

## **Glocal Football-Imaginations. The ‘2014 FIFA World Cup Winner’s Trophy’ and ‘Real Madrid’ visit to German towns**

This paper sets out to analyse the meaning and relevance of modernization strategies for football clubs in Germany (*Fußballvereine*). The paper focusses therefore on those media enactments and disseminations of professional football which are being reflected on and referred to at lower levels of German football. The analysis of these modernizing tendencies in German local football will be guided by the following questions. How are different levels of the local, national and global interconnected? How are modernizing processes in German football amateur clubs set up and carried out, and, at the same time, reconciled with traditions and local entrenchment? Such an approach presents a perspective on ways in which local community building takes place in the context of various *soccer imaginaries*. In line with Langenohl and Appadurai it will be argued that the activities within a local football club network allow us to understand the dynamics of localization and transnational frames of action and interpretation.

Using the example of two events which directly link the amateur level with the professional level, the paper seeks to address both professional and amateur/local football within a comprehensive and comparative analytical framework, arguing that grassroots football cannot be regarded as a separate and local phenomenon. However, at the same time specific local practices and self-perceptions still remain (including elements of particular values, traditions and myths) and these may well continue to strongly influence local club life despite modernization strategies. The paper starts from the assumption that these references are not necessarily in conflict with one another. Indeed, the main hypothesis expresses the belief that local clubs may be helped to re-define their own club identity/boundaries by increasingly taking part in cultural circulations of professional football.

The analytical focus is on the so called *Ehrenrunde* (Lap of Honour) organized by the DFB (German Football Association) and participated in by German local clubs, as well as the „Real Madrid Foundation Clinics, Germany“ which works according to the same principle. Through the introduction of the Ehrenrunde the DFB is offering 63 selected amateur clubs the opportunity to present the „2014 FIFA World Cup Winners Trophy“ for one day on their premises. The „Real Madrid Foundation Clinics, Germany“ are five-day football camps taking

place in over 120 German amateur clubs for children aged seven to fourteen, and officially organized by the famous Spanish football club.

The strategy being adopted here is to dissect implicit understandings of the local, the national and the global circulating in German amateur football, which are never expressed directly and explicitly by the participants involved but are nonetheless clearly visible because the practices that carry them are *public*.