

Dr Nicolas Scelles (University of Stirling, Scotland, UK)

**A comparative analysis of the evolution of TV rights in English and French football,
1980-2020**

(in collaboration with Dr Nadine Dermit-Richard, University of Rouen, France)

On 10 February 2015, it was announced that the national TV rights for the English Premier League will reach a record £5.136bn (€6.68bn for £1= €1.3) for the three seasons from 2016-2017 to 2018-2019. This could mean a league's overall broadcast revenue around £8.4bn (€10.92bn) for these three seasons once the international sales will be completed. These possible £2.8bn (€3.64bn) per season have to be compared with the annual £2.6m (€3.38m) for the 1983-1985 period, when the first televised live English Football League matches were shown (Gratton & Solberg, 2007). This indicates the dramatic increase in TV rights for English football from the 1980s, also true to a lesser extent in French football. Indeed, national TV rights for the latter have increased from €0.8m in 1983-1984 to €748.5m per season for the 2016-2020 period.

In this presentation, the objective is to compare the evolution of TV rights in English and French football over the 1980-2020 period. To do so, the focus is on ten factors identified as able to explain national and international TV rights for a domestic league:

1. Independency.
2. Appropriate number of teams.
3. At least one economically and sportingly strong team (driving force).
4. At least one convincing domestic rival (uncertainty for the title).
5. Continental competitiveness (proof of the product quality and source of sporting stakes, but also required to avoid that TV channels prefer other leagues).
6. Large stadium attendance (telegenic potential).
7. Ability to attract investors and revenues beyond TV rights (TV channels not alone to ensure economic and thus sporting competitiveness).
8. Quality of domestic players (among the best players in the world?).
9. Quality and quantity of foreign players (among the best players in the world and maximum of international markets?) (Buraimo & Simmons, 2015; Gratton *et al.*, 2012).
10. At the end, TV rights will be even higher if there is competition between TV channels and international TV rights; a domestic league can generate more competition with appropriate packaging and auctioning (Bolotny & Bourg, 2006).

Based on the previous factors, it is possible to identify key elements explaining the evolution of TV rights in English and French football over the 1980-2020 period:

- 1980-1992: limited increase in TV rights both in England and France due to a lack of factors met: European competitions ban, decreasing attendance and limited number of foreign players (11 in 1991-1992) in England; limited attendance in France; no independency and lack of competition between TV channels for both;
- 1992-2004: large increase in TV rights due to more factors and/or more *important* factors met: independency (Premier League from 1992), driving force (Manchester United from 1992 too) and more foreign players (56% in 2004-2005) in England; competition between TV channels both for England (Sky and not only BBC and ITV from 1992 again) and France (TPS against Canal + from 1999);
- 2004-2007: stagnation in England due to no competition for Sky, increase in France (the famous “€600m” from Canal +);
- 2007-2019: again large increase in England due to competition and international development; limited increase in France (limited product quality);
- 2019-2020: English Premier League number one in the world (in front of NFL)?

References

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