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Simon Chadwick, Daniel Parnell, Paul Widdop, Christos Anagnostopoulos

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Remco M. Beek, Martijn Ernest, Jos Verschueren
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Global football
Defining the rules of the changing game

Remco M. Beek, Martijn Ernest, and Jos Verschueren

Introduction: The phenomenon of globalisation

For decades, the term globalisation has been a buzzword with which to describe the integrations of markets and the benefits and dis-benefits of our present economic relationships. Several contributions were made to categorise the history of globalisation over the course of 200,000 years and multiple organising principles were used, mainly related to economics or by the definition of trade (Baldwin, 2016). The new globalisation is driven by information technology, which has radically reduced the cost of moving ideas across borders (Baldwin, 2016). In order to understand the actual and upcoming dynamics, it is relevant to briefly outline the dynamics of globalisation in order to integrate these patterns in the context of football.

Baldwin (2016) extrapolated two stages of globalisation. First, around 1820, trade costs fell, which drove “unbundling” of production and consumption. Nearly all economists and scholars of globalisation have noted that the economy was globalised by the early twentieth century. As European countries colonised Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, they turned their colonies into suppliers of raw materials for European manufacturers, as well as markets for European goods. Meanwhile, the economies of the colonisers were also becoming free-trade zones for each other (Saval, 2017). Production clustered locally as markets expanded globally, as this micro-clustering sparked innovation. Multinational corporations were prominent in the economic landscape and became significant investors in and exploiters of knowledge (Little, Go, and Poon, 2017).

The second stage occurred around 1990 when communication costs fell and the information and communication technologies (ICT) revolution and wage gap drove unbundling of G7 factories (this was the start of new globalisation). High-tech nations moved operations to low-wage nations and ICT broke the monopoly that G7 labour had on G7 knowhow. With the reduction of transaction costs as a recent driver of globalisation, production or supply “chains” were replaced by much more densely networked patterns (Little et al., 2017). This enabled innovation in the development of new business models and relationships with new sectorial and regional strategies in response to the demand for a global approach to positioning within global networks (Little et al., 2017).

Globalisation is inevitable in a world of modern communications that cannot be un-invented, but it will not be possible to combine globalisation with a small-state approach.
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The game of football has come a long way since English villagers began kicking around pigs’ bladders in the Middle Ages. Football began to spread internationally during the heyday of the British Empire, but the sport’s globalisation went into reverse in the interlude between World Wars I and II, as authorities restricted the international transfer of players (Ghemawat, 2007).

Ghemawat (2007) outlined five parallels of football’s global progress and many economic indicators of globalisation. First, there was a peak before World War I, followed by a reversal during and between the two world wars, and then a revival after World War II. Second, globalisation remained, in many respects, uneven and incomplete. In the case of football, this can be explained by the failure to gain traction in the United States, the world’s largest sports market. Third, cross-border differences featuring cultural, administrative, geographic, and economic differences between countries are highlighted in the football context as well. This could be illustrated by the role that Latin cultures, temperate climates, and threshold levels of economic development play in explaining various countries’ success in the FIFA rankings. Furthermore, the strategies that football clubs have followed exhibit a range of approaches for dealing with the differences between locations, related to forging a local identity or aggregate across borders. The final parallel is the negative portents about globalisation fuelling debates about whether it stalls or goes into reverse.

However, the business of football should not be considered independently of the major challenges facing the world in which sports may have a facilitating role. The shift towards hosting international hallmark events in emerging destinations such as South Africa (2010 FIFA World Cup™), Brazil (2014 FIFA World Cup™), Russia (2018 FIFA World Cup™) and Qatar (2022 FIFA World Cup™) raises challenges on the alignment with modernisation and neoliberal globalisation approaches (Beek and Go, 2017). Moreover, the impact of multinational organisations such as FIFA is stated in relation to state powers since laws changed in host countries because of organising these hallmark events. In the case of the 2014 World Cup, for example, the Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff signed a law that allows the sale of beer at football matches, reversing existing legislation in accordance with FIFA requirements (BBC, 2017a). Therefore, the political spectrum is crucial to understanding the process of globalisation in the context of football.

Stages of globalisation in football

In order to understand the developments in the playground of football, we clarify the phenomenon of globalisation in the context of football. In addition to the first process of internationalisation within football in the early 1900s, four main “globalisation stages” could be offered: geographical globalisation (Globalisation 1.0), commercial globalisation (Globalisation 2.0), digital globalisation (Globalisation 3.0) and social globalisation (Globalisation 4.0). Over the last decades, these much-discussed trends within international football are considered more important than others in fundamentally changing the game. However, it seems relevant to include these patterns in order to understand the challenges ahead, realising that these stages are continuous processes, without evident origin or expected ending.
Globalisation 1.0: Geographical globalisation

The first official international game was played between England and Scotland on the afternoon of Saturday, December 2, 1872. Four thousand spectators saw the teams draw 0–0 at Glasgow’s West of Scotland Cricket Club (The Guardian, 2016). Football’s global spread was both encouraged and hampered by Britain’s empire, most often in locations where Britain’s influence was through trade (such as Central America, South America, and Europe) rather than conquest (Pearson, 2017). In countries subject to acute British imperial muscle (such as South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand), football never really took hold as a truly popular sport since cricket and rugby became the sports of the people (Tomlinson, 2011). The FIFA World Cup in 1930 was the first world championship for men’s national association football teams. It took place in Uruguay from 13–30 July 1930 with 13 teams: seven from South America, four from Europe, and two from North America. The first pan-European football tournament was held in France in 1960.

The immigration of South American football players, especially to Spanish and Italian leagues, was explained by the historically talented South American players, the linguistic and cultural link because of the Spanish colonial past (except Brazil) and perceived styles (skill, flamboyance, and the like) that were better suited to the playing styles of Italy and Spain than to those of northern Europe (Maguire and Pearton, 2000). The concept of globalisation is an active ingredient in most analyses of player migration. However, Taylor (2007) argued that footballer migration is by no means a new phenomenon and should not be isolated from the general trends and patterns of migrations. Three sets of determinants (economic, cultural, and institutional/structural) have influenced and stimulated the movement of football labour and are crucial for understanding why players move around the globe. The movement of footballers from country to country and from continent to continent is much more than the product of the current economic and power relations of world football. It reflects a “complex set of linkages between specific countries, or sets of countries, linkages that often have deep social, cultural and historical roots” (Taylor, 2006). Poli (2010) contributed to this idea by concluding that the creation of economic opportunities is intrinsically linked to the characteristics of the actors involved (such as their biographies, linguistic skills, trust relationships) within the development of transfer networks.

Globalisation 2.0: Commercial globalisation

A new set of social and cultural relations have arisen, notably featuring the greater migration of elite labour, a gradual proliferation of continental and global competitions, astronomical rises in elite player salaries, new media outlets for football (satellite television, club television stations, the Internet, etc.), and new forms of cultural encoding of football through these media (Giulianotti, 2002). In line with the professionalisation of football towards an industry, sponsorship relationships started as transactional approaches, in addition to the philanthropic origins, and football organisations shifted from local institutions to global brands.

Although football was first broadcast on television in 1937, with the FA Cup final between Sunderland and Preston North End, the role of television was limited until the 1960s. Clubs refused to let cameras onto their grounds for fear of declining attendances (Sondaal, 2013). In 1964, an agreement was reached between the BBC and the Football League whereby £5,000 would be divided equally between all 92 Football League teams to allow the broadcast of extended highlights of football matches on the programme Match of the Day. By the 1980s, however, negotiations for a new contract took place in a changed environment, due to a combination of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher’s deregulation policies, growing
television ownership, English football’s global popularity, and developments in satellite television (Sondaal, 2013).

In addition to the stated private investments in football to gain shares and (partial) ownership in a football club, several examples indicated this commercial globalisation from a business investor’s perspective. In order to understand these patterns, it is relevant to briefly indicate the case of investments made in Brazilian football. Since football became big business in the 1990s, several companies have invested heavily in Brazil. Private equity firm Hicks, Muse, Tate & Furst was one of these investors with radical ideas, as the firm’s president Charles Tate mentioned that “soccer in Brazil is like baseball, basketball and football put together in the USA” (Romero, 1999). The transaction with the Corinthians club gave the company all licensing rights to the club’s name, enabling it to sell items like caps or T-shirts emblazoned with the Corinthians insignia as well as the opportunity to negotiate deals for the TV broadcast of games. At that time, Hicks, Muse, Tate & Furst had already entered into pay-tv ventures in Brazil and in neighbouring Argentina that could facilitate such deals. Over the years, other companies such as Bank of America and ISL invested, and lost, hundreds of millions of dollars in storied clubs such as Vasco da Gama, Flamengo and Corinthians (Antunes, 2012). Almost all have fled, with no desire to come back. According to Ghemawat (2007), the story of Hicks, Muse, Tate & Furst’s investment in Brazil also illustrates what is “probably the most common bias in evaluating cross-border strategies: an emphasis on ‘size-ism’, which fails to appreciate the persistence of differences between countries”.

Some football clubs were originally founded by another commercial organisation; for example, the professional Dutch football club PSV was started in 1913 to serve the needs for activities for Philips employees (PSV, 2017). Some other clubs were founded as a result of interference of Western football clubs. For example, Ajax Cape Town was formed in 1999 as the Dutch football club AFC Ajax expanded its worldwide talent-feeder network to South Africa (Ajax CT, 2017). These clubs supported society, shared knowledge, trained football and management skills, and aimed to spot new talent for the parent club. Furthermore, in order to offer fans around the world the opportunity to see their beloved team play live and to promote the club’s brand, clubs routinely travelled to financially lucrative places to play games during the preseason, such as the International Champions Cup (Sondaal, 2013).

Globalisation 3.0: Digital globalisation

The emergence of information and communication technologies, coupled with a globalising society, has resulted in network-centric marketing, causing corporate sponsors to be active in redrawing multiple boundaries. Internal restructuring, combined with international strategies, strategic alliances, and collaboration with a variety of societal stakeholders, has proven increasingly important to enhance sponsors’ reputations. In an increasingly globalised, connected, and media-intensive world, one of the most challenging tasks managers face is the implementation of effective ICT strategies.

In addition to the impact of satellite television, new technological innovations radically changed the media landscape. In addition to the worldwide commercialisation and developments of the Internet in the late 1990s, the first years of the new century were marked by the establishment of online social networks with Facebook (since February 2004), Twitter (since March 2006), WhatsApp (since January 2008), Instagram (since October 2010), and Snapchat (since September 2011). These innovations extended media and marketing communications as they shifted consumer behaviours away from personal computers, via laptops and tablets, to mobile devices (Parganas, Anagnostopoulos, and Chadwick, 2015). Moreover, it enabled football
fans worldwide to watch games and interact with other fans. The more physical communities of the football clubs were transformed into digital communities in which the content of football drove the interaction between the members of the tribes (Parganas, Anagnostopoulos, and Chadwick, 2017).

The opportunities to connect the world with the live streams of football games shifted the model of free public viewing on television to the first types of decoded pay-tv. Moreover, at this stage, multiple digital innovations were made in the football industry, including LED-boarding on the pitch, virtual advertising during the matches, and online communication. Most of these innovations created new forms of existing aspects (such as hardcopy advertising and hardcopy magazines moving to virtual advertising and online content, respectively). At the stage of digital globalisation, the digital gamification of football also started, resulting in a variety of games including FIFA (since 1993) and Pro Evolution Soccer (since 2001). However, what started as casual gaming was actually the start of the growing phenomenon of e-sports as well. Other forms of simulation (such as football analysis) also grew rapidly, enabling football clubs to improve tactical (on-field) aspects. Thus began a long process of incorporating the technological opportunities in the game by, for example, goal-line technology and video assistance referee (VAR).

Globalisation 4.0: Social globalisation

The ways in which supporters talk about football and “consume” the game indicate the dynamics of football in transnational networks and identified social movements in the new media age (Millward, 2011). Digital communication has forced organisations to redefine interaction with their communities and new efforts to enlarge sense of belonging and fan experiences (during the game as well as in and out of the stadium).

The social impact of influencers and the increasing technological opportunities have fundamentally changed the game. Whereas celebrity endorsement started as a way of connecting a celebrity (such as an athlete or artist) to a brand, with influencer marketing the influencer is perceived to be the creator of the entire content. Nevertheless, branded content is where branded content interferes with credibility and authenticity. Football is a context in which these social interactions with influencers as role models will also become more dominant and complex. The impact on social media of Francesco Totti’s farewell from AS Roma after 25 years was impressive and broke the club’s digital records on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube and AS Roma’s website. With 8.8 million Facebook followers – which is only a fraction of the social following database compared to clubs such as FC Barcelona and Real Madrid (102 million followers) or Manchester United (73 million followers), Roma out-performed every team in the world in terms of Facebook videos during that period of time (Rogers, 2017). The tribute to the talismanic Totti highlights the global impact of influencer marketing.

In line with the battle for football talent and in their search for authenticity, sports brands are looking for the “next big thing” to promote their products. While Neymar had only just turned 13 when Nike signed him in 2009, Shane Kluivert is now the youngest player to have signed an endorsement agreement. The nine-year-old son of retired Dutch football icon Patrick Kluivert switched from Paris Saint-Germain to FC Barcelona (both Nike sponsored) and continues his development as a football talent in addition to already being an impactful influencer. He has a global reach on social media, with 178,000 followers on Instagram and over 50,000 YouTube subscriptions to his personal channel (BBCb, 2017).

Community formation is driven by community members engaging, participating, and feeling supported by strong networks to form strong communities and tribes (Misener and Mason, 2010). These communities and tribes raise the complexity of the unique characteristics of a
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person and the interactions of a person as a component of a group. Moreover, this complex interaction is also driven by the various roles a person may have, such as a consumer, employee, or volunteer. Cultural dimensions, group behaviour, tribes, and networks are commonly used to draw tendencies among individual behaviours. Several contributions have sought to define the spectator identities in football including diversity on sense of belonging (Giulianotti, 2002) with interplay of identity, time boundaries, geographic constraints, level of attachment, the degree of fan-like behaviour, and the primary form of self-identification (Hunt et al., 1999; Sullivan, 2004). It seems relevant to reconsider the taxonomy of fandom in perspective of the new dynamics on geographical, commercial, digital, and social aspects in order to define marketing opportunities. Moreover, football clubs are investing in databases to have a more detailed understanding of the fan base, enabling them to explore new commercial possibilities.

In line with the service-dominant logic and the related integrative approach of value co-creation (Vargo and Lusch, 2008), new dimensions of engagement marketing by virtual extensions (such as virtual reality) were introduced to get access to exclusive content. Organisations shift from selling products and services towards creating detailed data profiles, knowing that the individual consumer becomes more valuable. Regulations on increasing interactions with spectators during the game have changed to create new ways of fan engagement. The debut of “Ref Cam” by ESPN came in the football match between MLS All Stars and AS Roma in 2013; four years later, FOX Sports enhanced the MLS All-Star Game with Real Madrid with “Ref Cam” (FoxSports, 2017). Following applications of technological capabilities in other sports (such as ice hockey, American Football and rugby), unique content was created by player cameras during a (friendly) match between Legends Real Madrid and AS Roma (Matthews, 2017). Indeed, Intel planned to showcase Intel TrueVR during the 2018 Olympic Winter Games in PyeongChang (Grant and Novy-Williams, 2017), while TAG Heuer Connected showed the use of smartwatches during football games in the Premier League and Bundesliga (Shaw, 2016).

The future dynamics of global football

According to the phenomenon of globalisation and its development within the context of sports, five patterns can be identified: global outlook with fidelity to local roots, changing commercial partnerships, changing media landscape, cultural battles within the playground of football, and attractiveness of the game. These are crucial ingredients in understanding the future dynamics of global football, representing challenges and dilemmas for the industry.

Pattern I: Global outlook with fidelity to local roots

Professional sports clubs need to clearly define what they are (identity), who they want to target (segmentation and targeting), how they want to be perceived and how they differentiate themselves from the other main competitors (positioning) (Bodet, 2010). As suggested by Sondaal (2013), there is a need for a global outlook with fidelity to local roots. What role is to be played by the vast majority of “local” clubs that are incapable of hiring global stars (Alvito, 2007)?

The dilemma of the identity of the football club is reflected in the rare emergence of the truly “global” team: Many players still play in their host nation and host-nation players are often awarded the accolade of club captain. This can be illustrated best by the 15 greatest performing European football clubs of 2017 (based on the UEFA coefficient season 2016/2017), which include Real Madrid (captained by Spain’s Sergio Ramos), Juventus (Italy’s Gianluigi Buffon), Club Atlético de Madrid (Spain’s Gabi), Manchester United (England’s Wayne Rooney), FC Barcelona (Spain’s Andrés Iniesta), FC Bayern Munich (Germany’s Philipp Lahm), Borussia
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Dortmund (Germany’s Marcel Schmelzer), Olympique Lyonnais (France’s Maxime Gonalons), AFC Ajax (Dutch Davy Klaassen), Sevilla FC (Spain’s Vinceinte Iborra), and RC Celta de Vigo (Spain’s Hugo Mallo). These “home” players are typically viewed as the “heart” of the team. Only AS Monaco (Colombia’s Radamel Falcao), Leicester City FC (Jamaica’s Wes Morgan) and Paris Saint-Germain FC (Brazil’s Thiago Silva) had captains who were not from the club’s home country. This supports the argument of football clubs practising cultural “globalisation”, meaning they accord status to symbolic local or national figures and recruits “foreign” players from culturally similar nations, at the same time as they seek to build global recognition.

Football clubs should determine their core values and higher purpose in order to strengthen the engagement of the community members and sense of belonging in the “glocal” tribes. In this foreign–familiarity continuum, trust is a crucial ingredient. Studies on place and identity in football cultures (e.g., Edensor and Millington, 2008) suggest that place-based sporting histories, practices, and identities matter more than ever, resonating culturally in an age of global communications, information, and capital flows. It is of importance here how these histories and practices, and the places and spaces tied to them, are being reworked, reordered, and, most critically, privileged by and through media according to differing hierarchies of symbolic value (Ruddock et al., 2010).

The case of the Maracanã stadium in Brazil indicated multiple aspects of the bright and dark sides of globalisation in the football context. Despite the centrality of the Estádio Mario Filho (Maracanã) stadium in the sporting landscape of Brazil and Rio de Janeiro, the shifting political economy of global sport in the 1990s positioned the Maracanã outside the realm of international competitions (Gaffney, 2010). Beginning in 1998 and continuing today, the Maracanã has undergone a series of major reforms in order to bring it into compliance with international regulations towards a Euro-American style of spectatorship. Before it was eliminated in 2005, a section of the stadium was known as the “geral”, a low-lying area of concrete that encircled the field. This “populist heart of the stadium was a functional and symbolic space that allowed for the inclusion of all social sectors in public life to participate in Brazil’s most popular form of leisure in its most iconographic stadium because of the low ticket prices” (Gaffney, 2010). As it illustrates several described dynamics, the pressure of global forces on local identity and the impact of society are obvious in this case.

Pattern II: Changing commercial partnerships

A geopolitical shift is underway that has not been seen since the end of the Cold War, moving from a unipolar world with one superpower to a multipolar one. This new world order has many great powers that will need to work together in order to avoid friction and conflict on trade and currency, on economics and finance (WEF, 2017). These changing powers will affect the sporting and football industries as well, since the challenges of the football context cannot be viewed independently from the dynamics in the world. New opportunities arise to collaborate within international partnerships in an effort to identify, where appropriate, the reputation-reality gap and manage the brand reputation as football organisation or stakeholder (sponsors, host cities, governments, etc.). These changing powers by new stakeholders are illustrated best by the case of City Football Group. This holding company now administers six association football clubs under the ownership of Abu Dhabi United Group (ADUG): Manchester City FC, New York City FC, Melbourne City FC, Yokohama F. Marinos, Club Atlético Torque, and Girona FC (Tremlett, 2017).

The impact of globalisation is more sudden, more individual, more unpredictable, and more uncontrollable (Baldwin, 2016). Therefore, the role of the football club in the (local)
society should surpass corporate social responsibility, since the contribution to the world is increasingly important to the members of the community. FC Barcelona and Arsenal recently announced their intentions to be of value for the stakeholders in innovative ways. Both clubs presented – separately from each other – two concepts that had distinct similarities: the Barça Innovation Hub and the Arsenal Innovation Lab. The Barça Innovation Hub is a platform for research, development, training, and innovation that aims to help change the world through sporting excellence via knowledge and innovation as a powerful brand with worldwide impact and one of the leading sports organisation regarding talent and knowledge (Barça Innovation Hub, 2017). The Arsenal Innovation Lab aims to identify smart-thinking businesses and help them identify ground-breaking ideas to take Arsenal forwards in a partnership with L Marks (Arsenal, 2017).

**Pattern III: Changing media landscape**

Due to the changing media landscape, the impact of the media will shift as well, since new ways of communication and sharing of content between consumers and organisations will enable new dynamics in the reality–reputation gap. Therefore, sponsorship partnerships help overcome the gap among stakeholders between perceived reality and obtained reality. The projected and perceived image, as well as the destination’s reputation, can be clarified as potential gaps between these aspects. It is important to understand the opportunities and the risks in increased digital media usage, so that both industry and users can learn how best to exploit the benefits while mitigating the negative effects (WEF, 2016). Wagg (2007) illustrated these dynamics by the vital myths in global sport and popular culture: the myths of the celebrity and of the football manager. As they are endowed via the media with special significance and unusual powers, the actual skills cannot be known, only believed, which makes both celebrity and football management socially constructed (Wagg, 2007). The changing media landscape affects the reality–reputation gap, which designs new opportunities and risks for the football industry.

In the nexus of branded content and user-generated content, sponsorship partnerships become increasingly important in the marketing domain to leverage engagement and conversations with stakeholders through meaningful content. For example, it has been suggested that new media powers such as Amazon, Google, Apple, Facebook, and Netflix will join the broadcasting battle in the Premier League (Sweney, 2017). Moreover, illustrating the changing media landscape, the live streaming sports network Stadium partnered with Twitter and Facebook to offer live streamed sports (Perez, 2017); Amazon won the battle with Twitter for the livestream rights of the NFL (Rovell, 2017); Snapchat signed partnerships with the NFL, MLB, NBA, Formula 1, and Wimbledon (Edmondson, 2017); and the Champions League shifted from the public network to pay-tv in Spain, Great Britain, and Germany (Sportcal, 2017). Furthermore, e-sports has experienced massive global growth over the past few years, with major investments from blue-chip sponsors, game publishers, and media companies, as well as sports leagues and teams (Nielsen, 2017). In understanding e-sports and its potential related to the football industry, it is crucial to distinguish gamification of football with professional gaming of, for example, League of Legends and the growing interaction on new media platforms like Twitch.

As digital engagement became key in order to engage customers, upcoming technological innovations in relation to artificial intelligence, blockchain, and 3D printing will undeniably impact the football industry in the years to come and shift the value propositions of rights holders and their partners (PWC, 2015).
**Pattern IV: Cultural battles within the playground of football**

In the next few years, cultural conflicts will be expressed in the context of football, both within the borders of a nation as well as in the international playing field. These conflicts will follow the political and social dynamics within and across nations and religions. The rivalry between FC Barcelona and Real Madrid reflects a broader antipathy of the media and citizens in Madrid towards the Catalans in general and FC Barcelona in particular, and vice versa (Ball, 2002). The recent political and social dynamics in relation to the potential independence of Catalonia have affected the tensions between the fans of both football clubs, as well as the support of the national team.

In addition, Great Britain leaving the European Union is suggested to have far-reaching effects on sports, especially in case of labour conditions and business investments of non-British organisations. This new Britain’s status as a member of the European Union might have both positive and negative effects on the national football industry and the global brand of the English football clubs and sponsors (Aarons, 2016). Moreover, the upcoming 2022 FIFA World Cup™ in Qatar has raised questions about alcohol being banned from stadiums and streets because of cultural and legal principles in the conservative Middle Eastern country (Payne, 2016). With Budweiser as a major sponsor of that event, the cultural clash between FIFA and Qatar’s strict cultural norms might not end like the FIFA’s push in Brazil to adjust legislation on alcohol for the 2014 World Cup. This is especially the case since FIFA already made an exception for the host country of the tournament being played in the winter, with a break during the regular season of the clubs, instead of the regular summer edition at the end of the club season.

The globalisation of football enables intercultural encounters of people within destinations, between destinations as well as among organisations with different cultures and structures. Despite the positives of this pattern, these dynamics will challenge the football industry as well. History has shown the impact of these aspects by means of political boycott, political conflict, and hierarchy of power (for example, players of German club Hertha BSC kneeling in support of NFL protests for tolerance and against discrimination (Uersfeld, 2017)). This form of social-cultural risk (for example, social support and cultural differences) was relevant in the conflict between Papiss Cissé and the English football club Newcastle United. The Senegal striker had complained that Newcastle’s new four-year, £24m sponsorship with a payday loan company called Wonga offended his Muslim faith and personal beliefs (*The Guardian*, 2013). He objected on religious and ethical grounds that he would not wear Wonga-branded clothes. Under Sharia Law, a Muslim is not allowed to benefit from lending money or receiving money from someone—that is, earning interest is not allowed. Wonga’s annual percentage rate is over 4,000 per cent. A few weeks after leaving the preseason training camp, Cissé and the club agreed on the terms of wearing these shirts (Taylor, 2013).

In addition to the cultural conflicts, the process of globalisation will have an impact on legal aspects as well, including labour rights, contract rights, transfer windows, television rights, and financial agreements (such as investments, ownership, taxes) among the cultural and political spheres of influence. For example, although Brazilian child-labour laws prevent anyone under the age of 14 from working, foreign clubs have the alternative of “hiring” a player’s entire family, who move along with the star player (Alvito, 2007).

**Pattern V: Attractiveness of the game**

The integration of football into the global economy represents a double challenge for all those involved with the sport and for the future of the sport itself. As Croci and Ammirante (1999, p. 501)
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stated, on the one hand, “all of these developments constitute new exciting and profitable opportunities, at least for a few people”. On the other hand, “they risk destroying all the identities and traditions that football has long embodied and that have been at the base of its appeal”. However, this process started decades ago, and new opportunities in the actual stage of globalisation bring new dimensions that will radically affect the football context.

Another example of this pattern is that the substantially Western-dominated powers of sport circulating around the globe will create new dominant practice and expressions by cultural adaptations (for example, English Premier League in the Asian context) and hybridised local forms of global sport such as Indian Premier League cricket. The latter illustrates perhaps the most tangible example yet of a genuine political and economic shift in the power relations of a major sport from West to East (Rowe and Gilmour, 2009). The rise of the Indian economy, combined with the nation’s population and its elevation of cricket above all other sports, has placed India at the centre of the sport. The same tendency might occur in case of an exceptional growing popularity of the local clubs and global world-class football players in the Chinese Super League exceed the interests in the English Premier League by Asian football fans (and investors). At the beginning of 2017, Chinese clubs were breaking transfer records and international football players quadrupled their wages and became some of the biggest stars in a continent of four billion people (Price, 2017). Moreover, only seven football teams are among the world’s 50 most valuable sports teams (Manchester United, Barcelona, Real Madrid, Bayern Munich, Manchester City, Arsenal, and Chelsea), in contrast to teams of strong global sport competitions like the NFL, the NBA, and MLB (Badenhausen, 2017).

While globalisation will affect both men’s and women’s football, it is considered less evident that globalisation transforms cultural values within football, especially when it comes to gender roles (Eliasson, 2009). However, a new agreement between Norway’s football association and the country’s international players will lead to men and women receiving the same financial compensation for representing their country, with the men making a financial contribution to the women’s team in this historic deal (Wrack, 2017). Moreover, the aging population generates new opportunities for the football industry, with a significantly growing new type of the game: walking football (Ramaswamy, 2016). Nevertheless, the incredible growth of women football is the focus of gender and the interference of Asian investors in European clubs impact the changing powers by new stakeholders. The competition with other sports and other types of entertainment in this era brings football into perspective, as there is, and will be, no unequal spread of interest in football around the world. With the aim of raising value for the sport’s fans, new strategies are required to reach new fans and create more intense relationships with present fans. There is a need for football clubs to avoid becoming the equivalent of a city in which residents move from the city centre because there are too many tourists. The same might occur in stadia where loyal fans feel less devoted to the club during matches when there is a higher proportion of day-visitors from abroad. Football clubs must realise the impact of change in ownership and spectators of the club in relation to not only identity and atmosphere, but to competitiveness between teams, level of attractiveness, and sense of belonging within the communities of the football industry.

Football’s long-term hope is that the magnificence of a performance and the excitement of its unpredictability will protect it from the problems that commodification inevitably brings (Croci and Ammirante, 1999). The main question of global football is whether the game being played is the finite one or the infinite one. A finite game is played for the purpose of winning, while an infinite game is played for the purpose of continuing the play (Carse, 1986).
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