

German Football

History, Culture, Society

Edited by
Alan Tomlinson and
Christopher Young



German Football

German Football: History, Culture, Society provides unprecedented analysis of the place of football in post-war and post-reunification Germany, revealing the motives and drives underlying Germany's successful bid to host the 2006 World Cup finals.

The contributors explore the significance of football in German sporting and cultural life, showing how football has emerged as a major focus for the expression of a coherent national identity and as evidence of the restoration of German national pride in the post-World War II period. Major themes include:

- German football's desire for success on the international stage
- Footballing expressions of local, regional and national identity
- The East European legacy
- Ethnic dynamics, migrant populations and Europeanization
- German football's commercial economy
- Women's football in Germany
- Literary and media perceptions of the German game

With contributions from a range of disciplinary perspectives, *German Football* illuminates key cultural moments – the 1954 victory, the founding of the Bundesliga in 1963, the 1974 World Cup victory as hosts, its third World Cup triumph in Italia '90, the winning bid for 2006 – from a variety of angles.

The result is an innovative, open-minded and critical analysis of football's burgeoning significance in German cultural life, which will be of importance to readers in Sport Studies and German Studies alike and of interest as well to followers of the world game.

Alan Tomlinson is Professor of Leisure Studies at the Chelsea School, University of Brighton.

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Preface

Alan Tomlinson and Christopher Young

The most dramatic and high-profile of world spectacles have been the modern Olympic Games and the men's football World Cup, events owned by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and FIFA (the governing body of world football). Such sporting encounters and contests have provided a source of and focus for the staging of spectacle and, in an era of international mass communications, the media event. The growth of FIFA and the IOC, and of their major events, has provided a platform for the articulation and expression of national pride and prestige. Greece saw the symbolic potential of staging an international event such as the first modern Olympics in 1896 to both assert its incipient modernity and deflect domestic tensions. Uruguay, having cultivated double Olympic football champions in the 1920s, helped FIFA's aspirations take off by hosting the first football World Cup in 1930 in the year of the country's centenary. From modest beginnings, each event grew in stature and significance as more nations came to recognise the potential benefits of participation in such events and the international status that might accrue from hosting and staging them.

In the age of modernity, sporting spectacle has been hugely important to Germany. The 1936 Olympic Games is an obvious case in point. In the post-war era, all major sporting spectacles in Germany have stood in its shadow. The ill-fated 1972 Olympic Games in Munich and the World Cup finals two years later, which culminated in the same stadium, were intended as a show-case for Germany's complete rejection of its complex historical legacy. The Miracle of Berne in 1954, when Germany beat the magisterial Hungarian side in the final, exemplified the power of sport to contribute to the remaking of national identity: as one commentator has recently observed, the Federal Republic was founded not in 1949 but in 1954.

The World Cup finals return to Germany in 2006 at an uncertain time for the country. Post-unification euphoria has firmly given way to a wave of nostalgia for the former East, the Berlin Republic has made controversial strategic alliances (with France and 'Old Europe' against the United States), and the SPD government has had to live through denied recession and to promote major yet difficult social change. As this book goes to press, the

result of the German election in September 2005 only seems to have cast a deeper question mark over the country's future direction. In the context of global football politics, Germany outflanked South Africa to win the bidding wars to stage these finals, and generated widespread resentment across the sporting world. The leadership of world football will be under a media spotlight, and perhaps contested in the period leading up to and following on from the 2006 event – and German football politicians will be prominent in the power brokering underlying this process. Whatever happens, Franz Beckenbauer, the first man to have both captained and coached a World Cup winning side, will be centre stage. For these reasons – football's importance to Germany's sense of identity and Germany's closeness to the operations of FIFA, the foremost INGO (International Non-Governmental Organisation) in world sport – it is the ideal time to subject German football history, culture and society to a critical analysis and review.

The primary themes that emerge in this analysis are:

- Myths, cultural symbols and historical resonances
- Region and community as sources of the expression of identity
- Representation and imaginings of national character
- Everyday and institutional politics of football
- Mega-event management
- Fandom and agency
- Commercialism and consumer culture in the new Europe
- Literary and media refractions.

Reinterpretations of Germany's first World Cup are central to any cultural history of German football history. The German national team's victory in Berne, nine years after capitulation in the war, is a more pivotal point for German football than 1966 was for the English national game. If the English victory – to date still the only triumph in any major international championship – was a reassertion of assumed strength and status in the world game, it has turned out in retrospect to be an apogee in the footballing fortunes of the nation. It is now a matrix both of longing and of self-doubt. In Germany, the 'Miracle of Berne' was not simply a much-needed boost to the national psyche. It was also the formative moment in the transformation of the game from its base in regional, local culture towards an institutionalised national phenomenon, which found its culmination in the inaugural season of the *Bundesliga* in the 1963–64 season.

The strong local roots of football in Germany are dramatically embodied in the widespread idealization of a club such as Schalke 04. Based in an industrial suburb of Gelsenkirchen in the heart of the Ruhr, the club has sustained its position among the elite of German football despite the 'metropolitanization' of the national game. Schalke's biggest rival for the status of Germany's most popular club is Bayern Munich – triple European

Champions in successive years in the mid-1970s and heirs to Ajax's crown – a club synonymous with glamour and city chic. Bayern is also Germany's most hated club. In this dynamic between the city and the regions, Schalke continues to provide an important source of expression of traditional forms of football loyalty and identity. This traditionalism is felt to be under threat from the forces of modernization and commercialization within the game. Fans are caught up in a complex web of incorporation into, and resistance to, the consumer model. The combination of the economic and the cultural in the game is now so interwoven that the limits of a romanticized agency among fans becomes obvious. Even on the national level, in a globally organised media market such as European club and international competitions, traditional notions of the national give way to the brand of the sponsor and the celebration of the transnational celebrity. This is more complex still when one's country has disappeared and one's team is forced to survive on players imported from cheaper markets – as is the case in the club sides of the former East Germany.

Perhaps more than in any other European country, football in Germany has provided a revealing focus for debates concerning national identity and the way in which conceptions and stereotypes of national character have been constructed and represented. Behind the stalwart trench-man Fritz Walter, the 1954 side marched as a comradely unit over the individual skills of the sublime Hungarian invincibles. In 1974, Germany's second World Cup success show-cased the swaggering post-1960s style and affluence of Kaiser Franz Beckenbauer *et al.* In Italia '90, the year of German reunification, at the most glamorously packaged World Cup finals ever staged, the finely tuned, ruthlessly efficient German squad steamrolled its way to victory. All these, of course, are stereotypes, which are constantly ebbing and flowing in and out of the media-generated popular consciousness. In 1974, for instance, 1954 was unexcavated cultural territory. By its fiftieth anniversary, however, the Miracle of Berne was a central pillar in the archaeology of German football history. In post-unification Germany, it filled the void of expectation opened up by the overbearing presence of the actors of 1974. The year 1990 is still caked in dust awaiting its rediscovery. Such cultural reappropriations are generated by a variety of media forms – from the broadcast to the print media, from the literary to the cinematic. In these latter categories, the discursive freedom of the genres facilitates an expansion of the interpretive agenda.

It is a truism that football culture has more significance than the mere drama and activities unfolding on the field of play. There is a cultural politics at work in the sport. Much of the history of the game has concentrated upon the world of masculinity, yet beyond this sphere, Germany has produced some of the most outstanding individuals and internationally successful competitive teams. Many accounts stress the core Northern European origins and traditions of football within Germany. Yet, since the upheavals of the Second World War and the increase in the immigrant population,

there is an expanding multicultural dimension to the 'national game'. If Turkey and Germany reach a World Cup final in 2006 – an achievement which at one point in Japan/Korea 2002 looked far from impossible – it will put to the test the rhetoric and policy intent of the multicultural theme prominent in the run-up to the tournament. Less prominent in the national football culture is the impact of the great achievements of German women footballers, and at the heart of this book we have sought to remind readers and scholars of the story of the struggles leading to those achievements.

Staging international sporting events has long been a means of making wider political and economic points. Germany is no exception. The Berlin Olympics in 1936, the Munich Olympics in 1972 and the 1974 World Cup each asserted the new role of a peaceful Germany in the world order – the former after 1914–1918, the latter two after 1939–1945. The 2006 World Cup will be yet another opportunity to present yet another new Germany. This Germany is acutely aware of its increasing ethnic diversity, its European connectedness and commitments, and its own internal post-unification obligations. It is also moving into a cautious yet fascinating period of re-evaluating its past. As Minister of the Interior Otto Schily publicly reasserted in 2004, Germany should show itself to be an 'open, lively and hospitable country'. This chimes in perfect and co-ordinated harmony with the event's official slogan – 'Time to make friends'. As our volume shows, this 'making' of friends is a complex process of media representation, event management, lived experience of the football festival, and aspirational politics. In all of this, sport's contribution to the remaking of the past – through its own and interconnected histories and discourses – is paramount.

1 German football

A cultural history

Wolfram Pyta

Culture and football

This contribution is based on the belief that football is a major cultural phenomenon (Tomlinson, Markorits and Young 2003). Football's triumphal march towards becoming Germany's most popular sport by far is due mainly to the fact that it contains a cultural creative power that can blossom under certain historical conditions. Before this can be demonstrated via a brief survey of the history of German football over the past 100 years, some preliminary issues have to be assessed. As a result of the renaissance of the term of 'culture' in the humanities, the concept has lost its preciseness and has become an indefinable factor which has come to represent a conceptual cipher for very disparate facts. Hence a precise definition of the concept of 'culture' that underlies this contribution is essential.

The following analysis is guided by reflections indigenous to a hermeneutics-orientated cultural sociology and philosophy (see in particular Andreas Reckwitz's brilliant studies of 1999 and 2000). According to this, culture is about collective forms of meaningful adoptions of the world. Culture results from hermeneutic processes during which subjects start a process of understanding and provide the world with a meaning. But this cognitive adopting cannot be achieved by an autonomous individual who, in doing so, creates to a certain extent the world of ideas out of his subjectivity. The subject's capacity for understanding can only be fully reached against the background of a collective inventory of knowledge and shared rules of interpretation. These webs of meaning structure the process of interpreting, and they define the conditions under which things can then have a certain meaning. But how are individual interpretation and the embedding in collective systems of meaning combined? Interpretive cultural theory refers in this case to the central significance of actions. It is always in actions that the adoption and translation of cognitive knowledge of order by the actor takes place. Understanding the world always has references to action – regular and routine actions indicating underlying systems of meaning. For this reason we have a concept of 'culture' that includes practical expressions of collective systems of meaning: thus culture is 'action-orientated configuration of meaning' (Luckmann 1988).

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In order to identify these cultural contents it is not sufficient to look to the inexhaustible pool of classical texts, in which man has formed the world according to his imagination. A cultural historian has to be especially attentive to those fields of action that show strong structures of meaning.

This brings us to football. Football as an ordered and constant mode of behaviour may be understood as one of these practices that has collective patterns of meaning embedded in it. During its recent history, football has extended its fields of action: initially a sport purely for enthusiasts of *das runde Leder* ('round leather'), it advanced to a spectator sport that fascinated tens of thousands who had never played it themselves under competitive conditions. Eventually, in the 1950s, it managed to become a mass-media phenomenon in Germany and was even used for political purposes. The reasons for 'King Football's' rapid territorial expansion can in essence only be understood from a cultural historical perspective. To do so, one has to ask the central question: why could football be used as a space of projection and place of expression for schemes of interpretation embedded in German history?

We can approach this core question by looking at the processes of cultural change with respect to the intrinsic power of social shaping. By understanding collective cognitive contents – i.e. culture – a high degree of integrating effects that are essential for constructing communities are released. The power of such collective interpretations of meaning for constructing communities has been impressively demonstrated by historically-orientated cultural sociology (Giesen 1999). These findings suggest that football can carry and transmit non-sporting webs of meaning and become the focal point of processes of socialization. Football is a cultural phenomenon which is open to interpretation and in which diverse patterns of meaning have been recognized (Knoch 2002: 119–20). With football as the raw material, socializations of varying denseness and durability could be formed that were subject to cultural change.

Finally, German football has a very special attribute that has helped its development into a major cultural phenomenon: the capacity to have symbolic meanings. Symbols play a decisive role in constructing communities. They enrich the interpretation of behaviour patterns with a degree of aesthetic condensation that facilitates the communication of shared cultural contents. Symbols act as perceivable expressions of those cultural dispositions that circulate in communities. The development of a long-lasting collective identity is not possible without the use of symbols, which form shared meanings and values and provide it with vital visibility (Giesen 1999: 17–18).¹

Germany is probably the only country in Europe where football has managed to gain symbolic qualities in such great measure. The reason for this is the exceptional situation after the Second World War that left Germany in a situation of such symbolic devastation that football could fill the gap.

Origins and cultural meanings

At the beginning, it did not seem as though football in Germany could ever achieve such importance. Initially it was an import from England, played by young sportsmen who experienced enthusiasm for a dynamic and physical team sport as opposed to 'German gymnastics' which they felt to be stereotyped and boring. Until 1914, football in Germany was a minority sport in a society that, to a considerable extent, regarded sport with contempt (Eisenberg 1999: 209–14). However, football had an enormous inherent potential for development. It was mainly discovered by the expanding new middle classes: by the growing number of young employees who had enough leisure and money to play football on Sundays (*ibid.*: 180–9). The breakthrough from a marginal to a mass sport came with the First World War. For the first time, millions of German soldiers came into contact with this sport when matches were arranged, mainly on (the more peaceful sections of) the Western Front to relieve the monotony of military life (*ibid.*: 319–21; Pyta 2004a: 13–15). In November 1918 they brought these experiences back home with them in their rucksacks. Therefore it is not surprising that the war was followed by a wave of the formation of football clubs, with football played in an organized way even in provincial backwaters.

The meteoric rise of football was only possible because football qualified as an expression for configurations of meaning which were mainly formed by the experience of the First World War. It is important to note that the war established a new attitude towards physicality. Without doubt the ubiquity of death lowered respect for physical integrity and led to a greater willingness for violence that manifested itself in excesses of unprecedented political violence (Ziemann 2003).

Sport was also an outlet for a new mode of bodily behaviour. The social association with the human body manifested in sports was not characterized solely by exhibitions of brute force and masculinity. A man's pure physical strength did not count for much – in comparison to abilities such as the dynamic use of the body or virtuoso interaction of body and military technique required to survive the war. Playful control of a football by a dexterous body that could be adapted to the speed of the game may therefore be seen as a social practice that expressed this new body culture.²

Football's ability to adapt to the mass cultural tendencies that were on the increase after 1918 was equally important. Rapidly growing industrialization and urbanization laid the foundations in Imperial Germany for the propagation of popular culture. Around 1900, popular arts and amusements characterized the everyday life of many Germans in large cities (Maase 2001: 9–28). After the end of the empire this trend also applied to the growing affection for sports. The increasing number of people interested in sports were recruited not only from active participants but also from those who did not actively take part in sports themselves but enjoyed matches

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as spectators (Saldern 1992, 1999). Football in particular profited from this development. During the Weimar Republic, it left all its rivals in the shade and became the people's most popular sport by far (Eggers 2001: 70–1).

In this respect football was class-independent. It was no longer the property of the middle classes. Rather, it was particularly popular with the working classes. The socialist labour movement went to great efforts to arrange football-playing workers into a socialist Workers' Gymnastics and Sports Organization (*Arbeiter-Turn- und Sportbund*) to attract them away from the bourgeois *Deutscher Fußballbund* (DFB). In the end all efforts to act against the class-independent maelstrom, driven by the cultural phenomenon football, were in vain. Most workers practised their sport in associations that were affiliated with the apolitical DFB. They did not wish to articulate their class-consciousness in a football match, wanting instead to play football in front of an increasing number of spectators. Financial aspects did, of course, play an important role for them. As a result of the growing number of spectators, football in the 1920s became a financially lucrative activity, in which considerable sums could be earned by prominent players. Although most of the DFB officials cherished the amateur ideal, they were not able to prevent covert payments to prominent players (Oswald 2004). Famously, the officials of the *Westdeutscher Spielverband* made an example of the workers' club, FC Schalke 04 from Gelsenkirchen in the Ruhr area, by suspending nearly the whole team due to violations of the amateur regulations. There was much hypocrisy in this decision, because other teams quietly paid their best players. However, the example of Schalke 04 shows that even miners – which most of the players were – were not immune to the temptations of the commercialization of football, which was nowhere more despised than in the socialist sports movement (Gehrmann 2004).

Football even conquered the religious boundaries which are so characteristic of German history. Although political Catholicism tried to integrate the expanding game of football into its differentiated organization of clubs and societies by founding a Catholic sports association, it was difficult to persuade football-loving Catholics to practise their sports exclusively within a Catholic microcosmos (Preißler 2004). In the end, football withstood all attempts to make it a compliant part of a socialist or Catholic organizational culture.

Yet why did tens of thousands of spectators throng into the stadiums in the 1920s to watch a match? Their need for spectacle is not in itself enough to explain why enthusiasm for this kind of sport created such a stir. The cultural power of football derived from the fact that spectators could interpret it in a non-sporting way. This inscription of a certain cultural signification propelled football in Germany towards a cultural mass phenomenon. Let us now go back to some thoughts that were articulated earlier

and the question of how football could complement the processes of socialization in the 1920s and 1930s.

The secret of football's success was that it could amalgamate with extraordinarily strong local and regional cultural traditions. The German Empire had only been recently founded in 1871 as a national state – but this did not mean that the single states which existed until then ceased to exist. The structural principle of the Empire was characterized by a distinct federalism. Under the *Bundesstaaten*, which gained their territorial shape mostly in the early nineteenth century, older regional traditions remained intact and were diligently cultivated.

German 'regions' are normally not geographically clear-cut entities but exist on the basis of cultural construction (Mergel 2000). 'Region' as a cultural space needs a set of meaning carriers which act as regional trade-marks and show affiliation to a region.

Football was predestined to adapt to regional traditions, because it heightened the impact of large cities in their metropolitan area. Such large cities provided services for a region; from the 1920s, sports in general and especially the flourishing sport of football formed a part of this. Football played an important role insofar as certain cities could be established as central locations.³

Football clubs were especially suited to acting as the figurehead and focal point of a large city and its metropolitan area because the teams usually consisted of players born in that city or region who spoke in local dialect and therefore achieved a high degree of identification. The most famous players of the dominant German football team in the 1930s, FC Schalke 04, were Fritz Szepan and Ernst Kuzorra, both born in Gelsenkirchen. And in the dominant team of the 1920s, 1. FC Nürnberg, the legendary keeper Heiner Stuhlfauth and centre-half Hans Kalb, both from Nürnberg, set the pace (Gömmel 2004). Enticed by under-the-table salary pay-outs, some leading players changed their clubs, but most remained faithful to their home teams. Compared to England, football was under-professionalized, but that acted only to strengthen club bonds and, consequently, the regional embedding of popular football clubs.

Big-city football clubs also connected with their regions because they had stadiums that could hold large crowds. In Stuttgart, Düsseldorf and Cologne, but also elsewhere, top clubs profited from the fact that in the 1920s the communal authorities spent enormous amounts of money (Eggers 2004c: 97–8; Nielsen 2002: 601–8) on building multifunctional sporting arenas that offered space for 50,000 to 70,000 spectators. It was not only the local football clubs that profited from these communal services, because in these stadiums other major sporting events such as gymnastics and athletics could also take place. But as the finals (at the very least) of the German championship took place in these large arenas, successful clubs could play in front of huge audiences that could not be achieved in the course of ordinary league business.

Such stadiums were not only purpose-built, they also offered a unique experience in which communication between the masses and the players took place in an atmosphere that allowed the audience to share the players' enthusiasm. Famous stadiums such as the legendary *Zerzabelshof* in Nürnberg formed a space⁴ in which dynamic processes of understanding between spectators and players could evolve. These processes enfold, of course, due to a shared commitment to a city and its region. As a result, football stadiums became important centres of regional identity.

Furthermore, the organizational structures of German football favoured regional ties. As opposed to England and other great footballing nations, there was no national league in Germany until 1963. The ordinary competition took place in seven regional associations, all of which were members of the DFB. The best teams of each regional association qualified at the end of a season for the final round of the German championship, which was carried out in a knock-out system ending in a final. This extreme federal structure mirrored the regional alignment of German football.

Little changed in the regional roots of German football until the 1950s. Football remained in its local and regional environment – and that is where the force of its socialization was. At a national level football did not initiate a process of socialization. This was due, on the one hand, to the fact that the concept of a German nation was strongly rooted in military values. The idea of Germany as an armed and well-fortified nation left no room for football as a national figurehead. Overzealous DFB functionaries occasionally stressed that football complemented military training.⁵ But this ingratiation often had perspicuous reasons, because in nationalistic circles football, being English, was treated with suspicion.⁶ Therefore it tried to defend itself from these attacks by stressing its supposed military usefulness (Pyta 2004a:10–12). But those webs of meaning manifested in football eluded any short-sighted military functionalization – attending a football match was not a continuation of war by other means.

On the other hand, German football lacked notable success at international level; since the proof of German superiority was missing there was no exploitation of football, especially during the period of National Socialism. At the World Cup in Italy in 1934 the German team surprisingly reached fourth place, but at the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin, where German sportsmen won the most gold medals of all nations, the footballers failed and were defeated in the preliminary round 2–0 by the 'football dwarf' Norway. In 1938, the post-Anschluss 'Great German' national football team disgraced itself, failing to get past the first round, being eliminated after losing to Switzerland. Even if Germany did have deficits with respect to national symbols, football was completely unsuitable in demonstrating feelings of national superiority. Nevertheless, football continued to flourish during the period of National Socialism. The boom in spectators continued and reached new peaks. The reasons for this development are still unclear

since a cultural history of football during the Third Reich has not yet been written. Still, some patterns of explanation may be discerned.

When, on 7 June 1936, the two dominant clubs of their time, FC Schalke 04 and 1. FC Nürnberg, competed in the semi-finals of the German championship in neutral Stuttgart, the capital of Württemberg, at least 75,000 people watched the game. This was the highest number of spectators ever to attend a football match in Germany.⁷ Approximately 35,000 spectators travelled from other regions to Stuttgart, but most of the spectators came from Stuttgart and its environment.⁸ But why did people from Württemberg rush to a game, in which none of the players were from Württemberg? And why did most of them support Schalke 04 of all teams,⁹ a club from the distant Ruhr, rather than the team from Nürnberg, which was at least – like Stuttgart – part of southern Germany?

Schalke 04 is a phenomenon which needs to be explained, since its fan community reaches far beyond the usual regional borders. There was no regional centre behind Schalke 04, such as Nürnberg (the centre for Franken), the Hamburger SV (for northern Germany) or Fortuna Düsseldorf (for the Rhineland). This club did not even take its name from the city of Gelsenkirchen, but from a district in which the club was rooted. Even Gelsenkirchen was not, by any measure, a metropolis of the Ruhr territory. This was the most densely populated area in Europe at that time, containing, over a length of 80 km and a width of 40 km, ten major cities like beads on a string along the rivers Ruhr and Emscher. The steel city of Gelsenkirchen remained economically and culturally far behind Dortmund, Essen and Duisburg.

This club from a suburb of Gelsenkirchen managed to garner support from beyond the borders of its home town throughout the Ruhr territory, becoming a part of the Ruhr area's identity (Gehrmann 2004). But its attraction reached far beyond the Ruhr region. This could be easily observed in the finals of the championships that were played in Berlin from 1936 onwards. Here Schalke 04 was supported by a huge majority of the neutral spectators from Berlin, giving Schalke practically home advantage. Of course, most football experts were enthused by Schalke's inimitable style, which was known as the *Schalcker Kreisel*, an outstanding example of perfect link-up play. Moreover, in Ernst Kuzorra and Fritz Szepan the club from the Ruhr area possessed two exceptional footballers who were highly popular throughout Germany. Kuzorra and Szepan could be called the first German football stars; they were even the object of a star cult (Berns and Wiersch 1936). The main reason for this response to Schalke in Germany may have been that it served as a substitute for a national team that failed to be a focus of identity due to its lack of success.

However, there are also indications that Schalke 04 served as a projection surface for non-sporting patterns of meaning. The National Socialist regime had destroyed socialist and Christian labour movements, and consequently both of these important social forces lacked an organizational centre.

Therefore one can suppose that in those circles a demonstration of sympathy for FC Schalke 04 meant a demonstration of sympathy for the no longer existing labour movement, since Schalke 04 – as a workers' club – could be regarded as a part of it. Conversely, the National Socialist regime did not dislike the sporting successes of the labour club, since this could be regarded as an appreciation of the working classes in Hitler's Germany (Fischer and Lindner 1999: 156–63). As a symbol for the progressing integration of the workers into the Nazi state, the triumph of FC Schalke had a significance that reached far beyond sports.¹⁰

Filling the symbolic void

Overall, football remained, until the end of the German Reich, a cultural phenomenon, whose community-creating power was restricted mainly to the regions. After the fall of Hitler this would change – football achieving a unique triumph as a cultural asset in the 1950s due to its rise to a symbol of political-cultural orientation for the West German people. In no other European country has football established such a symbolic character in the post-war period. Why was this the case in West Germany?

Until 1945 the highest community-creating power in Germany emanated from nationalism. The profound desire to overcome all social, confessional and political rifts, which were particularly evident in German society, was expressed in the 'spirit of 1914'. The drive towards political unity, unbroken after the end of the First World War, underwent its symbolic incarnation in the persons of Hindenburg and Hitler. Hindenburg, the Commander in the First World War, was regarded as the personification of this national will for unity (Pyta 2004b). Adolf Hitler could connect with this via his core message of *Volksgemeinschaft*, which evolved an enormous internal integrative impact while threatening so-called *Gemeinschaftsfremde* with physical extermination (see, at great length, Wehler 2003). Hitler drove nationalism so far that in 1945 Germany was in ruins, with German nationalism in all its forms and varieties also disqualified as a community-building force for the foreseeable future. Thus all the normative dispositions that had served as cultural suppliers for nationalism were contaminated. Military ideals were especially ostracized to such an extent that West Germans, in their tentative search for a new collective identity, could find no support in the fund of traditional German nationalism with its martial emphasis.

In a symbolic respect the 'zero hour' in West Germany struck in 1945. The Federal Republic of Germany, established in 1949, took care to avoid anything in its profile that could offer even the slightest nationalistic echo. This symbolic reorientation was the prerequisite for football to slip into the symbolic gap. For this purpose, however, a decisive event was needed, namely the triumph of the West German team in the World Cup final on 4 July 1954. The German outsiders beat the Hungarian dream team and

great favourites 3–2. Previously the Hungarians had been considered invincible, having humiliated England on the ‘hallowed turf’ of Wembley 6–3. This unexpected German success gave football a significant symbolic leverage.

Until the legendary 4 July 1954, football in Germany had continued on an upward trend – although it still only created identity at a regional level. Regional consciousness survived relatively undamaged during the period of National Socialism and was also available as a *Vergemeinschaftungsofferte* after 1945 because it had not been infiltrated by hyper-nationalism. The federal German culture of the 1950s was therefore affected by the retreat into home and region (Applegate 1990; Holtmann 1998), from which football, with its close connection to regional culture, also benefited. But football’s popularity was also enhanced by economic development in the 1950s. The ‘economic miracle’ that began in the 1950s led to the lower classes’ participation for the first time in economic prosperity, and 1950s’ Germany transformed itself increasingly into a consumer society (Prinz 2003; Siegrist *et al.* 1997).

On the one hand, this development meant that the consumption of football in the form of attendance at football matches was open to more and more classes (Eisenberg 2003). On the other hand, it enhanced the cultural constructive force of football, since, in the ‘levelled-out middle-class society’ of the 1950s and 1960s, conventional social stratifications lost their binding power (Goch 2003). The social cohesion of the working class declined visibly as the slogan ‘wealth to everyone’ became honoured in the daily life of the German industrial working class. The dogmatic Catholic milieu shrunk proportionately as the spread of consumer society advanced the secularization of the Catholic environment. Furthermore, considerable population shifts – the influx of millions of refugees and displaced persons, and, (since the 1960s) of foreign guest-workers – fundamentally changed the structure of the population after 1945.

In this period of eroding traditional social relations, the commitment to a region as a focal point of identity gained new significance – and in this way football clubs became more and more important as figureheads of regions which were subjected to rapid social change. This development may be demonstrated by the examples of 1. FC Kaiserslautern and VfB Stuttgart. 1. FC Kaiserslautern eked out its marginal existence as a mere local figure in the Palatinate until the end of the 1940s. But its sporting success, which is associated inseparably with the name Fritz Walter, captain of the German World Cup-winning team, turned this football club in the Palatinate, which ran through a fundamental structural change due to the deployment of tens of thousands of US soldiers after 1950, into a trade mark of Palatine identity. Since some five players of the victorious World Cup team belonged to 1. FC Kaiserslautern, the Palatines could proudly proclaim that it was actually the Palatinate that had become World Champion on 4 July 1954 (Herzog 2004). In contrast to the less well-developed infrastructure of the

Palatinate, the middle Neckar Valley around Stuttgart, Baden-Württemberg's capital, underwent a veritable economic boom in the 1950s. The population in Greater Stuttgart increased rapidly – and with it also the long-established Swabian need to emphasize their own identity in the face of social change. As the population of the old Württemberg had to undergo the creation of the Federal State of Baden-Württemberg in 1952, which involved very heterogeneous cultural landscapes, VfB Stuttgart provided a perfect projection surface for the quest for and articulation of regional identity during a difficult time. VfB Stuttgart was extremely successful in the 1950s (both German Champions and German Cup winners twice) – and its teams consisted, almost without exception, of Swabians born and bred (Pyta 2004a).

In the early 1950s the spectators' reception of football reached record dimensions. It had long become German sports enthusiasts' favourite sport. Yet still there was a huge number of Germans who were neither interested in sports in general nor in football in particular. Until the World Cup in 1954, football in West Germany remained a cultural niche product – but this would change fundamentally with the unexpected victory. Until the semi-final against Austria, which was won 6–1 on 30 June 1954, the German public had not taken much notice of the national team's performance during the World Cup (Brüggemeier 2004: 174–81). Most intellectuals gave football the cold shoulder and sneered at the trend towards stereotyping which the sport supposedly aided and abetted. Extremely significant in this respect is the fact that the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ), the journalistic flagship of the liberal middle classes, did not find the team's first game of the tournament, the first meeting with Hungary on 21 June 1954 – won by the imperious Hungarians – worthy of mention on the front page. Instead the FAZ dedicated an article to the opening of the sailing regatta in Kiel, thus reporting on an exclusive sport which was much closer to FAZ readers' hearts than football: the sport of the masses (Brüggemeier 2004: 174). However, when a wave of football enthusiasm erupted in Germany after they won the semi-final, not even middle-class intellectuals could entirely ignore this phenomenon anymore – although they continued to treat it with incomprehension until the 1960s (Brüggemeier 2004: 144–54, 324, 331).

The football euphoria that erupted after the final is not due solely to the fact that the final offered all the elements of a perfect drama: after only nine minutes the German team were 2–0 down against the overwhelming favourites Hungary, then managed to equalize after eighteen minutes, overcame a period in the second half in which the Hungarians surged continually towards the goal, only to seal victory with a powerful left-foot shot by forward Helmut Rahn from just inside the penalty box six minutes before the final whistle. It was decisive that not only the approximately 20,000 Germans among the 65,000 spectators in the Wankdorf-Stadium in Berne watched these dramatic events on the spot: via radio broadcasts to millions,

the whole of Germany was there live. The World Cup final of 1954 was the first sports event in Germany to become a gigantic media event. This is why they could captivate millions of Germans who until then had viewed football with scepticism, but were infected with the football virus due to the World Cup final and its presence in the media.

Until then, reporting on football had played only a marginal role in the press and radio. There had already been an expanding sports press since the 1920s, with the daily newspapers also giving a certain amount of space to sports. But these reports catered, without exception, for expert readers who actively played football themselves. The coverage of sports on the radio was also aimed primarily at well-informed people (Eggers 2004c: 99–100). But the commentaries from the World Cup final on 4 July 1954 opened the hearts of those who had not been particularly interested in football and who were following a football match on the radio for the first time in their lives. The German commentator Herbert Zimmermann, a mere 37 years old, delivered an unforgettable moment of sporting journalism. For he did not resort to jargon which was familiar only to football insiders but translated this match with his voice into German living rooms so that even absolute beginners were infected by the drama of this event.¹¹ Without Zimmermann's warming commentary the effect of the World Cup victory would not have been as long-lasting, and this event, which had been, first of all, purely sporting in nature, would not have become a symbol of the cultural orientation in West Germany.

Therefore, since half of the nation were sitting by their radios that day, Zimmermann's commentary made a deep impression on the collective imagination of millions of Germans. The towns were virtually deserted that Sunday afternoon (Brüggemeier 2004: 210–12), since every household possessed a radio. Television had a considerably lower scope, although the victories of the German team bestowed a sales boom to this young medium in June and July of 1954. But in all, probably only around 40,000 TV sets were available on the day of the final – making them rare and precious goods. On 4 July there was therefore an enormous run on those public houses that possessed one of these precious sets; seats at the bar even had to be reserved by paying a small fee (Brüggemeier 2004: 210; Fest 2004; Goch 2003: 432). On balance, the final leveraged football in Germany into the media. From then on, football became an evergreen in the media and entered into a close alliance with the breathtaking rise of the entertainment industry. Thus football's rise as a part of everyday culture took place in parallel with the expansion of the entertainment industry in the telemedia age (Knoch 2002: 132–5).

Community and comradeship – Berne 1954 and after

However, the decisive question – why did the enthusiasm for the World Cup title become more than just a passing fancy going out as quickly as it

had flared up? – still requires an answer. Why could 4 July 1954 achieve a symbolic quality and make football a heavily symbolic cultural possession? What meaning, outside of sport, could millions of Germans, who had hitherto paid only scant attention to football, put into football?

Decisive in this respect was the fact that the victory produced a connection with a form of collective community which was still well known from the Second World War: namely that of comradeship. The way in which sporting success was publicly commented on in Germany makes it clear that the discourse used to explain the victory borrowed directly from the world of imagination still well known from the war. Reporting on football of the 1920s and 1930s still used a language which was purely inherent to football: accordingly, a match was won due to superior skill, because a team was technically more well versed, because it had better individual players or sometimes even because the referee had favoured it. In 1954, however, the biggest newspaper of the Ruhr Valley, the *Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* which was published in Essen, explained to its readers the following recipe for success behind the winning of the World Cup: 'A team of eleven comrades fighting unquestioningly did it.'¹² This chimed with Bundestrainer Herberger, who repeatedly pointed out in news conferences during the tournament the central importance of comradeship for sporting success (Brüggemeier 2004: 177). This was taken up by the leader of the Federal German State of Bavaria, Hans Ehard, in his speech at the reception for the world champions in Munich on 6 July 1954: 'a game in which comradeship and mutual understanding often mean more than the artistic art of ball control.'¹³

As a result, the public, politicians and sports writers and functionaries identified the community of fighting comrades – a community that millions of Germans had experienced as members of the German *Wehrmacht* – as a key to success on the pitch. The 'politically united people', in the form of an excessive nationalism, had had its day as a cultural system of reference after 1945 – but with the end of the war the form of camaraderie experienced more or less intensively by almost twenty million soldiers (Kühne 1998) had not lost its effect in creating a community.

'Comradeship' – which the soldiers of the Second World War, like those of the First World War before them, brought home with them in their rucksacks – was something that gave everything meaning, and it survived defeat undamaged. Moreover, emphasizing comradeship also allowed typically male ideals to live on in a time which was otherwise less receptive to the mythical transfiguration of great military feats and especially shied away from the public celebration of war heroes (Moeller 2001). The picture of the soldier in the early Federal Republic of Germany was not one of an upright warrior undefeated on the field as it was after 1918, it was not the emphasis of supposedly glorious deeds of the German generals, but a retreat to the popular perception of the ordinary 'Landser' (Knoch 2001) who had always remained loyal to the ideal of camaraderie while the political and

military leadership had been gambling away the victory which was within reach. Via the popular value of 'camaraderie', ideas of male bonding seeped into the federal German culture, which otherwise had no great demand for military heroes. Thus a constellation was created that gave a completely new meaning to a sporting success, stylizing the 'Miracle of Berne' as a triumph of comradeship (Knoch 2002). Thus, the symbolic resonance of the victory of Berne derives from the fact that it could be interpreted within the discursive formations of comradeship and could therefore take on collective patterns of meaning which had survived the war defeat undamaged.

The symbolic potential attributed to this sporting event also derives from another factor: the Federal Republic of Germany. Unable to focus on individuals to exemplify abstract meaning the republic suffered from an obvious lack of symbols in the early 1950s. Normally, individuals offer particular symbolic potential because they are especially suitable for the visualization of the collective imagination. However, the symbolic market for individuals in West Germany was void at the beginning of the 1950s. A survey of a representative cross-section of West Germans from November 1953 (Allensbach 1956: 132) – answering the question which great German had achieved the most for Germany – made this obvious. Otto von Bismarck came first by a considerable margin. However, Bismarck was not suitable as a symbolic advertisement for a Federal Republic of Germany in the process of integration into the West. Well behind in second place, alongside the incumbent Chancellor, Konrad Adenauer, came the one person who had brought disaster upon Germany and the world: Adolf Hitler. Admittedly, Adenauer was later to rise to *the* symbol of a liberal and European-minded Germany which orientated itself towards the West. This, however, did not happen until the 1960s after his controversial domestic policy of integration into the West and of the domestic social market economy had been adopted by the political opposition (Schwarz 1986, 1991).

In the early 1950s there was, however, an obvious lack of a symbolic figure who could illustrate the cultural roots of the new Bonn republic. This constellation allowed, for the first time, a large-scale sporting event to become the imaginative focal point of the cultural condition of the West Germans. The symbolic accession of 'King Football' is therefore also an expression of the civilization of collective identity formation in West Germany from the 1950s on.¹⁴ No less a person than the then Minister of the Interior Gerhard Schröder, articulated this connection when he welcomed the football world champions in the name of the Federal government during their visit to Bonn, proclaiming:

There is great enthusiasm for football in Germany and therefore your victory in Berne has made such a strong impression on us. We are not as rich as other nations in terms of national events and symbols which provide a strong collective experience. Therefore we are all the more grateful for every event which mediates such a real sense of community to us.¹⁵

The swinging 70s and the German football brand

Thus the symbolic adaptation of the World Cup victory in 1954 paved the way for football to become a cultural phenomenon which was able to create collective identity at a national level. The cultural ranking of football in Germany may be seen from the history of the interpretation of 4 July 1954. It is a fact that the 'Victory of Berne', as a cultural asset open to interpretation, has experienced various new interpretations which mirror the changes in cultural development in West Germany over the course of the past fifty years. It is therefore necessary to focus, in a cultural-historical journey through the history of German football since 1945, on the significance of the winning of the World Cup, the manifestation of which is closely connected to the revival of German football on a national and international level in the early 1970s.

The foundation of a German league in 1963 – the *Bundesliga* – brought professional football to Germany for the first time, when football clubs from the north, west and south played in one league to determine the German champion. The introduction of the *Bundesliga* was also a success story because the cards were shuffled afresh and new clubs became the focus of attention as a result of their extraordinary performances. In 1969 a ten-year dominance by two football clubs that left their mark on the young Bundesliga began: Borussia Mönchengladbach and Bayern Munich. Until 1968 a different club had won the championship every year, but in the following nine years from 1969 to 1977 only these two clubs were champions: Borussia Mönchengladbach – a hitherto unknown club from the Lower Rhine province – triumphed five times; FC Bayern – a club that, like its great rival, was not considered worthy of belonging to the founding members of the *Bundesliga* in 1963 – won four times.

The domination of these two clubs opened up new cultural ground for football in Germany. Admittedly, the *Bundesliga* clubs of the 1960s and 1970s could still fall back on the fact that they had strong regional roots and that they could rely on loyal regular supporters from the close surroundings. In addition, the outstanding players of the two top teams, Borussia Mönchengladbach and Bayern Munich, came from the Lower Rhine and Upper Bavaria respectively so that the supporters could easily identify with the players (Pyta 2004a: 27). However, as illustrated by their exceptional player personalities – Günter Netzer and Franz Beckenbauer – it may be shown that top German players started to emancipate themselves from the so far dominating regional-cultural monopolization of football until that point and were destined to become a personal projection space for the cultural upheavals of the 1960s and 1970s (Böttiger 1994: 20).

Günter Netzer and Franz Beckenbauer were both footballers who left their mark on German football in its heyday from 1970 to 1974. Both interpreted their respective role on the pitch in an inimitable way: Günter Netzer, the long-haired blond midfielder, embodied the perfect midfield

player who passed the ball brilliantly, demonstrated perfect ball control and, to top it all, scored goals from free kicks. His Bavarian adversary Franz Beckenbauer was an equally brilliant player but who had withdrawn from his original position in midfield to the deeper role of 'free man' in front of and sometimes behind the defence. Beckenbauer gave the role of the 'libero', which was tailor-made for his skills, a new interpretation: he was not just a sweeper-up but a player who got involved in the attack and brought his centre forward into an ideal shooting position via perfect one-tvos.

It was, however, not only Netzer's and Beckenbauer's virtuosity that raised German football to a new cultural level. Decisively, both players also represented those upheavals in the value system that rapidly became evident in West Germany, especially from 1968 onward. Traditional emphasis on values and corresponding ways of life such as the bourgeois family lost their validity to such a degree that an increase in cultural autonomy led to a pluralism of lifestyles (Rödter 2004: 28–30). Netzer and Beckenbauer, in this respect, were very much children of their time and exponents of the 1970s' cultural experimentation. Both were born in simple homes, in 1944 and 1945 respectively, in the city where their football career started. Yet both set off for new shores in football and in their private lives. Netzer left the football idyll on the Lower Rhine to progress to new levels at world-famous Real Madrid. Beckenbauer remained loyal to his FC Bayern until 1977, before moving to America to open up new perspectives for himself in New York.

Moreover, both led private lives that fitted very well with the cultural upheavals of the 1970s. Netzer cultivated the image of the 'the rebel with the ball' with great success. He was an articulate lover of fast sports cars, was very fashion-conscious and stood out away from the pitch by running a fashionable disco. He became the darling of left-wing German intellectuals who saw in him someone who broke with conservative traditions on and off the pitch: on the pitch because Netzer celebrated a way of playing that represented a radical break from the supposed German 'football virtues' of competitive strength and eagerness; in private because he was regarded as a nonconformist (Böttiger 1994: 104–10). Although Netzer's rebellious image was rather artificial, having been created by intellectuals, it is, however, in no small way thanks to him that German football was now also accepted culturally by these intellectuals (Seitz 1987: 89–93). This sector finally dropped its reservations about football because the new German football style of the 1970s, in conjunction with cultural emancipation tendencies, permitted Günter Netzer and his team mates to become legitimate objects of literary reflection. Symptomatic of this is the expression: 'Netzer kam aus der Tiefe des Raums' ('Netzer came out of the depth of space'). It put the power of fascination and the aesthetic quality of football as a culturally legitimated object into words and became a familiar quotation in intellectual circles (Harig and Kühn 1974; Pyta 2004a: 2; Wolf 1980).