DUŠKO BAŠIĆ

The United Nations of Football

South-South Migration, Transnational Ties and Denationalization in the National Football Teams of Equatorial Guinea and Togo

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Editor's Preface

The United Nations of Football engages with contemporary developments in professional football, in particular the recruitment of international players in national football teams. It scrutinizes these developments in view of South-South mobility, international football politics, and the players' sense of identity and belonging. The study is based on a critical engagement with relevant theoretical approaches in the fields of international migration and the anthropology of football and combines it with empirical data derived from multi-sited fieldwork in Brazil and in social media networks.

The study, supervised by Prof. Michaela Pelican, makes a valid contribution to the debate about the role of the nation state in contemporary identity politics in the field of football migration. It stands out by its effort to integrate the perspectives of international institutions (FIFA), national governments and, importantly, individual players. Moreover, the study sheds light on a regional trajectory (Latin America – Africa) that, so far, has been neglected in studies on football or migration. Moreover, it illustrates the limits of classical anthropological fieldwork and attests to the need for innovative methodological approaches to studying mobile subjects in a highly mobile world.

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Contents

1. Introduction

The title of the present paper is derived from a radio interview with the head coach of the national football team of DR Congo, Claude Leroy. In the interview, he refers to the Equatorial Guinean national football team *Nzalang Nacional* as "the United Nations of Football" due to its current practice of naturalizing players from other countries (radiookapi.net, 2012). In this respect, Leroy assumes a critical standpoint[1]. This standpoint will not be reproduced in this text. The author of the study wishes to remain as neutral as possible.

The main theoretical frameworks relevant for this study – denationalization, international football migration, FIFA as a world-governing body and its legal rules, and finally transnationalism – will be presented in consecutive order. In terms of case studies, both men's and women's teams football will be considered.

The present paper scrutinizes the transfer[2] of professional Brazilian footballers to Togo and Equatorial Guinea in order to perform for the respective national teams. Although the study is within football research, it is placed in the field of international migration and mobility rather than the anthropology of sports. Migration research is an enormous field that embraces virtually all social sciences. In spite of its prominence – some would argue, precisely because of it – there is little agreement and no consensus on what migration in contrast to mobility actually means (Biddle & Yap, 2006).

Moreover, *The United Nations of Football* investigates how the players themselves associate meanings with their new circumstances from an emic perspective and thus assumes a cultural anthropological approach. The following questions, inter alia, will be considered: Why are Brazilian footballers from a lower professional tier called to defend national teams in Africa? How exactly did the opportunity arise, did the "mechanics" work? Was a relationship between Western Africa and the athletes' biographies established prior to the invitation? What was the prime motivation to represent a largely unknown African nation – financial benefits, professionalism or the opportunity to have an international career, play at a future World Cup? How did the footballers think and feel about football there (the country, and society at large?). Did their perspectives change over the course of time? Were there any special, memorable moments? On a more general level, what are the most significant issues

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[1] Literally: "La Guinée Equatoriale est devenue les nations unies du football. Et pour le football africain, je ne pense pas que ça soit une bonne chose de donner des naturalisations comme ça à tous vents."
[2] Instead of migration, I prefer the more general term "transfer" in this context.

the footballers have to face? Are there other clues and hints that would make future research promising?

We may ask why a master student of cultural anthropology would deal with such a seemingly marginal phenomenon and what insights could be derived that are applicable beyond the specific case studies. On a theoretical level, The *United Nations of Football* engages with current models of denationalization, as developed by geographers, economists, and, to a lesser extent, sociologists (e.g. Sassen, 1991, 2003; Poli, 2007). In essence, denationalization implies the increasing de-ethnicization of the nation state model and the geographic deterritorialization of fan communities, and is predetermined by globalization and migratory flows (Poli, 2007). In this paper, I wish to critically engage with and further develop the notion of denationalization by adding another perspective that, so far, has largely been neglected – the perspective of the players. While acknowledging the usefulness and validity of structural analyses that focus on economic and political structures, we also have to acknowledge the footballers as actors in their own right. Since this is precisely what ethnographic fieldwork can render (Ungruhe, 2013), *The United Nations of Football* is making a contribution to filling this gap. Moreover, the study of ethnicity, nationality and thus de-ethnicization has always been among the core domains of social and cultural anthropology.

Based on my case material, I will argue that one must be careful with using the notion of de-ethnicization when discussing the individual agency and emic perspectives of the players. Albeit numerous ethnicities[3] are present in the Equatorial Guinean national team, ethnic identity and self-ascription of the footballers remain stable and are not bound to imminent dissolution, as the *de* in 'de-ethnicization' might imply. That is why I propose the concept of multi-ethnicization rather than de-ethnicization to describe this ongoing social phenomenon inside the national sport teams of Togo, Equatorial Guinea and elsewhere. In other words: the denationalization of the nation (Poli, 2007) is paralleled by a multinationalization of the national team.

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[3] Next to players of various Guinean ethnicities and Brazilians, also Burkinabe, Cameroonians, Colombians, Congolese, Ghanaians, Ivorians, Liberians, Malians, Nigerians, and Spaniards, although to a much lesser extent.

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2. Methodology

The methodological difficulties I had to face can be explained by simply taking a look at a map: one sees Brazil and Equatorial Guinea, two countries on two different continents, separated by the vast Atlantic Ocean[4]. In my case, hence, traditional stationary fieldwork in one location alone would not have sufficed to harvest results. However, I did not want to abdicate an interesting topic only because it could not be reconciled with a standard M.A. curriculum. Due to time and financial reasons, I had to look for alternative methodological input[5].

The United Nations of Football moves from a conventional single-site location to multiple sites of observation and participation (Equatorial Guinea, the various locales in Brazil and Europe where my potential informants live and work, etc.). It follows intercontinental connections, associations and relationships that from the perspective of stationary fieldwork would appear as "worlds apart" (Marcus, 1995). Furthermore, it cross-cuts dichotomies such as "the local", "global", and/or "regional", it is *local* almost circumstantially: my informants are members of an extremely mobile population[6] and rarely stay in one place longer than a football season. In other words, the object of the study is ultimately mobile and multiply situated. For these and other reasons I found some guidance in the concepts and methods outlined in Marcus' instructive paper *Ethnography in/of the World System: the Emergence of Multi-Sited Ethnography (1995).*

The present ethnography borrows from Marcus in that it employs two modes of technique, first following the people and second their lives or biographies through a "diffuse time-space" (Marcus, ibid). Apart from a six-week stay in Florianópolis, Southern Brazil, where I was in contact with a group of experts and tried to get a feel for the country[7] where all my informants were born and lived most of their lives, the fieldwork was highly interdisciplinary in terms of methodology, including media content analysis (radio, video and print interviews, as well as social media, such as Facebook and Twitter)*,* research in online archives, and historical reconstruction[8]. I was in closer contact with a sports journalist from Chapecó (and

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[4] Some of the people I encountered during my fieldwork asked me whether I would subsequently also travel to Equatorial Guinea to further pursue my studies. In the frame of our CEA master program at the University of Cologne, one fieldwork of roughly six weeks is scheduled. Most African students combine the fieldwork with their home trip that is included in the scholarship. The others either have to find alternative sources of funding or pay the expenses out of their own pockets.

[5] Besides participant observation and semi-structured interviews.

[6] For example, Bruna Amarante da Silva is from the town of Petrópolis in Brazil, played several matches for Equatorial Guinea, and had a contract in a club in Kazakhstan in 2012-13.

[7] Improving my language skills, too.

[8] Especially in the short chapter on local football in the town of Chapecó.

head of the local fan club blog) and interviewed her several times. Luckily, while I was doing my research, she published her first book on the history of the local football club *Chapecoense* where she addresses some of the topics that are crucial to my paper as well.

Since my potential informants were scattered all over Brazil and the distance between their place of residence[9] and home was often large, visiting them one by one was not a good option. Instead, I took advantage of social media and added many of them on *Twitter* and *Facebook* in order to communicate with them online. Some accepted my request[10]. The results were not always as I had hoped, but I was able to extract valuable pieces of information.

One could criticize this approach in that it may lead to interpretative and rather speculative conclusions. If one must rely on media statements alone, there is no possibility to dig deeper or clear-out things as in face-to-face communication. However, I did not rely on media statements solely but also had the chance to engage in online conversations with the footballers[11]. Second, I was in direct communication with a team of experts, particularly the anthropologist Carmen Rial from Florianópolis. She has conducted interviews with Brazilian expatriate footballers and has visited them in Europe, North America, and Asia, but not yet not Africa, and is interested in similar questions (Rial, 2008; 2012). Drawing on the data available, I believe that the results are at least in some respects comparable.

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[9] Due to e.g. a club contract.
[10] On Facebook, one player by now even added me as "family member".
[11] Albeit online.

3. Denationalization in International Sport

A key aspect to understanding the working hypothesis of the present paper are concepts and models surrounding denationalization in international sport. Denationalization implies the increasing de-ethnicization of national sport teams and geographic deterritorialization of fan communities (Poli, 2007). Denationalization processes are deeply intertwined with globalization and increasing international migratory flows (Poli, 2007). There are literally thousands of definitions of globalization. A classic one provided by Anthony Giddens defines globalization as

"(…) an intensification of worldwide social relations, via which faraway places are linked together in such a way that events in one place are affected by processes taking place many miles away, and vice versa." (Giddens, 1990: 64).

One of my favorite approaches to globalization is derived from a paper by Georg Klute (2012) on the recent military conflict in Mali. Klute's methodological 'toolkit' to understanding the transboundary conflict makes assuming a local, regional and global vantage point at once necessary. Hence, I define globalization as a process whereby in a given political or economic event/situation "on the ground" the global context gets more importance relative to the local or regional one. This shift may, in turn, be accompanied by perceptions of increased insecurity, risk and powerlessness[12] on the side of the local populations[13].

Another significant prerequisite of denationalization is international migration. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) defines migration as

" (…) the movement of a person or a group of persons, either across an international border, or within a State (…) whatever its length, composition and causes; it includes migration of refugees, displaced persons, economic migrants, and persons moving for other purposes, including family reunification." (iom.int, 2011).

The German Federal Ministry for Migration and Refugees states migration was "the spatial shift of a person's life center" (bpb.de, 2009). International migration, thus, is such a shift beyond national borders. Other classical views understand migration as leaving behind one's native nation-state and experiencing processes of assimilation and incorporation into a foreign culture and society (Glick Schiller et al., 1995).

Various forms of migration exist. Migration within a country is called *internal migration*. *Circular migration* describes for instance the repetitive movement of seasonal workers from

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[12] Of course adjacent to many benefits that come along with globalization.
[13] It appears easier to alter the local reality than the global one.

home to the host area, from the countryside to the cities and back (Skeldon, 2012). *International migration* is the movement beyond national borders. *Return migration* describes the return of migrants to their original homeland (Cerase, 1974).

3.1 Denationalization in International Sport

According to Raffaele Poli (2007:646)

"(…) two different sets of processes occurring in sport today (…) can be conceptualized as examples of denationalization. The first one, defined as the progressive disconnection between the geographical origin of sportsmen and the nation-states that they are supposed to represent, leads to a de-ethnicization of the nation. The second one, defined as the decrease in importance of the 'origin label' in the identification process between fans, sportsmen and teams, leads to an identity deterritorialization. Both are intrinsically linked and need to be analyzed in conjunction with each other."

In addition, denationalization is linked to increasing and accelerating migratory movements[14] and partially provoked by professional sport itself with its tendency towards naturalizations and nationality changes.

The term denationalization was first used in the 1970s in economic studies as a synonym for privatization. Recently, the concept has come to express other notions, such as deterritorialization, transnationalism, postnationality etc. in order to circumvent 'methodological nationalism' or 'state centrism'[15] which has been dominant in the social sciences for a long time (Poli, 2007).

In both deterritorialization and denationalization there is the idea that the territoriality of the state is a historical construction which is not the 'natural' container of economic, political or social life. Denationalization is a process by which "the role of the national scale both as a self-enclosed container of socio-economic relations and an organizational interface between sub- and supra-national scales declines" (Brenner, 1999:52). According to Sassen "denationalization can be defined as the filtering and embeddedness of the global in what has historically been thought, represented, constructed and institutionalized as national (2003:15)".

As Poli (2007) argues, denationalization is also reflected in the deterritorialization of fan communities. He links it to the increased global broadcasting of sport events and the

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[14] A major characteristic of globalization, too, which can be defined as intensified circulation of goods, ideas, and people.

[15] According to Brenner state-centrism is the tendency to conceptualize "space as a static platform of social action that is not itself constituted or modified socially" and state territoriality as "a preconstituted, naturalized, or unchanging scale of analysis" (1999:45).

improved possibilities to identify with teams or sportsmen thousands of miles away from the supporter's place of residence, that represent different geographical entities, be it towns or nation-states. The deterritorialization of the fan identity is intertwined with the capitalist production system, since the identity is expressed by the choices available to the consumers, and no longer by a feeling of belonging to a place or place-bound group (Burgeois & Whitson, 1999).

Even if these forms of denationalization cannot be considered dominant trends from a historical perspective, according to Poli it is possible to understand them as "premises to bigger changes" (Poli, 2007:3). He believes that the results of further investigation could be interpreted as premises to bigger changes that may lead even to a redefinition of sports' organizational structures and the popular understanding of sporting events on a bigger scale.

There is indeed a strong tie between sport and nationalism - in the sense of nation-centrism but also in that of political or ideological nationalism. Sport, above all football, captures the notion of an 'imagined community' (Anderson, 1983) perfectly. It is much easier to imagine one's nation when eleven players are representing that nation in a match against another one (Duke & Crolley, 1996).

3.2 De-ethnicization and Ethnicity

Denationalization (partly) means de-ethnicization. In order to fully grasp what de-ethnicization is, one must also understand what ethnicity is. Ethnicity, as a conceptual and theoretical frame, has always been one of the core domains of cultural anthropology.

In anthropological thought there is an ongoing antagonism between so-called *primordialists* and *constructivists*. Primordialists believe that ethnicity is a somehow natural and essential attribute. Constructivists argue that ethnicity is fundamentally socially and culturally constructed. A classical definition of the essentialist notion is rendered by Clifford Geertz (1973: 259-60):

"(…) The givenness that stems from being born into one particular religious community, speaking a particular language, and following particular social practices. These congruities of blood, speech, custom, and so on, are seen to have an ineffable, and at times overpowering, coerciveness in and of themselves. One is bound to one's kinsman, one's neighbor, one's fellow believer, ipso facto; as the result of not merely personal affection, practical necessity, common interest, or incurred obligation, but at least in great part by some virtue of some unaccountable absolute import attributed to the very tie itself. (…) for virtually every person, in every society, at almost all times, some attachments seem to flow more from a sense of natural – some would say spiritual – affinity than from social interaction."

In essence, primordialism is based upon assumed bloodlines ("quasi-kinship") that are not biological but rather mythical, race (phenotypical properties), language, geographic region, religion, and custom. This idea of ethnicity was refuted, for example, by Coughlan & Eller in the article *The Poverty of Primordialism* (1993). Primordialism contains three distinctive ideas: first, primordial ideas/attachments are 'given', underived, prior to all experience. Primordiality is natural, spiritual, without social source. Second, primordial sentiments are ineffable and coercive, and third, primordiality is essentially a question of emotion and affect ('affectivity').

The argument can be refuted on all levels. First, ethnic identities, which in this view ought to be given and long-established, are at least "renewed, modified and remade in each generation" (Coughland & Eller, 1993: 188). Far from being self-perpetuating, they require creative effort and investment. Ethnicity is socially constructed, variably definable, continuously negotiated, revised and revitalized, volitional and fluid. Furthermore, primordial here simply means emotional, which is unacceptable. Emotional bonds too are born in social interaction, otherwise only socio-biological explanations remain, which lead to a dead-end.

Today primordialism is largely dismissed in anthropology. Nonetheless it retains a strong value on a descriptive level since it describes how 'ordinary' ethnic participants think and feel[16]. Moreover, it is still widely employed by so-called 'ethno-political entrepreneurs' all over the world (Brubaker et al., 2006). Also in various mass media primordialist ideas still appear to be the dominant ideology[17].

In social and cultural anthropology, there are other highly influential constructivist approaches on ethnicity (e.g. Barth, 1969; Brubaker, 2006; Lonsdale, 1994). In accordance with the various constructivist theories, we are prompted to view the de-ethnicization of the nation, if it really happens, as the deconstruction of the something constructed in order to be reconstructed.

3.3 Professional Clubs and National Sides

It is crucial to bear in mind the difference between professional football and football on the national team level. Processes of denationalization are nothing new in professional clubs

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[16] Primordial ties tend to be continually preferred bases for the demarcation of autonomous political units where the tradition of civil politics is weak and the technical requirements for an effective welfare government are poorly understood.

[17] This will be important in the case studies section where naturalizations of athletes and football players are discussed controversially, with the view of ethnicity as being something natural, essential and passed-down.

(Poli, 2007). Professional clubs cluster in so-called leagues which are semi-independent from the superordinate national associations in varying degrees (Darby & Solberg, 2010). Competition takes place in different tiers, Tier One representing the highest class, where the teams compete for the national championship. On the club level, the games usually take place once per week, generally on weekends, but there are other tournaments as well, such as national cups or the European competitions[18] which run parallel to the normal season and take place on Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

Denationalization is 'normal' in professional club football. In the English Premier League about two thirds of the players are foreigners (Gibson, 2014). In the German Bundesliga, the share of foreigners is approximately 50 per cent (statista.com, 2011).

The national teams are under the auspices of the national associations. Sometimes there are tensions between the professional semi-independent leagues and the national associations. Tensions arise over who has the prerogative on players, the country or the club employer[19] .

3.4 The 'State/Nation – Grid'

The allegedly natural nexus between a state, its nation, territory and identity is largely a social, political, cultural and historical construction (Anderson, 1983), comparable to that of ethnicity (Brubaker, 2006, Schlee, 2004). Nationhood must be contemplated against the background of a gradual historical development[20] (Wallerstein, 1990).

The notion of a clearly defined national territory where one can determine minutely if he is still in the jurisdiction of one country or another was unknown to the people of the distant past. Instead, there were frontiers or marches. The farther away one was from the center of the political unit, the weaker the control, until one reached the frontier zone where authority may have even been disputed (Neville, 1998). National territories and thus borders are basically an early modern invention (Schieder, 1964).

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[18] E.g. the European League or the UEFA Champions League, in Europe the league of "the best of the best".
[19] Mesut Özil, for instance, is Germany's most expensive player ever. He cost Arsenal London fifty million Euros. Arsenal is not eager to see him perform on unimportant friendlies for the German national side since in every game there is the imminent risk of injury.
[20] But what is a historical development? For instance, the standard variety of the German language is by no means natural or intrinsic to the German people. A couple of centuries ago the various regions had different dialects/languages that were mutually not intelligible (Polenz v., 1987). A fisherman from the coastal north could hardly communicate with a peasant from the Alps. Historians largely agree that the cornerstone towards a homogenization of the German language was the translation of the Bible by Martin Luther in his own dialect which is close to the variety spoken in today's Lower Saxony (therefore, the name of Germany's standard variety is Hochdeutsch, hinting at its geographical origin in the north).

The same development towards modern nation-building and cultural homogenization is reflected in sports, too. In the 19th century, competition in football took place between clubs of the same social sphere, e.g. student club of college A vs. student club of college B. The idea of playing against other nations was alien (Armstrong & Giulianotti, 2001). The national team of Italy in 1900 is a good example amongst many because of its supernational composition. Nine out of eleven players were strictly speaking not Italians (Lanfranchi, 2002). Nationality referred to the country of residence, not country of origin. Nationality as we understand it today was largely unknown (Papa & Panico, 2002).

Things started to change at the beginning of the 20th century. The first half of the 20th century may be considered to be the era of the 'grand ideologies'; fascism vs. communism vs. democracy/capitalism (Martel, 2003). The antagonistic political systems usurped sport for their own ideological ends. Particularly Nazi Germany must be mentioned as a fierce agent that used the 1936 Summer Olympics in Berlin to propagate the supremacy of its ideology and the white Aryan race, but France too used sports as a means of propaganda (Arnaud, 1994; Hold & Mason, 1994). However, the instrumentalization of sports for political ends is by no means only a story of the past[21].

3.5 Nationality in Modern Sport Events

How is nationality staged during international sport events? One device is the communal and passionate singing of the national anthem (Poli, 2007). Many rituals revolve around the various anthems[22]. Some athletes put the palm of their hands patriotically on their chests, others grasp a teammate's shoulder or hug one another to express unity and strength. The audience is encouraged to sing along with the athletes. In some cases the singing of the anthem is not regarded a decision of personal taste or distaste but a question of patriotism for the country and its people per se[23]. The national flag is another element – flags or a sheer

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[21] For example, after assuming the presidential office, Nelson Mandela summoned the captain of his national rugby team. The next Rugby World Cup was to be held in South Africa. Mandela explained South Africa needed the victory for the building process of his "Rainbow Nation". Why would the newly elected president of a country at a turning point bother with something as marginal as a rugby tournament? Obviously he was fully aware of the symbolic power sports competitions can have. This historical dialog was incorporated in the 2009 feature film *Invictus.*

[22] In the Brazilian national team, for instance, there is the tradition to sing the first part of the anthem with music and the second a cappella with the fans.

[23] See for example the media discussions about 2nd generation migrant players in the German, Swiss or Austrian national team who show good performances but refuse to sing the respective national anthems. Discussions often revolve around the question of whether these players are integrated or not (e.g. Hyun, 2010).

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sea of flags as a symbol of the nation[24]. Some teams look reverently at their flags while the anthem is played.

There are also more subtle ways in which nationality is staged and framed. Various national football teams are believed to carry specific, essentialist characteristics, as if they were "in their genes", handed down from one generation to the other. This image is also reinforced and purported by the global sports media (e.g. Armstrong, 2012). The English team, for instance, is believed to be extraordinarily bad at penalty shootouts[25], whereas the German team is considered extremely strong. England has never been able to win a shootout whereas Germany has never lost one in its World Cup history (rp-online.de, 2014). Of course there is a logical error in the reasoning. A football selection, due to the natural aging process of its squad members, is in a constant change, substituted by a completely new set of younger players every generation. So, if England lost in 1990 and there is another shootout in 2014, it is represented by a completely different team with new strengths and weaknesses. How could the record be of any relevance here unless one implies a natural, essentialist fiber of German/English/French footballers? Numerous interviews with coaches and players reveal that in the thick of the action such ponderings are irrelevant to them.

Football is not the only sport where staged nationality can be observed. During the Olympic Games competition is about which country is capable of getting most medals. Even in highly individualistic sports such as running, swimming or fencing, the athletes are first and foremost considered to be part of the national squads that compete against other national squads for the pride of their country. Here, too, nationality appears to be the most important single attribute of the athletes – save being athletes (Calmat, 1992).

3.6 Conclusion

Denationalization confronts so-called state-centered theories in the social sciences (Brenner, 1999; Wimmer & Glick Schiller, 2002). State-centered theories regard the state as the principal agent with respect to the social existence of human beings, especially in the West. Denationalization in international sport can only be fully grasped within the context of an increasing globalization and acceleration of international migration (Albrow & King, 1990;

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[24] In Germany there is the tradition to hang the flag out of the window, balcony or car during an international competition to demonstrate one's support.
[25] In the knock-out phase of a tournament, after 90 minutes of regular play there is an extra of 30 minutes. If after the extension there is still no winner, penalty shootouts from the 11-meter spot are performed.

Hoerder, 2002). It unmasks the allegedly natural nexus between a state, its nation, territory and identity (Poli, 2007).

The biggest sports organizations such as FIFA or the International Olympic Committee uphold the idea of a nation-state in the sense of a (culturally) homogenous territory[26]. This is evident in their official declarations and statements. In a 1999 issue of *I Quaderni de calcio* Lennart Johansson, UEFA's former president, states:

"(…) Our game is founded on traditional values, such as the pride in the jersey, national or regional identity (…) And if television is so interested in football as a product today, it is thanks to these factors. Thus they have to be preserved with care if we want to guarantee a sustainable future for it."

In other words, Johansson believes football was a successful media product primarily due to its expression of national or regional identity, i.e. national team vs. national team or nation-state against nation-state and club vs. club respective city against city. FIFA, UEFA and IOC, organizations that were founded in the early 20th century, are rooted in a conceptual 'nationalism' or nationhood-centrism. Multi-faceted identities such as transnationality, binationality, transgender etc. are still largely ignored (Poli, 2007).

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[26] See also Chapter 3 of the present paper.

4. Brazilian Football Talent and International Migration

"Football is a business, and we are the product." Leonardo Santiago (Brazilian football expatriate)

The United Nations of Football is positioned inside migration research. It scrutinizes the legal, political and economic framework and assumes a cultural anthropological approach in that it investigates how the players themselves associate meanings with their new circumstances. The flow of Brazilian professionals to Western Africa is but one example of the current labor migration that commenced with the incipient modernity (late 19th, early 20th century) and continues to this day (Manning, 2005). Labor migration differs from other types of migration, in that it is not entire bands or families that migrate but rather individuals who work abroad and remit money back to the family (Wotzka, 2013; direct communication) although there has been much anthropological critique on this plain economist approach. Who migrates when, why and where is also socially and culturally determined[27] (Jennissen, 2007).

Sports labor migration is, in part, embedded in pre-existing social, political and economic power arrangements. It can also be an indicator (and factor) of change (Maguire & Stead, 1998a). According to Tiesler & Coelho (2007), when studying social phenomena in and around football, one major consequence of globalization processes becomes evident, namely increasing international migration. The adoption of player recruitment strategies and the consequent growth in the international circulation is one of the central characteristics of what has been called "second globalization of football"[28] (Markovits & Rensmann, 2010).

4.1 Brazilian Football Exportation to the World

In terms of football, Brazil is a global superpower. It is the only country to have won the FIFA World Cup five times, the only country to have participated in all World Cups, the country that has led the FIFA ranking for longest in the last decades, and the country which has received most FIFA best player awards (Rial, 2008). However, Brazil is caught in a paradox since domestic football is facing a serious crisis. Although it continues to occupy a pivotal place in the contemporary "footballscape", domestic football has to negotiate with the new world order dominated by club football in Europe, especially England, Spain and Germany. A process of transformation and destabilization has already set in. Brazil has been

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[27] For example, in many societies along the so-called 'patrilineal belt', it may be the second son of the father and household head who migrates because he is not entitled to inherit the land (Haviland et al., 2007). Many more examples exist.

[28] The "first globalization" began in the 19th century with the dissemination of football from England to the British colonies (Rial, 2008).

trying to cope with the pressure of commercialization for quite some time now (Alvito, 2007).

The history of Brazilian football migration is long and well-established. Brazilian players have been going to Europe for more than 70 years (Alvito, 2007). Today Brazil is by far the country that exports most players to Europe, Brazilians making up the biggest contingent of expatriate footballers. However, its role in training and exportation is not limited to Europe (Poli & Besson, 2010). In 2004 alone, the Brazilian Football Association or CBF recorded the departure of 846 players worldwide, 60 per cent of them elsewhere than in Europe (Théry, 2006).

This recent boom or explosion cannot be explained without the bigger economic picture. The 1980s are called the 'lost decade' in Brazil due to serious economic crises, increases in unemployment and inflation. The structure of Brazilian football, however, remained unchanged[29]. Parallel to this, the main leagues in Europe underwent reorganization and professionalization. The result is what one would expect: starting in the 1980s, Brazilian players began leaving the country 'in droves'. Curently, the sale of the best players accounts for approximately 20 per cent of the revenue earned by top Brazilian football clubs (Alvito, 2007). In economic theories, this mechanism is called "Push and Pull".

4.2 Economist Approach: Push and Pull

Push and Pull models were introduced by sociologists and economists and are particularly prominent in economic theories (Lee, 1966). Push factor simply refers to the reasons that push people out of their country, e.g. wars or civil wars, epidemics, environmental catastrophes, high economic hardship in general, low life quality in terms of education or health and the like. Pull factors are those that "pull" people into a country, e.g. better wages in comparison to the country of departure, more prospects, firm civic institutions etc.

With regard to football, one might think of the poor infrastructure in many so-called third world countries: football pitches in a rotten state, lack of training facilities and investments, organizational disorder in the respective associations. An average football "pro" – a professional – in the Ghanaian league, for instance, earns about one or two hundred Euros per month (Darby & Solberg, 2009) whereas a mediocre colleague in the English Premier League is most likely more prosperous than, say, a senior British public official. In Brazil,

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[29] I.e. tight state control, little innovation, irrational match schedules, federations and associations controlled by the same people for decades, growing violence in and around stadiums (Alvito, 2007).

many footballers are accustomed to not being paid on time, sometimes not for three or four months. Often a transfer is not just a matter of a better salary, it also means he will receive the salary in a timely fashion (Alvito, 2007). On the other hand, for the clubs, selling their players is frequently the only way to balance their budget. As the best players leave, fans stop watching, which affects ticket sales and further weakens the clubs – a vicious circle.

Some sociologists and economists argue that if a country or region has severe push factors and others an extensive set of pulls, it is likely that many people from the former will try to reach the latter. Anthropologists have been criticizing such a simplistic and mechanical model for quite a time because it blends out all the social and cultural factors and structures in between (Adamo, 2009). Statistics indicate that there are presently about two hundred million migrants in the world (un.org, 2013), not many if one considers the misery and poverty in so many regions of the world. According to followers of a simple economic push-and-pull model, much more people should be migrating.

The models ignore that international migration requires knowledge, connections and above all financial resources. If a family unit is confronted with impoverishment, they may often decide to send one or two young family members overseas to seek employment rather than migrating as a whole family with vulnerable children and elders (Taran, 2011). Research has shown that people prefer to go to countries with already established contacts and networks instead of venturing into the unknown (Graeme, 2012). They might also decide not to migrate and "stand ground".

4.3 Network Theories, Transfer Networks

The historical founders of social network theories in social and cultural anthropology are Bronislaw Malinowski (1913), Alfred Radcliffe-Brown (1931), and Claude Lévi-Strauss (1948). Max Gluckman is often credited with conducting some of the first community network analyses in southern Africa, India and the United Kingdom, from which various network theories were derived. S.F. Nadel codified a theory of social structure that was also influential in later network analyses (1957). In sociology, the works of Talcott Parsons and Peter Blau set the stage for assuming a relational approach to social structure (e.g. Parsons, 1937, 1951; Blau, 1956).

The social network approach is a theoretical construct of the social sciences and used to study relationships between individuals, groups, organizations or even entire societies. One axiom of the social network approach towards understanding social interaction is that social

phenomena should be primarily conceived through the properties of relations between social units, instead of the properties of these units themselves. Thus, one frequent criticism on social network theories is that individual agency is often ignored (Scott, 2000) and that social network theories are, necessarily, relational.

In the context of international football, transfer networks are significant factor in defining and predefining migration trajectories. For instance, there are strong ties between Latin America and some Southern European countries, especially Brazil and Portugal, due to cultural, historical and linguistic affinities (Tiesler & Coelho, 2007). Legal regulations are also important because there are special transfer agreements (Rial, 2013; direct communication). To date the majority of Latin American players are being traded to Southern European destinations (cies.ch, 2011). The same is valid for the relationship between France and many francophone African countries, albeit things have begun to change. Migration patterns in the early 21st century have started to become more diversified (Maguire & Pearton, 2000; Darby, 2011).

Transfer networks often reflect the international division of labor and production. Yet globalization is often regarded as aspatial in nature (Massey, 2005), i.e. there are no longer any borders and the world has become a homogenous space. This vision does not take into account the perseverance of social factors linked to the history of relations between geographical territories (Poli & Besson, 2010). Meyer reminds us that

"(…) people are not moving in a vacuum between supply and demand. They are actors whose movements, constructed through and resulting from collective action, can be traced and described accurately instead of being left to external and elusive macro-determinations. Migrants are not made up of a volatile population of separate units in a fluid environment but rather a set of connective entities that are always evolving through networks, along sticky branches (2001: 96)."

In this sense, football migration across lusophone spaces and to Europe basically mirrors the general migration pattern of Portuguese-speaking migrants (Tiesler & Coelho, 2007). The high percentage of Brazilian and African[30] football professionals in Portuguese clubs opens questions concerning lusophone linkages and postcolonial patterns (ibid).

Although such post-colonial ties persevere, the migratory routes diversify, which reflects the integration of spaces occurring in the context of the globalization of the footballers' labor market. Brazil has become progressively specialized in exportation to Europe and Asia, continents where football generates higher revenues. Today, the best-distributed players in

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[30] Especially from Angola and Mozambique.

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the world are Brazilians, Cameroonians and Ghanaians. Recruitment focuses on attacking players (Poli & Besson, 2010), which may be due to the image of Brazilian and African football in Europe as being aggressive in style and focused on individual skills.

4.4 Football Academies

In the context of transfer networks, football academies are gaining more and more ground, particularly in Africa but also in Latin America (Künzler, 2010; Darby, 2012). Several types of academies exist: those owned by ex-players, others owned by the clubs, and again others controlled by private entrepreneurs (Künzler, 2010). They invite various youths to join and train with them. If a particular youth exhibits traits of an extraordinary talent, efforts will be made to sell him to a wealthy club from the global North, in the best case for his own and his family's benefit. Unfortunately, the reality is often different. More and more African and Latin American players are being signed at an exceedingly young age. Many have issues coping with life abroad, and have difficulties learning a new language. Their performances on the pitch may suffer. In such cases, they often get kicked out. Social exploitation and abuse is a big problem (sokaafrika.com, 2014).

In Brazil, veritable "phantom clubs" (Alvito, 2007) have emerged whose only intention is to spot new talents and showcase them for the European market. They are neither interested in winning championships nor gaining the support of fans, which further aggravates the situation of the domestic leagues.

Today, many European top clubs have numerous academies in various countries all over the globe (Künzler, 2010). They operate like multinational corporations. In a neo-liberal, capitalist and globalized environment it is often more cost-efficient to spot talents abroad and bring them over instead of raising and forming talents at home. Many voices deplore these circumstances because – so they argue – due to this, football especially in Africa, has largely degenerated (Künzler, 2010). The Africa Cup of Nations, nominally the equivalent of the European Cup, is little more than a show for European agents to pick the most promising strikers and midfielders. Defenders and goalkeepers are less often traded (Poli, 2010). Some sports functionaries are demanding a more rigid legislation and control to counteract these developments, e.g. quotas, substantial wage raises in the leagues of the global South, youth protection programs, and age limits (ibid).

4.5 Elite Migration

Football migration via transfer networks is part of elite migration, i.e. singled-out individuals are invited to a country and given incentives because one is in need of their professional skills (Siegert, 2011). This type of migration does not parallel the daily experience of the majority of opportunity seekers migrating from the countryside to the city – internal migration – or from one half of the globe to the other to find any job available. Studies on the migration of specialized workers focus on intellectual labor, the so-called "brain drain"[31]. Brazil has provided specialized labor of another kind, which may be referred to as *pés-de-obra*[32] (Damo, 2007).

Additionally, this paper deals with "south-south" migration, migration from the global south to the global south, in this case South America to Africa, a migration system that is heavily under-researched in comparison to migration from the 'poor' South of the globe to the 'rich' North (Bakewell, 2009). Of course it also broaches the issue of international football migration, a field currently on the rise in the academia (Armstrong et al., 1997).

Just as in other types of labor migration, international football migration trajectories depend on political, economic and legal factors (Künzler, 2010). It shares some characteristics with general labor migration, but it has distinctive features as well (ibid). For example, it is striking that Africa and Latin America are highly significant in the world football trade but comparatively marginal in the globalized economy. In turn, North America and Asia are marginal in world football but central hubs in the general global trade (Poli & Besson, 2010).

4.6 Brazilian Football Exportation to the World II

The big TV broadcasters can also be held responsible for the decline of domestic Brazilian football. Obviously, many different factors led to the drop in stadium spectators[33]. However, the broad emission of both international and domestic games is also an important factor in this reduction (Alvito, 2007). Television also contributed toward the scarcity of stadium spectators by scheduling games at times more convenient for the television viewers at home. In other words: domestic problems and the Bosman ruling led to an exodus of Brazilian talent and quality loss in general which in turn led to spectator loss in the stadiums and impoverishment which, in turn, led to further losses in quality, and so on.

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[31] Such as in the US Silicon Valley, which assembles intellectuals to work in computer and electronic firms.
[32] A neologism and word play in the Portuguese language; mão de obra [hands of work] roughly translates into workforce, pés de obra means "feet of work".
[33] E.g. poor administration, violence, scandals, as well as transformations within Brazilian society itself: increased unemployment and the decimation of the working class.

Crucial in this respect was the Bosman ruling which sparked a veritable revolution in the European football market. We will look at this ruling in detail in the next chapter. In short, the European Court prohibited quotas for players of the European Union since they breached Europe's free movement of persons. In order to protect their national leagues, many had introduced quotas – in international tournaments, for example, not more than three foreigners were allowed on the pitch per team. Now fellow Europeans ultimately had to be treated like nationals which, in consequence, cleared space for players coming from outside of the EU. It also led to export increases in Brazil from 1995 with a tremendous outflow in 1996, when the numbers of departures increased by 50 per cent in comparison to the year before, plus by a further 68 per cent between 1996 and 1997 (Alvito, 2007). The ruling particularly favored Latin American footballers, a majority of whom are also in possession of EU passports[34] (Poli & Besson, 2010).

In Brazil, the Bosman ruling was paralleled by the so-called Pelé Law[35] which determined the end of the *passé* (pass), which bound footballers to clubs as their property. The new Pelé Law made the relation more flexible and further increased the number of departures because the player became a worker with control over his own labor and the right to choose where to play, thus favoring players' circulation between clubs either within the same or between different countries (Bittencourt, 2007).

4.7 World System Theory Approach

Another common approach in migration research and frequently applied to football migration is the World System Theory which places global migration flows between a periphery and a center. Künzler (2010) and Jennissen (2007) have argued that international football migration defies a simplistic center-periphery logic. Migration occurs rather in steps from the periphery to the semi-periphery, and the center. Wallerstein (2000) defines semi-periphery as a buffer zone between the global center and periphery that is regarded as periphery by the center and as center by the periphery. It inhibits direct spatial contact between the two and is thus highly important for the continuity of the system.

The center of globalized football is definitively Europe respective the UEFA (the European Union of Football Associations) that includes the most successful professional leagues on a global scale, the so-called "Big Five" (Poli, 2010): the English *Premier League*, the German *Bundesliga*, the Spanish *Primera División,* the Italian *Serie A*, and the first league of France.

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[34] As descendants of migrants, especially Spaniards, Italians and Portuguese.
[35] The Law number 9.615/03/1998.

Yet also within Europe there are hierarchical levels (Künzler, 2010). Many Eastern European leagues save Russia, though geographically close, are perceived only as "gateways" for football migrants to the bigger leagues and ergo as semi-periphery; leagues such as those of Belgium, Switzerland or Portugal are positioned in-between. Further semi-peripheral leagues are the United Arab Emirates, Japan or the United States, for instance. The Russian league also belongs to this class. As already stated above, although the Brazilian national football team is still the single most successful national team in the world, professional football in Brazil does not constitute a part of the globalized football center.

An interesting case in point is the United States. Economically speaking, the United States is still the powerhouse of the world (Hanson, 2006), including in the field of sports, even in football (American English: soccer). Wages are good, sports facilities adequate (naase.com, 2014). Yet many football migrants regard the US as semi-periphery because there they would be outside the true hub of football culture and media attention[36] . One of the many examples of so-called "American Exceptionalism" is the fact that in the US football is not among the most popular sports (Markovits et al., 2001).

4.8 From Brazil to Western Africa – Migration or Mobility?

International football migration theories and the particular situation in Brazil are the blueprint for the transfer of footballers from Brazil to Togo and Equatorial Guinea. Nonetheless, one might argue that the biographies I am going to showcase are not examples of migration but much more so of an extreme economically-motivated spatial and social mobility. Despite the fact that they attain new national citizenship, there is little indication of a 'real' migration to the new host country which premises a permanent or at least semi-permanent stay. In fact, most spend only some weeks of the year in Africa and the rest in Brazil or tertiary countries where they have a club contract. A clear-cut distinction between migration and mobility is difficult and problematic. The migration, movement or simply transfer of Brazilian footballers to Equatorial Guinea and their subsequent naturalization challenges all definitions of migration and mobility made so far.

Take Anderson Ferreira from Itabuna (Brazilian state of Bahia) as a clear example amongst many. He was invited to play for Equatorial Guinea in 2007, accepted and received citizenship immediately. For various reasons, after two appearances in the national team, he

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[36] According to Tiesler and Coelho (2007) the USA (but also Russia and some Asian countries) can be considered as part of the periphery but also as new markets, economic powers which start shaping the migration of players and hence becoming at times challenging newcomers in the field.

was not appointed anymore. Today he lives the life of an 'ordinary' Brazilian football professional again but still holds dual nationality. Factually and legally, he is a Guinean just as he is a Brazilian.

The Oxford Online Dictionary defines mobility as "the ability to move or be moved freely and easily" and "the ability to move between different levels in society and employment" (2014). *Mobilities,* an academic journal that embraces sociological, anthropological, geographic and other contributions, examines "both the large-scale movements of people, objects, capital, and information across the world, as well as more local processes of daily transportation, movement through public and private spaces, and the travel of material things in everyday life" (Drexel.edu, 2011). Mobility studies look at the movements as well as the forces that drive, constrain and are produced by these very movements (Glick Schiller & Salazar, 2012). We can deduce that, in a broad sense, mobility is the movement of people, ideas and things, plus the broader social implications of these movements.

It may be convenient not to look at migration and mobility[37] as two rigid and opposing poles. Instead one could picture them as a continuum with mobility on the one end and transnational migration on the other (Sheller and Urry, 2006). Personally, I prefer to conceptualize them as a taxonomical tree with mobility being the superordinate 'tree top' or essence that can lead to various expressions and ramifications including permanent migration.

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[37] Be it for business, religious or merely touristic reasons.

5. The Legal Framework, FIFA: Organization, History of Statutes

Globalization, international migration, a capitalist mode of production and denationalization are intertwined. In sport, denationalization partly means de-ethnicization of a national team. However, ethnicity and nationality are primarily social, cultural and historical constructions rendering a precise definition of terms problematic or at least debatable. In the following, I will assume a legalistic approach to the issue in that I stick to the definitions of nationality made by FIFA, the world governing football organization, and the relevant nation states. Of course, this approach has strengths and weaknesses. Legal regulations do not emerge from the void but are the product of ongoing public and political debates, power relations, social and culture change etc. Nonetheless, it provides me with a convenient entry point with regard to the subject. The parameters of a 60-page master thesis are too restricted to discuss ethnicity, nationality and the involved concepts in depth.

Before we come to the FIFA statutes, it seems appropriate to present the organization as such as well as the history of its nationality regulations in order to see some of the dynamics in their wider socio-political context "at work".

5.1 Organization

The International Federation of Football Associations or FIFA (in French) was founded in 1904 and is headquartered in Zurich, Switzerland. Its current president is Joseph Blatter, a Swiss sports functionary.

Nominally, it is a non-profit organization under Swiss Law (fifa.com, 2014). It consists of 209 national football associations (respectively "member states") as well as six subordinate continental federations[38]. Each member association must be a member of one of the above-mentioned confederations[39]. At the same time, the member states must be members of the United Nations.

The three most important organizational bodies of FIFA are the Congress, the Executive Committee, and the General Secretariat (fifa.com, 2014). The Congress consists of the deputies of all 209 members and meets once a year to discuss current issues and decide on new statutes. The Executive Committee executes the decisions made by the Congress. It

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[38]UEFA (Europe), CONMEBOL (South America), CONCACAF (North America), CAF (Africa), AFC (Asia) and OFC (Oceania).

[39] The membership in a continental federation may deviate from the geographic location. Israel, for instance, is a member of the UEFA instead the AFC to avoid playing regularly against its Arabic neighbors with which it has difficult relations. Recently, Australia decided to compete in Asia rather than Oceania to play against more qualitative opponents on a regular basis.

consists of twenty-five heads. In the Committee, all federations must be represented. There are thirty-five other committees endowed with various tasks (fifa.com, 2014).

Football functionaries like to point out that today, FIFA has more members than the United Nations (Pelé, 2013). This is due to several historical particularities: Great Britain, the motherland of modern football, is traditionally represented by four independent associations[40] instead of one. In addition, some countries are members of FIFA whereas they are not affiliated with the UN, e.g. Switzerland and North Korea. But the meaning of the saying is more ambigious. It tries to capture the notion that football, the world's most popular sport, is much more capable of uniting the world than politics and diplomacy.

Today, FIFA is also a billion dollar business with factually more political weight around the globe than many nation states (Künzler, 2010). This has prompted scholars to try to explain its intrinsic structure and dynamics by means of globalization, world system, dependency and other center-periphery theories (Darby, 2000). But FIFA cannot be explained solely by these theories, its structure and internal logic is much more complex.

For example, unlike the UN, FIFA does not have a Security Council with several permanent members. All decisions are made by the Congress and every association has one vote. Nominally, Fiji exercises the same political influence as Germany or France, two of FIFA's biggest financial contributors. By this, the informality of power relations is institutionalized. The power relations are subject to constant negotiations, re-negotiations and facilitate insider deals and even nepotism[41] (Darby, 2000).

According to Paul Darby (2000), there is an ongoing debate between UEFA, the global football center, and the rest of the world. One bone of contention is whether to grant other confederations, especially Africa, more teams in future world cups or not. Nonetheless, to speak of Europe as the center and the rest of the world merely as periphery would be inadequate.

FIFA has also been criticized for being the most active agent in transforming football from a game of honor into pure commerce (Brick, 2000). The commercialization of the world's most popular sport was promoted by a combination of economic, cultural and technological

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[40] England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.
[41] For example, Sepp Blatter, the current FIFA president, could not have succeeded Joao Havelange without the declared support of many African deputies and their sheer number of votes (Jennings, 2006). Many European associations were against Blatter and favored another candidate, Johansson (Künzler, 2010). Critics claim that the election of Blatter involved heavy bribery (Brick, 2000).

developments, globalization and liberalization. The diffusion of new media, TV and later the internet, generated new income potential through commercials, merchandise and the sale of broadcast licenses. Today, the games can be followed all over the world (Brick, 2000).

Football 'traditionalists' criticize FIFA for making the game more suitable for TV audiences and sponsors while marginalizing the 'true' fans in the stadiums. FIFA decreed to abandon all standings (standings ≠ seats) in international matches (rp-online.de, 2012). The spectators must be seated although the 'real' fans prefer to stand, jump and chant during the matches[42].

In the past there were several scandals about FIFA officials, involving corruption and bribery, mostly in connection with elections, polls (Jennings, 2006) and also its decision to organize the World Cup in Qatar (Bräuer, 2013). Amongst others, FIFA's stance towards nationality and gender is problematic.

5.2 Nationality and Gender

Earlier in this paper, I referred to 1904, the year of the foundation of FIFA, and embedded it in the spirit of the time in Europe. Most historians agree that the then dominant ideologies were imperialism, nationalism, colonialism and social Darwinism which eventually lead to World War I (Martel, 2003). The German elites of the time looked suspiciously at football, a British invention, and preferred 'German' gymnastics as the national sport (Merkel, 2000). Every national elite tried to exploit sports for its own political and ideological goals (Poli, 2007).

FIFA still defines nationality in the 'nationalist', state-centered sense of that era (Poli, 2007). It is incapable or unwilling to acknowledge dual or multiple national identities. This is in sharp contrast to the globalized reality we live in, where even nation states begin to accept models of non-classic citizenship. According to the FIFA rules (art. 8, sentence 1), an athlete can decide to switch the country he wants to represent only at the turn from junior to senior status, from then on not anymore. A transnational athlete cannot mark his medals for both countries. He must decide on one and remain there for the rest of his/her active career.

Similar issues exist with respect to gender. In Equatorial Guinea for instance there was the case of Salimata Simpore who was suspended by FIFA on the ground that she was not a 'real' woman (Bennett, 2011). The biological reality, however, is not that there are only two

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[42] FIFA argues for necessary security restrictions but opponents claim the main goal was to make football look nicer for the TV audience at home which is economically more important.

sexes as opposing poles, male and female. Realities such as transsexuality and intersexuality are still largely ignored by FIFA and IOC policies (Poli, 2007).

5.3 Legislation History

In the past, many legal changes occurred both in professional football and on the national association level. Significant for the 'African game' (Künzler, 2010) was the CAF decision in 1980 to allow African professionals with a contract overseas to perform for their national teams (ibid). In 1981, FIFA in turn ordered the clubs to liberate their players if they were called to join their national teams.

Most crucial was the 'Bosman ruling', the case Bosman vs. UEFA at the European Court of Justice in 1995. Bosman, a former professional who had been hired by a Belgian club at the time, was about to be traded to France. The French club declined to pay the 'international transaction fee' demanded by the Belgians and he thus missed out on a good job opportunity. He filed a lawsuit. Subsequently, the European Court ruled that within the European Union such fees were incompatible with Community Law (Künzler, 2010). In consequence, the Court prohibited quotas for players of the European Union since they placed a restriction on the free movement for workers. In order to protect their national leagues, many had introduced such quotas[43]. Now fellow Europeans ultimately had to be treated like nationals. Quotas still exist, but only for those coming from outside the EU.

This ruling dramatically transformed professional football and led to an acceleration and intensification of international migration (Künzler, 2010). In England, only one third of the squad members are still nationals, and other big leagues show similar tendencies (transfermarkt.de, 2014). A new agreement is on the way between UEFA and the so-called AKP-states (Africa, Caribbean, Pacific) (Künzler, ibid). This will lead to a further intensification of international football migration. It is remarkable, however, that UEFA did not alter these rules on its own but had to be ordered to do so by a court decision. Some scholars interpret this as a proof of its enduring rootedness in 19th-century nationhood-discourses (Poli, 2007).

As outlined earlier, in the beginning of football as institutionalized and organized sport, the nationality aspect was not heavily pronounced. Nationality was seen as a question of residence rather than origin (Lanfranchi, 2002; Papa & Panico, 2002). A player who moved

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[43] In international tournaments, for example, not more than three foreigners were allowed on the pitch (per team).

from one country to another was consequently eligible for the national team of the new country of residence, too.

In 1932, FIFA ruled that every player must wait three years before competing for another national team (Poli, 2007). This rule was triggered by the 'Argentinian case'[44]. Argentines could move from Argentina to Italy to play for the Italian national team since many were of Italian origin. Later they could return to Argentina and play for the country where they were born. FIFA tried to restrict a massive 'abuse' of dual citizenship and constant back and forth movement.

In 1950 a statute was enacted s that no player could represent more than one country on the senior level. In football, 'senior' means 21 years of age. If somebody performs extremely well at an exceedingly young age, younger than twenty-one, he can be called to the senior national team earlier with the same effect. This rule is still in force. A professional who has played for one national team on the senior level can never again play for another national team.

5.4 Nationality Statutes

FIFA is an association under Swiss Civil Law (fifa.com, 2014). The FIFA Statutes serve as its 'constitution'. The corpus of legislation has 87 articles. All aspects of FIFA's organizational being are treated: structure of its main bodies, governance, finance, international competitions etc., but also eligibility to play for a national team. These are elaborated in the Articles 5-8 in the Regulations Governing the Application of the Statutes (FIFA Statutes, Edition August 2011) and will be given in full length in the appendix[45].

5.5 Outlook

Lately, the naturalization of Brazilians (and other nationals, predominantly from Africa) in Equatorial Guinea seemingly breaches this legislation. Whether, speaking with Raffaele Poli, this means that a new, perhaps even revolutionary reform is in the making or that FIFA simply neglects the practice in some peripheral countries, is one of the questions of the empirical part of the study.

In the next chapter I will take a closer look at various case studies that highlight and exemplify the above-mentioned theories. It will be discussed, with reference to the present

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[44] I will pay more attention to Argentina in the second part of the thesis with case studies.
[45] With the sentences that are directly quoted highlighted in bold.

literature and FIFA statutes on nationality, what kind of processes of denationalization (and if they are actually entitled to be so called) are occurring.

6. Case Studies

In this part I will present historical and contemporary case studies which have been assessed as examples of denationalization by some (e.g. Hyun, 2012; Gleeson, 2009; Künzler, 2010; Poli, 2007). I will render short biographical accounts of several players that have received high media attention throughout their career and discuss if, with regard to their personal stories, it is really admissible to speak of denationalization. The findings will be substantiated with a combination of the FIFA statutes and present-day anthropological literature. Needless to say, nationality and denationalization are politically and ideologically 'loaded' terms, used in political debates and media discourses often without an exact definition. In order not to make the same mistake, I will refer to the legal definitions of nationality and nationality change as made by FIFA and the relevant nation states and stick to their precise wording.

Before we can illustrate graphically what denationalization is, it might be appropriate to give examples of what it is not. Therefore we will first turn our attention to the Boateng brothers from Germany.

6.1 Transnational Ties – The Boateng Brothers

There are instances where the denationalization of a national sport team can be interpreted more accurately as the late adoption of a transnational identity by an athlete of the "second generation". According to theorizers on transnational migration, transnational relationships can also be activated in a later stage in life. They must not necessarily be implemented during childhood (Levitt, 2009). The respective stories of the Boateng brothers are very illustrative of migration, nationality, and identity politics. More than that, the Boateng brothers still fill the headlines of various newspapers and football magazines.

The brothers Kevin Prince and Jerome Boateng from Berlin are among the most successful and best-known football stars in current global football. Together they even made sports history during the 2010 World Cup in South Africa. For the first time ever in football history, two brothers – albeit half-brothers – stood on the same pitch during a World Cup match, but for opposing national teams (Herzinger, 2010). Jerome Boateng played as a defender for Germany, his country of birth and residence, whereas his brother Kevin was selected by the Ghanaian Association. Ghana is their father's country of birth that they had actually never visited before.

Prince Boateng, the father of the two, originates from the Brong-Ahafo region in Central Ghana (Horeni, 2012) and came to Germany as a student. The Boateng family triggers a lot of controversial and lurid mass media coverage in which Jerome Boateng is often staged as the 'good brother', calm, focused and steady, and Kevin Prince as the 'bad one', aggressive on the field and difficult to tame as a player and person (e.g. Herzinger, 2010). This media representation is partly due to their socio-biographical backgrounds. Jerome grew up with his mother and father in Berlin-Wilmersdorf, a middle-class neighborhood. He attended school and received a sufficient level of formal education. Kevin Prince grew up only with his mother in Berlin-Wedding, perceived and stigmatized as a "ghetto" in the media. Also Kevin Prince tended to party too much in his formational years and to disobey the orders of his coaches. This further reinforced the good brother/bad brother-stereotype (Horeni, 2012).

Nonetheless, according to expert opinions Kevin Prince was one of Germany's most talented football prodigies and played for all youth national teams until senior level. Due to his negative image of rowdiness, he received an unofficial note by some sports functionaries that there was no imminent perspective for him to play for Germany's "A" team (ibid). Disappointed, he applied for Ghanaian citizenship and voiced his wish to represent Ghana in the next World Cup, although he had previously expressed the desire to play for Germany. The Ghanaian Association accepted his offer and from then on he has become one of the leading players of the team. In the group stage of the 2014 World Cup in Brazil, Germany and Ghana faced each other again. There was also a second "face-off" between the half-brothers.

Legally considered, the case of Kevin Prince Boateng is not denationalization. Both he and the Ghanaian Association acted in accordance with the FIFA Statutes. As showcased above, a player is entitled to play for a relevant country if "his biological mother or biological father (…) grandmother or grandfather was born on the territory of the relevant Association." (FIFA Statutes: art.6, par.1). Kevin's biological father, Prince Boateng, is Ghanaian and was born on Ghanaian soil. In addition, a player is entitled to change the representative team if "he has not played a match (either in full or in part) in an official competition at A international level for his current Association." (FIFA Statutes art.8, par.1) Kevin was appointed to play for Germany's junior national side but he was never appointed to play for

Germany's senior national side. He took advantage of the FIFA regulations and decided to show up for Ghana, for whatever reasons and motivations[46].

Before we continue with the case of his brother Jerome, I need to address a second line of argument. It has been deplored (Gleeson, 2009; Hyun, 2012) that an athlete who (allegedly) has no personal connections to a country whatsoever, does not speak the language etc., suddenly represents that country in an official tournament. I argue that in Kevin's example, among others, this is not a sign of denationalization but rather an example of a late activation of a transnational relationship and, subsequently, identity. At this point, a brief review of the anthropological literature on transnationalism is necessary.

6.2 Transnational Migration

In short, various theories on transnational migration can be elucidated by means of three conceptual key words: assimilation, integration, and simultaneous inclusion. The so-called assimilation model was developed in the 1950s and describes a gradual but complete cultural dissolution of migrant populations into the dominant receiving societies (Nieswand, 2008). This scenario is opposed by the integration model, inspired by structural functionalist thought, which considers a given migrant population as integrated when it takes part in the key resources of the state equitably, e.g. work, education, and social security. Hence, a cultural assimilation is not required, not even desirable (ibid).

According to various transnationalism theories, both models are partially deficient because they regard the migrant only from the one-dimensional perspective of the receiving society and not from the angle of the sending society (Glick Schiller et al., 1995). The so-called 'simultaneous inclusion' postulates a synchronistic and parallel social rootedness of the migrant in both societies. That is why in transnational research the denominations "immigrant" and "emigrant" are given up in favor of (the more holistic) "migrant". Numerous neo-assimilation theorizers counter that simultaneous inclusion was only a temporary phenomenon (Nieswand, 2005). Eventually, the complete assimilation in the new homeland still occurs. Ergo, the argument goes, simultaneous inclusion does not really deserve the attention that contemporary research is giving it. The question in the current debate is whether transnational social spaces stabilize in the course of time or not.

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[46] In 2010, the Ghanaian national team was in a crisis because its playmaker, Michael Essien, was injured and could not represent the country in the World Cup. Boateng, a talented midfielder, substituted him on his position. Hence, he was received by the Ghanaian Association "with arms wide open".

A classical definition of the transnational migration approach is that migrants, unlike in traditional modernistic, dependency theoretical or neo-assimilationist models, are by no means "uprooted". Many of the contemporary migrants are indeed "transmigrants" – socially, economically and geographically deeply steeped into their new societies, while at the same time they uphold steady social connections to their old homeland (Glick Schiller et al., 1995).

Transnational migration research investigates migration and other forms of population shift, the circulation of information, symbols, capitals and other goods in global and transnational social spaces. The focus is on the increasing volume and velocity of this circulation in the globalized world. This has consequences on the dynamics of migrant communities and the identities of its members (Kearney, 1995).

6.3 Transnational Ties in Football: Equatorial Guinea

Transnationalism researchers agree that transnational social connections do not necessarily have to be tended from early childhood on but can also evolve during a later stage in life (Levitt, 2009). In the beginning, Boateng felt a bit like an outsider in the Ghanaian team but gradually became an integral part of it and is today one of its leading players (Horeni, 2012). Also, "transnational relations" do not mean that one has to give up one society for the sake of the other but rather the other way around: someone who has the social, financial and political resources to be engaged in one society has more options to use these resources to be active in the other society as well[47]. Künzler (2010) observed that this phenomenon is not uncommon in young football players. After the turn from junior to senior level, many youngsters wait if they receive an invitation by the Association of their home country, e.g. Germany, France or Spain. If this is improbable, some are ready to play for the teams of their parents' countries.

If the biography of Kevin Prince Boateng was a singular phenomenon, I could treat it as irrelevant. All over the world and especially in Africa, however, there are many similar examples. In Equatorial Guinea's national teams, the focus of my study, we are able to observe the formation of a true 'contingent' of so-called Spanish Guineans (marca.com, 2007; Molinaro, 2011; Roldán, 2012). All of them have in common that they were born and raised in Spain and have a professional career in the lower tiers of that country. At one point

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[47] In the meantime, Boateng returned to Germany, where he has a son with a German woman, and plays for Schalke 04, a very traditional and successful German football club. Simultaneously, he announced he would show up again for Ghana at the 2014 World Cup where they will have to face Germany in the group stage of the tournament.

in their career they were contacted by Guinean agents with the proposal to field them for the Equatorial Guinea national teams. This circumstance does not make the labels "non-national" or even "de-national" legitimate. Due to the history of Equatorial Guinea as a former Spanish colony (see last part), all of the above-mentioned persons have at least one grandfather or grandmother that was born in Equatorial Guinea and then in a later stage in life moved over the to the Spanish motherland, which is in accordance with the current FIFA Statutes on nationality and nationality change.

Jade Boho, one of the female Spanish-Guinean national players, says pointedly: "The naturalized we are because we have African roots. We are a family and, if you like it or not, we will continue to do the best for our roots." (Roldán, 2012).

6.4 Modern Labor Migration, 'Jus Sanguinis', 'Jus Solis'

Conversely, if the young football player of the second migrant generation decides to play for his "new" home, that is country of birth and residence, he is also likely to trigger discussions on denationalization in the team (Hyun, 2012). This, for example, is the case in Jerome Boateng's story, who plays for Germany. Recently, the high and increasing volume in international migration prompted some European countries to rethink their naturalization laws.

In the same vein, one could also add colonial, postcolonial, even "neo-colonial" migrations, depending on the viewpoint. A football nation reinforcing its squads with talent from overseas colonies is quite a common phenomenon. In the 1970s and early 80s, Holland, for instance, a country with an extensive colonial history, was considered the best national team in the world. The so-called "Surinam Connection" in the Dutch national team is a long list of dark-skinned players of Surinamese origin, including more contemporary stars such as Clarence Seedorf or Patrick Kluivert[48] (Winner, 2001).

In 1998, France was able to win its first World Cup. More than 60 per cent of the squad members had their roots in French ex-colonies in Africa, predominantly from the north but also the center and west. The most outstanding figure is Zinedine Zidane, FIFA's Player of the Year 1998, 2000 and 2003 (Toussaint, 2007). Zidane's parents came from Algeria. Many more such examples exist.

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[48] Winner (2001) argues that the traditional playing style of the Oranje, the Dutch national team, with its emphasis on aesthetics and a beautiful handling of the ball, can only be explained with the Surinamese input.

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In most contemporary legal systems, there are two contrasting principles of nationality attainment, *Jus Sanguinis* and *Jus Soli*. *Jus Sanguinis* is an essentialist principle that expresses the notion of an 'objective nationality' (Brubaker, 1994) which, in turn, is inherited through the parents. One can thus also call it 'Law of the Blood'. Today, most European countries still adhere to *Jus Sanguinis* although some countries, e.g. France, Britain, Germany, made some legal amendments due to the reality of increased immigration to these countries since the late 20th century. In recent history, the German latecomers of the dissolved ex-Soviet Union and Poland (*Spätaussiedler*) are a prominent example of *Jus Sanguinis* since they received German citizenship immediately because of their 'objective' German nationality/ethnicity (§ 1 Paragraph 2 No. 3 BVFG).

The contrasting principle is *Jus Solis* or 'Law of the Land'. Perhaps the best-known example of applied *Jus Solis* is the constitution of the United States which grants US-citizenship to everybody who was born on American soil (state.gov, 2014) even if the parents are non-nationals. Today most countries of the 'New World' apply this principle, whereas most historical European nations still uphold the 'Law of the Blood', albeit modified.

One could argue, the various *Jus Sanguinis* legislations are a product or parallel of essentialist, primordialist thinking, as outlined in the chapter on denationalization. Primordialists believe that ethnicity was a natural characteristic, passed down from generation to generation, held together by a somewhat mystical (and diffuse) bondage of language, race, bloodlines, shared belief systems, origin and ancestry. *Jus Sanguinis* treats nationality as something essential as well, inherited from the parents and through a blood line. As I have argued before, in the social sciences primordialism is largely discredited, yet it still dominates many political and legal discourses. In hypothesizing that the Swiss national team[49] was de-ethnicized or denationalized due to its players' migration experience, one relies heavily on a primordialist understanding of the same.

6.5 The Argentinian Case

In the Argentinian case the legal analysis becomes more problematic, especially because the two contrasting principles of nationalty attainment, *Jus Sanguinis* and *Jus Solis*, "clash". This clash is highlighted in the biography of Diego Armando Maradona, perhaps the best-known footballer of all times.

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[49] Or alternatively German, Austrian, French, Dutch team etc.

Diego Armando Maradona was born to a very poor family in Villa Fiorito, a shantytown in the outskirts of Buenos Aires. He is of mixed ethnic origin, with traces from Italy, Spain, indigenous blood, even Croatia (Maradona, 2004). Maradona's club career is deeply associated with SSC Naples (Burns, 2011). At that time, professional football in Italy was dominated by the teams from the rich north, above all AC, Inter Milan and Juventus Turin (ibid). Still today there is a palpable economic, cultural and social gap between the two halves of the country (Doyle, 2002). Especially with the help of Maradona, Naples was able to win the national championship and national cups several times. Some even interpreted Naples' success as a symbolic inversion of the encrusted power-relations between the two regions (Poli, 2007).

On the national side level, Maradona led Argentina to their second World Cup victory in Mexico in 1986. In 1990, the World Cup was held in Italy. In the semi-finals Argentina had to face the host which, after a dramatic game, they were able to beat. The most spectacular thing nonetheless happened in the streets of Naples during the match, where the local fans rooted for Maradona and his Argentines instead of Italy (Poli, 2007). This is due to several factors. First, Maradona still played for Naples at that time, and the fans loyalty towards their club was stronger than for the national team – a lack of interest for their national team, despite its success, can still be observed in the Italian public (Foot, 2007). Second, many fans of Naples saw in the national team a product of the association which was dominated by the powerful north. And third, as I outlined earlier, Maradona and many other Argentines are of Italian ancestry who hold dual citizenship, thus an ethnic-national distinction is difficult to uphold.

I already outlined the extensive set of relations between many South American and Southern European countries due to language affinity, legal regulations, historical connections and the consequences for transfer networks. In Argentina, about 90% of the population are of European origin with Italian descendants being by far the biggest group (Luna, 1994). This is due to a large Italian emigration wave in the late 19th and early 20th century (ibid). The Italian influence is traceable in many cultural dimensions[50]. During the fieldwork for this paper in Southern Brazil and Argentina, most of my informants in Buenos Aires had dual citizenship, both an Argentinian passport and a European, most of the times Italian or

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[50] E.g. the Argentinian and Uruguayan variety of the Spanish language, the so-called *Rioplatense*, with a melody and intonation pattern that resembles Southern Italian dialects more closely, especially Neapolitan, than the Castilian varieties (Noll, 2001). The Argentinian cuisine with ubiquitous pizza, pastas and milanesas serves as another example.

Spanish, one. The ties between the countries are old and well-established, dating back more than a century, and it is exactly this constant "to and fro" of the residents that prompted FIFA to initiate a statute reform in 1932, as I wrote in the second part on FIFA's legal framework.

From the legal framework perspective, the Argentinian case is evasive. Two contrasting principles of nationality attainment 'clash' here, *Jus Sanguinis* and *Jus Solis*. *Jus Sanguinis* is the dominant principle in many European countries which considers nationality an essential quality that is inherited through the blood. Those inhabitants of Argentina that can prove their Italian ancestry are entitled to Italian nationality. *Jus Solis* is the dominant principle in the New World which bounds nationality to the soil of birth. All Italo-Argentines are of course Argentines because of the fact that they were born and raised in the territory of the country. FIFA's reaction on this in 1932 was conservative, trying to preserve its predefined notion of nationality. FIFA still ignores the possibility of bi-nationality and regards nationality as monolithic.

For FIFA, nationality is a question of either/or rather than and/or. This makes it legitimate to speak of a real denationalization phenomenon here. More pronounced examples of denationalization will be presented in the following sections.

6.6 "Excessive" Naturalizations

The Brazilian striker Ailton[51] was most successful with the German first division club Werder Bremen where he played between 1998 and 2004 (ailton.de, 2014). During the period in Bremen, his career's heyday, Ailton made international headlines with Qatar's official offer to 'buy' the top scorer as a reinforcement for Qatar's national team, involving a one million euro enticement. Ailton declared that he was willing to accept (mea.com, 2004). Only 'in the eleventh hour', shortly before signing the contract, FIFA stepped in and inhibited the deal due to its nationality statutes (stern.de, 2004).

There are other such cases where the Qatari officials were more successful. Since the beginning of the new century, the Gulf state has been notorious for an active naturalization policy in order to become a regional sports power (Poli, 2007). Said Saaeed Shaheen, formerly Stephen Cherono, is a Kenyan steeplechase runner who switched allegiance to Qatar in 2003. He admits that he did so primarily for financial benefits (Longman, 2003). Shaheen has no connections to Qatar whatsoever and splits his personal life between Kenya and Switzerland. The only request on behalf of the Qataris was the athlete's adoption of a

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[51] I discuss Ailton here because, if possible, I want to stick to Brazilian and African examples.

Muslim name[52]. Similarly, Ethiopian middle distance runner Zanebech Tola, today Maryam Jusuf Jamal, was naturalized by Bahrain's athletic association in 2006 after she had sought political asylum in various Western countries, e.g. Canada and Switzerland (Baynes & Cheng, 2008). Like Shaheen she had no relations to the country prior to her naturalization and adopted the citizenship primarily for economic and political reasons. But it is not only Middle Eastern 'oil states' that woo foreign athletes for their sports image enhancement, Slovenia, for instance, has also been a noticeable actor in this respect recently (Poli, 2007).

According to Poli et al. (2007:653-54), a revolutionary change could be in the making:

"(…) The international rugby board now permits the employment of up to three foreign players at any one time. Even if their employment is conditional on them having played for at least three years in their 'country of adoption' and not having played for the national team of their country of origin, these new rugby rules on nationality could prefigure a revolution in the world of sport. In fact, the incorporation into the national team is here partially disconnected from the nationality of the sportsmen, giving rise to a sport citizenship, which is not based on nationality."

This, indeed, is a novelty in the international sport scene. Whether other sport organizations follow and whether the reform marks a watershed in the re-conceptualization of nationality remains to be seen.

So far the most 'extreme' cases in this respect, however, are the football national teams of Togo and Equatorial Guinea. The former Brazilian head coach Antonio Dumas systematically naturalized compatriots from minor Brazilian leagues (Künzler, 2010). The Guinean football association *Feguifut* seems to uphold this practice even after its creator left (Gleeson, 2009). In the last part of the thesis, I will scrutinize this extreme form of "denationalization" more closely.

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[52]There is an anecdote that at one occasion he had to consult his Qatari passport to tell what his official name is.

7. *Chapecoense* – A Historical Reconstruction

Chapecó is a town with about 200,000 inhabitants in the hinterland of Southern Brazil, in the extreme west of the state of Santa Catarina. It is located approximately 500 kilometers from Florianópolis, the state's capital, to the east, 1300 kilometers from Rio de Janeiro to the northeast and just a short drive to the Argentinian border in the west. Chapecó is surrounded by hills, extensive fields and pastures, but the potential natural vegetation is *mâta atlantica,* a type of subtropical perennial rain forest common in the region, and araukaria forests that once covered vast areas in the higher altitudes. The town lies about 400 kilometers from the world-famous Iguaçu Falls at the border triangle between Brazil, Argentina, and Paraguay.

Apart from native settlers such as the Kaingang and, to a lesser extent, Guaraní, the first people who frequented the area were so-called *bandeirantes*[53] from São Paulo in the 17th century. Later, the region became an important hub for agriculture and above all stock-farming which retain its significance for the locality to the present. In the 19th and first half of the 20th century, Chapecó (and Brazil in general) experienced large immigration waves from many European countries such as Italy, Spain and Germany. The descendants of European immigration constitute the largest share of Chapecó's population.

Chapecó is by no means a city, it is too small and rather unimportant on the national scale. Besides that, it is not situated by the sea - a characteristic that most Brazilian metropolises, with the exception of the planned capital Brasilia, share. In Brazil, every urban settlement that is not located at a beach, is somehow countryside – the beach as an egalitarian meeting point for the various social classes and an expression of the "Brazilian lifestyle" is of high cultural significance. But likewise, Chapecó is the undisputed agro-industrial capital of the country and thus more than just a town among others somewhere in the rear. Nonetheless, whereas the state's capital Florianópolis has been described as liberal, cosmopolitan and sophisticated (due to the large annual influx of tourists from all over South America and its well-known university life), Chapecó is considered a place with a pronounced "countryside mentality"[54].

Unless one is interested in the agroindustry business and exhibitions, for the visitor there is not much to see and explore. Like many municipalities in the New World, Chapecó is strictly

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[53] Adventurers, headhunters and fortune-seekers in search of precious minerals such as gold and silver but also indigenous people for enslavement.

[54] Although I have to admit that I do not know what that, in the Brazilian context, means. The information was derived from conversations with various people (academicians, friends, but also informants) during the fieldwork in Brazil.

rectangular in shape. There is a cathedral from the 19th century in the town centre, several contemporary shopping malls and a disproportionately high number of residential high-rises. Unsurprisingly, the biggest pride of many inhabitants seems to be the local professional football club *Chapecoense*.

7.1 Chapecoense

The *Associação Chapecoense de Futebol (ACF)* has become one of the most successful football clubs in the region and was able to win the state championship of Santa Catarina four times: in 1977, 1996, 2007, and ultimately in 2011 (chapecoense.com, 2014). Perhaps most remarkably, the ACF experienced a true ascension lately, jumping from the »C« championship to the »B« championship in 2012, and from the »B« championship eventually to the national »A« championship in 2013. Currently, *Chapecoense* is competing in the all-Brazilian First Division, the highest professional league in the country.

According to the historian Maria Bellani (2007) the club was founded in a time when amateur football in Chapecó was still dormant. The town had only a couple of amateur clubs, e.g. *Atlético*, *Independente*, *Grêmio Esportivo Comercial, Guairacá*, amongst few others. Some fans and sportsmen were determined to bring football in Chapecó to new life. On May 10, 1973, in the shop of the dressmaker Heitor Pasqualotto, which was localized on the avenue Getúlio Vargas, him, Alvadir Pelisser and Altair Zanella, rooters of *Independente*, Lorário Immich and Vicente Delai, rooters of *Atlético*, decided to fuse their two traditional clubs, *Independente* and *Atlético*. This event marked the beginning of the *Associação Chapecoense de Futebol.*

The unification of two traditional clubs was appreciated by many inhabitants and later gained the support of many businessmen in the region. Fans, inhabitants and businessmen were enthusiastic about the prospect of one club representing the entire municipality. One of the principal figures in this development was Plínio de Nês, an influential local politician who offered unconditional help in the first foundational years of *Chapecoense*. The first squad was established predominantly by players from town. Some of them still exercised other professions besides football. Only few people could imagine that four years later the ACF would win its first title on the state level of Santa Catarina (Bellani, 2007).

A key to understanding the success of *Chapecoense* from the very beginning is the support of the local and regional economy. The first set of jerseys, for instance, was a donation by

Ernesto de Marco, owner of the Casas Vitória[55]. In the course of time, the AFC received a lot of backup from prominent local personalities[56].

Beto, a team member of the first hour, remembers his first game as a professional: "It was against São José from Porto Alegre on the pitch of the Colégio São Francisco. *Chapecoense* won with 1-0. The second game took place in the city of Xaxim against *Novo Hamburgo*[57]." (chapecoense.com, 2014)

Later in 1973, *Chapecoense* travelled to Florianópolis, the state's capital, to play against *Avaí*. The game ended with a draw. Pelisser, one of the founding fathers, explains: "Drawing against *Avaí* was the biggest glory for *Chapecoense*[58]." (ibid)

Remarkably, the club history's deepest crisis between 2001 and 2006 was simultaneously its biggest historical momentum. The crisis commenced as a sporting issue when in 2001 *Chapecoense* finished the season in the last position. As is often in professional sport, a financial crisis was soon to follow and in 2003, due to tremendous debts, the club was forced to take on a new name and was subsequently called *Chapecoense Kindermann/Mastervet*[59]. Nonetheless, the partnership was successful. Already by 2004 *Chapecoense* was able to pay off a large part of its debts (Sechini, direct communication, January 2014). The club readopted its previous, more traditional name which was also more accepted and cherished by the fan community. Yet the club was not through with highly fluctuating performances; in 2005 the directory that consisted of several local and regional businessmen announced Agenor Piccinin as new head coach of the club. With Piccinin success gradually returned, and in 2006 *Chapecoense* was able to win the prestigious Copa Santa Catarina, a success that prepared the team for the following season which would ultimately mark the end of its crisis period.

Chapecoense's deepest crisis was also its biggest historical momentum - this apparent antithesis is amongst others due to Antonio Dumas Ramalho Esteves, a crucial figure in this story. Antonio Dumas was born on November 28, 1955 in Santo André, São Paulo state. He is a Brazilian football manager who during his active time played for a number of different clubs such as *Esporte* in Bahia, *Santos* in São Paulo and S.C. *Olhaense*. After quitting his

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[55] The Casas Vitória are a shopping mall in the centre of the town.
[56] The above-mentioned Heitor Pasqualotto and Plínio De Nês, but also Avelino Biondo, Moacir Fredo, Arthur Badalotti, Gentil Galli etc. Describing their roles would lead us too far here.
[57] "Foi contra o São José de Porto Alegre, no campo do Colégio São Francisco, Chapecoense 1X0 São José, o segundo jogo foi realizado na cidade de Xaxim contra o Novo Hamburgo."
[58] "Empatar com o Avaí na capital foi a maior glória para a Chapecoense".
[59] *Kindermann* and *Mastervet* were regional companies that operated as sponsors and new donors.

active career and coaching several Brazilian teams he became a globe trotter coach with special regional focus on Western Africa. He coached the national sides of Gabon, Sao Tomé and Principe, Togo and lastly Equatorial Guinea.

Dumas approached *Chapecoense* either directly or indirectly through agents. The way the social network between the actors was spun remains somewhat shady (Rial, January 2014, direct communication). At the beginning of the first decade of the new millenium *Chapecoense* was in deep financial trouble and looking for other business models that could help alleviate its predicament, for example player loans. Indeed Dumas had a highly innovative business idea. He had spotted a quintet of *Chapecoense's* players, convinced them to adopt Togolese nationality and play for the national team for a special fee, which was for their own and indirectly also their current club's benefit because thus they were able to enhance their revenue margin.

All in all, Togo had six naturalized Brazilian players in 2003 (the above-mentioned quintett from *Chapecoense* as well as Hamílton from *Sergipe*) who participated in the 2004 African Cup of Nations Qualifiers and the 2006 FIFA World Cup Qualifiers. Perhaps it should be mentioned that Dumas' idea to strengthen the Togolese national team with Brazilians was not very successful. None of the players played more often than half a dozen times and soon thereafter Dumas was dismissed. Nonetheless, he upheld his strategy to naturalize Brazilians in all other national teams he managed and was for example more successful in Equatorial Guinea. The names of the Togolese Brazilians are *Mikimba*, *Bill*, *Fábio Oliveira*, *Cris* and *Fabinho.*

All played together for *Chapecoense* in the 2003-04 season. They can be characterized as extremely spatially mobile players: Throughout their respective professional careers and as a whole, they played for not fewer than eighty clubs! Moreover, ethnically they are Afro-Brazilians, i.e. dark-skinned Brazilians with partial African ancestry.

Jeferson Paulo Rodrigues de Souza (born December 14, 1981), known simply as *Mikimba* or *Jeferson*, is a midfielder who was born in Joaçaba, a small city situated in the Brazilian state of Santa Catarina. *Mikimba* made his Togo national team debut on June 8, 2003 in a 2004 African Cup of Nations Qualifying match against Cape Verde, in Lomé. That day *Les Eperviers* (the nickname of Togo national football team) won by 5-2. Alessandro Faria (born June 7, 1978 in Porto Alegre, Brazil), known simply as *Bill* like *Mikimba* made his Togo national team debut on June 8, 2003 in Lomé. He scored one of the Togolese goals. Bill also played for Togo against the Ghanaian club *Asante Kotoko* in a friendly match on 29 June

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2003 in Stade de Kégué, Lomé. Fábio de Jesus Oliveira, usually known as *Fábio Oliveira,* is also a midfielder. He was born in Ipatinga, a city and municipality located in eastern Minas Gerais state. He and some other Brazilian-born players played for Togo in June and July 2003 in qualifying matches against Cape Verde, Kenya and Mauritania. He too played for Togo against the Ghanaian club *Asante Kotoko* in Lomé. Cristiano Alves Pereira, better known as *Cris*, is a defender. He was born in Joinville, a city in Santa Catarina, in the Southern Region of Brazil. Fábio Pereira de Azevedo (born 1 January 1977), known simply as *Fabinho*, is a striker. *Fabinho* was born in Salvador, a city on the northeast coast of Brazil and the capital of the Northeastern Brazilian state of Bahia. *Fabinho* played for Togo on July 5, 2003 in a 2004 African Cup of Nations Qualifying match against Mauritania. He was also Togolese international in two friendly matches.

In general, Togolese fans have appreciated the infusion of Brazilian skill into their national side campaign. There are rumours that the Brazilian players, all of African descent, have Togolese ancestry. Historical ties between Brazil and Togo to and fro the Atlantic indeed existed and continue to exist (e.g. Amos, 2001). For instance, surnames like 'de Souza' and 'Parreira' appear to be common in Togo, too. But the alleged Togolese ancestry of the Brazilian football players cannot be verified clearly.

7.2 Discussion

Marcos Alvito remarked (2007:525):

What takes place on a pitch in a regional match between two second-tier teams in a suburb of Rio is determined by global factors, which means that we have to start thinking about the specificities of Brazilian football in terms of new paradigms for global sports.

The interaction between the regional club *Chapecoense* and the national teams of Togo and Equatorial Guinea is the fruit of the relationship between the local, regional, and global. But this is not the only reason why I dedicated several pages of a master thesis to an, outside of Southern Brazil, largely unknown football club. The true reason is the "historicity" of *Chapecoense's* history, so to speak:

In a time of challenge and big distress, *Chapecoense* allowed the commission of five of its players to Togo, a country whose soil none of them had ever touched before. Similar incidents might have occurred before, but if so, rather haphazardly and in no way as systematic and permeating as orchestrated by Dumas. Knowingly or not, he triggered a

development that seems to be changing the world of professional sport for good[60]. I do not assert it would not have occurred *without* Dumas. The economic and legal trajectories of world football make this step seem logical. Nonetheless, Dumas and *Chapecoense* are among the first and principal agents in this 'revolution in the making'. I consider this line of argument one of the central hypotheses of the paper.

Interestingly, the strategy was not very successful in the beginning. None of the *Chapecoense* players performed more often than six times for Togo. Soon thereafter Dumas left the country too. But the coach apparently believed in what he was doing and later in Equatorial Guinea harvested the first sporting successes with it. In the next chapter, we will focus on *Feguifut* and the national teams of Equatorial Guinea.

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[60] If this statement is overinflated, then at least the structure of national team football in some West African countries.

8. Fieldwork

8.1 Setting Out the Ground

Equatorial Guinea is a country hardly known to the general European public. It is situated in West or Central West Africa and is bordered by Cameroon in the north, Gabon in the south and the Atlantic Ocean to the west. It has an area of 28,051km² and a population of about 1 million. This is a rough estimation since no data exists. Equatorial Guinea is a small country, comparable to Belgium in size; by African standards it is a dwarf.

Equatorial Guinea is a "peculiar" country in many respects. It is both an insular and continental state. The bigger share of the country's territory is on the mainland, but the capital Malabo, and thus the administrative, economic and political centers, are located on Bioko Island. The island is located several hundred kilometers off shore in a Northwestern direction and thus closer to Cameroon than to its own mainland.

Equatorial Guinea is culturally and ethnically relatively homogenous, 85% of the people are Bantu-speaking Fang (cia.gov, 2014). Moreover, Equatorial Guinea is the only country in Africa where the official language is Spanish. This is due to a historical anecdote: In 1778, the Spanish Empire traded one strip of South America with a "patch" in Africa, owned by Portugal. From then on, Equatorial Guinea was ruled from the Viceroyalty of La Plata in Buenos Aires. After the independence of South America's Spanish colonies, Equatorial Guinea was directly under the control of Madrid (Castro-Anatolín, 1992). Recently, there have been some initiatives to promote French and Portuguese as co-official languages, mainly to improve the relations with its neighbors. The dominant language, however, remains Spanish.

The start of independence in 1968 was difficult – the population was extremely poor, infrastructure bad. Fish, coffee, cocoa and timber were the main export goods (cia.gov, 2014). Small-scale subsistence farming predominated. In 1984, eventually, large offshore oil reserves were discovered, not far from the capital Malabo. Estimations of up to one billion barrels of oil and up to 200 million cubic meters of gas are hidden under the ocean crust.

Since the discovery, the population of Equatorial Guinea has almost tripled and large investments have been made. Migration from the surrounding countries has increased. Attempts are being undertaken to tap the potential for tourism and develop infrastructure. Yet questions of a fair distribution of petrodollars and social justice remain.

Recently, the oil boom has also had its influence on football in Equatorial Guinea (Tiesler, 2011). The national teams or *Nzalang Nacional* until recently played at best a marginal role on the African and global stage. With reforms facilitated by the petrodollars, *Nzalang Nacional* jumped from No.195 in the FIFA World Ranking in 1998 to No.59 in 2013. In addition, they were the co-hosts of the African Cup of 2012, a big gain in prestige. For the first time in their history they reached the quarter-finals of the Cup. The women's team is even more successful, becoming Africa's champion in 2008. How can this sudden success be explained?

Brazil, on the contrary, does not need much of a general introduction. It is the fifth biggest country in the world both in size and population (cia.gov, 2014). It is the regional super power in South America and the B in the so-called "BRIC-states", an agglomerate of emerging global players that challenge the dominance of the Western world (Firzli, 2011), consisting of Brazil, Russia, India, and China. Brazil has enormous natural and human resources, a developing industry and is likely to continue to play an even growing role in world politics and trade (O'Neil, 2010).

The link between the Brazilian "giant" and the remote Guinean "dwarf" is the Brazilian coach Antonio Dumas who was born in Santo André (São Paulo state) in 1995 and belongs to a very special type of globetrotter coaches. He was the head coach of many African national teams including Togo, Sao Tomé e Principe, Gabon, and Equatorial Guinea. According to his own Facebook site, he is currently assuming a job in Syria (facebook.com, 2014).

As outlined earlier, Dumas introduced a new and revolutionary strategy as a coach in that he systematically naturalized compatriots with the purpose of strengthening the specific national team under his charge (Künzler, 2010). Interestingly, only Equatorial Guinea seems to have upheld this practice after Dumas left.

According to a wikipedia article, there is a large contingent of Brazilian professionals (and other nationalities, too) that so far have played for *Nzalang Nacional*. Consultations with the Brazilian football researcher Carmen Rial from the UFSC (Universidade Federal do Santa Catarina) reveal that the list is very likely to be correct. The number is at least more than forty players (Wikipedia.org, 2014).

8.2 Biographical Accounts

The list of Brazilian-Guinean football players is long. In one international fixture in 2013 alone, nine out of eleven on the field were Brazilians[61]. Additionally, there is a high fluctuation: Expatriate footballers that, for whatever reasons, do not show up anymore, tend to be immediately substituted by others. For the present study, the biographies and careers of at least thirty-seven[62] athletes were considered, twenty-three men and fourteen women. The result is a load of material: radio, video and print interviews, personal statements via social media[63], as well as personal online chats with some of them.

It is the ethnographer's task to view, order, scrutinize, interpret and lastly present his material to the readership. Personally, I believe that a good ethnographic account can also include elements of storytelling in the way that stories approach their protagonists from a more holistic point of view than conventional scientific theories. Of course, ethnographies should include outer political, economic, social and cultural circumstances – the wider context – as well, but also inner thoughts and feelings, the informant's construction of meanings – the so-called emic perspective.

In the following, I will present two biographies / life stories: Emmanuel Danilo Clementino Silva's (*Danilo*) and Claudiney Ramos "*Rincón's*". In my opinion their stories symbolize the two juxtaposed, extreme poles between which most other careers can be positioned. The goalkeeper *Danilo* is in fact the only example of a Brazilian who really got established in Africa and, in the long run, became a vital and integral part of the team. *Rincón*, on the other side, is example of the many Brazilian-Guinean footballers who were picked almost "randomly", and after few appearances did not show up anymore. Yet this oppositeness is not what truly connects them[64]. During a short stay with the national team in Equatorial

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[61] According to an official note by a Brazilian football club:
http://www.barretosesporteclube.com.br/detalhes.asp?id=2452

[62] Their names include Aldir Rodrigues Nascimento Junior (Aldir), Alexandre de Oliveira Honorato (Amaral), Anderson Souza Ferreira, André Neles, Bruna Amarante da Silva, Camila do Carmo Nobre de Oliveira (Camila Nobre), Carlos César Matheus (Carlinhos), Carolina Conceicao Martins Pereira (Carol Carioca), Jussara Souza Neves (Cisne), Ana Cristina da Silva (Cris), Daniel Martins, Emmanuel Danilo Clementino Silva (Danilo), Diouzer da Crus dos Santos (Dio), Adriana Soares Parente (Drika), Dulcia Maria Davi (Dulce), Eduardo Soares Ferreira, Fernando Alves dos Santos, Floriano Claudino de Souza (Floriano), Jailton Eduardo da Silva (Jailton), Jonatas Paulino da Silva Inacio (Jonatas Obina), Judson Augusto do Bonfim Santos (Judson), Jumaria Barbosa de Santana (Jumaria/Ju), Leonardo Santa Rito Quirino (Léo Quirino), Mariana da Silva Machado (Mari), Mirian Silva da Paixao, Mauricio de Alencar Alves (Mauricio), Ygor da Silva (Nena), Luiz de Paula Neto (Neto), Edvania Miranda da Silva (Ninha), Eduardo Santos Thomaz (Portela), Ricardo Martins Pereira (Ricardinho), Claudiney Ramos (Rincón), Ronan Carolino Falcao, Etelvino Bonfim do Santos (Teo/Theo), Adriana Aparecida Costa (Tiga/Tiganinha), Vania Cristina Martins, Willian da Silva Gomes dos Santos (Willian).

[63] *Facebook* blackboard entries and 'tweets' on *Twitter*.

[64] Apart from being Brazilians playing for Equatorial Guinea, of course.

Guinea, both *Danilo* and *Rincón* contracted malaria. After a heavy course of disease, *Danilo* was able to recover and eventually resumed his career. Tragically, *Rincón* lost the fight and died in a hospital in São Paulo state[65]. At this point, I dare to employ a literary device and regard the infection with *malaria africana*, a widely-diffused disease on the continent with epidemic dimensions, as a metaphor for two South American athletes challenged by their first 'encounter' with the new environment. From a storyteller's point of view, malaria ties the two connected biographies/careers more strongly together. Marcus (1995) wrote that

Life histories reveal juxtapositions of social contexts through a succession of narrated individual experiences that may be obscured in the structural study of processes as such. (…) The[se] spaces are not necessarily subaltern spaces (although they may be most clearly revealed in subaltern life histories) but they are shaped by unexpected or novel associations among sites and social contexts suggested by life history accounts.

In this sense, I regard the malaria infection of both *Rincón* and *Danilo* as such an unexpected, novel association, brought to light by the life history account strategy.

8.2.1 Danilo

Emmanuel Danilo Clementino Silva was born on March 5, 1982 in Caruaru, a town located in the northeastern state of Pernambuco, Brazil. Throughout his career as a professional goalkeeper, he was active in Brazil's lower divisions. At one point, he allegedly received an offer to play in Numancia (Spain), but the contract was never sealed. Like many others, he would probably be known solely inside his locale's fan scene and the local sports media. With Equatorial Guinea his biography became extremely interesting.

He is a naturalized Guinean since 2006 and, as stated before, so far the only among the Brazilian-Guinean footballers who consolidated to their "new home". This makes his perspective unique. But how did the opportunity to play for Equatorial Guinea actually arise? Did a connection already exist?

This story commenced in 2006, as I already told you. The coach of the time was a Brazilian, and he was in great need of a goalkeeper. (...) African field players have a tendency to be more recognized than goalkeepers. So, I was invited to be naturalized for the national team of Equatorial Guinea and since 2006 I have been playing for the national team of that country. (...)

My base was (...) Recife [a city in Northeastern Brazil], and such an opportunity appears through football situations, things like that. (...) When you expect them the least, they happen. I have never

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[65] The disease only broke out after they returned to Brazil.

heard of that country before, even less when it came to football, and the opportunity appeared with the coach of the time, as I already told you. He invited me, I accepted. (...)[66],[67]

Several statements are particularly remarkable. First, *Danilo* tells that the opportunity arose through the Brazilian coach of the time, namely Antonio Dumas, but not how the contact was really established. The opportunity appeared "through football situations." And "when you expect them the least, they happen". The social networks revolving around footballers, coaches, agents, club functionaries, are indeed often highly nontransparent[68]. Much of the networking is informal, news about offers etc. spread from mouth to mouth. The footballers are reaching out and ready for negotiations virtually all the time[69].

Moreover, he states that "African field players have a tendency to be more recognized than goalkeepers." According to Poli et al. (2010), statistics reveal that African and Latin American strikers and midfielders are much more sought after in the European market than defenders and goalkeepers, allegedly because they are more skillfull. Apparently, similar discourses between Africa and South America exist. Dumas looked for a suitable goalkeeper in Brazil because presumably he could not find one in Africa where the quality is poorer.

Lastly, there was no connection between *Danilo* and Equatorial Guinea prior to the convocation: "I have never heard of that country before, even less when it came to football." This statement is indeed remarkable because if correct it would make his naturalization according to the FIFA statutes irregular!

Since *Danilo* has been defending Guinea's goal for several years, we can also expect memorable moments that shaped his view on Equatorial Guinea and Africa. The highlight of his international career was the Africa Cup of Nations 2012, the equivalent of UEFA's

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[66] My translations from the Portuguese. The interviews were conducted for a regional Brazilian TV station as well as ESPN, a sport channel (Alecrim TV, 2013; ESPN, 2013). The respective links are in the reference list.

[67] "Essa historia começou em 2006, como já te falei anteriormente. O treinador da epoca era um brasileiro, e ele estive numa carece muito grande de goleiro (…) porque jogadores africanos tem uma tendencia de serem mais reconhecidos de que os goleiros. Entao, eu foi convidado a me naturalizar pela selecao de Guiné Equatorial e desde 2006 eu estou jogando para a seleção do este pais. (…) A minha base (…) foi Recife, e aparece essa oportunitade por situaçoes de futebol, coisas assim (…). Quando se menos espera que as acontessem. Eu nunca ter ouvido falar de esse pais, menos no questião de futebol, e aparecia essa oportunidade com o treinador da epoca, como já te falei. Me convidou, eu aceitei.

[68] In an interview, the pundit Carmen Rial told me that she had been trying for years to figure such intricate networks out (Rial, 2013; direct communication).

[69] This somehow evokes an association with my main informant *Bobo* for another ethnographic inquiry on sports betting parlors in Germany's migrant districts. In his youth, Bobo was a talented footballer, too, and played for several amateur clubs big enough to pay several hundred euros compensation per month. Whenever Bobo had the chance to get a "raise" at another club he would immediately go there, disregarding if the club played in a lower league. Today Bobo believes that this behavior ironically impeded a professional career because he never played long enough in one club to get scouted (other regulars in the betting parlor confirmed that he was really talented).

European Cup, where Equatorial Guinea was the co-host and reached the quarter-finals, a big sporting success for the small country. Perhaps the most precious moment was the quarter-final game itself. Equatorial Guinea lost 0-3 to Ivory Coast and was kicked out of the tournament, but *Danilo* managed to defend a penalty against the world star Didier Drogba:

Until today I am remembered in all Africa for defending [...] the penalty against Drogba, a very venerated player by the fans and for me it was a very important moment. When you are inside the game, you don't look if it is Drogba or Joazinho [a Brazilian expression for John Doe], you focus on the game, on the match. But after the game you see what you did and that he is a great person[70].

But what about his perspectives of Africa? What struck him most when he arrived in the country? And did his opinion change in the course of time?

(...) I really changed my mind with relation to Africa. I, I think that the majority of Brazilians have a[n] ... opinion of Africa, a perspective that is not the truth. Africa has good things, too, also negative things but also good things.[71]

[What struck me most was] the euphoria of the fans. Because the people accustomed to Brazil think Brazil was a euphoric country, the fans with the players and (...) football. But there, I don't know, because of the lack of opportunities - the people don't have opportunities like here - it's completely crazy (...) much more than you can imagine, the relationship between the fans and the players. This is what struck me most[72].

In the same interview he has some interesting thoughts on Guinean football:

They have the tendency to invest much in the national team and little in the clubs. The national team has a very good structure, we have everything. When I say everything, I mean really everything what the people need (...) Sometimes I said with a stronger league they would have better results in the long run but they want immediate results. They invest much in the national team and leave the clubs (...)[73]

And, most importantly, his view concerning nationality and identity:

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[70] "Até hoje sou reconhecido na toda Africa por defender (…) o penalty de Drogba, um jogador (…) muito venerado pela torcida e pra mim foi um momento importante. Quando se esta dentro do jogo, voce nao olha se é Drogba ou se é Joaozinho, voce se concentra no jogo, na partida. Mas depois do jogo voce ve o que fez e que é uma pessoa muito grande."

[71] "Realmente me mudou muito a opinião em relaçao a Africa. Eu, como acho que a maioria das brasileiros, tenho uma (…) um pensamento da Africa, uma spetativa que não é verdade. Africa tem coisas boas tambem, tem negativas mas tem muitas coisas boas."

[72] "(…) a euforia da torcida. Porque a gente acostumbrada ao Brasil acha que o Brasil é um pais euforico, as torcidas, com jogadores e (…) o futebol. Mas lá, eu nao sei, pela (…) falta de oportunidades - a gente não tem tantas oportunidades como aqui - e uma loucura totalmente (…) muito mais de que você possa imaginar, a relaçao da torcida com os jogadores. Esso mais me chamou a atençao."

[73] "Eles tem uma tendencia de investir muito na seleçao e investir pouco nos clubes. A seleçao tem uma estrutura muito boa, nos temos tudo. Quando falo tudo, realmente tudo do que a gente precisa [...] As vezes ja foi falado que com a liga mais forte (…) mais eles querem resultados immediatos. Investir muito na seleçao y deixar os clubes (...)"

I did not know the language, I was a bit at distance from the other players, then I started to fit in, know the people, know the history of the country. You start feeling a bit like being from that country, too. They treat me really well. The fans are very euphoric when I come. I feel like a Guinean[74].

It is important to repeat here that *Danilo's* perspective in this regard is very special. He is the only Brazilian who, in the course of time, became consolidated in Equatorial Guinea as integral part of the team. We will discuss the structural frictions between the clubs and the national teams and tensions even within the national team of Equatorial Guinea more detailed in the next chapter. Still, one feels the distance when *Danilo* says that he started "feeling a bit like being from that country, too." The emphasis is on *a bit.*

This leads us directly to the last and most significant question of the interviews, questions concerning nationality and nationality change. How does *Danilo* think and feel about the developments in world football and denationalization, the increasing detachment between the player and the national team he represents? Are national teams becoming more and more like professional clubs?

Football today is a business, not only patriotism. Some choose patriotism. I don't criticize Diego's decision [Diego Costa, a Brazilian international who decided to play for Spain instead of Brazil] because I don't know under which circumstances he made it, I don't know his story. I didn't have the same opportunity to choose [between Brazil and Equatorial Guinea]. I think for me it was the right decision[75].

He underscores that "football today is a business". Deciding to play for a national team is not only a question of patriotism and national belonging, but nowadays also a professional career opportunity. In the same interview *Danilo* revealed that he had known he would never have the opportunity to play for his own country, due to the quality of his performance, thus the chance to play international tournaments for another country was additionally tempting, with respect to possible career opportunities. His decision must be considered in this light, too. Interestingly, in the very same context he states that "first and foremost, one must provide for his family." Research on Brazilian football professionals has shown that many rely heavily on the support of their family in the beginning of their careers and the relationship is reciprocal (Rial, 2008). Once they are on their way, footballers have the obligation to take care of their families, too, and compensate for their previous investments. This serves also as a motivation to look for new income opportunities. I think *Danilo's* stance

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[74] "Não conhecia a língua, ficava um pouco afastado dos jogadores, depois que comecei a entrosar, conhecer o povo, conhecre a historia do pais, você se sente um pouco do pais também.
Eles me tratam superbem. A torcida é muito eufórica quando eu venho. Me sinto como guineano."
[75] Futebol hoje é um negocio, não é só patriotismo. Alguns optam mesmo pelo patriotismo. Não critico a decisão do Diego, porque não sei em que condições fez a escolha, não sei a história dele. Eu não tive a mesma oportunidade de escolher. Acho que foi a atitude correta para mim.

is quintessential. Most other Brazilian-Guineans think and feel in a similar manner towards their new "strategic citizenship" (ibid).

8.2.2 Rincón

Claudiney Ramos, nicknamed *Rincón*, was born on March 15, 1980 and died on July 8, 2013. Unlike *Danilo's* case, little material about him can be found. Due to his premature, tragic death, it was not possible to contact him personally for an interview. Most newspaper articles about him focus on his malaria infection and death in a hospital in São Paulo.

I would like to take a different approach here and go briefly through all stations of *Rincón's* career as a professional footballer. I already observed that most of my informants/protagonists of my study are members of a highly mobile population, *Rincón's* career serves as an illustrative example. He started his career in 2004 in *Gremio Barueri* (São Paulo), Brazil's "D" competition. He was 23 years old. In the 2004-05 season he switched to *Tautabé* (São Paulo), in 2005 to *Ceilandia* (Distrito Federal, Brasília), in 2006 *Santo André*, back to São Paulo state, in 2007 to *Paulista*, 2008-09 to *Guaraní*, 2009 *São Bernardo*, all São Paulo, in 2010 to *ASA* (Alagoas, Brazil's Northeast), in 2011 to *Macaé*, Rio de Janeiro, in 2012 to *União São João*, back to São Paulo, and still in the same year to *Capivariano* and *Itabaiana* (in Sergipe, Northeast). His last station as a professional was from 2013 in *Avenida*, Rio Grande do Sul, the very south of the large country.

In Brazilian Portuguese, this circulation from club to club is called *rodar* and very typical of most footballers (Rial, 2008). Personally, I believe only by means of the above enumeration we can get a feeling of a young professional athlete struggling to realize his dream and make ends meet. *Rincón's* career as a Brazilian-Guinean is exemplary not only in terms of his high spatial mobility but also in terms of appearances for the African country. Most players appear only a few times.

Maybe in 2012, after signing a contract with Equatorial Guinea's Ministry of Sport and subsequently becoming a member of the national team, he hoped he was one step closer to making this dream come true. The oil-rich Equatorial Guinea is said to pay well for its footballers, and, with *Danilo's* words: "(...) we have everything. When I say everything, I really mean everything (...)".

Rincón was fielded three times for Equatorial Guinea, in two World Cup qualifiers and one friendly match. His last performance against Cabo Verde was very promising. When he came back from that trip, he still felt normal. The incubation time for *malaria africana* can take

several weeks. Sometime after arriving home he complained about headaches and pain in the body. Subsequently he was hospitalized in Soracaba Hospital (São Paulo state), where he died in the morning of July 8. His teammate *Danilo* also contracted malaria during the same trip. He too had to be delivered to the hospital, but unlike *Rincón* the disease took a more benevolent course and he was able to recover fully. Soon after his recovery, he resumed his career both in Brazil and Equatorial Guinea.

8.3 Cultural Themes

In an anthropological inquiry, of course one can define and delimitate a research question and then proceed by answering it. Ideally, the inquiry leads to novel, unexpected insights and associations, opens up new fields of research that make future studies interesting and promising. The following chapter aims to open up such new fields.

In ethnography, the analysis of the empirical material (gathered through participant observation, semi-structured, structured interviews etc.) can lead to a crystallization of so-called cultural themes; recurring motives that are particularly important in a given culture or subculture[76].

If we assume that the contingent of between fifty and one hundred male and female Brazilian-Guinean footballers represents a specific culture or subculture due to shared knowledge, values, norms, and experience, it would be interesting to see if cultural themes can be discovered as well. In the course of the fieldwork and media content analyses, I was able to identify the following: *The African 'Taboo', Resistance as Group Identity, Afro-Brazilian Background,* as well as *Evangelicalism*. I do not assert that the following presentation is complete. These are preliminary findings; more research will be necessary to substantiate or refute them.

8.3.1 The African 'Taboo'

Taboo stems from the Tongan *tapu* or Fijian *tabu* and means "prohibited, disallowed, forbidden" (Dixon, 1988: 368). A taboo is a prohibition of an action, including talk, based on the belief or social convention that such a behavior is unacceptable and under threat of punishment (britannica.com, 2014). Taboos exist in most societies. If in this context the term

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[76] In his seminal work *The Ethnographic Interview* (1979), the anthropologist James Spradley narrates his fieldwork with North American hipsters. According to his findings, one recurring cultural theme in this very culture is *to make a flop*, to find a residence or sleeping place for the night. Countless other examples exist. When referring to 'cultural themes' here, I agree with Spradley's understanding of it.

taboo is too strong or unsuitable, we could also use 'avoidance' or reluctance to talk about the experiences in Africa instead.

In Southern Brazil I was able to collect information and data on my potential informants, e.g. their social media accounts. On *Facebook*, I approached those with an account and introduced myself as an anthropology student from Germany who was interested in their personal stories as Guinean national players and offered 'Facebook friendship'[77]. About one half ignored, the other half accepted my offer. With some I was able to have interesting conversations, which of course is also difficult due to time differences, conflicting schedules etc. I tried to be careful not to "burn" the established contacts right at the beginning with intrusiveness.

The following excerpt of an online conversation took place with a female footballer who will remain anonymous because she did not give approval to divulge her name. She will be referred to as INF (informant), and I as INT (interviewer). The conversation was partly in Portuguese and partly in Spanish[78]. First we made some small-talk about this and that, suddenly she asked me to come directly to my point:

INT: What I am interested in is your experience in Equatorial Guinea as a Brazilian. I write about the so-called "denationalization" in international sport – professionals from one country going to other countries in order to play for their national teams.

INF: Ok. I don't like to talk about that.

INT: Ok. Why – if I may ask?

INF: I have an agent. If you want to, talk to him.

INT: I respect your decision but, frankly, I would rather like to talk to you. What I am interested in as an anthropologist is your own perspective. But I of course I would also talk to your agent, if you prefer that.

INF: You are ok? Who are you?

INT: I'm just a student. I have no connections to politics, officials and so on. A student who basically works for his professor and because it interests me.

INF: ☺

INT: ☺

(…)

She went on conversing with me but avoided speaking about her experiences in Africa. Instead, she related that she was "really proud" that the female Equatorial Guinean team had

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[77] If the friendship offer is accepted, one can see when the others are online on Facebook and start a conversation.
[78] She learned Spanish before her venture to Equatorial Guinea.

become very strong lately and about women's football in Germany. After her first refusal I did not want to give up so easily and rephrased my request. Please note her immediate reaction: "You are ok? Who are you?" When I appeased her that I was just a simple student who works for a degree, she calmed down a bit but ignored all further questions concerning her experiences overseas. If this behavior was singular among my informants, I could dismiss it, but it is not. In other interviews I felt this reluctance, too.

As a private person, André Neles is based in Florianópolis, the city where I conducted my fieldwork. He is a retired football professional and has embarked on a second career as an evangelical musician[79]. Neles has his own webpage. In a Christian TV interview, available on the webpage, the interviewer asks Neles to talk about his life as a football player, especially about which places he came to know:

INT: (…) and in your career as a player you already passed through great teams, you played outside of the country …

NELÉS: Indeed, I played for *Uberlandia*, started my career in *Atletico Mineiro,* to *Benfica* in Portugal I was sold in 2000, *Vila Nova*, thereafter *Maritimo*, *Vitoria*, *Internacional* Porto Alegre, *Atletico Parreira,* I played in *Palmeiras,* Fortaleza, Ceara, *Figueirense ...* and now I am back home [in Florianópolis][80].

As ethnographers, we are trained to listen to what people say, but also to listen to what people do *not* say. It is difficult to imagine that a player could simply forget that he had been an "A" national player in Africa, considering that he is capable of enumerating so many other clubs in no time. Please note that the interviewer particularly hinted at his international career by saying "you played outside of the country". He mentions *Benfica* in Lisbon, where he was fielded nine times between 2001 and 2003, but does not mention (or avoids mentioning) Equatorial Guinea, where he was fielded six times between 2007 and 2011. At the end he states that "now I am back home" as a retired player at the end of his career. If somebody asked me about my sports career, I would rather say that I was a national team member even of an unknown country than that I played for some lower tier club in the outskirts of a Brazilian city!

Another example: Adriana Aparecida Costa, short *Tiga* or *Tiganinha*, has a personal blog on blogspot.com.br. Tellingly, the blog is dedicated to women's football and futsal in Brazil and basically consists of scientific publications on the history of women's football, male

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[79] Further below we will see that the evangelical religion is of some significance.
[80] INT: (…) e na sua carreira, vocé já passou por grandes times, jogei for a do pais … - NELÈS: Já, jogei por Uberlandia, começou a minha carreira em Átletico Mineiro, Internacional de Porto Alegre, Átletico Parreira, jogei em Palmeiras, Fortaleza, Ceara, Figuirense … e agora voltou pra casa".

domination of the sport, and particularly strives to debilitate some typical prejudices, e.g. that being active in sport was bad for the woman's perceived sexuality and the like. Three features of *Tiganinha's* personal identity are highlighted: femininity, being a footballer, "Brazilianness." I was eager to find some information on *Tiga*, the naturalized Guinean, in the blog, but there is virtually nothing.

The "African taboo" can be explained on various levels. First, it is likely that there is a direction made by Feguifut's officials or the agents not to talk about Equatorial Guinea in public. As we will see in the next subchapter, the naturalization of Brazilians and other nationals is being debated controversially with respect to its legality, in the sports media, and by FIFA, and the Guinean public. Second, in Brazil's media discourses on expatriate footballers there are also sentiments of nationalism (Rial, 2013; direct communication). By many, the 'body drain' is perceived as a weakening of domestic football, and naturalized footballers are being referred to as 'traitors' to the Brazilian cause, as the interviews with *Danilo* already hint at. Third, they simply do not speak much about Africa because Africa is not important to them personally. Please recall *Rincón's* "odyssey" all over Brazil to find a suitable club that would give him a good contract. Carefully asked: why should a handful of games at just another location make a difference? My informants are contemporary football "nomads" who are used to frequent travelling from early on. Is it really appropriate to speak of denationalization in the sense of de-ethnicization?

8.3.2 Defiance, Rejection, Resistance – Group Identity

The naturalization of Brazilians is being debated controversially with respect to its legality, in the sports media, FIFA, and the Guinean public. Bonifacio Manga Obiang, president of *Feguifut* and the son of Teodoro Obiang's son, the head of state of Equatorial Guinea, saw himself prompted to make a press declaration in this regard (bbc.co.uk, 2011):

I will reply to the question, I want to say that the competence of whichever player is called up is by the national coach, because he is the one who selects the players. As for the rest, the federation fully respects the regulations that are set up by FIFA. Our federation speaks to other federations to ask them which player we can call up, and we only call on those. Neither do we call up every player that is out there, we don't call up all players from outside, because the selection can only have twenty-three players. The majority of these who play here in the local league, the rest are players who come from overseas. On the other side I want to tell you there are not many players who we have who are not from Equatorial Guinea. In fact, all players who we bring in from outside to take part in the national team have some relationship with Guinea, following on with the regulations laid down by FIFA. In order for them to qualify to play for Equatorial Guinea they should have either been born in the country or their parents are originally from Guinea or they are based in our local leagues, and so these players who are brought in who have no origins in Equatorial Guinea are those who have played in our league. We are following the rules that have been established by FIFA.

However, this official view as expressed by Obiang is being questioned inside and outside the public arena. Henri Michel, ex-coach of Equatorial Guinea, in an interview (Loyens, 2011):

INT: (…) la politique de naturalisation de joueurs étrangers (le gardien Emmanuel Danilo Clementino Silva, les défenseurs Ronan Carolino Falcão et Lawrence Doe, le milieu défensif Daniel Ekedo et, plus récemment, l'attaquant Thierry Fidjeu Tazemeta ont rejoint l'effectif) va-t-elle se poursuivre ?

MICHEL: Non, nous n'allons pas naturaliser à outrance. Sinon il n'y aurait plus aucune cohérence dans l'équipe. Je pense qu'il faut préserver une certaine identité.

Juvenal Edjogo-Owono, a Spanish-Guinean born in Sabadél, one of the central figures in the Guinean national team today, is even more outspoken. This excerpt is a literal transcription of a radio interview with the BBC (bbc.co.uk, 2014):

There are problems in, eh, Guinea, for this situations. There are players born in Brazil [emphasis] or there are players born in Cameroon. It's difficult this problem, but I think, the most important thing for me, federation and politics don't have any sports culture, don't have any basic rules in their morale rules. I prefer go and to play in Nigeria and Cameroon with all the players [indiscernable] born in Guinea or (...) origin to Guinea. I prefer go to play and lose [emphasis] 3[-0], 4-0, but all [emphasis] the team is Guinean, I prefer. But to, eh, take the goalkeeper in Brazil, take a defender in the Cameroon, take a striker in Nigeria, it's eh bad solutions. Temporal solutions. The politicians thinks the national team is like, eh, a club. I don't have a striker, I am going to take a striker in Brazil. (…) I have said thousand times to Obiang's son [Bonifacio Manga, Feguifut's president]: You can't do this, if one Brazilian player comes to Guinea, play, take his money, and go. I have said a lot of things. I have a lot of meetings to minister and, eh, secretario de estado [state secretary]. You can't do it, you can't do it. Guinea in 2003 not had stadiums, not had hotels, nothing. Now [emphasis] have big stadiums, good hotels and no problem. Now there are money here. Now you can do it, you can go to Brazil and Cameroon and to take players here. This is a national team.

It is interesting to see how a Spanish-Guinean who was born and grew up overseas and whose biography actually parallels the Brazilian-Guineans in at least some respects[81] presents oneself as 'true' Guinean and the others as 'false'. But this footballer discourse is not the main point. One must imagine the pressure which the naturalized Brazilians face, not only from sports journalists in Brazil and the rest of the world but also from inside the team. Juvenal said: "To (…) take the goalkeeper in Brazil (…) it's eh bad solutions. Temporal solutions." Of course he was referring to *Danilo*, his teammate (who, as we have learned, feels quite at home in Guinea by now), whom he tells publicly that he does not want him! Also Henri Michel, the then coach, speaks about excesses and: "I think one should preserve a certain identity". Naturalized Brazilians in Guinea share the experience of being at least partially rejected whereas most other national players are being venerated. Media voices

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[81] Also playing in the lower divisions of Spain's professional football, discovered and approached by Guinean agents, travelling to Guinea only to play football and the like.

(e.g. diariorombe.es, 2014), ex-coaches, even teammates express that they are against their presence!

In *The Power of Identity,* Castells (1997) distinguishes three forms of group identity building in the context of power relationships: *legitimizing identities, resistance identities,* and *project identities.* A legitimizing identity is introduced by the dominant institutions of society to extend and rationalize their domination vis-à-vis social actors. Resistance identities are generated by those actors that are in positions/conditions devaluated and/or stigmatized, thus building trenches of resistance and survival on the basis of principles different from, or opposed to, those permeating the institutions' society. A project identity emerges when social actors, on the basis of whichever cultural material is available to them, build a new identity that redefines their position and society and seek the transformation of the overall structure. He amends that what starts as a resistance identity may turn into a project identity, redefining reality by the reversal of norms.

Now if we assume that the contingent of Brazilian-Guinean footballers constitute a culture or subculture due to shared experiences, knowledge, values and norms and that they have a common group identity[82], as rudimentary as it may be, at best we could describe it as an incipient resistance identity in Castells' terms, generated by those actors that are in an inferior position, building trenches of resistance opposed to those who oppose them openly, coaches, functionaries, the general sports media, the public, even teammates. The resistance identity might be expressed by the construction of a 'taboo' or at least neglect to talk about Africa openly, but further research would be necessary to substantiate this hypothesis.

According to Castells, a resistance identity can turn into a project identity, in another theoretical framework this is also what Poli presumes when he speaks of denationalization and premises to bigger changes in international sport and nationality policy. If there is really a turn to a 'project identity' in this regard remains to be seen, however.

8.3.3 African Brazilian Background

All Brazilian-Guinean footballers are so-called Afro-Brazilians. In official Brazil, 'Afro-Brazilian' is an ethnicity, adjacent to 'White', 'Aboriginal' and 'Mixed'. Of course, naturalizing only Afro-Brazilians could be a strategy to conceal the practice on a bigger

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[82] Within the Equatorial Guinean national team there is a high fluctuation of Brazilians. Nonetheless, some Brazilians are always present. It is possible that the newcomers are being introduced to the specific set of ethic and values. A culture does not depend on individuals but is independent of them, a "fabric" at the same time superordinate and "in-between".

scale; black players in an African team are less eye-catching than white ones. Still, there may be more to it. Obiang said: "In fact, all players who we bring from outside to take part in the national team have some relationship with Guinea (…)". This statement is highly ambiguous. Guinea is also a historical region in West Africa which can, depending on the definition, compass a land mass 500 kilometers wide and 6000 long and thus equated with Western Africa as such (Quintino, 1965). Today, three modern nation-states[83] in Africa refer to themselves as successors of historical Guinea: Guinea, Guinea-Bissau and Equatorial Guinea.

It would certainly be too "daredevil" to summarize the history of African Brazilians or the intercontinental historical relationship between West Africa and the New World in the subsection of a subchapter of a 60-page master thesis. Let us be content with the fact that these relationships exist, they are strong and very profound[84]. Thus, coming back to one of the original research questions: *Did a relationship to Africa, prior to the naturalization, exist* we can conclude: Partly no – since most never even heard of Equatorial Guinea before they went there. Partly yes – because they share the trait of being Afro-Brazilians, which in Brazil is perceived as an ethnicity and thus could make for a cultural theme, a denominator of shared knowledge and experience, a motive of significance.

8.3.4 Evangelicalism

Diouzer Santos Larissa, short *Dio*, is in the contingent of the players I contacted on Facebook. On January 14, 2014 I wrote:

Good evening, Dio. My name is Dusan and I am a German researcher. Right now I am investigating football in Africa and your story interests me a lot. I also cooperate with the professor Carmen Rial in Florianópolis who already spoke to many Brazilian players all over the world. Perhaps we will have the opportunity to talk a bit here on Facebook. Regards from Florianópolis, Dusan.

On January 16, *Dio* replied:

Good evening, friend, everything alright, yes I am at your disposal whenever you want to talk. Contact me, a hug. May God bless you.

The frequent and repetitive use of expressions such as "May God bless you"[85], "Thank you Jesus", "God willing", "God is my strength" and many more indicate the adhesion to neo-Pentecoastalist congregations. Today one in five Brazilians is a member of a neo-

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[83] Let us not forget Papua New Guinea in the Southern Pacific.
[84] There are studies about the African heritage in the Caribbean languages, the Brazilian state of Bahía or the African traces in Vodoun religion or Umbanda. There is also a lot of literature on the transatlantic slave trade (e.g. Austen, 1987; Christopher, 2006; Rodney, 1972; Thornton, 1998).
[85] *Deus te abençoe* in Portuguese.

Pentecoastalist evangelical church (Londono, 2012). In the realm of professional football this turn to evangelicalism is even more pronounced. At the time of writing, I maintain a Facebook friendship with eleven Brazilian-Guinean players and virtually ALL of them regularly post content - quotations, their own words, pictures - on their Facebook boards that identify them as Pentecoastalists. Further analyses of other players on social media platforms such as Twitter and Instagram revealed similar results.

André Neles, the retired footballer and evangelical singer I introduced earlier, narrates his life before his conversion to a neo-Pentecoastalist church:

André Neles was better known as André Balada, you know, in the environment of football. I lived in the night, drank, smoked, took drugs, frequented prostitutes, and had a life without order, you know, not the life of an athelete at all and much less that of a servant of God. And in 2004 in Florianópolis brother Gustavo invited me to go to church, I accepted the invitation, and God had a plan with my life, you know. The pastor called me to come to the front, he put his hand on my head, and I fell back and couldn't see anymore, I only felt a strong blow in my heart, a very strong feeling, an interior purification. I believe that the Holy Spirit touched me, and he gave me a new life, I had been practically on the threshold of death (...), I used to live more in the favela than in my house, lacked training, in all the clubs I went to I was dispensed, nobody wanted André Balada. And in 2004 I had this powerful encounter with God, thereafter my life was transformed, my life was purified and modified. In 2008 I recorded my first CD (...)[86]

Today becoming a pastor – and at times an evangelical musician – is an increasingly frequent option for footballers after retirement (Rial, 2012). Like many other converted players, André Neles subdivides his life story explicitly in a "Before" and "After". Before he was in a kingdom of evil, so to speak, and afterwards in the kingdom of God. Before like many other evangelical footballers his life was "messed up", they drank, took drugs, went out with many different women (even prostitutes) and sometimes were also violent at home. In the "After" there is self-improvement, not necessarily in the sense of having more money, being famous or a better athlete, but in the more spiritual sense of being a good person. André Neles life narration is quite common and typical in this regard.

Usually, if the player is not born into an evangelical family (as in Nelés case), the conversion to the church takes place through evangelical friends – "brother Gustavo". Sometimes a

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[86] "André Neles foi conhecido melhor como André Balada, não é, no meio de fotebol. Vivia na noite, bevia, fumava, me drogava, me prostituia, e tive uma vida sem regras, não é, não a vida de um atleta e muito menos de um servedor de Deus. E em 2004 em Florianópolis o irmão Gustavo me convidou pra igreja, eu acetei este convite, e Deus teve um plan com minha vida, não é. O pastor me chamou a frente, colocao sua mão na minha cabeza, e caí pra trás e não pude ver mas, só senti um batimento muito forte no meu coraçao, um sentimento muito grande, uma purificaçao interior. Creio que o espiritú santo me tocou, me deu uma nova vida (…) vivia mais na favela do que na casa, faltou de treinamento, em todos os clubes aonde ia foi dispensado, ninguém queria André Balada. E em 2004 eu tive esta encontro poderoso com Deus, depois minha vida foi trasformada, minha vida foi purificada e modificada. E em 2008 gravei meu primeiro CD (…)

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future wife is religious and converts him, although it is more common for him to imitate the behavior of evangelical teammates[87].

According to Mauss (1968), religion formats a particular habitus[88] that allows professional athletes to cope with the experience of hypermobility[89] that is characteristic of their careers. Moreover, religions that propagate asceticism such as evangelicalism help disciplining the body and bringing forth a productive worker. Adherents are being encouraged to lead a healthy life, not to drink and not to smoke[90].

Religious participation has also a strong social component in that it establishes and consolidates friendships with other Brazilians that can be vital. Therefore it is quite common to emulate the behavior of the teammates.

Historically, the adhesion of many expatriate Brazilian footballers to neo-Pentecoastalist churches coincides with two reforms: the adoption of the so-called *Theology of Prosperity* in the 1970s (Mariano, 2010) and the rapid professionalization of Brazilian football in the second globalization phase. The *Theology of Prosperity* reconciles emotional and corporal asceticism on the one and material consumption on the other side. It is imperative for practicing neo-Pentecoastalists to demonstrate their success from a material perspective which is a proof that they have a good relationship with God[91]. In this philosophy material wealth is a compensation for living a life of obedience to God. In the same vein, one needs to become rich to donate money, since those who donate are inversely good people.

The protestant ethic in the *Theology of Prosperity* and other evangelical practices provide a convenient framework for this order of the body and mind to occur, fostering self-discipline and the constant monitoring of the body and emotions (remember Nelés' statement that before his conversion he lived a "life without order", that he "lacked training" and hence no club wanted "André Balada").

For those players who live overseas, religion also helps to endure the sacrifice of being away from an imagined Brazil, family and friends. The adherence to neo-Pentecoastal religious communities is probably the strongest common denominator among the Brazilian-Guinean and thus the most prominent cultural theme I was able to "filter out". In *Discussion,* we will

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[87] This explains partly why evangelical religions are so popular especially among football players.
[88] Concentration, meditation, reading the Bible every day.
[89] The long hours when a team is isolated in a hotel or training center, tense waiting in the locker room, unending hours travelling by bus, in airports and on flights.
[90] His body is the athlete's principal work tool.
[91] See also Max Weber's classic *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism.*

come back to the original research question concerning denationalization as defined in the introduction.

8.4 Discussion

8.4.1 Pragmatism as Prime Motivator

In his recent article[92] the slavist Thomas Kuhelnik (2014) examines on what motives Austrian-Serb footballers who are eligible for both countries[93] choose the nation they play for. Based on interviews, he identifies five factors: *esteem*, *loyalty*, *patriotism*, *pragmatism*, and *multi-antedecents*, a combination of the four.

Esteem subsumes players who decide in favor of the national football team that reached out earlier or more persistently. *Loyalty* shows players who are more grateful to one country – e.g. for enabling them a good football education. *Patriotism* refers to players who identify with one nation only[94]. *Pragmatism* summarizes those who decided on the basis of practical reasons – e.g. the perspective of getting nominated, considering the differing strength of the two teams etc. Kuhelnik further amends "money" as an incentive could not be fathomed because in the football scene in general, talking directly about money is a taboo[95]. Furthermore, in most cases one of the above-mentioned motives clearly sticks out.

Considering these categories with respect to the Brazilian-Guineans, the principal motive is definitely *pragmatism*, the decision based upon practical reasons. Please recall *Danilo's* statement that "football today is a business, not only a matter of patriotism". Money, i.e. the prospect of an advantageous financial transaction, for sure also matters[96]. One could infer that another motive is esteem because Equatorial Guinea was the country that reached out first. Remember that most footballers play in the lower divisions of Brazil, there is virtually no chance for them to get spotted by the Brazilian "A" team[97]. The athletes are fully aware of that, too. So the internal conflict of whether to appear for Brazil or another country never arises.

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[92] The German title of the paper is *Mehrere Identitäten, aber nur eine Mannschaft – Österreich oder Balkanstaaten? Wenn Fußballspieler mit multinationalem Hintergrund zwischen zwei Nationalmannschaften entscheiden müssen.*
[93] Austria and Serbia.
[94] In contrast to loyalty, where affinity towards more than one nation exists.
[95] As it is with Brazilian professionals.
[96] In the lower Brazilian leagues wages are low and it is not uncommon to get paid late. Feguifut, on the other hand, attracts foreign players with payments of several thousand dollars per match.
[97] Brazil's association is notorious for paying attention only to those who play in European top clubs.

8.4.2 Localization in International Migration Research: Circular Migration

I wrote earlier that my potential informants challenge all previously made definitions of migration and mobility. Are *Danilo*, *Rincón*, *Tiganinha*, André Neles and their mates actually "emigrants-immigrants"? If yes, can they be characterized as trans-migrants, "immigrants who develop and sustain multiple relations – family, economic, social, organizational, religious and political – that traverses borders"? (Basch et al., 1994). What does their naturalization as presented in the framework of contemporary labor migration actually mean?

In addition, "emigrant-immigrant" is not a native category either because the informants never relate to themselves as such. They regard themselves rather as professionals who work abroad for a limited period of time and who will finally return 'home', their country of birth and origin, or not (Rial, 2008), regardless of whether a naturalization occurred. In this vein, I propose that in our taxonomical tree of mobility/migration the phenomenon can be at best defined as a profoundly special and temporarily restricted example of circular migration. They reside and work in a locality in Brazil, move to Africa to fulfill another work contract, return home, depart again etc. In theory, circular migration is generally associated with internal (e.g. rural-urban) or transboundary migration, whereas the present migratory phenomenon is international and even intercontinental in scope, therefore profoundly special, and a rare example.

8.4.3 Cosmopolitanism vs. Strategic Citizenship

Cosmopolitan identities have been predominantly related to aesthetical and consumption habits (Hannerz, 1996). A typical "Cosmopolitan" is a member of a professional elite. He or she traffics between global cities as if he were in his native hometown, revisits museums, art galleries, theatres and restaurants with the implicitness of somebody who is used to this kind of lifestyle.

Perhaps a more cultural anthropological approach to cosmopolitanism is to postulate that cosmopolitanism is, beyond phenomenological consumption habits, above all an orientation and the willingness to commit with the "Other" (Hannerz, 1996). It is an aesthetic and intellectual attitude which is open to divergent cultural experiences, a search for contrast rather than uniformity.

The Brazilian-Guinean footballers are also members of a professional elite, i.e. singled-out individuals that are sought after for their specialized skills. But according to previous studies

(Rial, 2008), their consumption and lifestyle habits[98] does not evidence the cosmopolitanism typical of other professional categories (Beck, 2002). In the present author's words, the attainment of a new citizenship is not idealistic[99] but "strategic".

After the groundbreaking Bosman ruling, legal obstacles in most European countries disallowed the performance of four foreigners as starters in a club match. Therefore, naturalizations were and are vital for the market to remain open. Obtaining a new passport remains the principal way to avoid legislation controlling suitable players' access to football's dominant markets[100]. Strictly legally, this is a dual or multiple citizenship, but hard to understand in terms of two or more nationalities.

Thus, obtaining citizenship of the new host country does not imply gaining nationalist sentiment towards it or even acquiring a new identity adjacent to the Brazilian one. "Brazilianness" remains the sole identity of ethnic belonging. For example, the players interviewed by Rial would not speak of becoming citizens but only of "being able to get a community passport" (Rial, 2008:8). After obtaining the passport, the players continue to be seen and perceive themselves as foreigners. The naturalization has a strategic purpose (Sassen, 2008), therefore "strategic citizenship". The expatriate players cross geographic borders without really entering the countries[101], their borders are not national but those of the clubs. In our context, *Danilo's*, *Tiganinha's* and André's borders are not national either but solely those of national teams. For them, playing for Equatorial Guinea is little more than playing for another club.

On the contrary, naturalizations are not regarded by the players as increasing their distance from Brazil. The same is true for the increasing participation of Brazilian players in national teams[102]. The closeness to the original country is constantly confirmed, for example by social

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[98] In concordance with previous studies, the present analysis for example reveals that the informants still dress like ordinary people their age, sneakers, T-shirts, but from expensive brands. This congruence in fashion styles may hint at more general communalities in terms of consumption habits.

[99] An expression of willingness to commit with the "Other".

[100] In the chapter on denationalization, I alluded to this procedure by saying that in contrast to national teams, naturalizations in professional club football were nothing new.

[101] For travelling across borders does not necessarily mean players get to know the countries they visit. Routine is predetermined by the clubs' respective national associations and highly controlled. When Carmen Rial asked Denilson, whether he knew many countries, his answer was: "Yes, the hotels; we know the hotels and airports very well." (Rial, 2008). Danilo said he had never heard of Guinea prior to his invitation. André Neles even "forgot" to mention Guinea when asked where in the world he played.

[102] The uniqueness of the African cases is that in Europe and Asia the footballers are naturalized due to an initiative of the clubs! Later some are asked if they want to join the national teams. In Equatorial Guinea, professional club football is virtually non-existent. They are solicited directly by the national association Feguifut.

media analyses of what they write and post publicly. Brazilian daily consumption habits still inform their lifestyles.

Considering this and the extremely high mobility of the informants (e.g. *Rincón's* "odyssey" from one club to another) it is not surprising that the place counts little to them. When Carmen Rial started her research she had expected moving abroad to be the most significant landmark in the footballers' biographies. She soon realized that the milestone break happened at an earlier moment in Brazil: when they first left home. This moment ushered in their circulation, in Brazilian Portuguese *rodar,* where the first boundary trespassed is that of the family and intimate neighborhood (Rial, 2008). The distance is generally perceived as painful but at the same time charged with expectations of personal success and compensation. In my specific case study it was difficult to talk directly about the experience abroad because the episode in Equatorial Guinea is somewhat regarded as taboo. I was able to gather my ethnographic information partly directly, partly indirectly.

Much more than in a city or country, they are in a club/national team, and at a certain level in the football system, the stadiums, facilities, procedures, spaces and practices are pretty much alike. Again in cultural anthropological terms, one may say they move from a "non-place"[103] (Augé, 1992) to another.

8.4.4 Recruitment Strategy

Wherever in Africa Antonio Dumas hired Brazilian footballers, he did not hire individual players but a group of players[104]. This is indeed a characteristic of Brazilian players' successful migration all over the world: when a friend cannot be brought along, the clubs and associations themselves encourage closer contacts among Brazilians (Rial, 2008). The consequence is a constitution of social – and sometimes diffuse and informal – networks within a club, teammates who share responsibility and a common language on and off the field, which makes the backtracking of established contacts, as in the case of Dumas and *Chapecoense,* difficult.

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[103] According to the anthropologist Marc Augé, non-places are "symptoms" respective phenomena/materializations of postmodernity. In short, non-places, as against places, are those places where grounded social relationships do not emerge. Prominent examples are shopping malls, highways, waiting areas at airports, hypermarkets etc.
[104] Please recall the chapter on *Chapecoense*, where five players were hired at once.

8.4.5 Summary

In the present discussion, I have tried to relate my findings to previous studies on Brazilian expatriate footballers and thus bring theory and empiricism back together. The results are probably best summarized by the fellow anthropologist Carmen Rial when she writes (2008:25):

> The players approached by in this research are an extreme example of this living-between-borders associated to emigrants by recent scholarship. Can they be characterized as trans-migrants? Their physical presence there notwithstanding, they still live in Brazil, both in terms of imagination and economic investment. In Brazil, they support relatives and keep houses, farms, cars, bank accounts, and multiple investments. In this sense, they are trans-migrants. Even after nationalizing, they go on living as Brazilians and thinking of their future as in Brazil. To acquire legal citizenship is thus a strategic move, which does not mean incorporating some other national belonging. They are European[105] [respective African] citizens by right, who nevertheless feel and are perceived as foreigners. This nationalization – a clear instance of searching citizenship for strategic purposes (…) by no means implies de-nationalization or re-nationalization.

> Spain, France, Netherlands, Korea, Japan [Togo, Equatorial Guinea] – wherever the football system's mobility may lead them to *rodar* – are just a passage, a job, a sacrifice, in exchance for professional and financial prestige. They live in voluntary exile, with all the pain that the word encapsulates (ibid).

8.5 Interpretation

In international sport research, various denationalization models, which have been brought forth by geographers, economists, international relation experts and, to a lesser extent, sociologists, are presently circulating. Denationalization has been defined through the ongoing "de-ethnicization" of national teams and deterritorialization of fan communities. Although the incipient changes are not yet dominant, they are believed to be the "herald" of deeper structural changes, above all with respect to the notions towards the nation-state and nationality.

My qualitative research has shown that, at least in the parameters of the present investigation and from the emic perspective of the footballers, this view is in need of further amendments. As we have seen, the acquisition of a new citizenship does not necessarily lead to the emergence of a cosmopolitan identity or alternative super-ethnic self-ascriptions. Ethnicity, nationality and the nation-state tend to remain the central components of the athletes' identity construction. Rather than de-ethnicization, we are witnessing a process of multi-ethnicization in national teams. Moreover, multiple ethnicities are increasingly "clashing"

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[105] The researchers around professor Carmen Rial at the University of Santa Catarina in Florianópolis have not yet dealt with the flow of Brazilian professionals to Africa but mostly to the developed North (North America, Europe, Eastern Asia). They were actually quite surprised to hear that this link between Brazil and Africa existed.

in Equatorial Guinea, even those that are seen to be completely disconnected from the geographic locality, with all the tensions and frictions this may entail.

These findings help to complement and refine existing denationalization models that, so far, have left out the individual agency and emic perspective of the footballers. I therefore propose to define the ongoing phenomenon as the multi-nationalization rather than de-nationalization of national sports teams.

9. Conclusion

During one of the many conventions where academicians from various disciplines all over the world meet, a social geographer, today head of an important observatory in Switzerland, and a cultural anthropologist from South America came together. Both scientists have in common that football in its various social forms and dimensions is their major academic interest. According to the geographer, cultural anthropology could deliver best what contemporary football research needed most: qualitative data, native categories – the emic perspective. Of course, quantitative inquiries, surveys and statistics will always be necessary, but they only constitute the bigger picture, the surface, on which subsequent qualitative investigations must be performed. What is needed is in-depth material that provides the available facts and figures with meaning (Rial, direct communication, January 2014).

This is also what the present master thesis has humbly tried to contribute to. It examined the contemporary transfer of Brazilian football professionals to the West African coast in order to perform for various national teams. This transfer represents an extreme form of economically-motivated spatial and social mobility or, albeit rudimentary, a very special form of circular migration. It reached out to the roots of a phenomenon that for the African game has some significance, a historic endeavor that brought us to the rural town of Chapecó in remote Southern Brazil and a globetrotter coach called Antonio Dumas who by now seems to be almost forgotten. His ideas may be controversial, nonetheless the master thesis tries to give him the credits that he, in the opinion of the author, deserves. Pragmatism is the prime motivator for these naturalizations which, strictly speaking, must not be labeled denationalization but rather multi-nationalization since no real de-ethnicization processes occur. Also the thesis has aimed not to be one-dimensional by simply defining a research question and answering it, but rather to open up new research fields that make further investigations possible, interesting and also promising. If we assume that the one hundred and something footballers constitute a culture or subculture with shared experiences, knowledge, values and practices, several so-called cultural themes can be identified: the African encounter as taboo, experiences of rejection and resistance as group identity marker, Afro-Brazilian background and above all neo-Pentecoastalism as a belief system, which seems to be the most prominent trait.

In the following years, debates around denationalization respective multi-nationalization in sport will not lose their relevance. In the global and globalized societies of today, multi-ethnicity is a matter of fact. A glimpse at the football squads is enough to recognize that this

multi-ethnicity is also reflected in football. The legal and organizational preconditions further promote this development. In addition, the social and cultural construct of the national team is in a process of change. National teams are at least partly mirrors of society and serve as identification markers (Kuhelnik, 2014). The national team as we understand it today could indeed be substituted by something else, but maybe not exactly in the way macroscopic analyses have suggested. For many athletes, ethnicity, nationality and their homeland will remain pivotal components of their personal identity construction. What we may witness, as far as the present results allow such predictions, is thus an increase in multi-ethnicization in national teams. That is, the denationalization of the nation-state (Poli, 2007) is paralleled by the multinationalization of the national team.

10. Appendix

FIFA Statutes on Nationality

5) Principle

1. Any person holding a permanent nationality that is not dependent on residence in a certain country is eligible to play for the representative teams of the Association of that country.

2. With the exception of the conditions specified in Article 8 below, any Player who has already participated in a match (either in full or in part) in an official competition of any category or any type of football for one Association may not play an international match for a representative team of another Association.

6) Nationality entitling players to represent more than one Association

1. A Player who, under the terms of art.5, is eligible to represent more than one Association on account of his nationality, may play in an international match for one of these Associations only if, in addition to having the relevant nationality, he fulfills at least one of the following conditions:

(a) He was born on the territory of the relevant Association;

(b) His biological mother or biological father was born on the territory of the relevant Association;

(c) His grandmother or grandfather was born on the territory of the relevant Association;

(d) He has lived continuously on the territory of the relevant Association for at least two years.

2. Regardless of par.1 above, Associations sharing a common nationality may take an agreement under which item (d) of par.1 of this article is deleted completely or amended to specify a longer time limit. Such agreements shall be lodged with and approved by the Executive Committee.

7) Acquisition of a new nationality

1. Any Player who refers to art.5 par.1 to assume a new nationality and who has not played international football in accordance with art.5 par.2 shall be eligible to play for the new representative team only if he fulfills one of the following conditions:

(a) He was born on the territory of the relevant Association;

(b) His biological mother or biological father was born on the territory of the relevant Association;

(c) His grandmother or grandfather was born on the territory of the relevant Association;

(d) He has lived continuously for at least five years after reaching the age of 18 on the territory of the relevant Association.

8) Change of Association

1. If a Player has more than one nationality, or if a Player acquires a new nationality, or if a Player is eligible to play for several representative teams due to nationality, he may, only once, request to change the Association for which he is eligible to play international matches to the Association of another country of which he holds nationality, subject to the following conditions:

(a) He has not played a match (either in full or in part) in an official competition at "A" international level for his current Association, and at the time of his first full or partial appearance in an international match in an official competition for his current Association, he already had the nationality of the representative team for which he wishes to play.

(b) He is not permitted to play for his new Association in any competition in which he has already played for his previous Association.

2. If a Player who has been fielded by his Association in an international match in accordance with art.5 par.2 permanently loses the nationality of that country without his consent or against his will due to a decision by a government authority, he may request permission to play for another Association whose nationality he already has or has acquired.

3. Any Player who has the right to change Associations in accordance with par.1 and 2 above shall submit a written, substantial request to the FIFA general secretariat. The Players' Status Committee shall decide on the request. The procedure will be in accordance with the Rules Governing the Procedures of Players' Statutes Committee and the Dispute Resolution Chamber. Once the Player has filed his request, he is not eligible to play for any representative team until his request has been processed.

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