

Internationalization and managing diversity on the basis of professional basketball clubs

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Abstract

There is an undoubted impact of globalization on sport. In that matter we can analyze sport industry through the prism of different forms of internationalization that it is experiencing. There is a wide range of different activities however the main one relates to the migration of sport personnel mainly including players and coaches. This creates a situation of high levels of diversity in the roster of the professional sports club. The degree of difference in an organization may have a different effect on it. It may translate into a different level of efficiency of human resources employed and profitability of the organization and its overall success in the industry and the level of further development. Thus from the point of view of the organization the existing cultural diversity among its human resources must be properly managed. The article contains a brief analysis of the concept of internationalization in sports. Additionally author includes an analysis of The Basketball Migration Report published in 2019 by FIBA and CIES Observatory, which presents data in regards to international basketball transfers in a given basketball season. The article highlights some problems that relate to high degree of diversity that can be noticed in the basketball environment and points out some possible implications for professional club managers. Those problems can be viewed as quite universal and may also be visible in different sport disciplines, thus additional analysis is needed to develop appropriate managerial approach to possibly decrease the negative impacts of existing diversification level of sport workforce.

Key words: globalization, international activity, basketball, workforce diversity.

Introduction

The importance of sport in the global perspective is systematically growing. Although it is by definition a social phenomenon, the first association is related to physical activity, competition and recreation, it is sport that has an increasing impact on the economy of a given country (Sekot, 2017).

The internationalization of sports organizations thanks to the progressive globalization of our lives is a very visible phenomenon these days. Due to the fact that it operates in a multidirectional manner, it covers many countries, markets and employees of different origins. In fact, today it is difficult to imagine a sports team without a foreign star, a coach with an international experience or partners of organizations operating abroad or coming from outside the country in which the club is located. Each organization, when deciding on transfers and international relations, looks for specific benefits, sometimes not being aware of the dangers and difficulties of functioning in a highly diversified environment (Cunningham, 2015).

Although globalization is often described as the process of creating one common world or society, it is not a simple process (Lemańska-Majdzik, Sobiegraj, 2013). The development of the phenomenon causes the fundamental changes to occur in the social organization of human life. As a result, new links are created between distant communities and, depending on the nature, they may extend beyond the continental range. For example, within these changes, the end of the 20th century was a period accompanied by the increasingly stronger political and economic position of the United States and the worldwide popularization of American culture. This trend is visible in various industries and areas of life, initially accepted because of the fascination with everything that is American, later gradually adopted as a standard.

This trend is also visible in sports, where with the development of professional sports leagues in the USA (NBA, NHL, NFL), the popularity of basketball, hockey and American football in various parts of the world grew. For example, a large part of the current population of basketball fans grew up fascinated with the NBA league, thanks to night TV broadcasts of the matches. As a result, basketball was systematically gaining popularity, which directly translated into the number of professionals and amateurs playing the game. Everyone who practiced basketball mimicked the shots of NBA stars like Michael Jordan, Magic Johnson, Larry Bird and others. Generally due to the phenomenon of globalization, a sports product (e.g. sports events, international competitions, individual disciplines) spread around the world with greater ease, generating more and more popularity and income. As part of this phenomenon, we can talk about global sports disciplines, global

sports clubs and global customers, the supporters of a given sports club, who, thanks to technical capabilities and much greater mobility of their own and sports teams, participate in events around the world (Sznajder, 2017).

Based on that, one can boldly claim that the ongoing globalization processes change not only the economic sphere, and thus the existing systems of production or consumption organization, but also deeply penetrate culture and customs, at the same time changing man's attitude towards the surrounding world and himself (Dębowski, 2015).

Sport, however, is the field in which human activities adapt to the needs of the modern world in the most spectacular way. It is known for a long time that sport has a huge impact on human development, but it is also a great tool for social integration (Dębowski, 2015). Sport, among other things, teaches its participants, how to win, how to handle loses and most importantly to respect the opponent and cooperation (teamwork). As many research show, practicing sports also develops specific qualities, such as: self-confidence, determination, courage, creativity and an innovative approach, as well as allows you to acquire organizational skills and leadership qualities (Dzięgiel, Gulak-Lipka, 2017). This long list of athletes or people who have played sports and are successful in business around the world is a great evidence of that.

It is undeniable that the concept of globalization arouses a great interest. Due to the globalization processes, the importance of borders between countries is fading away, and structures beyond the border are growing stronger (Mead, Andrews, 2011). One of the examples of this trend is the development of international sports organizations, such as the International Olympic Committee, or FIFA, FIBA etc. As a result, the strength of those organizations that operate on the scale of only one country significantly decreases, while those units that have the necessary skills are able to develop complex interactions with each other more easily and much faster. Therefore, national organizations in a given discipline in order to be able to develop or take an active part in projects created by international organizations must cooperate closely with them and often submit to their rules and regulations.

Under the influence of the globalization, contemporary organizations more often and on a larger scale experience the phenomenon of the diversity of their human resources. Organizations that use services of people from different countries as a result experience a high degree of cultural diversity. This phenomenon of multiculturalism can bring a number of benefits to an organization, however, in the absence of conscious management it can also be a source of problems (Przytuła, 2011).

From the point of view of organizations with cultural diversity among its human resources, it is important to know what such diversity is associated with and at the same time be able to use it, so that it not only brings benefits to the employer, but also to employees. In practice, it is the national culture that is the main factor determining human behavior in all spheres of social life, including economic life (Gulak-Lipka, 2016). There are different studies that confirm that the behavior of employees is much more shaped by the national culture than the culture of a given organization (Sułkowski, 2002), hence the knowledge about cultures and existing differences is important in people management.

Internationalization of sports

The concept of internationalization is inextricably associated with globalization. The definition of internationalization was tackled by L. Welsh and R. Loustarinen, according to whom it is "a process of increasing involvement in international operations" (Welch, Luostarinen, 1988). However, in order to function smoothly in an international environment, a lot depends on how the organization fits in and adapts in case of big differences (Mikuła, 2015). A suggestion in this regard can be found in another definition of internationalization proposed by J. Calof and P. Beamish, according to which it is "the process of adapting the activities of companies to the international conditions" (Calof, Beamish, 1995). By the activities of companies author meant: strategy, structure organizational, resources or even the processes that take place in it. When analyzing the process of internationalization of sport, it is worth presenting the types of sports organizations and entities that operate in the field of professional sport and their activities are of international reach. Among them are: International Olympic Committee, National Olympic Committees, international Sport Associations (e.g. FIFA), intercontinental Sport Associations (e.g. UEFA), international organizations managing club competitions (e.g. ULEB)¹, national sport federation, regional sport federations, organizations managing national leagues, sport venues operators, sport event organizers, sports clubs, athletes (Sznajder, 2017).

At the professional level, which is usually synonymous with the highest sports level, the impact of internationalization on sports clubs is inevitable. Examples of activities that may take place in sports clubs include the willingness to participate in prestigious international competitions, the need to reach for foreign players that should bring quality to the team, establish relationships with international sponsors or strive to grow

¹ The meaning of presented abbreviations: FIFA – z fr. Fédération Internationale de Football Association, associating national soccer federations from 211 countries, UEFA – ang. Union of European Football Associations, responsible for organization of European soccer club competitions e.g. Champions League, Europa League, ULEB – fr. Union des Ligues Européennes de Basket-Ball, organization associating professional basketball clubs from 16 professional european leagues.

players who represent the country.

The manifestations of the internationalization of sport in literature, as shown in Table 1, are most often considered and classified in the social, economic and political dimensions.

Table 1. Internationalization of sport: social, economic and political dimensions

Social dimension	Economic dimension	Political dimension
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - popularization of sports disciplines outside the country of origin, - technological development that allows you to follow sports events almost all over the world, - organization of sports events with an international participants, - development of sports tourism by sports fans, - migration of sports personnel. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - internationalization of financing sources for sports activities, - internationalization of sports sponsorship, - purchase of TV broadcasting rights for foreign stations, - owners of sports organizations from abroad, - the formation of international sports management companies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - shaping the image of cities and regions in the international environment, - stimulating political cooperation through sport, - breaking down political, cultural, religious and racial barriers by helping, - maintaining a positive image of the country in the international arena, - implementation of international sports projects.

Source: own work based on: Gajda D., *Wpływ internacjonalizacji sportu na działalność profesjonalnych klubów sportowych*, Studia Ekonomiczne. Zeszyty Naukowe nr 226, 2015, Uniwersytet Ekonomiczny w Katowicach, s. 181-193.

New possibilities of acquiring foreign sources to finance sports activities are an example of the economic dimension of internationalization (Smith, 2008). Much higher freedom in international capital turnover enables enterprises to finance the activities of international federations, foreign clubs as well as sports events taking place in different countries (e.g. where they see new opportunities for themselves, and potential market). This transaction allows companies to use the marketing potential of sports organizations or events in return for financing, i.e. international sponsorship (Kozma, András, 2014).

Another dimension through which the process of sport internationalization is very often analyzed is the political dimension. In this sport is used to shape the image of a city, country or region in an international setting, and stimulating cooperation and building positive political relations through sport. Such activities provide, among other things, the possibility of breaking political, cultural, religious and racial barriers, which are or may be the source of most conflicts in the world. Building relationships through sports allows very often to establish multilateral inter-state relations (Burzała, 2009).

The social dimension of internationalization is primarily related to the fact that a given sport is popularized outside the country of its origin. Media or internet are making this process much easier these days. However, the key manifestation of social internationalization of sport is the migration of sports staff. This includes the flow of athletes, coaches and managers from one country to another for the purpose of earning money, development of sports, access to a modern training base with highest-quality sports equipment. Additionally, it is also possible to have a much better access to many services that support sports development that would not be possible in the home country, e.g. access to highly qualified professional advisers, promotion or very important medical care at the highest level (Thibault, 2009).

By acquiring human resources from abroad, sports clubs are looking for people whose skills will constitute a significant source of competitive advantage (Porter, 2001) in the market (in the league) in which they operate. High skills and competences, both in sports for the players and coaches and organizational for managers, are desirable because, according to many industry experts, they are a guarantee of success.

Materials and Methods

In this study author focused on the analysis of The Basketball Migration Reports, where data from major European basketball leagues as well as some highlights from most popular world leagues were published. The reports are a joint effort of FIBA and The International Centre for the Study of Sport (CIES)² and provide an insight into the migratory trends of the sport. The reports are published since 2012, annually, covering the period from July 1st, till June 30th of next year. So through combination of FIBA's knowledge and data on international transfers with the renowned expertise of the CIES Observatory, the IBMR focuses on the international migration of players per basketball season. Additionally it provides league comparisons, using different player criteria like: age and height; foreign players; U21 players; turnover of players within teams/leagues; stability of players at clubs/leagues within a country. The reports illustrate market trends and thus highlight new challenges from the point of view of business analysis.

Through this analysis it is possible to identify and assess the level of internationalization of professional

²International Center for Sport Studies (CIES) Observatory – is an independent scientific center based in Neuchâtel, Switzerland. CIES receives regular orders from prestigious sports organizations like FIFA, UEFA, many football clubs (City Football Group, Chelsea FC, Club Atlético de Madrid i SL Benfica) and also FIBA and IOC.

basketball leagues and clubs. The increased level of foreign players and high number of players transfers reveals many problems that leagues and clubs can face.

International activities of professional clubs

Thanks to the international exposure of professional sports clubs and the development of the media, it is possible to popularize sports disciplines on the international scale. The organizers of international leagues strive to ensure the highest level possible of these games and that the matches are balanced and fierce, which attracts the attention of international media. It also means that fans from various countries are interested in the fate of sports clubs, who at the same time constitute a potential group of buyers of all products offered by the clubs (Smith 2008).

Table 2. Internationalization by professional sports clubs

Mode of action	Examples of actions
Export	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sale of tickets for matches to foreign fans • selling merchandising products to foreign fans • planning and organization of show / friendly matches abroad
Intermediaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • opening sales offices abroad (tickets, gadgets, sponsorship rights), which makes it easier to make club brands more recognizable on an international scale and facilitate access to their products • training camps at foreign sport centers
Branches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • opening club franchises abroad • organization of sports academies abroad, from which clubs may acquire athletes in the future or treat them as another marketing activity of the club, providing the club with new fans (improving the brand image) • organization of camps abroad under the aegis of the club
Resource Acquisition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contracting foreign players / coaches / managers and other specialists necessary for the functioning of the club • acquiring foreign sponsors to be able to better pursue their business goals • sale of television rights, a source of financial benefits, with the global reach of television stations direct impact on the popularity and recognition of organizations abroad • contracts with global corporations that act as official technical partners that supply sports equipment
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clubs' websites allowing navigation in several foreign languages • maintaining the club's profiles on various social media popular in different parts of the world

Source: Oczkowska R. (2013). *Międzynarodowa ekspansja przedsiębiorstw w warunkach globalizacji. Motywy - Strategie - Tendencje*, Difin, Warszawa

Despite the opportunity to watch each match of their idols on TV, fans often take the opportunity to see them live, e.g. during a match in their country or even in the city of their residence (Table 2.). There are also those who choose to travel in the footsteps of their favorite team. High international activity affects the amount of profits generated from the sale of tickets for matches played abroad, and additionally they guarantee cheering during the trip, which has a positive effect on the players' game, which may translate into a better result in sports competition (Waškowski, 2010).

The clubs' expansion into foreign markets, which is possible thanks to the popularization of sports disciplines and foreign live performances, gives clubs many opportunities for development and obtaining revenues. Thanks to the international exposure, the clubs' merchandising products, which are sold during matches, are very popular. Even small gadgets make fans feel a bond with the club they are a fan of. The strategy of sports clubs is also to strengthen ties with foreign fans at tournaments or training camps organized by the club. In addition, world class clubs set up local sports academies for the youngest, where children train under the watchful eye of properly trained trainers who guarantee the highest level of training (know-how in the field of training children and youth is transferred by the coaches of a professional club), have official equipment of a given club and, of course, prestige, which is associated with a given brand (club brand). The most examples of this type of solutions can be found in football, where clubs like FC Barcelona, Paris Saint-Germain FC, Chelsea London, Juventus Turin, etc. have their academies all over the world.

The internationalization of sports organizations is a complex and multidirectional process, covering various areas and involving various resources. The decision to enter new markets or to obtain foreign capital or other resources in each organization, may be influenced by various factors. Among the most frequently mentioned reasons are: willingness to attract new fans, new partners who will guarantee development, general improvement of the financial situation of the organization or sports level (Pawlak, Smoleń, 2015).

One of the most important manifestations of the internationalization of sports organizations is the increase in the number of employees from different countries. Professional sports clubs are good example, especially those with sections team sports where players from different countries are part of the same team. It is safe to say that the value of the product of a sports club, is determined by its employees (Panfil, Seweryniak, 2009). The attention is focused mainly on players who provide sports services on the basis of a contract signed

with the club, as well as coaches or managers who are responsible for team management and responsibility for the team's sports results.

Report analysis – FIBA International Basketball Migration Reports

Although the discipline originates from the USA³, the popularity of basketball in Europe is very high. The organization that manages basketball is the International Basketball Federation (Fédération Internationale de Basketball Amateur - FIBA), which was founded on June 18, 1932 in Geneva. The greatest contribution and role of FIBA comes down to the organization of competitions of national teams in various age and club categories. The most important events include the World Championship (men's since 1950 and women's since 1953), the Continental Championships and cup games.

FIBA and the entire basketball have evolved over the years, with the rules, style of play and trends that have changed. Despite the changes taking place, FIBA always tries to deepen the knowledge of basketball and its stakeholders. The strong influence of American basketball players around the world, the economy and management of the clubs, the impact of FIBA regulations on international transfers (especially those for players under the age of 18) are just a few examples of areas where FIBA and its member states need a good understanding of these issues in order to better shape the regulations, which will allow the further development of basketball.

FIBA unites 214 national federations and millions of registered players around the world. This shows that basketball is a truly global sport. FIBA's longtime secretary general, Patrick Baumann⁴ has said many times that the growing popularity of basketball worldwide is followed by even greater responsibilities. One of the aspects is to fully understand the player data that is collected on a daily basis and that helps sustain the development of basketball. In 2012, in order to pursue that goal, FIBA has managed to establish a close cooperation with the Swiss organization CIES Observatory, which was responsible for the annual preparation of the International Basketball Migration Report.

Figure 1. Evolution of international player transfers in seasons 2010/11 - 2018/19



Source: International Basketball Migration Report 2019, FIBA i CIES Sport Observatory, 2019, https://www.cies.ch/fileadmin/documents/News_Agenda_Publications/IBMR_2019_-_FIBA.pdf, [accessed on: 05.01.2020].

The transfer market data and all related information are valuable source to a large group of basketball stakeholders, such as players, coaches, national federations, clubs and players' agents. Since 2012, reports present data on transfers, the number of players participating in transfers and the directions of transfers between

³Basketball has been found by James Naismith, on December 21, 1891, teacher from Council of the YMCA Sport College of Springfield, Massachusetts, he launched a competition to find a sport needed to keep children and young people fit during the winter time. Naismith developed a game that minimized physical contact, mainly relied on a lot of jumping and running and required hand-eye coordination in order to successfully put the ball into the basket. Naismith's proposal won and the era of basketball development has begun. After the US, basketball quickly became popular in the neighboring Canada than followed by France (1893), England (1894), Australia, China, India (1895-1900) and in Japan (1900). In 1904, basketball was an exhibition discipline at the summer Olympics, but it wasn't until 1936 that it became an Olympic discipline for good. A year earlier, a regular European basketball championships have been launched.

⁴ Patrick Baumann – swiss lawyer and sports activist, secretary general of FIBA during 2003-2018.

the national federations, which in practice requires the federation of origin to issue the so-called "Letter of Clearance" addressed to the target federation.

The data presents international movements of men and women professionally playing basketball, however, for women only aggregated data for a given season is presented. In the case of transfers of male players, detailed data from the largest professional leagues in the world are additionally available, including information on the age and height of players, their average stay with the current club and the percentage of foreigners (who have at least one nationality other than of the nation in which they play). The report also mapped the origin of the imported players and compares their profile with that of local players. The first report from 2012 contains an analysis of the 12 largest basketball leagues, but since 2014 it expanded and includes 16 world leagues.

In the latest International Basketball Migration Report 2019, the evolution of the transfer process of players since 2010 has been presented (Figure 1). The included data illustrate the situation on the basketball transfer market, where the number of international transfers compared to previous, 2017/2018 season for men and women remained the same, but the number of players participating in transfers fell from 7,764 to 6,882 players. The main reason is that the number of players who participated in two or more transfers during one season increased from 7.6% to 18.4%. This means that players were more likely to change club during the season in search of a better offer or clubs did not hesitate to make changes to their roster as the most competitive team which can guarantee achievement of sports success.

In the period from 2010 to 2016, the increase in foreign transfers was significant from the level of 4,739 to the level of 6,716 players. In case of women, the scale of the phenomenon is much smaller, where the highest number of transfers took place in the 2016/17 - 2018 season and the lowest in the 2010/11 - 1428 season.

Acquiring foreign athletes with a high level of sports skills is a very common practice among modern sports clubs. As a result, clubs are able to increase the sports level of the club and with that the organization is gaining real chances of winning a high place in national competitions which opens a possibility to achieve promotion to international competitions. Additionally, clubs can observe an increase in the number of club fans which include fans of the foreign athlete in his country of origin. With high international exposure there can be an increasing demand for the club's merchandising products among fans of foreign athletes (e.g. the possibility of selling club jersey with the athlete's number is increasing).

It is worth mentioning that the number of foreign players in a given team or league depends on the internal regulations governing player limits. Limits can be changed every season, thus adapting to the situation in a given league or depending on the votes of the clubs, which very often influence these decisions. In the report prepared by FIBA and CIES, an entire chapter is devoted in which the most important basketball leagues in the world are compared.

Table 3. Most common nationalities in men's European leagues

	Nationality	Players			Teams		
		Euroleague	BCL	Overall	Euroleague	BCL	Overall
1	USA	76	140	215	-	-	-
2	France	12	28	40	0	4	4
.	Greece	14	26	40	2	3	5
4	Germany	6	28	34	1	4	5
.	Lithuania	14	21	34	1	2	3
6	Turkey	17	15	32	3	2	5
7	Spain	13	16	29	4	3	7
8	Italy	7	18	25	1	3	4
9	Czech Republic	2	22	24	0	2	2
.	Russia	14	10	24	2	1	3
.	Serbia	13	11	24	0	0	0
12	Belgium	1	18	19	0	2	2
.	Izrael	6	13	19	1	2	3
14	Latvia	6	11	17	0	1	1
.	Slovenia	3	14	17	0	1	1
	Overall	250	466	713	16	32	48

Source: own work based on: *The Basketball Minority Report 2019*, FIBA and CIES Sport Observatory, 2019, https://www.cies.ch/fileadmin/documents/News_Agenda_Publications/IBMR_2019_-_FIBA.pdf, [accessed on: 05.01.2020].

We can distinguish leagues that do not impose any restrictions on contracting foreign players (e.g. Adriatic and Argentine league), such that allow the possibility of contracting up to 3 foreign players (Australian, Brazilian and Japanese league) or 4 (Spanish league, which allows for in employing up to two players from outside the European Union). In the other major leagues (Belgian, Italian, German, Polish, Turkish, Greek, French, Israeli and VTB) it is possible to contract between 5 and 8 foreign players.

The level of national diversity, expressed in the high number of foreign players in the domestic leagues, has remained high for several years. Analyzing the 2018/2019 basketball season, as many as 6 leagues out of 16

analyzed in the FIBA report each year indicates a higher number of foreign rather than domestic players. For example, as the 2019 data show, European clubs still rely heavily on US players (Table 3). This is reflected not only in the number of American players in the team roster, but also in the game and in the points scored in the game. The Spanish League (ACB) remains a league with the highest rate of foreign players (70%) and also has the greatest national diversity (46 different nationalities): USA 58 players, France 11, Argentina 10, Sweden 7, Georgia 6, Croatia, Slovenia, Ukraine, Belgium – 5 players, Lithuania, Canada, Senegal, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Latvia, Montenegro, Brazil, Dominican Republic, Germany – 4 players and Great Britain, Italy, Poland, Netherlands, Finland, Czech Republic, Mexico, Macedonia, Congo, Nigeria, Greece, Uruguay, Hungary, Estonia, Denmark, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Jamaica, Izrael, Cape Verde, Iceland, China, Romania, Azerbaijan, Surinam and Slovakia. The situation is similar in the Italian and German league, where there was over 60% share of foreign players in the club lineups. The Brazilian league remains at the other extreme, where the percentage of registered foreigners was 16.2% and players came from only 10 different countries (USA 21, Argentina 4, Uruguay 2 and Puerto Rico, Bahamas, Italy, Venezuela).

Discussion

The data presented confirm that the number of players from abroad is very high in major European leagues, which also translates into the time these players spend on the court. The average minutes spent on the court by foreign players is over 20 minutes per game, which proves that they play an important role in the team.

This, in turn, also confirms a degradation of the role and place of domestic players within their home league. Unfortunately, the significant supremacy of foreign players and high playing time in most of the analyzed leagues has a direct and unfortunately negative impact on the development of domestic players.

Additionally, this situation has a direct impact on the development of youth players, i.e. players under 21 years of age. The section of the report comparing national leagues highlights this problem, which is the lack of playing time for young players. The possibility of competing and number minutes spent on the court for young players is the key factor of the good development of a new generation of basketball players in a given country, which can directly translate into the success of the national team. For example, as the 2019 data show, European clubs still rely heavily on US players (Table 2.6). This is reflected not only in the number of American players in the team roster, but also in the game and in the points scored in the game.

The above analysis confirms that at every level and in every league the share of foreign players in the team roster, playing time received and the number of points scored is high and has remained at a similar level for several years. This shows that on many levels the role of national players is highly marginalized and only single talents are able to exist and develop properly.

Conclusion

Globalization and thus internationalization of sport sector has undoubtedly huge impact on the sport activity and products that are offered by professional clubs. Basketball, like many other sports disciplines is highly diverse due to the a high rate of international players and coaches present in the club rosters. Contracting foreigners by professional basketball clubs was supposed to increase the competitiveness and guarantee sports success in home country as well as abroad. However this is not always the case and many professional clubs find that too much national diversity among players can affect the work, communication and atmosphere in the team.

Additionally, for many fans, for the attractiveness of clubs public relations activities and the popularity of basketball leagues, higher number of foreign players is perceived positively, but in the long term it may have very negative effects on the sports level of domestic players. As a result, it may have an impact on the quality of the players who should be the strength of the national teams and the ultimate lack of international success by a given country.

The data presenting the level of international player transfers indicates that this trend quickly evolved and stays popular since 2016. It seems that only the clubs budget can be a real limitation here. This indicates that clubs prefer to spend money for a potential international star than spend money and time to develop new domestic talents. It might be interesting to monitor international players transfers trend in the following years and see if there was any significant impact of Covid pandemic on basketball players transfer market.

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