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## **Globalised Sports in a Historical Perspective**

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## **Globalised sports in a historical perspective – a summary**

The great interest in Asia for European, male football is an expression of globalised sports. Here globalisation and processes of globalisation stands for the economical, social and cultural processes, which link and affect globally. Global capitalism created a world hegemony. As a consequence the hegemonic power of the western world (including Japan) until now will be the norm of interpretation.

A precondition for the development of globalised sports as an industry of entertainment is the developing of a global infrastructure – especially in the shape of cable and satellite television. This infra structure, developed in the 80s and 90s, made it possible to worldwide watching of Olympic games, European Championships and World Championships in male football. The expansion of media played an important role for especially European football being global. The heavy interest was capitalized in the rights of broadcasting, which rapidly became substantial costly as the requests on the market grew.

Global attention made well-known athletics as the British footballer David Beckham becoming symbols of public relations twinning sports, entertainment and advertising in their brand names. Also the leading football clubs (or entertainment enterprises) as Manchester United and Barcelona became actors on a global commercial market. The season 1992/93 the Champions League became a formidable success. On the expanding broadcasting market the prime European football soon became a global matter. The combination of TV-rights and the logic of competition and success resulted in strengthening of the already economically strong clubs, which made them even more successful both sporting and economically. The broadcasting rights play an important role in the formation of the leading clubs as profit-driven companies. Financially strong interests of owners now compete of purchasing clubs in the British Premier League.

Another consequence of the global infra structure were the effects on the conditions of the labour market of sports. The new economical preconditions created assumptions for them to buy the best players on the market. The direction of the mobility from the economical periphery to the economical centre implies that the players move to Western Europe and the leading leagues there.

The processes of globalisation got many cultural consequences. Traditionalistic reactions in the Western World resulted in growing national and specific local identities. Sports are important fields for the interpretation of these identities.

The use of national symbols connected to sports has been more common. Firsthand supporting the national team has become more common. The interest from media has increased distinctly. The national celebration of the successes has increased – especially in the form of celebrating the heroes in a carnivalesque way.

The local identities are mostly expressed as the cultures of supporters. Hooliganism is an extreme form of this, which heavily has affected European male football. Hooliganism is a social problem, but when comes to the audience's behaviour it is a relative marginal phenomenon. Historically the male football interpreted class and local identities. As a result of this processes the audience was considered as an uncontrolled mass, which express community, carnival and ritual with tifon's, supporting chants and songs.

Hooliganism has existed all through the football's history, as one undercurrent. It got increased attention after England's victory in the World Championships of 1966. As a consequence of the mediated interest modern British style of football hooliganism in 1971 came to Sweden. In the 90s the problem grew, when the hooligan firms expanded. But, the historical perspective shows that the western problem with hooliganism is old and cannot be distinguished from the practice of football. The violent European fans treat the British hooligans as role-models, which inspired them and told them how to develop their own culture. The hooligans also are inspired by the increasing media coverage of football related violence.

## **Global football in a globalised world – from an historical change perspective**

New transport and communication systems, like economic and cultural ties, indicate that the world is becoming increasingly globalised. These globalisation processes can be studied in different ways and at numerous levels. In this article we take top-level male football as the point of departure for our discussions. The choice of male football is a simple one. As it is the sport that is most actively practised throughout the world it can be regarded as the most globalised – in the sense that it is organised and institutionalised by the global organisation

FIFA and as a market is globally integrated. The article aims to discuss the consequences of the globalisation process for top-level football. We discuss this from two angles: the first being the globalisation of top-level male football as a global entertainment industry and the second concerning the cultural consequences of globalisation processes from a spectator perspective. We regard the latter as identity- and educational processes.

The article is divided into three sections. In the first section, globalised sport, we deal with the first aspect. In the second section, an historical perspective of globalised sport, and also in the third section, a discussion of identity- and educational processes, we consider the second aspect.

## **A. Globalised sport**

In order to study the globalisation of top-level male football we first of all need to discuss the globalisation concept, since this provides the framework for the investigation. A prerequisite for the growth of a globalised sport is the development of a global infrastructure – mainly in the form of cable and satellite TV. This infrastructure made it possible for football to continue its development from competitive sport to entertainment industry. This change was manifested in several different ways, e.g. the growth of symbols and clubs with global range and global migration flows, which needed to be dealt with nationally and internationally.

In sections B and C we also discuss the cultural consequences of the globalisation processes.

## **The concept of globalisation**

With globalisation and globalisation processes we mean the economic, social and cultural processes that link and affect the world as a whole.<sup>1</sup> In this sense, globalisation ought to be regarded as a long-term historic process that has been going on for hundreds of years.<sup>2</sup>

We choose to describe globalisation from the starting point of global capitalism's world hegemony, i.e. from and including the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This perspective focuses on colonialism and imperialism and stresses a global economic, political and cultural order of power that is dominated by what is called "the Western world" and its capitalistic companies. Countries regarded as belonging to this world include the USA, Canada, Western Europe, Japan and

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<sup>1</sup> The interpretative approach is dependent on which problem is considered. Globalisation research is extensive. When it comes to the field of sport, cf. Peter Carlman's "Idrott och globalisering" [Sport and Globalisation], in *Idrottsforskaren* 1 2010.

<sup>2</sup> See for example Robert B Marks, *The Origin of the Modern World. A Global and Ecological Narrative*. Lanham, Maryland 2002.

Australia. World hegemony meant first of all a globalisation of the commodity market, secondly of commodity production and thirdly of the service market and service production. The commodity market was connected by more rapid transport (from steamship to tankers and container ships and global air traffic). During the 1960s and 1970s the communication and transport revolutions made it possible to move parts of the production from the so-called first to the third world. The structural crisis of the 1970s, which hit parts of the western world's heavy industry in the form of the shipping, steel and mining industries, was an example of this. The digital revolution and the rapid expansion of the TV media during the 1980s and 1990s, which we deal with below, led to the service market being globalised and parts of the service production being moved to countries like India and China.<sup>3</sup>

These processes reinforced the historically related regional differences in social and economic conditions. In 1913 the rest of the world's BNP per inhabitant was about 23% that of the western world. In 2001 it was 15%. Africa south of the Sahara had the most adverse development. Its BNP per inhabitant fell from 14 to 4% of that of the western world.<sup>4</sup> Another consequence was the widespread migration from the poorer parts of the world to the richer. A third effect, which became apparent during the mid-1970s, was a structural unemployment in the western world that resulted in significant re-organisational costs.<sup>5</sup> A fourth and final consequence was that the hegemonic perspective meant that the western world's interpretation of the world was converted to norms and that hegemony was not simply based on economic dominance but also on cultural supremacy.

These changes naturally also affected the hegemony. Global relations began to change during the 1970s, when the global economy became linked to global transport and communication systems in unprecedented ways. At the same time low industrialised parts of the third world began to be industrialised. It was the start of a process in which parts of the manufacturing industry were moved from the first to the third world. The rapid economic growth in countries like China, India, the so-called Asian Tiger Economies<sup>6</sup>, Brazil and Russia created long-term prerequisites in order to undermine the global hegemony.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Comments missing

<sup>4</sup> J. P. Smith, "Exploring International Differences in Economic Performance from a 'Social Capital' Perspective", Paper to ESSHC 2006.

<sup>5</sup> Comments missing

<sup>6</sup> Translator's note: see <http://www.investopedia.com/terms/t/tigreeconomy.asp>

<sup>7</sup> Matthew Taylor's "Football, Migration and Globalization: The Perspective of History", at *Idrottsforum.org* 2007. For the concept of hegemony see e.g. Björn Horgby, *Rock och uppror. Amerikansk, brittisk och svensk rockkultur 1955-69* [Rock and Rebellion. American, British and Swedish Rock Culture 1955-69]. Stockholm 2007 and *Kampen om facket. Norrköping under 1900-talet* [The Battle for the Trade Union. Norrköping in the 20th century] (forthcoming).

## **Top-class male football as an entertainment industry**

At more or less the same time as the global structural crisis kicked in, top-class male football began to change from being a mainly international, competitive sport to a global entertainment industry, i.e. a significant part of the globalised service production. Exactly when this happened is not certain, nor is it possible to sketch more than a vague outline of this development. Football had previously been characterised by a competitive logic that meant that one tried to achieve the best possible sporting results. This competitive logic contributed to leading clubs in Western Europe being forced into the global capitalist commodity- and service market. A consequence of this was that the competitive logic emphasis of success was linked to the market's own logic, which meant that success was no longer only measured in sporting results but also in the exposure of the club's and individual's brand and particularly in the club's economic results.

The growth of a global infrastructure enabled top-level football to be developed into a global entertainment industry. This is dealt with in the next section. After this we take a look at other expressions of this market adjustment.

## **The global infrastructure**

During the 1980s and 1990s TV and the Internet created the global infrastructure that made it possible for football enthusiasts throughout the world to take part in large sporting events. Cable and satellite TV developed rapidly at the end of the 1980s and beginning of the 1990s. This widespread interest was capitalised in the form of broadcasting rights, which quickly became more expensive as demand for the market grew. Media expert Peter Dahmén says that at the beginning of the 1990s Rupert Murdoch was one of the leading actors that turned global football into a global commodity. In 1991 his TV channel Sky bought the TV rights for the British Premier League for approximately 3 billion SEK. According to Norwegian sports researcher Harry Arne Solberg, at the end of the 1990s and beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century a number of satellite channels based all their activities on football rights like these. Competition thus became tougher, which forced the prices up more. The rights to the Champions League were the most attractive.

The American sports channel ESPN was one of the first. It started in 1979 and broadcast sport 24 hrs a day. In 1993 it reached about 65% of the cable TV market in the USA. Globalisation was also evident in that in 1993 the sports channel also broadcast in Spanish,

Portuguese, German, French, Dutch, Mandarin and Chinese. In 1993 the channel started to broadcast in Cantonese for southern China. Around that time the company began to prioritise the Asian market – instead of the European. Even the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) decision to stage the Olympic Games in China in the summer of 2008 can be seen from a similar perspective. It opened the Chinese market to IOC's sponsors.<sup>8</sup>

Mediatisation played a considerable role in turning top-level football into a global entertainment industry. By being seen in the media, players and teams could acquire advertising contracts and in this way become actors in a global advertising market.<sup>9</sup>

## Global sports symbols

One of the expressions of the global entertainment industry was the emergence of global football stars who not only received astronomical salaries but also large incomes from their advertising contracts. As a global brand, it became important during the 1990s and early 21<sup>st</sup> century that star players had long duration, since investment in the brand was huge. This commercial process seems to have contributed to companies focusing on fewer stars. The twinning together of competitive- and market logics meant that the more attractive stars combined sporting success with success in the advertising and media markets. Being the best player was not enough. Getting an advertising contract also meant having an attractive profile and being an attractive advertising object – not just nationally but for a global market. This led to players who were perceived as controversial being regarded as less interesting advertising objects. In other words, it was a matter of combining success as a player with good looks and acting in a way that inspired confidence. The Swedish mid-field star, Fredrik Ljungberg, who from 1998 played nine seasons with Arsenal, belonged to those who strengthened their brand through advertising.

The leading global football player was – and still is at the time of writing – the British footballer David Beckham. He made his debut in the Premier League for Manchester United in 1995, at the age of nineteen. In June 2003 he signed a contract with Real Madrid. His strong brand probably led to the Spanish club's interest. In the media there was speculation

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<sup>8</sup> Peter Dahlén, "Beckham – mannen, myten, varumärket", [Beckham – the man, the myth, the brand] at *Idrottsforum.org* 2003, Peter Dahlén, "Idrottskapitalismens genombrott i Kina", [The penetration of sports capitalism in China] at *Idrottsforum.org* 2008, Harry Arne Solberg, "TV-sportsrettigheter – attraktive, men riskable, investeringsobjekter", [TV sporting right – attractive but risky investment objects] at *Idrottsforum.org* 2004. See also Taylor 2007.

<sup>9</sup> For the symbiosis between sport and the media, see Knut Helland, "Sport som attraksjon: Symbiosen mellom fotball og medier", [Sport as attraction: the symbiosis between football and the media] at *Idrottsforum.org* 2004. For the relation between football and advertising, see Solberg 2004. See also Dahlén 2008.

about whether his appeal in Asia was the reason for his purchase, which meant that Real Madrid could increase its market there. The function of global stardom lay behind his transfer to Los Angeles Galaxy in 2007, in the hope that Beckham would give a boost to the American football league as a whole. New York Cosmos had done something similar in 1975 when they bought the famous Brazilian star Pelé.

In 2004, 2005 and 2008 Beckham was the world's best paid footballer if one takes his total income into account. His success on the football field did not really correspond with this position, however. Instead it was his brand that was rewarded. The film title "*Bend it like Beckham*" marked both the brand and that which characterised his game – the distinctive, dangerous free-kicks that bent around and over a defensive wall. Beckham's brand does not only signal that he has been an outstanding footballer (at the time of writing, in the spring of 2010, he was suffering from a long-term injury), but also that he lives a jet-set life and has a magnetic charisma. He married Victoria Adams (Posh Spice), one of the singers in the Spice Girls, in 1999. Together the couple have the same kind of appeal as leading American Hollywood stars and are also treated like "reality-soap" stars. On his official website Beckham is portrayed as a fashion-icon in an open-necked shirt that reveals parts of his well-toned chest and stomach. The image obviously strives to depict him as both a sports-star and a male sex-object, which gives him a multi-dimensional profile. Victoria Beckham is also portrayed as a leading fashion-icon.<sup>10</sup> On the Internet a number of websites publish gossip about the couple.<sup>11</sup> The endurance-aspect of his brand is illustrated by him still belonging to the leading class with regard to sponsorship, even though his sporting results are on the wane.<sup>12</sup> This shows that it takes time to establish a brand and that the companies that exploit him would very much like to continue to do just that. As Beckham's brand is largely based on the myths that surround him it is not always necessary for him to always appear as whiter than white. His career has had its ups and its downs. For example, he was made a scapegoat in the 1998 World Cup after having been sent off for a late tackle in a match that England lost.<sup>13</sup>

## Global clubs

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<sup>10</sup> Dahlén 2003, Wikipedia, The Official David Beckham Website, 23/3/10.

<sup>11</sup> [www.posh24.se/david\\_beckham](http://www.posh24.se/david_beckham), 23/3/10

<sup>12</sup> Dagens Nyheter of 24/3/10 refers to a survey undertaken by France Football about the best paid footballers in the world, which also included salaries, bonuses and advertising revenues. In 2010 the Argentinean player Lionel Messi, Barcelona, had the highest total annual income of around 330 SEK. Beckham was in second place with 304 million SEK.

<sup>13</sup> Dahlén 2003.



The individual brand showed itself to be important when Beckham was first sold to Real Madrid and after that to the USA, although it was the actual clubs that were the most important brands as well as the cornerstones of football as an entertainment industry. In the season 1955-56 the top European teams started to meet in the European Cup. This made it possible to determine which teams belonged to the elite, which in the long-run then created prerequisites for them to maintain and strengthen this position. This trend was further reinforced when the European Cup was replaced by the Champions League in 1992-93. This was a formidable hit – especially for the TV media. In an expanded TV market, male, European, top-level football was regarded as a global concern of similar importance to the European Championships and the World Cup in football. When the Italian club Inter won the Champions League in 2010, it was not only celebrated by fans in Italy, but also in India and China.

The combination of TV rights and competitive- and success logic meant that economically strong clubs became even stronger, which made them even more effective both sports-wise and financially – not least because the economic prerequisites meant that they could buy the best players on the market. In recent years it has mainly been the leading British, Italian and Spanish clubs that have had sufficient resources to compete in this way. Accordingly, they have also dominated the Champions League.<sup>14</sup>

Globalisation processes have also led to changes in the British Premier League and its predecessor, the Football League. In the 1960s and 1970s nearly all the players were British or Irish, whereas today the league is multicultural – and especially the leading teams. James Walvin claims that the clubs have de facto become “*a mosaic of nationalities and religions, yet when they played against foreign teams, they were thought to represent England.*”<sup>15</sup> We will return to the discussion about the regulation of migration flows later in the article.

In 1986 the Football League received £6.3 million for the TV rights.<sup>16</sup> In 2010 the global TV rights for the Premier League have more than doubled compared to an earlier agreement made in 2007/08. In 2010-2013 the revenues are estimated to top the £1 billion-mark; the Swedish-TV rights alone yielded almost half a billion pounds sterling. The greatest expansion has been in Asia. In Singapore the costs of such rights trebled from 2007 to 2010. TV rights are an important reason as to why several of the leading football clubs have become profit-related companies. In recent years financially-strong proprietary interests have therefore

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<sup>14</sup> Re. salary development, see e.g. Offside 2000, No.1. See also Dahlén 2003.

<sup>15</sup> Walvin J, *The Only Game*, Longman, 2001, p. 249

<sup>16</sup> Walvin J, 2001, p 271

competed for the purchase of British Premier League clubs. One of the first was the Russian oligarch Roman Abramovich, who bought Chelsea in 2003. He has been followed by e.g. the former prime minister of Thailand and multi-billionaire Thaksin Shinawatra, who in 2007 bought Manchester City, only to sell it two years later to representatives of the royal family in Abu Dhabi. Since 2005 City's rival club, Manchester United, has been dominated by American sports-club owner Michael Glazer and his son, who bought the club on credit. Global interests indicate that it is no coincidence that the London club Arsenal advertises Emirates airline flights from the United Arab States and that the new arena is called Emirates Stadium. According to the calculations of the business journal Forbes, Manchester United is the richest club in the world in 2010 – a position they have held for the last six years.

Successes in the sale of TV rights also mean that in 2010 the Premier League has been able to offer higher salaries than the competing leagues in Italy and Spain. According to one calculation, to which Dagens Nyheter refers, the British league paid out 18 billion SEK in wages – in comparison to the Italian Serie A with almost 12 billion SEK and the Spanish La Liga with around 11 billion SEK. In all three leagues salaries have increased significantly in recent years. A result of this is that successful teams in the three leagues can continue to recruit the world's best players.<sup>17</sup> While the top British clubs are lucrative investment objects, Real Madrid is best known for its “spending sprees”. When a new club president is chosen by members it is taken for granted that the purchase of certain top players will automatically follow. One of the consequences of its spending is that Real Madrid has not only accumulated huge debts, but also a corresponding credit.<sup>18</sup>

In the wake of the battle for TV rights and the global interest in Western European top football, several top-level European clubs now have their own TV channels that only report on their own club's activities. Manchester United's TV channel, MUTV, looks after the club's global brand and contributes both to advertising revenues and to so-called merchandising, which deals primarily with the sale of football shirts and similar goods. Real Madrid's TV channel broadcasts 14 hours a day, seven days a week. One of Spain's largest media groups owns the channel, Real Madrid Televisión. Real Madrid is paid for its participation in a variety of events and for exclusive interviews with the players. This kind of supporter-

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<sup>17</sup> DN 25/3/10, Dahlén 2008, Taylor 2007, Wikipedia, Forbes quoted by SvT Text 23/4/10. After Manchester United with 1.8 billion dollars, comes Real Madrid 1.3, Arsenal 1.2, Barcelona 1, Bayern München 1, Liverpool 0.8, Milan 0.8, Juventus 0.7, Chelsea 0.6 and Inter with 0.4 million dollars.

<sup>18</sup> Offside 2000, No. 4.

journalism has become a way of safeguarding the brand. Barcelona also has a TV channel of its own.<sup>19</sup>

## **Top-level sport as labour market**

Globalisation processes have also resulted in an increasing migration of footballers from the EU and other parts of the world. Mobility has changed direction from the periphery of the global economy to its centre, which in a football context still amounts to Western Europe and the leading Western European leagues. Or, in other words, migrants from the under-developed world have, for a variety of reasons, moved to the rich world. Today's top clubs are made up of the best players in the world, while the national leagues are drained of top-class skills and competence. So when the managers of African teams like Senegal, the Ivory Coast, Nigeria or Cameroon want to check the current form of their players they do not need to monitor the African leagues but can instead travel around in Europe and look at their players there. A large number of players in European clubs also come from Brazil and Argentina.<sup>20</sup>

Migration is partly a result of top-class clubs buying the best players in the world and partly because it has become much more common for clubs to buy outstanding players from markets in which one wants to expand, like China, Japan and South Korea.<sup>21</sup> This gives the clubs more TV-time in these countries. A similar tendency is that TV coverage increases if a player from somewhere like Sweden is featured. For example, when Zlatan Ibrahimovic moved from Inter Milan and Series A to Barcelona and La Liga, the Swedish media started to cover La Liga more than Series A. Similarly, when Henrik Larsson played for Celtic, Swedish TV viewers were able to see some of Celtic's matches.

Widespread migration has led to clubs, national leagues and especially the EU having an interest in regulating the market. Within the EU the watershed was the Bosman ruling of 1995. Prior to this the national leagues could restrict the number of foreign players in favour of their own younger players, who would have an opportunity to establish themselves. In addition, the clubs tried to prevent mobility between clubs by claiming astronomical transfer fees for players. Transfer fees were motivated by the amount it cost the club to educate and "improve" a player. Further, the transfer system prevented leading players going from a small club to a larger one, which led to salary increases. As the clubs wanted to keep their salary levels down,

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<sup>19</sup> [www.manutd.com](http://www.manutd.com) – the Official Website, 1003234, DN 100330, Dahlén 2008.

<sup>20</sup> Taylor 2007.

<sup>21</sup> See Takahashi Y and Horne J, "Japanese football players and the sport talent migration business" in *Football goes East*, Eds Manzenreiter W and Horne J, Routledge, 2004, pp. 69-87

it was not desirable for players to move around between clubs. The clubs were thus cartel-oriented in their use of the transfer system.

In 1995 the EC Court decreed that the free movement of manpower within the EU should also apply to the world of sport. The Court thus considered that top-level sport, particularly football, had become an entertainment industry that ought to be regulated in the same way as any other industry. From then on the clubs were only compensated if the players were still under contract. Another consequence of the freedom of movement within the EU was that national clubs could no longer restrict the number of EU players in the national leagues.<sup>22</sup>

Thus, with the Bosman ruling, the same rules that applied to the labour market as a whole were also introduced into the world of sport. This increased the players' mobility within the EU, which also meant that wage levels rose significantly and that the gap between affluent and less affluent clubs became even wider. Increased costs meant that many clubs in the national leagues experienced economic problems. In Sweden this process was amplified by football being professionalised, from previously having been semi-professional.<sup>23</sup> In order to prevent "economic doping", i.e. that clubs accumulated enormous debts – like Real Madrid – and to contribute to clubs competing under relatively similar economic conditions, an elite licence was introduced at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century in many national series systems. From then on clubs had to prove that their finances were sound. If not, they risked downgrading to a lower series level or a reduction in points – like the British club Leeds United in the 2006/7 season. The Swedish Football Association introduced the elite licence in 2002 in the two highest series for male football. From 2005 this also included the Damallsvenskan ("ladies' all-Swedish – the highest division of women's football in Sweden"<sup>24</sup>). Prior to the 2005 season, the Swedish club Örebro SK was downgraded from Allsvenskan (the premier division of the Swedish football league) to Superettan (the second highest division), due to their weak economy.<sup>25</sup>

The introduction of the elite licence meant that clubs had to be more careful with their finances and was also an indication that football was developing into an entertainment industry.

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<sup>22</sup> Elin Snögren Johansson, "En fri arbetstagare? Om det internationella transfersystemet för elitfotbollsspelare inom EU, särskilt om förtida uppsägning av anställningsavtal" [On the international transfer system for top-class footballers in the EU, and especially the premature termination of employment contracts] in *Idrottsforum.org* 2009. Snögren Johansson shows that the Bosman ruling began a successive change of employment regulations in the sports market.

<sup>23</sup> Offside 2001, No. 2, Taylor 2007.

<sup>24</sup> Translator's note: see Wikipedia <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Damallsvenskan>

<sup>25</sup> Wikipedia

## **Summarising viewpoints of global football as an entertainment industry**

Based on the above, and by way of summary, we can ascertain that the communication revolution of the 1980s and 1990s created a global infrastructure that made it possible for TV viewers throughout the world to watch top European football. This football was also developed into an entertainment industry – with a global spread. This led to the goal no longer only being sporting success, but also economic success. Leading players became global advertisers at the same time as top clubs no longer battled for sporting success but also competed for commercial market segments. This was how Manchester United became the world's richest club.

The sale of TV rights played an important role in the creation of this situation and also meant that it was possible for top clubs to buy the best players in the world, which in turn raised the level of players' salaries. Widespread migration meant that from 1995 the EU started to treat top-level football in the same way as any other line of business.

## **B. An historic perspective of globalised sport**

We now turn to the second question, namely the cultural consequences of the globalisation process. In this context the focus also changes from the world's top clubs to the national level, and especially to the spectators.

The global restructuring of capitalism, with industrial jobs relocated from the Western world to the so-called third world, together with a widespread migration from the periphery to the centre, had significant cultural ramifications in Western European countries like Sweden. Here we discuss two types of cultural reactions, namely that in the wake of globalisation national and specific local identities have become increasingly important. The emphasis on national identities means that nationalism has now become more important than it was before. These specific local identities are mainly expressed in the form of support to a football club. We also study this in terms of football supporters' changed behaviour as spectators. We first of all discuss both these identities – nationalism and football supporters' club identities. After this we put them into an historic perspective, which then makes it possible, in Section C, to discuss these identities in a problematising way.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Two works that discuss nationalism and the globalisation processes are Adrienne Sörbom's "Politikens globalisering i Emmaboda. En fallstudie från den svenska arbetarrörelsen" [The globalisation of politics in Emmaboda. A case study from the Swedish Labour movement] in Sörbom, A & Abrahamsson, H eds, *Den*

### *Sport as the arena of nationalism*

Ever since international football began national-based football matches have expressed nationalism. An example of this is that the regularly recurring football matches between Sweden and Denmark are headlined as international battles between “sworn enemies”. Although Sweden and Denmark have a long and common history of civil war and conflict, the last one actually occurred in 1815. After that relations between the two countries improved considerably. Scandinavianism in the mid-19th century is an example of this. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century the Nordic sense of belonging was meaningful.<sup>27</sup> However, in male football – and in other sports – national identities have been able to be articulated.

Prior to World War II, nationalism in Sweden – at least in part – was interwoven with racism and with a retrospective looking back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century period as a great power. This form of nationalism has been called “chauvinistic Swedishness”. During and after World War II this chauvinism became problematic. Sport became a way of articulating a new kind of nationalism that was neither racist nor chauvinistically retrospective, but that emphasised the successful competitiveness between nations in or beyond the sporting arena.<sup>28</sup> It is probably no coincidence that public support of top-level sport has increased in many countries in recent years. According to an Australian study, there is a linear connection between economic investment in top-level sport and success in the form of medals won by Australia since the 1980s. Research also shows that financial investment in order to achieve national success has become more widespread. The Danish sports researcher Rasmus Storm maintains that the political control of resources for certain sports is conditioned. If sport does not live up to the political goals then support is withdrawn. In recent decades the national image in affluent parts of the world is to be a successful sporting nation. It is probably no coincidence that the Russian president, Medvedev, according to the media, was seriously critical of the organisation of the Russian winter sports after the relative failures at the Olympic Games in 2010 in Vancouver. One could say that the pursuit of medals at the Olympic Games and the striving for national success in the area of sport had created a “permissible” national image at

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*tömda demokratin – och vägarna tillbaka till makten* [The emptied democracy – and the way back to power]. Stockholm 2004 and Björn Horgby's *Kampen om facket* [The Battle for the Trade Union]. In press 2010.

<sup>27</sup> Comments missing

<sup>28</sup> Henrik Berggren & Lars Trägårdh, *Är svensken människa*, Norstedts, Falun 2006

a time when unconcealed nationalism was perceived as something unattractive and problematic.<sup>29</sup>

Neighbouring countries have also served as rallying points for this self-assertion. This is shown by the Norwegian sports historian Matti Goksøy, who claims that during the early post-war period a Norwegian ‘big-brother’ complex was evident that had its roots in Sweden’s successes in the fields of economy and sport. The consequences of this complex nationalism in relation to Sweden were also expressed in the sports arena. International football matches are such an arena. According to Goksøy, international football matches are 90 minutes of nationalism that are framed by national flags and national anthems.<sup>30</sup> In recent decades Norway has emerged as a leading oil country. This means that Norway sailed past Sweden economically and partly also sports-wise. Today there is a Swedish envy of Norway, which is mainly articulated on the playing field.

Besides its relations with neighbouring countries, the Swedish conception of the country was influenced by the rapid change from being fairly culturally homogeneous to multicultural. Today one can categorise about an eighth of the population as “immigrant” in the first or second generation. This change, together with membership of the EU in 1995 and the threatening images of globalisation has meant that the need to articulate a Swedish nationalism has become increasingly important. However, as discussed above, the globalisation processes were not the only reasons for this.

### ***The supporter culture***

Specific local identities are often articulated in the form of supporter cultures. Attendance figures can be regarded as an expression of supporter interest in football. In Sweden attendance figures for Sweden’s Premier Division football matches were at their highest in the 1940s and 1950s, i.e. before TV became so popular. When TV emerged as an entertainment medium, attendance figures plummeted. This trend turned at the beginning of the 1990s, when attendance figures rose, although in 2007 they again began to diminish. Explanations for these

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<sup>29</sup> For example, DN 31/5/08, see also Matti Goksøy, ”Skihopp, cricket-tester og fotballkamper: Idrett som identitetsarena” [Ski-jumping, cricket tests and football matches: Sport as an arena for identity], at *Idrottsforum.org* 2004. Goksøy maintains that sport has become a field in which national identities can be expressed in an acceptable way. Rasmus Storm, ”En vedenskrig om medaljer” [A world war for medals], at *Idrottsforum.org* 2008. See also Henrik Stub, ”Fotbollen som farlig förebild. Sovjetunionens autonoma fotbollskultur”, [Football as a dangerous model. The Soviet Union’s autonomous football culture] at *Idrottsforum.org* 2004, cf. Henrik Berggren & Lars Trägårdh, *Är svensken människa? Gemenskap och oberoende i det moderna Sverige*. (Are Swedes people? Community and independence in modern Sweden) [Stockholm 2006].

<sup>30</sup> Goksøy 2004.

changes are multidimensional. There is naturally a connection between attendance figures and whether matches are broadcast on TV, but this is altogether too simplistic. Derby matches between big city clubs have filled the stands and terraces, despite the matches also being shown on the various sports channels.<sup>31</sup>

There are different reasons for the increase in attendance figures up to 2007. One is that football's identity value increased and that this led to supporters going to matches. A second is that football's entertainment value grew and that football also attracted new groups of supporters. A third is that media exposure increased. All three explanations are realistic. There may also be a link between them. Something that ought to be pointed out is that the media's entertainment value does not need to be the same thing as public entertainment value. We will come back to this a little later.

Football's increasing public entertainment value is linked to footballers' professionalism in terms of improved techniques and skills. This has in turn resulted in faster and more attractive football. This aspect does need to be problematised, however. At the same time as Swedish football has become more entertaining to watch, the TV assortment of international football has exploded since the infrastructural changes of the early 1990s. The entertainment value of the media is related to its increased coverage of football, since this attracts a larger audience. This does not say anything about the value of football as an entertainment product in itself, but simply that many are interested in consuming this product. Media exposure has ramifications, however. On the one hand, not only has TV increased its coverage of football during the 1990s and early 21<sup>st</sup> century, but also the Swedish media in general. One indication of this is that the leading Swedish tabloids, *Aftonbladet* and *Expressen*, now carry daily and extensive sporting supplements with a main focus on football. On the other hand, a comparison between Swedish football and international top-level football shows that the Swedish league finds it difficult to compete on the international market – both in terms of results and entertainment value. Media exposure means that the leading football clubs – also in Sweden – have significantly increased their turnover. In Sweden only leading ice-hockey clubs have a higher turnover per year. Finally, the identity value has also increased appreciably in recent decades. Supporter numbers have increased and their position has strengthened – a subject that we will return to in due course.

The facts cannot be ranked in order of preference or precedence. Something that points to the importance of identity- and entertainment value is that attendance figures have changed in

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<sup>31</sup> See DN 25/5/10 in which sports reporter Johan Esk claims that the changes are due to a trend reversal. However, he cannot give any explanation as to what this entails.



recent years, which is probably linked to the supporters of large clubs being associated with hooliganism, i.e. a violent identification with the club, which has meant that parts of the prospective audience have been reluctant to attend matches.

There have been several examples in recent years of supporters influencing the clubs' activities, such as the replacement of unpopular club directors or other leading officials and elected representatives. Protests have occurred in connection with annual meetings and at matches and the management have been harassed in various ways. There are also several examples of clubs increasingly having problems with violent supporters. Especially in the media, a discussion has been going on for some time as to how hooliganism should be dealt with.

Hooliganism and other supporter cultures are mainly associated with young men, who for various reasons over-communicate the supporter culture. Although it is not possible to go into any detail here, we do, below, suggest possible reasons for the use of violence. It should also be noted that it is not only in Sweden that male football has been transformed into a high-risk policing project<sup>32</sup>, but that this is also apparent in other places in Europe and South America. The use of violence seems to have strengthened traditional supporter identities with their own team.<sup>33</sup>

At the same time as the supporter culture is over-communicated and transformed into hooliganism, another tendency should also be taken into consideration. While the behaviour of supporters has been strengthened, the players' identification with the team has probably been weakened. Particularly after the Bosman ruling, players became market commodities. Alessandro del Piero, who has spent a large part of his footballing career with Juventus, and Henrik Larsson, who for many years chose to remain with Celtic, are exceptions. They have also received respect and attention for this. However, the rule is rather that successful players move from successful club to successful club and in their twilight years do the opposite. A career like this can start in a small Swedish club, that constitutes the player's basic education, and then continue in a top-level Swedish club, in which the player develops further and that also serves as a shop-window for wealthier clubs in the higher leagues. A successful career in these leagues can sometimes begin in a small insignificant club and then continue to international top-club level. Zlatan Ibrahimovic is a case in point, and progressed from the successful Swedish top-level club Malmö FF, to the Dutch club Ajax, to the top Italian club

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<sup>32</sup> G Robson G, *No One Likes Us, We Don't Care. The Myth and Reality of Millwall Fandom*. London 2000

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Offside 2000, No. 4 and the antagonism between Barcelona and Real Madrid, which has its roots in World War II.

Juventus. When Juventus was temporarily demoted he was transferred to Inter and then to Barcelona. Players' disloyalty indicates that their brands have been strengthened at the expense of the clubs' brands.<sup>34</sup>

The supporter culture seems to be relatively independent of these trends, however.

## Historical perspectives

The globalised football of recent decades needs to be placed in an historic context in order to be comprehensible. We do this by highlighting football's relation to nationalism and to the supporter culture.

### The national arena

In connection with increased globalisation, the formation of a stronger EU and other expressions of a weakened – and perhaps even dissolved – nation state, nationalism at football matches should really be on the wane. At least this was the hope of the European Commission at the beginning of the 1990s.<sup>35</sup> However, the Commission had misinterpreted the strength of national symbols and the nature of football as an identity-arena. Matti Goksøyr instead shows that development in the European Economic Area country of Norway did not match the Commission's hopes. Especially in the years 1993 and 1994, nationalism was a very strong force at different sporting events.<sup>36</sup> Goksøyr particularly mentions Norway's participation in the World Cup in 1994 and the Olympic Games in Lillehammer in the same year as examples of events in which strong national feelings were expressed and where national symbols were prolific. Sport has, he maintains, kept its position as a kind of free zone for national expression, where one sings the national anthem and uses national symbols that in other societal arenas would be deemed improper.<sup>37</sup> This is a perspective that we share.

Which sport is used in connection with national identity has changed over time. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century and way into the 20<sup>th</sup> century cricket was the British sport that gave rise to the strongest national feelings.<sup>38</sup> However, in the 1960s male football took over this role, despite it becoming more common for British clubs to be multiethnic, as we indicate above.

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<sup>34</sup> Something that is in line with the general individualisation process in Western societies, see Ronald Inglehart, *Modernization and Postmodernization. Cultural, Economic, and Political Change in 43 Societies*. Princeton, New Jersey 1997.

<sup>35</sup> See Goksøyr 2008, p. 161.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Goksøyr 2008, p. 162

<sup>38</sup> James Walvin, *The Only Game*, Longman, 2001, pp. 248-249

In the context of this study it is not possible to investigate how – and if – football has become a more significant national arena in Sweden, although there are definite signs of this being the case. International football matches between neighbouring countries became more popular in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and onwards. Indeed, international matches, primarily against Denmark, were depicted as battles against “the sworn enemy”, although there was little more to it than that. And so it continued, although the international interchange was extended. Sweden could also celebrate major national successes – especially during the early post-war period with a gold medal in the 1948 Olympic Games, bronze at the World Championships in 1950 and silver at the 1958 World Championships as highlights. Media attention was limited, however, as were the national celebrations.

Something has happened in recent decades, however. Firstly, it has become much more common for Swedish and other national team supporters to support their team in situ. This is partly due to increased living standards, which make this possible, although is not the only explanation. Secondly, media interest has markedly increased – not least in the form of flag-waving and supporters’ public and carnival-like homage of their heroes. In the 1990s and early 21<sup>st</sup> century national successes in the two largest sports in Sweden – football and ice-hockey – have been both recognised and celebrated. The bronze medal at the World Championships in 1994 was celebrated publicly in Stockholm. When the team flew into Swedish air-space on their way home the plane was given a guard of honour by the Swedish Air Force. The gold medals at the World Championships and the Olympic Games in ice-hockey were also celebrated in similar fashion. Thirdly, Swedish fans have also started to wear national team sweaters, paint their faces in the national colours and started to wear horned helmets that can be associated with a past Viking era.<sup>39</sup>

In the context of this article we are unable to consider the analysis of sport as a growing national arena in any depth. Instead we will now discuss the identities that are linked to sports clubs in the form of supporter culture.

## **Popular football and the origins of Western football**

In order to understand the supporter culture we need to go back in time and look at the medieval and early-modern origins of football. These roots have been discussed to varying degrees by sociologist Norbert Elias and historian Eric Dunning and also by historian

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<sup>39</sup> This is largely based on our own memories. In the past there was no Swedish tradition of celebrating successes by bathing in fountains or waving flags in public and so on, as in Southern Europe, although this type of celebration has now become more popular in Sweden.

Torbjörn Andersson and sociologist Aage Radman. According to their research results it would seem that earlier versions of modern football were played in different parts of the world. That which has most significance for modern football is the popular football that was prevalent in the British Isles in the Middle Ages. This was more or less without rules and downright brutal. The pitch was not marked out and no distinction was made between spectators and players. The element of violence meant that already in the 14<sup>th</sup> century the game was regarded as altogether too wild, uncontrollable and of no benefit to society. The authorities thus endeavoured to control – or to use Norbert Elias’ terminology “civilise” – football. Like many other sports, football was finally regulated in England in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. However, much of football’s rough and tough mentality lived on among the supporters, on the terraces.<sup>40</sup>

British football was integrated into the ceremonial calendar. Especially on Shrove Tuesday, different villages, communities or professional groups battled against each other. At that time football was clearly rooted in the carnival-like folk culture that we discuss later in the article. According to Andersson and Radman, football as we know it has also retained its links to festivals and ideas connected with this. Big matches are always expected to resemble national festivals. In Britain modern football first developed as a middle- and upper-class sport, but later spread to the working-class when the game became a typical spectator sport. The terraces were difficult to control and, especially in the 1890s, uncontrollable fans were widespread.<sup>41</sup> At the same time, the bourgeoisie endeavoured to use modern football as a means of shaping and educating the young gentleman, who would be disciplined in the forms of the game. A classic expression that formed the basic fundamentals was that football was said “to make men of boys and boys of men”. During the 20<sup>th</sup> century this bourgeois aspiration came into conflict with the working-class sporting expression of commercialism and hooliganism, which we deal with below. Not only that, women also eventually demanded access to this football culture – a miniature world that was originally set up by men for men.<sup>42</sup> Historically speaking football had been concerned with number of closely related, but often contradictory and clashing themes: violence and celebration, play and seriousness, amateurism and professionalism, folksiness and gentleman’s sport, commercialism and idealism, immature youth and male discipline, identity and rivalry as well as regionalism and nationalism.

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<sup>40</sup> Norbert Elias & Eric Dunning, *Från riddarspel till fotbollscup. Sport i sociologisk belysning* [From Tournament to Football Cup. Sport in a Sociological Light], Stockholm 1986, Torbjörn Andersson & Aage Radman, *Från Gentleman till Huligan*, [From Gentleman to Hooligan] Stockholm 1998, especially pp. 29-31.

<sup>41</sup> Eric Dunning, “Åskådarvåld. Sociologiska notiser kring ett till synes nytt problem”, [Supporter violence. Sociological indications of a seemingly new problem] in Elias & Dunning 1986, p. 139.

<sup>42</sup> Andersson & Radman 1998, pp. 61-62.

## When football came to Sweden

Modern regulated football was introduced in Sweden at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The conflict between control and unbridled popular culture meant that football as male fellowship was not developed in the conflict-free way intended by the bourgeoisie. Right from the start the game thus encountered resistance from different parts of society, at the same time as it almost naturally created conflicts between the rival teams. Criticism of football was based on a number of things. The game was considered to be unhealthy and dangerous. It also encroached on the Sunday church service.<sup>43</sup> The football culture did not encourage temperance either. Alcohol had a central place in middle-class sporting life at the turn of the century. Such partying was openly reported on in the sports press and in clubs' contemporary jubilee publications. That football teams and alcohol went hand in hand was no secret. Danish and English teams that visited Sweden said that they were very happy with their hosts, "*who generously offered them unlimited drinks at dinner parties*".<sup>44</sup> One reason for this early amalgamation of football and alcohol was that the country's first sports grounds were run as private joint-stock companies. In order to safeguard the economy they needed to find collaborative partners. This is why restaurant-, dance- and entertainment enterprises played an important role. Sports grounds thus became known as "dubious environments" in that wholesome sport was claimed to be largely financed by the modern entertainment industry. It is therefore hardly surprising that sports grounds often attracted social criticism at a time when the selling of alcohol was strictly regulated and when the temperance movement played an important political role. Pressure on the role of alcohol within sport increased. That this occurred at the same time as the working-class began to play sport, and especially football, was, according to Andersson and Radman, hardly a coincidence.<sup>45</sup>

Another expression of football being eventually integrated into the entertainment industry was the commercialisation of the sport itself. In England this tendency was widespread and coincided with the start of the professional league – a league that was run on commercial principles. In Sweden and in several other countries the development was checked by the

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<sup>43</sup> Andersson & Radman 1998, p. 32

<sup>44</sup> Andersson & Radman 1998, p. 33, see also Norrköpings Stadsarkiv, IF Sleipner, Styrelseprotokoll 6/4 § 117 1924 "*Beslöts att vid alla resor för fotbollslaget skall utgå en billig middag med begränsad kvantum sprit, 1 brännvin, 1 pilsner och 1 glas punsch. Kaffe för match om så erfordras. Dessutom skall utgå kronor 5 i fickpengar och kronor 10 för dem som ej deltaga i middag.*" [The minutes of the board meeting record: It was decided that all football team trips should include a cheap meal with a limited amount of alcohol, 1 schnapps, 1 lager and 1 glass of punch. Coffee for the match if so desired. In addition, 5 crowns should be provided as pocket money and 10 crowns for those not taking part in the meal].

<sup>45</sup> Andersson & Radman 1998, pp. 38-39

predominant amateur ideal, although that ideal would later be undermined by professionalism. After World War II Sweden was one of the leading football nations. In the autumn of 1946 Swedish champions IFK Norrköping embarked on a tour of England, where they played against several British league teams and won. Players like Nils Liedholm and Gunnar Nordahl were in the team. Two years later Sweden won a gold medal at the Olympic Games in London. After that Liedholm and Nordahl became professionals in Italy where, together with Gothenburger Gunnar Gren, they were a great success (Gre-No-Li). They were among the pioneers of Swedish football, who often found their way to the professional leagues in Southern Europe. When they turned professional they were no longer welcome in the Swedish national team. This rule was only abolished prior to the football World Championships in 1958, since otherwise Sweden would have been unable to form a competitive team.

Professionalisation did not only affect the leading players. The employment of foreign coaches in the interwar years and the early post-war period were examples of clubs beginning to think in terms of competitive-logic and success. For example, IFK Norrköping's successes were associated with coaches Lajos Czeisler, Karl Adamek and Vilmos Varszegi. The success logic also meant that resources were needed in order to attend training camps.<sup>46</sup>

Football played a major role as an identification object. At first the football culture was dominated by regional antagonisms, although local class-conflicts also became significant. For example, class rivalry between neighbourhoods, districts or groups could be transmitted to football, such as in Norrköping between the working-class team IF Sleipner and the middle-class team IFK Norrköping, in Malmö between the rival teams Malmö FF and IFK Malmö and in Gothenburg between GAIS and Örgryte IF. In Stockholm, AIK were known as "the tuxedo players", while Djurgårdens IF went under the epithet "the iron stoves". The third leading Stockholm team, Hammarby IF, was associated with the working-class district of Söder. This pattern is also repeated internationally.<sup>47</sup> The friction between Glasgow Celtic and Glasgow Rangers highlights yet another dimension – religious antagonism – between Catholic Celtic and Protestant Rangers.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> See e.g. Torbjörn Andersson, *Kung Fotboll. Den svenska fotbollens kulturhistoria från 1880-talet till 1950*. [King Football, The cultural history of Swedish football from the 1880s to 1950] Eslöv 2002, Gunnar Persson, *IFK Norrköping. En klubbhistoria 1897-1997*. Norrköping 1997, Björn Horgby, "Fotboll som arbetaridentitet. Berättelsen om en åttafotad häst", [Football as a working-class identity. The story of an eight-footed horse] Per Månsson ed, *Det goda livet*. [The Good Life] Göteborg 2001.

<sup>47</sup> Andersson 2002, Peter Billing, Mats Franzén & Tomas Petersson, *Vem vinner i längden? Hammarby, Malmö FF och svensk fotboll*, [Who wins in the end? Hammarby, Malmö FF and Swedish football], Lund 1999, Björn Horgby, "Klassrivaler – Kamraterna och Sleipner in Norrköping", [Class Rivals – Comrades and Sleipner in Norrköping] at *Idrottsforum.org* 2003.

<sup>48</sup> E Dunning 1986, p. 142.

The popular rivalry between the clubs stood in sharp contrast to the disciplining and educative way in which football was portrayed in the press. The game should be characterised by self-control, tactics and collective action. The team, the players, the goal-scorers and the end result were not important.<sup>49</sup> What was objectionable was the “*lack of discipline, disorder and individualism; especially dribbling in a conceited and showman-like manner*”.<sup>50</sup> Performing for the crowd indicated that one had misunderstood the educative nature and aims of football. Matches were regarded as a kind of test of character for the players with regard to playing in a gentlemanlike fashion and at the same time preferably to win. Playing fairly, being loyal to the team, not just prioritising victory and constantly keeping one’s head were all emphasised as ideal models. According to the magazine *Nordiskt Idrottslif* everyone was a gentleman if he performed correctly on the football pitch. In other words, there was no ideological difference between how the game was communicated to middle-class youth at the beginning of the century, and to working-class youth some years later. The game was supposed to be classless. This was not the case in practice, however. It was actually players from the working-class who began to focus seriously on football and at the same time expected proper economic recompense. By 1905 it became clear – especially in industrial communities like Eskilstuna and Sandviken – that football was becoming more attractive to working-class youth.<sup>51</sup> Despite this, the class aspect was not mentioned at all in contemporary magazines like *Nordiskt Idrottslif*.

## **Football supporters – an historical account**

We have seen that football soon became an arena for identities and social contrasts and that the supporters – at least at times – were perceived as a threatening, uncontrollable mob. Football hooliganism thus became a social problem – something that many researchers have tried to find explanations for. At the same time, research has shown that hooliganism is a relatively marginal supporter-behaviour. This was largely about solidarity, carnival and ritual. It was a solidarity that was based on the common identity, such as for example support for the 2009 Swedish champions AIK and in the carnival-like dragons associated with tifos and cheering and singing rituals.

Sweden’s first “hooligan” crisis occurred in August 1913, when public disturbances broke out in Gothenburg and Sandviken. The supporter problem in Sandviken was special because it

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<sup>49</sup> Andersson & Radman 1998 pp.35-36

<sup>50</sup> Andersson & Radman 1998, p. 36

<sup>51</sup> Andersson & Radman 1998, p. 37

was directed towards the neighbouring town of Gävle, some 20 km away. This geographic rivalry was probably reinforced by class differences. Sandviken's AIK was a working-class club that had recently reformed after splits during the Great Strike of 1909, whereas Gefle IF was still a decidedly bourgeois club. Around 1910 a strong local patriotism emerged among supporters in Sweden, and a number of incidents were reported in the press as hooligan-based; something that was a result of football "*becoming very serious for clubs and their supporters*". From then on football supporters were perceived as undisciplined. Supporter violence also made an appearance on several occasions, e.g. in the form of attacks on referees or on the away team's players. Supporters used what they could in order to promote the home team.<sup>52</sup>

Internationally, the supporter culture that is called hooliganism has existed as an undercurrent throughout the entire history of football. Hooliganism received more attention after England's victory in the World Cup in 1966. Football as such also received increased media attention around that time, and interest in the previously known problem of hooliganism grew. From then on "football hooliganism" was regarded as a problem that either aroused moral indignation or created moral panic reactions. A result of this was that the violence that had previously been limited to clearly defined working-class youth groups became more widespread. This also led to increased media interest, which in turn reinforced the behaviour pattern and contributed to its spread.

## **Football hooligans**

What exactly is hooliganism? The concept football hooligan was and is used in Sweden synonymously with "thug" or "unruly youth". The term is thought to originate from a 19<sup>th</sup> century Irish song about a violent family called Hooligan.<sup>53</sup> The modern version of football hooliganism emerged in Britain after World War II. There are several reasons for this. The most probable explanation is the development of a new and clearly defined youth culture – a working-class youth culture that was periodically violent. This is evident in the youth riots of 1958 and the Mod (modernist) riots of the 1960s. Riots during football matches became increasingly common. The problem accelerated and became more acute in connection with the tragedy at Heysel Stadium in Brussels during the European Cup final in 1985 between Liverpool and Juventus, when the clubs' supporters attacked each other. Thirty nine people

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<sup>52</sup> Andersson & Radman 1998, p. 47, 51. See also Walvin J, 2001, p 148-166

<sup>53</sup> E Lundberg, "Fotbollshuliganismen växte fram i Storbritannien", [The emergence of football hooliganism in Britain] in *Populär Historia*, No. 9 2008. Walvin J, 2001, p 153-154



died and 400 were injured. This resulted in British club football being banned from European Cup tournaments for several years.<sup>54</sup>

It can be said that modern football hooliganism came to Sweden in the autumn of 1971, when IFK Göteborg supporters stormed onto the pitch during the final match of the premier league season against Örebro SK in Örebro. IFK was losing 1-0 at the time and was in danger of being relegated, and as a consequence the match had to be abandoned. In Sweden the problem increased in the 1990s when hooligan firms made an appearance. A firm consisted and consists of loosely organised supporters who do not hesitate to use violence to, as they see it, defend their team. The first firm consisted of AIK supporters, which was later joined by counterparts in Djurgården IF, Hammarby IF, Malmö FF, Helsingborg IF, IFK Göteborg and GAIS – all of which except Helsingborg IF represent the three largest cities in Sweden. During a fight in 2002 one person died in connection with a match between AIK and IFK Göteborg, in which the respective teams' hooligan firms were involved.<sup>55</sup>

As already indicated, a number of different supporter organisations are connected with the three largest Stockholm clubs. In the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century supporter groups like Casuls and Últras were created.<sup>56</sup> Casuls is a subculture within the international football supporter culture. These supporters wear special clothes – a culture that began in England during the 1970s and that “*distinguishes itself by not distinguishing itself at all*”. Clothes should be smart and discrete so that it is not evident that one is a hooligan.<sup>57</sup> They thereby differ from the majority of supporters – who generally wear their favourite team's colours. Últras, which is Latin for “more than”, is a subculture that developed in Italy. These supporter organisations maintain that their love for their team is “*beyond the normal*”.<sup>58</sup> When magazines interview supporters belonging to the supporter groups of the three Stockholm teams, it is pointed out that the supporters consist of ordinary normal men with ordinary jobs and families who simply happen to love their team more than is considered usual.<sup>59</sup> As they consider themselves to be the real supporters of the team it is in conjunction with this that fights in the team's name can be deemed necessary.

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Larsson C & Källgren L, "Fotbollsrelaterad Hooliganism", [Football-related Hooliganism] Fördjupningsarbet, Polisutbildningen vid Umeå Universitet, Ht 2006, Rapportnummer 323 [In-depth study, Police training course at the University of Umeå, autumn term 2007, Report No. 323].

<sup>56</sup> Dimovski D, "Fotbollssupport och manlighet", [Football support and manliness] Examensarbete, Malmö Högskola, Medie- och kommunikationsvetenskap, Vt 2008 [Examination work, Malmö University, Media and communication sciences, spring term 2008].

<sup>57</sup> Quote from Dimovski D, 2008, p. 45

<sup>58</sup> Quote from Dimovski D, 2008, p. 46

<sup>59</sup> See e.g. <http://www.dn.se/sport/fotboll/karlek-till-vald-och-aik-forenar-1.542384>, 16/3/2010

This leads to the conclusion that hooliganism is an identity that is created on certain special occasions. Since hooliganism is also contextually anchored, it is hardly plausible to talk about hooligans in the sense of individuals who clearly detach themselves. Hooliganism can instead be seen as a kind of collective behaviour – part of the supporter culture.

## Hooliganism and carnivalness

In an attempt to clarify the latter argument we look at hooliganism from a carnival-like perspective. This concept refers to Russian literature scholar Mikhail Bakhtin's studies of medieval folk culture, whose laughter and grotesque realism, ridicule and outrage meant that people, through their swarming disorder at the festival, market or carnival, assumed power for a short time. Bakhtin claims that parts of this culture lived on in the Catholic carnival – the feasting that precedes Lent.<sup>60</sup> Carnivalness means that the hierarchies of the day are turned upside down when the hegemonic power has to temporarily step aside.<sup>61</sup>

The concept of carnivalness can be used to characterise the modern rock concert, where the audience's screaming, shouting and disorder renders it uncontrollable and means that it can temporarily assume power.<sup>62</sup> In the same way, football supporters can take over the terraces or some other arena with their songs, chants, taunting of the opposition and the referee in wild recognition of their own club. They do this partly to support their club and partly to have fun.

We argue that it is not possible to draw any clear lines between the supporter culture and hooliganism. Here a longer historical perspective would give greater substance to the discussion, and perhaps not only deal with a singling out of supporters as "violence-worshipping dregs". In the light of the history of football this is too simple a picture. Something that is taken up by the media in connection with hooligan incidents is the attempt to see the difference between a "genuine" versus a "false" football supporter. But is there actually any difference between a "false" and a "genuine" football supporter? Kutte Jönsson, a philosopher at Malmö University, maintains that there is no significant difference between the groups.<sup>63</sup> He claims that the ideal that is championed by hooligans is one that is championed within the football culture in general where it is "*basically the same kind of*

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<sup>60</sup> Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais och skrattets historia*. Francois Rabelais' verk och den folkliga kulturen under medeltiden och renässansen. [Rabelais and the history of laughter. Francois Rabelais' work and popular culture during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance] Stockholm 1986, pp. 14-16

<sup>61</sup> Björn Horgby, *Rockens uppror*. Amerikansk, brittisk och svensk rockkultur 1955-69. [The Rock Rebellion. American, British and Swedish Rock Culture]. Stockholm 2007, see also Bakhtin 1986, pp. 16-22, 25-30, 202-03.

<sup>62</sup> Horgby 2007.

<sup>63</sup> Kutte Jönsson, "Huliganismen och fotbollens hjärta", [Hooliganism and the heart of football] at *Idrottsforum.org* 2006.

*masculinity ideals, the same kind of masculinity norms that they base their engagement on*".<sup>64</sup> His conclusion is that hooliganism is mostly a "*caricature of the prevailing football culture's own logic*", which is mainly about winning.<sup>65</sup> It is however the case that the majority of supporters are not guilty of "hooligan crimes", although despite this it is important to place hooliganism in an explanatory context and into the football supporter culture.

## **C. Discussion of identity- and education processes**

In this concluding section, we discuss and summarise globalised sport's identity- and education processes from an historical perspective with regard to nationalism and supporter culture.

### **Sport as a nationalistic arena**

The historical perspective shows that the national team has always been placed in a nationalistic perspective. However, something that shows that nationalism has increased is that its expression has become much more multifaceted. With regard to the use of nationalistic rituals, an educational process can be discerned that has been communicated via the media. An example of this is flag-waving, which is a relatively new phenomenon, although it is not possible to determine any definite role model in this area.

Another example of the growing role of nationalism is that the country's supporters – like club supporters – have started to wear the national team's football shirts and even demonstrate national affinity with the aid of other national attributes. In recent years it has become common to paint one's face in the country's national colours or paint a flag on the cheek or the forehead. Swedish football and ice-hockey supporters have to a certain extent also started to wear some kind of horned Viking helmet that is supposed to symbolise both a past heyday and a national identity.

Club fans are more advanced in their identity work than the national team's supporters, however. This is shown by the use of cheers, chants and songs. Swedish supporters still use the age-old jingle "Come on Sweden, keep your spirits up", and apart from the national anthem no other national songs are in use.

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<sup>64</sup> Jönsson 2006.

<sup>65</sup> Jönsson 2006.

## The hooligan question

The historical perspective also shows that the Western hooligan problem is nothing new and that additionally it cannot be separated from football. A reasonable supposition, and one that is also supported by research, is that the globalisation process vitalised a behaviour that had already been institutionalised within the football culture frame. The decade following World War II was a period in the history of European football that was relatively free from football-related violence. The vitalisation of supporterhood and subcultures reappeared in England at the beginning of the 1960s and was linked to the TV-broadcasting of matches.<sup>66</sup> In England this increase in hooliganism was regarded as an expression of the general spread of “new” youth cultures. Similar behaviour also spread to other European countries some 10 years later, at the beginning of the 1970s. In Sweden the TV programme Tipsextra began to broadcast English football matches on Saturdays, which led to supporters in Sweden being inspired by the English supporter culture. In large cities the first indication came in connection with Hammarby’s home matches being framed by songs and chants from the terraces.<sup>67</sup> The next step in the process was that groups of fans started to partition themselves on the terraces with a view to creating a “British atmosphere” in the stadium. The more violent supporter groups that formed in the 1980s drew their inspiration from English hooligans – especially from West Ham’s notorious Inter City Firm.<sup>68</sup>

There is thus much to indicate that the spread and “learning” of hooligan behaviour came from the British hooligans. However, it is important to remember that there is no consensus among scholars about the extent to which youth in other countries is influenced by British hooligans. Carnival-like pranks or disorderly behaviour is common in all countries in which football is played. The behaviour does not necessarily have to assume the same expression or have the same causes in all cultures, given that there are different historical, social, political and cultural variations.<sup>69</sup> For example, we can compare the British class-conflicts with regional Italian antagonisms, which have different manifestations. Something that indicates that hooligan behaviour ought to be seen from an educational sciences perspective is that it is possible to discern different stages in its development. Like in education, in hooliganism it is possible to study the growth of a non-violent carnival-like fan culture. An example of this is

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<sup>66</sup>SIRC, Social Issues Research Centre

<sup>67</sup><http://www.aftonbladet.se/sportbladet/fotboll/> various articles 8/3/2002

<sup>68</sup>Walvin J, 2001, p 148 - 165

<sup>69</sup>SIRC

Denmark's peaceful "roligans". Another example is the development of the song-based and tifo culture.

While football hooliganism is not just a British phenomenon, research shows that the more violent European fans regard English hooligans as models that one has learned from and been inspired by. The increased media coverage of football-related violence also contributes to hooliganism as an inspirational source. Hooligans in England and in other parts of Europe appreciate the media coverage they get and also actively seek it out in order to create sensational headlines. This can also lead to competitions between the different groups to create the most media interest and coverage. The European Parliament has even asked the media to avoid writing sensational articles in an attempt to counteract new recruitments to the groups.<sup>70</sup>

## **Closing remarks**

Ever since the dawn of modern sport, top-level sport has been global in terms of World Championships and Olympic Games. In the early days taking part and being successful were more important. Today, when top-level sport – especially team sports like football – has become part of a global entertainment industry, the competitive objective has been intertwined with the aim of creating the greatest possible entertainment value; both economically and symbolically. The increased use of globalised symbols shows that these objectives are not always consistent. As a result of the entertainment value, sports stars need to look good so that he or she can attract a larger audience. He or she also needs to learn to defend their brand by their actions. A football team that plays boring football but achieves good results does not need to have the same entertainment value as a team that plays more attractive football but doesn't get the same results. In this sense, the globalisation processes create new prerequisites for top-level sport.

Sport has also become a more important arena for the expression of nationalism at a time when national borders are being undermined. This is another consequence of the globalisation processes. Although the link between sport and nationalism goes back a long way, it seems to have become more significant in recent years. One expression of this is that successful practitioners are now paid greater tributes than in the past. Another expression is that national symbols have become more important in global competitions.

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

A third and final expression is the connection between globalisation and young men's desire to demonstrate their masculinity in terms of identity and support of their football team. For this purpose, earlier forms of supporter culture, particularly hooliganism, have been revitalised. The supporter culture has now become more important for these young men than before. Hooligan-related violence has also increased.

It is in ways like this that globalisation processes charge and recharge top-level sport.

*Translation by Sue Glover Frykman*