The Glocalization of Sports: A Study of the Influence of European Football Leagues on the Nigerian Society

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Abstract

Nowadays, the commercialization, internationalization and the brand images of football clubs are vital. This article examines the *globalization* and *glocalization* of football and its influence on culture and society (a *glocal* response). Following ethnography approach and a qualitative method, it articulates European Football Leagues brand internationalisation and evaluates its positive and negative effects on Nigerian society. It evaluates the impact on Nigerians (African largest economy and most populous nation) via a study of 50 participants made up of community football managers, managers of football viewing centres and football fans. Our findings reveal the connection of football with booming hospitality and a culture which has positive and troubling relationships. There is fan faithfulness, devotion and allegiance that creates a culture of identity, religion and sense of belonging. At the same time, there are negative impacts such as a betting culture and online gambling which have devastating effects, especially on young people.

Key Words: Glocalization of Sports; Globalization of Football; Glocal Response; European Football Leagues; Nigerian Football Fans.

1. Introduction

Sports is a sector of outstanding economic, social and professional importance (Escamilla-Fajardo, Núñez-Pomar and Parra-Camacho, 2019). The heritage of some brands is such that an accumulation of brand equity occurs internationally (Chadwick and Holt, 2015; Ghodeswar, 2008; Holt, 2007). Recent developments in the sports industry, such as the growing commercialization and professionalization of sport (Enjolras, 2002; Hong and Zhouxiang, 2013), have resulted in the growing importance of a stable fan base as an imperative driver of a team's competitive advantage (Bauer, Stokburger-Sauer and Exler, 2008). Sport is a major interest in modern society with a greater number of participants than ever before (Enjolras, 2002). Sporting activities in Western countries are characterized by a trend toward pluralization, that is, the increase in the number of different sports activities (Enjolras, 2002) and internationalization of brands and sports activities (Jijon, 2017). Despite the globalization,

sports remain inherently connected to national and local roots (Rowe, 2003; Cho, 2009). Therefore, this article examines the brand image of European Football Leagues and fan loyalty while at the same time evaluates the cultural effect of *globalization of football* on Nigerian culture and society.

Sports has moved from a marginal place to a central place in today's society (Escamilla-Fajardo, Núñez-Pomar and Parra-Camacho, 2019). The theoretical model underpinning this research is *'glocalization of sports'* (Robertson, 1995; Giulianotti and Robertson, 2004). Jijon (2017) maintain that studies of the *glocalization* of sport usually focus on *'aesthetic glocalization'* (how local actors adopt a global sport and create a new hybrid aesthetic). Globalization is marked by processes of *glocalization,* whereby local cultures adapt and redefine any global cultural product to suit their needs, beliefs and customs (Robertson and White 2003a and b; Giulianotti and Robertson, 2004 and 2007a and b). Giulianotti and Robertson (2004) introduced the concept of 'glocalization' to explain local differences amid global similarity. In cultural terms, "modern football affords a rich study of *glocalization* processes which gives rise to a compelling relativization of social identities alongside concrete socio-political frameworks (Giulianotti and Robertson, 2004, p. 561). It highlights the different social and cultural changes international sports has brought to society.

Historically, culture has been, for social scientists, the most substantially examined of all the aspects of football's globalization (Hassan, 2014; Hassan and McCue, 2013; Sterkenburg, 2013). The construction of nostalgic discourses within football largely reflects particular glocal responses to social change (Giulianotti and Robertson, 2004). Football has also been manipulated by politicians throughout Latin America to win public support (Bar-On, 1997). "In diverse, multi-ethnic nations like Brazil and Peru, 'football is, without doubt, one of the principal factors in bridging the gap between the white and coloured races" (Bar-On, 1997, p.4). Football is undeniable 'the global game' (Jijon, 2017, p. 82), however, studies focusing on the internationalization of sports brands in Africa are rare. To contribute to the literature, we focus on Nigerian fans and local sports promoters. The brand image of European Football leagues especially English, Italian, Spanish and Germany Leagues are described and measured as to fan base and followership. Finally, relationships among the constructs of football, culture and society are examined from a theoretical point of view of 'glocal responses' *'glocalization'* and *'globalization'.*

The key reason for focusing on European Football clubs is that tops clubs in the English, Italian, Spanish and Germany Leagues enjoy extensive popularity globally and generate high incomes and revenues (Kidd, 2019; Gleeson, 2007). The reason we focus on Nigeria is that the

country is composed of more than 250 different ethnic and sub-ethnic groups with different cultures, values, beliefs and attitudes (Igwe et al., 2018). Therefore, Nigeria presents a unique context to examine the influence of *glocalization* of sports on culture, society and the *glocal* response. Aside from the World Cup and National team competitions, European football league has been a major source of footballing activities for African sports fans, the ultimate championship, the main place of their worship (Kwenda, 2015). Forget politics and religion, the topic of conversation that raises passions the most in Nigeria continues to be the English Premier League (BBC, 2019).

"Sports demands attention. It requires devotion. It provides ecstasy. And this makes religious leaders nervous" (Girma, 2018, p. 1). Football is like religion in Nigeria. Particularly, football-loving Nigerians, not only support their favourite teams in the leagues but also go ahead to buy jerseys, decorate their houses and vehicles with other fan gears. Consequently, players from favourite teams are idolised by football lovers while the club managers are revered for their ingenuity. To explicate our research objectives, we ask three questions:

Research Question 1: What are the characteristics of football-loving Nigerians?

Research Question 2: What influence do European Football Leagues have on fans, culture and society?

Research Question 3: What effect do globalization of sports have on local communities?

We hope that by exploring these contexts, we contribute to knowledge on internationalization and the *glocalization* of football and its effect on culture and society. The rest of the article is structured as follows: First, we review the concepts of *globalization* and *glocalization* and link it to football. This is followed by an evaluation of International Sports Management, Brand Image and effect on culture. Next, we present the methodology, the findings, conclusions and limitations.

2. Globalization and Glocalization of Football

Glocalization describes local differences amid global similarity and how modern football gives rise to a compelling relativization of social identities (Giulianotti and Robertson, 2004). International Business research has predominantly drawn on a static understanding of the organisation as its core category (Angouri and Piekkari, 2018). Internationalization describes the growth of economic activity spanning across national and regional boundaries through the people, firms and government seeking to do business in foreign markets (Hai and Igwe 2019).

Globalization enables firms to create global products and take advantage of economies of scale in operations and marketing (Ghauri, Wang and Elg, 2016). This has become an important driver for the growth and long-term sustainability of business entities in many regions (Igwe and Kanyembo, 2019). The global development of sport occurred throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth century as Christian Missionaries and European colonization spread sport over the globe (James, 2012).

The past few decades have witnessed an increased "marketization" (or commercialization) of sports (Enjolras, 2002; Hassan, 2014; Hassan and McCue, 2013; Sterkenburg, 2013; Jijon, 2017). This has been fostered by political, economic, social and technological developments such as shrinking domestic markets in Western countries, increasingly global workforce and the proliferation of satellite and internet telecommunications (James, 2012). Jijon (2017) explains that *globalization* is the increased movement of capital, people, images, and ideas around the world and sports like football are part of these processes, moving money and players across borders and promoting images, celebrities, and brands through the global media (Campbell, 2011; Carter, 2013; Gilmour and Rowe, 2010; Giulianotti and Robertson, 2007a and b). Throughout its history, football has been a catalyst as much for social cohesion, unity, excitement and integration as it can be for division, exclusion and discrimination (Cleland, 2015).

The concept of *glocalization* was first used by Robertson (1995, cited in Cho, 2009) to analyse both global consumptions of an American popular commodity and its various accommodations to local contexts. According to Giulianotto (2009), the word '*glocalization'* could be traced to the Japanese term 'dochakuka', meaning 'global localization' or 'localized globalization', which was widely used in business circles in the late 1980s to describe the micro-marketing techniques of Sony and other companies, whereby generic products and industrial practices are adapted to suit local conditions. Despite its global reach, football is not the same everywhere as different nation gives football different levels of importance (Jijon, 2017). As Giulianotti and Robertson (2004) noted, football as a cultural form has undergone different kinds of *glocalization,* such as an initial rejection or transformation in some societies, a more common development of highly particularistic identities among participants, and an institutional organization of the game into distinctive political tiers. When it comes to sports, Africa is commonly known for its passion for football more than any other sports. Football has been part of the African culture and the majority of the population love it and follow it. On a visit to Africa, Sebastian Coe, the leader of Great Britain's bid to host the 2012 Olympics, was moved by the enthusiasm for the game;

"To see 700 children playing football in the middle of a large patch of scrubland in Ghana - just watching them playing sport has been quite a sobering exercise" (cited in BBC, 2005).

However, African best players typically don't stay in the continent, instead, they migrate to powerful, international leagues such as Europeans football clubs. This contributes to developing African football fans who follow the development of their local footballer icon to the leagues where they play. Arguably, this trend has led to the local league being undeveloped, inexpensive, and less entertaining. But the migration of the top African players has made a huge positive change in sports development and fan base. It has enabled sports to be part of African culture. Watching African footballers has created a space for fans to experience a game collectively from bars, sports cinemas and in the privacy of their own homes. At the same time, the popularity of the sport has made it into a commodity. It makes it imperative to "explicate the unavoidable interplay between global and local forces that contributes to the reshaping of cultural spaces of identity within the new global media landscape" (Cho, 2009, p. 321).

The greater cosmopolitanism of supporters and commentators, as assisted by the intensive global mediation of the game's major news and key tournaments, serves to revitalize the relativization of cultural identities in football (Giulianotti and Robertson, 2004). Indeed, football provides "a complex, contradictory space where local actors can forge transnational connections and global consciousness" (Giulianotti and Brownwell, 2012, p. 214). Take Nigeria for example, local community competitions have integrated football into their national identities. From the streets, community leagues and school leagues football are played for the enjoyment of its players and its audience. In many cities and urban centres, football has become a crucial component of the local economy and sources of social integration. But for millions of people in Africa, poverty is their daily reality and for these, the importance of the beautiful game cannot be underestimated (BBC, 2005).

3. International Sport Management

Sports is watched and played globally and impacts business management practices in several ways, including through sponsorship, recruitment, and manufacturing (Ratten, 2011). As such, the relationship between multinationalism and performance is a relevant research field in international business (Ral-Trebacz, 2016). The notion of 'Masstige' which stands for mass prestige was used by Paul (2018) to explain 'masstige marketing' as a strategic phenomenon with the goal of market penetration and brand management in the era of

globalisation. Globalization has been facilitated through migration and internationalisation, national and cultural diversity (Bouncken et al., 2018). Over the past three decades, professional football clubs have been at the forefront of discussion and analysis by regulators, investors and researchers (Dimitropoulos and Scafarto, 2019). International commercialization of sports occurs worldwide as numerous companies and organizations involved in sports focus on the global market as a prelude to achieving economic and financial success (Ratten et al., 2011). Sports management is increasingly being viewed as an international activity due to way players are sourced and games are broadcast (Ratten, 2019).

Globalization and technological advances provide business opportunities for sports organizations, marketers and entrepreneurs involved in sport (Ratten et al., 2011). To compete globally, sports organizations work proactively to build and maintain an international presence (Ratten, 2011). In recent years there have been concerns over the impact of private majority owners on the sporting and financial efficiency of football clubs (Dimitropoulos and Scafarto, 2019). The Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) - the administrative body for association football in Europe since 2011 undertakes financial fair play assessment. Under this rule, clubs that qualify for UEFA competitions must prove they do not have overdue payables towards other clubs, their players and social/tax authorities throughout the season (i.e. financially viable) (UEFA, 2015). Since 2013, clubs have also been assessed against break-even requirements, which require clubs to balance their spending with their revenues and restricts clubs from accumulating debt (UEFA, 2015). Nigeria is one of the major exporters of talented footballers (Soccer Stars) to Europe and other nations of the world (Eze, 2015). Adeogun, Williams and Adeyeye (2010) suggest that entrepreneurship provides a unique way to view sport in Nigeria considering the growth of business sports in the community.

4. Communicating the Brand Image and Effect on Culture

Glocalization is neither a unilateral nor predetermined process, but rather an outcome of negotiation or contest among a wide variety of agents (Cho, 2009). Bar-On (1997) argue that while the diversity of social, cultural, and ethnic origins that comprise the citizenship of any nation can be problematic and divisive, football becomes one means of imagining a notion of unity within the national consciousness. Cultural distance describes the differences between a home and a host country in terms of the basic aspects of culture, including core values, beliefs, customs and rituals, as well as legal, political and economic systems (Kraus et al., 2016). However, many brands are built to appeal to both home and international markets and cultures

(Bodet and Chanavat, 2010). Brand image is the current view of the customers about a brand or consumers' perception of the product.

A brand is a distinguishing name and/or symbol (such as logo, trademark, or package design) intended to identify the goods or services of either one seller or a group of sellers and to differentiate those goods or services from those of competitors (Ghodeswar, 2008). A brand needs to carve a vision of how that brand should be perceived by its target audience. The brand positioning helps in prioritizing the focus of the brand identity and resultant communication themes which enable the company to set forth the communication objectives such as the type of message, brand differentiation to be achieved, and themes that appeal to the target customers. Many sports business structures also display strong degrees of glocality, as leading clubs show marked cultural variations in their systems of political association (Giulianotti and Robertson, 2004).

Brand image refers to consumer perceptions and encompasses a set of beliefs that consumers have about the brand (Nandan, 2005). The idea behind brand image is that the consumer develops an interest in the product/service but also develops a relationship with the image associated with that product/service. Entrepreneurial orientation constitutes an opportunity to improve performance in the sports sector (Escamilla-Fajardo, Núñez Pomar and Prado Gascó, 2018). Brand images can be strengthened using brand communications like advertising, packaging, word of mouth publicity, other promotional tools, etc (Nandan, 2005; Kelly, 2009; Kumar and Raju, 2013). Advertising that is creatively executed helps the brand to break the clutter and build a strong impact on the target market. The challenges faced by companies in building brands are: to be noticed, to be remembered, to change perceptions, to reinforce attitudes, and to create deep customer relationships. Also, the marketing communications environment has changed enormously from what it was 30 or perhaps even as few as 10 years ago (Kelly, 2009). Technology, internet and social media are fundamentally changing the way the world interacts and communicates. At the same time, branding has become a key marketing priority for most companies. For example, social media platforms have become an important tool for sports marketers to communicate their brand image and engage with fans (Maderer, Parganas and Anagnostopoulos, 2018).

Communicating the brand image also affect religion, especially in the African continent. There is a connection of football with cultic, superstitious and quasi-religious practices in Africa (Ludwig, 2015). According to Girma (2018) religion colours, the way Africans see the world. Majority of the people often don't listen to politicians, because politicians are aloof and distant, but they listen to religious and traditional leaders because

Africans believe that they are human representations of the divine horizon - the realm of truth (Girma, 2018). Furthermore, the Girma (2018) note that football challenges this and poses a religious dilemma in Africa. Citing its ability to unite people of all backgrounds around a common cause, football has been described as "an African religion" (Girma, 2018, p. 1). Some argue that football is threatening to become a religion as football demands allegiance and excessive emotional devotion. As such many in the religious community view football with contempt and disdain;

> *The media use of hyperbolic religious imagery to portray sports stars adds to this negative perception of sports. This includes calling Lionel Messi "The Messiah" and dubbing Cristiano Ronaldo "a god"* (Girma, 2018, p. 1).

Another challenge is that easy and quick access to online has enabled sports-by-products marketing such as betting. A recent studies reveal that countries like Nigeria, Kenya, Ghana, Uganda, Senegal, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Tanzania are seeing a huge expansion in sports betting and other forms of gambling (see, e.g. BBC, 2018; Owuor, 2018) where betting on major European soccer leagues, as well as local and national teams, has become a multimillion-dollar industry. According to Owuor (2018), the combined size of the gambling industry in Kenya, Nigeria, and South African are projected to be worth $37 billion in 2018 and Kenya alone, an estimated two million individuals engage in mobile-based sports betting in 2017. Despite the devastating implications of online sports betting among young Africans, the practice has become an intolerable addiction across the continent (Owuor, 2018). Kenya has the highest number of young people in sub-Saharan Africa - between the ages of 17-35 who gamble frequently and an estimated 78% of university students were problem gamblers (BBC, 2018).

In today's business context, it is believed that business philosophy has shifted from being predominantly orientated towards long-term growth and shareholder profit to broader goals based on the triple bottom line of economic, social and environmental protection and enhancement (Virutamasen, Wongpreedee and Kumnungwut, 2015). Consequently, organizations seeking to survive in this dynamic environment should include social benefits in their business operations (Virutamasen et al., 2015). Intellectual Capital Management (ICM, 2010) explained the difference between the business model evolution that football clubs have undergone in recent years. In the past, football clubs depended mainly on matchday as a primary revenue source, revenues depending on the performance on the pitch, sponsorship deals are not too structured. Nowadays, TV rights are a key contributors to total broadcasting

revenues, stadium as real Estate asset and entertainment venue, marketing strategies build revenues outside the season and on non-match days, football players have a fundamental role because they are brands in themselves and TV is not the only interesting media but also social network and mobile connection marketing strategy and Club chooses their sponsors selectively, deals are very structured and Converting fans into customers. Typically, clubs strive to create a model that is still delivering revenue even if the team isn't doing so well.

5. Methodology

This study is based on qualitative research method. An ethnography approach has been adopted as a lens through which to explore, understand, interpret or explain the phenomena of glocal responses, *glocalization* and *globalization* of sports' in the cultural contexts and settings. Ethnography is a research practice grounded in theory and dependent on observations gathered and interpreted in particular ways (Leslie et al., 2014). With roots in sociology and anthropology, ethnography is concerned with learning about people, in contrast to studying people, through immersion in native populations (Jones and Smith, 2017). This method enabled an in-depth observation of groups of individuals, interviews being cognisant of the influences of historical and cultural contexts on social interactions (Streubert and Carpenter, 2011).

We followed the steps advocated by Jones and Smith (2017), by being participant-observer to data collection through a natural engagement between the researcher and participants' real-world context. In some cases, there were interjections and questions, as appropriate to the situation, facilitated developing a rapport with participants and ensuring the purpose of the research was clear, adding depth to the data collected. Also, post-observation discussions and semi-structured interviews enabled us to articulate the views about the observed practice. We took field notes in additions to long 30 – 45 minutes interview of 12 principal actors and community football club managers, 8 managers of football match viewing centres/cinema and 30 football fans selected randomly from football match viewing centres (making a total of 50 participants). All participants were adults aged between 20 and 50 years old.

Although it has its merits, data saturation can be problematic in ethnographic studies (Hammersley, 2006; Monahan and Fisher, 2010; Ritchie and Lewis, 2013). Also, the presence of the researcher can influence the participants' behaviour, changing the way they practice during the observations, known as observer effect or observer expectancy effect. However, the post-observation discussions and semi-structured follow-up interviews enabled some

clarifications (Monahan and Fisher, 2010). Also, detailed field notes, combined with the reflexive approach strengthened the validity of the findings (Jones and Smith, 2017). Qualitative researchers need an understanding of the paradigms and theories that underpin methodological frameworks and the ethical background (Finnegan, 2014). Hence, we followed and observed some ethical procedures for undertaking research. We obtained informed consent from all participants in the study. We explained all participants the aim, objectives of the study, including its purpose and publication intentions. All the participants were explained that participation was voluntary, and they were free to withdraw from the process at any time. During the interviews, they were informed that the interviews were being recorded and to be transcribed and analysed for publication purpose. Finally, they were promised confidentiality and that no real names will be published.

During the interviews, participants were asked the key research questions. However, the interviewer used probing and follow-up questions (e.g. 'How come?', 'What do you mean?' and 'Tell me more') and took a non-judgemental approach (Eriksson, Boistrup and Thornberg, 2018). After the interviews, these were transcribed, and transcripts printed. Manually, we coded the transcripts to identify the key themes for analysis and interpretations. Following recommendations by Eriksson et al., (2018) the data analysis was guided by grounded theory methods accomplished by initial and focused coding, theoretical coding, constant comparisons and memo writing.

6. Findings
Thematically, we separated our findings into three - Characteristics of Nigerian Football Fans; the glocalization of European Football and the effect on culture and local communities. These themes are analysed and discussed in the subsequent sections.

6.1 Characteristics of Nigerian Football Fans
In line with grounded theory, the terms used to describe the feelings and rationales were constructed from the data as such to describe the characteristics of Nigerian football fans. In this way, the findings address the effect *globalization* of football (Carter, 2013; Gilmour and Rowe, 2010) have on global fans and the glocal responses (Giulianotti and Robertson, 2004; Jijon, 2017). From the data analysis, we reveal that Nigerian football fans are fervent and loyal to European brands more than they do for their local/city football clubs. Linked to social identity, fans show off their brand identity, have strong believe in their clubs philosophy and idolise their favourite players. The practices of fan faithfulness devotion and allegiance

depended on what they interpreted and perceived as their desire, culture and way of life. The fans remain loyal to their clubs forever and will never change. Football viewing centres showing European League matches involving teams like Manchester United, Chelsea, Arsenal, Liverpool, Manchester City, Barcelona, Real Madrid, Bayern Munich, Juventus, Inter Millan, Paris St German (PSG) are frantic, crazy, packed and tense with arguments and counter-arguments such that one could assume that the clubs are local or Nigerian clubs. However, this is not the case, these are European clubs matches. Among the European teams, Manchester United, Chelsea, Arsenal, Barcelona and Real Madrid has the largest followership judging from the interviews and observation of the fan base in match viewing venues that we visited. Here is one of the views of a football match viewing centres/cinema Manager;

> *"Nigerian Football fans are eccentric, devoted and religious about their favourite clubs. Absolute faithfulness and devotion drive extreme entanglement of patriotism, identity and sportsmanship,"* (ID: 033).

Fans range from teenagers, young men and women to adults of all ages. Indeed, there is a global influence (Campbell, 2011; Carter, 2013; Gilmour and Rowe, 2010; Giulianotti and Robertson, 2007; Jijon, 2017) that European football has on Nigerians. On match days, many fans can be seen wearing their chosen clubs jerseys or a walk around the cities and streets reveals stickers, flags, symbols on cars, buses, trucks, door fronts showing allegiance to favourite European clubs. Thus, it seemed that Nigerian football-loving fans have developed strong affection and loyalty to these brands. An accumulation of brand equity occurs whereby stocks of images, logos and icons are built up (Chadwick and Holt, 2015; Ghodeswar, 2008; Holt, 2007) and European sport industry focuses much on global commercialization and professionalization of sport (Enjolras, 2002; Hong and Zhouxiang, 2013). Table 1. presents phrases from quotes gathered during the interviews.

Table 1 Characteristics of Nigerian Football Fans

Individual Characteristics	Exemplary phrases from quotes
	They are passionate about their European clubs (ID=03)
	Knowledgeable about the history of the clubs and players (ID=05)
	They have high technical knowledge about football and will voice their opinion very strongly (ID=6)
	They are full of faithfulness, devotion and have life allegiance (ID=09)
	Their love for European League ignites their passion for football and sports (ID=14)
	They rejoiced when their teams win, but many are bad losers and will pick up a fight on slight provocation because their team lost (ID=17).
	It is almost like civil religion and a cult entangling "patriotism (ID=19
	To the majority, it is their identity, religion or sense of belonging (ID=23)
	Individual "sentiments deemed indispensable (ID=25)
	Fans of a club see themselves as one family (ID=27)
	They are faithful donning scarlet and favourite club colours (ID=28)
	Match days neighbours host game-day parties and feasts for fellow fans (ID=30)
	Foreign club's hymns translated into local songs and anthems (ID=32)
	Betting among friends and rival fans are common (ID=36)
	Acting of devotion, naturally idolization of favourite players and managers (ID=40)
	Boasting and betting not only about winning but about the match scores (ID=43)
	Selected individuals command huge respect and honour from same club supporting fans (ID=46)
	Mangers like Alex Ferguson, José Mourinho, Arsène Wenger, Pep Guardiola are their godfathers and mini gods (ID=47)

6.2 Globalization and Glocalization of Football and Effect on Culture and Society

Theoretically, *globalization* and *glocalization* of football and culture describe conditions whereby local cultures adapt and redefine global cultural products to suit their specific needs, beliefs and customs (Robertson and White 2003a; Giulianotti and Robertson, 2007a and b). In the current study, we found a notable trend of the imposition of global cultural products to local

products such as betting, fanatical behaviour, devotionist, sexualism and cultism exhibited in western football culture entering the Nigerian football culture.

> *"Betting which was unknown and unfamiliar is common in society and pushing young people into crimes and anti-social behaviours (ID=04).*

Writing on the troubling relationship between the rise in online betting and mobile money's growth, Owuor (2018) discusses the opportunity that Betting on major European soccer leagues, as well as local and national teams, has become a multimillion-dollar industry in Africa. Countries like Nigeria, Kenya, Ghana, Uganda, Senegal, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Tanzania are seeing a huge expansion in sports betting and other forms of gambling done on mobile phones (Owuor, 2018). The author maintains that what nobody talks about is the devastating effect betting has on many of those who participate in it, more than half of whom are below the age of 35. According to BBC News Service (2018), some young gamblers commit suicides and there several cases of bankruptcy, domestic violence and evictions.

A study on glocal responses provides avenues to the understanding of *glocalization* processes which gives rise to a compelling relativization of social identities where local actors can forge 'transnational connections and global consciousness' (Giulianotti and Brownwell, 2012). Football is fast becoming a religion, especially for younger generations and is replacing the traditional religious practices traditionally practised by Nigerian families. Many people are worried that if this trend continues there will be consequences on moral conduct, social behaviours and over westernization of future generations;

> *"It has become a religion and they don't come to the churches anymore as they prefer to gather and watch their football in the cinema and sing their songs and anthems"* *(ID=07).*

Writing for the Conversation Newspaper, Mohammed Girma (2018) noted that football is like a religion in Africa, but that could be a problem too. The author goes further to argue that for millions of people in Africa, sport is an important dimension of their lives as it gives them identity and a sense of belonging, however, the excitement and euphoria come with a unique challenge to the continent's religions since Africa remains firmly devout across different faiths. However, football has the power to create unity out of the division, joy from sadness and bring a welcome respite from a continent bursting with life but burdened by problems (BBC, 2005). Writing further, BBC (2005) emphasises that football is much more than pleasure in Africa -

for the lucky few it is also an escape from the problems that hold millions across the continent within its grasp. Hence;

> *"People must create family and work-life-balance to accommodate football matches"*
> *(ID=18).*

The BBC (2005) maintains that football is a source of pleasure and entertainment for millions unable to indulge in leisure pursuits out of the financial reach of many in Africa. In his article in the CNN News World by James Master (2013) on 'No grass, no shoes, pure pleasure: Football in rural Africa', the author states that "What I know is that everyone says the same thing, how can people be so content? Happiness is a state of mind. You see people with so much who are buried in their belongings and burdened by their attachment to possessions. Those who have less also have fewer worries and are more focused on what is essential. Football is what keeps the village breathing. Every evening a match takes place amid the noise and a carnival of colour (Master, 2013). Hence, many are;

> *"Proud to wear and be decorated with favourite club jerseys, scarfs, colours and*
> *badges and you can see the schoolboys playing their football on the streets with their*
> *favourite jerseys, players and numbers"* (ID=20).

The globalization of football affects young people future careers and aspirations. Education was always seen as a medium by many African families as a way out of poverty. As such, it is common to see African leaders prioritize education on their development agendas out of abject poverty (United Nation, UN, 2018). However, huge disparities in education and income inequality mean that many children do not have access to quality education or drop out of school. Wealthy families send their children to study in the best local private or public schools or abroad, while the poor grasp with what they can afford or have. Hence, recently, younger people now see football as an alternative to education and another way out of poverty.

> *"Within the African continent, you do not often see the children of doctors or politicians*
> *playing the game of football. It is mainly people from rural areas, from the small cities,*
> *from the less fortunate families"* (Pele cited in BBC, 2005).

There are many other positive effects of globalization of football such as a booming hospitability and tourism as well as employment opportunities created by the new business opportunities (business centres and football viewing centres) and transport industries that develop in the local communities, urban centres and cities. During match days, local businesses benefit from the fanfare and carnivals. These events provide local jobs and boost the local

economy thanks to match days, the fanfare and celebrations that follow. Other exemplary quotes which reveal mixed reactions and findings are presented in Table 2.

Table 2 Effects of Globalization and Glocalization

Effects of culture and Society	Exemplary phrases from quotes
	The football brings a lot of pleasure and entertainment, but it is destroying younger generations as they lose interest in education (ID=02)
	Sports generally is providing opportunities for young people to take their destiny into their hands (ID=06)
	It causes many young people to be lazy and not hardworking (ID=15)
	Cultism and gang-related activities are rampant as many people hide under the auspices of football fans to commit crimes (ID=16)
	You don't see many of the young ones in the church services and when you ask them, they give you the excuse that football match was on (ID=21)
	Farming is in danger of extinction in the villages as the young no longer support parents with farming because of football activities (ID=22)
	It brings hope, sense of belonging and power to the young generation that politicians deny (ID=09)
	It about bringing the community together, everyone is happy and shows the excitements, thereby reducing anti-social behaviours (ID=50)
	They want to develop into the new generation Kanu Nwankwo and Jay Jay Okocha who succeeded in life by choosing football (ID=29)
	It is the means to pleasure amid hopelessness caused by political leaders (ID=44).
	Betting and gambling are causing havoc among the young ones (ID=35)
	Betting is causing broken homes and families (ID=38)
	Since the digitalization of TV and broadcasting of International football, many hospitality businesses have sprung up, employing several thousand in the industry (ID=39)
	The hospitality and tourism industry is booming due to international football and sports (ID=08)
	It is a form of sports education as many young people watch, they learn and apply the tactics in their games (ID=20)
	Many of the young people look up to big international footballers as their role model (ID=26)

7. Conclusion, Implications and Limitations

7.1 Conclusions

In this article, we highlight the effect of *globalization* and *glocalization* of football, culture, and social change in Nigerian societies. The key argument of the article is that of globalization football with booming hospitality and a culture which has positive and troubling relationships in Nigerian society. The connection has resulted to fan faithfulness, devotion and allegiance that creates a culture of identity, religion and sense of belonging among football loving fans. Most previous studies on cultural distance applied a questionnaire where the participants were asked to evaluate elements of distance on a five-point or seven-point scale (Kraus et al., 2016). However, this study deviates from evaluating cultural differences on a quantitative scale but rather based on a qualitative method grounded in ethnography research involving observations and interviews that enabled a complex interactive system of individual perceptions and experiences. The past two decades have seen increased attention to the phenomenon of globalization and international marketing as firms try to find ways to succeed in today's highly competitive business environment (Kraus et al., 2016). Nowadays, sports, in general, attracts international audience and brands are built to serve across borders and cultures. Football is a major interest in modern society with a greater number of participants and many football leagues and clubs are building brands to serve international markets.

7. 2 Implications

European football leagues have become successful in creating an international brand image intended to identify the goods or services (see, e.g., Ghodeswar, 2008). There is a connection of football with culture and quasi-religious practices in Africa (Ludwig, 2015; Girma, 2018). However, there are positive and troubling relationships as revealed by the current study findings. We reveal practices of fan faithfulness devotion and allegiance that creates a football culture, identity, religion and sense of belonging. At the same time, the findings reveal some negative impacts such as the introduction of a betting culture and online gambling which have devastating effects, especially on young people. Besides the negative consequences of glocalization of international football, the greater cosmopolitanism of supporters and commentators assisted by the digitalization and commercialization TV broadcasting rights and key tournaments serves to revitalize cultural identities (Giulianotti and Robertson, 2004), creating new business opportunities, employment and hospitality industries. These contribute hugely to the development of the local economy and the advancement of society.

Building on previous research, the contribution of this research lies mainly in the conceptualisation of the concepts and theories of *globalization* and *glocalization* of International sports brands and European Football leagues as well as an explanation of how globalization develop *glocal* responses. European Football leagues such as Premier League has undoubtedly bridged the gap in cultures related to races and continents and will undoubtedly continue to do so. The *glocalization* processes will continue to give rise to social and cultural identities where local actors can forge 'transnational connections (Giulianotti and Brownwell, 2012). By examining and evaluating these contexts, we contribute to knowledge on globalization, glocalization and internationalization International sports brands.

7.3 *Limitations and Future Research*

With roots in sociology and anthropology, the ethnography and qualitative approach that we have taken focuses on learning about people (Jones and Smith, 2017). Although it has its merits, engaging with participants in the real world poses several challenges" (Jones and Smith, 2017, p. 98). Also, the qualitative method has limitations such limited in scope, the number of participants and sometimes the findings could be biased towards the responses. As Gartner (2007, p. 619) put it, "the narrative approach recognises that a story is never the whole story since any story is embedded in a context". Despite the limitations, this study provides a foundation for future studies. Therefore, we call on other scholars to carry out similar studies in different countries and cultures to further understand the relationships between glocalization of sports, culture, society and sports.

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