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## REVIEW

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# The evolution of the football business into a multinational entertainment company

*La evolución del negocio del fútbol como multinacional del entretenimiento*

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REVIEW



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## Data from the book under review:

Ginesta Portet, Xavier (2022). The entertainment multinationals. Football, Diplomacy, Identity and Technology. Editorial UOC.

## 1. IDENTIFICATION

The work of Xavier Ginesta Portet, professor at the Faculty of Business and Communication of the University of Vic-Central University of Catalonia (UVic-UCC), analytically presents a conceptual framework of the reality and evolution

of the football business as an entertainment multinational. This is done through four major themes: Sociology, Diplomacy, Identity, and Technology, distributed in two parts and seven chapters.

This work is essential for students interested in sport's sociological, economic, communicative, diplomatic, and/or technological aspects.

Ginesta Portet is a consolidated researcher specializing in sports communication since he defended his doctoral thesis at the Autonomous University of Barcelona (UAB) in 2009, entitled: "

ICTs and sports. Analysis of the Spanish First Division of football (2006-2008)". This thesis was supervised by the professor and great expert in the field, Miguel de Moragas Spà.

This book, published by the UOC publishing house, is the result of the remarkable trajectory of the teacher who has been able to delve into fields where sport, specifically football, has developed its professionalization. He is the author of many articles and book chapters, which have led him to complete this work.

He is a lecturer in various subjects, including Sports Marketing, and a collaborating researcher at the Centre for Olympic Studies at the UAB, a Sport Management Advisory Board member at Widener University (Philadelphia, USA) from 2016 to 2020. He is a member of the Communication & Sport Journal editorial board.

## 2. SUMMARY

This book analyzes aspects of sport from different points of view, delving into the business side of football. It is divided into two parts; the first part carries out a diachronic analysis of the globalization of sport, while the second part delves into the concept of football in the liquid society, an idea used by the Polish sociologist Zygmunt Bauman (2005).

In the first part, the author explores the dimensions of globalization in sports, specifically in football, from a sociological point of view. In this way, he turns this work into an essential manual for understanding the evolution of society, using authors such as Maguire (1999),

Elias (1989), Ritzer (2002), Wallerstein (1974), Donnelly (1996), Wagner (1990), among others.

In his analysis of globalization, he traces the economic origins of the global world, citing the works of Robertson (1992) and Dunning (1992) while also examining the classical sociology of Durkheim (1961), Weber (1978), and Simmel (1978, 1986) for precedents.

The final section explores the global media and sports complex in depth. The analysis focuses on the interactions between various actors in the sporting world, highlighting the benefits and drawbacks of such synergies. This section adds significant coherence to the longitudinal research.

In the second part of this work, Ginesta Portet reviews the globalization process with the theories that support it scientifically and explains the world of sports as a very complex network with compelling commercial and economic interests.

By way of example, an English football club, Manchester United, is studied as a pioneer of attractive business policies that have influenced those of the rest of the world's clubs. Comparisons are also made between the policies of Real Madrid CF and FC Barcelona, as they have served as a model for the Spanish football multinationals.

This second part identifies the phenomena of sports diplomacy and sports place branding, allowing us to delve into the link between politics and football and the evolution of city brands, respectively.

As an example of a country branding strategy, the Qatar 2022 World Cup and China's experience of state involvement in football are discussed:

What is new is the ability of private clubs to blur their corporate values to embrace foreign geostrategic interests: a marriage of convenience between the commercial interests of clubs and the political interests of states is proposed. (Ginesta, 2021, p. 147)

During this systematic analysis, an exemplary explanation is given of models such as that of FC Barcelona, of how local identity can be blurred in global environments, or Girona and other clubs, faced with the purchase of foreign investors, without losing the peculiarity of the local.

Finally, eSports is discussed as a consolidated sport worthy of study by specialists in sports communication due to its growing production and consumption, especially by young people.

### 3. EVALUATION

It is, without a doubt, an essential manual for all undergraduate and postgraduate students in the faculties of Communication, Commerce, Marketing, Geography, Sociology, and Humanities interested in the business and communication world of the king of sports.

A work, like a manual written in a very clear and organized way, leads us mentally to have a broader notion of everything that concerns the business of football.

The author highlights how football has become one of the most influential industries of the 21st century by providing various trends. These trends include the transformation of football clubs into entertainment multinationals, the use of football as a "para-diplomatic" agent, the struggle for the legitimacy of football brands, and the necessary relationship between technology and football in this industry.

It is a must-read for academics studying the field and those who wish to discover the business practices of football, which can be of practical application to many businesses in other areas.

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