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Football Supporters and the Commercialisation of Football

Comparative Responses across Europe

As football clubs have become luxury investments, their decisions increasingly mirror those of any other business organisation. Football supporters have been encouraged to express their club loyalty by 'thinking business' - acting as consumers and generating money deemed necessary for their clubs to compete at the highest levels. In critical studies, supporters have been portrayed as passive or reluctant consumers who, imprisoned by enduring club loyalties, embody a fatalistic attitude to their own exploitation. As this book aims to show, however, such expressions of loyalty are far from hegemonic and often interface haphazardly with traditional ideas about what constitutes the 'loyal fan'. While there is little doubt that professional football is experiencing commodification, the reality is that football clubs are not simply businesses, nor can they ever aspire to be organisations driven solely by expanding or protecting economic value. Rather, clubs hover uncertainly between being businesses and community assets. Football Supporters and the Commercialisation of Football explores the implications of this uncertainty for understanding supporter resistance to, and compromise with, commodification. Every club and its supporters exist in their own unique national and local contexts. In this respect, this book offers a Euro-wide comparison of supporter reactions to commercialisation and provides unique insight into how football supporters actively mediate regional, local and national contexts, as they intersect with the universalistic presumptions of commerce. This book was previously published as a special issue of Soccer and Society.



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