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GLOBALIZATION, CULTURE WARS, AND ATTITUDES TOWARD SOCCER IN AMERICA: An Empirical Assessment of How Soccer Explains the World†

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This study examines the "culture wars" using the lens of attitudes toward soccer. Despite soccer's increasing popularity in the United States, anti-soccer rhetoric is fairly common. In his widely read book, *How Soccer Explains the World* (2004), Foer contends that the "culture wars," including divisions over soccer, are better explained by reactions to globalization than social class or political ideology. Using data from a survey of Nebraskans, we find that attitudes about cultural globalization are the best predictor of soccer sentiment. Contrary to popular claims about the "culture wars," most respondents were moderate in their attitudes toward both soccer and globalization.

"Soccer is the metric system in short pants," wrote Tom Piatak, a conservative columnist for *Chronicles: A Magazine of American Culture*, during the 2010 World Cup. Coming on the heels of a thrilling two-goal comeback draw for the United States against Slovenia, Piatak's column encouraged readers to reject the "invasive foreign species" of soccer with "a healthy spirit of patriotic defiance." Even as millions of Americans whooped in patriotic fervor over the team's gutsy efforts, Piatak argued that resisting soccer (and the metric system) is an important means of defending American culture. As he wrote, "I don't want to see America globalized, and that includes American sports."

As even Piatak acknowledges, soccer is thriving in America. It is the country's leading participatory sport, and the World Cup Final telecast drew more viewers than any single game of the NBA or Stanley Cup Finals. Yet, judging by media reports and Web sites like soccersucks.net, anti-soccer rhetoric is also common. Soccer is the target of an animosity not directed at football, baseball, basketball, or hockey. As one *USA Today* reporter wrote in the days before the 1994 World Cup, "hating soccer is more American than mom's apple pie" (Weir 1993).

In *How Soccer Explains the World* (2004), journalist Franklin Foer offers anti-soccer sentiment in the United States as a prime illustration of the ongoing "culture wars" of

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recent years. Unlike most other commentators who see the "culture wars" as the product of partisan political rancor or a growing class divide, Foer claims that the public's divided reactions to globalization drive the "culture wars." Understood this way, as Piatak's column explicitly suggests, anti-soccer attitudes are an expression of opposition to globalization. By contrast, many analysts have understood "culture wars" issues, like resistance to soccer, as motivated by either class status (Bourdieu 1984) or political ideology (Hunter 1991).

Despite the massive volume of commentary on the "culture wars," most research has focused on the controversial policy debates (e.g., abortion, gay marriage, etc.), and few empirical studies have considered points of cultural contention (e.g., attitudes about country music, veganism, the "war on Christmas," etc.). To the best of our knowledge, no existing study has examined public attitudes about soccer. For that reason, it is not clear how common anti-soccer attitudes are in the general public. The current research attempts to better understand the relationship between globalization and the American "culture wars" through the lens of attitudes toward the sport of soccer.

Drawing on data from the Nebraska Annual Social Indicators Survey (NASIS), we consider whether attitudes about globalization are better predictors of soccer sentiment than social class, political ideology, or other social characteristics. Through this analysis, we address two key questions:

1. Is the general public polarized over "culture war" issues, specifically in their attitudes toward soccer and globalization?
2. Are attitudes toward globalization a better explanation of the "culture wars"—as expressed through soccer sentiment—than social class, race, religiosity, political outlook, or other factors?

We begin by reviewing existing literature on soccer, the "culture wars," and globalization. Next, we describe our survey of Nebraska residents collected during the year of the 2010 World Cup. Using frequencies and the results of multivariate regression analyses, we examine the extent of polarization in soccer attitudes and consider the role of globalization attitudes, social class, political ideology, and other social characteristics in explaining them. We conclude by discussing the implications of the findings for theory about sociopolitical divisions in American civil society as well as for the future vitality of soccer in the United States.

BACKGROUND

The World's Sport in America

Sports commentator Jim Rome represents one extreme in the cultural division over soccer. Foer (2004) quotes Rome as saying, "My son is not playing soccer. I will hand him ice skates and a shimmering sequined blouse before I hand him a soccer ball. Soccer is not a sport." Rome's disdain for soccer may be the most visible and strident among public figures, but he is not alone. During the 2010 World Cup, right-wing talk show host, Glenn Beck, told viewers, "It doesn't matter how you try to sell it to us . . . we don't want the World Cup, we don't like the World Cup, we don't like soccer, we want nothing

to do with it." Conservative radio host Mark Belling claimed that liberals are "force-feeding [soccer] down our throats." Dan Gainor of the conservative think tank, Media Research Center, offered that "Soccer is designed as a poor man or poor woman's sport . . . the left is pushing it in schools across the country" (Hertzberg 2010). Such rhetoric is nothing new. In 1986, on the floor of Congress, Congressman Jack Kemp opposed an American bid to host the World Cup, saying, "a distinction should be made that football is democratic, capitalism, whereas soccer is a European socialist [sport]" (Foer 2004).

While anti-soccer rhetoric is fairly common in the mass media, it seems clear that soccer is growing in popularity in some sectors of the American population. Soccer has long been the most popular youth participatory sport in the country with over 3.3 million children, ages 5–19, currently playing soccer in organized leagues alone (US Youth Soccer 2011). Thirty years after the first boom of American youth soccer, professional soccer is thriving as well. The national professional men's league, Major League Soccer (MLS), has grown to 18 teams, with over half of the teams playing in soccer-specific stadiums. Televised coverage of matches from the world's top domestic leagues in England, Spain, and Italy as well as international games have expanded dramatically in the past few years on prominent sports outlets such as ESPN and Fox Soccer Channel. And Americans are watching more soccer than ever. ESPN and ABC averaged 80 percent higher ratings per match for 2010 World Cup than in the 2006 World Cup. Both the US–England and US–Ghana matches drew over 17 million viewers, more than any single game of either the NBA or Stanley Cup Finals (Gregory 2010). When the American women's team reached the 2011 Women's World Cup Final, the match generated more tweets per second on Twitter than either the British royal wedding or the capture of Osama Bin Laden (Litke 2011).

Soccer, unlike football, basketball, and baseball, originated overseas. While earlier incarnations of the sport certainly existed, among the first formal organizations devoted to soccer was England's Football Association (The FA), which established the first comprehensive set of rules in 1863 (Bragg 2006). A former colony still taking many of its cultural cues from England, the United States very quickly adopted soccer, with Princeton University playing Rutgers University in a soccer match in 1869 using FA rules (Markovits and Hellerman 2001). However, like cricket, another British sport popular in the United States in the late 19th century, soccer failed to be adopted more widely at this stage in history. Crowded out by other sports, soccer has failed to become part of the United States' "hegemonic sports culture"—the sports that "dominate a country's emotional attachments" (Markovits and Hellerman 2001:10). Between 1985 and 2010, in Harris Interactive's annual poll of the American public's sports preferences, men's soccer was never selected by more than 4 percent as their favorite sport (2010).

In their study of the cultural diffusion of cricket, Kaufman and Patterson (2005) found that cricket became popular in the former British colonies where elites introduced, promoted, and continued to play the sport, "lending it their prestige by continuing to practice it themselves" (104). In some ways, soccer's recent success has followed precisely this path. As Andrews (1999) has documented, the popularity of soccer as a

structured youth participatory activity grew out of postwar suburbs. Prizing preparation for competitive college admissions, suburban parents prefer to enroll their children in soccer leagues, rather than allow for more unstructured playtime. For these parents, soccer offers a healthy, cooperative alternative to the "aggressive masculinity of American football" (1999:48). In many affluent suburbs, ensuring success by paying for soccer camps, travel teams, and expensive equipment are seen as an essential component of responsible parenting (Coakley 2009). Andrews (1999) argues that such expenditures, like having a child play on an elite soccer traveling team, which can cost as much as $3,000 to $4,500 per year, have become a new form of conspicuous consumption. But the preference for soccer is no longer exclusive to elite upper-middle-class suburbs. As people aspire to higher class status, participation in youth soccer is an important means of demonstrating their commitment to middle-class values and tastes. "No longer a 'mini-passion of suburban America' . . . youth soccer participation has emerged as a defining practice at the core of American life" (Andrews 1999:31).

Clearly, a sport that is widely popular among some Americans is also experienced as an imposition of tastes by others. What explains these conflicting views on soccer? While no systematic research to date has considered soccer attitudes directly, many commentators have attempted to explain "culture war" divisions in various ways.

The Culture Wars

In 1991, with the publication of his book, *Culture Wars: The Struggle to Define America*, James Davidson Hunter revived the phrase "culture wars" to describe what he saw as a growing polarization of Americans on an array of "hot-button" sociopolitical issues (e.g., abortion, drug legalization, separation of church and state, etc.). Divided not by race, class, education, or occupation, instead, Hunter argued, Americans were divided into two broad ideological worldviews: progressivism and orthodoxy. Though the two worldviews are founded on differing "interpretations of freedom and justice," the two warring parties express their differences through an ongoing contest over what "symbols" will dominate "American public culture" (135). Preferring country music to classical, vacationing in Branson instead of the Hamptons, or saying "Merry Christmas" in place of the more secular "Happy Holidays" could be symbolic battlegrounds for competing worldviews.

Contemporary versions of the "culture wars" argument articulated by both pundits on the Left and Right often take the form of the overly simplistic "red state, blue state" argument. Conservative *New York Times* columnist, David Brooks (2001), for example, depicts the United States as divided between Europe-worshipping, left-wing secularists and flag-waving, conservative Christian folk. In one knowingly exaggerated section, he writes:

> We in the coastal metro Blue areas read more books and attend more plays than the people in the Red heartland. We're more sophisticated and cosmopolitan. . . . But don't ask us, please, what life in Red America is like. . . . We don't know about Reba

or Travis . . . and some of us couldn't tell you the difference between a fundamentalist and an evangelical.

Implicit in Brooks' vivid, if misleading, portrait is the resentment he believes social conservatives feel toward the wealthy, educated liberal elites. Liberal author Frank (2005), for example, adopts a similar frame, adding only the spin that Republicans have tricked religious Middle Americans into adopting right-wing political views by casting the Democrats as anti-American elitists.

According to the logic of the "culture wars" argument, the conflicting attitudes over soccer are quite easily explained. Liberals with their ideology of Progressivism embrace the worldly, collectivist game of soccer, while the conservatives who hold an Orthodox worldview resist the insurgent game of soccer in favor of sports pioneered in the United States like baseball and American football. Indeed, some initial evidence from a National Media Research, Planning, and Placement (2010) poll suggests that MLS Cup viewers tend to skew Democratic. If true, we would expect to observe highly polarized soccer attitudes (i.e., bimodally rather than normally distributed) that are strongly correlated with political ideology.

On the other hand, it may be that America is not terribly divided at all. Many researchers have rejected the idea of polarization in contemporary American society altogether. In *Culture War? Myth of a Polarized America* (2010), Fiorina, Abrams, and Pope (2010) use polling data from the 2004 and 2008 elections to demonstrate that while an elite "political class" is polarized, the American public tends to be profoundly moderate and in agreement on most political issues. As sociologist Alan Wolfe said, when interviewed about his book *Moral Freedom* (2002) on National Public Radio (NPR), "I think the culture war is something that took place among intellectuals [and] the politically active interest groups that need to scare people to raise funds, whether from the left or right."

Politically moderate (and often apathetic), most Americans also generally share cultural preferences. Numerous studies have shown the tendency of wealthy Americans to engage in "high status" (e.g., opera and yachting) as well as "low status" (e.g., rock concerts and football games) activities (DiMaggio 1987; Peterson and Simkus 1992). Indeed, Peterson and Kern (1996) documented the growth of "cultural omnivores" in American society in which wealthy and poor alike enjoy the same food, activities, and films. Given the shared political views and preferences of many Americans, we might conclude that polarization is simply a mass media myth. If so, soccer attitudes would be fairly normally distributed with few differences based on political ideology.

Social Class and Sport

Many scholars have been skeptical of explanations that link cultural tastes to political preferences. Instead, the idea that social class explains both cultural divisions and political preferences is supported by much scholarly research. In Bourdieu's classic work *Distinction* (1984), he documents the importance of social class in defining cultural tastes as diverse as food, recreational activities, clothing, and music. Bourdieu

(1984) argues that one's social position is determined largely by the combination of economic capital (financial resources) and cultural capital (educated and statused social knowledge). Based on this social position, one has a set of dispositions that one shares with other similarly positioned people (i.e., *habitus*). For example, people with high cultural capital but relatively lower economic capital might be inclined to pursue intellectual or artistic careers and enjoy avant garde music, while those with high economic capital and lower cultural capital might prefer pricey sports cars and elite steakhouses. Bourdieu's model is by no means a deterministic one, but for him, social class plays an extremely important role in shaping all manner of attitudes and activities. Bourdieu (1978) specifically noted that the upper class tend to approach sports as an avenue for recreation and fitness, while the working class typically engage with sport as spectators.

Using Bourdieu's framework, Robson (2000) conducted ethnographic research examining supporters of Millwall Football Club (FC), an English professional soccer team. He found that through the culture of "Millwallism," supporters construct a shared class, gender, and national identity. The supporters use Millwall fandom as a space to express resentments over perceived threats to masculinity, the working class, and an ethnically homogenous England. Though American sports have, perhaps, a less tribal quality, even in the United States, one's cultural capital (education) and economic capital (income) clearly affect one's attitudes about sports.

More broadly, Fischer and Mattson (2009) have argued that the growing educational and income divides in American society have caused highly divergent "lifeways." Highly educated people now cluster in "vibrant metropolitan downtowns," while the less educated and poor tend to live in decaying "family-centered" suburbs (442). Similarly, culture war researchers have noted growing divides in musical tastes (Garcia-Alvarez, Katz-Gerro, and Lopez-Sintas 2007), food preferences (Johnston and Baumann 2007), and arts participation (Lopez-Sintas and Katz-Gerro 2005). However, these distinctions appear to be driven more by inequalities in education and income than political ideology or worldview.

Likewise, social class profoundly affects political attitudes. Gelman et al. (2007) demonstrate that in the 2004 Bush versus Kerry presidential election, contrary to the "NASCAR Republicans" image, wealthy Americans were much more likely to vote Republican than poorer voters, especially in the so-called "red states." Fiorina et al. (2010) compared the magnitude of the much-hyped religiosity voting cleavage (i.e., more religious people are more likely to vote for Republicans) with the income voting cleavage and found that class is a much stronger predictor of voting patterns than religion. Similarly, McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal (2008) have shown that the wealthiest quintile of Americans is twice as likely to identify as Republican as the lowest quintile.

With regards to soccer attitudes, it is possible that in the United States, soccer is seen as a sport of the affluent suburbs, popular among more educated people with higher incomes. In an almost perfect inversion of Robson's research on Millwall supporters, anti-soccer rhetoric offers working-class and less-educated Americans an opportunity to

express class-based grievances. Quite different from the "culture wars" theory, social class—not political ideology—is the essential dividing line in American society. If so, we would expect that when controlling for education and income, political ideology would not be a significant predictor of soccer attitudes.

Nationalism Meets Globalization

While it is cliché to note that globalization has profoundly reshaped the world's economy in the past 50 years, Globalization 2.0 (as distinct from the earlier globalized era of imperial conquest) is, in fact, a multidimensional process with political and cultural components as well (Friedman 2005). In economic terms, the supremacy of multinational corporations has led to the outsourcing of manufacturing jobs to developing nations, a system of international codependency, and the rapid rise of China as an economic power (Friedman 2005). Though the economies of wealthy *core* countries have benefited from the exploitation of *periphery* countries' natural resources and impoverished labor force (Wallerstein 1976), empirical studies suggest that it is *within* country inequalities that are growing at the fastest rate (Firebaugh 2006). Politically, the globalization of both war and trade has required the development of international law and court systems that supersede the sovereignty of nation-states. The United States' unilateral invasion of Iraq in 2004 was notable precisely because it violated the contemporary expectation of operating through intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) like the United Nations (UN), North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and/or the European Union (EU) (Anghie 2009). Culturally, globalization has brought a tremendous number of immigrant groups from the Global South to the United States, and with them, new foods, beliefs, and cultural practices. In such an age, challenges to traditional American culture and "American exceptionalism" abound. In many Western nations including the United States, the combination of growing *within* country inequalities and cultural change because of immigration have contributed to nativist, anti-immigrant sentiment and the growth of right-wing nationalist movements (Olzak 2004).

In *How Soccer Explains the World* (2004), Foer claims that the "culture wars" are driven not by social class or political persuasion but by the public's disagreement about globalization. As he writes, "Globalization increasingly provides the subtext for the American cultural split" (244). For Foer, the true divide behind the "culture wars" is a debate about protecting traditional American culture versus embracing cosmopolitanism. Such a disagreement may fall along partisan political lines, such as in the area of international courts where Democrats prefer international cooperation through IGOs, and Republican seek to protect the United States' freedom to act without restriction. Other times, the globalization debate may eschew such political divides, instead breaking along class lines, such as on the contentious issue of outsourcing jobs, which is overwhelmingly opposed by working-class people of all political persuasions. Given the complexity of globalization, we might find that a unionized Democratic auto worker and a wealthy Republican business executive would both feel some opposition to globalization. Though very different in class and political outlook, they would be united in seeking to defend American culture from the onslaught of globalization. Using Foer's

logic, both would also express some opposition toward soccer. By contrast, to the progressive, urban, cosmopolitan computer programmer, soccer might seem just as appealing as baseball.

In many ways, soccer offers an ideal case study in how the "culture wars" are driven by reactions to globalization. For the anti-soccer contingent, soccer represents a double threat of globalization, simultaneously European and Hispanic. With its best leagues located in Europe and many of the best players coming from South America, soccer is an import burdened by the dual threats of European politics and a growing American Hispanic population.

In dubbing soccer "socialist," "Left," and "European," the comments of Jack Kemp and others reveal that those who oppose soccer associate it with the more progressive politics and culture of Europe. In Glenn Beck's 2010 anti-soccer rant, he added, "Barack Obama's policies are the World Cup" (Hertzberg 2010). In Beck's analogy, like the World Cup, the United States will be just one among nations all governed by the same set of international laws, undermining America's freedom. Beck's tendency toward hyperbole and the melodramatic make him an extreme figure on the Right, but for those concerned with American sovereignty, soccer seems to conjure up images of a One World Government based on the European model of secular social democracy.

If soccer represents a threat from across the seas, it is also a warning sign of changes at home. In *Soccer against the Enemy* (2010), reporter Simon Kuper wrote, "When we say Americans don't play soccer, or that they celebrate Thanksgiving or come to Europe in tour groups, we are thinking of the big white people who live in American suburbs. Tens of millions of Hispanic Americans do play and watch and read about soccer" (191). When media commentators say that soccer is being forced on "us," they are quite clearly referring to white Americans and not Hispanics. Whether simple oversight or deliberate exclusion, much anti-soccer rhetoric marks people who like soccer as "the other." Indeed, much resistance to soccer seems to be a reaction to the culture of Hispanic Americans. This link was made plain in conservative Dan Gainor's anti-soccer rhetoric when he said that soccer was being pushed on schools and sold to the public because of "the browning of America" (Hertzberg 2010). In this way, the popularity of soccer is seen by some as a disturbing sign of growing influence that Hispanics exert on American culture.

According to Foer's argument, whether the threat is European or Hispanic culture, in both cases, anti-soccer attitudes are responses to larger concerns with globalization. For the average person who dislikes soccer, Foer says, the connection with globalization may not be a conscious one. Nonetheless, globalization, not soccer or political ideology, is the essential split behind the culture wars. If this is the case, we would expect that attitudes regarding globalization would be a better predictor of soccer attitudes than education, income, or political ideology.

Alternative Explanations

Attitudes about soccer and globalization may appear to be related only because both are affected by other social factors. Characteristics of individuals, their families, and their

communities could all play some role in shaping reactions to soccer and globalization, and therefore account for a spurious relationship between the two. Race and ethnicity, for example, appear to strongly shape attitudes about sports. According to a 2006 Pew Research study of the public's attitudes about sports, 24 percent of Hispanics named soccer as their favorite sport to watch as compared to only 1 percent of whites and 2 percent of blacks. The disproportionate preference for soccer among Hispanics likely stems from the popularity of soccer in Latin American countries and the many prominent Hispanic soccer stars. Similarly, we would suspect that people born in almost any country other than the United States would tend to express more enthusiasm for "the world's sport." With many Hispanics having recent immigrants in their families, it seems likely that they would tend to be supportive of globalization, particularly in its cultural manifestations.

Given the popularity of soccer as a recreational activity for women and the consistent success of the U.S. Women's soccer team since its founding in 1985, it stands to reason that soccer would be disproportionately favored by women. Past research on globalization attitudes reveals mixed responses from women. Though women tend to be more favorable than men to immigrants, numerous studies have consistently demonstrated that, even controlling for education and occupational status, women are more economically protectionist, opposing the expansion of foreign trade (Burgoon and Hiscox 2004) We would also expect that younger people, who grew up playing and/or watching soccer, would be more likely to have a positive attitude toward soccer than those who only became familiar with the sport later in life. Younger people have also been shown to be more accepting of the "liberalization of trade" and express more pro-immigrant attitudes (Scheve and Slaughter 2001).

As has so often been observed, soccer in the United States is largely played in organized leagues in suburban areas (Gems and Pfister 2009). As a sport so centered on families, it seems likely that married people and those with children in the home might be more positive about soccer. Though the sport has made significant inroads in expanding "urban soccer" in recent years, soccer continues to be less popular in rural areas (Gems and Pfister 2009). Likewise, more highly skilled workers and those living in urban environments with more frequent contact with immigrants tend to have more positive attitudes about economic and cultural globalization (Scheve and Slaughter 2001; Hoffman 2009).

Finally, the role of religion in public life has been cited as one of the key battleground in the "culture wars." On one hand, those who are more religious and have a more orthodox view of society would be more resistant to any change, including globalization or the mass introduction of soccer. On the other hand, many organized religions actively involve their adherents in charitable work that benefits the poor in other nations, which may lead to more positive views of soccer and some aspects of globalization. Therefore while it is possible that religiosity is associated with soccer and globalization attitudes, the hypothesized directions remain unclear. By controlling for religiosity and other important social factors, we are able to isolate the independent effect of globalization attitudes on soccer attitudes as a strategic inroad to better understanding the culture wars.

METHODS

Data and Sample

The data came from the 2010 NASIS, an omnibus quality-of-life survey conducted yearly with a representative sample of adult Nebraskans by the Bureau of Sociological Research (Bureau of Sociological Research 2011). The 2010 NASIS was conducted by mail using addresses for individuals age 19 and older with landline numbers published in Nebraska telephone directories. The surveys were mailed during the same week that the 2010 World Cup concluded; at this time of heightened awareness of soccer in the United States, we might be especially likely to find strong opinions on soccer among Nebraskans.

The sample size for the 2010 NASIS was 2,091 respondents with an overall response rate of 39.9 percent. The sample was moderately underrepresentative of younger people and males. Individual sample weights were used to produce a representative Nebraskan sample for statistical analyses. Our sample was restricted to respondents with valid answers on all three globalization attitude measures, which excluded 214 cases. Another 13 cases were lost, because they did not have valid responses to either soccer attitude measure, resulting in a final sample size of 1,864.

Variables

Soccer Attitudes

There were two dependent variables, *pro-soccer attitudes* and *anti-soccer attitudes*. Pro-soccer attitudes was a two-item scale made up of the following statements to which respondents could 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*: "I enjoy playing in or watching soccer matches" and "I would encourage my children to play youth soccer." The scale had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.68. Anti-soccer attitudes was measured by one item to which respondents could also 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*: "Compared to sports like football and baseball, soccer is 'un-American.'" Pro-soccer attitudes and anti-soccer attitudes are moderately correlated ($r = -0.40$, $p < 0.001$; see Table 1), but reliability analyses revealed that they did not in combination measure a single underlying dimension of soccer sentiment.

Globalization Attitudes

There were three central independent variables concerning attitudes about *economic globalization*, *political globalization*, and *cultural globalization*. Respondents were asked to 1 = *strongly agree* to 5 = *strongly disagree* with the following statements, which represent, respectively, economic, political, and cultural dimensions of globalization: "Sending American manufacturing jobs to other countries harms the U.S. economy," "International laws undermine America's ability to protect its national interests," and "American culture is strengthened by the values and traditions that new immigrants bring here." Cultural globalization was reverse coded so that higher scores represented more pro-globalization attitudes on all three measures. As with soccer attitudes, the globalization variables are significantly correlated ($r = 0.17$ to 0.31, $p < 0.001$; see

TABLE 1. Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations for All Variables[a]

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Pro-soccer attitudes		−.40***	.07***	.08***	.21***	.13***	.08***	−.01	−.12***	.06***	−.04*
2. Anti-soccer attitudes			−.05**	−.19***	−.23***	−.20***	−.12***	−.03	.19***	.02	.02
3. Pro-economic globalization				.31***	.17***	.14***	.05**	−.01	−.07***	−.00	−.07***
4. Pro-political globalization					.31***	.23***	.09***	.01	−.27***	−.04*	−.12***
5. Pro-cultural globalization						.21***	.10***	−.07***	−.32***	−.02	−.09***
6. Education							.47***	.03	−.08***	.13***	−.21***
7. Income								.06**	.03	.05**	−.26***
8. White									.00	.01	.06**
9. Political ideology										.28***	.10***
10. Religiosity											.12***
11. Age											
Mean (or proportion)	3.12	2.16	1.59	2.44	2.87	3.98	9.04	.95	3.38	5.14	56.30
SD	.89	.97	.86	.97	1.11	1.42	2.82	—	.90	2.12	15.04
N	1,861	1,851	1,864	1,864	1,864	1,834	1,686	1,841	1,785	1,750	1,587
	12	**13**	**14**	**15**	**16**	**17**	**18**	**19**	**20**	**21**	**22**
1. Pro-soccer attitudes	−.04*	.02	−.05**	.02	.00	−.00	.10***	−.06**	.05**	.03	.08***
2. Anti-soccer attitudes	.15***	−.05**	.06***	.00	.03	.00	−.01	.12***	−.14***	.05**	−.17***
3. Pro-economic globalization	.01	−.03	.00	.01	.02	.02	.10***	−.07***	.06**	.06***	.12***
4. Pro-political globalization	−.04*	−.04*	.07***	−.01	−.01	.03	.05**	−.05**	.03*	.04*	.11***
5. Pro-cultural globalization	−.01	−.01	.03	−.00	−.01	−.01	.07***	−.12***	.09***	.13***	.19***
6. Education	.06**	.16***	−.03	−.08**	−.13***	−.03	.16***	−.15***	.15***	−.01	.22***
7. Income	.08***	.42***	−.16***	−.25***	−.26***	−.07***	.20***	−.08***	.08***	−.02	.23***
8. White	−.01	.04*	−.04*	−.02	−.00	−.02	−.03	.14***	−.07***	−.26***	−.03
9. Political ideology	.14***	.12***	−.08***	−.06***	.00	−.09***	−.01	.04*	−.03*	−.04*	−.13***
10. Religiosity	−.01	.13***	−.07***	−.14***	.07***	−.11***	.04*	−.01	.02	−.02	−.08***
11. Age	.15***	−.04*	−.20***	.01	.32***	−.12***	−.59***	.01	−.00	−.04*	−.12***
12. Male		.11***	.04*	−.08***	−.13***	−.01	−.11***	−.03	.03	.00	.02
13. Married			−.46***	−.53***	−.51***	−.28***	.15***	−.06**	.05**	.02	−.01
14. Never married				−.07***	−.07***	−.04*	−.07***	.05**	−.05**	−.01	.01
15. Divorced					−.08***	−.04**	−.06***	.02	−.02	−.00	.04*
16. Widowed						−.04*	−.14***	.02	−.02	.00	−.02
17. Cohabiting							.03	.01	−.01	−.02	−.02
18. Children in home								−.04*	.03	.05**	.10***
19. Born in Nebraska									−.96***	−.19***	−.18***
20. Born in U.S. state										−.09***	.17***
21. Born in a foreign country											.07*
22. Urban											
Mean (or proportion)	.39	.78	.06	.07	.07	.02	.31	.66	.32	.02	.50
SD	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
N	1,648	1,845	1,845	1,845	1,845	1,845	1,864	1,853	1,853	1,853	1,864

[a]Sample sizes are unweighted; means, standard deviations, and correlations are weighted.

*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001 (two-tailed).

Table 1) but do not form a single underlying globalization construct; rather, they seem to assess different attitudinal dimensions concerning globalization.

Controls

Education was an ordinal variable that measured respondents' highest degree obtained, from 1 = *no diploma* to 6 = *graduate degree*. *Income* was an ordinal variable that measured respondents' annual family income, from 1 = *less than $5,000* to 12 = *$100,000 or more*. Race was a categorical variable measured as *white* (=1) or non-white. *Political ideology* was an ordinal variable that ranged from 1 = *very liberal* to 5 = *very conservative*. *Religiosity* was an ordinal variable that measured how often respondents attend religious services, from 1 = *never* to 8 = *several times a week*. *Age* was an interval variable measured in years. *Gender* was a categorical variable measures as *male* (=1) or *female*. *Marital status* was measured as a set of dummy variables that included *married* (reference), *never married*, *divorced*, *widowed*, and *cohabiting*. *Children in home* (=1) assessed whether respondents were currently living with at least one child under age 18. Nativity was a categorical variable with three groups: *born in Nebraska* (reference), *born in another U.S. state*, and *born in a foreign country*. Using respondents' zip codes and the metropolitan statistical area designation from the U.S. Census (U.S. Census Bureau 2011), a categorical variable was created that measured whether respondents resided in *urban* (=1) versus nonurban areas. For complete descriptive statistics, see Table 1.

Analytic Strategy

To examine whether Nebraskans are polarized in their attitudes toward soccer and globalization, we first computed frequency distributions for these central variables. To assess the relationships among soccer attitudes and globalization attitudes, we conducted separate multivariate ordinary least squares (OLS) regression analyses on both dependent variables in two steps. First, the dependent variable was regressed on all three globalization measures simultaneously. Second, control variables were added to determine if the relationships among the soccer and globalization measures observed in the first step were spurious. To address the possibility that the slight skew of the dependent variables may influence the OLS results, we also estimated ordered logit models. These results were nearly substantively identical to the OLS models. We report the OLS analyses rather than the ordered logit models for two reasons. First, the OLS models are more easily interpretable, and second, because one of our research goals was to compare the relative strength of the independent variables in the model, standardized betas provided by OLS regression are essential output in our models. Full results of the ordered logit models are available from the authors upon request.

Missing data on control variables were minimal with the exception of income (9.5 percent), age (16.4 percent), and gender (11.6 percent; see Table 1). In the regression models, we included dummy missing indicators for all variables with missing data. In addition, we imputed the mean for missing cases on ordinal and interval variables. With a few exceptions detailed in the results, the coefficients of the missing indicators were not statistically significant, and are therefore not shown in the tables.

To address the possibility of our missing data method producing biased results (Allison 2001), we conducted two additional sets of analyses. First, we produced regression models that employed list-wise deletion, which reduced the sample sizes to 1,286 (for pro-soccer attitudes as the dependent variable) and 1,280 (for anti-soccer attitudes). The results of these models were substantively identical to the models that included missing indicators. Second, we utilized the ICE command in *Stata* to conduct a multiple imputation analysis with 10 data sets. Again, results were substantively identical, with slightly lower levels of statistical significance for a few variables (but none that became nonsignificant). Although multiple imputation is the preferred method to deal with missing data, we did not report these results in the tables, because the ICE command does not produce standardized betas, whereas the missing indicator analysis does. Full results of the list-wise deletion and multiple imputation regression analyses are available from the authors upon request.

RESULTS

Descriptive statistics and correlations for all variables in the study are reported in Table 1. Pro-soccer attitudes and anti-soccer attitudes were moderately negatively correlated, as expected. Political globalization was positively and moderately associated with the other two measures of globalization attitudes, but economic and cultural globalization attitudes were only weakly correlated. Associations among soccer attitudes and globalization attitudes were all statistically significant in expected directions. The more positively Nebraskans felt about all three measures of globalization, the greater their pro-soccer attitudes and the lower their anti-soccer attitudes. The control variables were also correlated with the attitudinal variables and among themselves in expected directions.

The frequencies and percentages displayed in Table 2 reveal some diversity among Nebraskans in their attitudes toward soccer but no particularly strong patterns of polarization. In terms of pro-soccer attitudes, responses were diverse on the first item; about one fifth of the sample enjoyed playing or watching soccer, while over 4 in 10 respondents did not. Respondents were more homogenous and positive concerning encouraging their children to play soccer, with over half of the sample agreeing they would do so, and only about 1 in 10 indicating they would not. Over one third of the sample was neutral on both pro-soccer items. Regarding anti-soccer attitudes, there was a great deal of consensus; roughly 8 percent of respondents believed that soccer is "un-American," while nearly 55 percent disagreed with this notion, and 27 percent remained neutral. In general, Nebraskans appear somewhat disinterested in soccer but do not harbor strong feelings that their children should not play the sport or that it is "un-American."

Table 2 also shows that the sample was more divided about certain aspects of globalization than others. Respondents were united in their strong opposition to economic globalization, with nearly 90 percent agreeing that sending American manufacturing jobs to other countries is harmful to the U.S. economy. There was also some consensus

TABLE 2. Frequencies for Soccer and Globalization Attitudes

	Enjoy playing or watching soccer[a]		Encourage kids to play soccer[b]		Soccer is "un-American"[c]		Sending jobs overseas harms U.S. economy[d]		International laws bad for U.S. interests[e]		Immigrants good for U.S. culture[f]	
	f	percent	f	percent	f	percent	f	percent	f	percent	f	percent
Strongly agree	80	4.3	240	13.2	42	2.3	1,078	57.8	352	18.9	116	6.2
Agree	329	17.8	780	42.9	104	5.6	584	31.3	589	31.6	443	23.8
Neither agree nor disagree	672	36.3	615	33.8	505	27.3	117	6.3	696	37.3	587	31.5
Disagree	473	25.6	119	6.5	692	37.4	58	3.1	196	10.5	481	25.8
Strongly disagree	297	16.0	66	3.6	508	27.4	27	1.4	31	1.7	237	12.7
Total	1,851	100.0	1,820	100.0	1,851	100.0	1,864	100.0	1,864	100.0	1,864	100.0

[a]I enjoy playing in or watching soccer matches.
[b]I would encourage my children to play youth soccer.
[c]Compared to sports like football and baseball, soccer is "un-American."
[d]Sending American manufacturing jobs to other countries harms the U.S. economy.
[e]International laws undermine America's ability to protect its national interests.
[f]American culture is strengthened by the values and traditions that new immigrants bring here.

TABLE 3. Regression of Pro-Soccer Attitudes on Globalization Attitudes

	Model 1			Model 2		
	B	SE	β	B	SE	β
Pro-economic globalization	.04*	.02	.04	.03	.02	.03
Pro-political globalization	.01	.02	.01	−.02	.02	−.02
Pro-cultural globalization	.16***	.01	.20	.13***	.02	.16
Education	—	—	—	.04**	.01	.06
Income	—	—	—	.01	.01	.03
White	—	—	—	−.00	.07	−.00
Political ideology	—	—	—	−.09***	.02	−.09
Religiosity	—	—	—	.03***	.01	.07
Age	—	—	—	.00	.00	.03
Male	—	—	—	−.05	.03	−.03
Married	—	—	—	—	—	—
Never married	—	—	—	−.12	.07	−.03
Divorced	—	—	—	.11	.06	.03
Widowed	—	—	—	.05	.06	.01
Cohabiting	—	—	—	.03	.11	.01
Children in home	—	—	—	.15***	.04	.08
Born in Nebraska	—	—	—	—	—	—
Born in a U.S. state	—	—	—	.03	.03	.01
Born in a foreign country	—	—	—	.05	.12	.01
Urban	—	—	—	.03	.03	.02
Intercept	2.62***	.06	—	2.48***	.16	—
R^2	.04			.07		

N = 1,861.
*$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$ (two-tailed).

that international laws undermine U.S. political interests; half of the respondents agreed to this statement, while only 12 percent disagreed. The greatest diversity of responses was seen with cultural globalization. Just under one third of the sample believed that immigrants bring positive values and traditions to the United States, while just over one third disagreed, and nearly one third were neutral. Overall, Nebraskans seem skeptical of globalization when it comes to American economic or political concerns but are split over the benefits of immigration for American culture.

Model 1 of Table 3 shows that respondents' positive attitudes toward economic and cultural globalization were positively related to pro-soccer attitudes. The cultural globalization variable was highly significant, and its standardized beta was about five times as large as that of economic globalization. When controls were added in model 2, the economic globalization coefficient was reduced to nonsignificance. In contrast, the size of the cultural globalization coefficient declined by less than one fourth and remained highly significant. In regard to the control variables, respondents with more education, who attended religious service more often, and who lived with minor children held more positive soccer attitudes, while a more conservative political ideology was negatively

TABLE 4. Regression of Anti-Soccer Attitudes on Globalization Attitudes

	Model 1			Model 2		
	B	SE	β	B	SE	β
Pro-economic globalization	.02	.02	.02	.03	.02	.03
Pro-political globalization	–.13***	.02	–.13	–.09***	.02	–.09
Pro-cultural globalization	–.17***	.02	–.20	–.13***	.02	–.15
Education	—	—	—	–.07***	.01	–.11
Income[a]	—	—	—	–.01	.01	–.03
White	—	—	—	–.09	.08	–.02
Political ideology	—	—	—	.09***	.02	.08
Religiosity	—	—	—	.00	.01	.01
Age	—	—	—	–.00	.00	–.05
Male[b]	—	—	—	.32***	.04	.16
Married[c]	—	—	—	—	—	—
Never married	—	—	—	.26***	.07	.06
Divorced	—	—	—	.06	.06	.02
Widowed	—	—	—	.14*	.07	.04
Cohabiting	—	—	—	.03	.11	.01
Children in home	—	—	—	.07	.04	.03
Born in Nebraska	—	—	—	—	—	—
Born in a U.S. state	—	—	—	–.17***	.03	–.08
Born in a foreign country	—	—	—	.49***	.12	.07
Urban	—	—	—	–.18***	.03	–.09
Intercept	2.93***	.06	—	2.98***	.20	—
R^2	.07			.16		

[a]Missing indicator significant (B = .16, p = .004).
[b]Missing indicator significant (B = .33, p < .001).
[c]Missing indicator significant (B = -.53, p = .009).
N = 1,851.
*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001 (two-tailed).

associated with pro-soccer attitudes. The standardized betas in model 2 indicate that cultural globalization attitudes are nearly twice as strong a predictor as any other variable in the model, including education and political ideology. Overall, Nebraskans who felt more positively about cultural globalization in the form of immigration were much more likely to express pro-soccer attitudes.

In model 1 of Table 4, both political and cultural globalization attitudes were highly significant negative predictors of anti-soccer attitudes. In model 2, which includes controls, the two predictors become slightly weaker but remain highly significant; the more positively respondents felt about political and cultural globalization, the less likely they were to harbor feelings about soccer being "un-American." Education, being born in another U.S. state (compared to being born in Nebraska) and living in an urban area are negatively related to anti-soccer attitudes. Conservative political ideology, being male, being never married and being widowed (compared to being married), and being

born in a foreign country (compared to being born in Nebraska) were positively associated with believing that soccer is an "un-American" sport. Missing indicators for income, gender, and marital status were significant, so the coefficients for these variables should be interpreted with some caution.

According to the standardized betas, the cultural globalization variable is a stronger predictor than every other variable in the model except gender. Political globalization is approximately as strong a predictor of anti-soccer attitudes as education, political ideology, nativity, and urbanicity. Overall, the results suggest that globalization attitudes are important predictors of anti-soccer attitudes, in that Nebraskans who are suspicious of international laws and foreign immigration are more likely to believe that soccer is an "un-American" sport.

DISCUSSION

Our results indicate that Nebraskans are fairly moderate when it comes to soccer. Most respondents do not enjoy watching or playing soccer themselves, but the majority would encourage their children to play it, and only a small minority views it as "un-American." Though hardly polarizing, soccer is clearly more popular with some groups than others. More educated and politically liberal people expressed more favorable attitudes about soccer. Men and rural respondents were far more likely to view the sport as "un-American." Still, attitudes about cultural globalization were consistently the best predictor of one's feelings about soccer. In this section, we consider the implications of these results for ongoing debates about the culture wars and globalization, discuss some limitations of our study, and consider the future of soccer in America.

Does Soccer Explain the World?

The current study was animated, in part, by Franklin Foer's (2004) polemical claim that "soccer explains the American culture wars" (235). He argues that the "culture wars" over tastes, traditions, and family values are driven by the public's competing responses to globalization rather than either political ideology or class distinctions. In many ways, our findings validated Foer's claims. Cultural globalization ("American culture is strengthened by the values and traditions that new immigrants bring here") was the best predictor of pro-soccer attitudes and second only to gender in the magnitude of its effect on anti-soccer sentiment. Those who believe that immigrants improve American society were far more positive about soccer. Likewise, opposition to political globalization ("International laws undermine America's ability to protect its national interests") proved to be a significant predictor of anti-soccer attitudes. Taken together, these findings strongly suggest that those with a cosmopolitan perspective on cultural and political globalization are more open-minded to soccer.

On the other hand, attitudes about political globalization had no significant effect on pro-soccer attitudes, and economic globalization ("sending American manufacturing jobs to other countries harms the U.S. economy") was not a significant predictor of either measure of soccer sentiment. One possible explanation for the lack of an effect of

economic globalization on soccer attitudes has to do with the astonishing consensus on that measure. Nearly 90 percent of the sample agreed that the globalization of manufacturing jobs hurts the U.S. economy, leaving little variation to distinguish between potential supporters and opponents of economic globalization. Another possibility is that the political and economic components of globalization do not stimulate the kind of culture wars resentment wrought by cultural globalization. Either way, the results clearly indicate that at least one component of globalization is the most consistent predictor of one's stance in the culture wars debate over soccer. With regard to soccer at a minimum, Foer's assessment of the driving forces of the culture wars appears correct.

A few other findings are worth noting. Though gender did not affect positive attitudes about soccer, the best predictor of seeing soccer as "un-American" was being male. In other words, while women were not any more positive about soccer than men, they were less likely to see it as outside the American sports tradition, perhaps because it represents a prominent venue for women's athletics. Controlling for globalization attitudes, religious people were significantly more likely to be positive about soccer but were no less likely to see soccer as "un-American." That religious people would like soccer clearly runs counter to the accepted culture wars idea that people of faith cling to the traditional. After controlling for conservative political ideology, which is moderately correlated with religiosity, it is possible that the aspects of religion that encourage unity and tolerance help religious people hold more positive views of activities that are often associated with other cultures. Another surprising finding was that those respondents born in a foreign country were *more* likely to identify soccer as "un-American." It seems unlikely this finding is because of foreign-born people having hostility to soccer. Instead, foreign-born people may be especially likely to notice American resistance to soccer; labeling soccer "un-American" may enhance the pride they feel in their cultural heritage, or it may simply be a neutral assessment of what they see as empirical reality. Nonetheless, given the small number of foreign-born respondents, caution should be taken not to overstate the importance of this finding.

Understanding the Culture Wars

If the case study of soccer is at all indicative of the dynamics of other culture wars conflicts, cultural globalization is a much more important cleavage than is usually considered. Previous commentators have envisioned the culture war as a conflict between competing political ideologies (Hunter 1991), while others argue that social class distinctions fuel cultural clashes (Bourdieu 1984). Though these explanations are clearly secondary to the impact of globalization, we found limited support for both understandings. Independent of any globalization sentiment, more politically conservative respondents were significantly more negative about soccer on both dependent measures. This finding may lend some support to the popular idea that liberals like soccer and conservatives prefer football or baseball (Hunter 1991; Brooks 2001). Though it is purely speculative, it is possible that some of the conservatives in the sample may be

echoing the anti-soccer rhetoric of right-wing media outlets. Or, quite apart from their views on globalization, liberals might prefer soccer as a less violent and dangerous alternative to football.

Education also had a significant effect on both measures of soccer sentiment, while income was nonsignificant in both cases. Bourdieu (1978) argued that one's social position in a class society greatly shapes our relationship with sport. Given the nonsignificance of income, it does not appear that one's economic capital affects attitudes about soccer; however, the missing dummy for income is significant in the anti-soccer attitudes model, indicating that the influence of income may be underestimated, especially if the data are not missing at random (i.e., wealthier respondents are less likely to report their income). Though soccer is beloved by poor people throughout the world, in the United States, appreciation for the sport usually has to be cultivated. An appreciation for soccer may be a type of cultural capital acquired through school soccer programs, study abroad experiences, or encounters with cultural elites. In reality, political ideology, education, and attitudes regarding globalization mix with factors like one's gender, area of residence, and the presence of children in the home to influence the individual's feelings about soccer.

Despite these cleavages in soccer attitudes, our study also casts doubts on some of the more outlandish claims of the culture wars. The language of a culture *war* conjures images of hostility, strife, and marked polarization, but empirical evidence suggests otherwise. Fiorina et al. (2010) have quantitatively demonstrated that on a huge range of issues, including contentious ones like abortion or gay marriage, most Americans are quite moderate. Instead, they argue it is political elites who are polarized. To use Fiorina and his colleagues' terms, rather than being "deeply divided" with responses concentrated in the "strongly agree" and "strongly disagree" categories, the respondents' attitudes toward soccer and globalization were "closely divided," forming more bell-shaped than bimodal distributions. Even given a potentially divisive question like whether immigrants are good for U.S. culture, over 80 percent of our sample selected one of the middle three categories. It is quite possible that the remaining 20 percent include highly vocal advocates for and opponents of soccer whose intensity and volume create the appearance of widespread disagreement. However, our results indicate that most of the public is not engaged in a highly polarized culture war.

Soccer Night in America

For a brief time in the mid-1970s, Americans were enthralled with soccer. With the signing of global superstars Pele and Franz Beckenbauer to the New York Cosmos, the fledgling North American Soccer League (NASL) was able to ink television contracts with CBS and ABC while often filling the stadiums of their 24 teams. By 1979, ABC averaged a 2.7 rating or about 2 million homes for its NASL game coverage. Meanwhile, in that year, the Cosmos averaged over 46,690 fans in attendance at games and had several games with crowds in excess of 70,000 (Newsham 2006). Unfortunately, as the big name players retired and crowds for teams in smaller markets dwindled, NASL contracted to nine teams and folded in 1984.

Hope for soccer in America was born anew on Independence Day in 1988 when FIFA announced that the United States would host the 1994 World Cup. Careful to avoid NASL's mistakes, MLS, a new domestic league, played its first season in 1996. Since then, MLS has developed into a stable league with 18 teams and televised coverage on multiple channels. At the same time, recreational soccer has continued to expand and television coverage of international soccer has become more readily available.

Today, soccer is more popular in America than ever before, and the results of our study suggest that it is only likely to grow. Our findings suggest that cultural globalization and education are two of the stronger predictors of viewing soccer positively. With increased rates of college attendance, we would expect to see more positive attitudes about soccer and less anti-soccer sentiment. More importantly, as the population of Hispanic Americans grows, we anticipate change in two important ways. First, though our sample of Hispanics was too small to study in a meaningful way, past research clearly demonstrates the popularity of soccer among Hispanics (Pew Research Center 2006). With over 50 million and growing Hispanics in the United States, it seems likely that both participation in recreational soccer and viewing of televised matches will increase. Past research also indicates that those living in closer contact with immigrants have a more positive view of them (Hoffman 2009). With a larger population of Hispanics, the public's level of comfort with cultural globalization may increase, thus, increasing interest in soccer as well. However, we also suspect that for those who remain opposed to cultural globalization, soccer will likely continue to be a powerful symbol of what they see as disturbing changes.

Limitations

An obvious limitation in our study is that our sample is representative of Nebraskans age 19 and older, not all American adults; therefore, caution must be taken in generalizing the results of this study to the population of the United States. Future research that examines the links between globalization and the "culture wars" would do well to use a nationally representative sample. Nonetheless, Nebraska should not be considered drastically different from the rest of the country when it comes to attitudes about soccer and globalization. With over 30,000 registered members in the state soccer association (Nebraska State Soccer Association 2011), the rise of soccer's popularity in Nebraska mirrors that of the nation as a whole, despite the powerful influence a more traditional sports culture based largely around high school and college football. In regard to globalization, Nebraska continues to experience both the positive and negative effects of a "flattened" world. On one hand, manufacturing jobs continue to be outsourced, and immigration is continually debated in the public sphere. On the other hand, some Nebraskans, especially those living in major metropolitan areas, have benefited greatly from new economic and cultural opportunities that globalization offers. Finally, "heartland" states such as Nebraska have been cited by many commentators as central battlegrounds for the "culture wars" (e.g., Frank 2005).

Because of space constraints in the survey, a secondary limitation in our data is that the measures of soccer and globalization attitudes consisted of only three questions each. Future researchers in this area should look to multiple-item scales to assess pro- and anti-soccer feelings, as well attitudes toward various dimensions of globalization. Nonetheless, we were able to form a reliable scale for pro-soccer attitudes using two items, and this scale was moderately and negatively correlated with anti-soccer attitudes, as expected. Likewise, the three globalization measures were positively but not strongly correlated with one another, indicating that they measured related but distinct aspects of globalization, as intended.

Finally, our data were cross-sectional, so we cannot assert that attitudes toward globalization are the *cause* of feelings about soccer. We do, however, demonstrate a highly significant and relatively strong relationship between soccer sentiment and globalization attitudes, even after controlling for an extensive set of theoretically relevant social characteristics, none of which account for this relationship. Future longitudinal research that examines the relationship between *changes* in attitudes toward soccer and globalization could provide a more powerful test of the causal association.

CONCLUSION

Using data from a state-level survey of Nebraskans, the current research examined the "culture wars" through the lens of attitudes about soccer. Contrary to the claims of some prominent pundits, attitudes about globalization and soccer were not polarized. Instead, the majority of respondents were moderate in their responses, neither terribly interested in soccer nor hostile to it. Similarly, attitudes about political and cultural globalization were fairly normally distributed. In fact, on the one issue where most respondents were impassioned—opposition to the outsourcing of manufacturing jobs—there was remarkable consensus. This study also examined the underlying causes of the culture war conflicts using the case of soccer attitudes. Both education and political ideology were significant predictors of our two measures of soccer sentiment. Supporting Franklin Foer's claim that responses to globalization fuel the culture war, one's views on cultural globalization (i.e., the cultural contributions of immigrants) were the most consistent predictor of soccer attitudes.

While the state-level data limits our ability to generalize these findings to the American public, this research innovates in a few important directions. First, it considers the previously unexamined topic of attitudes toward soccer, an increasingly popular sport in the United States. Second, it tests the validity of the hypothesis that the culture wars are driven by divided responses to globalization advanced in Foer's widely read book *How Soccer Explains the World*. Finally, by comparing Foer's view to competing explanations for the culture wars, we develop a better understanding of contentious rhetoric in American society. In sum, our findings suggest that soccer attitudes—and, thus, the culture wars—are best understood not as a product of class divisions or political fissures, but as a reaction to profound cultural transformations brought about by globalization.

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