

2 Austrification as modernization: Changes in Viennese football culture

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In the spring of 1905, the First Vienna Football Club invited two English League clubs, Everton and Tottenham Hotspur, to Austria to give a demonstration of the strength and power of English football. These clubs played several matches against various Viennese teams and then, as top of the bill, on May 7 they played each other. This particular game attracted a crowd of more than 10,000, which broke all Austrian spectator records at that time. Almost ten years later, on 2 May 1914 24,000 went to see the Austrian team (which was in fact a Viennese team) play Hungary. However, these were relatively small crowds compared to those that could be seen at Austrian international and top league games in the years between World War I and World War II.⁽¹⁾ Football had turned into a sport that moved the masses.

This development is demonstrated best when looking at the numbers of spectators watching the international meetings of the Austrian (i.e. Viennese) team against Hungary (including the games where Vienna explicitly played Budapest).

The number of teams and players in Austria also grew rapidly. In 1914 we find 14,000 registered players in the whole of Austria and in 1921 this number had increased to 37,000 players. Most of these players came from Vienna, where most of the teams, and definitely the most important teams, were based. In 1932, 25 professional teams⁽²⁾ playing in two leagues, came from the capital. (Schidrowitz 1951, p.255 ff).

Table 2.1: Attendances at international matches between Austria and Hungary

1902-1937		
1902:	500	1919: 25000
1903:	?	1920: 20000
1904:	2000	1921: 45000
1905:	no games	1922: 65000
1906:	no games	1923: 40000
1907:	800	1924: 45000
1908:	4000	
1909:	2000	1925: 45000
1910:	6000	1926: 40000
1911:	7000	1927: 45000
1912:	13000	1928: 40000
1913:	18000	1929: 49000
1914:	24000	1930: 40000
	5000	1931: 43000
1915:	?	1932: 60000
	2000	1933: 55000
1916:	15000	1934: 55000
	9000	1935: 40000
1917:	6000	1936: 46000
	12000	1937: 45000
	15000	
1918:	20000	
	15000	

It is not necessary, and it is also confusing, to mention all the names of these clubs, so, instead, I am going to talk in more detail about two clubs which still play an important part in Viennese (and Austrian) soccer. What is more important is that these clubs embody the two main themes of Viennese football culture. It is not difficult to guess that these two clubs are Austria Wien and Rapid Wien. Let us start with the latter.

The *Erste Wiener Arbeiter-Fußballklub*/First Vienna Workers Soccer Club was founded in September 1898 with the intention to "introduce the highly popular sport to the colleagues of the working class who fancy sport". The club had to change its name in January 1899 due to official pressure. The name was changed to Sport-club

Rapid, but the label of 'working class club' remained.

Although the SC Rapid, even at its beginning, was maintained not just by workers, and though a number of clubs were founded at the beginning of the century which would have deserved the label 'workers club' a lot more, it was not by accident that Rapid became to be perceived as the typical Viennese workers' club; the representative of rough playing styles. Also, the culture of the club represented something of a puritanical tendency within Viennese football culture. An article in the *Illustriertes Sportblatt/Illustrated Sportspaper*, from the 8th October 1927, for example, characterized the club as follows:

They (the players of Rapid) have never disappointed their audience since they never give up and fight right up to the end. Their raw material, the players, are nearly exclusively "home bred", the management is conservative and adventurous business politics are not their cup of tea. The roots of Rapid lie within the population and it never loses contact with its home ground. The 'Green and Whites' are a suburban club in the best sense of the word.

The same source characterized the second club, the Wiener Austria, as the team of "salary football" fuddled by "dense coffeehouse smog". It should not surprise us that the same paper later praises this club concerning its lightfooted and brilliantly, clever way of playing, and celebrates the club as the most typical representative of the Viennese soccer school. This refers to the second branch/tendency within Viennese soccer culture. 'Austria', which was founded in 1911 under the name of *Wiener Amateur-Sportverein*/Viennese Amateur Sportsclub, as a split off of the Vienna Cricket and Football Club, one of the oldest Austrian clubs, very soon developed an aura of the club of the liberal (Jewish) Viennese middle class.

In April 1990, Karl 'Vogel' Geyer told me that he had joined the 'Amateur' in 1920 when he was 21 not only because of the salary on offer, but also to become part of a - as he put it - "more intelligent social group". This suits the proud self-image of this club, which is revealed best by a contemporary article in the club brochure:

The 'Violets' represent their own grade, not just in Viennese but in all Austrian football. They had never been what one could call a

'tough' team, probably because the club was always eager to be not just a football club but also a society club. Most of the players were intellectuals, students and merchants. Unintentionally, the head of the team was always a doctor or professor. (*Viennese Amateur Sportsclub*. Brochure for the summer tournament 1919-1920, Vienna O.J. 1920)

Of course, one should not take all of this literally. Nevertheless, a look at the headquarters/office of the club, which were always coffee houses in the city, helps us to understand why the 'Austria' (the name was accepted in 1926 in the third year of professionalism) was always understood as the liberal (Jewish) club of the Viennese middle class.

The geographical spread of soccer in Vienna

Next to the club structure we find a special geographical order of places where football was first played in Austria. In the early years, soccer was played on meadows in the outskirts of Vienna, and only later on do we find the establishment of soccer grounds. (In 1900, Vienna had only three such soccer grounds!). Together with the growing number of teams that were founded especially in the densely populated working class districts, the number of grounds grew.

Due to the rising interest in soccer, more and more grounds were constructed that were exclusively built for soccer. The early twenties saw the completion of a number of important stadia, especially in the Southern and the Western working class areas and the ones in the North of Vienna, across the Danube. This nails down the profound characteristic of Viennese football, concerning its geographical structure. Compared to the inner city locations popular in various cities in Britain, the Viennese stadiums were located at the outskirts of Vienna.

Vienna's inter-war suburbs differed, fundamentally, from the outskirts of most of the other European metropolises'. Being more or less grey areas, where urban and agrarian culture are merging indistinctly, they embody the successive integration of the 'flat country-side' into the urban structure. But *Vorstadt* (suburb) also meant particular spheres of life, and particular outlooks and mentalities: levels of a specific cultural, political and aesthetic feeling, which in many respects reflect the character of transition

so typical of the suburb as a whole. These correlations, between rural consciousness and ways of living, were embedded in swiftly developing processes of industrialization and urbanization.

Since the last third of the 19th century, the industrial exploitation of the suburbs was virtually unlimited. The development scheme of the area followed a very strict pattern, characterized by the mingling of residential buildings and industrial plants. In between, extensive free spaces had developed, which were neither of agricultural nor industrial use. This was a kind of 'no-man's-land', which was also without effective social control. These localities became places of primary socialization, above all for those for whom the stigma of rebellion was somehow 'naturally' attached: the suburban juveniles. Being appropriated for social use, these localities became central places of cultural learning, leisure time activities and reproduction. It comes as no surprise that football became so important here. It was the suburbs where the majority of the spectators and most of the players came from.

Into the 1920s

Up until this point I have tried to describe the special features of the early situation of soccer in Vienna. Analysing them I want now to split my account into three strands of development during the twenties and thirties. These three guiding strands often overlap and sometimes seem very close to each other but sometimes they move very far apart. They are:

1. The strand concerning mass respectable popular culture, including bohemian elements. It is characterized best by the idolization and stardom focused around 'the tank' of the twenties, Josef Uridil, and by the tight connection which existed between literary Viennese coffeehouse culture and the world of soccer. The Ringcafe was not only seen as the birthplace of the "Wonderteam" but also as a central meeting point for people interested in football. (Cf. Horak and Maderthaler 1992)
2. The strand of the highly centralized social democratic working class culture of 'Red Vienna'. This is characterized best by pointing to the regular differences between the small amateur clubs

organized within the frame of social democracy and the 'unpolitical' big clubs. Also, the social democratic sports movement constantly tried to extend the soccer structure with the intention of democratizing the sport by taking over its power and by forcing the breakthrough of the 'real and honest' sport.

3. The strand that runs next to, under and across the official party culture - the 'workers football culture'. This is characterized by loyalty to the club, close connections to the home district, but also the fact that major parts of the Viennese working class population was organized within various cultural organizations of the social democratic party, but were not afraid to watch games of their favourite professional 'bourgeois' clubs although the heads of the party were absolutely against that. From the autumn of 1924, more than a few working class players tried to join these clubs, even as professionals.

Between the Wars, Viennese soccer gained its social and cultural importance through the interactions of the various interpretations of the authorities. The social democrats could not really condone soccer because, in the last instance, they felt that sport prevents the workers from participating in class-conflicts. The workers found their political voice in the party but they did not want to miss out on soccer. Beyond abstract class solidarity, soccer was able to reflect and take the form of concrete local (suburban) district/street identities. The *feuilleton*, always after new subjects, turned specific players into figures of literature, thus presenting them as immortal. All this formed the basis (and the burden) for the period after the Second World War. The fifties, sixties, seventies and eighties saw not just changes the game itself but also changes in the conditions which provided the backcloth to the game. Old structures and old ways of interpretation changed or disappeared completely.

Post-war football in Vienna

In between the wars football had turned into an important popular cultural phenomenon in Austria, that drew its fans from different social groups. This enthusiasm was so great that discussions in the Austrian Parliament were interrupted because of the radio

transmission of a match played by the national team (Gastgeb, 1933) and thousands of Viennese gathered on the Heldenplatz, in the centre of Vienna, to listen to the live coverage of the game Austria vs. England in December 1932.

Austrian soccer in between the wars was formed by the rupture of the different organizational associations. From 1926 onwards, the (bourgeois) *Osterreichische Fußballverband* / Austrian Football Association, which ran the professional league opposed the (socialist) *Verband der Arbeiterfußballvereine Österreichs* / Association of Austrian Workers clubs (see, Marschik 1991, 1992). But this political split was not taken too seriously by Austrian working class football fans, so that games of the professional league were mostly watched by workers. During the years of Fascism (John, 1992, p.81 f.), but especially at the beginning of the Second Republic, soccer was able to keep its popularity alive. In the years immediately after 1945, it even gained in popularity.

Up until then this 'football euphoria' was more or less a phenomenon that occurred only in the capital Vienna and partly in its surrounding provinces (Lower Austria and northern Burgenland). That the situation was the same at the beginning of the Second Republic can clearly be seen when looking at the interest of the spectators and the number of active players and clubs.

Especially after 1945, there was a new wave of club formation. This was partly because new clubs were founded and partly because old clubs that had been closed down either in 1934 or 1938 were revived. The spirit had changed since before the war and soccer had turned into a 'sport for all' and was no longer based on ideological differentiation (see Friesenbichler, 1985, p.17). The climate of general social consensus and a new 'Austrian awareness in the young Second Republic led to a new structure for soccer. The *Staatsliga* (national league) was founded in order to bring together the best clubs from all over Austria. Until the 1948/49 season, the Viennese football champions were automatically labelled as the Austrian champions, an equation that was unique in Europe. Austrian soccer was clearly identified with Viennese soccer, whose premier rank was accepted without reservation.

The introduction of the *Staatsliga* announced the end of the Viennese predominance, but for the time being the capital remained the centre of Austrian soccer. Under the patronage of the Viennese Football Association, 10 clubs played in the *Staatsliga*; 14 in the

Viennese League; 28 clubs in the two Second Leagues; 56 in the four Third Leagues; and 27 in the lower divisions. In all, 232 clubs were active in 1949/50. Towards the end of the 1940s the number of clubs in the provinces increased rapidly. The official statistics of the Austrian Football Association indicate the number of clubs for 1951(see, Table 2.2).

The decline of Viennese domination

The important change occurred in Austrian football in the middle of the sixties. In 1964/65 the LASK club (a club that came from Linz the capital of Upper Austria) became the first non-Viennese club to win the Austrian League. But this cannot be interpreted in a simple sense as a sign of the end of the Viennese hegemony (Langisch, 1979). At that time, four well known Viennese players and the coach, Karl Schlechta, who had managed several clubs in Vienna, were employed by the LASK club.

The decline of Viennese football dominance became obvious only a few years later. The proportion of Viennese clubs in the first division decreased within a couple of years from 60% to under 30% (1963 to 1967). At the same time, Viennese clubs no longer dominated the top places in the league table. From 1969/70 onwards, only two Viennese clubs were regularly among the top five clubs in the country. Apart from that, we also find that, starting in 1969/70, the title of Austrian Champions was won five times in a row by a club which was not Viennese.

Table 2.2: Clubs and players in Austria in 1951

Region/Province	Number of Clubs	Number of Players
Vienna	265	26,000
Lower Austria	358	27,600
Burgenland	103	6,000
Styria	137	13,460
Carinthia	54	3,950
Upper Austria	150	12,500

Tyrol	43	3,300
Salzburg	47	4,000
Vorarlberg	27	2,600

Source: OFB, 1951

We can see that the great change which took place in the second half of the sixties, was the changeover from a Viennese football culture to an all Austrian football culture. The relegation of Viennese soccer, and therefore of east-Austrian soccer, was the result of the increase in efficiency of the Styrian and Upper Austrian clubs, but even more strongly of the dramatic increase in performance of clubs in the Western part of Austria, led by Salzburg and Innsbruck.

This process changed the structure of Viennese football dramatically. Out of the 'Great Four' (Austria, Rapid, Wacker, Vienna), only two clubs remain important today - Rapid and Austria'. Vienna, the oldest Austrian football club, survives but makes a bare living as a club that regularly gets relegated to the Second Division only to return to the First the following year. Even more sad is the case of Wacker Wien, a club that was the strongest in Vienna at the end of the 1940s but was relegated into the Second Division a couple of times during the 1960s. In 1970, Wacker merged with another traditional Viennese club, Admira, that had moved to Lower Austria some years before, due to financial and sporting reasons. (In this context it is interesting to realize that fans of both Admira and Wacker founded new local clubs that they renamed Wacker and Admira in order to keep the traditional culture of these clubs alive in the districts from which they originally emerged).

We can safely assume that professionalism and the commercialization of soccer, a phenomenon that occurred in the whole of Europe, had a lot to do with these changes, since nowhere did more than two big clubs in one city dominate domestic soccer. It is also obvious that only Rapid and Austria kept pace with the changes in a way that made it possible for them to stay relatively successful. We can draw the conclusion that Viennese football culture included some elements that were incompatible with professionalism. The importance of these various factors will be examined later. One important facet should not be overlooked, however: this is the general decrease in the number of clubs and active players in Vienna during the 1960s, while the number of clubs in the provinces stayed

more or less stable (Lössnauer 1983).

In 1951, 265 Viennese clubs existed but this number dropped down to 157 within 20 years (1973). In 1990, only 142 clubs remained. (This figure includes only clubs that are officially registered with the Austrian Football Federation, ÖFB). But was the demise in Viennese club football also reflected in falls in levels of match attendance in Vienna and elsewhere? We examine this issue next.

Games involving the national team or international club matches do attract a large crowds in Austria, but the Austrian League that runs nearly throughout the whole year remains the basis of soccer for the players as well as for the supporters. (The Austrian Cup has never gained as much popularity as, for example, the FA Cup has in England). The championship, as it is held in Austria since 1911, is still the 'spine' of Austrian football and therefore the appropriate basis upon which to measure the national interest in soccer.

Figure A shows the general spectator trends (average number of spectators at home matches) in Vienna. For this comparison we have chosen four prototypical clubs: 'Austria' and 'Rapid', the two biggest Viennese clubs which best represent the two traditions (coffee-house club and workers club) of football in Vienna. Neither club has ever descended into the Second Division. Together with these two clubs we have chosen two other traditional Viennese clubs that show a very close contact with their districts: 'Vienna' from Döbling (a socially mixed part of Vienna; partly bourgeois, partly working class) and the 'Wiener Sportclub (WSC)' from Hernals (traditionally a working class and lower middle class district).

Starting with the 1962/63 season, the numbers of spectators reflect the official figures of the Austrian Football Association. For the period between 1945/46 and 1962/63 there are no official figures, so we have reconstructed them by using contemporary sources like daily papers and sports magazines. The same goes for the average attendances at matches in the lower leagues.

Firstly, one could describe the interest of 'live' spectators as continually decreasing, at least if we look at the examples we have presented here. Shortly after the Second World War our four chosen clubs attracted a total of 60,000 people every weekend, but in the 1980s we find that the number goes down to approximately 10,000 to 15,000 spectators and varies only slightly. Figure A also shows that this decrease affected Vienna and Sportclub much more than 'Austria' and Rapid.

The early post-war years for Viennese football were, like for the rest of city life, primarily dominated by clearing work and rehabilitation, by hunger and lack of money. At this time football was the only affordable spare time occupation for many people. Although there was a high number of immobile supporters (difficulties in crossing the zone borders, hardly functioning public transport, etc.) there was an enormous influx of spectators during this period, a fact that manifests itself not only when looking at the high average number of spectators (Figure A) but also when having a closer look at individual football 'occasions'. The Vienna 'derby' (Austria vs Rapid), for example, but also other games often attracted more than 50,000 spectators, especially on days when two games per day were played in the same stadium. This usually happened in the Viennese stadium since it was the only one able to house such large numbers of supporters. Rapid's average crowd in season 1947/48 was 27,000 and the 'Austria' club, but also the Vienna and Wacker Wien clubs, held an average of 20,000 visitors per game for quite some years. These sorts of attendances have never been reached before or since.

Figure A also shows how much the post war-years were characterized by this particular soccer enthusiasm, almost regardless of opposition. Later, fans chose the games they where watching by first checking who the opponents happened to be. It is clear that even at that time (late 1940s) that top matches (those including teams like 'Austria', Rapid, Wacker, etc.) did attract bigger crowds. Yet, it also has to be mentioned that even the games of some smaller clubs could sometimes attract more than 30,000 spectators. In many ways, of course, this pattern of spectator attendance also mirrors that in countries such as Britain.

Since the second half of the 1950s, the number of spectators at Austrian football matches decreased rapidly. The economic situation became stabilized which especially changed ways of living in the capital. Increasing salaries, less hours of work, the 'free' Saturdays and the increasing demands for a certain amount of holiday time did not leave the traditional male working class football weekend untouched. Increasing numbers of holidays with the family, such as the trip to Italy, shows that a new geographical mobility had taken over. All this clearly signals changes which had taken place.

The likelihood of one going to a football match began to become more and more dependent on the club's successes. This explains the relatively small decrease of spectator numbers for the bigger clubs

('Austria' and Rapid) as well as the fact that the 'Wiener Sportclub' when it was very successful towards the end of the 1950s, attracted large numbers of spectators which mostly disappeared again when the club did not maintain its success.

Let us have a brief look at another typical Viennese club, Simmering, (named after the district which houses the club) is a typical working class club with a strong regional community spirit concerning the players, but especially the supporters. Simmering was in the top division from 1951/52 till 1965/66 but in the following 15 years it started to alternate between the First and the Second Divisions.

Compared to the decline of the number of spectators that the bigger clubs had to deal with, the number of spectators Simmering attracted (average: 7,000) stayed stable through the fifties (See: Figure B). Because of its inconsistent performance, Simmering was definitely not attractive for supporters that orientated themselves to success. Instead, the fact that the club promoted a strong regional solidarity was decisive for the large numbers of spectators who remained loyal. The fans did not attend Simmering games because they wanted to watch a top Austrian game but, basically, because the participation of their local club really was an event for them ⁽⁴⁾.

The years between the mid-fifties and the end of the 1960s show a drastic decline in attendances at football matches in Vienna, apart from a short recovery around 1961/5, when the so-called 'Decker Era' (named after Karl Decker, the manager of the national team of that period) was too quickly labelled as the days of the 'Second Wunderteam', once again raising the ghost of Austria as a great soccer power. The changes in leisure time activities in connection with the increase in TV coverage (concerning not only the matches of the national team, but also top League games) turned soccer into one among many options offered by the growing leisure industries. It was subject to completely different socioeconomic conditions and, under the pressure of competition from other spare time activities, football was not very flexible.

The end of the 1960s proved to be an important juncture in the world of Viennese football, a fact that can be clearly demonstrated by what happened to trends in 'live' spectatorship at matches. Whereas the Austrian statistics at this time do not point out relevant changes, the Viennese attendances dropped drastically. Up until the season of 1967/8 the number of fans in Vienna (measured by 'Austria', Rapid,

Wacker and Vienna) was always clearly higher than in the provinces but afterwards we find a sudden conflating of the Viennese and other Austrian figures. We see that this shift is a result of changing patterns of attendance at Viennese football.

The end of an era

The end of the 1960s saw a definite end to the weekly ritual of masses of spectators at the Viennese football grounds; neither the worsening performances nor the lack of conveniences in the stadiums, neither the bad conditions of the public transport system nor the presentation of soccer in the media could, on their own, have caused this rapid change. It is much more likely that the reason was the discernment that the era of the so-called 'Viennese school of soccer' ⁽⁵⁾ had come to an end. The stronger presence of clubs from the provinces; the internationalizing of soccer (e.g. via the European Cup) including the necessity of professionalizing and of sophisticated management as a precondition of success; but mainly the increased understanding of the importance of financial matters (although the dependence on financial resources already played an important part in the twenties), made a continuation of the specifically semi-amateur Viennese conception of football impossible at the highest levels of the sport.

Since the beginning of the 1970s we have to talk about *Austrian* soccer, no longer, simply, about Viennese soccer. The trends in attendances throughout Austria are approximately the same: crowds stagnated or decreased slightly, with the exception of the years after 1978 when Austria was able to step out into the international limelight (World Cup, European Championships, etc.). Regional particularities are only apparent when success meets with regional factors (f.e. Innsbruck, Austria Salzburg) and sometimes even when regional bonds are carefully directed (e.g. the relocation of Sturm Graz back to its original location, the *Gruwahn*).

The remains of the Viennese football culture, as we found it in the 1960s, are only present in a few areas. Most likely they exist in lower class Viennese clubs where certain traditions (faithfulness to the club, strong connections with the district, the community of the players, the administrators and supporters) from the time between the wars have survived.

If we want to set off the aspects of typical Viennese soccer culture

against the general trends in the field of (soccer) sport it is necessary to treat these changes of 'modernization' in all their Austrian varieties. The commercialization of soccer, especially in Austria, is not a development that originally occurred in the Second Republic although it unfolded its effects then. "Soccer cannot live off sponsors, it needs spectators", was one announcement of Dr. Heinz Gerö when he made his inaugural address as president of the Austrian Football Federation in 1970. (Langisch 1979, p.105). This simple statement needs no further explanation. Much more interesting is the timing of the statement. At the end of the 1960s, the time had come, even in Austria, when sponsors of football started to carry out more and more analysis concerning the publicity value of soccer sponsorship to be able to assess the value of their patronage (Schulz 1981; Schagerl 1981).

The development which occurred in the post war period cannot only be explained by the fact that clubs had greater financial support. What seems important is the fact that in the late sixties adverts on the team strip were introduced in addition to adverts on the perimeter boards and adverts in loudspeaker announcements. The removal of the traditional Viennese suburban club, Admira, to Lower Austria, which occurred in 1966 because of financial reasons, also aroused a lot of debate. But the economic dependence of football on sponsors did not become a matter for larger public debate until the beginning of the seventies, when the national media also joined in.

Football and the media in Austria

Whatever has been said about the tendencies towards the commercial reorganization of Austrian soccer can also be applied to the media. Reports of football events in papers and on the radio (e.g. the reports by Willy Schmiegler in the 1930s) have always had a great tradition in Austria. Nevertheless, a new step concerning the media was taken in the fifties and sixties, namely the improved quality and range of television transmission. As has already been mentioned, not only international games but also Austrian League games were transmitted live on TV at the weekends⁷⁰.

Since the late 1950s we find confrontations between the Austrian Football Federation (ÖFB) the *Staatsliga* (the union of the top division clubs, dominated by the Viennese) and the Austrian television

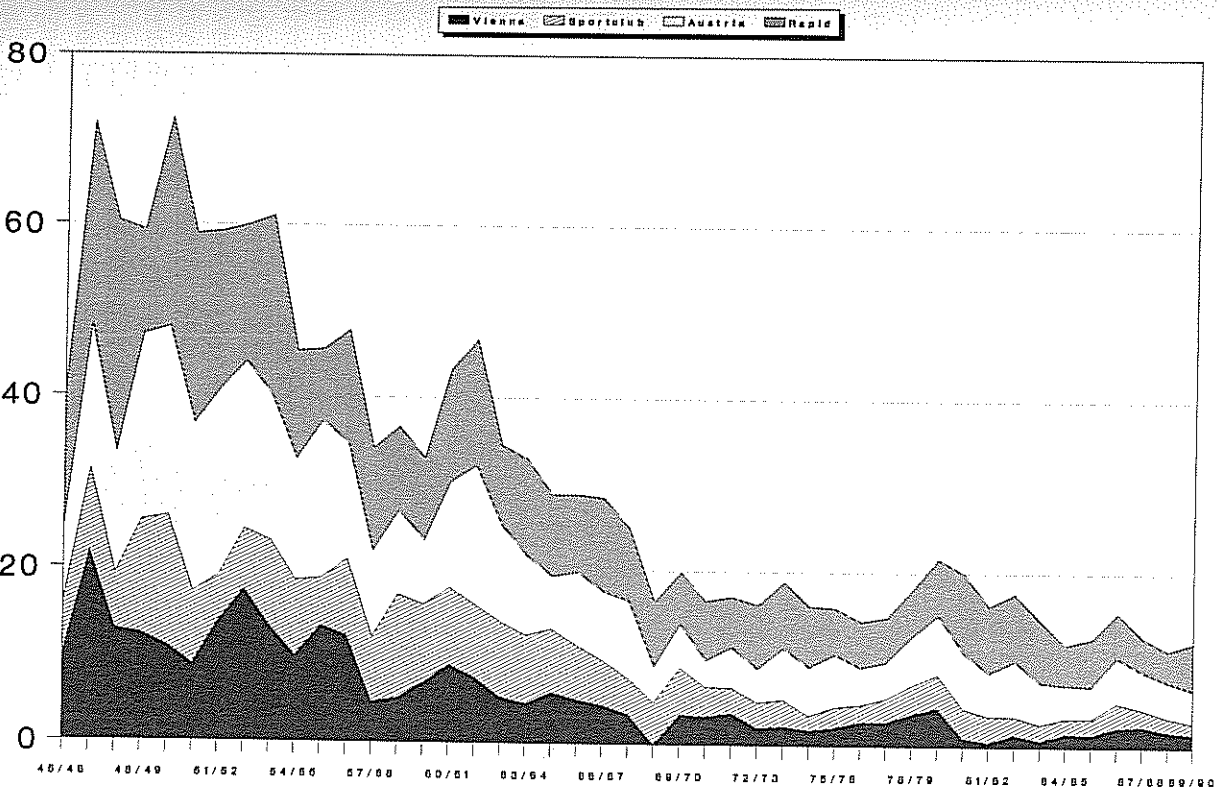


Figure A: Attendances at home matches (1st Division) - average number of spectators

Season/Team	Simmering	Vienna	Sportclub	Innsbruck	Austria	Rapid
45-50		13,570	9,991		16,742	20,516
50-55	7,333	12,664	7,885		18,312	18,059
55-60	7,131	8,411	8,592		11,759	10,632
60-65	3,759	5,244	7,957		8,849	10,034
65-70	2,322	4,078	5,135		6,930	8,391
70-75	2,331	2,575	2,776		4,617	7,001
75-80	1,121	3,151	2,820		5,389	5,610
80-85	812	1,036	2,404		5,159	7,333
85-90		1,902	1,903		7,322	4,760

(Source: ÖFB, III 1960 (KUS))

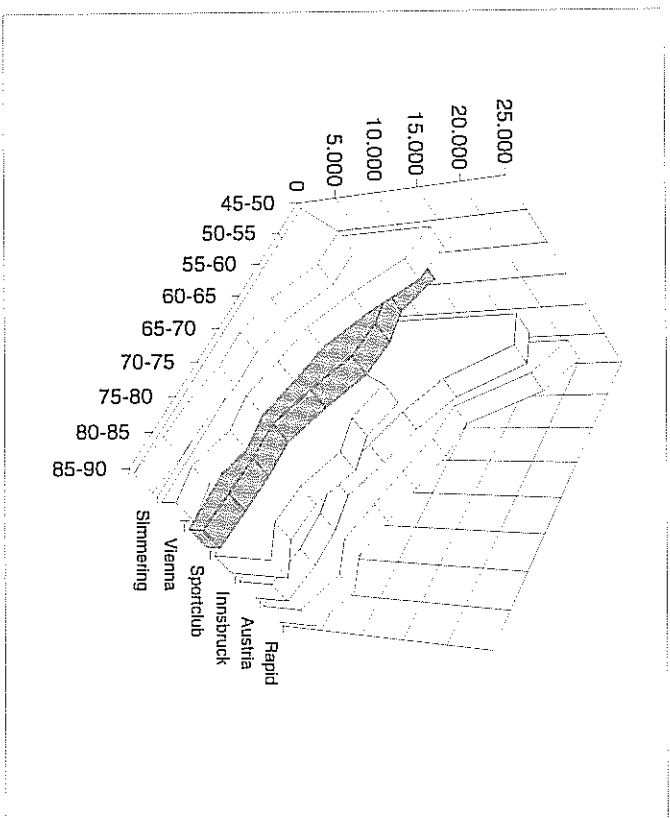


Figure B: Attendances at home matches (1st Division) - average number of spectators within a period of 5 years

network concerning the broadcasting of soccer games. In April 1964 the ÖFB decided that only if at least 60,000 tickets had been sold five days before an international game (played at the Prater Stadium) would a live telecast be allowed⁽⁸⁾. A year later it was decided that for some time no international matches at all should be transmitted from the Prater.

The clubs of the *Staatsliga* tried to attract larger crowds by engaging more and more international players. Players, mainly from Yugoslavia, Germany, Hungary but also from Turkey and Brazil, were bought on the international market. This led to a major change in Austrian football. Vienna had been, at least since the end of the thirties, an exporter of successful and good players but now even the smaller clubs of the top division tried to attract more spectators and they became more successful by importing foreigners. In the summer of 1962, the media started to talk about a new invasion of foreigners and to discuss the pros and cons of this situation. Sometimes the style of the coverage did not lack a certain racist undertone, especially when the media used terms like 'Negro players'.

As early as 1961 the manager of the 'Austria', Joschi Walter, brought his plans for reforming and professionalizing the Austrian football into the public domain. The development of the German *Bundesliga*, which was installed during the season of 1963/64, was his model. In 1964 he was provisionally appointed manager of the Austrian team and in May this appointment was confirmed with Bela Guttmann as his assistant. He kept coming up with more ideas for reform but these were only partly taken up by the ÖFB. They took up the plan to create a national league consisting of not more than 12 clubs under the direct supervision of the ÖFB; the reduction of the number of foreign players to two; and the recognition of three different types of player - the amateur, contract players and licensed players (the latter were only allowed to play in the top division). The granting of a license for the national league was made dependent on economical criteria which had to be fulfilled by the clubs.

In October 1964 Joschi Walter quit his job because he felt that his ideas for reform were not taken seriously and he felt mistreated and ignored by the *Staatsliga*, the provincial unions and by leading ÖFB administrators. Quite obviously, he did not see a chance of carrying through his programme (*Welt am Montag*, 12 December, 1964).

In fact, neither the reduction of the number of the First Division clubs, nor the economic recommendations he made were ever carried

out. Only the creation of the National League and new regulations concerning the status of the players were put into practise. Walter himself drew back from the so-called reforms; he never forgot to mention in public that "he was not the only one who proposed the rules in this form" (*Express*, 19 July 1965).

Modernization and reform in Austrian football

Since these first attempts, the modernization of Austrian (and therefore also Viennese) football constantly shifts between reform and counter reform. This process emphasizes and speeds up the split between top level and lower level soccer in Vienna. Two clubs with international aspirations ('Austria' and Rapid) oppose other clubs that still embody elements of the old Viennese football culture (ties to the home district, local roots). But even these two big clubs are, due to their history (that is, their semi-professional structure), stuck within this structure. Although they try to break away they do not really succeed. An almost tragic example was provided recently by the Rapid club. The establishment of a Rapid Limited Company (in 1991) which, in fact, now owns the club's players, made the club *de facto* an appendage of the company but it did not at all bring out the hoped for and expected success.

It is not by chance that the most important recent attempt to establish a big Austrian club that could come up to international standards occurred in the provinces. The short history of the FC Tirol club, lasted from 1986 to 1992 and would not have been possible in Vienna. It is unimaginable that Rapid or the 'Austria' club would change not only their club colours but also their name. This happened in Innsbruck without any difficulties. The FC Swarowski Tirol club, sponsored by the international Swarowski company, took over the First Division licence of Wacker Innsbruck, employed Ernst Happel as manager, and was actually quite successful in the Austrian Championship. It attracted its 'supporters', or more accurately the watchers of their home-games, by creating an image of a club standing against the (historically) dominant Viennese football culture. It is not only motives concerning football which play an important part here. It is also the general anti-centralist, more precisely anti-Viennese, attitude of the spectators which is important. But that covers only one side of the matter. Because of the image of

professionalism and modernization - built up following the model of Bayern Munich - this new club attracted the representatives of the new middle class of the whole of Austria, even the Viennese, a class that was very much orientated towards success. This is the sort of 'football-interested consumer' who has actually got few ties to the club but chooses his club by checking the results. Soccer for him is just one of many different spare time attractions. From time to time - should it be opportune - he even calls himself a soccer fan and really believes it. I want to end this essay by setting up the following thesis: the half-hearted modernization of Austrian football in the course of international modernizations during the sixties, seventies and eighties is, in fact, an attempted internationalization and a practical provincialization.

'Austriification' here means nothing more than the combination of modern economic strategies of management with an explicit anti-metropolitan attitude. At the same time, it brings with it the deconstruction of the traditional and, itself contradictory, Viennese football culture and the creation of something that could be called the 'general Austrian soccer supporter'.

Notes

1. A four division league, including only Viennese clubs, was installed during the season 1911-12.
2. A professional league, with two divisions, was established in 1924 - again including only clubs from Vienna.
3. Not unlike their British colleagues, Austrian socialists could not really understand the significance of sport in popular culture (cf. Hargreaves 1992).
4. A famous Viennese comedian of the fifties and early sixties, Helmut Qualtinger, coined the phrase: "Simmering versus Kapfenberg - that's brutality". In doing so he actually referred to the working class origins of both clubs. (Kapfenberg was the club of a small industrial city in Styria).
5. Rapid, a club which was always regarded as the one attracting the biggest crowds, had to cope with a decline in spectators from around 18,000 per home match in the first half of the 1950s to 8,000 in the late 1960s.
6. As early as 1964 the daily *Neues Osterreich* complained about the inability of both Viennese players and audiences to cope with the new direction the sport has taken:

Our spoiled audiences and our comparatively 'soft' players cannot come to terms with the development of football around the world. Everywhere else the players are tougher, more athletic and more reckless. The appealing actions (the good move) become less, success is the only thing that counts. (*Neues Osterreich*, 8 August 1964).
7. Precise analyses are - unfortunately - impossible since the ORF (Austrian Broadcasting Cooperation) has got no data available for this period.
8. The price of a live transmission was 300,000 AS. On the 8th October 1961 this was carried through for the first time when

Austria played Hungary. How strong the fascination is for TV soccer games was shown by the fact that 90,000 tickets had been sold for the match but 8,000 of these tickets where not used after it was reported that the game could be seen on TV (*Welt am Montag*, 9.10.1961).

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Game Without Frontiers

Football, identity and modernity

edited by

Richard Giulianotti
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