

A Work Project, presented as part of the requirements for the Award of a Master's degree in  
Management from the Nova School of Business and Economics.

**PORTUGUESE FOOTBALL TALENT EXPORTS:  
SINO-PORTUGUESE FOOTBALL RELATIONSHIP**

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**16-December-2021**

## Abstract

For decades, Portuguese football exports to China have been expressed in 3 modes, namely introduction of Portuguese football managers, “Bring in” strategy and “Go out” strategy. The study examines the changes to Chinese football brought by aforementioned 3 modes and their existing problems, in order to explore future challenges and opportunities in Sino-Portuguese football relationship. Mixed methods approach was applied, involving interviews with Portuguese football professional, web scraped data analysis, and 159 questionnaires gathered. The results confirmed Portugal's great football export potential to China, suggesting that sustained communication and cooperation would undoubtedly benefit both nations' football competitiveness and football economies.

**Key words:** Sport Management, Football Export, China, Portugal

This work used infrastructure and resources funded by Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia (UID/ECO/00124/2013, UID/ECO/00124/2019 and Social Sciences DataLab, Project 22209), POR Lisboa (LISBOA-01-0145-FEDER-007722 and Social Sciences DataLab, Project 22209) and POR Norte (Social Sciences DataLab, Project 22209).

## 1. Introduction

In the recent years, China has become a non-neglectable football power in Asia. However, in comparison with European first-class teams, there still is a big gap. In order to enhance its international status in the football world, the country has introduced excellent foreign football talents and promoted sophisticated football concept as the initial steps. For the introduction of players, the first choice for Chinese clubs is usually South American countries, but for the selection of football managers, they are more inclined to Europe.

As we all know, Portugal is not only the birthplace of the world's top players, but also of the world's best football managers. As of June 2020, there were a total of 25 football managers coaching overseas, ranking 6th in the world (Poli, Ravenel & Besson 2020). Numerous championship titles and outstanding results have demonstrated Portuguese managers' success; therefore, they have naturally entered China's field of vision.

While Portugal football exports to China, China also sends a large number of talents to Portugal to study football. The number of Chinese players officially registered with the Portuguese Football Federation has surpassed 200 in 2019. At this point, Portugal appears to have become the most popular destination for Chinese players looking to study abroad.

The object of cooperation in this research is Portugal Football Observatory, the examination of literature related to Portuguese football export and football youth academy will be applied, followed by interviews with Portuguese football professionals and collection of online questionnaire surveys as well as analysis of transfer market data to investigate opportunities and challenges of the 2 countries' football development.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Research on introduction of Portuguese football managers

Chinese football began to reform professionally in the 1990s. According to (Sun & Wang 2010), “The training methodology of “Bring in, go out” is used in all countries. Sticking to this policy is a necessary way to study advanced football fundamentals.” “Introducing foreign coaches will not only improve football tactical performance and team management methods, but also, to some extent, educate players’ football thinking and awareness” (Ma 2015). A total of 127 foreign coaches have been hired to coach in China Men’s Football Professional League till 2020, including 9 Portuguese.

Several reasons explain why Portuguese football managers are so well-liked around the world. First and foremost, collectivist culture is the primary cultural element of Portuguese society and Portuguese football managers are heavily impacted by it. Secondly, Portuguese love complexity, contradiction, circular reasoning, and considering all the different positions and possibilities. Thirdly, Portuguese football managers apply experiential learning. Lastly, they have pragmatic thinking (Sobral 2020). The above-mentioned characteristics are exactly what Chinese football requires to develop.

However, it seems that Portuguese football managers’ coaching philosophy, which is strongly aligned with the status of Chinese football, should result in a win-win situation, yet the effectiveness is not satisfactory. A total of 9 Portuguese coaches, including famous managers like André Villas-Boas, Paulo Bento and Paulo Sousa, except for Vítor Pereira, who led Shanghai port to break the 8-year monopoly of Guangzhou Evergrande in the Super League, others have not coached for the same team for more than a year. Furthermore, they all have

negative opinions of their coaching experience in China. “Chinese players are accustomed to following commands and struggle to make decisions based on their own understanding and reasoning, it’s impossible to transmit tactical philosophy” (Sousa 2020). It’s undeniable that objective factors such as “player fitness, cultural diversity, and the Chinese football management structure” (Ren 2012) are constraining their coaching performance. At the same time, subjective factors such as “Portuguese football managers trouble integrating into the Chinese football milieu, lacking comprehension of Chinese football and difficulties working with the team” (Ren 2012) also exist.

## 2.2 Research on the problems of Chinese football youth academy and Portugal’s role on “Bring in” strategy

In the recent years, Chinese football youth academy is separated into two paths: “Bring in” and “Go out”. Introducing international high-level coach teams to guide youth training is referred to as “Bring in”. With assistance of international football pros and the investigation of many scholars, many issues in all parts of Chinese football youth academy were discovered.

To begin with, many Chinese teams do not have a youth training system, which loses the meaning of professional football. The paradox is that while many teams do not have youth training, teams’ management has high expectations for performance. It is apparent that judging the team’s development philosophy by performance will not improve the standard of young football training in China (Zhang 2006).

Another difficulty of a single echelon in the building of youth training in Chinese professional clubs is that the number of young athletes is minimal, resulting in the club’s failure to keep up with the youth and talents (Wang 2003). Simultaneously, the level of training science is poor;

experience and feeling have become the primary means of training, with the lack of comprehensive and systematic training (Li & Zhang 2012).

Furthermore, the inadequacy of Chinese youth players' own circumstances like low level of education contributes to China's youth training's backwardness. At the same time, Chinese youth football academies place a greater emphasis on professional football tactics while ignoring the growth of football cultural understanding (Liu & Zhao 2007). Students' little awareness of professional football training and low interest in football are also the reasons why youth training has come to a halt (Wang 2015).

Judging from the current scholars' research on China's football youth training, many problems in the system have been discovered. In truth, the aforesaid issues have been improved thanks to the "Bring in" plan. Portuguese have played a critical role in putting this approach into action. According to incomplete statistics, more than 150 Portuguese are now instructing youth training in China. They not only helped to build a positive environment for youth football in the community, but also helped more people recognize the value of youth football training. This is precisely the type of youth football academy that China necessitates.

### 2.3 Research on "Go out" strategy and Portugal's role

The strategy of "Go out" refers to send talented young football players from China to world-leading football power with comprehensive youth training system to learn.

Portugal is the most popular destination. According to statistics, the number of Chinese footballers registered with the FPF has already surpassed 200. The reason is simple. On the one hand, there are no restrictions on non-European quotas in the Portuguese league. In this circumstance, numerous Chinese businesspeople have begun to invest in Portuguese clubs,

(LunengQingxun 2018). For players, Portugal might serve as a springboard for potential transfers to better leagues. As for investors, sending their own players to the club where they invest will also generate financial benefits. On the other hand, Portuguese clubs have advanced football ideals as well as a systematic and rigorous youth training system, and their training bases' construction and facilities are among the best in Europe, with Portuguese football star effect, a large number of Chinese players has naturally drawn (Sohu 2020).

The Chinese Football Association's "500.com Star Project" is one of the most essential initiatives. In 2012, 24 players born in the 1990s throughout the whole country were selected to study in Portugal. Their performance, however, did not meet the expectations.

According to FIFA regulations, young players under the age of 18 are unable to apply for international transfers. Secondly, the players' fundamental skills are lacking, and it is difficult for them to adjust to the overseas team's rhythm, resulting in poor training quality and the inability to attain the desired outcomes. Players' lack of adaptability to life and self-discipline are also one of the issues. Players are frequently in contact with Chinese partners, preventing them from fully assimilating into Portuguese football culture. After returning home, most players can't even speak Portuguese, let alone understand the essence of Portuguese football, therefore the success rate is low (Zhou 2014) (LunengQingxun 2018).

We can see from the literature about Chinese players studying in Portugal that, despite the increased number of Chinese players studying overseas, the success rate has remained low.

According to existing academic research, it has only revealed the reasons for the low quality of Chinese players studying in Portugal, but no scientific improvement ways to address these issues has suggested. Based on this, such research questions are proposed:

RQ1: What are the characteristics of the Sino-Portuguese relationship in football?

RQ2: How might this relationship be improved?

### 3. Methodology

The combined application of the 3 above mentioned modes has a certain degree of positive effect on the development of Chinese football youth training, club's management system and development of the players' individual abilities. However, a slew of issues has arisen as a result of the existence of both objective and subjective factors.

This field lab will be divided into different research directions, using mixed methods from various dimensions to analyze Portugal's excellent football exports. This workstream principally follows a sequential exploratory mixed method research design with inductive and deductive approaches, using qualitative and quantitative methods to analyze the factors that contribute to the unsatisfactory effectiveness of football cooperation between China and Portugal, and provide scientific and constructive solutions.

The first technique involves conducting interviews with Portuguese football practitioners to assess the effectiveness of Sino-Portuguese football collaboration from the standpoint of professionals. This is a qualitative data collection method, and the target profile is Portuguese football professionals working in China, who play a decisive role in the Chinese youth academy system construction. In order to get information from the respondent, these questions are direct and targeted.

The second study approach is quantitative, which involves using web scraped data from transfer market to quantify movements and identify patterns in exchanges between China and Portugal as well as creating an online Qualtrics survey to gather statistically significant data. The survey

is targeted to Chinese individuals who are into football or have a basic understanding of football (defined by the first question of the survey). The purpose is to investigate Chinese society's perceptions of Portugal's football exports to China, as well as views on the appropriateness of the 3 Sino-Portuguese football cooperation modes. The questionnaire is distributed using social media (mostly WeChat), anonymous link and via snowball sampling, with respondents being asked to share it with individuals who match the target profile.

## 4. Analysis & Discussion

### 4.1 Qualitative Research

In order to grasp the genuine state of the football youth training guiding work carried out by Portuguese football experts in China and the challenges discovered, I started with an exploratory interview with a representative participant in the Sino-Portuguese football relationship, who is a Portuguese UEFA football coach serving as the head coach of Meizhou Sports School as well as youth director and head coach of Jiaying Xinjiang FC.

Throughout three and a half years of coaching, he discovered that there are several issues in the Chinese youth training system that have resulted in unsatisfactory quality and efficiency.

First and foremost, this coach stated that the Chinese football management team is focused on rapid success and profit, and only cares about the game's short-term wins and losses, rather than the game's long-term sustainable development. If a 5- or 6-year-old youngster fails the first trial, they will be excluded from consideration as a young football player. He explained, "You can't expect a 5- or 6-year-old kid to win the game since their minds are still immature at that age.

The most essential thing for young beginners is to foster their interest in the game and allow them to experience the joy of playing. Their physical functions and football talents will

gradually emerge when they are 12 or 13 years old, which is the right time to emphasize the competitive nature of football and the value of victory.”

In contrast to Portuguese youth training, China utilizes an antiquated youth training methodology, according to the interviewee. Take Chinese coaches’ player development: they frequently ask players to repeat only one training exercise for an extended period of time, which is typically tedious and meaningless. Players are unsure of what they can achieve with this training. Furthermore, there is a lack of continuity in the introduction of foreign coaches into China. Continuity refers to the amount of time a player is coached by a suited coach when is at the golden age of studying football. Many foreign coaches were replaced with Chinese coaches after only a short amount of time because Chinese football management only considers short-term benefits. This has disrupted the training rhythm the players had just adapted to, and has harmed their professional progress.

The expert’s strongest impression after three and a half years of coaching in China is that so called "relationship culture" dominates Chinese football to a great extent, which is one of the biggest obstacles to football’s development. Many young players lack clear qualifications and skills, but because of their families’ strong social connections, they can join teams that are not matched to their abilities, while others who are truly talented do not receive the instruction they deserve. The same applies to coaches: many Chinese coaches do not have professional football expertise nor strong training experience, but they rely on relationships to get the job of coach, who then do nothing in the coaching position while earning a decent pay, resulting in the stagnation of Chinese youth training. In Portugal, on the contrary, the relationship is only one of the many factors impacting the football industry. The dominant and decisive selection

criterion is talent and ability, from coaches to management. This explains why, despite its dimension, Portugal has exceptional productive capacity for world-class footballers. Therefore, it can be argued that adjusting the weight of football-related relationship is a necessary condition for the proper growth of Chinese youth training.

Moving to the expert's opinion on whether sending Chinese players to Portugal for training is advantageous, he answered emphatically that yes. "And the younger the better," he said. "One of the reasons for China's ineffective execution of this strategy is that kids are not properly trained at the appropriate age. If players are over 16 when going overseas, their physical development is nearing maturity, and are easily distracted by other things. This, combined with the long-term influence of Chinese football culture, makes it difficult to absorb the new football culture and meet expectations." Therefore, the two most significant factors for selecting players are self-discipline and age. Secondly, while selecting a training location, it is important to choose a club with a good reputation, prestige, and a well-developed young training system.

When analyzing whether the Portuguese genre coaches represented by the interviewee is effective in guiding youth training in China, the answer is positive. Meizhou youth football has developed dramatically under his direction in just 3 years, consistently ranked among the top in domestic youth football events at all levels.

We may deduce from the participant's comments that Portuguese coaches exported to China brought Portuguese football philosophy, accurately diagnosed the problems in Chinese youth football training and provided appropriate improvement plans. As a result of this, Chinese football has progressed in the fight. The rate of progress, on the other hand, can be expedited by deepening China-Portugal collaboration. In addition to sending players to Portugal, it was

also recommended sending coaches to get mature team management experience as well as advanced game skills and tactics. The purpose of China seeking assistance from Portugal is to improve its own capacity to coach excellent players. Introduction of foreign coaches is only to learn from their experience, Chinese football can only progress if it develops its own distinctive and comprehensive training methodology.

## 4.2. Quantitative Research

### 4.2.1 Data collection through analyzing transfer market statistics

By analyzing all U20 talent transfers from 2000 to 2021, we discovered that in 21 years, Portuguese players have made a total of 247 transfers, of which 115 were exports, accounting for 46.6% of all transfers. Compared with Spanish players, although there were 124 exporting transfers, a total of 340 transfers occurred, the proportion of international transfers is only 36.5%. These statistics confirm Portugal's football export potential once again.

However, it is important mentioning that from 2000 and 2021, U20 players exchanges between China and Portugal in the transfer market was 0. Several Portuguese players went to China near the conclusion of their careers because of the large earnings, but their presence did not assist in the team's competitive level. In truth, many good players in their 20s can only play in low-level competitions due to the fierce competition in Portugal. The Chinese Super League has had sufficient capital in recent years, and its overall quality is comparable to these competitions. As a result, the introduction of these players will not only improve the competitiveness of Chinese Super League clubs, but also provide larger financial income to these Portuguese players.

### 4.2.2 Data collection through online survey

Another data collection method applied is through online survey, whose goal is to determine

the level of comprehension of the Portuguese football brand among Chinese socioeconomic groups, as well as their perspectives on the growth of Chinese football. A total of 159 responses were received for this survey, with 84.3% indicating that they do follow football news at least once a week. Given that the target audience for this survey is for any Chinese respondents who are into football or have a basic understanding of football, the other 15.7% are outside the scope of this study, leaving the remaining 134 replies as valid responses.

Males accounted for 66.4% of the 134 samples, which is expected since football is more popular among men. Football's popularity among youth and higher education groups is on the rise, the average age of the sample is 26 and 94% have a bachelor's degree or above. Furthermore, 41% indicated they don't play football at all, which is in line with the small number of people playing football in China as a whole.

Within the scope of the study, 78.4% stated that they follow European football, which is compatible with expectations since Europe is the world's football capital, home to more than half of the top 30 national teams in the world. It's worth noting, though, that 52.2% indicated they don't follow the Portuguese league, which is understandable, because it lacks the same level of renown and football stars as the top 5 European leagues. This, as we saw collectively, is also connected with exporting so much talent before they make a big impact in the Portuguese league.

Although the Portuguese league receives relatively little attention in China, this does not rule out the possibility of Portuguese football having an impact there. According to the data gathered, 95.5% are aware of a certain number of Portuguese football professionals and clubs, given that most people do not follow the Portuguese league, this figure is fabulous. When asked their

opinion about the level of competition in the international arena for Portuguese football, 63.4% of respondents said that Portugal is world first class. Furthermore, 50.7% of participants said their favorite football player is a Portuguese player. It is therefore demonstrated that Portuguese football is recognized in China.

Moving to questions regarding Portuguese football exports to China, respondents were asked to rate the potential of eight nations to export football based on their knowledge. Brazil was chosen as the #1 spot the most times (Mean=3.83, SD=2.82). Portugal came in second (Mean=3.66, SD=2.23), exceeding expectations considering that no Portuguese U20 player has been introduced to China since the 21st century. Furthermore, respondents were asked to rate the performance of Portuguese football managers who had coached in Chinese professional leagues on a scale from 0 to 10 (poor to excellent). Most of them gave 3–7 (Mean=5.72, SD=2.11). Despite the conservative views of Chinese social groups on Portuguese football managers, when asked “Would you choose to bring Portuguese football professionals to China (including players, managers, coach squad...)?” 124 positive answers were given, accounting for 92.5 % of respondents. With these figures to back it up, it’s safe to conclude that Chinese society’s overall attitude towards Portuguese football exports to China is favorable and enthusiastic.

In addition, the respondents were questioned about their thoughts on Sino-Portuguese cooperation in the development of Chinese youth training. The majorities believe that “Go out” (Mean=1.60, SD=0.69) and “Bring in” (Mean=1.69, SD=0.71) strategies are either definitely or perhaps advantageous to the growth of Chinese football youth training. When further asked “If you were a football player, which of the options among “Stay in China and receive Chinese

coaches' training", "Stay in China and receive foreign coaches' training" and "Go overseas, receive foreign coaches' training and experience local football culture" would you choose?" The third choice was chosen by 84.3%, which corresponds to the interviewed expert's opinion that Chinese football needs to reach out. Simultaneously, the location of going out is one of the factors that determines the quality of training. Respondents were asked to rank where they would want to train in if they were players, 16.4% chose Portugal (Mean=3.71, SD=2.04), which is in 3<sup>rd</sup> place after Spain and Germany. This result is fair, given that Spanish and German football have a higher impact in China than Portuguese football, as well as have equally sophisticated youth training system.

In sum, with regard to RQ1, Sino-Portuguese football relationship is regarded as favorable and sustainable. However, collaboration between the two nations has not gotten the best result due to limitations of China's own backward football concept, chaotic management, and lack of a decent football environment. As for RQ2, in order to strengthen this relationship even further, it will be required to adjust the present approaches and develop novel cooperation modes in response to the issues discovered.

## 5. Conclusion & Recommendation

**Academic implications:** It is clear that after entering the 21st century, the implementation of the 3 modes helped identify deficiencies in Chinese football and realize daring improvements, resulting in trained teams achieving certain progress and success. Chinese society acknowledges the Portuguese football brand and its export potential, believes that continuing to introduce Portuguese football philosophy and strengthening collaboration with the FPF would undoubtedly benefit Chinese football growth. Furthermore, both Chinese society and

Portuguese football professionals agree that Chinese backward and imperfect youth training system, as well as the lack of a good football environment and culture, are the most significant barriers to Chinese football's development. The most effective method is to send more football practitioners to countries like Portugal to experience local football culture and increase the influence of Portuguese football brands in China to help improve the domestic football environment. These findings are totally compatible with the opinions of Sun Jianqiang and Wang Fei (2020), which is, currently for Chinese football to improve, it is vital to seek assistance from high-level football regions, and Portugal is a cost-effective option.

**Managerial implications:** The findings suggest that CFA and FPF should continue to deepen their football relationship. In order to improve the effectiveness, there are 3 main areas that require adjustment and initiative. First and foremost, further improving youth training. China should send coaches to Portugal to study in addition to sending young players there. FPF might invite expert and experienced professionals to conduct necessary training on a regular basis for Chinese coaches. This would not only assist China in developing its own distinctive young training system, but also help promote Portuguese football methodology farther. Expansion of Portuguese football brand in Marketing is the second aspect. FPF has partnered with several Chinese platforms, including opening an official account on Weibo, Chinese mainstream social media platform, and becoming an official partner with Firefox Sports, China's most popular sports and entertainment platform. However, to further increase the influence of the Portuguese football brand, FPF can take inspiration from the EPL model to collaborate with more platforms and media to broadcast the Portuguese league matches and distribute Portuguese football news. The third point to consider is football economy. The overall output value of the Chinese football

industry is expected to surpass 2 trillion CNY by 2025 (Sohu 2020). The FPF might take use of this chance to work with Portuguese clubs represented by Benfica, Sporting, and Porto to establish football schools in China. This would not only provide more talented Chinese players with opportunity to play in Portugal, but also allow Portuguese clubs to stay up to date on Chinese football policy making, bringing them a competitive advantage.

**Limitations:** The main limitation in this study is that the sample size for the qualitative research is insufficient. To begin with, most of the Chinese players who were trained in Portugal have returned to their country owing to the Covid-19 pandemic. Secondly, some Chinese players approached by the author declined to be interviewed for personal reasons. As a result, the study only used the interview from angle of Portuguese football professional, lacking the perspective from people who receive assistance.

**Further research:** Whether players stay in China to be trained by a Portuguese coach or go to Portugal, they are main participants in the Sino-Portuguese football relationship. It's essential to conduct a study to learn what they really think about the "Go out" and "Bring in" strategies. In addition, in response to that no Portuguese U20 player has been introduced by the Chinese Super League since the 21st century, we might gather additional data and understand the Portuguese footballing's attitude of bringing young Portuguese players from lower-level competitions to China in order to assess its feasibility.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Interview questions to the Portuguese UEFA coach working in China

#### **Project Description**

Portugal only has only 10 million population, but its football export is considered one of the best in the world, there are quite a few football talents being exporting to La Liga, Premier League, including players and football managers. China, as a backward area in football, needs to resort to developed football power, such as Portugal. According to what I've found, there are 3 main approaches that China and Portugal carried out football communication and cooperation in football in the recent years, that is, introducing Portuguese football managers to the Chinese super league; "Bring in" strategy, which refers to bring Portuguese high-level coach teams to guide youth training, and "Go out" strategy, referring to send Chinese talented young football players to Portugal clubs to receive youth training. This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of these 3 ways and explore whether there are more novel and effective cooperative projects that China and Portugal can carry out to improve the athletic competitiveness and obtain economic benefits for both 2 countries.

1. May I ask your specific position in your work? In a football club or a football school? And the location? Is it a government cooperative project?
2. How many years have you been coaching in this institution?
3. What's the make-up of the club/school that you are working in? How many students and staffs in the institution? How is the infrastructure of the base?
4. What is your training mode? How many daily hours did you spend on training and how about the training intensity? Can you comment the training effectiveness?
5. According to your resume, you were instructing youth training in Crystal Palace, England, as we all know, the level of football in China is relatively backward compared to England. What is the motive and factor that prompted you to come to China to coach youth training? And how do you comment this experience?
6. During your coaching, do you find any problems that exist in Chinese youth academy? Such as players themselves, management issue? And anything good?
7. How do you think we can mitigate these problems?
8. Which positive aspects of Portuguese youth academy system we can learn from?
9. How do you think "Go out" strategy?
10. In comparison with bringing foreign coaching teams to China, which way do you think it's more beneficial for Chinese youth academy development and why?
11. Some Chinese players who went to Portugal didn't meet expectations that they should have due to some objective and subjective reasons like language barrier, long distance from home and negative training attitude. Do you have any suggestions to improve their training quality?

12. According to statistic, since the beginning of this century, Portuguese football players are hardly transferred to Chinese league, do you think we can introduce them?
13. In addition to “Bring in”, “Go out” and “Introducing Portuguese football managers”, what other aspects do you think Chinese football can benefit from Portugal?

## Appendix2: Online Survey

Q1 Do you follow football news at least once a week?

- Yes
- No

*Skip To: End of Survey If Do you follow football news at least once a week? = No*

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Q2 Do you follow European football at all?

- Yes
  - No
- 

Q3 Do you follow the Portuguese league?

- Yes
  - No
- 

Q4 Do you like to play football yourself?

- I don't play
  - Once or more times a week
  - Once or more times a month
  - Once or more times a year
-

Q5 How old are you?

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Q6 What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Neither
- Rather not to say

Q7 What is your highest qualification?

- Primary school
- High school
- Undergraduate degree
- Master
- Doctorate

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Q8 How much do you know about football in Portugal?

- A lot, including its history, league and staff
  - A moderate amount, knowing a certain number of football professionals
  - A little, only knowing some football stars
  - Not at all
- 

Q9 How many Portuguese football professionals are you aware of (Including players, coaches and other staff)?

- More than 30
  - Between 20 and 30
  - Between 10 and 20
  - Between 5 and 10
  - Less than 5
- 

Q10 What do you think of Portugal's standing in the world of football?

- World first class
  - World second class
  - World third class
-

Q11 Please indicate the nationality of your favorite football player (if there is).

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Q12 Which country do you think has the most prominent football export to China? (Football export includes introduction of players and football managers, introduction of coach team to guide youth academy) Please rank the order.

- \_\_\_1\_\_\_ Portugal
- \_\_\_2\_\_\_ Spain
- \_\_\_3\_\_\_ Germany
- \_\_\_4\_\_\_ England
- \_\_\_5\_\_\_ Italy
- \_\_\_6\_\_\_ France
- \_\_\_7\_\_\_ Argentina
- \_\_\_8\_\_\_ Brazil

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Q13 China and the Portuguese Football Association have collaborated on a number of projects in the recent years. Do you think the following measures are beneficial to the development of Chinese football?

	Definitely yes	Probably yes	Probably not	Definitely not
Introducing Portuguese football managers to coach in the Chinese Super League	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
"Bring in" strategy, introducing portuguese football professionals to guide youth academy in football clubs or sport school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
"Go out" strategy, sending Chinese young talented football players to Portugal to train with comprehensive youth training system	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q14 What do you believe the biggest explanation for Chinese football's lack of international competitiveness is? (Allow multiple answers)

- Players' own insufficient physical condition
- Failed policymaking and bad management
- Lack of positive football environment
- Negative attitude of football practitioners
- Backward youth training system
- Football professionals' lack of understanding of tactics
- Others \_\_\_\_\_

Q15 According to your knowledge, do you think the coaching experience of Portuguese football managers in China is successful? Namely, Paulo Sousa, Vítor Pereira, Paulo Bento, André Villas-Boas...Please rate from 0 to 10 (poor to excellent).

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10



Q16 If you work in football industry, would you choose to bring Portuguese football professionals to China (Including players, managers, coach squad...)?

- Yes
  - Maybe
  - No
- 

Q17 If you were a football player, which way do you prefer to receive youth training?

- Stay in China, receive Chinese coaches' training
  - Stay in China, receive foreign coaches' training
  - Go abroad, receive foreign coaches' training and experience local football culture
  - Others \_\_\_\_\_
- 

Q18 If you were going to a foreign country to learn football, please rank the following countries according to your preference.

- \_\_\_1\_\_\_ Portugal
  - \_\_\_2\_\_\_ Spain
  - \_\_\_3\_\_\_ Germany
  - \_\_\_4\_\_\_ Italy
  - \_\_\_5\_\_\_ France
  - \_\_\_6\_\_\_ England
  - \_\_\_7\_\_\_ Argentina
  - \_\_\_8\_\_\_ Brazil
  - \_\_\_9\_\_\_ Other countries
-

Q19 What else do you think China could benefit from Portuguese football expertise?? (Optional)

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End of Block: Default Question Block

# EXPORTING FOOTBALL TALENTS: THE CASE OF PORTUGAL

Nova SBE Master Thesis | 17.12.2021 – Professor Elizabete Cardoso

**NOVA**

NOVA SCHOOL OF  
BUSINESS & ECONOMICS



# MEET OUR TEAM



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## 1. Exporting Football Talent – Lessons from the English Premier League Model

What can we understand from the English model, and where does Portugal stand when compared, plus exploring possibilities that Portugal can adopt or embrace for the future

## 2. Exporting Analysis

Analyzing and identifying patterns in global youth talent transfers while determining possible feeding countries of young professional exports with possible movement streams

## 3. Portuguese Football Talent Exports: The Brazil-to-Portugal Exchange

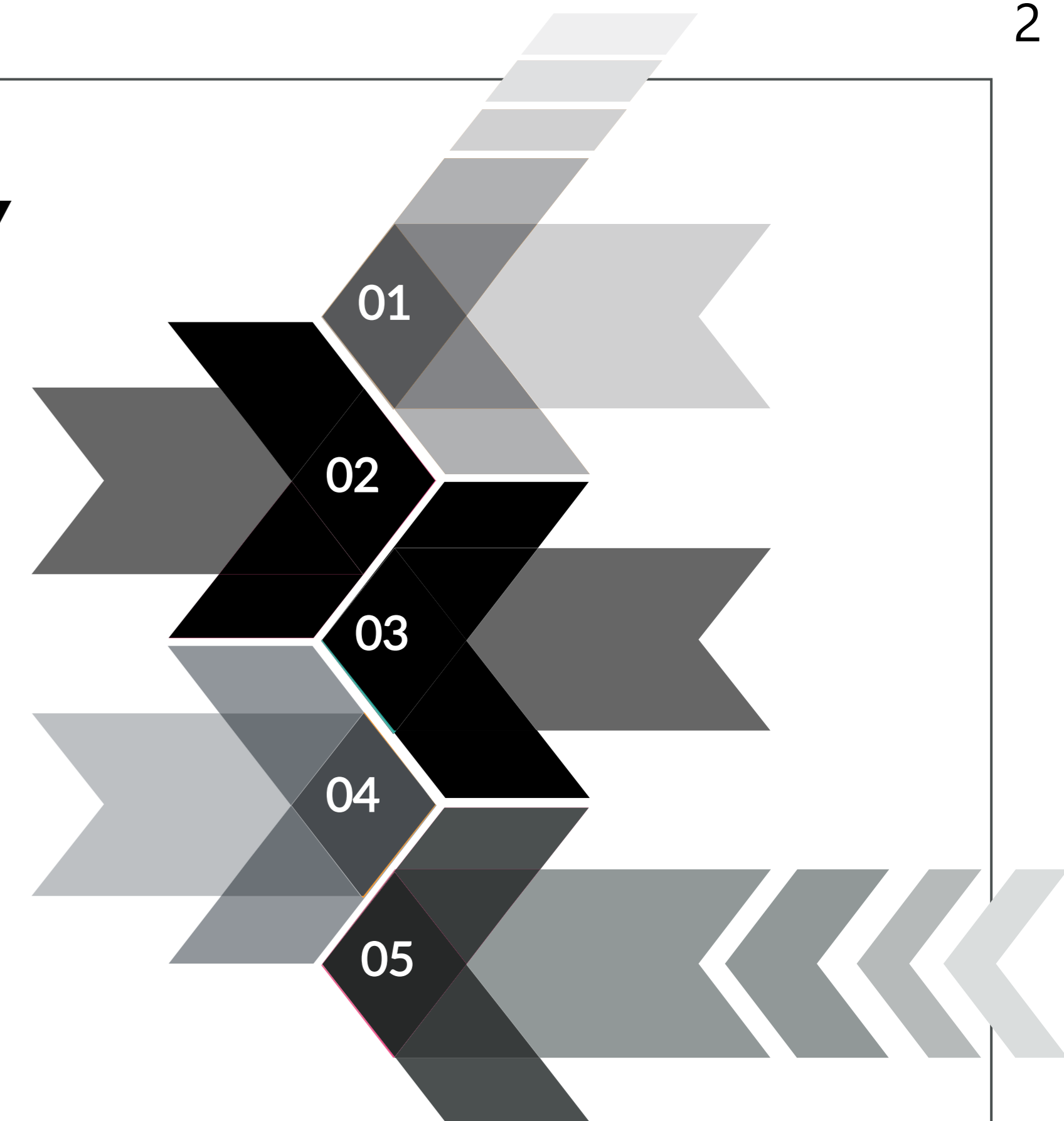
Understand the main characteristics of the relationship between Brazil and Portugal regarding football talent exports, exploring the reasons why Portugal is so attractive to many Brazilian players

## 4. Portuguese Football Talent Exports: Sino-Portuguese Football Relationship

Examine the effectiveness and problems existed in the Portuguese football exports to China as well as explore future challenges and opportunities in the Sino-Portuguese football relationship

## 5. Portuguese Football Exports: How Social and Cultural Capital Influence the Exports of Portuguese Football Coaches and Players

Unveil the underlying factors, contributing to the success of Portuguese Football Exports, using Pierre Bourdieu's Theory of Capital



1



**Premier  
League**

**Exporting Football Talent Exports –  
Lessons from the English Premier League Model**

## Studying the Premier League as a model to follow

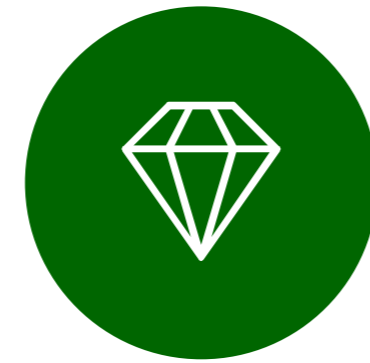
Throughout the thesis we will analyze the EPL model and understand what are indeed the major strategies that are behind their success and their impacts, the behind of why they are a good model to follow. Afterwards we will compute a survey in order to understand the Portuguese perspectives regarding these same impacts but regarding the Primeira Liga, that will be the bridge to compare what measures could be adopted by the Portuguese Football Federation.

## Why the Premier League?



**Modern football was born in England**

Carries history and traditions with it



**Ranked 1<sup>st</sup> UEFA coefficient table (2021)**

1<sup>st</sup> England = 90.641 2<sup>nd</sup> Spain 82.570



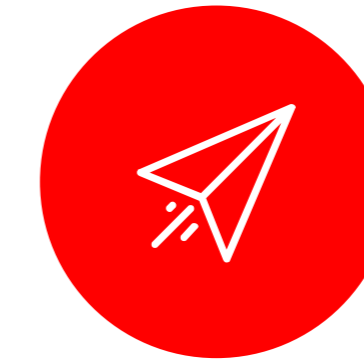
**6 different champions (last 15 years)**

Electrifying stadium environments, intense adrenaline games



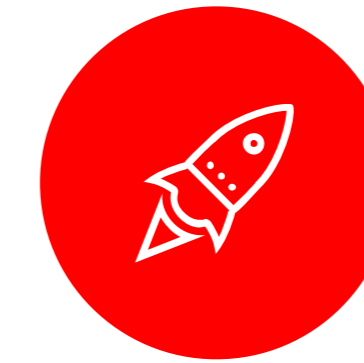
**Best strikers and managers in the world**

e.g.; Cristiano Ronaldo, Mohamed Salah, Pep Guardiola, Jurgen Klopp



**Giant monetary pole**

Last summer transfer market clubs spent over 1.04£ billion



**Broadcast Revenues are equally distributed**

Equal Share off 25% when distributing Broadcast Revenues



**Top dogs contesting for European cups**

Occupied all spots in both finals in 2019



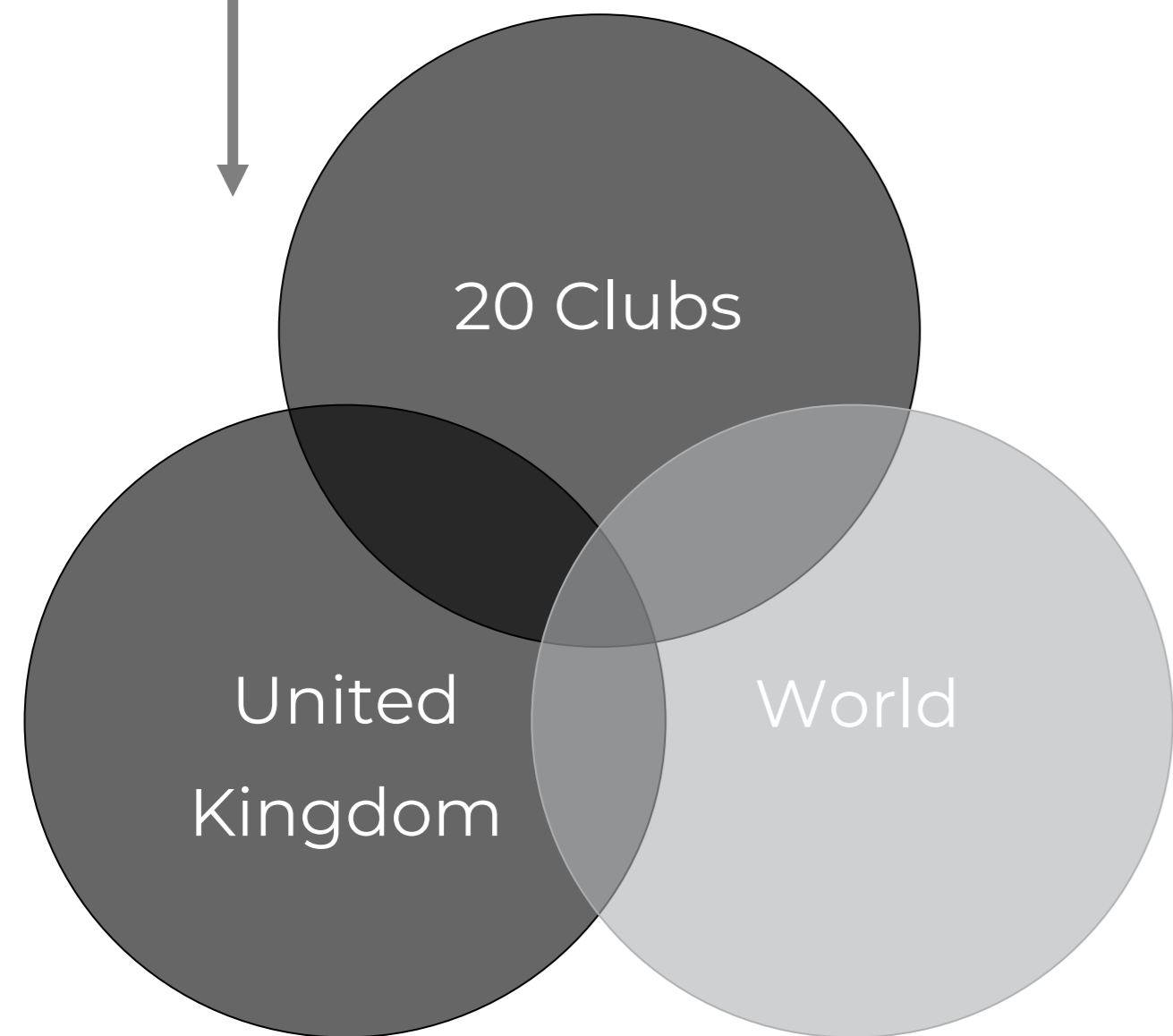
**Games broadcast live in 188/193 countries**

1.03 billion homes



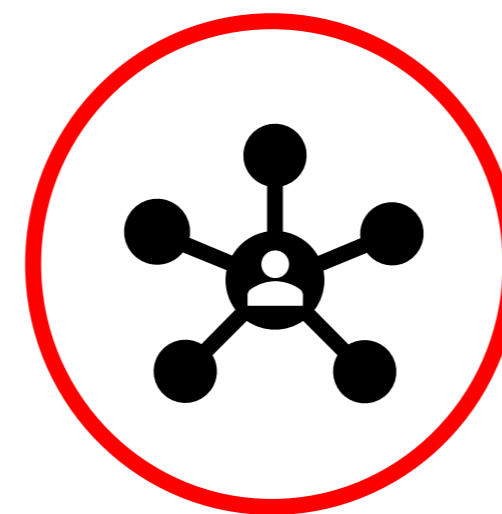
The EPL Model

- > Is the top tier competition of England’s pyramid of football, where +1500 professional players compete long 20 clubs, throughout 38 home and away games (during August and May) and in the end of the campaign the 3 clubs that finish last (relegation zone) are relegated to the championship
- > Was born in 1992, during that time 49 clubs have passed by and 7 where crowned champions: Manchester United (13), Chelsea (5), Manchester City (4), Arsenal (1), Blackburn Rovers (1), Leicester City (1) and Liverpool (1)
- > All the rules are explicit in the Premier League Rule Book, which is inside the annual handbook, that serves as a contract between both league and member clubs and defines the structure of the whole competition



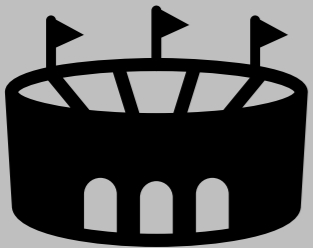
Economic Impacts

- > The economic benefits divided into three main areas: immediate impact, visitor economy and income
- > Going from local to global – Brand Recognition
- > Funds and wealthy individuals acquiring clubs
- > The Premier League Productions

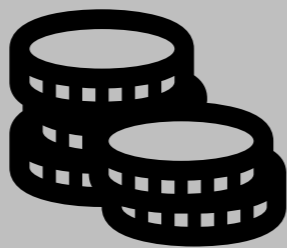


Social Impacts

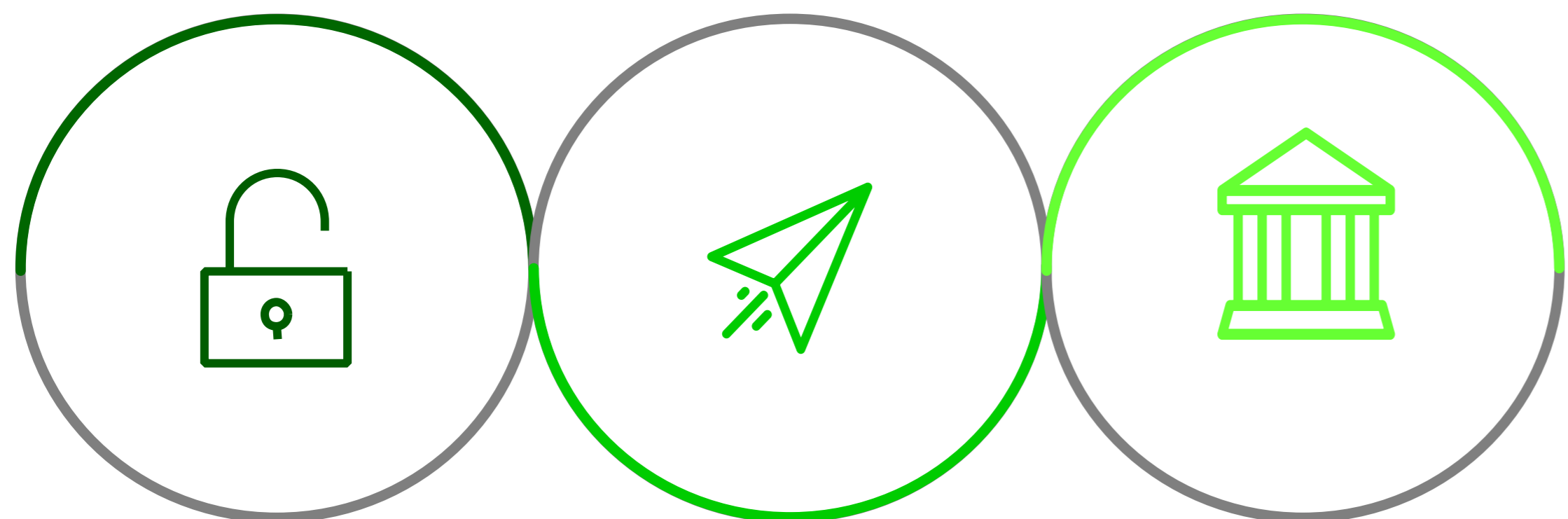
- > The social media power
- > Sponsors vision towards communities
- > The power of big star players onto the society



**96.5%**  
Stadium Utilization  
520,000 season ticket holder (£31 avg. price)



**£7.6 Billion**  
Contribution to UK GDP



### Immediate Impact

- ✓ £1.7 billion spent in league supply chains
- ✓ 12,400 employees at clubs
- ✓ £1.1 billion on players taxes contributions

### Visitor Economy

- ✓ 686,000 international visitor trips
- ✓ £555 million annual visitor spending
- ✓ 811,000 domestic (away fans) visitor journeys

### Income

- ✓ £1.5 billion in commercial and other revenues
- ✓ £614 million on matchday revenues
- ✓ £2.8 billion on central broadcast revenues

Season 2016/2017

## Going from local to global – Brand Recognition


**£1.1 Billion** Annual Broadcast Rights Exports > Bundesliga + La Liga + Serie A + Ligue 1 (£0.9 billion) or 10X Tennis + Rugby + Cricket

## Funds and Wealthy individuals acquiring clubs

- 2003: Chelsea was acquired by Roman Abramovich
  - 2008: Man. City was acquired by Sheikh Mansour
  - 2010: Leicester City was acquired by Srivaddhanaprabha family
  - 2016: Wolverhampton was acquired by Guo Guangchang
  - 2021: Newcastle was acquired by PIF
- A. Serious squad and infrastructure investments  
 → B. Success in the league

## The Premier League Productions

A partnership between the league and IMG, (major English company that distributes the match content to the Premier League’s 120 international broadcasts offering them a high-quality service, using the match footage provide by Sky Sports, BT Sport and the BBC) - allows the EPL to have visibility around the globe and supports their overseas broadcast rights earnings also making a positive contribution to production earnings within the sports market



63 Nationalities on pitch – season 21/22

“ A more diversified and inclusive society ”

**Social Media** →

A way of getting people together and reach millions

In 2018 the Premier League clubs added 52 million fans in global social media, where Manchester United was and is the most followed club at Facebook (74M) and Instagram (51M), with the most loved reactions and most engaged fans around the world

**Sponsors** →

Powerful brands have the other face of the coin by supporting and developing communities

Example of Nike: Besides being kit manufactured for 5 clubs inside the EPL and having one of the oldest partnerships with the league as ball sponsors there is a less known partnership where Nike provides kit and equipment for the youth league development, a schema running since 2011 where schools need to be registered with PL Primary Stars, and that through the years as engaged and inspired both boys and girls (high-quality equipment's makes a lot of difference) to learn, be active and develop important life skills

**Big Star Players** →

Players have an immense power within communities when it comes to reduction of racist insults, attacks, and criminality

Example of Mo Salah: Since the 9/11 attacks in 2001 the UK antimuslimism racism as increased, however a Stanford study to more than 8000 Liverpool fans showed that the reason for the reduction of this racism in the Merseyside was because Salah was familiarizing his fans with Islam, his image as a friend and a fantastic footballer was breaking down stereotypes of “threatening Muslims”. This clearly opens potential doors for building social cohesion and anti-racist societies

## Research Question 1

How do the economic and social impacts of football compare from England to Portugal?

## Research Question 2

Can Portugal adopt a similar model that substantially enhances their TV Broadcast revenues?

### 1 – A case Study

A detailed investigation of one or more organizations or groups within organizations. Which intend to provide an analysis of the context and processes involved in the phenomenon under study. This choice of methodology is useful as it responds to how and why questions about contemporary set of events.



### 2 – Single Case

There is a desire for a depth perspective of the economic model of this league and what makes it the most valued (€8.99bn) ranked league in the world



### 3 – Workstreams Concerns

The extent to which Portuguese viewed the Primeira Liga in terms of the impacts that English associate to the EPL. Therefore, a positivist approach was raised to measure this through an online survey (quantitative analysis)



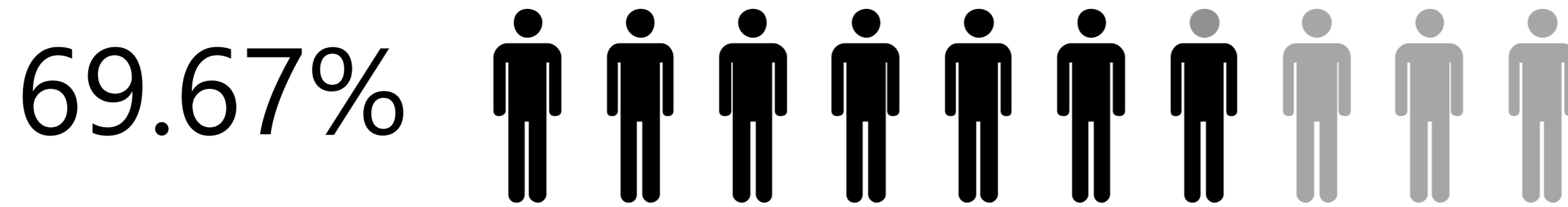
### 4 – The Survey

. A survey is a research method used for collecting data from a predefined group of respondents to gain information and insights into various topics of interest, in this specific case it will be done online to reach more correspondents as it is less time consuming and easy for further analysis



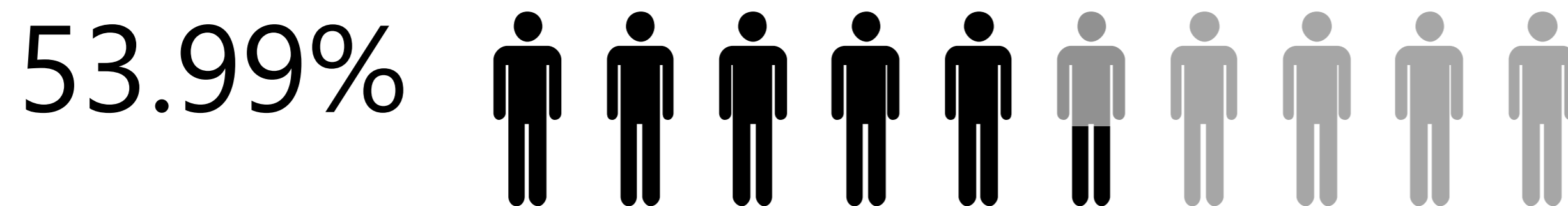
### Quantitative Findings

- > The first part of the questionnaire was built with the aim of understanding the **audience**, after that, the goal was to focus on: **TV Broadcast and the Social and Economic Impacts.**
- > The questionnaire obtained 313 valid responses



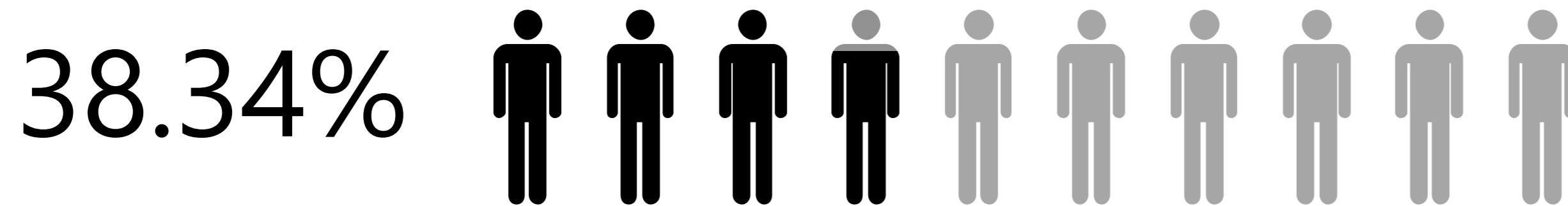
#### Male

This is a result that is expected as on average mans tend to know more about the sport and tend to like it more



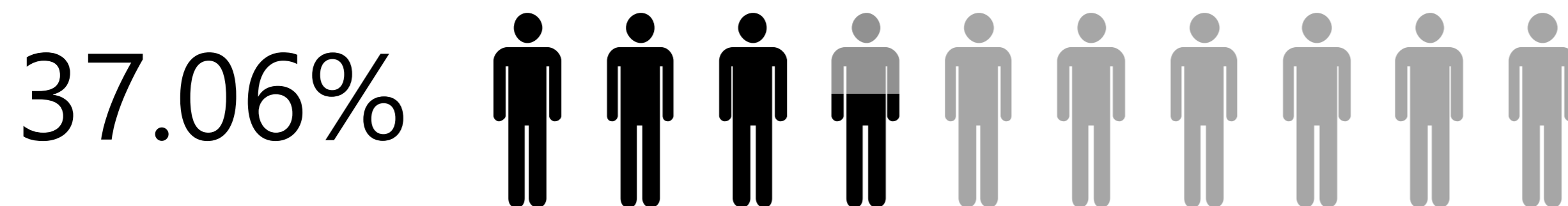
#### Aged 20-25

Since the survey was shared throughout social media (LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp) the snowball effect will tend to go after people aged in this range



#### Masters Degree

This comes in line with the fact that respondents aged between 20-25 are getting a higher education in Portugal



#### Bachelors Degree

This comes in line with the fact that respondents aged between 20-25 are getting a higher education in Portugal

## Economic Benefits

We asked the Portuguese on a scale from 0-5 how they recognize some economic benefits were generated by football (the same ones from England)

The Portuguese strongly agreed that the ones standing out were:

- ✓ TV Broadcast (Mean: 4.05; StDev: 1.00)
- ✓ Increase of Commercial Sector (Sponsors, Retail, Merchandise) (Mean: 3.58; StDev: 1.09)
- ✓ Brand Recognition (Mean: 3.73; StDev: 1.13)
- ✓ Tax contribution (Mean: 2.68; StDev: 1.40)

It happens as players pay taxes in the country they are playing. Not a direct impact but the Portuguese people agree that somehow contributes to the economy

## Funds and Wealthy individuals acquiring clubs

51.94 %

About 52% agree that clubs should be bought by funds or millionaires, independently of the League

76.24 %

From the 51.94% , almost 70% said that the Portuguese leagues should adopt this measure

90.27 %

Also 91% agree that this would bring benefits and advantages for the Portuguese clubs when attacking the transfer market

## Stadium Attendance:



When asked the average percentage of attendance in Portugal, 45.34% responded it was between 25-50%, which is below the average, 54.4%, but it is a fact, the stadiums at small clubs are not even close to be full

## Supporting Clubs:

One section off the survey asked the Portuguese what would make them go more to stadiums:

35.57 % *More accessible and lower prices*

24.83 % *Games at earlier hours during weekends*

Note: A measure like *not transmitting games at weekends* (like 3pm breakout rule) wouldn't ,make people rush to stadiums

74 % *Don't go to the stadium supporting their local club independently of supporting one of the tree big ones*

## Social Benefits

### Portuguese Strongly Agree:

- ✓ Social media allows people to follow closely their clubs (Mean: 4.02, StDev: 1.02)
- ✓ Sponsor initiatives should encourage children doing more sports (Mean: 4.19, StDev: 1.06)

### Portuguese Agree:

- ✓ There is a higher diversification social and cultural in the Portuguese football (Mean: 3.02, StDev: 1.22),
- ✓ Sponsors supporting the Portuguese leagues should be connected to the communities through events and activities (Mean: 3.42, StDev: 1.23)
- ✓ The football community should be doing more to fight the racism in Portugal (Mean: 3.21, StDev: 1.67)

### Portuguese have Miss feelings:

- ✓ Portugal is doing a good job in the social media (Mean: 2.54; StDev: 1.21)
- ✓ Clubs would have higher numbers of attendance if they had better social media (Mean: 2.61, StDev: 1.35)
- ✓ There should only be league sponsors if they support communities (Mean: 2.53, StDev: 1.55)
- ✓ In Portugal I believe there is racism (Mean: 2.32, StDev: 1.66)

All in all, the Portuguese feel that the social impact generated by the Portuguese football is not bad, but **there is a lot to work on**, mainly themes related to **racism, supporting local communities, and social and cultural diversification**. Nevertheless, there is a clear certainty that **social media allows clubs to reach everyone**, that **sponsors should be connected to communities as it encourages children into doing more sports**.

## Sponsors

Sponsors should indeed play a bigger role within the Portuguese communities (e.g.; Nike in England)

It was important to capture the big picture and understand how many sponsors of the Portuguese main league were known and their main activities towards local communities.

Who they believe them to be:



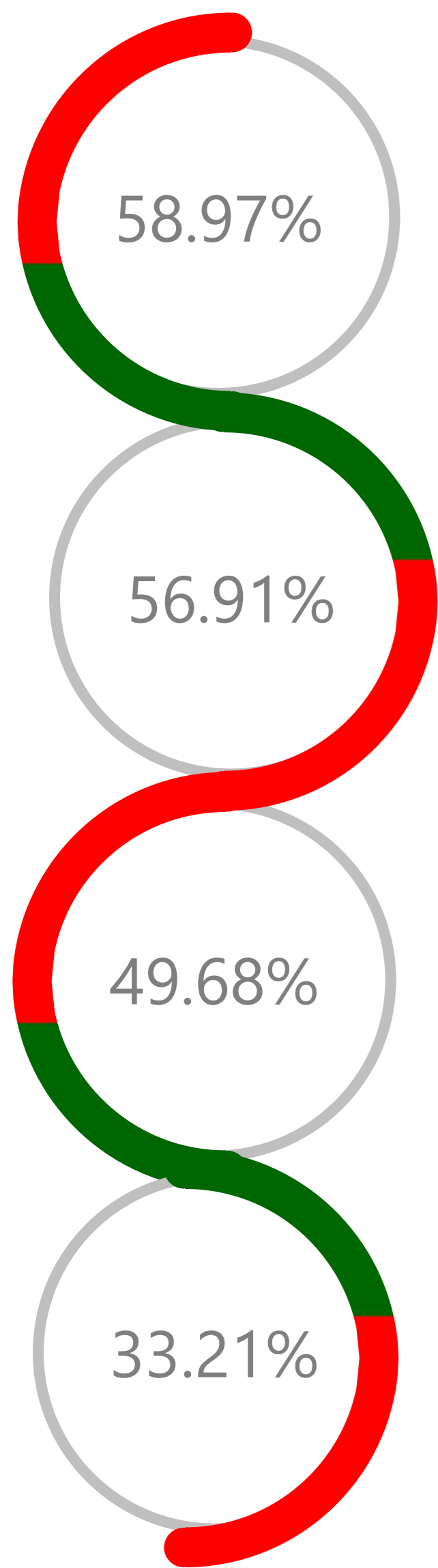
Who they really are:



92.91 %

After understanding who are the sponsors, almost 93% of the correspondents agree that they don't see any support of these brands towards communities

**Note:** The federation should create policies and guidelines around the sponsorships and on what sponsors should do (not only giving money to clubs) but creating shared value by means of contributing to society and communities



**Access to a Portuguese Broadcast TV**

Either Sport TV, Eleven Sports or Benfica TV  
 49.68% - watch every week Primeira Liga games,  
 32.47% said to watch once a month

**Watch Primeira Liga**

Only watches games from the team they support  
 46.95% - Sporting, 41.80% - Benfica, 8.04% -  
 Porto, 3.22% either support another club or none

**Time watching Primeira Liga**

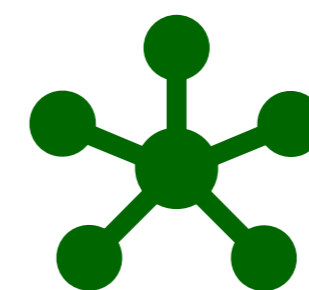
Almost 50% said that they watched the Primeira  
 Liga once a week, but in contrast 32.47% said to  
 watch once a month

**Watch other Leagues**

Almost 34% said that they watched the English  
 Premier League, surpassing the 25.24% that said  
 they didn't watch any other league

**Share revenues model of the TV Broadcasts**

What type of model is  
 used in Portugal?



**41.48%**

Centralized (like the one in  
 the EPL)

**89.66%**

Believes clubs would be able to  
 improve their infrastructures  
 and squads if the revenues  
 were distributed equally

**72.83%**

Feel that this model brings  
 greater equality to the  
 Portuguese leagues



**58.52%**

Each club needs to negotiate  
 their own rights

**14%**

Agree with this model, which  
 shows the dissatisfaction of the  
 audience


**55.56%**

Don't show any preference for  
 any model, as they also don't  
 have insights about them

Research Question 1


# How do the economic and social impacts of football compare from England to Portugal?

Portugal



VS

England



**Economic Impact**

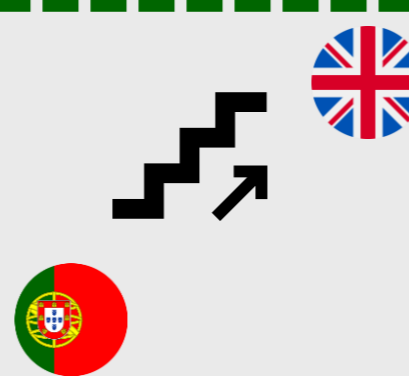
Major difference:

→ English fans support their local clubs → Clubs generate needed game revenues - stadium expenses and staff paychecks → Brings other economic benefits such as Tourism, job Creation or money spent in Football Supply Chains

**Social Impact**

Major difference:

- ✓ English sponsors engage with communities
- ✓ Clubs have huge presence on social media
- ✓ Big Star players take high stakes onto inclusion and diversification



Portugal is still far behind the EPL, but efforts can be undertaken in order to improve and be part of the top five leagues in the world

Research Question 2

# Can Portugal adopt a similar model that substantially enhances their TV Broadcast Revenues?

Portuguese recognize that the model used in Portugal does not potentiate clubs and leagues



Opportunity

- > Adopting a similar model like the one in the EPL, where there is a share (ideally not less than 25%) of the TV Broadcast revenues that is split equally among all participants of the league, will lead clubs to have a new revenue coming in
- > Innovative organization, such as the The Premier League Productions where with access to games images (from Sport TV or Eleven Sports) they are able to sell the streaming around the world, and maybe one day Portugal will be able to achieve the incredible dimension of England that broadcasts for 188 out of 193 countries and thereby enabling clubs and players to achieve higher visibility and somehow embrace in this vision for a shared model.

## Academic Implications

- > There is a clear recognition by the Portuguese that the football generates social and economic impacts
- > Portuguese clubs don't have the same financial capabilities to have a recognition around the globe equal to the English one
- > Along the survey the Portuguese recognize the impacts and measures (that were based on the EPL model) were generated by football, which enforces the idea of adoption of a similar model
- > A similar model will bring the best of the Portuguese Football

## Implications & Further Research

**Limitations::** Adding a qualitative approach (using sequential exploratory mixed methods research ) through interviews to supporters of some clubs, both small and big, could have helped to better understand the reasons behind their choices regarding the survey

**Further Research:** Explore the qualitative studies at a larger scale

## Recommendations

- Adopt measures like **lower ticket prices, activities during matches halftimes** or **better arbitrage** → Higher levels of stadium attendance → Clubs with higher revenues
- Increase club's **social media presence, involve sponsors in activities with local communities**, use **big star players** to appeal for less racism within football and country → Higher levels of support towards local clubs + A more social and cultural diversified country
- Allow **funds and wealthy individuals to buy smaller clubs** → Higher levels of support towards smaller clubs → Lower the gap between "The big 3" and other clubs
- Innovate and adopt a model like the EPL (in terms of **TV Broadcast Revenues shares** and **The Premier League Productions**) → Reduce the unfairness, as smaller clubs don't have the same bargaining power when it comes to negotiate the TV Broadcast rights → Improve Portugal's visibility → Better country at exporting talent

Portuguese people are receptive to improvements and in order to Portugal increase their visibility and export more talent, there are changes that need to happen inside out. **If we want to be seen as a top league, we need to act as one**



This is still very much league base as its better suited for league clubs and we understand that the FPF can only do so much regarding the Primeira Liga. So, we propose that the FPF applies this recommendations in his own matches and competitions (e.g.; Taça de Portugal, Liga Revelação, Supertaça Candido Oliveira) having as basis a definition of strategies and guidelines that shapes this

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2

Exporting  
Analysis



## Identifying patterns in young players' transfers – Is there a main feeding country for football talent?

### Goal of this workstream:

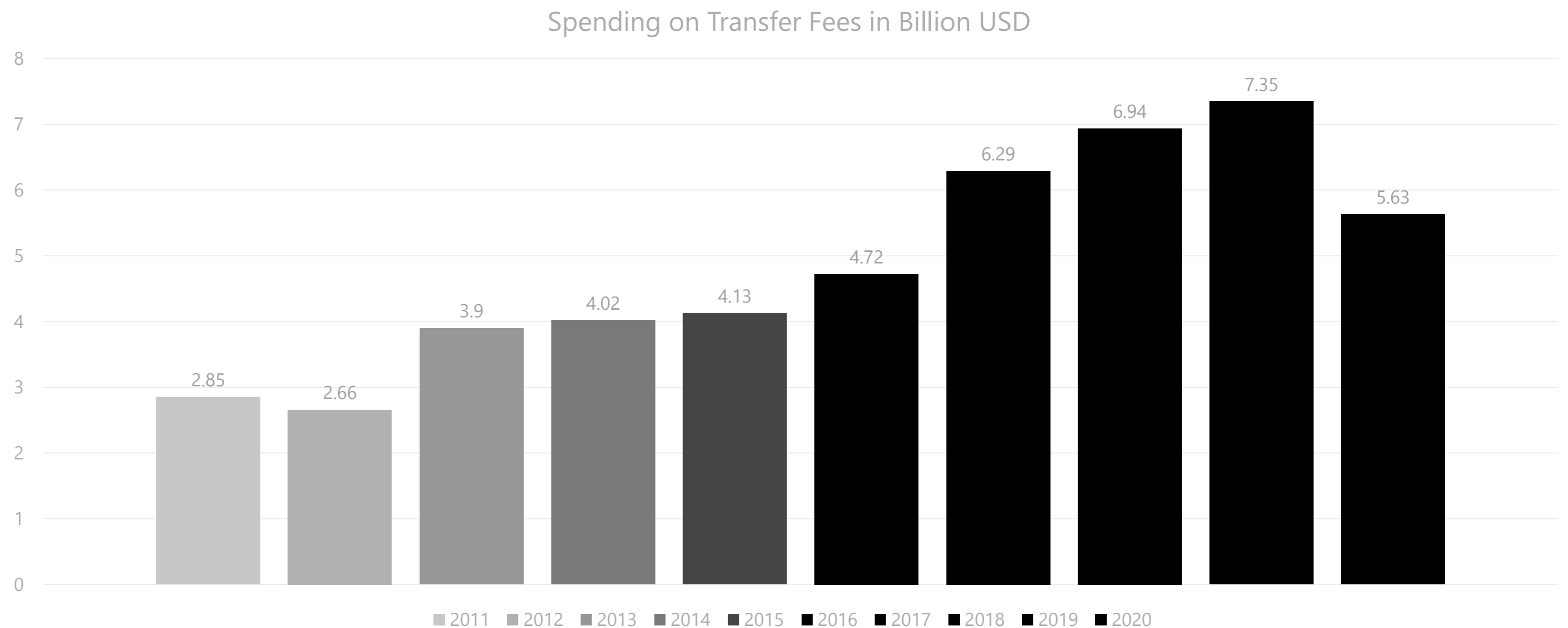
- Identify possible patterns in young talent transfers
- Determine the most talent-exporting countries
- Informing the Portuguese Football Federation

### Approach:

- Quantitative approach combined with existing literature

### Nowadays:

- Most of the professional football clubs are forced to invest in young rising talents -> transfer fees are skyrocketing
- Battle for talents already a global competition -> even children are transferred to guarantee a sufficient influx of talent in the clubs' academies (Di Minin et al. 2014)
- Many talent transfers to further develop skills and market value



**Categorization of European countries based on their role on European players market of football**

The categorization tries to allocate European countries in the matrix. It includes two variables: transfer volume and transfer balance. Countries with positive balances are named as net seller and can be spitted in "traders" or "suppliers". Countries with a negative transfer balance are net buyers and are divided in "purchasers" and "small customers", dependent on their transfer volume. Furthermore, the matrix shows transfer streams mainly to "purchaser" countries.

	Negative balance	Positive balance
High volume	"Purchasers" England, Spain, Germany Italy ← Russia ←	"Traders" Portugal, Netherland  France
Low volume	"Small customers" Turkey, Ukraine, Greece	"Suppliers" Scandinavians, post-socialist countries

(András and Havran 2014)

**FIFA's Ten Years of International Transfers Report 2021**

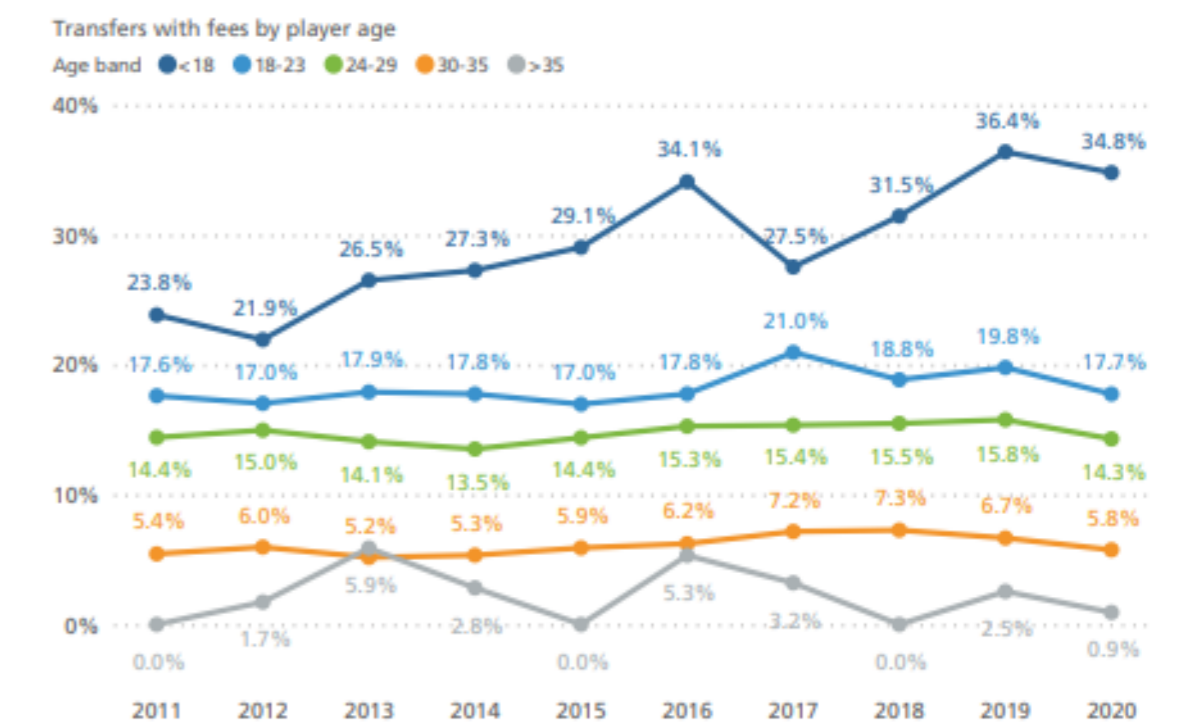
Although the immense increasing transfer fees, international transfers has been growing steadily over the years. From 11,890 in 2011, it constantly raised to 17,185 transfers in 2020. Especially, the British Premier League protrudes with 12 out of the top 30 clubs regarding spending on transfer fees. Manchester City even announced 130 incoming transfers. In total USD 12.4 Billion was spent by British football clubs on international transfers. However, on the other side, "traders" like SL Benfica and Sporting CP are the top clubs with a total amount of 537 outgoing transfers and loans. Moreover, Sporting CP, SL Benfica, and FC Porto are the top three professional clubs globally regarding net balance from transfer fees. Examining the ages of the transferred players, the majority were players that were in the range of 18 to 23 years and 24 to 29 years old.



(FIFA 2021)

**Transfers of talented young professionals**

Many football clubs changes their long-term strategy towards purchasing and developing young talents. Talents deal with highest performance expectations while tolerance for failure is significantly reduced. Playtime in 'meaningful' matches is amongst personal, social, and cultural factors, and absence of injuries, highly important to reach the peak level of the player development. However, most young talents rarely get the opportunity to show their skills in the A-team to compete with the top-tier players. As this is profoundly essential for their development, these young talents are often transferred permanently or on loan to lower-level clubs where the opportunity of getting playtime is significantly better.



(Relvas et al. 2010; FIFA 2021)

## Research Question



Identifying patterns in young players' transfers –  
Is there a main feeding country for football talent?



## Quantitative Research

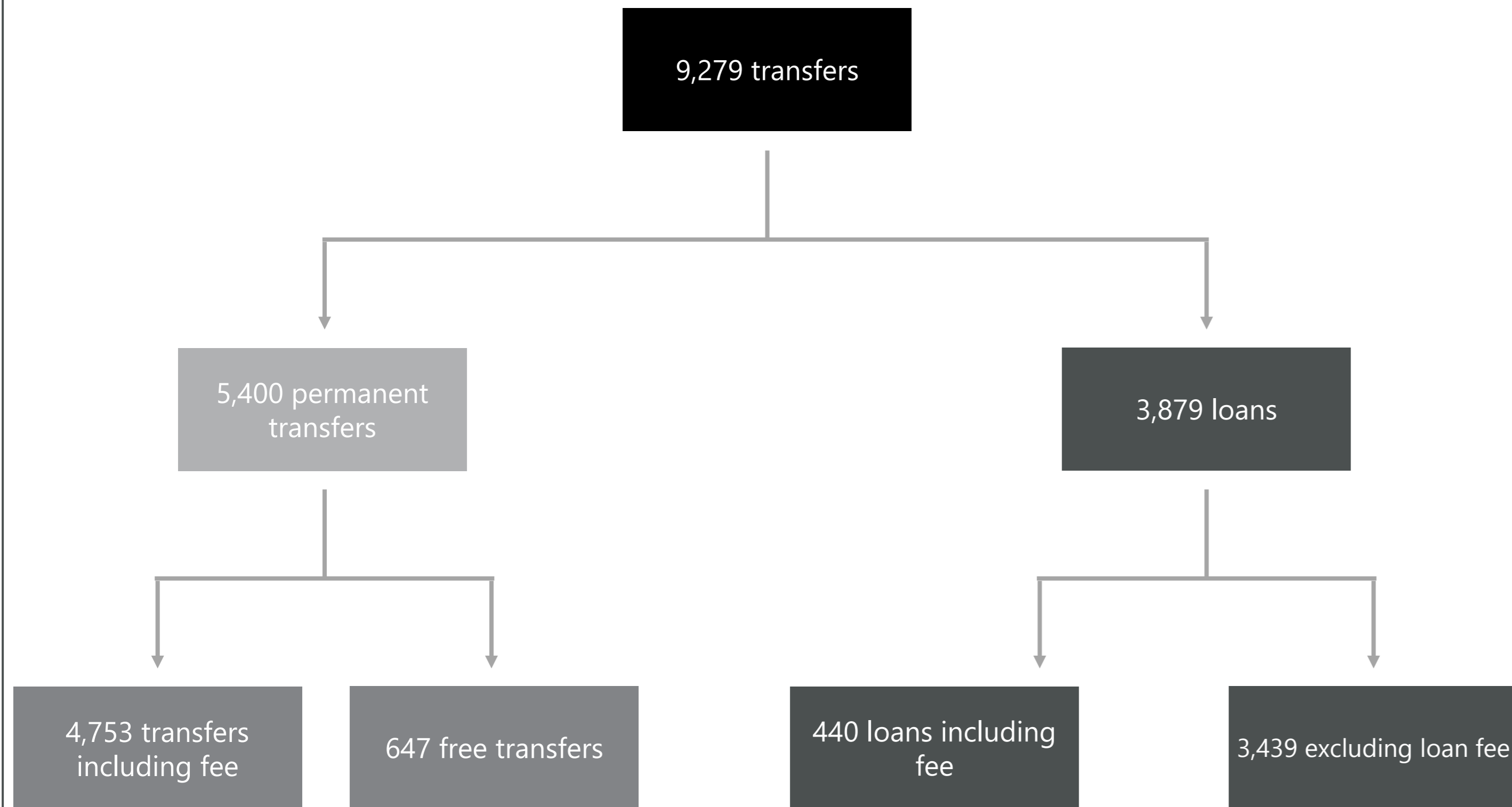
- ✓ Primary Research with **Data Analysis** of international transfers over the last two decades
- ✓ Scraped from the reliable statistical source **transfermarkt.de** via a **python webscraping algorithm**
- ✓ Important variable **restrictions**: timeframe with a total of 21 **season from 2000/2001 until 2021/2022** and player age **under or equal to the age of 20**
- ✓ Most 500 vulnerable transferred players per season (regarding their market value and transfer fee) were considered
- ✓ Essential variables: player's nationality, country of the selling club, country of the purchasing club, as well as the market value and transfer fee
- ✓ Other considered variables: name, age, position, club name, and club league
- ✓ Population was introduced to calculate the relative values of the specific variable calculations
- ✓ Total number of **9,279 international transfers** (where 2,846 football clubs from 140 different countries were involved)
- ✓ **Development countries**: number of **transfers** are considered
- ✓ **Nationality**: unique player transfer (**6,562 talents**) were considered

### Limitations:

- Transfermarkt.de only estimates market values and transfer fees
- In seasons 2000 until 2006 not the total 500 "best" transfers are available



# Descriptive Analysis



# FACTS

Explorative Data Analysis for the scraped data set from transfermarkt.de



6,562 transferred talents



129 different nationalities



€10,238,537,000 aggregated Market Value



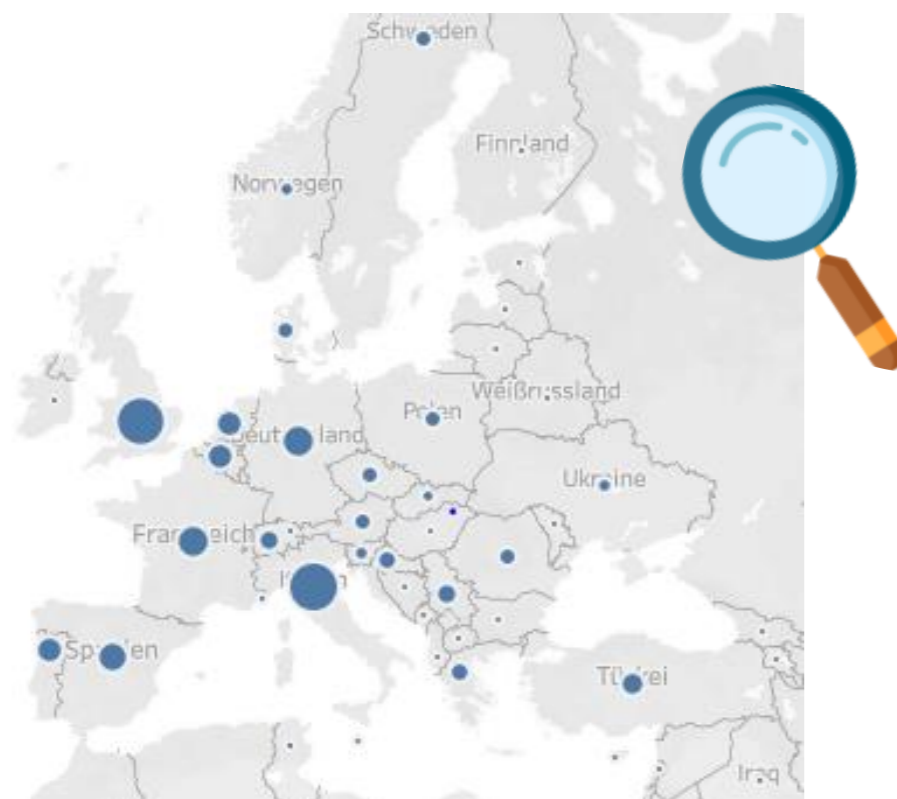
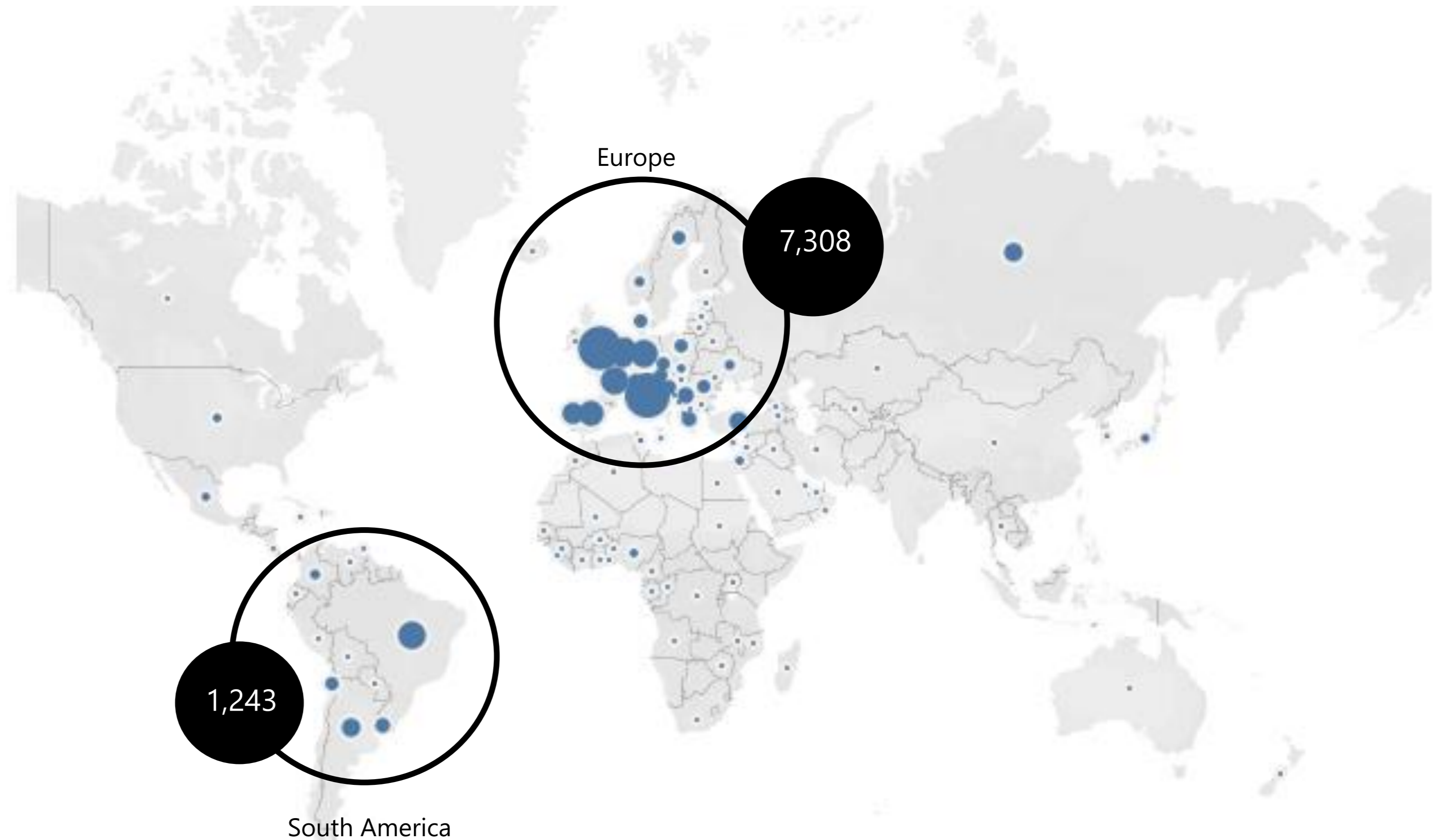
2,846 different clubs

# Transfer Map

An overview of the cumulative transfers of the development countries of the talents

## Analysis with consideration of the size of population

China is with 1,402 million inhabitants the country with the biggest size of the population in the data set whereas Liechtenstein (0.038 million) is the lower end of the range.



# Talents' Development Country

Overview of the talents' Development country with number of transfers, cumulative sum of transfer fees and the average market value

Development Country	Number of Transfers	Fee in Th. €	Avg. Market Value (€Th.)
Italy	1,387	1,624,072	1,385
England	1,307	1,225,736	1,698
France	560	1,256,256	2,233
Brazil	552	1,137,827	1,818
Germany	531	729,668	1,635
Spain	442	664,892	2,721
Portugal	321	689,211	2,205
Belgium	313	507,335	1,551
Netherlands	298	519,585	1,775
Argentina	264	665,900	2,248



### Number of transfers

Italy and England sticks out with more than 1,300 youth transfers over the last two decades



### Avg. received transfer fee (loans excluded)

Portugal (€ 5.4M) > France (€4.4M) > Argentina (€ 3.8M) > Spain (€3.5M) > Brazil (€ 3.3M)



### Avg. market value of transferred talents

Spain is the country with the highest average market value (€ 2,721,000), followed by Argentina, France, Portugal, and Brazil

# Talents' Origin Country

Overview of the talents' Origin Country with number of players and average market values in Million Euro



## Number of transferred talents

Italy (575) > Brazil (479) > England (435) > France (292) > Germany (265)



## Avg. received transfer fee (loans excluded)

Portugal (€ 6.4M) > France (€ 5.9M) > Brazil (€ 4.5M) > Spain (€ 4.2M) > Argentina (€4.1M)



## Avg. market value of transferred talents

Portugal is the top country with an average market value per transferred player of 3,095,000 Euros, followed by France (€2,835,000), and Spain (€2,719,000)

Portugal 174 3.095	Brazil 479 2.433	England 435 1.588	Switzerland 122 1.441	Uruguay 121 1.407	Senegal 62 1.399	Nigeria 116 1.357
France 292 2.835	Netherlands 167 2.283	Serbia 157 1.340	Germany 265 1.245	Chile 52 1.209	Ghana 92 1.204	Denmark 87 1.147
Spain 233 2.719	Cote d'Ivoire 63 2.123	Italy 575 1.321	Sweden 95 1.092	Turkey 208 1.024	Mexico 65 1.020	Poland 90 871
Argentina 235 2.474	Belgium 173 1.749	Croatia 134 1.308	Czech Republic 74	Greece 103		
	Norway 74 1.705	Austria 75 1.259	Colombia 71 1.057	Ukraine 66		Russia

# Calculated Performance Ratio for Nationalities

Nationality	Ratio	# Players Normaliz..	MV AVG Normaliz..	Pop Ratio Normali..	Fee AVG Normaliz..
Portugal	0,760	0,233	1,000	0,326	0,828
France	0,647	0,459	0,896	0,036	1,000
Spain	0,607	0,346	0,850	0,058	0,588
Brazil	0,567	0,816	0,735	0,000	0,764
Argentina	0,545	0,350	0,751	0,061	
Netherlands	0,511	0,220	0,675	0,186	
Uruguay	0,469	0,132	0,324	1,000	
Norway	0,449	0,042	0,443	0,640	
Cote d'Ivoire	0,433	0,021	0,611	0,117	
Croatia	0,408	0,157	0,284	0,856	

**Formula:**  
 Weighted Sum of the 'Average market value', 'Average transfer fee', 'Number of transferred players', and a ratio of talents per inhabitant  
 Highest Weight: 'Average market value'

The analysis results in Portugal as the strongest nationality for transferred young talents regarding the calculations. France, Spain, Brazil, and Argentina make the top five nations fulfilled.

The relative findings are very similar to the absolute analysing part and identify transfer patterns principally for Portugal regarding average market value and average fee. It determines that nations with a lower number of inhabitant (Portugal) can also compete with nations with a multiple in the population size.

# Calculated Performance Ratio for Players' Development Countries

Developme..	Ratio DevC	# Players Normaliz..	Fee AVG Normaliz..	MV AVG Normaliz..	Pop Ratio Normali..
Portugal	0,7549	0,139	1,000	0,992	0,408
France	0,6531	0,423	0,776	0,739	0,122
Argentina	0,5754	0,196	0,738	0,843	0,095
Brazil	0,5591	0,463	0,628	0,679	0,022
Italy	0,5554	1,000	0,413	0,399	
Spain	0,5100	0,246	0,605	1,000	
England	0,4773	0,786	0,380	0,392	
Belgium	0,4163	0,220	0,476	0,539	
Netherlands	0,4117	0,228	0,475	0,584	
Germany	0,3656	0,487	0,332	0,457	

Formula:  
 Weighted Sum of the 'Average market value', 'Average transfer fee', 'Number of transferred players', and a ratio of talents per inhabitant  
 Highest Weight: 'Average transfer fee'

Portugal has the highest ratio regarding the calculation (highest weight: 'received transfer fees'). FIFA further highlight this with determining SL Benfica, Sporting CP, and FC Porto as the top clubs regarding positive net balance (from transfer fees) and received transfer fees over the last decade (FIFA 2021). Furthermore, Sporting CP won the European Club Association (ECA) award of the "Football Training Category". Sporting CP won Portugal's first professional league with eleven homegrown players in their squad (Sporting CP 2021).

# Detected Transfer Streams of Talents

World map with the transfer streams of Portugal, France, Argentina, Brazil, Italy, Spain & England as Development Countries



The world map gives an overview of the transferred players from their Development Countries to the purchasing countries. The more intense the blue is, the higher was the cumulative or average transfer fee, respectively. Moreover, the size of the connections links is determined by the number of transfers which means, the thicker the link is, the more transfers were dealt between the respective countries.



## Italy to Italy

Italian clubs show significant pattern in trading within the same country with 1,173 transfers of young talents (almost 85 percent of the total transfers) between Italian clubs.



## Brazil to Portugal

For talents from Brazilian clubs a strong stream of movement to Portugal can be detected with 58 transfers and a cumulative sum of transfer fees of €104 Million.



## Portugal to England & Spain

Transfer patterns can be detected from Portugal to England and Spain, where 31 and 34 transfers of young talents with a cumulative sum of €237 Million and €209 Million were transferred.

## Academic Implications

“Best talent-export countries”: Portugal, France, Spain, and Italy as well as Brazil and Argentina

Most of all, **Portugal protrudes** in category “Nationality” and “Development Country”. Many top talents have the Portuguese nationality and convince in the foreign top leagues in which they were **sold for high transfer fees**. Additionally, **Portugal** is known as **the entrance door for Southern American talents to the European football market** where the talents aims to take the next step in their career. Especially, the transfer stream from **Brazilian players** is striking (FIFA 2021). Several cultural similarities, as well as the quality of the Portuguese league smoothens the move from Brazilian talents to Portuguese clubs to gain the promising opportunity to step into the European market. Moreover, due to heir **excellent youth academies**, Portuguese clubs are highly attractive to talents for further skill development.

## Managerial Implications

Define a clear strategy of the future-level aimed categorization of the Portuguese football leagues.

1. EITHER: a **specialization on build-and-sell strategy** (building top talents and later selling them for high fees)
2. OR: Trying to tie up on the European top leagues through **importing / developing and keeping top talents** as well as **top stars** to further **grow on the global football level**

Moreover, to guarantee the existing factors around the excellent academies and Portugal’s power in building top talents, **all participating parties must work together strongly**.

## Limitations

The major limitations of this paper relates to the **strong weighted quantitative part** that is mainly based on information from transfermarkt.de. With interviews of experienced **football expert**, a qualitative approach would contribute to understand more precisely the reasons for the outcomes of the analysis and categorize the findings also for not-transferred talents that still play at the development club. Additionally, **special loan-purchasing contracts** which are used to avoid restrictions by the financial fair play are an additional limitation (Haugen and Schubert 2014; FIFA 2019).

## Further Research

As regards further research, a **considering more variables of success indicators** would improve the study. Further indicators like the **number of active football players, popularity, geographical factors, or GDP per capita** would probably influence the outcomes.



- The findings from this research show the existence of exporting patterns regarding feeding countries for young football professionals
- Portugal, France, Spain, Brazil, and Argentina are the top five exporting countries and go along with existing literature
- Existing constraints could be avoided with additional variables and further expertise from experts of young talent transfers

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A person wearing a yellow t-shirt and blue shorts is captured in motion, kicking a soccer ball on a paved street. The background is blurred, showing other people and buildings, suggesting an outdoor urban setting. The lighting is bright, indicating it might be daytime.

3

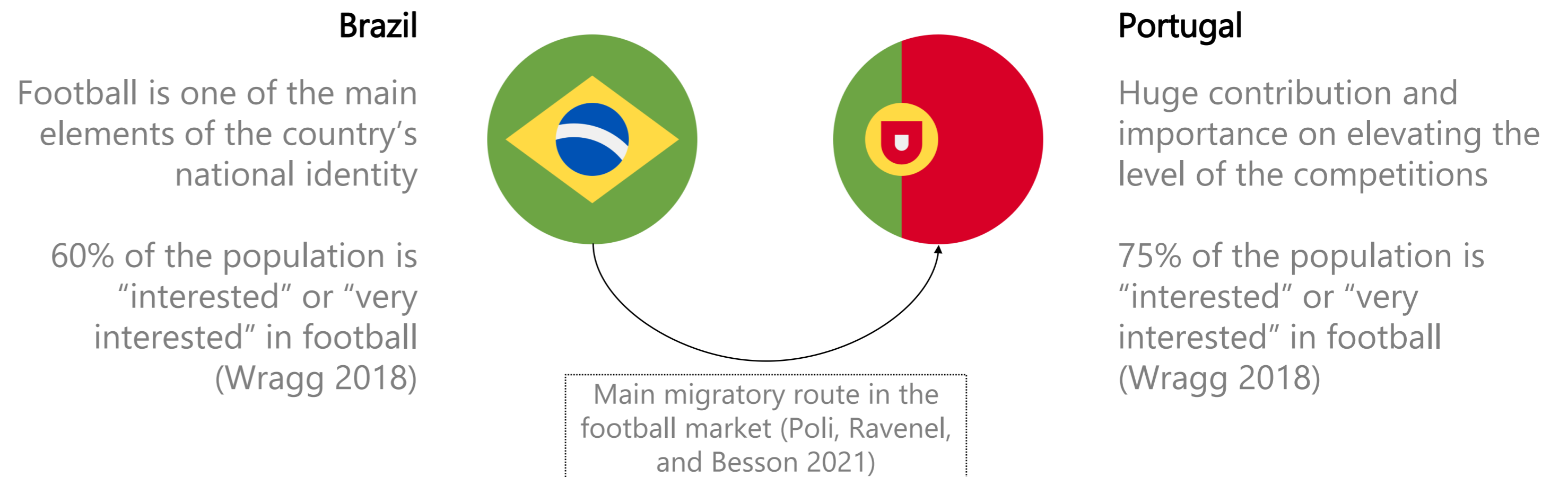
## Portuguese Football Talent Exports: The Brazil-to-Portugal Exchange

## The Luso-Brazilian connection beyond historical aspects

There are some **specific regions** that throughout the years have **played significant roles** on turning **football** into the sport we all know and love, regions that have a **strong influence of the sport** and that are represented by **Brazil and Portugal** in this study.

When looking at Brazil, its **history goes back to 1958**, when the national team won its first World Cup, turning this sport into one of the **main elements** of the country's **national identity**. Then, when we analyse Portugal's case, even though the **times of success** of its national team are **very recent**, its **contribution and importance** on elevating the level of the competitions is undeniable.

At the same time the **two countries** are **so different** from each other, they also share some **similarities** which **strengthen their relationship** in a way that goes beyond the historical aspect. This is reflected on the fact that **the movement from Brazil to Portugal is the main migratory route** in the football market.



Therefore, this study focuses on understanding the relationship between Brazil and Portugal regarding football talent exports, more specifically on exploring the reasons why Portugal is so attractive to many Brazilian players, most of whom choose to start their international career in the Portuguese football

## Expression of football in each country

### Football in Brazil

- Famous for being the “country of football”.
- Brazil’s national team is the **most successful in the FIFA World Cup** as it is the only national team that has won the tournament five times.
- Brazil has always been a **producer of top players**, some of whom were considered the best of the world back in their times and, sometimes, among the best in history.
- There were 15,128 transfers of Brazilian players from 2011 to 2020, being the nationality with the **highest number of transactions** (FIFA 2021).
- The Brazilian league was elected **the third world’s strongest national league** from 2011-2020, following La Liga and Premier League (IFFHS 2021).



### Football in Portugal

- Portugal’s national team retrospective in worldwide events is short, but considering its participations in a continental level, the national team has **more expression**.
- At a national level, there is a small group known as the “**Big Three**” that dominates the national competitions and that has the highest number of supporters across the country (Sport Lisboa e Benfica, Futebol Clube do Porto, and Sporting Clube de Portugal).
- The country is **very successful** when it comes to **revealing young promising talents**, and at times, those players become not only the best in their clubs, but also among the best players of the leagues they are playing in.



- Football in Brazil is successful in all dimensions, from being the only FIFA World Cup five-time champion to producing some of the best players in history
- Although Portugal’s national team retrospective is short, the country is home to internationally successful clubs and football talents
- Even though each country has its own football history, they share an important relationship in the football market

# Attractiveness of Portugal for Brazilian players

## Brazil-to-Portugal Relationship

- The **Brazilian community** is the main foreign community legally resident in the European country, representing 27.8% of the total (SEF 2020).
- Every season, **experienced young players** and **new young talents from Brazil** that stand out among others receive offers from Portuguese clubs, having the **opportunity** to play football in a country that is famous for being an “**entrance door**”.
- In the one hand, when we look at the origins, **Brazil** is the main country **responsible for exporting football talents**. But in the other hand, when we look at those players’ destinations, **Portugal stands out**. In this sense, many players are recruited from Latin America, especially Brazil, and go to Portugal, which is an entrance door to the European market, having the chance to be re-exported to other European countries in the future (KEA, and CDES 2013).
- There are **three main factors** that explain why Portugal is so attractive to Brazilian football players: **similar culture & language, quality management and trends & reliability**.

### Similar Culture & Language:

When it comes to the Brazil-to-Portugal relationship, perhaps the most important factors are the **similar culture and language**. Firstly, there is **almost no language barrier** between both countries as their official language is Portuguese. Secondly, concerning the culture, **Portugal has always been a prosperous market for the Brazilian artistic productions**, such as literature, music, television, theatre, etc. Therefore, it is possible for the Brazilian community that lives in Portugal to **still consume the Brazilian culture and lifestyle**.

### Quality Management:

Portugal presents an advantage that is its **capacity to produce quality football talents**, including **outstanding coaches and technical teams**. In order to increase the standards of the quality management in sports in general, the **coach education structure** in Portugal **values the importance of the formal education along with the coaching experience** while promoting coaching qualifications (Resende, Sequeira, and Sarmiento 2016). Therefore, coaching expertise is a **combination of formal and theoretical training programmes, knowledge, practical experience, and self-reflection** (ENSSEE 2007).

### Trends & Reliability:

The clubs seek to be involved in **recurrent transactions with established and trustworthy sources** with the objective of reducing the uncertainty and the risks. Therefore, football market transactions are not indiscriminate, but they are indeed **influenced by cultural, economic, historical, and social connections** (McGovern 2002). When a club finds success bringing in some players from a specific nationality, it makes it easier for more players from the same nationality to take the same path.



- Brazil is the main country that exports football talents and Portugal is the destination country which receives most of these transfers
- When a player moves from his home country, properly adaptation and adjustment in the country of destiny are crucial for his integration and success
- Similar culture and language, quality football management and trends and reliabilities of the market are the main factors that explain this attraction

# General plan used to answer the Research Questions

RQ1

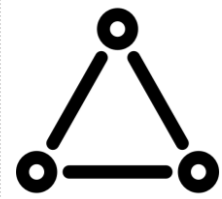
What are the factors that make Portugal attractive to Brazilian players?

RQ2

What are the general characteristics of the relationship between Brazil and Portugal with regards to football professionals, specifically players?

## Sequential exploratory mixed methods research

It comprises a **qualitative phase** followed by a **quantitative** one for the purpose of **elaborating on the initial findings**



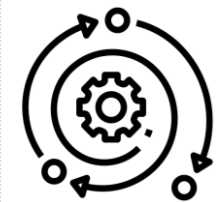
### Triangulation

It allows the researcher to find a **convergence of the data** collected by the different methods, resulting in a **more credible** research



### Complementarity

It allows the researcher to **better understand the problem** and to **clarify a specific result** with help from both qualitative and quantitative data



### Development

It helps the researcher on **completely understanding the research problem**, as the result from **one method** helps the development of the **other method**

(Greene, Caracelli, and Graham 1989)



## 1. Qualitative Phase

Semi-structured interviews with respondents who matched a **pre-determined profile**: Brazilian footballers who are currently playing football in Portugal, with no limitations regarding their age or their professional level



## 2. Quantitative Phase

Extracted from *Transfermarkt*, important data regarding around 10,000 transfers of players under 20 from season 2000 until 2021 was used in this phase



- A sequential exploratory mixed methods research uses the qualitative and the quantitative analytical procedures and data collection techniques
- The triangulation, complementarity and development are factors that explain why this kind of research is so important
- The qualitative phase is composed of semi-structured interviews and the quantitative phase is composed of a data analysis with data from *Transfermarkt*

## Interview guidelines and respondents' profiles



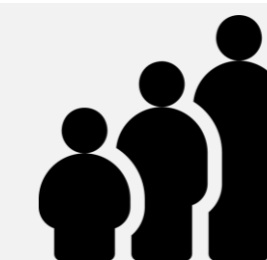
6

QUESTIONS



12

RESPONDENTS



19-28

YEARS OLD

### Questions:

1. How was your childhood? Have you always dreamt of being a football player?
2. What were the reasons that led you to choose a career in Portuguese football and not in Brazilian football?
3. Did you face any difficulty when moving to Portugal? Which one(s)?
4. And what were the factors that enabled a quick adaptation in Portugal?
5. Do you intend to have a long career in the Portuguese football, or do you dream of playing in another league for the next years?
6. Do you have any idea of what would you like to do when you finish your footballer career?

### Respondents:

- I. 21, Club Sport Marítimo
- II. 24, Grupo Sportivo de Loures
- III. 24, Sport Clube Senhora da Hora
- IV. 28, Ginásio Clube de Corroios
- V. 21, Grupo Sportivo de Loures
- VI. 26, Juventude Sport Clube
- VII. 23, Grupo Desportivo Da Pelariga
- VIII. 23, Leixões Sport Club
- IX. 19, Louletano Desportos Clube
- X. 27, Futebol Clube Tirsense
- XI. 27, Daegu Football Club (Portugal: Leixões Sport Club/Clube Desportivo Santa Clara)
- XII. 19, North Texas Soccer Club (Portugal: Futebol Clube de Alverca)



- The six questions cover topics from the players' childhood to their plans after they end their careers as footballers
- The 12 respondents were aged between 19 and 28 and almost all of them play in low-level and secondary leagues in Portugal
- From the 12 respondents, two of them are currently playing football in another country, but they started their international career in Portugal

## Respondents' answers and experiences

**Q1: How was your childhood? Have you always dreamt of being a football player?**

- Almost all of them have **always wanted to be a football player** since they were kids (10/12).
  - A few of them had some **influence from their father** (3/12).
- Playing football sometimes becomes a **life project** with **huge investments** and **planning** from the families and **total dedication** from the kids. Moreover, **parents also play an important role on the sporting lives of children** (Clarke, Harwood, and Cushion 2016).

*"My childhood was always linked to football. Since I was a child, my father used to take me to the stadiums, and I inherited this love for football from my father. That was always my dream!"*

(I2, 24, Grupo Sportivo de Loures)

**Q2: What were the reasons that led you to choose a career in Portuguese football and not in Brazilian football?**

- Most of them did not exactly have the objective to play in Portugal, they **actually got some offers** to play there (7/12).
  - Three of the participants mentioned that it was a **great opportunity** to come to Portugal as it is an **"entrance door"** for other bigger leagues in Europe.
- They argued that in Portugal they could have **more opportunities** than in Brazil and that they would be playing in a European country, region famous for its high-level football. **The high competition in Brazil leads to a limit of employability** in the intern market, which is one of the reasons that explain the growing demand for transfers of Brazilian players abroad (Soares, et al. 2011).

*"I chose to come to the Portuguese football as it is a very visible market within the football world. I always wanted to play in Europe, and Portugal is known as one of the best "entrance door"."*



(I1, 21, Club Sport Marítimo)

**Q3: Did you face any difficulty when moving to Portugal? Which one(s)?**

- Some respondents mentioned **not having any difficulty** at all (3/12).
- From a **personal** view, most of them mentioned that having to **adapt to the Portuguese lifestyle** and the **weather** were a big challenge.
- Two respondents mentioned that the biggest challenge was to **get used to the distance from their family and friends** and another two mentioned having **bureaucratic problems**.
- From a **professional** view, some respondents mentioned that the **style of the game** was more fast, physical, and technical.

*"Yes, the cold. I had never experienced this because where I lived it was always very hot. The game was much more intense and faster, so I had to change my style a bit. Also some financial issues that at the time the clubs were paying the salaries late. But I loved to live in Portugal."*

(I12, 27, Daegu Football Club – Portugal: Leixões Sport Club/Clube Desportivo Santa Clara)

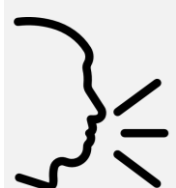
## Respondents' answers and experiences

**Q4: And what were the factors that enabled a quick adaptation in Portugal?**

- The answers were basically the same and revolved around five topics: the similar **cuisine**; **culture**; and **language**; the **quantity of Brazilians** in the club they play for and in the places where they live; and the **welcoming people who gave the support** they needed and made them feel a little bit at home.
- Having a **network of Brazilian players** within the club, who **share a common culture and language** and similar responsibilities, in an out of the field, is **one of the factors that lead to the Brazilian players' successful migration** (Rial 2008). It is possible for them to consume the Brazilian cuisine, culture, and lifestyle, bringing Brazil closer to their routine.

*"Portugal is a country that receives many Brazilians. The language facilitates the adaptation, the cuisine too. Personally, people received me very well received. (...)"*

(I8, 23, Leixões Sport Club)



**Q5: Do you intend to have a long career in the Portuguese football, or do you dream of playing in another league for the next years?**

- Three respondents (3/12) mentioned that their plan is to **stay in Portugal**.
- Three other respondents (3/12) said that they are **focused in following a career in Portugal**, but they are **open to new opportunities**.
- Other two (2/12) said that their **objective now is Primeira Liga**, but they have the **dream of playing in other bigger leagues**.
- The respondent who is currently playing in **South Korea plans to continue in the Arabic and Asian market**.
- The one who is currently playing in the **US answered he now plans to reach the MLS**.
- The players presented several opinions, but all of them showed **gratitude and a lot of respect for the Portuguese football**.

*"I dream of playing in another bigger league, but I also intend to play more here in Portugal, it all depends on what comes up."*

(I9, 19, Louletano Desportos Clube)

**Q6: Do you have any idea of what would you like to do when you finish your footballer career?**

- Some of them (5/12) want to **open their own business**.
- Some others (4/12) want to **continue in the football environment**.
- The number of **athletes turning to entrepreneurship** after ending their career is **increasing**. But even so, former footballers grow such a **meaningful identification** to the sport during their career that when they retire, they go towards the direction of a **new role within football environment** (D'Angelo, Reverberi, Gazzaroli, and Gozzoli 2017).

*"I haven't stopped to think a lot yet, but I think an entrepreneur lives inside of me. I think I would get out of football a little bit and invest in something."*

(I5, 21, Grupo Sportivo de Loures)



# Analysis of the data extracted from *Transfermarkt*

**9,279**  
TOTAL TRANSFERS OF <20  
(2000-2021)

**57**  
BRAZIL-TO-PORTUGAL  
TRANSFERS

## Clubs & Transfers



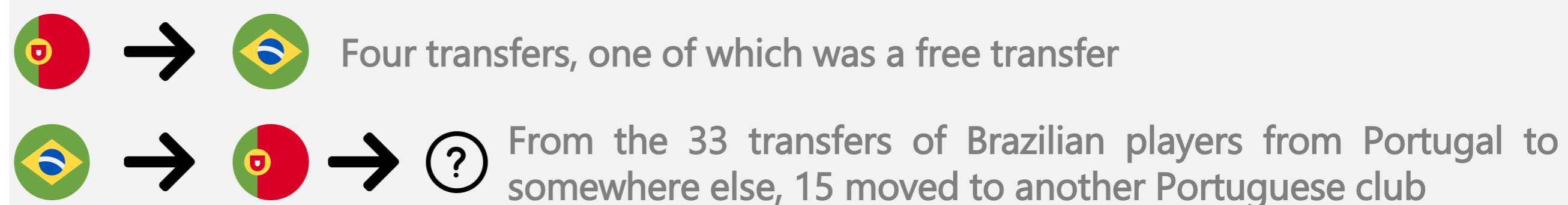
- These are the Brazilian clubs who were **more involved in young talents transactions** and these are the Portuguese clubs that **imported the highest number of players**.
- According to FIFA's report (2021), FC Porto and SL Benfica are on the **top 30 clubs that spend the most on transfer fees**.
- Moreover, these **producers of football players** are **selling their young talents very early**. This happens mainly because Brazilian clubs have to **negotiate their athletes** in order to **pay their debts** and also because European clubs are **willing to pay good amount of money** for these players (Morelli 2021).

## Types of Transfers

- From the 57 transactions, **three of them were free transfers** and **21 of them were loans**.
- This goes in line with the FIFA report (2021), which shows that **players under 24 most of the times are involved in free transfers** (out of contract) (62.1%), followed by loans (21.6%) and permanent transfers (16.3%).
- Many of these players at this age are transferred on loan because **they are not being used**, so their clubs try to give them **opportunity** somewhere else, so the young players can **earn experience and improve their techniques**.

## Transfers' Origins & Destinations

- Brazil is the **fourth country with the most transfers of players under 20 years** from 2000 until 2021 (552 transfers), laying behind Italy, England, and France.
- When looking specifically to the **552 transfers**, the players had **many different destinations**. In this sense, **Portugal**, by having 10% of those transfers is actually the **country with the biggest slice**.
- This short sample shows the **strong football connection** they have, which goes in line with the fact that the **main transfer stream in the football market is from Brazil to Portugal** (Poli, Ravenel, and Besson 2021). This fact was also mentioned in the FIFA report (2021), which identified 1,556 players being transferred from Brazil to Portugal from 2011 to 2020.



## Answers to the Research Questions



### **RQ1: What are the factors that make Portugal attractive to Brazilian players?**

It is possible to conclude, from the interviews, that the athletes tend to have more opportunities in Portugal than in Brazil, where the market is saturated, even if it is on teams with less expression. Plus, not only the similar culture and language play an important role in the players' adaptation, but also the fact that there is a big Brazilian community in and out of the fields, who give them support and make them feel at home as much as possible.



### **RQ2: What are the general characteristics of the relationship between Brazil and Portugal with regards to football professionals, specifically players?**

In short, the relationship between Brazil and Portugal with regards to football professionals proves to be important for the football market, with each country having their participations as main origin and destination countries for international transfers. More than that, it was possible to observe how specific clubs from both sides play important roles in transfers, launching young new talents to the market or buying them.

## Research's main contributions

### Academic Implications

There are indeed some specific reasons that explain this movement many Brazilian players are doing having Portugal as their destination. As explored in the FIFA report (2021), the nationality that had the highest number of transactions from 2011 to 2020 was the Brazilian. Therefore, Brazil is indeed one of the main football talent exporters and Portugal is the major destination. At the same time there are some Brazilian clubs that discover, work with young talents at the academies, and export them, there are some specific Portuguese clubs that import them, mainly the "Big Three". Once they arrive in Portugal, the athletes are susceptible to some challenges, but in this specific case, they also benefit from some particular factors that facilitate their integration. These factors are the similar cuisine, culture, and language, and the presence of a big Brazilian community in the country in general, which are vital for their success as an international football player.

### Limitations

For the qualitative part, even though 12 respondents shared their experiences during the interviews, most of the participants play in low-level and secondary Portuguese competitions. It would be important to have respondents who play in the main league as well, to show that the answers could be similar regardless their professional level. For the quantitative part, since it was chosen to focus on young talent (under 20), the data could not be extrapolated for the whole of Brazilian players coming to Portugal.

### Managerial Implications

There are two aspects that the football management could improve:

1. The first one is related to the strategy used to bring new players. A data driven scouting in Brazil using Machine Learning would be more effective, it would reach a wider pool and it would optimize this search for young talents.
2. The second aspect is related to talent retention. As already stated in this study, Portugal is the main destination for many Brazilian players, but many of these players use the country only as an "entrance door" and then move to another league. In order to reach the next level and be on the top five UEFA main leagues, it is extremely important to not only attract talents, but also to have a strategy to retain them.

### Further Research

A study that would analyse the reverse movement of Portuguese football talents going to Brazil would improve the knowledge on this face of this relationship, especially transactions involving coaches and technical teams, the latest examples of which being Abel Ferreira and Jorge Jesus. Another suggestion for a possible future study is the movement many Brazilian players are doing back to Brazil.



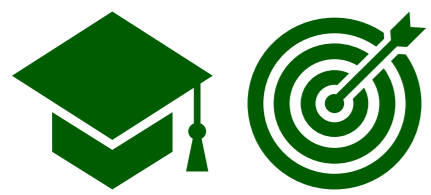
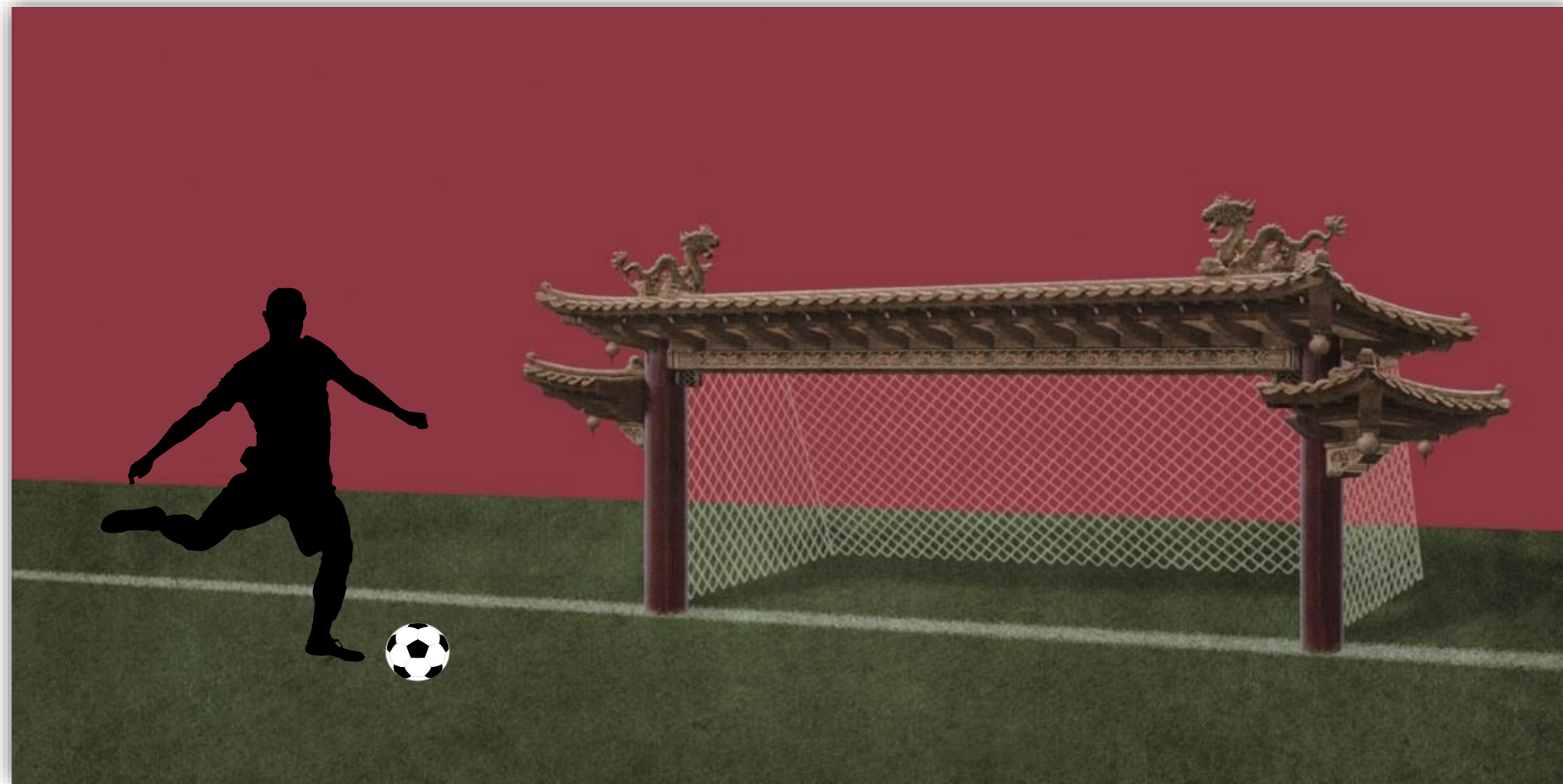
- The outcomes from this research show that there are indeed some specific reasons that explain this movement players are doing from Brazil to Portugal
- Looking at both countries, there are some aspects that called the attention and that football management could improve
- As regards to the limitations of this study, the two data collection phases had some different constraints

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4

## Portuguese Football Talent Exports: Sino-Portuguese Football Relationship



For decades, Portuguese football exports to China have been expressed in 3 modes, namely introduction of Portuguese football managers, “Bring in” strategy and “Go out” strategy. The study examines the changes to Chinese football brought by aforementioned 3 modes and their existing problems, in order to explore future challenges and opportunities in Sino-Portuguese football relationship.



### Introduction of Portuguese football managers

Portugal is the origin of not just the world's finest players, but also **the world's best football managers**; as of June 2020, there were a total of **25** football managers coaching overseas, placing Portugal 6th in the world (Poli, Ravenel & Besson 2020). The success of Portuguese managers has been shown by several championship triumphs and exceptional outcomes, and as a result, they have entered China's field of vision.



### “Bring in” Strategy

Youth academy is fundamental of football. The backwardness of youth football training in China is due to the youth's lack of understanding of the content and concept of football training, resorting to developed countries in football is necessary. Currently, **more than 150** Portuguese coaches are brought to China to instruct youth training.



### “Go out” Strategy

While Portugal exports football managers and youth training coaches to China, China also sends a huge number of young talents to study football in Portugal. In 2019, the number of Chinese footballers registered with the Portuguese Football Association exceeded **200**. As such, Portugal has become the most popular study abroad location for Chinese players.

## Research on introduction of Portuguese football managers



### Collectivist Culture

Portuguese football managers are heavily impacted by collectivist culture, therefore, they design strategy to target collective success rather than individual.



### Complexity, Contradiction, Circular Reasoning

Portuguese considers all the different positions and possibilities, which means they have adaptiveness and flexibility on tactics and strategy.

### The reasons why China chooses Portuguese football managers

### Experiential Teaching

Portuguese comes to realizations through experience, acting, observing, reflecting, and analyzing.



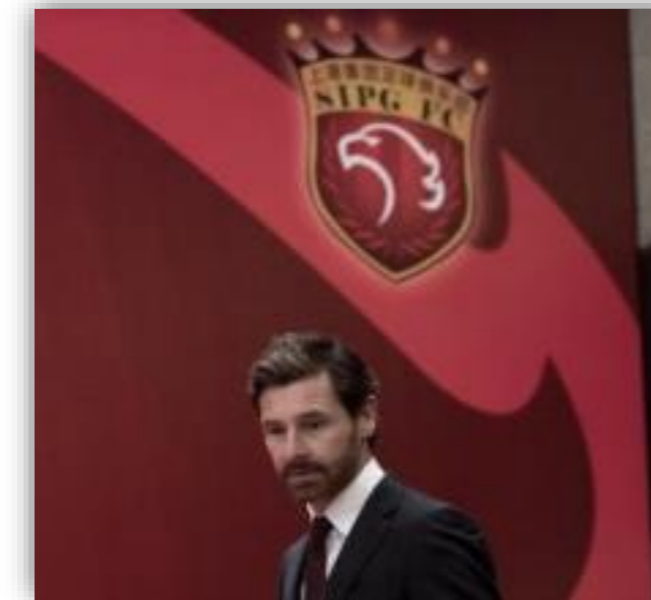
(Sobral, 2020)



### Pragmatic Thinking

One key aspect about the pragmatic is that it's easier to see the positives and negatives of each strategic decision, because it's based in practical, empirical evidence.

The coaching philosophy of Portuguese football managers, which is tightly connected with the status of Chinese football, should result in a win-win situation, however the results are not satisfactory.



### Unsatisfactory Performance:

- In the Chinese Men's Professional Football League, a total of 9 Portuguese football managers have coached. With the exception of one, none of the others have coached for the same squad for more than one year.
- Chinese players are accustomed to **obeying orders** and find it **difficult to make judgments** based on their own knowledge and thinking; it is tough to communicate tactical philosophy to them (Sousa, 2020).
- **Objective factors** such as player fitness, cultural diversity, chaotic Chinese football management and **subjective factors** like Portuguese football managers trouble integrating into the Chinese football milieu, lacking comprehension of Chinese football and difficulties working with the team constrained their coaching performances (Ren, 2012).

## Research on the problems of Chinese football youth academy and Portugal's role on "Bring in" strategy

### "Bring in" Strategy:

Introducing international high-level coach teams to guide youth training in football schools or clubs

### Problems Discovered



- Many Chinese teams do not have youth training system, while their management has high expectations for performance. (Zhang, 2006).
- The number of young athletes is minimal, resulting in the club's failure to keep up with the youth and talents (Wang, 2003).
- The level of training science is poor, experience and feeling have become the primary means of training (Li & Zhang, 2012).
- Athletes have little opportunity to put what they've learned into practice (Costa, 2012).
- Due to the relatively low level of education of football players, certain training methods are difficult to comprehend.
- Chinese youth football academies place a greater emphasis on professional football tactics while ignoring the growth of football cultural understanding (Liu & Zhao, 2007).
- Students have little awareness of professional football training and low interest (Wang, 2015).



Hugo Martins, source:  
<https://baijiahao.baidu.com/s?id=1682598007960855615&wfr=spider&for=pc>



In reality, "Bring in" Strategy has helped to improve the aforementioned concerns. Portuguese have been instrumental in putting this strategy into reality.

In China, more than 150 Portuguese are conducting youth training. Hugo Martins, a Portuguese coach based in Ordos, China, is one instance. He encourages collaboration, opposes over-strengthening, and uses scientific training methods to bring each child to their full potential. He not only worked to create a favorable environment for youth football in the neighborhood throughout his coaching years, but also helped more parents appreciate the value of youth football training. This is essentially the kind of youth football academy China requires.

## Research on "Go out" strategy and Portugal's role

### "Go out" Strategy:

Send talented young football players from China to world-leading football power with comprehensive youth training system to learn.

Portugal is the most popular destination. According to statistic, the number of Chinese footballers registered with the FPF has already surpassed 200 and numerous Chinese businesspeople have begun to invest in Portuguese clubs (LunengQingxun, 2018).

### Portugal's Advantages:



Portugal might be a **launching pad** for players looking to move to the United Kingdom or Spain. Those that opt to return to China, on the other hand, will be **more competitive** in the home league as a consequence of their international experience.



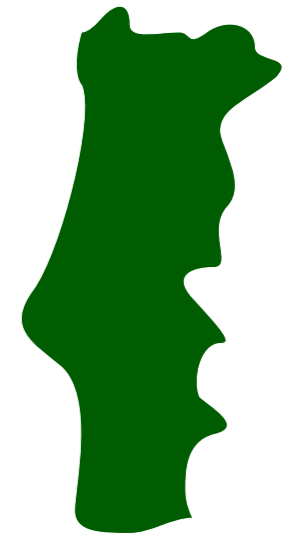
Investors will profit financially by sending their own players to the club in which they invest.



Portuguese clubs have **advanced football ideals** as well as a **rigorous youth training system** that is based on league clubs and their **training bases' construction and facilities** are among the best in Europe, with **Portuguese football star effect**, a large number of Chinese players has naturally been drawn (Sohu, 2020).



200+ Players



Low Effectiveness

One of the most important initiatives is the Chinese Football Association's "500.com Star Project." In 2012, 24 players from all around the country born in the 1990s were chosen to study in Portugal. Their performance, on the other hand, fell short of expectations.



- Young players under the age of 18 are not eligible to apply for international transfers, according to FIFA rules.
- Players' fundamental skills are lacking and finding it difficult to adjust to the overseas team's rhythm, resulting in poor training quality and failure to achieve the desired results.
- Another concern is players' lack of adaptation to life and self-discipline. Players are regularly in touch with Chinese partners, which prevents them from properly integrating into Portuguese football culture, resulting in a poor success rate (Zhou, 2014) (LunengQingxun, 2018).



We may discover that previous academic research has merely **exposed problems** in China's youth training system and the **causes for the low quality** of Chinese youth training, but no scientific improvement methods to solve these concerns have been addressed.

As a result, the following research questions are proposed:

RQ1. What are the characteristics of the Sino-Portuguese relationship in football?

RQ2. How might this relationship be improved?

To solve above questions, this study used mixed methods from various dimensions to analyze Portugal's football exports potential. This workstream principally followed a **sequential exploratory mixed method research design** with inductive and deductive approaches, using qualitative and quantitative methods to analyze the factors that contribute to the unsatisfactory effectiveness of football cooperation between China and Portugal, and provide scientific and constructive solutions.

## Qualitative Research



- **Interview with Portuguese football professional**

From the **perspective of experts**, an interview with a Portuguese football practitioner is undertaken to analyze the effectiveness of Sino-Portuguese football relationship. This is a qualitative data collecting approach, with the target profile being a **Portuguese coach working in China** who plays a key role in the development of the Chinese youth academy system. These inquiries are direct and focused in order to obtain information from the respondent.

## Quantitative Research



- **Online questionnaire**

To collect statistically significant data, an online survey is built, aiming at **Chinese football lovers** or those with a **basic grasp of the football**. The goal is to learn about **Chinese society's perceptions** of Portugal's football exports to China, as well as opinions on the appropriateness of 3 different Sino-Portuguese football cooperation modes, and to **make recommendations** on how to promote Portuguese football philosophy and **raise public football awareness** in China. The survey is distributed via social media (primarily WeChat), an anonymous link, and snowball sampling, with respondents being asked to share it with people who fit the target profile.

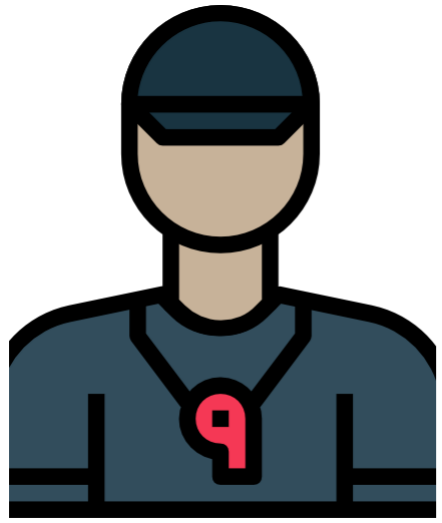


- **Analysis of web scraped data**

Quantify movements and discover trends in China-Portugal exchanges using online scraped data from the transfer market.

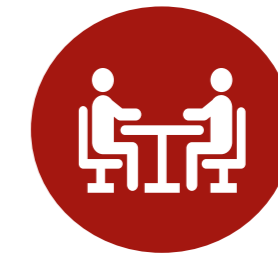
## Qualitative research- Interview with Portuguese football professional

## Interview Target



## Portuguese football professional working in China

- A Portuguese UEFA coach, scout, director, and former semi-professional footballer.
- Head Coach of the Meizhou Football Association and Head Coach and Director of Jiaying Xinjiang FC.
- Team composition: 3 Portuguese and 3 Chinese.
- Primarily in charge of one women's and one men's football squad.



## His Views



Chinese football management team is focused on **immediate success and profit**, primarily concerned with the game's short-term victories and losses, rather than its long-term growth.



In contrast to Portuguese youth training, China's youth training approach is **outmoded**, and there is a **lack of continuity** in the entry of foreign coaches into the country.



One of the largest barriers to football's development is China's so-called "**Relationship Culture**," which dominates the football to a large extent.



It is undeniably beneficial to send Chinese players to Portugal for training. And **the younger** the players are, **the better** they will be able to incorporate the new football culture and meet match expectations.

## His Contribution



Accurately diagnosed the problems in Chinese youth football training.



Provided appropriate improvement plans.



Meizhou football consistently ranked among the top in domestic youth competitions.



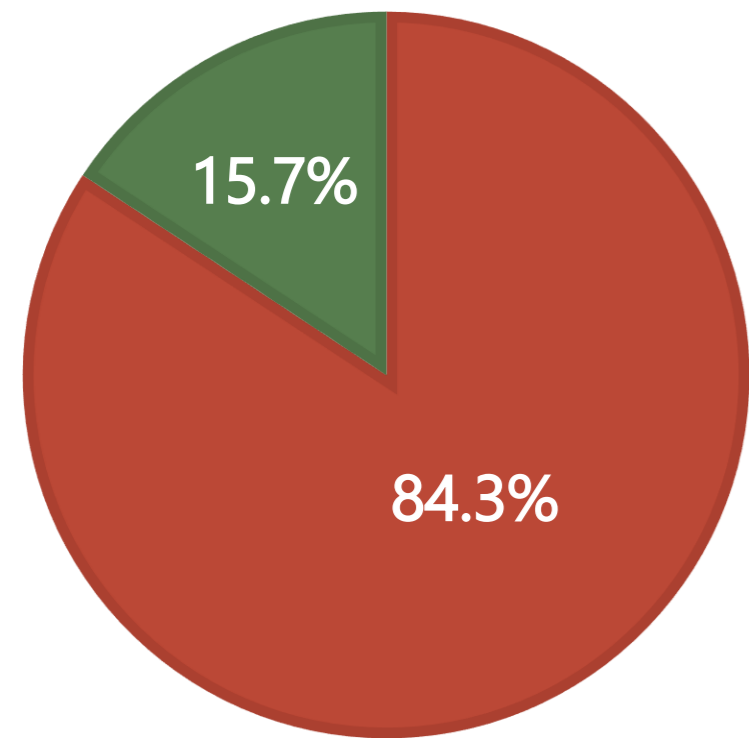
Suggested sending coaches to Portugal to study in addition to only sending players.

Quantitative research- Online questionnaire

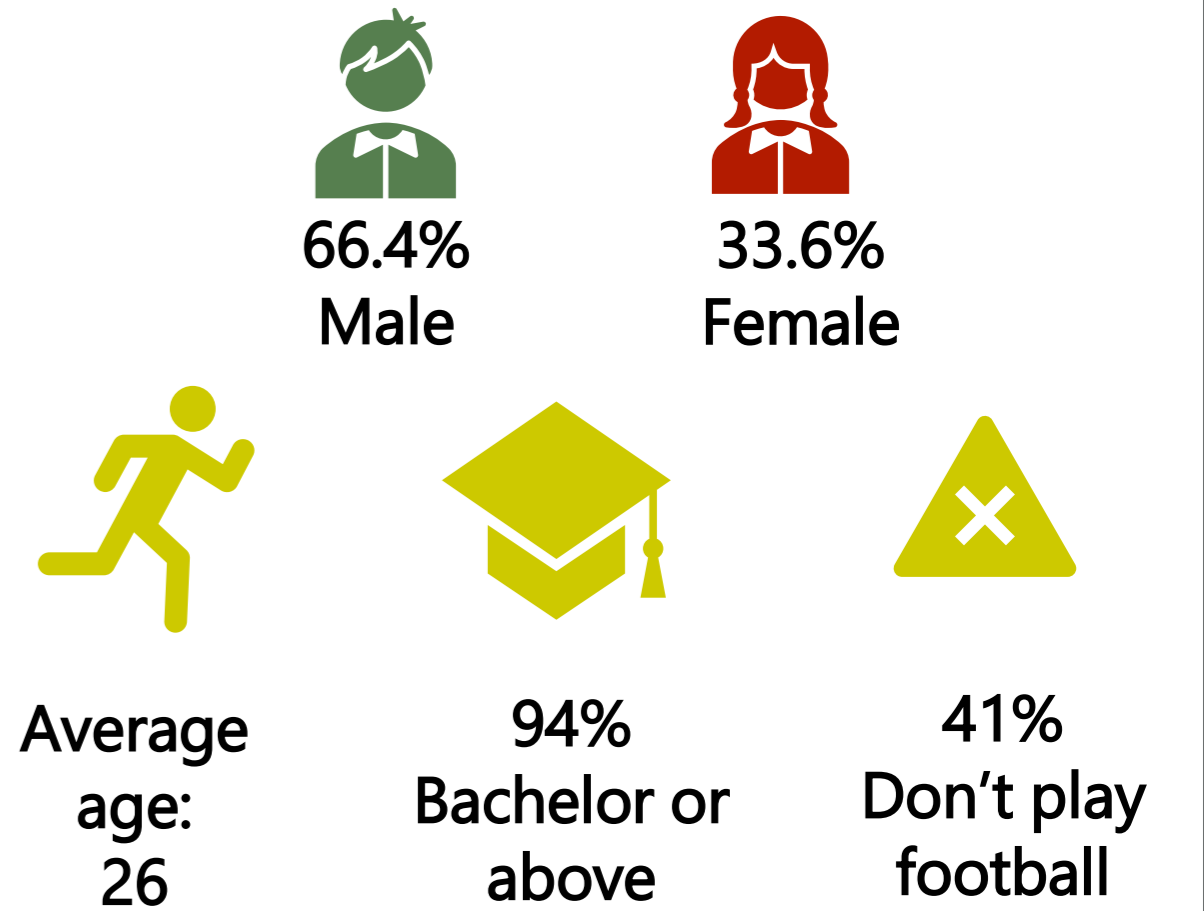
**Purpose of the survey:**

Determine the level of comprehension of the Portuguese football brand among **Chinese socioeconomic groups**, as well as their perspectives on the **growth of Chinese football**.

- Follow football news at least once a week
- Don't follow football news at least once a week



134 valid responses



**Recognition of Portuguese Football in China**

- 78.4 % follow European football, which is consistent with the fact that Europe is the world's football center, with more than half of the top 30 national teams based there.
- 52.2 % don't follow the Portuguese league, which is unsurprising given its lack of notoriety and football stars compared to the top 5 European leagues. This, as we've seen, is also linked to the fact that so much talent gets exported before making a significant effect on the Portuguese league.
- 95.5 % are familiar with a particular number of Portuguese football professionals and clubs; 25 of the 134 respondents are aware of more than 30 Portuguese football pros, 15 with 20-30, 19 with 10-20, and 35 with 5-10. Given that the majority of people don't follow the Portuguese league, this statistic is acceptable.
- 63.4 % believe Portuguese football is world first class. Because Portugal has developed many exceptional players in recent years and the Portuguese national team has won the 2016 European Cup and the 2019 UEFA Nations League.
- 50.7 % claimed their favorite football player is a Portuguese player, demonstrating the popularity recognition of Portuguese football in China.

Quantitative research- Online questionnaire continue

Attitude Towards Introduction Of Portuguese Football Philosophy

- Rating of the potential of eight nations to export football.

Brazil was chosen as the #1 spot the most times (Mean=3.83, SD=2.82). Portugal came in #2 spot (Mean=3.66, SD=2.23), outperforming expectations given that no Portuguese U20 player has been introduced to China since the 21st century.



- Rating of the performance of Portuguese football managers who had coached in Chinese professional leagues.

Most respondents gave 3–7 (Mean=5.72, SD=2.11).



- Whether bring Portuguese football professionals to China or not (including players, managers, coaching squad...).

Despite Chinese social groups' conservative opinions on Portuguese football managers, 124 favorable responses were supplied, accounting for 92.5 % of respondents. With these numbers to back it up, it's safe to claim that Chinese society's overall attitude towards Portuguese football exports to China is favorable and optimistic.

Attitude Towards Portugal's Role On Chinese Football Youth Academy

- Thoughts on Sino-Portuguese cooperation in the development of Chinese youth training.

The majority of respondents agree that "Go out" (Mean=1.60, SD=0.69) and "Bring in" (Mean=1.69, SD=0.71) are either certainly or perhaps beneficial to the development of Chinese youth football training.

- Choice among "Stay in China and receive Chinese coaches' training", "Stay in China and receive foreign coaches' training" and "Go overseas, receive foreign coaches' training and experience local football culture".

The third choice was chosen by 84.3%, which corresponds with the interviewed coach's opinion, that Chinese football needs to reach out.



- Choice of preferred locations to receive training if they were players.

After Spain and Germany, 16.4 % selected Portugal (Mean=3.71, SD=2.04), which is in the 3rd position. Given that Spanish and German football have a greater impact in China than Portuguese football, and have equally sophisticated young training systems, this outcome is reasonable.

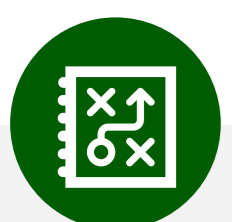
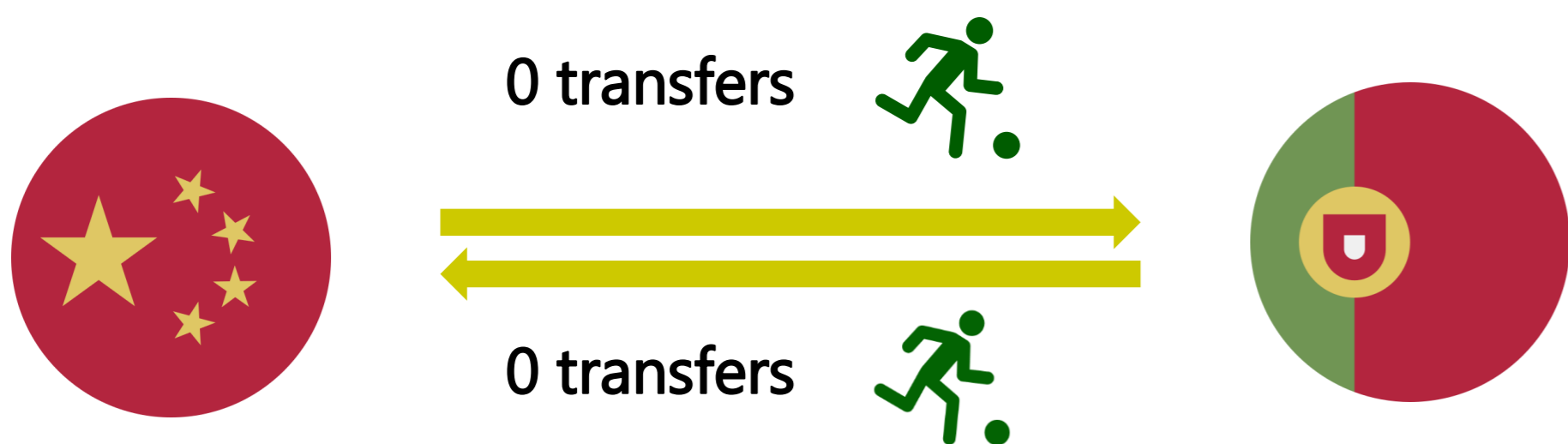


Quantitative research- Analysis of web scraped data

	Total Transfers	Export Transfers	Export Rate
Portugal	247	115	46.6%
Spain	340	124	36.5%
England	673	65	9.7%

Between 2000 and 2021, it was discovered that Portuguese players made a total of 247 transfers, 115 of which were exports, accounting for 46.6 % of all transfers; in comparison, Spanish players made 124 exporting transfers out of 340 transfers, accounting for only 36.5%. Take England as another example, there were 673 transfers in total, but only 65 were exports, making up only 9.7 %. This data once again confirms Portugal's football export potential.

Since 21st century, there were 0 transfer or exchange of U20 players between China and Portugal. Because of the high earnings, some Portuguese players went to China at the end of their careers, but their presence did not help the team's competitiveness. Due to the fierce competition in Portugal, many good players in their 20s can only play in low-level competitions. In recent years, the Chinese Super League has received sufficient funding, and its overall quality is equivalent to these leagues. As a consequence, the introduction of these players would not only boost the competitiveness of Chinese Super League clubs, but will also offer these Portuguese players with a higher financial income.



Answer to RQ1. Characteristics Of The Sino-Portuguese Relationship In Football:

Favorable and sustainable, but has not gotten the best result due to limitations of China's own backward football concept, chaotic management, and lack of a decent football environment.



Answer to RQ2. Ways To Improve This Relationship:

- Make adjustments on the present approaches.
- Develop novel cooperation modes in response to the issues discovered.

## Academic Implications



Sino-Portuguese football relationship is regarded have positive impact. However, it has upside potential.

- The implementation of 3 modes helped **identify deficiencies** in Chinese football and **realize daring improvements**, resulting in trained teams achieving certain progress and successes.
- **Chinese society recognizes the Portuguese football brand and its export potential**, agrees that **continuing to promote Portuguese football philosophy** and deepening partnership with the FPF would surely assist Chinese football development.
- The major impediments to Chinese football's growth are **backward and inadequate youth training system**, as well as **the absence of a suitable football environment and culture**. To strengthen the domestic football atmosphere, the most effective strategy presently is to send more football practitioners to Portugal to experience local football culture and to expand the impact of Portuguese football brands in China.

The findings are in total accord with expert judgements in the literature that it is **critical to seek assistance from high-level football areas in order to enhance Chinese football, and Portugal is a cost-effective solution.**

## Managerial Implications



- **Further improvement of youth training**

Apart from sending young players to Portugal, China should also send coaches to study. FPF may invite experts and experienced professionals to provide them with the appropriate training. This would allow China not only establish its own unique youth training system, but also promote Portuguese football methodology.

- **Expansion of Portuguese football brand in Marketing**

FPF has already **formed partnerships with some Chinese well-known sites** such as **Weibo and Firefox Sports**. However, FPF might draw inspiration from the EPL model to cooperate with additional platforms and media to **broadcast Portuguese league matches** and **distribute Portuguese football news** in order to further boost the influence of the Portuguese football brand.

- **Football economy**

FPF can cooperate with Benfica, Sporting, and Porto, as well as other **Portuguese clubs**, to **build football schools** in China. This would not only **allow talented Chinese players to play in Portugal**, but it would also allow clubs to **keep informed about Chinese football policies**, giving them a **competitive advantage** in the market.

## Limitations & Further Research



### Limitations:

- The sample size for qualitative research is **insufficient**.
- Only used the interview from the perspective of the person who gave help.
- Lack the **perspective from people who receive assistance**.



### Further Research:

- Conduct a study to learn what **Chinese players** really think about the "Go out" and "Bring in" strategies.
- Gather additional data to assess the feasibility of **bringing young Portuguese players** from lower-level competitions to China.

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- Zhou, Xiang. 2014. "An Investigation On The Status Quo Of Chinese Youth Football Players Studying Abroad."

A group of young football players and a coach are gathered on a green artificial turf field. The players are wearing dark blue and white training kits with 'EVORA' and a crest on the front. One player is kneeling on the ground, and another is sitting on the ground in front of him. The coach, wearing a dark blue puffer jacket, is standing and gesturing with his hands. The background shows a large, white, curved structure, possibly a stadium or training facility.

5

# Portuguese Football Talent Exports: How Social Capital Influences the Exports of Portuguese Football Coaches and Players

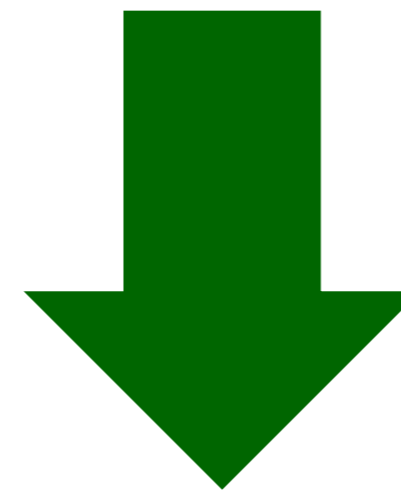
**CLUBS AT PORTUGAL HAVE THE BEST PERFORMANCES WHEN SELLING AT PROFIT**

**PORTUGUESE NATIONAL TEAMS ARE HIGHLY FEEDED BY FOREIGN CLUBS**

**FOOTBALL EXPORTS ARE A MAJOR REALITY OF PORTUGUESE FOOTBALL.**

**PORTUGUESE ACADEMIES ARE KNOWN TO BE THE BEST IN THE WORLD**

**THE CONQUERS OF PORTUGUESE PLAYERS AND COACHES ARE HIGHLY COVERED ON MEDIA**



**TO UNDERSTAND THE PORTUGUESE FOOTBALL EXPORTS BECOMES VITAL IN ORDER TO RECONSIDER WHAT IS THE POSITION FPF SHOULD ADOPT AND TO DEFINE THE PATH AND REGULATIONS FPF WANTS TO INFLUENCE**

## Social Capital Theories

### Coleman

Departing from Bourdieu's work, he creates a definition that includes, at the same time, aspects of a **functionalist view** of social action (as conditioned by social structure); and aspects of a **rational approach** of utility maximization as the goal of any individual (Coleman, 1988). Like Bourdieu, social structure of relationships among people; and both consider it to be productive (Coleman 1990). Coleman's theory diverges from Bourdieu by not acknowledging that:

- the property held collectively is considered to be **cultural capital**
- **social capital is a scarce resource**

### Bourdieu

Bourdieu defines social capital as the "aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquittance and recognition (membership to a group)" (Bourdieu, 1986). The **bigger the network** of an individual, the **higher the social capital** he or she may acquire. The network is established through relationships, who require **different levels of investment generating different pay offs**. (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). There relationships created may **be institutionalized** through groups, that may be translated in **symbols of status**. By this, the individual gets the possibility of accessing certain positions in society (Bourdieu, 1980).

### Putman

Putman has a more aggregate view on social capital (Putman, 2000). For him the passe for civic participation and trust among states is social capital. Through social capital, the political culture of society is defined (Putman, 1993). Putman has a different view on social capital that is different for Bourdieu because:

- Putman goes beyond the individual approach of Bourdieu and attributes **social capital to large population aggregates**.
- Putman disagrees with Bourdieu in the sense that social capital acquisition is **conditional on the social class**, by arguing it is available to everyone.



- Bourdieu's view on social capital is to be used in this study as it looks at social structures and connects it to a more traditional economic approach
- The possibility to contact with an author, such as Cardoso (2019) with work on Bourdieu theories of capital was crucial to take this option



## KINSHIP

The success in sports and the incentives to start playing football are deeply rooted in **kinship relations** (Novak, et al. 2020).

### Parents and other relatives :

- Engage in the club
- Promote an healthy connection between athletes and school
- Establish contacts to make their children grow in the sports

This is confirmed in the case of Portuguese Football, where **parents act as volunteers at clubs**, and the first who **suggest a career as footballer** if they recognise their children have the necessary skills (Domingues & Gonçalves, 2013).



## CLUB, PEERS & COACHES

The reality of the club and the validation of a coach connects to how serious a player **embraces a career as footballer**, doing whatever it takes to **persue it, including going abroad** (Augstad, et al. 2021). **The players who surround a young talent** are crucial foster the competition, improve skills, and increase focus. (Painter and Price, 2019). Clubs are also a **symbol of status** for certain players and provide the **necessary networks** that a player needs to improve (Domingues & Gonçalves, 2013).



## AGENTS

Agents have powerful connections within football with players recognizing they are **key to succeed as a footballer**. A certain agente can be a **social symbol**, that validates the quality of a player.

By promoting the quality of a player, **agentes are an important, professional nod in the a player's network** (Demazière & Jouvenet. 2013).



## PLAYER MOBILITY

Two major impacts of player migration had two main impacts identified in literature:

- **The quality of National Team**, teams with players playing abroad have performance impacts (Baur & Lehmann. 2007).
- The players, conditional on the **league where they move** to and the **level** at which they play (Nolasco. 2018).



- The connection between social capital and sports was considered in literature in relations regarding kinship, peers, coaches and agents
- The mobility of a player was a phenomenon subject to less study, with interesting remarks on a league

## General plan used to answer the Research Questions

RQ1

How is Social Capital connected to the Exports of Portuguese Football Coaches and Players?

RQ2

How do Players and Coaches perceive the impact of their migration on their careers and on Portuguese Football?

### Sequential exploratory mixed methods research

It comprises a **qualitative phase** followed by a **quantitative** one for the purpose of **elaborating on the initial findings**

#### Ontological

A degree of reality is present in society and it is independent of human beliefs

#### Epistemological

One can only understand what happens in the social world if the social structures behind them are understood

#### Axiological

The content and possible findings of this study are indicative that the way we see recruitment and the necessary skills to succeed are changing

(Saunders et al., 2012))



#### 1. Qualitative Phase

Semi-structured interviews with respondents who matched a **pre-determined profile**: Portuguese players and coaches that worked abroad without age or professional level limitations, but ensuring geographic diversity



#### 2. Quantitative Phase

Data base created through a Qualtrics Questionnaire . Sent to players and coaches that played abroad for at least one season. The survey includes a scale from 0 to 10 (the highest level) that evaluates the degree of Social Capital



- A sequential exploratory mixed methods research uses the qualitative and the quantitative analytical procedures and data collection techniques
- The targeted profile were professional football players and coaches that worked abroad for at least one season
- *This study applies the methodology used by Cardoso (2019) to evaluate capital impacts on students and Ambrósio (2020) who applied it to Portugal.*

## Interview guidelines and respondents' profiles

(...)

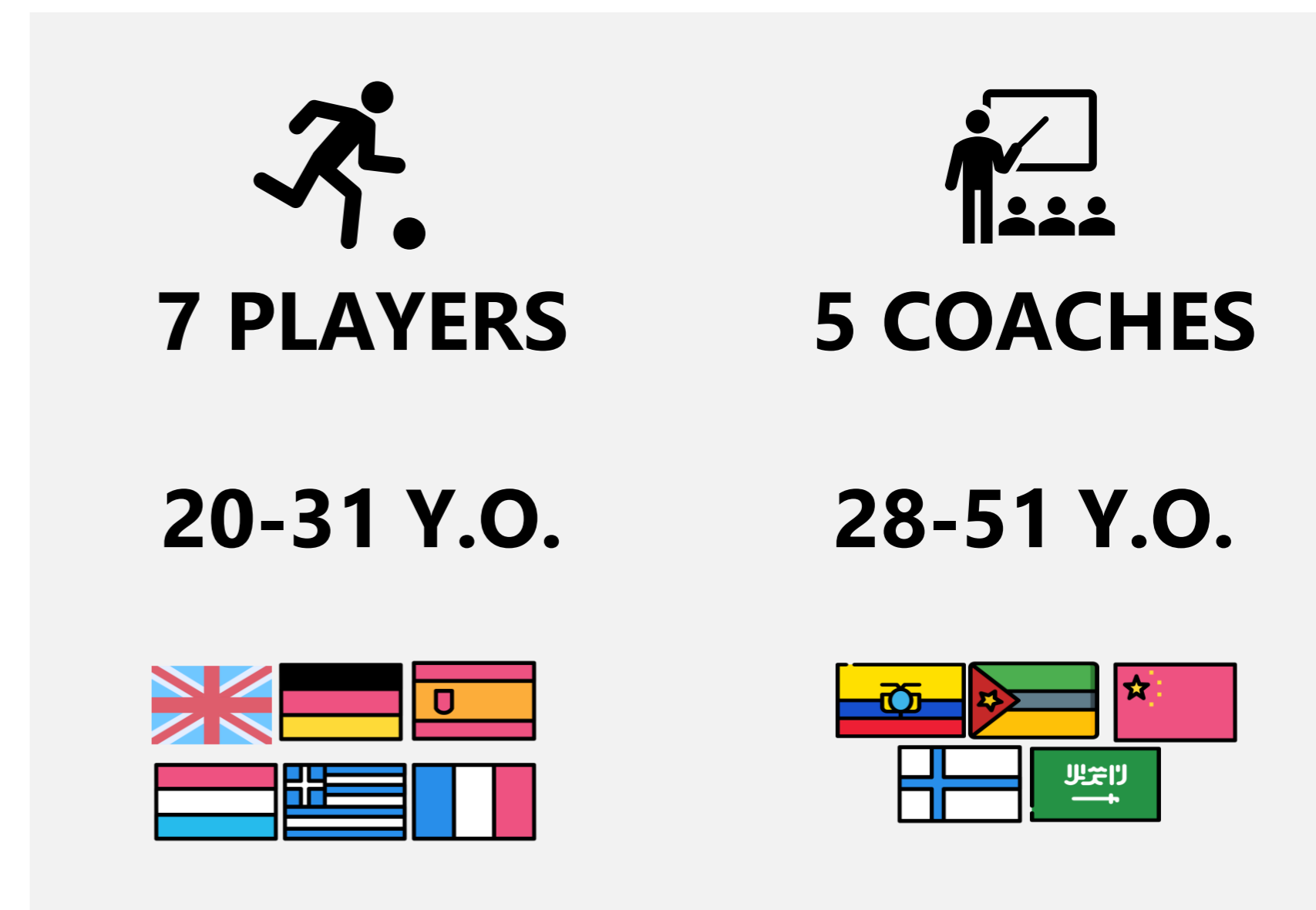
### Social Capital

6. Were you member of any group/community/society within your community apart from football?
7. Was your family affiliated any group/community/society?
8. Who was the person who encouraged you to play football?
9. How was the process to start playing football
10. Do you have an agent?
11. When did you decide that an agent was crucial to your career?

(...)

### Experience Abroad

22. How did the opportunity to play/coach abroad arise?
23. Which were the factor that made you go abroad? 24. What would be the factors that would make refuse the opportunity to play/coach abroad?
24. In which ways did this experience helped you?
25. Did all your goals have been accomplished (earnings, tactical and technical improvement, attain certain clubs...)
26. Do you think a player/coach needs to go abroad to be validated?
27. In your opinion, who was more impacted by your abroad experience (club, Portuguese Football, you)
28. Finally, based on your own experience, what could FPF do to improve the success of players that go abroad and foster their desires?



- The interview included an measurement of the social capital accumulated by players and coaches and an analysis on their experience abroad
- From the 12 respondents, 7 were players and 5 were coaches. Players aged between 18 and 31 while coaches between 28 and 51
- All respondents played, at least for one season abroad

## Respondents' answers and experiences

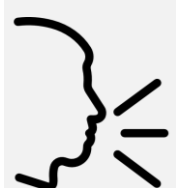
### Social Capital During Development

#### The Beginning

- All players and coaches **identify a specific person that directly incentive** them to start playing football, naming a relatives, friends or community members

*"My father works in construction and the father of (Now a very famous player) bought one of his houses and they became friends. He was a coach of the local football club. When I was a kid, knowing that I enjoyed football, he encouraged me to join the club"*

(I1, 20, Germany)



#### The Transition to Coaching

- For the coaches, the start of their careers is related to the **end of a path as player** (that all had, even if at low levels),
- Mentioned a **coach** who, by acknowledging their tactical leadership over the others, indicated them to coach the **academy level** or even coordinate some drills of the teams they were still players.

*"In my second year of my course I was still playing, but at the same time I was helping the coach in the first part of the training (as the coach did not have much education). Later that year I was invited to be the head coach of a under 13 team."*

(I10, 41, Finland)



#### The Lifechanging Moment

- The identification of players by scouts
- Two players mention the opportunities that opened due to a single moment

*"I joined [a big Academy in Portugal] because I played a tournament and there was a scout there. I doubt I would be a football player if it was not for that moment, being a kid growing in a small village it is not common to have a big team watching your games"*

(I2, 20 Germany)



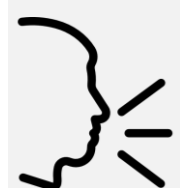
## Social Capital when Moving Abroad

### The Opportunity for Players

- The interest of clubs prompted by **agents**
- The specific interest of a **coach**

*“From 16 to 19 I did my academy in a solid club. They opened the doors of their B team. But in order to change to the A team the coach said I needed to play more regularly at a higher level. Then my agent and the club enter in action to try to find a club where I could be loaned.”*

(I7, 21, Spain)



### The Opportunity for Coaches

- All connect coach experiences to **accumulated social capital**
- The importance of the **coach network** to be appointed to certain jobs (QI –Quem Indica)
- The importance of the network as a **counselling tool** before going abroad

*“I started looking for job opportunities, a former GK coach of mine was in this club and said for me to apply, giving a word for me.”*

(I11, 51, Equador)



### Social Capital Improvements Abroad

- When abroad social capital is created, too
- Social capital created abroad opens **opportunities for players and coaches**
- It is an opportunity to develop their careers in the **regions they move**, preventing them to return to Portugal.

*“There are a lot of coaches that go abroad and do not comeback anymore (even if they intended to) because people lost track of them in Portugal and because new doors were opened abroad. There are the coaches that keep changing countries, but there are also the ones who make a name in one country” (I11, 28, Mozambique)*



## Respondents' answers and experiences

### Experience Abroad

#### A Fruitful Experience

- Both for agents and players the experience abroad is considered an **opportunity to learn**
- This benefits are acknowledge even for those playing at **lower leagues**

*"If I had stayed in Portugal I wouldn't be as good as I am today. Because a player's maturity is highly value, and in Portugal it would take more time for me to grow up."*

(12, 21 years old, Netherlands)



#### Social Capital Improvements Abroad

- It is an opportunity to develop their careers in the **regions they move**, preventing them to return to Portugal.

*"There are a lot of coaches that go abroad and do not comeback anymore (even if they intended to) because people lost track of them in Portugal and because new doors were opened abroad. There are the coaches who make a name in one country or region"*

(111, 28, Mozambique)



#### The Return

- Those who return mention **family reasons** (being closer to family, raise children in Portugal);
- Those who are still abroad mentioned the desire to return to play at the **club where they started**
- Highlight to the reduced awareness of their work when playing abroad

*"If you are not seen, you are not taken into account. And that only occur in the top 5 leagues, or if accomplish an international title."*

(18, 46, Saudi Arabia)



## The Respondents' Profile

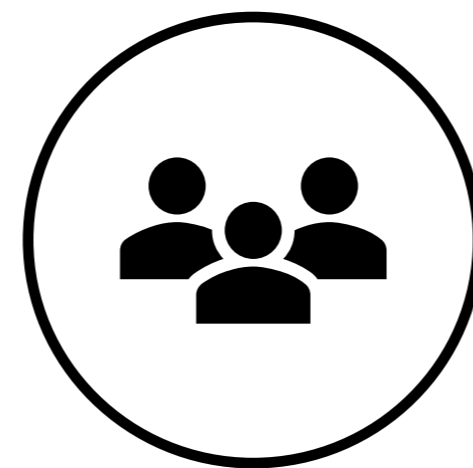


## Quantitative Findings



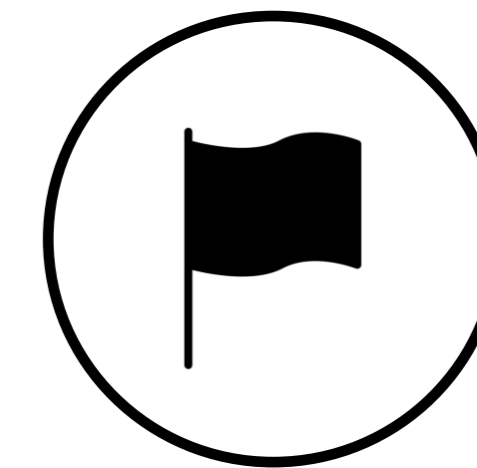
### THE FATHERS' ROLE

On a scale from 0 to 10, players evaluate the support of fathers as 7,22, on average. When father is the main support, there is a correlation to their ties to football (0,53\*\*) demonstrating that the set of networks created by parents are decisive to the pursuit of a professional career



### THE COMMUNITY

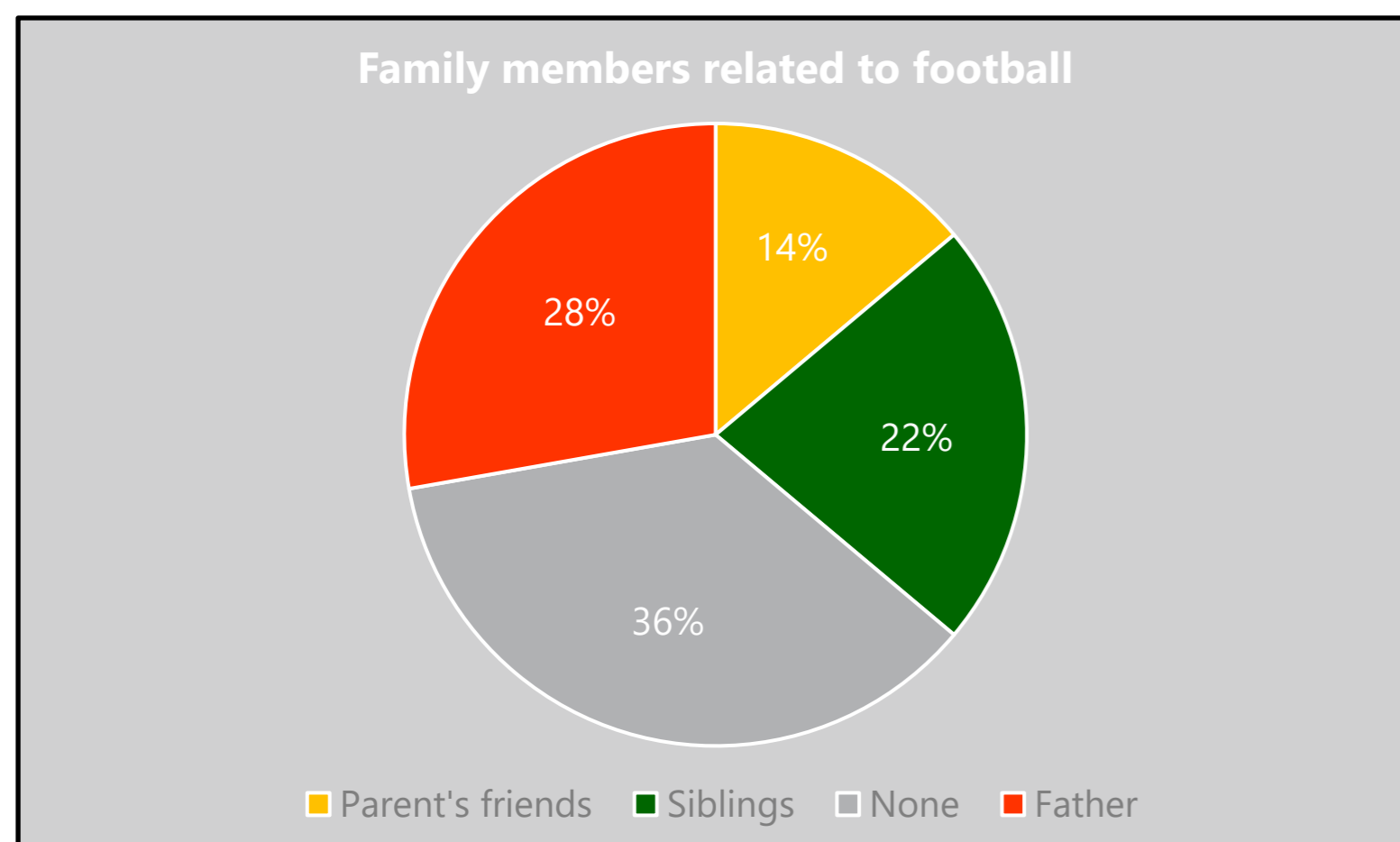
on a scale from 0 to 10, players ranked, on average, the importance of football in their community as a 7.53 out of 10. In addition, 89% of the players had a football field near his residence, a place where social interaction in football is promoted and peer incentives are developed.



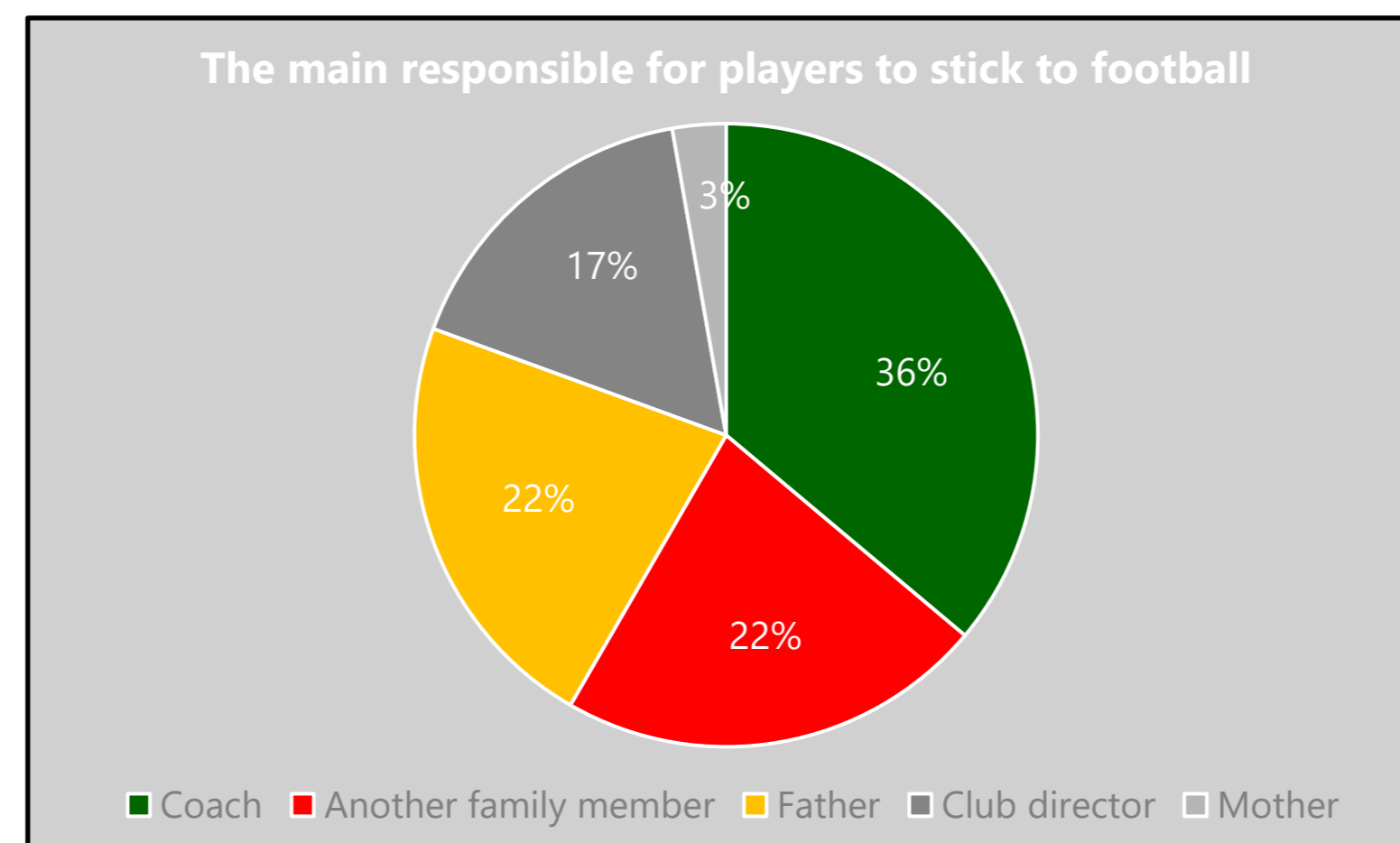
### THE FATHERS' ROLE

There is a connection between players acting abroad and the those with the number of appearances in the professional National Team (0,32\*) at the same time age present a weaker correlation with the appearances at the professional National Team, meaning that the National Team benefits from players that act abroad

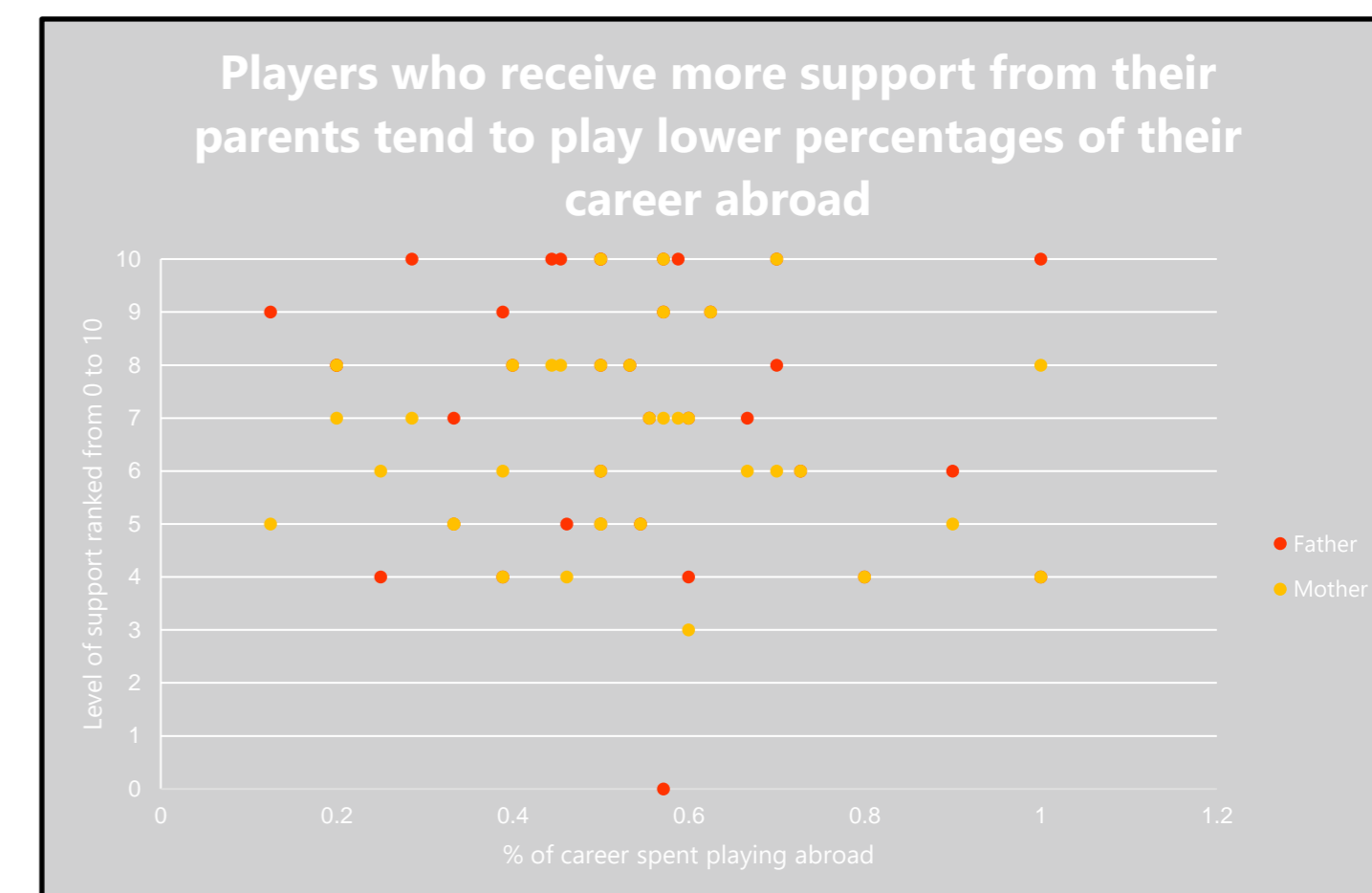
## Social capital impact both the development of the player and his decision to go abroad



Out of all respondents, **64% had a family member that had tie to a football club** or association. This indicates that the connection of the majority of players to football started through **kinship relations**. The first degree of social capital is, in fact family, and the **positions held in society by family member become network connections valuable** for players careers.



After being introduced to football, **coaches are illustrated by players as the reason why they stuck to the sport**, with 36% of them mentioning a coach as an important part of their amusement for the sport at a young age. It is important to highlight that 22% mention a club director. The environment at the clubs becomes a **social capital factor that impacts the development of a players** and a potential factor of success.



**Kinship relations are also connected to the decision to go abroad.** The player mobility is related to social capital in the sense that family networks established may constitute a factor for players to remain in Portugal.

## Research's main contributions

### Academic Implications

The presented study shows that **social capital impacts positively** the success of Portuguese football talent and provides incentives to both players and coaches to **go abroad**. This way it becomes an application to the world of football of the Bourdieusian theory on social capital, as an enabler of social network expansion and institutionalized relationships and a contributing factor to social placement and success (Bourdieu, 1986). By the same token, this study confirms previous research by concluding that **player's kinship relations the networks** they create during their careers and the choices on **professional relationships provide them benefits** through their careers and when the opportunity to play abroad arises (Painter and Price, 2019). Moreover, it contributes to academia, by introducing the particular **relevance of scouting**, the extension of social capital implications to the career of coaches and the discussion on the **impacts to countries of football exports**.

### Limitations

One of the limitations of this study was the **dispersion of coaches and players through age and level of performance**. In spite of it being a interesting way to capture the reality through a wider angle, it raises **limitations when looking at the specific impacts** of social capital on players and coaches and preventing, the creation of personas that would divide the types of players and coaches. Moreover, looking at the impacts created by social capital, ceteris paribus, prevented a deeper analysis of **cultural and economic capital reinforcements**.

### Managerial Implications

There are **three aspects** that the **football management could improve**:

1. Promote environments that increase the social capital of the players during their development (through competitions in Portugal and abroad) creating possibilities to interact with important stakeholders of the football industry
2. Increase its formative impact on the clubs (of all tiers) in order to create more management driven solutions, this would help clubs to be more transparent, more efficient, increasing the competition level
3. Efforts to retain talent are possible since, players show willingness to return to Portugal both for family reasons and as the end of the career as affection reasons. This implies that Portuguese football reputation is the first aspect to be developed.. This implies more opportunities for players, more competitiveness.

### Further Research

Now that a study estimated the general impacts of social capital on the Exports of Portuguese Football talent, it would be valuable to isolate these impacts according to the **function** of this talent (player, coach, agent, director), the **latitude** where they work (per continent) and the **level** (the international competition, the league or the relevance of the club).



- The outcomes from this research show that there social capital is connected to talent export and success.
- Social capital should be promoted, the management education of clubs reinforcement and the
- Treating talent in its broad definition provides limitations to this research, but at the same time an opportunity for further research

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A soccer ball is positioned in the bottom left corner of the image, resting on a green grass field. A white square with a thin border is located in the upper left quadrant, containing the number 6. The background is a blurred green field with white lines.

6

Portuguese Football Talent Exports:  
How Cultural Capital Influences the Exports of  
Portuguese Football Coaches and Players

# Finding out why Portuguese football players and coaches are so attractive to foreign teams and associations

- This presentation will focus on how Portugal has managed to become the most profitable exporter of talent in this market and what exactly makes Portuguese talent so appealing.
- Study conducted on Portuguese coaches and players resorting to Pierre Bourdieu's Capital Theory to help identify the most relevant factors present in exported talent

**RQ1**

What makes football talent want to play abroad?

**RQ2**

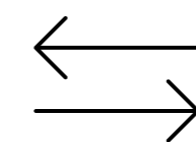
How do Players and Coaches perceive the impact of their migration?



The Portuguese association is the 3rd largest importer of international players but only the 8th largest spender on these imports and the 5th largest exporter, ranking as the top association with the most net profit from transfer fees, a total net profit 2,956.2m USD



The three largest Portuguese all rank as the top three clubs with positive net balance from transfer fees in the world.



2598 transfers for players with Portuguese Nationality, the 12<sup>th</sup> most worldwide despite Portugal only being the country with the 12<sup>th</sup> largest population in Europe in 2020.

## A small introduction to capital theory and culture capital

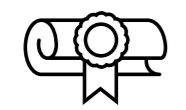
Pierre Bourdieu defines capital as accumulated labour in embodied forms that, when appropriated, enables agents (or groups of agents) to appropriate social energy in the energy of reified or living labour. Capital takes time to accumulate and as a potential capacity to produce profits and to reproduce itself in identical form. Bourdieu divides capital into 3 different forms:



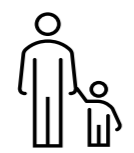
**Social** – An individual's collection of connections to different networks and communities which allow for potential benefits;



**Economic** – Liquid wealth directly convertible to money (or money itself), presenting itself in the form of property rights;



**Cultural** – An individual's formal and informal education. Acquired across each individual's different life fields with specific socialization interactions and experiences. Can be found in three different states:



**Embodied State** – Attitudes and states of mind that reflect an individual's acquired attitudes, skills and knowledge. Untransmissible at an immediate level;



**Objectified State** – Cultural goods owned by an individual. Immediately transmittable to another, both on a material and/or symbolical level;



**Institutionalized State** – Academic credentials and qualifications that represent specific properties of said capital as knowledge and skills.

## Research conducted with a sequential exploratory mixed-method approach

Two main phases of data collection:

1. **Qualitative** - Inductive stage, consisting of a qualitative exploratory data analysis aiming at exploring and discovering patterns on cultural capital among Portuguese exports
2. **Quantitative** - Deductive research aiming at obtaining quantitative data to test the hypotheses drawn in the initial stage

### Qualitative Research

- 12 semi-structured interviews with 5 Portuguese coaches and 7 players that had either coached/played in a football team abroad or were currently exercising their profession away from their home country.
- Quick background profiling and current professional situation;
- Measuring the interviewee's levels of capital;
- Understanding the individual's experience abroad and what led to the decision to play abroad.

### Quantitative Research

- Describing various indicators of cultural, social and economic capital through both multiple choice and scale questions.
- Ranking 5 different indicators on how much it affected respondents' decisions to exercise their profession abroad
- The questionnaire obtained a total of 48 responses, out of which 39 were players and the remaining 9 coaches.

## Some patterns among players' cultural capital were identified in the interviews, but coaches' inputs had more variability

### Current Situation and Career History



- Players played at around 3 different teams during formation years.
- Players started on a smaller club in their local town, eventually moving on to larger clubs in Portugal and signing their first professional contract at the age of 17.
- Interviewed coaches all played football before coaching (none at a professional level), with their first opportunities on a football technical team coming from helping around on their first club.

### Experience Abroad



- Interviewed players mostly aspired to play abroad due to a lack of both visibility and better financial conditions abroad, with the transition being facilitated by agents.
- Coaches refer to lack of demand for coaches in Portugal, attributing the connections made along their career as the most important factor to jumpstart a career outside of Portugal.

### Cultural Capital



- Most players reported feeling comfortable in English and Spanish and also being able to pick up basic levels of the language of the country where they played
- Coaches mentioned that knowing English was enough as language was not a significant barrier as the team hires translators.
- All players completed high school. High school GPAs between 11 and 14, with athletes mentioning how difficult it was to balance professional football with school.
- 2 coaches stated they had completed high school, two had completed a Master's degree and the other a PhD.

*I was in almost all positions of a technical team. As a coach, adjunct, analyst, scout, you become a more complete coach, because you know in detail every fraction of the process.*

**(19, 51, Ecuador)**



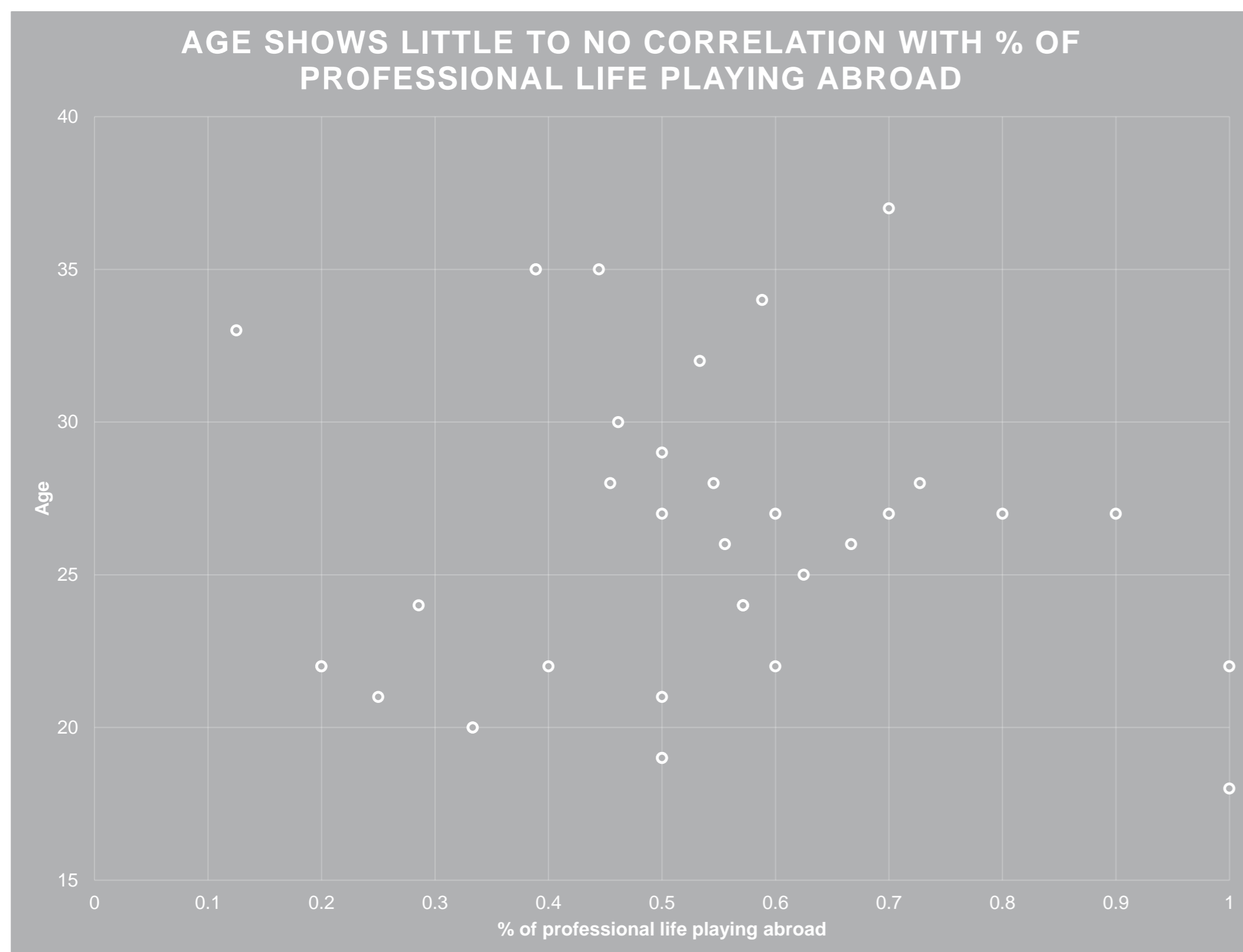
*"Coaches have translators, it is not a huge barrier: I am in Saudi Arabia, and I do not know the Arabic language"*

**(18, 46, Saudi Arabia)**



## The study's main variable - % of a player's professional career spent playing abroad - shows no correlation with a player's age

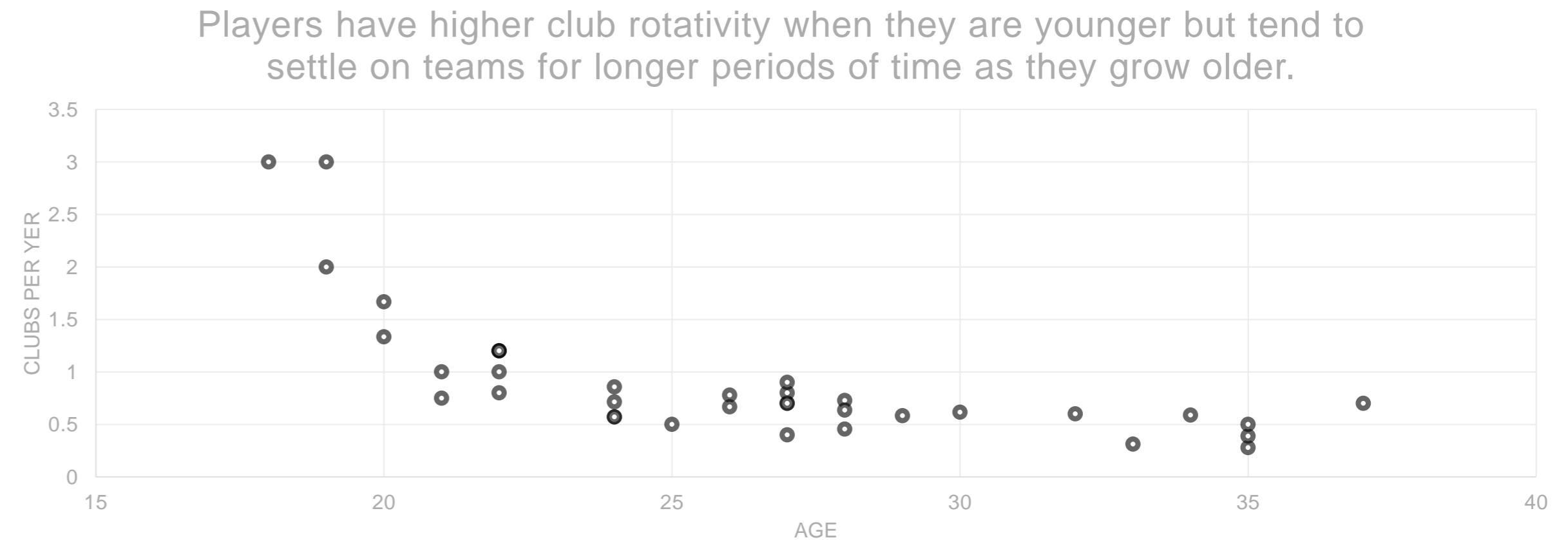
The questionnaire obtained a total of 43 valid answers, with the end sample being composed of 36 Portuguese players, aged from 18 to 37, and 7 coaches, aged between 20 and 51



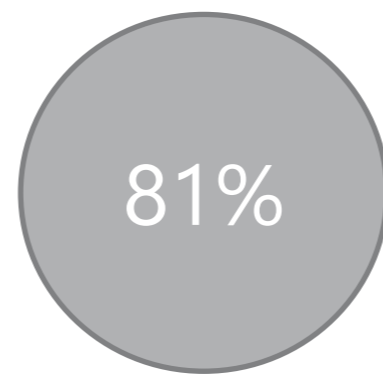
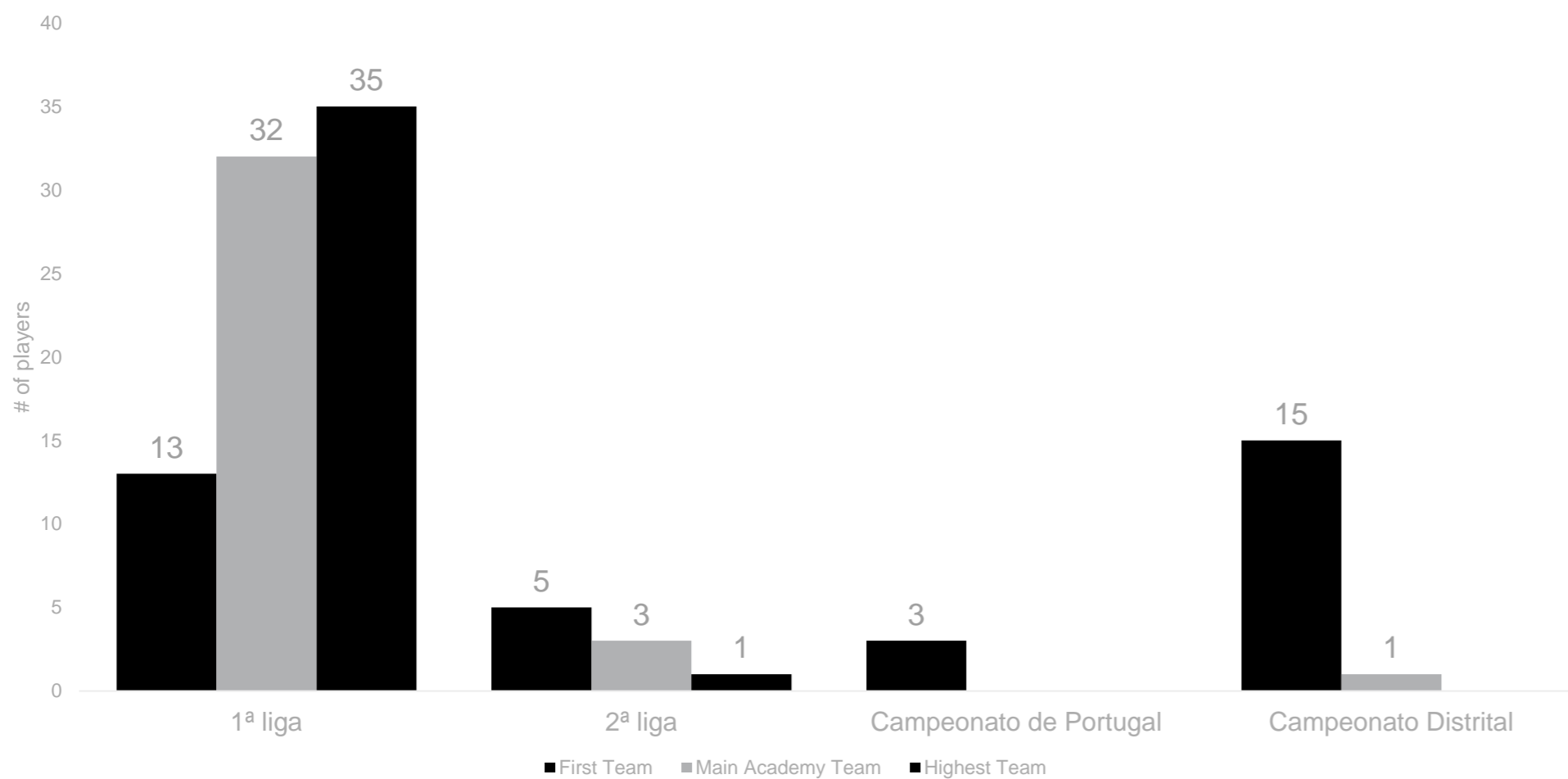
- On average, players began playing football at the age of 10, meaning the average surveyed individual has played football for 16 years;
- Under the assumption that most players sign their first official professional contract when they are 16, the average player in our database has **played football professionally for 9.1 years**;
- The average player has spent **53.0%** of his professional life playing abroad;
- While a player's age shows very little correlation to the this variable, a player on the peak of his career has played an average of 57% of his professional life playing abroad, whereas veteran players only played 45% of their career abroad.

# Cultural capital is present in exported players in the form of their previous teams

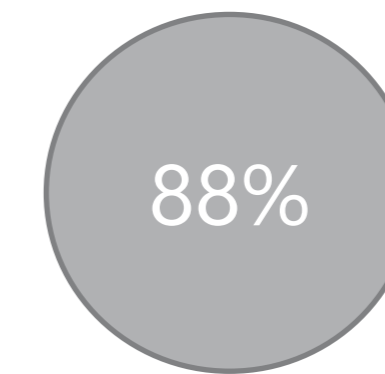
- Respondents played for an average of 6.14 different teams throughout their career, 2.14 of those coming before turning 18.
- Age has a strong negative correlation with the number of clubs per year played as a professional footballer ( $r = -.56^{***}$ ).
- Number of teams per year is positively correlated with the percentage of the athlete's career playing abroad ( $r = .33^*$ ).



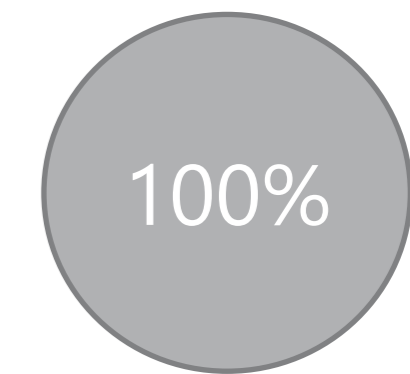
97% of exported players played for a renowned portuguese team at one point or another in their career



Started playing football on a team that was either on the lowest or highest possible Portuguese league.

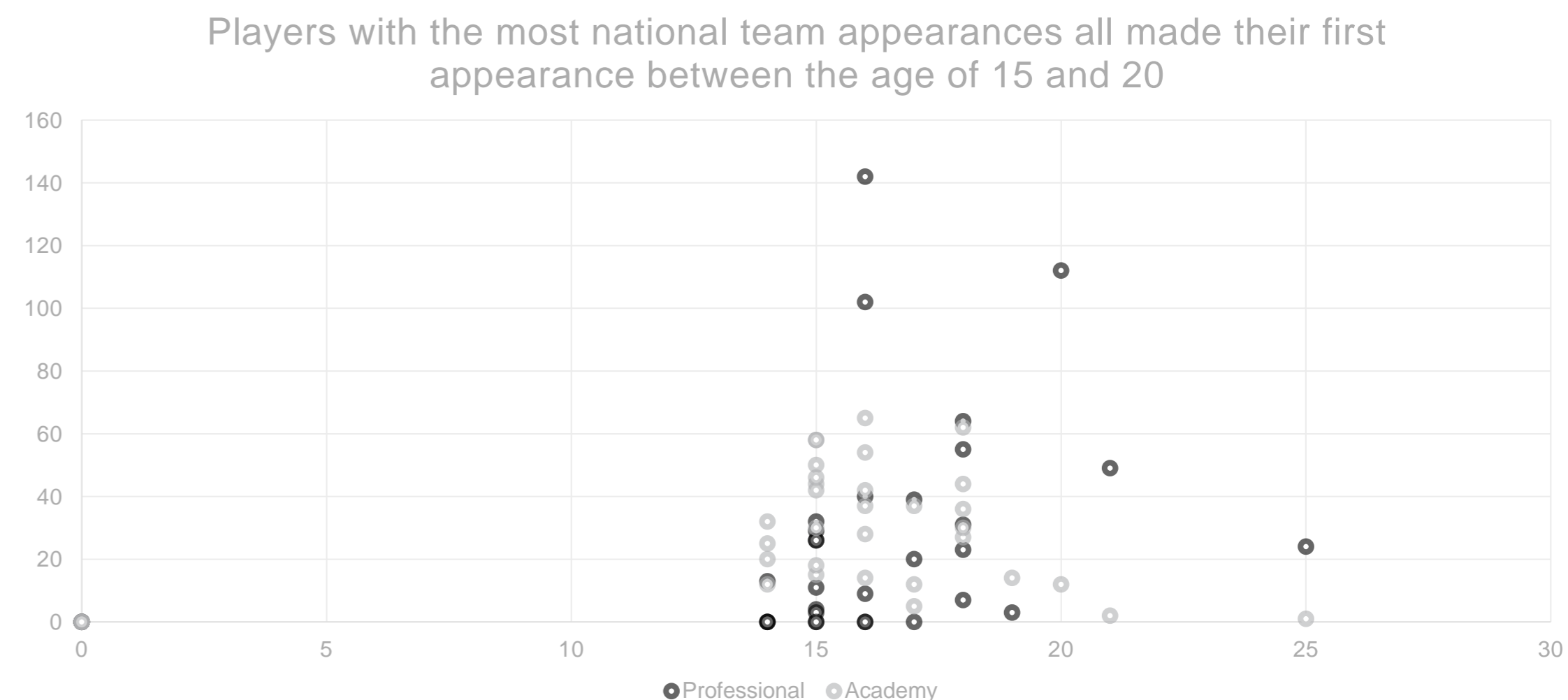
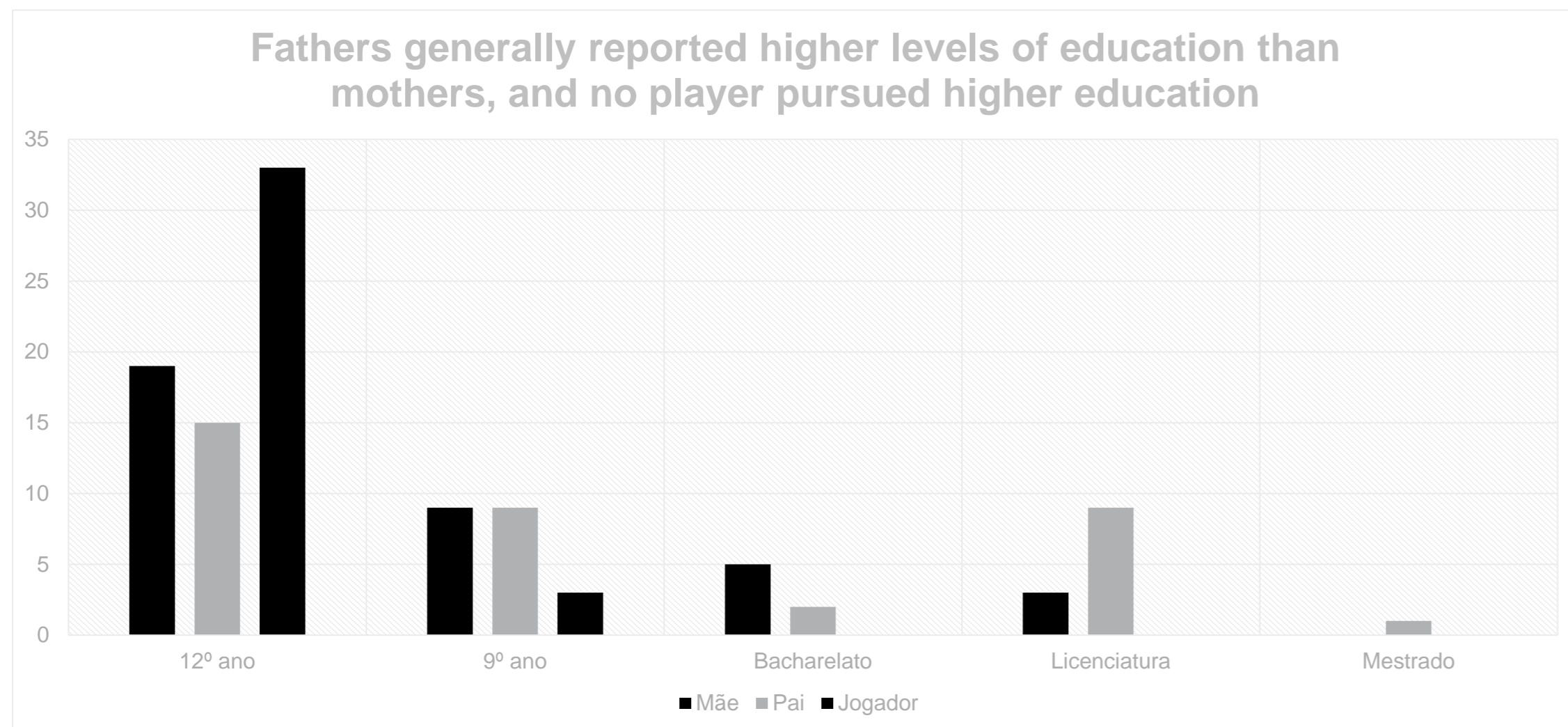


Spent the majority of their formation years on a club that had made the Portuguese 1st league



of players who spent the majority of their formation years on a 1st league club reported having a football field near their residence

A player’s academic qualifications did not impact their exportability, but national team selections made them more attractive to foreign clubs



- 91% of players completed the 12th grade, but no player attempted to pursue higher education;
- On average, players finished high school with a GPA of 12.02 out 20, with players that ended with lower GPAs tending to play larger percentage of their careers abroad.
- GPAs showed little to no correlation with a player’s current level of salary ( $r = -.07$ );
- The average respondent spoke an average of 2.67 languages on a basic level, with players that spend larger of amounts of their career outside of Portugal usually being able to speak more languages at a basic level ( $r = .37^{**}$ ).

- Both selections to the Portuguese National Team at a youth and senior level are positively correlated with the player’s salary, with senior national team selections showing higher correlations ( $r = .374^{**}$  and  $r = .346^{**}$ ).
- The average player first played for a national at the age of 16.45, but this showed little to no correlation with the total number of national team selections ( $r = .08$ ). The average respondent played around 28.0 games for the youth national team and 24.0 for the senior team.
- Academy level selections were slightly positively correlated with the percentage of professional life playing abroad ( $r = .11$ ), but senior level selections were negatively correlated ( $r = -.17$ ).

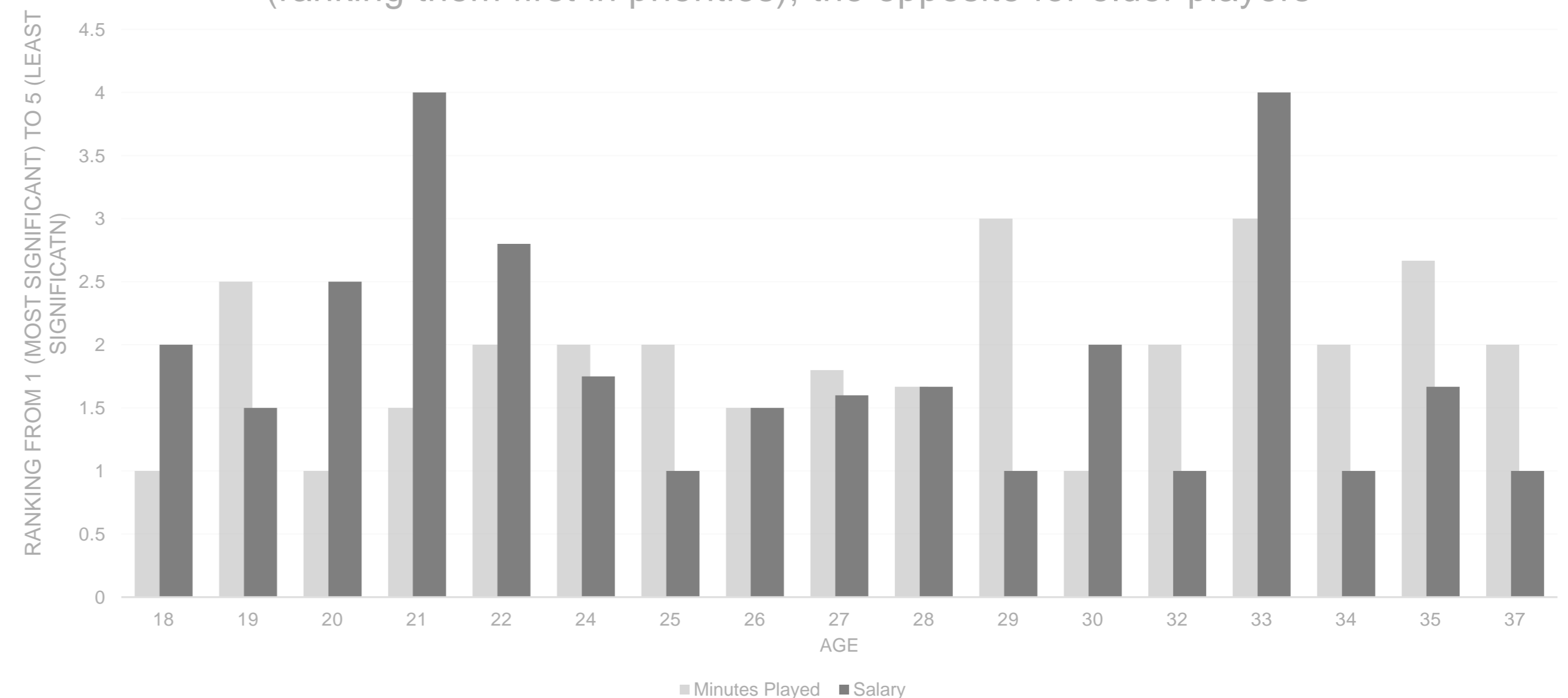
## Players in different stages of their career have different priorities and requirements in order to play abroad

To assess which factors players deemed the most important to play abroad, respondents were asked to rank 5 different indicators depending on how much it affected their decision to play or coach abroad.

Minutes Played	Salary	Team Quality	League Quality	Distance from Portugal
1.92/5	1.97/5	2.92/5	3.44/5	4.83/5

- Younger players will prioritize minutes played over salary to maximize their chances of performing well and being discovered by a club, whereas veteran players tend to prioritise salary as opposed to minutes played or team quality to try and maximise their income before retiring.
- Respondents in the peak of their ranked "Minutes Played" and "Salary" exactly the same
- Players that ranked "Minutes Played" first spent an average of 53% of their professional career away from Portugal, whereas players that ranked "Salary" first spent 56% of their professional career abroad.

On average, younger players tend to value minutes played over salary (ranking them first in priorities), the opposite for older players



Respondents were asked to indicate the minimum levels for each of the previously ranked variables which would make them consider playing abroad.

SALARY

Varied very little from the players' current salary level

MINUTES  
PLAYED

The average player required a minimum of 68 minutes per game, with younger respondents demanding 63.57 minutes per game, veterans 58 minutes and players on their prime 72 minutes.

TEAM QUALITY

Overall preference was for good teams that competed at high level competitions.

LEAGUE  
QUALITY

Responses were somewhat generic and simply referred to a team playing in the 1st league of an European country

DISTANCE FROM  
PORTUGAL

Deemed very insignificant to most respondents

## Research's main contributions

### Academic Implications

This mixed-method study allows for the identification of patterns and characteristics amongst Portuguese football players and coaches and how it can impact their exportability in the football transfers market, applying Bourdieu's Theory of Capital on the Portugal's football reality, confirming previous research on cultural capital and its impact in. Additionally, this paper contributes to academia by introducing different factors which influence a Portuguese player or coach's decision to leave their home country and play abroad.

### Limitations

- Deeper dive into teams that individuals played for with more indicators to separate good teams from great;
- Economic capital is not covered but is a important factor when considering largest teams and institutions is not mentioned that have high economic barriers to entry
- The small sample size for the quantitative analysis poses as a limitation. While most assumptions and conclusions are backed by the qualitative analysis and common sense, the percentages obtained could vary greatly amongst larger and more variate samples.

### Managerial Implications

Two different perspectives can be used to take conclusions from this study:

1. **Identifying what the Portuguese Federation has been doing right to have so much talent that's coveted across all of Europe.**

*As Portugal is already considered a top exporter of talent it should continue to on youth formation the talent will keep appearing and in larger quantities.*

2. **To maintain talent, Portuguese teams need to be more competitive across the European scene to increase relevancy and be able to afford the talent**

*Raising the level of the Portuguese league will create a snowball effect where more talented players will keep appearing and create even more exports*

### Further Research

- Conducting a study that went deeper into the relationship between the three different types of capital and how it influenced exports would allow for a deeper understanding of how Bourdieu's Theories of Capital apply in the football reality.
- Conducting this type of study on a different country with the perspective of an importer would allow for the Portuguese league to grow beyond the reputation of a good exporter but also a heavyweight in the world football.

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# Thank you!

Nova SBE Master Thesis | 14.12.2021 – Professor Elizabete Cardoso

