



INTERNATIONAL
CENTRE FOR
SPORTS STUDIES



by CIES Education

INTERNATIONAL MASTER
IN MANAGEMENT, LAW AND HUMANITIES OF SPORT

**Executive
Summaries**

PRESENTATION OF DISSERTATIONS CLASS OF 2020-2021



In partnership with



Programme

- 13:00 **Doors Open**
- 13:20 – 13:30 **Welcome** - Pierre CORNU, President of the CIES Council of Foundation
- 13:30 – 14:00 **How to Bridge the Gap in Women’s Football: “Haba na haba hujaza kibaba” – little by little fills the measure** - Thomas GRIMM (Germany), Lorenzo MAZZONE (Italy), Heather O’KEEFFE (Australia/USA), Diana YONAH (Kenya)
- 14:00 – 14:30 **Beyond the Pitch: Is it time to include social and environmental criteria in club licensing?** - Sara BASHA (Egypt), Rebecca JARDIM DE BARROS (Brazil), Mazhar Ahmed MANSOOR (India), Stanislav SHTIPKOV (Bulgaria)
- 14:30 – 15:00 **The Critical Balance between Sporting Realization and Protection of Minors: An analysis of the international transfer system in football** - Fatou Binetou BA (Senegal), Francesca INGLETTO (Italy), Mario Roberto PAPA (Argentina, Cameroon/Italy), Khair RIZAUDDIN (Singapore)
- 15:00 – 15:30 **Break**
- 15:30 – 16:00 **Lets Go Clubbing: A holistic analysis of multi-club ownership in football** - Hossamedin BEDIER (Egypt), Lorenzo CAVALLARI (Italy), Zeina HAMARSHA (Jordan), Charlotte NYANGERI (Kenya)
- 16:00 – 16:30 **You’re There, but not Really: Is virtual reality spectatorship an addition to the status quo in sports?** - Fábio FIGUEIRAS (Portugal), Pema TSHERING (Bhutan), Malin VESTIN (Sweden), Idy David WATT (Canada/Senegal)
- 16:30 – 17:00 **Pirates of the Stream: An assessment of illegal streaming of European football** - Nisrein AL QAISI (Jordan), Amra KUBAT (Bosnia/Croatia), Nitish METIKURKE (India), David RIBEIRO (Portugal/South Africa), Dilara YASACAN (Russia/Turkey)
- 17:00 – 17:15 **Closing remarks** - Pierre CORNU, President of the CIES Council of Foundation

How to Bridge the Gap in Women's Football: "Haba na haba hujaza kibaba" – little by little fills the measure



Thomas GRIMM (Germany), Lorenzo MAZZONE (Italy),
Heather O'KEEFE (Australia/USA), Diana YONAH (Kenya)

"We are counting on our member associations and the confederations to spread the love for women football so that it reaches the furthest corners of the earth and travels across religion, cultural and social barriers so that girls can get involved and get empowered through football.... It's time to roll up our sleeves and get stuck in; Lets' go. It's time to Dare to shine."

- Fatma Samoura (Secretary General, FIFA)

Introduction

The main purpose of the thesis is to explore and understand the reasons why there is a gap in the development of senior international women's football, specifically in the number of matches played by senior national teams. This was done by analysing how women's football has managed to evolve over the years, by analysis of the issues related to the phases of its development as a global industry. We will not only focus on the gap in women's football matches from a sporting point of view, but also include historical, socio-cultural, economic, geographical, and governance factors that influence the gap, since there are clear indications in academic research, that the acceptance of women's football compared to men's football in society as well as gender inequality have an impact on the development of women's football.

History of Women's Football

In this section of the thesis, our work focuses on the historic development of this sport discipline from a global perspective. In fact, the first part of the chapter analyses how women's football managed to rise and be played by the ladies of the European society and how this sport struggled for being socially accepted. The excursus explores the British scenario from the end of the 19th century to the present day, by focusing on the obstacles that the institution and society put against the professionalization and the establishment by the British Football Association of an official competition for women's players. Rather, the chapter treats the ban on women's football by the UK authorities and the difficulties

for women to modify the traditional perception of the society on sports played by female athletes. Subsequently, even in Germany, Italy and The Netherlands, the governments and the national football associations decided to follow the British example.

Furthermore, the chapter has the aim of analyzing the Asian and Australian scenarios, which have evolved in a completely different way compared to the European one. In fact, there were fewer social obstacles which could have blocked the propagation of this sport among the population, by obtaining a place in the sporting culture of these nations. This scenario led China to be able to host the first FIFA Women's World Cup in 1991. In addition, the thesis explores the African context and the development of women's football in countries such as Nigeria and South Africa, and how the team struggled with the Apartheid to play international matches due to the boycott imposed by the international community.

Finally, the section studies the American model and how high schools and colleges helped to spread the culture of women's soccer throughout the whole nation. In addition, the chapter deeply focuses on the pivotal role of Title IX to implement gender equity in the United States boosted the type of differences between the American and the European model, in terms of perception of the sports and, through the regulations provided under such amendment, more opportunities for American women to play at elite level, first at national and then at international level.

Research methodology

Our research introduces three theoretical frameworks that we considered to develop our KPI framework. By looking at the different member associations ranking, we selected four confederations and 16 member associations to analyse how different factors such as economic, geographic, governance, socio-cultural, and sporting factors correlate with the total number of matches played by the senior women's national team from 2016-2019. From the data collected, we did a comparative analysis between the chosen member associations whilst investigating the correlations between the matches played and the external influences. Our research utilized the ESG (Economic, Social and Governance) framework and the Hofstede cultural dimension theoretical framework which shows the effects of a society's culture on the values of its members. Finally, in addition to the analysis of 44 KPIs, interviews with decision makers from AFC, CAF, Concacaf and UEFA were conducted to gain an in-depth qualitative understanding of the women's football ecosystem. Our research uncovered challenges and possible solutions being developed by football stakeholders, in addition to understanding the impact of challenges may have on widespread adoption of the solutions.

Research Findings

Our analysis of KPIs and stakeholder interviews provided clear and complimentary themes in regards to the scheduling of senior international women's football matches. Of the 44 KPIs analysed, twelve were determined to be statistically significant and correlated to the scheduling of women's matches. These indicators, in order of degree of correlation, were

Ratio of women's to men's matches, Winning Percentage, Power Distance (HI), Women's World Rank (2019 EOY), Individualism (HI), LGBT Global Acceptance Index (2014-2019), Civil Liberties Indicator, Recreation and culture price index, International Connectivity 2019, Masculinity (HI), 2016-2019 % Games organized by FIFA, GDP per Capita (USD).

Following a review of our findings, eight themes emerged as the reasons why there is a gap in the scheduling for women's football matches. These themes are: The more you play, the better you perform; Collaboratively creating the international calendar; Infrastructure and travel; Club competitions as a central driver; Socio-cultural elements; Funding and financial support; Governance; and Willingness to grow the game. These broad range of findings are aligned to the holistic nature of the research methodology and frameworks.

Recommendations

Once we completed our comprehensive analysis on the reasons why the gap in women's football exists, our attention turned to providing recommendations. These recommendations are grouped into four categories: social change and education, competitions, organization, and governance. Related to the first type of recommendations, FIFA, confederations, and member associations should similarly adopt an ESG approach to matters pertaining to women's football. These organizations should implement socio-cultural assessments of their regions and create action plans specific to the socio-cultural dynamics within their region. Therefore, organizations should develop education plans for coaches, administrators, players, and parents that address socio-cultural barriers in their region.

Furthermore, along the lines of education, we recommend that confederations double their efforts around women's coaching education. This will address concerns from parents and create a healthy, inviting environment for young girls and women, as well as increase the level of on-field performance. In fact, FIFA, confederations, and member associations can take concrete steps toward these goals through codification via legal frameworks and regulations such as club licensing.

Secondly, the recommendations related to competitions have the purpose of adopting long-term approach to creating the women's international calendar. This approach would ingrain gender equality in a crucial process in the development and planning of men's and women's football. The women should not have to adapt around the men's calendar, but rather the stakeholders should collaborate to strengthen both the men's and women's game.

Moreover, between KPI analysis and interview findings, international travel was a key obstacle to competition participation. Therefore, we recommend an emphasis on centralized regional mini tournaments for confederation competitions. This possible scenario would reduce costs and the financial burden on member associations. This type of tournaments should rotate between member associations to facilitate capacity building, access to infrastructure, and knowledge sharing. To assist with travel costs, confederations should develop travel grants programs for national teams. These grants should be scaled based

on the GDP/capita and International Air Connectivity of the specific nation, thus providing help to where it is needed most.

Thirdly, as matter of organization, it is of the utmost importance that confederations conduct similar research across all of their member associations based on the same methodology that the thesis has carried out to understand the gap in women's football. All of the indicators used in KPI analysis are publicly available and therefore, accessible to all confederations. Additionally, confederations can incorporate their own data or regional specific data. A project such as this would be essential to a confederation's holistic understanding of football and obstacles in their region.

Furthermore, it is relevant that confederations and member associations serious about enhancing women's football partner with Hofstede insights or a similar company to gain a firmer understanding of the way culture and societal values impact their organization. This will ensure culturally specific solutions are implement, rather than a top-down approach, or attempts to copy and paste UEFA policies in other regions of the world.

Finally, related to governance, the importance of proper regulations and specific bodies is pivotal especially when several issues within the industry need to be addressed: For example, the AFC decided to create a Women's Football Committee to properly address the issues related to the development of the game in Asia. On the other hand, the lack of proper regulations within the legal system of a confederation could enlarge the gap between confederations and, therefore, damage the competitive balance among the football confederations themselves. Additionally, the role of national government does an important part when it comes to implementing specific matters of women's sports: in fact, without the support of the government in drafting proper laws, there is the risk of a legislative vacuum that might create several impediments to female players and other officials in the industry.

Last but not least, there are several international frameworks, that all confederations and member associations should endorse to publicly display their commitment to women's football, these include the 2008 Dead Sea Plan of Action from the IOC's World Conference on Women and Sport and the 2014 Brighton plus Helsinki Declaration on Women in Sport. We recommend organizations supplement these international frameworks with their own transformative legislation.

Beyond the Pitch: Is it time to include social and environmental criteria in club licensing?



Sara BASHA (Egypt), Rebecca JARDIM DE BARROS (Brazil),
 Mazhar Ahmed MANSOOR (India), Stanislav SHTIPOV (Bulgaria)

This research paper is a comprehensive overview of the relationship between sustainability concept, and professional football clubs, especially in relation to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (“SDGs”) with a specific focus on the possibility of mutually beneficial cooperation between football clubs and social & environmental sustainability through the Club Licensing System (“CL System”). The purpose of the paper, alongside analyzing the current impact of sustainability in football and the CL System evolution, is to investigate the possibility of the implementation of a new pillar at the CL System framework, including social & environmental requirements to be followed by clubs.

To help achieve this goal, the Group will also investigate the best practices adopted by football clubs, the fan’s perspective on the topic and what FIFA and Confederations think about the relation between sustainability, football, and the CL System. Therefore, the research will explore the possible impact that football could have on social and environmental issues. The research paper will also elaborate on a possible strategic competitive advantage for professional football clubs that develops actions, projects and programs that cover the values set up the SDGs.

Context

Football is more than a game. It’s the world’s passion. A record of 3.572 billion people, more than half of the world population, turned on to watch the 2018 FIFA World Cup Russia¹. No other sport can engage and call the attention of society as football. It is undeniable that the game’s social, economic, and environmental impact goes well beyond the pitch. For example, grassroots football can help children to integrate in their local communities and improve the wellbeing of an entire generation². Professional football clubs can also be an ally in the environmental protection, by mitigating its impact on the environment across all club’s operations. A simple action can be to offset the club’s carbon footprint by

¹ “More than half of the world watched record-breaking 2018 World Cup”, *FIFA*, December 21, 2018, <https://www.fifa.com/tournaments/mens/worldcup/2018russia/media-releases/more-than-half-the-world-watched-record-breaking-2018-world-cup>.

² Mattew Campelli, “Quantifying the economic and social impact of football”, *Sustainability Report*, January 28, 2021, <https://sustainabilityreport.com/2021/01/28/quantifying-the-economic-and-social-impact-of-football/>.

planting trees in the Training Center, as it is being done by the Premier League greenest club, Tottenham Spurs³.

The United Nations, through the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, established 17 SDGs to bring peace and prosperity by tackling different social and environmental challenges. Recognizing the power of sports, as *“an important enabler of sustainable development”*⁴ and considering the *“growing contribution of sport to the realization of development and peace in its promotion of tolerance and respect and the contributions it makes to the empowerment of women and of young people, individuals and communities as well as to health, education and social inclusion objectives”*⁵, the international organization has been working with many sports stakeholders in how to achieve the SDGs through sports. Of course, football could not be left out, with governing bodies such as the FIFA⁶ and the UEFA⁷ setting up strategic partnerships to embrace the SDGs.

In this context, especially considering the growing demand of the society for environmental and social responsibility, every company, government, and institution needs to pay attention to the sustainability topic. Professional football clubs, with their unequalled potential to reach millions of supporters can use their platform to redefine what means to be successful in football and to inspire future generations. In moments of crisis, such as the unprecedented time of distress faced by the globe due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, and where football clubs are still suffering the consequences of this crisis, opportunities can be created to redefine the role of football clubs in society. Football has the power to be a tool for action on many sustainability issues, being able to tackle several of the SDGs, especially the ones related to Health and Wellbeing (Goal 3), Quality Education (Goal 4), Gender Equality (Goal 5) and Peace and Conflict Resolution (Goal 16)⁸. As stated by the FIFA President, Gianni Infantino, in his message to the 2021 International Day of Sport for Development and Peace:

*“Football, the most popular sport in the world, will play a central role in bringing communities together. Through football, we will be able to get back in shape physically, socialize with our teammates and rivals, and fill stadiums again. We will regain some of what was lost in the past year and hopefully bring back joy and smiles.”*⁹

And, for that modernization, there is no need to reinvent the wheel. What is needed is to look at what is already in place and that can be used to change the game. With a tool such as the CL System in place, that was capable to bridge economic sustainability and football clubs, now it is the time for football to take the lead and revolutionize how sports approach sustainability, taking the meaning of success beyond the four lines of the pitch.

³ “To Care is to Do”, *Tottenham Spurs*, accessed on July 6, 2021, <https://www.tottenhamhotspur.com/the-stadium/to-care-is-to-do/>.

⁴ United Nations, “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, un.org, September 25, 2015. https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E. Pp. 10.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ “UN and FIFA shares strategic social goals”, *FIFA*, March 9, 2021, <https://www.fifa.com/about-fifa/president/media-releases/un-and-fifa-share-strategic-social-goals>.

⁷ “Football and Social Responsibility”, *UEFA*, accessed on July 6, 2021, <https://www.uefa.com/insideuefa/social-responsibility/overview/>.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Gianni Infantino, “Sport can help the world come back stronger”, *Sportanddev.org*, April 6, 2021, <https://www.sportanddev.org/en/article/news/sport-can-help-world-come-back-stronger>.

Research Question

In line with the introduced context, the group came of the research question:

Is it time to include Social and Environmental Criteria in Club Licensing?

For that, it is important to understand the concept of sustainability, which involves the triple bottom line (Social, Economic & Environment) and what is the CL System.

The FIFA CL System, inspired by the UEFA CL System, was developed, as stated in the FIFA Club Licensing Handbook (2018), to ensure that all around the world certain criteria are fulfilled by professional clubs to participate in national and international competitions. With this system and its implementation, FIFA can improve the level of professional club football through the creation of a global framework, establishing minimum standards in five key areas (Sporting, Personal and Administrative, Infrastructure, Legal and Financial Criteria).

Taking into consideration the already established FIFA's Regulations and the well-known impact that football has on modern society, an analysis of the implementation and main objectives of the CL System will be performed to discuss the possible absence of two pillars of the sustainability concept: Social & Environment. Considering that both the environmental and social pillars are a key factor in sustainable development, and the fact that the CL System has as a core value the transformation of the football business in a sustainable environment, it is essential to discuss why they are not already part of the current framework. The Group was mainly inspired by the SDGs and opt for using them as a criterion to guide the study conduct during the current research.

Methodology & Findings

To fulfil the research goals, the Group undertook research based on existing knowledge (secondary data collection), combined with primary data collection exclusively for this purpose. As part of the secondary data, we explored the role of sustainability in current society and its influence on the decision-making process. Moreover, the existing connection between football and sustainability on different levels was also investigated. Following that, a study over the question of how CL System works and the evolution of this tool responsible for helping professionalize football was conducted by the group.

The primary data collection initiated with interviews with key stakeholders, including the representatives of the six Confederations and FIFA. Those interviews offered a broad idea of the capabilities of Club Licensing as a tool that can be an enabler for huge changes in the football landscape if used accurately. Meanwhile, it was found that social and environmental sustainability are already being incorporated in some of the Confederations with a clear indication that this is the beginning of a change in the ecosystem. Also, the interviewees believe that this tool can embrace social and environmental elements as a strategic element to further develop football.

Additionally, the research aimed to understand how the most successful sporting clubs around the globe are performing in terms of social and environmental sustainability. A selection of 144 clubs across the six Confederations was examined to assess whether they work or no on the development of some of the SDGs. They were analyzed by Confederations, with good practices examples being selected for each of the 17 SDGs. The good practices were based on geographical diversity and showcased the possibility to work on a diverse range of projects based on local needs and specificity.

The primary data collection concluded with a fan's survey among the same 144 clubs. The survey gathers 1044 responses and demonstrated a good awareness of the supporters on their club's work, with 77% of the respondents having an opinion on how their club is performing in relation to the SDGs. Furthermore, correlations were noticed between supporter's evaluations of the projects and the existence of work on those areas by Confederations. Besides, the importance for the supporters to see their clubs working on different SDGs was visible with more than 64% marked as "Very Important" or "Important" on each of the domains. Also, it was found that if the club work on some of the SDGs, the supporters would be incentivized to contribute in a different way in 92% of the cases.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Combining all the research, the Group concluded that the CL System is a tool capable to incorporate social and environmental sustainability. This would have the approval of key stakeholders from governing bodies and from the fan's perspectives. Moreover, having in mind the societal changes that we are witnessing, it would also be a great strategic approach for football clubs to engage in the topic, strengthen their awareness with their spectators and sponsors, and remaining relevant in times in which consumer decisions are based more often than ever on sustainable production and social engagement of the companies¹⁰.

Therefore, a set-up of recommendations was formulated by the Group to introduce a new Sustainability Pillar within the CL System. This proposition comes with a suggested framework, support system and implementation that could be executed by FIFA within its own regulations. The global governing body's new policies and collaboration with the UN would be a great foundation to develop a new pillar that would be based on the 17 SDGs, considering the regional specificities, and allowing clubs to work on projects that would best serve their local reality. This is how FIFA's current administration could leave a legacy beyond the pitch in every corner of the planet!

¹⁰ Matteo Campelli, "Quantifying the economic and social impact of football", Sustainability Report, January 28, 2021, <https://sustainabilityreport.com/2021/01/28/quantifying-the-economic-and-social-impact-of-football/>.

The Critical Balance between Sporting Realization and Protection of Minors: An analysis of the international transfer system in football



Fatou Binetou BA (Senegal), Francesca INGLETTO (Italy),
 Mario Roberto PAPA (Argentina, Cameroon/Italy), Khair RIZAUDDIN (Singapore)

FIFA President Gianni Infantino had this to say at the launch of the new FIFA Guardians programme in 2019; *“Millions of children around the world are involved in football. What these children all have in common is the right to enjoy football in a safe environment.”*

One particular aspect of child protection is the prevention of child labour and trafficking through football. This phenomenon was rife in the late 1990s at the onset of the globalisation and commercialisation of football, most notably in Western Europe. This led to an influx of players migrating to these territories with the aim of securing professional football contracts. However, these migrations posed a particular threat to young players who were oftentimes misled by the promise of an elusive dream. Uninformed and unprepared their football dream soon turned to nightmare. Youths were left abandoned in foreign countries without the (financial) means or (at times) the willingness to return home and be seen as a failure. For many of these minors, football was seen as a hope for a better future.

In order to combat this increasingly problematic trend, the FIFA (in 2001) established Article 19 titled the “Protection of minors” as part of the Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players (RSTP). Article 19 prohibited the international transfer of minors (players below the age of 18) barring a few exceptions. While for the most part, Article 19 of the FIFA RSTP can be said to have been successful in achieving its original objectives, football and society has evolved over the last twenty years. Hence, there is an increasing and urgent need to relook into the regulations meant to provide protection to minors, which in today’s context, may be limiting and preventative.

FIFA’s duty and responsibility is to protect *all* children in football. This implies those who would benefit from an early migration in their career. Hence, the aim of this paper is to understand the current situation of minors around the world who have been both positively and negatively affected by these regulations. In order to do so we aim to answer these following sub-questions;

- Has twenty years of global and social evolution coupled with technological advancements changed the way we need to approach the topic of protection of minors in football (specifically related to the international transfer of minors)?

- Are minors today still at the same risk as their peers twenty years ago?
- Are these risks adequately reflected in the most current version of the FIFA RSTP?
- Is there a need to relook and reshape the current regulations governing the international transfer of minors?
- And perhaps most importantly, does the regulation adequately protect, balance and promote the rights of minors (which include; the right to realization and the right to protection)?

Research Methodology

In order to answer these questions and achieve our desired research objectives, an exploratory research was conducted making use of both primary and secondary data sources. Both qualitative and quantitative research methods were used. Following a stakeholder mapping exercise to identify key stakeholders for this research, primary data was then collected using two main tools; a questionnaire and interviews.

The main aim of our questionnaire was to collect quantitative data, which could be further analysed, in order to understand the impacts of the FIFA regulations on the international transfer of minors on football clubs and academies. The questionnaire consisted of twenty-five questions and was distributed to football clubs and academies that fell within the identified scope of our research. The questionnaire was distributed in four languages (English, French, Spanish and Italian) in order to facilitate data collection efforts across the different territories. The questionnaire took an estimated time of ten minutes to complete, was completely anonymous and voluntary.

In order to further strengthen our research, interviews were conducted with key stakeholders in order to gather in-depth and holistic qualitative data. The stakeholders that were identified and engaged via a semi-structured interview format were as follows; academics, players (FIFPRO), professional clubs, European Clubs Association (ECA), professional leagues (WLF), confederations (CAF) and the FIFA. This (semi-structured interview) format entails asking a set of open-ended non-leading questions, decided before hand by the researchers, in order to direct the dialogue. It is also important to note that, "researchers do not ask the questions in the same way or form to each participant" (Sparkes and Smith, 2014;2013, pg.84). Instead, this structure allows for the collection of important information while encouraging and not limiting the participants ability to express their own thoughts and feelings regarding the topic. Interviews were conducted via the online application "Zoom". The interview session typically lasted for about forty-five minutes to an hour with the interviewee being asked a series of seven to eight questions.

Challenges

The main challenge of this research was the sensitivity of the topic. At the moment, child protection and safeguarding is an extremely important issue in the world of sport, one

which governing bodies and clubs (public facing organizations) cannot afford to get wrong. While the research, for the most part, received positive and open responses, a particular weakness of the study was the underrepresentation of football clubs. One is only able to rely on interpretation in order to ascertain the hesitance of football clubs to participate in the research. However, linking the point mentioned above regarding importance and sensitivity of the topic, as well as the business nature (public facing) of football clubs may provide some indication.

Another key challenge of the topic was the inability to capture the opinions of minors. The difficulty lay in finding a voice that could be representative of the global population of minors. Furthermore, there was the added challenge of access to minors, who are (and rightly so) an extremely protected group of individuals. In this regard and as established in Patten and Newhart (2017, pg.22) “researchers may select key informants and seek participants who represent the full range of those under the study”. Hence, the insights of stakeholders (FIFPRO), who are meant to represent the best interest of the minors, were captured and represented in this study.

Key Findings

A thematic analysis as defined by Braun and Clarke (2006) as a “method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data” was adopted in order to represent our findings. This style of reporting provides structure and organization which allows description of the data in a coherent and detailed manner. The themes that have been identified in this research are: economic, social, legal and sporting.

Economic

Throughout our research it was clear that young football talents (minors) were of particular economic interest to clubs and academies. Firstly, they represented a cheap resource which clubs could rely on in order to develop talents for their first team. Secondly, when the time came, the contracts of these young players could be sold, therefore making a capital gain for the club/academy. Accordingly, 53% of our questionnaire respondents believe that the FIFA regulations have had a positive impact on investments towards youth football development. This implies that sales of player contracts have encouraged clubs/academies to reinvest that money into youth development.

Social

We will analyse social impacts from a club and (minor) player perspective. For the former, the regulations provide impetus to scout, identify, recruit and train young talents. The social impact for clubs in producing top football talents is the trust and prestige the club is able to foster. This positive reputation helps the club to grow in terms of awareness both locally and internationally which would then facilitate the creation of partnerships. As for the latter, minor players, we have found that while the restrictions may have a positive impact for some, others are restricted and denied a fundamental right (to realization). In this respect, our data is conflicted between the overall growth and development of

minors who are able to benefit from remaining longer within their family and local spheres. Whereas, on the other hand, there is also an argument for better access to other social factors such as education that could be facilitated through international migration.

Legal

Through our research we have been able to identify four major legal impacts and challenges. Firstly, the strict and mechanical interpretation and implementation of the regulations may work against, what is considered to be, the best interest of the minor. Secondly, the regulations may be viewed as discriminatory in favour of European citizens and clubs and therefore contributing to a distortion of the transfer market. Thirdly, the regulations may conflict with national laws, as they add administrative burden to the right of foreign minors to access organised football, specifically when considering national laws and instruments developed with the purpose of promoting social integration through sport. Lastly, while FIFA has a natural responsibility to ensure their regulations are upheld and respected, they are impeded by their lack of investigative powers and global enforcement.

Sporting

Sporting impacts of the international youth transfer regulations have affected individual (minor) players, football clubs and national football associations. Our research revealed a misalignment with respect to the potential benefits of the regulations on career opportunities for minor players. While slightly more than half (53%) of our questionnaire respondents believe the regulations have had a *positive* impact on minor players' career, the remainder of respondents were split between a *negative* (18%) and *no impact* (29%). When it comes to football clubs, the data collected revealed that the international youth transfer regulations have mainly positively affected financial investment in youth development as well as facilitated the development of partnerships between clubs and academies across territories. Lastly, it is our observation that local football development has been largely positively impacted through the regulations prohibiting the international transfer of minors.

Recommendations

As described through our findings, the peculiarity of this topic lies within the fundamental question of *the best interest of the child*. Hence, we acknowledge the extremely challenging task for a world governing body to regulate such a polarizing topic. However, we believe the different opinions discussed throughout this paper highlight the importance of balance and proportionality. Therefore, we propose the following;

Economic

- Training compensation to be calculated as a minimum percentage of the professional contract that is signed. This percentage is to be calculated based on data collected in the FIFA Professional Football Landscape.
- The development of a "National Academy Office" across all Member Associations via funds provided through the FIFA Forward programme.

- The develop of a universal methodology that will help clubs to determine player value.

Social

- FIFA to formulate partnerships and working groups to engage international agencies, organizations and institutions to address global challenges in child safeguarding.
- Specifically, FIFA could develop a partnership with the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (OHCHR) and to include them in the discussions related to the transfer system reform.

Legal

- While recognizing that FIFA regulations aim at protecting the child cannot be built on exceptions, we believe there is a need for higher flexibility and greater individual assessment when dealing with international transfer cases/requests.
- FIFA to ensure that the regulations are non-discriminatory and are in compliance with international law.
- FIFA to include in its current review of the agent's framework, standards that would protect minor players from being exploited.

Sporting

- The formulation and implementation of a Licensing System which could act as a certification to grant football clubs (that meet the minimum requirements) with the right to engage in the international transfer of minor players.

REFERENCES

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>

Patten, M. L., & Newhart, M. (2017). *Understanding Research Methods: An Overview of the Essentials* (10th ed.). Routledge.

Sparkes, A. C., & Smith, B. (2014;2013). *Qualitative research methods in sport, exercise and health: From process to product*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203852187>

Lets Go Clubbing: A holistic analysis of multi-club ownership in football



Hossamedin BEDIER (Egypt), Lorenzo CAVALLARI (Italy), Zeina HAMARSHA (Jordan),
Charlotte NYANGERI (Kenya)

“The winner isn’t the first one to get there, but the first one to make the most of all the potential of the discovery”

It is with these words that in 2009 Ferran Soriano, current CEO of Manchester City and the man behind the creation of the City Football Group, introduced the concept of football clubs developing different franchises for different markets in what can be considered the foundational text for multi-club ownership in football: *Goal: The Ball Doesn’t Go in By Chance*.

But what exactly is multi-club ownership, also referred to as “MCO”? In its broadest sense, it can be defined as an individual or entity owning shares in more than one club. Although in existence long before Soriano and the City Football Group, most notably with the English National Investment Company’s (ENIC) ventures in the late 1990s, MCO only really started developing and becoming increasingly commonplace over the past decade. CFG and the Red Bull Group, as the largest and most well-known organisations of this type, have understandably attracted the most focus, but the list is much longer, with as many as 117 different clubs controlled by 45 MCOs according to recent research by World Soccer. Despite the significance of MCOs in the football ecosystem and the prevalence of the topic in recent sports media, academic interest has been surprisingly lacking and professional sources have largely failed to address the perspectives of two of the most important stakeholders involved: fans and players.

Research Objectives

The objective of this research project was therefore to carry out an interdisciplinary and multi-stakeholder analysis of MCOs in football, analysing the legal, economic, sporting, and social implications of this business model with an academic approach. Specifically, we wanted to (1) introduce currently missing fan and player-centric perspectives on MCO, (2) analyse the limitations of the current regulatory framework to propose potential improvements, and (3) add to the current managerial literature on MCO through primary research.

Strategic and Regulatory Framework

An in-depth review of the literature was carried out to consolidate the current collective knowledge on the topic of MCO and inform our research. This covered both academic and professional sources, expanding beyond the core topic of MCO and into adjacent research areas of business administration, economics, and humanities. Theory spanning invented traditions, disneyisation, fan identification and club authenticity was brought into the context of MCOs, as were management theories on resource allocation, marketing, brand equity and corporate diversification.

After defining MCO and – perhaps more importantly – differentiating it from the various alternative models of investment and ownership that exist in football, the origins of the practice were explored, and MCO's historical development in the context of increasing globalisation and commercialization in the football industry was discussed. This section also presented a comprehensive, consolidated list of currently active MCO groups across the world.

The paper then explored the strategic framework underpinning investment into MCOs, using case-studies of current MCO groups as well as existing literature to identify and rationalise six main motivations for the creation and development of MCO networks. This included perspectives on the special case of acquisition and integration of women's football clubs through MCO structures, as well as discussion of how MCOs can serve as tools for the projection of soft power.

Finally, landmark legal cases on MCO were addressed, and the key legal concepts pertaining to the topic defined (decisive influence, competition integrity and conflict of interest). This was accompanied by a review of the current regulatory framework surrounding MCOs at all levels of the football pyramid (FIFA, Confederation, and MA level)

Methodology

In order to provide an original and holistic analysis of the topic, primary data, both qualitative and quantitative, would need to be collected from four distinct stakeholder groups: fans, executives, players and regulators. Our approach was modelled on this requirement and therefore included an online fan questionnaire, as well as interviews with a wide range of club and governing body executives. Three players currently playing for MCO clubs were also interviewed.

Findings

1. Fans

- Awareness of MCO and/or being part of an MCO was found to be high across all fan segments

- Perceptions on the impact of MCO on the supported football clubs, whilst different from one fanbase to the next, were generally positive across all three of the measured dimensions: (1) sporting, (2) financial and (3) brand/popularity.
- Behaviours relating to identification as a supporter of an MCO group and cross-support of other clubs within that same MCO group suggest that some measure of cross-support does exist, although loyalty to the individual club remains dominant.
- An indicator of intra-MCO cross-support was developed as a way of quantifying this sentiment. This was applied to the CFG and Red Bull fanbases and correlation between tenure within an MCO and cross-support received was established.
- Recommendations on how to balance club identity with group identity were given, as well as insights on how to ensure clubs are best positioned to adapt to changes in fandom behaviours and monetise an eventual MCO-fan.

2. Players

- Research suggests that MCOs are generally very well perceived by players. This is especially true in the women's game, where MCOs are seen as a source of investment and positive development. Players highlighted easier mobility, similarity in playing styles between the different clubs and simpler contract negotiation as key benefits of the MCO model.
- Awareness of MCOs was similarly high, to the point where the number and prestige of clubs in a group's portfolio, and the prospect of potentially being able to internally transfer to them, had an impact on the player's career decisions.
- The risk of consolidation on the offer side of the labour market, and the redefinition of the employee relationship to one contracted to a group rather than a club were suggested as sources of concern.

3. Regulators

- International nature of MCOs requires a uniform and transnational legal framework to adequately regulate the practice
- FIFA's regulations are currently ill-adapted to accommodate the increasing number of MCO cases, and the only uniform and express regulations on MCOs are contained in the Club Licensing Regulations of all six Confederations. Regulatory landscape at MA level is very heterogeneous.
- Need to clearly define permitted and non-permitted ownership structures, as well as permitted and non-permitted levels of influence, as this is too often a grey area which is interpreted on a case-by-case basis. Specific limitations on player trading within MCOs, in line with the new FIFA RSTP could be a further tool, although difficult to implement.
- FIFA's and UEFA's promotion of expanded club competitions such as the FIFA Club World Cup or the UEFA Europa Conference League, in the absence of a solid framework for the regulation of MCOs, could exacerbate the issue of integrity and public perception of competitions, as clubs from the same MCO become more likely to face each other.

4. Club Executives

- Shift in the balance of power in favour of clubs when dealing with agents and intermediaries within MCO (symmetry of information)
- Potential for increasing sponsorship value through consolidated group approach
- MCO is not for all, given the high financial barriers to entry and the potentially sub-optimal allocation of resources it entails

You're There, but not Really: Is virtual reality spectatorship an addition to the status quo in sports?



Fábio FIGUEIRAS (Portugal), Pema TSHERING (Bhutan), Malin VESTIN (Sweden),
Idy David WATT (Canada/Senegal)

“How do we replicate the courtside experience- and through virtual reality, augmented reality, all kinds of other immersive experiences in media, we’re getting closer.”

- Adam Silver

Adam Silver, the current (National Basketball Association)nNBA commissioner, commends the complementary benefits of immersive technologies (virtual reality and augmented reality) in enhancing a fan’s viewing experience. In 2015, after only a year as the commissioner, the NBA launched its first games in virtual reality. Today, sports leagues such as NHL (National Hockey League), NFL (National Football League), MLB (Major League Baseball), English Premier League, NASCAR (National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing), to name a few, have all integrated some level of virtual reality into their leagues and fan viewing experiences. In 2020, PwC published a report exploring the impact of virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) on the economy. The report predicted that these two technologies have the potential to deliver \$1.5 trillion boosts to the overall global economy by 2030. Given the business benefits that these technologies can provide, we, as researchers, were curious to explore the role of VR in sports: its past and current applications, how it can complement broadcasting in the future, and fan’s perception and willingness to try this exciting technology.

Our research paper explores the evolution of sports fans and broadcasting and their impact on each other, in addition to the evolution in technology within sports and within each of our case studies. Additionally, the management and legal implications of integrating such novel technology as VR in sports are discussed (e.g. data protection, product liability, and intellectual property rights). Given the novelty of the subject, the relevant terms for this research are addressed early on in the paper. Additionally, our paper also addresses the limitations of the literature used for the development of this research. Most importantly, the key findings from the literature review on broadcasting and fans are discussed in greater depth as they are the core themes of this project. The interdisciplinary approach, bringing together aspects from humanities, management, and law, of this research will help comprehend and assess the complementary significance of VR in sports broadcasting

and consumption, with an attempt to answer the following research question: How does virtual reality spectatorship (VRS) complement sports broadcasting and consumption? This research question was addressed via an analysis of its significance in both the NBA and the Premier League.

These two case studies were chosen because both of them have implemented virtual reality in recent years. NBA has broadcasted in virtual reality since 2016 and is seen as one of the most tech savvy and innovative sports leagues around the world. The NBA is always at the forefront regarding new technologies to innovate the game itself but also enhancing the experience for the fans. Sky Sports announced at the end of 2020 that they would start broadcasting one English Premier League game per week in virtual reality. The English Premier League is one of the best and most competitive football leagues in the world, and is in many ways the leader in innovation and globalization for domestic football leagues.

The literature review aided in formalizing some of the research objectives, but the mere curiosity of the researchers greatly assisted in the development of the research objectives. The objectives addressed are to aid the researchers in answering the research question and to provide readers with a glimpse of what will be discussed in this paper. The following objectives were outlined:

1. How have sports fans evolved over the years, and what are the different types of fans?
2. Who are and what characterizes the fans of the 21st century?
3. How have sports broadcasting evolved over the past decade, particularly in the EPL and the NBA?
4. What are immersive technologies in sports, and how are they implemented in the EPL and NBA?
5. What are the legal implications of these immersive technologies?

Topics encompassing the evolutions of what it means to be a fan and how they interact with sports content today are addressed throughout the research. In addition, we dove into the rapid progression of broadcasting within the last thirty years to answer the questions highlighted in our objectives and then finally address the historical nature of immersive technologies within our case studies to bring everything together. However, the interdisciplinary approach would not be complete without the legal implications of the integration of new technologies to aid in sports broadcasting developments. We outlined some challenges and limitations that we thought were relevant not only at a legal level but also as researchers. We then embarked on a comprehensive qualitative data collecting process. We have collected data through two fans' surveys that reached over 240 million people worldwide to understand fans' perception about VR and stakeholder interviews from six different perspectives; broadcasting, technology, fans, league, legal and miscellaneous. Each survey was targeted to either NBA or Premier League fans.

Our findings and discussions sections were divided thematically in the following order to best analyze the data and insights collected from our fan survey and stakeholder interviews. We

first examined the most relevant data from the fan's perspective, followed by broadcasting, and finished with how the technology is viewed in the eyes of both of these pillars in the sports industry. Within each section, the analysis was divided into two parts; one for the Premier League and the other for the NBA to compare results from our two case studies. As a result of the analysis, our discussions concluded the chapter in a holistic manner, tying in both what our stakeholders have provided during their interviews compared to what our survey has revealed. We then conclude our research with a conclusion section and some recommendations aimed at providing guidance to stakeholders looking to integrate virtual reality spectatorship as a new revenue stream.

Ultimately, our research found, through interviews with industry leaders and decision makers, that virtual reality is a promising technology that many executives believe has the ability to change the way fans consume and experience sports. However, challenges still exist around marketing and launching VRS to sports fans throughout the NBA and Premier League ecosystems. To find out what leagues and broadcasters must do if they want this technology to succeed, tune into our presentation.

Pirates of the Stream: An assessment of illegal streaming of European football



Nisrein AL QAISI (Jordan), Amra KUBAT (Bosnia/Croatia), Nitish METIKURKE (India), David RIBEIRO (Portugal/South Africa), Dilara YASACAN (Russia/Turkey)

The research project “Pirates of the stream: An assessment of illegal streaming of European football” started after group six witnessed an illegal stream of live football where no one felt there was anything wrong. Because of that we decided to tackle the taboo about illegal streaming of football in our final project. The main question about illegal streaming is no longer limited to whether the behaviour of the streamers is right or wrong. The main question our paper is answering is why illegal streaming is happening, how it is impacting the industry and what is being done to prevent it.

The aim of the research is to provide a 360-degree overview of the current situation for illegal streaming by analysing all the stakeholders involved and impacted: rights owners, holders, consumers, suppliers, and policymakers. The paper seeks to understand why illegal streaming occurs, what is being done to prevent illegal streaming and assess whether there is a solution. The research outlines the current business model of broadcasting rights sales and provides an overview of consumer behaviour to understand the reasons for illegal streaming. It also gives an overview of the regulatory frameworks available as well as the technological solutions.

Before addressing the questions, the paper started with an analysis of the complex ecosystem of sport broadcasting and the relevant stakeholders of illegal streaming. Also, the paper provides a brief look into history and the evolution of piracy, and how other industries i.e. movie and music, suffered from piracy. Unlike the movie and music industries, the sports industry has not been able to come up with a solution such as Netflix or Spotify to reduce the demand for piracy.

The paper outlined the gaps in the broadcasting business and how piracy has filtered in, leading the research to dissect and understand the legal framework behind the protection of broadcasting rights. There are several factors that led to these gaps: (i) Geographical considerations: as the business model is distributing the rights on geographical basis, this leads to some territories uncovered or differences in the types of content available in each territory, (ii) Accessibility issues: due to the exclusivity of broadcasting rights, which make football content available in limited places, consumers do not have many options to go

watch football, (iii) High commercial value: due to exclusivity, right holders pay very high prices to have the right to distribute football content which means that they charge high subscriptions in order to offset their investment. Because of the way the current business model operates, piracy becomes a real threat.

Therefore, illegal streaming of European football content seems to be meeting the demand of the consumers better than the legal streaming options. With limited options, consumers will turn to piracy to consume their football content. We conducted a world-wide survey to fully understand consumers' behaviour. Over a 6 weeks period we collected more than 600 responses. The preconception that the only reason people rely on illegal streams is because they do not want to pay the prices for legal routes was to be investigated and was the motivation to gather as many perceptions from as many different people across the globe. "No one is a pirate by pleasure, you will get into piracy because there is a way you want to consume content that is not provided for you." – as said by Arnaud Simon during the group's interview with him. Respondents who admitted to having illegally streamed a football match said there are three main drivers for them to do so: (i) the football matches they want to watch are not available in their region, (ii) it costs too much to pay for football content and (iii) they cannot access football content in any other way. Almost 50% of survey respondents claimed that the main reason they would watch football through an illegal stream was the issue of availability. The statistics on whether geographical area of residence has any influence on this. Of all respondents who checked the option of availability, 38.82% of them reside in Africa while almost 30% reside in Europe. Several answers mention specific problems related to packaging style. Many respondents said that they do not want to pay for a standard package but that they want to have more flexible options and better pricing. Consumers are willing to pay as long as content is available to them in a flexible and convenient way. Football fans want convenience and high-quality streams; however, based on our survey feedback, broadcasters are not meeting these criteria. On the other hand, illegal streaming provides for them a one-stop-shop for sports content, for free or for a lower fee than the regular TV provider can offer, sometimes even better quality. Unless the industry keeps up with the consumer demands, football fans will turn to illegal streams to watch their favourite teams.

From a legal perspective, live sports matches are considered to be an intellectual property right (IPR). Intellectual property rights are the creations of the human mind as defined by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and to be works of arts, inventions, computer programs, trademarks and commercial signs. Therefore, the breached right in the conduct of illegal streaming for live sport events, such as European football, is the broadcasting organization's right to stream and produce the sport live events, not the football match itself. The global trade of IP productions, such as broadcasting, influenced the international society to grant an international protection of IPRs. International Conventions such as Rome Convention 1961 and Berne Convention 1886 as well as the WIPO Copyright Treaty are put in place and when signed by a country, the provisions get adopted into domestic legislation. Because IPRs international conventions include the protection of sports broadcasting rights as copyrights or related rights, this implies that sports organizations can seek legal remedies to IP infringements under domestic laws that come from the conventions.

To complement the legal avenues for fighting illegal streaming, technological solutions were investigated and the process in which they can be deployed to counteract piracy. Technology has been both an enabler of illegal streaming operations but equally a disabler, meaning that technology can be used both in the supply and in the fight against illegal streaming. As peer-to-peer data sharing increased over time via the Internet, digital rights management systems (DRM) were developed to overcome piracy. Given the complexity of piracy operations, DRM systems are not sufficient to counter pirates. Therefore, new technology such as conditional accessing and watermarking technologies are usually used in conjunction. The aim of these technologies is to identify the illegal streams and then in conjunction with legal efforts, streams are directly and immediately blocked and taken down to ensure consumers are pushed towards legal and more convenient ways to consume sport.

The paper concludes with the recommendations of the group. Illegal streaming of sports content poses significant challenges to the sports broadcasting ecosystem. This research has revealed that the problem is persistent, that there is awareness and there are efforts taken to fight it but the general consensus seems to be that nothing can be done about it. On the contrary to this viewpoint, the findings of this paper show that there exist possibilities to reduce piracy if all stakeholders come together and play their part. Reducing piracy should be seen as the destination with two roads to get there: the Business road and the legal avenue.

The first part of the recommendation relates to the business side, with three main points: giving consumers what they want, more collaboration between stakeholders and social responsibility.

In terms of consumer demand, quality, availability, convenience and flexibility are essential factors. These four criteria should make illegal streaming so unattractive for the consumer that it stops being a choice when it comes to watching and consuming sports content. Furthermore, it should give the consumers more than what they want by keeping up with the current trends. Stakeholders need to collaborate and ensure the business model takes a fan-centric approach. Further to that, social responsibility is important and the stakeholders in the landscape can take more action to educate their audiences about the consequences and dangers of illegal streaming. The paper briefly mentions the dark side of illegal streaming. Illegal streaming is an unlawful activity and people do it because they have no other options. However, there are consequences to this behavior. The research has demonstrated how suppliers of illegal streaming such as the organized crime groups can have negative intentions and cause harm to the end-user.

The second part of the recommendations focuses on the future use of regulations and technology is explored and in introduction of More efficient Regulatory Frameworks. To have this level of protection it is important to overcome the differences between legislation around the world in determining whether broadcasting rights are considered as copyrights or related rights. This can be achieved by the intervention of international and regional legislation, such as WIPO and EU. As a way of example, adopting an 'Anti-piracy' legislation that tackles the sport live event piracy in specific. After establishing the legal

framework, a collaboration between different stakeholders shall take place. As we stated in the paper, the most successful operation to take down illegal streaming sites had been done with a collaboration between rights owners, holders and regulatory bodies. With the collaboration to prevent illegal streaming, it is significant to have shared responsibility between stakeholders. This shared responsibility can be addressed in broadcasting agreements between rights owners and holders or in the relevant legislation.

In sum, the paper tried to cover all the possible aspects relevant to illegal streaming of European football. Nonetheless, piracy will not vanish in a day's night, an organized collaboration between the industry, regulatory and governing body shall start to tackle and overcome this challenge.



INTERNATIONAL
CENTRE FOR
SPORTS STUDIES

Avenue DuPeyrou 1 | Phone +41 (0)32 718 39 00
2000 Neuchâtel | www.cies.ch
Switzerland