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## **SAFE ZONE National Report Germany** (Eckart Müller-Bachmann; CJD Nord)

### **Introduction**

Integrative functions and social functions that (can) have an integrative effect are ascribed per se to sport and to the two sports we focus on here, namely football and combat sports. The positive connotations of this ascription also make it difficult for clubs and associations to deal with the negative, disintegrative potential (Pilz 2014). Racism, discrimination and group-focused enmity are all phenomena of sport which are encountered again and again not only among competitors, but also among spectators. This is brought to the attention of the public at larger events, such as football matches. These phenomena of radicalization or indoctrination are less public in amateur sport and in sports that are not organized by associations, such as combat sports or more specifically mixed martial arts, to which we pay particular attention in point 2 below.

### **1. Football**

Football fan cultures and fan groups are invariably connected with racism and right-wing extremism. A small number of cases of Islamic “potential threats” in amateur sport come from Southern Germany (cf. Röhmel 2017), with considerably higher numbers coming from francophone regions (cf. Woller 2018). In national research and social politics there is considerably more focus on passive football hooligans and right-wing extremists who have been infiltrating the terraces at football stadiums for decades (Blaschke 2014). In recent times in Germany – as in many neighbouring countries – the population has become aware through the media of incidences of racist abuse from spectators and groups of fans, as well as from functionaries in the highest divisions<sup>1</sup>. Each and every example bears testament to the intrinsic political function of sport (Claus 2018) and are simultaneously seismographs of societal developments.

In the lower divisions of organized professional football, and in those of the amateur leagues, a large number of right-wing extremist and racist activity and offences have also been recorded in and around the stadiums and on the football pitches in the amateur sector. The national media and

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<sup>1</sup> During a home game in the winter of 2020, fans of the first division club Schalke 04 verbally abused the Berlin player Jordan Torunarigha; the club was fined 50,000 Euros. In 2019 the club's chairman of the board, Clemens Tönnies, had already made racist and colonial remarks in public and under immense pressure from the public was forced to take temporary leave of his office.



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sections of the responsible association structures of amateur football have focussed on certain amateur clubs in which either neo-Nazis took active part in the games (von Aster 2018), their fans harassed other spectators (Spiller 2015) or active footballers made right-wing extremist comments in the social media (Süddeutsche Zeitung 8.9.2019).<sup>2</sup> Another phenomenon belonging to this area in amateur football is the infiltration or subversion of entire football clubs by right-wing extremists in rural areas (e.g. Ruf 2015).

In the federal states of Saxony-Anhalt, Brandenburg und Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania the amateur football associations have become aware of these kinds of developments and have been forced into taking action at the association level - which includes reporting this in the national media. Regionally focussed initiatives such as the *Brandenburgische Sportjugend* (Brandenburg Youth Sport Organization) or the regional centres for democratic culture in Mecklenburg-Pomerania are monitoring this exploitation of football and are trying to combat this by means of, for example, educational work for clubs about extreme right-wing symbols and prevention programmes for young people (Schmidt 2016). These regional centres for democratic culture regard themselves primarily as a port of call for the battle against right-wing extremism and xenophobia which have also found their way into popular sports (Hasselmann 2018). Additionally, for several years now, people in the sports federation of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania have been aware of extremist influences in sports clubs. With their "Mobile Advice Centre in Sport" they provide contacts for concerned members, parents and federation officials and, at the same time, are striving to recognize when radically inclined structures are forming in certain areas or departments of sport, when groups or individuals make extremist remarks, or when they stand out as extremists in any other way. In this respect, those in the federation and those involved in the mobile advice centre are conscious of the key role of the managers, trainers and coaches and particularly sensitive to extremist indoctrination in the youth sector (Hasselmann 2018).

At the national level, the German Football Federation (DFB) has launched programmes which are aimed implicitly and also explicitly against extremist, xenophobic and racist phenomena, remarks, indoctrination and recruitment both on the terraces, as well as on football pitches. These programmes are divided into the areas of "social responsibility", "fair play/prevention of violence" and "diversity/anti-discrimination" (cf. <https://www.dfb.de/start/>). In addition, there are programmes of charities/foundations closely related to the DFB, such as "2:0 für ein Willkommen" (2:0 for a welcome), which furthers the integration of refugees and their active membership in football clubs. Also, the programme launched by the German Sports Federation "Integration through Sport", which is communicated to the clubs and financed regionally by the sports federations in the individual states, aims to enable football clubs to provide refugees and people with a migration background straightforward access to membership of clubs ([www.integration.dosb.de](http://www.integration.dosb.de)).

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<sup>2</sup> In September 2019 the South German football club TuS Holzhausen/Porta withdrew its first team from all competitions with immediate effect. As reported by the chairman, Matthias Adamkowitsch, the club was taking appropriate steps on the basis of a mobile phone video that showed first team players chanting Nazi slogans. The video was recorded during the team's promotion celebrations on 5 May and shows, among other things, some players shouting "Sieg Heil". The manager (Trainer) was relieved of his duties at the club. The club reserved the right, after the conclusion of the public prosecutor's investigation, to take appropriate action regarding their personnel.



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In Schleswig-Holstein, as in other states, preventive initiatives or programmes have been launched by state football associations, which promote mutual tolerance and respect among players and towards referees, and therefore also actively oppose violence on the field of play. These initiatives for the prevention of violence, such as “SH kickt fair” (<https://www.shfv-kiel.de/fairplay>) bring together full-time project management as well as volunteers at the official or association level in order to guarantee direct cooperation with football structures in the local area and ensure there are local contacts working as disseminators.

## **2. Combat Sports / Mixed Martial Arts (MMA)**

For years, right-wing extremist scenes have been recruiting youths and other young people looking for excitement not only in violent spheres of football scenes and right-wing music cultures, but also in sections of the combat sport world. The differentiation and the commercialization of combat sport go hand in hand with the professionalization of extreme right-wing and violent structures throughout Germany. The combat sport sector, which is differentiated by globalization but also by migration movements, together with a large number of commercial pledges, brings together various disciplines that were previously organized side by side.

To be able to train in various styles at the same time, as is possible for example in the Mixed Martial Arts, and then also to be able to use these in fights outside of the gymnasium, increases the attraction of this form of combat. In the Mixed Martial Arts the idea is to defeat the opponent by (almost) any means. That makes this style appear particularly hard and brutal and at the same ever more popular if we go by the number of organized contests, of spectators in the arenas, of those viewing television broadcasts and the number of clicks on YouTube. However, the MMA combat sport sector is not only struggling with the sport's image of brutality, but also with its appropriation by extreme right-wing scenes (cf. Hennings 2019).

At the same time, some sections of extreme right-wing scenes have been attaching great importance to living a healthy lifestyle in recent years: by analogy with the formerly left-wing oriented Straight-Edge-Movement they are also marketing them, as demonstrated by the image cultivation and label start-ups in extreme right-wing combat sports (cf. Claus 2018). The current boom in combat sports is ideologically classified and welcomed in far-right scenes across the board. At various levels the scene is constructing a return to the “resistance of the people” and to “manliness” (cf. Steiner 2019).

### **2.1. Combat Sports and the Extreme Right: Potential Attraction for Young People**

The majority of combat sport organizations are not aware of the extent of the extreme right-wing appropriation and the social repercussions. In reference to the event organizers, Claus (2018) points out three different attitudes towards extreme right-wing activities: those whom he places in pop culture clearly distance themselves from extreme right-wing fighters and make it clear before events that extreme right-wing clothing labels and signets, as well as discriminatory content in the entrance music was unwelcome. He places others in the violent milieu, in which he includes those who are



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from a bouncer/doorman environment, hooligans and rockers who often have few reservations about being among extreme right-wing fighters. Finally, Claus identifies a third category of the extreme right-wingers who organize and hold contests clandestinely. These kinds of events<sup>3</sup> are attended by hooligans, rockers and neo-Nazis and are used for networking, financing and recruitment for their own structures. They are not open to democratic discourse and prevention (Claus 2018).

## **2.2. Recruitment of Young Members by Extreme Right-Wingers in the semi-organized Reality of Combat Sport Associations**

Over the last five years combat sports have in many respects become the most important field of action for extreme right-wing scenes alongside right-wing rock music (Steiner 2019). In addition to right-wing rock music a further sub-cultural and youth-cultural field of action has become established and set itself apart in the last few years. Combat sports in all their forms go beyond the extreme right-wing scene and also mobilizes other milieus. Indoctrination through training of MMA for children and adolescents happens in some gyms that are directly connected to extremist milieus (Claus & Zajonic 2019). As already mentioned however, compared with combat sport events there are no relevant neo-Nazi demonstrations across the country which rally more spectators. Extreme right-wing combat sport events have been able to mobilize over a thousand people<sup>4</sup> (loc. cit.).

All in all, it can be said that 2018 saw a strengthening of the extreme right-wing combat sport scene. Analogous events were characterized by increasingly professional organization and by an effort to adhere to all official requirements (cf. Bundesministerium des Innern, für Bau und Heimat [Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community] 2019). The growing significance has become obvious over the last few years, in particular as analogous combat sport activities have been aggressively promoted to the outside world by right-wing extremists. The aim is obviously to arouse interest in this way beyond their own camp and to attract and recruit young people in particular. This is accompanied by an ideological message that draws directly on National Socialism, namely the formation of a “hardened” being, who is prepared for the fight with the “enemy” (cf. Ministerium für

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<sup>3</sup> Whereas in the 1990s conspiratorially organized right-wing rock concerts were viewed as a top priority of the right-wing world of experience, today, their own combat sport events also belong to the repertoire of the scene. At the beginning of the 2000s neo-Nazis were already taking part - in the main without comment - in combat sport tournaments which were either non-political or open to right-wingers. In addition, the last five years have witnessed a development of an extreme right-wing combat sport scene with its own Europe-wide network. One result of this networking is that with up to 600 participants the “Battle of the Nibelungen” in October 2017 is the largest right-wing combat sport event to date (AIB 116 / 3; 2017).

<sup>4</sup> The latest report on the protection of the constitution estimates approximately 850 spectators (many more than in 2017, cf. Anm. 1) - at the now banned *Kampf der Nibelungen* – came from all over Germany and as well as other European countries. This set a new record for a combat sport tournament (cf. Bundesministerium des Innern, für Bau und Heimat 2019).



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Inneres und Europa Mecklenburg-Vorpommern [Ministry of the Interior and Europe Mecklenburg-West-Pomerania] 2019).

The fact that the extreme right-wing scene is arming itself for the militant struggle is in no way new. Time and time again in recent decades there have been paramilitary sport groups and similar organizations, who have not only prepared themselves for the militant political struggle, but whose members have also carried out attacks and murders. Also, it is not just in the last five years that the combat sport scene has been actively exploited by the extreme right. As early as in 2005 the »Antifaschistische Infoblatt« [Anti-Fascist Newsletter] (AIB 68/4) reported on the interactions of the neo-Nazi scene with combat sport –and the hooligan milieu – both among the audiences and among the contestants, as for example at the “Fight Club Chemnitz” (Steiner 2019).

Through combat sports and the corresponding labels of sports clothing, via music, other dress codes and tattoos, the right-wing scene attempts to attract the attention predominantly of youths and other young people and then win them over to their cause. At the same time, the increased concentration of extreme right-wing structures on combat sports can also be attributed to the boom in recent years of the newer combat sports of kickboxing or the Mixed Martial Arts (Hennings 2019).

The recruitment methods are low threshold and simultaneously highly attractive for youths and other young people: “Extreme right-wingers rarely mobilize and recruit by holding grandiloquent seminars about Germanic history. They are much more likely to recruit via a much lower-threshold world of experience. It is all about action. It is all about belonging, violence and manliness.” (Claus cited from Hennings 2019).

In addition to the ideological components and the recruitment function, we should not underestimate the role of combat sports in forming scenes. According to the State Office for the Protection of the Constitution in Mecklenburg-West Pomerania, it leads to a more robust networking of actors both within and outside of Germany (cf. Ministerium für Inneres und Europa Mecklenburg-Vorpommern; 2019).

### **2.3. Regional Characteristics: Mecklenburg-West Pomerania, Saxony and Schleswig-Holstein**

The extreme right-wing scene is also continuing its recruitment programme through combat sports this year. Moreover, public workouts function as preparation “for the street fight and political upheaval” (Ritter cited from Korfmacher 2020). Peter Ritter, a member of the Mecklenburg-West Pomerania state parliament, therefore demands a “consistent approach” be taken by the security service “against these militant-fascist networks” (loc. cit.). According to the State Office for the Protection of the Constitution combat sports play an important role in the right-wing scene, predominantly among young members. In the words of the authority: “This is accompanied by an ideological message that draws directly on National Socialism, namely the formation of a “hardened” being, who is prepared for the fight with the ‘enemy’” (loc. cit.).

The “Nationalen Sozialisten” have been active in Rostock and the surrounding area for years. In 2019 a subgroup was formed calling itself the “Baltik Korps” which is referred to on “Aktionsblog”, the



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group website, as “the sporting arm of our network”. There are indications that the “Nationalen Sozialisten Rostock” do not act autonomously. On the one hand, they appear to have connections with the ultra and hooligan scenes: members of the „Baltik Korps“ frequently turn up to combat sport events wearing football shirts, T-shirts or ski masks of the third-division football club Hansa Rostock or pose in front of Hansa Rostock graffiti. On the other hand, they have links with the extreme right-wing NPD (Korfmacher 2020).

The “Fight Club” events, which since 2004 have been enjoying popularity in the right-wing scene in the state of Saxony, can be regarded as signposts for neo-Nazi participation in the professional combat sport sector. In a legal setting “comrades” could be cheered on in the ring, while demonstrations of power took place in the stands, for example by supporters of the Chemnitz hooligan group “HooNaRa” (“Hooligans Nazis Racists”) or supporters of the “Blood & Honour” (B&H) movement, an international group that was banned in Germany in 2000. Especially as a large number of the fighters came from the hooligan spectrum, the contests brought right-wing-minded hooligans closer to the neo-Nazi scene by creating a so-called fighting community. Moreover, the fighters from this spectrum received sporting recognition, which they had otherwise only known on a small scale and clandestinely through secretly arranged “woods and meadows” contests (cf. AIB 2017; 116/3).

To date “Fight Club” events still offer neo-Nazis, Rockers and right-wing hooligans a space which they very gladly utilize. In this respect events in West Saxony have regularly been a contact point for senior figures in the scene (loc. cit.). Fight Clubs are characterized by the repeated involvement and to some extent active organizational participation of neo-Nazis. Since 2014 the Leipzig-based combat sport event “Imperium Fighting Championship” (IFC) has been a contact point for (right-wing) hooligans and neo-Nazis (loc. cit.).

When the “Athletik Klub Ultra” (AKU) was formed in the Northern German city of Neumünster at the turn of the millennium, their gym became a contact point for leading neo-Nazis in the state of Schleswig-Holstein. They used the club's rooms from this time on. The rooms of the AKU were also raided in the early 2000s. While the police were searching for weapons on 4 March 2004, they discovered that the rooms were being used by Nazis from all over Northern Germany. The AKU was established by organized Nazis from the NPD, the “freie Kameradschaften” (free fellowships) and the right-wing sub-culture. In the past, the rooms had been used for holding right-wing rock concerts and are used regularly by militant Nazis for training purposes. At the same time, the AKU's address was used for dubious business transactions of the former B&H Nazis (cf. <https://www.antifa-berlin.info/node/1154>).

#### **2.4. Resistance and Initiatives within the Combat Sport Scene in the Fight against Extreme Right-wing Infiltration**

It should not be left unsaid that there are indeed initiatives that fight against right-wing infiltration in combat sports, including the network “Runter von der Matte” (“Get off the mat”) which documents dozens of visitors and contestants belonging to the violent extreme right-wing scene on its internet





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site (Hennings 2019). Moreover, there are a number of organizations and combat sport studios that explicitly take a stance against national-socialist extremists, speak up against every kind of racism against the visitors to their gym and prohibit the wearing of neo-Nazi clothing brands in their rooms. A club in Neubrandenburg, Mecklenburg-West Pomerania, announced for example that “respectful interaction and an unequivocally anti-racist attitude are important to us”. On Facebook the club raises readers’ awareness of the activities of Nazis and also supports the work of “Runter von der Matte” (cf. Franzen 2018).

### 3. Empirical voices

Observations by Mrs. Reip, expert at the „Deutsche Sportjugend im Deutschen Olympischen Sportbund e.V.“ (German Sports Youth in the German Olympic Sports Association), interviewed at 13.03.2020:

Mrs. Reip is arguing that young people in sports clubs are not under general suspicion of getting or becoming radicalised, only few are under influence or in danger of getting influenced. A variety of influence factors exist in sports that can lead to group orientated misanthropy. Most important for radicalisation processes are the social realities inside the respective sport clubs.

There are large differences being observed between rural and urban regions with regards to radicalisation tendencies of members of sport clubs. In certain rural areas that are dominated by right wing populist party’s viewpoints (mainly the AfD) whole sport clubs – most in the eastern parts of Germany – are potential contact points for right wing extremists and their followers. Mainly football clubs function as focal points where members can either be influenced or indoctrinated. The right extremist movement „Völkische Siedler“ (ethnic or national squatters) tries to influence rural, rather deserted areas in Germany through settling with families and the establishment neighbourhoods of self-minded extremist families who want to build new a new Aryan homeland for themselves. They try to influence and indoctrinate the rural communities, their institutions and community facilities, including sport and football clubs. These movements have expansive networks, reaching from the Federal States of Lower Saxony (Wiebese) to Mecklenburg-Western-Pommerania (Koppelow; Klabo, Krakow am See).

The observations of the „Deutsche Sportjugend im Deutschen Olympischen Sportbund e.V.“ (German Sportyouth in the German Olympic Sports Association) are concentrated in the area of registered sport clubs that are members in the Olympic Sports Association. This includes all sport clubs and associations of federal states that are hosting Olympic sport disciplines, including those that are commonly known as martial arts (judo, karate). They do not include Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) as this is no Olympic discipline and as this is privately organised and commercialised. The phenomena of right wing extremism and indoctrination through such minded MMA sportsman in certain studios and gyms, as these fighting and training locations are called, is well known but documented only to a certain extent in the last years. Within the „Deutsche Sportjugend im Deutschen Olympischen Sportbund e.V.“ these phenomena are observed and only analysed at an unregularly basis but not systematically as MMA does not belong to the Olympic disciplines. Mixed Martial Arts provider such as studios, gyms or fight event management offices are organised privately in different associations that are commercially orientated. It does not exist one umbrella association for the different MMA



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providers; most of those are not even registered and are not legally termed as charitable (as registered associations are).

*Harald Berndt*, (interviewed at 21.03.2020) conflict mediator and *coach for democracy at the Federal Association of soccer clubs in the federal state of Schleswig-Holstein (Schleswig-Holsteinischer Fußballverband)* can easily identify hot spots (sport clubs) in the federal state.<sup>5</sup>

Besides radicalisation tendencies that originate from the national German right wing one can also identify national conservative radicalisation processes within so called 'migrants sport associations'. There exist a number of associations that identify ostentatious with the policies of the Turkish leader Erdogan. Members of these sport clubs are mainly males from Turkish origin who do not seem to be (or to feel) 'integrated into the German society' and provoke other migrants and some Germans through their (mainly) symbolic actions. The far right conservative ideology is being transported to other leisure activities and areas as well. This has been observed by Harald Berndt in his function as a mediator for the sports area.

Indoctrinations by right wing extremists are phenomena which are happening on a more or less regular basis in amateur football clubs. Compared to some ten or more years ago nowadays the clubs ring alarm bells once they become aware of such tendencies. Football clubs and their amateur functionaries show that they have an attitude and they also fear to get run over by right wing tendencies in their clubs. Once these clubs mention such phenomena to the federal association of football clubs a talk with a mediator is being appointed.

Within the football clubs it has been observed more often that older (grown up) football players have a major influential role and are seen as role models and reach easily younger (adolescent) players simply because of their experience as active and well known players. The attempts to reach younger players with radical ideas were described as numerous and as either direct or indirect. Very important (with regards to the topic of indoctrination) it is a commonly well known and documented fact that also coaches of football teams of children have a central role model function and educational for the young players.

The financial possibilities of freelancers that work as mediators under the nationwide program „*Zusammenhalt durch Teilhabe*“ (= *cohesion through participation*) are very limited. The program – which is not solely directed towards prevention measures in sport or football clubs – does not have the financial means to support a professional supervision of sport clubs that face an emergency situation.

*Robert Claus*, *Social Scientist at KoFas (Kompetenzgruppe für Fankulturen & Sport bezogene Soziale Arbeit)* and *Expert on Radicalisation in Mixed Martial Arts Area* describes during his interview (at 30.03.2020) the high amount of resources that projects and initiatives have to invest in time and staff to contact Studios and gyms in the MMA and self defence sector with the intention to work with those sustainable and preventive. The reason is the access to these scenes is restricted and limited. He then questions if this approach to those groups is reasonable, those groups that are mainly and already radicalised or if trainings to strengthen democratic values within other groups of young

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<sup>5</sup> Those clubs are treated anonymously by mobile advisory teams that work against radicalisation processes and that will not be made public





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people is more effective and preventive. In times of limited financial resources, it should be evaluated which way is more effective and sustainable.

The highest and most urgent political demand for preventive measures is identified by him in this sports sectors. Preventive measures should be implemented here although this sector is not organised at all (see above), different associations and commercial organisations are able to organise themselves and they can call themselves for instance “world association of MMA” although they have only five local gyms under their roof.

In his view there are other areas within a totally unregulated sports sector where the most radicalisation and indoctrination of radical views – and mainly right extremist – are taking place. Additionally, to the MMA sector, he identifies the whole self-defence sports sector which is also completely unregulated as one that is hosting mainly male adolescents and men. And finally he argued that the wide and vast area of online games, and especially those games that simulate war and violent conflicts inhabit potentials for radicalisation. All mentioned areas harbour right wing orientated or extremist views and correspondingly radical youth and adolescents.

#### **4. Situations of Ambivalence in Sport**

The network “Sport und Politik” ([www.sportundpolitik.de](http://www.sportundpolitik.de)) is a national network initiative of various ministries, of the *Deutscher Städte und Gemeindebund* (German Association of Towns and Municipalities), of the *Deutscher Städtetag* (German Association of Cities), of the regional sport associations and many more. Following a symposium on the prevention of radicalization in sport, the network highlighted four situations of ambivalence, which can be described as fields of tension, as they not only offer chances, but also harbour risks with regard to democratic interactions in sport (cf. Reip 2019 below):

##### *Hierarchies and Structures in Clubs*

In order for social co-existence to succeed, people are needed in sports structures who are aware of their responsibility and their function as role models and who carry out their duties responsibly. Sports clubs and structures are not just “neutral” and “apolitical”, they can also be used as a platform for political influence, especially when they have strict (masculine) hierarchies that follow rules that are less democratic.

##### *Nationalism, Racism and (German) Identity (-ies)*

In national competition situations in particular there is a fine line between identification with and enthusiasm for a country and nationalistic identification. Do the media contribute to this becoming excessive, or are we becoming less sensitive when dealing with this subject due to the omnipresence of the media? Moreover, some clubs and/or fan groups have their own identity if they regard their club as a kind of home or community. This circumstance and the use of the thematic field “identity and community” are also abused in order to support group-based xenophobia, racism and hostility to democracy. Terms such as “Identity” and “nation” are used as “battle cries” (Reip 2019) in order to marginalize other groups and to elevate their own.

##### *Community, Group and Socialization*



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The socialization of young people is attached to the conditions of their living environment. Sport clubs give many young people the opportunity to socialize with their peers outside of the school or training environment and to get to know adults who had previously been “strangers”. Ideally, the sports club, as an independent learning and teaching context with a voluntary character and which is outside of school, then acts as a place of democratic and social learning. The social and physical character of the contest which is intrinsic to the sport – whether in training, in the group or in the contest itself - promotes an in-group and out-group way of thinking and can affect young people in different ways and bring about different individual and community reactions (see above).

### *Gender, Body and Self-Image*

As we know that some youth or sub-cultural milieus are mainly defined by body aesthetics, which are also predominantly masculine and heteronormative, and have little leeway and options for action for (sexual and cognitive) freedoms, we can assume that membership of these kinds of milieus conveys the hope of an elevation of their (supposedly low) status. Standardized milieus or scenes like these can also be equated with a kind of refuge. However, if they are defined by an individual or group-based identity that is predominantly oriented towards body- and strength-related ideals such as combat readiness, defence and fighting ability, they usually reject physical traits, body images and gender constructions that do not meet their own standards, and then assert their own standards by means of violence against others.

## **5. Conclusion: Prevention required**

The data and knowledge situation has so far been marginal about the landscape of associations and combat sport studios. In order to promote a higher sensitivity to the topic, an active contact of the prevention landscape with them as well as a network against extreme right-wing activities in combat sports would be needed – especially for those organizations that represent a democratic stance. We could profit from the results of research on the extreme right-wing and the corresponding prevention work: clothing, tattoos and music require order and classification, sponsors and organizers would have to be granted appropriate licensing conditions. Social work should be integrated into training activities; the prevention work should focus more intensively on this context so that it does not sink to become the linchpin of far-right subculture (Claus 2018).

Contacts with representatives or symbols and signets of right-wing extremist or populist provenance among young people have become multifaceted and also find their manifestations in sport. In view of mounting challenges – which also arise in youth sports - and also in view of the different skills required for volunteers in sport, networking must therefore play a central role in the fight for non-discriminatory, democratic spaces. In the future, it will be very important for clubs and associations to network with civil society initiatives, and for sport to be able to, indeed it will have to, develop its social potential mainly in prevention (Pilz 2014).



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