



INSTITUTO
UNIVERSITÁRIO
DE LISBOA

Football in the Network Society: a contextual analysis of the determinants in the negotiation of broadcasting rights of the European professional football

Célia Maria Carvalho Gouveia

PhD in Communication Sciences

Supervisors:

Doctor Rita Maria Espanha Pires Chaves Torrado da Silva, Associate Professor with Habilitation at Iscte-Instituto Universitário de Lisboa

Doctor Sonny Shiu-Hing Lo, Deputy Director / Acting Community College Principal at University of Hong Kong

May, 2024



SOCIOLOGIA
E POLÍTICAS PÚBLICAS

Department of Sociology

Football in the Network Society: a contextual analysis of the determinants in the negotiation of broadcasting rights of the European professional football

Célia Maria Carvalho Gouveia

PhD in Communication Sciences

Supervisors:

Doctor Rita Maria Espanha Pires Chaves Torrado da Silva, Associate Professor with Habilitation at Iscte-Instituto Universitário de Lisboa

Doctor Sonny Shiu-Hing Lo, Deputy Director / Acting Community College Principal at University of Hong Kong

May, 2024



SOCIOLOGIA
E POLÍTICAS PÚBLICAS

Department of Sociology

Football in the Network Society: a contextual analysis of the determinants in the negotiation of broadcasting rights of the European professional football

Célia Maria Carvalho Gouveia

PhD in Communication Sciences

Jury:

Doctor Cláudia Álvares, Associate Professor with Aggregation, Iscte-Instituto Universitário de Lisboa

Doctor Eduardo Cintra Torres, Assistant Professor, Universidade Católica Portuguesa

Doctor Pedro Brinca, Assistant Professor, Nova SBE-Nova School of Business and Economics

Doctor Geraldo de Fátima, Assistant Researcher, Universidade da Beira Interior

Doctor Jorge Vieira, Assistant Professor, Iscte-Instituto Universitário de Lisboa

Doctor Rita Maria Espanha Pires Chaves Torrado da Silva, Associate Professor with Habilitation, Iscte-Instituto Universitário de Lisboa

May, 2024

What is good?

Whatever augments the feeling of power, the will to power, power itself, in man.

What is happiness?

The feeling that power increases - that resistance is overcome.

Friedrich Nietzsche

[Page left blank on purpose]

Sport seduces the teeming 'global village'; it is the new opiate of the masses; it is one of the great modern experiences ... sport is a mirror ... that reflection is sometimes bright, sometimes dark, sometimes distorted, sometimes magnified. This metaphorical mirror is a source of mass exhilaration and depression, security and insecurity, pride and humiliation, bonding and alienation. Sport, for many, has replaced religion as a source of emotional catharsis and spiritual passion ... the story of modern sport is the story of the modern world ... sport demands the attention of the academic.

Mangan, Majumdar & Dyreson (2009: xii-xiii)

[Page left blank on purpose]

Acknowledgments

I am grateful to numerous individuals and organisations for their assistance and encouragement throughout this project.

I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisors, Professor Rita Espanha and Professor Sonny Lo, for their invaluable support and guidance throughout this research project. The unwavering encouragement, patience and reassuring assessment of the study provided by Professor Rita, as well as the insightful comments and confidence instilled by Professor Lo, were instrumental in the success of this project.

I would also like to thank Professor Richard Fitzgerald for his invaluable contributions to the formulation of the qualitative methodology used in this thesis.

I am also thankful to the CIES member's staff for all the considerate guidance. Furthermore, I would like to express my gratitude also to the FCT for its financial assistance.

My love and gratitude go to my children Rui Francisco and Marta. I would also like to express my gratitude to my husband, Rui Pedro, for his unwavering support, which was instrumental in my success.

My enormous gratitude to all research participants to generously spend their valuable time and shared with me their knowledge. I am also grateful to the partners, who provided me with invaluable guidance, especially in the field of sports entrepreneurship.

A warm thank you to my friends, who accompanied me closely throughout this journey, encouraging me and sharing their ideas and observations.

*

The research that contributed to the production of this thesis was sponsored by the Portuguese National Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT), with the award of a Doctoral Research Grant, reference SFRH/BD/128855/2017.

[Page left blank on purpose]

Abstract

Among all types of sport, football has had the greatest capacity to promote cohesion in Europe. This is due to the extraordinary popularity and the social and cultural consequences of its unrivalled standing within popular culture. This enables it to reach a vast audience, while becoming an integral part of the national and global imagination. At the same time, it is disputed by unprecedented economic interests. Consequently, it is a multidimensional phenomenon, of rare complexity, which raises many questions and needs to be studied from various disciplinary angles.

In discussing the transformations that have led to football as an industry, we are inevitably exploring one of the most engaged forms of popular culture in the way it is mediated and consumed. Our aim is to disseminate knowledge, making it more adequate, and making discoveries, to provide explanations to explain why things are the way they are, and how they could be. To accomplish this, our focus is to comprehend the connection between sports organizations and the media, a relationship that has been affected by economic, political, socio-cultural, and technological factors. This leads us to the following research question: what contextual factors determine bargaining power of broadcasting rights in professional European football?

Therefore, this study adopts a constructivist grounded theory methodology with the aim to providing theoretical explanations of the contextual factors that determine the bargaining power of broadcasting rights in European professional football. The research gathered rich empirical data through semi-structured interviews with experts and a heterogeneous set of documents. Data were analysed using grounded theory coding techniques to construct an abstract rendering of the interactions between the various stakeholders in the media/football complex.

The findings indicate that the media/football complex is a highly dynamic system in which actors are engaged in a constant process of negotiation regarding their respective positions and power relations. Furthermore, the media system is undergoing a period of significant transformation, with traditional broadcasters potentially losing ground to large technology companies. This could result in uncertainty regarding the bargaining power of broadcasting rights in professional European football. Therefore, centralised sports rights play a key role bargaining power of broadcasting rights, but they are not the driving force.

Our conclusion is that the forces of commercialisation and globalisation will continue to shape football as long as there are fans, who are inextricably linked to the capitalist social order, continue to feed the industry. Moreover, football is not a product of the sports industry or the media. The football

precedes them. While the sports industry and the media feed on sporting excellence and spectacle, the irony is that they run the risk of seeing 'neither the player nor the game'.

Keywords: football; media; broadcasting revenues; fans; culture; Europe.

Resumo

Entre todos os tipos de desporto, o futebol é o que tem tido maior capacidade de promover a coesão na Europa. Este facto deve-se à sua extraordinária popularidade e às consequências sociais e culturais da sua posição inigualável na cultura popular. Isto permite-lhe atingir um vasto público, tornando-se parte integrante do imaginário nacional e mundial, enquanto é disputado por interesses económicos sem precedentes. Consequentemente, é um fenómeno multidimensional, de uma complexidade rara, que levanta muitas questões e que precisa de ser estudado de vários ângulos disciplinares.

Ao discutir as transformações que conduziram o futebol enquanto indústria, estamos inevitavelmente a explorar uma das formas mais empenhadas da cultura popular na forma como é mediada e consumida. O nosso objetivo é difundir o conhecimento, tornando-o mais adequado e fazendo descobertas, para fornecer explicações que mostrem porque é que as coisas são como são e como poderiam ser. Para isso, o nosso foco é compreender a ligação entre as organizações desportivas e os media, uma relação que tem sido afetada por fatores económicos, políticos, socioculturais e tecnológicos. Neste sentido, definimos como questão de investigação quais os fatores contextuais que determinam o poder de negociação dos direitos de transmissão no futebol profissional europeu.

Este estudo adota uma metodologia construtivista da teoria fundamentada com o objetivo de fornecer explicações teóricas sobre os fatores contextuais que determinam o poder de negociação dos direitos de transmissão audiovisuais no futebol profissional europeu. A investigação recolheu dados empíricos ricos, através de entrevistas semiestruturadas com peritos e de um conjunto heterogéneo de documentos. Os dados foram analisados utilizando técnicas de codificação da teoria fundamentada para construir uma representação abstrata da interação dos vários *stakeholders* afetos ao complexo media/futebol.

Os resultados indicam que o complexo media/futebol é um sistema altamente dinâmico, em que os *stakeholders* estão envolvidos num processo constante de negociação das respetivas posições e relações de poder. Além disso, o sistema dos media está a atravessar um período de transformação significativa, com os organismos de radiodifusão tradicionais a perderem potencialmente terreno para as grandes empresas tecnológicas. Este facto pode gerar incerteza quanto ao poder de negociação dos direitos de transmissão no futebol profissional europeu. Por conseguinte, a centralização dos direitos de transmissão desempenha um papel fundamental no poder de negociação, mas não são a sua força motriz.

A nossa conclusão é que as forças da comercialização e da globalização continuarão a moldar o futebol enquanto os adeptos, que estão inextricavelmente ligados à ordem social capitalista,

continuarem a alimentar a indústria. Além disso, o futebol não é um produto da indústria desportiva ou dos media. O futebol precede-os. Embora a indústria desportiva e os media se alimentem da excelência e do espetáculo desportivo, a ironia é que correm o risco de não ver 'nem o jogador nem o jogo'.

Palavras-chave: futebol; media; fãs; receitas de transmissão; cultura; Europa.

Contents

Acknowledgments	v
Abstract	vii
Resumo	ix
List of Tables	xvii
List of Figures	xix
List of Abbreviations	xxi
List of Acronyms	xxiii
CHAPTER 1	1
Introduction	1
1.1. Chapter Overview	1
1.2. Conceptual Framework	1
1.3. Research Relevance	8
1.4. Research Objectives and Aims	9
1.5. Structure of the thesis	13
CHAPTER 2	17
Methodology and Research Design	17
2.1 Chapter Overview	17
2.2. From Discovery to Construction: Choosing a Methodology	17
2.2.1. Philosophical underpinnings and paradigmatic considerations	20
2.3. Turning to the Literature Review	22
2.4. Grounded Theory Approach	23
2.5. Charmaz's Constructivist Grounded Theory Approach	26
2.5.1. Symbolic interactionism	29
2.5.2. Social constructionism	30
2.5.3. Interpretivism	32
2.6. Data Collection Strategy	33
2.6.1. Gathering rich data	35
2.6.2. Semi-structured interviews	36
2.6.3. Documentary sources	41
2.7. Data Coding and Analysis	45
2.7.1. Initial or open coding	47
2.7.2. Focused coding	50

2.7.3. Memoing	51
2.7.4. Theoretical sampling	53
2.8. Constant Comparison, Abduction and Reflexivity	54
2.8.1. Theoretical saturation	59
2.8.2. Evaluation criteria	59
2.8.3. Ethical considerations	60
2.9. In Summary	62
CHAPTER 3.....	65
From Mediation to Mediatiation.....	65
3.1. Chapter Overview.....	65
3.2. The Symbiotic Relationship Between the Media and Football	65
3.3. The Sports Press: Organisation, Autonomy and Fragmentation	68
3.3.1. The traditional press: one of the main structuring agents of sport.....	69
3.3.2. The massification of football: the construction of social reality	72
3.4. The Role of Radio in Sports	76
3.5. The Role of Television in Sport	78
3.5.1. Televised football as entertainment	80
3.6. The Symbiotic Relationship in the 'Post-Mass' Era.....	86
3.7. Media/Football Complex: Networking Organization.....	89
3.8. In Summary	90
CHAPTER 4.....	93
Globalisation: Materialism versus Culture.....	93
4.1. Chapter Overview.....	93
4.2. The Media/Football Complex: Materialism and Culture.....	93
4.3. Globalisation and Intercultural Context	95
4.3.1. The socio-cultural influence of football on a global scale.....	98
4.3.2. Media processes and effects of mediatization on culture and society	100
4.4. Football Cycles: Historical and Structural Evolution	102
4.4.1. The new <i>status quo</i> of Postmodernism: citizen as consumer.....	107
4.5. The Power of Television to Market a Product	109
4.5.1. Media rights revenue in European League	113
4.5.2. Global markets and cultural flows	118
4.6. In Summary	122
CHAPTER 5.....	123

Structure and Governance of European Football	123
5.1. Chapter Overview	123
5.2. The Conceptual Construction of the 'European Model of Sport'	123
5.2.1. Comparing US and European sports leagues	126
5.3. The European Football Pyramidal Structure	127
5.4. The Transformation of the European Football Pyramid	131
5.5. From Pyramids to Networks: the New Configuration	135
5.5.1. Network governance, rationalities and forms	136
5.5.2. Stakeholder environment in governance network	138
5.5.3. Guidelines and principles for network governance	142
5.5.4. Independent fan initiatives spokespersons	144
5.6. In Summary	147
CHAPTER 6	150
Football Determinants: Economic and Policy	150
6.1 Chapter Overview	150
6.2. The Political Economy of Football	150
6.2.1. The bridge between the fields of football economics and football policy	154
6.3. Determinants of Supply and Demand: Sporting and Economic	155
6.4. Sport Determinants	157
6.4.1. Outcome uncertainty and team quality	157
6.4.2. Playing success	160
6.4.3. Entertaining	161
6.4.4. Promotion vs relegation	162
6.5. Economic Determinants	169
6.5.1. Revenues	170
6.5.2. Market sizes	172
6.6. Other Determinants	173
6.6.1. Culture and identity	173
6.6.2. Fandom and community	176
6.6.3. Fan loyalty	177
6.6.4. Consumer behaviour	181
6.6.5. Exhibition games and tournaments	184
6.6.6. League size and match day/time	184
6.6.7. Live streams	184

6.7. In Summary	185
CHAPTER 7.....	186
Competitive Balance and Sport Media Rights	186
7.1 Chapter Overview.....	186
7.2. Competitive Balance in European Leagues	186
7.2.1 The football value chain: competitive advantages.....	192
7.2.2. The domestic league's competitiveness, or the 'track' to Europe	194
7.3. Portuguese Professional Football League	197
7.3.1. Football broadcast rights: individual versus collective bargaining.....	200
7.4. Government Imperatives and Bargaining Seduction.....	202
7.5. Background on Sports Rights in Portugal	206
7.5.1. The Big 3 and others	210
7.6. Centralisation: The 'Negotiations'	214
7.6.1. David and Goliath – or the art of negotiation	217
7.6.2. Is this the best time to centralise: maybe yes, maybe no?	220
7.7. In Summary	222
CHAPTER 8.....	224
Regulation, Media Sport and Piracy in the Digital Age	224
8.1. Chapter Overview.....	224
8.2. Media Political Economy Overview	224
8.2.1. Media governance: a political and regulatory approach	225
8.2.2. The regulation of access to public interest sporting events	227
8.2.3. Regulatory barriers for access to sports content	232
8.3. Competition Regulations	232
8.3.1. Digital sports broadcasting market political economy.....	235
8.3.2. Multilevel governance: horizontal and vertical mergers and acquisitions	238
8.3.3. Concentration of new technology and deregulated markets	240
8.3.4. Building a leadership platform: broadcasters and distributors.....	242
8.3.5. Concentration of ownership between broadcasters and sports clubs	244
8.3.6. Circulation of power in so-called digital ecosystems	246
8.4. Live Sport Media Market and Digital Piracy	248
8.4.1. Live sports piracy.....	249
8.4.2. The lure of diasporas sport market	252
8.4.3. Is the rise of digital piracy the hidden competitor to Pay-Tv?	257

8.5. In Summary	261
CHAPTER 9.....	263
Discussion and Conclusion.....	263
9.1 Chapter Overview.....	263
9.2. Generalization, Data Analysis and Interpretation of Results.....	263
9.3. Discussion	264
9.3.1. Power in media/football complex: macro- meso- and micro	272
9.4. Main Conclusions	276
9.5. Field of Application.....	278
9.6. Research Limitations	280
9.6.1. Methodology implications	280
9.6.2. Limitations regarding the nature of the model	281
9.7. Future Research Perspectives.....	282
References	283
Appendices	337

[Page left blank on purpose]

List of Tables

TABLE 1. PHILOSOPHICAL ASSUMPTIONS	22
TABLE 2. COMPARISON OF THE THREE STRANDS OF GROUNDED THEORY	25
TABLE 3. SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM – GROUNDED THEORY METHODOLOGY	30
TABLE 4. THE CORE COMPONENTS OF THE GROUNDED THEORY DATA COLLECTION.....	35
TABLE 5. SUMMARY OF INTERVIEWEES ACCORDING TO THEIR AFFILIATION.....	39
TABLE 6. ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF INTERVIEW ADMINISTRATION FROM EMAIL	41
TABLE 7. COLLECTION OF DOCUMENTARY SOURCES OF SECONDARY ANALYSIS	42
TABLE 8. COLLECTION OF INSTITUTIONAL DOCUMENTS	44
TABLE 9. LIST OF DOCUMENTS – MASS MEDIA INTERVIEWS	45
TABLE 10. SUMMARY OF CGT CODING STAGES	47
TABLE 11. EXAMPLES OF OPEN CODING.....	49
TABLE 12. EXAMPLES OF FOCUSED CODE	51
TABLE 13. EVALUATION CRITERIA	60
TABLE 14. OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY’S RESEARCH DESIGN.....	62
TABLE 15. BROADCAST REVENUES FOR SEASON 2023/2024 (IN MILLION €)	115
TABLE 16. DETERMINANTS OF GAME ATTENDANCE.....	157
TABLE 17. TITLES WON IN THE BIGGEST EUROPEAN LEAGUES DURING THE LAST 32 YEARS.....	166
TABLE 18. LIST OF UCL AND UEL WINNERS DURING CENTURY 21 ST EDITIONS	205
TABLE 19. TOP FIVE OF THE MOST WATCHED PROGRAMMES IN MARCH 2024	232
TABLE 20. THE SPORTS BROADCASTING VALUE CHAIN	236

[Page left blank on purpose]

List of Figures

FIGURE 1. DIAGRAMMATIC EXPLANATION OF CONSTRUCTIVIST GROUNDED THEORY	28
FIGURE 2. THE CODING PROCEDURE OF CONSTRUCTIVIST GROUNDED THEORY	47
FIGURE 3. EXAMPLE OF AN ANALYTIC MEMO	53
FIGURE 4. A STREAMLINED CODES-TO-THEORY MODEL FOR QUALITATIVE INQUIRY	63
FIGURE 5. THE RECIPROCAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MEDIATISATION AND MEDIATION	66
FIGURE 6. THE PYRAMIDAL STRUCTURE OF EUROPEAN FOOTBALL	128
FIGURE 7. THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE EUROPEAN FOOTBALL PYRAMID	134
FIGURE 8. CONVERGENCE OF KEY STAKEHOLDERS: 'FROM THE PYRAMID TO THE NETWORK'	138
FIGURE 9. THE DRIVING FORCES BEHIND THE GOVERNANCE NETWORK OF EUROPEAN FOOTBALL	140
FIGURE 10. BIG 3 CLUBS – MAIN REVENUES IN 2021/22	207
FIGURE 11. BIG FIVE ANNUAL VALUE OF CURRENTLY ACTIVE DEALS (2023/24).....	210
FIGURE 12. COMPARISON OF UEFA COMPETITIONS INCOME OF BIG 3 OVER THE LAST TWO SEASONS	213
FIGURE 13. MEDIA GOVERNANCE AS HORIZONTAL AND VERTICAL EXTENSION OF GOVERNMENT	239
FIGURE 14. SPORTS BROADCASTING MARKET - TRANSMISSION RIGHTS PROCESS	242
FIGURE 15. PRICE OF TV PACKAGES AS A PERCENTAGE OF THE AVERAGE SALARY	261

[Page left blank on purpose]

List of Abbreviations

Big 3 – The three biggest clubs in Portugal (SL Benfica, Sporting CP & FC Porto)

Big Five – Five biggest European football Leagues (England, Spain, Germany, Italy & France)

CGT – Constructivist Grounded Theory

FFP – Financial Fair Play

FTA – Free-to-air TV channel

GT – Grounded Theory

GTM – Grounded Theory Methodology

MoU – Memorandum of Understanding

OTT – Over-the-top digital platform

Pay-Tv – Subscribed television channel (premium or pay-per-view channel)

SIT – Social Identity Theory

TV – Television

TVWF – Television Without Frontiers

[Page left blank on purpose]

List of Acronyms

AVMSD	Audiovisual Media Services Directive
BskyB	British Sky Broadcasting Group Plc
BSB	British Satellite Broadcasting
CoE	Council of Europe
EC	European Commission
ECA	European Clubs Association
ECF	European Clubs Forum
ECJ	European Court of Justice
EFL	England Football League
EP	European Parliament
EPFL	European Professional Football Leagues (or European Leagues)
EPL	England Premier League
ESL	European Super League
EU	European Union
FA	Football Associations
FIFA	Fédération Internationale of Football Association
FIFPro	International Federation of Professional Footballers
FPF	Portuguese Football Federation
FSE	Football Supporters Europe
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
IESR	Independent European Sport Review
ITV	Independent Televisions Network
LP	Portuguese Professional Football League (or Liga Portugal)
PCA	Portuguese Competition Authority
PFSC	Professional Football Strategy Council
PPL	Portuguese Premier League
SAD	Sports Limited Company
UCL	UEFA Champions League
UEFA	Union of European Football Associations
UEL	UEFA Europa League
UECL	UEFA Europa Conference League

[Page left blank on purpose]

Introduction

“Some people believe football is a matter of life and death, I am very disappointed with that attitude.

I can assure you it is much, much more important than that”

Bill Shankly (Liverpool icon)

1.1. Chapter Overview

The purpose of this introductory chapter is to present a conceptual framework, define the research objectives of this thesis, explain its importance, and outline the research approach adopted. The relevance of the research is also presented in terms of its thematic, interpretive and motivational aspects. Finally, a brief section is provided which describes the structure of the thesis and indicates to readers the content of each subsequent chapter.

1.2. Conceptual Framework

The centrality of football in European cultures and societies has been established over time through its unique position as the national sport (May, 2002; Manzenreiter & Spitale, 2010; King, 2016). Among all types of sports, football has the greatest capacity to foster community cohesion. This is due to the extraordinary popularity of football and the social and cultural consequences of its unrivalled standing within popular culture. This enables it to reach a vast audience, while becoming an integral part of the national and global imagination.

Football is always, invariably a social event: it makes sense only when it is shared, when it is re-constructed in discourse, when it becomes the thread of collective narratives. As noted, football is a social field in which the complex and dynamic intertwinement of the local and the global plays out in highly visible ways. As a result, multidimensional phenomenon, of a rare complexity, that raises many different issues and needs to be studied from various disciplinary angles. In discussing the transformations that have led football as an industry, we are inevitably exploring one of the most engaged forms of popular culture in the way it is presented and consumed.

In the context of popular culture, football and its representations have become the cornerstone of the TV industry. The media has transformed football from an amateur activity to a hyper-commercialized industry (Billings & Buzzelli, 2022). Consequently, over the past few decades, the football industry has become a highly commodified sector, involving a diverse range of stakeholders,

including investors, sport governing bodies, football clubs, national associations, national leagues, governmental bodies, sports marketing companies, media companies, economists, and supporters.

There is a great debate among authors as to whether football can be considered a game, a business, or both (Kennedy & Kennedy, 2013). However, Becker (2008) suggests that the football industry is an unconventional enterprise that, in many ways, reflects the critique of the social world of the creative industries. This is primarily due to the fact that the football industry phenomenon plays a dual role, involving economic and non-economic determinants (Evens et al., 2013). Our belief is that the football industry is both a business and a game, albeit an unorthodox one.

In light of this, Whannel (2005) presents a pertinent inquiry: whether there are other avenues through which customers (football fans) might maintain elevated levels of consumption despite a decline in quality (success) and an increase in price? Horne (2006) additionally posits that continued consumption (support) in the face of lack of success is perceived as a manifestation of genuine commitment, the assumption of which is the most prolific source of reasons for collective excitement and hysteria. The controversy does not demonstrate a correlation between financial gain and success in football consumption. It is therefore acknowledged that success is predominantly influenced by cultural and social factors that go beyond financial performance.

Consequently, the phenomenon of globalisation has transformed football into a major commercially profitable and heavily sponsored event, with a significant impact on the nature of televised football. The advent of broadcasting has played a pivotal role in the rise in popularity and global dominance of football. The popularity of football on screen led to a significant increase in the price of broadcasting rights. Consequently, there has been a discernible surge in the financial capital invested in European professional football.

This process occurred concurrently with the emergence of neoliberal social relations. It is evident that this process exhibits considerable variation between societies. Nevertheless, the implementation of neoliberal policies is compatible with the organisation of European football, which is structured as a spectacle and represents a means of establishing the use of competitions.

Some scholars have identified the impact of neoliberalism as a significant factor in the relationship between football and the media. Miller (2012) posits that sport represents the most visible and spectacular form of neoliberalism, while Coakley (2011) asserts that football internalises the value of competition and the logic of reward in the public's beliefs. Hoeber and Shaw (2017) posits that football has been transformed into an internationalist capitalist project through the media, which has brought new pressures. In an attempt to capture the attention of spectators, football has become an object of lyrical rhapsody and market values (Miller, 2017).

Since the early 1990s, this process has led to a paradigm shift in European football. On the one hand, due to endogenous 'revolutions', derived from the agents' choices, which were triggered by the

acceleration of technological change, rise of cable, and the emergence of over-the-top (OTT) internet and mobile video streaming services, marketing trends, sponsorship agreements, and licensing arrangements. On the other hand, due to exogenous 'shocks', imposed by external 'forces', such as the so-called Bosman verdict by the European Court of Justice (ECJ) in 1995, is considered as the most shaking external influence on European football in modern times (Hinzpeter 2000). The fact that the Bosman litigation involved a cross-border transfer provided an excellent opportunity for the EC to challenge both the transfer system and decisions regarding foreigners of political UEFA's rules (King, 2016). The Bosman verdict has changed the dynamics of labour relations in professional sport in the EU. Due to the effect of accelerating globalisation, the verdict had a profound impact on the nationality clauses of national leagues, as well as on the rules of the player transfer market, causing growing concerns about identity issues.

Endogenous changes have transformed the football landscape, including the way it is played, broadcast and consumed, as well as business practices. In addition, the liberalisation of the European broadcasting market has had a profound impact on football's funding model. Hutchins, Li & Rowe (2019) argue that the media ecosystem has expanded with the emergence of digital technology, resulting in an increase in the number of delivery platforms and sports channels. The convergence of technology, culture, and media practice has led to the reinforcement of broadcast logics in the delivery of sports on various screens. Consequently, the dissolution of conventional media divisions has precipitated a multitude of consequences for sports broadcasting, as it transitions from the historically dominant medium of broadcast TV to the digital domain of the internet within the contemporary media landscape. Today's content distribution landscape has changed beyond recognition since the broadcast/Pay-Tv era. The proliferation of OTT platforms and markets means that, with sufficient technological and financial resources, it becomes possible for viewers to watch more sport on more devices in more places than ever before and to personalise viewing practices and experiences across a variety of screens and communities of interest (Hutchins & Sanderson, 2017). The OTT platforms are the harbinger of an inclusive sports media market, changing the structure of rights markets and media systems that have long been built around national and regional territories (Evens *et al.*, 2013).

This context has led to the availability of more TV content than ever before (Evens & Lefever, 2011; Lotz, 2014). It has even led to the platforms have set new standards for sports media curation, demanding coverage for an increasingly wide and diverse audience (Boyle & Haynes, 2001; Sandvoss, 2003; Rowe, 2004; Meikle & Young, 2012). Consequently, the structure of the football business has been fundamentally transformed. Despite the opportunities, these changes have also brought about greater regulatory complexity in the national and global media markets (Evens & Smith, 2022).

It is evident that the global expansion of media industries, facilitated by networks (network society), has accelerated the transformation of football in many, if not all, nations (Evens *et al.*, 2013). This has resulted in a shift in the competitive imbalance within the content supply chain (Horn, 2011). The role of sports media networks have come to play a far greater role in the production, distribution, and consumption of football on a global scale has become increasingly significant. This has had a profound impact on the broadcasting sector and sports leagues (Cave & Crandall, 2001). In recent decades, the exponential growth of the broadcast rights market has resulted in an increase in revenues for football clubs (Szymanski, 2006).

In the context of discussing endogenous 'revolutions', it is inevitable to address the 'network society' and its consequent significant impact on the global business and sports landscape. Although social in origin and organised according to who holds power in dominant institutions, such networks are based on capital flows and have been dramatically expanded in their reach and complexity of interaction by recent rapid technological advances (Castells, 2007). In this context, capital is largely synonymous with power and takes on mobile informational forms as well as 'traditional' material and symbolic forms (Millward, 2013). The influence of neoliberal policy frameworks has led to the implementation of fundamental changes in conventional governance frameworks.

In the context of the discussion on exogenous 'shocks', we know that an exogenous stimulus is based on realities that can only be changed to a very limited extent by the agents receiving the stimulus. As a result, they have led to internal disputes over the free movement of professional footballers within the territory of another member state of the European Union, which have only been resolved by the intervention of the European Court of Justice (ECJ). The ECJ forced UEFA and FIFA to revise their regulations and ensured that their rules were in line with European law. As football has become an economic enterprise in its own right, political authorities, and the EU in particular, have begun to question certain rules created and applied by these independent regulatory bodies, especially those concerning the transfer of players across EU borders (Crocì, 2001).

European football has intrinsic market characteristics governed by national and international institutions. In this context, the EU has served as an alternative policy forum for football stakeholders seeking to challenge the decisions of football federations. The EU and football stakeholders can be considered two systems of multilevel governance that have coexisted in parallel (García, 2008).

The organisation and functioning of media systems in the EU vary due to differences in funding, structure, and political independence (Gibbons & Humphreys, 2012). These variations can be attributed to the different traditions, political cultures and regulatory systems that exist in each Member State (Iosifidis, 2011). Consequently, the EU's assertion that revenues from the sale of broadcasting rights are largely dependent on the size of national broadcasting markets needs to be

considered in conjunction with other structural changes if a full understanding of their impact is to be achieved.

From this perspective, the concept of 'media logic' is useful for understanding the processes of mediatisation and the ways in which the media influence communication and social interaction in various domains of society (Hjarvard, 2018). However, as content sources proliferated (especially on the internet and social media) the once mass audience became balkanized into smaller and often heterogeneous niche audiences (Napoli & Sybblis, 2007). These audience fragments consume different constellations of media sources and, therefore, acquire different information and develop different attitudes because rhetoric is epistemic (Benoit & Billings, 2020). An appreciation of the processes of mediatisation necessitates a more profound comprehension of the cultural, social and economic contexts and frameworks within which TV sports rights are sold and ultimately distributed.

The combination of local and global broadcasting rights holders may combine the local with the global, as the market for match attendance is geographically narrow, whereas the market for TV viewing is potentially geographically wide. A move towards more extensive TV coverage of live matches is likely to intensify competition, which is only mitigated by fan loyalty or multiple affiliations (Sandy, Sloane & Rosentraub, 2004).

Much of the discussion on the impact of TV broadcasting rights can sometimes appear to dwell at length on the technical and legal debates and arguments surrounding the issue of rights. In this regard, Evens *et al.*, (2013) make a point of highlighting the main competition (collective selling) and public interest (role of free-to-air broadcasting) issues raised in relation to the TV sports broadcasting market.

Particularly in the last twenty-five years, the development of football as an industry has reached an all-time high, revolutionising the competitive imbalance in the football value chain. Recognising that the financial sustainability of football clubs is largely dependent on broadcasting rights, it is imperative that the equitable distribution of revenues is essential to maintain the integrity of competitions and leagues (Donnelly, 2015). If there are significant discrepancies in income levels among teams, those with higher incomes will have an advantage in attracting and retaining the top players. If this occurs, it may be possible for a group of teams to dominate a league, which could in turn result in a decrease of competition (Hughes, 2000; Downward, Dawson & Dejonghe, 2009). As a result, this could contribute to a change in its governance structure at different levels (García, 2011).

Any research exercise has to define its limits, otherwise it will continue indefinitely. The early 1990s was an appropriate starting point, as it coincided with the development of satellite, digital and pay-per-view TV, and the consequent increase in revenue from the sale of broadcasting rights by clubs, which transformed the game and its governance structures.

One of our main arguments is that if we want to fully understand all the dimensions of this endeavour, we need research to be conducted from different paradigms. The paradigms from which

we operate as researchers, whether social constructionist, pragmatism, interpretivism, critical social science, postmodernism, or a combination of these paradigms, shape the questions we ask, the methods we use and the degree to which our results will have an impact on society (Schultz & Hatch, 1996; Creswell, 2009).

This study, however, follows these two distinct but interconnected areas, media and sport, categorised by different academic disciplines, which reflects their interdisciplinary nature. Sport is an area of academic interest that has stimulated research through a series of academic disciplines called 'sport studies', as mentioned by Ratton and Jones (2010). The field of 'media studies' brings communication, culture, and technology together. It encompasses different disciplines and theoretical traditions. While each field sees itself as the centre of knowledge, it is from this centre that their interdisciplinary links can be realised (Leeuwen, 2005). Several authors have conceptualised the link between media studies and sport (see: Horne, 2006; Boyle & Haynes, 2009; Miller, 2009; Fiske, 2010; Billings; 2011; Haynes, 2016, Hartley, 2020; Jensen, 2020). There is also a body of literature that specifically examines the influence of fans as consumers in the context of critical engagement with media ecosystems (Zuckerman, 2021), the configuration of media power and its articulation in the public policy system (Iosifidis, 2015), the demand for sports broadcasting (Buraimo, 2019; Gratton & Solberg, 2007), and the codes and conventions of audiovisual production and reception (Evens et al., 2013; Evens & Smith, 2022). In addition, questions of power are central to understanding the role of sport in global processes and the formation of political identity (Maguire, 2005).

The study focused multi-paradigmatic qualitative research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Qualitative research aims to approach the world 'out there' (rather than in specialised research setting such as a laboratory) and to understand, describe and sometimes explain social phenomena 'from the inside' in a number of different ways: by analysing the experiences of individuals or groups; by analysing interactions and communication in the making; by analysing documents (texts, images, films, or music) or similar traces of experiences or interactions (Flick, 2018b). Therefore, it aims to explore a world of meanings, interpretations, feelings, discourses and interactions (Gubrium & Holstein, 1979), understanding and context (Knoblauch, Flick & Maeder, 2005).

Context posits the idea that all knowledge is provisional and dependent on specific situations (Jaeger & Rosnow, 1988). Contexts are important for situating actions and understanding their broader social and historical significance. The word 'context' comes from the Latin *contextus*. It means 'to join together' or 'to weave together'. It is a constantly used but not easily explained term - the view that actions, expressions, behaviours and so on can only be understood in relation to a specific context. The term is polysemous and has a long history of investigation across disciplinary traditions (Dahler-Larsen & Schwandt, 2012). Within this universe, social interaction is an exceptionally nuanced endeavour, mediated by a range of different contextual affordances (Jenks, 2018).

Thus, any ideological explanation is shaped by a compromise between the different dimensions that surround its interpretation or activity (such as an evaluation), which take place in an identity, historical and cultural context. Therefore, fundamental theoretical frameworks serve as a mechanism through which the holistic approach is operationalised, as their discussion is systemic, comprehensive and integrated (Schwandt, 2007). A holistic interpretation is not limited to a single paradigm. As a result, contextual factors should be taken into account: its social arrangement, its ways of working, and its explicit and implicit rules (Miles, Huberman & Saldaña, 2014; Brodin & Avery, 2020). It is essential to provide an overview of the context under study through an intersectoral understanding of the diversity of impacts and strategies associated with the development of the media/football complex. As well as locating it not only in the context of national cultures, but also as implicated in the growth of globalisation and global culture, and the shift towards conditions and processes symptomatic of late, 'high' or post-modernity (Wenner, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Boyle & Haynes, 2001). Consequently, the research adopts a complementary set of theories (Guba & Lincoln, 2000), supporting an epistemological cluster (Elder-Vass, 2012) through the lens of the network society.

Interaction is recommended as a reciprocal act between the situation and the researcher (Horn, 2011). Research, in its act, requires dialogue (or conversation), and dialogue requires interpretation, which is why the contributions from the theoretical perspective propose a link between the different traditions of sociological theory - the microscopic, which emphasises the self and the interaction between individuals; the mesoscopic, which seeks to explain the interactions between groups at the institutional level; and the macroscopic, which focuses on the institutional, cultural and societal levels (Blau, 1987; Pettigrew, 2006).

Consequently, to comprehend stakeholder practices, it is imperative to enhance the analytical potential of the 'micro-meso-macro movements' (Knorr-Cetina, 1981; Fuchs, 1989; Talib & Fitzgerald, 2016; 2018). This analytical framework covers individuals, groups, systems, as well as organizational, social, and technological contexts.

According to Luhmann (1987), the interaction of the social system is empirical, while the distinction between levels of analysis is logical. For this reason, our social analysis distinguishes between the meso, macro and micro levels. Within the framework of this analysis, Seth (2016) and Cast & Stets (2016) argue that the institutional sphere constitutes the macro-structural level and the cultural basis that defines the fundamental elements of social life, i.e., the systemic dimension. The transitory movement or meso level, on the other hand, emphasises its mediating function and concerns shared expectations. The micro level refers to the small-scale patterns of society.

1.3. Research Relevance

In *The Structures of the Lifeworld*, Schutz and Luckmann state that issues become relevant when engaged with and therefore distinguish three types of relevance: thematic, interpretive, and motivational (1973). It is recognized that certain sectors of the academic community perceive football as a mere form of entertainment with minimal formal implications. However, we aim to challenge this perspective and emphasize its significance.

Thematic relevance, overall, describes ‘what’ topics the project will focus on and ‘how’ we will do this. Relevance is defined in this study as the problematic object that is questioned while being embedded within an established order, as pointed out by Schutz (1973). Our thematic focus is on the merger of many entities linked by a common concentration of corporate, albeit sometimes contradictory interests within the media/football complex.

Schutz and Luckmann (1989) define interpretive relevance as a second concept of relevance. In order to determine which elements of our knowledge are relevant to the interpretation of the problem under study, we assume that any discussion must present all sides of the story, even if these apparently paradoxical sides lead us to question the implicit assumptions underlying our work. We have therefore adopted a multi and interdisciplinary approach, which can be seen as a means of overcoming ‘tunnel vision’ (Klein, 1990). The decisions made within this research and the processes followed to address them emphasised the researcher’s philosophy. This is crucial, as it is believed that there should be a congruence between the method and the worldviews of the researcher (Lauridsen & Higginbottom, 2014).

Schutz and Luckmann’s (1989) third concept of relevance is defined as motivational relevance and centres on the question: To what extent should the problem be investigated? Barbalet (2009) emphasised that doubt stimulates investigation and therefore science. Thus, any investigation only makes sense when it is a concern; after all, only those who experience things can aspire to understand them and develop theory. Ignoring an activity that attracts almost a seventh of the world’s population, albeit temporarily, would be unwise, as Rowe (2012) points out. It is true that this apparently futile game seems to occupy a totally disproportionate and over-dimensioned place in the simultaneously national, transnational and European societies, that is, “in the life in which we have been placed”, according to Max Weber. Thus, our motivation is to understand the essence of what Weber (1949, p. 41) called the ‘science of reality’, defined by the author as “the understanding in its idiosyncrasy the reality of life that surrounds us, the life in which we have been placed - on the one hand, the context and cultural significance of its individual phenomena in their contemporary form, on the other hand, the reasons for their having historically become so and not otherwise”.

1.4. Research Objectives and Aims

Our aim is to disseminate previously unknown information, advancing human knowledge, making it more adequate, and making discoveries (at its simplest), to provide additional explanations - to explain why things are the way they are, and how they could be. To accomplish this, our focus is to comprehend the connection between sports organizations and the media, a relationship that has been affected by economic, political, socio-cultural, and technological factors. Guba (1990, p. 19) emphasises the importance of discovering the true nature of reality in an objective way; he says: “we must discover (in an objectivist way) the ‘true’ nature of reality and how it ‘truly’ works”. Elias (1986, p. 20) adds that “it is the discovery, not the method, that legitimises research as scientific”.

The aim is to develop a substantive grounded theory (GT) that explains the contextual factors that determine the bargaining power of broadcasting rights in European professional football. Although we recognise that theory refers to a set of concepts and their plausible interrelationships, as described by Urquhart (2013), we take a holistic view to look at the whole and not just the sum of the parts. By framing the research in this way, it became possible to consider the interactions of the endogenous ‘revolutions’ and the exogenous ‘shock’ between the actors and the socio-cultural context. The logical extension of the constructivist approach is to learn how, when and to what extent the experience under study is integrated into wider and often hidden positions, networks, situations and relationships. As a result, differences and distinctions between people become visible, as do the hierarchies of power, communication and opportunity that maintain and perpetuate these differences and distinctions (Charmaz, 2016).

The cultural, economic, historical, political, and geographical conditions determine the logic, values, epistemological assumptions, and worldview that influence the types of problems investigated within grounded theory geographical contextualisation (Charmaz, 2006). In terms of geographical contextualisation, this study maintains the scope of European football, as stated, but goes further by considering the broad resonance of the constituent elements of the media/football complex. Even when viewed through a specific lens, it is necessary to acknowledge the global nature of this ecosystem (Eisenberg & Lanfranchi, 2006).

Constructivist grounded theorists aim to produce interpretive theories that seek to understand how people construct meaning and act based on their view of reality. On the basis that group life provides the setting for individual experience and exerts a decisive influence on that experience, the research had to be grounded in the empirical study (Blumer, 1969).

There are different types of qualitative research, each with its own purpose and structure (Creswell, 2013). However, given the exploratory nature of the study and the complexities of the

phenomenon, a constructivist grounded theory (CGT) method was used to conduct the research (Charmaz, 2014).

Given that the focus of the study is to understand 'why' and 'how' the interdependent networks linking the different actors operate, in other words, the networks that regulate privileges or exclude interests or positions, in a system we call the media/football complex. The strategy of qualitative methodology as a set of interpretive activities that influence the distribution of power between actors recognises that this is a non-linear process that depends on the current social, political and economic landscape. The formulation of a research question is crucial in determining the design and conduct of empirical research (Wallace & Wray, 2016). Therefore, the research question for this study is: What contextual factors determine bargaining power of broadcasting rights in professional European football?

Research attempts to generalise from something specific. Therefore, the research question is exploratory in nature and started from the challenge posed by Directive 2010/13/EU of the European Parliament, which states that revenues from the sale of broadcasting rights are mainly determined by the size of national broadcasting markets. The research question encourages us to assume that the implicit assumptions of the EU are only one of many contextual factors and that there are wider constraints at play. A commitment that is also informed by one of the many assumptions of GT, which is to explain and modify existing theories (Strauss and Corbin, 1990).

Thus, in terms of structure, the thesis presents a hermeneutic perspective focused on understanding [how the media's relationship with football developed] (phenomenology used to describe and provide concepts); it then presents the interpretive and constructive perspective to arrive at [which contextual levers that determine the negotiation of broadcasting rights in European professional football] (it analyses and discusses the existing literature guided by emerging theory).

First, it compares existing literature on changes in football governance and neoliberal policies; then focus on the determinants of supply and demand - sports, economic and other. Second, focus on the link between football and fans - changes in the broadcasting market. Third, focus on the political, economic and managerial dimensions of the media system; explore governance - mergers and acquisitions, challenges and emerging trends. Competitive strategies, technological development, resources and skills from an economic and cultural perspective.

As previously stated, in the absence of a valid theoretical framework, this thesis is based on an established methodological approach (grounded theory) for the inductive construction of theories about the complexity of the phenomenon under study. The constructionist version of GT was employed, which assumes that people create and maintain meaningful worlds through dialectical processes of conferring meaning on their realities and acting within them. Fundamentally, because

social reality is not an independent entity, but rather a construct that emerges from human action (Charmaz, 2000).

In its simplest form, GT can be defined as “a largely inductive method of developing theory through close contact with the empirical world” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008, p. 44). CGT is also abductive. Mainly because we rely on reasoning to account for the findings that we find in the data through all possible theoretical explanations (Richardson & Kramer, 2006; Strübing, 2007; Charmaz, 2014).

Lewis (2002) argues that it is impossible to engage in any kind of ordered thinking about the social world without making a commitment (even if implicitly) to some kind of social ontology, because any attempt to conceptualize these phenomena inevitably involves an adoption of some image of the nature of the social being. Our involvement in sport is full of personal and socially generated meanings in different social and cultural contexts (Brustad, 2009).

Sport is an entirely human endeavour. Are connected with major spheres of social life such as family, economy, media, politics, education, and religion (Coakley, 2014). Gratton and Jones (2010) emphasize that sport, as a social phenomenon, needs to be thought of as something as abstract as the nature of social ‘reality’.

Gratton and Jones (2010, p. 29) add that “in the analysis of sport, it is not possible to reliably predict a causal relationship between X and Y – unlike the subject matter of the natural sciences – we all have, to differing extents, freedom to act in a number of different ways”. The individuals who participate in, watch or manage sports are acted upon by a number of external social forces - actions which carry with them intentions and meanings and lead to consequences.

Thus, it can therefore be assumed that the researcher's experience will be enlightening when the representation and meaning of an object is revealed by presenting it in its original form. In light of this, it is clear that context in academic writing requires a degree of introspection, an understanding of sophisticated theoretical frameworks, an appreciation of global and local perspectives, a capacity for critical analysis and the use of interdisciplinary methodologies (Hargreaves & McDonald, 2000; Ruddock, 2001).

Decision-making under uncertainty and often rely on simplistic ‘rules of thumb’, known as heuristics. Heuristics (from the Greek *heuriskien*, meaning ‘to find or to discover’) means engaging in scientific research through methods and processes focused on discovery (Gass & Fu, 2013). This is of fundamental importance when new questions are posed for the purpose of future orientation.

The heuristic approach is determined by the global scope of interrelationships. The unifying power of heuristics connects previously unrelated fields (Abbott, 2004). Moustakas (1990) notes that seeking to understand oneself and the world in which one lives has been a challenge and a puzzle. Therefore, heuristics are essential in any research aiming to explore multicultural, contextual, intersubjective, and embodied axes, irrespective of its paradigm or orientation (Sultan, 2018).

Consequently, any form of perception or knowledge, such as sensation, intuition or cognition, that arises in the researcher's consciousness, prompts further clarification. It is recognized that an object's true nature and significance are revealed when presented as they are. The expansion of knowledge is not the only outcome; the researcher's personal experience is also illuminated throughout the process.

Completing a literature review in a GT study is a contentious topic. It is believed that conducting one can cause interpretation of the data collected to be influenced by a prior reading of the literature, known as forcing theory onto data (Glaser & Strauss 1967; Glaser 1978). Furthermore, it was postulated that the process would contaminate the researcher's mind and force concepts into the analysis rather than those that emerged from the data. More recently, another current has argued that an 'exploratory' literature review is useful for building a knowledge base and identifying gaps in the literature (Strauss & Corbin, 1998; McGhee, Marland & Atkinson, 2007; Charmaz, 2008). Strauss and Corbin (1990) state that we all bring background literature to the research. Charmaz (2014) points out that is impossible not to be immersed in CGT literature.

The structure of our literature review is based on an interdisciplinary approach. It assumes the necessity of multiple collaborations as bridge-builders or integrators. It is at these points of intersection, or areas of overlap, that the dialectic between the various disciplines takes place.

One way of thinking of the debate is to imagine a continuum where many disciplines intersect, and different sub-disciplines influence each other. As sociology, a discipline that studies social contexts and organisations, making significant contributions to the field of sport studies (Dunning & Rojek, 1992; Coakley, 2014; Hargreaves, 2014; Maguire, 2014; Karen & Washington, 2015); communication studies (Hansen, Simon, Cottle & Newbold, 1989; Rieffel, 2003; Castells, 2009; McQuail, 2010; Fuchs, 2011); history is an essential academic field that provides factual accounts of cultural dynamics and transformations (Williams, 1977; Guttman, 1994; Murray, 2006; Gunn, 2011; Collins, 2013; King, 2017); anthropology, political science, and geopolitics are primarily concerned with the study of organizations, information networks and external relationships (Hoberman, 1984; Brewer, 2001; Auger, 2003; Bale, 2003; Sugden & Tomlinson, 2013; Grix, 2016; Lo, 2016; Powis, 2020); economic and policy (Andreff, 1996; 2008; Baimbridge, 1998; Hoehn & Szymanski, 1999; Gratton & Taylor, 2000; Jeanrenaud & Kesenne, 2006); sport management and marketing, as applied disciplines, view sports broadcasting as a fundamental component of contemporary commerce (Slack, 2004; Albarran, 2006; Desbordes, 2007; Chadwick & Arthur, 2008; Desbordes & Richelieu, 2012; Fajak & Frawley, 2022).

Cultural studies are a prominent field in sport and media (Klatell & Marcus, 1988; Barnett, 1990; Cullum, 1994; Whannel, 2000; Scannell, 2002; Rowe, 2004; Tomlinson, 2005; Grossberg, 2010; Stokes 2021). Cultural studies (e.g., popular culture, global culture, postmodernism) encompasses a set of approaches that attempt to understand and intervene into the relations of culture and power (Grossberg, 1993). According to Denzin (1992, p. 74), cultural studies direct the interpretive

interactionist towards a critical appraisal of “how interacting individuals connect their lived experiences to the cultural representations of those experiences”. Andrews (2002) asserts that cultural studies’ conjunctural theory-method provides an objective examination of society as a fragmented and historically produced entity comprised of diverse social relations, practices, and experiences. Cultural studies appear to share a view that culture is vital to recognise that sports practices, products and institutions are only fully understood when contextualised within the complex web of social, economic, political, and technological connections that comprise the broader social context (Grossberg & Pollock, 1998). As Denzin (2007) notes, culture is that dynamic, contested, and conflictual site of meanings, values, norms, beliefs, actions, and so on that constitute the fabric of everyday life for a specific social group.

In the field of media studies, an understanding of the approach to audience studies (Morley, 1980; Gunter, 2000; Livingstone, 2005; Hollifield & Coffey, 2006; Ruddock, 2007; Nightingale, 2011; Iosifidis, 2015); broadcasters (Gratton & Solberg, 2007; Buraimo, 2007; Evens, 2014); governance and sport policy (Grix, 2010; Goodwin & Grix, 2011; García, 2011); media policy (Rompuy & Donders, 2014; Donders, 2019); identities (Maguire & Poulton, 1999). It is worth noting that while the economic and political fields share common questions and analytical methods, there may be variations in the fundamental motivations and assumptions of research.

1.5. Structure of the thesis

This section outlines the structure of the thesis, which progresses in a logical manner through nine chapters. A brief overview of each chapter is provided below.

Chapter 1 - Introduction

The purpose of this introductory chapter is to present a conceptual framework, define the research objectives of this thesis, explain its importance, and outline the research approach adopted.

Chapter 2 – Methodology and Research Design

This chapter introduces grounded theory (GT) as the methodology used in this research and explains the research design that was followed. Following the principles of Charmaz’s CGT, we define the conceptual framework and philosophical assumptions that underpin the research. We then present the rationale for the choice of an inductive method, discuss the theoretical concepts that underpin it, and introduce the sampling techniques, data collection methods and range of analysis techniques used. The different stages of the research process are also described.

Chapter 3 – From Mediation to Mediatisation

This chapter presents a descriptive analysis of the processes of mediation and mediatisation of football. It begins by emphasising that there is a symbiotic relationship between football and the

media. Using a conceptual approach, it attempts, on the one hand, to illustrate the historical trajectory of the media system in order to explain how the media and football are constituted as a source of social meaning. On the other hand, it seeks to frame the evolution of this relationship, highlighting the way in which the media has positioned itself as a structuring agent of the sports field and developed into a powerful complex.

Chapter 4 - Globalisation: Materialism versus Culture

This chapter theorises the involvement of the dialectic of materialism versus culture. It analyses how football is affected by neoliberalism. It also examines the role of socio-cultural practices and market power in football in the context of accelerated processes of convergence and globalisation, highlighting the internationalisation of football in three temporal periods: 'traditional modernity', 'modernity' and 'post-modernity'. We examine the intertwining of issues of technological change with macro-transformations of the economic, social, and cultural system to present the new status quo: the citizen as consumer.

Chapter 5 - Structure and network governance of European football

Chapter five is to provide an overview of the organisational structure of football within the context of a European Sports Model. Emphasises the process of developing from the conventional pyramid structure to a networked organisational perspective. It looks at a variety of definitions and discusses how governance plays such a crucial role in the operations of sport organisations through a framework of interconnections where the term governance covers a framework of stakeholder interests. The concept of stakeholders will also be discussed.

Chapter 6 - Football Determinants: Economic and Policy

The chapter gives an overview of the political economy of football. Economics helps us to understand the unique characteristics of the football market, while politics allows us to examine co-optation, participation and the culture of resistance. The relevant theoretical and empirical literature is analysed, with particular attention to the different perspectives on fan culture, in order to identify the intangible elements involved in production and how some of these elements can contribute to the demand for football.

Chapter 7 - Competitive Balance and Sport Media Rights

This chapter addresses the importance of balance in sports competitions. In particular, the competitive balance of the current system for distributing UEFA Champions League (UCL) broadcasting revenues is addressed. The centralisation of the sale of broadcasting rights in the Portuguese market is discussed. The scope of the media market is also analysed. Finally, the role of the three main clubs in the Portuguese Premier League (PPL) is examined. The prospective of the new cycles of broadcasting agreements is analysed, based on nuanced judgements that require reflexivity.

Chapter 8 - Regulation, media sport and piracy in the digital age

This chapter analyses the political, economic, and managerial dimensions of the media system, focusing on regulatory policy, public interest, power and control. It examines EU regulatory power and media governance, such as horizontal and vertical mergers and acquisitions, and emerging challenges and trends. It identifies the concentration of ownership between broadcasters and sports clubs. It then analyses digital piracy in sports media and the contingencies and blockages of live sports piracy as part of the digital ecosystem.

Chapter 9 - Discussion and Conclusion

The chapter presents a discussion of the material presented in the previous chapters, emphasising the theoretical and operational objectives of the study. The problem identified serves as the basis for GT to describe the objectives and theoretical contributions of the research to the field of the media/football complex. The conclusion is brought together by means of a summary. The study's contributions and implications for theory and research are presented and discussed. The chapter then proceeds to propose implications for practitioners. Finally, the chapter concludes with an acknowledgement of the limitations of the study and suggestions for future research. This chapter represents the pinnacle of the present research study.

[Page left blank on purpose]

Methodology and Research Design

“We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.”
(*T. S. Eliot, 1943*)

2.1 Chapter Overview

The aim of this chapter is to explain the Constructivist Grounded Theory (CGT) methodology, understood as the most appropriate choice for this research. A logical path is followed, providing justification for the selection of methodology, while schisms in GTM and the philosophical debates in the extant area are discussed. The fundamental principles associated with the methodology, the research design including the sampling and data collection are explained. It also explains the suitability of CGT for this research and sets out the process of generating substantive theory. We also clarify the suitability of CGT for this research and present the valid reasons for carrying out qualitative research. Finally, ethical considerations are discussed in relation to informed consent, anonymity, and confidentiality within the context of this research.

2.2. From Discovery to Construction: Choosing a Methodology

In this section, we will outline the way in which we conduct research, i.e. the strategy or plan of action that underlies the choice and use of the methods we need to use to generate valid knowledge. It should be noted that our work faced many challenges due to the lack of a previously validated theoretical framework; however, with perseverance, commitment and time, the various elements came together to form a comprehensive methodology. We want to justify our decisions to do some things over others, as Smith (1989) advises, based on what seemed reasonable given the interests, objectives, socio-historical and spatio-temporal context, and so on.

The word Methodology is derived from the Greek word *methodos* which means pursuit of knowledge, scientific enquiry, or investigation, the stem method, therefore, means a way of accomplishing or pursuing an end, and methodology, having logos as a suffix indicates speech, discourse, or conversation. Hence, whilst the former is the way by which an undertaking is pursued,

the latter is the discourse surrounding that pursuit, so a methodology is the collection and use of methods within a particular research study (Gillani, 2014). Grounded Theory Methodology (GT M)¹ was therefore our choice because it offers an innovative approach to analysing qualitative data.

GT is probably the most influential strategy for conducting qualitative data analysis, although the extent to which the approach is followed varies from study to study (Bryman, 2012). Qualitative research is fundamental to a wide range of academic disciplines and is supported by diverse methodologies and theoretical frameworks (Patton, 2014). It incorporates multi-paradigmatic and interdisciplinary practices that span both the sciences and the humanities, which is why it values multi-methodologies (Guba, 1990; Nelson, Treichler & Grossberg, 1992; Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

The label 'qualitative research' is therefore a generic term for several different approaches. Interactions and interactive practices that are valuable for understanding the exploration of human elements and the social world (Wolcott, 1994; Flick, Kardorff & Steinke, 2004). When the research framework is oriented towards the research process rather than the product the standard qualitative research methodology is typically not adhered to in its entirety (Kaplan, 1998). In contrast, each study necessitates that the researcher adapt to the distinctive scenario or case at hand (Kidder & Fine, 1997; Patton, 2014; Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

The number of cited sport studies with quantitative approaches is considerable (Maguire, 1991; Sparkes, 2002; Silk, Andrews & Mason, 2005; Pitney & Parker, 2009; Gratton & Jones, 2010; Smith & Caddick, 2012; Young & Atkinson, 2012; Sparkes & Smith, 2013; Jones, Brown & Holloway, 2013; Smith & Sparkes, 2016). Qualitative research offers an imaginative and interdisciplinary perspective on sport studies. It provides insights into people in general, rather than reducing them to variables in a performance improvement research program (Edwards & Skinner, 2009), sport studies is a complex field (Cleland, 2015; Smith, Skinner & Edwards, 2021).

Sport is a highly organized and structured global activity that serves as both a cultural and economic driver (Forster & Pope, 2004). It also plays a significant role in shaping identity, citizenship, and culture (Sandvoss, 2003). As a form of cultural capital, sport enables individuals to participate actively as providers of well-being or as consumers, such as spectators (Lefèvre & Ohl, 2012), is often used as a means to achieve political goals (Hoye, Nicholson & Houlihan, 2010; Grix, 2013; Gouveia, 2022).

Many media studies that focus on qualitative research are also cited (Gunter, 2000; Plymire, 2005; Beam, 2006; Brennen, 2017). Qualitative research provides media studies with a comprehensive, process-oriented perspective (Hansen, Cottle, Negrine & Newbold, 1998; Wylleman, Reints & De Knop, 2013; Iordache, Audenhove & Loisen, 2018). Foster and Bochner (2008) argue that communication and

¹ We use the term GTM to distinguish the methodology from the result of research, grounded theory (GT).

social construction are coterminous. They add that to think, theorise, explore, write, or perform the constitutive qualities of communication is to inhabit the world of the social.

This constructionist perspectives recognises that both abstract ideas and concrete observations are equally valid and allows for nuance and context (Mosco, 2009). It involves the systematic study of media: it focuses on at least one of three interrelated elements of a media cycle: media production, representation, or consumption (Doyle & Frith, 2006). It affects the wider role of social, economic, political, and cultural systems that influence how media is produced, distributed, and consumed (Evens & Donders, 2018). According to Lordache, Audenhove & Loisen (2018), it also has the potential to interact with a range of social institutions within the wider social system. Consequently, it is interpreted through interrelated levels of analysis, including macro and micro (Talib & Fitzgerald, 2016; Rhodes, 2017).

Although each strand of the GT method advocates slightly different procedures, according to their philosophical positioning, they are united by several central components. Therefore, we outline the basic principles of GT and provide a rationale for why they were particularly appropriate in this case. According to Guba and Lincoln (1994), social science questions must ultimately be addressed at the level of worldview. As sport has contributed to different conceptions of how the world is or should be, it is consistent with GT, which provides methods for studying social processes in real-life situations, understanding social life, and describing how people construct social meaning.

In particular, Charmaz's approach to CGT takes centre stage, firstly because it is considered impossible to ignore the influential role of the author in research (Charmaz, 2014; Ramalho *et al.*, 2015) and, secondly, given its focus on social processes (Glasser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In this way, we achieve congruence between the worldviews of sport and media studies and the researcher's own perspective.

GT studies have been published in sports management and sports sociology journals, covering a diverse range of topics. Nevertheless, its popularity as a research method is still modest. Sotiriadou and Shilbury argue that the utilisation of the GT method serves to reinforce the existing body of knowledge within the field of sport management research. However, Mills (2021) has demonstrated that GT has become increasingly prevalent among sports researchers in recent years. This emphasis is particularly evident in sports management and sociology of sport journals, covering a wide range of topics (Weed, 2005; 2009; Bishop *et al.*, 2007; Holt *et al.*, 2008; Sotiriadou & Shilbury, 2010; Groom, Cushion & Nelson, 2011; Carmichael & Cunningham, 2017). From a media studies perspective, bibliometric data also reveals the use of GT (Craig & Tracy, 1995; Jinghong *et al.*, 1999; Halaweh, 2018; Zhang *et al.*, 2020).

2.2.1. Philosophical underpinnings and paradigmatic considerations

Before explaining and justifying the research methodology adopted, a clarification of the philosophical underpinning of the study is necessary. As Gibbs (2002) illustrates, the methodological design of any research can be distinguished by its underlying philosophy. Philosophy is undeniably a central pillar underpinning research design (Hesse-Biber & Nagy Leavy, 2011). Furthermore, Baldwin (2014) states that it is of the utmost importance for any researcher to be aware of the philosophical direction or, as Rowlands (2005) explains, the theoretical lens of the researcher.

Consisting of two specific, interrelated elements – ontology and epistemology – this theoretical lens will have a direct impact on the methodological path taken in terms of how and what to investigate. The different ontological and epistemological positions of researchers often lead to different research approaches to the same phenomenon (Grix, 2010).

The philosophical foundations of GT come from Symbolic Interactionism and Social Constructivism (Pidgeon & Henwood, 2009). Therefore, we decided to follow an ontologically relativist and epistemologically subjectivist, CGT reshapes the interaction between researcher and participants in the research process and in doing so brings to the fore the notion of the researcher as author.

Given that the focus of this study is to investigate the determinants that influence the bargaining power for broadcasting rights of European leagues within the football ecosystem, a qualitative approach was considered the most appropriate. Qualitative research is concerned with the natural context of the participant and seeks to understand the meaning of an experience from the participant's perspective (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007).

According to Potter (1996), there is a range of qualitative perspectives available for the study of meaning and human experiences, each providing specific theoretical underpinnings. Symbolic interactionism, with a clear focus on meaning making in social situations, provided the most appropriate perspective for this research study. Herbert Blumer (1969) also had a great influence on Strauss' thinking. Blumer took George H. Mead's idea of interaction further by emphasizing its symbolic nature.

Blumer described symbolic interactionism as being based on three fundamental principles: individuals act "towards things on the basis of the meaning things have for them"; meaning "is derived from, or arises out of, social interaction one has with one's fellow", meaning is dynamic and changes as one acts and modifies it as a result of ongoing interactions (Blumer, 1969, p.3).

Therefore, as Bogdan and Biklen (2007, p.36) point out, the complex process that leads to the value of broadcasting rights is "constitutive, not incidental or secondary to the experience". Meaning is intentionally constructed, it is dynamic and will change as a result of ongoing interactions, because individuals act, interpret and act again – in a continuous dialectic process.

By dictionary definition, epistemology is derived from the Greek word *episteme* meaning knowledge and *logos* is a suffix meaning doctrine. Epistemology means information based on knowledge and is concerned with the development of new models or theories that are better than competing models and theories (Grix, 2019). While ontology comes from the Greek *onta* meaning existing things, and *logos*, and is a branch of metaphysics concerned with the nature of being or existence, ontology is concerned with the nature of reality and discusses, and is more concerned than epistemology, with assumptions about the way the world works (Saunders *et al.*, 2007).

Exploring the interrelationships between paradigms and reflecting on the epistemology and ontological assumptions that inform or underpin qualitative research can aid in understanding the research. Denzin and Lincoln (2018, p. 56) consider paradigms as the researcher's 'net' that holds the ontological, epistemological, and methodological beliefs. They refer to the 'taken for granted' aspects of a paradigm as 'first principles' or 'ultimate'. As a set of assumptions, research strategies, and standards of rigour, or a fundamental set of beliefs that inform the actions of researchers and shape their view of the world (Guba, 1990; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Lincoln, Lynham & Guba, 2018). This 'worldview' represents a way of thinking and understanding the complexities of the real world (Patton, 2014).

Corbin and Strauss (2008) explain the positions of ontological and epistemological assumptions based on three major paradigms and apply them to different approaches to GT. The three paradigms are positivist, post-positivist, and interpretivist (Gannon, Taheri & Azer, 2022). The interpretivist paradigm encompasses specific approaches to social inquiry (Grix, 2019). Becker and Keller (2016) suggest that constructivism is an early formulation of the interpretive paradigm. Similar to interpretivism, constructivism acknowledges the existence of multiple, subjective, and mind-dependent realities (ontological relativism). According to Crotty (1998) and Bryant (2019), meaning is created through the interaction between the interpreter and the interpreted.

Philosophical positioning ensures a consistent approach to assessing how researchers answer ontological and epistemological questions (Lincoln *et al.*, 2018). In order to outline the interrelationships between ontology and epistemology, Grix (2019) notes that ontology is the starting point for all research. Crotty (1998) defines ontology as the 'study of being'. Ontological premises concern what constitutes reality, in other words, 'what is' (Bryman, 2012).

Denzin and Lincoln (2018, p. 183) argue that it "raises basic questions about the nature of reality and the nature of human beings in the world". This suggests that social phenomena and categories are not solely the result of social interaction (Bryman, 2012). Furthermore, it is proposed that these phenomena and categories are subject to constant revision, based on the assumption that the social world is constituted by constructed realities that are not determined by natural laws (Crotty, 1998; Holden & Lynch, 2004; Gibbs, 2007).

Consequently, we understand ontology as a critical discourse on the basic categories through which our understanding of the world is shaped; it describes the basic constituents of a given theory (Smith, 1993; Estes, 1994; Crotty, 1998; Madill, Jordan & Shirley, 2000; Wiltshire, 2018; Burrell & Morgan, 2019).

Grix (2019) argues that ‘ontology’ should be considered before ‘epistemology’, although the two are inextricably linked. Yolles (2006) notes that ontological boundaries must be consistent with the epistemological discussion. In addition, Annells (1996) posits that ontological beliefs constrain epistemological beliefs. It is therefore essential to guarantee that the philosophical assumptions are in alignment with and clearly articulated. As Blaikie and Priest (2017) propose, design decisions should be coherent.

Corbin and Strauss (2008, pp. 9-11) suggest a subjective perspective asserting that it is not possible to “separate who we are as people from the research and analysis we do”, and furthermore, “meaning does not come out of an interplay between subject and object but is imposed on the object by the subject”. To illustrate, the conviction in the independent existence of the world does not inherently entail the existence of meaning in a similar manner. Glaser (1999) challenges the necessity for a rhetorical debate on two fronts: firstly, that GT is a general methodology and is not aligned with any extant paradigms, and secondly, that GT is a methodology capable of accommodating diverse forms of data. There is no inherent logical contradiction in integrating disparate ontological and epistemological perspectives (Grix, 2019). To this end, paradigms, philosophical assumptions, epistemology, and ontology (Table 1) combine to influence the most appropriate methodological approach (Crotty, 1998; Hwang, 2019; Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 2021).

Table 1. Philosophical Assumptions

Term	Definition
Research Paradigm	Overall perspective on how research is/should be conducted. It is underpinned.
Philosophical Assumptions	A researcher’s set of beliefs holds about the research process, the nature of reality, and knowledge acquisition.
Ontology	Combined philosophical assumptions about the nature of reality
Epistemology	Combined philosophical assumptions about the nature of knowledge and how it is acquired.
Methodology	Techniques used to undertake scholarly inquiry.

Source: Easterby-Smith *et al.* (2021)

2.3. Turning to the Literature Review

For Urquhart (2016) the literature review appear as a non-binding review initially and subsequently updated to include relevant literature as determined by the GT. Charmaz (2014) states that the

literature review provides an opportunity to engage with the ideas and research in the areas that your GT addresses, serves as a means of evaluating our grasp of these areas, and allows us to analyse relevant works in relation to your specific research.

Charmaz adds that makes it clear that it is only during and after the data analysis phase that the relevance of the literature is fully determined, the 'integrative phase'. An integrative phase allows the researcher to connect new theory constructed from data analysis with existing theories, which lays the foundation for discussing the theoretical implications of the research findings.

In the view of Glaser (1999), the literature plays a role in providing a foundation for the data as the theory emerges. It is thus the emerging theoretical construction that informs the literature review, with the extant literature being incorporated and integrated with the substantive theory for constant comparison. Nevertheless, it is essential to gain a comprehensive understanding of the area under study before formulating theoretical propositions, as argued by Henwood and Pidgeon (2003).

In this respect, Henwood and Pidgeon (2003, p. 138) state that "the principle that people new to ground theory often read into descriptions of the approach – of completely setting aside the literature at the start of the project to maintain sensitivity to relevance in the data – may sometimes need to be displaced by a more discriminating strategy of using the literature early on in specific ways".

As in other aspects of the ground theory method, Strauss and Corbin (1998) disagree with Glaser and recognise the benefits of reviewing the literature early in the study for the purpose of stimulating theoretical sensitivity and questions, directing theoretical sampling and providing supplementary validity to the inquiry. According, a general review of the literature is of assistance to identify issues in the particular area and find gaps in available knowledge to be filled up by an inductively built theory.

Knowing the state of the art in relation to a phenomenon makes it possible to situate the specific research question for the study in question. Theoretical knowledge and pre-conceptions serve as heuristic tools for the construction of concepts which are elaborated and modified on the basis of empirical data (Kelle, 1995). As a result, the literature review when presented by interpretivist researchers, especially when using an inductive approach, presents a narrative style because the theory tends to be the result of the study rather than its basis (Bryman, 2012).

2.4. Grounded Theory Approach

Before considering the nature of the constructivist strand of GT, it is first necessary to consider the core components of GT itself. It would be inaccurate to describe GT as a unified framework. There are multiple versions, which interrelate and interpenetrate one another (Clarke, 2005; Clarke, Friese & Washburn, 2015; Charmaz, Thornberg & Keane, 2018). For example, traditional positivist GT stresses the importance of correspondence theories of truth, of objective inquirers, and processes of discovery.

Postmodern versions, in contrast, endorse constructivist models of truth, and reject objectivist views of the inquirer, privilege Foucault over Mead, emphasize situational, discursive, social arena approaches to interpretation (Clarke, 2005).

The concept of “the discovery of theory from data” (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, p. 1) was first articulated by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss in their seminal work, *‘The Discovery of Grounded Theory’* in 1967. As Charmaz (2001) notes, GT emerged as a distinct product of the intellectual traditions of its founders. Strauss contributed to the development of grounded theory through the application of Chicago School pragmatism, symbolic interactionism, and field research. Glaser, on the other hand, brought to GT a systematic approach, a proclivity for positivist methodology, and a procedural language shaped by his training in survey research at Columbia University.

Since its inception, GT has gained considerable influence among researchers, particularly those engaged in qualitative research. However, it is not uncommon to find ad hoc academic approaches that are not aligned with the principles of GT. One consequence of this increase in interest has been an increase in explanatory opinions, which has resulted in a schism that has led some researchers to move away from the fundamental principles. Today, GT has three main strands – the original, classical GT by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and its extensions by Glaser (1978, 1992, 1998, 1999, 2011), GT by Strauss and Corbin (1998) and CGT by Charmaz (2014). The latter approaches GT through a constructivist lens that looks at how realities are created, moving away from the positivism of the Glaserian and Straussian schools.

The three approaches differ in their underlying philosophical perspectives and their respective methodologies, their handling of the literature and the application of coding techniques. However, the theories seem to agree on a number of core points. It is widely recognised that the original theoretical foundations of GT derive from pragmatics and symbolic interactionism (Hutchinson, 1988; Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2000; Pickard, 2007). Drawing on a range of work analysing GT methods (Suddaby, 2006; Weed, 2009; Urquhart, 2013; 2016; Timonen *et al.*, 2018). A comprehensive comparison between the three principal strands of GT is provided in Table 2.

Table 2. Comparison of the three strands of Grounded Theory

Parameters	Strauss	Corbin e Glaser	Charmaz
Philosophical Underpinning	Interpretivist	Positivist	Constructivist
Data analysis objective	Substantive theory development or detailed description of phenomena	Core category development, entailing participants main concerns and ways they process those concerns	Substantive theory development or detailed description of phenomena
Coding Process	Open-axial-selective	Open-substantive-theoretical	Initial-focused-theoretical
Deductive, inductive and abductive logic in data analysis	Inductive	Initially inductive then deductive at theoretical sampling	Inductive-abductive
A priori Knowledge	Brief overview and then in-depth comparison to literature	No prior knowledge	Brief overview then prior knowledge brought into analysis to compare emerged insights
Description-conceptualisation	Conceptual	Descriptive	Descriptive and conceptual
Methodological Procedures	Degree of freedom on employment of procedural tools/steps	All procedures of the methodology are rigidly followed	Researcher can ignore or reject procedural step
Evaluation Criteria	Workability Relevance Modifiability	Credibility Transferability Dependability Integrity; Fit Understanding; Control	Credibility Originality Resonance Usefulness

Source: (Gillani, 2014) and (Cowley, 2018)

Due to the appeal of academics with various philosophical inclinations, the method has produced distinct strands. These include situational analysis (Clarke, 2005), critical realism (Kempster & Parry, 2011), pragmatism (Bryant, 2017), and pluralism (Urquhart, 2013). Nevertheless, the two most disseminated approaches to GT are the systematic procedures proposed by Strauss and Corbin (1998) and the constructivist approach put forth by Charmaz (2005, 2014).

In recent years, however, the roots of CGT have deepened, and its reach has grown, however, the roots of CGT have deepened, and its reach has grown. CGT began through critique and revisions of earlier versions of the method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1978, 1992; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). It is based on a research approach that has its origins in the interpretive tradition of symbolic interactionism (Benoliel, 1996) and favours reflexivity (Denzin, 2019). Yet underneath, these differences, there are commonalities: flexible guidelines for data collection (and analysis), including interviewing, archival analysis, observation, and participant observation (Charmaz, 2005; Clarke, 2005).

2.5. Charmaz's Constructivist Grounded Theory Approach

The constructivist turn in GT was born through Kathy Charmaz (2006; 2014). In '*Constructivist Grounded Theory*'. The author introduced a constructivist approach, arguing that her interpretations are themselves constructions. Then, other scholars, such as Bryant and Zillmann (2002) and Adele Clarke (2005; 2013), began to use her approach. Based on the premise that multiple realities emerge in a given context, the connecting between MGT and the constructivist ontology associated with the interpretive epistemological position soon became accepted (Denzin, 1989; Stanley & Wise, 1993; Blaikie, 2000; Silverman, 2004; Bryman, 2012).

Rather than studying a single process or central category, as in Strauss and Corbin's (1998) approach, Charmaz advocates a social constructivist perspective that includes an emphasis on diverse local worlds, multiple realities and the complexity of particular worlds, visions and actions. Charmaz thus altered the interaction between the interviewed subjects and the researcher, creating a construct in which the researcher is perceived as the author (Mills *et al.*, 2006).

Charmaz (1995, p. 35) argues that reality is constructed from the interactions of cultural contexts and that the contact between respondents and the researcher "produces the data and thus the meanings that the researcher observes and defines". Consequently, Skinner, Edwards and Smith (2021) highlight the existence of power hierarchies, with flexible orientations that focus on experiences within networks, situations and relationships.

In line with a fundamental principle of qualitative research, namely providing a stage for individuals to narrate their experiences, Charmaz (2006; 2014) encourages grounded theorists to consider people's views. It emphasises that the influence of the researcher – and, through them, the literature they view – is neither avoidable nor undesirable, but rather recognised and incorporated into the analytical process. In this approach, it is not the 'researcher-free' quality that guarantees the foundation of a theory, but the active, ongoing and deliberate commitment of the researcher to prioritise the data over any other input (Ramalho *et al.*, 2015).

Gubrium and Holstein (1997) and Whetten (1989) posit that constructivists are particularly attentive to the 'what' and 'how' of a phenomenon, as well as the 'who', 'where' and 'when'. Charmaz (2000) articulates a stance of 'multiple social realities', although she refers to an empirical world. While Charmaz's adoption of CGT maintains the core inductive strategies of GT, there is a notable shift away from the objective stance of the researcher and an acknowledgement of the researcher's role in shaping the data and the theory. The author also emphasises the mutual construction of knowledge by the observer and the observed.

According to Crotty (1998, p. 8), research from a constructionist paradigm recognises that "truth or meaning emerges both inside and outside our engagement with the realities of our world". Charmaz

(2014) has summarized that what is visualised exists outside the mind of the viewer and that meaning is dependent on, or relative to, the interaction between the viewer and what is visualised.

In contrast to the objectivist approach, which assumes that theory emerges from data (Glaser, 1992), the constructivist approach recognises that theory is constructed. Prioritises the phenomena under study and considers that both data and analysis are created from experiences and relationships shared with participants (Charmaz & Mitchell, 1996). Thus, in presenting theory, the constructivist researcher claims a constructed reality rather than a universal truth. Charmaz (2017) summarises some of the assumptions of this approaches to CGT:

- i. Grapples, with preconceptions, advocates ‘theoretical agnosticism’ (Henwood & Pidgeon, 2003);
- ii. Assumes data are constructed, relationships matter;
- iii. Reflexivity is crucial;
- iv. Data analyses and methods are constructed in specific times, locations, and situations;
- v. Methods reflect values.

CGT assumes that researchers can construct substantive and formal theories from the systematic analysis of empirical data. Increasingly, constructivist grounded theorists make links between their data about individuals, organizations, and social worlds and the social values and structures in which these data are situated. Hence, constructivist grounded theorists contribute to assessing how data from small qualitative studies reflect larger discourses and trends. For example, neoliberalism² with its assumptions of individual responsibility, self-sufficiency, competition, efficiency, valuing of profit, and narrow accountability pervades public consciousness, political measures, and social programs (Charmaz & Belgrave, 2018).

Constructivist theorists recognise the role of the researcher in developing what is presented as data and actively shaping interpretations of it. However, it is important to emphasise that note-writing is the field in which the findings of GT germinate, take root and grow. Effective communication skills, with particular emphasis on writing, are essential for researchers when collecting and interpreting data (Flick, 2007). According to Corbin and Strauss (2008, p. 7), some of the characteristics that a grounded theorist should possess are illustrated below:

- i. The ability to step back and critically analyse situations;
- ii. The ability to recognize the tendency toward bias;

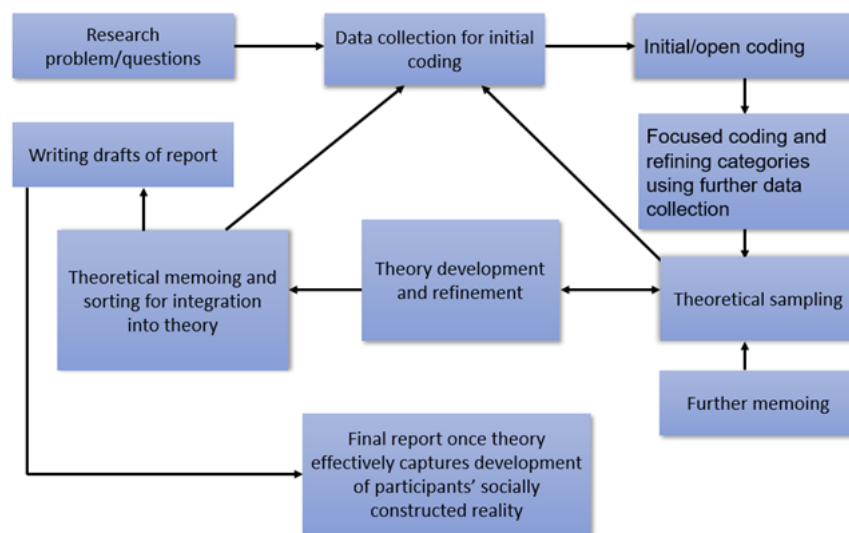
² Neoliberalism is in the first instance a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade. The role of the state is to create and preserve an institutional framework appropriate to such practices (Harvey, 2005, p.2).

- iii. The ability to think abstractly;
- iv. The ability to be flexible and open to helpful criticism;
- v. Sensitivity to the words and actions of respondents;
- vi. A sense of absorption and devotion to the work process.

CGT requires a concept-indicator model of analysis. In turn, empirical indicators from the data (actions and events observed, recorded, or described in documents is the words of interviewees and respondents) are compared looking for similarities and differences. As a result, the researcher develops the theory as it emerges from this continuous process – what Glaser and Strauss (1967) call ‘grounding’ the theory in the data. In this context, a research design concept that considers the various approaches, such as systematic and reflexive strategies, is essential (Charmaz, 1995; Smith, Skinner & Edwards, 2021).

The Figure 1 below provides a schematic explanation of CGT. Burnham *et al.* (2004, p. 45) point out that “research is a complicated process (...) uncertain and never straightforward as these ideal typical models of the research process suggest”.

Figure 1. Diagrammatic explanation of constructivist grounded theory



Source: (Charmaz, 2014; Lauridsen & Higginbottom, 2014)

This iterative process of moving back and forth between empirical data and emerging analysis makes the collected data progressively more focused and the analysis successively more theoretical (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007). It involves continually switching between nodes as the data is collected, moving seamlessly from conceptualising the issue to constructing a dynamic, collaborative narrative – it is based on the hermeneutic circle (Taylor, Bogdan & Vault, 2016).

2.5.1. Symbolic interactionism

As mentioned above, the philosophical foundations of GT come from Symbolic Interactionism. Symbolic interactionism is a theoretical perspective that posits that people construct selves, social worlds and societies through interaction. As a perspective, it provides a lens through which to view ourselves, everyday life and the world (Charmaz, Harris & Irvine, 2019). Through the repetitive act of interaction, individuals as agents in relation to social groups constitute symbolic and shared meanings (Casino & Thien, 2020). Methodologically, however, symbolic interactions are generally studied through various qualitative approaches.

Symbolic interactionism, with its clear focus on the constructions and processes of social interaction between individuals or groups mediated by symbolic relations, provides the most appropriate perspective for this study (Woods, 1992; Potter, 1996). Rogers and Pilgrim (2005) emphasised that the social issues that social constructivism develops as a theory of social occurrence are internally linked to methodologies associated with symbolic interactionism. CGT approach to the complements the symbolic interactionist perspective because both emphasize studying how action and meaning are constructed (Charmaz & Mitchell, 2001).

In the view of Charmaz (2014), any theoretical perspective presents types of questions and orientations that stem from symbolic interactionism, which may have greater significance than its specific concepts. Symbolic interactionist perspectives comprise a set of concepts and guiding assumptions (Reynolds & Herman-Kinney, 2003). It provides a foundation for theoretically driven research and offers new conceptual lenses through which to view existing theoretical implications. Consequently, GT methods furnish the analytical instruments to achieve this objective.

Chronologically, theory and research in symbolic interactionism developed along three main lines, following the work of Herbert Blumer (the Chicago School), Manford Kuhn (the Iowa School) and Sheldon Stryker (the Indiana School). The main variant of symbolic interactionism was developed by Herbert Blumer (1969). Blumer coined the term 'symbolic interactionism' and was the first to formulate George H. Mead's ideas into a coherent theory with specific methodological implications for research. Anselm Strauss brought Chicago School symbolic interactionist traditions to GT (Blumer, 1969; Bowers, 1988).

Blumer's (1969) symbolic Interactionism was an early sociological 'manifesto' for constructionism. In Blumer's definition of symbolic interactionism, the individual is in relation to another individual as the most basic level of a 'joint action' (Blumer, 2004). It is based on the belief that people construct their own identities and those of others through social interaction in their everyday lives (Burr, 1995). The individual interprets experiences and attributes meaning to each situation through social interaction (Stroot, 2002). This theoretical framework is derived from sociology and suggests that individuals interpret and make sense of their experiences (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007).

Symbolic interactionists start with a “sensitising picture of the interaction process” based on concepts such as self, language, social context, social object and the joint act (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p. 12). As a result, the theoretical focus is on the acting individual; the individual is seen as determining rather than determined, and society is constructed through the intentional interactions of individuals and groups. As Charmaz (2014) points out, names classify objects and events and convey meanings and distinctions. The author adds that the GT method, through its lineage with symbolic interaction, inherently encompasses issues of social justice and critical enquiry.

Symbolic interactionism is a perspective, not an explanatory theory that specifies variables and predicts outcomes. This perspective gives you a close connection between GT. This close linkage encompasses a set of flexible analytical orientations that allow researchers to focus their data collection and build mid-level inductive theories through successive levels of data analysis and conceptual development (Charmaz, 2005). Interactionist approaches do not compromise the autonomy of stakeholders or the ability of institutions to guide social life. Instead, offers an insight into how individual phenomena and institutional practices can perform the normative functions they are designed to do.

Table 3. Symbolic Interactionism – Grounded Theory Methodology

Symbolic Interactionism	Grounded Theory
Direct observation of empirical world	Participant observation; interviewing; document analysis; videotaping, etc
Determination of data through disciplined observation	Observation; interviewing guidelines; theoretical sampling
Raising of abstract problems	Analytic, methodologic, personal memoing
Construction of categories	Open coding; axial coding; theoretical coding; properties, dimensions
Construction of theoretical scheme	Core category; categories; subcategories; properties, dimensions; memos; diagrams
Testing of categories	Theoretical sampling; theoretical saturation; literature review; group analysis; member checks

Source: Adopted by the current study

2.5.2. Social constructionism

Social constructionism is a theoretical perspective that assumes that people create social realities through individual and collective actions. In line with the social constructionism theoretical perspective, CGT aims to generate conceptual analysis that emphasises understanding (Charmaz, 2014). Constructivist grounded theorists aim to produce interpretive theories that seek to understand how people construct meaning and act based on their view of reality.

Charmaz (2000, 2014) points out that constructivism and social constructionism tend to be used interchangeably and included in the generic term 'constructivism'. As a result, CGT reflects the views of social constructivism. Ontologically, the existence of multiple, equally valid realities is assumed by social constructivism. Epistemologically, social constructivism emphasises the role of the researcher by acknowledging the interactive and interpretive nature of data construction (Bryant & Charmaz, 2019). Since constructivism explicitly recognises the subjective role of the researcher, the researcher must take account of this. The need for researcher reflexivity is, therefore, an important consequence of assuming the constructivist position.

Constructivism became the epistemological and ontological basis for much, if not most, qualitative research across the world by the end of the 20th century (Pegues, 2007). Bryman (2012, p.12) elaborated on the concept of constructivism concerning ontological aspects: "Constructivism is an ontological position that asserts those social phenomena and their meanings continually being accomplished by social actors. It implies that social phenomena and categories (relationships among domains) are not only produced through social interaction but that they are in a constant state of revision. Constructivism essentially invites the researcher to consider the ways in which social reality is an ongoing accomplishment of social actors rather than something external to them and that totally constrains them".

This is a summary of the main beliefs of the social constructivist paradigm:

- i. The extensive and intricate tradition of social constructivism (Schwandt, 2007);
- ii. The social reality is considered socially constructed (Remanyi *et al.*, 1998; Mertens, 2010), dependent on participants view of the situation that is studied (Creswell, 2003);
- iii. Connects action with praxis based on anti-foundational premises. It encourages experimental and multivariate texts while preserving objectivity in research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018);
- iv. Focus on systems of representation, social and material practices, discursive laws, and ideological effects (Fuss, 1989);
- v. Human discourse is reconfigured in a non-foundational and non-reductionist manner (Gergen, 1999); the belief that the social world is not predetermined, but is socially constructed and influenced by power relations within society (Goldkuhl, 2012);
- vi. Emphasises the contextualisation of meaning (Roller & Lavrakas, 2015);
- vii. Constructivism fosters researchers' reflexivity about their own interpretations as well as those of their research participants (Charmaz, 2014).

This research utilises social constructivism as it acknowledges that human knowledge is inherently linked to social contexts and interactions. It is important to comprehend how individuals attribute social meanings to the phenomenon under study. While interpretivism promotes empathy towards the

cultural context, social constructivism emphasises the significance of language and interaction throughout the entire process (Given, 2008).

Burr (2015, p. 92) argues that “social constructionism is not claiming that language and discourse merely have a strong influence upon our perception of reality. Rather, reality as we know it is a product of social construction”. Bury (1986) explains that social constructivism includes elements that promote power relations that are linked to the definition of reality. Gibbs (2007) posits that constructivism is a form of idealism that emphasises the emergence of the world. The political dimension of constructivism is consistent, whether it is the power to define, influence, or advance some interests at the expense of others.

Nevertheless, as is the case with the majority of interpretivist theories, social constructionism posits that there exist a multitude of subjective and mind-dependent realities, which are defined by ontological relativism (Grix, 2019). Smith (1989) posits that our interpretation of individuals' statements and actions, including the meanings we ascribe to their motivations and intentions, shapes our social reality as we perceive it. Accordingly, the generation of meaning is contingent upon an interaction between the interpreter and the interpreted (Levers, 2013).

2.5.3. Interpretivism

CGT follows the interpretive tradition in which researchers assume that data and analyses are social constructions, and that participants and researchers construct meaning equally. The interpretive tradition is understood as inductive, generated from the data rather than prior to it (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). It is therefore assumed that any theory developed through research is an interpretation that reflects not only the participants' experiences but also the researcher's perception of the phenomenon. In this way, it contributes to understanding the complex reality of media/football as it is “internally lived, socially constructed and interpreted” (Sarantakos, 2013, p. 40). It allows us to explore the values, attitudes and beliefs that influence individuals to act in certain ways. Interpretivism follows emergent development, in which the analysis suggests the most useful constructs for describing culture (Schultz & Hatch, 1996).

Following Max Weber's observation that “man is an animal suspended in webs of meaning which he himself has spun”, we take culture to be those webs. Therefore, the analysis of culture is not an experimental science in search of law, but an interpretive one in search of meaning (Geertz, 1973). As Crotty (1998) points out, interpretivism seeks culturally derived and historically situated interpretations of the world of social life. An interpretivist approach involves:

“...the systematic analysis of socially meaningful action through the direct detailed observation of people in natural settings in order to arrive at understandings and interpretations of how people create and maintain their social worlds” (Neuman, 2013, p. 71).

According to Burrell and Morgan (2019), objectivity and rationality become relative concepts in the social world. Interpretation involves reflexive evaluation of reconstructed impressions of the world and integration of action processes into an overall context, which creates a new unity (Sarantakos, 2013; Irshaidat, 2022). In this sense, 'interpretive' refers to emphasising the production of meanings and understanding the perspectives of the actors (Punch, 2016; Pfeifer, 2000).

The interpretive tradition is predicated on the assumption that human beings are the primary source of data, seeking information about what Blaikie (2000) refers to as the 'inside view' rather than imposing an 'outside view'. Interpretivists recognise the existence of multiple meanings and forms of knowledge and acknowledge that the concept of an 'objective reality' is inherently subjective and cannot be fully captured or represented (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

From the perspective of CGT, interpretive practice necessitates that researchers maintain an awareness of the fact that knowledge is always shaped by the specific socio-cultural perspectives and locations of individual, institutional, and other actors (Henwood & Pidgeon, 2003). Conversely, interpretivism can facilitate a profound understanding of the intricacies of social conduct (Irshaidat, 2022).

According to Benoliel (1996), knowledge is relative to specific circumstances, including historical, temporal, cultural and subjective factors, and exists in various forms as representations of reality, which are interpretations made by individuals. Interpretation is influenced by frames of reference and personal beliefs, which can shape the understanding of what is considered true (King & Horrocks, 2010). For example, Hollifield & Coffey (2006) give an argument where an act that one person sees as terrorism, another may see as a heroic act of liberation.

2.6. Data Collection Strategy

Glaser and Strauss (1967, p. 145) states that "all is data", adding that "it is not only what is being told, how it is being told and the conditions of it being told, but also all the data surrounding what is being told". By this, we mean that all the information, all the data, all the knowledge that comes to us is data, so all types of data are relevant. Anything we learn, in the research setting(s) or about our research topic, can serve as data. They may need to be at least marginally relevant, but whatever their origin, any data that emerges is capable of being referenced (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Charmaz (2014) clearly states that people construct data – whether researchers construct data first-hand through interviews or field notes or collect texts from the reference media or information from other sources such as historical documents, government records or organisational information compiled for private discussion or public dissemination. The author even says that we can think of

these documents as data derived from a purpose to achieve a goal. In turn, purposes and goals arise from particular historical, social and situational conditions.

The quantity of data to be collected in a GT study depends on the research goal. The quality, relevance, and usefulness of the data for interpretation may vary. Additionally, the researcher's epistemological position influences how they view and work with the data. In a constructivist framework, data are constructed for a specific purpose and outcome and should be acknowledged as such (Charmaz, 2014). CGT captures the interaction between the form and content of data. The content of data is shaped by the form in which it is viewed. For this reason, Charmaz and Belgrave (2018) argue that language and culture precede data and influence how we define and assign meaning to it.

As mentioned above, the data collection for this research is qualitative in nature. In GT research, decisions about sampling are made informally and as the research progresses, not in advance. We use distinct types of data in our analytical approach. These include textual sources: documents; narratives/discourses; websites; transcripts; diaries; correspondence; textual artefacts. And graphic/visual sources such as photographs; videos; artworks; maps; timelines; diagrams; physical artefacts. As a result, our study included data from primary and secondary analysis.

- i. Primary form of data – Modes of access to subjective viewpoint (textual material, including interview transcripts, written documents, and diaries);
- ii. Secondary form of data – Description of process of creation of social situations (collecting of documents).

Much of qualitative research is based on text and writing – from field notes and transcripts to descriptions and interpretations, to the presentation of findings and the research as a whole. Questions of how to transform complex social situations (or other materials such as images into texts) are therefore relevant. Issues of (transcription and writing in general) are major concerns of qualitative research (Flick, 2018a). Burnham *et al.* (2004) stress the importance of using data from multiple sources. Thus, our primary data source is semi-structured interviews with experts.

We also utilize secondary analysis to re-examine existing data from a different perspective or to ask new questions of older data. According to Corti (2018), it is possible to investigate a topic that was not of interest to the original researcher or reinterpret the data from a more contemporary perspective or in line with our object of study. It is important to note that many of these datasets are based on large-scale, high-quality research that is beyond the means of a doctoral student (Bryman, 2012).

Data collection and analysis techniques and procedures are closely linked. Data collection leads to data analysis, which in turn leads to new data collection. This approach ensures that the data collected is sufficient to explain the results of the analysis. Mason (2002) describes this capacity as 'organic sampling', highlighting its growth and development throughout the research process in line with the

emerging shape of the project. The core components of the GT data collection are summarised in Table 4.

Table 4. The core components of the grounded theory data collection

Data collection	Gathering rich data	Data collection aims to generate rich description for analysis. Data is typically gathered from multiple sources, including interviews, observation and documents.
	Theoretical sampling	The use of theoretical sampling is central to the GT method, whereby data collection is guided by the concepts that become apparent from data analysis.
		Data collection and data analysis are performed concurrently to facilitate theoretical sampling. This permits the researcher to go back and forth between data collection and data analysis.
	Theoretical saturation	Data collection ends when new data no longer adds to the properties of theoretical concepts, nor sparks new theoretical insights.

Source: Adopted by the current study

2.6.1. Gathering rich data

Employing CGT, the sampling strategy is based on familiarity with the literature on the research project. This affinity with literature provides vantage points that can intensify looking at certain aspects of the empirical world or may ignore others. We begin our study from these points of view, but we were as open as possible to all our observations in the early stages of the research. This approach was taken as it was recognised that sensitisation to disciplinary concepts and perspectives is a point of departure, rather than an end goal (Charmaz, 2014).

Charmaz discusses the notion of sensitizing concepts, a term originally described by Blumer (1969). Sensitizing concepts are seen as a starting point for GT research through which the researcher generates initial ideas of interest, pays attention to guiding theoretical frameworks and becomes sensitized to asking particular types of questions, such as those related to identity or stigma. The involvement at this early stage can therefore be valuable in priming the researcher to key experiences of interest and providing a particular focus for the research (Tweed & Charmaz, 2012).

Some proponents of grounded theory posit that the quantity of data employed in an investigation should be taken into account. Nevertheless, Charmaz (2014) stipulates that the data should be fundamentally relevant, detailed and complete, and not be concerned with quantity. Both Glaser (1992) and Stern (1994) contend that the use of small samples and limited data is not problematic, given that GT methods are designed to facilitate the development of conceptual categories. Therefore, data collection is geared towards illuminating the properties of a category and the relationships between categories. It is important to rationalise data collection using their reasoning, as it allows

researchers to generate a robust GT with complete data. Geertz, (1973) emphasises that in order to achieve this, it is important to seek a 'thick' description.

Miles, Huberman and Saldaña (2014) emphasise that sampling requires decisions not only about the individuals to be observed and/or interviewed, but also about the contexts, events and social processes. By building theory inductively, sampling in theory building studies differs from more traditional forms of sampling. Both Straussian and Constructivist contend that the research sample cannot be predetermined; instead, it must be a theoretical sample, dynamically led by the emerging theory until the point of saturation. Some authors posit that the theoretical saturation point of the results may be influenced by the scope of the research question, the sensitivity of the phenomena, and the skill of the researcher (Morse, 2000; Sobal, 2001; Thomson, 2010).

The establishing specific rules for sample size in qualitative research is not feasible in ambiguous contexts (Patton, 2014). Therefore, the appropriate sample size depends on the research objectives, the purpose of the inquiry, what is at risk, what is valuable, what is reliable, and the available resources. As Gratton and Jones (2010) emphasise, the aim is to produce 'rich' data from a small group.

According to Merton (1967), grand theories offer researchers little guidance as to how they might guide or influence the collection of empirical evidence. Although theoretical saturation procedures were followed, we considered Thomas and Pollio's (2001) argument that an appropriate sample size for phenomenological research may vary between 6-12 participants if thematic redundancy is achieved after listening to 6 participants' narratives. Creswell (2007) suggests a sampling range of 5 to 25 participants, while Boyd (2001) proposes a more flexible range of 2 to 10 participants. Nevertheless, Strauss and Corbin (1998) suggest conducting more interviews cumulatively to increase the chances of discovering significant variations and validating the evidence as representative.

In theoretical sampling, participants are selected according to the descriptive needs of the emerging concepts and theory. These needs dictate the sampling strategies and goals (Glaser 1978; Charmaz 2014). In this sense, we sought to engage with experts from various fields related to the media/football complex. This would allow us to identify common themes and patterns across theoretical perspectives (Creswell, 2007; Patton, 2014). The sample includes participants, such as representatives from sports journalism, media outlets, sports organizations (which include representatives of professional clubs and national leagues), academia, law, and other specialists within the field.

2.6.2. Semi-structured interviews

The research interviews are the main source of qualitative approach and are used in a variety of social contexts (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995; Rapley, 2004; Silverman, 2014; Flick, 2018a). The interview appears to be the universal mode of systematic investigation to gaining a better understanding of reality (Wengraf, 2001). In the words of Silverman (2004), we live in the 'interview society', qualitative

interviewing has become so common that it is often considered the 'gold standard of qualitative research'. According to Foucault (1995), the interviews, as social arenas, provide both vehicles and sites through which people construct and contest explications for their views and actions. Consequently, it also has emerged as one of the most used methodological frameworks for data collection in GT (Thomson, 2010).

Most commonly, GT studies have been associated with the analysis of transcripts of interview data, typically gathered in a semi-structured format (Tweed & Charmaz, 2012). The semi-structured interviews enable researchers to maintain some consistency over the concepts that are covered in each interview. In a semi-structured interview, some topics are chosen before beginning the research based on the literature or practice (Corbin & Strauss, 2015).

Through these interviews, participants can share their experiences, opinions, feelings, and knowledge with the researcher (Webb & Webb, 1975). The application of semi-structured interviews is consistent with our ontological stance, as we maintain that comprehending social reality necessitates an understanding of individuals' knowledge, opinions, experiences, and interactions (Spivak, 1990; Holliday, 2002; Mason, 2002; Gerson & Horowitz, 2002; Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018).

Following the CGT approach, the study's interview schedules were organized in a structured manner (Charmaz, 2014). We conducted interviews with experts to attain valuable insights into the investigation's circumstances, rather than being mere participants (Platt, 2012). Expert interviews are a popular method among researchers involved in media business and policy studies because media executives and policymakers are more likely to consent to a conversational style that allows them to greater control over the direction of the business.

Above all because this approach offers flexibility to promote discussions with interested parties within the sports-media complex (Hollifield & Coffey, 2006; Altheide & Schneider, 2012; Evens, 2014). Semi-structured interviews have also been widely used in sports studies research (Gratton & Jones, 2010; Skinner, 2016; Lucidarme, Babiak & Willem, 2018; Parnell *et al.*, 2021), mainly applied to football leaders (Molan, Matthews & Arnold, 2016; Lucidarme, Babiak & Willem, 2018), athletes and other stakeholders (Shilbury, O'Boyle & Ferkins, 2020).

The interviews were designed to be 'emergent' and 'flexible' (Weiss, 1994), and to capitalise on the strengths of symbolic interactionism in uncovering subtle nuances in different contexts (Trauth, 2001). Therefore, the guiding questions were open-ended, with no expectation of 'right' or 'wrong' answers (Mergela, Edelmannb & Hauga, 2019). Therefore, it was expected that the answers would align with the research objectives and be appropriate to the social context being explored (Trinczek, 2009), while considering the interviewee's experience (Kvale, 2007). Given the significance of subjective appraisals in the interviewee's account, it was anticipated that the interviewee's experience would

prove invaluable in identifying supplementary sources of evidence (Yin, 2009; Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018).

Understanding how the meaning-making process unfolds during an interview is as important as comprehending what is being asked and conveyed. The 'how' refers to the interactional and narrative procedures of knowledge production, not just interview techniques. The 'what' pertains to the issues guiding the interview, the content of the questions, and the substantive information communicated by the respondent (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995; Blaikie, 2000).

Thus, the theoretical questions were generated using a conceptual framework and the researcher's knowledge base and even preconceptions (Wengraf, 2001). In addition, preparatory analyses of relevant domains and theoretical accounts of the area, along with other studies and their outcomes, also contribute to the derivation of interview schedules (Flick, 2000). This is supported by the correlation between the multiparadigm approach (Rossi, Lipsey & Freeman, 2004) that aided in answering the research question comprehensively.

As a result, all respondents were invited to express their perceptions and experiences based on the proposed questions. Although the process of preparation does not follow an equal pattern for all respondents, it is depending on the interviewee's affiliation. All interview was probed inductively on key responses. Semi structured interview questions focused following on three sets of domains of inquiry:

- i. The first set of questions discusses the perception of the transformation of football governance and the threat posed by the growing concentration of neoliberalism. It highlights the dominance of a small elite of clubs and the financial weakness of others, which undermines the entire structure of the European model;
- ii. The second set of questions focused on the determinants of supply and demand in sports, economics, and identity, as well as the relationship between football and its fans. Specifically, the questions explored the impact of changes in the broadcasting market.
- iii. The third set of questions focused on the political, economic, and management dimensions of the media system. This included exploring governance, mergers and acquisitions, challenges, and emerging trends. Additionally, competitive strategies, technological development, and resources and competences were examined from both an economic and cultural perspective.

Regarding the epistemological concepts, Kvale (2007) argues that research interviews have not been developed based on any specific theory or epistemological paradigm. However, we can use theoretical and epistemological positions to comprehend the knowledge obtained from the interviews (as mentioned in the sources above). Furthermore, according to Pfadenhauer (2009), expert interviews focus on a specific knowledge asset within the social knowledge stock – specialist knowledge.

This type of knowledge is increasing in proportion to general knowledge due to the progressive division of labour (Pfadenhauer, 2009). The expert has a comprehensive understanding of the relevant knowledge in a particular field and can provide fundamental solutions to problems within that field (Hitzler, 1994). A total of 20 people were interviewed (primary data analysis). For a summary, show Table 5.

Table 5. Summary of interviewees according to their affiliation

Organisation	Nº of interviewees	Place
Sport organizations/Clubs/Leagues	1	email
Sport journalist	4	email
Media organizations	1	email
National FAs	1	email
EPFL	1	email
Football supporters' organisations	2	email
Academics	5	email
Lawyers	1	email
Politics	1	email
Other sports organisation (non-football)	1	email

Source: Adopted by the current study

In accordance with the constructivist approach to GT, the interview schedules employed in this study were meticulously structured. These included a list of themes and questions that may vary depending on the participants, which emphasise the usefulness of flexibility in the phrasing and order of questions, thereby enabling participants to guide the conversation in unforeseen directions (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2007; King & Horrocks, 2010).

According to Deeke (cf. Pfadenhauer, 2009, p. 92), “the term ‘expert interview’ already denotes that its distinctive feature does not consist of a specific form of interview but in the fact that ‘experts’ are interviewed.” Experts possess not only systematic and organised knowledge, but also in-depth knowledge stemming from their actions, responsibilities and obligations within a particular functional role within an organisation (Mergela, Edelmannb & Hauga, 2019). In essence, our focus is on expert viewpoints, access to decision-making procedures and individuals, rather than personal life stories. The insights of those interviewed as representatives of a broader scope, such as an institution, are of great value.

The credibility of an expert is based on his/her position or reputation, although obviously, researchers may question the validity of (some of) the answers provided even when experts are chosen

with great care (Dorussen, Lenz & Blavoukos, 2005). The process of choosing implies being flexible in relation to nuances, surprises or confusion, as stated above, flexibility is a fundamental requirement. As Bogner, Littig & Menz (2009) point out there is no single ideal recipe for conducting interviews with experts.

As the work progressed on the inductive logic script, it is normal cognitive issues and key questions emerged (Katz, 2006). For this reason, researchers can modify the interview questions during the research to gain a better understanding of the topic (Morse, Cheek & Clark, 2018). Therefore, it may be necessary to verify information regarding their initial assumptions or alter the direction of the inquiry to gather data on previously unknown aspects of the subject. As a result, the inquiries posed to early participants may differ from those posed to later participants.

Due to this, our initial interviews started in November 2019 and the final ones were conducted in March 2024. According to Marzano (2012), this indicates that as the researcher becomes more assimilated in the field, they alter their preliminary queries to fit the trending themes and pivotal concerns (this process is akin to what Glaser & Strauss (1967), call 'grounded theory' analysis).

Online interviews were used to reach the interviewees due to the global diffusion of the internet and its significant impact on social interaction, providing opportunities for academic research. Online interviews have become popular tools for data collection (Gubrium & Holstein, 2001; Bampton & Cowton, 2002; Hine, 2005). According to James and Gubrium (2012), technology has altered the research context and the construction of knowledge, creating a new space for conventional research methods to be adapted and utilised.

Non-real time interviews, conducted asynchronously, are primarily facilitated via email and are considerably easier to set up technologically than synchronous interviews (James & Gubrium, 2012). This method offers advantages such as time and financial savings (Cater, 2011), as well as accommodating interviewees who may be geographically dispersed or have physical mobility limitations (Oltmann, 2016).

The use of email interviews has several advantages. Firstly, interviewees can work on their answers at a time that suits their personal or work schedule. Secondly, email interviews facilitate respondents who are located in different time zones (James & Gubrium, 2012). However, it is important to note that email interviews also add some peculiarities to the research process, as they are asynchronous and semi-private (Mann & Stewart, 2001). According to Meho (2006), communication via email actively constructs the roles of both the interviewer and the interviewee, leading to more open and honest exchanges compared to socially desirable answers.

Although emails lack certain nonverbal cues, such as facial expressions and body language, it can still provide important information, such as spelling (Curasi, 2001). However, online interviews should complement, rather than replace, face-to-face interactions (James & Gubrium, 2012). Table 6 has been

revised to outline the advantages and disadvantages of administering interviews via email and to highlight any existing contradictions.

Table 6. Advantages and disadvantages of interview administration from email

Advantages	Disadvantages
Cheap to run; Can reach wide geographical area; Respondents' complete questionnaire at own pace; Offer anonymity avoid interviewer bias; Removes the burden of doing time-consuming and labour-intensive transcriptions.	Questionnaires not always returned may suffer delays in responses; Responses higher for some social categories than for others; No control over how respondents' complete questionnaires; No one available to clarify questions if parts of questionnaire are not understood.

Source: (Gunter, 2002; Kazmer & Xie, 2008)

2.6.3. Documentary sources

Qualitative document analysis is similar to all qualitative methodology in that the main emphasis is on discovery and description, including search for underlying meanings, patterns, and processes. Like all research, it is interpretive, but it remains empirical, meaning that instances of certain meanings and emphases can be identified and held up for demonstration (Altheide 2000). According to Altheide, document analysis refers to “an integrated and conceptually informed method, procedure and technique for locating, identifying, retrieving and analysing documents for their relevance, significance and meaning” (2000, p.290). Documents can be both primary (original documents, contemporary records, records in close proximity to an issue/event) and secondary (based on primary sources) (Deacon *et al.*, 2007; Altheide 2000; Bryman 2012; Altheide & Schneider, 2012).

A variety of documentary sources have been employed by grounded theorists, with documents representing a particularly valuable data set for GT studies (Charmaz, 2014). The utilisation of a diverse array of documentary sources is a fundamental aspect of qualitative analysis in a multitude of contexts, including the form of literature reviews (Sarantakos, 2013). Consequently, our document set is heterogeneous. The data set includes a variety of documentary sources, such as official records, letters and diary entries, field notes based on observational work and focus group material, in addition to interview transcripts (Henwood & Pidgeon, 2003). It also comprises official documents from state and private sources, as well as media sources (Bryman, 2012).

The method of qualitative document analysis follows a recursive and reflexive movement for the development of concepts and categories, sampling, data collection, coding, analysis and interpretation (Altheide *et al.*, 2008). And it refers to an integrated and conceptually informed procedure and technique for locating, identifying, retrieving and analysing documents for their relevance, meaning and significance (Altheide & Schneider, 2012). It also explores how documents are used in everyday life

and social contexts (Coffey, 2014). When analysing the form and content of documents, it is useful to consider their functions and the importance of evaluating data before use (Stewart & Kamins, 1993). As Jawaharlal Nehru pointed out, ‘theory must be tempered with reality’ (cited in Patton, 2011, p. 1).

Blumer (1986) advanced the view that an understanding of people's attitudes and perspectives is crucial for explaining their actions. He also emphasised the value of documents in achieving this understanding. For this reason, the use of documents as sources has a long and esteemed tradition in empirical social sciences (Hakim, 2000; Hammersley, 2010). Secondary analysis of qualitative data indicates the potential to shed new light on previously collected data. However, this approach also gives rise to intriguing methodological questions, particularly regarding the distinction between inferences about change and the impact of examining old data through novel conceptual lenses (Bryman, 2012). It demonstrates how the interpretation of data is influenced by the researcher, in that the discrepancies between their interpretations and those of the original researchers may be partially attributable to the differing perspectives employed in analysing the data.

The theoretical sampling procedures in sport development research began with the collection of annual reports from sport and European organisations. However, our documentary sample is progressive and always guided by evolving identifications, rather than being predetermined at the beginning of the study. The documents consulted are shown in Table 7 below:

Table 7. Collection of documentary sources of secondary analysis

Main sources	
Official documents and press releases of the European Commission	Press releases of football organisations
Verbatim reports of debates in the European Parliament	Websites of football federations and other stakeholders
European Parliament resolutions	Official and working documents of UEFA
Presidency conclusions of EU sports ministers' meetings	Scholarly journals and books
European Council conclusions	Articles of opinion; leading articles; feature articles; interviews;
Parliamentary questions to the Council and the Commission	News; press releases
Judgements of the ECJ	Law reviews
Commission competition policy decisions	Doctoral theses
European Commission's Sports Unit website	Conference papers
EUIPO Communication Service, European Union Intellectual Property Office	Reports of conferences and research institutes

Source: Adopted by the current study

While secondary analysis is flexible and can be utilized in several ways, it is also an empirical exercise and a systematic method with procedural and evaluative steps, just as in collecting and evaluating primary data (Dale, Arber & Proctor, 1988; Bryman A., 1995; Saunders *et al.*, 2007; Vartanian, 2010; Robson & McCartan, 2016). Coffey and Atkinson (2011) argue that documents have a distinct ontological status, forming a separate reality referred to as ‘documentary reality’ and should not be taken as transparent representations of underlying organisational or social realities.

Consequently, the documents are interpreted outlining different approaches: qualitative content analysis, semiotics, and hermeneutics. Applying a critical discourse analysis approach to these documents also provides a means of gaining insight into the ideological underpinnings (Bryman, 2012).

Specific decisions about sampling were developed during the research process, as recommended by Strauss and Corbin (1998). Nevertheless, it is essential to have a clearly defined question or set of questions to guide the analysis of the documents – in other words, to make ‘analytical choices’ (Rapley, 2007; Barbour 2018). Furthermore, it is crucial to avoid approaching the documents in a neutral or abstract manner, but always in a specific context; as such, they are always read or used in specific work (Rapley & Rees, 2018). Documents shape and are reflexively shaped by our perceptions, interactions, institutions, policies and societies. As such, they deserve a sustained and systematic analytical focus, as they are central to the production, reproduction and transformation of the contemporary landscape.

Consequently, our sample is a collection of documents relating to court decisions on communications provided by the EU competition authorities and other potential sources of relevant economic regulatory data (Wolff, 2004; Doyle & Frith, 2006), which were undoubtedly selected for their ‘centrality’ to the problem under analysis, namely in the media. On the one hand, Doyle and Frith (2006) and Hollifield and Coffey (2006) emphasise the fact that the reports of various consultancy firms provide high quality data.

This data is of a higher quality than that which could be obtained through researcher surveys (Stewart & Kamins, 1993). On the other hand, as Coffey and Atkinson (2011, p. 12) point out, “we cannot learn from written records alone how an organisation actually operates on a day-to-day basis. Nor can we treat records – however ‘official’ – as hard evidence of what they report”.

The documents were therefore assessed for their relevance to the thematic areas and the most important (most likely strengths) were selected. This list is presented in Table 8.

Table 8. Collection of institutional documents

Institution	Document Type	Date
European Union	Independent European Sport Review	2005 (UK presidency of EU)-2006
	Amsterdam and Nice Declarations on Sport	1997
European Commission	UEFA broadcasting regulations	2001
	Commission White Paper on Sport	2005-July 2007 (adoption) ongoing implementation
	EU Media Futures Forum	2012
	Communication on Developing the European dimension in sport	2011
	EU Work Plan for Sport (2011-2014)	1 June 2011
	EU Work Plan for Sport (2014-2017)	14 June 2014
European Parliament	The Future of Football in Europe (2006/2130'INI')	March 2007
	EP resolution on the future of football	Dec. 2004 - March 2007 (adoption in plenary)
	Sale of TV rights for UEFA Champions League	2003
European Court of Justice, ECJ	Bosman Ruling	1995
	Television broadcasting — Directive 89/552/EEC	2013
	Council Directive 89/552/EEC	1989
UEFA	Annual Reports for UEFA	2010 to 2019
EUIPO	European Union Intellectual Property Office	2023
ANACOM	Communications Sector Background	2005
UEFA	UEFA broadcasting regulations	2001
	UEFA Club Licencing and Financial Fair Play Regulations	2012
	Sale of TV rights for UEFA Champions League	2015-2018
Marktest	Social Media Explorer	2024

Source: Adopted by the current study

Bryman (2012) argues that newspapers, magazines, TV programmes, films and other media are potential sources for social science analysis and are scrutinised to maintain their qualitative character. The author adds that issues of authenticity are sometimes difficult to determine in the case of media products. Although the products can generally be considered genuine, the authorship of the articles is often unclear (e.g., editorials, contemporary records-newspaper article at the time).

This means that the possibility of a reactive effect as a limitation on the validity of the data can be largely discounted, as they were not created specifically for the purposes of social research. Nevertheless, Charmaz (2014) emphasises that the emergent approach to utilising documentary sources is known as theoretical sampling. This legitimises the sampling of data by assuming the aim of developing an emergent theory.

Although GT is an action-interaction oriented method (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), media interviews as a source of input can be very important for grounded researchers. At this point it is important to clarify that these considerations only apply in cases where the researcher wishes to analyse the media

material itself as a collection of narratives and not as a means of support for observing another phenomenon (Figueroa, 2008).

Furthermore, the sources of information are permanent and available in a form that is relatively easy to verify by third parties (Denscombe, 2003) and open to public scrutiny (Saunders *et al.*, 2007). These sources offer enormous research potential because they represent the opinions of influential people on a wide range of issues who would be very difficult to reach. They also play an important role in supporting international comparisons (Dale, Wathan & Higgins, 2008).

Table 9. List of documents – mass media interviews

Institution	Document Type	Date
Al Jazeera	Interview: Yousef Al-Obaidly, CEO beIN Media Group	2019
A Bola	Interview: João Fonseca, FIFA Executive	July 2021
Record	Interview: Tiago Madureira, executive director of Liga Portugal	May 2022
RTP	Interview: Bernardo Silva, jogador do Manchester City	November 2023
Tribuna Expresso	Interview: Pedro Proença, President of Liga Portugal	November 2023
O Jogo	Interview: Pedro Proença, President of Liga Portugal	February 2024
Record	Interview: Jorge Pavão de Sousa, general Manager of DAZN Portugal	March 2024
A Bola	Interview: Pedro Mota Soares, Secretary general of APRITEL	March 2024

Source: Adopted by the current study

2.7. Data Coding and Analysis

This section discusses how the data collected was analysed using the CGT. Firstly, although the use of computer-aided software has advantages for analysing interview data (Silverman & Marvasti, 2008), it should be said that, given the exploratory nature of our interviews process, coupled with a relatively small sample size, we agree with Fielding, Lee & Blank (2008) position, that software often sacrifices depth for breadth. And in the belief that these packages effectively do little more than ‘crunch words’, as Fisher (2017) argues, it was decided to manually analyse the content of the interviews. Although this was a tedious labour, it allowed us to better understand the nature and complexity of each of the cases analysed.

After completing this process, the body of data was reviewed and it was decided that it was best to complete manual coding, with data printed and analysed using pen and paper. All observation notes and interview transcripts were coded. EU and UEFA documents were also coded, although they tended

to say more about the structure and network governance of the European football context. For this reason, the documents are mainly used in chapter 5.

Coding is the starting point for most forms of qualitative data analysis, although some authors prefer to refer to the process as indexing rather than coding (Bryman, 2012). In qualitative data analysis, a code is a researcher-generated construct that symbolizes or ‘translates’ data (Vogt *et al.*, 2014) and thus attributes interpreted meaning to each individual datum for later purposes of pattern detection, categorization, assertion or proposition development, theory building, and other analytic processes (Saldaña, 2016).

Analysis begins with coding (Charmaz, 2014). Coding is a *heuristic* (from the Greek, meaning ‘to discover’) exploratory problem-solving technique without specific formulas or algorithms to follow (Saldaña, 2016). As such, GT coding requires us to ask analytical questions of the data we have collected. These questions not only deepen our understanding of the phenomenon under study, but also help us to focus subsequent data collection on what is important.

Charmaz’s constructivist coding procedure is underpinned by many generic ground theory techniques, including analytic memo writing (analytic memo writing serves as an additional code), constant comparisons, theoretical sampling and saturation (Charmaz, 2008b). Schwandt (1998, p.16) says that coding is “a procedure that disaggregates the data, breaks it down into manageable segments, and identifies or names these segments”. Charmaz (2014, p. 59) adds that “coding is an ‘emergent process’ in which ‘unexpected ideas emerge’ and ‘may continue to emerge’ as the researcher revisits and compares codes and data”. These coding practices are very similar to the open and selective coding practices recommended by other strands (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Urquhart, 2013).

Charmaz (2014) sees coding as labelling and distillation. In the sense that it allows the researcher to begin an analytical accounting of the codes and the framework in which the analysis is constructed. It also allows comparisons to be made with other data segments (constant comparison). Charmaz & Mitchell (2007) point out that the initial coding stage encourages researchers to take their data apart and look at it again with an analytical eye. For the authors, this sequence means that if our data is wrong, the subsequent data collection and coding allows us to check and correct it.

CGT differs from classical GT in large part because it insists on providing strategies that focus on the subjectivity of the researcher, acknowledging the existence of multiple realities and emphasising methodological self-awareness (Charmaz, 2017). More generally, CGT captures the interaction between the form and content of data as individuals seek to understand the world in which they live.

The CGT coding system involves at least two hierarchical stages: initial coding and focused coding.

- i. During initial coding, we examine fragments of data (words, lines, segments and events) for their analytical significance.

- ii. In focused coding, we select the initial codes that seem most useful and test them against rich data.

Constructivist grounded theorists strive to use coding and memo-writing as imaginative strategies to learn about their data (Allen & Davey, 2018). The segments are labelled and then grouped, so that they can be categorised to provide an explanatory interpretation of the phenomenon. These practices help the researcher to take a fresh look at the data and to move it forward analytically (Charmaz, 2017). Table 10 summarises the coding stages:

Table 10. Summary of CGT coding stages

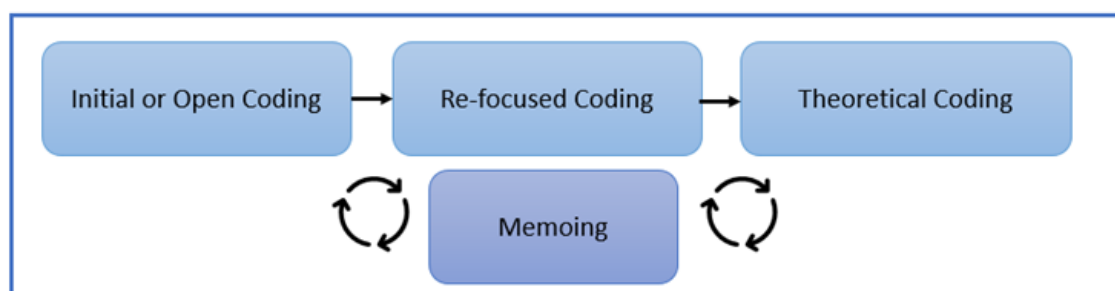
Type	Focus	Steps
Initial Coding	Identification of the action in the words of the participants, including intentions and experiences.	- Analyse the data line by line; - Create process codes using verbs that answer, 'what is happening here?'; - Develop in vivo codes using the participants' own words.
Focussed coding	Identify the most common and use them to group data for deeper analysis.	- Create focused codes based on the most significant or common codes; - Mark the entire dataset with focused codes and then use them to group the data accordingly; - Analyse the data in each focused code group using a variety of techniques, including theoretical coding; - Refine the focused codes into preliminary categories; - Development of the characteristics of each category until saturation has been reached.

Source: Adopted by the current study

2.7.1. Initial or open coding

CGT has thus become one of the most prominent versions of GT (Flick, 2018b). The CGT coding process is structured around initial or open coding, (re)focused and theoretical coding (the process is not linear in reality, and some of the stages are iterative), with memos throughout the research. Memoing is known as a central element of GT (Dunne, 2011) and provides the researcher with records of analytic thinking during the analysis process from start to finish. A simplified version of Charmaz's coding framework can be found in Figure 2.

Figure 2. The Coding Procedure of Constructivist Grounded Theory



Source: Adapted from Charmaz (2008)

The establishment of codes is where the true analytical process begins, with the application of questions to the data, which allow the constant comparative approach to flow and help maintaining a research focus. These questions, as outlined by Glaser (1978, pp. 56-57), are: What is this data a study of? What category, or property of a category, does the incident indicate? What is happening in this data? Or to go further, as emphasised by Strauss and Corbin (1998) posit at the open coding stage, researchers should be asking questions through deductive thinking: 'what', 'where', 'why', 'how' and 'when'.

A code in qualitative inquiry is most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language based or visual data (Saldaña, 2016). Open coding is like a process of 'breaking' and 'tritulating' that recombining data records and abstracted concepts, which intends to gradually conceptualize and categorize data sets (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). That is, an "analytical process through which concepts are identified and their properties and dimensions are discovered in the data", as later defined by Strauss and Corbin (1998, p. 101).

As per CGT guidance, this meant working through the data and coding short textual passages. Close attention was paid to the language used by interviewees, with telling phrases incorporated into codes. This helped to preserve *in vivo* terms in the analysis. The root meaning of *in vivo* is "that which is alive", and as a code it refers to a word or short phrase of real language found in the qualitative data record, "the terms used by (participants) themselves" (Strauss A. L., 1987, p. 33), preserving the authenticity and richness of their expressions (Saldaña, 2016). Gerunds were also considered in the coding. When coding, we gain a strong sense of action and sequence with gerunds (Charmaz, 2014). Care was taken, however, not to force gerunds on the data (Bryant, 2017).

The coding process requires the use of our analytical lens. But our perception and interpretation of what is happening in the data depends on what type of filter covers that lens (Saldaña, 2016). When coding, the researcher remains familiar with the context of the textual passage, thereby allowing consideration of the situation. This avoids the fracturing of data, whereby coding separates statements from context (Charmaz, 2014). As a result, in initial coding involved a line-by-line analysis of the data and the assignment of conceptual labels to words, lines and parts of the interview transcripts – such as an interview transcript (Urquhart, 2013; Thornberg & Charmaz, 2014).

The open coding phase allows the researcher to break the data down into manageable analytic pieces (Corbin & Strauss, 2015) and ultimately facilitate the delineating of, differentiating of, and constantly comparing the developing concepts. Initial coding in this thesis created 105 codes from documentary sources and interviews. Codes exist in relation another codes, so the codification of sentences or paragraphs should allow the identification of major themes; foster the understanding of informants' major concerns and increase the researcher's theoretical sensitivity. Some codes are

concrete and descriptive. Others are more analytic and account for a wider range of data (Charmaz & Thornberg, 2020).

Following the guidelines of Charmaz (2014), we remained open to what the material suggested and stayed close to them; we kept codes short, simple, active and analytical. Following are some of the examples of open coding carried out in the early stage of this research (Table 11).

Table 11. Examples of open coding

Source	Quote	Initial or Open code
Interviewee 5	"Technology is now such that even second, third and fourth division matches can be legally streamed, paid for and watched anywhere around the world as long as the recipient has a good internet connection and credit card. There's now less of a need than ever to get to a stadium if you know you can watch it with much easier convenience. It also gives clubs another source of income from their worldwide fanbase".	networking with good internet connection; credit card access - economic power; now less of a need than ever to get to a stadium.
Interviewee (secondary analysis of data)	... "Portugal's fall in the rankings is worrying and should be synonymous with reflection", ... "the European train is speeding up and Portuguese football cannot be left behind"... "Portugal's fall in the rankings is worrying and should be synonymous with reflection".	fall in the rankings; Portuguese football cannot be left behind.
Interviewee 2	"I particularly think that what sustains football is the passion of the fans"	fans loyalty.
Interviewee 3	"The industrial character of football constrains very strongly football as a sport, due to corruption, moneys involved in the contracts of coaches and players, etc. Still, most of the time, fans live well with that character (that being the reason for the continuation of corruption and inequalities between teams, for instance). Society in general is complacent with those inequalities."	the industrial character of football constrains very strongly football as a sport; fans live well with that character; society is complacent with those inequalities.
Interviewee 1	"I think European football overall is too strong and established for it to be at risk. Before the major leagues became established, it was a much more even playing field, but now the clubs who cannot compete financially are starting to think outside the box in terms of revenue and recruitment."	European football overall is too strong and established for it to be at risk; Clubs cannot compete financially are think outside the box in terms of revenue and recruitment.
Interviewee 4	"A number of younger players are involved and clubs, especially in England in my experience, are rarely willing to tell you in advance who will be involved or who may be missing because of injury. I totally understand why, they don't want to give the opposition team any advantage. However, for almost every league game, clubs in central Europe (France, Italy etc) take a different attitude to it and name their squads a day in advance of the match, which gives you a much better chance to prepare".	they don't want to give the opposition team any advantage; different attitude to it and name their squads a day in advance of the match, which gives you a much better chance to prepare.
Interviewee 12	"European clubs have the money, they can do what they want because the market is deregulated, and they have agents who can help them find players from other continents. This process in football reflects the wider process of international labour markets, with the global mobility of elite talent in different industries. Football is just one extreme case of this process"	market is deregulated. international labour markets; global mobility.

Source: Adopted by the current study

All of these codes suggest areas that the researcher could develop and test in subsequent interviews or observations. After studying the initial codes, the researcher can treat the most compelling and frequent codes as focused codes to sort, synthesise and analyse large batches of data.

2.7.2. Focused coding

Focused coding is the second stage of analytical abstraction (Charmaz, 2014). Decisions about which initial codes make the most analytic sense are at the centre of focused coding (Thornberg & Charmaz, 2014). Codes are then assessed for analytics relevance as they become more conceptual categories (Thornberg & Charmaz, 2014).

Thus, we used focused coding to identify and select codes that demonstrated greater analytical strength. This action involved comparing initial codes to identify recurring and significant themes. The initial codes were grouped together to create focused codes to encapsulate them. Initial codes that encapsulated other codes were also elevated to the status of a focused code. In this way, it was through focused coding that the categories were formed. This process involves gathering additional information to refine and complete the categories under development. Refinement often occurs through comparative analysis. In addition, theoretical sampling helped us to identify relationships between the data, gaps and to gain more insight into what is still unknown.

Focused coding is more directed, selective, and conceptual than initial coding and helps manage pre-conceptions by using constant comparison methods, by keeping the codes close to the data. Focused coding is an emergent process, which uses codes to explain larger sections of text (Charmaz, 2014). The aim here is to identify the core category (Glaser, 1978; 1992; Charmaz, 2014), which once emerged, can be used to help guide future data collection and analysis.

Charmaz (2009) also refers to this type of coding as ‘saturated coding’. In this coding the researcher asks himself or herself: “What else is there on this topic?” or “What further research is there?”. There is an opportunity, if necessary, for the researcher to go back to the research participants where the data was collected to challenge and validate their initial ‘findings’, for example to reinforce ideas from their initial notes. Hence, GT gives the researcher more analytic power with fewer data (Charmaz & Thornberg, 2020).

However, CGT allows for theoretical directions to be kept, rather than becoming too narrow in focus. This is a step away from classic grounded theorists who are sceptical of maintaining too many codes or descriptions (Sebastian, 2019). We therefore used focused coding, as described by Charmaz (2014), to identify and select the codes that demonstrated the greatest analytical strength. Following an example of how initial codes were grouped together to form a focussed code is provided in Table 12.

Table 12. Examples of focused code

Focused code	Initial or Open code
Streamed paid; Income	- networking with good internet connection; - credit card access - economic power; - now less of a need than ever to get to a stadium.
UEFA ranking	- fall in the rankings - Portuguese football cannot be left behind
Charisma; Integrity	- the industrial character of football constrains very strongly football as a sport; - fans live well with that character; - society in general is complacent with those inequalities.
Power	- European football overall is too strong and established for it to be at risk; - clubs who cannot compete financially are starting to think outside the box in terms of revenue and recruitment.
Competitive balance; Engagement	- they don't want to give the opposition team any advantage; - different attitude to it and name their squads a day in advance of the match, which gives you a much better chance to prepare.
Globalization	- market is deregulated - international labour markets - global mobility

Source: Adopted by the current study

Finally, the literature was considered at this point. Charmaz (2014) states that once the core category has emerged, the researcher needs to engage deeply with the literature and weave it into the developing theory. This helps to clarify ideas, make comparisons, and allows the reader to see where the work fits into or extends the field.

2.7.3. Memoing

Memos are notes that reflect the data and the conceptual links between categories. Memo data are initially subject to constant comparison, allowing the researcher to capture their formative ideas as they emerge. According to Birks and Mills (2015), memoing should begin with the first analysis session and continue throughout the process. This process is not only continuous, but also operates in a cyclical coexistence. As Patton (2014, p. 436) states “recording and tracking analytic insights that arise during data collection is part of fieldwork and the beginning of qualitative analysis”.

Memo-writing is a key technique in qualitative research. Memoing provide the opportunity to stop and think more deeply about the data (Thornberg & Charmaz, 2014). Hallberg (2006, p. 144) emphasises that “writing detailed notes throughout the analysis process requires noting ideas, assumed associations, and theoretical reflections related to each of the emerging categories”. When researchers write memos, they are engaging in dialogue with the data and moving the analysis further. For Clarke (2005, p. 202), “memos are sites of conversation with ourselves about our data”. Strauss

(1987, p. 110) stated “Even when a researcher is working alone on a project, he or she is engaged in continual internal dialogue – for that is, after all, what thinking is”.

If codes stimulate reflection, it is memo writing that preserves it. As a result, memo writing raises questions and leads us to build well-developed categories and to specify the relationships between them. For example, which codes appear to best account for the data? How do they account for the data? Where do they take you? Which comparisons can you make? What’s left out? Researchers in the GT tradition trust that uncertainty is ultimately generative of theory and that, as the analysis develops, the content of memos improves in depth and quality of conceptualization, and ultimately of integration (Lempert, 2007).

The memo writing process in GT is a memo writing is a skill like any other, it can be learnt through practice, a practised art; it is neither mystical nor mysterious. Memo writing itself is simple and straightforward. It is the thinking behind the memos which is necessarily complex and analytical (Lempert, 2007). Glaser (1992, p. 21) has suggested that “memos will vary in subject, coherence, interest, theoretical content, conceptual clarity, and future usefulness to a finished paper”. For Charmaz (2011), memos should be more analytical and precise in order to focus research. Birks and Mills (2015, p. 7) point out that writing memos is an essential process that “ensures the quality of grounded theory”. Lempert (2007) adds that the writing of memos develops ideas from the social world of research and therefore constitutes the infrastructure of a GT research process.

Memo-writing represents a pivotal intermediate step between data collection and the drafting of preliminary theories. It serves as the primary conduit between the data and the nascent theory, enabling the process of theory construction (Charmaz, 2014). The process of theorising, model development and analysis are documented throughout (Glaser, 1978; Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Such records comprise the researcher's thoughts, hunches, interpretations and decisions throughout the analysis. Such memos may be lengthy and contemplative, yet they are not merely a catalogue of codes and concepts (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Consequently, they constitute an integral component of the ‘audit trail’ of GT, thereby enabling the analysis to be documented at the point of occurrence (Tweed & Charmaz, 2012).

Different types of memos have assisted the research on grounding theoretical abstractions in data. However, operational memos were used as a reflexive instrument, documenting our coding processes and code choices; how the process of inquiry is taking shape; and the emergent patterns, categories and subcategories, themes, and concepts in your data – all possibly leading toward theory (Saldaña, 2016). They are roughly equivalent to a lab “notebook in experimental research” (Vogt *et al.*, 2014, p. 394). Memos were used for varying purposes in this study. An example of a memo from this study can be found in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Example of an analytic memo

Memo: How to prevent digital piracy

The nature of fragmentation and aggregation of services means that current streaming services must be delivered to a range of devices that are not directly under the control of an operator. Content is delivered through specific, aggregated applications, providing fertile ground for piracy of live football content. So, how can we ensure that this does not become a breeding ground for illicit activity? Is it worth centralising broadcasting rights in order to combat piracy? How can this be done? The perception is that it would be extremely difficult to implement. Streaming services have to be provided to a series of devices that are not directly under the control of an operator. So, we really have to admit that piracy is part of the digital ecosystem. We can see this death as an opportunity to change the current model of football funding. Maybe it is not fair. There is also the possibility that the rights are not sold on an exclusive basis. Any solution requires a paradigm shift.

Source: Adopted by the current study

The interplay between co-constructing rich data, constant comparison, focused coding, theoretical coding, memo-writing and theoretical sampling was crucial in order to develop a set of conceptual categories anchored in the data (Charmaz & Thornberg, 2020).

2.7.4. Theoretical sampling

In theoretical sampling, the researcher aims to develop the properties of their categories or theory under development, rather than sampling randomly selected populations or representative distributions of a given population. The researcher looks for people, events or information to illuminate and define the boundaries and relevance of the categories. As the purpose of theoretical sampling is to sample in order to develop the theoretical categories, conducting it may take the researcher across substantive areas (Charmaz, 2016).

Theoretical sampling is a strategy designed to actively present new cases or data with the objective of developing, refining and elaborating the emerging grounded theory (GT). Theoretical sampling is employed by researchers as a means of making decisions regarding the collection of data. The objective of theoretical sampling is to gain a deeper comprehension of conceptual categories by seeking data that either corroborates, elucidates, or expands upon them. The use of this method facilitates the development of a theory that is rich in conceptual detail. Insufficient sampling is likely to result in a theory that is incomplete and poorly integrated, with too many exceptions that remain unexplained (Glaser & Anselm, 2006).

In theoretical sampling, the researcher is required to collect, code and analyse their data concurrently, and to determine which data to collect next and where to find it in order to develop the

theory as it emerges. The objective is to gain a more profound comprehension of the conceptual categories by seeking out data that corroborates, elucidates, or expands upon them. It is a systematic process of data collection in which decisions are made on analytical grounds (Urquhart, 2013).

Using theoretical sampling in this way helps to develop a conceptually dense theory. The main principle of theoretical sampling is that the emerging categories, and the researcher's increasing understanding of the developing theory, now direct the sampling (Glaser 1978). Researchers deliberately seek participants who have had particular responses to experiences, or in whom particular concepts appear significant (Morse, 2007).

In accordance with the overarching methodology of qualitative research, which seeks to identify the most illuminating cases for investigation (Creswell, 2014), theoretical sampling also prioritises data collection with the objective of enhancing the analysis and formulating categories and relationships. This necessitates that the researcher identifies cases that are theoretically pertinent (Glaser & Anselm, 2006). Collecting data from multiple cases allows the researcher to consider how individuals' actions, behaviours and thoughts vary in different situations. Thus, through theoretical sampling and theory building, it is possible to explore similarities and variations of concepts in different situations.

2.8. Constant Comparison, Abduction and Reflexivity

Constant Comparison

Constant comparative is a method of analysis that generates successively more abstract concepts and theories through inductive processes of comparing data with data, data with category, category with category, and category with concept. Comparisons then constitute each stage of analytic development. By deploying constant comparison, the abstract labelling of data was exposed to a thorough examination, thereby bringing rigour to study. Comparisons then constitute each stage of analytic development (Charmaz, 2014).

All elements of the analysis – data, codes, categories and concepts – are constantly compared within and between each other. This comparative process entails looking for similarities, differences and nuances between all the elements of the analysis in order to generate a more abstract understanding of the material. Using this comparative method is a dynamic non-linear process, requiring the researcher to stay open to new insights within the analysis (Tweed & Charmaz, 2012).

The process involved “comparing data to data, data to code, code to code, code to category, category to category, and category to concept” (Charmaz, 2014, p. 344). The technique of constant comparison informed the entire analysis, expanding the possibilities of seeing the similarities and differences between different data. Thus, theoretical sampling guided the re-examination of data from a new perspective or the search for additional participants to understand and refine emerging

concepts. Theoretical sampling also guided the ongoing collection of data to represent the greatest variety of experiences, including negative cases (Charmaz, 2014; Morse *et al.*, 2021).

The development of theory in CGT takes place through constant comparison of data and refinement of categories with the interaction between field data and existing literature (Khanal, 2018). But there comes a time when we have to stop. The standard short answer of GT to the question of criteria is stop when you reach saturation of your categories. The longer answer is that categories are 'saturated' when new data collection no longer yields new theoretical insights or reveals new properties of your core theoretical categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Glaser & Holton, 2007; Bowen, 2008; Mason, 2010; Thomson, 2010).

In short, theoretical saturation occurs when no new or relevant data seem to emerge in relation to a category, the category is well developed with a variation of its properties and dimensions, and the relationships between categories are well established and validated (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

Abduction

The concept of 'abduction' has gained prominence in social research as a form of reasoning that starts with data analysis, exploring all possible explanations for observed patterns (Reichertz, 2007). These explanations are then tested by forming hypotheses, which are confirmed or disconfirmed until the researcher arrives at the most plausible interpretation of the observed data. The GT methodology is an iterative, comparative and interactive approach that commences with inductive data analysis and progresses to abductive reasoning (Charmaz & Belgrave (2018). This means that, from the initial analysis, the researcher began to develop conceptual categories, which were then used to make future sampling decisions (Richardson & Kramer, 2006).

Peirce (1969) introduced abduction as a third mode of reasoning or inference, using varied terminology (e.g., abduction, presumption, hypothesis) and refining its meaning over time. Charmaz *et al.* (2018) understand abduction as the selection or invention of a provisional hypothesis to explain a particular empirical case or data set better than any other candidate hypotheses and pursuing this hypothesis through further investigation.

The abductive inference involves considering all possible theoretical explanations for the data, forming hypotheses for each possible explanation, verifying them empirically by examining the data and following the most plausible explanation. In other words, it consists of discovering new concepts, ideas and explanations by identifying phenomena, data or events that are unexpected and cannot be explained by existing knowledge (Reichertz, 2007). The process of induction enables the creation of codes, categories, themes, theoretical constructs and relationships that facilitate the explanation of the data. Abduction produces plausible explanations of the data that explain the surprises that arise

during data collection and analysis. Specifically, using these logics in a complementary fashion allows for targeted data collection techniques that strengthen research findings (Kennedy & Thornberg, 2018). In sum, initial sampling in GT is where you start, whereas theoretical sampling directs you where to go.

Abductive reasoning involves considering all possible theoretical explanations for discoveries that may be surprising finding, and then returning to the empirical world and checking these explanations until the researcher arrives at the most plausible explanation to account for the finding (Peirce, 1969; Rosenthal, 2004; Reichertz, 2007; Charmaz, 2014). Glaser's approach to theoretical sampling is based on abductive logic, mainly because it aims to extend and test the properties of the emerging categories, rather than to achieve demographic representation in the study sample.

Reflexivity

Reflexivity is described as a key element in ensuring the groundedness of a theory in constructivist GTM, and as a result various reflexive strategies are presented (Ramalho et al., 2015). Reflexivity involves examining one's own assumptions, beliefs and judgments and critically considering how they may influence the research process (Jamieson, Govaart & Pownall, 2022). As a core principle of constructivism, this approach emphasises the importance of self-reflection in relation to the research process (Guzzini, 2000; Staller, Block & Horner, 2008; King & Horrocks, 2010).

Charmaz (2014) argues that the reflexivity of the researcher is essential to the CGT method. This is in line with constructivist epistemology, which compels researchers to be reflexive about their actions and decisions (Lincoln et al., 2013). We understand reflexivity as the researcher's examination of their research experiences, decisions and interpretations that they bring to the process, and which allows others to assess how and to what extent the researcher's interests, positions and assumptions have influenced the research. In other words, a reflexive stance informs the way the researcher conducts the research, relates to the research participants and represents them in written reports.

Reflexivity, or being reflexive, is often claimed as a methodological virtue and a source of superior insight, perspicacity or awareness, but it can be difficult to establish exactly what is being claimed (Lynch, 2000). Reflexive social construction is based on the idea that human beings are self-reflexive beings. Social theorists and philosophers such as Max Weber, George Herbert Mead and Alfred Schutz argue that self-reflection has tangible consequences, not only for scientific researchers, but more generally for agents whose actions and motivated interpretations constitute social orders. Reflexivity, as a concept derived from 'social construction' (Searle, 1995; Berger & Luckmann, 2011), highlights how consensual beliefs and concerted practices give rise to objective social institutions.

Accordingly, institutional facts such as the value of currency or the price of shares on a stock exchange depend on collective actions that presuppose the objectivity of these facts. These socially

constructed facts are real in the sense that they are intersubjective, exist independently of the observer, and persist in time, but their reality depends on, and is continually sustained by, a reflexive subscription to that very reality.

Following the arguments of Bourdieu (1990) and Wacquant (1992) on the importance of 'reflexive sociology', it is appropriate to explicitly outline these personal beliefs and their possible implications for our discussion. An appropriate starting point is to consider one's own position in relation to the phenomena under study; thus, from a constructivist perspective, it is possible to understand reflexivity as a process of critical self-reflection. As Charmaz (2014) points out, reflexivity involves the researcher examining how their interests, positions and assumptions have influenced the research and questioning their research decisions and interpretations.

For Gordon-Finlayson (2019), there is a risk in undertaking such scrutiny that deconstructing researcher subjectivity will lapse into nihilism. This risk can be avoided by balancing a realistic assessment of the researcher's subjectivity with the need to present a plausible interpretive account of social phenomena. It is with this in mind that we consider the role of the researcher in the study of the media/football complex.

Reflexivity has only become an explicit concern within a constructivist framework. Reflexivity is an opportunity for researchers to rethink, to justify their own decisions and to communicate the process of theory development to their co-researchers as well as to the research participants (Mruck & Mey, 2007). In this sense, a reflection diary was kept, although the reflection diary was not always a diary. However, it was always used when we were producing an analytical session. For example, when we were working on the methodological chapter, no entries were made in the diary unless they were necessary for analytical purposes.

Reflexivity also extends beyond the individual academic to include an acknowledgement of the limits of knowledge associated with the social scientist's membership and position in the intellectual field (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). For this reason, we seek to distinguish between two aspects of reflexivity: 'personal' and 'functional'.

Personal reflexivity

Personal aspects of reflexivity relate to the researcher's own identity. By being reflexive we acknowledge that we cannot be separated from our biographies. All researchers have biographies, pre-existing knowledge, values and personal interests. Rather than denying their existence, constructivist researchers are encouraged to be reflexive about what they bring to the research and how it affects the research. CGT emphasises methodological self-awareness (Charmaz, 2017).

Personal reflexivity helps to achieve this, whereby the researcher makes visible their motivations, interests and attitudes (Wilkinson, 1988). In CGT, the researcher must clarify “the position the author takes in the text”, acknowledge “the relevance of biography” (Mills, Bonner & Francis, 2006, p. 9) and put information about their experiences and interest in the area “on the table” (Clarke, 2005, p. 12). We are all influenced by our history and cultural context, which, in turn, shape our view of the world, the forces of creation, and the meaning of truth.

Often these underlying assumptions are unconscious and taken for granted. For this, our investigation is an expression of these personal interests and values. I grew up in a country where football is very popular, where it dominates the media spectacle before, during and after the game. I could not escape it: I am a football fan.

We all make different assumptions about society and the world that shape our perspectives on phenomena, which then form the starting points for any research study. We have often wondered why there is evidence of systemic inequalities in the values used to negotiate broadcasting³ rights in European professional football leagues. Even knowing that ‘local’ has a meaning that contrasts with the assumption of a universal reality. Knowing also that the relational realities we are talking about are presumably local to the processes in which they are made and remade. But the idea was there because, despite its structural problems, the PPL has fluctuated between sixth and seventh place in the UEFA club rankings for the past two decades.

This is because the commercial value of the PPL’ broadcasting rights is significantly lower than that of the top five, the so-called Big Five leagues of European football. All variations of GT exist on a methodological, however, CGT is positioned at the latter end of this spiral, actively repositioning the researcher as the author of a reconstruction of experience and meaning.

Functional reflexivity

Functional reflexivity involves continuous, critical examination of the practice/process of research. It also involves reflection on the nature of the research enterprise, including the choice of method and the construction of knowledge, in order to reveal assumptions, values and biases (Wilkinson, 1988). Functional reflexivity includes researchers reflecting on their actions and decisions and their interactions with research participants.

In this study, reflexivity offers a critical approach to the grounding of ideas which, although endowed with a kind of philosophical pragmatism, can be a way of seeing the other side of a phenomenon that is generally accepted, neither questioned nor challenged within the practical contexts within which it occurs.

³ The first complaint to the EC was in 1989, and the formal settlement in 2001.

From a constructivist standpoint, the inner resources of the researcher are reasonably applied to theory building, as long as this is accompanied by reflexivity. We reject the fact-value dichotomy, and the notion that philosophical or scientific enquiry should be value-neutral or disinterested. We face the future with the ability to make a better, more just world if we engage in our work with the reflexivity, sensitivity, and appreciation for complexity that characterizes the social constructionist sensibility.

2.8.1. Theoretical saturation

Theoretical saturation refers to the point at which gathering more data about a theoretical category reveals no new properties nor yields any further theoretical insights about the emerging GT (Charmaz, 2016). According to the principles of GT, the criterion for judging when to stop data collection is the attainment of theoretical saturation. In practical term, this means that individual interviews were conducted until no new conceptualisations emerged from the interview data and when, in the concomitant process of data analysis, no new properties of data were uncovered and no new relationship between categories were manifested. Therefore, emergent theory determined when data collection and analysis was complete (Urquhart, 2016).

Theoretical saturation is what grounded theorists aim for, or should aim for, according to the canons. Thus, categories become ‘saturated’ as new data no longer generate new theories, that is, as new data is collected, if these new insights do not reveal new properties, their data no longer generate central theoretical categories (Charmaz, 2016).

Saturation is not seeing the same pattern over and over again. It is the conceptualisation of comparisons of these incidents that yield different properties of the pattern until no new properties of the pattern emerge. This provides the conceptual density that, when integrated into hypotheses, makes up the body of the generated GT with theoretical completeness.

The final stage of this analysis is to consider theoretical saturation. It was completed when data collection no longer produced new analytical insights. The data was simply producing more data for existing codes and no new codes were being created. In GT, this is commonly referred to as ‘theoretical saturation’ and represents the point at which collecting more data does not produce any more theoretical insights (Urquhart, 2013).

2.8.2. Evaluation criteria

In CGT, the credibility of GT is based on four key criteria: credibility, originality, resonance, and usefulness. Therefore, the criteria for evaluating research depend on who formulates them and the objectives they invoke. In accordance with Charmaz (2008), our constructionist approach makes the following assumptions:

- i. Reality is multiple, processual, and constructed – but constructed under particular conditions;

- ii. The research process emerges from interaction;
- iii. It considers the researcher's positionality, as well as that of the research participants;
- iv. The researcher and researched construct the data – data are a product of the research process, not simply observed objects of it.

A strong combination of originality and credibility increases resonance, usefulness, and the subsequent value of the contribution. A claim to making a scholarly contribution requires a careful study of relevant literatures, including those that go beyond disciplinary boundaries, and a clear positioning of your GT.

The above criteria account for the empirical study and development of the theory. GT, when it emerges from reasoned reflection and principled conviction, conceptualises, and communicates what is meaningful about a substantive area, and can make a valuable contribution. The criteria applicable to this study are credibility, originality, resonance, usefulness. These criteria are summarised in Table 13.

Table 13. Evaluation Criteria

Definition	
Credibility	There are strong logical links between the gathered data and your argument and analysis.
Originality	Our study had far-reaching social and theoretical implications.
Resonance	The categories represent the phenomena under study and reveal both liminal and taken-for-granted meanings.
Usefulness	Our analysis provides interpretations that people can use in their daily lives. It has also helped to provide interpretations that lead knowledge to explore beyond the obvious.

Source: Adopted by the current study

2.8.3. Ethical considerations

In conducting social research, researchers make judgements and take practical actions when faced with ethical issues. The ethical conduct of research has become a cornerstone of conducting effective and meaningful research and is under constant scrutiny (Davies, 1999). It is essential that researchers are aware of these choices and can justify them. This section therefore sets out the ethical guidelines and principles followed in this study. It covers both institutional ethical requirements and wider ethical principles.

These considerations are all the more valid for qualitative research, especially as it collects data from people and about people, which can intrude on individuals' privacy (Punch, 2005). For researchers, the first resource considered when making ethical decisions is usually their institutional or professional code of ethics (Kitchener & Kitchener, 2014).

The researcher implemented procedures to ensure that all research data, including the transcripts, were anonymised. Anonymity was further maintained in the writing up of this thesis and other associated reports. In addition to following institutional ethical rules, Kitchener and Kitchener (2014) recommend that social researchers adopt higher-level ethical principles for their studies. They argue that ethical principles help researchers to evaluate their ethical dilemmas and make moral decisions.

Ethical considerations for interviews were relatively straight forward. The researcher gained informed consent from all interviewees. Access to interviewees was acquired through personal connections and provided by them. In the preliminary contact, they received information about the outline of the thesis, the research objectives, the topics planned for discussion during the interview and the types of questions they could anticipate.

Kitchener (2000) states that ethical rules and principles are essential virtues that form ethical character and promote moral behaviour in research. Therefore, axiology, the philosophical foundation of ethics and values, becomes a commitment in our research (Hammersley & Trainou, 2012). Online interviews are asynchronous and unique, offering methodological versatility and requiring ethical considerations above all else (Punch, 2016; King & Brooks, 2017).

All interviewees were asked for permission to use their data in the preparation of this thesis, to which they all agreed (Conrad & Schober, 2008). They were informed of the ownership of the data, the final outcome of the research, and the methods used to store the information. In accordance with standard ethical guidelines for using interviews as a research method (Burnham *et al.*, 2004; Bryman, 2012), respondents were guaranteed the following rights:

- i. Anonymity in the processing of information;
- ii. Not to be quoted without permission;
- iii. The right to withdraw permission to use the interview as a source of information at any time;
- iv. The information gathered from the interview will be used only for the purposes of academic research;
- v. Not be disclosed to third parties without the prior consent of the interviewee.

Respondents' right to confidentiality is an option. Some respondents requested confidentiality, which was respected and was the norm (Seidman, 2006). The reason for this is that we have been entrusted with data from a wide variety of sources, containing opinions on different points of view from informed individuals. It is therefore of the utmost importance that confidentiality is maintained throughout this research.

Confidentiality means protecting the identity of respondents and ensuring that their personal information is not disclosed or made public (Knoebel, 2003; Burns & Grove, 2005; Polit & Beck, 2006).

To ensure the anonymity of interviewees, quotations from interviews are identified in the thesis by interview numbers.

2.9. In Summary

This chapter has described and justified how CGT method has been used to address the research question posed in this study. Considerations of philosophical underpinnings and paradigmatic considerations are presented. GT is predicated on data, but how researchers regard and render data depends on which version of the method they adopt. Moreover, this chapter has shown how rich data can also be the inspiration for analytical insight.

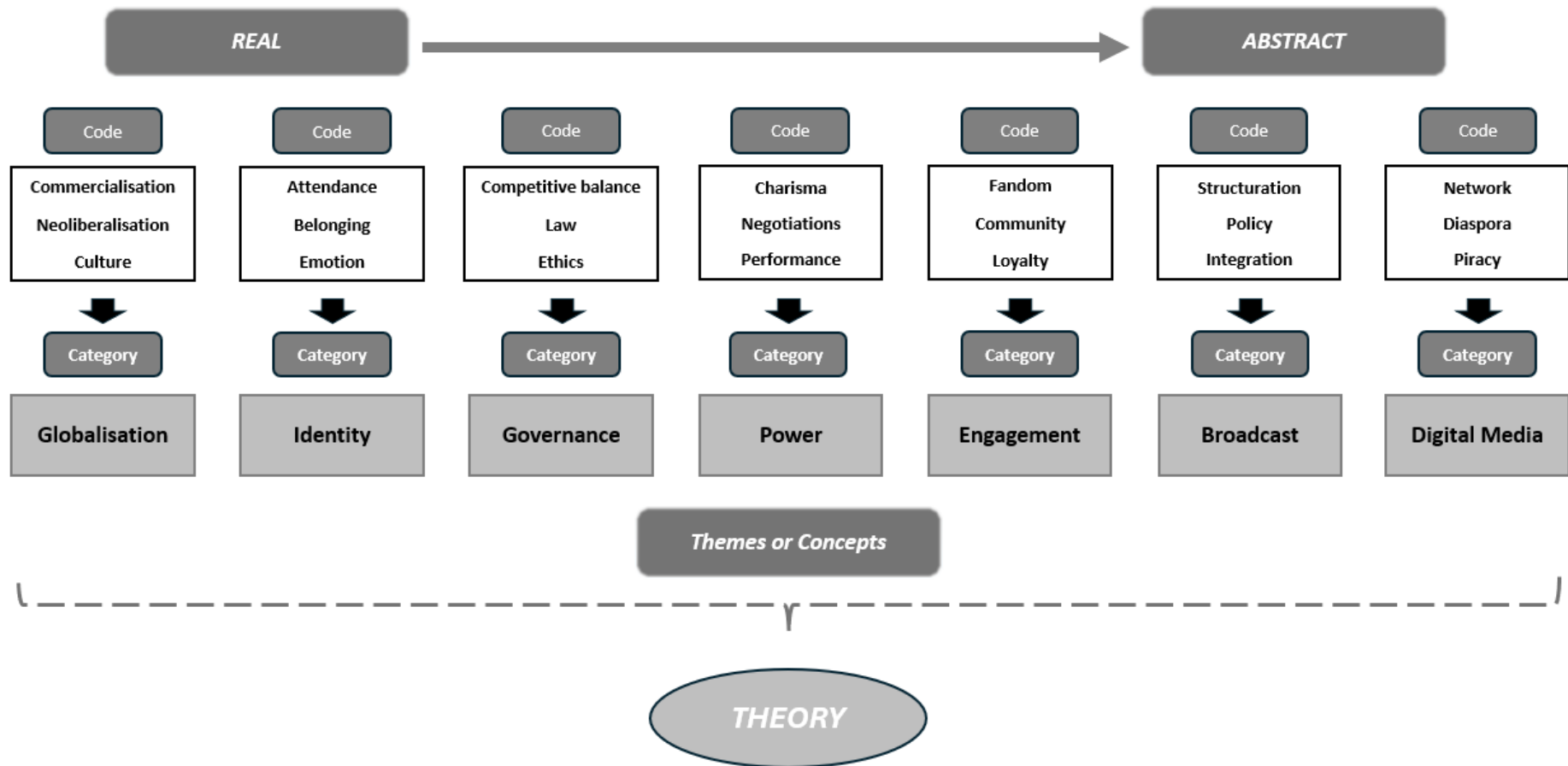
The research design applied in the present study, including sampling techniques, data collection methods and the process of theory generation, in the substantive area of research is expounded. The chapter concludes by a critical reflection, presenting issues of representation, challenges of legitimation (validity), reflexivity, and ethical concerns. Table 14 summarises the key features of the methodology followed in this doctoral thesis and Figure 4 resumes the theory model that we follow in the present research (both below).

Table 14. Overview of the study's research design

Position		Justification
Philosophical position	Symbolic interactionism and social constructivism	(Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2018)
Approach	Constructivist grounded theory method	Charmaz (2014)
Data collection strategy	Theoretical sampling	Charmaz (2014)
Data collection method	Documents, semi-structured interviews	Charmaz (2014)
Data analysis	Initial, focussed and theoretical coding	Charmaz (2014)
Reflective practice	Personal and functional reflexivity	Wilkinson (1989)
Research evaluation	Credibility, originality, resonance and usefulness	Charmaz (2008)
Ethics	Ethical rules and ethical principles	(Kitchener & Kitchener, 2014)

Source: Adopted by the current study

Figure 4. A streamlined codes-to-theory model for qualitative inquiry



Source: Adopted by the current study

[Page left blank on purpose]

From Mediation to Mediatisation

“The task is not so much to see what no one yet has seen,
but to think what nobody yet has thought about that which everyone sees”

Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860)

3.1. Chapter Overview

This chapter outlines the evolution of the transformation of football through the media. It follows this historical trajectory from a heuristic perspective. On the one hand, it explains how the media and football are sources of social and cultural meaning in the lives of many people. On the other hand, it seeks to frame the evolution of this relationship, highlighting the way in which the media have positioned themselves as a structuring agent of the sports field and evolved into a powerful complex.

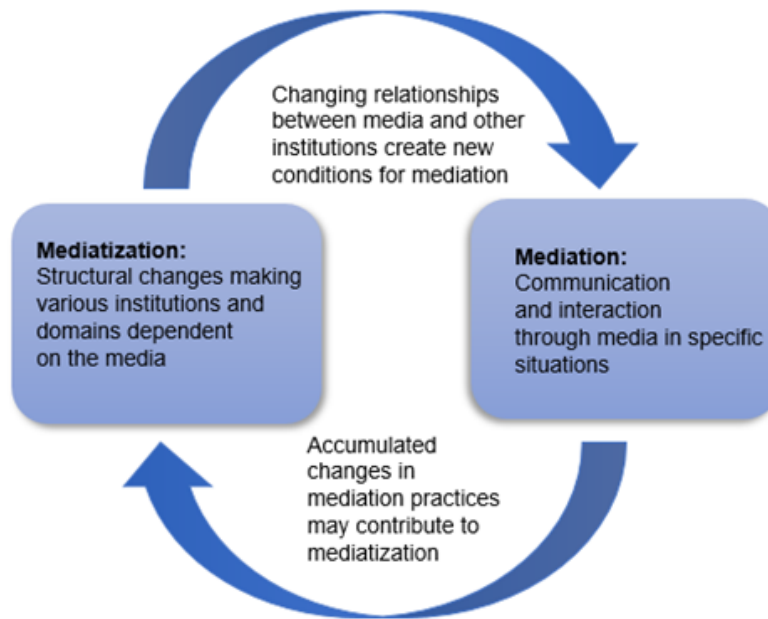
3.2. The Symbiotic Relationship Between the Media and Football

Football is one of those forms of culture that has been subject to ‘mediation’⁴ (Thompson, 1995; Wenner & Billings, 2017), and ‘mediatisation’⁵ (Sugden & Tomlinson, 1998a; Mazzarella 2004; Altheide & Schneider, 2012; Hjarvard, 2013; Hepp & Krotz, 2014; Haynes & Boyle, 2017), processes through which it has become part of the media system (Whannel, 1992; Horne, Tomlinson & Whannel, 2001; Horne, 2006; Frandsen, 2014; Krotz, 2018). Hjarvard (2018) illustrates this position by arguing that ‘mediation’ and ‘mediatisation’ are two different concepts and, as such, they should be kept separate. It should be noted, however, that the processes covered by these concepts are interrelated.

⁴ The term ‘mediation’ is used to describe the processes by which a social fact is generated and reproduced in and through a set of media. For William, mediation represents a constitutive process of social life. In this context, Silverstone (1999, p. 13) defines mediation as the circulation of meanings, whereby meanings are conveyed from one text to another, from one discourse to another, and from one event to another. The process of mediation entails the continuous transformation of meanings, both substantial and inconsequential, significant and trivial, as media texts and texts about media disseminate in written, spoken, and audio-visual forms. Furthermore, it encompasses the direct and indirect contributions of individuals and communities to the production of these texts.

⁵ The term ‘mediatisation’, as defined by Krotz (2018, p. 23), refers to the historical developments that have occurred as a result of media (communication) change and the consequences of this change (cited in Livingstone, 2009). For further insight, see Frandsen (2014), where the author defines mediatisation as “a social process in which the media exert a growing social influence, as they appear to play a dominant role in the transformation of the social and cultural field”. In alignment with the aforementioned perspectives, Hjarvard (2008) posits that mediatisation has emerged as a novel theoretical framework for re-examining foundational inquiries pertaining to the role and impact of the media in cultural and social contexts.

Figure 5. The reciprocal relationship between mediatisation and mediation



Source: Hjarvard (2016, p. 238).

Hjarvard (2013) points out that ‘mediatisation refers to a long-term process, whereby social and cultural institutions and modes of interaction are changed as a result of the growing influence of the media’. Mediatisation has emerged as an influential new concept in media and communication studies and refers to changes associated with communication media and their development (Deacon *et al.*, 2007; Hjarvard, 2008; Hepp & Krotz, 2014); accordingly, it is a process that takes place under the conditions of further meta-processes such as globalisation (Giddens, 2011; Hepp, 2013a, 2015), individualisation (Beck, 1992; Krotz, 2018) and commercialisation (McAllister, 1996).

According to Schulz (2004), the mediatisation assumption posits that the semiotic, technological, and economic characteristics of mass media result in problematic dependencies, constraints, and exaggerations. Schulz emphasises that media processes perform three basic functions: the relay function, which bridges spatial and temporal distances using media technology; the semiotic function, which codes and formats messages for human information processing; and the economic function, that standardises media products due to mass production processes.

Over the past decades, the concept of mediatisation has become central to discussions of communication and media issues. It has emerged, therefore, as an important theoretical concept to consider the interaction between media, culture, and society. In this sense, the processes highlighted by Schulz have assumed great importance in the study of the relationship between media and football, in an interdisciplinary framework. This leads to the conventional view that the relationship between the media and football is symbiotic, as advocated by several authors (Parente, 1977; McChesney, 1989;

Real, 1996, 2005; Chandler, 1999; Coakley, 2003; Jeanrenaud & Kesenne, 2006). Bolotny and Bourg (2006) also emphasise that football and the media have established networks of interdependence, having maintained a long relationship of common interest. A relationship of self-interest that allows them to reap the fruits of the complementarity of their interests, as noted by Evens *et al.*, (2013).

From this point of view, it makes sense to speak of a symbiotic relationship. This statement raises several questions. What does it mean? What do the media and football get out of this relationship? As already mentioned, the relationship between these two agents is above all an ephemeral one, so let us turn to the biological sciences to explain it.

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in biological systems as powerful analogy for understanding patterns of social behaviour in humans and non-human animals. This viewpoint is supported by Damásio (2017), who argues that it does not take a very fertile imagination to perceive comparable patterns of behaviour in societies formed by humans and bacteria. As a result, a growing body of literature has emerged on the symbiosis between sport and the media (Klatell & Marcus, 1988; Barnett, 1990).

Symbiosis is a key factor in evolution (Marshall and Fox, 2006) that immediately means living in association (Nash, 2008). It is therefore an association made up of relationships. It is a coexistence in which both parties benefit from the association (Real & Mechikof, 1992). In the field of biological science, Nash (2008) posits that a symbiotic relationship naturally arises when a fungus, unable to produce its own food, absorbs it from algae, which in turn are protected by the fungus to form a lichen.

McChesney (1989, p.67) notes that the symbiotic relationship between football and the media dates back to the late 19th century and continues to the present. He points out that “all indications are that this enduring marriage will continue to evolve in the present pattern”. In fact, this relationship has been the subject of debate, with some authors emphasising its positive aspects and others considering it controversial. Benjamin Rader (1984) takes the latter position in *‘Its Own Image: How Television Has Transformed Sports’*. The author accuses the media of exerting a survival effect akin to parasitism, claiming that TV exploits and destroys the best in sport. Steven Barnett (1990), in *‘Games and Sets: The Changing Face of Sport on Television’*, sees the relationship not with nostalgia for an idealised past, but with a growing anxiety about the future, now led by cable and satellite broadcasting (cf. Real, 2005). Klatell and Marcus (1988, p. 22) report that the complex relationship between TV and football “has produced a hybrid offspring: the TV/sport complex, which is neither pure TV nor pure sport, resembling either parent only in its profitable bloodlines”. Blociszewski (2001) points out that TV has turned sport into pure spectacle. Televised sport therefore loses the magic of the collective event and turns sport into a genetically modified species (cf. Jeanrenaud & Kesenne, 2006).

In the same vein, Mark McCormack (1984), the legendary American sports promoter, pointed out that “an unholy alliance developed in the 1960s in which sport helped to make television and vice

versa” (see Whannel, 1986a, p. 27). Still in terms of ecological laws, Johnson (1969) goes on to say that the relationship between the media and football is in fact a symbiotic relationship of harmonic interactions⁶. The author adds that the geography, the economics, the schedules, the aesthetics, the very ethos of the sport are dependent on the TV cameras and the advertising money. Ultimately, history shows that football and the media have a long-standing relationship (Bourg & Gouguet, 2005). This, of course, depends on the specific characteristics of the different media, which inevitably relate to specific historical and cultural situations and intentions, as Williams (2003) has noted.

3.3. The Sports Press: Organisation, Autonomy and Fragmentation

The relationship between the press and sport is a historical one (McChesney, 1989). A history that began at the end of the 19th century with the revival of the ancient tradition of the Olympic Games in 1896 (MacAloon, 1981; Preuss & Liese, 2011). A date that marks a milestone as a stage in the emancipation of the sports newspaper from the general press, especially in Europe, where it enjoyed a high degree of autonomy and self-regulation (Hutchison, 2007). As a result, it was the 1908 London Olympics, broadcast around the world by telegraph, and the 1912 Stockholm Olympics, with the first photographic records, that facilitated the consolidation of the first sports diaries and promoted the inclusion of sports content in generalist newspapers (Andújar, 2013), reaching its apogee in the period between World War I and World War II, a time when football appeared massively on the pages of newspapers (Crolley & Hand, 2013).

Since then, the sports newspaper has built up its autonomy, developing as a sub-field of journalism specialising in the focus desired by its audience, what Umberto Eco called sports chatter (1968). The media has come to present sport as a social field in its own right (Mattelart, 2002), creating a field of its own (Whannel, 1992). In this way, a formal hierarchy of values was established in the field of journalism – specifically, the prioritisation of news (Traquina, 2003). This shift in focus has motivated generalist reference newspapers to dedicate columns to sports information, as evidenced by the US daily ‘New York Journal’, the French ‘Le Figaro’ and the English ‘Times’ (Pinheiro, 2005; Crolley & Hand, 2006; Andújar, 2013).

This new landscape led to the emergence of several European sports publications, some of which are still in existence today⁷ (Crolley & Hand, 2013), seen as the guardians of the meaning of sport in

⁶ In microbial ecology ‘harmonic interactions’ are beneficial relationships for one or more species involved (Marshall & Fox, 2006).

⁷ *Gazzetta Dello Sport*, in Italy, founded in 1900, and *L’Auto-Vélo*, founded in 1900 by Henri Desgrange (the founder of the Tour de France), from which *L’Equipe* emerged in 1946. Like the Spanish sports newspaper *El Mundo Deportivo*, founded in 1906 (Crolley & Hand, 2013).

their respective cultures (Boyle, 2009). According to Rieffel (2003), this proved decisive for their organisation on an industrial basis as an echo of public opinion. Rieffel (2003) adds that this was a time when the traditional values of journalism, such as reason and order, were pushed aside. Illustrating the point that sports journalism has prioritised entertainment and favoured spectacle and staging to the detriment of argument.

This resulted in Dunning and Sheard (2005) contemplating football in its contemporary form as a vehicle for cultural manipulation. In Mason's (1993) posits that this does not entail disregarding the robust socialising, proliferating and democratic attributes, which, in conjunction with the archetypal influence of the newspaper, facilitated football's penetration into the middle and lower socioeconomic strata, thereby engendering a 'mass subculture' that flourished around sporting events.

The circulation of popular culture had a dual significance in the era of mass society. It served as both a tool for manipulation and a means of expansion and mediation through commercialisation (Dunning & Sheard, 2005; Hepp & Krotz, 2014). Newspapers played a fundamental role in transforming the perception of football. They facilitated its rise from an exclusive working-class pastime to a widely accepted element of popular culture. An example of this is the transformation of football into a mass spectacle (Hutchison, 2007; Boyle, 2009).

For Coakley (2003), the commercial development of sport, as well as the flourishing of the spectator, developed and evolved according to a variety of factors. Firstly, the hegemonic affirmation of the capitalist mode of production, together with the growth of the specialised newspaper aimed at the mass public (McChesney, 1989). Second, by the emergence of the new entertainment culture, a hallmark of the development of contemporary Western societies (Williams, 2003). Third, through the development of class and gender relations, which allowed for greater audience participation, especially the possibility of attending group events (Duncan & Messner, 1989).

3.3.1. The traditional press: one of the main structuring agents of sport

Sports mediation provided mechanisms of social affirmation and identification (Crolley & Hand, 2006), so that in European society the traditional press became a structuring agent of the sports field⁸ in its various dimensions. The influence of the press was not limited to being a mere vehicle of information and communication but had a positive cohesive effect (Sunstein, 2017). The press has taken on the role of event promoter, setting rules, helping to create clubs, promoting competitions, investing in athletes, teams and stadium advertising (Crolley & Hand, 2013; Kuma, 2014). It is easy to see this dual influence of the newspaper: on the one hand, the increasing number of readers of sports newspapers increases

⁸ This term refers to Pierre Bourdieu's definition of field. According to the author, 'spectacularisation' has transformed sport into what he called 'champ sportif'. This field definition conceptualises the media/football complex in the sense that it implies a concurrent process of complex interactions and diverse influences of media institutions, sports organisations, processes, products and services that emerge from interconnections.

interest in the sport (Horne, 2006); on the other hand, football needed newspapers to get advertising and newspapers needed football to get content (Collins, 2013). Within this logic, sport sold newspapers and newspapers sold sport.

Sports newspapers appeared in Portugal later than in the rest of Europe (Pinheiro, 2005). From an organisational point of view, the Portuguese spectre was not far from the European reality; the agents who moved on the pages of the newspapers were the same as those who moved on the football pitches as players, coaches, or managers (Kumar, 2004). For example, Cândido de Oliveira⁹, one of the most important figures in the history of Portuguese football, played countless roles, he was a footballer, a national coach, a manager, and a journalist. However, it was as a sports journalist that he made his greatest contribution to Portuguese football, playing a crucial and at the same time symbolic role (Coelho, 2011). Journalists have always been important cultural mediators between sport and society, as Boyle (2012) points out.

Fiske (1987, p. 129) explains that narrative in news stories links events together: “whichever principle it employs, it links events together so as to make their relationship meaningful and therefore understandable; this refusal of randomness creates consequence out of sequence.” Journalists therefore shape ‘facts’ within limited ‘narrative frameworks’ (Olasky, 2017) or ‘culturally specific storytelling codes’ (Bird & Dardenne, 1997) to promote particular social values (White, 1981). As Zelizer (1997) suggests, journalism is as socially important for the way it constructs meaningful communities and communities of meaning as it is for its attempts to dispassionately inform about events.

The critical theory of sport in general, and the reflections of Jean-Marie Brohm (1992) in particular, emphasize that the quest for records are two elements that align the phenomenon of sport with industrial development itself, giving it other elements clearly different from those that once defined the cult of deities and the concept of the body as subject to the metaphysics of finitude. This gave rise to competitions in which performance became central, and winning and losing became vital. In response, the press seized the opportunities behind this new paradigm to assume a structured role as the main promoter of performance awards (Mason, 1993).

For example, the Maillot Jaune (yellow jersey), introduced in 1919 at the Tour de France to identify the leader of the cycling race, owes its colour to the event’s sponsor, the established sports daily L’Auto, whose pages were curiously yellow (Holt, 1981). Subsequently, on 28 February 1946, L’Équipe was resurrected from the ashes of the sports daily L’Auto. During the following year, football made up the majority of its sales, which led to the launch of a specialised weekly publication, the ‘France Football’, alongside the daily edition. This new publication quickly gained a large readership and became known

⁹ Cândido de Oliveira was one of the founders of the Portuguese sports newspaper ‘A Bola’, which still exists as a daily.

as the 'football bible' (Dietschy, 2010). In this sense, Brohm (1992) emphasised that sporting achievements only acquire full significance when they become public knowledge. This illustrates the inextricable relationship between sport and the media.

The early 1950s saw a notable increase in the number of competitions, which paved the way for the establishment of crucial structures that enabled it to assert its dominance in international football (Vonnard, 2014). In accordance with Dietschy (2010), the 1950s constituted a parallel period in terms of economic factors and media coverage. The first mentions of the creation of the Intercontinental Cup were discussed by journalists such as Motson and Rowlinson and Jacques Ferran (Motson & Rowlinson, 1980). In the words of Jacques Goddet¹⁰, editor-in-chief of *L'Auto*, "it was time to look for new formulas better adapted to the accelerated growth of football" (cf. Vonnard, 2014, p. 597).

Among the competitions devised by these interested parties, the European Champion Clubs' Cup, an unprecedented tournament between clubs from all over Europe - played an important role. The concept of this competition was part of the wider movement to create a pan-European club competition¹¹, first proposed by French journalist Gabriel Hanot. The inaugural match was played on 4 September 1955, nine months after the competition was created on 15 December 1954, with Sporting Clube de Portugal (Sporting CP) taking on Partizan Belgrade.

This accelerated development was largely attributable to the actions of the competition's principal proponents, journalists from the French sports daily *L'Équipe*, who provided substantial support for the initiative. This tournament marked a significant transition in European football, moving from a system where national clubs operated independently to a dual system where successful clubs participated in both national and international competitions (Holt, 2007; Viel, 2014).

Indeed, the extensive network of foreign correspondents, the desire of its journalists to contribute to the development of the game, and the financial capacity of French newspapers to organise large competitions, led the weekly magazine *France Football*¹² to establish, since 1956, the award known worldwide as the 'European Footballer of the Year', one of the oldest and generally considered the most prestigious individual awards for footballers (Mittag & Vonnard, 2017). In Portugal, a similar trophy was created by the newspaper *A Bola*, following the European organisational models, with the introduction of the Silver Ball trophy in the 1952/53 season. A trophy awarded each season to the top scorer in the Football First Division (Coelho & Pinheiro, 2002).

According to Dietschy (2015), the first European competitions, parallel to the early stages of Europeanisation, were not pan-European and were largely organised around deceased empires

¹⁰ Jacques Goddet, *L'Équipée belle* (Paris: Robert Laffont/Stock, 1991), 237.

¹¹ European Champion Clubs' Cup, based on competitions between European clubs; the model from which the current UEFA Champions League (UCL) evolved.

¹² One of the most important publications in France and Europe, founded in 1923, still exists today with a biweekly distribution.

(notably the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian empires) or cultural affinities within Europe (e.g. the Latin Cup), nations and the market. In any case, this was a period in which football experienced a state of consolidation of the ideals that governed its sociogenesis (Marivoet, 2002), mainly through mediation and mediatization. From this logic, football emerged as an important component of the media, attracting readers and advertisers, using exchange value for potential customers (McNair, 2003).

According to Alger (2000), newspapers have been the most dynamic and innovative actors in the formation of mass sports subcultures because of their ability to constitute sources of information and public opinion formation in the European football space. It is in this sports universe, characterised by the dominance of the sports newspaper, that football is galvanised and reaches hegemony (Crolley & Hand, 2013), becoming a cultural element of great transcendence in the intercommunication of people and peoples (Pinheiro, 2005), becoming a social fact of global relevance.

In the 1940s, the sports newspapers *A Bola*¹³ and *Record* appeared in Portugal. These newspapers quickly proved their popularity with thousands of weekly readers (Pinheiro, 2005). This phenomenon, integrated into popular mass culture, led to football being communicated as an extension of social structures and values, and thus as an important agent of change, which proved to be a privileged vehicle for the dissemination of ideas of group, regional or national identity (Maguire, 1999).

3.3.2. The massification of football: the construction of social reality

David Altheide and Robert Snow (1979) developed the concept of the eponymous term 'media logic' in their book 'Media Logic'. The original idea of the authors was to create a theoretical framework to better understand mass media formats and the impact of media on institutions and social behaviour. In this sense, 'media logic' was defined as a process by which the media transmit and communicate information. Drawing on basic approaches from symbolic interactionism, the authors suggest that the mass media system of TV, radio and newspapers and its power can influence and even transform society.

In line with this argument, Esser and Matthes (2013) and Thimm, Anastasiadis & Einspänner-Pföck (2018) emphasise that media logic can thus be understood as a particular way of reporting and interpreting social, cultural, and political phenomena. However, the logic of the media as a social force is not static, as it has been developing over time, and still continues to do so, as changes occur in the nature of the organization, including funding, and commercialism, technology, and audiences control (Nölleke & Scheu, 2018).

The media played a pivotal role in the popularisation of football on a mass scale. The press facilitated the dissemination of perceptual tools and evaluation schemes that enabled the format to be

¹³ On January 29, 1945, the first issue of the sports newspaper *A Bola* was published, founded by Vicente de Melo, Artur Rebelo, Cândido de Oliveira and Ribeiro dos Reis (Kuma, 2014).

adopted. “Format becomes a framework or a perspective that is used to present as well as interpret phenomena. (...) Thus, the logic of media formats has become so taken for granted by both communicator and receiver that it has been overlooked as an important factor of understanding media” (Altheide & Snow, 1979, p. 10).

Indeed, sports newspapers have developed a structure of interests that has played a central role over the last century in recreating the concept of identity, both local and national provided an everyday narrative of conflict, an insight into a nation's beliefs and attitudes towards other nations, from one city to another, or from one neighbourhood to another (Maguire & Poulton, 1999; Crolley & Hand, 2006). Hargreaves (1986) reminds us that the development of sports culture has always been linked to the politics and culture of its time. Altheide & Snow (1979) point out that, apart from politics, no other institution is so clearly dominated by media logic as sport. However, McQuail (2010, p. 327) reminds us that that “the entire study of mass communication is based on the assumption that the media have significant effects, yet there is little agreement on the nature and extent of these assumed effects”.

In this context, Domingos and Neves (2011) attribute a leading role to the newspaper in fostering a culture of sports associations¹⁴ within civil society. Most football clubs were formed from these associations, independent of economic or political interests, making their origins a significant source of symbolic identification. This, in turn, contributed to the establishment of cultural dynamics at both the local and national levels (Marivoet, 2002). Messner, Duncan and Jensen (1993) and Crolley and Hand (2006) argue that the sports media performed a crucial strategy by simplifying the intricate and multifaceted nature of football matches to make it easily understandable for everyone. This renders football a well suited to illustrate and apply frame semantic theory (Goffman, 1963; Gamson & Modigliani, 1987; Iyengar, 1991), as it acknowledges that individuals, organizations or events could be perceived in different ways by different people.

The concept of frame semantics provides a consistent means of describing the impact of a communicating text on human consciousness (Edelman, 1993). An understanding of interpretative or perspective frames can influence attitudes, while the analysis of frames reveals the specific manner in which information is transferred or communicated from a speech, utterance, or news report to the human consciousness (Benoit & Billings, 2020). In the context of semantic frames, the media level serves as the primary organising concept or narrative thread, providing a framework for interpreting and contextualising events or occurrences (Scheufele & Nisbet, 2007). These concepts are embedded within news coverage, offering methods of interpreting and structuring significance.

¹⁴ Associative culture: as on the international scene, national sporting activity has developed through associations, i.e. organisations formed by the combined wills of citizens who want to pursue the same goal (Sousa, 1988).

The principle of 'interpretive framing', which pertains to the selection, emphasis and presentation of objects in newspapers, determines the significance of a given reality. In essence, of this reality, the 'interpretive framing' decides the manner in which an object is presented (Stewart and Nicholson, 2003). Wenner (1989) developed a comparable strategy, though emphasising subjective emotional experience¹⁵. This meaning reinforces interpretation and contextualisation. Consequently, Hall *et al.* (1978) posit that relating a sporting event to another event exposes the audience to a familiar interpretive framework for identification and contextualisation.

The links between social forces and the interests of the sports press have become central in determining how sports news has been, and continues to be, interpreted and understood (Tunstall, 1993). The implications of this logic in the sphere of football fans constitute social spaces oriented towards the creation of sociability networks; it suggests that mediation is shaped by existing cultural knowledge, which is in turn influenced by social and cultural forces (Oliveira, 2017). In addition to the political and ideological dimensions, as postulated by Hall *et al.* (1991).

Norbert Elias (1992), a seminal figure in the sociology of sport, posited that football is a game with straightforward rules, universally accessible and comprehensible. It is therefore able to combine, like no other, individual talents with collective effort. These arguments prompted Bourdieu, Dauncey & Hare (1998) to conclude that football does not demand significant levels of interpretive competence since individuals feel that they have ample knowledge of it as 'ordinary' knowledge. It could be said that the knowledge acquired by each party paves the way for mutual understanding, which often leads to an intersubjective acceptance of claims that are subject to critique (Habermas, 1970).

As previously stated, football is considered a comprehensive social phenomenon. It does not depend on interpretive capital as it is assumed that people possess significant knowledge of the sport (Dauncey & Hare, 2003). However, Claussen (2007) emphasizes the importance of individuals expressing opinions in the field of football, as those who lack a stance are often dismissed. The nature of the subjects, issues, situations, arguers, and opportunities at hand necessitates mutual agreement and influence, such that coordinating actions can be achieved despite their apparent incompatibility (Habermas, 1970).

According to Schmidt's (2008) definition, a frame is a structural entity that groups linguistic expressions that share a common perspective on a given conceptual scene. The question then arises: how does the existence of different frames at different times induce the creation of mental shortcuts and explanatory frameworks that emerge from pre-existing cultural knowledge? From this perspective, mediation should not be considered in isolation from culture. It can only interact with the stages of

¹⁵ Subjective emotional experience, also known as feeling, is one of the various components of the complex theoretical construct of emotions. Verbally reported feelings only partially capture what is actually consciously experienced (Grandjean, Sander & Scherer, 2008).

interpretive processes that are underpinned by a historically produced system of beliefs and codes. These codes guide individuals to selectively appropriate the text. Therefore, to comprehend the processes that create and share meanings around events, Fish (1980) and Hutchins & Boyle (2017) suggest the existence of an 'interpretive community'¹⁶. This is especially evident in 'media texts'. As Fiske (1987) observes, they are the result of their readership. TV content is thus interpreted as a text, and its interaction with one of its many audiences generates some of the meanings and pleasures it can evoke. The resulting support from this interpretive framework leads to a greater number of viewers - audiences.

For Whannel (2002), history is one of the ways in which a society creates structured cultural maps of meaning from its past: traditions and self-understandings on the one hand, and the nature of social relations in that past on the other. From this perspective, a text written without 'cultural maps of the social world' - without the ability to identify and contextualise - would be incapable of making sense in spontaneous 'live' events, as Hall *et al.* (1978) argue. From this perspective, mediation must be carried out from the 'accidental' to the 'fruitful', as Whannel (2002) argues, which essentially means that it must be interpreted through existing cultural knowledge.

It is within this cultural context that sports mediation takes place, a process that leads to a field structured by a complex pattern of cultures. From the perspective of the British sociologist Raymond Williams (1977), this framework defines a set of ideological elements that are considered predominant to frame the cultural forms in which the sports text develops, coined as 'dominant', 'residual' and 'emergent'.

Williams (2003, p. 171) observes that the primary process is firmly rooted in the practices and ideas of the interpreting community and the complexity of the current cultural landscape, rendering a comprehensive explanation of the phenomenon unnecessary. He notes that the 'dominant' culture is attentive "to anything that can be perceived as emergent". This statement adds value to the sports media by revealing its adherence to established bureaucratic structures of power relations. This approach guarantees objectivity and balance. For Abercrombie and Longhurst (1980), this crucial aspect of the consensus narrative is minimised or often denied by most of the ideologically based scholarship on TV. As a result, the ideological analysis of sport typically presents it as an unmediated and uncontested dominant element, where meanings are not contradictory or subject to discord (Whannel, 1992). Rarely do the media challenge the ideals of football or its regulators unless there is evidence of corruption or a scandal that could threaten the established system.

¹⁶ Hymes (1998, p. 17) defines an 'interpretive community' as a group united by the interpretation and sharing of a given reality. In literary terms, interpretive communities produce texts and "determine the form of what is read". Interpretive communities have certain patterns of authority, communicating and remembering each other (Dégh, 1972).

The 'residual' process, as defined by Williams (1977), refers to something that was created in the past but remains an active part of the current cultural process. This process is a result of social traditions that persist in institutions, social and cultural formations, which Williams labels as 'selective tradition'. Similarly, Jarvie (2006) notes that residual cultural forms have a strong influence on football in regions with established regional or national loyalties. The author cites Catalonia as an example.

The 'emergent' process is linked with novel cultural activities that are created socially by groups and individuals through dynamic interrelationships within and beyond the sporting realm. These processes are apparent in the practices presented by social networks.

There are prominent trends in our society that indicate that the media act as a reflexive agent in a totalizing process that organizes personal experiences into social formations, making them historical (Williams, 1977). Consequently, it is suggested that mediation in sports is more efficient, both economically and in terms of performance, when the community's interpretative values are homogeneous across the various social spaces they occupy.

3.4. The Role of Radio in Sports

Radio emerged as an important medium for sport in the 1930s. Although newspapers facilitated the dissemination of information, radio significantly extended its outreach (Barbero, 1993). As noted by Jeanrenaud and Kesenne (2006), attending events in person was the only way to participate in or watch sports prior to the 20th century. Therefore, Huggins (2007) and Haynes (2014) propose exploring and discussing the 'match of the day' as a way to connect the public and private spheres, whether at work or in the pub. As a result, the radio commercialized leisure activities that had previously brought together the football community while also allowing a wider audience to closely follow sports events in real-time (Beck & Bosshart, 2003).

Historically, Guglielmo Marconi¹⁷ took just one year to develop precursor technology for remote transmission of images and sounds in sport (Raney & Bryant, 2006). This marked a new landscape for radio, with companies incorporating discourse excitement and football ritualisation into their programming to capture audiences and facilitate commercial developments (Owens, 2009). Between 1920 and 1940, often referred to as the 'golden years of radio', there was a considerable expansion in football audiences through radio broadcasting (Sterling & Keith, 2004). The 1938 World Cup marked the first intercontinental broadcast (Haynes, 1998).

Radio played a crucial role in shaping the identity matrix of mass consumer society (Haynes, 2014). It was a highly accessible, flexible, and affordable medium that provided entertainment and news to

¹⁷ In 1898 Marconi used his wireless telegraph to send a Kingstown Regatta report to the Dublin Daily Express (Owens, 2009).

millions of people worldwide, primarily through voice transmission (Fitzgerald, 2006). Voice transmissions were typically formal and stylised, using punctuated speech, a serious and concise performative style, unambiguous language, and an underlying assumption of shared experience among viewers (Crisell, 1986).

Radio differs from previous forms of media in several ways. Firstly, it allows the audience to tune in to live broadcasts, providing them with the opportunity to experience the excitement of the game in real-time (Hughson *et al.*, 2016), which has disrupted traditional notion of 'place' (Crisell, 1986). Secondly, radio places significant emphasis on entertainment. Thirdly, it has broadened and changed the social bases of support for clubs, particularly in terms of scale, ranging from local to national organisations. The fourth reason relates to the significance of the geographic range of mediation, which encourages greater engagement with football at a national level.

The communicative style of radio-mediated football is performed according to specific discursive and performative conventions that reflect one of the primary genres. It represents a linguistic efficiency characterised by oral culture and faithfully represents live broadcasting. By adopting this form of discourse, which is more akin to a conversational style, that is, a conversation that seems more spontaneous, ordinary and lively, it has a much greater potential to reach listeners and appeal to the imagination (Eriksson & Fitzgerald, 2019). As a result, rapid speech emerged to evoke sensory experiences, mental images or sounds that reached a widely dispersed audience (Kerr, 2017).

The importance of sports events in leisure listening habits has increased, mainly because of the emotional responses and constant anticipation that live radio generates (Kerr, 2017). Radio was able to create a compelling listening experience for sports broadcasts, with sports announcers vividly conveying the game and its emotional swings to those not in attendance (Fitzgerald & Housley, 2009). The distinctive way of listening to the radio contributed to the remarkable success of mass sports events in the modern era. This helped build a culture of enthusiastic fans (Cook, 2011).

The radio words stuck to the event as it happened, in a breathless, dramatic way, giving the idea that knowledge of current affairs no longer belongs to the press but to words. The act of listening to broadcast sport, is so compelling that it has become part of the 'sports spectatorship' experience. Behind these activities, however, lie complex production techniques used to maximize audience enthusiasm and pleasure (Griswold, Lenaghan & Naffziger, 2011).

This context enabled the creation of socio-cultural circumstances that allowed radio to establish a preferred connection with the masses - a crucial asset in the domain of popular culture, as Fiske's (2005) approach validates by integrating the various social formations that play a central role in popular culture into everyday life. Consequently, the use of stylistic devices has added grandeur to the narration of events, which is essential for their assimilation. Holt (1981, p. 12) notes the transition from an "orally transmitted popular culture" to a "mass culture transmitted spectacularly".

In addition to discussing oral culture, it is important to consider how viewers can appreciate the rhetorical techniques used by animators, narrators, and commentators to establish a dedicated audience. The primary goal of every media outlet is to maximize viewership by creating an emotional connection with the audience. Therefore, it is crucial to use rhetorical techniques to highlight the emotional elements of sports (McChesney, 1989; Raney & Bryant, 2006).

A voice broadcast can, therefore, be viewed as a temporary platform of words, where the narrator helps the listener 'see'; in other words, it is an event in which the media influence society and society, in turn, influences the media. This aligns with what George Gerbner proposed in his 'acculturation theory', which suggests that the media promote "the cultivation of shared conceptions of reality among otherwise diverse audiences" (Gerbner *et al.*, 1986, p. 21). Meyrowitz (1985) adds that broadcasts frequently serve to reinforce social myths rather than clarify or resolve them. This is in accordance with the argument put forth by Silverstone (1981) that myths constitute a fundamental aspect of culture. Consequently, radio coverage exerts a profound influence on listeners' worldviews and establishes a system of identification with athletes and clubs that has shaped popular memory (Cashmore, 2006).

As is the case with any new technology, the advent of radio in sports broadcasting was met with a certain degree of scepticism (Kerr, 2017). Initially, club managers were reluctant to acknowledge the potential impact of radio broadcasting on attendances and popularity (Hare, 2003). Consequently, promoters, particularly in the United States, have sought remuneration from radio stations to offset the potential decline in stadium attendance (Cashmore, 2010). This was a pioneering method of financial compensation that subsequently became dominant in the following decades (Evens *et al.*, 2013).

In this context, Szymanski (2006b) considers that newspapers and radio have significantly changed professional football, particularly the role of clubs. Clubs have gone from being local production units to being part of a network of national media events, as Maguire (2005) points out. Consequently, the media representation of football has shifted from a local encounter with active participation to a passive and distanced media experience, as Maguire (1999, 2005), Coakley and Donnelly (2005) and Horne (2006) argue.

3.5. The Role of Television in Sport

The introduction of television brought significant changes, simplifying and visually portraying sport through euphemistic means. Sports broadcasts¹⁸ delivered skill, grandeur, and emotion to millions who

¹⁸ The term broadcasting has very specific connotations, reflecting the one-to-many communication dynamic that we, to some extent, tend to associate with the notion of mass media. However, the term broadcasting often refers specifically to mass media that rely on the broadcast spectrum (i.e., the airwaves) to deliver content. From this definitional standpoint, broadcasting comprises only terrestrial radio and TV broadcast stations,

had never experienced them before. Later, technical advances such as colour, close-ups, and slow-motion replays offered perspectives that were previously uncommon, even for those in the stadium (Kidd, 2013). Although televised sport began in the 1930s, the development of the TV coverage we are familiar with today took several decades, despite the intriguing experiment during the 1936 Berlin Games. Initially, gaining any form of access was institutionally and technologically challenging, and TV was of lesser importance compared to the press, newsreels, and even its 'sister' service - radio. Over time, as the austerity of the mid-20th century gave way to emergent domestic consumerism and relative affluence of the late-20th century, TV matured and dominated public and domestic cultural life in a way that had never been seen before (Corner & Goddard, 2013; Haynes, 2016).

In light of the above, it is recognized that televised football did not emerge in isolation but was the result of earlier developments. Cashman (1995) argues that football's unique and transformative role can only be understood by comparing it to other forms of mass media that preceded it. Similarly, Castells (2007) emphasizes that television's primary advantage lies in its ability to present itself as a platform for various types of communication, including politics, commerce, sports, and art.

As previously mentioned, the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin marked a significant milestone in sports broadcasting, despite the technological limitations of the time. Only three TV cameras were available at the time, and the footage was broadcast on a closed circuit close to the venue (Jeanrenaud & Kesenne, 2006; Missika & Wolton, 2012). The size of sports coverage on TV has subsequently grown in tandem with technological advancement (Gratton *et al.*, 2012). In the 1950s, colour TV was already available for viewing (Denicoli, 2011). The popularity of colour¹⁹ has led to increased viewership of sports content, making it a more compelling TV offering (Turner, 2000).

The rise of TV as a major cultural medium in the 1960s made the connection between sport and media evident to the public (Whannel, 2000). The first global broadcast was the coverage of the 18th Tokyo Olympics in 1964 (Jeanrenaud & Kesenne, 2006; Rowe, 2011a). As a result, sport in the television era has become an entirely captivating phenomenon (Johnson, 1969). Later in 1970, the World Cup in Mexico marked the first tournament to ensure live coverage of international football matches by exploiting satellite technology (Lozano, 2013). Although not always without controversy, the broadcasting of these events has fostered a lasting relationship between television and sport (Turner & Shilbury, 2005).

Stanley Baran (2007) argues that the history of sports on television is, in many ways, the history of television itself. A history in which sporting events are seen as the primary catalyst for the evolutionary

along with spectrum-reliant satellite systems. In many countries, broadcasting thus refers to a very specific sector of the media industry, that sometimes has its own distinctive regulatory framework, with this regulatory framework premised (rightly or wrongly) on the distinctive characteristics of broadcasting as a medium of communication (Napoli, 2017).

¹⁹ The first colour emissions took place in the 1950s in the United States of America (Denicoli, 2011).

leap in audiovisual media (Dayan & Katz, 1992). Harry Coyle, one of NBC's earliest Sports Content Directors in the United States, expressed:

"Today, perhaps sport needs TV to survive, but when it started it was just the opposite...when we (NBC) broadcast at the World Series in 1947, an Army-Navy football game, TV sales soared" (cf. Baran, 2007).

Thus, in the 1950s and 1960s, sport provided TV broadcasters with a relatively inexpensive method of reaching a wide audience (Gruneau, 2003).

This generalised view of TV's impact on football leads to the question: was it really played a decisive role in the growth, promotion, and expansion of the game? At the moment, the most obvious answer is yes! Without TV, football would not have reached the planetary scale it has today. TV has changed and transformed contemporary popular culture in complex and contradictory ways (Spigel & Olsson, 2004).

By the end of the 20th century, elite sporting competitions had become international media events (Real, 1989; Maguire, 1999; Roche, 2000; Wenner & Billings, 2017). For this reason, Jhally (1984) drew attention to the centrality of TV in what he called the media/football complex. The adjective 'complex' here consists in the broad definition of the word as a complicated conglomerate of different entities. There are many types of analysis, whose components, objectives, tools and 'language' of presentation are intended for different people and organisations, and all for the purpose of making decisions and solving different problems. From this point of view, the study of any human activity is undoubtedly complex.

3.5.1. Televised football as entertainment

In his book 'Only Entertainment', Richard Dyer (2002) argues that entertainment is one of the guiding principles of media production and reception. According to the author, entertainment is a part of common sense that is always historically and culturally constructed. Dyer also states that the idea of entertainment is one of the guiding principles of TV content.

TV is also a dominant medium with unparalleled capabilities for broadcasting 'live'²⁰ events, so it is understood as a structural form of entertainment that is constructed through physical action and therefore without the need for critical evaluation (Brown & O'Rourke, 2003; Raney, 2006). From the perspective of Raymond Williams' cultural materialism, which views culture as a way of life and history as a "continuous and interconnected process", television emerges not only as the medium but perhaps the driving force behind the phenomenon of 'sports watching' (Williams, 2015, p. 148).

Bogart (1956) posits that from the entertainment perspective, sports have undergone alterations in their rules of play, style of play, stadium showmanship, economic structure, media markets, hero

²⁰ 'Live' events are events transmitted as they occur in real time; usually called 'live' (Katz, 1992).

construction, and the development of a media sports culture. Rowe (2011b) notes that televised football has introduced new emotions, diverse visual experiences, and fostered a sense of 'presence.' Moreover, the reception of sound and image in public space through TV has its own self-contained dynamic, which can often commence before a ball is kicked. As noted by Haynes (2014), socialising and drinking may begin well before the match and discussions regarding potential outcomes and expectations can instigate a collective form of active involvement, resulting in the establishment of identifications and alliances with particular teams.

TV coverage has generated excitement and a curious sense of shared anticipation (Lipovetsky & Serroy, 2010). Viewers actively participate in this illusion to enhance their enjoyment, and through this interaction they establish a significant link between the televised world and their own (Fiske, 1987). As Buraimo (2007; 2008) argues, televised matches complement stadium attendance. Furthermore, Fiske (2005) suggests that broadcasters play a key role in facilitating communication between football and the collective self.

This combination of factors suggests a 'show of force' from the social groups and subgroups that regularly watch football - what Goffman (1990) called 'front stage' behaviour - which was not only a public form of identification with a particular interpretive community and peer status, but also, more importantly in terms of social distinctions, a ritualised expression of masculinity through public statements (cf. Haynes, 1998, p. 207).

There are many forms of narrative and spectacle in various societies that are considered popular; however, it is rare for them not to target specific subgroups or classes, as is the case with football (Thorburn, 1987). However, football events are objective occurrences, with a unique nature that exists apart from media practices and ideology. Therefore, Whannel (1992) characterises them as organised systems, coherent and independent sets of activities governed by regulatory frameworks, confined to specific locations and periods of time.

It would be reasonable to inquire whether the concept of 'television aesthetics' is applicable in this context. We believe that may be the case. The concept of television aesthetics is a relatively recent addition to the wider field of television studies (Cardwell, 2006). For the author, TV aesthetics primarily involves reimagining our possible connection to the programs that we are familiar with and enjoy. In his own work, Thorburn (1987) puts forward the idea that the study of television aesthetics should include both interpretation and evaluation. For the author the evaluative criticism aims to reveal the thematic and formal excellence of programmes. Jacobs (2001) acknowledges the varying aspirations of different types of TV and notes that certain programmes elicit strong engagement, intense proximity, and concentrated attention. He suggests that some programmes are likely to reward sustained analysis better than others, as they are richer, more complex, and more enduring.

In view of the above, it could be argued that television is an art form in its own right. It has a specific history and particular and unique forms (Cardwell, 2006). This allows football to be a televisual aesthetic event mediated by “framing the competition through narrative and technology”, as Messner, Duncan and Jensen (1993, p. 132) state. In this sense, Brown & O’Rourke (2003) tell us that sporting events are structured in terms of representation, especially by the way they represent the puzzle. Therefore, the hermeneutics of the key question in football is: Who will win? Unlike the fictional narrative, the outcome of a football match is not known until the end, so, as Whannel observed, “the narrative cannot be determined by convention” (1992, p. 25).

Entertainment can serve not only as a source of enjoyment but also as a means of exploring profound philosophical questions regarding the purpose of life and human significance. In line with this argument, Chanavat and Desbordes (2017) introduced the term ‘sportainment’, which is a fusion of ‘sport’ and ‘entertainment’, representing the alliance of sport, entertainment and financial profitability. This arrangement has led to the development of sports entertainment, with the objective of enhancing the spectator experience. If the sporting competition served as the foundation of the event’s identity, attention is now shifted towards the spectators, resulting in effects of interactivity, activation and animation (Chanavat & Desbordes, 2017).

Buscombe (1975) and Peters (1976) explore the structuring of media coverage of sporting events. Critically, they claim that televised football constructs a version viewed from the perspective of an imaginary or ideal viewer. There are multiple forms, styles and aesthetic conventions for representing reality, as Whannel (1992) points out, which suggests that there is no singular realism.

It is a fact that television has influenced certain ideological representations of football (Lawrence & Rowe, 1986). However, the discourse surrounding television as an institution, industry, ideology, and cultural environment has evolved over the past fifty years (Spigel & Olsson, 2004). Therefore, it is imperative to conduct an objective analysis to examine the means of production that shape the ideological coverage of media events.

Defining television as an institution for storytelling is a widely accepted perspective. Thus, football is incessantly mediated and broadcast, resulting in a language that highlights immediacy and currentness (Gruneau, 2003). It is occasionally referred to as ‘spectacularized’ because the institutions that support and produce representations construct associated discourses that shape and sustain a narrative (Sandvoss, 2003). The narrative is endlessly discussed, revised, and evaluated as it implies an explanatory and evaluative reading of the complex dialectic about the legality and illegality of plays and winning or losing. According to Rowe (2004) and Boyle (2006), linguistic conventions are the outcome of the intricate articulation of technical, organizational, economic, cultural, political, and social factors. Simply put, Claussen (2007) argues that objective evaluation is crucial in football discussions, as subjective and flowery opinions are often proven wrong and lack lasting significance.

As an area of academic inquiry, the power ascribed to the ideology of social integration and reproduction could offer a valuable theoretical framework for comprehending the 'spectacularisation' thesis, notably through the work of Guy Debord and subsequently Jean Baudrillard's theory. According to French author Guy Debord (1979, p. 15), the spectacle constitutes not only "a series of images but a social relationship between people mediated by images"; it presents itself as a unifying factor for society as a whole- the realm of social life in which "all eyes and all consciousness are focused".

In Baudrillard's (1982) view, the focus lies not on narrative but on the visual representation of images in generating a simulated reality. Baudrillard posits that the ascent of an image-based culture causes a crisis in representation itself. What precisely does this entail? Despite certain debates surrounding Baudrillard's ideas, it can be inferred that the system of images transforms the mundane into a hyperreal²¹ carnival of totemic monuments through which the 'masses' achieve congregation (Holmes, 2005).

According to Holmes (2005), Guy Debord and Jean Baudrillard theories suggest that the impact of the 'image' relies on the medium that carries it. According to Debord's argument, the spectacle is more than a mere collection of images; it is a social relation among people mediated by those images. The spectacle presents itself as an agent for the unification of society as a whole. TV, for instance, creates a social bond with the current societal trends, causing networks to exert significant social influence on the popular culture.

Through this construction and within broader movements, televised sporting events establish themselves as overproductions. They are widely viewed as mega-shows (Wenner & Billings, 2017) that captivate the public's imagination (Mills, 2000). This phenomenon is driven by an imagined community, which Anderson (2012) explains is achieved through a comprehensive combination of spectacularizing logics.

It is evident that TV has a dual relationship with the events it broadcasts, as it appropriates them on at least two levels. On one hand, technical innovations are improving filming through the use of multiple supports - cameras, and angles, such as super slow motion, miniature stick cameras, and articulated arm cameras (Dauncey & Hare, 2003). On the other hand, the availability of diverse and numerous images is facilitating the emergence of fresh means of communication, and consequently, new forms of storytelling that suit the era of information overload. However, we encounter a range of journalistic approaches that vary between impartial methods grounded in 'TV products' and dramatic approaches that involve the audience in the story (Whannel, 1992).

²¹ Baudrillard, in his analysis of the culture of contemporary societies, introduces the idea of hyperreality as a result of the evolution of the relationship between representation, image and simulacrum (Cardoso, 2006, p. 116).

From an ideological and cultural perspective, sports broadcasting can be seen as maintaining continuity rather than promoting cultural change, as we have argued. Nevertheless, it should be acknowledged that TV has not altered the essence of sport or its practices but has facilitated the establishment of innovative economic models, as Chandler (1999) asserts. These recent models have had economic influence and caused cultural transformation (Whannel, 1986b). Additionally, new forms of production, organization, and consumption have followed (Gratton *et al.*, 2012). According to Evens *et al.* (2013), the balance between commerce and culture in sports broadcasting has tilted too much toward the commercial interests of prevailing Pay-TV broadcasters and sports organisations that aim to increase their earnings from the sale of sports rights.

From this perspective, two archetypal models that have influenced professional team football began to coexist at the same time (Andreff & Staudohar, 2000): The SSSL (Spectators-Subventions-Sponsors-Local) model is characterised by local revenues. It has a long history in all European countries, was dominant in European professional football until the late 1990s and continues to dominate in economically less developed professional football leagues. Revenue streams are primarily generated from gate receipts, subsidies from local authorities, and sponsorship fees paid by local enterprises. The MCMMG (Media-Corporations-Merchandising-Markets-Global) model is prevalent in the most developed and wealthiest European football leagues. Most of the revenue streams for football clubs come from Media (via TV rights), Corporations (including tycoons and oligarchs), Merchandising and Markets – which include the labour market for talent and the capital market (the stock exchange) for trading shares of listed clubs. The majority of these revenue streams are derived globally (Scelles & Andreff, 2017; Terrien *et al.*, 2021).

The MCMMG model primarily builds upon rights revenues; scholars such as Gruneau (1983) and Coakley (2014) illustrate how society and culture gravitated towards the ascendancy of TV, although this occurred in a non-unified manner. Whannel (1992) highlights the equivocal and fluctuating attributes of sport representations on TV concerning production, content, and audience.

Firstly, with regards to ‘production’ Jarvie (2006) asserts that it invariably necessitates hierarchisation, personalisation, narration and framing of the occurrence geared towards a specific audience. As a result, Tunstall (1993) suggests that sports coverage is a technically intricate matter. Consequently, mediated football production is influenced by several forces such as cultural context, politics and economics, to which a new force is added: the ideology of the producers and publishers, both in the programme’s origin and in the technical processes employed (Kinkema & Harris, 1998). Sports coverage and commercialisation reflect an individual’s choice, shaped by the dominant cultural ideology that explains consumption, as Evens and Donders (2018) emphasise.

Secondly, the aspect of ‘content’; whilst discussing content, it is essential to consider audience retention and engagement. Thus, it is imperative to strike a balance between commentary and visual

aids. Clarke and Critcher (1985) contend that the transition from sport per se to televised sport signifies not only an ideological mode of production, but also presents competitive individualism, the division of local, regional and national identities, and male dominance as an inherent feature, to the detriment of prudent content selection. Real (2005) emphasises the significance of the narrative's content and intensity for observing how TV identifies and authenticates 'news values', such as conflicts, a sense of place, and the recreation of the nation, ultimately turning them into 'entertainment values'.

Thirdly, the dimension of 'audience'. According to Wolton (1996), this dimension is regarded to be interactive, enabling differentiation and consequent media transformations. It is not a pure entity, as Miller (2004) states, but rather an artificial one, with individuals' understanding depending on their mental capacity and specific perspectives. However, it segments, customises, and personalises as soon as technology allows, according to Castells (2007).

As discussed previously, generalisations should not be made as the dichotomy between televised football and 'real' football cannot be clearly distinguished. Redhead (1997) explores the idea of hyperreality, associated with televised football, which is often viewed negatively, as it undermines the authenticity of 'real' football, sport, and culture. Baudrillard (1996) argues that the concept of the 'real' has been destroyed by the dystopian vision of hyperreality and simulation, particularly in the realm of TV. When applied to media coverage, Baudrillard's arguments create a distance between the cultural event and what is perceived as reality (Duncan & Brummett, 1987).

Redhead (2004) notes that mediated football represents the 'fast-paced culture', which is heavily conditioned or influenced by the contemporary media system. This situation places football within the framework of the network society, especially regarding the intensified production of content, the accelerated flow of information, and the expanded communication capacity (Rowe & Hutchins, 2013). This highlights the technologically saturated setting that Baudrillard (1982) characterises as the postmodern world of the 'simulacrum' or simulations and representations. It is a realm of duplicates where originals do not exist.

In his famous essay *'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction'*, Walter Benjamin (2007) questions how the integrity of the Olympic Games as a human creation can be maintained in the context of media manipulation. Still referring to the Olympic Games, Baudrillard notes that the audience only encountered the images of the event rather than experiencing the games themselves (Baudrillard, 1982, cited in Redhead, 1997).

In any case, it is crucial to comprehend the mediation that transpires in an environment shaped by opposing forces that strive to influence tactics directions (Cardoso, Espanha & Araújo, 2009). It is also crucial to understand the mediation that occurs in an environment formed by differing forces attempting to dictate strategies. Nevertheless, discussing mediated football and football in its entirety is not worthwhile. Both mass media and football articulate the conditions necessary for the rational

reorganisation of everyday life and regimes of production (Haynes, 1998). As previously argued, many, if not all, aspects of football content are social constructions, with cultural, economic, and political factors imbued in the messages. They are subject to human control and therefore present selective representations of reality, presupposing the hermeneutic activity of social actors.

3.6. The Symbiotic Relationship in the 'Post-Mass' Era

An analysis of the symbiotic relationship between media and football would be incomplete without addressing the influence of new media and the internet. This is particularly relevant in the current era of significant change, with multiple social, cultural, and institutional repercussions.

In his article *'What's New About New Media?'*, Roger Silverstone (1999) notes that defining the relationship with new media is complex due to the inherent difficulty of analysing both technological innovation and social processes. The social dimension involves discussions of communication, information, and mediation as symbolic processes. Livingstone (2010) notes that the internet is often associated with a sense of 'newness', distinguishing it from other communication technologies. Castells (2007) argues that technology development is heavily influenced by its users, making it a powerful tool for social reconstruction.

In one of the most extensive efforts to chart and assess the workings of the network society, Castells (2007, p. 5) notes that "the information technology revolution, because of its pervasiveness throughout the whole realm of human activity for organisation and interaction, and communication processes have globally integrated the production and distribution of information, personalising it as a new set of economic, technological and cultural circumstances evolve". However, Castells' research fails to consider the significance of sports in the networked society or global networks of the media sector. However, the author suggests that technology and information have the potential to contribute to the experience of spirituality through leisure. In light of this, the author's preliminary contributions can be added to map the relationship between media and football in the network society. In backing this argument, Silverstone (1999) states that consumption occurs amidst work and leisure, making the realm of leisure an essential aspect of societal life, specifically through cultural tastes and consumption.

Williams (2003) argues that the concept of technology is not an isolated domain of society but integral to its existence. This perspective offers insight into the rise of new media and the proliferation of distribution channels, infiltrating the foundations of what Habermas (1996) calls the public sphere²².

²² The public sphere refers to an open arena of communication whereby individuals come together to participate in deliberations or discussions surrounding matters of general concern, leading to the development of opinions. According to Habermas (1996), these spaces act as forums for individuals to be equally regarded in terms of sociability and public discourse. According to Kennedy and Hills (2009), sports arenas are purposefully designed for individuals to occupy in particular ways - they enter and exit through designated points, occupy numbered seats, and adhere to specific patterns of behaviour.

The public sphere established by the emergence of new media is fundamentally grounded on networks, modes of symbolic message production, and reception. Thus, the new media have restructured social life to the point they attract and generate social ties with a worldwide audience (Stevenson, 2002).

The emergence of 'networked media sport' has led to significant changes in new media technology (Hutchins & Rowe, 2012). This has created a dense and multifaceted media environment where sport can be viewed, discussed, and organized among online sport communities. As a result, the traditional boundaries between the roles of spectators and participants have become blurred (Rowe & Hutchins, 2014). Technological advances have significantly transformed satellite, cable, and digital transmissions, as well as the rise of new media technologies, particularly the internet (Boyle & Haynes, 2004; Evens et al., 2013). The switch from analogue to digital environments has led to changes in the market for sports rights (Boyle, 2015).

New technological means have enabled TV to surpass the traditional sequential logic of traditional channels, creating an on-demand offer that permits individual consumption at any time. Additionally, coded or subscription channels have emerged, many of which are specialized, targeting specific audiences or niche markets with premium channels (Gratton & Solberg, 2007a). Hutchins and Rowe (2012) contend that although TV remains a significant element in the media arena, it is the advancements happening in the networked sports media realm that are destabilizing and modifying conventional systems.

Therefore, these developments suggest that the telecommunications industry is playing an increasingly important role in shaping media cultures. This is evidenced by the widespread use of mobile devices and web-based communication in many developed economies (Castells *et al.*, 2006; Hutchins & Rowe, 2009). Through the use of Pay-TV games and thematic sports channel boutiques, a direct monetary exchange has been established between media sports providers and sports fans. This has posed a clear challenge to traditional TV business and viewing practices (Lefever & Evens, 2009).

Depending on the socio-spatial environment, new media can add value to the sports field due to the audiovisual consumption nature, including platform, screen, content, and context (Evens et al., 2013). This resulted in a situation in which the way sports events are consumed through audiovisual media takes place within a market economy that combines 'old media – passive' and 'new media – interactive' (Boyle, 2009), leading to a redefined and multidimensional experience (Cleland, 2011). This process involves the compression of space and time enabled by technology, the flow of information, and trade and power relations, thereby increasing the significance of remote actions at the local level (Miller *et al.*, 2001).

The emergence of the digital element has been crucial in the development of 'networked football'. The digital element has influenced the sport's global reach, allowing fans to easily follow their favourite teams and players from anywhere. Consequently, the new media ecology has significantly impacted

the economic policies of football (Lefever, 2012) and has made it an integral part of popular culture (Cleland, 2009), driven by media exposure (Sandvoss, 2003).

Technology has the ability to unify or partition and promote or challenge cultural values within fan communities (Maffesoli, 2007; Cova, Kozinets & Shankar, 2011) who may assemble at different sites based on their shared association as a wider community of football enthusiasts (Maguire, 1999). According to Van Dijck (2011), society is increasingly relying on media networks to arrange interactions, which are slowly replacing or supplementing physical social networks. Currently, sport is a highly valuable form of content in the global media market. It is a significant arena for conflict between the 'newer dynamics' generated by advances in consumer technology and the 'older balance' favoured by historical market operators (Rowe, 2011b; Boyle, 2015).

Meyrowitz (1985) argues that the latest forms of media have blurred several formerly distinct social roles by bringing together individuals of diverse backgrounds in the same 'place'. Bale (1998) proposes the consideration of 'space' and 'place' in developing a geographical theory of football, from a cultural geography perspective. In contrast, Van Dijck (2013) argues that mass society is centred around a core, with surrounding peripheral populations, and a larger, continuous space and time.

While Giddens' (1984) analysis of time is important in evaluating modern society, it does not imply that the temporal contextualisation of sporting events or the 'timeless' time of the space of flows and the space of places (instantaneous time of computerised networks versus time allotted by the clock) coexist without any connections to one another (Castells, 2007).

On one hand, some authors argue that time and space do not impose fundamental limitations on the scope of human action and complexity of resources for movement and communication with others within the logic of networks (Van Dijck, 2006; Castells, 2007). Furthermore, Van Dijck (2006) suggests that time and space are decisively mediated. The control of variables can only be achieved by increasing control of space and time over long distances for a larger social unit. Fuchs (2020, p. 28) highlights that "space and time are the two central dimensions in organizing matter; space is the closest unit of matter". Cairncross (2001) argues that technology has triumphed over place, resulting in the annihilation of space and the end of geography. The end of geography signifies not only a territorial transformation but also the elimination of space within organizations, especially in the business corporation, as highlighted by Mosco (2004).

Furthermore, Fuchs (2020) argues that all mental content and ideas are connected to reality, represented through symbols, and contain imaginary aspects. From this perspective, it can be argued that televised football exists in a realm of imagination that is intertwined with spatial dimensions. The visual arrangement of space is jointly established by the characteristics of football and the conventions of TV coverage.

3.7. Media/Football Complex: Networking Organization

The term 'complex' (understood here in the broad sense of the word) consists of a complicated conglomeration of different entities through the concentration of corporate interests. There are different types of analysis, whose components, objectives, tools and 'language' of presentation are intended for different people and organisations, and all for the purpose of making decisions and solving different problems. From this point of view, the analysis of any human activity is undoubtedly complex. In the analogue era, before the digital convergence of media, the media industry comprised a relatively discrete set of markets - TV, radio and print - that were separate in terms of infrastructure, technologies, operating mechanisms, governance, production and consumption. With the rise of digital media, technologies have led to the most comprehensive transformation of the cultural media complex (Rowe & Hutchins, 2014). Understanding this transformation requires recognising the emergence of a networked social structure (Dijck, 2006; Castells, 2007). Its logic is highly restructured, suggesting a widespread expansion facilitated by multinational corporations (Giulianotti & Robertson, 2004) that operate in a global network, imitating and structuring themselves for global competition (Castells, 2005; Cardoso, 2006).

Networked organisations are seen as sites of intricate and structured relationships between stakeholders (Jhally, 1984; Wenner, 1989; Messner, Dunbar & Hunt, 2000; Rowe, 2004; Maguire, 2011). Some authors have described this as 'complex' articulation. Nevertheless, as we will see, there is no clear dominance in the coordination of media, sport or cultural participation.

From the intersection of the reflections of authors such as Jhally (1984) and Horn (2006) on the transformations taking place between media and sport, the label 'sports/media complex' emerged, with sport taking precedence over media. This is similar to what Messner, Dunbar & Hunt (2000) refer to as the 'sports/media/commercial complex'. Maguire (1991; 2011) expands on this relationship and refers to it as the 'media/sport/production complex'. Rowe (2004) introduces the concept of the 'media/sport/culture complex', building on the contributions of Wenner (1989) and Maguire (1991; 1999; 2011). While retaining the production element, Rowe places greater emphasis on the 'bidirectional relationship between the sports media and the larger cultural formation of which it is a part'.

Throughout this study we will use the term 'media/football complex' to refer to this emerging and multifaceted phenomenon. Though slightly different, its holistic approach and perspective are in line with those of the above-mentioned authors. One might ask why the primacy of the media is favoured over football. While any complex activity can be filled with a myriad of interpretations, images and meanings, the media takes centre stage here due to the global reach of elite football competitions and

its significant impact on the media system (Kinkema & Harris, 1998, Rowe, 2004; Huggins, 2015; Wenner & Billings, 2017)

In this regard, Jeanrenaud and Kesenne (2006) highlight two key points. First, sports broadcasting markets are essential for sports organisations as they generate significant revenues and allow fans to consume sporting events. Second, the development of football has become a complex and interdependent system with different actors determining the ecosystem. Where power is held not only by the media or sports organisations, but also by what Castells (2007) defines as the connections that link networks (privileging or excluding interests or positions), the preferred instruments of power.

To conceptualise the media/football complex, we have adopted the concept of the field, which suggests a dynamic process of complex interactions and multiple influences from media institutions, sports organisations, processes, products and services that emerge from interconnections. It has become an increasingly delineated concept capable of influencing the structures, ethos (distinctiveness, feeling, moral nature or belief orientation) and governance of professional football (Levinson & Christensen, 2005).

Bourdieu's cultural sociology is currently very influential. Bourdieu (1996) recognises the presence of cultural codes and the role of sport as a theoretical field homologous to other fields of consumer culture. Therefore, in Bourdieu's sense, the media/football complex can be seen as a heteronomous field, albeit one that is heavily influenced by the media and acts as a structure on other fields.

Using Bourdieu's framework, the dominant social tendency indicates that culture and sporting practices are shaped by human agents who draw on their various reserves of different types of capital to construct the habitus that characterises the field of sporting practice. From this perspective, the relationship between actors is characterised by the intertwining of media-football relations and cultural extensions.

3.8. In Summary

In conclusion, sports and the media have developed a symbiotic relationship over time. This relationship began with the advent of television broadcasting and was cemented by new media. Although phenomenological research means carefully describing experience without making value judgements about what the experience entails. This chapter was crucial to comprehend that the advent of new media forms did not entail the displacement of traditional mass media. Instead, they have augmented the intricacy of the global media landscape. The growth and diversification of newspapers at the beginning of the 20th century, the widespread use of radio in the forties and fifties, and the massive use of television in the sixties and seventies are often cited as the most significant examples of mediatisation. Bourdieu referred to them as 'a means of mass communication par

excellence'. In addition, various media structures exert a profound influence on the ways in which individuals and organisations communicate, act, and develop social relationships, both at the societal level and within local communities. This presents a complex puzzle that forms the basis of the current network organisation of the relationship between media and football, as described by several authors. It could be argued that football distinguishes itself from other forms of media content due to its unique aesthetic conventions for representing reality.

[Page left blank on purpose]

Globalisation: Materialism versus Culture

“Economics is all about how people make choices.
Sociology is all about why they don’t have any choices to make”.

James Duesenberry

4.1. Chapter Overview

This chapter aims to theorise the dialectic of materialism versus culture in the context of media and football. The aim is to understand the processes of globalisation that have influenced the relationship between football as a cultural product and its co-materialisation. It also focuses on the interaction between technological changes and economic, social, and cultural macro-transformations in the context of the neoliberal system. From a macro-social perspective, the aim is to explore the impact of media convergence and globalisation on culture, with a particular focus on the processes and effects of mediatisation.

4.2. The Media/Football Complex: Materialism and Culture

The articulation of the materialism²³ and cultural dynamics²⁴ underlying to the development of modern sport inspired the global sports industry (Westerbeek & Smith, 2003; Dourish, 2013; Hassan, 2018). Spurred by its symbiotic relationship with the media, commercialised sport extended its appeal around the world as a vital cultural component of modern capitalism (Hargreaves, 2002; Collins, 2013). From the 1970s, several authors characterize sport as a mirror of capitalist society and highlight the extent into have become dominated on a global scale by commercialization (Hoch, 1972; Vinnai, 1973; Beamish, 1982; Brohm, 1992).

This reflection inevitably leads us to two approaches. The first is that sports organisations are cultural institutions (Rowe, 2004). The second is that the activity of sports organisations is based on the business of the capitalist system (Jhally, 1984; Fuchs, 2020). According to Max Weber (1978), these approaches lead to a new form of social organisation. From the author’s perspective, they rooted in

²³ Materialism neither means an approach that stresses determination by the economy nor one that stresses the role of things. Materialism stresses that the world is dynamic, dialectical, a relation, and a process – a form of contradictions that enable change and development (Fuchs, 2020).

²⁴ The concept of cultural dynamics has become enormously important in our understanding of the interrelationships between social, political, economic or other contextual factors of everyday interaction and systems of meaning-making (Bennett & Frow, 2013).

the concept of rationalisation, which he saw as a defining feature of modernity (Weber, 1973). Weber's perspective highlights how sports organizations are embedded within and shaped by the broader capitalist system, reflecting the interplay between cultural, economic, and social forces.

For Alpert (2015), the cultural significance of sport should not be underestimated, and should even be used to highlight its true nature as a cultural phenomenon. Boyle (2012) opposes the media industry dynamics associated with football that conspire to produce, process, 'negotiate' and provide commercial entertainment to global audiences as part of emotional experiences. In this sense, the media/football complex can be an excellent example that allows us to emphasise the truly dialectical nature of materialism versus culture in modern capitalism²⁵. This means describing a set of systematic and dynamic synergies that have helped consolidate the relationships between the players involved in professional football.

Endorsing this argument, Hutchins, Rowe & Ruddock (2009) assert that contemporary professional football is characterised by a series of contradictions. Above all, because the materialistic view of football is now, more than ever, widely recognised as an important economic activity, and consequently, it is an integral part of the global capitalist system (Westerbeek & Smith, 2003; Andreff & Szymanski, 2006; Hassan, 2018; Lawrence, 2018). The continuous incursions of the corporate capital nexus into the field of popular culture are highlighted by Rowe (1995), not only in terms of its economic organisation, but also in the ways in which economics, ideology and culture interrelate.

Following the materialist thesis for interpreting the development of society (Giddens, 2000), human consciousness is conditioned by the dialectical interaction between subject and object, in which man actively moulds the world in which he lives at the same time as it moulds him. This assumption leads McChesney (1989) to assume the football industry is a well-adapted institution, both culturally and ideologically. Therefore, the relationship between football and capitalism is invariably shaped by the cultural and ideological context in which it is embedded. Nevertheless, this does not preclude the continued constraints imposed by materialism on cultural processes (Jhally, 1989).

Nevertheless, cultural processes possess semiotic value, that is to say, the capacity to generate meanings, which ultimately transforms them into a 'cottage industry' or a sophisticated institutional complex (Rowe, 2004). Where success and failure represent two distinct outcomes that are not susceptible to influence through the exchange of information, images, ideas, or rhetoric (Fiske & Hartley, 2003). Within this perspective (Whannel, 2005), emphasises that the football industry

²⁵ *The Macmillan Dictionary of Modern Economics* (Pearce, 1992, p.53) defines capitalism as "a political, social and economic system in which property including capital assets are owned and controlled for the most part by private persons".

represents a dominant ideology, unmediated and uncontested; it is a system in which no meaning is contradictory or the object of struggle.

According to Jameson (1991), the conversion of culture into economy and economy into culture is one of the pillars of capitalism. Kennedy and Kennedy (2016) state that both liberalism and Marxism originated from an 'enlightened' universalism that anticipated the emergence of a cosmopolitan world society. However, they argue that these ideologies are no longer sufficient to guide the complex global social architecture associated with phases of globalization. Plehwe (2016) critiques the neoliberal approach to which contemporary football has been subjected. For him, the neoliberal order assumes that profit maximisation is a sufficient incentive to develop the media/football complex.

Despite this, football has always been something of a microcosm and has therefore become an important part of social, cultural, political and economic life (Hughson et al., 2016). Regardless of the sporting success of the teams, dedicated fans continue to maintain high levels of consumption (Sandvoss, 2003). Boyle (2012) suggests that even in a society where competition can be replaced by cooperation, the appeal is unlikely to diminish. This is due to the emotional experiences of success and failure and the ability to communicate these experiences, both individually and collectively. Collins (2013) points out that this is an essential part of the enduring cultural appeal of both live events and mediatisation. Where else, in the face of declining quality (success) and rising prices, could consumers (football fans) maintain high levels of consumption? Indeed, continued consumption (support) in the face of lack of success is seen as a sign of genuine commitment (Horne, 2006).

Consequently, football as part of the growth of a commercial entertainment industry. The binary system that which defines winners and losers, aligned perfectly with the cultural dynamics of capitalism (Collins, 2013). These dynamics have led them to evolve into a large profit-orientated industry, while retaining elements of voluntarism. In essence, they are described as an amalgamation of interests, reflecting the complex and multifaceted nature of the industry (Gammelsaeter, 2011). In consequence, it can be asserted that the function of football within the global society is manifested through a complex and interdependent relationship with the media and other commercial interests (Gratton, 2000; Doidge, 2016).

4.3. Globalisation and Intercultural Context

Globalisation has become a key topic in social debates since the early 1990s (Delanty, 2000). In social theory, it has been used to designate far-reaching social transformations since economic, political, and cultural systems became globalised (Fuchs & Qiu, 2018). The approach to globalization actually has multiple dimensions (Bauman, 1998), where a complex network of processes (Giddens, 2011) it is not,

therefore, reducible to a single process, causal, but it involves a complex configuration of causal logic (Bairner, 2001). The notion of 'globalisation' is therefore an interpretative tool.

The advancement of information technologies, most notably the Internet and digital media, is regarded as a pivotal aspect of globalisation. These powerful forces are driving greater interconnection between markets, cultures, and institutions worldwide (Beck, 2000; Giddens, 2002; Held & McGrew, 2007; Castells, 2007; Fuchs, 2008).

As a result, globalisation as an idea or discourse has found expression in the creation of supranational blocs like the European Union, above all through the emergence of social movements and the growth of a more informed civil society (Wolf, 2004; Chadha, 2017). The flow of ideas, goods, and people is not new, but the current extent and speed of globalization are unprecedented (Jensen & Arnett, 2012).

Globalisation and the digital turn are often seen as being interconnected: the focus on 'networked individualism' and participatory media, and the rise of hybrid and diasporic identities, are all seen as undermining both the mass communication media paradigm and nationally based media (Flew, Iosifidis & Steemers, 2016). As a result, media management are organized around a global network of multi-media corporations that extend from a core of diversified multi-national media organizations to large national and regional companies, and to local affiliates in different areas of the world (Arsenault & Castells, 2008).

Moraes (2004) posits that transnational media operate through a combination of ideological and capitalist adherence, as well as their distinctive capacity to facilitate global connectivity. In other words, the process of transformation that resulted in deregulation served to reinforce the dominant position of the groups that were already in a position of strength (Sánchez-Tabernero, 2006; Hughson *et al.*, 2016). The deregulation of broadcasting had a significant impact on football and the transformation of the game under the conditions of commercialization (Dobson & Goddard, 2001). The live coverage of football is a fundamental aspect of new media networks. In pursuing this content, however, these networks have inevitably undergone a transformation in their genesis (King, 2016).

At the media level, globalisation has manifested itself as an ongoing process, with the activities of media conglomerates representing a significant driving force (Miller *et al.*, 2001; Nauright & Schimmel, 2005; Giulianotti & Robertson, 2012). Media conglomerates, organised into global networks, are formed around a process of mimicry and structured to compete globally in spearheading the cultural homogenisation of nationally constituted societies on a scale that is increasingly (Zhao & Schiller, 2001). Conversely, Appaduri (1996, p. 29) states that "the central problem in global interactions is the tension between cultural homogenization and cultural heterogenization". In view of these considerations, Thompson (1995) identified three assumptions of media globalisation:

- i. is a process that has been driven primarily by the activities of large-scale communication conglomerates;
- ii. the rapid and ongoing development of new technologies (specifically broadband and mobile platforms) that has played an important role in the global economy of communication both in conjunction with the activities of communication conglomerates and independently of them (Comor, 1996);
- iii. the media products circulate in an international arena, as activities that engage in some degree of reciprocity and interdependence, so that the materialism produced in a country is distributed not only in the domestic market, but also - and increasingly - in a global market.

Evens *et al.*, (2013) argue that the development of media markets with the inclusion of new distribution platforms, and the growth in revenue from TV rights intensified the symbolic relationship between the media and football, such that this relationship is now possibly dominated by financial and commercial imperatives. In practice, the legal framework of globalization and its impact is at once the cause and consequence of markets that produced a dynamic global business environment, while creating an economy of related products, thus, a process that brought complementarity to these relationships brought return to stakeholders.

The presence of the media has become a structural condition of social and cultural practices, both within specific cultural spheres and in society as a whole (Livingstone, 2009). Rowe (2004; 2011) and Miller *et al.* (2012) have observed that the overall success of sport in the media is mainly related to three socio-cultural processes: 'globalization', 'mediatization' and 'sportification'. Consequently, these three socio-cultural processes inevitably lead to the emergence of global products, global brands and global advertising within the football/media complex (Raaij, 1997; Wolfe et al., 2002; Boyle & Haynes, 2009), as the media's influence lies in its ability to anchor social practices through symbolic power in different social fields (Hepp, Hjarvard & Lundby, 2010).

Thompson (1995) argued that there was, both nationally and globally, a strong correlation between media coverage and its cultural ramifications, as well as the advent of sizeable media conglomerates. In the light of the above considerations, we have observed a diverse set of social media-orientated contexts in the field of sporting events. To summarise, these include:

- i. the increase in the commercial values of the main clubs, tournaments, players and broadcasting rights contracts;
- ii. the transnational mediatization of tournaments through TV, digital, and online platforms;
- iii. more deregulated global labour market;
- iv. deep competitive inequalities between the richest clubs and the rest;
- v. global market for football-related products (merchandising);

- vi. partnerships between global brands and the main players, clubs, and associations;
- vii. the main European stadiums are today workplaces, with integrated high-tech security systems;
- viii. global social media networks connected between fans and players, clubs, employees, and sponsors;
- ix. 'New' audiences for football, both nationally and globally, especially in terms of gender, the new social classes and transnational viewers.

According to Maguire (1999), Hoehn and Lancefield (2003), Gratton and Solberg (2007) and Boyle and Haynes (2009), the symbolic power established by the dominant spheres of society, such as sports organisations or the media industries, particularly sports organisations through the sale of broadcasting rights and sponsorships and media companies through advertising and subscription contracts, have converted the audience into a commodity for sale to advertisers. As a result, audiences are being used as 'bargaining chips' to fulfil the ambitions of multinational corporations (Jhally, 1984). In light of these arguments, Fiske (1992) states that the study of the audience is a concept that exists only in the realm of critical theory, and its sole aim is to elucidate the structural workings of capitalism. Crolley and Hand (2013) argue that football, born out of association and the collective²⁶, is now under the 'umbrella' of capitalism, commonly known as the 'global game'.

4.3.1. The socio-cultural influence of football on a global scale

The existing literature on the globalisation of football is extensive. Giulianotti (1999) in a sociological analysis, addressed the issues of the 'global football field'. Sandvoss (2003) discussed the evolving consumption patterns of football fans across the globe. According to the author, they are mainly motivated by changes in media coverage of matches. For Giulianotti and Robertson (2004) and Millward (2011), football is increasingly oriented towards 'glocalisation' and 'globalisation', concepts that link the local and the global.

Giulianotti and Robertson (2012) posit that football possesses a distinctive sociological import as a global game. Silk and Andrews (2011) propose that the sociology of sport has become increasingly ambiguous and may not survive as a sub-discipline in a wider, unsympathetic neoliberal environment. Since the last decade of the 20th century, the sociological approach to sport (Dunning, 2004; Nixon, 2010) refers that the political economy of communication tends to focus on the issues of globalization,

²⁶ Football clubs were originally formed to represent geographical locations and were focal points for community identity having emerged out of schools, churches, workplaces and even cricket teams. They were originally a source of civic pride (Burnham, 2014). This historic role of the football club in the community still exists, with notions of tradition and social solidarity having continued relevance to the nature of the contemporary relationship between a football club and the community in which it is located (Sugden, 2002).

commodification²⁷ and trading. Thereby, important synergies can be established between the sports industry and the entertainment industries in general (Cricher, 1979; Coakley & Dunning, 2000). As a cultural product, mediated sport is in no way distinct or separate from the idea of a consumer society. Indeed, mediated forms of sport have not only been fully appropriated by the order of corporate capitalism but are in fact an important component of the engines and processes of global corporate capitalism (Silk, 2004).

Football has increasingly become a business, a trend that has increased over the last three decades (Hamil & Chadwick, 2010). Above all, because the growth of a global sport network has been very closely articulated with the pursuit of economic interests and the promotion of consumer culture (Jarvie, 2006). Football has become a global, corporate product (Coakley, 2014). This means that it needs to be perceived as an entity that generates revenue and attracts audiences that can attract corporate investment.

Whannel (2005) argues that football has served as an articulated system with the links of the transnational capitalism. Primordial though it may be, the consecration of capitalism to the establishment of a global sports industry is not *per se* the motive, which reflects the immensity of a phenomenon with a logic as complex as football.

Sandvoss (2003) and Kuper and Szymanski (2015) argue that the value of broadcasting rights has become the biggest catalyst for club economic growth and is directly linked to the financial health of sports businesses and competition. Porter (2010) argues that the route of business and sport could come together to profitably trace the history of clubs as operating companies (pursuit of profit). According to Hamil and Chadwick (2010), it is obvious, therefore, that football and business share a common lexicon provided for by market forces. Castells (2013) emphasises that the challenges now faced by radically changed patterns of ownership by policy and practice are becoming widely evident throughout the greater communications industry.

Since the advent of the modern sports industry, there has been a growing tendency for sports organisations and the media to adopt the ideologies, structures and practices of corporate capitalism. This has been driven by the need to satisfy the commercial demands of both sectors (Wenner, 1998; Gaustad, 2000; Phillips & Hutchins, 2003). For this reason, sporting events are increasingly presented as entertainment products designed to be sold to specific audiences.

²⁷ For Giulianotti (1999), Giulianotti and Gerrard (2001) and Walsh and Giulianotti (2007), commodification is the process by which an object or social practice acquires a market value or meaning. Commodification is not an isolated process; it is continuous and involves the gradual intrusion of market logic into the various elements that make up the object or social practice in question. Regarding the application of the commodification of information, Braman (2004) argues that common economic trends are driving both the digital and genetic information worlds - marginalisation of producers, oligopoly and financial innovation.

Culturally, these approaches assume in that it sporting events become globalized, the international and multicultural dimension is making more and more sense through production, distribution and, consequently, consumption. Indeed, it can be said that this change offers fertile ground for negotiating and persuading targets from different cultural backgrounds and knowing how to understand and interpret cultural asymmetries and idiosyncrasies, therefore, it is essential power of influence on multicultural of interpersonal networks processes (Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov, 2010).

4.3.2. Media processes and effects of mediatization on culture and society

Mediatization and other 'izations', such as globalization, commercialization and individualization, have a critical and expressive function. Most often, they are instrumental in critical assessments of social change with the latent function of expressing a certain attitudinal or political position (Schulz, 2004; Lunt & Livingstone, 2016). Thus, from a classical question in the sociology of the media, is legitimate to ask ourselves: how the media interact with society and culture? The answer to the question, however, can be found in the social condition that we label mediatization²⁸ of culture and society. Mediatization represents a new social condition in which the media have emerged as an important institution in society at the same time as they have become integrated into the very fabric of social and cultural life (Hjarvard, 2013).

The traditional conceptualisation of the media as a discrete entity, distinct from society and culture, gave rise to the advent of mediatization as a novel theoretical framework. This framework was developed with the objective of re-examining long-standing issues regarding the role and influence of the media in culture and society (Hjarvard, 2008). The duality of the structural relationship between the media and society establishes a series of prerequisites for how the media establish certain preconditions, how in certain situations they are used and perceived by emitters and receivers (Nauright & Schimmel, 2005).

With regard to the social effects of mediatization, Phillips and Hutchins (2003) highlight that these are primarily based on domination relationships, subordination and resistance. The authors argue that of media diffusion is only open to question when ideology, the economy and culture intertwine,

²⁸ In this context, and as already covered in the previous chapter, the mediatization can still be perceived as the process by which culture and society become dependent on the media and its logics, which is characterized by equality as the media acquired the status of a semi-independent institution in society, while integrating with the very fabric of social life (Hjarvard, 2013). It is said that the effects of mediatization, at least in northwest Europe, date from 1980, only since then have the media become semi-independent institution, integrated into other institutions, mostly commercial, driven by professional logics and aimed at different audiences. Mediatization is an important concept in modern sociology, as it relates to the overriding process of modernization of society and culture.

influence or become an integral part of the functioning of other institutions. In essence, the effects of mediatisation compel institutions, regardless of their varying degrees of autonomy and authority, to align themselves with the logic of the media (Hjarvard, 2008).

In light of the apparent convergence of interests, it is pertinent to inquire as to the manner in which sports events are integrated into the interests of media companies and their expansionist strategies. In order to develop a potential response, we adopted the approach proposed by Rowe (2010), who posits that the increased role of the media in sport has resulted in a qualitative shift in its influence and dependence. Although it is imperative for sports organisations to adapt to the logic of the media, the relationship of dependence is mutual. The media require sports organisations in order to obtain sports content, generate audiences and, consequently, various revenues.

It is therefore evident that the concept of mediatisation has become an increasingly crucial element in elucidating the impact of the media on society and on football as a product of popular culture. As Hepp (2013) asserts, the relationship between the media and culture is contingent upon the increasing prevalence of media communication and the effects it produces. Contemporary culture and society cannot be conceived separately from media institutions due to the omnipresent and influential nature of the media (Castells, 2013). In defining the term 'mediatised' as the process by which society and its constituent components are influenced by the media, Hjarvard (2013) introduces a theoretical framework for understanding the ways in which culture has been instrumentalised and captured by the process of mediatisation.

From McChesney's (1989) perspective, the sports product (in this case, football) is considered a cultural institution that has been ideologically accepted. It is a product of the very existence of fans, which cements football's commercial nature and is consolidated by the convergence of corporate media interests. It can be concluded that this represents one of the trajectories of change in the context of cultural production and distribution, which limit or liberate what Habermas (1970) refers to as the 'public sphere'.

As Boyle and Haynes (2004) observe, the advent of the media system has coincided with a notable intensification of content production and acceleration of information flows within the context of football. A number of factors have been proposed to explain this phenomenon, which can be expressed as follows:

- i. the increased number of matches (such as the increased number of national team competitions in events organized by continental confederations or International Football Federation - FIFA);
- ii. the increased number of live matches broadcast on TV;
- iii. trend for subscription and Pay-Tv channels to get exclusive rights;

- iv. match days and times are increasingly determined by the needs of the media, giving rise to changes in the structure of competitions;
- v. the clubs birth ('such as mushrooms') and the arrival of players, often from economically dependent countries and with itinerant trajectories (every two or three years), the effect of which is to transform the relationship between fans and players (Bourdieu, 1999).

4.4. Football Cycles: Historical and Structural Evolution

Professional football has always been inextricably linked to its attributes as a business, but never more so than during the modern era (Dobson & Goddard, 2011). Redhead (1997) realized that the media and entertainment corporate business takeover of sport represents the defining characteristic of the 'postmodern condition'.

To understand the contemporary landscape of football, it is essential to consider the socio-political context in which it has become a dominant force. Therefore, comprehending the intricacies of football on a global scale represents a challenge. As with other cultural domains, football is characterised by complex ecosystems and has been shaped by historical influences, particularly in terms of sociological impact (Nauright & Zipp, 2020). From a sociological perspective, Giulianotti (1999) identifies three phases in the evolution of football: historical and sociocultural significance, political economy, and international contexts. These periods are designated as 'traditional', 'modern', and 'postmodern'.

Firstly, the author identifies a period, which he refers to as the 'traditional' period, that lasted until after the First World War. During this period, the establishment of the rules of the game, their international dissemination and the formation of national statistics for control and administration were key features of the process of domination by the ruling elites (Giulianotti, 1999). Conversely, football is experienced in a more solitary manner by the newly emergent middle classes.

Secondly, the concept of 'modernity' is introduced. As Baudelaire observed in his seminal essay, *'The Painter of Modern Life'*, modernity can be defined as the transient, the fleeting, the contingent. It is the one half of art, the other being the eternal and the immutable. In this context, Harvey (1989) postulates a conjunction of the ephemeral and the fleeting with the eternal and the immutable. Giulianotti (1999) characterizes this as 'modernity', highlighting the presence of enduring and unchanging elements that must be properly understood. Without reference to a macro-historical framework, it is subdivided into three periods: 'early modernity', 'middle modernity', and 'late modernity'.

The first of the three subdivisions, 'primitive modernity', encompasses the period from the 1920s to the Second World War. European professional football was still a largely national affair. Domestic leagues were the principal form of competition, and the only serious form of international competition was the World Cup²⁹, and this was still a relatively small affair. Most fans knew little about football in other countries, and although the 1954 World Cup was the first to be shown on TV, at this date TV penetration in Europe was only in the region of 10% (Szymanski, 2006). The broadcasting of the 1954 World Cup also marked the advent of the European Broadcasting Network, later known as the European Broadcasting Union (EBU). It was also a period in which football established itself as the main national sport in Europe and Latin America. Consequently, players began to emerge as national heroes and earn above-average salaries (Giulianotti, 1999).

The term 'intermediate modernity' is used to describe the period of history that lasted from the end of the Second World War until the early 1960s. During this period, the continental federations assumed responsibility for the management of football. European football remained the exclusive domain of individual countries, within national leagues economic resources were relatively evenly distributed, largely because there was very little money to be made at all. Some players were still amateurs, and even professionals often worked in alternative jobs during the summer to supplement their income. At this time probably the majority of clubs in the top national leagues were still clubs in the original sense of the word-organisations run and controlled by committees elected by the members, with membership open to anyone willing to pay the membership fee (Szymanski, 2006). However, UEFA³⁰ was already committed to promoting European competitions. Additionally, during this period, TV became a pervasive presence in domestic settings, affording visibility to the talents of the most accomplished players (Giulianotti, 1999). This was the era of public service broadcasting, and the relation between football and TV could be seen as cultural. Giddens (2000) posited that modern society is one in which economic influences exert the most distinctive and profound effect and is structured around capitalist institutions.

By the late 1970s, there was an increase in consumer participation. Guttman (1978) notes that a crowd of approximately 20,000 at major games had become the norm. Two decades later, the average

²⁹ Founded in 1904, FIFA is the supreme authority of football worldwide. FIFA is 'an association registered in the Commercial Register in accordance with art. 60 ff. of the Swiss Civil Code' (FIFA 2007b, Article 1.1). The objectives of FIFA are 'to improve the game of football constantly and promote it globally, to organise its own international competitions; to draw up regulations and provisions and ensure their enforcement; and to control every type of Association Football by taking appropriate steps to prevent infringements of the Statutes' (FIFA, 2007b, Article 2).

³⁰ UEFA was created in the mid-1950s, a period that saw the emergence of many other European organisations in areas ranging from academia and culture to economics and industry (Mittag & Vonnard, 2017).

attendance at league games was approximately 50,000. The advent of spectators at football matches also saw the sport gradually become more commercialised (Sandvoss, 2003).

As a result, the clubs' main source of funding came from sale of tickets and a modest amount of sponsorship. Nevertheless, this modest funding model was responsible for the strong resistance to live TV broadcasting. Even and Lefever (2011) note that promoters of sporting events felt that the remuneration paid by broadcasters was less than the true value of the event. Andreff and Staudohar (2000; 2002) defined this funding model, which lasted for the first half of the 20th century, as Spectators-Subsidies-Sponsors-Local (SSSL).

The final period of this subdivision, designated as 'late modernity', extends from the early 1960s to the late 1980s. This period saw football become a central aspect of the 'economies of signs and space'. This means that economies have become increasingly about signs (information, symbols, images, desire) and space, where both signs and social subjects (financiers, tourists, and flaneurs) are mobile, travelling ever greater distances at ever greater speeds (Lash & Urry, 1994). A model that has a subsequent effect on the consumption of matches. Players becoming superstars and icons of modernity. Revenue from TV and commercial activities such as sponsorship and merchandising has become as important as attendances (Downward, Dawson & Dejonghe, 2009).

The final phase, the 'postmodern' period, is commonly understood to be the formation of a reflexive world. It began to take shape at the end of the 1980s and reached its peak in the 1990s (Barnett, 1990; Lash, 1990; Boyle & Haynes, 2001; Turner, 2009). In the light of social theory, this period can be seen as a highly contested space (Pakulski, 2009). During this period, postmodernists were fascinated by the new possibilities for producing, analysing and transferring information and knowledge (Anderson, 1998). Conversely, postmodernist interpretations tend to emphasise the emergence of a shared culture of consumption and style (Ferguson, 2005).

In *'The Condition of Postmodernity'*, Harvey (1989) asks whether postmodernism is a radical break with modernism, or simply a revolt within modernism against a certain form of 'high modernism' or is it simply the commercialisation and domestication of modernism, and a reduction of its already tarnished aspirations to a *laissez-faire*, 'anything goes' market eclecticism.

In the postmodern format of contemporary football, we can begin to get an overview of the football ecosystem, which is now made up of different players, with implications for the marketing process and the influence of media companies or the market through financial control of the game and even the clubs (Giulianotti, 1999). Consequently, by the mid-1990s, the rights for live league matches in France, Germany, Britain, Spain, and Italy, were all owned by new private companies and, towards the end of the 1990s, increasingly broadcast digitally (King, 2016).

Tunstall (1993) presents a triadic summary of postmodern implications. The first point considers the amount paid for the rights to broadcast events, the second is sponsorship, and the third is the

impact of diffuse commercial elements, such as the inflation of athletes' salaries and the exorbitant associated transfer values. The advent of this new paradigm can be traced back to the disappearance of the SSSL model. These new sources of income, according to Andreff and Staudohar (2000), are characterised by the Media-Corporations-Merchandising-Markets (MCMM) model.

In general, the MCMM was consolidated when the sale of broadcasting rights to sporting events became more lucrative than the sale of turnstile tickets. Kuypers and Szymanski (1999), Andreff and Staudohar (2000), and Morrow (2003) identify additional factors that contribute to the MCMM, among them:

- i. Large increases in income from the sale of broadcast rights;
- ii. Large increases in advertising and sponsorship income;
- iii. A more "commercial approach" to ticket pricing, associated with "gentrification" of football club supporters.

Since 1990, the rate of growth of attendance in the English, German, and French leagues have enjoyed a significant renaissance. The English Premier League (EPL), in particular, has seen great growth, its constituent clubs benefiting greatly financially from the periodic sale of live broadcasting rights to their matches, especially, as far as UK broadcasts are concerned, to their long-standing TV partner, Sky UK TV (King, 2016). In sum, the modernization and commercialization of European football came 'hand in hand' with increased revenues from the sale of broadcasting rights (Sandvoss, 2003; Evens & Lefever, 2011; Kuper & Szymanski, 2015), and, consequently, the sponsorship and merchandising (Downward, Dawson & Dejonghe, 2009).

The logic of the shifts makes inevitable the development of something within the intertwined symbiotic relationships between football, the media and sponsors³¹. The impacts of such shifts on the utilization of global sport sponsorship by private firms have become apparent in a number of ways (Amis & Cornwell, 2005). In some European countries, some large companies have taken an interest in financially supporting a club, but this has largely been an investment made in the interests of the local city's workforce. Examples of this are PSV Eindhoven supported by Phillips (Netherlands), Sochaux supported by the car manufacturer Peugeot (France), Leverkusen supported by the pharmaceutical Bayer (Germany) and Juventus supported by the car manufacturer Fiat (Italy) (Szymanski, 2006). Beech

³¹ Sponsorship has long been a powerful communication tool, generating greater awareness and affinity with brands. The modern sponsorship, as a publicly commercial element, was conceived in the 70s - the first type of sponsorship in football in England took place at a Watney World Cup beer in 1970 (Szymanski & Kuypers, 2000). Sponsorship expanded when governing bodies, with the help of external consultants, began to construct packages of sponsorship rights which would be sold exclusively to global partners in non-competing business sectors. For the following three decades, the sponsorship market expanded to enable brands to become core stakeholders in the football industry (Semens, 2017).

and Chadwick (2008) defend that the nature of the sport combined with its highly emotional character, gives a logic inherent to the strategic construction of the brands.

As a result, the biggest leagues in the EU are located in the most populous countries: Germany, France, England, Italy, and Spain. If we consider which teams dominated these leagues in 1956 (the year the European Community was formed), based on the number of championships won over the previous decade, some familiar names appear. In Spain, Real Madrid and Barcelona. In Italy, Juventus, AC Milan and Inter; in England, Manchester United, Arsenal and Liverpool. These eight teams, of course, have dominated their leagues over the past years, and now form between them half of the membership of the G14³² group (it actually has 18 members), a body lobbying UEFA on behalf of the big clubs. Only in Germany and France had the future G14 members not yet achieved dominance. If we consider the 'smaller' countries, most of these have traditionally been dominated by at most two or three clubs. For example, Celtic and Rangers in Scotland; Ajax, PSV and Feyernoord in the Netherlands; FC Porto, SL Benfica and Sporting CP in Portugal (Szymanski, 2006).

At first, Europe took a similar approach to the structure of the hermetic model of the North American sport leagues (Hoehn & Szymanski, 1999), but it soon became clear that any attempt at bonding would not succeed: the institutional structures were intensely different, which required an analysis adapted to European conditions so as not to fall into a social/cultural vacuum (Groot, 2009).

The 'American' and 'European' organizational forms are different: if, in the former, the league exhibits a fixed affiliation alongside territorial exclusivity; the second accentuates the system of 'promotion and demotion' (Noll, 2003). The American model is, of course, capitalist in the sense that owners are assumed to be profit maximisers, and monopolistic in the sense that owners jointly control the economic rules of the league restrict entry into the major leagues by new teams (Szymanski, 2006).

The concept of globalisation challenges the traditional view of the sports industry model as an exclusively American phenomenon. Instead, it proposes a broader interpretation, suggesting that these influences are in fact part of a larger cultural exchange, including Asian and British influences (McKay & Miller, 1991).

The British historian Eric Hobsbawm (2003, p. 197) has argued that throughout the 20th century "the world, as in popular culture, was American or provincial", with one exception: football. For Hobsbawm, football was the universalising agent of sport, just as American popular culture was for the rest of the world. The historian affirms that the sport that made the world 'like you' was club football, the 'son' of the British global presence, "that simple and elegant game, unencumbered by complex

³² Founded in 2000 by Real Madrid, Barcelona, Manchester United, Liverpool, Inter Milan, Juventus, AC Milan, Marseille, Paris Saint-Germain, Bayern Munich, Borussia Dortmund, Ajax, PSV Eindhoven and FC Porto, the G-14 was the first European club organisation to enter into negotiations with UEFA and FIFA.

rules and/or equipment, which could be played on any open space, more or less flat, of the requisite size, and which made its way around the world on its own merits”, and which became truly universal with the creation of the 1930 World Cup (won by Uruguay).

Globalization is feared by many because it seems to force us to accept other people’s cultures and values (Szymanski & Zimbalist, 2014). The European discourse on sports, which is based on the social and cultural paradigm, is not as robust as it may appear at first glance. In fact, it generates ambiguities. One consequence of the globalization of capital is that the same individuals (and companies) who invested in USA are beginning to invest in Europe. One interviewee said:

“Since the beginning of the 2000s, European football has been one of the most unequal systems in the world, designed to ensure that hierarchies are crystallised and reinforced. And if a philosophy and message of inequality came from UEFA, the institution that was supposed to protect the equality of competitors and the fairness of competition, it was obvious that this encouraged the elite players of European football (i.e., those naturally inclined to look after their own interests first) to demand more and more privileges. Compared to the prospect of Americanisation, i.e., the prospect of closed sports leagues, that is the aspiration of the elite players. However, one must bear in mind that the American leagues have a strange nature: they are hyper-capitalist but also centralised according to socialist planned economy principles. Compared to this model, the elite players in European football only want privileges but not constraints. They only ask for a free hand” (Interview 1).

Theorising global forces allows for the possibility of cultural resistance by local cultures and acknowledges the multidimensional character of cultural power relations in sport (Rowe *et al.*, 1994). According to Hoehn and Lancefield (2003), there is indeed a European cultural code with significant influence on the organization and governance of sport, as well as on the structure of the TV broadcasting market and the conduct of media companies.

4.4.1. The new *status quo* of Postmodernism: citizen as consumer

The advent of postmodernism has resulted in the formation of a new status quo, wherein the individual is simultaneously a citizen and a consumer. Numerato and Giulianotti (2017) propose that the interrelationship between ‘citizen’ and ‘consumer’ identities can be conceptualised as a process of interconnection, resulting in the emergence of a new term, ‘citimer’. The developing the concept of citizen-consumer or ‘citimer’ is derived from an empirically facts, which identifies the social and cultural capacities of fans as its referent.

Numerato and Giulianotti (2017) argue that the emergence of citizen-consumer identities in football has been driven by five underlying processes:

- i. the contemporary phenomenon of globalization can be defined as the intensification and transnational connectivity of global flows of ideas, images, people, goods and services (Appadurai, 1990; Robertson, 1992);
- ii. the commodification of services, ideas and objects as 'goods' with market value has been closely associated with the rise of neoliberal capitalism, including global free trade and financial networks, the privatisation of public services (Mosco, 1996; Harvey, 2005; Walsh & Giulianotti, 2007);
- iii. the digital age is also an era of surveillance. As the practice of surveillance has been marked by the rapid dissemination of technologies, it offers measures and strategies to monitor and control diverse social spaces (Klauser, 2017);
- iv. the mediatization has expanded the presence and influence of the media in the social and cultural field, with consequences for daily life (Hjarvard, 2008; 2013; Frandsen, 2014; Krotz, 2018);
- v. the postmodern period has been characterised by the dissemination of postmodern social processes, including the dissolution of modern boundaries (e.g., high/low culture, producer/consumer), the growing cultural influence of the media and the emergence of 'new social classes' (Bauman, 1992).

The citizen-consumer, or 'citimer', may exercise their own value judgements in various ways, including rejecting media sports that are artificially imposed on them as part of a process of global expansion from congested domestic markets or exhausted national markets. This may involve violating copyright whenever prices are deemed to be exploitative, or access is excessively restricted. Alternatively, it may involve reformulating and redistributing these media sports in creative expressions of mediated fandom (Hutchins & Rowe, 2012).

On September 2014, two groups, Spirit of Shankly and the Blue Union, which represent football fans at the Liverpool FC and Everton FC, respectively, written a letter sought to put pressure on Barclays Bank, then the main English Premier League's sponsors, to reduce ticket prices, in particular for supporters of the 'away' (visiting team) at football matches. The campaign had results: the bank officially recognized the supporters' request, while Barclays' Head of Global Sponsorship acknowledged the contribution of football fans in generating atmosphere and passion inside stadiums and called for the EPL to act on prices. Several months later, EPL clubs agreed a ticket price cap of £30 for away fans, starting in the 2016/2017 football season (cf. Numerato & Giulianotti, 2017)

The campaign mirrored much broader techniques of resistance and contestation used in recent years by different European fan groups against commercial influences upon contemporary football culture. These expressions of discontent are not motivated purely by material concerns, but instead

represent a much wider struggle over the identities of football supporters and the politics of the game. For Parrish (2003), football collectively establishes, maintains and can even transform rules.

In this context, the civic engagement of football fans exhibits strong continuities with, and contributes significantly to, forms of critical, political and ethical consumerism that are observable in other social spheres and frequently framed by the citizen-consumer concept (Koski & Lämsä, 2015). Evens and Lefever (2011) posit that the objective of firmly integrating football into the global consumer culture was, to some extent, driven by processes that can be discerned through an examination of the historic state-funded European Public Broadcasters. In Europe, the consumer culture played a pivotal role in sports broadcasting, given the significance of sports as a national cultural phenomenon. Furthermore, this phenomenon later materialised with the progressive liberalisation and deregulation of the broadcasting sector (Paramio-Salcines & Ramón Llopis-Goig, 2018; Beek, Ernest & Verschueren, 2018).

The increase in demand for sports broadcasting rights gave rise to the possibility of a 'luxury' in which the masses began to participate (Claussen, 2007). The reasons for this phenomenon can be found in the utopian dimension inherent to football. The magic rectangle of the pitch transforms the space where promises become a reality. King (2016) notes that the game is founded upon the random and the accidental, which elicit a range of emotions among players and fans alike. Another significant factor is the subjectivity of the uncertainty of the result and the competitive balance (Gratton, 2000).

4.5. The Power of Television to Market a Product

Until the end of the 1980s, many national broadcasters in Europe were state owned corporations (like the BBC) and competition was either limited or non-existent. In England, clubs were not willing to sell live the right to broadcast live league football until 1983, and when they did so they were paid less than £3 million per season, a negligible sum, to be divided between the 92 Football League clubs (Szymanski & Kuypers, 2000). In Germany, the rights to show Bundesliga games were worth on DM10 million in the mid-1980s (Mikos, 2006). In 1984, the exclusive right to broadcast both national and international French football was sold for FF10 million (Wahl, 1989). On this basis, it is reasonable to estimate that, in 1985, the combined value of the broadcasting rights of the five big leagues did not exceed 30 million euros. Around 20 years later, in the 2003/2004 season, the combined TV revenues of the five big leagues totalled more than 2.5 billion euros.

This was driven in particular by competition from new platforms. The deregulation of the broadcasting markets and the emergence of satellite and cable technologies and the desire of the European Union (or rather its politicians) to take the lead worldwide in adopting these technologies have allowed Pay-Tv operators to enter the market (Szymanski, 2006).

The arrival of the two satellite broadcasters BSB and Sky in the late 1980s signalled a significant shift in the relative bargaining power of the football industry as the seller of broadcasting rights and the TV companies as buyers. The BBC-ITV monopoly was gone for good, and the TV companies were competing against one another to acquire broadcasting rights far more intensely than ever before. The implications of the shift were already apparent in the earliest days of satellite broadcasting (Dobson & Goddard, 2011). The Pay-Tv operators recognised that premium sports rights would be the key driver of subscriptions and so were willing to bid unheard-of sums to win these rights. The old terrestrial broadcasters were unable to match these bids because the number of advertising minutes per hour (which is generally decided by regulation in Europe) is much smaller than in the USA and hence rights have a lower commercial value to a terrestrial broadcaster. Football's horizons have changed, gradually moving from the national to the international level.

According to Sandvoss (2003), most professional football is in fact consumed via TV rather than *in situ*. He argues that "TV has fundamentally transformed the ways in which matches are viewed and experienced by spectators". In an interview with World Soccer (1997), Rupert Murdoch of News Corporation said:

"Sport absolutely overshadows film and everything else in the entertainment genre and football, of all sports, is number one".

Televised football can only be successful because of its cultural and social qualities: "Football is powerful programming because it has established itself in the urban cultural traditions of Europe" (King 2016, p.102). In this sense, football is not dependent on TV money, rather TV is dependent on football for successful programming. Philip Grothe, CEO of Kentaro, a major sports rights agency, in an interview with SportBusiness International (2014), said:

"Live football has come to dominate the global broadcast rights market as it is the only product that can consistently deliver young and upmarket mass audiences in a fragmenting media landscape".

The profitability of acquiring TV sports rights depends on a wide range of factors. Some of these can fluctuate substantially, and hence cause severe financial problems for the purchasing channel. Thus it is no surprise that a number of TV channels have been hit by the 'winners curse' and suffered substantial losses from unprofitable deal (Solberg, 2006). In accordance with this perspective, one interviewee asserts that:

"Some free-to-air (FTA) broadcasters are inclined to buy the rights to broadcast matches, even though they know it might not be profitable. However, the organisation feels they have to have some programming - and football matches are high on their agenda - to satisfy their viewers, to provide generalist programming and to get good ratings on that particular day, improving monthly ratings" (Interviewee 3).

Live football is the most successful attraction for Pay-Tv subscribers, and doubly so when it is exclusive (Evens et al., 2013; Miller, 2015). For Jarvie (2006), the increase in demand for live broadcasts was mainly due to the improved level of entertainment on the field of play, driven by a large influx of talented foreign players, who also contributed significantly to the resurgence in football's popularity.

"It seems that the import of players from abroad is becoming a more common occurrence in a growing number of clubs and leagues around the world. hence, player mobility is increasingly taking place through transnational transfer networks, not just for the most talented footballers, but also for players at lower levels" (Interviewee 16).

In addition, as Dobson and Goddar (2011) point out, improved stadium facilities, especially all-seater stadiums, along with the standards of safety, comfort and environmental and economic sustainability that stadiums have met, have helped to reinforce football's appeal as a sport that is not socially divisive (Dobson & Goddard, 2011). The successful delivery of a televised football match is depended on at least three aspects:

- i. factors specific to the sport itself;
- ii. factors related to a specific broadcaster's scheduling practices;
- iii. factors related to the quality of the TV coverage (Hallvard & Solvoll, 2007).

Televised sporting events are constructed as super-productions and are seen as mega-spectacles, so football captures the imagination of the public, something achieved through an extensive combination of 'spectacularisation' logics, from drama, the creation of 'stars' and emotion (Craig & Beedi, 2010).

"The rise of the Saudi League is a good example. Its ambitious project began with star signings, including international broadcasting deals. Several international broadcasters are covering Saudi Pro League matches. Viewers in the UK, Ireland, Germany, Austria, and Belgium able to stream the matches live on DAZN, the so-called 'Netflix of sports'" (Interviewee 4).

In Europe, the long-standing dominance of public service broadcasters has been challenged by private TV, resulting in a shift from FTA TV to cable and satellite services as the primary source of football content for viewers. As a result, Pay-Tv operators have entered this booming market. The strategy of Pay-Tv broadcasters based on the exclusive supply of live sports was perhaps most clearly illustrated by British Sky Broadcasting' (BSkyB) emergence in the UK market, but associated companies, like Foxtel (Australia) and Star TV (Asia), have also successfully benefited from first-mover advantages and obtained exclusive rights to key sports events and competitions (Evens et al., 2013).

The political economy of European football has been significantly altered by the emergence of Pay-Tv and digital platforms. The advent of digital platforms has rendered FTA TV obsolete. Instead, digital platforms have adopted live sports as a crucial instrument of their strategy to promote adoption

and gain market share (Boyle & Haynes, 2004). Football and commerce are closely linked. Sandvoss (2021) points out that the context of football, being a fan are however inseparable from the social order that gave rise to both: industrial capitalism. Large-scale broadcasting brought with it a completely new industry that gave viewers access to any major international competition taking place anywhere in the world (Andreff, 2008).

For those whose fandom stems from this changing football landscape, the importance of matches between, for example, Real Madrid and Manchester City - full of famous players from all over the world - will only increase. These fans are acquiring new layers of identity, either transnational or global, while others will remain strongly attached to aspects of local or national identity (Straubhaar, 2008). For the author, this axis is linked to the relationship between the processes of hybridisation of identity and culture over time and the construction, maintenance and even defence of various layers of multi-layered identities. These layers of identity are articulated with a variety of media, such as TV and the internet. According to Billings and Hardin (2014), the new media have changed the equation, transforming the notion of the public sphere.

Buraimo (2007) posits that since audiences for TV programs are not necessarily supporters of the competing teams, it is challenging to determine the variables that can identify audience patterns. Ruddock (2018) suggests that synergies between consumer culture and media industries are driven by vested interests in addressing audiences as autonomous rather than as supporters of specific teams. From this perspective, Skeggs and Wood (2012) argue that contemporary media practices are biased against 'disruptive' interpretations of established hierarchies. They contend that the primary effect of the media is to encourage individual action rather than collective mobilization. Hoskins and O'Loughlin (2015) describe the TV sports audience as flexible shaped by atmosphere, viewer choices, the presence or absence of star players, and other factors. Whannel (2000) consequently emphasizes that audience size and demographic composition are key considerations.

The changes in the TV industry that have increased the power of the viewer, and the providers of desirable programmes have been described as a transitional phase and a prelude to the exercise of the industry's traditional power in these relationships (Bellamy, 1988). Although national and transnational audiences were initially attracted to television, it was the 'live streams' on the Internet, accessed via personal computers, that saw the most significant global growth (Giulianotti & Robertson, 2009; Birmingham & David, 2011).

Szymanski (2016) defends other conditions that lead to televised football, particularly in the case of the English league: The EPL has benefited from the confluence of a remarkable number of favourable conditions. The majority of the audience with Pay Tv channels are dedicated football fans whose interest in the game is less dependent on outcome uncertainty and quality of performance. The reduction of uncertainty in entertainment value and a successful delivery of a televised football match

depend, as we saw earlier, on specific factors, such as the sport itself, factors related to a specific broadcaster's scheduling practices and factors related to the quality of the TV coverage (Hallvard & Solvoll, 2007).

4.5.1. Media rights revenue in European leagues

For top football clubs, match-day spectators represent only a portion of their target audience. Pay-TV viewers have become an increasingly significant component of the modern football consumer base (Dobson & Goddard, 2011). The sale of sports rights, particularly football rights, to broadcasters has evolved into an international enterprise (Evens et al., 2013). Enabled by the switch from an analogue to a digital environment, this transformation has reshaped the sports rights market in recent decades. However, key continuities remain, such as the central role of television as a platform and the importance of live broadcast rights.

In any discussion of the revenue generated by broadcasting rights in European leagues, the English Premier League inevitably serves as a model of success. The English Premier League (EPL) was established in 1992 (born as the F.A. Premiership in August 1992) as a breakaway from the Football League. The organisational structure is networked in the Castell (2007) sense because, rather than any centralised or hierarchical structure governing the league, the EPL constitution states that changes to the league are decided upon by at least fourteen out of twenty clubs voting for an alteration to the EPL's internal rules.

It has since become, BSkyB succeeded in concluding its first contract with the Football Association Premier League (FAPL) giving BSkyB the exclusive right to live broadcasts of EPL matches on Pay-TV over five years (Parlasca, 2006). The broadcasting contract (which resulted from the merger of Sky TV and BSB), for a sum of £304 million in exchange for the privilege of selling the rights to broadcast matches nationally and internationally for the next five years (Millward, 2011). BSkyB secured the first broadcasting rights for EPL games matches that had traditionally aired on terrestrial TV.

This was the first of many deals between broadcasters and the EPL, which has generated substantial financial and global growth, albeit with numerous consequences (Parnell *et al.*, 2022). During the period of the EPL's existence, it is reasonable to describe BSkyB as something more than the main broadcasters of EPL matches; they can rather be understood as 'marketing partners', since the broadcasting contracts incentivised football fans to accept subscription offers (Boyle & Haynes, 2004), but in return, BSkyB's advertising of the EPL opened up new markets for the league, attracting new fans who had not previously followed football (Malcom, Jones & Waddington, 2000; King, 2002).

The networked governance structure of the EPL has been consistent since its inception. However, in his book '*Giving the Game Away*', Stephen Wagg (1995) tried to defend, contrary to popular myth, in recent years, England has not necessarily had the best football league in the world. The Italian Serie A and Spain's La Liga are stronger contenders for that position. However, England has a thriving media

industry, including satellite TV station BSkyB and numerous other outlets. England has, in its EPL, the most famous football league in the world and more lucrative (Dobson & Goddard, 2011).

Today, the league is generally considered to be the best and most popular football league in the world, firmly 'embedded in a European and international market' (Parnell D., Bond, Widdop & Cockayne, 2021). The reputation of EPL can be explained by Portuguese professional football manager José Mourinho. In an interview with the 'The Telegraph' (2016), Mourinho explains that the EPL is a special competition:

"... due to the unpredictability enhanced by a different business model" ... "If we look at the German league, the same team has won it four times in the last five years; in France, PSG has won it four times. In Spain, Atletico Madrid won once and Barcelona the other three times. In England, there have been four different champions in the last four years. This indicates a lot about the competitiveness of the country and the fact that it probably has the largest TV rights".

Mourinho believes that the English case protects football as a whole, which is not the case in other leagues where the most powerful clubs are given preferential treatment. He emphasised:

"The way TV revenues are distributed allows the league to grow as a competition. This is unlike other leagues where the top teams always remain at the top 'the sharks are always the sharks', and they do not allow for economic convergence because they want to maintain a distance".

The interactions and relationships within the EPL can be viewed as 'systems' (Crossley, 2018). The league has undergone significant changes, with various factors impacting its consumption, organization, gameplay, and management. However, the status of the EPL has come a long way, and various factors have influenced the way the league is consumed, organised, played, and managed. Elliot (2022) argues that in recent years the EPL has won the 'war for talent', attracting the most talented and qualified international players as well as the best national players to EPL clubs.

Meanwhile, Thomas *et al.* (2022) emphasise the importance of relationships, networks and ties in the wider identification of talent in English football. Some dimensions of the EPL now clearly inhabit a transnational 'space of flows' (Castells, 2007). Parne *et al.* (2022) emphasise that professional football clubs are complex ecosystems, comprising a range of actors and roles interconnected in networks of overlapping and emergent relationships. The EPL was established in 1992 to do exactly what it is now doing. The essence of its formation was an emphasis on improving performance (both in international competitions and financially), stronger management, and commercial development. Simon Chadwick highlights the less positive aspects of the EPL:

"But the less glamorous truth is that the passage of the four English clubs into the European finals was the result of industry, money, and politics. English football's success

is an entertainment product nearly three decades in the making and comes via smart commercial management, international free trade, and developments in broadcasting and globalisation, all of which have been helped by a prevailing free market ideology” (Chadwick, 2019).

As a result, the EPL has not only developed as a big brand in its own right, but it has also induced a clustering effect, helping the brands around it grow. Thus, the EPL is particularly successful in marketing its TV rights worldwide. In 2023, the EPL generated €2.1 billion in revenue from international broadcasting rights, which is much more than the aggregated international TV revenues (around €1.3 billion) generated by the other top leagues in Spain (La Liga), Italy (Serie A), Germany (Bundesliga), and France (Ligue 1) (Nalbantis, Pawlowski, & Schreyer, 2023). Table 15 shows the Broadcast Revenues (in million €) for Season 2023/2024 in the actual top 20 UEFA ranking countries.

Table 15. Broadcast Revenues for Season 2023/2024 (in million €)

Country	League Name	Centralized Rights?	Domestic	International
UK	Premier League	Yes	1,844	2,100
Spain	La Liga	Yes	1,194	835
Italy	Serie A	Yes	927	205
Germany	Bundesliga	Yes	1,079	170
France	Ligue 1	Yes	580	80
Netherlands	Eredivise	Yes	105	15
Portugal	Primeira Liga	No	190	8
Belgium	Jupiler Pro League	Yes	103	
Türkiye	Süper Lig	Yes	143	
Scotland	cinch Premiership	Yes	29	
Czechia	Fortuna Liga	Yes	7	
Switzerland	Swiss Super League	Yes	22	
Austria	Austrian Bundesliga	Yes	40	
Denmark	Danish Superliga	Yes	43	
Norway	Eliteserien	Yes	67	
Israel	Israeli Premier League	Yes	18	
Greece	Super League	No	68	
Ukraine	Ukrayinska Premier Liha	No		
Serbia	Linglong Tire SuperLiga	No		
Poland	Ekstraklasa	Yes	67	

Source: (UEFA³³, 2023)

According to data published by Deloitte (2024), the estimated new domestic broadcast deals running between 2025/26 and 2028/29 will see an average annual increase of c.4% on a like-for-like basis, despite challenging market conditions. 2023 saw Serie A and Ligue 1 fail to secure bids matching their minimum asking prices in domestic rights tenders. The former eventually agreed deals through

³³ UEFA Report: The European Club Footballing Landscape, https://editorial.uefa.com/resources/0272-145b03c04a9e-26dc16d0c545-1000/master_bm_high_res_20220203104923.pdf

to 2029 at a marginal decline in average annual value over the current cycle, excluding variable components, while the latter is currently in private negotiations with potential partners. With La Liga's current domestic rights agreements secured through to 2027, the upcoming renewal of the Bundesliga's domestic broadcast rights will be watched with interest by its peers.

Until 2015, Spain was a prominent example in Europe for individual clubs directly marketing their media rights to broadcasters themselves (Ascari & Gagnepain, 2006). Compared to other leagues like the EPL, overall revenues were on average low, and particularly big clubs benefitted from directly selling their rights. This led to an imbalance in which the top three clubs out of the 20 La Liga's clubs received more than 30% of TV revenues of season 2015/16. This motivated the introduction of the Royal Decree-Law 5/2015, establishing the central marketing of La Liga's media rights starting with the sale for seasons 2016/17 to 2018/19. The law does not contain an NSB³⁴ rule, and a single broadcaster could potentially acquire all media rights. The joint sale led to overall higher revenues and a more balanced distribution of the revenues from which particularly smaller clubs benefitted.

In 2010-11, Italy returned to collective selling, following Italian legislation passed in 2007, which overturned the 1999 decision to authorise individual selling. Until 2008, football clubs in Italy's Serie A marketed their media rights directly to broadcasters. Influenced by previous investigations of competition authorities, such as the EC's decision in 2006 with respect to the EPL that led to the introduction of an NSB rule, the Legislative Decree n°. 9 of 2008, also called the Melandri Law, was introduced in Italy. Since then, media rights have been sold centrally. The law also foresees an NSB rule, which is implemented through an independent intermediary that acquires the obligation to market the media rights in main and optional packages to broadcasters (Andreff, 2008; Heller, Sudaric & Winkler, 2023).

Since 2007, the German Federal Cartel Office (FCO) has reviewed the German centralised sale of media rights for the respective upcoming Bundesliga seasons. The decisions resulting from the investigations form the basis for the current structure of rights sales in Germany. Since the FCO's decision of 2016, April 11th, the sale of Bundesliga media rights is subject to an NSB rule that forbids selling all rights to live matches to a single broadcaster.³⁵ This is implemented in the auction by allowing some matches to be shown by multiple broadcasters in case one firm obtains all live packages.

In accordance with the commitments made by the German Football League (DFL), and in line with the previous auction for seasons 2018/19 to 2020/21, the domestic media rights for seasons 2021/22 to 2024/25 for the Bundesliga, 2nd Bundesliga, relegation and Supercup games, were bundled in 14

³⁴ The No Single Buyer (NSB) rule posits that no individual broadcaster may obtain exclusive rights to all the matches.

³⁵ FCO decision B6-32/15 of 11 April 2016, para. 14. The NSB rule has also been upheld in the most recent decision by the FCO, Decision of 20th March 2020, B6-28/19.

rights packages. For the live coverage of Bundesliga games, largely exclusive, matchday-specific rights packages were provided. This package structure was supplemented by an NSB rule, which provided for the auctioning of a so-called over-the-top (OTT) package that would be sold if the remaining rights packages were acquired by a single broadcaster (Heller, Sudaric & Winkler, 2023).

Since 2004 in France, media rights for the national league (Ligue 1) are marketed centrally. This means that the rights to broadcast Ligue 1 matches in France are managed and sold by the league itself, rather than by individual clubs. The relevant provisions on sports media rights are now codified in Article L. 333-2 and Article L. 333-3 of the Code du Sport (the sales process does not contain an NSB rule). These articles allow the joint selling of media rights, but they require the bundling of media rights into multiple packages (Heller, Sudaric & Winkler, 2023).

According to Deloitte (2016), the gap between the Big Five leagues and other European leagues continued to widen in 2013/14. The trend will continue, as a number of leagues (the Netherlands, Belgium and Portugal) have signed long-term agreements with broadcast partners to support the development of competitions and to provide more financial security for clubs.

As can be seen in Table 15 above, there are considerable differences between leagues in terms of the redistribution of wealth. The clear outlier remains the PPL, where the three largest clubs sell their TV rights individually, for much higher values than the rest can do. I.e., individual selling fuels huge inequality in Portugal. At the moment, the ratio between the earnings of the highest broadcasting rights received by the most important clubs in Portugal is more than 9 times that of the median club in Portugal. Due to this, the Portuguese Government forced Portuguese FA, Liga Portugal (LP) and the clubs to present a model for centralized broadcasting rights until 2026 so that it comes into force from the 2028/29 season.

One historical difference is that Portuguese football differs from its richer European counterparts in its organisational structures. Its regulatory system and its leaders and clubs have been moulded by the concept of public service, eclectic values and centralist state interventionism. During the 2018/19 season approximately 32% of the Portuguese clubs' total revenue came from broadcasting and media rights, followed by sponsorship or commercial agreements with 24%, UEFA awards with 20%, and revenues from away games with 15%. However, a large portion of this revenue has been the work of the three major national clubs, FC Porto, SL Benfica, and Sporting CP (Gouveia & Pereira, 2021). Furthermore, according to Gouveia and Pereira (2021), although the PPL in the 2018/19 season had the seventh-largest market for broadcasting rights in Europe (a total of €143 million), these numbers are significantly much lower than those of the EPL (€2.9 billion) or the La Liga in Spain (€1.3 billion).

Portuguese teams still benefit from the financial return of participating in the UEFA competitions. In recent years, the winner and the runner up of the league are guaranteed their presence in the UCL group stage, which can also be accessed by the club that ranks third in the PPL if it gets through the

third qualifying round and the play-offs (due to Portugal's fall in the UEFA ranking - overtaken by the Netherlands - from 2024/25 only the winner will enter directly into the group stage of the UCL). The fourth-ranked team qualifies for the UEFA Europa League (UEL) group stage and so does the winner of the Portuguese Football Federation (FPF) cup. It is important to note that the circumstances in which Portuguese teams have accessed UEFA competitions have been very inconsistent. As a result, this has had direct consequences on the financial return as well as the level of competitiveness of some of the teams that participate in PPL. The economic gains of the UCL are quite uncertain and limited in most seasons to one or two clubs (Santos *et al.*, 2023).

4.5.2. Global markets and cultural flows

The global media/football complex is part of the transnational flow of cultural artefacts in a global media world and the transnational flow of money in a global economy. In every European country football is part of such changes and is in one way or another related to global media and global money.

A consideration of the global growth of football reveals that the industry is undergoing a continual process of expansion and evolution on a global scale (Hums & MacLean, 2018). Coakley (2014) posits that, in the contemporary era, international sporting events are less likely to be characterised by displays of nationalistic sentiment than by the commercial displays of large transnational corporations.

For Rowe (2004), and Kennedy and Hills (2009), the recognition of this fluidity is crucial to understanding how cultural flows, capital, information, sounds, and symbols intertwined in cultural, economic, and political dimensions. Despite the growing importance of interactive factors, Rowe *et al.* (1994) emphasise the need to understand cultural complexity in order to overcome the logic of cultural domination and to arrive at a multidirectional concept of global traffic flows is crucial. Castells (2007) notes, we are witnessing an authentic flow frenzy, a fundamental feature of network communication and information processing technologies, economic interdependence, globalised social standards and movements based on identity. As a result, in Castells' view, the demands of the contemporary era require the creation of larger markets (places where profits are maximised) located in the transnational 'space of flows'.

Football facilitated the acceleration of networks and information flows (Boyle & Haynes, 2004). Maguire (2011) and Hutchins (2014) emphasise that is currently part of an interdependent global sports system that is relatively autonomous, even partially linked to disjunctions that cause global chained flows. As evidenced by its significant transnational influence, the 'flow space' generates new revenue streams for event promoters (Matthew & Millward, 2012). Roche (2000), Rowe (2004) and Maguire (2011) identify three axes in which the local and global processes where media and football converge, as illustrated by the concept of 'space of flows':

- i. Media production addresses a social phenomenon that, when analysed more broadly, must consider the intertwined dimensions that involve the cultural, economic, and political;
- ii. The political economy of the media is the study of the impact of economic and financial pressures on a range of communication activities, systems, organisations and enterprises, including media and telecommunications (Picard, 2006);
- iii. The political and economic aspects of media consumption are leveraged by the synergies between the brand identity and the corporate capitalism that serves to impact consumer habits (Silverstone, 1991; McQuail, 2003).

The efficiency of networks in the transfer of sporting events is becoming increasingly accelerated, which has led to a far more complex market for the broadcast rights to such events (Redhead, 2014). Consequently, there has been a notable shift from the traditional model of selling broadcasting rights, which was previously based on an autonomous approach. The growth of OTT internet and mobile video streaming services is a major development in the distribution, broadcasting and consumption of global media sport. Heavily capitalised services such as Tencent Video, DAZN and Amazon Prime Video are intervening in coverage rights markets and changing how live sport is experienced and shared across TV, computer, game console, tablet, and smartphone screens (Hutchins, Li & Rowe, 2019). The interconnection between globalisation and the digital turn are often seen as being interconnected: the advent of the global internet, the emergence of networked individualism and participatory media, as well as the rise of hybrid and diasporic identities are seen as challenging both the mass media paradigm and nationally based media (Flew, Iosifidis & Steemers, 2016). This change is evidenced by the entry of global 'big tech' companies and capital into the market for coverage rights, as well as by the shifting territories and variable geographies through which content circulates in the pursuit of audiences, advertisers, profit and user data (Mosco, 2017). As a result, the space of transnational flows is inextricably linked to expressions of power and domination (Hutchins, 2004).

Consequently, the flow of sports media became part of an interdependent global sports system involving transnational practices, whose relative autonomy is linked to 'dysfunctions' that occur as global flows intertwine (Maguire *et al.*, 2002). Despite the prevalence of attempts at control and regulation of transnational practices, the global sports system flow is relatively autonomous (Maguire, 2014).

For Hirst, Bromley and Thompson (2009), globalisation is not a unidirectional phenomenon and its effects are not necessarily evident at the local level. While neoliberalism, mercantilism, governance and global civil society represent a set of relevant strategies for understanding the configuration of football around the world (currently shaped by stakeholders), the local absorption of these influences is shaped by traditions, culture and local/national institutions (Giulianotti & Robertson, 2009). The

illuminating a relationship between local/national and global/supranational is the best way to understand the 'global' (McGrew & Held, 2002).

In the context of football, the various conceptualisations of globalisation, especially those covering the economic, technological and socio-cultural dimensions, are particularly relevant. These factors constitute the foundation upon which the internationalisation of football was built (Dolles & Söderman, 2011). Such is the appeal of football that some have suggested that it can serve as an alternative to war as a source of catharsis (Goodhart & Chataway, 1968), it could be a government promotional forum or even an arena for international politics (Houlihan, 2014)³⁶. Indeed, football matches have been associated with the start of conflicts and revolutions, but also with the promotion of reconciliation (Kuper, 2003). Football has always been a big deal for mafias and dictators, from the stands to the boardrooms (Jarvie, 2006) and has helped different ethnic groups develop a sense of cultural identity (Reid & Jarvie, 2000). Szymanski (2010) says that politicians often want to be seen with sports stars because it shows their voters that they enjoy the same activities, coined the expression 'football as a flag' since football has become a symbolic event with profound geopolitical implications. Boniface (1998) states that football has always been more than just a game. Liew (2020) also says that football, like geopolitics, is all about results.

The interconnection between globalisation and the digital shift has resulted in a significant acceleration in the number of major international events. In 1912, there were 20 such events; in 1977, there were 315; in 1987, there were 660; and in 2005, there were 1,000. It is as though there is an event every day. Although the audiences are not linear, do not imply consistency and are predictable over time, there are notable peaks in audience numbers during major sporting events such as the World Cup (Andreff, 2008). For these reasons, significant expectations surround the bidding process for the broadcasting rights to the 2026 World Cup, which will be jointly hosted by the United States,

³⁶ It would be impossible not to mention, at this point, the famous 'football war' of 1969 between El Salvador and Honduras, which took place following a qualifying match for the 1970 World Cup (held in Mexico). After losing the first game, the Honduran supporters, who had thrown the principle of fair play out the window, organized a wild party the night before around the El Salvadorians' hotel to prevent them from sleeping. The return match took place in a deleterious atmosphere. The Honduran team had to be driven to the stadium in an armoured vehicle, the Honduran flag has been torn and the team lost 3-0. Two Honduran supporters were killed. Consequently, the border between the two countries was closed and armed militia expropriated El Salvadorian farmers living in Honduras. As a result, on 14 July 1969, the El Salvadorian army attacked Honduras, sparking a war that lasted four days. The reason for the conflict was not, of course, just the game, there were fractures rooted in society (Houlihan, 2014). Similarly, in Yugoslavia, the first cracks in the federation could be seen on 13 March 1990 during a match between Dynamo of Zagreb and Red Star of Belgrade. In both cases this would be to mix up the triggering event with the true, historical, social, and political causes. Perhaps the unified state itself died symbolically on 26 September 1990 at Split, during the match between Hadjuk of Split and Partizan of Belgrade, when the Hadjuk supporters streamed onto the field and burned the Yugoslav flag (Boniface, 1998).

Canada, and Mexico. Notably, the tournament will feature 48 teams, an increase from the 32 teams in the previous edition held in Qatar.

In the winner-loser culture intrinsic to football, it is in the interest of the game that frequent losers sometimes emerge victorious. When participating in a global competition, smaller nations are aware that their prospects of triumphing against larger ones are minimal. However, their supporters anticipate the occurrence of a tie and, indeed, a triumph over countries of comparable stature. This is the alluring influence of the global organiser (Armstrong & Mitchell, 2008). As Horne (2006) posits, the pervasive appeal of football can be attributed to its cultural basis, which both influences and is influenced by social issues. In the view of Henslin, Possamai and Possamai-Inesedy (2014), human beings are the active creators of their social reality. A position that takes the perspective of symbolic interactionism, where the globalisation of capitalism can be understood as a social reality that is produced through interaction and subject to change (Turner, 1991).

It is not symptomatic that all nations are competitive. Among FIFA's 200 member countries and territories, 120 have never qualified for a World Cup final tournament. Furthermore, only four new countries have participated in the tournament in the three events held since 2006 (Slovakia, Bosnia, Panama and Iceland). Notably, the latter two made their debut in 2018, marking their first appearance in the tournament. These arguments demonstrate that there has been a history of world football in which over 120 nations have consistently been unable to achieve competitive status, even when invited to compete (Andrews & Harrington, 2016).

In the context of globalisation, it is pertinent to inquire as to why the number of participants in international tournaments is on the rise, despite the fact that, in all editions of the FIFA World Cup, only eight countries have emerged victorious. Tomlinson (1999) posits that the prevailing trend indicates that football is inextricably linked with the global concerns of media conglomerates.

The globalisation of the media industries, deregulatory political system, the multiplication, convergence and commercialisation of sports formats have changed the nature of TV: its content, its industrial structure and the way it is consumed (Turner & Tay, 2009). The national TV systems that once governed sport TV through a relatively orderly series of arrangements with national governments, media corporations and sports organizations have been disturbed, though not entirely supplanted, by the transnational connectivity of media corporations such as 21st Century Fox, ESPN and beIN and the high-intensity global promotion and marketing campaigns by sports rights holders (Sage, 2015). However, this new international TV order has itself been disturbed by the cross-border and platform flows provided by highly mobile digital media technologies controlled by non-broadcast companies (such as Google or Apple) and passed through social networks (such as Twitter, Facebook and its subsidiary, Instagram) populated by 'co-producer' citizens (Rowe, 2020a).

Furthermore, this progressive globalisation has seen the patching together of worldwide sport rights markets acquired by broadcast corporations, like the US's 21st Century Fox and ESPN, and Qatar's beIN Sports, in different national copyright jurisdictions (Rowe, 2019). Although its power as a viewer attractor caused marked inflation in the value of coverage rights packages, sport has nonetheless become increasingly central to the economic viability of both advertiser- and subscriber - supported TV corporations under intense pressure from audience fragmentation and proliferating viewing options (Hutchins, Li & Rowe, 2019).

4.6. In Summary

This chapter is crucial because it reveals the scale and appropriation of mediated sport within the global capitalist order, by analysing socio-cultural practices in the context of convergence and globalisation processes. Through a retrospective of the internationalisation of football, the focus was placed on three periods: 'traditional modernity', 'modernity' and 'postmodernity'. The aim was to better understand the technological changes and acro-transformations of the economic, social and cultural system. The end of the Spectators-Subsidies-Sponsors-Local (SSSL) model of sustainability was identified, giving way to a new paradigm characterised by the Media-Corporations-Merchandising-Markets (MCMM) model. The impact of global capitalism on the game was highlighted through interdependencies and economic inequalities. The processes and effects of mediatisation on culture and society were discussed, concluding that media broadcasting policy can only be questioned when ideology, economics and culture intertwine, influence or become an integral part of the functioning of other institutions. We also highlighted the income from broadcasting rights for European leagues in the interconnected world by new players and transnational media networks.

Structure and Governance of European Football

“Good governance in sport is a condition for the autonomy
and self-regulation of sport organisations”

(EC, 2011, p. 10)

5.1. Chapter Overview

This chapter presents the governance structures of European football and its relationship with the EU political system. It explores the evolution from a pyramidal framework, based on the relationship between the old European sports institutions that combined sport and tradition, to a network perspective. A network perspective achieved through a global framework of connections between stakeholders. This chapter presents a critical analysis of the politics of football, with a particular focus on the forces, contradictions and operations of power at play in the context of European football. It identifies how stakeholders shape the bidding context, both materially and expressively, as a field of power.

5.2. The Conceptual Construction of the ‘European Model of Sport’

The Council of Europe (CoE) was the first intergovernmental organisation to introduce an official definition of sport in Europe. This definition was also used by the EC in its White Paper on Sport. According to the CoE’s definition, sport has a twofold role. Firstly, it has a social function and is considered an objective in itself, particularly in amateur sport where economic gain is not the primary objective. On the other hand, the CoE’s definition also emphasizes that sport is a competitive activity aimed at achieving the best possible results at all levels (García, 2009; Evens et al., 2013).

Allison (1993, p.6) distinguishes between the “commercial-professional” ethos and the “amateur-elitist ethos of sport”. The former aims to maximise revenue, while the latter aims to maximise sporting results in competition. In 1998, the EC created a memorandum called the European Model of Sport to bridge the gap between the grassroots approach, national identity commitment, and national team participation in competitions³⁷ (García, 2008). This model aims to promote and relegate teams, allowing lower-level teams to reach the upper echelons of their sport.

³⁷ Cf. Article 2 the official definition of sport in Europe is to be found in the European Sports Charter, adopted by the CoE in 1992, which defines sport as ‘all forms of physical activity which, through casual or organised participation, aim at expressing or improving physical fitness and mental well-being, forming social

The European model of sport draws parallels with the concepts of the 'European social model' and the 'European social area'. Therefore, governmental and non-governmental stakeholders have called on the EC to consider the specificity of sport in its policies to achieve greater legal clarity (EC, 2007). Since then, there have been calls to strengthen this commitment. In 1999, for example, the EC adopted a report to the European Council. This perspective is best expressed in Declaration No. 29 annexed to the Treaty of Amsterdam in 1997, which states that "the social importance of sport, in particular its role in forging identity and bringing people together" (cf. Evens et al., 2013, p. 55).

Since then, the EC has gradually impacted the structural development of various sectors, including sports in general and professional football in particular. This is supported by Holt (2006) and García *et al.*, (2011), who acknowledge the undeniable impact on football governance. Koch (2017) highlights the growing trend of using sport as a means to explore current political and social concerns, such as authoritarianism, transnational labour migration, and inequalities based on race, gender, and social class. Social dialogue is therefore important because it has the potential to create another level of football governance outside the vertical authority of governing bodies such as UEFA and FIFA.

In December 2000, the European Council declaration at Nice emphasised its support for the independence of sports organisations and their right to self-organisation. It also noted that such support was conditional on sports bodies observing principles of democracy and transparency, promoting solidarity across their sports, and adhering to a code of ethics (Evens et al., 2013).

In 2001, the 10th annual meeting of the European Sports Forum presented an opportunity to analyse EU sports policy. The Forum established working groups with clear objectives, including the implementation of the Nice Declaration, the fight against doping, the social economy, and sport for disabled people (Parrish, 2003b). The discussion document identified several key issues that are relevant to football governance³⁸, which we will discuss below. In 2004, sport was included in the Reform Treaty during an intergovernmental conference (EC, 2008). Consequently, the Independent European Sport Review (IESR), also known as the 'Arnaut Report', was launched by EU sports ministers,

relationships, or obtaining results in competition at all levels.' A 'sport' may be defined through recognition by a competent authority, particularly a regulator, at either a national or international level, or through recognition of special treatment, for example as a charity, eligibility for public funding or special status, such as a tax exemption, limited (or a different) application of normal legal rules, for example the law of tort, public law in disciplinary cases or the competition and State aid rules (CoE 1992, Article 2.1); In 1998 the EC's DG Education and Culture under which sport comes, had published a consultation document regarding 'The European Model of Sport' in which the organisation and structure of sport in Europe is described (Siekman, 2008).

³⁸ Academia has not necessarily provided a uniform definition, and the topic continues to generate extensive discussion (Boillat & Marston, 2016). Kersbergen & Waarden (2004) identify up to nine different meanings of the term 'governance'. According to Geeraert, Mrkonjic & Chappelet (2014), the origin of this conceptual diversity lies in the fact that definitions of governance depend largely on the respective research agendas of scholars or on the phenomenon that is being studied.

and its results were published in 2006. With the support of UEFA, FIFA and the European sports ministers, Arnaut delivered his report claiming that:

“Sports in general and football in particular are not in good health. Only the direct involvement of political leaders, working together with the football authorities, can put it back on the road to recovery... there is a real risk that the ownership of football clubs will pass into the wrong hands, the true values of the sport will be eroded, and the public will become increasingly disaffected with the ‘beautiful game’” (Arnaut, 2006).

UEFA and its national member associations agreed that concerted action was needed to implement the IESR at all levels:

“It is time to act. It is the responsibility of UEFA and all the associations to work together with our political heads to ensure that this unique opportunity to protect football is not wasted” (UEFA, 2006).

Following the IESR, in March 2007, the European Parliament (EP) adopted a resolution on the future of professional football in Europe (EP, 2006). In July of the same year, the EC produced its White Paper on Sport³⁹, which takes stock of the EC’s involvement in sports issues, including football (EC, 2007). Regarding the governance of football, the EC deemed it ‘unrealistic’ to establish a single European model due to the diverse structures of sports across the continent (Halleux, 2015).

The White Paper focuses on promoting and developing the economic aspects of sport as a source of wealth and growth (Storm & Nielsen, 2012). The memorandum outlines three fundamental pillars: the ‘social function’, referring to sport as a social phenomenon; the ‘economic dimension’, highlighting the contribution of sport to growth and job creation in the EU; and the ‘organisation’, discussing the role of public, private, economic, and sporting organizations and bodies in the governance of sport. White Paper adopts a holistic approach. As the EC argues in its white paper on sport:

“Sport is a growing social and economic phenomenon which makes an important contribution to the EU’s strategic objectives of solidarity and prosperity”.

García (2013) points out that the White Paper acknowledges the emergence of new players in football governance and presents a balanced view of football governing bodies, avoiding extreme negativity or favouritism. It supports a vision of sports governance as network governance rather than a pyramidal structure.

The European dimension of sport is considered an inalienable part of identity, culture, and citizenship from a holistic perspective. Its consumption is often viewed as a mechanism for maintaining cohesion and building social and economic capacity (Williams, 2007; Tomlinson, Young & Holt, 2011). In the sociocultural dimension, the EU has promoted the relationship between sport and community

³⁹ Commission of The European Communities (2007), White Paper on Sport, Published 11 July 2007.

through football (Marivoet, 2002; Breedveld *et al.*, 2013). Due to the fact that football occupies a unique position as the most significant and pervasive form of popular culture in Europe, facilitating the formation of emotional and horizontal bonds between individuals and groups (Free, 2015). It also serves as a public ritual in contemporary European culture, promoting a novel form of social solidarity (King, 2016).

Evens *et al.*, (2013) argue that sport encompasses a range of competitive and non-competitive economic and non-economic activities through cross-cutting strategies. These activities contributed to the conceptualisation of a European sports model. Consequently, the EC called for the creation of a legal framework for sport, with the aim of facilitating the integration of the new commercial environment while preserving the social values inherent in the European Sport Model.

5.2.1. Comparing US and European sports leagues

The language of sport is often considered universal, but there are notable differences between different sporting cultures, particularly between the US and Europe (Gems & Pfister, 2009). European and North American model of sport exhibit significant institutional differences (Hoehn & Szymanski, 1999b; Andreff, 2011b). European leagues are characterised by the promotion and relegation system, which allows lower-level teams to reach the upper echelons of their sport. This creates a strong link between amateur and professional levels of sport, based on a solidarity principle. The promotion and relegation system serves to maintain the social and educational value of amateur sport in the context of professional sport, since it allows the latter to obtain economic benefits, particularly with regard to the financial effort associated with training athletes, which is typically the responsibility of amateur football (García, 2008).

In contrast, North American leagues are typically 'hermetic'. They are structured around a closed league system with exclusive territories and entry by payment of franchise fees. There is no promotion or relegation, and the sport is recognized as an entertainment industry with an overtly commercial basis (Hoehn & Szymanski, 1999b; Disney, 2007). As a result, the structures of the two leagues suggest fundamentally different approaches to competition organization. European teams may compete in multiple competitions simultaneously, at both national and international levels (Hoehn, 2006; Sloane, 2006; Andreff, 2011). At the national level, the League Championship represents the primary competition in each country. Additionally, there is the League Cup, which is known as the Taça da Liga in Portugal, and the Portuguese Cup, which is another knockout tournament that often features a combination of professional and amateur teams. At the international competition level, the UEFA Champions League represents the premier club competition in Europe, featuring the top teams from various leagues. The UEFA Europa League is a secondary competition for teams that did not qualify for the Champions League. The UEFA Europa Conference League is a newer competition that aims to provide more clubs across Europe with an opportunity to compete internationally. The UEFA Super Cup

is a match between the winners of the Champions League and the Europa League. These competitions offer a diverse and extensive football calendar throughout the year.

The US sports industry promotes competitive balance between clubs through a league mechanism that operates autonomously. In contrast, the European sports system has an open structure (Hoehn & Szymanski, 1999b). Weatherill (2014a) explains that the European model resulted from a series of actions carried out by government agencies and non-governmental organisations.

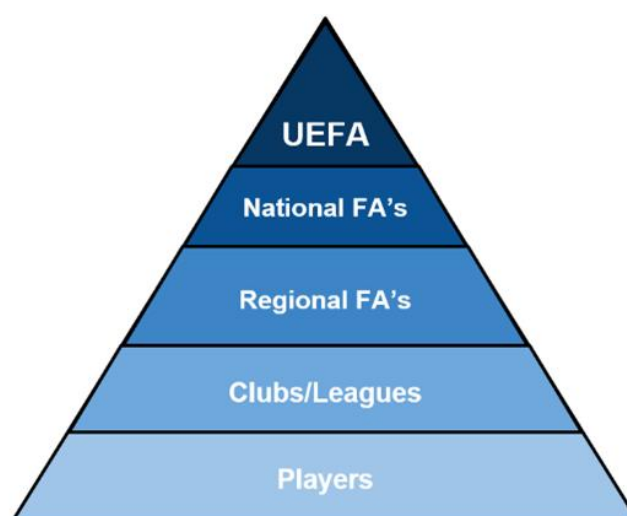
The contrast between the North American system of closed leagues and the European system of open leagues in professional team sports is indeed a controversial and often debated topic. Andreff (2011b) and Hassan and Hamil (2013) argue that the North American system functions as a regulated 'quasi-socialist' economy in the context of American liberal market capitalism, while the European system is open. Vallet (1998) argues that football is the only aspect of globalization that has not been dominated by American influence.

5.3. The European Football Pyramidal Structure

The governance of European football can be described as a pyramid - hierarchical pyramidal structure, where each level takes on responsibilities (Barros, Ibrah mo & Szymanski, 2002; Musso, 2003; Szymanski, 2004; Bogusz, Cygan & Szyszcak, 2007; Siekmann, 2008). This pyramid model assumes a layered system with different responsibilities with a different geographical scope (Ducreyet *et al.*, 2003; Sandy *et al.*, 2004; Garc a, 2011). Therefore, this model is considered to be legitimately social, ideally non-dominating and aggregating (Houlihan & White, 2002). Rodr guez, Kesenne & Garc a (2006) and Szymanski (2006a) have identified several key characteristics of the pyramidal structure of European football (Figure 6):

- i. It is organized and governed at regional, national and international level by the national football federations (FAs), as a management supreme authority;
- ii. Amateur players play side by side with professionals, with the former often assuming leadership roles within the hierarchy. As a result, business motivations are less important and even frowned upon;
- iii. There is a strong emphasis on the role of nationality in competition, accordingly, the state itself is closely involved in the organization and financing of sport;
- iv. Within the hierarchy, sports teams are move in and move down, thanks to process of promotion and relegation to lower divisions.

Figure 6. The Pyramidal Structure of European Football



Source: Adapted from Kotler (1994) and García (2008)

The pyramidal structure of football can be interpreted in two different but complementary ways. First, the pyramid is a hierarchical structure of regulators, with UEFA, the European football governing body, at the top. Governing bodies have different powers according to their geographical level and they have regulatory authority over the levels below. Second, the pyramid can also be understood as representing the dimensions of football as a sport (not just the governance structure), with the professional game at the top and the grassroots at the base.

The pyramid has evolved from the local and national level to the international level due to the increasing dispersion of player training (Giulianotti & Robertson, 2009). Nonetheless, some authors consider that there is a separation between professional football and grassroots football, and that the former needs to be separated from the rest of the pyramid in order to maximise the economic possibilities the economic possibilities of football as an industry (Holt et al., 2012).

The Bosman case was the political ‘event’ that contributed to this dispersion. Footballer Jean Marc Bosman, due to a dispute over his transfer between clubs, took his case to the European Court of Justice (ECJ) on the grounds that the decision, by Standard Liège, to block his transfer to the French team Dunkerque, was a restraint of free movement of labour trade rules. The Court found in his favour, a decision which radically changed the power relations between players and their clubs and led subsequently to UEFA being forced abandon its rules on the number of foreign players that a club could field.

From the point of view of the ECJ, it was simply enforcing the articles of the Treaty of Rome, the founding treaty of the EU, in relation to the free movement of labour. Professional sport was required to operate within the same legal framework as other European businesses (Houlihan, 2017). The Bosman ruling was the first case in which the regulation of professional football by FIFA or UEFA - in this case through transfer rules and nationality clauses - was subject to scrutiny by the ECJ. The Court’s

decision finally rested on the question of whether the public good of competitive equality outweighed the restrictiveness of the transfer system. This public policy had an undeniably significant impact on sport, both globally and within a given Member State (Parrish, 2003a). Consequently, the Bosman ruling fattened the body of 'EU sports law' (Weatherill, 2014b). Moreover, Bosman was sponsored by FIFPro, the European union of professional players, which appended to this grievance the question of foreign player restrictions. As a consequence of the globalisation, across the global economy, we are witnessing the relaxation of restrictions on mobility. One interviewee stated:

"European clubs have the money, they can do what they want because the market is deregulated, and they have agents who can help them find players from other continents. This process in football reflects the wider process of international labour markets, with the global mobility of elite talent in different industries. Football is just one extreme case of this process" (Interviewee 12).

The clubs were initially created as associations to provide the local community with the opportunity to participate in sports and promote the concept UEFA 'sport for all' (Ducrey *et al.*, 2003; Taylor, 2008; Gammelsæter, 2010). The growth of the sector has been driven by clubs due to the development of continental level competitions, with each level being interconnected. However, the international influence of the professional clubs has been more dependent on the managers and their supporters than on institutional requirements. Despite being at the top level, due to the limited supply of talent and the identification of the fans, the players do not occupy a position of power in the pyramid structure. Their main interests were self-realisation, financial security and status (Ducrey *et al.*, 2003).

Before the Bosman Ruling⁴⁰, football's governing bodies viewed unregulated player markets as an economic threat and therefore placed players at the bottom of the decision-making hierarchy (Tomlinson, 1983). UEFA therefore regulated player employment through transfer systems and nationality quotas (Wetherell, Taylor & Yates, 2001). Andreff (2011b) states that player power is a significant factor in the success of American model of sport, in contrast to European leagues, mainly due to the closed system of the former.

The Nice Declaration on Sport stressed its support for the independence of sports organisations and their right to organise themselves. It also noted that such support was conditional on sports bodies observing principles of democracy and transparency, solidarity across their sports and observance of a code of ethics (Hoehn, 2006).

⁴⁰ The Bosman case began in 1990, although the ECJ ruling did not come until 1995.

Following the guidelines of the Helsinki Report on Sport⁴¹ further states ‘the regulations of sporting organisations drawing up rules without which a sport could not exist, or which are necessary for its organisation or for the organisation of competitions, might not be subject to competition rules’. However, the report also outlines that there are practices that are, in principle, prohibited by the competition rules. And so, in addressing the competitions authorities have taken an interest in the governance of sport and the role of governing bodies (including event organisers and leagues) in parallel with the increased commercialisation of sport (Hoehn, 2006). Notwithstanding the regulations imposed, sports organisations continue to be the target of much public criticism for a lack of transparency and allegations of bribery (Sugden & Tomlinson, 2013; Boykoff, 2020).

There are no perfect governance models. Like any other governance model, the pyramid structure generates affinities, disputes and contradictory coexistence. The social constructivist view would consider this phase to be one of ‘interpretative flexibility’, in which various social groups attach different meanings to the artefact (Bijke, 1995). Doherty & Misener (2008) add that this is a phase in which a model is still evolving and various interpretations, sometimes contradictory, are put forward before stabilisation is achieved.

Although the European Model is based on the principles of participation and representation at every level of authority, the use of a pyramid structure implies a hierarchical system. This has been observed and discussed many times. Critically, Szyszczak (2007) points out that the use of a national federation for each sport tends to create monopolies, giving the governing body of each sport a dominant position. Weatherill (2014a) reiterates the monopoly position, adding that its power goes beyond setting the rules. Brohm (1992, p. 15) suggests that “the vertical hierarchical structure of sport models the social structure of bureaucratic capitalism, with its system of competitive selection, promotion, hierarchy and social advancement”.

Nevertheless, as Winston Churchill once said, “Democracy is the worst regime of all, except for all the others”. The phrase has been quoted so often that it has lost its originality, but it remains one of the best ways of defending the virtues of the European football pyramid system. As one interviewee points out in relation to the present European football season:

“Great season to highlight why football pyramid matters. Atalanta showing up at Anfield and trouncing Liverpool. Bilbao winning a major trophy for 40 years. And Leverkusen winning the Bundesliga with a stunning unbeaten season. Huge celebrations. None of them invited to European Super League. Would not have thought this possible at the start

⁴¹ Helsinki Report, Report from the Commission to the European Council with a view to safeguarding current sports structures and maintaining the social function of sport within the Community framework, December 1999, EC (1999), p. 644.

of the season but it all happened. That's why we love the game and that's why it needs to be cherished and protected from greed is good guys" (Interviewee 6).

5.4. The Transformation of the European Football Pyramid

For Geeraert *et al.* (2013) football's hierarchical pyramid network is characterised as a concept of 'government', in which football's governing bodies use coercive power to make and implement decisions unilaterally. This network has been under pressure due to the evolution of the media landscape and the increase in merchandising (Andreff & Staudohar, 2000; Szymanski, 2006a). As a result, Holt (2007) and García (2007) point to the emergence of a horizontal network governance structure, accompanied by a notable weakening of vertical governance channels. Eesley and Lenox (2006) and Breitbarth and Harris (2008) indicate two main reasons for this. Firstly, it is widely recognised that professional clubs and players are no longer in a marginal position at the bottom of the pyramid, following especially after the 1995 ruling of the European Court of Justice (ECJ) in the Bosman case. Secondly, negotiations with the EC regarding the sale of football broadcasting rights have had an impact on the situation.

To mitigate the situation, UEFA has attempted to involve various stakeholders in the decision-making process (García, 2011). Consequently, stakeholders have developed a strong conviction to assert particular rights or interests in the value chain of the organization and the exploitation of the sports ecosystem. This led to the formation of new alliances, support movements, and subcultures, resulting in changes in the economic, legal, and political landscape.

The application of stakeholder theory involves examining the connections between parties in networks and the mechanisms that facilitate the interaction of organizations with important stakeholders (Friedman & Miles, 2006). Stakeholder theory has enabled managers to shift from an organisation-centric approach to a network-oriented perspective that emphasises relationships and ideas (Ferrand & McCarthy, 2009). According to the theory, an organisation's long-term success is dependent on securing the cooperation of its stakeholders (Preston & O'Bannon, 1997) and involving them in long-term value creation (Andriof *et al.*, 2002).

Every sports organization operates in an environment where it is necessary to consider the exchanges between stakeholders. So, it is imperative to understand how stakeholders' activities should be configured for optimal value creation, including who does what, when, where, and with whom. Objectivity and comprehensibility are essential in this process. In order to provide an answer, Gummerson (2006) proposed the meaning of the terms: collaboration, competition, institutions and regulation to describe the relationships between stakeholders in a market-oriented environment, such as football.

Stakeholder involvement with media/complex football has grown exponentially. In 2005, clubs can also be represented through their leagues, which at the European level have joined forces to create the European of Professional Football Leagues (EPFL)⁴² and, in 2018, to 'European Leagues'.

In a memorandum of understanding (MoU), UEFA recognised the European Leagues as the legitimate representative of professional football in Europe. The mission of European Leagues is to represent the professional football leagues in Europe on matters of common interest. The clubs have agreed to join and be regulated because working together to provide a common product increases the economic value of the product provided by each individual club (Michie & Oughton, 2018). García, Niemann & Grant (2011) state that prior to the emergence of professional leagues, the restricted activity of national associations at the national level theoretically guaranteed their subordination to UEFA's authoritative vertical hierarchy. García (2008) adds that the European Leagues represents the leagues, but not the particular interests of the clubs. The emergence of Professional Leagues and their recognition as stakeholders at the supranational level has brought about a change in the situation.

The International Federation of Professional Footballers' Associations (FIFPro)⁴³ was established in 1965 by representatives of footballers' associations from France, Italy, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom (FifPro, undated). Over the years, FifPro has grown into a global network, bringing together unions representing professional footballers from around the world. The EU has 24 member states in which affiliated unions are present. The establishment of FIFPro was significantly facilitated by EU regulations (Gammelsæter & Senaux, 2011; Giulianotti & Robertson, 2012; García, 2017).

UEFA and FIFPro Division Europe have entered into a MoU with the objective of fostering collaboration, amicable relations, and solidarity between the European football governing body and the professional football players' trade union organisation, which represents the players' interests (Holt, 2006; UEFA, 2007b).

The richest clubs and leagues in particular therefore started contesting the legitimacy of football's governing bodies (Holt et al, 2012). As a result of the clubs' successful lobbying, the G14, a coalition of the 18 richest professional football clubs in Europe, was created in 2000 as a pressure group. According to Boyle and Haynes (2004), the G14 considers that its collective influence will place it in a position of ultimate authority in European and world football. Its main interests were to increase the representation of top clubs in the decision-making process of professional club football at international

⁴² EPFL - Originally founded by 14 members: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, England, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Scotland, Spain and Sweden. European leagues now have 35 professional football leagues and club associations from 28 countries representing over 900 clubs from across Europe. - <https://europeanleagues.com/about/>

⁴³ FIFPro is the International Federation of Professional Footballers Associations; in other words, it is the international trade union of professional footballers FIFPro (is the only global representative for professional football players); consists of 65 national member players associations; was founded on 15 December 1965 in Paris (FIFPro, 2007, Article 3.1).

level; and to advise clubs on current financial challenges (Ducrey *et al.*, 2003). In much the same way that the nodes of the wider network society question the legitimacy of hierarchies, G14 have caused problems for national associations (Millward, 2011).

However, the G-14 was never recognised by UEFA or FIFA as a legitimate organization and remained an informal group. In response, UEFA created the European Club Forum (ECF) in 2002 to give a voice to the clubs involved in UEFA competitions (Morrow, 2003; Grojean *et al.*, 2004; Hoehn, 2006).

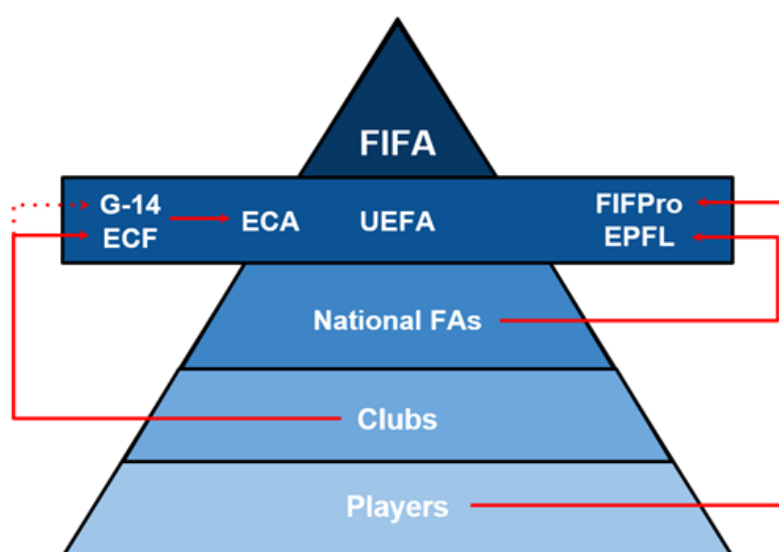
The European Club Association (ECA)⁴⁴ was formed in 2008 following the dissolution of the G-14. In a sense, the ECA was born out of the merger between the club-led G-14 and the UEFA-led European Football Forum, ending the split between the top clubs and UEFA. According to Boyle & Haynes (2004), the ECA embodies the neoliberalist agenda of contemporary European football. Millward (2013b) argues that one of the criteria for membership of this group is a club's economic power.

While the ECA represents more than 200 clubs from across Europe, it is increasingly dominated by a handful of the largest teams. That group includes the likes of Juventus and Bayern Munich but also heavyweights from Spain and England like Barcelona, Real Madrid and Manchester United. Those clubs have for years used their might — and threats to break away and form an exclusive competition outside the current domestic league structure — to wrest concessions from football's leaders (Panja, 2019). As Castells (2007) points out, capital is synonymous with power in the network society. As a result, the ECA has secured two seats on UEFA's Executive Committee, thus positioning itself directly in football's governance structure. The ECA has facilitated the dialogue between professional clubs, UEFA and FIFA. It is recognised by UEFA as its official partner for discussing issues related to professional clubs (UEFA, 2008a; 2008b; 2008c).

The pyramidal structure of European football was transformed due to the growing importance of these stakeholders (García, 2017), as shown in the figure 7.

⁴⁴ The European Clubs Association (ECA) started its activities in 2008 with 137 Member Clubs and has since grown to 246 Members. Every National Association has a minimum of one Ordinary Member Club - <https://www.ecaeurope.com>

Figure 7. The transformation of the European Football Pyramid



Source: Adapted from García (2007a; 2017)

To avoid divisions, UEFA recognised and directly involved stakeholders in the decision-making process (Arnaut, 2006). The rise of the stakeholder organisations FIFPro, European Leagues and ECA is consolidated by their official recognition by UEFA and the EU (UEFA, 2007a; 2008a; 2009). Since 2007, they have had a seat on the UEFA Professional Football Strategy Council (PFSC)⁴⁵, a purely consultative body set up to build a network of (social) dialogue and consultation with other stakeholders in the governance of professional football. The PFSC reinforces the argument that football governance has moved towards a horizontal dimension of stakeholder networks.

The PFSC has brought together UEFA, clubs, professional leagues and players to work together to find common solutions to the most important current issues affecting the game. The PFSC reports to the Executive Committee, UEFA's real decision-making body (UEFA, 2010). UEFA's decision reflects the growing importance of clubs, leagues and players in the ecosystem and therefore the transformation of the pyramid. In this context of assumptions and strategies, the EU has been able to balance the economic and social dimensions of sport and specific decision-making processes for football governance (Blackshaw, 2017). As Holt (2007) points out that steps have been taken towards a horizontal European football governance network.

These organizations, they operate within a network with, at least *prima facie*, the same characteristics as a multi-actor, multi-level governance network. The strict application of EU law by the

⁴⁵ The PFSC comprises elected representatives of the four main stakeholder groups involved in European professional football: the clubs, the leagues, the players and UEFA. The body discusses issues of strategic importance for professional football in Europe and advises the UEFA Executive Committee accordingly <https://www.uefa.com/insideuefa/stakeholders/professional-football-strategy-council/index.html>

EC in the period right after the ECJ's Bosman ruling can be described as the exercise of government (Geeraert *et al.*, 2013).

To avoid divisions, UEFA recognised and directly involved stakeholders in the decision-making process (Arnaut, 2006). FIFPro, EPFL and ECA are now officially recognised by UEFA as the representative organisations of their members (UEFA, 2007a; 2008a). Since 2007, they have had a seat on the UEFA Professional Football Strategy Council (PFSC), a purely consultative body set up to establish a network of (social) dialogue and consultation with other stakeholders in the governance of professional football. The PFSC reports to the Executive Committee, UEFA's real decision-making body (UEFA, 2010, Art. 7a).

The rise of stakeholder organizations FIFPro, EPFL and ECA – 'stakeholder organizations', is consolidated by their official recognition by UEFA and the EU. Together with these two organizations, they operate within a network with, at least *prima facie*, the same characteristics as a multi-actor, multi-level governance network.

Although imperfect, it is clear that the logic of horizontal interests has been sharpened by the 'stakeholder organizations'. The network organisation involves stakeholders more closely in football governance (Parrish, 2011) as power structures claiming part of football's jurisdiction (Millward, 2006). Footballers, their representatives, clubs, leagues, and supporters' organisations all gain more power and influence, while "UEFA's power and authority are reduced and diffused" (Niemann, García & Grant, 2011, p. 251).

In the light of symbolic interactionism, this 'chair dance' in the power structure is an expression of the fact that the organisation of the network is derived from the interactions of the actors. Power is derived from the use or control of resources to influence the decisions of decision makers (Houlihan, 2014).

5.5. From Pyramids to Networks: the New Configuration

The changes in contemporary society not only require new analytical approaches to governance, but also force us to rethink concepts such as power and influence. It seems that the uncertainty generated by complexity implies a new centrality of resources (Padovani & Pavan, 2011).

The interaction of specific organisational interests both inside and outside the football pitch, combined with social, economic, political, legal and technological developments, has led to a complex environment (Hoehn, 2006), that were ensured by the establishment of a network among key stakeholders and has conspired to change the parameters of authority of the traditional football governing organisations.

As a result, a horizontal axis of stakeholder networks emerged in the governance of football, where issues of representation, accountability and legitimacy have replaced the old style of direct vertical hierarchies, giving rise to a configuration of 'stakeholder networks' (García, 2009). It is a transitional one movement that García (2009) describes "from the pyramid to the networks". This movement has created valuable networks of social interaction. For Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) they are part of a structured system of social positions called a 'field', one of the key concepts in Bourdieu's theory of practice. A field in which struggles or manoeuvres over resources, interests and access take place.

Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) suggest that through these networks of social relations, players learn to recognise the conditions of the 'game' in advance, allowing them to use their experience to read the present and also to predict future possibilities. While these possibilities are influenced by their previous history in the league it does not mean that stakeholders definitely follow these experiences, as many new choices and paths are possible (Kitchin & Howe, 2013).

5.5.1. Network governance, rationalities and forms

Network governance, in contrast to bureaucratic structures within organisations and formal contractual relationships between them, refers to the coordination of complex products or services by a network of organisations within an uncertain and competitive environment (Gratton and Jones, 2010). To explore the football governance model and its possible evolution trajectory, it is necessary to understand the rationalities, forms, as well as the evolution of network governance (Peng *et al.*, 2020). The network conveys a powerful image for portraying the growing complexity of contemporary governance practices. In this sense, Slack (2004, p. 419), stated that "all sport organizations are embedded in organizational fields, and are subject to pressures from key suppliers, resource and product consumers, competitors and regulatory agencies. This makes the organizational field level of analysis extremely apropos for analyses of organizational changes in sport."

The mergence and empowerment of new stakeholders in professional football, has seen an increase in the intensification and densification of stakeholder contestation in its governance (Hoehn, 2006). Guerrero-Villegas (2019) provides that shareholders appear in organizations as a consequence of the separation between ownership and control. The process of sharing sovereignty results in gains, but also in some systemic erosion of power, which relocates certain decisions and fields of action (Castells, 2009).

The puzzle of relations in the media/football complex should be understood as a field in which the specific interests of each actor are asserted, presupposing a system of competition and struggles aimed at preserving or transforming the configuration of this power (Whannel, 1992; Bellamy, 1998). This argument is echoed in Adner's (2006; 2016) concept of 'ecosystems-as-structure'. This means that, in practice, the ecosystem is defined by the alignment structure of the multilateral set of partners that need to interact for a focal value proposition to be realised, as Adner (2016, p. 4) points out.

The greater the legitimacy of the stakeholder's request (legitimacy), the greater the likelihood that the company will respond to the stakeholder's request (salience) (Eesley & Lenox, 2006). For Ferrand and McCarthy (2009), the value of a relationship depends on the benefits obtained by each partner. In the EU policy framework, the power given to stakeholders has (to a certain extent) undermined the vertical channels of authority characterised in the traditional football pyramid, mainly due to successive appeals to the CJEU and the EC (García, 2008).

It is also important to understand how governance systems at different levels have managed to coexist. UEFA in its turn is dependent on the EC first to consolidate its legitimacy which came under pressure due to the emergence of new stakeholders and second because football's regulations are subject to European law (García 2008). UEFA had to change the structure and philosophy of the organization. However, it is recognized as a partner by EU institutions, the legitimacy of football governance is central to emerging networks and good governance. On one hand, the relationship between UEFA and the EU is seen as a relatively stable horizontal articulation of interdependent but operationally autonomous actors. On the other hand, the EU, as a formal authority, is unable to unilaterally regulate the network due to its limited competences in the field of sport. ECA and UEFA are in their turn interdependent since clubs cannot leave UEFA because they would no longer be allowed to play in UEFA's competitions (e.g. the UCL) and because UEFA obviously cannot exist without clubs.

Due to the interconnectedness of professional football, a similar logic applies to the relationships between the other actors (Holt 2007). The extensive lobbying of the football ecosystem and its involvement in high politics has prevented FIFA and UEFA from returning to their original state of self-governance.

The exploding broadcasting rights marketplace is considered one of the driving forces behind this fast-growing share of sports within the European economy. As a result, the sale of broadcasting rights has frequently caused interaction between football associations and EU institutions. The EC has stated that "competition in the markets for the sale of TV rights to football events is one of the EC's priorities" (EC, 2003, p. 47). Football associations have traditionally been sensitive to this issue, as the central marketing of rights to an entire competition brings obvious monopolistic advantages in terms of prices, which football associations see as a right in terms of their sporting autonomy (Barsch, 2015).

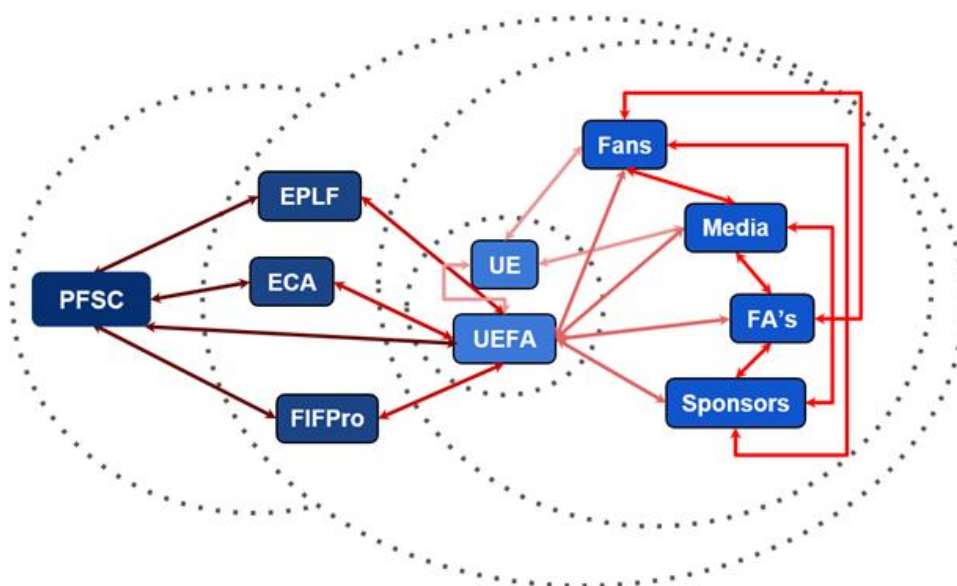
The question is, how does the structure of the organization's relationships affect its response to pressure from stakeholders? This may be answered by Adner (2016), who argues that ecosystems are inherently multilateral. Thus, this means that a multiplicity of partners, and also a set of relationships that are not decomposable to an aggregation of bilateral interactions. Similarly, multilaterality that can be fully decomposed simply along the lines of direct and indirect ties also does not require an ecosystem approach. Additionally, multilateral interdependence that can be broken down into bilateral relationships does not require a new construct (Lavie & Singh, 2012).

Since relationships between stakeholders do not occur in a vacuum of dyadic ties, but rather in a network of influences, stakeholders are likely to have direct relationships with each other (Rowley, 1997), so the value of a relationship depends on the benefits obtained by each partner (Ferrand & McCarthy, 2009). Grix and Phillpots (2011, p.4) use the expression “asymmetrical network governance” to describe the paradox between the pyramid system of governance and the governance of networks and their underlying power relations. The network attempts to capture the paradox between the surface observation of a shift away from big Government to governance by networks and partnerships and their underlying power relations.

On balance, Geeraert *et al.* (2013) argue that the atypical sports sector is historically - and still mostly - regulated by sports bodies. Within UEFA's structures, stakeholder organizations have only had a consultative role. As a result, UEFA still heavily regulates the football ecosystem, which may lead to an excess of rules and procedures in the network.

This system progressively succeeded the structural interfaces of the European sports network, as illustrates in Figure 8. The distinction between stakeholders becomes increasingly fluid, allowing flows to move through the connective system, which goes far beyond the horizontal and unidirectional relationships included in the concept of value networks.

Figure 8. Convergence of key stakeholders: ‘from the pyramid to the network’



Source: Adapted from Ferrand & McCarthy (2009) and García (2011)

5.5.2. Stakeholder environment in governance network

Stakeholders are identified on the basis of who they are/represent/belong to, their stake (or visibility) and their impact (or power) (Van den Bulck, 2012). Football has largely become an economic activity influenced by powerful of Stakeholders. It has become a business model subject to global mercantilist

imperatives through networked governance (Coakley & Dunning, 2000). According to Borgatti and Halgin (2011), a network is comprised of actors and ties within an organization. Houlihan and Green (2008) propose an interpretation of 'governance as networks', contrasting it with 'command and control' government. They argue that the shift towards governance reflects the decline in the ability of states to achieve their objectives through the exercise of hierarchical power, independently of the institutions of civil society.

The shift to a network governance system is influenced by power relations. According to Max Weber's (2004) definition, power is the ability of an individual or a group to achieve their own goals or will, even in the face of resistance from others. This definition aligns with the realist view that structural resources determine outcomes in favour of the stronger. Therefore, actors with overwhelming resources can decide outcomes in their favour (Dahl, 1957; Habeeb, 1988). Castells (2013) argues that power in a network is derived from relationships that enable economic, social, cultural, and political control over other actors. He suggests that power is located in the alliances and joint activities formed around specific projects and interests.

Friedman and Miles (2006) observed that the definition of the stakeholder concept varies widely. Some definitions, such as Freeman's (1984), are broad and use verbs like 'affect', 'impact', 'influence', and 'interact' in their widest sense. Other definitions are narrow and only consider stakeholders that affect an organization's strategic objectives. In our study the term 'stakeholder' is used in a sense to denote any person or entity that has a relationship with the media/football complex.

Despite the extensive theoretical debate surrounding stakeholders, Preston and O'Bannon (1997) proposed that stakeholder theory was developed based on its descriptive accuracy, instrumental power, and normative validity. Our approach is instrumental in terms of managing the relationship between stakeholders and the organisation's performance; it is descriptive in the sense that it analyses cooperative and competing interests; and it is normative in terms of governance in that it considers the legitimacy of stakeholder interests. The corollary of normative validity is the need for an organisation's governance to consider the legitimacy of stakeholders' interests in order to do (or not do) something because it is the right (or wrong) thing to do (Ferrand & McCarthy, 2009).

Preston and O'Bannon (1997) argue that it is crucial to distinguish between 'true stakeholders' and those who merely influence the organization. Ferrand and McCarthy (2009) suggest that the significance of stakeholders is dependent on how strategic goals impact the organization. Tiell and Cebula (2020) contend that an organization's stakeholders comprise all individuals with a vested interest. Therefore, the sports industry represents a wide range of value creation for all stakeholders.

Mitchell, Agle & Wood (1997) proposed a typology of the attributes and importance of stakeholders that provides practical ways of identifying them as legitimate. Resource dependence is the best attribute within a given theory to guide us reliably on issues of power and legitimacy.

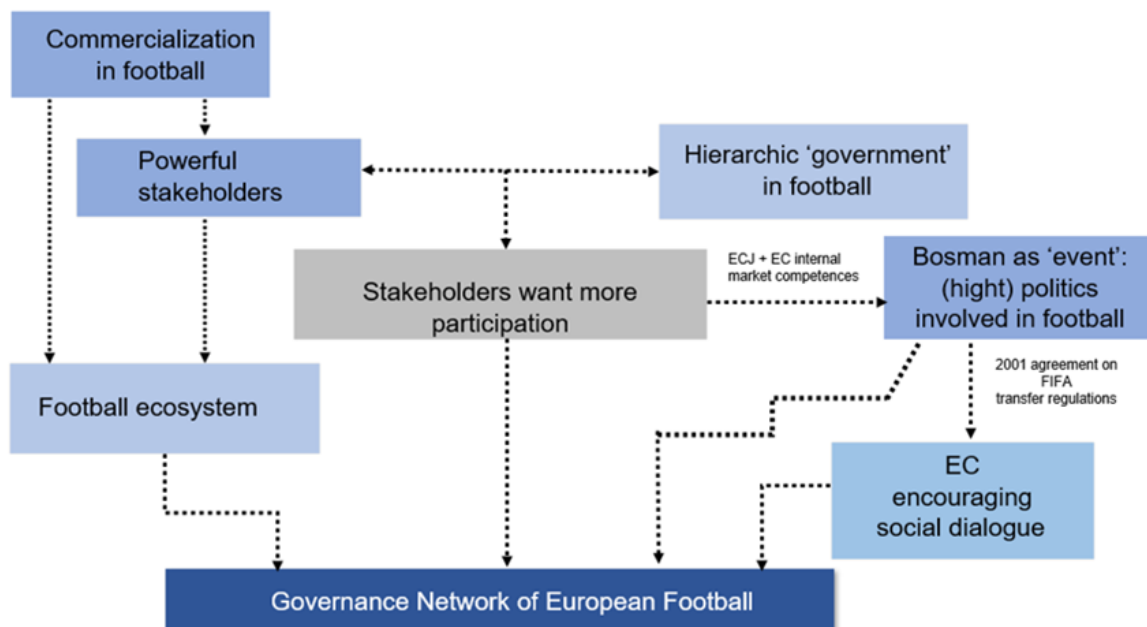
Therefore, dominant stakeholders are both powerful and legitimate. According to Senaux (2008), stakeholders are typically recognised as the primary actors in the ecosystem, and there are formal governance mechanisms in place for them. Duina (1999) suggests that the degree to which transnational markets penetrate the football industry and become a reality is determined by the alignment between stakeholder interests and the rules and regulations of these markets.

According to Strittmatter *et al.* (2021), legitimacy is closely tied to power. Legitimacy implies having the resources to exhibit appropriate behaviour and serve as a model for others. The authors add being able to grant legitimacy implies having the power to define what is appropriate.

Holt (2007) divides the European football network into horizontal and vertical axes, known as the 'internal' and 'external' networks. The 'internal network' comprises the established football structures and represents the means by which stakeholders attempt to influence the policies of the governing bodies through activities outside of these structures (Pfetsch, 2011). The impact of external networks is exemplified by the challenge to UEFA's control of elite competition, such as through the involvement of marketing agencies. The status of the actors is primarily determined by their axis of representation.

A diagram, such as the one shown in Figure 9, can be used to calculate the direct and indirect influences that stakeholders have on each other. Stakeholder status is determined by plotting stakeholder dependency on the horizontal axis against stakeholder influence on the vertical axis.

Figure 9. The driving forces behind the governance network of European football



Source: Adapted from (Geeraert, Scheerder & Bruyninckx, 2013)

Figure 9 shows that European football's influence and control have a complex relationship among stakeholders. This requires mutual understanding of objectives between public and non-public actors. Rhodes (2017) emphasises that the study of networks has evolved into the study of governance, and

positivism has given way to an interpretive stance, which focuses on beliefs, practices, traditions, and dilemmas.

Ferrand and McCarthy (2009) argue that the network approach could be based on general systems theory. This theory posits that systems have end goals and that the dynamic interactions of their components are organized as a function of the goals to be achieved. It also includes explanations of the impact of the environment on the structure, functioning, and communication of organizations through networks (Scott, 2010).

Pfetsch (2011) notes that the effectiveness of the EU as a regulator is a topic of controversy. While some academics consider the EU to be one of the most significant shapers of European regulation, others argue that the EU's effectiveness depends on its regulatory cohesion, the structure of political opportunities, and the regulatory capacity of its interlocutors (García & Meier, 2017). Geeraert *et al.* (2013) argue that the EU, as the formal authority of the ecosystem, lacks the competences to regulate the network unilaterally in the field of sport. They suggest that the self-regulatory effect of horizontal networks is lost if the formal authority regulates the network too much, especially if it is justified by the arguments that have led football to achieve unparalleled status. However, the non-traditional sports sector has historically been, and still mostly is, regulated by sports organizations.

Different forms of power relations can be viewed from a perspective of symmetry or asymmetry. The Bosman Ruling⁴⁶ of the CJEU in 1995 is a notable example of a fundamental change in the balance of power between players, clubs, and governing bodies (García & Zheng, 2017). This case brought about a radical shift in the regulation of player markets and dismantled national boundaries in club recruitment policies. Since the Bosman case, FIFA and UEFA have adopted a strongly protectionist view of sports governance. They have even argued that they should be granted full decision-making autonomy by the EU institutions (Parrish, 2011). However, this decision favoured the financially better placed big clubs in securing the most talented players in Europe (Holt, 2007). The Bosman case proved to be a watershed in the sense that it established a definitive EU involvement in sports, placing it on the 'high politics' agenda (García, 2007).

García (2011) argues that EU institutions cannot be held directly responsible for the emergence of new governance structures in European football. However, their policies have encouraged the emergence of new stakeholders and facilitated the challenge to the legitimacy of governing bodies by those who were previously firmly established in the football pyramid, such as clubs and players. Stakeholders used EU institutions as a site of contention and to search for dominant alternative policies

⁴⁶ Jean-Marc Bosman was a Belgian footballer who gave his name to the Bosman ruling. The Bosman judgment of the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) (Case C-415/93 [1995] ECR I-4921) is the most frequently cited in this context. In short, the ECJ ruled that both the system regulating the international transfer of football players (as defined by FIFA and UEFA) and a quota system limiting the number of foreign players in a team violated the free movement of workers.

that could not be accommodated within the supranational structures of football governance (García, 2009). UEFA has shifted its strategy towards a more cooperative model. This theme helps to explain the negotiation and likely impact of the provisions inserted by the Lisbon Treaty (García, 2007; García, Niemann & Grant, 2011; Weatherill, 2014b).

5.5.3. Guidelines and principles for network governance

For Rhodes (1996), governance is a term implying the involvement of actors well beyond the core executive. In his view, multi-level governance has become a new mantra. In the hierarchical mode, governance is characterised by a high degree of central control over policy design and outcomes, where control is organised according to institutionalised bureaucratic rules and active interventions by the central executive (Rhodes, 1996). Within a network mode, public and private agents interact to create co-operation and consensus with 'significant autonomy from the state' (Marsh & Stoker, 2010; Goodwin & Grix, 2011).

The term governance stems from the Latin root *gubernare* and means to steer (Cadbury, 2002). It implies the need for oversight in accordance with the law and relevant regulations. Therefore, sport governance should be the practice applied to the context (Hoye & Cuskelly, 2007). Donnelly (2015) identifies globalisation, institutionalisation and commercialisation as processes that have led to the emergence of cultural hegemony - a global sport monoculture that limits democratic participation and restricts what Roland Renson (2016) calls 'ludo diversity'⁴⁷.

The establishment of a dominant concept implies the existence of an opposing one. Therefore, governance structures often involve power dynamics and counter-power. Maguire (2005) argues that the current economic and cultural system requires 'efficient governance' among stakeholders. Castells (2009) proposes a conceptualisation that helps us understand power and counter-power. Power is defined as the relational capacity that enables one social actor to asymmetrically influence the decisions of other social actor(s) in ways that favour the will, interests and values of the empowered actor.

The concepts of 'government' and 'governmentality' are important and original features of Foucault's (1981) thought. In Foucault's terms, the expression 'the art of governing' means to describe how governments exercise power over their subjects by using techniques to ensure that individuals govern themselves in accordance with proposed objectives and goals (cf. Grix & Phillpots, 2011, p. 49). Government is essential for it provides order and stability.

For Foucault, such (alleged) transformations in governance draw attention to what Hunt & Wickham (1994, p. 26) call the "creation of mentalities other than state rationality" as a concept

⁴⁷ According to Roland Renson, 'ludo diversity' means the variation between all cultures that include movement, including the fields of play, physical culture and expression, and movement and their respective sub-fields such as games, sports, physical exercise, dance and acrobatic performances (2016, pp. 10-11).

involving a calculated preoccupation with activities aimed at shaping the behaviour of others. This concept is situated at the border between the 'interpretivist' research paradigm and 'critical realism'.

This approach to governance aims to consider the objectives of all stakeholders, but it does not leave us indifferent to whether there is a risk to the implementation of the European football model. In this sense one interviewee expresses optimism, he said:

"I think European football overall is too strong and established for it to be at risk. Before the major leagues (ENG/FRA/GER/ITA/SPA) became established, it was a much more even playing field, but now the clubs who cannot compete financially are starting to think outside the box in terms of revenue and recruitment" (Interviewee 5).

Thus, football governance is a fairly broad area that relates to issues of power, authority, structures and management in football. Rosenau (1995) conceives 'governance' as a process in which a single organization or network of organizations (or society/system) orientates, allocates resources and exercises coordination and control. Shilbury, Ferkins & Smythe (2013) argued that Rosenau's definition (1995) helps us understand 'governance' within the domain of sport where the concept of 'sport governance' can mean both the governance of an organization as well as the notion of governance of the sports system. Governance refers to 'self-organized, interorganizational networks', which complement markets and hierarchies as governing structures for authoritatively allocating resources, with authority that exercising control and co-ordination (Rhodes, 1996).

Geeraert, Mrkonjic and Chappelet (2014) argue that decision-makers utilise networks as a legitimate and effective tool for governance between stakeholders. Sports governance is understood as a systemic structure that establishes the relationships between stakeholders (Rhodes, 2007). It contributes to the institutional functioning and direction of sports organizations, from the club level to national bodies, government agencies, sports service organizations, and professional teams (Whannel, 1992; Rowe, 1995; Kikutis, 2000).

However, governance is often limited to a few basic dimensions, which can hinder its effectiveness. Poynton and Lee (2000) argue that sport governance can be categorized into three headings: systemic governance, political governance, and good governance.

- i. Systemic governance, an analytical concept that refers to the structures that facilitate the power and authority relationships of stakeholders within the sport system;
- ii. Political governance, which refers to the specific role of the state and public authorities in the regulation of sport and their relationship with sport non-governmental organisations (NGOs);
- iii. Good governance as it involves the principles of effective, transparent and democratic management, and we can certainly examine these in the context of sport.

From a systemic governance perspective, the most visible consequence is the weakening of the traditional pyramid of governance in European sport, the expression of the so-called European model

of sport (García & Zheng, 2017). From a political governance perspective, sports bodies and associations are believed to have a significant role in defining the unwritten legal principles. However, it is important to note that stakeholders are attempting to reserve the moral principles they consider inherent in sport for their own sphere of regulation (Caiger & Gardiner, 2000). They demonstrate an intentional governance strategy that promotes the ideals of shifting power to networked stakeholders.

Our focus is now based in last point, which encompasses the principles of effective, transparent and democratic management. What we have called the 'guidelines and principles for network governance'. Rhodes (2007) describes good governance as involving the principles of effective, transparent and democratic management, which is something that we can certainly look at in the context of sport. However, these principles are not a given; they are based on the social construction of sporting integrity. This in turn is linked to the institutional context and the role of stakeholders.

From a social constructivist viewpoint, integrity is a dynamic concept of which the precise meaning changes both over time and by context as it results from implicit or explicit sensemaking processes among the stakeholders involved (Hunter, 2012). What 'integrity' means and how it is expressed, then, depends upon the beliefs and practices of stakeholders in specific contexts (Huberts, 2014). It means that ideas about how to act are socially constructed and influenced by the socio-psychological and institutional context in sports. The integrity of sport is thus continually contested, debated, interpreted defined and redefined, and socially (re)constructed, and as such a product of continued interaction, dialogue, and sensemaking in specific contexts (Loland, 2023; Loyens *et al.*, 2022).

To better understand the construct of integrity, we have followed the line of symbolic interactionism Blumer (1969), which suggests that individuals within organisations are constantly involved in constructing meanings. He argues that "symbolic constructions (cognitions, expressions, norms, constructions of meaning) are dependent on the interest of the individual (or individuals) in them" (1969, p. 39). Grix and Phillpots (2011) add that integrity is conceptualised as a multifaceted and dynamic construct based on a moral foundation and inner drive that is managed by cognitive and affective processes manifesting various integrity-related behaviours.

5.5.4. Independent fan initiatives spokespersons

It has become increasingly popular for sports fans to appeal to ideas of 'sporting integrity' when voicing their approval or disapproval of some aspect of the football ecosystem (Archer, 2016). Crossley (2011, p. 42) points out that "there are no interactions, relations or networks without actors, but actors take shape within those interactions etc. in a constant process of formation or becoming". In this sense, we view football fandom as an excellent way of assessing interaction networks, because football fans are heterogeneous and come from a wide range of backgrounds and interests (Cleland *et al.*, 2018).

The concept of 'structured dialogue' was initially introduced in the White Paper on Sport⁴⁸, where the EC argued that one added value of EU action in sport was to provide a platform for dialogue on sport, proposed and organising thematic discussions. However, Giulianotti (2005) posits that discussions on the governance of European football have increasingly focused on the role of fans, given concerns that the commercialisation of the game could have a detrimental impact on its socio-cultural dimensions.

In this context, it is imperative that fans develop a more nuanced understanding of the asymmetrical nature of power relations in order to position themselves as influential stakeholders within the arena. It follows that "wherever there is power, there is counter-power" which is "the deliberate attempt to change power relationships (...) by reprogramming networks around alternative interests and values, and/or disrupting the dominant switches while switching networks of resistance and social change" (Castells, 2009, p. 431). In other words, counter-power could be the power of protest groups or networks of individuals in protest and collective action. Undoubtedly power might be related to resources, while counter-power might be realized through such resources.

Thus, through the emergence of 'project', 'resistance' and 'legitimation' identities (Castells, 2009), fans have emerged as spokespeople for collective action initiatives in the network (Millward, 2013b). This emergence of a project identity represents the vision of new realities through groups seeking an active voice in the network system within the media/football complex. At the centre of these networks, is the Football Supporters Europe (FSE), founded in July 2008. When the FSE organised the first European Football Supporters Congress at Arsenal's Emirates Stadium, FSE was joined by Independent Supporters' Associations, which provided information, assistance and advice on fan embassies/parks at international tournaments (Millward, 2009; McGillivray & Frew, 2015). Giulianotti (1999) argues that the activities of FSE, or ISAs, tend to be filled with white-collar service workers. As Brinkmann (2007) has argued, the concepts of power and integrity are interrelated (they are like two sides of the same coin).

In this context, football is not only considered a social sphere of entertainment and leisure, but also a sphere with its own politics and philosophy. Horizontal networks loosen the grip of established structures, enabling individuals in the football fan network to collectively manage their forms of capital within the network. Bourdieu (2010) argued that individuals occupy multidimensional social spaces in which they are defined by forms of capital that are articulated through relationships with others. Like Bourdieu, Castells views capital as largely synonymous with power.

However, for Castells (2007), network capital takes on mobile informational forms as well as traditional material and symbolic forms. Lasting relationships develop and take shape within this

⁴⁸ EC, White Paper on Sport (n 19).

network, supporting the premise of symbolic interaction (Crossley, 2011). From this perspective, networked collective action promotes more sustainable and inclusive football governance (Numerato, 2018). As a result, football fans are becoming more critical of national and transnational governing bodies and are taking on the role of self-appointed guardians of the football ecosystem (Senyuva, García & Llopis-Goig, 2019).

An illustration of the increasing impact of global business networks on the evolution and governance of global football can be observed a couple of years ago in the European Super League (ESL) initiative (Sugden, 2002). Back to the debate, on 18 April 2021, twelve European clubs announced the project of an ESL, which resembled closed league models found in the US sports industry. The intention was to organize a twenty-team competition with fifteen founding members and five further clubs invited each year. The competition was to be played mid-week, and the clubs intended to remain in their national leagues (Liew, 2020).

The ESL was intended to be an exclusive league competing with the current UCL but offering highly lucrative broadcasting rights. In short, the promoters of the ESL - the twelve richest clubs in European football - have prioritised financial profit over the basic point of sport itself: a battle of nations and cultures, towns and regions, ideas and systems, an ecosystem with a top and a middle and a bottom, something you go out and play as well as sit down and pay for (Meier *et al.*, 2022).

In opposition to the ESL project, hundreds of people protested in stadiums across Europe and the players themselves made statements on social media against the plans. Like a popular revolution against capitalism. The will of the fans prevailed over the most influential clubs. The result was the victory of football fans over the power of the 'boardroom'. Brownsell (2021) highlighted the reaction of European football fans who were angry with their clubs' billionaire executives. García (2017) highlights the active role of football fans in organising supporters' organisations to defend their interests.

Consequently, the EPL clubs declared their intention to withdraw from the league just hours after the announcement was made. This decision followed widespread criticism from other clubs, experts, commentators, academics, and large-scale protests by fans outside, and even inside, some EPL stadiums (Parnell *et al.*, 2022). Chadwick (2021) found that the workers had their own ideas about things that differed from those of their employers. On this topic, one of the interviewees said:

"I do not think they were expecting the ferocity of the backlash from the fans".

He also said that:

"UEFA is always in a difficult position, because its revenues are driven by this handful of wealthy teams, but it doesn't exist to serve the needs of just 12 or 15 clubs, it's there to represent 55 member associations" (Interviewee 4).

A closed ESL would destroy the pyramidal structure of European football, which embodies the ideas of inclusion, accessibility, and solidarity (Wagner *et al.*, 2021). One of the key stakeholders, the players, appear to have been left behind in the thoughts of the clubs. The ESL highlight once again some of the ideological fault lines that exist in global football. The interviewee added:

“Like in the EPL, a segment of the broadcasting revenue for the UCL gets shared among UEFA’s members. When Real Madrid and Manchester United play in a UCL final, there is a financial windfall also for the Maltese and the Faroe Islands football associations. So, there is a collective spirit” (Interviewee 4).

In their opposition to the ESL, many fans expressed the worry that national leagues which have been the focus of their fandom for decades will be downgraded or even disappear. Yet, the failure of the ESL tells us more about the pace of globalisation than indicating its reversal. The failure of the ESL does therefore not represent a victory of fans over commerce, or of culture over capitalism. Because the very existence and devotion of the fans has cemented the commercial nature of football (Sandvoss, 2017).

5.6. In Summary

This chapter examines the ongoing debate on governance in professional football. Initially, football was a self-regulating activity that developed its own principles and a hierarchical structure of governing bodies. However, as society became more interconnected, this hierarchical structure began to destabilize, resulting in a complex system of relationships among key stakeholders, both horizontally (between organizations at the same level) and vertically (across different levels of governance). This has led to certain stakeholder organizations in European football gaining more power due to political, legal, and economic forces, such as regulatory frameworks, legal rulings, and financial investments. In this context, the EU is positioning itself as a key factor in the political and economic spheres. It assumes political power, while recognizing that economic power is the responsibility of civil society actors, including individuals and organizations. The EU and UEFA view themselves as partners, deriving legitimacy from their roles in football governance - an essential element for the development of emerging governance networks and the promotion of good governance. In consequence, academics employ symbolic interactionism alongside an underdeveloped and often implicit understanding of networks. Network analysis provides a set of methodological tools to develop and apply these concepts in practice. Despite these analytical advances, it is a fact that the core structure of the football ecosystem has remained virtually unchanged since its inception.

[Page left blank on purpose]

Football Determinants: Economic and Policy

“Love it or hate it, there is no denying the sporting, cultural and even economic importance of football”.

Will Hutton, ‘Football pays the penalty’, the Observer, 16 March 2003

6.1 Chapter Overview

The aim of this chapter is to provide an overview of the political economy of football. The football industry has made political economy a crucial field of study. Economics helps us understand the unique characteristics of the football market, while politics enables the examination of co-optation, participation, and resistance within the sport’s governance and culture. The focus is on the factors that determine the supply and demand for sporting events. The relevant theoretical and empirical literature, particularly from economics and sociology, is analysed with a focus on fan culture to identify the intangible elements, such as emotional loyalty and community identity, that contribute to the demand for football.

6.2. The Political Economy of Football

The term political economy comes from two Greek words, *polis*, which means a city as a political unit, and *oikonomia*, denoting the management of a household. Use of the two words together began first during the feudal period in Western Europe and were used to describe the study of managing the revenues and expenditures of feudal monarchs (Sage, 2000). Since political affairs were in the hands of the monarchs and landed aristocracy, revenues and expenditures were obviously matters of economic management (Clark, 1991). In today’s world, the nature of economic policy and power politics are intertwined. As Caporaso and Levine (1992) point out, the field of political economy has always been much broader than the conventional study of economics or political science.

In the context of economic analysis, as Walter Neal’s (1964) seminal work describes, the economics of sport has ‘peculiar’ characteristics that make it particularly difficult to analyse compared to conventional economic markets. Piggin (2013) suggests that the politics of sport, unlike other areas of social policy, is often the site of struggles over resources, status and identity. In this respect, William McGregor, the founder of the English Football League, wrote in an article entitled ‘*The Book of Football*’

in 1905: “Football is big business... the turnover of some of our clubs is considerably greater than that of many large companies” (quoted in Taylor, 2008, p. 70).

While avoiding the trap of economic determinism, no analysis would be complete without exploring the economic dimension of sport. This is especially true given that the total income of football clubs has increased significantly in recent decades, largely as a result of lucrative broadcasting, sponsorship and commercial partnerships. So what is the policy of sport? This apparently simple question is not as straightforward as it may first seem, and it raises many further and difficult questions. For example, is politics tied to certain sites, that is institutional arenas where it takes place? Is it solely concerned with issues and decisions affecting public policy, that is, the whole society? Or may politics be found in all groups and organizations, large or small, formal or informal?

One of the main contributions of political philosophy to our understanding of politics is its potential for developing consistency and clarity of thought and judgment (Leftwich, 2004). For Nicholson (2004) politics, understood as the processes of governance, is predominately organizational and institutional politics. Since the mid1980s, systematic attempts to identify the value of sport to the economy have been developed to inform policy (Szymanski, 2006b; Gratton & Kokolakis, 2013).

Although neoclassical economics currently prevails, political economy has continued in different forms. Various conservative versions have emerged which argue that individual freedom can be extended by applying neoclassical principles to a wider range of issues. Meanwhile, institutional political economy represents an approach that focuses on the technological and institutional factors that influence markets. As long as communication studies are based on institutional analysis, critical political economy will probably be the tradition represented when we talk about the ‘political economy of communication’ (Wasko, 2005).

In *The Political Economy of Communication*, Mosco (2009, p. 25) defined this version of political economy as “the study of the social relations, particularly power relations, that mutually constitute the production, distribution and consumption of resources”. He explains that political economy is about survival and control, or how societies are organized to produce what is necessary to survive, and how order is maintained to meet societal goals.

In *Politics: Who Gets What, When, How*, Lasswell (1936) gave one memorable definitions of politics. He said that the essence of politics was “who gets what, when and how”. However, Grix (2016) considers that such a definition is clearly about ‘resources’ and how these are distributed. For the author, the definition of ‘politics’ employed in the study of politics is somewhat broader than that typically used by scholars. Leftwich (2004, p. 2), points out that the study is sometimes limited by its “preoccupation with analysing the origins, forms, distribution and control of power”. In fact, this concern leads to other key concepts such as authority, legitimacy, government and governance (Houlihan, 2008). Horne, Tomlinson and Whannel (1999) provide a definition of political economy as

the study of control and survival in social life. Especially since the effectiveness of a definition concerns the way a society organises itself, manages and adapts to change.

Therefore, a much broader understanding of 'political' includes everything to do with power, power relations, distribution and origin of power. Thus, wherever power relations exist in society, 'politics' is said to exist. Politics is first and foremost a social activity. A good example is the financing of Olympic sports in many states. Increasingly, National Sports Organizations are defined as 'goals' by governments or by bodies or committees close to the government. If targets are not met, funding will be reduced (Grix, 2013).

Sociologists have therefore taken a rather cyclical interest in the political economy of football. Early commentators adopted an orthodox Marxist perspective and thus concentrated upon economic structures (Giulianotti, 2005). Ian Taylor (1970) averred that the 'participatory democracy' within the England clubs was being replaced by a more profitable, bourgeois enterprise. Although ethically positive, this argument rather romanticized UK football's social history. Most English clubs have been genuine businesses since the late 19th century; since then, few fans have truly believed that club politics were essentially democratic (Dobson & Goddard, 2011).

The relationship between the structure and rules of sport and its economic nature are essential to the way the game is played (Neale, 1964). According to Murray (2000), political economy analysis makes it possible to understand the historicity of capitalism. That is, it contextualises the changing relations of domination, subordination, and resistance over time in social and economic orders (Jarvie & Maguire, 1994). In representing the diversity of political economy perspectives and reflecting trends in sport studies that challenge compartmentalisation, we aim to avoid replicating the theoretical and analytical categories often found in traditional texts. These texts are typically structured around levels of analysis or grand economic theories that have shaped political economy, such as neoclassical, mercantilist, and Marxist frameworks (Busumtwi-Sam & Dobuzinskis, 2003; Nauright & Schimmel, 2005; Murschetz & Tsourvakas, 2019). As a result, the boundaries between international sport, finance and politics have become increasingly blurred. As the French sociologist Jean Baudrillard aptly puts it:

"Politics is no longer restricted to the political sphere, but infects every sphere economics, science, art, sport ... Sport itself, meanwhile, is no longer located in sport as such, but instead in business, in sex, in politics, in the general style of performance" (Baudrillard, 1993, p. 8).

Social policy analyse of sport have been largely informed by sociology; accordingly, its economic perspective can be defined simply as the sociological perspective applied to economic phenomena, in the sense of the term as it emerged in the classical literature of Weber and Durkheim (Smelser & Swedberg, 2005). Economic action, according to Weber (1978), can be rational, traditional or affective. A key contribution of political and economic sociologists has been to show that markets and economic

activities are social constructions; that is, they are the result of historical, social, cultural, economic and political practices (Duina, 1999).

The relationship between sports and the economy dates back to the first antique Olympic Games. Athletes were compensated with goods or services (Andreff, 2008). In the 19th century, gambling on sporting results and the development of the first professional sports paved the way for a sports economy, but it is only in recent years that the phenomenon has been taken seriously on a larger scale. The peculiar economic logics of professional football have puzzled academics, as evidenced by the first classic works on the specificity of sport economics (Rottenberg, 1956; Neale, 1964; Davenport, 1969; Sloane, 1971; 1980).

A contextual understanding is necessary to comprehend the nuanced reality of football economics. Weisbrod (1986) argues that the sport market is a complex system that operates through various institutions and organizations. It is made up of different types of providers, including those from the public (state/government), market (private/for-profit), and voluntary (non-profit) sectors (Gratton *et al.*, 2012).

In addition, the efficacy of a definition is contingent upon the manner in which a society is structured, managed, and responsive to change. Professional sport exemplifies these attributes of enjoyment and social facilitation, but their importance is lessened given the 'cut and thrust' of winning and the heightened economic demands for athlete remuneration and the interface with commercial partners including sponsors and broadcast networks. Regardless of level, elements of business are inextricably intertwined with sport delivery systems (Shilbury, 2022).

The transnational popularity of football is reflected in the academic interest in analysing economic development. So much so that economic analysis was transformed into what is now known as managerialism⁴⁹, transforming neoliberal capitalism into 'managerial capitalism' (Glover, 2013, p. 363). Nonetheless, managerialism and neo-liberalism are not synonymous even though they share certain affinities (Klikauer, 2015). Miller (1999, p. 115) argues that sports spending seems immune to "conventional economic cycle" and has "grown through recessions". From an economic point of view, sport is an activity that has repercussions in many different areas. However, the extensive and superficial use of concepts such as 'industry' and 'business' alongside 'sport', and the inclination to study the externalities of sport rather than the effects of management on the sporting human being, are signs that research is less and less about the management and organisation of sport and more and

⁴⁹ Managerialism can be explained by the following formula (management + ideology + expansion = managerialism), the origins of managerialism (management), to which ideology is added as the second ingredient. The third ingredient is the drive to expand management techniques far beyond the realm of management organisations, spreading managerialism into the wider economic, social, cultural and political spheres (Chauvière & Mick, 2013).

more about the management of industry, wrapped up in an ideology of commercialism and managerialism driven by neoliberalism (Gammelsæter, 2021).

For those policy analysts more comfortable with social constructivist frameworks, the work of Fischer and Forester (1993), Fischer (2003) and Schneider and Ingram (2005) provide rich insights into the policy process which can easily be applied to sport. One reason for this may be that professional sport offers certain attributes that contribute to a sense of fun and social facilitation, but their importance is lessened given the 'cut and thrust' of winning and the heightened economic demands for athlete remuneration and the interface with commercial partners including sponsors and broadcast networks. Regardless of level, elements of business are inextricably intertwined with sport delivery systems (Shilbury, 2022).

Pitts, Miller & Miller (1994) use traditional and contemporary definitions of the sports industry to produce three segments: sports performance, sports production and sports promotion. However, Sugden and Tomlinson (1998b) suggest that TV rights are at the centre of the political economy of sport.

6.2.1. The bridge between the fields of football economics and football policy

The political economy of sport also focuses on what has often been called public policy, in order to fulfil people's leisure needs. Some scholarship on the subject emphasises that one of the most contentious issues has been whether the state should intervene in sporting practices or whether such matters should be left to the private sector (Sage, 2000). In spite of the different visions, the state has been involved in every type of market economy for the past 200 years, and its role has continued to greatly expand (Peterson, 1991). Particularly through a pluralist perspective - fair, balanced and impartial representation of a wide range of political opinions and points of view. From Polo's (2007) perspective, capitalist democracies are not dominated by a ruling class, but by many different interest groups.

Nevertheless, the primary product of football remains the game itself (Parnell et al., 2020), defined as a "recreational and professional competitive physical activity governed by rules" (Miller et al., 2001, p. 132). Consequently, many entrepreneurs invest significant sums in purchasing teams and commercial rights, driven by the pursuit of sporting success, despite having little expectation of a financial return. This raises the question: why do they invest in such ventures? Simplistically, we could point to factors such as ego, vanity and personal aggrandisement, which often seem to overshadow the rationality of financial gain.

However, these factors are just the 'tip of the iceberg' this analogy suggests that the surface-level information, problems, or symptoms we observe are just a small indication of a much more complex or deeper issue. Thus, in a commercial transaction, the activities in a football match are governed by a set of conventionalised rules; they are not a culturally universal process, but arise from unique technical, social and economic circumstances (Levinson & Christensen, 1999). A football match as a

whole is naturally decomposable into smaller sub-events, each of which comes with its own regularities concerning the actors and perspectives involved (Schmidt, 2008).

As a result, the economic importance of sport has increased. For many companies (clubs) involved in sport business, the universe is no longer a domestic market. It has definitely become global (Andreff & Staudohar, 2000). James F. Moore (1993), in his article *Predators and Prey: A New Ecology of Competition*, introduced the term 'business ecosystem' to describe a shift in how organizations interact within a shared environment. This concept emphasizes that, much like in a natural ecosystem, businesses are interconnected and mutually dependent, evolving together rather than merely competing.

The concept of 'business ecosystem' has gained widespread prominence in strategic discussions over the last two decades, both in academic and applied contexts. The growing use of the term underscores an increased focus on the interdependence of organizations and their activities. Alongside other related concepts, such as business models, platforms, coopetition, multi-sided markets, networks, technology systems, and value networks, the idea of ecosystems has sharpened attention on evolving models of value creation and capture (Adner, 2016). This reflects a shift in understanding how firms collaborate, compete, and co-create value in interconnected environments, suggesting that success now hinges not just on individual performance but also on the health of the broader ecosystem in which businesses operate.

6.3. Determinants of Supply and Demand: Sporting and Economic

Funk (2008) states that football is both a consumer product and an industrial product. But its importance is undoubtedly also social and cultural. According to Bourdieu (1990) sport is viewed as a cultural, social, and economic product that is part of a market of socially produced supply and demand. Supply is determined by organisational capacity at any given time, while demand is determined by the willingness to practise as expressed in society. Dobson and Goddard (2011) note that this is helped by the millions of people who attend matches each season and the many millions more who watch football on TV and follow its fortunes through media coverage.

The study of demand for professional sports has a long tradition in the economic literature (Schreyer & Däuper, 2018). The earliest research on this topic was published in the early 1970s (Borland & Macdonald, 2003; Downward, Dawson & Dejonghe, 2009; Dobson & Goddard, 2011). However, various studies of the impact on demand, regardless of the sport, take the standard economic theory of demand (neoclassical theory) as their starting point. This states that the quantity demanded of a good depends on the price of the good, the prices of other goods (complements or substitutes), the

consumer's income and their tastes (Borland & Macdonald, 2003). In this sense, there have been several studies on the determinants of demand (Baimbridge, Cameron & Dawson, 1996; Kuypers, 1997; García & Rodríguez, 2002; Forrest, Simmons & Szymanski, 2004; Buraimo, Forrest & Simmons, 2006; Buraimo, 2007; Allan & Roy, 2008; Buraimo, 2008, 2019). These empirical studies are not unanimous, and their conclusions are contested. Kuypers' (1997) found no significant impact of live TV broadcast on attendance. Forrest *et al.* (2004) produces detailed econometric evidence to demonstrate that broadcasting of EPL matches has had a negligible effect on attendance. Baimbridge, Cameron & Dawson (1996) distinguished between matches played on a Sunday and on a Monday night. In the former case, they found no statistically significant effect, while Monday night games were found to have 15% lower attendance.

An important branch of the literature on sport economics focuses on factors which can potentially influence match attendance (Schreyer & Ansari, 2022). Westerbeek and Smith (2003) have associated fan behaviour with 'harder' elements, including economic factors such as admission prices, income levels and the degree of 'competitive balance', as well as the less discussed, but equally important, 'softer' factors such as entertainment value, promotional campaigns, venue quality, the game aesthetics, fan involvement and identification, and economic and cultural forces.

Several studies have explored the relationship between the uncertainty of a game's outcome and attendance (García & Rodríguez, 2002; Forrest, Simmons & Szymanski, 2004; Forrest, Simmons & Buraimo, 2005; Buraimo & Simmons, 2009; Alavy *et al.*, 2010; Buraimo & Simmons, 2015; Bedina & Pershakov, 2017; Artero & Bandrés, 2017; Cox, 2018; Gouguet, 2019). Although numerous other factors influence match attendance, outcome uncertainty is often regarded as the primary focus of economic analysis. Furthermore, outcome uncertainty plays a pivotal role in the selection of matches and viewers by broadcasters, as evidenced by studies conducted by Forrest *et al.* (2004), Buraimo and Simmons (2009) and Artero and Bandrés (2017).

García and Rodríguez (2006) and Alavy *et al.* (2010) confirm that result uncertainty is relevant, but its effect is small and not decisive. Similarly, Andreff (2014) proposes that there is no evidence to suggest a correlation between the unpredictability of outcomes and fan engagement. While the data indicates that stadium attendance is relatively high in England and Germany, it is comparatively low in France and Italy (Andreff, 2018). However, there is no evidence of a relationship with the competitive balance of the leagues. Although Borland and MacDonald (2003) note that the day and time of an event also determine the nature of demand.

Szymanski (2006b; 2010b) provides empirical evidence to support these arguments. Based on author extensive research, the most important factors driving fan interest in football are the quality of the match, the uncertainty of the outcome (of the match and the competition) and the success of the fan's own team. The quality of the game encompasses aspects such as entertainment and spectacle,

the aesthetic pleasure of watching the game, and the quality of the visiting team. Fort (2006) includes various factors that affect sports events, such as ticket prices and potential substitutes. One of the most controversial factors is competitive balance and the resulting uncertainty of the match's outcome (Brook, 2006). The football fan activism complex is multifaceted (Cairns, 1990; Nalbantis & Pawlowski, 2023).

In short, while it is tempting to debate whether football is a business or a game, it is important to acknowledge that the unique dynamics of the football industry led us to the conclusion that it cannot be viewed as a typical business (Coates & Humphreys, 2007). Various authors have proposed a multidimensional typology for sports demand, considering various forms of determinants of demand. Table 16 is based on their classification, although the list of potential motives can be quite extensive.

Table 16. Determinants of game attendance

Sport Determinants	Economic Determinants	Other Determinants
Uncertainty of results	Revenues	Culture and identity
Playing success	(Ticketing, media	Loyalty
Entertainment	rights and	Exhibition games and
Promotion vs relegation	sponsorship)	tournaments
		League Size
		Match day/time
		Live Streams

Source: (García & Rodriguez, 2002; Forrest & Simmons, 2006; Dobson & Goddard, 2011).

6.4. Sport Determinants

The research related to sport determinants includes analysis of diverse perspectives such as uncertainty of outcome, playing success, entertainment, and promotion vs relegation.

6.4.1. Outcome uncertainty and team quality

The competitive balance between teams participating in a sporting competition implies uncertainty about the outcome of the various matches between any two teams. The hypothesis that a high degree of outcome uncertainty makes team sports more attractive and thus increasing in demand.

Gratton and Taylor (2000) argue that sports competitions are unique due to the presence of outcome uncertainty. Therefore, identifying the factors that influence demand for stadium attendance has become a priority for sports economists in recent decades. Several studies have been conducted to measure the correlation between team quality and the uncertainty of outcome, using various measures for uncertainty. Research has shown that matches in which the expected outcome is less one-sided are more attractive to the fans. It is believed that fans would be less enthusiastic about a

match where the result is considered a foregone conclusion (García & Rodriguez, 2002; Solberg & Mehus, 2014). Ducrey *et al.* (2003) emphasise the importance of preserving uncertainty, as the integrity of the game is closely linked to the integrity of the result. The competitive balance and uncertainty of outcomes are crucial for the success of professional sports (Buraimo, 2007).

Neale's (1964) assessment of the economics of professional sports emphasises the undesirability of monopolistic practices. He therefore emphasises the importance of maintaining the outcome uncertainty and the need for competitive competitors if professional sports are to thrive. The values of sporting contests are maximised when rivals are evenly matched, creating uncertainty of outcome. Peel and Thomas (2002) investigated the impact of uncertainty on stadium attendance in England's professional football by using the *a priori* probability of home team success based on sports bets. Their findings indicate a positive correlation between the probability of winning and stadium attendance, suggesting that fans are motivated by the prospect of seeing their team win rather than uncertainty. Leeuwen, Quick & Daniel (2008) suggest that spectators' satisfaction with the game and its peripheral services is significantly influenced by their identification with the club and the phenomenon of winning or losing. This, in turn, has positive or negative effects on the atmosphere during the event in stadia.

Woratschek, Horbel & Popp (2014) note that fans' participation in the value creation process continues after the sporting event, when they celebrate victories or jointly accept defeats. Biscaia *et al.* (2021) provide evidence that emotions and joy have a direct positive effect on satisfaction and an indirect effect on behavioural intentions through satisfaction. Discouragement has a negative effect on behavioural intentions, while satisfaction has a positive influence on them (Arrondel & Duhautois, 2020). Emotions play a central role in everyday interactions. The interactionist perspective challenges conventional ideas about emotions as innate or universal responses to external stimuli. According to this analytical position, the self and society are interdependent (Fields, Copp & Kleinman, 2006).

When analysing the debate surrounding the proposed introduction of the ESL, it becomes clear that the stadium environment has a significant impact on a club's overall image. The ESL is intended to be an exclusive league that competes with the current UCL. However, it does not contemplate promotion or relegation but offers highly lucrative TV rights. In short, the promoters of the ESL - the twelve richest clubs in European football - have prioritised financial profit over historical significance, cultural value and the interests of fans. As a result, the EPL clubs announced their intention to withdraw from the ESL just hours after it was announced. This decision followed widespread criticism from other clubs, experts, commentators, academics and large-scale protests by fans outside, and even inside, some EPL stadiums (Parnell *et al.*, 2022). Brownsell (2021) highlighted the reaction of European football fans who were angry with their clubs' billionaire executives. Hundreds of people protested in stadiums across Europe and the players themselves made statements on social media against the plans. The will of the fans prevailed over the most influential clubs. According to Chadwick (2021) the workers had

opinions contrary to those of their employers. García (2017) highlights the active role of football fans in organising supporters' organisations to defend their interests.

Another topic in the literature examines the relationship between consumer satisfaction and the quality of sporting events. Following on from the literature, we mapped authors who argue that there is a positive association between the factors and consumers' behavioural intentions (Wakefield & Blodgett, 1994; Madrigal, 1995; Biscaia, Yoshida & Kim, 2021). In the same vein, affective states such as pleasure (Wann *et al.*, 2001), team game performance evaluation (Dietz-Uhler & Murrell, 1999), and expectations (Murrell & Dietz, 1992; Zillmann, 1995). Pritchard and Negro (2001) concludes by considering supporting team sponsors has also been identified as crucial.

The literature on the economics of sport, which originated with Rottenberg's seminal article in (1956), has been extensively studied across various time scales, modified, adapted, and exhaustively tested in numerous football markets. Recent research has focused on the role of outcome uncertainty in explaining TV audience demand for European football, for example: in England, Buraimo and Simmons (2015) and Cox (2018); in France, Scelles *et al.* (2013); in Germany, Pawlowski and Anders (2012) and Schreyer *et al.* (2016); in Danish, Hallvard & Solvoll (2007); in Norway, Hallvard & Solvoll (2007); in Italy, Domizio and Caruso (2015) and Caruso, Addesa & Domizio (2017); in Ireland, Jena and Reilly (2016); in Spain, García and Rodriguez (2002); in Portugal, Biscaia, Yoshida and Kim (2021).

In addition, several authors have studied the correlation between the broadcasting of international matches and threats to the interests of national leagues (Forrest, Simmons & Szymanski, 2004; Forrest & Simmons, 2006; Solberg & Mehus, 2014; Kringstad, Solberg & Jakobsen, 2018). Forrest, Simmons & Buraimo (2005) found a significant positive relationship between outcome uncertainty and size of TV audiences in EPL football between 1993 and 2003. García and Rodriguez (2006) found a significant positive association between the proximity of the competition and the audience on a FTA terrestrial channel, but not on a rival subscription platform, in Spanish football over the period 2000-2003. Buraimo (2008) has estimated a joint attendance-television audience model for the second tier of English football (the Championship) and found no significant impact of match outcome uncertainty on either gate attendance or TV audience.

Another indicator that has been studied is the relationship between broadcasts and attendance schedules. There have been numerous studies on match day attendance, including research on the effect of broadcasts which may vary depending on the day of the week (Baimbridge *et al.*, 1996; Forrest *et al.*, 2004; Buraimo & Simmons, 2009; Kringstad, Solberg & Jakobsen, 2018; Barajas, Shakina & Gasparetto, 2019) and the specific season (Forrest *et al.* 2004) and is typically more pronounced when the broadcast is on FTA TV (García & Rodríguez 2006; Buraimo 2008; Buraimo *et al.* 2009; Buraimo & Simmons 2009; Solberg & Mehus 2014; Cox, 2018).

The empirical literature shows that the relationship between competitive balance and fan demand is far from obvious (Arrondel & Duhautois, 2020). According to '*What kind of fan are you?*', survey on the L'Équipe.fr website, the French respondents currently puts European matches ahead of Ligue 1 as a reason for subscribing. What is more, the trend in most countries is towards the need to subscribe to different (more expensive) services in order to have access to all the matches.

"It is essential that league organisers maintain a certain level of competitive balance, both within leagues and between leagues, in order to maintain interest. However, fans are mainly concerned with the success of their team, not paying much attention to the difficulties or otherwise of other clubs" (Interviewee 11).

6.4.2. Playing success

This is probably the most important objective of all, and one to which chairmen, directors, managers, players and spectators can all subscribe (Sloane, 1971). Similar to economic aspects, a football games' quality aspects are frequently employed to predict football stadium attendances (Schreyer, Schmidt & Torgler, 2018). Thus, the utility function considers success in the game as a factor. However, it is important to note that success on the pitch is not only determined by sporting results, but also by strategies off the pitch. Dobson and Goddard (2011, p. 321) state that clubs motivated by sporting success or profit require their players to develop their skills to the fullest and give maximum effort for the team. The popularity of sport determines its economic value, which has led to fluctuations in the demand for football throughout history.

Success and a style of play that fans embrace are both important in the way they imagine their clubs - and by extension themselves. Clubs that fail to replicate past successes lose fans. More importantly though, clubs need to allow fans to recognise their values in their clubs. Commonly, clubs achieve this by not doing very much at all – fans readily bring these beliefs to their reading of the team they support. Despite this, it would be naive to ignore the fact that there is a direct link between a football club's financial results and its sporting results (Carmichael & Thomas, 2014).

On a microeconomic level, a club's ability to generate revenue depends on the success of its team on the pitch. On the other hand, a club's ability to strengthen its team by acquiring better players on the transfer market and offering remuneration at a level that attracts and retains the best players depends on the soundness of its finances. On a macroeconomic level, several economists argue that the ability to attract spectators and, therefore, the potential for generating revenue of any sports league depends on maintaining a reasonable level of competitive balance (Dobson & Goddard, 2011).

It is also clear that there are empirical studies that have shown a strong correlation between team quality and match attendance. Hyman *et al.* (1975) used the current league positions of the home and away teams as explanatory variables and found that while highly placed away teams attract higher attendances, the coefficients for home positions are generally insignificant.

The total turnover of a sports club is the main variable that provides long-term assurance of its success, as noted by various studies (Van der Werf & Verlaan, 1994; Szymanski & Ross, 2000; Hall, Szymanski & Zimbalist, 2002; Dejonghe & Van Opstal, 2008; Dobson & Goddard, 2011).

When evaluating the sporting performance of football clubs, it is evident that there is a direct correlation between financial success and on-field success. At the micro level, a club's revenue generation is dependent on the success of its team. Conversely, a club's ability to improve its team by acquiring better players in the transfer market and offering competitive remuneration is dependent on the strength of its finances. At the macro level, some economists argue that maintaining a reasonable level of competitive balance is crucial for the revenue-generating potential of any sports league (Dobson & Goddard, 2011).

6.4.3. Entertaining

Further motivations for match attendance include aesthetics and entertainment. A core idea is that the playful logic of sports games paves the way for internal and experiential values: fun, joy, enthusiasm, mastery and failure, cooperation, and opposition (Loland, 2023). They provide the audience with the pleasurable experience of being able to achieve something better than everyday life (Dyer, 2002). Entertainment acts as an escape into desires, hopes and possibilities that are not presented to us in everyday life, but can be imagined through the world of entertainment (Mehus, 2010). Dyer (2002, p. 177) points out that "unlike true entertainment, sport is true: for all its performative elements, with their aesthetics and affective dimensions, it is not a representational performance, it is itself; and while the quality and authenticity of all entertainment can be discussed, winning in sport is absolute".

According to Rupert Murdoch "Sport is a universal form of entertainment" (quoted in Westerbeek & Smith, 2003, p. 119). The sports industry is now considered part of the entertainment industry (Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer & Exler, 2008). Therefore, watching a football match can be a search for excitement and pleasure (Elias & Dunning, 1992). Aggressive play can increase entertainment value and add drama (Comiskey, Bryant & Zillmann, 1977), and even discord (Fiske, 2005). Boniface (2002) discusses the symbolism of football. He argues that the use of language and rituals in football can reinforce the perception of war by other means. For instance, the game is often described in militaristic terms, such as 'start of hostilities', 'bombed', 'blown up', and 'missile'. It is important to avoid such language and instead use clear, objective, and value-neutral language.

"...98% of people who go to football go to watch an entertainment activity which happens to be football, they go to have a good experience, to go to a game that creates emotions" (Proença, 2023).

Several authors have pointed out that football has evolved to be presented as entertainment, becoming increasingly similar to expressive soap operas (Kraugerud, 2005; Blackshaw, 2008). Both are presented as entertainment, emphasising the importance of relaxation, humour, passion, and empathy

(Mehus, 2010). Spectators can enjoy a pleasant sensory experience through an exciting competition (Westerbeek & Smith, 2003; Feehan, 2019); phenomena of pleasant, restful, stimulating and exciting reception - as a pleasant experience of the physical system (sensory activities), of the psychological system (ego-motions), the social system of individuals (socio-motions), the cognitive system (wit, intellectual arousal), and the spiritual system (Beck & Bosshart, 2003). Sport has become an integral source of entertainment in contemporary societies because it combines the ingredients of enjoyable entertainment (Schramm & Klimmt, 2003, p. 61).

Major sporting events have historically been used as a means of diverting public attention from immediate concerns by providing entertainment. The phrase 'bread and circuses' refer to the situation in which a ruling authority provides relatively cheap food and entertainment to the masses in return for acquiescence (Grix, 2013). Despite this, it is important to note that the quality of a game may not always be guaranteed, unlike a theatre or variety show. However, according to Whannel (1992, p. 79), "spectators traditionally accept that some games can be more exciting than others".

Cleland (2010) states that the atmosphere is a major factor that attracts fans. As a collective emotional experience links many people under the shared experience of singing, clapping, and cheering in unison. And, of course, through such participation fans help to create the spectacle that attracts commercial sponsorship (Kennedy & Kennedy, 2012). Sports spectators who perceive an event to be attractive, entertaining, interesting and prestigious are more likely to develop favourable attitudes towards them (Speed & Thomson, 2000).

Solberg and Hammervold (2008) acknowledge the distinction between direct sports consumption, which occurs in the stadium and that which occurs through the media. However, they also note the similarities between these two forms of consumption. Additionally, Caruso, Addesa and Domizio (2017) suggest that the rise in TV demand is due to the improved performance of top clubs and the quality of entertainment. Sports entertainment can provide visually striking events and images through its use of mass, colour, and other dramatic qualities. Additionally, it emphasizes the construction of athletes as celebrities (Kennedy & Hills, 2009).

Entertainment and economics have been found to be correlated. Economics may not influence someone to become a fan of a club, but it does encourage them to attend as a spectator, so there is an entertainment factor for those motivated by economics (Wann, 2006). Economics considers the monetary gain of fandom, often through gambling (Guttmann, 1991; Wann, 2006).

6.4.4. Promotion vs relegation

According to the EC (1998), the system of promotion and relegation is one of the key features of the European model of sport. In the European model, leagues are open. In each country there is a hierarchy of leagues. Poorly performing teams from higher leagues can be relegated to a lower league, and strong teams from lower leagues can be promoted. New teams can enter leagues at the bottom of the

hierarchy without paying an entry fee to existing owners and work their way up to the higher leagues (Szymanski & Zimbalist, 2014).

In the European model promoting merit, sports are organized in ascending tiers (generally called divisions) and every year the worst performing teams are relegated to the next lowest division and replaced by the best performing teams from that division (Noll, 2002). The number of promoted and relegated teams in the various European leagues varies in each division and has changed many times over the years (Goddard, 2014).

On the one hand, open leagues have a number of desirable characteristics from the fans' point of view. Uncertainty is an attraction. In most countries, promotion and relegation have been determined strictly on the basis of the position in the top or bottom league at the end of a round-robin competition in which each team in a league plays every other team in the same league twice, once at home and once away. More recently, however, many leagues have introduced additional play-offs at the end of the season to determine at least one of the promotion and relegation positions (Goddard, 2014). Promotion and relegation are, in fact, an ideal structure for antitrust surgery to promote the entry of new operators, since it involves replacing the least efficient incumbent (in terms of wins) with the most efficient operator (Ross & Szymanski, 2000).

On the other hand, the operation of the promotion/relegation system has created significant financial and incentive problems in European leagues, contrary to its assumptions, that is, the compromise between equal opportunities and equal results (Nalbantis *et al.*, 2023). Szymanski and Valletti (2010) argue that the model can increase incentives for effort, but also reduce incentives for revenue sharing. The cost of extracting greater effort through promotion and relegation may be a reduction in competitive balance compared to a closed league.

Literature in Sports Economics has distinguished between two alternative objectives: 'profit maximizing' and 'win maximizing'. It is important to note that the utility maximisation model has implications that are very different to those that follow from the profit-maximising assumptions (Dobson & Goddard, 2011). There has been some consensus that clubs in Europe favour maximising utility (Szymanski, 2001; Fort, 2006). Solberg and Haugen (2010) consider European clubs as utility maximizers where the utility function of club also includes sporting performance. According to the authors, European clubs are willing to sacrifice some financial returns in order to achieve better sporting performance.

Although open leagues, have the potential to allow a much larger number of teams to enter than closed franchise leagues, such as those in North America, in practice, few teams tend to rise to the top of the league in European football's system (Gratton & Solberg, 2007b). In this context, it is interesting to analyse the last 32 years, because since 1992/93 (the season in which both the UCL and the EPL began, ushering in a truly new era in professional football), there has been very little change in the

clubs that have become champions in the major European leagues. The winning dynasties of national championships and UEFA competitions hardly rotate. The calculations are a little more tedious, but it is easy to see that the results reproduced can be seen for any particular league and any particular season, and the resulting shape seems to be the same – the distribution of wins that maximises attendance is much more unequal. The winning dynasties of national championships and UEFA competitions hardly rotate, as can be seen in Table 17.

[Page left blank on purpose]

Table 17. Titles won in the biggest European leagues during the last 32 years

	UCL		Big 5					6th	7th
Seasons	Winner Club	Country	England	Spain	Italy	Germany	France	Neetherlands	Portugal
1992/93	Olympique Marseille	France	Manchester United	Barcelona	Milan	Werder Bremen	**	Feyenoord	FC Porto
1993/94	Milan	Italy	Manchester United	Barcelona	Milan	Bayern Munchen	Paris SG	Ajax	SL Benfica
1994/95	Ajax	Neetherlands	Blackburn Rovers	Real Madrid	Juventus	Borussia Dortmund	Nantes	Ajax	FC Porto
1995/96	Juventus	Italy	Manchester United	Atletico Madrid	Milan	Borussia Dortmund	Auxerre	Ajax	FC Porto
1996/97	Borussia Dortmund	Germany	Manchester United	Real Madrid	Juventus	Bayern Munchen	Monaco	PSV Eindhoven	FC Porto
1997/98	Real Madrid	Spain	Arsenal	Barcelona	Juventus	Kaiserslautern	Lens	Ajax	FC Porto
1998/99	Manchester United	England	Manchester United	Barcelona	Milan	Bayern Munchen	Bordeaux	Feyenoord	FC Porto
1999/00	Real Madrid	Spain	Manchester United	Deportivo	Lazio	Bayern Munchen	Monaco	PSV Eindhoven	Sporting CP
2000/01	Bayern Munchen	Germany	Manchester United	Real Madrid	Roma	Bayern Munchen	Nantes	PSV Eindhoven	Boavista FC
2001/02	Real Madrid	Spain	Arsenal	Valência	Juventus	Borussia Dortmund	Lyon	Ajax	Sporting CP
2002/03	Milan	Italy	Manchester United	Real Madrid	Juventus	Bayern Munchen	Lyon	PSV Eindhoven	FC Porto
2003/04	FC Porto	Portugal	Arsenal	Valência	Milan	Werder Bremen	Lyon	Ajax	FC Porto
2004/05	Liverpool	England	Chelsea	Barcelona	*	Bayern Munchen	Lyon	PSV Eindhoven	SL Benfica
2005/06	Barcelona	Spain	Chelsea	Barcelona	Inter	Bayern Munchen	Lyon	PSV Eindhoven	FC Porto
2006/07	Milan	Italy	Manchester United	Real Madrid	Inter	VfB Stuttgart	Lyon	PSV Eindhoven	FC Porto
2007/08	Manchester United	England	Manchester United	Real Madrid	Inter	Bayern Munchen	Lyon	PSV Eindhoven	FC Porto
2008/09	Barcelona	Spain	Manchester United	Barcelona	Inter	VfL Wolfsburg	Bordeaux	AZ Alkmaar	FC Porto
2009/10	Inter	Italy	Chelsea	Barcelona	Inter	Bayern Munchen	Olympique Marseille	FC Twente	SL Benfica
2010/11	Barcelona	Spain	Manchester United	Barcelona	Milan	Borussia Dortmund	Lille	Ajax	FC Porto
2011/12	Chelsea	England	Manchester City	Real Madrid	Juventus	Borussia Dortmund	Montpellier	Ajax	FC Porto
2012/13	Bayern Munchen	Germany	Manchester United	Barcelona	Juventus	Bayern Munchen	Paris SG	Ajax	FC Porto
2013/14	Real Madrid	Spain	Manchester City	Atletico Madrid	Juventus	Bayern Munchen	Paris SG	Ajax	SL Benfica
2014/15	Barcelona	Spain	Chelsea	Barcelona	Juventus	Bayern Munchen	Paris SG	PSV Eindhoven	SL Benfica
2015/16	Real Madrid	Spain	Leicester City	Barcelona	Juventus	Bayern Munchen	Paris SG	PSV Eindhoven	SL Benfica
2016/17	Real Madrid	Spain	Chelsea	Real Madrid	Juventus	Bayern Munchen	Monaco	Feyenoord	SL Benfica
2017/18	Real Madrid	Spain	Manchester City	Barcelona	Juventus	Bayern Munchen	Paris SG	PSV Eindhoven	FC Porto
2018/19	Liverpool	England	Manchester City	Barcelona	Juventus	Bayern Munchen	Paris SG	Ajax	SL Benfica
2019/20	Bayern Munchen	Germany	Liverpool	Real Madrid	Juventus	Bayern Munchen	Paris SG	Ajax	FC Porto
2020/21	Chelsea	England	Manchester City	Atletico Madrid	Inter	Bayern Munchen	Lille	Ajax	Sporting CP
2021/22	Real Madrid	Spain	Manchester City	Real Madrid	Milan	Bayern Munchen	Paris SG	Ajax	FC Porto
2022/23	Manchester City	England	Manchester City	Barcelona	Napoli	Bayern Munchen	Paris SG	Feyenoord	SL Benfica
2023/24	-	-	-	Real Madrid	Inter	Bayer Leverkusen	Paris SG	PSV Eindhoven	Sporting CP

Source: (data compiled from UEFA and the seven football associations websites)

* Juventus lost the title; ** Olympique Marseille's 1993 championship was subsequently rescinded and lost the title.

[Page left blank on purpose]

Thus the empirical evidence on who won in the biggest European leagues during the last 32 years seems to support the theory. Regarding these outcomes in this period, this raises some questions: How did football, the great universal phenomenon, become a sport in which only a small number of clubs manage to win?

“It is concerning, and not just in Germany, where Bayern Munich had won the previous 11 league titles. Juventus won their ninth in a row in Italy in 2019-20. Paris Saint-Germain have won nine of the last 11 French titles and will surely make it 10 in 12 this season. In Spain, Real Madrid are likely this season to make it 19 of the last 21 league titles for them and Barcelona. Even in England, defeats to Liverpool and Arsenal in the last round have made Manchester City favourites to win a sixth league title in seven years. In any competition there is the obvious problem that the more successful a team is, the more prize money it will accrue, and the more interest it will generate, drawing increased revenues from gate receipts, broadcasting deals, sponsorship, and merchandise. The more money a club has, the better players it can sign and so the more likely it is to win, which in turn generates more revenue, creating an unhelpful cycle in which the rich increasingly dominate” (Interviewee 5).

Looking back at these results over this period, we can draw some conclusions from a longitudinal analysis:

- i. All European champion clubs belong to the seven best ranked countries in the current UEFA ranking: Spain was the best with twelve titles, while France, Netherlands and Portugal won just one title each (Spain and England won 61% of the total and, in the last ten seasons, only Germany has managed to come between them with just one victory);
- ii. In the EPL (for many football fans, considered as the best football league in the world), seven clubs have won the title. However, the two Manchester clubs won 65% of them. In a more detailed analysis, we found that, in the last twelve seasons, the current three-time champion Manchester City won seven times (which may indicate that the great balance in the top places may be being lost);
- iii. Regarding La Liga, only five clubs have won in this period. Even so, two of the biggest clubs in the world (Real Madrid and Barcelona) won 81% of the times;
- iv. Speaking now of Italy, we saw that six clubs won Serie A in this period, in which Juventus won almost half of the championships (48%), with nine titles in the last twelve (still, it has not won any of the last three);
- v. If there is a championship that is perfectly unbalanced, in terms of awarding the title in this new era (after 1992/93), it is the German Bundesliga. In fact, only Bayern München won 21 of 32 championships (67%... of the total amount). If we add Borussia Dortmund,

they both won 81% of the titles in the period. But the worst is that Bayern won the last eleven editions without interruption, just before this season when Bayer Leverkusen won the title for the first time in its history;

- vi. The last Big Five championship (Ligue 1 - France): apparently the most balanced championship analysed in this period, with ten different winners. This is a really good indicator of competitiveness. However, in a more detailed analysis, we found that Paris Saint-Germain has won ten of the last twelve championships, which goes against greater balance when we talk about the 32 seasons;
- vii. Moving now to the analysis of the Netherlands (the 6th country in the UEFA ranking), we see that there were only 5 winners in this period (just like in Spain). This, in itself, may show that the 'Eredivise' is not a very competitive championship. The most titled club is Ajax Amsterdam with fourteen, followed by PSV Eindhoven with twelve. I.e., both won 81% of the titles, which confirms the imbalance in the championship;
- viii. Finally, arriving in Portugal (the 7th country in the UEFA ranking), we observe that the PPL is the most unbalanced championship of the seven so far analysed. Why? Because only 4 clubs have won in 32 seasons; the most titled club Futebol Clube do Porto (FC Porto) won 18 times (58% of the total); if we add Sport Lisboa e Benfica (SL Benfica), they both won 84% of the titles in the period; and last but not the least, if we add Sporting CP, winner of four titles, we see that the three together won 97% of the championships in this period.

6.5. Economic Determinants

Demand depends on the nature of the economic activity, which implies a wide variety of theoretical approaches adapted to each specific case. It would be challenging to examine all the approaches in detail. However, it is worth noting that the economic analysis of professional team sports is distinct from that of other markets. While traditional markets encourage competition, economic cooperation is often necessary to maximize consumer welfare (Buraimo & Simmons, 2015). These economics are considered 'peculiar' due to the positive relationship between the demand for the product (i.e. the game) and the uncertainty of the outcome. Specifically, this is crucial to distinguish the professional sports industry from all other industries (Gratton, 2000). The link between sporting and financial activities is therefore of paramount importance for the competitiveness of football clubs (Szymanski & Ross, 2000). Research into the economic determinants involves analysing different perspectives, such as revenues (ticket sales, broadcasting rights and sponsorship) and market size.

6.5.1. Revenues

The demand for football is influenced by a number of factors, including price, consumer income, leisure time, demographic factors and sport-specific variables such as the importance and proximity of the competition (Buraimo, 2007). Ticket demand is also stimulated when the home team plays teams with an excellent brand strength and/or superstars (Pawlowski & Anders, 2012).

“Football is more of a TV event than ever. That makes fans in stadiums more like participants in a production than observers of a show. So instead of bumping prices up, maybe clubs should do the opposite. And make tickets...free?” (Interviewee 16).

Income is therefore a most important variable in order to explain economic sport demand. In football, clubs sell their goods or services (such as tickets to matches) to supporters. The actions of both sets of agents jointly determine this ticketing price structure (Clowes & Clements, 2003; Knoke, 2012; Schreyer, Schmidt & Torgler, 2017; Courty, 2019).

“Some people oppose these processes of commodification. They express their opposition in different ways. They also learn from other societies. For example, it is cheaper to go to matches in Germany. However, few English supporters’ movements point to the German model as the way forward for the English game” (Interviewee 12).

The neoclassical economic tradition of perfect competition assumes the complete absence of market power (Davies, 2016); but markets are atomised institutions where social, political and cultural connections are fundamental, so the proportion of fans who buy tickets is too small relative to the wider pool of seemingly apathetic fans to affect the price (Soebbing, 2019). The intersection of the aggregate supply and demand curves of buyers and sellers determines both the quantities and the prices that ‘clear the market’ (Knoke, 2012; Cleland *et al.*, 2018).

“Tickets for top-level football are expensive. I think of this in terms of how resources are distributed. For example, access to top-flight football is a limited resource. If you use the market to decide access, you will probably end up with only an ‘elitist’ audience...the high price of tickets can be used as an ideological justification for the commercialisation of football” (Interviewee 5).

Crossley (2011) observed how the social world, or fields, have temporal dimensions in which what happened earlier in an interaction shape what can happen later. Leisure is essential, but it needs to be supported by aspects as diverse as the quality of seating, the impact of adverse weather conditions, the distance to the event and the extent of the view of the venue (Borland & MacDonald, 2003).

“We are living in difficult times, the current economic climate is challenging, with many people earning low wages. This is contributing to growing inequalities. In this context, the high-ticket prices associated with football are likely to have a negative impact on social groups’ ability to engage with the sport” (Interviewee 11).

Revenues includes gate/ticketing ('gate revenue' is used interchangeably with 'match day revenue'), sponsor and commercial revenue stream combines two cost categories (sponsorship⁵⁰, commercial⁵¹) and notably broadcasting, but also includes the value of food and beverages sold at stadiums, licensed products and even infrastructure construction (Evens et al., 2013; Kuper & Szymanski, 2014) other services such as conferences and catering (Miller, 2015), and other operating revenues.

As recently as the early to mid-2000s, even the most lucrative football clubs depended on matchday revenue for approximately one-third of their income. By the early 2010s, this reliance had reduced to around one-fifth. However, in recent years, this proportion has exhibited a consistent decline, stabilising at approximately 15%. All in all, 42 of Europe's top divisions – more than threequarters – currently have a title sponsor. There are also 13 top divisions (including the EPL and the German Bundesliga) that have opted for commercial structures that currently do not include a naming rights partner. Gambling/sports betting firms and food/drink companies are still the most common title sponsors (UEFA, 2023), including the PPL ('Betclic', as its commercial name).

"Although Premier League clubs have agreed to withdraw gambling sponsorships on front of shirts. That doesn't change my opinion at all! Gambling, like any other companies, are big on brand awareness. Sponsoring football clubs is one way to build a gambling company's brand. It is a mutually beneficial arrangement that has been going on for a while. Over 60% of clubs in the three top leagues are sponsored by gambling companies" (Interviewee 13).

Nevertheless, another interviewee highlighted the ethical implications of sponsorship by gambling companies. He said:

"It seems sensible to me to develop a new code for responsible gambling sponsorship. Hence, while the vast majority of adults enjoy gambling without harm, we cannot ignore the fact footballers are massive role models to kids" (Interviewee 15).

As indicated by Deloitte (2024), there has been a considerable demand for live sport and other forms of entertainment. The most promising growth has been observed in commercial revenues and match days. In the 2022/23 season, revenue growth was unlocked through more effective use of stadiums by clubs, including on non-match days. Furthermore, Deloitte (2024) identified a growing

⁵⁰ The main subcategories within sponsorship include main sponsor; kit manufacturer sponsorship; stadium and perimeter boarding sponsorship, although in practice most sponsor and commercial deals involve multiple properties and rights.

⁵¹ The main subcategories within commercial revenues include merchandising, the non-matchday usage of facilities (e.g. conferencing, club museums, etc), membership revenue that does not involve ticketing rights, non-centrally distributed prize money and other commercial activities, such as appearance fees or international tours.

trend towards greater investment in infrastructure. Consequently, diversification of revenues may prove to be of particular importance for European clubs, which will control a greater proportion of their total revenues.

This will allow clubs to protect themselves from tough macroeconomic conditions and future disruptions in the football ecosystem, at a time when clubs are facing a greater degree of financial regulation from UEFA and uncertainty over new contracts for the sale of audiovisual rights.

For many leagues, tickets can be bought in advance for the duration of a season. Fans who buy season tickets are usually, almost by definition, committed supporters who have made an emotional, financial and time commitment to follow their club (Simmons, 2006). When looking at prices for goods and services, economists use a term called price elasticity of demand to explain the behaviour of consumers (or in the case of football, fans). Price elasticity of demand measures the sensitivity of buyers to a change in price in terms of the quantity of goods they buy (Maguire, 2020).

“We are living in difficult times, the current economic climate is challenging, with many people earning low wages. This is contributing to growing inequalities. In this context, the high-ticket prices associated with football are likely to have a negative impact on social groups’ ability to engage with the sport” (Interviewee 11).

Football industry is a complex micro-economy comprising interdependent markets. On the one hand, ticketing is a form of marketing the game, while, on the other, it is an essential component of the organization of the competition (Parrish, 2003b). Teams purchase the services of players and coaches, while fans purchase game tickets, subscriptions to TV sports channels, and team merchandise (Soebbing, 2019). TV companies acquire sports broadcasting rights to deliver games to stay-at-home fans and big businesses purchase executive suites, corporate hospitality, and sponsorship opportunities (Gerrard, 2004).

6.5.2. Market sizes

Market size has been accorded central importance in the analysis of professional sports leagues. However, as Winfree, Allen and Szymanski (2024) demonstrate, a basic model of a sports league shows that, depending on talent investment’s role in team revenue, this assumption is not necessarily true. Heterogeneity in markets sizes can not only decrease costs but also increase expected league revenue. Having a smaller market leads to more wins for the larger market team and less competition for playing talent. Therefore, leagues may prefer smaller markets for expansion teams or team relocation.

“...there is a proposal from the Portuguese League to study reducing the league to 16 teams. The League needs to be more effective and take concrete action. The Portuguese League has only been reduced to 18 clubs due to successive appeals to the courts by clubs who appear to have been wronged. Perhaps it would be helpful to consider the question of strategy” (Interviewee 10).

Indeed, the size of the local market, in terms of population, and the number of clubs competing in the local catchment area are key determinants of attendance. A significant part of the demand for gate attendance is dependent on the size of the local population and given this, attendance is normally positively correlated with population (Buraimo, Forrest & Simmons, 2007). However, playing success is the most significant factor in determining a club's demand. In general, the more successful the club, the higher the attendance (Gratton & Taylor, 2000).

6.6. Other Determinants

Research into other determinants that are considered intangible involves analysing them from different perspectives, such as culture and identity, loyalty, exhibition matches and tournaments, the size of the league, the day/time of the match and live broadcasts.

6.6.1. Culture and identity

Culture and identity, two terms that have long attracted the attention of scholars devoted to the study of both fields of political science and football. Culture helps shape a distinct sense of perception among members of a particular group (Kassimeris, 2023). Likewise, understanding identity as an integral part of culture, football is therefore an important space to express belonging and communal identities (Woods, 1992; Giulianotti, 2005), for developing peer and prosocial relationships, and to build relationships across cultural boundaries (Nathan *et al.*, 2013).

The close connection between football and national identity has been long recognised (King, 2019). Bourdieu (1980) argues that identity is both a representation and a will adopted by individuals. It is important to note that no one is born with an identity, as it is formed and transformed throughout our existence. As Holtug (2020) argues, national identity is first and foremost a shared identity. This can be seen as an 'imagined community' in the sense of Benedict Anderson (1991), but it is also a cultural product. Anderson observes that national communities must be actively created through the imagination. International competition generates numerous occasions when nations are embodied in something visibly real (Porter, 2008). It is fascinating, if sometimes frightening, how the performance of a football team acquires a vast and complex social meaning and symbolism that transcends the simple outcome of a sporting competition (Coelho, 2011).

"Premier League clubs, with foreign owners, managers and players and, increasingly, foreign fans, are now essentially global brands that happen to be based in England, altering the relationship between the club and its immediate community in ways traditional fans find unnerving" (Interviewee 11).

Football culture is about perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs of fans, thus allowing sufficient room to examine the culture of the popular game against the theoretical background of political culture. In

the past years or so, football has moved from being a national culture to real internationalization (Black & Van Der Westhuizen, 2004). The universality of the popular game suggests that football has been ingrained in culture, but the many different cultural settings across the world clearly indicate that the game of football maintains multiple different characteristics from one culture to another (Stewart, 2007). As a cultural practice, it is recognised that culture plays a significant role in understanding social relations within football fan movements (Cleland *et al.*, 2018).

Football extends and unites wider sections of the population than probably any other social activity. It is easily understood and enjoyed, cutting across social, economic, educational, ethnic, religious, and language barriers (Gouveia *et al.*, 2019). It permits some emotional release (reasonably) safely, it can be relatively cheap, and it is easily adapted to support educational and social-welfare objectives (Riordan, 1999). In this context, Sandvoss (2003) argues that the cultural proliferation of football - provoked by media interest - contributes to the structural transformation of the public sphere.

Identity from a historical perspective is indeed, as Hadfield *et al.* (2012, p. 178) observed, the primary requirement behind the construction and perpetuation of all groups is a sense of 'self'. Individual identity is the first unit; they grow into family groups, which further expand into societal, communal groups. Among the many contributions of critical theory is the notion that 'identity' is not simply a quality of personal or intergroup differences (McDonald, 2014).

The sense of national identity is a powerful force in the collective imagination and this imagination is often fuelled or fed by media representations that both define a nation internally in terms of its own history, invoking family and cultural traditions, and externally in terms of its difference from other nations (Crolley & Hand, 2013). The structure of the family is another factor that influences sport participation. In a study conducted in Portugal, De Carvalho *et al.* (2014) reported that more than half of sport consumers in Portugal became football fans at 6 years old, and 90% before 12 years old. This was often because of family tradition and the presence of the professional club. Furthermore, children who grew up in families with a sport history (e.g., parents who were athletes) were more likely to be involved in sport – the parents acted as role models for their children (Funk, Alexandris & McDonald, 2023). Through the process of becoming, every person evolves a set of core beliefs and values. Core beliefs evolve through experience, from the testimony of authority, and from the modelling of parents or peers (Chesnay, 2014).

The symbols of the nation, specific places and histories are other facts that influence the fan's identification. For example, the emblem of the Portuguese football team bears the national coat of arms and represents the cross of the Order of Christ of Portugal, together with the five shields that appear on the national coat of arms (Kassimeris, 2013; Pyta & Havemann, 2015). National identity and culture are lived things, ways of life imbued with meaning and significance for their respective populations (Smith, 1991; Murdock, 1993).

Symbolic interactionist perspectives or frames underlie most sociological interest in identity. George Herbert Mead greatly influenced contemporary sociological thinking about social psychological matters, especially self and identity (Serpe & Stryker, 2011). In symbolic interactionism the individual derives a sense of identity from interaction and communication with others. Through this process of interaction and communication the individual responds to others and adjusts his or her understandings and behaviour as a shared sense of order and reality is 'negotiated' with others. Central to this process is the notion that people continually change in the light of the social circumstances in which they find themselves. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2007) argue that the individual's sense of identity is constantly being constructed and reconstructed as he or she moves through differing social contexts and encounters different situations and different people.

Football is seen as a vehicle of identity, helping individuals and groups to present, classify and distinguish themselves and other out-groups (Giulianotti & Finn, 1999; Duerr, 2012). To support do not need to know the language (i.e., the technical terms associated with the game) – it is a bit like an instrument; you can play anyway, it is socially integration⁵², the rules are universal (everyone understands the rules). In general it is something where it is attractive to join a club as it is not just sport but social, it goes beyond social class (Harris, 2013). The concept of identification implies a sense of connection and belonging to a social group, such as a sports club, city, or country (Blackshaw, 2008; Moustakas, 2021).

According to Kassimeris (2013), football matches involving national teams are often characterised by the playing of national anthems and the display of flags, promoting a distinct sense of identity. Cleland *et al.* (2016) suggest that matches between locally close teams tend to generate more intense rivalry and fan interest than other matches. Fans openly express their love for their club and their aversion to rivals (Forrest, Simmons & Szymanski, 2004); these games give rise to short-lived skirmishes between neighbouring communities. Above all, the rivalry between European teams based in the same city has often emerged along class or religious lines, which 'morally' prohibit fans from 'switching' clubs (Kuper & Szymanski, 2018).

The study of consumer fandom⁵³ revolves around comprehending the logic behind identity formation and its significance. No matter how idiosyncratic the lines of identification may seem, they nevertheless turn into manifest attachments that inform fans' decision (Sandvoss, 2012). Feehan (2019) highlights that economists' conclusions regarding the developmental effects of local professional sports teams and their intangible benefits are often contradictory to public perceptions.

⁵² Social integration is defined as fan's need for interacting with others of like interests for social support, friendship, and intimacy.

⁵³ Fandom: group of individual fans who are like-minded, sharing the similar interest, and deriving emotional support and value from the group.

In this regard, one of the interviewees said:

“...It is possible to have football without an endless chase for money, without nation state ownership, without multiclub projects, without everything being at the mercy of TV, without VAR. Sweden has tried it for 10 years. It’s not perfect, but it works” (Interviewee 16).

6.6.2. Fandom and community

Sports fandom presents an excellent context for the study of intergroup relationships. Football provides both an individual and a collective experience. Collective identity is the first and most basic building block of social construction and development, from small communities to the largest unit of the nation-state. Promoting football fandom is one of the most prominent social, cultural, and geographic aspects of contemporary culture and society. Consequently, sport and fandom have attracted increasing academic attention over the last two decades. The phenomenon of modern spectator sports has been approached from several different theoretical angles and disciplines (Morley, 1980; Schimmel, Harrington & Bielby, 2007). Sociology of sport have considered sport fans with reference to subcultures of violence and systems of social control; cultural politics, resistance, and popular empowerment; demographic composition and the construction of taste communities; forms of gender or national identity; and media representation (Giulianotti, 2005).

Fans have been studied in the context of community, where connections and interactions are analysed through Social Identity Theory (SIT). SIT is an influential framework for research exploring sports fans (Wann *et al.*, 2001; Fink *et al.*, 2002, 2009). According to this theory, individuals have personal and social identities, and their social identities are linked to demographic classifications (e.g., gender or race) or sense of belonging to organisations (e.g., religious, educational, and social institutions) (Watkins, 2014; Hao, 2020). Individuals are more likely to identify with an organisation (or team) when it represents the attributes they ascribe to their own self-concepts (Turner, 1982).

Social identity is the individual’s feeling of belongingness to a group, an in-group, based either on acquired characteristics (sex, age, profession, place of living, nationhood) or on membership of particular organizations or societies (union, orchestra, supporter club) (Turner, 1982). This theory examines an individual’s cognitive judgment of coherence and sense of belonging resulting from group membership and affiliation (Watkins, 2014; Hao, 2020).

SIT presents an influential framework for assessing sports fans, suggesting that individuals have both a personal identity and a social identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). This framework explains how teams identify with each other (Carlson, Donovan & Cumiskey, 2009). It suggests that group membership results in individuals sharing common characteristics and values that provide a basis for normative behaviour (Stets & Burke, 2000). Tajfel and Turner (1986) propose that individuals identify with different social groups to facilitate self-definition within their social environment.

Self-identification allows for vicarious group participation (Fisher & Wakefield, 1998). Consequently, individuals try to identify with sports teams to show the harmony and similarity between their identities and the teams' identities (Carlson, Donovan & Cumiskey, 2009). Therefore, football fandom is a significant aspect of identity; it is stable and effective, meaning a strong affiliation to a football club is a permanent component of the fan's identity profile (Porat, 2010; Cleland & Dixon, 2015). They express affiliations with sport teams in several ways, including public displays of their fandom on social media (Bruns, 2018); wearing team clothing (Madrigal, 2000); and following games fanatically throughout the season.

Supporter communities are often associated with geographical communities, and historically, their relationship with clubs has been based on the need to identify with a particular place (Brown, Crabbe & Mellor, 2008; Gammelsæter, 2010). According to Nowak and Vallacher (2019), people are naturally drawn to groups, even if it means giving up some autonomy, personal control, and self-interest.

Sandvoss *et al.* (2017) argues that being a fan serves as a fixed point in an increasingly flexible world, allowing individuals to signal what is important to them and perform their identity. He adds that when fans talk about their favourite club, they are also talking about themselves and what is important to them.

Theories of social exchange have a long history in social psychology and are considered by many social scientists to provide the driving force in group dynamics (Blau, 1964; Emerson, 1972). Groups come into their own when the members are all concerned about the same thing. The coordination that defines a group goes beyond the basic features of action. Selfish interests may seem at odds with group cooperation, but the seeming contradiction is resolved from the perspective of social exchange (Vallacher & Wegner, 2014).

For sports fans, a sense of belonging to a wider community is a key element of the appeal of fandom, and a sense of identification between the team and other fans is often developed (Parry, Jones & Wann, 2014). Fans communicate this sense of belonging through their words and actions, often in a highly ritualised manner. Sandvoss (2003) adds that fandom is created by the tension between standardised production and creative consumption. Postmodern hyperrealism and local, organic authenticity are analytical concepts that do not fully apply to contemporary social and cultural realities.

For another hand, clubs to foster a deep connection with supporters, nearly all top-level football clubs now boast a recognizable slogan that encapsulates their brand. These slogans, such as Barcelona's "More than a club" (*Mes Que Un Club*) and Liverpool's "This Means More", aim to cultivate a sense of community and differentiate their clubs as something special to be a part of.

6.6.3. Fan loyalty

When talking about fans or their characteristics, the terms 'fan', 'supporter' and 'spectator' often used interchangeably. As a result, recent research has allowed supporters to define themselves (Pope, 2017;

Fenton, Keegan & Parry, 2021; Tamir, 2022). In doing so, academic research on football fan culture typically falls into two theoretical categories: those that see fans as products of social structures and those that see them as agents of postmodernity (King, 1997; Giulianotti, 2005) to position the football industry ecosystem in terms of local and community engagement and fan loyalty (Boyle, 2009).

The topic of loyalty is frequently discussed in consumer literature as a strong commitment to an organisation, demonstrated by regular purchases of its products or services (Dwyer, 2011). As argued by Caruana (2002), consumer loyalty is demonstrated by consistent attitudes that are essential to the sustainability of any business. This can be observed through attendance at games, displaying team colours, engaging in conversations and chats, and exhibiting favourable behaviour towards the organisation. Therefore, loyalty can be a useful metaphor for mapping the flow of interactions with fans on a macro level.

Another issue surrounding loyalty is the argument that loyalty is a highly developed attitude that is persistent, resistant to change, creates biases in cognitive processing and provides a guide for behaviour (Funk & James, 2001). In contemporary culture, these criteria make loyalty simultaneously iconic and destabilising. Hugenberg, Haridakis & Earnhardt (2014) recognise that the growth of football finances is directly and indirectly driven by the commercial exploitation of 'loyalty'. In this context, one interviewee elucidated the power of loyalty, saying:

"Football, though, is not quite the bubble it thinks it is. It is shaped, inexorably, by the world around it..." (Interviewee 16).

Therefore, fans are a ubiquitous feature of living in an increasingly commodified society amidst the influences of popular culture. Fans' emotional investment in clubs is based on their belief in the authenticity of their feelings; live action fuels tribalism, which is crucial for maintaining a connection with the team. No one builds their sense of self on something they perceive as inauthentic (Sandvoss *et al.*, 2017). However, the issue is not that straightforward. It could be argued that spectatorship is a result of fan ship. Defining a fan, however, has proven to be a difficult task (Hills, 2002; Sandvoss, 2005).

The contemporary political economy of football in Europe has transformed the relationship between the sport and its fans. There is a debate surrounding whether football has lost its connection with its central and traditional fans, while others argue that the fan remains an integral part of the contemporary sports landscape (García & Welford, 2015). This raises the question: what are the key influences that affect the behaviour of fans? To guarantee success for sports enterprises, it is essential to comprehend the motivations and drivers of fan behaviour (Westerbeek & Smith, 2003).

Supporter typologies are a widely used tool in the sociology of sport to explain the identities and behaviours of football fans (García & Llopis-Goig, 2019). According to Funk and James' (2001) theory on sports consumer behaviour, loyalty to a team develops through a psychological process consisting of four phases: awareness, attraction, attachment, and loyalty. These phases exist on a hierarchical

continuum. Pora (2010) notes that supporting a football club is often a lifelong project that typically begins in childhood and continues throughout the fan's life. Levermore and Budd (2004) add that fans can have both deep parochialisms, expressing their devotion to their team as a part of their local community, and an intense interest in their sport at the highest, international levels.

A typology for distinguishing casual fans from enthusiasts is proposed by Abercrombie and Longhurst (1998) and Crawford (2004). This typology considers the level of social connectivity, media usage, and the choice of object and its specificity. Enthusiasts shift their focus from a particular league, team, or player to their own activities. These activities may include supporting their team during home games, writing about football on message boards and in fanzines, and travelling to different stadiums as part of a practice known as 'groundhopping' (Sandvoss, 2012). According to Ansari and Schreyer (2023), casual fans, who often assume intercultural loyalties, are the most interested group in the FIFA World Cup and the UEFA European Championship. Sandvoss (2005) highlights that the study of football fans is, by definition, an audience study.

The relationship with governance can define another typology of football fans' attitudes. García & Llopis-Goig (2019) identify the existence of five types of fans: club militant, institutionalist, critical, modern and globalist. The critical, modern and globalist fans share a preoccupation with the problems of football governance but differ in the intensity of their views. Meanwhile, critical and globalist fans are heavy consumers of football matches and merchandise.

"I particularly think that what sustains football is the passion of the fans" (Interviewee 2).

García and Llopis-Goig (2019) note that the literature on typologies of football fans has limitations. Much of this literature places too much emphasis on locality, highlighting match attendance and close involvement with the club as defining factors of fandom. Appadurai (1996) states that the competitive global market encourages and supports increasing mobilisation and identification at a local level. Meanwhile, Fort (2000) argues that spectators, regardless of location, overwhelmingly prefer to see their own team win. It is important to note that the clubs' support base is their fans, although they are not homogeneous groups (Cleland *et al.*, 2018), nor are they homogeneous in the products they consume (Sutton, McDonald & Milne, 1997; Arnett & Laverie, 2000).

On the one hand, Crawford (2004) argues that loyal fans are a crucial element of the sports product. If empty stadiums become the new norm (as they have during the COVID-19 pandemic), the fundamental nature of the product will soon change. Thus, spectators' identification with the team or the fanbase has a significant impact (Leeuwen, Quick & Daniel, 2008). Loyal, repeat-purchasing customers are the bedrock of any business (Caruana, 2002). On the other hand, Wenner (1989) observes that the desire for emotion and victory is always present in football viewing, whether mediated or not. However, according to Holmes (2005), enhancing the visual spectacle of football

requires innovative camerawork or artefacts, such as contextual commentary, to engage non-committed fans.

In the football sector, decision-makers always prioritise fans as the end consumers of their product, because the sector's revenues are essentially driven by their consumption. Boyle (2009) observed that although television and football are increasingly targeting their fan base as consumers, football still has a symbolism that is deeply rooted in different areas of social life, such as class relations and community.

The development of new media has greatly affected the way sports organizations communicate with and market to their fans, and as a result, consumer engagement in the context of sports is closely associated with it (Ioakimidis, 2010). Football clubs and leagues aim to increase their visibility and generate commercial revenue by attracting fans who subscribe to TV or streaming providers to watch the sport and provide broadcasting revenue, as well as those who directly provide matchday revenue through their presence. The difference between football and conventional businesses is mainly due to the inadequacy of the term 'customer' to describe football fans (Dinan, Boyle & Morrow, 2002). The search for sports and the emotions of sports consumers cannot be easily bought. Fans can be fickle, and fandom can be fleeting (Miller, 2015).

"Football has never been an industry that functions according to logic. It is not easily understood by those outside. It has its own rhythms and rationales" (Interviewee 16).

The economic valuation of 'fan equity' can be difficult to estimate (Hamil, 1999). However, Michie and Oughton (2002) suggest that the valuation problem is no different from the standard problem facing companies which regularly put a value on 'goodwill' in their annual accounts. Fan equity has been shown to have clear monetary dimensions in several cases. Michie and Oughton (2002) note that many bankrupt clubs have turned to their fans for financial support to keep the clubs operational. This highlights the unique relationship between fans and clubs, as few industries see customers organizing to prevent a company from closing. Recognizing fans as stakeholders in this way means that issues of corporate governance take on particular dimensions and regulatory implications (Michie & Oughton, 2002).

Sport fandom participation in the value creation process continues after the sport event when they celebrate victories or jointly come to terms with losses. During the event, fans of the home and the away teams can contribute to the atmosphere in both positive and negative ways. Positive social identity is achieved through intergroup differentiation from rival teams (Phua, 2010). For Sandvoss *et al.* (2017), it is the very existence of fans that cements football's commercial nature. As sharp as the contrast between laissez-faire capitalism and social-democratic welfare states, different forms of football governance allow for vastly different experiences of the game for fans and spectators.

6.6.4. Consumer behaviour

A thread through of the mentioned above is the unequivocal fact that the fan is an integral part of the contemporary sports landscape, but what are the key influences that affect the behaviour of sports fans? Understanding the motivations and factors that determine fan behaviour is undoubtedly the most important element for the success of sports organisations (Westerbeek & Smith, 2003).

The Oxford Concise Dictionary of Sociology (Gordon, 1994) has an entry on behaviour consumption. The entry refers to the book by Gustave Le Bon (2001), *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind*, in which Le Bon argues that the crowd is a reality *sui generis*, since it forms a single being, and is subjected to the law of the mental unity of crowds. The author also adds that the crowds emerged through the existence of anonymity (which allowed a decline in personal responsibility); in contagion (ideas moving rapidly through a group); and through a suggestibility whereby the unconscious aspects of the personality come to the fore.

Initially, the literature on behaviour was concerned with exploring motivations to participate in events (Mahony, Madrigal & Howard, 2000; Funk & James, 2001; Crawford, 2003; Stewart, Smith & Nicholson, 2003; Giulianotti, 2005). Later, other fundamental theories for the study of consumer behaviour have emerged, mainly from identity theory (Stryker, 1968) and SIT (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). There are also a variety of disciplines with emphasis on psychology, sociology, anthropology, economics (both in the social and development fields), making the debate controversial and making it very difficult to present a detailed discussion of all the major theories (Wodak *et al.*, 2009). The academic study of sport consumer behaviour emerged from general consumer behaviour. This was largely based on assumptions that sport products have unique characteristics and elicit a variety of emotional responses as discussed above (Funk, Alexandris & McDonald, 2023).

Nonetheless, we felt it was important to highlight a few theories. First, behaviourism a family of philosophies that attributes the cause of behaviour to external factors. Neil Smelser's (1972) meticulous categorization of crowd behaviour, called value-added theory, is a perspective within the functionalist tradition based on the idea that several conditions must be in place for collective behaviour to occur. Each condition adds to the likelihood that collective behaviour will occur (Marx, 2012). For Durkheim, the collective conscience of society can only hold together a segmented society. As Gordon (1994) points out, collective consciousness becomes a diffuse and abstract 'cult of the individual'. A 'civil religion' that provides ultimate principles and justifications, but which cannot fully support social cohesion.

"Well, as we have seen, at least in northern Europe, the different "subcultures" of fans have appropriated labels as terms of self-identification. So they define themselves as 'hooligans', as part of hooligan groups (companies) that are involved in competitive violence with other similar groups" (Interviewee 12).

However, the importance of behavioural approaches to understanding consumption has been recognised in recent years, in particular, by sports scientists to understanding emotion, motivation, involvement, engagement, attitudes, identification, technology and experiences as socio cultural environment of sports fans and spectators (Theodorakis, Wann & Weaver, 2012; Funk, Alexandris & McDonald, 2023).

The literature on sports marketing extensively explores the factors that motivate individuals to engage in sports consumption behaviour (DeSarbo & Madrigal, 2011; Kim & Trail, 2011). Therefore, the term ‘consumers’ is frequently used to refer to those who purchase goods and services (Crow, Byon & Tsuji, 2011). According to Funk and James (2001) and Foster, O’Reilly and Dávila (2016), a consumer of sport is defined as someone who engages with it, regardless of their motivation or level of attachment to the product. However, depending on their level of attachment, they may exhibit a range of values, attitudes, and behaviours (Funk, 2008).

“Well, football is heavily influenced by neoliberal economic policies and strategies. When there’s a lot of free market deregulation, it can lead to instability, crises and bubbles. Many clubs have gone bankrupt in recent years, so it is not surprising that there are more problems in times of recession” (Interviewee 12).

Several authors have attempted to construct precise typologies or classifications of sport fans by emphasising the differences between spectators and fans. These typologies are based on the level of attachment to the sport object, the underlying motivation for consumption of sport, and actual sport-related behaviour (Hunt *et al.*, 1999). In sports management literature, the terms ‘spectators’ or ‘fans’ are sometimes used interchangeably with ‘consumers’. Although there is no universally agreed distinction between sports consumers and sports fans, the literature provides an understanding of the motivational, behavioural and attitudinal differences and similarities.

In practice most fans are spectators, and most spectators are fans, but it is logically possible to be one and not the other. Some fans have never actually attended a live sports event or watched one on TV; some spectators stare absentmindedly at televised sports without a flicker of interest, some allow themselves to be dragged to games that they then observe without any of the emotional involvement characteristic of the fan (Guttmann, 1991).

Then there are those fans who prefer to see their favourite club win (Buraimo & Simmons, 2009) and to watch a famous team play even if it is a far superior team (Pawlowski & Anders, 2012). As a result, it is important to acknowledge that sports fans are not a homogeneous group (Foster, O’Reilly & Dávila, 2016). They vary in their allegiance or psychological attachment to a team (Wann, 2006). Funk and James (2001) emphasise that the notion that all sports fans are determined and unwaveringly loyal is naive and even idealistic.

Sports enthusiasts may not always attend live games, but they often consume sports by watching them on TV or purchasing licensed merchandise (Wann *et al.*, 2001; Gladden & Funk, 2002). Wann (2006) and Funk, Alexandris & McDonald (2023) suggest that the distinction between a fan and a spectator is the level of dedication to a sporting object.

Sandvoss (2003) notes that football fans are audiences, whether they are inside a stadium, watching on TV, or listening to match commentary on the radio. Busse and Gray (2011) explain that fan studies largely originates from audience and cultural studies' interest in popular culture. As a result, academic theories of fandom have evolved in recent years (Hills, 2002; Sandvoss, 2005), leading to changes in the relationship between fans as communities and/or individuals, technology, and the cultural industries. In particular, fan activities have expanded into more mainstream audiences, and the industry has focused on viral marketing and the profitability of encouraging and exploiting such behaviours (Busse & Gray, 2011; Millward, 2011).

How do fans consume sports content? The consumption of sports content by fans is influenced by a complex interplay of individual, social, environmental, and contextual factors (Haslam, Boen & Fransen, 2020). As a result, the digital migration of key players in the sports industry has altered the way in which fans consume sport. Adapting and adjusting to the current situation is crucial (Haimovich, 2016). For Hutchins and Rowe (2012), the value of online fans is derived from the accumulated attention that they award to top-level sport, with social networking media proving a successful means of harvesting their time and energy.

According to Haslam, Boen & Fransen (2020), sports consumption content by fans is influenced by a complex interaction of individual, social, environmental, contextual, and technologic factors. Existing norms around sports consumption experiences are changing radically due to advances in technology.

“...there is now more information available than ever before, and the internet has opened up a whole world of football connections and contacts that I never previously had. It has helped share different viewpoints from people watching and working in football from different backgrounds and for me it is now invaluable, especially through the medium of Twitter, for example” (Interviewee 5).

The question of how fans consume sports content today is therefore pertinent. Because we know that the digital migration of the main players in the sports industry has changed the way fans consume. In general, technology is not only part of the sporting experience, but also changing sporting experiences as we know them (Kennedy, 2023). For example, instead of waiting until the next day to read an analyst's take on a sport game in the daily newspaper, analysts can provide real-time opinions and updates during the game using social media (Funk, Alexandris & McDonald, 2023).

6.6.5. Exhibition games and tournaments

Internationalisation is currently a strategic factor in the marketing of professional football competitions. As such, international tournaments take on a fundamental dimension. Amount of talent present in a game and the relevance of the game itself are factors that potentially affect the demand for sport (Buraimo, 2008; Tainsky, 2010); sport fans seeking entertainment may be more attracted by matches involving teams with high-level players or teams battling for the title (Caruso *et al.*, 2017). Leeds and Leeds (2009) point out that colonial heritage affects a league's football performance and consequent demand.

Specifically, there are two fundamental drivers behind the evolution of the production of most professional sports competitions. First, there are the objectives of the players, clubs and leagues. These are objectives that determine how clubs interact with each other and with players, and how different sports leagues will compete for fans' interest. For example, clubs whose goal is profit maximisation will seek to influence the evolution of their league in a way that creates the highest level of profits - such as seeking a regulatory league structure to minimise players' bargaining power and salaries. Second, there is the nature of the 'audience' or fan interest in a sport.

6.6.6. League size and match day/time

This enters the utility function in recognition of clubs' mutual interdependence. As polarisation is a growing challenge, there are increasing calls to seek ways to promote strong competitions to help protect and build fan interest and value for clubs, leagues and governing bodies alike. And the introduction of new regulations across Europe are more appropriately timed than ever due to the challenge of emerging leagues. Implicitly or explicitly, it seems that the evolution of the production of sports competitions can be understood as an attempt to maintain or increase fan interest (Szymanski, 2006a).

6.6.7. Live streams

Streaming services have undermined the primacy of TV as the source of live sport outside the stadium (Hutchins, Li & Rowe, 2019). Sport and media are two closely related fields. The majority of football fans are unable to physically attend the arena, necessitating the development of alternative avenues for participation in the live experience. These avenues must provide access to first-hand information about the event, including news, as well as comprehensive direct coverage through live broadcasts. This means interaction with online audiovisual platforms, viewing habits such as time-shifting and the emergence of a dedicated online audience, especially among younger users. These changes are a source of market anxiety due to uncertainty about the longevity of emerging structures, technologies, and practices (Hutchins & Rowe, 2012).

The new broadcast order then produced further effects as it evolved in relation to audience tastes, commercial decisions, advertising markets, and technological developments, such as the international

satellite and cable TV. The uses of media that explain the appearance and operation of media sport in the digital age, or, as we conceive and name it, networked media sport. Given the social, cultural, and economic significance of sport, it is important to account for its role in the operation of media markets, communication flows, and digital media technologies (Rowe 2011b).

“Global reach is crucial for a football league’s. The ability to attract a worldwide fan base, generate international revenue, and appeal to sponsors and partners is vital (...) success will depend on viewership and building lasting connections with fans. Active recruitment of global stars, a strong social media presence, and high-quality football can also attract fans” (Interviewee 16).

6.7. In Summary

Economics allows us to understand the unique characteristics of the football market, while politics enables the analysis of co-optation, involvement, and resistance within the sport’s governance. This presents a strategic dilemma, as organizations must balance competing interests in a rapidly evolving environment. To navigate the shifting dynamics of the football industry - shaped by factors such as commercialization and political influence - a forward-looking approach is essential, one that emphasizes adaptability and proactive policymaking. The economy of football extends beyond the simple exchange of money for tickets or wages for on-field performance. There is also a cultural economy of sport, where information, images, ideas, and rhetoric are exchanged, and symbolic value, such as brand identity and cultural significance, is added. In this context, metaphorical stocks - representing reputation and influence - rise and fall, and in some cases, literal stocks fluctuate, as seen with publicly listed sports clubs (Rowe, 2004). The balance between commerce and culture in football broadcasting has shifted significantly in favour of the commercial interests of dominant broadcasters and sports organizations, who prioritize maximizing their revenue from the sale of broadcasting rights.

Competitive Balance and Sport Media Rights

“After many years in which the world has afforded me many experiences, what I know most surely in the long run about morality and obligations, I owe to football”
(Albert Camus)

7.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter addresses the importance of balance in sports competitions, particularly focusing on the competitive balance within the current system for distributing UEFA Champions League (UCL) broadcasting revenues. The centralisation of broadcasting rights sales in the Portuguese market is discussed, along with an analysis of the media market's scope, including market size and influence. Additionally, the role of the three main clubs in the Primeira Liga (PPL) is examined. Finally, the prospects for future cycles of broadcasting agreements are analysed on the basis of nuanced judgements - financial, ethical, strategic. An exercise based on reflexivity.

7.2. Competitive Balance in European Leagues

C. Wright Mills (2000) wrote in *'The Power Elite'* that balance theory suggests that balance or 'checks and balances', as developed in the 18th century, became the main way of ensuring economic and political freedom and the absence of tyranny among the world's sovereign nations. In this study, Mills shows that the idea of 'balance of power' implies equality of power. Equality of power seems fair and even honourable, but in fact one man's honourable balance is often another man's unfair imbalance.

There is no doubt that power is a fundamental, if not the primary, concept within the field of cultural studies. While power is symbolically located at the centre of the field through the concern to understand various forms (i.e. material, ideological or identity-based) of oppression in/through/as physical culture, it is then deployed to map, programme and advocate for progressive social change. The concept of power is multifaceted, and its effects are complex. Atkinson and Gibson (2017) further note that there is a lack of consensus on the definition of power, and the most effective means of empirically demonstrating its multifaceted effects.

Couldry and McCarthy (2004) and Albornoz (2015) posit that the concept of 'power' is seen as a minefield in the social sciences, with diverse connotations and embedded within distinct traditions. For instance, symbolic interactionists employ the term 'micropolitics' to refer to the exercise of power in everyday life (Schwartz, 1990). Max Weber (2004) posits that power is the capacity to achieve one's

desired outcomes, even in the face of resistance from others. For Weber, political power is founded on legitimacy, which is expressed through authority. This implies the capacity to implement the directives of those in positions of power. Relationships characterised by command, direction, obedience, and subordination exemplify the nature of these relationships.

For Michel Foucault, power is the dynamic basis of all social interactions and practices, which allows the subjectivity of the participants to be constituted. Contested positions of power in different parts of social space combine to form a flexible, centreless system that enslaves all individuals subject to it without exception. Consequently, Foucault elevates the notion of power to a supreme, almost metaphysical principle that explains all social practices requiring control, surveillance and cooperation (Markula & Pringle, 2014).

As previously stated, one of the fundamental tenets of political science is the concept of 'power'. However, studies of sport policy rarely address this concept directly, with the exception of discussions pertaining to 'soft power' and sports governance (Bloyce & Smith, 2009). In Bergsgard (2018), the concept of 'power' is explored by two leading figures in the field, the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu and the American sociologist Steven Lukes (2005). This is then applied to the study of sport policy. By combining Bourdieu's field analysis with Lukes' three-dimensional view on power, Bergsgard (2018) offers a new approach to studying sport policy. He prompts scholars of sports studies to consider the role of power in sports politics and to recognize that power is related to more objective structures. This is because power relations influence social conditions regardless of an actor's intention.

The manner in which power is expressed is contingent upon the circumstances, and thus cultural logics inform this process and are therefore influential. However, it is important to note that we are not controlled by them, let alone determined by them, particularly when our actual environment contains meanings that challenge the legitimacy, veracity and relevance of certain procedures (Altheide, 2003). In discussing the influence of cultural logics, one interviewee provided an illustrative example of a remarkable power dynamic:

"...when the European Cup was launched in 1955, it was a knockout competition but, after Real Madrid had beaten Napoli in the first round in 1987-88, Silvio Berlusconi, at the time the owner of AC Milan, pointed out the absurdity, as he saw it, of having the champions of Spain and Italy, two huge markets, meeting in a direct eliminator so early in the competition. The outcome of his lobbying was a group stage and, gradually, an expansion so that, rather than just the champions, the competition now includes up to four teams from each country"(interviewee 16).

In light of the evolving landscape of competitive balance, King (2004) posits that Silvio Berlusconi emerged as a pivotal figure at this juncture, given his ownership of the private Italian media conglomerate, Mediaset, and his majority stake in AC Milan since 1986. For him, the ascendant

influence of broadcasting companies and the preeminent European football clubs necessitated recognition: “the European Cup has become a historical anachronism” (King, 2017, p. 140). It is economically illogical to suggest that a club such as AC Milan might be eliminated in the first round. This is not a modern approach to thinking. For Berlusconi, the knock-out structure of the European Cup favoured the smaller teams, while the value of this competition was dependent on the biggest clubs, which could attract large audiences (King, 2017).

Although the statement was typically hyperbolic, Berlusconi’s argument reflected the changing economic realities of European football. From the mid-1980s, European broadcasting companies were investing increasingly large sums of money into football, which benefited both UEFA and the clubs, however, the value of these broadcast rights depended on the most famous clubs (King, 2017). Consequently, the early elimination of the most prominent European clubs was not in the interests of media companies, the most successful clubs, or UEFA itself. As Berlusconi’s statement suggests, seeding was only a preliminary step towards the transformation of the structure of European competition itself.

Although UEFA introduced the first mini-league format in the European Cup as a result of external pressure, the adoption of this new format brought substantial advantages for UEFA. By introducing a greater number of matches, UEFA could dramatically increase its European Cup revenues, and the organisation was fully aware of this. On its own initiative, UEFA commissioned its marketing department, TV Event and Media Marketing (TEAM), to develop new marketing methods to develop new methods of marketing the mini league in order to maximise its financial value, a very substantial portion of which would go to UEFA itself (King, 2017).

This example shows us that this attitude is an important feature of the command-obedience structure. It also shows us that there is a certain ambivalence in the nature of charismatic recognition. In the football ecosystem, the charismatic figure point the way forward for the community, focusing more on the positive aspects of their own interests. The charismatic community in its genuine form is a relatively unstable group. It appears that it becomes more stable the more freely given recognition is also regarded as a duty. Dow Jr. (1969) posits that in the theory of charismatic leadership, followers attribute heroic or extraordinary leadership qualities when they observe certain behaviours. Although Weber borrowed the term “charisma” from Christian theology, he stripped the religious concept of its historicity. This makes the conceptualisation of charisma consistent with our study, as outlined below:

“Every charisma is on the road from a turbulently emotional life (...) every hour of its existence brings it nearer to this end” (Weber, 1978).

This quotation serves to remind us that in its purest form, charismatic authority can only exist in *statu nascendi*. The notion of charismatic leadership, see leaders as born, not made. However, nothing remains stable. Behavioural theories, then, consider that leaders are made and not born, mainly due to the unnatural circumstances in which leadership exists. Weber (1978, p. 246) explains that the

notion of charisma implies a source of leadership. But when charisma weakens or disappears, there is a risk that the person who carries it will disappear too, unless they can find a new dynamic that allows them and their project to turn their charisma into a source of leadership (Petit, 2012).

Despite the ongoing evolution in this field, it is evident that power plays a pivotal role in shaping the nature of the relationship between individuals, with far-reaching implications for enjoyment, development, success, and performance in football. Consequently, power is a crucial factor in the dynamics of the group and social context of football. It is power that has identified competitive sport in the five most popular European football leagues (Spain, England, Germany, Italy, and France), the Big Five, as a fundamental pillar for the professional European football entrepreneurial ecosystem.

The theoretical literature on the determinants of the degree of competitive balance in European sports leagues has identified the implementation of rules designed to promote the collective interest of teams in achieving joint profit maximisation as a key factor (Andreff, 2015). Consequently, the leagues implement restrictions on the behaviour of the teams in both the product and labour markets, which seek to prevent any individual team from achieving a level of competitive dominance that would be damaging to the collective interest of all teams in maintaining a reasonable degree of competitive balance (Dobson & Goddard, 2012). In essence, the importance of competitive balance can be attributed to the demand for the 'product' (e.g. the sport or the league). However, external stakeholders, in particular, can engage in a range of actions, including protests, civil litigation, and campaigns to promote their interests (Eesley & Lenox, 2006). For example, one interviewee described how football dominates public space and exerts considerable influence over Portuguese society, he said:

"The inculcation of football as the main issue that matters is clearly proved in surveys and fans comments. It is a clear choice (but also a social/cultural imposition) by citizens as a personal decision to make football their own 'things' instead of other social, political or cultural issues. Citizens get more gratifications from football (they like the game, their team may win) than from other spheres of shared life, as politics"(interviewee 3).

Plumley, Ramchandani & Wilson (2018) identify a strong correlation between professional team sports and the concepts of uncertainty of outcome, competitive balance, and profit and utility maximisation. A defining characteristic of competitive sport is the need to balance cooperation and competition. While the primary objective of participants in competitive sports is to emerge victorious, the success of the competition itself depends on the ability of participants to cooperate in organising the competition and ensuring its long-term sustainability. This entails maintaining a critical mass of competitors who are relatively evenly matched.

Competitive balance postulates the necessity for a balance between the various forces at play in order to generate uncertainty in results and, consequently, demand from fans (Scelles, 2021). The

concept of competitive balance is regarded as a fundamental element in the field of sport economics (Simko, 2021). Competitive balance can be quantified as a within-season or between-seasons variation. The former assesses the dispersion of wins, points, or other parameters among teams in a specific season, whereas the latter analyses results across several seasons or tournaments. There are numerous methods for measuring these variations, and no single method should be regarded as the most appropriate (Simko, 2021).

There is a substantial body of literature on professional team sports that is inextricably linked to the concepts of uncertainty of outcome, competitive balance and profit and utility maximisation (Buzzacchi, Szymanski & Valletti, 2001; Feddersen & Maennig, 2005; Vrooman, 2009; Buraimo *et al.*, 2015; Fort, 2015; Kesenne, 2015; Leach & Szymanski, 2015; Sloane, 2015; Ramchandani *et al.*, 2018).

In an article that examines the changing competitive balance in English football's topflight since the inception of the EPL, the focus is 56 seasons between 1964/65 and 2019/2020. Plumley *et al.* (2022) demonstrate that the EPL has seen a small number of clubs dominate the league since its inception, with only seven different teams winning the title in its first 28 seasons. According to Szymanski (2015), therefore, football leagues around the world tend to be dominated by a small number of teams. In a similar manner to large companies that dominate markets and continue to invest billions of dollars in advertising to maintain their market position, dominant teams remain dominant because they consistently win.

The uncertainty inherent to the football industry represents a crucial element in its recipe for success (Foster, Greyser & Walsh, 2006). Boorah and Managan (2012) argue that the long-term sustainability of a sporting league, in terms of retaining the interest of fans and generating income from the games, is contingent upon the competitive balance of the league. Smith and Stewart (2010) additionally posit that the intricacy of managing sport is contingent upon the distinctive nature of the product it offers to its participants and fans.

The European professional football industry is facing a significant challenge due to the growing concentration of capital within the sector. This is evidenced by the fact that a small elite of clubs is dominating the market, while many others lack the financial resources to compete effectively. This interviewee's assertion is a compelling illustration of this phenomenon, he said:

"I think this problem is already there and has been there for a long time. Since the beginning of the 2000s, European football has been one of the most unequal systems in the world, designed to ensure that hierarchies are crystallised and reinforced. And if a philosophy and message of inequality came from UEFA, the institution that was supposed to protect the equality of competitors and the fairness of competition, it was obvious that this encouraged the elite players of European football (i.e., those naturally inclined to look after their own interests first) to demand more and more privileges" (Interviewee 1).

The introduction of the UCL in 1992 represented a significant change in the revenue landscape of European football. This change led to a notable increase in European football's revenue streams, including match revenues, commercial revenues and, above all, broadcasting revenues. However, as the revenue and popularity of the competition grew, so did the threat from the biggest clubs to form their own league. Such a potential division could potentially alter the current revenue landscape in European football.

On the one hand, the competition has benefited from the performance of the most successful clubs. On the other hand, club revenues have increased significantly in recent decades through participation in the competition (Millward, 2011). Thus, the UCL has become a global showcase for these clubs and a significant source of revenue, which helps maintain their purchasing power advantage over domestic rivals (Szymanski, 2016).

The formation of the UCL has frequently been cited as a capitulation to the financial interests of the big clubs (Lovejoy, 2011). Whilst this has been debated, the transformation of the competition into a 'cash cow' for Europe's elite clubs has consolidated their position at the apex of the game and has been one catalyst for re-evaluation of the wider organizational structures of European football (Millward, 2007; Pyta, 2015; King, 2016). Another interviewee offered his perspective, saying:

"It is true that broadcasting has been responsible for substantially increasing the revenue available to the game. At the same time, it is this same revenue, or rather the way in which it is distributed, that has most damaged the competitive balance of the leagues and led to the emergence of financially dominant leagues and super clubs" (interviewee 13).

The restructuring of the UCL has resulted in the requirement for a team to finish in the top two places (depending on the country) in order to access the competition's substantial broadcasting revenues. Failure to qualify for the UCL represents a significant loss for teams striving to maintain their position at the top of the table (Ascari & Gagnepain, 2006). A potential consequence of this situation is that an excessively uneven competitive landscape can have a negative impact on fan interest and, consequently, demand. As one respondent succinctly put it:

"Football is a curious enterprise from a financial point of view, in that while each club strives to be the most successful it can be, what is actually being sold is not their excellence, but a series of contests between clubs" (Interviewee 2).

It is irrefutable that the concentration of broadcasting revenue at the largest clubs has placed them in a highly advantageous position, in access to a transnational market in players and sufficient resources to exploit that advantageous position to the fullest extent. However, this new paradigm has led to the emergence of a new balance between the clubs of Europe, which brings the giants of each national league closer together in an increasingly fierce and balanced struggle for transnational supremacy.

Consequently, while the old struggles within national leagues are becoming more predictable, competition is becoming increasingly uncertain at European level.

7.2.1 The football value chain: competitive advantages

A fundamental argument in Castells' studies (1993; 2007; 2009) is that the agents in the "space of flows" settle in the most lucrative space, which is often global in scope. This outcome has been demonstrated to be the case with the European football leagues. While some leagues enjoy a prominent position, the so-called Big Five leagues are the most profitable. It is evident that all other leagues are similarly engaged in a competitive search for a lucrative position in the media/football complex. Football continues to attract a diverse range of players who are committed to defining it and benefiting from it. On the one hand, European football can be considered to be, in essence, a market with a common product – the leagues – which can only be commercialised through cooperation (Symanski, 2007). Conversely, from an economic standpoint, clubs are interested in ensuring that the league is as fair as possible, as this enhances revenue generation through the uncertainty of results (Vrooman, 2009; Barsch, 2015). The dichotomy between balance and uncertainty is therefore a complex issue, oscillating between interrelated factors as dominance and distress:

- i. Dominance: meaning that the same big clubs dominate each league – this is true regardless of league size – it is as true of the Faroe Island as it is of Germany;
- ii. Distress: meaning that the majority of clubs exist on the verge of financial collapse, many businesses that own football clubs go bankrupt, but the football clubs survive (except for some very small ones) (Szymanski, 2015).

It is evident that a considerable number of clubs in Europe are experiencing persistent deficits and mounting debts across the majority of leagues⁵⁴. Despite the apparent paradox and the challenges posed by the situation, Storm and Nielsen (2012) emphasise that a significant number of European professional football teams are on the brink of insolvency and are still operating. In terms of the integrity of the European football landscape, Andrews & Harrington (2016) estimate that 85% of the major leagues are at medium or high risk in terms of revenue generation. Moreover, 77% of clubs in these leagues are insolvent or at risk of insolvency, while 65% of clubs in these top leagues are struggling to contain player costs. This has led UEFA to implement a number of reforms, including the Financial Fair Play⁵⁵ (FFP) initiative, which aims to improve the overall financial efficiency of European club football.

⁵⁴ Whereas many criminal activities (combined results, corruption, etc.) are a consequence of the spiral of spending, wage inflation and the resulting financial crisis that many clubs face (EP, 2006).

⁵⁵ The Financial Fair Play (FFP) regulation was approved in 2010 and came into effect in 2011. Since then, clubs that qualify for UEFA competitions have been required to demonstrate that they are not in arrears with other clubs, players, social security and tax authorities. This means that clubs must adhere to balanced break-even management, which in essence means that they must not spend more than they earn, thereby limiting the

Barham (2021) suggests that clubs may be in a more financially robust position than in the past, at least in part due to the implementation of FFP rules in recent years. However, Szymanski (2014) analyses the rules of UEFA's financial regulation system for football clubs and suggests that the objectives of FFP are not primarily about fairness, but rather about financial efficiency. He further argues that the rules are unlikely to achieve the desired level of efficiency.

Even the EPL, with its global appeal emphasised by elite players and vibrant stadiums, stands out as one of the pinnacles of the world's football leagues. An analysis of the finances of the 20 clubs taking part in the 2022/23 season revealed a collective deficit of €816 million last season. Among the EPL's 20 clubs, only four managed to eke out profits. Conversely, the remaining clubs grapple with notable financial deficits. This cost inflationary trend can be attributed to the equitable distribution of broadcasting revenues within the EPL, fostering unprecedented prosperity (FB, 2024). As Szymanski (2014) argues, even from a perspective of fairness, rules do little more than replace one form of inequality with another.

In a recent publication, Martín-Magdalena *et al.* (2023) found that the introduction of FFP had a positive impact on the financial performance of small clubs, but that it also increased the economic gap between large and small clubs. Interestingly, the authors' argument is supported by the recent 'cosmetic financing' of PPL's club FC Porto, in which the club has signed a 25-year deal with the Spanish company Ithaka to sell 30% of the economic rights to its Dragão Stadium in return for a €65 million investment.

"FC Porto informed the Portugal's Securities Market Commission (CMVM) that the 25-year agreement with Madrid-based Ithaka would allow the club to invest around €30m in updating the 'Estádio do Dragão', with the remainder set aside to "increase FC Porto's competitiveness" (Hamilton, 2024).

This case has parallels with that of Manchester City Football Club (Man City), one of the dominant clubs of the modern era of football (and one with seemingly bottomless financial resources). Broadly, the EPL has accused Man City of repeatedly failing to provide accurate financial information "that gives a true and fair view of the club's financial position, in particular in relation to its income (including sponsorship income - deals with companies linked to its Gulf owners, including the telecommunications company Etisalat and the United Arab Emirates national airline Etihad). They were also accused of failing to comply with the financial control mechanisms established by UEFA's FFP regulations.

In 2020, UEFA hit Man City with a two-season ban from European competitions, a suspension that would have kept Man City from playing in the lucrative and hugely popular UCL (Panja & Das, 2023).

accumulation of debt, <https://pt.uefa.com/news-media/news/01e6-0e74ab2818a1-ae0fefe2d591-1000--financial-fair-play-explained/>

Man City, however, had the judgment overturned on a technicality: it successfully argued at the Court of Arbitration for Sport that the most serious allegations — linked to its sponsorship agreements with Etisalat and Etihad — were outside UEFA's statute of limitations. Essentially, the club argued (and won) it was too late to punish them (Smith, 2023).

Smith (2023) wrote an article in 'The New York Times' explaining that "players and fans accept losing. It is part of the sport. But it is different when they discover that one of the parties wasn't playing by the same rules". Once again, we turn to Castells (2007a) to say that, in the network society, capital is power. Castells provides a useful view of power as the structural capacity of one social actor to impose its will on other social actors. He adds that all institutional systems reflect power relations and the limits of those power relations, negotiated through a historical process of domination and counter-domination.

Szymanski (1998) acknowledges that financial performance measures the value created by clubs and investors, which, incidentally, Simons (2013) confirms that the ability to survive and thrive over time depends on the club's ability to generate funds that compensate for factors of production. According to Maguire (1999), the central problem of global football is not much different from capitalism itself.

Nowadays, the on-the-pitch performance of a football club is perceived as a holistic entity, given that football clubs are presumed to pursue a multitude of objectives, with a particular focus on financial and sporting objectives (Plumley, Ramchandani & Wilson, 2018). Despite the economic difficulties outlined above, the history of European football is also a history of stability (Storm & Nielsenb, 2012). When it comes to survival, Kuper & Szymanski (2014) point out that the football sector is very stable.

7.2.2. The domestic league's competitiveness, or the 'track' to Europe

The social value of sports clubs is taken for granted at local, national and, above all, European level (Breuer *et al.*, 2015). The UCL has marked an important change in European football - from a system of domestic club football operating unilaterally to a dual system in which successful clubs compete in both national and international competitions. This duality has led to a growing divergence in financial power between clubs operating domestically and those regularly competing in the national and international spheres (Holt, 2007).

For example, Deloitte accountant Rich Parkes (2005, p. 22) has argued that "many clubs now view UCL qualification as ... the cake itself" on account of the boost to revenues it provides. However, in the network society there are also potential 'black holes' into which 'nodes' can fall (Castells, 1998). Such black holes are metaphorical, but they encapsulate the process by which an organisation can fall out of its position in the space of flows (Millward, 2011; Trenberth & Hassan, 2012).

According to Barsch (2015), the path-dependent mechanisms, initiated in European football in 1992, have led to an ever-widening gap in success between European clubs. Andrews and Harrington

(2016) posit that the concentration of income within a structure generates inequalities that are inevitable and reflect the nature of the pyramidal structure of European football, where clubs are routinely found at different levels, causing such abysmal income gaps between the richest and the poorest. Rohde and Breuer (2017) note that this situation has created a climate of over-investment, where teams increasingly compete on the basis of their spending power.

Eichberg (2008) examines football's divergence from the traditional European Sport Model. He highlights the problematic development of this model, which has allowed the influence of interest and/or pressure groups. Consequently, he argues that the challenge is to reconcile the competing interests and priorities inherent in the European Sport Model.

Despite the huge influx of capital, football is widely reported to be economically unhealthy or unprofitable at club level (Lago, Simmons & Szymanski, 2007). This, ironically, seems to be one of the few features that most clubs and leagues have in common, for if we look at the history of football organisation in Europe, a picture of heterogeneity seems to emerge.

The competitive balance of the domestic league can be seen as a proxy for the 'track' to Europe. In 2022, the UEFA Executive Committee approved a new format for the UCL. This was a unanimous decision by the UEFA Executive Committee, the ECA, the EPFL and the National Associations (FAs), who together represent a part of the stakeholder network. From 2024-2025, the number of teams competing will go up from 32 to 36, which means there will be 189 matches instead of 125. The group stage will be replaced by a league phase, which is called the 'Swiss model'. Most importantly, the UCL new model is expected to increase the number of games between the top clubs and give backup spots to elite clubs that do not qualify through domestic competitions.

This implies that the selection criteria will continue to privilege the most prominent clubs, such as England, which has five direct places in the group stage, followed by Germany, Italy and Spain, which have four, France with two, the Netherlands with two and Portugal, Belgium, Scotland and Austria with one. In theory, the EPL could have a total of seven teams in the UCL in some years, due to the coefficient for allocating places based on performance and the winners of Europe's most significant club competition, the UCL, and the UEL (should those clubs not otherwise qualify automatically) (Sheldon, 2024).

Another change is that clubs from the same country will be able to play each other in the early knockout stages. Currently, domestic clashes are blocked until the quarterfinals. The eight league-style matches will be spread over 10 weeks, and it will mean that the UCL, UEL, and UEFA Europa Conference League (UECL) will have an exclusive week dedicated to their tournament (UEFA, 2024). According to UEFA, European football is one of the most successful and popular sports in the world. Above all, because it never stands still. Since the inaugural competition, known as the European Champion Clubs'

Cup, kicked off in 1955, UEFA has continuously evolved and adapted the UCL to keep pace with wider changes in the game. At the time, UEFA president Aleksander Čeferin made the following statement:

“UEFA has clearly shown that we are fully committed to respecting the fundamental values of sport and to defending the key principle of open competitions, with qualification based on sporting merit, fully in line with the values and solidarity-based European sports model”...“I am really pleased that it was a unanimous decision of the UEFA Executive Committee, with the ECA, European Leagues and national FAs all agreeing with the proposal made. Another proof that European football is more united than ever” (UEFA, 2024).

European football officials have promoted the changes by arguing the format will add more teams in each competition and will allow fans to not only see more top European matches but also to see those matches take place earlier in the competition; and will introduce a better competitive balance between all the teams, with the possibility for each team to play opponents of a similar competitive level throughout the league phase. Asked about the potential expansion of the ‘new’ UCL to include 36 clubs, the interviewee 6, said:

“The governing body of European football, UEFA, had two objectives. The first was economic: more matches meant more revenue from ticket sales, sponsorship and broadcasting rights. The second, perhaps more altruistic, was to increase the chances of the finals being important, and important for more teams. But what is at stake in this kind of change is money” (Interviewee 6).

The pivotal change in the reforms announced by the UEFA is the departure from the current format’s group stage system. Access to the UCL is currently linked to performance in domestic leagues. However, Portugal lost sixth place in the UEFA ranking to the Netherlands, which now has two (plus one, on play-off phase) places in the UCL, two clubs in the UEL and one team in the UECL.

Such a change would dramatically reduce the attractiveness of national leagues for broadcasters, where the battle to qualify for European club competitions has long been part of the narrative sold to media companies. At times, in fact, the battle for UCL positions has often been more compelling than the race for the title, which in some countries is often wrapped up months before the end of the campaign (Panja, 2019).

The new UCL will distribute more money to participants next season 2024/2025. Portuguese clubs are going all out to win this ‘jackpot’. One interviewee said:

“With UEFA new financing model, basically, the prizes for each victory and draw in the group stage (initial stage) will be reduced and the prizes for progress to the round of 16, quarters, semi-finals and finals will be increased. Who will benefit with this? I think will be the best clubs, from the strongest countries, that usually go through to the Play-off stage:

that is, those with more money and, consequently, that are able to buy the better players and with better teams. Essentially, we are talking about the best teams from the Big Five countries. In the end, everything remains the same” (Interviewee 13).

7.3. Portuguese Professional Football League

Historically, football clubs in Portugal have been structured as non-profit sports associations, with full professionalism being allowed for the first time in the 1990s with the creation of the Portuguese Professional Football League (LP or ‘Liga Portugal’). Since the beginning of the 2000s, clubs participating in the I Liga – Primeira Liga – and II Liga – Segunda Liga – (the most important football competitions in Portugal and the only ones considered professional) have had to set up a sports company as a responsible business with professionalised management structures. The LP is the organisation responsible for the administration of three football competitions: ‘Primeira Liga’, ‘Segunda Liga’ and ‘Taça da Liga’. These competitions are contested by 36 professional teams. The right of access to these two leagues, like most European leagues, is based on the fundamental values of the European sporting model, based on sporting merit, in a pyramid structure of free access, where all clubs form the base, and all clubs can live the dream of reaching the top.

The Portuguese football represents a paradox: although Portugal has only 126,006⁵⁶ registered footballers, it produces teams that compete successfully at elite level in European club competitions and the quality of its players, in terms of sporting excellence, makes it one of the most admired football cultures in the world (Hamil *et al.*, 2010). PPL produces elite players who are the most successful in European club competitions, and the quality of its players is internationally recognised. However, the sector is chronically unprofitable and unstable. Despite being subject to EU and UEFA regulations, the PPL’s regulatory framework is structurally weak, as football continues to attract a wide range of players committed to defining and monetising it. It is not uncommon for managers to engage in constant conflict, fighting for their clubs out of self-interest, often on the pitch, in front of spectators and TV cameras.

In an interview, Portuguese international footballer Bernardo Silva, who plays in the EPL for Man City, compared the PPL with the EPL and stated that the differences are significant. He went on to discuss a cultural problem that exists within the country. He adds:

“I’m not going to lie and say that the PPL is on the same level as the EPL, the Portuguese players are very sneaky”...“It’s the fault of a whole system that needs to be educated”...

⁵⁶ In 2021, according to Pordata, (<https://www.pordata.pt/portugal/clubes+desportivos+total+e+por+federacoes-2238-178745>), Portugal had 10,426 sport clubs.

“In Portugal, players go down once, they go down twice, so going down is rewarded. This little idea of 'contact', of everything being whistled, makes our football very boring” (Silva, 2023).

It is not simple to accommodate this range of aspirations, because football has a deep cultural resonance, but it is also big business. Taylor, Doherty & McGraw (2008) suggest that culture is the social context in which people live, so any leadership needs to be considered with these factors in mind.

“The industrial character of football constrains very strongly football as a sport, due to corruption, money involved in the contracts of coaches and players, etc. Still, most of the time, fans live well with that character (that being the reason for the continuation of corruption and inequalities between teams, for instance). Society in general is complacent with those inequalities” (interviewee 3).

An organisation has shared meanings and values, just as a group, community or society has shared. Organisational culture is an underlying system of values, beliefs and assumptions about how things are done in an organisation. As our individual values and beliefs determine our behaviour, organizational values and beliefs also serve to guide individual behaviour within the organization.

“Football in Portugal is experiencing different realities. On the one hand, the country has one of the best players ever in the world (Cristiano Ronaldo), we have some of the best coaches and one of the most important football agents (Jorge Mendes) in the world, but on the other hand, football at club level is in the doldrums, much of it due to managers who do not recommend themselves and are responsible for nefarious administrations and organizers (LP and FPF) that show a kind of cooperativism, let's find out why...” (interviewee 13).

According to Grojean *et al.* (2004), there are a few basic rules that sports organisations must follow to get around these weaknesses:

- i. Absence of unethical behaviour;
- ii. General sense of morality/ethics;
- iii. Justice/respect;
- iv. Openness/authenticity;
- v. Empathy/compassion.

In this regard, the preceding examples are merely illustrative; there are numerous other virtues. In this field, integrity is most often discussed in relation to leadership, perhaps because of the relatively high level of influence that a leader exerts. One of the most crucial aspects of integrity in leadership is the capacity to maintain consistency in social conduct. This is defined as the perceived consistency match between an actor's words and actions (Palanski & Yammarino, 2007). However, as Armstrong

and Mitchell (2008) remind us, in Latin countries the links between politics and football have sometimes been close, even in clubs organised.

Overall, Szymanski (1998) and Szymanski and Kuypers (2000) argue that for good leagues performance, it is important to consider the impact of two key factors: the symmetry between teams (competitive balance) and the aggressiveness with which teams try to win (incentives to win). Therefore, better league performance leads to higher revenues.

“The president of the LP is trying to send out a positive message about Portuguese football, but there is still a lot of room for improvement! The PPL could be stronger and more exciting, with higher stadium attendances. It would also be great that the clubs to become more competitive at European level” (interviewee 10).

A key differentiator between the PPL and other European leagues is the concentration of resources goes hand in hand with the concentration of talent. The PPL are confined to a stepping-stone role for up-and-coming players. This permits the generation of profits on the transfer market. However, in an economic context that is more and more unequal, the financial compensations from these transactions are not sufficient to halt the increasing competitive imbalance (CIES, 2018). Additionally, the player’s loan system is an integral part of a wider transfer system in place across Europe, including Portugal (Bond, Widdop & Parnell, 2020).

“Portuguese clubs’ difficulties in retaining emerging football talent are a serious obstacle to Portugal joining the Big Five or changing its name to the ‘big six’. The situation is linked to the economic fragility of the clubs, and if UEFA does not act, this trend will likely intensify. It has been demonstrated that the financial fair play regulations have been ineffective in combating inequality, which has the consequence of diminishing one of the principal attractions of football: the unpredictability of results (...) Portuguese football was betting on recovering players at the end of their careers, but even that strategy has been called into question, first by the Chinese league, and now by Saudi Arabia league. We just need to be able to retain our talents” (Interviewee 9).

One further distinction between the PPL and other European leagues is the source of funding. Over time, there has been a notable discrepancy between the financial resources available to historically successful teams and those of less successful teams within the League (Santos *et al.*, 2023). During the 2018-2019 season approximately 32% of the Portuguese clubs’ total revenue came from broadcasting and media rights, followed by sponsorship or commercial agreements with 24%, UEFA awards with 20%, and revenues from home games with 15%. A large portion of this revenue has been the work of the three major national clubs, FC Porto, SL Benfica, and Sporting CP (Gouveia & Pereira, 2021).

7.3.1. Football broadcast rights: individual versus collective bargaining

Collective selling is the standard model for the sale of broadcast rights in the worldwide football market (Evens et al., 2013). This practice refers to arrangements by which clubs entrust the selling of their media rights to their national or international sports association, which then collectively sells the rights on their behalf (EC, 2014).

The EC's intervention in centralised selling is at recommendation level. The EC has not considered it necessary to intervene in national markets where the sale of broadcasting rights is not centralised. In the Netherlands, for example, the national competition authority did the work for the EC and even went further. The Dutch competition regulator suggested that joint selling is not necessary to achieve redistribution and financial solidarity in football, thus advocating that clubs sell TV rights on an individual basis. In Spain and Italy, the other major live football markets in the EU, clubs sold their broadcasting rights on an individual basis, and the EC never considered it necessary to intervene (García, 20013). However, with the exception of Portugal, collective selling is currently practised in all these countries.

A significant amount of literature has analysed the competitive effects of centralised sales of football media rights in Europe, with a focus on the Big Five leagues. Nevertheless, the scarcity of literature dedicated to other European leagues seems to indicate a certain reluctance to contribute a solid theoretical framework.

In order to gain a fuller understanding of the subject, we have undertaken a theoretical discussion, with a particular focus on seminal contributions. Rottenberg (1956) argues that if all revenues are shared equally, teams have no pecuniary incentive to spend on players to enhance their own performance and revenue. As a result, an equal distribution of mediocre playing talent is the most likely outcome. Does this imply that professional sport is an industry in which competition is more profitable than monopoly, contradicting what can be read in any Principles text? Neale (1964) addresses this paradox by distinguishing between sporting and economic competition. He highlights the unique aspect of the economics of professional sports, where revenues are dependent on competition between teams rather than commercial competition between the managing clubs/companies. This is due to the fact that greater economic collusion and sporting competition lead to higher profits. The paradox arises because, in the world of sport, the company is not organised for economic analysis, and the item sold by the sports company is not entirely the product of these companies. The product is a unique combination of divisible parts that can be sold separately, but it is also a joint and multiple yet indivisible product.

Sloane (1971) suggests that Neale's argument tends to overemphasise interdependence. The fact that clubs produce a common product together is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for analysing the industry as if the league were a firm. However, he stresses that interdependence is an

essential element, mainly because the economy of team sports is unusual in that it is not possible to produce a product without the help of other producers or teams. The commercial value of a particular football match can therefore be considered to be ephemeral.

Fort and Quirk (1995) showed that league-level trades have no effect on competitive balance because they do not affect the marginal value of teams' talent. Imbalance occurs when one team, usually the larger team, has a higher marginal value of talent and when talent is not equally distributed across teams. For the authors, sports leagues are in the business of selling competition on the field, leading to what Neale (1964) called 'the peculiar economics of professional sports'.

Since 2000 there has been an increase in literature. Cave and Robert (2001) analyse the competition and efficiency issues involved in the granting of broadcasting rights by sports teams or leagues. The authors avoid presenting new perspectives on theoretical issues and instead focus on discussing the structure of sports broadcasting rights. They examine the likely effects of these rights on league balance, league monopoly power, and broadcasting market power. One justification for concluding league-wide contracts instead of selling broadcasting rights to individual teams is that it supports teams in smaller and less lucrative markets through a more or less equitable distribution of broadcasting revenues.

This approach ensures fairness and equal opportunities for all teams, regardless of their market size or financial resources. Similarly, Falconieri, Palomino & Sákovics (2004) add that collective selling is socially preferable when leagues are small and relatively homogeneous in terms of power and teams receive little performance-related revenue.

As a result, much of the debate in the EU has focused on the ownership of broadcasting rights. More specifically, are the leagues or the individual clubs the legitimate owners, and the effects of centralised sales by the leagues and the effects of European competition law.

Professional sports leagues are subject to a complex regulatory environment, encompassing external institutions (general laws, typically enforced by public authorities) and internal market organisations and institutions (Butler & Massey, 2019). Both collective and individual selling approaches result in the formation of symmetrical or asymmetrical relationships, although the specific nature of these relationships varies (Pfetsch, 2011).

In both systems, the most talented individuals tend to move to those organisations that value them the most, whether through expansion, relocation or promotion. Given that it is not possible for all clubs to be successful in the sporting sense in any given season, it follows that it may not be possible for all clubs to be profitable, given a positive relationship between playing success and profitability. In practice, teams with the largest markets tend to gravitate to the higher tiers of the promotion or relegation system (Goddard, 2014).

Consequently, a considerable proportion of the discourse within the EC has focused on the divergence between professional team sports and European competition law, which became apparent following the Bosman case. The White Paper on Sport posits that centralized sales represent an efficacious method of marketing TV rights and ensuring the integrity of competitions, while also preserving their intrinsic nature and appeal. Furthermore, EC posited that the centralized sale of rights can be important for the redistribution of income and can therefore be an instrument at the service of greater solidarity in sport.

According to Bertrand & Associé (2021), it has been suggested that Member-States' sports federations to introduce the centralized sale of media rights, where this is not yet the case, on the grounds that it constitutes "an instrument at the service of greater solidarity in sport". Arnaut (2006) asserts that the EC has taken significant steps towards considering the collective sale of broadcasting rights in a manner that is compatible with EU competition rules. In doing so, the EC has legitimised the joint sale of football broadcasting rights (Evens et al., 2013).

The question thus arises as to whether the sports industry should be exempted either fully or partially from the requirements of competition policy or antitrust laws (Sloane, 2015). In order to resolve the doubts, instruments and rules have been proposed by the sports associations to guarantee financial and/or competitive equilibrium. These include revenue sharing and "parachute" payments to compensate relegated clubs, which facilitate agreement between clubs on collective selling conditions (Feddersen & Maennig, 2005).

For Budzinski & Kunz-Kaltenhäuser (2020), the internal market regulator acts as a monopolist institution due to the benefits of defining the common institutional framework. It automatically enjoys considerable power over upstream and downstream market actors (Budzinski & Szymanski, 2015). In the majority of sports, the internal market regulator assumes the role of a monopolist due to the advantages of defining a unified institutional framework (Budzinski & Kunz-Kaltenhäuser, 2020).

7.4. Government Imperatives and Bargaining Seduction

Despite the collective selling model being the recommended approach by the EU, a political and economic bloc of which Portugal has been a member since 1986, the country seems to have moved in the opposite direction. As García and Meier (2017) argue, the effectiveness of the EU as a global regulator is controversial. In examining the reactions of EU countries to EU policy initiatives, Knill (1999) employed the term 'administrative tradition'. This term, which is more implicit than explicit, discusses the degree of fit between the policies coming from Brussels and the political trajectories of integration into national governance models. The author concludes that in Portugal the capacity to diverge from the trajectory set by EU legislators persists in numerous areas.

Countries with a labelled Napoleonic tradition of regulation (Peters, 2008; Donina & Paleari, 2019), such as France, Italy, Spain, or Portugal, have a more prominent role for the state in regulating sport than liberal states such as England. In line with the perspectives of Foster (2000) and García (2009), governments may assume the roles of regulators (through direct legislation), partners (e.g., funding) or supervisors (e.g., legal review of sport bodies' decisions) of sport organisations. Green (2004) and Grix (2016) also emphasise that governments can play a more nuanced yet impactful steering role through a range of regulatory instruments.

The clubs in PPL continue to sell the rights to their home games directly to broadcasters. This practice can be seen as a continuation of the Estado Novo⁵⁷ leadership's characteristic stance of 'proudly alone', a statement that became a symbol of the regime's isolation and a reference that illustrated the country's centuries-old history. This may be a practice in Portugal's self-interpretation, because since the earliest chronicles of the kingdom, the narrative of events has never considered the influence of external interests on the decisions of Portugal's rulers.

In order to reverse this situation, the main issue currently under discussion in Portugal is the commercialisation and distribution of the revenue generated by the rights to broadcast professional league matches. In 2021, Decree-Law No. 22-B/2021 of 22 March 2021 established an agreement for the future centralisation of the PPL's broadcasting rights. From the 2027/28 season, the national TV rights of the PPL will be centralised under an agreement between the LP and the national governing body of the sport (FPF). The law defines the ownership of the TV and multimedia broadcasting rights for the Men's First and Second professional football Division and establishes that the sale of these rights will be centralised in subsequent sports seasons. Specifically, the law provides that:

- i. the impossibility for clubs participating in the I and II Leagues to commercialise the rights to their matches for the 2028/2029 and following seasons on an individual basis;
- ii. that the Portuguese Football Federation (FPF) and the Liga Portugal (LP) have to present a proposal for a centralised marketing model (by the end of the 2025/2026 season);
- iii. that the Portuguese Competition Authority (PCA) approves this model.

Taylor (2021) characterizes the recently approved model as a 'core tool' for the advancement of Portuguese football. It represents a significant departure from the prevailing model, under which the clubs sell their home game rights on an individual basis. Consequently, the LP, organiser of the PPL, and the FPF have entered into a MoU which will result in the establishment of a single company to oversee the league's media rights sales. Based on this premise, the 'Portugal Centralisation League'⁵⁸ was

⁵⁷ Estado Novo was the dictatorial, authoritarian, autocratic and corporatist state political regime that existed in Portugal for 41 uninterrupted years, from the approval of the Portuguese Constitution of 1933 until its overthrow by the Revolution of April 25, 1974.

⁵⁸ "Liga Centralização, Sociedade Unipessoal, Lda.", <https://www.ligaportugal.pt/pt/paginas/conteudos/liga-portugal-centralizacao/>

created. The primary objective of the company is to analyse and define a proposal for a future model for the centralised sale of broadcast and media rights, as well as other audiovisual content, for professional football competitions in Portugal. This agreement will include the subsequent rights marketing (LP, 2022).

“The sustainability and development of national football as a whole are closely linked to this negotiation,” said FPF president Fernando Gomes... “It seems to us that this is a sign of the irrevocable will of the FPF and the LP to complete this process and work together to come up with better solutions for national football” (FPF’s official website, 2021).

In a report, LP’s president Pedro Proença stated:

“The centralisation of audiovisual rights is a challenge for Portuguese professional football, as we have advocated since the moment we arrived here. It might have seemed, to the more inattentive, an obsessive goal, but time and the Executive have finally confirmed what we had known for a long time: we were on the right track” (LP, 2021).

João Paulo Rebelo, the Secretary of State for Youth and Sport in Portugal, welcomed the MoU emphasised the desire to distribute money in a much better way to create a more “competitive championship, in line with what happens across Europe” (Lingeswaran, 2023).

During the 2023 summit, the Head of Spanish football, Javier Tebas, spoke about the centralisation of media rights in Portugal. He said:

“It has to happen by the 2027-28 season. Many clubs will be grateful, but they will have to decide on the best division because it will always be a source of tension. However, it’s necessary to implement a strategy that anticipates, if possible, the implementation of the PPL. There are still some issues to be resolved, but it is important to start as soon as possible in order to improve the product and for the good of professional football in Portugal”.

The LP will use the Spanish example as a guide for its centralisation model. The Spanish model, given the disparity in values between clubs prior to centralisation, was a successful example of the commercialisation of audiovisual rights. The application of a centralized model through legislation allowed the increase of La Liga club’s audiovisual rights revenues - National rights grew 80%, while international rights increased by 28%.

“Using the example of Spain is ‘wrong’. Spain is always used as an example! Which is wrong. Spain always has clubs and players in the final stages. It’s not a good example. Spanish football has a stage in world football” (Interviewee 7).

Another interviewee stated that:

“International success, particularly in the UCL, is a crucial factor in the status of any European league. It reveals a league’s talent and competitiveness, and it attracts the best

players and coaches. The consistent success of Real Madrid raises the overall profile of a league and attracts a wider international audience” (Interviewee 2).

Table 18. List of UCL and UEL winners during Century 21st editions

Seasons	UCL		UEL	
	Winner Club	Country	Winner Club	Winner Country
1999/00	Real Madrid	Spain	Galatasaray	Turkey
2000/01	Bayern Munchen	Germany	Liverpool	England
2001/02	Real Madrid	Spain	Feyenoord	Neetherlands
2002/03	Milan	Italy	FC Porto	Portugal
2003/04	FC Porto	Portugal	Valencia	Spain
2004/05	Liverpool	England	CSKA Moscow	Russia
2005/06	Barcelona	Spain	Sevilha	Spain
2006/07	Milan	Italy	Sevilha	Spain
2007/08	Manchester United	England	Zenit S. Petersburg	Russia
2008/09	Barcelona	Spain	Shakhtar Donetsk	Ukrain
2009/10	Inter	Italy	Atlético Madrid	Spain
2010/11	Barcelona	Spain	FC Porto	Portugal
2011/12	Chelsea	England	Atlético Madrid	Spain
2012/13	Bayern Munchen	Germany	Chelsea	England
2013/14	Real Madrid	Spain	Sevilha	Spain
2014/15	Barcelona	Spain	Sevilha	Spain
2015/16	Real Madrid	Spain	Sevilha	Spain
2016/17	Real Madrid	Spain	Man United	England
2017/18	Real Madrid	Spain	Atlético Madrid	Spain
2018/19	Liverpool	England	Chelsea	England
2019/20	Bayern Munchen	Germany	Sevilha	Spain
2020/21	Chelsea	England	Villarreal	Spain
2021/22	Real Madrid	Spain	Eintracht	Germany
2022/23	Manchester City	England	Sevilha	Spain

Source: (data compiled from UEFA website)

Thus, the empirical evidence on the UCL and UEL wins during the last 24 seasons – Century 21st editions – seems to support the theory. I.e., in support of the two interviewees’ testimonies above, we add that 6 different Spanish teams have won 23 European titles (11 UCL and 12 UEL), when the second country is England with 10 titles. In the same period, Portugal (always by FC Porto) has won only 3 titles, as we can see in Table 18 below. These data, alone, show that the interviewee 7 is right when he says that it is not possible to compare the international prestige of the PPL with La Liga.

When Spain started broadcasting rights centralization, the distribution system guaranteed to Real Madrid and FC Barcelona an amount that was very close to what they earn when they traded alone. The income ratio of the clubs started at 4:1 and diminished as the total amount of income increases. From the total income, about 3% was deducted for the Spanish FA and for non-professional football. Additionally, 10% was assigned to the Second Division. The remaining amount was distributed as

follows: 50% as fixed amount for all the clubs, 25% depending on sports results while taking into account historical results. The other 25% was distributed in relation to public awareness similar the Italian system (calculated on the basis of TV audiences, city population, and number of fans of the club) (Rompuy & Maren, 2015).

“Centralisation makes sense as long as a fair formula is found for the distribution of revenue from the sale of TV rights. The so-called Big 3 do not play alone, nor only among themselves. Consequently, it is imperative that the other clubs receive a proportion of the revenue, but that this be determined according to their respective sizes” (Interviewee 9).

In a webinar organised by the Portuguese football governing body: Tiago Madureira, executive director of LP, said:

“The centralisation is not the ‘Robin Hood of football’, the audiovisual assets are of great importance, and the intention is not to take from those who earn more to distribute to those who earn less. Rather, the objective is to enable all to earn more, thereby levelling up”. He added “the only way a club can earn less, if the market is shrinking” (Madureira, 2022).

In terms of revenue from the commercialisation of audiovisual rights, the sports clubs affiliated to LP are the ones with the greatest asymmetry in audiovisual rights revenue. In this sense, we can see that the top three clubs earn 15.4 times more than the average of the other sports organisations. By contrast, in Spain and Italy, for example, the difference is three times greater, in Germany it is 2.5 times greater and in England it is 1.3 times greater (EY, 2021). Although it can be said that this model does not seem to be attractive for the Big 3 clubs of Portugal, the reality is that, based on the example of the main European leagues, the expectation is that it will tend to generate economic advantages for all clubs in the I and II Leagues, regardless of their size.

7.5. Background on Sports Rights in Portugal

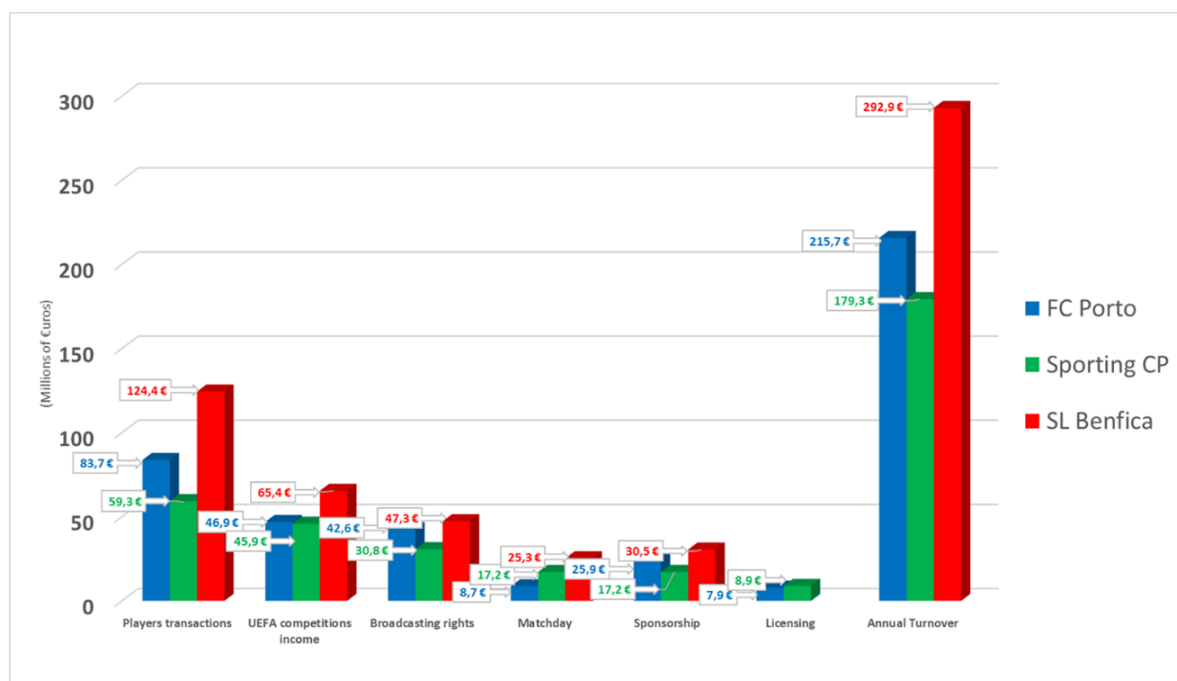
In Portugal, with regard to the First and Second Division Football Championships, Article 68(2) of the Regulations for Competitions organised by LP states that “the clubs individually own the broadcasting rights to the matches and its highlights”. As far as the League Cup is concerned, the broadcasting rights of the matches are commercialised by LP on behalf of the clubs. This means that the teams own the broadcasting rights to their home games. They negotiate directly with the broadcasters.

In recent years, the main Portuguese clubs have focused on increasing their profits through broadcasting rights contracts and have invested heavily in strengthening their teams, trying to create a virtuous circle between sporting results and economic gains. As proof that this distribution mechanism is highly polarised, SL Benfica, FC Porto and Sporting CP have managed to monopolise the market in

recent years. This threatens the so-called ‘solidarity mechanism’, as successful clubs generate more revenue (Brand & Niemann, 2011).

This data shows a competitive imbalance in the PPL. In fact, in 2021/22 season, the three biggest Portuguese clubs together earned 61% of the total revenue from broadcasting rights generated by the PPL (see Figure 10, showing revenue of €120.7 million from broadcasting rights relating to the 3 biggest clubs, which compares with the €198 million generated in total from the PPL).

Figure 10. Big 3 clubs – main revenues in 2021/22



Source: (2021/22 FC Porto, Sporting CP & SL Benfica accounts' reports)

Sport TV holds rights to home matches for 17 of PPL's 18 clubs until 2025/26. All but one of the current PPL's clubs have deals with Pay-Tv broadcaster Sport TV. Until 2013, the sports channel provider Sport TV was the only premium provider on the Portuguese market. On the specified date, the exclusive relationship between SL Benfica - Futebol, SAD and Controlinveste Media came to an end. Consequently, SL Benfica - Futebol, SAD began to exploit its rights independently on its own linear channel and on an OTT platform, Benfica TV.

This exception status is the result of the 10-season contract signed with telco NOS - Portuguese telecommunications company - for its linear distribution, which will expire after the 2025-26 season. Nevertheless, this vertical integration between the own broadcaster and sporting entity is subject to criticism from the main rival clubs of SL Benfica, who consider that the competitive balance is compromised by the fact that SL Benfica broadcasts its own games. This allows SL Benfica to gain advantage:

- i. repeating countless times the moves in which they may have been harmed by the refereeing and, by otherwise;

- ii. not repeat the moves in which they may have benefited.

In other words, rival clubs say that this strategy wrongly influences public opinion, helping SL Benfica in a strategy of putting pressure on referees in subsequent games.

On way power is manifested is by influencing the definition of a situation. Cultural logics inform this process and are therefore powerful, but we are not controlled by them, and certainly not determined, particularly when one's effective environment contains meanings to challenge the legitimacy, veracity, and relevance of certain procedures.

During the 2023 Summit, Spanish football director Javier Tebas spoke about the level of integration of sports broadcasting in Portugal. He said:

“Sport TV is the majority shareholder of the product, so there is no competition, which leads to a certain distortion of this reality, something that harms the growth of the PPL. With the centralisation of media rights, there will be new operators and new platforms, such as OTT, which will contribute to its development and, by definition, help the clubs financially...is now necessary to make decisions that are not comfortable”.

In the current overview, the NOS group and the Altice group have signed long-term exclusive agreements with several first and second division clubs, with thirteen agreements, in which the transfer was agreed for periods between seven and twelve seasons. It should also be noted that the duration of these agreements varies, resulting in a situation of asynchrony (time lag) in their duration.

As a result of these agreements, it is estimated that the NOS Group will have a 45 to 55% share of the premium sports rights marketing market in the period 2019-2026, while the Altice Group will have a 25 to 35% share of this market in the period 2018-2028.

In 2016, MEO, NOS and Vodafone became shareholders in Sport TV. Since that time, Olivedesportos, NOS, Vodafone and MEO have each held 25% of the channel's share capital⁵⁹. The PCA has never officially commented on this operation.

An attempt was previously made in 2012 to establish a tripartite shareholder structure in Sport TV, with the objective of dividing the company's capital. However, this initiative was ultimately rejected by the PCA, which determined that it would likely result in the creation of significant obstacles to competition, both in the market for TV broadcasting rights and in the market for conditional access sports channels. In the majority of sports, the internal market regulator assumes the role of a monopolist due to the advantages of defining a unified institutional framework (Budzinski & Kunz-Kaltenhäuser, 2020).

Following this, the rights acquired by the NOS and Altice groups have been transferred to Sport TV, a company in which the NOS, MEO, Vodafone and Controlinveste Media groups hold equal individual

⁵⁹ <https://www.sporttv.pt/lei-da-transpar%C3%A2ncia/>

stakes of 25% each. Mergers and acquisitions are a popular strategy to increase the size of the company and increase its bargaining power (Evens & Donders, 2018), an alliance and strategic partnership involving divisions, in other words, media companies as flexible and adaptable entities operating in a network of interconnected entities, in what Arsenault and Castells (2008) describe as the concept of 'networked organisations'.

In 2017, the NOS group led the Pay-Tv retail market with a share of 42.6 %, the Altice group had a share of 39.8 %, Vodafone had a share of 14.3 % and NOWO had a share of 4.7 %. In short, the three operators hold 95 % of the Portuguese retail Pay-Tv market. Consolidation has pushed the distribution market towards a three-operator structure. Consequently, they are in a favourable position to prevent or hinder the distribution of sport rights acquired by a new competitor.

Eleven Sports got into the Portuguese market in August 2018, but for about six months it was only available on NOWO, which has a 4.7% market share. Eleven Sport then got together with all the Pay-Tv operators in Portugal (NOS, MEO and Vodafone) to work out a deal to distribute its channels. As well as the UCL and several European football leagues, Eleven Sports also has added to their portfolio in 2024 the rights to broadcast Formula 1 and American football. The content that was broadcast on Eleven Portugal is now part of the DAZN app, which is owned by the same group.

Consequently, the upstream market is now characterised by a lack of competition. However, Evens (2014) points out that new forms of business organisation, including strategic partnerships and networks, are replacing traditional hierarchical bureaucratic entities and simple market-based transactions. Thus, interactions between broadcasters and distributors should be understood as dyadic relationships between buyers and suppliers.

In Portugal, as in most EU Member States, premium sports channels, which broadcast the matches of the main football leagues, constitute a 'must have' media product for any Pay-Tv and related service providers. However, as far as the consequences of the above agreements are concerned, Sport TV has a dominant position in the retail sports Pay-Tv market. Consequently, the concentration of valuable broadcasting rights in the hands of a very small number points to an inexorable expansion of their market power and a resultant diminution of competition in media markets.

For years, the monetization of sports has been dominated by legacy broadcasters beaming out content to consumers' TV sets over the airwaves or via satellite or cable. These companies control more than 80% of sports rights contracts, which are expected to have total average annual value of \$24.5 billion in 2023 and 2024 (Swinburne, 2023). As Evens (2014) points out in a multiplatform environment and spurred by the increasing rivalry on the distribution side, self-exploitation could generate more profits for sports rights owners.

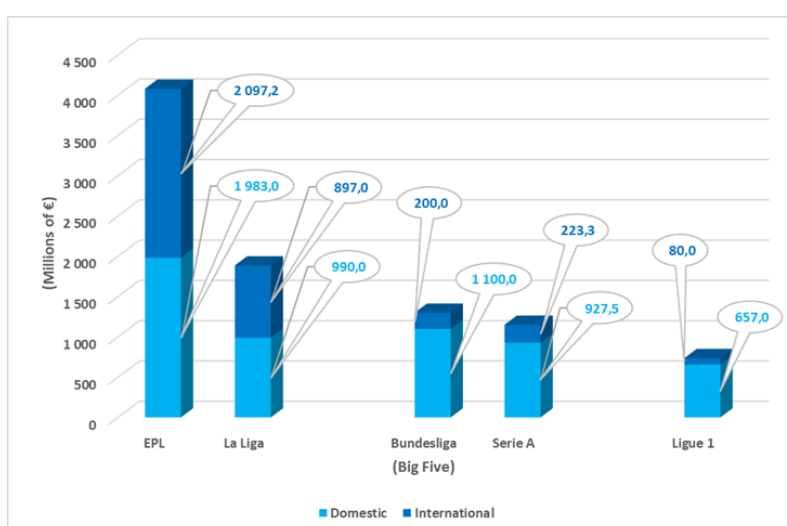
However, according to the EU, revenues from the sale of sport broadcasting rights are largely determined by the size of national broadcasting markets. According to Millward (2011), the dominance

of English clubs in its collective sale of broadcasting rights to a strong domestic TV market is highly significant, while the EPL might be structured as a networked organisation. The Deloitte Money League thus illustrates Castells' argument that in the network society, nodes may be crucial, but a strong domestic TV market can influence the distribution chain. In light of the above, Portugal's prospects seem rather pessimistic.

"They are determined by the numbers of broadcasting competitors, their financial situation, the dimension of the audience, but also by the public or private status of the broadcasters" (Interviewee 3).

The overview of broadcasting rights deals in the domestic versus international market for the Big Five are mainly sold in the domestic market, with the exception of the English market. This is demonstrated in Figure 11 below.

Figure 11. Big Five annual value of currently active deals (2023/24)



Source: FootballBenchmark⁶⁰

7.5.1. The Big 3 and others

The football industry has changed a lot in recent decades. However, the evolution of the media/football complex in Portugal is a fascinating case study within the EU because the orthodox rules that govern the football industry do not apply here. The PPL is *sui generis*, with SL Benfica, Sporting CP and FC Porto representing the dominant force in the league.

In an interview, Tiago Madureira, the executive director of LP, discussed the merits of centralisation. He said:

"In Europe, the sale of TV rights is done in bulk and the total revenue is shared by all, with variations based on sporting merit and the social impact, e.g. the number of fans or audience figures of each club" (Madureira, 2022).

⁶⁰ https://www.footballbenchmark.com/data_analytics/starter/club_finance

The total budget of the 18 teams comprising the PPL is 396 million euros. SL Benfica leads the way with a budget of 115 million euros, followed by FC Porto with 90 million euros and Sporting CP with 65 million euros. Even within the so-called Big 3 there are differences in budgets. Half of the remaining fifteen teams have a budget of ten million euros, or less per season. The same applies to the value of the squads. In order of size, SL Benfica's squad is valued at €380.7 million, Sporting's at €307.4 million, and FC Porto's at €268.1 million. Then there is Braga's squad, which is valued at €133.5 million (Record, 2023).

The Transfermarkt⁶¹ portal estimates that the top league, comprising 18 clubs/SADs, is valued at 1.35 billion euros in the 2023/24 season. However, there is a significant disparity between the financial resources of the Big 3 and those of the other clubs, who are struggling to meet their short-term financial obligations.

"If the format is similar to what's used in most European countries, which is 50% of the total value distributed equally and the rest according to sporting merit (25%) and social dimension (25%), then the losses of the Big 3 will be in the order of 10 to 25 million euros per year, assuming that centralised negotiation would be able to ensure the same revenues as those in force. This would take away competitiveness from Portuguese clubs in UEFA competitions" (Interviewee 7).

In terms of the relevance of the Portuguese topflight in a European context, the PPL is currently ranked in seventh best league in Europe in the UEFA rankings. If we compare Portugal's economic and social dimension with the nations immediately above it in the ranking - the Big Five and the Netherlands - this position appears quite positive. However, the reality is that Portugal has fallen further and further behind its closest rivals in the positions immediately above it - France and the Netherlands.

"I would not be so pessimistic. A position in the ranking can be lost but then regained. It also happened to Serie A, and it was an opportunity to work harder and improve" (Interviewee 1).

The link between sporting and financial activities is therefore of paramount importance for the competitiveness of football clubs (Szymanski & Kuypers, 2000). As a result, the UEFA ranking is based on the results of clubs from each association in the UCL, UEL, and UECL in a given season. It should be noted, however, that 93% of the points in the current ranking (accumulated over the last five years) have been won by just four teams: FC Porto, SL Benfica, Sporting CP and SC Braga.

"...those who manage to qualify for the UCL have access to revenues that can reach 50% of a season's total... the Big 3 make less than half the average revenue of the second-placed clubs in the 2018/19 UCL' group stage. This shows the challenge Portuguese

⁶¹ <https://www.transfermarkt.pt/liga-portugal/startseite/wettbewerb/PO1>.

football faces to remain relevant in a Europe that wants to expand the UCL (...) centralisation will be the 'belgification' of Portuguese football: competitive domestically but lacking international expression. Belgium has 11 million inhabitants, with more purchasing power than Portugal, and Belgian clubs are not going anywhere" (Interviewee 7).

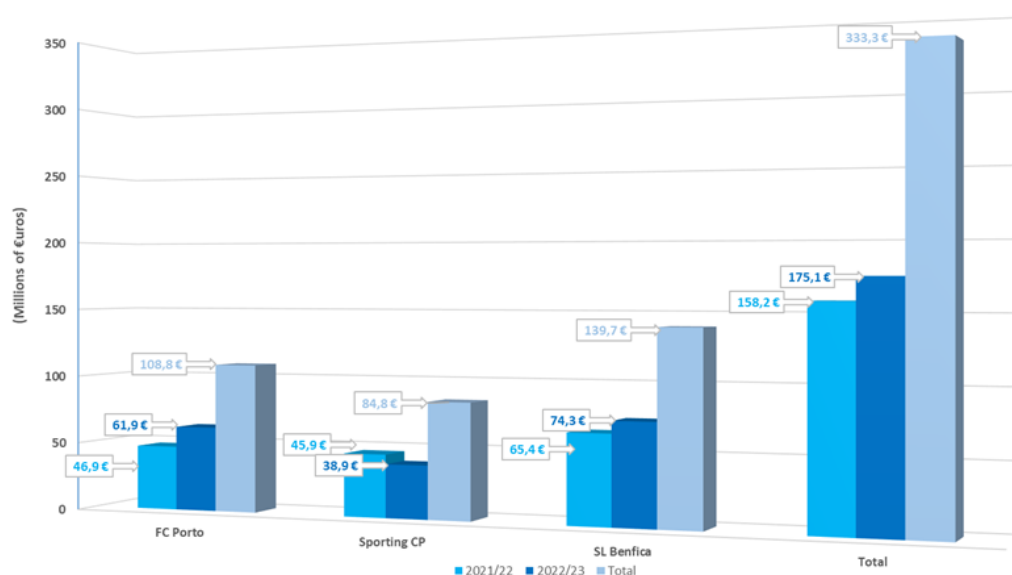
In the same vein, another interviewee observed the following:

"It's a difficult issue. There has to be a balance. We must reward merit, but we must have more competitive football. We do not have enough clubs to get points in the UEL and the UECL. We need to reflect on this, otherwise we will not have any European achievements. But that must be the way forward, like the EPL" (Interviewee 10).

Competitive balance is also measured in international competitions such as the UCL and UEL. Large sums of money are available in European competitions and the aim of the big clubs is to go further than the first round of a European competition. Although they do not necessarily have the pedigree or resources typically associated with success, the Portuguese Big 3 clubs manage to achieve remarkable feats in European competitions.

"I think that, when it comes to Portuguese football, any talk of competitive equity is very difficult to put forward. There is no other country where three clubs (which are also like three monotheistic churches) are so clearly superior to the rest of the movement. The centralised sale and management of broadcasting rights would certainly be a matter of redistributive equity. But certain elements should be considered. First, there is the fact that the formulas for redistributing income from broadcasting rights can also be very unfair; and Italy is an example of this. I am quite certain that in Portugal, if a centralised sales system was ever arrived at, it would result in a very unbalanced distribution. I would add that this is also inevitable, precisely because you have to consider the vast difference between the Big 3 (SL Benfica, FC Porto and Sporting CP) and all the other clubs. But beyond all considerations, a greater redistribution of wealth would be good for the movement" (Interviewee 1).

Figure 12. Comparison of UEFA competitions income of Big 3 over the last two seasons



Source: (2021/22 & 2022/23 FC Porto, Sporting CP & SL Benfica accounts' reports)

In our perspective, some factors should be listed that will probably conditioning the implementation of this new model from 2028/29. To know:

- i. the Big 3 do not want to have an annual amount lower than what they currently receive (around €120 million in total) and the LP itself assumed that no club would be harmed;
- ii. although the study commissioned by LP⁶² estimated that the value of the broadcasting rights for Primeira and Segunda Ligas' games would be between €275 and €350 million per year, the two proposals received⁶³ by LP were for lower values: one for €250 million and another for €180 million;
- iii. there are studies⁶⁴ that predict a reduction in revenue from broadcasting rights for the biggest clubs, which will have harmful effects in reducing their competitiveness in European competitions (there are only four Portuguese clubs that contribute positively to the current Portugal's 7th place in the UEFA ranking). In other words, believing that internal competitiveness may even increase, the study demonstrates that revenue from performance in UEFA competitions is more relevant for the Big 3 clubs than revenue from broadcasting rights itself;
- iv. in addition to the difficulty in increasing revenue from international broadcasting rights, it seems to us that the domestic rights market is also stagnant (perhaps it could also regress).

⁶² According to 'Estudo Internacional sobre Direitos Audiovisuais Desportivos', Relatório Final, Junho de 2021, EY & Liga Portugal.

⁶³ <https://eco.sapo.pt/2023/12/12/consorcios-a-espera-de-proenca-sobre-direitos-de-futebol/>

⁶⁴ According to 'Estudo sobre o impacto da negociação centralizada dos direitos televisivos em Portugal', Março de 2022, Movimento 'Servir o Benfica'.

Although, currently, Portugal occupies the 7th position in Europe, with around €200 million per year, we must consider that, in the current UEFA Top-20 countries ranking, Portugal occupies the 13th place both in population (one third of the average population in these 20 countries), and in average annual salary (half the average of these 20 countries and around 20% of the highest average salary). In other words, the combination of these two indicators with the current economic crisis in Europe (as a result of the ongoing crises in Ukraine and the Middle East, or even the current emerging world order) could result in a slowdown in domestic demand for pay-TV channels among football fans, given that the majority of Portuguese find it difficult to pay.

7.6. Centralisation: The ‘Negotiations’

It is often asked whether football has adapted to the new TV models. Conversely, one might ask whether football has changed the TV models. Perhaps the best answer is that both have adapted to the context and the users. However, this question can be analysed using Strauss's concept of 'negotiation' as a modern version of adaptation: it is the sociological process by which actors negotiate with and against each other to ensure their own survival, and in the process create, maintain and transform the very social order that creates, maintains and transforms them (Charmaz & Clarke, 2020).

Strauss found negotiation pervasive, noting that ‘everyone seemed to be negotiating something’. Negotiation has many synonyms: bargaining, wheeling and dealing, compromising, making deals, reaching agreements after disagreements, making arrangements, etc. Strauss (1978a) saw negotiated order as what we now call a 'generic social process'.

He posited the following key assumptions of his negotiated order theory:

- i. Social order is negotiated order...There can be no organisational relationships without accompanying negotiations;
- ii. Specific negotiations are contingent on specific structural conditions...patterned, not accidental. They can be studied in terms of their conditions, character and consequences for persons and organisations;
- iii. The products of negotiation (contracts, understandings) all have temporal limits, for eventually they will be reviewed, reevaluated, revised, revoked, and/or renewed;
- iv. Negotiated order has to be worked at (and)... is continually reconstituted;
- v. The negotiated order on any given day can be conceived of as the sum total of the organisation's rules and policies, along with whatever agreements, understandings, pacts,

contracts, and other working arrangements currently obtained, at every level of the organisation;

- vi. Any changes impinging on the negotiated order, such as the introduction of a new technological element...calls for renegotiation or reappraisal.

This interactionist tool is used here to contextualise the trading process inherent in centralisation. In other words, the bargaining positions in the market, both upstream and downstream. The wider social worlds/arenas of concern are thus made up of multiple social worlds centred on shared private interests that are prepared to act collectively in some way. Within the arenas, different issues are debated, negotiated, contested, enforced, and manipulated by representatives of the different worlds, and underworlds (Clark, 2021).

“The head of DAZN Portugal regrets the non-transparent way in which TV rights are negotiated. He says that when there is a public consultation without perfectly defined criteria, the highest bid may or may not be considered. This is all about vested interests and what the market wants, and I wonder if the clubs are aware of this” (Sousa, 2024).

In particular, this negotiated order follows a number of strategies to ensure that they alone would obtain valuable sports rights and foreclose access to other broadcasters. In addition, this issue can be seen in terms of the ‘essential facilities doctrine’, which states that certain upstream inputs (sports) are essential/indispensable for downstream broadcasters to compete in the relevant market and cannot be easily replicated without significantly increasing costs. This requires a dominant position in the upstream sports market and can create or strengthen a dominant position in the broadcasting markets (Abbamonte & Rabassa, 2001).

“There are difficulties in breaking down the barriers to entry for national football, there is a status quo installed in the national market that does not want to cause any disruption for the stakeholders who own the rights” (Sousa, 2024).

Negotiated order theorists criticise the tendency to reify organisations, institutions and systems, arguing that these social entities must be understood as recurring patterns of joint action (Clark, 2021). The separation of power (the ability to get things done) and politics (the ability to decide what to do) is increasingly evident in the media age (Bauman 2000).

“DAZN Portugal has attempted to purchase the broadcasting rights to Portuguese football competitions on three occasions but has not yet succeeded. The most recent attempt was for one of the Cups, and we submitted a bid that was significantly higher than the previous cycle. I would like to congratulate the winner, as they have acquired an attractive product at a much higher price” (Sousa, 2024).

For Baker and Rowe (2013), the conceptual separation of power and emotions has a long tradition in sociology, with the two concepts commonly treated as distinct states: emotions as

internal, power as external; emotions as subjective, power as objective; and emotions as non-rational, power as calculative and rational.

“There are historical barriers that exist in national football where the decision-makers do not want to cause this disruption because of the electoral calendar or changes in the responsibilities of some players, so it is better to leave everything as it is until 2028” (Sousa, 2024).

The League president says that the model he wants to put in place is a great financial advantage, but the most important thing is to create a better-quality product that is overseen by the League.

“The ‘game changer’ of centralisation is that we will suddenly have a key organiser and regulator of football, which is broadcast in audiovisual form. We will be able to benefit internationally, choosing the markets we want to penetrate and that interest us, controlling what the audiovisual product is” (Proença, 2024).

The centralisation of TV rights and the financial control of clubs represent fundamental vectors in the growth of any league. Furthermore, it is becoming increasingly important for Portuguese football to fight for its presence in international markets.

“The success of centralisation will be indelibly marked by what is done between now and 2027. Projecting that the negotiation of rights for some markets will begin as early as that year, the window is short - 3 years. LP will have to work hard to reverse this situation. It’s becoming increasingly important for Portuguese football to fight for its presence in international markets. We have a unique diaspora, spread across the four corners of the world. We can’t waste this unique and differentiating element that belongs to us” (Fonseca, 2023).

The dominant meanings of football are never fixed, but always an arena of struggle and negotiation (Levermore & Budd, 2004). The LP’s defence of centralisation is based mainly on the presumed increase in sporting competitiveness and the consequent promotion of greater balance in competitions at national level (as a result of a more equitable redistribution of revenue).

“However, this increase in competition is not monetizable. Consequently, if the PPL were to pursue this course of action, it would inevitably result in a decline in its international competitiveness” (Interviewee 7).

Rather, if ongoing commercial gain, than the joint selling only creates incentives for horizontal solidarity, the financial solidarity justification in itself could not outweigh the anti-competitive effects of a joint selling arrangement. The restrictions of competition are considerable.

“People tend to associate the issue of centralising rights with increasing revenue, but it is important to recognise that there is more than that. Having an entity that regulates what

the product is, is also crucial. When we talk about product, it is the identity that is created” (Proença, 2023).

The primary strategic development line for any product is brand identity. Identity is actually very difficult to define. It is generally described as a set of features, characteristics and qualities that make something what it is. Therefore, the aim of creating an identity for PPL should be to become an active and recognised subject within the media/football complex. This means that the strategic objectives must be seen as hierarchical, with a clearly defined vertical hierarchy and horizontal correlation.

“We have the best player in the world, the best coaches, the best managers and the best agent... we are a talent development factory” (Proença, 2024).

In this process, brand recognition must be achieved. Hence, in competitive media/football complex it is naive for leagues to assume that their brands are strong simply because the best player in the world is Portuguese or because there are several Portuguese coaches at top clubs.

“In Portugal, we often find it challenging to recognise the many positive aspects of our country. One area where we stand out is football. However, the leading figures in international football may have a different perception of our own internal view” (Proença, 2024).

Although the President of the LP (Proença, 2024) presents several of the LP’s strengths, it should be noted that there is still a lot of room for improvement internally. Poor attendance at sporting events is evident in the number of empty seats in stadiums. Only the matches of the ‘Big three’ seem to counteract this trend. According to Szymanski (1998), the results are measurable, not only in financial terms, but also in terms of sporting success (games and trophies won). As suggested by Falter & Perignon (2000), there are few industries that produce such clear profit and loss indicators. As indicated above, theoretical models of the economics of sports leagues are concerned with the degree of competitive balance or inequality between the member teams of a league competition, which in turn determines the degree of uncertainty about the outcome of individual matches and the destination of the league championship.

7.6.1. David and Goliath – or the art of negotiation

The story of David and Goliath is a familiar one. In this case, little David seems incapable of defeating the seemingly invincible giant Goliath. Given their sources of income, the current ‘Big three’ can be described as large firms. If these firms are affected by idiosyncratic shocks at the firm level, such as the loss of broadcasting revenues, this may constitute a case where micro-level shocks translate into other aggregate outcomes.

The dominance of SL Benfica, Sporting CP and FC Porto in the PPL has manifested, lead to increasing differences on the pitch in many (but not all) national and international competitions. In any

competition there is the obvious problem that the more successful a team is, the more prize money it will accrue, and the more interest it will generate, drawing increased revenues from gate receipts, broadcasting deals, sponsorship and merchandise. The more money a club has, the better players it can sign and so the more likely it is to win, which in turn generates more revenue, creating an unhelpful cycle in which the rich increasingly dominate (Ramchandani *et al.*, 2018; Scelles *et al.*, 2022).

The phrase ‘it takes two to tango’ is used to indicate that an activity cannot be carried out without the participation of two or more individuals or entities. In order for centralisation to occur, it is necessary for the clubs to reach an agreement. Although it should be stressed that the organisational structure of the LP is a network structure in the ‘Castellian’ sense, because rather than any centralised or hierarchical structure governing the league, the LP’s statutes state that changes to the league are decided by at least five sports societies from the I Liga and three sports societies from the II Liga, who vote on an amendment to the LP’s internal regulations.

In 2021/22 season, the I Liga saw a greater polarization of revenues between its clubs, as the league achieved overall revenue growth of 13.1% compared to the 2020/21 season. However, revenue remains concentrated as the top three clubs, SL Benfica, FC Porto and Sporting CP, drove growth through increased matchday revenues and distributions from UEFA club competitions. Data collected from the accounts reports of FC Porto/Sporting CP/SL Benfica in 2021/22 show that the global revenue of the Big 3 was €690 million compared to the €867 million generated by all clubs in the PPL⁶⁵.

In fact, professional football in Portugal generated a turnover of €917 million, which translated into a contribution of €617 million to the Portuguese GDP. However, 77% of the total revenue generated is concentrated only at the Big 3. By one hand, the average capacity used by the LP’ stadiums was 34% per game (2.4 million in total versus 7730 fans per game), with 63% of the competition’s total attendance weight being due to the Big 3 home matches. By other hand, the average TV share of PPL games was 80 thousand viewers, with only the Big 3’s games (home and away) being above this average.

Monteiro and Mourão (2024) argue that this dynamic is especially concerning because matches with more attendance also attract more viewers, which drags small clubs into another cycle of losses because they cannot benefit from higher match-day revenue. Small clubs are less likely to win and therefore less able to attract an audience. They cannot negotiate better broadcast rights contracts if they do not improve their sporting results, which means that they cannot increase interest in their matches and, as a consequence, the number of viewers.

⁶⁵ According to Anuário do Futebol Profissional Português, Época 2021/22 (<https://www.ligaportugal.pt/pt/epocas/20222023/publicacoes/anuario-do-futebol-profissional-portugues-2021-22/>).

In reality, it can be observed that uncertainty about the outcome of matches and even leagues overall does not drive attendance to matches. Instead, consumers and fans have shown to prefer home-win certainty and displayed a significant aversion to losses. Those findings suggest that historically bigger clubs (including Sporting CP, FC Porto, and SL Benfica) maintain a competitive imbalance in order to profit from the patterns of consumption, thereby drawing larger stadium attendance and conflicting with balancing measures such as the equitable distribution of broadcast rights (Martins & Cró, 2016).

As with other elements of globalised popular culture, Portuguese football is deeply rooted in local club preferences. In Portugal, these preferences are well defined, with 94.5% of football fans supporting just three clubs: SL Benfica, FC Porto and Sporting CP (Gouveia, Espanha & Di Fátima, 2020). Hobsbawm (2003) argued that the way in which individuals or groups establish their relationship with existing political, cultural, and organisational structures influences their ability to respond to structural change. Giddens (2002) reinforces this perspective, stating that traditions are subject to the influence of power forces that are neither spontaneous nor immemorial.

In such cases, exist significant impact on the relationship between emotions and power. Hence, in the 2014-2015 season, and to every industry observer's surprise, no company was able to acquire all live rights for the Portuguese football competition. In 2015, SL Benfica agreed to an initial three-year contract with NOS, with an option to extend to 10 years (up to €400 million)⁶⁶, including the distribution of the club's home matches and Benfica TV, which at that time also had the rights to broadcast some of the top European football leagues.

Also in 2015, Altice battled with rival telecoms operators for rights to Portuguese football. Its 10-year €457.5m⁶⁷ deal with FC Porto was the highest profile of its individual deals. This cross-selling rights agreement gave him the rights to broadcast FC Porto's home matches (from 2018-19 to 2027-28) plus shirt sponsorship and in-stadium sponsorship rights and the distribution of the FC Porto club channel.

Finally, in December 2015, Sporting CP agreed with the operator NOS the cross-selling rights for €515m⁶⁸, with the contract starting in 2018, July 1st and ending in 2028, June 30th. This global value reflected a review of static advertising TV rights still relating to the 2015/16 season and the two following seasons (for which the parties still had a contract). Sponsorship of the main football team's shirt was also included, during 12 and a half seasons (until June 2029), in addition to the exploitation of static and virtual advertising at the Alvalade Stadium, from 2018, July 1st to 2028, June 30th.

As can be seen, the Big 3 have broadcasting rights contracts that the other clubs will never be able to achieve. The clubs have benefited from the increasing level of competition in the Portuguese sports

⁶⁶ <https://www.dn.pt/desporto/benfica/oficial-nos-compra-direitos-televisivos-por-400-milhoes-4912632.html>

⁶⁷ <https://www.dn.pt/desporto/fc-porto/fc-porto-e-altice-fecham-negocio-por-4575-milhoes-de-euros-4954073.html>

⁶⁸ <https://www.dn.pt/desporto/sporting/sporting-faz-acordo-com-a-nos-por-515-milhoes-4956745.html>

broadcasting market that produced more lucrative rights deals. As in other negotiated orders, cooperation here does not necessarily mean consensus but refers instead to power differentials (Clark, 2021). One of the interviewees presented the following argument:

“The PPL has only twelve players of relevant competitive interest and is struggling in a market where there are many better offers. It will be a truly Homeric challenge to find an investor in this space of two and a half years who can come up with the sum of between 275 and 350 million euros per year that the LP is said to be worth” (Interviewee 15).

It should be noted that a system of joint selling of media rights does not necessarily bring about an equitable distribution of the revenues among the clubs.

“For no club to be harmed by centralised negotiation, revenues would have to double. The Portuguese consumer already bears the highest football broadcasting costs in Europe, despite Sport TV making significant losses” (Interviewee 7).

According to Swinburne (2023), there are more consumers that do not consume enough sports on TV to continue to prop up cable bundles. Cord-cutting has reached a level where subscriber losses more than offset price increases, sending down distribution revenues for national networks.

Albeit connected, the distribution mechanism is a separate measure, which is typically for the most part performance based. Moreover, financial solidarity can also be implemented through other mechanisms, such as a taxation system or the redistribution of voluntary contributions. That said, it must be acknowledged that a system of joint selling does facilitate the sharing of revenues among clubs. The ability of sports organisers to impose alternative financial solidarity mechanisms might be constrained by the pressure of the larger clubs (which evidently wish to see a larger share of the revenues flow back to them because they are primarily responsible for generating these revenues) (Rompuy & Maren, 2015).

7.6.2. Is this the best time to centralise: maybe yes, maybe, no?

Business cycles are not new, of course. The Bible tells us of the seven fat years in Egypt followed by the seven lean years, and of Joseph who engaged in what we would today call counter-cyclical economic policy. This is not a novel observation; economic historians have identified 32 cycles for the years since 1857 (Zarnowitz, 1991).

Volatility and cyclicity will be an inherent part of the telecoms sector in the future. But the real issue is that the telecoms industry may be entering a chronic pattern of volatility, where boom and bust patterns become the norm rather than the exception. The network environment is leaving stability and entering volatility. A pattern of ups and downs is emerging, a cycle (Noam, 2006).

Media and telecom stocks with exposure to sports have been among the most resilient to economic cycles and changes in business models. But the turmoil could also present opportunities for investors. The demand for sports broadcasting is inextricably linked to the demand to watch sporting

events. From a Keynesian perspective, the key drivers of the business cycle are fluctuations in aggregate demand. Aggregate demand, in turn, is influenced by the expectations of market participants, which are often self-fulfilling.

According to Deloitte (2005), between 2004 and 2005, the combined TV revenues of the Big Five leagues exceeded €2500 million. This represents a hundredfold increase in just 20 years (Szymanski, 2006). As a result, some authors have suggested that authors' rights have peaked and are in decline. As shown above, this claim was not substantiated. Subsequently, between 2007 and 2010, as the mortgage crisis developed into a global financial crisis, several authors predicted a decline in broadcasting rights revenues. This did not materialise. In the 2015-2017 cycle, the value of broadcasting rights is again increasing exponentially.

"It can be observed that during the period when the Portuguese clubs were engaged in negotiations, broadcasting rights revenues also increased to a similar extent in England and even more in Germany. Both countries have been engaged in negotiations at a central level for several years. But where was the record increase observed? In Portugal, where individual negotiation led to revenues increasing by more than 100% at the same time. It's quite extraordinary that after achieving the biggest increase ever with individual negotiation, the model of excellence is now centralised negotiation" (Interviewee 7).

In 2019, Yousef Al-Obaidly, chief executive of BeIN Media Group, described as 'crazy' predictions by UK analytics firm Rethink TV that the value of broadcast rights would increase by 77% to reach £85bn by 2025. The prediction has come true, with the EPL recently finalising the sale of broadcast rights for the 2025-2029 cycle for a substantial £6.7 billion. Overall, while this figure represents an absolute improvement on the previous cycle, it is actually a relative decline, representing a modest annual increase of 4%. Serie A suffered a setback with a 3% reduction, while Ligue 1 opted for private negotiations. Meanwhile, the German Bundesliga is preparing to explore the market and La Liga's contracts expire in 2027 (FB, 2024).

On the one hand, there are those who believe that the current recession is just an isolated accident, a rare confluence, a 'perfect storm', and that things will sort themselves out in due course. The football broadcasting bubble has not yet burst and the product of live sport and the entertainment it provides to broadcasters and fans is worth it. On the other hand, there are those who believe that the broadcasting market is in decline, with piracy playing an important role in devaluing the product and a greater diversification of entertainment offerings forcing competition.

Similarly, the data (UEFA and Deloitte Reports) suggest that the centralisation of the PPL's broadcasting rights may have come at a time of market retraction, in a context where the paradigm shift from broadcasting to streaming has generated many doubts in the sector. According to FootballBenchmark (FB, 2024), the commercial aspect of football appears to have boundless potential,

fuelled by the global reach and allure of top clubs and their star players. In contrast, the broadcasting facet is showing signs of reaching a saturation point or plateau. Additionally, we are seeing major changes sports-related assets are entering a transition period that could see traditional broadcasters lose ground to big tech companies.

7.7. In Summary

In this chapter, we analyse how the deregulation of television in Europe and the subsequent transformation of football broadcasting have posed challenges to competitive balance. In approaching the concept of competitive balance, we consider its ambiguity due to the variety of determinants (e.g. financial resources, player recruitment, historical success) that affect it in different leagues and clubs. In this sense, prominent clubs have become increasingly dominant, wielding considerable power in the UEFA structure through financial capacity and influence in decision-making, which the growth of the UCL has helped to influence. This chapter also analysed market power and the transformation of media landscapes, both in the European Union and specifically in Portugal, relating the evolution of media dominance to market competition. We can see that competition policy and media regulation have had a strong impact on the acquisition, sale and exploitation of sports rights in Portugal. Finally, in a forward-looking exercise, we highlight arguments for rethinking centralisation. Drawing on the volatility and cyclicity inherent in the future of the telecoms sector, we suggest that the exponential growth cycles practised by TV networks or streaming rights services point to new configurations.

[Page left blank on purpose]

Regulation, Media Sport and Piracy in the Digital Age

“Television, or more specially satellite television,
has been the most important contributory factor in the new business era of football”
(Morrow, 1999)

8.1. Chapter Overview

The discussion in this chapter is organised in three main stages. The first stage analyse the economic, political and cultural dimensions of the media system, with a focus on regulatory policy, public interest, power, and control. It also examines how the EU’s efforts to regulate these connections. The second one provides an overview of research perspectives on media industries and audiences. It also explores media governance as horizontal and vertical mergers and acquisitions and discusses challenges and emerging trends. The third stage is concerned with issues of digital piracy challenges in the field of media sports.

8.2. Media Political Economy Overview

Fuchs (2024) postulates that in contemporary society all social systems and organisations have economic, political and cultural dimensions, and that there is an antagonism between self-management and alienation. Consequently, the significance of political and economic organisation, such as the ‘political economy’ of the media, has never been more apparent (Hardy, 2014). Media political economy generally refers to the commercial and financial activities of firms operating in different media sectors, which are conducted in the context of a given market configuration, political environment and technological alternatives (Braman, 2009; Evens, 2014; Simpson *et al.*, 2016).

However, Mosco (2009) broadens the scope by defining the political economy of media as the study of power relations that shape the production, distribution, and consumption of resources, including those related to communication. Freedman (2008), in turn, describes it as the establishment of objectives and norms that lead to the creation of instruments aimed at shaping the structure and behaviour of media systems. According to Picard and Wildman (2016), economic and financial pressures significantly affect communication activities, systems, organizations, and companies, including media and telecommunications. These definitions are important for understanding the development, global expansion and politics of the media sectors.

Wasko *et al.* (2011) identified four assumptions that underpin the interface between media and politics:

- i. Media systems focus on the relationships between economic practices, political organisation and social and cultural life;
- ii. It focuses on understanding historical transformation and change, not just immediate events;
- iv. It is not viewed as a value-free discipline but rather as a normative one, aiming to create a just society grounded in principles widely accepted as democratic;
- iv. Rejecting the traditional position that separates academic research from social intervention.

However, there has been a gradual shift in media political economy, with focus moving from the 'political' to the 'economic' dimension. Media industry deregulation has led policymakers to prioritize economic considerations over political ones (Doyle & Frith, 2006). Dobson and Goddard (2011) argue that distinctions between business owners, entrepreneurs, and managers have become blurred, as they all share the primary objective of maximizing profits.

In neoclassical economic theory, perfect competition occurs when no party has market power, meaning no firm can raise prices above marginal costs to earn a profit (Evens, 2014). The degree of market power is determined by the difference between prices and marginal costs (Calvano & Polo, 2020). In this context, Mosco and Nagy (2017) offer an overview of media effects, which range from strong effects - where media content is closely linked to media influence, to more complex or nuanced effects - where media content primarily reflects historically situated social, political, and economic processes.

Over the years, media economics has gained prominence in guiding many regulatory and policy decisions - ultimately overshadowing other valuable perspectives and potentially hampering effective policy making (Napoli, 2004). Consequently, the digital revolution has changed both the structure and the scope of the media industries, accelerating the processes of convergence and globalisation. In this context, technological, political and economic changes have made it essential to study media in a global framework (Miller & Kraidy, 2016).

8.2.1. Media governance: a political and regulatory approach

'Media governance' is a relatively new concept, but a useful one for analysing media regulation. It is a compelling topic that is attracting increasing interest among academics and policymakers in the media field and has become quite a 'catch-all word' (Puppis, 2010) or 'buzzword' (Ginosar, 2013) in the communication literature. Consequently, it is a concept with heuristic value, providing an integrated view of the rules in the field of media studies and communication policy, and is adaptable to different theoretical approaches (Mosco, 2009; Puppis, 2010; Levi-Faur, 2011).

McQuail (2003) offers a definition of media governance as (encompassing) all the means by which the media are constrained, directed, encouraged, managed, or held accountable, from the most binding laws to the most resistant pressures and self-selected disciplines. Freedman (2008, p. 14) expands on this, describing media governance as “the sum of mechanisms, formal and informal, national and supranational, centralized and decentralized, that aim to organize media systems.”

According to Hamelink and Nordenstreng (2007, p. 232), governance serves as a "framework of practices, rules and institutions that set limits and provide incentives for media performance". Governance does not create absolute barriers to press freedom, but encompasses various forms of soft power and influence, including industry and professional self-regulation (McQuail, 2007). Meier (2018) suggests that media governance should be seen as a contested power order, or an ongoing power struggle. Therefore, media governance is not only an analytical concept to describe power shifts in media policymaking from a multi-level perspective, but also a normative concept that aims to redefine the roles of the state/government, regulatory bodies, private economic actors and civil society in the policy processes that regulate the media and the internet.

Puppis (2010) argues that governance, like regulation theory, is not exclusive to communication studies. Both media activity and regulation can be justified by normative objectives or, as Feintuck and Varney (2007) put it, ‘public interest claims’. As a result, it is often described as a process of ‘power transfer’, with power shifting from governments, parliaments, state agencies, and administrations to networks of different stakeholders (Meier, 2018).

Fuchs (2008) argues that regulatory theory, economics and politics are two systems of capitalist society. For the author, the mode of regulation refers to the institutional framework that allows and restricts the accumulation of capital. The result is the accumulation of political capital within the framework of antagonistic political forms (laws, state) and political relations. This point can be illustrated in relation to contemporary media analysis.

Several authors have used critical political economy of the media to illustrate the power relations in the way information is produced, organised and distributed (Fuchs, 2009; Mosco, 2009; Hardy, 2014; Winseck, 2017). Critical political economy highlights the unequal distribution of power and critiques the mechanisms through which these inequalities are maintained and reproduced. Associated with the media, critical political economy explains the social phenomena and power relations associated with the dynamics of global capitalism (Albornoz, 2015).

Wasko (2014) highlights that radical, critical or Marxian political economy continues to grow, particularly in the study of media. It criticizes the allocation of resources in capitalist societies and analyses power relations through the study of ownership and control. For Hardy (2014), classical political economy was broadly influenced by the scientific study of economics developed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, which focused on the efficient satisfaction of desires in markets, known

as neoclassical economics. Thus, mainstream economics developed largely as a discipline that professed value neutrality, while taking existing social relations as given and generally supporting the core principles of market-based systems, namely that consumer and citizen welfare is best achieved through efficient market mechanisms. Evens (2014) highlights the dominant position of neoclassical political economy in contemporary thinking about media ecology, despite sharing many similarities with traditional media economics, arguing that all levels of the communications industry - content, distribution, and reception - have become more fragmented and competitive than ever before.

This new paradigm has allowed new stakeholders to enter the media industry (Buraimo, 2007) and change the dynamics of the market (Szymanski & Ross, 2000). According to Evens et al., (2013), the ideas of neoliberal globalisation have inspired the commercialisation of football over the last two decades through four major intervention and/or regulatory policies, trends that are the result of various factors:

- i. Privatization⁶⁹ - the sale of public assets to private investors;
- ii. Liberalization⁷⁰ - opening of previously restricted markets to new entrants;
- iii. Policies of deregulation⁷¹ - away from the defence of the public interest, however defined, to the promotion of 'fair' competition;
- iv. Corporatisation - urging or obliging publicly financed organisations to seek additional sources of income and to maximise their market value.

8.2.2. The regulation of access to public interest sporting events

The regulation and governance of media policy are related concepts. "Policy and regulation" (or "global governance", a fashionable mantra referring to structural changes in policymaking) has clearly been affected by globalisation, as quoted by Iosifidis (2015, p. 3).

The concept of media policy is typically informed and justified by the notion of the "public interest" (Iosifidis, 2015). Iosifidis further posits that the public interest philosophy in the Western world is largely predicated on four core tenets: freedom of communication (expression and opinion), universal access to information and knowledge (inclusiveness), diversity (plurality of ownership and content diversity) and accountability. Until about three decades ago, the means of promoting these public

⁶⁹ This aspect of marketisation in the first phase has not happened in Portugal. However, numerous European governments have overseen the complete or partial privatisation of publicly owned broadcasters (e. g., TF1 in France) and telecommunications operators (e. g., Deutsche Telekom in Germany).

⁷⁰ In the late 80s and 90s, the EU directives facilitated the opening to competition of European broadcasting (TV without Frontiers, renamed Audio-visual Media Services) and telecommunications markets. At the European level, regulations of the audio-visual sector occur by the Television Without Frontiers Directive (TWF Directive) and later the Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMS Directive).

⁷¹ In Europe, this trend is best illustrated by the increased influence of the EC's Competition directorate over key areas of media regulation, such as mergers, the definition of 'state aid' with regards to public service broadcasters as well as, of course, the buying and selling of sports rights (Wheeler, 2004).

interest goals was state intervention in the media market, although more recently neoliberal policies have led to the 'marketization' of the notion of public interest.

As Hardy (2014) points out, neoliberalism has become a dominant force in supranational and national communications policy. As a result, governments have been challenged to find new balances between freedom and regulation in relation to the media. In terms of regulation, they have tended to adopt a dualistic approach, seeking to maximise socially positive aspects and minimise negative ones (Roche, 2017). Given the democratic, integrative and social functions of sports (Maguire, 2005), as well as the right of the public to (sports) information, media regulations were introduced to guarantee viewers access to events of major importance for society via FTA TV (Valcke *et al.*, 2009).

However, public service broadcasting receives public funding through a tax levied on all households, so it is legitimate for citizens to put in jeopardy whether the public institution should compete with Pay-TV in buying the rights to broadcast sporting events, knowing that football is an industry that generates a lot of money. One interviewee answered:

"Public Service Operators have special duties but act in commercial markets. So, I guess there is no choice. However, professional entertainment products like football are very much supported by the public sector in a variety of ways. They should have special obligations regarding the public goods (or public bads) nature of their activities. My view is that football is an economic activity that sucks more value out of society than it contributes" (Interviewee 14).

For McQuail (1992) and Napoli (2001), the concept of the public interest has a long, well-established tradition in the field of traditional media governance, and not only serves as a guidepost for policymakers in formulating and evaluating policy. Serving the public interest is a normative principle that represents the standard to which most media policymakers are expected to adhere in their decision-making process (Feintuck & Varney, 2007; Lunt & Livingstone, 2012).

For Iosifidis (2015), public interest in the context of sport refers to the collective cultural, social and informational benefits to society. The question remains: how do we defend the 'public interest' or the 'interests of citizens' today? In Europe, policy interventions aimed at promoting TV production have highlighted the growing influence of the EC's Competition Directorate in crucial areas of media regulation (Wheeler, 2004).

The EU first introduced measures to safeguard the availability of major (or national) sporting events on FTA TV in the late 1990s, as part of the renewed TVWF Directive of 1997. These measures were subsequently included in the 2007 Directive and codified in 2010 in Article 14 of the renamed Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD) (EC, 2010). The main objectives are:

"The main argument for these measures is that public service broadcasting strengthens the public sphere and cultural citizenship by treating people as citizens rather than

consumers and by guaranteeing the principle of affordable and universal access to premium content, including sports events. At a time when sport on TV is often viewed in largely commercial terms, the social and cultural value of FTA sport cannot be underestimated and should remain at the forefront of debates on the regulation of sports broadcasting.”

The AVMSD applies to both linear (broadcast) and non-linear (on-demand) media services. Papathanassopoulos (2018) highlights that the introduction of a ‘non-linear’ category subject to regulation was a highly controversial point. The application of this regulation remains a problematic area.

The introduction of this mechanism is justified by the fact that, in the absence of legislation, coverage of high-profile sporting events tends to migrate from FTA to Pay-Tv (Evens et al., 2013). It is also justified by the fact that many analogue households may be deprived of access to major sporting events because these additional services require an additional subscription.

Regulating and governing media policy in the EU is a difficult task due to the diversity of media environments in each member state; made up of different political systems, socio-cultural and economic structures and levels of technological development (Iosifidis, 2015). However, this mechanism should ensure that Member States are obliged to cover events of high interest to society, despite the highly fragmented market and multi-jurisdictional regulatory environment in the EU (Gratton & Solberg, 2007b).

The term ‘events of major importance for society’ in the Directive leaves it up to each Member State to decide what should be broadcast (Iosifidis *et al.*, 2005). Criteria therefore vary from country to country and change over time, depending on regulatory philosophies and structural/technological circumstances (Napoli, 2001). On the one hand, the implementation of the SCSA Directive represents a real opportunity to promote greater equity in the national creative sector. On the other hand, these regulatory provisions have come under increasing pressure, particularly from screen content providers offering on-demand over-the-top (OTT) streaming services via the Internet.

However, as Sousa (2002) points out, the comprehensive nature of the Directive has not influenced the definition of Portuguese broadcasting policy. Nowadays, the debate on the definition of the public interest is still shrouded in controversy. One interviewee explained:

“There should be a reflection and debate about the concept of football’s ‘public interest’. Who decides that it has ‘public interest’? Politicians? What is the political fundament of that decision? Is it because it is in the interest of politicians themselves, like the games in the Roman Colosseum of yesterdays? It may be a myth maintained without strong reasons. Football is partly a business and a TV business. With the fragmentation of TV offer, there is a number of potential platforms and channels interested in buying certain

games. Thus, normally the ‘public interest’ serves to privilege the ‘public service’ channels.

I believe that the mentioned and arguable democratic, integrative and social functions of sports and specifically football could not be attained in a free market” (interviewee 3).

This observation brings us back to the already discussed issue of power. Especially the power that many in Portugal attribute to the football industry. However, Solberg (2002) argues that sporting events are of social and cultural importance and generate positive externalities. The author argues that, according to the economic theory of welfare, there is an element of public good associated with these externalities. Boardman and Hargreaves-Heap (2000) add that people not only like to watch major sporting events, but they also like to talk about them, and the conversational value of an event depends in part on the number of people watching it.

For Evens *et al.*, (2013), the concept of network externalities is highly relevant to the debate on major events legislation because it can be seen to apply to the shared benefits, difficult to quantify but no less real, that can arise from the coverage of sporting events on universally available FTA TV. As a result, neither sellers nor buyers of rights have any incentive to take full account of externalities such as increased national pride and identity. A fully deregulated market will therefore jeopardise the potential positive externalities of broadcasting major sporting events.

The AVMSD allows member states to draw up a list with events, being of major importance for society that can only be broadcast on FTA TV in order to ensure that a “substantial proportion” of the public would not be deprived of the possibility of following such events. All over Europe, however, the role of public service broadcasting in the sports market is increasingly contested.

The following listed events regulation comprises the events that should qualify as football events (men’s professionals) of general interest to the public in 2023⁷²:

- i. Portuguese players and national teams in the final stages of the World and European Championships in sports supervised in Portugal by sports federations with public benefit status;
- ii. Official matches of the national men’s football teams;
- iii. Finals of the national men’s football competitions, namely the final of the Portuguese Football Cup, the ‘Final Four’ of the LP’s League Cup, and the final of the ‘Cândido de Oliveira’ Super Cup;
- iv. Finals of the men’s club competitions organised by UEFA.

FTA broadcasters need to ensure that a substantial proportion of the public has access to events considered of major importance for society. Because sport is part of everyday life, it has concomitantly raised the stakes with regard to the role of sport in television culture, which has become embodied in

⁷² Republic Diary Nº. 3/2023 – order nº. 155/2023.

a sense of ‘cultural entitlement’ for a large part of the Portuguese population. However, as the AVMS Directive does not contain a definition of the term ‘substantial proportion’, every member state has its own interpretation of this concept (Eveans, 2014). Due to the fact that access to listed events remains a privilege for ‘broadcasters, i.e., linear services that reach a substantial proportion of the public’, the current mechanism fails to provide a fair opportunity to all audio-visual media providers. An interviewee said:

“Professional major-league (i.e., corporate) sports like football are informational economic commodities and should be subject to all fitting regulations. Moreover, it should be pointed out corporate sports are also a source of “public bads”: they are distracting and alienating while constituting a tax on all those that do not enjoy them or are politically against their role in society. No special rights should be attached to football, but its characteristics of public good/bad should be considered to calibrate policy frameworks” (Interviewee 14).

However, the following audience figures (Table 19) demonstrate the importance of live football content in the list of general audience interest, according to the AVMS Directive. Football continues to dominate the preferences of Portuguese TV viewers (FTA channels). Hence, any ‘siphoning’ of major sports events from free-to-air to pay television represents, *prima facie*, an erosion of contemporary cultural citizenship rights (Rowe, 2017).

According to official data from the Marktest group’s Social Media Explorer⁷³, the top three most-watched programmes in January 2024 were football matches. The semi-finals of the League Cup ‘Final Four’, broadcast by SIC channel, was the most watched programme of the month. The first and the second semi-finals matches reached an average of 1.756 million viewers, a share of 34.3%. Then, in second place was the League Cup final between ‘outsiders’ SC Braga and Estoril, with an average of 1.430 million viewers and a share of 29.5%. Finally, in third place was the Portuguese Cup Round of 16, broadcasted by RTP1. The matches SL Benfica x SC Braga and Estoril x FC Porto averaged 1.146 million viewers, a market share of 23.0%. In March 2024, the five most watched programmes were broadcast from football stadiums, in a top five positions in the top 10 programmes, as Table 19 shows:

⁷³ <https://www.meiosepublicidade.pt/2024/04/12/tv-os-programas-que-dominaram-as-audiencias-gravacoes-e-redes-sociais-em-marco-2>

Table 19. Top five of the most watched programmes in March 2024

Date	Channel FTA	Description	Audience in millions
21-03-2024	RTP1	Football: EURO 2024 preparation match - Portugal vs Sweden	2019.9
07-03-2024	SIC	Football: UEL – SL Benfica x Rangers	1980.2
12-03-2024	TVI	Football: UCL - Arsenal v FC Porto	1835.7
26-03-2024	RTP1	Football: EURO 2024 preparation match - Slovenia vs Portugal	1749.2
14-03-2024	SIC	Football: UEL – Atalanta x Sporting CP	1569.5

Source : Marktest group's Social Media Explorer

8.2.3. Regulatory barriers for access to sports content

In 1974, due to its increasing economic significance, sports became subject to EU regulation. European competition regulations began to shape the conditions for selling and exploiting sports media rights in the upstream broadcasting market while sector-specific media regulations have further imposed restrictions on the exploitation of these rights in the downstream market. Whereas competition regulations aim for establishing open and effectively competitive markets, media regulations envisage securing public access to information (Evens, 2014).

8.3. Competition Regulations

The opening of the market to competition, coupled with the technological development of satellite and digital TV, paved the way for the creation of new private TV platforms throughout the EU that wanted a share in the lucrative market previously dominated by public broadcasters.

Competition policy is an essential tool to ensure that private barriers to trade. New TV operators have relied on live football broadcasting to enter the market. The decision as to which operators are allowed to broadcast live football is, therefore, very important because it can have vital repercussions for the audiovisual market, a significant industry in economic terms (García, 2013).

In the sports industries, the joint selling of exclusive broadcasting rights⁷⁴ is a widespread practice. According to this principle, all broadcasting rights to sporting events are sold centrally by the organiser of the event or by the league to one single broadcaster in each territory for a relatively long period, covering all exploitation modes (Toft, 2003; Evens, 2014). By reducing quantity and competition on the supply-side, leagues establish a monopoly in order to maximise joint profits (Cave & Crandall, 2001).

⁷⁴ In these cases, a licensee may also be granted the exclusive right to exploit the media rights for a pre-defined period of time. Typically, time restrictions are imposed on certain (deferred) media rights in order to guarantee first run exclusivity of more valuable live rights (EC, 2014).

These exclusivity deals are blamed to prevent competition by favouring the incumbent broadcasters and to allow foreclosure of new media providers from competition, this issue has caught attention from competition and public policy authorities, which have defined a number of criteria that should be considered when pooling broadcasting rights (Evens, 2014).

The competition rules and policy framework of the EU represents an important institutional restriction for doing sports business. Driven by the courts, the 2007 overhaul of the approach has increased the scope of competition policy towards sports associations and clubs. Nowadays, virtually all activities of sports associations that govern and organize a sports discipline are subject to antitrust rules. This includes genuine sporting rules that are essential for a league, championship or tournament to come into existence as well as ‘real’ business or commercial activities like ticket selling and marketing of broadcasting rights (Budzinski, 2019).

In the absence of political agreement to legislate on media concentration, the EC had only one other mechanism to ensure competition in the TV market: competition policy. In this context, as Wheeler (2004, p. 357) points out, it “became an active player in intervening in European TV markets”. Accordingly, the EC asserts that the joint sale of exclusive broadcasting rights is in contravention of Article 101 (1) TFEU (Heller, Sudaric & Winkler, 2023).

The EU’s approach to the field of sport has been informed by two key drivers of European integration: negative integration and positive integration. In essence, the balance between these two forces has shaped the evolution of EU sport policy. As a result, the EC has intervened against UEFA⁷⁵, EPL and the German Bundesliga in cases that proved to be key to future negotiations. Chronologically, the UEFA case was the first one and it covers a period when UEFA wanted to reduce the exposure of football on TV. EC case law such as the UCL decision has accepted the collective sale of sports rights under a number of conditions:

- i. Broadcasting rights contracts should be concluded for a period not exceeding three years (temporal exclusivity) (EC, 2014);
- ii. Sports rights should be traded through open and transparent tender procedures giving all interested parties equal opportunities;
- iii. Individual clubs should be granted the possibility of selling individually the rights that the league was not able to sell jointly;
- iv. Broadcasting rights should be marketed into different packages (TV, internet, mobile...) to allow several competitors to acquire sports content (EC, 2003; 2005; 2007).

Despite of the fact that the allocation of broadcasting franchises has always been a central element in broadcasting regulation, the first condition can have advantages and disadvantages. For example, a

⁷⁵ See EC, COMP/C.2-37.398 – Joint selling of the commercial rights of the UEFA Champions League, 23 July 2003.

firm bidding for an asset of common value of which it is already a part-owner will find that its net outlay on the purchase is reduced accordingly in relation to the highest bid that was not accepted. This situation interacts with the “winner’s curse”, causing other non-dominant bidders to rationally reduce their bids for fear of being outbid in a bidding contest with an already advantaged competitor. As a result, the operation of this mechanism gives a vertically⁷⁶ integrated bidder an advantage over the owner of the asset. In order to offset or substantially reduce this advantage, an auction procedure has been adopted, such as the sealed-bid procedure, in which the “winner’s curse” plays a less important role (Cave & Crandall, 2001). Cave (1989) points out that the bids are not determined exclusively by their makers’ tastes but depend upon (possibly different) judgements about potential revenues and costs.

For Evens (2014) this last condition is extremely important since the emergence of mobile platforms and the fragmentation of the demand-side urges for unbundling broadcasting rights in separate windows. This fragmentation should allow fans to enjoy a wider range of content formats through a diversity of distribution technologies and should allow individual clubs to exploit certain rights themselves. In addition, unbundling allows rights holders and the media to benefit from new revenue streams from subscription and Pay-Tv services on various access networks (Boyle & Haynes, 2006).

In hypercompetitive media climate, these sports rights have become increasingly important for broadcasters as well as platform operators to differentiate from other competitors (Lefever, 2012). Sports content has always been at the forefront of technological innovations in the media and the development of new market logics, drastically altering the competitive landscape and putting strains on traditional regulatory models (Miller, 2013; Simpson, Puppis & Van den Bulck, 2016). The new operators quickly recognised the importance of live football in attracting new subscribers. For its part, the EC noted that a monopoly of live football rights by one of these operators could lead to excessive dominance of the newly liberalised market. It can be concluded that the development of sports broadcasting policy in the EU has been influenced by conflict, negotiation, imitation, diffusion, and interaction between national and sub-national actors. As Goetz (2002) points out, the EU should be seen as an arena rather than an actor.

The convergence of sports-related media can connect people for non-sports-related purposes, as well as catering to the marketable tastes of fans (Hutchins & Rowe, 2013). Therefore, the relationship between sports organizations and the media industry is no longer solely a matter of mutual interests

⁷⁶ Vertically Integrated: Owning every possible aspect of the business process from start to finish. In media context it allows for control of franchise, media production for the franchise, and sale of media advertising beside the sport product. <https://www.coursehero.com/file/pq6f4m/16-How-are-Sports-Franchises-owned-Sole-proprietorship-Partnerships/>

and dependencies among advertisers, media organizations, sports organizations, and the public (Bellamy, 1989; Real & Mechikoff, 1992; Whannel, 1992; Bogart, 1995; Bolotny & Bourg, 2019).

Van Dijck (2020, p. 2802) argues that “the complexities of platforms are increasingly at odds with the narrow legal requirements and economic concepts on which their governance is based”. Political reassessment of the digital economic sector has focused on issues of content moderation, big data/privacy/surveillance and competition (Popiel, 2022). Competition policy illustrates the most problematic area since legislators have been unsuccessful in enforcing the current competition law (Budzinski & Mendelsohn, 2022). In particular, the rise of video-on-demand and OTT services in an era of what Hutchins and Rowe (2012) have labelled ‘networked media sport’ in an era of ‘digital abundance’.

The production and consumption of media sport is in flux, representing an unstable, unpredictable synthesis of the old and the new, the familiar and the strange, the predictable and the unanticipated (Hutchins & Rowe, 2013), as a mirror of our networked society and globalised operations (Parnell *et al.*, 2020). Sports broadcasts assume unprecedented economic dynamism as they are the largest source of revenue for leading professional sports in industrialized economies (Noll, 2003; Szymanski, 2006a; Gratton & Solberg, 2007b; Szymanski, 2010).

8.3.1. Digital sports broadcasting market political economy

As noted above, an essential requirement for any definition of media governance is that it encompasses the collective rules that organise media systems. The concept of governance takes a holistic view of the rules. It reflects a transfer of power to new actors and forums (Freedman, 2008) and encompasses a much wider range of governance efforts by public and private actors, resulting in a horizontal and vertical extension of regulation (Puppis, 2010).

Media policy studies in general show relatively little conceptual analysis of the actual research process involving stakeholders (Van den Bulck, 2012). However, the various forms of corporate integration have been common in the broadcasting industry in recent years. This has been accompanied by major technological innovations that have led to new products and new ways of communicating. These changes have affected the strategies of the companies involved in the production and distribution of programmes, as well as the value chain and the established synergy between sport and digital media, involving both the supply and demand sides.

Traditionally, Porter’s (1985) value chain concept has been widely applied to analyse the roles of all stakeholders involved in the value creating process within the broadcasting industry as it maps the position these stakeholders occupy in the flow of value-adding activities. A firm acquires a competitive advantage when holding a crucial stake in this chain of activities (such as the exploitation of sports media rights or the distribution of content) where value is created through a sequential line of stages

in which suppliers add value and pass their output to the next intervenient in the chain until the product or service finally reaches the end-user (Lefever, 2012; Evens & Donders, 2018).

To some extent, the nature of sports programming has also changed. As a result, consumption patterns and the way in which sports programmes are viewed have changed (Solberg & Helland, 2011). Four consecutive stages, from creation to consumption, can be distinguished in the value chain in which established actors are assumed to play fixed roles: creation and production, aggregation, distribution, and consumption (as Table 20):

Table 20. The sports broadcasting value chain

Creation and production	In this stage, content is invented, financed and produced. Beside production companies, rights holders (and rights intermediaries as they reduce transaction costs) are an important part of this stage of the value chain.
Aggregation	Aggregators are dealing with scheduling programmes in channels (broadcasters) and bundling these channels in packages to be distributed (platform operators). In this stage, added value is created by the inclusion of new services and applications in broadcasting (such as interactivity and on-demand features).
Distribution	Distributors are making TV content widely accessible through the network infrastructure they exploit. In this stage, telecom companies such as access providers and network operators are involved in distributing and reproducing the content packages to be sold to clients.
Consumption	In this final stage, TV viewers pay and consume the content. In the case of digital media, this content is often enriched by interactive and personalised applications.

Source: Lefever (2012) and Solberg & Helland (2011)

In the sports broadcasting (the term ‘sports broadcasting’ includes both traditional TV broadcasts and newer communication channels, such as the internet and mobile phones) value chain, actors at various levels provide results that serve as input for programme producers. The producers’ results, in turn, serve as input for transport companies that distribute the programmes to viewers (Solberg & Helland, 2011).

The circumstances in which inputs and outputs are transferred are not static but change according to dynamic factors. For Solberg and Helland (2011), technological innovations can change conditions, for example by increasing the number of products related to the main product, in this case traditional TV programmes, or by affecting the way products are consumed. The authors also point out that the emergence of new products that are complementary to existing products can strengthen the link between producers and consumers. This in turn can make sports broadcasting more profitable, provided that the producers of the core programmes are also involved in the production and distribution of the new products.

Evens (2014) emphasises that strategies are significantly influenced by the institutional context, in particular the legal framework, such as media ownership rules. However, he notes that various forms of corporate integration can increase the market power of companies involved in sports broadcasting. Puppis (2010) notes that the new institutionalism considers both the role of agency and the influence of governance on media organisations. This draws attention to the way in which media organisations respond to rules.

Multilevel governance explores both the vertical and horizontal dimensions of the redistribution of power and authority. These two dimensions of integration are generally driven by a company's desire or need to grow. Whether it is sourcing and producing raw materials or delivering the final product to customers and/or end users, all functions need to be performed efficiently and effectively (Puppis & Van den Bulck, 2019).

Jenkins (2006) used the term 'economic convergence' to describe the horizontal integration of the entertainment industry, resulting in business synergies that stimulate cultural production. Jenkins' (2006, pp. 2-3) definition of media convergence as "the flow of content across multiple media platforms, the cooperation between multiple media industries and the migratory behaviour of media audiences" is a constructive starting point for discussing media convergence, as it links its industrial, technological and social aspects.

In contrast, Holt (2011) proposes the term "structural convergence" to describe the mergers that have taken place in the media industries since the mid-1980s, a mixture of vertical and horizontal integration. Both terms describe the complex developments in media governance. As media companies have grown larger and more profitable, they have often acquired companies in the same industry, thus integrating horizontally (Wasko, 2005). In this context, we define integration as synonymous with expansion.

According to Hoehn & Lancefield (2003), foreclosure and increased concentration in the broadcasting value chain can be achieved through a variety of means:

- i. Selling exclusive long-term contracts to broadcasters (vertical restraints) (Aghion & Bolton, 1987);
- ii. Bundling of rights (Whinston, 1990);
- iii. Horizontal integration (mergers) between broadcasters (Marks & Hooghe, 2004);
- iv. Vertical integration between broadcaster and sports company (Stotlar, 2013);
- v. Distribution terms for channel providers (Evens & Donders, 2018);
- vi. Collective agreement between broadcasters (e.g., EBU);
- vii. Specific policy rules (e.g., legislation on listed events).

8.3.2. Multilevel governance: horizontal and vertical mergers and acquisitions

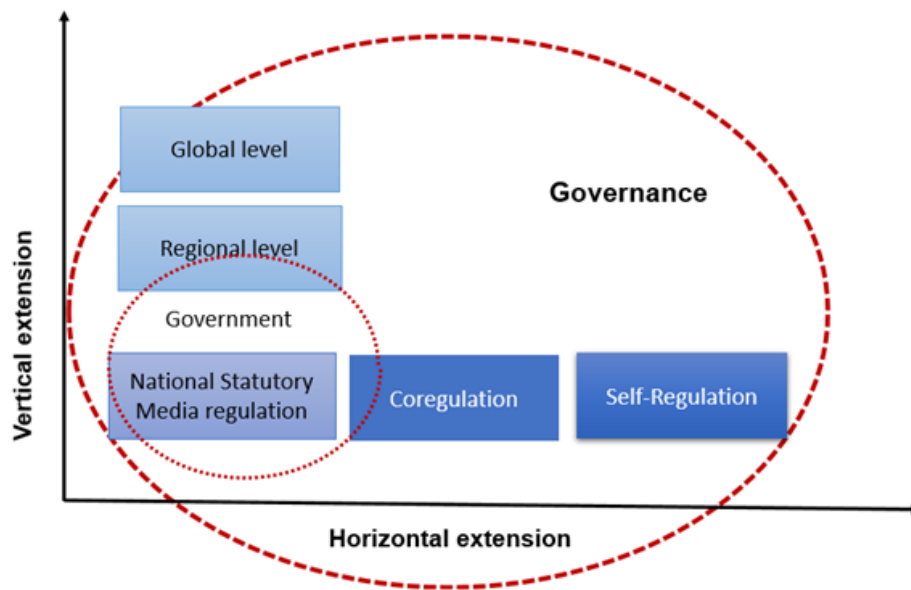
Multilevel governance is used as a normative and analytical concept. It can include legal regulation, self-regulation and co-regulation (Gratton & Solberg, 2007). According to Puppis and Van den Bulck (2019), self-regulation refers to organisations at the sectoral level that set rules and standards for the behaviour of companies in the media sector. Co-regulation, on the other hand, refers to self-regulation with some degree of state control. The authors suggest that while statutory regulation may struggle to adapt to societal and media changes, self- and co-regulation offer several advantages, such as flexibility, cost-effectiveness and expertise. They also suggest that self- and co-regulation offer more assertive solutions to the challenge of reconciling media regulation with media freedom. However, Puppis and Van den Bulck (2019) warn of the risks of self- and co-regulation, both of which carry certain risks inherent in maximising the economic benefits of regulated entities.

Multilevel governance aims to ensure efficient, effective and sound administration. Two dimensions are distinguished: horizontal and vertical. In summary, horizontal integration refers to the relationships between governmental and non-governmental actors (including private actors). The vertical dimension refers to the territorial distribution of governmental authority (including activities/interventions at regional and global levels) (Marks & Hooghe, 2004).

The governance choice approach builds on early debates on 'governing without government' (Rhodes, 1996), shifts from 'the positive to the regulatory state' (Majone, 1996), and 'alternative forms of governance and regulation', in particular self- and co-regulation (Latzer, Just & Saurwein, 2013), characterised by the growing consideration of the involvement of private actors in governance arrangements (Latzer, Saurwein & Just, 2019).

Black (2002, p. 17) notes that the concept of regulation is "difficult to understand, if we recognise it at all" because "it remains a concept inherently linked to the state". For Rhodes (1996), the concept of governance is popular but imprecise. However, it allows us to encompass all forms of rules designed to organise media systems, makes it possible to discuss a horizontal and vertical extension of government (Puppis, 2007; 2010) and thus to distinguish different forms and levels of collective media governance, as shown in Figure 13.

Figure 13. Media governance as horizontal and vertical extension of government



Source: (Puppis, 2007, p. 331)

According to Radaelli (2003), national public policies are ‘Europeanised’ through vertical and horizontal mechanisms. Vertically, through the direct mandates of the European institutions (in the form of EC directives, ECJ rulings, EC decisions on competition) and horizontally (suggestion of best practices through political forums at the European level). The two mechanisms therefore have a combined effect, in that the overall result has led to changes in media legislation, the adoption of proposed policy instruments and regulatory approaches at national level.

Strategic alliances, mergers, and acquisitions can establish vertical or horizontal integration relationships. With the advent of new distribution technologies and the deregulation of markets, media companies have increasingly pursued integration, merging with other companies either within the same supply chain or across different stages of production (Wasko, 2014; Birkinbine *et al.*, 2017). This alignment allows organisations to gain greater control over supply and distribution (Stotlar, 2000). The literature identifies several forms of agreement, such as: strategic alliances (Doz & Hamel, 1998; Lorange & Roos, 1993), joint ventures (Hladik, 1988; Kogut, 1988), and mergers and acquisitions (Hitt *et al.*, 2001; De Pamphillis, 2003) are commonly used by organisations to gain access to scarce resources and reduce uncertainty (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978; Aldrich, 1979).

The emergence of digital technology, combined with political developments towards liberalisation, has further expanded the media ecosystem and multiplied the number of delivery platforms and sports channels (Seabright & Hagen, 2007). In recent years, operators have therefore sought alliances that allow them to acquire the wide range of skills needed to penetrate new markets (Iosifidis, 2005).

Vertical integration is often promoted as a way to seamlessly integrate platforms for user convenience. However, in practice, it can result in privatisation flows causing user lock-in and vendor

lock-in (Ji & Waterman, 2016). These dynamic concentrates power at the vertical integration, infrastructuralization, and cross-sectorization (Van Dijck, 2020).

Traditionally, vertical integration requires strategies to extend reach both backwards to suppliers and forwards to retailers and consumers (Hoehn & Lancefield, 2003). In both cases, there are increased risks due to the tendency for investment needs to increase (backwards); due to fluctuations in consumer demand (forwards). If demand falls, producers are left with stocks that no one wants (Stotlar, 2000). However, there is a greater chance of maximising profits more efficiently by taking control of production and distribution (Doyle, 2002).

Following the Chicago School emphasized that vertical relationship are agreements concluded between companies that both fulfil an indispensable function in putting the product on the market suggests that they are primarily used to make the vertical combination more efficient. After all, in a vertical relationship, when one party does a poor job in satisfying consumer demand, this will not only affect the consumer but also the other trading partner. Through this special interdependent relationship, every party in a vertical agreement can, in principle, be considered a natural ally of the consumer (Verouden, 2008).

Other parallel forms of integration have emerged. We have seen examples of horizontal integration, where former rivals have started to collaborate or even merge rather than continue to compete. Others have seen examples of vertical integration, where players operating at different levels of the sports broadcasting value chain have joined forces (Solberg & Helland, 2011). According to Evens and Donders (2018), the governance structure shows that relationships between broadcasters and distributors are characterised by mutual dependence and a complementariness of business interests.

8.3.3. Concentration of new technology and deregulated markets

In Europe, the market and structure (concentration of ownership) as well as the political and regulatory context have had the net effect of evolving digital distribution systems that have led to major media organisations engaging in mergers, acquisitions, vertical integration strategies and ownership disputes in all major industries, including sport (Gerrard, 2000; Stotlar, 2000; Turner & Shilbury, 2008). As a result, over the last few years, a number of multinational companies seem to be running rampant into the sports industry (Stotlar, 2013).

For example, in 2003, the Italian Pay-Tv platforms Telepiú and Stream, which had been broadcasting Italian Serie A matches since 1999, merged to form Sky-Italy (Gratton & Solberg, 2007a). A similar merger took place in Spain in the same year, when former rivals merged to form a single company called Grupo Sogecable⁷⁷ (Almiron & Segovia, 2012). The SBS Broadcasting group is a media

⁷⁷ Sogecable's history includes the tough competition over broadcasting rights of the football games of the Spanish premier league, the first round of which occurred in 1997, and the expensive takeover of the

company that has been active in Scandinavia since the early 1990s. In 2005, the SBS Broadcasting group expanded its Pay-Tv broadcasting and advertising activities to seven countries, including the Netherlands, Belgium, Hungary and Romania. Some of its channels are involved in sports programming and others operate in the same market. The fact that they are under the same parent company has influenced the level of competition in the markets (Sminia, 2003).

As a result, the entry of new players into the distribution market has intensified competition and highlighted the importance of content, particularly sports rights, as a differentiating factor (Evens & Donders, 2018). The increasing interest of cable operators in owning sports networks has raised concerns about discriminatory behaviour, both upstream and downstream (Chen & Waterman, 2007; Lee & Kim, 2011).

The exploding broadcasting rights marketplace is considered one of the driving forces behind this fast-growing share of sports within the European economy. In today's hypercompetitive media climate, these sports rights have become increasingly important for broadcasters as well as platform operators to differentiate from other competitors.

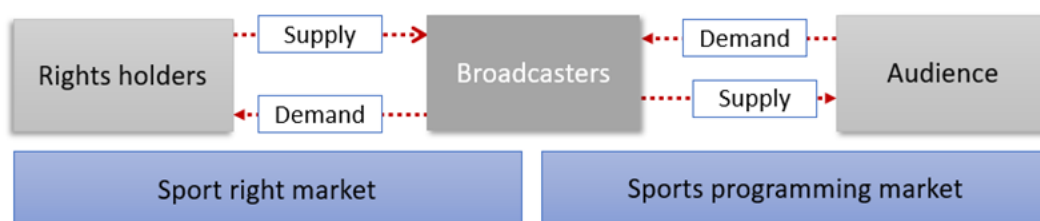
Indeed, TV operators are increasingly involved in a fight for the rights to broadcast live sports in order to open and simultaneously close markets and achieve platform leadership. By controlling premium sports rights, they aim to play a prominent role in the sports broadcasting market and provide the most attractive content in order to extract value from a range of services and obtain the greatest economic benefit (Evens, 2014).

The exclusivity regime, in addition to the fees charged to their subscribers, also benefits advertising revenues. Although the rights holders are not necessarily Pay-Tv operators, as this is a choice that depends entirely on the business model of the concerned broadcaster, but in such cases the viewing experience is limited solely to subscribers. A similar limiting effect occurs in the case of a broadcaster with limited territorial coverage.

In any case, the media give us today the symbolic space of omnipresence, but a space with rules created on the one hand by state and EU regulatory instruments and on the other hand by the ramifications and concentration of ownership of media (McChesney & Schiller, 2003; McChesney, 2008). It follows that in any case, when discussing broadcasting rights in sports and regardless of the relative law provisions, there are three main parties involved: The 'broadcasting right holders', the 'media channels' that bought the rights to broadcast the event and the 'audience' of the event (Figure 14).

competitive satellite-TV platform Vía Digital, driven by Telefónica, which in 2003 gave way to Canal+ (Almiron & Segovia, 2012).

Figure 14. Sports broadcasting market - transmission rights process



Source: (Evens, 2014)

This dependent relationship between sports organizations and media has evolved significantly following the introduction of broadcast technology in sport. Firstly, the increased competition on the demand side has fundamentally changed the political economy of sports and reshaped the economics of professional sports and, in particular European club football (Evens, 2014). Sports markets thus have a multi-sided character and internalize the network externalities that are generated both by the supply and demand side of sports broadcasting (Budzinski & Satzer, 2022).

According to Tsiotsou (2005), the ecosystem unfolds from these three actors mentioned above. It is legitimate to question how this repositioning has attributes that mark the forms of appropriation by the spectators? To answer this question, the bold work of Silverstone (2006) can be applied. The author leaves an alert to the role of the media in the moralization of civilization and corroborates the importance of the media (the press, broadcasts, the internet, and increasingly peer-to-peer networks), because they have a profound meaning in the way the world is understood by individuals (audience). In sum, we will say that the debate on the ownership and distribution of broadcasting rights has important consequences in terms of power and governance structures (García, Niemann & Grant, 2011).

8.3.4. Building a leadership platform: broadcasters and distributors

The media industry has evolved into a multi-sided market in recent years, with distribution platforms increasingly occupying a central position in the market. Indeed, the TV ecosystem has been marked by a series of power conflicts between TV broadcasters and distributors. In Europe, Pay-Tv platforms have entered into exclusive deals with sports rights holders in order to differentiate themselves from FTA broadcasters. Identified as the most profitable strategy, sports rights holders have arranged exclusive window schemes to enhance their bargaining power and to benefit from the scarcity of their broadcast rights (Evens et al., 2013).

However, limited competition in each part of the European Pay-Tv market (upstream and downstream) has led to a fundamental transformation in the meaning and extent of the acquisition of exclusive broadcasting rights. Whereas exclusive rights windows were initially seen as a means for all Pay-Tv operators to create a competitive advantage over FTA channels, incumbent (and first- moving)

Pay-Tv broadcasters have effectively re-interpreted these windows as a privilege to exclusively provide key sports programming (Nicita & Ramello, 2005).

Licensing on an exclusive territorial basis is the most common form contained in sports broadcasting rights contracts. It means that the licensee acquires the exclusive right to exploit the media rights in a given a national territory⁷⁸, in order to guarantee territorial exclusivity, sports rights are sold on the condition that the holder of the rights excludes the possibility of receiving and viewing the broadcast outside the (national) territory.

The licensee may be granted the exclusive right to exploit the rights on a specific platform. This means that the rights holder divides the rights into slices and sells them separately to different distribution platforms (EC, 2014).

A licensing agreement typically requires the licensee to ensure that:

- i. Transmissions on a pay and/or Pay-Tv basis and by satellite are encrypted;
- ii. Digital and analogue terrestrial transmissions do not overspill outside the territory other than as a natural consequence of using terrestrial transmission systems;
- iii. Transmissions via the internet are geo-blocked-in accordance with the highest reasonable industry standards⁷⁹.

According to Evens *et al.*, (2013), the combination of exclusivity and the underlying economic characteristics of sports programming make the sports programming market particularly prone to breaches of competition law. Szymanski (2004) recommend 'non- exclusive sale to multiple broadcasters' as a means to tackle the persistent competition issues related to the buying and selling of EPL football. However, such a move would be strongly opposed by sports organisations and (at least some) broadcasters and could well fatally undermine the sports programming market.

Exclusivity, however, is not always a bad thing. It may be necessary to create competitive incentives or assure quality control (Hovenkamp, 2008). In this sense, exclusive content on a platform with smaller standalone value increases the owner's reliance on content sales. However, exclusive content also increases the platform's value to users, thereby reducing the difference in utilities for the two firms. This, in turn, increases heterogeneity in profit foci and the likelihood of compatibility (Adner, Chen & Science, 2019). This reduction in heterogeneity reduces the likelihood of one-way compatibility. Ultimately, the impact of exclusive content on one-way compatibility depends on its effect on utility difference and additional profits from content sales to the platform owner. This finding contrasts with studies on system competition, where companies with larger networks tend to favour incompatibility because compatibility would result in a loss of their market share advantage (Dayan & Katz, 1992).

⁷⁸ There are a few notable exceptions, however. In the Nordic countries, pan-Scandinavian broadcasters usually sell and exploit media rights at a regional basis, i.e. in more than one national territory.

⁷⁹ Based on the 'Invitation to Tender' of various national and European football media rights.

8.3.5. Concentration of ownership between broadcasters and sports clubs

The digitisation process has accentuated technological convergence, along with political, economic, and cultural evolution. As a result, distinctions between media, telecommunications, and other communication and information aspects have become obsolete, breaking down boundaries (Puppis & Bulck, 2019). Consequently, the introduction of technology into the sports broadcasting environment has contributed to an increase in the complexity of relationships, affecting organisations in terms of relationships and the acquisition of resources. The size of today's TV audiences puts TV channel managers in a privileged position to negotiate event schedules, sometimes modifying or determining the rules of sporting events (Gouveia & Pereira, 2021).

Since 2011, there has been an increase in merger and acquisition activity in the broadcasting and distribution sector, largely due to the spectacular growth of online video and the emergence of OTT platforms. Dobson and Goddard (2011) suggest that it is easy to predict further vertical integration and joint ventures between broadcasters and football clubs in the future, and that the interface between football and TV will continue to be a major battleground where many of the issues affecting the future development of football will be fought out and decided.

The issue of vertical integration between football clubs and TV companies first hit the headlines in England with the announcement on 7 September 1998 that BSkyB was offering £623 million to acquire 100% of Manchester United (Walsh & Brown, 1999). News of BskyB's bid sparked outrage among Manchester United fans and small shareholders who feared that their club would be destroyed by Mr Murdoch. However, following an investigation by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission into BskyB's bid for the club, the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, announced that the bid was anti-competitive, contrary to the public interest and would damage the quality of British football (Gibson & Watt, 1999). The argument that broadcaster ownership of a sports league may be anti-competitive relies in part upon the so-called toe hold effect (Bulow *et al.*, 1999).

The Independent Manchester United Supporters' Association welcomed the news, also the group Shareholders United Against Murdoch welcomed the news and pledged to keep fighting for the independence of football clubs. Spokesman Michael Crick delighted in parodying Sky's response, declaring (Gibson & Watt, 1999):

"It is a victory for football, a victory for broadcasting and a victory for the ordinary fan".

Another example is that of Italian businessman Andrea Radrizzani, founder and chairman of the sports broadcasting group Eleven Sports in 2015. He is also the majority shareholder of Leeds United. It is noteworthy that Leeds' stadium, Elland Road Stadium, does not belong to the club itself, but was purchased by Radrizzani in 2017, shortly after he purchased the club.

Eleven Sports holds the UK broadcasting rights to football matches from Spain's La Liga and Italy's Serie A. However, the OTT sports broadcaster collapsed in the UK and Ireland after a brief period of operation. At the time, a spokesman for Eleven Sports stated:

"Without carriage deals with the existing platforms, alongside the challenges of rampant piracy, the current market dynamics in the UK and Ireland are very hostile to new entrants" ... "We are in discussions with our rights partners, La Liga and IMG, about how we can restructure our existing deals to continue our current OTT (streaming) service" (Percy & Hayward, 2018).

In 2018, the DAZN Group acquired the Eleven Group companies. DAZN also acquired the Team Whistle, a sports and entertainment media agency based in the United States. Andrea Radrizzani subsequently joined the board of DAZN, which is backed by billionaire Len Blavatnik. In 2023, Andrea Radrizzani became the owner of the Italian club Unione Calcio Sampdoria, using the Elland Road stadium as a bank guarantee. Such a situation generates a politics of personalisation and ensures that political actors not only need to have public charisma, but also need to be successful, they need strong networks of personal relationships with friends, patrons and supporters (Armstrong & Mitchell, 2008).

The examples are numerous and often illustrate not isolated observations, but their interaction. However, our point here is not to study business strategies, but just to observe them in a less ad hoc way. However, we add that this TV-based financial symbiosis with the business model allows the owners of sporting events to be effective organisations that generate events and intellectual property, and consequently gain international recognition and status.

Recalling the strategic importance of the symbiosis between media and sport, we easily assume that media/football complex is a very dynamic system in which actors are constantly negotiating positions and power relations. Initially, TV needed sport more than sport needed TV. Nowadays both need each other, it is a relationship that raises many issues. Because the boundary between media industry and football has been very fluid.

Initially, these boundaries were crossed when the media acted as sports promoters, creating competitions and promoting the game for their own economic purposes (Borges, 2019). Then sports organisations ventured into the media frontier, taking advantage of the transformation of the TV industry, whose structure has been decisively affected by the rise of platforms as the dominant infrastructural and/or economic model in the media, electronic communications and ICT sectors. As argued by Evens and Donders (2018), the governance structure shows that the relationship between broadcasters and distributors is characterised by mutual dependence and complementary commercial interests. The vertical integration between broadcasters and sports clubs there is a theoretical basis for concluding that vertical integration between broadcasters and sports teams could result in a lessening

of competition in the market for sports broadcast rights. The question remains whether broadcasters have become too powerful in relation to sports organisations, or vice versa.

8.3.6. Circulation of power in so-called digital ecosystems

The complexity of platforms is increasingly at odds with the narrow legal and economic concepts on which their governance is based (Van Dijck, 2020). The hybridisation of distribution technologies, driven by digitalisation and the convergence of network infrastructures, has intensified competition. Today, most European markets are effectively controlled by two or three distributors, replacing former monopolies, with more balanced market shares than before (Evens & Donders, 2018).

In EPL the sales round for the seasons 2019/20 to 2021/22, the FAPL offered seven rights packages with 200 matches overall, of which a single buyer could only purchase media rights to at most 144 matches. The broadcasters Sky Sports, BT Sports and Amazon Prime Video acquired the domestic rights for these 200 matches for on average €1.9 billion per season. Indeed, the income per match generated by EPL TV deals is almost three times what its nearest competitor leagues in Europe (Germany, Spain, Italy, and France) can achieve despite all of them seeing significant growth in their own deals in recent year⁸⁰.

The next sales cycle that starting in 2024/25, the England Football League's (EFL) clubs have agreed a record domestic rights deal with broadcaster Sky Sports worth £935m over a five-year period. The new deal represents a 50% increase on the current rights value and will see significantly enhanced exposure for all EFL clubs with an uplift in coverage across all divisions (Championship, Ligue One, League Two, and others). However, from the 2024/25 season onward, this new deal with Sky Sports will effectively replace the EFL's domestic video streaming option provided via iFollow and Club streaming services⁸¹.

In France's Ligue 1, in the latest sale of broadcasting rights for the 2020/21 to 2024/25 seasons, the broadcasting rights were acquired by several broadcasters, Mediapro being the largest. After the acquisition of the rights, broadcasters can sub-license their rights, as seen in the most recent cycle where Mediapro sub-licensed part of its rights to broadcaster beIN Sports. In total, the broadcasters agreed to pay €1.2 billion in each of the four seasons for the seven packages that were offered, including rights for all 380 matches of the season⁸². For overseas broadcasting, Ligue 1 receives €70 million from beIN per season until 2024, under a deal first agreed in 2011 and then extended in 2014.

⁸⁰ KPMG, Broadcasting revenue landscape – big money in the “big five” leagues, 6 August 2019, [Football Benchmark - Broadcasting revenue landscape – big money in the “big five” leagues](#); Premier League, Sales of UK and Ireland live TV rights decided, 7 June 2018, <https://www.premierleague.com/news/708008>

⁸¹ EFL & Sky Sports broadcast rights agreement, <https://www.efl.com/news/2023/may/efl-and-sky-sports-broadcast-rights-agreement/>

⁸² LFP, Résultats de L'appel à candidatures pour les droits audiovisuels de la Ligue 1, 29 May 2018, <http://prod-ibp.lfp.lfp.fr/api/v1/files/5b0fd7e38fe56f3bed4f3691?alt=file>

Revenues above this amount are split between the broadcaster and Ligue 1 (Heller, Sudaric & Winkler, 2023).

In Germany, the Bundesliga is broadcast by broadcasters Sky, DAZN, Sport1, ProSiebenSat.1, RTL, ARD and ZDF, who have secured the broadcasting rights for an average of €1.1 billion per season. Internationally, the DFL sells media rights at cycles independent of the sale of domestic media rights to individual countries or regions. For 2020/21, revenues from the sale of foreign media rights dropped by more than 20% from around €250 million in the previous season to EUR 200 million (due to the pandemic)⁸³.

In Italy, in the last cycle (2018/19 to 2020/21), DAZN and Sky paid on average €1.0 billion per season for the domestic media right sales of Serie A. For the same period, broadcasters paid €370 million per season for the overseas broadcasting rights. For the seasons 2021/22 to 2023/24, DAZN on average pay annually €840 million for the domestic rights allowing DAZN to show exclusively seven out of ten matches per match day, and to broadcast the remaining three together with another broadcaster⁸⁴. DAZN beat a rival bid by Sky, owned by US group Comcast, which had offered €2.25 billion for Serie A rights on its satellite and digital terrestrial TV platforms. DAZN, a sport streaming app, marks a big advance on DAZN's current agreement with Serie A. Owned by billionaire Len Blavatnik's Access Industries, DAZN sealed a technological and distribution agreement with Telecom Italia (TIM) to give its Serie A bid a boost.

However, in Spain, La Liga offered eight separate packages in the most recent sale for seasons 2019/20 to 2021/22, of which Telefónica acquired the main packages⁸⁵. Together with Mediapro, the successful broadcasters spend on average €1.1 billion per season in the current cycle⁸⁶. Internationally, broadcaster Mediapro marketed La Liga's media rights, between 2019/20 to 2023/24, for which its payer €0.9 billion annually.

The primary driver of the escalating cost of sports rights is intensified competition among broadcasters and streaming platforms, media entities and platforms such as Amazon and DAZN. As

⁸³ Süddeutsche Zeitung, Minus bei TV-Auslandsvermarktung erschreckt die Bundesliga, 19 December 2020, <https://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/international-minus-bei-tv-auslandsvermarktung-erschreckt-die-bundesliga-dpa-urn-newsml-dpa-com-20090101-201119-99-391161>

⁸⁴ Reuters, DAZN grabs broadcast rights for Serie A in Italy, 26 March 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-soccer-italy-seriea-broadcast-idUSKBN2BI20P/>

⁸⁵ In the context Telefónica's acquisition of DTS in 2015, the broadcaster committed in negotiations with the Spanish competition authority Comisión Nacional de los Mercados y la Competencia (CNMC) to grant competitors access to up to half of their premium channels with exclusive content against payment. Competitors could choose the channels, amongst others the first division football and other live sporting events. These remedies would at least apply until 2020 and could be extended by three years - https://www.cnmc.es/sites/default/files/972414_18.pdf

⁸⁶ KPMG, Broadcasting revenue landscape – big money in the Big Five leagues, 6 August 2019, https://www.footballbenchmark.com/library/broadcasting_revenue_landscape_big_money_in_the_big_five_leagues

more and more media entities strive to secure exclusive rights to broadcast popular sporting events, bidding wars among these players have become increasingly common.

8.4. Live Sport Media Market and Digital Piracy

Governing bodies in the major popular sports took a lead in creating this symbiosis between mass sport and mass TV. Their gambles paid off in most cases. They have generally thrived and thus been able to invest heavily in the production of national and international sport events. They have been able to charge premium prices to media companies for the sale of sport TV rights and associated intellectual property rights on an exclusive basis. However given the media technology revolution led by the internet, the media tide may now be turning (Roche, 2017).

Live sports content differs from traditional digital content in several important aspects. Firstly, live sports content possesses an inherent liveness, creating a sense of urgency in which the outcome is essentially unknown and the process of achieving a known outcome is thus a dramatic and compelling viewing experience and limited availability for viewers (Roche, 2017). Unlike movies or music that can be enjoyed at any time, sports fans prefer consuming sports content through live broadcasts to avoid spoilers and experience the excitement in real-time (Hoof, 2019).

As a result, in today's digital landscape the number of stakeholders has increased exponentially (Freedman, 2018). The digitalisation entails two key factors that impact the core football business: new technologies and changing consumer behaviour (Schmidt & Holzmayer, 2019). As a result, the multiplatform strategy has come to play an important role in the production, distribution and consumption of football globally. However, platform owners may become frenemies (friends and enemies) - they compete but at the same time cooperate with each other. Of particular interest are settings characterized by asymmetric compatibility where one platform owner hosts a rival's application but not vice versa (Adner, Chen & Science, 2019).

Speaking at a Leaders in Sport event, the CEO of BeIN Media Group, a Qatari media group and one of the world's leading sports and entertainment networks, Yousef Al-Obaidly said:

"Many in the industry still had a misplaced belief that US technology companies launching streaming services, along with the likes of DAZN, would deliver growth in the value of rights moving forwards" ... "I simply don't know where this money is going to come from! This is because every deal needs, one, a combination of at least two bidders in a market, and two, a level of exclusivity in line with the investment made. And while sometimes there are headwinds outside our control, these two factors do not exist" (LaMay, 2022).

The internet's free-for-all culture can operate to undermine the financial bases of media sport industries. As the second decade of the 21st century progresses it is possible that internet piracy will

begin to undermine the exclusivity of the TV rights to national- and international-level sport and its events which have traditionally been purchased at such high cost by media companies.

If effectively non-exclusive (ultimately free for all) coverage of sporting events were to develop significantly, the prices achievable by TV companies for this type of programming content could decrease substantially (Roche, 2017; Jarvie, Thornton & Mackie, 2017). In turn, if this was to happen then the income available for the original sport TV rights holders, namely football leagues, would also begin to collapse, since this source typically constitutes the biggest single component of their income.

The complex dynamics of the football business extend beyond the pitch and into the boardrooms where businessmen meet. While the commercial value of sports media remains inextricably linked to viewing behaviour (subscriptions), technological change and the digitalisation of media are challenging the utility of established audience measurement techniques. Audiences, as stakeholders with a vested interest, may not actually participate in the policy process. However, their influence (or power) significantly affects the outcome of the process.

8.4.1. Live sports piracy

Media and Entertainment operators are more diverse than ever, and consumers can feast on a bewildering array of direct-to-consumer services alongside more established Pay-Tv offerings. The very nature of fragmentation, then content aggregation and more recently service aggregation means today's streaming services need to be delivered to a range of devices that are not directly within the operator's control. Content is distributed through specific and aggregated apps and operates in an environment that provides a significant surface area for piracy (Hutchins & Sanderson, 2017).

Speaking at the 2023 Summit, Javier Tebas, the head of the organising body for Spanish football, began by outlining the key points of his strategic vision for the game. His starting point was that the:

“Consolidating economic control is the key to any competition, as is centralising media rights, which allows us to unify the brand and fight piracy” (quoted in Summit 2023 web site).

Both legal sellers and broadcasting rights holders are concerned about piracy. For instance, in a BBC study in 2017 found that more than a third of football fans regularly watch through illegal streams. Of those polled, 36% admitted to streaming EPL matches via unofficial providers at least once a month, with 22% saying they used online streams at least once a week (Gil, 2017).

More recently, in a survey conducted by global research firm YouGov Sport has found that 5.1 million adults in England, Scotland and Wales admitted to watching sport via an illegal streaming website, pirated app or modified set-top box in the first six months of 2023. Live coverage of the EPL is big business. TV broadcast rights are sold off for billions each season but hidden within the marketplace is a lingering challenge to stakeholders. For all of the money generated by supporters who are content

to pay monthly subscriptions to authorised partners and providers, there is a significant minority who continue to watch the action unfolding at home via illicit platforms (Slater, 2023).

Piracy today is part of the digital ecosystem (Filloux, 2012). Digital piracy involves such things as accessing and rerouting sport event coverage from audiences in one nation where it might have been paid for to distribution for audiences in other nations where it might not have been (Roche, 2017). Piracy and measures taken against it – such as geo-blocking – are part of continuously fought “battles and dramas between formal and informal, the ill-structured and the well-structured, the standardized and the wild” (Star, 2010, p. 614).

“I have to say that there is a lot of hypocrisy when it comes to digital piracy. Everyone is involved in one way or another” (interviewee 1).

One of the best examples of this is BeIN Media Group. The group distributes live sports and major international events across 5 continents, 43 countries and 9 different languages, covering Europe, North America, Asia, Australasia and the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). Since becoming independent from Al Jazeera Sport in 2013, BeIN Sports has become an important part of Qatar’s efforts to establish itself as a global and regional power in the world of sport, with particular influence in the field of football through the acquisition of broadcasting rights for many of the main European leagues and world competitions (LaMay, 2022).

Sports media network have come to play a far role of geo-influences. In 2017, a blockade was launched against Qatar by several neighbouring countries, and BeIN was caught in the crosshairs of attempts to undermine Qatar’s economic interests and tarnish its reputation. A Saudi-based network, ‘beoutQ’, began engaging in the unauthorized distribution, streaming, and broadcasting of media content created by licence to BeIN. How? ‘beoutQ’ pirated BeIN’s signal and offered it as a low-cost alternative to audiences. The piracy quickly evolved into a highly sophisticated operation, encompassing the widespread sale of ‘beoutQ’ branded set-top boxes and annual subscriptions in retail stores in Saudi Arabia and other countries, including Bahrain, Jordan, Morocco, and even France. These set-top boxes received satellite broadcasts of pirated content, primarily content licensed to or owned by BeIN.

Within this context, speaking at a Leaders in Sport event, Al-Obaidly said that BeIN Media would be forced to amend its commercial offers for sports rights as a result of the massive pirating of content by Saudi Arabia-based BeoutQ (Thomson, 2019):

“I’m here to tell you how the endless growth of sports rights is over. Not only that, but in certain cases, rights values are going drop off a cliff, and the very economic model of our industry is going to be re-written. Any rights-holders who think that the technology companies of the West Coast are their financial saviours are going to be swiftly disappointed” ...” We now regard all sports rights as non-exclusive and our commercial

offers will reflect that. I am also confident that other broadcasters – of all shapes and sizes – will make similar devaluations, while many once-premium rights will remain unsold,” he said.

Sports rights can be seen as a lucrative form of intangible property. As a result, they argued that football deserves a different treatment. The words of BeIN’s CEO were listened to with great enthusiasm.

“I am amazed that these words have not been uttered before! TV rights are overpaid, and this overvaluation has drugged football. Incidentally, almost never has this sudden and disproportionate wealth served to develop the system, but rather created the opportunity for more waste and more debt. The day the broadcasters decide to pay less, football will really have to think about giving itself a more compatible economic model. Something I have been hoping for a long time” (interviewee 4).

BeIN CEO also criticised the reaction of the majority of broadcasting rights holders to BeoutQ’s pirate operation as disastrous, with the exception of a few, such as the EPL and Spain’s La Liga. The war over pirated transmissions resulting from ‘beoutQ’ played out in international courts, in the court of world public opinion and over the airwaves. Although the battle of the broadcasters is over following the lifting of the blockade against Qatar and the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between Qatar and Saudi Arabia in 2021, the reverberations of this major challenge to BeIN’s previously unrivalled dominance will certainly be felt by football fans across the region.

In an interview with BeIN Sports CEO Yousef Al-Obaidly, known around the world for leading the global fight against broadcast piracy, he was asked if it had been an important year for BeIN in its relationship with Qatar regarding piracy?

“We have been relentless in our fight against piracy for over three and a half years now; and we won’t stop. Through international legal cases, political lobbying, media scrutiny and commercial pressure, we have deployed every lever of influence to hold to account anyone who steals intellectual property. Qatar won one of its most high-profile legal cases of recent times at the World Trade Organisation (WTO). This was an important moment for beIN and for Qatar as together - side by side - supported by the entire international community (including the most senior levels of the US and UK governments, the EC, the WTO, and world sport), we upheld international law. It was also an important moment for the truth, which always prevails” (Al-Obaidly, 2021).

Forbes analyst Mike Ozanian has said that sports rights inflation is unsustainable in the long term. According to the report, the JPMorgan analysts say that firstly, this is due to the decline of linear video and despite strong ratings and live viewing, although they predict that some sports rights may still see significant renewal increases in the coming years. Secondly, sports are likely to move increasingly to

digital/streaming platforms in the coming years, making it imperative for distributors to develop their digital business models to replicate the monetisation of linear platforms, without which video margins will continue to erode (Ozanian, 2023). The future outlook is not optimistic. One of those interviewed described his position as ‘questioning’:

“I cannot predict the future. Will technology make piracy more difficult or impossible? Can the football industry and the TV business live with a high piracy rating? Do or will they discard piracy as collateral damage? I think nobody knows. If we knew, the business model would already be changing” (interviewee 3).

Conversely, alternative perspectives do not depict such a catastrophic scenario. It is not universally assumed that piracy will be the decisive factor in the valuation of future broadcasting rights negotiations.

“In line with other authors in this field, I concur with the opinion that piracy is not a direct competitor to formal broadcasting and may not represent a significant loss. This is because a significant proportion of individuals engaging in piracy are not inclined to pay for the service in question (...) Consequently, a significant proportion of those who engage in piracy would not be lost customers in any meaningful sense” (Interviewee 8)

In fact, there are more doubts than certainties. Especially as we witness the orderly, decades-long transition from globalisation and geo-economics to a world based on geopolitical risk. Despite the fact that cyber-attacks are becoming more and more frequent and are being used as a political tool.

The scope of the piracy problem may expand in the next decade. The rapid diffusion of broadband connections to the internet and the rise of peer-to-peer live sports networks make it much easier to access pirated content, which is a cause for concern. However, from what we have seen of the nature of internet piracy in the discussion so far, it is evident that, whether sooner or later, it has the capacity to seriously disrupt and undermine the professional sport business models and thus to threaten the operation and even existence of the sports organisations per se (Roche, 2017).

8.4.2. The lure of diasporas sport market

Economic theory suggests that audiences for televised sport are rational and that their demand is based on a number of factors similar to those for live attendance. However, a significant part of the demand for viewing depends on the size of the local population and given this fact, viewing tends to be positively correlated with population (Buraimo, 2006). Buraimo’s argument is in line with the EP’s Directive 2010/13/EU, which states that revenues from the sale of broadcasting rights are mainly determined by the size of national broadcasting markets.

However, it is a well-known fact that it’s not just the technological environment that conditions/motivates people to watch sport on TV. Social, political, and cultural issues also have a significant influence. For Silverstone (1994), all audiences are active in one way or another. For the

author, the fundamental question is not so much whether an audience is active, but whether this activity is significant.

Today, technology allows fans outside their home country to stay in touch with their teams, no matter where they live. Although people move away from their hometowns, many retain their values, traditions, identity, and sporting preferences. The latter may be directed towards a particular sport or (more likely) team.

Sport, in particular football, provide a useful means through which to explore the related issues of migration and national identity (Lee & Kassing, 2023). Exploring the roots of supporters encourages reflection on issues of identity and belonging. As Burdsey (2006) points out, sports clubs or events can act as cultural intermediaries or flows between the homeland and the dispersed diasporic community. Football reflects the popularity of the game among the Portuguese diaspora and provides examples for understanding migration, diaspora, citizenship, and the multifaceted and contingent nature of national identity (Spaaij & Broersea, 2018). Traditionally, the Portuguese diaspora tends to wear the national colours, sing the anthem, ‘wave the flag’ and never stop supporting the national clubs, not least because they become the embodiment of the wider imagined community.

It is a well-known fact that the Portuguese diaspora is large. Portugal is the European country with the highest proportion of emigrants. According to the Portuguese government’s 2022 Emigration Report⁸⁷, there are around 2.1 million citizens born in Portugal living outside the country, most of them in European countries such as France (573,000), Switzerland (203,000), and United Kingdom (156,000) or in America such as USA (183,000), Brazil (137,000), and Canada (133,000).

Nevertheless, the PPL is no longer broadcast in countries where it enjoys a strong presence, such as France, United Kingdom and Brazil. According to the daily sports *L’ Équipe*:

“Liga Portugal Betclic, the PPL, has no broadcaster in France. According to our information, the Altice group (parent company of SFR and RMC Sport), which has held the rights since the creation of SFR Sport in 2016, has taken the decision to stop broadcasting” (Nokovitch, 2023).

The PPL used to be broadcast via Disney’s and Star+ streaming service, which includes ESPN content, in Brazil. However, it is no longer available. Similarly, TNT Sports used to broadcast one match a day last season in England, but it has now stopped broadcasting. This lack of interest in broadcasting the PPL in international markets, where there is no shortage of Portuguese viewers, is worrying. This is especially true in the context of the centralisation of TV rights. In an interview with sports website *MaisFutebol*, FIFA Executive Director João Fonseca expressed concern about this issue. He said:

⁸⁷ According to Emigration Report 2022, Portuguese Republic, Ministry of Foreign Affairs. [2022-RelatoriodaEmigracao_MNE_NI_SECP_FINAL.pdf](#), p. 63.

“The decision that international TV operators in the mentioned 3 countries concluded that the product (PPL) is not attractive enough is, for us, very strange. What’s more, in these markets there are a huge number of Portuguese emigrants who are avid football fans and who will be deprived of our League matches. And we know how passionate for football our emigrant communities are (...) It could become an irreversible cost. The cost of winning a customer is always greater than the cost of retaining them” (Fonseca, 2023).

As a result, RTP (FTA public channel) and Sport TV (Pay-Tv sport channels) reached an agreement so that the public broadcaster could broadcast one match per day on RTP Internacional and RTP Africa. In an official statement, the public broadcaster said, through its international channels RTP Internacional and Africa, have the rights to broadcast the Portuguese Liga Betclac (PPL) 2023/2024 outside Portugal: 34 matches, between 11 August 2023 and 19 May 2024 (RTP, 2023). Following the agreement, Sport TV’s CEO, Nuno Ferreira Pires, emphasised:

“We made every effort to ensure that emigrants’ requests were not left unanswered, guaranteeing a concrete and realistic solution to the financial challenges presented by RTP that could fulfil the objective of bringing the best of national football to all Portuguese emigrants around the world”.

The CEO added in a statement:

“Above all, we could never let emigrants not have access to one of the most important pieces of content for them, national football” (RTP, 2023).

Therefore, this agreement can be understood as safeguarding the important social role of sport, since some sporting events are considered to be of heritage importance, i.e., they create a sense of national identity and a collective experience. Regarding the agreement between RTP and Sport TV, one interviewee said:

“It can be public interest! Conveying such contents facilitates synchronization with issues taking place in Portugal. But not only the diaspora will tune in, also other Portuguese speaking peoples: specifically Portuguese speakers in Africa (Angola, Cape Verde, etc.) and abroad (for instance, the Cape Verdian communities emigrated in Europe and North America)...While it can be considered of public interest there is a cost-benefit analysis that should be made” (Interviewee 14).

The apparent lack of interest in watching the PPL is a matter that could be seen to resonate with Williams’ (2003) argument. He posits that viewers have the capacity to disrupt, interrupt and distract from the cold logic of history and technology. On the one hand, broadcasting and its sociability emphasise the relationship between producers and audiences as a social relationship and a voluntary activity. Thus, in order to give people reasons to watch or listen, broadcasting occasions must be designed with the audience in mind and, in particular, the context in which the programme will be

received (Scannell, 1996). This sociability is, according to Scannell (1996, p. 23), “the most fundamental characteristic of the communicative ethos of broadcasting”. It is the fans who watch, who buy the subscriptions and watch the games and make the advertising space valuable (Smith, 2021). On the other hand, any regulations that regulate the ability to keep sporting events out of the public domain reduce the rights owner’s ability to make a profit. As a rule of thumb, the higher degree of the public domain, the lower the commercial value of the ownership will be. A high degree of public domain reduces sellers’ freedom to exploit the commercial value of the product (Gratton & Solberg, 2013).

However, for the 2023-24 to 2025-26 cycle, a new deal was brokered by international sports and marketing agency Sportfive in an agreement with the rights holder Sport TV, the Portuguese Pay-Tv broadcaster. As a result, Fite, a combat sports-focused streaming platform, has acquired exclusive rights to football’s top-tier LP across several markets in Europe and Oceania, through the 2025-26 season, ending a blackout to the 2023-24 campaign (Lingeswaran, 2023).

Fite takes over from financially struggling Viaplay, which held rights to the PPL in the UK last season. Dobson and Goddard (2011) argue that one of the most influential and durable propositions of neoclassical economics is the idea that the interactions between large numbers of buyers and sellers operating in free, unregulated markets, each taking spontaneous and uncoordinated decisions in pursuit of their own self-interest, can normally be relied upon to deliver an efficient allocation of scarce resources. Since the Fite deals have been secured with DAZN (Italy), BeIN Sports (France), ESPN (Brazil), and United Media (the Balkans).

While the main rights package to the PPL has not been secured in Spain, one game per week is aired in that country by RTP Internacional. DAZN Group has secured the rights to broadcast the top PPL matches in Italy until 2025/26.

More than its interest in the PPL, Fite’s streaming platform is primarily interested in expanding outside combat sport. On the other hand, it is about attracting global subscribers to combat sports through other sports that arouse passion in other markets. Adam Bigwood, vice president of subscriptions at Fite, has said:

“As we continue to expand our football offerings, Fite remains at the forefront of delivering superior sports and entertainment through our advanced technology platform”
(Lingeswaran, 2023).

However, we believe that there are at least three related indicators due to which the French and English markets in particular are not sufficiently interested in PPL:

- i. as more than 90% of Portuguese football fans support one of the Big 3 (Gouveia, Espanha & Di Fátima, 2020), the PPL games that have the greatest demand are those in which SL Benfica, FC Porto, or Sporting CP take place. Unfortunately, the other games do not have enough viewers to justify broadcasting.

- ii. the PPL is not competitive enough, with teams with less attractive football, because there is a large difference in the number of fans who support the Big 3 clubs compared to other 15 clubs. This fact has negative impact for the revenue of small clubs, because their stadiums are not full; they sell few merchandising items; they have lower revenue from sponsorship partners and, consequently, have less capacity to buy better football players and to negotiate the broadcasting rights for their games. Everything is closely connected: in the end, the demand for TV viewing of games (without any of the Big 3) is very low.
- iii. nowadays, digital piracy of live sports broadcasts allows fans to watch, with relative ease and free of charge, football matches that theoretically are broadcast exclusively through pay per view way. This “strategy” of fans appears to have reduced the demand for Pay-Tv sports channels.

Related to this third indicator, Wong (2015) points out that with the rise of digital media technologies, predominantly the internet, established social, economic, political, and cultural practices of these previously discrete markets are disrupted and reconfigured. In terms of sports piracy, the main area of concern remains on the full retransmission of live sports broadcasts, rather than highlights, delayed transmissions, and archived content (Wong, 2015). According to Pedro M. Soares, secretary-general of APRITEL⁸⁸, Portugal has a serious problem of digital piracy:

“Portugal is one of the countries in the EU in which young people most admit that consume digital piracy”.

He adds,

"That the way to combat this problem should be by raising awareness among users who resort to digital piracy and then fining them. Firstly, warning the user that pirated consumption has been detected on that IP and explaining to them that when someone illegally accesses protected content, which has copyright, which someone worked to produce, they are harm us all. Secondly, if the offense were repeated again, regulator have to resort to imposing fines (similar to the Italian regulator, who has already done with fines of €150 to €5,000)” (Soares, 2024).

Despite being adjusted, we believe that both proposed measures will have very little chance of becoming efficient, given the difficulty of identifying the offenders. According to the study by the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO) has found the downward trend in piracy seen in recent years has been reversed. Among the most pirated genres are live broadcasts of sporting events and sports channels. The streaming of live events, particularly sport, is also on the increase, rising by some 30% between 2021 and 2022. The data study reveals that Greece has one of the highest rates of

⁸⁸ APRITEL - Associação dos Representantes dos Operadores de Comunicações Eletrónicas.

live sports piracy, well above the EU average, just behind Cyprus and Portugal. For Depken and Simmons (2004) the cross-country variation in digital piracy is a product of both traditional economic influences and institutional social norms.

“Copyright infringement in the digital era is a serious concern and a direct threat to the creative industries in Europe. The study shows that there is still much work to do to tackle piracy. Stopping this phenomenon is complex as piracy is continuously evolving with technology. This is why understanding the underlying mechanisms of piracy is essential to adopt effective policies and measures that contribute to reducing it” (EUIPO, 2023).

8.4.3. Is the rise of digital piracy the hidden competitor to Pay-Tv?

Microeconomic theory suggests that if two homogeneous goods are offered to a buyer at two different prices, the buyer will choose the cheapest option. The choice between pirated and legit content is a combination of ease-of-use, pricing and availability on a given market. However, microeconomic theory has its limitations. One limitation can be illustrated by the market for Pay-Tv sports programmes.

From a theoretical point of view, the high-risk characteristics of ‘live’ information goods make them a suitable case to study the relations between quality and uncertainty in digital markets. But it also connects piracy and circumvention practices to a broader perspective that uses risks and uncertainty to explain how stability and change operate in society (Beck, 1992).

On the one hand, legitimate channels of distribution such as Pay Tv offer information goods characterized by a predictable stability in the user experience. On the other hand, streaming channels that infringe the intellectual property of legitimate channels of distribution are often disconnected in the last third of a 90-minute football match, reflecting the time it takes to send and process takedown notices; the quality of these streams is quite diverse, ranging from high-definition resolution to low-quality, heavily compressed video in which it is often difficult to recognize the players; there is also the risk that there are no streams available at all, or that the quality is too low; Previously stable, high-quality streams can turn into dysfunctional broadcasts if too many users are trying to access them (Hoof, 2016).

While many people argue that digital network markets are new forms of collaborative capitalism, which can provide free goods, the case of live sports streaming demonstrates that there are significant costs involved. The continuous movement of consumers is volatile, as demonstrated by this interviewee:

“If people can have the service without paying, they will not pay! Look at journalism, music, etc. Piracy became normal with the Web. But it is also true that at least some broadcasters, like FTA channels, are prone to buy games rights knowing that they will lose money” (interviewed 3).

The heterogeneous relations between piracy and legitimate consumption structure the grey area between scarcity and abundance of live information goods (Hutchins & Rowe, 2013). Sports activities and associated social interactions are deeply embedded in the connectivity provided by social network media and moulded by the digital (Van Dijck & Poell, 2013). For the consumer or sports fan, the increased availability of illegal distribution channels significantly changes the viewing situation. Consequently, this paradigm permeates public consciousness in various ways (Huggins, 2015). According to Jorge de Sousa, Managing Director at DAZN Portugal:

“A match between the biggest clubs in the PPL reaches 500,000 viewers on national IPs. This is more than the total number of subscribers to any of the premium pay sports channels in Portugal”. He adds, “The fight against match piracy needs the help of the judicial authorities and the government, who are calling for legislative changes to punish both suppliers and consumers of pirated content more quickly and effectively” (Sousa, 2022).

For Gupta, Gould & Pola (2004), piracy of live sports is considered an unethical act, although different understandings and interpretations of what constitutes such an act sometimes remain unclear. Consumer choices are generally influenced by behaviours that are considered appropriate and therefore normatively prescribed, while others are considered inappropriate and prohibited. Jones (1991) has argued that moral intensity has an important impact upon the proclivity of individuals to engage in unethical actions. He argues that moral intensity is a multidimensional construct.

“The vast majority of consumers are not at all concerned with ethical issues when it comes to accessing content informally. It's really a utilitarian, cost-cutting vision” (interviewee 8).

As Star (2010, p. 614) points out, the consumers move continuously “back-and-forth between ill-structured and well structured” situations. If not restricted to the idea of ‘free’, ‘convergence’ or ‘access’, to dualisms such as ‘formal’ versus ‘informal’ or ‘legal’ versus ‘illegal’, these continuous negotiations between infrastructure, information goods and the market can be understood as a *modus operandi* that structures, stabilizes and changes digital markets (Hoof, 2016). When the Secretary General of APRITEL Portugal was asked: How can we fight the phenomenon of sports piracy? He said:

“First of all, some sensitisation of users who resort to piracy. When someone illegally accesses protected content, it harms sports, small clubs with and it harms us all as taxpayers”. He adds “I don't think the prices of closed channels are an excuse for something that does a lot of harm to the country” ...” There needs to be reflection by the political bodies and by the partners themselves, the LP and the federations” (Soares, 2024).

Depken and Simmons (2004) observe that traditional economic variables are important in the (aggregate) decision to pirate or not. They postulate that the greater the power distance, or the further away individuals feel from their superiors, for example, law enforcement agents, the greater the propensity to pirate. The authors add that individuals from one culture who consider that another culture exerts power over them will seek to reduce that power, thus guaranteeing their future in their own society. Moreover, cultural metrics suggest that the propensity of certain countries to consistently expropriate illegal content at higher rates than others may have more to do with a social construct.

On 4 May 2023, the EC adopted its “EC Recommendation on combatting online piracy of sports and other live events”. The Recommendation encourages Member States, national authorities, holders of rights and providers of intermediary services to take effective, balanced and appropriate measures to fight unauthorised retransmissions of such streaming, whilst strengthening the competitiveness of the EU sport and creative industries. The Recommendation focuses on three main areas:

- i. Prompt treatment of notices related to live events - ensure swift action, considering the nature of the live event, in order to minimise the damage caused to providers as a result of unauthorised transmission;
- ii. Injunctions - the Recommendation encourages Member States to assess whether sports event organisers are entitled to take legal action to prevent any unauthorised retransmissions;
- iii. Commercial offers and awareness - The holders of rights in the transmission of live events are encouraged to increase the availability, affordability, and attractiveness of their commercial offers to end users across the Union (EC, 2023).

The o European Leagues has welcomed the first European initiative to focus specifically on online piracy of live content. However, they believes that the initiative could go further:

“As the cost of online piracy continues to rise year on year for football event organisers and the live content sector as a whole, we still do not have an effective, legally binding instrument to tackle this problem which is draining the resources of our sector” (European Leagues, 2023).

So the scourge of all broadcasters today is the instant availability of programmes online in the form of legal and illegal downloads. Piracy of live sports often outnumbers TV viewers. One of the reasons for this is that football needs to be consumed ‘live’, because once the result is known, much of the theatre of sport disappears. The Portuguese are among the biggest digital pirates in the EU, despite technological and ethical constraints, what is the reason for the high number of people who illegally access live sports content:

“Piracy demonstrates how much value many Portuguese place on football” (Interviewee 8).

On the one hand, Portugal’s legal broadcasts are not always accessible to consumers and fans due to complex commercial and licensing arrangements. On the other hand, the Portuguese now pay for

the most expensive football in Europe in terms of purchasing power parity. This is particularly pertinent to the question of the relationship between consumption and piracy.

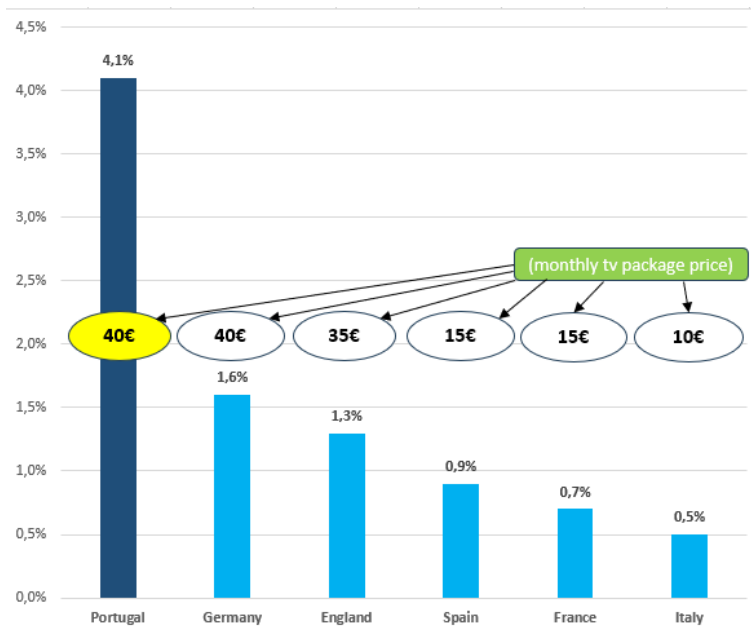
“It is true that more and more people are signing up for premium services like Spotify or Netflix. But as the content gets more exclusive and fragmented, fewer people will be willing to pay the higher monthly prices, so, it is clear that price is a big factor in whether or not you subscribe to a service like this. Maybe offering micro-payments could attract a larger customer base” (Interviewee 8).

This is the direction already taken by some sports media portals, which are constantly evolving towards a wide range of commercial and revenue models, including subscriptions of varying lengths, payments for access to one-off events, specific content packages (including ‘freemium’ content) and programmes supported by sponsorship and advertising. The seasonal and temporal nature of many sports, the different amounts of content they generate with varying levels of appeal, and the intermittent programming of major, high-profile events require new logics. This dynamic provides some validation for those who have positioned live sport at the forefront of changing television viewing rituals, serving as a site where an enduring cultural appetite for mass communal experiences intersects with the proliferation of mobile screens and personalised ‘à la carte’ viewing practices (Hutchins & Rowe, 2012). This dynamic of personalised viewing can be seen as a solution to the argument that Pay-TV packages are expensive in relation to consumers’ income.

According to the “*Study on the Impact of Centralised Negotiation of TV Rights in Portugal*”⁸⁹, in terms of the increase in revenue per consumer, PPL consumers pay a much higher price to watch all matches in domestic competitions than consumers of the major European leagues. Figure 15 compares the monthly price of TV packages for the main European leagues (2017-18), expressed as a percentage of the average salary in each country. As we can see in the Figure below, Portuguese fans pay the same as German fans (€40), but four times more than Italian fans (€10) to gain Pay-TV access, monthly, to the games of their own football league. We should bear in mind that the €40 that Portuguese people have to pay monthly represents an average of 4.1% of their average salary (purchasing power in Portugal is much lower than that of the Germans and Italians). So, we can conclude that this is an extremely high value.

⁸⁹ Available at <https://www.servirobenfica.pt/uploads/1/3/3/2/133248124/sob-esincdtp.pdf>

Figure 15. Price of TV packages as a percentage of the average salary



Source: Club licensing benchmarking report EY18⁹⁰

Evidence on viewing figures, although scarce, provides some understanding of the factors likely to influence TV viewing. One such factor is the subscription price or the price of a particular Pay-TV match. As noted above, it is not always possible to determine the price of sports programmes. Therefore, while it is difficult to estimate the exact impact of price on televised sport, it is safe to assume that price has an impact on audience demand (Buraimo, 2019).

8.5. In Summary

This chapter presents a flow of ideas ranging from the complexity of economic policy to the involvement of supranational organisations and then to media convergence. It also establishes the link between the evolution of the sport/media complex and the opportunities and constraints that illustrate the dynamic nature of the OTT landscape, highlighting both the potential benefits, such as increased access to diverse content and lower costs, and the challenges faced by consumers and providers. We highlight the challenges posed by the emergence of OTT video streaming services over the Internet and mobile devices in a world where sport is increasingly interconnected, including digital platforms, social network participation, and global fan interaction. The chapter revisits fundamental economic aspects, highlighting that the definition of economic policy has become more complex and competitive, particularly due to globalisation and technological change. It demonstrates that in a global context,

⁹⁰ Available at https://assets.ey.com/content/dam/ey-sites/ey-com/pt_pt/topics/strategy-and-transactions/pdf/ey-anuario-do-futebol-profissional-portugues-2019-20.pdf

national policies and regulations are no longer confined to national borders, with the increasing involvement of supranational bodies such as the EU. Media convergence leads to new configurations involving traditional actors, such as the state, and emerging actors, like the media industry and civil society. The chapter argues for the creation of a specific regulatory process, as the exclusive acquisition of rights reflects the traditional unilateral commercial model, an approach in which decisions and actions are taken by a single entity without mutual agreement or cooperation. By contrast, sports broadcasting is increasingly characterised by bilateral intermediaries who play a crucial role in facilitating transactions and agreements between two parties, alliances between companies, revenue-sharing agreements and direct sales to consumers. This chapter also examines the challenges posed by digital piracy of live football broadcasts and analyses the efforts made to combat it. It concludes that piracy has become an integral part of the digital ecosystem due to its pervasiveness. The proliferation of streaming services and social media platforms has created an environment in which consumers seek access to complementary services, although the propensity to systematically expropriate illegal content may have more to do with individual' social constructions. As a result, both consumers and complementary providers need access to the same platforms in order to engage effectively and facilitate transactions.

Discussion and Conclusion

“When it is obvious that the goals cannot be reached,
don’t adjust the goals, adjust the action steps”

Confucius (551- 489 BCE)

9.1 Chapter Overview

In this chapter, the discussion of the data is presented first, followed by the conclusions of the study. The chapter provides a summary of the key points, identifies the limitations of the study and provides guidelines for future research.

9.2. Generalization, Data Analysis and Interpretation of Results

Like the border around a picture that separates it from the wall, frames suggest what is relevant and irrelevant (Altheide, 1976). Followed the aforementioned analogy, we will focus on the aspects that we consider to be of greater relevance to illustrating our framing.

The conduct of scientific research adheres to established norms and conventions. This implies that it is founded upon logic and reason, and that it employs a systematic examination of evidence (Veal, 2006). This process involves analysing the content of the data; what we treat as the content of the data is shaped by how we view it. Data can help us look below and beyond our privileges and change our points of view (Charmaz & Belgrave, 2018).

Given this, the objective of data content analysis acts as a compass to guide our exploratory journey, in order to develop a substantive grounded theory that explains the contextual factors that determine the negotiating power of broadcasting rights in European professional football. We would also add that periodically reviewing and constantly refining our approach was an important process, because as we familiarised ourselves with the data, new ideas emerged that helped us to better understand the narrative it told.

The formulation of an explanatory grounded theory is the identification of a coherent story, which consists in the narrative alignment of the most salient features of data, interwoven in a set of systematically related descriptive sentences that account both for the uncovering of patterns in data and for the sequencing of categories. This stage essentially translated the “process of going from raw data, thinking about that raw data, delineating concepts to stand for raw data, then making statements

of relationship about those concepts linking them all together into a theoretical whole” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 16).

As we start digging into the data, the need to develop grounded theory usually exists in tension with the need for clarity and focus. For this reason, data analysis is as much an art as a science. Thus, we were concerned with formulating clearer guidelines for qualitative data analysis, so we adopted the strategy of developing explicit preliminary frameworks, which we nevertheless revised several times during the study. In general, we are condensing - simplifying, selecting, and collapsing a very large collection of codes into a more focused, narrowed, and coherent major set of themes or concepts: globalisation, identity, governance, power, engagement, broadcasting, digital media.

9.3. Discussion

The approach to a basic understanding of the political economy of world football is one that involves a global perspective. After all, football is compulsively transnational, unevenly global, and reflexively national in character by means of multi-dimensional, dynamic interplay (Rowe, 2017). To grasp the dynamics of contemporary media/football complex, it is therefore necessary to understand how global networks are organised around a process of mimicry and are structured to compete in promoting the cultural homogenisation of nationally constituted societies on an increasingly global scale. The media have become transnational, and operate through ideological and capitalist adherence, as well as their ability to actively mould the economic, cultural and social environment to consolidate advantage.

Hence, football industry has opened up takeover opportunities to a wider group, and foreign ownership of the biggest clubs is now commonplace. Outside of business, football clubs also attract national and global fanbases, so they have an intrinsically transnational character. It is caught up with processes involving the movement of sport institutions, practices and tastes into new territories and a corresponding relocation of people into national spaces where they must co-exist with, and negotiate the terms of, an established sporting-societal order that is itself in flux – not least because of their presence (Rowe, 2017).

Football is one of the most important and widespread forms of popular culture in Europe, a socio-cultural practice that can be called a ‘common passion’ and that creates emotional and horizontal bonds between individuals and groups. However, it is an ambiguous cultural practice: it allows social groups to display their self-perceptions of uniqueness in an immense and intense ‘vanity fair’, while at the same time feeling and even joyfully celebrating the commonalities with external groups against which they define and constitute their identity. It is undoubtedly one of the best illustrations of the European Union’s oft-quoted motto ‘united in diversity’. This socio-cultural phenomenon, which linked

to a wider symbolic power, means so much to so many people across the continent, inevitably influences the feelings Europeans have towards each other.

A community's belief system determines its values, influences its perceptions and affects the choices it makes, whether it is a community or a country. Football is considered a value-orientated cultural practice. The way in which these values are interpreted in the social and cultural contexts in which they take place is therefore a distinction between internal values, which derive from the logic and experiential qualities of football itself, and external values, that is, the actual and potential values of football in society.

Social interaction is the core of social constructionism. Events in the course of individuals' everyday lives are seen as the practices during which our shared versions of knowledge are constructed. Therefore what we regard as 'truth' (which of course varies historically and cross-culturally), that is, our currently accepted ways of understanding the world, is a product not of objective observation of the world, but of social processes and interactions.

It is our belief that the power of economic and political incentives is the driving force behind professional football, we also believe that the aim of any economic or political institution is to serve the attendance or 'clients/consumers'. In football, specifically, it is the fans, those who attend the game in the stadium, who watch the game on television, who buy material and merchandise, some use their team to confirm their personal identity, others know the history of the club, are the faithful guardians of the mystique, or are resistant to changes that could threaten the club's values and practices.

It is common for fans' commitment to the club to be passed down from generation to generation, often through family tradition, as a legacy. Through this process, each person develops a set of core beliefs and values that are shaped by experience, the witness of authority and the example of parents or peers. Another important element of football's appeal is the relationship between the stars and the history of the clubs; the stars of the clubs are a beacon of identity for younger players. Social media are a good example of their global fan bases. In a way, this means that the current generation of managers and owners are not the guardians of the club's legacy. In addition, the policies of current managers are geared towards their own interests, regardless of the ownership structure of football clubs. It is broadly accepted that sport has a deep cultural significance that goes beyond the commercial imperative. Therefore, fans should be seen as a long-term investment for clubs, while purely financial objectives are short-term gains. Fan engagement has never been seen as an industry. Football engagement is not easily understood by those outside. It has its own rhythms and rationales.

Fans, of all sports clubs, show an extraordinary degree of loyalty to their clubs. What some have described as 'fan equity', to the extent that they will not substitute their support for other clubs even if their own team proves to be unsuccessful. This area of consumer-producer relationships in sport is

unique in business terms and therefore needs to be nurtured and protected by governing bodies. It is the very existence of fans that cements football's commercial nature. As Sandvoss *et al.* (2017) emphasise, as sharp as the contrast between *laissez-faire* capitalism and social-democratic welfare states, different forms of football governance allow for vastly different experiences of the game for fans and spectators. The economic valuation of 'fan equity' can be difficult to estimate. However, it is not valuation problem is no different from the standard problem facing companies which regularly put a value on 'goodwill' in their annual accounts. In some cases, fan devotion has a tangible monetary dimension. Many clubs have turned to their fans to maintain their operational financial strength - investing in football clubs through the stock market is a popular activity among die-hard football fans. This highlights the unique relationship between fans and clubs, as few industries see customers organizing to prevent a company from closing. Recognizing fans as stakeholders in this way means that issues of corporate governance take on particular dimensions and regulatory implications (Michie & Oughton, 2002).

The consumer's interaction experience in virtual environments is as important as their offline experience with the product of a brand. However, the spectators' attendance in particular depend on several main economic and sporting determinants, such as:

- i. the price of admission tickets (considering the levels of consumer/fan income);
- ii. the competitive balance between the teams (projected on the uncertainty of the outcome of each game, as well as the unpredictability of the winner of the competition);
- iii. entertainment value (measured by the pleasure obtained by the viewer from the aesthetics and quality of the game/show – 'the product').

Then, we also stated other determinants of demand for football by spectators/attendance, which help to complement the three main ones, listed above:

- i. the day and time on which the game takes place (games on weekdays and the late hours negatively affect fan attendance at the stadium);
- ii. the hospitality conditions and services offered by the club/venue;
- iii. fan culture and identity with the club and the stadium environment (the involvement and interaction of fans in the game, as well as the emotion and fun enjoyed by them are fundamental to the satisfaction and to create a spirit of loyalty between fans with the club and vice versa);
- iv. the team's sporting success and club's financial performance (enhanced by good sporting performance and consistency of positive sporting outcomes);
- v. the quality of the visiting team (which maximizes the entertainment value and the uncertainty and relevance of the game result).

When the topic of the thesis was first conceived, our big question was whether it was football that had adapted to the new business models of the TV companies, or whether it was the new business models of the TV companies that had adapted to football.

However, during and after the study we came to the conclusion that the focus was on fans/audience/users/public, whatever you want to call them: football is not a product of the sports industry or of the media. Football precedes them both and while the industry and the media feed on sporting excellence and spectacle, the irony is that they run the risk of seeing 'neither the player nor the game'. As Beck (1992) said, the narrative of risk is a narrative of irony.

The exercise of governance in European football is based on rules that cover several areas. Governance covers strategy, management, policy, regulation and even development, and applies to all relevant actors (e.g., national associations, leagues, clubs, as well as those outside the football pyramid, such as fans and government authorities), but which are part of the network.

Despite a high level of involvement in sports, the EU formally has no legal competence to develop a common sports policy. The observation rather undermines an argument that commitment is comprised of power elements because the relations of the European football have evolved into a highly complex governance system engaging many different actors and cutting across a wide range of policy areas. It also implies an advanced commodification, and the consequent hierarchy of contemporary global sport created the structural imbalance leads to the serious integrity problems (Rowe, 2020). It also implies naivety or cynicism based on the belief by one party that another will inevitably perceive a benefit in being associated with them. The jurisdiction of European football has been intrinsically linked to the financial evolution.

In order to link the analytical approach to governance through investigation of the 'network' that characterises these stakeholders, and the normative concepts of governance, we focused on the development of the network of stakeholder influences in order to examine the characteristics of entire stakeholder structures and their impact on the media/football complex.

This environment, however, appears to be changing, with fundamental changes in inter-organisational and stakeholder relations. These are extremely important for the implementation of football policies. However, these relationships have often been thwarted by conflicts of interest, which can cause their governance structures to stagnate.

The well-known Bosman judgment made it clear that legal challenges through the court are the most powerful and effective tools to induce change in European sport governance. The rest of the avenues, even under the nascent and direct EU sport policy have, at best, reinforced the finite and supervised nature of the autonomy of sport. EU sports law remains a powerful and important element to understand the structures of sport in Europe.

This suggests commitment is likely to be of instrumental nature whereby the general legal and policy principles have increasingly been applied to sport, thus giving sport an EU dimension. As such, the implication is that more than any other part of the world economy, with the exception of global financial markets, football has been intermediated by its own set of institutions and organisations. We argue that in the context of a wider transformation, the traditional hierarchical modes of governance are being replaced by a stakeholder network are becoming increasingly influential.

Further improvement of the network's democratic legitimacy through the enhancement of its democratic anchorage via the introduction of more openness, stakeholder participation and meta-governance by the EU, should help the network to deal with the growing complexity of the football world. This way, governance networks in sport can be the solution to the governance failures in the sector, just like governance networks were the solution to many examples of government and market failures in modern society.

Regulation has become a central issue in this context, and effective regulation by sports and football authorities, as well as the government, is needed to guarantee effective results in relation to all of the above criteria. The reality is that, as a sector, sports organisations have multiple objectives spanning the social, cultural and economic spheres, which is reflected in their network of stakeholders.

Focusing power on the production processes, clubs and leagues constitute a form of joint production. The key point there is a need for strong competitors to have a healthy league competition, or to achieve competitive balance; whereas under conventional market arrangements businesses seek to eliminate other strong competitors to increase their market share. Ultimately, therefore, sports competitions require the presence of effective governance mechanisms to ensure an adequate level of competitive balance is maintained.

However, the range of power relationships, and includes, particularly, political power relationships, which provide the access to and management of institutions of governance. Communication networks are essential to the construction of political power and counterpower. Castells (2013) argues that power in a network is derived from relationships that enable economic, social, cultural, and political control over other actors. He suggests that power is located in the alliances and joint activities formed around specific projects and interests.

It is indeed the case that the objectives of businesses in the sporting industry often diverge from those of businesses in other sectors. Sports teams, managed as companies stand out in the business world because they often prioritise winning (utility) over financial profit. Nevertheless, this creates an inherent incentive for clubs to be financially irresponsible in the pursuit of sporting success. Consequently, the interconnection between capitals, their symbolic translation and their social meaning and effectiveness as a source of power is lost. As Bourdieu & Wacquant (1992, p. 114) wrote: "in network analysis the study of underlying structures has been sacrificed to the analysis of particular

linkages...and flows...no doubt because uncovering the structure requires that one put to work a relational mode of thinking that is more difficult to translate into quantitative and formalized data”.

Therefore, if the main issue is why, it is crucial to safeguard and promote the game, it is because it has evolved from popular culture into an economic commodity (it is bought and sold as a commodity). Can we ask whether financial dependence on media revenue is a threat to the independence and integrity of football? Is there ultimately a relationship of dependency between football and the media? In fact, our argument can be explained in both directions. On the one hand, through the relationship of coexistence and mutual benefit between football and the media, in which an increase in the material productivity of one stakeholder, due to the processes of value creation, exchange and distribution, leads to a potential benefit for both. On the other hand, we argue with some reflections on the concept of dependency.

One of the conceptualisations that places the most emphasis on the role of dependency is that of Castells and Laserna (1989), and so we thought it appropriate to use it to explain the relationship between the media and football. From this we can deduce that dependency acts to alter, modify or condition a relationship, making it asymmetrical between the actors, so that the dependent actor is largely shaped by the social dynamics and interests generated by the dominant actor, thus limiting the dependent actor's degrees of freedom in terms of development strategies and decisions.

Football has long been a cornerstone of the television industry. Silverstone (1994) points out that the television space was created by a social and cultural fabric that had already been prepared. The rise of television played a central role in the increasing importance of rationalised mass consumption in capitalist societies. The social, cultural, and economic installations were all influenced by this phenomenon.

Not only might contemporary transformations in the mediation of sport be instructive in the task of understanding socio - cultural change, but media sport is itself an influential socio - cultural phenomenon that, in a reflexive fashion, is helping to remake the world that has made it. These are circumstances that demand the close attention of those who are concerned with developments in society and culture in general, and in media and sport in particular.

Partly as a result of the political climate towards the liberalisation of broadcasting markets has profoundly changed football's funding model thanks to the expansion of the broadcasting sector. The advent of digital technology has further expanded the media ecosystem, multiplying the number of distribution platforms and sports channels. This, in turn, has fundamentally altered the content acquisition strategies of the sports business, which has become heavily dependent on television rights as its main source of revenue.

Since the ideas of neoliberal globalisation have inspired the commercialisation of football over the last two decades through intervention and/or regulatory policies, live sports have migrated to Pay-Tv

providers, public service broadcasters and, to a lesser extent, commercial channels still play an important role in providing the highlights of major sports competitions (Evens, 2014). In the case of the national cup and the national football team, FTA TV remains an essential factor in the market. Thanks to the listed events regulation have to be broadcast on FTA TV and therefore fall outside the scope of Pay-TV providers. It is at this point, though, that the nation-state retains its relevance where it can exercise its capacity to intervene in media sport markets in the name of national cultural citizenship.

The positive social effects that the coverage of sporting events generates continue to justify the continued usefulness of public service broadcasters to the public. This was evidenced by the first quarter audiences in Portugal (Table 19). Commercial decisions regarding mediatisation, access and cost have a direct bearing on sport and television's relationships to cultural citizenship, the rights to which need to be safeguarded to enable the full participation of citizens in the collectively oriented public culture environments that constitute the social (Miller, 2009).

The transition of power from traditional broadcasters to vertically integrated operators, access to broadcasting markets through exclusive long-term contracts, access to major sporting events and collective selling have become significant political issues. As a result, professional football broadcasting is highly regulated. Our main finding is that common trends and differences in the quality, quantity and price of televised football across Europe cannot be adequately explained without reference to policy interventions by national and supranational governments, as well as competition and regulatory authorities. These interventions have had a significant impact on the organisation and governance of football, as well as on the structure of broadcasting markets and the behaviour of broadcasters.

Consequently, competition policies and media sector regulations have exerted a profound influence on the sale, acquisition and exploitation of sports broadcasting rights in Portugal. Beyond the volatility and cyclicity inherent in the media industry, this suggests that the exponential growth cycles practised by the right buyers seem to be coming to a head.

With the entrance of multichannel and later digital television, an increasing number of companies outside the TV business, such as telecom operators or new media companies, acknowledged the strategic power of live sports rights and joined this battle for controlling these rights. Regarding to the attendance in live football broadcasts, in addition to the determinants above mentioned to the attendance in stadiums (detailed in Chapter 8), the following are of the most relevance:

- i. the price of the subscription to the channel holding the broadcasting rights, considering the salary level of the potential viewer: this determinant is more affected by the digital piracy the higher the subscription price and/or the lower the viewer's salary level;

- ii. the size of the market: in demographically small countries, the value of broadcasting rights is negatively affected, given the existence of fewer potential subscriptions for the Pay-Tv channel that holds the rights.

Concerning international broadcasting rights, also in Chapter 8, we realize that the less popular leagues, that is, with teams without great sporting results in UEFA competitions, will have to develop major marketing actions in the markets with the largest diaspora in that country (as is the Portuguese case). In this sense, we propose that 'Liga Centralização' will have to start launching a timely and effective plan with concrete marketing actions, targeting the main markets of the Portuguese Diaspora (essentially, in France, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States, and Canada), so that the sale of international broadcasting rights of PPL, mainly through OTT platforms, can achieve the success that its promoters claim from the 2028/29 season onwards. Otherwise, these broadcasting rights will become negligible. Furthermore, centralised sports rights play a fundamental role in bargaining power, but they are not its driving force.

The expanding market power exercised by operators of OTT streaming platforms is interpreted as both an outcome of the continuing popularity of TV viewing, and of the related growth of internet-based communications technologies, networks, infrastructures and markets for live-streamed content, especially those of a sporting nature (Hutchins, Li & Rowe, 2017).

The findings indicate that the media/football complex is a highly dynamic system in which actors are involved in a constant process of negotiating regarding their respective positions and power relations. This is particularly relevant at a time when the media system is undergoing significant change, with traditional broadcasters potentially losing ground to 'Big Tech' companies that have amassed enormous wealth and influence through their ownership of digital infrastructures and platforms. This situation leads to great uncertainty regarding the bargaining power for broadcasting rights in European professional football.

The operation of networked digital media is becoming increasingly untrammelled. The growth of OTT internet and mobile video streaming services is a major development in the distribution, transmission, and consumption of global media sport. Heavily capitalised services are intervening in coverage rights markets and changing how live sport is experienced and shared across television, computer, game console, tablet, and smartphone screens. Live sport streaming is a key means by which television content and practices are escaping the boundaries of broadcast media, while also continuing to perpetuate the logics of television coverage and viewing practices. The advent of these services has established new benchmarks for the accessibility and organisational structure of sports media, thereby inaugurating a transformative shift in the global market for sports coverage rights and the media systems through which live content is disseminated. However, this raises the question of whether the acquisition of national football rights by global technology companies creates the need

for a new type of regulation that goes beyond national and even European audiovisual policy frameworks.

One of the consequences of the intersection between technology, culture and media practices has been the emergence of an illicit approach to accessing live sports content. In fact, the practice of illicit streaming has become a phenomenon with global implications. The growing prominence represents a significant challenge for holders exclusive digital streaming rights. It can be concluded that digital piracy is having a detrimental effect on the broadcasting markets. Furthermore, if we consider the medium and long term, it is possible that many of those who currently engage in piracy may eventually become subscribers. This is particularly the case when prices are lower. A reduction in prices will result in an increase in the number of customers, which will in turn lead to economies of scale. Moreover, the high cost of content in lower-income countries makes live sports piracy an attractive option.

Indeed, the practice of illegal streaming has resulted in significant financial losses for broadcasters. Therefore, the issue can also be better understood as an opportunity, through the conversion process of the clients/consumers, in today's competitive landscape, learning how to convert customers into loyal clients is crucial for any company's success.

In the context of the contemporary digital media industries, many portals through which TV content can be delivered have created new conditions that have forced broadcasters to compete and collaborate with other providers and distributors in digital technology and telecommunications around the world. The media industry was not prepared for the volatility. This is not to say that volatility is necessarily a bad thing. Too much stability can stifle innovation and price competition.

9.3.1. Power in media/football complex: macro- meso- and micro

Foucault (1984) argues that the particular micro-meso-macro levels in any text or a set of texts are developed through the analysis and conceptualised as (philosophically) free, cyclical, living 'movements' to reflect the mobile, circulatory workings of power through metaphorical apparatuses as an open, more-or-less coordinated cluster of relations.

Following Foucault's explanation, in the light of grounded theory, we examined power relations at various analytical levels, conceptualising and transmitting what is significant in relation to the fundamental processes involved in the study. Furthermore, analysing these processes creates connections between individual and social contexts, as well as specific and general concepts (Charmaz, 2017). The theory is not limited to analysing fundamental processes but focuses on how people create social realities through individual and collective actions.

Thus, a thorough analysis involves various levels of empirical dimensions, which are categorised based on their complexity in terms of breadth and depth, referred to as micro-, meso- and macro-levels of analysis. The question of power within the media/football complex is understood at the macro

and meso level of the dimensions of structural practices and incorporated at the micro level in personal practices in the context of social structures and relationships.

Consequently, we realise that power flows in both directions, allowing for the interaction and conversion of different forms of power at different levels to generate new sets of emergent and interstitial structures and relationships. Power is therefore, in principle, everywhere. It is expressed in various micro-contexts and cannot be restricted to a particular unit or dimension, for this reason the power relations can be analysed by linking the three levels of analysis. Constructivist orientations to macro and micro-objects, and thus to the macro/micro problem, have interesting implications for all fields of inquiry, but are particularly relevant to social theory and sociology (Barnes, 2003). Elias (1986) argues that there is a false dichotomy between the structural or macro theories and the interactionist or micro theories that underpin much sociological thinking.

Therefore, the media/football complex can be seen in different perspectives. For Wittel (2001), the emergence of power in micro-contexts can be identified in 'networked sociality': a disembodied intersubjectivity that contrasts the 'belonging' of 'community' with the concept of 'integration' and 'disintegration' in a network.

Given that all levels interact and influence each other, we understand that globalisation is also linked to a general vision of self-identity and global identity. The micro level, subjective dimension, encompasses the individual and their representations, as well as identity formation, attitudes, motivations, memories, and other psychological processes. At this level, the club's members, fans, and sympathisers are identified. 'Football without fans is nothing!' (famous phrase said by Celtic manager Jock Stein, 1965-78). However, even TV fans can be partisan, and even in the most TV-oriented leagues, clubs still obtain a large fraction of their income from gate money. Furthermore, it is the fans in attendance at the stadium who contribute to the atmosphere, by adding colour and enthusiasm to the stands. Ultimately, the actions of the fans determine the outcome of the situation, since they are the assets responsible, directly or indirectly, for securing sponsorship contracts. Sponsorship studies have generally been focused on attitudinal measures of fan loyalty to understand the reactions to abstract sponsors (Biscaia, 2021). A greater emphasis is being placed on the part of clubs and tournament organisers alike on the generation of revenue and the enhancement of income. The commercial and media systems have the effect of overwriting the game.

As the marketisation of television sport has progressed, the balance of power between citizens and consumers has shifted from the former to the latter. Essentially, the aim is to maximise club revenues through 'clients/consumers' - fans. This implies strengthening the interrelationship between the identities of 'citizen' and 'consumer' - 'citimer'. This concept is derived from empirical evidence that identifies the social and cultural capacities of fans as their referent. It is often asserted that football is an inherently social activity, and that it is incomplete without spectators. From this

perspective, the imbalance of power between football fans and football managers is striking. However, it is evident that the relationship is mutually beneficial, despite the fact that one of the parties is based on voluntarism.

In general, football can be considered to reflect the broader global political economy, particularly in relation to the rise of neoliberal policies. Football is strongly influenced by neoliberal economic policies and strategies. A crucial point to consider is the ascendancy of the global market and their interconnectivity with gambling. Indeed, there is now a global market with free competition for players. The efficient functioning of markets presumes the existence of free competition. Nevertheless, there are notable variations in the manner in which these neoliberal models are developed in football, depending on the nation in question or even the league and club in question.

At the macro level, we consider the systemic dimensions that concern the structural and institutional elements that structure the production and reproduction of the game. These discussions are often linked to variations in governance. From a macro perspective, power is a force that shapes large-scale social formations and outcomes. This force derives from macro conceptual entities such as spheres of action, fields or institutions (Abrutyn, 2013). The systemic dimension of football governance in Europe is experiencing a more competitive, even aggressive environment, because the legitimacy of governing bodies is contested especially by the richest clubs and leagues. As a result, the vertical channels of authority in the football pyramid, identified in Chapter 5, have been altered by stakeholder pressure and replaced by a horizontal axis of stakeholder networks acting as pressure groups.

Football is a community with its own set of self-regulating rules, procedures and regulations. On the other hand, although the EU has extended its scope of action, both in terms of treaties and in other ways, non-institutional actors are just as important for European football as the EU institutions. Nevertheless, the ECJ is responsible for promoting football on the systemic and institutional agenda. The EC has strengthened its policy on the football economy.

On the other hand, legal action (by the players) in the ECJ has been responsible for putting football on the EU's institutional agenda. However, UEFA has played a key role in promoting the redefinition of football in the EU. It is now a reliable partner for the EU institutions. The EU has established guidelines for fair competition in the negotiation of TV rights, which must be respected by all relevant operators. UEFA has adopted all these guidelines and recommendations as a model to be followed, even though not all its European football associations are members of the EU. The EU and European football thus appear as two parallel systems of governance at different levels, which have been used as alternative political spaces by a range of stakeholders.

Although meso-level analytical frameworks are often treated as distinct from macro-level theories in the context of complex network governance problems, they are all rooted in macro-level assumptions. It is crucial to remember that meso-level analytical frameworks are not value-free and

are often derived from highly contested and partial theorisations at the societal level (Dryzek & Dunleavy, 2009).

The meso level, also seen as a dimension of shared expectations, deals with groups and interactions between individuals where they express their attitudes and receive information from others. In particular, analysing the specific context of involvement with football in Portugal, a *sui generis* situation where about 95% of football fans support one of the Big 3 clubs, and only then do they consider supporting another football club in their city or region. These Big 3 have passionate fan bases, cutting-edge youth academies, rich legacies, more than a hundred years of history. Some of the finest footballers in nation's history have come from these three clubs.

This means that it is very difficult for any other club to achieve socio-cultural sustainability - fans or members. Consequently, the Portuguese league is the one with the greatest disparity in the distribution of television revenues. Portugal has almost four times the discrepancy in the distribution of television revenues than the second country with the greatest disparity. Most notably, is the power of the (Big 3) over other players in the network is exercised not by excluding networks but by imposing the rules of inclusion (Castells, 2007). In addition, the Big 3 have the ability to unbalance the power of governance structures (LP and FPF), but also political power. The expressed will of supporters exerts a form of pressure on political power. The LP's power is asymmetrical in that it conditions the legitimate objectives of the other clubs. But they do not hold all the power. This is true because they themselves depend on others to create a football league, compete, and become one of those eligible for the UCL.

Similarly, the Big Five European football leagues are determined by a combination of successes that make them collectively superior. They represent a colossal part of the global football ecosystem. Their allure extends beyond the pitch, as they generate vast sums of revenue from a variety of sources, including broadcasting deals, sponsorship contracts and match-day experiences. On the one hand, these leagues consistently produce competitive clubs, have a rich legacy spanning more than a century, passionate fan bases, cutting-edge youth academies and iconic stadiums. On the other hand, the multiplicity of power networks and their necessary interaction for the exercise of power has political implications for the other clubs, the players and the governing bodies of European football in terms of competitive balance. As a result, policymakers have historically demonstrated a complex relationship with regard to conflicts of interest and transparency.

Therefore, still at the meso level, or dimension of shared expectations, given the new media ecosystem, national broadcasters have to compete with distributors who are part of international conglomerates and can therefore face difficulties in acquiring negotiating power. On the one hand, markets that allow new platforms to enter, gain market share and create competition end up increasing the bargaining power of rights sellers. In addition, as a result of the scarcity of professional

team franchises, as well as the relatively fixed supply of content, this also contributes to an increase in the value of broadcasting rights or the streaming of games and matches.

For their part, broadcasters have passed on the increased costs through higher advertising rates, distribution fees and the cost of tuning in for viewers.

These factors constitute conflicts, although consumers may resist by 'cutting the cord' by ditching cable TV packages in favour of streaming services. Asymmetrical power relations between broadcasters and distributors (cable, satellite, IPTV) can also give rise to conflicts, and relations between broadcasters and OTT platforms such as Netflix and YouTube are also becoming conflictual.

9.4. Main Conclusions

As discussed in preceding sub-theme, in endeavouring to understand the contextual factors determine bargaining power of broadcasting rights in professional European football, this research has contributed to the identification of a complex of interest relationships that control the power network within the media/football complex. More importantly, this thesis advances a theory that address the issue of the forces of commercialisation and globalisation will continue to shape football, while the fans who are inseparable from the capitalist social order will continue to feed the industry.

The central argument contained in this thesis is that football is not a product of the sports industry or the media: football precedes them. And while the industry and the media feed on sporting excellence and spectacle, the irony is that they run the risk of seeing neither the player nor the game.

To achieve this conclusion, we are focusing on three observations concerning: governance, football and media. Governance area focuses on policy responses to football industry. Firstly, and in the broadest sense, we can observe that football is almost always political and, underpinned by asymmetrical interests, it can even be seen, to borrow Clausewitz's phrase about war, as 'a continuation of politics by other means'.

Secondly, that the predominant relationship of the spectator to sport (clients/consumers) is partisan and takes the form of an identification with a contestant, whether individual or collective, by virtue of its immense value and popularity. As a reaction, the football broadcasting market has become increasingly regulated as a reaction to the processes of liberalisation and deregulation of the European audiovisual markets, in order to guarantee fair competition and preserve its legacy as a bulwark of European society.

Thirdly, the football industry has changed radically, in all its aspects. First, by the advent of TV and then by internet. The second decade of the digital age, the global extension of the internet and the permeation of its allied complex of new media technologies into everyday life, has gathered pace, in a combination of benefits and problems associated with these developments.

The empirical data corroborates the theory that there is a tension in redistribution to create a reasonable level of competitive balance, and that a certain degree of revenue redistribution is necessary to ensure that unequal financial power in the sports labour market does not distort the overall competitive balance. Once again, therefore, sports competitions need effective governance mechanisms to ensure that a proper competitive balance is maintained. We therefore argue that the frictions created by commercial rivalry, technological innovation, government oversight and the assertiveness of football fans manifest themselves within, between and among nations.

Recalling the strategic importance of the symbiosis between media and sport, we easily assume that media/football complex is a very dynamic system in which actors are constantly negotiating positions and power relations. We therefore argue that the qualitative evidence that centralised sports rights play a critical role in determine the bargaining power of broadcasting rights but are not the driving force behind leveraging the value of broadcasting rights.

The attractiveness of live sports streaming is linked to a wider symbolic power that has long been associated with the experience of live events on FTA TV. Therefore, in order not to jeopardise the interests of the general public due to the evolution of the distribution, transmission and consumption of global media sport, we believe that this evolution should be closely monitored and analysed from a social, market and equal access perspective.

In the specific case of contextual factors that determine bargaining power of broadcasting rights in Portugal, we are led to say that the Big 3 have broadcasting rights contracts that the other clubs will never be able to reach. The clubs have benefited from the increased level of competition in the Portuguese sports broadcasting market, which has produced more lucrative rights contracts. Due to the lack of competition in the Portuguese domestic media market – which does not mean to achieve a new paradigm – but, at the moment, preserving the commercial value of the Big 3 clubs and guaranteeing more value for all sports companies, is a task extremely challenger and herculean. However, media markets are volatile, and a lot will happen until 2028.

The argument resonates with a wide and evolving range of business and revenue models, with exposure to sport that have proved resilient to the industry, despite economic cycles and changes in business models. It is not predictable, but it will be a healthy confrontation between the old media players, who have dwindling revenues, and the big tech companies with big pockets, who are looking to improve margins and revenues.

We also recognise the importance of using competition law to discourage illegal streaming while promoting fair competition between legitimate streaming services. Despite ongoing concerns about widespread piracy, the growth of the streaming industry and the expansion of partnerships suggest that competition for sports rights around the world will only intensify. However, innovation in business models may provide new opportunities to balance access, affordability and exclusivity of sports

content, further shaping the sports media landscape. The intricate relationship between football and the media has always had very tenuous boundaries, so this period of transition could see traditional broadcasters losing ground to big tech companies. In this process we consider:

- i. Live sports streaming serves as a primary means by which television content and practices move beyond the constraints of traditional broadcast media, while maintaining the conventions of television coverage and viewing habits;
- ii. The streaming services are establishing new norms for accessing and curating sports media, signalling a historic shift in the global market for sports coverage rights and transforming the media systems that distribute live content around the world.

However, the world of football is not known for its conformity to the principles of rationality. Instead, we seem to have reached a stage where there are several entrenched camps, those in favour of change, and others that resist any change. These camps are fighting for their corners on the chessboard of geo-economics. The outcome of this conflict will tell us about the future of football in Europe.

In short, we have concluded that the forces of commercialisation and globalisation will continue to shape football as long as fans, who are inextricably linked to the capitalist social order, continue to feed the industry. Moreover, football is not a product of the sports industry or the media; football predates both. This may seem self-evident, but as Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860) observed “The task is not so much to see what no one yet has seen, but to think what nobody yet has thought about that which everyone sees”. While the sports industry and the media feed on sporting excellence and spectacle, the irony is that they run the risk of seeing neither the player nor the game.

9.5. Field of Application

As King (2016) argues, for many, football is entertainment and therefore unworthy of serious consideration. However, sport research systematically advances knowledge and is therefore relevant to both academics and practitioners.

One of the lessons for both academics and industry managers is that the contours of cultural differences and similarities do not always parallel the contours of profit. Shared cultural attributes, such as a sense of belonging, identity and uncompromising commitment, can help bring audiences together across borders, while the same attributes, if not shared, can drive audiences apart.

Future directions for the football industry:

We hope that the results of our study will help to provide an additional explanation to the existing ultra-optimistic discourse on the challenges of centralisation, almost comparable to the Portuguese

messianic myth of Sebastianism - as the solution to all the problems of the PPL, which will become the 'Fifth Empire' of European football.

The characteristics of professional football as a sport have always been inextricably linked to its characteristics as a business, but never more so than today. For this reason, the results of the project may be of interest to organisations, especially as Portuguese clubs prepare for an important step: the centralisation of sports broadcasting. As Evens (2014) points out, the inclusion and comparative analysis of new and available information requires a (purposeful) theoretical sampling of new and information-rich cases to confirm or falsify tentative concepts.

Future directions for policymakers:

While issues surrounding dispute resolution and competition decisions were present throughout the study, it became clear that policymakers have limited capacity to intervene directly in commercial disputes. In order to improve the sustainability of the local media/football complex, the results of the study can be considered.

Future directions for academics:

The greatest contribution to academia is, however, the subject itself and its angles. It is indisputable that much more systematic empirical research is needed on the media football complex. In a study by Kirkendall (2020) on the evolution of football as a research topic, the author concludes that the academic research to date in football is enormous, with over 24,000 articles listed on Google Scholar, nearly 14,000 citations listed on PubMed and nearly 60% more articles than the next most studied sport. The aforementioned papers, however, mainly cover leagues in the so-called Big five in Europe countries, that is, the Premier League in England, the Bundesliga in Germany, the La Liga in Spain, the Serie A in Italy and the Ligue 1 in France. There is much less research on smaller, so-called 'Beyond the Big five' football countries, including Portugal.

This scarcity applies to studies about the media football complex. Relatedly, increasing the understanding on factors that are associated with attendance is relevant, because in smaller football countries the composition of main club revenues – broadcasting, commercial and match-day revenues – may be different to that of Big five countries due to, for example, proportionately smaller media revenues.

We advise our academic colleagues, especially those involved in knowledge development, to build on our contributions, whether they take the form of guidelines or concepts. As Deleuze and Guattari (1991, p. 49) have suggested, a concept is a dynamic force - both real and ideal. This transforms engagement with the work into a literal 'happening' in which something new is constantly emerging. Therefore, in addition to specific meanings and verifiable statements, the work also generates 'becoming'.

9.6. Research Limitations

As an innovative and original project, the research was able to raise fundamental questions, particularly because of its methodological contribution. The choice tended to favour the possibility of working simultaneously on form and content. The appeal of the constructivist approach in 'revealing the researcher as the author of a construction of experience and meaning is an important step in the research'.

Furthermore, it may be seen as an advantage by some, but it may also be seen as a disadvantage by others, that grounded theories can be revised and updated as new knowledge is acquired. Nevertheless, the knowledge acquired makes it possible to explain and act to change, contain and transform situations.

There are, of course, limitations. All empirical research faces certain limitations, starting with its focus, its broad scope, its cultural, economic and mass phenomena, in other words, a complex. There are limitations when undertaking a large project, as working with grounded theory is a long journey. Therefore, as Strauss & Corbin (2015) state, it is impossible to be immersed in data and not be affected by it. However, as Albert Einstein insightfully noted, "everything that can be counted does not necessarily count; everything that counts cannot necessarily be counted" (cited in Goetz & LeCompte, 1985, p. 2).

9.6.1. Methodology implications

The process of grounded theory building has been the subject of criticism on the grounds that it is bewilderingly complex. This is primarily due to the fact that the aim of grounded theory is to develop new theory or modify existing theory. As a result, it is not enough to produce good categories and interesting narratives and then neglect the underlying social processes or fail to develop abstract concepts.

Despite the evolutionary and inductive nature of this form of qualitative research, we recognised that it is a systematic approach to research with specific stages in data analysis, which makes the process time-consuming. The necessity for the study of a phenomenon 'in action' or 'in situ' arises from the continuous interaction of comparative analysis and theoretical sampling. This is because theories develop and evolve over time (Skinner, Edwards & Smith, 2021).

Grounded theory is distinct from other qualitative research programmes because of its major aim, to develop theories from empirical analyses and to provide explanation for phenomena (Flick, 2018). In constructivist grounded theory, neither data nor theories are discovered; researchers are part of the world they study and the data they collect.

From our point of view, perhaps one of the limitations comes from understanding the interpretive definition of the theory. Even more so because interpretive theory calls for an imaginative understanding of the phenomenon being studied. Emphasises understanding rather than explanation. Interpretive theories allow for indeterminacy rather than seeking causality and prioritise the demonstration of patterns and connections over linear reasoning. It emphasise truth as provisional and social life as procedural.

No qualitative (or quantitative) research study is flawless, possessing only strengths without any drawbacks. By openly and unreservedly acknowledging the limitations within the proposed design, our proposal takes the 'high road', thereby reinforcing the argument that this design is optimal, given the funding, time, and other resources available to support the study.

In conclusion, we believe that integrating the interviews and primary analysis with the secondary analysis was highly advantageous. This process, in our view, enhanced the quality of the qualitative data analysis.

9.6.2. Limitations regarding the nature of the model

Throughout the study, we strive to approach ontological inconsistencies with an open mind, recognizing them as opportunities to understand existing theories and to create new ones. As Peirce (1969) underscores, knowledge does not directly represent reality but rather serves as an instrument for dealing with it.

Therefore, to develop our instruments, our primary focus was data collection. Unfortunately, the available reports tend to concentrate on the largest source markets and the 'big five' leagues in Europe, often overlooking smaller markets such as Portugal. It was therefore considered that the lack of access to a media group's privileged data, including commercial information, customer data or financial reports, as well as football leagues, was one of the most important issues. Conducting interviews with experts proved challenging, with many failing to provide feedback and others politely stating that they lacked the knowledge to give informed opinions. As a result, we also found that it was sometimes more difficult to engage research partners, as participating in our research could be too much of a burden for some. On reflection, this is not surprising. Whatever the reasons, we had less response from the research community, particularly for the third and final rounds of data collection. However, these factors did not affect the course of the study.

We understand that time is essential to enable both a creative component and an exhaustive analysis of the data, ultimately leading to a theoretical explanation of the phenomenon under study. As Skinner, Edwards, and Smith (2021, p. 360) argue, any theoretical explanation must be robust enough to accommodate various interpretations while still permitting generalizations. At this stage, we have successfully achieved the proposed objective.

9.7. Future Research Perspectives

The originally stated overall aim of this research was to develop a substantive grounded theory that would explain the contextual factors that determine the bargaining power for broadcasting rights in European professional football. Whilst acknowledging the limitations of our analysis, we believe that we have achieved our aims.

Although the complex landscape of the subject and the network around the product 'football' left us 'no room for manoeuvre'. However, our contributions are only the 'tip of the iceberg', as there are many other lenses through which to view the phenomenon under study. Moreover the chosen methodology was exploratory rather than confirmatory, which may raise doubts but also provide new directions for further research.

Any future research analysing the determinants of broadcasting rights, whether using grounded theory or another theoretical framework, should reveal (or at least approximate) fundamental truths that are as free as possible from researcher 'bias'. It should keep the understanding of research processes as rigorous and refined as possible.

References

- Abbamonte, G. & Rabassa, V. (2001). "Foreclosure and Vertical Mergers - The Commission's Review of Vertical Effects in the Last Wave of Media and Internet Mergers: AOL/Time Warner", *European Competition Law Review*, 6, 214–226.
- Abbott, A. D. (2004). *Methods of discovery: Heuristics for the social sciences*, New York, Norton & Company.
- Abercrombie, N. & Longhurst, B. (1998). *Audiences: A Sociological Theory of Performance and Imagination*, London, Sage.
- Abrutyn, S. (2013). *Revisiting institutionalism in sociology: Putting the "institution" back in institutional analysis*, Routledge, New York.
- Adner, R. (2016). "Ecosystem as structure: An actionable construct for strategy", *Journal of Management*, 43(1), 39–58.
- Adner, R., Chen, J. & Science, F. Z. (2019). "Frenemies in Platform Markets: Heterogeneous Profit Foci as Drivers of Compatibility Decisions", *Management Science*, 66(6).
- Ahmed, M. (2018, January 16). "Football's Big Spenders Prop up Smaller Rivals", *Financial Times*, available at <https://www.ft.com/content/9daf36e8-fab9-11e7-9b32-d7d59aace167>.
- Alavy, K., Gaskell, A., Leach, S. & Szymanski, S. (2010). "On the edge of your seat: Demand for football on television and the uncertainty of outcome hypothesis", *International Journal of Sport Finance*, 5, 75–95.
- Albarran, A. B. (2006). "Historical Trends and Patterns in Media Management Research", in A. B. Albarran, S. M. Chan-Olmsted & M. O. Wirth, (Eds.), *Handbook of Media Management and Economics*, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, New Jersey, pp.3-22.
- Albornoz, L. A. (2015). *Power, Media, Culture: A Critical View from the Political Economy of Communication*, Palgrave Macmillan, London.
- Albritton, R., Jessop, B. & Westra, R. (2010). *Political Economy and Global Capitalism: The 21st Century, Present and Future*, Anthem Press, London.
- Albrow, M. (1996). *The Global Age: State and Society Beyond Modernity*, Polity Press, Cambridge.
- Alexander, J. C., Giesen, B., Münch, R. & Smelser, N. J. (1987). *The Micro-Macro Link*, University of California Press, California.
- Alger, D. (2000). "Os Megamedia, a Situação do Jornalismo e a Democracia", *Revista de Comunicação e Linguagens*, 27, 97-107.
- Allan, G. & Roy, G. (2008). "Does television crowd out spectators?", *Journal of Sports Economics*, 9, 592-605.
- Almiron, N. & Segovia, A. I. (2012). "Financialization, Economic Crisis, and Corporate Strategies in Top Media Companies: The Case of Grupo Prisa", *International Journal of Communication*, 6, 2894-2917.
- Al-Obaidly, Y. (2021, July 12). "Yousef Al-Obaidly is the CEO of beIN Media Group. Qatar - Telecoms & IT", available at <https://thebusinessyear.com/interview/yousef-al-obaidly/>.
- Alpert, R. T. (2015). *Religion and Sports: An Introduction and Case Studies*, Columbia University Press, New York.
- ALPFL (2023, May 5). "European Leagues Statement on European Commission Recommendation on live content piracy", *Media Release*, available at <https://europeanleagues.com/european-leagues-statement-on-european-commission-recommendation-on-live-content-piracy/>.
- Altheide, D. L. (2000). "Tracking discourse and qualitative document analysis", *Poetics*, 27, 287-299.
- Altheide, D.L. (2003). "The Mass Media", in Larry T. Reynolds; Nancy J. Herman-Kinney, (Eds.), *Handbook of Symbolic Interactionism*, Alta Mira Press, Oxford, pp.129-138.
- Altheide, D.L. & Snow, R. (1979). *Media Logic*, Sage, London.

- Altheide, D. L., Coyle, M., De Vriese, K. & Schneider, C. (2008). "Emergent Qualitative Document Analysis", in S. Nagy, Hesse-Biber, & P. Leav, (Eds.), *Handbook of Emergent Methods*, Guilford Press, New York, pp.127-154.
- Altheide, D. L. & Schneider, C. J. (2012). *Qualitative Media Analysis*, (2nd ed.), Sage, London.
- Alvesson, M. & Sköldbberg, K. (2000). *Reflexive Methodology: New Vistas for Qualitative*, Sage, London.
- Amara, M., Henry, I., Liang, J. & Uchiumi, K. (2005). "The governance of professional soccer: Five case studies – Algeria, China, England, France and Japan", *European Journal of Sport Science*, 5(4), 189-206.
- Amis, J. M. & Cornwell, T. B. (2005). *Global Sport Sponsorship*, Berg Publishers, London.
- Anderson, B. (2012). *Comunidades Imaginadas: Reflexões Sobre a Origem e a Expansão do Nacionalismo*, Edições 70, Lisboa.
- Anderson, P. (1998). *The Origins of Postmodernity*, Verso, London.
- Andreff, W. (2001). "The Correlation between Economic Underdevelopment and Sport", *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 1(4), 251-279.
- Andreff, W. (2008). "Globalization of the Sports Economy", *Revista di Diritto ed economia dello sport*, 4(3), 13-32.
- Andreff, W. (2011a). *Contemporary Issues in Sports Economics Participation and Professional Team Sports*, Edward Elgar, Cheltenham.
- Andreff, W. (2011b). "Some comparative economics of the organization of sports: competition and regulation in north American vs. European professional team sports leagues", *The European Journal of Comparative Economics*, 8(1), 3-27.
- Andreff, W. (2014). "French professional football: how much different?", in J. Goddard & P. Sloane, *Handbook on the Economics of Professional Football*, Edward Elgar, Cheltenham, pp.298–321.
- Andreff, W. (2018). "Financial and Sporting Performance in French Football Ligue 1: Influence on the Player Market", *International Journal of Financial Studies*, 6(4), 1-17.
- Andreff, W. (2018). "Different Types of Manipulation in Sport", in M. Breuer & D. Forrest, *Handbook on the Economics of Manipulation in Sport*, Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, pp.13-36.
- Andreff, W. & Bourg, J. F. (2006). "Broadcasting Rights and Competition in European Football", in I. Jeanrenaud & S. Kesenne, *Economics of Sport and the Media*, Edward Elgar, Cheltenham, pp.37-70.
- Andreff, W. & Staudohar, P. D. (2000). "The Evolving European Model of Professional Sports Finance", *Journal of Sports Economics*, 1(3), 257-276.
- Andreff, W. & Staudohar, P. D. (2002). "European and US Sport Business Models", in C. P. Barros, M. Ibrahímo & S. Szymanski, *Transatlantic Sport: The comparative economics of North American and European sports*, Edward Elgar, Cheltenham, pp. 23-49.
- Andrews, D. L. (2002). "Coming to Terms with Cultural Studies", *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, 26(1), 110–17.
- Andrews, D. L. & Ritzer, G. (2018). "Sport and presumption", *Journal of Consumer Culture*, 18(2), 356–373.
- Andrews, M. & Harrington, P. (2016). "Off Pitch: Football's Financial Integrity Weaknesses, and How to Strengthen Them", *HKS Faculty Research Working Paper Series*, available at <https://research.hks.harvard.edu/publications/workingpapers/Index.aspx>.
- Andújar, C. S. (2013). "Orígenes de la Prensa Diaria Deportiva: El Mundo Deportivo", in U. P. Sevilla, *Materiales Para La Historia Del Deporte*, 11, 7-27.
- Annells, M. (1996). "Grounded theory method: Philosophical perspectives, paradigm of inquiry, and postmodernism", *Qualitative Health Research*, 6, 705-713.
- Ansari, P. & Schreyer, D. (2023). "Mega sports event TV demand: synthesis and outlook", in H. A. Solberg, R. K. Storm & K. Swart, *Research Handbook on Major Sporting Events*, Edward Elgar, Cheltenham, pp.258-270.
- Appadurai, A. (1990). *The social life of things. Commodities in cultural perspective*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

- Appadurai, A. (1996). *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, University of Minnesota Press, Minnesota, Vol. I.
- Armstrong, G. & Mitchell, J. P. (2008). *Global and Local Football: Politics and Europeanisation on the Fringes of the EU*, Routledge, New York.
- Arnaut, J. L. (2006). *Sport in Europe (participation, volunteering, organisation)*, Independent European Sports Review, Brussels.
- Arnett, D. B. & Laverie, D. A. (2000). "Fan characteristics and sporting event attendance: Examining variance in attendance", *International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship*, 2(3), 40-59.
- Arrondel, L. & Duhautois, R. (2020). "Are French Football Fans Sensitive to Outcome Uncertainty", *Economics and Statistics*, 513, 5-26.
- Arsenault, A. H. & Castells, M. (2008). "The Structure and Dynamics of Global Multi-Media Business Networks", *International Journal of Communication*, 2, 707-748.
- Artero, I. & Bandrés, E. (2017). "The Broadcasting Demand for the Spanish National Soccer Team", *Journal of Sports Economics*, 1-26.
- Ascari, G. & Gagnepain, P. (2006). "Spanish football", *Journal of sports economics*, 7(1), 76-89.
- Atkinson, P. & Coffey, A. (2004). "Analysing Documentary Realities", in D. Silverman (Ed.), *Qualitative Research: theory, method and Practice*, Sage, (2nd ed.), London, pp.56-74.
- Aunger, R. (2003). *Reflexive Ethnographic Science*, Altamira Press, Lanham.
- Baimbridge, M. (1998). "Outcome uncertainty in sporting competition: the Olympic Games 1896–1996", *Applied Economics Letters*, 5(3), 161-164.
- Baimbridge, M., Cameron, S. & Dawson, P. (1996). "Satellite Television and the demand for football: a whole new ball game?", *Scottish Journal of Political Economy*, 43(3), 317-333.
- Bairner, A. (2001). *Sport, Nationalism, and Globalization: European and North American perspectives*, University of New York Press, Albany.
- Baker, S. A., & Rowe, D. (2013). "The power of popular publicity: new social media and the affective dynamics of the sport racism scandal", *Journal of Political Power*, 6(3), 441-460.
- Baldwin, A. (2014). "Putting the philosophy into PhD", *Working Papers in the Health Sciences*, 1(10), 1-4.
- Bale, J. (2003). *Sports Geographies*, Routledge, (2nd ed.), London.
- Bale, J. (2008). *Anti-Sport Sentiments in Literature*, Routledge, London.
- Bampton, R. & Cowton, C. J. (2002). "The E-interview", *Qualitative Social Research*, 3(2).
- Barajas, A., Shakina, E. & Gasparetto, T. (2019). "At the stadium or at home: the effect of broadcasting matches", *Sport Business and Management: An International Journal*, 9(5), 495-505.
- Baran, S. J. (2007). "Sports and Television", *From encyclopaedia of Television, MBC - The Museum of Broadcast Communication*, available at <http://www.museum.tv/eotv/sportsandte>.
- Barani, L. (2007). "The regulation of sport in the European Union: courts and markets", in B. Bogusz, A. Cygan & E. Szyrsczak, *The Regulation of Sport in the European Union*, Edward Elgar, pp.107-131.
- Barbalet, J. (2009). "Pragmatism and Symbolic Interactionism", in B. S. Turner, (Ed.), *The New Blackwell Companion to Social Theory*, Blackwell, Oxford, pp.199-217.
- Barbour, R. S. (2018). "Quality of Data Collection", in U. Flick, (Ed.), *Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis*, Sage, London, pp.217-230.
- Barnes, B. (2003). "The Macro/Micro Problem and the Problem of Structure and Agency", in G. Ritzer & B. Smart, (Eds.), *Handbook of Social Theory*, Sage, London, pp.339-352.
- Barnett, S. (1990). *Games and Sets: The Changing Face of Sport on Television*, British Film Institute, London.
- Barros, C. P., Ibrahimo, M. & Szymanski, S. (2002). *Transatlantic Sport: The Comparative Economics of North American and European Sports*, Edward Elgar, Cheltenham.
- Barsch, K. (2015). "The path of European football: a level playing field for only 90 minutes", *Historical Social Research*, 40(4), 221-254.
- Baudrillard, J. (1982). *Simulations*, Semiotext(e), New York.
- Baudrillard, J. (1993). *The Transparency of Evil: Essays in Extreme Phenomena*, Verso, London.
- Baudrillard, J. (1996). *The System of Objects*, Verso Books, New York.

- Bauer, H. H., Stokburger-Sauer, N. E. & Exler, S. (2008). "Brand image and fan loyalty in professional team sport: A refined model and empirical assessment", *Journal of Sport Management*, 22(2), 205-226.
- Bauman, Z. (1992). *Intimations of Postmodernity*, Routledge, Nova York.
- Bauman, Z. (2000). *Liquid Modernity*, Polity, Cambridge.
- Beam, R. A. (2006). "Quantitative Methods in Media Management and Economics", in A. B. Albarran, S. M. Chan-Olmsted & M. O. Wirth, (Eds.), *Handbook of Media Economics and Management*, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, New Jersey, pp.523-552.
- Beamish, R. (1982). "Sport and the logic of capitalism", in H. Cantelon & R. Grueau, *Sport Culture and the Modern State*, University Press, Toronto.
- Beck, D. & Bosshart, L. (2003). "Sports and Media", *Communication Research Trends*, 22(4).
- Beck, U. (1992). *Risk Society. Towards a New Modernity*, Sage, London.
- Beck, U. (2000). *What is Globalization?*, Polity Press, Cambridge.
- Becker, H. S. (2008). *Art worlds: Updated and expanded*, University of California Press, California.
- Becker, H. S. & Keller, R. (2016). "Ways of telling about society", Howard S. Becker in Conversation with Reiner Keller, *Forum Qualitative Social Research*, 17(2).
- Beech, J. & Chadwick, S. (2007). *The Marketing of Sport*, Pearson Education, Edinburgh.
- Beek, R. M., Ernest, M. & Verschueren, J. (2018). "Global Football: Defining the rules of the changing game", in S. Chadwick, D. Parnell, P. Widdop & C. Anagnostopoulos (Eds), *Handbook of Football Business and Management*, Routledge, New York, pp.20-32.
- Bellamy, R. J. (1989). "Professional sports organizations: Media strategies", in L. Wenner, *Media, Sports and Society*, Sage, Newbury Park, pp.120-133.
- Bellamy, R. V. (1988). "Impact of the television marketplace on the structure of major league baseball", *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 32(1), 73-87.
- Bellamy, R. V. (1998). "The Evolving Television Sports Marketplace", in L. A. Wenner, *Mediasport*, Routledge, London, pp.73-87.
- Benedict, A. (1991). *Imagined Communities*, Verso, (2nd ed.), London.
- Bennett, T. & Frow, J. (2013). *Handbook of Cultural Analysis*, Sage, London.
- Benoit, W. L., & Billings, A. C. (2020). *The Rise and Fall of Mass Communication*, Peter Lang, New York.
- Benoliel, J. Q. (1996). "Grounded Theory and Nursing Knowledge", *Qualitative Health Research*, 6(3), 406-428.
- Benschop, Y. (2006). "Of small steps and the longing for giant leaps: Research on the intersection of sex and gender within workplaces and organizations", in A. M. Konrad, P. Prasad & J. K. Pringle, (Eds.), *Handbook of workplace diversity*, Sage, Thousand Oaks, 273-298.
- Berg, K. & Latin, R. (2008). *Essentials of Research Methods in Health*, Williams and Wilkins, (3rd ed.), Baltimore.
- Berger, P. L. & Luckmann, T. (2011). *The Social Construction of Reality - A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*, Penguin Books, London.
- Bergsgard, N. A. (2018). "Power and domination in sport policy and politics – three intertwined levels of exercising power", *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*, 10(4), 1-15.
- Bertrand & Associé, G. d. (2021, July 9). "How are professional football TV rights marketed and redistributed in France?", available at <https://en.bertrand-sport-avocat.com/blogs/post/comment-les-droits-tv-du-football-professionnel-sont-ils-commercialis%C3%A9s-et-redistribu%C3%A9s-en-france>.
- Billings, A. C. (2011). *Sports Media: Transformation, Integration, Consumption*, Routledge, London.
- Billings, A. C. & Buzzelli, N. R. (2022). "Sport, Television, and structuration get arrow", in L. A. Wenner, (Eds.), *Handbook of Sport and Society*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, pp.1044–1160.
- Billings, A. C. & Hardin, M. (2014). *Handbook of Sport and New Media*, Routledge, London.
- Birkinbine, B. J., Gómez, R. & Wasko, J. (2017). *Global Media Giants*, Routledge, New York.
- Birks, M. & Mills, J. (2015). *Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide*, Sage, New York.
- Birmingham, J., & David, M. (2011). "Live-Streaming: Will Football Fans Continue to be More Law Abiding than Music Fans?", *Sport in Society*, 14(1), 69-80.

- Biscaia, R., Yoshida, M. & Kim, Y. (2021). "Service quality and its effects on consumer outcomes: A meta-analytic review in spectator sport", *European Sport Management Quarterly*, available at <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/16184742.2021.1938630>.
- Bishop, D. T., Karageorghis, C. & Loizou, G. (2007). "A grounded theory of young tennis players' use of music to manipulate emotional state", *Journal of Sport & Exercise Psychology*, 29, 584-607.
- Biti, O. (2008). "The Local and Global in Contemporary Sport", *Nar, umjet*, 45 (1), 183-197.
- Black, D. & Van Der Westhuizen, J. (2004). "The Allure of Global Games for 'Semi-peripheral' Politics and Spaces: A research agenda", *Third World Quarterly*, 25(7), 1195-1214.
- Black, J. (2002). "Critical reflections on regulation", *Discussion paper*, Retrieved March, 4.
- Blackshaw, I. S. (2017). *Short Studies in International Law International Sports Law: An Introductory Guide*, Asser Press, T.M.C.
- Blackshaw, T. (2008). "Contemporary community theory and football", *Soccer and Society*, 9(3), 325-345.
- Blaikie, N. (2000). *Designing Social Research: The Logic of Anticipation*, Polity Press, Cambridge.
- Blaikie, N. & Priest, J. (2017). *Social Research: Paradigms in Action*, John Wiley & Sons, New Jersey.
- Blau, P. (1964). *Exchange and power in social life*, Wiley, New York.
- Blau, P. M. (1987). "Contrasting Theoretical Perspectives", in J. C. Alexander, B. Giesen, R. Münch, & N. J. Smelser, *The Micro-Macro Link*, University of California Press, California, pp.71-85.
- Blociszewski, J. (2001). "Le Football Télévisé Victime du Ralenti", *Communication & langages*, 129 (1), 4-20.
- Blumer, H. (1969). "The Methodological Position of Symbolic Interactionism", in H. Blumer, *Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method*, University of California Press, Berkeley, pp.1-60.
- Blumer, H. (1986). *Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method*, University of California Press, Berkeley.
- Blumer, H. (2004). *George Herbert Mead and human conduct*, Rowman & Littlefield, Washington.
- Boardman, A. & Hargreaves-Heap, S. (2000). "Network Externalities and Government Restrictions on Satellite Broadcasting of Key Sporting Events", *Journal of Cultural Economics*, 23, 167-181.
- Bogdan, R. & Biklen, S. (2007). *Qualitative Research for Education: An Introduction to Theory and Methods* (5th ed.), Pearson, Boston.
- Bogner, A., Littig, B. & Menz, W. (2009). "Introduction: Expert Interviews: An Introduction to a New Methodological Debate", in A. Bogner, B. Littig & W. Menz, *Interviewing Experts*, Palgrave Macmillan, London, pp.1-13.
- Bogusz, B., Cygan, A. & Szyszczak, E. (2007). *The Regulation of Economic Activity in Sport*, Edward Elgar, Cheltenham.
- Boillat, C. & Marston, K. T. (2016). *Governance Models Across Football Leagues and Clubs*, Editions CIES, Neuchâtel.
- Bolíbar, M. (2015). "Macro, meso, micro: broadening the 'social' of social network analysis with a mixed methods approach", *Quality & Quantity*, 50(5), 2217-2236.
- Bolotny, F. & Bourg, J. F. (2006). "The Demand for Media Coverage", in W. Andreff, & S. Szymanski, *Handbook on the Economics of Sport*, Edward Elgar, Cheltenham, pp. 112-133.
- Bolotny, F. & Bourg, J. F. (2019). "The demand for media coverage", in P. Downward, B. Frick, B. R. Humphreys, T. Pawlowski, J. E. Ruseski & B. P. Soebbing, (Eds.), *Handbook on the Economics of Sport*, Sage, London, (2nd ed.), pp.112-120.
- Bond, A. J., Widdop, P. & Parnell, D. (2020). "Topological network properties of the European football loan system", *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 20, 655-678.
- Boniface, P. (1998). Géopolitique du football, *Politique étrangère*, 64(1), 156-157.
- Boniface, P. (2002). "Football as a factor (and a reflection) of international politics, The International Spectator", *Journal of International Affairs*, 33(4), 87-98.
- Borges, F. (2019). "Soccer Clubs as Media Organizations: A Case Study of Benfica TV and PSG TV", *International Journal of Sport Communication*, 1-20.
- Borland, J., & Macdonald, R. D. (2003). "Demand for Sport", *Oxford Review of Economic Policy*, 19 (4), 478-502.

- Bourdieu, P. (1980). "Le capital social. Notes Provisoires", *Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales*, 31 (2-3).
- Bourdieu, P. (2010). *A distinção: Uma crítica social da faculdade do juízo*, Edições 70, Lisboa.
- Bourdieu, P. (1990). *The Logic of Practice*, Polity Press, Cambridge.
- Bourdieu, P. (1996). *On Television*, The New Press, New York.
- Bourdieu, P. (1999). "The State, Economics and Sport", in H. Dauncey, & G. Hare, *France and the 1998 World Cup*, Frank Cass, London, pp.15-21.
- Bourdieu, P., Dauncey, H. & Hare, G. (1998). "The State, Economics and Sport", *Culture Sport and Society*, 1(2), 15-21.
- Bourdieu, P. & Wacquant, L. (1992). *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, Polity Press, Cambridge.
- Bourg, J. F., & Gougnet, J. J. (2005). *Économie du Sport*, Éditions La Découverte, Paris.
- Bowen, G. A. (2008). "Grounded theory and sensitizing concepts", *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 5(3), 12-23.
- Bowers, B. J. (1988). "Grounded theory", in S. B., *Paths to knowledge: Innovative research methods for nursing*, National League for Nursing, New York, pp.33-60.
- Boyd, C. O. (2001). "Philosophical Foundations of Qualitative Research", in P. L. Munhall, *Nursing Research: A qualitative perspective*, Jones & Bartlett, Sudbury, (3rd ed.), 65-89.
- Boyle, R. (2009). "Why Sport Matters: New Challenges in the Digital Age", *Centre d'Estudis Olímpics UAB, Barcelona*, available at <http://olympicstudies.uab.es/pdf/boyle.pdf>.
- Boyle, R. (2012). "Reflections on Communication and Sport: On journalism and digital culture", *Communication & Sport*, 1(1/2), 88-99.
- Boyle, R. (2015). "Battle for control? Copyright, football and European media rights", *Culture & Society*, 37(3).
- Boyle, R. & Haynes, R. (2001). *Power Play Sport, the Media and Popular Culture*, University Press, Edinburgh.
- Boyle, R. & Haynes, R. (2002). "New Media Sport", *Culture Sport Society*, 5(3), 96-114.
- Boyle, R. & Haynes, R. (2004). *Football in the New Media Age*, Routledge, London.
- Boyle, R. & Haynes, R. (2006). "The Football Industry and Public Relations", in J. L'Etang & M. Pieczka, *Public Relations: Critical Debates and Contemporary Practice*, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, London, pp. 221-240.
- Braman, S. (2004). "Where Has Media Policy Gone? Defining the Field in the Twenty first Century", *Communication Law and Policy*, 9(2), 152-82.
- Braman, S. (2009). *Change of State: information, policy, and power*, MIT Press, Cambridge.
- Brand, A. & Niemann, A. (2011). "The Europeanisation of German Football: from minor adjustments to system transformation", in Niemann, A., García, B. & Grant, W. (Eds), *The Transformation of European Football: Towards the Europeanisation of the national game*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, pp. 59-79.
- Breedveld, K., Gratton, C., Hoekma, R., Scheerde, J., J. S., Stubbe, J. & Vos, S. (2013). *Study on a Possible Future Sport Monitoring Function in the EU: final report*, Sheffield Hallam University, Utrecht.
- Breitbarth, T. & Harris, P. (2008). "The Role of Corporate Social Responsibility in the Football Business: Towards the development of a conceptual model", *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 8(2), 179-206.
- Brennen, B. S. (2017). *Qualitative Research Methods for Media Studies*, Routledge, (2nd ed.), New York.
- Brewer, J. D. (2001). *Ethnography*, Open University Press, Berkshire.
- Brinkmann, S. (2007). "The Good Qualitative Researcher", *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 4(1-2), 127-144.
- Brinkmann, S. & Kvale, S. (2018). *Doing Interviews*, Sage, Oaks.
- Brodin, E. M. & Avery, H. (2020). "Cross-Disciplinary Collaboration and Scholarly Independence in Multidisciplinary Learning Environments at Doctoral Level and Beyond", *Minerva*, 58, 409-433.
- Brohm, J. M. (1992). *Sociologie Politique du Sport*, P.U.N., Nancy.
- Brook, S. L. (2006). "Evaluating inelastic ticket pricing models", *International Journal of Sport Finance*, 1(3), 140-150.

- Brookes, R. (2002). *Representing sport*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Brown, A., Crabbe, T. & Mellor, G. (2008). "Introduction: football and community – practical and theoretical consideration", *Soccer & Society*, 9(3), 303-312.
- Brown, R. S. & O'Rourke, D. J. (2003). *Case Studies in Sport Communication*, Praeger Publishers, Westport.
- Brownsell, J. (2021, April 23). "What was behind the collapse of the European Super League?", available at <https://www.aljazeera.com/economy/2021/4/23/what-was-behind-the-collapse-of-the-european-super-league>.
- Bruns, A. (2018). *The Routledge companion to social media and politics*, Routledge, London.
- Brustad, R. J. (2009). "Validity in context - qualitative research issues in sport and exercise studies: A response to John Smith", *Qualitative Research in Sport and Exercise*, 1(2), 12-115.
- Bryant, A. (2017). *Grounded theory and grounded theorizing: Pragmatism in research practice*, Oxford University Press, New York.
- Bryant, A. (2019). *The Varieties of Grounded Theory*, Sage, London.
- Bryant, A. & Charmaz, K. (2007). "Introduction Grounded Theory Research: Methods and Practices", in A. Bryant & K. Charmaz, (Eds.), *Handbook of Grounded Theory*, Sage, New York, pp.1-28.
- Bryant, A. & Charmaz, K. (2019). *Handbook of Current Developments in Grounded Theory*, Sage, London.
- Bryant, J. & Zillmann, D. (2002). *Media Effects: Advances in Theory and Research*, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, London.
- Bryman, A. (1984). "The Debate about Quantitative and Qualitative Research: A Question of Method or Epistemology?", *The British Journal of Sociology*, 35(1), 75-92.
- Bryman, A. (1995). *Research Methods and Organization Studies*, Routledge, London.
- Bryman, A. (2012). *Social Research Methods*, Oxford University Press, (4th ed.), Oxford.
- Budzinski, O. (2019). "Competition Policy in Sports Markets", in P. Downward, B. Frick, B. R. Humphreys, T. Pawlowski, J. E. Ruseski & B. P. Soebbing, (Eds.), *Handbook of Sports Economics*, Sage, London, pp.144-153.
- Budzinski, O., & Kunz-Kaltenhäuser, P. (2020). "Promoting or Restricting Competition?", *Ilmenau Economics Discussion Papers*, 26(141).
- Budzinski, O. & Mendelsohn, J. (2022). "Regulating big tech: From competition policy to sector regulation?", *Ilmenau Economics Discussion Papers*, Technische Universität Ilmenau, Ilmenau, 168.
- Budzinski, O. & Szymanski, S. (2015). "Are Restrictions of Competition by Sports Associations Horizontal or Vertical in Nature?", *Journal of Competition Law & Economics*, 11(2), 409–429.
- Buraimo, B. (2007). "The Demand for Sports Broadcasting", in W. Andreff, & S. Szymanski, (Eds.), *Handbook on the Economics of Sport*, Edward Elgar, Cheltenham, pp.100-111.
- Buraimo, B. (2008). "Stadium attendance and television audience demand in English league football", *Managerial and Decision Economics*, 29, 513-523.
- Buraimo, B. & Simmons, R. (2009). "A tale of two audiences: Spectators, television viewers and outcome uncertainty in Spanish football", *Journal of Economics and Business*, 61(4), 326-338.
- Buraimo, B. & Simmons, R. (2015). "Uncertainty of Outcome or Star Quality? Television Audience Demand for English Premier League Football", *International Journal of the Economics of Business*, 22 (3), 449-469.
- Buraimo, B. (2019). "Exposure and Television Audience Demand: The case of English Premier League Football", in P. Downward, B. Frick, B. R. Humphreys, T. Pawlowski, J. E. Ruseski & B. P. Soebbing, (Eds.), *Handbook on the Economics of Sport*, Sage, London, pp.171-180.
- Buraimo, B., Forrest, D. & Simmons, R. (2006). "Robust estimates of the impact of broadcasting on match attendance in football", in B. Buraimo, D. Forrest, & R. Simmons, *Economics Working Paper Series*, Lancaster University, pp. 1-26.
- Buraimo, B., Forrest, D. & Simmons, R. (2007). "Freedom of entry, market size, and competitive outcome: Evidence from English Soccer", *Southern Economic Journal*, 74(1), 204-213.

- Burdsey, D. (2006). "No Ball Games Allowed? A Socio-Historical Examination of the Development and Social Significance of British Asian Football Clubs", *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 32 (3), 477–496.
- Burnham, A. (2014). "Regulation, Redistribution and Mutualisation: a red-in-tooth-and-claw cure for football's ills", in M. Jackson, & P. Maltby (Eds.), *Trust in Football*, Institute for Public Policy Research, London, pp.13-29.
- Burnham, P., Gilland, K., Grant, W. & Layton-Henry, Z. (2004). *Research Methods in Politics*, Palgrave Macmillan, London.
- Burns, N. & Grove, S. (2005). *The Practice of Nursing Research. Conduct, Critique and Utilization*, Saunders, (5th ed.), Philadelphia.
- Burr, V. (1995). *An Introduction to Social Constructionism*, Routledge, New York.
- Burr, V. (2015). *Social Constructionism*, Routledge, (3rd ed.), New York.
- Burrell, G. & Morgan, G. (2019). *Sociological Paradigms and Organisational Analysis: Elements of the Sociology of Corporate Life*, Routledge, (3rd ed.), New York.
- Bury, M. (1986). "Social constructionism and the development of medical sociology", *Sociology of Health and Illness*, 8, 137-169.
- Buschmann, R. & Wulzinger, M. (2017). *Football Leaks*, Planeta, Lisboa.
- Buscombe, E. (1975). *Football on Television*, British Film Institute, London.
- Busse, K. & Gray, J. (2011). "Fan Cultures and Fan Communities", in V. Nightingale, *The Handbook of Global Media and Communication Policy*, Blackwell, Oxford, pp.425-443.
- Busumtwi-Sam, J., & Dobuzinskis, L. (2003). *Turbulence and New Directions in Global Political Economy*, Palgrave Macmillan, Hampshire.
- Butler, R. & Massey, P. (2019). "Has Competition in the Market for Subscription Sports Broadcasting Benefited Consumers? The Case of the English Premier League", *Journal of Sports Economics*, 20(4) 603-624.
- Cairns, J. A. (1990). "The demand for professional team sports", *British Review of Economic Issues*, (12), 1-20.
- Calhoun, C. (1995). *Critical Social Theory: Culture, History, and the Challenge of Difference*, Blackwell, Oxford.
- Calhoun, C. (1998). "Community without Propinquity Revisited", *Sociological Inquiry*, 68(3), 373-397.
- Calvano, E. & Polo, M. (2020). "Market Power, Competition and Innovation in digital markets: A survey", *Information Economics and Policy*, 100853.
- Caporaso, J. A. & Levine, D. P. (1992). *Theories of Political Economy*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Cardoso, G. (2006). *Os Media na Sociedade em Rede*, Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisboa.
- Cardoso, G., Espanha, R. & Araújo, V. (2009). *Da Comunicação de Massa à Comunicação em Rede*, Porto Editora, Porto.
- Carlson, B. D., Donovan, D. & Cumiskey, K. J. (2009). "Consumer-brand relationships in sport: Brand personality and identification", *International Journal of Retail and Distribution Management*, 37(4), 370-384.
- Carmichael, F. & Thomas, D. (2014). "Team performance: product and efficiency in football", in J. Goddard & P. Sloane, *Handbook on the Economics of Professional Football*, Edward Elgar, London, pp.143-165.
- Carmichael, T. & Cunningham, N. (2017). "Theoretical Data Collection and Data Analysis with Gerunds in a Constructivist Grounded Theory Study", *Electronic Journal of Business Research Methods*, 15(2).
- Carrington, B. & McDonald, I. (2009). *Marxism*, Cultural Studies and Sport.
- Caruana, A. (2002). "Service loyalty: The effects of service quality and the mediating role of customer satisfaction", *European Journal of Marketing*, 36 (7/8), 811- 828.
- Caruso, R., Addesa, F. & Domizio, M. D. (2017). "The Determinants of the TV Demand of Soccer: Empirical Evidence on Italian Serie A for the Period 2008–2015", *Journal of Sports Economics*, 20(1), 25-49.

- Cashman, R. (1995). *Paradise of Sport: The Rise of Organised Sport in Australia*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne.
- Cashmore, E. (2002). *The Cult of Football is a Blight on our National Life*, Routledge, London.
- Cashmore, E. (2006). *Celebrity/Culture*, Routledge, London.
- Cashmore, E. (2010). *Making sense of sports*, Routledge (5th ed.), London.
- Casino, V. J. & Thien, D. (2020). *Symbolic Interactionism*, International Encyclopedia of Human Geography.
- Cast, A. D. & Stets, J. E. (2016). "The Self", in S. Abrutyn, (Ed.), *Handbooks of Sociology and Social Research*, Springer International Publishing, Cham, pp. 343-368.
- Cast, A. D., Stets, J. E., Burke & J., P. (1999). "Does the self-conform to the views of others?", *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 62, 68-82.
- Castells, M. (1993). "The Informational Economy and the New International Division of Labor", in M. Carnoy, M. Castells, S. S. Cohen & F. H. Cardoso, (Eds.), *The New Global Economy in the Information Age: Reflections on Ours*, Pennsylvania State University Press, Pennsylvania.
- Castells, M., & Laserna, R. (1989). "The New Dependency: Technological Change and Socioeconomic Restructuring in Latin America", *Sociological Forum*, 4(4), 535-558.
- Castells, M. (2005). "The Network Society: from Knowledge to Policy", in M. Castells & G. Cardoso (Eds.), *The Network Society from Knowledge to Policy*, Johns Hopkins Center for Transatlantic Relations, Washington, DC, pp.3-22
- Castells, M. (2007). *A Sociedade em Rede: A Era da Informação. Economia, Sociedade e Cultura*, Vol. I, Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, (3rd ed.), Lisboa.
- Castells M. (2007a). "Communication, Power and Counter-power in the Network Society", *International Journal of Communication*, 1, 238-266.
- Castells, M. (2009). *Communication Power*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Castells, M., Fernandez-Ardevol, M., Qiu, J. L. & Sey, A. (2006). *Mobile Communication and Society: A Global Perspective*, The MIT Press, California.
- Cater, J. K. (2011). "Skype a cost-effective method for qualitative research", *Rehabilitation Counselors & Educators Journal*, 4(2), 3.
- Cave, M. (1989). "An introduction to television economics", in G. Hughes, & D. Vines, *Deregulation and the future of commercial television*, Aberdeen University Press, Aberdeen, pp.9-37.
- Cave, M. & Crandall, R. W. (2001). "Sports Rights and the Broadcast Industry", *Economic Journal*, 111(469), 4-26.
- Cetina, K. K. & Cicourel, A. (2014). *Advances in social theory and methodology: Toward an integration of micro-and macro-sociologies*, Routledge, London.
- CIES (2018). "Competitive balance: A spatio-temporal comparison", CIES Football Observatory, available at <https://football-observatory.com/IMG/sites/mr/mr40/en/>.
- Chadha, K. (2017). *Globalization and Americanization*, The International Encyclopedia of Media Effects.
- Chadwick, R. (2001). "Ethical assessment and the human genome issues", in P. Shipley, & D. Moir (Org.), *Ethics in practice in the 21st century*, Oxford: Proceedings of the Interdisciplinary Conference of the Society for the Furtherance of Critical Philosophy.
- Chadwick, S. & Arthur, D. (2008). *International Cases in the Business of Sport*, Elsevier, New York.
- Chadwick, S. (2019, May 28). "Premier League: how England's clubs swept to European football dominance", *The Conversation*, available at <https://theconversation.com/premier-league-how-englands-clubs-swept-to-european-football-dominance-117030>.
- Chanavat, N. & Desbordes, M. (2017). "The Marketing of football: History, definitions, singularities, strategies and forms of operationalization", in N. Chanavat, M. Desbordes & N. Lorgnier, *Handbook of Football Marketing*, Routledge, London, pp.9-57.
- Chandler, J. M. (1999). "Media", in D. Levinson, & K. Christensen, *Encyclopedia of World Sport: From Ancient Times to the Present*, Oxford University Press, New York, pp.241-246.
- Charmaz, K. (1995). "The body, identity, and self: Adapting to impairment", *Sociological Quarterly*, 36, 657-680.

- Charmaz, K. (2000). "Grounded theory: Objectivist and constructionist methods", in N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln, (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, Sage (2nd ed), New York, pp.509-533.
- Charmaz, K. (2001). "Grounded theory: Methodology Grounded theory: Methodology and theory construction", in Neil J. Smelser; Paul B. Baltes,(Eds.), *International Encyclopaedia of the Social and Behavioural Sciences*, Elsevier, New York, pp. 402-407.
- Charmaz, K. (2005). "Grounded theory in the 21st century: Applications for advancing social justice studies", in N. K. Denzin, & Y. Lincoln, (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, Sage (3rd ed.), London, pp.507-535.
- Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide through Qualitative Analysis*, Sage(1st ed.), New York.
- Charmaz, K. (2008b). "Grounded theory as an emergent method", in S. N. Hesse-Biber & P. Leavy, (Eds.), *Handbook of Emergent Methods*, The Guilford Press, New York, pp.155-172.
- Charmaz, K. (2011). "A Constructivist Grounded Theory Analysis of Losing and Regaining a Valued Self", in F. J. Wertz, K. Charmaz, L. M. McMullen, R. Josselson, R. Anderson & E. McSpadden, (Eds.), *Five Ways of Doing Qualitative Analysis: Phenomenological Psychology, Grounded Theory, Discourse Analysis, Narrative Research, and Intuitive Inquiry*, The Guilford Press, New York, pp.165-204.
- Charmaz, K. (2014). *Constructing Grounded Theory – A Practical Guide Through Qualitative Analysis*, Sage(2nd ed.), New York.
- Charmaz, K. (2017). "The power of constructivist grounded theory for critical inquiry", *Qualitative Inquiry*, 23, 34-45.
- Charmaz, K. & Mitchell, R. G. (2007). "Grounded Theory in Ethnography", in P. Atkinson, A. Coffey, S. Delamont, J. Lofland, & L. Lofland (eds.), *Handbook of Ethnography*, Sage, London, pp. 160-174.
- Charmaz, K., Thornberg, R. & Keane, E. (2018). "Evolving Grounded Theory and Social Justice Inquiry", in N. Denzin, & Y. Lincoln (eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, Sage (5th ed.), Thousand Oaks, pp. 411-443.
- Charmaz, K. & Belgrave, L. L. (2018). "Thinking about data with grounded theory", *Qualitative Inquiry*, 25(8), 743-753.
- Charmaz, K., Harris, S. R. & Irvine, L. (2019). *The Social Self and Everyday Life: Understanding the World through Symbolic Interactionism*, John Wiley & Sons, Hoboken.
- Charmaz, K. & Thornberg, R. (2020). "The pursuit of quality in grounded theory", *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 18(3), 305-327.
- Charmaz, K., & Clarke, A. E. (2021). "Anselm Strauss: Pioneer in Qualitative Inquiry", in P. Atkinson, S. Delamont, M. Hardy & M. Williams (Eds.), *Research Methods Foundations*, Sage, London.
- Skinner, J. Allan, E., & Corbett, B. (2014). "Research Methods for Sport Management", *Routledge*, London, 455-487.
- Chauvière, M. & Mick, S. (2013). "The French sociological critique of managerialism: themes and frameworks", *Critical Sociology*, 39(1), 135-143.
- Chesnay, M. D. (2014). *Nursing Research Using Grounded Theory: Qualitative Designs and Methods in Nursing*, Springer Publishing Company.
- Clark, B. S. (1991). *Political Economy: a Comparative Approach*, Praeger, New York.
- Clarke, A. E. (2005). *Situational analysis: Grounded theory after the postmodernist turn*, Sage, Thousand Oaks.
- Clarke, A. E. (2021). "Straussian negotiated order theory c. 1960–present", in D. Vom Lehn, N. Ruiz-Junco & W. Gibson (Eds.), *International Handbook of Interactionism*, Routledge, New York, pp.47-58.
- Clarke, A. E., Friese, C. & Washburn, R. (2015). "Introducing situational analysis", in A. E. Clarke, C. Friese & R. Washburn, *Situational analysis in practice: Mapping research with grounded theory*, Left Coast Press, Walnut Creek, pp.11-75.
- Clarke, J. & Critcher, C. (1985). *The Devil Makes Work: Leisure in Capitalist Britain*, Palgrave, New York.
- Clarke, S. (2013). "Culture and Identity", in T. Bennett & J. Frow, *Handbook of Cultural Analysis*, Sage, London, pp.510-529.
- Claussen, D. (2007). "On Stupidity in Football", *Soccer & Society*, 8 (4), 654-662.

- Cleland, J. (2009). "The Changing Organizational Structure of Football Clubs and Their Relationship with the External Media", *International Journal of Sport Communication*, 2 (4), 417-431.
- Cleland, J. (2010). "From Passive to Active: The changing relationship between supporters and football clubs", *Soccer & Society*, 11(5), 537-552.
- Cleland, J. (2011). "The Media and Football Supporters: a Changing Relationship", *Media, Culture & Society*, 33 (2), 299-315.
- Cleland, J. (2015). *A Sociology of Football in a Global Context*, Routledge, London.
- Cleland, J. (2020) "Charismatic leadership in a far-right movement: an analysis of an English defence league message board following the resignation of Tommy Robinson", *Social Identities*, 26(1), 48-60.
- Cleland, J. & Cashmore, E. (2016). "Football fans' views of racism in British football", *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 51(1), 27-43.
- Cleland, J., Doidge, M., Millward, P. & Widdop, P. (2018). *Collective Action and Football Fandom: A relational sociological*, Palgrave Macmillan, London.
- Cleland, J. & Dixon, K. (2015). "'Black and whiter's': The relative powerlessness of 'active' supporter organization mobility at English Premier League football clubs", *Soccer & Society*, 16(4), 540-554.
- Clowes, J., & Clements, N. (2003). "An explanation of discriminatory ticket pricing practice in the English football Premier League", *Managing Leisure*, 8, 105-120.
- Coakley, J. (2003). *Sport in Society*, McGraw-Hill, New York.
- Coakley, J. (2004). *Sports in Society: Issues and Controversies*, McGraw-Hill, (8th ed.), Boston.
- Coakley, J. (2011). "Ideology doesn't just happen: Sports and neoliberalism", *Curitiba*, 1(1), 67-84.
- Coakley, J. (2014). *Sports in Society: Issues and controversies*, McGraw-Hill Education (11th ed.), New York.
- Coakley, J. & Dunning, E. (2000). *Handbook of Sport Studies*, Sage, London.
- Coates, D., & Humphreys, B. R. (2007). "Ticket Prices, Concessions and Attendance at Professional Sporting Events", *International Journal of Sport Finance*, 2, 161-170.
- Coelho, J. N. (2011). "On the Border': Some Notes on Football and National Identity in Portugal", in A. Brown, *Fanatics! Power, Identity, and Fandom in Football*, Routledge, London, pp.158-172.
- Coelho, J. N. & Pinheiro, F. (2002). *A Paixão do Povo: História do futebol In Portugal*, Edições Afrontamento, Porto.
- Coffey, A. (2014). "Analysing Documents", in U. Flick (Ed.), *Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis*, Sage, London, pp. 367-379.
- Coffey, A. & Atkinson, P. (2011). *Making Sense of Qualitative Data*, Sage (2nd ed.), London.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L. & Morrison, K. (2007). *Research Methods in Education*, Routledge (6th ed.), New York.
- Collins, T. (2013). *Sport in Capitalist Society: A short history*, Routledge, London.
- Comiskey, P., Bryant, J. & Zillmann, D. (1977). "Commentary as a substitute for action", *Journal of Communication*, 27(3), 150-53.
- Comor, E. A. (1996). *The global Political Economy of Communication: Hegemony, telecommunication and the information economy*, Palgrave Macmillan, London.
- Conrad, F. G. & Schober, M. F. (2008). "New Frontiers in Standardized Survey Interviewing", in S. N. Hesse-Biber, & P. Leavy, *Handbook of Emergent Methods*, The Guilford Press, London, pp.173-188.
- Corbin, J. M. & Strauss, A. (2008). *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*, Sage, (3rd ed.), New York.
- Corbin, J. & Strauss, A. (2015). *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*, Sage, (4th ed.), Thousand Oaks.
- Corrigan, T. F. (2014). "The Political Economy of Sports and New Media", in A. C. Billings & M. Hardin, *Handbook of Sport and New Media*, Routledge, London, pp.42-54.
- Corti, L. (2018). "Data Collection in Secondary Analysis", in U. Flick (Ed.), *Handbook of Qualitative Data Collection*, Sage (5th ed.), London, pp.164-181.

- Courty, P. (2019). "Secondary Ticket Markets for Sport Events", in P. Downward, B. Frick, B. R. Humphreys, T. Pawlowski, J. E. Ruseski & B. P. Soebbing, *Handbook on the Economics of Sport*, Sage, London, pp.190-2002.
- Cova, B., Kozinets, R. & Shankar, A. (2011). *Consumer Tribes*, Routledge, London.
- Cowley, R. (2018). "Consumer Response to Transgression in Sport: A Grounded Theory Study", *PhD*, Coventry University, Coventry.
- Cox, A. (2018). "Spectator Demand, Uncertainty of Results, and Public Interest: Evidence from the English Premier League", *Journal of Sports Economics*, 19 (1), 3-30.
- Craig, R. T., & Tracy, K. (1995). "Grounded Practical Theory: The Case of Intellectual Discussion", *Communication Theory*, 5(3), 248-272.
- Crawford, G. (2003). "The Career of the Sport Supporter: The Case of the Manchester Storm", *Sociology*, 37(2), 219-237.
- Crawford, G. (2004). *Consuming Sport*, Routledge, London.
- Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches*, Sage, London.
- Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among five traditions*, Sage (2nd ed.), New York.
- Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, Sage (3rd ed.), London.
- Creswell, J. (2014). *A concise introduction to mixed methods research*, Sage, Thousand Oaks.
- Critcher, C. (1979). "Working Class Culture", in J. Clarke, C. Critcher & W. Johnson, *Football Since the War: a study in social change and popular culture*, Hutchinson, London.
- Crolley, L. & Hand, D. (2006). *Football and European Identity: Historical Narratives Through the Press*, Routledge, London.
- Crolley, L. & Hand, D. (2013). *Football, Europe and the Press*, Routledge, London.
- Crossley, N. (2011). *Towards Relational Sociology*, Routledge, Abingdon.
- Crossley, N. (2018). "Networks, Interactions and Relations", in F. Dépelteau, *Handbook of Relational Sociology*, Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, pp.481-498.
- Crotty, M. (1998). *The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process*, Routledge (1st ed.), London.
- Crow, B., Byon, K. K. & Tsuji, Y. (2011). "International sport marketing", in E. MacIntosh, G. Bravo, & M. Li, *International sport management*, Human Kinetic.
- Cullum, P. (1994). "Sport, Television and the Consumer", *Consumer Policy Review*, 4(4), 213-220.
- Cunningham, G. B. & Sagas, M. (2008). "Gender and sex diversity in sports organizations: Introduction to a special issue", *Sex Roles*, 58, 3-9.
- Curasi, F. C. (2001). "A Critical Exploration of Face-to-face Interviewing vs. Computer-mediated Interviewing", *International Journal of Market Research*, 43(4), 361-375.
- Dahler-Larsen, P. & Schwandt, T. A. (2012). "Political Culture as Context for Evaluation", *New Directions for Evaluation*, 135, 75-87.
- Dale, A., Arber, S. & Proctor, M. (1988). *Doing Secondary Analysis*, Unwin Hyman, London.
- Dale, A., Wathan, J. & Higgins, V. (2008). "Secondary Analysis of Quantitative Data Sources", in P. Alasuutari, L. Bickman & J. Brannen, *Handbook of Social Research Methods*, Sage, London, pp. 520-535.
- Damásio, A. (2017). *A Estranha Ordem das Coisas*, Círculo de Leitores, Lisboa.
- Dauncey, H. & Hare, G. (2003). *The Tour De France, 1903-2003: A Century of Sporting Structures, Meanings and Values*, Routledge, London.
- Davenport, D. S. (1969). "Collusive competition in major league baseball: Its theory and institutional development", *American economist*, 13(2), 6-30.
- Davies, C. A. (1999). *Reflexive Ethnography: a guide to researching selves and others*, Routledge, London.
- Davies, W. (2016). *The Limits of Neoliberalism: Authority, Sovereignty and the Logic of Competition*, Sage, London.

- Dayan, D. & Katz, E. (1992). *Media Events: The Live Broadcasting of History*, Harvard University Press, London.
- Deacon, D., Pickering, M., Golding, P. & Murdock, G. (2007). *Researching Communications. A Practical Guide to Methods in Media and Cultural Analysis*, Hodder Arnold, London.
- Debord, G. (1979). *Society of the Spectacle*, Rebel Press, London.
- De Carvalho, M., Scheerder, J., Boen, F. & Sarmento, J. P. (2014). *SPM19, What Brings People into the Soccer Stadium? (Part 2): The Case of Portugal from a Marketing Perspective*, Research Unit of Social Kinesiology and Sport Management, KU Leuven.
- Dejonghe, T. & Van Opstal, W. (2008). *The consequences of an open labour market in a closed product market in the economic environment of European professional football*, SSRN Electronic Journal.
- Deloitte (2016). *Finance, Annual review of football*, Deloitte Sports Business Group, Manchester.
- Deloitte (2024). *Football Money League 2023*, Deloitte Sports Business Group, Manchester.
- Delanty, G. (2000). *Citizenship in a Global Age: Society, Culture, Politics*, Open University Press, Buckingham.
- Denicoli, S. (2011). *TV Digital–Sistemas, Conceitos e Tecnologia*, Grácio Editor, Coimbra.
- Demuth, C. & Fasulo, A. (2022). "Qualitative Research Design across Different Cultural Communities", in U. Flick (Org.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research Design*, Sage, London, pp.430-451.
- Denscombe, M. (2003). *The Good Research Guide, Open University Press*, (2nd ed.), Berkshire.
- Denzin, N. K. (1989). *The Research Act: A Theoretical Introduction to Social Research*, Prentice Hall, (3rd ed.), Englewood Cliffs.
- Denzin, N. K. (2007). *Symbolic Interactionism and Cultural Studies*, Wiley-Blackwell, New Jersey.
- Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln, Y. S. (2018). "Introduction: The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research", in N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln, *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, Sage (5th ed.), New York, pp. 29-71.
- Denzin, N. K. (2019). "Grounded Theory and the Politics of Interpretation, Redux", in A. Bryant & K. Charmaz, *Handbook of Current Developments in Grounded Theory*, Sage, New York, pp.449-469.
- Depken, C. A. & Simmons, L. C. (2004). "Social construct and the propensity for software piracy", *Applied Economics Letters*, 11(2), 97-100.
- DeSarbo, W. & Madrigal, R. (2011). "Exploring the Demand Aspects of Sports Consumption and Fan Avidity", *INFORMS Journal on Applied Analytics*, 42(2), 199–212.
- Desbordes, M. (2007). *Marketing and Football: An international perspective*, Elsevier, New York.
- Desbordes, M. (2023). "Analysis of the Sport Ecosystem and Its Value Chain, What Lessons in an Uncertain World?", in Basu, B., Desbordes, M. & Sarkar, S. (Eds.), *Sports Management in an Uncertain Environment*, Springer, Berlin, pp.109-142.
- Desbordes, M. & Richelieu, A. (2012). *Global Sport Marketing: Contemporary issues and practice*, Routledge, London.
- Desbordes, M., Richelieu, A. & Lopez, S. (2008). "The Internationalisation of a Sports Team Brand: the case of European soccer teams", *International Journal of Sports Marketing & Sponsorship*, 10 (1), 29-44.
- Devereux, E. (2014). *Understanding the Media*, Sage, (3rd ed.), London.
- Dicken, P. (2007). *Global Shift: Mapping the Changing Contours of the World Economy*, Sage, (5th ed.), New York.
- Dinan, W., Boyle, R. & Morrow, S. (2002). "Doing the Business? Newspaper reporting of the business of football Journalism", *Sage*, 3 (2), 161-181.
- Disney, R. (2007). "Remuneration of Sports Stars: implications for regulation", in T. R. Union, Barbara Bogusz, Adam Cygan, Erika Szyszczak, *Edward Elgar Publishing*, Cheltenham, pp.132-156.
- Dobson, S. & Goddard, J. (2011). *The Economics of Football*, Cambridge University Press, (2nd ed.), Cambridge.
- Doherty, A. & Misener, K. (2008). "Community sport networks", in M. Nicholson & R. Hoyer, *Sport and Social Capital*, Elsevier, New York, pp. 113-145.
- Doidge, M. (2016). "Democracy and Supporter Ownership", in J. Hughson, K. Moore, R. Spaaij, & J. Maguire (Eds.), *Handbook of Football Studies*, Taylor & Francis, London, pp.336-347.

- Dolles, H. & Söderman, S. (2011). *Sport as a Business International, Professional and Commercial Aspects*, Palgrave Macmillan, London.
- Domingos, N. & Neves, J. (2011). *Uma História do Desporto em Portugal - Vol. II: Nação, Império e Globalização*, Quidnovi, Lisboa.
- Domizio, M. D. & Caruso, R. (2015). "Hooliganism and Demand for Football in Italy: Attendance and Counterviolence Policy Evaluation", *German Economic Review*, 16(2), 123-137.
- Donders, K. (2012). *Public Service Media and Policy in Europe*, Palgrave Macmillan, London.
- Donina, D. & Paleari, S. (2019). "New public management: global reform script or conceptual stretching? Analysis of university governance structures in the Napoleonic administrative tradition", *Higher Education*, 78, 193-219.
- Donnelly, P. (2015). "What if the Players Controlled the Game? Dealing with the consequences of the crisis of governance in sports", *European Journal for Sport and Society*, 12 (1), 11-30.
- Dorussen, H., Lenz, H. & Blavoukos, S. (2005). "Assessing the Reliability and Validity of Expert Interviews", *European Union Politics*, 6(3), 315-337.
- Dourish, E. (2013, October 23rd). *The 'Cambridge Rules' of football, 1863*, available at <https://specialcollections-blog.lib.cam.ac.uk/?p=5891>.
- Dow, Jr., T. E (1969). "The Theory of Charisma", *The Sociological Quarterly*, 10(3), 306-318.
- Downward, P., Dawson, A. & Dejonghe, T. (2009). *Sports Economics: Theory, evidence and policy*, Butterworth-Heinemann, Oxford.
- Doyle, G. (2002). *Media Ownership: Concentration, Convergence and Public Policy*, Sage, London.
- Doyle, G. & Frit, S. (2006). "Methodological Approaches in Media Management and Media Economics Research", in A. B. Albarran, S. M. Chan-Olmsted & M. O. Wirth (Eds.), *Handbook of Media Economics and Management*, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, New Jersey, pp.553-572.
- Dryzek, J. & Dunleavy, P. (2009). *Theories of the Democratic State*, Bloomsbury Academic, Camberra.
- Ducrey, P., Ferreira, C., Huerta, G. & Marston, K. (2003). *UEFA and Football Governance: a new model*, Centre international d'étude du sport, Neuchâtel.
- Duerr, G. M. (2012). "Playing for identity and independence: the issue of Palestinian statehood and the role of FIFA", *Soccer & Society*, 13(5-6), 653-666.
- Duina, F. G. (1999). *Harmonizing Europe: Nation-States within the Common Market*, University of New York Press, New York.
- Duncan, M. C. & Brummett, B. (1987). "The Mediation of Spectator Sport", *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*, 58 (2), 168-177.
- Duncan, M. C. & Messner, M. A. (1989). "The Media Image of Sport and Gender", in L. Wenner, *MediaSport*, Routledge, New York, pp.170-185.
- Dunne, C. (2011). "The place of the literature review in grounded theory research", *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 14(2), 111-124.
- Dunning, E. (2004). "Sociology of Sport in the Balance: Critical Reflections on Some Recent and More Enduring Trends", *Sport in Society: Cultures, Commerce, Media, Politics*, 7(1), 1-24.
- Dunning, E. & Rojek, C. (1992). *Sport and Leisure in the Civilizing Process: Critique and Counter-Critique*, Palgrave Macmillan, London.
- Dunning, E. & Sheard, K. (2005). *Barbarians, Gentlemen and Players: A sociological study of the development of rugby football*, Routledge, (2nd ed.), London.
- Durkheim, E. (2000). *Sociologia*, Editora Ática, São Paulo.
- Dwyer, B. (2011). "Divided loyalty? An analysis of fantasy football involvement and fan loyalty to individual National Football League (NFL) teams", *Journal of Sport Management*, 25(5), 445-457.
- Dyer, R. (2002). *Only Entertainment*, Routledge, (2nd ed.), New York.
- Easterby-Smith, M., Jaspersen, L. J., Thorpe, R. & Valizade, D. (2021). *Management and Business Research*, Sage, (7th ed.), New York.
- Eaves, Y. D. (2001). "A synthesis technique for grounded theory data analysis", *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 35(5), 654-663.
- EC (1998). "The European model of sport", available at http://ec.europa.eu/sport/documents/library/doc248_en.pdf.

- EC (1999, December 10th). "The Helsinki Report on Sport", *Report from the European Commission to the European Council with a view to safeguarding current sports structures and maintaining the social function of sport within the Community framework*, available at <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:1999:0644:FIN:EN:PDF>.
- EC (2003). *The Governance of Public and Non-profit Organizations: what do boards do?*, Routledge, London.
- EC (2005, January 19th). "Commission Decision Pursuant to Article 81 of the EC Treaty and Article 53(1) of the EEA Agreement", *Case Comp/C.2/37.214 — Joint Selling of the Media Rights to the German Bundesliga*, OJL 134/2005, available at <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32003D0778>.
- EC (2007, November 7th). "White Paper on Sport", available at <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/PT/TXT/?uri=celex:52007DC0391>.
- EC (2008). "Official Journal of the European Union - C 151/36: Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee on the White paper on sport", available at <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2008:151:0036:0040:EN:PDF>.
- EC (2010, April 13th). "Directive 2010/13/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 March 2010 on the coordination of certain provisions laid down by law, regulation or administrative action in Member States concerning the provision regulation or administrative activity", available at <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX:32010L0013>.
- EC (2011). "Developing the European dimension in sport", available at <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1401997912784&uri=CELEX:52011DC0012>.
- EC (2014). "Study on Sports Organiser right in the European Union", *Institute for Information Law - University of Amsterdam*, Amsterdam, p. 70.
- EC (2023, April 27th). "Recommendation on combating online piracy of sports and other live events", Policy and Legislation, available at <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/recommendation-combating-online-piracy-sports-and-other-live-events>.
- Eco, U. (1968). *Travels in Hyper-Reality*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, New York.
- Edwards, A. & Skinner, J. (2009). *Qualitative research in sport management*, Routledge, Oxford.
- Eesley, C. & Lenox, M. J. (2006). "Firm Responses to Secondary Stakeholder Action", *Strategic Management Journal*, 27(8), 765-781.
- Eisenberg, C. & Lanfranchi, P. (2006). "Football History: International Perspectives", *Historical Social Research*, 31(1), 4-6.
- Eisenberger, R. H., Hutchison, S. & Sowa, D. (1986). "Perceived organizational support", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 71, 500-507.
- Elder-Vass, D. (2012). *The Reality of Social Construction*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Elias, N. (1986). "Introduction", in N. Elias & E. Dunning, *Quest for Excitement: Sport and Leisure in the Civilising Process*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, pp.10-62.
- Elias, N. & Dunning, E. (1992). *A Busca da Excitação*, Difel, Lisboa.
- Eliot, T. S. (1943). *Four Quartets*, Brace & Co, New York.
- Emerson, R. (1972). "Exchange Theory", in J. Berger, M. Zelditch & B. Anderson (Eds.), *Sociological Theories in Progress: New Formulations*, Houghton Mifflin, Boston, pp.38-57.
- EP (2006). Future of professional football in Europe procedure, available at <https://oeil.secure.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/popups/printficheglobal.pdf?id=535382&l=en>.
- Eriksson, G. & Fitzgerald, R. (2019). "Web-TV as a backstage activity: Emerging forms of audience address in the post-broadcast era", *Text & Talk*, 39(1), 47-75.
- Estes, S. (1994). "Knowledge and Kinesiology", *Quest*, 46(4), 392-409.
- Esteves, J. P. (2016). *Sociologia da Comunicação*, Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, (2nd ed.), Lisboa.
- EUIPO (2023, September 19th). "Online piracy: Europeans consume more pirated TV shows and live sports", *EUIPO Communication Service*, European Union Intellectual Property Office.
- Evens, T. (2014). *Power Play in Television: A political economy analysis of power balances in broadcasting markets*, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Brussel.

- Evens, T. & Donders, K. (2018). "Game of Screens", in T. Evens, & K. Donders (Eds.), *Platform Power and Policy in Transforming Television Markets*, Palgrave Global Media Policy and Business, London, pp.47-85.
- Evens, T., Iosifidis P. & Smith, P. (2013). *The political economy of television sports rights*, Palgrave Macmillan, London.
- Evens, T. & Lefever, K. (2011). "Watching the Football Game: Broadcasting Rights for the European Digital Television Market", *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, 35 (1), 33-49.
- Evens, T. & Smith, P. (2022). "Regulating the Digital Sport Broadcasting Market: New Players, Old Problems", in Fajak & S. Frawley, *Sport Broadcasting for Managers*, Routledge, London, pp. 6-20.
- EY (2021). "Estudo Internacional sobre Direitos Audiovisuais Desportivos" – *Relatório EY & Liga Portugal*.
- Falconieri, S., Sákovics, J. & Palomino, F. (2004). "Collective versus Individual Sale of television Rights in League Sports", *Journal of the European Economic Association*, 2(5), 833-862.
- FB (2024, March 14). "Which club will be the first to reach revenue?", *FootballBenchmark*, available at <https://www.footballbenchmark.com/library?search=broadcasting+rights>.
- Feddersen, A. & Maennig, W. (2005). *Trends in Competitive Balance: Is There Evidence for Growing Imbalance in Professional Sport Leagues?*, University of Hamburg, Hamburg.
- Feehan, P. (2019). "Attendance at Sport Events", in P. Downward, B. Frick, B. R. Humphreys, T. Pawlowski, J. E. Ruseski & B. P. Soebbing (Eds.), *Handbook on the Economics of Sport*, Sage, London, pp. 90-99.
- Feintuck, M. & Varney, M. (2007). *Media Regulation, Public Interest and the Law*, Edinburgh University Press, (2nd ed.), Edinburgh.
- Fenton, A., Keegan, B. J. & Parry, K. D. (2021). "Understanding Sporting Social Media Brand Communities, Place and Social Capital: An ethnography of Football Fans", *Communication & Sport*, 11(2), 313–333.
- Ferguson, M. (2005). "The Mythology about Globalization", in D. McQuail, P. Golding, & E. d. Bns (Ed.), *Communication Theory & Research*, Sage, London, pp, 23-35.
- Ferrand, A. & McCarthy, S. (2009). *Marketing the Sports Organisation: Building Networks and Relationships*, Routledge, New York.
- Fielding, N. G., Lee, R. M. & Blank, G. (2008). *Handbook of Online Research Methods*, Sage, London.
- Fields, J., Copp, M. & Kleinman, S. (2006). "Symbolic Interactionism, Inequality, and Emotions", in J. E. Stets & J. H. Turner, *Handbook of the Sociology of Emotions*, Springer, Boston, pp. 155–178.
- FIFA (2007). "FIFA Statutes", available at <https://www.fifa.com/inside>.
- FIFPro (2007, July 5th). "FIFPro: Board Division Europe Elected", available at <https://www.fifpro.org/en>.
- Figueroa, S. K. (2008). "The Grounded Theory and the Analysis of Audio-Visual Texts", *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 11(1), 1-12.
- Filloux F. (2012, January 23rd). "Piracy is part of the digital ecosystem", *The Guardian [Online]*, available at <http://www.theguardian.com/technology/2012/jan/23/monday-note-piracy-sopa>.
- Fischer, F. (2003). *Reframing policy analysis*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Fischer, F. & Forester, J. (1993). *The argumentative turn in policy analysis and planning*, Duke University Press, Durham.
- Fish, S. (1980). *Is there a text in this class?*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge.
- Fisher, M. (2017). *Qualitative Computing: Using Software for Qualitative Data Analysis*, Routledge (2nd ed.). London.
- Fisher, R. J. & Wakefield, K. L. (1998). "Factors leading to group identification: A field study of winners and losers", *Psychology and Marketing*, 15(1), 23-40.
- Fiske, J. (1987). *Television Culture*, Routledge, London.
- Fiske, J. (1992). "Audience: A cultural studies approach to watching television", *Poetics*, 21(4), 345-359.
- Fiske, J. (2005). *Reading the Popular*, Routledge, London.
- Fiske, J. (2010). *Introduction to Communication Studies*, Routledge, (3rd ed.), London.
- Fiske, J. & Hartley, J. (2003). *Reading Television*, Routledge, London.

- Fitzgerald, R. (2006). "Radio: Language", in K. Brown, *Encyclopedia of Language & Linguistics*, Elsevier (2nd ed.), New York, pp. 348-354.
- Fitzgerald, R. & Housley, W. (2009). *Media, Policy and Interaction*, Ashgate Publishing, Hampshire.
- Flew, T. (2007). *Understanding global media*, Palgrave Macmillan, (2nd ed.), London.
- Flew, T. (2018). *Post-Globalisation*, The Public, Javnost.
- Flew, T., Iosifidis P. & Stelmers, J. (2016). *Global Media and National Policies: The Return of the State*, Palgrave Macmillan, London.
- Flick, U. (2000). "Episodic Interviewing", in M. W. Bauer & G. Gaskell (Ed.), *Qualitative Researching with Text, Image and Sound*, Sage, London, pp. 75–92.
- Flick, U. (2007). *Designing Qualitative Research*, Sage, London.
- Flick, U. (2018a). *Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis*, Sage, (3rd ed.), London.
- Flick, U. (2018b). *Doing Grounded Theory*, Sage, London.
- Flick, U., Kardorff, E. v. & Steinke, I. (2004). "What is Qualitative Research? An Introduction to the Field", in U. Flick, E. v. Kardorff & I. Steinke, *A Companion to Qualitative Research*, Sage, London, pp. 1-3.
- Fonseca, J. (2021, July 13th). "Daily sports newspaper 'A Bola' (no. 17.354)", *Direitos de TV* (N. Perestrelo, Interviewer).
- Fonseca, J. (2023, September 6th). Website 'MaisFutebol', "Os clubes portugueses têm de ser rivais dentro de campo e parceiros fora dele", (S. Pereira, Interviewer), available at <https://maisfutebol.iol.pt/benfica/fc-porto/os-clubes-portugueses-tem-de-ser-rivais-dentro-de-campo-e-parceiros-fora-dele>.
- Forrest, D. & Simmons, R. (2006). "New Issues in Attendance Demand", *Journal of Sports Economics*, 7(3), 247–266.
- Forrest, D., Simmons R. & Buraimo, B. (2005). "Outcome Uncertainty and the Couch Potato Audience", *Scottish Journal of Political Economy*, 52(4), 641–661.
- Forrest, D., Simmons, R. & Szymanski, S. (2004). "Broadcasting, Attendance and the Inefficiency of Cartels", *Review of Industrial Organization*, 24(3), 243-265.
- Fort, R. (2000). "European and North American sports differences?", *Scottish Journal of Political Economy*, 47, 431–55.
- Fort, R. (2006). *Sport Economics*, Pearson Prentice Hall, (2nd ed.), Upper Saddle River.
- Fort, R. & Quirk, J. (1995). "Cross Subsidization, Incentives, and Outcomes in Professional Team Sports Leagues", *Journal of Economic Literature*, 33(3), 1265-1299.
- Forster, J. & Pope, N. (2004). *The Political Economy of Global Sporting Organisations*, Routledge, London.
- Foster, E. & Bochner, A. P. (2008). "Social Constructionist Perspectives in Communication Research", in J. A. Holstein, & J. F. Gubrium, *Handbook of Constructionist Research*, The Guilford Press, New York, pp.85-106.
- Foster, G., O'Reilly, N. & Dávila, A. (2016). *Sports Business Management: Decision Making Around the Globe*, Routledge, New York.
- Foster, K. (2000). "Can Sport Be Regulated by Europe? An Analysis of Alternative Mode", in A. Caiger & S. Gardiner (Ed.), *Professional Sport in the European Union: Regulation and Re-Regulation*, TMC Asser Press, The Hague, pp.43-64).
- Foucault, M. (1981). *The History of Sexuality. An introduction*, Penguin, Harmondsworth.
- Foucault, M. (1984). *The Foucault Reader*, Penguin, Harmondsworth.
- Foucault, M. (1995). *Discipline and Punish: The birth of the prison*, Vintage Books, (2nd ed.), New York.
- Frandsen, K. (2014). "Mediatization of Sport", in K. Lundby, *Mediatization of Communication*, Mouton de Gruyter, Berlin, pp.525-543.
- Frandsen, K. (2019). *Sport and Mediatization*, Routledge, London.
- Free, P. F. (2015). "Football Research in an Enlarged Europe: Identity dynamics, perception patterns and cultural change in Europe's most prominent form of popular culture", *Ecole Supérieure des Sciences*, available at <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/29080>.
- Freedman, D. (2008). *The Politics of Media Policy*, Polity Press, Cambridge.
- Freedman, D. & Goblott, V. (2018). *A Future for Public Service Television*, Goldsmith Press, London.

- Freeman, R. E. (1984). *Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach*, Pitman Publishing, Boston.
- Friedman, A. L. & Miles, S. (2006). *Stakeholders: Theory and Practice*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Friedmann, J. (1972). "A general Theory of Polarized Development", in G. C. Development, *Niles Hansen*, Free Press, New York, pp.82-107.
- Fuchs, C. (2008). *Internet and Society: Social Theory in the Information Age*, Routledge, London.
- Fuchs, C. (2009). "Information and communication technologies and society: A contribution to the critique of the political economy of the internet", *European Journal of Communication*, 24(1), 69-87.
- Fuchs, C. (2011). *Foundations of Critical Media and Information Studies*, Routledge, London.
- Fuchs, C. (2020). *Communication and Capitalism: A Critical Theory*, University of Westminster Press, London.
- Fuchs, C. (2024). "A new framework for the analysis of media systems and media organisations", *Communication and the Public*, 1–18.
- Fuchs, C. & Qiu, J. L. (2018). "Ferments in the Field: Introductory Reflections on the Past, Present and Future of Communication Studies", *Journal of Communication*, 68(2), 219–232.
- Fuchs, S. (1989). "On the Microfoundations of Macrosociology: A Critique of Microsociological Reductionism", *Sociological Perspectives*, 32(2), 169–182.
- Fujak, H. & Frawley, S. (2022). *Sport Broadcasting for Managers*, Routledge, London.
- Funk, D. C. (2008). *Consumer Behaviour in Sport and Events: Marketing Action*, Butterworth-Heinemann, Oxford.
- Funk, D. C., Alexandris, K. & McDonald, H. (2023). *Sport Consumer Behaviour Marketing Strategies*, Routledge, London.
- Funk, D. C. & James, J. (2001). "The Psychological Continuum Model: A Conceptual Framework for Understanding an Individual's Psychological Connection to Sport", *Sport Management Review*, 4(2), 119-150.
- Fuss, D. (1989). *Essentially Speaking: Feminism, Nature, and Difference*, Routledge, New York.
- Gammelsæter, H. (2010). "Institutional Pluralism and Governance in "Commercialized" Sport Clubs", *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 10(5), 569-594.
- Gammelsæter, H. (2021). "Sport is not industry: bringing sport back to sport management", *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 21(2), 257-279.
- Gammelsæter, H. & Senaux, B. (2011). "Perspectives on the Governance of Football Across Europe", in H. Gammelsæter & B. Senaux, *The Organisation and Governance of Top Football Across Europe – An Institutional Perspective*, Routledge, New York, pp. 195-208.
- García, B. (2007). "UEFA and the European Union: from confrontation to co-operation?", *Journal of Contemporary European Research*, 3(3), 202-223.
- García, B. (2008). "The European Union and the Governance of Football: a game of levels and agendas", *PhD dissertation*, Department of Political Science, Loughborough.
- García, B. (2009). "Sport Governance after the White Paper: The Demise of the European Model?", *International Journal of Sport Policy*, 1(3), 267-284.
- García, B. (2011). "The Influence of the EU on the Governance of Football", in H. Gammelsæter & B. Senaux, *The Organisation and Governance of Top Football Across Europe: An Institutional Perspective*, Routledge, New York, pp. 32-45.
- García, B. (2013). "The developing role of the European Union", in I. Henry & L.-M. Ko, *Handbook of Sport Policy*, Routledge, London, pp. 279-385.
- García, B. (2017). "Football and Governance", in J. Hughson, K. Moore, R. Spaaij & J. Maguire (Eds.), *Handbook of Football Studies*, Routledge, London, pp. 99-110.
- García, B. & Llopis-Goig, R. (2019). "Club-militants, Institutionalists, Critics, Moderns and Globalists: A quantitative governance-based typology of football supporters", *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 1–20.
- García, B. & Meier, H. E. (2017). "Global Sport Power Europe? The Efficacy of the European Union in Global Sport Regulation", *JCMS*, 55(4), 850–870.

- García, B., Niemann, A. & Grant, W. (2011). "Conclusion: A Europeanised game?", in A. Niemann, B. García & W. Grant (Eds.), *The Transformation of European Football: Towards the Europeanisation of the National Game*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, pp.239-261.
- García, B. & Rodriguez, P. (2002). "The Determinants of Football Match Attendance Revisited: Empirical Evidence from the Spanish Football League", *Journal of Sports Economics*, 3(1), 18–38.
- García, B. & Rodriguez, P. (2006). "The determinants of TV audience for Spanish football: A first approach", in P. Rodriguez, S. Kesenne & J. García, *Sports economics after fifty years: Essays in honour of Simon Rottenberg*, Ediciones, Oviedo, pp. 147–167.
- García, B. & Welford, J. (2015). "Supporters and Football Governance, From Customers to Stakeholders: A Literature Review and Agenda for Research", *Sport Management Review*, 18(4), 517-528.
- García, B. & Zheng, J. (2017). "Introduction", in B. García & J. Zheng, *Football and Supporter Activism in Europe. Whose Game Is It?*, Palgrave Macmillan, Cham.
- Gass, S. I. & Fu, M. C. (2013). *Encyclopedia of Operations Research and Management Science* (3rd ed.), Springer Heidelberg, Berlin.
- Gaughan, J. (2016, June 1st). "Why is Jose Mourinho the special one?", *The Telegraph*, available at <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/sport/football/article-3786184/Jose-Mourinho-says-Premier-League-clubs-struggle-Champions-League.html>.
- Gaustad, T. (2000). "The Economics of Sports Programming", *Nordicom Review*, 21(2), 101-113.
- Geeraert, A., Mrkonjic, M. & Chappelet, J.-L. (2014). "A Rationalist Perspective on the Autonomy of International Sport Governing Bodies: towards a pragmatic autonomy in the steering of sports", *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*, 7(4), 473-488.
- Geeraert, A., Scheerder, J. & Bruyninckx, H. (2013). "The Governance Network of European Football: Introducing new governance approaches to steer football at the EU level", *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*, 5(1), 113–132.
- Geertz, C. (1973). *The Interpretation of Cultures*, Basic Books Publish, New York.
- Gergen, K. (1999). *An Invitation to Social Construction*, Sage, London.
- Gerrard, B. (2000). "Media ownership of pro sports teams: who are the winners and losers?", *International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship*, 2(3), 199–218.
- Gerrard, B. (2004). "Media Ownership of Teams: The Latest Stage in the Commercialisation of Team Sports", in T. Slack, *The Commercialisation of Sport*, Routledge, New York, pp. 240-257.
- Gerson, K. & Horowitz, R. (2002). "Observation and Interviewing: Options and Choices in Qualitative Research", in T. May, *Qualitative Research in Action*, Sage, London, pp. 199-224.
- Geyer, M., & Bright, C. (1995). "World History in a Global Age", *The American Historical Review*, 100(4), 1034-1060.
- Gibbons, T. & Humphreys, P. (2012). *Audiovisual Regulation under Pressure: Comparative Cases from North America and Europe*, Routledge, London.
- Gibbs, G. R. (2002). *Qualitative Data Analysis: Explorations with NVivo*, Open University Press, Berkshire.
- Gibbs, G. R. (2007). *Analysing Qualitative Data*, Sage, London.
- Giddens, A. (1984). *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the theory of structuration*, University of California Press, Berkeley.
- Giddens, A. (1991). *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*, Polity Press, Cambridge.
- Giddens, A. (2000). *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory: An Analysis of the Writings of Marx, Durkheim and Max Weber*, Cambridge University Press (2nd ed.), Cambridge.
- Giddens, A. (2002). *Runaway World: How Globalization Is Reshaping Our Lives*, Profile Books, London.
- Giddens, A. (2009). *Anthony Giddens Sociology*, Polity Press, (6th ed.), Cambridge.
- Giddens, A. (2011). *Capitalismo e Moderna Teoria Social*, Editora Presença, (7th ed.), Barcarena.
- Giddens, A. & Pierson, C. (1998). *Conversations with Anthony Giddens: Making Sense of Modernity*, Stanford University Press, Stanford.

- Gil, J. (2017, July 4th). "More than a third of football fans admit to regularly watching Premier League using illegal streams", available at <https://www.radiotimes.com/tv/sport/football/more-than-a-third-of-football-fans-admit-to-regularly-watching-premier-league-using-illegal-streams/>.
- Gillani, A. J. (2014). "Reconciling demands of conscience: a grounded theory of consumer behaviour in the fairtrade context", *PhD*, Cardiff Business School, Cardiff.
- Ginosar, A. (2013). "Media Governance: A Conceptual Framework or Merely a Buzz Word?", *Communication Theory*, 23, 356–374.
- Giulianotti, R. (1999). *Football, a Sociology of the Global Game*, Polity Press, Cambridge.
- Giulianotti, R. (2004). *Sport and Modern Social Theorists*, Palgrave Macmillan, London.
- Giulianotti, R. (2005). "Sport spectators and the social consequences of commodification: Critical perspectives from Scottish football", *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, (29), 386-410.
- Giulianotti, R. (2007). "Popular Culture, Social Identities, and Internal/External Cultural Politics: The Case of Rangers Supporters in Scottish Football", *Global Studies in Culture and Power*, 14(3), 257-284.
- Giulianotti, R. & Finn, G. P. (1999). "Old visions, old issues: New horizons, new openings? Change, continuity and other contradictions in world football", *Sport in Society Cultures*, 2(3), 256–282.
- Giulianotti, R. & Robertson, R. (2004). "The Globalization of Football: A Study in the Glocalization of the Serious Life", *The British Journal of Sociology*, 55(4), 545-568.
- Giulianotti, R. & Robertson, R. (2009). *Globalization & Football*, Sage, London.
- Giulianotti, R. & Robertson, R. (2012). "Mapping the Global Football Field: a sociological model of transnational Forces within the world game", *The British Journal of Sociology*, 63(2), 216-240.
- Given, L. M. (2008). *Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods*, Sage, London.
- Gladden, J. M. & Funk, D. C. (2002). "Developing an Understanding of Brand Associations in Team Sport: Empirical Evidence from Consumers of Professional Sport", *Journal of Sport Management*, 16(1), 54-81.
- Glaser, B. G. (1978). *Theoretical sensitivity: advances in the methodology of grounded theory*, Sociology Press, Mill Valley.
- Glaser, B. G. (1992). *Basics of grounded theory analysis: Emergence vs. forcing*, Sociology Press, Mill Valley.
- Glaser, B. G. & Anselm, L. S. (1999). *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*, Aldine Transaction (2nd ed.), New Brunswick.
- Glaser, B. G. & Anselm, L. S. (2006). *The Discovery of Grounded Theory Strategies for Qualitative Research*, Aldine Transaction, New Brunswick.
- Glaser, B. G. & Holton, J. (2007). "Remodelling Grounded Theory", *Qualitative Social Research*, 5(2), 47-68.
- Glaser, B. G. & Strauss, A. L. (1967). *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*, Aldine de Gruyter, Chicago.
- Glover, I. (2013). "Bleak house: pessimism and prescription about management, responsibility and society in the early 21st century", *Work, Employment and Society*, 27(2), 360–367.
- Goddard, J. (2014). "The promotion and relegation system", in J. Goddard & P. Sloane, *Handbook on the Economics of Professional Football*, Edward Elgar, Cheltenham, pp. 23–40.
- Goetz, J. & LeCompte, M. (1985). "Ethnography and Qualitative Design in Educational Research", *Anthropology & Education*, 18(1), 76-77.
- Goetz, K. (2002). "Four worlds of Europeanisation", *Paper prepared for the ECPR Joint Sessions of Workshops - 22-7 March*, Turin.
- Goffman, E. (1963). *Behaviour in Public Places: Notes on the social organization of gatherings*, The Free Press, New York.
- Goffman, E. (1990). *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, Penguin Books, New York.
- Golding, P. & Murdock, G. (1978). "Theories of Communication and Theories of Society", *Communication Research*, 5(3), 339-356.
- Goldkuhl, G. (2012). "Pragmatism vs interpretivism in qualitative information systems research", *European Journal of Information Systems*, 21(2), 135-146.

- Goodhart, P. & Chataway, C. J. (1968). *War Without Weapons*, W.H. Allen, London.
- Goodwin, M. & Grix, J. (2011). "Bringing Structures Back", in The 'Governance Narrative', *the 'Decentred Approach' and 'Asymmetrical Network Governance' in the education and sport policy communities*, Public Administration, 89(2), 537–556.
- Gordon, M. (1994). *The Concise Dictionary of Sociology*, Oxford Press, New York.
- Gordon-Finlayson, A. (2019). "Grounded theory", in C. Sullivan & M. A. Forrester, *Doing Qualitative Research in Psychology: A Practical Guide*, Sage, (2nd ed.), London, pp. 284-312.
- Gouguet, J.-J. (2019). "The Demand for Sport", in P. Downward, B. Frick, B. R. Humphreys, T. Pawlowski, J. E. Ruseski & B. P. Soebbing, *Handbook on the Economics of Sport*, Sage, London, pp. 71-76.
- Gouveia, C. (2022). "An Intercultural Sporting Event as Part of Soft Power Strategy: Macao's 1st Lusophony Games", *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*, 14(4), 641-656.
- Gouveia, C., Espanha, R. & Di Fátima, B. (2020). "Mapeamento das preferências clubísticas em Portugal: Uma análise comparativa de 2003 a 2013", *Revista Observatorio del Deporte*, 6(1), 01-25.
- Gouveia, C. & Pereira, R. (2021). "Professional football in Portugal: preparing to resume after the COVID-19 pandemic", *Soccer & Society*, 22(1-2), 103-114.
- Gouveia, C., Tavares, A. & David, A. (2019). "Futebol e Religião: a devoção dos adeptos portugueses", *Revista Observatorio del Deporte*, 5(1), 37-59.
- Graeme T. & Tay, J. (2009). *Television Studies after TV: Understanding Television in the Post-broadcast Era*, Routledge, London.
- Gratton, C. (2000). "The Peculiar Economics of English Professional Football", in J. Garland, D. Malcolm & M. Rowe, *The Future of Football: Challenges for the Twenty-first Century*, Frank Cass Publishers, London, pp. 11-28.
- Gratton, C. & Jones, I. (2010). *Research Methods for Sport Studies* (2nd ed.), Routledge, London.
- Gratton, C. & Kokolakis, T. (2013). "Assessing the economic impact of outdoor recreation in Northern Ireland", *Research Report: Sport Northern Ireland*, available at www.sportni.net/sportni/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Economic-Impact.pdf.
- Gratton, C., Liu, D., Ramchandani, G. & Wilson, D. (2012). *The Global Economics of Sport*, Routledge, London.
- Gratton, C. & Solberg, H. A. (2007a). *The Economics of Sport Broadcasting*, Routledge, London.
- Gratton, C. & Solberg, H. A. (2007b). "The Economics of Professional Sport and the Media", *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 7 (4), 307-310.
- Gratton, C. & Taylor, P. (2000). *Economics of Sport and Recreation*, Routledge, London.
- Green, M. (2004). "Changing policy priorities for sport in England: the emergence of elite sport development as a key policy concern", *Leisure Studies*, 23(4), 365-385.
- Greenwood, J. (2002). *Inside the EU Business Associations*, Palgrave, Basingstoke.
- Grix, J. (2010). "The 'governance debate' and the study of sport policy", *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*, 2(2), 159-171.
- Grix, J. (2013). "Sport politics and the Olympics", *Political Studies Review*, 11(1), 15–25.
- Grix, J. (2016). *Sport politics. An introduction*, Macmillan, Basingstoke.
- Grix, J. (2019). *The Foundations of Research*, Palgrave Macmillan, (3rd ed.), London.
- Grix, J. & Phillpots, L. (2011). "Revisiting the 'governance narrative': 'Asymmetrical network governance' and the deviant case of the sport policy sector Public", *Policy and Administration*, 26(1), 3–19.
- Grojean, M.W., Resick, C.J., Dickson, M.W. & Smith, D.B. (2004). "Leaders, values, and organizational climate: Examining leadership strategies for establishing an organizational climate regarding ethics", *Journal of Business Ethics*, 55, 223–241.
- Groom, R., Cushion, C. & Nelson, L. (2011). "The delivery of video-based performance analysis by England youth soccer coaches: Towards a grounded theory", *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, 23, 16-32.
- Grossberg, L. (1993). "Can Cultural Studies Find True Happiness in Communication?", *Journal of Communication*, 43(4), 89-97.

- Grossberg, L. (1995). "Cultural Studies Versus Political Economy: Is Anyone Else Bored with this Debate?", *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, 12(1), 72-81.
- Grossberg, L. (2010). *Cultural Studies in the Future Tense*, Duke University Press, London.
- Grothe, P. (2014, Feb 5th), *Interview with Philip Grothe*, SportBusiness.
- Gruneau, R. (1983). *Class, Sport and Social Development*, University of Massachusetts Press, Massachusetts.
- Gruneau, R. (2003). "Making Spectacle: A case study in television sports production", in E. Dunning & D. Malcolm, *Sport: critical Concepts in Sociology*, Routledge, London, pp. 216-235.
- Guba, E. G. (1990). "The alternative paradigm dialog", in E. G. Guba, *The paradigm dialog*, Sage, New York, pp.17-30.
- Guba, E. G. & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). "Competing paradigms in qualitative research", in N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln, *Handbook of qualitative research*, Sage, New York, pp.105-117.
- Guba, E. G. & Lincoln, Y. S. (2000). "Paradigmatic Controversies, Contradictions and Emerging Confluences", in Y. S. Lincoln & E. G. Guba, *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, Sage, New York, pp.163-188.
- Gubrium, B. K. (2012). "Interview and Sampling How Many and Whom", in J. F., J. A. Holstein, A. B. Marvasti & K. D. McKinney, *Handbook of Interview Research: The Complexity of the Craft*, Sage, (2nd ed.), London, pp.243-254.
- Gubrium, J. F. & Holstein, J. A. (1997). *The new language of qualitative method*, Oxford University Press, New York.
- Gubrium, J. F. & Holstein, J. A. (2001). *Handbook of Interview Research: Context and Method*, Sage, New York.
- Gunn, G. C. (2011). *History Without Borders: The Making of an Asian World Region 1000-1800*, Hong Kong University Press, Hong-Kong.
- Gunter, B. (2000). *Media research methods: Measuring Audiences, Reactions and Impact*, Sage, London.
- Gunter, B. (2002). "The Quantitative Research Process", in K. B. Jensen, *A Handbook of Media and Communication Research: Qualitative and quantitative methodologies*, Routledge, London, pp. 209-234.
- Gupta, B., Gould, S. & Pola, B. (2004). "'To Pirate or Not to Pirate': A Comparative Study of the Ethical Versus Other Influences on the Consumer's Software Acquisition-Mode Decision", *Journal of Business Ethics*, 55, 255-274.
- Guttmann, A. (1978). *From Ritual to Record: The Nature of Modern Sports*, Columbia University Press, New York.
- Guttmann, A. (1991). "Sport Diffusion: a response to Maguire and the Americanisation commentaries", *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 8(2), 185-190.
- Guttmann, A. (1994). *Games and empires: Modern sports and cultural imperialism*, Columbia University Press, New York.
- Guzzini, S. (2000). "A Reconstruction of Constructivism in International Relations", *European Journal of International Relations*, 6(2), 147-182.
- Habermas, J. (1970). "Towards a theory of communicative competence, Inquiry: interdisciplinary", *Journal of Philosophy*, 13(1-4), 360-375.
- Habermas, J. (1996). *Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a discourse theory of law and democracy*, MIT Press, Cambridge.
- Hadfield, A., Rofo, J. S. & Williams, A. J. (2012). *International history and international relations*, Routledge, New York.
- Hage, J. (1980). *Theories of Organizations: Form, Process, and Transformation*, John Wiley & Sons, New York.
- Haimovich, D. (2016, November 24th). "Opportunities and Challenges For The Sports Industry In The Digital Age", available at <https://medium.com/@jonnymadill89/driving-fan-engagement-in-the-digital-age-what-digital-disruption-really-means-for-sport-e4444f595a61#.u87x7ubeu>.

- Hakim, C. (2000). *Research Design: Successful Designs for Social and Economic Research*, Routledge, (2nd ed.), London.
- Halaweh, M. (2018). "Integrating social media and grounded theory in a research methodology", *Business Information Review*, 1-8.
- Hall, S. (1992). "The Question of Cultural Identity", in S. Hall, D. Held & T. McGrew, *Modernity and Its Futures*, Polity Press, Cambridge, pp. 273-316.
- Hall, S., Critcher, C., Jefferson, T., Clarke, J. & Roberts, B. (1978). *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State, and Law and Order*, Macmillan, London.
- Hall, S., Hobson, D., Lowe, A. & Willis, P. (1991). "Culture, media, language: working papers in cultural studies", *Routledge*, London, pp. 1972-79.
- Hallberg, L. R.-M. (2006). "The 'core category' of grounded theory: Making constant comparisons", *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-being*, 1(3), 141-148.
- Hallvard, J. & Solvoll, M. (2007). "The Demand for Televised Football", *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 7 (4), 311-335.
- Hamelink, C. & Nordenstreng, K. (2007). "Towards Democratic Media Governance", in E. d. Bens, *Media Between Culture and Commerce*, Intellect, Bristol, pp. 225-243.
- Hamil, S. (1999). "Corporate Community Involvement: a case for regulatory reform", *Business Ethics: A European Review*, 8(1), 14-25.
- Hamil, S. & Chadwick, S. (2010). *Managing Football: An International Perspective*, Elsevier, New York.
- Hamil, S., Morrow, S., Idle, C., Giambattista, R. & Faccendini, S. (2010). "The governance and regulation of Italian football", *Soccer & Society*, 11(4), 373-413.
- Hamilton, G. (2024, April 19th). "FC Porto sells off portion of stadium commercial rights for €65m", *SportBusiness*, available at <https://www.sportbusiness.com/news/fc-porto-sells-off-portion-of-stadium-commercial-rights-for-e65m/>.
- Hammersley, M. (2010). "The case of the disappearing dilemma: Herbert Blumer on sociological method", *History of the Human Sciences*, 23(5), 70-90.
- Hammersley, M. & Trainou, A. (2012). *Ethics in qualitative research*, Sage, Thousand Oaks.
- Hansen, A., Cottle, S., Negrine, R. & Newbold, C. (1998). *Mass Communication Research Methods*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York.
- Hansen, A., Simon Cottle, R. N. & Newbold, C. (1989). *Research Methods in Mass Communication*, Macmillan Education, New York.
- Hao, A. (2020). "Understanding Consumer Fandom: Literature Review and Conceptual Framework", in C. L. Wang, *Handbook of Research on the Impact of Fandom in Society and Consumerism*, IGI Global, Hershey, pp.18-37.
- Hardy, J. (2014). *Critical political economy of the media: An introduction*, Routledge, London.
- Hargreaves, J. (1986). *Sport, Power and Culture: A social and historical analysis of popular sports in Britain*, Polity Press, Cambridge.
- Hargreaves, J. (2002). *Sporting Females: Critical Issues in the History and Sociology of Women's Sport*, Routledge, New York.
- Hargreaves, J. (2014). "Sport, culture and ideology", in J. Hargreaves, *Sport, culture and ideology*, Routledge, London, pp.30-61.
- Hargreaves, J. & McDonald, I. (2000). "Cultural Studies and the Sociology of Sport", in J. Coakley, & E. Dunning, *Handbook of Sports Studies*, Sage, London, pp.48-60.
- Hart, C. (1998). *Doing a Literature Review: Releasing the social science research imagination*, Sage, London.
- Hartley, J. (2020). *Communication, Cultural and Media Studies - The Key Concepts*, Routledge (5th ed.), London.
- Harvey, D. (1989). *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford.
- Harvey, D. (2000). *Spaces of Hope*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh.
- Harvey, D. (2005). *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

- Harvey, J. & Law, A. (2005). "Resisting' the global media oligopoly? The Canada Inc. response", in M. L. Silk, D. L. Andrews & C. Cole, *Sport and Corporate Nationalisms*, Berg, Oxford, pp.187–225.
- Haslam, S. A., Boen, F. & Fransen, K. (2020). *The New Psychology of Sport and Exercise: The Social Identity Approach*, Sage, London.
- Hassan, D. (2018). *Managing Sport Business: An Introduction*, Routledge, (2nd ed.), London.
- Hassan, D. & Hamil, S. (2013). *Who Owns Football? Models of Football Governance and Management in International Sport*, Routledge, New York.
- Hay, J., Grossberg, L. & Wartella, E. (2018). *The Audience and its Landscape*, Routledge, New York.
- Haynes, R. (1998). "A Pageant of Sound and Vision: Football's relationship with television", *International Journal of the History of Sport*, 15 (1), 211-226.
- Haynes, R. (2014). "Radio Sports News: The Longevity and Influence of Sports Report", in M. Conboy, & J. Steel, *Routledge Companion to British Media History*, Routledge, London, pp.366–379.
- Haynes, R. (2016). *BBC Sport in Black and White*, Palgrave Macmillan, London.
- Haynes, R. & Boyle, R. (2017). "The FIFA World Cup: Media, football and the revolution of a global event", in L. Wenner & A. Billings, *Sport, Media and Mega-Events*, Routledge, New-York, pp.85-99.
- Heidegger, M. (2003). "The phenomenological method of the investigation", in M. Stassen, *Philosophical and Political Writings*, Continuum, New York, pp.57-69.
- Held, D. & McGrew, A. G. (2007). *Globalization/Anti-globalization: Beyond the Great Divide*, Polity Press, (2nd ed.), Cambridge.
- Helland, K. & Solberg, H. A. (2007). "Journalism – an instrument to promote TV sports rights?", in M. Desbordes, *Marketing and Football: An international perspective*, Elsevier, Oxford, pp.51-82.
- Heller, C.-P., Sudaric, S. & Winkler, A. (2023). "The Centralised Sale of Football Media Rights in Europe", *European Competition Journal*, 19(3), 449-480.
- Henslin, J., Possamai, A. & Possamai-Inesedy, A. (2014). *Sociology: A Down-to-earth Approach*, Pearson Australia, Australia.
- Henwood, K. & Pidgeon, N. (2003). "Grounded theory in psychological research", in P. Camic, J. Rhodes & L. Yardley, *Qualitative research in psychology*, American Psychological Association, Washington, pp.131-155.
- Hepp, A. (2013a). *Transcultural Communication*, Policy Press, London.
- Hepp, A. (2013b). *Cultures of Mediatization*, Polity Press, London.
- Hepp, A., Hjarvard, S. & Lundby, K. (2010). "Mediatization Empirical perspectives: An introduction to a special issue", *The European Journal of Communication Research*, 35 (3), 223-228.
- Hepp, A. & Krotz, F. (2014). *Mediatized Worlds Culture and Society in a Media Age*, Palgrave Macmillan, London.
- Hepp, A., Lunt, P. & Hartmann, M. (2015). "Communicative figurations of the good life: Ambivalences surrounding the mediatization of homelessness and the transnational family", in H. Wang, *Communication and 'the good life'*, Peter Lang, New York, pp. 181–196.
- Herman, E. S. & McChesney, R. W. (1997). *The Global Media: The New Missionaries of Corporate Capitalism*, Bloomsbury Academic Press, New York.
- Hesse-Biber, S. & Nagy Leavy, P. (2011). *The Practice of Qualitative Research*, Sage, (2nd ed.), New York.
- Hills, M. (2000). "Media fandom, neoreligiosity, and cult(ural) studies", *A Critical Journal of Film & Television*, 46, 73-89.
- Hine, C. (2005). *Virtual Methods: Issues in Social Research on the Internet*, Berg, Oxford.
- Hitzler, R. (1994). "Wissen und Wesen des Experten", in R. Hitzler, R. Hitzler, A. Honer & C. Maeder, *Expertenwissen: Die institutionalisierte Kompetenz zur Konstruktion von Wirklichkeit*, Westdeutscher Verlag, Opladen, pp.13–30.
- Hjarvard, S. (2008). "The Mediatization of Society a Theory of the Media as Agents of Social and Cultural Change", *Nordicom Review*, 29 (2), 105-134.
- Hjarvard, S. (2013). *The Mediatization of Culture and Society*, Routledge, London.
- Hjarvard, S. (2018). "The Logics of the Media and the Mediatized Conditions of Social Interaction", in C. Thimm, M. Anastasiadis & J. Eemspanner-Pflock (Ed.), *Media Logic(s) Revisited: Modelling the Interplay between Media Institutions*, Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, pp. 63-84.

- Hoberman, J. M. (1984). *Sports and Political Ideology*, University of Texas Press, Austin.
- Hobsbawm, E. J. (2003). *Era dos Extremos - O Breve Século XX 1914-1991*, Companhia das Letras, (2nd ed.), São Paulo.
- Hoch, P. (1972). *Rip off the Big Game: The Exploitation of Sports by the Power Elite*, Doubleday Anchor Paperback, New York.
- Hoehn, T. (2006). "Governance and Governing Bodies in Sport", in W. Andreff & S. Szymanski (Ed.), *Handbook on the Economics of Sport*, Edward Elgar, Cheltenham, pp.227-240.
- Hoehn, T. & Lancefield, D. (2003). "Broadcasting and Sport", *Oxford Review of Economic Policy*, 19 (4), 552-568.
- Hoehn, T. & Szymanski, S. (1999a). *European Football: The Structure of Leagues and Revenue Sharing*, Economic Policy, Cheltenham.
- Hoehn, T. & Szymanski, S. (1999b). "The Americanisation of European Football", *Economic Policy*, 14(28), 204-240.
- Hofstede, G., Hofstede, G. J. & Minkov, M. (2010). *Cultures and Organizations: Software for the Mind*, McGraw-Hill, (3rd ed.), London.
- Hognestad, H. K. (2006). "Transnational Passions: A Statistical Study of Norwegian Football Supporters", *Soccer & Society*, 7(4), 439-462.
- Holden, M. & Lynch, P. (2004). "Choosing the Appropriate Methodology: Understanding Research Philosophy", *The Marketing Review*, 4(4), 397-409.
- Holliday, A. (2002). *Doing and Writing Qualitative Research*, Sage, London.
- Hollifield, C. A. & Coffey, A. J. (2006). "Qualitative Research in Media Management and Economics", in A. B. Albarran, S. M. Chan-Olmsted & M. O. Wirth, *Handbook of Media Managing*, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, New Jersey, pp.573-600.
- Holmes, D. (2005). *Communication Theory: Media, Technology, Society*, Sage, London.
- Holstein, J. A. & Gubrium, J. F. (1995). *The Active Interview*, Sage, London.
- Holt, J. (2011). "Empires of Entertainment: Media Industries and the Politics of Deregulation", *Rutgers University Press*, New Jersey, pp.1980-1006.
- Holt, N., Tamminen, K., Black, D. E., Sehn, Z. L. & Wall, M. P. (2008). "Parental involvement in competitive youth sport settings", *Psychology of Sport & Exercise*, 9, 663-685.
- Holt, M. (2006). *UEFA, Governance and the Control of Club Competition in European Football*, Birkbeck, London.
- Holt, M. (2007). "The Ownership and Control of Elite Club Competition in European Football", *Soccer and Society*, 8(1), 50-67.
- Houlihan, B. (2008). *Sport & Society: A student introduction*, Sage, London.
- Holt, R. (1981). *Sport and Society in Modern France*, Macmillan Press, London.
- Holt, R., Young, C. & Tomlinson, A. (2012). *Sport and the Transformation of Modern Europe*, Routledge, London.
- Holtug, N. (2020). "National Identity, Shared Values, and Social Cohesion", in M. Sardoc, *Handbook of Patriotism*, Springer, Cham, pp. 499-512.
- Hoof, F. (2016). "Live Sports, Piracy and Uncertainty: Understanding Illegal Streaming Aggregation Platforms", in R. Lobato, & J. Meese (Eds.), *Geoblocking and Global Video Culture*, Institute of Network Cultures, Amsterdam, pp.86-93.
- Hoof, F. (2019). "Liveness Formats: A Historical Perspective on Live Sports Broadcasting", in M. Jancovic, A. Volmar, & A. S. (Eds.), *Format Matters. Standards, Practices, and Politics in Media Cultures*, Meson Press, Lüneburg, pp. 81-103.
- Horn, T. S. (2011). "Multiple Pathways to Knowledge Generation: qualitative and quantitative research approaches in sport and exercise psychology", *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health Aquatic*, Insects, 3(3), pp. 291-304.
- Horne, J. (2006). *Sport in Consumer Culture*, Palgrave Macmillan, London.
- Horne, J. & Manzenreite, W. (2006). "An Introduction to the Sociology of Sports Mega-Events", *The Sociological Review*, 54(2), 1-24.

- Horne, J., Tomlinson, A. & Whannel, G. (1999). *Understanding Sport An introduction to the sociological and cultural analysis of sport*, Routledge, London.
- Horne, J., Tomlinson, A. & Whannel, G. (2001). *Understanding Sport: An introduction to the sociological and cultural analysis of sport*, Routledge, London.
- Hoskins, A., & O'Loughlin, B. (2015). "Arrested War: The Third Phase of Mediatisation", *Information, Communication & Society*, 18(11), 1320-1338.
- Houlihan, B. (2014). *The Government and Politics of Sport*, Routledge, (2nd ed.), London.
- Houlihan, B. (2017). "Sport Policy-Making", in A. Bairner, J. Kelly & J. W. Lee, *Handbook of Sport and Politics*, Routledge, New York, pp.79-98.
- Houlihan, B., Bloyce, D. & Smith, A. (2009). "Developing the research agenda in sport policy", *International journal of sport policy*, 1 (1), 1-12.
- Houlihan, B. & Green, M. (2008). *Comparative Elite Sport Development: systems, structures and public policy*, Elsevier, New York.
- Houlihan, B. & White, A. (2002). *The Politics of Sports Development: Development of sport or development through sport?*, Routledge, London.
- Hoye, R. & Cuskelly, G. (2007). *Sport Governance*, Routledge, London.
- Hoye, R., Nicholson, M. & Houlihan, B. (2010). *Sport and Policy: Issues and Analysis*, Elsevier, New York.
- Hoye, R., Smith, A., Westerbeek, H., Stewart, B. & Nicholson, M. (2006). *The Sport Management Environment*, Elsevier, New York.
- Hugenberg, L. W., Haridakis, P. M. & Earnheardt, A. C. (2014). *Sports Mania: Essays on Fandom and the Media in the 21st Century*, McFarland, Jefferson.
- Huggins, M. (2007). "BBC Radio and Sport 1922–39", *Contemporary British History*, 21(4), 491–515.
- Huggins, M. (2015). "The Visual in Sport History: Approaches, methodologies and sources", *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 32(15), 1813-1830.
- Hutchins, B. (2011). "The Acceleration of Media Sport Culture: Twitter, telepresence and online messaging", *Information, communication and Society*, 14 (2), 237-257.
- Hutchins, B. & Sanderson, J. (2017). "The primacy of sports television: Olympic media, social networking services and multi-screen viewing during the Rio 2016 Games", *Media International Australia*, 164, 32–43.
- Hughes, R., & Coakley, J. (1984). "Mass Society and the Commercialization of Sport", *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 1(1), 57-63.
- Hughson, J., Moore, K., Spaaij, R. & Maguire, J. (2016). *Handbook of Football Studies*, Taylor & Francis, London.
- Hums, M. A. & MacLean, J. C. (2018). *Governance and Policy in Sport Organizations*, Routledge, (4th ed.), New York.
- Hutchins, B. (2004). "Castells, Regional News Media and the Information Age", *Journal of Media & Cultural Studies*, 18(4), 577-590.
- Hutchins, B. & Boyle, R. (2017). "A Community of Practice: Sport journalism, mobile media and institutional change", *Digital Journalism*, 5 (5), 496-512.
- Hutchins, B., Li, B. & Rowe, D. (2019). "Over-the-top sport: Live streaming services, changing coverage rights markets and the growth of media sport portals", *Media, Culture & Society*, 41(7), 975–994.
- Hutchins, B. & Rowe, D. (2012). *Sport Beyond Television: The Internet, Digital Media and the Rise of Networked Media Sport*, Routledge, London.
- Hutchins, B., Rowe, D. & Ruddock, A. (2009). "'It's Fantasy Football Made Real': Networked Media Sport, the Internet, and the Hybrid Reality of My Football Club", *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 26, 89-106.
- Hutchison, D. (2007). "The EU and the Press: Policy or Non-Policy", in K. Sarikakis, *Media and Cultural Policy in the European Union*, Brill Rodopi, Amsterdam, pp.183-202.
- Hutchinson, S. (1988). "Education and grounded theory", in R. Sherman & R. B. Webb, *Qualitative Research in Education: Focus and Methods*, Routledge, New York, pp.122-140.
- Hyman, H. H., Cobb, W. J., Feldman, J. J., Hart, C. W. & Stember, C. H. (1975). *Interviewing in Social Research*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

- Hwang, K. (2019). "Positivism versus realism: Two approaches of indigenous psychologies", *Journal of Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology*, 39(2), 127-129.
- Ioakimidis, M. (2010). "Online Marketing of Professional Sports Clubs: engaging fans on a new playing field", *International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship*, 11(4), 271-282.
- Jordache, C., Audenhove, L. V. & Loisen, J. (2018). "Global Media Flows: A qualitative Review of Research Methods in Audio-visual Flow Studies", *The International Communication Gazette*, 81(7), 1-20.
- Iosifidis, P. (2005). "The Application of EC Competition Policy to the Media Industry", *International Journal on Media Management*, 7(3-4), 103-111.
- Iosifidis, P. (2015). *Global Media and Communication Policy*, Palgrave Macmillan, (2nd ed), London.
- Iosifidis, P., Steemers, J. & Wheeler, M. (2005). *European Television Industries*, British Film Institute, London.
- Irshaidat, R. (2022). "Interpretivism vs. Positivism in Political Marketing Research", *Journal of Political Marketing*, 21(2), 126-160.
- Jaeger, M. E. & Rosnow, R. L. (1988). "Contextualism and its implications for psychological inquiry", *British Journal of Psychology*, 79(1), 63-75.
- James, N. & Gubrium, H. B. (2012). "Internet Interviewing", in Gubrium, J. F., James A. Holstein, J. A., Marvasti, A. B., McKinney, K. D. (eds), *Handbook of Interview Research: The Complexity of the Craft*, Sage, (2nd ed.), Oak, pp. 177-192.
- Jameson, F. (1991). *Postmodernism, or the cultural logic of late capitalism*, Duke University Press, Durham.
- Jamieson, M. K., Govaart, G. H. & Pownall, M. (2022). "Reflexivity in quantitative research: A rationale and beginner's guide", *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 17(4), 1-15.
- Jarvie, G. (2006). *Sport, Culture and Society*, Routledge, London.
- Jarvie, G. & Maguire, J. (1994). *Sport and Leisure in Social Thought*, Routledge, London.
- Jarvie, G., Thornton, J. & Mackie, H. (2017). *Sport, Culture and Society: An Introduction*, Routledge (3rd ed.), London.
- Jeanrenaud, C. & Kesenne, S. (2006). *The Economics of Sport and the Media*, Edward Elgar, London.
- Jena, F. & Reilly, B. (2016). "Testing the Uncertainty Outcome Hypothesis Using Data from Second Tier Soccer in Ireland", *Applied Economics Letters*, 23(18), 1257-1260.
- Jenks, C. J. (2018). "Recording and Transcribing Social Interaction", in U. Flick, *Handbook of qualitative data collection*, Sage, London, pp. 118-127.
- Jenkins, H. (2006). *Cultura convergente*, NYU Press, New York.
- Jensen, K. B. (2020). *Handbook of Media and Communication Research Qualitative and Quantitative Methodologies*, Routledge, (3rd ed.), New York.
- Jensen, L. A. & Arnett, J. J. (2012). "Going Global: New Pathways for Adolescents and Emerging Adults in a Changing World", *Journal of Social Issues*, 68(3), 473-492.
- Jhally, S. (1984). "The Spectacle of Accumulation: Material and Cultural Factors in the Evolution of the Sports/Media Complex", *Critical Sociology*, 12(3), 41-57.
- Jhally, S. (1989). "Cultural Studies and the Sports/Media Complex", in L. A. Wenner, *Media, Sports, and Society*, Sage, New York, pp. 70-93.
- Ji, S. W. & Waterman, D. (2016). "Vertical ownership, technology and programming content", in R. G. Picard & S. S. Wildman, *Handbook on the Economics of the Media*, Edward Elgar, Cheltenham, pp. 36-52.
- Jin, D. Y. (2021). *Handbook of Digital Media and Globalization*, Routledge, New York.
- Jinghong, X., Xinyang, Y., Shiming, H. & Wenbing, C. (1999). "Grounded theory: Its train of thought and methods", *Educational Research and Experiment*, 4, 58-63.
- Johnson, L. M., Choi, K. H., Kim, E., Pitts, B. G. & Ahang, J. J. (2019). "Globalized Sport Management in Diverse Cultural Contexts", in B. G. Pitts, & J. Zhang (Eds.), *Globalized sport management in diverse cultural contexts: an introduction*, Routledge, Abingdon, Oxon, pp. 1-26.
- Johnson, W. (1969). "TV Made it all a New Game", *Sports Illustrated*, 36(26), 86-102.

- Jones, I., Brown, L. & Holloway, I. (2013). *Qualitative Research in Sport and Physical Activity*, Sage, London.
- Jones, T. M. (1991). "Ethical Decision Making by Individuals in Organizations: An Issue-Contingent Model", *The Academy of Management Review*, 16(2), 366-395.
- Kaplan, A. (1998). *The Conduct of Inquiry*, Routledge, New York.
- Karen, D. & Washington, R. E. (2015). *Sociological Perspectives on Sport: The Games Outside the Games*, Routledge, London.
- Kassimeris, C. (2013). "The Semiotics of European Football", *Soccer & Society*, 15(2), 190–202.
- Kassimeris, C. (2023). *The Politics of Football*, Routledge, London.
- Katz, J. (2006). "Ethical Escape Routes for Underground Ethnographers", *American Ethnologist*, 33(4), 499–506.
- Kazmer, M. M. & Xie, B. (2008). "Qualitative Interviewing in Internet Studies: Playing with the media, playing with the method", *Information, Community and Society*, 11(2), 257-278.
- Kelle, U. (1995). "Theories as Heuristic Tools in Qualitative Research", in I. Maso, P. Atkinson, S. Delamont & J. Verhoeven, *Openness in Research. The Tension between Self and Other*, van Gorcum, Assen, pp. 30-50.
- Keller, B. (2016). "The regulation of professional football at the European Union level: towards supranational employment relations in the football industry?", in M. Barry, J. Skinner & T. Engelberg (Ed.), *Research handbook of Employment Relations in Sport*, Edward Elgar, Cheltenham.
- Kellner, D. (1995). *Media Culture: Cultural studies, identity and politics between the modern and the postmodern*, Routledge, London.
- Kempster, S. & Parry, K. W. (2011). "Grounded theory and leadership research: A critical realist perspective", *The Leadership Quarterly*, 22(1), 106–120.
- Kennedy, B. L. & Thornberg, R. (2018). "Deduction, Induction, and Abduction", in U. Flick, *Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis*, Sage, London, pp. 49-64.
- Kennedy, E. & Hills, L. (2009). *Sport, Media and Society*, Berg, New York.
- Kennedy, H. (2023). "Technology and sport consumer experiences", in D. C. Funk, K. Alexandris & H. McDonald, *Sport Consumer Behaviour: Marketing Strategies*, Routledge, New York, pp. 311-326.
- Kennedy, P. & Kennedy, D. (2012). "Football supporters and the commercialisation of football: comparative responses across Europe", *Soccer & Society*, 13(3), 327-340.
- Kennedy, P. & Kennedy, D. (2013). *Football Supporters and the Commercialisation of Football: comparative responses across Europe*, Routledge, New York.
- Kennedy, P. & Kennedy, D. (2016). *Football in Neo-Liberal Times: A Marxist Perspective on the European Football Industry*, Routledge, London.
- Kerr, R. L. (2017). *The Sociology of Sports-Talk Radio*, Palgrave Macmillan, Cham.
- Kerr, R., Barker-Ruchti, N., Stewart, C. & Kerr, G. (2020). *Women's Artistic Gymnastics: Socio-cultural Perspectives*, Routledge, New York.
- Kersbergen, K. V. & Waarden, F. V. (2004). "'Governance' as a bridge between disciplines: Cross-disciplinary inspiration regarding shifts in governance and problems of governability, accountability and legitimacy", *European Journal of Political Research*, 43(2), 143–171.
- Kesenne, S. (2007). *The Economic Theory of Professional Team Sports: An Analytical Treatment*, ResearchGate, Antwerp.
- Khanal, K. P. (2018). "Constructivist Grounded Theory Practice in Accountability Research", *Journal of Education and Research*, 8(1), 61-88.
- Khondker, H. H. (2005). "Globalization to Glocalization: A Conceptual Exploration", *Intellectual Discourse*, 13(2), 181-199.
- Kidder, L. H. & Fine, M. (1997). "Qualitative Inquiry in Psychology: A radical tradition", in D. R. Fox & I. Prilleltensky, *Critical Psychology: An introduction*, Sage, London, pp. 34-50.
- Kihl, L. A., Richardson, T. & Campisi, C. (2008). "Toward a Grounded Theory of Student-Athlete Suffering and Dealing with Academic Corruption", *Journal of Sport Management*, 22(3), 273-302.

- Kim, Y. K. & Trail, G. (2011). "A Conceptual Framework for Understanding Relationships between Sport Consumers and Sport Organizations: A Relationship Quality Approach", *Journal of Sport Management*, 25(1), 57–69.
- Kima, Y. Y. & Bhawuk, D. P. (2008). "Globalization and diversity: Contributions from intercultural research", *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 32(4), 301-304.
- King, A. (1997). "New directors, customers and fans: The transformation of English football in the 1990s", *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 14(3), 224–240.
- King, A. (2002). *The End of the Terraces: The Transformation of English Football in the 1990's*, Leicester, University Press London.
- King, A. (2004). "The New Symbols of European Football ", *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 39(3), 323–336.
- King, A. (2016). *The European Ritual: Football in the New Europe*, Routledge, (3rd ed.), London.
- King, N. & Horrocks, C. (2010). *Interviews in Qualitative Research*, Sage, New York.
- Kinkema, K. M. & Harris, J. C. (1998). "MediaSport Studies: Key research and emerging issues", in L. A. Wenner, *MediaSport*, Routledge, London, pp. 27-54.
- Kirkendall, D. T. (2020). "Evolution of soccer as a research topic", *Progress in Cardiovascular Diseases*, 63(6), 723-729.
- Kitchener, K. S. (2000). *Foundations of Ethical Practice, Research, and Teaching in Psychology*, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, New Jersey.
- Kitchener, K. & Kitchener, R. (2014). "Social science research ethics: Historical and philosophical issues", in D. Mertens & P. Ginsberg, *The Handbook of Social Research Ethics*, Sage, Thousand Oaks, pp. 5-22.
- Kitchin, P. J. & Howe, D. P. (2013). "How can the social theory of Pierre Bourdieu assist sport management research?", *Sport Management Review*, 16(2), 123–134.
- Klatell, D. A. & Marcus, N. (1988). *Sports for Sale: Television, Money and the Fans*, Oxford University Press, New York.
- Klauser, F. (2017). *Surveillance and Space*, Sage, London.
- Klein, J. T. (1990). *Interdisciplinarity: History, theory, and practice*, Wayne State University Press, Detroit.
- Klikauer, T. (2015). "What Is Managerialism?", *Critical Sociology*, 41(7-8), 1103–1119.
- Knill, C. (1999). "Explaining cross-national variations in administrative reform: autonomous versus instrumental bureaucracies", *Journal of Public Policy*, 19, 113-139.
- Knoke, A. (2012). *Economic Networks*, Polity Press, Cambridge.
- Knoblauch, H., Flick, U. & Maeder, C. (2005). "Qualitative Methods in Europe: The Variety of Social Research", *Qualitative Social Research*, 6(3).
- Knoebel, M. (2003). "Rants, Ratings and Representation: ethical issues in researching online social practices", *Education, Communication & Information*, 3(2), 187–210.
- Knorr-Cetina, K. (1981). "The MicroSociological Challenge of MacroSociology: Towards a Reconstruction of Social Theory and Methodology", in K. D. Knorr-Cetina & A. Cicourel, *Advances in Social Theory and Methodology*, Routledge, Boston, pp. 1-47.
- Koch, N. (2017). "Athletic Autocrats: understanding images of authoritarian leaders as sportsmen", in N. Koch (Ed.), *Critical Geographies of Sport: Space, Power and Sport in Global Perspective*, Routledge, London, pp. 91-107.
- Koski, P. & Lämsä, J. (2015). "Finland as a Small Sports Nation: sociohistorical perspectives on the development of National Sport Policy", *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*, 7(3), 421-441.
- Kringstad, M., Solberg, H. A. & Jakobsen, T. G. (2018). "Does live broadcasting reduce stadium attendance? The case of Norwegian football", *Sport, Business and Management: An International Journal*, 8(1), 67–81.
- Krippendorff, K. (2004). *Content Analyses: An Introduction to Its Methodology*, Sage, London.
- Krotz, F. (2018). "Media Logic and the Mediatization Approach: A Good Partnership, a Mésalliance, or a Misunderstanding?", in C. Thimm, M. Anastasiadis & J. Einspänner-Pflock (Ed.), *Media Logic(s)*

- Revisited: Modelling the Interplay between Media Institutions*, Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, pp.41-62.
- Kuma, R. M. (2014). "A Pureza Perdida do Desporto: Futebol no Estado Novo", *Tese Doutorado em Sociologia*, Universidade de Lisboa Instituto de Ciências Sociais, Lisboa.
- Kumar, R. (2004). "Da Bancada aos Sofás da Europa: Apontamentos sobre os Media e o Futebol no Século XX Português", in J. Neves, & N. Domingos, *A Época do Futebol: O Jogo visto pelas Ciências Sociais*, Assírio & Alvim, Lisboa, pp.230- 262.
- Kuper, S. (2003). *Football Against the Enemy*, Orion Publishing Group, London.
- Kuper, S. & Szymanski, S. (2014). *Soccernomics: why England loses, why Germany and Brazil win, and why the U.S., Japan, Australia, Turkey and even India are destined to become the kings of the world's most popular sport*, Nation Boo, (3rd ed.), New York.
- Kuper, S. & Szymanski, S. (2015). *Money and Soccer: A Soccernomics Guide: Why Chievo Verona, Unterhaching, and Scunthorpe United Will Never Win the Champions League, Why Manchester City, Roma, and Paris St. Germain Can, and Why Real Madrid, Bayern Munich, and MU Cannot Be Stopped*, Nation Books, New York.
- Kuper, S. & Szymanski, S. (2018). *Why England Lose, Why Germany, Spain And France Win, And Why One Day The Rest Of The World Will Finally Catch Up*, HarperCollins, London.
- Kuypers, T. (1997). "Football on the Box: More TV Offers Big Opportunities but Will Lead to Changes in League Power", *New Economy*, 4(4), 207–211.
- Kvale, S. (2007). *Doing Interviews*, Sage, London.
- Landis, D. (2008). "Globalization, migration into urban centres, and cross-cultural training", *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 32(4), 337-348.
- Lash, S. (1990). *Sociology of Postmodernism*, Routledge, Oxford.
- Lash, S. & Urry, J. (1987). *The End of Organized Capitalism*, Polity, Cambridge.
- Lash, S. & Urry, J. (1994). *Economies of Signs and Space*, Sage, London.
- Lasswell, H. D. (1936). *Politics: Who Gets What, When, How*, Whittlesey House, New York.
- Latzer, M., Just, N. & Saurwein, F. (2013). "Self- and co-regulation: Evidence, legitimacy and governance choice", in M. E. Price, S. G. Verhulst & L. Morgan, *Handbook of Media Law*, Routledge, New York, pp.373–397.
- Latzer, M., Saurwein, F. & Just, N. (2019). "Assessing Policy II: Governance-Choice Method", in H. Van den Bulck, M. Puppis, K. Donders & L. V. Audenhove, *Handbook of Methods for Media Policy Research*, Palgrave, New York, pp.357-573.
- Lauridsen, E. I. & Higginbottom, G. (2014). "The roots and development of constructivist grounded theory", *Nurse researcher*, 21(5), 8-13.
- Lawrence, G. & Rowe, D. (1986). *Power Play: The commercialisation of australian sport*, Hale & Iremonger, Sydney.
- Lawrence, I. (2018). *Football Club Management: Insights from the Field*, Routledge, New York.
- Le Bon, G. (2001). *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind*, Dover Publications, New York.
- Lee, R. L. (1990). "The Micro-Macro Problem in Collective Behavior: Reconciling Agency and Structure", *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, 20 (3), 213–233.
- Lee, S. & Kassing, J. W. (2023). "Football and Diaspora Theoretical Framework", in J. W. Kassing & S. L. (Eds.), *Football and Diaspora: Connecting Dispersed Communities through the Global Game*, Routledge, London, pp.18-35.
- Lee, S. & Lee, S.-C. (2013). "The Influence of Sport Sponsorship Communication on Sport Fans' Rating of Retail Service Quality", *International Journal of Sport Communication*, 6, 312-324.
- Lee, S. & Pedersen, P. M. (2011). "Measuring sponsorship effects in intercollegiate sport: An examination of Division I basketball", *Journal of Sponsorship*, 4(4), 391–401.
- Leeds, M. A. & Leeds, E. M. (2009). "International Soccer success and National Institutions", *Journal of sports Economics*, 10(4), 369-390.
- Leedy, P. D. (2016). *Practical Research: Planning and Design*, Macmillan, (11th ed.), New York.

- Leeuwen, L. V., Quick, S. & Daniel, K. (2008). "The Sport Spectator Satisfaction Model: A Conceptual Framework for Understanding the Satisfaction of Spectators", *Sport Management Review*, 5(2), 99-128.
- Leeuwen, T. v. (2005). "Three models of inter disciplinarily", in R. Wodak & P. A. Chilton, *A New Agenda in (Critical) Discourse Analysis*, John Benjamins Publishing Company, Amsterdam, pp.3-18.
- Lefever, K. (2012). *New Media and Sport: International legal aspects*, Asser Press, The Hague.
- Lefever, K. & Evens, T. (2009). "All sports for free! A difficult match? Right to information in the digital broadcasting era", *The International Sports Law Journal*, 3(4), 29-35.
- Lefèvre, B. & Ohl, F. (2012). "Consuming Sports: distinction, univorism and omnivorism", *Sport in Society*, 15(1), 44-63.
- Leftwich, A. (2004). *What is Politics: The Activity and its Study*, Polity Press, Cambridge.
- Lent, R. W., Brown, S. D. & Hackett, G. (1994). "Toward a unifying social cognitive theory of career and academic interest, choice, and performance", *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 45, 79-122.
- Levermore, R. & Budd, A. (2004). *Sport and international relations: An Emerging Relationship*, Routledge, London.
- Levers, M.-J. D. (2013). "Philosophical Paradigms, Grounded Theory, and Perspectives on Emergence", *Sage Open*, 3(4).
- Levi-Faur, D. (2011). "Regulatory Networks and Regulatory Agencification", *Journal of European Public Policy*, 18, 808-827.
- Levinson, D. & Christensen, K. (1999). *Encyclopedia of World Sport: From Ancient Times to the Present*, Oxford University Press, New York.
- Levinson, D. & Christensen, K. (2005). *Berkshire Encyclopedia of World Sport*, Berkshire Publishing, Massachusetts.
- Lewis, P. A. (2002). "Agency, Structure and Causality in Political Science: A Comment on Sibeon", *Sage Journals*, 22(1), 17-23.
- Li, S., Kim, K., Ryuc, Y. & Kim, H. (2023). "Demand for Chinese Super League Broadcast: An Analysis of Broadcasters' Match Selection and TV Ratings", *European Sport Management Quarterly*.
- Lie, R. & Servaes, J. (2000). "Globalisation: Consumption and identity. Towards researching nodal points", in G. A. Wang, J. Servaes, & A. Goonasekera, *The New Communications Landscape. Demystifying Media Globalization*, Routledge, London, pp. 307-322.
- Liew, J. (2020, February 17th). "Manchester City Backers are not the Sort to Take UEFA's Punishment Lying Down", available at <https://www.theguardian.com/football/2020/feb/17/manchester-city-backers-are-not-the-sort-to-take-punishment-lying-down>.
- Lincoln, Y. S. & Guba, E. (2013). *The Constructivist Credo*, Walnut Creek, Thousand Oaks.
- Lincoln, Y. S., Lynham, S. A. & Guba, E. G. (2018). "Paradigmatic Controversies, Contradictions, and Emerging Confluences, Revisited", in Norman K. Denzin; Yvonna S. Lincoln, *T. S. Qualitative*, Sage, (5th ed.), Thousand Oaks, pp. 222-264.
- Lindgren, S. (2013). *Hybrid Media Culture: Sensing Place in a World of Flows*, Routledge, New York.
- Lingeswaran, S. (2023, December 1st). "Fite ends Portuguese league blackout across multiple markets in Sportfive deal", available at <https://www.sportcal.com/newsletters/fite-nets-exclusive-liga-portugal-rights-until-2025-26/?cf-view>.
- Lipovetsky, G. & Serroy, J. (2010). *O Ecrã Global*, Edições 70, Lisboa.
- Livingstone, S. (2005). *Audiences and Publics: When Cultural Engagement Matters for the Public Sphere*, Intellect Press, Bristol.
- Livingstone, S. (2009). "On the mediation of everything: ICA Presidential Address 2008", *Journal of Communication*, 59(1), 1-18.
- Livingstone, S. (2010). "Interactive, engaging but unequal: critical conclusions from internet studies", in J. Curran, *Media and Society*, Bloomsbury, London, pp. 122-142.
- Lo, S. S.-H. (2016). *Politics and Development of Contemporary China*, Palgrave, Now York.
- Loland, S. (2023). "Sport, Values, and Character", in L. A. Wenner, *Handbook of Sport and Society*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, pp.27-47.
- Lotz, A. D. (2014). *The Television Will Be Revolutionized*, University Press, (2nd ed.), New York.

- Lovejoy, J. (2011). *Glory, Goals and Greed: Twenty Years of the Premier League*, Mainstream Publishing Company, Edinburgh.
- LP (2021). "Estudo Internacional sobre Direitos Audiovisuais Desportivos", available at https://www.ey.com/pt_pt/strategy/estudo-internacional-sobre-direitos-audiovisuais-desportivos.
- LP (2022). "Liga Portugal Centralização", available at <https://www.ligaportugal.pt/en/paginas/conteudos/liga-portugal-centralizacao/#>
- Lucas, S. (2021). *Power: A Radical View*, MacMillan, (3rd ed.), London.
- Lucidarme, S., Babiak, K. & Willem, A. (2018). "Governmental power in elite sport networks: a resource-dependency perspective", *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 18(3), 348-372.
- Luhmann, K. (1987). "The Evolutionary differentiation between Society and Interaction", in J. C. Alexander, B. Giesen, R. Münch & N. J. Smelser, *The Micro-Macro Link*, University of California Press, Berkeley, pp. 112-131.
- Lukes, S. (2005). *Power. A Radical View. The original text with two major new chapters*, Palgrave Macmillan, (2nd ed.), New York.
- Lunt, P. & Livingstone, S. (2012). *Media regulation: governance and the interest of citizens and consumers*, Sage, Thousand Oaks.
- Lunt, P. & Livingstone, S. (2016). "Is 'mediatization' the new paradigm for our field?", *Media, Culture & Society*, 38(3), 462-470.
- Lynch, M. (2000). "Against Reflexivity as an Academic Virtue and Source of Privileged Knowledge", *Theory, Culture & Society*, 17(3), 26-54.
- MacAloon, J. A. (1981). *This Great Symbol: Pierre de Coubertin and the Origin of the Modern Olympic Games*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago.
- Madill, A., Jordan, A. & Shirley, C. (2000). "Objectivity and reliability in qualitative analysis: Realist, contextualist and radical constructionist epistemologies", *British Journal of Psychology*, 91, 1-20.
- Madrigal, R. (1995). "Cognitive and affective determinants of fan satisfaction with sporting event attendance", *Journal of Leisure Research*, 27, 205-227.
- Madrigal, R. (2000). "The Influence of Social Alliances with Sports Teams on Intentions to Purchase Corporate Sponsors Products", *Journal of Advertising*, 29(4), 13-24.
- Madureira, T. (2022, May 22). Daily sports newspaper 'Record' (no.15 703), "Revolução Centralizada", (S. Krethinas, Interviewer).
- Maffesoli, M. (2007). "Tribal aesthetic", in B. Cova, R. Kozinets & A. Shankar, *Consumer Tribes*, Elsevier, New York, pp. 27-34.
- Maguire, J. A. (1991). "The Media-Sport Production Complex: The case of American football in western European societies", *European Journal of Communication*, 6, 315-335.
- Maguire, J. A. (1993). "Globalisation, sport development and the media/sport production complex", *Sport Science Review*, 2(1), 29-47.
- Maguire J. A. (1999). *Global Sport: Identities, Societies, Civilizations*, Polity Press, Cambridge.
- Maguire, J. (2004). "Pontos e Questões-Chave do Complexo Desporto-media Globais", *Media & Jornalismo*, (4), 7-26.
- Maguire, J. A. (2005). *Power and Global Sport: Zones of Prestige*, Emulation and Resistance, Routledge, London.
- Maguire, J. A. (2011). "Civilised Games? Beijing 2008, power politics, and cultural struggles", *Sport in Society: Cultures, Commerce, Media, Politics*, 14(7-8), 1027-1039.
- Maguire, J. A. (2014). *Social Sciences in Sport*, Human Kinetics, London.
- Maguire, J., Jarvie, G., Mansfield, L. & Bradley, J. (2002). *Sport Worlds. A sociological perspective. Champaign*, Human Kinetics, Illinois.
- Maguire, J. A. & Poulton, E. K. (1999). "European Identity Politics in Euro 96: Invented traditions and national habitus codes", *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 34(1), 17-20.
- Mahony, D., Madrigal, R. & Howard, D. (2000). "Using the Psychological Commitment to Team (PCT) Scale to Segment Sport Consumers Based on Loyalty", *Sport Marketing Quarterly*, 9, 15-25.
- Majone, G. (1996). *Regulating Europe*, Routledge, London.

- Malcom, D., Jones, I. & Waddington, I. (2000). "The people's game? Football spectatorship and demographic change", *Soccer and Society*, 1(1), 129-143.
- Mann, C. & Stewart, F. (2001). "Internet Interviewing", in J. F. Gubrium & J. A. Holstein, *Handbook of Interview Research: Context and Method*, Sage, (1st ed.), Thousand Oaks, pp. 603-628.
- Manzenreiter, W. & Spitale, G. (2010). "Governance, citizenship and the new European Football Championships: The European spectacle", *Soccer & Society*, 11(6), 695-708.
- Marivoet, S. (2002). *Aspetos Sociológicos do Desporto*, Livros Horizonte, (2nd ed.), Lisboa.
- Marks, G. & Hooghe, L. (2004). "Contrasting Visions of Multi-Level Governance", in I. Bache & M. Flinders, *Multi-Level Governance*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, pp. 15-30.
- Markula, P. & Pringle, R. (2014). "Foucault, Sport and Exercise: Power, Knowledge and Transforming the Self", in A. C. Billings & M. Hardin, *Handbook of Sport and New Media*, Routledge, New York, pp. 55-66.
- Martín-Magdalena, J., Ibarreta, C. M., Gonzalo-Angulo, J. A. & Domonte, A. G. (2023). "The impact of financial fair play on the financial performance of Spanish professional football: do the biggest clubs behave better?", *Sport Business and Management an International Journal*, 13(4).
- Martins, A. M. & Cró, S. (2016). "The Demand for Football in Portugal New Insights on Outcome Uncertainty", *Journal of Sports Economics*, 19(4), 473-497.
- Marsh, D. & Stoker, G. (2010). *Theory and Methods in Political Science*, Palgrave Macmillan, (3rd ed.), London.
- Marshall, P. J. & Fox, N. A. (2006). *The Development of Social Engagement: Neurobiological perspectives*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Marx, G. T. (2012). "Looking at Smelser's Theory of Collective Behavior After Almost 50 Years: A Review and Appreciation", *The American Sociologist*, 43(2).
- Marx, K. (1977). *Capital, Vol. 1: A critique of political economy*, Progress Publishers, London.
- Marzano, M. (2012). "Informed Consent", in J. F. Gubrium, J. A. Holstein, A. B. Marvasti & K. D. McKinney, *Handbook of Interview Research: The Complexity of the Craft*, Sage, (2nd ed.), New York, pp. 443-456.
- Mason, J. (2002). *Qualitative Researching*, Sage, (2nd ed.), London.
- Mason, M. (2010). "Sample Size and Saturation in PhD Studies Using Qualitative Interviews", *Qualitative Social Research*, 11(3), 1-19.
- Mason, T. (1993). "All the Winners and the Half Times", *The Sports Historian*, 13(1), 3-13.
- Mattelart, A. (2002). *A Globalização da Comunicação*, Edusc, S. Paulo.
- Matthew, D. & Millward, P. (2012). "Football's Coming Home? Digital reterritorialization, contradictions in the transnational coverage of sport and the sociology of alternative football broadcasts", *The British Journal of Sociology*, 63(2), 349-360.
- Maxwell, J. A. (2013). *Qualitative Research Design: An Interactive Approach*, Sage, (3rd ed.), New York.
- May, T. (2002). *Qualitative Research in Action*, Sage, London.
- Mazzarella, W. (2004). "Culture, Globalization, Mediation", *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 33(67), 345-360.
- McChesney, R. (1989). "Media Made Sport: a history of sports coverage", in L. A. Wenner, *Media, Sports, and Society*, Sage, London, pp. 49-69.
- McChesney, R. W. (2008). *The Political Economy of Media: Enduring Issues, Emerging Dilemmas*, Footprint Books, New York.
- McChesney, R. W. & Schiller, D. (2003). "The Political Economy of International Communications: Foundations for the Emerging Global Debate about Media Ownership and Regulation. Technology", *Business and Society Programme*, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, Geneva, pp. 1-43.
- McCormack, M. H. (1984). *What They Don't Teach You at Harvard Business School*, Collins, London.
- McDonald, M. G. (2014). "Mapping Intersectionality and Whiteness Troubling gender and sexuality in sport studies", in J. Hargreaves & E. Anderson (Ed.), *Handbook of Sport, Gender and Sexuality*, Routledge, New York, pp. 151-159.

- McGhee, G., Marland, G. & Atkinson, J. (2007). "Grounded Theory Research: Literature Reviewing and Reflexivity", *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 60(3), 334–342.
- McGrew, A. & Held, D. (2002). *Governing Globalization: Power, Authority and Global Governance*, Polity Press, Cambridge.
- McKay, J. & Miller, T. (1991). "From old Boys to Men and Women of the Corporation: The Americanisation and commodification of Australian sport", *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 8(1), 86-94.
- McLuhan, M. (2005). *The Medium Is the Massage*, Gingko Press, Thousand Oaks.
- McNair, B. (2003). *An Introduction to Political Communication*, Routledge, (3rd ed.), London.
- McPherson, T. (2006). "Reload: Liveness, Mobility and the Web", in W. H. Chun & T. Keenan, *New Media Old Media*, Routledge, Abingdon, pp. 199–208.
- McQuail, D. (1992). *Media Performance: Mass Communication and the Public Interest*, Sage, London.
- McQuail, D. (2003). *Teoria da Comunicação de Massas*, Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisboa.
- McQuail, D. (2007). "Introduction: The current state of media governance in Europe", in G. Terzis, *European media governance: National and regional dimensions*, Intellect, Bristol, pp. 17-25.
- McQuail, D. (2010). *McQuail's Mass Communication Theory*, Sage, (6th ed.), London.
- Meho, L. I. (2006). "Email Interviewing in Qualitative Research: a methodological discussion", *Journal of the American Society for Information Science & Technology*, 57(10), 1284–1295.
- Mehus, I. (2010). "The diffused audience of football", *Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies*, 24(6), 897-903.
- Meier, W. A. (2018). "Media Governance: More than a Buzzword?", in L. L'Haenens, H. Sousa & J. Trappel, *Comparative media policy, regulation and governance in Europe: Unpacking the policy cycle*, Intellect Books.
- Meikle, G. & Young, S. (2012). *Media convergence: networked digital media in everyday life*, Palgrave Macmillan, London.
- Mergela, I., Edelmann, N. & Hauga, N. (2019). "Defining digital transformation: Results from expert interviews", *Elsevier*, Konstanz, 36(4).
- Mertens, D. M. (2010). "Philosophy in Mixed Methods Teaching: The transformative paradigm as illustration", *International Journal of Multiple Research Approaches*, 4, 9-18.
- Merton, R. K. (1967). *On Theoretical Sociology*, Free Press, New York.
- Messner, M. A., Dunbar, M. & Hunt, D. (2000). "The Televised Sports Manhood Formula", *Journal of Sport & Social Issues*, 24 (4), pp. 380-394.
- Messner, M. A., Duncan, M. C. & Jensen, K. (1993). "Separating the Men from the Girls: The Gendered Language of Televised Sports", *Gender and Society*, 7 (1), 121-137.
- Meyerson, D. E. & Kolb, D. M. (2000). "Moving out of the 'armchair': Developing a framework to bridge the gap between feminist theory and practice", *Organization*, 7, 553–571.
- Meyrowitz, J. (1985). *No Sense of Place: The Impact of Electronic Media on Social Behavior*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Michie, J. & Oughton, C. (2002). "Regulatory Issues and Industrial Policy in Football", in S. Metcalfe & A. Warde, *Market relations and the competitive process*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, pp. 130-144.
- Mikos, L. (2006). "German football- a media economic survey: the impact of Kirch Media company on football and television in Germany", in A. Tomlinson; C. Young (Eds.), *German Football: history, culture, society*, Routledge, London, pp.143-155.
- Miles, M. B. & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *An Expanded Sourcebook: Qualitative Data Analysis*, Sage, (2nd ed.), New York.
- Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M. & Saldaña, J. (2014). *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook*, Sage, (3rd ed.), New York.
- Miller, T. (1999). "Competing Allegories", in R. Martin & T. Miller, *SportCult*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis.
- Miller, T. (2004). "Trainspotting the Avengers", in S. Gwenllian-Jones & R. Pearson, *Cult Television*, Minnesota University Press, Minneapolis, pp. 187-197.
- Miller, T. (2009). *Television Studies: The Basics*, Routledge, London.

- Miller, T. (2012). "A distorted playing field: Neoliberalism and sport through the lens of economic citizenship", in M. L. Silk & D. L. Andrews (Eds.), *Sport and Neoliberalism: Politics, Consumption and Culture*, Temple University Press, Philadelphia, pp. 23–37.
- Miller, T. (2013). "Broadcasting", in T. Bennett & J. Frow, *Handbook of Cultural Analysis*, Sage, London, pp. 206-227.
- Miller, T. (2017). "Spectacular and Eroticized Bodies", in M. L. Silk, D. L. Andrews & H. Thorpe (Eds.), *Handbook of Physical Cultural Studies*, Routledge, London (pp. 403-418).
- Miller, T. & Kraidy, M. M. (2016). *Global Media Studies*, Polity Press, Cambridge.
- Miller, T., Lawrence, G., McKay, J. & Rowe, D. (2001). *Globalization and Sport: Playing the World*, Sage, London.
- Miller, T. W. (2015). *Sports Analytics and Data Science: Winning the Game with Methods and Models*, Pearson Education, New Jersey.
- Mills, C. (2021). "Building a grounded theory of volunteer engagement in English associational golf clubs", *PhD*, Faculty of Business & Law.
- Mills, C. W. (2000). *The Sociological Imagination*, Oxford University Press, (2nd ed.), Oxford.
- Mills, J., Bonner, A. & Francis, K. (2006). "The development of constructivist grounded theory", *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 5(1), 1-10.
- Millward, P. (2006). "Networks, Power and Revenue in Contemporary Football: an Analysis of the G14", *International Review of Modern Sociology*, 199-216.
- Millward, P. (2009). *Getting 'into' Europe: Identification, prejudice and politics in English football culture*, VDM Verlag, Düsseldorf.
- Millward, P. (2011), *The Global Football League Transnational Networks, Social Movements and Sport in the New Media Age*, Palgrave Macmillan, London.
- Millward, P. (2013a). "Fan Movements in the Network Society Project, Resistance and Legitimizing Identities among Manchester United Supporters", in B. Hutchins & D. Rowe (Eds.), *Digital Media Sport Technology, Power and Culture in the Network Society*, Routledge, New York.
- Millward, P. (2013b). "New Football Directors in the Twenty First Century: profit and revenue in the English Premier League's transnational age", *Leisure Studies*, 32(4), 399-414.
- Missika, J. L. & Wolton, D. (2012). "Televisão: das origens ao multimédia e à interatividade", available at www.fcsh.unl.pt/cadeiras/httv/artigos/Televisao_das%20origens.pdf.
- Mittag, J. & Vonnard, P. (2017). "The role of societal actors in shaping a pan-European consciousness. UEFA and the overcoming of Cold War tensions, 1954–1959", *Sport in History*, 37(3), 332-352.
- Molan, C., Matthews, J. & Arnold, R. (2016). "Leadership off the pitch: the role of the manager in semi-professional football", *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 16(3), 274-291.
- Monteiro, Â. & Mourão, P. R. (2024). *Why are stadiums empty in Portugal? An examination of costs associated with being a fan of Premier League football in Portugal*, Soccer & Society.
- Moore, J. F. (1993). "Predators and Prey: A New Ecology of Competition", *Harvard Business Review*, 71(3), 75-86.
- Moraes, D. d. (2004). "A Lógica da Media no Sistema de Poder Mundial", *Revista de Economía Política de las Tecnologías de la Información y Comunicación*, 1(2), 16-36.
- Morgan, W. J. (1994). *Leftist Theories of Sport: Acritique and reconstruction*, University of Illinois Press, Illinois.
- Morley, D. (1980). "The Nationwide Audience: Structure and Decoding (1980)", in D. Morley & C. Brunson, *The 'Nationwide' Audience*, Routledge, London, pp.117-300.
- Morrow, S. (1999). *The New Business of Football Accountability and Finance in Football*, Macmillan Press, London.
- Morrow, S. (2003). *The People's Game? Football, Finance and Society*, Palgrave Macmillan, London.
- Morse, J. (2000). "Determining sample size", *Qualitative Health Research*, 10, 3-5.
- Morse, J. M. (2007). "Sampling in Grounded Theory", in A. Bryant & K. Charmaz, *Handbook of Grounded Theory*, Sage, New York, pp.229-244.
- Morse, J. M., Bowers, B. J., Charmaz, K., Clarke, A. E., Juliet Corbin, C. J. & Stern, P. N. (2021). "Developing Grounded Theory", *The Second Generation Revisited*, Routledge, New York.

- Morse, J. M., Cheek, J. & Clark, L. (2018). "Qualitatively Driven Mixed Method Designs: Sampling, Pacing, and Reflexivity", in U. Flick, *Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis*, Sage, London, pp.565-583.
- Mosco, V. (2004). *The Digital Sublime: Myth, Power, and Cyberspace*, MIT Press, Cambridge.
- Mosco, V. (2009). *The Political Economy of Communication*, Sage, (2nd ed.), London.
- Mosco, V. (2014). *To the cloud: Big data in a turbulent world*, Paradigm, Boulder.
- Mosco, V. (2017). *Becoming Digital: Towards a Post-internet Society*, Emerald Publishing, Bingley.
- Mosco, V. & Nagy, I. (2017). "Political Economy of Media Effects", *The International Encyclopedia of Media Effects*, 1–13.
- Moustakas, C. (1990). *Heuristic Research: Design, methodology, and applications*, Sage, Newbury Park.
- Moustakas, L. (2021). "Sport and social cohesion within European policy: a critical discourse analysis", *European Journal of Sport and Society*, 1-28.
- Mruck, K. & Mey, G. (2007). "Grounded Theory and Reflexivity", in A. Bryant & K. Charmaz, *Handbook of Grounded Theory*, Sage, New York, pp.515-538.
- Murdock, G. (1993). "Communications and the Constitution of Modernity", *Media Culture & Society*, 15(4), 521-539.
- Murray, G. P. (2006). *Deconstructing Sport History: A Postmodern Analysis*, State University of New York Press, New York.
- Murray, M. (2000). "Levels of Narrative Analysis in Health Psychology", *Journal of Health Psychology*, 5(3), 337-347.
- Murschetz, P. C. & Tsourvakas, G. (2019). "Media Management", in D. L. Merskin, *International Encyclopedia of Mass Media and Society*, Sage, Thousand Oaks.
- Musso, D. (2003). "Continuing to build the European Model of Sport", *The International Sports Law Journal*, (3).
- Nalbantis, G. & Pawlowski, T. (2023). "The effects of overseas exhibition games on consumer interest: the case of the English Premier League", *European Sport Management Quarterly*.
- Nalbantis, G., Pawlowski, T. & Schreyer, D. (2023). "Substitution effects and the transnational demand for European soccer telecasts", *Journal of Sports Economics*, 24(4), 407-442.
- Napoli, P. M. (2001). *Foundations of Communications Policy: Principles and Process in the Regulation of Electronic Media*, Hampton.
- Napoli, P. M. (2004). "Introduction: The Impact of Regulatory Change on Media Market Competition and Media Management", *International Journal on Media Management*, 6(3-4), 150-151.
- Napoli, P. M. & Gray, A. K. (2017). "Social TV Analytics and the Integration of Fandom into Television Audience Measurement", in Jonathan, C. Sandvoss & C. L. World, *Fandom: Identities and Communities in a Mediated*, New York University Press, (2nd ed.), New York, pp.194-230.
- Nash, T. H. (2008). *Lichen Biology*, Cambridge University Press, (2nd ed.), Cambridge.
- Nauright, J. & Schimmel, K. S. (2005). *The Political Economy of Sport*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York.
- Nauright, J. & Zipp, S. (2020). *Handbook of Global Sport*, Routledge, New York.
- Neale, W. C. (1964). "The Peculiar Economics of Professional Sports: A Contribution to the Theory of the Firm in Sporting Competition and in Market Competition", *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 78(1), 1-14.
- Nelson, C., Treichler, P. A. & Grossberg, L. (1992). "Cultural Studies: An Introduction", in L. Grossberg, C. Nelson & P. A. Treichler, *Cultural Studie*, Routledge, New York, pp.1-16.
- Neuman, W. L. (2013). *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, Pearson Education, (7th ed.), London.
- Nicholson, M. (2007). *Sport and the Media: Managing the Nexus*, Elsevier, New York.
- Nicholson, P. P. (2004). "Politics and the Exercise of Force", in A. Leftwich, (Org.), *What is politics? The Activity and its Study*, Polity Press, Cambridge, pp. 41-52.
- Nightingale, V. (2011). *The Handbook of Media Audiences*, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford.
- Nixon, H. L. (2010). "Sport sociology, NASSS and undergraduate education in the United States: a social network perspective for developing the field", *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 27, 76–88.

- Noam, E. M. (2006). "Fundamental instability: Why telecom is becoming a cyclical and oligopolistic industry", *Information Economics and Policy*, 18, 272–284.
- Noll, R. G. (2002). "The Economics of Promotion and Relegation in Sports Leagues: the case of English football", *Journal of Sports Economics*, 3(2), 169–203.
- Noll, R. G. (2003). *The Organization of Sports Leagues*. Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research, Stanford University, Stanford.
- Nowak, A. & Vallacher, R. R. (2019). "Nonlinear societal change: The perspective of dynamical systems", *British Journal of Social Psychology*, 58, 105–128.
- Numerato, D. (2018). *Football Fans, Activism and Social Change*, Routledge, New York.
- Numerato, D. & Giulianotti, R. (2017). "Citizen, Consumer, Citimer: The interplay of market and political identities within contemporary football fan cultures", *Journal of Consumer Culture*, 18(2), 336–355.
- Oliveira, J. M. (2017). *Comunicação e Quotidiano*, Tinta da China, Lisboa.
- Oltmann, S. M. (2016). "Qualitative Interviews: A Methodological Discussion of the Interviewer and Respondent Contexts", *Qualitative Social Research*, 17(2).
- Owens, J. W. (2009). "The Coverage of Sports on Radio", in A. A. Raney & J. Bryant (Eds.), *Handbook of Sports and Media*, Routledge, London, pp.124–138.
- Ozanian, M. (2023, May 1st) "Inflation of sports media rights is unsustainable", *JPMorgan Analysts Say*, Forbes Staff, available at <https://www.forbes.com/sites/mikeozanian/2023/05/01/inflation-of-sports-media-rights-is-unsustainable-jpmorgan-analysts-say/>.
- Pakulski, J. (2009). "Postmodern Social Theory", in B. S. Turner (Org.), *The New Blackwell Companion to Social Theory*, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, pp.251–280.
- Palanski, M.E. & Yammarino, S. (2007). "Integrity and Leadership: Clearing the Conceptual Confusion", *European Management Journal*, 25(3), 171–184.
- Palomino, F. & Sákovics, J. (2004). "Inter-league competition for talent vs. competitive balance", *International Journal of Industrial Organization*, 22(6), 783–797.
- Panja, T. (2019, April 19th). "In Europe, a Bitter Battle Between Clubs and Leagues Is Taking Shape", *The New York Times*, available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/01/sports/uefa-champions-league.html>.
- Panja, T., Das, A. (2023, February 7th). "The Premier League's Charges Against Manchester City, Explained", *The New York Times*, available at <https://www.nytimes.com/article/manchester-city-premier-league-charges.html>.
- Papathanassopoulos, S. (2018). "The Europeanization of the European media: the incremental cultivation of the EU media policy", *ResearchGate*, (1st ed.), pp. 117–132.
- Paramio-Salcines, J. L. & Llopis-Goig, R. (2018). "Structures and Policies at the main European football leagues Evolution and recent changes", in S. Chadwick, D. Parnell, P. Widdop & C. Anagnostopoulos (Eds.), *Handbook of Football Business and Management*, Routledge, New York.
- Parlasca, S. (2006). "Collective selling of broadcast rights in team sports", in W. Andreff & S. Szymanski (Eds.), *Handbook on the Economics of Sport*, Edward Elgar, Cheltenham, pp. 719–730.
- Parne, D., Rookwood, J., Bond, A. & Ludvigsen, J. A. (2022). "It's a whole new ball game': thirty years of the English Premier League", *Soccer & Society*, 23(4-5), 1-5.
- Parnell, D., Bond, A. J., Widdop, P. & Cockayne, D. (2020). "Football worlds: Business and networks during COVID-19", *Soccer & Society*, 22(1-2), 19–26.
- Parnell, D., Bond, A. J., Widdop, P., Groom, R. & Cockayne, D. (2021). "Recruitment in elite football: a network approach", *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 23(1), 1–17.
- Parnell, D., Rookwood, J., Bond, A., Widdop, P. & Ludvigsen, J. A. (2022). "'It's a whole new ball game': thirty years of the English Premier League", *Soccer & Society*, 23(4-5), 329–333.
- Parnell, D., Widdop, P., Bond, A. & Wilson, R. (2020). "COVID-19, networks and sport", *Managing Sport and Leisure*, 27(1-2), 78–84.
- Parrish, R. (2002). "Football's Place in the Single European Market", *Soccer & Society*, 3(1), 1–21.
- Parrish, R. (2003a). "The politics of sports regulation in the European Union", *Journal of European Public Policy*, 10(2), 246–262.

- Parrish, R. (2003b). *Sports Law and Policy in the European Union. European Policy Research Unit Series*, Manchester University Press, Manchester.
- Parrish, R. (2011). "Europe: the transformation of football", in A. Niemann, B. García & W. Grant (Ed.), *The Transformation of European Football: Towards the Europeanisation of the National Game*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, pp. 23-39.
- Parry, K. D., Jones, I. & Wann, D. L. (2014). "An examination of sport fandom in the United Kingdom: a comparative analysis of fan behaviors, socialization processes, and team identification", *Journal of Sport Behavior*, 37(3), 251-267.
- Patton, M. Q. (2011). *Essentials of Utilization-Focused Evaluation*, Sage, Beverly Hills.
- Patton, M. Q. (2014). *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Method: integrating theory and practice*, Sage, (3rd ed.), Beverly Hills.
- Pawlak, M. (2008). *Tying Micro and Macro: What Fills up the Sociological Vacuum?*, Peter Lang, Berlin.
- Pawlowski, T. & Anders, C. (2012). "Stadium attendance in German professional football – the unimportance of uncertainty of outcome reconsidered", *Journal of Sports Economics*, 11(2), 186–202.
- Pearce, D. W. (1992). *The Macmillan Dictionary of Modern Economics*, Macmillan Education, New York.
- Peel, D. A. & Thomas, D. A. (2002). "The demand for football: Some evidence on outcome uncertainty", *Empirical Economics*, 17(2), 323–331.
- Pegues, H. (2007). "Of Paradigm Wars: Constructivism, Objectivism, and Postmodern Stratagem", *Educational Forum*, 71(4), 316-330.
- Peirce, C. S. (1969). *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Pierce. Vol. I: Principle of Philosophy; Vol. II: Elements of Logic*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge.
- Percy, J. & Hayward, P. (2018, December 12th). "Leeds owner faces financial difficulties with Andrea Radrizzani's Eleven Sports on brink of closure", available at <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/football/2018/12/12/leeds-face-financial-difficulty-withandrea-radrizzanis-eleven/>.
- Pereira, S. (2023, September 6th). "Os clubes portugueses têm de ser rivais dentro de campo e parceiros fora dele", available at <https://maisfutebol.iol.pt/benfica/fc-porto/os-clubes-portugueses-tem-de-ser-rivais-dentro-de-campo-e-parceiros-fora-dele>.
- Peters, G. B. (2008). "The Napoleonic tradition", *International Journal of Public Sector Management*, 21(2), 118–132.
- Peters, R. (1976). *Television Coverage of Sport*, Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, Birmingham.
- Peterson, R. (1991). *Political Economy and American Capitalism*, Kluwer Academic Publishers, Boston.
- Petit, V. (2012). "Like a phoenix from the ashes. A Weberian analysis of the charismatic CEO routinization", *European Management Journal*, 30(6), 510-522.
- Pettigrew, T. F. (2006). "The Advantages of Multilevel Approaches", *Journal of Social Issues*, 62(3), 615-620.
- Pfadenhauer, M. (2009). "At Eye Level: An Expert Interview", in A. Bogner, B. Littig & W. Menz, *Interviewing Experts*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, pp. 81-97.
- Pfeifer, L. (2000). *Sachverhalte, Konstruktion und Wirklichkeit*, Selbstverlag, Wien.
- Pfetsch, F. R. (2011). "Power in International Negotiations: Symmetry and Asymmetry", *Dans Négociations*, 16, 39-56.
- Phillips, M. G. & Hutchins, B. (2003). "Losing Control of the Ball: The Political Economy of Football and the Media in Australia", *Journal of Sport & Social Issues*, 27(3), 215-232.
- Phua, J. J. (2010). "Sports Fans and Media Use: Influence on Sports Fan Identification and Collective Self-Esteem", *International Journal of Sport Communication*, 3(2), 190-206.
- Picard, R. G. (2006). "Historical Trends and Patterns in Media Economics", in A. B. Albarran (Ed.), *Handbook of Media Management and Economics*, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, New Jersey, pp. 23-37.
- Picard, R. G. & Wildman, S. (2016). "Introduction", in R. G. Picard & S. S. Wildman, *Handbook on the Economics of the Media*, Edward Elgar Publishing, Cheltenham, pp. xiv-xv.
- Pickard, A. (2007). *Research Methods in Information*, Facet, London.

- Pidgeon, N. & Henwood, K. (2009). "Grounded Theory", in M. Hardy & A. Bryman, *The Handbook of Data Analysis*, Sage, New York, pp. 625-648.
- Piggin, J. (2013). "Discourse Analysis and its Application to Sport Policy Analysis", in I. Henry & L.-M. Ko, *Handbook of Sport Policy*, Routledge, London, pp. 23-51.
- Pinheiro, F. (2005). "Imprensa desportiva portuguesa: do nascimento à consolidação (1893-1945)", *Ler História*, (49), 71-190.
- Pitney, W. A. & Parker, J. (2009). *Qualitative research in physical activity and the health professions*, Human Kinetics, Champaign.
- Pitts, B., Miller, L. K. & Miller, L. K. (1994). "Industry segmentation theory and the sport industry: Developing a sport industry segment model", *Sport Marketing Quarterly*, 3(1), 15-24.
- Platt, J. (2012). "The History of the Interview", in J. F. Gubrium, J. A. Holstein, A. B. Marvasti & K. D. McKinney, *Handbook of Interview Research*, Sage, New York, pp. 7-9.
- Plumley, D., Ramchandani, G., Mondal, S. & Wilson, R. (2022). "Looking forward, glancing back; competitive balance and the EPL", *Soccer & Society*, 23(4-5), 466-481.
- Plumley, D., Ramchandani, G. & Wilson R. (2018). "Mind the Gap: An Analysis of Competitive Balance in the English Football League System", *International Journal of Sport Management and Marketing*, 18(5), 357-375.
- Plymire, D. (2005). "Qualitative Methods in Sport-Media Studies", in D. L. Andrews, D. S. Mason & M. L. Silk, *Qualitative Methods in Sports Studies*, Berg, Oxford, pp. 139-164.
- Polit, D. F. & Beck, C. T. (2006). *Essentials of Nursing Research. Methods, Appraisal, and Utilization*, Lippincott Williams & Wilkins, (6th ed.), Philadelphia.
- Polo, M. (2007). "Regulation for pluralism in media markets", in S. Paul & v. H. Jürgen, *The Economic Regulation of Broadcasting Markets: Evolving Technology and Challenges for Policy*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 150-188.
- Pope, S. (2017). *The feminization of sports fandom: A sociological study*, Routledge, London.
- Popiel, P. (2022). "Regulating datafication and platformization: Policy silos and trade-offs in international platform inquiries", *Policy and Internet*, 14(1), 28-46.
- Porat, A. B. (2010). "Football fandom: a bounded identification", *Soccer & Society*, 11(3), 277-290.
- Porter, C. (2008). "Manchester United, global capitalism and local resistance Manchester United", *Belgeo*, 2, 181-192.
- Porter, D. (2010). "Entrepreneurship", in S. Pope & J. Nauright (Eds.), *Routledge Companion to Sports History*, Routledge, London, pp.197-215.
- Potter, J. W. (1996). *An analysis of thinking and research about qualitative methods*, Lawrence Earlbaum Associates, New Jersey.
- Powis, B. (2020). *Embodiment, Identity and Disability Sport: An Ethnography of Elite Visually Impaired Athletes*, Routledge, New York.
- Poynton, C., & Lee, A. (2000). *Culture & Text: Discourse and Methodology in Social Research and Cultural Studies*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Plymouth.
- Preston, L. E. & O'Bannon, D. P. (1997). "The corporate social-financial performance relationship: A typology and analysis", *Business & Society*, 36(4), 419-429.
- Preuss, H. & Liese, K. (2011). *Internationalism in the Olympic Movement Idea and Reality between Nations, Cultures, and People*, Springer, Berlin.
- Pritchard, M. P. & Negro, C. M. (2001). "Sport Loyalty Programs and Their Impact on Fan Relationships", *International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship*, 3(3), 317-338.
- Proença, P. (2023, November 17th). "Nenhum clube vai perder com a centralização", *Tribuna Expresso* (H. T. Silva & L. P. Gomes, Interviewers).
- Proença, P. (2024, February 10th). "Futebol português é muito respeitado em termos internacionais", *Daily sports newspaper 'O Jogo'* (no. 39 354), (N. Vieira, Interviewers).
- Punch, K. F. (2005). *Introduction to social research: quantitative and qualitative approaches*, Sage, London.
- Punch, K. F. (2016). *Developing Effective Research Proposals*, Sage, (3rd ed.), London.

- Puppis, M. (2007). "Media governance as a horizontal Extension of media regulation: The importance of self- and co-regulation", *Communications*, 32(3), 330–336.
- Puppis, M. (2010). "Media Governance: A New Concept for the Analysis of Media Policy and Regulation", *Communication, Culture & Critique*, 3, 134–149.
- Puppis, M. & Bulck, H. V. (2019). "Introduction: Media Policy and Media Policy Research", in H. V. Bulck, M. Puppis, K. Donders & L. V. Audenhove, *Handbook of Methods for Media Policy Research*, Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, pp. 3–21.
- Pyta, W. & Havemann, N. (2015). *European Football and Collective Memory*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke.
- Raaij, W. F. (1997). "Globalisation of marketing communication?", *Journal of Economic Psychology*, (18), 259–270.
- Radaelli, C. M. (2003). "The Europeanization of Public Policy", in K. Featherstone & C. M. Radaelli, *The Politics of Europeanization*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, pp. 27–56.
- Rader, B. G. (1984). *In Its Own Image: How Television Has Transformed Sports*, The Free Press, New York.
- Ramalho, R., Adams, P., Huggard, P. & Hoare, K. (2015). "Literature Review and Constructivist Grounded Theory Methodology", *Qualitative Social Research*, 16(3).
- Ramchandani, G., Plumley, D., Boyes, S. & Wilson, R. (2018). "A longitudinal and comparative analysis of competitive balance in five European football leagues", *Team Performance Management: An International Journal*, 24(5/6), 265–282.
- Raney, A. (2006). "Why We Watch and Enjoy Mediated Sports", in A. Raney & J. Bryant, *Handbook of Sports and Media*, Lawrence Erlbaum, Mahwah, pp. 331–352.
- Raney, A. A. & Bryant, J. (2006). *Handbook of Sports and Media*, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, London.
- Rapley, T. (2004). "Interviews", in C. Seale, G. Gobo, J. F. Gubrium & D. Silverman, *Qualitative Research Practice*, Sage, London, pp. 15–33.
- Rapley, T. (2007). *Doing Conversation, Discourse and Document Analysis*, Sage, London.
- Rapley, T. & Rees, G. (2018). "Collecting Documents as Data", in U. Flick, *Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis*, Sage, London, pp. 378–391.
- Real, M. R. (1989). "MediaSport: Technology and the Commodification of Postmodern Sport", in L. A. Wenner, *MediaSport*, Routledge, London, pp. 14–26.
- Real, M. R. (2005). "Television and Sports", in J. Wasko, *A Companion to Television*, Wiley Blackwell, Malden, pp. 337–360.
- Real, M. R. & Mechikof, R. A. (1992). "Deep Fan: Mythic Identification, Technology, and Advertising in Spectator Sports", *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 9, 323–339.
- Record (2023, July 27th). "Guia 2023/24", *Magazine Record*.
- Redhead, S. (1997). *Post-Fandom and the Millennial Blues: The Transformation of Soccer Culture*, Routledge, London.
- Redhead, S. (2004). *Paul Virilio: Theorist for an accelerated culture*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh.
- Redhead, S. (2014). "Scream if you Wanna go Faster: The City of the Instant and Sport and New Media. Futurism of the Instant", *Left Curve*, 38(28), 133–144.
- Reichertz, J. (2007). "Abduction: The Logic of Discovery of Grounded Theory", in A. Bryant & K. Charmaz, *Handbook of Grounded Theory*, Sage, New York, pp. 214–228.
- Reid, I. & Jarvie, G. (2000). "Sport, Nationalisms and their Futures", in R. L. Jones & K. M. Armour, *Sociology of Sport: Theory and Practice*, Longman, London, pp. 83–96.
- Renon, R. (2016). "Ludo-diversity: an argument for a pluralistic movement culture", in Y. V. Auweele, E. Cook & J. Parry (Ed.), *Ethics and Governance in Sport The future of sport imagined*, Routledge, New York, pp. 113–120.
- Renton, D. (2001). *Marx on Globalization*, Lawrence & Wishart, London.
- Reynolds, L. T. & Herman-Kinney, N. H. (2003). *Handbook of symbolic interactionism*, Alta Mira Press, Lanham.

- Rhodes, R. A. (1996). "The New Governance: Governing without Government", *Political Studies*, 44(4), 652–667.
- Rhodes, R. A. (2017). *Network Governance and the Differentiated Polity: Selected Essays*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Richardson, R. & Kramer, E. (2006). "Abduction as the type of inference that characterizes the development of a grounded theory", *Qualitative Research*, 6(4), 497-513.
- Rieffel, R. (2003). *Sociologia dos Media*, Porto Editora, Porto.
- Riordan, J. (1999). "The impact of communism on sport", in J. Riordan & A. Krueger, *The international politics of sport in the twentieth century*, Spon Press, London, pp. 45 -54.
- Ritzer, G. (2007). *The Globalization of Nothing*, Sage, (2nd ed.), London.
- Ritzer, G. & Jurgenson, N. (2010). "Production, consumption, prosumption: The nature of capitalism in the age of the digital 'prosumer'", *Journal of Consumer Culture*, 10(1), 13–36.
- Robertson, R. (1992). *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture*, Sage, London.
- Robertson, R. (1994). "Globalisation or Glocalisation?", *Journal of International Communication*, 1(1), 33-52.
- Robertson, R. (2003). "Glocalización: tiempo-espacio y homogeneidade heterogeneidad, in J. C.-G. Modedero, *Cansancio del Leviatán: problemas políticos de la mundialización*, pp. 261-284.
- Robson, C. & McCartan, K. (2016). *Real World Research*, John Wiley & Sons, (4th ed.), New Jersey.
- Roche, M. (2000). *Mega-events and Modernity Olympics and Expos in the Growth of Global Culture*, Routledge, London.
- Roche, M. (2017). *Mega-events and social change Spectacle, legacy and public culture*, University Press, Manchester.
- Rodríguez, P., Kesenne, S. & García, J. (2006). *Sports Economics After Fifty Years: Essays in Honour of Simon Rottenberg*, Universidad de Oviedo, Oviedo.
- Rogers, A. & Pilgrim, D. (2005). *A Sociology of Mental Health and Illness*, University Press, Berkshire.
- Rohde, M., & Breuer, C. (2017). "The Market for Football Club Investors: a review of theory and empirical evidence from professional European football", *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 7(3).
- Roller, M. R. & Lavrakas, P. J. (2015). *Applied Qualitative Research Design – A Total Quality Framework Approach*, Guilford Press, London.
- Rompuy, B. V. & Margoni, T. (2014). *Study on sports organisers' rights in the European Union*, Asser International Sports Law, Amsterdam.
- Rosenau, J. N. (1995). "Governance in the Twenty-first Century", *Global Governance*, 1(1), 13-43.
- Ross, S. F. & Szymanski, S. (2000). "Open competition in sports leagues", *Law and Economics Working Papers Series*, available at http://papers.ssrn.com/paper.taf?abstract_id=243756.
- Rossi, P. H., Lipsey, M. W. & Freeman, H. E. (2004). *Evaluation: A Systematic Approach*, Sage, (7th ed.), New York.
- Rosson, P. (2005). "SEGA Dreamcast: National Football Cultures and the New Europeanism", in M. L. Silk, D. L. Andrews & C. Cole, *Sport and Corporate Nationalisms*, Berg, Oxford, pp. 144-167.
- Rottenberg, S. (1956). "The Baseball Players' Labor Market", *Journal of Political Economy*, 64(3), 242-258.
- Rowe, D. (1995). *Popular Cultures: Rock Music, Sport and the Politics of Pleasure*, Sage, London.
- Rowe, D. (2003). "Sport and the Repudiation of the Global", *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 38(3), 281–294.
- Rowe, D. (2004). *Sport, Culture and the Media: the unruly trinity Opens in a new window*, Open University Press, (2nd ed.), Berkshire.
- Rowe, D. (2010). "Money, Myth and the Big Match: The Political Economy of the Sports Media", in D. Karen & R. E. Washington (Ed.), *Sociological Perspectives on Sport: The Games Outside the Games*, Routledge, London, pp. 232-248.
- Rowe, D. (2011a). *Global Media Sport: Flows, forms and futures*, Bloomsbury Academic, London.
- Rowe, D. (2011b). "Sport and its Audiences", in V. Nightingale, *Handbook of Media Audiences*, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford, pp. 509-526.

- Rowe, D. (2012). "Reflections on Communication and Sport: On Nation and Globalization", *Communication & Sport*, 1(1/2), 18-29.
- Rowe, D. (2013). "Television, Nation and the Olympic Universe", *Journal of Popular Television*, 1(1), 129-136.
- Rowe, D. (2017). "We're all transnational now: sport in dynamic sociocultural environments", *Sport in Society*, 20(10), 1470-1484.
- Rowe, D. (2019) "Sport, media ownership and control", in J. Maguire, M. Faloutsos & M. Liston (Eds.) *The Business and Culture of Sports*, Macmillan, Farmington Hills, MI, pp. 155–166.
- Rowe, D. (2020a). "Global sport television: Seamless flows and sticking points", in S. Shimpach (Eds.) *The Routledge Companion to Global Television*, Routledge, New York, pp.203-213.
- Rowe, D. (2020b). "Subjecting pandemic sport to a sociological procedure", *Journal of Sociology*, 1–9.
- Rowe, D. & Hutchins, B. (2013). *Digital Media Sport: Technology, Power and Culture in the Network Society*, Routledge, London.
- Rowe, D. & Hutchins, B. (2014). "Globalisation and online audiences", in A. Billings & M. Hardin, *Handbook of sport and new media*, Routledge, New York, pp. 7-18.
- Rowley, T. J. (1997). "Moving Beyond Dyadic Ties: A Network Theory of Stakeholder Influences", *Academy of Management Review*, 22 (4), 887-910.
- Rowlands, B. H. (2005). "Grounded in practice: Using interpretive research to build theory", *The Electronic Journal of Business Research Methodology*, 3(1),81-92.
- Ruddock, A. (2001). *Understanding Audiences: Theory and Method*, Sage, London.
- Ruddock, A. (2007). *Investigating Audiences*, Sage, London.
- Ruddock, A. (2018). "A Fragmented Audience: How to remain on target", *Security Challenges*, 12 (2), 27-41.
- Sage, G. (1990). *Power and Ideology in American Sport: A critical Perspective*, Human Kinetics, Champaign.
- Sage, G. (2000). "Political Economy and Sport", in J. Coakley & E. Dunning (Ed.), *Handbook of Sports Studies*, Sage, London, pp. 260-276.
- Sage, G.H. (2015). *Globalizing Sport: How Organizations, Corporations, Media, and Politics are Changing Sports*, Routledge, New York.
- Saldaña, J. (2016). *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*, Sage, (3rd ed.), Thousand Oaks.
- Sánchez-Tabernero, A. (2006). "Issues in Media Globalization", in A. B. Albarran, *Handbook of Media Management and Economics*, Lawrence Erlbaum, Mahwah, pp. 463-492.
- Sandvoss, C. (2003). *A Game of Two Halves: Football, Television and Globalization*, Routledge, London.
- Sandvoss, C. (2005). *Fans: The Mirror of Consumption*, Polity Press, Cambridge.
- Sandvoss, C. (2012). "Jeux Sans Frontières? Europeanisation and the Erosion of National Categories in European Club Football Competition", in W. Gasparini & J.-F. Polo (Eds.), *L'espace européen du football : Dynamiques institutionnelles et constructions sociales*, Paris, pp. 76-101.
- Sandvoss C., Gray J. A. & Harrington C. L. (2017). "Introduction: why still study fans?", in Gray J. A., Sandvoss C., Harrington C. L. (Eds.), *Fandom: Identities and Communities in a Mediated World*, New York University Press, (2nd ed.), New York, pp. 1-26.
- Sandy, R., Sloane, P. J. & Rosentraub, M. S. (2004). *The Economics of Sport: An International Perspective*, Palgrave Macmillan, London.
- Santos, R. (1998). *Os Novos Media e o Espaço Público*, Gradiva, Lisboa.
- Santos, T., Fatela, P., Vilar, L. & Gonçalves, B. (2023). "The Portuguese football league 'Liga Portugal'", in Jerónimo García Fernández; Moisés Grimaldi-Puyana; Gonzalo A. Bravo (Eds.), *Sport in the Iberian Peninsula: Management*, Routledge, New York, pp.154-163.
- Sarantakos, S. (2013). *Social Research*, Palgrave Macmillan, (4th ed.), Basingstoke.
- Saunders, M., Lewis, P. & Thornhill, A. (2007). "Collecting Primary Data using Semi-structured, in-depth and group interviews", in M. Saunders, P. Lewis & A. Thornhill (Org.), *Research Methods for Business Students*, Pearson Education Limited, London, pp. 310-351.
- Scannell, P. (1996). *Radio, Television and Modern Life*, Blackwell, Oxford.

- Scannell, P. (2002). "History, Media and Communication", in K. B. Jensen, *A Handbook of Media and Communication Research: Qualitative and quantitative methodologies*, Routledge, London, pp. 191-208.
- Scannell, P. (2007). *Media and Communication*, Sage, London.
- Scelles, N. & Andreff, W. (2017). "Economic model of a professional football club in France", in N. Chanavat, M. Desbordes & N. Lorgnier, *Handbook of football marketing*, Routledge, Abingdon, pp. 60-72.
- Scelles, N., Durand, C., Bonnal, L., Goyeau, D. & Andreff, W. (2013). "Competitive Balance versus Competitive Intensity before a Match: Is One of These Two Concepts More Relevant in Explaining Attendance? The Case of the French Football Ligue 1 over the Period 2008–2011", *Applied Economics*, 45(29), 4184–4192.
- Scelles, N., François, A. & Dermit-Richard, N. (2022). "Determinants of competitive balance across countries: insights from European men's football first tiers, 2006–2018", *Managing Sport and Leisure*, 27(3), 267-284.
- Schimmel, K. S., Harrington, C. L. & Bielby, D. D. (2007). "Keep Your Fans to Yourself: The Disjuncture between Sport Studies' and Pop Culture Studies' Perspectives on Fandom", *Sport in Society: Cultures, Commerce, Media, Politics*, 10(4), 580-600.
- Schmidt, L. K. (2006). *Understanding Hermeneutics*, Acumen Publishing, Stocksfield.
- Schmidt, S. L. & Holzmayer, F. (2019). "A Framework for Diversification Decisions in Professional Football", in S. Chadwick, D. Parnell, P. Widdop & C. Anagnostopoulos, *Handbook of Football Business and Management*, Routledge, London, pp. 23-39.
- Schmidt, T. (2008). "The Kicktionary: Combining corpus linguistics and lexical semantics for a multilingual football dictionary", in E. Lavric, G. Pisek, A. Skinner & W. S. (eds.), *The Linguistics of Football*, Gunter Narr Verlag, Tübingen, pp. 11-22.
- Schneider, A. & Ingram, H. (2005). *Deserving and entitled: social construction and public policy*, Suny Press, Albany.
- Scholte, J. A. (2005). *Globalization: A Critical Introduction*, Macmillan Education, (2nd ed.), New York.
- Schramm, H. & Klimmt, C. (2003). "Nach dem Spiel ist vor dem Spiel", *Medien & Kommunikationswissenschaft*, 51, 55-81.
- Schreyer, D. & Ansari, P. (2022). "Stadium Attendance Demand Research: A Scoping Review", *Journal of Sports Economics*, 23(6).
- Schreyer, D. & Däuper, D. (2018). "Determinants of spectator no-show behaviour: first empirical evidence from the German Bundesliga", *Applied Economics Letters*.
- Schreyer, D., Schmidt, S. L. & Torgler, B. (2016). "Game Outcome Uncertainty and Television Audience Demand: New Evidence from German Football", *German Economic Review*, 19(2), 140–161.
- Schreyer, D., Schmidt, S. L. & Torgler, B. (2017). "Predicting season ticket holder loyalty using geographical information", *Applied Economics Letters*, 25(4), 272–277.
- Schreyer, D., Schmidt, S. L. & Torgler, B. (2018). "Football Spectator No-Show Behavior", *Journal of Sports Economics*, 1(23).
- Schultz, M. & Hatch, M. J. (1996). "Living with multiple paradigms: The case of paradigm interplay in organizational culture studies", *Academy of Management Review*, 21(2), 529-557.
- Schulz, W. (2004). "Reconstructing Mediatization as an Analytical Concept. European", *Journal of Communication*, 19(1), 87–101.
- Schumpeter, J. A. (2006). *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*, Routledge, New York.
- Schutz, A. & Luckmann, T. (1973). *The Structures of the LifeWorld*, Northwestern University Press, London.
- Schutz, A. & Luckmann, T. (1989). *The Structures of the Life World*, North-western University Press, (2nd ed.), Illinois.
- Schwandt, T. (1998). "Constructivist, Interpretivist Approaches to Human Inquiry", in N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln, *The Landscape of Qualitative Research: Theories and Issues*, Sage, Thousand Oaks, pp. 221-259.
- Schwandt, T. A. (2007). *Dictionary of Qualitative Inquiry*, Sage, Stanford.

- Schwartz, M. A. (1990). *A Sociological Perspective on Politics*, Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs.
- Scott, J. (2010). *Conceptualising the Social World: Principles of Sociological Analysis*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Seabright, P. & Hagen, J. v. (2007). *The Economic Regulation of Broadcasting Markets: Evolving Technology and the Challenges for Policy*, Cambridge University Press, New York.
- Searle, J. (1995). *The Constructions of Social Reality*, Penguin, London.
- Sebastian, K. (2019). "Distinguishing between the strains grounded theory: Classical interpretive and constructivist", *Journal for Social Thought*, 3(1), 1-9.
- Seidman, I. (2006). *Interviewing as Qualitative Research: A Guide for Researchers in Education and the Social Sciences*, Teachers College Press, (3rd ed.), New York.
- Semens, A. (2017). "Football Sponsorship", in J. Hughson, K. Moore, R. Spaaij & J. Maguire, *Handbook of Football Studies*, Routledge, pp. 111-123.
- Serpe, R. T. & Stryker, S. (2011). "The Symbolic Interactionist Perspective and Identity Theory", in S. J. Schwartz, K. Luyckx & V. L. Vignoles, *Handbook of Identity Theory and Research*, Springer-Verlag, New York, pp. 224-248.
- Servulo (2021, March 23rd). "O futebol português e a comercialização de direitos televisivos e multimédia: um passo importante em direção a uma liga mais competitiva", available at <https://www.servulo.com/pt/investigacao-e-conhecimento/O-futebol-portugus-e-a-comecomercializacao-de-direitos-televisivos-e-multimedia-um-passo-importante-em/7438/>.
- Seth, A. (2016). "Institutional Spheres: The Macro- Structure and Culture of Social Life", in A. Seth, *Handbooks of Sociology and Social Research*, Springer International Publishing, Cham, pp. 207-228.
- Shaw, S. & Frisby, W. (2006). "Can gender equity be more equitable? Promoting and alternative frame for sport management research, education, and practice", *Journal of Sport Management*, 20, 483–509.
- Sheldon, D. (2024, April 22nd). "How the new Champions League format works", *The Athletic*, available at <https://theathletic.com/4523470/2024/04/22/champions-league-format-new-2024/>.
- Sheppard, E. (2002). "The Spaces and Times of Globalization: Place, Scale, Networks, and Positionality", *Economic Geography*, 78(3), 307-330.
- Shilbury, D. (2022). "In search of sport management", in D. Shilbury, *A Research Agenda for Sport Management*, Elgar Research, pp. 3-20.
- Shilbury, D., Ferkins, L. & Smythe, L. (2013). "Sport Governance Encounters: Insights from lived experiences", *Sport Management Review*, 16, 349–63.
- Shilbury, D., O'Boyle, I. & Ferkins, L. (2020). "Examining collective board leadership and collaborative sport governance", *Managing Sport and Leisure*, 25(4), 275-289.
- Siekman, R. (2008). "Is Sport 'Special' in EU Law and Policy?", in R. Blanpain (Ed.), *The Future of Sports law in the European Union - Beyond the EU Reform Treaty and the White Paper*, Alphen an den Rijn, pp. 37-49.
- Silk, M. (2004). "Televised Sport in a Global Consumer Age", in T. Slack (Eds.), *The Commercialisation of Sport*, Routledge, New York, pp. 219-239.
- Silk, M. L. & Andrews, D. L. (2011). "Toward a Physical Cultural Studies", *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 28(1), 4-35.
- Silk, M. L., Andrews, D. L. & Mason, D. S. (2005). "Encountering the Field", in D. L. Andrews, D. S. Mason & M. L. Silk, *Qualitative Methods in Sports Studies*, Berg, Oxford, pp. 1-20.
- Silva, B. (2023, November 22nd). RTP programme TV, "Primeira Pessoa" |Ep. 17. (F. C. Ferreira, Interviewer), available at <https://www.rtp.pt/play/p11167/e730252/primeira-pessoa>.
- Silverman, D. (2004). *Qualitative Research: theory, method and Practice*, Sage, (2nd ed.), London.
- Silverman, D. (2014). *Interpreting Qualitative Data*, Sage, London.
- Silverman, D. & Marvasti, A. (2008). *Doing Qualitative Research: A practical handbook*, Sage, (2nd ed.), Thousand Oaks.
- Silverstone, R. (1981). *The Message of Television*, Heinemann, London.

- Silverstone, R. (1991). "From audiences to consumers: the household and the consumption of communication and information technologies", *European Journal of Communication*, 6(2), 135-154.
- Silverstone, R. (1994). *Television and Everyday Life*, Routledge, London.
- Silverstone, R. (1999). "What's New About New Media?", *New Media & Society*, 1(1), 10-82.
- Silverstone, R. (2005). "The Sociology of Mediation and Communication", in C. Calhoun, C. Rojek & B. Turner, *Handbook of Sociology*, Sage, London, pp. 188-207.
- Silverstone, R. (2006). *Media and Morality: On the Rise of the Mediapolis*, Polity Press, Cambridge.
- Simmons, R. (2006). "The demand for spectator sports", in W. Andreff & S. Szymanski, *Handbook on the Economics of Sport*, Edward Elgar, Massachusetts, pp. 77-89.
- Simons, R. (2013). *Performance Measurement and Control Systems for Implementing Strategy Text and Cases*, Pearson New International, (2nd ed.), New Jersey.
- Simpson, S., Puppis, M. & Van den Bulck, H. (2016). *European Media Policy for the Twenty-First Century: Assessing the Past, Setting Agendas for the Future*, Routledge, New York.
- Skeggs, B., & Wood, H. (2012). *Reacting to Reality Television: Performance, Audience and Value*, Routledge, New York.
- Skinner, J. (2016). *Research Handbook of Employment Relations in Sport*, Edward Elgar, Cheltenham.
- Skinner, J., Edwards, A. & Smith, A. C. (2021). *Qualitative Research in Sport Management*, Routledge, (2nd ed.), London.
- Sklair, L. (1991). *Sociology of the Global System*, Harvester, London.
- Sklair, L. (2001). *The Transnational Capitalist Class*, Blackwell, Oxford.
- Slack, T. (2004). *The Commercialisation of Sport*, Routledge, London.
- Slater, M. (2023, August 21st). "Pirated live sport endemic in UK' as study suggests over eight million watching illegal streams", *The Athletic*, available at <https://theathletic.com/4792811/2023/08/21/premier-league-illegal-streaming-piracy/>.
- Sloane, P. J. (1971). "The economics of professional football: Football club as a utility maximiser", *Scottish Journal of Political Economy*, 18, 121-146.
- Sloane, P. J. (2006). "The European Model of Sport", in W. Andreff & S. Szymanski (Ed.), *Handbook on the Economics of Sport*, Edward Elgar, Cheltenham, pp. 299-303.
- Sloane, P. J. (2015). "The Economics of Professional Football Revisited", *Scottish Journal of Political Economy*, 62(1), 1-7.
- Smart, B. (2014). "Late Capitalism", *The Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopedia of Globalization*.
- Smelser, N. J. (1972). *Theory of Collective Behavior*, Free Press, New York.
- Smelser, N. J. & Swedberg, R. (2005). "Introducing Economic Sociology", in N. J. Smelser & R. Swedberg, *The Handbook of Economic Sociology*, (2nd ed.), Princeton University Press, New York, pp. 3-25.
- Sminia, H. (2003). "The Failure of the Sport7 TV-channel: Controversies in a Business Network", *Journal of Management Studies*, 40(7), 1611-1650.
- Smith, A. D. (1991). *National Identity*, Penguin Books, London.
- Smith, A., Skinner, J. & Edwards, A. (2021). *Qualitative research in sport management*, Routledge, New York.
- Smith, B. & Caddick, N. (2012). "Qualitative methods in sport: a concise overview for guiding social scientific sport research", *Asia Pacific Journal of Sport and Social Science*, 1(1), 60-73.
- Smith, B. & Sparkes, A. C. (2016). *Handbook of qualitative research methods in sport and exercise*, Routledge, London.
- Smith, J. K. (1989). *The nature of social and educational inquiry: Empiricism versus interpretation*, Ablex Publishing Corporation, Norwood.
- Smith, J. K. (1993). *After the Demise of Empiricism: The Problem of Judging Social and Educational Inquiry*, Ablex, Norwood.
- Smith, R. (2023, February 7th). "It's Not Just What Manchester City Won. It's What Others Lost", *The New York Times*, available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/07/sports/soccer/manchester-city-premier-league-rules.html>.

- Sobal, J. (2001). "Sample extensiveness in qualitative nutrition education research", *Journal of Nutrition Education*, 33(4) 184-192.
- Soebbing, B. P. (2019). "Ticket Pricing", in P. Downward, B. Frick, B. R. Humphreys, T. Pawlowski, J. E. Ruseski & B. P. Soebbing, *Handbook on the Economics of Sport*, Sage, London, pp. 181-189.
- Solberg, H. A. (2002). "The Economics of Television Sports Rights. Europe and the US – A Comparative analysis", *Norsk Medietidskrift*, 10(2), 59-81.
- Solberg, H. A. & Hammervold, R. (2008). "TV Sports Viewers – Who Are They? A Norwegian Case Study", *Nordicom Review*, 29 (1), 95-110.
- Solberg, H. A. & Haugen, K. K. (2010). "European club football: why enormous revenues are not enough?", *Sport in Society*, 13(2), 329-343.
- Solberg, H. A. & Helland, K. (2011). "Sports Broadcasting: An Accelerator of Business Integration in the Media Industry", *Nordicom Review*, 32 (2), 17-33.
- Solberg, H. A. & Mehus, I. (2014). "The challenge of attracting football fans to Stadia?", *International Journal of Sport Finance*, 9, 3-19.
- Sotiriadou, K. & Shilbury, D. (2010). "Using grounded theory in sport management research", *International Journal of Sport Management and Marketing*, 8(4), 181–202.
- Sousa, H. (2002). "The liberalisation of media and communications in Portugal", in S. Syrett, *Contemporary Portugal, Dimensions of economic and political change*, Ashgate, Hampshire, pp. 133-155.
- Sousa, J. O. (1988). *Contributo para o Estudo do Associativismo Desportivo em Portugal*, UTL/ISEF, Lisboa.
- Sousa, J. P. (2022, May 1st). "Desafios da Negociação", *Daily sports newspaper 'Record' (no.15 703)*, (S. Krithinas, Interviewer).
- Sousa, J.P. (2024, March 30th). "Podcast Negocios Record", *Daily sports newspaper 'Record' (no.16 429)*, (D. Ramos & S. Krithinas, Interviewer).
- Spaaij, R. & Broerse, J. (2018). "Diaspora as aesthetic formation: Community sports events and the making of a Somali diaspora", *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 1-18.
- Sparkes, A. C. (1992). "The paradigms debate: An extended review and a celebration of difference", in A. C. Sparkes, *Research in Physical Education and Sport: Exploring Alternative Visions*, Falmer Press, London, pp. 9-60.
- Sparkes, A. C. (2002). *Telling tales in sport and physical activity: A qualitative journey*, Human Kinetics Press, Champaign.
- Sparkes, A. C. & Smith, B. (2013). *Qualitative Research Methods in Sport, Exercise and Health: From Process to Product*, Routledge, London.
- Sparks, C. (2007). *Globalization, Development and the Mass Media*, Sage, London.
- Speed, R. & Thomson, P. (2000). "Determinants of sport sponsorship effects", *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 28, 226–238.
- Spigel, L. & Olsson, J. (2004). *Television after TV: Essays on a Medium in Transition*, Duke University Press, Durham.
- Spivak, G. C. (1990). *The Postcolonial Critic: Interviews, Strategies, Dialogue*, Routledge, New York.
- Staller, K. M., Block, E. & Horner, P. S. (2008). "Historical Context of Emergent Methods and Innovation", in S. N. Hesse-Biber & P. Leavy, *Handbook of Emergent Methods*, The Guilford Press, New York, pp. 25-52.
- Stanley, L. & Wise, S. (1993). *Breaking Out Again: Feminist Ontology and Epistemology*, Routledge, London.
- Star, S. L. (2010). "This Is Not a Boundary Object: Reflections on the Origin of a Concept", *Science, Technology and Human Values*, 35(5), 601-617.
- Sterling, C. H. & Keith, M. C. (2004). *Encyclopaedia of Radio*, Fitzroy Dearborn, Nova York.
- Stern, P. N. (1994). "Eroding grounded theory", in J. M. Morse, *Critical issues in the qualitative research methods*, Sage, London, pp. 212-224.
- Stets, J. E. & Burke, P. J. (2000). "Identity theory and social identity theory", *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 63, 224–237.

- Stevenson, N. (2002). *Understanding Media Cultures: Social theory and mass communication*, Sage, London.
- Stewart, B. (2007). *The Games are Not the Same: The Political Economy of Football in Australia*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne.
- Stewart, B. & Nicholson, M. G. (2003). "The Media? Use of Interpretive Frames During Football Club Relocations and Mergers", *Football Studies Group*, Canberra, pp. 66-78.
- Stewart, B., Smith, A. & Nicholson, M. (2003). "Sport Consumer Typologies: A Critical Review", *Sport Marketing Quarterly*, 12, 206–216.
- Stewart, D. W. & Kamins, M. A. (1993). *Secondary Research: Information Sources and Methods*, Sage, (2nd ed.), Newbury Park.
- Stokes, J. (2021). *How to do media and Cultural studies*, Sage, (3rd ed.), London.
- Storm, R. K. & Nielsen, K. (2012). "Soft Budget Constraints in Professional Football", *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 12 (2), 183-201.
- Stotlar, D. K. (2000). "Vertical integration in sport", *Journal of Sport Management*, 14(1), 1-7.
- Stotlar, D. K. (2013). *Developing Successful Sport Sponsorship Plans*, FiT Publishing, (4th ed.), West Virginia.
- Straubhaar, J. D. (2008). "Global, Hybrid or Multiple? Cultural Identities in the Age of Satellite TV and the Internet", *Nordicom Review*, 29(2), 11–29.
- Strauss, A. L. (1987). *Qualitative Analysis for Social Scientists*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Strauss, A. L. (1978a). *Negotiations: Varieties, Contexts, Processes and Social Order*, Jossey Bass, San Francisco.
- Strauss, A. C. & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*, Sage, (2nd ed.), Thousand Oaks.
- Stroot, S. A. (2002). "Socialisation and participation in sport", in A. Laker, *The Sociology of Sport and Physical Education*, Routledge, New York, pp. 129-147.
- Stryker, S. (1968). "Identity Salience and Role Performance: The Relevance of Symbolic Interaction Theory for Family Research", *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 30 (4) 558-564.
- Sugden, J. (2002). "Network Football", in J. Sugden & A. Tomlinson, *Power of Play: Uma sociologia critica do desporto*, Routledge, London, pp. 61-80.
- Sugden, J. & Tomlinson, A. (1998a). "Power and Resistance in the Governance of World Football: Theorizing FIFA's Transnational Impact", *Journal of Sport & Social Issues*, 22(3), 299-316.
- Sugden, J. & Tomlinson, A. (1998b). *FIFA and the Contest for World Football*, Polity Press, Cambridge.
- Sugden, J. & Tomlinson, A. (2013). *Power Games: A Critical Sociology of Sport*, Routledge, London.
- Sultan, N. (2018). *Heuristic Inquiry: Researching Human Experience Holistically*, Sage, Newbury Park.
- Sutton, W. A., McDonald, M. & Milne, G. (1997). "Creating and fostering fan identification in professional sports", *Sport Marketing Quarterly*, 6(1), 15–22.
- Swales, J. M. (2004). *Research Genres: Explorations and Applications*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Swinburne (2023, August 31st). "Disruption in Sports Offers Play for Growth", *Media Analyst Ben Swinburne: Morgan Stanley Financial Advisor*, available at <https://www.morganstanley.com/ideas/sports-broadcasting-media-rights>.
- Syvrtsen, T. (2003). "Challenges to Public Television in the Era of Convergence and Commercialization", *Television & New Media*, 4(2), 155-175.
- Szymanski, S. (1998). "Why is Manchester United So Successful?", *Business Strategy Review*, 9(4), 47-54.
- Szymanski, S. (2001). "Income Inequality, Competitive Balance and the Attractiveness of Team Sports. Some Evidence and a Natural Experiment from English Soccer", *Economic Journal*, 111, 69 – 84.
- Szymanski, S. (2004). "Is There a European Model of Sports?", in R. Fort & J. Fizel (Eds.), *International Sports Economic Comparisons*, Praeger, Westport, pp. 19-37.
- Szymanski, S. (2006a). "The Economic Evolution of Sport and Broadcasting", *Australian Economic Review*, 39, 428-434.

- Szymanski, S. (2006b). "The Future of Football in Europe", in Rodríguez P., Kesenne, S. & García, J. (Eds.), *Sports Economics After Fifty Years: Essays in Honour of Simon Rottenberg*, University of Oviedo, Oviedo, pp. 190-210.
- Szymanski, S. (2010a). "Economists and Sport History", *Journal of Sport History*, 37(1), 71–82.
- Szymanski, S. (2010b). "The Political Economy of Sport", in S. Szymanski, *The Comparative Economics of Sport*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, pp. 79-86.
- Szymanski, S. (2014). "Fair Is Foul: A Critical Analysis of UEFA Financial Fair Play", *International Journal of Sport Finance*, 9(3), 218-229.
- Szymanski, S. (2016). "Professional Asian Football Leagues and the Global Market", *Asian Economic Policy Review*, 11(1), 16-38.
- Szymanski, S. & Zimbalist, A. (2014). *National Pastime: How Americans Play Baseball and the Rest of the World Plays Soccer*, Brookings Institution Press, Washington, D.C.
- Szyszcak, R. (2007). "Is sport Special?", in B. Bogusz, A. J. Cygan & E. M. Szyszcak (Ed.), *The Regulation of Sport in the European Union*, Edward Elgar, Cheltenham, pp. 2-16.
- Tainsky, S. (2010). "Television broadcast demand for National Football League contests", *Journal of Sports Economics*, 11(6), 629–640.
- Tajfel, H. & Turner, J. C. (1979). "An integrative theory of intergroup conflict", in W. G. Austin & S. Worchel, *The social psychology of intergroup relations*, Brooks/Cole, Monterey, pp. 33-47.
- Tajfel, H. & Turner, J. (1986). "The Social Identity Theory of Intergroup Behavior", in S. Worchel & W. N. Austin, *Psychology of Intergroup Relations*, pp. 7–24.
- Talib, N. & Fitzgerald, R. (2016). "Micro–meso–macro movements; a multi-level critical discourse analysis framework to examine metaphors and the value of truth in policy texts", *Critical Discourse Studies*, 13(5), 531-547.
- Talib, N. & Fitzgerald, R. (2018). "Putting philosophy back to work in Critical Discourse Analysis", *Critical Discourse Studies*, 15(2), 123-139.
- Tamir, I. (2022). "The natural life cycle of sports fans", *Sport in Society*, 25(1), 1-15.
- Tan, J. (2010). "Grounded Theory in Practice: Issues and Discussion for New Qualitative Researchers", *Journal of Documentation*, 66(1), 93-112.
- Taylor, A. (2021, January 27th). "Portuguese football bodies reach deal over centralised TV rights sales from 2027-28", *SportBusiness*, available at <https://www.sportbusiness.com/news/portuguese-football-bodies-reach-deal-over-centralised-tv-rights-sales-from-2027-28/>.
- Taylor, I. (1970). "Football mad: a speculative sociology of soccer hooliganism", in E. Dunning, *The sociology of sport*, Frank Cass, London, pp. 346–373.
- Taylor, M. (2008). *The Association Game: A History of British Football*, Routledge, London.
- Taylor, S. J., Bogdan, R. & Vault, M. D. (2016). *Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods: A Guidebook and Resource*, John Wiley & Sons, (4th ed.), New Jersey.
- Taylor, T., Doherty, A. & McGraw, P. (2008). *Managing People in Sport Organizations A strategic human resource management perspective*, Elsevier, Oxford.
- Tebas, J. (2023, September 9th). *Speech by Javier Tebas "The centralisation of media rights will improve the Portuguese football as a product" during the Summit 2023, Thinking Football Summit 2023 [online]*, available at <https://thinkingfootballsummit.com/news-details.php?id=165>.
- Tetzlaff, D. (1991). "Divide and Conquer: popular culture and social control in late capitalism", *Media, Culture and Society*, 13, 9-33.
- Theodorakis, N. D., Wann, D. L. & Weaver, S. (2012). "An antecedent model of team identification in the context of professional soccer", *Sport Marketing Quarterly*, 21(2), 80-90.
- Thibault, L. (2009). "Globalization of sport: An inconvenient truth", *Journal of Sport Management*, 23(1), 1-20.
- Thomas, R., Hall, E. T., Nelson, L. & Potrac, P. (2022). "Actors, interactions, ties, and networks: the 'doing' of talent identification and development work in elite youth football academies", *Soccer & Society*, 23(4-5), 420-431.
- Thomas, S. P. & Pollio, H. R. (2001). *Listening to Patients: A phenomenological approach to nursing research and practice*, Springer, New York.

- Thompson, J. B. (1995). *The Media and Modernity: A social theory of the media*, Polity Press, Cambridge.
- Thompson, K. (2003). *Culture & Progress: Esc. Vol. VIII*, Routledge, New York.
- Thomson, S. (2019, October 9th). "BeIN Media: sports rightsholders face 'financial cliff' as piracy destroys market", *DigitalTV [online]*, available at <https://www.digitaltveurope.com/2019/10/09/bein-media-sports-rightsholders-face-financial-cliff-as-piracy-destroys-market/#close-modal>.
- Thomson, S. B. (2010). "Grounded Theory - Sample Size", *Journal of Administration and Governance*, 5(1), 45-52.
- Thornberg, R. & Charmaz, K. (2014). "Grounded Theory and Theoretical Coding", in U. Flick, (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis*, Sage, London, pp. 153-169.
- Tiell, B. & Cebula, K. (2020). *Governance in Sport: Analysis and Application*, Human Kinetics, New York.
- Toft, T. (2003). "Football: joint selling of media rights", *Competition Policy Newsletter*, 3, 47-52.
- Tomlinson, A. (1983). "Tuck up Tight Lads: Structures of Control within Football Culture", in A. Tomlinson, *Explorations in Football Culture*, Leisure Studies Association, Eastbourne, pp. 165-186.
- Tomlinson, A. (2005). *Sport and Leisure Cultures*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis.
- Tomlinson, A., Young, C. & Holt, R. (2011). *Sport and the Transformation of Modern Europe: States, Media and Markets 1950-2010*, Routledge, New York.
- Tomlinson, J. (1991). *Cultural Imperialism: A Critical Introduction*, Pinter, London.
- Tomlinson, J. (1999). *Globalization and Culture*, Polity Press, Cambridge.
- Tomlinson, J. (2007). *The Culture of Speed: The Coming of Immediacy*, Sage, London.
- Traquina, N. (2003). *Jornalismo*, Quimera, Lisboa.
- Trinczek, R. (2009). "How to Interview Managers? Methodical and Methodological Aspects of Expert Interviews as a Qualitative Method in Empirical Social Research", in A. Bogner, B. Littig & W. Menz, *Interviewing Experts*, Palgrave, London, pp. 203-216.
- Tsiotsou, R. (2005). "The Effect of European Union Regulations on Marketing Practices: The Case of European Football Broadcasting Right", *Journal of Euromarketing*, 5(1), 75-93.
- Tunstall, J. (1993). *Television Producers*, Routledge, New York.
- Turner, B. S. (2009). *The Blackwell Companion to Social Theory*, Wiley-Blackwell, New Jersey.
- Turner, J. (1982). "Towards a cognitive redefinition of the social group", in H. Tajfel, *Social identity and intergroup relations*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 15-40.
- Turner, J. H. (1991). *The Structure of Sociological Theory*, Wadsworth Publishing Company, (5th ed.), Belmont.
- Turner, P. (2000). "Innovations in the delivery of television broadcasting within Australia: The role sport programming plays in the diffusion process", *International Journal of Sport Management*, 1(3), 181-199.
- Turner, P. & Shilbury, D. (2005). "Determining the Professional Sport Broadcasting Landscape: An Australian football club perspective", *Sport Management Review*, 8, 167-193.
- Turner, P. & Shilbury, D. (2008). "Broadcasting technology and its influence on sport broadcaster inter-organisational relationship formation", *International Journal of Sport Management and Marketing*, 3(3).
- Tweed, A. & Charmaz, K. (2012). "Grounded Theory Methods for Mental Health Practitioners", in D. Harper & A. R. Thompson, *Qualitative Research Methods in Mental Health and Psychotherapy A Guide for Students and Practitioners*, Wiley & Sons, Sussex, pp. 131-146.
- UEFA (2007a). *Regulations of the UEFA Champions League 2007/2008*, UEFA, Nyon.
- UEFA (2007b, January 11th). "European Professional Strategy Forum to Meet in Nyon", *Media Release 1*, available at <https://www.uefa.com/insideuefa/mediaservices/mediareleases/newsid=942709.html>.
- UEFA (2008a, January 21st). "Agreement Heralds New Era in Football", available at <https://www.uefa.com/insideuefa/stakeholders/clubs/news/newsid=648350.html>.

- UEFA (2008b, January 21st). "Victory for Football as a Whole: Historic Meeting between FIFA", *UEFA and Several Top European Clubs, Media Release 4*, available at <http://www.uefa.com/newsfiles/646362.pdf>.
- UEFA (2008c, January 21st). "New Era in Football Begins with Formation of European Club Association", *Media Release 7*, available at <http://www.uefa.com/newsfiles/648367.pdf>.
- UEFA (2023). *The European Club Footballing Landscape*, UEFA, Zurich.
- UEFA (2024, April 17th). "New format for Champions League post-2024: Everything you need to know", available at <https://pt.uefa.com/uefachampionsleague/news/0268-12157d69ce2d-9f011c70f6fa-1000--new-format-for-champions-league-post-2024-everything-you-ne/>.
- Urquhart, C. (2013). *Grounded theory for qualitative research: A practical guide*, Sage, London.
- Urquhart, C. (2016). "Grounded Theory", *The International Encyclopedia of Communication Theory and Philosophy*, 1–13.
- Urry, J. (2000). *Sociology Beyond Societies: Mobilities for the Twenty First Century*, Routledge, London.
- Valcke, P., Gillis, D. & Van Damme, S. (2009). "TV rights for sports events in Belgium", in I. Blackshaw and R. Siekmann (Eds.), *TV Rights in Europe*, Asser International Sports Law Centre, The Hague, pp. 235-26.
- Vallacher, R. R. & Wegner, D. M. (2014). *A Theory of Action Identification*, Psychology Press.
- Van den Bulck, H. (2012). "Towards a Media Policy Process Analysis Model and its Methodological Implications", in N. Just & M. Puppis (eds), *Trends in Communication Policy Research: New Theories, Methods and Subjects*, Intellect, Bristol, pp.217-231.
- Van Dijck, J. A. (2006). *Network Society: Social aspects of new media*, Sage, (2nd ed.), London.
- Van Dijck, J. A. (2011). "Tracing Twitter: The rise of a microblogging platform", *Internacional Journal of Media and Cultural Politics*, 7(3), 333–348.
- Van Dijck, J. A. (2013). *The Culture of Connectivity*, Oxford University Press, New York.
- Van Dijck, J. A. (2020). "Seeing the forest for the trees: Visualizing platformization and its governance", *New Media & Society*, 23(9), 2801–2819.
- Van Dijck, J. & Poell, T. (2013). "Understanding the promises and premises of online health platforms", *Big Data & Society*, 3 (1), 1-11.
- Varis, T. (1985). *International flow of television programmes*, United Nations Educational, New York.
- Vartanian, T. P. (2010). *Secondary Data Analysis: Pocket Guides to Social Work Research Methods*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Veal, A. (2006). *Research Methods for Leisure and Tourism: A Practical Guide*, Prentice Hall, (3rd ed.), Harlow.
- Verouden, V. (2008). "Vertical Agreements: Motivation and Impact", in S-o. Law (Org.), *Competition Law and Policy Publisher: American Bar Association*, W.D. Collins, Sheffield, pp. 1813-1840.
- Vieira, J. (2015). "Consumos em Rede não Autorizados: Pirataria digital In Portugal", *Tese Doutoramento*, Escola de Sociologia e Políticas Públicas - ISCTE-IUL, Lisboa.
- Viel, A. (2014). *UEFA 60 Years at the Heart of Football*, UEFA, Nyon.
- Vinnai, G. (1973). *Football Mania*, Ocean Books, London.
- Vogt, W. P., Vogt, E. R., Gardner, D. C. & Haeffele, L. M. (2014). *Selecting the right analyses for your data: Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods*, Guilford Press, New York.
- Volkmer, I. (2014). *The Global Public Sphere Public Communication in the Age of Reflective Interdependence*, Polity Press, Cambridge.
- Vrooman, J. (2009). "Theory of the Perfect Game: Competitive Balance in Monopoly Sports Leagues", *Review of Industrial Organization*, 34(1), 5–44.
- Wagg, S. (1995). *Giving the Game Away - Sport, Politics, and Culture*, Leicester University Press, Leicester.
- Wahl, A. (1989). *Les Archives du Football: Sport et société en France (1880-1980)*, Éditions Julliard, Paris.
- Wakefield, K. & Blodgett, J. (1994). "The importance of services capes in leisure service settings", *Journal of Services Marketing*, 8, 66–76.
- Wallace, M. & Wray, A. (2016). *Critical reading and writing for postgraduates*, Sage, (3rd ed.), London.
- Wallerstein, I. (1979). *The Capitalist Economy*, University Press, Cambridge.

- Walsh, A. & Brown, A. (1999). *Not for Sale: Manchester United, Murdoch and the Defeat of BskyB*, Mainstream, Edinburgh.
- Walsh, A. & Giulianotti, R. (2001). "This Sporting Mammon: a normative analysis of the commodification of sport", *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport*, 28(1), 53-77.
- Wang, Y. & Polillo, S. (2016). "Power in Organizational Society: Macro, Meso and Micro", in S. Abrutyn, *Handbook of Contemporary Sociological Theory*, Springer, Cham, pp. 43-62.
- Wann, D. (2006). "Understanding the positive social psychological benefits of sport team identification: The team identification social psychological health model", *Group Dynamics: Theory, Research, and Practice*, 10, 272-296.
- Wann, D. L., Melnick, M. J., Russell, G. W. & Pease, D. G. (2001). *Sport fans: The psychology and social impact of spectators*, Routledge, London.
- Wasko, J. (2005). "Studying the political economy of media and information", *Comunicação & Sociedade*, 7, 25-48.
- Wasko, J. (2014). "The study of the political economy of the media in the twenty-first century", *Journal of Media and Cultural Politics*, 10(3), 259-271.
- Wasko, J., Murdock, G. & Sousa, H. (2011). "Introduction: The political economy of communications core concerns and issues", in J. Wasko, G. Murdock & H. Sousa, *The Handbook of Political Economy of Communication*, Blackwell Publishing, Sussex, pp. 1-11.
- Watkins, B. (2014). "An integrated approach to sports branding: Examining the influence of social media on brand outcomes", *International Journal of Integrated Marketing Communications*, 6(2), 30-40.
- Weatherill, S. (2014a). *European Sports Law, Collected Papers*, ASSER International Sports Law Centre, (2nd ed.), The Haag.
- Weatherill, S. (2014b). "Is the Pyramid Compatible with EC Law?", in S. Weatherill (Ed.), *Law, European Sports*, T.M.C. Asser Press, The Haag, pp. 295-309.
- Webb, S. J. & Webb, B. (1975). *Methods of social study*, Cambridge University Press, (2nd ed.), Cambridge.
- Weber, M. (1949). *Objectivity in social science and social policy*, in *The Methodology of the Social Sciences*, Free Press, (2nd ed.), Glencoe.
- Weber, M. (1973). *From Max Weber: essays in sociology*, Oxford University Press, New York.
- Weber, M. (1978). *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology - II vols*, University of California Press, Los Angeles.
- Weber, M. (2004). *Economia e Sociedade - Vol. I*, Fundação Universidade de Brasília, São Paulo.
- Weed, M. (2005). *A Grounded Theory of the Policy Process for Sport and Tourism*, Sport in Society.
- Weed, M. (2009). "Research quality considerations for grounded theory research in sport & exercise psychology", *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 10(5), 502-510.
- Weisbrod, B. A. (1986). "Toward a theory of the voluntary nonprofit sector in a three-sector economy", in S. Rose-Ackerman, *The economics of nonprofit institutions, Studies in structure and policy*, Oxford University Press, New York.
- Weiss, R. S. (1994). *Learning from Strangers: The Art and Method of Qualitative Interview Studies*, Simon and Schuster.
- Wengraf, T. (2001). *Qualitative Research Interviewing: Biographic Narrative and Semi-Structured Methods*, Sage, London.
- Wenner, L. A. (1989). *Media, Sports, and Society*, Sage, New York.
- Wenner, L. A. (1998). "Playing the MediaSport Game", in L. A. Wenner (Org.), *MediaSport*, Routledge, London, pp. 3-13.
- Wenner, L. A. & Billings, A. C. (2017). *Sport, Media and Mega-Events*, Routledge, New York.
- Westerbeek, H. & Smith, A. (2003). *Sport Business in the Global Marketplace*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York.
- Wetherell, M., Taylor, S. & Yates, S. J. (2001). *Discourse Theory and Practice: A Reader*, Sage, London.
- Whannel, G. (1986a). "The unholy alliance: notes on television and the ranking of British sport 1965-85", *Leisure Studies*, 5(1), 22-37.

- Whannel, G. (1986b). "Television spectacle and the internationalization of sport", *Journal of Communication Enquiry*, 9(2), 54-74.
- Whannel, G. (1992). *Fields in Vision: Television sport and cultural transformation*, Routledge, London.
- Whannel, G. (2000). "Sport and the Media", in J. Coakley & E. Dunning (Eds.), *Handbook of Sport Studies*, Sage, London, pp.191-308.
- Whannel, G. (2002). *Media Sport Stars*, Routledge, London.
- Whannel, G. (2005). *Fields in Vision: Television sport and cultural transformation*, Routledge, (2nd ed.), New York.
- Wheeler, M. (2004). "Supranational Regulation: Television and the European Union", *European Journal of Communication*, 19(3), 349– 369.
- Whetten, D. A. (1989). "What constitutes a theoretical contribution", *Academy of Management Review*, 14(4), 490–495.
- Wiggins, D. K. & Rodgers, R. P. (2010). *Rivals: Legendary matchups that played sports history*, University of Arkansas Press, Fayetteville.
- Wilkin, P. (2001). *The Political Economy of Global Communication: An Introduction (Human Security in the Global Economy)*, Pluto Press, London.
- Wilkinson, S. (1988). "The Role of Reflexivity in Feminist Psychology", *International Forum of Women's Studies*, 11(5), 493-502.
- Williams, B. (1977). "The structure of televised football", *Journal of Communication*, 27, 133–9.
- Williams, J. (2007). "Rethinking Sports Fandom: The Case of European Soccer", *Leisure Studies*, 26(2), 127-146.
- Williams, R. (1977). *Marxism and Literature*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Williams, R. (2003). *Television: Technology and Cultural Form*, Routledge, (3rd ed.), London.
- Williams, R. (2015). *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, Oxford University Press, (2nd ed.), Oxford.
- Willig, C. (2001). *Qualitative Research in Psychology: A practical guide to theory and method*, OUP, Buckingham.
- Wiltshire, G. (2018). "A case for critical realism in the pursuit of interdisciplinarity and impact", *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*, 10, 525–542.
- Winfree, J., Allen, C. & Szymanski, S. (2024). "Sports League Profit and Market Sizes", *International Journal of Sport Finance*, 19(1), 25-38.
- Winseck, D. (2017). "Reconstructing the political economy of communication for the digital media age", *The Political Economy of Communication*, 4(2).
- Wittel, A. (2001). "Toward a Network Sociality", *Theory, Culture & Society*, 18(6), 51–76.
- Wodak, R., Cillia, R. d., Reisigl & Liebhart, K. (2009). *The Discursive Construction of National Identity*, Edinburgh University Press, (2nd ed.), Edinburgh.
- Wolcott, H. F. (1994). *Transforming qualitative data: Description, analysis and interpretation*, Sage, Thousand Oaks.
- Wolf, M. (2004). *Why Globalization Works*, Yale University Press, New Haven.
- Wolfe, R., Meenaghan, T. & O'Sullivan, P. (2002). "The Sports Network: insights into the shifting balance of power", *Journal of Business Research*, 55(7), 611-622.
- Wolff, S. (2004). "Analysis of Documents and Records", in U. Flick, E. v. Kardorff & I. Steinke (Eds.), *A Companion to Qualitative Research*, Sage, London, pp. 284-289.
- Wolton, D. (1996). *Elogio do Grande Público: Uma Teoria Crítica da Televisão*, Editora Àtica, São Paulo.
- Wong, D. (2015). "The EPL drama – paving the way for more illegal streaming? Digital piracy of live sports broadcasts in Singapore", *Leisure Studies*, 35(5), 534-548.
- Woods, P. (1992). "Symbolic Interactionism: theory and method", in W. M. LeCompte & J. Preissle (Eds.), *The Handbook of Qualitative Research in Education*, Academic Press, London, pp. 337-404.
- Woratschek, H., Horbel, C. & Popp, B. (2014). "The sport value framework – a new fundamental logic for analyses in sport management", *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 14(1), 6–24.

- Wright, J. (2000). "Disciplining the body: power, knowledge and subjectivity in a physical education lesson", in C. Poynton & A. Lee, *Culture and text discourse and methodology in social research and cultural studies*, Lanham, pp. 152–169.
- Wylleman, P., Reints, A. & De Knop, P. (2013). "A developmental and holistic perspective on athletic career development", in P. Sotiriadou, & V. D. Bosscher, *Managing high performance sport*, Routledge, pp. 159–182.
- Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case Study Research and Applications: Design and Methods*, Sage, (4th ed.), Thousand Oaks.
- Yolles, M. (2006). *Organizations as Complex Systems: An Introduction to Knowledge Cybernetics*, Information Age Publishing, Greenwich.
- Zhang, J. J. & Pitts, B. G. (2019). *Globalized Sport Management in Diverse Cultural Contexts*, Routledge, New York.
- Zhang, Y., Liu, Y., Li, W. P. & Yuan, C. (2020). "A study of the influencing factors of mobile social media fatigue behavior based on the grounded theory", *Information Discovery and Delivery*, 48(2), 91–102.
- Zhao, Y. & Schiller, D. (2001). "Dances with wolves? China's integration into digital capitalism", *Info*, 3(2), 137–151.
- Zillmann, D. (1995). "Mechanisms of Emotional Involvement with Drama", *Poetics*, 33-51.
- Zuckerman, E. (2021). "Why study media ecosystems?", *Information, Communication & Society*, 24(10), 1495-1513.

[Page left blank on purpose]

Appendices

A - Aggregate of questions asked to interviewees

To what extent might changes in the broadcasting market weaken the link between football and fan's passion for their teams?

In your opinion, can the agreement between RTP and Sport TV be considered to be in the public interest, given that the public interest in the context of sport refers to collective cultural, social and informational benefits?

In your opinion, is it right that public service TV, which uses public funds, should compete with Pay-Tv when it comes to buying the rights to broadcast sporting events?

The history of TV always played a decisive role in increasing, promoting and expanding football. Given the democratic, integrative, and social functions of sports should 'public interest' (AVMS Directive) regulation still apply in the football contents to broadcast to consumers?

The AVMSD allows member states to draw up a list with events, being of major importance for society that can only be broadcast on FTA TV in order to ensure that a 'substantial proportion' of the public would not be deprived of the possibility of following such events. Some authors argue that the rule the comprehensive nature of the Directive has not influenced the definition of Portuguese broadcasting policy. Would you like to comment?

For the 2024/25 season, UEFA will introduce some changes to the financing model of the three UEFA club competitions: UCL, UEL and UECL. How do you think this will affect the PPL?

Football continues to be one of the most important social phenomena in Portuguese society. We have some of the best players in the world, coaches in several international leagues and the best sports agent in the world. But we also have a national championship that struggles with structural problems every weekend. Would you like to comment?

It is understood that not all European leagues permit the sponsorship of gambling companies in an explicit manner, such as on kit shirt of the team. Given your experience, how do you view the involvement of gambling companies in less robust leagues?

Evaluate the relationship between TV and sport, with special emphasis on the impact of TV on football. How do you see the positions of each, the advantages and disadvantages of this long-standing relationship?

Can you tell me about some of the technologies that you are currently using. Do you think they would increase stadium attendance or enhance fans' experience?

In essence, sporting events exist independently of TV's own practices and ideology. They are real events, closed systems, coherent and autonomous sets of activity, and are governed by regulatory systems. They are delimited both in space and time. In your opinion, can the ideology of the producers and publishers, both in the origin of the programming and in the technical processes used, be considered a new force in the content of sports? What cultural and ideological themes are at play?

The EU asserts that the revenues generated from the sale of sport broadcasting rights are largely determined by the size of national broadcasting markets. Can you please comment?

The centralized sale of exclusive broadcasting rights is a widespread practice in European countries, although it does not exist in Portugal so far. In your opinion, can the exclusive broadcasting agreement between the clubs (through the organiser of the national competition - LP) and a broadcaster improve the competitive balance in the league and serve the public interest?

In the sports industries, competition issues arise when broadcasters acquire exclusive sports rights for a long period of time. Do you consider that the structure of the media market in Portugal is an important factor in creating bargaining power that can jeopardise the independence of clubs?

In a recent interview at the Sport Business Summit in London, the CEO of sports and entertainment network beIN Media Group, Yousef Al-Obaidly, warned that the 'bubble' of sports broadcasting rights is about to burst due to the industry's inability to combat rampant piracy. Would you like to comment?

The PPL, by government decision, will centralise the sale of broadcasting rights until the 2026/2027 season, and is already on the market looking for commercial partners. Do you think the fact that the

Portuguese are among those who most pirate live sporting events could make it difficult for the LP to sell the rights for the amounts it wants?

Do you think that a lack of ethics and disrespect for intellectual property are predominant factors in live sports piracy, or do the Portuguese pirate because legal access to content on Pay-Tv channels is high in relation to the average salary in Portugal? Would you like to comment?

Pedro Proença said in an interview: 'People associate the issue of centralising rights with increasing revenue, but it is much more than that,. It is the importance of having an entity that regulates what the product is.' However, 93 per cent of the points achieved by Portuguese teams at the current UEFA ranking (accumulated over the last five years) have been won by just four teams: FC Porto, SL Benfica, Sporting CP and SC Braga. And when 95 per cent of fans say they sympathise with SL Benfica, FC Porto and Sporting CP.

In view of the above, does it make sense to centralise and distribute television broadcasting revenue more evenly among the 18 teams in the PPL, when only three (or four) contribute to the international expression of Portuguese football?

SL Benfica's negotiation contract with NOS ends in 2025/2026. In your opinion, could the fact that SL Benfica has to negotiate before its rivals (FC Porto and Sporting SP) have an influence (positive or negative) on the values to be reached for the centralised negotiation?

The Portuguese league is seen as 'second tier', confined to a role as a springboard for emerging players. However, in an increasingly unequal economic context, the financial rewards of these operations are not enough to curb the growing competitive imbalance. In your opinion, is the failure of PPL clubs to 'retain talent' a major factor in the LP's lack of 'credibility' in the Big Five perspective?

Compared to the 2018/19 season - the last before the pandemic - there was a significant drop in the number of spectators in stadiums in 2022/23, the first without any restrictions due to covid-19. In the 34 matches, the total number fell from 3,577,720 to 3,555,937, meaning that football lost 21,783 spectators. Once again, four seasons after, LP failed to reach its goal of bringing more people to football and reaching 3.7 million spectators, as stated in the Activity Plan and Budget for 2022-23.

Several analysts attribute this to the late timing of matches, due to broadcasting imperatives. Do you consider that the time of matches, even on weekend days, is a factor that prevents people from coming to the stadium?

Global reach is crucial to a football league's ranking in the top five. The ability to attract a worldwide fan base, generate international revenue and appeal to sponsors and partners is vital. What do you think? Would you like to comment?

The improved level of entertainment on the pitch, driven by a large influx of talented foreign players, which has also contributed significantly to the resurgence in football's popularity. As well as improved stadium facilities, especially all-seater stadiums, along with the safety, comfort and environmental and economic sustainability standards that the stadiums have met, have helped to strengthen the appeal of football, including broadcasting on the domestic and international market. What do you think?

Could the increase in ticket prices put fans off?

Recognizing that not all European leagues allow the sponsorship of gambling companies, at least in an explicit way, such as on kit shirt of a team. Given your experience, how do you see the fact that (less strong) leagues have gambling companies as partners?

Competitive balance is fundamental, both within leagues and between leagues, in order to maintain interest. From the fans' point of view, do you think competitive balance is a concern?

Given that until recently PPL had only 16 teams, and became 18 due to administrative problems and legal proceedings, do you think that makes sense for the PPL to be made up of 18 clubs, even considering the size of Portugal and the number of its inhabitants?

From the fans' point of view, how unbalanced does a football league have to be important?

The demand for football depends on factors such as price, income, free time, importance and proximity to the competition. Do you think that today's ticket prices are one of the ways in which football is commodified?

The rich getting richer as income is drawn increasingly to capital - that is, the results success. Would you like to comment?

In APDA's (Portuguese Fans Association) view, which of the negotiation models (individualised or centralised) best defends the interests of the fan?

Currently, professional football in Europe seems to be threatened by the growing concentration of the economy dominated by a small elite of clubs, while the rest (the vast majority) are showing serious financial difficulties. Do you think the European model of professional football could be at risk in the future?

What are your opinions on the ESL? And how have you seen the fans actively contesting it?

The idea of the ESL has been around for decades. It is based on the sporting format in the United States, where there is no relegation. What is the idea behind the new (football) ESL?

Football fans say that the ESL is only about money. Who will win the ESL: fans or big clubs?

[Page left blank on purpose]