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KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
Political Economy, Sports, Value Co Creation, Public Policy, Governance, Football	This case study explores the political economy of sports in Pakistan and evaluates that why with huge demographic potential of 65 million young population and international level football manufacturing industry remains on margin in world sports economy. The research is based on in-depth interviews with key institutional, regulatory and club executives and grassroot representatives. It identifies significant governance and market constraints which hamper strategic value creation. While passion for football is significant in public, the ecosystem is seriously affected by a decade of unstable institutional arrangements and unreliable formats of football operations / competition. This has led to adhoc and short term planning, weak management and organization and inability to harness media and sponsors' commitment on long term basis. Limited availability of market data and inadequate facilities available for matchday experiences also challenge credibility. Through addressing these structural and basic issues through a phased three years development strategy affords public policy opportunity, strategically, to boost national identity, capitalize economic potentials and steer youth development.
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Introduction – Strategic Value of Sports

In contemporary world, sporting activities are not social or recreational activity only. They have positively transitioned from entertainment to a full-fledged service sector industry where society, governments, market actors and public join hands. The interests of the stakeholders may vary as a matter of geographical identity, social wellbeing, economic activity, national prestige as was the case of Qatar hosting FIFA WC 2022. Football is the most popular and followed sport. It links

large populations across continents and generates a shared culture. In the last few decades, this transition has also advanced in producing financial, social development and diplomatic value for nations and countries (Chadwick Simon et al., 2019; Yiapanas et al., 2024).

Governments use sports as policy instruments for various internal objectives such as social cohesion, youth engagement and development, health and civic progression. Sports are useful tool in the international arena for display of national prestige, soft power and diplomatic discourse (Houlihan, 1997). Sports governance is therefore politically and economically integrated in public policy and governance. This perspective also covers synergy of efforts by market stakeholders like privately or institutionally operating clubs, sponsors and broadcasters (Grant, 2021; Grix & Carmichael, 2012). The sports need patronage, regulation and support from political government. It is the institutions' role to keep the balance to accrue political, economic benefits, afford opportunities and ensure stability in sports ecosystem. (Grant, 2021).

Many analyses by scholars and professionals highlight that due to its demographic potential in young population (65 millions) as per Population Census (2023), Pakistan is a compelling case for developing a robust and sustainable football ecosystem (Fatima, 2024; Zia et al., 2024). FIFA president Gianni Infantino recently pledged full support of FIFA to Pakistani Football hinting at this potentials (FIFA Inside, 2025); *see figure 1*. Another major indicator for the growth is manufacturing of Footballs for prestigious football competitions like UEFA Champions League and FIFA WC, in Sialkot by Forward Sports and Saga Sports. Despite, football mostly remains underdeveloped as highlighted by Aurora (2018). The challenges point towards administrative gaps, lack of credibility and inconsistency in policy formulation and implementation (Abbasi, 2020; Ali et al., 2023; Zia et al., 2024). The outcomes are short term initiatives, broken competition formats, lack of synergy in joint ventures by stakeholders and limited commercial confidence.



Figure 1: Projection of soft power (*Ajrak*, a strong cultural symbol) Coinciding with FIFA lifting of ban on PFF – PFF and FIFA Presidents in frame.

Usual features of an ecosystem are elaborate and quality governance system, operational structure including competition formats, media visibility, audience and fan experiences and sponsoring brands augmenting each other in value co creation framework (Kolyperas et al., 2019; Oertzen et al., 2017; Wenner, 2023; Yiapanas, 2022a). In terms of Policy, value co creation implies growth of sports linked with synchronized work of institutions and clubs beside market stakeholders. Progressively, sports federations and public offices provide realistic set of rules, predictable schedules of operations including matches and competition, while sponsors and broadcasters add value in visibility, outreach and long-term commercial development (Mughal et al., 2024; Nosheen, 2022). Contrarily weak governance leads to decline in the credibility, limited or no long term initiatives both by sponsors and broadcasters subjecting ecosystem to adhoc decision making and short term event based activities.

Economic value of the sports and particularly football is well documented. The worth of European football market has been reported at €43.1 billion in current season. The revenues are driven by broadcasting, matchday ticketing and other commercial revenues (Deloitte Sports Business Group, 2025); *see figure 2*. The report suggests scale of European club football revenues at €12 billion for top 20 clubs. At international level, for the duration of 2019 to 2022, FIFA's reports record revenues of \$ 7.57 Billion. FIFA and UEFA subsequently redistribute handsome amounts to participating entities according to elaborate distribution framework for developing national pathways (FIFA Publications, 2022; Keiran Maguire, 2021)

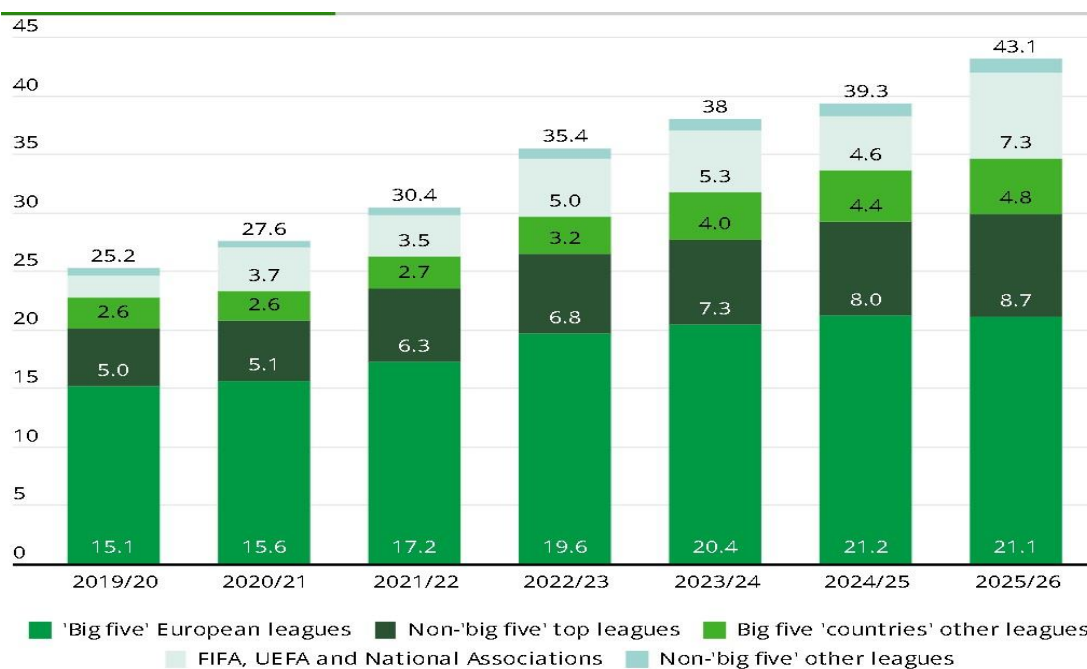


Figure 2: Financial Out Lay (Revenues) of European Football Market from 2019 to 2025/26 (In Billion Euros): Source ~ Deloitte Sports Business Group, 2025

EU describes sports’ substantial 3.4 % GDP contribution to European Economy and supporting 9.7 Million jobs (Eurostat, 2025). For an emerging economy and developing country like Pakistan, right approach, scaled allocation of resources from mere 1.18 billion rupees (Associated Press of Pakistan, 2025) and consolidation would matter in commercializing sports to the right size. This can potentially create job opportunities, support infrastructure development, add to tourism and boost national image through sports diplomacy as founded by Grix & Houlihan (2014) and Houlihan (1997). Current economic overlay of economic value / resource allocation is given below (figure 3):

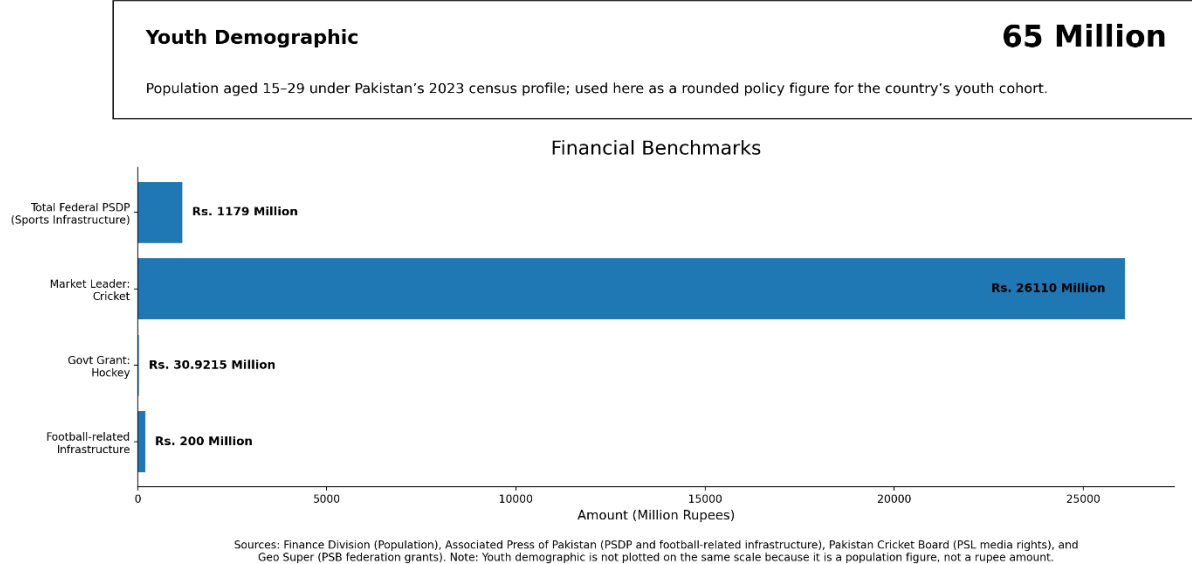


Figure 3: Important Financial Indicators

The objective of this paper is to evaluate challenges faced by Pakistan’s football industry from the lens of political economy while giving due consideration to value co creation framework as adopted in recent scholarship by Grix & Houlihan (2014) and Yiapanas, (2022). Instead of abstract theory, the study focuses on realities and existing structures suggesting collaborative policy discourse for a progressive football ecosystem in Pakistan.

Analytical Framework & Interactive Enquiry

This research paper is embedded in practical and real environment, grounded in the straight involvement and hands on experience of individuals who formulate policy, regulate and run football operations. As supported by McNabb (2021) and Patton (2015), an exploratory and qualitative approach was adopted to describe functioning of the system and collect valuable inputs from the respondents, empirically (Edwards, 2009).

Beside, multiple visits by the author to Jinnah Sports Complex and Pakistan Sports Board, and personal interaction with various stakeholders, primary evidence is collected through eighteen semi structured interviews. For enriched input from all tiers purposively, respondents across the football ecosystem in Pakistan were interviewed. This included top position holders in government departments, PFF / Associations and their extension down to district level, Provincial Youth Department Officials and their field offices as regulators and policy makers. At the operational level, CEO, owner and managers and team captains of top tier semiprofessional, private and departmental clubs were included. Selection was based on their capacity to directly observe governance decisions, tournaments planning, allocation of resources and integration with media and sponsors (Patton, 2015). Additionally, it was ensured that various geographical regions of the country are represented appropriately as listed:

Table 1:

Respondent	Category	Role	Organization	Region
1&3	Regulator	President and Secretary	Football Association	KP
10		Executive	District Sports Office	Punjab
12		Director	Punjab Sports Directorate	
11&14		Director & Manager	Pakistan Sports Board	ICT
15		Executive	Pakistan Football Federation	Punjab
18			POA	Punjab
8&9	Regulator, Club	DG Sports and Team Manager	Federal Deptt	Punjab
2	Club	National Player and Coach	Club	Balochistan
4,5,6&7		Managers & Team Captains	Two Federal Departments	ICT
13		Owner	Semi Professional Club	Sindh
16		Manager		ICT
17		Executive	Government University	

The structure of interviews was validated by academics and professionals from the relevant field and was organized to cover the various aspects of governance, management, structure of operations, and market underdevelopment in the policy and commercialization domains. Logical sequencing was adopted spanning from challenges to proposed prospects for overcoming challenges and shortfalls in political economy cycle (Grant, 2021; Nosheen, 2022).

Rigorous thematic analysis of data was conducted with contemporary data tool NVIVO. The insights were clustered into governance challenges, structural review, interface with commercial perspective, current strengths of the system and adoptive policy framework. This method is often used due to its relevance in translating opinions into description of clear policy narratives (Patton, 2015; Saunders Mark et al., 2019).

Institutional and Governance Deficiencies

Top most aspect in political economy of sport is controlling the regulations and resources, and legitimate authority to govern the system. In a structured football ecosystem, robust governance develops regular and tiered competitions as per preset scope and formats, elaborate planning, ensures merit and competitive selections, dependable sponsorship and reliable broadcasters' interest. When governance appears lean, commercial and media partners display risk averse behaviour (Ali et al., 2023; Grant, 2021). This reduces long term value co creation by stakeholders.

Decade of Institutional Stagnation (2015–2025)

For most of last decade, Pakistan's football suffered due to administrative turmoil, conflicts and litigation, and parallel factions competing for control of PFF. This caused continual governance crises, suspensions of PFF by FIFA and special supervisory arrangements for PFF and resultantly led to decline in international standing (Inside FIFA, 2018; Kashif Abbasi, 2020). A rectification measure was adopted by FIFA through appointment of a Normalization Committee in September 2019 to restore order and facilitate conduct of elections (Yaqoob Mohammad, 2019). Mandate of Committee was extended multiple times till 2025 (Reuters, 2025, Inside FIFA, 2025). This subjected football ecosystem to planning limitations and diluted the market confidence making it commercially unviable and unattractive because the framework and basic contact paradigm cannot be established with commercial stakeholders. A club manager linked with a federal department stated the circumstances and implication:

"For years our Football Normalization Committee has been running... all this is a chaotic mess. This politics has destroyed our football. What is the work of a politician inside football when it should be run by professionals?"

This internal rift and instability also deprive players of a competitive environment & opportunities.

Misaligned Roles of institutions

In the top governance and regulation system, there are three main institutions, PSB representing Federal Interprovincial Coordination Ministry, Pakistan Football Federation working directly in coordination with FIFA and the Provincial Youth & Sports Departments. Their individual roles are chalked out in their own respective constitutions and policies, though some are too old to be of significant relevance (Pakistan Sports Policy, 2005; PSB RULES, 1981). However, the problem

arises in coordination across these tiers and their lower extensions at grassroot level. Moreover, FIFA has important role in functioning of PFF and its funding stakes. Ideally, FIFA treats governments as third party and discourages “third-party interference.” After 18th Amendment in the Federal Constitutional, many roles were devolved to the provinces. The provinces are responsible for development and promotion of sports while federal government is limited to facilitation and part funding (Aurora, 2018) rather than lead, to accrue benefits from political economy of sports and particularly football. Among the football circles, this shortfall is described as:

“After the 18th Amendment, all its powers were transferred to the provinces. Now the Pakistan Sports Board mainly coordinates for international-level events. Before, there was a yearly calendar for under-16 competitions... so basically, the Pakistan Sports Board is also somewhat orphaned. There is no proper system at the federal level.”

FIFA’s governance and regulatory model limits role of government to enforce accountability. The outcome is a policy dilemma where the state is expected to assist in infrastructure and organization but has limited window to ensure accountability and regulation while carrying the burden of sanctions from FIFA.

Power Politics and Accountability Deficit

Due to weak accountability and legitimacy, power politics and favoritism has crept in, eroding foundation of system. Non enforcement of regulatory framework, merit, talent identification & selection based on competency and the roll out of football operations is also seriously affected. Respondents have consistently pointed towards “*parchi system*” and undermining the players of rival factions. A regional regulator and former coach said:

“There is immense talent in Pakistan, but continuity is missing due to the ‘parchi system’. Influence deeply affects selection. Sometimes an influential person’s child gets selected to use it for foreign opportunities, while the genuinely talented local players from the grassroots remain ignored.”

This appears as human capital matter where competence as pathway is distorted by doubt and lack of interest by aspiring youth.

Ad hoc Planning and Fall of Domestic Structure

Due to long term governance and organizational shortfalls, a deliberate and consistent structure of the competitions and football operations has not been followed for last many years. Event based or short term actions, short duration training camps even for international participations, infrequent and venue based competitions do not give credence to stable ecosystem. The passionate groups and communities hold competitions, but are not linked with hierarchy selections for next tiers. After a long gap National Challenge Cup was organized by PFF in February 2026 which involved only six departmental teams and spanned over a fortnight. A regular season on the lines of PSL or European leagues only remains a proposal so far. This gap

seriously affects gradual human resource development, as players shift interest and do not see sports as suitable careers. Besides Broadcasters and sponsors substantial interest also remain wanting and uncertain. A federal department team manager explained:

“We have trended toward diaspora players. Out of 11 in international matches, six or seven are diaspora players. They come in the last five days—what impact can they create? We lose with them and without them. It is far better to give international experience to local players so there is continuity.”

It is only through a sustained and long term calendar that market confidence, public engagement and development of talent can be gained.

Departments vs. Community Clubs

At national level, Pakistani football has usually depended on departmental teams like WAPDA, armed forces, KRL and few others. Department follow employment based support which is highly encouraging for players due to nonexistent professional club system. It is generally agreed that departments lack ability to engage audience and to generate revenues on the lines of modern football economy. The departmental teams do not hold support of regions, communities, a loyal fan base which could subscribe to the events through ticketing and merchandise. The club owner of a semi professional club from Karachi highlights:

“Departmental teams like WAPDA or the Army have no [public] audience or followers; if Chaman Club plays in Chaman, the ground will be full. But our club system at the lower level is very weak. Clubs run on self-help and donations, which makes sustaining teams incredibly difficult.”

Departments present positive financial structure for players and owning of basic infrastructure, yet they cannot substitute for a quality professional club system which generates economic value through audience, media and sponsorship.

Whereas limited data and feedback from the streets and the footballing circles suggests football actually being second only to cricket in its appeal, its limited commercial appeal is best explained by lack of opportunity for non departmental clubs.

Economic and Market Context

In the contemporary world sports / football are not sustained by good governance only. They also depend on a durable football economy and endeavor to develop it (Michel Desbordes, 2007) through marketing strategies to incorporate all stakeholders including broadcasters, sponsors, fans and knitting of credible data (Kolawole-Abon & Adebayo, 2021). In marketing terms, besides being a final product “the match” is taken as full package where identity, storytelling, media event production, matchday experience and sponsor branding commitment are based on marketing concerns. Scholars and professionals put heavy emphasis on value co creation through

collaborative mechanism involving all the stakeholders (Kolyperas et al., 2019; Viglia et al., 2023; Yiapanas et al., 2024). A descriptive model of this interaction is given at figure 4.

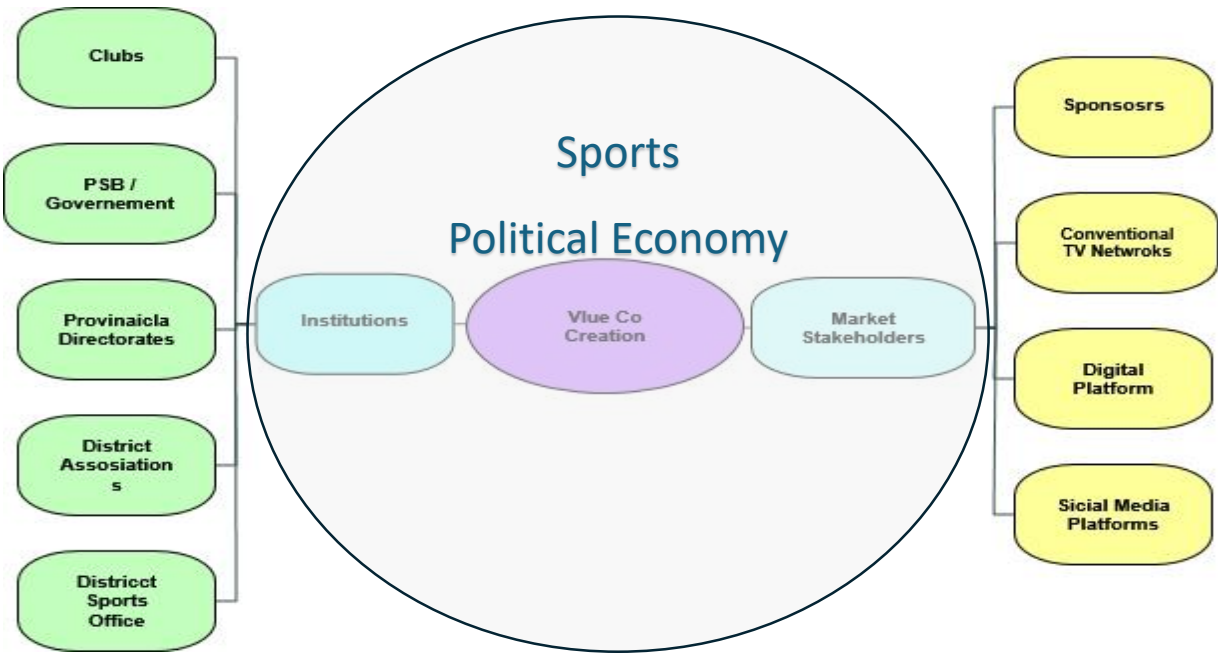


Figure 4: Basic Interactive Model for Capitalizing Political Economy of Sports

It is vital, for Pakistan also, to gradually develop a robust economic portfolio. In spite of passion, participation and talent, Pakistan currently lacks long term and risk averse value addition from both media and committed sponsors. To fully capitalize the governance, market stakeholders must be taken on board (Lin & Bruning, 2024; Milovic & Vojvodic, 2021).

Broadcasting Landscape

From economic and financial point of view, visibility is currency. Broadcaster, (conventional TV network, social media or digital platform like TAPMAD or MYCO) display sports and build profile of sporting personalities, foster emotional identity and shape interest of public. They create the excitement which sponsors want, to scale their business interest. Through a strong broadcasting partnership, sports become commercial product (Nosheen, 2022).

Participants consistently argued that Pakistan's mainstream sports media is dominated by cricket which leaves very limited window for football, both international and domestic. In February 2026, Pakistan Super League (PSL) broadcast and live-streaming rights for next four year were contracted at 26.11 billion rupees (Pakistan Cricket Board, 2026). This indicates significant economic value and domination of cricket together with validity of strong coordination among stakeholders and high quality production of events gaining trust of audience.

While cricket makes a strong supporting case, its monopoly has marginalized other sports and football. Coverage of football events as live and other events is negligible. The low coordinated efforts with institutions and sponsors and lack of regular schedules definitely undermine broadcasters' support and value. The burden of media visibility is neither shared nor synergized. At times, the cost of coverage is upon clubs and domestic tiers as pay-to-broadcast which is inverse model to contemporary practices. A prominent club owner from Karachi thus shares:

"Even today, to get your event broadcast, you have to pay the broadcaster for production. They don't pay you, unlike cricket or foreign leagues."

Matchday Environment and Experience

The production and coverage teams take operational decisions depending upon visuals, props, audience demand, cost and feasibility of production. Modern sports are full service sector entertainment package bundling atmosphere, amenities and convenience, safety, and excitement. Mature ecosystems describe how institutional and market stakeholders generate this value to shape fan experience and found commercial interest (Kolyperas et al., 2019; Yiapanas et al., 2024).

Participant of interviews shared that football struggles on all these fronts. Production costs are higher relative to ROI. Most venues lack supporting and administrative structure for broadcasting. Additionally, except a few, venues are not equipped with floodlighting, better looking playing fields and basic stadium presentation so as to support big events. It is imperative that the matches lose the ability to hold audience if the appearance is not appealing. With serious concern, Football stakeholders emphasize "minimum viable broadcasting" as start to gradually bring in football society and fans.

Due to limited floodlight facility, matches are conducted during daytime resulting in exposure to extreme weathers and difficulty in sparing time from working days routines. Finances also constraints audience to actively engage in match days. A federal department club manager described it directly and suggest regulators facilitation to develop audience through simple policy decisions:

"The token money, the gate money, is so high that a common man cannot afford it... to promote football and bring fans to the ground, we should make the token money free there so that all people come to the ground, watch it, and develop a passion for it."

Digital Platforms Harnessing

In the digital age, there is a major ongoing transformation and a real shift in consumer outreach through digital platforms like, TAPMAD, MYCO, tamasha and Shog TV. Youth is increasingly following digital platforms and short form contents like highlights, compared to full match coverage. Some of these platforms are streaming European football for monthly subscriptions or full season coverage. Around the globe, football is benefitting from this trend. In Pakistan, the

trend is not being capitalized due to limited value offered to these streaming platforms by the ecosystem and needs to be explored.

Commercial Value Visibility and Superficial Commitment

Large and corporate sponsorship operates on measurable value like viewership, large scale digital following and statistics. Social media giant like Real Madrid and Manchester United and ever increasing billion plus fan following of Messi and Ronaldo has mega economic effect on its own by collaborating on such platforms. Potentially, their respective ecosystems generate huge value by engaging with fan communities as indicated by their respective social media presence. Similarly emerging systems like Saudi Pro League and US Major League Soccer are beneficiaries of broadcasting and social media tools. Even the CSR initiatives also have latent interest like market penetration and brand equity. This is particularly important in socially complex markets (Lin & Bruning, 2024). The measurable scales, data and matrices availability is a major challenge due to limited capacity of ecosystem and limited players in the market as highlighted by respondents. There are limited events, few or no instances of recording of such data, thus there are no central reporting or processing networks for primary or secondary data. The clubs albeit community support, find it difficult to arrange sponsors for their activities and players. A football academy manager from Islamabad summarized:

“Clubs struggle even more because there is no reliable data system to demonstrate value to sponsors.”

Moreover, in current circumstances value package appears as ROI trap. Sponsors falter because they do not see promising returns while the ecosystem lags for want of sponsors. Currently, sponsorship is mostly event based, rudimentary without any long term impact like contracts, youth funding or collaboration with other stakeholders (Mughal et al., 2024). A prominent club owner described short term mindset among sponsors:

“Sponsors should not think that if they do one small event for one or two months, they will immediately know if it worked or not... You have to give it time. Someone should invest for two or three years and then see whether it created value.”

Self Help Based Activities

Insight from field research accounts that football currently survives through self-help of local communities and informal support from elders, volunteers and small-scale donors. The cultural and regional strength does exist particularly in Balochistan, Gilgit Baltistan, Karachi and other rural areas of the country, but it fails to generate significant impact on systemic growth of the informal and semiprofessional participant communities and clubs, into structured ecosystem. The market constraint is not privation of interest rather an investable approach.

Recommending a Strategic Roadmap

Notwithstanding notable governance and market constraints, football is not an alien concept to the population in Pakistan. It is deep rooted in cultural and society specially in some areas. The tradition has been guarded against all odds since 1947 as described by respondents. There are nationwide grassroot academies, regional football leagues, existing facilities and government provided infrastructure. Large young population as target audience and participants, passionate about football remain overriding consideration for both the institutions and a potential growth perspective for market stakeholders (Fatima, 2024; Zia et al., 2024). The given recommendations are a policy discourse for value addition to politico-economic value of football (figure 5).



Figure 5: Strategic Roadmap for Developing Political Economy of Football in Pakistan

Transition to Regional Identities

The research noted that a modern football economy in Pakistan cannot be developed unless local identity is capitalized to prompt communities and fan bases. An inference exists in Pakistani Sports paradigm as regional teams of PSL. Departmental teams serve as basic infrastructure and structured financing of players. Professional club logic suggests expanding the ecosystem to community clubs or linking the departmental teams to clear identities like Arsenal or Bayern Munich FCs. Alternatively, departmental teams can be interfaced with regional teams. Development or structuring region or city based leagues will endure fan loyalties, participation of

sponsors and broadcasters, and generate commercial value, sustainably (Kolyperas et al., 2019; Yiapanas, 2022).

Ensuring Predictable Long Term Competition Formats

Core of the roadmap is regular and stable schedules for various tiers, minimally, national or top tier leagues. This will invariably serve as the foundation and basic framework around which all stakeholders, communities, organizers, media and sponsors can work. It ensures visibility encouraging them to put stakes and value investments positively. Most issues like adhoc practices, event based planning and information gap across stakeholders will be addressed through elaborate planning of competitions. Grassroot, regional league or departmental competitions will also inherently get aligned with top tier league system. A federal club manager and former national team described it as international benchmark:

“We don’t keep realistic goals. Japan reached the World Cup quarter-final and said ‘in 2050 we will play the final’—that is long-term planning [while] We often expect results immediately.”

Structure and certain calendar is the single most important measure from regulators to lead the ecosystem to better governance. This can trigger quality performance and pride to the nation in longer run.

Adopting Commercial Approach

Consensus is found among community professional circles that domestic football is generally taken as only “the match” and a sports activity. However scholars and professionals treat it as package where operations of football sell as entertainment experience in service sector. Its commercial presentation has potential to boost match-day revenues, long term collaboration through meaningful engagement. Together, the stakeholders can incite purchase intent and participatory value from the fans. Initially the participatory value / affordability may be prioritized over actual buying value as suggested by a provincial sport executive.

“If football is shown properly on TV through a league, sponsors will come... we should have floodlight matches to attract people... the first few floodlight matches, you could even give away 1,000 shirts to create a colorful crowd. This will build the trend.”

Shortlisted venues with basic administrative facilities with a low-cost entry fee may be adopted for leisure time participation to attract broadcasters. Moreover, in the institutions, dedicated marketing windows may be established for undertaking tasks of advertisement and interface with market stakeholders.

Grass Root Development

Clubs and low tier circles view short term event based training camps and trial based selection instead of player profiles, as obvious development failure. Regular training camps, recording of player profiles and merit based selection will encourage youth to explore possibilities of adopting

sports / football as career. This is possible by activating grass root offices, providing sufficient resource to lower tier to conduct regular competitions, identify talent and impart regular training to grassroots players. Foundation level actions are necessary for inflow of talent and preparation. The respondents also linked bad domestic continuity to growing dependence on informal players. Instituting structure for regular age bracket competitions, incorporating educational institute competitions, clubs and their respective academies, will facilitate holding of quality competitions at regional and national level, (Ruiz-Alba et al., 2023). Grassroot development appears only second to the governance in the research themes emanating from data of this research.

Gradual Broadcasting Curve and Information Sharing

In the preliminary phase, it is inappropriate to expect a perfect or near perfect media production at par with UEFA like competitions. However, scholars have validated a solid requirement and value of broadcasting (Cox, 2012; Mondello & Fortunato, 2022) and is confirmed by respondents. For creating mass visibility, attracting sponsors, government support through PTV Sports can be starting point for promotion of football as stated by Abbas & Riaz, (2015). Practical step will be minimal coverage of live football, advertising planned match schedules for public visibility and hosting of pre & post match shows. It is also noted that even with small production design of semi professionals through social media channels, performance and motivation of people specially players rise. This will also contribute to broader outcomes through mass media visibility for generating economic value and promotion of sports (Nosheen, 2022).

Commercial Incentives for Stakeholders

For aligned politico-economic value, government can contribute through incentives to the stakeholders while remaining within bounds of FIFA regulations. The possible incentives are tax incentives to sponsors and broadcasters for investing in football specially financial structure for players and sponsored clubs. This should also include waiving off fees and charges to use provincial and district level stadiums for competitions arranged by communities and football associations or clubs. In collaborative design, government can also arrange joint programs and workshops to match commercial partners with institutions and clubs. A provincial senior representative inferred from practices of other countries in the region:

“India selected about 10–15 sports and pushed the corporate sector to adopt them... When the corporate sector started supporting them, their financial problems were reduced. Their household needs started being taken care of. And when a player is mentally at peace, he performs better.”

Introducing CSR initiatives while taking business entities onboard and combining financial incentives for participants is likely to add value and consistency to the ecosystem while mitigating investment and risk of sponsors and broadcasters. Empirical data from Pakistan also suggest that coordinated sponsorship strengthens development of infrastructure and players as stated by Mughal et al., (2024).

Proposed Model

A phased and workable roadmap has been induced through this research.

Phase-I (6 Months): As matter of immediate concern and of direct consequences, a two level national and provincial (or regional) calendar and operational structure must be formulated while taking all stakeholders aboard. The plan shall also fix venues with basic facilities including floodlights. PFF should take lead role while PSB should facilitate and coordinate media coverage and information sharing with masses.

Phase-II (Upto Two Years): Conduct of pilot competition on [City>Province>National] levels exclusively without concern for national games. This phase must include rigorous efforts to harnessing potential sponsors. Credibility of the pilot and its continuation will be established in second season. Through outreach of districts level organizations, talent identification, financial support of shortlisted players and competence-based selection will be imperative.

Phase-III (Upto Three Years): Refine regulatory framework for players selection for teams from a local system, expansion of grassroot pathways, defining of league system after taking feedback from institutions and clubs, and substantiating sponsors and broadcaster collaboration should be aimed at. A well organized league pyramid will continue to evolve under guidance and regulatory framework of PFF to give opportunities to emerging and established clubs.

The stakeholder value co-creation framework remains consistent in this model in which credibility grows through predictability and consequently gives way to information exchange and visibility for developing a sustained and investible market.

Conclusion

Sports or football, as discussed in this study, is not a matter of matches only. In the current era, sports contribute substantially towards national capacity and prestige, GDP, HDI, youth policy and demographic advantage. There are many successful examples to support this argument. This research was based on review of literature, case studies of successful football entities and in-depth interviews with top level representatives of institutions and clubs. For Pakistan to prosper in this domain, the potential must be tapped. Findings of this case study are generally applicable to other games like field hockey, squash and kabaddi. Major challenges in Pakistan's football are lack of systemic governance and market constraints trapped in a vicious cycle. Glaring gaps are inconsistency, short term approach and power struggle in regulating bodies which leads to fission of credibility, doubted legitimacy and disruption in the eyes of international regulators, market stakeholders and fans alike. From the lens of media and sponsors, in present state, football in Pakistan is not a promising business venture because It does not garner sufficient and long term interest from the business collaborators. It also limits promising future for grassroot level participants due to lack of financial and material support. Passion and popularity of football offers a strategic opportunity in the domain of governance and public policy beyond stadium to its full economic potential, human resource development and national identity.

Existing sports policy and PFF structure are suited to function as foundation, an aggressive reform therefore may not be required immediately. Only gaps are required to be addressed gradually through evolution of existing ecosystem.

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