. This 'internalisation process' is guided by the interplay of dispositional needs, which represent a person's motives "that directly influence the adoption of a particular Sport Identity" (Funk & James, 2004, p.7) and the emergence/presence of endearing features.

Most interestingly for this study, Rooney (1975) has identified geographic proximity as one of the features that are said to be attributes influencing the decision whether dispositional needs can be satisfied. If sport identity satisfies these dispositional needs now, the person sets his/her responses in relation to sport identity due to the integration into the self-concept. Attitude importance thus represents the degree of attitude formation.

Consequently, and as finally argued by Funk and James (2004), "the more importance an individual places on his/her sport identity, the more likely subsequent evaluations and responses elicited by the team will persist over time, resist counter information and preference for alternative teams, bias the types of thoughts generated about the team, and be more consistent with past behavior and behavioural intent" (p.8).

To sum up, in order to understand attitude formation, it is necessary to investigate the internalisation of a sport identity. Sport identity is an essential part of attitude importance which in turn is influenced by the dispositional needs/endearing features interplay (Funk & James, 2004).

2.4 THE SEVEN DIMENSIONS OF FAN ATTITUDE FORMATION AND FAN ATTACHMENT

Since local fans can be expected to feel stronger attached to a certain place than foreigners, their attitudes are also supposed to differ (see for example Bale, 1998; van Houtum & van Dam, 2002). The explanation lies within their different sport identity, or, more clearly, for local fans club attachment is more dependent on place factors than for distant fans

In order to measure fan attachment based on the fans' evaluation of importance towards certain factors that contribute to their attitudes, seven dimensions of attitude formation are now introduced. The dimensions are supposed to be the components' of attitudes of an average (European) football fan and have newly been established for the purpose of this study.

2.4.1 LOCAL RIVALRIES AND COMPETITION WITH NATIONAL/EUROPEAN TOP CLUBS

Among football fans all around the world, local rivalries play an extraordinary role in football fandom. These competitions between two clubs from the same region are called derbies. The concept was first used at the end of the 19th century in English football when two local rivals played against each other. Over the years, football derbies developed into an international phenomenon with some well-known examples in Buenos Aires (Boca Juniors against River Plate) or in Glasgow (Celtic against Rangers).

According to Heck *et al.* (2012), the "derby is more than just a sport performance; it describes a special identity-forming, symbolic and emotional meaning for the devotees of clubs in a region" (p.2031). More particular, Heck *et al.* (2012) argue that football teams "contribute to the community identity in a region" (p.2031). Bearing in mind these findings, one can assume that the derbies with their identity-forming character are especially important for local fans; for locals these matches are the highlights of the entire season.

A particular phenomenon in European football is the dominance of certain teams. A study by Goossens (2006) shows that within Europe, Greece, the Netherlands and Portugal are the most dominated countries, and from the 'big 5', namely England, Spain, Germany, Italy, France, "England and Spain have more dominant champions than the other big 5 countries" (Goossens, 2006, p.118).

Examples for dominating teams during the last decades are Liverpool, Manchester, and Arsenal in England, Ajax, PSV, and Feyenoord in the Netherlands, Real Madrid and FC Barcelona in Spain, or Bayern Muenchen in Germany. High competition among the teams with various different champions was reported in less influential countries such as Denmark with only Brondby having won 10 titles while all others won four or less. Contrarily, Buzzacchi *et al.* (2003) found that particularly in closed leagues, which are typical for the United States and where teams are not relegated, a large group of teams is able to compete each year.

Thus, one can suggest that matches against the dominant teams in European football leagues are very important for a team's fans in their respective leagues as winning over the top teams brings a lot of prestige. Since these matches do not significantly contribute to the community identity in the region as argued by Heck *et al.* (2012) in the context of regional derbies, winning over the national champions is assumed to be more important for distant fans.

Something that gained growing importance in the last decades, are the European club competitions. Participating in the Europa League or the UEFA Champions League accompanies international attention, increased media attention and additional revenues. Feddersen (2006)

illustrates that German clubs that qualified for the UEFA Champions League are better off in terms of, for instance, relative budget or transfer expenditure.

Likewise, teams that perform well in European competitions become more popular among fans from all over the globe. As the presence in European competitions attracts not only local fans, it can be assumed that distant fans prioritize success in non-national competitions.

2.4.2 SPONSORS OF THE CLUB

Sport sponsorship is an extremely powerful instrument in marketing. For instance, sports accounted for 69 percent of the worldwide total expenditures on corporate sponsorship in 2004 (Musante, 2006). As a consequence, a trend emerged to sell a club's names rights in order to make more profit. Moreover, a range of football clubs already sold their stadium's name (e.g. Emirates Stadium, London; Allianz Arena, Munich). However, selling the club's name rights is a more sensitive issue as the name also represents a club's identity. A prominent example is Red Bull Salzburg.

Due to their deeper place attachment to the city where their favourite club is based, local fans are expected to be united in the opinion that the club should never sell its name. Although it can be assumed that many distant fans feel the same, those that prioritize the financial profit that can be made out of that business, might not have such a negative opinion about the issue.

Since most football clubs have a strong link to the city where they are based, it can be suggested that – apart from investing in the club – local fans expect the club's sponsor to have a good link to the city as well and to engage in projects in the region that show the sponsor's social responsibility as most clubs oblige themselves to charity involvement.

2.4.3 FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE OF THE CLUB

Financial distress is a very common occurrence in European football nowadays. For instance, Buiramo *et al.* (2006) report that "English football has sustained losses in eight of the ten seasons since 1993-1994" (p.35). Moreover, they cite numbers from the Independent Football Commission's 2003 annual report, stating that the net loss between 1995/96 and 2001/02 accounted for 957 million pounds.

Reasons "to explain why clubs enter into large levels of debt are an inability to sell players as assets through the transfer market, a loss of revenues consequent on relegation and an inability to align costs and revenues on the loss of divisional status, an inability to maintain loan payments on capital expenditure such as a new stadium, and a failure to realize expected revenues from TV broadcasting deals" (Buiramo *et al.*, 2006, p.37-38).

With regard to the Spanish football league, in the official notes revenues have always been bigger than costs. This is different from the Italian Serie A, in which the huge majority of teams showed losses in their balance sheets in 2003 (Baroncelli & Lago, 2006). However, Ascari and Gagnepain (2006) illustrate that already in the beginning of the last decade Spanish clubs faced enormous problems since "television revenues are not growing as fast as in the past, and depreciation is heavily burdening the costs side, given the high amount of intangible assets in the balance sheet" (p.87). Despite the fact that many Spanish football teams especially in provinces with strong ethnic identities are still backed up by public authorities (Ascari & Gagnepain, 2006), the situation is now as alarming as in an increasing number of other European leagues.

Particularly the coming into effect of national licensing systems as well as the UEFA sanctions will, once consequently in place, pose existential threats to many clubs which could be equivalent to a club's relegation. The dilemma in Europe is a situation where many clubs "have experienced liquidity shortfalls", while "in contrast others have climbed up to the top of European club football with the help of external money" (Vöpel, 2011, p.54).

Local fans who feel strongly attached to the club's city and region are thus supposed to accept lean times as they rather care about the club's financial soundness.

In line with the argument above, one can also question the importance of financial fair play rules the UEFA is planning to impose. Many of the world's leading clubs are purchasing players for huge amounts of money despite their debts, which is widely recognized as unfair conduct since these clubs are allowed to compete with clubs that do not have these debts. By making debts without consequences, financially sound clubs which only invest within the limits of their economical possibilities, are clearly disadvantaged.

These developments made the UEFA introduce financial fair play rules that every club shall respect and accept and that will come into force with the end of the season 2012/13. It "implies that for the first time there will be a harmonized, European-wide and tighter regulation for all European clubs" (Vöpel, 2011, p.54). Despite the debt situation, distant fans can be assumed to prioritize sporting successes over financial soundness (see assumption above), and thereby not to put much emphasis on the respect for the UEFA financial fair play rules, while local fans can certainly be expected to show high compliance with regard to accepting the rules.

2.4.4 COMPOSITION OF THE SQUAD

In today's football, Europe can be seen as the centre of the international game (Niemann *et al.*, 2011). European clubs are global brands and talents are 'imported' from everywhere around the world. Relvas *et al.* (2010) argue that "clubs appear to favour bringing high profile players into the club in order to obtain immediate results and increase merchandise sales" (p.166). According to Hobsbawm (2007), this purchasing practice can be best described as capitalist imperialism,

whereby Hobsbawm expects tensions between these global approaches and national identity. As stated earlier, players can be purchased from every corner of the world, from every club and every youth academy, often to the detriment of Africa and Latin America.

However, due to the enforced reduction of debts in the future and the increasing value of young players (Relvas *et al.*, 2010), a lot of clubs already established wide-ranging youth development schemes, where youth players from the club's region are formed. Reduced budgets made many clubs integrate regional youngsters into their first team squad instead of purchasing stars.

Among the fan bases, opinions about the clubs' purchasing behavior seem to be twofold. While some fans feel the desire to see more stars playing for their club in order to be more competitive, others do not get tired to explicitly express their compliance with the way to give a chance to youth players. Since most of these players originate from the region where the club is based, especially local fans identify with the youngsters; they often argue that a player comes from "my" city, "he is one of us" (van Houtum & van Dam, 2002). Accordingly, distant fans that do not feel such strong attachment to the region can be expected to consequently not show strong identification with the youth players. One can suggest that distant fans who follow the club from a rather 'neutral' point of view (without the strong regional identification), wish to see new stars in their favourite's club squad.

Furthermore it was already mentioned that the big majority of clubs in European football is very engaged in developing youth academies, where promising players not only get trained but also live in order to profit from the best facilities. As it was earlier assumed that local fans can better identify with these talents, it can also be assumed that these fans attach more importance to the academies.

2.4.5 LOCATION OF THE STADIUM

The stadium as such "is not just an open-air building but probably the most enduring symbol of the home team" (Canter *et al.,* 1989, p.63). Accordingly, "it is associated with many people's fondest memories, and may actually become a monument to supporters" (Giulianotti, 2004); in Charleston, 2009, p. 145). It can further be seen as an important place of interest for the local community.

It cannot be denied that attachment to a stadium is generally present; Charleston (2009) reported that it is "certainly arguable that a football stadium is a place to which supporters have become attached" (p.145). Consequently, the stadium could also have an impact on the degree to which fans feel attached to the city where the club of choice is based. It can hence be suggested that local fans who experience the connection between the club and the city day by day find it more important that the stadium as the home ground will always remain in the city than distant fans that just travel to the home games without building a significant relationship to this place. One

could even exaggeratedly argue that the location of the stadium is not an important factor for distant fans, as they only want to see their club, irrespective of the place.

Besides, both the city where the club is based and the stadium are physical sites to which the individual can build an "emotional link" (Milligan, 1998, p.2). A study by Jones (1997) found that the choice of a favourite club for English football fans was primarily lead by the fact that it was the local club or the club of city where the fans originally lived.

Football matches as well as other sport competitions are today widely perceived as events. It is not the pure competition between the two teams anymore that attracts a lot of spectators; it is also the event character around the stadium, where the spectator is entertained before, during, and even after the match. A range of different meals and drinks together with music acts and video shows contribute to the fans' entertainment. Such a development is however not appreciated by all fans. Many local fans that have been visiting their favourite club's matches since their childhood in good and bad times do not necessarily need or appreciate this entertainment. Local fans hence are expected to prefer a pure exciting, tense and challenging atmosphere as opposed to global fans, who travel to matches (and thereby often accept longer travel distances) to be entertained by the match and all the pleasures around. It can be assumed that this type of fan would thus prefer a rather safe, unhostile, and unthreatening atmosphere in all parts of the ground.

2.4.6 TICKETING AND MEDIA COVERAGE

In times of absolute media coverage and worldwide interconnectedness, a football fan has various options to follow his favourite team, no matter where he lives, may it be via TV, internet, mobile phone, or trough the purchase of tickets to see the games live. According to Giulianotti and Robertson (2004), "world cartels of satellite, cable and free-to-air broadcasters have emerged to distribute football images globally" (p.550).

Buying tickets is, however, not always practical, especially when the fan lives far away from where 'his' club plays. Although fans are often willing to accept long distances for travelling to the home matches of their favourite team, the majority of fans in the stadium is supposed to come from the broader region. Most distant fans cannot frequently visit the home matches of their favourite club. Thus, it can be hypothesized that local fans pay more attention to buying tickets to see a game in the stadium, while distant fans prefer a subscription to pay-TV for watching the games live due to practical obstacles such as the long journey.

2.4.7 MISSION STATEMENT/CLUB CHARTER

The majority of clubs in professional football previously established a set of general guidelines that shall lead the clubs' development. The character or outline of these statements is, however,

very different and often not binding for the clubs' managerial boards. Most importantly, there is neither a common way of paraphrasing the clubs' targets nor are there official UEFA demands. A prime example for such a guideline was set up by Manchester United. The club published a club charter providing the club with a direction that shall be "United, Non-discriminatory, Innovative, Team-orientated, Excelling, Determined (Manchester United Club Charter, 2012). The charter is, however, basically a catalogue of customer rights and duties and does not include a strong local commitment, but rather its connection to supporters around the world.

In contrast, other clubs such as Everton FC stress the "unbreakable link with its local community" (Everton FC Customer Charter, 2012). Accordingly, the Scottish club Celtic FC regards itself as a club that is "supportive of its local community" (Celtic FC Corporate Social Mission, 2012). What most of the clubs share, is the awareness of the clubs' social responsibility. For this purpose, various foundations and charities set up by football clubs exist.

The linkages to local communities are though not always defined; social responsibilities are often not limited to the city, community, or region. For instance, the Spanish top club FC Barcelona extended its slogan "more than a club" to "more than a club around the world". Furthermore the "humanitarian Barca needs to be globalised" (FC Barcelona Values, 2012).

As argued earlier, particularly local fans show a high degree of identification with the city where the favourite club is based. Thus it can be suggested that local fans who feel stronger attached to the city, also find it more important to adhere that the club is rooted in the city and inextricably linked to the city. Such attachment to a place is expected to involve a good knowledge about the city's culture and history.

2.5 THE FAN

In order to finally provide a characterization of the main subject of this study, namely the fan, this section is designed to complete the conceptual framework.

As generally defined by Reysen and Branscombe (2010), a fan is "any individual who is an enthusiastic, ardent, and loyal admirer of an interest […] and the term can be used to describe individuals who are devoted to a myriad of interests, not only sport teams and celebrities" (p.177).

Within the sports literature, the 'fan' is separated from the 'sport spectator'. Although 'sport fan' and 'sport spectator' as the consumer is called by Wann *et al.*, (2003) are sometimes used within the literature in an indifferent way, it is for the purpose of this study and from a theoretical point of view necessary to distinguish them. A 'sport fan' is enthusiastically following his/her team (Wann *et al.*, 2003), whereas a 'sport spectator' is interested in a less emotional way. Fans want to see their team winning, they like to be informed about the club's activities and they love to

visually identify with their team. Spectators are typically very different. They prioritize good entertainment, enjoy the athletes' skills and want to expand their knowledge. It is hereby certainly worth mentioning that both terms ('fan' and 'spectator') are not mutually exclusive since an individual can be either one or both of them.

A trend in the current sport fan literature is to treat sport fans as one group. However, when turning to the fans' identification with a team, one has to differentiate between two diverse concepts. It is necessary to make a distinction between "a fan's personal connection with a sports team, and a fan's connection with other fans as a group"(Reysen & Branscombe, 2010, p.177).

While the individual's sense of connection with a (sports) team is generally termed "fanship", the individual's link to a group of fans of a certain team is called "fandom". In other words, fanship points to the identification with the object itself, whereas fandom points to the identification with a group that shares a connection with the aforementioned object. Hence, fanship can be compared with Wann's (1997) definition of 'team identification' that is phrased as "the extent that a fan feels psychologically connected to a team" (p.133).

Contrarily, fandom is synonymous with social identity, being defined by Tajfel (1978) as "that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership" (p.63; see also Reysen & Branscombe, 2010).

3 OPERATIONALIZATION

3.1 PROPOSED MODEL

In order to merge all theoretical assumptions that have been made so far, a model was constructed. It is based on the idea that a club is locally embedded if it maintains many relationships with its fans. This embeddedness leads to the fans' attachment to the club and the place where the club is based. As fans feel attached, they develop certain attitudes towards the club of choice. These attitudes are measured along seven dimensions. By using existing literature and empirical findings a number of theoretical assumptions were assembled, whereby each of these assumptions points to the expected attitudes of either local or distant fans. As far as these assumptions hold true, they will illustrate the attitudes (and potential differences in attitudes) of local and 'global' fans. If attitudes in fact differ, a global fan can be identified and one can ask whether clubs are dis-embedding.

Club is locally embedded if it has many relationships with the fan	Fans feel attached to the club	Attribute formation of fans	Empirical considerations	Theoretical assumptions	Local versus global fan

Local rivalries and competition with national/European top clubs
- Beat local rival
- Beat dominant national team
- Beat European top teams

Sponsors of the club
- Selling club name no option
- Indigenous local sponsor
- Sponsor has good link to the city
- Sponsor is engaging regionally

Financial performance of the club
- Club is financially sound
- Respect for UEFA FFP
- Club creates jobs in the region

Composition of the squad
- Regional youngsters in first team
- Club purchases superstars
- Club develops youth academy

Location of the stadium
- Stadium remains in home city
- Exciting atmopshere
- Safe atmopshere

Tickting and media coverage
- Tickets for games
- Pay-TV subscription

Club charter
- Roots of the club
- History of the city
- Club remains always in home city
- Club inextricably linked with city

Club is locally embedded

Fan attachment to the club → do the attitudes differ?

Local fan

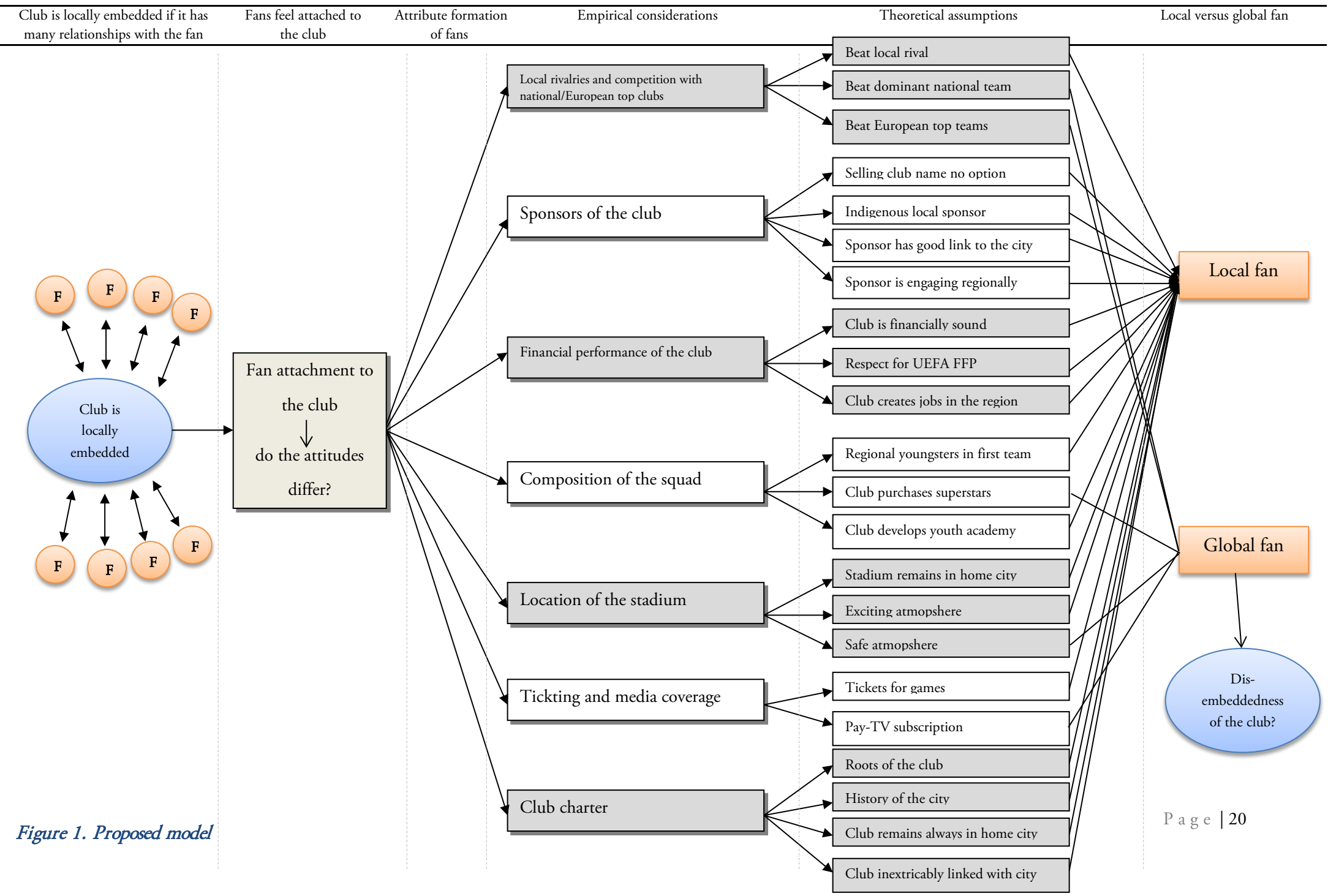Global fan

Dis-embeddedness of the club?

Figure 1. Proposed model

3.2 HYPOTHESES

Based on the theoretical assumptions made in paragraph 2.4 and the proposed model, eight main hypotheses were erected:

Hypothesis 1: Local and distant fans differ in their attitudes towards the importance of regional derbies respectively the matches against the dominant teams.

It is thereby expected that

I.   for local fans, winning over the local rival is more important than winning over the league's dominant teams, while winning over the dominant teams is more important for distant fans;
II. beating the local rival is more important for local fans than it is for distant fans;
III. finishing above the local rival is more important to local fans, while finishing above the dominant teams is more important to global fans.

Hypothesis 2: Local and distant fans differ in their attitudes towards the importance of international successes.

It is thereby expected that

I.   distant fans find it more important to beat European top teams than local fans.

Hypothesis 3: Local and distant fans differ in their attitudes towards a potential sale of the name and the club's sponsor.

It is thereby expected that

I.   among local fans, selling the club's name is no option, while distant fans are more open to that business;
II. local fans prefer an indigenous local sponsor, while distant fans find it important that the sponsor is globally known and brings a lot of money;
III. local fans find it more important that the sponsor has a good link to the city where the club is based and is engaging in the region than distant fans.

Hypothesis 4: Local and distant fans differ in their attitudes towards the club's financial situation and the club's financial performance.

It is thereby expected that

    I.   the club's financial soundness is more important to local fans than it is to global fans;

   II.   local fans find it more important to respect the UEFA financial fair play rules than distant fans;

 III.   local fans rather recognize the importance that football clubs create jobs in the region than distant fans.

Hypothesis 5: Local and distant fans differ in their attitudes towards the squad's composition and the importance of integrating youth players as well as developing the youth academes.

It is thereby expected that

    I.   local fans find it important that regional youth players are integrated in the squad, while distant fans find it important that the club is active in the transfer market and signs new stars;

   II.   local fans find it more important that the club supports and develops the youth academy than distant fans.

Hypothesis 6: Local and distant fans differ in their attitudes with regard to the club's stadium.

It is thereby expected that

    I.   local fans find it more important that the location of the stadium will always remain in the city where the club is based than distant fans;

   II.   local fans prefer an exciting and possible edgy atmosphere in the stadium, while distant fans prefer a safe and unthreatening atmosphere in all parts of the ground.

Hypothesis 7: Local and distant fans differ in their attitudes towards the possibility to buy tickets to see the games and the possibility to afford a Pay-TV subscription.

It is thereby expected that

    I.   local fans find it more important that they can afford to buy tickets to see the games in the stadium as opposed to distant fans who find it more important that they can afford a

subscription to watch live games or that they can watch highlights of the games on the internet.

Hypothesis 8: Local and distant fans differ in their attitudes with regard to club charters.

It is thereby expected that

I. local fans recognize the importance to be informed about the city's past, while distant fans do not have this attachment to the region and do not recognize the necessity to be informed the past;

II. compared to distant fans, local fans find it more important to adhere that the club is and will remain based in the city where it is found and based;

III. local fans find it important to adhere that the club is inextricably linked to the city, while distant fans do not see the necessity.

4   CASE BACKGROUND FC SCHALKE 04

The FC Gelsenkirchen Schalke 04 e.V. is deeply rooted in the Ruhr Area, an urban and industrial region in the North-West of Germany. This strong attachment to the region was adhered in the recently established mission statement. Under paragraph 3 of the Schalke mission statement (FC Schalke 04, 2012), it is mentioned that the cradle of the club is the Schalker Markt, a historical place where the club was founded. But not only the Schalker Markt is a symbol for its long history, the club is without a doubt strongly connected to coal mining as in the early 1900s and even until the 1950s most players as well as the huge majority of the fans worked in this industry. Thus, the club sticks to the statement that the "FC Schalke 04 began as collers' and grafters' club" (FC Schalke 04, 2012).

Based in the broader Rhine-Ruhr region, nowhere else in Germany compete so many high level clubs against each other (Heck *et al.*, 2012). The derby between the two most successful clubs in the Ruhr Area, Schalke and the BVB (BV Borussia 09. e.V. Dortmund) is named *Big Revier Derby*. Among Schalke fans, the Revier Derbies are widely recognized as the most important matches of the season. The deep rivalry has a very long tradition, thus it is not surprising that for both Schalke and Dortmund fans winning over the arch-rival constitutes the highlight of the whole season. This is especially present for local fans that experience this rivalry in their everyday life, may it be at the working place where their colleagues sympathize with the BVB or in the neighborhood, where Dortmund fans live in the same street.

On the other hand, there is also another rivalry with the German record champion Bayern Munich which gained importance with the success of Bayern and a number of key events

involving Schalke over the last years. One of these key events took place on the last matchday of the Bundesliga Season 2001/2002. Popular opinion tends to inply that Bayern Munich "stole" the national title from Schalke. Four minutes into overtime, when the Schalke game already had ended and the fans in Gelsenkirchen considered their team national champions, Bayern scored the equalizer in Hamburg that helped them to regain the top position from Schalke in the very last seconds of the season. This event together with a number of title bouts after 2001 deepened the negative feelings of many Schalke fans towards the Southern rival.

In the context of derby rivalries, many local Schalke fans voiced the feeling that it is just important to finish the season above the BVB to make it a "good" season. Contrarily, in the view of many distant fans that do not experience the strong rivalry between Schalke and Dortmund in the Ruhr area, it might be more important to finish above Bayern Muenchen since it is the most successful club in Germany, having won as many as 22 national titles and 15 cups.

During the last couple of seasons, Schalke performed above-expectations in UEFA competitions. After the Uefa Cup win in 1997, which is still the biggest international success of the club, Schalke progressed in 2008 past the UEFA Champions League group stage for the first time to beat Porto in the round of 16 but to be stopped by FC Barcelona in the quarter-finals. In 2011, Schalke even advanced to the semi-finals with a 5-2 victory over Inter Milan. In the semi-finals they were eventually beaten by Manchester United. These successes might have contributed to the passion of many global followers who were impressed by the international performances of the German underdog. Although all local fans also enjoyed these European competition evenings, distant fans can be expected to find it more important to beat European top teams.

In the earlier mentioned Schalke mission statement it is outlined that the name of the club "is and will remain Football Club Gelsenkirchen-Schalke 04 e.V." (FC Schalke 04, 2012). Since October 2006, one of the world's leading oil companies, namely Gazprom, is the club's main sponsor, replacing the former sponsors Veltins (beer brewery) and Victoria (insurance company). Gazprom is said to have invested as much as €125 million until 2012.

Local fans who daily live, work, and go out in Gelsenkirchen, are aware of the impact Schalke as an institution have on the city since the club is present everywhere. As the sponsor is present as well with these strong ties, it can be suggested that – apart from investing in the club – locals expect Gazprom to have a good link to Gelsenkirchen and to engage in projects in the region that show Gazprom's social responsibility.

Particularly after the construction of the new stadium, the Veltins-Arena, Schalke were burdened with enormous debts. Over the years, and despite additional debts that were made especially in the era of the former Schalke head coach and general manager Felix Magath, the financial department was able to significantly reduce these debts that now amount to an estimated €160 million (Mersch, 2012). In 2012, Schalke even appeared in the Top 10 of the Forbes list of the

'world's most valuable soccer clubs for the first time (Forbes, 2012). Within the next ten years, debt shall be continuously reduced which in turn implies that Schalke will not be able to acquire expensive players in the future.

In contrast to the first decades of Schalke's history where players were recruited more or less exclusively from clubs in Gelsenkirchen and the Ruhr area, today's Schalke squad is composed of players from all over the world. In a globalizing world players can be purchased from the other end of the world without any barriers. This process did not stop at Schalke either. Even world class players such as the Dutch international Klaas-Jan Huntelaar or the Spanish striker Raul Gonzalez were successfully lured to Gelsenkirchen, which increased the club's attention and presence in worldwide media.

However, due to the necessity to reduce debts, Schalke successfully integrated own youth players step-by-step that now not only enrich the current squad but that form an important part of the team. Additionally, most of these trainees grew up in Gelsenkirchen or the Ruhr area and already played for the Schalke youth teams since they made their first steps in football boots. Hence, Schalke are very engaged in developing the "Knappenschmiede", which is the club's own youth academy where promising players not only get trained but also live in order to profit from the best facilities.

Something that is highly relevant for Gelsenkirchen and the region around is the club as an employer. Notably, Schalke 04 is one of the biggest employers in Gelsenkirchen with almost 500 employees. Moreover, other companies and employers strongly depend on the club; examples are the security services or the gastronomy. This results in a high degree of dependency between Schalke 04 and the jobholders in Gelsenkirchen and its neighboring cities. In 2011, Schalke employed 492 salaried people (FC Schalke 04 Konzernbericht, 2011) and plenty of employees worked for suppliers of the club.

Aside from creating jobs, the club also helps to boost development in the region because it brings a lot of money to such a structurally weak region as Gelsenkirchen with an unemployment rate of about 16 percent. Schalke finance director Peter Peters recently described the club as a booming economic factor for the region. Hence, people feel attached to Gelsenkirchen recognize the importance of Schalke 04 to create jobs, while distant fans who are not regularly staying in Gelsenkirchen do probably not feel the importance of job creation by the club.

The Schalke stadium is known as the Veltins-Arena (capacity of 61,673 spectators). It is located in Gelsenkirchen, and was previously known as Arena AufSchalke. Since the club's foundation in 1904, all football grounds of Schalke have been in Gelsenkirchen, starting with the Glückauf-Kampfbahn (capacity of 35,000 spectators) that was constructed in 1928 and earlier used for amateur matches with a reduced capacity, and followed by the Parkstadion (capacity of 62,000 spectators) being built in 1973. The Veltins-Arena that is nowadays named after the sponsor

Veltins brewery was completed in 2001 and is regarded as one of the most modern event facilities throughout Europe. The stadium was listed in the highest category by the UEFA.

5 METHODS

5.1 DESIGN

A cross-sectional web survey has been conducted. It was chosen because it is the most efficient way to ask a large number of respondents an appreciable number of structured questions.

Although mail surveys have generally higher response rates than web surveys (Shih & Fan, 2008; Fricker & Schonlau, 2002), a web survey was used for reasons of simplification due to the analytical tools that are provided by the "Lime Survey IGS" programme, which has been used. With a limited time window, online tools serve better for conducting such a survey compared to paper surveys which is in line with Tse (1998) who discovered a remarkable difference in the average initial response time for web/email survey respondents compared to paper survey respondents.

Jansen *et al.* (in Reynolds *et al.*, 2007) support Tse's (1998) findings and list "(1) decreased costs, (2) faster response times, and (3) increased response rates" (p.1) as the most common reasons for choosing an e-survey over traditional paper-and pencil approaches, however, they point to potential drawbacks (see Appendix 1), mainly with regard to the population and the project's goal. These drawbacks include "time-consuming development, limited access to potential users (only those with Internet access), potential technological problems, […], the possibility of poor security threatening the validity of the study", and the fact that "self-selected Web surveys are likely to result in biased samples and provide little to no control over the sample" (Jansen *et al.* in Reynolds *et al.*, 2007, p.5).

Fortunately, the majority of the drawbacks (see Appendix 1) mentioned by Jansen is not relevant for this study due to the way the survey was distributed. Since all fan clubs that were contacted are registered with an e-mail address and need to have Internet access for receiving news from the SFCV, there were no technical obstacles for successfully participating. In addition, security was threatened because the initial e-mail was sent around by the SFCV chairman who recommended filling in the questionnaire.

This research design not only holds advantages for the researcher conducting the study, it is also beneficial for the fans that are participating because "the voluntary nature of participation is enhanced in online research" (Roberts, in Reynolds *et al.*, 2007, p. 21). Hence, the fans can

decide on their own whether or not they participate. Sitting comfortably in front of the computer makes it easier for the individual participant to withdraw from the survey. If, for instance, participants would have been contacted before a home game at the Veltins-Arena, they would have been more likely to feel uncomfortable if they had been interviewed face-to-face. By offering the participants the possibility to voluntarily fill in the questionnaire, so-called "forced" participation can be removed, which is expected to improve the quality of the data.

Finally, as argued by Roberts (in Reynolds *et al.*, 2007), "electronic surveys and measures can be programmed to ensure respondents are asked only to respond to questions that are relevant to them (based on their previous responses)" (p.21). Hence, participants of this study did not have to answer all questions and different windows were opened in the introductory part that asked for general information depending on the place of residence. Such procedure allowed for differentiated responses which consequently simplified the analysis for the researcher by looking at different data sets (depending on place of residence).

5.2 MEASURES

The survey items have been newly developed as there were no comparable surveys available. Since the attitudes towards Schalke 04 were classified into different dimensions, the survey consisted of a total of seven parts (dimensions), apart from an introductory part which asked for general information. For each of these dimensions several statements were identified and measured by 5-point Likert scales (see example *Fig. 2*) as it is usual in place attachment research. According to Williams (2000) who frequently measured place attachment, "no one has used a seven point scale" (p.2).

Figure 2. Example of a typical row of statements

Please evaluate the following statements.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No answer
I find important that the club is financially sound.	O	O	O	O	O	O
I find it important that the club respects the FIFA financial fair play rules.	O	O	O	O	O	O
I find it important that the club is creating jobs in the region of Gelsenkirchen.	O	O	O	O	O	O

5.3 QUESTIONNAIRE ITEMS USED

Derby rivalries/competition. For measuring the fans' attitudes towards derby rivalries and national/European competition, four questionnaire items were chosen. These items were 'I find it important that Schalke win the Revierderby', 'I find it important that Schalke finish above BVB in the Bundesliga', 'I find it important that Schalke finish above FCB in the Bundesliga', and 'I find it important that Schalke are able to beat European top teams'.

Sponsors of the club. For measuring the fans' attitudes towards Schalke sponsor Gazprom, the four questionnaire items 'I find it important that the club does not sell its name like Red Bull Salzburg', 'I find it important that Gazprom is globally known', 'I find it important that Gazprom has a good link to Gelsenkirchen', and 'I find it important that Gazprom is not only investing in the club, but is also engaging in projects in the region' were chosen.

Financial performance. For measuring the fans' attitudes towards the club's financial performance, three questionnaire items were chosen. These items were 'I find it important that the club is financially sound', 'I find it important that the club respects the UEFA financial fair play rules', and 'I find it important that the club creates jobs in the region'.

Composition of the squad. For measuring the fans' attitudes towards the Schalke squad composition, the three questionnaire items 'I find it important that regional youngsters play for the first team', 'I find it important that the club is active in the transfer market and signs new superstars like Raul or Huntelaar', and 'I find it important that the club supports and develops the "Knappenschmiede" (youth academy)' were chosen.

Stadium. For measuring the fans' attitudes towards the Schalke stadium 'Veltins Arena' and its location, three questionnaire items were chosen. These are 'I find it important that the stadium of Schalke will always remain in Gelsenkirchen', 'I find it important that the stadium has a safe, unhostile, unthreatening atmosphere in all parts of the ground', and 'I find it important that the stadium has an exciting, tense and challenging atmosphere'.

Ticketing and media coverage. For measuring the fans' attitudes towards ticketing issues and media coverage, the two questionnaire items 'I find it important that I can afford to buy a ticket to see the games' and 'I find it important that I can afford a subscription to watch live games' were chosen.

Mission statement/club charter. For measuring the fans' attitudes towards the recently established mission statement, four questionnaire items were chosen. These are 'I find it important to adhere that the club is rooted at the "Schalker Markt"', 'I find it important that I am informed about Gelsenkirchen's past (Coal and steel…)', 'I find it important that the club's domicile shall always remain in Gelsenkirchen', and 'I find it important to adhere that the club is inextricably linked with Gelsenkirchen and the "Kohlenpott"'.

5.4 PRE-TEST

Before distributing the questionnaire, a pre-test with a group of Schalke fans (n=15) was conducted in order to check time specifications. The mean duration for filling in the questionnaire was 8.57 minutes (MIN = 5.47, MAX = 9.53,). The '5.47 response' was a strong outlier as all other participants of the pre-test indicated response duration between 8.30 and 10.00. It could be concluded that filling in the questionnaire takes no longer than eight to ten minutes.

Thus it was communicated to the recipients of the questionnaires that the participation demands not more than ten minutes. Notably, all participants of the pre-test were satisfied with the wording of the questionnaire and did not point to any lack of clarity.

5.5 SURVEY DISTRIBUTION

Following the design process for online questionnaires by Lumsden (in Reynolds *et al.*, 2007), the targeted participants were contacted via the mailinglist of the Schalke fan umbrella organization

SFCV (Schalker Fan Club Verband). Thus all officially registered Schalke fan clubs received an email from the SFCV board member Arthur Saager who pointed to the link of the web survey. In order to make non German-speaking fans participate as well, there was a link provided for an English version of the web survey, too. Consequently, all fan club chairmen (n≈1500) got an email with the survey links.

Since all fan clubs are registered with an email-account, both Internet access and computer literacy were no obstacles to successfully participate. The chairmen were further asked to forward the mail to their fan club's members. After two weeks, the link of the questionnaire was further distributed via the so-called 'social media' including posts on Schalke fanpages on Facebook.

After three weeks, an additional reminder was sent to all fan clubs via e-mail and all chairmen were asked once more to forward the e-mail to the fan club members. Moreover, all foreign fan clubs and fans that are registered on the SFCV webpage were contacted individually by email but the response rates for the English survey remained on a low level. One reason could be that a quite big number of the foreign fans understand German and therefore used the German version.

Three and a half weeks after sending around all e-mails and links, the number of daily responses decreased significantly. In consequence – and since no meaningful increase in response rates could be expected – the survey was closed after four weeks in total.

5.6 DESCRIPTIVES OF THE SAMPLE

5.6.1 SAMPLE

The respondents in this study were 412 Schalke fans. 59 respondents (14.3%) stated that their postcode begins with the numbers '45' as the postcodes of Gelsenkirchen begin with 45, and are labeled 'local fans, 334 respondents (81.1%) have another postcode and are labeled as 'distant fans', and 19 respondents (4.6%) live abroad. Hence that group represents the 'foreign' fans in this study.

The foreign respondents live in the following countries: Argentina (n=1), Austria (n=1), France (n=4), Great Britain (n=3), Italy (n=1), Luxembourg (n=3), Netherlands (n=3), Norway (n=1), Sweden (n=1), and Switzerland (n=1).

5.6.2 Self-characterization of the respondents

In order to develop an understanding of how the respondents would characterize themselves as fans, a question was raised at the beginning of the survey, confronting each respondent with six different statements (see *Table 1*) they could agree on. The reasoning behind this progress is the possibility to compare the respondents` self-evaluation with the empirical findings of the study.

It is hereby extremely striking – but at the same time not very surprising - that more than half of the local fans (55.4%) declare to identify with Gelsenkirchen and the broader Ruhr area, while only 22.1% of the distant fans and 15.8% of the foreign fans show strong identification with the Ruhr Area ('Kohlenpott'). This fact is concordant with the finding that about one fifth of distant and foreign fans indicate to support no other club than Schalke but cannot identify with Gelsenkirchen.

Contrarily, the majority of both distant and foreign fans agree with the statement to mainly follow the club`s games online or in TV. Beyond that, it is very remarkable that only 2.3% of all respondents list the stadium, the sporting successes, or the fact that Schalke recently purchased internationally well-known players as a reason for supporting Schalke 04.

Moreover, especially when taking into account the first two statements, it can be assumed that for a plurality of local fans from Gelsenkirchen the aspect that the club is located in their city plays a tremendous role. Since the majority of all respondents watches the games on the internet or TV, one can carefully expect a fan structure where the fan who identifies with Gelsenkirchen is more or less equally weighted with the fan who is following the games and events from a geographically distant place.

Most notably and as already stated – based on the respondents' self-characterization where only statement 1 would involve a strong feeling of place attachment as defined earlier – one can assume that place attachment and identification are much more relevant for local than for distant fans. This argument goes in compliance with a number of 18% of distant fans who explicitly state to not identify with Gelsenkirchen.

Table 1. Self-characterization

	Local fans	Distant fans	Foreign fans	Total
I love the city and the 'Kohlenpott' and I absolutely identify with Gelsenkirchen's past.	55,4%	22,1%	15,8%	26,5%
I really like Schalke but I am mainly watching the games on the internet or TV.	39,3%	56,2%	63,2%	54,1%
I cannot really identify with Gelsenkirchen, however, I do support no other club than Schalke.	1,8%	18,0%	21,1%	15,8%
I am mainly interesting in the amazing stadium and the great successes.	1,8%	1,6%	0,0%	1,5%
I am Schalke fan because they are purchasing stars like Raul or Klaas-Jan Huntelaar.	0,0%	0,9%	0,0%	0,8%
Berger Feld? Never Heard! I like Schalke but there are better things in life.	1,8%	1,3%	0,0%	1,3%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

6 DATA ANALYSIS

In order to test the predicted outcomes of the attitudes of local (postcode 45) and distant fans, each hypothesis was tested for a difference in the means with a Mann-Whitney U Test (see Appendix 3). The results of the Mann-Whitney U Tests for the chosen questionnaire items are reported in Appendix 4.

In addition, it was tested whether the outcomes would have differed if locals had been defined differently. For this purpose, the scope of local fans was extended to those postcodes beginning with 44-47 and 58-59, which follows a clear logic since 'local' covers all responses from the Ruhr Area. One could have argued that responses from the closed Rhine region ('Rheinland') should have been labeled 'local' as well but different authors (Dieleman & Faludi, 1998; Knapp, 1998; Blotevogel, 1998; van Houtum & Lagendijk, 2001) have brought forward the argument that the Rhine-Ruhr metropolitan region cannot be regarded as one entity.

According to Blotevogel (1998), "differences in mentality, sociocultural identity and dialect correspond with differences in political culture and voting patterns" (p.401). Among the inhabitants of the Rhine-Ruhr region, Knapp (1998) does not see "a strong common identity" (p.379), and Dieleman and Faludi (1998) report "no feeling of togetherness". Particularly due to

the differences in mentality and cultural identity it was decided to not include the Rhine region or other neighboring areas.

7   RESULTS

Based on α=0.05 (*), three hypotheses could be rejected by using a Mann-Whitney U Test. The inferences drawn are the following:

I.   Local fans find it more important to respect the UEFA financial fair play rules than distant fans.
II. Local fans find it more important that Schalke create jobs in the region than distant fans.
III. Local fans find it more important to adhere that Schalke is inextricably linked to Gelsenkirchen than distant fans.
IV. Local fans find it more important that the stadium has an exciting, tense and challenging atmosphere than distant fans.

There was no statistical evidence to reject the other null hypotheses (scientific hypotheses), which means that the differences in the mean between local and distant fans were not significant for these hypotheses.

For the tests of locals with a postcode beginning with 44-47 or 58-59 (labeled local new/distant), and based on α=0.05 (*), four null hypotheses could be rejected. The inferences drawn from the Mann-Whitney U Test are the following:

I.   Local fans find it more important that the club finishes above Borussia Dortmund.
II. Local fans find it more important that they can afford to buy tickets for the games.
III. Local fans find it more important to adhere that the club shall always remain in Gelsenkirchen.
IV. Local fans find it more important to adhere that Schalke is inextricably linked to Gelsenkirchen than distant fans.

Based on α=0.01 (**), one additional null hypothesis could be rejected. The inference drawn is the following:

I.   Distant fans find it important that club is purchasing 'superstars'.

Finally, and in addition to the main test series, it was tested whether there are differences in the attitudes of the participants living abroad and those living in Germany. For this purpose the

group variable 'Fans in Germany/Foreign fans' was introduced. It has to be taken into account that neither the dependent variables nor the hypotheses were changed.

Of course, it is hereby difficult to apply the place attachment conceptualization (local fans feel stronger attached to Gelsenkirchen) since the German fans cannot replace local fans equivalently as it was shown earlier that differences among fans in Germany exist. The tests, however, indicated that based on α=0.05 (*) four null hypotheses could be rejected. The inferences drawn are the following:

I.   Fans living in Germany find it more important that the club is financially sound.
II.   Fans living abroad find it more important that Schalke finish above Bayern München.
III.   Fans living abroad find it more important that Schalke are able to beat European top teams.
IV.   Fans living in Germany find it more important that the stadium has an exciting, tense and challenging atmosphere.

In addition, one variable that was excluded for the other tests, namely the possibility to watch the Schalke games online, showed a significant outcomce:

I.   Fans living abroad find it more important that they can watch Schalke games and/or highlights on the Internet.

A T Test replication approved the results provided by the Mann-Whitney U Test.

In the table below all inferences are reported.

Table 2. Overview inferences

Inference	Group Variable	Test	Significance
Local fans find it more important to respect the UEFA financial fair play rules than distant fans	Local / distant	Mann-Whitney	*
Local fans find it more important that Schalke create jobs in the region than distant fans	Local / distant	Mann-Whitney	*
Local fans find it more important to adhere that Schalke is inextricably linked to Gelsenkirchen than distant fans	Local / distant	Mann-Whitney	*
	Local new / distant	Mann-Whitney	*
Local fans find it more important that the club finishes above Borussia Dortmund	Local new / distant	Mann-Whitney	*
Local fans find it more important that they can afford to buy tickets for the games	Local new / distant	Mann-Whitney	*
Local fans find it more important to adhere that the club shall always remain in Gelsenkirchen	Local new / distant	Mann-Whitney	*
Distant fans find it important that club is purchasing 'superstars'	Local new / distant	Mann-Whitney	**
Local fans find it important that the stadium has an exciting, tense and challenging atmosphere	Local / distant	Mann-Whitney	*
	German / foreign	Mann-Whitney	*
Fans living in Germany find it more important that the club is financially sound	German / foreign	Mann-Whitney	*
Fans living abroad find it more important that Schalke finish above Bayern München	German / foreign	Mann-Whitney	*
Fans living abroad find it more important that Schalke are able to beat European top teams	German / foreign	Mann-Whitney	*
Fans living abroad find it more important that they can watch Schalke games and/or highlights on the Internet	German / foreign	Mann-Whitney	*

**- p<.01
*- p<.05

8 Discussion

8.1 Summary and analysis of the results

The primary purpose of this study was to develop a first understanding of potential differences among football fans and to set up a theoretical framework of place attachment in a football context that goes beyond the place attachment-stadium relationship (Charleston, 2009; Jones, 1997). The results allowed drawing four main conclusions about the differences between local and distant Schalke fans.

First, the study has found that local Schalke fans find it more important to respect the UEFA financial fair play rules than distant fans do. Although the rules are not in place yet, there is disagreement among Schalke fans about the rules' importance. Following Vöpel's (2011) argumentation, local fans show higher compliance with a harmonized European regulation system than distant fans do. So far, literature has not provided any reasons for such an outcome but it can be assumed that local fans that grew up in Gelsenkirchen do prioritize the club's financial soundness over potential successes and thereby appreciate strict regulations across Europe.

Second, it is further not very surprising that local fans find it more important that Schalke create jobs. As mentioned earlier, the club is one of the biggest employers in Gelsenkirchen and many fans not only support the Schalke, but are also employees of the club. Compared to fans who earn their money far away from the Ruhr district and who are not affected by the fragile labour market situation in the Ruhr district, locals do, as expected, rather realize the importance of Schalke 04 as a regionally big employer.

Third, paragraph 3 of the Schalke mission statement states the following: "The Schalker Markt is the cradle of our club. The way we see ourselves is shaped by our local and regional roots in the Ruhr. Therefore the club is and will remain based in Gelsenkirchen, the city of a thousand fires." This deep rootedness in Gelsenkirchen and the Ruhr is particularly shaped by local fans since they find it more important that Schalke as a club is inextricably connected with Gelsenkirchen, the city where the club was founded and where it is daily lived by its supporters. Similar to the finding that local fans find it important that Schalke create jobs, it is not very surprising that local fans put more emphasis on the statement that club and city are inseparable associated. When talking to football fans abroad or in other parts of Germany, many people are not aware of the fact that 'Schalke' is located in Gelsenkirchen; it even happens that Schalke is supposed to be a city. This phenomenon, however, is not likely to occur in the Ruhr, where people as locals can predominantly identify Gelsenkirchen as the Schalke base, even if they are not interested in football at all. A BBC article nicely illustrates the strong link between club, city, and fans since an

English supporter who came to Germany in the 1980s and is now working as a translator for the club, is cited: "Schalke is more than just a club, it is the fans, it is the city" (BBC Sport, 2011). The finding that locals feel stronger attached to Gelsenkirchen and evaluate the link between club and city as more important, goes in line with the respondents' self-characterization. While only 22 percent of the participating distant fans mentioned to identify with Gelsenkirchen, about 55 percent of local fans described identification with Gelsenkirchen as their main object to support Schalke. Hence self-characterization and empirical findings show similar tendencies.

Fourth, there is enough statistical evidence to say that local fans find it more important than distant fans that the Veltins-Arena has an exciting atmosphere. Atmosphere and safety issues are hereby not only very sensitive topics, but also very current. It can only be hypothesized why local fans find it more important than distant fans but, for instance, it can be assumed that the majority of distant fans find it less important because they wish to enjoy the Schalke games as an event where they feel safe and unthreatened. Throughout the Bundesliga, fans began to protest "against a number of repressive measures from the DFL" (The Guardian, 2012) at the end of 2012 as the well-known columnist Raphael Honigstein writes in his article. Very prominent became pyrotechnics that shall be banned from all Bundesliga stadia. The incidents did not stop at Schalke either as twenty flares forced a delayed second-half kick-off between Schalke and Eintracht Frankfurt. Police reports later mentioned that the majority of the sixty fans that were arrested belong to a supporters group from Gelsenkirchen. Of course, these happenings cannot be generalized to say that all local fans support pyrotechnics and other atmosphere-challenging instruments to feel excited but it might point to a tendency that such things are rather preferred by local fans.

The repeated tests with an extended definition of local fans generated only one equal finding, namely that local fans find it more important to adhere that club and city are closely linked, which shows that there is a strong tendency amongst fans in the region of Gelsenkirchen to stress the club's roots and that this feeling is significantly higher than for distant fans. It also proves that distant fans do not recognize a very big importance of Gelsenkirchen; one could argue that the club is the main objective and their target to be a Schalke fan, while local fans' support of the club is also based on a stronger regional identification. Doubtlessly, local fans feel stronger attached to Gelsenkirchen, regardless of whether they originate from Gelsenkirchen or the broader Ruhr. This goes in line with the outcome that local fans find it more important that the club shall always remain in Gelsenkirchen. Therefore, fans from the entire Ruhr district prioritize the club's roots in their city of birth as opposed to fans outside this industrial region that do not see such a necessity.

The results have further proven the assumption that the rivalry with Borussia Dortmund is of greater relevance for local fans who find it more important that Schalke finish above the arch-rival based only 40 kilometers from Gelsenkirchen. In contrast, fans living abroad find it more

important that Schalke 04 finishes above Bayern and is able to beat European top teams which leads to the conclusion that local fans from the Ruhr who are supposed to feel strongly attached to Gelsenkirchen and to experience the Ruhr rivalry, are more focused on successes over the regional opponent. Fans living abroad on the other hand focus on successes that gain attention outside Germany such as achievements in the UEFA Champions League or finishing above Bayern München as the internationally most recognized team. That corresponds with Heck *et al.*'s (2000) statement that the rivalry as it finds its climax in the Big Revier derbies developed "into and identity-forming media spectacle […] in the whole Ruhr region" (p. 2031).

8.2   The emergence of a 'global football fan'?

Finally, it shall be discussed in what way the results of this study comply with previous research. In the context of globalization, Giulianotti and Robertson (2004) labeled today's football clubs as TNCs that cut their strong links to the home locations and at the same time drive football's contemporary globalization. Jakobsen *et al.* (2009) described that as a one sided process towards geographical dis-embeddedness.

This study has empirically proven that these processes can indeed be observed when the perspective is deepened to the football fan who is attached to the place where his favourite football club is based. Most importantly, foreign fans show characteristics of a 'global' fan as their attitudes differ from those of local fans. They not only prioritize to finish above the dominant team of the league, but also find it important that European top teams in the respective UEFA competitions can be beaten. That consequently highlights the importance for fans abroad to keep competitiveness in the 'battle' for global honor and successes.

Although mentioned earlier, it has to be underlined that the possibility to follow games via broadcasting stations or Internet streaming has obviously paved the way for the emergence of a global fan who favours a certain team but has no local connections to the place where the club is located, or in other words, does not feel attached to this place. The comparison between Schalke fans from the Ruhr Area and those living abroad highlights that local fans find it more important that they are able to afford tickets to see the games live as opposed to foreign fans who prioritize the option to follow Schalke on the Internet.

Giulianotti and Robertson (2004) describe an industry that emerged to provide global football broadcastings and the study of Schalke fans has proven that football fans around the globe strongly appreciate and even depend on these cartels or Internet streaming. Based on this, it can be hypothesized that this global coverage stimulated the emergence of 'global' fans who feel attached to a club even though they might have never seen a game in the stadium.

So based on the study results, two archetypal types of fans can be distinguished. On the one hand we have the local fan who feels connected his club's city, who is deeply rooted in the struggles

with the local or regional rival, and who assesses the club's soundness over temporary sporting successes. The global fan, on the other hand, prioritizes the event character of the games, he prefers to follow the games either under safe circumstances in the stadium or at home, where he likes to celebrate in particular victories over the dominant national team or other European top teams in the UEFA Champions League. The archetypal local/global fan is presented in figure 3.

Figure 3. Two archetypal fan types
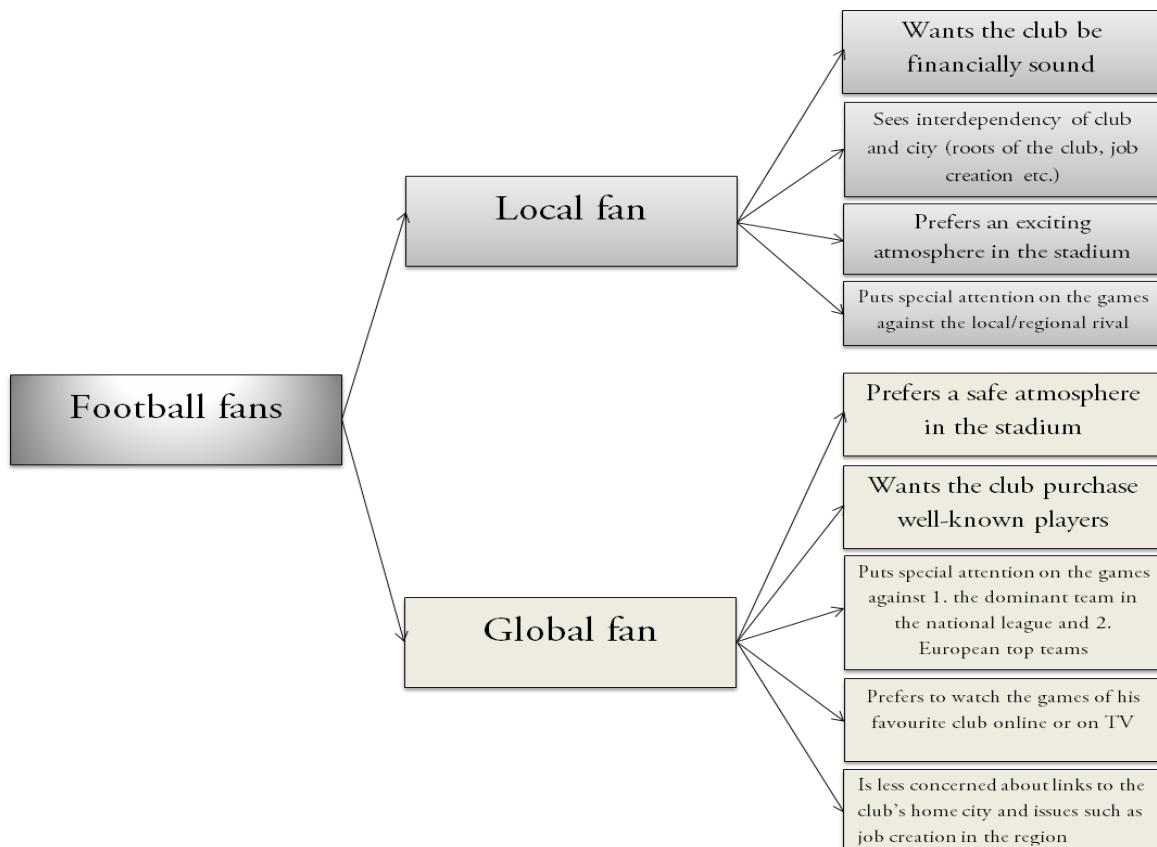
But does the emergence of a 'global' fan in turn mean that clubs are thus confronted with "a process towards dis-embeddedness" as assumed by Jakobsen *et al.* (2009)? Are clubs dis-embedding if they would respond to global fans?

There is certainly no simple 'yes or 'no' answer but the results of this study show some tendencies though. It cannot be denied that football clubs are confronted with some form of dis-embeddedness, as parts of the fan base do not have the local fan attachment to the place where the club is based. Previously, the fan was more dependent on place factors, which has changed over the years. However, and although tendencies of dis-embeddedness appear, the proven strong attachment of local fans outweighs the decreasing attachment and embeddedness of distant fans. But it is hereby indispensable that clubs do respond to the emergence of global fans.

In doing so, they have various options. An appropriate starting point is the establishment of roadshows. The clubs could send big trucks (similar to the well-known Coca-Cola-Truck) to agglomerations of global fans both in the country and abroad that stay in contact with the fans. The club is hereby represented and global fans get the possibility to keep in touch with their favourite club. From time to time, club staff and players could support the work around the truck in order to create a feeling of togetherness in the 'club family'; although the fans might not be able to attend games regularly, players and club remain thus 'touchable'. Roadshows should be conducted in particular in those cities of the away matches in the national leagues because away matches are often attended by distant fans that live nearby the place where the away match is played.

Another option big football clubs already make use of, are journeys to test matches abroad. For instance, Bayern Munich played a test match against the national team of India or Manchester United travels regularly to test matches in the United States. Especially the huge Asian market is of growing importance for clubs and specific marketing strategies are needed to respond to these global fans. As a response to these new challenges, the leading football clubs could also request the UEFA to take into account new venues for the finals of the Champions League or the Europa League. For example, in rugby

Different clubs (e.g. Schalke or Bayern) already arrange their training camps in strategically important countries as they go to Dubai in order to forge and intensify links. They usually invite fans and get into contact with them during certain events where the fans are able to meet the squad. This is an approach that still provides room for improvement since it is not only applicable for the big clubs but also for smaller clubs in professional football that can use their training camps to reach their distant fans.

Additionally and as already implemented by the leading clubs, the clubs' Internet representations have to be translated in more languages than just English in order to address and satisfy foreign fans from all over the globe.

As clubs need to respond to global fans, this implies that the fan community is changing. But how does that look like? It was earlier presumed that fans, who attend the home matches of their favourite team, can be regarded as an imagined community where the fans are united in their place attachment although they do not know each other.

Given that the global fan is mostly not able to travel to the club's home matches or even to away matches, this type of fan strongly depends on global ties. The internet is then supposed to be the most frequently used medium of communication or information exchange, in other words, global networks arise. Institutions such as fan clubs will certainly remain important for the community, but global networking will become the key for fan communities worldwide.

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10 APPENDIX

10.1 APPENDIX 1. BENEFITS AND DRAWBACKS OF E-SURVEY APPROACHES

Approach	Benefits	Drawbacks
Web-based (both solicited and non-solicited; *italicized applies to non-solicited only*)	Turnaround time (quick delivery and easy return) Ease of reaching large number of potential respondents Can use multiple question formats Data quality checking Ease of ensuring confidentiality Can provide customized delivery of items Can capture data directly in database	Time-consuming development Potential for limited access within target population Potential for technology problems to decrease return rate Security issues may threaten validity or decrease return rate *Lack of control over sample* *Potential for bias in sample*
Email- based (both embedded and attached	Turnaround time (quick delivery and easy return) Ease of reaching large number of potential respondents	Possibility of incompatible software Potential for limited access within target population Confidentiality issues may decrease return rate *Respondents comfort level with software and attachment process*
Point of contact	No software compatibility issues Fewer computer access issues Access to populations without computers Identical instrument across all respondents Technology available for multiple question formats Potential to capture data directly in database	Cost of equipment Scheduling time with respondents Finding acceptable location Potentially time-consuming development Potential for time consuming data collection effort May not be able to reach large sample

Source: Jansen et al. *(in Reynolds et al., 2007)*

10.2 APPENDIX 2. FAN CLUB MEMBERSHIP

		Local fans (n=56)		Distant fans (n=317)		Foreign fans (n=19)		Total number (n=392)	
		Count	% of Total	Count	% of Total	Count	% of Total	Count	% of Total
Registered in a fan club	Yes	32		175		7		214	
	No	24		142		12		178	
Size of the fan club	7-10	2	0,5%	6	1,5%	0	0,0%	8	2,0%
	10-20	5	1,3%	21	5,4%	0	0,0%	26	6,6%
	20-50	10	2,6%	48	12,2%	0	0,0%	58	14,8%
	50-100	6	1,5%	40	10,2%	2	0,5%	48	12,2%
	More than 100	5	1,3%	48	12,2%	3	0,8%	56	14,3%
	No answer	28	7,1%	154	39,3%	14	3,6%	196	50,0%

10.3 APPENDIX 3. OVERVIEW HYPOTHESES

Intuitive/natural hypothesis	Data point/ question	Form of response	Data that have	Relationship of two variables?	Scientific hypothesis
[SPO1] Beating Borussia Dortmund in the "Revierderby" is more important for local fans than it is for distant fans.	I find it important that Schalke win the Revierderby	Five-point Likert	BVB_{local} continuous [1,5] $BVB_{distant}$ continuous [1,5]	$EXP [BVB_{local}] > EXP [BVB_{distant}]$	The mean expectation for the local fans is not significantly greater than distant fans.
[SPO2] Finishing above Borussia Dortmund is more important to local fans, whilst finishing above Bayern Muenchen is more important to distant fans.	A combination of the two following questions. A AND B must be significant at ** or better.	Two statistical test results	$FBVB_{outcome}$ (significant or not) → (1,0) $FFCB_{outcome}$ (significant or not) → (1,0)	A AND B is true if ($FBVB_{outcome}$ is 1 AND $FFCB_{outcome}$ is 1)	A AND B is true.
	I find it important that Schalke finish above BVB in the Bundesliga.	Five-point Likert	$FBVB_{local}$ continuous [1,5] $FBVB_{distant}$ continuous [1,5]	$EXP [FBVB_{local}] > EXP [FBVB_{distant}]$	The mean expectation for the distant fans is not significantly lower than the local fans.
	I find it important that Schalke finish above FCB in the Bundesliga.	Five-point Likert	$FFCB_{local}$ continuous [1,5] $FFCB_{distant}$ continuous [1,5]	$EXP [FFCB_{local}] < EXP [FFCB_{distant}]$	The mean expectation for the distant fans is not significantly greater than the local fans.
[SPO3] Distant fans find it more important to beat European top teams than local fans.	I find it important that Schalke is able to beat European top teams.	Five-point Likert	ETT_{local} continuous [1,5] $ETT_{distant}$ continuous [1,5]	$EXP [ETT_{local}] < EXP [ETT_{distant}]$	The mean expectation for the distant fans is not significantly greater than local fans.

Intuitive/natural hypothesis	Data point/ question	Form of response	Data that have	Relationship of two variables?	Scientific hypothesis
[BR1] Among local fans, selling the club's name is no option, while distant fans are more open to that business.	I find it important that the club does not sell its name like Red Bull Salzburg.	Five-point Likert	NAM_{local} continuous [1,5] $NAM_{distant}$ continuous [1,5]	$EXP [NAM_{local}] > EXP [NAM_{distant}]$	The mean expectation for the local fans is not significantly greater than distant fans.
[BR2] Local fans prefer an indigenous local sponsor, while distant fans find it important that the sponsor is globally known.	I find it important that Gazprom is globally known.	Five-point Likert	SPO_{local} continuous [1,5] $SPO_{distant}$ continuous [1,5]	$EXP [SPO_{local}] < EXP [SPO_{distant}]$	The mean expectation for the local fans is not significantly lower than distant fans.
[BR3] Local fans find it more important that Gazprom has a good link to Gelsenkirchen than distant fans.	I find it important that Gazprom has a good link to Gelsenkirchen.	Five-point Likert	GLG_{local} continuous [1,5] $GLG_{distant}$ continuous [1,5]	$EXP [GLG_{local}] > EXP [GLG_{distant}]$	The mean expectation for the local fans is not significantly greater than distant fans.
[BR4] Local fans find it more important that Gazprom is engaging in projects in the region than distant fans.	I find it important that Gazprom is not only investing in the club, but is also engaging in projects in the region.	Five-point Likert	EIP_{local} continuous [1,5] $EIP_{distant}$ continuous [1,5]	$EXP [EIP_{local}] > EXP [EIP_{distant}]$	The mean expectation for the local fans is not significantly greater than distant fans.
[FIN1] The club's financial soundness is more important to local fans than it is to distant fans.	I find it important that the club is financially sound.	Five-point Likert	FIS_{local} continuous [1,5] $FIS_{distant}$ continuous [1,5]	$EXP [FIS_{local}] > EXP [FIS_{distant}]$	The mean expectation for the local fans is not significantly greater than distant fans.
[FIN2] Local fans find it more	I find it important that the club	Five-point Likert	FFP_{local} continuous	$EXP [FFP_{local}] > EXP [$	The mean expectation

Intuitive/natural hypothesis	Data point/ question	Form of response	Data that have	Relationship of two variables?	Scientific hypothesis
important to respect the UEFA financial fair play rules than distant fans.	respects the UEFA financial fair play rules.		$[1,5]$ $FFP_{distant}$ continuous $[1,5]$	$FFP_{distant}$]	for the local fans is not significantly greater than distant fans.
[FIN3] Local fans rather recognize the importance that Schalke 04 create jobs in the region than distant fans.	I find it important that the club creates jobs in the region.	Five-point Likert	JOB_{local} continuous $[1,5]$ $JOB_{distant}$ continuous $[1,5]$	EXP [JOB_{local}] > EXP [$JOB_{distant}$]	The mean expectation for the local fans is not significantly greater than distant fans.
[SQU1]Local fans find it important that regional youth players are integrated in the squad, whilst distant fans find it important that the club is active in the transfer market and signs new stars.	A combination of the two following questions. A AND B must be significant at ** or better.	Two statistical test results	$YOU_{outcome}$ (significant or not) → (1,0) $ATM_{outcome}$ (significant or not) → (1,0)	A AND B is true if ($YOU_{outcome}$ is 1 AND $ATM_{outcome}$ is 1)	A AND B is true.
	I find it important that regional youngsters play for the first team	Five-point Likert	YOU_{local} continuous $[1,5]$ $YOU_{distant}$ continuous $[1,5]$	EXP [YOU_{local}] > EXP [$YOU_{distant}$]	The mean expectation for the local fans is not significantly greater than distant fans.
	I find it important that the club is active in the transfer market and signs new superstars like Raul or Huntelaar.	Five-point Likert	ATM_{local} continuous $[1,5]$ $ATM_{distant}$ continuous $[1,5]$	EXP [JOB_{local}] < EXP [$JOB_{distant}$]	The mean expectation for the local fans is not significantly lower than distant fans.
[SQU2] Local fans find it more important that the club supports and develops the "Knappenschmiede" than distant fans.	I find it important that the club supports and develops the "Knappenschmiede" (youth academy).	Five-point Likert	SDK_{local} continuous $[1,5]$ $SDK_{distant}$ continuous $[1,5]$	EXP [SDK_{local}] > EXP [$SDK_{distant}$]	The mean expectation for the local fans is not significantly greater than distant fans.

Intuitive/natural hypothesis	Data point/ question	Form of response	Data that have	Relationship of two variables?	Scientific hypothesis
[STA1] Local fans find it more important that the location of the Schalke stadia will always remain in Gelsenkirchen than distant fans.	I find it important that the stadium of Schalke will always remain in Gelsenkirchen.	Five-point Likert	LST_{local} continuous [1,5] $LST_{distant}$ continuous [1,5]	$EXP [LST_{local}] > EXP [LST_{distant}]$	The mean expectation for the local fans is not significantly greater than distant fans
[STA2] Local fans prefer an exciting and possible edgy atmosphere in the Veltins-Arena, while distant fans prefer a safe and unthreatening atmosphere in all parts of the ground.	A combination of the two following questions. A AND B must be significant at ** or better.	Two statistical test results	$SUT_{outcome}$ (significant or not) → (1,0) $EXT_{outcome}$ (significant or not) → (1,0)	A AND B is true if ($SUT_{outcome}$ is 1 AND $EXT_{outcome}$ is 1)	A AND B is true.
	I find it important that the stadium has a safe, unhostile, unthreatening atmosphere in all parts of the ground.	Five-point Likert	SUT_{local} continuous [1,5] $SUT_{distant}$ continuous [1,5]	$EXP [SUT_{local}] < EXP [SUT_{distant}]$	The mean expectation for the distant fans is not significantly greater than local fans.
	I find it important that the stadium has an exciting, tense and challenging atmosphere.	Five-point Likert	EXT_{local} continuous [1,5] $EXT_{distant}$ continuous [1,5]	$EXP [EXT_{local}] > EXP [EXT_{distant}]$	The mean expectation for the distant fans is not significantly lower than local fans

Intuitive/natural hypothesis	Data point/ question	Form of response	Data that have	Relationship of two variables?	Scientific hypothesis
[TM1] Local fans find it more important that they can afford to buy tickets to see the Schalke games in the Veltins-Arena as opposed to distant fans who find it more important that they can afford a subscription to watch live games or that can watch highlights of Schalke games on the internet.	A combination of the two following questions. A AND B must be significant at ** or better.	Two statistical test results	$BTI_{outcome}$ (significant or not) $\rightarrow$ (1,0) $SUB_{outcome}$ (significant or not) $\rightarrow$ (1,0)	A AND B is true if ($BTI_{outcome}$ is 1 AND $SUB_{outcome}$ is 1)	A AND B is true.
	I find it important that I can afford to buy a ticket to see the games.	Five-point Likert	BTI_{local} continuous [1,5] $BTI_{distant}$ continuous [1,5]	EXP [BTI_{local}] > EXP [$BTI_{distant}$]	The mean expectation for the distant fans is not significantly lower than local fans.
	I find it important that I can afford a subscription to watch live games.	Five-point Likert	SUB_{local} continuous [1,5] $SUB_{distant}$ continuous [1,5]	EXP [SUB_{local}] < EXP [$SUB_{distant}$]	The mean expectation for the distant fans is not significantly greater than local fans.
[MIS1] Local fans find it more important to adhere that Schalke is rooted at the Schalker Markt than distant fans do.	I find it important to adhere that the club is rooted at the "Schalker Markt"	Five-point Likert	RSM_{local} continuous [1,5] $RSM_{distant}$ continuous [1,5]	EXP [RSM_{local}] > EXP [$RSM_{distant}$]	The mean expectation for the local fans is not significantly greater than distant fans.

Intuitive/natural hypothesis	Data point/ question	Form of response	Data that have	Relationship of two variables?	Scientific hypothesis
[MIS2] Local fans recognize the importance to be informed about Gelsenkirchen's "coal and steel past", while distant fans do not have this attachment to the region and do not recognize the necessity to be informed about Gelsenkirchen's past.	I find it important that I am informed about Gelsenkirchen's past (Coal and steel…).	Five-point Likert	IGP_{local} continuous [1,5] $IGP_{distant}$ continuous [1,5]	$EXP [IGP_{local}] > EXP [IGP_{distant}]$	The mean expectation for the local fans is not significantly greater than distant fans.
[MIS3] Compared to distant fans, local fans find it more important to adhere that the club is and will remain based in Gelsenkirchen.	I find it important that the club's domicile shall always remain in Gelsenkirchen.	Five-point Likert	CDG_{local} continuous [1,5] $CDG_{distant}$ continuous [1,5]	$EXP [CDG_{local}] > EXP [CDG_{distant}]$	The mean expectation for the local fans is not significantly greater than distant fans.
[MIS4] Local fans find it important to adhere that the club is inextricably linked with Gelsenkirchen, while distant fans do not see the necessity.	I find it important to adhere that the club is inextricably linked with Gelsenkirchen and the "Kohlenpott".	Five-point Likert	CLG_{local} continuous [1,5] $CLG_{distant}$ continuous [1,5]	$EXP [CLG_{local}] > EXP [CLG_{distant}]$	The mean expectation for the local fans is not significantly greater than distant fans.

10.4 APPENDIX 4. TESTING THE HYPOTHESES

#	Scientific hypothesis	Mean local fans (postcode 45)	Mean distant fans	Mann Whitney U	Significant at	Inference drawn
(SPO1) Beating Borussia Dortmund in the "Revierderby" is more important for local fans than it is for distant fans.	The mean expectation for the local fans is not signifantly greater than distant fans.	4.63	4.71	10370,0	-	There is no significant difference in the attitudes of local and distant fans towards a victory over the BVB.
[SPO2] Finishing above Borussia Dortmund is more important to local fans, whilst finishing above Bayern Muenchen is more important to distant fans.	A AND B is true.	-	-	-	-	There is no significant difference in the attitudes of local and distant fans towards finishing above the FCB and the BVB.
	The mean expectation for the distant fans is not significantly lower than the local fans.	4.35	4.39	9743,5	-	
	The mean expectation for the distant fans is not significantly greater than the local fans.	3.61	3.48	9468,5	-	
[SPO3] Distant fans find it more important to beat European top teams than local fans.	The mean expectation for the distant fans is not significantly greater than local fans.	4.05	4.09	10336,5	-	There is no significant difference in the attitudes of local and distant fans towards the importance of beating European top teams.

#	Scientific hypothesis	Mean local fans (postcode 45)	Mean distant fans	Mann Whitney U	Significant at	Inference drawn
[BR1] Among local fans, selling the club's name is no option, while distant fans are more open to that business.	The mean expectation for the local fans is not significantly greater than distant fans.	4.60	4.73	9983,5	-	There is no significant difference in the attitudes of local and distant fans towards the option of selling the club's name.
[BR2]Local fans prefer an indigenous local sponsor, while distant fans find it important that the sponsor is globally known.	The mean expectation for the local fans is not significantly lower than distant fans.	2.88	3.07	9262,0	-	There is no significant difference in the attitudes of local and distant fans towards the importance of having a globally known sponsor.
[BR4] Local fans find it more important that Gazprom is engaging in projects in the region than distant fans.	The mean expectation for the local fans is not significantly greater than distant fans.	4.03	4.11	10058,5	-	There is no significant difference in the attitudes of local and distant fans towards the importance hat Gazprom is engaging in projects in Gelsenkirchen.
[FIN1] The club's financial soundness is more important to local fans than it is to distant fans.	The mean expectation for the local fans is not significantly greater than distant fans.	4.35	4.45	9353,0	-	There is no significant difference in the attitudes of local and distant fans towards the importance that the club is financially sound.

#	Scientific hypothesis	Mean local fans (postcode 45)	Mean distant fans	Mann Whitney U	Significant at	Inference drawn
[FIN2] Local fans find it more important to respect the UEFA financial fair play rules than distant fans.	The mean expectation for the local fans is not significantly greater than distant fans.	4.31	4.27	8650,0	*	Local fans find it more important to respect the UEFA financial fair play rules than distant fans.
[FIN3] Local fans rather recognize the importance that Schalke 04 create jobs in the region than distant fans.	The mean expectation for the local fans is not significantly greater than distant fans.	4.46	4.20	8381,0	*	Local Fans find it more important that Schalke create jobs in the region than distant fans.
[SQU1] Local fans find it important that regional youth players are integrated in the squad, whilst distant fans find it important that the club is active in the transfer market and signs new stars.	A AND B is true.	-	-		-	There is no significant difference in the attitudes of local and distant fans towards the importance that regional youngsters play for Schalke and that the club is active in the transfer market.
	The mean expectation for the local fans is not significantly greater than distant fans.	4.63	4.54	9560,0	-	
	The mean expectation for the local fans is not significantly lower than distant fans.	3.70	3.70	10416,0	-	

#	Scientific hypothesis	Mean local fans (postcode 45)	Mean distant fans	Mann Whitney U	Significant at	Inference drawn
[SQU2] Local fans find it more important that the club supports and develops the "Knappenschmiede" than distant fans.	The mean expectation for the local fans is not significantly greater than distant fans.	4.60	4.55	9986,0	-	There is no significant difference in the attitudes of local and distant fans towards the importance of developing the "Knappenschmiede".
[STA1] Local fans find it more important that the location of the Schalke stadia will always remain in Gelsenkirchen than distant fans.	The mean expectation for the local fans is not significantly greater than distant fans	4.92	4.91	10417,5	-	There is no significant difference in the attitudes of local and distant fans towards the importance that the stadia of Schalke 04 will always be in Gelsenkirchen.
[STA2] Local fans prefer an exciting and possible edgy atmosphere in the Veltins-Arena, while distant fans prefer a safe and unthreatening atmosphere in all parts of the ground.	A AND B is true.	-	-		-	A and B is not true. However, there is statistical evidence that local fans find it more important that the Veltins-Arena has a tense and challenging atmosphere. Such evidence cannot be found for distant fans to find it more important that the Veltins-Arena has a safe and unthreatening atmosphere.
	The mean expectation for the distant fans is not significantly lower than local fans	4.60	4.28	8802,0	*	

#	Scientific hypothesis	Mean local fans (postcode 45)	Mean distant fans	Mann Whitney U	Significant at	Inference drawn
	The mean expectation for the distant fans is not significantly greater than local fans.	4.28	4.36	9904,5	-	
[TM1] Local fans find it more important that they can afford to buy tickets to see the Schalke games in the Veltins-Arena as opposed to distant fans who find it more important that they can afford a subscription to watch live games.	A AND B is true.	-	-		-	There is no significant difference in the attitudes of local and distant fans towards the importance of being able to afford to buy buy tickets to see Schalke games live and there is no significant difference in the attitudes of local and distant fans towards the importance of being able to afford a subscription to watch live games.
	The mean expectation for the distant fans is not significantly lower than local fans.	4.77	4.75	10423,0	-	
	The mean expectation for the distant fans is not significantly greater than local fans.	3.58	3.54	9831,5	-	
[MIS1] Local fans find it more important to adhere that Schalke are rooted at the Schalker Markt than distant fans do.	The mean expectation for the local fans is not significantly greater than distant fans.	4.73	4.67	9921,5	-	There is no significant difference in the attitudes of local and distant fans towards the importance of adhering that Schalke are rooted at the Schalker Markt.

#	Scientific hypothesis	Mean local fans (postcode 45)	Mean distant fans	Mann Whitney U	Significant at	Inference drawn
[MIS2] Local fans recognize the importance to be informed about Gelsenkirchen's "coal and steel past", while distant fans do not have this attachment to the region and do not recognize the necessity to be informed about Gelsenkirchen's past.	The mean expectation for the local fans is not significantly greater than distant fans.	3.95	3.84	9342,0	-	There is no significant difference in the attitudes of local and distant fans towards the importance of being informed about Gelsenkirchen's past.
[MIS3] Compared to distant fans, local fans find it more important to adhere that the club is and will remain based in Gelsenkirchen.	The mean expectation for the local fans is not significantly greater than distant fans.	4.88	4.82	9764,5	-	There is no significant difference in the attitudes of local and distant fans towards the importance of adhering that Schalke are and will always be based in Gelsenkirchen.
[MIS4] Local fans find it important to adhere that the club is inextricably linked to Gelsenkirchen, while distant fans do not see the necessity.	The mean expectation for the local fans is not significantly greater than distant fans	4.78	4.63	9204,5	*	Local fans find it more important to adhere that Schalke is inextricably linked to Gelsenkirchen.

***- $p < .001$
**- $p < .01$
*- $p < .05$

11 REFLECTION

As place attachment and attributes were for the first time investigated empirically within a distinct football context, this study was able to show the relevance of the topic and contributed to future research. For the first time, a 'global fan' was identified and the dis-embeddedness of clubs was studied with football fans as the main subject.

It has to be noted that the findings of this study might have limitations in terms of generalizability. The respondents were predominantly committed football fans who are regularly engaging for Schalke (in their respective fan clubs) or regularly view Schalke fan sites on the Internet. They are self-selected and might hence differ from the entire population.

Moreover, the items were created from the author solely for the purpose of this study and were not derived from previous research. After having conducted this study, one can though suggest that the wording of the statements still has to be improved as the respondent is just confronted with importance statements. Paraphrasing them in a different way would allow to cover additional aspects of place attachment; most importantly they should go beyond descriptive aspects. Hence it could be investigated why fans have certain attitudes as this study only covered the question of whether differences in attitudes exist.

Future studies could thus investigate the motives of football fans to feel attached to a certain place or city, or they add new aspects of the 'global fan' which seems to be rapidly growing phenomenon boosted by global media coverage. As football fans of only one football club were asked to participate, future comparative studies need to clarify the extent to which the findings of this study can ultimately be generalized.

To finally conclude, this study was a good starting point to investigate fan attachment, since it was able to show that the attitudes between local and distant fans in fact differ. These differences enabled the author to carefully identify a global fan but broad generalizations are difficult and need to be proven in future studies.