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Football economics: Exploring the evolution of World Cup television broadcasting rights as vital revenue streams for FIFA and national teams from 1954 to 2022

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***Abstract*---**The research aimed to trace the historical evolution of World Cup television broadcasting rights, highlighting their significance as crucial revenue streams for FIFA, national teams, and the broader football economy. From the inaugural broadcast of select matches during the 1954 World Cup in Switzerlandm, to the recent World Cup in Qatar 2022, the journey spans three distinct phases delineated by revenue milestones. Over time, these rights have evolved significantly, with current figures surpassing $3.5 billion. This substantial sum underscores the pivotal role these revenues play for FIFA and the participating national teams, undoubtedly facilitating both the growth of the sport and the development of the teams themselves.

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Introduction

Throughout history, FIFA has diligently pursued the diversification of its revenue streams, spanning sponsorships, advertising, broadcasting rights, and strategic partnerships. Additionally, the organization has forged crucial financing agreements to support its diverse development initiatives. FIFA has also capitalized on lucrative broadcasting deals for its tournaments, resulting in substantial financial gains. Sponsorship revenue and football broadcasting rights serve as major profit drivers for the International Federation of Association Football (FIFA), as well as for national football associations (Note-d-Analysis-n-16, 2019). As noted by (Dietl and Hasan 2007), their study highlighted that from the 1980s, revenues generated from television broadcasting rights began surpassing other income sources in various sporting events.

In recent years, sporting events have gained significant economic importance alongside their athletic significance (Trade and Development Council, 2018). Sports, including football, make substantial contributions to the overall economic value of many countries, such as 3% in South Korea, 2.9% in the United Kingdom and France, and 2.5% in Japan (Lv et al., 2022). Football, being the most popular sport globally and widely broadcasted across numerous nations, plays a particularly prominent role in this regard. According to Klobučník et al. (2019), media plays a crucial role in shaping perceptions of football, while Floros (2014) highlights football's status as a major topic of discussion among legal professionals. Furthermore, the broadcasting of sporting events has become as captivating to audiences worldwide as news coverage of conflicts (Perechuda, 2014). Al Thani (2021) underscores the significance of countries vying to host World Cup tournaments, recognizing them not only as economic assets but also as opportunities for national pride, brand promotion, and the display of a positive national image. Football's appeal transcends borders, captivating diverse local and international audiences through both local and international broadcasting channels. Floros (2014) further elucidates how football significantly influences investor sentiment, aligning with behavioral finance theories. The market valuations of players involved in these tournaments also play a pivotal role in attracting increased investor interest and viewership (Metelsk et al., 2022).

The organization of FIFA World Cup tournaments has always been intricately linked to their broadcasting methods and rights. Major sports and non-sports networks have vied for exclusivity in broadcasting these events across different regions such as Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, North America, and Asia. This demand is fueled by various factors, including the insights provided by Scelles et al. (2020), who assert that investing in television broadcast rights fosters heightened competition by featuring top players and high-quality gameplay. Additionally, it attracts larger audiences and secures international broadcast rights across diverse countries worldwide.

The substantial revenue from television broadcasting rights has been instrumental in financing the operations of the International Federation of Association Football (FIFA) and has also provided significant income for the national teams participating in various editions of the World Cup (Arrondel, 2022). Beginning with the 1986 World Cup in Argentina, FIFA relinquished its share of the surplus, thereby leveraging the growth in revenues from television broadcasting rights, sponsorships, and promotions, which it managed independently (Ruberti, 2024). As Ruberti (2024) explains, television broadcast revenues are the cornerstone of sports clubs' budgets and play a vital role in covering players' wages.

Today, numerous international channels, as noted by Wilhelm (2000), specialize in sports broadcasting, including coverage of World Cup events tailored to various societal segments across different countries. Broadcasting these matches not only guarantees enjoyable and thrilling viewing experiences for spectators but also adds an element of unpredictability to the outcome (Hoehn & Kastrinaki, n.d.). In recent years, competition among these channels for exclusive broadcasting rights has intensified, potentially resulting in some channels and audiences being deprived of access to sports matches and events (Evens & Lefever, 2011).

Throughout history, television broadcasting rights have undergone significant transformations, from the inaugural televised World Cup in Uruguay in 1954 to the most recent edition hosted in Qatar in 2022. This study will delve into the historical evolution of television broadcasting rights for world championships, examining how these rights have contributed to the revenue structure of FIFA and its economic landscape.

Study Results

The Evolution of Television Broadcasting Rights: From the 1930 World Cup in Uruguay to Qatar 2022:

Observers of the FIFA World Cup's history discern a clear division between its early stage from the inaugural 1930 edition to 1950, when matches were not televised. The advent of televised World Cup tournaments commenced with the 1954 event in Switzerland, marking the onset of the television broadcasting era. This era can be segmented into three fundamental stages based on the evolution of broadcasting rights value, as elaborated in the subsequent discussion.

1-The Evolution of Television Broadcasting Rights: From the 1954 World Cup in Switzerland to the 1970 World Cup in Mexico:

Table No. 01: Shows the development of television broadcasting rights from the 1954 World Cup in Switzerland to the 1970 World Cup in Mexico

World cup	1954	1958	1962	1966	1970
	Switzerland	Sweden	Chile	England	Mexico
Tv broadcasting*	27500 D	2 m CHF	227000 d	4.7 GBP	N f

Source: (ARRONDEL, 2022)

* in courent value

In a bid to broaden its revenue streams and reach a global audience, FIFA embraced television broadcasting of World Cup matches, debuting with the 1954 Swiss edition. Though initially confined to just 9 matches, it marked the true inception of broadcasting World Cup matches. The value of television broadcasting, estimated at around $2,500, translates to approximately $27,500 in present value (Arrondel, 2022). This value saw a notable increase in the subsequent Football World Cup, reaching 2 million Swiss francs in current value. Subsequently, during the World Cup held in Chile in 1962, it surged to $227,000 as a current value, marking a significant milestone in the development of broadcasting rights for World Cup matches. Notably, matches were broadcast in the form of films in European countries due to the absence of satellite broadcasting technologies at that time (The story of broadcasting and encryption in the history of the World Cup, kooora.com, 2014).

During the 1966 World Cup in England, television-broadcasting rights soared to 4.7 million pounds sterling. Notably, this tournament witnessed the emergence of replay technology. Broadcasted in 75 countries, the final match between England and West Germany garnered a staggering television audience of 400 million people (Arrondel, 2022).

2-The development of television broadcasting rights from the World Cup in West Germany in 1974 to the World Cup in France in 1998:

Table No. 02: The development of television broadcasting rights from the 1974 World Cup in West Germany to the 1998 World Cup in France (US$)

World cup	1974	1978	1982	1986	1990	1994	1998
	West Germany	Argentina	Spain	Mexico	Italy	United States of America	France
Tv broadcasting*	42 m	45 m	64 m	72 m	98 m	112 m	173 m

Source: (ARRONDEL.2022)

* in courent value

During this period, television-broadcasting rights experienced a ninefold increase, marking the initiation of FIFA's regulation of television broadcasting prices, beginning with the 1978 World Cup in Argentina. Furthermore, this stage witnessed the commencement of the monopoly in selling broadcasting rights to a single entity, which started with the 1998 World Cup in France.

The broadcasting rights for the World Cup in West Germany amounted to 42 million, which increased to 45 million for the World Cup in Argentina in 1978, as specified by FIFA. Subsequently, the rights surged to 64 million for the World Cup in Spain in 1982, 72 million for the World Cup in Mexico in 1986, and 98 million for the World Cup in Italy in 1990, surpassing the rights in subsequent editions. Television broadcasting breached the 100 million threshold, reaching 112 million for the World Cup in America, and peaked at 173 million for the World Cup in

France in 1998. This edition marked a turning point in the landscape of television broadcasting rights, with the advent of monopolies and encrypted broadcasts of matches.

3-The development of television broadcasting rights from the World Cup in South Korea and Japan in 2002 to the World Cup in Qatar 2022:

Table No. 03: The development of television broadcasting rights from the World Cup in South Korea and Japan 2002 to the World Cup in Qatar 2022

World cup	2002	2006	2010	2014	2018	2022
	South Korea Japan	Germany	South Africa	Brazil	Russia	Qatar
Tv broadcasting	1 b **US$**	1.4 b **US$**	2.4 b **US$**	2.5 b **US$**	3.0 b **US$**	3.5 b **US$**

Source: staatista 2018

From 2002 to 2022, World Cup broadcast rights underwent substantial development, experiencing a qualitative leap in the field. They surpassed one billion dollars for the 2022 World Cup in Japan and South Korea, jumping to 1.4 billion dollars for the 2006 World Cup in Germany. This amount nearly doubled to reach 2.4 billion dollars for the 2010 World Cup in South Africa, marking the largest increase in value among all World Cup editions. However, these rights did not see a significant increase for the 2014 World Cup in Brazil, remaining at $2.5 billion. Certainly, the lack of a significant increase in broadcast rights for the 2014 World Cup in Brazil could be attributed to the demonstrations and protests staged by citizens and opposition groups. These protests were fueled by concerns over the high costs associated with hosting the World Cup, particularly amidst the backdrop of economic crisis and high poverty rates in the country.

Broadcast rights experienced another surge during the 2018 World Cup in Russia, reaching approximately $3 billion, marking a $0.5 billion increase. This same increment in value brought the rights to $3.5 billion for the World Cup in Qatar in 2022, setting a new record as the highest figure in the history of the FIFA World Cup.

Conclusion

The International Federation of Association Football (FIFA) has recognized the significant role that television broadcasting rights play in financing its operations and securing continuous and renewable financial resources for its various international competitions, with the World Cup being the most prominent among them, held every four years. This sporting extravaganza has been a source of revenue for FIFA since the 1954 Swiss tournament. Despite the simplicity of the amount at that time, it began to develop gradually with the development of television broadcasting technologies, and FIFA subsequently began specifying sums of money to obtain television broadcasting rights since the World Cup in Argentina in 1978. Broadcasting rights doubled after the World Cup in France, in which monopoly and encrypted broadcasting appeared, and then exceeded the ceiling of one billion dollars starting from the beginning.

Since the World Cup in Japan and South Korea, held in 2002, FIFA recognized the immense value of television broadcasting rights as a major revenue source. Consequently, FIFA took over the management of these rights itself, rather than delegating them to specialized companies. Presently, television broadcasting rights for World Cup tournaments are allocated based on geographical regions, with the rights granted to the highest bidder, thereby ensuring significant revenues for FIFA and the World Cup.In Qatar 2022, television broadcasting rights soared to approximately $3.5 billion, underscoring the substantial contribution of these rights to FIFA's financing. This influx undoubtedly fosters the development of FIFA and the sport as a whole, while also boosting revenues for participating countries, enhancing their competitiveness and overall level. Furthermore, it ensures global enjoyment and entertainment for viewers worldwide, an event eagerly anticipated every four years with unwavering passion.

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