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From West to East – and Back Again

Sport beyond nations?

When considering global media sport, it is crucial to consider the nature and balance of its flows around the world. As indicated in various places in this book, it is banal and misleading to talk about ‘the global’ as if it were evenly spread and without histories, origins and destinations. Nations are not irrelevant to sport and media – only a brief glance at locational variations in the popularity and prominence of various sports, and the involvement of national governments in it, quickly disabuses the analyst of that misconception – but not all nations command equal power over the production and circulation of sport. The institution of sport, its practices and protocols emerged, as argued in Chapter 2, in the West, as did the first major media institutions capable of transmitting the images and sounds of sport across the globe. Therefore, there is a close historical relationship between the development of global sport and Western imperialism and colonialism still evident in the twenty-first century, but as is also apparent, control over the flows of media and sport is not all one way, and just as there is something of a shift in geopolitical economic power towards Asia, this trend is also registering in sport and its mediation. It is no simple task, though, to disentangle what might be regarded as media sport imperialism from the necessary development of sport in a new context before it is ‘indigenized’, adapted and even ‘re-exported’ to its places of origin (as has occurred with other Western-dominated cultural forms, such as popular music – Robinson, Buck and Cuthbert 1991). It is also conceivable that sports and forms of sport originating outside the West may become globally popular. Indeed, it has been argued that some so-called Western sports originated in other regions and were appropriated, changed and then reintroduced in their places of origin (e.g. physical practices resembling association football and golf have been recorded in ancient China – Xu 2008: 14). I am not going to delve deeply into these debates, as they tend to rely on disputes between historians about the origins of sport and its cultural predecessors – one example concerns whether Australian rules football originated among colonists as an adaptation of British football forms, especially rugby union football (Blainey, 2010), or among Australian Aborigines in a cultural practice known as Marn-Grook (Judd 2005). The specific focus of this chapter is on the extent to which the flows of media sport are uneven and whether the consequences of such an imbalance entail the subordination and, at worst, extinction of local sport structures.

It is important, though, not to fetishize or romanticize nations, which are in long-view historical terms recently constructed entities prone to ‘invent’ traditions (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983) stretching back to antiquity, often

operate through national mythologies as ways of shoring up inequalities by invoking the 'enemy without', and can be used as vehicles for chauvinism, often of a highly racialized kind, militating against cross-border initiatives in pursuit of social justice and citizenship rights that are deemed by local elites as interference in a nation's 'internal affairs' (Calhoun 1997). At the same time, the idea of nation is often crucial in mobilizing diverse, divided populations to throw off the yolk of colonial and neocolonial oppression or to resist military aggression and territorial ambition (see, for example, various contributions to Delanty and Kumar 2006). Sport is particularly effective in symbolizing the nation, for good or ill, according to context, aim and outcome. As Garry Whannel (2008: 108) notes in an influential early (now reprinted) work on the subject from a socialist perspective,

National sport has proved a highly successful element of bourgeois ideology. A popular cultural activity is linked to national identity, an unproblematic unity over and above political difference. It creates a largely artificial sense of national-belongingness, an imaginary coherence. It masks social divisions and antagonisms, offering a unity which we all too easily fall in with ...

Judgements about the relations between national sport and nationalism cannot be made without considering the particular social context. National sport plays a different role in developing and post-colonial countries from that which it has in imperialist powers. Similarly its role in industrialised communist countries is rather different from its role in capitalist countries.

Thus, the mobilization of sporting nationalism to express a sense of superiority over 'inferior peoples', demand political fealty (Miller *et al.* 2001) or, in classic 'bread and circuses' style, to distract the populace from the pressing political questions and outrages of the day (Eco, 1986), are quite different uses of sport to that of, say, giving a once subordinated and, perhaps, arbitrarily combined people a sense of purpose, pride and unity (see various contributions to Bairner 2001; Bale and Cronin 2003). Globalization has not on the evidence in sport diminished national sentiment, and it is unthinkable to consider an international sports tournament without the *frisson* of national competition. However, global media flows have powerful effects on significant elements of the sporting infrastructures and cultures of nations, and it is important to understand the extent to which these have positive or negative sociocultural consequences. For example, connecting nations to other nations through respectful sporting contact is generally regarded as a benign phenomenon, but obliterating local sporting cultural cultures through sports commerce is not. If mediated sport figures as a key agent of global neo-cultural and economic imperialism, a critical media sport studies is required to intervene in debates concerning the cultural politics of sport. A conspicuous point of return for such an analysis is a sporting competition from the place of origin of modern sport and now its 'world game' – the EPL. In previous chapters I have highlighted at various points the significance of the EPL as a nationally based competition that has transmuted into a hybrid of local and global, its images and signs flowing outwards as its labour and capital moved in the other direction. It is

useful to track and examine these flows in greater detail in seeking to grasp the dynamics of power in the global media sports cultural complex.

Founding a global media sport behemoth

The EPL might be described as a national sports league with an initially national media focus but with a formative logic that turned it into a global media sport phenomenon. Its history is well known but in short can be traced to the frustration of a small number of leading English association football clubs in the 1980s that they were, essentially, ‘carrying’ the majority of the ninety-two professional clubs that comprised the four divisions of the Football League stretching from Carlisle near the Scottish border to Plymouth in the far south-west. The so-called big five (King 1998) of the time – Arsenal, Everton, Liverpool, Manchester United and Tottenham Hotspur (later reduced to the ‘big four’ with the addition of Chelsea since its purchase in 2003 by the Russian oil billionaire Roman Abramovich and the relative decline of Everton and Tottenham) – were especially keen to gain a greater share of collectively negotiated broadcasting, sponsorship and marketing revenue rather than be required to share part of it with other, smaller clubs. One key justification for the breakaway by the twenty-two clubs (reduced to twenty in 1995) in the English First Division to establish the Premier League (thereby creating the taxonomic absurdity of a descending hierarchy with names such as Championship and League One) was, though, international in nature – that English football was falling behind richer southern European clubs, in particular, and so English clubs were underperforming in European competitions. As Anthony King (1998: 110) has noted, television income, especially the prospect of a greater inflow of capital from subscription television, was crucial to the formation of the EPL:

The Premier League was created to prevent the loss of income to the lower leagues which the top clubs had found increasingly intolerable throughout the 1980s, but the League was also established to maximize the bargaining position of the top clubs in their re-negotiation of a new television contract which was due in 1992.

The EPL’s decision to exchange the broadcast reach afforded by free-to-air television for the unprecedented funding offered by the (Rupert Murdoch-controlled) BSkyB did not only create disputes over cultural citizenship rights in the United Kingdom (as discussed in Chapters 3 and 4) but also accelerated the globalization of football in England. The capacity to charge viewers for access to the best live club contests of the nation’s most popular sport created an increasing influx of television capital in football that saw the EPL’s broadcast rights contracts rise in value from £304 million for the first five seasons (1992–6) to almost £1.8 billion for domestic rights alone (2010–13) among its broadcasters (European competition authorities having insisted on splitting ‘packages’, although without destroying BSkyB’s overall dominance). The large amount of money flowing into the English game reversed the (quite modest) leakage of English footballers to continental Europe, attracting a large

number of top players from Europe (assisted by the 1995 Bosman Ruling, which guaranteed footballers freedom of contract and mobility throughout the EU) and many from other regions, especially Africa and South America (Giulianotti 1999). These flows across the global 'ethnoscape' (Appadurai 1996), or shifts in the 'new international division of cultural labour' (Miller *et al.* 2001), transformed the complexion of the English football labour market, especially the Premier League. According to one calculation from 2007 concerning the Premier League,

Research by BBC Sport has revealed the extent of the challenges currently facing the national team as the pool of talent available to the manager decreases.

- 76% of the starting XIs that played on the first weekend of the first Premier League season in 1992 were English, only 37% were English on the first weekend of this season
- Only 10% (23 players) of the starting XIs in 1992 were from outside the UK, this season that number had increased to 56% (123)
- Non-English players have scored 69% of Premier League goals so far this season – they have even scored two of the three own goals
- Of the 118 goals scored so far, only nine have been scored by seven English strikers
- According to the latest Deloitte figures for disclosed transfer fees, spending by Premier League clubs rose from £333m in 2006 to £531m in 2007
- Half of that went to non-English clubs. (Slater 2007)

This increased European cosmopolitanism of English football, it is argued here, jeopardizes its 'Englishness', as foreign players are purchased from overseas and come to dominate the Premier League, the wealthiest division and also the expected source of most players in the England national team (as discussed at the end of Chapter 2). It should be noted, though, that there has also been a spillover effect for the lower divisions of English football (and in other UK leagues such as in Scotland, which formed its own Premier League and lower divisions structure in 1997), where there has also been a considerable influx of overseas players. In contrast to the success of English club teams packed with non-English players in international competitions such as the European Champions League, the failure of the England football team to win a major international tournament for over forty years has led to criticisms that players eligible to play for England are, as noted earlier, being disadvantaged by the influx of overseas players to its best league. Thus, after every tournament, newspaper stories such as the following appear:

England's dismal failure at the World Cup can be blamed on the Premier League's inability to promote home-grown talent, according to the president of Spain's La Liga.

José Luis Astiazarán has questioned the number of young foreign players at Premier League clubs and said the principal reason Spain have reached Sunday's final against Holland is that '77.1%' of footballers in their domestic league

are Spanish-qualified, a direct result of home-grown players being given the opportunity in their clubs' first teams. In the Premier League fewer than 40% of players are English.

'In La Liga there are 77.1% Spanish players, 16.7% European and 6.7% non-European', Astiazarán said. 'Our strategy is to work very hard with young home-grown players and to try to have a mix between them and experienced players.'

'Why is it not a high number of foreign players in La Liga? Because we invest more and more in young Spanish players than in young foreign players. England has many times taken young players from outside who are 14, 16 years old. These kind of players are not English. This is one of the most important differences between Spain and England. We invest in young Spanish players. In Arsenal, Liverpool, Manchester United there are a lot of young Spanish, French and Italian players – maybe this is why at the moment you are not creating young English players.'

'These [young foreign] players cannot play for the English national team. It's good to have goalkeepers from outside. But how many English goalkeepers are in the Premier League?' (Jackson 2010)

Such comments by the president of one prominent national league of association football in Europe about another, of course, may be read as political and do not recognize other national variations, such as the capacity in Spain for individual clubs to negotiate their own broadcast rights contracts and the related domination of two clubs, Barcelona and Real Madrid, with these two clubs alone supplying over half of Spain's 2010 World Cup-winning squad (twelve out of twenty-three). However, the above statistics and commentary reveal not only national variation in the organization of sport but also the ways in which the nation can be problematized by regional and global sports flows. In what sense, for example, is the EPL 'English' in any more than a territorial sense when over half of its players (and most/many of its owners, managers and coaches) are from other countries and when this arrangement appears to undermine the performance of the principal signifier of nation – the team that competes in the UEFA European Football Championship and the FIFA World Cup. In that sense, the 'English' in EPL may refer only to where it is hosted or to the majority of in-stadium spectators – where cities override nations as the principal units of organization and identification – rather than in a deeper, more expansive sense of national identity. In this regard, the primacy of 'multinational', city-based football clubs over nation states invokes the analyses of theorists of globalization and transnationalism – such as, notably, Manuel Castells (1996, 1998) – that new networks of major cities are able to some degree to bypass nation states and might even constitute the revival of the city-states that preceded nations as the most powerful units of sociopolitical organization. Anthony King (2003: 27–9) has related this development of region-states or city-states to football, which he regards as the 'primary public ritual in the new Europe' (King 2003: 32). It can be seen, for example, in the constant pressure by Europe's largest football clubs to form a 'European Superleague', which would effectively subordinate national domestic competitions in the same way as, for example, the EPL has done with the other English football leagues. The

arguments in favour of a European Superleague are similar to those for the EPL – that smaller clubs were gaining too much of the industry's turnover from broadcasting, sponsorship and marketing; that the standard of play would be enhanced by pitting 'the best against the best'; and that there is much more popular interest in watching the glamorous clubs, which in turn would create higher revenues through television ratings and subscriptions, thereby elevating association football in the entertainment market.

That a European Superleague is still yet to be formed despite over thirty years of agitation may be ascribed both to the mutation of the European Champion Clubs' Cup into the UEFA Champions League as a hybrid 'knockout cup' and league competition that has created more contests between Europe's dominant clubs, and to the resilience of passionate local rivalries in intra-national competitions (not all of which are between the leading clubs, which, in any case, do not retain that status in perpetuity). It can also be attributed to the power of the supranational sport bodies like UEFA and FIFA, who are able to wield power in governance through 'diplomatic' interventions in European and world football. This does not mean that nation states do not retain power in some key respects – for example, no international sports event can take place without, effectively, the consent and often direct support of the host nation. Also, although the United Kingdom cannot under EU law prevent the citizens of member states gaining employment in its football clubs, as a sovereign state the United Kingdom is free to impose restrictions on those from non-EU countries. Nonetheless, it has largely fallen to supranational bodies like UEFA and FIFA to, perversely, buttress domestic sport competitions. For example, a 2009 newspaper report referring to coverage in various European media outlets stated,

A European 'Super League' is a non-starter for Uefa chief Michel Platini, senior officials within European soccer's governing body said today, playing down media reports it was mulling plans for such a competition.

Platini was quoted by France Football as saying Uefa was prepared to discuss plans from European teams to create a continental league to replace the Champions League and Uefa Cup ...

The European Club Association (ECA), which represents 137 leading teams such as Manchester United and Real Madrid, talked about a 'Super League' during a meeting last week in Nyon, Switzerland, France Football reported.

The Super League would be made up of three divisions with 20 to 22 clubs in each tier, the two newspapers said. Promotion and relegation would occur between the divisions each season.

European domestic leagues would remain if a Super League ever got the go-ahead, *Gazzetta* said, but the number of matches in individual championships would have to be reduced so that top clubs could play in both competitions. (Ennis, Reuters 2009)

Here the political dynamics of sport seem to have little bearing on the interventional role of nations, as clubs and the governing body negotiate over competitive structures and resource distributions. Governing bodies such as

UEFA (despite occasional threats of secession by dissident clubs), while important economic entities in their own right, are also involved in regulating the ‘rampant’ football capitalism that individual clubs may engage in while pursuing their individual interest. It falls to peak sporting bodies to manage individualist motivations among sports clubs, which if given full rein, would destroy the variety, novelty and competitive uncertainty that is integral to the appeal of sport. For example, UEFA has sought to ‘even up’ the relationships between clubs and reduce the instability resulting from their collapse through excessive debt and trading imbalances by intervening in the increasingly ‘wild’ and speculative football market:

Michel Platini has warned clubs who are running at huge losses, notably Manchester City, that Uefa would not shirk from issuing Champions League bans if new rules governing ‘financial fair-play’ are broken.

The principle of the new Uefa regulations is that clubs must not spend more than they generate and thus either accumulate debts or be reliant on billionaire benefactors such as Roman Abramovich at Chelsea or City’s Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed al Nahyan.

According to recent annual accounts, only four Premier League clubs met this principle, though Uefa’s assessments will be over two or three-year periods, beginning in 2013. Even then, clubs will be allowed to accumulate as much as €45 million (£37.3 million) in losses in that first period as long as it has been written off as equity by a benefactor ...

Uefa also unveiled its latest report into the finances of European clubs and believes that the findings – a record combined loss of €1.2 billion (£996 million) – highlights [sic] the need for reform.

The report shows that it is not just English clubs who are struggling to balance their books. More than half of the 664 clubs across 53 leagues are currently running at a loss. It is only in Germany, Belgium, Austria and Sweden that the overall income of the clubs exceeds their outgoings. (J. Wilson 2011)

The reliance on speculative borrowing and (increasingly multinational) benefactors, as well as questionable accounting practices tolerated, notably, in Italy and Spain, has created enormous capital imbalances within European football that require new market development in other regions. UEFA’s European Club Footballing Landscape Report (2010) of the 732 clubs that it licensed in 2008 found that

[English] Premier League clubs owe more money than all the other clubs in Europe’s top divisions put together ...

It calculates the combined debts of just 18 Premier League clubs at just under €4bn (£3.5bn), around four times the figure for the next most indebted top division, Spain’s La Liga ...

The Premier League made much more money from television and other commercial income than its rivals, €122m on average at the 18 clubs; the next wealthiest was the German Bundesliga, whose clubs made an average €79m. Yet despite that commercial advantage, the 18 English clubs were hugely more reliant on borrowed money from banks and club owners than the 714 other clubs

combined. 'English clubs contain on their balance sheets an estimated 56% of Europe-wide commercial debt', the report says. (Conn 2010c)

While the EPL's assets (£3.8 billion or 48 per cent of total club wealth across Europe) were also the most valuable in Europe, the UEFA figures did not even include its most indebted clubs, Portsmouth and West Ham United, to which, ironically, it had denied licences in the accounting year because of their extraordinary financial problems (although it also found that 47 per cent of Europe's top clubs made a loss in the year assessed, despite the highest ever revenue levels). Reliance on benefactors is particularly common among English football clubs, which is a clear indication of the unreliability of a business model that not uncommonly leads to insolvency, according to the 'very generalised picture' provided by Beech, Horsman and Magraw (2008: 12–13):

- A trend of poor performance on the pitch leads to relegation and reduced revenues.
- Costs are not cut back, in particular players' wages, and are wrongly prioritized.
- If the club owns its stadium, as the most valuable asset this becomes an issue. If the club does not own its stadium, it raises different issues – borrowing becomes extremely difficult, but creditors may hold off as there is no major asset to strip.
- Management faces a dilemma of whether to spend in the hope of improved performance on the pitch and hence promotion with its attendant financial gains or whether to release its better players in order to reduce costs.
- Bad management is widespread, with a worrying number of instances of unethical and even criminal management.

Increasingly, the 'benefactor' is an overseas entrepreneur using football as a point of entry into UK business networks and often, given the importance of sport stadia to the urban fabric (Frank and Steets 2010; Gratton and Henry 2001), with perhaps a greater interest in the redevelopment of land in and around football clubs, than in the sport itself. This pattern, which is by no means restricted to English football, is presented here only by way of illustration of some of the key factors in the indebtedness of many football (and, indeed, other sports) clubs despite enhanced levels of turnover. UEFA's 'financial fair play concept', which includes banishment from a key international competition if prudent financial management has not occurred in clubs, has been developed to stabilize and equalize a sport market in which the EPL, especially, has been characterized by continuing club difficulties in an era where rising revenues, both from broadcasting and the 'gentrification' of the game (King 1998), might be expected to achieve those outcomes. However, as has been demonstrated, the concentration of market power in a small number of clubs has created a perverse situation whereby the majority of clubs receive a slight proportion of total revenue and a minority uses its increased revenue to leverage more debt for higher expenditure.

Thus, just as football fans are often said to be eternally optimistic about ‘next season’, many football clubs are similarly naively hopeful with regard to the ‘next market’. For example, to return to the EPL’s recruitment of overseas players, a key justification is not only enhanced strength of the playing squad but also increased interest in the club from their countries of origin, which in turn creates the conditions for major marketing pushes into new territories. This does not mean, though, that English football did not have a substantial overseas following prior to the establishment of the Premier League. The flows of sport and television in the twentieth century took football fandom both to ‘likely’ places (diasporic settlements across the world) and rather unlikely ones where the signs of football affiliation took root. With regard to the latter, for example, Grant Farred (2008: 4) has described in passionate terms how

[he] became a Liverpool fan ... by accident. It was an arbitrary decision, a choice made by a young boy in apartheid South Africa from a very long way, geographically and conceptually, away from the city of Liverpool and the club’s Anfield Road Stadium. The full ethical complexity of that choice, a disenfranchised coloured kid supporting an almost uninterruptedly white team for almost two decades in a supposedly democratic metropolitan society ...

However, such ‘arbitrary decisions’ and ‘accidents’ became more systematically induced as the development of a global television infrastructure (as discussed in Chapters 2 and 3) and of sports markets in new zones created important new revenue streams when mature sports markets began to show signs of saturation (Miller *et al.*, 2010). The £1.4 billion (2010–3) garnered for the overseas broadcast rights to the EPL signified its value in competitive subscription television markets, especially in Asia, which in turn raises questions about the impact on football production and consumption in those places. The flow of such intensively marketed sport broadcasts involving ‘glamorous’, high-production quality content, it can be argued, is likely to have a deleterious effect on equivalent, local sport formations. As noted above, this process may manifest itself as media-cultural imperialism, whereby the sport experiences offered on the ‘periphery’ appear inferior and, indeed, as a sign of ‘backwardness’. The EPL (and other major Western sports discussed as follows) has judiciously played on this comparative advantage, seeing in the Asia-Pacific region in particular a rapidly growing sport consumer market that is ripe for cultivation, if not exploitation. Just as the EPL has ‘sucked in’ overseas labour and, as noted in Chapter 2, overseas (particularly US but also Eastern European, Middle Eastern and Indian subcontinental) capital, it has spread out in an attempt to counteract the high degree of indebtedness and balance sheet failure described earlier.

Global sport: export markets and local sustainability

The Asia-Pacific region has been consistently identified as the primary growth opportunity for global sport, given its population of over 4 billion and economic growth rate that far exceeds that of other world regions (Rowe and Gilmour 2008). There is consistent concern with ‘opening up’ Asia to sport by a variety

of means. These include, as noted at various points in this book, awarding mega media sports events to it (in recent times, these include the 2002 Korea–Japan World Cup and the 2008 Beijing Olympics) as well as the growing role of Asia on tennis, golf and motor sport circuits. It also involves the prominent televisual presentation of Western sports competitions like the EPL and the NBA, backed by team tours and heavy promotion of licensed merchandise, as well as the strategic recruitment of Asian athletes to competitions such as the EPL, NBA and Major League Baseball in a manner that draws ‘hometown’ viewers in large numbers (notably, for example, the Chinese NBA basketball player Yao Ming – Farred 2006). These are not simply ‘innocent’ extensions of leisure options to new audiences across the globe – the sophisticated barrage of sports brands articulates with the development of consumption-oriented cosmopolitanism in Asia that tends to reflect unfavourably on local sports products. Indeed, securing a visit of a major European football team, often involving public subsidies alongside local commercial sponsorship, is commonly regarded in Asian cities as a highly desirable goal. Thus there are frequent media stories concerning such attempts, like the following from Taiwan:

Taipei – Taiwan is trying to woo Real Madrid to play on the island while the Spanish club is on its Asian tour in August, a sports marketing company said Monday. Real Madrid has been invited to play an exhibition match in Beijing in August as part of activities to mark the second anniversary of the 2008 Beijing Olympics, said Chin Hsi-yueh, the manager of Bros Sport Marketing Inc.

Taiwan, Japan and Vietnam are all vying to lure Real Madrid, the world’s richest football club, to their venues after Real’s Chinese sponsor Great Gate Sports & Entertainment Co Ltd, agreed to add one more stop to the tour, Chin said.

‘We hope Real Madrid can play one game in Taipei on August 4 before it goes to Beijing,’ he said ...

Chin said the Chinese sponsor favours Real Madrid playing in Taiwan but said Taiwan must come up with the funds.

Taiwan’s biggest rival is Tokyo, which is offering 7 million euros (10 million US dollars) for a friendly, while Bros Sport can only offer 3 million euros.

‘We hope our government and the Sports Affairs Council can allocate funds and join us in inviting Real Madrid,’ he said. (*Earth Times* 2010)

Despite, in this instance, the tour not occurring because of the extended commitments surrounding the 2010 World Cup in South Africa, the contest between nations to host star sports visitors is a continuing feature of each off season. A frequent justification for these invitations is that they stimulate the sport in the host country, encouraging young people to take it up on behalf of their country and providing a ‘benchmark’ for local teams’ performance. However, evidence of this outcome is slight, with commonly expressed complaints that the impact is, in fact, negative in that local sport may be overshadowed and even denigrated. For example, Malaysia’s hosting of the 2007 Asian Cup (the major tournament of the Asian Football Confederation (AFC)) was a major

disappointment in terms of spectator numbers and national attention, and its domestic club competition remains in severe decline (Gilmour and Rowe 2010). By contrast, Manchester United Football Club's 2009 promotional tour garnered intense interest, with 30,000 fans attending the team's training session and many Malaysians in the 85,000 crowd in the match between Manchester and the Malaysian national team (itself a questionable pitting of club against nation) wearing the visiting team's colours and merchandise and cheering for them (Gilmour and Rowe 2010).

It is not intended here to represent association football in Asia as entirely in a state of disrepair. Japan's J-League, for example, has seen attendances rise annually since 2006 to reach almost 10 million in total by 2009, although Japan, as part of the dominant global economic triad with Europe and North America (now challenged by China), can hardly be regarded as on the economic periphery (Hirst and Thompson, 2009). But this success contrasts with that of even those countries with strong performing teams and economies, such as Korea's K-League (whose 2009 season-average attendance was barely half of the J-League's 20,000 – AFC 2010), or with large populations and considerable potential but with poorly organized football leagues, as is the case in corruption-ridden China (Montague and FlorCruz 2010). It is also notable that, in the 2011 Asian Cup held in Qatar (which had at that time recently been awarded the 2022 World Cup), '[o]nly 3,481 turned out to watch Uzbekistan beat Kuwait on Wednesday at the 22,000-seat Al-Gharafa stadium while 3,639 were at the 12,500-seat Qatar Sports Club on Tuesday to watch United Arab Emirates play North Korea' (Casey 2011). This attendance, though, was substantial when compared with the 2009 Malaysian Super League match at which there were only eleven paying spectators (Samuel 2009, cited in Gilmour and Rowe 2010). The overall argument is that in Asia, as in other world regions, the development of football is much more uneven than is generally acknowledged in such claims as 'Asia's footballing potential is boundless' (FIFA 2004).

In East and Central Africa, there is a similar pattern to that found in parts of the Asia-Pacific region, with massive support for the EPL among local fans while local football often struggles. The turmoil caused by war and internal discord, the debilitating impact of underdevelopment and poverty, and institutionalized corruption have all helped to contribute negatively to the conditions that have fostered the export of the EPL to countries such as Kenya, Ethiopia, Uganda and Tanzania that reveal a deep global imbalance. As Peter Musembi (2010) records in a BBC World Service (2010) radio feature,

No country from the east of the continent qualified for [the 2010] South Africa [World Cup] – not that there is anything unusual in that ... And it is certainly no surprise that Kenya will not to be at the World Cup ... A feud has been raging there for over six years between two bodies claiming to be the legitimate administrators of the game in the country. As a result, football standards have plummeted, and there has been a growing passion for the English Premier League.

In Kibera slum [the largest in Africa], just outside the capital, Nairobi, people pay 20 Kenya shillings (25 cents) to watch Premiership matches in TV halls. One hall is

called San Siro Stadium, named after the home ground of Italy's Inter Milan, where Kenya's most successful international footballer, McDonald Mariga, plays. Kenyan teams play to just a handful of spectators. Other halls are called [after English football grounds] Old Trafford, Stamford Bridge and Highbury. Bernard Otieno, an Arsenal supporter outside San Siro hall, says it is a disgrace that Kenya is not in the World Cup. 'We have very good players like McDonald Mariga who can represent us in international matches, but our league is surrounded with a lot of politics that is why we can't prosper,' he says. 'We are left with the consolation of watching the English Premier League, since we are not entertained by our own football.'

Such postcolonial accounts involving the 'consolation' of the EPL give a much less positive interpretation to that of Farred's (2008) symbolic embrace of English football under the South African apartheid regime. By 2010, post-apartheid South Africa hosted the World Cup for the first time on the continent, and yet association football in Africa is widely regarded as afflicted with substantial difficulties. According to Steve Bloomfield (2010) (whose book's prologue contains an anecdote in which he is released from brief detention by the Sudanese security agency after claiming to be a friend of English celebrity footballer David Beckham), different histories of imperialism and colonialism have created different patterns, with footballers from ex-French colonies like Senegal finding it much easier to move to European clubs than from ex-British colonies, given the more restrictive immigration arrangements in the United Kingdom. But it is not clear how enhanced labour mobility in East and Central African football would automatically be of benefit to the local game, although the banning of such movement by the Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of Congo, a former Belgian colony whose official language is French) government after that country reached the World Cup Finals in 1974 had a clearly deleterious effect on the development of the game in that country. In Kenya, though, the media are perhaps coming to the rescue, with its sixteen-team Premier League for three years carried and sponsored by the South Africa-based, pan-African satellite broadcaster SuperSport (which also, ironically, has the rights to the EPL), creating the necessary infrastructure for a professional football system that, for example, can now pay its players reasonable wages and is required to display greater transparency in governance. The global interdependency of media and sport is well illustrated here as in other regions of the globe, with a familiar contrast between flourishing fandom for glamorous overseas sport competitions and the struggling attempts of local competitions to overcome a vast gap in prestige and 'packaged' spectator appeal.

The problems of football in Africa, signified for some by the general failure of African teams in the World Cup, are frequently ascribed to internal factors (such as inefficient and corrupt governance) and, above all, to the reproduction of historical inequities deriving from imperialism and colonialism as they are played out in the flows of labour, capital and images of contemporary global sport. Following is one assessment from within the African online media (Inou and Akinyosoye, 2010), listing among 'Six Problems with African Football':

The alienation of African football and neo-colonialism: Five out of six trainers of African teams, excluding Algeria, are of European origin. Thus one can

assume that African countries, fifty years after having achieved their so-called independence, are still not able to believe in themselves ...

European coaches continue to convey a colonial image in football schools, where football talents are ‘produced’ for European clubs. Young African football talents serve as fresh supply for European Clubs. What happens to national leagues is irrelevant. This leads to a depreciation of African football leagues and to an extremely fragile national consciousness ...

Depreciation of African football leagues: African players, who play in national leagues have almost no chance of playing for the national team. Such a depreciation of the national league pushes players to emigrate. During the last FIFA World Cup, the South African Soccer team was the only one in which the majority (14 out of 23 players) of the team also played in the NFL. In the Ivory Coast and Cameroon teams only one player came from national clubs ...

In Algeria no single soccer player of the national team played for the national league.

Migration as the only way to success: Since soccer players are not appreciated in national leagues, African soccer players tend to emigrate from their countries. More than 400 African soccer players play in 36 European top-leagues ... Dishonest agents attract young players between the age of fifteen and sixteen to Europe on the grounds of false promises and the intention to exploit them. If the players do not perform as expected, they are simply disregarded and abandoned. Traffickers of soccer players no longer use traditional ways and means, transporting players from an African country to a once occupying country (Nigeria–Great Britain, Cameroon–France). Players are trafficked via Eastern European countries where entry requirements are not so tight. For many European Clubs African players are cheap goods. They are imported to Europe on the sidelines of human trafficking and thanks to the cognisance of high-ranking officials and criminal networks.

This very negative picture of neocolonialism in African football sees the top positions occupied by Europeans and the local players as a source of cheap labour, ‘trafficked’ into the main European leagues (sometimes via exploitative football academies) in the certain knowledge that most young aspirants will not prosper, while importing the seductive imagery of Western sporting glamour and success (Darby, Akindes and Irwin 2007; Sparre 2007). However, this is not a random or open process of the movement of sporting labour. As Raffaele Poli’s (2010: 499) research has revealed, the increased flow of footballers between countries has ‘not been reflected in a significant spatial diversification of transfer networks. On the contrary, it has led to a quantitative reinforcement of older channels’. These channels include ‘geographical proximity’ within Europe and, outside it, ‘historical links (Spain–Latin America, Italy–Latin America, France–old African colonies, England–United States and Australia)’. The same channels, as noted above, carry their structured symbolic dominance back to the places where athletic labour is sourced and so stimulate consumptive spectatorship directed less towards the local sports competitions that have been ‘vacated’ than to the global, cosmopolitan sport seen as the ‘gold standard’ by which all excellence is measured.

Association football has been extraordinarily successful in its ‘global diffusion’, which can be partially attributed to the ‘relative simplicity of football’s laws,

equipment and body techniques' (Giulianotti 1999: xi), qualities that facilitate ready adoption by players and spectators alike. But such a purely formal analysis cannot explain its global spread – there are many other simple, easily adopted and appealing sports, and at least one other, basketball (discussed below), could just as easily fit this mould. Instead, a range of other factors has contributed to association football's spread, from imperial and colonial imposition (especially from its British 'home' – see, for example, Mills and Dimeo 2003) to more everyday encounters through international trade, educational provision and cultural exchange. Giulianotti (1999) also emphasises the game's adaptability in meaning and use in very different contexts, its formal characteristics meshing in a range of ways across continents with different antagonistic formations (articulating with its pronounced, though by no means unique, binary competitive structure), cultural and religious belief systems and so on. But the master narrative has not been one of universal uptake with various local adaptations and variations. In Australia, for example, association football has lagged behind other codes despite its strong connection with Britain (to the extent that it was stigmatized in Anglo popular culture as the 'wogball' of migrants from non-English-speaking countries (Hay 1994) while, most strikingly, the United States has been resistant and ambivalent towards it (Markovits and Hellerman 2001). There is a revealing debate (paralleling in some ways critiques of the inconsistency of US agricultural protectionism and advocacy of free markets for its own exports) about how much the country most associated with global sport resists those that it does not dominate – especially association football. Toby Miller (2010) has argued that, despite the evident popularity of the sport in the United States, there is a tendency in some quarters to see it as 'un-American':

A potent brand of amateur intellectualism and reactionary academic scholarship celebrates a putative American exceptionalism, which supposedly seals off American sport from outside influence. The concept of exceptionalism began as an attempt to explain why socialism had not taken greater hold [t]here. It has since turned into an excessive rhapsody to Yankee world leadership, difference, and sanctimony. So we encounter claims made – in all seriousness – that 'foreignness' can make a sport unpopular in America.

Perhaps the most notorious instance of American exceptionalism was applied to soccer by the Reaganite Republican Jack Kemp, who derided it as a 'European socialist' sport, in contrast to its 'democratic' rival (the 'football' that he had played in college and professionally). Similarly ethnocentric denunciations of soccer – predicated, of course, on letting Latinos and migrants know they're not 'American' – still flow from angry white men. Frustrated at the prominence and popularity of the sport, they are desperate to attack what a *Wall Street Journal* opinion essay calls its taint of 'European ... death and despair'. The American Enterprise Institute's journal says Americans insist that 'excellence should prevail' while Europeans and Latin Americans are happy with second-best – so they enjoy soccer.

It is a little curious to see association football regarded as in some way 'alien' or 'un-American'. Its national men's team is currently the top-ranking Confederation of North, Central American and Caribbean Association Football (CONCACAF) member and eighteenth out of 203 in the world, took

part in the first World Cup in 1930 and has qualified for every tournament since 1990 and hosted it in 1994. Its women's team is ranked first in the world and has won the World Cup twice and the Olympics five times (indeed, it is this success that may have led to a sexually stigmatized 'feminization' of football in the United States, where the patronized figure of the 'Soccer Mom' is associated with a certain kind of stifling suburbanism – see, for example, Swanson 2009). While there is clearly a substantial foundation of practice and support for association football in the United States (especially at the school and community level), the intemperate comments of some critics and, less dramatically, its continued lagging behind the professional, 'home-grown' team sports of gridiron, basketball, baseball and ice hockey are a salient reminder that the flows of global media sport are complex, variable and multidirectional. The kind of critique that Miller advances – essentially that in the United States there is an ethnocentric suspicion of association football – has often elicited defensive complaints that the game is, indeed, an important part of the American sporting fabric. For example, Bill Saporito (2010) demands,

Please stop lecturing us. We know that it's called football everywhere else and that it's the global game, the beautiful game. Americans call it soccer because there's a perfectly great sport here already called football, one that is not inclined to surrender its moniker anytime soon. So don't get your football knickers in a twist about it.

Soccer it is. And stop asking that question, 'When is soccer ever going to be big in America?' Soccer won't ever be NFL big or Major League Baseball big, but in so many ways, soccer has become a big and growing sport. An American sport. Americans love to play it, certainly. Soccer trails only basketball in the number of participants. It's the most popular sport for women among NCAA schools. That's been true for a long time. Indeed, the game has deep roots in the U.S., arriving with immigrants from Scotland, Germany, Italy and elsewhere, who brought their work skills and their game with them.

The United States, as a 'nation of immigrants', would be expected to be the site of many sports, but just as racial and ethnic hierarchies persist within it, the sphere of sport is also unequal and, as noted earlier, may be so through association (pun not intended) with those already marginalized and disadvantaged. It is not possible here to engage in a thorough, detailed analysis of the social complexion and power structure of each sport. But it should be remembered that although, following Pierre Bourdieu (1978, 1984), capital in all its forms (social, economic, symbolic, cultural and educational) is crucial to how sport is structured, deployed and experienced, it is accumulated and exchanged in diverse ways including, perhaps perversely, foregrounding human subjects who are exploited and degraded in substantial proportions as image-exemplars and promotional vehicles (notably African American men – Carrington 2010). This point is made because the United States is not only a developer of domestic sport and recipient of externally produced sport but is also a major exporter of it, especially in mediated form. Indeed, it was the United States that first developed the commercial mediation of sport that was subsequently mimicked and adapted all around the world (Chandler 1988;

Goldlust 1987; Rader 1984; Rowe 2004a; Wenner 1989). US-identified sports have, therefore, pioneered the global promotion of sport and sports brands, while tending to display a certain defensiveness towards those that have moved onto their 'patch'.

Probably the most successful US-originated sport in this regard is basketball, which (as discussed in Chapter 2) was developed in the United States (by the Canadian James Naismith) in the late nineteenth century explicitly as a sport for young men that was easy to play in inclement weather indoors. Basketball, though, was adaptable to a range of spaces (such as external urban squares, streets and waste ground), its popularity at the informal, community-based level accompanying its progressive establishment as a professional sport in the United States, first at city and college level before the NBA was founded in 1946 (WNBA wasn't formed until 1997). Basketball leagues have been set up on all inhabited continents, with an international governing body, now known as Fédération Internationale de Basketball Amateur (FIBA) and currently with 213 national member federations, and its own World Championships since the middle of the twentieth century (first held in 1950 for men and 1953 for women) and a long-established participation in the summer Olympics (since 1936 for men and 1976 for women). FIBA presents the following 'Key Numbers' among its 'Quick Facts':

- A study conducted by TGI Europe in 2006 in the four European markets UK, FRA, ESP and GER and based on 56.00 [sic] interviews, shows that the 33 million basketball fans in these four markets are mainly young (15–24), male and deriving from high social grade categories.
- A global study, conducted by Roper Starch Worldwide in April '97 based on 35,000 interviews, showed that 11% of the world plays basketball. Basketball has even replaced football as the most popular sport in areas like Asia and Australia and is on the way to surpassing football worldwide.
- Over 450 million people play basketball on competition and grassroots level in 2007, but the number of licensed players has also risen drastically since 1992. (FIBA 2011)

While such statistics are promotional in nature and so in various ways questionable (including the claim about regional popularity and the apparently approving four-country European player profile as 'mainly young (15–24), male and deriving from high social grade categories'), they do reveal that basketball is a major global sport that has acquired a player and spectator appeal that extends well beyond its technically sporting characteristics. Basketball, more than any other sport, has wedded the 'style power' associated with popular music with the performative, competitive cultural characteristics of organized sport (McComb 2004; Rowe 1995). In particular, as has often been discussed, basketball's association with a certain 'cool' form of African American masculinity (drawing on, in particular, the studied insouciance of hip hop's presentation of self) created a 'cultural package' that was highly visual and globally portable (Andrews 1996; Baker and Boyd 1997; Carrington 2010; McKay 1995). The NBA's global expansion has been on several fronts, including, as already noted, the

circulation of content on television, with its influential Commissioner David Stern assiduously placing it on screens in a multitude of countries by direct negotiation with broadcasters from the early 1980s onwards (Williams 2009) and encouraging overseas players in a manner that would later ‘globalize’ basketball more fully by reversing the flow of sporting labour in its originary American contexts. As one journalist commented after viewing Stern at the 2008 Beijing Olympics,

Last summer, when the gold, silver, and bronze medals were handed out after the Olympic basketball tournament in Beijing, China, to the members of the teams representing the United States, Spain, and Argentina, 24 of the 36 medals went to NBA players, past and present.

Standing with hand over heart as the U.S. national anthem played and the flags of the three medal-winning nations were raised in the Olympic basketball arena, NBA commissioner David Stern felt his heart swell with pride – equal parts patriotism and self-realization.

The globalization of the NBA, long a goal Stern had envisioned, seemed an unquestioned fact.

FOR DECADES, Stern has understood the global appeal of basketball in general and of the NBA in particular ...

Today, NBA television programming reaches 215 countries and territories, and games are broadcast in 45 languages.

And Stern has watched the rosters of his league’s teams swell with players born outside the United States. In the 1983–1984 season, there were eight international players on the NBA’s 23 rosters; by the 2006–2007 season, there were 83, from 37 different countries and territories. (Monroe 2009)

This history of basketball’s development reveals the familiar correspondence of elements of globalization and Americanization, with contrasting readings that basketball’s spread beyond the United States through promotional and marketing campaigns and the flow of foreign sports labour into the NBA can represent the diffusion or re-concentration of US control over, and identification with, the sport. Similarly, ‘socially responsible’ outreach work such as ‘Live, Learn or Play’ as part of the ‘NBA’s commitment to youth and family development’, involving 525 ‘new and refurbished basketball courts, libraries, playgrounds, homes, fitness facilities and technology rooms [are] created in conjunction with NBA league and team community and business partners’ in over twenty-two countries since 2005 (NBA 2010), can be seen as either philanthropy or marketing by stealth – or, indeed, as both and more besides. I prefer here to argue that the NBA and US basketball in general, as with other cultural-material forms and sub-forms (including film, blue jeans, soft drinks, fast processed food and pop music) in which the United States played a seminal (and often resiliently powerful) role in international circulation, communication and exchange, have overtly and systematically taken its ‘product’ to the world. This, though, as was observed in the case of English association football, could never be a one-way process of sports exportation, with the flows of people,

capital, identities and practices moving in other directions and also setting up alternative centres of power (notably in Europe). That 300 million people in China might watch an NBA game (sometimes exceeding its US audience) is testament to its televisual sporting pulling power, but it is also a sign of Chinese sporting nationalism in the particular attraction of that audience to contests involving their compatriot Yao Ming (Farred 2006; Oates and Polumbaum 2004). Here, as with the EPL and its aforementioned influx of foreign players and increased emphasis on cultivating external markets that are potentially larger than the foundational one, the status of, strictly, a 'national' competition becomes problematic.

Nonetheless, the extended forays of the NBA into Asia, especially its two largest markets China and India (now often conflated as 'Chindia'), represent a US-initiated expansionism with mixed evidence of a positive effect on the sport in the 'recipient' country. In India, NBA financial support for competitions, coaching programmes, strategic organizational advice and 'Live, Learn or Play' sport community-infrastructure building have been generally less successful than its television coverage of games in the United States and website NBA.com/India. The NBA-India fan page on Facebook is able to create a local 'buzz', but (as discussed in Chapter 4) this medium of exchange can be directed towards, and provoke interest in, major sports events such as the NBA finals, rather than stimulate local, grass-roots participation and spectatorship (Dawson 2010; Klayman 2010; Singh 2010). Whether an imported sport 'takes' in its introduced site is not determined by a formulaic application of standard principles of exposure, marketing and persuasion. The NBA is one among many sports viewing India as an alluring commercial opportunity, but it must confront a range of socioeconomic obstacles, such as the widespread urban and rural poverty that make even establishing a basketball court, club and small competitive league inordinately difficult. In addition, there is the national sporting disposition – supported by massive economic investment and media coverage – which, as is discussed below, leans so heavily towards cricket in India as to overshadow all others.

The NBA expansion strategy extends beyond Asia to Africa (Means and Nauright 2007) and, as with other sports with global ambitions, is enthusiastic about 'tapping' mature and emergent media sport markets and anticipating the next to embrace branded sports consumption. Although this process has much in common with imperialism, it is never a simple process of invasion and obliteration. For example, as Mark Falcous and Joseph Maguire (2006: 74) argue in their analysis of NBA coverage in the United Kingdom,

Status, prestige, power, and control underpin established-outsider relations: without hegemonic control, the claim to higher status and the specific charisma of a particular sport and nation (the NBA and the United States) would have no basis. Power differentials of this kind generate contrasts between group charisma and group stigma – established groups enjoy the former, while outsiders suffer the latter. Established groups are better able both to organize, within specific zones of prestige, their high status public image while at the same time constructing a negative image of outsider groups. This uneven balance of power – at local,

national, and global levels – is the decisive condition for any effective stigmatization of an outsider group. Accordingly, dominant reflections of both US and UK culture(s), both national contexts characterized by complex heterogeneity, are reinforced in NBA coverage. The NBA seeks established status in global terms. Yet, the political economy of UK media production, and the dynamics of global ideological exchange, moderate their strategies. This study shows that the selling of the global involves ‘concessions’ to the local. These findings confirm the assertion that, no matter how apparently powerful the global, it is obliged to negotiate with the local, especially when the ‘local’ is a former ‘super power’ with a well-established media industry.

Basketball is a popular sport in the United Kingdom and in many other European countries, but there is little prospect that it can, by the end of this century, supplant association football as Europe’s dominant sport. It must, therefore, negotiate its place in the ‘space of sports’, in which the NBA’s quintessential ‘Americanness’ can be both an advantage for those trying to break away from the restrictions of a ‘parent’ sports culture and at the same time induce some resistance among those who see it as imposed, alien and inauthentic. Sometimes, the same human subject will feel the gravitational pull of competing sports, or see them as part of a mood-sensitive smorgasbord, or set them both aside for another cultural pursuit. In order to stimulate potential and capitalize on current interest, the NBA has begun playing regular season games outside the United States, the first ever in Europe in early March 2011 in London between the New Jersey Nets and the Toronto Raptors in basketball’s 2012 Olympic venue, the O2 Arena (formally known as the Millennium Dome and for the purposes of the Olympics called the North Greenwich Arena). A similar proposal that each EPL club should play at least one game per year outside the United States has been rejected by a majority of its clubs and opposed by UEFA, but NBA practice and EPL prospect signal a tentative move towards the globalization of national sports competition in competitive as well as mediated terms.

Michael Veseth (2005) applies the pejorative term ‘Globaloney’ (first coined in the 1940s) to specious grand assertions of the destruction of local variations by aggressive global, predominantly American capitalism, especially in its popular cultural form. In rejecting the familiar use of Michael Jordan as a symbol of triumphant Americanization and globalization, he suggests, after considering how basketball and the NBA take local forms in new territories and then feed back into its primary sports context in the United States, that perhaps the ‘NBA has been globalized *by* the rest of the world, and that in the process, American professional sports have become much more like spectator sports in the rest of the world’ (Veseth 2005: 76, emphasis in the original). Ironically, perhaps, Veseth’s approach to the concept of globalization is rather too US centric and so tends to conflate Americanization and globalization (Miller *et al.* 2001), but he clearly recognizes the limitations of a mechanical, linear approach to it. This point is reinforced further when the focus shifts to a sport that means little in the United States but was once dominated by Europe and is now firmly controlled by the Indian subcontinent – cricket.

The Indian Premier League: a redirection of flows?

As discussed above, the narrative of globalization tends to be entwined with that of Americanization and certainly a directional flow from the West to East or the 'Global North' to 'South'. This familiar story was certainly evident in cricket, with its close formative ties to British (specifically English) imperialism and colonialism (Farred 2004). As Peter Corrigan (2001: 232–3), drawing on the work of Keith Sandiford (1994), has observed,

Cricket was one way through which imperial links were forged, maintained and preserved between England and the rather extensive patches of the world it colonized ... Playing the game marked one as a participant in the Empire, but was also an opportunity to show that one existed differently as, say, 'Australian' ...

[A]n important function of cricket in the imperial era was the transmission of certain English cultural values to the colonies, both to remind the colonizers of who they were (or, rather, who they were supposed to be) and to display to the colonized what they were. Assimilation of these values was to a degree a way in which certain sections of the colonized could access some of the spoils of the imperial adventure for themselves.

Thus, cricket, despite the English imperial impulse to disseminate and diffuse the superiority of its 'gentlemen', could not be consistently and permanently secured in this way. Hilary Beckles (2001: 243) has observed in the Caribbean context that '[d]espite attempts by white colonial elites to monopolize and racially segregate the game, the popular demand for open access provided it with a radical, democratizing mandate'. The best-known analysis of this capacity of cricket both to draw from and challenge the colonial legacy is C. L. R. James's (1993) classic *Beyond a Boundary*, a sophisticated and highly personal account of how the sports field appeals as a place temporarily separated from politics but is always subject not just to its intrusion but is thoroughly permeated by the political. James was critical of the commercialization of cricket where it impinged on the nobler aspects of the game, but his death in 1989 (aged eighty-eight) meant that he did not witness a later stage in cricket's development when, after one-day cricket threatened the position of the more sedate five-day game and the Packer Revolution made the sport more lively and colourful for television (Barnett 1990), the power of India asserted itself, to be followed by its embrace of an even shorter, more spectacular, television friendly form – Twenty20 (see Chapter 2) as presented in the IPL and its (short-lived) rival the Indian Cricket League (ICL).

The rising power of the Indian subcontinent in cricket stems from a combination of factors – most notably the economic development of India since the mid-twentieth century and the growth in leisure consumption and broadcast media access of its huge population; the investment in cricket by local capital, especially from the media and entertainment sectors, and its intimate connection to its (mostly) illegal gambling industry; the extant and stimulated (both external and internal) popularity of the game that has seen it crowd out rival sports; and the belated cooperation and 'caucusing' among

subcontinental representatives in the International Cricket Council with fragile, if not volatile, relationships (Haigh 2010; *Indian Express* 2011; Majumdar 2004; Malcolm, Gemmell and Mehta 2010; Williams 2003). The media are especially important in this context because exercising power over sport means not just receiving broadcasts sent from other regions but wresting control over production and integrating sport broadcasts across media sites and forms, including current affairs programmes, talkback radio stations, websites, colour magazines and both general news and sports pages.

In Chapter 2 it was argued that Western media corporations, notably News Corp, have established global media sport operations by licensing coverage of major Western sports competitions to which they have acquired broadcasting rights in other territories and, where necessary, establishing partnerships with local media. The IPL, as a major sports competition of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), has directionally reversed this arrangement by selling in 2008 its inaugural ten-year global broadcast rights to a Consortium of Sony Entertainment Television (India) (a subsidiary of the Japan-owned Sony Pictures Entertainment, which is part of the Sony Corporation that acquired the US-based, Coca Cola-owned Columbia Pictures in 1989) and the Singapore-based World Sport Group (WSG) (which markets sport, manages sport events and athletes, and produces made-for-television sports programmes) for US\$1.026 billion. Perhaps inevitably given the history of manoeuvring of various parties involved in the IPL, a subsequent dispute led to cancellation and legal action over WSG's rights (Engineer and Gollapudi 2010) and the suspension on grounds of impropriety of its founding chairman and commissioner of the IPL, Lalit Modi (Bal 2010).

IPL, whose Indian-city-based franchises are all India owned (with Lachlan Murdoch, son of Rupert, an investor in the Rajasthan Royals), has a range of international and Indian sponsors of the competition and its franchises (including title sponsor property Indian developer DFL, UK-based telecommunications company Vodafone and US-based soft drink company Pepsi Cola). Thus, while IPL is not an 'enclosed' Indian competition, it is clearly Indian controlled, with the BCCI exerting its local authority to eradicate the ICL, established by local company Zee Entertainment Enterprises (a subsidiary of the US-based Turner Group) and, as discussed below, hiring local and international players (while effectively banning those from Pakistan) in a contra flow of the earlier international cricket labour market that saw subcontinental players move along a more familiar path to the previously more lucrative setting of English County Cricket. As Mehta, Gemmell and Malcolm (2009: 701) argue in drawing on the work of Michael Curtin (2007) on film and television in China,

In analysing India's rise as the centre of world cricket, it is possible to draw a parallel from theoretical frameworks in studies of the media and globalization, and in particular, the work of Michael Curtin's notion of what he calls 'media capitals'. At the heart of debates over media capitalism are concerns over location – centres with concentration of resources and their spheres of circulation which lead to concerns over culture, identity and power. Curtin's 'media capitals' are geographic centres which transcend national boundaries and become global. These are places where resources, talent and production processes concentrate

based on the inherent logic of capitalism: the accumulation of capital. Creative talent migrates towards 'media capitals' and the ruthless logic of efficiency fuels perpetual circuits of expansion. There is a socio-cultural dimension to this. For the logic of capitalist expansion to work, it needs to address local variations such as language, cultural issues, identities, communal imaginaries, etc., but primarily this is a process central to capitalism.

Mumbai, the media capital of India, is the headquarters of Sony Entertainment Television (India) and the BCCI, as well as Bollywood, which supplies both some of the IPL franchise co-owners (such as the actors Shah Rukh Khan and Shilpa Shetty, co-owners of the Kolkata Knight Riders and the Rajasthan Royals, respectively) and of the flamboyant presentational aesthetic of match entertainment. The raw expression of twenty-first century global cricketing capitalism and its accommodation with localism is evident in its latest iteration of the new international division of cultural labour (Miller *et al.* 2001) through the annual player auction. Each franchise bids (under a notional but apparently circumvented salary cap of US\$9 million), drawing from a nominated list of players (350 in 2011) from around the world (except, for transparently but officially unacknowledged political reasons, neighbouring Pakistan), in various tiers and categories. It is not, though, a completely open market, with no more than ten foreign players permitted per squad, no more than four of whom can be chosen in a starting team and a minimum of eight local players and of two players aged under twenty-two in each squad. Local players are also favoured by gaining comparatively higher values than some better performed foreigners (Bhogle 2011; A. Wilson 2011) for essentially nationalist reasons – as Boria Majumdar (2011) explains:

It was inevitable that the five Indian stars – Yuvraj Singh, Zaheer Khan, Gautam Gambhir, Yusuf Pathan and Rohit Sharma – would command the highest bids at the auction. This is simply not because they are the best players available, but also because an Indian name is still preferred to lead an outfit and they are essential names to have on the roster to enlist sponsors for the next three seasons. More than foreigners, Indian names remain the tried and tested option as far as the market is concerned and this resulted in huge sums being spent on these stars. In fact, Rajasthan Royals, champions of season 1, found it impossible to find a lead sponsor in year two because they lacked an Indian face. [Australians] Shane Warne and Shane Watson weren't enough for the marketers.

Although other factors are involved in the player auction – such as some nations requiring their players for international duties (B. Wilson 2011) – it is apparent that the market appeal of Indian players is such that if the game in that country has, as argued by Boria Majumdar (2007: 93), indeed, undergone a transition from 'nationalist romance to postcolonial sport' and that 'the frenzied nationalism stimulated by cricket' is 'at best a facade, a romantic escape', its institutional base remains firmly organized on nationalist lines. Gideon Haigh (2010: 196–7) acerbically comments in criticizing 'the contention that the IPL somehow leads to the sunny uplands of a post-nationalist cricket utopia' that 'the IPL is nationalism's ultimate triumph: a global tournament in which the same nation always wins'. But if India is always the winner in

symbolic, economic or sporting terms, the riches generated by the IPL may be elusive for many of its player participants. Harsha Bhogle (2011) has noted the undervaluing of players from Bangladesh as a reflection of a resilient colonialism still evident among South Asia elites, while there are very substantial disparities in the values of the contracts gained by IPL players. Thus, for example, in the Darwinian competition of the player auction in 2011, Gautam Gambhir of the Kolkata Knight Riders received a contract worth US\$2.4 million, while Jonathan Vandiar of South Africa received US\$20,000. While there is no doubt a large gulf in their accomplishments, that one player receives less than one per cent of the other's remuneration indicates, even within the structured labour market of the IPL, the kind of hypermarket-based reward system advocated under the rubric of neoliberalism – and with the same distortions of its meritocratic framework.

In the light of such structurally induced material inequalities among both teammates and competitors, and the heavy promotion of status conscious, conspicuous consumption for spectators (Rowe and Gilmour 2008), Jack Williams (2003: 104–5) regards the ascendancy of South Asia in cricket flowing from its advancement of commercialization of the game not as a sign of de-Westernization but of the ultimate triumph of a globalized Western capitalism:

This Asian drive for the greater commercialization of international cricket can be seen as part of the late-twentieth-century globalization of sport and of globalization in general ... Fast food, credit cards, and jeans, very much the icons of globalization, are American cultural artefacts, and while the internet can be regarded as a resource for a decentralized global economy, the American corporation Microsoft dominates computer software. The enhanced commercialization of international cricket has been stimulated largely by the revenue to be gained from satellite television and sponsorship, and can be seen as an imitation of the American model of sports presentation, with sports events packaged to maximise their television appeal.

For Williams, the postcolonial paradox of 'Asian-led' commercialization of international cricket is an expression of 'Western cultural imperialism' that discomfits the West (specifically England, the home and moral guardian of the game), which had, after first commercializing the game – a process much advanced in the 1970s by Australia (Cashman 2010) – resisted a full embrace of American-style *razzmatazz* because of a residual cultural conservatism (here, again, the relevance of Raymond Williams's typology of cultural forms is highly relevant). Therefore, a certain disarticulation between economic practices and sporting values is evident, but so, too, is the brute size and strength of the Indian market (itself, as noted, created by an enthusiasm for the game that is not matched in the West). Thus, the loss of political economic power in cricket by the West has created the conditions for a lament that the game is degraded – a position that can be readily reinforced by betting-related corruption and match-fixing, and by threats to withdraw from tours during disputes that would severely compromise the finances of other cricketing nations (see Chapter 6). Mike Marqusee (2010) has described the IPL as the 'dark side of the neoliberal dream' in a new entrepreneurialist India

shielded from criticism by presenting its internal detractors as reactionary and its external critics as 'neocolonial', but which has exposed 'the true cost of unleashing the private sector'. However, he acknowledges that the English and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) had shown no less an enthusiasm for rapid, unprincipled capital accumulation through its involvement in the highly lucrative Twenty20 international matches in the Caribbean proposed by Allen Stanford, who was charged in 2009 with running a pyramid scheme (Haigh 2010). The 'Post-Westernization of World Cricket' (Rumford 2007) or the role of cricket in the 'Rise of the Non-West' (Gupta 2004) occurring under globalization are not, then, straightforward incidences of historical turn-taking and resistance. If cricket is a lead indicator of the rise of the Asia-Pacific in the twenty-first century and of the reversal of previous capital flows and lines of political authority, it has become so not by forging an entirely new path based on distinct Eastern cultural values (although non-Western cultural elements are obviously evident) but by turning the political economic weaponry perfected by cricket's formerly dominant colonial powers against them in what is clearly felt by many in India to be a delicious historical irony.

Mega media sports events in new places

In the earlier discussion the main concern has been with nation-based sports competitions and their control and mediated circulation, especially through television. These are vital to the globalization of sport, but so also are major events at greater intervals involving a bidding process and enormous investments by hosts. In Chapter 6 I will discuss the Beijing 2008 Olympics and the 2010 South Africa World Cup in terms of being sought and awarded as new host sites, interpreted as epochal changes in the global circulation of major sports events (South Africa having already hosted other World Cups in rugby union and cricket but becoming the first African country to host the world's largest sports event). In this immediate context I will address briefly the significance of awarding these major sport events outside their conventional orbit in terms of global media sport development. Since the revival of the Summer Olympics in 1896 by French aristocrat Baron Pierre de Coubertin the Games have mainly clustered in Europe and North America (the Winter Olympics even more so, but their specific climatic requirements means that they are more globally restricted in technical terms). A European city has hosted (including London 2012) the Summer Games on sixteen occasions (in eleven nations), and a North American one on six (the United States four of these, with one each to Canada and Mexico) and once in Australia. By contrast, the vast Asian continent has hosted the Games only three times, and South America will hold the Summer Games for the first time in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 2016. This skewing of the Games towards the West (Hill 1992) has been periodically countered by strategic inclusion of new Olympic hosts, notably as part of Japan's post-Second World War rehabilitation (1964), South Korea's economic and political emergence (1988), China's opening up

to the world as an economic power to rival the United States (2008) (Rowe 2012) as well as Brazil's rise as one of the booming 'BRIC' countries (along with India, Russia and China). The pattern of the FIFA World Cup since its inception in 1930 and hosting by Uruguay has been considerably different in that it has reflected the prominent role of South America, which has been awarded it on five occasions (including Brazil 2014, a further confirmation of that country's newfound economic status) and also given its rotational system across the major confederations. Europe has been awarded the World Cup on eleven occasions, North America three times, Africa once and Asia twice. Of particular interest regarding the latter is the hosting of the 2022 World Cup in Qatar, described by its bid ambassador, the celebrated footballer Zinedine Zidane, as 'a victory for the Arab world' (FIFA 2010c).

The controversial choice of Qatar was justified by FIFA on grounds of its location in the growing Middle East football market and, although the smallest country to host the World Cup since the first one in Uruguay in 1930, its wealth presents a sharp contrast to that of the 2010 host, South Africa:

Summer temperatures which can soar to above 50 degrees Celsius and a concern about lack of infrastructure did not deter FIFA Thursday from awarding the 2022 World Cup to the tiny Gulf state of Qatar.

The Middle East has never before hosted a major global sporting event and analysts said Qatar's win would do much to boost the region's global profile.

FIFA were likely to have been swayed by Qatar's hefty financial prowess with money no object for the world's largest exporter of liquefied natural gas.

The country's economy, forecast to grow by 15.5 percent this year, is expected to soar by a staggering 21 percent in 2011, allowing Qatar to pour as much cash as necessary into preparations for 2022. (Doherty 2010)

Thus, the most significant global flow with regard to Qatar 2022 is that of energy, alongside the television images to be broadcast by Qatar-based Al-Jazeera Sport, which won the Middle East and North Africa rights for the 2014–22 World Cups. However, as is noted below, most of the proceeds of the media rights sale, which includes cable, satellite, terrestrial, mobile and online across twenty-three territories (Mann 2011), will not remain with Qatar:

Revenue in the Middle East from football pay TV broadcast rights is expected to rise 30 percent to \$550m over the next twelve years as a result of Qatar's successful bid to stage the World Cup in 2022, according to a new study.

However, the bulk of the broadcasting revenue – believed to be as high as 90 percent – will not go to Qatar, but will go to FIFA ...

The growth in revenue from broadcasting rights was forecast by consultants Grant Thornton in a study commissioned by the Qatar 2022 bid team.

'Given the central location of Qatar, 82 percent of the world's time zones would receive Qatar 2022 games live in prime time, with a potential match day peak audience of 3.2 billion viewers,' the report added.

Middle East TV audiences for the FIFA World Cup have grown almost 350 percent since 1986, the Grant Thornton report said and FIFA's own evaluation of Qatar's bid revealed that television penetration in the Gulf state has risen from 67 percent to 94 percent in the last eight years.

Qatar has also claimed that football is the most-watched TV programme in the country, with 77 percent of men and 64 percent of women tuning into matches. (Football Marketing 2010)

It is apparent that, despite increased interest in football in the Middle East, winning the World Cup hosting rights in 2022 is not beneficial to Qatar in a strict accounting sense, given the enormous cost of building carbon neutral, air conditioned stadia, accommodation and so on (FIFA 2010d). The pivotal appeal is enhancement of global profile and reputation. As Chapter 6 indicates, in the sphere of global media sport the management of image and profile can be a hazardous enterprise and its outcomes as unpredictable as the very sport contests that distinguish sport from other cultural forms.