

DIASBOLA

FUTEBOL E MIGRAÇÃO



Main trends and patterns in Women's Football Migration

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Main trends & patterns in women's football migration

Abstract

In the last twenty years, a phenomenon has emerged which is entirely new in the study of gender, migration, women and sport, namely the international migration of female football talent and labour. Just as boys all over the world, also a growing number of girls dream about becoming a professional footballer and pursue this dream at intensively investing into their skills over years. The number of registered players has in fact more than doubled since 2000, with now over 30 million female footballers; but until date, "making a living" as a female football player is only possible in 17 out of 168 FIFA-listed women's football countries. This means for highly talented and skilled women in 90% of the countries that they actually *have* to leave their home in order to act as professionals.

The percentage of top players who leave the "developing countries" of women's football is at levels of up to 80%, while migrants constitute between 36 up to 50% of players in premier league clubs of the "core countries". The paper will analyze main trends and patterns in women's football migration at following these questions:

- a) Are the fluxes mainly from South to North and North to West? Do they expand beyond traditional geographical limits and assume globalized characteristics?
- b) What makes women leave (structural, super-structural, subjective reasons)?
- c) How far do motives, experiences and outcomes of migration projects differ between the developing and core countries of WF?

The logics of this migratory process shall be approached by presenting quantitative data on fluxes and qualitative material on the women's migration projects which derived from an ethnographic case study on Portuguese players and from interviews with Norwegian and Brazilian female football migrants. The paper concludes by approaching the open question, if and how migration is increasing *substantially* and which are the opportunities and challenges for players, key agents and -parties involved.



International Migration of Women Footballers

Introduction: some numbers

- ❖ 40 countries, 800 national squad players: 190 abroad
- ❖ Extreme case Ireland: 80% top level players abroad
- ❖ 2000-2010: hundreds of Scandinaviens in the USA
- ❖ Among ca. 170 FIFA-countries only 17-20 can provide (semi-) professional contracts
- ❖ Players from 90% of these countries have to leave home in order to become professionals
- ❖ Clubs in the Swedish women's premier league Damallsvenskan: up to 50% expatriates



Main trends in Women's Football Migration

Introduction



Main themes

International Migration of Women Footballers

Why studying a quantitatively rather small migratory movement?

- **4 Comparable migrant groups**
decision making process
- **Professionalization process**
motor & consequence
- **WF as both subject & object of social change**
gender systems

Main questions

- Are the fluxes increasing substantially; from South to North and North to West?
- What are the main features?
- What makes women leave (structural, super-structural, subjective reasons)?
- How far do motives, experiences and outcomes of migration projects differ between the developing and core countries of WF?



Main trends in Women's Football Migration

Main features to showcase

- 1. Structural inequality in WF; fluxes North-Northwest; midfield and core countries heavily involved**
- 2. Geographical & cultural proximity; friends (of friends)**
- 3. Women Football Migrants share single features with comparable migrant groups but do not match with any of them.**
- 4. Migration projects in WF differ in core- and developing countries.**
- 5. The particular life course and biographical phase of the potential migrants play an important role.**





Core- and developing countries, newcomers

FIFA ranking 18.03.2011

1. USA
2. Germany
3. Brazil
4. Japan
5. Sweden
6. Canada
7. France
8. Korea DPR
9. Norway
10. England
11. Australia
12. Italy
13. Denmark
14. Netherlands
15. China PR
16. Korea Republic
17. Iceland
18. Spain
19. Finland
20. Russia

CAF ranking

1. Nigeria 27
2. Ghana 49
3. S. Africa 58
4. Eq. Guinea 61
5. Cameroon 66

CONCACAF ranking

1. USA 01
2. Canada 06
3. Mexico 22
4. Coasta Rica 41
5. Trinidad and Tobago 43

AFC ranking

1. Japan 04
2. Korea DPR 08
3. Australia 11
4. China PR 15
5. Korea Rep 16

CONMEBOL ranking

1. Brazil 03
2. Colombia 31
3. Argentina 33
4. Chile 44
5. Equador 50

OFC ranking

1. New Zealand 24
2. Papua New Guinea 53
3. Tonga 67
4. Fiji 81
5. Tahiti 91



Core-, midfield-, and developing countries

Infrastructure

strong

- Norway: 4.000 teams, 60.000 players
- USA: 791 college teams, WUSA & WPS
- Japan: 1.138 teams, 10 Pro- & 50 college teams, 23.000 active
- Sweden: commercialization
- Germany: transfer-market

middle

- China: 10 elite pro-teams
- France: football academies
- Denmark, Italy: semi-professional contracts for expatriates
- Brazil: single clubs, "talent exporter"

weak

- Korea Republic: 65 teams from elementary school to top level
- Generally: African, South American, Middle Eastern countries
- In Europe: Portugal, Ukraine, Poland, Romania, Wales, Ireland



Global inequalities causing migration

Structural conditions for women's football



- Organisation of leagues
 - coaching, age-groups
 - sponsoring, funding
 - support programs in schools

- Stigma vs. Recognition
 - hetero-normative concepts of femininity
 - body concepts
 - fertility
 - homophobia

- Gender systems
 - gender roles
 - equality in employment sector
 - women in the public sphere
 - women in sports



Main trends in Women's Football Migration

Emigration of Female National Squad Players

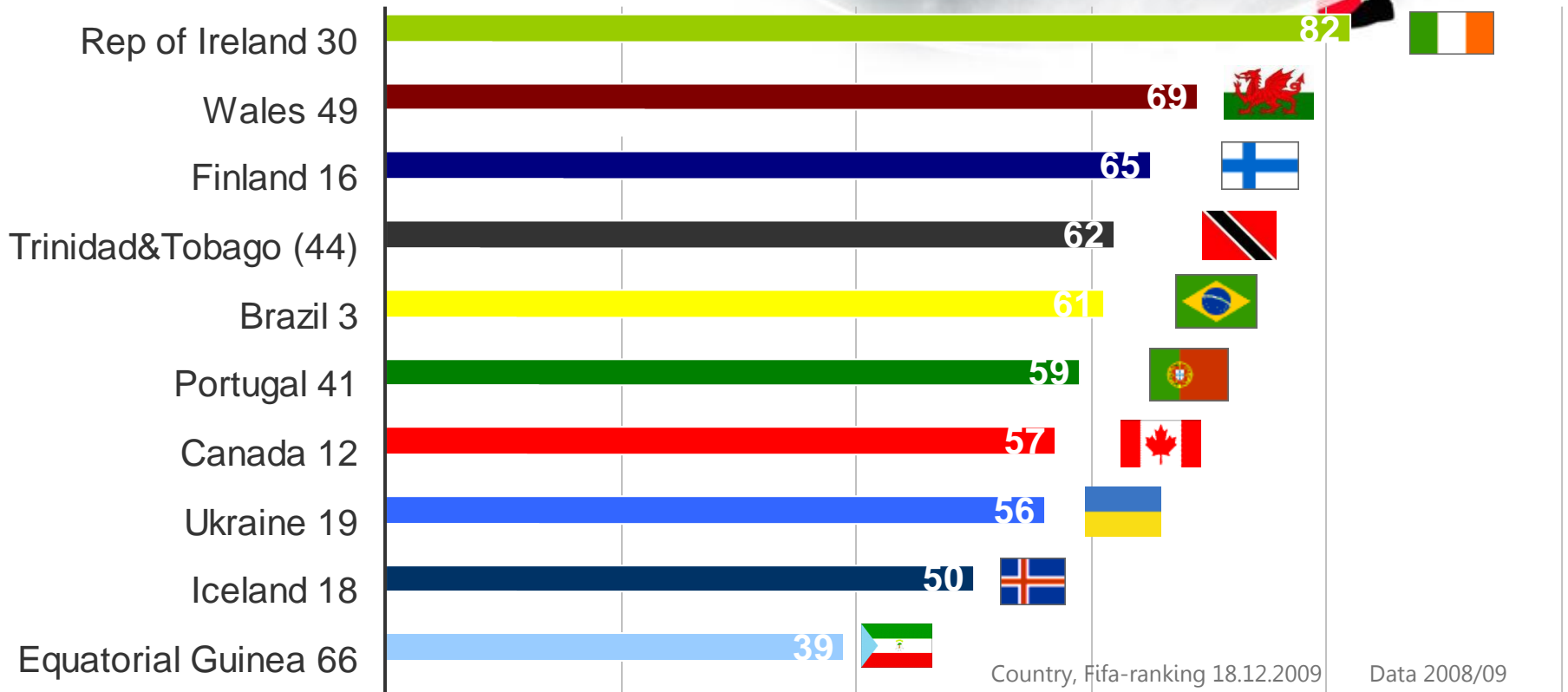


Continents	Countries (iso-codes)	Nat. Squad Players	abroad 2008/2009	%
North America	US, CA	40	13	32.5
Central & South America	BR, TT, UY, AR	73	20	27.4
Africa	GQ, NG, CM, GH, ZA	100	28	28.0
Asia	JP, CN	36	2	5.6
Ozeania	AS, AU, NZ	55	5	9.1
Europe incl. IL	24 countries	473	123	26.0
	Portugal	22	13	59.1
Total	40	799	187	23.4



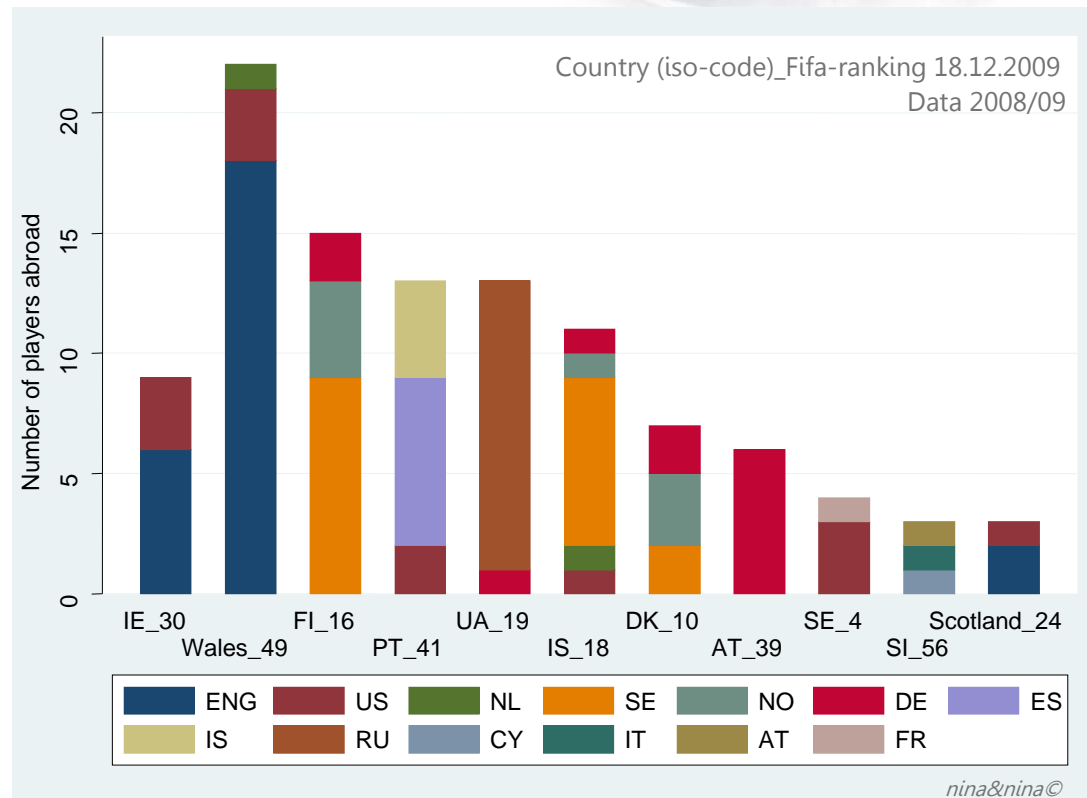
Main trends in Women's Football Migration

Top 10 National Squad Players abroad in %



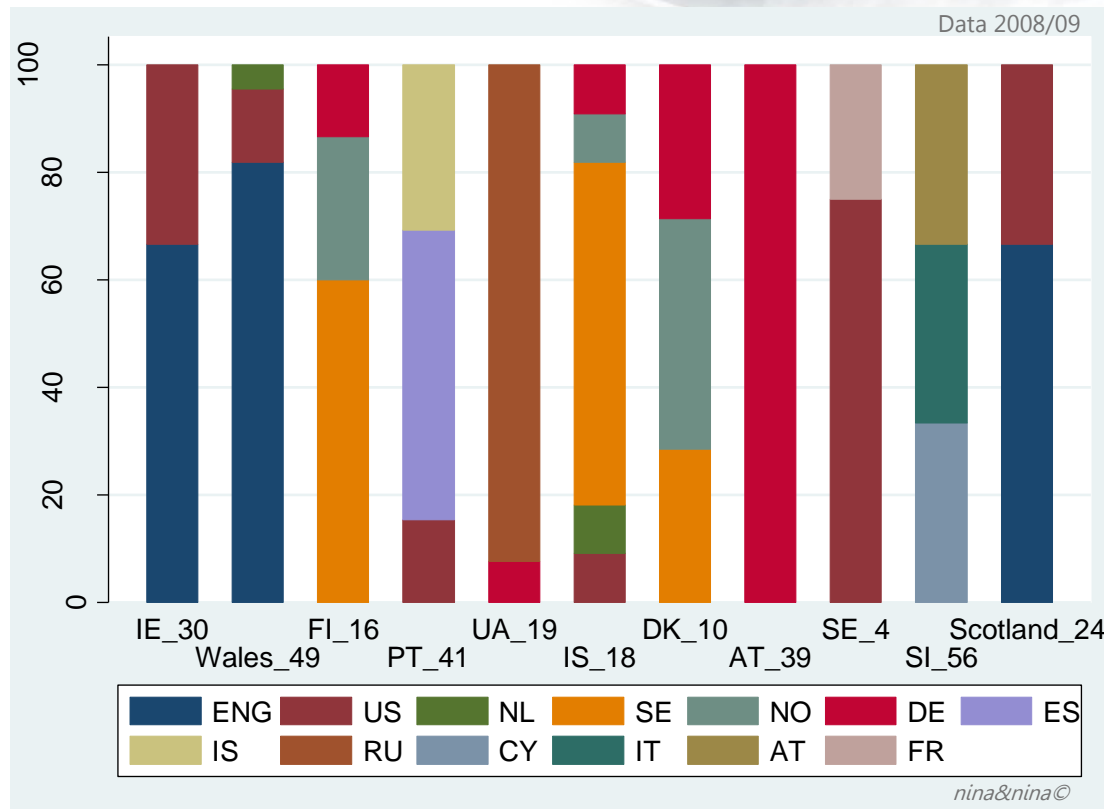
Top 10 European National Squad players abroad

Destinations: geographical & cultural proximity



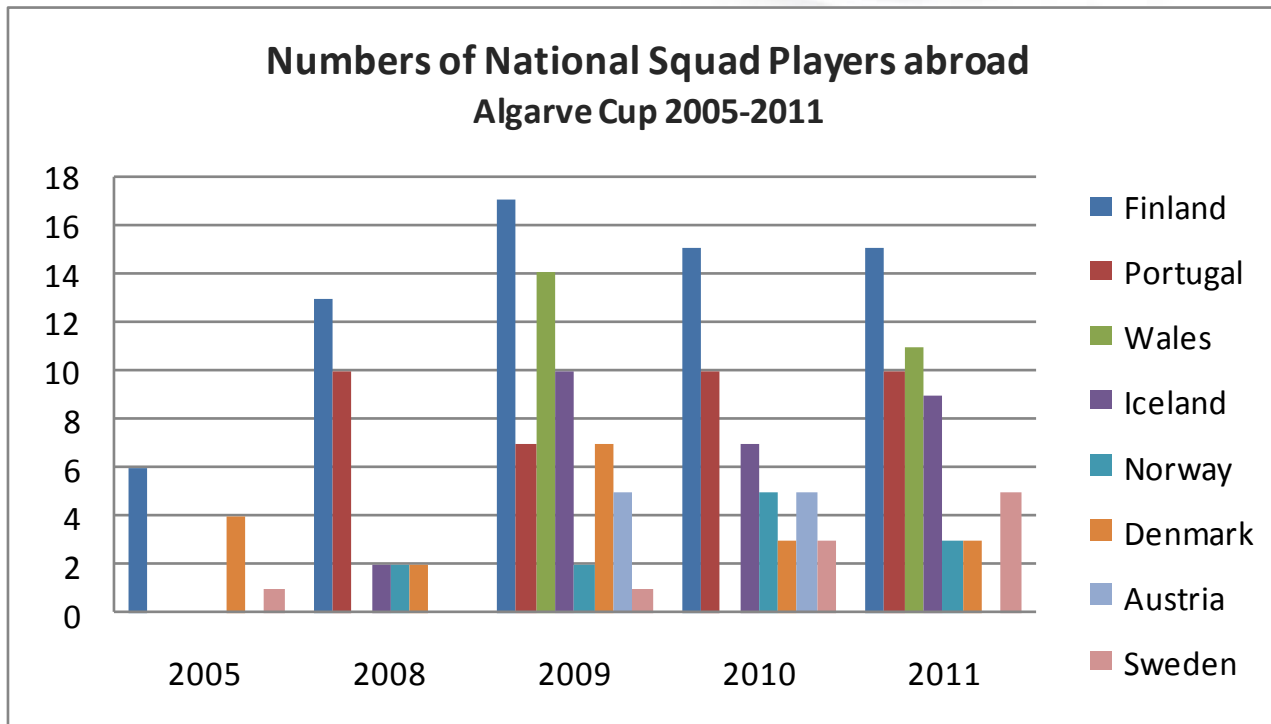
Geographical & cultural proximity

Top 10 Europe: % in countries of destination



Countries most involved in WFM as senders

Core countries and developing FIFA-midfield



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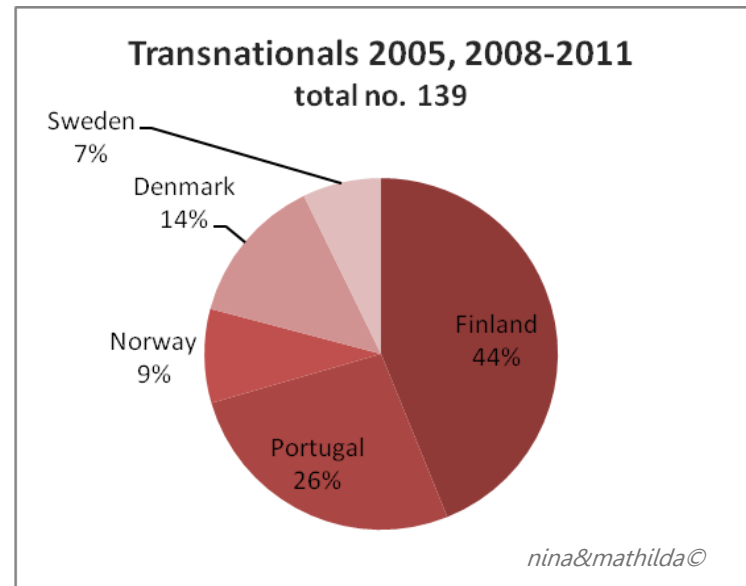
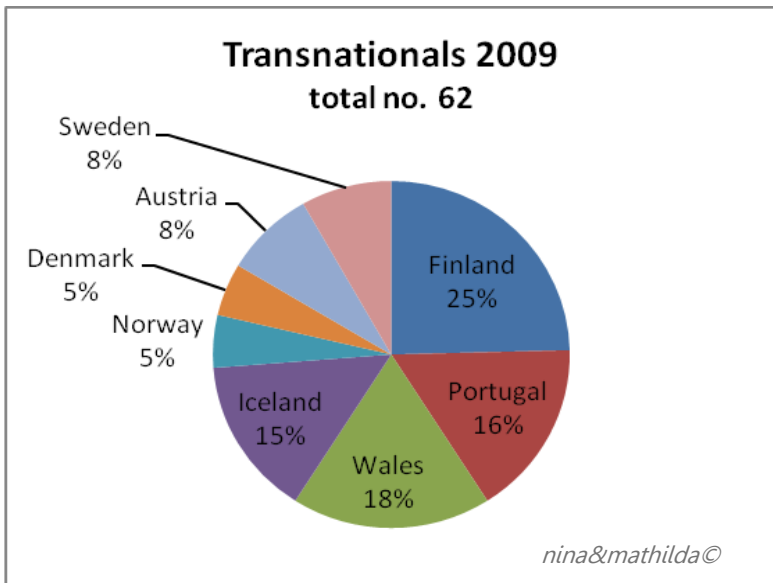
Main trends in women's football migration

Algarve Cup data



Core countries & FIFA midfield

Leaving from and to the core



Leaving for the Passion and the Cause?

Main study group: Portuguese National Women Squad



Main features of the squad: Emigrants & Diaspora Players

- Lousy national championship
- Improved with new head coach
- Integration of diaspora players
- Support of emigration
- "Chain migration"
- Age: 17-39 years old
- No. 6 World Emi, No. 4 EU Emi, No. 12 in total moves
- Mere Emigration country



Main trends in women's football migration

Algarve Cup data

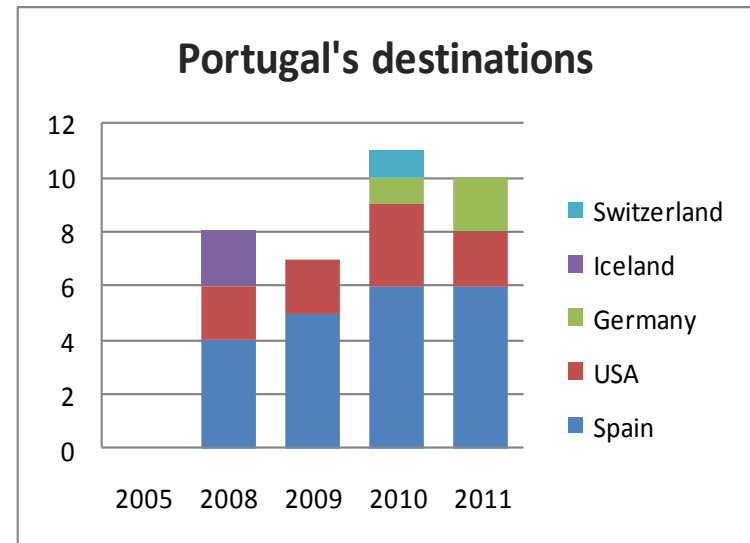


Cloth to core country

Developing midfield country



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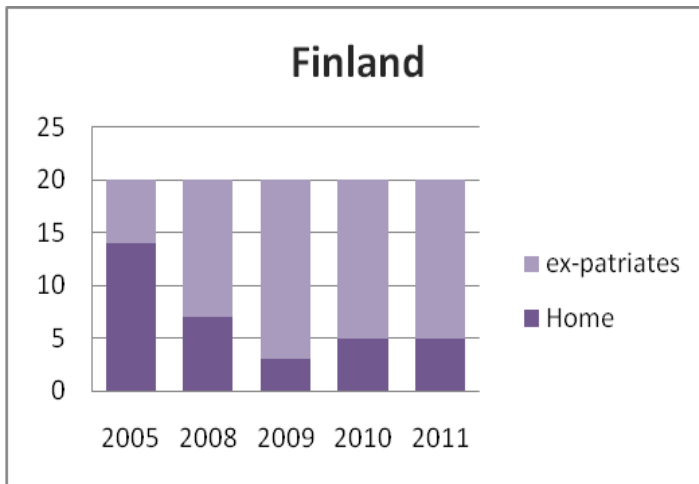
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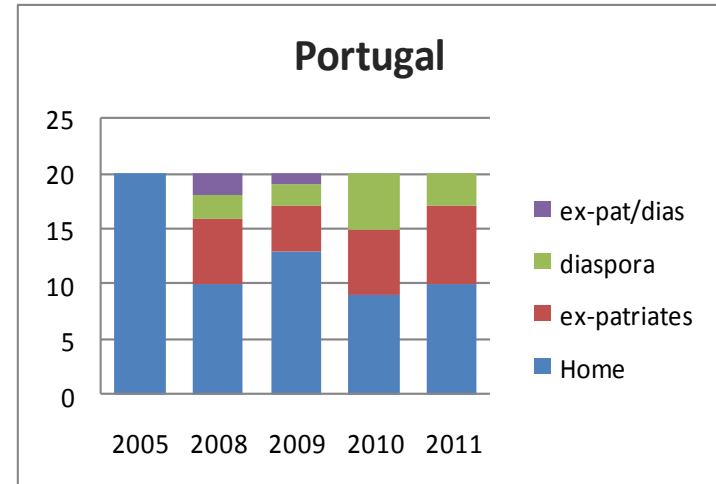


Cloth to core country

Developing midfield country



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Portuguese National Squad Diaspora Players 2010/2011

USA



Kimberly & Lissette Brandão
Buffalo Flash; NJ Wild Cats



Donya Mendonça Oliveira
Juventus Destiny

Germany



Ana Cristina Leite
Essen Schoenebeck

Brazil



Emily Lima
Juventus São Paulo



Two Types of Female Portuguese Football Transnationals

Migration decision making

Diaspora Players

- ❖ “To fulfill my father’s, my parent’s dream”
- ❖ “To re-connect with my roots”

Emigrants

- ❖ “Querer Arriscar” – Taking the Risk

Migration as an adventure (Simmel, Sarró)

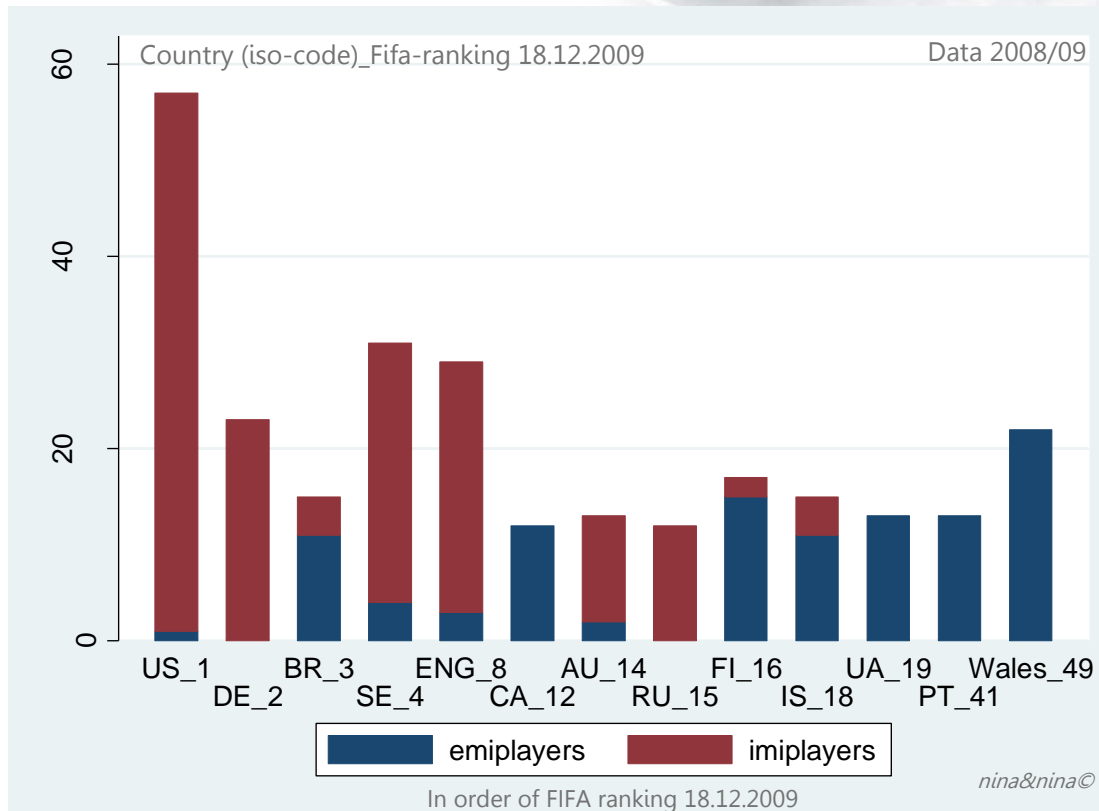
For the Passion and the Cause

- ❖ Positive Perception of Emigration and Naturalization
- ❖ Improvement of the National Squad
- ❖ “To play at all”



Main trends in women's football migration

Countries most involved in WFM

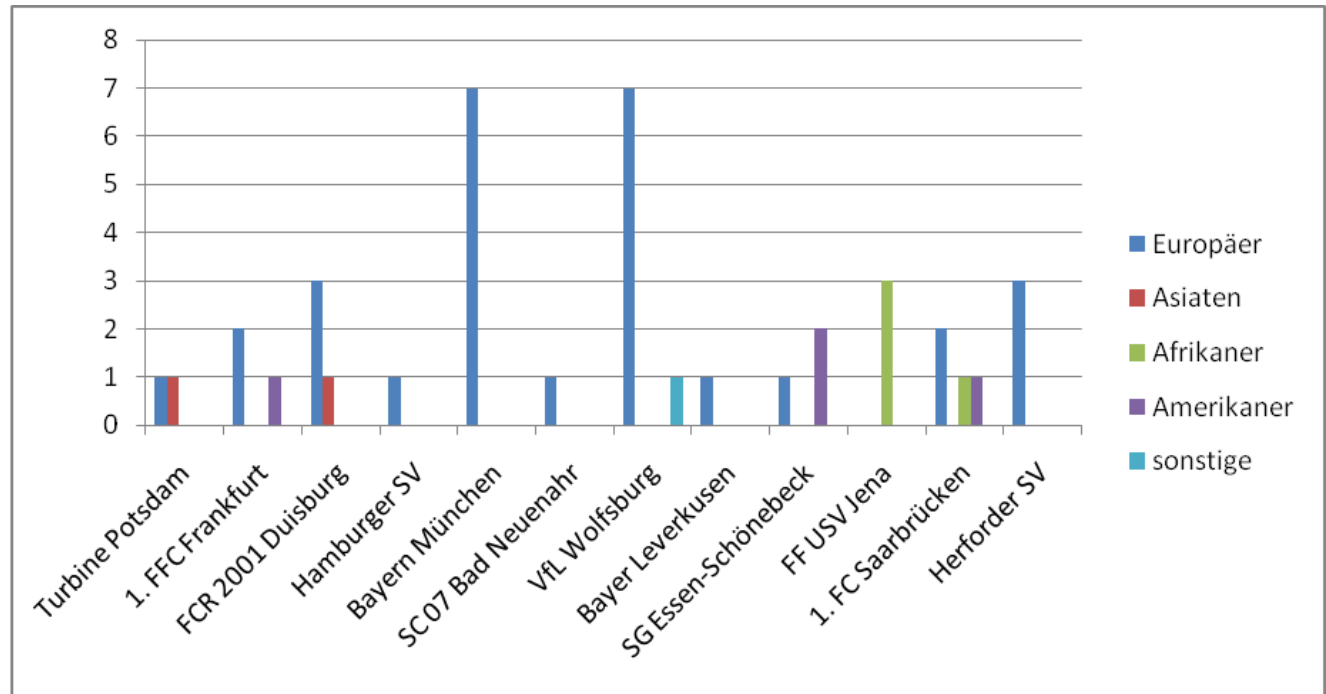


Main trends in women's football migration

Expatriates in the German Frauenbundesliga



Marlyse Bernadette
NgoNdoumbouk
Cameroon – FC Jena



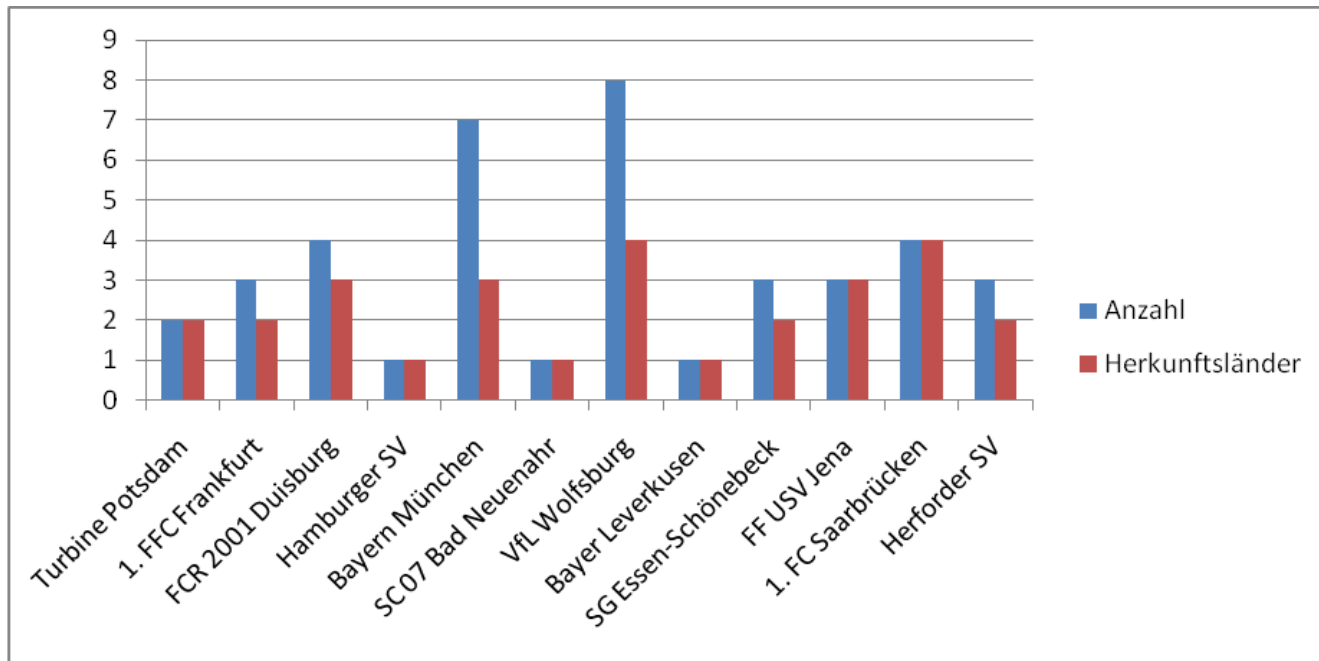
Data 2010/2011

Figure by: V. Branzk, Justus-Liebig Universität Giessen



Numbers of players & countries of origin

Expatriates and compatriots in the German Frauenbundesliga



Data 2010/2011

Figure by: V. Branzk, Justus-Liebig Universitaet Giessen



Leaving for the Passion and the Cause?

Typology of migration projects

- a) **top level players who sign with WPS** teams or gain scholarships in the US high school soccer system
- b) **diaspora-players** (e.g. descendents from Portuguese emigrants in the USA, Germany, France and Brazil who play for the Portuguese national squad; known also for Mexicans/USA, Irish/USA and Israeli/USA)
- c) **players who leave “core countries of WF”** to gain transnational football experience or for simply playing abroad after retiring from their national squad
- d) **players who leave “WF developing countries”** in order to play as professionals
- e) African and Southern American **players who migrate partly to sustain their families** back home
- f) **players** who migrate to more wealthy or advanced countries, in order to combine their dream to play as professionals **with educational purposes**
- g) **players who have long-term emigration aspirations**, trying to build an existence in the host society which reaches beyond the period of their football career
- h) **12-15 years-old-players who lack a domestic league** for their age group
- i) **players “fleeing” from miserable** structural (economic, organisation, coaching) and socio-cultural (stigma) **conditions** for WF



Sources & Acknowledgements

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