

Club instability and its consequences

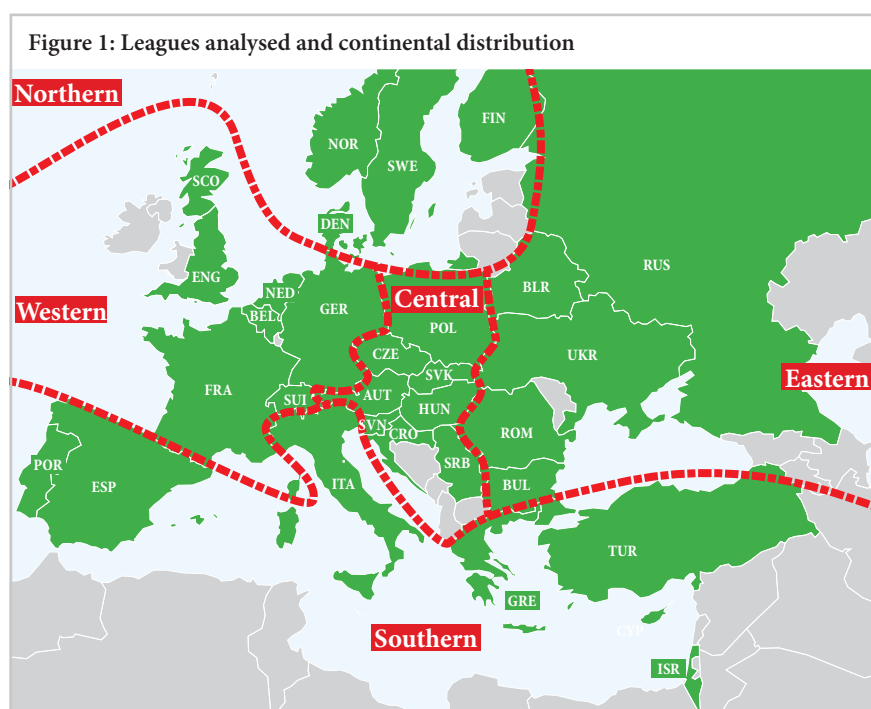
Drs Raffaele Poli, Loïc Ravenel and Roger Besson

1. Introduction

The CIES Football Observatory embarks on its tenth year of existence and its reputation continues to grow. As a result, we decided that a change was necessary to respond to the more exacting demands of our audience. We are therefore delighted to present this new formula of monthly reports which are available as free downloads from our website.

With current affairs in mind, these reports will develop themes that we have covered previously in our annual paying publications. The latter will be discontinued. However, our academic team is more than ever at the service of professional actors of the game when it comes to carrying out research mandates.

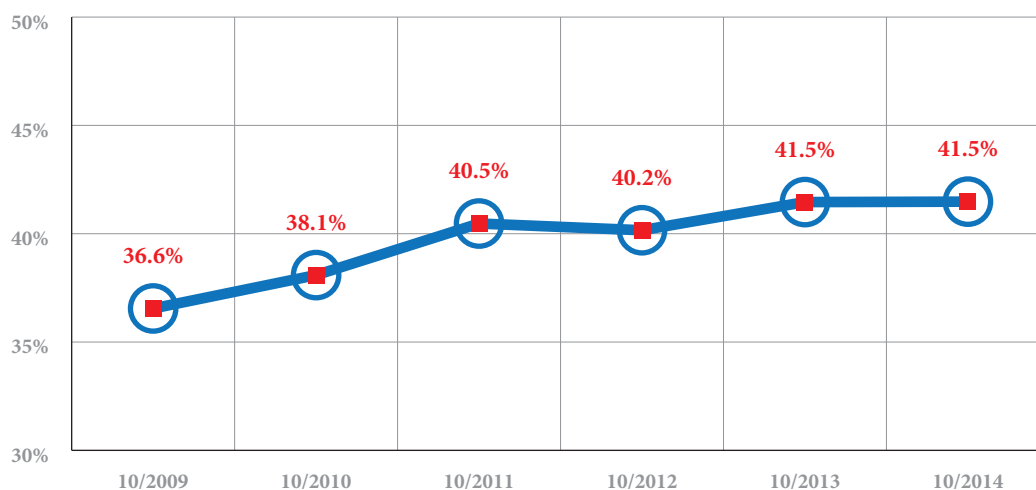
The first Monthly Report deals with the theme of club instability. It covers 31 top division championships of UEFA member associations (see map). The sample is made up of footballers present in the first team squad on the 1st October 2014 having played matches up until this date or unused squad members having taken part in adult championships during both of the two preceding seasons.



2. Progression of instability

The surveys carried out since 2009 show that the number of footballers recruited during the year have never been as high as in 2013 and 2014. The increase in the proportion of new recruits in squads since 2009 is noteworthy: from 36.6 to 41.5%. The footballers' labour market tends towards greater mobility and club stability decreases in parallel.

Figure 2: Evolution of the percentage of players signed during the year (2009-2014)



3. Geographical differences

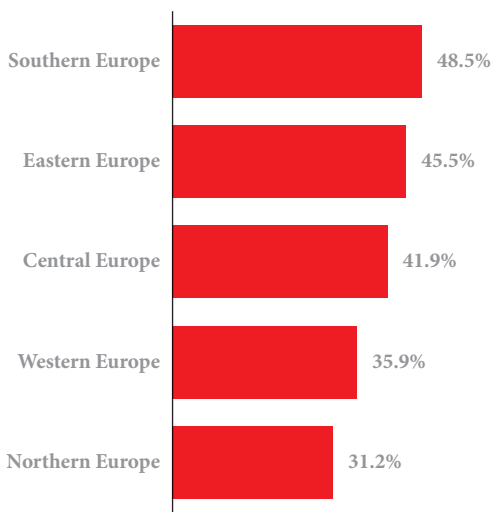
Out of an average of 24.7 players who made up a squad on the 1st October 2014, 10.3 were recruited during 2014. The percentage of new signings is considerably higher in Eastern (48.5%) and Southern Europe (45.5%) than in Northern (31.2%) and Western Europe (35.9%). This result highlights the differences of approach regarding transfer policies according to the geographical location of clubs¹.

The stronger tendency of Eastern and Mediterranean clubs to recruit players is not linked to a greater necessity to replace footballers transferred for money to other teams. Indeed, no correlation exists between the number of paid transfers and the total number of transfers carried out.

The high level of activity of some teams on the transfer market is thus not primarily a strategy aimed at increasing revenues. From an economic point of view, according to numerous accounts, transfer operations tend rather to benefit intermediaries that are at the heart of transactions, as well as the club managers and coaches with whom they collaborate.

¹ Appendix 1 presents the detail per national association.

Figure 3: percentage of players signed during the year according to continental zone (2014)



4. The champions of instability

Eighteen out of 22 clubs having recruited in 2014 at least 18 players present on the 1st October in the first team squad are situated in Eastern and Southern Europe. The maximum level – 24 transfers – was recorded for FK Voždovac (SRB). Romanian (Târgu Mureş, Iaşi, Universitatea Craiova, Concordia Chiajna, Universitatea Cluj) and Turkish clubs (Marsin Idmanyurdu, Trabzonspor, Balıkesirspor, Gaziantepspor) are also over-represented in this ranking.

Figure 4: Clubs having signed during the year the most players present on the 1st October 2014



5. Impact on results

The comparison between the average percentage of players recruited during the year by teams ranked on the 31st December 2014 in the top half of the table in their respective league and those in the bottom half shows that instability also affects results. Indeed, the better ranked teams recruited on average 38.5% of their squad during the year, while this percentage was 43.8% for the lower ranked clubs.

This analysis shows that over-activity on the transfer market not only offers no economic advantage, but also has a negative impact in sporting terms. The consequences of such a policy tend to be counterproductive in the long run. Indeed, the proportion of teams relegated at the end of the season increases with the presence of new signings in the squad.

Between 2009 and 2013, 34.3% of clubs having more than 15 new recruits did not take part in the first division championship of their country in the following year. Their probability of relegation is twice as high as for clubs having signed between 11 and 15 players (17%) and three times higher than teams with a maximum of ten new recruits (10.6%).

Figure 5: Percentage of players signed during the year and rankings on the 31st December 2014

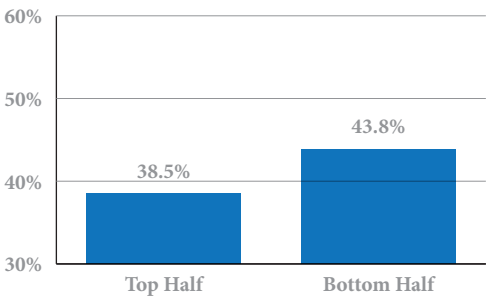
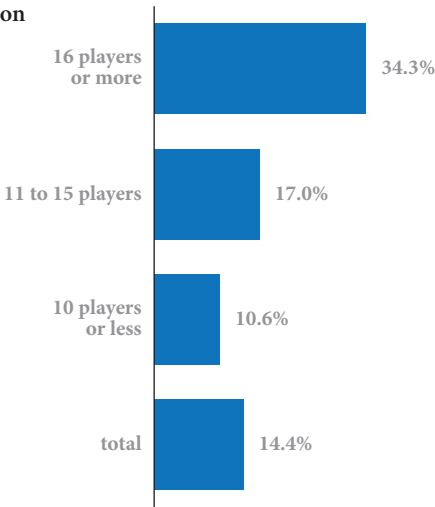


Figure 6: Percentage of teams relegated at the end of the season according to the number of players signed



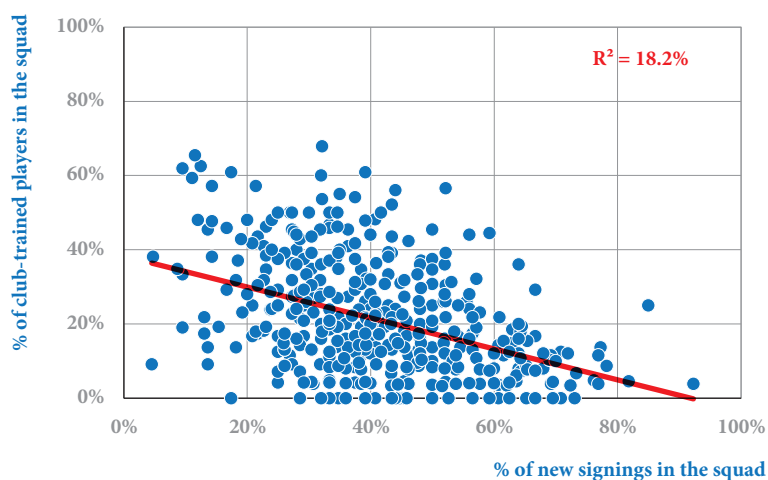
6. Impact on training

Speculation on the transfer market is also often accompanied by a tendency to neglect player training. There is indeed a negative correlation between the percentage of new signings and the proportion of club-trained footballers in the squad².

This result confirms that the wholesale recruitment of players from other clubs is indicative of a lack of strategic planning. Although for many of the teams analysed, training is the only means to offset a lack of economic resources, many managers continue to embrace a short-term vision based on the ceaseless coming and going of players trained by other clubs. Though easier to implement, this policy often constitutes an insurmountable obstacle hampering a club's ability to pursue long-term success.

² The notion of "club-trained" refers to players who have been in their employer club for at least three seasons between the ages of 15 and 21 (UEFA definition)

Figure 7: correlation between the percentages of new signings and club-trained players (2014)



7. Conclusion

Our report indicates that the stability gives clubs a competitive advantage over rival teams, be it on a sporting level (better medium and long-term results) or an economic one (a greater capacity to launch careers of club-trained players and generating revenues through their transfer). Stability indicators such as the average length of stay of players in their club or the percentage of new signings in the squad thus show their true worth when judging the pertinence of management strategies instigated by club managers.

Well-informed fans of the most unstable teams have good reason to be anxious (Appendix 2). In order to protect football from the bad practices of certain managers, to promote training and to increase team competitiveness, it would thus be timely to consider the introduction of a limitation in the number of transfers allowed.

True to its reputation, our research group is at the disposal of football stakeholders to analyse such a scenario. It would notably be about defining more precisely the boundaries of such a limitation on transfers in order to attain the desired goals without interfering with the free movement of players or provoking a distortion of the market with regard to the upholding of the principle of proportionality.

Appendix 1:**Evolution of the percentage of players signed during the year by league (2009-2014)**

League	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Average
1. Cyprus	56.7%	57.5%	51.2%	59.8%	60.9%	58.8%	57.5%
2. Bulgaria	45.0%	44.9%	53.0%	56.9%	53.4%	55.4%	51.4%
3. Portugal	46.9%	52.6%	50.7%	49.4%	50.1%	52.6%	50.4%
4. Serbia	42.8%	40.7%	48.9%	50.9%	53.2%	53.7%	48.4%
5. Romania	39.8%	47.1%	46.6%	51.7%	50.6%	54.3%	48.3%
6. Greece	45.5%	48.8%	45.7%	44.3%	52.1%	51.4%	48.0%
7. Turkey	50.3%	45.9%	49.3%	44.7%	46.9%	47.6%	47.5%
8. Italy	40.2%	42.1%	46.3%	48.4%	45.2%	47.9%	45.0%
9. Belarus	41.8%	41.1%	41.6%	46.2%	48.1%	42.4%	43.5%
10. Israel	40.9%	42.8%	44.5%	39.8%	48.3%	41.6%	43.0%
11. Russia	38.3%	44.7%	46.1%	40.8%	46.5%	39.9%	42.7%
12. Hungary	34.9%	40.6%	44.2%	37.7%	38.2%	40.1%	39.3%
13. Belgium	35.9%	35.1%	40.4%	39.4%	41.6%	40.1%	38.7%
14. Croatia	32.1%	38.4%	39.3%	38.0%	43.6%	40.6%	38.7%
15. Slovenia	31.6%	37.9%	42.2%	36.5%	42.6%	40.1%	38.5%
16. Poland	32.3%	36.6%	41.2%	38.5%	39.8%	41.5%	38.3%
17. Ukraine	33.0%	42.9%	43.2%	35.9%	39.8%	34.5%	38.2%
18. Scotland	33.4%	35.4%	40.4%	37.1%	39.8%	37.2%	37.2%
19. Czech Republic	35.5%	32.5%	39.7%	40.6%	36.8%	37.4%	37.1%
20. Slovakia	34.6%	37.8%	34.0%	30.6%	40.7%	39.6%	36.2%
21. Finland	38.8%	30.8%	42.4%	33.5%	34.0%	36.9%	36.1%
22. Spain	31.7%	33.2%	35.0%	32.4%	39.7%	42.6%	35.7%
23. England	35.1%	31.0%	32.9%	36.1%	37.4%	40.6%	35.5%
24. The Netherlands	28.3%	32.1%	36.5%	36.7%	35.9%	38.5%	34.7%
25. Switzerland	33.3%	33.6%	32.8%	35.4%	33.6%	34.3%	33.8%
26. Austria	34.3%	33.0%	34.0%	29.0%	30.9%	38.5%	33.3%
27. Norway	27.3%	29.6%	32.0%	36.0%	29.8%	33.0%	31.3%
28. Germany	26.7%	30.5%	30.3%	35.0%	32.1%	30.8%	30.9%
29. France	29.7%	27.1%	32.5%	30.0%	32.1%	30.1%	30.3%
30. Sweden	32.2%	23.1%	25.7%	33.6%	23.0%	27.2%	27.5%
31. Denmark	20.7%	25.1%	25.8%	25.1%	33.0%	27.8%	26.2%
Total	36.6%	38.1%	40.5%	40.2%	41.5%	41.5%	39.7%

 Maximum Level

Appendix 2:**The most unstable clubs according to the average length of stay in the first team squad (2014)**

Average stay (number of years)	
1. Hapoel Petah Tikva FC (ISR)	1.10
2. FK Voždovac (SRB)	1.12
3. Niki Volos FC (GRE)	1.13
4. CS Universitatea Craiova (ROM)	1.28
5. Doxa Katokopia FC (CYP)	1.32
6. Nea Salamis Famagusta FC (CYP)	1.33
7. Mersin İdmanyurdu SK (TUR)	1.34
8. ASA Târgu Mureş (ROM)	1.37
9. FC Universitatea Cluj (ROM)	1.37
10. PFC Lokomotiv Plovdiv (BUL)	1.38
. NK Istra 1961 (CRO)	1.38
. CS Concordia Chiajna (ROM)	1.38
13. FK Radnički 1923 (SRB)	1.39
14. Ayia Napa FC (CYP)	1.39
15. FK Vojvodina (SRB)	1.41
16. FK Belshina Bobruisk (BLR)	1.43
. FK Gomel (BLR)	1.43
18. Boavista FC (POR)	1.44
19. FK Botev Plovdiv (BUL)	1.46
20. Kayseri Erciyesspor (TUR)	1.48
21. CSKA Sofia (BUL)	1.50
. Nyíregyháza Spartacus FC (HUN)	1.50
. Académica de Coimbra (POR)	1.50
. Moreirense FC (POR)	1.50
25. AO Platánias (GRE)	1.52

Average stay (number of years)	
26. Córdoba CF (ESP)	1.54
. AC Cesena (ITA)	1.54
28. FC Genoa 1893 (ITA)	1.54
. CFR 1907 Cluj (ROM)	1.54
30. FC Dordrecht (NED)	1.54
31. DAC 1904 Dunajská Streda (SVK)	1.56
32. Asteras Tripolis FC (GRE)	1.56
. FC Petrolul Ploieşti (ROM)	1.56
. Balıkesirspor Kulübü (TUR)	1.56
35. PFC Marek Dupnitsa (BUL)	1.57
. PFC Slavia Sofia (BUL)	1.57
37. Vitória FC Setúbal (POR)	1.57
38. FK Crvena Zvezda (SRB)	1.58
39. Panaitolikos GFS (GRE)	1.60
. CSMS Iaşi (ROM)	1.60
. FC Oţelul Galaţi (ROM)	1.60
42. FC Torpedo Moskva (RUS)	1.62
. OFK Beograd (SRB)	1.62
44. PFC Levski Sofia (BUL)	1.63
. NK Krka Novo Mesto (SVN)	1.63
46. ND Gorica (SVN)	1.63
47. Royal Mouscron-Péruwelz (BEL)	1.64
48. FK Novi Pazar (SRB)	1.64
49. NK Lokomotiva Zagreb (CRO)	1.65
. Ermis Aradippou FC (CYP)	1.65

Appendix 3:**The most stable clubs according to the average length of stay in the first team squad (2014)**

Average stay (number of years)	
1. Real Sociedad de Fútbol (ESP)	5.26
2. PFC CSKA Moskva (RUS)	4.91
3. Fenerbahçe SK (TUR)	4.41
4. Real Madrid CF (ESP)	4.32
5. Athletic Club Bilbao (ESP)	4.25
6. FC Barcelona (ESP)	4.04
7. Atvidabergs FF (SWE)	4.00
8. Borussia Dortmund (GER)	3.89
9. FC Shakhtar Donetsk (UKR)	3.89
10. FC Bayern München (GER)	3.88
11. VfL Borussia M'gladbach (GER)	3.82
12. FC Dynamo Kyiv (UKR)	3.80
13. Bnei Sakhnin FC (ISR)	3.75
14. Montpellier Hérault SC (FRA)	3.69
15. Everton FC (ENG)	3.67
16. Juventus FC (ITA)	3.58
17. FK Haugesund (NOR)	3.54
18. FC Zenit St Petersburg (RUS)	3.54
19. Debreceni VSC (HUN)	3.48
20. FK Teplice (CZE)	3.48
21. KSC Lokeren (BEL)	3.46
22. FC Vorskla Poltava (UKR)	3.46
23. Arsenal FC (ENG)	3.44
24. Silkeborg IF (DEN)	3.39
25. Chelsea FC (ENG)	3.39

Average stay (number of years)	
26. Manchester United FC (ENG)	3.36
27. Viking FK (NOR)	3.32
28. Stoke City FC (ENG)	3.31
29. FC Zürich (SUI)	3.29
30. FC Metalist Kharkiv (UKR)	3.29
31. IF Elfsborg (SWE)	3.29
32. MTK Budapest (HUN)	3.28
33. IK Start (NOR)	3.27
34. AS Gaz Metan Mediaş (ROM)	3.27
35. Cagliari Calcio (ITA)	3.26
36. Aalesunds FK (NOR)	3.24
37. BK Häcken (SWE)	3.24
38. KKS Lech Poznań (POL)	3.23
39. FK BATE Borisov (BLR)	3.22
40. Manchester City FC (ENG)	3.21
41. Bayer 04 Leverkusen (GER)	3.21
42. Liverpool FC (ENG)	3.20
43. MFK Košice (SVK)	3.20
44. FC Dnipro Dnipropetrovsk (UKR)	3.19
45. Inverness Caledonian Thistle (SCO)	3.19
46. LOSC Lille (FRA)	3.17
47. APOEL FC (CYP)	3.16
48. Evian Thonon Gaillard FC (FRA)	3.13
49. Lillestrøm SK (NOR)	3.11
50. Galatasaray SK (TUR)	3.10