



HOUSE OF LORDS

Library Note

Debate on 25 July: Contributions of English Premier League Football to the United Kingdom

This Library Note provides background reading for the debate to be held on Thursday 25 July on:

“the international economic and cultural contributions of English Premier League football to the United Kingdom”.

This Note outlines the continued revenue growth witnessed in the Premier League, and the potential positive consequences this has on clubs and on the economy. The Note also considers the impact of the Premier League on local communities and fans, and its impact worldwide.

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I. Introduction

The English Premier League was formed in the early 1990s following negotiations between a number of the top clubs in the English Football League, the Football Association and the Football League themselves (see the brief history supplied by [Restrictive Practices Court \(1996 No.1 \(E&W\)\)](#)). The clubs cited concerns over the way the Football League was run and their intention to pursue further television revenues. On 17 July 1991, the 22 clubs which then made up the first division of the Football League entered into a formal “Founder Members Agreement”, and agreed to a set of principles for the Premier League, including:

- constitutional and commercial independence;
- a system of promotion from and relegation to the Football League; and
- a structure for the sharing of domestic and overseas television contracts or sponsorship.

The clubs announced their intention to resign from the Football League in 1991. On 22 May 1992, a new company was incorporated with the name “The Football Association Premier League Limited”. Although starting with 22 teams, this was reduced to 20 in time for the 1995/96 season (Premier League website, ‘[Short History](#)’, accessed 19 July 2013). Over 40 clubs have played in the League since its inception, including several clubs based in Wales.

The inaugural Premier League season began on Saturday 15 August 1992, with Sheffield United’s Brian Deane [scoring the first goal](#). The first Premier League title was won by Manchester United, and the highest amount reported to be paid for a player by a Premier League club that season was around [£4 million for Alan Shearer](#) (who joined Blackburn from Southampton). Since then, there have been 21 seasons, five different Premier League champions (Manchester United, Blackburn, Arsenal, Chelsea and Manchester City), and the transfer record (for purchasing a player) now stands at around [£51.5 million for Fernando Torres](#) (who joined Chelsea from Liverpool). The League has also witnessed growth in attendances, overall revenue and its global fan base. The Premier League states that:

At the end of the first Premier League season, in 1992/93, the aggregate attendance was 9.75 million and 69.6 percent available seats were sold. By the 2010/11 season, the aggregate had increased to 13.4 million and an occupancy rate to 92.2 percent. The Clubs have worked hard to ensure that Premier League football is attractive and accessible.

That fan base is also increasingly diverse, with the Premier League attracting more fans from all parts of society. Around a quarter of those who attend games are women, over one in ten is from an ethnic minority background and 13 percent are children.

Premier League football is a very social affair, with 89 percent of match goers attending with friends, family or their partner, including 70 percent who bring their children—a number which is growing. The average age of the adult Premier League fan is 41—a younger average than that of the UK’s general population.

The Premier League is extremely popular with both domestic and foreign fans. In England, 32 percent of the adult population state that they are actively engaged with the Premier League, while the League continues to play an important part in British tourism.

During the 2010/11 season, 750,000 foreign fans came to England to attend Barclays Premier League matches.

... Global fan following of the Premier League is 1.46 billion—or 70 percent of the world’s estimated 2.08 billion football fans. This enduring interest ensures some of our biggest supporters are commercial partners with whom we have longstanding relationships of over ten years, and in some cases they have been with us since the beginning of the Premier League.

(Premier League website, ‘[A Growing Fan Base](#)’, accessed 17 July 2013)

This Library Note is split into three parts, with each considering a different aspect arising from the Premier League’s continued growth. The first part analyses the economic growth of the Premier League, and how this benefits the clubs and the UK economy. The second discusses the impact of the Premier League on supporters, the community and diversity. Finally, the third part considers the global reach of the Premier League, and whether the growth of this market may bring benefits beyond financial reward. Although the Note does briefly consider the subject of governance and club ownership, this is covered in greater depth in the House of Commons Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee’s reports, [Football Governance](#) (19 July 2011, HC 792 of session 2011–12) and [Football Governance Follow-up](#) (22 January 2013, HC 509 of session 2012–13).

2. Economics of the Premier League

2.1 Increasing Revenues

According to the latest annual report on football finance by professional services firm, Deloitte (whose clients include the Football Association, the Premier League and the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA)), the collective revenue of the 20 Premier League clubs in 2011/12 was over £2.3 billion ([Annual Review of Football Finance—Highlights](#), June 2013, page 4). This amount equated to an increase of around 4 percent upon the previous year, and is around 14 times the collective amount recorded in the last season before the Premier League began (1991/92) of £170 million. The report claimed that these figures show that the Premier League is the “football world’s leading revenue generating club competition” (ibid, page 8), with 50 percent of the revenue made up of money from broadcasting rights, 27 percent from commercial revenue streams (such as sponsorship) and the remaining 23 percent coming from matchday revenue. The report went on to state that:

Premier League clubs’ revenue for 2012/13 is estimated at £2,480 million (up 5 percent), and then for 2013/14 there is a significant projected uplift of £600 million (up 24 percent to £3,080 million), largely driven by the first season of the new broadcast deals.

Domestic broadcast deals, largely relating to BSkyB and new market entrant BT for the live television rights, will generate around £3.4 billion over the three seasons from 2013/14 (up about 60 percent on the previous cycle). Overseas broadcast rights covering over 200 countries will generate over £2.2 billion (up over 50 percent on the previous cycle).

Based on the Premier League’s long-established central revenue distribution mechanism, for 2013/14 TV monies to clubs are estimated to range between £60 million and

£95 million; on average an extra £25 million per club. The equivalent TV monies for 2011/12 ranged from £39 million (to relegated Wolverhampton Wanderers) and £61 million (to Premier League winners Manchester City).

(ibid, page 7)

Deloitte also reported that seven Premier League clubs (Manchester United, Chelsea, Arsenal, Manchester City, Liverpool, Tottenham Hotspur and Newcastle United) currently feature in the list of the top twenty revenue generating clubs worldwide (Deloitte, [Football Money League](#), January 2013, page 5). Due to the new broadcasting deal, Deloitte estimated that even more English Premier League clubs could soon make this top twenty, which is currently led by Real Madrid and Barcelona, with the number of English representatives potentially forming around half of the list over the next few years (ibid).

2.2 Benefits to the Economy

In a written submission to the House of Commons Culture, Media and Sport Committee in January 2008, which was considering the European Commission's white paper on sport, the Premier League spoke of the growth of the Premier League, including in terms of interest and playing standards, and claimed that it had resulted in a number of benefits to the economy:

Improved playing standards and investment in facilities have seen stadium attendances increase by over 60 percent in fifteen years alongside increases in the live television audience and in marketing income. Buoyant incomes have been re-invested: in stadium facilities, in playing squads and training standards, in wider communities and in grassroots football. This has improved playing standards and the watching experience even further, triggering further economic and sporting success.

As a result, the Premier League has become much more than just the United Kingdom's most popular regular sporting competition. It has also become an important economic agent, with a significant impact on employment, GDP and national and local economies. A number of related industries have benefited from the Premier League's strength, including broadcasting, marketing and other communications industries, and the travel, tourism and hospitality industries. Premier League Clubs have become the social focus of many urban communities and are often the most prominent symbol of their cities in the UK and around the world.

The economic success of the Premier League generates significant taxation revenues for national and local government, giving the Government and local authorities a direct interest in the continued economic health of our competition. It is therefore important to bear in mind that, in considering the impact of the EU on sport, the relevant policies include employment, the internal market, economic development, trade, judicial and legal services, social inclusion, and regional policy as well as sport itself.

(House of Commons Culture, Media and Sport Committee, [European Commission White Paper on Sport](#), 14 May 2008, HC 347 of session 2007–08, Ev 19)

Benefits to the tourism industry have been recognised by VisitBritain. In 2012, the organisation claimed that around 900,000 tourists had attended a football game during their visit the previous year, and that 40 percent of these described this as the main purpose of their trip. They estimated that “these 900,000 foreign football tourists spent a substantial £706 million,

the equivalent of £785 per fan and £200 more than the average visitor (£583)” (VisitBritain, ‘[900,000 Football-watching Visitors Spend £706 Million While In Britain](#)’, 22 October 2012). In addition, with regard to tax revenue, Deloitte recently valued the amount of tax contributed by English professional football to the government, in 2011/12, at £1.3 billion ([Annual Review of Football Finance—Highlights](#), June 2013, page 8).

2.3 Club Debt

Despite the Premier League’s ongoing revenue growth, concerns continue to be raised over clubs’ actual profits. For example, a CentreForum report of 2011 acknowledged the game’s high levels of growth, but also expressed concern over the amount of clubs that were operating at a loss (Paul Marshall and Sam Tomlin, [Football and the Big Society](#), CentreForum, 2011, chapter 2). The authors suggested that there were problems with the amount of revenue that is subsequently spent on players’ wages, owners that appear to burden clubs with debt, and clubs living beyond their means:

Much more common is the phenomenon of clubs living well beyond their means in order to compete at a higher level. Here the issue is the suitability and financial solvability of the benefactors themselves. The two issues came together in the case of Portsmouth FC, who, in 2010, became the first Premier League club to go into administration. The rollercoaster ride of Portsmouth FC from 2003–10 ended up in administration with unpaid debts of £108.6 million, including £17.1 million owed to HMRC.

The failure of Portsmouth FC and their relegation from the Premier League have left the supporter base with potentially years in the footballing doldrums, while the club recovers its financial stability, just like other clubs before it such as Leeds United.

(*ibid*, page 16)

The matter of profit was also covered in Deloitte’s report on the [Annual Review of Football Finance—Highlights](#) (June 2013). Noticing a recent improvement, which they suggested may be due to the introduction of the Financial Fair Play Regulations¹ by the game’s European governing body (UEFA), the report stated that:

The aggregate operating profit (before player trading and finance costs) of Premier League clubs improved to £98 million in 2011/12; a margin equivalent to only 4 percent of revenue. Only half of the Premier League clubs made an operating profit.

Premier League clubs’ net losses (after player trading and finance costs) for 2011/12 were £245 million (2010/11: £375 million). This improvement was largely due to lower losses at Manchester City and Chelsea. Only eight Premier League clubs made a net profit.

(*ibid*, page 8)

¹ These require certain clubs to break even over a period of time. Clubs participating in UEFA club competitions have been having their transfer and employee payables monitored since the summer of 2011, and the break-even assessment covering the financial years ending 2012 and 2013 will be assessed during 2013/14.

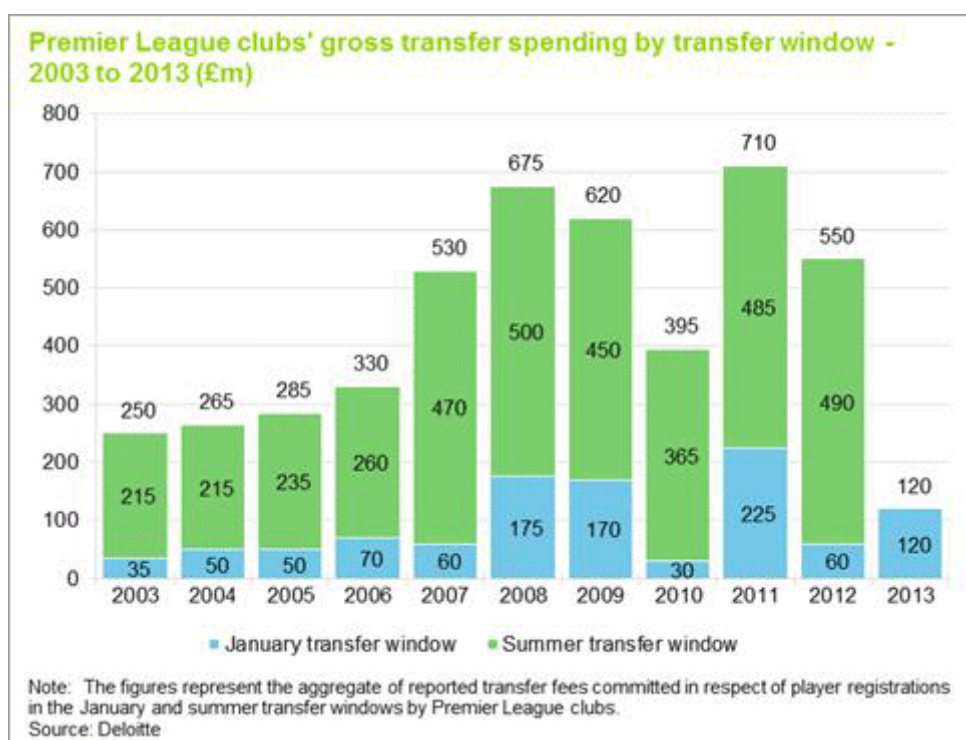
Regarding player wages, Deloitte found that:

The total wage bill, across all employees, of Premier League clubs in 2011/12 was £1,658 million (up 4 percent), ranging from £202 million (Manchester City) down to £35 million (Swansea City). There were six Premier League clubs with total wages above the average of £83 million, all of which finished in the top eight positions in the table. 13 Premier League clubs had total wages in a relatively narrow range between £35 million and £64 million.

The wages/revenue ratio is a well-established key performance indicator for football clubs. In 2011/12, of the 28 clubs from the top two divisions with a wages/revenue ratio greater than 70 percent only four reported an operating profit. The average wages/revenue ratio for Premier League remained at 70 percent, ranging from 49 percent (Norwich City) to 94 percent (Aston Villa). It has been between 67 percent and 70 percent for four seasons in a row.

(ibid, page 9)

Besides wages, another aspect of expenditure on players is that of transfer fees: money paid to clubs to “purchase” their players. Presenting their expenditure analysis following the closure of the most recent “transfer window” for players in January 2013, Deloitte noted that spending by Premier League clubs appeared to have become more restrained. Again, they hypothesised that this could be due to the introduction of UEFA’s new Financial Fair Play Regulations. The graph below shows transfer spending since 2003:



Addressing the subject of debt in their written evidence to the House of Commons Culture, Media and Sport Committee for their [Football Governance](#) report, the Premier League defended clubs’ debt levels (19 July 2011, HC 982-ii of session 2010–12). They stated that “debt is a feature of the modern economy” and “the key questions are whether the burden can be financed without jeopardising the economic health of the debtor, whether it is backed by assets

and whether the trend indicates that borrowing is under control” (ibid, Ev 210). They also claimed that clubs are now taking steps to reduce debt and that Portsmouth FC were exposed by “high-risk strategies and poor management”. However, this view was not shared by Supporters Direct (an organisation to promote the value of supporter community ownership at sports clubs), who stated:

There is clearly too much unsustainable debt, as the number of clubs in insolvency shows. Whilst some clubs have taken on capital debt which is serviceable through using it to generate higher revenues, too many clubs have debts to their owners, their suppliers and the state which are accumulated operating losses from trying to keep pace with those for whom money is no object.

Often, debt is secured against the most important asset of the club, its stadium, and because the clubs fail to generate any surpluses to pay their debt down, an increasing number of grounds have become separated from the control of the club, and in many cases been sold for development.

(ibid, Ev 220)

Concerns over the ownership and financing of football clubs have more recently been discussed in the Culture, Media and Sport Committee’s [Football Governance Follow-up](#) published on 29 January 2013 (HC 509 of session 2012–13). Despite the introduction of the Financial Fair Play Regulations, the Committee stated that they saw “little evidence that clubs will spend significant amounts of the funding available from the latest broadcasting rights settlement on increasing their sustainability rather than on players’ salaries and transfers”, and questioned how the new regulations would be enforced (ibid, page 27).

3. Premier League and the Community

3.1 Economic Impact on Communities

According to a study on Swansea City’s promotion to the Premier League in 2011, conducted by the Welsh Economy Research Unit, a club’s presence in the Premier League can have a significant effect on the local economy (Tom Davies, [‘Moneyball: The Finance of Sport’](#), *Economia*, 5 June 2013). The study estimated that the club’s promotion resulted in 125 extra people being employed as a direct result, and an additional 295 full-time equivalent jobs being created due to increased economic activity. They predicted that “spending by visitors to Swansea matches was around £8.13 million per season, leading, after deductions, to an initial injection to the Welsh economy of £4.72 million”. In addition, they estimated that the increased wealth from players and non-playing staff would lead to a spend of “around £4.5 million in Welsh goods and services, which have additional multiplier effect impacts of £1.63 million supporting 60 full-time equivalent jobs”. The city also saw an increase of 25 percent in applications to its university.

A similar study has been published on the impact of football on Greater Manchester (Cambridge Econometrics and the Sport Industry Research Centre at Sheffield Hallam University, [Analysing the Value of Football to Greater Manchester](#), 11 April 2013). This report suggested that football-related activities in the area contributed around £330 million “gross value added” to the local economy in 2010/11 (ibid, page 4). They highlighted a number of benefits from Greater Manchester’s “football ecosystem”, including: revenues derived from the

professional clubs; the manufacture and retail of sports equipment; and increased money for the hospitality industry. Regarding the impact upon tourism to the area, the report stated that:

Football plays a significant role in attracting tourism to Greater Manchester; the average occupancy rates of hotels on matchdays is 85 percent compared to 70 percent on non-matchdays. The role of football in attracting tourism to Greater Manchester is also larger than in the rest of the UK—114,000 international visitors to Manchester attended a game at Old Trafford in 2010, accounting for one in every eight international visitors to the city. This is in stark contrast to the national picture, where only one in every forty international visitors to the UK attends a football match. Old Trafford was the most visited stadium in the UK in 2010, attracting 15 percent of the international visitors who attended a football match and substantially more than the likes of Liverpool and Arsenal (90,000 international visitors each) and Chelsea and Tottenham (90,000 international visitors between them).

Football tourism not only impacts positively on the conurbation by attracting visitors who would not otherwise have come, but also by attracting higher-spending visitors—visitors who watched a game of football spent an average of around £800 compared to the average international visitor to the UK who spent only £600, a boost in expenditure of a third.

(*ibid*, page 9)

The report then highlighted the importance of Manchester United and Manchester City to global name recognition of the area. This flowed from the global interest in the clubs and their sponsorship dealings. It also stated that both the clubs, and sponsors, had been involved in economic development projects in the area, such as investment from Etihad Airways and Manchester City's redevelopment of the Eastlands area (*ibid*, page 10).

In contrast, a 2009 article from *Regeneration and Renewal* (Ben Cook, '[The Cost of Defeat](#)', 8 June 2009) discussed the potential implications upon a community of a club's relegation from the Premier League. With reference to the 2009 relegations of Middlesbrough, Newcastle and West Bromwich Albion, the article suggested that they could negatively impact upon name recognition for the area (which, in turn, could affect the level of foreign investment), and might also affect revenues within the local economy:

[Tom Cannon, a football finance specialist] estimates that, while Middlesbrough and West Bromwich football clubs will lose around £30 million each from lost revenues, Newcastle United—which has the biggest fanbase of the three—will lose around £50 million. Cannon says that around one-and-a-half times a club's income is 'spent in the local economy'. In effect, this means that if Newcastle United FC loses £50 million in income next season, the local economy will see a £75 million drop in revenue in the same period. In Newcastle's case, Cannon says many people from outside the area travel to the city to watch the game, drinking in bars, eating in restaurants and staying in hotels. 'Each match day at Newcastle is worth around £1 million in tourism,' he says.

(*ibid*)

3.2 Community and Supporter Engagement

The Premier League's [Creating Chance 2012](#) report sets out some of the initiatives that the Premier League is involved in relating to community support, development and integration. This involvement includes help with the organisation, promotion or funding of schemes. One of the schemes featuring Premier League involvement, Kickz, is a project "with the aim of using football to bring communities together and engage with young people. The vision was to "build safer, stronger, more respectful communities through the development of young peoples' potential, getting to youngsters who had previously proven difficult to reach and guiding them towards a range of healthy and constructive activities" (Premier League website, '[Kickz](#)', accessed 7 July 2013). The Premier League claims that the project, which includes two football sessions a week and a further session relating to another topic, has achieved many positive outcomes, including educational attainment and employment opportunities. On 2 July 2013, Maria Miller, the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, welcomed the new three year partnership between the Premier League and Sport England to further support the initiative, with both organisations committing £1.5 million to the project (GOV.UK, '[More Young People Given the Chance to Get into Sport](#)', 2 July 2013). The partnership also included a three year commitment to the [Premier League 4 Sport](#) initiative, which aims to improve young people's opportunities to get involved in other sports in their local community. Other initiatives including Premier League involvement, as outlined in the *Creating Chances* report, include: the Prince's Trust; Premier League Schools Tournament; the Premier League Community Facility Fund (which aids investment for the purpose of increasing sports participation in communities); support for anti-racism campaigns such as '[Kick It Out](#)'; and schemes aimed at those with disabilities.

Commenting on clubs' community involvement in their 2010 report, [The Social and Community Value of Football](#), Supporters Direct emphasised the need for football clubs to "adopt a more holistic approach to club-community relations that embraces the whole club and does not 'ghettoise' community concerns to the community trust or department" and the "reporting of social and community value as a routine part of football club reporting" (page 13). The report also outlined some good practice for community relations and suggested that supporter involvement (including in regard to the running of the club) benefitted the club's social and community output (ibid, page 6).

A further report by Supporters Direct, [Football, Ownership and Social Value](#) (November 2008), expressed concern over the impact of the growing success of Premier League clubs on their supporters: "[There] has been a growing sense that football has moved too far from its roots and risks alienating the very supporters upon which its success has been built. Rocketing ticket and kit prices—and a more general sense of being 'fleeced' at every opportunity—have priced many out of the 'people's game', while the steady transition to purpose-built out of town stadiums has taken many clubs out of the communities from which they came" (page 3). Turning to the ownership of Premier League clubs, the report sets out three main models: Public Limited Companies (PLCs) listed on the stock market; investments by "professional sports investors"; and clubs owned for "prestige reasons". In a critical analysis of these, the authors claim that PLCs or clubs owned by "sports investors" have too much focus on financial returns, often to the detriment of supporters, and that "prestige" purchasers do not care for the heritage or community of clubs in the way that supporters might (ibid, page 11). The report also states that "these takeovers serve to reinforce the point that football clubs are simply economic entities to be bought and sold like any other, which completely neglects the broader social impacts that clubs have in their local communities and beyond". The report goes on to consider some alternative forms of ownership, including as Community Interest Companies and

Industrial and Provident Societies, and briefly outlines the models employed by Barcelona and the German leagues.

In June 2013, there were [reports](#) of supporter protests over the price of tickets for Premier League games, and increased calls for reconsideration of standing areas in football grounds. However, the idea of wide supporter dissatisfaction is not one that resonates with the Premier League, who, in their written evidence to the Commons Culture, Media and Sport Committee's [Football Governance](#) report (19 July 2011, HC 982-ii of session 2010–12), stated that:

Supporters attending matches have benefitted from over £2 billion in expenditure on stadia and facilities since the formation of the Premier League. Their interests are protected by the requirement for each club to meet the standards of their Supporters' Charters and Supporter Liaison Officers at each club work closely with fans to improve the match-day experience and the relationship between fan and club. Away attendance is encouraged by Rules which insist on a minimum number of tickets for away fans at prices as good as the equivalent tickets for home fans...

The Premier League consults widely with the many different categories of fans at home and abroad, ranging from dedicated season ticket holders to casual attenders, from those who subscribe to Pay-TV sports channels to those who watch in pubs and clubs, and those whose main engagement is via free-to-air highlights or the internet. Our research indicates a high degree of satisfaction, with attending fans continuing to place winning football played attractively in quality, safe stadia with good sightlines at the top of their priorities. Other concerns appear to have much less salience, although of course vocal minorities are able to articulate a wide range of demands.

(Ev 208)

The question over whether greater investment in facilities at football clubs benefits fans was considered, in part, by the University of Leicester's Centre for the Sociology of Sport ([Fact Sheet 14: Football and Families](#), 2002). They found evidence that improved facilities, including family stands, crèche facilities and better toilets, created a more welcoming environment for families. However, there were still concerns over the cost of tickets, and many felt that smaller clubs offered more of a sense of belonging:

Smaller Football clubs can offer a friendly atmosphere for fans that want to attend matches with their kids. Many of the larger clubs now offer a more friendly experience. Nevertheless, for some of the families interviewed by the Sir Norman Chester Centre for Football Research 2001, the attractions of a smaller club still outweigh those offered by the larger clubs.

The impersonal relationship, the cost of supporting a 'super club', and basic lack of access to tickets, have put many families off following FA Premier League teams. Support for a smaller club can be like being part of a family, something which some parents feel is much more important for their children than what football's major stars can offer. Small clubs also offer a strong sense of 'community' to family groups, and a real feeling that their support actually matters and is valued by the club.

(ibid)

Another publication by the University (University of Leicester, [Fact Sheet 7: Fan ‘Power’ and Democracy in Football](#), 2002) considered the impact of the Premier League on the influence of fans. On the one hand, they welcomed the Premier League’s attempts to connect with fans through regular fan surveys and supporter liaison schemes set up by Premier League clubs. However, they also expressed their concern over fans’ treatment in regard to objections or protests over club ownership, and the influence of TV contracts on the timing of matches:

Supporters had little say in the negotiation of this new contract, yet it affects them directly; some would argue that television now too much dictates the time at which games are played. This can lead to much inconvenience, especially for travelling fans. The money to be made from TV and merchandising at the national and international levels has tended to limit local fan campaigns to issues of symbolic relevance only. Local clubs are now in international markets and largely outside of local influence. More fans are now shareholders at large clubs but most lack voting rights.

(ibid)

3.3 Diversity

In addition to monitoring attitudes to Premier League community initiatives and the supporters’ experiences of the Premier League, the [Populous Premier League Football Nation Survey 2011/12](#) also seeks to present information on the demographics of those interested in football (ibid, page 12). Some of its findings are presented in the following table:

Percentage of population, sorted by demographic groups, that are:	Male adults	Female	Black and Ethnic Minority
Attending fans	18	5	13
Non-attending fans	16	9	16
Casual fans	15	5	7
Non “Premier League” football fans	12	11	12
Non football fans	39	70	51

Regarding the representation of black and ethnic minority groups within the game itself, the House of Commons Culture, Media and Sport Committee’s report, [Racism in Football](#), stated that “the most recent academic study of the levels of representation of black and ethnic minority groups in key roles within football showed that the 92 clubs in the top four English football leagues employ 2,800–3,000 players, of whom 20–25 percent come from a black or minority ethnic background. However, there is currently only one black manager in the Premier League (Chris Hughton at Norwich City, while Terry Connor served as interim manager at Wolverhampton Wanderers football club until May of this year) and two in the Football League (Chris Powell at Charlton Athletic and Keith Curle at Notts County)” (HC 89 of session 2012–13, page 15). Despite some recent high profile reports of racism in football, the Committee did recognise the strong progress made in tackling the issue, with the Premier League highlighting their work with organisations such as Kick It Out and other anti-discrimination projects (ibid, Ev w25). However, the Committee did outline an additional concern:

Evidence is now emerging that homophobia may now be a bigger problem in football than other forms of discrimination. Recent research found that 25 percent of fans think that football is homophobic while 10 percent think that football is racist. About

14 percent of recent match attendees also reported hearing homophobic abuse. Stonewall recognised that “progress has been made by Government and football authorities in recognising homophobia as an issue, but too little practical action has been taken to address it”. It called for a high profile campaign specifically focused on challenging homophobic attitudes and behaviour directed at fans, players and managers. As well as raising the profile of the issue, the football authorities and individual clubs should be required actively to address homophobic incidents as well as to offer support to players, staff and managers.

(ibid, page 9)

On 28 June 2011, the Government Equalities Office published the [Sports Charter](#), which outlined the importance of tackling homophobia and transphobia in all sports. A voluntary charter, this was adopted by all Premier League clubs on 2 February 2012. Commenting, Lynne Featherstone, Equalities Minister, stated:

The whole world admires the skill and competitive drama on display in our football grounds but too often we also see the worst of intolerance and discrimination.

That’s why the government launched the Sports Charter last year. It’s a rallying cry for all of us to tackle homophobia and transphobia in sport. Everyone with an interest in sport will want to spread the message that homophobic and transphobic abuse is never acceptable.

Nearly 3,000 individuals and clubs have already signed up and I’m delighted that Premier League clubs have taken a stand by signing the Charter too. It sends a really strong signal when clubs in the best league in the world say enough is enough.

(GOV.UK, ‘[Premier League Signs the Sports Charter](#)’, 2 February 2012)

4. Global Impact of the Premier League

According to the Premier League’s [Research and Insight 2011/12](#), the global audience distribution for the Premier League is as follows:

- Asia: 31 percent
- Europe (excluding UK): 23 percent
- Middle East and North Africa: 16 percent
- United Kingdom: 16 percent
- Africa: 7 percent
- North America and Caribbean: 4 percent
- South and Central America: 2 percent
- Oceania: 1 percent

The Premier League have also stated that the “global fan following of the Premier League is 1.46 billion—or 70 percent of the world’s estimated 2.08 billion football fans” (Premier League website, ‘[A Growing Fan Base](#)’, accessed 17 July 2013). Due to such estimates, and the continued growth in global TV and sponsorship revenues, questions have arisen over whether the global market is becoming more important to the Premier League than the domestic

market (eg Jonathan Dyson, '[World Will Soon Be Worth More to Premier League than UK](#)', *Independent*, 17 February 2013).

One such example of the growing importance of the international market to the Premier League is the increasing emphasis on overseas pre-season tours. Writing for the newspaper *The National*, Richard Jolly highlighted some of the Premier League clubs' plans for pre-season tours this season ('[Premier League: All the World is Their Stage to Explore](#)', 12 July 2013). This would see Manchester United and Chelsea engaged in pre-season preparations in Thailand, Arsenal heading to Indonesia, Manchester City in South Africa, and Liverpool visiting Thailand, Indonesia and Australia. Although the author acknowledged the importance to the Premier League and its clubs of serving, and increasing, its global fan base, he also questioned whether these pre-season activities were ideal preparation for the footballing season itself. In addition, the piece stressed the importance to the global market of players at the clubs that represented their own nationality, and the fanaticism that is sometimes observed:

They are still more fanatical when their compatriots are involved. United will field the Japan international Shinji Kagawa in his homeland, just as, in the past, they took Park Ji-sung back to his native South Korea. "Whenever we go to Korea it's incredible", Jonny Evans said. "I remember we were playing a game there and Ji was sat on the bench and every time the camera went on him the noise inside the stadium was just unbelievable."

South-east and East Asia is where interest is at its highest and fans at their most numerous. Indonesia claims to have more Liverpool supporters than any other country; the club have also launched a website in Thailand to prepare for their visit. Yet there is a sense the attention can also be suffocating.

(ibid)

The potential importance of pre-season tours to Premier League clubs was also covered in the [Analysing the Value of Football to Greater Manchester](#) report (Cambridge Econometrics and the Sport Industry Research Centre at Sheffield Hallam University, 11 April 2013). They stated that "the pre-season tours of the elite clubs have typically been used as a way of encouraging interest in the Premier League and often also coincide with major developing markets for Greater Manchester's businesses. In 2010 and 2011, Manchester United, Manchester City and Bolton Wanderers all took part in pre-season tours to the United States, which has in recent years been host to an increasing number of Premier League teams as the clubs seek to increase the popularity of football in the country and extend their own brand" (ibid, page 7). They listed benefits such as increased brand recognition, encouraging tourism, and generating business and investment opportunities. Further examples of these business and sponsorship opportunities can be found in a recent *Independent* article (Ian Herbert, '[From Aeroflot to Thai Batteries, It's a Brand New Global Ball Game](#)', 13 July 2013), which highlighted some of the commercial advantages such exposure has given Premier League clubs.

This level of globalisation may also have advantages beyond the realms of the Premier League and its clubs. For example, the United Kingdom was ranked number one by the global affairs magazine, *Monocle*, in their [2012 Soft Power Survey](#). Commenting on the achievement, the British Council praised the Premier League for the part that they played in achieving such influence. John Worne, the British Council's Director of Strategy, stated that: "our work around the world with the Premier League brings English, inspiration and practical skills to young people's lives. That's one of the reasons the UK is No 1 in 2012: teamwork and sharing the best of the UK worldwide" (Premier League website, '[Premier League Helps UK to be No](#)

[1 “Soft Power”](#), 11 December 2012). The piece also mentioned the work of the Premier League and the British Council running the Premier Skills initiative: “drawing upon the Premier League clubs’ expertise in delivering community-focused projects in the UK, it teaches people how to use football to tackle a variety of social issues relevant all over the world such as health, disability, gender, inclusion and education. Since 2007, Premier Skills has been delivered across 20 countries in Asia, Africa and the Americas, offering more than 2,300 grassroots coaching and refereeing training opportunities, and benefiting over 400,000 young people” (ibid). Also, on the weekend of 26 November 2011, the Premier League operated an appeal across the grounds of all its clubs for the [Disasters Emergency Committee \(DEC\) East Africa Crisis appeal](#) (GOV.UK, ‘[Premier League and DEC Unite to Tackle Famine](#)’, 14 November 2011). This involved displays on advertising boards, players’ bibs and in matchday programmes appealing for fans to donate £5 by texting a designated number. Commenting at the time, the chair of DEC stated that “with ‘Tackle Famine’ the UK is continuing the international leadership it has shown in responding to the crisis in East Africa. There is a huge amount of work still to be done so we are delighted to have the Premier League, leading clubs and so many footballing stars on our side”.