

**The Contours, Dynamics and Impacts of African Football
Migration to South Africa**

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degree of Master of International Studies at Stellenbosch University**




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Declaration

By submitting this thesis electronically, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am the owner of the copyright thereof (unless to the extent explicitly otherwise stated) and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.



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Abstract

This study explores the contours, dynamics and impacts of African football migration to South Africa. It argues that there has been a change in the international political economy of sport, and that this change is affecting world football migration. In addition to the study's primary focus on African football migration, it also reviews substantial parts of the literature concerning the phenomenon of football migration, in order to explain which dynamics characterise football migration. The thesis also accounts for the incentives that motivate African football migration to South Africa, and the impact such players have on the South African domestic elite league. The study identifies which incentives exist for promoting football cooperation in the context of Southern Africa, and how football migration patterns correlate or contrast with general migration patterns to South Africa.

The study makes use of two theoretical frameworks, by Paul Darby and Joseph Maguire, to understand and explain player migration. These frameworks provide an understanding of the different aspects and structures shaping player migration, and should be interpreted as complementary and not contrasting approaches. The examination of the frameworks' theoretical deficiencies and implications provides the basis for further research in the conclusion. The conclusion argues that there exists a need to create a new theoretical framework within which future studies can be concluded.

The study is motivated by the general lack of academic research on the specific subject and migration to South Africa. The latter is suggested by the body of literature, concerning African migration to South Africa, which argues for more research on the issue to get a better understanding of the current situation.

This study is based on both primary and secondary sources, the latter being represented by e.g. academic journal articles and books. In addition it was necessary to conduct fieldwork to provide answers to the research questions. The study makes use of exploratory qualitative methods in order to provide a conclusion, and to answer the research questions. It can be characterised as exploratory because it will offer new insights into a specific issue which, until now, has not been researched extensively.

The analysis of the data and desktop research revealed certain trends, and provides a basis for answering the research questions. The study concludes that football migration, like conventional migration, is very complex and influenced by several interwoven factors. Hence a broad scope is crucial to understand the phenomenon correctly and not exaggerate the importance of some factors above others.

In the conclusion the current position of the PSL is explained in relation to the two theoretical frameworks and the work of Pierre Lanfranchi and Matthew Taylor. It is argued that the PSL, unlike most other African leagues, has managed to cope with the 'enduring problem of African football', and has transformed into a commercialised, commoditised league heavily influenced by corporate interests.

Opsomming

Hierdie studie ontleed die aard, dinamiek en impak van die migrasie van sokkerspelers van die res van die Afrika-vasteland na Suid-Afrika. Dit word beweer dat daar 'n verskuiwing plaasgevind het in die internasionale politieke ekonomie van sport, en dat dit internasionale sokkermigrasie beïnvloed. Benewens die primêre fokus op sokkermigrasie in Afrika, verskaf die studie ook 'n omvattende oorsig van bestaande literatuur oor sokkermigrasie, om sodoende verklarings te bied vir die redes en dinamiek rondom hierdie verskynsel. Die tesis spreek ook die faktore aan wat aanspooring bied aan Afrika-spelers om na Suid-Afrika te migreer, en die impak wat sulke spelers op die Suid-Afrikaanse topliga het. Die studie identifiseer die insentiewe wat bestaan om sokkersamewerking in die Suider-Afrika streek te bevorder, en hoe tendense rondom sokkermigrasie korreleer of afwyk van breë migrasiepatrone na Suid-Afrika.

Die studie steun op twee teoretiese raamwerke om sokkermigrasie te ontleed en te verklaar. Hierdie raamwerke, wat deur Paul Darby en Joseph Maguire formuleer was, verskaf verklarings oor die verskillende faktore en strukture wat sokkermigrasie beïnvloed. Hulle moet as aanvullend, eerder as uiteenlopende benaderings beskou word. 'n Ontleding van die tekortkominge van die teoretiese raamwerke word gedoen, en die implikasies hiervan vir verdere toekomstige navorsing word in die samevatting bespreek. Dit word beweer dat daar 'n behoefte aan 'n nuwe teoretiese raamwerk bestaan waarbinne toekomstige ontledings geplaas kan word.

Die motivering vir die studie spruit uit die algemene tekort aan akademiese navorsing oor migrasie na Suid-Afrika. Bestaande literatuur oor Afrika-migrasie na Suid-Afrika beklemtoon ook die behoefte aan meer navorsing om sodoende 'n beter begrip oor hierdie aangeleentheid te ontwikkel.

Die studie maak gebruik van primêre sowel as sekondêre bronne. Laasgenoemde bestaan uit vaktydskrifartikels en boeke. Primêre inligting is verwerf deur middel van veldwerk. Die studie maak gebruik van verkennende, kwalitatiewe metodes.

Die ontleding onthul bepaalde tendense, na aanleiding waarvan sekere gevolgtrekkings gemaak kan word. Soortgelyk aan konvensionele migrasie is sokkermigrasie baie kompleks en word dit deur verskeie oorvleuelende faktore beïnvloed. Dit is dus nodig om 'n breë benadering tot die verskynsel te neem, en om nie die belangrikheid van sekere faktore bo ander te beklemtoon nie.

Die samevatting bespreek die huidige posisie van die PSL aan die hand van die twee teoretiese raamwerke, en die werk van Pierre Lanfanchi en Matthew Taylor. Dit word beweer dat die PSL die 'durende probleem van Afrika-sokker', wat ander Afrika-ligas te beurt val, te bowe gekom het, en homself omskep het in 'n gekommersialiseerde, kommodifiseerde liga wat baie deur korporatiewe belange beïnvloed word.

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

- CAF** Confederation of African Football
CEO Chief Executive Officer
FASA Football Association of South Africa
FIFA International Federation of Association Football
HDI Human Development Index
IOM International Organization for Migration
NPSL National Professional Soccer League
PSL Premier Soccer League
SABC South African Broadcasting Corporation
SADC Southern African Development Community
SAFA South African Football Association
SASF South African Soccer Federation
TV Television
UEFA Union of European Football Associations
UN United Nations

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Problem statement

During the last decades professional football has progressively developed into an economic commodity, mainly because of the immense commercial value and revenues created by the world's most popular sport. When the first football clubs started off in Britain in the latter half of the nineteenth century, 'simply' clubs were what they were. They were voluntary associations consisting of groups of men who got together to play matches against other similar groups (Conn, 1999; Williams and Neatrou, 2002). This was the basic idea of football, before the extended commercialisation turned the sport into a multimillion business. Sport simply has changed.

The European leagues which today host the world's most important clubs, such as Manchester United in the English Premier League, Internazionale in the Italian Serie A, FC Bayern München in the German Bundesliga, and Real Madrid in the Spanish La Primera División, all took their first steps towards transforming football from a 'simple ball game' into an economic commodity as early as in the 1960s (Conn, 1999; Williams and Neatrou, 2002). The top flight clubs all over the world have become employers of both their players and administration and developed into limited companies owned by shareholders and run by directors. Since the 1970s, media exposure and commercial sponsorship have all contributed to transforming football into big business with large volumes of capital (Conn, 1999; Williams and Neatrou, 2002).

Today the big European leagues and their flagship clubs are not the only ones to do business in the multimillion class. During the late 1970s television sparked football's commercial boom in South Africa. Soon afterwards, in the 1980s, sponsorships started to escalate when sponsors discovered the opportunities of extensive media exposure of their brands and logos (Alegi, 2004: 142). During the 1980s and 1990s South African football went through an increasing commercialisation, which also meant increased revenues to the clubs. After entering the new millennium, South African football broke new barriers on the economic front. In 2000 the Premier Soccer League (PSL), the

professionalised elite league in South Africa, signed an agreement for television rights with the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC). The agreement gave SABC the right to broadcast the PSL over the next three years, in exchange for R110 million (Fihlani, 2007).

Modern football has an extremely high commercial value in the form of television rights, official merchandise, outgoing player transfers, gate receipts and other revenue. This has transformed football from a ball game to an economic commodity.

It would be reasonable to assume that this new environment stimulates migration. Players from all over the world try to make their way into professional football and attractive leagues, presumably because they want to capture 'their' share of the economic wealth generated by professional football. Stated differently, the economic opportunities provided by professional football can act as a pull factor for players considering migration to pursue their career opportunities (Bale and Maguire, 1994; Lanfranchi and Taylor, 2001; Maguire and Pearton, 2000).

There is a gap in the academic literature about the development of modern football as an industry, and the push and pull factors it creates. Literature on general migration from other African countries to South Africa exists, but no academic literature aims at describing migration dynamics for footballers in particular. In an age where football is increasingly becoming an industry with much money involved, it is necessary to do research to explain why, where and how professional football affects migration dynamics (Giulianotti, 2005; Jones, Parkes, Houlihan, Ingles, Hawkins and Ashton-Jones, 2008).

In the current state of modern football, the development and coaching of talents and future transfer prospects has become a major feature. The biggest clubs in Western Europe are well known for their close relationship and cooperation with smaller clubs in other countries. One example is the link between the Italian clubs Milan and Monza or Arsenal from England and KSK Beveren from Belgium. Traditionally African clubs and academies have been 'donors' to the European continent. This study seeks to explore current initiatives to promote football cooperation and facilitate general football

development in the context of Southern Africa, and South Africa in particular. ‘Football cooperation’ in this context should be understood as cooperation between various actors, e.g. an elite and a lower level club, to produce shared benefits. Cooperation to develop talents has emerged as a new feature of modern football, presumably motivated by future prospects for profit, and is hence an important facet to study.

Sport is currently being utilised as a tool for development by large influential actors, like the United Nations (UN). The UN declared 2005 as *The International Year of Sport and Physical Education*. This facilitated increased knowledge-sharing among different stakeholders. The purpose was to raise the general awareness of the importance of sport, and to help create the right conditions for the implementation of sport-based human development programmes and projects (Grujoska and Carlsson, 2007).

Since the end of apartheid, South Africa has been embraced and welcomed back by the international football society, after the sanctions posed during the apartheid period (Alegi, 2004). South African elite football got the opportunity to integrate with the rest of the global football scene. In the wake of this change, South African football developed rapidly into an important economic commodity, and has since become significant commercially, economically and politically. On the new ‘scene’ that emerged after 1994, professional football in South Africa has become very lucrative.

Globalisation can be explained as the widening and deepening of international flows of trade, finance and information in an increasingly single, integrated global market (Monsod, 2000). This development has both been a benefit and a drawback for South African football. The end of apartheid and the emergence of a professional league has created a rich and developed football economy. In recent years several top class players, like Sibusiso Zuma, Benedict McCarthy and Steven Pienaar, have been exported to European clubs (Alegi, 2004; Alegi, 2006). The many talented players attract foreign clubs and scouts who are all looking for the ‘next’ Weah, Yeboah or Milla. The increased globalisation is of great significance to African football in general, because it has become easier to buy, scout for and invest in human capital.

While most other African leagues struggle in a state of amateurism/semi-professionalism, haunted by state intervention and/or actors looking to extract talent at a very early stage in their careers ¹, the PSL seems to be on a steady financial course, recording increasingly more revenue. This is confirmed by the PSL's latest Annual Financial Statements. According to the 2007 report, the financial results have increased from approximately R140 million in 2003 to around R220 million in 2007 (PSL, 2007).

1.2 Research questions

Previous studies have mainly examined the dynamics and processes of migration of footballers from Africa to the European continent. Little interest has been shown for internal football migration in Africa. To be able to contribute to knowledge on the cross-disciplinary field of football migration, I am posing five main research questions:

1. What dynamics characterize international football migration?
2. What kinds of incentives exist in South Africa for players from other parts of Africa?
3. What are the impacts of such players in the South African domestic league?
4. What initiatives exist in order to promote football cooperation in South Africa, and what effects do they have on migration?
5. How do football migration patterns correlate or contrast with general migration patterns to South Africa, and why?

1.3 Literature review

1.3.1 Defining the concept of migration

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) has identified a need for a commonly accepted migration language with a set terminology (IOM.int a, "International Migration Law & Legal Affairs" accessed 15 April 2008). According to the IOM, migration is a policy field that traditionally has been addressed at the national level, not the international. This has led to a situation in which there are very few

¹ Elaborated and explained further in chapter two

universally accepted definitions, because various actors employ different conceptualisations. Most of the terms are unclear, contested and controversial, if not contradictory. Hence, no single definition exists of the term 'migration' which can be applied in all contexts.

Mafukidze (2006) argues that in essence a definition of migration should involve crucial elements like change of residence, and must accompany the crossing of the boundary of a migration-defining area (Kok, Gelderblom, Oucho and Van Zyl, 2003). Other definitions are also accepted, like Skeldon's (1990) who argues that migration can be explained as relocation within geographical space, and as such is characterised by a permanent or semi permanent change of residence (Mafukidze, 2006). This study will make use of Ogden's (2000) definition of migration, which explains the term as permanent or semi permanent change of residence by an individual or a group of people.

1.3.2 Review of international migration

According to Brunson McKinley, Director General of IOM, migration is one of the defining issues of the twenty-first century. He argues that the phenomenon is an 'essential, inevitable and potentially beneficial component of the economic and social life of every country and region' (IOM.int b, n.d. "Facts and Figures" accessed 15 April 2008). In his opinion it is currently not a question of migration or no migration, because the phenomenon is so common and widespread. The question is how to manage migration effectively in order to enhance its positive and reduce its negative impacts (IOM.int b, n.d. "Facts and Figures" accessed 15 April 2008).

This view is heavily supported by the body of literature reviewed in this study which presents argumentation stating that there has been a shift from attempts to stop migration towards managing it and transform the migrants into a possible positive resource (Adepoju, 2006; Mafukidze, 2006; Oucho, 2006).

The IOM (2005b) explains that migration is a multifaceted and complex global issue, which today affects every country in the world. All countries are now either points of

origin, transit or destination for migrants. Current estimates show that 175 million migrants exist globally (IOM, 2005b). The share of migrants in terms of global population numbers is not high, but their presence in social, economic and political terms makes them very visible. The majority of migrants are concentrated in a relatively small number of advanced industrialised countries. Of these, nearly half (49 per cent according to 2000 figures) are women, a proportion which has changed little over the recent decades (IOM, 2005b).

The IOM (2005b) claims that current patterns of world migration continue to be caused by the usual pressures and motivations. These factors are explained as phenomena like widening disparities in income and employment; low education and life opportunities; environmental degradation; political upheaval and armed conflict; poverty; and human rights abuse. While the usual factors seem to remain, the IOM (2005b) argues that migration types are changing rapidly. More people are moving temporary, but often stay longer before returning to their countries of origin. Overseas study options are rapidly expanding, and many countries (e.g. Australia, Japan and Germany) are increasingly opening up for other long-term skilled migration categories (IOM, 2005b).

With increased temporary migration, particularly of highly skilled persons, the phenomenon of voluntary return to country of origin has become an important issue of migration in the recent years. According to the IOM (2005b) the most important features of contemporary migration are the large emigration flows out of traditional immigration countries; the importance of governmental policies; gender issues; and the complex networking between migrant diasporas and their home countries (IOM, 2005b).

The IOM (2005b) stresses the need for more research on international migration in general, because of the complex nature of the issue and a constant need for better management of public perceptions of migration. The complex nature of the subject is explained in terms of difficulties in the process of data gathering and subsequent methodological problems in the process of analysis. One example is the difficulties of examining the causes and impacts of migration and the policies to manage it, because migration is extremely difficult to measure (IOM, 2005b). It is generally argued that

there is a strong need for further research in order to establish clear facts about migration and its consequences and eradicate common myths (IOM, 2005b).

1.3.3 Review of international sport and football migration

Not much research has been done on talent migration. The most comprehensive study seems to be *The Global Sports Arena: Athletic Talent Migration in an Interdependent World*, edited by Bale and Maguire (1994). This study examines talent migration in numerous sports to give a general overview of the phenomenon. Bale and Maguire (1994) argue that sports talent migration is a pronounced feature of modern sports development. The authors refer to the movement of elite sports talent in terms of labour migration, in order to illustrate that the process is interwoven with the commodification of sport within the capitalist world economy. This is, according to Bale and Maguire (1994), important to emphasize, because it is not a common viewpoint to think of sportspeople as workers. Athletes are not unlike other sectors of the workforce who, for various reasons, provide their trade in several national, continental or trans-continental locations (Bale and Maguire, 1994).

It is claimed that there are many similar patterns in the recruitment process and subsequent retention of athletes such as in American football, baseball, cricket, basketball, track and field, ice hockey and football (Bale and Maguire, 1994). These trends are supported by the globalisation, commercialisation and commoditisation of international sport.

According to Bale and Maguire (1994), and Maguire and Pearton (2000) football labour movement flows with the more powerful leagues. These leagues attract players of a standard that commensurate with their ability to pay transfer fees and player salaries. According to Bale and Maguire (1994) these patterns are not new, but have existed for a long period of time. In recent times talent labour migration has gained pace and occurred over a more widespread area. This change has made it more visible and evident. Sport labour migration is according to Bale and Maguire (1994) gathering momentum, and seems to be closely interwoven with the broader process of global sports development in the late twentieth century.

1.3.3.1 Moving with the ball

According to Taylor (2007) much emphasis has been put on discussing the three major trends – commercialisation, professionalisation and globalisation – in recent studies on football migration. Taylor's (2007) main argument is that the importance of the historical perspective has been disregarded. History, according to Taylor (2007), is of great importance because football migration has roots back to the early 1900s. Much of the movement of footballers across national and continental borders in recent times is actually based on established systems and networks. Taylor (2007) states that the current migration system can be seen as an extension of the traditional migratory systems, which were based on economic, cultural and institutional or structural determinants.

Taylor (2007) argues that football migration cannot be isolated from the general trends and patterns of migration due to the factors mentioned above. He claims that migration in general does not occur as a spontaneous phenomenon and does not occur in a vacuum, and that generally, migration paths are based on previous traditions and past experiences.

Taylor concludes by elaborating on the nature of the international football market, stating that it underwent considerable modifications during the 1990s. He contends that in Europe there has been significant diversification in the geographical origins of recent soccer migrants, with an increasing number of players from outside the continent, in particular Africans and Latin Americans. Taylor claims that the integration of these different regional and intercontinental systems based around Europe and the major European leagues are showing signs of forming a central core for aspirant footballers around the world (Taylor, 2007).

Despite the nature of the modern international football market Taylor stresses the importance of historical and cultural roots, which according to him underpin many of the contemporary systems and networks of football player migration. This affects where the players choose to go and where clubs scout for players, due to long-established colonial, cultural, linguistic, social and personal connections (Taylor, 2007).

Maguire and Pearton (2000) stress the importance of not explaining elite sports migration solely with reference to economic analysis. According to Maguire and Pearton (2000) such analysis would result in an incorrect understanding of sports migration, because talent migration is influenced by a complex and shifting set of interdependencies. These interdependencies are multi-faceted and incorporate not only economic but also political, historical, geographical, social and cultural factors. Hence, when seeking to explain global sport labour migration, it is crucial to take a broad approach (Maguire and Pearton, 2000).

According to Maguire and Pearton (2000) professional players first and foremost seem to seek to advance to the highest possible level and use their talent to play for the best clubs. Such patterns are evident and possible to identify within or between specific geographic regions, and can be illustrated by looking at the football leagues in Northern Europe. Professional players from the Scandinavian leagues strive to be spotted by bigger foreign clubs, preferably in England or by the other well established leagues in Central Europe. The biggest European leagues boost the highest wages and give the players the possibility to play in one of the world's top leagues (Poli, 2006a).

Lanfranchi and Taylor (2001) start their comprehensive book, *Moving with the Ball: The Migration of Professional Footballers*, by arguing that the tradition of cosmopolitan teams is deeply rooted in the world football history. According to the authors, players moved across borders, both cross national borders and regional borders, from the very beginning to play football. Foreign footballers who possessed sufficient skills, were imported in large numbers as early as in the 1920s and 1930s to the major nations in Western Europe and the Americas, due to a system which enabled them to sell their talent abroad (Lanfranchi and Taylor, 2001).

From its very beginning football has been a universal game, characterised by its uncomplicated nature. The game is easy to learn and simple to play, and does not require a specific national language or acquired qualifications because the rules are the same across the globe (Lanfranchi and Taylor, 2001). For these reasons football must be regarded as a universal game, and association football has been particularly suited to the transfer of labour forces. Lanfranchi and Taylor (2001) claims that player migration has

always been bound up with general migratory patterns, and that different regions and countries have been involved in different ways. Some countries, e.g. England or Italy, have assumed the roles of recipients while others, e.g. Cote d'Ivoire or Ghana, have been suppliers of talent.

According to Lanfranchi and Taylor (2001) international migration expanded to include more regions in the post-war period, and increased in volume. They claim that it is possible to outline some distinct features for football migrants within migratory groups. The authors argue that while most migratory movements have both political and economic causes, politics is of little significance to football migrants. History shows that the international football market rarely has been populated by political refugees (Taylor and Lanfranchi, 2001).

Taylor and Lanfranchi (2001) claim to have identified three main situations, involving both push and pull factors, which favour the economic migration of professional footballers. First, the situation of economic crisis and financial weakness has been a catalyst for the departure of players. In this situation the factors mentioned above, contrasting with the situation in a foreign country, function as both push and pull factors motivating migration. Good results internationally and established domestic professional leagues have not been sufficient to prevent players from migrating (Lanfranchi and Taylor, 2001). The situation of economic crisis and financial weakness, according to Lanfranchi and Taylor (2001), is one of the major explanations for why African players leave their countries of origin. They argue that the weakness of post-colonial economies has left African teams unable to compete with the European clubs in keeping their promising youngsters.

Secondly, in certain countries football's amateur or semi-professional status has prevented the game from becoming a lucrative activity (Lanfranchi and Taylor, 2001). They point to the Scandinavian countries before the 1980s where football was conducted in amateur leagues. Players who wanted to earn a living through their footballing skills had to go abroad. Thirdly, for the elite, the wealthy European leagues, most notably England, Spain and Italy, have been able to offer unrivalled contracts (Lanfranchi and Taylor, 2001). This situation has, according to Lanfranchi and Taylor

(2001), led to a concentration of highly specialised human resources in certain leagues, most notably the Serie A (Italy), Primera Liga (Spain) and the English Premier League.

In addition to economic factors, which Lanfranchi and Taylor (2001) consider very important, the authors also acknowledge the importance of history. Lanfranchi and Taylor (2001) exemplify this by looking at how historical factors have played important roles in the evolution of the international transfer market. They claim that the international transfer market has been influenced by certain bodies or individuals that have encouraged migration from the donor country, or attempted to attract players to the receiving society. They also point to the developments in transport as a contributing factor, which have made it easier to transport migrants over vast distances. This infrastructural arrangement was decisive in the 1920s, when South Americans were transported by steam ships to the European leagues (Lanfranchi and Taylor, 2001: 5).

Lanfranchi and Taylor (2001) make a useful distinction between different kinds of 'foreign' footballers. One consideration is to classify migrants who effectively moved with the ball with the intention of earning a living playing football. The second consideration is players who arrive in a host country as youths, and subsequently develop their talent to become professionals. Lanfranchi and Taylor (2001) explicitly state that their study is limited to exploring the first type of migrants.

After making the distinction elaborated on above, Lanfranchi and Taylor (2001) argue that three main categories of football migrants emerge: namely the 'itinerants', the 'mercenaries' and the settlers. The 'itinerant' is a player who travelled, often over vast distances, to sell his labour skills for shorter periods. According to the authors this type of movement has long traditions, and can be compared with for instance forms of commercial entertainment. This applies to players spending one or perhaps two years in a foreign country before they return to their previous country (Lanfranchi and Taylor, 2001).

The football 'mercenaries' are players who change country as soon as they get a better offer. Many players choose to actively 'shop' for the best offers they can get, and opt for the most lucrative one. Such players often signs contracts in three or four different

national leagues during the course of their careers (Lanfranchi and Taylor, 2001). The third category, the ‘settler’, applies to young players who move to play in a foreign country where many find a home and a wife along with a stable job. This can also be illustrated by looking at former players who choose to stay in their host country where they continue to be employed, e.g. as managers or coaches, after their playing career is over (Lanfranchi and Taylor, 2001). The authors conclude by stating that not all players fit into these fixed categories.

Lanfranchi and Taylor (2001) use one chapter to elaborate on Africans in Europe, and explain the football relationship and history between the two continents. The authors treat Africa as one single unit rather than a collection of independent states. This can potentially be very problematic, due to the vast differences and contrasts on this continent.² The authors’ motivation for this is the strong pan-Africanism, which has functioned as a powerful force for regional integration since the 1950s (Lanfranchi and Taylor, 2001).

In the chapter on African football migration the authors claim that the story of migration of African footballers to Europe is considerably different from migrants from other parts of the world, e.g. South Americans. With few exceptions football on the African continent is not professionalised. This has led to a situation in which a move to Europe traditionally has been the only way of becoming a recognised international footballer (Lanfranchi and Taylor, 2001). The migratory patterns of African footballers have been affected by many factors. For instance, African footballers in Europe have become important symbols of international recognition and achievement in their countries of origin (Lanfranchi and Taylor, 2001).

Lanfranchi and Taylor (2001) elaborate on what they label as ‘the enduring problem for African football’. In their view the organisational weakness and the fragility of the professional sporting economy in most African countries, have precluded any alternative to the emigration of the best talents. This can be seen in the wider context of the ‘brain drain’ issue, a situation in which footballers, like other technical and qualified

² Lanfranchi and Taylor (2001:168) mention ‘geographic, linguistic, religious and cultural divisions’ in addition to economic development

professional migrants, have faced the dilemma that ‘while Africa needed their expertise, they became positive evidence that Africa had arrived’ (Lanfranchi and Taylor, 2001: 167).

1.3.3.2 Contrasts, causes and effects

To explain why some leagues are more attractive to players than other, numerous factors need to be taken into account. For instance push and pull factors applicable to the context, or supply and demand of labour. Football migration from Africa to Europe should not only be interpreted in an isolated context of sports. Rather sports migration should be put into a wider context of other issues, which together can motivate cross-border migration. The migration process should be viewed in a more holistic approach and include both socio-economic and socio-political factors (Cornelissen and Solberg, 2007). As with conventional migrants, push and pull factors also apply to football migrants. Pull factors are, according to general migration theory, positive incentives which help to draw migrants towards a new location. Pull factors, on the other hand, can be said to be forces which fuel peoples’ motivation for moving away from one place (IOM, 2003).

Hence it seems as if conventional and football migrants are both affected by similar pressures and motivations. Football migrants should, due to their talent, be considered as a resource with the same status as other highly skilled or educated migrants. The trend outlined by IOM (2005b) is evident among footballers as well, they will presumably return to their countries of origin after their playing careers are finished. A very general comparison could suggest that both conventional and football migrants should be regarded as labour migrants, and that their proficiency level facilitates movement.

1.3.4 General African migration

It has also been argued, for instance by Mafukidze (2006), that African migration studies have made progress from strict focus on labour migration to attempts to include other kinds of migration streams, including war-related mobility like internal

displacement and refugees, and trafficking of women and children. On this basis he claims that migration research has 'moved toward a more holistic understanding of the local, national and global levels' (Mafukidze, 2006: 103). According to Mafukidze current migration activity in Africa is mainly confined inside the continent, not predominantly to other continents. Several scholars and commentators, e.g. (Adepoju, 2006), (IOM, 2005a), and (Mafukidze, 2006), argue that the current context of migration in Southern Africa is extremely complex and that it is very difficult to identify trends or clear patterns. Due to the complexity of current migration patterns, it has been advocated for more research on migration in order to increase the knowledge about the topic. Crush, Williams and Wits (2005), Maharaj (2004) and Oucho (2006) have also advocated for reform of the existing legal framework that applies to the topic, because the current regional initiatives fail to cope with the challenges created by internal migration in Southern Africa.

1.3.5 Main Types of African Migration in the Current Era

Adepoju (2006) claims to have identified four distinctive types of African migration: labour emigration from western and central Africa to developed countries and oil-rich Gulf States; refugee flows within eastern and western Africa; labour migration from eastern and southern countries to South Africa; and clandestine migration in West and East Africa. According to the author, migration is a very dynamic and complex issue in Africa, making it difficult to outline a pattern. A case in point is the recent feminisation of migration. Increasingly more women tend to migrate independently because of the dismal economic prospects in Sub-Saharan Africa, in search of secure jobs in foreign countries as a survival strategy to increase the total family income.

According to Oucho (2006) the current pattern of migration in Southern Africa has two important features. It consists of cross border migration between southern African countries, and an inward migration from outside the region. Oucho provides a useful definition of the term 'cross border migration' as 'migration between states that share a common border' (Oucho, 2006: 48). According to Oucho it is important to distinguish between 'cross border migration' and 'international migration'. The term 'international migration' refers to both the terms 'cross border migration' and 'transit migration',

meaning cross border migration over a long distance. Both Oucho (2006) and the IOM (2005a) claim that cross border migration is the largest of all immigration streams in Southern Africa. Oucho (2006) concludes by saying that generally, countries in Southern Africa can be classified as either 'sources of migration' or 'destinations of migration'. Oucho (2006), Wentzel and Tlabela (2006) and IOM (2005a) all emphasize South Africa as one of the most appealing destinations in Southern Africa because of its economic buoyancy and relative political stability.

Wentzel, Viljoen and Kok (2006) outline migration patterns and explain the important distinction between internal and cross border migrants. They claim, along with other studies, that migration from neighbouring countries to South Africa exhibit circular movement patterns between host and home country. The cross border migrants, according to Wentzel et al. (2006) intend to stay in South Africa for various reasons and over different periods of time. Some, like the Zimbabwean and Mozambican women involved in cross border migration, tend to stay in South Africa for less than one month. Others stay in South Africa for a long period of time before returning home. Many cross border migrants do not intend to settle permanently in South Africa, and have many dependents in their country of origin, to whom they send remittances and consumables.

1.3.6 Main Causes and Effects

It seems to be consensus among many scholars that it is nearly impossible to ascribe the reasons for cross border migration from neighbouring countries to South Africa to one specific factor, because the issue is so complex and interwoven. Some of the most important reasons for cross border migration in Southern Africa are poor economic conditions like lasting unemployment and low wages, political tension and marginalisation of minority groups (Adepoju, 2006; Maharaj, 2004; Mafukidze, 2006; Wentzel and Tlabela 2006). Wentzel and Tlabela (2006) conclude by stating that the phenomenon of migration will not disappear, because of people's eternal wish to improve their own living conditions. While it is hard to pinpoint one exact push factor in the differing countries of origin, Wentzel et al. (2006) emphasize South Africa's dominant economic position in the region as the most important pull factor. It is reasonable to expect that Africa, and hence also South Africa, will continue to

experience large-scale population movements both internally and externally (IOM, 2005a; Wentzel et al, 2006).

1.3.7 African sport migration

‘The story of the migration of African footballers to Europe is in many respects a very different one from those we have previously considered. With a few exceptions, football in Africa is not professionalized and so a move to Europe has traditionally been *the* only way of becoming a recognized international footballer’ (Lanfranchi and Taylor, 2001: 167).

The quote above illustrates the general perceptions of African sport and how scholars have framed their studies. In my understanding this reflects why internal talent migration on African soil has not been studied, as it is perceived as non-professional and hence less interesting. First of all it is being stated that African sport migration is fundamentally different from e.g. South America to Europe, and that football in Africa, with a few exceptions, is not professionalised. Because of this, research on African talent migration has only examined talent extraction from the African continent, or the presence and performances of African footballers on the European continent (cf. Poli (2006a; 2006b), Lanfranchi and Taylor (2001) or Darby, Akindes and Kirwin (2007). Hence it can also be argued that this is not a new field of study, but it has previously been restricted to examining some specific aspects while ignoring others.

1.4 Aims of study

The main purpose of this study is to explain the dynamics which characterise African football migration to South Africa by investigating African football migration to the PSL. The reason for researching migration to the PSL is its current status as a professionalised and organised league, in contrast to most other leagues on the continent which mainly function as ‘donors’. This study will try to elaborate and explain the role of the PSL both on the African continent and in the larger context of football migration and the modern football industry. The thesis will focus on identifying and explaining the incentives that exist in South Africa, and that are absent in the migrating players’ home countries. The study will also seek to explain what impacts the migration of foreign players have on the domestic South African league.

Finally, it will investigate existing initiatives to promote football cooperation, and what effects these initiatives have on the migration dynamics. One of the most important parts of the thesis will be to explain which push and pull factors drive other Africans to South Africa, and to map out how football migrants fit into the wider context of migration. As advocated for by several scholars, e.g. (Adepoju, 2006 or Mafukidze, 2006), there is an urgent need for more research on the topic of migration in Africa. My aim is to contribute to this field of study by exploring football migration patterns and correlating and contrasting them with broader trends of migration on the continent.

1.5 Theoretical framework

1.5.1 Africa's Place in the International Federation of Association Football's Global Order

Paul Darby's work on Africa's place in the International Federation of Association Football's (FIFA) Global Order (Darby, 2000) will be used as theoretical framework in this thesis. The framework could be seen as a part of a wider discourse on globalisation and development, and a theorisation of Africa's relationship with world football's ruling powers (Darby, 2000). Darby's framework claims that FIFA has developed into a so called 'World-System'. The World-System theory was created by Immanuel Wallerstein, and can be described as an international system of commerce and communication with its roots in the sixteenth century. The expansion of this system has resulted in excessive political networks and connections across the globe which have created a world economy (Darby, 2000). Wallerstein argues that,

'the world coheres around four interdependent sectors whose position *vis-à-vis* the global capitalist economy have been determined through combination of colonial history and economic power: The core (North-West Europe, North America and Japan); the semi-periphery (Southern Europe and the Mediterranean region); the periphery (Eastern Europe, North Africa and parts of Asia); and the external area (most of Africa, parts of Asia and the Indian sub-continent) which, given the advance of colonialism and transnational corporate activity, now can be classified as being peripheral' (Wallerstein, 1974; Wallerstein, 1979).

Darby uses Wallerstein's analysis as a starting point for his theoretical framework, in which he claims that a 'World-System' of international football has been developing since the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This system, according to Darby (2000), has emerged because of the rapid increase in global playing contracts,

institutional and political relationships and the growing economic significance of world football. In this system, it is possible to understand in which way nations or regions relate to one another by drawing upon the core-periphery concept provided by Wallerstein's World-System theory.

Darby utilises Wallerstein's theory to explain how he views the current international system of football. He refers to certain aspects of African football's relationship with the core footballing nations, which correlate with the idea of hierarchical dependency and exploitation within the World-System (Darby, 2000). The dependency can be illustrated by the flow of skilled talents from the African periphery to the North-Western European core. Darby (2000: 41) also claims that 'FIFA's core European members have attempted to monopolise power and resources within the world game'. This is because of the core members acting ostensibly as exploiters seeking to underdevelop the Third World through restricting its influence at the centre of world football's decision-making structures (Darby, 2000).

Darby's framework is very focused on core-periphery exploitation, and uses Dependency theory to illustrate the dynamics and between the core and periphery. The best example of this, according to Darby, is the European clubs' vacuuming the most talented players from the African continent, interpreted as some sort of neo-colonialism. The extensive recruitment of talented Africans has undermined the development of African football, because of the subsequent de-skilling of domestic African football. In general, the dependency theory is a 'theorization of the market global inequalities that permeate social life' (Darby, 2000: 49). The most important theories which have emerged from the dependency tradition are theories about dependent underdevelopment, dependent development and dependency reversal (Darby, 2000). According to Darby (2000), all these three major aspects of the dependency tradition are possible to identify in African football's relation to the so called core. The early relationship between Confederation of African Football (CAF) and FIFA can be interpreted as dependent underdevelopment, while the more recent relationship between the two can be characterised as dependent development.

Darby argues that Andre Gunder Frank's thesis of dependent underdevelopment is the most applicable for explaining the dynamics and relationships between the football's core and periphery. Frank argues that the global capitalist system dominated by the core industrialised systems is the prime driver for the underdevelopment of the Third World. As long as this system of exploitation remains dominant, sustained development within the Third World is unrealistic because the core will continue to prosper through continued underdevelopment (Frank, 1969). This becomes evident when African footballers are recruited to European clubs. The recruitment of Africans and the consequent de-skilling of African domestic football, according to Darby, is a perfect example of how dependent underdevelopment is operating in the world of football (Darby, 2000). 'Raw materials', young talents, are extracted from the African continent without suitable compensation, the aim being to 'refine' them in Europe. .

Darby concludes by saying that the relationship between CAF and FIFA clearly implicates aspects of imperialism, dependency and World System theory (Darby, 2000). To be able to develop African football to its own good, CAF needs to break free of its dependency relationship with FIFA's core, according to Darby (2000). By distancing African football from the mainly European core Darby argues for the initiation of a self-sustained development dynamic, in order to create the same type of professional and commercial culture which surrounds, for instance, European football.

1.5.2 Examining the Deficiencies of Darby's framework

Critique of two of the theories Darby makes use of in his theoretical perspective, world-system theory and dependency theory, has revealed several important deficiencies. One major deficiency of the dependency theory is the perspective's problem when moving beyond the historically observable consequences of the dependency relationship within individual satellites or dependencies (Friedmann and Wayne, 1977). According to dependency theory, the most important fact about any nation is its relations with other nations, because these relations have been shaped by capitalism.

In terms of football relationships it would hence be possible to understand the historical relationships between the two units 'core' and 'periphery', but it would be difficult to

address changes like the emergence of the PSL as a dominant actor in sub-Saharan Africa³. Another notable problem with the dependency theory is its reliance on hierarchical structure. The analytical starting point for dependency theorists like Frank is bilateral relationships among nations, in which one nation exploits the other. According to dependency theory scholars the characteristic in such relationships between societies has been exploitative, creating wealth at one of its poles (Friedmann and Wayne, 1977).

Despite arguing that current relationships can be explained by looking at historical relationships, this does not seem to apply to African football. In general, the notion can explain the stream of skilled talent from Africa to Europe, but seemingly not the change that occurred when the PSL emerged as a non-dependent actor on the African continent without making use of exploitative relationships.

In contrast to the dependency theory, the World-System theory uses the capitalist world economy as unit of analysis. The basic framework for World-System theorists is to explain the different levels of national development within what seems to be a unified global economy. They specify the different political and economic roles which a state or a geographical area plays within the overall system (Petras, 1981). Another key factor for understanding the World-System theory is the use of generalisation. Hence specific events in the system can be explained as a demand in the system as a whole. Actors within the system not acting for the immediate concrete interest, but because the system dictates that they act (Petras, 1981).

According to Petras (1981: 154) the general weakness of the World-Systems theory is that it ‘explains everything and explains nothing’. This can be seen as an attack on the World-System’s heavy generalisation, which makes the approach overly simplistic. The simplistic and extremely structural approach makes it difficult to apply the World-System theory to football. As Darby argues, there are certain factors that indicate the emergence of a World-System within football, for instance the excessive political networks and connections across the globe through FIFA and its subordinate

³ See chapter four and five for elaboration on the status and role of the PSL

confederations. Despite the unquestionable existence of these structures, Darby tends to draw too much on Wallerstein's work. For instance, it can be argued that he fails to address certain crucial important aspects of modern football. This can be illustrated by looking at the movement of players. According to the World-System this would occur solely because of a demand in the system. This is a simplistic and very broad approach which does not account for the individual motivations of the players and other sociological factors causing movement.

1.5.3 The Sport Industrial Complex

Joseph Maguire (2005a) argues that it is possible to interpret the current system of global sports as controlled by the West because of its economic, technological, and knowledge resources and political dominance. According to Maguire (2005a) this combination has literally given the West the control levers of global sport. This has given a limited, exclusive group of participants in the system a competitive advantage, in what can be described as a power relationship between the established elite and the rest. This modern global system of sports, which to a large extent favours the West, consists of a world market for capital, commodities, labour and communications (Maguire, 2005a).

There are many possible ways of theorising the current relationships within world sports. Maguire's approach (2005b) is a more sociological interpretation, compared to Darby (2000), of how the global system of sports operates. Maguire (2005b) argues that sport has been made into a science on elite level, and that this contributes to consolidating Europe's advantaged position because it possesses the most sophisticated technology.

'Sporting success is believed to depend on several elements: the availability and identification of human resources; methods of coaching and training; the efficiency of particular sports organizations and the depth of knowledge of sports medicine and sports sciences' (Maguire, 2005b: 164).

By looking through Maguire's lens, it is possible to identify some of the ways in which the Core, as explained by Darby (2000), take advantage of the periphery. Maguire (2005b: 164) argues that sporting success depends on, among other factors, the

‘availability and identification of human resources’. This means that in order to achieve success within sports, such as football, you must have access to talented human capital that can perform adequately on the pitch. This has become an increasingly bigger problem for the domestic African football leagues, because agents and representatives from the European leagues extract promising young talents from the African continent (Darby et al, 2007; Poli, 2006b). This, to some extent, eliminates the first factor on which sporting success depends, according to Maguire (2005b).

The second factor, ‘methods of coaching and training’, can best be explained by means of general migration theory. According to general migration theory, migration is motivated by so called push and pull factors. Push factors motivate people to move away from one place. Pull factors draw them towards a new location (IOM, 2003). For young talents who seek to maximise their own potential, modern methods of coaching and training may be an important pull factor for migrating to Europe.

European sports, in particular football at the topmost level, have without doubt become extremely scientific. To compete in the topmost segment of European football, it is not enough to have a good coach, support from many dedicated fans, a lot of money to buy new players, etc. The most successful clubs also boost their own institutions to monitor, enhance and improve their players’ physical and mental health. One such institution is the Italian club Milan’s own MilanLab⁴. This is a research facility established to enhance the team’s results through careful studies of their athletes, in order to optimise their management of human resources.

The gap between playing in the less developed domestic leagues in West Africa or Southern Africa, and the Western European leagues, is evident. This gap can be seen as a threat to both the second and the last factor mentioned by Maguire (2005b). The big difference between the continents and the facilities they can offer serves as a pull factor for talented players who seek to compete on the highest level. Although many of them

⁴ ‘MilanLab contributes strongly to optimizing the team's results. The objectives of the studies and research are to enable athletes to achieve the most optimum performance possible, to reduce the risks of injury and to act in the decision making to support the technical staff and club hierarchy in the management of human resources.’ (AcMilan.com, n.d. “Milan Lab” accessed: 5 August 2007)

know they are not good enough for the very best level, lower leagues in European countries may still be regarded as an upscale.

While Darby tends to focus solely on the structural governing of football, Maguire approaches it from a sociological angle, elaborating on the underlying factors causing talents to migrate. Darby's argumentation centres on the exploitative structural system of global sports, without exploring which factors might influence the individual player's motivation for migrating. Maguire, on the other hand, explores the more sociological concepts and emphasises the competitive advantages of the European leagues because they currently are in possession of the most sophisticated technology. This does not mean that the two theoretical approaches contradict each other, but rather that they can complement each other and explain different aspects. Darby's perspective, for instance, seems to be suitable to explain the stream of talents from Africa to Europe, but is unable to understand the individual push and pull factors motivating players to migrate to Europe.

1.6 Conceptualisation

In general the term 'migration' can be explained as 'permanent or semi-permanent change of residence by an individual or group of people' (Ogden, 2000). The term 'football migration' in this thesis refers to cross border migration by football players who intend to make a living out of playing football. As previously stated, cross border migration means migration between states that share a common border (Oucho 2006).

One of the other main features in this thesis is the political economy of modern professional football. This refers to the interaction between political processes and economic variables concerning professional football and the surrounding industry. Modern football interacts and operates within a larger context where politics and economics play a significant role.

This study understands the concept 'political economy of football' as the way in which capital structure influences and shapes modern football. This interaction is, for instance, evident in the role of media corporations, in particular TV broadcasting corporations, is

shaping the modern football market. A reign of different interests shapes the football market on various levels, for example football clubs and domestic, regional and international governing bodies. The governing bodies have the possibility to influence football markets through their capacity and power to shape and regulate existing legal frameworks. These frameworks regulate several aspects of the game, both playing rules and restrictions on player transfers or foreign player quotas. The interplay between politics and markets in this study is understood and perceived as the concept 'political economy of football'.

1.7 Methodology

The major purpose of this *descriptive* social scientific study is to describe situations and events, in order to draw a conclusion. It makes use of exploratory qualitative methods to reach a conclusion and provide answers to the previously mentioned research questions (Babbie and Mouton, 2005). Use of qualitative research methods means non-numerical examination and interpretation of observations, for the purpose of discovering underlying meanings and patterns of relationships (Babbie and Mouton, 2005). The research will also be exploratory, because this specific issue has not previously been extensively researched by any scholars. Exploratory research is generally regarded as quite valuable in social scientific research, because it can yield new insights into a research topic (Babbie and Mouton, 2005).

The study is based on both primary and secondary material. The latter is represented by various academic journal articles and books, newspaper articles and non-academic sources. These sources are used to support and substantiate the description of the nature of global football and migration in chapter two; to compile the literature review and make the theoretical framework in chapter one; and to explain how professional football emerged in South Africa and the current state of the PSL.

Due to the lack of previous academic studies on player migration to the PSL it was necessary to conduct fieldwork and gather primary data. The primary data gathering was carried out by using face-to-face interviews containing both closed and open ended

questions (see appendices 1-4). In total eleven interviews were conducted with football players, a player's agent, a coach and the current Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the PSL. The football players, from the PSL clubs Santos, Ajax and SuperSport, were interviewed with a questionnaire targeted at revealing basic demographics, how they were recruited to the club, and the most significant push and pull factors influencing their choice.

The player's agent and the coach were interviewed face-to-face using semi-structured questionnaires. The interview with the agent centred on the circumstances around a player transfer, how agents work to recruit players, and the pull factors of the South African football economy. The coach was interviewed on topics regarding incentives attracting foreign players to the PSL, initiatives promoting football cooperation, foreign players' impacts on the PSL and the process of recruitment of foreign players.

The current CEO of the PSL, Kjetil Siem, had to be interviewed by phone as he is based in Johannesburg and it would not have been possible to interview him face-to-face. He was interviewed on topics regarding football dynamics in Southern Africa, existing initiatives to promote football cooperation in the region, and the impact of foreign players in the PSL.

I decided to use semi-structured interviews to interview the agent, the coach and the CEO because the technique provides a fairly open framework which allows for focused, conversational, two-way communication. The interviews started with more general, relevant topics with more specific enquires as the interview went along. This technique allows both the interviewer and the respondent flexibility to probe for details or discuss specific issues (D'Arcy, 1990).

I chose to interview all the respondents face to face myself, except the PSL CEO due to time constraints, to ensure the highest possible response rate and completion rate. This technique also provided me with an opportunity to observe the respondents reactions to the study, probe for answers if the respondents were unsure of the questions and hence limit possible literacy issues (Babbie and Mouton, 2005: 249-251). Literacy issues

should in this context be understood as failure by the respondents to understand the questions and provide relevant answers.

Before the interviews were conducted, the questionnaires were piloted to reduce the possibility of formal or technical problems with the questionnaires, for instance unclear or leading questions. Prior to the interviews the respondents were informed verbally on confidentiality, anonymity, and the purpose and intention of the study. Where required, they were given a formal letter from the university from the supervisor with the same details (see appendix 5).

The major reason for conducting the interviews was to be able to measure and identify the different concepts, like migration dynamics, push and pull factors and football cooperation, asked for in the research questions. After conducting the interviews it was possible to identify certain themes by examining the trends in the data in order to shed light over the research questions. All three questionnaires aimed at some central questions to try to gather data on the topic from different perspectives. One example is the presence of questions about incentives, push and pull factors, in different varieties in all three questionnaires, to reveal the players' motivation for moving to South Africa. All the concepts in the conceptualisation, derived from the research questions, are linked to the questionnaires, in order to be able to measure them.

Table 1.1: Overview of the Respondents

Date	Location	Type of Respondent	Country of Origin	Club
19 May 2007	Johannesburg	Player's Agent	Croatia	N/A
20 May 2007	Johannesburg	Coach	South Africa	SuperSport
21 May 2007	Johannesburg	Player	Uganda	SuperSport
21 May 2007	Johannesburg	Player	Zambia	SuperSport
15 Oct 2007	Cape Town	Player	Botswana	Santos
16 Oct 2007	Cape Town	Player	French Mauritius	Santos
16 Oct 2007	Cape Town	Player	Kenya	Santos
16 Oct 2007	Cape Town	Player	Cameroon	Ajax Cape Town
16 Oct 2007	Cape Town	Player	USA	Ajax Cape Town
16 Oct 2007	Cape Town	Player	Malawi	Ajax Cape Town
26 March 2008	N/A	CEO of the PSL	Norway	N/A

1.8 Delimitations

The thesis is delimited to a time period over the past two years, to narrow the scope and keep a strict and concise focus. The assessment makes use of primary data gathered within a restricted geographical area, limited to Johannesburg and Cape Town/Stellenbosch and surroundings because of limited funds and time. It is also delimited to only using one survey method, but a different questionnaire to interview the respondents.

The study is limited because it is based on a relatively small number of respondents. This is both due to the delimitations mentioned above, mainly concerning lack of funds and time, but also the gatekeeper issue. Numerous attempts were, for instance, made to secure an appointment with the English Premier League club, Everton, to conduct interviews with their African players. I intended to interview Steven Pienaar about his view on the PSL as a representative of the many players who have followed the route from the PSL to one of the best clubs in England. In addition I wanted to interview Yoseph Yobo, Aiyegbeni Yakubu and Victor Anichebe, all Nigerians, about their

perceptions of the PSL, its function/role on the African continent and its relations to Europe. Attempts were made personally by phone and e-mail, and indirectly through board members of the Everton Supporters Club Norwegian Branch without being able to conclude any appointments to conduct interviews.

1.9 Thesis outline

The focus in chapter two is to explain the nature of global football and the dynamics involved in modern professional football, and Africa's, in particular South Africa's role, within this bigger context. In this chapter I explain how football has become a major economic commodity, and the importance of some of the big role players involved in the business, for instance FIFA, the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA), Nike and Adidas. I also map out the most important characteristics of football migration. Within this wider global context I also provide an understanding on how football cooperation operates on the African continent and identify the most important organisations, and explain how the different role players interact with each other.

The third chapter explains what currently is happening in South African football. This part will provide extensive background coverage for the South African case, with emphasis on how South African football is constructed and organised. Chapter three will give an explanation of the political economy of professional South African football and its role in the context of sub-Saharan Africa. This chapter also points out some of the most important factors and incentives which currently exist in South Africa, in order to attract foreign players.

Chapter four is devoted to reporting back on primary data from interviews with football migrants using qualitative data analysis. This part presents five main findings, and some sub-themes, which emerged after the interview process. The investigation of these provides an understanding and explanation of the process of recruiting foreign players to the PSL; identifies the main push and pull factors; elaborates on the sending of remittances; the PSL's specific role in sub-Saharan Africa; and the leagues' reputation.

Chapter four will compare the results of the primary data gathering with the general characteristic migration dynamics of African migration to South Africa, in order to put the football migrants into a larger context.

The last part, chapter five, summarises the main findings of the study, revisits the initial research questions, and concludes on the nature and implications of African football migration to South Africa.

Chapter 2: The Nature of Global Football and Migration

2.1 Introduction

Over the latest decades migration has become an important feature of world football, much due to globalisation and the extended commercialisation of the game. This chapter explains how these phenomena influence the game. It also outlines the nature of global football and the dynamics which contribute to current patterns of international football migration. Within this modern environment of global football, Africa and South Africa's position and role will be defined and explained. The chapter also seeks to explore and explain how football cooperation operates on the African continent and will identify the most important football regulatory organisations and explain the relationships between FIFA and the subordinate confederations.

The main arguments presented in this chapter are that the political economy of sport currently is changing. Enhanced commercialisation and commoditisation play an important role in shaping the patterns of football migration, through influencing decisive push and pull factors which contribute to migration. This has affected the political economy of African football, directed by external push and pull factors and internal conditions in the countries which players depart from.

2.2 Commoditisation and Commercialisation

The enormous influx of capital into modern professional football has contributed heavily to commoditising and commercialisation of the sport. The process of commoditisation can be described as the process by which a good becomes saleable in the market, while the process of commercialisation is to involve something in commerce. Over the last three decades sports competitions, above all football, have been related increasingly to commercial activity due to both cash flow and interest from profit seeking companies (Amis and Cornwell, 2005a). Significant sports events, such as the FIFA World Cup, are broadcast to the entire world and professional clubs have turned into transnational corporations. Sports no longer seem to be organised

spontaneously and exercised only to entertain the participants and its spectators. Instead, on top level, it appears as a growing industry in which the clubs compete for sponsorships and make investments to enhance their own performance. The growing competition for sponsorships and success tends to have forced the clubs into an eternal hunt for skilled players. In this process talented players assist their clubs to achieve their goals, by for instance attracting sponsors and consumers, trophies and possible income from transfers.

Modern professional football has developed into a state of inequality due to commercialisation, not only between continents and countries but also within regional borders. Conn (1999) argues that the commercialisation of English football developed the game into a state of inequality, mainly after breakaway talks initiated in the early and mid-1980s. The top teams decided to break away and form own structures to better accommodate their own economic interests, in order not to be obliged to share the increasing revenue with smaller clubs (Conn, 1999). This wave of commercialisation, mainly sparked by the increased revenue gathered from TV broadcasting rights, divided the world game into two halves of money-making clubs at the top and poverty below according to Conn (1999). This approach can to some extent be applied to Darby's (2000) framework, and does not only concern the English premiership. Applied to the rest of the world it is possible to identify this state of inequality due to the extreme differences within the leagues – for example difference in economic capacity between Manchester United and Darby in the Premier League – and the differences between the Italian Serie A and the Mauritanian Premier League. While AC Milan, Internazionale, AS Roma and Juventus accumulated a total amount of €725 million⁵ in revenue in 2006/2007, the clubs participating in the Mauritanian Premier League had to share the only two existing stadiums in the country (Edwards, 2007; Jones et al, 2008). While the Italian clubs mentioned above use their stadiums to gather extreme amounts of revenue, the Mauritanian club's possibilities are extremely limited because basic infrastructure is lacking and not geared towards creating revenues.

⁵ 1 Euro = 11.59 South African rands

2.3 Global Sport Sponsorship

As Amis and Cornwell (2005a: 4) state, ‘there is little doubt that we exist in a global age that evidences a political, economic, technological and social landscape much changed from even two decades ago’. The reason for this change is indeed a very multifaceted one, which consists of for instance the expansion of regional trading blocs, the collapse of communism and the subsequent opening of markets in the former Soviet Union and its satellite states, and the increased commercial access to China. With increased trade in different parts of the world comes also the opportunity for sport sponsorship, as corporates seek to integrate themselves in local markets within which they may have no heritage and tradition (Amis and Cornwell, 2005a).

The increased interest from substantial transnational corporations, trying to achieve certain corporate objectives in multiple countries, has contributed significantly to shaping and influencing the new more commercialised and commoditised environment of global sport (Amis and Cornwell, 2005a). In this context sport scholars have claimed that decisions to engage in global sponsorship agreements have become strategically more important for corporate executives (Amis and Cornwell, 2005a). The reason for this can be the constantly transforming modern environment, due to the forces of globalisation. It is possible to make the argument that sport sponsorships are playing a central role in shaping this cross-border environment, in which various corporate actors strive to position their brands in the global market (Amis and Cornwell, 2005a).

Investment and interest from transnational corporations in large-scale sport sponsorship agreements seem evident, in particular when looking at global sport properties such as the Olympics and the FIFA World Cup. These mega-events have achieved universal popularity and receive international media coverage in major markets, which in turn inspire international sponsorship (Amis and Cornwell, 2005b; Sugden and Tomlinson, 1998). Commercial and economic interests, such as multibillion dollar⁶ sponsorships at the very elite level, are often used to illustrate some of the main drivers for commoditisation of modern sports. This process, of increased capital influx, has contributed to transforming sports at various levels, not only the very elite, into a good

⁶ 1 U.S. dollar = 7.55 South African rands

saleable in the market. The influence from corporate interests, in terms of favouring some leagues and events above others, can be said to have led to a change in the political economy of sport. In the context of global sport sponsorships, some leagues and tournaments tend to be more attractive to sponsors than others and hence attract the most lucrative sponsorship deals (Shaw, 2005). This can, to a significant extent, have led to a greater diversion in the political economy of sport, in this case football. There currently seems to be a vast distance between what Shaw (2005: 277) labels as the 'haves' and the 'have nots' in terms of sponsor agreements between sponsors and sponsored. This vast 'gulf' between those able to attract the most lucrative sponsorships and media coverage and those who are not, seems to have shaped and influenced the modern football economy substantially. Referencing back to Maguire and Pearton's (2000) assumption that football labour flows with the money, on the background of the great diversification in the field of sponsorships, it is possible to assume that the influence of corporate interests in the European elite-level football has made a huge impact on European football in enforcing and consolidating the position it currently enjoys.

Since the early 1990s, in particular, FIFA and its most prominent confederational partner UEFA, seem to have developed a solid relationship with the media industry (Sugden and Tomlinson, 1998). Together FIFA and UEFA are in control of the highly valued television rights to tournaments such as the European Football Championship, the UEFA Champions League, the UEFA Cup and the FIFA World Cup. Sugden and Tomlinson (1998) note that some of these competitions, most notably the Champions League and the World Cup, can be described as the world's most important football competitions, mostly because of the high cumulative television audience. The fact that tournaments such as the World Cup are broadcast to nearly every country in the world has seemingly led to a continuous escalation in the valuation of the broadcasting rights, and causes every bidding process to be of 'record breaking' character. This can be illustrated by looking at FIFA's substantially increased revenue over the latest years. In the period from 1998 to 2002 the organisation's revenue grew from CHF⁷ 389 million

⁷ 1 Swiss franc (CHF) = 7.37 South African rands

to 963 million, mainly due to media rights and associated sponsorships (Nicholson, 2006: 69).

Football is currently the most popular and valuable of all sports, and this translates into very big business as illustrated by Deloitte's most recent report (Giulianotti, 2005; Kunene, 2006). According to Deloitte's 2008 edition of the Football Money League the top twenty richest clubs in Europe's revenues grew by 11%, to €3.8 billion, during the 2006/2007 campaign. Over the most recent years the top European clubs saw their revenues exploding, recording higher and higher amounts of profit. The twenty clubs now generate more than three times the combined revenue of the clubs in the first Money League in 1996/1997 (Jones et al, 2008).

The very extensive media coverage combined with a mutually substantial public interest has presumably caused the world's elite football tournaments to develop into some of the most interesting venue for multinational corporations. Within this modern market of international football, Sugden and Tomlinson (1998: 98) argue that the process in which modern football has become commodified is heavily shaped by three main actors or groups of actors. The first is the game of football itself, which on the very elite level literally mesmerises the audience around the world. The second is television, both in terms of the extensive broadcasting of the game and the highly valued broadcasting rights. The third is the sponsors who contribute to developing the game through an enormous influx of capital into the game (Sugden and Tomlinson, 1998).

2.4 The Significance, Impact and Interests of Big Role-players

The two previous sections explain how sport, foremost on the elite level, has become commoditised and commercialised due to strong interest in the game from corporate actors. This involvement and interest from some of the world's biggest corporate actors have, as previously explained, helped the game to develop into an industry and created a state of inequality. This section aims at identifying some of the most influential actors, both corporate and governing bodies, which influence and shape the current political economy of football.

2.4.1 The Governing Bodies, FIFA and CAF

The biggest and most important role-player is indeed FIFA, due to its proactive governing function of modern association football. FIFA aims, both directly and through the various confederations such as CAF, to develop the game of football on a worldwide basis. The worldwide governing organisation has over the latest decades had a remarkable growth in terms of players, popularity, status and income. Maidment (2002) claims that while the organisation has grown substantially, the professional financial administration has not followed, and the executive power within the organisation has remained with the president and his cabinet of advisors. Currently the executive power is not even shared with the executive committee, consisting of 24 members, elected from FIFA's member association, and the organisation is accused of lack of transparency and accountability (Maidment, 2002).

Currently there seems to be an ontological misfit between how the developing world and FIFA, and the developed world conceive the system of world football. On the one hand FIFA seems to have failed in fulfilling the organisation's own outspoken responsibility concerning football development in the third world, and are repeatedly being accused of channelling too much of their revenues back to what Darby (2000) refers to as the 'core' of the modern football industry. Money is currently being channelled to Third World countries through for instance the highly profiled Goal Programme, and has for a long time been granted for development purposes (Fifa.com c, n.d. "Goal Programme" accessed 25 October 2007).

According to the President of FIFA, Joseph Blatter, the organisation's aims are to develop the game of football through investing in people and society at large. According to Blatter the organisation also regards football as a 'unifying force', which can be used as a tool for social and human development through for instance peacebuilding, health, social integration and education.

'Played by millions around the world, football is the heart and soul of FIFA and as the guardian of this most cherished game, we have a great responsibility. This responsibility does not end with organising the FIFA World Cup™ and the various other world cup

competitions; it extends to safeguarding the Laws of the Game, developing the game around the world and to bringing hope to those less privileged. This is what we believe is the very essence of fair play and solidarity.’ (Blatter, n.d.)

While FIFA is the world’s governing body of football, the six confederations represent international association football all around the world. The confederations’ primary objectives are to improve and promote the game of football within their specific geographical area. The various confederations are also responsible for organising their own continental and international competitions, maintain relations with FIFA, draw up regulations and provisions related to its activities and ensure their implementation and protect the integrity of the game and its competitions (Cafonline.com, n.d. “Statutes” accessed 4 March 2008; Fifa.com a, n.d. “Confederations” accessed 19 September 2007).

2.4.2 Commercial Role-players

‘Companies have wanted to associate themselves with me since I was a teenager. The first time I was approached to give my name to a product was when I had just started at Santos’ (Pelé, 2007: 287).

As the quote above indicates, commercial role-players have for decades had extensive interests in sponsoring athletes, teams and sporting events. Williams (1999) argues that very few major football events take place at the international level without major commercial interests being involved. This argument could possibly be revised to state that there are no exceptions from major commercial interests. Today all major football events taking place at the international level involve big commercial actors. Transnational corporations like Coca Cola and Adidas have both long standing agreements with FIFA and the World Cup tournament (Howard and Sayce, 2002). The trend of commercial actors connecting their brands and products to events like the World Cup, the Euro Final and the Champions League seems to be non-declining, involving more and more financial capital (Howard and Sayce, 2002).

Howard and Sayce (2002) argue that since the late 1970s the World Cup finals, and possibly also other mega events, have largely been shaped by the politics of FIFA and

what they label as the ‘golden triangle’, consisting of football, television and sponsors (Sugden and Tomlinson, 1998). Given the commercial value of football, as the most valuable spectator sport (Kunene, 2006), sponsorships have escalated into almost unrealistic amounts.

Due to the fact that commercial actors spend billions of dollars on football sponsorships and marketing, it is reasonable to assume that they expect value for their money. The commercial actors have an interest in the World Cup and Champions League being as attractive and entertaining as possible, to gather for instance maximum amount of media coverage and TV spectators in order to expose their brands and logos. Seen on a long term perspective the commercial actors might have incentives to support, or even lay pressure on organisations such as FIFA, to sustain the current situation, in which the European clubs receive a steady stream of talents from the African country which enriches the European game. This assumption is to some extent verified by Amis and Cornwell’s (2005a) work on modern sport sponsorships.

2.5 The African Football System

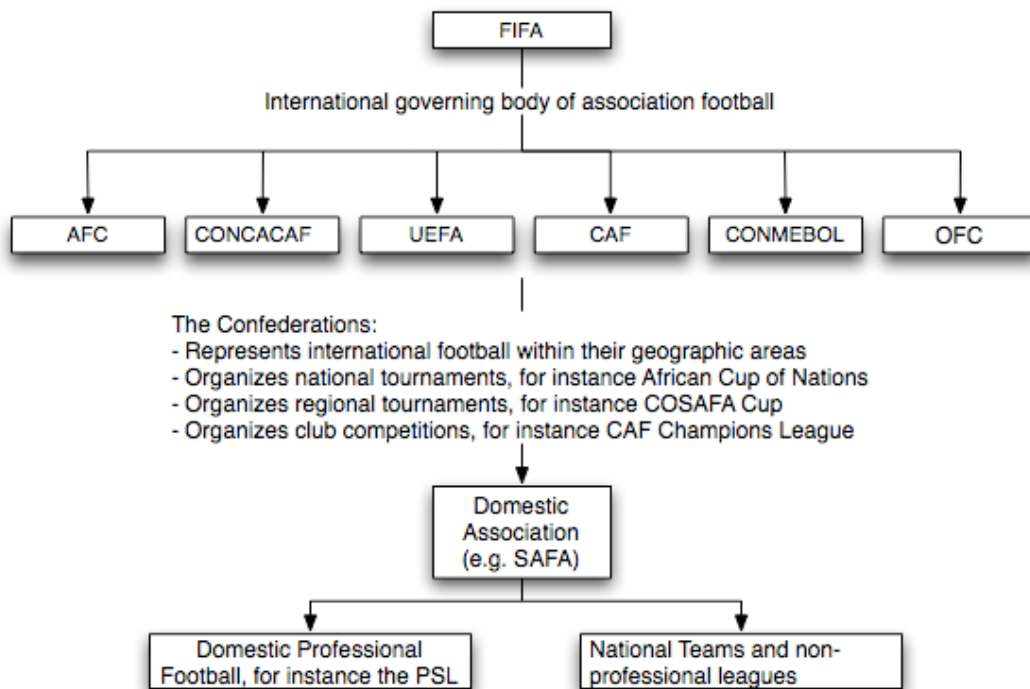
According to Lanfranchi and Taylor (2001) the organisation of football on the African continent has been unified and distinct since the creation of CAF in 1957. Competitions, like the African Cup of Nations and the CAF Champions League, have reproduced the European model of national and club championships.

Structurally African association football is governed by the continental CAF through FIFA, the international governing body of association football (FIFA.com a, n.d. “Confederations” accessed 19 September 2007; Lanfranchi and Taylor, 2001; Sugden and Tomlinson, 1998). FIFA can be described as an umbrella organisation, which reaches out to all continents and countries through the organisation’s subordinate confederations and national associations. The rule of FIFA is represented in Africa through CAF, which organises both regional and national tournaments such as the African Cup of Nations and the African Champions League (Cafonline.com, n.d. “Statutes” accessed 4 March 2008). Sugden and Tomlinson (1998:7) argue that FIFA can be understood in two different ways. In one way FIFA, through its outer circle, can

be represented, in terms of organisational power, as a ‘particularly advanced case of progressive global bureaucratization and rationalization, albeit with a democratic façade’. At the second deeper level, FIFA’s inner circle can be described as an ‘hierarchical organisation, so steeped in oligarchic and corporate patronage, that its organisational coherence has bordered on a form of total power often conveyed in European social thought as ‘oriental despotism’’ (Sugden and Tomlinson, 1998: 7).

When examining the African and European game it becomes possible to reveal differences, despite the fact that both continents seem to be governed through confederations, respectively CAF and UEFA, which operate within the same framework under FIFA. Sugden and Tomlinson (1998) argue that to a large extent this is due to post-colonial turmoil, problems within the individual African nations and lack of proper governance and organisation of sports. The lack of unity and good leadership eventually facilitated for malgovernance, often in terms of corruption, and the African game started to lag behind. Without a substantial alteration of the African football administration and proper resource governing, transparency, accountability sustainable development across the continent will, according to Tomlinson and Sugden (1998), not be realised.

Figure 2.1: Illustration of the Organisation of Football *



* Source: Own analysis and design

Figure 2.1 illustrates the top-down organisation of world football, with FIFA as the overarching governing authority of association football. Within this system domestic African football is organised, through national associations, such as the South African Football Association (SAFA), in the different countries. In its early beginning FIFA was created in order to produce a single set of rules for all participants, making it possible to conduct international matches. Since then, particularly the period from 1980 until present, FIFA has extended its interests, and is now involved in shaping the commercial processes which surrounds modern football (Sugden and Tomlinson, 1998).

This figure illustrates the British model by which football is organised in South Africa. The British model distinguishes between the organisation and governing of professional football, run by a separate body, and the national teams and non-professional leagues. This is further explained in chapter three. Hence figure 2.1 does not apply on domestic

level for explaining the organisation of football in many other African countries, in which the national associations do not make a distinction between the governing of professional and non-professional leagues.

2.5.1 The Organisation of Football in North and West Africa

To be able to provide a meaningful understanding of the South African PSL's specific status and role in Africa, it is necessary to explain how, why and by whom football is being organised elsewhere on the continent.

In northern Africa, for instance in Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt, some clubs and a type of infrastructure and professionalism exist which are able to provide certain important incentives, for example decent salaries. Hence the clubs are able to encourage some players to remain at home, at least in the early part of their careers, and prevent de-skilling of the local game. This has enabled the clubs, predominantly the top-flight teams, to allocate foundations, for instance administration and knowledge, which allow them to exist and act as fully functioning professional clubs (Darby et al, 2007). In sub-Saharan Africa the football economy seems to be constructed around two centres, the West-African talent academies and South Africa's flagship, the PSL⁸.

In contrast to North Africa, the West African model tends to be organised mainly around various types of talent academies. This region has for long been affected by periods of socio-economic and political instability and in some places also civil warfare. The unstable climate has not facilitated football development and unfortunately lead to widespread destruction of football infrastructure. In this case infrastructure does not only refer to physical infrastructure in terms of stadiums and training facilities, it also concerns the administrative organisation of football. Because the circumstances do not facilitate the establishment of well-organised professional clubs and leagues, the vast majority of the clubs in West Africa operate without corporate and individual sponsors. Without such sponsorships it has become nearly impossible for the clubs to offer their

⁸ Darby et al. (2007) elaborates on the role of football academies in West Africa, the role of the PSL is explained and substantiated in chapters 3, 4 and 5

players regular, guaranteed salaries and labour protection like in Europe (Darby et al, 2007).

In the absence of a functioning administration and other facilities required of a professional league, the current football industry in West Africa is built up around football academies. Defined in very broad terms an academy can be described as facilities or coaching programs designed to produce football talents (Darby et al, 2007). Although various types of academies exist which can be characterised very differently in terms of objectives and means of production, the majority of them have one important feature in common. They are mainly designed to extract African talent from the continent, and to make profit out of it.

Due to the absence of an administration which can protect domestic football from actors of an exploitative character, West Africa and its informal organisational structure literally became a paradise for talent speculators, recruiting agencies and scouts working to serve the interests of European clubs (Darby et al, 2007).

These problems not only concern West Africa. The characteristics apply to most other countries in sub-Saharan Africa as well. In addition to the structural and administrative difficulties surrounding football in most sub-Saharan African countries, it should also be pointed out that football in these areas is largely controlled and organised by the state (Darby et al, 2007). In the wake of colonial independence the newly constituted governments provided financial support for the game, and hence argued that they were entitled to play a central role in its running. Due to economic crisis and subsequent structural adjustment programmes, the funding decreased dramatically from the 1980s onwards. Because the state controls important football infrastructure such as training facilities and stadia which are managed by the Ministry of Sports or local government, the clubs cannot use the facilities to create revenue that might allow them to invest in professional infrastructure improvements (Darby et al, 2007).

2.6 The Changing Political Economy of Football

Extended commercialisation and commoditisation of the game have contributed heavily to change the political economy of professional football, and the migration patterns of professional footballers. This development has had a great impact on African football, which seems to be experiencing an outflux of skilled players. The most skilled players seem to be attracted to the more prosperous European leagues. Hence it can be said that the changing political economy of world football directly has affected the political economy of Africa, through for instance external push and pull factors and labour demand.

The nature of football migration seems to be tied to economic and political processes, as suggested by Lanfranchi and Taylor (2001). This argument, concerning economy, is being supported by Maguire and Pearton's (2000) research, which claims that football labour flows with the more economically powerful leagues. This has, according to Lanfranchi and Taylor (2001), created a natural flow of football migrants from the poorer countries to the more developed and advanced countries in Europe in particular.

2.7 Incentives and Dynamics

There is no single explanation of how the West European countries became the power centre of professional football. Rather it appears to be a set of several interconnected factors which together constitute an aggregate explanation. One important factor tends to be the European elite clubs' economic capacities backed by a solid legal framework protecting the clubs and their players from external exploitation. This combination seems to be mutually enforcing and makes the leagues, clubs and involved actors less prone to being exploited by external actors seeking to extract profit. Over the recent decade the leagues in Western Europe have consolidated this position to a great extent, and enjoyed remarkable financial growth due to extensive revenue increases (Elliott and Robinson, 2006; Jones et al, 2008). The financial capabilities were mainly generated by regional tournaments, like the UEFA Champions League and the UEFA Cup, through sale of media rights, gate receipts, sale of official merchandise, etc. Backed by substantial financial capacity many European leagues have become capable of offering salaries that simply do not exist elsewhere in the world (Darby et al, 2007; Maguire and Pearton, 2000).

When researching player migration it is important to stress the fact that the migration of professional footballers is not a new phenomenon, and take into account that the phenomenon has a long history which influences current migration streams (Taylor, 2007). Player migration has existed since the establishment of the early World Cups – which was founded in 1930 when the first tournament was held in Uruguay – when the international market for football talent expanded. On these occasions a large number of players moved from one continent to another, many influenced by push factors like the poor economic state of their home country and the amateur status of the game. In addition the promise of financial rewards assumingly functioned as a pull factor for the numerous players who participated (Taylor, 2007).

Economic incentives are an important part of the explanation, but cannot provide a complete explanation by itself. Scholars, like for instance Taylor (2007), Lanfranchi and Taylor (2001), Poli (2006b) and Maguire and Pearton (2000), emphasize the value of investigating historical, geographical, political, social and cultural factors. Hence it can be argued that push and pull factors which apply to conventional migrants, such as e.g. political stability and standard of living, are also playing an important role for football migrants.

2.8 Africans' Status in the European Football Labour Market

As previously argued the extensive commercialisation and commoditisation of professional football have led the sport into what seems to be an irreversible spiral of revenue gathering, in order to protect and possibly enhance its position in the system of world football. In the mid 1990s the status of players within the system of professional football was raised significantly, due to the Bosman law (Poli, 2006a). This law gave players whose contract had expired the possibility to sign for a new club without any compensation to the former club. This provoked a significant increase in the amount of salaries paid to players, and led to a situation in which more money tended to circulate between agents and players and not clubs (Poli, 2006a). At the same time as the salaries for top class players increased, the salaries for players in the lower clubs in Europe stagnated because of lack of capital influx. While the clubs playing in the highest

leagues received significant amounts of income, mainly from TV rights, the lower league clubs did not (Poli, 2006a). This created an economic gap in the employment market of football which assumingly has continued to increase ever since.

Simultaneously as commercial and economic interests transformed football into an industry, footballers from the third world started to enter European football in increasing numbers (Darby et al, 2007). The explanation for why this occurred seems to be of joint character. Darby et al (2007) argue that one of the factors causing an increased flow of African players into the European game seems to be the growing profile and status of African national teams in the international arena at that time. This development was closely linked to a radical transformation in the world football, led by the Brazilian FIFA President João Havelange. Havelange's presidency brought with it a general development of football in the third world through political, financial and technical support (Darby, 2002; Darby, 2005; Darby et al, 2007).

One of the most important contributions made by João Havelange was the new FIFA ruling of 1981, which obliged clubs to release players for all World Cup Qualifying and finals matches (Lanfranchi and Taylor, 2001). This ruling made it possible to include European-based professionals in African national sides, and hence made it possible to pick the best players available.

As a by-product of these initiatives more places in the World Cup Finals were allocated for African teams, and the teams which participated improved their performances from the 1982 World Cup and onwards (Darby et al, 2007; Lanfranchi and Taylor, 2001). In total the improvement and exposure of African talent, also combined with good performances in youth World Cups, started to challenge the established stereotypes of African footballers, and to create new, more positive perceptions. Darby et al (2007) argue that during this phase African footballers destroyed the stereotypes which presented them as athletes relying on their instincts, skill and speed, who were tactically immature, lacked discipline and organisation and were incapable of competing effectively on the international stage or in the European game. The disproving of these stereotypes, through success on senior and youth level in international tournaments,

advertised the great deal of potential in bringing African talent to European clubs, and hence created a demand for African players in Europe (Darby et al, 2007).

While, on the one hand, there seemed to be an important altering in the European perception of African footballers from the mid 1980s and onwards, this does not offer a complete and correct explanation for why Africans started to migrate to Europe in increasing numbers. The previous two paragraphs only explain how African footballers were made visible and attractive in the system of world football. On the other hand it is necessary to take into account the situation which characterised the new and increasingly more commercialised football environment in Europe's top leagues at this time. Due to the transformation from a simple ball game into a more industry-like business, it presumably became more important than before for the clubs that wanted to challenge for big titles to widen their scope in the search for top-class players. Because of the extensive commercial interests in the game of football, having certain famous world class players in one's squad potentially can boost revenues, through for instance sale of jerseys, or other commercial activities (Maidment, 2006). The best example of this is probably Real Madrid's purchase of former England captain David Beckham. Real Madrid used the Englishman's extreme popularity and fame to launch the club as a brand and conquer new market shares around the world in order to increase its own economic capacity (Moon, 2006; Talbot, 2006).

In this new environment an increased demand for players presumably arose. Top-flight clubs were obviously in need of top-class players, and begun scouting and monitoring the African football market in search of reinforcements. So did also smaller teams and independent scouts and agents, which altogether saw the potential for exporting talent to Europe for refining and added value. Given the situation in the early 1990s it was bound to develop into the direction of exploitation observable through Darby's (2000) view on the current system of world football.

The combination of these two main components, increased commercialisation and industry transformation and improvement of African players' status in Europe, tend to have created the increased flow of African players to the European continent. At the time when this phenomenon started to accelerate there was a substantial capacity

difference between the fragile political economy of African football and the economic strength of the European (Darby et al, 2007). In the wake these differences tend to have been extended in favour of Europe, leaving domestic African football behind.

2.9 Conclusion

This chapter contends that the political economy of sport is changing due to enhanced commercialisation and commoditisation through interests from international corporate players. This transition has affected the political economy of African football, which to a large extent is influenced by change in the system of global sport and migration, and transformed football into an economic commodity. This change is most notably affecting African football through a steady outflux of skilled players, who are attracted to the European game for several reasons.

Economic incentives play an important role, but it is important to also acknowledge the value and importance of historical, geographical, political, social and cultural factors. The migration process of professional footballers should hence be examined by taking a holistic approach, and not exaggerate the focus on economic factors.

Chapter 3: The Current State of South African Football

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to account for the football development in South Africa. The chapter also gives an overview of the current state of affairs, explains the political economy of football in South Africa, and the main factors that shape it. The components are placed in a general context, to show how this connects South African football into an international system. The chapter elaborates on the PSL's position and status on the African continent, and explains how professional football is organised in South Africa.

As explained in the previous chapter, domestic football on the African continent contains enormous contrasts in terms of organisation, level of professionalism, sponsorships, training facilities, venues and knowledge. Looking at the continent as a whole it seems possible to fit the various countries and their respective leagues into certain categories. The West African talent academies, as present in e.g. Cote d'Ivoire and Ghana, can be grouped into one specific category. As explained in section 2.5.1 elite-level football in these areas is geared towards talent academies and not conventional clubs and tournaments. The North African leagues, e.g. in Tunisia and Morocco, can be categorised in another group. These leagues have managed to provide certain incentives which enable the clubs to retain some of their best players, at least in the early years of their careers. This has led to a situation in which the clubs exist and function as fully professional clubs.

Because of this specific situation it seems reasonable to make a distinction between South Africa and the other African countries, both due to the PSL's special role on the African continent and its dynamics and relationships to the European leagues.

3.2 The History of South African football

The popularisation of football in South Africa must be placed in the broader context of British and Boer colonialism, commercial capitalism, and the spread of missionary

Christianity. During the period of industrialisation and urbanisation in the late 1800s the inherited institution of British football was transformed into the 'people's game' (Alegi, 2006). After the game was introduced in South Africa by British white working-class soldiers brought in to fight in the Anglo War of 1879, whites in Natal founded the first stable, formal football organisations. Examples are the Pietermaritzburg County Football Club in 1897 and the Natal Football Association in 1882. During this period football became popular among black men. In 1886 four Indian football clubs were established in Durban (Alegi, 2006).

Football continued to increase in popularity among blacks, and in 1916 the Durban and District Native Football Association, the first major urban African football organisation in the country, was established. As football continued to increase in popularity among black men, whites increasingly turned to rugby and cricket (Alegi, 2006). The black football dominance became extended in 1932, when Albert Luthuli (Africa's first Nobel laureate), was named national secretary and treasurer of the South African Football Association. Luthuli described the special value of football as a cultural force, and believed that it could assist in the process of building alliances among Natal's urban workers and rural migrants (Alegi, 2006).

One of the most important contributions made by Luthuli was the part he played in forming the Natal Inter-Race Soccer Board in 1946. This represented an initial move towards challenging apartheid in sport, and using sport as a force for racial integration, equality and human rights. This move was followed by increased resistance politics against the rise of apartheid in the wake of the Second World War. At this stage football had gained mass popularity and had a wide appeal amongst native Africans, a situation which brought the sport close to resistance politics (Alegi, 2006).

During the 1950s and 1960s African footballers in South Africa were faced with various obstacles, for instance access to training and match venues, posed by the hostile White authorities, who tried to impose strict control over the game. This resulted in Africans, coloureds, and Indians forming the South African Soccer Federation (SASF) in 1951 which opposed apartheid in sport (Alegi, 2006).

Apartheid generally affected the domestic South African football to a great extent, as the international society's reactions and sanctions against the apartheid regime were extended beyond normal commodities and exports like red wine and oranges. FIFA's reactions towards apartheid were to impose a ban lasting from 1961 to 1992, except for a one-year reprieve in 1963 (Alegi, 2006; Kunene, 2006). This ban left South Africa isolated from the global game as it expelled the country from the FIFA World Cup and African Nations Cup tournaments, and prohibited South Africa from playing friendly matches with FIFA members (Alegi, 2004).

The period prior to the ban was characterised by an escalation of the long standing internal struggle for legitimacy between the two rivalling football associations; the white-run SAFA and the SASF which represented coloured, African and Indian bodies. After years of rivalry SAFA/FASA⁹ won the struggle in 1952, when FIFA recognised the organisation as the sole footballing body of South Africa (Kunene, 2006).

3.3 The Emergence of Professional Football in South Africa

Between 1961, when FIFA imposed the ban, and 1977, South African football experienced two different developments according to race. Because SAFA and SASF were unable to and uninterested in cooperating, the two bodies continued to develop independently without engaging with each other. Attempts were made by FASA, in the late 1970s, to contest the government's policies which denied teams to face each other. Due to lack of support from the leading clubs from Soweto, the plans were later abandoned (Alegi, 2004; Kunene, 2006). During the 1980s the National Professional Soccer League (NPSL) emerged as the driving force of South African football, and gained a reputation as the most competitive and profitable league mostly due to income from gate receipts and sponsorships from e.g. South African Breweries.

Despite being omitted from the rest of the world, South African football underwent a process of commercialisation during the 1980s. The sponsorships increased

⁹ SAFA removed a colour-bar clause and changed its name to FASA in 1956 (Kunene, 2006)

substantially throughout the decade and the top players began to earn a living wage¹⁰. Strong corporate support and rising gate income underpinned the game's financial growth (Alegi, 2006). From the 1970s and throughout the 1980s growing black power in the game became more and more evident, and can be illustrated with reference to two particular occasions. The first occurred in 1971 by the creation of Kaizer Chiefs, which introduced the corporate model of American sport. The second was when Jomo Sono bought Highlands Park, a white football powerhouse, in 1983 and subsequently renamed it to Jomo Cosmos.

As the league moved steadily towards commercialisation and indicated signs of being profitable, the financial success motivated a breakaway and the formation of a new league; the National Soccer League. This was backed by emerging football bosses Kaizer Motaung, owner of the Kaizer Chiefs, and Irwin Khoza of Orlando Pirates who currently are key figures of the PSL (Alegi, 2004; Kunene, 2006). In the wake of the breakaway from the NPSL, the NSL and the new non-racial SAFA were able to merge under one umbrella and finally launch their new body in 1991 and were re-admitted into the international football society in 1992 (SAFA.net a, n.d. "Introduction to SAFA" accessed 22 February 2008).

3.4 The Organisation of Football in South Africa

Football in South Africa follows the example of Great Britain's format, set-up and administration. The administration of the game is divided into two branches. SAFA oversees the country's national teams and the amateur game, and keeps a custodial eye on the sport as the ruling, FIFA affiliated body of football in the country. SAFA is made up of 52 different regional affiliates which cut across the nine geo-political provinces of the country. According to SAFA itself its main objectives are to facilitate the development of football through sustainable infrastructural and training initiatives. It aims to create an image of being a stable, progressive and innovative institution, and is working to establish a mutually beneficial relationship with the corporate world. In addition, SAFA has an own goal of contributing to Africa's ascendance in world

¹⁰ This means a wage sufficient for a worker and family to subsist comfortably
Source: <http://wordnet.princeton.edu/perl/webwn?s=living%20wage>

football through the hosting of major events in Africa, and striving to become a leading football playing nation (SAFA.net b, n.d. "About SAFA" accessed 22 February 2008).

The other branch is the PSL which runs the professional game with a high degree of autonomy, commanding millions in television, marketing and sponsorship revenues (FIFA.com b, n.d. "The South African Football Association" accessed 22 February 2008). The PSL's main objectives are to promote, organise, control and administer professional football, and to facilitate the development of professional football in South Africa (PSL.com, n.d. "About the PSL" accessed 22 February 2008). The PSL provides one of the SAFA's vice-presidents, currently Irvin Khoza, and several members of its Executive Committee (FIFA.com b, n.d. "The South African Football Association" accessed 22 February 2008; SAFA.net c, n.d. "Executive Committee" accessed 22 February 2008).

Most clubs in South Africa are owned by rich entrepreneurs in a franchise system which enables the clubs to be sold, and possibly relocated, just like in American sport. It is not uncommon to see, most notably at the lower levels, clubs moving from one location to another and going through complete changes of identity (FIFA.com b, n.d. "The South African Football Association" accessed 22 February 2008). This happened, for instance, in 1999 when Ajax Amsterdam bought the franchises of both Seven Stars and Cape Town Spurs, and subsequently merged the two clubs and formed Ajax Cape Town.

While Ajax Cape Town may seem to be the result of Ajax Amsterdam wanting to spread its talent seeking network to the African continent on a permanent basis, most other big clubs are owned and/or controlled by individuals who seem to be seeking profit and wealth accumulation (Kunene, 2006). This can be illustrated by looking at some of the most prominent clubs, both currently and historically, which have navigated and propelled the development of domestic football in South Africa. This process has been carefully monitored and steered in a particular direction by a handful of individuals and their respective clubs. Most notably it is possible to identify Jomo Sono (Jomo Cosmos), Irwin Khoza (Orlando Pirates) and Kaizer Motaung (Kaizer Chiefs) as

the most powerful entrepreneurs that have helped creating and transforming¹¹ South African football into its current profitable state. These prominent figures have, from the beginning, had an own interest of aiding the national game’s development either indirectly or directly through positions in the board of the PSL and/or in SAFA’s Executive Committee¹².

Table 3.1: Football Organisation in South Africa **

SAFA	PSL
Amateur and National Teams	Professional Game
<p>Responsible for:</p> <p>Developing and Organising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SAFA Vodacom League (third tier) - SAB Regional League (fourth tier) - DANONE U12 League (youth) - SAFA Metropolitan LFA (U19 National League) - SAFA Women’s league - The Nedbank Cup <p>Teams</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Senior Men’s National Team - Senior Women’s National Team - Under 23 (men) - Under 20 (men) - Under 17 (men) - Under 12 (men) 	<p>Responsible for:</p> <p>Organising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Premier Soccer League - National First Division - PSL Reserves League - SAA Supa 8 - Telkom Knockout - Telkom Charity Cup - Baymed Cup <p>Negotiating</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TV and radio broadcasting rights - Sponsorship rights <p>Developing, Promoting and Protecting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clubs and tournament’s interests - The PSL as a saleable commodity - Professional football as a whole

** Source: Own design and analysis. Compiled with information from psl.co.za, SAFA.net and (FIFA.com b, n.d. “The South African Football Association” accessed: 22 February 2008).

3.5 South Africa’s Premier Soccer League and its Political Economy

After achieving unity in the early 1990s, and the establishment of the PSL in 1996, South African football rapidly turned into a multimillion Rand business due to commercial sponsorships (Alegi, 2004; Kunene, 2006). Football is considered by many

¹¹ Meaning from semi-professional to the current more professionalised state of the game

¹² Irwin Khoza is for instance currently both the chairman of the PSL and vice president of SAFA

to be the most valuable sport because of several factors, which makes the sport a subject for big business. The combination of a highly competitive team sport and free market business which seeks to maximise power and profitability, have according to Kunene (2006) been one of the most important factors for football's current pole position. After the PSL tournament was founded in 1996 the league has steered steadily towards increased commercialisation and corporatisation at the topmost levels, fuelled by sponsorships from big commercial actors like South African Breweries, South African Airlines, TV broadcasting companies and Vodacom. This 'new' commercialised environment to a large extent created a situation in which financial success accompanied success on the field. The PSL has from the beginning been dominated by a handful of clubs,¹³ which acquired a solid following and have established marketing concepts to create revenue. Following the logic of the free market, the PSL transformed into an increasingly unequal venue, dominated by a few clubs which claimed most of the trophies, most of the better players, and also most of the money. The leading clubs were tailed by the remaining clubs whose greatest fear was relegation to the far less lucrative National First Division, which would result in dramatically reduced income through TV rights, gate receipts and loss of sponsorships.

South African football seems to be dominated by the teams from the urban Gauteng province in which you find the most lucrative sponsorships and a substantial crowd with interest and passion for football (Kunene, 2006). The dominance of the teams from the Gauteng province can be illustrated by looking at past winners of the PSL Championship. To date only two teams not based in Gauteng, have managed to win a title. The remaining nine championships have been shared by Mamelodi Sundowns, Kaizer Chiefs and Orlando Pirates. Throughout the history of the PSL some of the most successful participating clubs have been controlled and run by powerful individuals, who all share the desire to accumulate wealth through football. The influence from individuals such as Irwin Khoza, Irwin Khoza and Jomo Sono contributed significantly to transforming the clubs from poorly run institutions belonging to poor communities into professional commercial enterprises. The trend was towards total commercialisation of the entire premiership and the participating clubs, and increased

¹³ From the founding of the PSL in 1996 until present only five clubs have clinched the Championship. Only Sundowns, Pirates and Chiefs have won more than one Championship.

attraction from interests outside football (Kunene, 2006). This has shaped the current PSL and given it a privileged place in the context of Southern African football.

The PSL currently enjoys the position as the most powerful and most attractive league in Southern Africa due to several factors. One of the most important success factors is that the league is being broadcast by satellite pay-TV. Selling broadcasting rights to pay-TV corporations, according to Poli (2006a) has been one of the most important reasons why the Western leagues have developed into the wealthiest and hence most attractive leagues in the world. The income created from the sale of TV rights gives the clubs within the tournament a solid economic foundation, and the South African league a huge advantage in comparison to neighbouring leagues in the Southern African region. Recently the PSL signed a new deal with SuperSport International for the next five years, worth over R1 billion. The new deal means that the PSL will increase its revenue by at least R130 million, when sponsorships, advertising boards and gate takings are added (Enslin-Payne, 2007). This will give the tournament a solid economic foundation, and generate additional income for the partaking clubs. The new deal means that the PSL will be broadcast to 48 African countries through the dedicated football channel SuperSport 3 (Enslin-Payne, 2007).

This exposure is an extremely important aspect of the new deal. The increased income generated by the deal is of course important for the clubs, but so is the broadcast to other countries. Such coverage may not only attract more lucrative sponsorship, it may also contribute to consolidating the PSL's current position and reputation as a possible stepping stone to Europe. The truth is that TV coverage is extremely important for foreign players, who seek to utilise the PSL as a springboard for migrating to a bigger league at a later stage in their careers.

3.6 The Current Situation

Recently compiled statistics shows that all PSL clubs make extensive use of foreign players. This list, compiled in March 2008, indicate that most nations within geographic proximity to South Africa have players featuring in PSL clubs. Examples are Malawi (10), Namibia (10), Swaziland (7), Zimbabwe (12) and Zambia (9). Despite some

‘exotic’ contributions, from e.g. Austria (1), Holland (1), Chile (1), Venezuela (1) and Iceland (1), the migrant players in the PSL tend to come from other African countries. Worth noting is also the fact that players from West Africa are represented, e.g. Ivory Coast (1), Ghana (5) and Senegal (2), but not to the same extent as players from countries within geographic proximity.

Table 3.2: Foreign Players in PSL Clubs ***

Club	Number of Foreign Players ¹⁴	Countries of Origin
Ajax Cape Town	5	Holland (1), DR Congo (1), Brazil (1), Cameroon (1), Malawi (1)
AmaZulu	5	Nigeria (1), DR Congo (2), Ghana (1), Zambia (1)
Bidvest Wits	6	Namibia (1), Mozambique (1), Zambia (1), Cameroon (1), Brazil (2)
Black Leopards	8	Namibia (2), DR Congo (1), Malawi (3), Swaziland (1), Cameroon (1)
Bloemfontain Celtics	6	Uganda (2), Cameroon (1), DR Congo (1), Malawi (1), Ghana (1)
Free State Stars	6	Zambia (2), Senegal (1), Zimbabwe (1), Nigeria (2)
Golden Arrows	4	DR Congo (2), Zambia (2)
Jomo Cosmos	10	Namibia (3), Mozambique (1), Burundi (1), Senegal (1), Swaziland (1), Liberia (1), Uganda (1), Botswana (1)
Kaizer Chiefs	7	Austria (1), Zimbabwe (2), Ghana (2), Uganda (1), Zambia (1)
Mamelodi Sundowns	6	Chile (1), Zimbabwe (2), Mozambique (1), DR Congo (1), Venezuela (1)
Moroka Swallows	9	Nigeria (1), Namibia (2), Malawi (2), Zimbabwe (2), Zambia (2)
Orlando Pirates	6	DR Congo (1), Congo (1), Lesotho (1), Malawi (1), Mozambique (1), Zimbabwe (1)
Platinum Stars	8	Zimbabwe (3), Ghana (1), Botswana (2), Swaziland (1), Namibia (1)
Santos	6	Zimbabwe (1), Kenya (1), Mauritius (1), Botswana (1), Namibia (1), Malawi (1)
SuperSport United	7	Uganda (1), Swaziland (3), Mozambique (2), Ethiopia (1)
Thanda Royal Zulu	6	Ivory Coast (1), Malawi (1), Burundi (1), Swaziland (1), Benin (1), Iceland (1)
Total	105	

*** Sources: Compiled with information from www.psl.co.za, the individual clubs' websites and Kick Off Yearbook 2007/2008

¹⁴ Note to Table 3.2: Some clubs might exceed the quota of five players. This might be due to the players not being registered yet, or are awaiting SA citizenship or permanent residence

3.7 The PSL's Role and Position on the African Continent

After examining the history and development of the PSL, some key propositions concerning the PSL's role and position on the African continent seem to emerge. First, there are numerous factors indicating that the PSL is operating as a regional, and to some extent continental, migration centre for footballers in sub-Saharan Africa. This seems to be caused by a general perception of the league as profitable, competitive, media exposed and professional. Second, the PSL seems to be able to protect itself against external exploitation, because of the professional administration's ability to enforce and regulate a robust legal framework. This, for instance represented by the enforcement and implementation of FIFA laws, seems to enable the PSL clubs to conduct business of a non-exploitative character with European clubs.

Third, the political economy currently surrounding the PSL seems to facilitate player migration within a regulated framework. This can be illustrated in terms of both the capital influx and media exposure from television corporations, which has influenced and shaped the PSL. In addition to television corporations, the local body administering elite-level football in South Africa also seems to play an important role in this regard. The PSL administration controls its local football market through its ability and power to regulate laws e.g. concerning player transfers or quota restrictions on foreign players. The administration also works to incorporate new, or change existing, FIFA rules to keep the legal framework updated. This is presumed to help shrink the distance between the PSL and the European leagues. Hence the league becomes more attractive to participate in and recruit from, because the players are believed to be acclimatised and adapted to the latest set of rules.

3.8 The PSL and the Sport-Industrial Complex

The flow of skilled talent from other African countries to the PSL can be explained by adapting Joseph Maguire's (2005a) theoretical framework. Instead of arguing that the current system of global sport is controlled by the West, because of its economic, technological, knowledge resources and political dominance, it is possible to argue that the system in sub-Saharan Africa is controlled by South Africa and the PSL. Compared to its neighbouring countries and football leagues the South African PSL seems to have

a competitive advantage in terms of economic power, technology and knowledge resources. In addition, South Africa enjoys an influential political position as the most developed and modern country on the African continent (Van Nieuwkerk, 2004).

Instead of arguing that this combination has given the West the control of global sport, one can adapt it to the case of the PSL, and instead state that a power relationship has been established between South Africa and the rest. According to Maguire (2005b), sport has been made scientific on elite level. Rather than claiming that Europe has consolidated its advantaged position, because the continent possesses the most sophisticated technology, one might claim that South Africa has an advantage because presumably, South Africa has managed to make sport scientific on elite-level, in contrast to the neighbouring competing states.

Maguire (2005b: 164) claims to have identified some of the ways in which the established elite functions in order to take advantage of the other states. For instance sporting success depends on the 'availability and identification of human resources'. While the problem for most domestic African leagues is that their most skilled talents choose to move abroad, the PSL seems to have countered this problem. The PSL is both able to attract foreign players and retain some of its own best players in its own league. Another factor, according to Maguire (2005b: 164), is the 'methods of coaching and training'. The PSL seems to have acquired a high level of competence and knowledge, which might contribute to motivating native players to stay with the league and foreigners to become attracted by it. This is considered an important pull factor for young players seeking to maximise their own potential.

Generally speaking, there seems to be a considerable gap between the PSL and other sub-Saharan leagues, in terms of the factors mentioned above. These contrasts contribute to making the PSL even more attractive as a possible venue for foreign players, due to the significant differences between the PSL and the competing leagues.

3.9 Conclusion

Chapter three explains the history of football in South Africa, and how it transformed into a professionalised sports industry after the breakaway from the NPSL and the later emergence of the PSL. The chapter also contends that the organisation of the league, according to the British model, has proven to be a decisive factor for the tournaments' success, and that it is surrounded and protected by a robust legal framework and professional administration. In the last part of the chapter some key propositions emerged, which are explored and substantiated in chapter four. One of the most important propositions is the contrast between how football is organised in South Africa and other African countries. Because of this contrast it is reasonable to make a distinction between the professionalised PSL and other African leagues.

Chapter 4: Dynamics and Implications of African Migration to the PSL

4.1 Introduction

In contrast to most other countries in sub-Saharan Africa the South African PSL seems to be built upon a solid political economy, and is surrounded by a robust organisational framework which provides stability and reliability. Given the relatively sharp contrast between South Africa and its PSL and the conditions within other African countries, the stability and prosperity currently found within the borders of South Africa presumably represent significant pull factors for migration.

This chapter is a qualitative data analysis which reports back on the primary data gathering, carried out through interviews with players, agents and a coach. It gives a detailed chronological account of how and by whom the players are recruited to the league, describes the most influential push and pull factors, and provides an understanding of the PSL's role and position on the African continent. The chapter also compares the results of the primary data gathering with the general migration dynamics of African migration to South Africa, in order to try to place football migrants in the wider context of migration.

4.2 Main Findings

After conducting the interviews it was possible to identify five major recurring themes:

1. Foreign players are recruited to the PSL by use of agents and/or scouts, who are able to get the players trials with clubs.
2. There is a very strong trend indicating that foreign players recruited to the PSL send remittances back home to their families and/or relatives on a regular basis.

3. The PSL generally seems to have a good reputation amongst foreign players, and is perceived as a league which facilitates individual development and progression.
4. The main pull factors attracting foreign players are the league's professional status, its stability/reliability, good infrastructure, adequate media coverage, and higher level of wealth compared to other African leagues.
5. The PSL is also perceived as a stepping stone for (young) players looking to further their careers abroad, preferably in one of the major European leagues.

4.3 The Process of Recruitment

4.3.1 Who? Mapping out the Most Important Actors

There are mainly two different types of actors, scouts and/or agents, involved in the initial process of recruitment which facilitates contact between the player and club. A scout is a person who commits professional talent evaluation to try to discover talented players. The process of scouting involves extensive travelling with the purpose of watching the athletes play, and to determine whether their skills and talent represent what is needed by the scout's employer. The scout reports back to his/her employer, who in turn initiates contact with the player and his representatives and the current club.

Given the unstable and less reliable conditions of many other sub-Saharan leagues, as outlined in the previous chapters, players are frequently scouted by video. The interviews revealed that there seems to be a niche in the African market for people seeking to expose players to potential buyers through agents and scouts. To avoid this problem, the matches are recorded, often with specific focus on one or two hot prospects, with a handheld video camera, and the recordings are subsequently distributed to a network of stakeholders for a set fee. This niche enables ambitious players who seek to migrate from the less developed leagues, to connect with the PSL, despite the lack of TV broadcasting and general media coverage of the matches.

According to FIFA, a player's agent is,

'A natural person who, for a fee, introduces players to clubs with a view to negotiating or renegotiating an employment contract or introduces two clubs to one another with a view to concluding a transfer agreement, in compliance with the provisions set forth in these regulations' (FIFA.com, 2008: 4).

While the scout's role is limited to talent evaluation, the agent serves as a middleman representing the player's interests when negotiating possible transfers and contracts. In contrast to the scout, agents are often approached by players seeking someone who can assist them in negotiating situations and help develop their careers. FIFA's current framework only entitles players and clubs to engage the services of a licensed player's agent in connection with a transfer or with a view to negotiating or renegotiating an employment contract (FIFA.com, 2008). Any natural person can apply for a player's agent licence although certain conditions apply. The applicant must, for example, have an impeccable reputation and not hold a position as an official, employee etc. at FIFA, a confederation, an association or a league (FIFA.com, 2008).

While it is possible to distinguish between agents and scouts and categorise them separately, it is important to keep in mind that the two might overlap. There is not always a clear distinction between the two roles. For instance an agent scouts players, if competent, and later in the process can function as an agent if he/she is a certified FIFA agent. Whether one person can function as both an agent and a scout depends not only on the person's technical competence to evaluate talent but also on his/her contact network both in terms of talented players and possible employers.

Players' agents have historically played an important role in the movement of football labour. According to Lanfranchi and Taylor (2001) they have taken many guises over the years, acting as e.g. representatives of clubs eager to recruit foreign talent; journalists or former players who act as middlemen in negotiations; and, increasingly in recent years, independent agents from outside the football world who represent a string of clients and often are transnational in their dealings. Due to this important involvement and contribution, players' agents can be said to have played a crucial role in the development of the international transfer market. Hence, agents are widely

regarded as a key factor in the acceleration of football migration in the 1990s (Lanfranchi and Taylor, 2001: 5).

4.3.2 How?

Before the recruitment process there needs to be an initial phase where the demand for a player is created. This can either be caused by the need to strengthen a particular position, e.g. centre forward, if the team struggles to score goals. Otherwise it can be just a general demand for any kind of highly skilled player, not associated with a particular position, in order to enforce the squad. This demand can be identified by a scout or an agent who approaches and offers a player, or a club can make a request through its network.

The interviews revealed a strong trend indicating that most players are recruited to the PSL by following a particular route. The first step is to establish contact with a scout or agent. Some players are spotted and are subsequently approached, while others choose to initiate contact with a scout or agent themselves to expose their talent. If the player is found to possess sufficient talent, the next step will normally be a trial with a club for a certain period of time. If this stage is completed successfully, the player might be offered a contract with the club after having undergone a medical examination. If not, the player might return to his old club or, if possible, go for another trial with a different club, perhaps on a lower level depending on the situation.

In the interviews many of the respondents indicated that the legal framework did not cause any problems for foreign players due to the capability of the PSL clubs, neither in the case of trial nor in the case of getting a visa to stay in South Africa on a more permanent basis. This makes it possible to make an important distinction between football migrants and most other migrants who do not get the same kind of assistance. Due to their extraordinary talent, football migrants are 'wanted', and hence do not face the same legal obstacles as most other migrants to South Africa

4.4 Remittances

The respondents indicated that foreign African players based in the PSL regularly send remittances to their families. Six out of eight players responded that they sent remittances back to their home country on a regular basis, most often monthly. In addition to the players, two other respondents – the players' agent and the coach – indicated that most foreign players based in the PSL send remittances.

As outlined in the literature review, sending remittances is a normal feature amongst regular migrants in South Africa. Wentzel et al. (2006) states that many cross border migrants did not intend to settle permanently in South Africa, and had many dependents in their country of origin, to whom they sent remittances and consumables. This makes it possible to identify one important feature held in common by both types of migrants.

4.5 Push and Pull Factors: What is so attractive about the PSL?

4.5.1 Push Factors

One of the most prominent push factors indicated by the respondents was the lack of football professionalism in their respective home countries. As previously outlined, state intervention is common in many other sub-Saharan countries in the governing and development process of professional football. This seems to be less beneficial for the most skilled players who seek to further their careers and enhance their level of play. In contrast the PSL is organised according to the British model with a clear distinction between national teams and amateur leagues organised by the national football association, and the PSL administration which is responsible for the professional part of the game.

This gives the PSL a clear competitive advantage in comparison to the other leagues in the region of sub-Saharan Africa. The current organisation of the PSL has provided the top two leagues, the PSL and the National First Division, with a reliable organisation and stability and has created a competitive league which, according to many of the respondents, has made the league quite similar, in terms of level of skill and organisation, to European football.

In addition to the sport-related factors such, socio-economic conditions play an important role. A substantial number of the countries in sub-Saharan Africa have experienced, or are still experiencing, armed conflicts, political instability, poverty, health issues etc. Examining the United Nation's Human Development Index (HDI) it becomes evident that many of the countries in Southern Africa, for instance Tanzania, Angola, Malawi, Zambia, DR Congo and Mozambique, are categorised as having 'Low Human Development'¹⁵. The HDI measures a country's average achievements in three basic aspects of human development: health, knowledge, and a decent standard of living (UNDP.org, n.d. "What is the human development index (HDI)?" accessed 21 March 2008). Being grouped in the lowest category, as having 'Low Human Development', indicates an overall state of poor standards of living, which in itself functions as a push factor for people looking to improve their own quality of life.

Many of the respondents gave responses indicating that the lack of media coverage, e.g. newspapers, radio, internet, and general interest in the local game was a decisive factor for migration. Media coverage, most important satellite TV, plays an important role in two ways. The respondents were very aware of the significance of featuring in TV broadcasted matches in order to further their personal careers, because this enabled scouts, coaches, agents and other stakeholders to monitor the progress of one or more players over a very far distance, making them possible transfer targets. In addition the respondents gave responses indicating that the sale of satellite TV broadcasting rights caused a substantial revenue increase for the clubs, and hence players, and that they would have remained untouched by these benefits by staying in their domestic leagues.

In general, the interviews indicated that the lack of media exposure and interest in the local leagues in sub-Saharan Africa have created a vicious circle for the domestic football. In the case of the PSL, satellite TV has actually helped increase the general interest in the game and channeled revenues directly to the clubs, making it possible for the participating teams to improve their squads and make the league more competitive. In the other sub-Saharan leagues, which currently remain uncovered by pay TV

¹⁵ Based on the 2007/2008 Human Development Index rating: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/>

companies, it seems to have had a deteriorating effect. When these leagues are left without extensive media coverage less money is channeled into the game, making it difficult to improve the standards of the game and attract interest from the local football fans. Instead, the local leagues have to compete with the PSL, the big European leagues and tournaments which all are broadcasted through satellite and extensively covered in the remaining media.

This perception is supported by Poli (2006b) who elaborates on the role of the media coverage around domestic football in Africa. According to Poli (2006b) the African media is playing an important role in popularising football. It is, however, only focusing on the successful career paths of a few players, like that of Didier Drogba. In many African countries media attention to a great extent focuses on the biggest profiles abroad, and not on the domestic leagues. This perception is being enforced by the presence and popularity of ‘video clubs’ in West Africa, where people pay a small fee to watch European football on satellite TV (Poli, 2006b). Hence the local fans are made consumers of the European game and not the local African game, channeling revenue and interests to Europe instead of benefiting local clubs.

4.5.1 Pull Factors

Analyzing the primary data, it was possible to identify several pull factors motivating players to migrate to South Africa to participate in the PSL. One of the strongest trends concerned the PSL’s good reputation among foreign players. In general the PSL seems to have a very good reputation among other African footballers, because it is perceived as a league which facilitates player development and progression. The majority of the respondents indicated that access to improved training facilities and staff with experience and knowledge was decisive. This can be seen in relation to the player’s own ambitions and aims of adding value to themselves through improvement of skills.

The good reputation is not only caused by the factors mentioned above. Other factors that were mentioned by the respondents were stability, professional organisation, support from the South African government, general infrastructure, profitability and media exposure which will be elaborated on below. As previously explained, football in

South Africa is organised according to the British model. This facilitates professional development of football as an industry geared towards revenue growth and profitability, which makes it an attractive venue for players. In addition to this, several respondents indicated that they perceived the South African government, most notably through the Department of Sport and Recreation, as having a genuine interest in facilitating increased sport development and strengthening of the PSL's position.

Since the PSL brand was redeveloped and relaunched in 2003, the tournament has increasingly attracted the interest of commercial players (Sindane, 2008). Some of the most recent concluded sponsorship agreements involve millions of Rands, creating a significant capital influx to the participating clubs. In late 2007, for instance, ABSA announced that they had concluded a five-year deal worth R500 million to name the premiership ABSA Premier League (Joseph, 2007). A few months later, in early 2008, the PSL concluded a five-year deal worth 1 billion rand with SuperSport, giving the company the rights to broadcast the matches live on TV (Malekutu, 2008). Such sponsorships make it both profitable to own a club and to play in the premiership. This contributes to stability, an important pull factor elaborated on above, and secures the players stable salaries and bonuses, for instance in the event of a cup victory.

TV and media coverage play an important role as a pull factor as well. The player interviews revealed that the general media coverage of football in South Africa, most importantly satellite TV, was one of the most influential pull factors. While satellite TV seems to have made the situation more difficult for the local game in many other sub-Saharan countries, it seems to have been the main driver behind the PSL's growth and development. In addition to the financial aspect which is functioning as a migration incentive, the satellite coverage of the PSL has, according to several of the respondents, contributed to reducing the distance between Europe and Africa. The extensive coverage of PSL matches by satellite not only means that PSL clubs can access new consumer markets and extend their market territories to increase revenues. It also means that the players featuring in the PSL have a better opportunity of showing off their skills and to be spotted by agents/scouts based in other countries. This may make it more attractive to buy players from the PSL, because foreign clubs can initiate the recruitment process in front of their TV screens in their home country, not being dependent on

sending scouts to watch players live before they are offered a trial. Hence the process of exporting players from the PSL becomes both more affordable and less complicated.

It is important to not overlook the other media channels which provide extensive coverage of the PSL. In addition to SuperSport's TV broadcasts, newspapers (e.g. Sowetan), magazines (e.g. Kick Off) and various internet sources provide information about the current state of the premiership. Together they offer complete and extensive coverage of elite football in South Africa, and help to create interest in the local game.

4.6 Sub-Themes

During the interviewing process numerous sub-themes emerged, in addition to the strongest main trends. Also note that it became difficult to extract any trends from section one of the player-interviews¹⁶, probably because the sample was too small. Hence no clear demographic trends are identified and explored further.

Some of the respondents indicated that they perceived the PSL as being as competitive as some of the minor European leagues, e.g. in Ukraine, Greece, Switzerland and Malta which are known to employ African players (Poli, 2006b). Two of the respondents arrived in the PSL after small stints in respectively the Cypriot First Division and a lower league in France. This differs from the main route most foreign players follow when they are recruited to the PSL. The respondents indicated that it was most common to be recruited directly to the PSL from their respective home countries by following the route elaborated on in section 4.3.

The players who were interviewed, gave a strong impression of being loyal both to their current clubs and to the PSL. While most of them had ambitions to move to a bigger league in Europe at a later stage in their careers, they seemed content with the current situation. The reason stated for this was most notably that they enjoyed a higher standard of living in South Africa than they had in their home countries; a stable and good income; and a higher degree of predictability of their daily life situation.

¹⁶ See Appendix 1

In this regard it should be mentioned that the relationship of trust with the respondents interviewed in Johannesburg played an important role. The contact with these players was facilitated through their agent, who also audited the interviews without interfering. These players in general gave the impression that they were satisfied with the current situation, although they would eventually leave the club at some stage in their careers. They appeared to be either in favour of another club in the PSL or a foreign club based abroad, preferably in Europe.

The contact with the players interviewed in the Cape Town area was facilitated by approaching the club beforehand, and then gaining access to the relevant players. This, apparently, did not create the same relationship of trust with the respondents, who only after probing revealed that they would move to another club, also within the PSL, if they were given the opportunity.

Emphasis should be put on the situation after the recruitment process, described in section 4.3. The settling-in process was revealed by a significant part of the respondent group, in particular by the coach and the agent. When the players are scouted or brought on a trial it is difficult to determine if the player will adapt to the new environment and be able to perform. According to the respondents the biggest challenges were the difference in style of play in the PSL; language and/or culture issues; and general homesickness. The respondents gave various examples and pointed out that apparently straightforward issues could be very difficult to cope with. One example is the widespread superstition and use of sorcery/witchcraft in the dressing room prior to the game. Foreigners need to familiarise themselves with this established tradition and participate immediately, if not, they risk being frozen out of the squad by team mates.

Cultural norms in general, e.g. style and standard of life, are pointed out by Lanfranchi and Taylor (2001) as crucial barriers for whether football migrants are able to settle or not. It is important to acknowledge, and not trivialise, the importance of factors such as food and social life when a player tries to adapt to a foreign lifestyle. Such factors can explain why many players choose to migrate to countries where such barriers are limited. Lanfranchi and Taylor (2001: 234) illustrate this by stating that ‘it is much

easier for an Algerian to play his football in Marseilles than any of the cities of Northern Europe'. Presumably it would be less difficult for an Algerian to settle in Marseilles, due to e.g. the city's substantial Algerian diaspora and the elimination of the potential language barrier. In addition to the potential issues players are facing off the pitch, emphasis should also be given to the crucial adaptation to the interpretation and style of game (Lanfranchi and Taylor, 2001). The process of 'interpretation' in this case refers to for instance methods of training, matchday customs and refereeing.

The process of recruitment seems to be complex and interwoven, with many foreseeable and unforeseeable factors playing a role. In addition to the conventional recruitment process, as explained in section 4.3.2, many of the respondents pointed out international matches¹⁷ as an important venue for recruiting foreign players to the PSL. When scouting such matches or tournaments, clubs looking to recruit new players can monitor a big group of talents who have already been 'sorted' through the selection process during the call-ups. This presumably makes these venues constantly monitored by scouts, agents and club representatives who seek to map out possible transfer prospects.

During the interviews a very low level of cooperation between clubs emerged as a sub-trend. In many European countries knowledge-sharing and loan-deals between clubs at different levels are a well known practice to foster development and progression. An example of this is the former-cooperation between the Italian giants Milan and the smaller team Monza, both of which are based in the province of Lombardy. The link between these two clubs has produced several world class players, e.g. Christian Abbiati and Alessandro Costacurta. The PSL, according to the respondents, does not cooperate and share knowledge. Rather, each club seems to be working in isolation to improve their methods of training.

Desktop research later revealed that very few initiatives have been taken to facilitate the development of younger talents in PSL clubs. One such initiative is the cooperation between Umbelebele/Jomo Cosmos, a club playing in the Swazi Premier League. Jomo Sono, owner of PSL club Jomo Cosmos, purchased the club in 2001 and subsequently

¹⁷ The process of scouting is not restricted to senior level. Scouting also takes place on e.g. U-20 and U-17 level

renamed it. Through exchanging both coaching staff and players the idea behind the project is to develop players good enough to play for Jomo Cosmos in the PSL (Kick Off, 2007; Nkosi, 2007).

The same investigation also revealed that regional initiatives have been established to aid the sport development in the region, through the inter-governmental organisation of SADC (Southern African Development Community). In 2002, SADC established its own Protocol on Culture, Information and Sport, with the objective to spell out the 'objectives and scope of, and the institutional mechanisms for cooperation and integration' (SADC.int, n.d. "Protocol on Culture, Information and Sport" accessed 11 April 2008). The establishment of this protocol was motivated by the organisation's positive perception of culture, information and sport as vital components in the process of integration and cooperation of the Member States constituting SADC (SADC.int, n.d. "Protocol on Culture, Information and Sport" accessed 11 April 2008). Despite the organisation's high ambitions this initiative currently does not seem to function, and does not make any important contribution to the development of sport, hence also football, in general. In a 2007 media-release SADC stated that the focus would be on 'coordination and promotion of the 2010 Soccer World Cup and implementation of the SADC Protocol on Culture, Information and Sport' (Were, 2007).

The identification of this absence of cooperation contrasts sharply with the situation in Europe, where clubs and the individual players benefit from initiatives promoting skill enhancement. In Norway, and also several other European countries, progress is nurtured through knowledge sharing between bigger clubs and smaller clubs within geographical proximity; player exchange; and regional talent teams. The latter are regional teams consisting of the best talents within a specific age group, picked by the individual clubs, who occasionally train together and play matches versus other regional teams. This ensures that the players get good training, supervision, and are nurtured into professionalism at a young age.

The interviews revealed that there is a lack of incentives promoting knowledge improvement among coaches and other staff members. This responsibility does not rest solely with the PSL clubs but also with the various sports education institutions in South

Africa. If the PSL is going to retain its competitive advantage in relation to its neighbouring leagues, more resources should be spent on relevant education and research.

Due to the sampling size of the respondents it was difficult to map out any characteristics common to football migrants in the PSL. Nonetheless it was possible to derive a few conclusions. The PSL clubs only attach players who can compete for a place in the starting line-up. Due to the PSL's quota restrictions on foreign players, only allowing five foreigners in the squad, the foreign players are recruited to feature in the first team. This is, according to the respondents, a common view among the clubs. The clubs do not recruit very young foreign players with a long term objective of developing them. It also became evident, during the interviews, that the PSL clubs rarely recruit players from West Africa. This seems to be caused by three factors: the long distance; the lack of TV coverage of the West African leagues; and the constant presence in the region of other foreign, predominantly European, clubs.

4.7 Football Migrants and Conventional Migrants

As argued by Adepoju (2006), the IOM (2005a) and Mafukidze (2006) the current context of migration in Southern Africa is extremely complex, and it is very difficult to identify clear trends or patterns. This notion seems to be applicable to both conventional migrants and football migrants, making it difficult to outline any characteristics applicable to all migrants.

Despite the complexity it is possible to identify some characteristics held in common by football migrants and conventional migrants. The clearest trend is the sending of remittances to family or other relatives in their country of origin. In the region of Southern Africa, South Africa's dominant economic position and relative political stability, amongst other factors, seem to constitute an important pull factor for both types of migrants.

The biggest difference between football migrants and conventional migrants seems to be present during the bureaucratic process of migration. While normal migrants rarely

get any help in gaining the necessary permits, football migrants get assistance from potential employers during the process of migrating into the country. This is due to the extraordinary talent the players possess, which makes them valuable and hence more attractive.

4.8 The Premier Soccer League: A Springboard to Europe?

When taking the respondents' answers and the push and pull factors elaborated on above into account, it is possible to describe the PSL as a stepping stone for players wanting to pursue a career in a bigger, predominantly European, league. The PSL currently seems to function as a regional, to some extent continental, migration centre attracting players. This is due to several factors. The league enjoys a good reputation; it is competitive; more developed in terms of infrastructure and technical capabilities; it is professional, well organised and stable. All these factors make up a very lucrative package for young African players wanting to migrate.

The PSL's current position and status on the African continent is currently causing a big influx of foreign players to the league. While this may be positive for the PSL, which is enriched by more talented players who enhance the level of play, it could also be deteriorative for the other domestic leagues on the continent from which the PSL currently recruits. Elite footballers, particularly from countries such as Malawi, Zimbabwe, Namibia and Zambia, seem to be concentrated in the PSL, leaving their own domestic leagues behind. Hence the PSL can be seen as a force enriching itself on the cost of the poorer and lesser developed leagues in sub-Saharan Africa.

4.9 Does the PSL Fit in Darby's Theoretical Frame?

As opposed to most other sub-Saharan countries, the South African PSL, aided by big commercial actors and determined influential individuals, has created a unique tournament on the continent. This has created a difference between Darby's framework because of the PSL's abilities to retain many of the best South African players, to attract foreign talents, and the way in which the tournament and participating clubs protect their own product. As explained earlier, the top-level football, and the surrounding

industry if any, in sub-Saharan Africa seem to be geared towards talent export and profit extraction¹⁸ to a greater extent. This is most evident and visible in West Africa where few structures are designed to reconstitute some economic profit in order to develop domestic football. This seems to correlate with Darby's framework because there are numerous factors indicating a system of value extraction, exploitation and hierarchical dependency. The latter factor, for instance, is clearly illustrated through the stable flow of skilled African talents to Europe.

When looking at the PSL in detail it seems difficult to apply Darby's framework to the South African case. While top-level football in many other African countries is built up mainly to facilitate talent export, the PSL has created its own football economy able to attract foreign players. The commoditised and commercialised PSL is built up on a solid economic foundation which makes the league profitable, and hence attractive for the participants, e.g. players, clubs and their owners and agents/scouts. In addition the league is stable, professionally administered and well organised. The administrative capacity is also able to enforce and implement existing FIFA rules and new policies which make it difficult, and hence far less attractive, for stakeholders wanting to extract resources.

In addition to the factors outlined above the PSL also seems to be attracting players and interests due to several other reasons. Most important are live pay TV broadcasting of matches, vast media exposure through channels such as magazines, radio, internet and newspapers, and a general interest from the public. Added to this are superior facilities, most notably match venues and training grounds, compared to neighbouring countries, and a relatively high level of knowledge.

The PSL appears to be operating as a regional, or continental to some extent, migration centre for footballers in sub-Saharan Africa. The tournament seems to attract foreign players for mainly the same reasons that motivate players to move with the ball to Europe. Compared to the surrounding countries and their respective tournaments in the region the PSL stands out as a very attractive and lucrative venue. While the PSL offers

¹⁸ In the meaning out of the country to enrich agents, scouts and/or foreign clubs

numerous alluring features, as mentioned above, most neighbouring and competing leagues are of a totally different standard. These leagues, in for instance Mozambique, Botswana or Zimbabwe, lack professionalism, most notably within the administration, infrastructure and sponsorships. The leagues in most of the countries in Southern Africa are organised and run by the national football associations and are not branched into different bodies like in the UK or in South Africa. This way of organising top-football can be said to hamper its development, and does not facilitate increased commercialisation and commoditisation of the game.

While most other sub-Saharan leagues are geared towards an overarching aim of exporting their most talented players, the PSL seems to be able both to attract foreign talent and to retain their own to a great extent. Currently the most talented South African players are based in European clubs, for instance Steven Pienaar (Everton, England), Benni McCarthy (Blackburn, England), Aaron Mokoena (Blackburn, England) and Sibusiso Zuma (Arminia Bielefeld). When looking at recent call-ups to the national team it is possible to map out that the very best South African players are based in some of the best leagues in Europe, while the remaining substantial part of the international squad is based in domestic PSL clubs.

In addition to being able to retain a great portion of their own best players, the PSL seems to attract foreign talents for two main reasons. The first is that the PSL itself is a competitive league where the players can make profit and reside in South Africa which currently has a better standard of living than its neighbouring countries¹⁹. The second is that the PSL attracts players who seek to use the league as a stepping stone for further migration to Europe. Many players consider the PSL to be a fine venue to expose themselves to foreign clubs and agents, due to the league's stability, reliability and the extensive satellite TV coverage of the premiership. One possible example is the Zambian forward Christopher Katongo who played for Jomo Cosmos from 2004-2007 and became top scorer in the PSL before he was signed by the Danish side Brøndby²⁰. Another player who followed the same route is the Zimbabwean striker Benjani

¹⁹ Based on the 2007/2008 Human Development Index rating: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/>

²⁰ Information obtained from: <http://www.brondby.com/player.asp?sid=163&id=33>

Mwaruwari who also played for Jomo Cosmos between 1999 and 2001, before he went on to join the Swiss club Grasshoppers²¹.

The PSL seems to have managed to break out the vicious circle Lanfranchi and Taylor (2001: 167) call the 'enduring problem for African football'. As outlined in the literature review, Lanfranchi and Taylor describe this problem as the organisational weakness and the fragility of the professional sporting economy on the African continent. This has precluded any alternative to emigration for the best performers who want to further their personal careers and make a living from playing football (Lanfranchi and Taylor, 2001).

The PSL is built on a solid organisation and a robust legal framework protecting the various stakeholders, e.g. clubs and players, involved in the domestic football in South Africa. The tournament is organised and developed by a professional administration, and the participating clubs are currently able to offer their players good stable wages, adequate training and match venues, professional coaching methods amongst other factors. In addition, the tournament and broad media coverage attract great interest, and the tournament and players are exposed to consumers far beyond the borders of South Africa.

Hence the South African PSL seems to be in a special position in sub-Saharan Africa. The league is able to attract foreign players with the same incentives that motivate foreign players to migrate to the European leagues.

4.10 Conclusion

Chapter four provides an analysis and understanding of the material gathered from the interviews. The main arguments presented in the chapter provide substantiation, and hence consolidate the perception of the PSL a stable and reliable league, which is surrounded by a robust organisational framework. Because of this situation it is possible

²¹ Information obtained from: http://www.mtnfootball.com/live/content.php?Item_ID=7261

to argue that there is a sharp difference between the conditions in the PSL and other domestic leagues in sub-Saharan Africa.

The main findings presented in this chapter are that foreign players are recruited to the PSL by use of scouts and/or agents, and that most migrant players follow a specific path when they are recruited. Second, a strong trend indicates that foreign players based in the PSL send remittances back home to family/relatives in their country of origin. Third, the PSL seems to have a generally good reputation among foreign players, who perceive the league to facilitate individual development and progression. Fourth, the main pull factors attracting foreign players are the PSL's status, level of professionalism, stability/reliability, infrastructure, media coverage. The PSL furthermore exhibits a higher level of wealth compared to other African leagues. Last, the PSL is perceived as a stepping stone for players seeking to further their personal careers abroad.

The chapter also attempts to place football migrants into the wider context of migration to South Africa. A major outcome of this attempt is the difficulty of outlining any characteristics applicable to all migrants. This is due to the very complex nature and context of migration in Southern Africa in general, which makes it nearly impossible to identify any clear trends or patterns.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter summarises the main findings of the study, revisits the initial research questions, and provides a conclusion on the nature and implications of African football migration to South Africa. In section 1.2 I posed the following main research questions, targeted at revealing key issues outlined in the problem statement in section 1.1:

1. What dynamics characterize international football migration?
2. What kinds of incentives exist in South Africa for players from other parts of Africa?
3. What are the impacts of such players in the South African domestic league?
4. What initiatives exist in order to promote football cooperation in South Africa, and what effects do they have on migration?
5. How do football migration patterns correlate or contrast with general migration patterns to South Africa, and why?

5.2 Revisiting the Research Questions

As outlined in the literature review, and elaborated on in chapter four, the dynamics influencing football migrants are of a very complex nature. Because the process of football migration is very complex and consists of many interwoven factors, it is necessary to use a wide scope when examining the phenomenon in order to grasp a holistic aggregate understanding. This view is supported by studies carried out by e.g. Maguire and Pearton (2000), Lanfranchi and Taylor (2001), Taylor (2007) Cornelissen and Solberg (2007) and Poli (2006b).

5.2.1 Economic Incentives

Despite the issues elaborated on above, it is possible to extract some important notions which can be applied to characterise football migration in general. The first, and

perhaps most important, is the point made by Maguire and Pearton (2000) that football labour flows with economically more powerful leagues. The more economically privileged leagues are, due to their economic supremacy, able to attract players who commensurate to their abilities to pay transfer fees and salaries. If verifying this suggestion and combining it with Poli's (2006a) claim – stating that the biggest European leagues offer the highest wages and give the players the possibility of playing in the most competitive leagues – it is possible to identify an important contour and component of why there is a steady transfer stream from Africa to Europe, and also from other African countries to South Africa. This contour is heavily supported by the primary data gathering of this study, which identified economic incentives and the competitiveness of the PSL as two major incentives attracting foreign players to the PSL.

As explained in chapter four, economic incentives play an important role in the context of football migration in Southern Africa. This incentive seems to be applicable to the first of Lanfranchi and Taylor's (2001: 4) 'three main situations, involving both push and pull factors, which favour the economic migration of professional footballers'. In this situation, economic crisis and financial weakness operate as catalysts for the departure of players. Comparing it to the situation in a foreign country, it is possible to argue that the situation can function both as a push and pull factor motivating players to migrate. As argued for in chapter four, this seems to be applicable to the region of Southern Africa, and presumably also the rest of sub-Saharan Africa. Players are attracted by the economic power exhibited by the South African football economy, and subsequently seek to migrate to the PSL because of its status and economic capacity.

Investigating the particular economic state of football clubs and domestic tournaments in sub-Saharan Africa, it appears that football in many countries holds an amateur or semi-professional state, without professional administration or stakeholders trying to facilitate commercialisation, professionalisation and commoditisation (Darby et al, 2007; Lanfranchi and Taylor 2001).

Many scholars doing research on football migration stress the importance of not overemphasizing the focus on economic incentives (Lanfranchi and Taylor, 2001;

Maguire and Pearton, 2000; Poli, 2006b; Taylor, 2007). Economics undeniably is one of the most important factors, but elite talent migration cannot be explained solely with reference to economic analysis because sport talent migration is influenced by a complex and shifting set of interdependencies (Maguire and Pearton, 2000).

5.2.2 Economical, Political, Historical, Geographical, Social and Cultural Factors

While most scholars acknowledge the importance of economic incentives as a very important component for explaining football migration, it is a common manifestation that political, historical, geographical, social and cultural factors should be taken into account. Due to the complexity and extent of these components, different scholars tend to focus on different elements. Both Lanfranchi and Taylor (2001) and Taylor (2007) argue that historical factors have played important roles in the evolution of the international transfer market.

Poli (2006b) describes processes of football migration by using particular case studies, examining historical, geographical and cultural approaches. By combining these approaches he is able to explain African football migration to Europe not only in terms of the dominating pull factor: economic dynamics. The broader approach enables him to investigate that the increasing number of African footballers in Europe can be explained by looking at pull factors such as the search for 'new markets' and the establishment of transfer networks for instance. Push factors are lack of structure in African football, the new and increasing status of football and increased attractiveness due to satellite-TV coverage (Poli, 2006b).

Also Maguire and Pearton (2000) are convinced that sport labour migration, hence also football migration, should be explained with reference to political, historical, geographical, social and cultural factors. According to Maguire and Pearton (2000), an examination of wider social factors is more appropriate than focusing on the sports industry when researching elite talent migration.

5.2.3 What dynamics characterise football migration?

Football migration has long historical roots, and its dynamics are influenced by many interconnected factors. The most important one seems to be economic incentives, due to a strong trend indicating that football labour flows with economically more powerful leagues. This dynamic was identified by Maguire and Pearton's (2000) study, and is heavily supported by the findings in this study's primary data gathering.

Another main dynamic characterising football migration is the individual players' strive to further their personal careers. Hence major factors influencing migration dynamics can be the competitiveness of one league compared to another; the level of professionalism; the state of training and match venues; general knowledge about coaching methods; and the general interest around a league or a tournament. The latter one can also be illustrated in terms of media interest and exposure, for instance TV and newspaper coverage, and not only the general public interest and statistical attendance rates.

In addition, numerous other factors should be taken into account. In this study the supply and demand for labour; socio-economic and political factors; historical ties; geography; and social and cultural factors have all been identified as important elements shaping the dynamics of football migration. It seems difficult to ascribe more importance to a few of these factors, because they all tend to play important roles in the complex process of cross-border football migration.

5.2.4 Incentives attracting African football players to South Africa

Statistics show that the PSL currently is a very popular league for foreign African players. The reasons are many. Again it would be suitable to refer to Lanfranchi and Taylor (2001) who state that the situation of economic crisis and financial weakness has been an important catalyst for motivating players to migrate. When taking the current status of most sub-Saharan leagues into account, it becomes evident that the prosperous PSL is an attractive destination. In addition in many of these leagues football is

currently operating on a amateur or semi-professional level. This makes it crucial for footballers who want to earn a living from playing football to migrate.

In general the incentives attracting African footballers to South Africa can be divided into two categories: one category with incentives concerning football, and one category with more general incentives.

Table 5.1: Incentives attracting African footballers to the PSL

Football Incentives	General Incentives
Economics, in terms of a stable, good income	Prospects of a higher standard of living
Professionalism	Socio-economic stability
Reputation	Political stability
Stability and organisation of the league	
Methods/knowledge about training	
Training facilities and match venues	
Media interest, most notably TV coverage	
Presence of foreign agents of scouts	
Competitiveness	

Together the incentives make up a very lucrative and attractive package for young African players seeking to migrate to further their careers. This has given the PSL a status which can compete with the smaller leagues in Europe for talents, and a good reputation and popularity amongst foreign fans and players. The aggregated product of all the factors mentioned in table 5.1 has made the PSL able to break out of the ‘enduring problem for African football’, and to conduct business on more equal terms than other domestic African leagues. Because of its ability to protect itself the PSL does not function as a ‘donor’ of skilled talent, like most other sub-Saharan African domestic leagues. Accordingly, more money remains in South Africa to benefit further development of the PSL. It is possible to argue that the PSL has not only been able to break out of the vicious circle as previously elaborated on. It has also been able to create a virtuous circle which works to enforce and consolidate its status and position.

The organisation of African and European domestic football stands in a very sharp contrast. In sub-Saharan Africa only South Africa seems to have a league structure and administration that may resemble the European ones. All developed European countries have at least one professional league on top, with several divisions of semi-pro and amateur leagues organised below in a pyramid-structure. In summary, there seems to be a lack of professional structure for football throughout the entire African continent, which literally facilitates talent extraction due to the absence of an international, regulatory framework protecting against exploitation.

The PSL has, in contrast to most other leagues, managed to break out of the established system, and create a unique, professionalised, commoditised tournament that attracts vast numbers of supporters and extensive corporate interest.

5.2.5 Impacts of foreign players in the South African domestic league

Due to the quotas on foreign players, only the best foreign players are recruited into the tournament. When the PSL clubs recruit foreign players, they look for players who can enforce the starting line-up, not prospects to develop on long term. As explained previously, particularly in chapter four, there are many factors influencing whether or not a player can adapt to the new environment and perform when recruited to a foreign league. With many uncertainties associated with the recruitment of foreign players, the clubs do not want to take any unnecessary risks and subsequently aim to recruit players they are confident in.

This situation facilitates an enrichment and general increase of skill in the tournament. This, in turn, may enhance the popularity of the PSL in other countries, because the tournament features some of the best footballers from a particular foreign country. Due to the extensive media coverage, foremost live satellite TV broadcasting of the matches, the PSL can reach football fans far away and open up and create new consumer markets. This effect can be exemplified by looking at two foreign stars in the PSL Diphetogo 'Dipsy' Selolwane (recently transferred to Ajax Cape Town) from Botswana or David Obua (Kaizer Chiefs) from Uganda. Presumably their regular participation in the PSL

has made South African football, particularly their respective clubs, popular among football fans in their home countries and created new fan bases.

This effect is documented by Poli (2006b) who explains that African footballers in Europe become national icons and heroes in their home countries, through the media coverage given to them. Examples are the Ivorian star Didier Drogba (currently playing for Chelsea in England) and Cameroon's Samuel Eto'o (currently playing for Barcelona in Spain).

In addition to enhancing the PSL's popularity in foreign countries and establishing new consumer markets, foreign players make the club's and the tournament's sponsorship more interesting and attractive. Media exposure of sponsorship logos to vast numbers of people in foreign countries is indeed attractive to corporations, e.g. the current league sponsor ABSA seeking to expand its business abroad. Last but not least it is important to acknowledge that the combination of foreign players and TV can lead to increased revenue for the clubs. It would be reasonable to assume that new consumer markets open up for sale of official merchandise, for instance, to increase the clubs' total revenues.

As elaborated on in chapter four, players from different cultures exhibit different styles of play. Most people interested in football would for instance verify the common notion of Brazilians being perceived as 'artists' due to their entertaining playful style of play. Another example is the perception of British players as being tough, fair and persistent in their style of play. Foreign players may enrich the PSL, and make the tournament more interesting.

5.2.6 Initiatives promoting football cooperation and their effects on migration

Except for a few initiatives, major efforts to promote football cooperation do not exist in South Africa. Research revealed that Jomo Cosmos has established links with Umbelebele, a club based in the Swazi Premier League, with the intent of producing players who can strengthen the PSL club's squad in the long run. The lack of cooperation and knowledge sharing between clubs was revealed as being absent during

the interviewing of the respondents, and this trend was enforced by subsequent desktop research on the matter.

This investigation also revealed that the regional organisation of SADC has created a protocol with the objective to support sport development in the region of Southern Africa. While the organisation warmly stated its faith in sport as a vital component in the process of integration and cooperation within the region, this initiative is showing clear signs of being defunct and can not be considered to be working to facilitate football cooperation.

In other parts of the world, most notably in Europe, initiatives are established to aid the progress of young talents and nurture them into professionalism at a very young age to create future elite-players. After identifying this absence my concluding remark is that the PSL should spent more resources on relevant education of coaching staff and general sport research, in order to retain its competitive advantage in relation to its neighbouring leagues. It is important to emphasize the need to also establish and implement initiatives that promote cooperation between different stakeholders in order to facilitate the best possible development of players.

Currently initiatives promoting football cooperation are either non-existing, or defunct. Hence they assumingly have no effect on player migration. My argument is that if the PSL can change this situation and establish working initiatives with the objective to develop the players' skills, it would create a new powerful incentive that would attract foreign players to the tournament.

5.2.7 Correlations and contrasts between player migration and general migration

As elaborated on in the literature review, section 1.3, the context of migration in Southern Africa is extremely complex, and it is hence very difficult to identify trends or clear patterns. Because of the complex and interwoven nature of the issue, it is nearly impossible to ascribe the reasons for cross-border migration to South Africa to one specific factor. This section will very briefly revisit the general migration patterns to

South Africa, provide an understanding on how football migration patterns correlate or contrast with general migration patterns to South Africa and explain why.

The body of literature used in this study suggests that one of the major factors causing migration to South Africa is economic prospects and search for secure employment. Migrants commonly perceive South Africa as the most attractive destination in Southern Africa, due to the country's economic buoyancy. The literature also suggests that a main objective for migrants is to enhance their own standard of living, and that they aid their relatives in their respective home countries by sending remittances. The following table will illustrate how general migration patterns to South Africa correlate and contrast with football migrant patterns.

Table 5.2: Comparison between migration patterns

Correlate	Contrast
Attracted by economic prospects	Football migrants receive assistance in the migration process
Search for secure employment	Football migrants are regarded as a useful resource
In pursuit of enhancing own standard of living	Football migrants are attracted by very specific incentives connected to football
Sending of remittances	Demand for a special type of labour
	The amateur or semi-professional state of football in other sub-Saharan countries

The most important ways in which the two groups correlate is the economic prospects. Both general migration patterns and football migration patterns suggest that a major incentive drawing migrants to South Africa is the general economic prospects, which are perceived to be better than in their home countries. The second correlating factor is the search for secure employment, which is caused by high unemployment rates in many sub-Saharan countries. This is closely related to the last correlating factor, which

is the pursuit to enhance own standard of living. A pursuit to enhance the standard of living will often improve the conditions for relatives in the home country, in the form of remittances sent.

One of the most significant contrasts between general migration and football migration is associated with the bureaucratic process of migration. While most migrants are perceived in a negative fashion, football migrants are regarded as an important resource because they possess certain skills. This enables them to receive vital help in the process of obtaining the necessary permits and visas to reside in South Africa on a long term basis. This situation is also influenced and strengthened by the demand for the specific kind of football labour in South Africa.

While the general migrants are attracted by a general perception of South Africa as a better place to live, football migrants are attracted by very specific incentives associated with football. These incentives are elaborated on and explained in section 5.2.4, and are for instance the level of professionalism exhibited by the PSL, the tournaments reputation and competitiveness. In addition it is important to identify that the amateur or semi-professional state of football in many 'donor' countries to the PSL, is causing an incentive which contrasts from the more general patterns of migration. This should be seen in relation to the more general point concerning 'specific incentives connected to football', but is at the same time perceived to be of such importance that it is mentioned explicitly.

5.3 Theoretical implications and deficiencies

As elaborated on in section 1.5.2 there are certain deficiencies associated with Darby's framework which makes it unable to explain several of the PSL's most features. One of the most notable deficiencies is the reliance on dependency theory, and the subsequent problems which emerge when the analyst moves beyond historically observable consequences of the dependency relationship within individual satellites or dependencies. This makes Darby's perspective unable to explain for instance how change occurred within the individual 'satellite', in this case the domestic South African football. The problem is that this is not dependency theory's unit of analysis, and hence

it is problematic for the perspective to explain the shift towards commercialisation and commoditisation which created the current situation of the PSL. This is crucial because this shift is the main reason why the PSL has managed to break out of the ‘enduring problem for African football’.

When examining the theory it is important not to overemphasize the focus on deficiencies, because Darby’s use of dependency theory is useful and not only problematic. One of its major strengths is its power to illustrate and contextualise the relationships and dynamics between most African countries and what Darby call the ‘core’. These dynamics inevitably have features of an exploitative character. As Darby points out, this is very visible in the constant flow of skilled talent from the African continent to Europe, and subsequently becomes added value to through a process of refining. Looking at the previous historical relationships between South African and European football, it is also possible to apply this theoretical perspective to explain the dynamics between the two before the important shift took place.

Darby’s use of World-System theory is, as previously explained, also problematic, because of the theoretical perspective’s extremely structural approach and very rigid nature. According to World-Systems theory, specific events within the system can be explained as a demand in the system as a whole. The actors within the system are not acting for the immediate concrete interest, but because the system dictates their behaviour. According to Darby there are certain factors indicating the emergence of a World-System within football, for instance represented by the excessive political networks and connections across the globe through FIFA and its subordinate confederations. In my understanding this is a valuable and useful observation put into a suitable and helpful theoretical context. Despite this, I believe that Darby relies too much on the systemic approach, which leads to a failure to address certain extremely important features of modern football and the movement of players. The movement of players is naturally influenced by the supply and demand, as all other kinds of labour movement. But it is not solely dictated by the system, because individual motivations and other sociological factors play a crucial role in motivating migration. Hence it is, in my understanding, difficult to rely heavily on World-System theory when trying to

explain the movement of professional footballers because of its failure to address non-structural factors.

5.4 Prospects for further research

I have two main propositions for further research after conducting this study. The first is to advocate for more research on migration, both football migration and conventional migration, in Southern Africa, due to its complex and interwoven nature. Hence this study should be understood as a substantiation of the proposals, made by the body of literature used in this thesis, to conduct more research on migration in general. In this regard I would like to advocate for more studies on internal talent migration in Africa. This study has revealed factors indicating that this field of study has been overlooked, and that previous studies have been limited to examining the relations between Europe and Africa and the situation of African talents abroad. Hence a need to further examine the dynamics and implications of African talent migration on the African continent might be identified.

The other prospect for further research is the need for a new theoretical perspective within which future studies can conduct research. My claim is that Darby's perspective fails to take sociological factors into account. This does not make the framework useless, because certain aspects of it provide a very useful theoretical account for dynamics between various actors. I would suggest a merging of a revised, more adaptable version, of Darby's theoretical frame with Maguire's Sport Industrial Complex. This framework should be divided into two layers, with Darby's frame providing a general explanation of how the structural system works, while Maguire's frame would offer an understanding of the underlying sociological factors causing talent migration. Migration is, as illustrated by this thesis, and argued for by the body of literature, an extremely complex phenomenon. It cannot be explained solely without focusing on individual sociological factors. Hence a broader theoretical frame should be developed in order to provide more accurate understanding of talent migration.

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Appendix 1: Player Questionnaire

Section 1: Demographics	
1.1	Age: _____
1.2	Club: _____
1.3	Nationality: _____
1.4	Education: _____
1.5	Period living in S.A.: _____
1.6	Civil status: <input type="checkbox"/> Single <input type="checkbox"/> Engaged <input type="checkbox"/> Married <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> Does not want to answer
1.7	Have you got children? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Section 2: Recruitment and Remittances	
2.1	How were you recruited to the club? _____
2.2	What were the main obstacles when migrating to South Africa? _____
2.3	What route did you follow to get to South Africa? _____
2.4	Do you regularly send remittances back to your family/relatives in your home country? (Explain what the term remittances mean) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Does not want to answer
2.4.1	If yes, please specify how often _____

Appendix 1: Player Questionnaire

Section 3: Push and Pull factors and Ambitions

3.1 What are the main reasons why you opted to come to South Africa to play soccer?

Probes,
Push factors, socio-economic or political conditions in home country?
Pull factors, why more lucrative to play soccer in SA, what does SA got that home country does not?

3.2 What do you think about your own opportunities to advance as a professional footballer in South Africa?

3.3 Do you consider the South African Premier Soccer League to be a good stepping stone for players who wants to show of their skills for European clubs?

3.4 What are your career ambitions?
 Stay in the South African Premier Soccer League
 Move to a club abroad, and if so please specify in which country below

Appendix 2: Coach Questionnaire

What do you consider to be the main incentives attracting foreign players to the PSL?

Which initiatives do you consider to be the most important promoting football cooperation within the Southern African region?

What impacts do foreign players have on the South African PSL?

Which sources and methods does the club use to recruit players from other African countries?

Does your PSL club aim at developing players, both South Africans and other Africans, for export to bigger clubs abroad?

Describe the most typical characteristics of a foreign player who is transferred to your club?

In which ways does your club cooperate with other smaller clubs? (Probes: Farmer clubs, loan agreements, knowledge sharing)

Appendix 3: Agent Questionnaire

Topics:

- Describe a typical player transfer from a foreign club to a South African PSL club?
 - o How do you work to recruit players to the South African PSL clubs?
 - o What are the main obstacles for getting a player into South Africa to play football, seen from an agent-point-of-view?
- What are the main motives for players moving to South Africa to play football, according to your personal impressions?
- Is it lucrative to “import” African players to South Africa? If so, please state the main reasons?
- What reasons have made the South African PSL an attractive scene for players from other African countries?
- Describe the most typical characteristics of a foreign player for whom you facilitate transfer to a PSL club?

Appendix 4: CEO Questionnaire

Topics:

- Hvilke incentiver tror du motiverer afrikanske spillere til å flytte til Sør-Afrika for å spille fotball?
- Hvorfor tror du PSL er en så attraktiv arena for andre afrikanske fotballspillere?
- Hvordan har PSL skaffet seg den særegne posisjonen turneringen innehar i dag, i forhold til seriene i nabolandene?
- Hvordan kan PSL konsolidere sin posisjon på det afrikanske kontinentet?
- Har du noen formening om hvordan klubbene jobber for å rekruttere utenlandske spillere?
- Hvilke initiativ eksisterer for å fremme fotbollsamarbeid i regionen?
- Hvilke følger får det for serien at PSL tiltrekker seg andre Afrikanske fotballspillere?

Appendix 5: Interviewee Invitational Letter



May 2007

To whom it may concern:

Research on soccer migration

Mr Eirik Solberg is currently conducting research on the nature of African soccer migration. He would like to conduct an interview with you on this aspect. I am supervising his research and will provide guidance to him in the finalisation of his dissertation. I would be grateful if you would take the time to conduct the interview. Interview material are analysed and use'd for research purposes only, and all material are treated confidentially. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require further detail.

Yours sincerely
Dr Scarlett Cornelissen
Senior lecturer: International Relations