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Research Article
'Let us prepare for the Champions League!' the symbolic Europeanization of Romania's football bosses
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ABSTRACT

The post-communist privatization of Romanian football clubs saw their transfer into the hands of the *nouveau riches* who emerged after 1989. Gradually, the public image of the local championship rapidly worsened, because of corruption scandals or match-fixing incidents in which the new owners involved it. Thus, the Champions League participation of Dinamo, Rapid, and Steaua Bucharest proved desirable for more than its economic benefits. The competition also offered football bosses an important symbolic capital, meant to highlight an improved image of "real" capitalist entrepreneurs. Accordingly, qualifying in the Champions League groups also meant the "Europeanization" of the club owners' social status, through their association with a competition strongly appreciated in Romania, due to its perceived quality and correctness. The research behind this article is based on the analysis of the public discourses related to local club owners seeking participation in the Champions League groups during the past 30 years.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

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