

Söderman, Sten and Dolles, Harald (eds) 2013.

Handbook of Research on Sport and Business.

Cheltenham: Edward Elgar

The Governance of the Game.

A review of the research on football's governance

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1. Introduction

Given that the membership of football's supreme international body Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) surpasses that of the International Olympic Committee (208 versus 205 member nations) and the United Nations (192 members), that allegations of corruption and mismanagement have followed FIFA for a long time (e.g. Jennings, 2006), and that the sport has experienced soaring commercialisation (e.g. Giulianotti and Robertson, 2009), one should perhaps expect huge research interest about how 'the World's Game' (Murray, 2006) is structured and governed. This chapter aims at taking stock of what has been published academically about the theme over the last decade or so, providing an overview of studies and research topics, and reflecting on further research.

In this chapter we confine our review to publications that address the governance of football (for other sports, see in this handbook, e.g. Bourke, 2012; Skille, 2012; Winand and Zintz, 2012). While this encompasses the regulation of clubs' organisation and management by national and international governing bodies and their interaction with a number of other organisations, for practical reasons we here exclude research on club management (research on club management is emphasized in this handbook, e.g. by Anagnostopoulos, 2012; Dolles and Söderman, 2012; Jansson and Söderman, 2012; O'Reilly, 2012). The examination is also primarily based on empirical and conceptual studies and with a wish to map and coarsely

classify research areas, research questions, and findings. In saying that, we have excluded writings that largely ignore *processes* of governance, typical for many studies in sport economics and marketing which often depart from the notion that industries and companies should make profit, and from that position indulge in developing models of profitable business conduct. We also concentrate our treatment on studies appearing roughly during the last decade. We do not think this is a brutal limitation because this literature encompasses football's development in the last era and most of the academic material on the topic published in English also dates back to the last decade. Perhaps indicative, *Soccer and Society*, the only social scientific journal that dedicates itself entirely to football, appeared in 2000. Having said this, there are historical, sociological, and economic studies appearing before this time that have a bearing on governance, organization, and management issues. An example hereof is for instance the presentation of the theorem of uncertainty of outcome (e.g. Rottenberg, 1956; Neale, 1964).

The remaining part of the chapter is structured as follows: In section two we outline the concept of governance and discuss how it applies to this text. In section three we review studies that address football's governance primarily from within its own ranks, first with an eye on the transnational level, then with a more national focus. Section four follows the structure of section three, but its focus is on studies that sees the governance of the game more from the outside in, as interactive processes within a web of stakeholders. Section five provides a brief discussion of political governance in football, before in the remaining section the state of the research field and the suggestions for further research is summarized.

2. The study of governance in team sport

A defining characteristic of competition sport is the need for balancing cooperation and competition. While the focus of contestants is to win competitions, competition is premised on the ability of contestants to cooperate in organising the competition and to make sure that it is sustainable, i.e. keeping a critical mass population of more or less equal competitors. The superior end to which governance is important is to ensure the popularity of the game, which, as long as a balance between competition and cooperation is maintained, possibly can happen in many ways encompassing different views of what the game should look like. In accepting

these terms it follows that the issue of governance in sport particularly pertains to two levels; the organisation and management of the competing unit (the club and national team); and the organisation and management of the sport which aims at ensuring continuous cooperation and competition between competing units (the football authorities). Albeit these two levels are obviously closely connected, here space allows us to address the last one only.

The concept of governance is often seen as the twin concept of government. *Government* entails the notion that a governing body can define and control its domain, while *governance* responds to the observation that this is frequently not the case; governing bodies have to compete, adjust and cooperate with other organisations and groups and hence the structure and changes of a domain, including its borders, are subjected to contestation and negotiation. Henry and Lee (2004) assert that this is the case in sport where the traditional top-down hierarchies of governing sport bodies far from control their sport. On the contrary, sport changes through interaction in a complex web of stakeholders who make claims on it. Henry and Lee (ibid.), building on Leftwich (1994), label this *systemic* governance, of which they also identify two subsets: *organisational* and *political* governance.

Organisational governance refers to what is often labelled corporate governance, or ‘good governance’, i.e. “the accepted norms or values for the just means of allocation of resources, and profits or losses (financial or other) and of the conduct of processes involved in the management and direction of organisations” (Henry & Lee, 2004: 26). This more normative branch of systemic governance is increasingly being associated with stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984) and corporate social responsibility (CSR) (Lockett, Moon and Visser, 2006) as emerging fields of study.

Political governance relates to how political governing bodies seek to achieve goals by influencing other organisations through means such as licencing, regulation, financial incentives or moral pressure rather than by using direct action and coercive control. While there is a mixture of profit, non-profit and public organisations in sport governance, this does not mean that governments and the EU at the European level, support sport without trying to steer it in particular directions. Since politics are generically related to issues of legitimacy, political governance is also an approach that in part is normative.

Henry and Lee's (2004) notions of sport governance capture efforts to understand the development of sport in part as the political economy of sport, in part as the legitimated intentional strategies, actions, structures and systems created by sports' mandated organisations and directors - which is often the case in sport management studies (cf. Ferkins, Shilbury and McDonald, 2005) - and partly as a matter of sport policy (e.g. Houlihan, 2002; Bergsgard et al., 2007). If we add to this typology that governance also has its ideational aspects, change can also be studied as the outcome of processes that designated managers do not always fully understand and steer, although, or perhaps because, they are deeply immersed in them (cf. institutional organisation theory; Greenwood et al., 2008). Arguably, conceiving even corporatized football as an economic activity that is managed by shareholders and their salaried managers, or politicians for that sake, falls short of capturing the complexities and dynamics of an activity which engages a multitude of logics and stakeholders whose engagement is perhaps more social or social-psychological than purely economic (Senaux, 2008; Gammelsæter, 2010; Chadwick, 2012 - this volume). Accordingly, the question of governance should not be confined to 'who governs, and how?' but ask more broadly 'what governs, and how?'.

Having said this, describing properly the set-up, personalities, and inner deliberations of the bodies and persons in football's own governance structure is a necessary prerequisite to understanding how football, and team sport more broadly, is governed and by what dynamics. If football is studied primarily from the vantage point of broader socio-political and economic processes one runs the risk of depicting its development as a mere reflection of societal changes, ignoring or downgrading the agency and impact of football's own leadership and decision making bodies. In a mature research field we would expect to see studies that profoundly address the internal arrangements and dynamics of the sport as well as studies that highlight the interaction and influence patterns between the sport's own governing bodies and external constituents.

3. From the inside out: How the 'football family' governs the game

In this section we look at studies that broadly can be labelled as organisation governance oriented (note, however, our reservation in section 5). This does not mean that this literature is

particularly normative or prescriptive, but it does have a bearing on discussions of how football authorities should organise itself and behave in the future.

For those that expect to find a reader to football's basic organisation principles and governing arrangements, titles in the academic literature do not abound. This possibly reflects a remaining dearth of governance studies in the sport field, and the lack of sport studies in organisation theory (cf. Henry and Theodoraki, 2002). Studies that provide some descriptive completeness of how football is set up and simultaneously account for the most frequently recurring issues that can be referred to its organisational principles and inward tensions are few. To learn about the set-up and challenges of the sport one has to reconstruct from a multitude of sources, oftentimes in the context of sport governance more broadly (e.g. Foster and Pope, 2004, Hoehn, 2006).

3.1 Organisational governance at football's transnational level

Foster and Pope (2004) categorize FIFA as a team sport global sporting organisation (GSO) which is composed of other organisations, pursues the mission to govern and promote the sport globally, and bases its decision making on the one member - one vote principle. Sport historian Christiane Eisenberg (2006), co- author of the FIFA centennial book (Lanfranchi et al., 2004), concludes that FIFA has transformed itself into an international non-governmental organisation (INGO) with powers not only in sport governance but also in the field of development aid, alongside transnational organisations such as the International Red Cross and Amnesty International. This means that it operates independently of governments yet with the help of official elites, pursues cultural, humanitarian, and developmental aims, and helps to spread universal ideas and activities globally. The synergy of this has been to help fulfilling FIFA's original aims of regulating and promoting football and its competitions. While this has also been advanced by the commercialization of FIFA, Eisenberg repudiates the claim that FIFA has grown into a mere business enterprise. She acknowledges that the entrepreneurial success of FIFA erodes its democratic basis; when even the relatively wealthy national associations now receive more money from FIFA than they contribute, the power of FIFA's executive bodies which allocate the money is obviously enhanced. Nevertheless,

FIFA's allocation of surpluses is conducted according to need or equality principles and not as dividends on invested capital which is the manner in shareholder companies.

In his essay on 'Decisive moments in UEFA' the previous chief executive of the *Union of European Football Associations* (UEFA) Lars-Christer Olsson addresses some key governance issues at the transnational level (Olsson, 2011). He sees it as a complication that the continental confederations, such as UEFA and CAF (Confédération Africaine de Football), are not fully integrated in FIFA. One consequence in Europe is that the European Union (EU) has to keep relations with both UEFA and FIFA, which have not always coordinated their interests and agendas. In fact, the two organisations might compete for the patronage of such important authorities, thus the structure encourages politicking within the sport. Another deviation from the idealised model is harboured in the privileges still retained by the UK which on top of being admitted four associations, four national teams, and four votes for the Congress, also maintains the right to elect one of FIFA's eight vice-presidents (the others being elected by the continental confederations) and cast half of the votes in the International Football Association Board (IFAB), the supreme authority for determining the laws of the game. Olsson asserts that IFAB can be used for political manipulation because it has global impact that does not tally with its limited representation (Olsson, 2011).

Focusing more particularly on the interactions between UEFA and the EU, and relying on in-depth empirical research combining archival research and 43 semi-structured interviews, García (2008) concurred with Holt (2006, 2007) to say that football's traditional pyramid of government based on national associations, and in which UEFA had all authority to govern European football, has been challenged by emerging stakeholders. It is increasingly being replaced by a network structure in which new stakeholders – notably big clubs, leagues, and the players associations - define the future alongside the traditional bodies. For instance, to counteract the actions of the powerful clubs previously associated as the G-14, UEFA created the European Club Forum (ECF) in 2002. As UEFA's recognised partner and voice of the professional clubs, ECF was incorporated into UEFA's Professional Football Strategy Council, thus for the first time clubs could bypass the national football associations in making their voices heard in UEFA. While more recently the structural relations between the clubs and UEFA has changed again (García, 2011), the essential point here is that in Europe the confederation structure is under increasing pressure as a consequence of recent changes in the power relations between the professional clubs and national associations. Interestingly,

Eisenberg (2006) reminds us that FIFA is not to the same extent as UEFA compelled to take account of the major clubs, hence it can continue to channel its funds to the national member associations while UEFA has adopted models where revenues have increasingly been skewed to gratify the major clubs in the major leagues in the major television markets (cf. Guilianotti and Robertson, 2009: 118).

When jumping from structural issues to leadership the dearth of studies is only more noticeable. Fortunately, there are a few exceptions which show that added understanding can be reaped from studying the leaders of football's organisations. One of these is Tomlinson (2000) who employs the telling title 'FIFA and the men who made it' to build an argument that the way FIFA governs the game largely reflects the backgrounds and management styles of its presidents. In Tomlinson's account a particular shift in organisation policies and power relations took place when the dynamic Havelange - the businessman that had promised not to be subjected to anyone, and "a master of giving people the feeling that they are important without giving power away" (interviewee cited in Tomlinson, 2000: 64) - changed the atmosphere created by his predecessors Rimet and Rous who, with backgrounds in education and public service, led FIFA like "idealist missionaries" (ibid.: 69). Havelange is depicted as the new type of international leader who takes advantage of the changes in world politics.

According to Sugden and Tomlinson (1997) it was the anxiety about Europe's persistent influence in world football that inspired European football associations to establish UEFA in 1954, and that speaking with one voice was decisive in keeping the Presidency European until 1974 when Brazilian Havelange took over. Rous stood up for re-election but lost because Havelange, in contrast to Rous, canvassed energetically in post-colonial Africa and clearly supported the anti-Apartheid lobby in FIFA (ibid.; Darby, 2008). African votes were again pivotal when 82-year old Havelange stepped down in 1998 and his protégé Sepp Blatter stood up against UEFA-president Lennart Johansson which, somewhat surprisingly, lost the election (Bairner and Darby, 2001). These studies highlight how the political clashes between FIFA and UEFA, epitomised in the battles over the election of presidents was closely connected to changes in world politics. FIFA's aims of globalisation, generous admission practice, and one-member-one-vote principle contributed to water out the European influence as new nations were taken on board. Simultaneously, more expansionist presidents were able to take advantage of the world political situation and the global strategies of corporations like Coca Cola and Adidas (Eisenberg, 2005, 2006).

Bairner and Darby (2001) spotlights the previous UEFA president Lennart Johansson and his philosophy and presidential campaign prior to the FIFA elections in 1998. According to these authors his campaign reflected his social-democratic background and Swedish international commitment. This background led Johansson to develop a working relationship with the African football confederation, CAF, based on a vision statement that included a transparent rotation system for FIFA Presidents and World Cup Finals around the continental confederations. We now know that Johansson's election manifesto based on democracy, solidarity, and transparency did not appeal to the majority of the FIFA delegates, an issue that should attract our attention not merely to personalities but to the cultures of politics and friendship at the apex of football's hierarchy. Curiously, in contrast to the portrait of the last FIFA presidents as politically able and the rise of FIFA as an influential INGO, Eisenberg (2005) ascribes little to the analytical and political acumen of FIFA's leadership in her explanation of FIFA's transformation over the last century. She notes instead that thanks to the cause, the passionate involvement in the competition, and lifelong friendships among the sporting officials FIFA has been able to keep its direction and foster the development of football. More than anyone else, journalist Andrew Jennings (2006) has reminded us that these friendships and interactions may also have their darker sides.

The organisation governance literature on the transnational structure and leadership of football is centred on FIFA and UEFA. It depicts UEFA as more subjected to systemic governance than FIFA, partly because of EU's growing intervention into professional football but also because UEFA is more of a front line soldier having to battle directly with big European clubs and leagues backed by powerful sponsors and media corporations. In contrast, FIFA -and its presidents- is much described as operating independently of governments and powerful clubs due to its interaction with political, cultural, and humanitarian elites and multinational corporations and its distance to club football. FIFA is, in part seen as a reflection of the political leadership of its presidents which has been able to withstand allegations of corrupt practices exactly because of their support in global elites. Against the background of these diverse portraits of FIFA and UEFA, the interaction between these governing bodies as well as their relations to other continental confederations seems to be a much under-researched topic. This includes issues of formal structure and representation, but also issues relating to the asymmetry between Europe's central role in world football and its minority representation in FIFA's decision structure.

3.2 Organisational governance at football's national level

Despite the recent professionalization and commercialisation of football, analyses of football's national governance structures are far between. England to some extent represents an exception, but notwithstanding the many books, reports, essays, and articles that have been produced on the effects of commercialisation on English football, there are remarkably few that provide a complete outline of the governance changes that has taken place since the 1980s. For other countries, including leading nations such as France, Germany, Italy, and Spain, what is available (in English) is often sketchy (e.g. Desbordes, 2007; Hamil and Chadwick, 2010), and richer in descriptive numbers and graphs than in details about how the game is governed and by whom.

As with the inquiry into transnational governance structures there are exceptions to the broader pattern. Surely, the 'state of the game' reports on the corporate governance of English football, produced at Birkbeck University between 2001-2006 (e.g. FGRC, 2002, 2003, 2004; Holt et al., 2005), provide detailed reviews and analyses of governance change based on surveys on attitudes and effects of policy measures. Notably, the Birkbeck analyses are policy-oriented as they are produced by 'supporter activist' researchers which advocate measures to curb the corporatization of the clubs and the league and what is seen as efforts to transform the fans into pure consumers (cf. Hamil et al., 2000, 2001).

Another exception is a recent study of governance and regulation in Italian football provided by Hamil et al. (2010). Departing from observation of the series of misconduct and scandals in Italian football these authors outline its structure while spotlighting the political and corporate governance culture in which Italian football is wreathed. While this study illuminates how organisational governance is confined by national culture, it concurs with Bairner (2004) who -reflecting on football governance in small countries- argues that local factors in the national football bodies can limit the capacity for change.

Gammelsæter and Jakobsen's (2008) exploration of the specific dual-structure of Norwegian top football clubs highlight how the structure of professional clubs largely reflect an institutionally derived national regulative system in which sport bodies are central stage. In comparing the governance of top football in the three quite homogeneous countries of

Scandinavia, Gammelsæter (2009) found that despite great similarities in sport cultures and the set-up of elite football, there were marked differences in issues such as licensing, the way clubs are organized, and in the relations between the football authorities, top clubs, and organized players. In an extension of the study Gammelsæter, Storm and Söderman (2011) point out that, despite Sweden's much larger population and prouder traditions in international football, Swedish football economy is the smallest in Scandinavia. Since these countries largely share socio-political traditions and cultures, the differences are not convincingly explained as mere reflections of national regulative systems. Recently Hay (2011) has claimed that structural issues, often set down by the sport's own authorities should play a more central role in explaining the development and position of soccer in Australia. Hay himself outlines how the structure of Australian soccer has changed over the last 50 years much as a result of decisions and non-decisions made by its own leaders.

One of the consequences of the low number of organisation governance studies at football's national level - including comparative studies and studies of national bodies' relations to FIFA and their continental confederation - is little understanding of differences across countries and the extent to which football's own governing bodies influence different patterns of how football is organised and managed. We also observe the seeming oblivion of numerous national leaders that must have influenced their national football (notable exceptions are Hare (2003) and Armstrong and Mitchell (2008)). Where are the 'Havelanges', 'Blatters', or 'Johanssons' in national football? We assume that this picture is partly a false one in the sense that this domain of study has been the remit of sport historians writing in their national language. If we are correct this means that there is a reservoir of national studies that governance researchers can tap into. Another important source for organisation governance studies could be public inquiries into football, for instance in many Anglo-Saxon countries.

In conclusion we think it is fair to say that despite the understanding that sport in general and perhaps football in particular are increasingly being transformed through processes of systemic governance further research from an organisation governance perspective should be encouraged. If it is true that the game is now governed through a wide web of interacting stakeholders (Henry and Lee, 2004; García, 2011), the need to outline and understand the impact of football's own governing bodies and leadership should be even more pressing.

Disregarding research into the sport's own arrangements and personalities is of little help if we want to make sense of the dynamics that change football.

4. From the outside in? A changing game in a changing world

Above we have reviewed literature that outlines how football has organised and managed itself transnationally and across nations. Now we turn to studies that to a much larger extent see developments in football as a reflection of broader dynamics that comprise sport as they do other sectors of society. These are studies that primarily see the governance of the game as systemic, i.e. as moulded through interaction in a complex network of stakeholders.

4.1 Systemic governance of football at the transnational level

In borrowing from Castells (1996) conceptualisation of a 'network society', Sugden (2002) depicted the increasing influence of global business networks on the development and control of world football in an article titled 'Network Football'. Holt (2007), finding that the big clubs and their sponsors increased their leverage in European football, maintains that the stepping stone for these empowered stakeholders is the recent commercialisation of football, facilitated by simultaneous technological and political changes affecting the broadcasting industry, the autonomy of professional clubs, and the interest of sponsors to develop football as an industry. Despite this increasing network character of football's governance, Holt argues that UEFA and national associations most likely keep will a strong position in European football in the future. He points out that even the biggest Europeans clubs depend on their domestic market, and given the fierce competition and the lack of trust and unanimity among them it is not likely that they will risk the consequences of breaking away from the system of governance that integrates all levels of football at the European level (ibid.).

Lee (2004) outlines the increasing corporate influence in football's governance and argues that only states and major political institutions possess the necessary power to impede the pursuit of private commercial interests to undermine the broader interests of sport. Noting the general reluctance of the British government to intervene in governance issues, Lee's hopes

are directed towards the EU which, through the Bosman case, demonstrated willingness to involve itself in European sport. García (2007, 2011), analysing the EU-UEFA relationship after the Bosman-ruling, finds that UEFA has changed its attitude towards the EU from seeing it as a threat to considering it a long term strategic partner. UEFA has accepted that European law applies to the activities of football, and on this platform it has developed a policy dialogue with the EU which is now seen as an adequate vehicle in maintaining its own legitimacy in the governance of European football. According to García, the increasing demand for influence from the big clubs, the leagues', and players' associations as well as UEFA's partnership with the EU has transformed the governance structure into a 'stakeholder democracy' in which UEFA maintains its power through engaging in direct and regular contact with diverse players in the football field.

Another political economic contribution is provided by King in his two books on football's transformation in England (2002) and Europe (2003). In the first he is concerned with how the FA Premier League was established and how the new consumption of football came into existence in the 1990s. In the second he explores the emergence of new economic networks between football clubs and new solidarities among fans. King uses football to understand the transformation of society because "once football is recognised as a social ritual rather than an escape from social reality, important new horizons are opened up" (King, 2003: 15). King's approach is to see football as a ritual which expresses the hegemonic framework of society; hence football and its governing structure provide an arena for the expression of identities, meanings, and actions for society's dominant groups. Here governance becomes a matter of continuously 'controlling' the meaning of the ritual. In King's (2003) work the transformation of football was marked by the dissolution of Fordist economic regimes, deregulation of markets and free movement across borders, transformed nation-states menaced by the new region-cities and the European super-nation, and new identities rooted at different planes of social structure: the region, the nation, and, less likely, the super-nation. The processes of changing the ritual – which in England produced the FA Premier League – is closely connected to changes in actors in the political economy, and in this sense it reflects changes outside the ritual itself. The transformations in European football came out of largely intended political, cultural, and socio-economic transformation of the society.

In expanding the scope, Giulianotti and Robertson (2009) see the development of football as dynamics of pushes and pulls constituting the following four themes in the global field:

individual selves, national societies, international relations, and humankind. Associated with each of these themes they see political-economic strategies that relate to processes of globalisation and the formation of football. Thus, *neo-liberalism* is associated with the idea of the individual free agent and the promotion of transnational corporations such as large clubs, media networks, and key sponsors which benefit from deregulation of markets. *Neo-mercantilism* - epitomized as self-protecting and self-aggrandizing policies by nations, supra-state institutions and international governmental organisations - is promoted for example by nations hosting football mega-events and supporting their leagues in the international competition, such as the Russian state's channelling of money into Russian clubs and the expansionist televising of for example the English Premier League or the Spanish League. *International governance* is promoted by football's international government bodies such as FIFA and UEFA which, through their successful expansion, also have inherited competing interests and aspirations. Lastly, Giulianotti and Robertson (2009) see *global civil society* as harbouring ideas of a common world humanity and shared transnational fate, promoted for instance by INGOs and even transnational corporations which engage in football schemes to advance issues such as peace, development, democratisation, reconciliation, and social responsibility. The governance of football is conceptualised as the temporary outcome of battles between the diverse actors that partly pursue, partly oppose these political-economic strategies within the field of football.

In these systemic governance contributions the organisation of the game is largely seen as impacted by and reflecting, or - to concur with King (2003) - expressing, changes of the larger society: its changing cultural, political and economic ideologies and realities, and technologies. A pertinent question that arises out of this literature is whether football is merely a vehicle or medium that is malleable to all kinds of circumstances. Is it governed from the outside in, or has it a core identity of its own, a specificity that, given football's large outreach, may provide an autonomous force in transforming society? To get closer to an answer, it is not enough to assume that football's governance reflects societal changes and overlay this with selected examples. One needs instead to study empirically the micro-processes in which football's governing bodies and leaders interact with other powerful stakeholders in the network, be they media corporations, owners, sponsors, public authorities or fans. Thus, we encourage more studies like the ones undertaken by Holt (2007) and García (2008), at the transnational level as well as at the national to which we now turn.

4.2 Systemic governance of football at the national level

Giulianotti and Robertson (2009) employ the concept of glocalization to describe effects caused by simultaneous global and local influences. While neo-liberalism, neo-mercantilism, international governance, and global civil society are relevant strategies to understanding the shaping of football worldwide, local and national traditions, cultures, and institutions will shape the local uptake of these influences. From this vantage point studying processes of football's governance at the national level is highly relevant, and while there are few studies that specifically revolve around the issue of national governance, the numbers of book titles and articles relating national football in its many aspects to national history, traditions, and political-economic issues proliferate. Some are rather sketchy, as exemplified by the chapters on football in edited volumes in sport economics (Andreff and Szymanski, 2006), sport marketing (Desbordes, 2007) and sport management (Hamil and Chadwick, 2010). Others, reflecting the difference in disciplinary approaches as well, sweep more broadly without placing governance at the centre of the analysis, although it sometimes features as a sub-theme (e.g. Horne and Manzenreiter, 2004; Miller and Crolley, 2007).

A study which - besides King (2002) - ploughs deep is Hare's (2003) historic-cultural examination of 'Football in France'. Hare uses football as a window to study the revival of French national self-confidence, and identifies towns and cities, fans, coaches, player heroes, television and club chairmen as the major stakeholders in the development of French football. Nevertheless, in light of the study's pivotal question "whether the values carried by football are simply the expression of identifiable collective cultures, or whether we are dealing with a process of top-down construction of values by the state or the media" (ibid.: 4), national football bodies are not fleshed out as major stakeholders in the analysis. Hare gives extensive attention to State influences in the coaching system and the regulation of club organisation structures, but we learn little about the relationships between such stakeholders as the Ministry, the French FA, and the League.

Another rich study, yet with a closer look at the personalities of the football leaders is Armstrong and Mitchell's (2008) anthropological exploration of football in the Maltese society on the fringes of Europe. This study's methodology and access to the political players

(through interviews and observation) contrasts with the bulk of the literature on the governance of football in the centre, notably the UK. Much of the academic writing about transformations in professional football is produced by British authors and frequently uses English football as the “natural” reference point even when other countries are treated (e.g. Hare, 2003; Hamil et al., 2010), yet a comprehensive institutional analysis where football’s governance is related to UK sport policies, the role of the state, and the dealings of the football authorities are hard to find. Magee (2002: 223) for example, addresses the shifting balances of power in the new football economy through the “examination of the combined issues of Premier League wealth, increased player salaries, increased labour rights through the Bosman case, the use of agents”, but without an explicit framework that clearly situates the study in an institutional football system.

To alleviate the shortness of detailed description of football’s governance and improve the basis for better understanding differences across countries, Gammelsæter and Senaux (2011) recently compiled contributions from 19 European countries. Relying on an institutionalist approach these authors see football governance much as a mosaic of regional and national idiosyncrasies, and that prevailing differences are produced by different historical and evolving relationships between the State, sport associations, big clubs, sponsors, and, increasingly, agents and media corporations. In Mediterranean Europe, for example, sport is frequently seen as the responsibility of the State and with the national association as its ally, while the clubs, with some exception of Italy, are historically rooted in non-profit traditions. Corporatisation is therefore regulated or even induced by State laws that incorporate sporting ends into otherwise commercial companies. In Northern Europe, State involvement is more ad hoc, but non-governmental organisations rooted in traditions of voluntary sport in part play a similar role to the Southern European State in regulating the forms of football governance. Moreover, football in the British Isles has its own historical patterns with marked differences between Great Britain and Ireland. Similarly Eastern European countries share the legacy of football governance under communism, but - with the emancipation from Ministries’ funding and control - football seemingly have embraced a liberal market model with mixed success largely depending on the availability of private sponsors. Another trend across Europe is that Leagues, sometimes set up as shareholder corporations owned by the clubs playing in the league, increasingly govern the national professional competition on behalf of the national football associations which concentrates their efforts on youth and amateur football.

A study which more strictly juxtaposes football's governance across nations is proposed by Amara et al. (2005) who compare such diverse countries as Algeria, China, England, France, and Japan. These authors depict football governance as a systemic web of interactions between TV broadcasters, players' associations (e.g. FIFPro), sponsors, clubs' unions (e.g. G-14), national or European governments who are now interacting with and influencing traditional football governing bodies. Drawing on the five case studies, they analyse how interactions between stakeholders shape the system in each country and compare the cases along variables such as: role of the central state, role of local governments, mode of resource allocation (market driven or apportionment by some authority), uncertainty of outcome, patterns of player movement, and identification of dominant stakeholders in the web. Interestingly, they conclude that, despite the influence of global trends (such as the significance of merchandising, broadcasting deals and players' mobility), there is no teleological process at play that inevitably leads the systems towards a specific model of governance. The strength of the various stakeholders – and the network governance which results from it- differs from one country to another since local contexts have their own specific historical configurations.

In some contrast to the conclusions in the previous studies, Meier (2008), in comparing the institutional dynamics in English and German football, shows that different national trajectories may lead to similar institutional outcomes. Meier sees the instable governance in European football as the result of tensions between amateur and commercial logics. Amateurism, because of its initial hegemony and its emphasis on the educational and integrative value of team sport, has shaped the institutional preferences of political actors in Europe. This implicates that “professional sport is only regarded as an apex of a much larger and deeper grassroots movement” (ibid.: 105). It is this endogenous institutional tension that provided a fertile ground for governance changes when football confronted exogenous factors such as the deregulation of TV-markets and the advance of satellite TV. In England, the failure of football self-governance, illustrated by the crowd disasters of the 1980s, lead the State to provide huge financial support to modernise stadia, thus opening the way for a rapid commercialisation. When the top clubs, which had been sharing their rights with lower professional divisions within the Football League, received a lucrative offer from BskyB, they were supported in their break-away from the Football League by the Football Association which had been struggling with the Football League for institutional dominance and jumped

on the opportunity to strengthen its position through the creation of the FA Premier League. In Germany, support for associational self-governance has been the dominant policy paradigm, and in the absence of any governance crisis the political elites remained committed to the autonomy of sport despite an increased commercial context. Professional clubs were, however, able to use regulatory spill-over from the European level and pending anti-trusts suits to force the German football association to accept their adoption of corporate legal structures, to acknowledge their broadcasting rights, and to increase their control of German football by gaining a blocking minority in the executive committee of the German football association. Rather than leading to homogenization, Meier (2008: 127) acknowledges that the endeavour to disentangle European football from the amateur logic has “resulted in a further eclectic hybridization of practices and structures”.

Upon closing this section we should also mention that Niemann, García and Grant (2011) very recently, and too late to be properly reviewed here, released a book on the Europeanisation of the national game. With its ten country studies on how a changing Europe influences the governance of the national game the volume further adds to our understanding of systemic governance processes at the national and European level. Despite new releases, we reiterate the need for more empirically based studies into the micro-processes of systemic governance. We need to know more about similarities and differences across countries and what it is that cause them. Is football outside the pitch in a process of standardisation, or are standardisation efforts encountered by hybridisation dynamics? An interesting question is also whether cross-country coalitions are being formed inspired by specific competition requirements, common interests, or the pressure of sponsors and corporations. The idea of systemic governance entails the assumption that the powers of football’s governing bodies are being diluted, but a pertinent question is also whether influence is transferred from the national to the transnational level and if some nations have more to gain than lose from such displacement.

5. Political governance in football

If Henry and Lee’s (2004) conceptual scheme of governance types should be criticized it is perhaps because organisational and political governance seem to derive more from a

distinction between private corporations and public government than from what characterises governance dynamics in sport organisations. One might argue that these organisations are basically political, and if political governance relates to how governing bodies seek to achieve goals by influencing other organisations through means such as licencing, regulation, financial incentives, or moral pressure, this is exactly what football associations do (Gammelsæter and Senaux, 2011). Accordingly, outlining governance in association football should be about political as much as organisational governance. Indeed, this reminds us of Meier's (2008) argument that the instability and hybridisation of football's governance derives from the tension in the sport between amateur and commercial logics, and it also relates back to Eisenberg's (2006) repudiation of FIFA as a multinational corporation. This means, of course, that the question of football's identity and configuration is a political issue – and a research question – in its own right, and that King (2003) perhaps captures a key insight when he sees the configuration of football as the expression of political transformations. When we are inclined to see governance within football as corporate it is perhaps because we have come to see it through the lenses of the neo-liberalist political strategy (Giulianotti and Robertson, 2009).

Whereas the issue of how to conceptualise the governance of the game is immanent in several of the studies reviewed under the rubric of systemic governance, political governance as a specific type can also be reserved for strategies of intervention into football by public authorities. References to state intervention or intermediation abound in the literature (i.e. Hare, 2003; Amara et al., 2005; García, 2008; Anagnostopoulos, 2011; Morrow, 2011; Relvas, 2011; Riordan, 2011; Senaux, 2011), but to our knowledge there are no systematic policy studies that focus particularly on the interface between football and public authorities. This is a domain ripe for academic research where empirical studies would help us to explain differences in governance across nations, and, besides outlining diverse political strategies, possibly also highlight how and the extent to which public bodies mediate between various stakeholders in the systemic network.

6. Suggestions for further research

Table 1 provides a summary of research topics and example studies sorted according to the types of governance suggested by Henry and Lee (2004). Whereas we hope this synopsis does right to the research that has been done in the field, the table does not fully testify that research on this issue still has big leaps to take. To the extent that football governance constitutes a research field in its own right, it is fragmented and comprises as yet few studies which target football from a governance perspective. However, when many of the studies reviewed here suffer from not being situated in an explicit governance context, this does not mean that they are flawed. Rather it reflects that many of them happen to fill a vacuum by providing descriptions and analyses that are relevant for conceptualizing how football changes. It also reflects a lack of engagement in studying football in more typical governance disciplines such as management and organisation studies. Therefore the contribution to the understanding of governance often comes from disciplines that are dedicated to pursue other research questions than governance, such as ethnography, sociology, history, and, in part, marketing.

Insert table 1 about here

We have identified several issues where we think our knowledge on football's governance is highly deficient. This includes straightforward outlines of how football is structured and has changed its structures, and research on the extent to which the still prevailing pyramid of membership-based associations defends the interests of the sport's members, whoever these are, or if football's superior bodies, notably FIFA and UEFA, now operate as commercial corporations, not to say conglomerates, in the disguise of voluntary non-profit organisations. This is a seasonable question in light of the skyrocketing revenues that the sport now generates (according to Deloitte (2011: 8) the European football market amounted to €16.3 billion in 2009/10). Do the seemingly increased commercial orientation of the traditional governance bodies and the increased relative power of professional clubs undermine the "one member - one vote" principle so entrenched in the governance of the game (Eisenberg 2005)?

Another similarly neglected research topic is the lateral and multilateral relations between national associations and how these connect to politics in regional confederations and FIFA. Olsson (2011) asserts that voting in the UEFA general assembly and representation in the Executive committee before 1990 reflected the Cold War divide as well as a north-south split in Western Europe. This created an environment which slowed down the decision-making capacity of the associations. But what happened after 1990? Are there still powerful blocks in UEFA? How do they operate (and shift?) and what are the processes like? What issues have been (and is) at stake here, and what has been the upshot of such processes?

We have seen that some studies outline a context which is characterised by systemic governance; new interest groups short-cut the traditional bottom-up hierarchical process and become unavoidable interlocutors providing direct guidance to their members at the national and international level. European examples of such groups are the national players' unions, federated within the European division of FIFPro; the professional clubs' unions, gathered within the European Club Association (ECA); and the national professional leagues, associated in the European Professional Football League (EPFL). Though these organisations are increasingly important (Brand and Niemann, 2007), there is little research analysing their emergence and highlighting their role in the governance of the game. Studies are welcomed, therefore, on how actors, structures, and processes evolve in this landscape and regarding the outcomes of the dealings between them.

When it comes to depicting the environments that football's governing bodies have had to deal with there seems to be three favourite themes in the literature: the impact on world football (in particular on FIFA) in the aftermath of emancipation processes in Africa; the effect of technological developments and the liberalisation of broadcasting; and the widespread influence of the Bosman case on player migration and its reverberation on the competition for players (and revenue) across the world. While these events undeniably have been very important one wonders if there are not others that are much under-researched, such as the fall of communism in Eastern Europe and the liberalisation and transformation of financial markets, an important part of what is often referred to as globalisation. Giulianotti and Robertson (2009) have recently addressed the latter, but if football is the world's game (Murray, 1996) there is obviously a multitude of events, among them national events, that should intrigue researchers. A case in point is for example the effects on football governance in Belgium coming out of the intensified language and culture divide in the country (Balduck

and Lucidarme, 2011). An interesting question is also how football through the hosting of World and European finals affects the organisation of football in the hosting countries as well as the wider society (cf. Horne and Manzenreiter, 2002; Dolles and Söderman, 2011)?

The almost complete lack of analyses of individual leaders - and the cultures they create, sustain, or change - is striking in a sport which is so focussed on individual player and manager celebrities. As a consequence, we are not informed at all about the persons that manage football's governing bodies or the cultures that have developed in any of these organisations, not to mention if there are management issues related to the transition from hierarchical to systemic governance. Such studies would provide useful information for understanding the strategic actions of these organisations, whether it be the awarding of mega events or the efforts to investigate (or turn a blind eye to) practices that threatens to corrupt the game. Moreover, since most of these organisations are member-based and their directors are trustees, knowledge about management in these organisations should not simply be inferred from management studies in other fields. While football is now frequently denoted a commercial industry, the organisations making up this industry deviate from those dominating other industries. It follows that questions about their specificity in terms of culture and management should be most adequate.

Lastly, the modern game is encumbered with a lot of "modern" problems and challenges that beg research, in part to learn more about their nature, but also to increase transparency. Economic unfair play through debt accumulation, doping (cf. Malcolm and Waddington, 2008), corruption (Jennings, 2006), fixing (cf. Hill, 2008), hooliganism (e.g. Joern, 2009) trafficking and other migration related issues belong to the dark side of the beautiful game. A pressing issue for the game's governing bodies is to fight these problems, and to design and employ effective measures. Being not merely a member-based pyramid but also increasingly a network of organisations, the development and governance of control measures do not come easily. Research into how football deals with these issues, such as the initiatives to license football clubs, should be of utmost importance to football but also to the research community which needs to address the pivotal question the game faces in our time.

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Table 1: Summary of research topics and example studies according to types of governance and geographic levels

	Organisational governance		Systemic governance		Political governance	
	Topics	Example studies	Topics	Example studies	Topics	Example studies
Transnational level	Nature of governing bodies	<i>Eisenberg (2005, 2006)</i>	Network structure	<i>Amara et al. (2005), Holt (2007), Garcia (2008)</i>	Nature of governing bodies	<i>Meier (2008), Giulianotti & Robertson (2009), Gammelsæter & Senaux (2011)</i>
	Relations between FIFA-UEFA Governance structure	<i>Holt (2007), Garcia (2008), Olsson (2011)</i>	Football as ritual of political-economic changes	<i>King (2003)</i>	Public sport policy for football	<i>Garcia (2008)</i>
	Proliferation of powerful football associations	<i>Garcia (2008)</i>	Globalization of network	<i>Giulianotti & Robertson (2009)</i>		
	Personalities and cultures	<i>Tomlinson (2000), Bairner & Darby (2001)</i>	Homogenisation of governance structures	<i>Meier (2008)</i>		
National level	Good governance	<i>Holt et al. (2005), Hamil et al. (2010)</i>	Football as ritual of political-economic changes	<i>King (2002)</i>	Public sport policy for football	<i>None</i>
	Governance structure	<i>Gammelsæter & Jakobsen (2008), Gammelsæter (2009)</i>	Glocalization effects, hybridization	<i>Giulianotti & Robertson (2009), Gammelsæter & Senaux (2011)</i>		
			Football as identity network	<i>Hare (2003)</i>		