

Sport and the geopolitical economy are now more intertwined than ever - sport research must reflect this

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Sport and the geopolitical economy are now more intertwined than ever, and academic research in the area of sport must have a focus on this link, according to new research from emlyon business school.

This review of current and previous research was conducted by Simon Chadwick, Professor of Eurasian Sport Industry at emlyon business school.

It showcases how the focus of previous sport management research has been looking at the industry from either a utilitarian view – where sport is viewed as the greatest good for the greatest number of people, or in the neoclassical view – where sport is viewed in a global capitalist model.

Professor Simon Chadwick states that there must be a new research agenda for sport management academics which is instead focused on the link between sport and the geopolitical economy, specifically on these five key areas:

- Sport as an outcome of geography;
- Sport as a focus for soft power, diplomacy and trade;
- Sport as a networked geopolitically economic activity;
- Sport as the basis for achieving national competitive advantage;
- Sport as a means of acquiring resources.

This new research agenda is needed because of the global, profound giga-changes that the world is experiencing, including rapid developments in digital technology, shifts in global economic power, challenges to the established international political order and environmental concerns.

The researcher state that these are all affecting the world of sport, including the ways in which it is broadcast, who invests in it and why, and the convergence of sport with other sectors. Therefore, sport research must reflect these huge global changes that are affecting all aspects of the sporting industry.

Professor Simon Chadwick says,

“Global economic and political shifts are challenging the established Western order with power having begun to move beyond centres like New York and London to the likes of Mumbai, Riyadh and Beijing. With such shifts has come a challenge in prevailing ideologies, systems of government and institutions, and the rules- based order established by Western nations after the Second World War.

At the same time, a digital revolution is building global interconnectivity, whilst creating new production and consumption opportunities. After two decades of this revolution, digital technology has given globalisation a boost and driven some profound changes to economic systems, political relationships as well as the way in which individuals, organisations and states engage with one another. The ever-present dangers of climate change and environmental degradation must not be forgotten either.”

According to Professor Chadwick, this global shift in geopolitics and sport means that scholars, researchers and others in the field of sport should change the way in which they see a discipline that has thus far broadly been framed as 'sport management'.