

Globalization and why I am not so excited by the World Cup anymore

Ian Sheldon



1966 and all that!



1970 World Cup – first truly “global” soccer tournament



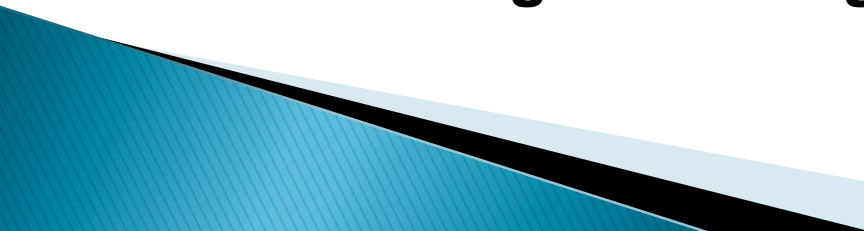
1970 – 1990, World Cup often meant seeing great players for first time



Since mid-1990s – possible to watch multiple soccer leagues



Club soccer has become real business

- ▶ **Soccer teams around for nearly 150 years**
 - ▶ **1990s saw significant commercialization of game in Europe – working-class-pastime became “gentrified”**
 - ▶ **Improved stadia, professional merchandising, and huge increase in TV broadcasting revenues**
 - ▶ **Clubs have gone to financial markets for investment capital, and there is multinational ownership**
 - ▶ **Restrictions on soccer labor market removed – resulting in higher transfer fees, higher wages, and clubs being able to sign more foreign players**
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FIFA now has real competition



Club rivalries going global

- ▶ **Until 1990s, soccer teams supported by local fans, and rivalries were local, e.g., “El Clasico” in Spain**
 - ▶ **Advent of UEFA Champions League has resulted in pan-European rivalries becoming as important**
 - ▶ **TV coverage of Champions League and major European leagues, as well as merchandising, has expanded global “support” for clubs such as Chelsea**
 - ▶ **Players once known only locally are now household names, and followed wherever they play – “Chicharito”**
 - ▶ **Consequence: no need to wait for four years to see the great players anymore, and club allegiance often matters more to soccer fans than respective international teams**
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