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Foreign players in the Finnish football league 1970–2010

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#### ABSTRACT

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Sport is one of the most visible parts of globalisation in the contemporary world. Football, being the most popular sport in the world, is linked to the concept of globalisation in many ways. The movement of workers, in this case football migration, is one of the aspects that have turned football into a truly global sport. This study investigates the phenomenon of athlete and football migration and its roots, development and contemporary state in Finland. The first part of this study discusses the phenomenon of globalisation of sport and sport migration as a whole. This information enables the reflection between the situation in Finland and in the global scene. The main purpose of the study is to find the defining features of the development of football migration in Finland.

This study was conducted using both quantitative and qualitative data collection, methods and analysis. The quantitative data was collected during 2010 and 2011 and later modified to respond to the purpose of the study. The qualitative data, theme interviews (n=3) with three former foreign players were collected in the autumn 2010 and spring 2011. The quantitative data was analysed mainly by using statistics methods and the qualitative data with a thematic content analysis.

In 1970 there was one foreign player in the highest level of Finnish football system, the Finnish league. 40 years later the amount was almost 80 players. Compared to the European big leagues the amount is small, but reveals features about the Finnish football scene and the society. The amount of foreigners has increased during 40 years and the countries of origin have changed between decades. Different political, cultural and economic reasons have had the impact on football migratory routes to Finland. In the 1970s and 1980s Finland attracted British footballers that spent summer seasons in Finland and went back to their home country for their main season. In the 1990s the collapse of the Soviet Union brought Russians and Eastern Europeans, and the spreading of the South-American players could be seen in the Finnish league, as well. In the 2000s Finland, with the rest of the football world, faced the new flood of African players. In 2000s, however, the proportional share of footballers from different areas became more even, which shows the true global nature of football in our time.

Finland is still a football periphery and not seen attractive in terms of level of the game or the wages. However, Finland is able to compete with good facilities, stable conditions and secured paycheque. Our country does not attract players from wealthier leagues, but for Eastern Europeans, South Americans and Africans it has provided and keeps providing new opportunities in football.

Keywords: Football – Player Migration – Sport globalisation – The Finnish league

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**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

EC	European Commission
ECC	European Consumer Centre
ECJ	European Court of Justice
EU	European Union
FA	The English Football Association
FIFA	Fédération Internationale de Football Association
IAAF	International Association of Athletics Federations
IOC	International Olympic Committee
UEFA	The Union of European Football Associations

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

*It was not only that Internet and satellites made the world of football much smaller and easier to access. Globalisation could be seen also on the field: In the 90s Basque teams lead by Welsh coaches recruited Dutch and Turkish players, and Moldovan teams bought Nigerians to their squads. Whatever direction one looked at, it suddenly seemed that nations' borders and national identities had been thrown to the garbage bin of the football history.*

(Foer 2006, 10)

The extract from Franklin Foer's novel *How soccer explains the world: an unlikely theory of globalisation* summarises the direction in which football, and sport in general, have been heading for some time now. Sport is probably the most universal aspect of popular culture. It crosses languages and countries to captivate spectators and participants, as both as professional business and a pastime. (Miller et al. 2001, 1)

Waters (1998) defines globalisation a social process in which the constraints of geography on social and cultural arrangements recede and in which people become increasingly aware that they are receding. Houlihan (2008) points out that in regards of sport and the term of globalisation, there is a need to be aware of a distinction between the process and the outcome. Scholte (2000, see Houlihan 2008) identifies five common uses of the term globalisation, when referring it to process: internationalisation, liberalisation, universalism, Westernisation/Americanisation and deterritorialisation. All the phenomena of the sporting world of recent decades from player movement to global coverage of sporting events or the fan groups crossing national state boundaries can be linked to these five concepts.

Globalisation refers to the process of moving away from the traditional idea of nation states and their social systems, cultural patterns, political systems and economies. Sport, once a strong feature of the pride of the nation, is a part of this movement. This can be noticed only by looking at the teams of Formula One or Tour de France, which consist of drivers and athletes of several nationalities. The football teams of the 2000s are the most evident examples of this. Football is the most global sport of all in terms of media coverage, hobbyists or free trade, in this case player movement. In the year 2000 alone, 1478 international transfer requests were processed in the world (Lanfranchi et al. 2004, 97). In December 1999, Chelsea became the first English club side in history to field a

team with no British players in the starting line-up (Maguire and Pearton 2000, 767). Among the top 12 richest clubs, ranked in 2005/6, foreign players constituted over 75 per cent of the 'List A' players. In turn, Europe-based players dominate South American and African national sides. At the African Cup of Nations, since the year 2000, at least half of the registered players have been Europe-based. (Giulianotti and Robertson 2007, 90) Therefore, in terms of football, by studying the process of globalisation, it is possible to identify the changes in the nation states. Football is mirroring the society itself and the changes in cultural and political environment.

Athlete migration has been a very popular research topic in the last two decades and many researches have contributed to this field of study. Even though several studies have been done on different sports, such as baseball, ice hockey and track and field, the emphasis has notably been on football migration, since it is the most popular sport in the world.

Lanfranchi and Taylor (2001) introduced in their book *Moving with the ball* the concept of football migration, but also focused in more specific topics, such as history of British, Yugoslavian and South American football immigrants, North American role of drawing foreign players, the migration of African players to Europe and the Bosman ruling and its affects on the player movement. Elliot and Maguire (2008), Magee and Sudgen (2002), Maguire and Pearton (2000), Maguire (2008) and Taylor (2006) have studied athlete and football migration in general, trying to conceptualise the topic and find useful typologies for further studies. Several studies have been conducted concentrating on situations in different countries or nationalities, for example England (McGovern 2002; Madichie 2009; Stead and Maguire 2000), France (Lanfranchi 1994), Germany (Nieman and Brand 2008), Israel (Ben-Porat and Ben-Porat 2004), Hungarians (Molnar and Maguire 2008), Japanese (Yoshio and Hornee 2004) and Africans (Bale and Sang 1996; Darby 2000; Poli 2004).

There has been, however, very little research on foreign players in Finnish sport leagues, even though the topic is inevitably very popular around the world. Olin (1982; 1984) studied foreign basketball players in Finland. In his earlier study his purpose was to determine the reactions of the sport clubs contributing basketball towards the use of the foreign star-recruit-players. The latter study concentrated on foreign-star-players as immigrants: their ethnic and social background, motives to move to the new country

and how they have integrated into the new socio-cultural environment during their stay in Finland. Brooks and Penttilä (1988) conducted a similar study on American basketball players and Olin, Heinonen and Lahtinen (1990) contributed the topic by investigating foreign basketball, volleyball and ice hockey players in Finnish leagues. These researches were qualitative and they were conducted by using questionnaires.

Itkonen and Nevala (e.g. 2006) have done several studies concerning football, especially Finnish football, its history and development. Even though there have been several yearly listings of foreign football players in the Finnish league (see e.g. The foreign players in the football league 2000–2010 by Suomen Urheilumuseosäätiö), there have been very few academic studies to cover football migration in Finland.

At the beginning of the season 2010 there were approximately 60 foreigners playing in the Finnish football league, Veikkausliiga (Veikkaaja 17/10, 22). However, the first foreign football players arrived to Finland as early as in the 1950s and have been important contributors to the game since. The growing amount of foreign players in the English Premier league has been accused to be the reason for the poor performances of the English national squad, since the young domestic players do not have the same opportunities develop and gain a solid positions in the opening line-ups, which has led to national squad's player material being narrower (see e.g. Kuper and Szymanski 2009, 14). Similar discussion has been going on in the Finnish media from time to time and Finnish Association of football has been trying to make the clubs give more responsibility to young domestic players, to develop the national squads in the long run. (Kanerva 2010)

Nevertheless, it is still obvious that clubs do not have enough players to meet the quality that playing in the league requires and therefore it has been essential to recruit players elsewhere. Maguire (2008, 453) states that foreign players can improve the standards of existing players and act as role models for younger players. Besides raising the quality of the game in general, the significance of one talented foreigner can be great in a single team's success. The African invasion of recent years has been widely discussed topic in the Finnish football, but it has been only the 2000s that African players have started to arrive to play in Nordic countries. However, when studying the statistics it can be seen that there have been players from every single continent in the Finnish league. By



investigating these migratory routes it is possible to build up a better understanding of Finnish football scene, its history and how it has developed in recent decades.

This study shows that until the 1980s the foreigners arriving to play in the highest level of Finnish football were random cases, and migratory patterns could not be found. Regardless of a small amount of foreigners, the decade of 1970s is included in this study with the latter decades in order to gain a better understanding of the changes between different decades. The important basis of this study is the database, consisting the information of all the foreigners playing in the highest level of Finnish football between 1970 and 2010. The quantitative study was completed with the help of qualitative method, theme interviews with former foreign footballers, John Allen, Valeri Popovitsh and Diego Corpache.

The main results reveal that migratory routes to Finland have changed over time, from Great Britain in the 1970s and 1980s, to South America and Eastern Europe in the 1990s and finally Africa in the 2000s. Even though the Bosman ruling did not have as great significance in the player movement as it had in the big leagues of Europe, similar patterns can be seen in Finland than in Europe in general. The interviews with the former players unveiled several economic, cultural and political reasons for certain migratory patterns.

The main concepts of this study, globalisation of sport and football, and athlete and football migration are defined in the chapter two. The purpose of this chapter is to explain the key features of the player movement from the cultural, economical and structural point of view. Different player rules regarding the restrictions are also discussed in this chapter in order to gain better understanding of the controversial nature of the concept of free trade of footballers.

The chapter three concentrates on Finnish football, its beginning, main features and development. The purpose of this chapter is to describe the environment in which player movement has started to develop in Finland, and build up the understanding of the position of football as a sport in our country. It is essential to understand the semi-professional status of the Finnish league in order to be able to make comparisons between Finland and the big European leagues.

In the chapter four the research task and methodology are defined. The main research question and sub-questions are presented together with the quantitative and qualitative research methods used in this study. In this chapter the heart of this study, the database and the information collected for it are introduced. In addition, in this chapter the interviews and different themes are defined.

The results and the analysis of the study are presented in the chapter five. First, the overall results of the whole investigated era are presented and later in this chapter the results from every decade are presented and discussed separately. The aim of this chapter is to find different migratory routes to Finland and explanations for their development. This chapter combines both quantitative and qualitative results in order to gain better understanding of the topic.

In the chapter six the results of the study are mirrored through the main concepts of the study: globalisation, sport and migration. The purpose is to position Finland on a global map of football in terms of football geography and migration.

## **2 GLOBALISATION AND FOOTBALL**

### **2.1 Globalisation of sport**

Globalisation is a process through which space and time are compressed by technology, information flows, and trade and power relations, which allows distant actions to have increased significance at the local level (Miller et al. 2001). The term is sometimes used to refer to the integration of national economies into the international economy through trade, foreign direct investment, capital flows, migration, and the spread of technology. According to Robertson (1992, 8–9), globalisation refers to the increased concrete interdependencies of societies and to the greater consciousness of the world as a whole. Robertson also refers to a “global community”, by which he means the consolidation of the world into a whole space. Simply put, the world is “shrinking “, which means we have the possibility of becoming more aware of what is happening globally.

According to Bale and Maguire (1994), academic research and different perspectives on the concept of globalisation are so versatile, that the concept is becoming the cliché of our generation. Therefore it is no use seizing the concept any further. Many authors share the same view that sport has become a form of global culture (see e.g. Bale and Sung 2003; Miller et al. 2001; Giulianotti and Robertson 2007; Thibault 2009). Evidence of this can be found in international sports media spectacles, geographically mobile sports and US-originated advertising, promotion, marketing and packaging practices such as celebrity endorsements (Miller et al. 2001). Thibault (2009) states that sport has always included an international dimension but this dimension appears to have intensified and therefore the evidence that sport is globalised is uncontested. However, whether the results are positive or negative can be questioned.

Thibault (2008) explains globalisation of sport through four elements: The use of developing nations’ workforce by transnational corporations for the production of sport equipment, the migration of athletes, global sport media and environment. Bale (2003) takes the division even further. He presents that globalisation reflects itself in sport through a huge range of activities and movements: 1. Global corporations using sport as a marketing device and owning sport franchises; Brands like Nike and Puma enrolling athletes of any nation as a part of their media and publicity campaigns. 2. The new international division of labour producing sports equipment and apparel in sweatshops in poor Asian countries, often using child labour and providing very low wages. 3.

International Sports Organisations such as the IOC, FIFA and the IAAF generating huge venues by selling television rights to the Olympics, World Cup and world track and field championships to transnational corporations. 4. International sports management firms controlling athletes, promoting events in which their athletes compete as well as producing the televising of these competitions. 5. Promoting national leagues and specific teams in markets overseas in order to promote league and team-related merchandise. 6. The growing amount of foreign athletes in sports teams in most of Europe and North America; The international migration of athletes and the resulting permeability of national boundaries becoming more apparent, and the eligibility of athletes to compete for countries other than those of their birth becoming commonplace. Wright (1999, 270) completes the list with the professionalization of former amateur sports such as athletics.

## **2.2 Football as a global sport**

*From its beginnings, football was a universal game. As well as being simple to learn and play, it did not require the use of a specific national language, a recognized diploma or acquired qualification, and its rules became standardized across the globe. Moreover, for many of its overseas promoters, football was a product of transnational connections and the ideology of free trade.*  
(Lanfranchi and Taylor 2001, 2)

Football has been a significant component of the globalisation processes (Giulianotti and Robertson 2007, 31) and according to FIFA's survey conducted in 2000, there are 240 million people around the world that regularly play football, along with almost five million referees, assistant referees and officials who are also directly involved in the game.

It is not only the game that has spread; football players such as David Beckham, Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi are recognised everywhere due to the commercialisation of the game. Teams such as Manchester United, Real Madrid and FC Barcelona have a huge fan base in Asian countries and the teams are willing to increase it. It is obvious that football is present in almost every corner of the globe.

McGovern (2002, 25) links football to globalisation in three different ways. First, football is a global sport as more than 200 countries currently participate in international competitions, and professional leagues exist on all five continents. Football's biggest event, the World Cup finals, attracts tens of thousands of international spectators and is televised intensively worldwide (Giulianotti and Robertson 2009). Secondly, professional football is a unique industry in which the contribution of individual units of labour is unusually transparent. Potential employers can obtain the statistics of each player's strengths and weaknesses in addition to physical attributes such as age, weight and height. Thirdly, the status of labour as a commodity is taken to the extreme within the football industry since players may be traded between employers in the same way as machinery or land. (McGovern 2002, 25)

Taylor (2006, 8) suggests that football became somewhat global as early as 1930, when 13 national teams competed in Uruguay in the first World cup tournament, albeit he points that only four European nations were represented, which makes the tournament more international, not global. Yet what the establishment of the World Cup did from the beginning was to expand the international market for football talent. For the first time, a significant number of players moved from one continent to another, many of them due to the poor economic situation of their home country and the promise of the financial rewards.

However, Giulianotti and Robertson (2007, 7–29) tracked down the globalisation of football far further. They have divided football's historical globalisation into six phases, which follows Robertson's six-phase schema of globalisation (Robertson 1992, 58–60).

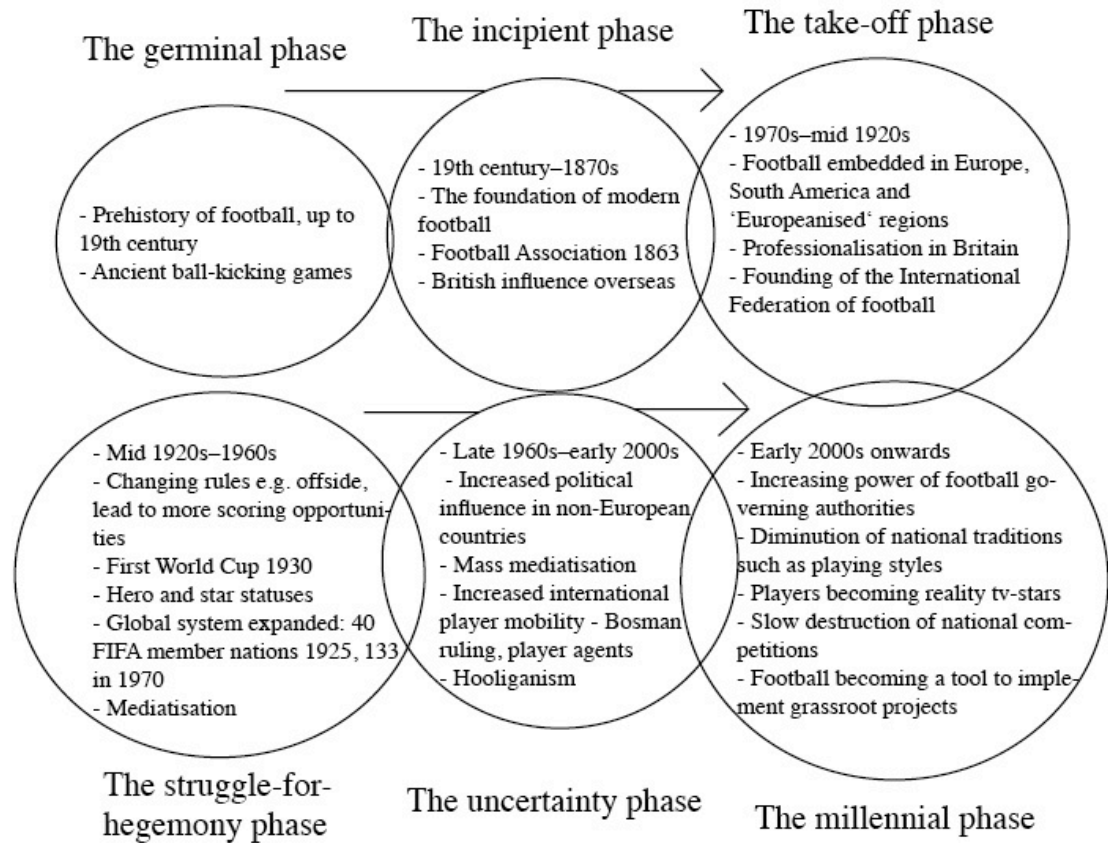


Figure 1. Six phases of football's historical globalisation (Giulianotti and Robertson 2007, 7–29).

Ben-Porat and Ben Porat (2004) state that there are effects of globalisation that can be seen and measured in football. They name three key cross-boundary flows: the mobility of capital (investments), the mobility of labour (players) and the mobility of cultural symbols (global icons and changed identities).

One perspective in sport studies argues that the international changes occurring in sport are rather an example of 'Americanisation' rather than 'globalisation'. This means that the strategies, products and concepts associated with sport around the world are predominately 'American' oriented. (Wright 1999, 270) It can be agreed that multinational companies, brands such as Nike and Puma are indeed strongly involved in the football industry. However, since the United States is still a 'football periphery' and is dominated by more American sports such as American football, baseball, basketball

and ice hockey, football, as being more part of Latin American and European culture, has been able to avoid the Americanisation to some extent.

### **2.3 Labour migration**

International migration is considered to be one of the defining features of globalisation (see e.g. Castles and Miller 1993; Koser and Lutz 1997; Staring 2000, as cited in McGovern 2002, 24). For historians of migration, the concept of globalisation can be particularly problematic. International migration is not as linear phenomenon as it is sometimes assumed to be. Migration across the globe has been said to have happened in great waves, for example the ‘Great Migration’ between 1860 and 1914 and the wave of the post-1945 period, which is called ‘the age of migration’. (Taylor 2006, 12–13)

Around 80 million people now live in foreign lands, and their numbers are rising steadily. One million people emigrate permanently each year, while another million seek political asylum. Added to these are 18 million refugees, driven from their homelands by natural disaster or the hunt for political asylum. (Stalker 1994, 3) Stalker (ibid.) divides international migrants into five different categories: settlers, contract workers, professionals, illegal immigrants and asylum seekers and refugees, from which the second and the third categories can be defined as labour migrants. Most migrants today are associated with the idea of an international labour market. Labour surpluses or shortages in some countries are offset by flows to, or from, other countries. (Stalker 1994, 9)

In sport, the migration of athletes refers to the movement of athletes from one country to another, generally to access more resources whether it is financial compensation or better coaching, equipment, and support services for their sport involvement. (Thibault 2009, 6–7) A socially and mobile workforce is a feature of most modern industrial societies. The movement of athletes from their hometown to their place of initial recruitment to elite or professional sport clubs can be seen as a part of this same process. (Bale and Maguire 1994, 1) This migration process is arguably most pronounced in football, as professional players travel around the continent of Europe. Football labour movement flows across the continent, ending up to the economically powerful leagues that are able to pay transfer fees and the salary of the players

concerned. Even those countries, from which the outflow of talent is most evident (such as the Scandinavian countries) recruitment of lesser talented players also occurs (for the Swedish, Norwegian and Finnish leagues). As seriousness, increased competitiveness and professionalism spread into sport, the catchment areas from which clubs drew their players increased. (Bale 2003, 103) Sports labour tends to be hired by a specific club or organisation and is resident in the host country for a limited period of time. In some sports, such as rugby, the migration has a seasonal pattern while some athletes, e.g. alpine skiers or Formula One drivers experience an even more transitory form of migration. (Maguire 2008, 446) But this is not always the case. Some athletes stay on and make the host country their home. More often this occurs either through marriage to a citizen of that country or by having resided in the country for a length of time sufficient to qualify for nationality status (Bale and Maguire 1994, 4).

These migration patterns are nothing new, but the process seems to be speeding up (Bale and Maguire 1994, 5). Athletes were increasingly crossing national boundaries, not only to compete but also to train already by the late 1960s (Bale and Sung 2003, 104). The migration of sports labour, not only athletes but also performers, coaches, administrators and sport scientists are all gathering pace and occurring over a more widespread geographical area and within a greater number of sport subcultures. Sports labour migration is closely linked with the process of global sports development in the late twentieth century, and this development in turn is linked with a process of accelerated globalisation unfolding the last hundred years. (Maguire, Bale and Sung 2003) Significant recent features of this have included 1.) an increase in the number of international agencies, 2.) the growth of increasingly global forms of communication, 3.) The development of global competitions and prizes, and 4.) the development of notions of rights and citizenship that are increasingly standardised internationally. (Bale and Sung 2003)

#### **2.4 Football players as global workforce**

Within the football industry, employers are permanently fixed to specific geographical locations while the employees can move between cities, countries and continents. This has led to the popular view that football is undergoing a process of globalisation, mostly because an increasing amount of clubs in Europe have begun to import more players



around the world. (McGovern 2002, 24) Lanfranchi and Taylor (2001) are, however, more careful discussing globalisation and football. They suggest that it is not sufficient to say that the increasing movement of professional footballers reflects broader processes of globalisation or to assume that earlier examples were mere precursors of the recent migration ‘explosion’. The migration of footballers has taken place on an international scale from the beginning of the twentieth century but its potential status as a global phenomenon has to be further investigated (Lanfranchi and Taylor 2001, 7).

Footballers have always been moving. Football migration is nothing new but its history is long and complicated and it should not be isolated from general migratory trends and patterns.

*Just like any type of migration, the movement of footballers has been affected by economic and political processes and by the restrictions of states and governments, as well as the regulations of national and international football federations. Even in the late 1990’s, footballers were far from free: they were rarely exempt from the systems of work permits, green cards and other immigration controls which existed throughout the world.*  
(Taylor 2006, 1–16)

Multinational football is not a contemporary phenomenon. Although very different from their professional descendants, Europe’s first football players and club founders were migrants. The defining feature of the first football clubs in continental Europe was their cosmopolitanism. (Taylor 2006, 15) In a French novel published in 1932, the author described the atmosphere of Lyon Football Club at the turn of the century. It was, he wrote, “a mixed society in which the German-speaking Swiss was together with the Italian, the Englishman with the Egyptian and the man from Lyon with the man from Marseilles.” (Jolinon 1931, as cited in Taylor 2006, 14)

Football club FC Barcelona that was founded in 1899 was composed entirely of foreigners who had been prevented from joining local gymnastics clubs. Players from the first Barcelona team came from several European countries. (Taylor 2006, 15) The first football players in continental Europe were also migrants. They were not migrants in a sense of professionals travelling abroad to earn their money with football, but football was part of their cultural baggage. (Lanfranchi and Taylor 2001, 31)

Intranational migration of footballers had been commonplace already in the 1880s, when Irish, Welsh and Scottish footballers travelled to sign contracts with English clubs. Irish and Welsh players tended to move to regions with high migrant populations. The labour market in British football remained closed to outsiders before the 1960s, with only five players born outside Britain in England's two divisions in 1911 and eight in four divisions by 1925. (Taylor 1997, as cited in Lanfranchi and Taylor 2001, 48)

International migration started to develop before the Second World War, when a handful of British professionals left to play in Europe. After the war the destinations were Italy, France, Colombia and North America. Refugees from Nazi-occupied Europe made British society more cosmopolitan, which was reflected in football, as well. However, it was not until the mid-1970s the FA's qualification rule and the Football League's prohibition of foreigners were overturned and more foreigners started to arrive. (Lanfranchi and Taylor 2001, 2; 40) Since then, England has been rather the importer than the exporter: in the season 2008–2009 only three English players were playing in four other European major leagues (Italy, Spain, France and Germany), where as from those four countries alone there were 31 players playing in the English Premier League (The Professional Football Players Observatory 2010). In the early part of the century developments in transport, such as steamship, facilitated the movement of South Americans to European leagues and Europeans to United States in the 1920s. Air transport has undoubtedly had even greater impact. (Lanfranchi and Taylor 2001, 5)

Taylor (2006, 16) identifies factors or determinants that have influenced or stimulated the movement of football labour economic, cultural and institutional (or structural). Political causes are of little significance, even though some events such as the Spanish Civil War and the Budapest uprising have accelerated the dispersal of Spanish and Hungarian players. (Lanfranchi and Taylor 2001, 4) Lanfranchi and Taylor (2001, 4–5) identify three main situations, which favour the economic migration of footballers: First, economic crises or national financial weakness have been a catalyst for the departure, secondly, football's amateur or semi-professional status has prevented players from staying in domestic league and thirdly, the wealthy European leagues have been able to offer alluring contracts.

Football migration can also be seen as a movement of sporting labour from the economic periphery to the economic core. This is based on Wallerstein's world systems

theory, which suggests that the core states dominate and control the exploitation of resources and production, whereas peripheral states are on the outer edge of the world economy, semi-peripheral states being in between. (Bale and Maguire 1994, 15) However, the model is not completely applicable to football. For example, core global nations like the United States and Japan have semi-peripheral football systems that rarely grace European television screens. On the contrary, nations such as Brazil and Nigeria are both very successful football nations but second and third world economies. Similar hazards surround the core/semi-peripheral classification of small Western European national league systems. (Giulianotti and Robertson 2007, 40)

In Europe one of the main migratory routes has been from the ‘poorer’ north to the ‘richer’ south, which is a contrast to economic relationships. Many of the rich countries of northern Europe have been exporters rather than importers. As the Scandinavian leagues were amateur before the 1980s, generations of Scandinavian players went to play in the south. This is still the contemporary situation in Finland. From the 39 players listed in the Finnish national football team in 2013, only seven played in the domestic league (Palloliitto 2013). Therefore it can be stated that the migration of football labour has tended to move to those *leagues* with greater financial resources and status at the ‘core’ of world football (Bale and Maguire 1994, 2–3). According to the world systems view, a particular change within one of the nations in the system can only be understood within the context of the system as a whole. (Magee and Sudgen, 2002, 428; Bale 2003, 105)

Stalker (1994, 4) divides international migrants to four different categories, professionals, contract workers, settlers and immigrants/asylum seekers. Based on this division, most of the football players seem to represent professionals. Players are mostly hired for their skills; they bring additional value to the team. In the 1970s and 1980s there were a great number of contract workers in Finland, especially from the British Isles. Players arrived to Finland for summer and returned to their home countries for the winter season (Allen 2010). Some of the players, such as Valeri Popovitsh, started as a professional but turned into a settler due to settling permanently in Finland.

However, a by-product of the contemporary world of football is also the increasing amount of illegal immigrants and asylum seekers, who seek for a better life through football. Stories of illegal agents trafficking young players from the third world

countries and abandoning them are common in the sports world. In 2003, three of the twelve footballers from Sierra Leone stayed behind after competing in the World U-17 Championship in Finland and later applied for political asylum. (BBC 2003) Some of them later had a successful career in the Finnish league and abroad.

## **2.5 Bosman ruling and the transfer rules**

It is important to recognise that there are several rules and procedures restraining the movement of players from a country to another. It has not always been self-evident, that a squad consists of several different nationalities. The rules regarding the player movement are set by FIFA, UEFA or national associations. The most famous one, the 1995 Bosman ruling tied football to European law, destroying 'retain and transfer' systems by enabling out-of-contract European players to move freely between clubs. It has been said to have the greatest impact of player mobility in recent decades.

### **2.5.1 Prior to Bosman**

Institutional or structural factors have been instrumental in helping to shape patterns of migration long before Bosman. Associations have had a strong role in controlling the football migration until the recent decades. Already in 1931, the English FA introduced a two-year residency qualification for non-British professionals in major competitions, which meant that foreigners could only play as amateurs. This was finally removed in 1978. In Germany, Hitler coming to power in 1933, the German federation banned the involvement of foreign players and managers at every level. The French professional league, formed in 1932, allowed the clubs to field up to five foreign players in every match, whereas the Italian league banned non-nationals but permitted the importation of players with dual citizenship (*rimpatriati*) from South America. However, the American Soccer League did no such restrictions (Taylor 2006, 19).

Prior to the Bosman case, quota systems existed in many national leagues and also in the UEFA club competitions. The quota systems meant that only a limited number of foreign players could play in a particular match. For example, in the UEFA club competitions, only three foreign players (plus two 'assimilated' foreign players) could

play for a team. (Pearson 2008) During the 1980s, several European nations relaxed recruitment restrictions on overseas players, leading to the '3+2' system in club football from 1991 to 1995 (Giulianotti and Robertson 2007, 24).

Before 1995, a combination of rules set up by the FIFA and UEFA have provided the basis for the establishment of the transfer system for non-contracted players. These rules included that a ceding football club was entitled to compensation from the acquiring club when, on the expiry of his contract, the player in question moved to another club. (Ericson 2000, 204)

There were basically two ways to move a player between clubs: a) transferring a player while he still had a contract with the ceding club, and b) transferring the player when the contract had expired, but using transfer fees that were restricted by transfer fees regulated by league officials. A typical arrangement on the expiry of a player's contract has been the possibility for a holding club to offer the player a new contract with terms that were at least as good as those in the player's final year. If the player, however, preferred to be transferred to another club, the old club was entitled to a transfer fee from the new club. There were two methods of recruitment in professional football, namely the transfer and trainee (apprenticeship) systems.

The transfer or market system is based on two elements: registration and contract. Every player must be registered with the Football Association and the Football League if he is to be employed by any club. Players may move between clubs when the player's registration is transferred from one club to another, subject to the payment of a fee to the club that holds the player's contract. (McGovern 2002) Lowrey et al. (2002) point out that it is this provision of a transfer payment and also the inability of players to move freely between employers as and when they liked, largely marked them out as different from many other sorts of employees. Football clubs had therefore considerable employment control over their players.

### 2.5.2 The Bosman ruling

Lowrey, Neatrou and Williams (2002) state that the massive impact that the Bosman ruling has had on the sport and on player loyalty cannot be underestimated. The richest clubs continue to buy the best players, of course, but now the scope for their spending is

truly global. Lanfranchi and Taylor (2001), however, suggest that as far as it relates to migration, the Bosman judgement has been less revolutionary than is often assumed. Bosman ruling has to be located alongside the range of technological, structural and economic developments that together facilitated the increasing volume and speed of football migration in the 1990s.

Jean-Marc Bosman was born in Liège in 1964 and had played his football exclusively for the clubs in his native city. His only transfer had been to local rivals Royal Football Club (RFC) Liège. He had had a fairly modest career and he had not succeeded in gaining a big breakthrough in senior league. (Lanfranchi and Taylor 2001) In 1990, his contract came to an end and he was offered a further one-year contract on minimum terms, equivalent of one quarter of his previous salary. It went from 120.000 Belgian francs to 30.000 francs, which was the lowest wage the club could offer under the rules of Belgian Football Association. (Parrish and McArdle 2004) He rejected the offer and found a new possible employer a French second division club US Dunkerque-Littoral.

Under the terms of his contract with the new club, it was Bosman's responsibility to organise his release from RFC before the beginning of the season. RFC, worried that Dunkerque would not be able to pay the transfer fee, did not do the request for the Belgian federation and Bosman's contract with the new club was automatically cancelled. This was due to "cross-border transfer ruling" which stipulated that clubs had to agree a fee before a player was allowed to transfer. (Madichie 2009) When Bosman refused to sign a new contract with his old club, he was immediately suspended. (Ericson 2000, 205)

After his appeal of Belgian transfer system being illegal to European Court of Justice (ECJ) was overturned in the early 1990s, Bosman sued for restraint of trade citing FIFA's rules regarding football, specifically Article 17, in ECJ. He claimed that the football regulations on transfer fees prevented EU citizens from exercising their human right of unfettered labour mobility. (Madichie 2009) About a half a decade later, on December 15, 1995, the ECJ ruled in favour of Bosman, deciding that the existing football transfers rules were in the breach of the EU law on the free movement of workers between member states. Existing transfer system was contrary to the free movement of workers as decreed in Article 48 in the Treaty of Rome (the ECC Treaty). (Ericson 2000, 205)

The EU ruling eventually led to the free movement of footballers between clubs within EU member states with no fee payable at the expiration of players' contracts. It also meant that players were allowed to negotiate their own deals with a new or potential employer as their existing contracts neared expiration. (Madichie 2009)

UEFA's opinion was that the new ruling does not provide for a fair transitional period, it disregards sporting traditions, destroys national structures of sport and endangers the future of national football associations and national teams. It also causes a two-class society in football on the European continent and causes discrimination against football players from non-EU countries. (The Independent 1996) All in all, Bosman ruling gave players more powerful position in negotiating signing fees and salaries on the basis that the club they were joining had not had to pay transfer fees. Within a few years, many European clubs were directing over 80 per cent of annual revenues into wages. (Giulianotti and Robertson 2007, 24)

As clubs tried to prevent their best players leaving on a Bosman transfer and costing them millions in lost transfer fees, they began signing their stars to long-term deals. The smaller clubs could no longer rely upon transfer fees, as their home grown talents could leave for free at the end of their deals. The rich clubs were the only ones who could afford to match the biggest stars' risen salaries. Money went to the free-agent players and their agents rather than smaller clubs and their talents. (Fordyce 2005)

Pre-Bosman, clubs were limited in the number of foreign players they could sign, but after Bosman they could sign any number of players from EU countries. That enabled the clubs fielding teams without a single player from the home country, which eventually led to all-foreign line-ups. This led to lower-division clubs to put over-priced tags on their young players, which made a cheaper, proven foreign footballer more attractive to higher-division clubs. However, poorer clubs could benefit by recruiting quality players on free transfers or by signing promising younger players on longer contracts. A new agreement now allows for compensation fees to be paid for younger players for the training and investment put into them by clubs. (Lowrey et al. 2002)

### 2.5.3 6+5 rule

Football became a highly international business and this has led to all-foreign line-ups. On one hand, the nationalism has been set aside and the quality of games has improved with the best players in the world playing against each other regularly. On the other hand, however, having too many foreigners harms the chances of domestic (locally-born) players, allows a few rich clubs to win everything, and weakens the national team. (Endersby 2008) The 6+5 rule, which FIFA's president Sepp Blatter brought up already 2006, (Lynam 2006) suggested that at the beginning of each match, each club must field at least six players eligible to play for the national team of the country of the club.

There is no restriction on the number of non-eligible players under contract with the club, nor on substitutes to avoid non-sportive constraints on the coaches, potentially 3+8 at the end of a match. The aim of the rule is to protect minors, protect youth training, adapt the transfer system to today's realities and ensure tighter control over the actions of players' agents. The objective was to have an incremental implementation starting at the beginning of the 2010–2011 season to give clubs time to adjust their teams over a period of several years: 4+7 rule for 2010–2011, 5+6 rule for 2011–2012 and 6+5 rule for 2012–2013. (FIFA 2008)

In 2008, the 58th FIFA Congress voted with a significant majority (155 yes, five no) in favour of a resolution on 6+5. President of UEFA, Michel Platini stated their support for the rule. (FIFA 2008) The rule was widely accepted by different actors in the field of football and by the ministers of sports of several countries. However, the rule was rejected by the European Parliament later that year, since it violates both Article 39 of the EC Treaty and the Bosman ruling. (Euractiv 2008) Therefore the implementation of the rule has not taken place so far.

### 2.5.4 Home grown player rule

UEFA defines locally trained or 'home grown' players as those who, regardless of their nationality, have been trained by their club or by another club in the same national association for at least three years between the age of 15 and 21. Up to half of the locally trained players must be from the club itself, with the others being either from the club itself or from other clubs in the same association. The content of the proposal for



the rule outlined that from the season 2008–09, clubs in the UEFA Champions League and UEFA Europe League required a minimum of eight home grown players in a squad limited to 25. These rules are also in force in several national leagues across Europe. UEFA introduced the rule in three phases: In the season 2006–07 there would be a minimum of four home grown players in 25-man squad, in the season 2007–08 a minimum of six home grown players in 25-man squad and in the season 2008–09 a minimum of eight home grown players in 25-man squad. (UEFA 2005)

UEFA unveiled its proposals in February 2005 and they received the support of the national associations at the governing body's Congress in Tallinn two months later. More than 80 per cent of the fans responding to the survey conducted by UEFA wanted clubs to maintain a local identity. In addition, UEFA organized a two-year consultation with fans, national associations, national leagues, clubs, players' unions, and all the institutions of the EU. In parallel, UEFA spent two years providing detailed research to the European Commission Directorates-General that were most interested in the rule (Education and Culture, Employment and Social Affairs, Competition, and the Legal Service). (UEFA 2005) The main difference between the 6+5 rule and the home grown player rule is that the home grown player rule contains no nationality conditions because within the EU such conditions are illegal. The European Commission stated that the UEFA rule was legal in a statement in May 2008, and that a review would take place in 2012. (UEFA 2005) In 2009 a majority of English Premier league clubs agreed to introduce the rule (Conn 2009) and it was adopted in the season 2010–2011. (Premier League 2010)

### 2.5.5 National rules

Countries have their own national rules regarding the amount of foreign players a club can have. The rules can vary extensively within the same area. For example, in Argentina, there can only be four foreigners in the team, whereas in Brazil the number is three, in Chile seven, in Mexico five and in Peru six. In European countries, there are different rules in regards of players from EU-countries and non-EU countries. The rules vary from no quota for non EU-players (Austria, Belgium, England, Germany, Poland, Portugal, Scotland, Serbia, Wales, The Netherlands), no quota for non EU-players but only a certain amount can be fielded (Czech Republic, Croatia, Denmark, Finland,

Hungary, Iceland, Russia, Sweden, Slovakia) and the amount of foreigners/non EU-players limited (Belarus, Bulgaria, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Norway, Romania, Spain, Turkey). In addition, there are individual conditions that limit the amount of foreign players within the rule. In the Netherlands, for example, there is no quota for non EU-players but 18–19-year-old players should have a gross salary of at least 202.500 Euros and 20 year olds and older players must have a gross salary of at least 405.000 Euros. In Scotland, There is no quota for non EU-players but they have to go through a government and football process to get a work permit. In Germany, there is no quota for non EU-players but the teams of the first and second Bundesliga need to have a maximum of 12 players who hold the German nationality. Similar rules have been applied in Austria and Belgium, as well. (Colucci 2008)

In Finland, according the Football Association of Finland (2011) a club can have three foreign players lined-up in one game. A player, who before the current season has been registered in a member club of the football association minimum of five seasons, is not included in the quota of foreign players. However, these orders are not applied to the citizens of the member countries of UEFA, nor the countries, which have an agreement prohibiting the discrimination of labour between the parties with European Union. Within that agreement there are 95 countries. Therefore it was possible for example Rovaniemen Palloseura (RoPS) to have ten African players in the squad at the same time.

### 3 FINNISH FOOTBALL

*“Football is not an educational game, it is a spectator game. It is a fool around game, every man’s game and money collecting game.”*

Tahko Pihkala 1942 according to Wallén (2006)

Football has never gained the status of the most popular sport in Finland. Even though the amount of players is greater than in ice hockey, football has always been behind since the early decades of the 20th century, in terms of popularity, visibility and moreover, international success. Even though the quality of Finnish players has improved and many of them are playing in the big European leagues, the sport is still not as dominating in the sports scene as it is in other Scandinavian countries: Sweden, Norway and Denmark. In Finland football stayed an amateur sport until 1970s, which had an impact on Finland never gaining great international success (Itkonen and Nevala 2006, 71).

#### 3.1 The beginning of Finnish football

Football is said to have arrived to Finland at the end of nineteenth century. Nevertheless, Vettenniemi (2007) writes about an article published in Huvudstadsbladet 1876, which mentioned football being one of the games played in a folk party in Kaisaniemi, Helsinki. However, two years earlier Victor Heikel, who at that time was a physical education teacher, published a book *Praktisk handbok I skolgymnastik för gossar (Practical handbook of gymnastics for boys)*, which presents 20 different games, including football, and also defines some early rules of the sport. Most of the entries of the first football matches played in Finland are from the 1890s. (Sjöblom 2007, 19)

The first ones to spread the new exciting game that came to Finland along with sailors were gymnastic teachers from Turku, Viipuri and Sortavala schools that had been on learning trips in Britain. Factory owners took an example from their British colleagues and started to provide pastime games for their workers in order to keep them away from the pubs, and to teach them team spirit. (Sjöblom 2007) Already in 1903 Ivar Wilskman reported in his book *Ballgames* some rules of football (Itkonen and Nevala 2006).

The first international games against British and Swedish teams were played during the early years of the twentieth century and the Football Association of Finland was founded in 1907. At the end of the same year the association became a temporary member of FIFA. Teams were able to compete for the Finnish championship the following year. (Itkonen and Nevala 2006) In 1912 the Finnish football team participated in the Olympic games, albeit as a part of the Russian Olympic team. The activities of the Association and the national team were concentrated on the capital area for the first decades of the century. Finland was for a long time the only country in the Europe not having grass pitches. It was not until the 1930s that the football activity started to develop in the countryside, as well, but for decades it stayed a game played mainly in the cities. (Wallén 2006)

Itkonen and Nevala (2006) have divided the history of Finnish football into five phases: Arriving-phase, whose features are described in the earlier paragraph, Organising-phase, National system -phase, Early internalisation -phase and Globalisation-phase. The defining features of the four latter phases are presented in the next table.

Table 1. The phases of Finnish football. (Itkonen and Nevala 2006, 69–74)

<b>Organising phase</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Founding of the Association of Football 1907</li> <li>- National championship cup 1908</li> <li>- Membership of FIFA 1908</li> <li>- Olympic Games 1912</li> <li>- Beginning of the regional system 1922</li> <li>- Nordic Championships 1929</li> <li>- Olympic Games in Berlin 1936</li> </ul>
<b>National football system phase</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Co-operation between Association and Workers' Sport Federation</li> <li>-&gt; joint league system</li> <li>- Amount of players and clubs doubled, amount of club members tripled</li> <li>- Spreading out to new locations</li> <li>- Development of education, coaching and national team</li> <li>- Founding of UEFA -&gt; international games for clubs</li> <li>- First Finnish players to foreign leagues</li> <li>- Stabilisation of the national football system 1960s</li> </ul>
<b>Early internationalisation phase</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- New league system 1973</li> <li>- Emphasis on competitive sport and development of coaching</li> <li>- Stabilisation of the position of women's football in the 1970s</li> <li>- The amount of clubs from 700 to 1200 between 1970 and 1990</li> <li>- Football became television sport from the 1960s</li> <li>- Increasing amount of international matches of all national teams</li> <li>- The first foreign players in the league in the 1970s</li> <li>- Increasing player movement and international coach education</li> </ul>
<b>Globalisation phase</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Separation of the Football league and the Association in 1990</li> <li>- The amount of international games doubled from the previous decade</li> <li>- Increasing amount of foreign players due to Bosman-ruling in 1995</li> <li>- Increasing amount of Eastern-European players due to collapse of the socialistic system</li> <li>- Increasing amount of Finnish players playing abroad</li> <li>- Global cultural phenomena: fan culture, supporting clubs</li> <li>- Increased economic activity, clubs' financial struggles, betting scandal in the league in 2005</li> <li>- Competition of TV visibility with other sports and international football</li> </ul>

### 3.2 Losing the position

It is widely stated that due to the strong position of the Finnish baseball, football could not develop to be the ruling sport in Finland (see e.g. Itkonen and Nevala 2006, 71), since it failed to become the main sport practiced in the Finnish White Guards. The original citizen militias were formed due to unrest and lack of security caused by the Russian revolution 1905 and later on the conflicts caused by the Russian revolution of 1917 and the subsequent independence of Finland. White Guards constituted the majority of the White Army that won the Finnish Civil War in 1918. (Vihavainen 2006) After the war the White Guards remained the resting contingents of the Finnish Defence

Force and the government ratified its position. According to the regulation, the purpose of the White Guards was to promote the defence condition of the citizens and secure the social order. (Kylväjä and Sainio 1997)

Sport education was a part of the association's action plan from the beginning, as the national pride and self-esteem were already strongly based on sport. The government was highly interested in combining sports and the defence system, which produced many committees promoting co-operation between the two. At the beginning of the 1920s different ball games had a strong position in the conversations among the decision-makers in the association. At that time it seemed football would have a strong place notably due to the many active promoters among the Finnish sportsmen and its role as a crowd moving sport. (Kylväjä and Sainio 1997)

However, at the same time a known writer and a sportsman Lauri "Tahko" Pihkala was forming rules for a new game based on American game baseball, which he had gotten to know in his trips to America during the 1910s. According to Vasara (2007), Pihkala was an excellent propagandist and was able to get sportsmen in the Defence Force excited about the new game by arranging show matches and by comparing the Finnish baseball pitch to a war field. Soon after, when regional leaders were voting about the official ball game of the White Guards, Finnish baseball won the vote incomparably. Other official forms of sports became skiing, biathlon and track and field. Football received a status of a voluntary sport, which could be practiced if there was enough interest in the area. Even though football had many defenders, it had lost the first battle. However, football became one of the official sports in the Finnish army, albeit its role was more of a leisure game than military educational game. (Kylväjä and Sainio 1997) Football eventually became a popular game among all the age groups, but it can still be discussed whether football would have stronger position in our country if there had not been Tahko Pihkala and his invention, Finnish baseball.

### **3.3 The early stage of player movement**

According to Vuorinen and Kasila (2007), the first foreigner in the Finnish league was a Scotsman Thomas Murray, who played in HJK in 1939. HJK attracted also some other foreigners already before 1970s. German player Fritz Vogt stayed in HJK for the season

1955. A Welsh player Ron Redfern played for HJK 1969 for one season, but returned to Finland to play for FinnPa 1976–77 and JäPS 1979. A Danish player Knud Heinrichsén arrived to play in Kiffen in 1943 and stayed in the same club until 1949. (Vuorinen and Kasila 2007) A German player Manfred Nolte played in Kiffen 1963–64 (Lautela 2007). However, according to some unofficial sources (football related discussion forums), there were several foreign coaches in the Finnish league already in the 1940s (Futis Forum 2006). The unofficial sources suggest that the first foreign football player that was hired to play football in Finland was an Englishman Peter Cordwell who had ended his career but came to VPS to play for the seasons 1975–1976.

In the 1964 the Football Association of Finland set a rule that foreigners could play in the official matches, if their previous Association had given permission and they had lived in Finland permanently at least three months. In addition, there could only be two foreigners in the same team. In 1975 the three-month rule was removed. (Lautela 2007) This may have had a little impact on foreigners starting to arrive to play in Finland in the 1970s.

The first Finnish players to go play abroad were Kaarlo Niilonen, who went to Denmark in the 1940s and later on to Switzerland, where he worked as a player-coach, and Aulis Rytönen, Nils Rikberg and Kalevi Lehtovirta, who all went to play in France in the 1950s. In the 1970s nine Finns played abroad as professionals, and in the 1980s the number increased to approximately 20. By the 1990s it had increased to 60. (Lautela 2007) Approximately 80 Finnish football players (men) played in a foreign club in season 2009–2010 (MTV3).

## **4 RESEARCH TASK AND METHODOLOGY**

This chapter focuses on introducing the research tasks and methodology used in collecting the data. The research question and the sub-questions of the study are defined, and finally the methods of collecting the data and the methodologies used are introduced.

### **4.1 Research task and questions**

The aim of this study is to describe the phenomenon of football player migration to Finland, its extension, dimensions and details, and to reflect the situation and history of Finland to the overall scheme of the global phenomenon of football migration. In order to achieve this goal, it is important to create an extensive description of the topic and therefore find an inclusive information basis for the future studies.

The main research question is:

1. What are the defining features of the development of football migration in Finland?

This research question is divided into three sub-questions, which are:

1. What has been the background of the foreign players in the Finnish leagues during different decades?
2. How has the player flow from certain areas changed during the four decades and what are the reasons for that change?
3. How can Finland's situation be posited in proportion to the global and European scheme of football migration?

### **4.2 Quantitative data analysis**

The quantitative data was collected from different sources. The main source was Pelimiehet: Suomen jalkapallon pelaajatilastot 1930–2006 (Players: The statistics of football players in Finland 1930–2006) by Vuorinen and Kasila (2006), which consists of all the players playing in the three highest divisions of Finnish football between the years 1930 through 2006. The information of all the foreign players was collected manually and archived to an excel file, which was later transformed into an SPSS file.



The information of the players from 2007–2010 was collected from different sources: *Urheilulehti* (Sport magazine), *Veikkaaja* and *Pallokirja* (Ballbook) 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010, which the Football Association of Finland publishes every year, and the webpage of Veikkausliiga ([www.veikkausliiga.fi](http://www.veikkausliiga.fi), 2010). Later on, the data was checked and corrected with the help of the study *Veikkausliigan ulkomaalaispelaajat 2000–2010* (the foreign players in the football league 2000–2010) by Suomen Urheilumuseosäätiö (Sports museum foundation of Finland).

Two different files were formed, the other one consisting of players that have played at some point in the highest level, which meant that the information of first or second division teams was removed. This was due to the decision to concentrate on the footballers that have migrated with the intention of earning their living by playing football. The Finnish football league can still be called semi-professional among with some other sport leagues such as basketball and volleyball, because work outside sport still plays a significant role in their make-up. (Lämsä 2008; Olin and Penttilä 2001, 126) Including all the divisions of the Finnish football league into the research was not substantial, since the purpose is to investigate the foreign players that have arrived to Finland in order to play football. However, the second file was left to consist the information of all the foreign players, in order to gain a better overall look. The first file had most focus, since it was a clear decision to concentrate only on the football on the highest level. The final database includes the information of 719 players.

The information of the players included their birth year, nationality, seasons they played, teams they played in, age when they arrived to Finland, the amount of seasons they played altogether and the amount of seasons they played at the highest level. Some of the players in the database are nowadays citizens of Finland. If, however, their nationality is something else in the data collected by Vuorinen and Kasila, they are included in the database as foreign players. The players that have played in Finland 2007–2010 have been included in the database if their nationality is not Finnish in the sources used (Veikkausliiga, Sport magazines, statistics). Some of the players are from a country that does not exist anymore, for example Yugoslavia. However, their nationality has been marked in the database as it is in the source of information. Therefore there can be some overlaps in regards of the 1990s player information. In the 2000–2010 data base Yugoslavia is not included but there are countries that were a part of former Yugoslavia, such as Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia. This did not cause a

problem since the backgrounds of the players are mostly dealt regarding the areas, not individual countries. Since the data was collected manually from different statistics, magazines and web pages, the numbers are not perfectly accurate. However, the purpose of the study is not to provide accurate numbers but rather give an overall look of the background of the players who arrived to Finland to play football. The database consists of all the players that have been signed up for some team of the Finnish football league, even though they had not played a single game. The games played have not been taken into account, firstly, because the information – notably in regards of older decades – may not be available and secondly, such information would not give any great additional value to this study.

Quantitative data was used to find answers to different questions regarding both the whole time frame and different decades. The data was studied using statistics program SPSS. The program was used mainly due to the large amount of data even though most of the results could have been found handling the data manually in Excel or similar software. The quantitative tests used were simple and general for two main reasons: Firstly, since the qualitative results had a great importance in this study, tests were used to find the basic results with what the qualitative results could be easily combined, and secondly, it was important to maintain a sensible limiting in this study.

The most essential results of the quantitative study, the nationalities of the players, were found by using basic frequency test. This gave the simple answer for how many players and from which countries there were in the Finnish league in the investigated timeframe. When studying different decades, a slightly more detailed test was needed. The amount of players and their nationalities in different years and decades were found using case summary, in which nationality was the grouping variable and the investigated timeframe was the variable. Those results were later used when finding the possible immigration routes and political, economical and cultural reasons to explaining them. Those results were also used when selecting the interviewees; all three come from the countries that are strongly represented in the quantitative results.

Normality test was used to study the differences in the length of stay and the arrival age between different nationalities. To limit the data and to gain more reliable results only the nationalities with ten or more players in the league during the time frame were included in the test.

### 4.3 Qualitative data analysis

According to McNamara (1999), interviews are particularly useful for getting the story behind a person's experiences. The interviewer can pursue in-depth information around the topic. The qualitative data in this study consists of three theme interviews. In such interviews, the themes are predetermined. However, the questions have no specific form or order. The interviewer ensures that all predetermined themes are covered, but the extent and order can vary (Eskola and Suoranta 1998, 87). The exploratory questions can be inserted, and the pace of the interview can be adjusted depending on the responses provided by the participant. The utility of this type of interview is that there is a structure that ensures that certain themes will be covered and helps to keep the individual focused on particular issues, but there is also the flexibility to develop questions as new themes emerge in the course of the interview (Amis, 2005, 108). In this research, the method was particularly useful, since it was not known how extensive the answers of the participants would be and how well they would construe their history and career as a player.

Main themes of the interviews were interviewees' personal history, arrival to Finland and opinions about Finnish football in regards of history and contemporary situation. The interviews were conducted in autumn 2010 and in autumn 2011. The interviews lasted from approximately an hour to almost two hours. The interviews were recorded and transcribed into text, from which the analysis was made.

The interviewees were selected due to their long player history in Finland, their nationalities and the decades they arrived to Finland to play. All three interviewees represent different nationalities but also different continents. Each of them arrived to Finland on different decade and ended up staying in the country. They have continued their career as a coach and therefore they have been in contact with foreign players after their playing career, as well.

A Welshman John Allen is a former player and current manager. He arrived to Finland to play football in 1984 and attended his first league game in 1987. He has represented several Finnish clubs, in which he has won two silver medals and one bronze. His last season as a player was 2001 in a first division team Salon Palloilijat (SalPa). He became the assistant coach of the league team TPS in 2003, and after that he has pursued career as a head coach in Turun Palloseura (TPS), Åbo IFK (ÅIFK) and the league team

Rovaniemen Palloseura (RoPS). Currently he is working in Salon Palloilijat as a manager of coaching. He is married to a Finnish woman and he lives in Turku.

Valeri Popovitsh is a former football player and a current manager. He is originally from Russia but obtained Finnish citizenship in 2006. He started his playing career in the former Soviet Union, where he also played in junior national teams, in which he won a Euro Cup title in 1988. He arrived to play in Finland in 1992 for a first division team Tampereen Pallo-Veikot (TPV), which rose to the league for the following season. He was chosen as best player of the league four times and he is the all-time best goal-scorer in the league's history. He finished his playing career in 2009 and started coaching second division team Ilves the following year. He is married to a Russian woman and lives in Valkeakoski.

An Argentine Diego Corpache is a former football player in the Finnish league. Corpache arrived to Finland to play football in 2001 and played altogether eight seasons in FC Inter, Turku. His last season in the Finnish league was 2009 in Haka. He became the assistant coach of TPS in 2010.

Qualitative data analysis was used to support the results gained from the quantitative analysis. The purpose of it was also to go beyond the numbers and link the quantitative results the key concepts of this study, globalisation of sport and player migration. The theme interviews were conducted after the first, though not completely accurate, quantitative results were gained. Those results operated as a framework for the interviews, since it was already known that the interviewees' countries of origins were strongly represented in the results.

All three interviews had the same main themes: background of the interviewee, arrival to Finland, career in Finland and change in regards of amount of foreigners and their background. During the last theme the interviewees were able to express their opinions and notions and show their expertise in the area. There was no strict structure in the interviews and the discussion flowed naturally, allowing the researcher to seize different topics that emerged during the interview. Therefore the interviews can be called semi-structured.

Table 2. Interview themes

<b>Interview themes</b>		
<i>Main theme</i>	<i>Sub themes</i>	<i>Example questions</i>
<b>1. Background</b>	Country of origin Length of career	Where did you start playing football? Which clubs did you represent?
<b>2. Arrival</b>	Reason to arrive to Finland Transfer procedures Previous knowledge	Why to Finland? Was there an agent involved? Did you know anything about Finnish football?
<b>3. Career in Finland</b>	Reasons to stay Level of play compared to the country of origin	Why did you end up staying? How would you compare the Finnish league and English divisions?
<b>4. Change in terms of foreigners</b>	Change in numbers between decades Economical, political and social reasons	Why the amount of Russian increased in 1990s? Did Bosman-ruling have any impact on the Finnish league?

The interviews lasted from an hour to two hours and they were recorded. The interview with John Allen and Diego Corpache were conducted in English, and the one with Valeri Popovitsh was in Finnish, since it was his own wish. All the interviews were transcribed to texts, and Popovitsh' interview was also translated to English.

The qualitative analysis took place after the quantitative results were found. It was conducted by content analysis. In content analysis, the data is examined by classifying, by finding similarities and differences and by summarizing. Content analysis is similar to discourse analysis and text analysis, in which one examines data in form or text, or those transferred into text. Texts that are studied can be almost anything: books, diaries, interviews, speeches or discussions. In content analysis the purpose is to form a summarised description of the studied phenomenon, which links the results into larger contexts and other study results of the topic. (Tuomi and Sarajärvi 2002, 105.) Content analysis was conducted by finding themes from the quantitative results also from the qualitative data. Where as the quantitative data gave answers to the questions how many and from where, the purpose of the qualitative analysis was to find answer to the question why.

This study combines both quantitative and qualitative methods, and therefore it can be called multi-method study. There is a distinct tradition in the literature on social science research methods that advocates the use of multiple methods. This form of research strategy has been described convergent methodology, multi-method/multi-trait, convergent validation or, "triangulation". These various notions share the conception that qualitative and quantitative methods should be viewed as complementary rather than as rival camps. (Jick, 1979) Simply put, triangulation refers to the usage of different materials, theories and/or methods in the same study.

Huber and Grtler (2004) state that by alternatively using qualitative and quantitative procedures according to a strategy of "mixed methodology" it can be expected to succeed in elaborating on those aspects of a complex research problem, which would not have been possible to analyse with a limited repertory of methods only. Qualitative and quantitative methods do not exclude each other in a research project, but are often used in a complementary relation. Decisions about methods depend on the research question needing an answer in an investigation. Jick (1979) presents that triangulation provides researchers with several important opportunities. It allows researchers to be more confident of their results, which is the overall strength of the multi-method studies. Triangulation may also help to uncover the deviant or off-quadrant dimension of a phenomenon. Different viewpoints are likely to produce some elements, which do not fit a theory or model.

Denzin (1978, see Eskola and Suoranta 1998) separates four different ways to use triangulation: material triangulation, researcher triangulation, theory triangulation and method triangulation. Method triangulation was used in this study in order to complete the quantitative results with qualitative ones. Combination of methods can be used in three phases of the study: in the phase of access to the field, in the phase of data collection and in the phase of data analysis. (Huber & Grtler, 2004) In this study, a combination was used in both, the phase of data collection and analyses. The data collected by qualitative method was used mainly to understand the results gained from the analysis of the data collected with quantitative methods.

## **5 RESULTS AND ANALYSIS**

The timeframe examined in the study is from 1970 until 2010. In order to create a comparable system between different periods of time, the results are examined in terms of four decades: 1970–1979, 1980–1989, 1990–1999 and 2009–2009. Year 2010 is investigated separately in order to maintain comparability between the decades and therefore having a same amount of seasons in every period of time examined.

### **5.1 Overall results 1970–2010**

There were altogether 719 foreign players in the Finnish football league during the examined timeframe. They represent 76 different nationalities and nine players have double nationalities with eight different combinations of nationalities.

The home countries of the players are divided into eleven categories mainly based on the geographic location. This refers to sports-geographic approach, which is a simple way to map the information to show the pattern of migratory flows between the origin countries and Finland. By using quantitative methods it is possible to gain the information of the origin countries, and the extension of player migration flows during each phase. The categorisation is largely based on continents, since Asia, Africa, North America and South America form their own categories. However, it is necessary to divide European countries into separate categories firstly, due to cultural similarities and differences and secondly, political reasons. Therefore European countries form five categories: 1.) Scandinavia, 2.) Central and Southern Europe, 3.) British Isles, 4.) Balkan countries and 5.) Russia and the former Soviet Union countries.

Scandinavian countries Sweden, Norway and Denmark share a similar cultural atmosphere to Finland and they are located close to it. The presumption is that the reasons named above can have an effect on the flow of expatriates from these countries. Therefore creating a separate category for these countries is justified. British Isles forms its own cultural entity and the English league was the first league showed on Finnish television. Therefore they form their own category. Balkan peninsula is a geopolitical and cultural region of South Eastern Europe. This category consists of countries that have some portion of their land located within the peninsula. Romania, Slovenia and Turkey are also included in this category, as well as former Yugoslavia, which is

currently divided into seven countries. Kosovo is included as its own country since it is widely recognised nation.

The collapse of the Soviet Union in the beginning of the 90th century had a great impact on player movement to Finland and therefore it is necessary to scrutinise the former Soviet Union countries as a whole and separately. That is the reason they form their own category. The rest of the Europe, so-called "old Europe" forms their own category Central and South Europe. These countries share somewhat political and historical stability and their have a long history in sports.

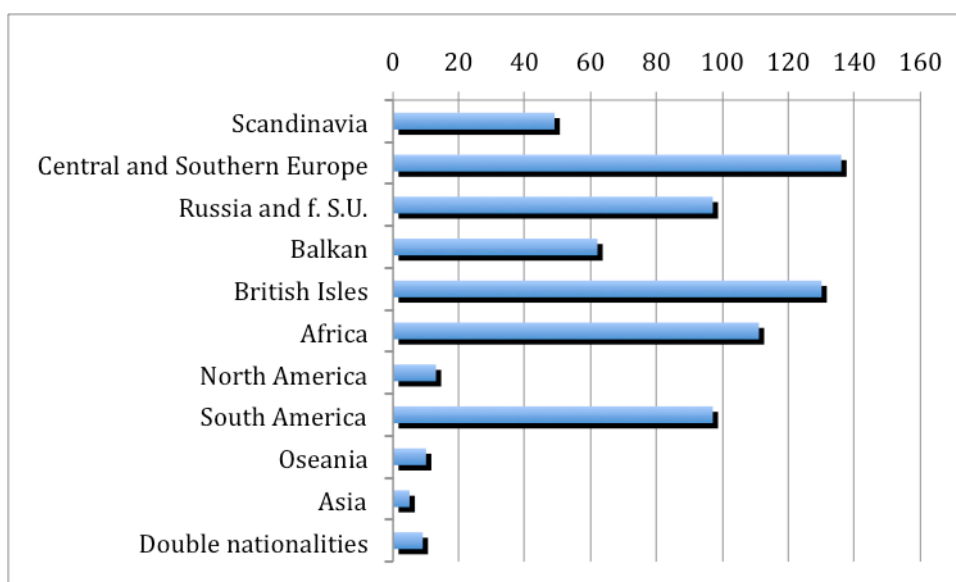


Figure 2. Amount of players by region 1970–2010.



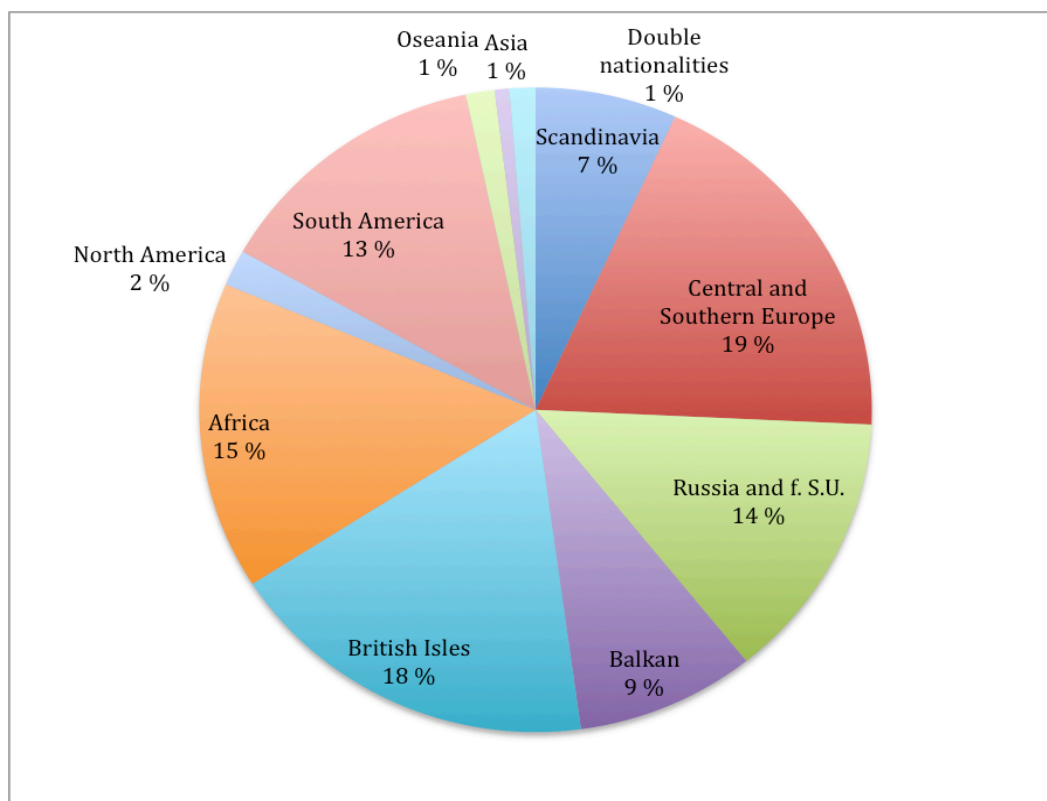


Figure 3. The proportional share of players from different regions 1970–2010.

#### 5.1.1 The dominating countries

Central and Southern European players have had the largest representation in the Finnish league 1970–2010, making up altogether 136 players, which is 19 per cent of all the players. The largest representation of separate countries has Hungary with 51 players (7,1 % of all), Poland with 38 players (5,3 %) and The Netherlands with 14 players (1,9 %). The second largest representation has Britain and Ireland with 130 players, which is 18 per cent of all the players. This is mainly due the large amount of English players. There were altogether 105 English players in the league between 1970 and 2010, which makes 14,6 per cent of all the players. Wales and Northern Ireland have five players each and Ireland three. The third biggest representation during the time frame has Africa with 111 players, making 15 per cent of all the players. The most common origin country is Nigeria with 30 players, making up 4,2 per cent of all the players. After that comes Zambia with 20 players (2,9 %) and Cameroon, Ghana and Sierra Leone with nine players each (1,3 %).

The former Soviet Union and South America have both 97 players in the league. Before 1991 all the countries in this category were part of the Soviet Union (Russia) and therefore, naturally, Russia is the largest representative in this category with 41 players, making up 5,7 per cent of all the players. Second comes Estonia with 24 players (3,3 %) and Ukraine with 14 (1,9 %). The biggest representative of South American countries is Brazil with 56 players (7,8 %), making it the second biggest representative country after England. After Brazil comes Argentina with 19 players (2,6 %) and Paraguay with six players (0,8 %).

Balkan countries have 62 players in the league. The largest amount, altogether 20 players (2,8 %), come from Serbia, followed by Bulgaria with nine players (1,3 %) and Croatia with seven players (0,97 %). Scandinavian countries have 49 players in the league, with 35 Swedish players (4,9 % of all), nine Danish (1,3 %) and five Norwegian players (0,7 %). The remaining 37 players come from North America with 13 players (USA 8, Canada 5), Oceania with 10 players (New Zealand 7, Australia 3), Asia (South Korea 5) and nine players with double nationalities.

The amount of players from different countries playing in the Finnish league 1970–2010.

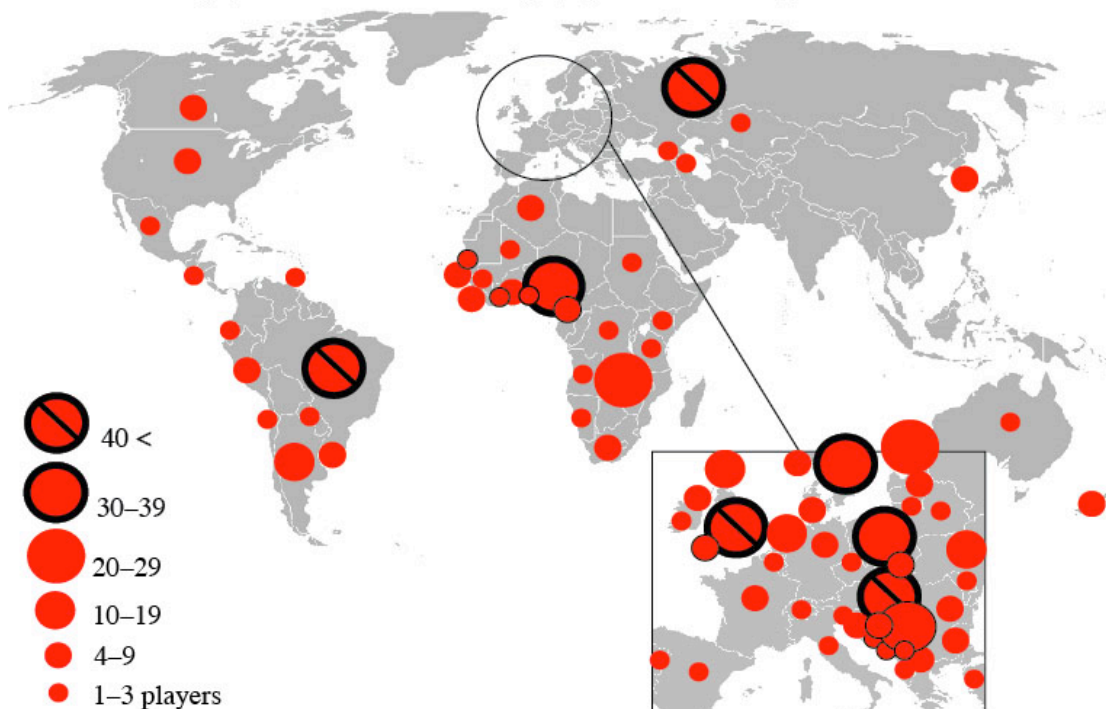


Figure 4. The amount of players from different countries playing in the Finnish league 1970–2010.

Table 3. Ten countries with most players in the Finnish league 1970–2010.

1. England	105	14,6 % of all the players
2. Brazil	56	7,8 %
3. Hungary	51	7,1 %
4. Russia	41	5,7 %
5. Poland	38	5,3 %
6. Sweden	35	4,9 %
7. Nigeria	30	4,2 %
8. Estonia	24	3,3 %
9. Zambia	20	2,9 %
9. Serbia	20	2,9 %

### 5.1.2 Age of the players

The youngest foreigner attending Finnish league turned 15 in his arrival year, where as the oldest one turned 39. The mean age of the foreigners when arriving to Finland is 24,96, with a standard deviation of 4,292. Of all the players 8,2 per cent was under 20 years old the same year they arrived to Finland, 41,7 per cent were 20–24 years old, 31,6 per cent were 25–29. Over 30 year-olds form 16,7 per cent of all the players. The information of 11 players was not found, and they form 1,5 per cent of all the players.

To gain better understanding and to find possible differences between countries all the countries with ten or more players (n=14) in the league during the time frame are included in the study regarding the age of the players. The mean age differs from 21,6 years (Nigeria) to 29,47 (Poland). Standard deviation differs from 2,54 (Nigeria) to 5,025 (Russia). This means that the age of the players from certain nationality still

varies greatly since a high standard deviation (out of -1,96–+1,96) indicates that the data points are spread out over a large range of values.

Table 4. The mean age of arriving to Finland, countries with >10 players.

Country	Mean	St. dev.	Country	Mean	St. dev.
Argentina (n=19)	24,47	3,81	Poland (n=38)	29,47	3,01
Brazil (n=55)	23,47	3,47	Russia (n=41)	25,75	5,03
England (n=105)	23,76	4,28	Scotland (n=12)	22,25	2,77
Estonia (n=24)	24,92	4,04	Serbia (n=20)	27,32	2,83
Hungary (n=50)	27,94	4,32	Sweden (n=35)	25,50	3,61
The Netherlands (n=14)	24,43	3,88	Ukraine (n=14)	24,92	3,55
Nigeria (n=30)	21,60	2,54	Zambia (n=20)	24,00	3,09

### 5.1.3 Seasons played in Finland

The great majority of all the foreigners, altogether 51,9 per cent stayed in Finland only one season. If the players who stayed two or three seasons are included in the group, the percentage is 77,9. Only 16 per cent of all the players stayed five seasons or more in Finland. Only two cases ended up playing in Finland more than 20 years. The mean of the seasons is 2,79 with standard deviation 3,253. The information of one case is missing.

When investigating the amount of seasons played in the highest level, the amount of single-season visitors is even higher, 67,7 per cent. 90,2 per cent of the players ended up playing in the highest level three seasons or less. Only 6,2 per cent played five seasons or more in the highest level. The mean of the seasons is 1,84 with a standard deviation of 1,946. The information of three cases was missing.

To find possible differences between countries all the countries with ten or more players (n=14) in the league during the time frame were included in the study regarding the amount of seasons played in the highest level. The amount of seasons differs from 1,29 (The Netherlands) to 2,59 (Russia). Standard deviation differs from 0,62 (Scotland) to 3,3 (Russia), with most of the cases being normally distributed (between -1,96–+1,96). This means that in the most of the cases the time players have spent in Finland has not varied greatly.

Table 5. The mean amount of seasons in the league, countries with >10 players.

Country	Mean	St. dev.	Country	Mean	St. dev.
Argentina (n=19)	2,47	2,53	Poland (n=38)	1,63	1,17
Brazil (n=55)	2,36	3,09	Russia (n=41)	2,59	3,3
England (n=105)	1,95	2,59	Scotland (n=12)	1,25	0,62
Estonia (n=24)	1,58	0,93	Serbia (n=20)	1,30	0,73
Hungary (n=50)	2,06	1,70	Sweden (n=35)	1,97	1,64
The Netherlands (n=14)	1,29	0,61	Ukraine (n=14)	1,21	0,43
Nigeria (n=30)	1,53	0,86	Zambia (n=20)	2,55	2,59

### 5.2 1970–1979 A few brave men

Itkonen and Nevala (2006, 72–73) have defined the decade of 1970s the Early Internationalisation phase. They name internationalisation the most significant change in the Finnish football during the 1970s and the 1980s, which can be measured with several different factors, for example the amount of international matches and player movement.

Altogether there were 11 foreign players in the Finnish league in the 1970s. The first was Jan-Erik Lundberg, a Swedish player arriving already in 1970. However, it cannot really be stated that this was the beginning of the movement, since there were only one or two foreign players in the league the same season and they only stayed for one or two seasons. The highlight season was 1978, when there were altogether five foreigners in the league. All of them, however, stayed for only one season. The player staying the longest during that time was an Englishman Alan Wooler, who arrived to Helsingin Jalkapalloklubi (HJK) 1977. He played there altogether four seasons. During that time he spent winter and spring playing in English Division four team Aldershot and came back to Finland for summer seasons. According to John Allen (2011) that kind of arrangement was very common with English players at that time. Wooler ended up playing in Finland for 12 seasons; He went to play for First Division team FinnPa after HJK and finally ended his career in a Third Division team Mikkelin Palloseura (MPS).

The other player making a long career in Finland at the time was a German player Hans-Erwin Königsmann, who first arrived to Finland in 1976 to play in the second division, and a after a brief, one-season trip to the first league in Kiffen 1978, played rest of his career in second and third division teams, altogether 14 seasons.

Probably the most famous foreign player of all time in Finland arriving in the 1970s is the Englishman Keith Armstrong, who played in the first league from 1979 until 1986. After that he played in first, second and third division teams, making his career in Finland last altogether 16 seasons. After his playing career he has been very active in the Finnish football scene as a manager, consultant, sports commentator and media person.

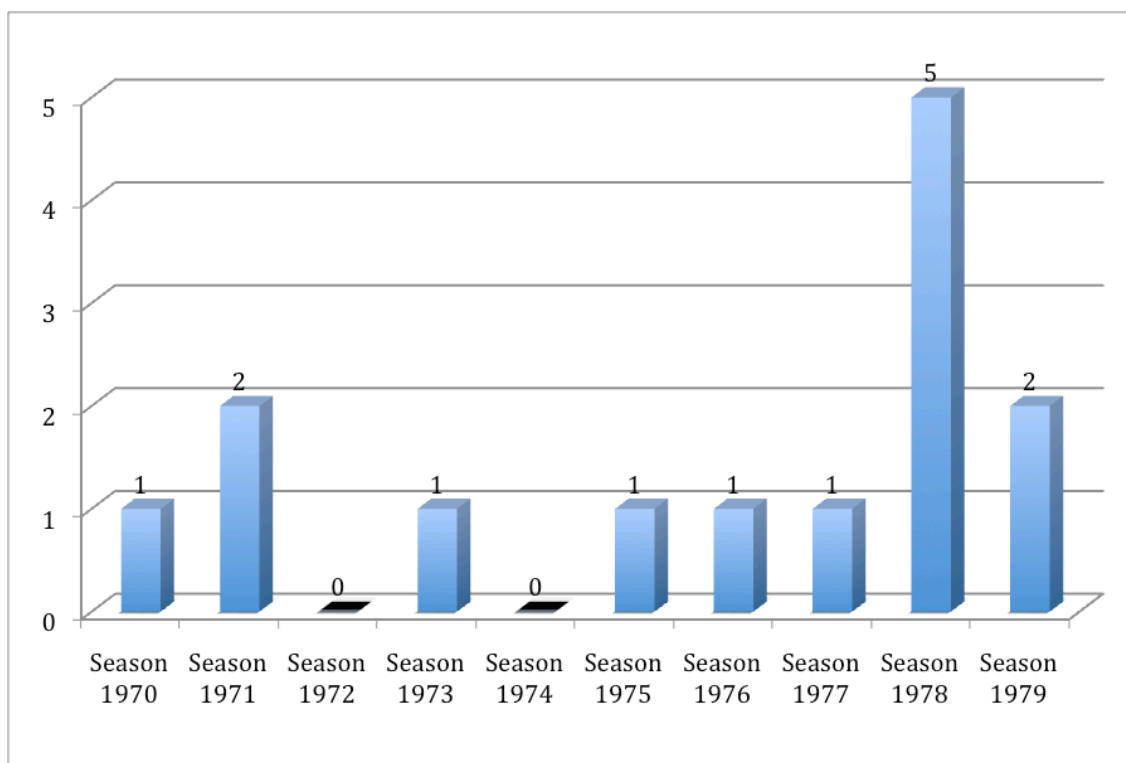


Figure 5. The amount of foreigners in the league by year, 1970–1979.

The average age of players arriving to Finland in the 1970s was 26,18 years, the oldest being Piotr Suski, 35, and the youngest Mark Weatherly, 20. The average amount of seasons they played in Finland was 5,45, varying from one season to 16. However, the average number of seasons they played in the highest level was only 2,18, for which one player especially, Keith Armstrong, playing eight seasons in the highest level, affected significantly.

The foreigners represented ten different clubs: HIFK, VPS, KPV, Kiffen, TPS, Ikissat, OTP, Koparit, HJK and OPSO. Only one club had two foreigners in this decade: Both Hans-Erwin Königsman and Steve Melledew played in Kiffen in the season 1978, both staying there only one season.

The amount of players from different countries playing in the Finnish league 1970–1979.



Figure 6. The amount of players from different countries playing in the Finnish league 1970–1979.

### 5.3 1980–1989 The arrival of the Britons

As the decade of 1970s turned into 1980s, the amount of foreign players increased, becoming somewhat steady during the 1980s. In the season 1980 there were nine foreign players in the league, but already next season the amount was 15. In 1989 the amount was 17 foreign players. The peak year of the 1980s was 1982 when there were altogether 31 foreign players visiting the league. During the 1980s, there were altogether 107 foreign players in the domestic league, from which 76 came from the British Isles.



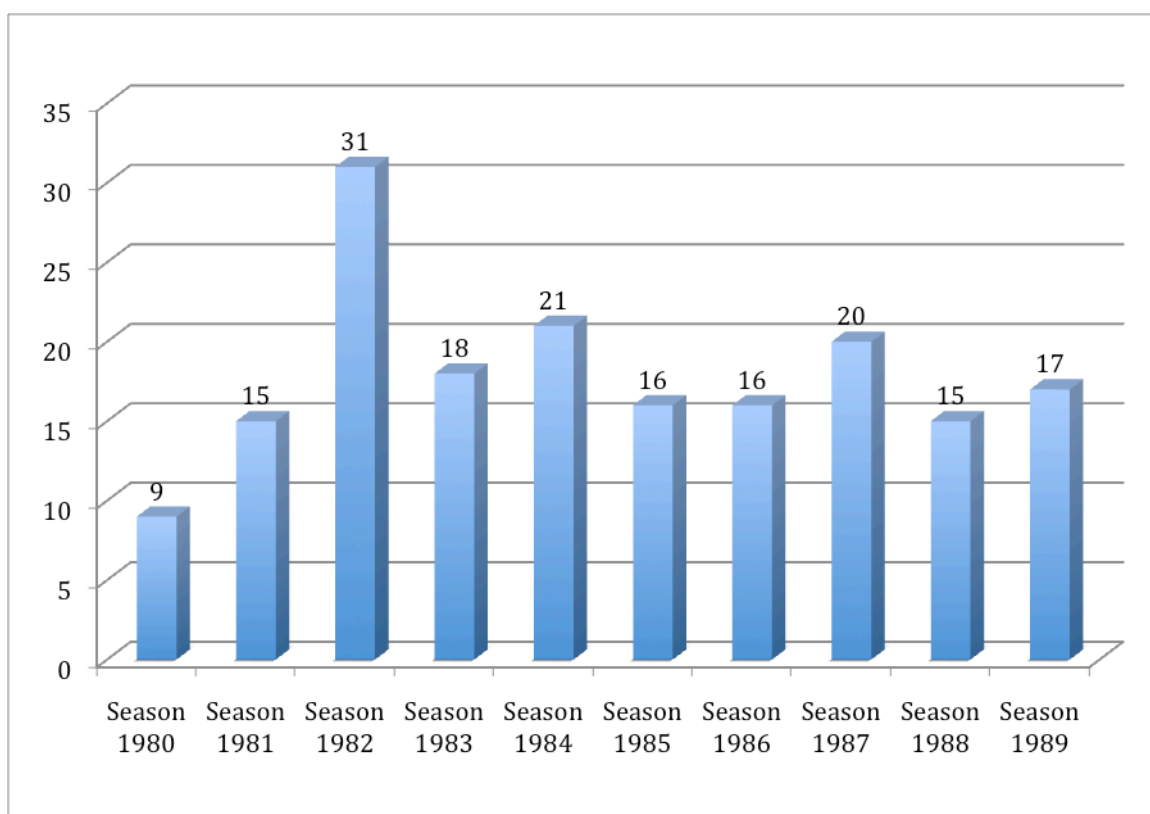


Figure 7. Amount of foreigners in the league by year 1980–1989.

The most remarkable feature in the 1980s was the great amount of Englishmen. Out of 107 foreign players 66 were from England, followed by Poland with ten players and Hungary with six players. Altogether there were 21 different nationalities represented in the league in the decade, but besides the Britons, no pattern or flow from certain areas can be identified.

The amount of players from different countries playing in the Finnish league 1980–1989.

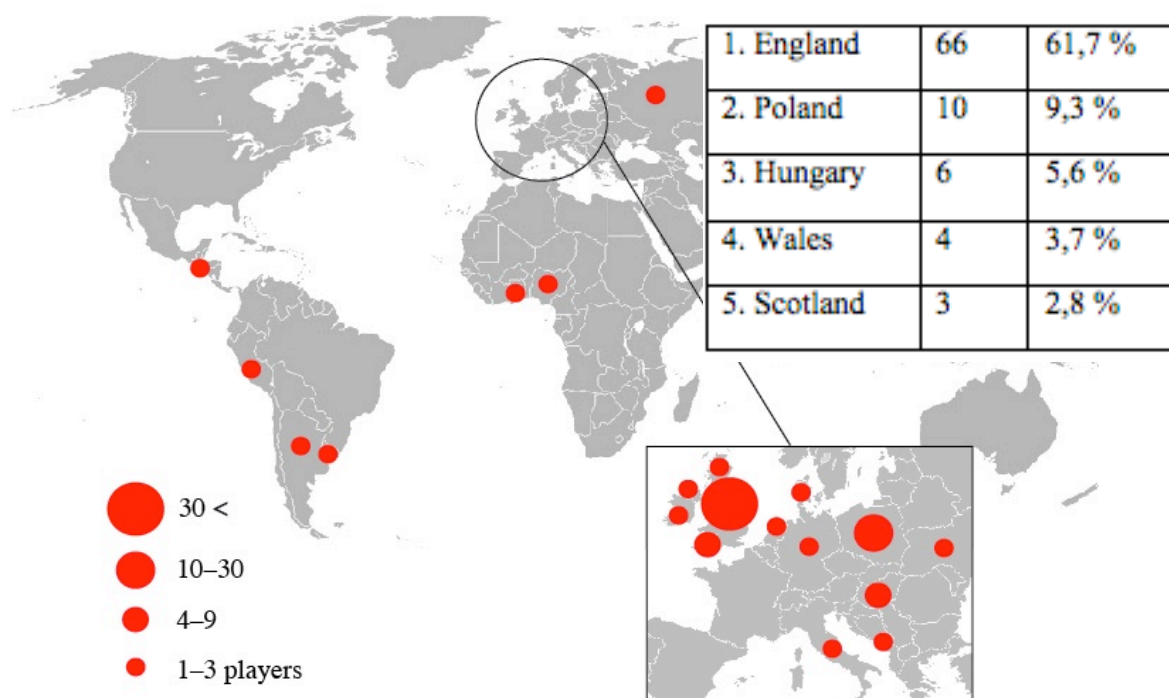


Figure 8. The amount of players from different countries playing in the Finnish league 1980–1989.

According to John Allen (2011) in the 1980s, sports agent was not as a common profession as it is in contemporary sports business. Football players ended up coming to Finland without middlemen, players contacting a club directly or vice versa. Allen was one of the many Britons arriving to Finland to play football in the 1980s. According to Allen, he ended up to Finland in the same way that most of the players at that time.

*“My friend had also been released from Chester same time than me and we both played in the same non-league team to make it to the professional team. He had seen an article in a paper, in an English national paper, that a Finnish team was looking for foreign players for the summer. So he asked me if I’d like to put my details in because he was going to put his, so I said why not, what have I got to lose. So we would put our details on CV and within a week I had a phone call, which was funny because it was his idea but I got the phone call.”*

There were two different ways to come to play in Finland, as a free agent or sent by your home club.

*“You could be either free agent that meant that your contract expired so you were free, you could basically go for nothing. That was just a question of agreeing your own contract, financial contract with your club and yourself. There was another situation that players had been playing in England with contracts and clubs want them to get some experience because they are not going to play in that club they are contracted to, so they would put them in Scandinavia, Sweden, Norway, Finland and hope that a young player would get experience.”*

John Allen ended up at Äänekoksen Huima, which played in the first division. The club offered him a deal for the summer season. This kind of arrangement was beneficial for English players, for what Maguire (2008) calls migration with a seasonal pattern or transitory form, with northern or southern hemisphere, or in this case two different league schedules, offering two seasons to play.

*“I stayed because I thought this is a new challenge and I wait to start something to get myself going again...and I wasn't frightened to coming abroad. Of course I thought it's not the best step to go abroad to Finland but at the time when I was playing non-league semi-professional that was not good either. So I thought this is a challenge, let's go for it and that's what I did.”*

From Huima Allen moved to a league team, Mikkelin Palloilijat. Moving from a team to another was very easy at the time.

*“There were no transfer fees at the time, I came as a free player to Finland and I left as a free player every time I moved. There was never a transfer fee in the clubs that I moved between because I always had it put in my contract that if I'm coming for free, I'm leaving for free. So that was kind of agreed. But of course it might have been a different story if I had gone abroad to foreign clubs and then everybody would have made money...but inside of Finland it was always easy just to move from club to club without any transfer fee being involved.”*

According to Allen, there are three reasons that there were so many British players in Finland during the 1980s: there were a lot of players without contracts, Finnish football had relatively easy access to England since they didn't show any other league on

Finnish TV and that the players were affordable to Finnish teams. Taylor (2006, 20) states that the expansion of television coverage was probably the most important factor in the increase of volume and speed of player migration. Therefore the significance of the Premier League TV coverage in Finland cannot be underestimated when considering the attractiveness of the British players.

*“ If they wanted two or three to strengthen their teams they could afford it, they weren't ridiculous prices to get players here, players without a contract. -- So money was one thing: they could afford them and England was a easy access because of the amount of players there, free players who could travel on a phone call's notice. And English players have always been ready to travel anyway if they are not getting football in their own country.”*

The peak year in regards of foreigners was 1982, when there were altogether 31 of them in the league. The greatest number, six Englishmen, played in Elo. This, however, did not seem to benefit the team, since it was relegated to the first division at the end of the season. The most international club was KTP with three foreigners from England, Peru and Argentina. Out of 12 league teams, ten of them had foreigners that year.

#### **5.4 1990–1999 The gates of the East open**

In 1990s the amount of foreign players in the league doubled from the previous decade, the number being altogether 229 players. Those players represent 70 different nationalities. That number, however, was affected by the collapse of Soviet Union and the resulting increased number of countries in Eastern Europe.

The amount of players from different countries playing in the Finnish league 1990–1999.

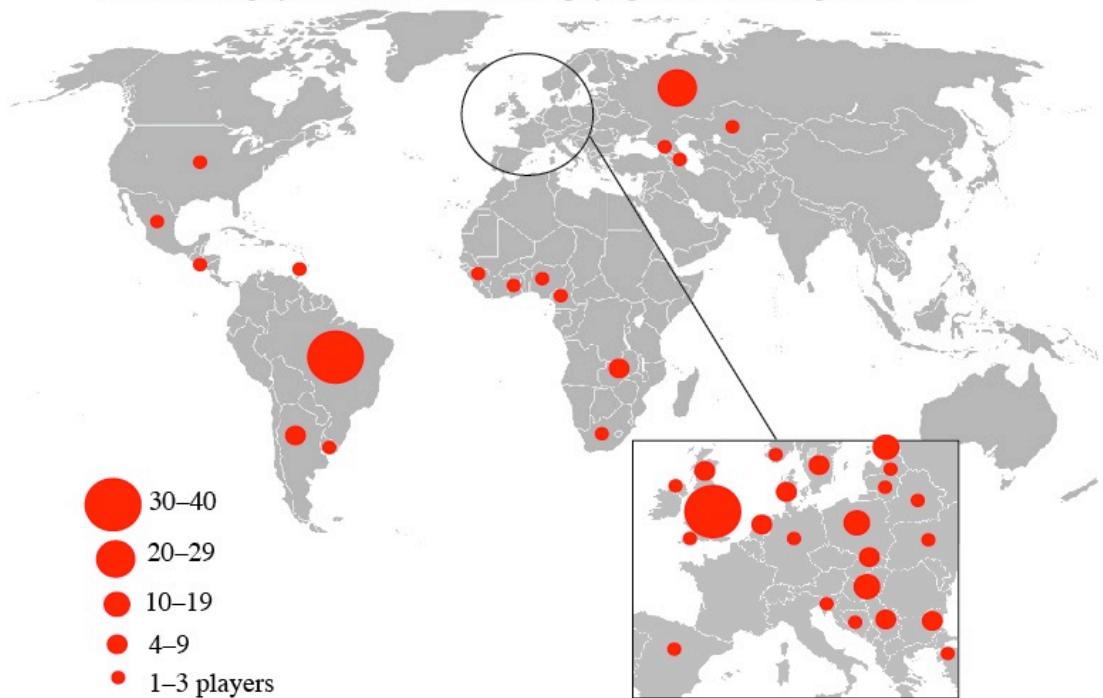


Figure 9. The amount of players from different countries playing in the Finnish league 1990–1999.

The most notable change is the increased number of players from Russia and former Soviet Union countries. Altogether 50 players had that origin. Second largest group is Central and Southern European players, altogether 41, from which Hungarian and Polish players make up 34 players. The other remarkable trend is the increasing numbers of South American players, from which Brazilians formed the largest group, 32 out of 41 players. Although this number decreased from the previous decades British Isles and Ireland had still altogether 40 players in the Finnish league. Therefore it can be stated that the Finnish league had become more attractive especially for the players from Eastern Europe. The flow of South American players was slowly reaching the North Europe, as well as the big European leagues.

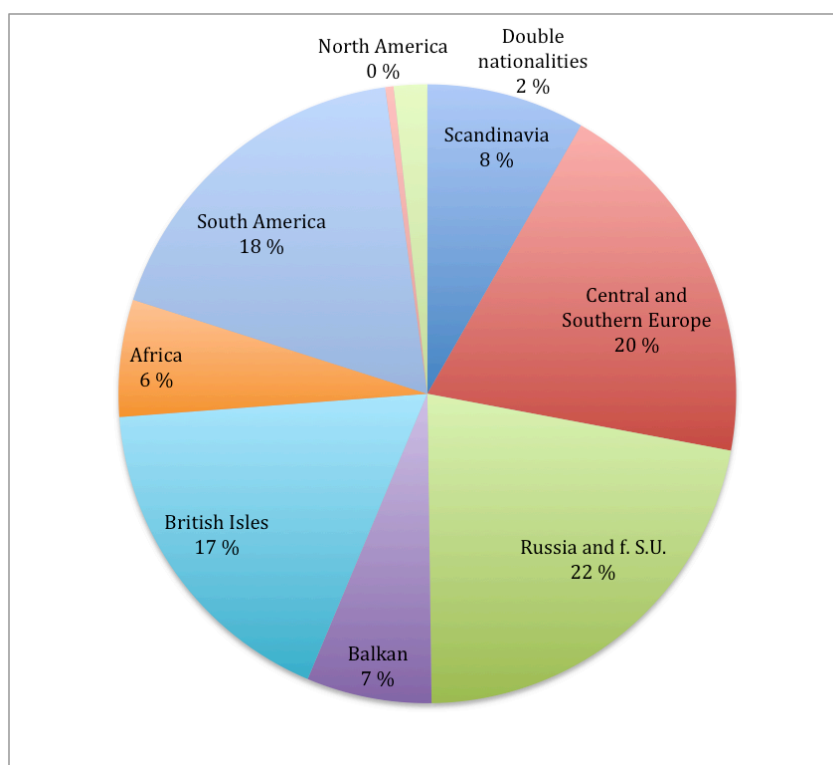


Figure 10. The proportional share of players from different regions 1990–1999.

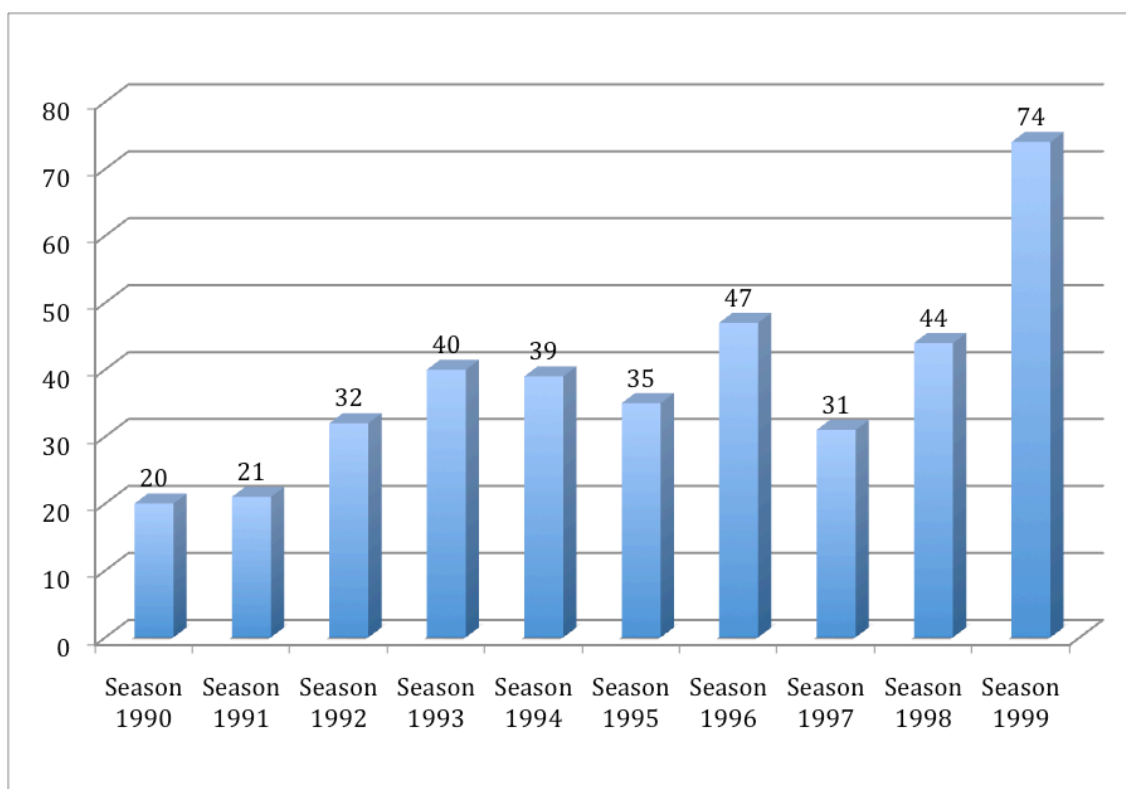


Figure 11. The amount of foreigners in the league by year 1990–1999.

#### 5.4.1 The collapse of the Soviet Union

The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) formally ceased to exist on the 26th of December 1991, ending the era of Cold war. The independence of the twelve republics of the Soviet Union was acknowledged at the same time. The collapse of the Soviet Union had a great impact on player movement. Before the collapse it was very hard for Russians to go play abroad (Popovitsh 2011).

*“When I lived in Soviet Union, it was difficult. There were not many Russian players in European countries, It was difficult to leave the country, and there was KGB and the rest involved, life was different. When the junior national team went abroad, to France or Spain, there were always a couple of guys watching us not to go here or there. It was tough time.”*

Even though Popovitsh played in one of the best European clubs, Spartak Moscow at that time, he wanted to leave as well as many other Russian players.

*“It became more free when the Soviet Union collapsed and all that bureaucracy and KGB ended. My friends left to Spain, France, Italy, straight away. There were good players in Russia and they fled immediately. There was tough competition in Spartak, it was probably the best team in Russia. I wanted to improve and when you are 20 there are many years ahead. The Soviet Union had just collapsed and it was hard time so I moved to Finland.”*

Besides the political situation, the conditions of the league changed radically, which possibly reinforced the decisions to move abroad to play.

*“Before it was the great Soviet Union, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Ukraine, Belarus... When it collapsed, there was just Russia. The league was not very good since all the players, who had played in their own countries, stayed in the clubs there. They created a good league eventually, but back then it was not.”*

Marc Bennets (2008) reminisces in his article “The rise of Russia and its football”, what the situation after the collapse of Soviet Union was:

*“The first games I went to in Russia in the mid-1990s were characterized by extremely low crowds, players whose only desire was to sign with a foreign club, and an overwhelming sensation of sadness as once great football was brought to its knees. Turnstiles were often opened at half-time to let fans in for free, such was the lack of interest.”*

Popovitsh went to Finland with other player, Oleg Ivanov, who visited Finland and came back saying there was a club that needs a player. Both of them decided to go, and a planned six months of staying turned into 22 years. Going to the Finnish league was easy.

*“At that time none of the Russian players had an agent, the contact was directly with the club. It went through someone, we came here and got permission from Spartak.”*

According to Popovitsh, it was not the quality of the game that attracted the players, it was the peaceful lifestyle and chance to get to play. The location was one the reasons why former Soviet Union players came to Finland.

*“Finland was not far away. A lot of players were in try-out, top players from Russia and Ukraine. Some of them did not fit because in Finland there is this ping pong football.”*

Maguire (2008) and Taylor (2006) agree that during the Cold War era, the migration of Eastern European players was restricted by the ‘Iron Curtain’. Following the collapse of Communist regimes some Eastern European countries have developed reputations as major producer nations for powerful European clubs. Limited professional opportunities in the East, potential financial gains, geographical proximity and with it, a history of shared ethnicity, culture, language and religion have been incentives to migrate. Economics is only part of the migration equation (Maguire 2008, 450) and since the Finnish league could not provide huge income but subsistence was secured, it can be stated that all of the reasons above drew former Soviet Union players to Finland.

#### 5.4.2 Hungarian and Polish footballers

The amount of Hungarian and Polish footballers in the Finnish league has always been great compared to other countries, and the amount increased from the 1980s to the



1990s. The proportional share has stayed somewhat the same; the amount of players has increased with the same pace than the amount of all foreign players.

Table 5. Countries with the most players in the Finnish league 1990–1999.

1. Brazil	32	14,0 % of all the foreign players
2. England	30	13,1 %
3. Russia	29	12,7 %
4. Hungary	19	8,3 %
5. Poland	15	6,6, %

Molnar (2006) presents in his research concerning Hungarian footballers that between 1991 and 2003, 22 per cent of outgoing Hungarian footballers were playing in Finland. He states that The Finland-Hungary channel is mostly built on football connections, and refers to Martti Kuusela, who was the coach of a Hungarian team Kispest-Honvéd. Molnar also states that the networks of Hungarian footballers are representative of the years of transition. This is probably the case with Finland, since Hungarian footballers have played in the Finnish league already in the 1970s. Hungarian male footballers tend to move towards economically more advanced nation states. They are not primarily concerned about the level in football in the host country and they go wherever they have a chance of gaining higher monetary benefits (Molnar 2006, 475–476).

#### 5.4.3 South Americans

One defining feature of the 1990s was the growing amount of South American players, especially Brazilians and Argentines. In the previous decade, the number of South Americans was five, but in 1990s the amount was 41, being 18 per cent of all the foreigners in the league.

First South American football migrants moved to Europe, especially to Italy, to play football already in the 1920s. They were also to be found in France and Spain during the 1930s. Brazilian World Cup victories 1958 and 1962 and the following Pelé phenomenon also supported the good reputation of South American players worldwide (Lanfranchi and Taylor, 2006). According to Bellos (2002) in 1999, there were 650 Brazilian footballers that went to play abroad. They spread around. Besides top leagues, they headed to countries like Armenia, Senegal, China and Jamaica. In 2000, transfers were made to 66 countries from Lebanon to Vietnam and from Australia to Haiti. According to Football Association of Brazil, approximately 5000 Brazilians earn their living abroad playing football. Bellos spent a year travelling around investigating the Brazilian football culture. One Brazilian, Marcelo lived and played in Faro Islands.

*“I don’t complain. I am here, because I am professional and because this is an opportunity to earn money. I could never earn as much money in Brazil than I earn here. I am king here. There is no one here who is able to perform like me.”*  
(Bellos 2002, 14–15)

According to Bellos (2002), every Brazilian’s dream is to go to Europe to play football. They are ready to go anywhere either to earn money or to be seen and maybe be found some scout from a top team. Therefore it is not surprising that Brazilians started to find their way to Finland in the 1990s. According to Poli (2010, 498) from 1995 to 2005 the proportion of non-European expatriate players increased in two ways, in comparison with the global pool of players, as well as relative to expatriate footballers. In the big European leagues the number of expatriates from Western and Eastern European countries increased from 317 to 502 (+58.3 %), whereas the number of non-Europeans augmented from 146 to 496 (+240 %). He points out that the proportion of the latter still changes greatly according to country, even though it was on the increase everywhere.

It is stated in the Global Player Migration Report 2011 (CIES 2011) that the Brazilians can be considered as the authentic global football workforce. In 2010, they have moved across borders to clubs located in 58 distinct national associations out of 69. This figure is much higher than for any other player origin, for example Argentina (44), Serbia (40) Croatia (36) and Nigeria (35). The Demographic Study of Footballers in Europe discovered, when investigating the number of expatriates in European football leagues,

that top three associations of origins are Brazil (577 players), France (261) and Argentina (233). (CIES 2011)

An Argentine, Diego Corpache ended up playing in Finland by a chance. His own club was bankrupted due to nation's economical crises and he could not find a club that would pay him enough. His plan was to travel around Europe and return when the transfer window was open again. After a call from his agent he ended up in Malmö.

*I didn't know Malmö was that big team in Sweden. They offered me money that I could easily get in Argentina so for me it was not a big deal. After a month I decided to go back to Argentina and find a team. But then I had a few players, ex-team mates who played with me in Argentina, who had signed up for FC Inter... they proposed me to come over to Turku. In the beginning I didn't like the idea because I didn't have a clue about Finland, but then they told me about the facilities of the club and the organisation and how respectful everything is here and it's not going to be a problem with the salaries. So, then they convinced me and I came over and then I started to play for FC Inter.*

Corpache played in Finland for eight years and after that worked as an assistant coach for a league team TPS.

*"I always had everything here, really comfortable. I never wanted to go to Turkey to try-out because the things were not..I don't know. I never wanted to take a risk to lose what I had here. Here life was easy. It was difficult to find another option. Of course you can find another option but life here is boring but it's easy. It's like every time I tried in Argentina, after three four months it was a big mess. It's not that easy like in here. If you want to start your own company, the bureaucracy, this and that and then it's like no, it's too complicated. It's not impossible but it's complicated. Every time I tried something new in Buenos Aires it didn't work so that's why Finland was my second option and my safest option."*

With the foreign player regulations, only a limited number of foreigners can play in one team. For the top player the possibilities are numerous, but for average skilled players the options are limited.

*"Why I stayed in Finland is that I didn't have the European passport so it is very difficult to get a club with ok money, because then you have to be really good like a*

*national team player. When I was in Malmö, Malmö got three national team players, one from Cameroon, one from Nigeria...so there was no room for me, to a foreigner because there were three good players at that time. So the players, who came here to Finland, it's like, the experience is like..ok, I came not to have fun, but like this is what I have."*

The phenomenon of South American migrating to European leagues is not only positive. Wertheim (see Thibault 2009, 9) states that European leagues are taking advantage of the downtrodden South American economy and pursue aggressively the best players. The Brazilian team, often owned by multinational corporations, sell players for millions of dollars, and money does not often go back to the team. Brazilian fans are left with second-rate rosters while the stars escape to Europe.

Large scale and prolonged migration of athlete labour can amount, in specific instances, to the de-skilling of 'donor' countries. Latin and Central American countries, for example, regularly experience the loss of football players to USA and Europe. (Maguire 2008, 451)

#### 5.4.4 The impact of Bosman

Bosman ruling became valid in December 1995 and it accelerated the movement of footballers inside the European Union. Finnish league applied the rule two years later (Urheilumuseo 2013). It is widely agreed that the Bosman ruling had an impact on the several big European leagues in terms of amount of expatriates. For instance, since 1999 the number of foreign players registered in the FA Premier League has continued the climb and the National Fan Survey in 2001 suggested that 60 % of fans thought there were now too many foreign players in the English game (Lowrey et al. 2009) In the 1999/2000 season there were 215 foreign national playing in England's leagues, which was 100% more than four years earlier.

In the Finnish league the amount of foreigners in 1995 was 35. The amount increased to 47 the next season but dropped back to 31 the following year. However, the amount of foreigners increased to 74 in 1999, which was 30 foreigners more than the previous year. In 1999 11 out of 12 clubs in the league had foreigners in their squad. However, the great increase in numbers can at least partly be explained with the amount of clubs,

not the impact of Bosman ruling. In 1998 there were only ten clubs in the league but in 1999 there were altogether 12 clubs, the amount, which was kept for the next four years. One club, TPV had altogether 23 foreigners in their team during the season. According to Urheilumuseo (2013), there were altogether 45 foreign players, from which 23 foreigners represented TPV in the season 1999. This, however, did not help the team and it was relegated at the end of the season.

The amount of foreigners in the league was increasing in the decade of 2000, with some exception years. As it is stated in the next chapter, the increase is more due to the increasing amount of non-European players than EU-players, since the amount of European players has stayed somewhat the same in the Finnish league. European players tend to move from their home league to wealthier European leagues. There was not much money involved in the Finnish league and there were financially better options in Europe for free agent players, as John Allen (2010) points out.

*“It didn’t affect the Finnish league. The clubs did not pay much anyway, but it didn’t really matter. Towards the 90s, when you see players like Litmanen and Hyypiä moving to Holland, or Kolkka or these players, of course the Finnish clubs would make some money. And that was good money for Finnish clubs but that was mediocre money compared to what the European big countries are talking about.”*

### **5.5 2000–2009 The African flood**

In the early 2000s the Finnish league had not only become more international, but the portion of different expatriates had also changed significantly. The share of expatriates from different regions had equalised.

The amounts of foreigners each year varied greatly. In the years 2002 and 2006 the amount was less than 50, which can be explained by the “foreign legion”, RoPS being relegated and therefore decreasing the amount of foreigners. In 2007 RoPS was still playing in the first division, but the amount of foreigners in the league grew up to 71. The reason for it is that the largest amount of foreigners that season, altogether 16, played in AC Oulu, which had risen to the league at the end of season 2006. There were altogether 381 foreign players in the Finnish league between 2000 and 2009.

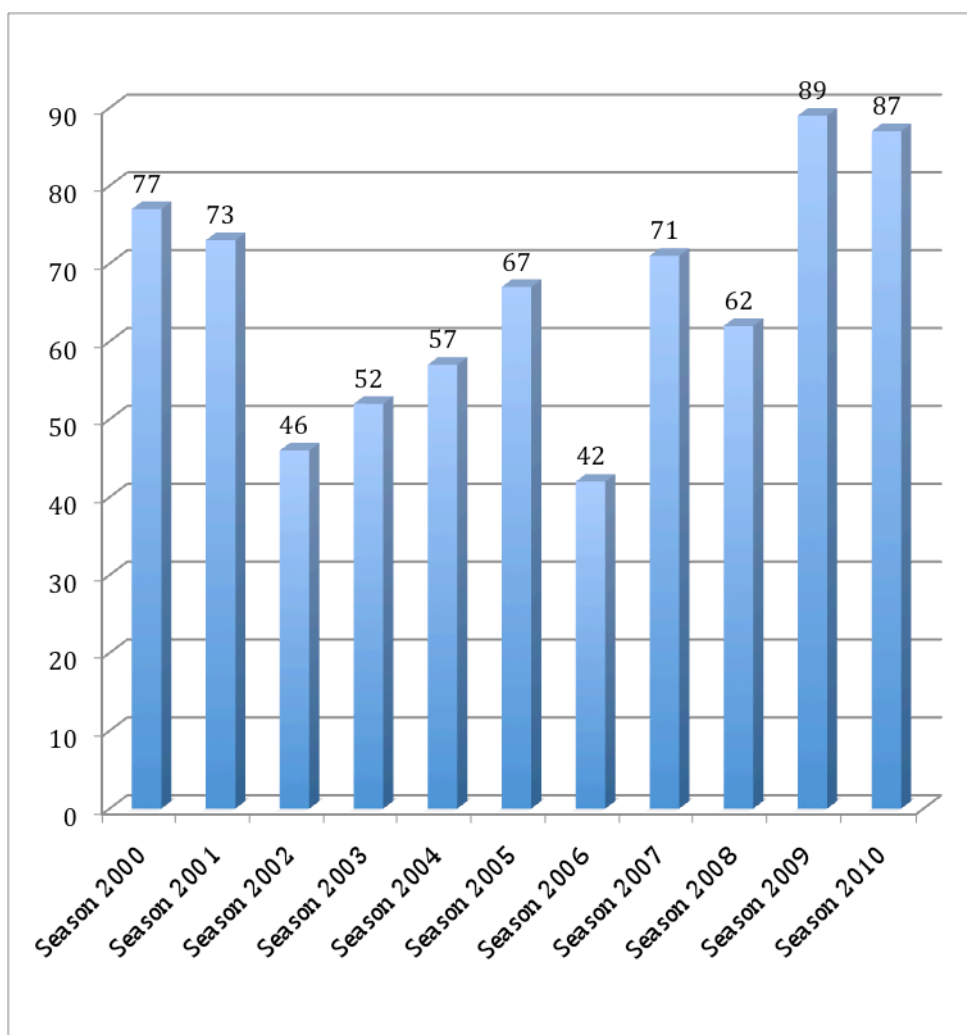


Figure 12. The amount of foreign players in the league by year 2000–2009.

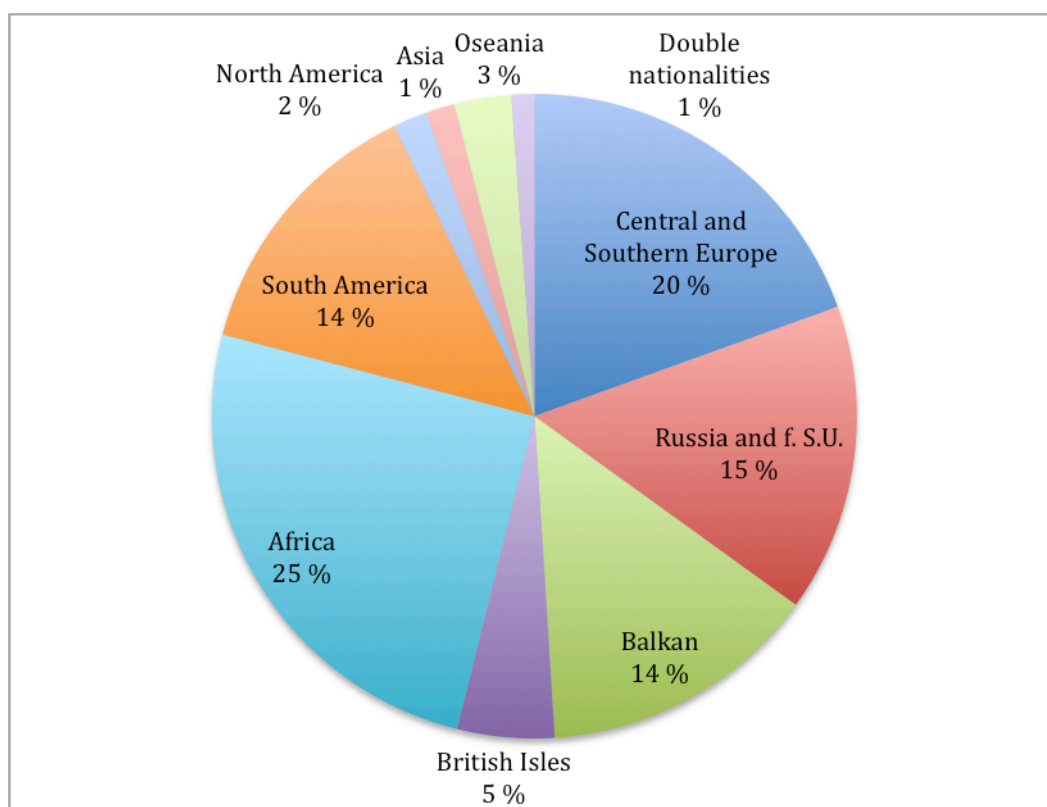


Figure 13. The proportional share of players from different regions 2000–2009.

### 5.5.1 The Africans take over

On the 1st of October 2009, 571 players imported from Africa were employed by 528 clubs of 36 top division leagues of UEFA member countries and they were present in 33 out of the 36 leagues, only excluding Baltic countries (Poli 2010). It is not only football the Africans have taken over. In the mid 1960s Africa provided only four per cent of élite foreign track recruits; two decades later the respective figure was 30 per cent, with Kenya alone supplying over ten per cent (Bale 2003, 105). This same trend can be seen also in Finnish football, since the amount of African players increased significantly in the 2000s.

Whereas the proportional share of African players in the 1990s was only six per cent, in the 2000s it was 25 per cent of all the foreigners in the Finnish league making it the largest exporting area of footballers to Finland. Nigeria, which is the biggest footballer talent producer in Africa (Poli 2010), brought altogether 22 players to the Finnish league. Zambia sent altogether 16 players, Sierra Leone eight, Algeria and Cameroon

both seven and Ghana and South Africa six. There were players from altogether 17 African countries.

Scherrens (2007) found in his study of trade and trafficking African players two main reasons for the increased migration of African football players: 1. The phenomenon is to a large extent steered by recruiting agents who offer the perspective of making a living through playing in a financially viable league, and 2. Their low purchase cost and potential surplus value has always been an impetus for clubs to seek the services of African players. The Bosman ruling can be seen as an accelerator, since it created the free movement of out-of-contract football players. The transfer sums that were previously paid for these players consequently shifted into the hands of the players and their agents. Hence, players' wages increased considerably and made it even more interesting for clubs to hire cheaper foreign players and for agents to lure them.

The development of a sport within a particular society also depends on the status of that society in the international rank order of specific sports. Less-developed African nations tend to under-utilize their talent and/or lose them to more powerful nations in the global sports figuration. (Maguire 2008, 451–455). Therefore the migration of African footballers can be called, similarly to the South Americans, the de-skilling of 'donor' countries.

African players are not a phenomenon only in the highest level but throughout Finnish football.

*"I've seen Africans playing in third division, second division, first division, Veikkausliiga, and when I was playing here, there were only one or two Africans who played outside of the Veikkausliiga 'cause they didn't really need them. But nowadays, I don't know what it is, where they get their money from or are they so cheap and then they are actually a little bit better than Finnish local guys, if you talk about places like Seinäjoki or Ylivieska or whatever, there are two or three foreigners playing in these places and do they really need it?"* (John Allen, 2010)

According to Allen, African players are easy to get and they are cheap.

*"All the time there are agents offering players, people offering themselves by faxes all the time, they are sending in faxes from every country to every club, and if you go on to every club's website I'm sure they all have a list of faxes from all over the world. So*



*when you get it and get it and get it and you start to get a little.. Let's try one! You know, it's a temptation as well to take, 'cause you hope that they are good and maybe they are a little bit better than the average local boys but there are a lot of poor quality players in my opinion, a lot of players I wouldn't even.. I would send them back... but there have been some great players, too, if you take Medo."*

Rovaniemen Palloseura is the northernmost club playing in the league, starting from 1981. Excluding the year 1982, the club played in the highest level until 2002. The decade of 2000–2010 was very hard for the club, which came back to league for the 2004 season, but was relegated again at the end of the 2005 season. The club was able to rise to the league again for 2008 but was relegated again at the end of 2009. The remote location does not attract players and therefore the club hired several foreigners, most from African countries. Already in 2000 the club had ten foreigners in the squad. The number varied from nine to 12, but in 2008 it was already 14, making up 17,1 per cent of all the foreign players in the league. This included seven Zambians, two Cameroonians, two Ukrainians, one Nigerian, one German and one Estonian. The large amount of Zambians can be explained by the actions of Zeddy Saiteti, a Zambian player who arrived to RoPS already in 1994. He represented club until 2006 and with the help of his connections, RoPS was able to get Zambian players to the team.

*"He (Saiteti) was playing in African Cup for Zambia, I think it was in Algeria or one of the North-African countries where the African Cup was being played and he was spotted and he was offered to.. I think RoPS. So they took him and he was very good, he was a great player Saiteti.. so of course that's a good thing that when you are offered a good player you don't wanna say no to. And the others just seemed to follow, you know 'cause Zeddy was such a good player, maybe they thought we can get more like.. and it just started a snow fall in a way" (Allen 2010)*

Five of these players were later sentenced for arranging games (Lapin Kansa 2012), which seemed to harm the reputation of African players for a moment. RoPS was accused of being a "foreign legion", but John Allen, who was the head manager 2010–2011, states that there are good reasons for the large amount of foreigners.

*"Even if I had the money to bring them (Finnish players) here, it's hard to compete with the locations like TPS, Inter, Haka, Honka, you know, HJK.. that's the big problem that*

*is always gonna face RoPS... or AC Oulu.. Oulu is a nice town and there are a lot of foreigners there also but that's the way it is."*

Allen also states that it is increasingly common for Finnish clubs to have several foreign players.

*"If you look at HJK, they have seven foreigners: Medo, Bah, Fowler, they had the Dutch guy, they had a Swedish stopper, they had about seven or eight foreigners... when Inter won the championship two years ago, they had seven starting players foreigners in the best 11: Hooivelt, Bantamoi, Chatto, Corpache, Ats Purje, Grot.. it's always RoPS they pick on for some reason."*

One of the biggest problems in the contemporary world of football is the exploitation of young players. Hopeful third world children and their parents are being deceived and exploited by so-called agents into believing that they are provided a lavish life of a European footballer. There are several stories, in which parents have paid an agent to take their child to Europe to play only to be dumped penniless on the street. So far these kinds of incidents have not been reported in Finland.

The amount of players from different countries playing in the Finnish league 2000–2009.

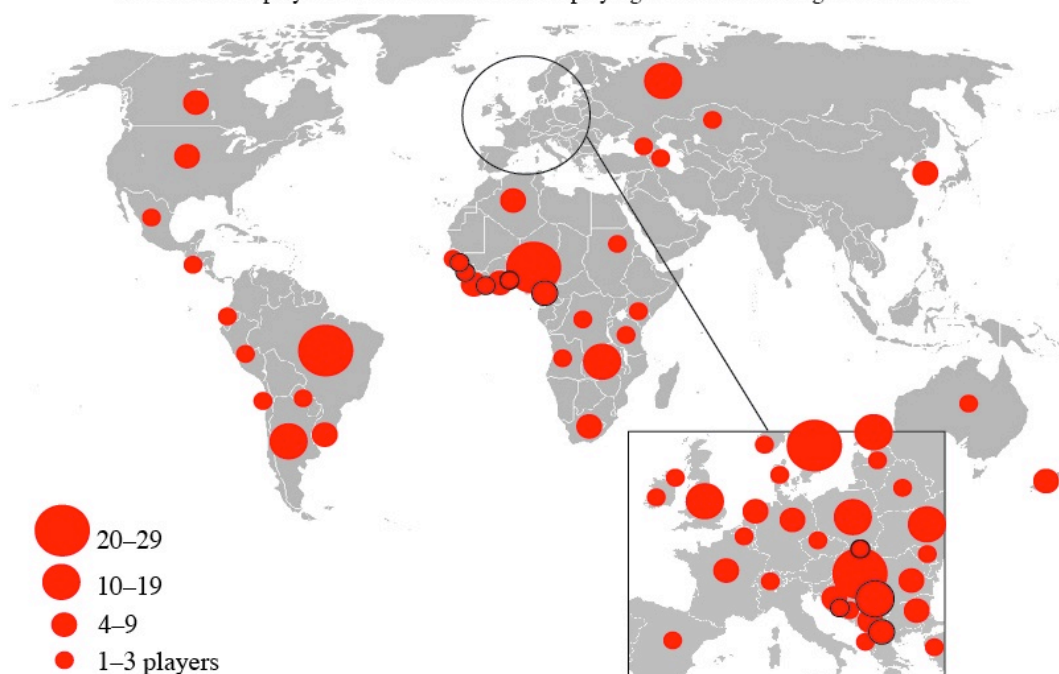


Figure 14. The amount of players from different countries playing in the Finnish league 2000–2009.

Table 6. Origin countries with most players in the Finnish league 2000–2009.

1. Hungary	28	7,3 % of all
1. Sweden	28	7,3 %
3. Brazil	24	6,3 %
4. Nigeria	22	5,8 %
5. Russia	17	4,5 %
5. Estonia	17	4,5 %
7. Poland	16	4,2 %
7. Zambia	16	4,2 %
9. Serbia	14	3,7 %
10. Argentina	13	3,4 %

### 5.5.2 Eastern Europeans stay on the route

When looking at the origin countries exporting players to Finnish league, the Eastern part of Europe has still a strong role. Player route from Hungary and Poland to Finland remained strong throughout the decade of 2000 and the political situation allowed players from Russia and Estonia arrive to Finland, as well. Central and Southern Europe forming the second largest area of origin is due to the large amount of Hungarian and Polish players, since other countries had only a few representatives in the league.

In the decade of 2000 South American players had even stronger position in the stage of world football. Brazil won its fifth World Cup in 2002 and its players were at this point known everywhere. Massive production of players secured that some of them arrived to Nordic countries, as well.

Characteristic of the 2000s is also the increased amount of Swedish players. Whereas in the 1990s the total amount was nine, in 2000 it was already 28. Most of the players played in IFK Mariehamn and stayed only for one season. IFK Mariehamn started playing in the league 2005. Aland is an autonomic Swedish-speaking island between Finland and Sweden. Therefore the cultural environment provides an easy access to Swedish players. The quality of the Finnish league is generally stated to be poorer than Swedish league and therefore it seems that Swedish players do not experience it attractive enough to move from Sweden.

## 6 DISCUSSION

### 6.1 Conclusions

Football has become similarly business and sport since billions of euros are involved in revenues, prizes, transfer fees, salaries and betting. Entire books, academic studies and web pages are dedicated to the economic side of the most popular game, as money and football cannot be discussed separately anymore. Therefore it is inevitable that football immigration is intertwined with the economics. Football immigration many times is a result of players and managers seeking for better financial conditions. That is, in several situations, the case in the Finnish league, as well. However, due to the geographical location, for instance, it is possible to identify other reasons behind the internationalisation of the Finnish league.

Lanfranchi and Taylor (2001, 4–5) identify three main situations, which favour the economic migration of footballers: First, economic crises or national financial weakness have been a catalyst for the departure, secondly, football's amateur or semi-professional status has prevented players from staying in domestic league and thirdly, the wealthy European leagues have been able to offer alluring contracts. The economic status of Finnish sports is not as good as most of the European football leagues. There is little money involved and the wages are relatively low. As all the three interviewees openly admitted or suggested between the lines, one does not become rich by playing football in Finland. Therefore, economic-wise, Finland has been the most attractive country for players from less-developed countries or areas such as the former Soviet Union countries, Balkan countries, South America and Africa, where as there has been only random players from Western European countries or North America. It has been inevitable that big importers, such as Brazil and Argentina, and African countries such as Nigeria and Zambia have been providing players to the Finnish league, since their players have spread around the world from the big European leagues to Asia and Faro Islands.

Maguire and Pearton (2000) believe that although economics play a crucial part in determining the patterns of football migration, they are by no means the only factor involved. They suggest that a set of interdependencies shape the global sports migration. Taylor (2006, 16) identifies factors or determinants that have influenced or

stimulated the movement of football labour: economic, cultural and institutional (or structural). According to Lanfranchi and Taylor (2001, 4) political causes are of little significance, even though some events such as the Spanish Civil War and the Budapest uprising have accelerated the dispersal of Spanish and Hungarian players. However, the political causes have been one of the reasons of shaping the Finnish league. The collapse of the Soviet Union increased significantly the amount of Russian players and those from the former Soviet Union countries. Without that historical event the amount of foreigners would have been smaller in our domestic league and the level of the game might have stayed lower. Finland would have never seen one of the greatest players in the league, Valeri Popovitsh, who was able to improve his teammates' performance, as well. Wars in Balkan Peninsula and the collapse of Yugoslavia increased the amount of Balkan players in the Finnish league. Besides the league, it has had an impact on Finnish football in general. There are four players, whose roots are in Balkan playing in the Finnish national team at the moment. These political events probably had greater influence on the Finnish football than the Bosman ruling.

Cultural reasons cannot be underestimated, either. Finland has a reputation of safe and peaceful country, where conditions and facilities are good and salaries are paid on time. Valeri Popovitsh admitted in his interview that stable conditions were one of the main reasons for him moving to Finland. Undoubtedly that can be a crucial actor for a player, who has to decide for example between the Finnish league and some smaller Eastern European league. Even though racism is a general problem in the contemporary world of football, in Finland it is not as out in the open and violent as in some other European countries. Cultural reasons can be seen already in the 1970s and 1980s, with the great amount of British players arriving to Finland. English football was the best-known European game in Finland and therefore British players were welcomed and respected in our leagues, which built up a good reputation for our country. Finland was seen as a good option for out-of-season playing or not getting field time in the home country.

Hungary and Poland may not share same cultural atmosphere, but roots for collaboration was established already in the 1980s, after which the players from these countries have been affecting our league in great numbers. Therefore it can be stated that history has played at least a minor impact in building an immigration route in this case.

The Finnish league was not able to attract Swedish players until recently, when IFK Mariehamn started playing in the highest level. The island, in which 90 per cent of inhabitants speak Swedish as their mother tongue and which has attracted a lot of Swedish families due to the geographical proximity to Sweden, provides easier access to Swedish players than Finnish mainland would.

Most importantly, the Finnish league can be seen as a stepping-stone. Poli (2010) defines the 'stepping stone' space a country from which a player gains access to another country where the sporting and economic levels of the championship are higher. Even though Finland cannot compete with the level of play, high salaries or superstardom, the league can be still seen as a window to the Europe. This is helped by the globalisation and the world 'getting smaller'. Even though the Finnish league matches cannot be watched on TV abroad, agents and fans are able to follow players on Youtube and read statistics anytime and anywhere. There are two main reasons, why Finland is a good stepping-stone: Firstly, it is relatively easy for a skilful player to get a contract for a Finnish club since there is not much competition. In the same way it is easy to stand out, since the relatively poor level of play and due to the best Finnish players going to play abroad. Secondly, many teams get to play international matches and even though the journey may end in the first round, it is still possibility to attract attention from an agent by giving a good performance on the field.

Since the age of the foreign players coming to Finland is relatively high, our league is not seen as a stepping-stone or a good place to develop for a young player. This may be due to the level of play and lack of competition. Therefore it is more likely the Finnish league being a destination for those whose career has not taken off elsewhere or is temporarily fading, which may be the case for older, close to thirty-year-old players.

However, one must keep in mind the fact that compared to big European leagues, our league is far from international. In 2010, 25 European clubs recruited more than 11 foreign players from abroad. Most of these teams are not part of the top leagues, which indicates that signing players overseas has become a common strategy in Europe. (CIES 2011) The same year there were 61 foreign players in the Finnish league, which means approximately 4,4 players per club, from which 18 were recruited already previous seasons. According to the survey (CIES 2011) Finland is one of the minor importers of foreign players in the world with less than 1,5 imports per club. Whether this is a good

thing has to everyone themselves decide. On the other hand the majority of foreigners, regardless of their association of origin, are able to improve the level of the game and therefore attract more audience and sponsors. The larger the audience the more money the club is able to gain, which means investing in better players. On the other hand recruiting foreign talent takes away playing time from the local talent, whose development is important in a small country like Finland. Moreover, using local players is cheaper to the club and may pay back in the future in the form of transfer fee. Every time, like the RoPS case proves, due to the lack of local talent and interest from Finnish players, the club is forced to recruit foreign players.

Nevertheless, the amount of club-trained players is the third biggest in Finland (CIES 2013). In 2013, foreign players formed 23 per cent of all the players in the Finnish league, where as the number in the Premier league was 55,7 per cent, in German Bundesliga 45,1 per cent and Spanish La Liga 36,3 per cent. (CIES 2013) This, as well as the more detailed analysis of the reasons the foreigners end up in Finland would be a subject to another study.

Even though the football leagues have become increasingly multinational, the growth seems not to be linear. In the five big leagues the presence of expatriate players in squads slightly decreased from the 2008/09 season to 2010. Nevertheless, expatriates still represented more than 40 per cent of players both at squad level and on the pitch. This proportion still remained greater than that observed in 2006/07. In the season 2013 the percentage was 43,5.

## **6.2 Evaluation of the study**

Football is the most investigated sport also in the academic world. I chose the topic mainly due to my own affection to the sport but also due to my interest to study something that was not studied thoroughly before. This decision, however, caused the limiting being a difficult task and the database ending up being the most time-consuming part of the study. Even though re-evaluating and re-calculating the data several times, it may not be perfectly accurate, since all the information of the players, their origins and playing history was collected manually.



Looking behind, the greatest challenge for me was the quantitative research, since I am not very comfortable using SPSS. With better skills with the program or better selection of the methodology, it would have been easier to provide more detailed quantitative results. I still feel that I was able to gain the information from the large set of data that is essential regarding the research task and questions.

In my opinion the qualitative part is the strongest section of the study. My own interest and experience with interviewing people together with my strong language skills helped gaining such inside information and perspectives that are both new and useful for further studies. I believe that stories behind numbers should never be overlooked or unappreciated when conducting a study. Listening to my interviewees made me want to hear and learn more, not only about my topic but all of their experiences in the world of football.

### **6.3 Suggestions for further studies**

As Poli (2010) states, each footballer has his own story. In the case of the footballers' transfer market networks are made up of a plurality actors playing distinct and complementary roles. From a relational perspective, each flow is a concrete, empirical and synthetic output of networks involving, among others, club officials, managers, agents, talent scouts, investors and, last but not least, players themselves and quite often also their relatives. This study provides general information on the Finnish international football market but it must be acknowledged that there are stories as many as foreign footballers. Therefore in the future studies it would be useful to either interview more players or use a questionnaire, to gain better understanding of the reasons why players arrive to Finland.

It must also be remembered that sometimes it only requires one person to change statistics. In Finland those significant actors are for example Zeddy Sileti, who helped bringing several Zambian players to RoPS and Martti Kuusela, who was establishing connection between Hungary and Finland. Even though certain patterns can be identified, football is always also about timing, about people you know, about places you happen to be in and just pure luck and chance. Stories behind the people are always

more interesting than numbers and therefore this topic provides a fruitful ground for several case studies.

A topic to investigate would also be Finland's role as a stepping-stone. All the foreigners who have played in our league and left have ended up somewhere. Their destinations after Finland and whether our league was able to provide them a pathway to better quality leagues might be worth studying.

Because of the limiting of this study the Finnish clubs signing up foreigners were not discussed much. However, it is possible to see by looking at the database that at certain times certain clubs have had more international line-ups than the others. There may be several reasons such as connections or pursuit for international success. Sometimes it has correlated with the success in the league, other times not. In some cases only one player's superiority has gained success for the club.

At the beginning of the season 2014 (3.4.2014) there were 61 foreign players from 29 different countries in the Finnish league. (Urheilusanomat 2014) It means that there are approximately 2,1 players from each country. There have been a lot of changes in the squads in regards of foreigners, which is typical of our domestic league. The biggest representative countries are Brazil (seven players), Sweden (five) and Nigeria (four). However, the transfer window is open until the end of April and again in August so most likely the number will be climbing close to 80 players, which has been somewhat constant number during the whole 2000s.

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### **Other:**

A lecture “National sport as a historical institution” by Jari Lämsä in the course of Sport in Finland, autumn 2008.

### **Interviews:**

John Allen, England (autumn 2010)

Diego Corpache, Argentina (autumn 2011)

Valeri Popovitsh, Russia (autumn 2011)

## **APPENDICES**

### **APPENDIX 1**

#### **Questions for John Allen**

When did you arrive to Finland to play?

Why did you come to Finland?

Who arranged the transfer?

What did you know about Finnish football before arriving?

How would you describe the Finnish league in the 1980s?

What made you stay and play in Finland for so long?

What are the biggest changes in the league from the 1980s to 2010?

Why did so many British players come to Finland in the 1980s?

How was the transfer arranged usually?

Why has the amount of British players in the league collapsed so dramatically during three decades?

What are the reasons that Finnish league is good for foreigners?

What are the reasons that foreigners should be better off in some other league?

Most of the foreigners stay only a couple of seasons. What are the reasons for that?

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **Questions for Diego Corpache**

How would you describe your career in Argentina before coming to Finland?

Which teams were you playing for?

How did you end up coming to Finland?

Was there an agent involved?

Where did you play in Finland and why?

Why did you end up staying in Turku and not going somewhere else or back to Argentina?

Did you know anything about Finnish football before arriving?

When you first started playing in the league, what was your opinion about it, about the level and the players?

What things have changed during these 10 years that you've been here in the Finnish league and football in general?

Are the players better than ten years ago? How?

Brazilians and Argentines started to come to Finland in the 90s and 2000s so was it the same with all the European countries? Did they start to come earlier if we think about the movement from Argentina?

Why are South-American players all over the Europe nowadays?

When did the involvement of agents start to happen?

Most of the foreigners that come to Finland, they stay for one season, two seasons. What are the reasons for that?

What are the good things you would tell about the Finnish league for foreigners?

**APPENDIX 3**  
**Questions for Valeri Popovitch**

How would you describe your football career in Soviet Union (Russia)?

How did the collapse of the Soviet Union affect football?

You came to Finland in 1992. How did you end up coming here?  
Who arranged the transfer?

Did the political situation in Russia affect your leaving?

What did you know about the Finnish football before arriving?

What was the level of the Finnish football compared to Russian football back then?

What was your career like in Finland? Where did you play and for how long?

Did you ever consider going back to Russia or elsewhere?

What made you stay in Finland?

How would you compare Finnish league then and now?

In the 80s there were one Russian in the league, in the 1990s there were 29 and the 2000s there were 17. There were only two of them year 2010. In your opinion, what are the reasons for this?

Is Finland an attractive option for Russians?

What is the most popular destination for them?

Why is the Finnish league a good place for foreigners and why not?

Most of the foreigners only stay for a season or two, why?

**APPENDIX 4****The list of Finnish football clubs playing in the highest level  
1970–2010 in the alphabetical order**

AC Oulu, Oulu

AC Allianssi, Vantaa

Atlantis FC, Helsinki

FC International Turku (Inter), Turku

FC Haka, Valkeakoski

FC Honka, Espoo

FC Hämeenlinna, Hämeenlinna

FC Jazz, Pori

FC Jokerit, Helsinki

FC Kiffen, Helsinki

FC KooTeePee, Kotka

FC Kuusysi, Lahti

FC Lahti, Lahti

FC Oulu, Oulu

FC Viikingit, Helsinki

Finnairin Palloilijat (FinnPa), Helsinki

Fotbollsföreningen Jaro (FF Jaro), Pietarsaari

Gamlakarleby Bollklubb (GBK), Kokkola

Helsingfors IFK (HIFK), Helsinki

Helsingin Jalkapalloklubi (HJK), Helsinki

Helsingin Ponnistus (Ponnistus), Helsinki

IFK Mariehamn (MIFK), Maarianhamina

Ilves-Kissat, Tampere

Jyväskylän Jalkapalloklubi (JJK), Jyväskylä

Kemin Palloseura (KePS), Kemi

Kokkolan Pallo-Veikot (KPV), Kokkola

Kotkan Työväen Palloilijat (KTP), Kotka

Kuopion Elo (Elo), Kuopio

Kuopion Palloseura (KuPS), Kuopio

Kuopion Pallotoverit (Koparit), Kuopio

Kuusankosken Kumu (Kumu), Kuusankoski

Mikkelin Palloilijat (MP), Mikkelä

Mikkelin Pallo-Kissat (MiPK), Mikkelä

Myllykosken Pallo -47 (MYPA), Kouvola

Oulun Palloseura (OPS), Oulu

Oulun Työväen Palloilijat (OTP), Oulu

Pallokerho-35 (PK-35), Helsinki

Porin Pallotoverit (PPT), Pori (huom. Myöh Jazz!)

Reipas, Lahti

Rovaniemen Palloseura, (RoPS), Rovaniemi

Sepsi-78, Seinäjoki

Tampereen Pallo-Veikot (TPV), Tampere

Tampere United (TamU), Tampere

Tornion Pallo -47 (TP-47), Tornio

TP-Seinäjoki, Seinäjoki

Turun Palloseura (TPS), Turku

Vaasan Palloseura (VPS), Vaasa