

Sport Labor Migrations from the Southern Countries to the Northern Countries



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Hi, I'm here today to talk to you about the third world muscle drain, also known as 'brawn drain'. I just handed in my thesis on " Sport Labor Migrations from the Southern countries to the Northern ones ". It's my pleasure today, to share my results with you during this short presentation which will be divided as follows :

Presentation plan

- n Problem: Sport Labor Migrations
- n Hypothesis
- n Concepts
- n Legislations Study
- n Statistical Research and Discussion
- n Conclusion

- 1) First of all, the explanation of my problematic : the sport labor migrations
- 2) Then I will show you what direction I chose for this paper with my hypothesis
- 3) Definition of my 2 main concepts: globalization, market logic
- 4) Next, I'll do a quick review of the legislations that have modified the European sport scene, it's the first tool to verify my hypothesis.
- 5) In the fifth part, we'll discuss the results from a statistical research I did with the following three sports : football, basketball, baseball. It enabled me to quantify sport migration strands and to determine their geographical orientation.
- 6) Conclusion

1-Problem: Sport Labor Migrations



Nowadays, globalization induces liberalization and ferocious competition, clubs (and even national teams) have to find talent seedbeds, and the cheaper is the better.

n Global sports means more competition...

n New seedbeds of talents

n Predisposition to leave

n Uneven chances to succeed

n Vicious circle...informal recruiting networks.



Like delocalization for industries, the solution is often to go south. Why, because those athletes are predisposed to leave because of poor living standards, political insecurity, growing demography, or a combination of those factors. Southern sportsmen know their chances of success are limited if they stay in their country. The infrastructures are inadequate, there's a lack of formed coaches and a lack of medical, economical or technological resources. So even the tiniest opportunity engages the pattern of migration.

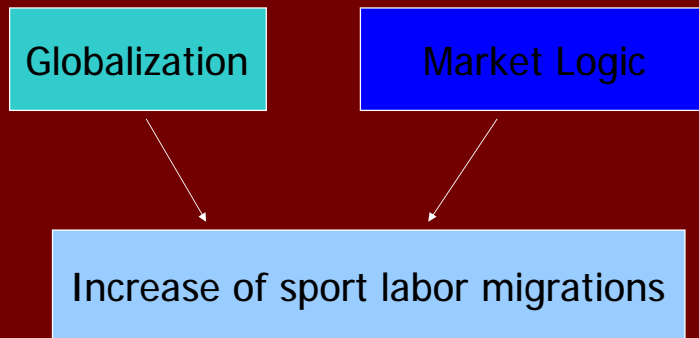
Altogether, these realities are the basis of a vicious circle that is tough to dismantle. Recruiting networks are growing, but in absence of concerted regulations, they too often go underground and become informal. People working in those organizations are headhunters. They are not legitimate managers or agents; some are even accused of participating in the human beings trade. They take advantage of the profound desire of southern athletes to join the European eldorado.

2- Hypothesis

- n The brain drain from southern countries to northern countries was a mobility phenomenon stimulated by globalization and market logic which results, especially these last years, by migration patterns and legislations which are advantageous almost only for northern countries.

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3- Concepts



To be understood properly, the hypothesis has to be decorticated, the two main concepts extracted and explained thereafter.

Scholte 's Globalization

- n Internationalization
- n Liberalization
- n Universalization
- n Modernization (or westernization)
- n *Deterritorialization*

Sub-divided in 5 definitions, Scholte's description of globalization seems to me to be the most complete. He takes in consideration the existing definitions of globalization, which are the internationalization (increase of cross-border relations and interdependence between countries), the liberalization (we're leading towards a "borderless" world economy) the universalization (what is global is mundial), the modernization (or westernization) where social structures of modernity (capitalism, industrialism, etc.) are spread the world over.

The fifth definition, the one that I find innovative and that adds to the comprehension my analysis is the idea of deterritorialization. Here Scholte's 'globalization' entails a 'reconfiguration of geography, so that social space is no longer wholly mapped in terms of territorial places, territorial distances and territorial borders. Although territory still matters very much in our globalizing world, it no longer constitutes the whole of our geography. (Scholte 2000: 46)

Market Logic

- n Mediatization of the competitions
- n Commercialism of sporting events
- n Professionalism of athletes



Market logic, which is the second premise, is perfectly adapted to this idea of supraterritorial space. Sport, on the contrary, was traditionally linked to national territory. However, post-modern society tends to transform in merchandise everything that falls into its hegemonical trap and sports was part of it. The importance of sports in the social environment has grown dramatically during these last twenty years, mainly due to the mediatization of competitions, the commercialism of sporting events, and the advent of professionalism. The sporting act is not free anymore, it is regulated, calculated and managed. Sports scene has considerably changed; it has become globalized and gotten caught in a spiral where only performance and market logic count. This spiral of merchandising fuels sport labor migration.

4- Legislations

- n Bosman case: 25 countries
- n Malaja case: 24 countries
- n Cotonou agreement: 77 ACP countries (Africa-Caribbean- Pacific islands)



Now, let's see what is the impact of legislations on those movements of athletes. With the Bosman case, the first one of its kind in the legal history of football, European football had been recognized as an economical activity, therefore it has to be regulated by the EU's laws in conformity with the Rome Treaty. It was hence necessary to reconsider the transfer of players and the restrictions on foreign athletes because Article 48 allows freedom of movement for workers and the Rome Treaty stipulates that no discrimination based on nationality is acceptable.

With the Malaja case, several European courts have extended Community Status to all nationals of countries that have signed association or cooperation agreements with the EU. The Cotonou agreement, which came into effect in 2003, gave 77 countries of the ACP zone the same advantages that were given with the Malaja case. If we resume, we can now hire players coming from 126 countries without special restrictions: 25 European countries, 24 countries from Maghreb, Eastern Europe and ex-soviet republics and 77 ACP countries.

5- Statistical Research and Discussion



The third world muscle drain, being a young phenomenon in sports sociology, its documentation can not be found as easy as it can be for its academic cousin, the 'brain drain'. Plus, given the fact that many migrations or naturalizations are conducted in fraudulent ways, we undergo a flagrant lack of transparency. Therefore, the data acquisition was not a simple task; scattered data and no homogeneity; a rigorous work was complicated.

I started my researches by contacting the organisations regulating football around the world and in Europe : FIFA and the UEFA. They said they did not have the information I was looking for which was the number of foreign players in the most important European leagues and the statistics on naturalizations. They suggested me to contact national federations but these kept referring me to their websites where there was nothing relevant for me. Consequently, I changed my strategy and decided to build my own data basis. So I looked up each player on each team in Europe's most important leagues to find out about their nationality.

FOOTBALL: Percentage of Foreign Players versus Percentage of Foreign Players from the South in the European most important Championships

COUNTRY	Percentage of Foreign Players	Percentage of Foreign Players from the South in Comparison with the Number of Foreign Players
ENGLAND	272/612= 44%	58/272= 21%
FRANCE	184/509= 36%	134/184= 73%
GERMANY	226/492= 46%	59/226= 26% 88/226= 39% (if we include players from the south with double-nationality)
ITALY	162/531= 31%	89/162= 55%
SPAIN	134/451= 30%	82/134= 61%

Now if we take a look at the analysis, we realize that the number of migrants from the South varies considerably depending on which regulations are implemented in which leagues. In France, Southern athletes are in majority, they represent 73% of the total number of foreign players; the highest of all the studied leagues. The Spanish and Italian leagues follow respectively with 61% and 55%. In those two cases, foreign players come principally from South America.

If we pay attention to the other two leagues, we recognize that our hypothesis does not resist analysis anymore. In England, the rules are really strict concerning non-EU foreigners, that's why 50% of the foreign players come from Europe and only 21% come from Southern countries.

Looking at the German league now, we can mention its particularity: the teams' websites show players double nationality. This league has the highest percentage of foreign players, 46%. Note that we have 26% of athletes from the South, but if we include in the Southern category all players who have a double nationality with a country from the South, we reach 39%. It changes facts considerably. We thus can understand why federations and clubs are looking with great interest at the naturalization process. Moreover, a naturalised athlete usually costs less in salary and social and tax charges than a home-grown talent. And above all, it gives the club the possibility to hire other non-EU players. The interest for athletes from the south and from around the world brought Northern professional leagues to impose quotas on foreign players to protect the development of their national talent. The naturalization process has become a pronounced feature these last twenty years for the good reason that it is a efficient technique to circumvent those limitations.

BASKETBALL: Percentage of Foreign Players, American Players and Non-Naturalized Players Coming from the Southern Countries in the European most important Championships

COUNTRY	Percentage of Foreign Players	<i>Percentage of American Players</i>	Percentage of Non-naturalized Players Coming from the South
BELGIUM	57%	40%	11%
ENGLAND	51%	74%	8%
FRANCE	55%	43%	6%
GERMANY	71%	39%	9%
ITALY	65%	45%	6%
NETHERLANDS	48%	62%	2%
SPAIN	65%	31%	13%

The basketball case now: At the contrary of football, this is a sport strongly dominated by United States. Players that we count to be part of the South/North sport migration were almost never developed in Southern Countries. Most of the time, they are American citizens, they played in great NCAA teams, and they have a joker... African-Caribbean or Pacific islands' origins. So when the time has come for them to play overseas, they try to have a double nationality with a country included in the Cotonou agreement.

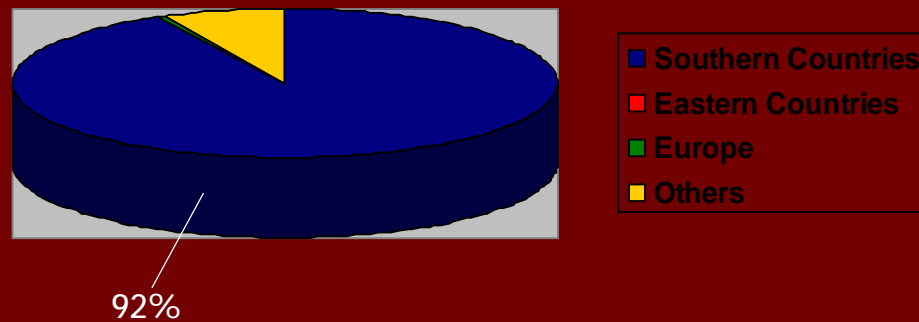
Those players with two passports are worth gold for managers. But they distort my data because they are considered as being part of the South/North sport labor migration, but in fact they are North/North ones. Obviously, we have to be aware that this problem arises in other sports as well.

With the Eurobasket website, I was able to find all the statistics I needed: number of foreign players and naturalised players. European leagues have a really high percentage of foreign players, often more than 50% . Let's take the Italian league for example: we have 65% of foreign players, and from that, 45% are from United States. Concerning southern athletes, they represent 17%. But be careful, every player coming from South America has been naturalised except one Brazilian. So when we take out those who have been naturalised, we have 6% left, and from this 6% we have to cut other northern players with an ACP passport. So, at the end, the percentage is quite small.

Note the impressive ratio of foreign athletes in Germany: 71%, and the crushing domination of American athletes. Finally, I want to draw your attention on the highest rate of South sportsmen: Spain with 13%.

So we see that naturalizations contribute to the lowering of the real impact of sport labor migrations. European basketball is therefore not really affected by South/North migratory flows; North/North and East/ North ones are the most important.

BASEBALL: Foreign Players in the Minor League Baseball (2004)



For our last sport, we need to change continent; consequently the rules are not the same. There are no quotas on the number of foreign players in the baseball professional league in United States, (also true for the other professional leagues like the NBA or the NFL). Maybe it has to do with the particularity of American sports to display a small-scaled rate of naturalizations. We know the protectionist tendency of United States, they are really strict concerning the attribution of their nationality.

Our statistics on baseball are very interesting because I was able to find a chart going from 1871 to 2002 with the evolution of the number of foreign players in the Major League Baseball. During the last 30 years, the number of foreign players has tripled. And last year, the number of foreign players was 47, 6%.. The most striking statistics are those from the minor leagues. The contribution of athletes from the South is impressive. Over all foreign athletes, the Southern countries presence reaches 92% in minor leagues, this is quite eloquent.

6- Conclusion



Our hypothesis has been proved right and wrong depending on the sport. The theoretical frame is correct in each circumstance, but the geographical direction would have to be extended, emphasizing on the East/North sport migration and the North/North ones. So the globalization and market logic premises were adequate and the thesis saying that the legislations and the migratory patterns were profitable almost only for the Northern countries as well.

Some limits have to be underlined, although our statistical research helped us to verify our hypothesis, it is still a pale representation of the sports reality. We don't have any statistics about individual sports, and we only have three sports, which is too few on the international scene. Another important point is that the feminine side of the problem is inexistent in our work; the statistics were collected only for the men's professional leagues. The women sport migrations would be a stimulating subject for further researches.

These exploratory results could suggest some avenues. I decided to analyse this phenomenon with a geographical axis, but in fact we understand that more of a geographical orientation, it is a socio-economical migration. Therefore, the basis of the problem is still the inequalities between countries and poverty. With regulations and concerted efforts to develop these areas, it could incitate athletes to stay and to reinforce sport and social activity and maybe we could now start to talk about a brawn gain.