



GLOBALISING WOMEN'S FOOTBALL

Europe, Migration and Professionalization

Jean Williams

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With an estimated 26 million female players globally (6 million based in Europe), the evolution of football has been dramatic. Growth in the women's game has led to more widespread player migration as new forms of professionalism emerge. This work explores those patterns of movement into, and out of, Europe using new archival evidence and player interviews.

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CENTRE
INTERNATIONAL
D'ÉTUDE DU SPORT

Savoirs sportifs

Edited by Denis Oswald and Raffaele Poli

Vol. 5

A modern phenomenon of the highest importance, sport raises a multitude of scientific questions. The collection „Savoirs sportifs“ publishes original works in French and English across the spectrum of law, economics and social sciences. These subject areas correspond to the sectors of specialisation of the International Centre for Sports Studies (CIES), to which the collection belongs. The collection is directed by Denis Oswald, Doctor of Law, CIES Director and Professor at the University of Neuchâtel, and Raffaele Poli, Doctor of Geography, head of the CIES Sports Observatory.

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PETER LANG

Bern • Berlin • Bruxelles • Frankfurt am Main • New York • Oxford • Wien

Bibliographic information published by die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek

Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data is available on the Internet at <http://dnb.d-nb.de>.

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data: A catalogue record for this book is available from The British Library, Great Britain

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Williams, Jean, 1964-

Globalising women's football : Europe, migration and professionalization / Jean Williams.

p. cm. – (Savoirs sportifs-sports knowledge, vol.5)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-3-0343-1315-5

1. Soccer for women–Europe–History. 2. Women soccer players–Europe–History. 3. Women soccer players–Europe–Social conditions. 4. Women soccer players–Europe–Interviews. I. Title.

GV944.5.W55 2013

796.334082094–dc23

2013022616

This book is based on the research project "Women's football, Europe and professionalisation, 1971–2011" by Dr Jean Williams, financed by the 2010/11 edition of the UEFA Research Grant Programme. The publication of this book was made possible thanks to additional support from UEFA. The content of this book is the work of the author alone and does not necessarily represent the views of UEFA opinion.

ISBN 978-3-0343-1315-5 pb.

ISSN 1663-4616 pb.

ISBN 978-3-0352-0205-2 eBook

ISSN 2235-753X eBook

© Peter Lang AG, International Academic Publishers, Bern 2013

Hochfeldstrasse 32, CH-3012 Bern, Switzerland

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Printed in Switzerland

To Simon, with thanks for your support and patience.

Table of contents

Introduction: Europe, patterns of migration and the professionalization of women's football	1
1. Post-war Europe and the rise of women's football	1
2. UEFA, European competitions and the growth of women's football	17
3. Conclusion	34
Sources and Methods	37
1. The academic literature on women's football, professional leagues and migration	37
2. Labour markets and women's football	42
3. Conclusion	48
Micro, Meso and Macro Professionalism	53
1. Introduction	53
2. Micro Professionalism: Pioneering Individual Women Football Players	56
<i>Case study one: Sue Lopez, the temporary football migrant</i>	<i>57</i>
<i>Case study two: Rose Reilly-Peralta, the long term migrant</i>	<i>62</i>
<i>Case study three: Vera Pauw, the European internationalist</i>	<i>64</i>
<i>Case study four: Gao Hong, the elite retired-player migrating in Europe</i>	<i>65</i>
3. Meso Professionalism: Club Football, Growing Internationalism and World Championships	68

4. Macro Professionalism: Women's Champions' League and Women's World Cups	74
<i>The UEFA Women's Champions' League</i>	74
<i>The Women's Super League: the English model of professionalism.</i>	75
5. Conclusion: From FIFA Women's World Cup Germany 2011 to Canada 2012	84
Conclusion: Mobility, Professionalism and Football's Changing Cultural Values	89
Appendix I: Some Key Dates of European Union integration and expansion	103
Appendix II: Some Key Dates for European Association Football ...	109
Appendix III: Summary of the European-wide growth in women's football 1996-2003, by national association	119
Appendix IV: How UEFA has grown: newly affiliated full members since 1954	167
References	169

Abbreviations and Acronyms

AFC	Asian Football Confederation
AIAW	Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women
ALFA	Asian Ladies Football Association
CAF	Confédération Africaine de Football
CFA	People's Republic of China Football Association
China '91	FIFA Women's World Championship 1991
CONCACAF	Confederation of North, Central American and Caribbean Association Football
CONMEBOL	Confederación Sudamericana de Fútbol
DFB	Deutscher Fussball-Bund (German Football Association)
ECSC	European Coal and Steel Community
EC	European Community
EU	European Union
FA	Football Association (English)
FAI	Football Association of Ireland
FAW	Football Association of Wales
FAWPL	Football Association Women's Premier League
FFF	Fédération Française de Football (French Football Association)
FICF	Federazione Italiana Calcio Femminile

FIEFF	Fédération Internationale Européenne de Football Féminin
FFIGC	Federazione Femminile Italiana Gioco Calcio
FIFA	Fédération Internationale de Football Association
FIFA U17 WC	FIFA Under Seventeen World Championship for Men
FIFA U17 WWC	FIFA Under Seventeen World Cup for Women
FIFA U19 WWC	FIFA Under Nineteen World Cup for Women
FIFA U20 WWC	FIFA Under Twenty World Cup for Women
FSFI	Fédération Sportive Féminine Internationale
FSFSF	Fédération des Sociétés Féminines Sportives de France
IOC	International Olympic Committee
ISF	International Sports Federation
LFAI	Ladies Football Association of Ireland
Korea DPR	Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea)
Korea Republic	Republic of Korea (South Korea)
NOC	National Olympic Committee
OFC	Oceania Football Confederation
PFA	Professional Footballers' Association
SEA	Single European Act
SFA	Scottish Football Association
SWFA	Scottish Women's Football Association

UEFA	Union des Associations Européennes de Football
USSF	United States Soccer Federation
WNBA	Women's National Basketball Association
WSL	FA Women's Super League
WUSA	Women's United Soccer Association
WPS	Women's Professional Soccer League
WWC '99	Women's World Cup 1999
WWC '03	Women's World Cup 2003
WWC '07	Women's World Cup 2007
WWC '11	Women's World Cup 2011

Introduction: Europe, Patterns of Migration and the Professionalization of Women's Football

How should a history of Europe be configured? This should not be a simple collection of individual national stories. This is not the only, or perhaps even the best way, to attempt to trace a process of European historical development...In the context of sport, Lanfranchi and Taylor's study of the patterns of professional footballer migration serves as a guide on how to break away from a national fixation...What is Europe? How is it represented to us? To what extent do we feel European? Our notion of «Europe» must be seen in terms of these various issues, and not as territory constructed with western-Eurocentric vision (Hill 2010: 1).

1. Post-war Europe and the rise of women's football

When, in 1951, six European states formed the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), via the Treaty of Paris, economic integration on the continent accelerated. The ensuing Treaty of Rome, signed in 1957 by Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands, began to merge some areas of fiscal policy. More than fifty years later, over thirty states have become involved in a complex arrangement of political, social and cultural ties in the European Union (EU). However, there have been significant exceptions. Cold War politics particularly affected central and eastern regions (Edelman 1993: 5-10). While federalists before the war described a possible union including the USSR, communist government in the countries of central and eastern Europe saw a Soviet «sphere of influence» become, in Churchill's words, an «iron curtain» by March 1946 (Kowalski and Porter 1997: 100-21). The subsequent recommencement of the civil war in Greece, territorial demands on Turkey and claims on Persia then combined with the exit of the Soviet representative from the Four-Power Council of Foreign Ministers in 1947. From this point on, the division of Germany into a Federal Republic (West Germany) and the Democratic Republic (East Germany) determined different notions of

European-identity until the fall of the Berlin Wall and the reunification of the country in October 1990. Across Europe, diplomacy and policy «faced» East or West, although, as a recent exhibition at the V&A Museum in London indicated, social, political, economic and cultural influences crossed physical and ideological divides (V&A 2009). Since 1990 a number of new European states have become independent; marking a growth in the size and intricacy of migration across the region as a whole.

While sport, identity and representation are therefore central to this study, a detailed assessment of changing political systems in Europe since 1945 is beyond its scope¹. One academic approach to the subject of the EU has tended to emphasize the role of political parties in power at a given time (inter-governmentalism). However, from its antecedents before the Second World War, the EU was conceptualised as having a much wider and more powerful role (supranationalism). From this scholarly perspective, the union, its institutions and activities are treated as a progressively autonomous body. The first expansion of what was the European Community (EC) in 1973, with the accession of Denmark, Britain and Ireland, was part of a growth about which many people remain ambivalent. Britain's previous application to join had been vetoed by French President de Gaulle in 1963; Norway had applied to join the EC in June 1970 but voters rejected the idea in a referendum held in 1972 and both countries remain, by and large, Euro-sceptic. Extending the EC to Greece, Portugal and Spain involved protracted negotiations. The Mediterranean enlargements were eventually agreed in 1979 in the case of Greece, and 1985 for Portugal and Spain (coming into force in 1981 and 1986 respectively).

Subsequent regional conflicts and economic difficulty have made further augmentation of the EU's role a relatively slow and precarious affair. Nevertheless, in this increasing sense of Europeanization, the four most significant aspects debated in the public domain have been federalism, a widening and deepening of the union and a degree of flexible integration. These are worth outlining briefly because the same processes can be said to be, more or less, present in the changing Europeanisation of football over the same period. Federalism involved nation-states entering various forms of partnership involving supranational organization. Widening the EU has also been contentious. The current membership of twenty-seven states has been scheduled to expand further still, in spite of acute economic circum-

1 Appendix 1 summarizes the necessary context of the expansion of the European Union since the ECSC agreement to the present (European Commission 2010).

stances across the region. EU candidate countries at the time of writing include Croatia; The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; Turkey and Iceland. In addition, potential candidate countries include Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo under UN Security Council Resolution 1244, Montenegro and Serbia. Some European nations are deeply committed to the European Union and others remain less so. Consequently, the extent to which the EU has spoken on behalf of European nations as an umbrella organization at various points in its history remains debatable. The degree of flexible integration has meant that individual nations have sometimes been able to advance their domestic interests through the EU, but this is another challenging topic beyond the scope of what concerns us here.

While most academics would acknowledge that a changing sense of Europe has been significant for sport, the opening quotation from Jeff Hill shows that it is only recently that it has been conceptualized with any rigour. Compared with the amount of ink spilt on the topic of monetary union and the common currency from 1999, or opinion polls that show a commitment to federalism, sport has been relatively neglected (George and Bache 2001: 1). Perhaps the current enthusiasm for European football competition, such as the annual Champions' League trophy, can be seen as evidence of a relatively banal indicator of European-identity. When a Chelsea supporter wears her team shirt to attend a Champions' League match in Barcelona, a sense of being European might be less evident than other characteristics, including local pride. Greater connectivity, such as improved transport and communication networks, make football as much a creative-cultural industry, as a sport. Switzerland, home to important governing bodies for the sport, remains more Euro-sceptic than other countries but has a prominent place in the history of world football over the same period. It is as well not to presume too much of a confluence of interest, therefore: fundamental values which appear to be highlighted both by the EU and football, such as peace, non-discrimination, solidarity, unity and sustainable development, can be somewhat nebulous in their application, in spite of the apparent consensus of their use.

Nevertheless, the EU has sought to become more involved in the business of sport as the twentieth century progressed. The European Parliament declared 1992 Olympic Year and by 1999 the Helsinki Report established that the sport industry required supranational regulation. The relationship with Olympism has since further been formalized with a permanent European Olympic Committee (EOC). The *White Paper on Sport* issued in

2007 went further to argue that health, social inclusion, education, competition law, freedom of movement, criminal liability and the protection of minors all came under the umbrella of EU. However, there are clear limits to a sense of European identity in sport. Proposals to create a European team whose athletes would wear a national and EU symbol while participating in the Olympic Games have been resisted.

In football, independent and autonomous national associations usually wish to tolerate intervention only when European-wide interests are concerned (Lanfranchi and Taylor 2001: 5). As one of the most well-known EU mottos would have it, most football national associations prefer to show «Unity in Diversity» rather than through a wider sense of European-ness. Until the late 1990s, for example, newly-formed associations affiliated first to of the Federation Internationale de Football Associations (FIFA), the world-body of football since 1904, then to their continental confederation, though the reverse is now the case. Therefore, the growth of the EU has been just one way of interpreting how a greater sense of Europe has become evident in sporting terms since 1945 (Agergaard and Bothelo 2010: 157).

Arguments linking sporting migration with recent globalization processes may neglect longer historical trends. The commercialization of sport had a significant pre history and, from the nineteenth century onwards, it was allied with other urbanized creative industries. These included large international exhibitions; the music hall and theatre. Each of these business models used similar technologies of enclosing areas of entertainment to which a paying public were admitted. Gentlemen and scholars formed the Football Association in 1863, though there remains debate about how far their codified laws of the game relied upon previous versions of rules (Mason 1980: 34-8). With the significant influence of Sheffield and northern industrial towns, the game was primarily developed and disseminated by business connections; in particular entrepreneurs who understood mass markets for both participants and spectators (Harvey 2005: 10-5). The establishment in England of the FA Cup in 1871 and the Football League in 1888 had shown how local and regional rivalries could be stimulated well before such trophy competitions could be described as national, let alone international in perspective (Taylor 2005: 35-7). Charles Korr's important study of West Ham United illustrated how ambitious teams had to make a difficult choice over whether to remain representative of a local area or draw in playing talent and support in order to compete against the best op-

position (1986: 24). Club competition stimulated the migration of players and distinct patterns of diffusion (such as the movement south of Scottish «anglo» professionals) began to emerge at the same time that some destinations became nodes where specific groups of foreign nationals clustered. Consequently, a degree of cultural transfer was allied with athletic labour migration well before the Second World War.

As part of European post-war reconstruction from 1945 onwards, commercial links, player transfers and the exchange of knowledge became more evident and systematized so that England's World Cup victory of 1966 could be celebrated in the form of endorsed musical, mascot and magazine products specific to the tournament (Davies 2004: 50-2). This merchandise opened the sport to consumers well beyond the stadium. The football collectibles market itself became a by-product of the convergence between sporting spectacle, business and the representation of other cultures. As well as new professional characteristics in sport, there were innovative commercial cultures developing out of participatory and elite competition. Education and leisure opportunities spread unevenly across western Europe and new global communication technologies increased a sense of connectivity. Football was a particular beneficiary of these changes. However, regional conflicts, localized practices and individual circumstances also complicated these general trends. This work therefore begins with these multiple and changing aspects of European identity. Rather than a stable meaning, being «European» has implied a fusion, and perhaps some confusion, of terms. Football has meant many things to different people. Neither has professionalism been a straightforward or coherent phenomenon.

A conscious move towards European integration, which was to have wide-ranging and important consequences, coincided in 1951 with an event that seems, on the face of it, isolated, unrelated and insignificant: T. Cranshaw of the Nicaraguan football association wrote to the secretary of FIFA, concerned that he had seen women's football in Costa Rica and knew of almost 20,000 female players in the United States (Eisenberg et al. 2004: 187). Cranshaw enquired what FIFA intended to do about this shocking development. The governing body, based in Switzerland, responded that it had no concern with, or jurisdiction over, women's football. In consequence, it could not offer advice either to Mr Cranshaw or to its affiliated associations on this issue. However, there had been a history of European women's football going back at least to the 1880s and the

world-body must have been aware of at least some of this: Jules Rimet, who had been a president of both the French Football Federation (FFF) and FIFA, had assisted in two female Paris-based matches attended by 10,000 spectators in 1920 (Dietschy 2010: 503).

At the time of writing much has changed: football has held a men's World Cup in South Africa in 2010; one of the first African-hosted sporting mega-events. The 2018 edition has been awarded to Russia and the 2022 competition to Qatar; so football is still consciously moving into emerging markets for the sport. Increasing the gender equity profile of football has coincided with these aims. However, the movement of people and expertise in women's football remains a neglected academic topic. The first Women's World Championship was held in PR China in 1991 and the country also hosted the 2007 Women's World Cup (WWC) in a number of key cities. The United States has held two Women's World Cup competitions in 1999 and 2003. Sweden hosted the Women's World Cup in 1995 and an Olympic Games tournament first showcased women's football at Atlanta in 1996. Thereafter, Sydney, Athens and Beijing became important milestones in the cross-cultural transfer of Olympic women's football. FIFA awarded the finals of the Women's World Cup to Germany in 2011, breaking attendance records for a female-only tournament on the continent. This live attendance was surpassed again during the 2012 Olympic Games in London, where over 660,000 people attended women's matches. There are now also two FIFA youth trophies; the U-20 and U-17 Women's World Cup tournaments, held in Germany and Trinidad and Tobago respectively in 2010. The crowded playing schedule includes confederation, regional and national competitions. It is no exaggeration to say that the rise in the number and variety of international fixtures for women players is football's most conspicuous move toward equity in the last twenty-five years. Not only has this changed the way that the sport has been conceptualized, skilled female players have changed the representation of football's technological and institutional networks by moving across the world to play the game.

First, what do we mean by European football and where do women fit into this research agenda? Second, if football is the fastest growing team sport for women, and has had a world tournament since 1991, why has it not become more widespread and commercialised? While research on the international migration of male and female athletes has developed, particularly over the last ten years, we know little about women earning