

This special edition of *Sport, Business and Management: An International Journal* attracted a considerable number of submissions, from which we eventually selected the six papers for publication. To all of the scholars who sent us their proposed contributions, we extend our gratitude.

Inevitably, the editorial team has sought to ensure that relevance and quality have been the guiding principles for this football special edition. It is nevertheless notable that the ultimate body of work presented here is effectively, though unintentionally, characterised by two common themes: globalisation and management.

For those who study the business and management of football, this will probably come as no surprise. After all, the last two decades have seen a growth in managerialism (often allied to commercial developments) and an increasing focus on the sport's development across the world.

The phenomenon of managerialism has received scant specific attention, researchers in the field instead preferring to focus on the concepts and issues pertaining to commercial developments in football. Managerialism has, however, played an equally prominent role in the recent evolution of the sport.

Hence, the papers appearing in this edition that focus on innovation and legacy constitute important contributions to the field, in the way they address issues of efficiency and improvement in resource utilisation. We believe that studies in such areas are valuable and deserve to be replicated in different settings. Indeed, we encourage researchers to apply such managerial concepts more widely in the further studies of football.

A common narrative history of the sport often emphasises the importance of European football, especially from a business and management perspective. However, in this journal special issue, each of the papers adopts a broader, more open and expansive view of football, one that suggests a growing moment of power.

What is especially notable is a pivot towards an Asia-centric view of the game, particularly in the way that states engage with it to achieve both economic and political ends. This implies a view that is ideologically opposed to football in its former industrial heartlands. That is, by contrasting the role of state interventionism with a more *laissez faire* approaches to the organisation and management of the sport.

Given the upcoming 2022 World Cup in Qatar, the likelihood that China will quickly follow as the tournament's host, and a growing number of Asian sponsors and investors within FIFA and rippling through the game at all levels, we call for more research in this area. Understanding the economic and industrial dynamics of these changes and how they influence the business and management of football will, in future, be crucial.

It is routinely stated that fans are the lifeblood of football; it was thus somewhat surprising that more studies of fandom were not submitted for possible publication in this special edition, especially fandom in emerging nations. At one level, this is rather unfortunate; at another, it creates an opportunity for further studies in what is still a well-established research field.

The paper on fandom published here is nevertheless an important one as it addresses issues pertaining to expatriate fans. This clearly has relevance for marketers and international development managers in the sport. In turn though, it suggests some interesting opportunities in, for example, the importance of diasporas and migration for the business and management of football.



In addition to the relevance and importance of papers presented in this special edition, we also hope that it provides an inspiration for other scholars either working in the field or else seeking to publish papers relating to football.

There is an ongoing debate about the importance of research in football, with some critics questioning its value. However, with an industry estimated by some to be worth \$30bn globally, and with work of the quality being published here being produced, we argue that the case for work examining the business and management of football remains as compelling as ever.

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