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## **The transformation of European football**

Towards the Europeanisation of the national game

Edited by

ARNE NIEMANN, BORJA GARCÍA AND WYN GRANT

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Edited by Arne Niemann, Borja García  
and Wyn Grant

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## Acknowledgments

The origins of this volume go back to debates on several conference panels, more seriously beginning with the first Sport & EU conference in Loughborough in 2006, followed by a panel at the European Union Studies Association conference in Montreal (2007). Perhaps the experience of drawing quite big audiences at international conventions (while being cramped into the smallest conference rooms) provided extra motivation for a joint publication at the nexus of European politics, economics and law, on the one hand, and football on the other. After Montreal more concrete exchanges took place between the three of us concerning the idea of a volume on the transformation of European football with Europeanisation as a central theme. After successfully enlisting specialist authors – both upcoming and more established researchers – for the various chapters, we met for an intensive workshop in Amsterdam in June 2009 to discuss the authors' drafts. The workshop not only helped to fine-tune the direction of the volume and yield input for the authors but also enabled those who had not already met to be socialised into the group.

We would like to thank Dave Allen, who acted as a discussant at EUSA in Montreal and who presented stimulating and thoughtful concluding reflections at the workshop in Amsterdam. We are also grateful to the other discussants and participants at the events in Loughborough, Montreal and Amsterdam for their encouragement and helpful comments. In addition we would like to express our gratitude to several institutions for financing the workshop in Amsterdam: the Centre for the Study of International Governance at the University of Loughborough, the Amsterdam Institute for Social Science Research (also for logistical support), the Institute of Sport and Leisure Policy at the University of Loughborough, and the University Association for Contemporary European Studies. Finally, we would like to thank Anthony Mason of Manchester University Press for his valuable advice.

A.N.  
B.G.  
W.G.

# 1

## Introduction: the transformation of European football

*Arne Niemann, Borja García and Wyn Grant*

Although football – better known as ‘soccer’ in some parts of the world – is still in its infancy as a subject of study in the social sciences, there is a growing body of literature which tries to describe and explain important political, economic and social dimensions of the game. This tendency is more evident within the globalisation debates, where football is taken to be one of the most globalised phenomena (e.g. Foer 2004; Giulianotti and Robertson 2007). Other authors have also tried to establish a link between European integration and the development of football in the continent (e.g. Missiroli 2002), whilst the study of the impact of European Union (EU) law and policies on football has also attracted considerable academic attention (e.g. Holt 2007; Parrish 2003; Parrish and Miettinen 2008; García 2007, 2009). However, most authors have concentrated on the European level of football governance, with fewer attempts made to link the supranational policies of the EU with organisational transformations of football at national level (see for example King 2003 as one of the possible exceptions, although he does not focus on EU politics and policies as a main force behind the game’s evolution; see also Brand and Niemann 2007).

In this book we analyse the evolution of national football structures in ten different European countries. For that purpose we have chosen to rely on an analytical framework based on the concept of Europeanisation. It is recognised from the outset that the transformation of football in Europe is due to a combination of different factors (local, national, international), and that is evident in the contributions to this volume. The chapters ahead explain change through different mechanisms and dynamics in order to evaluate the degree of importance of EU decisions within those dynamics. However, the contributions in this volume find their common ground in the concept of Europeanisation, which is broadly defined as the impact of European governance on the domestic arena.

By focusing on the impact of European integration on the domestic level the book reflects the evolution of the EU integration studies research agenda: after four decades of attention on developments of integration at the European level,



in the mid-1990s scholars have increasingly begun to examine the effect that EU politics and policies may have at the domestic level. Even though research on Europeanisation has turned into something like an academic growth industry in recent years, it merits continued systematic academic attention, for several reasons. The Europeanisation research agenda arguably focuses on a set of very important research questions, related to where, how, why and to what extent domestic change occurs as a consequence of European integration/governance. Second, judged against five decades that European integration studies have focused on explaining and describing the emergence and development of a supranational system of European cooperation, research on Europeanisation is still at comparatively early stages. Third, it is difficult to make firm (cause-and-effect) generalisations in this field of inquiry, given, for example, the considerable variation in national institutional histories, actor constellations and structural differentiation and the wide scope of EU policies (cf. Olsen 2002: 933 ff.).

This volume concentrates on professional football, the sport that is subject to most (well known) European level cases and decisions. In the last ten to fifteen years the development of sport as an industry has reached peak levels: '[a] study presented in 2006 suggests that sport in a broad sense generated value added of €407 billion in 2004 [throughout the European Union], accounting for 3.7 per cent of EU GDP, and employment for 15 million people or 5.4 per cent of the labour force' (European Commission 2007a: 11). The social importance of football and other sports in Europe should not be underestimated either. Sport plays a significant role in health promotion, education, training and social inclusion and networking (European Commission 2007b: 7). Unfortunately, there are no disaggregated data to single out the contribution of football to this economic and social development, but it seems safe to assume that football is the most popular team sport throughout Europe. It is perhaps not far from the truth, either, to assert that football is one of the main factors in the economic and commercial development of professional sport as an industry. Moreover, the economic importance of professional football spills over to other markets, especially the audio-visual industry (e.g. Kruse and Quitzau 2003). Possessing rights to live games in leagues is a vital determinant of the success or otherwise of television companies, particularly those using cable, satellite or pay-per-view formats. Football's influence cuts across political, economic social and cultural spheres, and should also be illustrative of other sectors of European sport.

In this introductory chapter we set the conceptual foundations that will inform the book's analysis throughout. First, we concentrate on specifying the concept of Europeanisation. Part II systematises alternative explanatory factors that can account for the transformation of European football. Thirdly, we briefly justify the selection of case studies. Finally, we give an outline of the book's structure.

## **The concept of Europeanisation**

Research on Europeanisation has gradually increased since the mid-1990s and has developed into an academic growth industry over the first decade of the century.<sup>1</sup> While the term Europeanisation has been taken up by most (sub-)disciplines in the humanities and social sciences focusing on Europe, it is arguably in the area of political science scholarship dealing with European integration that the concept has been used most widely. In this latter field alone, the term Europeanisation is used in a number of different ways to describe a variety of phenomena and processes of change (cf. Olsen 2002). Most frequently Europeanisation is referred to as the impact of European/EU governance on domestic change, in terms of policy substance and instruments, processes of interest representation and policy style, as well as (political) structures and institutions (e.g. Radaelli 2000: 3; Ladrech 1994: 69). Existing policies (in integrated sectors) are increasingly made at the European level, which leads to substantial changes in the policy fabric (and content) of EU member states (e.g. Caporaso and Jupille 2001). At the level of politics, European governance impacts on domestic processes of political and societal interest representation and aggregation as well as on the policy style (e.g. Hartcourt and Radaelli 1999). In terms of polity, Europeanisation focuses on the effect of EU integration and European-level governance on domestic (mainly political) structures and institutions (e.g. Börzel 2001).

### *Top-down and bottom-up Europeanisation*

As a starting point, Europeanisation is understood here as the process of change in the domestic arena resulting from the European level of governance. However, Europeanisation is viewed not as a unidirectional but as a two-way process which develops both top down and bottom up. Top-down perspectives largely emphasise vertical developments from the European to the domestic level, which has also been referred to as ‘downloading’ (Ladrech 1994; Schmidt 2002). Bottom-up (or ‘uploading’) accounts stress the national influence concerning European-level developments (which in turn feeds back into the domestic realm). This perspective highlights that member states are more than passive receivers of European-level pressures. They may shape policies and institutions on the European level to which they have to adjust at a later stage (Börzel 2002). By referring to Europeanisation as a two-way process our conceptualisation underlines the interdependence of the European and domestic levels for an explanation of Europeanisation (processes). In contrast to a unidirectional top-down use of the concept, studying Europeanisation as a two-way process entails certain disadvantages in terms of (waning) conceptual parsimony and methodological straightforwardness. However, we argue that these problems are outweighed by a substantially greater ability to capture important empirical phenomena. It has convincingly been shown, for example, that member states’ responses to Europeanisation processes

feed back into the European level of decision making. Thus European/EU policies, institutions and processes cannot be taken as given, but are, at least to some extent, the result of domestic political preferences and processes which are acted out at the European level (Börzel 2002, 2003; Dyson 2000).

However, as will be further specified later on, framing Europeanisation processes as the interplay of the European realm and the domestic realm still constitutes a considerable simplification. For example, transnational (non-EU)-level developments may provide important properties of Europeanisation (cf. next sub-section). In addition, related to the previous point, it should be pointed out that for us Europeanisation does not equate with 'EUisation'. Rather the EU is only part (albeit an important one) of the wider fabric of cross-border regimes in Europe in which other transnational institutions and frameworks, both formal and informal, also play a role. Hence the EU is not the monopoly source and channel of Europeanisation (cf. Wallace 2000: esp. 371, 376). This may include institutional arrangements at the European level which are related to European integration and co-operation in a broader sense, such as the Council of Europe (COE) or the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) at the political level but also organisations such as the Association Européenne des Conservatoires (AEC) and – more important in this context – the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA), at the societal level.<sup>2</sup>

While working with a fairly wide notion of Europeanisation, it is important to delimit the concept clearly in order to avoid the danger of overstretching it. For example, we would reject 'the emergence and development *at the European level* of distinct structures of governance' as an appropriate definition of Europeanisation (Risse *et al.* 2001: 3, authors' emphasis). Closely related, Europeanisation as conceived of here is to be distinguished from 'political unification of Europe' (Olsen 2002: 940). Although above we have pointed out that our conceptualisation relates to interaction with the European integration process and to changes at the European/EU level, the core focus remains on the process of change *in the domestic arena*.<sup>3</sup> In addition, Europeanisation should not be confused with 'harmonisation' and also differs from 'convergence'. Europeanisation may lead to harmonisation and convergence, but such is not necessarily the case. Empirical findings indicate that Europeanisation may have a differential impact on national policy making and that it leaves considerable margin for domestic diversities (cf. Héritier *et al.* 2001; Caporaso and Jupille 2001). Moreover, as pointed out by Radaelli (2000: 5) there is a difference between a process (Europeanisation) and its consequences (e.g. potentially harmonisation and convergence).

#### *The societal/transnational dimension of Europeanisation*

Apart from top-down (downloading) and bottom-up (uploading) accounts of Europeanisation, we would like to highlight an aspect that has been neglected in the literature that is relevant for some of the empirical analysis of the chapters

to follow: the societal/transnational dimension of Europeanisation (which could also be seen as a form of ‘cross-loading’<sup>4</sup>). This dimension encapsulates two elements: (1) the *level and sphere* of change; (2) the type of *agency* generating or resisting change. Hence by the societal dimension we mean, on the one hand, the fact that regulation and jurisdiction from Brussels are likely to induce some adaptational pressure not only at the political level but also in societal contexts, e.g. the realm of sport and, for our purpose, football. On the other hand, to speak of a transnational dimension of Europeanisation aims at capturing some trends, which can be traced in analysing how societal actors are either reacting to attempts at regulation by the EU or creating transnational spaces that in turn impact on the governance of football.

Highlighting the societal/transnational dimension contributed to our rather broad conceptualisation of ‘Europeanisation’. Concept stretching has to be justified, given the potential loss of analytical clarity (cf. Radaelli 2000). We argue that accounting for the societal and transnational dimension is justified, as otherwise interesting fields of study and important dynamics between the European and the domestic levels would go largely unnoticed.

As has been noted, the societal dimension of Europeanisation mainly indicates the *sphere* of change. In contrast to most studies, we chose to study a subject (football) which is seemingly ‘non-political’. What makes such a case interesting is that it represents a social context, which forms an important and conscious part of citizens’ ‘life world’. It is therefore a context, which is realised by many people as part of their lives – not a supposedly abstract and inaccessible sphere of politics. To study processes of Europeanisation at this societal level thereby should allow a deeper understanding of any Europeanisation regarding citizens’ life worlds. Although this is not a major theme in this volume, the question of a Europeanisation of life worlds could lead to interesting insights in the eventual formation of a common European identity, a subject much debated in the current literature (cf. Risse 2004: 166–71; Mayer and Palmowski 2004). Aside from these considerations, to study Europeanisation dynamics within a societal field such as football seems to be highly interesting because of two reasons. First, it allows us to explore the general applicability of Europeanisation concepts (sources, dynamics and level of change) which have been derived mainly from the analysis of more political contexts. The question is then: to what extent do these concepts explain dynamics in these rather more societal contexts? Second, our study may clarify potential ‘blind spots’, i.e. dynamics and interrelated mechanisms in Europeanisation processes that have been largely ignored by traditional analyses, which have mainly dealt with political issues.

Although it would be wrong to assert that ‘transnational dimensions’ of Europeanisation have only rarely been mentioned, the concept of ‘transnationalism’ itself is less frequently specified and illustrated empirically in Europeanisation studies.<sup>5</sup> Thus mostly the transnational quality of relationships is merely stated

or an ongoing transnationalisation within EU/Europe is simply assumed (e.g. Menz 2003; Winn 2003; Feron 2004). On the other hand, it is questionable whether the debate on concepts of transnationalism and transnational actors in the discipline of international relations offers many sensible starting points here,<sup>6</sup> mainly because this debate is ‘still primarily concerned with proving against a state-centered picture of world politics that [transnational actors] matter’ (Risse 2002: 268). In the context of (European) integration studies, scholars working in the transactionist, neofunctionalist or supranational governance perspective have of course somewhat gone beyond that and developed accounts of transnational dynamics (Deutsch 1953; Deutsch *et al.* 1957; Haas 1958; Lindberg 1963; Stone Sweet *et al.* 1997; Niemann 2006). However, their focus was above all on the development of co-operation, institutions and policies at the supranational level, i.e. on (European) integration, rather than Europeanisation, with its primary focus on change in the domestic arena.

While not diverging from a common definition of ‘transnationalism’, our concept also encompasses actors that have been less analysed in the current literature, which heavily focuses on either non-profit NGOs or profit-driven multinational corporations. We define ‘transnational actors’ as societal actors in a broad sense, who co-ordinate their actions with societal actors from other national contexts in Europe, thereby creating common, transnational reactions to EU institutions and/or creating transnational institutions. Transnationalism within Europe here therefore rests on transboundary networks of actors, whose interests and perceptions are either aggregated or amalgamated within these networks and institutions. Transnational governance networks across countries have undoubtedly preceded the Europeanisation processes described in this book. That is, there are transnational sports bodies – such as UEFA (founded in 1954) and its global counterpart, the International Football Federation (FIFA, founded in 1909) – formed of delegates from national associations. However, as this volume will indicate, transnational Europeanisation processes since the 1990s have induced a new quality of transnational agency.

To speak of a ‘societal/transnational dimension’ of Europeanisation in the end means to pay tribute to the interrelatedness of the sphere of change and the type of agency: football as a societal sphere is characterised by a growing transnationalisation, as will be shown. Opening up the field of Europeanisation studies to this dimension further adds to the awareness of the impressive complexity of Europeanisation processes, but it may also incorporate the consciously perceived ‘Europeanised’ life worlds of European citizens into the academic debate (on this point cf. especially Chapter 3 on UEFA and Chapter 4 on Germany).

### *The Europeanisation process: some systemising factors*

A number of scholars have introduced different typologies in order to systematise Europeanisation processes. This section will formulate several

systematisations, which are to some extent derived from the existing literature. The suggested sub-categories are meant to capture only some important aspects and are of course by no means exhaustive. Subsequently, these factors will broadly inform the empirical analysis in the country chapters. However, they are not meant to be restrictive for the authors' analysis in the book, because our intention is to ascertain the potential of Europeanisation as an explanatory (independent) variable of the transformation of football (dependent variable). Thus it is also necessary to be aware of other factors that may help to explain football's transformation.

To begin with, the basic sources of Europeanisation – top-down, bottom-up and transnational/societal – have already been sufficiently pointed out above and thus require no further explication here. Although these sources of Europeanisation often substantially interact, certain tendencies in terms of these dimensions can usually be ascertained (cf. Lodge 2002).

Secondly, we can differentiate in terms of the *level of strength* of Europeanisation sources and pressures. As for top-down processes, a number of indicators can be suggested. The legal bindingness of EU provisions probably constitutes the best indicator for the force of top-down pressures (Vink 2002: 9–10). Having said that, Europeanisation is not confined to legally binding EU provisions. It may be carried by more cognitive or ideational mechanisms. Although termed the 'weakest' Europeanisation trigger (Knill 2001: 221), the 'framing of domestic beliefs and expectations' still seems to drive Europeanisation processes forward to some extent (Knill and Lehmkuhl 2002: 258).<sup>7</sup> In addition, the degree of clarity, both in terms of legal argumentation (e.g. concerning ECJ rulings) and in terms of legal competence (e.g. regarding exclusive or shared competence in the case of Commission involvement) influences the weight of downward adaptational pressures. Ambiguity in these respects adversely affects Europeanisation dynamics. Moreover, the level of uniformity of reaching a decision at the European level – e.g. in the Council or between the Council and the European Parliament on legislative acts, or in the European Commission concerning decisions in the area of competition policy – also impacts on the strength of top-down Europeanisation sources and pressures. It can be assumed that, generally speaking, more uniform and consensual decisions at European level may have a more significant Europeanisation effect than rather contested EU decisions. As for bottom-up or transnational/societal Europeanisation, indicators regarding the strength of processes seem less obvious and perhaps more limited at this stage of inquiry. However, for example the existence of alternative (policy) venues or of credible exit options from prevailing arrangements and, more generally, the possibility of challenging existing regimes (e.g. when undesired policy externalities arise) condition the strength of such Europeanisation dynamics (cf. Lodge 2002).

Our third categorisation concerns *reactions* to initial top-down Europeanisation pressures. Broadly speaking, one can distinguish between reactions on two levels: the level of policy formulation and the level of implementation (cf. Bugdahn 2005: 183). The type of reaction in terms of formulation and implementation depends on several factors, such as prevailing norms and preferences on the part of those affected or addressed by the initial Europeanisation pressures – and partly overlapping with actors' preferences – the goodness of fit, i.e. the compatibility between the (e.g. domestic) *status quo* and newly induced (e.g. EU) requirements.<sup>8</sup> On the level of (policy) formulation, we suggest that reactions to primary Europeanisation can take on different forms: (1) 'support', when affected/addressed actors back new requirements; (2) 'acquiescence', when agents simply accept the changes stemming from Europeanisation; (3) 'engagement/intervention', when actors seek to modify or reduce adaptational pressures; (4) 'confrontation', when actors try to resist or escape initial Europeanisation pressures. The degree of misfit can be assumed to gradually increase on this continuum. Adjustment costs are also sought to be minimised at the level of implementation, where losses made in the formulation stage may, to some extent, be compensated. In the EU context, member states often retain considerable discretion in interpreting EU rules (e.g. Mörtz 2003). Implementation of EU provisions can range from what an 'objective' observer would consider 'full and comprehensive', or even 'progressive' to more 'conservative' interpretations of requirements. In addition, member states tend to have the option of adopting new or preserving old national legislation that influences the operational context of the transposing legislation (Bugdahn 2005: 179).

Our fourth element systematising the Europeanisation processes is the strength of reaction to initial Europeanisation pressures. The impact of such responses will depend on several factors, one of which is access to government/policy makers and the strategic position in or 'membership' of policy/advocacy networks. Another factor is organisational strength, made up, for example, of material resources, the degree of centralisation and cohesiveness, effective management, etc. (cf. Menz 2003).

Finally, the degree of change of national settings as result of Europeanising forces can be categorised. Drawing on Lodge (2002) and Radaelli (2004), who themselves drew on earlier writings, three main forms concerning the impact of Europeanisation pressures are suggested here: (1) 'system maintenance', which is characterised by a lack of change or the rejection of new requirements; (2) 'adjustment', where existing policy cores are not challenged, but some non-fundamental changes are absorbed and new layers may be added to the regime; (3) 'transformation', which denotes paradigmatic or core policy changes. Chapters 4–13 will be guided by these categories that make up Europeanisation processes, i.e. sources, strength of initial pressures, reaction, strength of reaction and degree of change.

### **Other transformational forces**

Europeanisation is the principal organising paradigm structuring this book, but other transformational forces are certainly at work in the recent evolution of European professional football. The most significant of these is the effect of economic market forces, which take the form of commercialisation and globalisation. There is a substantial literature on the relationship between European integration and globalisation (Rosamond 2005), but one theme that emerges from it is the Janus-faced relationship of the EU to globalisation. On the one hand, the central project of the EU, the single market, creates new opportunities for transnational companies to secure economies of scale and acts as an incentive to cross-border mergers. On the other hand, the EU seeks to protect its citizens, particularly those who are economically marginal or socially excluded, from the worst effects of globalisation, through various forms of European social policy. The EU both encourages and fends off multinational capital from other parts of the world which are perceived to be potentially economically stronger, particularly the United States and East and South Asia.

The situation of football is rather different from that in other economic sectors because Europe, at least in terms of economic power, is the centre of the international game. It has the global brands such as Manchester United, Chelsea, Bayern Munich, AC Milan or Real Madrid and it imports talent from around the world. For some analysts, the position of European football in the global system is essentially exploitative. This is the view taken by Hobsbawm (2007), who sees the leading European clubs are engaged in a system of capitalist imperialism in which Africa and Latin America are deprived of talent as it is imported into Europe to the detriment of the 'formerly proud clubs of Brazil and Argentina' (Hobsbawm 2007: 91). Hobsbawm sees tensions arising between these globalising forces and national identity. International business, in his view, tends to favour competitions involving the super-clubs, and this produces a clash with 'the national teams that carry the full political and emotional load of national identity' (Hobsbawm 2007: 92).

Such tensions are evident between leading clubs and national governing bodies over whether players should be released for national team duty in friendly games or how clubs should be compensated when the player is returned injured. However, one must be cautious about 'reading off' a narrative about the dominance of globalising forces, albeit European ones, from a reductionist account of the complex structural tensions in the game. It is clear that sport remains a focus of national identity and that different countries organise their national game in different ways. The population of the country is clearly a factor here, so that a wealthy country with a small population like Luxembourg has little option but to organise its comprehensive national league system around largely amateur players. Larger and more prosperous countries such as Sweden have made an



effort to preserve amateurism in sport, or at least to ensure that it offers opportunities for maximum participation. The challenge for countries like Sweden is that talent goes where the money is, and the Champions League becomes increasingly dominated by teams from the larger countries.

In accounts of most economic sectors, technology would be an important transformational factor. The technology of the game itself has changed very little: the most important change was probably effective floodlighting to permit evening matches. Artificial pitches have had limited success, and some technology such as that which can assess whether a goal has been scored has so far been stoutly resisted by the game's authorities. The technological transformation has been in the televising of the game. Colour television was transformative, and then near-earth satellites facilitated charging viewers for receiving games. They also made possible the simultaneous global screening of games, facilitating betting on games, which is a major driver of its popularity in parts of East Asia. High-definition television and perhaps even 3-D will enhance the viewing experience and increase the number of 'supporters' who never attend a live game. In relation to television and the audio-visual market, the emergence of new private television outlets also counts as an important source of transformation. The interest of satellite and pay-per-view operators in acquiring broadcasting rights to live football competitions generated tensions between the traditional organisers of competitions (be that UEFA at European level, professional leagues or federations at national level) and the clubs taking part in those competition (Spink and Morris 2000). The fight for the television market and the income of the television rights has certainly conditioned the recent evolution of European football. And the response of public authorities and football stakeholders alike to the interest of the audiovisual market in football is also focus of particular attention in the different country contributions to this volume.

In such a globalised environment, forces inducing transformation of national structures may also come from countries experimenting similar situations. These dynamics are termed along the volume as emulation or transnational benchmarking and they have a transformative effect that can also be labelled as cross-loading (see above). Briefly, these processes can be defined as the comparison of national football structures and results (both economic and sporting results) to the situation of other countries. The comparison can be done with countries that present (1) a sociocultural affinity, (2) geographical proximity, (3) a recent successful period in football competitions or (4) a successful business development of professional football. Certainly, these processes are influenced by perceptions of what is successful elsewhere as much as by reality. The comparison or benchmarking with foreign football leagues, might result in a degree of transformation of the national system, adopting foreign models that are considered successful. This change can be measured along the parameters defined above. It might be difficult to map a direct cause-and-effect relationship, but the

indirect influence in transformation needs to be taken into account. The impact of these transformational factors is likely to be increased when local stakeholders incorporate foreign models in their policy preferences, hence promoting changes along those lines. A general sense of failure within the football system (be that a failure defined in sporting, social or economic terms) is also likely to increase the potential of emulation, as local stakeholders will tend to look for alternative organisational arrangements in other football systems that they consider to be successful. For a country like Italy, for example, the best option may then be not 'Europeanisation' but 'Anglicisation', an attempt to replicate what they perceive to be the successful English Premier League model in their domestic competition.

Thus emulation or transnational benchmarking are processes of change that will involve national actors to put transformation in motion. Indeed, despite our focus on Europeanisation, it would be misguided to minimise the importance of transformational factors generated at national level. Whilst football is nowadays more global, its market and organisational structures retain a strong national component. As Parrish and Miettinen (2008: 49–51) point out, only the players market seems to be truly international, both in its structures and components. National governments (or regional and local authorities, where applicable) still remain masters of their own sport policy and football remains a national affair for the majority of stakeholders involved. The inclusion of an article on sport in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (see Articles 6 and 165 TFEU) entrusts EU institutions only to develop measures supportive of the national policies, with the member states retaining full competence in this area (Vermeersch 2009). It was clear in the research and preparations for this volume that national factors could not be ignored.

The regulation of football structures by national governments is the most obvious source of transformation at national level. However, this will be influenced by the legal and regulatory tradition of the country in question. Authors such as Esping-Andersen (cf. 1990, 1996) have developed typologies of welfare regimes where they identify different regulatory roles for governments. So for example England is a clear type of a liberal state, where the role of the government is expected to be minimised, whereas the Scandinavian countries (e.g. Sweden, included in this volume) would be an archetypical example of social democratic states, where public authorities are expected to play a more prominent role. Countries with a Napoleonic tradition of regulation, such as France, Spain or Portugal, will be likely to present a more prominent role for the state in the regulation of sport than liberal states such as England. Following Foster (2000) and García (2009), governments could act as regulators (direct legislation), partners (e.g. funding) or supervisors (e.g. legal review of sport bodies' decisions) of the sport organisations. Green and Houlihan (2005, 2006) also point out that governments may perform a more subtle, yet effective, steering

function through instruments such as benchmarking, funding allocation or naming and shaming.

National governments can have an impact on the transformation in three different ways. First, they can generate direct transformation through any of the roles of the state outlined above. Second, they can act as a transmission belt of supranational Europeanising (top-down) initiatives. In this case, national authorities could have either an amplifying or a blocking effect. Third, national public authorities can also act as an agent on behalf of their national football organisations before EU institutions.

Tradition and history are important in football, reflected in the way that clubs create myths about their history and provide sanitised accounts of their triumphs in museums. Whatever attempts are made to construct particular accounts of the past, football cannot stand aside from broader economic, social, political and technological forces, although it is also a shaper of those forces, particular for potential male migrants from the global South.

### **Case study selection**

The selection of cases for this volume has been made with the idea in mind that the impact of European governance/integration should be analysed across substantially diverse systems and scenarios (duration of EU membership, football league size, general sport/societal model, television marketing system, etc.), so as to allow of wide-ranging generalisations. The so-called Big Five European football leagues (England, France, Germany, Italy and Spain) have been included because of their influence in EU policy making and their importance for the game in terms of economic revenue, aggregated audiences (especially on television) and dominance at the sporting level.

A diversity of systems and scenarios has been assured, as follows. In terms of the duration of EU membership we have selected four out of the original six EC member states (France, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands), one country that joined in 1973 (England/UK), one which became a member in 1986 (Spain), two that joined in 1995 (Austria and Sweden), one that acceded in the big enlargement round of 2004 (Poland) and one non-member (Switzerland). Through variation in these criteria we may be able to infer whether longer membership periods tend to lead to more intense (top-down) Europeanisation processes and effects, or whether the causal relevance of membership duration is not so significant.

In terms of league/country size we have selected five big states/leagues (the above-mentioned Big Five), one big country with a less substantial league (Poland), one medium-size country (the Netherlands) and three small states (Austria, Sweden and Switzerland). As for television marketing systems we mainly have leagues that are marketed through a centralised system, but also

some which are marketed in a decentralised fashion (e.g. Spain and, partly, Italy). In addition, we have chosen countries with different sports policy models, such as Sweden's 'sport for all' ethos or France's heavily state-regulated sports policy. We have also selected a number of countries with a more participatory civil society (e.g. Germany, Sweden) and those rather at the opposite end of that spectrum (e.g. Spain). Finally, we have ensured a large degree of regional distribution by including northern, southern, central/eastern and western European states.

### **Outline of the book**

We have brought together strong specialist authors who combine both expertise in European integration studies/Europeanisation and knowledge of the governance of football in the area/country they investigate. The book also benefits from the insight of policy practitioners in some of the chapters. The structure of the book is relatively straightforward. This introduction has set the ground in theoretical terms. Next, Part I deals with the policy and political context in which the transformation of football has taken place. The second part of the volume goes then to present the ten country studies. Finally, the conclusion summarises our findings.

Part I sets the ground for the analysis of the ten case studies. In Chapter 2 Richard Parrish describes the transformations of football at supranational level. In addition to the European Union, he identifies four different influences for change: members of the so called 'football family', the Council of Europe, the Court of Arbitration for Sport and the World Anti-Doping Agency. The chapter argues that the rise of new economic stakeholders is placing a strain on traditional governance standards in football. This has raised serious questions for the football governing bodies, particularly FIFA and UEFA, which increasingly have to accept greater external scrutiny of their activities. In Chapter 3 the Director of UEFA's Brussels office between 2003 and 2009, Jonathan Hill, presents an interesting inside description of the evolution of UEFA as result of its contacts with EU institutions. Hill argues that UEFA itself has suffered a process of Europeanisation and this has also further Europeanised the sport itself. Hill considers UEFA as being subject to transformation, but also as an agent and generator of change in European football.

Part II contains the detailed study of ten different national football structures. In Chapter 4 Alexander Brand and Arne Niemann analyse the transformation of German football. They argue that the most important changes in German football can be attributed to different sorts of Europeanisation processes. While the Bosman nationality issue has induced a (top-down) system transformation, heavy adjustments have been required as a result of the Bosman ruling regarding the transfer regime, and in a more transnational fashion through the Europeanising

effect of the Champions League. Only partial adjustments were made on the issue of broadcasting rights that was carried by the European Commission but successfully mitigated by bottom-up (counter-)pressures. Chapter 5 features Wyn Grant's evaluation of the transformation of English football. The Premier League has been seen as a model of commercial success to be emulated, but it has also encountered resistance from those who see it as undermining a solidaristic model of football, leading to UEFA's ratification of its financial fair-play rules in 2010. Television income is the basic financial dynamic of the English Premier League and it has held up well in the recession, but it can also encourage teams to overspend to an extent that is not sustainable.

In Chapter 6 David Ranc and Albrecht Sonntag contribute with the special case of French football, where, they argue, the evolution of the game is strongly marked by a discourse of decline and lack of competitiveness. Ranc and Sonntag bring to the volume an interesting focus on 'transnational benchmarking' when they argue that French football is in a perpetual attempt to reassess its economic performance, its attractiveness and its social functions. France's big four neighbours, England, Spain, Italy and Germany, are normally the benchmark for French football's stakeholders.

Oswaldo Croci, Nicola Porro and Pippo Russo take on Italian football in Chapter 7. They argue that in the post-Bosman era Italian football has undergone a process of financial and competitive decline relative to other European countries. Such relative decline, however, is a direct consequence not of Europeanisation but of the fact that top Italian clubs have used the Bosman ruling in conjunction with the revenue generated by the individual selling of broadcasting rights to try to create a virtuous cycle linking higher levels of spending to success on the field to increases in revenues. Like the French case, the Italian chapter identifies dynamics of emulations, with the English Premier League being used as a model to follow in Italy.

In Chapter 8, Borja García, Alberto Palomar and Carmen Pérez suggest that the transformation of Spanish football over the last two decades is better explained by national political factors. They argue that the regulatory tradition of the Spanish state explains the hands-on approach of Spanish authorities when regulating national football authorities. The Spanish case is an example of how national factors can either amplify or hamper top-down Europeanising forces from the supranational level.

The book moves away from the Big Five leagues. In Chapter 9 Otto Holman, Rick de Ruiter and Rens Vliegenhart present the transformation of Dutch football. They argue that top-down processes have a detrimental influence on the functioning of Dutch football and the competitiveness of Dutch clubs. Due to the Bosman ruling increasingly younger Dutch players are transferred to non-Dutch clubs, leading to a decreasing quality of Dutch league football and a growing gap between Dutch club football and the Dutch national

team. The trend is only to a very limited extent countered by bottom-up processes.

Chapter 10 moves to Austria, one of the small countries featured in the book. Alexander Brand, Arne Nieamann and Georg Spitaler suggest that Austrian football – due to the heritage of a fairly multinational state – has been (Central) Europeanised from the beginnings of the game and that the Bosman ruling altered a nationality regime that was already fairly international. Nevertheless Austrian football underwent a substantial transformation after the Bosman ruling that was implemented in a manner best characterised as a mixture of progressive liberalisation accompanied by counter-measures to promote national talent. Bottom-up reactions to top-down Europeanisation pressures have been limited in Austria not least due to the country's status (following EU accession in 1995) as a new player and small member state within the Union. The absence of a marked dualism between big clubs and the national association further hampered any activism of relevant actors to go down the Brussels route.

In Chapter 11 Torbjörn Andersson, Jyri Backman and Bo Carlsson analyse the evolution of football in Sweden, which is characterised by the tensions between the country's traditional sport-for-all ethos and the professionalisation and commercialisation of sport. The authors argue that Swedish club football, and the Swedish premier league, *Allsvenskan*, has managed to cope neither with the post-Bosman situation nor with the increasing commercialisation of football in general and the impact of globalisation and the 'Europeanisation' of club football.

Chapter 12 features Poland, a country that joined the EU in 2004. Magdalena Kędzior and Melchior Szczepanick argue that the main factors that have driven changes in Polish football since 1989 are the economic and political transition to democracy and a market economy, membership of international football federations (UEFA and FIFA) and the accession negotiations and EU membership. The authors argue that the most important driver of change in Polish football was the result of a series of changes set in motion by the process of economic and political transformation that began with the fall of the communist system in 1989.

Finally, Chapter 13 focuses on Switzerland, a non-EU state. Dirk Lehmkuhl and Olivier Siegrist consider that the transformation of Swiss football implies a professionalisation and modernisation of governance structures at the level of both clubs and the national association. Three sets of factors offer explanations for the changes. At the domestic level, long-lasting frustration caused by mediocre results of both clubs and the national team led to a substantial overhaul of the existing structures. At the international level, it is possible to trace both EU and UEFA-related factors. Despite Switzerland not being a member state of the EU, its degree of association with the EU triggered either a voluntary (as in the case of the transfer regime) or a mandatory (in the case of the nationality regime) transposition of the provisions on the free movement of workers.

The concluding chapter of the book, by the editors, brings together the most significant elements of the case studies to reflect on the utility of Europeanisation as an analytical concept to explain the transformation of European football.

### Notes

- 1 This section draws on Brand and Niemann (2007: 183–187).
- 2 By not restricting Europeanisation to change induced by the EU, it is possible to escape the  $n = 1$  dilemma in European integration studies where the EU is only an instance of itself, as a result of which findings cannot be generalised because of this uniqueness (e.g. Rosamond 2000: 17). EU Europeanisation processes can thus be compared with larger/other Europeanisation processes in Europe and with other cases of regional integration (also cf. Vink 2002: 6–7).
- 3 As pointed out by Vink (2002: 6) it is rather questionable to add a new concept (Europeanisation) as a synonym for notions such as European integration or Communitarisation (also cf. Radaelli 2000: 3).
- 4 It can be seen as a form of ‘cross-loading’ in so far as the term refers to horizontal adaptation processes. However, the term has so far mostly been used in the context of learning and adaptation processes amongst EU member states are taking place (Howell 2004).
- 5 But see, for instance, Kohler-Koch (2002), who sketches out several dimensions of transnationalism within the complex system(s) of European governance.
- 6 For an instructive overview of this debate see Risse (2002). For a discussion of the methodological implications of transnationalisation within EU-Europe for International Relations also see Ebbinghaus (1998).
- 7 The role of cognitive and ideational factors applies equally to the domestic and transnational/societal dimensions. These may also frame beliefs and expectations on other levels and thus impact on the Europeanisation process.
- 8 Indicators for the degree of misfit are economic, institutional, procedural, substantive (i.e. in terms of policy content) adjustment costs and consequences incurred through new requirements compared with prior/existing arrangements (Falkner 2003).

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