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# PANORAMA

INSIGHTS INTO ASIAN  
AND EUROPEAN AFFAIRS

## MORE THAN A GAME SPORTS, SOCIETY AND POLITICS



Konrad  
Adenauer  
Stiftung



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# Preface

“Sport has the power to change the world.”

Nelson Mandela once said these words when talking about the power and political significance of sports and the relevance of sports in politics. From antiquity to modernity and beyond, competitive physical engagement has continued to captivate the hearts and minds of individuals as well as entire nations.

The relationship between sports and politics is one of the most enduring and pervasive examples of society's impact on sports. Although the adage says that sports and politics don't mix, sports have become more than just games. In this era of globalization, sports have crossed many spheres and have become an important part of international politics and diplomacy. Sports and politics are intricately intertwined. Politics often manifests itself through sports, and sports have often been used as political propaganda. Sports and sporting events have always served a wide variety of political purposes, ranging from a supposed symbol for peace to a staging ground for rivalries at the local, regional, national and international levels.

Sports have often been an outlet for expressing political views, settling scores and renewing bonds. World events, such as the Olympics, World Cups and international tournaments, are among the biggest forums for global politics. Mega sports events are viewed as effective resources by countries seeking to enhance their role and influence in international affairs. Hosting a major sporting event or the success of a bid to host a mega sports event is seen as an important indicator of the success of the nation state in the international arena. Sports have often been used as a cultural and diplomatic tool to achieve targeted goals. The 2008 Beijing Olympics, the 2010 Football World Cup in South Africa, and the forthcoming 2014 World Cup and 2016 Olympic Games in Brazil exemplify this. For Brazil, the hosting of the World Cup is an important part of its long-term strategy for enhancing its soft power, prestige and visibility in the global arena.

With the 2014 World Cup around the corner, we have dedicated this issue of our journal to analysing the relationship between sports and politics. The papers explore the political, economic and global significance of sports in international politics and diplomacy. The question we try to answer through these papers is not whether or not there exists a direct relationship between sports and politics, but how this relationship manifests itself in different contexts. The journal will focus on the impact of different sports events in various regions. The history of many countries' relationship with



football and the inter-connectedness with politics, nationalism, and racial identity provide an interesting perspective on the interrelationship between sports and politics.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Wilhelm Hofmeister". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name "Wilhelm" and last name "Hofmeister" clearly distinguishable.

Dr. Wilhelm Hofmeister  
Regional Director

# Dangerous Liaisons? Sport, Politics, Economics and Events

*John Nauright*

Historically, modern sport has been deeply embedded in British sporting ideology, suggesting that sport is an activity of diversion from the day-to-day concerns of ordinary life – an escape from the “real” world. Yet, sport as an important social and economic activity has a long and well-established history. The role of sport in modern societies has not surprisingly led to political intervention by governments as well as to much political gamesmanship and indeed corruption within sporting organisations and from those seeking to profit from associations with sport.

Belying the myth of autonomy has been the direct instrumental use of sport by governments across the ideological spectrum since at least the early 1900s (Beck, 1999; Keys, 2006; Santos, 2014). Governments have for many decades supported physical education and sport as means to foster healthy economic workforces in times of peace and a militarily prepared populace for times of war. In addition, sport has been a site whereby important socialisation takes place and where leadership and teamwork are inculcated.

Sports, having achieved wide popularity in every nation, have the possibility of promoting resistance and individual and social transformation. They have, however, become more and more enmeshed in a global system based on growth and inequality, at the expense of sustainability and social and economic justice. Governments have sought to gain political advantages both internationally and domestically through the use of sport. Governments are acutely aware that tourism and sports are integral parts of the global economy. With large-scale events being key factors in local and national development strategies, traditional sports fans, local communities and democratic practices are often ignored as growth is promoted and business and government interests aligned in support of economies driven by events (Giampiccoli and Nauright, 2010).

In general, events such as the Olympic Games, the Commonwealth Games, the FIFA or Rugby World Cups and Continental Championships in football have gained greater significance due, in large part, to an expansion of global media markets, new technologies enabling greater exposure to be achieved, and the profits generated by the 1984 Olympic Games in Los Angeles, which began the move towards the notion of mega-events as potential economic drivers (cf. Boykoff, 2014; Roche, 2002; Lenskyj,

2008; Sage, 2010).<sup>1</sup> As a result, many countries began to link their economic development strategies to the attraction of major international sporting events that they hoped could leverage exposure into an increase in tourism income and outside business investment while encouraging the rapid development of supporting infrastructure that could be used more widely post-event (Nauright, 2004). Therefore, even though mega-sporting events are vulnerable to imprecise impact studies and much ambiguity exists with the meaning of the concept of “legacy,” it is a reality that a continually growing number of cities and nations compete to host large-scale events (Cornelissen, 2007; Pernicky and Lueck, 2013).

Governments are often keen advocates for promoting the positive impact that these events have, not only on a country’s economy, but also on its developmental legacy. While political factors form the power behind the willingness to host mega-events, the hosting itself, beside the usually advertised economic and “image” impacts, can have a variety of social consequences. Examples of social costs that impact local day-to-day life include: traffic congestion and overcrowding of roads; increased potential for criminal activity; disruption to daily schedules; and increased pollution. Protests in Rio de Janeiro in June 2013 brought these into sharp relief for a global audience, though such opposition is normally held at bay through draconian legislation and the militarization of public space (Gaffney, 2014).

The political willingness to host mega-events can, therefore, involuntarily (or not), ignore negative consequences faced by the local community/region/nation such as residential displacement, breakdown of historic communities, and cost overruns that impact negatively upon citizens’ quality of life. Various estimates suggest that a minimum of one million and upwards of two million or more people will be displaced in Rio de Janeiro as a result of that city being one of the locales for the 2014 FIFA World Cup and then host of the 2016 Summer Olympic Games. Host nations and cities work to establish a sanitized space where imagined visions can be projected to spectators and the global community, thus unsightly landscapes and undesirable people are removed or relocated.<sup>2</sup> Boosterist politicians and business leaders aided by complicit corporatized media within host nations promote sports mega events as the expression of national self-worth and tout the benefits of being generous hosts to the global community.

The notion that sport is somehow apolitical or moral has infused discourses urging participation for the sake of enjoyment or fun. The history of modern sporting forms and organizations, however, demonstrates clearly that sports have become key components of the public relations machine whereby public discourses reify the wonders of capitalist accumulation and growth as the only legitimate path to development and

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<sup>1</sup> Numerous studies have examined the mega-event developments since at least Los Angeles 1984; the reference lists in the sources cited here provide access to most of this literature.

<sup>2</sup> I witnessed this firsthand during the FIFA World Cup of 2010 as relocated homeless from Cape Town appeared in the nearby town of Stellenbosch, well away from the World Cup action.

measure of success. Sport operates largely as a legitimating institution that has done little to challenge the dominant world system propagated by the West and North and spread through the imperial and neo-imperial mechanisms of conquest, economic control and political intervention.

The Olympic Games provide a prime example of complexities in utilizing mega-events as economic development strategies to promote the common good. The concept associated with the creation of the Olympic Games in the late 19th century was associated with the perpetuation of class distinction while shrouding the games with an aura of universalism and healthy, fit and youthful bodily display. Alternative international sporting movements were marginalized – such as the “Worker Olympics” (Riordan, 1991) and “Women’s Olympics” of the 1920s and 1930s – as the governing body for the Games, supported by business and governmental elites, established control of the governance and operation of global sport (Nauright, 2012). The rise of neo-liberal economic strategies in the West in the 1980s enabled the Olympic “Movement” as a single institution with the capital to organize events, to define, delineate, and sustain particular meanings about sport and human society, and to tie human aspirations to economic development issues. In addition, the hegemonic ideology of Olympism has been coupled with a financial capitalist ideology through association with transnational corporations. Thus, mega-events exist to legitimate political, economic, diplomatic and militaristic institutions that support and gain benefit from them. At the same time, competition in sports event production has led corporate interests to demand that event organizers demonstrate value or return on investment resulting from sponsorship and public exposure.

Olympic Games, ultimately, are more about selling consumer processes and dominant political ideologies than about promoting peace and social justice. The Games are political; they always have been. Unfortunately, the disturbing testimony to their success is that most people don’t complain about distortions of the “ideals” of sport, and in fact actively support the Games. Thus it is important to understand the “manufacturing of consent” that occurs in the production of support for capitalist-driven sport. As Canadian labour historian Bryan Palmer argues, “there are no ties that bind as effectively as those that are self-imposed, those that appear in the historical record of oppression and exploitation at the request of the very people they will secure” (Palmer, 1992: 17). Most people happily support major sporting events even when it is against their short- and long-term economic interests. Even in the face of readily available evidence demonstrating the horrible living and working conditions of most workers who produce the goods consumed in and around sports and sporting events and in the face of forced removals, cost overruns, increased taxation, and the suppression of democratic rights and freedoms, like Avery Brundage, we happily announce, “the Games must go on”, enjoy our nationalist celebration and stories of triumph against adversity,

and consume the products proclaiming loyalty to the nation and the brand of sport/event on offer.

FIFA's recent decision to send its global extravaganza World Cup event to Russia in 2018 and Qatar in 2022 clearly demonstrates that the world's leading sports organizations are selling to the highest bidder and that countries willing to prostrate themselves fully to organizations such as the IOC and FIFA are the ones most likely to be given the right to host the flagship events of the Olympic Games and the FIFA World Cup. The stakes have been raised higher and higher in the past decade as countries from Africa to South America to Australia and Asia have begun to vie for the scarce commodity of global mega-sporting events. The playing field is far from level, however.

Countries with a much lower level of global visibility than Olympics host nations Australia, China or the United Kingdom, particularly in the Global South, face an increasingly uphill battle as the global sport-media-tourism complex solidifies around large events with widespread interest. An events-driven global economy favours the already wealthy nations that can afford the levels of investment necessary to attract such events. To illustrate income inequalities we should note that the total annual income of Tiger Woods as far back as 2003 was \$76.6 million, while Bhutan's national Gross Domestic Product that year amounted to \$68 million (Nauright, 2004). Multi-year baseball, basketball, American football and European soccer contracts now surpass gross domestic products of countries such as Belize and Botswana, and this is money paid to a single athlete. The value of leading sport franchises such as Real Madrid, Manchester United, or the New York Yankees exceeds the GDP of many developing nations, such as Paraguay, Honduras or Zambia to name but a few. Currently, Real Madrid is the world's most valuable soccer club at \$3.3 billion, just ahead of Manchester United at \$3.17 billion, and Barcelona at \$2.6 billion. The New York Yankees lead the American list at \$2.3 billion (Ozanian, 2013). Manchester United's recent firing of manager David Moyes led to a \$200 million rise in share price on the New York Stock Exchange, prompting investigation into the possibility of insider trading. These clubs are more valuable than the total *national* economies of some nations.

With elite commodified sports having such large economic values, they become significant power players in regional and national political economies. Local community interests and democratic practices are often subverted as business and governments align in support of events-driven economies as part of pro-growth strategies. In substance, business and political leaders view sports mega-events as significant channels for local and regional economic development and as a way to facilitate urban redevelopment using the event as a catalyst to leverage additional resources that they argue might not otherwise be as forthcoming.

This strategy is justified through projecting tourism growth, and touting the resulting infrastructural improvements and the generation of short-term employment opportunities. Tourism and envisaged new investment in the specific locality or nation

are key aspects of the heightened interest in hosting mega-events as they are thought to be the most expedient way to attract media interest in a host city or nation, which, it is hoped, will translate into an influx of outside capital through tourism and new investment. Sports critic Marc Perelman (2012) suggests there is now an entire mode of production that has emerged around globalized sport. Several sociologists of globalization and sport, notably George Sage (2010), make a similar if slightly less bold argument about the increasing potency of sports in global capitalism.

In addition to economic issues, mega events also must be understood from political and social viewpoints, because mega-events involve the political leadership of a host country and often shape legacies that governments and leaders envision for themselves. Governments are often keen advocates for promoting the positive impact that these events have, not only on a country's economy, but also on its developmental legacy. While political factors form the power behind the willingness to host mega-events, the hosting itself, beside the usually advertised economic and "image" impacts, can have a variety of social consequences. Examples of social costs that impact local day-to-day life include: traffic congestion and overcrowding of roads; increased potential for criminal activity; disruption to daily schedules; and increased pollution.

## DIVERTING RESOURCES AND SUBVERTING DEMOCRACY

The subversion of democratic practices and public transparency I have alluded to were evident in South Africa in the lead-up to the World Cup. In examining the covert government-led management practices in the city of Durban, for example, it is clear that the building of Moses Mabhida stadium was part of a larger and secretive plan involving Durban municipal manager Michael Sutcliffe, who managed the city's 2010 build-up. While a new stadium in Durban was nice to have, it was not a FIFA requirement for hosting matches. The new stadium displaced spending that was badly needed elsewhere, but was constructed with a view to a future Olympic bid and as part of a massive urban beachfront redevelopment focused on increasing tourism and high-end leisure activities.

The Durban beachfront urban renewal has greatly enhanced the image of Durban and the space is now widely used in sport/leisure activities across its length from Moses Mabhida stadium to the area of uShaka Marine World. Many community members have used the space, though few infrastructural investments were made to the areas where the consumers live in the numerous impoverished areas in and around the city. Embracing an almost exclusive neo-liberal, market-orientated approach, the idea among advocates of the FIFA World Cup was to position cities like Johannesburg, Durban, and Cape Town among a global hierarchy of competitive metropolitan areas. Yet, evidence from previous such events suggest that the results of hosting do not deliver on the promise of widespread community benefit. Basic infrastructure remains

poor to non-existent for the majority of the population in those cities, unemployment is rampant, and crime is prevalent (Giampiccoli, Lee and Nauright, 2013).

In the lead-up to the Sydney 2000 and London 2012 Olympics, democratically elected governments enacted Olympic-related legislation that restricted public freedoms and rights and protected Olympic sponsors and Olympic-related logos, signs and phrases in draconian fashion to satisfy the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) requirements (Lenskyj, 2002; 2008). Former Australian Prime Minister John Howard argued in the 1990s that criticism of the Olympics was “un-Australian” in efforts to minimize protests against the requirements for Sydney 2000 that the country had to implement to satisfy the IOC. Protest and vigorous debate are hallmarks of the Australian tradition. Similarly in Britain, the *London Olympic Games and Paralympic Games Act* of 2006 exacted even tighter control over what can and cannot be done or said in the lead-up to the event and during the event itself.

Who benefited from the London Olympics? We know for sure that the IOC and its group of elite global corporate sponsors will top the list. Today, sport appears more and more popular yet less and less accessible to the masses as corporate boxes and specialized event tourist packages price events beyond the means of the average citizen (Nauright, 2012). In early 2013, the showpiece Joao Havelange Stadium in Sao Paulo was closed and in disrepair less than a year and a half out from the World Cup. If Brazil struggles with its vast and rapidly increasing economic resources, if the United Kingdom subverts its own laws in order to host the London Games, if the Greek economy collapses in part due to the overspending and poor policy planning and implementation surrounding the Olympics (Georgiakakis and Nauright, 2012), if South Africa spends millions to build a useless stadium to present the television images FIFA demands, where does that leave the vast majority of nations and cities around the world striving to get “on the map” through sports? History matters, yet too often it is ignored or obliterated as the boosterist political and economic machine engages full thrusters towards the objective of “selling” an event or facility for national prestige and global economic gain.

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# The Attraction of Sport Mega-Events to States of All Political Hues

*Jonathan Grix*

For a time the age-old adage “sport and politics do not mix” was upheld by sports administrators, athletes and even politicians. Nowadays, there is a wider acceptance that sport is not just political, but very political indeed. This ranges from government involvement in elite sport development and funding, to school sport and community sport provision. The following short essay, however, focuses on the increasing attraction of sports mega-events to states from across the political spectrum. Irrespective of regime type, sport clearly attracts the attention of all kinds of states, for example:

- Advanced capitalist states – this usually refers to “developed” countries, such as Australia, Canada, the US, the UK, etc., in which the vast majority of sports mega-events have been held;
- “Emerging states” – this is a term reserved for up-and-coming countries in terms of their economic, but also political, power, for example, Brazil, Russia, India and China (the so-called “BRIC” countries) – all of these state have or will host a sports mega-event;
- An autocracy – Qatar is the best example of this, where the state is ruled by a royal family and citizens have no say in who their leader is. Qatar is set to host the 2022 FIFA World Cup;
- Authoritarian/communist – China, Cuba and East Germany have all embraced elite sport success and China, in particular, played host to the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games.

Hoberman (1984, 17) summed up the broad political appeal to states of “sporting competition” by suggesting:

All kinds of governments, representing every type of political ideology, have endorsed international sporting competition as a testing ground for the nation or for a political “system”. German Nazis, Italian Fascists, Soviet and Cuban Communists, Chinese Maoists, western capitalist democrats, Latin American juntas – all have played this game and believed in it.

One could extend this to sports mega-events, now seen as a short-cut to modernity, a method of by-passing and leap-frogging years of development and showcasing one’s state on the world stage.

## THE DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD OF HOSTING

While this type of “politics of attraction” is becoming popular, inviting the global media to scrutinise in detail the host state, government, politics and policies during a sports “mega” can lead to *unintended consequences*. Some examples from history and recent examples as highlighted below are indicative of how an event can turn out to be a double-edged sword:

- **2010 Commonwealth Games in Delhi, India.** This event was supposed to be a pre-cursor to an Indian Olympics bid, but instead turned into an unprecedented disaster for India and its global reputation. The intense focus of the world’s media was partly to blame for quashing India’s ambitions of hosting an Olympics after the debacle surrounding the preparations for the Commonwealth Games. Images and reports of crumbling building work, wild monkeys, child labour, Dengue fever and corruption were beamed across the world. Just two years later, the Indian Olympic Committee was banned by the IOC for corruption (December 2012), leaving potential Indian Olympic athletes to compete under the IOC flag if this debacle is not resolved by Rio 2016 (see Baviskar, 2014).
- **European Football Championship in 2012 (Euro 2012).** Ukraine – as co-host with Poland – was similarly faced with an unprecedented level of media scrutiny. A British BBC Panorama exposé on racism among Ukrainian football fans started a fierce debate about whether England’s multi-ethnic supporters should heed former England player Sol Campbell’s warning to stay at home, just prior to the start of the event. Further media scrutiny focused on the treatment of the former prime minister, Yulia Tymoshenko, who at the time of the event was languishing in jail on charges many believe to be “trumped up”. Overall, Ukraine attracted the kind of attention that can lead to a deterioration of their image abroad rather than the positive boost they were hoping for. The constant stream of bad press, the threats of boycotts (the UK government suggested, rather optimistically, that they would “boycott” the final should England get through), and the media gaze gave rise to questions about the democratic legitimacy of the Ukrainian regime and concerns around racism among a population who had previously lived under dictatorial conditions and, like many former communist states, experienced little multi-culturalism in their society.

In addition, a number of Olympic events – the crown-jewels of sports megas – have turned out far worse than expected:

**1972:** the Munich Olympics is remembered for terrorists, murder and mayhem. The tragic killing of eleven Israeli Olympic team members and one West German policeman by the Palestinian group Black September (five of their members were also killed) is the abiding memory of this event.

**1976:** the Montreal Games is often cited as the prime example of a debt-ridden Games that took the tax payers thirty years to pay off. Also, the Montreal Olympic stadium is a classic example of an under-utilised “white elephant”.

**2004:** much more recently the Athens Olympics very likely contributed considerably to Greece's major financial and economic problems and many of the facilities became "white elephants" not long after the Olympic circus rolled on.

**2008:** the Beijing Games was the most expensive Olympic bonanza at the time (since then eclipsed by the Sochi Winter Olympics). The opening ceremony alone cost an estimated £64 million (as opposed to Danny Boyle's well-received £27-million effort to launch London 2012); moreover, the Games clearly highlighted the issue of human rights and the Chinese treatment of Tibetan Monks.

**2012:** London 2012 has been described as the apex of the neo-liberalisation of the Olympics. It was by far the most commercialised (and "securitised") Games to date, boasting the largest McDonald's outlet in the world. This could be understood as a negative development, taking the event further away from sport and nearer to that of a business fair.

### Successful "Megs"

On the other hand, there have been sports mega-events that can be considered an unmitigated success. In fact, most events – apart from those above – are by general consensus considered successful once the sport takes place.

Providing the scandals uncovered by the media are not far-reaching, the media coverage and scrutiny of sports "megs" follows a startlingly similar pattern: in the years leading up to the event, reports are few and far between; as the event approaches, attention is drawn to any possible cause of a scandal, usually around facilities not being finished in time (for example, Athens 2004), the politics of the host nation (Euro 2012), any potential protests or uprising around the event (2012 Bahrain Grand Prix) or deteriorating roads and outpaced private security firms, which required the publicly funded army to provide the security for the Games (London 2012). In general, however, once a sports mega-event starts, sport takes centre stage and the mistakes made in the run-up are quickly forgotten in a "manufactured consent" that surrounds such big events. Even years after an event, little discussion takes place about mistakes made. In the wake of the Greek financial crises from 2012, one would have expected more probing questions into the implications of "Greece [hosting] a party that cost 5 percent of its annual revenue..." (Szymanski, 2009, 161) back in 2004. Barcelona is usually cited as the best example of a successful sports mega both in terms of image enhancement for the city, balanced books and a wider legacy.<sup>1</sup> A more recent important example of a successful sports mega-event was Germany's hosting of the FIFA 2006 World Cup (FWC). It is instructive to analyse what went right, so as to avoid the fate of the examples above:

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.standard.co.uk/news/lessons-of-barcelona-1992-games-provided-model-for-london-and-few-warnings-6382929.html>

- The FIFA Football World Cup 2006, hosted by Germany, revealed what long-term planning and a focused approach to sports mega-event hosting could achieve (see Grix, 2013 for the full study). It is fair to say that this sports “mega” was an unmitigated success. As a country that had suffered from a poor image abroad for over 60 years, Germany set out to use the FWC to improve it on a global scale. Three essential parts of the Germany strategy were employed to achieve this end:

1. long-term campaigns,
2. a fan-centred approach to staging the FWC,
3. and the (unintended) creation of a “feelgood” factor around the four weeks of the event.

### Long-term campaigns

Germany is known for its meticulous planning and the 2006 FWC took this to a new level. Even *prior* to winning the right to host the event, Germany had launched a global campaign to attract tourists to their country; as soon as they won the bid, Franz Beckenbauer, a European football legend widely respected in Germany, toured every single one of the thirty-one nations which had qualified for the FWC to welcome them to Germany, receiving high-level receptions wherever he went. This had the effect – early on – of generating a great deal of positive media attention around the event. Other campaigns included hospitality training for thousands of staff who welcomed visitors to Germany and a very successful “Land of Ideas” campaign that managed to bring together diverse stakeholders from business, science, government and civil society to work together to promote the nation and the FWC.

### A fan-centred approach

A second part of the successful strategy was to ensure that the whole event was fan-centred. This led to the creation of unique “fan-zones” and “fan-miles” where those people without tickets could watch the games live on very large screens. Over 20 million people joined in the party-like celebrations around the large viewing screens, which were set up in the twelve host cities in Germany, with no major public disorder reported. The “Fan Fests” served a number of purposes: first and foremost, they offered a street-party atmosphere to fans and bystanders who did not have tickets or who did not want to watch the football in the stadium(s). These innovative “spaces” also provided an arena within which fans and people, mostly women, who would not usually follow football, could enjoy a good party atmosphere. Women made up just 22% of all attendees at the FWC matches (overall average age of 34), but some 44% of those present at the fan parties were female (the average age of all present was younger at 31). An initial driver behind the idea of “Fan Zones” and public viewing was, interestingly, safety: the British ambassador in Germany had informed the organising committee to expect some 100,000 travelling English fans. The organising committee knew that

there was a maximum of only 20,000 tickets available, raising the possibility of 80,000 disgruntled fans from a country well known for its hooligans.

### Unintended “feelgood” factor

The well-functioning fan zones, excellent signage, trained personnel and first-class transport system provided an unintended by-product in the creation of a “feelgood” factor among those outside the stadiums who did not have tickets. This meant that despite the numbers of English fans and others there was not only no trouble to speak of (English and German police had worked together to prevent known troublemakers from entering Germany), but there was also a carnival-like atmosphere.

Post-event it is clear that Germany’s attempt to alter its negative national image was successful. Although international attitudes towards Germany had begun to improve in the years prior to the FWC – including the notoriously difficult British media – there has been a marked improvement in the manner in which Germany is now perceived by foreign publics. Inbound tourism rose before, during and after the event and has continued to rise – some two million visitors came to Germany for the FIFA World Cup in 2006 – and herein lies the rub: one of the most important factors in improving a state’s image, apart from a trouble-free event, is to have people visit your country, return home happy and spread the word. Since 2006, Germany has not been outside the top five globally in international polls on nation “branding” and how states are viewed by others. The “secret” ingredients of Germany’s success then would appear to be

- i. Long-term planning;
- ii. Resources (Germany is fortunate to already have an excellent infrastructure necessary to put on sports “megas”);
- iii. A clear strategy and
- iv. An “image” in need of changing/improving.

This last point is important, as a state such as the UK, which already enjoys a very high international reputation, had everything to lose from London 2012 – the fact that it went off well, was well-organised and generally received praise from all corners (as most sports “megas” do if nothing untoward happens) will simply help maintain the UK’s strong international image, but will not change it.

States with unsavoury pasts or images they wish to see corrected or enhanced have far more to gain from a successful, global sports mega-event, but a great deal to lose if things do go wrong. Qatar’s sense of excitement at winning the right to host the 2022 FWC is likely to have diminished with the unprecedented media scrutiny of its cultural practices, especially around its treatment of construction workers and domestic staff. Qatar’s problems have been exacerbated by the extremely long “run-in” to the actual event (twelve years between the announcement and the event) which has intensified media interest: before Qatar, Russia will host the 2018 FWC. Thus, any would-be hosts

should think carefully before rushing to stage the next sports mega-event, as it may just turn out to be a very poor investment of their time and money.

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# The Politics of Football in Asia

*Wolfram Manzenreiter*

In reoccurring waves of a four year-cycle, football's central event, the FIFA Men's World Cup, reminds the world of the fact that the "theatre of the great" (Hargreaves 1986: 243) also serves as a globally mediated showcase event for the display of national characteristics and state achievements. Notwithstanding manifold attempts to frame the presentation of football as politically disinterested, FIFA, Football's governing organization, explicitly involves state actors by requesting governmental approval and back-up for hosting bids, thereby implicitly inciting governments to capitalize on the symbolic power of football. The popular appeal of the game, reaching the hearts and minds of hundreds of millions of people, has prompted many members of ruling elites worldwide to enhance their own standing by forging all-too-close alliances with the world of football. For governmental interference in football, national associations in Asia, such as those of Iran, Brunei, Kuwait, Iraq and Yemen, have been frequently admonished and occasionally even suspended by FIFA (Dorsey 2014).

Throughout large parts of Asia, football never acquired the same over-determinist meaning for representational purposes as in Europe; it also never played a greater role for the redefinition of post-colonial relations between the Western centre and the Asian periphery (Manzenreiter and Horne 2007). The history of the game and its underdog status in comparison to baseball or cricket help explain the low visibility of hooliganism and jingoism on Far Eastern playing fields. This is less the case in West Asia and particularly the Middle East, where numerous incidents have corroborated football's internationally well-known bad reputation as a battlefield and breeding ground for aggression, violence, xenophobia, racism, and homophobia. These are some of the most frequent fissures and cleavages on the surface of football's acclaimed achievements of traversing all boundaries and bringing people together when other contacts would be unthinkable – which is why a Swedish parliamentarian nominated football for the Nobel peace prize in 2001 (*International Herald Tribune*, January 24, 2001).

This essay demonstrates the inter-connectedness of football with politics and nationalism in East Asia. Using the case studies of two sports mega-events, the FIFA Men's World Cup Finals and the Asian Cup, it will become apparent how various actors have tried to utilize football as a vehicle for the acquisition of status in the international



community or the expression of partisan messages in front of international audiences. Postcolonial nation-building and regional integration are the two cornerstones between which discussions of the political meaning and usage of football in East Asia are oscillating.

## FOOTBALL AND POST-COLONIAL RELATIONS IN EAST ASIA

Due to the shifting geopolitics of power in the background of global football history, football in East Asia has always been situated at the periphery, largely disconnected from dynamics and developments within the European and South American centres of the people's game (Manzenreiter and Horne 2002: 6). Football was first introduced to the region in the late 19th century by members of the military forces and commercial communities that safeguarded, administered and financed the British Empire. Since the introduction of football concurred with the final chapter of European colonialism and the growing US American influence in the North Pacific, football remained in the shadows of the overwhelming popular support for baseball for the most parts of the 20th century.

From a postcolonial perspective, however, sporting rivalries in East Asia are rather of significance for the symbolic representation of the relations between Japan and her former colonies. There is ample evidence demonstrating how the Imperial state employed sports for obtaining international acclamation and for forging internal cohesion (Sakaue 1998). For such purposes, athletes and teams from the colonies in Taiwan, Korea and Northern China were granted the right to participate in national championships, and the best of them were forced into delegations to international tournaments. The most famous "indentured athletes" of Korean origin were the marathon runners who won gold and bronze for Japan at the Berlin Olympics in 1936. Less well known is the striking role of Korean footballers for the "Miracle of Berlin", a legendary turnaround victory against Sweden at the same sports event.

For many Koreans under colonial rule, football enjoyed a special position as a sport at which they regularly sustained some national prestige by defeating Japan. After the restoration of Korean independence, football continued to serve this prominent function. Playing the game against the former suppressor offered the postcolonial nations of the Korean peninsula a highly visible opportunity to demolish the claims of cultural superiority or political supremacy through which imperial rule and military expansion had been rationalized (Lee 2002). When Japan joined the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) in 1954, it had to play only the Republic of Korea for the FIFA World Cup qualifiers. Public opinion, as much as President Rhee, would not permit a visit by a Japanese team to Korea and so both matches were played in Tokyo. Winning the first and drawing the second match, the South Korean players wisely followed the presidential advice of either returning as winners or else drowning themselves in the sea between the countries (Podoler 2006). In this regard, sport has been aptly described

as a ritualized combat, matching only war in its ability to channel national passions. Those passions are tied to an almost mythic connection fans make between their team and their national narrative.

Records from the Japan Football Association (JFA) show that continuous defeats at the hands – or feet – of the Koreans were at the root of the decision to install a fully professionalized football league in the early 1990s (Hirose 2004). The JFA wanted to see Japanese football advancing to a level worthy of Japan's economic power and overall achievements from forty years of post-war peace and prosperity. The concomitant end of the Cold War heralded a new global world order arising on the premises of economic rather than military power. But any Japanese aspiration for regional leadership is meeting strong resistance from neighbouring Korea and China where remembrances of colonial suppression under the Japanese Empire have vividly remained in the collective memory. The dispatch of Japanese troops – first under UN mandate to Cambodia and Somalia and later as part of the USA-led so-called “alliance against terror” into the Indian Ocean and Southern Iraq – raised suspicions about the actual objectives of Japan's quest for “normal state” status. Japan's inherent difficulties of coming to terms with the past further undermined any official attempts of restoring trust. The occasional odd remarks by politicians on the justification and benefits of the Korean occupation or high-profile visits to the war-tainted Yasukuni Shrine (which is dedicated to Japan's war dead but also honours 14 Class A war criminals) by prime ministers and other government representatives, the controversial depiction of Japan's role as aggressor in the Pacific War and the omission of wartime atrocities conducted by the Imperial army in history textbooks continued to obstruct any progress towards regional integration. Territorial disputes over a number of uninhabitable island groups are another legacy of the Pacific War straining the relations between Japan, the Koreans and China.

## JAPAN, KOREA AND THE 2002 WORLD CUP

Awarding the 2002 Football World Cup to Japan and Korea aptly served the strategic interest of FIFA and the aspirations of its corporate associates, who were aiming at a region that would be home to the second and third most powerful economies in the world soon. Around the turn of the century, all East Asian countries witnessed the establishment of professional leagues, often with the support of football and marketing intelligence from the Western centre and football talent and labour imports from the periphery of the football world system. The successful integration of the former East Asian “football periphery” into global commodity markets as well as changing relations of consumption in areas where football previously was close to non-existent has also impacted upon the way Asian populaces and their official representatives associate the game nowadays with national prowess (Manzenreiter and Horne 2002).

The first-ever World Cup on Asian soil emerged as the most pronounced example of a strategic usage of football for political ambitions. The Solomonian (?) decision of

awarding the World Cup finals to both Japan and South Korea was motivated by power struggles inside FIFA rather than by political acumen. The controversial move ended a harsh bidding contest overshadowed by sportive and political rivalries. Japan, having led the region economically for a long time, consequently wanted to lead Asia into hosting the first World Cup in Asia. For South Korea, at least on the pitch the stronger contender, this was hardly acceptable.

Colonial history as well as contemporary aspirations added a particular twist to the way the World Cup and foreign politics were entangled. For Japan, “co-hosting presented a means of re-orienting Japan’s relations with South Korea toward the future without having to make the apologies and compensation that South Korea demanded as a prerequisite to such a development” (Butler 2002: 52). For South Korea, it simply was a matter of national pride, particularly because football had been a means of resistance to Japanese rule during the Occupation (Lee 2002). Both sides were keen to dampen down any dispute, separating politics from the hosting of the football event. But both parties understood well that there was an opportunity to make effective use of the World Cup as moral leverage in diplomatic relations.

The experience of co-hosting caused the formation of a fragile, yet increasingly viable alliance between the two states and their people. Managing World Cup logistics required Seoul and Tokyo to improve ties long before the finals took place. The anticipated increase in travel, money transfer and communication exchange between Japan and South Korea by teams, supporters and media of all nationalities required governmental co-operation on security, visas, flight schedules and telecommunications. Regular meetings between the two local organising committees, that listed many bureaucrats and public figures from both countries, were held to discuss common issues. On the sub-state level, governors and mayors of the host regions met at several occasions; on a local politics level city partnerships were forged, and numerous youth sport exchange programs and goodwill projects were launched (Manzenreiter 2011). Bilateral relations improved when South Korean president Kim Dae-Jung’s “sunshine policy” started to de-ice the frosty stance towards Japan. South Korea gradually opened its doors to Japanese popular culture, and both countries sported a successful rapprochement policy at the diplomatic level. Immediately after the finals, South Korean president Kim and Japan’s prime minister Koizumi issued a joint communiqué in which the two leaders declared their determination to develop cooperative relations between Japan and the ROK to an even higher dimension in light of the success of the cohosting of the FIFA World Cup.

Both Korea and Japan, more than merely representing the countries of Asia in hosting the FIFA World Cup, **have been able to fulfil their responsibilities and produce results as the host countries.** These **results are something that will remain in Asia** as a whole and will, without doubt, provide a significant incentive for other

Asian countries to participate actively in future FIFA World Cup tournaments. **We are proud to be members of Asia.** (from the website of the organizing committees)

## FOOTBALL AND NO REGIONAL INTEGRATION

Only two years later, during the 2004 Asian Cup hosted by China, all signs of Asian pride and regional integration seemed to have vanished. Japan's national side faced hostile crowds in all their matches. Chinese spectators heckled Japanese players, booed the national anthem and displayed banners reading "Look into history and apologize to the Asian people" or "Return the Diaoyu (Senkaku) Islands". Chinese supporters in Xinan province converged on the Japan team bus, which was forced to depart earlier than scheduled, leaving two players behind. At the semi-finals in Chongqing, Chinese fans reportedly insulted their opponents, hurled garbage and stormed a bus carrying Japanese fans (*Asia Times*, August 7, 2004). When Japan was ultimately going to face China in the final, the Japanese embassy advised Japanese fans not to wear the jersey of the national team, to enter the stadium very early and leave quickly, and without celebrating in case of victory, since the match was met with heightened expectations to such an extent that one Shanghai TV reporter forecasted: "It's going to be a war" (*The Observer*, August 8, 2004).

Despite all diplomatic interventions and a massive deployment of 6,000 security forces, Chinese football supporters clashed with riot police outside the Beijing Workers Stadium after China was defeated 3-1. During the match they threw bottles and other objects at Japanese fans, shouted obscenities and sang anti-Japanese songs from the war of liberation from colonial rule. After the match, which they saw distorted by a number of dubious referee decisions, they burnt Japanese flags and surrounded the Japanese team bus, which was pelted with missiles and forced to return to the stadium. A diplomat's car had its window smashed. Japanese fans had to wait for an hour after the game inside the stadium until enough buses were provided for their safe escape from the stadium. Japan's embassy in China as well as Foreign Ministry officials formally protested against what they perceived of as abusive treatment of their citizens.

Compared to European or Southern American experiences of hooliganism, these incidents were rather minor. But they were not for the Japanese media that grossly over-emphasized the actions of a few among the many thousands of Chinese supporters. One year later the media were also stirring up expectations of troubles at the World Cup qualification games against North Korea. For the home game in Saitama, the JFA increased the number of security guards to 1,400 that joined a 2,000-strong police force. Fans of the two teams entered the stadium by separate entrances, and a buffer of 1,000 seats prevented the 5,000 North Korean fans, who were basically all members of the Korean community in Japan, from coming into contact with the Japanese. The return match in Pyongyang would have generated the largest presence of Japanese citizens on

North Korean territory since liberation from colonial oppression. But due to spectator riots that followed another qualifier between North Korea and Iran, FIFA transferred the game to a neutral venue in Bangkok without any crowd (Podoler 2006). In the ghost stadium of Bangkok, Japan won the second match and a ticket to the World Cup in Germany, whereas North Korea saw itself discriminated by a biased Syrian referee who caused the upheaval in Pyongyang, and by FIFA, whose decision deprived it of the chance to play Japan under more favourable conditions at home in the Kim Il Sung Stadium.

## CONCLUSION: FAIR PLAY IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Appeals to fair play and equal opportunities are common to sports as well as to an idealist conception of international relations. Chinese fans remember the final as an unfair game in which bad refereeing robbed China of chances of gaining the Asian Cup title, whereas Japanese officials remember it as a very uncomfortable display of hostility based on a distorted historical memory. Clinging to the international norm of fairness simultaneously at both the levels of sport and foreign relations imposes irreconcilable problems, at least on the part of the host nation. From a Chinese perspective, their fans acted in a way commonly observed abroad and thus it was rather a problem created by the Japanese media that exaggerated the incidents and linked sports with politics. In what could be interpreted as a reference to the international norm of keeping sport and politics apart, China's Foreign Ministry spokesman, Kong Quan, expressed his regrets that politicians and media in Japan had established these links. For the Japanese, it was rather the other way around. Not only the Chinese fans, but also the Chinese government, that was either not willing or not able to control its people, had not acted appropriately. Negative responses to Japan are not seen in relation to a past that continues to inform the present, but rather as a cause of contemporary nationalistic education used by the power elite to forge national cohesion and cover the increasing gaps among the Chinese people. Stirring up anti-Japanese sentiments was seen as a government strategy to divert criticism of its own policies by keeping the anger of its people directed towards its closest international rival.

But what seemed to have been caused by the ghostly shadows of Japan's colonial past acquired quite different meanings when put into context with contemporary domestic politics. From the people's point of view, both in China and North Korea, the football stadium is the only safe place for political articulations that are otherwise censored or prohibited. Japanese wartime atrocities are much more constitutive of the official state history of PR China than the millions of casualties and victims that suffered from the Great Leap or the Cultural Revolution, and in North Korea the dominant historical narrative of Japanese aggression leaves little scope for events and figures that are not related to the "Great Leader" Kim Il Sung and his family. Since the state is limited in its legitimacy and opportunities to suppress anti-Japanese demonstrations in the

public arena of a sports stadium, the stadium could become their court of international appeal. The case of football, and probably Anti-Japaneseness, became boogies for playing out new forms of civil society engagement, or for criticizing censorship, lack of civil society, political participation, and other domestic issues.

## CONCLUSION

Football has been interwoven in larger issues of postcolonialism and regional integration in the North Pacific region, where bilateral as well as multilateral relations are continually held hostage by opportunistic politicians beating the drum of nationalism for their own purposes. The colonial past, which indirectly caused the formation of Japan's "fatalist pacifism", continues to hamper any aspirations of Japan for a stronger role in multilateral frameworks of the region. Issues of the past and the present probably haunt foreign policy makers more than the play-makers on the pitch. But it is inside the stadiums in which they frequently show off their faces.

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# Sport and Nationalism in China

*Lu Zhouxiang and Fan Hong*

## INTRODUCTION

Nationalism is a concept dominated by politics. Its development is reinforced by economic, cultural, linguistic and/or other kinds of national aspirations, and hence these less-dominant elements are assigned an auxiliary function in the consolidation of national consciousness.<sup>1</sup> Sport is one of these national aspirations. Nationalism and sport are closely linked by their political natures. By cheering for their national squad, and playing or talking about their traditional sport or national sport, people who belong to different ethnic or religious groups, or who come from different social classes and regions within the nation state, become bound together and endowed with a collective identity. This results in the promotion of national consciousness. In addition, as a part of the traditional or popular culture, both traditional sport and modern sport can be regarded as symbols of a nation. People can find common ground in playing, watching or talking about their traditional sport or national sport. In this way, sport functions as a powerful cultural force that serves the construction of the national identity and national unity. Scholars use the term “sporting/sportive nationalism” to sum up the relationship between nationalism and sport. Sports nationalism often functions as a galvanizing or motivating force in nationalist movements. It serves a wide range of political objectives, such as “enhancing prestige, securing legitimacy, compensating for other aspects of life within their boundaries and pursuing international rivals by peaceful means”.<sup>2</sup> This article will map the relationships between sport, nationalism and nation building in China. By exploring the last 150 years of Chinese history, it intends to provide a clear understanding of Chinese sports nationalism from both macro and micro perspectives.

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<sup>1</sup> Alter, Peter. *Nationalism*. London: Edward Arnold, 1994.

<sup>2</sup> Bairner, Alan. *Sport, Nationalism and Globalization*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001, p. 18.



## THE LATE QING ERA (1840–1911)

“The history of modern China is one in which nationalism replaces Culturalism/Tianxialism as the dominant Chinese view of their identity and place in the world.”<sup>3</sup> Sport has played its part, in the same manner as education, economics and other social institutions, in reflecting and stimulating the transformation of China. Since the arrival of Western colonial powers in the mid-19th century, sport has, in general, influenced and contributed to the rise of Chinese nationalism and the construction of the people’s national consciousness in many ways, and directly served the nationalist revolution, which resulted in the formation of the Republic of China in 1912. After the Opium War, and influenced by an embryonic nationalism that was concerned with defending China against foreign powers and restoring the “Great Qing”, the Qing government introduced and promoted Western military gymnastics as part of the Self-Strengthening Movement (1861–1894) in an attempt to enhance the military power of the country. In the late 19th century, modern sport, especially Western gymnastics, was advocated by reformers and scholars who were eager to achieve national salvation by transforming China into a modern nation state. Thanks to their efforts, sport was promoted as a means of cultivating new citizens for a new China, and was widely accepted as a basic approach to “preserving the nation” and “preserving the race”. With the accumulation of anti-foreign sentiment that came about as a result of foreign aggressions in the late 1890s, the most famed traditional Chinese sport, Wushu 武术 (Chinese Martial Arts), came to be practised by lower-class Chinese civilians for the purposes of self-defence and eliminating the foreign powers. In this period, Wushu clubs united Chinese people against the foreign forces and gave birth to the Boxer Rebellion (1899–1901), which occasioned an eruption of anti-foreign nationalism. After the failure of the Boxer Rebellion, sport was used by Han Chinese nationalists in their plans to overthrow the Manchu regime. Sports schools and societies became places where nationalists and revolutionaries built up their forces. They facilitated communication and the assembly and training of revolutionary forces and contributed to the success of the 1911 Revolution. The history of the late Qing Dynasty clearly shows the close relationship between sport, nationalism and politics and reflects the changes in Chinese society and Chinese people’s view of their identity as well as their way of thinking. Sport was of great importance, not only for the construction of Chinese nationalism and national consciousness, but also for the eventual transformation of China from a “Celestial Empire” into a modern nation state.

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<sup>3</sup> Townsend, James. “Chinese Nationalism.” *The Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs*, no. 27 (1992): pp. 97–130, p. 97.

## THE REPUBLIC OF CHINA ERA (1912–1949)

The Republic of China era (1912–1949) saw the transformation of the modern Chinese nation state. Sport played an important part in this process of change, supporting and facilitating the rise of a republic from the ashes of the Qing Empire. Spurred on by a modern Chinese nationalism that focused on anti-imperialism, national unity and national revival, educationalists and political elites used sport and physical education to strengthen the nation in the early years of the Republic (1912–1927). The nationalist significance and political importance of sport and physical education was reinforced. Promoting sport and physical education became an essential part of the strategies of Chinese nationalists, politicians and educationalists aimed at achieving national salvation and revival.

After the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) came to power in 1927, guided by a government policy based on anti-imperialism and self-strengthening, sport and physical education were used to consolidate national unity, cultivate patriotism and improve the physical strength of the people. The Second Sino–Japanese war, which made national salvation the priority for the country and its people, tightened the relationship between nationalism and sport, consolidated the KMT government’s nationalism-oriented sports policy and facilitated a nationwide campaign of sports promotion. Both mass sport and competitive sport received strong support from the government and developed accordingly. In terms of mass sport, sport was promoted as part of the New Life Movement (1934–1949) to train strong bodies for the nation. In the education sectors, militarized physical education was adopted in 1927 for the purposes of national defence.

Competitive sport served the construction of a clear sense of national unity in the Republic of China era in three different ways. First, the regaining of governance over competitive sport from the Westerners in the 1920s confirmed the newly established nation state’s sovereignty. Second, by gathering the “big family” together, the National Games created an image of a strong and united China and thus bolstered feelings of national unity. Third, international sport events, including the Far Eastern Championship Games and the Olympic Games, functioned as important vehicles for enhancing China’s international recognition. By competing in the international arena, the modern Chinese nation state established its position in the world and thus further fostered a sense of national unity among the people. In conclusion, sport contributed to the shaping of national consciousness among the Chinese people and consolidated the unity of the newly established nation state. It became an essential part of Chinese nationalists, politicians and educationalists’ strategies for reviving the country. It was also used by both the nationalists and communists to build up their military power in order to resist and combat the Japanese invasion during the Second World War.

## THE MAO ERA (1949-1976)

Since the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, sport continued to be an integral part of Chinese nationalism. In order to provide physical exercise for the people and train them to be “healthy national defenders” and “socialist builders”, mass sport was promoted by the government in the 1950s. At the same time, an elite sport policy and systems were established to raise the profile of the new nation state and to achieve international recognition and domestic unity.

In the 1960s, the Sino-Indian border conflict, the Sino-Soviet split and the Vietnam War triggered a defensive strain of nationalism that made the Chinese very assertive in defending the country's sovereignty and national security. Sport in the first half of the 1960s was heavily influenced by this defensive nationalism. A nationwide campaign to promote mass military training was initiated by the government to “Turn Everyone into Soldiers”. Sport was used for the purposes of training bodies in preparation for war and sports activities were militarized as a result.

Mao's Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) gave rise to a nativist anti-Western xenophobia that served to further consolidate defensive nationalism. This sentiment was intensified by the Sino–Soviet border conflict of 1969. It resulted in the official promotion of military physical education in the education sector and in communes in rural China. It was not until the early 1970s that the military physical education of students and the workforce declined following a change in China's domestic and foreign policies.

## THE POST-MAO ERA

China, the so-called “sleeping giant” with the largest population in the world, nostalgically cherishes the memory of its supremacy at the centre of the world and its prosperity during the Tang Dynasty a millennium ago. It recalls painfully the history of humiliation and inferiority at the hands of the West and imperialist Japan in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Influenced by booming communism, socialism and anti-imperialism in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, the Chinese people mistakenly believed that they were the most progressive and advanced force on earth and that they were responsible for the liberation of all the human beings in the world – especially those living in the capitalist West. The reform and opening-up of China since the late 1970s has presented the “real world” to the Chinese people and made them aware that China's standard of living, science, technology, education and economy were far behind those of its Western competitors. The reality made them desperate. At the same time, the rise of China's new nationalism, which sought the revival of the Chinese nation, led the people to find a shared hope that China will recover its strength, achieve modernization and become a powerful country again in the near future.

Fuelled by nationalism, China's status and relative strength among nations became measured by the country's success at international sporting events. Gold medals became the symbol of achievements in modernization. The government's “elite-sport-first”

policy and the Olympic Strategy made elite sport the priority and resulted in the formation of a nationwide gold medal fever. Over the past century, the Olympics and other international and regional sports events have fostered an active interweaving of sport, politics and nationalism. They became a ritual of cohesion, a battlefield on which to beat the economically advanced nations and a means to restore the confidence of the nation. International sport competition is war without gunfire. The Chinese, who had lost most of the wars they were involved in in the first half of the 20th century, were longing to become the victors of any kind of war, including the Olympics.

Throughout the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s, the nation's morbid appetite for gold medals placed a heavy political burden upon Chinese athletes, whose mission was to improve China's international image and satisfy the people's expectations for national revival. Those who were lucky enough to secure world titles were honoured by the government and the people as national heroes. But once they failed to win gold medals, the Chinese people's nationalist wrath would immediately turn them from heroes to villains. In addition to the gold medal fever in elite sport, nationalism also inspired the Yangtze River and Yellow River rafting expeditions. The patriotic rafters, who defeated the foreigners to complete the first descents of the Chinese nation's two mother rivers, were regarded as heroes. Their heroic effort was praised by the media and the general public. However, the heavy casualties suffered by the rafting teams provoked criticism. Led by scholars and enlightened thinkers, people began to rethink the wisdom of these heroic but reckless adventures. More and more people became aware of the negative sides of nationalism, patriotism and heroism. At the same time, scholars and journalists began to question the country's "elite-sport-first" policy, which had resulted in the neglect of mass sport. The debates on sports patriotism and criticisms of the gold medal fever resumed after China was crowned No. 1 in the gold medal table at the 2008 Beijing Olympics and the 2010 Asian Games. This suggests that an increasing number of Chinese people are now eager to move away from extreme sports patriotism. They have achieved a better understanding of the relationship between the country, the government, the individual and patriotism, and are seeking individual freedom and a more liberalized social environment. However, as long as there are athletes competing under their national flags, it will be impossible to free athletic bodies from the influence of nationalism.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Lu Zhouxiang and Fan Hong. *Sport and Nationalism in China*. London: Routledge, 2014.



# Sports and Politics in South Asia: The India-Pakistan Rivalry

*Ronojoy Sen*

Think South Asia and the first sport that comes to mind is cricket. Think sport in South Asia and the first thing that comes to mind is the legendary India-Pakistan rivalry. While the India-Pakistan rivalry in sport mostly brings to mind cricket contests, the competition has been equally intense in field hockey. These sporting contests have often been seen as symbols of nationalism as well as proxies for the frequent wars that the two nations have fought against each other. But there have been moments too when sport has transcended boundaries and brought the two nations and its people together.

## THE EARLY YEARS

It was in 1952, only five years after the two nations gained independence, that India had the opportunity to play Pakistan for the first time on the cricket field. The series was an example of sport bringing together two nations, who had already fought one minor war over Kashmir. The Pakistan team was led by Abdul Hafeez Kardar, who had represented the undivided Indian side in the 1946 tour of England. An Oxford Blue in cricket, Kardar had a “deep commitment to the idea of Pakistan” and would later become a prominent politician. Historian Ramachandra Guha calls him “perhaps the greatest cricketer-ideologue born outside the West.”

The first Test match between the two neighbours – which was also Pakistan’s first ever – was played in Delhi. Considering the occasion, India’s president Rajendra Prasad inaugurated the match. The series was played in good spirit though Hindu groups tried to disrupt the matches. In Nagpur, where Pakistan played a match, the president of the right-wing Hindu Mahasabha, N.B. Khare, announced that his party would stage protests outside the stadium. In a pre-emptive move Khare was arrested, prompting the Pakistani paper *Dawn* to proclaim that the Hindu leader had been “bowled out.” In Calcutta, too, Hindu Mahasabha members shouted anti-Pakistan slogans outside the Eden Gardens stadium but that did not affect the Test match in any way. The stands were packed every day of the match.

Three years later, India went to Pakistan for a five-Test tour, playing its first match at Dacca in East Pakistan and then flying across the sub-continent to the west to continue the tour. Kardar was not only the captain of the Pakistan team but also a selector

and a columnist for the *Dawn*. A dull draw in the first Test at Dacca was a sign of the safety-first cricket that was to follow, resulting in all Test matches ending in a draw. It seemed that the fear of “defeat seemed upper most in the minds of the two teams” and the cricket magazine *Wisden* described the cricket as “two boxers tentatively sparing for an opening, but being afraid to strike the first blow in case some unexpected counter might be forthcoming.” But the lack of excitement on the field was adequately compensated by the enthusiasm off it. The bitterness of Partition was momentarily forgotten in the festival of cricket. For the third Test match in Lahore, which was the premier city in undivided Punjab, 10,000 Indians crossed the border at Wagah every day and returned by evening. *Dawn* called it the “biggest mass migration across the frontier since Partition.” The city literally closed down and “almost the whole of Lahore – minus those who were lucky to go to the stadium – listened to the radio from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. every day.”

In the 1950s both India and Pakistan were not considered among the top teams in cricket. In field hockey, however, the situation was quite different, with India having won the Olympic gold medal every time since the 1928 Games. India and Pakistan first played against each other on the hockey field in the final of the 1956 Olympic Games. The mood in the Indian camp before the big day was best described by India’s star player and two-time gold medallist Balbir Singh, who wrote, “I could not sleep that night, and after tossing about restlessly for a while, I went out for a stroll. It was quite late in the night when someone called out my name.” Also up at that late hour was India’s top Olympic official, who took Balbir back to his room and gave him a pill to soothe his nerves. Only then could Balbir go to sleep. The match itself was a close one with India winning by a solitary goal. Balbir admitted that the Melbourne victory stood out since it was against Pakistan. His sentiments were unsurprising considering Balbir was from Punjab, which had borne the brunt of the Partition violence in 1947.

India and Pakistan renewed their cricketing rivalry in 1961-62. The cricket was as dull as the previous series, with all five Tests as well as the fifteen first-class matches ending in a draw, which was probably a dubious record of sorts. The stakes were too high for any of the two sides to risk losing. This was pointed out by *Wisden*: “The chief aim of the contestants appeared to be to uphold national prestige by avoiding defeat rather than to take the risk of trying to enforce a decision. Cricket was a secondary interest.” The bonhomie of the two earlier series had evaporated to some extent. Indian batsman Abbas Ali Baig, a Muslim, received threat letters which said that he was deliberately playing poorly, prompting a commentator to condemn the notion that Pakistan-India contests are between “Hindus and Muslims only.” Off the field there were ominous rumblings about Kashmir, which would eventually lead to full-fledged war in 1965 and the snapping of cricket ties between the countries for over a decade.

In football, too, there was some connection between India and Pakistan but mostly at the club level. The DCM tournament, held in Delhi, was the first one to invite foreign

teams in the 1950s, including Pakistani clubs. Pakistani sides playing in India were not uncommon in the 1950s with a Lahore club winning a sensational victory over one of India's top clubs, Mohun Bagan, in the 1952 Rovers Cup. The talent scouts of the Calcutta football clubs, who were then the best in India, even looked to Pakistan for players. The free movement of Pakistani players to India was a reminder that ties between the two neighbours were cordial in the 1950s.

## WAR AND CRICKET DIPLOMACY

The two wars that India and Pakistan fought in 1965 and 1971 resulted in the snapping of sporting ties for a considerable period. When sporting relations were resumed in 1978 with a cricket series, it led to a potent cocktail of cricket and nationalism. In a one-day match at Sahiwal in Pakistan, the Indian cricket captain, Bishen Singh Bedi, conceded the game after Pakistani bowlers resorted to unfair tactics. The tour however went on, with India losing the final Test at Karachi, a match which was telecast live in major Indian cities. Unsurprisingly, when the Indian team returned home, there were demonstrators shouting angry slogans at the airport. The team's "miserable" performance was raised in India's Lok Sabha (the lower house of Parliament) as was the demand for an enquiry by a committee into the loss.

This was the time, however, that the term *cricket diplomacy* was coined to describe the use of cricket to bring about a thaw in relations between India and Pakistan. Despite the controversies dogging India's ill-starred tour of Pakistan in 1978, Pakistani President Zia ul-Haq said at a farewell dinner for the cricketers that the goodwill and friendship generated by the cricket matches should bring the two countries closer even in politics. A week earlier, India's then foreign minister and future prime minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, had said that the Indian cricket team had made a "significant contribution towards promoting goodwill and understanding between the people of India and Pakistan." Nearly a decade later in 1987, Zia watched an India-Pakistan match in Jaipur, raising the slogan of cricket for peace, to defuse tensions along the border. Around this time India and Pakistan even co-hosted cricket's World Cup in 1987, the first time that it was held outside cricket's traditional home, England.

## THE UPS AND DOWNS

According to anthropologist Arjun Appadurai, cricket arouses in spectators in South Asia what he calls the "erotics of nationhood." From the 1980s onwards it has mostly been on the cricket field where India and Pakistan have fought their battles. As Appadurai points out, "Cricket matches between India and Pakistan are thinly-disguised national wars. Cricket is not so much a release valve for popular hostility between the two populations as it is a complex arena for re-enacting the curious mix-



ture of animosity and fraternity that characterises the relations between these two previously united nation states.”

Cricket has often been a casualty of strained relations between the two countries, with long gaps between tours. Between 1962 and 1978, a period punctuated by two wars, there were no cricket matches between India and Pakistan. For most of the 1980s and 1990s, which saw unprecedented communal violence and riots in India, the little cricketing contact between the two countries happened at neutral venues with a large expatriate South Asian population, such as Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates and far-away Toronto. Cricketing ties were resumed in 1997 – the 1996 World Cup was in fact held in the Indian subcontinent for the second time in a decade jointly by India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka – but the Kargil conflict in 1999 nipped in the bud further sporting contact for five years.

At the same time cricket has been used to signal better relations between the two countries despite the best efforts of certain groups to disrupt visits. Threats by the Shiv Sena, the radical Hindu outfit from Maharashtra, ensured that Pakistan did not participate in cricket’s Hero Cup in 1993, not too long after a disputed mosque in Uttar Pradesh, the Babri Masjid, was pulled down by Hindu nationalists. In 1998-99, months before the Kargil conflict, when the Pakistani team visited India for the first time in twelve years, the Sena dug up the pitch in the Ferozeshah Kotla ground in Delhi, venue of the first Test match of the series. Though the Sena leader, Bal Thackeray, described the act as “true patriotism”, it did not have any impact whatsoever on the series, with the first Test moved out to Chennai and the second played in the hastily restored Kotla ground. Unlike the Sena and its supporters, Indian cricket fans were very happy to catch Pakistan. In the Chennai Test match, 50,000 people turned up every day to watch the cricket. Pakistan won that match and their captain led his team on a victory lap to a standing ovation from the Chennai crowd. It was a scene that would have left the Sena and its supporters deeply puzzled.

The ups and down of India-Pakistan contests were amply reflected in the one-off Test (as part of the Asian Test Championship) that was held in Calcutta in February 1999 during the same tour. Around 100,000 spectators attended each of the first four days of the Test match. On the fourth day, however, after a controversial incident on the field involving India’s iconic cricketer Sachin Tendulkar, angry spectators stopped play for over an hour. Play resumed but on the fifth and final day of the match, when India was on the verge of losing, the 65,000 people who had turned up at the stadium turned violent. Not for the first time at the Eden Gardens, spectators were ejected and the final moments of the game were played out in a near-empty stadium watched by a few officials, VIPs, journalists and police.

In 2004, India toured Pakistan for the first time in fourteen years thanks to the astute diplomacy of Vajpayee, who was by then India’s prime minister. At a reception for the Indian players before they left for Pakistan, Vajpayee put the series into perspective

when he said: “*Khel hi nahin, dil bhi jitiye* (Win not only matches, but hearts too).” Bonhomie and goodwill were in abundance during that series. This was especially so in the historic city of Lahore, where two Cricket Specials – train services to ferry cricket fans – between Delhi and Lahore carried over 2,000 passengers across the border for the one-day match there. But when Pakistan capitulated in the third Test and lost the series, a distinguished Pakistani journalist wrote in the *Dawn* newspaper that it was Pakistan cricket’s “blackest day.” The next year, however, Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf accepted the invitation to watch a match in Delhi alongside India’s Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

## CONCLUSION

After the Mumbai terror attack in 2008, carried out by terrorists originating from Pakistan, cricketing ties were snapped once again, confirming the role of the game as a barometer of India-Pakistan relations. Even the Indian Premier League, cricket’s most lucrative tournament involving cricketers from all over the world playing for city-based clubs, was not immune to the aftershocks of the 2008 attack. Pakistani players were shunned in player auctions after the Mumbai attack and continue to be ignored. Cricket diplomacy is, however, not dead. When India and Pakistan played against each other at Mohali near Chandigarh in the semi-final of the 2011 cricket World Cup, co-hosted by India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, Pakistani Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani was invited for the match and watched it in the company of Manmohan Singh. When ties between India and Pakistan are at a low, sport continues to allow for some breathing space and to provide welcome contact between the two nations.

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# Football and National Identity in Europe

*Alexander Brand and Arne Niemann*

## 1. FOOTBALL, POLITICS AND IDENTITY

That football and politics often intermingle is a truism. Everybody knows anecdotes about “football wars”, “enduring rivalries” and “symbolic victories” on the pitch which gain their importance only when interpreted within the larger politico-cultural background. Just think of Germany’s post-war restoration of self-confidence in 1954 (the “Miracle of Bern”) or Poland’s “victorious draw” against the Soviet Union in the second round of the 1982 World Cup, which was taken to resemble a symbolic revenge for the introduction of martial law in Poland in 1981 ordered by the Soviet leadership.<sup>1</sup> And who can forget that it was the riots at the occasion of a football match between (Croat) Dinamo Zagreb and (Serb) Red Star Belgrade in 1990 which set off a dynamic that culminated in the collapse of Yugoslavia? On the other hand, the increasingly multiethnic composition of clubs as well as national teams has given rise to ideas of more inclusive, less xenophobic societies throughout Europe. The Swiss may have just voted, by a small margin, to take measures to curb immigration; yet today’s highly successful Swiss national team – it has lined up no less than 18 players with migrant origins since 2012<sup>2</sup> – nicely illustrates that football can act as a catalyst for change, and for the better! What all these examples have in common is that they refer to the dimension of “identity”, i.e., self-understandings of people about their characteristic traits vis-à-vis others. Hence, football matches and football as a cultural practice can be said to constitute a site in which identities surface and are eventually transformed – and all this with political implications.

To *define* the term “identity” satisfactorily would necessitate a series of books, and still it is safe to assume that the resulting definition would be partial, selective and disputable. Some authors even question the very use of the term “identity”. Brubaker and Cooper for instance argue that in order to come up with a term amenable to social

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<sup>1</sup> Dmowski, Sewerin (2013). “Football Sites of Memory in Eastern Bloc 1945-1991”, Presentation at the FREE Conference, Stuttgart 2013.

<sup>2</sup> Sonntag, Albrecht (2014). “Populist Own Goals”, Blog entry, 25 February. Available at: <http://www.free-project.eu/Blog/post/populist-own-goals-1781.htm>, accessed: 11 April 2014.

science, the term “identity” should be replaced by more specific concepts.<sup>3</sup> The first substitute they use is “identification” with the advantage that it invites social scientists to specify the social actors who *do* the identifying. The second identity-substitute they offer is “self-understanding”, on the grounds that this alternative explicitly recognizes the *subjective* nature of identity. The third alternative is “commonality” which is to merely denote similarities within social groups, promoting “a feeling of belonging together”. Based on this, our understanding of identity in the context of football is inspired by the notion of group identities proposed by Eder.<sup>4</sup> Following from that, identities are collectively held self-understandings which are grounded in frames or narrative constructions delineating the boundaries of a network of actors. Consequently, identities are about “us versus them” phenomena, normal/foreign, acceptable/unacceptable actions, ideas and lifestyles, about “membership” and the stories upon which it is founded, emotional attachment and delineations from “others” in a situation of group plurality. As such, identities do not only enable and legitimise certain actions and policies. They may serve as a key resource for political actors, a resource that is to be nurtured in order to be exploited for political gains. Following from that, identities are sites of strategic importance (aptly described by the notion of “identity management”), as they are at the same time fluid, indeterminate, subject to manifold influences and relatively flexible outcomes of a host of social and cultural acts.<sup>5</sup>

Identity research by political scientists in Europe – research on national identities across Europe as well as forays into a “European identity” – has so far tended to restrict itself to analysing phenomena with an eye to strictly political issues. In doing so, it has explored rather *traditional* political issues such as: political convictions and shared political values as foundations of common identities, the identity potential of institutions and political symbols, and the eventual convergence of news agendas and political coverage throughout Europe. What is largely missing so far in political science is a focus on everyday activities that is lifeworldly and seemingly non-political dimensions of (national and European) identity formation. This is all the more lamentable since the potential of sport in particular for identification processes has already been established conceptually.

## 2. FOOTBALL AND NATIONAL IDENTITIES

In the context of football, the issue of “national identity” usually arises in four different ways: alongside matches of national teams, regarding specific national styles of play, at

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<sup>3</sup> Brubaker, Rogers and Frederick Cooper (2000). “Beyond ‘Identity’”, in *Theory and Society* 29: 1-47, pp. 6-20.

<sup>4</sup> Eder, Klaus (2009). “A Theory of Collective Identity. Making Sense of the Debate on a ‘European Identity’”, *European Journal of Social Theory* 12: 1-21.

<sup>5</sup> van Zoonen, Lisbet (2013). “From Identity to Identification: Fixating the Fragmented Self”, *Media, Culture and Society* 35: 44-51, p. 44.

the level of club competition, particularly if a club is regarded as an “ambassador” of a quasi-nation, and finally, in the wake of mega events such as World Cups or European Championships.

At the level of *national team competition*, the classic formula is that national teams are said to inspire “passionate nationalism” because “an international football match involving *our* team intrudes into our daily routines, reminding us *with whom we stand* with regard to our fellow nationals and *whom we stand against* in the international sphere.”<sup>6</sup> Such a conception indicates that it is relevant national “others” through which a national identity is activated and attains meaning at all. Social comparison hence leads to feelings and articulations of rivalry. Without doubt, however, such a dynamic is mostly event-driven, i.e., specific identity conceptions flare up in the run-up to a match and calm down later on, only to be activated again eventually when national teams meet anew. A case in point here is the ritual of England-Germany matches, which regularly bring up an essentialized English national identity conception in the UK press: notorious references to historic military victories (“Let’s Blitz Fritz”, “Achtung Surrender” or “Let Battle Commence”) are invoked in order to outbalance the rather meagre track record of the English national team when playing against Germany.<sup>7</sup> More muted are such identity-relevant articulations of “us versus them” in the case of Spain versus Portugal, although one can easily detect traces of problematic neighbourly relations, historical rivalries and cultural differences in the discourse accompanying such “derbies”. That it is often football-related developments (victories or dramatic losses) combined with complicated historical-political legacies which drive such identity-mongering is demonstrated by the case of Germany versus the Netherlands. Bitterness and hatred from the Dutch towards the Germans in the wake of World War II, the 1974 World Cup win by Germany beating the fancied Dutch in the final, the 1988 European Championship defeat of Germany through a last-minute goal and the infamous brawl between two players in the 1990 World Cup match<sup>8</sup> have added up to a situation of rivalry between the two neighbours which is almost exclusively turning violent during football matches. And, of course, it is about delineating “us” versus “them” (the “Mofs”, Germans according to a Dutch cuss, and the “Cheese heads”, a German invective for their Dutch neighbours). Most empirical studies, however, tend to conclude that such emotional

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<sup>6</sup> Sugden, John and Alan Tomlinson (1998). “Power and Resistance in the Governance of World Football. Theorizing FIFA’s Transnational Impact”, in *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* 22: 299-316, p. 304; emphases added.

<sup>7</sup> Vincent, John, Edward (Ted) M. Kian, Paul Pedersen, Aaron Kuntz and John S. Hill (2010). “England Expects: English Newspapers’ Narratives about the English Football Team in the 2006 World Cup”, in *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 45: 199-223.

<sup>8</sup> *goal.com* (2012). “The Ten Most Intense International Football Rivalries”. Available at: <http://www.goal.com/en-ng/news/4072/euro-2012/2012/06/26/3201141/portugal-v-spain-the-10-most-intense-international-football>, accessed: 11 April 2014.

upsurges are temporary phenomena which mellow after matches and tournaments; sustained aggressive nationalism is hardly an outcome of such identity work.<sup>9</sup> As Lechner succinctly puts it: “beyond the game, soccer does little to cement collective [national] identity.”<sup>10</sup>

Interestingly, there seems to be one exception to this rule though. When “nations” are still in the process of formation, football may provide moments of identity galvanization. The most recent example in Europe for this is Kosovo, which was finally allowed to play an official friendly against Haiti in March 2014. Although FIFA rules forbade flying the Kosovo flag (the singing of the national anthem and jerseys with the “national emblem” were banned as well), 17,000 enthusiastic spectators flocked to the stadium in Mitrovica with self-styled flags.<sup>11</sup> Their “Kosova! Kosova!” shouts indicated that for *them*, the match was about more than football; it was about articulating a collective self-understanding, a will to political independence and recognition.

A second manifestation of the football/national identity-nexus is the idea of specific “football cultures” and “styles of play” which are said to be meaningful beyond the game. Talk about supposedly “German virtues” – an almost obsessive will to work, run and win on the pitch and in normal life – is common as are characterizations of “passionate” South Europeans (Italy and Spain) or creative but ultimately losing Frenchmen. This conscious use and creative projection of stereotypical images is relevant for the identity-question, in particular if such clichés are accepted and carried on by those who are the objects of stereotyping. As Crolley and Hand demonstrate, again we see a blending of an alleged essence of national football styles and specific general traits ascribed to people.<sup>12</sup> According to their analyses, if there is a fit between stereotypes and preferred match strategies or philosophies (individualist versus collectivist, defending versus aggressively striking, working hard versus playing elegantly), such attributions may even become subject to political instrumentalization and marketization. Think of how the tradition of “lionheart spirit” and “fair play” finally culminated in the (English) Football Association’s branding strategy of “lion symbolism” in the wake of the EURO 1996. Such identity-work, however, might lead to very different reactions abroad and among competitors on the field: While there was widespread admiration of the “English fighting spirit” in France in the mid-1990s, the Spanish

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<sup>9</sup> Mutz, Michael (2013). “Patrioten für drei Wochen. Nationale Identifikation und die Fußball-Europameisterschaft 2012”, in *Berliner Journal für Soziologie* 22: 517-538; von Scheve, Christian, Manuela Beyer, Sven Ismer, Marta Kozłowska and Carmen Morawetz (2014). “Emotional Entrainment, National Symbols, and Identification: A Naturalistic Study around the Men’s Football World Cup”, in *Current Sociology* 62: 3-23.

<sup>10</sup> Lechner, Frank (2007). “Imagined Communities in the Global Game: Soccer and the Development of Dutch National Identity”, in *Global Networks* 7: 193-229, here: 225.

<sup>11</sup> Ehrmann, Johannes (2014). “Kosova! Kampion!”, in *11Freunde*, April: 76-82.

<sup>12</sup> Crolley, Liz and David Hand (2006). *Football and European Identity. Historical Narratives through the Press*, London: Routledge, chap. 2.

press mostly mocked the nostalgic references to old-fashioned values and past glory.<sup>13</sup> Here, this specifically constructed notion of “Englishness” in the football arena was seen as antiquated and autumnal. Sometimes such identity-management also fits the purpose of turning a defeat into a victory of sorts. Again, Crolley and Hand point to how the French press commented on the 1982 World Cup semi-final defeat of France by Germany. The most prominent theme there was that “French romanticism had triumphed in defeat” and that Germany had won “because we [the French] were better”, i.e., playing more elegantly, creatively, spectacularly.<sup>14</sup> The Germans only dominated physically and through their machine-like efficiency. Clearly, this resembles a merger of supposedly national characteristics with expectations of a proper style of play as well as wilful constructions of how a nation is best represented to the outside world.

At the level of club competition, national identity dynamics are rarer. Although there are cases of national rivalries read into club competition, the, even by historical standards, fairly multinational composition of internationally competing club squads often mutes identity-related outbursts of national sentiment. As Taylor reminds us, this is hardly only a feature of today’s globalized players’ markets. Bari FC fielded Swiss, German, Austrian, French, Spanish, British and Italian players when it was founded in 1908, and the Naples team at the beginning of the century included Belgians, Maltese and Norwegians next to German and Swiss players.<sup>15</sup> More generally, there has often been a relatively high level of foreign players in some European leagues even before the Bosman ruling of the European Court of Justice in 1995 (e.g., in England, the Netherlands, France and Austria).

For this reason, dynamics of national identity are rather to be found in cases where specific European clubs have emerged as a substitute for “sub-national”, regional, or secessionist teams. Within such regions, which at least from time to time toy with the idea of becoming (more) autonomous from a central state, football clubs and their actions may become focal points of identification for such aspirations. This is obvious with regard to Catalonia and the Basque country in Spain, and FC Barcelona and Athletic Bilbao, respectively. Although there is a Catalan *Selección*, i.e., a quasi-national team which has already played some friendlies, FC Barcelona has undoubtedly attained the status of an institution to represent Catalonia to the outside world.<sup>16</sup> Visible signs of this are not only the abandonment of the once-enforced Spanish club title – CF – and the return of the Catalan stripes in the club’s emblem after 1974, at the end of Franco’s dictatorship, banners at Camp Nou reading “We are not Spain” during international friendlies are not uncommon, and the collective shouting of “Independencia!” at 17:14

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., pp. 36-37.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 52.

<sup>15</sup> Taylor, Matthew (2006). “Global Players? Football, Migration and Globalization, c. 1930-2000”, in *Historical Social Research* 31: 7-30, p. 14.

<sup>16</sup> Crolley and Hand, op. cit., p. 125.



of the match clock – a reference to the regionally important date of 1714 – is by now a well-established ritual. To some degree, albeit muted, the club officials themselves promulgate the specific image of Barça as “more than a club”. Such identity work, however, finds its limits when commercial interests are at stake. Hence, when Barça fans demanded that a defender reject an invitation to play for the Spanish national team in 2006, PR officials at Barça tried to suppress this story as much as possible for fear of losing nationwide sponsors.<sup>17</sup> Concerning Basque identity politics, it may be the case that several clubs compete for the role of a “national” ambassador.<sup>18</sup> However, Athletic Bilbao fosters such an indigenous identity by particular means: it has, by and large, only Basque players on their books. Such a policy is certainly identity politics at the extreme. It strives for a perfect fit between the club, the regional/local fan base and those that represent it on the field. In terms of its outcomes, sport economist Szymanski has labelled this the “Bilbao effect”: “If all of football clubs were like this – based *around tight knit communities* which cared only about preserving their *local identity* – then most of the commercial and financial problems in football would disappear” (emphases added).<sup>19</sup> Be that as it may, in terms of the identity component, however, one can clearly see that in this case political and cultural ideas (language, community, national autonomy) and “us versus them”-dynamics (Basque, not Spanish, not international) coalesce in a football club’s policy.

Finally, issues of national identity are regularly debated in the context of football mega events such as World Cups and European Championships. Hosting such events has at least two implications concerning identity: internally, it is about a collective effort to make the best games ever possible (yes, *we* can). Externally, it is about showcasing a country to the outside world, about reputational gains and managing a country’s image internationally (yes, *they* can). Recent examples of such phenomena are abound, be that of France ’98 with the French team finally winning the World Cup at home, or Germany’s “summer fairy tale” (*Sommermärchen*) in 2006 despite only finishing third. While France’s hosting of the World Cup and its win in 1998 is often said to have reasserted an alleged lack in self-confidence (as regards sports as well as politics),<sup>20</sup> the German case of success in 2006 had more to do with what happened alongside the tournament. One need not buy into the self-congratulatory language of the Final Report of the Federal Government which stated that “[e]ven in countries with a traditionally critical view of Germany, old stereotypes have been called into question through the World Cup 2006. Germany and its people are said to be more

<sup>17</sup> Federmair, Klaus (2014). “Eine Stadt sieht gelb-rot”, in *ballesterer* (AUT), January: 16-26, p. 23.

<sup>18</sup> Crolley and Hand, op. cit., p. 133.

<sup>19</sup> Szymanski, Stefan (2012). “Manchester United 2 Athletic Bilbao 3: Aurten kopa irabaziko dugu”, in *Forbes Online*, 9 March. Available at: <http://www.forbes.com/sites/stefanszymanski/2012/03/09/manchester-united-2-athletic-bilbao-3-aurten-kopa-irabaziko-dugu/>, accessed: 11 April 2014.

<sup>20</sup> Crolley and Hand, op. cit., p. 63.

relaxed, more friendly and emotional.”<sup>21</sup> What such assessments demonstrate, however, is that the image dimension was a decidedly targeted sphere of political action (through football). And survey research seems to be rather unequivocal in telling that, as an identity-management effort, hosting the World Cup has been a success for Germany: buzzwords of “friendly nationalism”, “relaxed patriotism” and “normalization” made the headlines, domestically and abroad.

That hosting a football mega event in today’s Europe is most often at least to some degree linked to image politics, nation marketing and fostering national self-understandings is underscored by Switzerland’s co-hosting of the EURO 2008, too. Despite rather meagre accomplishments in world football (up to 2008), the Swiss bid for co-hosting the games arguably also served the purpose of demonstrating a cosmopolitan outlook and positioning itself as an economically capable and reliable partner of Austria (which had unsuccessfully tried to organize the games before with Hungary and the Czech Republic).<sup>22</sup> However, such identity work is hardly a self-seller; sometimes it is elusive, both internally and externally. The European Championships 2012, for instance, had been co-hosted by Poland and the Ukraine but this effort obviously neither forged a national identity within Ukraine nor did it contribute to polishing its reputation abroad. For Ukraine, hence, the legacy of hosting the EURO 2012 may comprise of infrastructure upgrades<sup>23</sup>, but at the level of identities and image politics, this has not turned out to be an appropriate quick-fix.

### 3. FOOTBALL AND TRANSNATIONAL IDENTITIES

Is football a field where only “national identities” (if at all) are articulated, forged and transformed? We think this not to be the case and have proposed to analyze more in-depth whether there are identity-related dynamics transcending societies in Europe.<sup>24</sup> This idea is anchored in the by now uncontroversial phenomenon of the Europeanization

<sup>21</sup> Abschlussbericht der Bundesregierung “Fussball-WM 2006”, Berlin: Presse- und Informationsamt, p. 24.

<sup>22</sup> Koller, Christian (2012). “Football Negotiating the Placement of Switzerland within Europe”, in Manzenreiter, Wolfram and Georg Spitaler (eds.), *Governance, Citizenship and the New European Football Championships*, London: Routledge, pp. 54-66.

<sup>23</sup> Cieski, Jan and Roman Olearchyk (2012). “Euro 2012 to leave a more valuable legacy”, in *Financial Times*, 14 June.

<sup>24</sup> Brand, Alexander and Arne Niemann (2013). “Europeanisation from Below? Football Spectatorship, Mediatization and European Identity”, FREE-Working Paper, March 2013. Available at: <http://www.free-project.eu/documents-free/>, accessed: 11 April 2014.

of football.<sup>25</sup> Based on the growing influence of the European Union and its institutions, i.e., EU-level decision making and legislation, on the governance of football, as well as the increased attempts by national (sports) actors to go via “the European level”, we have analyzed several mechanisms in this regard. These are: the European Court of Justice’s (ECJ’s) Bosman ruling and its impact on European players’ markets; Bosman and its implications for the overhaul of the transfer regime; the issue of broadcasting rights as picked up by the European Commission and various stakeholders; the establishment of the UEFA Champions League as a *de facto* European league of top clubs; and parallel to that, the evolution of new forms of transnational sport lobbying and networking. Through our analyses, we also compiled tentative evidence that the frequent interaction of club officials has, to some degree, “Europeanized” their perspectives. The question, however, is whether such phenomena are restricted to the elite level or whether we can also find an Europeanization of perspectives, ideas, understandings and identities at the mass popular level. Accordingly, increasingly Europeanized players’ markets, frequent competition at the European level and its continent-wide broadcasting could have already had some effect on the perceptions of fans and spectators. In that sense, it might not be trivial when German fans cheer Dutch players and accept them as “theirs” or when, as one colleague once remarked, it might be of more relevance for a Liverpool supporter what happens at Barça than what is going on in Stoke. Gradually changing perception patterns might also be indicative of an emerging collective European identity, at least the Europeanization of such identities, anchored in cultural and lifeworldly practices.

For this purpose, we have started to explore two identity-dimensions among European football fans and spectators: “communities of belonging” and “frames of reference”. “Communities of belonging” refer to in-group/out-group phenomena, perceptions of “foreignness” and delineations vis-à-vis other groups. Here, one would have to look at fans’ reactions to the Europeanization of players’ markets (normalization or “foreignness” still as a hot topic?) as well as to the overall level of interaction and networking of fans and spectators across borders. “Frames of reference”, in turn, include the attractiveness assigned to different forms of competition (national versus European level), the reasons for such peer orientation (being top or being a national representative) and the eventual normalization of “going Europe”<sup>26</sup>, i.e., travelling on the occasion of football matches and experiencing Europe all along that way. Some

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<sup>25</sup> Niemann, Arne, Borja García and Wyn Grant (2011). *The Transformation of European Football. Towards a Europeanisation of the National Game*, Manchester: Manchester University Press; Brand, Alexander, Arne Niemann and Georg Spitaler (2013). “The two-track Europeanisation of Football: EU-level Pressures, Transnational Dynamics and their Repercussions within Different National Contexts”, in *International Journal of Sports Policy and Politics* 5: 95-112.

<sup>26</sup> Millward, Peter (2006). “‘We’ve all Got the Bug for Euro-aways’: What Fans Say about European Football Club Competition”, in *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 41: 357-375.

trends suggest that a gradual transformation of self-understandings and identities towards more Europeanized, less nationally defined ideas is indeed underway. The arrival of and growing acclimatization towards “non-national heroes”<sup>27</sup> is a fact, as are more defensive gestures in fear of “over-foreignization”. An interesting phenomenon in this regard is also “foreign fandom”, i.e., fandom directed at clubs from other European countries. This is especially true for forms of fandom which are not reducible to migration and diaspora situations. It may be true that the regular fan travel between Ireland, Northern Ireland and Scotland (Celtic versus Rangers) is mostly due to religious affiliations and respective identity-work, and hence not exactly an embodiment of Europeanization. But what about the 8,000 vacant seats at Liverpool’s Anfield road when flights across *European* airspace had to be cancelled as a result of volcanic ash clouds?<sup>28</sup> Why is it that FC Barcelona is, according to a 2012 survey of the ISBS Institute for Sports, Business and Society, fancied by 29 per cent of football fans across Europe? Ethnographic research in Britain has also shown that followers of clubs who regularly compete at the European level find more pleasure in a culturally defined notion of “Europeanness”.<sup>29</sup> Anecdotal as this might be at the moment, we think it is worth undertaking more efforts to explore whether there is an incremental Europeanization of identities of football fans by default. As Jonathan Hill, ex-head of the EU Office at UEFA, remarked back in 2008: “It would be absurd to suggest that the Champions League is succeeding where the European parliament has often failed, but the fact that millions of Europeans now watch the same games at the same time *must surely count for something*.”<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Levermore, Roger and Peter Millward (2007). “‘Official’ Policies and Informal Transversal Networks: Creating a Sense of Belonging across Europe through Sport?”, in *The Sociological Review* 55: 144-164.

<sup>28</sup> Millward, Peter (2011). *The Global Football League: Transnational Networks, Social Movements and Sport in the New Media Age*, Houndsmills: Palgrave, p. 78.

<sup>29</sup> King, Anthony (2000). “Football Fandom and Post-national Identity in New Europe”, in *British Journal of Sociology* 51: 419-442.

<sup>30</sup> Hill, Jonathan (2008). “A European Language”, in *Prospect Magazine Online*, 29 February. Available at: <http://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/magazine/aeuropeanlanguage/>, accessed: 11 April 2014; emphasis added.



# Political Economy of Football

*Tim Pawlowski and Marcel Fahrner*

## INTRODUCTION

The Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), the governing body of global football, reported US\$1.02 billion events-related revenues in 2012 (FIFA 2013, 17). Also especially profitable was the European Championship (EURO) 2012 for the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA), with the governing body of European football presenting revenues adding up to €1.39 billion. Still even greater figures were reported for the UEFA club competitions in 2012/13, where revenues reached €1.69 billion, out of which around €1.21 billion were distributed to the participating clubs (UEFA 2014, 4-5). Overall, similarly prosperous revenues are reported across European club football, indicating an evolution from €10.6 billion in 2007 to €13.2 billion in 2011 (UEFA 2013, 76) and demonstrating how broadcast and commercial earnings are key drivers of the football economy.

From a legal and political point of view this thriving football business is highly relevant and thought-provoking, especially since conflicting interests occur between (national or European) law and the regulatory autonomy of (inter)national football federations and leagues. Interests which are leading to a relentless debate stretch from disputes on competition or employment law to matters such as governance and regulation. The objective of this article is to show the reciprocal ties and interconnections between these economic, legal and political dimensions of football. In contrast to Grant (2007), who introduced an analytical framework for a political economy of football, we discuss selected issues frequently subject to public debate in this context, i.e., the Bosman verdict, Financial Fair Play, collective selling of broadcasting rights, the “right to watch” and (illegal) state aid as well as hooliganism.

## THE BOSMAN VERDICT

European football leagues maintained a regulatory framework for transfers that included compulsory transfer fees for out of contract players. Amongst other reasons, this was to ensure financial compensations for the releasing clubs and therefore to stimulate the education of young players by compensating clubs’ investments in talents. However

these transfer regulations, by prohibiting a player from transferring to a new club without the consensus of his or her former club (even after the contract had expired), constituted a restriction of players' free movement within the borders of the European Union (EU), which is one of the fundamental freedoms safeguarded by the EU Treaty.

In 1995, with its verdict in the so-called Bosman case, the European Court of Justice (ECJ) confirmed the regulatory autonomy of (inter)national football federations, pointing out however, that sport is subject to European law in so far as it constitutes an economic activity within the meaning of the EU Treaty, as in the case of the activities of professional or semi-professional footballers, which are in gainful employment or provide a remunerated service. In view of that, ECJ found restrictions in professional football regarding the transfer system and the limitation on the number of players from other EU countries in a team (initially a maximum of three players was allowed) to be inconsistent with European law. In response, UEFA abolished the nationality restriction clauses for domestic leagues and for its own pan-European club competitions as well as overhauled the transfer system in European football. Subsequently, the European Commission, UEFA, FIFA and players' unions negotiated the principles of international transfer regulations that were first set up in 2001 and are binding for all national leagues (FIFA 2012).

Following this verdict, the players' labour market was liberalized resulting in a substantial increase in the proportion of expatriate players across Europe. For example, Andreff (2006, 327) notes that the largest changes took place in Germany (27% to 39%), Italy (17% to 33%) and Spain (29% to 40%). Clubs started employing more players from South America, Africa and other European countries. Consequently, in many instances clubs playing in small (financially weak) leagues became even less attractive since the most talented players were contracted to clubs from big (financially strong) leagues.

Until today, professional players benefit from the changes in the transfer system as their average contract length as well as their salaries have been raised. For example, average player salaries in German Bundesliga rose from about €285,000 in 1992/1993 to €1.14 million in 2002/2003 (Frick 2007). Moreover, players are now usually bound for the long-term to their clubs, even though they are offered more attractive contracts by other clubs. Although this strengthens the negotiation power of clubs in future transfer deals, it also bears a certain risk, such as when a player's performance no longer corresponds to the salary over time.

Due to the liberalization of the players' labour market and the global recruiting of players, the integration of young local talents in professional teams has become a central problem in football as well as in other team sports (Majani 2009, 19; Flores et al. 2010, 546-549). Therefore, a number of national football leagues – for example, the Deutsche Fußball Liga – have adapted their licensing regulations to this evolution and are now instructing their clubs to run performance and youth development academies.

## FINANCIAL FAIR PLAY

In contrast to sports franchises in North American Leagues (Major League Baseball [MLB], National Basketball Association [NBA], National Football League [NFL], National Hockey League [NHL]) and to firms in other industries, professional football clubs in Europe would rather maximize their sporting success than their profits (Sloane 1969; 1971; Késenne 1996; 2004; 2006; Fort and Quirk 1995; Szymanski, 2003). Hence, sports economists routinely assume in their theoretical models that clubs in the European football leagues are usually just constrained in a way that total costs equal total revenues.

However, given the enormous liabilities of professional football clubs in Europe, even this zero-profit constraint can be questioned, as clubs tend to over-invest in talent to achieve sporting success.<sup>1</sup> This was one of the main reasons why UEFA introduced a regulatory system of financial restraints (the Financial Fair Play [FFP] concept) in 2010, namely, to ensure the financial sustainability of European professional football. FFP forces all clubs competing in the UEFA club competitions to operate in compliance with the directive that relevant expenses shall not exceed relevant income.<sup>2</sup> Herewith, benefactors shall no longer be able to bail out clubs after (over-)investing in salaries and transfer fees (UEFA 2012; Franck 2014).

However, FFP might face legal challenges in the future: one issue is whether regulations aimed at excluding particular types of owners or restricting their business investments in football are legitimate. Another issue is whether FFP's break-even rule will succumb to a potential competition law challenge. In this regard Peeters and Szymanski (2013, 30) argue: "If the courts conclude that the break-even rule is no more than a rent shifting agreement which brings no obvious benefits to consumers, it is unlikely to survive antitrust scrutiny".

## COLLECTIVE SELLING OF BROADCASTING RIGHTS

Next to the win-maximizing objective of clubs, the product of professional football also offers several peculiarities. First and foremost, following the Uncertainty of Outcome Hypothesis (UOH) developed by Rottenberg (1956) and Neale (1964), the *uncertainty* of a game as well as participation in in-season sub-competitions such as the championship, the relegation battle, and qualifying for continental competitions, such as the UEFA European League and Champions League, is one of the most important features

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<sup>1</sup> For instance, the 235 clubs competing in UEFA club competitions reported net losses of €1.18 billion in 2011 (UEFA 2013, 39).

<sup>2</sup> Relevant (football related) income is broadly defined as income from ticket sales, merchandising, broadcasting rights and sponsorship. Relevant (football related) expenditure is broadly defined as wage and transfer spending on players (UEFA 2012).



of sporting competitions driving stadium attendance and TV viewership. Though empirical evidence seldom confirms this relationship in European professional football (for a summary, see Pawlowski 2013), the UOH serves as the main reason for several regulations governing salaries (such as the salary caps in the North American Major Leagues) and the redistribution of revenues from rich to poor clubs in order to maintain a certain degree of competitive balance in the leagues.

The redistribution of media revenues presumes a collective selling of broadcasting rights, run by the leagues (like the Deutsche Fußball Liga or the Premier League), according to which the media rights to all games are pooled and sold (usually in packages) to broadcasters. Over time most leagues have adopted the collective system. Also, FIFA and UEFA have recently adopted the collective system for future qualifying competitions for the World Cup and the EURO.

However, collective selling forms a cartel that might harm consumers, for example, when media companies charge higher prices to TV viewers or (artificially) restrict the number of televised games. Even though empirical evidence for positive (competitive balance) effects is lacking (Peeters 2011), this point makes a case for the European Commission and respective national cartel authorities to accept collective selling under certain conditions, such as where the rights are awarded to broadcasters by open competitive tender procedures, where the maximum contract duration is three years and unsold rights are returned for individual exploitation by the clubs themselves (Commission of the European Communities 2007).

## THE “RIGHT TO WATCH” AND (ILLEGAL) STATE AID

Watching competitions in professional football on TV, especially the World Cup and the EURO but also UEFA’s Champions League or national club competitions, is a major leisure activity for a large number of people.

Football associations try to take advantage of this by maximizing the revenues of media and commercial rights by increasing the exclusivity of access (such as Pay-TV access only). However, Article 3a (1) of European Council Directive [89/552] defines the conditions for European member states to ensure that sport events which are regarded as being of major importance for society are not broadcast on an exclusive basis. As the Court of Justice of the European Union has argued in the cases *FIFA vs. Commission* and *UEFA vs. Commission* (July 18, 2013), such lists of designated sport events, which shall be (partly) followed on free television, are compatible with European Community law (European Court of Justice 2013a; 2013b).

Furthermore, for politics, football is of particular interest since (especially) national football teams with outstanding sporting success offer society a connecting point by facilitating the collective identification and (might) also contribute to a positive international image of the nations. In addition, as a large number of football fans are prospective voters, active (football -related) lobbying might help mobilise voters for

elections. Therefore, tight relations between local, regional and federal governments and football clubs are common – though joint “projects” sometimes face the risk of illegality. For instance, public funds are often used to finance the construction of new stadiums and arenas but the funding conditions offered by public authorities are regularly below “market prices”. In this context, the European Commission recently started investigations into (illegal) state-aid cases in football.<sup>3</sup>

## FOOTBALL (FANS) AND HOOLIGANISM

Football (fans) and hooliganism is a topic of political and economic importance because of two reasons: First, hooliganism might negatively affect stadium attendance; for instance, Szymanski and Kuypers (1999) argue that the numerous excesses caused by hooligans were one of the main reasons for the attendance-decrease in the English league in the mid-1980s. Similarly, Baroncelli and Lago (2006) find hooliganism to be one of the main reasons for the decline in stadium attendance in Italy. Second, hooliganism causes considerable costs since numerous police forces are deployed to secure public safety; for instance, in Germany, the game-related police operations cost more than €130 million per season, which is similar to the annual amount of money spent by the Federal Ministry of the Interior to foster elite sports in Germany (Pawlowski and Breuer 2012; Pawlowski and Schüttoff 2014).

Especially in the more recent past, such football game-related police operations have repeatedly been subject to public disputes between different stakeholders, i.e., the federal and state authorities, the police force, the clubs and the fans. For instance, there is an ongoing dispute about measures to reduce violence such as video surveillance or storage of personal data, since non-violence-prone fans feel more and more regulated. In addition, there is an ongoing dispute between public authorities and the clubs about who should bear the costs and personnel burden for the police force. For example, in England, the police force is demanding full cost recovery for policing the area around stadia and public transport stations while league officials argue that these costs are already covered by the taxes paid by the football clubs and the fans (BBC News 2012).

Whether or not these costs should (at least partly) be covered by the clubs is a tricky question: in general, the government and its institutions come into action if a “market” is not able to provide efficient outcomes (Newman 1998). In line with this, for instance, a clause in the German police and order law explicitly authorizes police staff to intervene in situations where public safety and order is threatened (Schenke 2011). However, potentially problematic might be the fact that not only football fans but all taxpayers pay for the security provided by the police. In addition, clubs paying for police opera-

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<sup>3</sup> For further details on this, please refer to Stefan Szymanski’s blog at <http://www.soccernomics-agency.com/?p=436>

tions might claim the right of co-determination for police operations before, during and after football games, which might hinder the effectiveness and efficiency of measures.<sup>4</sup>

## CONCLUSION

This article discusses some reciprocal ties and interconnections between selected economic and political as well as legal dimensions of football. As can be seen, in recent years, the economically thriving football business as well as the regulatory autonomy of national and international football federations and leagues became aware of the fact that national and European laws also apply to the football industry. In particular, issues of competition and employment laws as well as issues of governance and regulation have become more and more important. However, the peculiarities of professional football, for instance the associative character of competition, the collaborative production and interdependence of the clubs as well as competitive balance as an integral element of the product still serve as arguments for allowing several exemptions.

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<sup>4</sup> For a more extensive discussion on the economic dimensions related to this topic, please refer to Jewell, Simmons and Szymanski (2014).

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# Fighting Corruption in International Sports

*Wolfgang Maennig*

To start with, the forthcoming 2014 World Cup matches in Brazil may be less endangered by corruption, due to worldwide attention (high transparency) and high compensations for the athletes (meaning a risk of high losses in case any corruption is detected). Nevertheless, corruption in sports has always been and is everywhere. The first documented case of corruption in international sports is attributed to the athlete Eupolos of Thessalia, who successfully bribed three of his competitors in the fist combat tournament at the Olympic Games of 388 BC. There are also records of an early case of corruption in sports management and administration. In 12 BC, Damonikos of Elis, father of the Olympic wrestler Polyktor, attempted to bribe Sosandors, in order for him to persuade his son to concede victory in the Olympic wrestling competition to Polyktor.

In modern sports, well-documented cases of corruption include the college basketball scandal in the USA in 1951, the scandal in German soccer (Bundesliga) in 1971, the boxing final (< 71 kg) of the Seoul Olympics in 1988, and the bidding process for the Olympic Winter Games of 2002 in Salt Lake City, USA.

Corruption in modern sports affects a wide range of sports, at almost all stages of the value creation chain, and in all groups of “stakeholders”, including decisions on host venues for important competitions, allocation of rights (e.g., for televised transmission), nominations for positions (including honorary positions), commissioning of construction works for sports arenas and other venues, and manipulation of competition results.

While most of the corruption cases until the beginning of this century were targeted towards achieving better results in championships, the more recent cases, such as the widespread match-fixing in European football discovered by Europol, were betting-related, attempting to generate incomes by rigging matches. SportAccord (2011) illustrated this fundamental change with a tabular overview of betting-related corruption in sports, and cited 33 cases of betting-related corruption in 2010 and 2011 alone.

Betting on sports is nothing new either. It may have started at least in ancient Greece with bets on the competitions in Olympia, Delphi, Corinth and Nemea. At the end of the 13th century, bets in England on archery are reported, and soccer-related betting started there in 1921. Today, sports-related betting is possible in a wide range

of Olympic and non-Olympic sports, including badminton, bowls, darts and fishing. Estimates on the volume of betting range up to US\$120 billion, or 28.4% of global gambling revenues in 2011 (GBGC 2011). It should be added that illegal betting (online and shops) plus street betting are estimated to have a share of about 42% of sports betting gross revenue (SportAccord 2011).

## **BETTING-RELATED CORRUPTION IN SPORTS: DEFINITION, CAUSES AND COSTS**

In the following section, corruption in sports is understood as

- behaviour by athletes who refrain from achieving the levels of performance normally required in the sport in question to win the competition and instead intentionally permit others to win, or
- behaviour by sporting officials who consciously perform their allocated tasks in a manner at variance with the objectives and moral values of the relevant club, association, or competitive sports in general and/or society at large,

because they receive or expect pecuniary or non-pecuniary advantage for themselves (or for acquaintances, relatives and/or associated sports institutions) from the person favoured by the action (or others). A number of relativisations of the definition, categorisation and determination of the actual extent of corruption applies (Maennig 2006).

According to Becker (1968), most delinquent activities can generally be regarded as a choice made by an individual in the face of a number of legal and illegal alternatives for action, whereby the course of action is chosen which promises the greatest expected net utility for the individual. Within this framework, the decision for committing corrupt acts depends negatively on the probability of being detected and convicted and positively on the gross pecuniary income from “successful” cheating as well as the probability of “success” of corruption (Maennig 2002). For example, even if a player is bribed, the defeat of his team is not assured. Corruption also depends negatively on the financial penalty or the financial loss arising in the case of competition bans and on the loss of utility in the form of reputation in the case of conviction. Last but not least, it depends negatively on the direct cost for the preparation and realisation of corruption, including the bribes and the costs of self-protection to escape detection, conviction and punishment.

An illicit behaviour will come about when the total expected net utility exceeds the individual disutility or non-pecuniary cost from illicit behaviour because of moral values and the like, i.e., individuals or institutions with extensive moral qualms will reject illegal behaviour across a greater range of realisations of the other variables.

The variables discussed do not necessarily represent objective data, but rather the perceived values, which may be subject to individual distortion. Hence individually differing variables such as intelligence, age, education, wealth and family background have to be included in the explanation of whether an individual has recourse to corruption: "Some persons become 'criminals', therefore, not because their basic motivation differs from that of other persons, but because their (perceived) benefits and costs differ" (Becker 1968).

The sudden rise in betting-related corruption can be explained via economic rationale without necessarily having recourse to "tastes" or "morals" as explanatory factors: for example, online techniques reduced the direct cost for the preparation and realisation of corruption. There are cases where delinquent agents in "overseas" betting markets for European soccer matches collaborated with athletes or referees in Europe. The rising market volumes of betting markets also increase the expected net utility of betting-related corruption. Empirically, large illegal markets, a low probability of detection, low income of athletes, as well as low win premia and low prestige of individual wins are the most significant determinants of sports betting-related corruption.

## COUNTER-MEASURES

In general, anti-corruption measures should be expanded as long as their marginal costs do not exceed their social marginal utility. In the literature on general delinquency this state of affairs leads to the conclusion that it should not usually be society's goal to lower the rate of delinquency to zero (Becker 1968). In other words, from an efficiency-oriented point of view, in general, there is a certain level of corruption that can be considered tolerable.

In sports, one case of corruption alone can cause significant social marginal damage, since in general it may result not only in a considerable loss of image for the perpetrator, but also for the sporting discipline as a whole and even for sports in general, and may not necessarily stop at the borders of the individual country involved. Moreover, the following analysis of the counter-measures and potential further measures may result in the conclusion that the social marginal costs of avoiding corruption in sports could be kept relatively low. The calculation that the fight against corruption should be extended until its social marginal costs correspond to its marginal utility should result in a rate of corruption that differs only insignificantly from zero.

Second, as far as the composition of anti-corruption measures is concerned, their individual social marginal utility should be identical to their social marginal costs. Even if for example one measure is twice as effective as another (or, more precisely, has twice the level of marginal utility), the measure can be used only for as long as it gives rise to marginal costs below a level twice as high as that of the other measure.



## INCREASING THE PROBABILITY OF DISCOVERY

A lack of transparency for decisions, in most cases equivalent to discretionary powers, leads in the risk-assessment of bribe recipients like athletes and referees to a conclusion of the low probability of discovery. A straightforward reaction – the simplification of the rules – would be costly in many cases. For example, an abolishment of the offside rule in soccer might change the character of the sport. It may be less costly to use modern techniques to keep track of adherence to the rules. In football, for example, there are a number of concepts towards making referee decisions more objective, including electronic registering of balls going out of play and 3-D location systems, some of them having been introduced to international tournaments recently.

Concerning umpires, the example of boxing is worthwhile mentioning: the Amateur International Boxing Association introduced an electronic assessment system, where five referees placed around the boxing ring register each hit. A video control system, which records the contest, makes it possible to check the accuracy of each given hit retrospectively. All of the activities of the referees are subjected to statistical analysis. In the event of poor referee performances, the specific referees will be immediately suspended from further contests.

It is more difficult to imagine measures to reduce discretionary powers in the case of corrupt athletes, whose performances are subject to big variance and low traceability anyway. It has to be mentioned though that the International Cricket Council has introduced an obligation on players to accept requirements, including provision of personal data as banking details, phone bills, etc.. Federations such as the IOC, FIFA, UEFA, and also some individual federations, built up early warning systems, ranging from a basic online monitoring system to automatic early warning systems, betting fraud detection systems, and direct risk management systems. For example, UEFA monitors each of its matches (1,800 matches in 2010), plus some 29,000 matches organised by national leagues, and checks the current betting market situation against statistical normal distributions, information on athletes and referees and suspicious moments from earlier matches (SportAccord 2011).

In addition, one ought to consider whether it may be effective to introduce a ruling offering immunity from or decent remission of punishment to those willing to act as prosecution witnesses in corruption cases, even if they themselves were involved in the corruption. Taking this one step further, some (soccer) federations have now introduced a rule that not reporting an attempt of manipulation is punishable.

A historically high level of corruption reduces the expected costs of corrupt activity perceived by the corrupt person in question. In addition the structures of social climates and general value judgements in the concerned sport predetermine the moral threshold, and the probability of detection. It is therefore of the utmost importance to establish a clear code of behaviour, against which any infringements can be measured in order to reinforce an attitude of fundamental opposition to corruption in international sports. In

addition it is also highly important that the system of control should be multi-layered. Furthermore, independent complaints bodies, independent investigating institutions, guarantees of anonymity and possibly even rewards for information about corrupt behaviour as well as a free press are all important.

Having stressed the importance of “good governance” and pedagogical measures, it has to be mentioned that for certain milieus of athletes, strong discounting of the future is immanent in their preferences and lives (Bird/Wagner 1997, 751). Moral suasion might reach its systematic limits here.

## REDUCING THE BENEFITS OF CORRUPTION

The danger of corruption increases if sufficiently large payments can be made to potentially corrupt individuals. To finance such payments, certain limitations to competitions must exist that produce considerable profits. Earlier studies thus came to the conclusion that only those types of sports that are able to generate considerable sources of pecuniary income, such as football, boxing, and basketball, are affected by corruption. Profits generally fall if there is competition, but it is hard, for example, to imagine competing national soccer leagues.

Proponents of the prohibition on any betting in sports may argue with Samuelson (1976, 425): “(Gambling) involves simply sterile transfers of money or goods between individuals, creating no new money or goods. Although it creates no output, gambling does nevertheless absorb time and resources. When pursued beyond the limits of recreation, where the main purpose after all is to kill time, gambling subtracts from the national income.”

Nevertheless, the prohibition of betting seems to be socially inefficient. Taking aside the argument that today’s internet technology might make enforcement difficult, gambling is more than transfers of money. It creates pecuniary incomes in the form of betting fees and generates employment. Productivity Commission (1999), in a study for Australia, stresses that the gambling industry in 1997/98 generated a consumer surplus of A\$4 billion to A\$6 billion, adjusted for losses of problem gamblers. Wagering contributed some A\$0.6 billion to A\$0.9 billion.

Such social net benefits result from several different sources, such as the joy of the game and the benefits of venturesome persons. Betting allows for the capitalization of accumulated consumption capital. It may even form an incentive to build up human capital, either in a specific sport (or other phenomenon), or in more general terms in the understanding of market function.

It must be noted that the estimates of Productivity Commission may not correctly control for the newly arose problem of the (mis)use of betting for money laundering, as well as the increased problems for sports that are associated with any inducements of changes in the behaviour of athletes, referees, etc., which in turn may endanger the credibility of spectator interest and finally the income from sponsors. Nevertheless, up

to now, the above-reported net consumer benefits are too high to be credibly compensated by such non-considered negative effects.

## INCREASING THE EXPECTED COSTS OF CORRUPT BEHAVIOUR

As far as the direct costs of corrupt behaviour are concerned, an initial effect could be achieved by increasing the costs of the concealment measures for both sides. All measures which serve to increase transparency have this kind of effect. Also office rotation and the limitation of terms of office are in some cases regarded as meaningful measures against corruption because they prevent the level of trust between potential providers and recipients of bribes from becoming too great. Making it impossible to bet online from competition sites, horse-racing organisers introduced bans of mobile phones for jockeys on race courses. The Australian and French organisers of tennis Grand Slam tournaments banned laptops on the tennis courts. In some sports, referees are nominated from a large pool of qualified officials just a short time before the start of competition.

The pecuniary opportunity costs can in general be increased by measures that enhance legal earning opportunities from alternatives to corruption. Such “positive incentives” (Ehrlich 1996) include, in particular, measures to lower disparity in distribution by increasing the incomes of athletes and referees in sport disciplines or minor leagues. Their low incomes are one major reason for their susceptibility to bribes in the first place.

The introduction of professional referees, as has been implemented in cricket, is sometimes raised for discussion. Higher incomes compared to today’s situation would increase the opportunity cost of corruption by referees as they perceive higher opportunity costs when losing their umpiring jobs. This measure is effective if referees are paid an allowance that is higher than the standard market wage for equivalent activities.

Opponents against professional referees argue that – due to the limited time periods in which the refereeing jobs can be exercised, at least in some sports such as football – almost all conceivable salaries would be too small, leading to an actual increase in the corruptive vulnerability of referees. “Amateur” referees with a profession outside of soccer which may be harmed by corruptive involvements may imply higher opportunity costs instead.

(Increased) financial penalties for athletes and officials convicted of corruption violations need to be re-examined; the implementation of such fines causes minimal social costs. The fines should be high enough for the culprit’s personal cost-benefit calculation as mentioned above to end in a negative result. As a rule of thumb and ignoring the non-pecuniary costs and benefits of corruption and assuming risk-neutrality, the lowest fine could be calculated by multiplying the expected benefit from corruption by the reciprocal value of the probability of discovery. A similar procedure applies in the law concerning taxation or donations to political parties, where anyone who is

convicted of a violation of the law is obliged to pay a fine greater than the sum originally involved.

Competition associations or organisers would require athletes and referees to contractually agree to penalties of this kind before competitions. In spite of all the legal restrictions which would apply, these contractual penalties would then be subject to contractual law rather than the tight limitations of the law on working and personal rights (e.g., concerning competition bans).

An objection that might be raised is that under certain conditions it might be impossible to collect such high penalties from the athletes involved. One solution to the problem of the implementation of penalties could be a deferred compensation model, i.e., a large part of the income of referees and athletes would have to be paid into funds which would then be paid out at the end of a corruption-free sporting career. Any penalties for corruption (and other offences) would then be paid from the funds of the individual athletes involved.

The (temporary) competition bans would nevertheless remain necessary in order to avoid the impression that might arise that corruption culprits are able to buy their freedom to compete.

## CONCLUSIONS AND SUMMARY

In recent years, corruption in sports has been dominated by betting-related corruption. A prohibition on sports-related betting does not seem to be economically efficient. Sports betting, even taking into account problematic (pathologic) gamblers, generates considerable net consumer surplus due to the joy of the game and the benefits of venturesome persons.

Anti-corruption measures should be introduced and extended only as long as their marginal social utility (which includes especially gains in credibility) exceed their social costs. In the case of international sports, the analysis of the measures already undertaken by sports associations and potential further measures may result in the conclusion that the social marginal costs of avoiding corruption in sports could be kept relatively low, given a skilful combination of measures. The calculation that the fight against corruption should be extended until its social marginal costs correspond to its marginal utility should result in a rate of corruption that differs only insignificantly from zero.

The following measures are most efficient for fighting betting-related corruption:

- Creating clear codes of conduct, with unambiguous definitions of undesirable (and punishable) behaviour, Increasing transparency, as well as introducing freedom of information acts in sports.

- Creating financial incentive mechanisms for athletes and officials that have the effect of increasing the opportunity costs of corruption and that provide them with decent official recompense.

Finally, evidently for too many athletes and referees the expected benefits from corruption is greater than the expected additional costs. An economic solution could be to increase the expected costs of corruption by agreeing on financial penalties of a sufficiently high level. Such penalties might appear wide of the margin for many contemporary sports enthusiasts. However, a look back at classical history shows that this proposal or measure is as old as corruption in international sports. In the ancient Olympics, corrupt athletes have been heavily punished by financial means. Each of them had to pay for the construction of one “column of shame”, which was placed directly at the entrance of the Olympic Stadium. The columns costed a fortune because they were produced out of the very best materials and manufactured by the best artists. If the athlete could not pay, his city had to. Till today at least the fundamentals of the columns of shame can be seen in Olympia. The inscriptions included the name of the corrupt athlete, his illicit behaviour, and a moral guidance. Beside a hefty financial penalty, a loss of reputation for near to eternity was assured.

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# Football-Related Violence and the Impact of Political Conflicts

*Ramón Spaaij*

On 1 February 2012, the Egyptian city of Port Said witnessed one of the deadliest episodes of football-related violence in modern history. Seventy-four people were killed and hundreds injured when spectators invaded the playing field after a football match between Al-Masry and Al-Ahly. Most of the deaths were caused by concussions, stab wounds and suffocation from the stampede. The subsequent sentencing to death of 21 football fans on charges of having been responsible for the brawl sparked fierce protests on the streets of Port Said, with many militant fans holding the military and security forces responsible for the deaths.

The events that have rocked Egyptian football in recent years should be understood in the context of the ongoing political conflict in the country. Football fan activism has long been a driver of political protest in Egypt, turning football grounds into battlefields against the armed forces and the military-backed government. Football fans acted as “shock troops” of the anti-Mubarak revolt and anti-military protests prior to the election of Mohammed Morsi in July 2012. In the wake of the Port Said tragedy, the Egyptian authorities initially suspended the football league to prevent further violence, a suspension that was repeatedly extended for fear that militant fans would again use football grounds as a platform for the expression of political dissent.

The recent developments in Egypt highlight how football-related violence can have its roots in broader political conflict or social unrest. But how common is this fusing of militant football fandom and political movements? And how precisely do political conflicts and hostilities impact on football-related violence?

In this essay, I will address these questions with a particular focus on militant football fan subcultures known as “football hooligans” or “ultras”, which are dominated by male partisan fans whose opposition is primarily targeted at rival fan groups with whom there is often a history of hostility and confrontation. These subcultures constitute one particular modality of sports crowd violence, one to which several countries have been exposed. The kinds of collective identities produced in these subcultures range from hyperpoliticised to apolitical. In the former, political difference is a major fault line that fuels and contours the rivalries and actions of militant football fans, including the use of violence. In such conditions, football, its sites and its crowds can offer considerable



potential for political mobilisation, recruitment and demagoguery, as well as staging grounds for sectarian rivalries on local, regional, national and international levels.

## FOOTBALL AND WAR

The relationship between football, violence and politics is as old as the game itself. From the Middle Ages onwards, the various forms of “football” were frequently violent affairs involving rival social groups. In the modern era, football has often been used as a platform for political propaganda and the expression of political rivalries and hostilities (Armstrong and Giulianotti, 2001). In their most extreme manifestation, the enactment of political rivalries through football can be linked closely to inter-communal violence and war.

Perhaps the best known example of the link between football and war is the Football War fought by El Salvador and Honduras in 1969, which erupted following a qualifying match for the 1970 FIFA World Cup. The football match clearly did not cause the war between El Salvador and Honduras, which had more deep-seated political, social and historical causes. Indeed, the war had been predated by a series of political tensions and conflicts between the two countries. However, the qualifying match did act as a triggering event for the ensuing war.

The potential that football and its crowds offers for political mobilisation and demagoguery was also evident in the former Yugoslavia, where in the late 1980s and early 1990s the links between armed conflict and activities of previously established football fan groups were particularly strong. Tribal activity and hooligan violence at matches between Serbian and Croatian clubs in 1990 were an important flashpoint for the outbreak of the Balkan War. In the wake of the football-related rioting, militant fan groups transferred from the football stadium to the rival military forces on the Serbian and Croatian sides, acting as a catalyst for political violence on a mass scale. Most famously, Arkan, the leader of Red Star Belgrade’s militant fans, became the commander of the voluntary Serbian paramilitary unit named the Tigers, which was responsible for war crimes in Croatia and Bosnia. Reflecting on the Balkan War, anthropologist Ivan Čolović (2002) has argued that in the context of deep-seated ethno-political conflict, it is in the interest of the political authorities that football hooligans’ sense of opposition and taste for violence be conserved for the realisation of wartime goals. While in times of peace football-related violence may be targeted at authority and established social values, in times of war it can be mobilised by political actors and redirected at external enemies of the state.

## FOOTBALL FANS AND EXTREMIST POLITICS

The Balkan War is an extreme and exceptional manifestation of the role that football grounds can play as recruitment centres for radical political actors. However,

comparable – yet (so far) less severe – manifestations of this process can be found in other times and places too. Far-right organisations in the United Kingdom, such as the National Front (1970s), British National Party (1990s) and Combat 18 (1990s and early 2000s), viewed football stadia as a potentially fertile ground for recruitment. Overall, with a few notable exceptions, these organisations have had little apparent success among fans of domestic club football in the UK. More recently, the English Defence League (EDL) has similarly tried to attract disaffected football fans, and in particular hooligans, to its cause, and with greater success. There appear to be relatively strong links between the EDL and hooligan groups from a range of English football clubs. Coalescing under the banner of “Casuals United”, these groups share much of the EDL’s anti-Islamic thinking and have been mobilised as “street fighters” to recent EDL demonstrations. According to Garland and Treadwell (2010), this present fusing of football hooligan culture and extremist politics poses the most significant threat to community cohesion in Britain’s cities since the heyday of the National Front in the 1970s.

A similar trend of the fusing of far-right political movements and militant football fans has been observed in various Eastern and Southern European countries, including Russia, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Greece. While this often involves militant fan groups loosely espousing racial hatred and anti-Semitism, in some cases a stronger association between militant football fans and the nationalist far right can be found. In Russia, for example, there are growing concerns about the endemic nature of football violence and its link to far-right groups, according to recent media reports (e.g., Gibson, 2013).

In some countries, the enactment and exacerbation of political rivalries through football fandom is nothing new. Spain and Italy serve as examples of countries with hyperpoliticised football fan subcultures. Both countries have vibrant *ultra* movements whose ties with far-right and far-left political ideologies are well documented. In 1980s’ Spain, for example, militant football fans increasingly ascribed to political tendencies that came to constitute a dichotomy between those who identified with the far right on the one hand, and those who expressed stances close to the far left on the other hand. The extreme politicisation of the ultras triggered several outbreaks of collective violence both inside and outside football grounds; violence not only against rival fans but also against political opponents. This proliferation of violent confrontations between politically opposed fan groups marked an important developmental stage of the ultra movement in Spanish football.

Hyperpoliticisation still characterises the Spanish ultra movement to a significant degree, and it continues to influence fans’ identities and actions. While some Spanish ultras have come to see that their political rivalries should not be pursued using violent means, others believe that violence is “the only way” and “the most effective way”. However, unlike the former Yugoslavia, where militant fans became elevated to the status of national heroes during the Balkan War, political movements in Spain have

generally been reluctant to recognise the ultras as anything more than “street fighters”, and often consider them a liability due to their lack of organisation and party discipline, thereby potentially damaging the image of the organisation. However, the ultras do maintain loose relationships with such organisations, and have at times participated in their protest events in ways akin to Casuals United.

## CONCLUSION

It would be naïve to view football as the *cause* of armed political conflict and war. At worst, it can act as a catalyst or triggering event for political violence on a mass scale. However, football, its sites and its crowds can be used to reinforce or escalate already existing political tensions and hostilities. Not only do they offer considerable potential for political mobilisation, recruitment and demagoguery, but in certain circumstances they may also act as a staging ground or battlefield for political conflicts, especially where there is a fusing of militant fan subcultures and radical political movements. This relationship between football, violence and politics manifests itself differently in different countries and in different time periods, fuelled and contoured by the underlying political, social or religious divisions of particular societies.

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# International Football Migration and Africa: Feet Drain or Feet Exchange

*Paul Darby*

## INTRODUCTION

While the transnational migration of football players is by no means a recent phenomenon, it has intensified significantly over the last two decades. This process has changed football inexorably both in those countries that have experienced considerable inward flows of expatriate football talent and in those that have seen its best players leave for pastures new. Europe has long featured as a focal point for international football migration (Lanfranchi and Taylor, 2001) with the continent's elite leagues in England, Spain, Germany, Italy and France experiencing an almost threefold increase in the percentage of foreign players plying their trade there since 1995 (Poli and Besson, 2011). The deregulation of the football marketplace following the "Bosman" ruling in 1995 was a tipping point in this process facilitating as it did the free movement of European players within the EU. The attendant liberalisation of quota systems that had previously operated to protect opportunities for home-grown, European players ensured that the game's richest and most prestigious leagues were also made more accessible to non-EU footballers.

Faced with an increasingly open international market for playing resources, European clubs have faced outwards and extended their recruitment activities internationally in a much more sustained way than has ever been the case in the history of the game. This has given leagues and club rosters a much more cosmopolitan complexion. In their efforts to recruit highly skilled talent and where possible, obtain value for money, Europe's clubs have looked particularly to Latin America and Africa and have built the sorts of networks that have resulted in players from these two continents becoming the European game's most populous expatriate workforce. This essay concentrates on the migration of African players to Europe and assesses the extent to which this process might be interpreted as a cause for optimism and as one that is mutually beneficial for European and African football (feet exchange) or whether it should be considered more pessimistically through the lens of a feet drain. While this is an issue that divides opinion, this piece seeks to examine it as dispassionately as possible by accounting for both perspectives.

## POLEMICS

African football players have been traversing national and continental borders for decades but in the post-Bosman era, the numbers involved have increased exponentially (Bale, 2004; Darby, 2000; Lanfranchi and Taylor, 2001). This has led to an increasingly acrimonious debate, played out in the game's corridors of power, in media circles, amongst academics, between politicians and in both European and African courts, on the consequences of this process. The discourse that pervades this debate has often mirrored polemicizing around highly skilled African migration more generally. Here migration is painted as a zero sum game involving either gains or drains, winners or losers, a cause for optimism or pessimism. Optimists argued that capital could be captured and gains accrued by donor nations through remittances, the (assumed) return of migrants and associated brain circulation, rising wages and transnationally-minded diasporas, all of which could function as potential engines and agents of "development". Pessimists depicted skilled migration as an extractive process characterized by the haemorrhaging of valuable resources abroad, underdevelopment, a deepening of poverty and global inequality, and damaging socio-cultural impacts in sending societies (Adepoju, 2004; De Haas, 2010; Lucas, 2006). Beyond these two broad, macro-level positions, a whole raft of micro-level studies reveal the impact of out-migration on African countries to be much more complex and heterogeneous (De Haas, 2009).

The debate on the emigration of highly skilled football labour to Europe reveals similar fault lines. On one side are optimists who argue that the migration of African footballers provides the sort of exposure to elite leagues and salaries that not only contribute to the development of football, but also allow individuals to escape poverty and act transnationally in ways that potentially facilitate "development" at home. Others vehemently disagree, painting the loss of Africa's football resources to Europe as evidence of uneven global development and neo-colonialism. This latter view was perhaps expressed most caustically by Sepp Blatter, the FIFA President who described those European clubs involved in the recruitment of African labour as "neo-colonialists" who "engage in social and economic rape by robbing the developing world of its best players" (cited in *Financial Times*, December 17, 2003). Concerned at what it considered the nefarious activities of recruitment agents, scouts and clubs in Africa, FIFA introduced a set of international transfer regulations in 2001 that sought to regulate international transfers. While transfers of players between Africa and Europe are much more tightly controlled than they were in the past, quantitatively, the flow of talent has continued unabated. This essay now considers in more detail optimist and pessimist interpretations of the mobility of African players.

## OPTIMISTS

Those in the optimists camp have long argued that increasing opportunities for African players to move overseas and acquire professional contracts in Europe has not only enriched European football leagues but has also generated benefits at both the level of the individual migrant and for the exporting country. While only a tiny proportion of those who aspire to a career in professional football actually “make it”, Europe offers the most talented with a chance to become a professional player and in so doing to dramatically increase their earning potential. For those who are able to obtain and sustain a career in the game, the financial rewards can be considerable and for a small proportion, their earning power not only facilitates luxuriant lifestyles both during and after their careers but also allows them to support extended families in their country of origin. The remittances that often flow from overseas professionals can support and sustain households that may have limited opportunities to become economically productive. Indeed, recent research reveals that intergenerational reciprocity is often at the centre of the process that sees family members support a talented sibling in his quest to develop into a professional player (Van der Meij and Darby, 2014).

It is also feasible that remittances generated through football can have economic impact beyond the households that players have come from. Remittances more generally have recently caught the imagination of “development” policy makers and practitioners who argue that when they are invested locally in valuable ways, including on education and healthcare, they can serve as an engine of “development”. Others remain unconvinced, suggesting that remittances are often squandered on conspicuous consumption, particularly of high-end, imported goods and thus, do little for local businesses (Carlin, 2006; Agrawal et al., 2011). It is unclear what perspective best explains the impact of football-related remittances and more research is needed. Beyond direct remittances, a number of high profile players, such as Didier Drogba, Michael Essien, Emmanuel Adebayor, Stephen Appiah and Samuel Eto’o, are also engaged in charitable work and philanthropy that allow them to “give back” and support various causes in Africa. Others who return home on conclusion of their European careers will also often re-invest their financial and sporting capital back into local communities, projects, businesses or other initiatives and these sorts of activities can be interpreted as a form of financial and brain circulation that benefits communities in various African countries.

Beyond the acquisition of personal wealth and the use of this financial capital for philanthropic or business purposes, it has also been argued that player mobility, particularly exposure to top-level European competition, has improved the standard of the game in Africa. A plethora of football coaches and technical staff have argued that African migrant players have been able to develop their skills and hone their abilities in ways that would not have been open to them had they remained at home. The logic of this argument is clear and it suggests that the opportunity to compete against other

highly skilled players on a regular basis, to play and train on state of the art facilities and be exposed to high-quality coaching and training regimes can significantly enhance their technical, tactical and physiological abilities. This not only benefits individual players but may, it is argued, also improve the standard of African national teams, particularly those that are comprised of a high ratio of players who play in Europe's top leagues. Indeed, it is considered as somewhat of a truism that the achievement of African national teams in international competition over the last two decades has been contingent on having squads that are made up primarily of migrant players. The role of European academies in Africa is considered crucial in the production of players and the readying of them for the European game. Beyond their impact in terms of developing young players and building capacity for the game, some academies can also be considered as carriers of "development" more generally although the extent to which this is the case and how sustainable it might be remains unclear (Darby, Akindes and Kirwin, 2007; Darby, 2013; Manzo, 2007).

## PESSIMISTS

There is a considerable lobby, comprised of leading figures within FIFA and the Confederation of African Football, politicians, human rights groups, NGOs and sections of the liberal European press, that views African player migration to Europe as a process that at its worst exploits aspiring African football talent and at best deskills the game in the continent. This lobby contends that this occurs in four main ways. Firstly, the exodus of players systematically underdevelops the domestic African game by reducing the standards of play and hence negatively impacting on the possibility of developing the type of professional or semi-professional leagues that might encourage local players to stay at home. Secondly, it has been argued that the difficulties that African national teams often have in procuring the services of their overseas players for the African Cup of Nations as well as World Cup and Olympic qualifying tournaments serve to undermine international performances rather than benefit them. Thirdly, it has also been claimed by African players and administrators that those who play their football in Europe often become "de-Africanised" in terms of their style of play. For example, Jafet Noram, a former professional in France, suggested that the creativity and imagination of African players is lost through training in French academies and that they are "deculturised" in football terms (Boniface, 2001). Finally, underdevelopment occurs at the level of the individual migrant player through being contracted to European clubs and agents on deals that range from being exploitative to less favourable than those negotiated by their European counterparts. It is also argued that for those who fail to make the grade in European football, their prospects are often bleak and many feel unable or reluctant to return home and face the ignominy that they feel their failure will bring within their local communities. This process, it is suggested, not



only restricts their development as footballers but also their psycho-social development into adulthood.

Of particular concern for this lobby has been the explosion in the number of football academies in recent years, particularly in West Africa. For critics, these facilities are, in essence, nothing more than fronts for the systematic deskilling and exploitation of Africa's football resources (Tataw, 2001). This sort of discourse has emanated from the highest echelons of world football. For example, in 2000, Sepp Blatter responded to the increased practice of European clubs brokering partnerships with African academies by imploring these clubs to "not just show up, take the best players, not let anyone have them and take them off to Europe" (Homewood, 2000). Issa Hayatou, the President of CAF, shared Blatter's view, arguing that the growth in academies with European partners or investors "is a terrible thing" (cited in *Soccer Africa*, October 1999: 14). Others have expressed fears for those academy recruits who fail to secure professional contracts, a group whose number far exceeds those who actually go on to earn a living from the game. The issue here is with those players who have focused their attention on football to the detriment of academic qualifications or vocational training, leaving them in a precarious position when their football "dream" ends.

The precariousness of young, aspiring players is perhaps the major concern of critics of the trade in African players. Prior to the introduction of FIFA's transfer regulations in 2001, players, particularly minors, were highly susceptible to financial and other forms of exploitation by unscrupulous clubs, agents and intermediaries. This practice has been well documented across West Africa. For example, in Ghana, a judicial enquiry into 150 overseas transfers in the 1990s uncovered clear examples of player exploitation and financial corruption involving senior GFA officials, local club chairmen, and a number of European agents (Gbadegbe Commission of Inquiry, 1999). These, and other cases of what can be considered football trafficking, demonstrate that the trade in young African players has a darker side and that the mediatised images of African stars gracing the cathedrals of European football can often hide a much harsher reality. This has led to organizations such as the United Nations Commission on Human Rights to call for increased policing and regulation of the trade (Donnelly and Petherick, 2004).

## CONCLUSION

FIFA's regulation of transfers in 2001 essentially made it illegal to transfer players under the age of 18 overseas and this, combined with the introduction in 2008 of an electronic system for registering international transfers, has helped to curb, although not completely eradicate, some of the more exploitative, nefarious aspects of the trade, especially the maltreatment of minors. This regulatory tightening has not completely eradicated these features, nor has it slowed the pace of football labour migration from Africa to Europe. In terms of the latter, the opposite has been the case and the



number of African players plying their trade in Europe and in a plethora of other overseas destinations continues to grow. In a context where European leagues and clubs are increasingly experiencing pressure to operate within their means, partly because of UEFA's Financial Fair Play initiative, it is highly likely that European clubs will continue with their pro-active drive to seek out cheap recruits in Africa. At the same time, for as long as the domestic game in much of the continent continues to struggle to incentivise players to remain at home, there will be an abundant supply of highly talented and willing footballers eager to pursue a career in the European game. Thus, it seems that for the foreseeable future, the out-migration of its most skilled labourers will remain part of the football landscape in Africa and the debate over the impact of this process will rumble on.

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# The World Cup in South Africa: Impact and Consequences

*Eddie Cottle*

## INTRODUCTION

The Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) 2010 Soccer World Cup was hosted by South Africa and was the first World Cup to be held in Africa. Both the South African government, led by the African National Congress (ANC), and FIFA had then officially declared the World Cup a success,<sup>1</sup> with President Jacob Zuma proudly stating that “South Africa had proved the Afro-pessimists wrong”.<sup>2</sup>

In addition to tangible economic benefits and the sports legacy, the World Cup was supposed to provide intangible benefits, such as helping to forge a cohesive national identity and building a positive image of South Africa. But this was a transient moment and the World Cup legacy was more “mythical than practical”.<sup>3</sup> As the tournament was drawing to a close, the cohesive effects of the event seemed to disappear with the spectre of xenophobic attacks<sup>4</sup> on foreign nationals raising its ugly head and with well over a million public sector workers preparing for strike action across South Africa.<sup>5</sup> The promises of the trickle-down economic effects of the World Cup legacy evaporated almost as soon as the drops landed.

What, then, is the legacy of the first FIFA World Cup held on African soil? Is it a legacy that created “social and economic opportunities” or is it a legacy wherein the

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<sup>1</sup> Government Communications. 2010. “Government assessment of the 2010 FIFA World Cup™”. Media release, 14 July, <http://www.sa2010.gov.za/en/node/3353> (accessed 20 October 2010).

<sup>2</sup> FIFA News. 2010. “Presidential letters stress legacy”, *FIFA.com*, 26 July, <http://www.fifa.com/worldcup/news/newsid=1278066/index.html#presidential+letters+stress+legacy> (accessed 20 October 2010).

<sup>3</sup> Udesch Pillay, Richard Tomlinson and Orli Bass. 2009. *Development and Dreams: The Urban Legacy of the 2010 Football World Cup* (Cape Town: HSRC Press), p. 4.

<sup>4</sup> Franz Kruger. 2010. “Are patriotic fervour and xenophobia two sides of the same coin?” *Mail & Guardian online*, <http://www.mg.co.za/article/2010-07-05-are-patriotic-fervour-and-xenophobia-two-sides-of-same-coin> (accessed 19 October 2010).

<sup>5</sup> SAPA. 2010. “PSA members embark on public-service strike”, *Mail & Guardian online*, <http://www.mg.co.za/article/2010-07-29-psa-members-embark-on-publicservice-strike> (accessed 20 October 2010).

first African country to host the World Cup actively participated in feeding a globalised mega sports-accumulation complex?

## FIFA'S SPORTS-ACCUMULATION COMPLEX

When the South African government entered the FIFA market to bid to be the first country in Africa to “host” the World Cup<sup>6</sup> it purchased the right to host the sporting spectacle without a definite price. The bid document, itself a secret document (which was funded by multinationals with a direct financial interest in the games), contained flawed calculations based on what are called guess-estimates, which cannot account for cost escalations let alone the net income to the state and society.

The initial cost estimate was calculated at R2.3 billion and was to be paid by the South African government, largely to fund the stadia and related infrastructure. At the same time, it was projected that South Africa would gain an additional R7.2 billion in tax revenue related to hosting the event. However, the 2010 estimated cost (and this is likely to be much higher) for the South Africa government was R39.3 billion – an enormous 1,709% increase from the original estimate and amounting to a complete financial loss in terms of taxable sales.<sup>7</sup> As South African Revenue Services (SARS) spokesperson Adrian Lackey candidly stated: “Our approach to the World Cup has been that it was never going to be a revenue-raising exercise. Certainly it would be wrong to view the World Cup as a significant contributor in itself. The concessions we had to give to FIFA are simply too demanding and overwhelming for us to have material monetary benefits”.<sup>8</sup>

The concessions to FIFA are contained in the seventeen government guarantees in the FIFA Bid Book and secured through the Revenue Laws Amendment Act 20 of 2006.<sup>9</sup> Guarantees included a tax-free bubble around FIFA-designated sites; unrestricted import and export of all foreign currencies to and from South Africa, as well as their exchange and conversion into US dollars, euros or Swiss francs; the suspension of any labour legislation that could restrict FIFA, its commercial partners, media and broadcast members; free security and medical care; the protection of FIFA's intellectual property rights; and guarantees to indemnify FIFA against all claims and proceedings

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<sup>6</sup> On 15 May 2004, the president of the Federation of International Football Associations (FIFA), Joseph “Sepp” Blatter, announced that South Africa would host the 2010 Soccer World Cup. <http://www.sahistory.org.za/dated-event/south-africa-wins-2010-bid-host-soccer-world-cup>.

<sup>7</sup> Bond and Cottle. 2011. “Economic Promises and Pitfalls of South Africa's World Cup”. In *South Africa's World Cup: A legacy for Whom?* University of KwaZulu-Natal Press. p. 46.

<sup>8</sup> Julian Rademeyer, Chandre Prince and Anna-Maria Lombard. 2010. “Fifa's great SA rip-off”, City Press, 6 June.

<sup>9</sup> Official South African 2010 World Cup website, <http://www.sa2010.gov.za/en/guarantees> (accessed 24 September 2010).

against it. To enforce these extraordinary concessions to South African sovereignty, FIFA demanded that the state set up and fund special courts.

In addition to providing “guarantees” to FIFA and its commercial partners for unhindered capital accumulation, the state also used its vast control of the surplus value of society (taxes) to contract the provision of infrastructure and services, including driving a local fan base of around 12 million people to consume merchandise and ticket sales invariably paid for or funded through increased consumer debt spending.

On the other hand, foreign tourists, many of whom used Visa-branded credit cards (Visa is an official FIFA sponsor), increased their spending to \$312 million (R2.4 billion). This is a dramatic increase of 70%, or \$128 million (R1 billion) more than the \$184 million (R1.4 billion) spent during the same period in 2009.<sup>10</sup> Total spending by foreign tourists in the second quarter of 2010 is estimated at R15 billion, of which roughly R3.5 billion could be associated with the soccer tournament.<sup>11</sup> The World Cup also spurred on international consumerism as people bought new televisions and manufactured goods, contributing to increases in retail spending.<sup>12</sup> Unfortunately, there are no global data available that we are aware of on how this increase in retail sales has impacted on the increased profits of Sony and Adidas, other official FIFA sponsors.

Furthermore, multinational companies were largely responsible for stadium design, and were involved in materials manufacture and construction of the “iconic” legacy stadiums mostly in joint ventures with South African construction companies. Among the most important were German companies HBM Stadien-und Sportstättenbau GmbH, a specialist stadium construction company, GMP Architekten<sup>13</sup> and Hightex engineers;<sup>14</sup> the Italian company Cimolai; the French company Bouygues; and the Dutch company BAM International, which was involved in stadium construction where huge increases of construction costs were incurred. All the stadiums built are currently regarded as

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<sup>10</sup> Asia Travel Tip. 2010. “FIFA World Cup 2010 spending statistics”, *Asia Travel Tip.com*, 14 July, <http://www.asiatraveltips.com/news10/147-WorldCupSpending.shtml> (accessed 19 May 2011).

<sup>11</sup> South African Reserve Bank. 2010. Quarterly Bulletin, No. 257, September.

<sup>12</sup> Euro-news. 2010. “World Cup Boosts French consumer spending”, 24 June, <http://www.euronews.net/2010/06/24/world-cup-boosts-french-consumer-spending/> (accessed 29 September 2010). Jurjen van de Pol. 2010. “World Cup win may spur consumers”, *Bloomberg.com*, 10 July, <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2010-07-08/world-cup-winners-may-provide-economic-boost-by-spurring-consumer-spending.html> (accessed 29 September 2010). Andrew Downie. 2010. “World Cup boosts Brazilian spending”, *Gauteng.net*, 3 June, <http://www.gauteng.net/2010/2010-news/709-world-cup-boosts-brazil-consumer-spending> (accessed 29 September 2010).

<sup>13</sup> [http://www.capetown.gov.za/en/FIFA2010/Documents/CapeTownStadium\\_Zcard.pdf](http://www.capetown.gov.za/en/FIFA2010/Documents/CapeTownStadium_Zcard.pdf) (accessed 14 June 2010).

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.cup2010.info/stadiums/Johannesburg/SoccerCity/SoccerCity.html> (accessed 14 June 2010).

white elephants as none of the municipalities in the host cities are able to afford the exorbitant operation and maintenance costs of these high-tech modern stadia.<sup>15</sup>

Due to the international character of FIFA's sports-accumulation complex economists have not yet calculated the losses by South Africa's economy as remittances and profits land in international companies' coffers. Due to FIFA's complete monopoly over the event, StreetNet International estimates that some 100,000 South African street vendors and informal traders lost their livelihoods during the World Cup as they had been forcibly removed or banned from trading in areas around the stadiums and official viewing areas.<sup>16</sup>

## INCREASING THE RATE OF EXPLOITATION

The South African government provided the stimulus for the rapid and large-scale expansion of the economy, which at the same time required the mobilisation of the readily available and large supply of cheap labour. With an official unemployment rate of 24%<sup>17</sup>, a large reserve army of labour (including the unemployed, casuals, self-employed and migrant workers) was absorbed into the labour market for the production of the sporting spectacle and was disposed of in the run-up to the mega-event (held 11 June to 11 July 2010), contributing to the loss of 627,000 jobs in the overall economy.<sup>18</sup>

Gearing the South African economy up to meet the needs of the World Cup, including providing the required upgrades and expansion to infrastructure, the manufacture of commodities and provision of services related to the hosting of the event, necessitated increasing the rate of exploitation of workers. The FIFA mascot Zakumi, for example, licensed through the Global Brands Group, was produced by Chinese teenage workers under sweatshop conditions as they worked 13-hour shifts for a meagre \$3 a day.<sup>19</sup>

Table 1

Tourism	2008	2009	2010	2011
Direct GDP	R67,147 m	R69,289 m	R80,249 m	R84,333 m
Direct employment	606,934	553,990	567,378	598,432

Source: Table by author with data sourced from Statistics South Africa, National Accounts Report, Report No.: 04-05-07, March 2013

<sup>15</sup> SAPA. 2010. "Renewed fears for future of World Cup stadiums", *Times Live*, 18 August <http://www.timeslive.co.za/sport/soccer/article609966.ece/Renewed-fears-for-future-of-World-Cup-stadiums> (accessed 31 August 2010).

<sup>16</sup> Maria Hedman. 2010. "This World Cup is not for us poor people", StreetNet International, June.

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.stanlib.com/ECONOMICFOCUS/Pages/SAUnemploymentRateQ42010.aspx>.

<sup>18</sup> Statistics South Africa. 2010. "Quarterly Labour Force Survey Quarter 2 (April–June)". Press statement, 27 July.

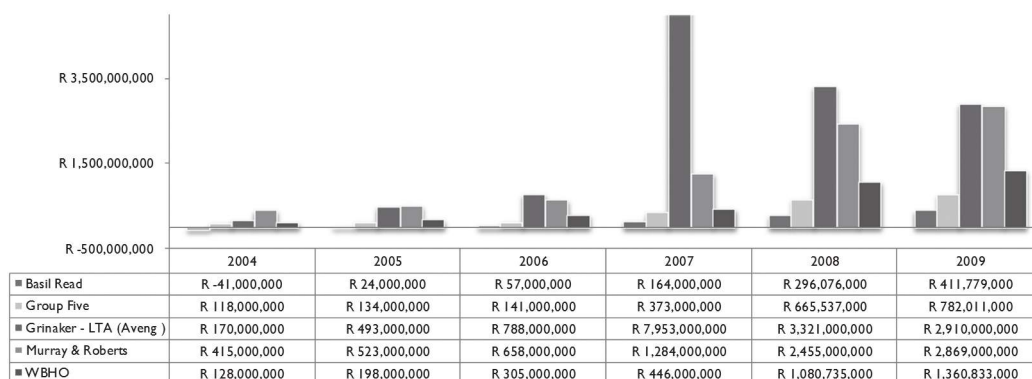
<sup>19</sup> Staff Reporter. 2010. "Zakumi factory ordered to stop production". *Mail & Guardian Online*, 10 March 2010, (accessed 16 April 2013).

As illustrated above, in the tourism sector and related industries, there has been a growth in the contribution to the direct gross domestic product in the pre- and post-World Cup periods from R67,147 million in 2008 to R84,333 million in 2011. There were 606,934 workers directly engaged in producing goods and services purchased by visitors in 2008, 553,990 workers in 2009, 567,378 workers in 2010 and 598,432 in 2011.

If we compare the number of workers employed in direct employment in the tourism sector in the pre-World Cup period of 2008, where some 606,934 workers were employed, with the three years immediately before (2009), during (2010) and post-World Cup period (2011), we find that employment was in fact lower despite the increased levels of expenditure, even during the actual month that the World Cup took place during 2010. There were 52,944 fewer workers in 2009, 39,556 fewer workers in 2010 and 8,502 fewer workers in 2011 than there were in 2008.

Thus, the employment multiplier effect projected by Grant Thornton<sup>20</sup> fell apart because, instead of increased employment through increased investment and expenditure, there was an actual decrease in direct employment. What this suggests is that there was a real increase in the rate of exploitation of workers employed in the tourism and related industries who had to work longer hours or at an increased pace of work or both in the context of increased tourism flow to South Africa.

Figure 1: Rising profits of the “Big Five” construction companies during the stadium years, 2004–9



Source: *South Africa's World Cup: A Legacy for Whom?*

Despite the world economic crisis of 2008-2009, the top five South African construction companies<sup>21</sup> have benefited handsomely from the World Cup infrastructure projects, raking in an average profit of 100% over the five-year period (2005-2009)

<sup>20</sup> Grant Thornton Strategic Solution was the official economic think tank that drew up the economic impact report for South Africa's bid to host the World Cup. <http://www.gt.co.za/>.

<sup>21</sup> Aveng (owner of Grinaker-LTA), Murray & Roberts, Wilson Bayly Holmes–Ovcon (WBHO), Group Five and Basil Read. Two overseas firms – Dutch-owned BAM International, formerly Interbeton BV (Royal Dutch BAM), and French-owned Bouygues – were included in stadium contracts through joint ventures.



after making substantial losses up to 2004. The total remuneration of CEOs, which includes benefits and bonuses, on average had risen by over 200% since 2004.<sup>22</sup>

In keeping with the time-bound nature of the World Cup, some 452,000 jobs were said to have been created. However, the nature of these jobs was precarious. The general trend has been for construction companies to downsize their workforce and retain a core workforce of quantity surveyors, site managers, foreman, health and safety officers and a few artisans and semi-skilled workers. Then there was a large layer of unskilled casual or temporary workers hired on short-term contracts, largely as general workers. Skilled South Africans are in great demand but there are very few opportunities for millions of unskilled, mainly black, workers, who can be delivered to companies through labour brokers and sub-contractors and trained very quickly, if required. Through this mechanism a racial dimension to work was maintained or perpetuated in the construction of the World Cup infrastructure.<sup>23</sup>

In the construction sector, where some 1,117,000 workers in both the formal and informal sector were employed in 2009, only 1,006,000 workers were employed by the time the World Cup kicked off in South Africa, resulting in a loss of 110,000 construction jobs year-on-year. In fact, from the fourth quarter of 2009, when the official unemployment rate was 24.3%, unemployment had reached 25.2% by the first quarter of June 2010.<sup>24</sup> The mass of the reserve army of labour in the construction sector was disposed of as soon as the World Cup projects were completed.

Despite the efforts of trade unions and workers to fight for improved working conditions the wage gap in the construction sector rose from 166 in 2004 to 285 in 2009.<sup>25</sup> The World Cup has therefore made its contribution to increasing social inequality within South African society.

On 17 July 2013, at the tribunal of the Competition Commission of South Africa, there was an investigation into the operation of a construction cartel that conservatively estimated that some R4.7 billion (R\$1 billion) of “unfair profits” had been made by construction companies for the 2010 FIFA World Cup and other projects. They were

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<sup>22</sup> M. Taal. 2011. “Their Cup Runneth Over: Construction Companies and the 2010 FIFA World Cup”. In Eddie Cottle (ed). *South Africa's World Cup: A Legacy for Whom?* Company financial reports do not indicate what percentages of profit were derived specifically from the World Cup so it is not possible to differentiate the sources of profit for the period under study.

<sup>23</sup> E. Cottle. 2009. Paper presented at the International Federation of Workers' Education Association (IFWEA) Conference on “Workers' Education as a Global challenge”, 8-9 October 2009, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey.

<sup>24</sup> Statistics South Africa. 2010. “Quarterly Labour Force Survey”, Quarter 2 2010. Statistical release P0211.

<sup>25</sup> By dividing the worker's annual wage into the average annual CEO remuneration, the figures show how many years a worker would have to work in order to earn what a CEO takes home in one year.

consequently fined a total of R1.5 billion (R\$338 million).<sup>26</sup> This plundering of public funds demonstrates how public mega subsidies for mega sports events degenerate into vehicles for sponsored private capitalist-primitive accumulation.

## CONCLUSION

The production of mega sports spectacles such as the World Cup not only requires investment in new infrastructure, but also demands a vast amount of short-term employment and other resources. Due to the global but uneven levels of wage repression, consumers are driven by the global excitement to increased debt spending (both nationally and internationally). Host governments and host cities alike subsidise the events through the provision of the required infrastructure, security and other requirements which are invariably also debt-financed. In this way, the state becomes the guarantor of capital accumulation for both international and national capitalists.

Thus, South Africa did prove the Afro-pessimists wrong, as though the country was trying “to escape from the undignified position called underdevelopment”.<sup>27</sup> What the World Cup highlighted is that Africans have attained global recognition that they are “developed” enough to meet FIFA’s stringent criteria in pulling off a world-class mega sporting event, with its architectural legacy as its trophy. But attaining this new-found image came at a huge financial cost to the host country in order to meet the expectations of the “developed” world. Mimicking the North’s advanced infrastructure for a luxury mega sporting event such as the FIFA World Cup came at the expense of meeting other, more pressing social needs.

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<sup>26</sup> Chantelle Benjamin and Phillip de Wet. 2013 “The flaw that broke the construction cartel’s back”. *Mail & Guardian Online*. 19 July <http://mg.co.za/article/2013-07-19-00-the-flaw-that-broke-the-construction-cartels-back> (accessed 22 July 2013).

<sup>27</sup> Gustavo Esteva. 1977. “Development”. In Wolfgang Sachs (ed), *The Development Dictionary: A Guide to Knowledge as Power* (Johannesburg: Wits University Press; London and New York: Zed Books), p. 7.



# World Cup 2022—Qatar’s Political Strategy Put to the Test

*Peter Sendrowicz*

## INTRODUCTION

One of the world’s foremost sporting events, once intended as a political tool in Qatar’s soft power-driven foreign policy, has turned into a far-reaching political challenge for the tiny but extremely wealthy Gulf emirate.

After winning the bid to host the FIFA World Cup, it hungered for the challenge of the Olympic Games. We are not talking about South America’s emerging powerhouse, Brazil, with a population of almost two hundred million, which is destined to be in the spotlight over the next two years, as it hosts both the 2014 FIFA World Cup and the 2016 Olympic Games. Instead, we are going to look at tiny Qatar, with a native population of only approximately 250,000 people and a land area 715 times smaller than Brazil. Apparently, Qatar can compete with emerging global heavyweights – at least when it comes to sports. Since being chosen to host the FIFA 2022 World Cup on December 2, 2010, this micro-state has made many headlines. In winning the bid for a major sporting event, Qataris accomplished a staggering coup. Hosting the World Cup is a high point for the emirate’s strategic foreign policy launched in 1995 by the al Thani ruling family. Also, the mere application to host the Olympic Games in 2020, even if it failed, well-reflected Qatar’s ambitions to become a regional and global sports hub. Doha 2020 chief executive Noora al Mannai commented: “For Doha, it will always be a question of when not if”.<sup>1</sup>

Through sports, Qatar initially intended to expand its visibility and to strengthen a positive image in the world. This is a clear example of the use of soft power in international relations. Joseph Nye defined soft power as “the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than through coercion”.<sup>2</sup> It derives from a country’s political, economic, cultural and sporting achievements. A state’s admirable behaviour can set

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<sup>1</sup> Andy Sambidge, “Doha 2020 upset will not curtail Qatar ambition”, *Arabian Business*, 25 May 2012, <http://www.arabianbusiness.com/doha-2020-upset-will-not-curtail-qatar-ambition--459200.html> (accessed 3 Apr 2014).

<sup>2</sup> Joseph Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, New York, Public Affairs, 2004, 7.

new standards and become a model for others.<sup>3</sup> However, in Qatar's case it currently does not seem likely that any other country would wish to be publicly portrayed in the same way as the emirate has been. A series of reports published in November 2013 documents the exploitation suffered by migrant workers, mainly from South and Southeast Asia, who are working on future World Cup venues construction sites. Statistics say that 1.38 million foreign workers live there, making up 94 per cent of the country's total workforce.<sup>4</sup> Instead of being perceived as a modern 21st-century nation, Qatar's standing in the public opinion is dramatically diminishing due to serious allegations of fundamental rights abuses and toleration of forced labour. The emirate risks being branded rather as a 21st-century feudal state. This is not what Qatar had imagined and thwarts its plans to use the sports arena as a positive communication tool.

## SPORTS AS A TOOL FOR NATION-BRANDING

As with many other countries in the world before, Qatar had also discovered the benefits of nation-branding as an integral part of its soft power strategy. Simon Anholt, who, starting in 2005, has published the Nation Brands Index, notes that nation-branding is due to globalization and the ensuing global run for "products, services, events, ideas, visitors, talent, investment and influence".<sup>5</sup> States seek to be attractive and appealing in order to get the biggest outcome out of the global marketplace. They need to identify with a generally acknowledged superior quality and uniqueness through a core idea which brands a nation in the long term. There are the examples of Great Britain's *Cool Britannia* or Germany's *Land of Ideas*. Key events with a global dimension can sustain a nation's image. Since these are moments when a nation's story can be told, it is not surprising that countries seek to host major international events. The main purpose of nation-branding is to give more visibility to a nation because "higher visibility does tend to go together with stronger appeal".<sup>6</sup> Like liberal institutionalist scholars who emphasize soft power as an essential resource of statecraft, Anholt writes: "Place branding is nothing less than a new approach to statecraft, to economic development and international relations".<sup>7</sup> If a nation succeeds in making itself visible in the world by branding, then an initial big step is made. The next step is to make others identify with this nation.

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. Huberta v. Voss-Wittig, "Soft Power", *Aktueller Begriff – Deutscher Bundestag – Wissenschaftliche Dienste*, No. 45, 2006, [http://www.bundestag.de/dokumente/analysen/2006/Soft\\_Power.pdf](http://www.bundestag.de/dokumente/analysen/2006/Soft_Power.pdf) (accessed 3 Apr 2014).

<sup>4</sup> Amnesty International, "The Dark Side of Migration", 18 Nov 2013, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE22/010/2013/en> (accessed 25 Mar 2014).

<sup>5</sup> Simon Anholt, *Places: Identity, Image and Reputation*, Houndmills, Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, 1.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

In the global race to attract tourists, factories and companies, Qatar has envisaged establishing itself as a comparatively liberal, generous, advanced and business-savvy location which remains competitive among its regional rivals, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain. Though it may rankle Qatar that it does not host the Formula 1 Championship, it has succeeded in outdistancing Abu Dhabi and Bahrain with its branding. Taking on Dubai, however, remains a challenge in any case, especially after it was awarded the contract to host the World Exhibition in 2020. In addition to the 2022 FIFA World Cup, Qatar has scored an unprecedented series of first-class sporting events, including the World Handball Championship in 2015 and the Road World Championships in 2016. Both emirates must now promptly prepare to stage world events by which they will be measured.

Besides sports, Qatar has relied on four more soft factors as means to success in world politics: its television news channel Al Jazeera, Qatari investments abroad, the promotion of culture, innovation and science as well as the pursuit of a grand-scale diplomacy until 2011. While culture, innovation, and education appeal to the elite, promotion of sports appeals to the masses and is attractive to commercial investors. Sports belong to popular culture. Due to its widespread global popularity, football has been therefore one of the most appropriate sports for serving political goals.

Qatar's campaign slogan for the Doha 2020 Olympic and Paralympic bid – *Inspiring Change* – reflected its wish to be known as a future-oriented nation. International recognition through sports is not new. "This popular-cultural attraction helped the United States to achieve important foreign policy goals".<sup>8</sup> The same applies to China, which became an organizer of sporting events to obtain worldwide visibility: it hosted the Asian Games in 1990 and 2010, and the summer Olympic Games of 2008 in Beijing.

The emirate's guiding principle seems to be that there is nothing that Qatar cannot do. It wants to play in the same league as the US and China. Qatar has already taken decisive steps on the regional and global stage. It hosted the Asian Games in 2006 and by winning the bid for the World Cup, Qatar outpaced formidable competitors such as the USA, South Korea, Japan and Australia. Special tribute was paid to Qatar since it will be the first Middle Eastern country to host the FIFA World Cup. The Middle East, "a region where football has played a key role in national and social development since the late 19th century", has never hosted this huge sporting event before.<sup>9</sup> Zinedine Zidane, the French record soccer player, played an important role in Qatar's bid for the World Cup. As an official ambassador to advance football in the Middle East and as of Algerian descent, he was a perfect spokesman to promote Qatar as an appropriate venue for the World Cup. His endorsement carried great weight and provides an example of soft power.

<sup>8</sup> Joseph Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, New York, Public Affairs, 2004, 48.

<sup>9</sup> James Dorsey, "Qatar 2022: A Mixed Blessing", *The World Post*, 12 Sep 2013, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/james-dorsey/qatar-2022-a-mixed-blessi\\_b\\_3846940.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/james-dorsey/qatar-2022-a-mixed-blessi_b_3846940.html) (accessed 27 Mar 2014).

Even before the 2022 World Cup kicks off, Qatar boosted its brand visibility by purchasing the Paris Saint-Germain football club in 2012 and by sponsoring FC Barcelona. One only needs to look at Qatar Airways and Barça's joint promotional clip released in 2013 to get an impression of the attraction and persuasion the emirate's soft power apparatus is capable of.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, the tiny Gulf State has secured a prominent place in the international sporting calendar, including tennis, equestrian sport and golf.

## QATAR – A VISIBLE BRAND UNDER POLITICAL SCRUTINY

After all, the emirate's endeavours should primarily be seen from a self-protectionist point of view with regard to its two enormous neighbours, Saudi Arabia and Iran. Qatar views the Second Gulf War as a precedent and fears Iran may take the same actions with the Gulf monarchy as Iraq once did with Kuwait. Moreover, it cannot rely on Saudi Arabia as its protection force. Endearing Qatar to the international community that would want to come to its aid in times of need has therefore been the ultimate goal in the emirate's foreign policy approach. Nevertheless, in making use of sports as one of the five pillars of its strategy, Qatar appears to have underestimated soft power as a double-edged sword: "the awarding of the 2022 World Cup has brought increased global prominence to Qatar, but also intensified scrutiny".<sup>11</sup> Critics have become increasingly interested in the till-then almost unheard-of Gulf state and have started to take a closer look at its political, economic and social configuration. This has finally led to more and more activists questioning Qatar's conformance to standards of universal human rights and international labour rights in the framework of the multiple construction projects related to the World Cup. In a similar vein, scandals such as that involving French footballer Zahir Belounis, who was held along with his family for 18 months in accordance with Qatari labour law, are not exactly conducive to improving public opinion on Qatar's brand.<sup>12</sup> Belounis was a prominent victim of the sponsorship system (*al Kafala*), which, typical for Qatar and other Gulf states, does not allow foreign workers to leave the country without their employer's permission. The success and the effectiveness of Qatar's soft power strategy have thus become endangered. Now the World Cup can serve as a political tool for the international community to move Qatar towards reforming its labour market in a sustainable manner. By setting new standards in the region, Qatar has nevertheless the chance to restore its reputation.

<sup>10</sup> "FC Barcelona and Qatar Airways, a team that unites the world", FC Barcelona, 27 Aug 2013, <http://www.fcbarcelona.com/club/detail/article/fc-barcelona-and-qatar-airways-a-team-that-unites-the-world> (accessed 31 Mar 2014).

<sup>11</sup> Amnesty International, "The Dark Side of Migration", 18 Nov 2013, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE22/010/2013/en> (accessed 25 Mar 2014).

<sup>12</sup> Cf. "Zahir Belounis: French footballer finally able to leave Qatar", BBC, 27 Nov 2013, <http://bbc.com/sport/0/football/25116925> (accessed 10 Apr 2014).

## FROM QATAR BASHING TO SERIOUS POLITICAL ALLEGATIONS

Before even culminating in the recent allegations of deaths which have resulted from tough working conditions at World Cup venues construction sites, and which deserve serious consideration, populist *Qatar bashing* caused damage to the emirate's reputation. Right from the beginning, after Qatar was selected as the host for the 2022 FIFA World Cup in 2010, the public outcry was big. However, there is a fine line between fair criticism and bigotry. Yet, much of the argument against Qatar amounts, according to James Dorsey, to sour grapes "stemming from Qatar's financial muscle, the arrogance of large nations seeking to delegitimize it on the grounds of it being tiny in population and territory, and anti-Arab and anti-Muslim prejudice".<sup>13</sup> The same applied when the debate on moving the World Cup to winter, because of the unbearable heat during the summer months, started. The opposition to moving the *Qatari World Cup* to winter can be interpreted as *European ethnocentrism*, if the sole argument in its defence is that the main European leagues will all need to be rescheduled – a task possible to be solved over the next eight years.

The series of populist criticism of Qatar hosting the 2022 World Cup showed once more that the process of selecting a host country is "a complicated manner that blends politics, economics, culture, identity [...] and is a source of contentious debate and endless controversy".<sup>14</sup> A much less banal controversy casting a shadow on Qatar has been the one over bribery and corruption allegations relating to the 2022 World Cup ballot. It may raise ethical issues regarding potential Qatari wrongdoing, but first and foremost it demonstrates lacks in FIFA's perceptions of integrity and upholding of rules. Published and public opinion found therein a popular political issue of international relations which lends itself to being exploited to a maximum. However, the true political dimension of the World Cup currently lies in the precarious situation of the migrant workers. Before Qatar can get back on the path of positive country-branding, fundamental labour market policy reforms are necessary and better working conditions must be provided for international workers. But FIFA also has to take more political responsibility, in order to manage the balancing act of being an institution between sports and politics.

After all, FIFA put the human rights issue on its agenda with regard to the Qatari World Cup. FIFA president Sepp Blatter is said to be travelling again to Qatar by the end of April 2014 in order to assess the evolving situation on the spot. Furthermore, FIFA Executive Committee member Theo Zwanziger, former president of the German

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<sup>13</sup> James Dorsey, "Qatar 2022: A Mixed Blessing", *The World Post*, 12 Sep 2013, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/james-dorsey/qatar-2022-a-mixed-blessi\\_b\\_3846940.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/james-dorsey/qatar-2022-a-mixed-blessi_b_3846940.html) (accessed 27 Mar 2014).

<sup>14</sup> Umberto Plaja, Steffi Decker, "Contextualizing the 2018 & 2022 Bids for the World Cup", *The Politics of Football*, 2013, <http://sites.duke.edu/wcwp/research-projects/world-cup-site-selection-process> (accessed 9 Apr 2014).



Football Association, has been leading the FIFA *task force* to improve workers' rights in Qatar since the end of 2013 and has thereby been one of the most fervent campaigners calling on politicians and business representatives to help Qatar improve its human rights situation in the run-up to the 2022 football tournament. This is not the case of all his colleagues who believe that human rights are not an issue for an institution such as FIFA. In their eyes, the role of sporting associations should not be overstated.<sup>15</sup> A lack of political will to change the current situation might also be present in countries such as Nepal and Bangladesh, the home of most migrant workers. Recruitment agencies in those countries promise lucrative jobs to interested workers, make them pay exorbitant recruitment fees and thereby exploit their ignorance of the real situation on the ground. The countries of origin should also get involved in the accelerating discourse. The problem is global and also involves international and Western companies which profit from the construction boom in Qatar related to the World Cup. In this regard, Nasser al Khater, member of the Qatar 2022 Supreme Committee, states that the emirate needs international support in the form of partnerships in order to improve living and working conditions of migrant workers.<sup>16</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Qatar's 33-year-old Emir, Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamid al Thani, a sports enthusiast, faces one of the biggest political challenges for his country and he seems to understand what is at stake: reports claim that new working guidelines have been developed in order to stop companies breaking laws and exploiting migrant workers. A minimum wage is set to be paid for each worker; employers must open bank accounts for their employees into which they can transfer their salaries; 53,000 new accommodation facilities are planned to be built; foreign workers get English classes for free; the number of construction site inspectors is being tripled and regular exchanges with Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and the International Labour Organization shall be guaranteed.<sup>17</sup> Yet, for Sharan Burrow, General Secretary of the International Trade Union Confederation, these announcements are nothing more than yet another PR campaign. She points out that the only way to solve the problem is the immediate abolition of the current sponsorship system.<sup>18</sup> The question is legitimate: how serious is Qatar about changing the migrant workers' situation? The Gulf emirate faces a difficult choice: accept profound change which would reshape its society or run the risk of a fatal setback to its all-important soft power strategy. Qatar now needs to move off the defensive and play again an active role.

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<sup>15</sup> Cf. Tim Röhn, "Rote Karte", *Welt am Sonntag*, 23 Mar 2014.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

For Simon Anholt, things are clear: only a country's real behaviour can prove that its image corresponds to reality.<sup>19</sup> He holds that "national reputation cannot be constructed – it can only be earned".<sup>20</sup> Quoting Socrates, he adds: "the way to achieve a better reputation is to endeavour to be what you desire to appear".<sup>21</sup> This is the real test that the 2022 World Cup has set for Qatar's political strategy.

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<sup>19</sup> Cf. Danuta Szarek, "Nation Branding: Der Staat als Marke", *DW*, 20 Sep 2006, <http://www.dw.de/nation-branding-der-staat-als-marke/a-2178556-1> (accessed 10 Apr 2014).

<sup>20</sup> Simon Anholt, *Places: Identity, Image and Reputation*, Houndmills, Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, 6.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*



# Soccer and Society in Brazil

*Mauricio Murad*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Soccer is one of the phenomena that most impacts Brazilians' social and collective lives. Its material and symbolic repercussion is immense and its historical roots are deep in our country and, consequently, help to reveal Brazil in all its contradictions, dilemmas and potential to overcome difficulties. Brazilian culture cannot be thoroughly understood without including soccer in the contexts of observation, analysis and comprehension. The history of Brazilian soccer is a chapter in the general history of our social struggles for a fairer society, with more equalitarian opportunities and distribution of wealth.

Soccer is the biggest and most constant cultural event *of* the masses and *for* the masses in Brazil, even bigger than the carnival. Numerous Brazilian cities do not even know about the carnival except from television footages. But soccer...A joint assessment made previously and updated in 2013 by UERJ and Universo universities demonstrated that soccer is the biggest social-cultural activity in the country. In every city, even in small and micro ones, there is always a soccer field, a scenario representing not only that of simple sport competitions, but that of community encounters to debate their common issues, of events and even wedding ceremonies. The research proved that the three most frequently encountered social institutions in the average Brazilian's life are his or her religious temple (regardless of belief), the public jail and the soccer field. The latter is even more present than the former two in the daily routine of Brazilians as well as in their hearts and minds. Therefore, soccer is more than a sport in Brazil; it is a cultural identity, a collective representation.

## II. THE HISTORY OF SOCCER IN BRAZIL

In his reference book *Casa Grande e Senzala* (1933)<sup>1</sup>, the basic book for understanding Brazil, the sociologist Gilberto Freyre (1900-1987) values preliminarily the soccer theme as a possible metaphor for Brazil. Freyre (1963: 193) references the indigenous

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<sup>1</sup> Published as *The Masters and the Slaves* in the English language.

ball games on Brazilian soil that could be, even if indirectly and with the necessary relativizations, the pre-historical origin of the game that later on resulted in soccer. The fact is that this colonial playful modality, which arrived in Brazil by the end of the 19th century from Victorian England, is industrial, bourgeois, capitalist. Officially, it arrived here by the Santos port and proceeded to Sao Paulo in 1894, brought by Charles Miller, six years after the signing of the *Lei Aurea* (or Golden Law, in English) by Princess Isabel, which abolished slavery in Brazil on 13 May 1888, five years after the Proclamation of the Republic by Marshal Deodoro da Fonseca.

Descending from an immigrant English family, Charles Miller was born on 24 November 1874, at *Freguesia do Brás*, in Sao Paulo. At the young age of nine, he went to study in England, as was common back then for the sons of wealthy families. There, he came into acquaintance with the Football Association and shortly after began to play. When coming back to Brazil in 1864, Charles Miller brought in his baggage two soccer balls, two complete uniforms, one air pump and one needle. On top of being a good player, Miller encouraged the formation of teams and organized tournaments; later, he became a referee. Charles Miller and the year 1894 are cornerstones for the implementation of soccer in Brazil, although there are signs of the “British sport” being played before that in Rio de Janeiro at the Gloria Beach and in the city of Itu, in Sao Paulo.

In Brazil, soccer began as an elitist and racist sport, excluding blacks, underprivileged, mixed-race and illiterate people – the majority of the Brazilian population. Aristocratic, white, elegant, rich and English-speaking, soccer demanded from its practitioners wealth, education and tradition. The first Brazilian soccer clubs imposed criteria of colour and class – rigidly. This social and racial exclusion was framed in the *zeitgeist* of the post-abolishment establishment. We must not forget that Brazil was the last country in the world to abolish slavery. This social and soccer-related situation is no more than a reflection of the political and cultural historical moment, of the discriminative and highly hierarchical structural constants of the Brazilian social formation. Till today, according to the UN’s 2012/2013 report, Brazil confirms its position as a nation with one of the worst distribution of wealth in the world: we are the seventh biggest economy in the world and the fourth worst when it comes to wealth equality and opportunities.

In the first stage of soccer’s history, that is, from 1894 until the mid-1920s, rigid social and racial barriers were raised, a true violence against afro-descendants, mixed races and underprivileged whites, the usually stigmatized since then and, yes, until now. These social sectors were structurally discriminated against and excluded by the social, cultural and political dynamics which were characteristic of our historical formation of slavery and colonialism. It must be highlighted that soccer officially arrived in Brazil in 1894, only six years after the abolishment of slavery through the Golden Law, in 1888. This historical racist, elitist and exclusive framework represented the first

form of violence in Brazilian soccer against our “popular strata”, the same ones that almost revolutionized the game play and style, with great body malleability, tricks and dribbles. There was great creativity and this enchanted the country and made our national team the only team in the world to have been a part of every World Cup (since the first one in 1930 in Uruguay) and also the only team with five titles – 1958, in Sweden, 1962, in Chile, 1970, in Mexico, 1994, in the USA and 2002, in Korea and Japan.

But there is always two sides to every story, and social, cultural and political oppositions and contradictions are regularly present in the historical process and in human societies’ formation and transformation. In parallel and many times in direct confrontation to the racial elitism, since the start of our soccer history, an underground and clandestine process took place in the popular strata’s bosom that would innovate and diffuse soccer in a democratic and popular way. Dribbling with ingenuity and art these interdictions between colour and class, through the playing of street soccer, in squares and peripheral neighbourhoods, our population “recreated and transformed” soccer. Simple and underprivileged folk, black, mixed-race and illiterate people edified a firm position that made a mark in history: the appropriation and inversion of the prevalent code, that is, deflagrated the popularization and democratization of soccer in Brazil.

This process had its validity installed and recognized from the 1920s, more specifically in 1923, when Vasco da Gama (a club founded in 1898 by Portuguese immigrants and vendors in the centre of Rio de Janeiro; initially a yacht club and then, in 1915, a soccer club) was consecrated the champion of the city league, in the first year of its ascension to the premier league. Vasco’s campaign was extraordinary and gathered many admirers who watched a group of modest people become champions, almost unbeaten (the team only lost one game, to Flamengo, by two goals to three), against very strong soccer teams with tradition and social elitism.

The Vasco da Gama yacht club had already symbolically defied racism and social prejudice when they elected the first black president of a major league soccer team. Cândido José de Araújo presided over Vasco between 1904 and 1906, a never before seen fact that was considered bold – both culturally and politically; which reminds us of another striking moment, the so-called “historical answer”, the letter of 1924 from the then-president of the club, José Augusto Prestes, who refused to expel twelve players from Vasco’s soccer team; coincidentally, all were black or underprivileged. The “request” had come from AMEA, *Associação Metropolitana de Esportes Atléticos* (the metropolitan soccer association), and is now a historiographical document proudly exhibited until today in the Trophy Room at *Sao Januario*, headquarter for the club. This moment is a relevant mark on the history of social struggles in Brazil, beyond soccer and the team. Vasco took on this fight institutionally as a club. Some teams and associations were already accepting of the idea of including afro descendants and underprivileged people, but Vasco was the first one to openly fight for equality, and for that it was persecuted, but never retreated from its position, never gave up.

The accumulated symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1989) was not little and its effects in the Brazilian reality were soon felt, not least because these developments in Rio de Janeiro, the political and cultural capital of Brazil, were not isolated, but the result of a process that was enrooting in the population day-to-day and that had already demonstrated its will to stay. It was from there that a Brazilian soccer *identity* began constituting itself, not merely as an episodic and transient *identification*, but a striking and permanent symbology that defines the Brazilian *ethos*, or our social profile. As a result of this historical process, our “popular culture” embodies soccer in its rich collection of creations and body, artistic, playful and ritual representations, which constitute themselves as indicators and metaphors of the Brazilian social existence. Folklore, popular music, theatre cars, *Cordel* literature, the dances, the regional festivities, capoeira, the carnival, religiousness and soccer can and should be pointed out as examples of these metaphors, which are access ways to understanding the founding roots of the country’s structure.

Slowly, clubs included these groups of black and underprivileged players in their teams, which resulted, in the long term, in a significant transformation. The professionalism implemented in Brazilian soccer in 1933 was both a consequence and the cause of this popularization process. The professionalism also helped to contain the exodus of Brazilian players to Italy, Spain, Uruguay and Argentina, already occurring in the 1920s. This professionalization, democratization and popularization process, however, did not occur under the auspices of cordiality and conciliation. In fact, it was marked by a social-racial confrontation, by tension and friction, by advances and throwbacks, whose roots go back to the early 20th century. A popularization and democratization process of soccer was growing in the underbelly of Brazilian society.

Starting in the 1920s and, more so, 1930s, the racist and elitist tradition, sustained by an ideology of social and cultural exclusion of the humbler strata of society, was increasingly being questioned and altered from the inside of our contemporary history. At the same time, new cultural and identity propositions were being forged. Hence, the beginning of Brazilian popular expansion must be analyzed in the context of a broader process of new perspectives for the country and its people. It was a new agenda of a new *ethos* that included multiple elements of popular and daily culture and the empowerment of its symbologies – as exemplified by the revolutionary projects of tenentism, modernism and communism.

In the context of these structural events in Brazilian lives and in tune with them, even if indirectly, Brazilian soccer will forge the background for a new phase, the most original, productive and spectacular one of its trajectory, that is, the phase of its popular and democratic affirmation, conquered through the inclusion of black and mixed-race people as well as white underprivileged – the historically and structurally excluded. Starting from the 1940s/1950s the most original moment begins, with the novelty of the “Brazilian style” of playing soccer, the free swagger, the spontaneous jinks and the creative dribbles. The success and ascension of blacks and underprivileged is a

considerable symbolic instance of denunciation. It has undeniable historical relevance, mainly because it occurred in a society with rigid hierarchies, elitist, prejudiced and excluding, although, obviously, it does not manage to overcome our grave social condition of ethnic and class exclusion which is, until nowadays, very prevalent.

### III. CONCLUSIONS

Thus, soccer in Brazil (as in other countries) is more than a sport; it is an expressive symbology of our historical foundations as a society, of our way of being and acting, of our identities, of our dilemmas and, perhaps, a possible means to confront and denounce our social issues (I said: possible!). Nowadays, it seems like there is little doubt that soccer is a central element of Brazilian cultural identity, inwards and outwards. However, despite the historical and anthropological relevance and its proven capacity to be an instrument of social, cultural and ethnic resistance, soccer has yet to overcome exclusion and stereotyping – which are structural and historical in Brazil, stigmas that are constitutive and founding in the country. However, it has helped to denounce them and question them.

If even education, justice and politics have not been able to surpass our powerful social and cultural exclusion, it would not be a sport that would be able to do it, which obviously does not annul the (political!) importance of denouncing and putting up resistance that Brazilian soccer has attempted. Thus, it historically represented a politics of opposition, even if indirectly, to the rigid and hierarchical Brazilian institutions and contributed to reinforcing new ideologies of inclusion and insertion, more popular and more democratic, of valuing our culture and shared identity.

Finally, it serves to prove that in Brazil – and the socio political process of the FIFA World Cup in 2014 confirms that – the history of soccer can be considered a chapter in the history of our social struggles, in the pursuit of a more equal, honest and solidary country.

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# Reflections around 2014 FIFA Football World Cup in Brazil

*Airton Saboya Valente Junior and Joan Noguera-Tur*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Currently, only five countries in the world – Brazil, China, USA, India and Russia – have a land area larger than 2 million km<sup>2</sup>, a population of over 100 million people, and a GDP of over US\$ 2 trillion. Some other countries have a vast territory, such as Canada, Australia and Argentina, or a huge population, such as Indonesia, Pakistan, Nigeria or Mexico, or an enormous GDP, such as Japan, Germany, France, UK, Italy or Spain, but none of these has all three characteristics together simultaneously.

Brazil is a democratic republic with a presidential system, being the union of three distinct political entities: 26 states, the Federal District, with the federal capital, Brasilia, and 5,565 municipalities. Brazil is the fifth largest country in the world in terms of land area, with a total of 8.5 million km<sup>2</sup>.

The country has significant natural resources, such as different types of terrain and climate, flora and fauna, extensive coastlines, giant river basins, forest, agricultural and fishery resources, livestock, minerals, oil and gas.

Brazil also ranks fifth in terms of population with 195 million inhabitants, of whom 51% are women and 49% are men. Urbanization has been rapid and intense and, as a result, 80% of Brazilian people live in urban areas today.

The population pyramid is changing, with an increase in the older population (more than 55 years old), which currently makes up 15.5% of the population. Meanwhile, the working age groups and young people are outstanding, about 43.6% are 25-54 years old, and 40.9% are between 0-24 years. The passion for sports, especially football, is a defining characteristic of the Brazilian people (IBGE, 2013).

For Brazil, the 2014 World Cup is an opportunity to develop goals and objectives to improve and modernize their infrastructure and services in different sectors related to the mega event. Similarly, investments in the host cities can help to generate a significant number of jobs and income.

However, the opportunity cost implicit in the organization of sports mega-events can be significant. Furthermore, mega-events pose risks such as displacement of people from their homes, gentrification of neighbourhoods, and an increased public debt, among others.

Despite its wide distribution and marketing, initially followed by a training campaign to create political consensus, and then by popular protests, the preparations for the 2014 World Cup has not yet been sufficiently studied.

Accordingly, the general objective of this study is to discuss the planning and preparation for the FIFA World Cup competition in Brazil 2014. This article examines to what extent the said event can leave a legacy and be a factor for sustainable territorial development for the host cities.

Besides this introduction, this paper is divided into the following sections. Section 2 presents the methodology used in the research, highlighting the concept of legacy. Section 3 presents the reflections, results and recommendations for political action.

## 2. THE CONCEPT OF “LEGACY”

The legacies of sports mega-events can be perceived in different ways. They can be seen as positive or negative, tangible or intangible, territorial or personal, public or private, intentional or unintentional, global or local, short or long term, and related or unrelated to the sport, and can be analyzed according to the perspectives of the various stakeholders in the event, such as athletes, organizers, hosts and viewers (Cashman, 2006; Chappelet, 2012).

Therefore, the concept of a mega-event legacy is multidimensional and plays an important role in all phases related to the management of a sports competition: the application, preparation, organization and plan for the post-event (Hiller, 2007; Kassens-Noor, 2012).

According to Chappelet (2003:77), the legacy can be defined as “all that remains and can be considered as a result in the environment of the event”. Thus, the legacy includes tangible or intangible or soft harsh elements. Hard elements include primary infrastructure such as, for instance, the sports equipment, the secondary structures represented by entertainment centres for athletes, technical and media for addition to the recognizable security tertiary structures, the electrical central, telecommunications networks and cultural attractions (Preuss, 2007).

The soft elements include knowledge, such as the organization, management and technology; political networks, such as the ones related to sports federations and security; and cultural goods, consisting of cultural identity, cultural ideas and the common memory (Preuss, 2007).

Cashman (2003) lists six different types of legacy: economic, physical infrastructure, education, public life, politics and culture, sports, and symbols, memory and history. Alternatively, Chappelet (2003) proposes five legacies: tourism and economy, infrastructure, sports facilities, the natural and urban environment, and socio-cultural development.

The concepts of urban development and legacy guide the analysis of descriptive and explanatory elements herein. Meanwhile, data collection has been carried out through document analysis and review of data sources.

### 3. POLICY REFLECTION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Currently, sport has become a social phenomenon with enormous capacity to mobilize, support and gather. In parallel, it has become increasingly important in the economies of many countries, as a result of sports equipment, capital moving its production, investments that require their facilities, resources, advertising and promotion demanded by competitions, wages of athletes, coaches and professionals associated with the implementation of the competition, and the production and transmission of events.

The twentieth century has witnessed the emergence of soccer as the most popular team sport in the world, and besides being a physical practice it also became the “seed” to promote national unity, apart from its ability to become a leisure service marketable at various national and international levels.

Like in other countries, soccer was introduced in Brazil by associates of British companies in the early 1900s. Little by little, the elite sport became leisure for the working class, and the amateurism was transformed into professionalism while local players receiving modest salaries were converted into global stars amassing true fortunes. Soccer became part of the Brazilian society and nowadays it is perceived to be more than a leisure activity and a passionate sport. Indeed, soccer is recognized as a platform for social upgrade and inclusion.

According to a study conducted by FGV and CBF (2001), cited by Leoncini and da Silva (2005), it is estimated that the worldwide soccer value chain, including agents, players, clubs and associations as well as the sport industry equipment and the specialized press, brings about US\$250 billion annually.

In the case of the Brazilian economy, the chain generates US\$32 billion yearly, producing 300,000 direct jobs. In addition, with its 30 million formal and informal practitioners, 13 thousand amateur teams, 800 professional clubs and 580 stadiums, soccer is an economic and social powerhouse that engenders enormous passion in the whole country.

The mega sporting events have significant dimensions, with a short, fixed-term, organisation in a particular city or country. However, as they are able to reach a large number of participants and spectators, they are attractive to the media internationally. This ability to become the focus of attention at the international or global level requires from the host a significant economic investment in infrastructure, logistics and security. Nevertheless, the potential international projection of the event furnishes the investment with enormous appeal for international investors through expectations of business generated. Through all these aspects, mega sporting events can be used as a means of economic development for countries and host cities.

Nevertheless, considering the high costs associated with organizing mega-sporting events, and because of the need to justify the investments made by the hosts and the requirement to more accurately present the results of competitions, has developed the concept of “legacy” to focus on the determination of the actual impacts of mega-events on the places in which they occur.

The nomination and election of Brazil to host the 2014 FIFA World Cup is the result of the combination of business interests, sports, and media conglomerates, under the tutelage of FIFA, as well as Brazil’s ambitions to assert itself as an emerging country, using the event as a vehicle to achieve a strategically prominent position on the global stage. Furthermore, the country raised using the event as a lever for regional and urban development through the construction of infrastructure in the host cities.

The local and federal public sector are key players in the organization, planning and implementation of the 2014 FIFA World Cup, through making direct investments in infrastructure, financing and procurement of works, provision of services and management structure governance of the competition.

The 2014 Cup is being used by host cities as a platform for financing urban development, boosting infrastructure and accelerating existing urbanising plans. However, regional disparities will not be resolved because of the organisation of the event. Due to the characteristics of the host cities, it is difficult to imagine that the World Cup will solve many of the existing structural urban problems, unless parallel transversal and complementary development policies are applied.

The main tangible legacies of the event will be the stadiums, airports, passenger terminals at ports, and facilities built in the field of tourism and leisure. Although important, investments in urban mobility will not be enough to generate expressive transformations in this segment in the host cities. Despite this, the Urban Mobility Plan, recently created by the Federal Government, will be essential to improving public transport in the metropolis of the country (Portal Brasil, 2014).

It is still difficult to estimate the intangible legacies that will be supplied by the professional and VET training processes, and the knowledge and experience that will be gained by the different institutions and national companies.

The legacy of the 2014 World Cup will be jobs and income generation. Meanwhile, the sports-media-business conglomerates, under the leadership of FIFA, together with segments of the construction, tourism, leisure, food, drink, electronics and media sectors, will become, no doubt, one of the main beneficiaries of the event. These segments are largely being built and composed by the Brazilian national initiative.

Similarly, the 2014 FIFA World Cup will benefit, first and mainly, the social groups with medium and high levels of income, due to the construction and modernization of new tourism and leisure facilities. However, it seems that the lowest income groups will have access to new employment opportunities, training and improvements in public

transportation. It seems, though, that the event will not be enough by itself to mitigate the exacerbated economic and social inequalities characteristic of the host cities.

The decision by Brazil to submit an application to host the 2014 FIFA World Cup represents a decision to incur a significant investment, using essentially public resources that could have been used for other purposes, such as education, health, social programmes, science and technology, culture and the arts. This dilemma involves an implicit cost, the so-called opportunity cost.

The event has implicit costs, such as displacement of people from their homes, real estate speculation, the public debt increase, a trend towards an internal inflation in the prices of basic goods and services, and increased imports of goods and sending profits abroad.

Mega sporting events can also trigger inefficient urban actions, because they are in the wrong place, because they are of inadequate sizes, or simply because they are unnecessary. At the same time, the World Cup can focus a big share of the available public country-wide in achievements with a limited life or that are of interest to a reduced collective. This investment can be achieved at the expense of more strategic and sustainable urban and territorial development.

The characteristics of the investments of the 2014 FIFA World Cup help to raise some reflections. Initially, the host cities are characterized, at different levels, by significant shortfalls in terms of human development, physical infrastructure and housing deficit, patterns of inadequate environmental protection, economic and social inequalities marked with pockets of poverty, and some street violence.

The above problems have intensified as the result of a poorly planned process of migration to these urban areas during the last thirty years. The result is a substantial reduction in terms of sustainable urban development capacity. This, along with the aforementioned hardships and the complexity of the projects of the World Cup, institutional weaknesses, failures in the framework related to infrastructure works, and inexperience urban schedulers, have notably increased expenses, delayed and hampered the implementation of several projects for stadiums, airports, and, in particular, many of the most complex projects related to urban mobility.

Apart from the strategies of urban and regional development, there is evidence about a certain level of association between the civil construction sector, real estate and entertainment with urban planners, constituting an “urban tourism conglomerate”, which has driven the choice of twelve host cities instead of the previously planned ten cities. The building of new stadiums as opposed to the refurbishment of previously existing equipment, also driven by this lobby, has had a strong consequence in the overall elevation of the event budget. Speculative activity in the property sector of host cities is showing record numbers year after year in a clear association with the 2014 FIFA World Cup event.

Currently, management of urban traffic is a major metropolitan problem in Brazil. The 2014 Cup has enabled the financing and consequent acceleration of investment plans for urban mobility in the host cities, so the newly built infrastructure and facilities represent significant legacies. However, the budget for the 2014 World Cup is, itself, not enough to solve the problems of urban mobility in the host cities. The expansion of the fleet of private vehicles is occurring at an accelerated rate, so sub-city areas need to develop Urban Mobility Plans, which aims to offer quality public transport on buses, trains and alternative modes.

None of the cities has carried out a public consultation exercise about its candidacy. There are indications that the host cities submitted their schedules based on the requirements laid down by FIFA. In other words, any planning activity was aimed at meeting the demands and requirements of the event. There has not been, at all, a participative strategic planning aiming to create synergies between the investments and change brought about by the event, and the opportunity to create an urban structural change framework in each host city and beyond. In relation to urban mobility, for instance, the venues continue prioritizing locomotion in buses and cars, instead of planning a transformation matrix based on a more sustainable and multi-modal urban transport integration. The mobilization and resistance of various civil groups to the 2013 Confederations Cup represent the dissatisfaction of the population in relation to the mega event.

According to these approaches, the spatial strategy for the host cities does not represent a process of social organization. From the perspective of governance, for instance, that process would have developed and implemented a territorial strategy, a basic and fundamental scenario in which any mega-event activity would acquire its full reason for being and potential. These inaccuracies in planning contributed to the mobilization and protests by citizens during the Confederations Cup in 2013.

Finally, evaluation of mega sporting events is a recent field study, particularly in Brazil. The present study has limitations because the data sources are secondary. At the same time, there is a remarkable opacity in disclosure and access to data and information by the Cup Committee and especially by FIFA.

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The KAS headquarters is located in Berlin, capital of the Federal Republic of Germany.

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The Political Dialogue Programme of the KAS Regional office organises and sponsors international conferences and seminars around the ASEAN+3 Region with a focus on political and social development, political parties and civil society, social market economy, regional security, international cooperation and relations between Asia and Europe.

Through these events and partnerships, KAS regularly produces publications and newsletters, alongside this bi-annual journal *Panorama: Insights into Asian and European Affairs*.



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**"Dangerous Liaisons? Sport, Politics, Economics and Events"**

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