

Is FC Bayern Munich Killing Off Their Competition?

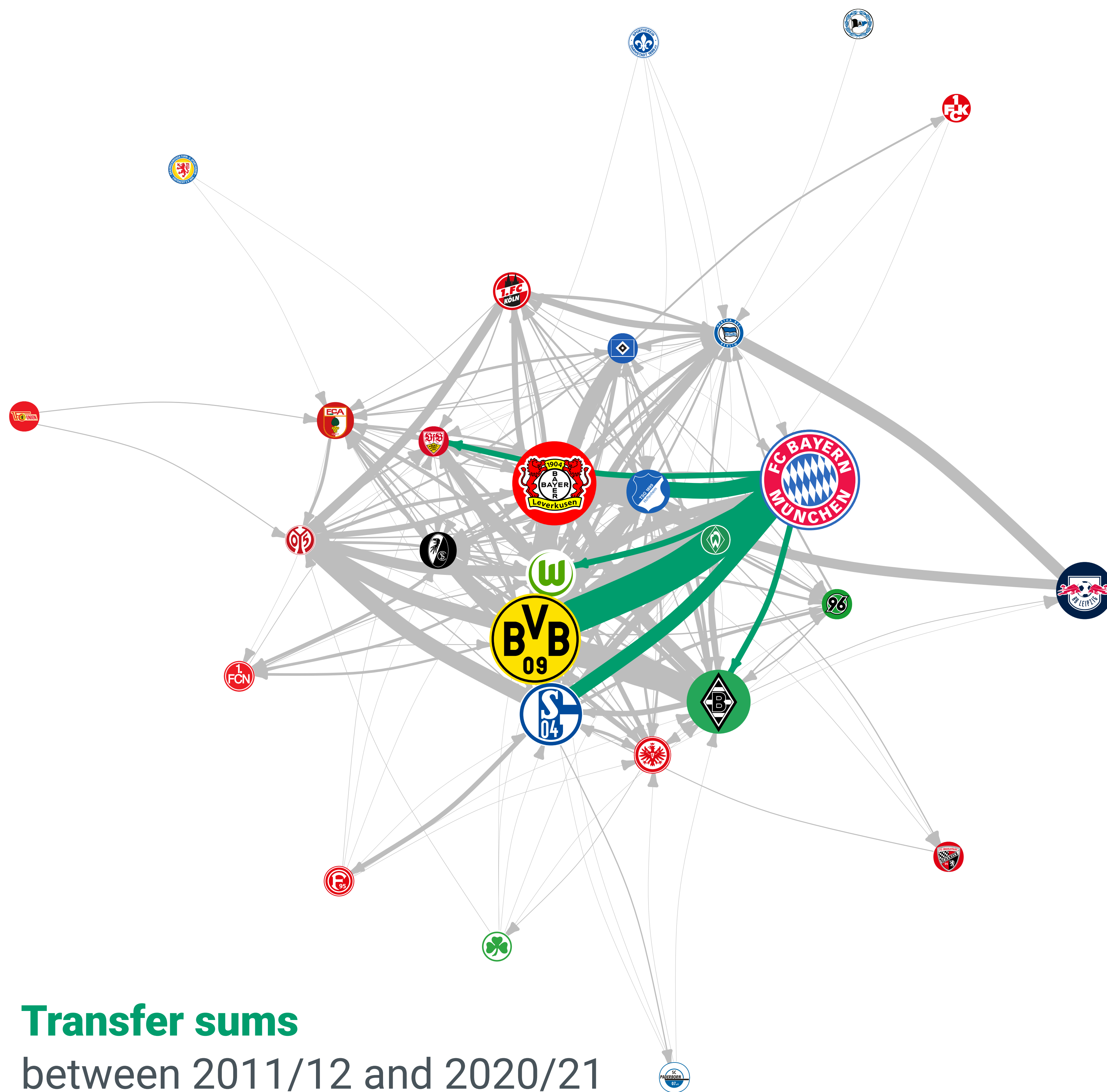
A Network Analysis of Transfer Expenses within the Bundesliga

Motivation

- FC Bayern Munich is the most dominant club in Bundesliga history
- the club is often criticized for stifling its competitors by buying out their key players
- this analysis aims to explore whether the data on transfer spending supports this claim

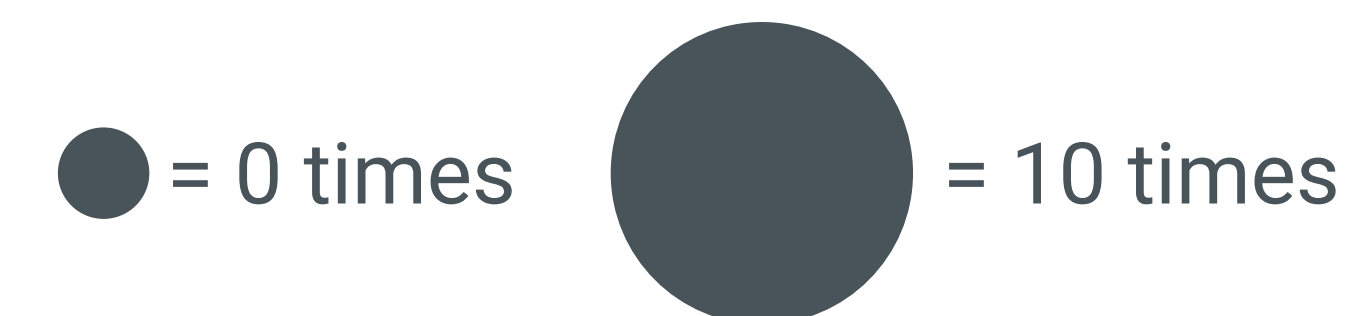
Approach

- Analysis of transfer expenses between Bundesliga clubs over a period of ten years
- network with clubs as vertices and transfer spending as edges
- **Research Question:** Does FC Bayern Munich strategically target direct competitors with disproportionately high transfer spendings?



Legend

Node size: frequency of finishing season in top 5



Edge size: accumulated sum of transfer spending



Colored edges: spending by FC Bayern Munich



Key figures

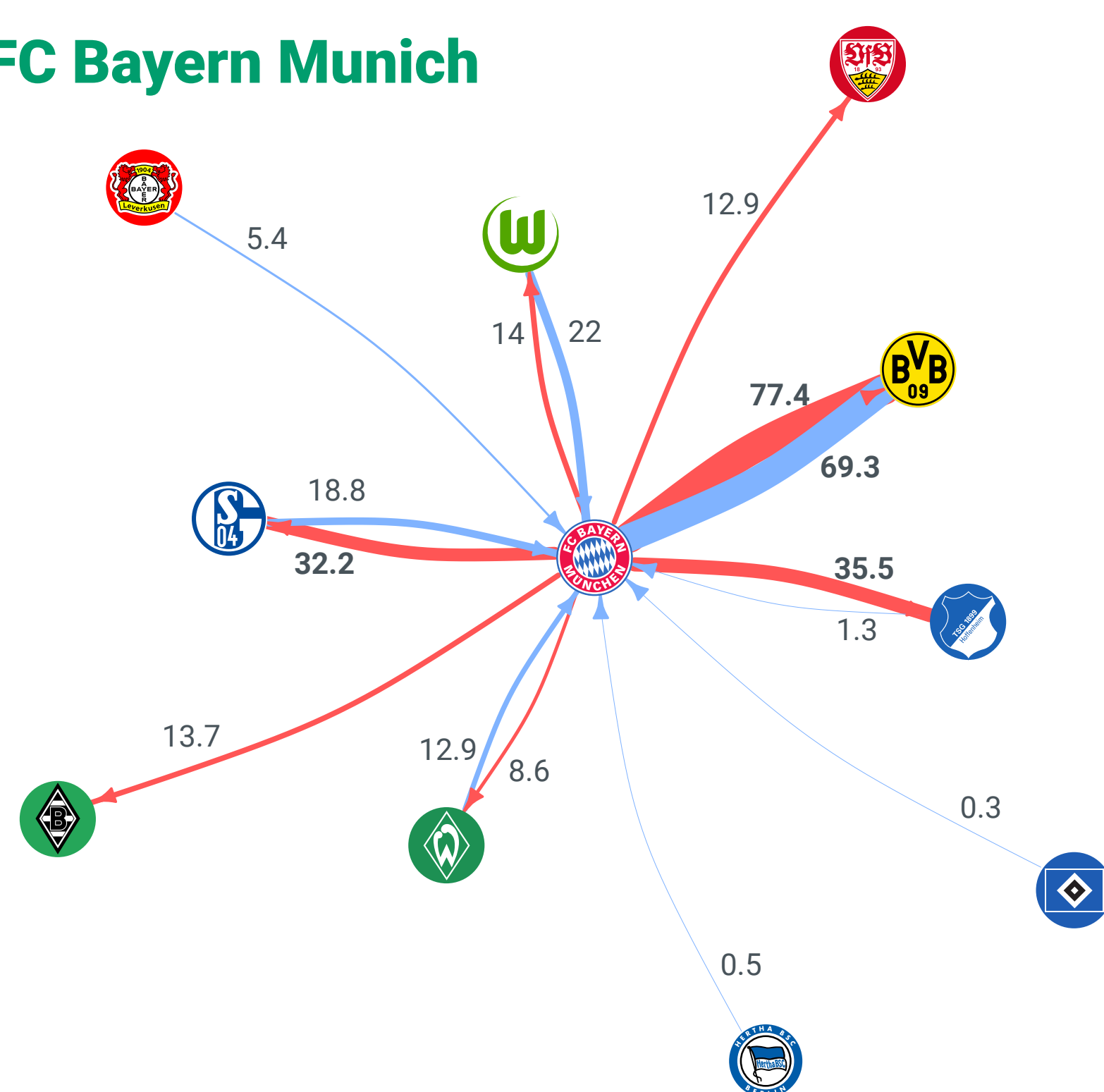
Highest transfer sums:

1. Bayern Munich - Borussia Dortmund: 77.4m €
2. Borussia Dortmund - Bayern Munich: 69.3m €
3. Bayer Leverkusen - TSG Hoffenheim: 66.1m €
4. Borussia Dortmund - M'Gladbach: 58.7m €
5. Borussia Dortmund - Bayer Leverkusen: 51.6m €

Highest total spending:

1. Borussia Dortmund: 372.1m €
2. VfL Wolfsburg: 213.1m €
3. FC Bayern Munich: 194.2m €

FC Bayern Munich



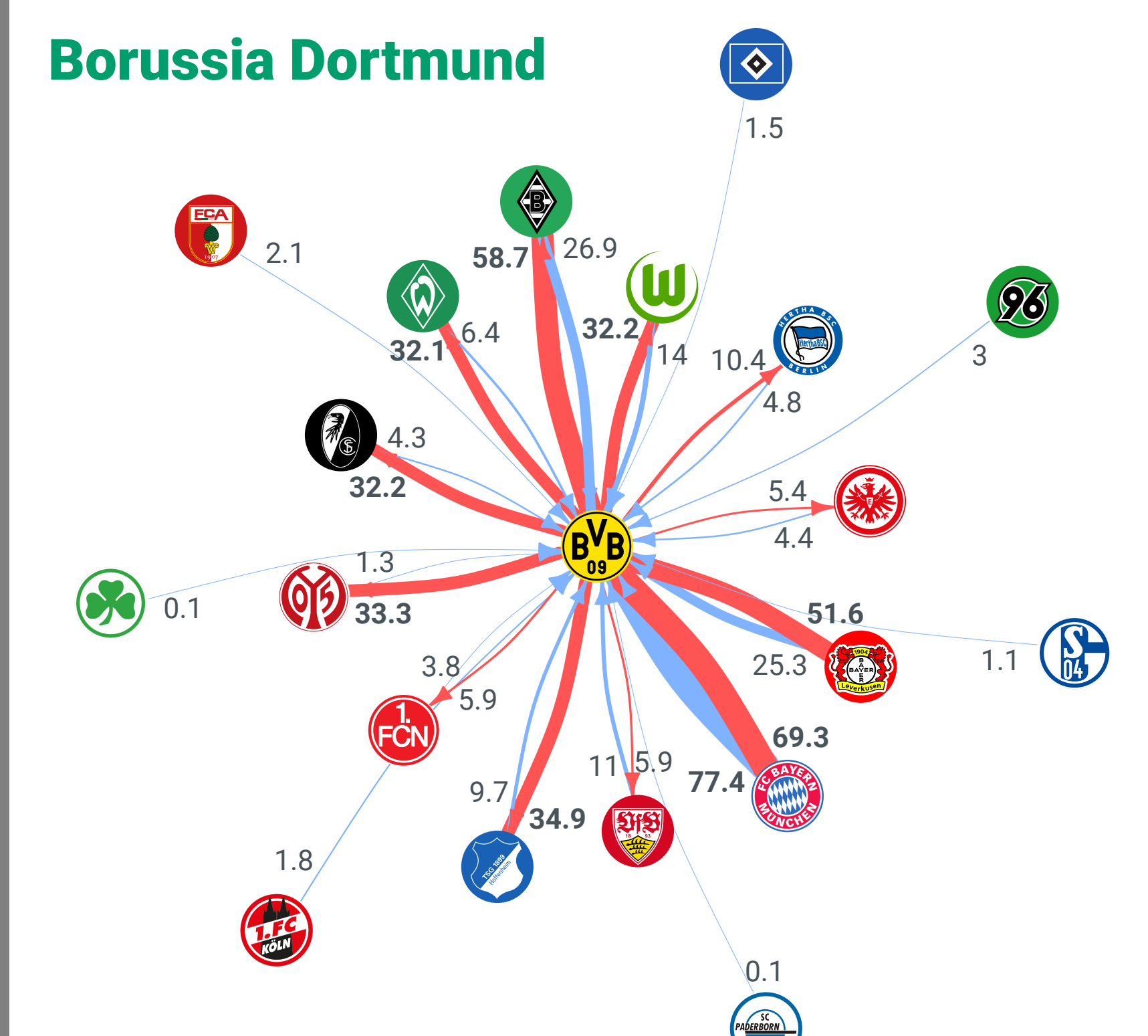
A Closer Look

- Bayern Munich spent roughly 40% of their total expenses on Dortmund players
- Bayern bought from less clubs than Dortmund, primarily from direct competitors (except Werder Bremen and VfB Stuttgart)
- both clubs had significantly higher expenses than revenues

█ = transfer expenses in m €

█ = transfer revenues in m €

Borussia Dortmund



Analysis

- between 2011/12 and 2020/21, Bayern Munich spent less money on Bundesliga players than Borussia Dortmund and VfL Wolfsburg
- Bayern spent more money on Dortmund players than any team on any other team's players
- remarkably, Dortmund spent almost twice as much money on Bundesliga players in total, buying mostly from direct competitors

Results

- it can be argued that Bayern Munich spent a noticeably large part of its transfer expenses on players from competitor Dortmund
- however, the money spent on players from other Bundesliga clubs does not seem to be unusually high compared to their competitors
- overall, the fact that almost half of FC Bayern's transfer expenses went towards Dortmund might indicate strategic reasons