



Sport Fandom's Contribution to Democracy: How Soccer Fans Socialize into Good Citizenship



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Oct. 24
Research
Conversations



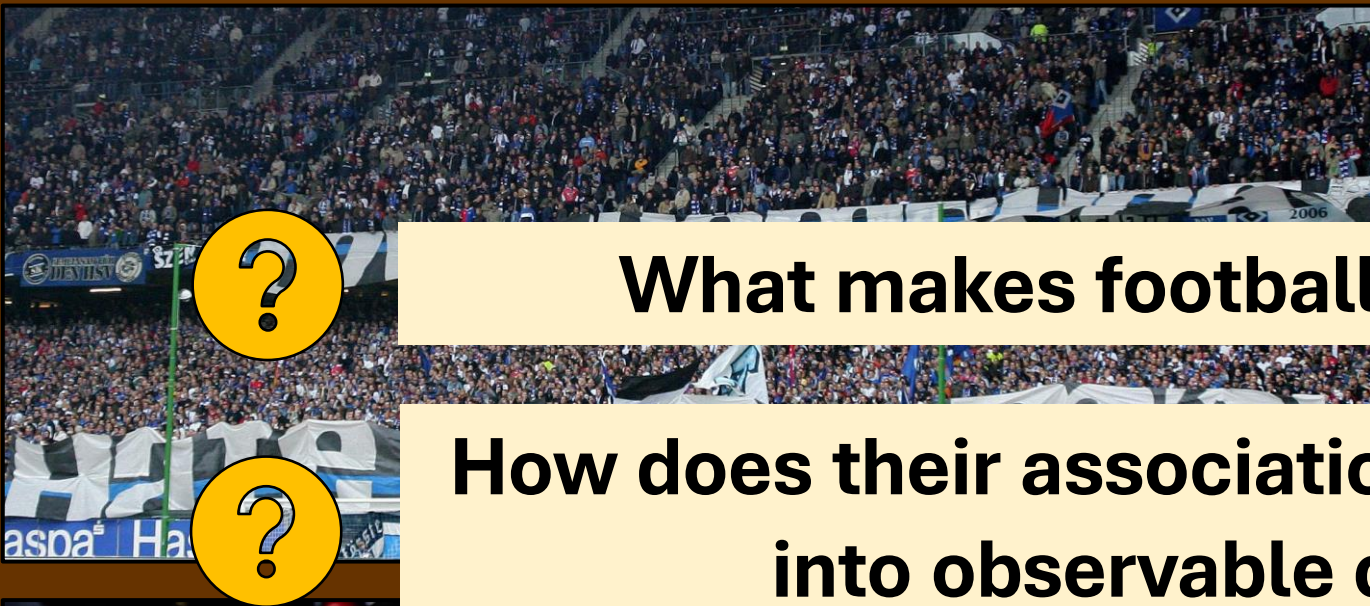
Dortmund

1945

AVERAGE

£ 946.5

NEW STADIUM



What makes football fans become civic?

How does their associational experience translate into observable civic outcomes?



- **Voluntary association**

- Organizations that compose the “civil society”
- “Large free schools training citizens in the art of democracy” (Tocqueville, 1835)

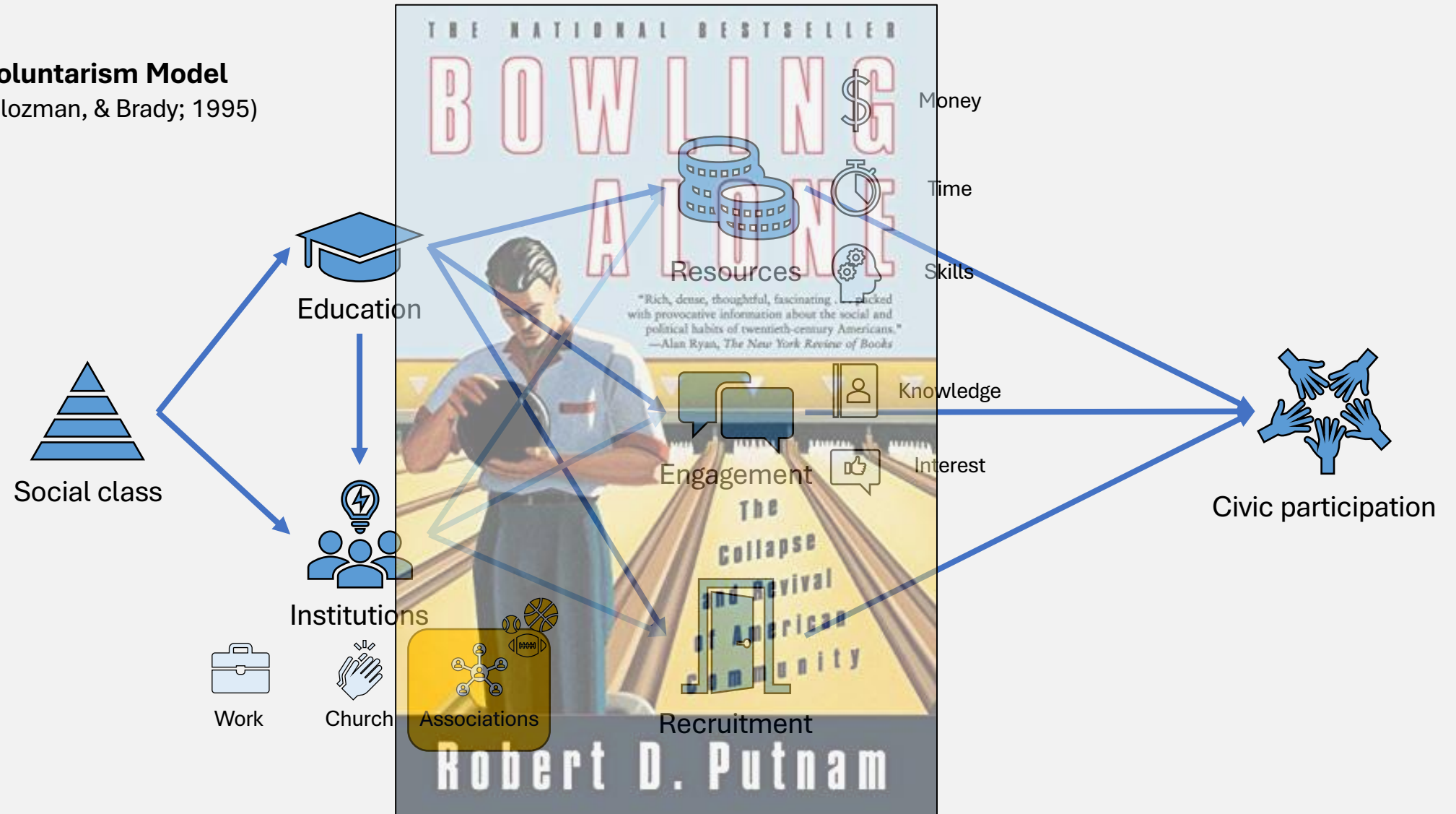
- **Neo-Tocquevillian approach to voluntary associations**

- Positive relationship between participation in civic association and democracy (e.g., Putnam, 1993; van der Meer & van Ingen, 2009; Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995)
 - Identifying various dynamics internal to associational engagement (e.g., Baggetta, 2009; Eastis, 1998; Fung, 2003; Putnam 2000; Skocpol, 2003)
 - Understanding how associational life affects participants’ civic engagement (e.g., Coffe & Guys, 2007; Hooghe & Quintelier, 2013; McFarland & Thomas; 2006; Rapp & Freitag, 2014)
 - Theorizing the type of associations most conducive to pro-social values (e.g., Quintelier, 2008; van der Meer, 2014)

Civic Engagement (Cont.)



Civic Voluntarism Model (Verba, Schlozman, & Brady; 1995)



- **Sport organizations and civic engagement**

- Comprises the largest category within civil society (Gang, 2020; Harding, 2016)
- “Good governance comes from singing choirs and soccer clubs.” (Dekker & Uslaner, 2001, p. 2)
 - Face-to-face social interaction
 - Heterogenous membership structure (e.g., Ibsen et al., 2019; Seippel, 2006)

- **Inconsistency in findings**

- Political engagement, generalized trust, community engagement...
- Prevalent usage of content-based typologies (Baggetta 2009; Baggetta & Madsen, 2018; Firat & Glanville, 2017)
 - Limits of large-N quantitative techniques (Baggetta & Bredenkamp, 2019)
 - Categorization of sport organizations under recreational category
 - Disregarding the heterogeneity within ‘sport organizations’
 - Structures unique to each associational setting

Sport Organizations as Voluntary Associations

- **Football fan clubs**

- Commercialization and neo-liberalist ideals in professional football
- Led to inevitable cultural and structural change (Numerato & Giulianotti, 2018)
- Fan activism
 - Citizenship-consumer orientation (Numerato, 2015)
 - Radius of involvement expands beyond football (Gang et al., 2023)



- **Extended spatial usage of football supporters**
 - Broadened use of space (e.g., Gang et al., 2023)
 - Transcending matchday (on-field) experience
 - Football stadia exhibiting political and social identities (Guschwan, 2017)
- **Wider spectrum of associational engagement**
 - Transnational network of supporters (Numerato & Guilianotti, 2018)
 - Collaborating with organizations outside of football (Totten, 2015)
 - Active participation in issue-based campaigns (Guilianotti, 2005; Numerato, 2015)

“To identify civic opportunities generated in the football fan communities to understand how these will be materialized in individual fans’ wider civic arena.”

Research Question: “What are the elements of **civic opportunity structure** of the football fan clubs.”



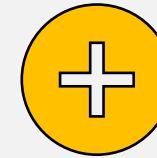
Opportunities to
acquire skills



Opportunities to
establish relational ties

“To understand the civic potential of football fan clubs.”

Research Question: “What are the **civic outcomes** that arise out of football fans’ associational involvement in their fan clubs?”



Socialization



Self-selection

- **Civic opportunities** (e.g., Baggetta, 2009)
 - Interpersonal interaction (e.g., Baggetta & Bredenkamp, 2019; Putnam 1995, 2000)
 - Institutional relationships (Darcy et al., 2014; Lichterman, 2005)
 - Governance experience (e.g., Brady et al., 1995; Verba et al., 1995)
- **Two kinds of schooling**
 - **Citizenship socialization hypothesis**
 - Development of prosocial behavior (e.g., Putnam, 2000)
 - Early engagement rears positive formation of civic identity (e.g., Levine, 2007)
 - Areas unrelated to politics fostering democratic imagination (e.g., Perrin, 2009)
 - **Self-selection hypothesis**
 - Civic involvement reflects existing prosocial attitudes (Uslaner, 2002)
 - Educational achievement as strongest and most robust predictor (Musick & Wilson, 2008)

- **Fan clubs of professional football teams**

- Critical ethnography (Carspecken, 1996)
- Hamburger SV (HSV) & FC St. Pauli (FCSP)
- Fan clubs within Hamburg region
 - 217 (HSV) & 349 (FCSP)



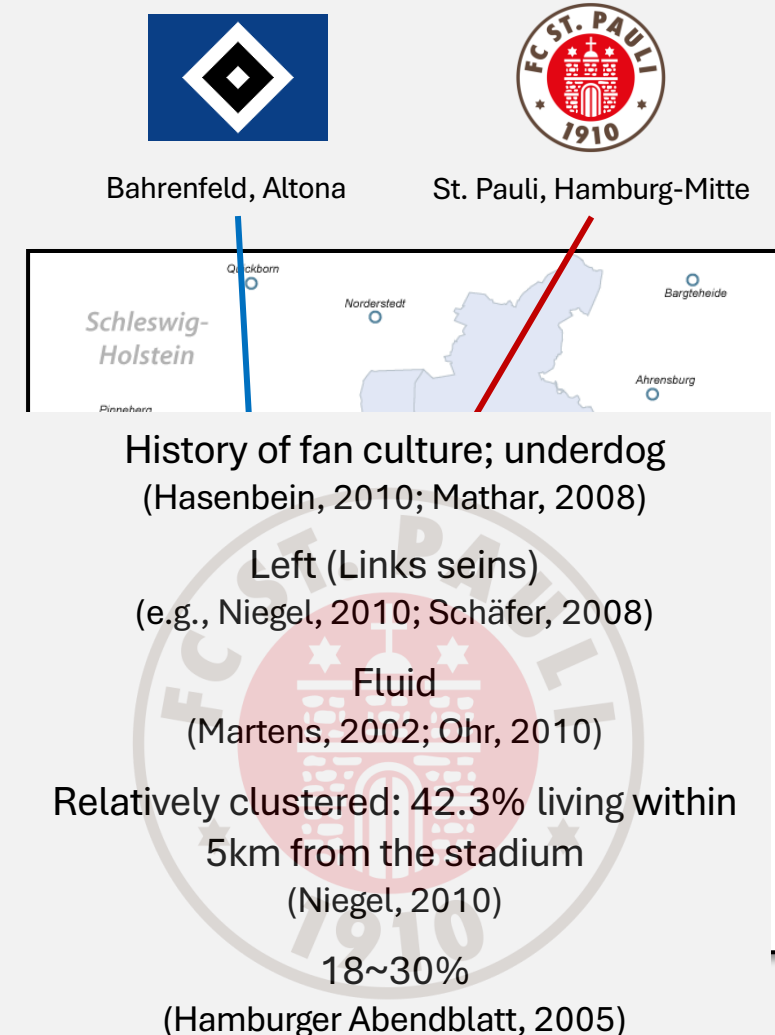
Identity

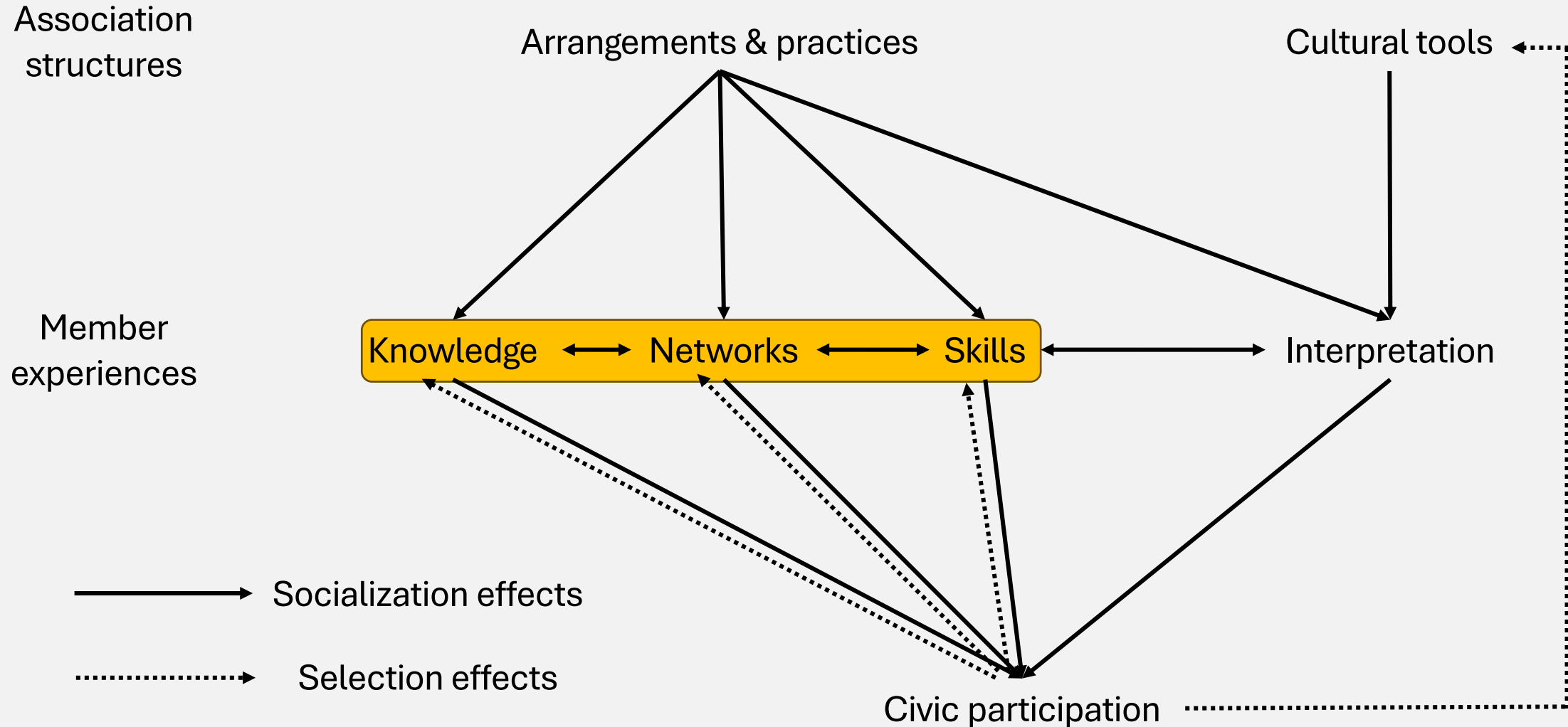
Political Orientation

Pathway to Membership

Regional Fanbase

Composition of Female Fans

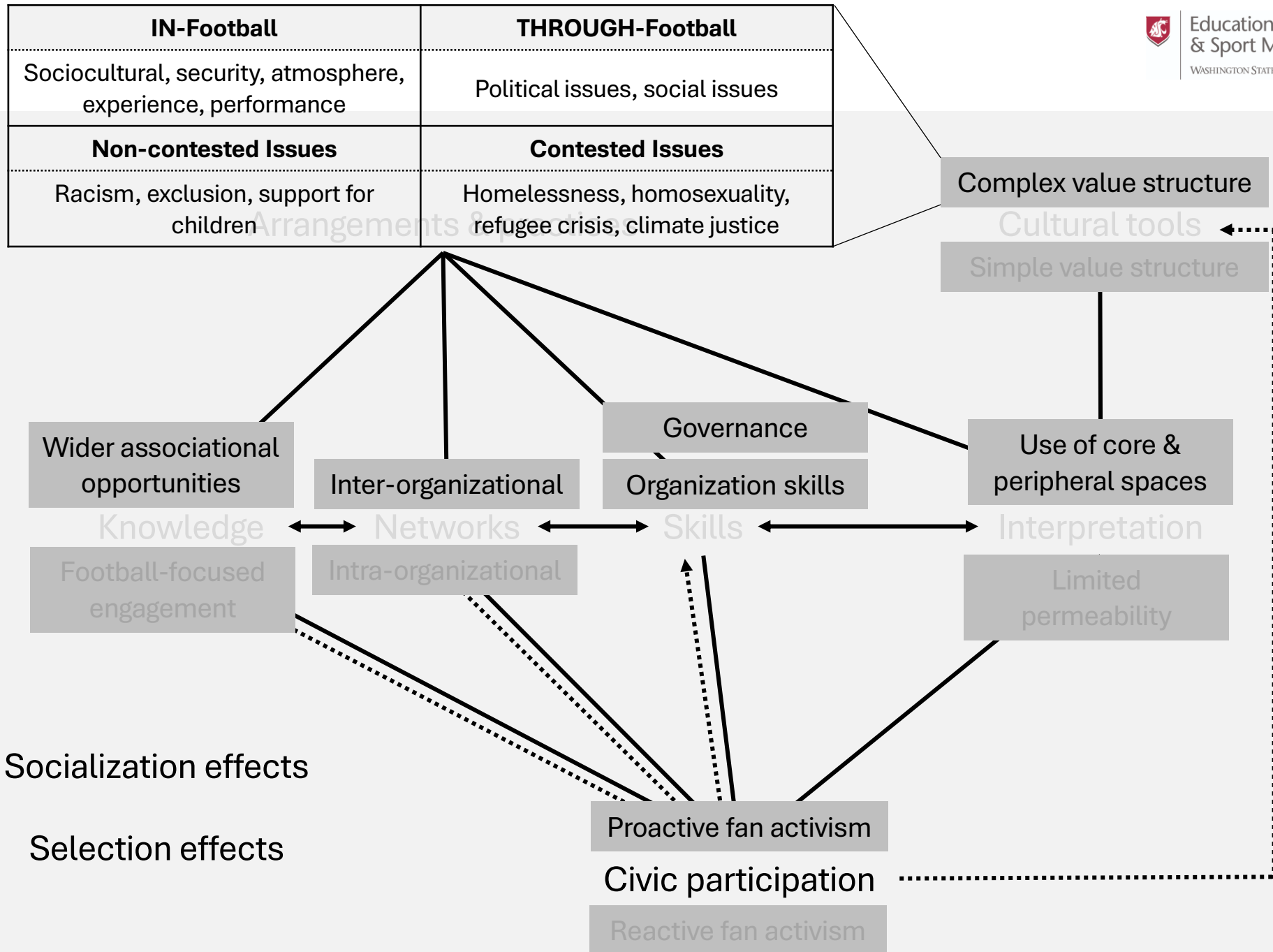




Results

Association
structures



Member
experiences



A large crowd of people is gathered in a stadium or arena, holding various flags and banners. The scene is festive, with many colorful balloons (red, yellow, green, blue, pink) floating in the air. The crowd is dense, and the atmosphere appears to be one of celebration or protest. In the background, there are large white banners with black silhouettes of two people holding hands. Other banners include a heart with an equals sign, the word 'LOVE', and the word 'FAS'. A banner with the word 'MO' is also visible. The crowd is diverse in age and appearance, and many people are wearing winter clothing like hats and scarves. The lighting is bright, suggesting an indoor or well-lit outdoor venue.

Why do civic potentials of sport organizations matter?

Why It Matters

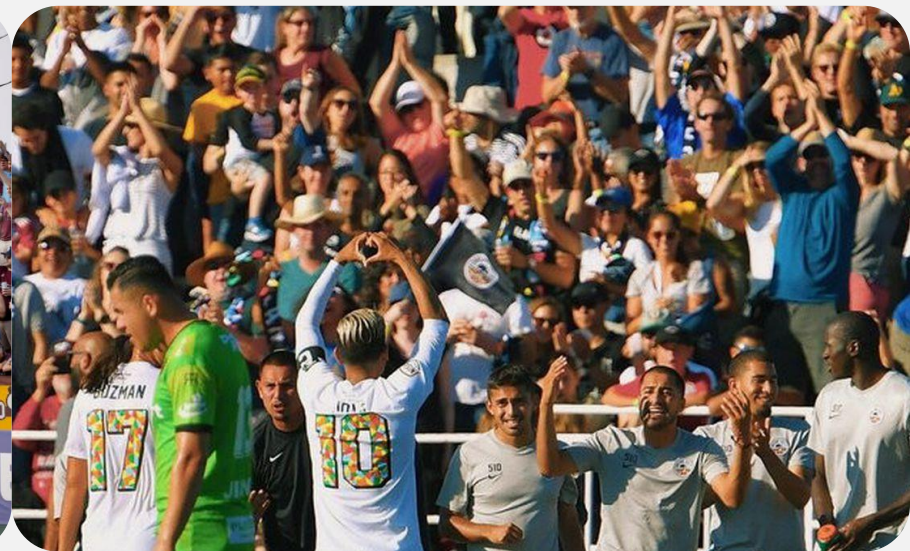
-  Football fandom as a new subculture in American sport
-  Practicing small-scale democracy
-  Sport stadia as potential public sphere?



Portland Timbers FC



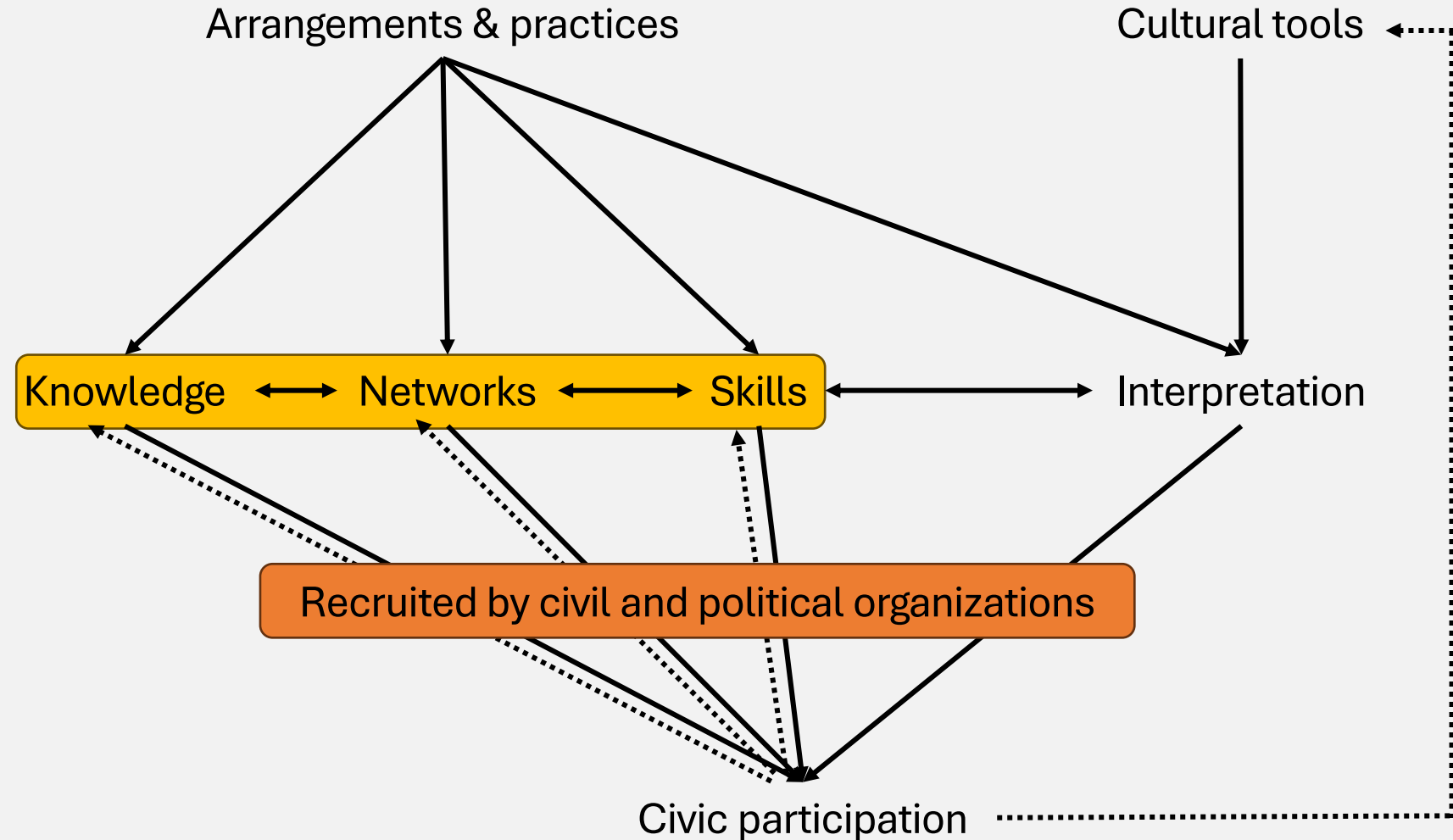
Detroit City FC






Oakland Roots SC

Association
structures

Member
experiences



Why It Matters

-  Helping students to answer the 'why' questions
-  Sport as a mechanism for social change
-  Understanding the niche of sport in the hyper-commercial market economy



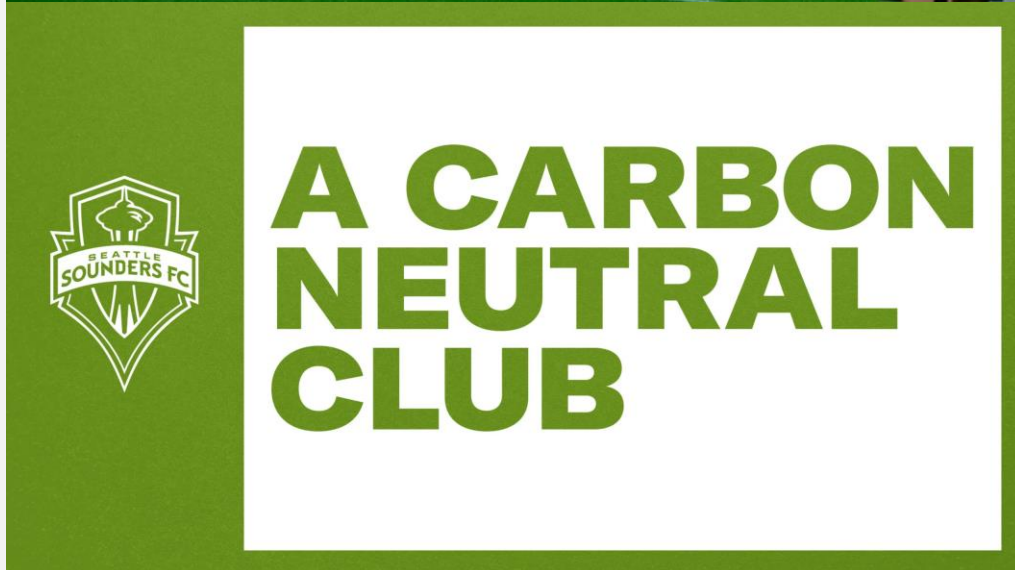


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UNSERER
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