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"Heute schreiben wir Geschichte!"

Exploring St. Pauli through the lens of football and the analytical concept Paulitics

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Abstract

This article builds on findings from the Frascati funded project, "Pedagogy in Civil Society Contexts." Through unstructured conversations, semi-structured interviews, and field walks with local social workers and individuals at FC St. Pauli, we explore the St. Pauli area in Hamburg. We argue that the place and people of St. Pauli embody unique values, ideas, and norms, collectively termed "Paulitics".

The first half of the article provides an ethnographic account of a match day between HSV and St. Pauli, highlighting the emotional aftermath and the roles of social workers. The second half zooms out to focus on the people, values, and area of St. Pauli, emphasizing the ever-present nature of the football club's inclusive and anti-authority belief system.

Schlagwörter: Social Pedagogy, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Football Community, Ethnographic Research, Social Inclusion, Community Engagement

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Introduction

This article builds on the research findings from the Frascati funded research project: “*Pedagogy in Civil Society Contexts - Social and Recreational Pedagogical Interventions and Social Value Creation in Football Organizational Frameworks*”. Through spontaneous, unstructured conversations, semi-structured interviews, neighbourhood field walks with local social workers, and individuals in more formal positions within football club St. Pauli FC we explore the area of St. Pauli in Hamburg to gain valuable insights into the life world of the people living there and the social pedagogical and social work interventions that takes place there. Throughout this article we furthermore aim to argue that the place and the people of St. Pauli seem to possess certain set of values, ideas and norms that penetrates every little nook and cranny of the place as well as inhabiting the very bodies and minds of the people living and working there. With a collective term we call those values, ideas and norms *Paulitics*.

In the first half, this article takes the reader to match day between HSV and St. Pauli. It’s the most important match in the history of St. Pauli, as we learn. This part is written like an ethnography, taking its reader through police line-ups, on trains and buses to secret meeting places, on a march, to the stadium, and at the match, ending with the post-match reactions from the visiting St. Pauli fans. The post-match scene vividly illustrates the emotional aftermath of a high-stakes football match, highlighting the profound impact on both fans and social workers. The stark contrast between the earlier vibrant atmosphere and the ensuing silence underscores the depth of disappointment felt by the St. Pauli supporters. This section will explore the roles of social workers in managing crowd dynamics and providing emotional support, illustrating the broader social responsibilities intertwined with sporting events. Through this lens, the article will examine the multifaceted nature of fan engagement and community support in the context of high-stakes football matches.

The last half of the article aims to zoom out from the ethnographic tour of the away game match day and focus more on the people, the values and the area of St. Pauli in itself. This does not exclude the football club at all, in that as the brand, the logo and the core set of left-leaning, inclusive and anti-authority belief system of the football club seem to have an ever-present nature of the area.

Project Background

Through ethnographic fieldwork in and around FC St. Pauli, Hamburg, this project explores the social and leisure pedagogical efforts carried out by the club. We explore the socialization processes of the youth who engage with these efforts and the club's societal social value creation. Additionally, we explore how football clubs, as private enterprises, employ social and leisure pedagogical interventions as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) strategy. This includes exploring the unique influence of the football community on local society and understanding how partnerships between private, civil, and public actors function, focusing on both social and economic value creation. We also investigate the opportunities for participation offered to these actors and the extent to which these opportunities promote democratic engagement among the youth. Our overall research question is:

How do traces of social and leisure pedagogical intervention forms appear in private football organizations' CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) work, and what significance do these have for the football clubs' social and societal anchoring in local communities?

Project Relevance and Potential Findings

Football clubs such as FC St. Pauli transcend their roles as mere sports organisations, functioning as cultural institutions that significantly influence the identity and values of young individuals. At St. Pauli Fanladen – the fan leisure club found at their home ground Millerntor social workers, who you will later meet throughout this article, engage in dedicated pedagogical work with diverse fan groups, particularly the youth, to mitigate social exclusion and foster inclusion. By embedding Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) into their fundamental operations, football clubs like FC St. Pauli exemplify their dedication to social responsibilities, thereby contributing to the local community through various social initiatives. Collaborations between football clubs and other stakeholders seem to drive innovation and social transformation, creating unusual opportunities for young people to engage with societal issues and enhance their sense of agency and citizenship.

This project endeavours to provide comprehensive insights into the design and implementation of social work and pedagogical interventions from the viewpoint of a professional football club. It aims to broaden our understanding of social work and pedagogy, and their adaptation to diverse cultural and organizational contexts. The project will investigate the interplay between CSR strategies and pedagogical practices, contributing to the body of knowledge on integrating social objectives into business strategies. Furthermore, it will examine the distinctive impact of football communities on local societies, the efficacy of partnerships in generating social and economic value, and the role of educational programs in combating social exclusion and promoting inclusion, particularly among marginalized youth.

Additionally, the project will generate new knowledge regarding the societal role of football clubs and their unique influence on local cultures, communities of values, and norms. It will provide insights into how these entities cultivate collective identity, a sense of belonging, and connection among youth and their local environment.

Wem gehört die Stadt? – Die Machtfrage and the ethnography of the St. Pauli social workers

The question in the headline above is taken from the 3. May edition of the newspaper *Hamburger Morgenpost*. 3. May 2024 marks the day that St. Pauli FC may return to the 1. division of the Bundesliga. With an away game-win over arch-rivals from Hamburger Sportsverein later this evening the St. Pauli could secure their first season in the top liga for the first time in 12 years. We were there on the day and we followed three of the St. Pauli FC social workers at work from their meet-up with St. Paulis stadium Millerntor in the heart of St. Pauli, Hamburg, through S-bahn and bus rides, the march towards Volksparkstadion, where the white- and blue-clad archrivals from HSV (Hamburger Sportsverein) could be the only hurdle on St. Pauli FC's way to glory and a new season within the best German national league system.

"This... is the most important match in the history of St. Pauli!", Johann, a St. Pauli FC social worker from Fanladen assures me as we meet up in front of the Millerntor at 14.30 on matchday. We have agreed to follow the three social workers Johann, Daniela and Rudi on their way to Volksparkstadion with some stops along the way. These following paragraphs serves as a testimony of the ethnography of the St. Pauli social workers and their everyday work life.

In front of Millerntor Stadium, 26 large police vans are lined up, creating a noticeable presence. Small groups of fans are gathered near the Fanladen, each group representing different fan factions. Among them, some Ultras are planning to cycle to a secret meeting place, a detail unknown to the police, I later learn. The total number of fans is around 150. Many more are joining a common fan march towards the stadium, we later learn.

The atmosphere is tense, with gray clouds hanging overhead. The scene feels charged with anticipation and unease. I approach and ask, "It's tense today, yeah?" trying to capture the mood of the moment. *"Oh, you think?"*, Rudi laughs rather uneasy, as he hands us our accreditation badges from HSV in a St. Pauli FC keyhanger. With them we are allowed inside the away-game host-stadion at HSV.

The line of 26 large police vans highlights the authorities' readiness, while the small groups of fans near the Fanladen show the different factions within the fan community. Among these groups, the Ultras are planning to meet up secret meeting point, we learn, a detail unknown to the police.

As more fans join the march towards the stadium, the atmosphere becomes more tense, we would later learn. The grey clouds overhead seem to add to the sense of unease and anticipation, if this is not just a mere coincidence.

This moment not only highlights the tensions but also the somewhat unique social rituals within the fan culture. There is a lot at stake tonight. Not only for St. Pauli FC as a football club looking to test themselves against better opponents in the Bundesliga 1, and earn more money to the club, but also for the brand of the club. Even more is seemingly at stake for the fans and the local residents of St. Pauli – two groups who more often than not share the same members. For them this is about their identity as fans and local supporters of the values and ideas framed within the brand value of the club. This is about demonstrating and establishing the values of the St. Pauli area in a direct showdown with the white- and blue-clad side of Hamburg, where HSV resides. It is identity, football and feeling in a big melting pot at the same time. It is Die Machtfrage - Wem gehört die Stadt?

Scene: Millerntor – Landungsbrücken

We walk with Johann, Daniela, and Rudi from Millerntor towards the S-Bahn station Landungsbrücken. On the way, we pass under a large bridge. Johann tells me that several homeless people usually seek shelter under the bridge at night. Therefore, the authorities wanted to install a fence to prevent them from sleeping there. This led to such significant protests from the local residents that the plans for the fence were abandoned.

When we arrive at Landungsbrücken, we are met by at least 100 combat-dressed officers with batons, pistols in their belts, and full protective armor extending down over their boots. They all wear helmets with visors and are strategically spread out over the station. We are told that the police expect a large group of local St. Pauli fans to take the train from here. However, these plans have been changed last minute by the fan groups. I know this because the social workers know it. They say nothing to the police, though. Additionally, the officers present at the station are from the federal police. *“You can tell by the license plates on their cars, which start with certain letters”*, Johann lectures me. The police’s large vans are parked wherever there is space up against the station.

“We are going to buy water at the station. A pro-tip, as the water at the stadium is too expensive”, says Rudi. I grab an Evian without looking, and all three look at me. They buy some cheaper water themselves. I want to ask about the ticket for the S-Bahn. *“We don’t need to worry about that. We just say that we have a ticket, which we have just happened to forget, if inspectors come on the trains”*. But there won’t be any on match days like this, I am told. Another pro-tip.

“*We must remember a selfie on the train*”, Daniela says to Johann, as she takes out her phone from her purse and finds selfie-mode. “*This day could become memorable.*”

As we settle into our seats on the train, the vivid scenes from Landungsbrücken lingers in our minds. The sight of the combat-dressed officers, the strategic positioning of the federal police, and the bustling activity around the station painted a complex picture of urban life. Johann’s detailed explanations about the police and the local protests against the fence under the bridge highlighted the complex social dynamics at play. With our water bottles in hand and a sense of anticipation in the air, we prepare for the next chapter of our journey:

The S-Bahn trip from Landungsbrücken to Othmarschen is where many St. Pauli fans have agreed to meet. From there, shuttle buses are planned to drive everyone towards Volksparkstadion – the home ground of the local rivals from HSV.

Scene: At the S-Bahn station Othmarschen.

We emerge into a swarm of St. Pauli fans, standing and drinking beer in large clusters, waiting for the shuttle buses to the stadium. The three social workers stick together. Rudi takes charge, organizing the groups, and each of them contacts several people in each cluster. As more fans arrive, we eventually gather over 500 strong. Rudi assesses which police forces have shown up. “*You wouldn’t know, but we need to get an overview of which fan groups are here... People are tense... feeling nervous. Both active fans and...*”, “*... and the ordinary people?*”, I finish his sentence. “*Yes. That’s a good way to put it...*” He walks with Johann to a row of parked police cars on the edge of the crowd. Here, 9-10 police officers stand, talking quietly together. Rudi asks the nearest officer who is leading the effort and is directed to a man in his fifties, who greets him politely. Rudi gives him his business card, offering help if needed. The officer thanks him and puts the card in one of his uniform pockets. The police want to know the plans for the fans from here. Rudi admits he doesn’t know, saying, “*I kind of have to lie...*”, he confides in me. It’s part of the game between the police and the club’s employees.

I notice that none of the police officers interact with the fans. “*The police are never in contact with the fans. Never ever.*” Only two small teams of three officers each talk, smile, and joke around with the fans. They are dressed differently, in more relaxed blue shirts and blue cover vests with “communication team” on the back. “*They usually know nothing... But they are nice,*” says Rudi.

Daniela is also there to watch over some of the younger fans under 18, so when she spots a few familiar faces in the crowd, she greets them with a smile, as she has some informal and kind talks with them.

Suddenly, three HSV fans in white and blue football jerseys and blue, black, and white HSV scar-

ves appear, mingling with the crowd of over 500 St. Pauli fans. My eyes meet Daniela's in a shared look of concern. The few St. Pauli fans who notice them give them hard stares as they weave their way through the crowd, as the tension builds. The HSV fans look down and laugh as they make their way towards a bus. A few St. Pauli fans sporting a brown home-jersey or a Totenkopf-t-shirt pad the HSV fans on their back and engage in some banter songs. Everybody smiles. The fans continue to talk football and drink beer, often bought from more or less legal beer vendors selling cold Astra beer from a delivery bike or the back of the often times rather beat up van. We are waiting for some shuttle buses to take us from Othmarschen to Volksparkstadion.

The scene at the S-Bahn station Othmarschen sum up the tough dynamics of football fandom and the social structures that emerge within it. As St. Pauli fans assemble, the presence of social workers like Rudi and Daniela make efforts to maintain order and provide support in a tense social environment. The interaction between fans and police, or rather the lack thereof, underscores the complex relationship between authority and community within this subculture. The brief appearance of HSV fans introduces a moment of potential conflict, yet the situation is diffused through informal social interactions and shared rituals, such as banter and beer drinking. This scene talks of the broader social processes at play, where identity, rivalry, and community co-exist in a subtle balance. As we transition to the next scene, we carry forward an understanding of these underlying tensions and the mechanisms through which they are managed.

In the Shuttle Buses:

After a delay of more than 30 minutes, the shuttle buses finally arrive, and we find ourselves squeezing into a tightly packed crowd. The bus is filled to capacity, with the doors barely able to close. Our group is split in half, forcing some of us to wait for the next bus. The atmosphere is both high-spirited and claustrophobic as we stand closely together. Despite the doors being closed, the bus remains stationary, causing impatience to grow among the fans crammed inside.

It becomes apparent that there is an issue with the doors, preventing the bus from moving. A couple of people open the middle door, providing a brief respite of fresh air, though it is short-lived. After a few bangs, the door closes again, and the bus finally starts moving. The majority of the fans erupt in loud cheers as the bus gets underway. From the back, chants of "HSV ist Scheiss!" begin to ripple through the bus.

Before reaching our destination, the bus comes to a halt, and we, along with approximately 80-100 fans, are let out in the midst of a larger march towards the stadium. We still have several kilometres to walk, and we find ourselves deep in HSV territory, an area not intended for the many St. Pauli fans. The police are conspicuously absent, prompting the three social workers to check their phones, make a series of calls, and coordinate with their colleagues who have already arri-

ved at Volksparkstadion. “*This situation is far from ideal*,” Johann remarks, in a voice that mirrors his seriousness and his idea of the whole situation.

After the bus had to drop us off earlier than planned, we find ourselves walking towards the stadium, now in the middle of the fan march. It feels like a collective walk or protest march towards the stadium, we notice. We never find out what the march is meant to signify.

On the Way to the Stadium:

We begin our walk towards the stadium from a completely different part of Hamburg than where we started. While St. Pauli is characterized by its diverse and left-leaning identity, the area near Volksparkstadion is marked by tall, anonymous buildings, corporate headquarters, and a large green park through which our march leads us. A helicopter hovers overhead as local beer vendors sell more or less cold Astra beers from cargo bikes and out of the backs of well-used vans along our route. We are several thousand strong, with many carrying signs that read “Suche ticket”.

Johann spots a car with a smashed windshield parked along the wide avenue leading up to the forest we must pass through to get closer to Volksparkstadion. He takes a picture of it with his phone, perhaps for future reference. I notice a significant amount of HSV and St. Pauli graffiti on signs, utility boxes, and building facades. Among them are orange stickers from the diversity bar Ramba Samba in St. Pauli, which, among many others, has decorated part of St. Pauli FC’s home ground, Millerntor, in the Millerntor Gallery section with their art.

The social workers maintain constant contact with their colleagues around the city, who are strategically placed with other groups of fans. Coordination and management of the groups are crucial to prevent encounters with HSV fans. The social workers’ eyes are vigilant, monitoring everything and everyone.

As the march progresses through the diverse landscape of the city of Hamburg, the role of the social workers becomes increasingly crucial, we learn. Their constant vigilance and strategic communication seem crucial in navigating the complex social landscape. We found that the social workers act as mediators, ensuring that the St. Pauli fans remain cohesive and avoid potentially troublesome encounters with HSV supporters. Their presence seemingly provides a sense of security and order within the chaotic energy of the fan march. As we approach the stadium, their efforts to coordinate and manage the fan groups underscore the subtle balance between maintaining enthusiasm and preventing conflict as they navigate complex unforeseen social encounters. This careful orchestration by the social workers seems to be a crucial part of the work on matchdays and on the day it sets the stage for our arrival at Volksparkstadion, where the atmosphere intensifies:

Arriving at the Stadium:

As we arrive at the stadium, the three social workers and I must squeeze past a tightly packed group of St. Pauli fans, entering through an iron gate a few at a time. With fans behind us and a line of police in front, we inch our way towards the steel gate. The police, clad in combat gear with balaclavas, helmets with visors, knee and shin guards, gloves, and body armor, present a formidable presence. Rudi glances at them and later remarks, *“That... is a little too much show of force.”*

Everyone undergoes a mandatory security check, with tifos, banners, and signs inspected by a specific group of controllers at the “material check.” A banner becomes problematic upon closer inspection, I notice as we wait at a fence. We discreetly approach the security guard along the fence before reaching the gate. After some persuasion, we are allowed through the iron gate due our accreditation badges, worn around our necks on St. Pauli lanyards featuring the famous Totenkopf logo that seem to grant us early entry. The remaining 5,000 St. Pauli away fans must wait behind us. The social workers from Fanladen had provided these badges, hours before when we met a Millerntor, thus gaining us access.

After a thorough search by the controllers, the social workers engage with several groups of fans. Jan coordinates the traveling fans with reduced mobility, assigning them to a special section of the stadium. *“Clubs are not well prepared for special needs people,”* he tells us.

We find that the scene at the stadium entrance shows a lot about the social dynamics in modern football culture. The mix of excited St. Pauli fans and the heavily armoured police highlights the tension between fan enthusiasm and strict security measures. This tension reflects a bigger issue in society about public space and the right to gather. The police, in their combat gear, are a strong reminder of potential conflict and the state’s readiness to control – in short just the mere authority that we have shown until now, the St. Pauli fans have a rudimentary scepticism against. Rudi’s comment about the excessive show of force points out just that. To him and his social worker colleagues and co-fans this means nothing good, and it indeed does not make them feel any safer. On the contrary, we find, that they would rather, that they were not there to begin with.

We see that the mandatory security checks and the inspection of tifos, banners, and signs show the strict rules fans must follow. These measures, meant for safety, also control and watch fan behaviour, we learn. The issue with banner and the negotiation with the security guard show the everyday acts of resistance and compliance fans seem to deal with and thus rather unwillingly just accept, as a part of the game. Following this perspective our accreditation badges can be seen as symbols of legitimacy and somewhat privilege, allowing early entry for the social workers and us as anthropologists, setting them apart from the waiting fans, thus creating a social gap of who is allowed where and when. Not something that is taken lightly within the whole identity of the club and the fan scene, as we see it through the lenses of our analytic reflexions thus far.

Jan's work with fans with reduced mobility highlights a seemingly certain challenge of inclusivity in football stadiums. His comment about clubs not being well-prepared for special needs individuals points to a bigger issue of accessibility and the need for more inclusive infrastructure, that we find is a key value within the St. Pauli community as it acts like a highly concrete and highly visible display of exclusion mechanisms in society as a whole. To us, this moment of care contrasts with the rather strict and intimidating security measures, showing a more human side of fan culture in general, and the need for social work in football in particular.

“Heute schreiben wir Geschichte!”

Behind the steel gate, we have a little more room to move around. We have an overview of the remaining approximately 5,000 fans waiting to join the rest of the 52,000 HSV fans at the stadium towering behind us. “*Heute schreiben wir Geschichte!*” says a St. Pauli fan as he approaches Berndt, a social worker whose route to the stadium was different from ours, to say hello. They hug each other and smile.

Suddenly, we are fetched by a couple of local higher-ups from HSV. A security briefing was called. That's how it is every time, we soon learn. On the way to the security briefing, our small delegation of about 6-7 St. Pauli employees and 4 local HSV employees walk around the station, through a grey iron door on the side, and up a long flight of stairs. We reach a door that opened up to a series of conference rooms with glass walls. Through the walls, one can see into another office that had windows out to the home stands and the long side of the field. On the way up, one of the St. Pauli employees talks with an HSV employee about the current Israel-Palestine conflict. “Yes, we *always discuss that just before a big local derby,*” he laughs, addressing one of us.

In the conference room, where more and more people keep arriving, we suddenly stand rather close. HSV representatives, St. Pauli representatives, the anthropologists and the police mingle with each other around a large oval conference table filled with turned-off video phones. Everyone is greeted with a “*moin.*” There is a tense and serious atmosphere in the room. Not many speak. Everyone stands up and looks down. A HSV security person opens the talks and says that the reckons the day has gone more calmly than expected so far. They apparently let in 30,000 fans so far. The total audience number would come to exceed 55,000 in a short while. “*People are nervous.*” a St. Pauli representative says. “*Is it today?*” (Are you promoted to Bundesliga 1 - implied), HSV representative aks. “*Ja, natürlich!*” Berndt, the St. Pauli security officer for the away games, replies swiftly. They continue to discuss security procedures and processes. “*Ich hoffe das klappt,*” concludes Berndt with a firm look to his face.

As the group moves behind the steel gate, we see that the atmosphere changes. We find that the greeting between the St. Pauli fan and Berndt, with a hug and a smile, shows the almost family

like structure and solidarity within fan communities, and between the social workers and the fan groups as well. This short moment of familiarity seems to contrast with the earlier tension and control, highlighting the somewhat dual nature of football fandom as both a site of potential and often sought after notions of conflict on one side, and social aspects and community building on the other. Above everything though, the line *“Heute schreiben wir Geschichte!”* oozes of hope and a firm belief that today will be a day to remember in St. Pauli history. After all this is the most important match in the history of St. Pauli, Johann claimed earlier this day.

The security briefing with HSV officials, St. Pauli representatives, us the anthropologists, and police shows the complex mix of interests and perspectives in managing large events. The short discussion about the Israel-Palestine conflict, humorously noted as a pre-derby tradition, adds a layer of global political context to the local derby, showing the connection between sports and broader societal issues as well as being just a joke. The tense and serious atmosphere in the conference room, with formal greetings and subdued conversations, reflects the high stakes and careful planning involved in ensuring the event goes smoothly. *“Ich hoffe das klappt”*, as Berdt says, leaving the room.

In summary, we find that the arrival at the stadium and the interactions provide a rich picture of social dynamics, revealing the indeed multifaceted nature of football fandom culture. From the tension between fans and security forces to moments of solidarity and the detailed planning behind the scenes, these scenes offer valuable insights into the experiences of those involved in every social aspect of football fandom and community identity all set aside from the game itself.

Pre-match, kick-off and match summary

After a short while post the security meeting, we find ourselves in the lower end of the away-end stands in Volksparkstadion, along with 5,000-6,000 St. Pauli fans on our right-hand side and directly above us, ready with flags, banners, tifos, and songs both cheering on the St. Pauli team and players as well as bantering and mocking the HSV fans. Approximately 52,000 of the remaining 57,000 people in the stands are cheering on the home team HSV. The sound from everyone in total is indeed overwhelming. As the time for kick-off approaches, the HSV club song comes on the stadium speakers, and the home team's supporters, who sit directly opposite the St. Pauli fans, belt out their song as they sport their impressive tifo, coordinating what looks to be a sinking pirate ship in the stands – a direct hit on the pirate identity, imagery, and logo of St. Pauli FC. The fight is on. Gloves off. Rudi, who stand directly in front of us, encouraged us to take notice of this in particular. The whistle blows - Kick-off.

Here we see how football matches serve as an arena for cultural and social identity formation for the masses of fans. The visual and auditory elements, such as tifos, songs, and banners, act as

symbols that reinforce group affiliation and rivalry. The HSV fans' use of a sinking pirate ship tifo is a direct attack on St. Pauli's pirate identity, demonstrating how symbolism can be employed to challenge and demean the opponent's identity and self-images. This dynamic creates an intense atmosphere where the spectators' engagement and emotions become an integral part of the match's narrative. It is not merely a sporting event but also a social and cultural performance where identities are negotiated and affirmed through certain rituals and symbols.

The atmosphere is electric, with both teams knowing the stakes are sky-high. For FC St. Pauli, a win means promotion, while HSV needs a victory to keep their own promotion dreams alive.

The match begins with a flurry of activity and even more drama. HSV, the home side, has two goals disallowed, much to the frustration of their fans. The tension is palpable as both teams fight tooth and nail, each aware that a single mistake could be the difference between glory and despair.

As the clock ticks towards the 85th minute, the deadlock is finally broken. Robert Glatzel, seizing a rare opportunity, finds the back of the net, sending the HSV supporters into a frenzy. The goal is a dagger to the heart of FC St. Pauli, who have defended valiantly throughout the match.

But the drama is far from over. In the dying moments of the game, HSV is awarded a penalty. Ludovit Reis steps up, the weight of the match resting on his shoulders. Nikola Vasilj, the FC St. Pauli goalkeeper, stands tall and, in a moment of sheer brilliance, saves the penalty, keeping his team's hopes alive, if only for a few more minutes.

Earlier in the match, FC St. Pauli shows promise. Lars Ritzka makes his return to the squad, taking his place on the bench. On the other side, HSV coach Steffen Baumgart also sticks with his winning formula from their 4-0 triumph over Eintracht Braunschweig.

The first half is a battle of attrition, with both teams creating few clear-cut chances. HSV comes close when Immanuël Pherai's volley forces a low save from Vasilj. FC St. Pauli has their moments too, but a series of misplaced passes and tight defence keeps the scoreline goalless at the break.

The second half continues in the same vein, with neither side willing to give an inch. The intensity is high, and the crowd remains on the edge of their seats. The game's pivotal moment comes when Glatzel's header finally breaks the deadlock. Despite a late surge and a series of substitutions by Hürzeler, FC St. Pauli can't find the equalizer.

In the end, HSV's narrow 1-0 victory keeps their promotion hopes alive, while FC St. Pauli is left to rue missed opportunities and what might have been. The derby is a testament to the passion and unpredictability of football, leaving fans eagerly anticipating the next chapter in this storied rivalry (FC St. Pauli, 2024).

The atmosphere was charged with anticipation as both teams faced high stakes: FC St. Pauli needed a win for promotion, while HSV sought victory to sustain their own promotion hopes. The match was filled with drama from the start, with HSV having two goals disallowed, heightening the tension. As the game neared its end a late goal for HSV ignited the home fans. Despite FC St. Pauli's promising performance and late efforts, HSV's narrow 1-0 win kept their promotion dreams alive, leaving FC St. Pauli to reflect on missed opportunities. The derby highlighted the passion and unpredictability of football, setting the stage for future encounters in this unique and historic rivalry.

Post-match.

After the match referee's whistle sounds for the last time, the faces of the social workers and their co-fans in the stands are those of defeat and utter disappointment. Club history should be written, as the fan coming up to Berndt outside of the stadium foretold. No club history is being written this evening in early May. The contrast between the singing and the noise in the stands and the now silence is not to be overstated. In somewhat silence, the St. Pauli fans get up from their seats as they only minutes later find the nearest exit. Outside the stadium, a few fans gather around the social workers. We see two or three crying silently. This was to be their day. The social workers hug a few people, then gather to plan their next move. Their workday is far from over. Some fan groups must be escorted to nearby S- and U-Bahn stations, some must be guided away from the police waiting outside in their combat gear and now with heavy armoured vehicles, and some other groups must be guided around the winning team's fans. We bid our social worker informants farewell, as we head in the direction of the 50,000+ HSV fans leaving the stadium at the moment. Luckily, we are here in our roles as social researchers and anthropologists – not football fans, so we do not sport any St. Pauli gear. That lets us mingle in between the HSV fans singing and cheering as we approach a 35-minute walk to our car, parked at a safe distance from the stadium at a fitness complex in the north-western outskirts of Hamburg. "1-0 HSV – St. Pauli – defeat" is the last entry in my notebook for the night.

The post-match scene illustrates the emotional aftermath of a high-stakes football match, highlighting the wholehearted impact on both fans and social workers. The stark contrast between the earlier vibrant atmosphere and the profound silence underlines the depth of disappointment felt by the St. Pauli supporters. We also witness how the social workers' role extends beyond being mere spectators of football, as they navigate the complex dynamics of both crowd management and emotional support. Their efforts to guide and protect fans amidst the heightened security presence reflect the broader social responsibilities intertwined with being a professional at this football club. This narrative not only captures the immediate reactions to the match's outcome but also emphasizes the ongoing, multifaceted nature of fan engagement and community sup-

port in the context of football as a whole. On this day, no history was made. They had to wait a week. But then they were promoted to Bundesliga 1.

Overall, our findings contribute valuable knowledge that can be applied across various sectors to promote social inclusion, education, and sustainable community development. This will benefit not only those directly involved in the football clubs but also broader societal interests. The new knowledge gained will be crucial for understanding and improving the mechanisms underlying socialization and education in alternative arenas such as professional football clubs.

Paulitics – brand, area, people, values and a whole lot of football still

“The brand St. Pauli FC is an identification mark. The totenkopf-t-shirt means that you share values with the club. Like me!” (Leni, social worker, Gemeinwesenarbeit (GWA) St. Pauli eV)

In this last part of the paper, we aim our focus on how St. Pauli, both as a district and a football club, leaves its mark on the people who inhabit the area and engage with the fan club or attend matches weekend after weekend. It is precisely here that we experience how St. Pauli as a whole exudes certain values that indeed connote local belonging for these individuals and becomes a form of formation that takes root in their bodies and consciousness, thereby contributing to their corpus of understanding, their repertoires of action, and their ways of being in the world. This is also why we engage our informants in discussions about perspectives on *bildung* or *life formation* when we talk with them. Because the area, the vibe and the environment of St. Pauli gets under the skin of its people. Therefore, our research interest primarily encounters narratives and practices that all revolve around the district’s and football club’s immediate unison value set, as evidenced by the introductory quote by Leni. Therefore, this part of the paper, which we collectively called Paulitics, delves into the seemingly underlying tone of left-leaning political values, constant lurking activism, overt police resistance, and a “stick-it-to-the-man” attitude that runs as a distinct community-building and highly diversity-bearing thread through the Hamburg district of St. Pauli (Mouleart, F., MacCallum, D., & Hamdouch, A. (Hrsg.). (2014), 31). We understand Paulitics as a unifying collective foundation for how the aforementioned social relations and local community anchoring constitute a catalyst for the continuous development of communities and the significance of creating these communities for the area’s residents and their opportunities for becoming, belonging, being and gaining life formation through their interactions with the people, phenomena, ideas, things, and matters of the area (Rømer, 2019: 5; Tanggaard, 2021: 20, 23-24).

St. Pauli the area

In St. Pauli lies Reeperbahn – the nearly one-kilometer-long avenue that, with its sex shops, clubs, sex workers, and vibrant local nightlife culture, is a world-renowned signature of the area. St. Pauli is also affected by widespread tourism, which the locals increasingly perceive as tarnishing the area. “*Reeperbahn has become too touristy!*” as Leni, our local social worker, tells us in a spontaneous interview. Parallel to Reeperbahn runs St. Pauli Hafenstraße, which in the 1980s was the preferred neighbourhood for left-wing activists and now houses local homeless initiatives. However, it is also impacted by gentrification plans that several locals, according to Leni, are fighting against. For example, a local café owner recently removed an entire flower bed in front of her café because “*it didn’t fit the area*”, as Leni explains.

A local symbol and indeed tangible sign of resistance to authority is the *Balduintreppe* – the flight of stairs, which, during our spontaneous city walk, Leni tells us was previously the site where conflicts between the local authorities and left-leaning individuals were fought. Today, the area around the stairs and St. Pauli Hafenstraße is patrolled by visible police officers in pairs, wearing full uniforms, yellow vests, and carrying visible weapons. They stop local residents for brief conversations or specific reprimands every quarter hour. According to Leni, this effort seems characterized by widespread racial profiling: “*...because the police go after people who look different - the people of color.*” The only local officer we randomly encounter in casual conversation with a resident seems genuinely welcomed by the locals. Officer Schulz is easily recognized. He walks alone, without a cap, vest, or weapon, and appears to play a different role in the local community. We greet him with a nod and continue. “*Well, this is a so-called danger zone area,*” says Leni, pointing to a street sign we pass, while using her fingers to indicate quotation marks. The sign is yellow and signals a weapons ban and search zone. “*But who are actually the dangerous ones?*” she asks, not needing an answer.

Authority resistance and activism

The local community’s biggest marker of togetherness and gathering is St. Pauli FC, which has its home ground at Millerntor Stadium in the heart of St. Pauli, as we visited earlier on the day long field walk. St. Pauli FC is a professional football club with all that entails: sponsorship deals, player jerseys, fan shops, and factions. However, all these aspects stem from specific value sets, as we immediately discover. This project itself also originates from our own immediate encounter with the sometimes harsh and romanticized notions of belonging, resistance, rebellion, and diversity associated with the club’s name - a name that has also given the club cult status worldwide, despite the fluctuating sporting quality of football over the years, that just now seems to change as we showed earlier in this paper. The spirit of the club that permeates the atmosphere at the stadium, among fans, and in the local community is globally recognized:

“The football club has a lot of influence on the area and on the people. They give the supporters a way of being political—because sports are political! On the arena, there is sometimes a banner that says: ‘Red Card for the police!’... Why? The police are very aggressive toward football fans!” says Leni.

As we began this second half of the article by describing, the club’s unofficial logo features a realistic human skull (totenkopf) with two crossed bones underneath - a symbol with its own distinct value set. While others may immediately think of the Jolly Roger and pirates, for Leni and her many peers, the iconic black t-shirt with the white skull represents the club’s special values:

“St. Pauli is left-wing; there is no middle ground anymore. For us, it’s the fear of the state. St. Pauli FC is a very special mix of sports and politics. There will be no room for racism and fascism. The way the club represents itself is always through political statements. If anti-Semitism is the problem, the fans do something about it.”

This blend of sports and politics, as Leni describes it, is probably not unique to St. Pauli FC and can be found elsewhere in the world. However, through our repeated visits to the stadium and everyday conversations with social workers at Fanladen staff we realize that the club’s mere presence in the area becomes a unifying mutual space for political engagement and visible activism. This activism involves actions taken by informed individuals who assess the world and, through reflection, create opportunities and actions that can change power structures and unjust living conditions for certain groups in society (Mørck et al., 2023).

However, Leni believes that activism could be even more pronounced: *“There is room for 24,000 fans in the stadium, and they all support the values—yet only 3,000 participate in the post-match demonstrations.”* The club’s and the area’s values, which blend and transform through interactions between fans and locals (often the same people), manifest not only in graffiti and slogans at the stadium but also in concrete demonstrations and happenings. Leni herself actively participates, such as in the fan faction Yalla Yalla:

„I’m in a fan club called Yalla Yalla... Because of the refugees who got shot in the betting shop by the right-wing man, some years ago! We arranged for the stadium to have banners showing the names of the victims on the side in memory of the ones who got shot. The way the club represents itself is always through political statements. If anti-Semitism is the current problem, for example - the fans do something about it!”

Through our ongoing conversations and spontaneous interviews with local fans, we learn how these fans resonate with the club’s values, make them their own, and become part of them. Simultaneously, they also influence the club’s stadium aesthetics with slogans, banners, and local street art. Their impact extends to shaping the club’s professional setup, official sponsors, player jerseys, and merchandise. In this way, the club’s more official faces also contribute to similar

narratives of values. Franziska, the club's official head of Strategy, Transformation & Sustainability, discusses the club's fundamental principles:

"Some of the values in the house are to be honest, diverse, and tolerant... But about the word tolerance – I don't like it. I think it connotes some kind of power and devaluation. I would much rather talk about solidarity."

As the small interview excerpt reveals, even from the club's more official channels, there is a conscious awareness of the values upon which they build their football enterprise. They communicate these ideas and values to their fans, and these concepts are periodically revisited, as we observe in our interview. But what does the word *tolerance* truly connote and signify? Can it be replaced by *solidarity*, which lacks the same underlying perspectives of power and devaluation that Franziska reflects upon? St. Pauli FC seems acutely aware of what their fans demand. Franziska continues: *"The fans underline social topics as most important. Things like antifascism, providing opportunities for young people, and supporting the homeless."* It matters significantly what the club associates its name with, both symbolically and economically. From an official standpoint, they are keenly aware of their role in the local community. Franziska explains:

"St. Pauli FC is a platform for social work, work against racism and sexism, for example. Local initiatives then utilize the football club's name and brand as a platform for their efforts."

Throughout our rather informal conversations, we discover that various voices express a similar sense of connection between the football club and the local community. The football club is conscious of its responsibility and local affiliation. By leveraging their name and brand, they become a lever for local social initiatives, assisting refugees, vulnerable families, the elderly, and the homeless. This politically driven work and activism permeate everyday life in the community, we find. In this symbiotic relationship, both the club and the locally oriented fanbase seem to coexist. The club is fully cognizant of this. Franziska continues:

'We are a platform driven by certain values. We bring forward topics and strengthen connections. Football serves as the connecting element. We are an amplifier.'

Here, we witness how football is perceived as the unifying element. This notion, that football acts as a local kit blurring differences, is not unique to St. Pauli FC. What distinguishes this statement is the idea that the football club is not merely a community platform but a genuine catalyst for local initiatives toward concrete social change. Additionally, the club demonstrates a clear awareness of the power of their brand and the limitations of being primarily a football club - not experts in social work, we argue.

Football and Community as Arenas for Bildung or Life Formation

As we have demonstrated above, a particular set of values intertwines itself between the residents of the area and the football club. This club is not merely sensed as a special place centered around their Millerntor stadium; it serves as a symbol and gathering point, with small markers of identification scattered throughout St. Pauli's narrow streets and grand avenues. Everywhere, the club's name or totenkopf logo appears as stickers or graffiti, bearing witness to an omnipresent echo of community, collective resistance, and latent rebellion. It is precisely these myriads of small empirical impressions that, combined with our informants' narratives, we gather under the umbrella term *Paulitics*. We do so to capture and conceptualize the essence of the deep social and cultural connections that permeate the environment around St. Pauli. This essence *Paulitics* seems to embed itself in the people we encounter. It takes shape through dynamic interactions with the values, belonging, and social and political responsibilities they engage with in their daily lives. It forms with them, through them, and into them. Fundamentally, formation refers to the process by which an individual gains authority through participation and integration within communities. Initially subject to norms and traditions, they later contribute to maintaining and, over time, perhaps challenging and renewing these norms (Brinkmann, Tanggaard & Rømer, 2021: back cover). Following Danish scholar Lene Tanggaard, we learn that form and formation arise from particular experiences that become embedded in people's mere existence. She describes formation as a spark capable of igniting human thinking, language, bodies, and imbuing existence with both meaning and significance (Tanggaard, 2021). Perhaps through the lens of *Paulitics* – a phenomenon of formation – we can better comprehend how and, more importantly, why the otherwise pronounced, sometimes ideological, and occasionally fluctuating value and belief systems symbolised by the environment and the club take root in those who subscribe to such logics and doxa.

How does one form oneself through anti-authority, alleged police violence, feminism, anti-racism, anti-fascism, solidarity with refugees and the homeless, and other symbol- and content-laden mega-terms? Returning to Tanggaard's perspective, formation, in its broadest sense, involves becoming aware of the world one is part of - without questioning whether "it pays off," as she writes (Tanggaard, 2021). However, with this notion in mind, formation becomes a question of how the phenomenon of *Paulitics* embeds itself in an individual's thoughts and spirit, becoming something one can, both think with and think about. Subsequently, these thoughts translate into the person's repertoire of actions, manifesting as realised care, activism, and social work for vulnerable groups.

When we inquire about this formative perspective in their diverse practices, it can be challenging (naturally) for our informants to view these thoughts and relationships as objectively and distantly as we can. Nevertheless, Jan, a club employee and social worker at St. Pauli's own youth fan club, Fanladen, naturally interprets the German term *Bildung* through the lens of education

when discussing his work: “...*Most of the fans live nearby and develop ideas within the area... So yes... We educate people.*” Throughout our conversations with Jan, we observe how *Bildung*, which we use to align with traditional German notions of formation, is, in the absence of a better English term, interpreted as education by Jan. He shares insights into his and his colleagues’ concrete work with the unique group of young male fans under 18 years old, who also participate in the youth club section within Fanladen.

“We do talk a lot about the Holocaust and Memorial Day, for example. We come together not to lose our history. Sometimes we take those under 18 to see concentration camps. In that way, they experience something that the school system cannot offer.”

First and foremost, we experience how *Bildung* in German, and perhaps in the translation to English, takes the form of a more formal educational perspective, as the concept of education probably also connotes for most people. And it becomes clear how crucial the historical perspective and foundation are for their practices in the fan club. The concept of path dependency seems to capture this as both a basis for practices and possible future paths that can be taken (Mouleart & MacCallum, 2019). Jan also becomes aware of a broader perspective on *Bildung*: “*Bildung is how to behave both formally and informally,*” he continues, and finds out how one can be formed into specific patterns of action, understandings, and repertoires:

“We do educate fans to be smart about violence, crime, and drugs. For example - do not show the police more than your ID. You are not obliged to show more... and don’t show them if you have done any drugs. And again: We tolerate the Ultras (the most radical fan faction in the club), but not racists, for example. Personally, I wouldn’t save the racist in the stands from being punched. We won’t force anyone to be anything they are not. Being from around the area... St. Pauli identity, you know...”

In the above, we see how Jan also sees it as part of his job to educate the young people he deals with to possess what he considers the right actions and preconceived precautions in their inevitable encounters with the police. At the same time, we see our construction of *Paulitics* unfold as a concept of education. This happens both when Jan trains his young co-fans in how the obvious opposition to the police, which is one of the most significant elements in *Paulitics*, becomes concrete dos and don’ts in encounters with the authorities, and in the young people’s encounter with racism, which, just as much as the opposition to the police, constitutes a support in the area’s cultural framework. Here, the pedagogy and education of the young simply become concrete tackles of the police’s demands and turning the other cheek if racism should appear. Then there must and will be a reaction from the St. Pauli fans’ side, we must understand. It is that kind of *Paulitics* that runs in their blood. Here it becomes relevant to apply the theoretical framing; Street Decency (Mørck et al., 2023). It describes conflictual and contradictory practices and actions and connects to knowledge, attitude, and actions that contain ambiguities. When

Jan does not clearly choose a side but turns a deaf ear to the violence against racism, there is a reproduction of existing dichotomies (street or decent) and so the ambiguities help to de-institutionalize the police as an authority and fans as lawbreakers. If he very clearly sided with the police and supported their practice, he would lose credibility with co-fans, and if he, on the other hand, unequivocally sided with the fans, he would lose the opportunity to cooperate with the police. In this way, *Paulitics* may also contain an ongoing assessment of which practices belong when. In this way, the introduction to and upbringing to let oneself be formed through *Paulitics* can be encompassed by the theoretical breadth of the concept of education. Formation is about the whole person, and about becoming and understanding oneself in the light of one's fellow human beings, of something greater (Brinkmann, Rømer & Tanggaard, 2023). In this case, the cultural, social, and aesthetic frameworks that St. Pauli, both as a football club and a local area, offer one to think and act in relation to. The encounter with this other, which stands outside oneself, and which is greater than oneself, becomes a catalyst for life formation.

In the following section, we delve deeper into the particularity of two special places, where the fulfilment of human needs, both individually and through social relations, is clearly evident, and where sociopolitical relations and transformations create new paths. The two narratives have emerged as clear geographical focal points for the establishment, maintenance, and development of *Paulitics*.

Places for Transformative Community Creation

In the heart of St. Pauli lies Kölibri on Hein-Köllisch-Platz, door to door with Leni's office. Since 1989, Kölibri has been a social and cultural gathering place for activities for local children, youth, and adults in the area. There is a homework cafe for school children, art projects, neighbourhood meetings with discussions on local political initiatives, and much more. And like the saying "*If there is a room in the heart, there is a room in the house*" at Kölibri there is certainly room for everyone with the large kitchen and the area designated for communal dining as the first thing one encounters when stepping through the door of the old shop premises. In a melting pot of children's drawings, recycled furniture, house rules, and the scent of fresh vegetables on the kitchen table, the place forms the setting for our online interview with Franziska, who, as previously mentioned, is employed by the football club to lead the work with strategy, development, and sustainability. In her own words, she is employed to create infrastructure in the club to support sustainable impact with a focus on both CO₂ footprint, economy, and social efforts.

"We are a platform for people that drive change. In that, we need to be consistent and to be a reliable partner. Other organizers use our impact because we can leverage the impact. We use our brand to help others."

Franziska mentions various examples of specific socio-economic efforts and projects during the interview, which are to be supported by the aforementioned infrastructure. All profits from the sale of merchandise go to support local social projects, which among other things offer shelter and the possibility for a shower to some of the area's many homeless, as well as football training for young criminals, and music school at the stadium for the area's children and youth who do not have the resources to pay for tuition themselves.

All projects are spoken into the overall sustainability strategy of the club but started long before a strategy was made. The collaboration between the club and the local area is years long and is modelled through both small and large uncontrollable projects and through the over 600 different fan groups, all of whom have their own theme and purpose. The interaction is described by Franziska to understand the work with social sustainability.

“Not everything is controlled by us. The club looks upon the people and the local environment - an inside-out perspective. The outside-in perspective is the local community's impact on our business.”

At the same time, Franziska later describes how they will become stronger in measuring the value of the efforts they make in her department in the future.

When we look at this way of working with the management of sustainable efforts and strategies, the social innovation structures clearly emerge as reinforcing processes that must ensure more equal opportunities for everyone in the district with the football club as an amplifier. However, a duality also becomes clear, as there is recognition of the uncontrollable in parts of the projects, but at the same time a desire to measure the value creation of the efforts (Swyngedouw, 2009). In addition, the dialectic between individual needs of people and the local community's mobilisation as a socio-economic community-creating space as described by Moulaert et al. (2005) also becomes clear in Franziska's stories.

Our visit to the Kölibri is together with a group of Danish pedagogy students. We catch up with Leni and her colleague Soeren to talk about social work in the local area, social pedagogical core values and communal eating with the area's residents. *„I think it's wrong to talk about poverty in the way that it's all about money. Firstly, you can't measure value in terms of money alone and secondly, these people didn't choose to be in the position they are in. Society has chosen it on their behalf because they can't get enough help. That's why we are here. To help those who our society (state) won't help in a proper way,”* says Leni.

Therefore, reaching out is a very big part of the pedagogical work in the area. One of the initiatives is communal dining at Kölibri a few times a month. German pedagogy students from HAW work in the kitchen and make sure that food is prepared for the residents who want to drop by and have a meal. Today, the Danish students help in the kitchen and while chopping and slicing, a local lady

comes by to get advice on how to make ends meet as a single woman with children and fixed expenses that exceed her modest income month after month. Because that is also part of the job. Helping to create an overview when daily life gets difficult.

The conversation turns to the large number of armed police who walk past the window many times a day to make the area feel safe. *„But it doesn't create safety, it creates insecurity,”* says Soeren and continues: *“...because as a local resident you don't know when you will be detained and searched, unless you have colored skin - then you can be sure to be detained and suspected.”* Soeren has conducted a study together with the students from HAW, where they have registered every time the police pass by and patrol the area. More than 1 million police hours have been spent in St. Pauli at a total cost of around 16 million euros. *„You could hire a lot of social workers for that money“.*

On the way home after dinner, we pass the Millerntor stadium where a match is taking place. The streets around the stadium are packed with fans on their way to the game and officers in riot gear, some on foot, some on horseback and some in cars. They move slowly in carefully planned formations like a giant Chinese dragon about to attack. *„They are better staffed than the staff in a kindergarten,”* says Mathilde, one of our students. The different fan fractions are led towards the stadium through various side streets, and all end up in the square in front of the Millerntor stadium. Here the police disperse them so that they head towards the different entrances to the stadium. We head to the underground and take the metro back to the city centre.

Alienation and the Fight for Preservation

In front of Fanladen, some boys are learning to make graffiti. They receive thorough instructions from a couple of the club's employees. They spray on the wall that runs along the stadium, and the colours and figures mix with stickers and posters in a jumble of anti-fascist slogans and chants. We are going to meet with Jan, who has been employed at the fan club for 3 years. So, he is still new to the game, as he says. Like the other employees of the club, he lives in the local area within walking distance of the stadium, and he attends all the matches, even when he is not working. We sit down in the local historical archive of the football club, where the shelves are packed with fanzines and publications about the club, and the walls are filled with newspaper clippings with decades of stories about the club and the area. Jan tells us that he has friends in all groupings of the fan club, including the most extreme fan groups. This gives him the opportunity to understand and act differently in relation to the disturbances that arise, especially when they are at away games. *“I see myself as a gardener of the garden St. Pauli. If somebody needs space to grow, I see that. And where to cut things down to make room for something else. We are not always ahead of everything - sometimes we just react.”*

Jan does not hide the fact that meetings between certain groups of fans and the police can often become very conflict filled. There is a fundamental mistrust of the police and stories about the use of power and control-creating methods. He tells us:

“There was an away game in Magdeburg, the police filmed in the toilets because they smelled spray paint. They would never do that in other areas of society.’ And he continues, ‘German police hate the football fans. Mostly because the fans are always the ones acting badly on trains. We like to say that the police try out new tactics on us.’”

Jan’s examples also become part of St. Pauli’s Code of the Street, a cultural adaptation in socially isolated fan environments, which can be attributed to the citizens’ pervasive lack of trust in and feeling of alienation towards the norm society and its institutions - especially the executive and judicial powers, which for these citizens are not perceived as conducive to their well-being (Mørck, et al., 2023, 242). And in Jan’s stories, there is always a very strong notion of we. A we that seems to go across groupings and attitudes and is ready to fight against any form of oppression and discrimination.

We let Franziska have the last word with a local description. We ask her how she would characterize the area:

“It is an area with a strong history, and which is struggling socially. It is an area which stands up for needs. It is an area where people protest gentrification and are against tourism. They have a willingness to fight, and it is people with high social consciousness.”

Again, thoughts are led to a concept like path dependency, which both encompasses the special historical characteristics but simultaneously re-actualises itself and changes structure due to the many breakers in the area and in the people, who all at the same time maintain and develop *Paulitics* as a common denominator.

Throughout this paper, we have shown how our unifying concept and analytical construct *Paulitics* encompasses special places, people, values, and transformative processes and helps unfold the nuances and understandings of the phenomenon of St. Pauli. At the same time, there is both a clear formative interaction and at the same time a very tangible way of the world, found within the area and its people which again and again positions itself critically against changes and conflicting political winds. The question of how clear anti-authoritarian traits and rebellion against the police, find its way to the people from within St. Pauli, there is a need for further investigation. For despite the fact that *Paulitics* is experienced as an inclusive and solidarizing though and practice, it also seems thrive within some delimited, special conceptions of what a society should be and some distinct and certain overall ways of being. There can be no doubt that the values of the club and in the area are an amplifier and lever for social innovation as a space for the development of opportunities and potentials for the people who live in St. Pauli. Still there is some clear

tension between the socio-economic understanding, that is anchored in both the social educational work that takes place in the local area and in the fan club and the more capitalist-based economic models that control the football club as a business with a very large brand value. Our analysis throughout this paper has been made through the lens of our theoretical understanding of *bildung* or life formation, as something that happens when a person meets the worlds, acts in it and with and through it, and the notion of social innovation understood as a local and transformative concept that can lift people through a common set of values. At the same time, with the help of our research methods, we have let the initial matchday field walk, as well as some places and people speak for themselves in order for them to tell their stories and accounts, and in our presentations, we have let these stories speak their own unchallenged language. We have not had intentions to develop or radically change the field we intervene with, but in our understanding of formation, this is to some extent inevitable. Football is never just a game, a sport, but also politics, emotions, and reproductions of existential values for people and functions as a magnifying glass for the district, the football club, and all the many people who are and do *Paulitics*.

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