The Sick Man's Football Dream: Sport, Fandom, and Consumer Culture in Post-Mao China

Marco D'Amico

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_____ Chair

Dr. Ted McCormick

_____ Examiner

Dr. Andrew Ivaska

_____ Examiner

Dr. Kimberley Manning

_____ Supervisor

Dr. Matthew Penney

Approved by _____

Chair of Department or Graduate Program Director

_____

_____2016 Dean of Faculty

Abstract

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Marco D'Amico

After two decades of quick paced economic reform and social change, the ruling Communist Party elite have sought to utilize the notion of the "China Dream" to reassert their position as the country's political and cultural center. Coupled with the historical narrative of the "Road to Rejuvenation", the "China Dream" represents a new state ideology that seeks to reassert China as one of the dominant world powers. The world of modern international sports displays similar themes, as the athletes individual gain brought great joy and prestige to their home nation or region". The relationship between private investment and state control within the sport of Football consequently sets the stage for an interesting comparison of Chinese Football and Chinese society as a whole. With twenty-first century China sitting at a proverbial crossroad, the study of physical culture (*Tiyu)* will help illuminate the negotiation between state planning and the free market, while also connecting the world of football to particular themes like nationalism, consumerism, education, identity, etc. Thus, the study of football development from a top down and bottom up approach would allow one to understand the complexities of sponsorship and commercialism in an era of change and cultural diversification. Ultimately, this study brings forward a story of complicated and interwoven economic and cultural linkages that transcend the concepts of nation to deliver a truly global story of football within reform-era China.

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Introduction: The Birth of a Dream

Football is often described as the world's most popular sport, a truly global game. This was never more evident to me than during the 2014 World Cup; not because of events in Rio de Janeiro, but because of where I was watching the game. In the summer of 2014, I spent two months in Beijing as part of a cultural exchange program. During this time, I would scurry off in the early hours of the morning to watch whatever World Cup game I could find. I was surprised to see many others meeting in local bars to watch mesmerizing battles on football's biggest stage. People flocked to sports bars, large squares and, in some cases, embassies to partake in this global spectacle. After having spent time in Shanghai, Zhengzhou and Xi'an, I saw that Beijing was not unique in its mass admiration for the beautiful game, but rather just one part of a larger national appreciation. These enormous cities were decorated in honor of the global tournament, with Shanghai and Beijing littered with sports advertisements from Adidas, Nike, Umbro, and other global brands.

Drinking my sorrows away after another disappointing exit by the Italian national team, the bartender of a small Beijing pub smiled and said '' Italy has a great team with good players, you have been very successful in the past''. He continued by saying "I hope that one day, my country can be as good as Italy or Germany.'' He named players like Zinédine Zidane, Roberto Baggio, Diego Maradona and Ronaldo as some of his favorites. I could not believe that these heroes I had grown up watching would ever spark such passionate conversation between myself and a complete stranger halfway around the world. I found it inspiring that I was able to enjoy my favourite sporting event in a completely different context than I had experienced in North America or in Europe. This new experience sparked my curiosity as to how football fit in the complicated history of contemporary China. Local fans told me they had appreciated football since they were first exposed to television, with many saying it was through local television stations and sports magazines that they first encountered the world of football. There were even those who claimed that football was first established in imperial China, and thus it would be fitting to host a World Cup in Beijing in the near future. I became interested in the development of football in a Chinese context and how fandom and sports consumption evolved within a reform-era context.

In as such, my ensuing research has shed light on the complicating web of transnational relationships and local initiatives, both in Europe and in China. Through the heightened exposure of football in China, due primarily to expansion of television and the introduction of football magazines, early forms of fandom created a unique instance in the 1980s where the Chinese Football Association, rising local entrepreneurs and individuals came together to promote the beautiful game. Although it was the intent of the Chinese Sports Commission, the state's sport governing body, to pursue the promotion of football for its political and diplomatic purposes, the involvement of fans, businesses and other local actors displayed a break from the top-down approach to sports development that applied to all other forms of modern sports. Consequently, the development of football culture, in conjunction with the growing notions of individuality, such as dreams and desire, presents an avenue for one to observe the growth of individuality, desire and wealth during a time where China begun its return onto the international stage. However, this research also illustrates the changes in local Chinese football culture within the larger discussion of sports media globalization in Europe and beyond between the 1970s and 1990s in an effort to display the complicated and often forgotten links that were necessary to promote the pioneering of China's first instance of fandom and, eventually, professionalization of sport.

Prior to the commercial and professional development of China in football, the sport was primarily utilized for national means during the late 19th century. The correlation between sports and the nation can be traced back to 1895, through the aftermath of the humiliating losses of the Opium and the first Sino Japanese War. Prior to the instability of the 19th century, sport was practices in both a leisurely and celebratory way, as a celebration of local culture and wealth. However, by the late 19th century, Yan Fu, an influential Chinese scholar and translator of Western books, related the health of a nation, or lack thereof, to that of an individual.[1]As Yan Fu compared the state of China to that of a sick man, he termed the "Sick Man of East-Asia" (dongya bingfu) in comparison to the Ottoman Empire's "Sick Man of Europe" moniker. This theme of national rejuvenation was promoted by a young generation of intellectuals known as the New Youth. Among some of the strong promoters of sport culture and physical education (tiyu) was Mao Zedong, who, in 1917, wrote an article titled "On

[1] Xu Guoqi, *Olympic Dreams: China and Sports, 1895-2008* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 18.

Physical Culture" (Tiyu zhi yanjiu), which compared China to powers such as Germany in an effort to promote the national benefits of wide-spread physical education.[2]

During the Republican era, known primarily for the nationalist initiatives of Chang Kai-Shek's Nationalist Party, sport was utilised as a tool to promote the growing strength of athletes in China in comparison to their international peers. This use of sport was an attempt to shed the Sick Man's Dream tag that China had been given early in the century. Even after WWII and the formation of the People's Republic of China in 1949, Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai, the influential Minister of Foreign Affairs, were "deeply involved in exploring and exploiting connections between sports and diplomacy. "[3] The goal to promote the sporting successes of China on an international scale, was limited by Cold War tensions, but continued to highlight anxiety over the "Sick Man" identity. The fruits of these initiatives led to the birth of "Ping-Pong Diplomacy" in 1972. Through a Ping-Pong tournament held in 1971, Mao was able to utilize sport as a means of rapprochement between the United States and the PRC, combining "friendly" diplomacy with an opportunity to showcase the prowess of Chinese athletes to both international and domestic observers. [4] This moment has been documented as a turning point in the continued push for recognition. The Sick Man's dream of individual vitality and national power, however, was far from realised.

Mao's use of sports as both a domestic means of conditioning national strength and an international means of diplomacy appears to be a pre-cursor to Xi Jinping's use of the "China Dream" as a means to contextualize athletic excellence within the national revival rhetoric. Even during the Deng Xiaoping years in power, books like the 1986 novel "Sick Man's Dream" continued to question the relationship between a healthy individual to the health of the nation.[5] Such works continued to question the validity of China's international position through the use of sport displays and demonstrated a continued anxiety concerning the role of China on the international stage. Japan and the "Four Little Dragons" (Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan, and South Korea) had enjoyed unprecedented growth and eclipsed China as the

[2] Xu, *Olympic Dreams*, 22.
[3] Ibid, 118.
[4] Nicholas Griffin, *Ping-Pong Diplomacy: The Secret History Behind the Game That Changed the World*. (New York: Scribner, 2014),126.
[5] Zhao Yu, *Sick Man's Dream (Qiang guo meng*),(Beijing: Writer's Publishing House:1988).

economic powers in the Asia-Pacific.[6] Thus the use of sport and sports commercialization in the 80s and 90s helped serve national interest on the political and economic spectrum, while furthering the quest to boost China's international prestige.

Consequently, China's two Olympic bids, 2000 and 2008, demonstrate the Party's continued utilization of sports as a diplomatic tactic. This was also made obvious by the opulent opening ceremony of the Beijing Olympics. After fifteen years of unprecedented economic growth in the Middle Kingdom, the Beijing Olympics was framed as China's coming out party to the world and the opening ceremony represented the alignment of sports, economics and culture to symbolize the breaking of the Sick Man's moniker. The ceremony consisted of an historical retelling of China's past through strong symbols like calligraphy and iconic characters such as famed explorer Zheng He. This part of the spectacle ended with LED birds flying out of the "Bird's Nest" symbolizing phoenix-like rebirth. Coupled with the presentation of taikonauts (Chinese astronauts), the latter part of the ceremony was used to symbolize the return of China as a world power. Although China did not meet its goal of 119 gold medals, it had the highest gold medal total and the Beijing Olympics were declared a great national success.[7] For these same reasons, China found itself in a two horse race with Kazakhstan to host the 2022 Olympic Winter Games, as Xi Jinping continues to build up China's strong image on the world stage.[8] Thus, the development of sports was an "avenue to national revival and equality among the nations of the world" and "means to achieve their desire to be recognized as a respected power."[9] As an underlying political theme for national revival during the last century in China, the use of sporting success was a means to achieve national success and international prestige.

The field of Chinese sports history, albeit younger than other fields like gender history and micro history, allows for a multitude of approaches to study culture, economics and social

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[6] Lin Justin, Fang Cai and Zhou Li, *The China Miracle: Development Strategy and Economic Reform* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Centre for Economic Research and the International Center for Economic Growth by the Chinese university press, 2003) , 16.
[7] Michael Smith, *Project 119 Didn't Work Despite China's Gold Lead*, last modified August 22, 2008.(http://www.nysun.com/sports/project-119-didnt-work-despite-chinas-gold-lead/84420/) .
[8] Angus Griggs, *Xi Jinping: China's president a populist strongman*, last modified July 25, 2014, Financial Review (http://www.afr.com/p/lifestyle/afrmagazine/xi_jinping_china_president _populist_TGg3DERJXTZ mz3ND3ogEfI)
[9] Xu, *Olympic Dreams*,28.

movements in time. It can be interpreted in many ways, as it intersects with many different facets of Chinese culture and socio-economic development such as nationalism, international policy and statecraft. Nationalism, gender, internationalism, economics, demographics are just a few of the very many angles from which sport has already been discussed. All have strengths, but a new approach to the history of Chinese physical culture is needed to bring it into dialogue with conceptualizations of Chinese political statecraft.

Anthropologist Susan Brownell, a former athlete in her own right, was the first to outline the overarching historical significance of physical culture and the nation with her *Training the Body for China* in 1995. Brownell's special attention to the athletes themselves, due to being a former athlete herself who had some of the first insight into local Chinese administrative sports practices, sets her work apart from Andrew Morris and Xu Guoqi, as she focused on the social implications of athletes and their growing importance in Chinese culture. Brownell's athletic background and familiarity in Chinese sports culture allowed her to display athletes "as symbolic intermediaries between state and society" in order to open a discussion into the multi-faceted social complexities of actually doing sports rather than simply talking about it.[10] China's inclusion in popular international games gave, according to Brownell, was an attempt to "symbolically link economic modernization, Chinese nationalism, and Communist Party legitimacy into a meaningful and moving totality."[11]

Similarly, Andrew Morris' *Marrow of the Nation* sought to illustrate the role of nationalism alongside the economic and social factors behind the organic construction and perpetuation of physical culture in China. His most important argument was "the degree to which physical culture was not only an instrument useful in creating the modern state and citizen but a vital element of this transformation itself."[12] In Morris' estimation, early Republican discourse on physical education was "clearly part of the project to reinsert China into an international narrative of history and progress. "[13] His research on modern Chinese physical culture (*tiyu*) sought to bring out "China's ambivalent relationships with the Western

[10] Susan Brownell, *Training the Body for China: Sports in the Moral Order of the People's Republic* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 69.
[11] Ibid, 110.
[12] Andrew Morris, *Marrow of the Nation*: *A History of Sport and Physical Culture in Republican China*(Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2004), 9.
[13] Ibid, 3.

nations."[14] In claiming that Western powers worked just as hard to "spread these modern ideologies as the Chinese did to integrate and adapt them," Morris describes the evolution of sport culture as being a national modernization project with unique Chinese characteristics; a project of international proportions.[15]

Studying sports culture, as Brownell and Morris have displayed, helps explain the major social and cultural patterns in physical culture and the localization of international notions of nationhood and strength. These localizations will allow one to study the transformation of the cultural and social sphere, which will undoubtedly leave a lasting mark on the region, nation, or other demographic space it pertains to. Sports are frequently used as a symbol of national characteristics and national identity. However, an important aspect in the study of sport is to avoid duplicating the tropes of nationalist rhetoric in order to seek out the agency of athletes, fans, consumers and the national or transnational entrepreneurial agents that played an active role in the localization of international sport.

Such an analysis will utilize the discrepancies between the dominant nationalist rhetoric and the local bottom-up rhetoric in order to paint a precise picture of these cultural instances of change. As the use of nationalist tropes eludes many from the true social and cultural instances occurring on the local level, the voices of the many and the transnational links synonymous with the world of modern sport are often omitted in favor of high level political rhetoric. The initial push to center the growth of sport in China over the nationalist discourse thus inhibits Brownell and Morris from seeing beyond the general notion of sport performance, as concepts like consumerism, feminism, commercialization and sports fandom are seldom discussed. Fandom, in the context of professional football, can be defined as the allegiance of an individual to a specific team or, in more general cases, a sport. Furthermore, the importance of fandom is not simply in the ability to choose to support a team based on demographic, geographic, cultural or social factors, but to consume, identify and promote the brand of the chosen football team and, in the process, the sport of modern football as a whole. The trend of scrutinizing high level political rhetoric, as it pertains to Chinese historical research, consequently deters historians from presenting a more nuanced account of

[14] Morris, *Marrow of the Nation*, 12.
[15] Ibid.

contemporary Chinese socio-cultural paradigms, as they focus most of their attention on the state and a minute amount on the local and the individual.

Evidently, this top-down approach to mass cultural studies creates a gap in the literature, as notions of locality and adaptability are re-counted through teleological narratives that borrow from the nationalist framing of the state and ethno-national community as a singular organism undergoing inevitable evolution. Instead, this paper seeks to analyze the localization of sport through a sharper lens, which opens up a new direction in discussions about the reform era in 1980s China and the globalizing world of the 1990s. This era has been the subject of rich critical discussions of cultural consumption in fields such as cinema and literature, such as the work of Germaine Barnes or Jeff Wasserstrom, the world of sport has not received the same type of critical attention in the scholarship due primarily to the overreliance on the national frame in the study of sport. For example, in the world of Chinese cinema, underground film is described by Paul Pickowicz as being "not exactly underground,'' but a genre of film that allows a ''discussion and negotiation with the state.''[16] Pickowicz's work demonstrates that citizens and state are in an ''elaborate dance'' which gradually alters what constitutes the political and, most importantly, cultural realms of consumable culture in an era of growing consumerism, urban buying power, and sub-cultural identification. Such themes of cultural negotiation, rather than dichotomous cultural experiences between citizens and state, are easily adaptable to the study of football culture as a part of the larger cultural renegotiation of urban Chinese consumption and cultural diversification. Due to the lack of scholarship on sport, this paper will seek to break through the nationalist narrative in order to present a plethora of counter-narratives from Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), Sporting Organizations and individual accounts in order to open up a larger discussion of sports within a commercialising China. In order to do so, the study of authors such as Xu Guoqi and Victor Cha is necessary in order to display the break from nationalist sports rhetoric into a more inclusive internationalist method of history.

The internationalist approach of historians like Xu Guoqi, which seeks to locate China on the international plane, provides a different and refreshing approach from the consistent discussion of nationalism and physical culture in contemporary Chinese history. His book,

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[16] *From Underground to Independent: Alternative film culture in Contemporary China,* Paul Pickowicz & Yingjin Zhang, eds *(Toronto: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers ,2006),* 7.

Olympic Dreams, follows the aforementioned international approach through study of sport as a means to contextualize "internationalizing of China through modern sports."[17] He attempts to "explain the interactions between nationalism and internationalism" in order to highlight "the connections between Chinese domestic politics and international affairs."[18] Xu justifies his use of an internationalist lens through the belief that sports, as a collective experience, "crosses the social and political divisions of everyday life" and the ensuing study of it offers a "unique window into larger historical processes."[19] Xu views sport as a vehicle for studying society-to-society, people-to-people and culture-to-culture interactions.[20] His view of sports as an agent of social change and legitimacy, as well as a source of international recognition, national prestige and an engine of nation-building follows most of the opinions brought forth by the aforementioned authors. However, it is his study of the international diplomatic effect of sport which offers readers a more refreshing narrative for a growing and complex topic.

In conjunction with Xu, William Manzenreiter and John Horne's *Football Goes East* builds on the internationalist approach, as it seeks to understand how aspects of international trade and international relations are crucial in understanding how football acquired such a high standing in the region.[21] They analyse the effects of football and globalisation in East Asia through the study of media and cultural capital. They argue that "the technological change the media, whether television, radio, film or new media (internet, satellite TV), generates globalisation and permits increased visibility of difference."[22] Thus, they seek not to illustrate the globalisation of football as a "commercially-driven process aiming at the creation of a global market for products whose popular consumption led to the standardization of culture that were once distinctive," but to "stress the relative importance of economic capital and the capitalist mode of production, distribution and exchange within the globalisation of sports."[23]

Similar to Manzreiter and Horne, Victor Cha's work promotes sport and its historical study as a key component in understanding "how transnational phenomena increasingly define

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[17] Xu,*Olympic Dream*, 25.
[18] Ibid, 7.
[19] Xu,*Olympic Dream*,4.
[20] Ibid.
[21] *Football Goes East: Business, culture and the people's game in China, Japan and South Korea*, Wolfram Manzenreiter and John Horne, eds(New York: Routledge, 2004), 1.
[22] Ibid, 9.
[23] Ibid, 6.

the international system" rather than traditional views, which focus on state-to state relations.[24] For example, Cha's *Beyond the Final Score: Politics and Sport in Asia* views sport as not simply just a "tool to express national identity" or to convey an image of modernity, but, in some cases, a "positive reputation in sport can augment a country's global status" and position on the world stage.[25] Cha hypothesizes that sport can "become a power asset" in the form of soft power to benefit the image and influence of a country on the world stage.[26] In light of the most recent Olympics in Sochi and the current discussions around holding the 2022 Winter Olympics in Beijing, Cha represents a new wave of scholars looking to incorporate the conceptualization and practice of sport within the building of the national and the international community itself. The use of sport as a negotiator of intercultural relations has proven to be a "critical ally" of China, as it attempted to use the 2008 Beijing Olympics to "close the door on a difficult period in its national history and to start anew."[27]Although Cha does have a lengthy discussion on how sports "can be a facilitator of change within a country", he rarely assesses how the athletes competing act as the ambassadors of this social change.[28] Individuals like tennis player Li Na or basketball hero Yao Ming have played a vital role as agents of change. As intermediaries between the domestic and international world, sports players are able to mediate differences between domestic and international customs and policies.

Although each of these authors brings a variety of different techniques to uncover the linkages between sport and nationalism, an entangled historical approach would provide a far wider lens, allowing the reader to dive deeper than the simple top-down concept of sport. In fact, this kind of approach would allow one to understand the bottom-up relationships between fan, athlete and corporation in a way that would be omitted within the nationalist rhetoric. One pioneer of this approach is Dr. Timothy Brook in his book *Vermeer's Hat*, which links the transnational relationship between imperial China and colonial Belgium during the 17th century into a bigger story of early modern global history. He is able to link the use of gun powder development in Ming China to the eventual colonization of Quebec by the French through the use of muskets, which he illustrates through a variety of complicating connections,

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[24] Victor Cha*, "A Theory of Sport and Politics," The International Journal of the History of Sport 26, no. 11 (September 1, 2009), pp 1581–1610*, 1584.
[25] Victor Cha, *Beyond the Final Score: Politics and Sport in Asia* (New York: Columbia University, 2009), 47.
[26] Cha, *Beyond the Final Score*, 48.
[27] Ibid, 61.
[28] Ibid, 3.

promoted for cultural and economic purposes, by simply analyzing the historical context of Johannes Vermeer's paintings. Thus, this approach facilitates understanding of the cultural paradigm that evolved within a Post-Mao China, while also shedding light on the connections that helped influence such change and adaption in the world of football, sports, media and economics.

Simply viewing sports and athletes as tools of the state, or tools to continually promote the cultural and economic goals of the state would miss the varied directions of agency evident in the early forging of football fandom and commercialisation. Although athletes do act on their own, but through socially and economically rooted conditions, we should not overlook the sports organisers, the non-centralized media outlets, and the implications of entrepreneurial initiatives and sports fandom. A complete study of football and sports culture should be able to connect the cultural, social, economic and social influences around the world and in distinct localities in a way that does not promote cultural imperialism. This entangled approach to history can uncover the means through which connections were forged and the world was changed. This new approach could synthesize the internationalist conceptualization of sports culture and the micro historical analyses from ground level cultural consumption and practice of sport.

The study of football on its road to professionalization thus requires a more entangled approach that links the socio-economic conditions of Europe to those of China at a similar point in time. This paper will focus on Guilianotti and Robertson's *glocalization* theory to explain to the process of the Sinification of football in the reform era.[29] According to Robertson, glocalization is the "tailoring and advertising of goods and services on a global or near-global basis to increasingly differentiate local and particular markets."[30] Sociologist Howard Nixon III states that glocalization "is important because it challenges the assumption rooted in dependency theory that globalization necessarily means that local social patterns and cultural ideas and practices are dominated and replaced by global imports."[31] In studying the link between localities and global patterns, they explore the mutual interdependency of local and global in order to distinguish the unique local adaptation of cultural commodity within a

[29] Richard Giulianotti and Roland Robertson , "Glocalization and Sport in Asia: DiversePerspectives and Future Possibilities," Sociology of Sport Journal, 2012, Vol.29, pp 433-454.
[30] Roland Robertson, "G*localization:Time-space and homogeneity- heterogeneity," in* Global Modernities *:Theory, culture & society*, *Featherstone et al. eds, (London: Sage Publications, 1995), 28* .
[31] Howard L. Nixon,, *Sport in a Changing World* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 100.

global discussion of culture and sport. Although Giulianotti and Roberston have already discussed concepts of glocalization in Asia and the glocalization of football in general, this paper will expand on their general application of glocalization through the analysis of football development during the reform-era in China.

Furthermore, the use of Dick Hebdige's theory of subculture and ''bricolage'' will assist in directly linking the intricacies of local and global culture to explain how groups in China were able to pick and choose the elements of their cultural spheres, attributing a meanings to these newfound symbols in an alternative (dominant culture) and rebellious (parent culture) phenomenon. [32] According to Hebdige, the "bricolage" of culture and the creation of subcultural groups act as "mundane ritual whose function it is to make us feel at home, reassure us, to fill up the gap between desire and fulfillment."[33] In Paul Pickowicz's estimation, the study of culture within the theory of globalization 'is one dimensional' and ''focuses all the attention on a single external factor.''[34] However, cultural historians are now tasked with ''locating globalization in the context of recent domestic history'' in order to observe the ''agency of the Chinese people'' within a localizing effort and a globalizing world. [35] Consequently, the analysis of football culture as a subcultural phenomenon will disrupt the old binaries of state vs citizen in order to grasp the alternative cultural processes that occurred during the reform-era. The use of cultural theory to study the growth of local Chinese football fandom and the entrepreneurial initiatives of the initial wave of consumerism in post-Mao China will assist in fulfilling what Robertson and Guilianotti theorized, but did not flesh out with detailed case studies based on primary sources.

This work will utilize two major sports journals to assess the discrepancies in sports culture rhetoric during the post-Mao Era. Firstly, the *China Sports and Technology* (Zhongguo Yundong Keji) is a scientific journal that began print in 1960. This journal, originally published in conjunction with the National Sports Commission of China, was utilised to promote the national developments of sports culture and performance amongst the intellectual elite. The study of such a journal would allow one to feel the pulse of high level political discussion in regards to the anxieties of sports performance and the ongoing dialogue

[32] Dick Hebdige*, Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (New York: Routledge, 1979), 139
[33] Ibid, 139.
[34] Pickowicz, *From Underground to Independent*, 7.
[35] Ibid.

of reform within the sporting administration. On the flipside, *Soccer World* (Zuqiu Shijie), which began publication in 1980, was far more accessible than *China Sports and Technology* and was widely distributed amongst the masses. Although based in Beijing, the magazine offered urban Chinese a glimpse into the development of national football practices and culture, while also acting one of the first means of exposure to global football culture. In short, *Soccer World* represented a break from top-down national sports rhetoric and began to attract a passionate base of readers that would soon emerge as the initial football fans of reform-era China. The study of both sources can allow one to compare and contrast the rhetorical, developmental and philosophical approaches of top-down and bottom-up initiatives in order to gage the the complexities of football development within the 1980s and 1990s.

First, this paper will discuss China's reintegration into the international sporting world, as it sought to rejoin the Asian Football Confederation in 1976 and FIFA and the International Olympic Committee in 1979. It will analyze the state of football following the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976 and explain the first instances of what many refer to as "Football Diplomacy". This section will seek to realign connections between sport, trade and internationalism to offer a more complicated story than the narrative of diplomatic relations which dominate existing writing. Instances like West Bromwich's tour of China in 1978, Watford FC's tour of China in 1984 or China's first World Cup qualifying home game in 1981 are the first instances of rapport between China and international sporting peers but these events were not centralized government initiatives but rather represent the coming together of local agents with their own often conflicting desires. Contemporary football magazines and physical culture journals will bring a stronger sense of context to this tangled story, and it will become clear that this rapprochement was not the centrally-guided political project it is often assumed to be.

The second chapter discusses the early discourse of reform in football in harmony with the early reform era (1979-1986). This section seeks to explain the way that football culture was able to penetrate to the local markets of urban China, while other international cultural commodities, such as pop culture icons Elton John and George Michael, two of the first global stars to perform in China, did not. Furthermore, this section outlines the first stages of football fandom, as local forms of media became available through the implication (unclear) of the Chinese Football Association.

Furthermore, the third section section will be vital in illustrating the complicated relationship between the National Sports Commission of China and the Chinese Football Association. Prior to the Open Door Policy of 1979, the Chinese sport governance system was a huge state-run enterprise that resembled that of the Soviet Union. The government was responsible for funding and monitoring all sporting affairs and operations under a centrally planned, hierarchical bureaucratic and economic system. Soon after the implementation of the open-door policy, the sport governance system gradually evolved with the changing economic paradigm, as China itself was moving towards a free market economy. Consequently, this section will discuss the first instances of local Chinese football commercialisation as it relates to sponsorship, media and capital. The discussion between the AFC, football fans and the State Sports Commission during the 1980s would mirror the political and economic rhetoric of the Chinese Communist Party elite.

The fourth chapter will explore the evolving channels of media that Chinese football fans would have access to and how the implementation of this evolving technology abroad (magazines and satellite television) negotiated a special space for football within the realm of Chinese sports. This section will discuss the first instances of local Chinese football commercialisation as it relates to sponsorship, media and capital. Furthermore, this section will tie in the international linkages required in order to both incorporate and alter multiple facets of global mediatisation and commercialism to fit a Chinese context.

Lastly, the conclusion of the work will seek to tie in the emerging themes of fandom, athletic professionalization, mediatisation and mass commercialism to the current slogan of the "Chinese Dream" in an effort to display the compatibility of football within China's flow towards a market economy and an economic and cultural powerhouse. Furthermore, this conclusion will seek to crystalize the necessarily transnational linkages required in order to grow an industry such as commercial sports and how this specific sport stood above the rest as one that would change China and, in turn, would be changed itself.

Chapter 1) Friendship First, Competition Second: Football in The Heat of the Sun

Modern football initially found its way into China during the aftermath of the First Opium War against Great Britain. Although a similar game (*cuju)* had been practiced in the imperial city of Beijing for hundreds of years, the cultural export of organized football to China was a result of the sport's growing cultural prestige in England at the time. With the inception of association football in 1863, the expansion of leisure sport from pastime to a commercial and entrepreneurial initiative became increasingly attractive to prospective owners.[36] Consequently, when Shanghai became the first British development in 1842, the transformation of the Huangpu River from humid swamp to industrial center allowed for the export of new social and cultural practices.[37] The influx of trade and infrastructure led to the amical football games between local athletic clubs and Royal Navy teams stationed in the area. With the help of the YMCA, the Shanghai Recreational Club was founded by 1888, and would eventually create the first known football club in China: Shanghai FC.[38]

In 1911, after the fall of the Qing Empire, the game was dominated by British and other European expatriates, but, with the help of the YMCA, the development of modern sports in China became far more inclusive. After setting up a branch in Shanghai in 1899 and forty branches by 1922, the YMCA played a vital role in the promotion of sports education and sponsorship in the early 20th century.[39] The sponsorship of the YMCA also boosted the promotion of mainland Chinese involvement in sporting participation at a time where China as a whole was being represented in the world of international sport by Hong Kong.[40] However, with the creation of the China National Amateur Athletic Federation in 1921, which included the Chinese Football Association, and the establishment of the first all-Chinese football club, the 'Three Cultures Club ''of the Shanghai Football League, the early 1920s saw a stronger involvement of local Chinese in football. As Chinese intellectuals began to focus on the training of bodies for the nation, the creation of the Chinese National Games presented the first

[36] Bobby Charlton, *The Rules of Association Football (Oxford: University of Oxford Press,2009)* 7.
[37] Dave Twydell, *The Little Red Book of Chinese Football* (Harefield: Yore Publications, 1994), 16.
[38] Neil Eaves, Nigel Empson and Daniel Fletcher, *Football in China* (London : SportBusiness Group, 2003),43.
[39] Xu, *Olympic Dreams*, 26.
[40] Ibid, 30.

stage to promote and celebrate national and social progress as it pertained to the "creation of the modern nation-state."[41] In conjunction with the promotion of sport, football was utilised for international relations, as Morris points to the use of football as China's "internationalist start" when it received the Philippines' football team in 1923.[42] However, the anxieties of the "Sick Man" broke through the passionate Shanghai crowd, as the paying spectators and the players responded violently to the unfavorable match result (3-0).[43] Early signs of consumerism and fandom had begun to burgeon, as local fans paid for tickets to enjoy a spectacle (and thus the first instances of spectator leisure sport), but their interests seemed irrevocably tied to the nationalist anxieties that had plagued China for decades.

With the rise of the Chiang Kai-Shek's Nationalist Party in 1927, the slogan "training bodies for the nation" became a popular, as the war ridden nation sought to shed its moniker of the "Sick Man of Asia" once and for all.[44] The Nationalist Party elite utilized the spectacle of sport within urban centers in order to promote a re-emergence within the international fold, as they actively sought to participate in both FIFA (1931) and the IOC (1932) while promoting the importance of National Games on home soil.[45] Although football was a prominent sport within the pantheon of China's National Games tournament, local games did not have strong enough fan support for the football to stand above other sports like long distance running, gymnastics or weight lifting. Furthermore, citizens were encouraged to attend these exhibitions of national strength in accordance with other nationalist initiatives from the Nationalist Party during their New Life movement in 1934.[46] However, by 1937, sporting events were tossed aside as the threat of Japanese invasion destabilized the middle kingdom and sent it into a decade of war; eventually leading to a civil war in 1947 that would be won by Mao Zedong's Communist Party in 1949.

Since the founding of the People's Republic of China, football, like most sports, was played as a celebration of national health. However, the ongoing issue of the two China's (Communist mainland China and Nationalist Taiwan) led to a continuing dispute that saw

[41] Brownell, *Training The Body For China*, 50.
[42] Morris, *Marrow of the Nation*, 96.
[43] Ibid.
[44] Xu, Olympic Dreams, 61.
[45] Ibid, 65.
[46] Dikotter Frank, *The Discourse of Race in Modern China* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 119.

China pull itself out of FIFA and the IOC in 1958.[47] Nevertheless, through the emulation of the Soviet penchant for team sports, China continued to partake in friendly football games with Communist Bloc nations as a means of asserting their position and prestige within the communist world. From 1949 to 1958, the Communist Party would often send make shift teams like the People's Liberation Army (the national army football team) or municipal teams to play in Hungary, Czechoslovakia or Yugoslavia to promote "friendship and cooperation."[48] By the mid-1950s, municipal teams coming from Beijing and Shanghai, amongst others, were also sent to play in Moscow or Bucharest in the interest of unity. During this period, the Maoist revolutionary rhetoric promoted athletes to "fight for the revolution, practice ambition and high sense of political responsibility" and to "implement strict training and strict requirements."[49]

Furthermore, the domestic administration of sport changed after the birth of the People's Republic, as the creation of the State Physical Culture and Sports Commission was established in 1952 with the task of "imitating the Soviet model" and creating sports schools in order to ensure a pyramidal effect where the state can control sporting administrations from top to bottom.[50] Another objective of the Sports Commission was to organize and promote the National Games of the People's Republic of China, which would act as the major national sports competition. The tournament, identical to the prior Chinese National Games, called on the different regions of China to send teams , sometimes more than one, to partake in a celebration of the nation; the last of which occurred in 1965, one year prior to the Cultural Revolution.[51] During this time, athletes were employees of the state and their wage was based solely on their seniority, without much of development league or any commercial sponsorship to assist them in the meantime. Unfortunately, upon the start of the Cultural Revolution, in 1966, the practice of sports on a massive level was suspended, but would soon rise back to national prominence by the mid 1970s.

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[47] Hong Fan and Xiong Xiaozheng, "Communist China: Sport, Politics and Diplomacy," in *The International Journal for the History of Sport*, Vol.19, 2002, pp.317-340, 317.
[48] Chen Chengda, "The last 20 years of Football development in China ," *China Sports and Technology*, Issue 01, 1973, pp 9-15, 9.
[49] Ibid, 10.
[50] Hong Fan, *Politicisation of Sport in Modern China: Communists and Champions* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 7.
[51] Ibid, 19.

Prior to the Cultural Revolution, it was clear that China had to "adapt to a high level of competition" and the proper development of modern football would require "higher speed and technical requirements". [52] Although state research promoted internal solutions, such as the increase of technical skill and choosing taller players for the national team, there was little interest in foreign players and knowledge for the development of Chinese football. However, by the mid-1970s, the rhetoric of academic sports journals, most notably *China Sports and Technology* (*Zhongguo Tiyu Keji*), would begin to point to the necessity of seeking outside assistance. By 1976, the Beijing Amateur Sports School on Nanjing East Road was called upon by the Ministry of Sport to change" the backwardness of Chinese football in order to compete at the international level within three to five years."[53] In the aftermath of their loss in the 1975 Asian Cup, it had become clear to the leaders of Chinese football that change was needed.

A) Professional Football in Europe

Meanwhile, half way around the world, the realm of British sports culture, most notably football, was at a crossroads of its own. With declining profits and viewership by the late 1960s, the beautiful game "shifted away from a spectator sport" and became a mass audience sport.[54] This shift occurred in conjunction with the rapid growth of English suburbia, the increase of domestically orientated leisure sports and the increased popularity of television. As the British economy enjoyed a ten year period of relative prosperity, there was an increase in discretionary income that led to a more "aggressive commercial pattern of leisure activity."[55] Consequently, the increase in television viewership led to the increase in sponsorship revenue, as corporations sought to advertise their product on the popular British Broadcast Corporation. As the game grew to a larger national television audience, sports sponsorship revenue grew from 1 million pounds in 1966 to 16 million in 1976 and to 250 million by 1990.[56] Thus, the period between 1976 and 1990 saw an international increase of English football as a whole. The most intriguing statistic is the gargantuan increase between 1976 and 1990, which also

[52] Xi Dixiong, "Several problems with the ball," *China Sports and Technology*, 1974 Issue 09, pp 10-11, 10.
[53] Bu Jinzhong, "Youth Football training to adapt to the development trend of modern football," *China Sports and Technology,* 1976, Issue 9, pp 30-34, 30.
[54] Raymond Boyle and Richard Haynes, *Power Play: Sport, the Media and Popular Culture* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 46.
[55] Boyle and Haynes, *Power Play*, 46.
[56] Ibid.

coincides with the export and sale of television rights to international markets, such as China and Japan.

However, this was not unique to Great Britain, as Italy had also begun pushing its storied football clubs from non-for-profits to profit oriented brands. English clubs had generally operated like companies, as they were the first profit-oriented teams in Europe. Italian football soon followed in 1981, as teams that had traditionally been considered not-for-profit sports clubs were, overnight, turned into" joint-stock companies with the qualification that any profit be reinvested in the sport."[57] Furthermore, these newly labelled joint-stock companies were now subject to new taxes that a recovering Italian government solely needed, while also allowing these teams to become public traded entities with shareholders or sole owners with a knack for diversifying their product and expanding their existing capital. Similarly to their English counterparts, clubs like AC Milan, Inter Milan, Roma F.C. and Diego Maradona's Napoli F.C. began seeking means to sell their product aboard through the sale of television rights, merchandise and national tours of untapped markets. China certainly presented itself as an untapped market, as, on June 25th, 1978, China Central Television (renamed from Beijing Television) rented an international communication satellite to telecast the world football game to the Chinese audience from Argentina.[58] Although there seemed to be a desire for the consumption of football in China, there were a few necessary events that needed to infold prior to truly allowing the sport to take off commercially.

B) A Return to the World Stage

Due to the help of FIFA executive, AFC vice-president and Hong Kong resident Henry Fok, members of the Chinese Football Association were able to meet in Tehran during the 1974 Asian Games.[59] The goal was to restore the PRC's seat in FIFA, but re-admittance within its regional district was the first step to international reintegration. By May 4th 1975, FIFA officials had been flown into Beijing to meet directly with CFA president Li Fengluo in order to hasten the progress in time for China to participate in the 1982 FIFA World Cup.[60] Even

[57] Hallgeir Gammelsæter and Benoît Senaux, *The Organisation and Governance of Top Football across Europe: An Institutional Perspective*.(New York: Routledge, 2011), 171.
[58] Hong Junhao, *The Internationalization of Television in China: The Evolution of Ideology, Society, and Media since the Reform* (Westport: Praeger Publishers, 1998), 58.
[59] Twydell *The Little Red Book of Chinese Football,* 32.
[60] *Chinese Football History* (Beijing: National Sports Commission and Chinese Football Association, 1993), 142.

prior to its re-admittance into FIFA, China had sent its national team to tour the United States in 1977, while also hosting International Friendship Tournaments with the likes of Mexico, Morocco, India and Zaire. These Friendship tournaments continued the long fabled themes of "Friendship First, Competition Second", as these tournaments were a way to compare China's level of play with that of their new international peers. In 1977, the first Beijing International Football Friendly Tournament was utilized to "enhance friendship," but also as an "exchange of talent and knowledge" in order to improve the national team.[61] Participating in the competition with football athletes from Asia, Africa, Latin America displayed "the large gap in performance" between stronger teams and that of China.[62]

Although the tournament did not end positively for China, two major observations were made. Firstly, the fans who watched the games at the Workers Stadium of Beijing were "passionately engaged", as every match filled the sixty-six thousand seat stadium to maximum capacity; one of those seats was occupied by none other than CCP leader Deng Xiaoping himself.[63] Due to his time in France as a youth, Deng Xiaoping became familiar with the passion and deep symbolism surrounding football and consistently presented himself during these awe-inspiring spectacles.[64] These annual international tournaments would serve as "experiments" where "data could be collected" in order to distinguish the technical and physical deficiencies of the Chinese players in comparison with other elite talent. Ultimately, a trend had begun in Beijing, where the National Sports Commission of China would begin to attract competition from all over the world in an effort to assist its political aspirations of international inclusion.

Over the following two years, each Friendship tournament or professional club tour of China would further reinforce the idea of a technical and performative gap between foreign professional footballers and the national Chinese team. Although this paper will touch on the effects of the influential professional tours of 1978, it is first important to understand what was being pushed towards the State Council in the meantime. The State Council of China was the governing body in charge of establishing legislation for various branches of culture, most notably sports. By June 6th 1979, enough empirical data had been assembled by their

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[61] Anonymous,"Comments On The First Beijing International Friendly Tournament*," China Sports and Technology* 1977, Issue 13, pp 4-8, 5.
[62] Ibid.
[63] *Chinese Football History*,198.
[64] Anonymous,"Comments On The First Beijing International Friendly Tournament*,"* 6.

subsidiary (National Sports Commission) to approve the creation of the document "The Request Instruction from the NSC for Raising China's Elite Football Performance."[65] In their words, "the level of football can mirror or represent a country's symbol of strength, economic and cultural prosperity and national spirit."[66] The document proposed a multitude of avenues to accomplish this quick development : 1) Massively promote football amount youths 2) focus on building more football fields 3) Rapidly form a national youth team 4) strengthen international exchanges 5) increase scientific research 6) continue football invitational 7) construct a football training center and 8) increase propaganda.[67] Although they set out with multiple goals, which will be discussed at length, the committee did also mention the possibility of missing these targets due to China being "a poor country with limited funds."[68]

Football development was not the only field for which Chinese elites had begun discussions of major reform, as areas of commercial consumption, such as advertising and visual culture were also being promoted by members of the CCP. Commercial advertising and cultural consumption, according to Frank Dikotter's *Things Modern : Material Culture and Everyday Life in China* , were once part of the material culture of brand that ''intertwined sections of the population with international trends.''[69] The change in cultural consumption and commercial linkages was monopolized by the State during the Maoist era, but was gradually revived in the late 1970s. In 1979, the first tv commercial for a wine tonic was aired on the Shanghai TV station, which prompted a larger discussion of commercial advertising due to the influence of Deng Xiaoping's Open Door policy. Looking at the return of commercial advertising in China since 1979, Jing Wang's *Brand New China: Advertising, Media and Commercial Culture* assesses that process in which commercial advertising ''did not replicate the dualistic thinking of 'resistant locals' versus dominant 'multinationals.' [70] Her focus on the transnational links that were ''driven by synergy-making'' in order to uncover ''how one bonds with the locals in relation to domestic and ''multinational advertisers'' discusses a multitude of commercial cultural avenues, but curiously omits the

[65] *Chinese Football History*, 140
[66] *Chinese Football History*, 140.
[67] Ibid.
[68] *Ibid,* 141.
[69] Frank Dikotter, *Things Modern : Material Culture and Everyday Life in China*(London: Hurst, 2007), 8.
[70] Jing Wang, *Brand New China: Advertising, Media and Commercial Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 1.

field of sport. [71] The birth of football media and early forms of cultural commercialization will assist in bridging the work of Dikotter from the republican era into the reform era, while also expanding the work of Jing Wang's study of localizing commercial patterns within the context of football and sport as a whole.

C) The Birth of Football Media

Soon after the implementation of this document, youth teams began to form in urban sectors and were heavily promoted by the National Sports Commission. Furthermore, their scientific journal *China Sports and Technology,* in distribution since 1960, began to increase its yearly volume, moving from twelve to twenty issues a year by 1980. The focus of the journal was divided into integrated and specialized scientific investigations which sought to promote and enhance elite sporting performance. The journal, published in accordance with China Sports Daily, became more accessible during the 1980s, due to reform and opening of sport development rhetoric.[72] Thus, it can be understood that this journal was primarily focused towards scientific and academic audiences and not the general populace of urban China.

Meanwhile, due to the rampant demand for football, made no more evident than through the expensive diffusion of the 1978 World Cup Final on CCTV or the sellout crowds of the international invitational football tournaments, the Chinese Football Association, a subsidiary organization under the National Sports Commission, began funding a monthly periodical journal known as *Football World*, which would consistently inform fans of football news at home and abroad. The magazine was initially founded as a bimonthly journal in 1980 and, by 1985, reverted to a monthly journal. *Football World* sold approximately two-hundred and fifty thousand copies per issue in the early 80s, but, due to the growing popularity of the sport, that amount rose to approximately thirty million copies by the late 1980s.[73] The magazine reported on most local events and reviewed many abroad, while also profiling star athletes and professional clubs to promote growth. *Football World* utilized intriguing tools such as anecdotes from local players who had played abroad, fan created short stories called "A Fan's

[71] Ibid.
[72] *Chinese Football History*, 207.
[73] Ibid.

Dream", a section on international football friendship initiatives and Q&A's with national and visiting coaches.[74]

For many, these magazines were one of the first means of consuming football and, to an extent, culture originating outside of China. This is not to say that fans had never heard of Maradona or Pele, but these magazines did present them with an opportunity to follow and idolize these global football icons on a regular basis. In his work, Anthony Fung similarly analyzes the ''adaptation of global capital to devise new local strategies to produce programs and cultures palpable to the changing values of the new generations in China'' in order to ''parallel the strategies of how the Chinese authorities have shaped, distorted and even dictated the production, distribution, circulation and consumption of culture'' within the reform era and beyond. [75] The introduction and early adaptation of Chinese media to globalizing football culture thus displayed the "localization of global capital'' through new local avenues like magazine production and, as we shall soon see, television.

Essentially, these monthly magazines planted the first seeds of fandom in China, as it, unlike the academic journals, was publically accessible and editors actively sought interaction with readers. *Football World* magazine was largely distributed in Beijing, but it was not the only one of its kind. A newspaper named *Football* (Zuqiu) hud also begun print as early as 1980. This newspaper was a joint venture between the Guangzhou Physical Culture Association and the *Guangzhou Daily*. It consisted of monthly newspapers highlighting the current local and global football news.[76] It was the first sports centric newspaper and it was also actively involved in community sports activities. The newspaper fostered interest in football and also acted as an intermediary between enterprises and grassroots football teams to lay the foundation of sport sponsorship in China.[77] The production of monthly periodicals like *Football* and *Football World* represented a change in the means of consumption and the desire to consume sports information, of engaging in dialogue with other fans and of following sporting stars on a massive scale. Essentially, these magazines facilitated the early point of entry of a generation of youth into football. This same generation was central to cultural

[74] Anonymous, Fan's Dream, *Football World*, 1988, Issue 8, pp 19, 19.
[75] Anthony Fung, *Global Capital, Local* Culture: *Transnational media corporations in* China (New York: Peter Lang Publishing Group,2008), 22.
[76] *Chinese Football History*, p 206.
[77] Ibid.

paradigm of consumerism and consumer-focused, globalizing cultural capital in the 80s and 90s.

D) The Winds of Change : West Bromwich Albion and A.C. Milan in China

In 1978, the National Sports Commission realised , due in part to the success of the Football Friendship tournaments, that invitational games were an effective way to study and the best international athletes and see how China measured up. Based on foreign examples, the Commission even formed a permanent national team, rather than relying on municipal teams or the People's Liberation Army to represent China in friendly games. However, the question remained as to how a country that had just slowly returned into the international fold, after the relative isolation of the Cultural Revolution period, could make the first move to invite nations like Italy or England to play a game of "footy"? In the case of England, the connection was facilitated by Jack Perry. In 1953, Perry, the head of the London Export Corporation, was one of the first British businessmen allowed to visit the People's Republic after its inception in 1949.[78] Due to his twenty-five years of history in the world of international trade, Perry was approached by the National Sports Commission to facilitate a China tour by a British football team.[79] Calling on his favourite childhood team, Perry chose West Bromwich Albion Football Club as the organisation to approach in order to partake in the "realization of a dream."[80] Whose dream he was realizing will soon be up for debate.

Perry was able to secure funds for this great voyage, while being accompanied by the entire West Bromwich team and various members of the BBC. Furthermore, famous international FIFA referee Jack Taylor, Vice-Chairman of the British Sports Council John Disley and Bertie Mee, a representative of Watford FC of the English Premiership League, were also part of the entourage. The inclusion of these influential individuals indicated a strong interest on behalf of British professional football and FIFA for the study of this momentous tour. This was later confirmed by Taylor Frank and David Kingsley, the authors of *Albion in China,* who mentioned that football" is now a world game which, in the West, has

[78] Frank Taylor and David Kingsley, *Albion in China: The First British Football Tour to China, West Bromwich Albion* (New York: Pergamon Press, 1979), 1.
[79] Ibid.
[80] Ibid.

become a multi-million pound industry."[81] They believed that the English League, the "prototype all other countries should follow," was "taking the next step in becoming a world force."[82] Ultimately, this tour seemed to be serving two causes. On one hand, the British contingent was looking to complete this tour for the potential economic benefits of branching out into foreign markets such as China, while the Chinese were looking to utilize this tour as a means to establish closer economic rapport with the members of Jack Perry's entourage and measure up their regional teams against some elite international talent for scientific and technical evaluation.

Landing in Hong Kong on May 14th 1978, West Brom, the media and Jack Perry's entourage made their way to customs in order to receive clearance for their passage to Beijing. Upon arriving at the customs area, a giant red banner flew above the customs office and it read:

> "We must adhere to proletarian internationalism. Strengthen the unity between our party and the genuine Marxist-Leninist Parties, and strengthen the Unity between the people of our country and the peoples of other countries, particularly those of the third world. Unite all forces in the world than can be united, to carry on the struggle against imperialism, social imperialism and modern revisionism to the end."[83]

This banner illustrates the recent change in Chinese diplomatic relations, as the National Sports Commission was openly inviting the very former imperial force that this banner had sworn to struggle against. Consequently, this directly disproves past assumptions of theological cultural imposition, as the intervention of entrepreneurial intermediaries blurred the cultural dichotomy between a global cultural phenomenon such as football and the state. Evidently, football, in the sense of consumable culture, was afforded more space to negotiate alternative means of cultural expression and consumption in China. This display of ideological idiosyncrasy will become more apparent as this story marches in the 1980s.

Although the players understood their roles "as representatives of Britain" and "sporting ambassadors," they also appreciated the fluid positions and passions of the fans in the stands.[84]

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[81] Ibid.
[82] Ibid., 2.
[83] Taylor and Kingsley, *Albion in China,*2.
[84] Taylor & David, *Albion in China*, 3.

Noting the eighty-thousand person Stadium's raucous sell-out crowd, Frank Taylor described the fans as "magnificent "and praised their knowledge of the sport.[85] Finally, once West Brom had finished touring Shanghai and Guangdong, they dined with the Chinese Sports Commission contingent and their athletes. Jack Taylor, who was in high demand for refereeing international friendlies such as this, had "conducted seminars for Chinese referees" and had found a potential for professional football in China.[86] Bert Millichip, the chairman of West Brom and an influential figure in FIFA, "made it clear that he would use any influence he possesses" to assist China in joining FIFA once again. Lastly, Nien Weishi, the former center forward and current national coach, responded to the kindness of his guests by thanking them for showing the local's "weakness in technique and tactics" and for having "learned a lot from them."[87]

A year before, football superstar Pele and his New York Cosmos also toured China. During this time, the football legend instructed the representatives of the Chinese National Sports Commission to "play the most games with the most adversaries possible."[88] Consequently, within a month of the West Brom's visit of China, the National Sports Commission played host to another football powerhouse: Inter Milan. The Italian *Nerazzurri* (black and blues) were no strangers to playing on foreign soil, as they were one of the only professional teams to have visited the Soviet Union in 1960. By 1978, the conditions were somewhat similar, as the Milanese team ventured beyond the Bamboo Curtain that was slowly being hacked down from both sides. On June 10th, 1978, 24 hours after having won another national championship, Inter Milan touched down in Beijing to commence their week-long visit of the country.

Sandro Mazzola and Giancarlo Beltrami, two former Italian football stars turned executives, sought to organize "a study-voyage, without any strings attached, in order to open up football borders, exchange experiences on athletic preparation, tactics and medical practices."[89] Mazzola saw it fitting to "honor the Chinese people" with his final match.[90]

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[85] Ibid, 3.
[86] Taylor and Kingsley, *Albion in China,* 6.
[87] Ibid*, 2.*
[88] Oliva Alessandro, *L'Inter di Thohir con Zhang alla scoperta della Cina, sulla scia di Mazzola*, last viewed on January 6th ,2016 (http://www.calcioefinanza.it/2015/03/12/inter-marketing-thohir-cina/).
[89] Pedrazzini Marco, *Bentornata All'Inter d'Asia, Nella Cina del Dopo Mao*, Last viewed on January 6th ,2015, (http://www.fcinternews.it/vintage/bentornata-all-inter-d-asia-nella-cina-del-dopo-mao-80847).

Although the Chinese did not boast many elite athletes, especially in the aftermath of the Cultural Revolution, the executives of Inter Milan praised their attitudes and passion; this with the lack of a professional league or consistent football media. The cultural and tactical exchanges were deemed such a success that the Sports Commission had decided to send the newly formed national team to Italy in the summer of 1980. For Inter Milan and the Seria A football league, this consistent dialogue with the CFA and the National Sports Commission would allow these professional teams to independently "deepen the connection of football culture in other countries", while the Sports Commission sought the "acquisition of as much experience possible."[91]

In conclusion, it would seem that, as Mazzola eloquently put it, the "opening up of football borders" did indeed occur during the 1978 tours of both West Brom and Inter Milan. Similarly to the New York Cosmos the year prior and the multitude of Friendship tournaments, each party had a unique desire to forge a connection for their own means. The economic situation in England and Italy pushed each respective team to seek out new avenues for investment and expansion of influence, while the Chinese National Sports Commission and, as we will later see, the Chinese Football Association sought to promote a higher level of athletic standards for football players through the acquisition of foreign knowledge.

Be it as it may, these instances, coupled with the creation of a Football Development Committee in 1979, would make way for a unique instance in post-Mao China; one that would see the birthing of fandom and sports consumerism. . The state project of studying foreign talent effectively served as an advertisement of higher quality play and created the first instances of cultural football commodity, as the individual fan became enthralled with the knowledge of the international game. In doing so, the Friendship Tournaments fostered the first fan-based desires for heightened levels of football performance within a local setting and these voices would soon begin to make themselves heard. Although local level agency was still in its infancy at this point, the growing appeal of football in China, primarily due to its heightened importance from a political level, had begun to prompt the involvement of local actors (entrepreneurs, youth, physical culture officials, etc). Nevertheless, the early instances of fandom would begin promptly in the early instances of the 1980s, as magazines, television

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[90] Bagozzi Marco *La Missione Eurasiatica Dell'FC Internazionale,* Last viewed on January 6th (http://www.statopotenza.eu/2189/la-missione-eurasiatica-dellfc-internazionale).
[91] Bagozzi, *La Missione Eurasiatica Dell'FC Internazionale*

and commercial campaigns would promote the local development of football within a changing urban landscape in China

Chapter 2) The Birth of Football Commercialism and The Rise of Football Fandom

A) Watford FC and Wham! In China: Two Case Studies, Two Different Results

In early 1982, José D'Amico, a championship winning Argentine coach, was invited by the National Sports Commission to perform lectures for the Liaoning youth team.[92] The best football coaches from across the country attended the lectures, while several athletes also sat in. Due to D'Amico's time in the United Kingdom, France, Portugal, Spain, Uruguay, Italy, Belgium and the United States, the Commission believed he would "close the gap" between China's technical play and that of world powers; a gap that had continued to "grow due to a quicken pace of development in the West over the last ten to fifteen years." [93] Due to the continued defeat of Chinese football teams at the hands of their foreign guests, many within the National Sports Commission believed that the invitation of teams and football personalities would assist in "fundamentally opening the development of football."[94]

Liu Guojiang of the National Commission had observed during his time in Germany and Italy that the two nations had "a long history and tradition" and have maintained their position as "two of the world's football powers" because of their multi-faceted engagement with the development of football."[95] He believed that, in order "to catch up as soon as possible on the popularity of football", the Commission needed to have a "multi-faceted approach that had been rarely implemented".[96] He also acknowledged the higher degree of popularity in sports consumption in urban spaces like Shanghai, but believed that the popularity of football culture in Europe went beyond the confines of urban and rural; culture that would include facets like media, sponsorship and gamesmanship.[97]

By 1983, China was moving at a very different pace than in prior years. After the implementation of Deng Xiaoping's Open Door Policy, experimental initiatives, known as Special Economic Zones, were set up in the south. The SEZ's were regions that were granted permission to deal with foreign investment and international demand. In short, the Communist

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[92] Shen Lin, "Ingeniously Unique: Teaching Training Characteristics of Argentine Football Expert Jose D'Amico," *China Sports and Technology*, 1982, Issue 28, pp 35-42, 42.
[93] Ibid, 38.
[94] Liu Guojiang, "Route to the Development of Football," *China Sports and Technology*, 1980, Issue 17, pp 1-4, 1.
[95] Ibid.
[96] Ibid, 3.
[97] Ibid, 4.

Party was testing the waters of a market economy that it would later dub "Socialism with Chinese characteristics."[98] These new initiatives were brought forth through the promotion of the Four Modernizations, which were a set of goals outlined by Zhou Enlai in 1963 and rehashed by Deng Xiaoping in late 1978.[99] The four modernization concept promoted the strengthening of the fields of agriculture, industry, national defense and science and technology. As the domain of sport intersects with the fields of industry, science and technology, the years following the visits of the English and Italian powerhouses harmonized the ideological pathologies of state rhetoric with the Commission's continued experimentation through the use of multiple friendly football games - an era of experimentation, from top to bottom.

The Communist Party found itself at an ideological crossroads between communist and market economies (commonly referred to as the Fang-Shou cycle), and there were parallels between market discourses and the rhetoric surrounding the development of football.[100] The divergence between the willingness to promote football in the name of international integration and letting in free-market influences was never more evident than through the analysis of two separate events in 1983 and 1985. In 1983, another English club by the name of Watford F.C. had decided to tour China for two weeks. Watford representatives such as Bertie Mee took part in the West Brom tour of 1979, and the London Exchange Company once again worked to secure funding and visas. The executive members were already familiar with the process and were able to organize the tour with the National Sports Commission. Their chairman, Elton John, also participated and said "that beyond football, he hoped to visit the Peking Conservatory and meet China's young musicians."[101] The British artist, who grew up a Watford FC fan, had invested large sums of his fortune in order to push the club out of the basement of the British football league standings. Consequently, as acting chairman, he was brought along on this tour as an executive. After arriving in Beijing on June 10th, the Watford players and their executives went straight to the pitch, where Elton John "enjoyed the anonymity of China" due to his "music being unknown and no more than an exotic

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[98] Deng Xiaoping, Build Socialism with Chinese Characteristics (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1985), 35.
[99] Deng Xiaoping, "The 'Two Whatevers' Do Not Accord with Marxism," 24 May 1977, as seen in Deng Xiaoping, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping* (1975-1982), Vol. 2 (Beijing: Foreign Language Press, 1984), pp51-52, 51
[100] Baum Richard, *Burying Mao: Chinese Politics in the Age of Deng Xiaoping* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 6.
[101] Joan Hanauer, "China Trip: Elton," United Press International, June 6, 1983 (http://www.upi.com/Archives/1983/06/06/CHINA-TRIP-Elton-John/5205423720000/).

curiosity."[102] Graham Taylor, the manager of the club and the mastermind behind the trip to China, made his players practice alongside the Chinese National Team at the Workers Stadium in Beijing in an effort to foster a "friendly exchange of views." [103]The players, some still students at the Beijing Sports Institute, were ecstatic to be meeting English Premier League players and discussing their favourite stars, such as Keegan Kevin.[104]

Images of the team were put on display all over *Football World* for young and all to see, as the April and May editions of the magazine displayed pictures of the club's athletes prior to their tour of China.[105] Consequently, readers were exposed to a clearly demarcated consumer product for the first time and thus were able to purchase tickets to see the professional team they had heard so much about. Fan commitment and commercial activity converged in an important popular culture moment. During the game, fans were very passionate, with a live audience of fifty thousand and a television audience estimated at 350 million.[106] With the Department of Public Security monitoring them, fans displayed a strong sense of humility, even as the central speaker continuously shouted orders on how to behave during the game.[107] Watford continued their tour in Shanghai, where they found a similar stadium environment. Although the spectators were subject to constant monitoring, they were soaking in the experience of professional football in a sold out stadium. The citizens even booed their home team after they gave up a fifth goal. The friendly ended with a 5-1 loss, but nonetheless the Watford tour displayed a staggering example of fandom that had begun to take root within the urban spaces of 1980s China since the first introduction of international and professional football in 1978. One of the first instances of Western cultural consumption in China was made possible because of transnational economic connections, however, as we will soon see, other facets of Western popular culture were not as adaptable as football culture.

By the time Watford FC and Elton John returned to England, two of John's friends, Freddie Mercury and George Michael, had already caught wind of the China tour. At the time, Wham! had achieved strong commercial success in the UK, but had not had the necessary publicity to truly demarcate themselves as cultural icons. Consequently, the manager of

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[102] Martin Amis, *Visting Mrs. Nabokov* (New York: Harmony Books, 1994), 37.
[103] "Elton John Arrives With Watford Football Club," *London Daily Telegraph*, June 11th 1983.
[104] Ibid.
[105] See *Football World*, 1983, Issue 3&4 , 1.
[106] Amis, *Visting Mrs. Nabokov* , 39.
[107] Ibid.

Wham!, Simon Napier-Bell, orchestrated the duo's eventual expedition by tricking a junior Party minister into hearing him out, with the minister assuming that Napier-Bell was a foreign investor.[108] Napier-Bell convinced the ministers to allow Wham!, instead of prospective bands such as Queen or the Rolling Stones, to be the first Western band to play in the People's Republic. Ultimately, Napier-Bell won his cause through many late night suppers and had effectively convinced the organizing committee that Freddie Mercury's sexual orientation made him unsuitable for a Chinese crowd.[109] Napier-Bell had sold the concert to the Chinese as a way to show they were open to foreign investment; however the means to getting the concert underway presented an instance of trickery which was necessary in order to pioneer the first pop concert in the People's Republic. Furthermore, the presentation of the event displayed official hesitancy toward allowing western musical culture to penetrate the Chinese market; a hesitance that was not as stern or obvious in the everyday exposure of international football within an urban Chinese setting. Football represented a spectacle that promoted notions of unity and mobilization that did not deter from the cultural status quo, while Western Pop music presented significant differences in their lyrics, stage presence, dance moves and overall product.

Although the Chinese crowd did not know of Wham or their songs, Napier-Bell had local singers record versions of the band's music in Chinese and then proceeded to give away cassettes with the originals and the covers to everyone who bought a ticket.[110] However, on those tickets, sold with the very cassettes made to entice the Chinese population, were written: "Listen, but don't learn."[111] The Department of Public Security, responsible for the discretionary message on the tickets, was involved in every aspect of the show's design, from the stage lighting to George Michael's attire and dance moves.[112] In short, Wham! did perform in Beijing in 1985, but it was on Chinese terms and within the confines of a Chinese cultural paradigm. Meanwhile, Napier-Bell had sold the concert to the Chinese as "a way to show they

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[108] *When China met Wham! Thirty years ago, the band staged first Western pop concert*, CBC Radio, last viewed on January 9th, (http://www.cbc.ca/radio/asithappens/as-it-happens-friday-edition-1.3028194/when-china-met-wham-thirty-years-ago-the-band-staged-first-western-pop-concert-1.3028466).
[109] Anderson Lindsay, *Wham! in China - Foreign Skies*, 20th Century Fox, 1998.
[110] *When China met Wham! Thirty years ago, the band staged first Western pop concert*, CBC Radio, last viewed on January 9th, (http://www.cbc.ca/radio/asithappens/as-it-happens-friday-edition-1.3028194/when-china-met-wham-thirty-years-ago-the-band-staged-first-western-pop-concert-1.3028466).
[111] Anderson Lindsay, *Wham! in China - Foreign Skies*.
[112] Ibid.

were open to foreign investment," but, Napier's true intent was "to jack up Wham!'s profile in America."[113] Ultimately, the match between Western Pop-Culture and the political elite of China was not as easy-going as football culture was, as sports culture did serve a political purpose for them without necessarily jeopardizing the CCP's cultural hegemony.

During the late 1970s and early 1980s, party officials attempted to experiment with Western culture but feared the possibility of negative influences on the general populace. In the case of football, its importance was expanded upon through the old national paradigm, but it was not foreseen that local initiatives would pave the way for fandom, desires and alternatives. China's international identity was being fashioned through a joint relationship between international actors looking to boost a global brand, local passionate fans who wanted to see quality play and the state governing bodies who wished to increase the quality of their team in order to gain prestige on the international level. Perhaps a good place to start in understanding this process is at the first instance of global football in China. On September 29th 1981, China was partaking in its first World Cup qualification game at home. The entire world had eyes on this event, as BBC news reporter Barry Davies explained that the game "symbolized hope for cooperation," while admiring a country "looking to be accepted."[114] China would go on to lose to New Zealand in a playoff round on January 10th 1982, with many calling for necessary reform and potential investors ready to accommodate a new commercial opportunity.

By 1982, there was continued internal debate as to how to promote and improve football development on the ground. The National Sports Commission's two main approaches to this problem, which they had maintained since 1979, were "exporting human capital" (*Song chuqu*) and "bringing foreign resources in" (*Qingjinlai)*.[115] As we have already seen, the National Sports Commission believed that importing talent in order to study them would bear fruit from a scientific and technical perspective. A perfect encapsulation of these policies is the case of FIFA technical consultant Carlos Alberto Parreira, who was invited to Kunming to give lectures and participate in training for the national football team coaches in tactical and

[113] Anderson Lindsay, *Wham! in China - Foreign Skies.*
[114] Barry Davies, *BBC Sports Report: Chinese football in Peking,* September 1989, 4 :10 mins.
[115] Tien-Chin Tan, *Chinese Sports Policy and Globalisation: The case of the Olympic movement, elite football and elite basketball (*PhD diss*),* Loughborough University , 2008), 214.

technical practice drills and coaching strategies.[116] He spoke of changes needed "in the internal environment'' with the aim of ''building a solid foundation for tactical experimentation."[117]

In contrast, the Commission had come to the conclusion that the "improper use of young athletes" that are "forced to adapt to coaches" had created a "need for urgent change" in the development of youth players and the tactical training of national team players. [118] Some even advocated for an increase in the "importance of physical strength" and "the improvement of physical training for football players on positional need."[119] Many believed that any rapid development would need to expand the athlete's mandate in the realm of the sport, to accelerate the pace of competition, increase the number of friendlies played at home, and increase the standards of athletic performance.[120] It was Sports Commission's belief that, in following what "so many teams in the world do to prepare for the World Cup," the national team would rise to international standards. The need to "catch up" was visible through the Commission's import of Italian, French German and British sports experts in order to train the athletes and their coaches for Olympic success.[121] However, the State Council, the governing body above the Sports Commission and the government overseer of sporting success, stated that they had ''to send our national and strongest provincial teams, especially the new young national squads, in a planned way and in groups, to European and South American countries to be trained there for 6 - 12 months."[122] Accordingly, on 20th November 1981, the first Chinese national team youth , headed by coach Gao Fengwen, partook in a two month trip to Argentina and Peru for over 2 months, but, due to limited funding, young national squads could train abroad for no more than a few months at a time.[123]

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[116] Chen Yilin, "The Characteristics Of Modern Football and The Status Quo Of Chinese Football ," *China Sports and Technology,1983,* Issue 17, pp 40-46, 40.
[117] Ibid.
[118] Wen Weiguan, "Several Problems WithThe Cultural Center," *China Sports and Technology*, 1983 Issue 4, pp 23-26, 25.
[119] He Jaicai, "On The Physical Problem of How To Better Our Football Players", *China Sports and Technology,* 1980, Issue 2, 20-26, 21.
[120] Ibid, 22.
[121] See *China Sports and Technology*, 1979, Issue 18, pp 1-49.
[122] Tien-Chin, *Chinese Sports Policy and Globalisation* ,218.
[123] Ibid.

B) The Birth of Football Sponsorship

The Chinese Football Association, on the other hand, offered a more hands on approach with their youth and even invited corporate initiatives, such as utilizing the FIFA/Coca Cola International Football Academy in order to "upgrade" the knowledge of promising Chinese football coaches. [124] This initiative, headed by Sepp Blatter, sought to inform and train the next generation of coaches, with stops in Beijing in 1982 and Kunming in 1985.[125] The initial contact between Coke-Cola, FIFA and the CFA displayed another instance of international cooperation through the funding of sports sponsorship, as Coke-Cola was also utilizing the event in order to advertise their products that had just entered a burgeoning Chinese market in 1979. John Horne and Wolfram Manzenreiter believed that "both aspects of international trade and international relations were crucial in understanding why football acquired such a high standing in the region of East Asia," which can be observed through the utilization of both FIFA and corporate sponsorships such as Coca-Cola as a grassroots initiative rather than a top-down directive from the Sports Commission.[126]

The shift in international investment for local progression was headed by Li Fenglou, the chairman of the Chinese Football Association from 1979 to 1985, who advocated in *Football World* that "reform was necessary" in order to "change our development and achieve our dream."[127] He promoted a need to move beyond the ping-pong diplomacy model, as the country boasted a large population and a high level of demand for the sport.[128] *Football World* issues released followed the chairman's call for reform sought to inform readers of potential avenues for change through interviews with coaches from successful national teams such as Argentina and Brazil, while also promoting the concept of fandom (qiumi).Even during this time of tactical and scientific discussion between state and ground level organizers, domestic competition took a backseat to the national team's development. [129]

By 1980, the Sports Commission and the Ministry of Education promoted national football competitions for young players in the education system by setting up of three football divisions (A, B,C); where division C was designed for early youth and division B resembled a

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[124] *"Course in Kunming to Upgrade Football," China Daily*, November 27th, 1985, last viewed on January 9th 2016, (http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/epaper/html/cd/1985/198511/19851127/19851127007_9.html).
[125] Ibid.
[126] *Football Goes East,* Manzenreiter and Horne, eds, 4.
[127] Anonymous, ''My Dream,'' *Football World*, Issue 3, 1983, pp 2, 2.
[128] Ibid,
[129] Twydell, *Little Red Book of Football*, 15.

young adults league or a feeder league for Division A.[130] By 1984, the Division A league, which consisted primarily of southern teams and urban standouts Beijing and Shanghai, was heavily promoted by local governments and football centric newspapers in order to foster stronger development from the ground up. During this time, there were three types of football clubs: Privately owned, collectively owned and state owned clubs. The privately owned clubs were helmed by companies/corporations and were jointly owned by shareholders in a similar fashion to what Italian football clubs had advocated for a few years earlier. Furthermore, the athletes, executives, coaches and other staff members were given wage based contracts for exclusivity with the club. Clubs like Chongqing Lifan FC, Liaoning Hangxing FC and Shenzhen FC pioneered the concept of privately owned football clubs, creating a new space for the reinterpretation of cultural capital and a move towards a meritocratic wage system.[131] In contrast, collectively owned clubs were similar to privately owned clubs, but were financed and created by government owned initiatives and enterprises. Important examples include Shanghai Shenghua FC and Sichuan Quanxing FC. Lastly, the State-owned clubs were financed by local enterprises, but managed by local sports commissions and provincial or municipal governments.

Ultimately, the varying statuses of ownership correlated to character of China's industrial sector at the time, as government run organizations were still very much involved, while instances of free-market commercialism evolved within a hybrid system.[132] It was the CFA that first encouraged local factories and companies to sponsor government-owned clubs and this led to the first instance of Chinese football sponsorship.[133] By October 1984, through the aid of Guangzhou Daily and the Guangzhou Physical Culture Association, the Baiyunshan Pharmaceutical Factory became the first industrial and commercial enterprise to sponsor a football club. Local sports stores like Li-Sheng in Beijing and emerging factory kingpins in Shanghai soon followed suit.[134]

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[130] Fan Hong & Zhouxiang Lu , 'The Professionalisation and Commercialisation of Football in China (1993-2013),' *International Journal of the History of Sport*, 2013, vol. 30, no. 14, pp. 1637-1654, 1643.
[131] Hong & Lu , "The Professionalisation and Commercialisation of Football," 1643.
[132] Ibid.
[133] Dong Jinxia & J.A. Mangan, *Football in New China: Political Statement, Entrepreneurial Enticement and Patriotic Passion*, Soccer and Society 2001, Vol. 2 ,No. 3, pp. 79-100, 85.
[134] Zhang Zhe Li Bin , "Guangzhou Over The Last Fifty Years," *Guangzhou Daily*, October 10th, 2007, Last viewed on January 11th, 2016,(http://gzdaily.dayoo.com/html/2007-10/07/content_60853.htm).

C) Internal Propagation of Football Culture

These entrepreneurs in turn implored their peers to invest in the development of sports. An important example is Li Sheng's "Football Knowledge Competition" in January of 1985. Li Sheng, the Beijing Advertising Company and the Chinese Football Association jointly held the football event in an effort to "increase the standards of football athletes and teams."[135] The management team mentioned that general knowledge on the sport was lacking, and initiatives such as this were meant to "encourage teenagers to popularize football in order to enhance the understanding of football and promote the expansion of the game in China."[136] They also spoke about the need for rapprochement with other sports enterprises abroad, in Europe and North America, in order to "promote brand expansion and a large scale exchange of views and economic tactics."[137] Store manager Liu Bin believed the expansion of football culture to be in sync "with the current economic development of China's industrial sector" and thus promoted their partnership with local Beijing football team the Beijing Snowflakes.[138] They promoted their turn to a "specialized sports warehouse", where they would provide a "wide range of products ranging from training uniforms to top quality equipment" to furnish the promotion of their business and the national project of football development.[139]

The exploration of entrepreneurial investment within the realm of sports culture can be traced, in part, to the State Council's alteration of labor laws in 1986, as enterprises and entrepreneurs were granted the ability to hire their own workforce, rather than having the government place citizens in lifetime jobs. The shift toward relative economic independence from the standpoint of the citizen worker and the entrepreneur led to an expansion of economic opportunity while also redefining the localities of wealth, as the majority of capital was found in booming urban areas such as Shanghai and Guangzhou. Doug Guthrie's *China and Globalization: The Social, Economic and Political Transformation of Chinese Society* highlights the importance of change in labor law which "transformed in a fundamental way"

[135] Yang Fu, "Enterprises Should Help Football Take Off", *Football World*, 1985, Issue 12, pp 4-5, 4.
[136] Ibid.
[137] Ibid.
[138] Ibid.
[139] Ibid.

the workplace and, indirectly, the public sphere, as new relationships between enterprises and workers began to redefine the parameters of choice and investment.[140]

Consequently, as workplaces diversified, their obligation to provide recreational activities for workers diminished and this pushed the commercial sector into high gear. Whether it was pool tables or multilevel discos, entrepreneurs saw profitable niches to invest in as urban residents independently sought their own leisure activities for the first time. Prior to this, leisure activities were organised by the workplace and did not present workers with the choice or diversity than had begun to emerge in the 1980s due to the rise of television and independent leisure activities. Consequently, Deborah Davis points out that, within a span of three or four years, "urban residents, especially young adults, had a lengthy and ever-changing menu of topics and leisure activities to discuss and experience."[141] Accordingly, the entrepreneurial investment and the meritocratic development of the workforce created a new paradigm for sports consumption and practice, as the conventional concept of municipal or provincial teams was cast aside in favor of a commercial model of development that would become necessary in the creation of a semi-professional and, eventually, professional football league. The urban landscape had changed in order to incorporate and promote the role of leisure activity and football found itself at the forefront of this new movement. The evolution of leisure activity, coupled with the growth of fandom and the heightened level of private entrepreneurial investment, accelerated the pace of football commercialization and its cultural commodification in urban China. Moreover, these factors allow one to observe the importance of the individual as a vital actor within the development of Chinese football, as their local conditions altered and allowed them a larger space for which to consume, promote and establish local football hubs.

In conjunction with a heightened level of investment and the first instances of fandom, television also promoted the accessibility of football as a consumable cultural commodity. The National Games and Chinese Football Association Cup were displayed on household TV monitors through CCTV (having now changed its name from Beijing Television Station) and, in some cases, even local municipal television stations (Beijing Television, Shanghai Television, etc). Furthermore, by 1982, CCTV had also begun regularly broadcasting World

[140] Doug Guthrie, *China and Globalization: The Social, Economic and Political Transformation of Chinese Society* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 207.
[141] Deborah Davis, *The Consumer Revolution in Urban China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 12.

Cup games, while a set of commemorative coins were released in honor of the global tournament.[142] By 1985, the total of household televisions had reached 49.68 million, which catapulted the local importance of football and the consumption of magazines like *Football* and *Football World*.[143] The quest for a heightened level of football performance was indirectly creating one of the first instances of consumerism with Chinese characteristics. One can observe that, through a change in local circumstances, a real shift in football development rhetoric on the ground was taking place which differed from the high levels of sports administration.

Through the discussion between state, football clubs, enterprises and athletes, it becomes much easier to understand how football culture developed naturally in an urban environment. In the case of pop culture, the lack of exposure to musical legends such as Elton John and George Michael displayed hesitancy from the high levels of government to include the musical hegemony of the West (mostly England and the United States) into popular Chinese cultural dimensions. In Zhong Xueping's *Mainstream Culture Refocused*, Zhong believed ''Chinese mainstream culture'' to be ''in flux,'' partly to due to new structural changes spurred on by ''changes in the dominant ideology'' and in the ''state's economic and cultural policies and also by corresponding rise of market forces.''[144] Furthermore, Deborah Davis' *The Consumer Revolution in Urban China* establishes that "the rapid commercialization of consumption did more than simply increase consumer choice and raise the material standard of living, it also broke the monopolies that had previously cast urban consumers role of supplicants to the state."[145] Accordingly, in the case of football, there seemed to be a two sided and organic push for the inclusion of international forces of sponsorship and commercialization as an irrevocable means to the heightening the pace of football development. This speaks volumes to the ability of football, as a global sport, to be adapted to the changing conditions of reform era China. In conclusion, the overall appeal of the game and the necessity to raise football standards and athletic development correlated to the industrial urban development of China as a whole, which offers a rare occasion to study a

[142] Eaves, Empson and Fletcher, *Football in China*, 47.
[143] Tan Hua,"Hooligans and Supporter Culture in China," in *Football Goes East: Business, Culture, and the People's Game in China, Japan, and South Korea*, Manzenreiter, Wolfram, and John Horne, eds(New York: Routledge, 2004) pp 87-100, 88.
[144] Zhong Xueping, *Mainstream Culture Refocused: Television Drama, Society, and the Production of Meaning in Reform-Era China*(Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2000),2.
[145] Davis, *The Consumer Revolution in Urban China*, 2.

divergent cultural paradigm at a time where foreign investment and international business linkage was still in its infancy. In the following chapter, these grassroots movements will trigger larger discussions on athletic status, professionalization and the creation of a demand for the consumption of football culture.

Chapter 3: Chinese Football Fandom as Subculture

In the aftermath of the early stage of football club commercialization and the ensuing media coverage and official promotion of the sport, the birth of fandom quickly followed. Paul Clark described the attractiveness of football to youth in the 1980s as due to "its lack of script and unpredictable competition" with a "similar degree of involvement" for those watching and those playing.[146] Football also presented a space to be expressive, as fans expressed their feeling in relation to the athletic performance. Clark indicates that this contrasted from the past generation, which was "given a script for life".[147] A May 19th, 1985 football match riot that occurred when Shenyang F.C. lost a game to a visiting club from Hong Kong is an early example of these passions.[148] In the aftermath of the humiliating defeat, the emotion felt from the loss prompted high level of "social disturbance" associated with the humiliation of losing.[149] Although a multitude of football related riots would ensue within the late 1980s, it is of interest to note the role of football stadiums as spaces of uncensored individual expression, which allowed individuals to voice their.

Another intriguing statistic, brought forward by Clark, is that 85 % of the detained in the 1985 riot were under the age of 25, of which most were workers in growing industrial field and represented the first generation of sport culture consumers. [150]Drawing on several parallels of protest like the May 4th movement, this riot saw the expression of an identity that had been tarnished due to a high level humiliation. However, unlike the aforementioned May 4th protests , these riots pertained simply to emotions or desires related to their identities as fans of a certain football club, and not a citizen voicing their displeasure with the state. Within a few months, the first football fan associations would be established and the ground level promotion of fandom would ensue. Associations like the Shenyang Football Fans Association (1986), the Chongqing Football Fans Association (1986) and the An Shan Football Fans Association (1986) all emerged in the aftermath of a quick commercial and industrial boom in the realm of

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[146] Paul Clark, *Youth Culture in China: From Red Guards to Netizens* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 93.
[147] Ibid.
[148] Tan Hua, "Hooligans and Supporter Culture in China," in *Football Goes East*, pp 87-100, 89
[149] Ibid.
[150] Paul Clark, *Youth Culture in China*, 95.

local football.[151] The intrigue behind the development of these football fan clubs was that they consisted of youth seeking a means to surround themselves with fans of their favourite clubs as a means to discuss, promote and engaged with passions that officials had trouble understanding; presenting a break from the dominant cultural apparatus.

Tan Hua believed that a grand majority of these initiatives were "mostly young people affected by the atmosphere of the stadium" due to their "spontaneous emotional outbursts."[152] Although Hua's claim does separate the way in which football culture was consumed and expressed by youth in comparison to the general populace, it is not entirely misplaced within a larger understanding of Chinese culture. For example, by 1986, universities were implored to run elite sports team programs in sync with the promotion of a proto-professional system that could utilize the university ranks in order to recruit new home-grown talent and further propagate the attraction of football. Thus, the categorization of youth as a subcultural group of individuals, in accordance to Dick Hebdige's subcultural theory, would directly correlate to the response of youth to football as a "synthesis" of local "forms of adaptation, negotiation and resistance" within the convergence of the local parent culture and international football culture.[153] Clark, who similarly utilized Hebdige's subcultural theory, used sport fandom as a means of shedding light on the emerging diversification of youth culture, which further fuels the argument of football culture presenting itself as an adapted cultural paradigm that promoted an active negotiation between the dominant ideology and the counter cultural implications of individuality and consumption.

A) Youth and Football Subculture in the Mid-1980s.

The correlation between youth and the evolving football culture can be traced back to the early 1980s and continues well into the 1990s. An example of this would be the 1986 "Football Training Research Collaborative Meeting", which was organized by the chairman of the early iteration of the Chinese Football League, Chen Chengda, "in order to properly assess the role of youth in the promotion and consumption of football and its effects on future

[151] Tan Hua, "Hooligans and Supporter Culture in China," in *Football Goes East*, pp 87-100, 89.
[152] Ibid, 91.
[153] Hebdige, *Subculture*, 56.

football success.[154] The conference applauded the increased role of media in "engaging young individuals in conversation "since the 1980 conference on "How To Help Chinese Football Take Off ", which displays a continuity in the creation of a unique means to incorporate football culture within a young generation of students and eventual fans.[155] In response to media and entrepreneurial initiatives, local initiatives in Beijing and Shanghai have also produced a multitude of "Youth Research Training Sessions," which exposed the post-Cultural Revolution youth to a consistent amount of football media in order to study and emulate it. Chen implored further focus on "educational circles to uncover enthusiastic people from all walks of life", and stated that, since the first meeting regarding youth football culture development in 1980, "many have taken a step further in the exploration of the role of youth in football development."[156] Promoting the development of youth initiatives, both on and off university campuses, in 18 different urban centers in China displayed a necessity for "taking youth early in order to increase our place in the world of football."[157]

As early as 1985, there existed many instances of urban culture which incorporated the consumption and practice of football in relation to the growing influences of market forces and global brands. In an editorial published in the *China Sports and Technology* journal, Shanghai Football Association Chairman Chen Wenbin discussed how "the masses, especially young people's favorite sport" was football and that they "must be mobilized."[158] Chen explained that, due to Shanghai's municipal initiatives and high ratio of television per household, the coverage of the 1982 World Cup was "heavily watched and discussed" in public and educational areas; he was even informed of the lack of pedestrians on the road and the multitude of empty municipal buses during the games.[159]

He believed that "the invigoration of the economy, reform and opening-up policy guidelines correlated directly to the invigoration of the football," as certain urban spaces, namely Shanghai in his case, could now involve themselves in the growth and improvement of football development. From grassroots sport initiatives, Chen discussed the various

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[154] Ben Kanxun, *"Second Football Training Research Collaborative Meeting In Beijing," Football World,* 1986, Issue 12, pp 12-13, 12.
[155] Ibid.
[156] Ibid.
[157] Ibid, 13,
[158] Chen Wenbin, "Views On Youth: On the characteristics of football," *China Sports and Technology*, 1985, Issue 14, pp1-8, 1.
[159] Ibid, 2.

development projects to improve football standards, such as a continued focus on youth and the promotion of youth teams abroad for learning and exchanging ideas and tactics with their international peers. The chairman furthered his argument by correlating the "materialist dialectics" within the cultural realm of football, as the last few years had seen the promotion of socio-economic and "cultural conditions for the gradual transition from amateur to professional" football.[160] Thus, as the chairman had concluded, the introduction of football had promoted a materialistic rhetoric within a multitude of urban environments and the inception of a cultural paradigm that had a majoritarian focus on youth. Accordingly, through the study of youth in the later 1980s within the subculture of football, one could uncover the earliest signs of both practice and consumption of football in the essence of fandom.

B) Incorporation of Foreign Principles For Local Adaptation: Explore, Learn and Adapt

Due to the growing level of football club investment by private and state-owned initiatives, local youth teams were able to begin spending far longer abroad in order to continue the trend of exchanging ideas. A good example of this difference is the initial relationship between Chinese and Brazilian club exchanges in 1984 and 1986. On June 11th, 1984, Internacional Porto Alegre, a Brazilian multisport club based in Porto Alegre, came to play a friendly game against a local Beijing team. Although the visitors outplayed and outscored the local team, many saw the experience as a positive one. However, those critical of China's consistent show of friendship and lack of result began to vent their frustrations in regards to the same system utilized by the Sports Commission since 1979.[161] Shen Furu wrote about the friendly in order to promote the need for the "incorporation of the development tactics of football in Brazil" and "also absorb the essence of European development that had been adapted by Brazilians."[162] In his estimation, it was imperative to "learn from the South American style and attempt to emulate their development," as the current local model could not "develop and change" if it continued to "tie their hands and feet by remaining

[160] Chen, "Views On Youth," *China Sports and Technology,* 3.
[161] Shen Rufu, "On The Transmission of Technical Football Information," *China Sports and Technology*, 1985, Issue 6, pp 15-17, 15.
[162] Ibid.

conservative."[163]In comparing the technical skill difference in shot and pass ratios, the Chinese experts soon realized that it was not simply tactic changes and philosophical reforms that would close the proverbial gap between themselves and the football powers. Similarly, this game against Brazil was the journal's first admission to the failure of reform, and that a new means of development was required. The issue of reform and industrialisation was not unique to the world of football or sports, as many facets like infrastructure, economic production, arts and science had stagnated. However, by the late 1980s, this stagnation would soon make way for a fast paced change that would have drastic cultural implications within the local urban football communities of China.

Contingents of young male players were being mobilized in order to partake in international cultural exchanges through football by the mid-1980s. A memo from Margaret Thatcher during a youth exchange in England helps shed light on the change in pace, as she welcomed the "young pioneers" as the important group of "players and eventual coaches" of China.[164] These young individuals were able to spend the entire summer abroad in order to practice, adapt and incorporate foreign football tactics, rituals and culture within their understanding of football. Similarly, a youth team and several CFA executives partook in the 1986 summer exchange in Brazil, where they were blown away by the "popularity of the sport" in urban and rural areas.[165] The premise of the trip was to incorporate what "makes Brazil a football kingdom" and experience how to attract "all kinds of people to the stadium, not simply just youth."[166] Many of the CFA executives could not believe how all of the cities they visited, big or small, had stadiums that locals described "as necessity in order to continually promote and practice the game."[167] Many of the young athletes saw the stadium as the quintessential space in which football culture, at its very core, could be established, promoted and genuinely experienced. The cooperation between enterprise, state, and individuals allow for those with talent to have enough support within the state, while also presenting "football as an innate part of Brazil's international identity, a true football Kingdom."[168] The executives concluded a need for a "meritocratic system with wages and

[163] Ibid, 16
[164] Thatcher Margaret, "I Hope You Succeed", Football World, 1988, Issue 5, pp 2, 2.
[165] Gu Yue,"Knowledge, Acquire, Explore: Brazil's Mentality," *Football World*, 1987, Issue 5, pp 12, 12.
[166] Ibid.
[167] Ibid.
[168] Ibid.

incentives" in order to promote an individual progression of the athlete (namely the young athlete) and "reform the cultural and ideological concept of athletes."[169]

C) The Chinese Football Dream

At a time when Chinese youth began to questions notions of China's traditional structures through the consumption and production of books like Wang Shuo's *Please Don't Call me Human* or films like Chen Kaige's *Yellow Earth*, football fandom and the ability to "dream" for the betterment of the sport fit right into these concerns. The 1988 release of six-part CCTV mini-series *River Elegy* encapsulated the need for reform and opening up towards a market economy, as it sought to do away with the shackles of tradition and heavy bureaucracy. The narrator of *River* Elegy, a young 25 year old Xia Jun, depicted the need for "an expanding sky-blue civilization engaging in international trade" in order to do away with the "yellow civilization wedded to an agricultural economy and a bureaucratic government."[170] The symbolic association to the colour blue was linked to the color of the sea, and, by extension, objects and ideas that came from abroad; a color of internationalism. In his analysis of the *River Elegy,* Jeff Wasserstrom studied the symbolism of the colors utilized during the mini-series and concluded that "it has also become acceptable to revel in aspects of China's past that are blue", which symbolises "the country's ties to international currents that have more to do with consumption and capitalism than to radical action."[171]

The field of Chinese media history gives one a glimpse into the cultural localization process within a globalizing cultural paradigm in the realm of visual culture. Zhong's illustration the role of television in the 1980s, "in both a material and cultural sense," which "quickly became one of the early commodity symbols of modernization and functioned essentially to inaugurate the arrival of post-revolution, technology-aided mass culture in the reform process," directly correlates to the evolving presence of football within the cultural consumption of urban Chinese.[172] Accordingly, the role of television within the cultural realm of Chinese visual culture is vitally important due to the rise in television sets during the 1980s, as the number of TVs increased from 463,000, in 1976, to 120 million and 47.8 % of urban

[169] Ibid.
[170] "The River Elegy" (He Shang 河殇), CCTV, 1988.
[171] Jeff Wasserstrom, "China's Political Colours: From monochrome to palette," *Open Democracy,* May 14th, 2008, last viewed on January 13th , 2016. (https://www.opendemocracy.net/article/institutions/china-s-political-colours-from-monochrome-to-palette).
[172] Zhong, *Mainstream Culture Refocused*, 14.

households. In Zhong's estimation, "television set ownership in China is symptomatic of the complex relationship between state, society, the elite and the populace in relation to China's post-socialist transformation and related discursive and ideological struggles"[173]

Similarly, Junhao Hong's *The Internationalization of Television in China: The Evolution of Ideology, Society, and Media since Reform* looks at the internal development of TV in harmony with the existing literature on western influence on television expansion. His work links the ''cultural communication between Europe and China through the use of television program imports'', which, similar to the import of football tapes, ''reflected the rapid rate of international contact.''[174] His discussion surrounding the ''importation of television programming into China'' allows him to study China`s communication and open-door policies since the reform in order to draw out important local factors in the evolution of local television and global communication. However, his discussion on the role of sports during this moment of initial television program import displays a significant hole in the literature of television localization, as, by 1991, sport broadcasting was second only to Chinese drama in local popularity.[175] Thus, this project seeks to fill said hole through the aforementioned study of globalizing sports broadcasting initiatives and local import of football visual culture.

A cultural localization pattern had occurred in the world of Chinese football, which had transitioned almost overnight from a formal national league into a semi-professional football league due to the sponsorship of Goldlion Holdings in 1986.[176] The quick growth of the popularity of the football clubs of major urban centers, as seen through the creation of a multitude of fan clubs, also prompted a large dialogue between the young consumers of football and the media platforms through which they consumed. For example, the *Fan's Dream* articles that appeared in *Football World* between 1987 and 1989, allowed readers to send in short stories about football in their local context. One article described the story of a young boy and his grandfather attending a football match in a large stadium. The young boy, who confided in his grandfather that "football was his favourite hobby" and that he would "buy all the tickets available" for every football game, represented a new generation of

[173] Zhong, *Mainstream Culture Refocused*, 15.
[174] Junhao, *The internationalization of television in China,* 58,
[175] James Lull, China Turned On: Television, Reform and Resistance (New York : Routledge, 1991), 66
[176] Chinese Football Association, *The 1987 National Football League Teams (Goldlion Cup),* last viewed on January 13th, 2016.(http://cfa002.cfadata.com/china/1987a.html).

passionate fans of the sport on a national and international level.[177] Furthermore, the grandfather of the young boy discussed the attractiveness of a football game over the watching of a movie, where a movie was a "simple viewing" the watching of football was "an experience."[178]

An interesting point of discussion in another short story similarly titled *Fan's Dream* was the creation of a Chinese football superstar. In this short story, a group of boys discuss the merits of football legends like Pele, Maradona and Beckenbauer and wonder when the "conditions would be right to see the first Chinese football superstar."[179] The discussions surrounding "dream" continued throughout 1988, when another fan questioned "how many reviews would need to be written for change to happen", as the fan continued to write "review after review for every Chinese team loss."[180] Another fan wrote a story of the role of women and football, and how the system "needed to change" in order to facilitate the "establishment of more female football players."[181] It is thus clear to see that, not only had a local football culture emerged within urban China, fans were also active agents in voicing their opinions to the executives of the CFA. They stood in opposition to the cultural norm surrounding the development of football on social, economic and cultural standpoints and represented a "break between dominant and subordinate value systems" typical of subcultural experience.[182]

However, the notion of the "dream" was not unique to football, as Lisa Rofel's *Desiring China* utilizes the terms desire and dream "to gloss a wide range of aspirations, needs and longings" in order to present desire as a "key cultural practice in which both government and its citizens reconfigure their relationship to a post-socialist world."[183]The lack of social benefits like pensions for retirees, coupled with the implementation of Deng Xiaoping's One Child Policy, created a significant burden on the young generation coming of age in the late 1980s. Young people seeking to pursue a career in a competitive sport would be quickly opposed through the dominant and traditional cultural structures imposed by their parents and, to an extent, the state. Consequently, these desires represented "a rejection of those passions

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[177] Anonymous,"Fan's Dream," *Football World*, 1988, Issue 7, pp 5-6, 5.
[178] Anonymous,"Fan's Dream," *Football World*, 1988, Issue 7, pp 5-6, 6.
[179] Anonymous, "Fan's Dream," *Football World*, 1988, Issue 8, pp 19, 19.
[180] Anonymous, "Fan's Dream," *Football World*, 1988, Issue 10, pp15, 1.5.
[181] Ibid.
[182] Hebdige, *Subculture*, 76.
[183] Lisa Rofel, *Desiring China: Experiments in Neoliberalism, Sexuality, and Public Culture* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 3.

and the political interpretation of moving history forward that subtended them." Thus, her focus on "the public narratives and the novel grounds" that local Chinese constructed for knowing and speaking about a post-socialist reality can easily related to the football culture consumption through sports magazines and the creation of "fan stories" as an expression of desire within a post-socialist reality.[184] Similarly, the work of James Farrer in the study of reform era Shanghai nightlife also contextualizes this "culture of desire" as part of the "fragmented cultural transition associated with the market transition of China."[185] Although one can argue that socialism had not yet officially fallen in China by the late 1980s, it is important to note that the cultural and ideological transition that occurred during the 1980s was gradual and the experience of desire in the case football had not yet expanded throughout every cultural avenue. Therefore this friction would be directly linked to the evolution of a distinct football culture, where athletes, fans and ground level enterprises would band together in an effort to promote a global phenomenon within local conditions

According to Fung, ''the global media and the Chinese state are interdependent,'' however the ground level media such as magazines and local television stations are also active actors in the global interdependency of media and information and present a break from Fung's claim due to their own agency and local cultural climate**.** [186] Evidently, local television stations such as Shanghai TV, Beijing TV and Guangdong TV stations led local calls for an expansion of consumable visual culture like drama and sport. These local television stations "boosted the interest of existing football fans while inciting interest in non-football fans."[187] While CCTV broadcast major games involving the Chinese national team or big Chinese Football League games, the local television stations would broadcast international friendlies and most local football clubs games.[188] By 1984, the first instances of televised British or Italian football were broadcast by the local television stations, which "paid whatever extra funds they hand in order to secure even a game or two."[189] By 1988, the Beijing Station had acquired enough funds to broadcast the Euro Cup in its entirety, while CCTV did not even

[184] Rofel, *Desiring China,* 22.
[185] James Farrer, "Dancing Through the Market Transition," as see in, *The Consumer Revolution in Urban China. Studies on China*, Davis Deborah, eds, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), pp226-249, 248.
[186] Fung, *Global Capital Local Culture*, XV.
[187] Bi Liyuan, "Beijing Television Station," *Football World,* 1991, Issue 7,pp 15, 15.
[188] Ibid.
[189] Ibid.

broadcast the games.[190] By the late 1980s, the Beijing Station was broadcasting upwards of 20 games from foreign leagues per year, while also being strong supporters of the local Beijing Snowflakes which saw a "heightening of ratings of about 60 % per year."[191] This steady rise in viewership illustrates a push away from the CCTV programming in favor of Snowflake televised games, which displayed the growing popularity of football as alternative visual culture in Beijing. Meanwhile the Guangzhou and Shanghai Television stations had also begun to independently invest in the broadcasting of foreign and local games, as CCTV continued to only focus on Chinese national games and the World Cup.[192] The stations would even receive letters from fans applauding them for their effort and investment into "more foreign games than CCTV".[193]

Demand began to emerge in urban China and forced media to alter its platform in order to promote new modes of packaging and consuming culture. Zhong observes the ''tensions and struggles within and the rise and fall in popularity of subgenres'' as a means to measure ''active cultural engagement and manifest ideological renegotiations, '' which football represented on a cultural, social and political level. [194] A perfect example of this practice of social and cultural renegotiation can be found in the 1990 Beijing TV program "The Difficult China Dream." The six-episode series outlined the difficulties of bettering the China's football situation, both domestically and internationally, within the socio-economic conditions of the reform-Era.[195] The innovative mini-series was a joint production between the Beijing Academy of Social Sciences and Beijing TV, which displayed the continual link between the innovative approaches of football development to youth in and out of university campuses. The episodes gained significant popularity in Beijing, which led a multitude of other television stations to present and then replay the mini-series due to popular demand.[196]

A film critic described the series as a "piece discussing the implications of Chinese football and world football as organically combined" in order to "really understand Chinese football of today and the future." [197] Zheng Fu, a student of the Beijing Academy of Social

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[190] Bi Liyuan, "Beijing Television Station," *Football World,* 15
[191] Ibid.
[192] Ibid.
[193] Ibid.
[194] Zhong, *Mainstream Culture Refocused,* 12
[195] Meng Gu, "A Review of Beijing Television's 'Difficult Football Dream," Qianxian, 1991, Issue 05, pp 49-50, 49
[196] Ibid.
[197] Ibid, 50.

Sciences, believed the evolution of football would have a difficult road to success if "the conservative mentality of traditional society" was not suppressed in favor of "concepts of individuality."[198] The young student promoted the need for football development as "an economic opportunity" to promote Chinese culture at home through "the creation of a leisure industry"[199] The student's discussion of football thus created a space for critical discussion of the state and conservative order, which allowed its readers a glimpse into a critical counter-narrative of the urban social context. Similarly, Liu Ji, a deputy of the 1990 Asian Games delegation, echoed the fans' call for the "reinvigoration of the Chinese nation" through avenues such as professional football.[200] He spoke of the role of fans and athletes in pushing for this new kind of football experience, while also noting the "power of athletes" as economic entrepreneurs in an era of rising demand."[201]

Liu Bin, the general manager that had initially called enterprises to become more involved the promotion of football, unsurprisingly took part in the sponsorship of this production, as he claimed that "entrepreneurs are indispensable for the success of Chinese football" and that "the football community has displayed a sense of urgency in order to accelerate athletic career prospects, high levels of investment and a faster rate of development." [202] Local factory managers also banded together in an effort "to reproduce a world trend of entrepreneurial investment," while also stating that the country "required football development suitable to characteristics of local Chinese conditions instead of simply imitate the European model of football."[203]

Mirroring the claim put forth by the various ground level initiatives, it had become clear that a football culture, football media, football fans and a burgeoning football industry were all in discussion with each other in relation to bigger socio-political discussions of Chinese cultural and political discourses. The intent of this chapter was to display the evolution of fandom, as it pertains to being out of the dominant cultural paradigm, with many different rituals and socio-economic patterns. The inclusion of media, industry, fan and athlete for a push towards commercialization and professionalization mirror many of the discussions that

[198] Jin Shan,"Difficult Football Dream 6 part Documentary- A Fan's View," *Football World*, 1991, Issue 3, pp 12-13, 12
[199] Ibid.
[200] Ibid, 13
[201] Ibid.
[202] Ibid.
[203] Ibid.

were occurring on campuses and major squares in urban China, before and after the 1989 Tiananmen incident. In Kenneth Lim's *Professional Soccer: A market report*, the youth of post-Tiananmen era "were the first batch of consumers who had benefited from the opening up of China's market economy," while also being the "first generation of consumers to benefit from the expansion of popular culture" and the information explosion."[204] However, as this paper has attempted to argue the youth generation directly following the Post-Mao era were the actual pioneers that indirectly and directly negotiated the massive consumer development of leisure sport and, most notably, localized football culture. Thus, the first "branded generation," which enjoyed the "benefits of branded goods and lifestyle choices," was actually found in the 1980s.[205] Consequently, the exposure to new forms of culture consumption such as television and an explosion of print culture, most notably *Football World*, promoted the very notions of brand expansion, entrepreneurial investment and lifestyle diversity that Lim had used to categorize the generation directly succeeded that of the late 1980s.

Many of the themes surrounding the rise of desires, leisure activity and economic freedom were at the forefront of the Tiananmen Square protests, which saw the youth of Beijing occupy Tiananmen Square in an effort to enact the change they were clamouring for. Occupying the Square from April 15th until the eventual state crackdown on June 4th 1989, students voiced their displeasures with the state and called for heightened reform and further opening up. Although the June 4th incident did heavily subdue public movements for political displeasure, the desire for football consumption persisted. A month following the events of Tiananmen Square, there was a near riot in Shenyang over the availability of tickets to a Shenyang FC football game. Thousands of young fans were waiting in line to pay 370 yuan for a ticket, which continued the theme of individual desire and expressed the frustrations of the first consumer generation.[206] Thus, the push to influence a new conceptualization of sport through the emulation, but not imitation, of foreign football leagues and cultures would constitute a unique opportunity to study the localization of world football within changing China, as the many facets of global sports consumption and media are discussed, altered or discarded to fit a Chinese context. Having economic backing and a solid fan base would be the

[204] Kenneth Lim, "Professional Soccer: A market report," as seen in, *Media in China: Consumption, Content and Crisis,* ed. Hermerlyk, Keane and Yin (New York : Routledge, 2002), pp 152-164, 157.
[205] Ibid.
[206] Clark, *From Red Guard to Netizens*, 97

initial beginnings of promoting a new cultural paradigm, which continued to gain steam through the multitude of international exposure and local commercialisation. However, the discussions that would ensue in the early 90s will help display how the global world of football adapted to and changed urban Chinese notions of football.

Chapter 4: Professionalization with "Chinese Characteristics": Localization of Chinese professional football

A) Chinese Socialism and Reform

In the early 1990s, China found itself at a crossroads between a free market economy, or what local political elites termed "Socialism with Chinese Characteristics", and the maintenance of the Leninist-Maoist ideals.[207] In the aftermath of the Tiananmen Square incident of 1989 and the fall of the USSR in 1991, Deng Xiaoping had re-emerged in the public eye to begin promoting the ideals of capitalism within China. Having seen what could happen to China through the Soviet collapse, it became increasingly clear to Deng that more significant change needed to occur if China was to avoid the same fate as the Soviets. By January 1992, Deng decided that it was time to head south in order to his Special Economic Zones and reassert their economic validity.

Describing the purpose of his visit to be an "inspection visit to the south", Deng had stopped off in cities like Shanghai, Shenzhen and Zhuhai, where he began to realize that his urban reforms had succeeded and that it was now time to implement the reforms of his experiments on a wider scale. Deng pleaded with his peers to "not hesitate to draw on achievements of all cultures and learn from other countries, including developed capitalist countries, all advanced methods of operation and techniques of management that reflect the laws governing modern socialized production".[208] Due to the gradual expansion of road and rail networks, the growth of the wealth of, the heightened influx of western invest after the positive Special Economic Zone experiments, the creation of a stock market, and the re-structuring of State offices and industries are all facets that assisted in the eventual move towards a free market economy and the possibility of industrial growth in areas such as sport.[209]

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[207] Michael E. Marti , *China and The Legacy of Deng Xiaoping* (Washington: Brassey's Inc., 2002), 14.
[208] Deng Xiaoping, *Excerpts From Talks Given In Wuchang, Shenzhen, Zhuhai and Shanghai* ,http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/dengxp/vol3/text/d1200.html (Last seen on February 11th 2013), 1.
[209] Robin Jones," Football in the People's Republic of China," as seen in *Football Goes East: Business, Culture, and the People's Game in China, Japan, and South Korea*, Manzenreiter, Wolfram, and John Horne, eds(New York: Routledge, 2004), pp 54-66, 57.

B) Changes From Abroad With International Consequences

Although the field of Chinese television history has been covered extensively by scholars like Ying Zhu, James Lull and Junhao Hong, there is a gap in the litterature of Chinese media studies when it comes to the development of sports broadcasting in China. According to Lull, "sport is second only to drama in overall popularity" and "European-style football is the favourite televised sport," however the discussion of sports diffusion within a growing Chinese market remains strikingly silent.[210] By the 1990s, fans had become accustomed to regularly watching all major European leagues and reading about them in monthly magazines.[211] With numbers reaching close to 300 million household televisions by 1997, a sharp climb from the 158 million of 1990, the ability to view a football game from abroad had increased in conjunction with the rise in individual wealth.[212] Coupled with commercial advertisements on television, which was as high as US$5, 000 per 30 second ad, the great increase in television audiences represented a significant enlargement of the football market within China, as a grand majority of the urban population had access to mass media and CCTV sports programming.[213]

Following the international trend of expanding brand power and television rights across new and emerging markets were the booming German (Bundesliga) and the Spanish (LA Liga) football leagues, which were facilitated by the rise of satellite and cable delivery systems within a European context.[214] This European context commenced with Italian media mogul, Silvio Berlusconi, who purchased an indebted AC Milan in 1986 and promoted an enormous domestic and international expansion of the club's brand power that saw the value of the club increase exponentially. As the owner of Mediaset and advertising company Publitalia, Berlusconi drove the Italian deregulation of television within Italy as the country turned from an official policy of "inform, educate and entertain" to one of simple entertainment.[215] A direct example of this shift saw the television rights of AC Milan rise from US$2 million in 1982 to

[210] Lull, *China Turned on,* 166.
[211] Tan Hua,"Hooligans and Supporter Culture in China," in Football Goes East, pp 87-100, 88.
[212] Ibid.
[213] Ibid.
[214] Boyle and Haynes, *Power Play,* 56.
[215] Mark Doidge, *Football Italia: Italian Football in an Age of Globalization* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015), 56.

an alarming 510 million by the mid-1990s.[216] Furthermore, Belusconi's push reverberated across Europe, as England, France and Germany also began to follow the same model in order to keep up with the expanding European pay-per-view market.[217] Thus a change in technological means and the deregulation of television and media rights legislation created a new era of football media; an era in which the world of media in Italy had gone from one of state control to one fueled by consumer demand.

Similarly, in the United Kingdom, the 1990 Broadcasting Act "loosened rules considerably" and gave rise to the "commercial television sector" and increased club income dramatically.[218] This increased opportunity for income was met by the arrival of British Sky Broadcasting, a British broadcasting group that emerged in the aftermath of the 1990 Broadcasting Act and utilized satellite technology in order to broadcast their products on a multi-national scale.[219] The increased capital allowed clubs the "broader commodification and entrepreneurial transformation" of English football, as top division English clubs increased the value of their brand to the extent that they were able to push for the recalibration of English club football in order to create the English Premier League in 1992.[220] The same trend had also emerged in Germany, as the German Football Association had sold the rights to the *Bundesliga* to a private corporation by 1988 for an estimated 135 million marks, only to be dwarfed four years later when the same rights were sold to KirchMedia for 700 million Marks.[221] The dramatic increase in television rights was related to the penetration of BSB and Sky media in the late 1980s within the German football market, as it created a high demand in German media and commercial rights in order to broadcast and sell the rights to foreign bidders.[222] Thus, the cultural and economic expansion of club football in Europe created a trend of multi-national broadcasting that would seek out new markets, such as China, Japan and India, to sell the private broadcasting rights in order to maximize profit.

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[216] Ibid, 58
[217] Doidge, *Football Italia*, 100.
[218] Boyle and Haynes ,*Power Play*, 57.
[219] Richard Giulianotti and Roland Robertson, *Globalization and Football: A critical sociology* (Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 2009), 67.
[220] Ibid.
[221] Alan Tomlinson, and Christopher Young, *German Football: History, Culture, Society* (New York: Routledge, 2006),148.
[222] Ibid.

In line with this cultural and economic change within the world of mass media and sports commercialization, the expansion of television rights in Asia occurred quickly in the early 1990s. Seria A football was the first major league to be broadcast regularly on CCTV in 1990, while a multitude of fans would also be exposed to the stars of A.C.Milan, Inter Milan and Juventus on a regular basis in *Football and Football World.* Even the English Premiership League, which truly began to explore international broadcasting markets by the mid-1990s, had sold the rights to their live games to CCTV by 1997.[223] Furthermore, the increase exposure of football stars created instances of local fan clubs emerging for top clubs, such as AC Milan, Bayern Munich and Manchester United.[224] However, the increased exposure also created anxieties about the local football product and its need to evolve in order to once again catch up the global norms of performance and brand expansion.

C) Chinese Football Professionalization Debate

Contrary to authors like Rana Mitter, who believe the Tiananmen Square massacre to have acted as a symbolic "end of an era," the discursive themes and cultural negotiations persisted well into the early 1990s in regards to commercialization, professionalization and other neoliberalist principles such as fandom and sports consumption.[225] In conjunction with the political landscape of early 1990s China, there was an equal amount of debate on maintaining the socio-economic status quo in relation to football development and football commercialization. Some believed that China's "current economic capacity cannot afford high level foreign players and coaches" and believed that "self-reliance was a better alternative" and "one that is better suited for our current condition."[226] The traditional belief was that "the only input foreign forces should have are for knowledge gathering purposes" and that "only a soft reform is required."[227] Furthermore, research funded by the Sports Commission had concluded on the need to increase the practice of football training in primary schools, similarly to several set up by the Sports Commission in Shanghai, in 1990, in order to "benefit

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[223] Jack Gage, "Cracking Soccer's Great Wall." *Forbes* 179, no. 8 (April 16,2007) : 86-88. *Business Source Complete*, EBSCOhost, viewed January 16th 2016.
[224] Anonymous, "Global Football's Best", *Football World*, 1991, Issue 3, pp 22-23, 22.
[225] Rana Mitter, *A Bitter Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press,2004), 285.
[226] Xian Dong Jin, *"What Does Chinese Football Need To Learn From Foreigners?," Football World,* 1991, Issue 8, pp 8, 8.
[227] Ibid..

children's morality, intelligence, physique and cultivate young talents for the country."[228] Meanwhile, the work published out of *China Sports and Technology*, the main platform for the Commission's findings, were primarily focused on the "successes of Italy" and the "glory of Brazil" rather than understanding the multitude of socio-economic factors that prompted the breading and promotion of a constant flow of talent and the expansion of each country's commercial reach.[229] Many of the articles published by *China Sports and Technology* refused to "consider a change in ideology" and instead promoted Mao's "belief in practice and performance" or other Marxist-Leninist-Maoist theories to advance the development of football.[230]

By the early 1990s, football as a sport had developed in a different direction than other elite sports, as it had begun to separate itself from a state project and become an autonomous and massively followed leisure sport. The attention of fans and enterprises had turned from the propagation of the sport to the ubiquitous professionalization of football in China. Fans, who had gradually become more exposed to the evolving European product of football, debated over the multiple ways to "revitalize Chinese football" , which included the dissolution of a permanent national team, an increase in fan-athlete interactions, profit-oriented ticket and gambling revenue and attracting foreign talent to increase knowledge and enticement of Chinese football.[231] Fans believed that the "dissolution of a permanent national team in favour of a competitive professional developmental football system" could "accelerate the development process" while also "enriching the potential investors" who sought to get the project off the ground.[232]

CFA representatives had begun publishing detailed reports discussing the "need for the country to engage in professionalism" and the need to "challenge the limits of human movement through the motivation of strong entrepreneurial concepts."[233] Utilizing the example of South Korea and their emerging K-League, the CFA's Yang Yimin believed

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[228] Huang Xiaoguang, "Football Training On The Comprehensive Development of Children's Moral, Intellectual and Physical Status: Shanghai Yangpu District Wujiaochang Primary Investigation of Children's Football Training," *China Sports and Technology*, *1991,* Issue 08, pp 19-23, 19.
[229] See *China Sports and Technology, 1991,* Issue 3.
[230] Yang Qun, "The Enlightenment: On football status quo and development," *China Sports and Technology,*1992, Issue 1 , p 14-21, 14.
[231] Zheng Fu, "The Revitalization of Chinese Football," *Football World*, 1990, Issue 10, pp 6-7, 6
[232] Ibid.
[233] Yang Yimin, "Professional Football in Asia," *Football World, 1990,*Issue 12, pp 12-14, 12

"professionalization was indispensable in stimulating the revitalization of Korean football" and a similar need to become "entrepreneurial with one's body, health and discipline" would improve the overall product of local Chinese Football.[234] The push towards profit oriented athletes and clubs presented a "profit rotation that would play within the sale of tickets, television rights, payrolls and commercial brands" in order to promote a meritocratic sports league.[235] Although they believed the "European model of football" as being the best, they also alluded to this model as "not generally suited for all regions" and requiring the need to "take these models and appropriate them to our national conditions."[236]

Similarly to the members of the CFA, Beijing Football Coach Jin Zhiyang also praised the professionalization rhetoric, as he believed it would assist in launching the development of Chinese football in respect to the rest of the world. In an open letter to the CFA written in the aftermath of the establishment transfer regulations, Jin Zhiyang openly applauded the recent Chinese Football League's wage and transfer (equivalent to buying a player from another club) terms, as it eased the "flow of talent " into the league and would inevitably "increase the overall development of football."[237] The coach used his trip to Germany in 1984 to speak of the Bundesliga (the German football league) and its utilization of transfers and talent flow for the purposes of improving local football conditions, while also promoting the next generation of young German football stars through television viewership and commercialised merchandise initiatives.[238] In short, the coach believed that, by infusing talent within the league, the overall quality of the league would attract "more sponsorship" and increase the amount of funds available toward the improvements of training grounds and international youth team tours.[239]

Ultimately, even the CFA president Nian Weisi had taken to speaking for the fans, as he wrote a detailed article discussing the CFA's own Special Economic Zone (SEZ) initiative in their Guangdong Football experiment. As Guangdong was one of the fourteen SEZ's set up by Deng Xiaoping"s administration during the early to mid-1980s, the conditions for commercialisation and sponsorship were very good. Consequently, the heightened level of

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[234] Ibid, 13
[235] Yimin, "Professional Football in Asia", 13.
[236] Ibid, 14.
[237] Jin Zhiyang, "An Open Letter to the CFA," *Football World,* 1991, Issue 7, pp 8-9, 8
[238] Ibid.
[239] Ibid, 9

investment in the area prompted Guangdong Hongyuan Group and Guangdong Football Association to establish Guangdong Hongyuan F.C., which was, due to good sponsorship and quality talent transfers, immediately performant and consistently at the top of the Jia-A standings. Due to their overall success since the inception of the semi-professional Chinese Jia-A League, Nian described a "necessity of developed area with better conditions in order to change the state of football."[240] Through the study of "this experiment", the CFA uncovered that the manager of the club was able to "build a model enterprise with Chinese characteristics" with an ability to "sell tickets and found a football lottery organization."[241] Furthermore, the success of the team prompted the creation of business advertising which would sponsor many of the team's international initiatives.

In light of the Special Economic Zones attracting significant foreign investment and creating the necessary environment for the quick development of a professional club, the CFA vice-chairman Donglian Tian believed that "China's pursuit of football specialization" was part "of a global movement" that included "socialist and capitalist countries alike."[242] Donglian promoted the concepts of fandom, commercialisation and professionalization after his visit to Italy in the summer of 1990 to witness the FIFA World Cup. In awe at the level of fandom in Milan for both Inter Milan and A.C. Milan, Donglian was very much in favor of utilising the Guangdong model and promoted the need to close the gap "through the use of a breakthrough club system like that of Guangdong."[243] He believed that "such a complicated situation" would be simplified through "mass fan support" and commercial "investment from growing business and foreign investment."[244]

D) Reform of Sports Structures and Adoption of Market Economy

According to Tan Hua, "Chinese sport fandom is underpinned by an anxiety about engaging with globalising sport world whilst also fearing being left of the stage," which became increasingly apparent due to the expansion of global sports broadcasting in the late

[240] Fa Di, "Football Built in Guangdong Special Economic Zone Is Feasible," *Football World*, 1991, Issue 6, pp 5-6, 5.
[241] Ibid.
[242] Ibid.
[243] Ibid, 6.
[244] Ibid.

1980s and early 1990s.[245] The opinions of disgruntled fans discussing their dream for national success through the reform of the administrative and economic realms of China were developed organically from the bottom, as seen in the previous chapter. However, primarily due to the heightened penetration of regular football broadcasts in China, the rapidly evolving game had increased that anxiety exponentially in the eyes of fans and in the eyes of the CFA. In contrast to the fans and members of the CFA, the Sports Commission continued to promote the ideal of local development through continued practice. The arguments in favor of a new system based on a market economy brought forth by Donglian and Nian would eventually be voiced by the end of 1992. In June of 1992, the CFA organized a National Football Congress to "revolutionize Chinese football."[246] Within the years of 1992 and 1993, *China Sports and Technology* had also begun releasing articles which sought to compare the "competitive systems of football powers in order to provide references to setting up a competition system within our local conditions."[247] Thus, the unique development "of constructive suggestions for the development of Chinese football professionalism" had begun to mirror much of the political debate over the turn to a free market economy.[248] The discussions revolved mostly around how to incorporate a world of professionalization within the changing cultural and economic paradigm in China. Through the rhetoric of the CFA and the Sports Commission, the process of adapting the global industry of professional football, which had begun in the late 80's with the help of fans, entrepreneurs and sports organizations, had created a unique instance of cultural localization on within the evolving Chinese cultural realm. There was a sense of compromise within the complicated strings that linked the market forces, the CCP, athletes and fans, which saw the pushing for something unique with Chinese characteristics.

These events would unfold as early as 1992, as the CFA utilized the instability and lack of confidence in the current sports structure to become the "First Competitive Sport Department" within the National Sports Commission, which gave them direct power over the Chinese Football League, the professional clubs, athletes and the development projects for

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[245] Tan Hua,"Hooligans and Supporter Culture in China," in Football Goes East, pp 87-100, 98.
[246] Dong & Mangan, "Football in New China," *Soccer and Society*, 91.
[247] Song Shou Xun, Zhang Renmin, Ni Guoying, Ye Guozhi, "Feasibility of Lessons Learned of Professional Club Development In China," *China Sports and Technology*, 1992, Issue 9, pp 1-10, 1.
[248] Yang Qun, "Development Strategy of Chinese Football," *China Sports and Technology,* 1993, Issue 03, pp 1-5, 2.

youth players.[249] The CFA gained a greater economic autonomy, as the government funding had been reduced from three million yuan in 1991 to two million yuan by 1995 and its expenditure rose to over ten million yuan.[250] The CFA had acquired enough local fan, entrepreneurial and invaluable political support to become the pioneer of professional sports in China. By November of 1992, at a conference held in Zhongshan, Guangdong province, a discussion around the reform of old sports structures was at the forefront of the conference's themes.[251] This conference was called in order to set up a new blueprint for the next decade, which sought to promote commercial and professional development of football (such as the creation of a fully professional football league by 1994), employ a multitude of foreign coaches (the first being Klaus Schlappner for the national team) and to qualify for the following Asian Games and World Cup.[252] In short, this meeting cemented the independence of the CFA within the evolving market friendly political and cultural sphere of China. With a variety of new reforms that would ensue between 1992 and 1994, the Chinese football "system still differed from the western market system" in various points (commercial legislation, transfer fee caps and youth team development) that made the Chinese professional football scenario one that adapted to local conditions.[253]

In harmony with the CFA's independence from the direct control of the National Sports Commission, the Third Plenary Session of the 14th Central Committee in November of 1993 approved Deng's socialist market economy system to replace the planned economy and has pushed forward the transformation of Chinese society.[254] The CFA's 1993 *10 year Development Blueprint of the Chinese Football Business.*[255], similar to Deng Xiaoping's greenlight for market oriented reform, laid out reforms of their own in order to "improve the capacity for self-development of football."[256] They called for reforms on ticket sharing, advertising, television rights and implementing an extensive football betting system as

[249] Dong Jinxia, Women, Sport and Society in Modern China: Holding Up More Than Half the Sky (London :Frank Class Publishers, 2003), 113.
[250] Dong & Mangan, *Football in New China*, 91.
[251] Fan and Lu, "The Professionalisation and Commercialisation of Football in China", 1638.
[252] Dong & Mangan, *Football in New China*, 91.
[253] Dong Jinxia, Women, Sport and Society in Modern China, 113.
[254] Ibid, 1637.
[255] Tan Hua,"Hooligans and Supporter Culture in China," in *Football Goes East*, 98.
[256] *Chinese Football History,* 182.

alternative sources of income in order to reinvest the profits into the development of football.[257]

At the time, tickets and advertising had not yet garnered the attention of the general populace mainly due to the lack of national exposure and the limited amount of domestic televisions in the mid-1980s. Due in large part to the growth of the European satellite based pay-per view system, the expansion of professional football into regularly televised attractions in emerging markets like China allowed the CFA to promote companies to invest into club sponsorship and commercial advertising during live professional games.[258] The CFA also promoted this change of pace to "the change in national policies," which altered local economic investment opportunities to allow Malboro and Coke-Cola to invest in the creation of the Chinese Super League in 1994.[259]

Due to the reforms set out by the CFA and the economic opening up China, most of the clubs had become joint ventures between local sports organisations and new entrepreneurial investment. Clubs like Shenhua FC and Dalian Wanda were pioneers in the commercialisation of Chinese football, as they were able to gain their independence from local sports organisations and government control.[260] Furthermore, by 1995 Dalian Wanda FC emerged as China's first privately owned club, setting the stage for the evolution of a league that would highly resemble their English or Italian counterparts.[261] Furthermore, the athletes themselves became further commodified, as the average annual salary of football players rose from US$ 326 to an average of US$ 1630–2445, a staggering number for China at the time.[262] Lastly, fans responded well to the establishment of a professional league, as it satisfied their desire for "local football competition with a foreign influence."[263] The initial investment of fan participation displayed the fusion of the evolving professional status of football, the commodification of athletic performance and the participation of fans with their respective teams that had long been called upon by the emerging football fans of the late 1980s. In

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[257] Ibid, 178.
[258] *Chinese Football History*, 178.
[259] Ibid, 180
[260] Fan and Lu, "The Professionalization and Commercialisation of Football in China," *The International Journal for the History of Sport,* 1643.
[261] Ibid.
[262] Ibid, 1645
[263] Zhang Xiao, "Chinese football player transfer and role of money in football", *China Sports and Technology*, 1995, Issue 03, pp 6-8, 6

applying the foreign professional model, due to its success and global penetration of foreign markets, the localization of football had reached its most important milestone yet and had laid the ground for the continued expansion of sports professionalization for other sports like basketball or hockey within the next decade.

Conclusion: The "Footbal Dream" and the "China Dream:" A Link to The Past

In producing this research, littered with notions of "dreams", transnational connectivity and global commercialization, one cannot help but relate it to current socio-political conditions in contemporary China. How does this "Football Dream" relate to the "China Dream" rhetoric of CCP General Secretary and Chinese President Xi Jinping? In as such, the "China Dream" represents the cultural continuity of bottom-up desires of a rising Chinese middle class, as local economic and cultural conditions continue to adapt to transnational economic ties and the rising cultural importance of China on the world stage. Similarly to Dikotter`s *Things Modern* and Michael Keane's *Created in China: The Great New Leap Forward*, this paper "traces the history of cultural exchange," in particular the transfer and translation of ideas and symbols of development to present an "alternative account to China's emergence" in contrast to the existing top-down policy process dominated by elite level government officials.[264] Furthermore, the gradual inclusion of commercial and capitalist means of international connectivity enhanced, but was not responsible for all, the increase in the exchange of ideas, systems and cultural commodities. In as such, the localization of football represents an excellent means to understanding the evolution of Xi Jinping's "China Dream" and how it pertains to the cultural and economic evolution of reform-era China.

Xi Jinping's 29 November 2012 speech plays a monumental role in the introduction of the "China Dream". Having been the mastermind behind the renovation of the Chinese National History Museum in 2007, it seemed only fitting that Xi would center his new political motto on the realization of a century-long path to China's re-emergence on the international stage.[265] After adding a new wing to the museum, known as the "Road to Rejuvenation", Xi decided to have his first public address as General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in the halls that illustrated the long path from the humiliation of the Opium Wars to the rise of China as a global power. Xi described the "China Dream" as China's century long "great revival of the Chinese nation."

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[264] Keane Michael, *Created in China: The Great New Leap Forward* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 5.
[265] South China Morning Post Ltd, *The China Renaissance: The Rise of Xi Jinping and the 18th Communist Party Congress*, Edited by Jonathan Sharp (Singapore: World Scientific, 2013), 35.

While accepting the honor of being elected as General Secretary of the CCP, Xi expressed his desire to pursue "socialism with Chinese characteristics" with the firm leadership core of the party" leading the charge."[266] Believing that "China needs to learn more about the world, and the world also needs to learn more about China", Xi's intent was to continue to reform the policies of his predecessors, Deng Xiaoping Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao, and to establish China as a world player on the international stage.[267] Xi believed that the party's legitimacy rose from the "successful transformation of the impoverished and backward Old China into the New China that has become prosperous and strong."[268] It is also important to note that Xi Jinping himself experienced the evolution of the "China Dream" rhetoric himself during the post-Mao period, as he has gone on record to promote his love for football and his early fandom of local sport and international competition. Xi fell in love with football as a youth at Beijing 101 Middle School and even used to play with certain classmates on the Huiwen football team.[269]

Sitting in the stands in Shanghai to watch Elton John's Watford FC crush the local Shanghai team 5-1, Xi Jinping witnessed the game as a young fan and experienced a defeat that left him saddened but did not sway his passion for the sport.[270] Even during his term as secretary of the Zhengding County Committee of the CPC in Heibei province, Xi was known to have commuted to Beijing on weekends in order to catch a game with his long-time friend and national football champion Wei Qi.[271] Furthermore, Xi commonly utilized football as a metaphor in order to exemplify "the coordinated consciousness on the field" as "the organic" development of the economy."[272] Ultimately, Xi Jinping was part of the fan culture that emerged during the 1980s and represents the young generation that the CFA and the Sports Commission sought to promote towards football as a player and a fan.

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[266] Xi Jinping, Xi Jinping,, "China's New Party Chief Xi Jinping's speech", *BBC News*, last modified November 15th 2012 (http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-20338586).
[267] Ibid
[268] Ibid.
[269] James C. Hsiung, Hong Liu, Ying Chen, Xingwang Zhou, and Huoshen Tan, *The Xi Jinping Era: His Comprehensive Strategy towards the China Dream* (New York: CN Times Books, 2015)
[270] The party's goal Football, long a national shame, becomes compulsory at school, The Economist, December 13th, 2014, last viewed on January 20th, 2016. (www.economist.com/news/china/21636097-football-long-national-shame-becomes-compulsory-school-partys-goal).
[271] Hsiung et al., *The Xi Jinping Era* 23.
[272] Ibid, 24.

Continuing on his interest of football whilst rising through the political ranks, Xi's 2011 unveiling of the "Chinese Football Dream" illustrated his goal to see China qualify, host and win the World Cup.[273] Even prior to the inception of the official "Chinese Dream", the use of the "Football Dream" rhetoric, which echoes the voices of fans from the two previous decades, displays a continuity in the relationship between the industrial and economic development of football and the nation as a whole. This can be mirrored by the continued focus on football, even during an era of cooling economic progress, as bureaucracy of the CCP backed up Xi's passion with administrative action through the announcement of a football reform educative and administrative reform on March 16th, 2015.[274] On top of the government implication in the continued push for the development of the beautiful game, many of the richest entrepreneurs continue the similar trend of their predecessors in investing locally.

Xu Jiayin, owner of the Ever Grande Real Estate Group, purchased a club in Guangzhou team in 2010 and invested in it heavily through player and executive acquisitions (namely Italian World Cup Champion coach Marcello Lippi and Team Captain Fabio Cannavaro).[275] This increase in investment and foreign experience pushed the club, under its new name of Evergrande Guangzhou, into the position of local powerhouse and eventual winner of the Asian Champions League in 2013.[276] In conjunction with a heightened investment in football clubs, Wang Jianlin and his Dalian Wanda group invested US$30 million toward sending young Chinese football abroad, which has, over the last 10 years, coincided with the increase in Chinese football players in European football leagues.[277]

A) Defining the "China Dream"

In writing on this topic, littered with notions of "dreams", transnational connectivity and global commercialization, I cannot help but relate it to current socio-political conditions in contemporary China. How does this "Football Dream" relate to the "China Dream" rhetoric of Xi Jinping? The "China Dream" represents the cultural continuity of bottom-up desires of a rising Chinese middle class as local economic and cultural conditions continue to adapt to

[273] Georg Wolfgang Arlt, "Why China Will Win The 2022 FIFA World Cup," *Forbes Asia*, June 21st, 2014, Last viewed on January 20th, 2016. (www.forbes.com/sites/profdrwolfganggarlt/2014/06/21/why-china-will-win-the-2022-fifa-world-cup/#2715e4857a0b7953d2bc7c77).
[274] Ibid.
[275] Ibid
[276] Ibid.
[277] Ibid.

transnational economic ties and the rising cultural importance of China on the world stage. Furthermore, the gradual inclusion of commercial and capitalist means of international connectivity enhanced, but was not responsible for all, the ability for the exchange of ideas, systems and cultural commodity. Thus, this work has sought to dethrone what Keane has termed as an "academic bias of humanities towards activities of transnational media corporations," in order to study culture and economics in a way that has rarely been done by China scholars.[278] In as such, the localization of football represents an excellent example to link to establishment of the "China Dream" and how it pertains to the cultural and economic evolution of reform-era China.

In Xi Jinping's "China Dream", the dreams of individual Chinese are intertwined with that of the nation: its great revival. In order to define Xi Jinping's China Dream, one must first establish what it is not. Authors such as Helen Wang, Gerard Lemos, Neville Mars have framed the notion of the "Chinese Dream" as either a knock-off of the "American Dream", the illusion of affluence in contemporary China or the infrastructural and architectural boom of post-socialist China. Although the rise of individuality, economic opportunity and architectural innovation are at the origin of the reality of the "China Dream", they are but components that assist in reinforcing the imaginary relationship between the individual "China Dream" with the "National Dream."

Helen Wang's *The China Dream: The Rise of the World's Largest Middle Class and What It Means to You* illustrates the new socio-economic aspirations of the rising middle class. Although her book was written a few years prior to Xi Jinping's promotion, she encapsulates the growing sentiment of opportunity or the pursuit of personal aspirations.[279] Wang's use of the "China Dream" plays off the popular notion of the "American Dream", where one's dream is but many in a land of opportunity. Dreams ranging from scholastic success to economic prosperity littered the one hundred interviews she conducted and established a rising sentiment of opportunity among a rising urban middle class.[280] However, Wang's "China Dream" differs from that which Xi Jinping is discussing. Her vision of the ``China Dream`` seems primarily focused on the individual dream, when Xi Jinping's assessment claims the individual "China

[278] Arlt, "Why China Will Win The 2022 FIFA World Cup".
[279] Helen Wang, *The Chinese Dream: The Rise of the World's Largest Middle Class and What It Means to You* (New York: Bestseller Press, 2010), 145
[280] Ibid, 75.

Dream" (*wo de meng*) to be irrevocably linked to the national "China Dream" (*Zhongguo meng*).

In his book, *The End of the Chinese Dream*, Gerard Lemos declares the "short-lived Chinese dream of prosperity, stability, and security for all has stalled and died."[281] Claiming that it will take "decades before the majority of Chinese people enjoy the same prosperity as people in Europe or the USA", Lemos attacked the glaring negatives in contemporary Chinese society. Declaring the unsustainable ideological friction among leaders, frozen decision making and controlled media as the main means behind China's lag behind the West, Lemos seems to provide a more critical approach to his interpretation of the "China Dream." However, his idea of the "China Dream", similarly to Wang, seems to gravitate toward an American Dream with Chinese characteristics rather than a dream of reality based on the imaginary. The "China Dream" is simply not based on the same principles as that of the American Dream. Xi Jinping's "China Dream" thus "presupposes both a real and imaginary relation" where the ''ideology is the unity of the real relation expresses a will … a hope, or a nostalgia rather than describing a reality."[282]

Thus the "China Dream" as an ideology is able to frame all competing definitions of "dream" within its range, with the "Football Dream" rhetoric front and center. Scholar Zhen Wang compares Xi's "China Dream" narrative to an "old wine in a new bottle" with the "dream's" name "replacing Jiang Zemin and Hu Jintao's national rejuvenation or Deng Xiaoping's invigoration of China."[283] In this instance we can observe Xi Jinping's "China Dream" as a continuity of cultural themes and evolving economic principles within the socio-economic paradigm of an internationalist China. The ruling classes, as Lemos points out, can be identified as the high ranking party members and the beneficiaries of the "Get Rich First" policies of Deng Xiaoping in the 80s and 90s. However, the intended audience of Xi's "China Dream" is, as Wang states it has always been, towards the masses. The manner in which the concept of the "China Dream" dream appropriates the aspirations of citizens is what truly distinguishes Xi's "China Dream" from the definition of Lemos, Wang et al., as the "dreams"

[281] Gerard Lemos, *The End of the Chinese Dream: Why Chinese people fear the future* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 2.
[282] Louis Althusser, *For Marx* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1969), 233-234.
[283] Wang Zheng, *The Chinese Dream: Concept and Context.* Journal of Chinese Political Science. Mar2014, Vol. 19 Issue 1, pp1-13, 7.

of success and economic prosperity, which were at the forefront of the development of football during the reform-era, illustrate the changing nature of a majority urban population with a rising middle class.

The very notion of "dream" even headlined the Beijing Olympics, which represented a new era for Chinese political, economic and cultural presence on the world stage; promoted as China's coming out party. The "One World, One Dream" propagated the ideals of cultural and economic transnational linkages which gradually led to the realization of the "China Dream" on its "Road to Rejuvenation."[284] To dream, in this case, would relate to a fulfilment of the individual and national aspirations of success and respectability. In doing so, political events like the Cultural Revolution and the June 4th incident have been marginalized by a new focus on consumerist cultural and national persona. Although this shift occurred organically through the creation of transnational linkages with "glocal transnational corporations" like foreign football clubs, international trading companies, local entrepreneurs, a growing Chinese middle class and evolving forms of global media technology, it is important to place the "China Dream" within its proper historical context through studies of industrial expansion.[285] The industrial expansion of elite sports, Olympic or professional alike, was prompted by both an individual (fans or entrepreneurs) and national (CCP or the CFA) discussion of cultural backwardness and international prestige.

D) Realizing the "Dream"

Ultimately, the localization of football occurred through the involvement of the earliest forms of commercialism and sports consumerism in China. Standing today as the largest international market in the world, the early instances of consumerism and commercialisation in urban China created precedence for the new cultural paradigm of the "China Dream." At a time where football fans and football organizations (local governments, entrepreneurial organizations, local sports organization) adapted to both local and international socio-economic variables that continually shaped the local and international world of trade and

[284] Wang Zheng, *Never Forget National Humiliation: Historical Memory in Chinese Politics and Foreign Relations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 145.
[285] Richard Giulianotti and Roland Robertson, "The Globalization of Football: a study in the glocalization of the 'serious life," *The British Journal of Sociology*, 2004, Vol. 55, Issue 4 , pp 546-568, 547.

culture, it was the adaptation of global football culture within local socio-economic conditions that simultaneously pioneered and mirrored the current political and economic reforms of China since the Cultural Revolution. The agency of municipal and regional football organizations also displayed a break between a perceived top-down state control of sport, as they assisted in the reshaping of their cultural environment in harmony with their local fan base and their international peers. The study the professionalization of football also allows one to appreciate the existence and evolution of strong transnational links that blur the common used nationalist-sports rhetoric generally found in Chinese national building studies. Robertson's glocalization theory allows one to go beyond old binaries of oppositions that tend to prevail in much of the field of globalization. Consequently, the localities would no longer be portrayed in a constant struggle against the global, but as "mutually implicative" relationship in order to examine their complex interdependencies.[286] In studying the evolution of football culture and economics in both Europe and China, one is able to get a grander understanding of a global pattern and appreciate the complicated relationships required to pursue the cultural and economic shifts in urban Chinese culture. In as such, Robertson's glocalization theory speaks volume to the commonly used moniker of "with Chinese characteristics," as the implementation of new social, economic and cultural norms consistently went through an adaptation process that could not have been more evident than through long road to football professionalization.

In conclusion, the evolution of football as a cultural commodity, industrial sector, competitive national leisure sport and a global media hotbed pioneered a global change in both Europe and China. The evolution of football allows one to appreciate the complexities of economic relationships as a driving force in changing local and global means of communication and cultural consumption. In an era most interested in assessing the complex transnational connections of the past, this work effectively brings together two worlds long thought divided. Through the divergence from the common Cold-War narrative, this work is able to illustrate the influence of global trading patterns altered China into the economic world power it is today, how China's inclusion into the rising global market in turn changed the world, and how the urban citizens and entrepreneurs of China acted as the middle-men for this

[286] Richard Giulianotti and Roland Robertson , "Glocalization and Sport in Asia: Diverse Perspectives and Future Possibilities," *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 2012, Vol.29, pp433-454, 437.

change. Without these middle-men who dared to dream, the story football in China before and during the reform era cannot truly be understood in the field of Contemporary Chinese history or within the framework of East-Asian globalization theory. Therefore, this work can place itself amongst the rising works of entangled global history, while also shedding light on the commonly omitted citizens of reform-era China, as they continue to renegotiate their dreams and desires within a negotiated cultural milieu.

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