



Research Paper

## Analysing the British commercial hegemony in football and understanding how it's preventing the emergence of new football markets (India, China, USA) and degrading old powers (Spain, Germany, Italy )

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*Football's diffusion and popularisation throughout the world mainly happened due to the British influence, who infused football into the popular cultures of many countries.*

*However, the British commercial hegemony in football is preventing the emergence of new football markets, such as India, China, and the USA and degrading old powers such as Spain, Germany, and Italy.*

*This paper delves into why this happened and how emerging markets can rectify this situation.*

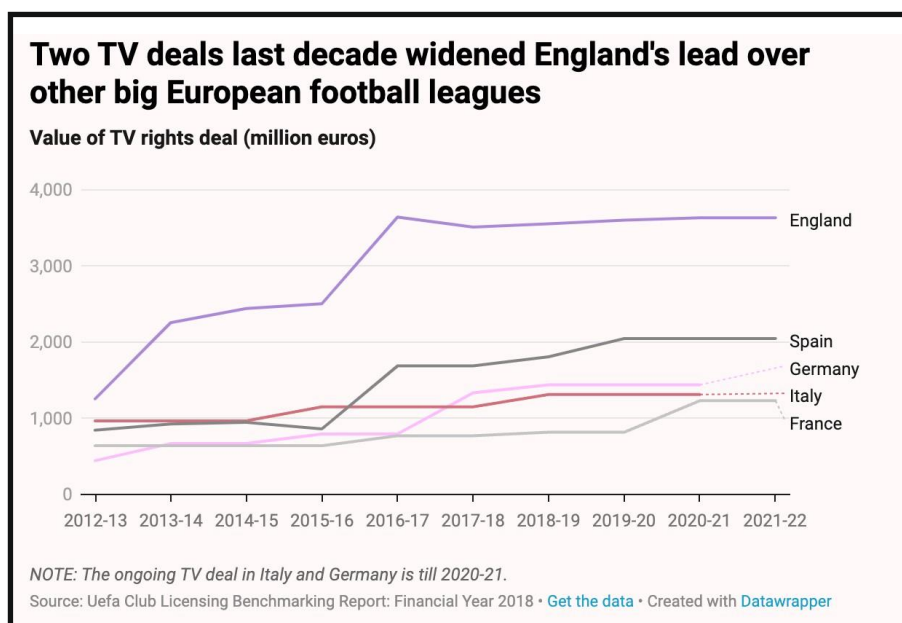
Data reveals that the success of British football is reflected in the different strategies they used to have the maximum market share.

One of the strategies was **outreach**. It is interesting to note that *The origin of this hegemony was a broadcast deal.*

*For the 2013-14 season, the English Premier League (EPL), the top club football league in England, got Sky Sports and BT to shell out 80% more for TV rights over 2012-13. According to Uefa data, it negotiated another 45% hike three years later. [2021]*

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The graphical analysis below reflects the impact of TV deals on the large market share the Britishers could capture.

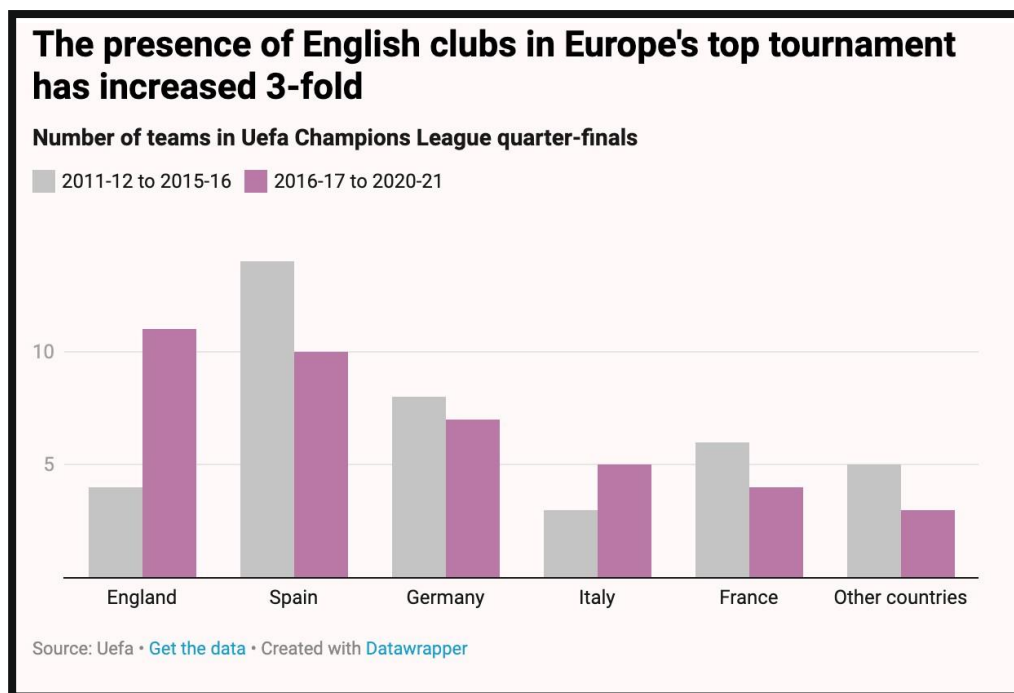


However, a cause of concern is that The British commercial hegemony in football is preventing the growth of new markets and degrading old powers by controlling the financial aspects of the game.

### **The current scenario**

Football is currently dominated by British commercial interests, which is problematic for emerging markets and established football nations. This is because they control the sport's financial aspects, negatively impacting the growth of these markets and countries. However, this commercial dominance threatens English football's diversity and global appeal.

An article titled "The Economics Behind English Hegemony in European Club Football" [howindialives.com] reveals that English football clubs are in the midst of a golden run, and their dominance on and off the field is now upending the football world. The graph below reflects this growing trend.



But there could also be other reasons for the lack of emergence of other countries, like in China- The real estate crisis has significantly impacted the country's football industry. In 2021, 11 of the 16 teams in the Chinese Super League (CSL) were owned by property developers, and nearly all of them now face funding crises. But the same does not apply to countries like the USA and India.

If we consider a country like India:

It is also advancing in the sports industry, with aspirations to host the Olympics or the World Cup. However, there are political as well as socio-economic restrictions that may impede the growth.

### **But as they say, there is hope!**

Despite these challenges, it is anticipated that the growth and transformation of the sports industry will provide more opportunities for organisations and athletes to connect with their fans.

This would be possible through international events such as the Cricket World Cup (India), Rugby World Cup (France), and FIFA Women's World Cup (Australia and New Zealand). Besides this, Private equity investments in sports are anticipated to continue to increase; this inflow of money will undoubtedly help them deal with the monetary and commercial inconveniences.

**After analyzing the issue, I have developed a multi-point strategy to find a way forward:**

#### **Promote grassroots programs:**

Youth education and training should be very inexpensive and merit-based. There should be greater emphasis on training, as in European championships. This will establish a pool of academy graduates that are more socially diverse and better trained.

These academies should have a boarding model with regular schooling (La Masia model) to ensure the holistic development of the child as well as specialised vocational training for the players, which they can employ after their playing careers have ended.

**Redefine talent identification:** Focus on identifying and developing local talents in emerging football markets, considering physical attributes and psychological and social factors. Utilising the merit-based approach mentioned earlier, clubs should integrate technology into their training modules and track their players' fitness and performance data. Talent identification is usually in the hands of scouts and agents, fewer in these countries. We can attract these skilled positions to these new markets by propping them up as training grounds for scouts employed by larger European markets and FIFA training programs. This will help reduce costs, stimulate local training and support the growth of these clubs simultaneously.

**Collaborate with international organisations:** Partner with FIFA and the United Nations to promote football development and leverage their resources and expertise.

FIFA needs to create committees focusing on football development in these emerging markets. A proposed "pooling of resources" from Europe and investment directly from FIFA into these markets can help create FIFA clubs within these leagues, focused on empowering local communities through vast youth training programmes. This will benefit both the bottom line and also spread talent. FIFA taking up this task can also give these players access to the European market.

**An adaptive model** can help prevent the destruction of these new models before they materialise, but enforcing the 50+1 rule can help retain the football culture. This will ensure that private capital can be brought into Clubs, but the model should always be member-based, and every club should have a democratic system with a list of members that people can pay to become. This will create a club with culture and ethos. Elections should be held five years apart and only be for the top post to prevent politicisation, and no parties can exist, just a cabinet structure for every election. This model has been successfully applied in Germany and Spain, and its absence in England is a significant criticism of its growth model.

**Encourage fan engagement:** Foster fan engagement and support for local clubs and leagues in emerging markets, creating a sense of belonging and loyalty to domestic football. Unlike the US, India and China, where clubs are set up by large monetary powerhouses who chose locations to maximise profitability, a large part of English Football has been set up locally, enabling a traditional connection. This creates an emotional bond between the community and the club. This is then leveraged to attract local talent, develop derbies and rivalries and build a loyal support base.

**Learn from successful models:** Study and adapt successful models of football development from other countries, focusing on best practices in talent identification, coaching, and infrastructure. [learning from the UK model](#)

The UK football system has over seven tiers, including amateur leagues, funnelling talent upwards. The promotion and demotion-based system allows emerging clubs to move to the premier league, providing players basic wages even in lower leagues. This creates a competitive youth scouting network, enabling inexpensive players to move up. Local clubs in every region have high attendance and sponsorships, allowing them to improve infrastructure and hire better coaches.

**Support local leagues and clubs:** Strengthen domestic companies and clubs in emerging markets by providing financial support, improving infrastructure, and offering professional development opportunities for coaches and administrators.

Promotion and relegation systems in multi-tier leagues generate financial and sporting competition. Implementing such procedures has improved European companies, and countries like India and the MLS could benefit from expanding their current plans to increase competition.

Create partnerships between clubs and leagues in emerging markets and established nations to boost international football. Establish more prominent leagues like the Asian Champions League and merge competitions like the Copa Libertadores and MLS to attract investment and increase prize pools.

**Leverage media and technology:** Utilise media and technology to promote local football, increase visibility, and attract sponsors and investors to support the sport's growth in emerging markets.

To promote football in Dharavi, we can partner with sports manufacturers for a PR campaign, set up sponsored youth leagues, create a profitability model with fitness schemes and tournaments, and organise legend matches. Promoting this as "empowerment through football" can help increase its appeal and reach in society.

- **women's football can grow at the same pace instead of looking secondary as neither is prominent**
- utilise the latest techniques in terms of fitness training as the costs have significantly reduced + introducing sports analysts using the massive "computer wealth" in these countries.

**Implement inclusive policies:** Promote inclusive policies for all football players, regardless of background. The English football system made the game exclusive with homegrown rules, restrictive visa rules, and media hype. New markets should attract talent with above-average financial incentives, but first, they should harness their local potential. This can help financially sustain diverse football-playing communities. Train women along with men to establish equality from the start.

**Promote football as a tool for social change:** Football can address societal issues, like racism, poverty, and inequality, and create unity. The goal is to make the sport accessible to all. Leagues should extend to diverse regions to remove stigma and highlight prejudices.

The EPL's emergence in the 1990s paved the way for football commercialisation in Britain. Its financial success enabled English clubs to attract top players worldwide, leading other countries to struggle and decline in their footballing fortunes.

The British football market's commercial hegemony has significantly impacted global football. This dominance has enabled English clubs to attract top players and become some of the most successful clubs in the world. However, it has also prevented the emergence of new football markets and diminished the power of old footballing forces. The commercialisation of the sport, combined with British commercial interests, has hindered the growth of new markets in countries such as India, China, and the USA. Furthermore, the media's focus on British football has perpetuated existing power structures and hindered the development of other football powers like Spain, Germany, and Italy. To empower new football markets, more research is necessary to uncover specific mechanisms and deliverables. This research will allow countries to bring the game home and give everyone an equal opportunity to participate and excel.

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