



Football* From Below

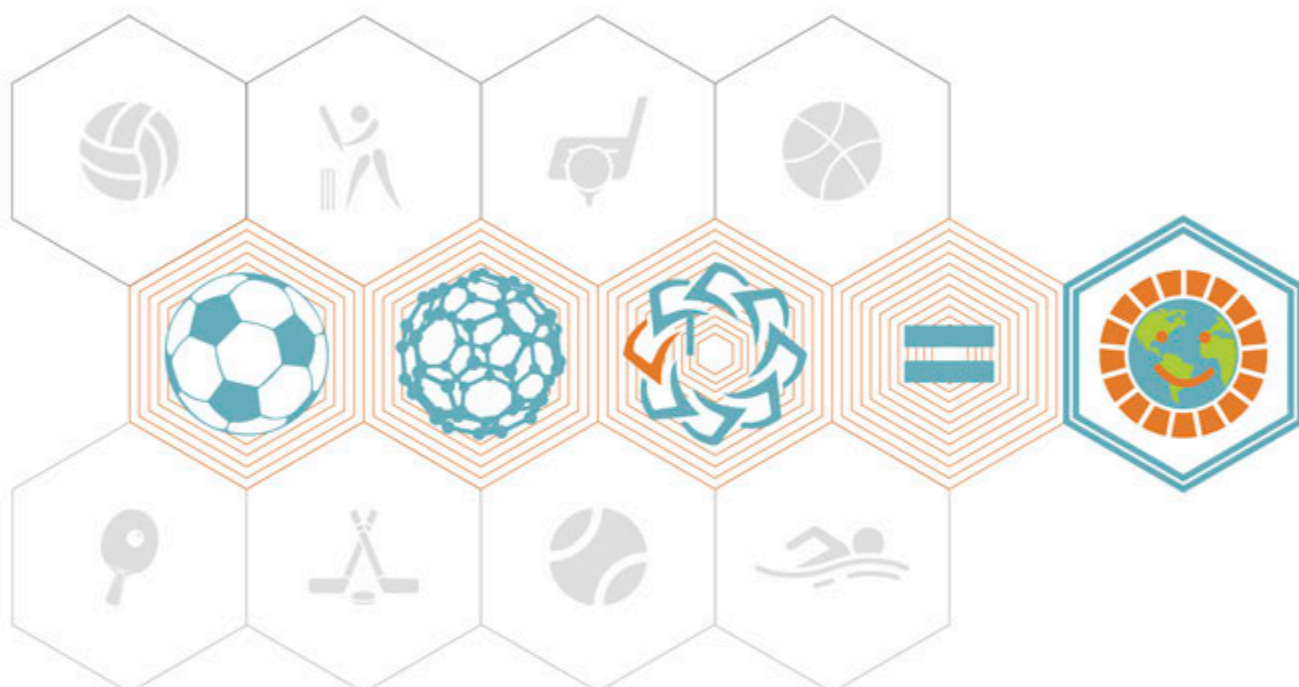
the past, present, and future power
of sport for sustainable development

Rita Ricobelli Corradi

* “Soccer” in the United States of America and other countries.

Sport’s potential as a game-changer in sustainability

Football and other sports could significantly help advance social justice, economic vitality, and environmental balance, particularly through science, engineering, and all applicable disciplines, augmented by technology, innovation, and multisector collaborations.



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CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	5
PART I:	
FOOTBALL'S SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE LIVES	7
1. INTRODUCTION. FOOTBALL IS MUCH MORE THAN A GAME	8
2. RESEARCH AND NARRATIVE STRUCTURE	10
3. ASTONISHING VOIDS	12
3.1. Football in Official History	12
3.2. Football's Underrated Protagonists	13
4. MODERN FOOTBALL'S GLOBAL EXPANSION	15
5. HISTORICAL IMPACT OF FOOTBALL ON INDIVIDUAL/COLLECTIVE LIVES (1860-1960)	16
5.1. United Kingdom	16
5.2. Argentina-Uruguay	23
The illustrations of football's link to social processes are divided into:	
• Football as a <i>metric-benchmark</i> of social relations	
• Football as a <i>mirror</i> of personal and social issues	
• Football as a <i>motor</i> (or component) of national/international transformations	
6. RECAPITULATION AND SUMMARY	34
PART II:	
A NEW APPROACH TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH FOOTBALL/SPORT	36
1. INTRODUCTION. SPORT FOR DEVELOPMENT: connecting football/sport's social power in the past, present, and future	37
2. OPPORTUNITIES TO ENHANCE THE FIELD OF SPORT FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (SFD), including through science	39
2.1. Football/Sport as an enriched <i>metric-benchmark</i> for positive behavior change and social relations	40
2.1.1. Need for deliberate, rigorous, and theoretically sophisticated approaches to SFD	41
2.1.2. Applied science, technology, innovation, and multisector work to expand SFD's impact	43
2.1.3. Using social and behavioral science to support sustainability communication and action via sport	45

2.1.4.	Science-based SFD programs for youth education, development, and well-being	47
2.1.5.	Facilitating adjustments to new environments and life systems, considering forced migration	48
2.1.6.	Football/Sport as a universal language to promote unity and progress using systematic approaches	50
2.2.	Reframing Football/Sport as a <i>mirror</i> of wide-ranging contributions to sustainable development	51
2.2.1.	The constructive <i>Power of Groups</i> in Sport	52
2.2.2.	Linking hope, optimism, and social trust with football and other sports	54
2.2.3.	Sport allegiance and its role in interrupting/contesting conflict and fostering peace	55
2.2.4.	Relating grit, football/sport, and sustainable development objectives	57
2.2.5.	Promotion of positive masculinity and gender equality methodically through sport	59
2.2.6.	Subjective well-being/happiness, sport, and sustainability	61
2.3.	Football/Sport as a <i>motor</i> (or component) of constructive transformations	62
2.3.1.	Sport and behavioral insights, including mental models, to facilitate sustainable decision-making	63
2.3.2.	Social norms/networks and fans' shared identities/values to guide positive behavior change	65
2.3.3.	Sport networks, <i>systems-thinking</i> , and the <i>social multiplier effect</i> for large-scale impact	67
2.3.4.	Systematic strategies and sport to bolster racial equality and other human rights	69
2.3.5.	Tango, football, and the universal increased value of leisure time	72
2.3.6.	Sport as a diplomatic vehicle to strengthen the global partnership for sustainable development	74
3.	RECAPITULATION AND SUMMARY	76
	CONCLUSION	79
	AUTHOR'S MOTIVATION	81
	REFERENCES	95

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Modern football (hereinafter, “football”) has had a powerful influence on a significant number of people, both individually and collectively, across demographics and continents, for over a century. The sport has facilitated social rapport and cohesion, helped establish common values and identities, and has become a universal language that stimulates camaraderie, bonding, solidarity, and even diplomacy. As such, it is poised as a valuable opportunity to engage, educate, and empower millions around the world. This white paper¹ summarizes the major impact that football has had in key locations during its first 100 years, ultimately becoming a global social phenomenon. Given the ubiquitous nature of football, the paper then explores how this sport’s (and others’) role as a platform to advance the cause of sustainable development² can be enhanced systematically.

Historically, football’s social and grassroots dimensions have mostly remained outside of the spotlight. As a result, the sport has an undervalued *history from below*, representing the experiences of ordinary people—primarily its *fans*³—as well as untapped constructive opportunities (summarized in Table III). With an estimated fanbase of 5 billion people,⁴ football fans (and those of other popular sports) are a latent legion of champions for sustainability, particularly to support the 2030 Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015.⁵ In order to move the needle toward progress in sustainability, we need a critical mass. In this quest, sport’s massive engaging force, if methodically harnessed, could powerfully contribute to the achievement of these universal goals.

The initial part of this paper examines football’s social impact in the United Kingdom, Argentina, and Uruguay, as the world’s first powerhouses of this sport on each side of the Atlantic Ocean. These nations are key settings of football’s initial 100 years, starting in 1860, the decade of the game’s codification, until 1960, around the time when television began to bring the sport to many corners of the world. In this period, football went from being a game of the elite to the obsession of multitudes, and the sport organically shaped human lives while fostering rapports and social networks. Football proved to be an effective and large-scale platform for social experiences, outcomes, and connections, with strong links to immense historical forces such as urbanization, industrialization, and globalization. Thus, while many social processes, innovations, and engaging platforms (e.g., music) had powerful roles in history—and they still do in the present—football’s powerful social links and its constructive capacity are at the core of this case study and call to action, which in turn extend to other sports and, perhaps, other appealing platforms.

¹ *The author acknowledges all the experts, family and friends that have supported the long journey of this white paper, particularly the academic insights received from Doctors Emily Tiberi, Elke U. Weber, Lynnette Widder, Matthew R. Sisco, and Jorge L. Durand, the sociopolitical expertise from Melissa L. White, the design of Danielle Lair Ferrari, the advice of Jerry Boies, and the enduring support of Lauren Barredo.*

² *Sustainable development* or *sustainability* are used interchangeably in this white paper, and refer to the act of ensuring the future resilience of communities, economies, and the natural environment, while fostering equality, other human rights, socioeconomic progress, and peace. UCLA offers a complimentary definition suggesting that *sustainability* encompasses the “integration of environmental health, social equity and economic vitality.” Source: “What is Sustainability?,” UCLA Sustainability, July 2021, www.sustain.ucla.edu/what-is-sustainability/.

³ See definition of *fan* in footnote 11.

⁴ “The football landscape – The Vision 2020-2023,” FIFA, accessed July 30, 2024, <https://publications.fifa.com/en/vision-report-2021/the-football-landscape/>.

⁵ Martin, “The Sustainable Development Agenda,” United Nations Sustainable Development, July 2021, www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/development-agenda/.

Today, we have the chance to deliberately guide sport's massive influence toward constructive social, economic, and environmental outcomes, while enhancing this opportunity both methodically and strategically. Some may overlook or discount football/sport as a tool for sustainable development. However, various organizations, including the United Nations, have purposefully leveraged *Sport for Peace and Development* since the turn of the 21st century. Now, this relatively new field can be enhanced through *systematic approaches*, which involves applying science, technology, and leading-edge resources/tactics to maximize its impact, working across sectors as applies. Part II expands on this opportunity, focusing on social science and behavioral insights promoted by international organizations, governments, and academic experts.

The historical snapshot of football's powerful social influence, in Part I, provides the foundation for Part II, which is more theoretical and exploratory, and looks to catalyze thought, innovation, and action toward maximizing sport's global positive contribution. Both parts are organized in three categories that present football (linked to globalization)⁶ as (1) a metric or benchmark of social relations, (2) a mirror of social issues, and (3) a motor (or component) of national and international transformations. While some of the opportunities outlined here could also apply to other popular sports, this document focuses on football, seeking to inspire (and even surprise) readers and inviting them to envision a better world through sport.

Football has certainly had, and will most likely continue to have, far-reaching effects around the world, some positive and some negative. Throughout this discussion, it is important to acknowledge football's shortcomings, including with regard to race, gender, and socioeconomic factors, and take them into consideration as we move forward in expanding the sport's capacity to facilitate sustainable development. Past and present manifestations of the sport reflect racial and gender discrimination, as well as other detrimental social issues. This document concentrates on positive features of football and how they can be systematically managed to counteract negative impacts and support sustainability, while acknowledging the systemic problems in the sport's historic and present culture.

Sport can be a powerful lever of change. To that end, we can, and must, augment sport's contribution to advancing sustainable development. A promising path forward is to tactically connect *sport for sustainability* initiatives with knowledge from multiple disciplines, technology, innovative approaches, and multisector collaborations. For instance, cross-functional academic experts have the chance to methodically understand and leverage the loyalty, common identity, influence, fervor, and cooperation developed around sport to advance people's well-being. The ultimate goal is to turn individuals and groups linked to sport into more socially- and environmentally-conscious citizens. Moreover, we need to further equip and galvanize athletes and sport fans to foster their own positive development and that of their communities and nations while protecting the planet.

⁶Richard Giulianotti and Roland Robertson, *Globalization and Football* (London: Sage Publications Ltd., 2009), p. xii.

PART I:
FOOTBALL'S SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
ON INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE LIVES



1. INTRODUCTION. FOOTBALL IS MUCH MORE THAN A GAME

Football is not just a game, but a social phenomenon⁷ that transcends class, culture, religion, race, ideology, and geography. It unites friends, families, strangers, and sometimes even enemies in a shared love that often exerts an unparalleled fervor.⁸ Since its early development, football has been intrinsically and organically linked to major social processes. Several historical examples illustrate this link and the sport's inherent ability to affect individual and collective human lives (hereinafter, "lives") and behavior. This modest account of the significant influence the sport has had since the mid-19th century, in selected locations, helps shed light on how football can be a framework for humans to interact, change in constructive ways, and contribute to global sustainable development.

Innovation expert Dr. William Duggan states that at the heart of every creative strategy are precedents, as in examples from history, and that we need statistical proof showing how one set of actions works best to yield a particular effect.⁹ To this end, this section draws upon the history of football as precedent for the sport's impact on lives, such as its capacity for creating and enhancing social cohesion and development. Now, we should leverage these examples and apply statistics—as well as other disciplines—to make the definitive case that football/sport's actions yield positive social effects, in addition to clarifying its capacity to contribute to environmental sustainability. This evidence can then be the platform from which to build more effective and large-scale initiatives, applying knowledge and experience from various disciplines and modern resources. It is important to note that, because of the time period studied, the late 19th century to mid-20th century, many of these illustrations do not consider aspects of gender, race, and social equality, as they are understood by contemporary society.¹⁰

Football began in elite schools in the United Kingdom, but expanded quickly and broadly. Large historical processes, such as industrialization, shaped its development and expansion. Concurrently, the sport also shaped lives across socioeconomic divides, acting as a social barometer. The selected locations—the United Kingdom, Argentina, and Uruguay—showcase how the formation of the working class and other major social processes have been linked to football. In addition to being the first leaders of the sport in each particular region and globally, these nations have historical ties (discussed in section 5.2).

Since the late 1800s, football has had a remarkable influence on people at the community, city, national, and international levels, an influence that has, in some ways, remained outside of the sport's coverage and limelight. Most of the history written about football

⁷This white paper uses the concept of "social phenomenon" based on how broadly and deeply the sport has influenced behaviors and lives of individuals and masses, globally.

⁸Football can be played anywhere, but "it is not only about playing. Watching (and then discussing and reading about) football has become part of the leisure lives of so many people in many places during the twentieth century." Source: Tony Mason, *Passion of the People? Football in South America*, Critical studies in Latin American and Iberian culture (London New York: Verso, 1995), p. viii. In 2014, the New York Times reported that 3.2 billion fans watched part of the 2010 FIFA World Cup™, that is, nearly half of the planet, and specifically compared this number of global football (soccer) fans with 410 million fans of American football. Source: Sofia Perpetua, "Video: The World Cup, by the Numbers," *The New York Times*, June 2014, www.nytimes.com/video/sports/soccer/100000002935260/world-cup-2014-brazil-by-the-numbers.html.

⁹William R. Duggan, *Creative Strategy: A Guide for Innovation* (New York: Columbia Business School Pub, 2013), p. 14.

¹⁰These omissions will be acknowledged in some sections and should be assumed throughout the document.

takes a view *from above*, focusing on the great deeds of professional players and officials, who are often the main protagonists. However, the historical account that follows is centered on football's impact on the lives of fans,¹¹ focusing on the *History from Below* and the effects of the sport on the population at large. This significant social impact is far beyond what a casual fan or observer might immediately recognize.

Part I also illustrates why football can be considered “one of the great cultural institutions, like education and the mass media, which shapes and cements national identities throughout the world.”¹² Its role as a cultural architect, together with its billions of fans globally,¹³ are clear indications of the potential football has to support the world in its quest for sustainability and lead the way for other sports to do the same, particularly via *systematic approaches* and strategic collaborations.

Since the late 1800s, football has had a remarkable influence on people at the community, city, national, and international levels ... Its role as a cultural architect, together with its billions of fans globally, are clear indications of the potential football has to support the world in its quest for sustainability and lead the way for other sports to do the same, particularly via *systematic approaches*.

¹¹ *Fan* is defined as “an enthusiastic devotee (as of a sport or a performing art) usually as a spectator.” Source: *fan*, in *Merriam-Webster*, www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/fan and athlete is defined as “a person who is proficient in sports and other forms of physical exercise.” Source: *athlete*, in *Oxford English Dictionary*, www.google.com/search?q=athlete. For the purpose of this paper, the word “fan” (and its plural) refers to those who are athletes and/or follow a sport—or game or physical activity—including those who take part in the sport/game/activity and/or those that are just devoted aficionados, particularly those who intensively follow football (or another sport/interest) across all competitive/recreational levels and demographics.

¹² Richard Giulianotti, *Football: A Sociology of the Global Game* (Cambridge, UK: Oxford; Malden, MA: Polity Press; Blackwell Publishers, 1999), p. 23.

¹³ Approximately 5 billion fans. Source: “The football landscape – The Vision 2020-2023.”

2. RESEARCH AND NARRATIVE STRUCTURE

This white paper’s historical research is guided by some elements in Peter Burke’s *New Perspectives on Historical Writing*, including “the process of interaction between major events and trends on one side and the structures of everyday life on the other.”¹⁴ Based on this focus of attention, the analysis herein considers the massive expansion of football and its impact on people’s daily lives, two key factors in the sport’s journey of becoming a global social phenomenon.

The following narrative of football’s history relies heavily on the chronological facts outlined in David Goldblatt’s book *The Ball is Round: A Global History of Soccer* and on valuable insights from sociologist Richard Giulianotti’s *Football: A Sociology of the Global Game*. The regional impact of the sport is mainly illustrated in the United Kingdom (UK), through Richard Holts’ *Sport and the British*, and, in Latin America, through Tony Mason’s *Passion of the People? Football in South America*, the Argentine magazine *El Gráfico*, and stories from Eduardo Galeano’s *Soccer in Sun and Shadow*.

Some assertions in this paper are based on direct observations of the influence that football had on people’s lives. Other statements are inferences from the work of writers that inadvertently captured key social implications throughout history simply by commenting on the sport. Direct quotes and paraphrased ideas from a number of sources are used to corroborate football’s tremendous social influence and substantiate the understated role of fans in the development, and constructive potential, of the sport. Most of the data that follows is presented through the lens of the “history from below,” looking to highlight the “views of ordinary people and ... their experience of social change” as opposed to history’s common view from above, concentrating on “great deeds of great men.”¹⁵ The chosen “below” perspective aspires to showcase the many unsung experiences linked to football in the quest to reposition fans as protagonists in the initial development of the sport and—hopefully—in a future where the sport contributes significantly to sustainability.

Direct quotes and paraphrased ideas from a number of sources are used to corroborate football’s tremendous social influence.

The narrative is organized according to three categories used by Giulianotti and Robertson in their book *Globalization and Football*. In presenting football as an “illuminating globalization process,” they describe the sport’s role in various ways: (1) as a *metric* to measure transnational, political, and social connectivity, (2) as a *mirror* for peoples to reflect “upon their ... identity, in relation to changing transnational audiences,” and (3) as a *motor* to accelerate “particular global transformations.”¹⁶

Here, the three classifications are used to present football as a **metric-benchmark**, that is a benchmark or framework for people to relate to each other, as a **mirror** to reflect lives, cultural norms, and social issues, and as a **motor** or part of societal processes and transformations. These categories, reimagined, aim to first organize and illustrate modern football’s impact during a century in the lives of individuals and communities in key

¹⁴Peter Burke, ed., *New perspectives on historical writing*, 2nd edition (University Park, Pa: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001), p. 11.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 4.

¹⁶Giulianotti and Robertson, *Globalization and Football*, p. xii.

locations. Some arguments bleed into other categories and reinforce the profound interplay between sport, culture, and society in different parts of the world (see Table I).

Table I: Categorical impact of football on individual/collective lives (in the selected nations)

	INTERPRETATION	ILLUSTRATION
METRIC-BENCHMARK of social relations	Refers to a point of reference (a benchmark) in modern / urban social relations facilitated by the sport for people to relate and cope with new environments.	As rural to urban migration drove urbanization and isolation in London, Buenos Aires, and Montevideo, football facilitated social rapport, cohesion, camaraderie, solidarity, and integration of city residents.
MIRROR of life / national issues	Represents how football reflects values, culture, identities, norms, and other significant personal and social aspects .	The sport reflected identities of the working class in the UK, Argentina, and Uruguay, while mirroring new forms of masculinity.
MOTOR of national and international transformations	Describes how football, in some cases, accelerated local, national, and international transformations or , in some others, was deeply connected to these transformations .	Football was intensely linked to the UK's industrialization, urbanization, and international presence; later, similar patterns take place in Argentina and Uruguay. After the UK introduced it to the world, the game was adopted by many nations as a source of local pride, values, and independence.

In Part II, the same three categories—metric, mirror, motor—are used to present opportunities to enhance sport's impact on sustainable development.

3. ASTONISHING VOIDS

3.1. FOOTBALL IN OFFICIAL HISTORY

Noted Uruguayan author Eduardo Galeano narrates how the sport developed its *magical grip* on the world; in particular, he points to “an astonishing void: official history ignores football. Contemporary history texts fail to mention it, even in passing, in countries where it has been and continues to be a primordial symbol of collective identity.”¹⁷ The authors cited in this document—and some not covered—delve into football’s social, economic, and political aspects, including the sport’s various relationships with globalization. However, as Tony Mason highlights, sociologists and historians have been reluctant to pay attention to football as a popular activity,¹⁸ and there has been even less academic coverage on its capacity to support social change and sustainable development.

The sport’s social aspects have largely been understated or misjudged, particularly before the exponential expansion of the game, assisted by market forces. Even prior to this external pressure, the game’s impact had an unforced and powerful connection to lives and human behavior, and to our evolution into a modern society. While the conventional history of modern football begins around mid-19th century, there are records of ancient football that go back much further. According to David Goldblatt’s investigation, many ancient cultures, including the Chinese and Japanese, engaged in “competitive ball games”; in China, *cuju* (206 BCE), simply translated as kick-ball, expanded along distant land and sea trade routes; in Mesoamerica the ball game gained center stage, reflecting the primordial role it had in what is now Mexico, Guatemala, Belize and Honduras.¹⁹

Eduardo Galeano points to “an astonishing void: official history ignores football. Contemporary history texts fail to mention it, even in passing, in countries where it has been and continues to be a primordial symbol of collective identity” Tony Mason highlights [that] sociologists and historians have been reluctant to pay attention to football as a popular activity, and there has been even less academic coverage on its capacity to support social change and sustainable development.

Although archaeological remains suggest that the ball was fabricated as early as 1500 BCE, it was only by about 1200 BCE that an early ball game emerged from the Olmec Empire in Central Mexico, which had set rules and many of football’s current characteristics (e.g., a contested team game).²⁰ In Mesoamerica, Goldblatt also relates how the “geographical spread of the ball game was matched by its social depth,” as the game was played by commoners and the elite,²¹ an ancient indication that football is, indeed, for all. In the 16th century, this game crossed the Atlantic Ocean in the Spanish conquest of the Americas; in 1528, Hernán Cortés forcibly took ball players back to Spain, “where his captive athletes performed for the Castilian nobility ... The Spanish suppressed the game” at home,²²

¹⁷Eduardo Galeano, *El fútbol a sol y sombra* (Montevideo: Imprenta Rosgal S.A., 2002), p. 243. All translations are mine unless otherwise noted.

¹⁸Mason, *Passion of the people?*, p. vii.

¹⁹David Goldblatt, *The Ball is Round: A Global History of Football* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2008), p. 5-7, 9.

²⁰Ibid., p. 11-12.

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid.

although not forever. Spain was not the only nation to prohibit the game—or a version of it—before fervently adopting it later.

In the British Isles, football was popular as both a rural and urban leisure pursuit in the medieval era, but the sport also met with resistance. Goldblatt expands on this fact, relating how several kings (from Edward II to Henry VIII) sought to prohibit or restrict football because it was associated with injuries and deaths.²³ Citing a 1314 law for public order, by Edward II, Goldblatt notes that some provincial towns (e.g., Manchester and Liverpool) banned the game at some point between 1450-1650 until Charles II and his court began enjoying football in the 17th century. By the 18th century, ball games were part of an emerging sporting culture, and in the 19th century, after the sport transitioned from a “dying folk ritual ... to the formalized if eccentric hobby of overgrown, aristocratic schoolboys,”²⁴ and the British can be credited with having created modern football.

Despite different versions of this sport’s origins,²⁵ the key and valuable role that the British had in formalizing and expanding football—a game followed by billions today—is irrefutable. Football’s capacity for social integration and its ability to draw the attention of societies’ leaders and cross land and maritime borders are timeless. The sport is undeniably an important catalyst of historical change, in which fans—historically mostly men—played a critical role in its expansion, a role that has not been valued highly enough in both the sport’s and the world’s *official history*.

3.2. FOOTBALL’S UNDERRATED PROTAGONISTS

Despite the “astonishing void” of football in history, there are some accounts of the sport that generally represent its history viewed from above, with an emphasis on the sport’s competitive, economic, and political aspects. This approach to football’s history can help cover part of the aforementioned void, but it still obscures the central role that ordinary people played in football’s first century, and beyond.

Football fans, who comprise the majority of the sport’s population, had a critical role in its growth as a sport and social phenomenon, a fact that has not received the attention it deserves—particularly for the greater good. The examples presented as case studies concentrate on the fans who have inadvertently turned the game into a global trend. Across class lines, fans’ deep connection to the sport turned it into a catalyst of social interactions. Later, as globalization shaped humanity around the world, football—along with key socioeconomic processes—shaped lives across borders. Moreover, the sport became a benchmark of societal trends while responding to the pulse of ordinary people worldwide. As such, the sport acted as a social barometer: a marker of lives in new urban and industrialized settings, of new environments for immigrants, of racial discrimination issues, and even of some nations’ international relations (e.g., UK), further described below.

²³Goldblatt, *The Ball is Round*, p. 17.

²⁴Ibid., p. 17-18, 51.

²⁵Goldblatt also talks about another team ball game of similar qualities called *calcio*, which was played in medieval and early modern Florence, but disappeared, or perhaps was banned, in the mid-eighteenth century. Source: Ibid., p. 16. While some credit *calcio* as modern football’s origin, this paper attribute’s the game’s origin to be where its formal rules were set. Italians’ deep passion for the sport also had a particular and significant influence on its massive expansion, both at home and abroad, principally in South America.

Football fans, who comprise the majority of the sport’s population, had a critical role in its growth as a sport and social phenomenon ... as globalization shaped humanity around the world, football—along with key socioeconomic processes—shaped lives across borders.

It is important to note that many identity groups have been marginalized in this and other sports’ development, and their roles, or lack thereof, are important to consider in the sport’s “History from Below.” Racial discrimination in football is discussed to some extent in Part II. Regarding gender, it’s worth noting that, in England, the first registered women’s football match was in 1895, but the Women’s Football Association was not formed until 1969; in 1921, the Football Association banned “women from playing on Football League grounds ... [arguing that] the game of football is quite unsuitable for females and ought not to be encouraged.”²⁶ However, before the ban, women’s games were quite popular in the United Kingdom and had large attendance in the late 1920s when, for example, 53,000 people saw Dick, Kerr Ladies beat St. Helens Ladies.²⁷

Today, with 9 official FIFA Women’s World Cups™ played since 1991 (versus 21 FIFA [men’s] World Cups™ since 1930),²⁸ and women’s football added to the Olympic program in 1996 (men’s since 1900),²⁹ the opportunity for the sport to become even more globally predominant and impactful is remarkable. Women’s experiences, as well as those of other minoritized groups in sport, are deserving of a separate analysis beyond the scope of this white paper. Moreover, the hope is that future research will be able to cover a century of football’s global expansion also through female players and fans, including their role as catalysts in many positive sustainability outcomes.

²⁶“The story of women’s football in England,” The Football Association, accessed June 5, 2020, www.thefa.com/womens-girls-football/heritage/kicking-down-barriers.

²⁷Goldblatt, *The Ball is Round*, p. 180-181.

²⁸FIFA, “World Cup | How the tournament has evolved,” accessed April 26, 2024, www.fifa.com/en/tournaments/mens/worldcup/canadamexicousa2026/articles/world-cup-format-evolution-change-history-1930-2026.

²⁹“Football: Olympic history, rules, latest updates and upcoming events for the Olympic sport,” The International Olympic Committee, accessed June 5, 2020, <https://olympics.com/en/sports/football/>.

4. MODERN FOOTBALL'S GLOBAL EXPANSION

The selected time frame (1860-1960) begins around the codification of the game and the establishment of English football's governing body, The Football Association (FA), on October 26, 1863.³⁰ By the end of the 19th century, Goldblatt explains how the sport underwent a transformation regarding who played and followed it that paralleled the long process of industrialization and urbanization in the United Kingdom. Football began as a game of the aristocracy, turning later into the pastime of the working class, who were both players and spectators. By the First World War, football had become England's national game and, on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, was already quite popular in Argentina and Uruguay.³¹ These nations were the first football powerhouses in their respective continents as well as globally. Hence, they are the focus of this discussion on early football history.

The regions analyzed here have been pivotal in football's growth. First, in the United Kingdom, England is the birthplace of modern football and the British Empire was the main facilitator of the sport's growth globally. Second, across the Atlantic Ocean, the two countries that border the mouth of the La Plata River, Argentina and Uruguay, played an important role in football's growth. These two nations have many things in common, and football's evolution and fervor are just two examples. Both were early adopters of the sport and were particularly impacted by its expansion, with a pattern of development that resembled that of the UK. At the level of international play, these two South American countries occupied a prominent and successful role in regional and world competitions, while the British took a more isolationist and nationalistic approach.

By the end of the Second World War, football was firmly established as “the world's game,” marking the end of football's “early modernity” in the early 1920s, as the Olympic Games and World Cup bolstered football's global rank; the post-Second World War period (1945-1960s) saw the birth of continental confederations.³² For instance, the foundation of the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) in 1954 was influenced by the period's process of European integration and collaboration; it is worth noting that establishing the European Economic Community took politicians six years, while UEFA established a pan-European football competition—the standard of excellence in club football—in just one year.³³ Moreover, in the second half of the 20th Century, a time of significant division in Europe, “UEFA remained one of the only truly pan-European functioning institutions on the Continent,” and football was one of the rare means of consistent cultural interaction.³⁴ See related considerations in Part II, section 2.3.6.

The analyzed period ends in 1960, marking football's first century and when the access to television started spreading the game around the world.³⁵ Later, the sport rose to a new level denoted by the emergence of new fan groups (e.g., hooligans), superstar players, and the sport's new status as highly fashionable.³⁶ The historical organic global expansion and cultural influence of football require careful analysis, so they can guide positive interventions in the present and future.

³⁰“The History of The FA,” The Football Association, www.thefa.com/about-football-association/what-we-do/history.

³¹Goldblatt, *The Ball is Round*, p. 51-52, 135.

³²Giulianotti, *Football*, p. 167.

³³Goldblatt, *The Ball is Round*, p. 398-399.

³⁴Ibid., p. 406-407.

³⁵Ibid., p. 334, 384, 401-403.

³⁶Giulianotti, *Football*, p. 167-169.

5. HISTORICAL IMPACT OF FOOTBALL ON INDIVIDUAL/COLLECTIVE LIVES (1860–1960)

Modern football started in the UK and, after its expansion abroad, Argentina and Uruguay quickly embraced and mastered it. In the British Isles, the massive expansion of football mainly occurred through its adoption by the working class, while in the two South American countries, it also took place among immigrant communities. Inadvertently, the sport moved from being the pastime of a select few to the passion of multitudes.

Changes in society certainly impacted the trajectory of football. Increased literacy created a market for secondary media and advertising that intensified the cultural character connected to the sport. Football's larger crowds grew out of a variety of factors in the UK and South America: geographical expansion at the turn of the 20th century; rising (though still minimal) incomes; more leisure time due to the transition to a six-day week that often included a Saturday half-day holiday; and new means of transportation and improved infrastructure.³⁷

Transitions to modern society not only gave rise to key conditions for football to spread its influence, but also to a societal focus on well-being. In the early 1900s, John Keynes made a distinction between wealth and well-being as a positive measure in life; he favored well-being, valuing not only leisure, learning, and the arts for all, but also the need to share the benefits of progress widely for the well-being of all.³⁸ In the next century, the United Nations General Assembly passed a historic resolution encouraging countries to measure the subjective well-being (SWB) or “happiness” (here used interchangeably) of their citizens and use this metric to guide policy making.³⁹ SWB refers to how and why people experience their lives in positive ways, including both cognitive judgments and affective reactions.⁴⁰

At a macro level, happiness can be linked with football via its many potent social networks, which have emerged through intense adherence to the sport and affiliation with local/national teams. As humans are “social animals through and through,” strong social networks are a key contributor to happiness.⁴¹ Football's long-standing capacity to promote and strengthen connections among members of a group led to the development of large and robust networks. More details in Part II, sections 2.2.2-6 and 2.3.5.

5.1. UNITED KINGDOM: KEY SOCIAL PROCESSES AND FOOTBALL

Social class is an important lens for examining the historical development of modern football; for instance, the sport was initiated by the British elite, but then its popularity

³⁷ Goldblatt, *The Ball is Round*, p. 53-54.

³⁸ Jeffrey Sachs, “Keynes and the Good Life,” *The American Prospect*, May 2020, <https://prospect.org/culture/books/keynes-and-the-good-life/>.

³⁹ *Happiness: towards a holistic approach to development* (United Nations, August 2011), [https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/715187/files/%20\(A_RES_65_309-EN](https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/715187/files/%20(A_RES_65_309-EN).

⁴⁰ Ed Diener et al., “Subjective well-being: Three decades of progress.,” *Psychological Bulletin* 125, no. 2 (March 1999): 276–302.

⁴¹ John F. Helliwell, Richard Layard, and Jeffrey D. Sachs, *World Happiness Report 2012* (April 2012), p. 5, 69, <https://worldhappiness.report/ed/2012/>.

progressed down the class spectrum, providing new connections and a stronger sense of self to those who fervently adopted and transformed the sport,⁴² across socioeconomic divides.

The notion that popular sports have often been imposed from above and passively embraced by those below is particularly incomplete in the case of football; as such, Holt asserts that workers developed “their own culture rather than having their play organized for them or sold to them” through football.⁴³ In fact, shortly after its codification, first by aristocratic schoolboys and then officially by the FA in 1863, the sport began to occupy the increasing leisure hours of working class men, leading to “football’s massification.”⁴⁴ This significant turn in the sport’s demographic base points to one of its most enduring and important aspects—that despite its elite origins, football has managed to spread to all levels of the population.

An 1880 article covering a speech about social issues stated that “football and curling are excellent amusements for one class, they ought not to be without good results for all classes ... The great secret of life is to find out what really gives one enjoyment ... [which] was entirely independent of the question of income.”⁴⁵ Over a hundred years ago, football in the UK was already part of conversations suggesting that enjoyment in life should not rely on socioeconomic factors. Nowadays, millions are welcome to enjoy the game.⁴⁶

The British not only developed modern football, but disseminated it globally. Although football started as a British game, many countries subsequently adjusted it to their cultural style and identity, while some British colonies adopted football as an emblem of their search for independence and national character. Football is, evidently, more than a game.

5.1.1. Football as a metric-benchmark of social relations in the UK

This section illustrates how the sport was able to create, foster, and shape social relations for British people living in a new urban setting at the turn of the 20th century. Particularly among working class men, the sport was an excellent mechanism to adapt to rapid urbanization and industrialization, as well as a valuable bridge to establish social rapport and bonding within an unfamiliar, often alienating, urban context. Today, in our globalized world, the sport can again be utilized as a connecting nexus for people needing to adjust to new living environments (e.g., refugees) and form, recreate, and repair personal relations (more in Part II).

Giulianotti describes how, in the UK’s new urban industrial life, football facilitated recreation that served as an extension of the contemporary reality.⁴⁷ He explains how the

⁴²Giulianotti, *Football*, p. 147.

⁴³Richard Holt, *Sport and the British: a modern history*, Oxford studies in social history (Oxford: Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 135.

⁴⁴Giulianotti, *Football*, p. 5, 147. In this white paper, “football’s massification” refers to the sport’s mass appeal and the significant expansion of its *fan* base across socioeconomic status.

⁴⁵Our Own Correspondent, “The Social Science Congress,” *The Manchester Guardian (1828-1900)*, October 14, 1880, www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/social-science-congress/docview/478821541/se-2.

⁴⁶This statement excludes gender and modern urban complications. At the present time, there remain obstacles to equality in football especially when it comes to gender, race, and socioeconomic background. Also, professional football games and high-level training for players are still expensive and, for many, out of reach. However, at the recreational level, football is one of the least expensive and most accessible (in terms of equipment and game setup) sport on the planet.

⁴⁷Giulianotti, *Football*, p. 5-6.

environment that the sport provided reflected the novel way of modern life, with stadiums looking very much like factories and the massive crowds circling around the pitch looking like workers gathered at the factory gates. The game itself infiltrated the workday schedule and finances of its fans, as thousands would stop working on Saturday afternoons, risking summary dismissal, to watch matches; in fact, match attendance funds were set aside even during periods of unemployment.⁴⁸ The link between football and industrialization was not a coincidence in the UK.

Football provided many British men a remarkable outlet to escape the daily tedium of industrial life. A 1904 article states that “the same monotonous and sometimes deadly toil ... [made men resort] ... to the football field or elsewhere.”⁴⁹ Football was a mechanism of unity within the large, intimidating metropolis, where “the urban whole had to be more than the sum of its parts”; thus, working class men had to build their own sense of belonging and football teams inspired shared feelings of victory, consolation, and banter.⁵⁰ In an urbanized and industrialized environment, personal relationships had to be recreated, since a new, overcrowded reality prevented the more intimate relations of the past.⁵¹ The sport fostered cultural bonding and social integration within a new, more isolated, life.

In fact, Giulianotti highlights how modern nations had to attain “fresh ways of unifying disparate peoples as an *imagined community*” at a time when shared language and education were able to disseminate “senses of modern nationhood”; adopting football stars as new heroic figures gave many people a notion of protection against hostile forces, while popular culture facilitated social relations.⁵² Sport events, especially football matches, had a key role in this process. He explains how football’s bonding effect counteracted the claim that modern life (e.g., urbanization) tends to divide the community and “erode the communitarianism and fixed social identities found in pre-industrial, traditional societies”; in fact, some sociologists would argue folk football integrated individual men at the local level.⁵³ In many ways, the UK’s modern society experienced their new lifestyle interwoven with football.

The “organic solidarity” that French sociologist Emile Durkheim distinguished as a new model of society may have been represented in the formation of football clubs [or “teams”—used interchangeably], offsetting the atomization and estrangement that the new British working class was experiencing; many clubs initially formed around a commonality (parish vs. parish, bachelors vs. married men, or town vs. countryside).⁵⁴ Later, new communities formed through the sport, facilitating social bonding, spontaneous camaraderie, common values/pride, and a solid foundation for human relations.

Affiliation to a specific football club bestowed a common identity among fans of the same institution, promoting masculine cohesion, concord, and a means to belong to something—a community, among which supporters achieved a “symbolic citizenship.”⁵⁵ Holt explains how this shared identity affirmed their pride of place and how the sport developed its own value system, turning into a successful source of sociability.⁵⁶ Fans formed networks with

⁴⁸Giulianotti, *Football*, p. 6.

⁴⁹“Universities and the Workers: Higher Education for the People,” *The Manchester Guardian (1828-1900)*, October 1904, p. 10.

⁵⁰Holt, *Sport and the British*, p. 154-155, 172.

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²Giulianotti, *Football*, p. 23.

⁵³Ibid., p. 3, 14.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 15.

⁵⁵Holt, *Sport and the British*, p. 153-154, 172.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 172-173, 366.

the fans of other clubs, developing an even larger social system, suggesting the power of social affiliations to provide entry points for cooperation.

Unfortunately, football groups' negative characteristics and behavior cannot be ignored, as they have also been a source of social upheaval, including hooliganism and intolerance of minoritized populations, particularly along the lines of race and gender,⁵⁷ gender identity and sexual orientation. The early codification of football intended to control violence in aristocratic British schools. Later, the sport proved its ability to alleviate tension among the working class and to turn real conflicts into imaginary ones between two teams. Nevertheless, it has also been evident that football's dark side can trigger human rights violations, including racism, sexism, ethnocentrism, xenophobia, and violence.

This document focuses on football's positive aspects and its significant impact on individual and collective lives, looking to foster fruitful rapports and methodical interventions that work against those negative forces while effectively promoting human rights, peace, and sustainable development. As leading behavioral scientist Dr. Elke U. Weber states, sport can help build strong group identities and (in connection to addressing climate change) "sustainable behavior requires future focus and group identity, which facilitates patience, trust and common goals,"⁵⁸ thus promoting solid foundations for human relations (more details in Part II, section 2.2.1).

5.1.2. Football as a mirror of personal and social issues in the UK

Football is here presented as a *reflection of civic concerns*, a mirror of local places, communities, and a nation, and of new ways of life and occupations, including the peculiarities of modern men's personal and professional lives. Football was actively and fervently adopted by the multitudes who saw their new urban, industrial lives mirrored by the sport and who developed a deep allegiance to the game and its clubs. British working-class men became deeply and culturally connected to football, which turned into a successful group experience able to promote cohesion and trust. Individually, the sport gave hope through life-changing opportunities. Today, experts from multiple disciplines, particularly social scientists, have the chance to methodically understand and harness the loyalty, common identity, influence, fervor, and cooperation developed around sport, toward fans' well-being, the well-being of others, and that of the planet (expanded in Part II).

⁵⁷For instance, Foer recounts the experience of a commander in one of the first organized group of English soccer hooligans in the mid-1960s. Source: Franklin Foer, *How Soccer Explains the World: An Unlikely Theory of Globalization* (Harper Perennial, May 2010), p. 89. Goldblatt reports "a black presence in English professional football since its inception ... and that there was "an altogether nastier undertone expressed on the terraces" (stadium), with the first generation of British-born players in professional football in the early 1970s ... who had a hard path. Source: Goldblatt, *The Ball is Round*, p. 564. Moreover, "in the UK, racist abuse was routinely aimed at players throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Source: Giulianotti, *Football*, p. 160. Williams relates that on December 5, 1921, clubs affiliated with the FA banned women's football, an interdiction which lasted until November 29, 1971; women's football has never recovered its early popularity in terms of status. Source: Jean Williams, "The fastest growing sport? Women's football in England," *Soccer & Society* 4, no. 2 (June 2003): 112–127. The fact that women have been deprived of a role in football, as a sport and a social phenomenon, in the UK or around the world is a sensitive issue and the bias and prejudice that provoked it need to be furthered explored.

⁵⁸Elke Weber et al., *Communication for Climate Change 2.0* (Connect4Climate, World Bank Group, and Center for Research on Environmental Decisions | Columbia University, January 2016), p. 26, www.connect4climate.org/sites/default/files/files/publications/Communication_for_Climate_Change-Technical_Report-Jan2016.pdf.

At the turn of the 20th century, many football clubs formed around a geographical home base and mirrored the context of their vicinity. Their connection to local and civic aspects—especially in the UK—was demonstrated, for example, through the clubs’ second names, which often evoked “the City,” or togetherness, as in “United.”⁵⁹ For instance, the club named *Newton Heath Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway* (1878) changed its name to *Manchester United* in 1902; when the FA League was formed (1888), Newton members were uncertain of their abilities, delaying participation for four years.⁶⁰ Eventually, this team became avid rivals of *Manchester City* and one of the world’s most successful and popular football clubs. Those hesitant Newton men hardly suspected the tremendous role their team would play at both national and global levels, offering a simple example of how football’s life-altering potential should not be underestimated.

Due to its simplicity, adaptability, and even suitability to the factory schedule, football turned into a booming collective experience. Holt explains that the sport served not only as a means for releasing tension, but also as a reflection of the work structure to which working-class men were adapting their mindset; when watching football matches, fans had to observe both team and individual performance, a metaphor for industrial labor. The same qualities admired among the work force (hard work, perseverance through grueling physical demands, and teamwork) were valued by football crowds, and so “the team symbolized the men who supported it.”⁶¹ As thousands of workers deeply identified with the sport in a newly industrialized and urbanized UK, football managed to facilitate social cohesion through common identities, goals, and trust.

Moreover, football reflected life-changing possibilities. The elites that initially controlled the sport privileged amateurism. Later, after football’s vast expansion and professionalization, players were mostly former factory workers that initially had few career progression prospects; for those players, the sport provided “a route toward social recognition within a meritocratic environment, and life-change opportunities that were denied elsewhere, in politics, commerce, and higher education.”⁶² Gradually, the realm of life-altering opportunities broadened, and those in sport persisted and expanded.

Football has also mirrored strong national identities, and Giulianotti identifies England as perhaps the most complex setting. Within the United Kingdom, he describes a friendly football rivalry between Scotland and England, thought to benefit the UK as a whole. But it reinforced a sense of Scottish separateness with Scots continuing to favor all of England’s other rivals, even Germany, as “a reflex technique for identity construction”; nationalist conflicts were mirrored in football with allegiance to football often superseding allegiance to the nation.⁶³ National identity issues linked to football are further described in the next section. Here, the emphasis is on the fervent loyalty to football, which could not only help tackling disparities by building common ground, but also by connecting fans to sustainable development in new and more powerful ways when approached systematically.

Throughout history, football’s popularity and engaging ability is, unfortunately, also tied to violence and war. During the First World War, football clubs and games became the perfect tool for recruiting the young, working-class men that the armed forces were desperate for.⁶⁴ Goldblatt adds that the press and the public often unfavorably contrasted footballers with

⁵⁹Giulianotti, *Football*, p. 33.

⁶⁰“Manchester United: The Story so Far,” Manchester United, accessed June 5, 2020, www.manutd.com/en/History/History-by-Decade.

⁶¹Holt, *Sport and the British*, p. 162-163, 173.

⁶²Giulianotti, *Football*, p. 31, 107.

⁶³*Ibid.*, p. 28-29.

⁶⁴Goldblatt, *The Ball is Round*, p. 80-81.

the brave young men at the front, criticizing the former for prioritizing football over duty; many argued the sport had a negative influence on the war effort. Moreover, in this period, the Minister of War, Lord Derby, said when presenting the Cup in the last FA game: “You have played with one another ... for the Cup ... play with one another for England now” (April 24, 1915).⁶⁵

In the same World War, the sport’s magnetic influence was also manifested in the interruption of military conflict, when British and German soldiers put aside their arms and played football in No Man’s Land in France.⁶⁶ In many other world regions, the sport has been able to alleviate tension, bring hope, and contribute toward understanding, reconciliation, and peace.⁶⁷ The intensive devotion inspired by football can either exacerbate collective violence or help build positive bridges between groups, a dynamic that needs to be methodically understood. Such insights as well as the sport’s appeal and recruitment capacity should be applied to nonviolent, constructive, and sustainability endeavors, via effective motivation and communication (further explained in Part II).

5.1.3. Football as a motor (or component) of transformations in the UK and abroad

This section addresses the role played by football in paralleling and, in some cases, contributing to transformational processes at the local, national, and international levels—regarding the British Isles and some former colonies—from the late 19th century to the post-Second World War era. The attitude toward British rule and its influence was often paralleled in football in many English-speaking countries and even within the UK. In some cases, football acted as a liberation symbol. The British were a key factor in the global dissemination of football, which adopted local characteristics to better represent other countries’ realities. Today, the sport could be intentionally linked to nations’ internal and external affairs, while methodically put to work as a constructive tool across sectors. In the past, the worldwide adoption and adaptation of football turned the sport into a global heritage, in which fans have played a crucial role. Now, billions of fans could also play a key role in further advancing the SDGs, as a new generation of *sport for sustainability* fans (see opportunities included in Part II).

From the late 19th century to the post-Second World War era, football was part of ideological and social transformations in the British Isles and abroad, exposing contrasts among those changes. The “friendly” Scottish-English tension (in sport and politics) evolved over the 20th century as Scottish football and society focused on Europe and beyond.⁶⁸ In Ireland, football’s role was more complex and less “friendly,” given that it was seen as part of the British imperial rule by most Irish nationalists, and it flourished in Northern Ireland and among the Protestant community; in 1892, the *Belfast Celtic Club* was formed and quickly gained fame as a nationalist and Catholic organization, becoming embroiled in a number of intense confrontations.⁶⁹ Later, football managed to become one

⁶⁵ Goldblatt, *The Ball is Round*, p. 82.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 174.

⁶⁷ As an example, see the following work: The African Centre for Constructive Resolution of Disputes (A.C.C.O.R.D.), *Playing for Peace: Beyond the Big Stage: Football for Peace and Development in Africa* (Africa Portal, June 2010), <https://africaportal.org/publication/playing-for-peace-beyond-the-big-stage-football-for-peace-and-development-in-africa/>.

⁶⁸ Giulianotti, *Football*, p. 29.

⁶⁹ Goldblatt, *The Ball is Round*, p. 77.

of Ireland's most popular sports, playing a major role in local communities and in Irish society in general.⁷⁰

Abroad, football not only embodied the UK's isolationist attitude, but also paralleled, and in some cases fostered, notable changes on and off the pitch.⁷¹ Early in the 1900s, British clubs toured Europe and South America, promoting their *superior* level of play (the national team won gold at the 1908 and 1912 Olympic Games) and carrying an attitude of disdain toward the rest of the football playing world, as Goldblatt relates. Interestingly, FIFA was founded in 1904 by Europeans without British involvement; the FIFA World Cup™ was first played in 1930, and the British only participated in this competition for the first time in 1950.⁷² In their initial FIFA World Cup™ appearance, England lost in the first round to the United States of America (U.S. or United States), for whom the victory goal was not “the work of General George Washington but of a black Haitian-born named Gaetjens.”⁷³

In 1953, England was again shocked in football after being defeated by Hungary at home; Goldblatt, who is British himself, describes how humiliations on the field occurred in tandem with the demise of the British Empire after the Second World War and events like the withdrawal from India and slow breakdown of its territories, the Suez crisis, and the declining rate of capital formation.⁷⁴ For the UK, the challenges at home and abroad forced reconsiderations and a changeover; in the game, the inflection point included England hosting and winning the FIFA World Cup™ in 1966 and two British Clubs winning the European Championship in the late 1960s, among other international victories.⁷⁵ Nevertheless, the *exclusive* British approach to football was transformed by having to acquiesce to other nations' fevered adoption and dominance of the game the British created and (initially) mastered.

As some countries passionately incorporated the emblematic British game, others did the opposite. Outside of the UK and Europe, football offered a combination of amity and enmity in British dominions, where the sport only gained a marginal status.⁷⁶ The latter is further described by Goldblatt as the “paradox of the global game,” because football was “most fiercely rejected, resisted, bypassed or replaced” by the English-speaking societies, including those that favorably looked upon their connection to Britain, such as Australia, Canada, and New Zealand. As international relations improved, so did the attitude toward the sport, which gained a major role in the culture of former colonies in Africa. In the case of South Africa, the game continued to grow in popularity despite the development of separate, segregated national tournaments under apartheid.⁷⁷

In the rest of the African continent, in areas colonized by the British and other European nations, football became the quintessential game. Considering the sport as one of the few

⁷⁰“Irish Sports: Activities & Sports,” Discovering Ireland, accessed June 10, 2020, www.discoveringireland.com/activities-and-sports/.

⁷¹Goldblatt, *The Ball is Round*, p. 76-77.

⁷²Ibid., p. 77, 240, 335.

⁷³Galeano, *El fútbol a sol y sombra*, p. 98.

⁷⁴Goldblatt, *The Ball is Round*, p. 441-442.

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 451.

⁷⁶Ibid., p. 87-88.

⁷⁷Peter Alegi, *African Soccerescapes: How a Continent Changed the World's Game*, Africa in world history (Athens: Ohio University Press; Ohio University Center for International Studies, 2010), p. 25. In fact, South Africa was banned from FIFA at the end of my periodization (until 1992). Goldblatt also reports: “When Nelson Mandela was released from prison his first major speech was given at a rally in the FNB soccer stadium in Johannesburg.... In football as in politics and economics, South Africa was going to be a beacon of hope and reform” for the African continent. Source: Goldblatt, *The Ball is Round*, p. 884.

positive outcomes to emerge from the devastating encounter between Western and African cultures, Goldblatt describes how the game was transformed into a tool for political and social struggle, as well as an emblem of liberation.⁷⁸ For instance, an Algerian leader during the 1958-62 Algerian War of Independence, Ferhat Abbas, recognized that “in every area of life where colonizer met the colonized—economic, political, and cultural—the playing field was weighted against the latter... But on the football pitch, where there is nowhere to hide and no rhetorical sleight of hand that can mask the reality of a goal, then one could see who really was superior.”⁷⁹

After the emergence of an organized, urban Black working class in the mid-20th century, football in Africa was solidified as the “sport of the liberation movement”; the sport of the colonists was turned against them and was adopted by the new urban masses of Africa as “an instrument of social organization, cultural self-expression, and a yard-stick for demonstrating the limits and fragilities of the colonizing authorities.”⁸⁰ Nigeria’s first president, Nnamdi Azikiwe, declared in his autobiography, “We made and altered our rules to suit each game, and so we emerged to become self-made soccerists.”⁸¹ As football was part of national struggles in many African countries, the sport turned into a regional symbol of self-determination, gratification, honor, and autonomy.

In the 19th century, the British Empire stretched over one-fourth of the earth’s surface.⁸² In the next century, their game of modern football managed to reach most countries around the world and become a global heritage. In the process of turning into a social phenomenon worldwide, the sport was interrupted by the Second World War while being adopted and transformed by nations distant from the combat zones. This war devastated European football, which would not recover its pre-eminence on the international scene until the mid-1950s; in the interim, Latin American football emerged to become the unparalleled leader in the sport.⁸³

5.2. ARGENTINA–URUGUAY: KEY SOCIAL PROCESSES AND FOOTBALL

The foundation of the sport in South America, specifically in Argentina and Uruguay, was similar to its origin in the UK. Originally, Argentina and Uruguay belonged to the same Spanish colony, and in 1825, they formed part of the United Provinces of the Río de la Plata; in 1828, Uruguay became an independent nation, after the English mediated the border war with the United Provinces and the Empire of Brazil,⁸⁴ which later also became a football leader in the region and the world.

Britain’s role in the origins and early development of the game in Argentina and Uruguay cannot be refuted.⁸⁵ According to the first Argentine census in 1869, its population was over 1.8 million, of which more than 10% were born overseas, primarily in Italy, Spain,

⁷⁸Goldblatt, *The Ball is Round*, p. 480.

⁷⁹Ibid. In India (and somehow in the English-speaking Caribbean), football had a similar link to independence, but it was later surpassed by cricket in popularity and social relevance. Source: Ibid., p. 91.

⁸⁰Ibid.

⁸¹Alegi, *African soccerescapes*, p. 6.

⁸²“United Kingdom,” Ohio State University, accessed September 25, 2021, <https://ehistory.osu.edu/region/united-kingdom>.

⁸³Goldblatt, *The Ball is Round*, p. 266.

⁸⁴Juan José Arteaga, *Breve historia contemporanea del Uruguay*, Colección Popular 583 (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2000), p. 56.

⁸⁵Mason, *Passion of the people?*, p. 9.

and France (in that order); British immigrants were a small (0.6%), but powerful subset of the population, and the British impact on the economy was significant: the country's first meat exports went to England, and the first banks and major investments (e.g., railroads) were all British-owned and operated.⁸⁶ Neighboring Uruguay, registering a population of just over 200,000 in 1860, was similarly marked by British economic influence.⁸⁷

These two South American nations, particularly their capital cities Buenos Aires and Montevideo, have much in common, including the Spanish language, accent, and similar traditions. Argentines and Uruguayans treasure the music and dance style of *tango* and enjoy drinking *mate* (an herbal infusion).⁸⁸ These countries cultivated a deep national identity around football, sharing the same dazzling style of play, known as *rioplatense* (*which means of the La Plata River region*). This comparison was stressed by the head of the Uruguayan Football Association right after winning the 1924 Olympics. He said that “more than a Uruguayan victory, this was one for the *rioplatense* sport, given that the winning team is the product of twenty years of practice between Uruguay and Argentina, with games that have always shown similar conditions,” and Goldblatt noted that, “for most of the 1920s and 1930s, Brazilian football had lived in the shadow of *fútbol rioplatense*.”⁸⁹

In Argentina and Uruguay, football was initially popular primarily among the elites⁹⁰ (as it had been in the UK), and it was only later fervently adopted and adapted by the masses. As football moved away from its elite origins, those who developed the sport retreated from it. In 1930, *El Gráfico*, the iconic sport magazine that has documented and defined many of the trends surrounding the game in Latin America, reported that high society felt nostalgia for the sport that was slipping away from their grasp, saying “the earlier fans saw themselves displaced from the fields ... the galley and fine gloves together with the hat ladies, looked instead for rugby and cricket.”⁹¹

El Gráfico was more than a popular magazine. Goldblatt describes its staff as the “organic intellectuals, who transformed the raw material of *porteño* [from Buenos Aires] *football* into an entire national mythology.”⁹² Founded in 1919, *El Gráfico* was an Argentine illustrated weekly magazine for men, originally covering politics, sport, and culture; by 1921, everything but its sport coverage had been dropped, and by 1930, it was distributed throughout Latin America, adopting the nickname of the region’s “sports bible.”⁹³ Arguably, the magazine built and shaped Latin America’s close identification with football. Early in the 1930s, the sport was as important in Argentina’s national culture as it was in England’s, perhaps “even more prominent.”⁹⁴

Despite their drastically different cultures, these South American countries and the UK share a similar relationship with football. In these nations, football was and continues to be part of the national identity and culture. The extensive examples in the UK and those

⁸⁶Ezequiel Fernández Moores and Víctor Hugo Morales, *Breve historia del deporte argentino*, 1. ed, Claves del Bicentenario Breves historias de la Argentina (Buenos Aires: El Ateneo, 2010), p. 53.

⁸⁷José Pedro Barrán, *El Nacimiento del Uruguay Moderno en la Segunda Mitad del Siglo XIX.*, September 1995; Adela Pellegrino, *Caracterización Demográfica del Uruguay* (Universidad de la República, August 2003).

⁸⁸Ana Pais, “¿Qué país es el verdadero rey del mate: Argentina, Paraguay o Uruguay?,” *BBC News Mundo*, November 2017, www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias-america-latina-42138588.

⁸⁹La Nación, “Más que Uruguayo es Rioplatense el Éxito Logrado Ayer en Paris,” *El Gráfico*, no. 258 (June 1924); Goldblatt, *The Ball is Round*, p. 281.

⁹⁰Mason, *Passion of the people?*, p. 7.

⁹¹Juan José Sebreli, *La era del fútbol* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Sudamericana S.A., 1998), p. 30.

⁹²Goldblatt, *The Ball is Round*, p. 203.

⁹³Ibid.

⁹⁴Ibid., p. 205.

to follow in Argentina and Uruguay (again organized by the metric-benchmark, mirror, and motor categories), highlight the transformative power of football and form a precedent for its vast potential to contribute to sustainability, systematically.

5.2.1. Football as a metric-benchmark of social relations in Argentina-Uruguay

At the turn of the 20th century, football was part of a new landscape of social events and relationships among males in both countries' capitals, while new sectors of the population took over the sport. As in the UK, football became more than a simple pastime in Argentina and Uruguay, providing a *means of social integration* among individuals of different national backgrounds and, in the wake of broader societal changes, an effective adjusting and bonding mechanism, facilitating social cohesion and inter-personal relationships (mostly among men). It also turned into an instrument for asserting patriotic sentiment, a novel language and mode of communication, and a coping mechanism for young men. As such, the sport could now have a greater constructive impact if deliberately and methodically harnessed to tackle contemporary issues (illustrated in Part II).

The spread of football in Argentina coincided with the formation of new social groups according to men's occupations (*popular sectors/classes*)⁹⁵ within an evolving social and cultural setting. Julio Frydenberg relates how Argentina began the 20th century with sociopolitical and labor-related tensions driven by the arrival of numerous immigrants, who were mainly young Europeans.⁹⁶ Moreover, Frydenberg describes how these youth, who faced bitter competition for jobs, opted for adjusting to a new urban lifestyle with leisure time. In this context, there was a widespread adoption of football that helped youth—young men—to positively channel their anxieties, while building the social networks needed for assimilation and integration in a new society. These groups found the sport to be a means for “sociability,” particularly through clubs.⁹⁷ Arguably, Argentine football's popularization emerged from an emotional search for social identity and connection among men.

Football clubs (or teams) provided male immigrants and recently urbanized dwellers a platform to build common values mostly linked to a specific geographic area, while offsetting the alienation of the individual within big impersonal metropolises and increasing an individual's sense of belonging. The sport started to facilitate cross-cultural rapports and *acculturation*, which is the modification of an individual or group by adapting to or borrowing traits from another culture.⁹⁸ In his book, *The Age of Football*, Sebrelí relates that, while football was expanding in Argentina, daily urban life was starting to become strongly defined by newly minted neighborhoods, within which sport clubs assisted their

⁹⁵The “sectores populares” (popular sectors) that Julio Frydenberg links to the expansion of football in Argentina included a broad set of groups formed by workers from various branches of the urban economy, particularly youth. The formation of football clubs, key factors of the sport's expansion, was mostly led by these young men, some of whom were apprentices of different trades, while others were employees of the government or of small merchants, or worked for the railroad system. Their upbringings were families of diverse socioeconomic profiles, either from Argentina or abroad, including sons of high-level government officials and professionals. Source: Julio David Frydenberg, *Prácticas y Valores en el Proceso de la Popularización del Fútbol, Buenos Aires 1900-1910* (Buenos Aires: Entrepasados, 1997).

⁹⁶Ibid.

⁹⁷Ibid.

⁹⁸*acculturation*, in Merriam-Webster, www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/acculturation.

residents' interaction and camaraderie, mainly among men. In the early 1900s, the first Buenos Aires football clubs were based in working-class neighborhoods, such as Avellaneda, La Boca, and Lanus, areas that became something of a shelter for young men living and working in an enormous, anonymous, and often hostile city.⁹⁹

For many new urban settlers, a neighborhood was the first home with which they felt they could identify. The La Boca neighborhood gave rise to one of the first Argentine football clubs, the Club Atlético Boca Juniors (1905), with strong links to the working class, particularly immigrants from Italy.¹⁰⁰ The wave of transatlantic immigration to Argentina had largely ended by the early 1930s, and the Boca Juniors' numerous culturally diverse members reflected Argentina's drastically changed demographic landscape, which Goldblatt suggests meant the club could claim to have become the team of the masses. Thus, large crowds found in football a means to build strong social networks through clubs' affiliation and common norms. Boca's classic rival has always been the Club Atlético River Plate, founded in 1901 also by immigrants, and the two clubs, alongside San Lorenzo and Independiente, dominated Argentine professional football for its first 15 years.¹⁰¹

In Uruguay, the two most popular clubs/teams have been Peñarol and Nacional. At the turn of the 20th century, Goldblatt relates that Montevideo's society was divided into "middle and working classes, Hispanics and Italians, criollo¹⁰² and immigrant," and they all discovered their "footballing expression" in a club with local identity.¹⁰³ For example, an old and British-influenced club, the Central Uruguayan Railway Cricket Club (1891¹⁰⁴), was reincarnated into a new national association called "Peñarol," a process that was completed in 1913 and included the abandonment of the English language.¹⁰⁵

The main rival of Peñarol, Club Nacional de Football, turned into a "self-consciously nationalist project" after it was founded in 1899 by Hispanic students who chose the colors of the flag of José Artigas (Uruguay's national hero).¹⁰⁶ Similarly to the way some African countries challenged British hegemony through sport, Uruguay mastered and transformed football into what Arbena-LaFrance describes as a "foundation of emerging national identities."¹⁰⁷ In the 1920s, Uruguay was the "premier soccer power," winning two Olympic Gold medals, four South American Championships, and the first World Cup.¹⁰⁸

As in the UK, football in Argentina and Uruguay has, for decades, been a constant topic of conversation, mostly among men. At the turn of the 20th Century, the media noticed that the "hunger for football" went beyond game time, including scrutiny of the plays post-game and the "delirious pleasure" the sport evoked in fans.¹⁰⁹ Their passionate pursuit of football broadened the sport in time and space, extrapolating it into their daily lives. In 1950, *El Gráfico* illustrated this obsession by stating that "much more than going to watch a game, it is something to talk about in the neighborhood, in the office, at home, spending

⁹⁹Sebrelli, *La era del fútbol*, p. 45.

¹⁰⁰Goldblatt, *The Ball is Round*, p. 130, 269.

¹⁰¹Ibid.

¹⁰²Defined as "a person of pure Spanish descent born in Spanish America." Source: *criollo*, in *Merriam-Webster*, www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/criollo.

¹⁰³Goldblatt, *The Ball is Round*, p. 131.

¹⁰⁴"Our History," Club Atlético Peñarol, accessed July 22, 2024, www.xn--pearol-xwa.org/El-club/Our-History-uc7043.

¹⁰⁵Goldblatt, *The Ball is Round*, p. 131.

¹⁰⁶Ibid.

¹⁰⁷Joseph Arbena and David G. LaFrance, eds., *Sport in Latin America and the Caribbean*, Jaguar books on Latin America, no. 23 (Wilmington, Del: Scholarly Resources, 2002), p. xiii.

¹⁰⁸Ibid.

¹⁰⁹Goldblatt, *The Ball is Round*, p. 63.

the week [with it], waking up on Sunday with the mind focused only on the game [and later] inundated with the sadness of the loss or the happiness of the victory.”¹¹⁰

Men in these countries found in football a channel for male bonding and masculine self-identification that progressed over time. A new and subtle male language developed around the sport, and illiterate men learned most of the English terms used at the beginning of the 20th century.¹¹¹ It was not until the 1930s that *El Gráfico* switched from “football” to “fútbol,” and even then, the magazine kept using many English terms¹¹² and locally-adapted words (e.g., *futbolero*, *shoteo*), evidencing the *creolization*¹¹³—the *cultural blending*—of the sport, which only later adopted terms in Spanish. A mixture of both English and Spanish allowed the sport, in its early stages, to become a popular language shared by locals and foreigners of diverse socioeconomic backgrounds.

Over time, the sport turned into an international language still shared by people of different social experiences and economic backgrounds. As former United Nations Secretary-General and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Kofi Annan stated, “Sport is a universal language that can bring people together no matter their origin, background, religious beliefs, or economic status” and that the FIFA World Cup™ “may do more to bring our planet together than any treaty or convention could ever hope for.”¹¹⁴ By systematically advancing this capacity, the sport could help repair social relations—or create new positive ones—and foster local as well as global awareness and discourse on sustainability.

5.2.2. Football as a mirror of personal and social issues in Argentina-Uruguay

Football reflects Argentina’s and Uruguay’s history, culture, pride, grit, and character. The sport created heroes, advanced political agendas, and had other wide-ranging effects, which is still the case today, in both nations. These countries’ national identities became intrinsically connected with their fervent passion for the sport. In the La Plata River region, football also mirrored the new masculine features of recently urbanized men. Novel personal qualities were valued, and some were in direct correlation with traits prized on the football pitch. The sport also mirrored grit and adjustments to individual and collective disadvantages, a projection that included some levels of happiness and even hope. As such, football can now, through behavioral and other sciences, support public policy as well as individual and collective well-being (more details in Part II).

¹¹⁰“Empezó el Fútbol,” *El Gráfico*, no. 1600 (April 7, 1950). A similar context is described in the chapter “A passionate attachment” by John Cash and Joy Damousi. Source: J. Damousi and J. Cash, *Footy Passions* (University of New South Wales Press, 2009), p. 15-29.

¹¹¹Arturo A. Bienesdell (President of the Historic Museum and Archive Foundation of San Francisco and Region, Argentina), in discussion with the author, December 24, 2010.

¹¹²English words include “centre half, off-side, referee, corner, goalkick, kick-off, offside, throw-in, centre forward, backs” and “winger, team, performance, free-kick, goals”. Source: “Consultorio Chantecler,” *El Gráfico*, no. 620 (May 30, 1931); “El Clásico entre Boca Juniors y River Plate Defraudó a los Espectadores,” *El Gráfico*, no. 632 (August 22, 1931).

¹¹³Jane Webster, “Creolization,” in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Classics* (Oxford University Press, March 2016), <https://classics.oxfordre.com/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780199381135.001.0001/acrefore-9780199381135-e-6981>.

¹¹⁴Disputes (A.C.C.O.R.D.), *Playing for Peace: Beyond the Big Stage: Football for Peace and Development in Africa*.

Many governments on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean have leveraged the engaging power of football, and the sport has mirrored political agendas—not necessarily for the public good.¹¹⁵ In Argentina, Goldblatt relates how President Juan Domingo Perón¹¹⁶ was closely connected to the sport, directly appointing senior football officials in recognition of football’s influence in nation-building, social policy, and that strong nations required intense collective experiences.¹¹⁷ Perón had a special relationship with Boca Juniors fans, whose spontaneous chant, “Boca-Perón-*un solo corazón*” (*one single heart*), leads Goldblatt to attest that, in this country, the “cultural links between football and politics were forged from below.”¹¹⁸

In Uruguay, we find two key historical figures. Uruguayan sociologist Cesar Aguiar notes that “Uruguay is a country built by two Varelas”; one was social activist José Pedro Varela, whose reforms led Uruguay to become Latin America’s most advanced welfare state in the early 1900s, and the second was a footballer, Obdulio Varela, captain of the country’s World Cup-winning football team in 1950.¹¹⁹ Goldblatt also describes how, marked by a unique determination and leadership, Captain Varela led his team to an upset win, known as *Maracanazo*, considered a miracle at Rio de Janeiro’s Maracanã Stadium. The term *Maracanazo* is often used to refer to an underdog’s victory, and it has its own place in Brazilian history; the event caused “the entire country [to be] plunged into depression.”¹²⁰

In that 1950 FIFA World Cup™ final, Obdulio Varela and his team left 200,000 people speechless in the stadium and millions more outside. Reporting on this amazing victory, *El Gráfico* recognized that “Uruguayan players have an international class, a very special capacity to face decisive contests for important titles, a capacity that increases their technical level in an astonishing proportion.”¹²¹ As Viera put it, “other countries have their history; Uruguay has its football,” to which Goldblatt adds, “Uruguay is perhaps the extreme case, but it is not alone in finding its history suffused with football.”¹²² The victory was a key example of how Uruguayan football helped the country develop a strong sense of nationwide character and pride.

Uruguay, with currently less than 4 million citizens,¹²³ is indeed a very small country. Still, football also managed to build similar intense character, pride, identity, and joy in large countries. For instance, Uruguay’s national pride and elation was shared by a significant amount (perhaps most) of Brazil’s 70 million people when winning their first FIFA World

¹¹⁵Foer, *How Soccer Explains the World: An Unlikely Theory of Globalization*. The fact that ‘the sport has mirrored political agendas—not necessarily for the public good’ has been described in various chapters of this book, where Foer provides an illuminating geopolitical analysis about soccer/football, globally.

¹¹⁶The only Argentine President to be in office three times (1946-52; 1952-55, and 1973-74). Source: Mariana Vicat, *Compendio de Historia Argentina* (Buenos Aires: Artes Gráficas Urano, 2007), p. 169, 173, 211.

¹¹⁷Goldblatt, *The Ball is Round*, p. 265, 274.

¹¹⁸*Ibid.*, p. 265-266.

¹¹⁹*Ibid.*, p. 263-265.

¹²⁰Arbena and LaFrance, *Sport in Latin America and the Caribbean*, p. 35. Anthropologist Roberto DaMatta described the 1950 World Cup lost as “perhaps the greatest tragedy in contemporary Brazilian history. Source: “Having a ball,” *The Economist*, March 2014, www.economist.com/1843/2014/03/27/having-a-ball. After the final whistle, a fan committed suicide ... others died from heart attacks. Source: Matthew Schorr, “The Maracanazo: Brazilian Tragedy and the 1950 World Cup,” trans. Catherine Foy, *Soccer Politics / The Politics of Football*, December 2013, <https://sites.duke.edu/wcwp/tournament-guides/world-cup-2014/world-cup-2014-fan-guide/anglophone-version/the-1950-world-cup-brazilian-tragedy/>.

¹²¹“Uruguay Campeón del Mundo,” *El Gráfico*, no. 1615 (July 21, 1950).

¹²²Ondino Viera was the coach of the Uruguayan team at the 1966 World Cup. Source: Goldblatt, *The Ball is Round*, p. 265.

¹²³“The World Factbook | Uruguay,” [cia.gov](https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/uruguay/#people-and-society), accessed May 17, 2024, www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/uruguay/#people-and-society.

Cup™ in 1958, in Sweden, and becoming the only non-European country to win a World Cup in Europe.¹²⁴ More recently, approximately 180 million Brazilians rallied around a shared elation and sense of national pride after winning the FIFA World Cup™ for the fifth time—a world record—in 2002.¹²⁵ Football does impact millions of people in remarkable ways.

In discussing Uruguayan football, there is a unique quality known as the *garra Charrúa* (“Uruguayan grit”). Grit¹²⁶ is characterized as a “trait of self-discipline,” involving high persistence and passion for an objective,¹²⁷ representing strength, effort, and determination. The *garra charrúa* has been a prominent characteristic of Uruguay since the early 20th century, particularly after the national team won the 1924 and 1928 Summer Olympics, and the very first World Cup in 1930.¹²⁸ Uruguay’s grit not only facilitated remarkable football victories but, in a way, also its connection with and identity within the rest of world. As Máspoli said, “the day we lose the *garra/grit* we [Uruguay as a nation] disappear, so that sentiment will always exist.”¹²⁹ The statement is figurative, but can be interpreted as a description of the way the *garra charrúa* sealed this country’s unique and profound connection with the sport.

The new masculinity that football mirrored in Argentina paralleled changes in society, from rural to urban-based. As the sport became an integral part of the new national iconography, the image of the *gaucho* Martín Fierro (the famous *South American cowboy* character) was replaced by that of the Argentine footballer Guillermo Stabile; thus, football altered traditional concepts of masculinity and the rural imagery of “bone-dry machismo” was replaced by that of a footballer, a better fit for an urban setting.¹³⁰

In addition, *El Gráfico* offered different images of masculinity that led to greater freedom in defining the ideal of manliness, idealizing the footballer of Argentina as a younger boy or *pibe*,¹³¹ a drastic contrast to the gaucho image. Moreover, the dream of being a pro football player in Argentina has been touted (since the 1940s) as “el sueño del pibe” that is “the kid’s dream,” and the ultimate *pibe* was Argentine Diego Maradona, nicknamed “El pibe de oro (golden boy).”¹³² Maradona is one of the two most famous Argentine footballers, both known globally even in remote places. The second player is Lionel Messi, whose technique, already at a very young age, was described as “totally different. He was from another planet.”¹³³ With his record eighth win of the Ballon d’Or (Golden Ball) for best player

¹²⁴Felix Keith, “The birth of Brazil at World Cup 1958,” *These Football Times*, May 2015, <https://thesefootballtimes.co/2015/05/30/the-birth-of-brazil-at-world-cup-1958/>.

¹²⁵“Country with the most World Cup wins 2022,” Statista, December 2022, www.statista.com/statistics/266464/number-of-world-cup-titles-won-by-country-since-1930/.

¹²⁶Defined as “firmness of mind or spirit: unyielding courage in the face of hardship.” Source: “Grit and Self-Control,” *Authentic Happiness*, accessed May 17, 2024, www.authentichappiness.sas.upenn.edu/learn/grit.

¹²⁷Martin E. P. Seligman, *Flourish: a visionary new understanding of happiness and well-being*, 1. Free Press hardcover ed (New York, NY: Free Press, 2011), p. 118.

¹²⁸Arbena and LaFrance, *Sport in Latin America and the Caribbean*, p. xiii.

¹²⁹Roque Maspoli was the 1950 World Cup Uruguayan goalkeeper. Source: Ben Miller, dir., “Brazil and South American Super Powers,” *History of Soccer: The Beautiful Game*, vol. 3 (Los Angeles, CA: Shout Factory, 2003), DVD, Los Angeles, CA: Shout Factory, DVD.

¹³⁰Goldblatt, *The Ball is Round*, p. 203.

¹³¹Eduardo P. Archetti, “Estilo y virtudes masculinas en El Gráfico: la creación del imaginario del fútbol argentino,” *Desarrollo Económico* 35, no. 139 (October 1995): 419–442, www.jstor.org/stable/3467209?origin=crossref.

¹³²Pablo Valdivia, “In Argentina, achieving soccer stardom isn’t just a dream — it’s also an escape,” *NPR*, November 10, 2022, www.npr.org/2022/11/07/1134745315/lionel-messi-argentina-barcelona.

¹³³*Ibid.*

in the world,¹³⁴ Lionel Messi’s “sueño del pibe” has materialized in various and amazing ways.

Uruguayan Ricardo Lorenzo Borocotó¹³⁵ argued that Argentina’s style of play derived from the peculiar urban experience of Buenos Aires football and the *pibes* (boys) from very poor origins as the archetypal players; their streetwise lessons are a constant preparation for dribbling around life challenges.¹³⁶ Football can be played anywhere, balls and goal posts can be made from locally found materials. Blurry field lines can make the outside world and socioeconomic differences vanish. Games can bring hope and happiness to players and spectators and offer a coping mechanism that should be further understood and systematically harnessed (see Part II, sections 2.2.2 and 2.2.6). Similarly, football icons can encourage joy, hope, and education as role models for key issues (e.g., public health), particularly when guided by the appropriate knowledge for the intended—and greater—positive impact (see Part II, section 2.2.5).

5.2.3. Football as a motor (or component) of transformations in Argentina-Uruguay and abroad

In Argentina and Uruguay, football was linked to *changes in values, traditions, and icons*, particularly among the residents, mostly men, of new metropolitan areas at the beginning of the 20th century. The sport helped individuals cope with social isolation and provided “some” alternative to racial discrimination. Football—together with tango—incorporated these countries in the globalization of leisure time, anteceding contemporary research on and valuing of leisure’s vital role in promoting physical and mental health. Also, football has been deeply connected to both countries’ identities, diplomacy, and international affairs, affiliations that developed mostly organically. Today, the sport’s worldwide influence and diplomatic capabilities could be deliberately and systematically harnessed to contribute to the revitalization of the global partnership for sustainable development (see Part II).

Early in the 20th century, for newcomers to Buenos Aires, football became a way to deal with life changes and lack of identity, after moving from rural areas into an urban metropolis or leaving behind their European nation-states for a diverse and multi-ethnic community.¹³⁷ A 1932 *El Gráfico* article described Argentina as “a country with multi-racial immigration, where the qualities from each race are assimilated while adding a local stamp ... In sport, the same trend takes place ... English immigrants introduced the game ... [and it] was popularized, with no racial distinctions. The British descendants imposed team discipline and the rest started imposing distinct talents, unconsciously modifying the game.”¹³⁸ This creolization process turned the British game into Argentina’s—and Uruguay’s—cultural patrimony.

¹³⁴ Julien Pretot and Rohith Nair, “Messi wins record eighth Ballon d’Or for best player in the world,” *Reuters*, accessed July 22, 2024, www.reuters.com/sports/soccer/messi-wins-record-eighth-ballon-dor-best-player-world-2023-10-31/.

¹³⁵ He was *El Gráfico*’s editor, from Uruguay, who “elaborated [a] historical theory of the development of *fútbol rioplatense*.” Source: Goldblatt, *The Ball is Round*, p. 203.

¹³⁶ Ernesto Escobar Bavio, “Sombras y luces en el fútbol rioplatense,” *El Gráfico*, no. 1911 (April 6, 1956); Goldblatt, *The Ball is Round*, p. 204.

¹³⁷ Sebrelí, *La era del fútbol*, p. 45.

¹³⁸ Chantecler, “La Viveza Criolla Característica Principal de Nuestro Fútbol,” *El Gráfico*, no. 652 (January 9, 1932).

Football's popularization in Latin America was not without racial implications. Uruguayan football, in particular, brought to light social issues pertaining to race and equality, reflecting the broader societal need for transformation. Following the abolition of slavery in 1862, discrimination against people of African descent in Uruguay continued.¹³⁹ Still, it did not prevent the country's Afro-Uruguayan minority from playing football. When Uruguay won the first South American championship—also the world's oldest international tournament—in 1916, its national squad was the only team, and the first in a transnational competition, to feature Black players.¹⁴⁰ In this tournament, Uruguay beat Chile 4-0 and the Chileans responded to their defeat by requesting that the game be annulled because there were “two Africans” on the Uruguayan team; both players were Uruguayan citizens and the great-grandchildren of slaves.¹⁴¹

In 1924, Uruguayan footballer and Olympic champion José L. Andrade ushered in a new breakthrough, enchanting crowds in Paris and becoming “the monarch of the Pigalle Quarter.”¹⁴² He was celebrated as the “Black Marvel,” one commentator wrote, “not only for his color but also for his notable playing skills ... exhibiting brilliant moves that only absolute aces can produce.”¹⁴³ Andrade rose to celebrity in a world strongly marked by racism, xenophobia, and class discrimination, and he unfortunately died in poverty. Galeano noted the irony that “the first international football idol was black, South American, and poor.”¹⁴⁴ Today, the world still struggles with racism, and football is no exception.

In Argentina, football was linked to socioeconomic transformations that the nation experienced. On the one hand, mandatory universal male suffrage in 1912 brought political change, and the country drifted away from the conservative elites,¹⁴⁵ as did football. On the other hand, Goldblatt explains how Argentina transitioned from an agrarian to an industrial economy, and the rural population moved to urban areas, which, like football, were populated with first generation immigrants. By the end of the second decade of the 20th century, Argentine society had undergone radical economic, social, cultural, and political transformations, and football remained a touchstone of these large-scale changes.¹⁴⁶ In 1951, Argentine women obtained the right to vote and to be part of decisive national affairs—until then considered only a man's business.¹⁴⁷ However, the chance for women to play in a football league would only and timidly start several decades later.

Football in the Southern Cone of Latin America quickly became central to culture and, in particular, to the *rioplatense* identity. During the early 20th century, in essence, the sport was a conduit for non-European societies, especially from South America, to take part and gain traction in an emerging international society.¹⁴⁸ In the case of Uruguay, which at the time held only a peripheral global status, football enabled it to become a proud and globally recognized nation. *El Gráfico* stated, “Uruguay has been made known to

¹³⁹Marisa Bucheli, Lucía Scuro, and United Nations Development Programme, eds., *Población afrodescendiente y desigualdades étnico-raciales en Uruguay* ([Montevideo], Uruguay: PNUD, 2008).

¹⁴⁰Euan McTear, “Rifts, racism and rioting: the story of the first Copa América,” *These Football Times*, January 2016, <https://thesefootballtimes.co/2016/01/22/rifts-racism-and-rioting-the-story-of-the-first-copa-america/>; “Copa América,” *Encyclopedia Britannica*, July 25, 2024, www.britannica.com/sports/Copa-America.

¹⁴¹Galeano, *El fútbol a sol y sombra*, p. 42.

¹⁴²*Ibid.*, p. 53.

¹⁴³Chantecler, “Los Cracks de Nuestro Fútbol,” *El Gráfico*, no. 1001 (September 16, 1938).

¹⁴⁴Galeano, *El fútbol a sol y sombra*, p. 53.

¹⁴⁵Goldblatt, *The Ball is Round*, p. 201.

¹⁴⁶*Ibid.*, p. 202.

¹⁴⁷“El recorrido hacia el voto femenino en Argentina,” Secretaría de Cultura de la Nación, September 2018, www.cultura.gov.ar/23-de-septiembre-de-1947-asi-se-promulgo-la-ley-del-voto-femenino_6501/.

¹⁴⁸Giulianotti and Robertson, *Globalization and Football*, p. xii.

Europe through the dribbling of its football players ... instead of the selected exposure [of] Embassies, this time the international promotion was through an element representing the broad population.”¹⁴⁹

It is difficult to overestimate the degree to which national identity and pride became linked to the fate of Uruguay’s national team, *La Celeste*.¹⁵⁰ A 1923 article claimed that “those eleven players chosen ... to represent the same country should wear its colors with a national consciousness.”¹⁵¹ Much later, Galeano tells the story of Pedro Arispe, for whom his native land (Uruguay) did not mean much more than where he was a meatpacker. Arispe was part of the team that won the 1924 Olympics and, as the Uruguayan flag was raised, he felt his heart burst with pride. For this Uruguayan team to travel to the 1924 Olympics in France, Atilio Narancio, one of the founders of the country’s football federation, mortgaged his house as collateral.¹⁵² In 1928, the Uruguayan football team won the Olympics again, in the Netherlands, and Narancio said “We are no longer just a tiny point on the map of the world”; this led Galeano to conclude that “La Celeste was proof of the existence of the nation ... football pulled this tiny country out of the shadow of universal anonymity.”¹⁵³

The footballers from the La Plata River region created a new mode of diplomacy, which *El Gráfico* pointed out in several articles from as early as the 1920s. One piece was titled “Football is an Agent of Propaganda Overseas,” while a later article praised “a bunch of young footballers that have achieved more recognition for a disparaged South America than all of its diplomatic corps together.”¹⁵⁴ In 1923, *El Gráfico* also stated “all those players that leave their countries in search of better horizons, should be considered as the old Spain viewed the conquistadors. The players go to conquer multitudes.”¹⁵⁵ The footballers’ reversed trajectory of the conquistadors continued and exponentially increased over time—first from Latin America to Europe (as the main world football market), and then from—and to—many other regions of the world.

The *rioplatense* identity, deeply tied to football and with strong international influences, also embraced other leisure activities. Just as the sport became a cornerstone of the region’s urbanization process, tango was another key social component and *rioplatense* creation, occupying a prominent place in both Buenos Aires’ and Montevideo’s popular culture.¹⁵⁶ There are many parallels between football and tango, which emerged in the slums of these cities as the music of the underprivileged and was at first disdained by the upper class. The dance was later avidly adopted in Europe, Asia, and North America.

Importantly, both football and tango incorporated Buenos Aires (and the whole country—similarly to Uruguay) into the “growing process of leisure time’s globalization.”¹⁵⁷ Borocotó stated “football was the popular sport of the criollo, the tango his music ... it is possible that tango and football will continue having a privileged role for many years, maybe forever.”¹⁵⁸

¹⁴⁹Borocotó, “Origen del Dribbling Criollo,” *El Gráfico*, no. 482 (September 29, 1928).

¹⁵⁰Goldblatt, *The Ball is Round*, p. 264. “La Celeste” means “the sky-blue shirt,” and is commonly used to represent the Uruguayan football national team.

¹⁵¹“El Football es un Agente de Propaganda en el Extranjero,” *El Gráfico*, no. 190 (February 17, 1923).

¹⁵²Les Carpenter, “A century ago, Uruguay shocked the Olympics and changed soccer forever,” *Washington Post*, June 10, 2024, www.washingtonpost.com/sports/olympics/2024/06/09/uruguay-soccer-1924-paris-olympics/.

¹⁵³Galeano, *El fútbol a sol y sombra*, p. 50.

¹⁵⁴“El Football es un Agente de Propaganda en el Extranjero.”

¹⁵⁵“Stabile Pone Proa a Italia,” *El Gráfico*, no. 190 (February 17, 1923).

¹⁵⁶Archetti, “Estilo y virtudes masculinas en El Gráfico,” p. 427.

¹⁵⁷*Ibid.*, p. 426.

¹⁵⁸Borocotó, “Charlando de Cosas Nuestras. El football, el Tango y el Alma Criolla.,” *El Gráfico*, no. 467 (June 16, 1928): p. 8.

Almost a century later, this 1928 prediction is accurate, but the sport has surpassed tango's global popularity exponentially. Still, both the dance and football allowed these countries to play an important role in the globalization of leisure time,¹⁵⁹ which research shows can promote both physical and mental health (more details in Part II, section 2.3.5).

Uruguay's deep connection and devotion to football, including its unique grit, transformed the country's anonymity into a stage for global attention and admiration. Argentina has a similar longstanding and passionate bond with the sport—as with tango—that also gave it global recognition. Moreover, these countries' most eminent players are well-known around the world. This special and intense national relationship with football is shared, later, by many nations globally.

Today, the sport engages millions at national levels and billions worldwide. Contemplating football's diplomacy and links to the global milieu, the sport has great potential in facilitating global cooperation to advance sustainable development, which was addressed by a 2019 New York University event on “The Power of Sport and Diplomacy.”¹⁶⁰ With these precedents, we should now deliberately and methodically work on football's proven capacity for diplomacy, profile-raising, and effect on international transformations or affairs so that this sport—and others'—can help revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development (see Part II, section 2.3.6).

¹⁵⁹ Archetti, “Estilo y virtudes masculinas en El Gráfico,” p. 426-427.

¹⁶⁰ “The Power of Sport and Diplomacy” (New York University, February 2019), <https://networks.h-net.org/node/28443/discussions/3604382/power-sport-and-diplomacy-february-5th-new-york-university>.

6. RECAPITULATION AND SUMMARY

By looking back at football’s social impact in different decades and parts of the world, we can envision its potential to influence people for constructive purposes. Table II, below, provides an overview of the varied ways that football influenced individual and collective lives—mainly men’s—between 1860 and 1960, in the United Kingdom, Argentina and Uruguay. These examples demonstrate how football has been a framework for people to relate and cope, a mirror of culture and millions of lives, and a key part of large-scale societal transformations.

The integrated research presented above, incorporating various sources that directly or indirectly covered football’s social impact, corroborates and underscores the sport’s powerful influence on so many people, particularly male fans. It also highlights the understated—and critical—role that these fans and the sport’s grassroots dimensions had in the development of football. This paper’s historical lens of the “history from below” not only looks to reposition the role of football fans in history, but also to envision how their role in the world could change and have a *significant* positive impact on sustainability. As covered in Part II, through new integrated and systematic approaches, sport and its fans, both men and women, could move the needle toward a more prosperous and sustainable world.

Table II: Summary of Football’s social implications

Football 1860-1960	In the United Kingdom, the sport became a:	In Argentina-Uruguay, the sport promoted:
METRIC of social relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benchmark facilitating social rapport and cooperation (among men) • Mechanism to adjust to new environments/life systems • Nexus for community cohesion and order • New vernacular promoting camaraderie and goodwill • Bonding structure to develop organic solidarity • Basis for strong group identity, creating “symbolic citizenship” through clubs/teams that affirm a “pride of place.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social cohesion and intense collective experiences • Structure for youth to cope with anonymity, isolation, and anxiety • A sense of belonging to a group with common values • Collective identities, norms, and patriotic sentiment • Social affiliations and networking through clubs/teams (for men) • Youth expression and comradeship (the sport was a bonding mechanism) • A novel mode of communication that became a universal language

Football 1860-1960	In the United Kingdom, the sport became a:	In Argentina-Uruguay, the sport promoted:
MIRROR of individual and social issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replication of characters, virtues, geographical contexts, and commonalities; consolidating social identities • Reflection of fans' (male) bonding and loyalty • Popular activity with huge growth potential—not to be undervalued (e.g., life-changing chances) • Feature of new urban and industrial lifestyles • Setting to engage youth, mostly men; with the capacity to also engage women and fans of all ages • Reproduction of collective practices, interests, and characteristics, promoting confidence in peers and common goals that can build social trust 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government agendas (in positive and negative ways) • National identity construction, pride, and grit (firmness of mind/spirit, courage, high persistence, and passion for a goal) • The countries' international achievements, as they intersected with the sport's feats • Modern values, styles, and traits (among men) • Adaptation to new lifestyles and maturing, a coping mechanism for youth (then, mostly young men) • New contemporary icons and role models for masculinity • A platform for subjective well-being/happiness, community-building and social networks, particularly among deprived or conflicted youth and adults
MOTOR (component) of local and global transformations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Force connected to major national and international changes (mostly by coincidence) • Bridge to cross socioeconomic and geographic limits • Local pastime that progressed from the elites to the working class and multitudes overseas • Game mastered at home and abroad, then learned and adapted by other nations that adopted it in their values, norms, and identities • Symbol of British colonies in search of independence and national character, reinforcing patriotism and pride • Social phenomenon around the world, turning into a global heritage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Racial equality in the early 1900s (to some extent), showcasing a much-needed societal change • Social assimilation to a new urban life and country, with working-class immigrants and a new pop culture • Changes in homeland and personal identity (self-worth) • The incorporation of both countries in the globalization of leisure time (together with tango) • A more prominent country profile, altering the global perception of tiny Uruguay • Diplomacy and international exposure/attention, which could now foster collaboration to help advance sustainable development

PART II:
A NEW APPROACH TO SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT THROUGH FOOTBALL/SPORT



1. INTRODUCTION. SPORT FOR DEVELOPMENT: connecting football/sport's social power in the past, present, and future

Part I of this white paper has touched on how football is more than a game, illustrating the significant impact the sport had on individual and collective lives in the first nations that mastered it. The historical trajectory of football in the UK, Argentina, and Uruguay shows how this sport has expanded and become a powerful global social phenomenon, engaging, and influencing people in these regions for over a century. Today, this influence is evident in numerous other countries where football—among other sports—plays a key role in the society at large.

Due to football's global reach, its significant ability to engage both adults and children, and its adoption as a universal language, there are many stakeholders applying the power of this sport toward positive socioeconomic effects and—sometimes—environmental sustainability. These efforts are commonly known collectively as *Sport for Development and Peace* (SFD), a field that involves a variety of sports. Historically, the focus of SFD has mostly surrounded social aspects rather than environmental concerns. In fact, some academics have argued that the physical environment plays a less prominent role than other local instrumental concerns and development priorities within SFD.¹⁶¹ In this white paper, SFD refers to *Sport for Sustainable Development*, considering sport's opportunity to support social, economic, and environmental initiatives.

Today, as noted in the United Nations Chronicle, “the time is right to move beyond the question of whether to use sport for international development”¹⁶² and to discover how to enhance SFD's impact. This approach is promoted here for both top-down and bottom-up approaches—favoring the latter—as SFD has started and continued building-up from community and grassroots efforts. Now, all these endeavors can look to augment their scale and effect, in part by incorporating existing and new knowledge from various disciplines in the design, implementation, measurement, and analysis of initiatives harnessing the engaging and massive power of sport.

In the case of football, as illustrated in Part I, the sport has been the passion of multitudes, building a potent social network—with an estimated fan base of 5 billion people around the world.¹⁶³ Therefore, we have the opportunity and responsibility to expand the capacity of this sport—and others—to support sustainable development, using *systematic approaches*. Here, the term *systematic approaches* refers specifically to the process of leveraging science, engineering, technology, and as many ground-breaking resources and tactics as possible to analyze and develop SFD initiatives, seizing cross-sector collaborations when applicable.

¹⁶¹Richard Giulianotti et al., “Sport for Development and Peace and the Environment: The Case for Policy, Practice, and Research,” *Sustainability* 10, no. 7 (June 29, 2018): p. 3, www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/10/7/2241.

¹⁶²Simon Darnell, “Sport as a means of advancing international development,” *UN Chronicle* 53, no. 2 (August 2016): 27–29, www.un-ilibrary.org/content/journals/15643913/53/2/7.

¹⁶³“The football landscape – The Vision 2020-2023.”

[Football] has been the passion of multitudes, building a potent social network—with an estimated fan base of 5 billion people around the world. Therefore, we have the opportunity and responsibility to expand the capacity of this sport—and others—to support sustainable development, using *systematic approaches*.

This white paper promotes the application of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) and relevant research in its many forms to enhance SFD, with a focus on social and behavioral science. Several of the arguments and opportunities presented have been inspired by the work of the Center for Research on Environmental Decisions (CRED), part of the Earth Institute at Columbia University, and a team effort led by Dr. Elke Weber, former CRED Co-Director and now a Princeton University professor.¹⁶⁴

It is important to note that this document is not intended to be a rigorous academic work nor an oversimplification of approaches. Instead, it aims to present new facts, ideas, and opportunities as a *call to action* to stakeholders across sectors. The aim of this paper's Part I is to help academics, as well as a broader audience, appreciate the magnitude of sport's social implications, while Part II outlines specific and tangible ways to augment SFD. These examples may help public, private, and non-profit sectors reframe science and modern resources in order to amplify the constructive power of sport, in terms of both active and passive participation. Here, *passive participation* refers to people's connection and fervor for a specific sport without actively participating in it (see the definition of *fan* in footnote 11). But, by no means is this consideration promoting sedentarism.

Football's spotlight has indeed been mostly on its athletic, competitive, and economic aspects; the attention to its grassroots facet has been limited and even more rarely, if ever, focuses on the important role sport could play in sustainability through *systematic approaches*. The latter not only has the potential to provide greater and more enduring positive impact, but also to identify new ways sport can enrich lives and stimulate action and cooperation toward attaining the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Achieving the SDGs is a difficult and enormous undertaking that requires the contribution and collaboration of multisector organizations as well as the active involvement of as many people as possible, globally. Part I illustrates how football engaged and influenced large populations in Europe, South America, and Africa. This special engagement and significant impact on so many people remain salient in these regions and many parts of the world. Hence, this popular sport, and others, can become a powerful tool to advance sustainable development. Part II argues how to strengthen and amplify this opportunity through new integrated multisector and innovative approaches. A number of initiatives, involving multiple disciplines, have already been identified and developed, while others remain in the pipeline. Through transdisciplinary innovation¹⁶⁵ and multisector collaborations, supported by technology and other leading-edge resources, we can take SFD to the next level.

¹⁶⁴“Center for Research on Environmental Decisions,” Earth Institute | Columbia University, accessed June 18, 2020, <http://cred.columbia.edu>; M. A. Seltzer, “Elke Weber, leading behavioral scientist, elected to the National Academy of Sciences,” Andlinger Center for Energy and the Environment, April 2020, <https://acee.princeton.edu/acee-news/elke-weber-elected-a-fellow-of-the-national-academy-of-sciences/>.

¹⁶⁵“Transdisciplinary approach to innovation differs from multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches in that it is not just about working towards a shared goal or having disciplines interact with and enrich each other... Instead, transdisciplinary innovation is about placing these interactions in an integrated system with a social purpose, resulting in a continuously evolving and adapting practice.” Source: Chris McPhee, Martin Bliemel, and Mieke Van Der Bijl-Brouwer, “Editorial: Transdisciplinary Innovation (August 2018),” *Technology Innovation Management Review* 8, no. 8 (August 31, 2018): 3-6, <https://timreview.ca/article/1173>.

2. OPPORTUNITIES TO ENHANCE THE FIELD OF SPORT FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (SFD), including through science

The following opportunities to expand the constructive impact of football/sport are organized according to each of the three categories used in Part I. In Part II, these classifications are readjusted and used as broad themes to propose new considerations around SFD, including deliberate, data-driven, and *systematic approaches* so that: 1) football/sport can act as a *metric-benchmark* to not only facilitate social rapport, but other positive outcomes including behavior change to advance sustainability, 2) football/sport is a *mirror* reflecting new valuable human traits and wide-ranging support to sustainable development, and 3) football/sport turns into a *motor* that drives—or is a component of—local and international constructive transformations.

Each category of impact (metric-benchmark, mirror, and motor) presents six sections covering general and specific topics as well as action-oriented takeaways. These sections address both gaps and opportunities for growth in the field of SFD, while considering football and sport as:

- a powerful platform for sustainability initiatives, particularly when supported by science, engineering, technology, innovation, and multisector collaborations,
- a key area to methodically advance youth well-being and development and facilitate social cohesion,
- a conduit of the *power of groups* (section 2.2.1), allegiance, and potentially even social trust as ways to help achieve socioeconomic and environmental goals,
- an innovative factor to promote subjective well-being/happiness with links to sustainable development,
- a global network to seek large-scale positive behavior change and constructive outcomes, and
- a platform to foster human rights, beneficial modern pursuits, and global cooperation for sustainability.

Part II has recurring observations and themes, but the supporting arguments differ, of which some are linked to content presented in Part I and others refer to sport more broadly. Part I's examples of how football has had a significant social influence for over a century are both a prelude and a strong rationale to now systematically work on expanding the power and impact of SFD. This opportunity is presented in Part II, as a modest introduction, through subjects that are more commonly related to SFD (e.g., health, education and youth development/welfare, social and gender inclusion, environmental protection) and some that are less common, such as the development of grit, subjective well-being, and the constructive prospects of tactically harnessing sport's social networks, values, and norms. Importantly, not only can SFD benefit from the rigor and innovation of science and technology, but this combination could in turn promote new areas of study and innovative techniques that would allow sport to further support sustainable development.

Not only can SFD benefit from the rigor and innovation of science and technology, but this combination could in turn promote new areas of study and innovative techniques that would allow sport to further support sustainable development.

Enhancing and maximizing sport’s contribution to sustainability involves methodically planning and executing initiatives, based on existing and/or new know-how. This proposition includes qualitative and quantitative undertakings—with experimental and other forms of research—to better understand, for instance, individual and community behavior linked to sport. These insights can facilitate positive behavior change and guide the application of behavioral science to effectively engage, motivate, and even empower sport fans to work on sustainability.

Moreover, this approach involves multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, and transdisciplinary research and innovation, integrating and transcending different sciences and humanities¹⁶⁶ to then turn knowledge into action that contributes to SFD. Here, the role of academia is reimagined to work in new ways while building on the contribution of traditional academic work and understanding that innovation is not just “in technology, but also in policy, finance, society, equity, and justice.”¹⁶⁷ In addressing today’s challenges and opportunities for people, planet, and economic prosperity, time is indeed of the essence. By thinking outside the box, academia can benefit and simultaneously benefit the world even more, while focusing on momentum, rapid problem solving, and large-scale impact. Integrated, multisector collaborations are also critical so that the public, private, and non-profit sectors, including academia, contribute their best assets and capabilities. These opportunities are expanded below and described as a deepened notion of the SFD field.

2.1. FOOTBALL/SPORT AS AN ENRICHED *METRIC-BENCHMARK* FOR POSITIVE BEHAVIOR CHANGE AND SOCIAL RELATIONS

History shows that football served as a coping, relating, engaging, and empowering mechanism. From the start of the 20th century, these outcomes took place “organically” in the UK, soon after in Argentina and Uruguay (see summary in Frame I below), as well as in other nations. As such, football created, assisted, or played a key role in social relations in the past, which has endured—and expanded—over time and geographically, setting the stage to replicate the sport’s large scale positive outcomes, intentionally and systematically. However, there exist a number of voids in the analysis and application of sport as a tool to help society and the planet.

The metric-benchmark category of Part II lays the foundation for the subsequent two categories by highlighting broad gaps and opportunities in the SFD field. While this opening category covers more general considerations, it serves as an important starting point to suggest how knowledge-based approaches—e.g., applying STEM disciplines, the psychology of sustainability communication, etc.—cutting-edge resources, and innovation can begin to fill some of SFD’s voids and enhance its impact (sections 2.1.1, 2.1.2, and 2.1.3). This category focuses on initial and central topics of SFD: youth well-being/development and community cohesion, both connected to football as a universal language facilitating human rapport and integration (sections 2.1.4, 2.1.5, and 2.1.6). The subsequent mirror and motor categories use this foundation to cover more specific and action-oriented arguments.

¹⁶⁶McPhee, Bliemel, and Van Der Bijl-Brouwer, “Editorial”; Bernard C. K. Choi and Anita W. P. Pak, “Multidisciplinarity, interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity in health research, services, education and policy: 1. Definitions, objectives, and evidence of effectiveness,” *Clinical and Investigative Medicine. Medecine Clinique Et Experimentale* 29, no. 6 (December 2006): 351–364.

¹⁶⁷“Our approach | Sustainability Accelerator,” Stanford University, School of Sustainability, accessed September 18, 2024, <https://sustainability-accelerator.stanford.edu/how-we-work/accelerator-approach>.

Frame I. Summary of Part I's Metric-Benchmark Category

As a metric-benchmark in the UK, football:

- provided a new vernacular for people (primarily men) to connect, while building cultural bonds, social cohesion, and a sense of belonging and meaning within new ways of living, in the early 1900s.
- facilitated novel profound social rapport, camaraderie, goodwill, integration, banter, recreation, solidarity, and positive empowerment (particularly among young men).
- created commonalities that turned into a successful source of sociability, establishing strong social networks through intense team affiliations; the teams' supporters even achieved a "*symbolic citizenship*,"^a based on pride of place, including a new informal common language.

In Argentina-Uruguay, football enabled social relationships and adjustments to a new urbanized life for a large sector of the population (mostly men) at the turn of the 20th century, by being:

- a tool for youth to cope with anxiety. Football built common norms, identity, and even a sense of community (influenced by location and/or football/social affiliation).
- a mechanism to adjust and relate to a new city or profession, and for some, a new culture and country.
- a medium to challenge social anomie (in intimidating and lonely urban settings), assisting male rapport and communication through a locally fashioned vernacular; football-related expressions combined English and local terms (a common/bonding denominator), which later evolved into a popular universal language.

^aHolt, *Sport and the British*.

2.1.1. Need for deliberate, rigorous, and theoretically sophisticated approaches to SFD

In the UK, football had a profound cultural impact for over a century, laying the foundations for methodical analyses of sport's influence on individual and collective lives. Such significant social impact also underscores the need to identify new and effective ways in which this influence—now around the world—can be constructively harnessed. Giulianotti highlights several studies that explored football cultures globally in the 1990s; for instance, the research of John Bale on *sporting spaces* and of Christian Bromberger on *ground spectators' demographics* have, among other analyses, been instrumental in early research and building an understanding around football's social implications.¹⁶⁸

Nevertheless, we need new generations of researchers to study the culture of football through a "far more critical and theoretically sophisticated approach," to better understand football's sociocultural properties alongside the identity of people who practice the game.¹⁶⁹ In this analysis, those who fervently follow the game are stakeholders of equal significance to those who play. Thus, the approach proposed here, which includes a rigorous, academic input, targets a large—in fact, massive—population that can lend valuable insights to significantly expand the positive impact of sport.

¹⁶⁸ Giulianotti, *Football*, p. 69, 71.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 169-170.

In the book *Soccer Madness*, sociologist Janet Lever stresses that “we need empirical studies of the place of sport in society if we are to begin to understand its special cultural achievement”¹⁷⁰ and its constructive potential. We have records on sport’s power to unite people in a metropolis or nation, but “we need systematic data to specify how the process works.”¹⁷¹ This would provide new and effective ways to include sport in sustainable development strategies, both locally and globally.

“[W]e need empirical studies of the place of sport in society if we are to begin to understand its special cultural achievement” and its constructive potential. We have records on sport’s power to unite people in a metropolis or nation, but “we need systematic data to specify how the process works” ... [and find] new and effective ways to include sport in sustainable development strategies.

As an example, a global study on the relative influence of sociodemographic characteristics, geography, perceived well-being, and beliefs on climate change awareness and risk perception (on national scales) identified factors that are common throughout countries worldwide and others that vary according to a region or country; this effort provided valuable general and tailored insights to expand public engagement and support for climate action (the study included a survey of 119 countries).¹⁷² Building on existing research and strategies, as was done in this global study, we can introduce nuances particular to SFD to increase football/sport’s contribution to initiatives that target sustainability goals, specifically at the local, national, and international levels.

In order to evaluate and select the most promising sustainability—and SFD—actions, we can rely, for instance, on the life-cycle assessment (LCA). As a “scientific approach to guide sustainability decisions,” the LCA analyzes and prioritizes actions, considering the effects of a product or service [or activity] on sustainability over a period of time.¹⁷³ Serving as an objective tool to evaluate and compare sustainability across different scenarios—and even to reflect on our own behavior—an LCA can shape planning for more sustainable World Cups.¹⁷⁴ In fact, the LCA was proposed in the United Bid Sustainability+ Strategy for the 2026 FIFA World Cup™.¹⁷⁵ Hosting the world’s biggest sporting event—ever—going from 32 teams/nations to 48,¹⁷⁶ is indeed a tremendous opportunity and responsibility to leave a positive social, macroeconomic, and environmental legacy.

However, *systematic approaches* are necessary not only for SFD monitoring and evaluation—as is often touted—but also to augment the efficiency of projects’ design and implementation strategy before actual execution. A 2017 SFD report published by the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), a pioneer in this field, emphasizes the need for rigorous and *systematic approaches* for program design, to minimize unintended consequences. This report describes SFD projects supported by the IDB since the early 2000s—initiatives working to foster economic development and enhance cognitive, non-cognitive, and socio-

¹⁷⁰ Janet Lever, *Soccer Madness* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), p. 22.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Tien Ming Lee et al., “Predictors of public climate change awareness and risk perception around the world,” *Nature Climate Change* 5, no. 11 (November 2015): 1014–1020, www.nature.com/articles/nclimate2728.

¹⁷³ Leidy Klotz, *Sustainability through soccer: an unexpected approach to saving our world* (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2016).

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ *Environmental Impact Assessment - Executive Summary* (United Bid, March 2018), <https://digitalhub.fifa.com/m/2ce02c09f31d75e0/original/oapcqj2335fexqnlb5oc-pdf>.

¹⁷⁶ Tariq Panja, “FIFA Drops Plan for 48-Team World Cup in 2022,” *The New York Times*, May 2019, www.nytimes.com/2019/05/22/sports/fifa-2022-world-cup-48-teams.html.

emotional skills—and states that “it is not the lack of sports or activity that matters but the way the activities have been structured.”¹⁷⁷

Therefore, as we “move beyond the question of whether to use sport for international development,”¹⁷⁸ we need to determine how to work on SFD most effectively and efficiently. Many organizations, such as the United Nations (UN) and Commonwealth Secretariat, have been collaborating in quantifying and enhancing the role of SFD, focusing on common indicators, evaluations, and statistics that can guide policy priorities and investments.¹⁷⁹ Integrating the work from social and other scientists as well as practitioners in the design, implementation, and evaluation phase of SFD interventions can deliver new tactics to achieve greater impact, scrutinize existing and new endeavors, determine best practices, and scale them up. In addition to academia, we need all sectors to help advance SFD through new and applied research for novel and successful interventions, so that sport can be an even greater vehicle in supporting sustainable development.

2.1.2. Applied science, technology, innovation, and multisector work to expand SFD’s impact

Science has always had a decisive role in helping humanity advance, facilitating breakthroughs in medicine, engineering, and technology, and delivering innumerable innovations and living standard improvements. Still, in the sport sector, there may be a concern that scientific processes are lengthy and difficult to grasp, to the point of disregarding their value. New research and discoveries to advance SFD through science may take some time. Nevertheless, existing knowledge and tools from multiple disciplines, such as social science and engineering, technology and other resources across sectors are readily available, and we simply need to strategically connect the dots. These resources should be used to amplify the capacity of football/sport both in small local SFD initiatives and as a massive platform for effective personal and large-scale awareness of, and action on, sustainable development.

For instance, pioneering technology, such as artificial intelligence (AI), can assist in expanding data collection, analysis, and decision-making capabilities applied to SFD initiatives. As an example, big data is already part of many organizations and its utility can be optimized through technology and technological expertise that work with raw data processing and analysis, elucidating how individuals use information with higher geographic and temporal resolution.¹⁸⁰ In this effort, social scientists can help adjust future sustainability “campaigns based on scientific methodology (e.g., randomizing different messages to different sets of people) to produce data sets usable for causal inference.”¹⁸¹ This type of collaboration exemplifies a mutually beneficial partnership that includes scientists, as proposed in this paper. Some sport organizations have been working with big data, particularly as it applies to athletic and/or business initiatives. An expanded use of data, science, and technology in SFD could not only augment this field’s positive impact, but also identify new ways in which sport can contribute to society and the planet.

¹⁷⁷Laura Jaitman and Carlos Scartascini, *Sports for Development* (Inter-American Development Bank, December 2017), p. 41, 49, 53, <https://publications.iadb.org/handle/11319/8713>.

¹⁷⁸Darnell, “Sport as a means of advancing international development,” p. 27-29.

¹⁷⁹“Measuring the contribution of sport to the Sustainable Development Goals,” Commonwealth, accessed May 17, 2024, <https://thecommonwealth.org/our-work/measuring-contribution-sport-sustainable-development-goals>.

¹⁸⁰Quoting Matthew Sisco. Source: Weber et al., *Communication for Climate Change 2.0*, p. 26.

¹⁸¹Ibid.

Existing knowledge and tools from multiple disciplines, such as social science and engineering, technology, and other resources across sectors are readily available, and we simply need to strategically connect the dots ... to amplify the capacity of football/sport in small local SFD initiatives and as a massive platform [to support] sustainable development. For instance, pioneering technology, such as artificial intelligence (AI), can assist in expanding data collection and analysis capabilities applied to SFD initiatives.

Sport provides the opportunity to bridge scientific research and practice. Dr. Jeffrey D. Sachs stated, “History and geography have provided a vast wealth of development experience ... Cross-disciplinary research projects and teams are vital for harvesting and utilizing existing information.”¹⁸² In this way, current and new scientific knowledge from various disciplines can enrich SFD design, execution, and evaluation. Moreover, linking science and sport could provide mutual benefits. A more scientific praxis and evaluation would enhance the use of sport as a tool for sustainable development. At the same time, sport’s ability to engage the masses can expand the dissemination and application of sustainability science and augment its impact. The potential is immense: in the United States alone, less than 20 percent of the population follows science, while over 75 percent follows sport.¹⁸³

The overarching reach and engagement of football underscores the importance of linking this sport’s—and others’—sustainability efforts to interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research and innovation, which can then guide effective multisector SFD endeavors. An integrated review of SFD literature highlights the potential of collaborative research between economists and other social scientists to shed light on new approaches and creative strategies.¹⁸⁴ Focusing on social and educational outcomes related to youth sport, this review covers SFD research since the year 2000 that has been primarily community-based and qualitative. This study also points out the need for quantitative and mixed research methods as well as the nexus between SFD and policy making, with links to social services, foreign aid, health, and international trade as areas of SFD cooperation, which may address the challenge of obtaining government assistance, especially funding.

The public, private, and non-profit sectors have key roles in SFD. Outside of academia, non-governmental organizations serve a key function and have a valuable role and experience in the field, often benefiting from community trust. Governments, at various levels, have broad access to the population and could benefit from sport’s close and deep connection to so many citizens. Applicable know-how, technology, and strategic tactics can guide sport to effectively support public services related to education, health, and urban and economic development, among other policy areas. Corporations and philanthropies can facilitate innovation, agility, and important resources, but are sometimes skeptical of the lack of evidence and *systematic approaches* in SFD. However, as the private sector has come to appreciate the exposure and benefit of sport, with a global market size of over 400 billion

¹⁸² Jeffrey D. Sachs, “Trials and Tribulations,” *Foreign Affairs* 99, no. 3 (April 2020), www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/world/2020-04-13/trials-and-tribulations.

¹⁸³ Quoting Allen Hershkowitz (New York Yankees Environmental Science Advisor). Source: Alexandra Criscuolo and Katie Ellman, “Beyond the stadium: Q&A with sports professionals on the impact of sustainability in the industry,” *GreenBiz*, May 2019, www.greenbiz.com/article/beyond-stadium-qa-sports-professionals-impact-sustainability-industry.

¹⁸⁴ Nico Schlenker, Emma Sherry, and Katie Rowe, “Sport for Development: An Integrated Literature Review,” *Journal of Sport Management* 30, no. 1 (January 2016): 22–39, <https://journals.humankinetics.com/view/journals/jsm/30/1/article-p22.xml>.

US\$ in 2022 and expected to be worth over 680 billion US\$ in 2028,¹⁸⁵ the hope is that the value of, and support for, SFD will become as relevant as its business merits.

2.1.3. Using social and behavioral science to support sustainability communication and action via sport

At the center of SFD is community. The social interactions and community changes developed through sport mostly originate and evolve organically and thus can seem slow and lacking in direction. Social science aims to understand how humans relate to others, as individuals or in groups, and provides us with tools to guide, and ultimately improve, sport-related endeavors and their effects on communities and their well-being. Methodical approaches to sport's role in society can help reverse its negative outcomes and expand its potential to positively impact social relations and broader sustainability goals.

Societies must be motivated and empowered to adopt the changes needed¹⁸⁶ in order to contribute to a more sustainable world. An increasing number of sport awareness campaigns and efforts address both social and environmental issues—e.g., antiracism messages at professional games and climate initiatives. However, effective work in sport for sustainable development requires a better understanding of how people use information and make decisions, as well as the various individual and collective aspects that influence if and how people use information.¹⁸⁷ As a way to have an effect on decision-making and increase the success of interventions, communication of sustainability through sport needs to be carefully designed and implemented to give the sporting community ownership over the message, as should be the case in other communities.

Societies must be motivated and empowered to adopt the changes needed in order to contribute to a more sustainable world... Communication of sustainability through sport needs to be carefully designed and implemented to give the sporting community ownership over the message.

There is a need to link “factual information with improved methods of communication that take into account how the human mind (homo sapiens, not the rational homo economicus decision maker) ... thinks about climate change”¹⁸⁸ and other sustainability aspects. Football/sport fans' *emotions*, and other variables, should be carefully considered when creating sustainable development communication—and action—strategies through sport, for more effective results. Intuitively, it seems that making emotional appeals may make fans more interested in climate change—at least in the short term—but, instead, it may backfire down the road, with negative outcomes that can be difficult to reverse.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁵Christina Gough, “Total sports market revenue worldwide 2022-2028,” Statista, May 22, 2024, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/370560/worldwide-sports-market-revenue/>.

¹⁸⁶Edward L. Deci and Richard M. Ryan, “The “What” and “Why” of Goal Pursuits: Human Needs and the Self-Determination of Behavior,” *Psychological Inquiry* 11, no. 4 (October 2000): 227–268, www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1207/S15327965PLI1104_01.

¹⁸⁷Weber et al., *Communication for Climate Change 2.0*, p. 12.

¹⁸⁸*Ibid.*, p. 1.

¹⁸⁹People have a limited capacity for worrying about issues (referred to by scholars as “finite pool of worry”, see Part II, section 2.3.1) and studies show that, unless given reasons to remain engaged, people's attention shift and “the effects of worry can lead, paradoxically, to emotional numbing.” Source: Debika Shome and Sabine M. Marx, *The Psychology of Climate Change Communication: A Guide for Scientists, Journalists, Educators, Political Aides, and the Interested Public* (Center for Research on Environmental Decisions, 2009), p. 20-21, <https://coast.noaa.gov/data/digitalcoast/pdf/psychology-climate-change-communication.pdf>.

In particular, effective sport-based climate change and other sustainability communication strategies should, for instance, avoid *emotional numbing*. This term is used by psychologists when communication efforts repeatedly expose people to emotionally draining messages and images to which an audience may eventually stop responding emotionally altogether; such an effect can be mitigated by linking concrete and personal climate impacts to immediate, locally available solutions, which helps to ensure that the audience both understands the issue and feels empowered to be part of the solution.¹⁹⁰ This should be an important consideration for organizations that look to promote fair play, respect, and sustainable development among sport fans.

Other behavioral considerations and interventions for effective sustainability communication may include “nudging” individuals, e.g., nudging children into more exercise to improve their motor skills, among other benefits,¹⁹¹ which could be applied to fans, of all ages, through football and other sports. Choice architecture—a practice to influence choice by “organizing the context in which people make decisions”—can also nudge people [fans] toward making better choices in areas such as health and investments without limiting freedom of choice, based instead on understanding how people think.¹⁹² Moreover, in his book, *The Elements of Choice*, Dr. Eric Johnson—leading expert behind the most well-known research on decision-making—explains how we can design better “end-to-end decision-making processes” and, going beyond the concept of “nudges,” offers a comprehensive guide to creating effective choice architectures—the environments in which decisions are made.¹⁹³

The United Nations has invested in behavioral insights, noting that “if we are to collectively achieve the Agenda 2030, all actors need to take a human-centric and experimental approach in designing policy interventions that account for how people make decisions in their daily lives.”¹⁹⁴ Better choice architecture could make all the difference in improving key life aspects.¹⁹⁵ Besides the UN, the World Bank and other international organizations, many governments have elected to apply behavioral science principles within communication-based interventions, including more time spent analyzing problems and behavioral barriers.¹⁹⁶ As behavioral design is increasingly used in public policy,¹⁹⁷ applying this approach to sports’ social networks in the context of sustainability could help advance the work on many—if not all—the SDGs (more details in section 2.3).

¹⁹⁰ Ezra Markowitz, Caroline Hodge, and Gabriel Harp, *Connecting on Climate: A Guide to Effective Climate Change Communication* (Center for Research on Environmental Decisions and ecoAmerica, 2014), p. 32, <https://ecoamerica.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/ecoAmerica-CRED-2014-Connecting-on-Climate.pdf>.

¹⁹¹ Jaitman and Scartascini, *Sports for Development*, p. 59.

¹⁹² Richard H. Thaler and Cass R. Sunstein, *Nudge: improving decisions about health, wealth, and happiness*, Rev. and expanded ed (New York: Penguin Books, 2009).

¹⁹³ Eric J. Johnson, *The Elements of Choice: why the way we decide matters* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2021).

¹⁹⁴ *Behavioural Insights at the United Nations – Achieving Agenda 2030* (United Nations, December 2016), www.undp.org/publications/behavioural-insights-united-nations-achieving-agenda-2030.

¹⁹⁵ Benjamin Kumpf, Rafael Obregon, and Raquel Wexler, “Bringing behavioural insights to scale in the United Nations,” UNICEF, December 2018, www.unicef.org/innovation/stories/behavioural-insights-UN.

¹⁹⁶ Manning, Lauren et al., *Behavioral Science Around the World Volume II: Profiles of 17 International Organizations* (Washington, D.C: World Bank Group, 2020).

¹⁹⁷ Saugato Datta and Sendhil Mullainathan, “Behavioral Design: A New Approach to Development Policy,” *Review of Income and Wealth* 60, no. 1 (March 2014): 7–35, <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/roiw.12093>.

2.1.4. Science-based SFD programs for youth education, development, and well-being

The engaging and positive effect that football had in the UK and then in Argentina and Uruguay in the early 20th century, particularly among youth, can be (and is) applied in sport programs to help youth feel further involved in society. It provides for them an accessible civic forum to express themselves, seek reassurance, cope with anxiety, and mature in a safe¹⁹⁸ space. Sport should also be systematically approached as an informal and formal education tool.

The impact of sport on youth education, development, and well-being has been documented to a certain extent. For example, an analysis done by Substance of nearly 4,000 UK sport for youth development initiatives (mostly informal education) determined that the main positive influence of SFD projects was in reducing crime and anti-social behavior and substance misuse levels of young people who are NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training).¹⁹⁹ These programs also improved well-being and fitness, educational attainment, school attendance, and employment; the findings show that SFD projects have a consistent positive effect on all of these areas, reducing the risk of various social problems amongst participating youth in the range of 4.5% to 19.2%.²⁰⁰

Overall, the economic value of the assessed SFD intervention projects was an estimated annual societal cost saving of £4,174.12 per participant; however, the report highlights many “conceptual weaknesses identified in the existing research literature in terms of definitions; methodical weaknesses; [and] ... reliance on inconsistent summative literature reviews.”²⁰¹ These key aspects further substantiate SFD’s need for more science-based know-how. The results of this assessment by Substance have been highlighted by many international organizations, including the International Olympic Committee (IOC), the United Nations, and the Commonwealth Secretariat.²⁰²

The aforementioned IDB report provides additional evidence of the positive aspects of sport for youth; it covers programs throughout 18 Latin American countries that use sport to reach and retain young people with broader objectives, including promoting skills for life and academics as well as health and wellness.²⁰³ These initiatives promote less violent behavior, stronger ethics, goal setting, perseverance, and conflict resolution, plus gender and social inclusion. They also help young people to develop teamwork and leadership skills, enhance their employability, thereby boosting their empowerment and self-esteem. The report recognizes that these interventions can have positive effects, but that they can also have negative consequences.²⁰⁴ For instance, an unintended outcome of SFD utilizing informal education may be youth’s rejection of the instructive component linked to the sport/fun activity. Therefore, to avoid these adverse effects, SFD programming needs to be strategically crafted.

¹⁹⁸Football and other sport environments are not always secure, threatening children’s rights, safety, and well-being. Thus, there are various initiatives safeguarding children in sport, such as one led by the Council of Europe and the European Union “CsiS” (Child Safeguarding in Sport) to guide European countries toward effective child safeguarding in sport policies. Source: “Child Safeguarding in Sport,” Council of Europe, accessed May 17, 2024, <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/pss>.

¹⁹⁹*Sportsworks* (Substance), p. 10, 13, accessed June 20, 2020, www.substance.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Sportsworks-Full-Report.pdf.

²⁰⁰Ibid., p. 10,13.

²⁰¹Ibid., p. 17, 86.

²⁰²“Global agencies join up to measure sports’ contribution to the SDGs,” Commonwealth, accessed May 17, 2024, <https://thecommonwealth.org/news/global-agencies-join-measure-sports-contribution-sdgs>.

²⁰³Jaitman and Scartascini, *Sports for Development*, p. 11.

²⁰⁴Ibid., p. 11, 34, 42.

In formal education, UNESCO promotes sport values—fairness, teambuilding, respect, etc.—to be embedded across school-based curricula in cooperation with international organizations, including the IOC.²⁰⁵ An infrequent consideration is the use of sport to teach core curricula subjects (e.g., math, geography, biology, etc.) by leveraging sport’s engaging and stimulating features in pedagogical methods such as Project-Based Learning (PBL), using inquiry and hands-on experiential learning.

An example of this innovative pedagogical approach is a Football, STEM, and Sustainability project implemented by a Columbia University team in 2010-2012, which was part of a broader STEM initiative working with New York City middle schools, funded by a National Science Foundation grant.²⁰⁶ The novel sport and education endeavor linked literacy, math, natural science, and other disciplines to football concepts, including social emotional learning processes, helping students to be more engaged with their learning, behavior, and personal development. As indicated by educators involved in this formal education and sport project, the program’s content made the school curriculum approachable, entertaining, and even personal. For those students that were sport enthusiasts, the program connected their passion to their studies. Those less inclined to sport still found an engaging new way to learn and care for their physical and mental health. Moreover, educators also pointed out that football—as a global phenomenon—allowed for the integration of immigrant students, who often feel alienated into their new educational environment.²⁰⁷

In the UK, Argentina, Uruguay, and other nations where football is so popular, this sport—and others with similar popularity in different cultures—can be a valid and engaging tool in science-based pedagogical efforts to further connect with young men and women who struggle with education and personal development.

Sport programs [can] help youth feel further involved in society [and] express themselves, seek reassurance, cope with anxiety, and mature in a safe space. Sport should also be *systematically* approached as an informal and formal education tool... [It] can be a valid and engaging means for science-based pedagogical efforts to further connect with young men and women who struggle with education and personal development.

2.1.5. Facilitating adjustments to new environments and life systems, considering forced migration

As in the UK, football was also a coping mechanism to adjust to a new context and life in the La Plata River region. It was a medium that connected people in unfamiliar circumstances—both young and adult men who needed to adapt to new living environments early in the 1900s. Today, football can still play an important role when individuals must adapt to new life circumstances, contexts, and events, such as in the cases of domestic or international migration, including forced migration.

Football cannot be the solution to forced migration—mostly caused by violent conflict,

²⁰⁵“Values Education through Sport,” UNESCO, accessed September 25, 2021, www.unesco.org/en/sport-and-anti-doping/sports-values-education.

²⁰⁶The Earth Institute, “Breathing New Life into New York City Schools,” *Annual Donor Report*, 2011, <https://issuu.com/earthinstitute/docs/donor-report-2011/14>.

²⁰⁷The author was part of this Columbia University project led by Dr. Nancy Degnan and collaborated with New York City teachers and principals to leverage football concepts and popularity in order to facilitate their STEM and sustainability education efforts.

famine, corruption, persecution, natural disasters, or environmental change²⁰⁸—but the sport can still contribute. In fact, many large international organizations have recognized the positive impact the sport can have on forcibly displaced people, defined and protected by international law as “refugees.”²⁰⁹ For example, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees’ (UNHCR) Sports Programmes and Partnerships²¹⁰ and UEFA have been collaborating to ameliorate Europe’s refugee crisis in many European countries.²¹¹

Multiple sports can support these efforts. However, football plays a key role not only because of its simple rules and equipment, but also due to its universal appeal and capacity to foster connection. As UEFA states, “everyone understands football,” the sport can ease “the strains caused by the current migration crisis[, and] football has the power to bring people together, foster mutual understanding, and break down prejudices.”²¹² It builds powerful bridges across cultural differences—even between enemies—while helping and empowering the groups’ members connected by the sport.

In refugee settings, football/sport can help youth and adults who are coping with new environments and lifestyles to forge ties with their host communities. For instance, Uruguay has been receiving many refugees and asylum seekers from other Latin American countries, Africa, and Asia.²¹³ Some Syrian refugees, and perhaps others, did not have an easy transition adjusting to a new life in this Latin American country and opted to return to war-torn Syria.²¹⁴ Based on initiatives that the UNHCR and other organizations implement through sport, Uruguay—and other countries who receive asylum seekers and refugees, where football is also popular—could systematically choose to include this sport, and others, in much-needed refugee assistance programs.

“Everyone understands football,” the sport can ease “the strains caused by the current migration crisis. Football has the power to bring people together, foster mutual understanding, and break down prejudices.” ... Countries who receive asylum seekers and refugees ... could systematically choose to include this sport, and others, in much-needed refugee assistance programs.

A paper exploring migrant families in Canada highlights sport’s “ability to facilitate cross-cultural relationships and influence acculturation strategies.”²¹⁵ Nevertheless, this study also noted the need for additional research to further explore a variety of strategies and

²⁰⁸The Harriet Health, Robert Heilbrunn Department of Population, and Family, “Forced Migration,” Columbia Mailman School of Public Health, accessed June 10, 2021, www.columbia.edu/itc/hs/pubhealth/modules/forcedMigration/definitions.html.

²⁰⁹UNHCR, “‘Refugees’ and ‘Migrants’ – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs),” March 2016, www.unhcr.org/us/news/stories/refugees-and-migrants-frequently-asked-questions-faqs.

²¹⁰UNHCR’s utilizes “the unique ability of sport programmes and partnerships to improve the lives of displaced and stateless people and the communities where they live.” Source: UNHCR, “Sport partners,” June 2020, www.unhcr.org/about-unhcr/our-partners/sport-partners.

²¹¹Shabia Mantoo, “UEFA and UNHCR partner to support refugees,” UNHCR, May 2021, www.unhcr.org/us/news/news-releases/uefa-and-unhcr-partner-support-refugees.

²¹²*Football and Refugees* (UEFA, June 2020).

²¹³“Uruguay,” ACNUR, accessed May 17, 2024, www.acnur.org/pais/uruguay.

²¹⁴“El drama de los refugiados sirios que prefirieron regresar a su país en guerra tras vivir en Uruguay,” *Infobae*, September 2018, www.infobae.com/america/america-latina/2018/09/06/el-drama-de-los-refugiados-sirios-que-prefirieron-regresar-a-su-pais-en-guerra-tras-vivir-en-uruguay/.

²¹⁵Sacha Smart, Kyle Rich, and Allan Lauzon, “Exploring migrant families’ acculturation and livelihoods in Canada and the role of sport participation,” *Journal of Sport for Development*, July 2020, <https://jsfd.org/2020/07/01/exploring-migrant-families-acculturation-and-livelihoods-in-canada-and-the-role-of-sport-participation/>.

how they can better inform initiatives that utilize sport to address the social and economic challenges of migrants during the acculturation process. For example, the sport sector can impart transferable, job-market skills to migrants, such as personnel management and project coordination, after adopting or reinforcing these skills within a context they know²¹⁶ and, in many cases, deeply connect with and enjoy.

Given that sport's potential as a tool for social inclusion has now been well documented, many European Union Member States are working on sport projects to support refugees' inclusion in host communities. The European Commission is funding various initiatives to better integrate refugees through sport.²¹⁷ These undertakings addressing forced migration may work with new tactics that combine sport and academic knowledge. For instance, the Columbia Global Center's Committee on Forced Migration²¹⁸ as well as other university initiatives could add sport to their interdisciplinary scholarly work and applied research.

2.1.6. Football/Sport as a universal language to promote unity and progress using systematic approaches

Early in the 20th century, football was a new vernacular shared by locals and foreigners across socioeconomic boundaries in Argentina and Uruguay. A century later, this cross-boundary idiom is “international.” As former UN Secretary Kofi Annan said, “Sport is a universal language,”²¹⁹ particularly football, which is *spoken* by over 5 billion fans globally.²²⁰ Another Nobel Peace Prize laureate, Nelson Mandela, said that “Sport has the power to change the world ... It has the power to unite people in a way that little else does. It speaks to youth in a language they understand ... It is more powerful than governments in breaking down racial barriers.”²²¹ Pope Francis added “ ... the language of sports is universal; it extends across borders, language, race, religion, and ideology; it possesses the capacity to unite people ... by fostering dialogue and acceptance. This is a very valuable resource!”²²² It is indeed a valuable resource as a powerful language/medium to work on sustainability, through *systematic approaches*.

The former Ibero-American Secretary-General, Rebeca Grynspan, expands on Kofi Annan, stating that sport is also the “language of emotion, inclusion, cooperation and motivation, and that it is as universal as the Agenda 2030.”²²³ Grynspan sees in sport a great ally in promoting the SDGs, highlighting that football, in particular, is key in the daily lives of millions of Ibero-Americans and that “public policies on sport mobilize hundreds of thousands of people at all levels, impacting various spheres of sustainable development.”²²⁴

²¹⁶Smart, Rich, and Lauzon, “Exploring migrant families’ acculturation and livelihoods in Canada and the role of sport participation.”

²¹⁷“Sport as a tool for integration and social inclusion of refugees.,” EU Funding & Tenders Portal European Commission, accessed July 6, 2021, <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/topic-details/pppa-sport-2021-inclusion-refugees>.

²¹⁸“Committee on Forced Migration,” Columbia Global Centers, accessed May 17, 2024, <https://globalcenters.columbia.edu/CFM>.

²¹⁹The Lancet, “Foreword: A universal language,” *The Lancet* 366 (December 2005): S1, <https://linkinghub.elsevier.com/retrieve/pii/S0140673605678191>.

²²⁰“The football landscape – The Vision 2020-2023.”

²²¹Rahul Mukherji, “Nelson Mandela used power of sport to unify, rebuild South Africa,” sportanddev, May 31, 2023, www.sportanddev.org/latest/news/nelson-mandela-used-power-sport-unify-rebuild-south-africa.

²²²Address of Pope Francis to Members of the European Olympic Committee (November 2013), www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2013/november/documents/papa-francesco_20131123_delegati-comitati-olimpici-europei.html.

²²³*El deporte como herramienta para el desarrollo sostenible, Part I* (SEGIB-CID, September 2019), p. 5.

²²⁴Ibid.

Narratives can strengthen engagement, and stories are key to “connect[ing] with core human values and social identities ... and [engaging] the public on climate change”²²⁵ as well as other sustainable development topics. As a unifying language and global platform, football has a rich history and memorable anecdotes that can touch people’s hearts in profound ways. Like other narratives, this sport’s language and stories—and probably those of other sports—could “influence people’s beliefs about alternative futures because they shift the frames of reference for emotional and cognitive processes [enhancing] people’s capacity for empathy.”²²⁶ Also, glorious past stories can motivate concern for a livable [and football/sporting] future, and as one form of mental processing, “both fictional and factual stories open people up to new information, attitudes, intentions, beliefs, and behaviors.”²²⁷

In the early 1900s, football allowed Argentines and Uruguayans—mostly men—to adjust to a new modern context and life and facilitated a common vocabulary that was a channel for expression, bonding, and camaraderie.²²⁸ At the present time—and likely into the future—football is a potent channel of human rapport and, as such, it can be a universal language, narrative, and context to build awareness and tools to positively change our lives. It could also help mobilize fans, as well as organizations across sectors, by methodically facilitating dialogue and engagement in connection to the SDGs. Such a globally unifying and powerful shared language can—particularly through deliberate, science-based tactics and carefully designed social, economic, and/or environmental initiatives—help advance sustainable development. Additional insights on effective human communication, awareness, empowerment, and action surrounding sustainability are included below.

At the present time—and likely into the future—football is a potent channel of human rapport and, as such, it can be a universal language, narrative, and context to build awareness [of sustainability]. It could also help mobilize fans, as well as organizations across sectors, by methodically facilitating dialogue and engagement in connection to the SDGs.

2.2. REFRAMING FOOTBALL/SPORT AS A MIRROR OF WIDE-RANGING CONTRIBUTIONS TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The selected historical social implications of football in the UK, Argentina, and Uruguay, (summarized in Frame II) demonstrate that there are opportunities for this sport to mirror personalities, situations, traits,²²⁹ individual and collective identities, and good rapports. The strong identification and devotion that many feel toward football can also be systematically channeled toward building awareness of and action in the advancement of sustainable development (examples in section 2.2.1).

This category illustrates how a *systematic approach* to SFD could help build social trust, which is not only critical in the pursuit of happiness, but also in working toward

²²⁵Markowitz, Hodge, and Harp, *Connecting on Climate: A Guide to Effective Climate Change Communication*, p. 42.

²²⁶Ibid.

²²⁷Ibid.

²²⁸Frydenberg, *Prácticas y Valores en el Proceso de la Popularización del Fútbol, Buenos Aires 1900-1910*.

²²⁹Defined as “an enduring personality characteristic that describes or determines an individual’s behavior across a range of situations.” Source: *trait*, in *American Psychological Association*, <https://dictionary.apa.org/trait>.

socioeconomic and environmental goals (section 2.2.2). The strong long-lasting allegiance to football could likewise be methodically directed to address and combat conflict and foster peace (section 2.2.3). Moreover, football's historical connections to boys' self-assurance and grit, as shown in Part I, and now increasingly including girls and women, can currently be studied and guided through the lens of social science to, for instance, enhance the sport's impact in reducing gender, racial, and other inequalities while advancing many related SDGs and subjective well-being (sections 2.2.4, 2.2.5 and 2.2.6).

Frame II. Summary of Part I's Mirror Category

In the United Kingdom, as a mirror, football:

- reflected men's personalities, work style, characters, commonalities, and issues linked to cities and nation; thus, the sport consolidated social and geographical identities. It helped men cope with the monotonous industrial workload and the isolation of urbanization, providing a bonding mechanism that turned into powerful group experiences.
- became a focal point around which various aspects of people's lives revolved, developing strong roots in society by providing people (primarily men) a comforting sense of community and apparent trust. It also mirrored a deep fervor, devotion, and allegiance among the British working-class fans.
- was a setting to engage youth in support of war efforts (Part I, section 5.1.2). Later, the sport became a tool to suspend or interrupt conflict and promote peace (Part II, section 2.2.3).

At the turn of the 20th Century, in Argentina-Uruguay, football mirrored:

- these countries' history and national identity (from the early 1900s onwards). The sport also reflected the trait of grit, intense emotions of pride, social inclusion, and governments' agendas.
- local context and civic concerns, as the sport turned into a coping mechanism for the isolation of urban life and the anxiety of young men. It also mirrored modern values and lifestyles, as well as new contemporary icons and role models for the construction of masculinity.
- subjective well-being/happiness at the personal and community levels.

2.2.1. The constructive *Power of Groups* in Sport

In the UK, Argentina, and Uruguay, football grew from being the sport of a select few to the obsession of the masses. Evidence shows that a person's attitudes and behaviors are profoundly shaped by their membership in a social group or network and the shared identity it fosters.²³⁰ Therefore, the popularization and mass appeal of football, which involves vast group memberships with strongly-held identities, can be the basis for this sport—and probably others—to play a significant role in motivating positive behavior change. Referencing the sociology of football and the sport's collective power, David Goldblatt stated, "the point is that absolutely no other human behavior can gather these kinds of crowds ... if you're a sociologist and you're interested in the origins and consequences of

²³⁰The role of social identities, memberships, and the term *power of groups* is taken from the Center for Research on Environmental Decisions' and ecoAmerica's publication. Source: Markowitz, Hodge, and Harp, *Connecting on Climate: A Guide to Effective Climate Change Communication*, p. 16.

collective action, you really can't beat that."²³¹

Based on the massive group influence that football has had, it continues to provide an important opportunity to channel the *power of groups* in fostering positive action, in best case scenarios.²³² As research indicates, people's attitudes and behaviors change when in groups, putting the group benefit over their personal benefit; also, by identifying ways to tap into group identity, we can foster cooperation in circumstances involving tradeoffs between self-interest and the larger common good for ingroup members.²³³ Furthermore, this research shows that such altruistic outcomes are driven by mechanisms unique to group settings, including an enhanced sense of connection with other people, a weakened focus on personal identities and goals, and the desire to avoid social exclusion.

Research indicates [that] people's attitudes and behaviors change when in groups, putting the group benefit over their personal benefit [and also that] by identifying ways to tap into group identity, we can foster cooperation.

For instance, in addressing climate change and other environmental issues, sport teams and organizations could tap into fans' identity and bolster their "sense of affiliation with each other, their environment, and the society that enjoys the benefits of its natural resources."²³⁴ An example of sports' connection to the natural environment is POW, "Protect our Winters," which helps passionate outdoor people to take action to protect the places they love from climate change; it was initially founded to mobilize the *snowsports* community and, since 2007, has been looking to give a national voice to the outdoor sport community.²³⁵ Similarly, non-profit 11th Hour Racing applies the power of sport to restore a balanced relationship between people and planet, committed to the health and resiliency of our ocean.²³⁶ And, the World Surf League (WSL) has launched "WSL PURE" (Progressive Understanding and Respect for the Environment) initiative, to foster participation in protecting the ocean through research, education, and activism.²³⁷

Group behaviors reflect shared values. By methodically working on these values (when positive), we could harness group membership to build long-term engagement around climate action and other SDGs. This engagement can involve small and large groups,²³⁸ providing significant opportunities to both relatively small football/sport grassroots groups as well as to large sport crowds. In order to move the needle toward progress in sustainable development, we need a critical mass. Football, and perhaps other sports, has an enormous potential to engage the masses, yet it has been an underused platform to systematically leverage the *power of groups* in advancing sustainable development (further considerations in sections 2.3.2 and 2.3.3).

²³¹ "David Goldblatt on the Sociology of Football," Social Science Space, June 2014, www.socialsciencespace.com/2014/06/david-goldblatt-on-the-sociology-of-football/.

²³² Group think and group influence can also have serious negative consequences, hence the need to guide football's *power of groups* toward constructive outcomes.

²³³ Markowitz, Hodge, and Harp, *Connecting on Climate: A Guide to Effective Climate Change Communication*, p. 16.

²³⁴ Shome and Marx, *The Psychology of Climate Change Communication*, p. 43.

²³⁵ "POW," Protect Our Winters, accessed January 19, 2024, <https://protectourwinters.org/>.

²³⁶ "Our Story," 11th Hour Racing, accessed September 21, 2024, <https://11thhourracing.org/our-story/>.

²³⁷ The Earth Institute, "World Surf League Teams Up with Columbia to Support Ocean Science," Columbia Climate School, April 2016, www.earth.columbia.edu/articles/view/3279.

²³⁸ Markowitz, Hodge, and Harp, *Connecting on Climate: A Guide to Effective Climate Change Communication*, p. 78.

Football, and perhaps other sports, has an enormous potential to engage the masses, yet it has been an underused platform to systematically leverage the *power of groups* in advancing sustainable development.

2.2.2. Linking hope, optimism, and social trust with football and other sports

Throughout time, football has shown its astonishing, massive, and even unforeseen power, both in economic and social terms. In 1888, the *Newton Heath Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway* (NHLRY) football team—now Manchester United—representatives were hesitant to participate in England’s FA League.²³⁹ Much later the team became one of the most successful and popular teams of the league; it also became one of the most admired and wealthiest teams globally. Neither this team’s representatives, the elites that initially controlled the sport, nor the early working-class players—limited to low wages and a precarious retired life—could have ever imagined their sport’s current multi-million-dollar transactions or its expansion to most corners of the world.

By understanding *optimism* as “an inclination to put the most favorable construction upon actions and events or to anticipate the best possible outcome”²⁴⁰ and *hope* as “desire accompanied by expectation of or belief in fulfillment” or the ability “to expect with confidence” and “trust”²⁴¹ football inspired hope since its early days. The NHLRY team and other British men that were part of the initial days of modern football perhaps could not envision nor have the optimism that this sport would become such a colossal social and economic engine. However, the fact that British working-class men, and later many others, found in football a source of social rapport, cohesion, camaraderie, and solidarity²⁴² showcases that the sport fostered hope and, potentially, trust within a new industrialized, urbanized, and more isolated society.

Over the course of three centuries, football has offered life-changing experiences in the UK, Argentina, Uruguay and, in at least the last two centuries, in many other nations. This alone makes the case for new, robust research on the mechanisms linking *optimism*, *hope*, and *trust* with the transformative opportunities that football—and other sports—can provide to athletes as well as passionate fans/observers, and how this knowledge can promote constructive outcomes in sport and life. Moreover, the massive and worldwide influence of football today, unimaginable in the early 20th century, prompts us to investigate how this sport—and others—can be an innovative and effective medium to foster *social trust*,²⁴³ which is a key component in human well-being and happiness, according to the World Happiness Report.²⁴⁴ The latter is a landmark survey of the state of global happiness, ranking over 100 countries by how happy their citizens perceive themselves to be, presenting “how the science of happiness explains personal and national variations in happiness.”²⁴⁵

²³⁹“Manchester United: The Story so Far.”

²⁴⁰*optimism*, in *Merriam-Webster*, www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/optimism.

²⁴¹*hope*, in *Merriam-Webster*, www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/hope.

²⁴²Holt, *Sport and the British*, p. 153-155, 172.

²⁴³Social trust is a belief in the honesty, integrity and reliability of others – a “faith in people”. Source: “Americans and Social Trust: Who, Where and Why,” Pew Research Center, February 22, 2007, www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2007/02/22/americans-and-social-trust-who-where-and-why/.

²⁴⁴Helliwell, Layard, and Sachs, *World Happiness Report 2012*, p. 69.

²⁴⁵World Happiness Report, “About,” accessed July 30, 2024, <https://worldhappiness.report/about/>.

[There is a] case for new, robust research on the mechanisms linking *optimism, hope,* and *trust* with the transformative opportunities that football—and other sports—can provide [and how sport may] be an innovative and effective medium to foster *social trust*.

The first World Happiness Report (2012) asserts that a successful society is one in which people have a high level of trust in each other—built on strong mutual respect among people, including those of all genders, ages, ethnicities, and social groupings [like those in football, with exceptions] and that this trust spurs a sense of life satisfaction.²⁴⁶ The structured setting in sport, where rules, norms, and agreements have been honored, presents the capacity of football/sport to promote social trust, while building community and loyalty. As a key variable in the pursuit of happiness, social trust could also shift individuals' perception of the future.

By connecting social trust to shifts in *temporal discounting* (the tendency to select short-term, rather than long-term, rewards), sport could be an important tool to support socioeconomic development and environmental sustainability,²⁴⁷ which benefit from long-term thinking and commitment. In the context of structural inequality, trust and belief in future rewarding opportunities are challenged; therefore, we need to find innovative ways to increase people's level of trust. For example, the continuity and predictability that community sport programs offer to youth and adults could build trust and “influence the extent to which they discount future rewards”; therefore, the potential of sport to bring about trust and hope may be associated with lower temporal discounting, greater long-range decision-making, and more positive outcomes.²⁴⁸ Additional research and analysis are needed to enhance this opportunity.

The World Happiness Report 2020 states that individuals with high social and institutional trust levels were happier than those living in less trusting and trustworthy environments.²⁴⁹ The same report in 2023 highlights that, “[trust] and cooperative social norms ... facilitate rapid and cooperative responses, which themselves improve the happiness of citizens.”²⁵⁰ Thus, by methodically harnessing sport to foster social trust, we could help to advance levels of happiness and sustainable development (expanded in sections 2.2.6 and 2.3.5).

2.2.3. Sport allegiance and its role in interrupting/contesting conflict and fostering peace

In the early 1900s, football proved to be an effective tool in recruiting young men from the UK to participate in the First World War (Part I, section 5.1.2). A century later, we should be systematically leveraging the sport's ease in team-building and engaging people (which expanded over time, now including girls and women) to effectively recruit devoted fans to challenge conflict while advancing peace and sustainable development. The second UN Special Adviser on Sport for Development and Peace stated, “Sport is the most unifying tool for peace in the world ... Sport can bring millions of people together to achieve social

²⁴⁶Helliwell, Layard, and Sachs, *World Happiness Report 2012*, p. 92.

²⁴⁷Quoting Jon Jachimowicz. Source: Weber et al., *Communication for Climate Change 2.0*, p. 13-14.

²⁴⁸Ibid.

²⁴⁹John F. Helliwell et al., *World Happiness Report 2024*, March 2024, p. 9-10, 40, <https://worldhappiness.report/ed/2024/>.

²⁵⁰John F. Helliwell et al., “World Happiness, Trust and Social Connections in Times of Crisis,” in *World Happiness Report 2023*, 11th, vol. Chapter 2 (March 2023), <https://worldhappiness.report/ed/2023/world-happiness-trust-and-social-connections-in-times-of-crisis/>.

good,”²⁵¹ particularly through football, all while considering its negative forces that should be reversed.

In linking peace and sport, we can go further back in history to consider the “Olympic Truce”—an ancient Greek tradition from the eighth century B.C.—which intended to interrupt all conflict and provide safety and peaceful environments, influencing the longest lasting peace accord in history.²⁵² In 1896, Olympism was revived, aimed at contributing to a peaceful future for humankind through the educational value of sport.²⁵³ In 1993, the UN General Assembly, through its resolution 48/11, urged Member States to observe the Olympic Truce seven days before and after the opening and closing of each of the Olympic Games.²⁵⁴ The Truce has been violated in the modern history of the games,²⁵⁵ an issue that needs further analysis and discussion. Another task ahead is to figure out effective strategies in which sport can extend the “brief respite from conflict and strife” that this UN resolution promotes²⁵⁶ and can become a more effective vehicle to promote peace.

In the UK, allegiance to football has superseded allegiance to nation, as Scots favored all of England’s other rivals, even Germany (described in Part I, section 5.1.2). This was later replicated in other nations’ football rivalries.²⁵⁷ It is important to understand and address allegiance to football, as well as its negative and positive aspects. The challenge and opportunity are to harness the sport to relax strong identity disparities that cause animosity and extreme violence—instead of exacerbating them. We need to meticulously leverage the loyalty and devotion in football to bridge differences, soften tension, bring enemies together, tackle violence, and advance common interests, e.g., clean air, good health, and other sustainable development goals. Academic initiatives to conflict resolution and cooperation can be found below in section 2.3.6. Also, in terms of addressing and hopefully bridging the “diversity of individuals and groups,” the use of moral foundations like “loyalty,” along with associated emotions like group pride, may facilitate communication about climate change—and other sustainability aspects—in a way that truly resonates with the audience.²⁵⁸

Throughout history, football has been able to suspend armed conflicts. In the 20th century, the two sides of the Nigerian civil war called a cease-fire to watch Pele and his Brazilian team visiting Lagos (1967).²⁵⁹ In the 21st century, the United Nations organized a friendly football game between Brazil and Haiti as a “peacekeeping force” during Haiti’s civil war; later, in Ivory Coast, “Drogba and his teammates didn’t single-handedly stop the civil war. But over the course of two football matches, they did at least give their beleaguered country a reason to hope.”²⁶⁰ In the Middle East, football has been used to foster values of

²⁵¹Wilfried Lemke, “Sport is the most unifying tool for peace in the world,” *The Guardian*, April 2016, www.theguardian.com/global/2016/apr/06/sport-is-the-most-unifying-tool-for-peace-in-the-world.

²⁵²“UN and the Olympic Truce,” United Nations, accessed July 9, 2021, www.un.org/en/olympictruce.

²⁵³Ibid.

²⁵⁴*Observance of the Olympic Truce* (The United Nations, November 1993), 16, <https://undocs.org/A/RES/48/11>.

²⁵⁵“IOC condemns ‘breach of Olympic Truce’ after Russia invades Ukraine,” *Reuters*, February 2022, www.reuters.com/lifestyle/sports/ioc-condemns-breach-olympic-truce-after-russia-invades-ukraine-2022-02-24/.

²⁵⁶*Observance of the Olympic Truce*.

²⁵⁷For instance, when fans of Boca Juniors or River Plate (both from Argentina, known as one of the world’s fiercest football rivalry) cheer for other nation’s teams when they face their classic national rival. On occasions, this rivalry has caused quite violent confrontations.

²⁵⁸Markowitz, Hodge, and Harp, *Connecting on Climate: A Guide to Effective Climate Change Communication*, p. 14.

²⁵⁹“Pelé Fast Facts,” *CNN*, January 2023, www.cnn.com/2015/06/10/world/pele-fast-facts/index.html.

²⁶⁰Goldblatt, *The Ball is Round*, p. 827; Olivier Guibertau, “Didier Drogba: How Ivory Coast striker helped to halt civil war in his home nation,” *BBC Sport*, March 2020, www.bbc.com/sport/football/52072592.

peace, e.g., The Peres Center’s Sports Programs.²⁶¹ *Science Magazine* covered an initiative wherein football facilitates social contact in the context of real-world conflict, between Christians and Muslims, in post ISIS-Iraq.²⁶² The magazine’s systematic analysis of this initiative is one example of the many ways social science assists in investigating how football—and other sports—may advance peace and other SDGs.

Existing and new science-based strategies can harness sport fans’ allegiance in order to get the attention and educated engagement of millions of young people and adults across the globe and thus help sport to extend respites from conflict and promote peace. As in the case of climate change (and sustainability) communication, it is critical that work on conflict resolution and peace promotion is not a once-size-fits-all practice and instead contemplates people’s values, identities, priorities and worldviews (more below in section 2.3.2), and that “messengers” are people whom the audience trusts and respects.²⁶³

[We must, methodically,] harness sport fans’ allegiance in order to get the attention and educated engagement of millions of young people and adults across the globe ... [to] work on conflict resolution and peace promotion [but not as] a once-size-fits-all practice and instead contemplate[ing] people’s priorities and worldviews, and that “messengers” are people whom the audience trusts and respects.

2.2.4. Relating grit, football/sport, and sustainable development objectives

Argentina and Uruguay adopted football as a national pastime—and identity—early in the 20th century. In the case of Uruguay, the well-known “garra charrúa” (Uruguayan grit) embodied by Uruguayan football has not only been a “ferocious spirit” identified as a staple element of Uruguay’s national identity,²⁶⁴ but it has also been a characteristic that granted this very small nation in the southeastern coast of South America, global acknowledgment and respect²⁶⁵ (Part I, section 5.2.3.).

Uruguay in particular—as well as Argentina and other countries—has been able to organically develop grit through football, which on several occasions led to euphoria, aspirations of improvement, and intense national pride. Former Uruguayan President Mujica launched a campaign to combat drug use through football in schools, capitalizing on the achievement of the country’s gritty national team in the FIFA 2010 World Cup, stating “there is nothing that unifies the nation like this ... they gave us dignity as a society, and happiness.”²⁶⁶

Academics present *grit* as “an extreme trait of self-discipline” and grittiness as the “combination of very high persistence and high passion for an objective,” and they hope

²⁶¹“Our Projects,” Peres Center, May 2020, <https://peres-center.org/en/the-organization/projects/>.

²⁶²Salma Mousa, “Building social cohesion between Christians and Muslims through soccer in post-ISIS Iraq,” *Science* 369, no. 6505 (August 2020): 866–870, www.science.org/doi/10.1126/science.abb3153.

²⁶³Here, the concepts from Columbia University / EcoAmerica are applied specifically to sport. Source: Markowitz, Hodge, and Harp, *Connecting on Climate: A Guide to Effective Climate Change Communication*, p. 78.

²⁶⁴Williams, “The fastest growing sport?”

²⁶⁵“How tiny Uruguay became a soccer giant,” Yahoo Sports, July 7, 2024, <https://sports.yahoo.com/how-tiny-uruguay-became-a-soccer-giant-050027599.html>.

²⁶⁶“Mujica quiere combatir las drogas con campeonatos de fútbol.,” *El Observador*, April 2011, www.observador.com.uy/nota/mujica-quiere-combatir-las-drogas-con-campeonatos-de-futbol-20114111940.

that future work will uncover key factors to increase grit and self-control.²⁶⁷ Self-control, “the voluntary regulation of behavioral, emotional, and attentional impulses in the presence of momentarily gratifying temptations or diversions,” and grit change over the life course, as both traits are affected by new experiences [especially by overcoming adversity and other challenges]; also, on average, “individuals who are gritty are more self-controlled.”²⁶⁸

Due to the enormity of global challenges, the world could certainly benefit from additional levels of self-control and grittiness toward positive results and advancing sustainable development. Because traits can change over the life course, as children and adults modify habitual patterns of interacting while accumulating new experiences,²⁶⁹ there is an opportunity to explore growth mindset through football and other sports. Grit has a natural and intimate connection to sport, more in some people than others. As these traits can be learned, through specific applied research and perhaps new know-how, grit could be encouraged, developed, and guided through sport. Moreover, the dedication, focus, perseverance, and leadership linked to many in sport, are not only positive traits for competition, but also valuable life skills.

There is an opportunity to explore growth mindset through football and other sports. *Grit* has a natural and intimate connection to sport, more in some people than others. As these traits can be learned, through specific applied research and perhaps new know-how, grit could be encouraged, developed, and guided through sport.

Psychological research led by Angela Duckworth, co-director of the Behavior Change for Good Initiative at the University of Pennsylvania, links grit with the “power of passion and perseverance” for a central goal, describes how this trait can be learned regardless of IQ or circumstances, and provides scientific evidence that grit can also grow.²⁷⁰ Duckworth states, “grit, talent, and all other psychological traits relevant to success in life are influenced by genes and also by experience,” and that research shows the psychological assets that people with mature models of grit have in common and “they tend to develop ... over the years”; first comes *interest*, then *practice*, *purpose*, and *hope*.²⁷¹ These four psychological assets can develop through learning to discover and deepen one’s interests, building more discipline, cultivating a sense of purpose, and teaching oneself to hope.²⁷² Importantly, these assets are intrinsic to athletes, who therefore have the opportunity to develop grit through their active athletic participation.

Deliberate and science-based strategies on the correlation between football/sport and grit could assist individuals and groups transform their fervent sport participation into powerful positive character, courage, and action that can be applied to advance sustainable development.

Grit could assist individuals and groups transform their fervent sport participation into powerful positive character, courage, and action that can be applied to advance sustainable development.

²⁶⁷Seligman, *Flourish*, p. 118, 125.

²⁶⁸“Grit and Self-Control.”

²⁶⁹Ibid.

²⁷⁰Angela Duckworth, *Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance*, First Scribner hardcover edition (New York: Scribner, 2016).

²⁷¹Ibid., p. 82, 91.

²⁷²Ibid., p. 92.

2.2.5. Promotion of positive masculinity and gender equality methodically through sport

In Argentina, football has had a deep connection to the construction of masculinity across different times and contexts, whereas—as in many other countries—it has been an unforgiving space for women and girls, a situation that is slowly improving. Although this section focuses on masculinity, there are football programs that have expanded opportunities for young women, and some examples are highlighted below. New and existing multidisciplinary research and analysis of masculinity construction, in fields such as psychology and economics, could lead to new opportunities for the sport to, for example, guide boys' positive development while working on advancing gender equality. Although the sport has not always reflected positive relational qualities, aspects of the game focus on sportsmanship and respectful play as cornerstones of football culture. Building upon these broadly shared values of respect, sport is well-situated as an engaging platform to impart evidence-based programming addressing gender and other inequalities.

Reframing the culture of football through a constructive lens could guide positive masculine identity development. For instance, the inner child that football brings to the surface, particularly in tough adult male players, could be engaged to contemplate equality and fairness. Football and other sports can become an important vehicle to challenge negative stereotypical masculine qualities and to advocate for a broader understanding of positive human emotion and interaction. Thus, the sporting culture can foster a masculinity that is receptive, caring, non-violent and empathetic. More specifically, as was already implemented by the men's Georgian Rugby team,²⁷³ a broader definition of masculinity can be used to promote gender equality and end violence against women and girls.

Football can have an important role in boys' healthy development, as it has in the *Playing for Health* program of the World Health Organization (WHO)²⁷⁴ and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)²⁷⁵ in the early 2000s. Much later, the WHO established the *Sport for Health Programme*,²⁷⁶ incorporating football and sport as a powerful engaging platform, an approach that could really benefit from many of the opportunities highlighted in this document. The *Playing for Health* program was an innovative and ambitious health and gender equality initiative for boys and men 11-17 years old, some of whom were unreceptive to clinic-based services (e.g., reproductive health and substance abuse services) and, at times, to formal education. Using established measurement tools, this WHO-PAHO initiative—implemented in several Latin American countries—was met with success. A WHO-commissioned review of programs reaching boys and men classified this project as a promising approach to youth development after identifying statistically positive changes in health and gender attitudes.²⁷⁷

²⁷³United Nations, "Georgian Rugby UNiTEs to End Violence against Women and Girls," United Nations, Publisher: United Nations, August 2016, www.un.org/en/chronicle/article/georgian-rugby-unites-end-violence-against-women-and-girls; "Rugby players in Georgia scrum against violence," UN Women – Headquarters, July 22, 2016, www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2016/7/rugby-players-in-georgia-scrum-against-violence.

²⁷⁴"WHO," World Health Organization, accessed August 12, 2024, www.who.int/.

²⁷⁵"Who We Are," PAHO/WHO | Pan American Health Organization, accessed August 12, 2024, www.paho.org/en/who-we-are.

²⁷⁶"Sport for Health Programme," accessed August 12, 2024, www.who.int/initiatives/sports-and-health.

²⁷⁷Gary Barker et al., "Engaging men and boys in changing gender-based inequity in health : evidence from programme interventions / Gary Barker, Christine Ricardo and Marcos Nascimento," *Engager des hommes et des garçons dans la lutte contre les inégalités sexospécifiques en matière de santé: enseignements tirés des programmes d'interventions / Gary Barker, Christine Ricardo et Marcos Nascimento*, 2007, p. 63, <https://iris.who.int/handle/10665/43679>.

It is important to also mention SFD programs for young women, such as the Mathare Youth Sports Association (MYSA), which formed in Kenya in 1987, and the “Vencedoras,” based mostly in South/Central America. MYSA (first only for boys) started a football program for girls in the 1990s, which, as documented by the Population Council, demonstrated how playing in a safe space facilitated girls’ education, empowerment, and integration, transforming the way in which girls thought about themselves and how their communities perceived them.²⁷⁸ The “Vencedoras” program (since 2008) utilizes sport to teach life skills valued in the workplace and facilitates internships to help young Latin American women have greater job opportunities.²⁷⁹ These and many other valuable SFD initiatives, like StreetFootball World (for boys and girls, launched in 2002),²⁸⁰ those of various governments (e.g., in Brazil, Canada, France, Germany/GIZ, Monaco, Spain, Sweden, UK, United States, etc.), and other stakeholders across sectors could greatly benefit from new and existing science-based knowledge and approaches.

In the first half of the 20th Century, football in Argentina reflected changes in the traditional concept of masculinity while offering new role models—with icons that better adjusted to the modern urban life. Now and in the future, sport figures can be popular role models on, for example, health, gender equality, and other social or environmental issues, particularly when guided by the appropriate knowledge for greater positive impact. Sport representatives do not need to understand the science behind sustainable development, but they should be guided on how to promote the main issues effectively. The *Motivational Theory of Role Modeling*²⁸¹ and alternative behavioral science insights can steer the active work of football/sport role models, so that role aspirants achieve the desired positive outcomes, rather than off-target or negative effects.

In the first half of the 20th Century ... now and in the future, sport figures can be popular role models... The Motivational Theory of Role Modeling and alternative behavioral science insights can steer the active work of football/sport role models, so that role aspirants achieve the desired positive outcomes.

²⁷⁸Martha Brady and Arjmand Banu Khan, *Letting Girls Play: The Mathare Youth Sports Association’s football program for girls* (Population Council, 2002), https://knowledgecommons.popcouncil.org/departments_sbsr-pgy/1204.

²⁷⁹“Partners’ Female Sport-for-Development Program Empowers Women in the Americas,” Partners of the Americas, June 2016, www.partners.net/our_stories/partners-female-sport-for-development-program-empowers-women-in-the-americas/.

²⁸⁰“Changing the World Through Football,” Street Football World, accessed June 19, 2020, <https://web.archive.org/web/20180319011839/http://www.streetfootballworld.org/>; M. Pegg, “S is for Streetfootballworld: Empowering People Across The World,” *The Positive Encourager*, April 16, 2014, www.thepositiveencourager.global/streetfootballworld-and-its-work-empowering-people-across-the-world/.

²⁸¹Thekla Morgenroth, Michelle K. Ryan, and Kim Peters, “The Motivational Theory of Role Modeling: How Role Models Influence Role Aspirants’ Goals,” *Review of General Psychology* 19, no. 4 (December 2015): 465–483.

2.2.6. Subjective well-being/happiness, sport, and sustainability

In Argentina, Uruguay, and numerous other countries, many play football to find a better future and/or to cope with a complicated present. Football’s simplicity—in equipment and game setup—facilitates access across socioeconomic status.

A public wall in Mexico, states “I don’t play football to be the best—I play to be happy.”²⁸² In this vein, the book *Soccer and Philosophy* states that “the key to love of games is that they contain the same elements as real life, but without the burden ... A bit of mess, a bit of free thinking and free action, a bit of art, a bit of emotions might lead to a joyful life,”²⁸³ as both a player and a fervent fan. In the book *GOAL!*—described by Nobel Peace Prize laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu as “uplifting and inspiring”—Mina Javaherbin states that football is a sport played “in all corners of the world, mak[ing] both young and old feel that they belong, that they matter ... ” and that people play “to stay connected ... to stay children ... to stay human ... they play to play”; when playing, “we forget to worry, when we run, we are not afraid.”²⁸⁴

Collectively, football’s potent social networks have a unique opportunity to foster happiness and positive behavior change. The World Happiness Report describes how people’s happiness depends on strong social networks that accumulate over time like financial capital and “yield benefits, such as informal mutual assistance or simply the pleasure of being socially integrated.”²⁸⁵ This white paper has demonstrated, in multiple ways, football’s long-standing capacity to develop strong local and global social networks for over a century. Sections 2.3.2 and 2.3.3 below expand on opportunities to harness these enormous networks for the common good.

Football’s potent social networks have a unique opportunity to foster happiness and positive behavior change. If we look at the elements of the well-being theory, football and other sports may also be a huge untapped resource to influence positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment.

If we look at the elements of the well-being theory, football and other sports may also be a huge untapped resource to influence positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment (PERMA).²⁸⁶ In the case of religion, for example, there are science-based conclusions that people with religious beliefs have higher well-being through community identity and gathering, as well as from the building of social networks and personal values, like one’s sense of life purpose and meaning.²⁸⁷ These PERMA elements are deeply linked to sport. Moreover, by combining religion and sport in SFD programs, elements of the well-being theory may be reinforced and expanded through systematic work. In fact, such a combination naturally took place early in the 20th century, giving birth to one of Argentina’s top professional football clubs, “San Lorenzo de Almagro.”²⁸⁸

²⁸²Acción Poética, “No juego futbol para ser el mejor, juego para ser feliz...,” Tumblr, accessed June 12, 2024, <https://accionpoeticaamerica.tumblr.com/post/132598839434/no-juego-futbol-para-ser-el-mejor-juego-para-ser-feliz>.

²⁸³Ted Richards, ed., *Soccer and Philosophy: beautiful thoughts on the beautiful game*, Popular culture and philosophy 51 (Chicago: Open Court, 2010), p. 14, 289.

²⁸⁴Mina Javaherbin, *Goal!* (Somerville: Candlewick, April 2012).

²⁸⁵Helliwell, Layard, and Sachs, *World Happiness Report 2012*, p. 70.

²⁸⁶Seligman, *Flourish*, p. 16.

²⁸⁷Helliwell, Layard, and Sachs, *World Happiness Report 2012*, p. 72.

²⁸⁸“Historia de San Lorenzo / San Lorenzo de Almagro,” C. A. San Lorenzo, accessed September 22, 2024, <https://sanlorenzo.com.ar/club/historia>.

During the early 1900s, in Buenos Aires, Father Lorenzo Massa decided to organize pick-up football games with the goal of congregating, protecting, and guiding young people on the right path.²⁸⁹ In popular understanding, the police in Argentina told Father Massa that the more youngsters he had away from the dangers of the streets and playing football on his grounds, the fewer youths found themselves on the wrong path. Over a century later, this simple formula can be maintained, across faith-based groups and other organizations (expanded in Part II, section 2.1.4).

The World Happiness Report also states that “the quest for happiness is intimately linked to the quest for sustainable development.”²⁹⁰ Existing science-based work should expand to determine how these two global aspirations can be greatly advanced by the distinctive social dimension of football and other popular sports. As an international organization looking to harness sport to support its mission and sustainable development efforts, the World Health Organization launched a Global Action Plan on Physical Activity 2018-2030, highlighting the need to systematically link physical activity to public policy and 13 SDGs, while emphasizing sport’s particular contribution to community well-being and quality of life.²⁹¹ More on well-being and happiness linked to sport below in section 2.3.5.

2.3. FOOTBALL/SPORT AS A *MOTOR* (OR COMPONENT) OF CONSTRUCTIVE TRANSFORMATIONS

In the UK, Argentina, and Uruguay, football expanded across socioeconomic boundaries and was linked to transformational processes like urbanization, industrialization, and globalization (highlights in Frame III). At the national level, football has been strongly connected to collective identity and pride, as well as massive social networks and norms. The latter also took place in many other nations. Sections 2.3.1, 2.3.2 and 2.3.3 discuss how to harness these aspects to help advance sustainability. As it developed across geographical borders, football exposed, in part, critical—and ongoing—social issues, such as racial inequality (section 2.3.4).

Moreover, Football had a key role in the development of leisure time, which research links to meaning-making and other key components of well-being (section 2.3.5). In addition, football has had an important role in global affairs, facilitating diplomacy and promoting countries’ recognition internationally (section 2.3.6). This diplomatic feature of football, which has taken place mostly organically, could now be systematically analyzed and leveraged for greater beneficial outcomes at community, national and international levels.

²⁸⁹Alberto Barja, “El padre Lorenzo Massa (1882 – 1949),” Museo Jacobo Urso, accessed September 22, 2024, www.museodesanlorenzo.com.ar/contenido/LORENZO%20MASSA/PAGINA.htm.

²⁹⁰Helliwell, Layard, and Sachs, *World Happiness Report 2012*, p. 3.

²⁹¹World Health Organization, *Global action plan on physical activity 2018–2030: more active people for a healthier world* (Geneva: World Health Organization, 2018), <https://iris.who.int/handle/10665/272722>.

Frame III. Summary of Part I's Motor Category

In the United Kingdom, as an engine (or component) of local and international transformations, football:

- progressed from the elites to the working class and later to multitudes overseas. As part of the globalization process, the sport was expanded by the British to about one-fourth of the earth's surface and then reached most countries and corners of the world, linked to both local and global issues.
- transitioned from being a sport with UK supremacy to one dominated by other nations, where football gained an important role in their national norms and identities. The sport was part of ideological and social transformations, first in the British Isles and then abroad.
- was exported overseas and adopted by numerous countries and cultures that turned the sport into a global heritage, a legacy of tangible and intangible assets that were passed down through several generations, and a process in which fans had a crucial—and underrated—contribution.

As motor (or part) of key transformations in Argentina-Uruguay, football:

- helped men adjust from a rural to an urban life and, for some, settle in a new country. It also started to point out a critical and enduring issue: racial injustice.
- was intimately linked to changes in homeland and personal identity, affecting change in perceptions and self-worth (particularly among men) and influencing youth development and the use of free time. Both countries had a distinct role in the globalization of leisure time thanks to this sport (and tango).
- facilitated diplomatic and international affairs, and, particularly for Uruguay, it altered and boosted the global perception of the country and its participation on the world stage.

2.3.1. Sport and behavioral insights, including mental models, to facilitate sustainable decision-making

Football proved its capacity to help many British men tackle major life transformations due to industrialization and urbanization, and also served a strategic function in the process of globalization at the turn of the 20th century. Now, the sport could play a critical role as a platform to address local and global challenges, particularly if guided by social science—and other fields—on how best to put individual and collective processes to work. In this way, football/sport could facilitate greater engagement on climate change and other complex sustainability issues, which often need to be better understood and addressed. Environmental and social issues should be brought close to home and communicated through successful science-based strategies.

Behavioral sciences provide a “deeper understanding of the psychology behind environmental decision-making.”²⁹² People tend to have a hard time thinking about physically or temporally distant events, or those happening to others, and seem to be able to only deal with a limited number of things at a given point—a phenomenon previously referred to as a “finite pool of worry,” though it seems to be more of a “finite pool of action.”²⁹³ If we

²⁹²Weber et al., *Communication for Climate Change 2.0*, p. 1.

²⁹³Matthew R. Sisco et al., “Examining evidence for the Finite Pool of Worry and Finite Pool of Attention hypotheses,” *Global Environmental Change* 78 (January 2023), <https://linkinghub.elsevier.com/retrieve/pii/S0959378022001601>.

help people to identify the locally relevant, personally experienced consequences of global phenomena—that is, how issues may impact them personally and how their actions can help—we could raise their awareness of the effect of their personal actions and decisions.²⁹⁴ While this may encourage awareness and understanding around sustainable development issues, motivation to act is equally important, if not more important, than information, including insights about effective and feasible response options, as well as their immediate and long-term costs and benefits.²⁹⁵

Initiatives to make more people cognizant of climate change—and other local or global matters—through football/sport must be combined with efforts that enable action. For example, behavioral science uses *framing*, “the setting of an issue within an appropriate context to achieve a desired interpretation or perspective,” a subtle art where “even the choice of a single word can make the difference between winning and alienating an audience,” to help influence behavior change while considering the audience’s membership in specific subcultures.²⁹⁶ Therefore, *framing* can be applied to promote positive action linked to climate change, racism, and other world challenges through sport.

The intense membership/affiliation of football fans in the UK, Argentina, Uruguay, and now elsewhere, including their respective subcultures, can facilitate framing to increase fans’ sense of connection to and action in supporting sustainable development. Similarly, in cases of skepticism, confusion, and uncertainty around climate change, behavioral insights can illuminate mental models to uncover how an audience [e.g., a group of fans] understands scientific phenomena.²⁹⁷ Mental models represent a person’s thought process and help shape actions and behavior; they serve as the framework into which people might fit new information, like data about climate change²⁹⁸ and other sustainable development issues.

For instance, people primarily seek out or absorb only data that matches their mental models, confirming what they already believe about an issue, such as when individuals confuse the hole in the ozone layer with climate change. From the misconception that there is a “hole” in the ozone layer, and the fact that there is a global “greenhouse” effect, some people reason that there is a “hole” in the greenhouse that allows heat to escape, cooling the planet; alternatively, some believe that the “hole” allows heat to enter the atmosphere, warming the planet.²⁹⁹ However, such mental models can be modified by incorporating new information and making new connections, a process that could help people adjust their understanding of sustainability problems and take actions to address them.³⁰⁰

²⁹⁴Markowitz, Hodge, and Harp, *Connecting on Climate: A Guide to Effective Climate Change Communication*, p. 79.

²⁹⁵Weber et al., *Communication for Climate Change 2.0*, p. 1.

²⁹⁶Shome and Marx, *The Psychology of Climate Change Communication*, p. 40-41.

²⁹⁷Markowitz, Hodge, and Harp, *Connecting on Climate: A Guide to Effective Climate Change Communication*, p. 46-47.

²⁹⁸Shome and Marx, *The Psychology of Climate Change Communication*, p. 3. There are mental models for how much to talk to children, what risks to insure, what to save for, what the climate is like, and what causes disease. Source: World Bank, *World Development Report 2015: Mind, Society, and Behavior* (The World Bank, December 2014), p. 11.

²⁹⁹Shome and Marx, *The Psychology of Climate Change Communication*, p. 5. “The role the ozone hole itself plays in global warming and the resulting climate change is small compared to the impacts coming from human activities.” Source: “Is the ozone hole causing climate change?,” NASA Science, March 2024, <https://science.nasa.gov/climate-change/faq/is-the-ozone-hole-causing-climate-change/>.

³⁰⁰Markowitz, Hodge, and Harp, *Connecting on Climate: A Guide to Effective Climate Change Communication*, p. 47.

[New] mental models can facilitate sport fans around the world to better understand sustainable development and, in turn, can help change their behavior to become promoters and active contributors to positive social, economic, and environmental initiatives.

As the World Bank states, mental models come from the cognitive side of social interactions, which people often refer to as “culture,” and culture then influences individual decision-making.³⁰¹ If mental models are well-adapted to a specific goal, they make individuals better off, and the opposite can happen when they are out of sync with the real world; in fact, given their influence and “use ... for filtering and interpreting information,” mental models have long been a focus of attention among private firms.³⁰² Multisector stakeholders should consider how mental models—and the sport culture shared by billions—can guide fans’ decision-making in connection to sustainable development, at both local and global levels. For example, applying mental models can facilitate sport fans around the world to better understand sustainability and, in turn, can help change their behavior to become promoters and active contributors to positive social, economic, and environmental initiatives.

2.3.2. Social norms/networks and fans’ shared identities/values to guide positive behavior change

The World Bank demonstrated how social networks and norms shape behavior and serve as the basis of new kinds of sustainable development interventions in one of its annual Flagship Reports.³⁰³ These publications cover specific aspects of world development, and the 2015 edition showcased how social networks—the relational ties forming the building blocks of human social experience—allow individuals to reinforce existing behaviors among one another and to also transmit novel information and normative pressures, sometimes sparking social change. Moreover, “adjusting *what* information is provided, and the *format* in which it is provided, can help people make better decisions,” and shift mental models toward more sustainable behavior.³⁰⁴

The title of the 2015 World Bank Flagship Report, “Mind, Society, and Behavior,” captures the publication’s main idea, considering “how humans think (the processes of mind) and, how history and context shape thinking (the influence of society) can improve the design and implementation of development policies and interventions that target human choice and action (behavior).”³⁰⁵ In other words, this report highlights the need to adjust development policy based on careful consideration of human factors. The large social impact of football for over a century should urge multisector stakeholders to methodically harness this influential factor in support of wide-ranging sustainable development interventions. If we link science-based efforts from multiple disciplines and SFD to the World Bank’s work—and that of the United Nations and other organizations—on human behavior and development, the positive impact of sport on sustainability goals could become quite significant.

³⁰¹World Bank, *World Development Report 2015*, p. 11-12.

³⁰²Ibid., p. 3, 67.

³⁰³Ibid.

³⁰⁴Ibid., p. 6, 70.

³⁰⁵Ibid., p. 2.

If we link science-based efforts from multiple disciplines and SFD to the World Bank’s work—and that of the United Nations and other organizations—on human behavior and development, the positive impact of sport on sustainability goals could become quite significant.

After the UK’s football fervor and dominion spread to many other nations around the world, the sport built significant social networks (some already described in Part I, plus new networks seen in many of FIFA’s 211 members³⁰⁶—the United Nations has 193 Member States³⁰⁷). During the 20th century, the sport gained an important role in the adopting nations’ values, identities, and norms. People’s values and identities can be addressed in effective communication about climate change and other sustainable development areas.

As the *Guide to Effective Climate Change Communication* explains, an “identity is a person’s conception and expression of his or her self and the social groups he or she is part of ... Identity plays a particularly strong role in shaping how people respond to climate change when they have limited knowledge about the complex issue and when they have strongly held identities.”³⁰⁸ A good example of a potent common identity shared by billions around the world is the passion for football, which transcends nationalities, economic status, gender, and politics, among other differences. Furthermore, communicators can appeal to these fans’ values to make sustainability personally meaningful.

This science-based guide clarifies that when putting a climate communication strategy together, “communicators should start by identifying core identities of their target audiences ... [with whom it is important] ... to build trust, credibility, and consequently support for climate [and other sustainability] solutions.”³⁰⁹ The guide suggests putting “yourself in your audience’s shoes”—or cleats—and this engagement can also be boosted by tailoring communication tactics to people’s worldviews. Such tactics can emphasize a particular theme for a given audience, depending on their moral foundations and their characteristic emotions—e.g., group pride—as well as relevant virtues—e.g., loyalty, patriotism.³¹⁰

In many nations, football has been deeply linked to the population’s collective pride, allegiance, patriotism, values, and identities, such as during a FIFA World Cup™. Linked to this event, nations’ various subgroups, sometimes divided by politics or other differences, still unite in intense fervor, hope, and patriotism. Such was the case in Argentina after winning the 2022 FIFA World Cup™, where social tension and strong divisions among political views were set aside—temporarily bridged—by a national and historic euphoria.³¹¹ Another example is Germany as host of the 2006 FIFA World Cup™. During this event, Germany experienced an explosion of patriotic feeling, whereas in the past Germans “avoided ostentatious displays of national sentiment for obvious historical reasons;” their football euphoria overcame “lingering divisions” between East and West Germany, precipitated a significantly improved national mood despite economic challenges, and led to the country’s

³⁰⁶“Member Associations,” FIFA, accessed June 24, 2024, <https://inside.fifa.com/about-fifa/associations>.

³⁰⁷“Our Work,” United Nations, accessed June 13, 2024, www.un.org/en/our-work.

³⁰⁸Markowitz, Hodge, and Harp, *Connecting on Climate: A Guide to Effective Climate Change Communication*, p. 9.

³⁰⁹Ibid., p. 11-12.

³¹⁰Ibid., p. 6-7, 14-15.

³¹¹Alberto Amato, “El fútbol anuló la grieta, el milagro de la manifestación más grande de nuestra historia,” *Infobae*, December 2022, www.infobae.com/opinion/2022/12/19/el-futbol-anulo-la-grieta-el-milagro-de-la-manifestacion-mas-grande-de-nuestra-historia/.

“biggest party since the Berlin Wall came down in 1989.”³¹² This fervent national euphoria should be methodically harnessed to assist countries in sustainable development efforts.

In the context of sport, the potential to unify peoples and nations is not exclusive to football. For instance, “President Mandela saw rugby as a way to help lessen divisions between Black and white South Africans and foster a shared national pride.”³¹³ Despite criticism, President Mandela’s vision materialized in the 1995 Rugby World Cup and the final game “went beyond sport,” representing hope for reconciliation and serving as a historical moment when sport had the opportunity to unite a divided nation in celebration and euphoria.³¹⁴ In the year 2000, Mandela said “Sports has the power to change the world. Sport can create hope, where once there was only despair.”³¹⁵

As described, sport builds strong group identities, which facilitate patience, trust, and common goals,³¹⁶ and research shows that social identities and norms can be influential in promoting Environmentally Responsible Behavior (ERB).³¹⁷ Football’s history and current massive social network highlight the tremendous opportunity that this sport and others have to guide fans toward positive behavior change, in connection to sustainability goals, and grounded in science-based knowledge, communication and tactics. Some of these strategies already exist and simply need to expand, while many others still need to be developed.

2.3.3. Sport networks, systems-thinking, and the social multiplier effect for large-scale impact

Considering fans’ key role in the expansion of football and the current fervent adoption of the sport in most corners of the world, there is a great opportunity to harness fans’ strong engagement with football in order to significantly expand people’s awareness of and contribution to sustainable development. Now, since societies [and fans] must be motivated and empowered to change,³¹⁸ we must first understand what influences *if* and *how* people [fans] use information; basic behavioral science theory and an understanding of psychological mechanisms are critical to advance knowledge and bring desired results, particularly working with large populations [e.g., networks of millions of fans].³¹⁹

Behavioral science theory and an understanding of psychological mechanisms are critical to ... bring desired results, particularly working with large populations [e.g., networks of millions of fans].

³¹²Luke Harding, “Germany revels in explosion of national pride and silly headgear,” *The Guardian*, June 2006, www.theguardian.com/football/2006/jun/30/worldcup2006.sport2.

³¹³Farrell Evans, “How Nelson Mandela Used Rugby as a Symbol of South African Unity,” *History*, October 2023, www.history.com/news/nelson-mandela-1995-rugby-world-cup-south-african-unity.

³¹⁴Donald McRae, “Mandela, Lomu and a Rugby World Cup final that went beyond sport,” *The Guardian*, October 2023, www.theguardian.com/sport/2023/oct/27/mandela-lomu-and-a-rugby-world-cup-final-that-went-beyond-sport.

³¹⁵Evans, “How Nelson Mandela Used Rugby as a Symbol of South African Unity.”

³¹⁶Weber et al., *Communication for Climate Change 2.0*, p. 26.

³¹⁷Noah J. Goldstein, Robert B. Cialdini, and Vlas Griskevicius, “A Room with a Viewpoint: Using Social Norms to Motivate Environmental Conservation in Hotels,” *Journal of Consumer Research* 35, no. 3 (October 2008): 472–482, <https://academic.oup.com/jcr/article/35/3/472/1856257>.

³¹⁸Deci and Ryan, “The “What” and “Why” of Goal Pursuits,” p. 227-268.

³¹⁹Weber et al., *Communication for Climate Change 2.0*, p. 12, 24-25.

It is important “to make behavior change easy,” for example, by presenting a sustainability-friendly behavior as the default choice; when given a choice, people tend “to stick with the option or behavior that is preselected for them or selected automatically,” known as the *default effect*.³²⁰ Expanding on these insights, it is also possible to facilitate behavior change (e.g., in connection to sport) by showcasing positive actions that other people (e.g., a specific group) have taken and highlighting sustainability-friendly social norms. Since humans are inherently social creatures, their shared identities and social goals can be potent sources of engagement. Research shows that “humans like to comply with the social norms that govern groups they affiliate with.”³²¹ Thus, the strong affiliation that fans have with sports—their teams and athletes—should be systematically addressed and harnessed.

Moreover, in order to make progress on the three pillars of sustainable development—social, environmental, economic—thinking in *systems* can help. Considering sport’s large audiences and norms, the field of sport and sustainability can also benefit from *systems-thinking*, which focuses on investigating what set of factors and interactions are contributing to or could contribute to a possible outcome.³²² *Systems-thinking* is capable of guiding our sustainability quest, as Dr. Leidy Klotz states in his book, *Sustainability through Soccer*. Applying system dynamics to soccer/football, Klotz describes how systems are made up of some basic parts: *purposes* dictate the behavior of *elements*, *flows*, *stocks*, and *feedback loops*,³²³ while “new *purposes* [can] change soccer careers” and system behavior toward sustainability objectives.³²⁴ He considers how people (*elements*) interacting with one another lead to change (*flows*) and can impact a country’s cultural norms (*stocks*); systems are dynamic and evolve through *feedback loops*.³²⁵

Klotz explains that *flows* in the right direction—like those spurred by Brazilian footballer Marta³²⁶ and other ground-breaking women—can overcome *stocks* (e.g., cultural norms) and start a virtuous reinforcing *feedback loop*,³²⁷ where, for instance, prejudice decreases and equality increases. Marta changed the “*purpose* of Brazil’s soccer system and the world that connects to it ... helping more people realize that having a Y chromosome is not a requirement for enjoying soccer”; she pushed a leverage point, which is a place “where a small shift produces big changes ... [including correcting] systematic inequality for a more sustainable Brazil”³²⁸ and world. *Systems-thinking* could assist social, economic, and/or environmental *purposes*/initiatives through sport that lead to broad behavior change in advancing sustainable development.

³²⁰Markowitz, Hodge, and Harp, *Connecting on Climate: A Guide to Effective Climate Change Communication*, p. 71, 81.

³²¹*Ibid.*, p. 81.

³²²Marie Morganeli, “What is Systems Thinking?,” Southern New Hampshire University, March 2020, www.snhu.edu/about-us/newsroom/business/what-is-systems-thinking.

³²³Elements are vital parts of any system (e.g., in a city system the elements are the people, buildings, etc.; in football, they can be traits such as intelligence and athleticism) and one way they interact is through movements called flows. Elements and flows build up in a system and become stocks (e.g., the size of a city population, goals in football). Systems evolve: information from the past shapes future actions; effects are causes and causes are effects; they learn and progress through feedback loops (reinforcing feedback loops can accelerate change, offering challenges and opportunities for sustainability). Moreover, on our sustainability quests people (and their actions) are often the most influential system *elements*. Source: Klotz, *Sustainability through soccer*, p. 15-17, 19, 38.

³²⁴*Ibid.*, p. 17, 41.

³²⁵“Feedback loops” are connections between a stock and a flow or element that is changing the stock. Source: *Ibid.*, p. 15-16.

³²⁶Marta Vieira da Silva, Brazilian football player generally regarded as the best female player of all time; a six-time winner of the FIFA World Player of the Year award (2006–10 and 2018). Source: “Marta | Biography & Facts | Britannica,” Britannica, July 7, 2024, www.britannica.com/biography/Marta.

³²⁷Klotz, *Sustainability through soccer*, p. 160.

³²⁸*Ibid.*, p. 161.

Likewise, sustainability objectives can benefit from a large-scale multiplier effect through the billions of football/sport fans around the world. Accordingly, a summary article of a Psychological Review publication, explains that the “social multiplier ... posits that when something raises the average performance of society, that rise becomes a powerful cause in its own right, and raises the average performance further, and raises it further, until the original rise is greatly multiplied.”³²⁹ This article also highlights that the social multiplier hinges on the fact that other people are the most powerful aspect of our environment. An example of this influence is when television increased basketball’s popularity, more players participated, which in turn improved players’ performance over time. In this way, “a modest environmental trigger of enhanced performance” catalyzed a multiplier effect, causing large performance improvements in a relatively brief period; similarly, this type of “reciprocal causation explains IQ gains” over time.³³⁰

Such a virtuous cycle of skills improvement, coined by James Flynn as the *social multiplier effect*, is also explained by Angela Duckworth in her book *Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance*.³³¹ While commenting on Flynn’s work on IQ test score improvements over the past century, Duckworth adds that—whether triggered by genes or small environmental differences—the “effects [of virtuous cycles] are multiplied socially, through culture, because each of us enriches the environment of all of us.”³³² Sustainable development can also be supported through initiatives that capitalize on the *social multiplier effect* linked to football and other sports.

The field of sport and sustainability can also benefit from *systems-thinking*, ... investigating what set of factors and interactions are contributing to or could contribute to a possible outcome.... Likewise, sustainable development can ... be supported through initiatives that capitalize on the *social multiplier effect* linked to football and other sports.

It is indeed important to facilitate far-reaching behavior change that can lead to effective transformations and large-scale positive impact, a process in which social science research is a critical factor. Furthermore, to bridge scientific research and sustainability practice, we need to integrate the work of behavioral scientists with that of practitioners, empirically test communication strategies, and promote multisector collaborations that enable moving from the laboratory to field research to practice³³³—all within the sporting community.

2.3.4. Systematic strategies and sport to bolster racial equality and other human rights

Football continues to deal with racial discrimination and other issues of inequality. Uruguayan Leandro Andrade (Afro-Latin American) was one of the first international stars in this sport³³⁴ and, potentially, its first racial equality model in the early 1900s. Today, the sport can have many more equality champions guided by evidence-based approaches for effective and desired results—e.g., the *Motivational Theory of Role Modeling* mentioned

³²⁹James R. Flynn and William T. Dickens, “Heritability Estimates Versus Large Environmental Effects: The IQ Paradox Resolved,” Brookings, April 1, 2001, www.brookings.edu/articles/heritability-estimates-versus-large-environmental-effects-the-iq-paradox-resolved/.

³³⁰Ibid.

³³¹Duckworth, *Grit*, p. 84.

³³²Ibid.

³³³Quoting Liza Zaval. Source: Weber et al., *Communication for Climate Change 2.0*, p. 24.

³³⁴Galeano, *El fútbol a sol y sombra*, p. 53.

above—expanding this work to other sports’ representatives to further challenge racism and all other types of discrimination. For instance, human rights activist and scholar Dr. Richard Lapchick, a global expert in the fight against racism in sport, has “dedicated his life to addressing racial inequality in sports and society,” from a local basketball camp in New York to the world stage.³³⁵ In the case of sport organizations, FIFA and UEFA, for example, have a long record of campaigns to eliminate racism and discrimination.³³⁶

Giulianotti describes racism within football as an apparent *cultural universal*,³³⁷ taking place “between and within ethnic groupings,” with abuse and discriminatory treatment of non-white players and “by the powerful against the relatively powerless within the same ethno-national community.”³³⁸ He highlights the strengths and limitations of football’s antiracism campaigns and states that “academic and liberal interpretations of fan racism are too keen to condemn rather than understand its cultural properties.”³³⁹ Certainly, it is key to meticulously comprehend football’s powerful culture to also leverage it in addressing racism and other injustices, and which in turn may provide insights to replicate efforts in and through other sports.

It is key to meticulously comprehend football’s powerful culture to also leverage it in addressing racism—and other injustices—[in and through the sport], which in turn may provide insights to replicate efforts [linked to] other sports.

Thus, sport could become a more effective platform to address inequalities and discrimination, both in grassroots and elite sport. The SDG Fund Toolkit on *The Contribution of Sports to the Achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals*, emphasizes leveraging sport for “the inclusion of all demographics irrespective of age, sex, race, ethnicity, origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, or economic or other status”; it also expands on sport’s potential to promote social integration and the inclusion of people with disabilities, highlighting the recognition of sport in the *International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*.³⁴⁰ The Paralympic Games have been promoting a more inclusive elite sport.³⁴¹ At both grassroots and elite levels, the Centre for Sport and Human Rights, with Mary Robinson as founding Chair, is doing its part.³⁴²

³³⁵Laura J. Cole, “The Calm Persistence of Social Rights Activist Richard Lapchick,” *Pegasus / The Magazine of the University of Central Florida*, 2017, www.ucf.edu/pegasus/calm-persistence-richard-lapchick/.

³³⁶“FIFA against racism: a decade of milestones,” sportanddev.org, March 2011, www.sportanddev.org/latest/news/fifa-against-racism-decade-milestones/; “No Discrimination,” FIFA, accessed July 22, 2024, <https://inside.fifa.com/social-impact/campaigns/no-discrimination>; UEFA, “No to Racism, say UEFA Champions League, UEFA Europa League and UEFA Women’s Champions League teams,” UEFA.com, October 17, 2016, www.uefa.com/news-media/news/0232-0f8e332fbdfd-0fa4c62d12ec-1000--no-to-racism-say-uefa-champions-league-uefa-europa-league/; UEFA, “#Anti racism,” UEFA.com, accessed July 22, 2024, www.uefa.com/news-media/topic/social/anti%20racism/.

³³⁷Defined as “customs, patterns, and traits that occur in virtually every culture.” Source: *cultural universals*, in *Social Dictionary*, <https://sociologydictionary.org/cultural-universals/>.

³³⁸Giulianotti, *Football*, p. 159.

³³⁹*Ibid.*, p. 161.

³⁴⁰“UN presents a new toolkit for action on how sports can contribute to achieve SDGs,” Sustainable Development Goals Fund, July 2018, www.sdgfund.org/un-presents-new-toolkit-action-how-sports-can-contribute-achieve-sdgs.

³⁴¹“Who We Are,” International Paralympic Committee, accessed May 17, 2024, www.paralympic.org/ipc/who-we-are.

³⁴²“What We Do,” Centre for Sport and Human Rights, accessed May 17, 2024, www.sporhumanrights.org/what-we-do/.

Indeed, sport has a significant opportunity to combat racial and other inequalities (SDG 10³⁴³) and support additional SDGs such as quality education (SDG 4³⁴⁴). In some countries, education itself is linked to racism. For instance, the United States faces a race gap in educational achievement, in which schools' failures fall disproportionately on students of colors; such failures, including children not being able to read, write, and do simple math,³⁴⁵ create a landscape of present and future risk. One such risk is evidenced in increasing dropout rates affecting minority students in disproportionate numbers; dropouts are more likely to be unemployed, living in poverty, receiving public assistance, in prison and on death row, unhealthy, divorced, and single parents with children who will drop out of school as well.³⁴⁶ Given the extent of these challenges, the U.S. government strives to overcome them through various endeavors.

An example of an effort to address racial disparity in education is a White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans, which highlights how students can be supported, in part, “by increasing the number of diverse mentors and learning opportunities in and outside of the classroom.”³⁴⁷ One approach to augmenting these opportunities, covered above under the *Science-based SFD programs for youth education, development, and well-being* section, is to link informal as well as formal education with sport, especially if connecting specific communities with their most popular sport.

For many low-performing, low-income, and/or immigrant students, football or other sports could be a compelling context for educational achievement and investment in their futures. As explained earlier, engaging students by linking school subjects such as math and science with sport has a vast potential for facilitating learning—and in turn, retention—in school. Sport could also foster social integration and cohesion, as well as positive changes in self-worth and behavior, particularly if structured and guided by the corresponding know-how, including some of the behavioral science insights outlined in this paper.

Both education and sport have a unique and valuable opportunity to combat racial and other forms of discrimination. It is imperative that we expand the science-based knowledge to help address racism via sport, whether linked to education or to other complementary sectors and SDGs, such as decent work and economic development (SDG 8³⁴⁸). We need tactical and science-based strategies that effectively address racial and gender equality—as well as other human rights—in and through sport, especially in places where injustices have not yet been successfully addressed. Sport, football in particular, could be a neutral/non-polarizing and engaging platform through which to address these injustices.

³⁴³Martin, “Reduce inequality within and among countries,” United Nations Sustainable Development, July 2023, www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/inequality/.

³⁴⁴Martin, “Education,” United Nations Sustainable Development, July 2023, www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/education/.

³⁴⁵Harold Berlak, “Race and the Achievement Gap,” *Rethinking Schools* 15, no. 4 (June 2001), <https://rethinkingschools.org/articles/race-and-the-achievement-gap/>.

³⁴⁶John M. Bridgeland, John J. Dilulio Jr., and Karen Burke Morison, *The Silent Epidemic: Perspectives of High School Dropouts* (A report by Civic Enterprises in association with Peter D. Hart Research Associates for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, March 2006), <https://docs.gatesfoundation.org/Documents/TheSilentEpidemic3-06FINAL.pdf>.

³⁴⁷*Fact Sheet: Supporting Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Success among African American Students* (White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans), accessed June 10, 2020, <https://sites.ed.gov/whblackinitiative/files/2016/09/STEM-Fact-Sheet-9.22.16.pdf>.

³⁴⁸Martin, “Economic Growth,” United Nations Sustainable Development, July 2023, www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/economic-growth/.

We need tactical and science-based strategies that effectively address racial and gender equality—as well as other human rights—in and through sport, especially in places where injustices have not yet been successfully addressed. Sport, football in particular, could be a neutral/non-polarizing and engaging platform through which to address these injustices.

2.3.5. Tango, football, and the universal increased value of leisure time

Like football, the music of tango was another key social component in Argentina’s and Uruguay’s popular culture early in the 20th century and helped incorporate these countries into the “growing process of leisure time’s globalization.”³⁴⁹ Nowadays, leisure experiences are considered an important tool for encouraging positive emotions and relations, and their mechanisms have been studied by researchers. Thus, the evidence-based understanding of how leisure provides spaces for meaning-making, including connection and belonging, identity, freedom, autonomy, and competence,³⁵⁰ could be carefully applied to guide football and other sports—experienced as leisure—to have a greater role in fostering positive feelings and social rapport.

Given global and multicultural perspectives linking meaning-making and leisure-like pursuits, research shows how these pursuits can facilitate positive emotions and identities, well-being, self-esteem, spirituality, social and cultural connections, harmony, human strengths and resilience, learning, and human development across the life-span.³⁵¹ For example, participation in indigenous games and sport can strengthen cultural identity, self-esteem, and life quality among youth, and help counteract challenges such as poverty.³⁵² On this basis, leisure—through sport—could be systematically addressed by public policy and community initiatives, supported by applicable knowledge from multiple fields such as urban planning and public health, to make advancements in social, economic, and environmental challenges.

Linking meaning-making and leisure-like pursuits, research shows how these pursuits can facilitate positive emotions and identities, well-being, self-esteem ... and human development across the life-span ... On this basis, leisure—through sport—could be addressed by public policy and community initiatives [incorporating the *systematic approaches* promoted in this paper].

Mason describes how, during the 20th century, football became “part of the leisure lives of so many people in many places”; he focuses on South America’s passion for the sport, particularly within Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay.³⁵³ In this region—and others—the sport has been part of many governments’ agendas (not always positive ones, as explained

³⁴⁹ Archetti, “Estilo y virtudes masculinas en El Gráfico,” p. 426-427.

³⁵⁰ Heather Porter, Yoshitaka Iwasaki, and John Shank, “Conceptualizing Meaning-Making through Leisure Experiences,” *Loisir et Société / Society and Leisure* 33, no. 2 (September 2010): 167–194, www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/07053436.2010.10707808.

³⁵¹ Yoshitaka Iwasaki, “Pathways to Meaning-Making Through Leisure-Like Pursuits in Global Contexts,” *Journal of Leisure Research* 40, no. 2 (June 2008): p. 231, 237, www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00222216.2008.11950139.

³⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 240-241.

³⁵³ Mason, *Passion of the people?*, p. viii.

in Part I), and it should now also be analyzed as a factor contributing to indicators in well-being indices. In fact, some Latin American authorities have considered harnessing their nations' football passion to advance well-being and the SDGs.³⁵⁴ Worldwide, the United Nations called on all its country members to look beyond the Gross Domestic Product for new happiness/well-being components.³⁵⁵

Well-being and a happy society depend on strong social networks,³⁵⁶ and football facilitates large networks, perhaps the largest worldwide. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) indirectly connected football to the *Better Life Index* initiative around the 2014 FIFA World Cup™ in Brazil.³⁵⁷ For any city, state, and national government looking to link their efforts to protect or raise their citizens' well-being³⁵⁸ with their endeavors to advance the Agenda 2030,³⁵⁹ the work proposed in this white paper can be a helpful guide.

Football and other sports continue to be an important expression of leisure time, even in extreme circumstances. During the recent COVID-19 pandemic, sport received a significant amount of attention by the media who debated empty stadiums, by governments regarding containment of their populations, and by individuals in quarantine. For instance, football/sport was a coping mechanism for many children and adults confined at home and finding creative ways to connect to their favorite sport.³⁶⁰ Moreover, the WHO and FIFA together launched the “Kick-out Coronavirus” campaign.³⁶¹ It is also notable how countries that declared an “absolute quarantine” only gave permission to leave home for physical activity, e.g., Argentina and Spain, while other governments worked with professional athletes/trainers in helping the population to cope with the crisis, e.g., Paraguay and Uruguay.³⁶² These disparate efforts could have had a magnified impact through a more unified and *systematic approach*.

³⁵⁴Marcelo Decaux, “Fernando Cáceres: ‘Dimos un salto en calidad de producción de políticas deportivas para la región’,” *El Observador*, February 25, 2019, www.elobservador.com.uy/nota/fernando-caceres-dimos-un-salto-en-calidad-de-produccion-de-politicas-deportivas-para-la-region--2019224172226.

³⁵⁵*Happiness: towards a holistic approach to development*.

³⁵⁶Helliwell, Layard, and Sachs, *World Happiness Report 2012*, p. 100; John F. Helliwell, Richard Layard, and Jeffrey D. Sachs, *World Happiness Report 2017*, March 20, 2017, p. 31, <https://worldhappiness.report/ed/2017/>.

³⁵⁷Anthony Gooch, “Is there more to life than football? “Transformar o Jogo Bonito em Vida Bonita”,” OECD Insights, June 2014, <https://web.archive.org/web/20200319063437/oecdinsights.org/2014/06/09/is-there-more-to-life-than-football-transformar-o-jogo-bonito-em-vida-bonita/>.

³⁵⁸T. Besley, J. Marshall, and T. Persson, “Well-being and State Effectiveness,” in *World Happiness Report 2023*, 11th (March 20, 2023), <https://worldhappiness.report/ed/2023/well-being-and-state-effectiveness/>.

³⁵⁹“OECD Programme on a Territorial Approach to the SDGs,” accessed July 5, 2021, www.oecd.org/cfe/territorial-approach-sdgs.htm.

³⁶⁰Matthew Gault, “As Stadiums Go Quiet, Esports Are Having a Moment,” March 2020, <https://time.com/5812633/esports-coronavirus/>; “Cuatro niños juegan al fútbol-tenis de casa a casa en plena cuarentena,” *La Sexta*, March 2020, www.lasexta.com/noticias/deportes/otros-deportes/cuatro-ninos-juegan-futboltenis-casa-casa-plena-cuarentena_202003255e7b38034626fc0001c063d6.html; “El ingenio de un niño que sueña con ser portero... y está ‘encerrado’ por el coronavirus,” *Marca.com*, March 2020, www.marca.com/futbol/futbol-internacional/2020/03/23/5e792d2f268e3ee10e8b456f.html; Sudipto Ganguly, “Roger Federer surprises Italian girls with rooftop tennis match,” *The Independent*, August 2020, www.independent.co.uk/sport/tennis/roger-federer-italy-rooftop-tennis-match-vittoria-oliveri-carola-pessina-a9652626.html.

³⁶¹“Coronavirus update: WHO and world football launch ‘kick out coronavirus’ campaign, as millions sign up to WhatsApp helpline,” UN News, March 2020, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/03/1060032>.

³⁶²“Segunda Conferencia Iberoamericana de Deporte en Tiempos de Covid-19,” Consejo Iberoamericano del Deporte (October 2020), www.coniberodeporte.org/es/noticias/item/366-2-conferencia-iberoamericana-de-deporte-en-tiempos-de-covid-19.

2.3.6. Sport as a diplomatic vehicle to strengthen the global partnership for sustainable development

After modern football began receiving international attention, it naturally turned into a diplomatic tool, even allowing a tiny country like Uruguay to go from global anonymity to being admired by the world for its success in the sport, as Galeano eloquently explained.³⁶³ Focusing on the 20th century, football facilitated Argentina's and Uruguay's international participation, but first, it was part of the UK's expanding global reach. Part I illustrates how the British introduced the game to Latin America and many other world regions.

Now, football's vast international influence—across geopolitical differences—has a valuable opportunity to facilitate global relations. This sport—and perhaps others—can assist diplomatic efforts and cooperation linked to the SDGs, particularly if methodically harnessed through multisector and multidisciplinary initiatives. For instance, Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs,³⁶⁴ Princeton's Woodrow Wilson School of International and Public Affairs,³⁶⁵ Harvard's International Negotiation Program (INP),³⁶⁶ Columbia's Advanced Consortium on Cooperation, Conflict, and Complexity (AC4),³⁶⁷ are examples of academic endeavors working on conflict resolution and global cooperation across disciplines and sectors.

Social science should further analyze and understand football's and other sports' facilitative potential in foreign affairs, as well as their role as a local, national, and global developmental tool. Such understanding can better leverage sport to promote sustainability, while opening new ways of thinking for government officials, business representatives, and society at large. As Nobel Peace Prize laureate and U.S. President, Barack Obama, said, "Sports has changed attitudes and culture in ways that seem subtle but that ultimately made us think differently about ourselves and who we were Sometimes, it's not enough just to change laws. You've got to change hearts. And sports has a way, sometimes, of changing hearts in a way that politics or business doesn't. And sometimes it's just a matter of us being able to escape and relax from the difficulties of our days, but sometimes it also speaks to something better in us."³⁶⁸

Social science should further analyze and understand football's and other sports' facilitative potential in foreign affairs ... [as] an effective diplomatic and profile-raising platform [as well as a call to action] for critical issues affecting people and the planet.

Modern football continues to significantly attract global attention, providing a unique and powerful platform for worldwide exposure, connections, and engagement. Through *systematic approaches*, this sport—and others—can be an innovative, deliberate, and effective diplomatic and profile-raising platform for critical issues affecting people and the

³⁶³ Galeano, *El fútbol a sol y sombra*, p. 50.

³⁶⁴ For more information on Columbia's School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA) visit www.sipa.columbia.edu/.

³⁶⁵ For more information on Princeton's Woodrow Wilson School of International and Public Affairs visit spia.princeton.edu/.

³⁶⁶ For more information on Harvard's International Negotiation Program visit inp.harvard.edu/.

³⁶⁷ For more information on Columbia's Advanced Consortium on Cooperation, Conflict, & Complexity (AC4) visit ac4.climate.columbia.edu/.

³⁶⁸ Jerry Brewer, "President Obama offers final reminder about the value of sports in America," *The Washington Post*, January 2017, www.washingtonpost.com/sports/nationals/president-obama-offers-final-reminder-about-the-value-of-sports-in-america/2017/01/16/884975ba-dc0c-11e6-918c-99ede3c8cafa_story.html.

planet. Football has a unique capacity to ease geopolitical differences, build bridges, and influence international affairs. As such, football and other popular sports could further contribute to achieving the SDGs, particularly by helping to strengthen the means of implementation and to revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development. We should not miss the opportunity to help reach these global goals by methodically and fully harnessing football/sport as a powerful element associated with billions of stakeholders worldwide.

3. RECAPITULATION AND SUMMARY

As an overview, Table III provides a summary of present and future opportunities for football/sport to deliberately contribute to efforts toward sustainable development, particularly through *systematic approaches* (right). Such opportunities are presented in tandem with a summary of the historical instances when football, organically, was able to positively impact millions between 1860-1960 in the UK, Argentina, and Uruguay (left).

In conclusion, Part II provided examples of how existing and new science-based know-how, technology, cutting-edge resources, and collaborations across sectors, could help amplify the impact of football and other sports on the progress of sustainability. It is also critical to measure this impact and the monetary value of social, economic, and environmental initiatives linked to sport. Overall, the considerations and suggestions presented in Part II suggest some of the many ways we can, and should, expand and maximize the power of sport for the greater good.

Table III: Synopsis of Opportunities for Football/Sport (F/S) to Further Support Sustainability through Systematic and Multisector Approaches

Football in the UK, Argentina, and Uruguay	Present/Future Opportunities of F/S to support Sustainability
<p>As a Metric-Benchmark, the sport fostered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social rapport (involving connection, integration, cohesion, camaraderie, and cooperation) • Adaptation to new environments and life systems • A common language to relate and bond over • Goodwill and organic solidarity • Pride of place and symbolic citizenship • A shelter for youth, comradeship, a coping mechanism for stress and personal expression • Intense collective experiences and patriotic sentiment • A sense of belonging, common values, norms, and shared identities • Significant social affiliations and networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harnessing F/S’s strong impact on people’s lives to guide positive behavior change through applicable know-how. • Science-based approaches and leading-edge resources (e.g., social and behavioral science, AI) to enhance the contribution of F/S on sustainability. • Behavioral science can improve communication and implementation strategies in Sport for Sustainable Development initiatives. • F/S for youth education (informal / formal), development, and well-being, based on science, technology, etc. • F/S to facilitate adjustments to new environments and life systems, including for migrants • F/S as a community and universal language for evidence-based SDG discourse, awareness, engagement, and action at scale.

Football in the UK, Argentina, and Uruguay	Present/Future Opportunities of F/S to support Sustainability
<p>As a Mirror, football organically reflected:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Characters, virtues, geographical contexts, commonalities, and strong allegiances • Tension, violence, and conflict alleviation • The chance for life-changing opportunities (hope) • Modern values and lifestyles • Youth recruitment, relief, and support • Common goals and apparent social trust • Nations’ histories and government agendas • National identity and grit • Subjective well-being/happiness from community building and social networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The mass appeal of football facilitates the constructive application of the <i>power of groups</i> (globally). • Systematic interventions may interrupt/contest conflict and foster peace through F/S’ multitudes and their allegiance. • Methodically work on hope, optimism, and social trust through F/S. • The development of grit supported by psychological research may assist in goal achievement (e.g., the SDGs) through F/S. • Promotion of positive masculinity and gender equality through science-based F/S initiatives. • Multisector and transdisciplinary efforts can reinforce F/S links to subjective well-being/happiness and sustainability.
<p>As a Motor (or part) of major social transformations, the sport was a:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pastime of the elites that progressed to become the obsession of multitudes (in these nations and beyond), turning into a global social phenomenon • Symbol of national character, values, uniqueness, independence, dedication, and pride • Platform to demonstrate the need for important societal changes (e.g., racial equality) and a means to adjust to a new environment/country • Popular leisure alternative that has been linked to these (and other) countries’ international affairs • Potent social network that became a global heritage (FIFA currently counts 211 members—the United Nations has 193 Member States), overcoming socioeconomic and geographic limits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behavioral insights, including mental models, linked to F/S could facilitate sustainable decision-making. • F/S’ identities, values and massive social networks/norms may be harnessed to guide positive behavior change. • Connecting <i>systems-thinking</i>, the <i>social multiplier effect</i> and innovation to F/S for effective action and large-scale impact on sustainability • F/S and systematic approaches to protect and promote human rights. • The role of F/S in leisure time to be methodically employed by governments (and other sectors) to help advance sustainable development. • F/S as a greater diplomatic, profile-raising, and call to action vehicle to strengthen the global partnership for the SDGs.

The World Bank demonstrated how social norms and networks shape behavior and serve as the basis for new kinds of interventions in sustainable development. Moreover, given that social emotions and norms motivate much of what humans do, how can we ignore football's intense emotions, widespread norms, and massive social networks, which have existed for over a century, in the UK, Argentina, Uruguay, and across the world. This intense passion and loyalty generated by football—and other popular sports—should be methodically harnessed to advance peace and sustainability. To do otherwise is to miss a tremendous opportunity!

CONCLUSION

Football became a major sociocultural phenomenon through individual and collective experiences that have deeply marked people's daily lives in the UK, Argentina, Uruguay—and many other nations. We should now look to effectively translate this passion into constructive outcomes. The sport's global adoption and its impact on national and international affairs show its potential to affect behavior and social trends, both positively and negatively. This white paper focuses on the sport's positive aspects, illustrating its capability to influence people and effect constructive change, and describing opportunities to harness this capacity for the advancement of peace and sustainable development. What is more, using innovative *systematic approaches* and leveraging multiplier effects, interventions can begin to counter the sport's negative aspects, such as discrimination and violence.

As described, football transformed from the pastime of a select few to the passion of multitudes. By looking back at the sport's *history from below* and some ways in which it affected everyday life, we can better understand the current and future prospects for the sport to expand—for instance, in various large countries like China and India³⁶⁹—and to further support social, economic, and environmental endeavors. Science-based tactics and leading-edge resources can be a factor in this sport's development potential, on and off the pitch. Addressing football at the grassroots level remains key, and the sport's success goes beyond physical and economic conditions; it involves the intense emotions (passion) and behaviors it can and does engender in the community.

The simplicity and allure of the game, with its diverse personal development and social attributes, have helped elevate football to its pre-eminent status. I am grateful to those historians and sociologists who have documented football's evolution, and I hope many more multidisciplinary scholars build on this foundation, reversing the “astonishing void” of this sport in world history. So far, most of the work on *Sport for Development—defined and promoted in this white paper as Sport for Sustainable Development*—(SFD) has been conducted through the active participation in sport, with a focus on social aspects. Now, as many stakeholders recognize, the SFD field can benefit from innovation and more impactful initiatives. We could amplify sport's constructive impact through multidisciplinary science, technology and other modern advances, working on both active participation as well as with the passionate sport followers—the world's legion of fans. These efforts, together with strategic multisector collaborations, can take SFD to the next level.

Sustainable development can certainly benefit from engaging more people through significant social networks—like sport—as well as from creative strategies. Such strategies rely in part on precedents, as in examples from history. Therefore, the first part of this paper provided a brief historical overview of how football has created, reflected, and been deeply linked to major national and global affairs over a century, shedding light on football's massive and influential social network, which expanded in time and space. Given the powerful influence of football, the second part of the document explored opportunities to maximize the potential of SFD. It highlighted gaps, such as the lack of work connecting specific theory to SFD interventions, as well as prospects and strategies to enhance impact through innovation. An optimistic projection is that the impact on society and constructive potential of football become a rallying point, as did its professional and recreational aspects.

³⁶⁹Brian Homewood, “India inspired by Iceland in grassroots expansion of soccer,” *Reuters*, December 2016, www.reuters.com/article/uk-soccer-india/india-inspired-by-iceland-in-grassroots-expansion-idUKKBN1430OH/.

I am confident that those football fans yet to be born will be as passionate as their predecessors. Hence, there is a clear and significant prospect for football to continue to build social relationships, to mirror positive identities, and to connect with local and global constructive transformations. As multidisciplinary academic work in sustainable development continues to evolve, I invite scholars to include football's—and other sports'—engaging power in their agendas and to collaborate with all sectors in developing effective, long-lasting SFD initiatives. Such a systematically orchestrated approach provides a great opportunity to further contribute to the world through football/sport while equipping fans with the ability to help advance sustainability. Billions of football fans appreciate the value of even one goal at a game; many could come to appreciate—and hopefully support—the seventeen sustainable development goals as well. Football is, indeed, so much more than a game.

AUTHOR'S MOTIVATION

How my personal journey in sport, particularly football, and sustainable development inspired this work.

Football entered my country of origin, Argentina, through the Port of Buenos Aires, the same port where my grandparents arrived from Italy and nearby where my favorite football team was formed over one hundred years ago. Since then, the sport has gained massive appeal worldwide, transforming into a global social phenomenon. Many people love football, but not too many see its social implications and how they could be harnessed to significantly support sustainable development.

My sport journey started in San Francisco, Córdoba, Argentina as a young tennis player with a great appreciation for all sports, particularly football. This interest and involvement in sport continued as an amateur football team/league manager in the United States and as a professional in international affairs. I began my career in sport working on marketing projects and business development and was subsequently involved in sport for development initiatives collaborating with governments and non-profit organizations before finally becoming a sustainability and sport consultant across sectors. I held an executive team role as Director of Sustainability for the United Bid Committee of Canada, Mexico and United States, LLC, which successfully attained the right to host the 2026 FIFA World Cup.TM These experiences taught me a great deal about the enormous social impact and potential for development of sport, globally.

Argentina was an early adopter of football in its national culture and I have vivid memories of the population's euphoria after winning the first two FIFA World CupTM titles. This contributed to my long process of becoming a passionate football fan, despite being a woman. While growing up in my country, as in many other countries, football was—and still is—considered “cosa de hombres” (a man's business). I could only play it—discretely—with tennis or school friends. So, like many other girls and women, I was also part of the sport's *History from Below*.

In 1997, to advance my education, I travelled to the United States, where football is one of the most popular sports for girls; more female players participate in this country than in any other country in the world. A year later, as a graduate student in New York, I formed a women's football team that became part of the New York Metropolitan Women's Soccer League,³⁷⁰ which includes former U.S. college players and women of various nationalities. For many years, I have been a proud member of a team and league that provides space for camaraderie and integration between women, while some devoted husbands cheer from the sidelines together with their children. This is quite unthinkable where I am from—and in so many other nations.

During various international trips, I have connected with people through the sport's universal language. In remote locations in Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and Eastern Europe, where I did not speak the language, the names of famous players or simply “the ball” helped me to facilitate human connections. Plus, I have been able to foster wonderful interactions with people in many Latin American countries as well as with New York City taxi drivers from countless nationalities thanks to football. The latter have been part of

³⁷⁰For more information on the New York Metropolitan Women's Soccer League (founded in 1978) visit www.nywomensoccer.org/.

my informal field research. I have even connected meaningfully with drivers from Asian countries where the sport is not as popular, learning for instance that in Bangladesh, where the national team has never qualified for a FIFA World Cup™, people fervently root for other nations' teams, in particular Argentina and Brazil.

Both on and off the field, I have gained first-hand experience of the positive implications of sport in my personal, social, and professional life. I began my professional career working on foreign trade for Argentina's national government, and later, pursued a master's degree in international affairs at Columbia University in the City of New York. Upon graduation, I switched to the private sector and worked in sport business. After September 2001, I sought out opportunities to link my passions for sport and international/sustainable development, which led to my exciting career in sustainability and *Sport for Development* (SFD). Following the historical evolution of the SFD field, I first focused on social aspects, before increasing the scope of my work to include the economic and environmental dimensions. As a result, I now have a broad view of the opportunities of SFD as Sport for Sustainable Development.

My initial experiences in SFD—mostly in Latin America—helped me confirm the power of football and other sports to engage people on many key issues, for their own benefit and that of others. I also identified that this relatively new field faces key challenges when attempting to demonstrate, optimize, and maximize impact, as the outcomes are sometimes less significant than expected or can have unintended consequences. This is often a result of a lack of resources and/or lack of multidisciplinary knowledge-based tactics. I promptly realized that SFD could benefit from more strategic, methodical/multidisciplinary, and multisector approaches.

In 2007, I joined The Earth Institute at Columbia University to help manage its international multidisciplinary academic initiatives in advancing sustainable development, hoping to also identify opportunities to link them to sport. And I did so in many areas, including health, education, gender equality, urban planning, climate change, economics, biodiversity, psychology, and others.³⁷¹ I worked on local urban initiatives, such as a STEM education, sustainability, and football program³⁷² with New York City public schools. Plus, a collaboration with a community center for vulnerable and marginalized New Yorkers, with whom simply talking about sport provided bonding experiences.

In 2012, ahead of the 2014 FIFA World Cup™, I visited Brazil with Columbia University representatives. In collaboration with public and private sector representatives, several SFD initiatives were envisioned and designed, starting in Rio de Janeiro. The execution of these initiatives was not as initially planned, but the experience inspired new areas of research and multisector approaches. I still trust that a *smart city* should combine sport initiatives linked to the latest technology and corresponding know-how to contribute to its citizens' good health and well-being as well as other sustainable development goals. Based on the information provided in Part I of this white paper and the popular notion of sport being a powerful global social phenomenon, it is not very *smart* to disregard this platform in support of people and the planet.

³⁷¹Appreciating the academic expertise and support of so many multidisciplinary experts, more recently of Doctors Bajpai, Bose, Culligan, Gulati, Lerner Lam, Sachs, Plunz, Tiberi, Weber, Widder and previously, from Doctors Baethgen, Baptista, Barrett, Becker, Besbes, Broughton, Chen, Coleman, Deckelbaum, De Fries, Degnan, Denning, Desai, Diouf, Ergas, Fanzo, Fisher, Fraiman, Gerrard, Kastrinakis, Kinney, Lackner, Lall, Lawrence, Lesko, Masri, Mandiberg, Medini, Modi, Morgan, Pippenger, Rosenfield, Rubinstein, Sassen, Simon, van Ryzin, Teklehaimanot, Weintraub, among many others, including Columbia University alumni such as Julissa Reynoso, Sonia Bumbak, Melanie Huff and Sree Sreenivasan.

³⁷²Led by Nancy Degnan and supported by Ellen Meier, Minosca Alcantara and many others, involving New York City principals and teachers.

I fervidly contributed to two FIFA World Cup™ Bids. First, as part of the Sustainability Advisory Panel of the United States 2022 FIFA World Cup™ Bid. Then, in 2017-18, working full time for the United Bid Committee of Canada, Mexico and the United States, LLC, I had the privilege of being part of a professional team that worked on a bid proposal that did not require building new stadiums. Instead, we were able to focus on priorities like developing the game and leveraging the sport towards social, economic, and environmental goals. I collaborated with multidisciplinary stakeholders across sectors and borders that recognized the great opportunity and responsibility that a FIFA World Cup™ provides to work on human rights, youth development, environmental protection, and many sustainable development areas. Both the 2022 and 2026 Bids had a valuable contribution from Dr. Jeffrey D. Sachs.

My work on sustainable development for over fifteen years has helped me understand that we need innovative tools to further engage people in sustainability, from the target groups that need assistance to all stakeholders involved. Sport can help, and science—in particular, behavioral science—can support the development and execution of SFD initiatives that have broad and long-lasting impact. I was fortunate to cooperate on climate change and other sustainability issues with behavioral scientists, including the distinguished scientist Elke Weber and part of her team of experts.³⁷³ I have also collaborated with public, private, non-profit, and multilateral organizations in advancing the SDGs through sport, including the United Nations, the Ibero-American General Secretariat and the Consejo Iberoamericano del Deporte. By expanding multisector and multidisciplinary collaborations, we can enhance the power of football—and other sports—in supporting devoted fans, other world citizens, and the planet that hosts us all.

I know very well how serious and committed many of us get about football's scored (or missed) *goals* and context on the field; it is time we adopted a similar approach off the field to achieve the world's *goals* toward sustainable development.

³⁷³Including Matthew Sisco, Jon Jachimowicz, Tien Ming Lee, Sabine Marx, Courtney St. John, Lori Scally, and Lisa Zaval.

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