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The definers and standard setters of security: mapping the security field's regulators through European football

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ABSTRACT

By drawing upon and attaching a new layer to the "security field" concept, this article examines and conceptualizes European security practices and challenges through the lens of European football. At a critical juncture for security in both Europe and football, this article questions (i) how the supranational regulation informing European football's security field has evolved since 1985 and (ii) how exactly the security field's regulators – the Council of Europe, Council of the EU, and UEFA – set the standards for the remainder of the security field. Relatedly, it asks what this tells us about the power to define security. Drawing upon theoretical perspectives located in International Political Sociology, the sociology of leisure and sport, and publicly available documents and conventions, this conceptual article contributes to our understanding of security in Europe. It argues, first, that the security field in European football is indicative of wider security transformations. Second, that the security field's regulators configure and dictate the wider field and possess the power to standardize security and the prioritization of threats. This remains important because, to fully understand and analytically capture the security field in European football, one must conceptually account for its standard setting organizations.

Introduction

Leisure and sporting spaces represent important windows for sociological analyses of security (Giulianotti & Klauser, 2010; Lisle, 2013). In the context of European security practices and challenges of the twenty-first century, several academic analyses have explored the supranational regulation of, and networked exchanges that occur between security professionals or organizations areas such as drug trafficking, organized crime and immigration (e.g. Bigo, 2008a; Carrapico, 2014). Broadly, as Bigo et al. (2010) write, current security practices in the European Union (EU) area are facilitated by surveillance and technologies of control, knowledge exchange and interactions between various institutions. Moreover, as the EU's security agenda has broadened to account for new threats commonly linked with transnational mobilities, so may an expansive

supranational security governance within Europe be detected (Kaunert & Léonard, 2012).

Against this background, within what must be considered a site of *contested leisure* – namely, European elite football – the complex areas of security in relation to European football-related disorder and "counter-hooliganism" have been subjected to sociological and legal analysis in the post-1985 era (Mojet, 2005; Spaaij, 2013; Taylor, 1986; Tsoukala, 2007, 2009a, 2009b). Occasionally, football is also given a brief mention in discussions of European security more broadly (Benyon, 1994; Besselink et al., 2010; Bigo, 2008a). For example, and interestingly, football matches are mentioned in the same context as terrorism, passport data and money laundering as a relevant issue for understanding the mechanisms of information exchange and cooperation between authorities in Europe (Bigo et al., 2010). Crucially, whilst the turn toward leisure, sport and its spaces as valuable areas for International Political Sociology (IPS) has gathered momentum in recent years (Boyle & Haggerty, 2009; Bulley & Lisle, 2012; Hagmann, 2017; Lisle, 2013), the above solely reinforces the importance of sport and leisure as promising sites for analyses of European security more widely. As closely linked to this, the purpose of this conceptual article is to revisit, survey and (re)conceptualize the security field (cf. Bigo, 2000a) of European football and, in doing so, focus particularly its regulators who set its standards and define security in these contested leisure spaces, as visited by large mobilities of fans, tourists and consumers annually.

By cross-pollinating, and drawing extensively from extant bodies of literature, predominantly in the subdisciplines of IPS and the sociology of leisure, and sport, and publicly available documents and texts from European organizations including European football's governing body, Union of European Football Associations (UEFA), the conceptual article engages with two key research questions. First, how has the emergence of the supranational regulation in European football's security *evolved* throughout the 2010s and 2020s? In policy and practice, these two decades have been characterized by the intensified contestations of security in football cultures (Lee Ludvigsen, 2022a; Numerato, 2018). Indeed, on a European level, key developments have occurred in form of the European Convention (signed in July 2016) on an integrated safety, security and services at football matches and other sports events, often referred to as the Saint Denis Convention. However, remarkably, other incidents in Saint Denis, Paris, powerfully encapsulate the contemporary relevance of security and seriousness of disorder in football: in 2015, *Stade de France* was targeted in a terrorist attack, and in 2022 large-scale chaos emerged during the 2022 UEFA Champions League final between Real Madrid and Liverpool almost leading to a disaster. The latter was, in part, described to show the limitations of transnational information-sharing and to undermine the Saint Denis Convention (Hunter, 2022). Second, the article questions how the security field's regulators "set the standards" for the remainder of the field. Building on Tsoukala's (2009b) work, it focuses on the main "decision-making centres" of Council of the EU, Council of Europe and UEFA, their supranational influence and promotion of universal, recognized standards that other actors in the field must normatively adapt to. However, this concurrently speaks to these organizations' power to define the sources of insecurity and provide the tools to manage threats (Bigo, 2000a). Overall, the article argues that European football's security field is symptomatic of wider security changes, and the field continues to be *dictated* and *configured* by the mentioned supranational regulators'

frameworks. This remains important as it directly impacts the leisure spaces and life-worlds inhabited by millions of football fans on an annual basis.

At a critical moment in European football's security, this article, by conceptually advancing further and attaching a regulatory layer to sporting "security fields" (Giulianotti & Klauser, 2010) makes an important contribution to the existing scholarly work on the security governance of football which has often remained preoccupied with its *micro-level* practices and the development of efficient policing methods. Indeed, as Tsoukala (2009a, p. 9) contends, this work has not – nor necessarily aimed to correlate the "current configuration of the political and security fields within which the security officials under examination are operating". Scholars have therefore seldom turned towards the available political sociological tools to analyse the key actors' relationships in European football, nor examined the notion of "power" *vis-à-vis* making security claims within this field.

The remainder of this article contains three sections. The next section theoretically unpacks the security field and highlights its transnational, relational and evolving nature and the need to situate its regulators in related analyses. This is followed by a section historicizing the emergence of (1985–2015) of the supranational regulation of security in European football, its institutionalized and "Europeanized" nature, before its *continuation* is elaborated upon. Then, the article discusses the security field's regulators and their powers *vis-à-vis* defining security and setting standards. These regulators include UEFA, the Council of the EU, and Council of Europe whom, the article argues, continue to inform an evolving, transnational regulatory framework with its global standards; thereby reflecting the competition for authority in the definition of security in football.

Unpacking the security field: power, struggle, actors

Before revisiting and laying out the regulators of European football's security field, a brief turn towards Bourdieu's sociological thinking tools of "power" and "capital" and, more specifically, (social) field theory, is imperative to understand the social relations and structural power dynamics within the area of security. Whilst Bourdieu's theoretical repertoire is yet to be fully embraced in International Relations (Bigo, 2011), it becomes necessary upon unpacking the security field to return to his ideas of what a field *is* and, moreover, how its security-related application constitutes an extension to Bourdieu's own thinking – indeed a conceptual acceptance of Wacquant's (1992, p. xiv) call sustaining that to: "think with Bourdieu is of necessity an invitation to think beyond Bourdieu, and against him whenever required".

Naturally, for reasons of brevity, this is not the place for an extended account of Bourdieu's "field", but as existing within social spaces, a field, following Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992, p. 97), refers to:

> a network, or a configuration, of objective relations between positions objectively defined, in their existence and in the determinations they impose upon their occupants, agents of institutions, by their present and potential situation (situs) in the structure of the distribution of species of power (or capital) whose possession commands access to the specific profits that are at stake in the field, as well as by their objective relation to other positions.

Whereas Bourdieu (1993) employed the examples of artistic, educational, and economic fields, his core ideas have later been utilized by academics who utilizes this analytical

relation to explore how security fields are made up by structured systems of social relations between those actors that possess an influence on security practices and techniques. Further, Bourdieu's "field" has also been applied to various leisure and sports contexts (English, 2016; Tomlinson, 2004), including football (McGillivray & McIntosh, 2006).

Especially relevant here, as linked to the power relations between social agents, is the idea of fields as "sites of struggle" that are structured by the "capital pertinent to them" (Crossley, 2003, p. 44). Accordingly, within a field, "capital" – more specifically, Bourdieu's typologies of economic, cultural, social, and symbolic capital – represents a key figure, placing "an emphasis on the amounts individuals and organisations possess" (English, 2016, p. 1002). For Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992, p. 98) capital works as a "weapon and as a stake of struggle, which allows its possessors to wield a power, an influence, and then to exist, in the field". As such, actors' accumulated capital determines (i) their position in the field and (ii) their relations with each other. In brief terms, a field is composed of an internally structured system of social and hierarchical positions. These are ordered by the distribution of capital (or power). Moreover, the struggles within the field preserve or transform power relations (Bourdieu, 1993).

While much has been written about the fragmentation of security and its mentalities in contemporary societies, Bigo (2000a) captured this as he transported the ideas and grammar of Bourdieu's "field" into the study of security. Bigo observed the decompartmentalization and subsequent convergence of "external" and "internal" security in Europe following the Cold War and how this gave rise to a *security field of (security) professionals* that is much resonating with Bourdieu's configurations of objective relations. Reflective of the wider European project (Benyon, 1994), the security field was directly connected to the external aspects of EU security cooperation, but also to the new, occasionally blurred types of "enemies", "threats", or "disorder" that were commonly framed in terms of (in)security and its mobility. This included, *inter alia*, immigration, terrorism, delinquency and "football hooliganism" (Bigo, 2000a; Tsoukala, 2009a). Threats that "consequently [appeared] increasingly sub-national, regional, and urban in scale" (Boyle & Haggerty, 2009, p. 258), and fundamentally, were less constrained by geographical boundaries. The emergence of new threats consequently demonstrated the necessity of supranational efforts and governance, such as demands for EU legislation or for organizations to supply legislation (Kaunert & Léonard, 2012).

Accordingly, this set of transnational trends impacted the field insofar as they led to "specialist" institutions – with the expertise or authority to deal with particularized threats (Bigo, 2006) – becoming entangled in a field that was:

> determined by the struggles between police, intermediaries and military agencies over boundaries and the definition of the term 'security', and over the prioritisation of different threats as well as the definition of what is not a threat but only a risk or even an opportunity. (Bigo, 2006, p. 394)

Hence, following Bigo (2000a), the actors situated within the security field – which is structurally oriented towards cooperation and information-sharing – are also diverse, in competition and engaged in a struggle over definition. Meanwhile, the field's actors are defined as the professionals of threat management and the producers of knowledge based on (in)security. This makes the field constituted by "*groups and institutions that*

authorize themselves and that are authorized to state what security is" (Bigo, 2000b, p. 195, emphasis added). Therefore, with regards to the central question of power (or capital) in the security field, this is not obtained through an actor's coercive force. Instead, it is bound to questions of whom that possesses the ability to define the sources of our insecurity (threats) and subsequently come up with the techniques to manage these sources (security practices). As such, the distributed positions in the field are "depending on types of knowledge (for threat management) which permit types of statement […] which each agency is trying to promote" (2000a, p. 87).

Accordingly, as policing and security practices have become increasingly transnational, so have their related activities, like surveillance or public order maintenance, also become increasingly networked yet specific or particularized insofar as groups or organizations with "professional specialties" (Bigo, 2008a, p. 18) exist within the spheres surrounding particular threats or issues. This is the case in, for example, drug trafficking, immigration, order maintenance and, of the most centrality here, football-related disorder and "hooliganism" (Bigo, 2008). Thus, the paramount departure point here is that security practices, from this perspective, come to exist within a specific Bourdieu-inspired field that is "formed by actors with a particular know-how and technologies" (Aradau, 2004, p. 394). In that respect, an actor's mentioned ability to *define* security, and produce standards or knowledge on this, speaks to that actor's position within the competitive field.

Whilst Bourdieu's field has been widely applied in the sociology of leisure and sport (English, 2016; Tomlinson, 2004), conceptualizations of security fields *in sport* remain less developed. One important exception here, in the post-9/11 milieu of transient and securitized sport mega-events, is Giulianotti and Klauser's (2010) (re)mobilization of the security field framework. As directly influenced by Bourdieu and Crossley's relational sociology, the security field is defined by Giulianotti and Klauser as a: "specific, security-defined social space, which contains objective, game-like relationships that are played out between various "players" (or stakeholders)" (p. 57). Examples of the actors situated in this field include law enforcements, government officials, local residents, visiting spectators, non-governmental organizations and, the primary focus of this article, international organizations. These actors, then, possess various levels volumes of "capital" or "power" in the field.

Yet, apart from Giulianotti and Klauser (2010) and Lee Ludvigsen (2022a), in the case of one specific mega-event, the security field has, hitherto, remained under-developed, despite its clear portability to the domain of European-wide football which, as argued here, provides a promising and illuminating portal for understanding the power dynamics, relations, and struggles between its multitude of security-related actors. Significantly, within this research gap, even fewer analyses draw attention to whom – that is, which organizations – that ultimately regulate the security field of European football on a supranational level and the exact processes and dynamics that inform the relevant organizations' regulations and definition of security and related standards.

One exception here is Tsoukala's (2009a, p. 10) analysis which documents that the interactions between the security field and European, EU and national levels, in the attempts to combat "hooliganism", often can reveal more "general changes that have occurred in the fields of politics and security in Europe". Yet whilst the security field is made up by actors acting heterogeneously and according to their own power, this

also underpins the importance of devoting attention and space to those actors deter-mined to dictate the field by providing universal, standardizing tools and regulatory fra-meworks for the field *as a whole.* Aiming to do exactly this, the next section will therefore historicize and critically analyse the emergence of multi-level supranational regulation in European football. This remains vital in order to comprehend the origins and underpin-nings of its current and wider security field. To be sure, this means that the article does not concern itself with empirically capturing the micro-level interactions between the actors of the field. Rather, it commits to examine the organizations that operate supra-nationally and are positioned to regulate, engineer, and scaffold these interactions.

Emergence, evolution, and continuation: the supranational regulation of European football's security (1985–2015)

As intrinsically related to the sport's mass crowds and transnational mobilities of individ-uals circulating between cities and countries on an almost weekly basis, football's con-temporary security complexes predominantly originate from the threats of violence, anti-social behaviour and public disorder (often labelled "football hooliganism" despite the absence of a legal or sociological definition of this term),[1] terrorism, crime and crowd disturbances. Therefore, because certain football spaces – in terms of security and safety – are not too dissimilar from Foucault's (1977, p. 144) description of the port as "a crossroads for dangerous mixtures [and] a meeting-place for forbidden circu-lations", one might turn towards football to explore central questions speaking to Euro-pean security practices (Lee Ludvigsen, 2022a; Byrne & Lee Ludvigsen, 2023). Especially so, in the post-1985 timescape. It was around 1985 that football-related disorder and security emerged and became a concretized issue for European institutions. Although UEFA's security regulations existed prior to this, there was no supranational regulation of European football's security (Tsoukala, 2009a, 2009b) even though the contested and vaguely defined (worldwide) phenomena of "hooliganism" constituted an issue in national settings long before the 1980s (Dunning, 2000).

On the macro and meso-levels, the 1985 Heysel stadium disaster – tragically resulting in the death of 39 supporters – became a turning point in European football's security management which, consequently, underwent a "Europeanization" aided by processes ensuring enhanced cooperation (Spaaij, 2013) and the formalization of networks of cor-respondents that assisted speedy information-exchange in Europe (Benyon, 1994). However, importantly, this was generated by a wider and pronounced supranational turn, exemplified by the "European Convention on Spectator Violence and Misbehaviour at Sport Events" (1985) adapted by the Council of Europe only three months after the Heysel tragedy (Taylor, 1986). Significantly, this represented the "first response to face hooliganism at a supranational level" (Di Giandomenico, 2020, p. 76), although security and safety-related issues at the time, as reflected by Heysel and the 1985 Bradford fire, also related to structurally inadequate or poorly maintained stadiums (Scraton, 2016).

As a binding, international Convention containing a myriad of measures to ensure safety and security in football,[2] the European Convention's precautionary and situational measures focused primarily on three areas: prevention (Article 3), international cooperation (Article 4) and, finally, the identification of misbehaving individuals in sport (Coenen et al., 2016). The Convention placed duties on its Parties (states) to –

on a practical level – adapt these and, crucially, apply existing or enact new legislation to deter and punish offenders engaging in spectator violence (Articles 3(1)(C) and 5(1).) The Convention also established a Standing Committee (Article 8) tasked with monitoring the Convention's application and progress by, for example, engage in monitoring visits, attending high-risk matches and making recommendations for improvements (Taylor, 1986; Council of Europe, n.d.).

However, in terms of its social and spatial implications, the supranational response encapsulated by the Convention was also marked by a spatial vagueness and precautionary logic since it applied not merely to "offenders" but to "*potential* troublemakers […] both *inside* and *outside* the football stadia" (Coenen et al., 2016, p. 9, emphasis added). Thus, one ramification of the Convention was an expansion of surveillance and control mechanisms in European football that reflected more generalized trends within the pre-emptive control of deviance and crime (Tsoukala, 2009b; Zedner, 2007), and the acceleration of a technological imperative in European security (Davidshofer et al., 2017). In the present-day, across Europe, these imperatives are underpinned by the prevalence of CCTV systems within and around the stadia, and the emergence of invasive technologies that fans are subjected to, and that, *inter alia*, assist information-sharing, risk categorization and the management of circulations (see Klauser, 2013; Spaaij, 2013; Turner & Lee Ludvigsen, 2023). Notwithstanding, the capacities for information-sharing have also been underpinned by the different domestic legislative approaches adopted across different European countries (see Coenen et al., 2016). Similarly, risk categorizations have also been implemented differently across Europe, whereby fans or fixtures were defined according to "risk" or "non-risk" in some contexts and, in others, according to categories such as A, B or C (cf. Pearson & Stott, 2022, Chapter 5).

However, as Tsoukala (2009b) writes, the 1985 Convention became the starting point of what she calls a *supranational regulatory frame* designed to ensure more pre-emptive approaches to criminal and deviant behaviours in the sport. This supranational influence evolved during the 1990s and 2000s: much due to the fact that, in the wider European context, "hooliganism" was now included on the "list of phenomena that were thought to pose a serious threat [to] the security of the EU countries" (p. 12). Football-related security issues therefore crystallized their position on the wider EU agenda and subsequently another institution, the Council of the EU, started to address the issue – again in spite of the absent legal definition of "hooliganism" (Tsoukala, 2009b). This engagement was illustrated by binding and non-binding law and order texts and risk-based recommendations speaking to *inter alia* standardized information exchange on "known" troublemakers (1996) and the setup and empowerment of National Football Information Points (NFIPs)[3] to facilitate this (early 2000s) and exchange personal data on supporters deemed, as discussed later, to be "high" or "lower" risk (see Tsoukala, 2009a, 2009b).

Since 2002, NFIPs in EU Member States have worked to facilitate transnational information exchange before football matches with an international dimension, although this was also marked by the acceleration of policing methods that aided the "normalisation both of surveillance practices inside the territory and exchange of intelligence with foreign security agencies" (Tsoukala, 2016, p. 80). In 2011, as Spaaij (2013) writes, the Council of the EU also called on Member States to strengthen police cooperation with non-EU countries in the area of sport and take actions speaking to more wide-ranging

data exchange and explore the possibilities for more efficient information exchange with countries where NFIPs were not yet set up. Altogether, the post-1985 timescape reveals how the construction of security in European football "no longer [constitutes] a matter exclusively for the hosting Member State", nor its policing actors (Coenen et al., 2016, p. 10). Essentially, a distinct, supranational multi-level framework is in place to regulate the organization of fixtures and tournaments (Coenen et al., 2016) and, as argued here, influences the remainder of the security field which encompasses European level actors, visiting and other Member States, UEFA and national football associations. Notwithstanding, analyses of this continuum must also appreciate more general security transformations and the perpetually evolving institutionalized social control of supporters that:

> [S]tems both from the risk-based mindset and the growing politicisation of security-related issues in post bipolar Europe. Consequently, it is not a transient but an inherent feature of the current security policies. *As such, it is most likely to be further strengthened in the future.* (Tsoukala, 2009b, p. 30, emphasis added)

Indeed, the timeline of Tsoukala's pioneering security-informed analysis of European "counter-hooliganism" ends in the mid-2000s. Following this, a series of crucial security-related, regulatory and technological developments have occurred directly impacting the security field. As contended, this rationalizes the need to advance this analysis one step further and map out the central developments, especially after 2016.

Integrating security (2016 – present)

The need to update the increasingly outdated 1985 Convention was emphasized by European institutions in the years leading up to 2016 in order to keep up with external and internal security developments, socio-technological changes and the 1985 Convention's narrow "emphasis on spectator violence in isolation from other crucial factors" (Council of Europe, 2016b, p. 2; see Di Giandomenico, 2020). In 2016, the new Council of Europe Convention on an "Integrated Safety, Security and Service Approach at Football Matches and Other Sports Events (CETS No. 218)" was opened for signature on 3 July 2016, during a ceremony at *Stade De France* during France's UEFA Euro 2016. The Saint Denis Convention – as it is often referred to – entered force on 1 November 2017 and was described by then-Council of Europe Secretary-General, Thorbjørn Jagland, as an internationally binding instrument that would: "boost international co-operation needed to make football matches and other sporting events safe, secure and enjoyable for supporters" (quoted in Council of Europe, 2016a) in member and non-member states. In this discussion's context, this remains a pivotal moment, because whereas few international legislations that are applied *directly* to sport; two exceptions to this rule are the Council of Europe's Conventions from 1985 (spectator violence) and 2016 (integrated approach) (Chappelet, 2018).

Whilst subjected to minimal scholarly analysis (Di Giandomenico, 2020; Byrne and Lee Ludvigsen, 2023), the Saint Denis Convention also represents another critical landmark both in terms of European football's security field and this field's regulation. Clearly framed in terms of the need for further strengthening European cooperation, the Convention sets out "best practice guidelines for policing across Europe" (Cleland et al., 2018, p. 174) and it builds largely on the content from and, in certain ways, laminates the 1985 Convention which it seeks to gradually replace.[4] Notwithstanding, it also

represents an extension – and indicates a broadened security agenda in line with that of the EU (see Kaunert & Léonard, 2012) – insofar as it alters the Convention's main stance from a predominantly violence-focused one, towards the three new pillars of safety, security and service. Moreover, the Convention subsequently accounts for a "new" range of security threats, including terrorism, infrastructure failures, natural disasters and natural disasters (Council of Europe, 2016b, p. 4).

Mapping the field's standard setters and security definers

The above genealogy of the regulatory framework of European football's security field activates three primary departure points with relevance for the domain of security. Firstly, the evolving supranational regulation has established an institutional foundation upon which a more particularized security field can develop. Whilst this paper does not concern itself with the security field's *inner-workings* nor the "web of interactions that lie beneath this circular multi-level process" (Tsoukala, 2009b, p. 6), one may view the contours of how the security field's regulators have attempted to, increasingly, standardize a "pan-European" security field. Second, the supranational regulation of football's security has paved the way for the intersection between a "technological imperative" (Davidshofer et al., 2017) and a precautionary logic. Both nationally and transnationally, technological solutions, in form of databases, surveillance techniques assisting spatial confinement, work to "pre-empt and minimize the probability of any undesirable conduct by football spectators in the future" (Spaaij, 2013, p. 178). Third, considering the plethora of actors that have been scanned over so far (states, sport governing bodies, law enforcements, international organizations), it is pertinent to ask important questions about what all this says about power and authority. That is the puzzle about whom that, ultimately, has the power to define security for the rest of the field, and to produce with definitions, techniques and knowledge on how to counter threats or risks (cf. Bigo, 2006).

A focus on the supranational regulators can be justified as the transnationalization of social control techniques is much illustrative of the restructured national state institutions and the *expansion* of supranational organizations (Giulianotti & Brownell, 2012). Therefore, within the networked and migratory circulation of security knowledge in sport, international organizations possess a critical role (see Boyle, 2011). As such, the next subsections examine how international organizations not merely regulate, but define the standards for the other actors of the security field which, again, implies that they possess the authority to authorise what security is, and how it should be pursued within the same social (leisure) space. In doing so, this article focuses especially on the power, authority, and relations between what can be understood, in this context, as representing the three supranational "decision-making centres" (Tsoukala, 2009b, p. 5). That is, UEFA, the EU institutions and Council of Europe (Tsoukala, 2009b) whom, as discussed already, dispense the regulatory framework in European football and its wider security field, and promote ideals of standardization.

UEFA

As firmly situated within the security field (Giulianotti & Klauser, 2010), it would be myopic not to dedicate attention to the power and role of sport's governing bodies

and, in this case, UEFA. UEFA is the supranational regulatory entity which governs European football. Yet its primary role as a sporting organization does not mean that it is detached from the European security or political fields. Indeed, UEFA maintains close relationships with other EU level actors and the Council of Europe. According to UEFA (n.d.), these relationships are based on "permanent dialogue, the participation in working groups, events and cooperation agreements" such as the mentioned Standing Committee of the European Convention on Spectator Violence (T-RV). Beyond this, UEFA does not solely set the sporting and commercial rules for its competitions, but it is also central in the development of a regulatory regime that "in many aspects [are] independent of national law and to some extent even negating the rule of law in international sport" (Włoch, 2013, p. 299). Following Wloch, UEFA's position as an actor that can create new global rules renders it a global governor, defined by its exercise of policy-oriented power that transcends borders and its ability to "create issues, set agendas, establish and implement rules or programs, and evaluate and/or adjudicate outcomes" (Avant et al., 2010, p. 2).

Importantly, some of these global rules and agendas relate to security. However, although UEFA's Binding Instructions, as Taylor (1986) noted early, are binding for clubs and national football associations; they did not apply to states. In other words, UEFA did not have the "power to tell a Party how to conduct crowd control. As a result, it may be that the sports clubs, alone, will be enforcing the UEFA rules while a Party refuses to do so" (p. 645). Despite this, UEFA (2019) possesses its own *Safety and Security Regulations*. These represent the security and safety related conditions for participation in UEFA's competitions and place responsibilities on match organizers but also upon law enforcements and authorities. For example, participating associations or clubs are obliged to cooperate with police forces and public authorities to ensure cross-border information exchanges and that international coordination arrangements are established (Article 6). This also means that a club or association failing to comply with these regulations may be punished according to UEFA's own Disciplinary Regulations (Article 47).

As argued here, this means that UEFA may be understood as a standard setting and rule-making actor *vis-à-vis* the security field. Yet this is also aided by other mechanisms. For example, UEFA's own safety and professionals (Conn, 2022), its *Supporter Liaison Handbook* (2011),[5] and how the organization regularly hosts conferences and events for the exchange of good security and safety practices (e.g. UEFA, 2022; Lee Ludvigsen, 2022a). Moreover, as Hagmann (2017, p. 434) points out, in order to "harmonize standards, UEFA has, since 2012, offered Pan-European Football Police Training" to relevant stakeholders. Another important and illustrative example of UEFA's power as a global governor relates to how it sets security-related standards before time-specific sport mega-events, such as the European Championship in football. These standards – or globally recognized rules – national federations with backing from their states must then sign up and adhere to, as Włoch (2013, 2020) highlights in her investigations into Euro 2012, reflecting again UEFA's power to dictate other actors in the field who are tasked with enforcing security at specific tournaments. Indeed, following Eick (2011), the existence of tournament-specific requirements mirrors those evident for the football World Cup, whereby FIFA set both the commercial and security-related preconditions for host cities' "neoliberal security gaze".

UEFA, despite its position as a governing body of European football, provides its own formal security regulations, institutional expertise and guidelines and specific requirements. Its authority, represented by its "ability to induce deference in others" (Avant et al., 2010, p. 9), transcends football and renders it an actor that possesses the power to delegate risks that states must cover and subject themselves to (Eick, 2011). Returning to the security field, this is pertinent because it underscores UEFA's power to, first, define the sources of insecurity, uncertainty and danger in football and, second, the techniques through which these security issues should be addressed (in form the standardized regulations) by UEFA countries and their public authorities.

The Council of the EU

The second actor that must be considered a standard setting security definer with authority for the relevant security field here is the Council of the EU; as one of the EU's decision-making institutions. As contextualized earlier, the Council of the EU's engagement with security-related issues in football has become increasingly (pro-)active since the 1990s and involves both binding decisions and advice for Member States (including the Joint Action in 1997 speaking to enhanced coordination and cooperation, as well as the establishment of NFIPs) (Mojet, 2005; Tsoukala, 2009a). Importantly, the EU has, owing to its duty to address common concerns of freedom, security and justice in the EU, engaged with security and best practices at other major events beyond football, including the Olympic Games, summits and VIP meetings over the past decades (see Boyle, 2011; Gregory, 2010). Still, some argue that the most advanced area of the EU's major event security cooperation is located in connection with "football matches and series with an international dimension" (Gregory, 2010, p. 212).

Beyond its binding decisions, on the Council of the EU level, the attempts to articulate common definitions and standards for the security field are visible first through the Council's own handbook that sets out detailed policing recommendations for football matches with an international dimension and encapsulates a wider EU orientation towards standardized information exchange (Spaaij, 2013).[6] More specifically, the Council of the EU's authority to state what security *is* before the wider security field of football is also demonstrated by the institution's definitions and categorizations of individuals according to risk. Hence, on the EU level, a "risk" supporter was defined in the 2016 Council Resolution (the 'EU Football Handbook') as: "A person, known or not, who, in certain circumstances, might pose a risk of public disorder or antisocial behaviour, whether planned or spontaneous, at, or in connection with, a football event" (Council of the EU, 2016, C444/35). On the other hand, this rendered a "non-risk" supporter as: "A person, known or not, who can be regarded as usually posing a low risk, or no risk, of causing or contributing to violence or disorder, whether planned or spontaneous, at or in connection with a football event" (Council of the EU, 2016).

Whereas the vague and contested nature (i.e. "might pose a risk") of these binaries and the inclusion of terms such as "anti-social behaviour" are discussed elsewhere (see James & Pearson, 2015; Tsoukala, 2016; Lee Ludvigsen, 2022b), these definitions – in themselves – remain telling insofar as they underscore the Council of the EU's power to precautionary categorize individuals, how these individuals, accordingly, should be policed and/or surveilled by security providers (Spaaij, 2013) and consequently how the

disciplinary apparatuses adhering to these guidelines should adapt the hierarchized position framing "risky" or "non-risky", or "the 'good' and the 'bad' subject in relation to one another" (Foucault, 1977, p. 181). Moreover, this illustrates the institution's position as an actor that, in the security-related context of European football, possesses the power to determine whom that should be secured against as security "threats" and, subsequently, whom that should be provided with security. Returning once again to the security field, these definitions and the institutional recommendations thus provide a clear insight into both "risk supporters" as generators of insecurity and the techniques that may be deployed to counter this.

Overall, the Council of the EU's mechanisms are reflective of Gregory's (2010) argument that the EU's dominant mode of response to security in sport has been through the Council of the EU's manuals of guidance which we can understand as EU-level agreements on standard setting and best practice despite their role as 'guidance documents' for the Member States. Indeed, the guidance and handbooks serve to illustrate how standardized, international cooperation is desired in EU-wide response to disorder in football (Mojet, 2005). This remains important because it illuminates how a supranational influence both configures and dictates the relevant security field through the promotion of universal standards that, whether binding or non-binding, are to be followed other actors populating the field.

The Council of Europe

As European institutions have increasingly engaged with social issues in sport – security, organized crime, and doping – the Council of Europe with its 47 Member States remains another standard setting organization that "promotes international cooperation […] in relation to the areas of sport, culture and human rights" (Serby, 2015, p. 86). Whilst this article has already mentioned the Council of Europe's Conventions, its standard setting position for the security field must also be viewed through how it rationalizes the need for a convention, calls upon and imposes obligations upon governments to adopt measures and is entangled in the competition for defining security.

As the Convention in itself aims to "provide a safe, secure and welcoming environment at football matches and other sports events", the Explanatory Report on the Convention's Article 2 "specifies the approach which should be adopted by the Parties in order to achieve this purpose" (Council of Europe, 2016b, p. 7). States that sign up – whether members of non-members – are thus obliged to, *inter alia*, develop a multi-agency approach, adoption of good practices, and cooperation at local, national and international level (Council of Europe, 2016b; cf. Taylor, 1986). Concerning the concept of "security" this is, for the organization, defined as:

> all measures aiming to tackle violence inside and outside of stadiums, and incorporates all measures designed to deter, prevent and sanction any incident of violence or misbehaviour in connection with football matches and other sports events, including co-operation between policing and other agencies involved in the security of an event, risk assessment, sanctions against individuals committing offences or public disorder, etc. (Council of Europe, 2016b, p. 8)

The framing of both agencies' cooperation *and* violence and misbehaviour inside and beyond the stadiums here, remains important in the wider context of the security

field's regulators. On a basic level, it demonstrates why, in the relevant context, the Council of Europe should also be approached as an organization involved in the definition of "security". Moreover, similar to UEFA and the Council of the EU, it also provides a set of global best practices – or standards – which the states must prioritize, albeit the adaptions naturally depend on the states' political will (Taylor, 1986). Nevertheless, states' adaption of the Convention's principles is monitored by the Standing Committee (and *ad hoc* working groups) – who through consultative visits, reports, and recommendations – are structurally engaged in the (re)production of these standards. The organization hence imposes an involvement from European governments in the football-specific security field. This field, it appears, is heavily dictated and regulated by three supranational organizations that, despite their different remits, capacities and authorities, are all engaged in the same social space characterized by a competition for the definition of security in European football and designation of specific best practices, threat categories and cooperative mechanisms.

Conclusions and future work

As Lisle (2013) shows, leisure life is not isolated from wider security trends. It is crucial to recognize that attending football matches represents a central part of the leisure life of millions of people across Europe in twenty-first century (Cleland et al., 2018; Webber & Turner, 2023). This article concerned itself with how European football – understood as a site of "contested leisure" – is secured. The social history of European football, from 1985 to date, is intertwined with developments in the politics of European security. In the context of European security practices, scholars have highlighted the increasingly decompartmentalized security fields, characterized by cooperation and information exchange, that have become particularized in responses to particular threats such as immigration and organized crime (Bigo, 2000a, 2000b; Carrapico, 2014). This has, however, occurred alongside the expansion of supranational security governance in Europe (Kaunert & Léonard, 2012). Whereas the security complexes of European football have not remained completely absent from these discussions, limited work has examined the supranational regulation of security in European football and how this works as an overarching, regulatory framework for the security field enacted to counter threats and disorder in football.

Against this backdrop and by attaching itself to pre-existing work (Spaaij, 2013; Tsoukala, 2007, 2009a, 2009b), the purpose of this article was not to map out the "full" security field of European football, but to update our understanding of which actors that regulate this field and, in doing so, conceptualize wider security trends *through* football. The article aimed to attach another layer to the security field concept in sport (Giulianotti & Klauser, 2010) by focusing on three actors devising the field's "supranational regulatory frame" (Tsoukala, 2009b). These are UEFA, the Council of the EU and Council of Europe who are amongst the actors competing and converging for the definition of security and who possess the capacity to speak authoritatively about security standards in football. Drawing upon insights located in IPS and the sociology of sport and leisure, this article produces two main arguments to answer its two research questions. These arguments remain particularly important when accounting for how the decompartmentalization of security means that a "large number of actors enter into the competition to define (in)security" (Bigo, 2008b, p. 128).

First, it is argued that European football's security field, since the mid-1980s, is symptomatic of more general security changes, especially the emergence of specialist institutional knowledge or bodies dealing with particularized threats (e.g. football-related violence). If the EU is, on the one hand, approached as a "laboratory" for transnational, particularized networks of security (Bigo, 2008b). While, on the other hand, football stadiums and their surroundings are functioning as a "laboratory, in that they have come to constitute a site for the production of knowledge about those under observation and a place for experimentation and training" (Spaaij, 2013, p. 168). Then, it can be contended that European football represents a laboratory *within* a laboratory (cf. Lee Ludvigsen, 2022a). While a set of specialized knowledge (e.g. handbooks, dedicated football policing bodies, "risk/non-risk" classifications) on football disorder exist to be deployed at national level, this is heavily driven or guided by the supranational regulators of UEFA, Council of Europe and the Council of the EU. These actors "define the substance of cooperation" and a "common set of rules" for participants (Drezner, 2009, p. 65) whilst configuring and dictating the wider security field by acting as inter-related decision-making centres (Tsoukala, 2009b). Since fields are structured internally *vis-à-vis* the distribution of power (Bourdieu, 1993), the ability to define security and the prioritization of threats (Bigo, 2000a) characterize these actors who place obligations on the remainder of actors entangled in the field (national federations, law enforcers, clubs, authorities). Second, the article demonstrates how what is dubbed the "standard setters" – despite their diverse remits and specialisms – since the 1980s have acted (and continue to act) as promoters of standardized best practices and cooperation that normatively should be adapted by the other actors collectively making up the security field (cf. Giulianotti & Klauser, 2010). Taken together, the "security field" advanced further in this article helps us understand how "security" in a leisure context is (re-)produced in a social space where there is a competitive element to the making of knowledge claims in relation to the definitions of security and the related best practices that promote or produce security.

Overall, and crucially, this article's argument concerning football's continually evolving "security field" opens up important avenues for further research on current issues of security in football. Yet, these lines of research do not solely relate to how "external" threats are secured against. They also speak to how the powerful political and football authorities' management of football fans might, in fact, increase levels of insecurity. For example, in February 2023, the Independent Review Panel's Report concluded that UEFA bore the primary responsibility for the near-disaster outside *Stade De France* and that "overarching organisational failures" by UEFA and French authorities were at the "root of what went so disastrously wrong in Paris" (UEFA Independent Review Panel, 2023, p. 13).

In light of recent security-related issues at Euro 2020, the mentioned final in Paris (2022) (Pearson & Stott, 2022), and to ensure an advanced and continual understanding of European football's "security field", this article highlights three particular areas requiring further work. First, scholars should critically examine the implementation processes of both the 2016 Convention in specific countries, and the 21 recommendations from the post-Paris report. Second, concerning the Convention and the post-Paris report, further work is needed that examines how their content and recommendations may be compatible with the "right to leisure", but also whether they account for fans' rituals and cultures. Especially because security practices in football often enable forms of "constrained leisure"; whereby football spectators are disciplined by regimes of control

and surveillance (Webber & Turner, 2023). Finally, the social relationships between those regulators discussed in this article and the wider field (e.g. media, the police, supporters' movements) also remains important to investigate to fully capture the contested nature of security-related issues in football. Ultimately, for such work, this article can serve as a springboard.

By marrying insights from IPS with those located in the sociology of sport and leisure, this article makes two key contributions to the existing scholarship. In terms of IPS, this article contributes – by employing European football as an exemplar – to our understanding of security practices on a European level and how these are currently characterized by "a wide array of interconnected and interacting institutions and agencies at the national, European and international levels" (Bigo et al., 2010, p. 49). Second, it advances the literature on security as critically analysed through leisure life at a critical juncture where crowd troubles and safety concerns have intensified and continue to cause concern.[7] Whereas existing scholarship provide us with an indication of the actors involved in the pursuit of security and how they are entangled in a social space based on objective relationships between actors (Boyle, 2011; Boyle & Haggerty, 2009; Giulianotti & Klauser, 2010; Lee Ludvigsen, 2022a; Tsoukala, 2009a), this article drives this literature one step further by enhancing our understanding of this field as one that is dictated and governed by international organizations that act as *security definers* and *standard setters* through institutional regulations, binding and non-binding decisions and the transnational spread of formal and informal best practices and recommendations.

Notes

1. See Dunning (2000) and Tsoukala (2009a) for accounts of this phenomenon.
2. The Convention, however, also relates to other sport events.
3. In Member States, NFIPs are responsible for cooperation and information-exchange in the context of football matches with an international dimension (Tsoukala, 2016).
4. States ratifying the Saint Denis Convention must consequently denounce the 1985 Convention (Council of Europe, n.d.).
5. Although this role differs across Europe, Supporter Liaison Officers (SLO) are, broadly, individuals that mediate between fans, clubs, national football associations and 'other parties involved in football, such as the police and stewards' (UEFA, 2011, p. 10). As Numerato (2018) submits, the implementation of SLOs in 2012/13 occurred in line with the heightened emphasis on dialogue, as advocated by fan activists, to prevent football-related violence.
6. See: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.C_2016.444.01.0001.01.ENG&toc=OJ:C:2016:444:TOC (Accessed 07/2022).
7. See: https://www.reuters.com/lifestyle/sports/uefa-commissions-independent-report-into-champions-league-final-fiasco-2022-05-30/.

Disclosure statement

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