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# Atmosphere in the home stadium of Hertha BSC (German Bundesliga): melodies of moods, collective bodies, and the relevance of space

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## ABSTRACT

German football stadiums are well known for their atmosphere. It is often described as ‘electrifying,’ or ‘cracking.’ This article focuses on this atmosphere. Using a phenomenological approach, it explores how this emotionality can be understood and how geography matters while attending a match. Atmosphere in this context is conceptualized based on work by as a mood-charged space, neither object- nor subject-centered, but rather a medium of perception which cannot not exist. Based on qualitative research done in the home stadium of Hertha BSC in the German Bundesliga, this article shows that the bodily sensations experienced by spectators during a visit to the stadium are synchronized with events on the pitch and with the more or less imposing scenery. The analysis of *in situ* diaries reveals that spectators experience a comprehensive sense of collectivity. The study presents evidence that the occurrence of these bodily sensations is strongly connected with different aspects of spatiality. This includes sensations of constriction and expansion within the body, an awareness of one’s location within the stadium, the influence of the immediate surroundings and cognitive here/there and inside/outside distinctions.

## Atmosphère au stade de Hertha BSC (Bundesliga allemande): mélodies d’atmosphères, corps collectifs et pertinence de l’espace

### ABSTRAIT

Les stades de foot allemands sont bien connus pour leur atmosphère. Elle est souvent décrite comme « électrique » ou « géniale ». Cet article se concentre sur cette atmosphère. Utilisant une approche phénoménologique, il explore comment cette affectivité peut être comprise et comment la géographie a son importance quand on est à un match. L’atmosphère dans ce contexte est conceptualisée à partir des travaux de Gemot Böhme, comme un espace chargé d’atmosphère, ni centré sur le sujet, ni centré sur l’objet, mais plutôt comme un moyen de perception qui ne peut pas exister. A partir de recherche

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qualitative faite sur le stade de Hertha BSC de la Bundesliga allemande, cet article montre que les sensations corporelles ressenties par les spectateurs pendant une visite au stade sont synchronisées avec les événements sur le terrain et avec le paysage plus ou moins imposant. L'analyse de journaux intimes sur place révèle que les spectateurs font l'expérience d'une notion totale de collectivité. L'étude présente la preuve que la présence de ces sensations corporelles est fortement liée aux différents aspects de la spatialité. Cela inclut les sensations de compression et d'expansion dans le corps, une conscience de sa position dans le stade, l'influence de l'entourage immédiat et les distinctions cognitives de l'ici/là-bas et de l'intérieur/extérieur.

## **El ambiente en el estadio de Hertha BSC (Bundesliga alemana): melodías de estados de ánimo, cuerpos colectivos y la relevancia del espacio**

### **ABSTRACTO**

Los estadios de fútbol alemanes son bien conocidos por su ambiente. A menudo se lo describe como 'electrizante' o 'estupendo'. Este artículo se centra en este ambiente. Usando un enfoque fenomenológico, explora cómo se puede entender esta emotividad y la importancia de la geografía mientras se asiste a un partido. El ambiente en este contexto se conceptualiza a partir del trabajo de Gernot Böhme como un espacio cargado de emociones, no centrado en objetos ni en sujetos, sino en un medio de percepción que no puede no existir. Basado en investigaciones cualitativas realizadas en el estadio de Hertha BSC durante la Bundesliga alemana, este artículo muestra que las sensaciones corporales experimentadas por los espectadores durante una visita al estadio se sincronizan con los eventos en la cancha y con el escenario más o menos imponente. El análisis de experiencias *in situ* revela que los espectadores experimentan un sentido integral de colectividad. El estudio presenta evidencia de que la ocurrencia de estas sensaciones corporales está fuertemente relacionada con diferentes aspectos de la espacialidad. Esto incluye sensaciones de constricción y expansión dentro del cuerpo, una conciencia de su ubicación dentro del estadio, la influencia del entorno inmediato y las distinciones cognitivas aquí/allá y dentro/fuera.

## **Introduction**

This article explores perceived atmospheres in the home stadium of Hertha BSC of the German Bundesliga by drawing on the work by Böhme (2014, 2013, 1995), who designed atmosphere as an aesthetic concept (Anderson, 2009, p. 78). Consider the term 'atmosphere'. It originates from meteorology and has 'only since the 18th century [...] been used metaphorically, for moods hanging "in the air," for the emotional tinge of a room' (Böhme, 2014, p. 101). Böhme assigns atmosphere – to pick up that metaphor – to neither the side of the subject (spectators), nor the side of the object (stadium architecture, other spectators). Rather, he views atmosphere as

something that conveys something, as a state that is shared by both subject and object (Brandl, 2010, p. 191).

In recent years, several articles have been published in the field of geography dealing with atmosphere explicitly (Anderson, 2009; Bissell, 2010; Hasse, 1999; Kazig, 2007; McCormack, 2009). These research activities can be classified – roughly speaking – into a larger emerging field of research exploring the relationship between space and emotions (Degen & Rose, 2012; Dirksmeier & Hellbrecht, 2013; Korf, 2012; Schurr, 2014). These approaches deviate from reconstructive social research, and concern themselves with the situational exploration of sensations of space, which among other things brings increased attention toward embodied actions (Nayak & Jeffrey, 2011, p. 284). In this research area, geographers are joining developments within the social sciences that have been characterized by Howes (2006) as the ‘sensorial revolution.’ For, as Degen and Rose (2012) assert, within the social sciences it is by now ‘commonplace to remark that the senses are part of people’s everyday experiencing’ (p. 3274), and therefore reason enough to warrant their inclusion into research concepts (see also Bondi, 2005, p. 434; Wood & Smith, 2004, p. 534).

According to the phenomenological understanding of atmosphere, it can vary in its specifics, but it cannot not exist: Every space has an atmospheric quality, no matter if it is a schoolyard, a marketplace or a commercialized football stadium (Hasse, 2014, p. 203). This article will illustrate one example of such an atmospheric quality, the home stadium of Hertha BSC Berlin, a moderately successful football club playing in the German Bundesliga. For this purpose, the recorded bodily sensations and feelings of 62 stadium visitors from outside the football fan scene have been analyzed. This article provides three central proposals for the geographical debate.

Firstly, this article is meant to expand on the geographical research on football. By choosing a phenomenological approach, the emotional and affective dimensions of a stadium visit as well as the omnipresence of atmospheric quality are put into focus in a radical way. In this, atmosphere is being captured in form of the bodily sensations of people from outside the fan scene, and not – as is customary in the existing geographical research on stadiums – by reconstructive social research about football fans (Bale, 2000; Edensor & Millington, 2010; Urich, 2008). This study’s results may be used to link these emotional and affective dimensions with previous insights on collective identities, topophilia, and fan culture (see Bale, 2000; Church & Penny, 2013; Conner, 2014; Edensor & Millington, 2010; Lawrence, 2016). This could stimulate further research into the relation between cognitive understandings and the affective, sensual qualities of a stadium (Edensor and Millington, 2010, p. 151) or the interplay between discourse and performance (Lawrence, 2016, p. 286).

Secondly, this article contributes to the research exploring the relationship between space and emotions in general. Research findings show that and how human practices unfold in the interplay with the sensually perceived elements of the environment. In this vein, Thibaud (2004) highlighted the significance of atmospheres for style of movement, Kazig (2007, p. 173) showed a specific mode of attention that is stimulated by atmospheres, and Anderson (2009), Bissell (2010), and Hasse (2002) derived an affective dimension of atmospheres (see also Kazig & Popp, 2011, p. 5). These works use differing theoretical conceptions of atmosphere. A controversy around the terms emotion and affect has sprung up between the proponents of the emotional, the affectual, and the

non-representational approaches. Schurr and Strüver (2016) point to current research while calling for overcoming the confrontations between these terms and opening up the different approaches towards each other. The phenomenological view that is applied in this article offers a bridge between the emotional and affectual geographies (Anderson, 2009, p. 80). The findings show that certain emotions and bodily experiences are more likely to occur in certain spaces. The examination of stadium atmosphere provides insights into the fundamental question of how bodily sensations, thoughts and human practices relate to spatiality.

Thirdly, a self-designed method of *in situ* diaries is presented as a possibility for observing and analyzing atmospheres in the stadium. Geographical approaches under the influence of the emotional and performative turn are concerning themselves with the mundane, the practices, and the commonplace incidents that bring forth the affective and emotional experience – such as during the course of a football match (Schurr & Strüver, 2016, p. 88). This creates novel methodological challenges: emotional, affective, and non-representational geographies encourage experimentation with new methods while enabling a multitude of different strategies and combinations of methods (Filep, Thompson-Fawcett, Fitzsimons, & Turner, 2015, p. 460). Using *in situ* diaries, the body becomes an important scientific research instrument for recording the affectivity and emotionality of everyday life (Schurr & Strüver, 2016, p. 88). This method is tied to expertise of the *parcours commentés* in use for analysis of urban atmospheres (Kazig & Popp, 2011, p. 5), as well as to the method of diaries (Filep et al., 2015). Before expanding on the controversy between the emotional, affectual, and non-representational approaches, a view on existing studies on football stadiums is presented.

## The football stadium in geography

Within the field of geography, several authors are dealing with football stadiums explicitly and are highlighting the phenomenon of stadium atmosphere implicitly (Bale, 1993, 2000; Church & Penny, 2013; Edensor & Millington, 2010; Gaffney, 2008; Lawrence, 2016; Penny & Redhead, 2009; Vertinsky & Bale, 2004; Wilhelm, 2018). Besides structural, image-oriented and other influences that stadiums have on their environments, Bale (2000) points out the emotional significance of stadiums. The author describes the stadium as a ‘source of topophilia’ (p. 92; Edensor & Millington, 2010, p. 150). Some geographical works within the scope of analyses of power and collective identity deal with relating those to stadiums. Church and Penny (2013) emphasize that ‘the strength of feelings that some supporters hold for clubs and stadiums means that metaphors of ritual, pilgrimage, religion, and theatre have all been used to explore the experiential, emotional, sensory and affective dimensions of supporters’ activities in stadiums’ (p. 821).

Scientific discussion has also paid attention to the changes that have resulted from the Taylor Report (1990) – a report on the Hillsborough Stadium disaster of 15 April 1989, with a death toll of 96 – and the ongoing effects of neoliberalism, globalization and commercialization. With these, the focus is on the new generation of stadiums and the changes in football culture and place attachment. Bale (2000) describes these stadiums as ‘surveilled, safe and sanitized’ (p. 93) and Lawrence

(2016) calls Manchester United and Manchester City 'global super brands [...] whose ever changing commercial agendas force their particular local-spectator to realign continually their sense of localism' (p. 290). An analysis by Penny and Redhead (2009) on the new Manchester City stadium concludes that the new stadium is seen as sterile and lacking character, resulting in a lack of place attachment and lack of identity with the built environment (p. 756). Church and Penny (2013) identify in their analysis of the new Arsenal London stadium the lack of power supporters and lack of collective belonging. It has been a merit of Conner (2014), to view fan culture and identities not only in the context of their roots, but also in that of their routes (globalization).

These studies address stadium atmosphere as a phenomenon that is waning in quality, due to the aforementioned developments in professional football. Edensor and Millington (2010) talk of the disruption and dislocation of match day routines through stadium relocation and redesign (p. 147). And Penny and Readhead (2009) as well as Church and Penny (2013) point out that for both analyzed stadiums, groups have formed with the goal of improving the stadium atmosphere that was considered to be lacking, the 'REDaction group' in London and the 'Atmosphere Action Group' in Manchester (Church & Penny, 2013, p. 828; Penny & Redhead, 2009, p. 758).

Outside of geography, in the area of sports marketing, scholars are dealing with stadium atmosphere explicitly (Chen, Lin, & Chiu, 2013; Uhrich, 2008; Uhrich & Benkenstein, 2010). Drawing on theories from environmental psychology and using a stimulus-response model as their basis, these studies present qualitative and quantitative surveys of spectators sensing an atmosphere. Examples include the studies conducted in the home stadium of F.C. Hansa Rostock in Germany (Uhrich, 2008) and in stadiums of the super basketball league in Taiwan (Chen et al., 2013). Contrary to the debate in geography, these scholars take no issue with the commercialization of football, rather they are viewing it as an opportunity. They are looking at atmosphere as a marketing instrument which may be optimized purposefully – for example, by playing the club anthems (Uhrich & Benkenstein, 2010).

Even though these analyses should be acknowledged for broaching an as yet sparsely researched subject, three points of criticism attract attention: First, the underlying conceptualizations of atmosphere and the research methods in use ignore the affective and emotional dimensions of atmospheres. Geographers are analyzing atmosphere based on reconstructive research methods such as interviews. The scholars in sports marketing on the other hand are using a stimulus-response model, based on the assumption of linear chains of effect. Second, stadium atmosphere is conceptualized far too statically. The dynamics and diffusivity of atmospheres is left out of the equation. Third, the spatiality of atmospheres is accounted for only in a relatively unsophisticated manner, by equating the spatial dimension either with the stadium or, with regard to Edensor and Millington (2010), to the stadium and its surroundings. Differentiations between here/there, inside/outside of a certain area, and near/far play no or just a minor role. In all, there is reason to believe that a geographical perspective inspired by the 'sensorial revolution' in social science could be of use to illuminate some of these blind spots in the treatment of stadium atmosphere.

## The dynamics, transience, and inconstancy of emotions and effects

This section, as an excerpt from a social geographical debate, intends to explore further the spectators' bodily experiences of the stadium atmosphere, which can roughly be grouped under the headings of the emotional, the affectual and the non-representational geographies. Roughly, because it is no easy task to find clear definitions for these three approaches, in part owing to their ongoing development (Schurr & Strüver, 2016, p. 89). In general terms, a controversial debate has sparked concerning conceptual approaches in this area of geographical research. This controversy at its core revolves around certain distinctions between the terms 'emotion' and 'affect.' In its wake, two camps can be distinguished: the emotional and the affectual/non-representational geographies (Schurr, 2014, p. 148). According to Pile (2010) and Bondi (2005), emotional geographies deal with how emotions are lived and experienced in the spaces of everyday life – for example, in a football stadium. In this, the subjective experience of space lies at the center of the research interest (Schurr, 2014, p. 149). Emotional geographies conceptualize emotional articulations as conscious and authentic expressions (Schurr & Strüver, 2016, p. 90). Fundamentally, exponents of an emotional geography consider emotions as being accessible on a conscious level, and therefore as being surveyable and researchable in a verbal fashion (Davidson, Bondi, & Smith, 2005).

Conversely, exponents of nonrepresentational geographies want to research what characterizes the experience of space on a pre-discursive, unconscious and precognitive level. This latter camp – having been shaped substantially by Thrift (2008) – uses the term 'affect' to set itself apart from the emotional geographies. As Nayak and Jeffrey (2011, p. 290) have highlighted, affects are characterized as taking place prior to the formation of consciousness and volition. Pile (2010) points out that affect is seen as 'a quality of life that is beyond cognition and always interpersonal' (p. 8). Affects arise not as a result of individual action, but rather emerge from a mesh of relations between human bodies, objects, motions, and concerns. The term 'nonrepresentational' is intended to underline the fact that the core of the work is not the analysis of meaning and texts – representations – but rather that of practices and performances. Practices in particular are of central interest – that which can neither be articulated, nor captured by words, nor conveyed by texts, but which is present in bodily experiences and motions that are more than cognitive, indeed that never are cognitive (Schurr, 2014, p. 150).

The two camps disagree in their understanding of emotions and affects, having been influenced by developments within the social sciences, psychology, and neurology. One camp views emotions as socially constructed and thus conceptualizes them as resulting from a cognitive, linguistic, and social process. The other camp views them as part of an inherent biological system which is networked with other such systems, in which case they are being denoted by the term 'affect' (Anderson, 2006, p. 735; Lehnert, 2011, p. 11). The conceptual distinction between unconscious affects and emotions as consciously perceived feelings is more prominent in the Anglophone than in the German-language debate, but it has by no means escaped scientific scrutiny (Schurr & Strüver, 2016, p. 90, with reference to Ahmed, 2004; Anderson, 2013; Thien, 2005; Tolia-Kelly, 2006; Wetherell, 2012).



In this context, Lehnert (2011) refers to the dynamics, transience and inconstancy of emotions and affects, on the individual as well as the social level. Schurr (2014) implicitly takes up this dynamic understanding of emotions and, with reference to current psychological studies, proposes a third position that tries to position itself beyond the polarizing differentiation between controlled and conscious on the one hand and automatic and unconscious on the other hand. With reference to Wetherell (2012, p. 62), Schurr emphasizes that modern psychology and neurosciences today provide a much more dynamic and complex picture of the affects (p. 152). In this view, emotions and affects are understood as interactions between automated bodily reactions, other bodily motions, subjective feelings, cognitive processing, neuronal currents, and verbal and non-verbal signals (Schurr, 2014, p. 152). This leads to Wetherell's (2012) conclusion that an 'emotional episode, such as a burst of affect like a rage or grief, integrates and brings together all of these things in the same moment' (p. 62).

## A phenomenological approach to stadium atmosphere

This article is based on a phenomenological research approach towards emotionalities in football stadiums, which is not compatible with only one of the above-mentioned camps, but rather takes a third, unifying direction, thus taking up the current debate among researchers. Concerning this matter, atmosphere appears as a very promising concept, as Anderson (2009) points out,

because it unsettles the distinction between affect and emotion that has emerged in recent work on emotion, space and society as one answer to the question of how the social relates to the affective and emotive dimensions of life. [...] They [the atmospheres, the author] mix together narrative and signifying elements and non-narrative and asignifying elements. And they are impersonal in that they belong to collective situations and yet can be felt as intensely personal (p. 80).

According to Böhme (1995), atmosphere is shared by both subject and object. The subjective part of atmosphere is expressed through the way in which we perceive the experience of space, that is, the way our bodies sense the presence of something and of being present somewhere (Böhme, 1995, p. 47). The objective aspect is reflected in the mood of the environment and the impression it gives (Brandl, 2010, p. 196). Böhme (2014) emphasizes that 'the character of an atmosphere [...] is the way [...] that it conveys an emotional state to us as participating subjects. A grave atmosphere has the tendency to make me feel serious, a cold atmosphere makes me shiver' (p. 102). Or, in the words of Hasse (2002), 'atmospheres are [...] feelings. In them, environmental judgments come into effect not in conceptual form, but in the form of mental states' (p. 23).

Brandl (2010) calls attention to the fact that 'only in the process of analysis and reflection [...], from a sensing of the actuality of an atmosphere or the sensing of a shared actuality between the perceiver and the perceived [emerges] the reality of a (detached) perceiving subject and a (property-determining) perceived object' (p. 197). The world, as well as the subject, is understood as emerging only in the process of sensing. Atmosphere as a medium influences 'the way in which the world and the subject develop in a reciprocal relationship' (Kazig, 2007, p. 170).

According to the phenomenological approach, atmosphere is not reducible to a private mental state that is only felt on a purely individual level (Hasse, 2002, p. 23). According to Böhme (2013), the suspicion that the atmospheric refers to nothing more than a coloring of one's perception due to one's own inner mood can be refuted by the observation 'that one, being entangled in a completely different mood, may, through the atmosphere in which one finds oneself, be affected and one's mood be changed' (p. 25). For this reason, Böhme (2013) also refers to a 'quasi-objectivity' of atmospheres. This, according to Böhme (2013), 'can furthermore be justified by the fact that [atmospheres] – at least when first encountered – are experienced as subject-independent: The subject feels deeply moved by the atmosphere, feels affectively involved' (p. 26). However, it is not the case that individuals are helpless in the face of an atmosphere. The impact of a specific atmosphere on one's mental state is always dependent on individual prior conditions, such as one's sensorial ability, prior individual experiences with atmospheres and current mental state (Kazig, 2007, p. 179). Atmospheres should rather be understood as the potential of a space to express certain emotional states. Different kinds of spaces exhibit widely different potentials, for example, church space having a very high atmospheric potential (Kazig, 2007, p. 179). The atmospheric potential of football stadiums will be the focus of the following sections.

## Empirical approach

This analysis of the atmospheric potential of a place was conducted during Bundesliga home matches of Hertha BSC in the Olympiastadion in Berlin, Germany. This stadium, completed in 1936, is not a pure football stadium, but can also host track and field events. According to the interviewed experts the home matches of Hertha BSC are rarely sold out, their atmospheric quality being considered to be somewhat mediocre. The aim of the study was to provide a differentiated analysis of the atmospheric quality of the Olympiastadion. The interest did not lie in detecting possible changes in atmosphere, e.g. in the process of increasing commercialization or to compare this stadium with other stadiums.

According to Böhme (2014), to describe the character of an atmosphere one needs to rely on persons who have exposed themselves to it; participants need to experience it from their own emotional and bodily state (p. 103). To achieve this, the methodological approach for the Hertha BSC study has been derived from expertise in atmosphere research by Kazig and Popp (2011), as well as previous experiences with the use of diaries (Latham, 2010). Kazig and Popp (2011) studied urban public spaces using so-called *parcours commentés*. During a *parcours commentés*, a participant, after having been briefed, goes on a route and describes his or her experienced body sensations and feelings. In the study on stadium atmosphere, the participants narrated their bodily sensations and feelings in so called *in situ* diaries, not while walking a route, but rather while sitting in the bleachers. A total of 62 test subjects aged 20–30 years, all of them university students, were given the task of writing *in situ* diaries during their visits to the stadium in May 2014, 2015, and 2016.

The subjects were to record their sensations at selected stages of the match in their diaries, approximately at the moment that they were experiencing them. Instructions

were given to carefully record any observations during the final five minutes before the beginning of the match, the first ten minutes of each half-time, and whenever a noteworthy event had occurred. The following information was recorded: time (minute of play), any significant changes in the participant's bodily sensations (e.g. clapping, wanting to jump up, something draws my attention) or in their feelings (e.g. feeling of joy, feeling of relief, feeling of being bored), and, in a third column, in which context these phenomena were experienced and evaluated (e.g. 'after the goal I wanted to jump up but I did not').

In this way, the changing bodily states of the subjects were employed as measuring instruments for the atmospheric. With the objective of evaluating the influence of different spatial perspectives, different immediate environments and near/far-relationships, the participants were seated in different areas of the stadium. The participants sat in the North, East, South, or West of the stadium, close to the fans of the home team or those of the guests, in the family block, or in so-called neutral areas. The research subjects were not part of the passionate fan scene; they were not people who would visit a stadium regularly. All subjects initially reported a neutral stance towards the outcome of the match that they were about to view. (The participants were not asked about the depth of their prior experiences with football, but this can be determined indirectly from the contents of their *in situ* diaries.) The choice not to work with avid football fans was made to ensure that the moods 'hanging in the air' during a match would be recorded impartially, without interference from the intentions and discussions within the fan scene. Information on ethnic or religious affiliation was not collected.

The recordings in the *in situ* diaries were accompanied by work on two different levels. Firstly, an autoethnographic participatory observation was conducted by the author during matches in the stadiums of Hertha BSC, 1. FC Union Berlin, SV Babelsberg 03, and 1. FFC Turbine Potsdam. The objective was for the author to feel consciously in his own body, and to record, the different facets of sensations and feelings during a stadium visit. Through this, it became apparent that the subjects of the case study will only be able to write in their logs for short periods of time and that they will be in need of careful guidance and instruction on how bodily sensations and feelings are to be observed and recorded. Secondly, interviews were held with experts concerning these four football clubs. Among those experts were coaches, referees, safety officers, stadium announcers, police officers, fan representatives, and architects. These were conducted as semi-structured interviews, with the aim of cognitively furthering the understanding of stadium atmosphere.

The data of the *in situ* diaries has been categorized and consolidated according to Mayring's method for qualitative content analyses (Mayring, 2015). In doing so, important anchor quotes were determined for each category. The following quotes all originate from the *in situ* diaries and are referencing the home stadium of Hertha BSC.

### **Case study: the home of Hertha BSC and the melodies of moods**

What do the recorded and observed sensations reveal? Is there evidence for the assumption that inside the stadium we are drawn into resonance with the moods

hanging in the air, with the emotional tinge – even if we previously did not intend to be? Which patterns can be discerned and what relevance can be attributed to the spatial?

In general, spectators' sensations display wildly fluctuating moods. Their sensations can for the most part be characterized as highly intense. Happiness, euphoria, and the feeling of wanting to jump for joy may rapidly be replaced by sadness, numbness, and the desire to leave the stadium quickly. The melodies that are created from this rhythm of mood swings – speaking metaphorically – feature high and low, rapid and slow, loud and soft themes, some passages foreseeable, others unexpected, the rhythm sometimes slowly speeding up or slowing down, sometimes changing abruptly. For a more detailed commentary on these melodies of moods, we first turn to fans' resonance with happenings in the match and then to organized scenery in the stadium.

### ***In-game actions setting the rhythm***

First chance for the visiting team. Fans are jumping to their feet, throwing up their hands. I look up suddenly and try to find the action by following the line of sight of those around me. I take a deep breath. (stadium visitor, May, 2016).

In the records, there are many passages like this one, associating an individual's agitation with specific match events. In addition to goal attempts, the transcript writers refer to fouls, free kicks, and saves as occurring concurrently with felt mood swings. Diary notes referencing in-game events are registering, for example, 'excitement that something is happening,' 'I jumped to my feet and am clapping with the others,' and 'I feel relieved.' What attracts attention in these transcripts of personal emotional states is the fact that they frequently refer not only to in-game actions, but rather to a coming-into-resonance with the excitement of the other spectators. In the above quotation, the transcript writer's attention is drawn to the goal attempt only via the reactions of the other fans and he reacts by taking a deep breath. Another writer notes in his diary, 'I feel myself sharing the excitement, the tension.' As quickly as this shared excitement and tension build up, just as quickly do they disappear, being replaced by the individual desire for inhaling deeply or, alternatively, by the feeling of relief. In this regard, many entries are referring to collective feelings, for example, many accounts noting a murmur going through the crowd, spontaneous clapping, or the aforementioned collective throwing of hands into the air.

Regarding the influence of match incidents on the moods of the spectators, goals for or against their team constitute exceptional situations for the diary writers. For instance, one participant notes after a goal for the home team, 'Something like an intense jolt explodes through the stadium. The fans quickly get louder and louder. I feel a strong sense of elation.' Other participants report immense cheers, unbelievably amazing sensations and, time and again, the urge to jump to their feet and throw up their arms like the other fans. In the case of a goal against their team, the cheers fall silent from one moment to the next, frustration and immobility arise and even 'a certain feeling of hate towards the fans of the guests, because they are cheering, while I'm sitting here quietly.'

Besides goals, disputed game actions also appear to result in highly intense states of agitation. In the matches observed, two scenes in particular seemed to bring forth especially strong resonances on the parts of the test subjects. One was a supposedly incorrect decision by the referee, which led to a promising free kick, and the other a provocation of the fans by an opposing player. Both situations – as noted by the diary writers – elicited high agitation, unrest and aggression, as well as the desire to participate in collective protesting. ‘The fans of the home team are whistling and ranting. The mood is contagious. I join the booing of the referee.’ Another participant notes: ‘The fans react aggressively, throwing beer cups and plastic bottles. Everyone is flipping everyone else off and shouting insults. The aggressive atmosphere is quite tangible and sends shivers down my spine. I am fascinated, amused and anxious.’ Both contentious game situations were experienced by the subjects as acting like initial sparks for the subsequently arising mood. Thus, the atmosphere in the stadium was reported to have been markedly louder and more intense after the barrage of whistles, and the game minutes after the player’s provocation induced goosebumps in more than one participant, one of them noting: ‘Apart from the start of the game, this is the most intense stadium atmosphere. Since the provocation, my leg is shaking up and down.’

### ***Enthralled by the organized scenery***

The variation and intensity of moods are stimulated not only by the events in the match. In fact, many of the diaries indicate that spectators notice themselves becoming enthralled by the impressive interior of the stadium – by the organized scenery. The layout of the stadium is mentioned frequently in the diaries. ‘In a stadium, you feel surrounded. It’s like a different world where you can forget everything else.’ Many test subjects report that just upon entering a stadium, they are overcome with a gripping sensation. ‘... as you don’t enter at the level of the playing field, but rather the field is much further below.’ The ‘magic’ of the stadium is recorded in the diary notes, especially during the first minutes of the visit. One participant notes during the first minutes of the game, ‘I feel vulnerable and distracted by all the different impressions experienced. It makes it difficult to concentrate on the match.’ Another writes: ‘I don’t notice what’s going on in the match as there is too much happening around me.’ The feeling of being consumed is evidenced also by nearly half the writers missing the starting whistle. Besides the overall arrangement and structure of the stadium, the sight of the fans’ seating areas (‘blocks’) and the synchronized, organized behavior of the fans make an impression, as evidenced in this quote: ‘There is loud singing, jumping and swaying. I feel dizzy watching the fans move in a wave through the stadium.’ Synchronized body movements like waving scarves (‘I think it is funny how they look like little propellers’), choreographed clapping and standing ovations are reported by most subjects to be quite impressive, perceived as ‘optical illusions’ that get one ‘charged up for the match’. The synchronized clapping – which has become famous in part through the actions of the fans of the Icelandic national team during the European Championship in France in 2016 – is orchestrated in the home and guest teams’ respective blocks with the participation of thousands of fans. One such routine consists of rhythmic clapping above one’s head followed by stretching out of the right hand with extended index

finger. The synchronized clapping serves to demonstrate power and presence and influences the bodily sensations of the spectators not only within the crowd clapping but also in the other bleachers.

During the match, many spectators describe feeling gripped by the 'battle' of the two fan blocks. One participant writes, 'The guest fans answer the home supporters with loud singing, drowning them out. The back and forth of the domination of volume creates an atmosphere like a battle arena.' Another describes 'an atmosphere like in an arena, with two opposing camps that are battling through their chants,' and how thereby 'the match moves to the background.' Not only inside the stadium does the singing of the fans cast a spell, it even affects the areas surrounding the stadium.

We're sitting on the grass outside the stadium listening to the fans cheer again and again. We all have the feeling we are missing something and decide to drink up and get back inside to take part. (stadium visitor, May, 2016).

Many of these enthralling scenes result from organized rituals. From the perspective of the diary writers, this is attributed to the organizers. The design of the stadium, the alignment of the loudspeakers, the playing of the clubs' hymns, the moderation of the opening lineups and the score announcements are clearly coordinated atmospheric impulses. However, also the fans' actions, such as choreographies or chants, are initiated following a fixed pattern, started by initiators known as 'capos'. The more the capos are accepted within the fan scene, the better they can conduct the coordinated program of moods for the fans.

### ***Sensing an attractive collective body***

Upon evaluation of the diaries, a common thread emerges, highlighting a sensation shared by many participants of being part of a collective body. It becomes apparent that the 'shared rituals,' the 'impressive sea of colors,' that 'men stand arm in arm,' and that 'unifying song' are associated with passion, euphoria and complete immersion. Personal participation in moments of bodily synchronization seems to be especially intense when singing, jumping up, or heaving a sigh of relief along with the others. The reports provide much evidence that this resonance, this immersion ('only the sky shows me that there is still an outside'), is in many cases almost unconscious, is sneaking up on the subject, hardly controllable and not readily influenceable. The most prominent indicators of this affective potential of the atmospheric, of this aspect of charging the mood, which seems to go beyond subjective emotional states, seem to be 'quasi-objective' – besides the numerous small impulses of feeling drawn into the atmosphere, of wanting to participate in the cheering, developments of partiality towards one of the teams over the other are also recorded.

Most of the research subjects present in the stadium had classified their own passion for both teams as being neutral before the start of the match. Several of the test subjects specifically made note of their lack of zeal as fans: 'As yet, I have no real interest in the match or its outcome, because I have no connection with any of the teams.' With this, the writer already implies that there could be an impulse to root for the home team ('because I live here') and that something could develop. And it is

precisely such a development of fan passion that can be observed in many of the notes. The participant just quoted will later note disappointment at a failed goal attempt, and the impression that he or she is beginning to root for the home team. Another spectator writes, 'Such a pleasure! A goal just before the end of the match. Throughout the match and with my position among the fans, I have become somewhat of a fan myself. It is as if something good has happened to me, something genuinely joyful.' At the same time, many of the diary writers emphasize their perplexed and surprised reactions to their newfound passion. 'Even though I am not a fan, the atmosphere is contagious. I develop a certain hatred for the opposing team's fans, even though I am neither for the home team nor do I have anything against the visiting team.' Another subject writes more explicitly: 'It irritates me to some degree that the announcer is so positively biased for the home team and neutral for the visiting team. I find this only mildly ludicrous as I am completely impartial. (I'm not a fan).' Little by little, the irritation subsides, being replaced by an ever more uninhibited partiality. Especially striking is one case, where a state of sadness about not directly taking part in the mood because of a lack of personal connection towards one of the teams gives way to a state of joy: 'In the Eastern block, the fans are jumping and singing, and toilet paper is flying. This causes happiness and sentiment in me. Meanwhile, I've found my way into the match, and I'm up and down with the home team fans.'

### ***Spatiality of the stadium atmosphere***

We now explicitly turn toward the question how the spatiality of stadium atmosphere is expressed. Which spatiality is reflected in the observed melodies of moods, in the organized scenery and the collective body? Böhme (2013) describes atmospheres as tuned spaces (p. 25). The spatiality of atmospheres signifies 'that they are indeterminate poured out into the wide expanse [...] (p. 25). The extent to which bodily sensations change in accordance with an atmosphere depends to a large degree on the distinction between near and far. This is because 'the spatial character of an atmosphere is apparent in the fact that atmospheres are not the same everywhere' (Hasse, 2002, p. 24). In this, the wide expanse, as Böhme writes, remains indeterminate, and in the words of Hasse (2002), '[one] cannot mark a boundary where the one can still be felt and the other not yet' (p. 24). Regarding the question which spatialities the recorded sensations of the spectators reflect, several assertions can be made, as described below.

To start with, there is a spatiality to be observed within the bodies of the spectators. Hasse (2002) points out the inner spatial dimension of sensing an atmosphere through one's own body. 'That is to say, feelings are experienced along the span of bodily constriction (of tightening uncomfortably) and bodily expansion (*in situations of relaxed serenity*)' (Hasse, 2002, p. 24). The reports contain, as has been mentioned, much evidence of bodily constriction and expansion taking place in the subjects, in two respects. They include the urge to slump down in one's seat after a goal by the opposing team as an example of bodily constriction, and the sensation of wanting to jump to one's feet or throw up one's arms after a goal or a goal attempt by the favored



team as examples of bodily expansion. Generally, it was observed that, the further one club's team advanced into the opponent's half of the pitch, the louder and more active grew the spectators. More active meaning that they rise to their feet, wave flags, or 'gesticulate wildly with their arms'. One spectator states for the record, 'Now comes the first chance for Gladbach. Fans are springing to their feet, yelling, and throwing up their hands.' There are many indications that this inner spatial dimension of sensing an atmosphere with one's own body seems to be connected not only to the actions on the ground, but also to one's specific location within the stadium.

Broadly speaking, the stadium can be subdivided into a larger area, dominated by the fans of the home team, a smaller area, dominated by the fans of the guests, and a diffuse transitional area. The fan areas, located directly opposite each other, impress the spectator, as outlined above, due to the intense, loud, and visually striking fan activities taking place therein. It must be noted that the test subjects did not experience both fan camps to the same degree, but rather with significant differences. The above-mentioned 'battle' was only noticed in specific areas of the stadium. The reports show clearly that the closer a participant is located towards one of the camps, the more they feel in resonance with the moods generated therein. It can be seen that the development of partiality, which has been mentioned, tends to favor the guests when the participant is located close to the guest team's fans, and the home team when located near the home team's fans. There is an impressive example for this observation: Before the start of the match, the researchers distributed the stadium tickets randomly among the test subjects. One of the participants had arrived wearing a jersey of the home team, and received, randomly, a ticket for a seat directly next to the guests' block. First off, he took off the jersey. This could be understood as being done for reasons of personal safety. Surprisingly, however, this participant developed a passion for the guest team during the course of the match.

In all the reports, references can be found describing the feeling of being carried along with the behavior of the fans, for example, 'As the players came onto the field, the fans stood up and applauded loudly. I stood up as well, even though I am not a fan.' While for some specific moments, like goals, the anthems, or the above-mentioned disputed match situations, very similar sensations were recorded throughout the stadium, greater differences were found for other phases of the match, depending on where the spectator was located. Participants seated far from both fan blocks, for the most part gave quite calm descriptions, showing little sympathy. 'In my block everyone was more or less silent. This irritated me to no end' or 'I was shocked at how little the fans in my block sang.' In those areas, the influence of individual behavior not connected to the game was much more apparent. One participant noted growing annoyed by 'how the child behind me was constantly kicking the back of my seat,' while another described feelings of envy and hunger on seeing the pretzel in the hands of the person in the next seat. In these areas the feeling of being part of a collective body was much less present.

One's location within the stadium appears to make a difference for one's sensing. This difference between 'here' and 'there' becomes apparent not only when comparing the locations of the subjects, but rather is addressed by the subjects themselves in their descriptions of their sensations. One writer noted, 'Many fans in the other blocks are standing up, in our block only a few people are standing up, I would have



liked to stand up, but I'm not doing it, because I would feel silly doing it by myself.' There, people are standing up, here they are not. In this case, the observing of the direct environment seems to prevent the acting out or permitting of the inner desire for bodily expansion.

There are numerous descriptions of situations where 'over there' there seems to be a great mood, but it stays 'over there', it does not spill over to 'here', it does not reach one's own block. This form of differentiation is usually accompanied by descriptions of felt disappointment, or the desire to partake more in that other mood. Over there might be a 'really great mood,' whereas here people are 'docile like sheep.' This form of here/there differentiation is often followed by a differentiation of inside/outside. There, they are in a good mood, here I am feeling left out. The feeling of being left out leads to the impulse of wanting to be over there instead, inside the action. ('I'd much rather sit in a block with an energetic atmosphere') This again expresses the already mentioned attractiveness of the fan activities. This impression of being outside the action is also linked in the reports to not being able to sing along with a fan song, or not wearing fan attire. This differentiation of inside/outside is also present in the overall assessments of the stadium atmosphere, with one transcript writer noting, 'Most of the time, the atmosphere in the stadium is breathtaking. This is not the case in my block. I observe left and right how the other fans cheer and celebrate their respective teams. It's captivating to watch and I wish I could experience that as well.'

Upon analyzing the *in situ* diaries, varied references to the spatiality of atmospheres can be made out. There is evidence for bodily constriction and expansion, as well as differentiation between stadium areas. Where there is a differentiation between moods occurring inside and outside a certain area, this presupposes a demarcation between the two. As mentioned previously, the borders of an atmosphere tend to be diffuse. Do the statements of the diary writers indicate that atmospheres can and should nevertheless be differentiated along distinct borders? This remains difficult to determine. On the one hand, the writers perceive differences, and a comparison between the reports seems to reveal different spaces carrying different moods. On the other hand, the diaries also express that the writers perceive a good mood in the far-off blocks and experience desire to be there. This seems to indicate that they are still included in the 'quasi-objective' atmosphere originating over there. This is to say, they are still well within reach of the atmosphere, even though it could be argued that their sensations are less intense as those felt in areas closer to the origin.

## Conclusion

In this article, the phenomenological approach as presented by Böhme (2014, 2013, 1995) serves as a method for researching atmospheres. The case study conducted at the home stadium of Hertha BSC in the German Bundesliga shows that spectators' bodily sensations and feelings relate to the events of the match, to the stadium scenery, and to the perception of a collective body. The participants of the study were not football fans, nor were they regular stadium visitors. As an interesting outcome, many of the participants in the study lost their neutrality towards either team during the match. Contrary to their personal attitudes and expectations, they noted, they began to root for one

particular team. The bodily sensations experienced by the participants were evaluated with regard to spatial aspects. This analysis revealed patterns of bodily constriction and expansion that were consistent across subjects. In this, evidence was found for the relevance of one's location within the stadium on the bodily sensations experienced.

With regards to previous research about stadium atmosphere and the phenomenon of collective belonging, the findings show in detail how the affective and emotional dimension of an atmosphere expresses itself. The study shows with a greater amount of nuance, compared to work done by Edensor and Millington (2010), Uhrich (2008), Uhrich and Benkenstein (2010), and Chen et al. (2013), how certain game actions (e.g. goals, referee decisions), fan actions (e.g. waving scarves, chanting), and the organized scenery (e.g. architecture, announcements, songs) carry away the ordinary people visiting the stadium. Contrary to the results presented by the above authors, this case study shows that the description of stadium atmosphere as a homogenous phenomenon is insufficient (Hasse, 2014, p. 202). Within a stadium, atmosphere expresses itself in highly dynamic and spatially finely differentiated ways. There were indications, for example, that a spectator in the vicinity of the fan block supporting the guest team tended to develop an affinity for this particular team, while spectators located near the home team's fan block began to root for that team.

This shows that, in addition to arguments on identity narratives (Lawrence, 2016), power constellations (Church & Penny, 2013), place attachment (Penny & Redhead, 2009), and globalization (Conner, 2014), the loyalty towards one particular team may also be explained through the (spatially) different experience of atmospheric qualities by the stadium visitors. According to Conner (2014), this could represent a contribution towards a more sophisticated understanding of the 'roots' of collective belonging (p. 525). In this sense, stadium atmosphere is understood as being generated by fan clubs, architects, and club officials according to their systematic calculations and interests, much like the atmosphere in shopping centers and music halls (Hasse, 2014, p. 204).

This study has shown that the atmospheric quality inside a stadium may vary depending on the area one finds oneself in, and that visitors in some areas might find it to be lacking while those in other areas might have a different experience. Based on emotions and affects, this provides a deeper insight into why for instance the visitors of Arsenal London (Church & Penny, 2013) and Manchester City (Penny & Redhead, 2009) might be planning actions to improve their stadium's atmosphere. Such actions are not in all cases fueled by fan culture or opposition towards changes brought about by neoliberalism. They may just as well be pursued by club officials and club owners for marketing reasons.

Second, these findings contribute to the research about atmospheres in general. For some specific moments, like goals, organized massive rituals by the fans, or the anthems, very similar bodily sensations were recorded throughout the stadium. In this sense, the study seems to present evidence for an 'affective atmosphere' according to Anderson (2009, p. 77) and Bissell (2010). And that is exactly what the frequent characterizations of stadium atmosphere as 'electrifying,' or 'cracking' seem to imply. And, the identified feeling of being enthralled by the organized scenery and of being part of a collective body show parallels to the collective affects having been found by Bissell (2010) in his

study on passenger mobilities, presenting evidence for 'affective atmospheres' (p. 283). The analysis of the *in situ* diaries furthermore indicates that, besides affects, emotions, and the accompanying cognitive reflections, also play a crucial role in the spectator's experience of the stadium. In a similar vein, Kazig (2007, p. 180) highlights how the influence on body sensations and state of minds is always subject to individual pre-conditions. Bodily sensations vary over time, can be learned and unlearned, and are affected by one's current personal state of mind. This is reflected in passages of the diaries showing how participants differentiate sharply between there and here and inside and outside, respectively, and how their behavior in the stadium is dependent thereof: over there, everybody is clapping, but here one must sit quietly. Another piece of evidence for the relevance of state of mind can be found in the observation that during each intense affective moment, e.g. a goal, there are some persons who do not show any change of mood. Taking all diaries together, the study uncovers a wavelike motion – melodies of moods – between very intense moments with great affective potential and other moments, in which reflexivity and state of mind lead to a suppression of body sensations. Against this backdrop, one might be well-advised to avoid using the term 'affective atmospheres,' as it suggests a dominance of the affective.

Third, these melodies of moods as an indicator of the affectively and emotionally compelling moments during a stadium visit supports the position adopted by Schurr and Strüver (2016), that a debate about 'wider-than-non-representational' approaches within the field of geography could be very promising (p. 91). This likewise becomes apparent when contemplating the need for further research induced by this study: After having shed light on the affective and emotional aspects of a stadium visit, it could be of value to further expand on the interplay between the affective, the emotional, and the social. For example, how can it be explained – as unfolded in the study – that spectators are leaping to their feet in specific situations – they are virtually being swept along – and in others, they are not, or only a few of them are? What role play – to hint at a possible connection with the studies done by Bale (2000), Church and Penny (2013), Penny and Redhead (2009), Conner (2014), and Lawrence (2016) – identities, power relations, place attachments, and globalized routes (Conner, 2014)? It would be essential to research how bodily sensations are associated with and influenced by cultural narratives. The present study provides some indications on how affects and emotions experienced within a stadium can flow into narratives on atmosphere (Edensor & Millington, 2010, p. 155), or into narratives about the ritual performance of song during football matches as being symbolic of the union of the spectators (Lawrence, 2016, p. 288). In this way, research methods could strive towards an integration of the surveying of bodily sensations, as presented in this article through the use of *in situ* diaries, with reconstructive social research, such as done through interviews and text analyses. Research of this kind would not necessarily have to be about stadiums. Especially the development of our cities could profit from an increased sensitivity towards the interplay between bodily sensations and the social. Atmospheres are everywhere, even if they are rarely as noticeable as within the stadium (Hasse, 2003, p. 186).

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