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Challenges to globalisation and the impact on the values underpinning international sport agreements

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ABSTRACT

Accompanying the spread of sports as a global business and a political/diplomatic resource have been attempts to underpin the organisation and practice of sports with a set of Kantian values that maintain its economic/cultural utility while also protecting the rights and dignity of key stakeholders, especially athletes. In recent years, there has been growing evidence of challenges, at both the grassroots and corporate/governmental level, to the globalisation of liberal Enlightenment values. This paper addresses three research questions: 1) to what extent are the Kantian values that underpin international rights conventions such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights under threat from anti-globalisation pressures; 2) to what extent are these challenges evident in sport and 3) how secure are the liberal values that underpin international sports documents/agreements such as the Olympic Charter, the WADA Code, the Brighton Plus Helsinki 2014 Declaration on Women and Sport and the Universal Declaration of Player Rights? It is argued that the challenges are substantial and have significant consequences for the values underpinning global sport. The focus of analysis is on three elements of the global sports infrastructure: international sports agreements/declarations, national identity politics and international sports organisations. It is argued that the strength of the challenges is undermining the values on which global sport has been built either by attempts to redefine core liberal values or by simply ignoring them. The same countries that are seeking to undermine global human rights conventions are also reluctant to be bound by sports-related institutions and conventions.

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In many respects, sport has been emblematic of the progress of globalisation as represented by increasing economic, cultural and organisational interconnectedness. The prominence of the Olympic Games as a cultural phenomenon, the global reach and monopoly position of international federations, the growth of a global sports media industry and the relative insulation of international sports organisations from domestic and international accountability all attest to the rapid change in the economic and political significance of sport. Accompanying the spread of sports as a global business and a political/diplomatic resource have been attempts to underpin the organisation and practice of sport with a set of values that maintain its economic and cultural utility while also protecting the interests of key stakeholders, especially athletes and fans. These values are reflected in documents such as the Olympic Charter, the European Sports Charter (of the Council of Europe), the World Anti-Doping Code and the Brighton Plus Helsinki 2014 Declaration on Women and Sport. Broadly speaking, all these various conventions and charters reflect a set of liberal Western values

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which in turn have been influenced by Kantian philosophy. Central to Kant's moral and legal thought are a) the fundamental importance of the dignity of human beings and that they must be treated as ends in themselves; b) that persons have a right to freedom compatible with and equal to the freedom of others and c) that freedom should be universally cosmopolitan in its legal application, regardless of social status, gender, ethnicity or religious belief (Follesdal and Maliks 2014, Fasoro 2019, Brown and Andenas 2020). It is the argument of this paper that those of us who subscribe to those Kantian values, as reflected in international sports agreements, are witnessing a sustained attack on those values and that their global spread has stalled and is possibly in retreat. This paper examines the causes of this attack and argues for a more robust defence of the charters and conventions that are essential to preserving the probity of sport and the dignity and rights of athletes. More specifically, this paper addresses three research questions: 1) to what extent are the Kantian liberal values that underpin major international rights conventions such as the UN Human Rights Convention under threat from anti-globalisation pressures, 2) to what extent are the challenges identified in RQ 1 evident in sport and 3) how secure are the liberal values that underpin international sports documents and agreements mentioned previously?

This paper begins with a brief discussion of three inter-related concepts – globalisation, cosmopolitanism and the liberal international order (LIO) – as an introduction to a discussion of the challenges, from above and from below, to the globalisation of liberal values. This discussion provides a reference point for considering whether global sport is insulated from these broader global trends and, if not, how these challenges are manifest within the sports context. This discussion is followed by an analysis of the impact of these challenges on four international sports agreements: the World Anti-Doping Code; the Olympic Charter, the Brighton Plus Helsinki 2014 Declaration on Women and Sport and the Universal Declaration of Player Rights.

Globalisation, cosmopolitanism and the liberal international order

Depending to a large extent on their social science disciplinary starting point, the terminology adopted to explore global interconnectedness varies between globalisation,¹ cosmopolitanism and the liberal international order (LIO). Although differing in emphasis, the three concepts share a number of common characteristics as shown in Figure 1.

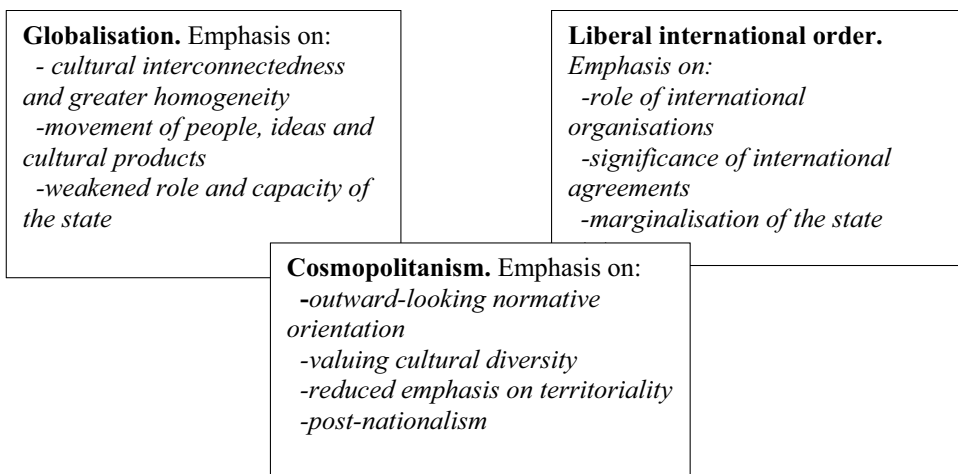


Figure 1. Characteristics of the concepts of globalisation, cosmopolitanism and the liberal international order

Discussions of globalisation need to take into account the extent to which the characteristics, trajectory and impact of globalisation are the product of the embedding of the liberal international order which, since the late 1940s, has structured relations between capitalist, industrialised and democratic states. The LIO, although a contested concept, is conventionally characterised by the growth of international political and trade organisations such as the United Nations, Council of Europe and the WTO (the equivalent in sport would be the increased prominence of the IOC and the major international sports federations), the marginalised role of the state and the greater reliance on technocratic responses to political/economic problems.

The LIO is also strongly associated with the concept of cosmopolitanism defined by Beck and Sznaider (2006) as associated with the values of openness to ideas, people and change, but not necessarily a rejection of national identification. Cosmopolitanism is best conceptualised as a normative concept reflecting the willingness and capacity to move between cultures, to create a global civil sphere that, according to Fozdar and Woodward (2021, p. 4), implies, as does Kant, 'a moral obligation to care for others beyond the nation, based on common humanity' or what Delanty (2003) calls a post-national orientation. While local cultural differences are acknowledged, they will operate and be judged within the context of a set of universal moral principles as reflected, for example, in the various United Nations conventions. However, cosmopolitanism has been increasingly criticised for being self-regardingly individualistic and a rationalisation by the privileged elite of their lifestyle – 'the class consciousness of the frequent traveller' (Calhoun, quoted in Fozdar 2021, p. 151). As Mansfield *et al.* (2021, p. 2279) conclude, 'A sizeable literature ... argues that the backlash is not related to economic pressures and is part of a larger cultural revolt against more cosmopolitan, non-traditional norms that have been adopted as globalisation has spread' (see also Norris and Inglehart 2019).

Challenges to globalisation from below

Challenges to globalisation and the associated concepts of cosmopolitanism and the LIO have intensified in recent years and have their origin at both the community/grassroots level and at the elite corporate/governmental level. Two problems arise in examining the nature and extent of challenges from below. The first is the difficulty of drawing a clear distinction between grassroots and elite points of origin. For example, while it is possible to argue that populist leaders such as Donald Trump and Jair Bolsonaro were the product of a populist groundswell, it is also the case that populist leaders/elites reinforce and often magnify populist rhetoric and grievances. The second problem is that the nature of the challenges is varied and sometimes contradictory and cannot be seen as a uniformly global response to liberal globalisation. Bearing these two caveats in mind, this section discusses those challenges that either had their origin or have their main source of momentum at the grassroots level.

Challenges from 'below' are best indicated by the increasing attraction of populist movements/parties in Europe and the Americas. According to Rooduijn (2015), the rise of populist parties in Europe can be largely explained by a combination of four factors: nativism, a historical tendency towards authoritarianism, Euroscepticism and dissatisfaction with existing politics and political actors. The increasing prominence of political populism provides many examples of the slow shift in ideologies, national moods and identities. Where the movement of people, as tourists, workers, migrants and refugees, was once considered emblematic of the positive impact of globalisation – and the embrace of cosmopolitanism – not only has migrant 'ceased to be a neutral descriptive term and ... become instead a category of exclusion' (Featherstone 2020, p. 159), but also the worker who crosses national boundaries is seen less as the bringer of skills and more as the depriver of jobs for local people and a parasite on the national welfare system (although footballers and athletes in many other sports seem to be an exception). Indeed, the nation-state and/or the ethnic group has become the key reference point for 'belonging' and has led to 'belongingness' emerging as a source of global contestation. These national-level developments

have their parallel within sport, especially football. Fitzpatrick and Hoey (2022) note that 'The growing neoliberal logic of English football, involving the incremental decoupling of many EPL clubs from their traditional supporter base and communities, has provided the impetus for an increase in football fan activism since 1992' which is 'inextricably bound up with a deep sense of topophilia'.

As Reus-Smit (2021, p. 1250) commented, the values associated with cosmopolitanism have been confronted by the return of 'unashamed civilizational nationalism, apparent in prominent calls to arms to defend a morally superior yet embattled West'. A similar analysis is presented by Simmons and Goemans (2021) who argue that globalisation has led to an 'identity reaction' according to which as physical borders have weakened or disappeared they have been replaced with cultural borders. The hardening of cultural borders between Turkey and Georgia and between East and West Germans following the end of the Cold War and as a result of the implementation of the Schengen Agreement in Europe are given as examples. As Simmons and Goemans (2021, p. 395) argue, 'When borders fade, other coordinating principles, such as cultural type – along race, language, or religious divisions, for example – can emerge'.

A similar blurring of definitions is noted by Brubaker (2010, p. 78) who notes that while 'the nation-state remains fundamentally a territorial organisation ... it is also a membership association, and the frontiers of membership increasingly extend beyond territorial borders of the state ... [A]s forms of transborder nationalism, they represent an extension and adaptation of the nation-state model, not its transcendence'. For example, Hungary, along with other right-wing populist governments in the Czechia, Poland and Slovakia, have defined themselves as a cross-national European heartland creating not a national 'we' but a regional 'we'. In a similar fashion Perdue (2021, p. 27) notes in his review of Ge's history of China (2019) that 'For [Ge] "China" usually refers to a civilisational frame rather than a territory occupied by the contemporary state or its predecessors'. As Wong (2022) notes, 'to Chinese nationalists all Chinese are one people' even if they are well outside the country's borders.

While much analysis of the rise of populist challenges to globalisation focuses on the movement of people, criticism of the role of the state is a second major strand of which there are three elements: first, a critique of the impact of the state on personal liberty; second, a critique of the role of the state in ceding power to INGOs and third, abrogation of the implicit bargain between the political/economic elites and the people according to which the negative consequences of globalisation would be ameliorated by robust and generous welfare provision for the native population.

Regarding the first element, one of the themes running through contemporary right-wing populism is that the state is a fundamental threat to individual liberty and that there is a need to 'protect capitalism from government' (MacLean 2017, p. 74). While the main source of momentum in relation to the second element is at the elite level there is also a powerful though fragmented grassroots movement challenging the influence of international organisations and agreements. The Mexican Zapatista campaign against the North American Free Trade Agreement 'played a crucial role in mobilising a wide variety of causes from around the world to the question of neoliberalism' including protests at the meetings of the WTO in Seattle and Cancun and of the World Economic Forum in Melbourne. More recent activism by the Occupy movement (Pickerill *et al.* 2016), anti-vaxxers (Hinsliff 2019), NOlympics (Robertson 2019) and radical environmental campaign groups (Scarce 2016, Smyth 2019, Moore and Roberts 2022) provides more evidence of the continuing vitality of the grassroots opposition to some INGOs and associated agreements from both the left and the right. The third element in the populist critique of the state may be explained as reaction to the breaking of the implicit post-war bargain between the economic and political elites on the one hand and the general population on the other hand according to which a well-resourced welfare regime would ameliorate the

negative consequences of globalisation such as the outsourcing of jobs and the downward pressure on wages. One consequence of the perceived breaking of this bargain is that it fuels nativism and exclusionary identity politics.

Challenges to globalisation from above

Among the most explicit challenges that originate at the elite level are those directed at the regulatory aspects of the LIO and the IGOs that have been established to effect regulation. Some analysts (Baker 2006, Schneiderman 2008, Gill and Cutler 2014) have argued that the establishment and growing influence of global/regional institutions such as the WTO, NAFTA and the EU have had the effect of depoliticising economic issues, insulating them from democracy and ensuring the priority of the interests of private capital. Of equal significance is the growth in private governance organisations (PGOs) such as the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), the Court of Arbitration for Sport, and of hybrid governance organisations such as the World Anti-Doping Agency. For Gill (1998) these developments constituted the emergence of a new pattern of capitalist governance, referred to as New Constitutionalism, which locked in the rights of private capital through a series of international legal entities. As a result, an increasing number of issues of trade, human rights and finance have moved beyond the sovereignty of the nation-state to the level of supranational governance.

The impact of anti-globalisation from above is not only limited to trade and economic regulation but also affects rights-based international agreements/conventions which are of particular relevance to international agreements in sport. According to Reus-Smit (2021, p. 1267) the LIO is being undermined by 'right-wing [populist] governments that readily assert their Westphalian sovereignty, but reject international norms governing their domestic cultural practices, particularly human rights norms'. Perhaps more significant is that while claims are still being made for the protection of individual human rights often under the terms of UN Conventions, 'the most vociferous and powerfully mobilised claims today are collectivist: claims for ethno-national, religious and civilisational recognition and empowerment' and claims which are often articulated and pursued by populist leaders (Reus-Smit 2021, p. 1269). For example, Donald Trump declared that the survival of Western civilisation was the 'fundamental question of our time' and called for 'an international order based on patriotic nationalism, in which sovereign states defend and celebrate their distinctive "history, culture and heritage"' (Reus-Smit 2021, p. 1269). Cosmopolitanism and the LIO which weaken the power of the state have understandably been most severely challenged by those who argue that sovereignty is the fundamental characteristic of the nation-state, and weakening of sovereignty has only negative consequences (Wickham 2021). As Featherstone (2020, p. 163) argues, 'From this perspective history is seen as an elimination contest between nation-states, super states, civilizational states and blocs, many of which operate with incompatible systems of government, values and objectives'.

The reference to civilisational states is important as it is a break with the traditional notion of international relations being based on relations between territorially bound states. Contemporary civilisational states are defined, on the one hand, by common ideas and culture often reinforced by common ethnicity and, on the other, by a rejection of claims of the 'placeless universalism' (Baggini 2018, p. 340) of particular rights and responsibilities as exemplified by the UDHR. Russia, Turkey and China are all examples of types of civilisational states. Zhang (Zhang 2012, p. 104) crystallises the challenge to Western liberal values as follows: 'Are there universal values that all countries and peoples must adhere to such as democracy, freedom and human rights? ... There are also a lot of values most Chinese endorse such as harmony, benevolence, responsibility, poverty eradication, can these be universal values?'. Similar sentiments have been expressed by Russian commentators. According to Leontiev (quoted in Yanov 2013) 'At the moment when the Russian people become a nation they will cease to exist as people, and Russia will cease to exist as a state'. Yanov (2013)

argues that Russia is not a nation-state but a civilisation and Dugin (2014) argues that Western cosmopolitanism is a threat to Russian civilisation. Russian president Medvedev stated that one of Russia's policy goals was to create a 'sphere of "civilisational privilege" in countries with significant Russian minorities' (Coker 2019, p. 122) – a policy goal that has been pursued through the invasion of Georgia, Crimea and Ukraine. Claims of civilisational status are not confined to non-Western countries. Donald Trump's populism was based, on the one hand, on a narrative of national decline, due to self-serving globalist elites and, on the other hand, nativism – an image of a folk community.

Globalisation, its challenges and the impact on sport

The dominant view of the relationship between sport and globalisation is that it is illustrative of the impact of Western culture and its underpinning values on the rest of the world. During the period of rapid globalisation – 1980s to 2010s – the West dominated the economic, technological and political resources in global sport. The growth in significance of non-Western countries in the last ten to fifteen years in global sport has to a large extent confirmed the degree to which Western values have permeated globally. For example, while the Indian Premier League is undoubtedly the most economically important competition in cricket, which other competitions have to accommodate, the format follows closely the US sports business model (Kohli 2011). The rise of China, Japan and South Korea as 'sports powers' is again within a Western cultural template of the Olympic Movement. Similarly, the huge investment by Middle Eastern countries such as Saudi Arabia, UAE and Qatar in hosting sports events is reinforcement rather than a challenge to the Western sports model and its underpinning values. However, global sport is not immune to the elite and grassroots backlash against globalisation and this section will illustrate the impact on liberal sport values through the examination of three fundamental pillars of the global sports system: international sport agreements, national identity politics and global sports organisations. It is argued that recent developments in these three pillars combine to dilute the commitment to Kantian values and illustrate the obstacles to promoting and protecting the rights of athletes and fans.

International sporting agreements

The foundation of international sport is a series of agreements – some a requirement of participation and others the basis for the pursuit of sectional interests. Examples of the former would include the rules governing membership of International Federations and participation in the Olympic Games, and the latter would include statements of values by organisations pursuing gender equality and the protection of the rights of athletes. This section will focus on four agreements: the World Anti-Doping Code; the Olympic Charter; the Brighton Plus Helsinki 2014 Declaration on Women and Sport; and the Universal Declaration of Player Rights. All four of these agreements are substantially derived from or modelled on Western liberal values and human rights international conventions which emphasise individualism, national autonomy/responsibility regarding implementation and the universality of Enlightenment values.

Two fundamental reference points for sports agreements are the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). The 'decidedly social democratic orientation' (Duranti 2017, p. 6) of the UDHR placed significant emphasis on personal responsibility. In Europe, the ECHR was strongly influenced by conservative values and a 'nostalgic Christian vision of the European legal order' (Duranti 2017, p. 3) such that 'To the dismay of many socialists, they ensured that the right to property . . . would be codified while the rights to employment, health care and social security would not' (Duranti 2017, p. 5). Liberal individualism, in either its social democratic or conservative form, is evident in all four sports agreements identified above. The World Anti-Doping Code (hereinafter 'the Code') places the individual (athlete, coach etc.) at the heart of the document and also emphasises the responsibility of governments (reinforced by the UN International Convention Against Doping in Sport) and international sports organisations. Despite

the apparent success of the Code in gaining international support (Hanstad and Houlihan 2015), the level of support is often shallow (Hanstad *et al.* 2010) or a fiction and the senior leadership of the Agency remains largely recruited from Europe and North America.² Many of the most economically powerful sporting countries prioritise national interest/advantage over adherence to the spirit of the Code. While Russia's state-organised doping regime at the Sochi Winter Olympic Games is the most egregious example, other countries such as India, Jamaica and Kenya have shown little enthusiasm for rigorous Code compliance.

Similar unfulfilled optimism is evident from the attitudes of governments towards the Olympic Charter. In many respects, the Olympic Movement (OM) anticipated the values underpinning the LIO with the strong emphasis on the autonomy of National Olympic Committees and the constant mythologising of the Olympic Games as being above politics and insulated from that 'dangerous creature known as the state' (Coubertin quoted in Lenskyj (2017, p. 187). Even the most cursory review of recent Olympic history will provide ample evidence of the extent to which states assert their priority over the cosmopolitan values of the OM and of the passivity of the OM in the face of national self-interest. Examples include the continued marginalisation of female athletes in many Muslim countries, the refusal to expel Russia from the OM after the Sochi doping scandal and China's increasing repression of political dissent. Similar to the resentment felt towards trade NGOs, states remain sceptical regarding the IOC's commitment to and contemporary relevance of the OM's principles. The OM seems content to retreat behind the mythologising of the Olympic Charter (see Parry 2012) while being complicit in the slow erosion of its moral authority (Lenskyj 2017).

The Brighton Plus Helsinki 2014 Declaration on Women and Sport (hereinafter 'the BPH Declaration') is of a very different type from the two previous examples as the Declaration is a statement of aims and values to support the lobbying of sports organisations and public authorities by the International Working Group on Women and Sport (IWG). The BPH Declaration has a strong social democratic foundation and is closely modelled on the UDHR. For example, principle 1a states 'Every effort should be made by state and government to ensure that institutions and organisations responsible for sport and physical activity comply with the equality provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Declaration of Berlin (UNESCO MINEPS V) and the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women'. In the almost thirty years that the IWG has been active, it has achieved considerable success with over 500 sports organisations having ratified the BPH Declaration. However, the global distribution of signatories is heavily skewed towards Europe, North America and former British Commonwealth countries as is the membership of the organisation's executive. Signatories are thin on the ground in Asia and the Middle East.

The final example, the Universal Declaration of Player Rights (UDPR), shares many common features with the BPH Declaration. The Preamble of the 2017 document references not only the UDHR but also the International Bill of Human Rights, the International Labour Organization's Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and international standards relating to vulnerable groups, including the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The UDPR is promoted under the aegis of the UNI Global Union, an international labour organisation, and records the acceptance of its principles by a wide range of organisations mainly based in Europe and the Americas. Unlike the Code and the Olympic Charter, whose acceptance is a condition of participation, the BPH Declaration and the UDPR can be ignored without serious consequences.

As mentioned previously, all four agreements are embedded in a set of values closely associated with the liberal international order and the universal application of, broadly defined, Kantian Enlightenment values. In recent years, the conventions on which these sports agreements have been based have come under sustained attack. China has used its new-found political leverage to challenge the UDHR. According to Posner (2014, p. 26) 'China has worked quietly but assiduously behind the scenes to weaken international HR institutions [and] supported HR violators like Sudan'. In 2018, China challenged the UDHR by submitting a successful resolution ('Promoting the HR cause

through win–win cooperation’) to the Human Rights Council (a body of the United Nations) that weakened the procedures for holding countries to account for HR violations and replaced them with an emphasis on ‘dialogue’ and ‘cooperation’. The resolution not only referred to the need to ‘tolerate cultural and political differences’ but also stressed the ‘absolute sovereignty’ of states. Two years later, China presented a new resolution which had as a core proposal that external review of HR would be replaced by an internal review and report. According to Worden (2020) ‘The PRC’s resolution would move the Council one step closer to becoming a “HR Council with Chinese characteristics’ in which sovereignty, non-interference, ‘dialogue and cooperation’, ‘mutual respect’ and multilateralism would be prioritised as fundamental, non-negotiable principles and the promotion and protection of human rights of individuals rendered an afterthought’. While China seeks to modify interpretations of UN Conventions to make them more palatable, Russia promotes itself as a bastion of human rights and denies all accusations and evidence to the contrary (United Nations 2018).

China and Russia, as two of the most significant global ‘sporting powers’, adopt similar strategies in relation to engaging with international sports agreements, with the former working to manage agreements to make them more supportive of domestic policy objectives and the latter making public demonstrations of support while ignoring their obligations. From its re-engagement with the Olympic Movement in the mid-1970s, China has sought to strengthen its representation on the IOC. As fluency in English was a requirement (or at least a major advantage) for election to the IOC and to the governing boards of major international federations (IFs), the General Administration of Sport required the inclusion of English on the elite athlete’s academic curriculum as elite athletes were seen as the major source of future board/committee members. The motive behind the desire to increase influence on the IOC was mainly concerned with securing the award of the Games. But China’s engagement with Olympism has been on its own terms. As Hu and Henry (2016, p. 1427) comment, ‘Rather than simply “translating” Western versions of the ... Olympic ideology key groups ... have proactively interpreted and reconstructed the Olympics’ and argued that the country’s success is driven not by nationalism but by patriotism defined in class and cultural/civilisational terms.

In relation to the major IFs, the motive for increasing Chinese influence was the product of the perception that in some sports, such as gymnastics, the presence of Chinese judges would help avoid poor scores for Chinese athletes. As Shuan Yang, COC vice president, stated, ‘we need to ... increase the number of Chinese officials ... to have the power to make decisions in the IFs ... More importantly, we can create a beneficial arena for our athletes, by taking advantage of the opportunities to amend match rules and the constitution’ (Yang 2005, pp. 278–9, quoted in Tan and Houlihan 2012, p. 136). In addition to China’s strategy to influence the decisions of global sports organisations, the country has a mixed record on respecting the human rights of its athletes. WADA is currently investigating accusations of systematic doping of athletes in the 1980s and 1990s (Butler 2018), and there remain serious concerns regarding the treatment of the tennis player, Peng Shuai, who made allegations of sexual assault by a senior Communist Party official. In 2020, the former China international footballer Hao Haidong was also censored on the internet after he openly criticised the Communist Party.³

With regard to Russia, the strategy has been to espouse publicly and vociferously the values of Olympism and anti-doping while privately undermining them. Not only was the Sochi winter Games an example of Russia’s contempt for the IOC’s and WADA’s anti-doping efforts and for the IOC’s environmental protection guidelines, but it was also used as a platform for the promotion of nationalism and the sportswashing of Russia’s poor record on human rights. It is acknowledged that Russia is not unique in its attitude towards anti-doping, environmentalism and the exploitation of the Olympic Games for nationalistic purposes; it is, however, one of the most powerful challengers to the attempts to globalise the values associated with Olympism and anti-doping.

National identity politics

The growing prioritisation of civilisational identity politics provides one of the strongest rationales for challenging value universalism. Identities are just as likely to be based on cultural commonalities, including values, as they are on ethnicity. A number of commentators have noted the deterritorialising of citizenship among Western and some non-Western states as a consequence of globalisation. Simmons and Goemans (2021), for example, stress the extent to which cultural borders are being promoted not only to reinforce but also to extend the physical borders of the state. Sport is often central to the debates about cultural belonging. In terms of challenges to globalisation from below, one example would be the criticism of importing and fast-tracking citizenship for foreign athletes to improve medal chances at the Olympic Games or world championships whether they are 'plastic Brits' (Baker 2012) and imported Qataris⁴ or athletes imported under the Foreign Athletes Talent Scheme in Singapore.⁵ Even China, a country where the acquisition of citizenship is extremely difficult, has imported football players for the national team – a decision that stimulated a backlash from fans, leading the football federation to promise, although somewhat ambiguously, 'not to recruit foreign players on a "large scale"' (Economist 2019, see also Ronay 2019).

A second example of identity-based challenges to globalisation from below is the operation of Confederation of Independent Football Associations (ConIFA) (Rookwood 2020). ConIFA has about 50 members including cultural/geographical communities such as Tibet, Northern Cyprus and Biafra that have a strong sense of their distinctive identity but are located within and constrained by established and more powerful states to which they do not consider that they 'belong' and have been unsuccessful in gaining recognition from FIFA and/or the IOC.

A third example concerns the rise of football 'ultras' who, while not necessarily agents of populist politics, are generally associated with nationalism. Jones (2019, p. 70) argues that ultras in Italy are 'the yeast in this rapidly rising far-right dough', are in pursuit of the 'vanishing grail of modern life: belonging' and consequently reject the highly commercialised sport that football has become. A similar view is presented by Doidge *et al.* (2020) who argue that the unifying banner for ultras is 'Against Modern Football' and against the increasing regulation of their activities. However, antipathy towards the globalisation of football was best illustrated by the grassroots revolt against the proposal to form a European Super League and the (admittedly more muted) opposition to FIFA's proposal to hold biennial World Cups.

In addition to using athletes as a means of defining or reinforcing who 'belongs' in a state, identity politics have also been used to define those who are beyond the state's borders but are considered to 'belong' to the state's community. Molnar and Whigham (2021, p. 134) demonstrate how the Hungarian Prime Minister, Victor Orbán, 'attempted to reinvent a strong nation and national identity through sport and related populism'; distancing himself from the 'corrupt' social and business elites and demonstrating his association with the general population. Orbán emphasised the threats to Hungary's sovereignty from the European Union and its commitment to the liberal economic order, especially in relation to immigration. The government of Orbán sought to assert its independence from international institutions which were perceived as 'the policing agents of global neoliberalism' (Geva 2021, p. 74). As Molnar and Whigham (2021, p. 140) note, 'sport was identified as a key strategic sector to reinforce a distinctive sense of Hungarian identity ... [F]ootball specifically, became a distinctive aspect of right-wing populist politics in Hungary'. Of particular interest is the way in which sport, especially football, was used to strengthen links with 'Hungarian' communities beyond the national boundaries as part of an 'irredentist stance ... to re-connect Magyars inside and outside of Hungary'. To this irredentist end, Orbán has funded football academies in areas of Slovakia, Ukraine, Romania, Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia that contain Hungarian minorities (Molnar and Whigham 2021). This form of diaspora politics reinforces not a 'nation-state', but a 'nationalist-state' defined by cultural values and ethnic identification with those who remain outside its boundaries.

International sports organisations

In many ways, not only international sports organisations, especially IFs, but also the IOC epitomise the LIO and are the apotheosis of globalisation. IFs are global monopolies that are substantially beyond the control of states and are often located in corporate-friendly jurisdictions such as Switzerland and Monaco. It is consequently surprising that criticism and challenge to the power of IFs from the grassroots of the sports have been so limited. Such challenges have tended to come from 'above' from governments. The indictment of 15 FIFA officials by United States federal authorities in 2015 is the most notable example, but France has also been prominent in challenging the autonomy and corruption in the International Association of Athletic Federations (now World Athletics). Among the few challenges from below was the Europe-wide opposition from fans to the proposed European Super League.

Apart from IFs, there have also been challenges from above to the autonomy of WADA with the US, in particular, seeking to have a greater influence on the basis that it was the Agency's largest financial contributor. Arguing that the Agency lacked sufficient transparency and independence, the US threatened to withhold payment of its full contribution in 2021. The US attitude towards WADA mirrors its wider suspicion of international agencies that it cannot control such as UNESCO, WHO and the WTO. At a less confrontational level, the US is also arguably more interested in focusing on the criminal aspects of doping (illegal manufacturing and trafficking) than the use of prohibited substances. Other countries also vary in the aspects of the Code that they emphasise domestically. For example, Sweden is as much concerned with non-elite/recreational use of performance enhancing drugs as it is with use by elite athletes.

As mentioned with regard to IFs, there is relatively little grassroots challenge to the decisions of international sports organisations. One modest exception is the growth of challenges to the Olympic Movement, manifesting in opposition to bids to host future Olympics. The NOlympics movement is a largely centre-left movement opposing the hosting of the 2028 Olympic Games in Los Angeles. Although the Games have been awarded to the city, the NOlympics organisation argues that 'We will continue to fight tooth and nail for a better Los Angeles instead of allowing the elite to shape the future of our city'.⁶ Los Angeles' opposition to hosting the Olympic Games is only one of the more recent grassroots campaigns against the Games. There have been at least 31 local referendums regarding the hosting of the winter Games, of which 18 have rejected the event. The frequency of both the holding of referendums and their rejection of the Games has steadily increased in the last 20 years (Livingstone 2018, Chappelet 2021).

Conclusion: consequences for and impact on sport

Just as it is difficult to draw firm conclusions about the prospects for globalisation in general, it is equally difficult to draw firm conclusions about the consequences for sport. It is also too soon to determine whether the various challenges from above and below discussed in this paper constitute a redefining or a reversal of globalisation and the spread of liberal Enlightenment values or merely a temporary loss of momentum. However, some conclusions may be drawn significantly in relation to the primary challenges to globalisation which are clearly at the elite level of governments and national political movements. In addition to the populist movements represented by Trump and Brexit/Johnson (and the prioritisation of sovereignty), of greater importance is the evidence of resistance to the LIO from powerful civilisational states such as China and Russia, and also Turkey and Hungary. The resistance to LIO institutions takes a variety of forms but shares the rejection of the limits that they place on sovereignty and/or the set of universal values embodied in the UDHR, ECHR and other UN rights-based conventions. The same countries that are seeking to weaken and undermine these institutions and conventions are also reluctant to be bound by sports-related institutions and conventions. The Russian doping scandal at the Sochi winter Games has done substantial damage to the reputation of WADA, but may also be an indication of the limits of the universalisation

of the values that underpin the World Anti-Doping Code. Similarly, the lack of evidence of enthusiasm for the BPH Declaration and the UDPR outside a largely European and North American constituency may be further confirmation that the universalisation of the Western values (both conservative individualist and social democratic) has run out of steam and may in fact be in retreat.

Mignolo (2020, p. 13) argues that we are experiencing ‘the “change of epoch” no longer reducible to the hegemony of one universal and unipolar world’. Even that hegemony might have been exaggerated as a result of complacency and hubris and it may well be that the assumed global culture existed only in a superficial fashion. As Flanagan (2017, p. 7) commented, Western philosophy can be accused of being ‘transcendentally pretentious’ in claiming to have identified what is ‘really good or right independently of history and culture’ and that this transcendental pretentiousness is evident in the Olympic Charter, the WADA Code and the BPH Declaration and the UDPR – the West has simply overlaid its hand. Consequently, the fundamental question is whether the dissemination of Western Enlightenment values has reached its limit and that Western countries will have to accommodate to other value systems such as Confucian or Buddhist or using Fiske’s (1992) categorisation, whether the models of social relations typical of western countries (equality matching and market pricing) will need to adjust to the growing influence of models that are characterised as authority ranking (generally hierarchical authoritarian states such as those in the Middle East) and communal sharing (generally hierarchical and deferential such as those in East Asia). There is evidence that President Xi of China along with Vladimir Putin are determined ‘to craft a “post-West world order” unchained from American-led ideals of liberal democracy’ (Reynolds 2021, p. 32). From the Chinese perspective, the US is an upstart and the loss of Chinese influence and status in the long nineteenth century is an aberration in its history as a regional and global major power (Schuman 2020).

However, while deglobalisation might be evident in the sphere of values, there is evidence that other areas of sports globalisation are intensifying, most notably in sports media, international sports events, team ownership in major sports and player movement. The value of premium sports broadcasting rights have continued to grow from an estimated 24.2 billion USD in 2014⁷ to 44.6 billion USD in 2020⁸; the number of countries participating in the summer Olympic Games has grown steadily over the last 50 years from 121 in 1972 to 206 in 2020; in the 2021/2 season investors from nine different countries owned teams in the English Premier League; in the big 5 European football leagues, the proportion of foreign players increased from 9.1% in 1985/6 to 46.7% in 2015/16, with the EPL having 66.4% in 2021/2.⁹ At neither the elite nor the grassroots levels does there seem to be significant active resistance to these elements of globalisation. For example, the grassroots opposition to hosting the Olympics, coordinated by the NOlympics Anywhere (Robertson 2019) movement, reflects the growing scepticism in the West to the economic and environmental value of the Olympics, but is likely to simply make it easier for authoritarian states to act as hosts and try to sportswash their image. The corporate juggernaut of global sport is still being carried on the wave of globalisation even if the liberal value system on which it was founded is in steady retreat.

The challenge that faces those organisations and individuals that subscribe to Kantian values that emphasise that individuals should be seen as ends and not as means and that sport should be a vehicle for promoting and protecting individual freedom and dignity is how to respond to the current challenges. One response would be simply to accept a form of value globalization according to which considerable scope in interpreting international sports conventions and agreements would be tolerated, if not formally accepted. However, tolerating local variation in the organisation of sport and the treatment of athletes not only has to be within agreed limits (conventions such as the BPH Declaration are not and should not be infinitely elastic) but also is a weak response to fundamental challenges from powerful countries. A salutary example is provided by the fate of Daryl Morey, the general manager of the NBA Houston Rockets, who tweeted his support for the opposition movement in Hong Kong with the words ‘Fight for Freedom, Stand with Hong Kong’. The response from the Chinese government was robust – demanding Morey’s dismissal, withdrawing Rockets merchandise from sale and banning Rockets’

games from Chinese television. The outcome was as spineless as it was predictable. As Cha and Lim (2019, p. 24) note, 'The Chinese got most of what they wanted: Daryl Morey immediately deleted the tweet, the Rockets announced that Morey's initial tweet did not represent the views of the team, the NBA Commissioner expressed regret over the incident, and some of the NBA star players disavowed any interest in the protests in Hong Kong'. The craven response of the NBA is unlikely to be the exception as many other sports businesses and IFs have shown that their desire for profit far exceeds any desire to protect Olympic values or the interests of athletes. The IOC's willingness to take the Olympic Games to authoritarian regimes that have shown scant regard for human rights (Russia and China) and FIFA's award of the World Cup to Qatar provide additional recent examples. Moreover, the preparedness of countries, social democratic and liberal, to take part in sports events in authoritarian countries, suggests that there is little scope for leverage at the governmental level.

On a more positive note, there are general human rights organisations such as Amnesty International,¹⁰ Commonwealth Forum of Human Rights Organisations¹¹ and Transparency International¹² whose campaigns include work on behalf of athletes as well as a number of organisations focused specifically on sport including Play the Game,¹³ Athlete Ally,¹⁴ The Centre for Human Rights and Sport¹⁵ and Sport and Rights Alliance.¹⁶ The recent decision by the Women's Tennis Association (WTA) to boycott events in China in support of Peng Shuai was an important but rare example of action on athlete's rights by a sports federation, but was overshadowed by the refusal of the International Tennis Federation and the Association of Tennis Professionals to support the WTA. It is thus important to acknowledge the severity of the challenge faced by those committed to protecting a Kantian view of athletes' rights and to support the incorporation of the protection of athletes' rights within the work of general rights organisations as well as supporting the campaigns of sport-specific rights organisations. While these are small steps, they are the most promising way of pressuring governments, international sports organisations and sports media corporations to resist a further decoupling and subordination of liberal sports values from political/corporate interests.

Notes

1. The term globalisation will be used in general discussions of global interconnectedness, but the phrase LIO and the term cosmopolitanism will be used when discussing the specific/distinctive elements of these concepts.
2. Ten of the 14 most senior positions in the Agency are filled by Europeans or North Americans.
3. Peng Shuai: How China censored a tennis star. Accessed 7 December 2022. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/59338205>.
4. In Qatar, the Olympic team (like much else) is imported, *New York Times* 7 August 2021. Accessed: 16 January 2022. Available at: <https://www.newstatesman.com/culture/sport/2012/06/plastic-brits-are-some-olympians-more-worthy-cheer-others>.
5. Bowlers, body-builders and racy crescent moon swimsuits, *Facts and Details*. Accessed 16 January 2022. Available at: https://factsanddetails.com/southeast-asia/Singapore/sub5_7d/entry-3753.html#chapter-3.
6. Platform: NOlympics. Accessed 18 January 2022. Available at: <https://nolympicsla.com/platform/>.
7. Broadcast sports rights: Premium plus, Deloitte. Accessed on: 20 January 2022. Available at: <https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/au/Documents/technology-media-telecommunications/deloitte-au-tmt-broadcast-sports-rights-011014.pdf>.
8. Global media report 2020, Sport Business. Accessed on: 20 January 2022. Available at: <https://www.sportbusiness.com/global-media-report-2020/>.
9. Foreign players in football teams, CIES Football Observatory. Accessed on: 20 January 2022. Available at: https://football-observatory.com/IMG/pdf/mr12_eng.pdf.
10. Sport and Human Rights. Available at: <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/issues/sport-and-human-rights> Accessed: 4 May 2022.
11. Commonwealth Forum of Human Rights Organisations.
12. Corruption in Sport. Available at: <https://www.transparency.org/en/news/sport-integrity> Accessed: 1 May 2022.
13. Play the Game. Available at: <https://www.playthegame.org> Accessed: 5 May 2022.
14. Athlete Ally. Available at: <https://www.athleteally.org/about/> Accessed: 2 May 2022.

15. Centre for Human Rights and Sport. Available at: <https://www.sporhumanrights.org/about-us/> Accessed: 3 May 2022.
16. Sport and Rights Alliance. Available at: <https://sportandrightsalliance.org/about-us/who-we-are/> Accessed: 4 May 2022.

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