



Joost Jansen

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WHO CAN REPRESENT

THE NATION

MIGRATION, CITIZENSHIP AND NATIONHOOD
IN THE OLYMPIC GAMES

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Wie kan de natie vertegenwoordigen?

Migratie, burgerschap en nationale identiteit in de Olympische Spelen

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To my parents

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1

SETTING THE FIELD

An adapted version of this chapter, co-authored by Gijs van Campenhout, will be published (forthcoming, 2020) as:

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1 Setting the field

Introduction

This dissertation forms an inquiry into the enduring relevance of Eric Hobsbawm's observation that 'sportsmen [sic] representing their nation or state' in international sporting competitions are 'primary expressions of their imagined communities' (1992: 143). More specifically, this study is about the implications of his claim that 'the imagined community of millions seems more real as a team of eleven named people' (ibid.), especially in times when the hyphen between the nation and state is in crisis (Antonisch, 2009; Appadurai, 1996) and, according to some political readings, nation-states are under attack (Baudet, 2012). However, as we will see, against the backdrop of global de- or reterritorialisation (Appadurai, 1996; Edensor, 2002), growing population mobility and diversity, and, at least in certain European and North-American countries, increased levels of immigration (Czaika and De Haas, 2014), nations and nationalism have turned out to be far from 'waning forces' (Edensor, 2002: 28; Skey, 2011).

In the build-up to the London 2012 Olympic Games, Martin Samuel (a Daily Mail sports columnist) instigated the so-called 'Plastic Brits' debate, where 61 foreign-born athletes who represented Great Britain at the London 2012 Olympic Games were subject to ongoing scrutiny and critique (Poulton and Maguire, 2012; Chapter 5). Two years later, in 2014, fans of the Spanish national football team chanted 'No eres español!' at Diego Costa (Jenson, 2016), who had just transferred his sporting allegiance from Brazil to Spain. In these two examples it was ultimately a question of nationhood, that is, a question of who belongs to and can represent one's nation, that so strongly resounded in both the use of the pejorative 'Plastic Brits' moniker and the supporters' chants. Such criticism of the inclusion of athletes in the British Olympic team and the Spanish national football team was and continues to be emblematic of a broader shared discomfort surrounding mass-mediated international sporting competitions that are organised around the principle of nationality, most notably the Olympic Games but also football World Cups, regarding 'foreign' athletes who compete for countries other than their 'own', some even under multiple flags.

More recent examples of controversy but also uneasiness over foreign-born athletes, many with dual nationalities and overlapping identities, are numerous and diverse. They include, for example, Mathieu van der Poel (a Belgian-born cyclist who rides for the Netherlands), Jofra Archer (a Barbadian-born English cricketer), the many players with African roots who won the 2018 FIFA World Cup with the French national football team, the Dutch-born football players of Moroccan descent forced to choose between representing the Netherlands or Morocco internationally, and Ted-

Jan Bloemen (a Dutch-born speed skater who switched to compete for Canada, for which he won a gold medal in the 2018 Pyeongchang Winter Games). These examples all share the following commonality: they concern athletes whose countries of birth are not the countries they compete for, and while they have formal citizenship of those respective countries, somehow their national belonging has been deemed ambiguous or is called into question.

The *Sport and Nation* research project, which was started in September 2016, sets out to study debates about the status of athletes with migration backgrounds competing in mass-mediated international sporting competitions in relation to issues of citizenship and nationhood. The broader research project, of which this dissertation is a product, was pre-divided into two sub-projects: one about football World Cups and one about the Olympic Games. While some scholarly attention had been devoted to these debates before this project was started (e.g. Adjaye, 2010; Holmes and Storey, 2011; Maguire and Falcous, 2011; Poli, 2007; Shachar, 2011; Spiro, 2014), it was our contention as a research group that further, more systematic empirical inquiry was required for two main reasons.

First, however needed and insightful they are, prior studies on or touching upon this topic are often based on anecdotal evidence or analyses of a limited number of mediagenic cases. In the *Sport and Nation* project we believe that research on athletes with migration backgrounds in international sporting competitions – which at present sometimes risks to neglect taking into account the larger socio-historic developments in which empirical events or trends in sports are embedded – would benefit from a more comparative historical analysis in order to contextualise and better understand such issues.

Second, related studies have always been, rightfully, embedded within wider academic debates about migration, citizenship, or national belonging. However, within the broader research project we contend that it is also critical to develop a perspective that draws linkages between the three domains, since, of course, the 'growing international mobility of people questions the basis for belonging to the nation-state' (Castles and Davidson, 2000: vii; also see Bloemraad, 2000). In the context of international sporting competitions such as the Olympic Games, where the eligibility rules as formulated by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) primarily rely on citizenship (Iorwerth, Hardman and Jones, 2014), the allegedly growing presence of foreign-born athletes is inextricably linked with the attribution of legal membership in different nation-states and changes therein.¹ Although these athletes born abroad all have formal citizenship of the countries they compete for, their presence also seems

¹ Citizenship is defined here as legal status, i.e. how modern states formally define their citizenry (see Brubaker, 1992)

to challenge existing discourses of nationhood, in particular ideas of who belongs to which nation and on what grounds.

These are the lacunae that I aim to address in this dissertation. The central research question that guides this study is: *How has the number of foreign-born athletes in the Olympic Games changed, and how do these numbers challenge notions of citizenship and nationhood?* Although I have referred to examples from a range of different sports and sporting competitions in this introduction, it should be noted that the scope of this dissertation is limited to the Olympic Games. The primary, more pragmatic reason for centring this research on the Olympic Games is the broader research project's division into two different sub-projects.

On a more theoretical note, however, I believe that the Olympic Games, being a mass-mediated international sporting event primarily organised around the principle of nationality, can be conceived of as a 'strategic research site' (Merton 1987: 10) in the sense that the Olympics exhibit 'the phenomena to be explained or interpreted to such advantage and in such accessible form that they enable the fruitful investigation of previously stubborn problems.' Prior research has frequently pointed to the importance of sport, in particular global mega-events like the Olympic Games, as an archetypal 'venue for national storytelling' and productive avenue for studying issues of national identity, cultural identity, and mobility (Wenner and Billings, 2017). Heinz-Housel (2007: 447), for example, examined how media coverage of the Sydney Olympic Games' opening ceremony predominantly communicated White Australian narratives of nationhood in an attempt to cope with the 'increasing disintegration of the nation-states' rigid boundaries in the context of globalization.' Such research stands in a tradition that, as Holmes and Storey note, conceives of sport as 'a prism ... uniquely well suited to an examination of national identity' (Holmes and Storey, 2011: 253).

Following that tradition, this dissertation will examine debates about the status of foreign-born athletes participating in the Olympic Games with the aim of investigating the triadic relationship between migration, citizenship, and nationhood. As will be discussed in the sections that follow, it is precisely because of their ostensible banality that sport in general, and mass-mediated sporting events in particular, are of great importance to billions of people across the globe. They provide relevant cultural settings in which publics articulate and contest manifest and more latent ideas about nationality in relation to issues of migration and citizenship. Moreover, the globally mass-mediated character of the Olympics makes that the amounts of biographical information about athletes available, as well as the large amount of media coverage of discussions about foreign-born athletes, together allow for a deeper analysis of the interrelation between issues of migration, citizenship, and nationhood.

An additional feature that makes the Olympics a particularly interesting research setting for the purposes of examining issues of migration, citizenship, and nationhood, is the fact that under Rule 41 of the Olympic Charter athletes are, under certain conditions, allowed to switch their sporting nationality. In football World Cups, for instance, FIFA's eligibility rules impede players from switching their nationality after one's first appearance in an official match (IOC, 2019; Van Campenhout, Van Sterkenburg and Oonk, 2018). In light of this, the attribution of citizenship (as a legal status), and more specifically the having of multiple citizenship or acquiring of a new citizenship, provides Olympic athletes with options for transferring their nationalities in international sporting competitions. It is these transfers of allegiance that create an additional dimension to public debates about the thorny issues of migration and population mobility in relation to the meaning of citizenship for national belonging.

The remainder of this chapter is structured into three main sections. The first section demonstrates the sociological relevance of studying the field of sport as a reflection and exacerbation of broader social divisions. Then, I will examine the theoretical debates in the domains of migration, citizenship, and nationhood that have informed my thinking on this topic and served as starting points for empirical inquiry. The last section of this introductory chapter outlines the structure of this dissertation by connecting the theoretical debates to the four empirical studies I have conducted.

Sport as a prism to study social divisions

One of the obstacles to a scientific sociology of sport is due to the fact that sociologists of sport are in a way doubly dominated, both in the world of sociologists and in the world of sport. Since it would take too long to develop this somewhat blunt proposition, I will proceed, in the manner of the prophets, by way of a parable. In a recent discussion with one of my American sociologist friends, Aaron Cicourel, I learned that the great black athletes, who, in the United States, are often enrolled in such prestigious universities as Stanford, live in a sort of golden ghetto, because right-wing people do not talk very willingly with blacks while left-wing people do not talk very willingly with athletes. If one reflects on this and develops this paradigm, one might find in it the principle of the special difficulties that the sociology of sport encounters: scorned by sociologists, it is despised by sportspersons. (Bourdieu, 1988: 153)

Sport is serious business. The 2016 Rio Olympic Games, for instance, were broadcast in more than 200 countries with an estimated total worldwide audience of 5 billion

people, and the final cost of organising the event were estimated at around \$11 billion (Settimi, 2016). Similarly, a viewership of 3.4 billion people and up to \$6 billion in revenue were forecast for the 2018 FIFA World Cup hosted in Russia (Roxborough, 2018). Through such global mega-events, sport has not only gained increasing economic importance, with ever larger sums of money involved in the organisation and mediatisation of professional and international sporting competitions, it has also become an important arena for the mobilisation of political and socio-cultural interests (Giulianotti, 2015a).

From a political science point of view, for instance, the organisation of sporting mega events provides states with 'unprecedented diplomatic opportunities' to 'project and boost their soft power in the international system' and positively impact the host nation's national image (Grix and Lee, 2013: 521; Grix and Houlihan, 2014). From a sociological perspective, modern sport can be seen as a medium of great cultural importance, sometimes functioning as a social lubricant, and other times as an arena of polarisation and division. Sport can play such an important role as it 'dominates much of everyday public discourse' (Giulianotti, 2015b: xix), especially given the increased mediatisation and hypercommodification of sport. As Billig famously noted: 'There are always sports pages, and these are never left empty. Every day, the world over, millions upon millions of men scan these pages' (1995: 122).

It is both through the spectacular and the quotidian that sports and the mediatisation thereof, as trivial as it sometimes may seem, plays an important role in the lives of millions across every continent of the globe. While, of course, sporting traditions and tastes vary widely across different countries and regions and heterogeneous audiences decode mass media discourses in different ways (Hall, 1973; Wenner and Billings, 2017), the global mediatisation of sport has, on the one hand, the ability to connect and bring together people from different cultures and backgrounds around singular events or issues (Wenner and Billings, 2017). For example, historic moments in sport, such as a nation losing the final of a football World Cup, can become 'inscribed in the collective cultural memory' (ibid.: 3). On the other hand, however, sport can also be conceived of as a space where social division, that is, manifest and latent ideas of gender, ethnicity, race, and national belonging, are communicated, explored, and contested (Ncube, 2014, 2018; Van Sterkenburg, Knoppers and De Leeuw, 2012). This study's ultimate focus is on the (re)production of ideas of nationhood in the context of sport.

While a scientific sociology of sport might have been still in its infancy when Pierre Bourdieu (1988) wrote his *Program for a Sociology of Sport*, the sub-field of sociology that studies sport has since developed into an internationally established discipline with institutional foundations (e.g. academic journals, network

organisations), producing a growing body of research on a variety of sociological themes including, for instance, social divisions along the lines of ethnicity, gender, race, social class, etc. (Giulianotti, 2015a). Notwithstanding the institutionalisation of the field, Bourdieu's observation as regards the 'special difficulties that the sociological study of sport encounters' still seems to have relevance. For while, according to Bairner (2001: 163), among those who study sport 'there is little dispute that sport in the modern world is political to the extent that it not only reflects social divisions but also frequently exacerbates these', he also notes that this thesis evokes 'lingering protestations of sports people themselves' (ibid.). As for sociology in general, to my best knowledge not many sports-related papers are published in journals from outside the realm of sport.

With Bourdieu (1988), however, I argue that sport is not a 'self-contained universe' isolated from practices that are structured by and constitutive of social spaces in which it is included. Instead, sport should be seen *and* studied as a 'microcosm indicative of larger social forces' (Zenquis and Mwaniki, 2019: 24). While, of course, the field of sport has a dynamic specific to it, 'one must not forget that this space is the site of forces that do not act on it alone' (Bourdieu, 1988: 120). In the words of Richard Giulianotti, 'modern sport illustrates *par excellence* the globalization of cultural practices and social relations, as well as the deep-seated divisions and inequalities in global politics and economics' (2015b: xviii, italics in original).

Let's consider two examples of how sport can simultaneously reflect and provoke wider debates about (sometimes intersecting) issues of social division. Ever since Caster Semenya, a black South-African track athlete, won gold in the women's 800 metres at the 2009 World Track and Field Championships, her biology has been the subject of ongoing scrutiny, in particular her testosterone levels being 'far above the normal range' for female athletes (Broadbent, 2019). Although the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) initially suspended the World Athletics² old testosterone policy, on 1 May 2019 it rejected Semenya's challenges to newer rules regarding 'hyperandrogenous' athletes (Longman and Macur, 2019). These new rules, which came into effect a week later, dictate that female track athletes with naturally higher levels must take hormone-suppressing medication to be allowed to compete in international sporting competitions. For years now, Semenya's case has generated massive media attention and spurred further debate about the complicated questions of biology, gender identity, human rights, and even race (Butler, 2009; Essed, 2018; Magubane, 2014; Sloop, 2012). Of course, these questions are also becoming increasingly contested in the broader culture, where gendered relations of power and cultural understandings

2 Before being rebranded in 2019, World Athletics was named International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF).

of masculinity/femininity in relation to matters of biology (as with other forms of identity) become increasingly politicised (Butler, 1993).

In a similar manner, and maybe more closely related to the central focus of this study, ethnic and racial dividing lines within the nation are reflected in and reproduced through sport (Bairner, 2001). Van Sterkenburg (2013) has studied how understandings of race, ethnicity, and nation can be reflected and reinforced by televised media coverage around mega events such as the football World Cup. In particular, Van Sterkenburg notes how the viewers' connectedness to the Dutch national football team is informed by ethnic and racial markers of identification. White Dutch football fans especially employed hegemonic understandings of race and Dutchness. Indeed, the - in their eyes - presence of too many 'allochthonous' football players in the national team, with their stereotypical racial/ethnic qualities or traits ('athletic superiority of Black athletes', 'irrational and aggressive behaviour of Moroccans'), leads to weakened forms of identification and connectedness with the Dutch national team among some of these White Dutch football fans. It is through such everyday discourses about sport that boundaries and distinctions between in- and outgroups are oftentimes (re)constructed rather than overruled (ibid.).

In this dissertation, the central aim is to explore how debates about the eligibility of foreign-born athletes selected to compete in the Olympic Games, which are organised around the principle of nationality, can also be a reflection and exacerbation of wider debates about the significance of nationality and belonging in the contemporary era - an era marked by social pressures that are generally brought together under the umbrella of 'globalisation', among which, most notably, increased social insecurity, increased population mobility and subsequent growing levels of immigration and immigration diversity (at least in some West European and North American countries) and the culturally 'homogenising tendencies of globalisation' (Appadurai, 2006; Bairner, 2001; Skey, 2011).

Not only are these pressures highly visible in sport (one only has to look at the commercialisation of and player migrations in association football), they can also become contested through sport. This contestation covers a range of dimensions, three of which will be highlighted in this study. First is the question as to whether we can indeed speak of a globalisation of international sporting competitions in the sense that nowadays larger numbers of athletes are representing countries in which they were not born. Second is the question as to how changes regarding the numbers of foreign-born athletes and their sporting nationalities are tied up with (changing) pathways to citizenship, i.e. how states *formally* define their citizenry (Brubaker, 1992). Third, I will discuss how, bearing in mind these migrations and their links to the legal attribution of citizenship, established discourses of nationhood ('who *can* represent

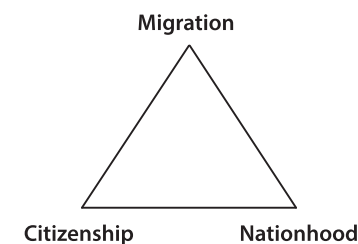
the nation?') are contested or 'reassembled' by changing immigrant-native relations in broader society as well as in sport (Pratsinakis, 2017).

Conceptual triad: migration, citizenship, and nationhood

This study uses sport, and then in particular uncertainty or controversies over the eligibility of elite foreign-born athletes competing in international sporting competitions, as a prism to further academic and sociological debate around international migration, (re)configurations of citizenship regimes, and narratives of nationhood. The theoretical framework that guides this research takes the form of a triad. While its three dimensions - migration, citizenship and nationhood - are analytically distinguishable, they are also always interrelated. Citizenship laws, for example, play an important role in shaping international migrations (Castles and Davidson, 2000), which in turn challenge established and often-taken-for-granted notions of nationhood (Pratsinakis, 2017; Skey, 2011), as a result of which 'citizens [with a migration background] in the formal sense are discursively disenfranchised' and placed 'outside the moral zone of "society" even though they are formally members of the nation-state' (Schinkel, 2017: 197).

Using this triadic framework, I aim to approach the topic of this dissertation from a more theoretically holistic perspective. For while in each of the empirical chapters I tend to highlight one angle or side of the triad in particular, the others will always remain inevitably present in the background. For instance, a focus on the question of whether the Olympic Games have become more migratory highlights scholarly debate on historical patterns of international migration patterns against the horizon of formal definitions of citizenship and conceptions of national belonging. Similarly, it is against the backdrop of athlete migration and notions of formal and moral citizenship that the question of 'who *can* represent the nation?' becomes contested in the contemporary era.

Figure 1.1: Triad of migration, citizenship, and nationhood.



As regards the domain of migration, the attentive reader will have noted that up until this point I have persistently used the term ‘foreign-born athletes’, which I employ to refer to the group of athletes who compete for a country that is not their country of birth. On some occasions, especially in response to the findings presented in Chapter 2, I have been criticised for using such a broad-brush approach, as the term ignores the qualitative differences between various ‘types’ of athletes with migration backgrounds, who all had different stories behind and pathways to their decisions to migrate or change national allegiance. For instance, the term lumps together under a single category athletes who already at a very young age moved to their countries of destination and Olympians who during their careers left their home countries by getting their citizenship applications fast-tracked in search for quicker routes to glory (Van Campenhout, Van Sterkenburg and Oonk, 2018).

While I acknowledge and further address these issues in a later section and in Chapter 3, I also believe that it is important to start off this study with a fairly basic question: have the Olympic Games become more migratory in the sense that nowadays more athletes are competing for countries in which they were not born? By first asking this basic question before moving on to discuss issues of citizenship and nationhood, my aim is to sketch a more nuanced and historically grounded image of the topic while maintaining critical distance to some popularly held beliefs surrounding the ‘migratoriness’ of international sporting competitions.

Moreover, since this study is essentially about conceptions about who belongs to and can compete for the nation, with the use of the term ‘foreign-born athletes’ I aim to avoid distinguishing between athletes with ‘genuine’ links and with ‘non-genuine’ links to the countries they compete for, or to present a list of objective criteria on the basis of which such a line should be drawn. It is certainly not my intention to make claims about which athletes should or should not be allowed to represent certain nations. Instead, what I aim to show in the empirical chapters of this study is that many countries in international sporting competitions have always been represented by substantial numbers of athletes who compete for countries in which they were not born. While their paths to citizenship and participation in the Olympics might be subject to differences over time (see Chapter 3), I believe that, on a more fundamental level, it is above all the way in which numbers are perceived that has changed. Indeed, it will be contented that it is not the sheer *number* of foreign-born athletes that explains the heightened emotions during the so-called ‘Plastic Brits’ debate (see Chapter 5). Rather, it is the way in which numbers are nowadays *evaluated* by various publics (e.g. journalists, officials, athletes themselves and their entourage, academics), namely in terms of the ‘non-genuine links’ between some of these athletes and the countries whose flags they carry on their vests.

Migration in the Olympics: big or small numbers?

In essence, this dissertation is about connecting uneasiness or controversy over the ‘circulation of people’ (Appadurai, 1996: 101) with imaginaries of nationhood in the context of mass-mediated sporting events. In *Modernity at Large*, Appadurai (1996) argues that the current era is marked by the existence of a complicated disjunctive relationship between mass-mediated events and migrations that challenges imaginaries of nationhood. The ‘isomorphism between people, territory and sovereignty’ is under threat from the mass migrations of people that, exacerbated by their mass mediation, ‘make the difference between migration today and in the past’ (ibid.: 6). Contemporary migrations (or that of the recent present) have ‘massively globalized’ (ibid.: 9) and are taking place at ‘increased rates’, ‘at every level of social, national and global life’ (ibid.: 6).

In *Fear of Small Numbers*, Appadurai (2006) offers a somewhat different account of the puzzling relationship between numbers and ideas about nationhood. How is it that minorities, still often relatively small in numbers, increasingly come to be experienced as a cultural threat in a globalising world? The answer, according to Appadurai, lies in the combination of a set of conditions produced by globalisation that have ignited new waves of racialised and ethno-nationalism. More specifically, the large-scale social insecurity that followed reorganisations of markets and states is exacerbated by an *anxiety of incompleteness*, that is, the fear following from being reminded of the incompleteness of national purity by the presence of ethnic minorities. Together, uncertainty and incompleteness have sparked higher levels of anti-immigrant sentiments since the 1990s (Appadurai, 2006).

Now, comparing the two arguments, an important question that needs asking before delving into issues of citizenship and particularly nationhood is whether contemporary migrations and those of the recent present have indeed ‘massively globalized’ (Appadurai, 1996: 9) and are taking place at ‘increased rates’, ‘at every level of social, national and global life’ (ibid.: 6), or that migration, difference, and ‘national impurity’ have always been integral characteristics of the world of nation-states. So, are we now, as the title of another book on migration runs, living in an ‘age of migration’, characterised by a ‘globalisation of migration’, that is, ‘the tendency of more and more countries to be crucially affected by migratory movements at the same time’ (Castles and Miller, 2009)? Or should we be hesitant to readily accept the ‘idea that there has been a global increase in volume, diversity, and geographical scope of migration’ (Czaika and De Haas, 2014: 283)?

Much of the public and media debate about immigration as well as much of the academic literature on migration, citizenship, and nationhood implicitly holds that the phenomenon of international migration has rapidly grown over the past decades

as a consequence of globalisation (cf. Castles and Davidson, 2000; Taylor, 2006). In the 2009 edition of Castles and Miller's migration handbook *The Age of Migration*, the authors speak of an 'acceleration of migration' as the second of six key characteristics of contemporary international migrations. In the 2014 edition of the book, where Hein de Haas joined Stephen Castles and Mark Miller as a co-author, the second characteristic was renamed into 'changing direction of dominant migration flows'.

Presumably, this rather notable amendment is related to the publication (also in 2014) of an article written by Czaika and De Haas, which is titled 'The Globalization of Migration: Has the World Become More Migratory?'. In this paper, Czaika and De Haas argue that rather than an acceleration of international migration on a global level (the *relative* number of international migrants has remained fairly stable over the past century, at about 3%), 'main shifts in global migration have been *directional* and are linked to major geopolitical and economic shifts' (2014: 314, italics in original). The idea that immigration has rapidly increased and diversified reveals, according to the authors, a Eurocentric worldview, as 'immigrant populations have become more diverse in new destination countries in Europe', but 'this is not always the case elsewhere, such as the Americas and the Pacific, where immigrant populations have become less European but not necessarily more diverse in terms of diversity of origin countries' (ibid.). Migration, thus, may have become globalised 'from a destination country perspective but hardly from a country of origin perspective' (ibid.). Above all, 'the global migration map' has become more skewed.

The key take-away message from Czaika and De Haas's study, thus, is that contemporary migrations cannot be understood properly unless situated within a broader geopolitical, historical, and economic context. There are several factors that can help explain contemporary migrations in general and immigrant diversification in Europe in particular, of which the collapse of Communism, socio-economic development, and the decreasing significance of (post-)colonial relations account for much of the variation in patterns of international migration and the 'skewing' of the global migration map (ibid.). Again, international migration has not necessarily accelerated on a global scale and immigration and immigrant diversity have only increased in some parts of the globe.

Czaika and De Haas's conclusions also underline the importance of situating contemporary migrations within larger regional and national historical phases (Hollifield, Martin and Orrenius, 2014). In Chapter 2 of this dissertation I will further scrutinise the particular (recent) historical processes of migration that different countries have undergone, but for now it is important to recognise that while, for instance, some Western European countries are nowadays confronted with relatively higher levels of immigration and increased immigrant diversity compared to previous

decades, immigration (next to emigration) as such has always formed an integral yet oft-forgotten part of Europe's history, as for instance Sassen (1999) and Lucassen, Lucassen and Manning (2010) have convincingly demonstrated. That is not to say that contemporary migrations are not different from those of the past. However, as Sassen notes, 'history does not draw a fixed line between what is and what has been' (1999: 45). Immigration has always encompassed and still encompasses a small fraction or minority of a country's population. Therefore, 'mass immigration' or 'invasion' imaginaries provide highly inaccurate depictions of the phenomenon of immigration, which is always cyclical, patterned, bounded, and 'embedded in specific historical phases' (ibid.: 155).

Perhaps, coming back to Appadurai's account of the difference between migrations today and those of the past, it is above all a fear of relatively small numbers that produces anti-immigration and nationalist sentiments in some corners of a world marked by increasing social insecurity. In a sense, the immigrant has always been an outsider, and anti-immigrant sentiments already loomed large decades or even centuries ago (Sassen, 1999). Yet what distinguishes migrations in the present from, say, migrations that took place in the 19th or first half of the 20th century, is the increased visibility of phenotypical, cultural, or religious difference (De Haas, 2005), and perhaps an underlying 'narcissism' of such differences, which 'unsettle the hard lines at the edges of large-scale [national] identities' (Appadurai, 2006: 82). In particular, mass electronic media have transformed migration into a central feature of everyday life. Moreover, they have created 'diasporic public spheres' that remind majorities of the inherently 'unsullied national whole', thereby challenging or confounding traditional imaginations in which nations are represented as homogeneous peoples naturally connected to homelands (ibid.).

At this juncture, having laid out the theoretical ingredients for the first part of this study, the question is whether patterns of migration in the Olympic context (i.e. changing numbers of foreign-born Olympic athletes) are a reflection of global migration trends and patterns. If such is the case, it can help us understand, historically contextualise, and perhaps nuance the belief that nowadays more athletes are competing for countries in which they were not born. Before we started the *Sport and Nation* project, there had been no studies that tried to systematically and empirically verify the idea that the Olympics or football World Cups have become more migratory over the course of the past decades. Albeit a somewhat different phenomenon, from research on sports labour migration we know that the global movement among professional athletes (mostly football players) has a long-standing history (Bale and Maguire, 1994). Remarkably similar to Czaika and De Haas's line of reasoning, Taylor's convincing historical account of the globalisation of football migration demonstrates

that football migration as such 'is nothing new, but has a long and complicated history' and should, therefore, 'not be isolated from general migratory trends and patterns' (2006: 7). Determined by 'long-established colonial, cultural, linguistic, social and personal connections', football migration, like any other type of migration, tends to take on the shape of ebb and flow movements rather than a showing a simple linear increase (2006: 30).

In the absence of research that has systematically and not anecdotally engaged with the issue of foreign-born athletes competing in international sporting events such as the Olympic Games, this study, together with the other study within the *Sport and Nation* project on the history of migration in the context of football World Cups (see Van Campenhout, Van Sterkenburg and Oonk, 2018, 2019), sets out to develop a comparative historical framework. This framework is grounded in a combination of insights drawn from the works of, most notably, Czaika and De Haas (2014) and Taylor (2006). Since, as some critics have rightfully argued, the use of such a broad-brush approach comes with a number of limitations, the next section addresses the issue of Olympic athletes born abroad from a formal-citizenship perspective so as to explore the legal context that regulates the athletes' eligibility in the context of the Olympic Games.

Issues of formal and moral citizenship

The Olympic Charter, which contains the statutes of the IOC and the rules and guidelines for the celebration of the Olympic Games, is the leading document that governs athletes' admission for participation in the Olympics. In general, while the National Olympic Committees (NOCs) are responsible for submitting entries for competitors to the IOC, the national federations administering the different sports in their countries are in control of selecting and recommending the athletes for competition in the Olympic Games. The national federations themselves must be recognised by and be accepted as a member of the NOCs, and be affiliated with an International Federation (IF) that administrates specific sports at a world level and is, therefore, responsible for setting the criteria (e.g. qualification criteria related to nationality) that athletes need to meet in order to be allowed to compete for their countries in international sporting competitions (IOC, 2019).

Rule 41 of the Olympic Charter states that 'any competitor in the Olympic Games must be a national of the country of the NOC which is entering such competitor' (IOC, 2019: 77), meaning that Olympic nationality requirements are primarily organised around the principle of legal nationality or citizenship (Exner, 2019). Citizenship is defined here as formal membership in a nation-state, the latter which also in the contemporary era continues to hold 'substantial power over the formal rules and

rights of citizenship' (Bloemraad, 2000, 2008: 154). In this respect, it is important to emphasise that through its regulations the IOC does not seek to interfere with the ways in which nation-states give shape to their membership regimes, as the Charter does not distinguish between various modes of acquiring citizenship (e.g. Vink and De Groot, 2010), for instance through the rights of blood (*jus sanguinis*), soil (*jus soli*), or residency (*jus domicilii*).³

The implicit rationale behind the inclusion of legal citizenship as condition for participation is that 'it is a fairly easy way of establishing that a genuine link exists between the person involved and the nation-state in question' (De Groot, 2006: 4; Iorwerth, Hardman and Jones, 2014: 335). To cope with the growing international acceptance and expansion of dual or multiple citizenship (Spiro, 2010), the By-law to Rule 41 specifies that (i) 'a competitor who is a national of two or more countries at the same time may represent either one of them, as he may elect' (IOC, 2019: 77), and (ii) a competitor who has represented one country in the Olympics or another officially recognised international competition may change his or her nationality and compete for a new country in the Olympics after a waiting period of three years (which can be reduced or cancelled with the agreement of NOCs and IF involved).

In addition to these basic nationality rules, Rule 40, By-law 1, of the Olympic Charter specifies that 'each [international federation] establishes its sport's rules for participation in the Olympic Games, including qualification criteria, in accordance with the Olympic Charter' (IOC, 2019: 76). Although many sports have adopted some form of the model of nationality criteria as set forth by the IOC, other sporting federations have - in response to the growing mobility of athletes and with the goal to protect the *international* character of their respective competitions - established additional, sometimes contradictory, requirements regarding athletes' sporting nationalities which are not necessarily in line with those of the IOC (Exner, 2019; Spiro, 2014).

As several scholars (Exner, 2019; Wollmann, Vonk and De Groot, 2015) have argued, the provisions of By-law 1 to Rule 40 generate a set of complexities and contradictions as regards the athletes' eligibility to compete in international sporting events. For example, in swimming (governed by FINA) it is still possible to apply for changes of nationality, whereas other international sporting federations (e.g. FIFA) largely prohibit athletes from transferring their nationality after their first appearance at senior national level (Iorwerth, Hardman and Jones, 2014). This lack of harmonisation among international sports organisations creates complex situations in which athletes with similar backgrounds (e.g. dual citizenship of Morocco and the Netherlands) in different sports, say, football and swimming, have diverging options

³ In Chapter 3 various theoretical conceptualisations as well as different modes of acquiring citizenship will be discussed in more detail.

as regards their participation in international competitions. However, notwithstanding all these variations, citizenship continues to remain the dominant organising principle of sporting nationality (Iorwerth, Hardman and Jones, 2014).

Much of the literature on the topic of foreign-born athletes in international sporting competitions centres on the question of whether organising national eligibility rules around the principle of formal citizenship should be seen as something desirable or not (see Iorwerth, Hardman and Jones, 2014; Kostakopoulou and Schrauwen, 2014; Shachar, 2011; Spiro, 2014). As many of these authors have argued, in some way or another the international mobility of athletes is at odds with or even contradictory to the idea of the Olympics as a competition between nation-states represented by athletes who are 'genuine' members thereof (also see Adjaye, 2010). In their respective papers, the authors often propose solutions to solve such paradoxes, for instance: revising the existing eligibility criteria so as to restrict 'just-in-time talent-for-citizenship exchanges' (Shachar, 2011: 2132); introducing a 'sporting nationality' that is independent of citizenship (Wollmann, Vonk and De Groot, 2015); replacing it with a set of rules and regulations primarily based around residency requirements, grounded in a more 'liberal and cultural understanding of national belonging' (Iorwerth, Hardman and Jones, 2014); introducing a flexible and residence-based 'participatory growth model' to halt the commodification of citizenship while circumventing exclusionary narratives of nationhood (Kostakopoulou and Schrauwen, 2014); or abandoning the Olympic nationality criteria at all (Spiro, 2014). While I find myself sympathetic to some of the inconsistencies and moral issues that these authors have pointed out and the solutions they have subsequently proposed, I also have a number of empirical and theoretical reservations about such accounts, which I will address in this and the next section.

First, many of the arguments made in the literature on this topic are based on rather anecdotal evidence about mediagenic cases. This evidence is used to illustrate that citizenship is becoming a commodity under the marketisation of citizenship, defined as citizenship's reconception from 'sacred' bond to marketable 'commodity' (Shachar, 2017: 792). In this light, Iorwerth, Hardman and Jones (2014: 335) discuss some examples of athletes who switched their nationalities based 'on a pragmatic and instrumental desire to reap the extrinsic benefits of [nationality regulations] rather than [having] anything to do with cultural or national allegiance.' The examples presented, then, should indicate how 'athletes, governing bodies and nation-states are taking advantage of ... citizenship regulations in order to further their own personal, sporting and nationalistic ambitions' (ibid.: 337). In a similar vein, Shachar argues how the naturalisation of a number of Olympic athletes represents a significant shift in the conception of citizenship – 'turning an institution steeped with notions of collective

identity, belonging, loyalty, and perhaps even sacrifice into a recruitment tool for bolstering a nation's standing relative to its competitors' (2011: 2090).

The empirical question is, however, whether we can indeed conclude that, increasingly, states are relaxing and reconfiguring their citizenship regimes to 'further their own nationalistic ambitions' (Iorwerth, Hardman and Jones, 2014: 336) and boost their medal count by attracting talented elite athletes. My problem with such claims is that they have hitherto not been substantiated by systematic empirical research. Whether containing references to the (allegedly) growing number of foreign-born athletes (Poli, 2007), the number of naturalised athletes competing in the 2004 Olympic Games (Gillon and Poli, 2006; Iorwerth, Hardman and Jones, 2014), the Canadian hockey players who competed for Italy despite having 'only minimal ties to Italy' (Shachar, 2011: 2093), or to the 'usual suspects' like Becky Hammon and Viktor Ahn who were fast-tracked for Russian citizenship (ibid.): rather far-reaching as well as fairly ahistorical conclusions tend to be drawn based on the lumping together of athletes with different stories and backgrounds under the category of 'naturalised mercenaries'.

It should be noted that the point of this study is not to downplay the fact that some states *did* liberalise their citizenship regimes and expedited naturalisation processes in order to attract talented elite migrants such as athletes, nor to deny the strategic use of citizenship by athletes and others. There have been numerous cases in which countries (especially Qatar, Bahrain, and Turkey) have naturalised foreign-born athletes in order to enhance their positions on Olympic medal tables (see Reiche and Tinaz, 2019).⁴ However, as Gillon and Poli (2006) themselves acknowledge in their study on naturalised athletes in the 2004 Olympics, very often is it not clear whether athletes were naturalised for sportive reasons, or if they had already acquired (at or after birth) a second nationality well before their sports skills became an issue (ibid.: 13). Moreover, I concur with Shachar and Hirschl (2014) that the broader marketisation of citizenship poses 'serious moral hazards' to an egalitarian ideal of equal citizenship. However, I also believe that there lies a danger in accusing foreign-born athletes, some whom have strategically mobilised their dual citizenship, of being 'hired mercenaries' lured by states who, in the words of former IOC president Jacques Rogge, 'switch nationalities for personal or material gain' (FOX Sports, 2012) and who are 'willing to forsake their national and political identities ... as well to forsake their very practical identities' (Morgan, 2006: 31-32).

4 Some scholars contend that the facilitation of expedited citizenship grants by states with fairly restrictive citizenship regimes (e.g. Qatar) could be interpreted as an act to counterbalance the fact that their pool of talented athletes is much smaller than that of countries with liberal citizenship regimes that tolerate dual citizenship and facilitate naturalisation (Wollmann, Vonk and De Groot, 2015).

I believe that this ‘mercenary-frame’ can be problematic in empirical as well as sociological respects, which can be illustrated by Iorwerth, Hardman and Jones’s emblematic statement that ‘it is commonplace for athletes to represent nations to which they have tenuous cultural attachments’ (2014: 34), for instance based on the nationality of their parents or grandparents, but also on the reconfiguration of citizenship rules and procedures by states. Empirically, as discussed, my problem is that such generalisations about the extent (‘commonplace’) of the issue are generally based on anecdotal evidence about mediagenic cases. Presumably, many athletes who would ostensibly fall under the category of ‘naturalisations’, or even ‘mercenaries’, did not acquire their second citizenship via the explicit market-principle which I will call the ‘right of talent’ (*jus talenti*) in Chapter 3.

For example, the Canadian-Italians who represented Italy during the 2006 Olympics in Turin are likely to have been able to lay claim to Italian citizenship via the principle of *jus sanguinis*. While their inclusion in the Italian Olympic team might be conceived as dubious from a perspective that emphasises ‘the idea that citizenship must express a genuine link’, Bauböck also argues that it remains still a question whether purely instrumental or strategic uses of citizenship ‘will become ever more widespread and will eventually transform the relational structure of citizenship’ (2019: 1018-1023). This question is particularly relevant in an era of growing anti-immigrant sentiments and subsequent demands for a restriction of citizenship laws. With regard to the theoretical angle of citizenship, this dissertation attempts to map the extent to which naturalisations and/or nationality transfers in the Olympics are bound up with the marketisation of citizenship.

Sociologically, I hold some reservations regarding the notion of ‘tenuous cultural attachments’ of athletes (Iorwerth, Hardman and Jones, 2014), as well as regarding subsequent ‘efforts to police the absence of genuine links between athletes and states’ (Spiro, 2014: 7). In this study, one aim is to examine why such policing is problematic and can eventually form a dangerous trope, given the assumption that discussions within the microcosm of sport are oftentimes not just about sport (Zenquis and Mwaniki, 2019). Spiro (2014) argues that attempts to police so-called non-genuine links and the introduction of ‘guidelines for determining what counts as a sufficiently meaningful connection between the individual and the state she represents’ to ensure ‘genuine national representation’ (Shachar, 2011: 2133) are undesirable from a law perspective, and Exner (2019) found that some of the (additional) rules governing sporting nationality (e.g. not allowing transfers of sporting nationality) could be potentially void under EU law provisions on EU citizenship.

The more sociological question is, of course, what counts as a ‘genuine link’ for whom and why it would matter in the context of sports? For some, ‘a genuine

link can be presumed to exist between nationals of a state and that particular state’ (Wollmann, Vonk and De Groot, 2015: 320), while for others the principle of birthright citizenship, for instance, is already unjust and prone to exploitation and abuse (see Bauböck, 2019). In line with Storey (2019), I would argue that calls to develop more stringent nationality rules are in part demonstrative of a broader ongoing reluctance to ‘recognise the duality and multiplicity of identity’ (2019: 11). Indeed, ‘we need to be wary of seeing the choices players make as an all-or-nothing statement of identity or allegiance’ (ibid.). Strategic uses of citizenship-by-descent by, for example, athletes of the African diaspora should be interpreted from a framework that recognises the duality and multiplicity of identity, and perhaps as also as some form of the countries’ compensation for a lack of strong sporting infrastructures, instead of being juxtaposed to exclusive ideals of national identity and loyalty.

Iorwerth, Hardman and Jones (2014: 334) write that it is necessary to ‘elaborate in more detail the conditions of a genuine cultural and national belonging’ that is not based on formal citizenship, which in its current form often favours ethnic nationalist conceptions of membership that are predicated upon the law of blood (*jus sanguinis*). Here, too, I find myself sympathetic to accounts that point out the inherently arbitrary and unfair nature of the ‘birthright privilege’ and, for instance, some of the ethnocentric nationalisms with which they are bound-up. Moreover, I agree with the authors that ‘our hopes for a more liberal and egalitarian world require that we take nationalism seriously and, more than anything, critically’ (ibid.: 338). Yet, exactly in pointing to and wanting to resolve a perceived mismatch between international sportive representation through legal citizenship and the attachments of individuals to the national culture and identity by imposing further eligibility regulations to ensure ‘that representatives have a genuine and credible national link with the nation’ (Iorwerth, Hardman and Jones, 2014: 331), one can also find an illustration of the broader ‘shift from a relative focus on formal citizenship to an emphasis on moral citizenship’ that Schinkel (2017) has observed.

Taking nationalism and literature on nations and nationhood seriously, studies on national belonging should move beyond treating ‘categories of practice’, such as nations, as ‘categories of analysis’ (Brubaker, 1992, 2009). Although *in practice* these groups or categories are meaningful in organising everyday social and political life, Brubaker (2002: 28) warns us that they should not be thought about in a substantialist manner that unreflexively treats ‘nations as basic constituents of social life’. From this perspective, analyses that start from the notion of ‘authenticity’ (of both international sporting events as a whole and of links between athletes and nations) tend to reproduce a taken-for-granted logic of nationhood (Skey, 2010), with a world naturally divided into nations to which individuals genuinely and actively

belong and can compete for. Moreover, they can feed into the dangerous trope of 'good-immigrant narratives' that conceive of good citizens (in particular immigrants) as actively participating, culturally and socio-economically integrated, loyal, and grateful citizens (Anderson, 2013; Schinkel, 2017). For while foreign-born athletes who participate in the Olympic all have legally acquired formal citizenship of the countries they compete for, for some it is their attachment to that country that is deemed questionable and generates further uneasiness or controversy, as will be demonstrated in Chapter 5.

Apart from the questions of whether and to what extent formal citizenship is strategically mobilised by athletes and commodified by states in their pursuit of sporting success, this study is also about the evaluation of moral conceptions of national belonging that oftentimes underlie attempts to impose restraints on these practices with the aim of preserving authentic *international* competitions and links between athletes and nations. As Kostakopoulou and Schrauwen have argued, historically sport has often been (mis)used by 'governing elites as a means of advancing certain political programmes and morally deplorable agendas' (2014: 154). In this light, a transformation of citizenship into a commodity in order to attract talented elite athletes can be interpreted as a paradoxical avenue to nation-building (ibid.).

This dissertation will examine how 'communitarian' attempts to renationalise the Olympics and other sporting competitions using notions of 'tenuous links', 'loyalty' and 'gratefulness' can also produce perverse effects in terms of how sport has been frequently misused in 'nationhood narratives and exclusionary citizenship politics' (ibid.: 158). In a sense, such attempts are contradictory to the very principles of the Olympic Movement, as the Charter explicitly states that the 'Olympic Games are competitions between athletes in individual and team events and not between countries' (IOC, 2019: 21). From this perspective, the next section will discuss the literature on nations and nationhood, and the perspective will shift from citizenship in the formal sense to what Schinkel (2017) has called a 'moralisation of citizenship', in which citizens in a formal sense are no longer seen to automatically be part of the imagined community.

Who belongs to the nation?

The third theoretical angle that this study takes as a starting point concerns the domain of nationhood, a term that, as Skey notes, refers to 'processes of identification, imagination, inhabitation, organisation etc. that are defined (and justified) in national terms' (2011: 170) and which I use to shed light on conceptions of who belongs to and can represent the nation from a moral perspective. In the following section, I will sketch an overview of more recent theoretical debates on nations and nationhood

that have informed my thinking on the topic of this study. By taking this literature as a starting point, I also address Bairner's (2014: 378) argument that 'what is required is far greater engagement with mainstream nationalism studies and the theories they produce.' Too often, Bairner observes, 'sociologists of sport have seemed happy simply to refer to the term "imagined community" and move on without further scrutiny of that concept itself' (ibid.). If we want to use sports and mass-mediated sporting events to better understand the ways in which processes of globalisation are related to how nations are imagined, it is pivotal to engage with debates in mainstream nationalism studies in a more coherent manner.

Since the late 1980s, there has been a noticeable shift in the ways in which 'nationhood and links between peoples and their homelands' have been studied (Billig, 1995: 61; also see Antonisch and Skey, 2017; Özkirimli, 2010). Instead of theorisations around questions of 'what' is a nation, with a strong focus on the historical dating of the origins of nations while often treating them as real entities, new approaches have increasingly turned their attention to questions of 'how' the nation is 'actively institutionalised' through everyday practice and discourse (Bonikowski, 2016: 432; also see Billig, 1995; Brubaker, 1996; Edensor, 2002; Özkirimli, 2010). Here, the nation is not seen as a fixed object that always was or is, but rather as something that 'happens' (Brubaker, 1996). Nationalism, then, is not so much distinct or opposite to 'benign patriotism' as an exotic, malign or fanatical ideology of *others*, it is everywhere every day as an intrinsic feature of *our* lives (Billig, 1995; Calhoun, 2017).

In the literature, a key distinction is made between 'banal nationalism' (Billig, 1995) and 'everyday nationhood' (Fox and Miller-Idriss, 2008). Nationalism is 'banal' in the sense that the nation is continuously 'flagged' so that on a daily basis we are mindlessly reminded of our 'national place in a world of nations' (Billig, 1995: 8). Nationalism is also 'everyday', for it is in mundane settings that the nation and nationhood are talked about, chosen, performed, and consumed (Fox, 2017). While there is much overlap between the two concepts in their focus on everyday settings and the ways in which nations operate as the 'taken-for-granted fixture of the landscape of things' (Fox, 2017: 42), the concept of everyday nationhood reiterates that people are not just 'nationalist dupes' or 'unwitting targets' (ibid.: 40-41) who passively undergo the nation and national order of the world. Instead, people 'engage and enact (and ignore and deflect)' nations and nationhood differently across a variety of places, times, and contexts (Fox and Miller-Idriss, 2008: 537; Fox, 2017).

This study, in particular the part that examines the question of who belongs to a nation, especially taps into the idea that everyday settings play a crucial role in the reproduction of taken-for-granted nationhood. That is not to say that 'official nationalism' (Anderson, 1991; Malešević, 2013: 124), that is, the existing

national institutional and state structures, no longer matter in the proliferation and sedimentation of nationhood. Without nationally shared bureaucratic institutions, newspapers, currencies, school systems, languages, traditions, holidays, and, indeed, sporting teams, 'there could be no mundane, everyday nationalism' (Malešević, 2013: 131). In this light, international sports federations such as FIFA or the IOC form a part of the institutional horizon that underpins processes of national identification and imagination. As Hobsbawm noted, nations are 'dual phenomena' that are 'constructed essentially from above, but which cannot be understood unless also analysed from below' (Hobsbawm, 1992: 10).

At this point, two arguments are worth emphasising. First, it is important to recognise that everyday cultural settings play an important role in the reproduction of nations and nationhood. Through 'everyday activities, habits and discussions' (Skey, 2011: 19) the world of nations is reproduced. In his book *National Identity, Popular Culture and Everyday Life*, Edensor (2002) points to the importance of studying various forms of popular culture as mediums through which nationhood is expressed and experienced. Whether it is national television programmes (*The Great British Bake Off*), landscapes (polders, dikes), films (*Braveheart*), architecture (styles of fencing, garden ornamentation), or cuisine (spaghetti, pizza), they - irrespective of their historical accuracy - all form ingredients of a 'logic of national thinking' (Skey, 2011: 152) which habitually reminds us of our national place in the world. From this perspective, sports and mass-mediated events such as the Olympic Games, while usually studied as sites of overt flag-waving or blatant nationalism, also provide important opportunities for exploring the 'more or less routine understanding of a world defined in terms of nations' (ibid.: 153). In the contemporary era of globalisation, in which we are increasingly confronted with others and otherness, far from being erased, local and national forms of identity continue to 'anchor people to place' (Edensor, 2002: 116). Nations provide individuals with 'ontological security' (Giddens, 1990), i.e. confidence in the stability of their identities and social environments, in a world marked by rapid change (Skey, 2010, 2013).

The second, related argument is that part of this shift towards studying *how* nations are discursively reproduced through everyday practices involves paying attention to the ways in which the nation's boundaries are flagged and drawn. Since nations are no longer to be studied as 'things' or as 'real entities of some kind' (Brubaker, 1996: 14), the boundaries between those seen to belong and not belong also need to be analysed in terms of how they are drawn by heterogeneous, ambiguous, and shifting understandings (Bonikowski, 2016). An important question is, therefore, how the boundaries between 'us' and 'them' are constructed in everyday settings. This question has gained particular importance in the contemporary era, where increased

levels of immigration in some corners of the world seem to have produced tensions in terms of taken-for-granted conceptions of nationhood, with 'the world ... naturally divided up into nations, individuals belong[ing] to a nation and, as a result, [having] certain beliefs, characteristics, responsibilities and entitlements' (Skey, 2014b: 14; italics added).

By necessity, these encounters with others and otherness require a constant renegotiation of nationhood (Ahmed, 2000), for it is through such encounters with 'strangers' that questions of 'who are they? do they belong here? who am I? who are we?' and 'who is the "we" of the nation if "they" are here to stay?' (ibid.: 101) require a response. In contemporary discourses of nationhood, institutional national belonging, in the form of citizenship, is frequently distinguished from practical national belonging, which refers to a form of 'national cultural capital' that can be understood as 'the sum of accumulated nationally sanctified and valued social and physical cultural styles and dispositions ... as well as valued characteristics' (Hage, 1998: 53). Similarly, Schinkel (2017: 197, italics in original) observes how 'integration discourse has seen the shift from a relative focus on *formal citizenship* to an emphasis on *moral citizenship*', the latter comprising the ideal of membership that foregrounds socio-economic participation and cultural integration in the national society. Oftentimes, however, it remains unclear *exactly* which forms of cultural capital are 'national' and what makes citizenship 'moral' and citizens 'good citizens'. Rather, the answers to such questions of nationhood tend to obscure and mystify perceptions and images of 'nation', 'society' and 'dominant culture' (ibid.) by only offering 'imaginaries of alterity' (Pratsinakis, 2017: 99): 'we are what they are not'.

In order for immigrant groups to *really* belong to the nation, their sense of belonging needs to be recognised as such by the more established groups. For Hage (1998), recognised national belonging is a form of symbolic capital that tends to be related to the possession and accumulation of dominant national cultural capital, such as looks, manners, cultural preferences, and accent. Importantly, however, as immigrants are not born into the established group, the very fact that their national capital is always partly an accumulation makes that they are *a priori* seen as 'less' national. Dominant forms of national cultural capital hence operate as a symbolic violence by which migrants are 'safely positioned in the liminal spaces of inclusion/exclusion' (ibid.: 246) so that their belonging is precarious and subject to ongoing scrutiny (Skey, 2011).

The importance of all this is that the recognition of national belonging is related to processes of in- and exclusion. Taking this overview of the more recent literature on nationhood back to the topic of this dissertation, I believe that there lies great value in studying the uneasiness and/or sometimes-heated discussions around

foreign-born athletes competing in the Olympics. Who genuinely belongs to and therefore qualifies to represent 'our' nation? And why does nationality matter for international events in the first place? As Malešević (2013) notes, the omnipresence of (banal) nationalism and concepts like national identity may seem innocent, futile, or trivial. However, as many scholars have argued (Hage, 1998; Schinkel, 2017, 2018; Yuval-Davis, 2006), reified notions of nation, society, national identity, and belonging are not only problematic from an empirical point of view, they are also highly political in the sense that they can ultimately be bound up with the reproduction of unequal relations of power, social inclusion and exclusion, violence and oppression, and racial and ethnic discrimination.

To be sure, nationalism is not always only bad. Such a limited view would obscure the fact that, by providing cultural support for structures of belonging, nations are also arenas of democratic political participation and sources of solidarity (Calhoun, 2007; 2017). Psychologically, nations enable people to feel that they belong, for they provide a 'sense of self, place, and ontological security', all of which is important to people in this globalised era marked by social change and insecurity (Skey, 2011: 157). Yet, we should also pay attention to the nation as a 'category of practice' used to 'divide and exclude' (ibid.: 158). Nations are 'part of the process of social imagination that makes national thinking and national sense of belonging available for politics' (Calhoun, 2017: 24). Nationalism, as Billig notes, 'embraces ways of thinking ... which make boundedness and monopolization of violence seem natural to us' (1995: 20). The role of public social science, then, 'lies in the illustration of the contingency of conceptions of immigrant integration and of articulations of national societies' (Schinkel, 2017: 235). This study attempts to examine these discursive articulations of national societies and their boundaries which, as I have argued, can also be reflected in and exacerbated through talk about sport, in particular in the context of *international* sporting events where nationality remains the primary organising principle and athletes are seen to compete as representatives of the nation.

Outline of this dissertation

This research is based on four empirical studies. In each of these studies, one of the theoretical domains will be highlighted in particular. In combination, the empirical chapters are meant to provide an answer to the central research question of this study: *How has the number of foreign-born athletes in the Olympic Games changed, and how do these numbers challenge notions of citizenship and nationhood?* Or, as formulated in the title of this dissertation: who represents and who can, in a formal and moral sense, represent the nation?

The next chapter (Chapter 2) has a strong focus on the more descriptive question of this research project: how has the number of foreign-born athletes in the Olympics changed? Using this rather basic question as a starting point, my aim is to show a broader picture by using a comparative historical perspective which is grounded in the broader academic literature on general migration trends and patterns (Czaika and De Haas, 2014). Based on that literature, we may expect that the Olympics have not necessarily become more migratory and that countries have always been represented by substantial numbers of not native-born athletes. Presumably, migration in the context of the Olympics is primarily a reflection of broader migration patterns, making certain countries and their respective Olympic teams, depending on their particular histories of migration, more diverse in terms of the origins of athletes selected to participate than in the past.

The second study (Chapter 3) zooms in on the question of naturalisations in relation to changes of Olympic nationality. As with Chapter 2, the goal of this study is to move away from a 'mercenary-frame' that is based on rather anecdotal evidence and to provide a more theoretically and empirically grounded interpretation of the presence of (naturalised) foreign-born Olympic athletes. Given a number of methodological constraints, which also applied to the first study, Chapter 3 will predominantly focus on a subgroup of athletes who have 'swapped' one Olympic nationality for another. By examining the biographies of 167 athletes, this study investigates if and how naturalisations of athletes and subsequent changes of sporting nationality are related to a marketisation of citizenship. In other words, to what extent do naturalisations in sport increasingly have the character of 'just-in-time talent-for-citizenship exchanges' (Shachar, 2011)? Or is it the case that athletes who switched their nationalities strategically use their dual citizenship or existing pathways to citizenship?

Both Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 are part of the more descriptive part of this study in which I aim to historically and comparatively assess the presence of foreign-born athletes in international sporting competitions. For these purposes, I created a dataset consisting of over 45,000 athletes from 11 countries participating in the Summer Olympics between 1948 and 2016. The 11 countries, which were selected primarily because of their different 'histories of migration' (Hollifield, Martin and Orrenius, 2014), are: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, France, Great Britain, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, and the United States. In total, the selection covers 33% of the total number of athletes who participated in these editions. Based on the countries of birth of these athletes, Chapter 2 assesses whether the Olympics have become more migratory in the sense that nowadays more athletes are competing for countries in which they were not born. Owing to the fact that it was impossible to gather information about the nationalities of all the athletes in the dataset, including

the modalities through which they acquired formal citizenship, Chapter 3 focuses on the sub-group of athletes who competed for two different countries in the Olympics and about whom more biographical information was available. In this way, it becomes possible to study how changes as regards the number of athletes born abroad and their sporting nationalities are tied up with changing pathways to citizenship.

Chapter 4 is meant to function as a bridge between Chapter 3 and Chapter 5. It shifts the focus from describing numbers and patterns to examining media reception. With this chapter, I also aim to methodologically inspire and further research in the areas of migration, citizenship, and nationhood by employing state-of-the-art machine learning techniques by which large amounts of textual data can be analysed. Using so-called 'supervised machine learning' techniques (DiMaggio, 2015), approximately 1500 English language newspaper articles were automatically coded according to three generic media frames: the conflict frame; the economic frame; and the morality frame (Burscher, Odijk, Vliegthart, De Rijke and De Vreese, 2014). Using these frames, the first question asked in this chapter is whether changes of allegiance of Olympic athletes have become more controversial over time, knowing from the previous chapters that athletes and countries engaged in the practice of nationality swapping in earlier decades. Next, this study investigates if controversy over changes of nationality is framed in economic terms, for instance by making references to the financial consequences of pursuing a transfer of allegiance, or moral terms, that is, by discussing nationality changes in terms of nationhood narratives.

Lastly, Chapter 5 centres on what is perhaps the most pivotal question underlying this dissertation: who genuinely belongs to the nation? Chapter 4 finds that the question of national belonging became a particularly thorny issue in the run up to the London 2012 Olympic Games. By taking what is known as the 'Plastic Brits' debate as a case study, Chapter 5 examines how the nation's boundaries are discursively drawn and contested in media discussions about the status of foreign-born athletes who compete in international competitions. The chapter draws on a qualitative content analysis of 431 newspaper articles, which was guided by a theoretical framework that particularly draws on insights from works of Norbert Elias, Ghassan Hage, and Erving Goffman, but also engages with more mainstream nationalism studies as a means of attending to Bairner's call to move beyond the mere use of the term 'imagined communities'. The chapter can serve as an example of how sociological research on sport can further research on national belonging as a particular form of solidarity *and* social division that does not seem to have lost much of its significance in this contemporary era shaped by the forces of globalisation.



2

HAVE THE OLYMPIC GAMES BECOME MORE MIGRATORY?

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WHO CAN
REPRESENT
THE
NATION?

2 Have the Olympic Games become more migratory?

Introduction

In anticipation of the Rio 2016 Olympic Games, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) published an online blog mentioning the fact that of the 558 athletes representing the United States, an 'astonishing 44 foreign-born athletes will be donning the stars and stripes' (Ekin, 2016). These 44 athletes were born in 28 different countries, indicating the alleged super-diversity that marks our globalised era. Similarly, in 2012 the British tabloid newspaper Daily Mail reported that 61 'Plastic Brits' competed for Team Great Britain during that year's London Olympics (Daily Mail, 2012). The supposed increase in the number as well as diversity of foreign-born Olympic athletes is often the subject of media controversies. Various stakeholders, especially international sports federations, call for measures to discourage nationality transfers and secure the authentic *international* character of the Olympic Games (Kostakopoulou and Schrauwen, 2014; Spiro, 2014). The very term 'Plastic Brits' suggests that the 'Britishness' of these athletes is called into question. Are some British athletes more British than others?

Some foreign-born Olympians are even referred to as 'Olympic mercenaries': athletes willing to, without scruples, sell their talents to the highest bidding country (Kozłowska and Traywick, 2014). The examples raised in media discourses are often the same; be it a 'Russian' speed-track skater born in Korea or a 'Qatari' long distance runner from Kenya. Altogether, the common belief is that the Olympic Games have become increasingly migratory and diverse. It is perhaps not coincidental that Vertovec (2007) introduced his much-cited article on super-diversity by referring to the London bid to host the 2012 Olympics, which emphasised the similarities in terms of 'multicultural diversity' between the city itself and the Olympic Games, and of which Team Great Britain's diversity might be the ultimate expression.

It should, however, be noted that migration in the context of sports is hardly a new phenomenon. Like many things in life it traces back to the ancient Greeks (Hardman and Iorwerth, 2012). During the Ancient Olympics mention was made of a talented Cretan long-distance runner, named Sotades, who was bribed to become a citizen of and an athlete for Ephesus after first having competed and having won races for Crete. This evidently led to great Cretan discontent whereupon Sotades was banished from Crete (Kyle, 2015). Switching city-state allegiance to the highest bidding state was far from uncommon in those days. The question therefore is whether the

assumption that Olympic teams increasingly consist of foreign-born athletes holds true. Hitherto such claims have not yet been subject to rigorous empirical testing. Migration within the context of sports is often merely a reflection of global and historical patterns of migration, rather than an isolated phenomenon.

In the context of the migration of football players to the English Premier League, for instance, Taylor (2006: 7) concluded that 'football migration is nothing new, but it has a long and complicated history; ... it should not be isolated from general migratory trends and patterns.' Perhaps the same could be said about the number of foreign-born athletes representing Team USA or GB during recent editions of the Olympic Games. The purpose of this chapter is to shed a comparative historical light on the 'astonishing' number of foreign-born athletes who nowadays compete for other nations. To answer the question of whether the Olympic Games have become more migratory, we will analyse Olympic teams between 1948 and 2016.¹ Through contrasting the results with broader migratory trends and patterns, we aim to place a common (mis)conception under scrutiny.

In the first part of this chapter we discuss a conceptual framework based on research from both mainstream migration studies and the sociology of sport. This framework serves as a tool for comparatively and historically assessing how the number of foreign-born athletes in the Olympics has evolved over time in terms of intensity, diversity, and direction. In the second part of this chapter we discuss our methodological approach that follows from the theoretical framework. Lastly, we present the results of our analyses and elaborate on the implications and limitations of our study.

'Has the world become more migratory?'

Whilst some academics state that we are now living in times of accelerating migration and super-diversity (cf. Castles, De Haas and Miller, 2014; Vertovec, 2007), others question this widespread belief. The idea that 'the volume, diversity, geographical scope, and overall complexity of international migration have increased as part of globalisation processes remains largely untested' (Czaika and De Haas, 2014: 283). According to Czaika and De Haas this idea marks a Western bias or an Eurocentric worldview. Migration is not accelerating everywhere at the same pace (see also Flahaux

¹ The analysis in the article published in *Comparative Migration Studies*, on which this chapter is based, originally ran from 1948-2012. Only after the article's publication I acquired data on the Rio 2016 Olympics, which I wanted to include in this dissertation. I have chosen to complement certain sections with the 2016 data, especially the section on intensity, while keeping the sections on diversity and direction largely intact.

and De Haas, 2016). Some traditional immigration countries (for instance Argentina and Brazil) are facing the opposite process: they have developed into countries of emigration. The authors conclude that under the unequal conditions of globalisation, migration has become increasingly non-European and less colonial (see also Penninx, 2016). Global migration has 'skewed' and 'diversified', but not necessarily increased everywhere. Throughout the twentieth century, the relative number of international migrants has remained quite stable, at about 3%. From a global perspective, the idea that we are now confronted with unprecedented migration seems to be flawed. It is therefore classified as one of seven common migration myths by De Haas (2005). However, it is true that international migration has become more visible. Recent imaginaries like the 'migration crisis' in Europe could explain why people tend to think of the world as becoming more migratory (De Haas, 2005; Goldin, Cameron and Balarajan, 2012). This visibility-argument could also apply to the Olympic Games, as one of the greatest mediated spectacles on the planet which is live broadcasted in over 200 countries in the world.

Over time countries have undergone different histories of migration (Castles, De Haas and Miller, 2014). In this respect, Hollifield, Martin, and Orrenius (2014) differentiate between so-called 'nations of immigrants', 'countries of immigration', and 'latecomers to immigration'. The first category applies to countries like the United States, Australia, and Canada. These are nations that have immigration as a part of their DNA, since they were established by immigrants. Countries like Great Britain, France, and the Netherlands belong to the second category. Although these countries have always been confronted with a vast influx of immigrants, they are hesitant in considering themselves countries of immigration. The third category applies to countries such as Italy and Spain. For a long time, they have accounted for a significant share of the world's migration population. It was only during the last decades of the twentieth century that migratory movements to these countries began to increase. For the purpose of this study, we propose to add a fourth category, which we call 'former countries of immigration' and applies to countries like Argentina and Brazil. They have evolved from countries of immigration into countries of emigration.

During the epoch of globalisation and super-diversity in which we are now thought to live immigration policies in immigration countries have become increasingly selective. Structural economic developments have changed the nature of labour markets, especially demanding more highly skilled workers (Castles, De Haas and Miller, 2014; De Haas, Natter and Vezzoli, 2016; Hollifield, Martin and Orrenius, 2014; Penninx, 2016). The phenomenon of elite migration emerged, with countries competing for knowledge workers, sometimes even by offering them citizenship in exchange for their skills (De Haas, Natter and Vezzoli, 2016; Shachar, 2006). This elite

migration is not limited to regular highly skilled migration, i.e. the migration of lawyers, engineers, or academics. It has also expanded to the field of sports. In the hands of governments, migration is said to have become a tool with which countries try to enhance their global productivity, be it economic growth or the number of medals at the Olympics (Shachar, 2011).

Within the fields of sport sociology and history there is an ongoing debate regarding whether athletic migration (as a form of elite migration) around the globe has intensified since the Second World War. Some authors (Bale and Maguire, 1994: 5) argue that, although nothing new 'it appears, however, that the process is speeding up.' Most scholars sketch an increasing tendency of states taking an instrumental stance on the migration and naturalisation of talented athletes for state promotion purposes (Maguire, 2011; Poli, 2007; Shachar, 2011). Against such notions, Taylor (2006) argues that the migration of athletes, *in casu* footballers, is not novel and can only be understood when related to general migratory trends and patterns. The movement of football players across the globe is merely a reflection and 'adaptation of already existing patterns rather than any radical breach with the past' (Taylor, 2006: 30). Take for instance the post Second World War movements of footballers, such as Scottish players to the English leagues or the large influx of Argentinians and Yugoslavs since the 1970s. Similarly, after studying foreign footballers in the English football leagues, McGovern (2002: 23) concluded that notions of labour market globalisation are 'fundamentally flawed, since they fail to account for the ways in which labour market behaviour is socially embedded.'

Taylor's research focusses, like similar studies (Bale and Maguire, 1994), predominantly on movements of professional athletes across the world seeking employment elsewhere. The phenomenon that we address in this study differs slightly from these movements in the sense that we focus on athletes who represent countries other than in which they were born (rather than just 'working' in other countries). However, the main argument formulated in this chapter is based on a combination of the above two elaborated arguments, taken from mainstream migration studies and studies on athletic migration. Firstly, that global migration has not intensified, but skewed and diversified and, secondly, that athletic migration is above all a reflection of global migration patterns. It is thus hypothesised that:

1. Migration within the context of the Olympic Games is above all an adaptation of already existing migration patterns and not so much a discontinuity with the past;
2. The number of foreign-born Olympians has not necessarily increased in every participating country, but varies according to historical migration patterns.

That means that, for instance, the number of foreign-born athletes in Italy and Spain is expected to grow over time, whilst the opposite applies to countries like Argentina and Brazil;

3. Foreign-born Olympic athletes increasingly come from a wide variety of countries of origin. The pool of foreign-born Olympians is thus expected to have become more diverse; and
4. The direction of the movement of Olympic athletes across borders has skewed, which implies that migration in the context of the Olympic Games has become increasingly non-European, less colonial, and more diverse.

Methodology

Our aim of mapping migration in the context of the Olympic Games via the counting of changing numbers of foreign-born athletes comes with a number of challenges. First of all, it should be acknowledged that while many studies on international migration also make use of foreign-born population data, this country-of-birth proxy tends to overlook historical-geopolitical changes (Van Campenhout, Van Sterkenburg and Oonk, 2018) and explain little in terms of the qualitative variation *within* the group of foreign-born athletes (see Castles, De Haas and Miller, 2014; Dumont and Lemaître, 2005). Just by counting foreign-born athletes, the ‘reason, timing and nature’ of an athlete’s move’ remain obscure (Horowitz and McDaniel, 2015: 39). We thus do not know whether athletes born abroad were actually seen as nationals of the countries they have chosen to represent, e.g. through descent (Brubaker, 1990; Dumont and Lemaître, 2005), or if they, attracted by certain financial rewards, migrated to their new countries at a later stage.

Furthermore, changes in numbers of foreign-born athletes tell us little about the role of citizenship in the decisions athletes make regarding their Olympic nationalities. For example, based on foreign-born data we do not know which athletes had their citizenship applications fast-tracked in order to compete for a new country, and which athletes ‘only’ strategically mobilised their dual citizenship in order to be able to participate in the Summer Olympics. The fact that the International Olympic Committee (IOC) does not openly keep historic registers of such detailed information on the nationalities and birthplaces of all Olympic athletes further limits the possibility of accounting for the qualitative variation within the group of foreign-born athletes.

While we acknowledge these limitations, for the purposes of this Chapter we have chosen to employ a foreign-born proxy and rely on secondary sources for the creation of a dataset which contains athletes and their countries of birth (Horowitz and McDaniel, 2015). Sports Reference LLC is the only known secondary source that

provides information about the names and countries of birth of nearly all Olympic athletes since 1896. Unfortunately, also Sports Reference doesn’t provide complete data. For this study, it was therefore necessary to make a selection of a limited number of countries and editions (1948–2012). The eleven countries selected are (in alphabetical order) Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, France, Great Britain, Italy, Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, and the United States. The motivation (both theoretic and pragmatic) for this selection is fourfold:

1. The selected countries have different histories of migration and thus together cover the distinction between ‘nations of immigrants’, ‘countries of immigration’, and ‘latecomers to immigration’ (Hollifield, Martin and Orrenius, 2014). For the purposes of this study, we propose to add a fourth category, namely ‘former countries of immigration’ (Argentina and Brazil).
2. The selected countries employ different citizenship rules, based on either the principle of *jus soli* or *jus sanguinis* or some hybrid form.
3. The selected countries participated in nearly all editions of the Summer Olympic Games after the Second World War, which allows us to map historical patterns.
4. Information on the birth countries of athletes from the selected countries is relatively complete compared to many other participating countries.

We constructed the dataset (see Jansen, 2017) by manually retrieving the names and countries of birth of all athletes in our selection from Sports Reference. The total dataset comprises more than 45,000 participants. Some athletes were counted repeatedly as they participated at multiple editions, leaving us with over 30,000 unique athletes. In total, the country of birth is unknown for about 8% of the participants in the dataset, many of which are concentrated around the earlier editions (see Table 2.1, last column). We made some concessions regarding completeness (criterion 4), as, for instance, information on Argentinian and Brazilian athletes who participated in earlier editions is relatively incomplete. Nonetheless, we have chosen to select these countries based on our theoretical considerations (criterion 1).

In terms of analysis, the historical patterns of migration in the Olympic Games are compared with global migration patterns. In their paper Czaika and De Haas (2014) test the common belief that the volume, diversity and scope of migration have globalised by conceptualising globalisation using several indicators, of which *intensity*, *diversity*, and *direction* are pivotal. Intensity is measured as the relative share of migrants as a percentage of a given population. They define diversity as the extent to which immigrants come from a variety of countries of origin. Diversity (*D*) is calculated

by using the Herfindahl-index, a measure derived from economics (used to calculate market concentration). Other sociologists (Putnam, 2007) have also adopted this measure to calculate ethnic diversity. For each country, it is used to calculate the sum of squares of the proportion of each immigrant population (IM_i) as a share of the total immigrant population (M). An outcome close to 1 indicates relatively high diversity, whereas an outcome close to 0 indicates homogeneity.

$$D = 1 - \sum_{i=1} \left(\frac{IM_i}{M}\right)^2$$

Regarding direction, Czaika and De Haas (2014: 315) refer to the changing direction of contemporary global migration flows: ‘Migrants from an increasingly diverse array of non-European-origin countries have been concentrating in a shrinking pool of prime destination countries.’ In this chapter, we compare the number of foreign-born athletes in the Olympics and global migration patterns on these three indicators in order to determine whether the Olympic Games have become more migratory.

Intensity

In previous decades, the relative share of migrants as a share of the total world population has remained relatively stable, at about 3%. In line with earlier remarks about this figure, not all countries have faced the exact same patterns of immigration since the Second World War. Three major transitions can be discerned (Czaika and De Haas, 2014). First of all, South American countries like Argentina and Brazil were among the top immigration destinations before and during the 1960s, but gradually migration to these countries has reduced. Contrarily, some European countries are facing the opposite process. During the second half of the twentieth century, migration patterns reversed as countries like Italy and Spain changed from emigration to immigration countries. European migrants now account for a relatively small share of the global migrant population. Other European countries (think of France, Great Britain, and the Netherlands) have entered the immigration phase somewhat earlier, partly due to their colonial histories and partly due to the recruitment of guest workers. Thirdly, traditional ‘nations of immigrants’ like the United States and Australia have always attracted many immigrants, just as they do nowadays.

Table 2.1: Share (%) foreign-born athletes by country by edition.

	ARG	AUS	BRA	CAN	FRA	GBR	ITA	NLD	SPA	SWE	USA	TOT	UNK
1948	3.5%	2.7%	0.0%	5.5%	5.7%	10.2%	6.5%	10.7%	1.5%	1.7%	7.0%	6.2%	21.0%
1952	7.3%	1.2%	0.0%	4.7%	6.9%	4.3%	2.6%	14.4%	0.0%	1.5%	5.9%	4.8%	19.6%
1956	3.6%	6.5%	0.0%	4.3%	9.5%	5.3%	3.9%			4.5%	7.4%	6.0%	22.4%
1960	3.3%	11.6%	4.2%	18.8%	13.0%	8.3%	2.9%	8.2%	0.7%	4.5%	3.8%	6.9%	0.6%
1964	0.0%	7.9%	3.3%	13.9%	6.5%	5.9%	5.4%	7.2%	0.0%	1.1%	5.5%	5.8%	18.7%
1968	3.4%	6.3%	3.9%	23.7%	7.5%	8.4%	2.4%	6.5%	1.6%	5.0%	3.9%	6.6%	1.9%
1972	0.0%	5.4%	2.5%	20.7%	4.0%	6.0%	2.2%	7.6%	4.1%	4.6%	6.3%	6.3%	21.2%
1976	0.0%	5.0%	0.0%	19.5%	3.9%	9.5%	1.9%	4.6%	1.8%	5.2%	4.5%	7.1%	21.1%
1980	0.0%	5.8%	0.9%		6.6%	9.1%	1.3%	4.0%	2.6%	4.1%		4.3%	30.7%
1984		2.1%	0.0%	16.2%	4.6%	9.2%	2.6%	2.9%	0.6%	4.0%	6.1%	6.2%	13.0%
1988	0.8%	6.0%	0.0%	21.6%	6.0%	5.5%	2.4%	4.1%	3.9%	3.8%	4.4%	6.2%	12.8%
1992	1.2%	7.9%	1.1%	19.3%	8.8%	7.3%	3.0%	6.5%	3.3%	4.8%	5.3%	6.6%	7.8%
1996	0.6%	10.1%	1.8%	15.8%	8.6%	5.7%	2.9%	6.7%	5.9%	3.4%	6.3%	6.7%	3.8%
2000	2.1%	13.9%	1.0%	17.0%	8.0%	4.8%	8.0%	8.2%	5.3%	2.7%	5.3%	8.0%	1.5%
2004	1.3%	10.2%	2.1%	12.5%	11.4%	5.3%	10.7%	12.4%	5.7%	7.0%	5.4%	7.9%	0.0%
2008	2.3%	9.7%	1.1%	13.9%	7.1%	8.2%	7.2%	11.0%	8.5%	5.7%	6.1%	7.7%	0.0%
2012	2.9%	11.1%	2.0%	12.8%	9.3%	13.0%	8.5%	11.0%	10.1%	3.0%	8.1%	9.2%	0.0%
2016	2.8%	14.0%	4.3%	12.3%	6.4%	7.8%	6.1%	6.8%	11.7%	4.7%	9.0%	8.2%	0.0%

Applying these findings to the Olympics, it was expected (in line with the second hypothesis) that the number of foreign-born athletes wouldn't necessarily have increased in all participating countries. Table 2.1 shows that this expectation seems to be confirmed for the 11 countries selected in this study. The overall share of foreign-born athletes has only somewhat increased over the past 60 years and fluctuates between roughly 4 and 9%. Regarding this fluctuating increase we need to make two important remarks. First, we need to take into account that there is considerable uncertainty regarding the birth countries of about 20% of the athletes participating in earlier editions. If we were to extrapolate, for instance, the total share of 6.1% foreign-born athletes in 1948, we would estimate it at roughly 8%. But, to avoid errors (mistakenly counting native athletes as foreign-born), we have chosen to employ a conservative approach and solely base our analyses on the information that is certain (Horowitz and McDaniel, 2015; Oettl and Agrawal, 2008). Our second remark concerns the overall proportion of foreign-born athletes, which turns out to be higher than 3% (the proportion of migrants as a share of the total world population). Given our selection of high-profile migration countries, this deviation seems logical and maybe even somewhat small. In 2017 for instance, the percentage of foreign-born persons in OECD countries was 13% (OECD, 2018). At the Olympic Games of 2012, the total share of foreign-born athletes was about 9%, and in 2016 the number of athletes born abroad had somewhat decreased to approximately 8%. Based on research on global migration trends and patterns we a priori expected their share to be higher than 3%.

As hypothesised, during earlier editions of the Olympic Games the three 'nations of immigrants' (Australia, Canada, and the United States) have always been represented by a significant number of foreign-born athletes. At the Mexico 1968 Summer Olympics, Team Canada (139 athletes) was represented by no less than 33 foreign-born (nearly 24%), accounting for the highest share of foreign-born athletes of all observed countries since 1948. Gradually, their numbers declined. In 2016, Canada was represented by 38 athletes born abroad (about 12%). Although not as high, the same applies to Australia. At the 1960 games held in Rome, 22 of 189 athletes weren't born in Australia. In 2016, this was the case for 59 athletes out of a total of 420. In both editions, the relative share of foreign-born athletes was about 11%. When Sydney hosted the Summer Olympics in 2000, 86 Australian athletes (14%) were born abroad, accounting for the highest absolute number of foreign-born Olympians in our dataset. The United States, often referred to as one of the countries that nowadays sees no shame in capitalising athletes from abroad (Shachar, 2011), was represented by 22 foreign-born athletes in 1956 (about 7.5%). In 2016, their numbers were 50, which *prima facie* seems to be a lot. Their relative share however just equals 9% of the whole team,

which is lower than statistics on stocks of foreign-born people living in the United States (OECD, 2018).

Argentina and Brazil are well-known for once welcoming large numbers of immigrants. However, over the past decades this influx stagnated. This pattern then should be reflected in the number of foreign-born athletes representing these two countries. Although there is much more uncertainty regarding the birth countries of some of their athletes (especially during earlier editions), it seems that the expected pattern arises. In 1960, four out of 72 athletes competing for Brazil were born abroad. We counted zero foreign-born athletes competing for Brazil in the editions before 1960, which can be partly attributed to the high percentages of athletes whose countries of birth are unknown (varying from 50 to 60%). In 2012, the share of foreign-born athletes declined to just 2% (5/248), while in 2016 it had increased again, presumably as an effect of Brazil hosting the 2016 Summer Olympics. Similarly, in 1952 about 7% of the Argentinian athletes were born abroad. In 1948 and 1956, the share of foreign-born athletes was somewhat lower at 3.5 and 3.6% respectively. However, uncertainty regarding the birthplaces of Argentinian athletes participating in those editions was also significantly higher (resp. 49% and 54%, compared to 39% in 1952). In London, the share of foreign-born Argentinian athletes was only 2% and in Rio nearly 2.8% (with zero uncertainty).

As for the typical countries of immigration (France, Great Britain, Netherlands, and Sweden) we expected that, due to their histories of migration, they have always been represented by lots of foreign athletes, especially those with colonial backgrounds. Their numbers are likely to have increased since the 1990s when the European Union (EU) became a prime migration destination. Yet again, the expected pattern emerges. When Great Britain hosted the 1948 Summer Olympics, nearly 10% of their athletes (40) were foreign-born. A figure that places the 61 foreign-born athletes who were pejoratively referred to as 'Plastic Brits' (12.5%) in the London 2012 Olympics in a different light. The share of foreign-born British athletes seems to concord with general immigration trends in the UK. The gradual increase in foreign athletes between 2004 and 2016 appears to have taken place slightly faster than, yet consistent with, a gradually increasing stock of foreign-born people in the UK (OECD, 2018). The consistency between OECD stock-data and our data also applies to France and, to a somewhat lesser extent, the Netherlands. Although the stocks of foreign-born athletes have fluctuated from edition to edition (especially in France), we note an upward trend line from the 1980s onwards. Sweden proves to be a somewhat different case compared to the other countries in our dataset, for the relative share of foreign-born athletes has often varied and remained quite low compared to national immigration rates. Lastly, as latecomers to immigration, Italy and Spain have witnessed an overall

increase of athletes born abroad, which is also consistent with general immigration trends. In 2012, their teams were composed of 8.5 and 10%, respectively, foreign-born athletes. In 2016, the number of athletes in Team Italy who had been born abroad decreased to roughly 6%.

Diversity

Having demonstrated that the Summer Olympics have not become inherently more migratory, we come to the third hypothesis: the pool of foreign-born athletes is becoming increasingly diverse. To verify this, we calculated the diversity among foreign-born athletes using the Herfindahl-index. We have chosen to compare 1960 and 2012 because information on both editions is near complete and it allows us best to contrast the outcomes with global immigration diversity (Czaika and De Haas, 2014). An outcome close to 1 indicates high diversity, whereas an outcome close to 0 indicates concentration.

Table 2.2: Diversity (D) among foreign-born athletes.

Country	1960	2012
Argentina	0.444	0.625
Australia	0.860	0.935
Brazil	0.667	0.560
Canada	0.898	0.924
France	0.730	0.911
Great Britain	0.898	0.949
Italy	0.688	0.906
Netherlands	0.494	0.892
Spain ²	0.000	0.923
Sweden	0.667	0.750
United States	0.860	0.962
All 11 countries	0.953	0.972

Table 2.2 shows that foreign-born Olympic athletes increasingly come from a wide range of different sending countries. The outcomes indicate that migration in the context of the Olympics is diversifying. Again, this process seems to be a reflection of global migration patterns, rather than it being an isolated phenomenon. On a global scale, migration has also diversified, as immigrants increasingly originate from a wide

array of sending countries all over the world.² In earlier editions, there was less diversity among the origin of foreign-born athletes, as many of them had a European or colonial background (e.g. fencers from Hungary after the Hungarian revolution in 1956, British hockey players from India). Nowadays, foreign-born athletes come from all parts of the world. Caribbean migrants for instance now account for a substantial share of the global athletic migration (e.g. Jamaican runners competing for Canada).

On a country level, it turns out that not all countries have become equally diverse, let alone at the same pace. If at all, it seems that South American countries are diversifying at a slower pace, a finding that is consistent with global migration statistics (Czaika and De Haas, 2014). In comparison to the other participating countries, foreign-born athletes competing for Great Britain, France, Canada and the United States have always come from a variety of countries. Other countries, like the Netherlands, were less diverse during earlier editions of the Olympic Games. In the case of the Netherlands, a relatively high influx of foreign-born athletes mainly stems from colonial linkages. Many foreign-born Dutch athletes that participated in the editions of 1948 and 1952 were born in Indonesia and had (by analysing the look of their names) Dutch roots. The Olympic teams of Great Britain and France, having had more colonies than the other countries in our selection, also consisted of a more diverse palette of foreign athletes. In 1948 and 1952, many French athletes born abroad came from Morocco and Algeria.

Our data indicate that colonial linkages aren't as important as they used to be in explaining migration in the Olympic context, a shift that corresponds with global migration patterns. Czaika and De Haas (2014: 315) note that: '... migration from many developing and former colonies tended to be concentrated on the former colonisers (e.g., from the Maghreb countries to France; or from Guyana to Britain) because of economic, social, cultural, and linguistic ties. These ties may have eroded over time, possibly coinciding with a diversification of migration.' Similarly, Penninx (2016) argues that European immigration in the 1960s was to a significant extent determined by colonial ties, whereas nowadays the immigration in Europe is highly diversified. As we will demonstrate in the next section, foreign-born Olympians too increasingly come from different sending regions.

Direction

In the remainder of this chapter, we will highlight two epochs of migration that occurred over the course of Olympic history (since the Second World War) through a country-of-origin perspective. These epochs are meant to illustrate the fourth

2 For the years 1960 and 2000, Czaika and De Haas (2014) calculated a global immigration diversity of 0.980 and 0.993 respectively.

hypothesis underpinning this chapter, namely that the direction of the movement of Olympic athletes across borders has skewed in the previous decades. During the first period after the Second World War, global migration patterns were predominantly European and to a large extent determined by colonial linkages. Nowadays, because of its skewed directional nature, migratory movements tend to be less European and more diverse in their offspring.

Table 2.3: Cross-continental movements of foreign-born Olympic athletes.

1960	Destination continent				
Origin continent	Europe	North America	Oceania	South America	Total
Africa	37.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	21.1%
Asia	19.2%	7.4%	27.3%	0.0%	17.2%
Europe	35.6%	85.2%	72.7%	83.3%	54.7%
North America	8.2%	3.7%	0.0%	0.0%	5.5%
Oceania	0.0%	3.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.8%
South America	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	16.7%	0.8%

Table 2.3, which shows the cross-continental movements of foreign-born Olympic athletes in 1960, forms a perfect illustration of the first epoch after the Second World War. During the Rome 1960 Olympic Games, about 55% of the Olympians born abroad originated from Europe. Of all foreign competing for both North American countries (Canada or the United States) and South American countries (Argentina and Brazil), more than 80% was born in Europe. Germany, Great Britain, Italy, and Croatia were among the top sending countries in terms of the absolute number of foreign-born athletes. Asia and Africa together accounted for about 38% of the share of foreign-born Olympians, which can be explained by the importance of colonial linkages at the time (with Algeria, Morocco, India, and Indonesia as important countries-of-origin). These two findings are perfectly illustrated in Fig. 1 (darkness indicates relatively high outflow), showing the predominantly European and colonial origin of foreign-born Olympians during the first epoch after the Second World War.

The London 2012 Olympic Games are noted for their multicultural character and hence form a perfect illustration of the second epoch in the modern history of migration in the Olympic Games: the epoch of diversity. In accordance with global migration patterns, we hypothesised that foreign-born Olympic athletes increasingly tend to come from non-European and non-colonial countries.

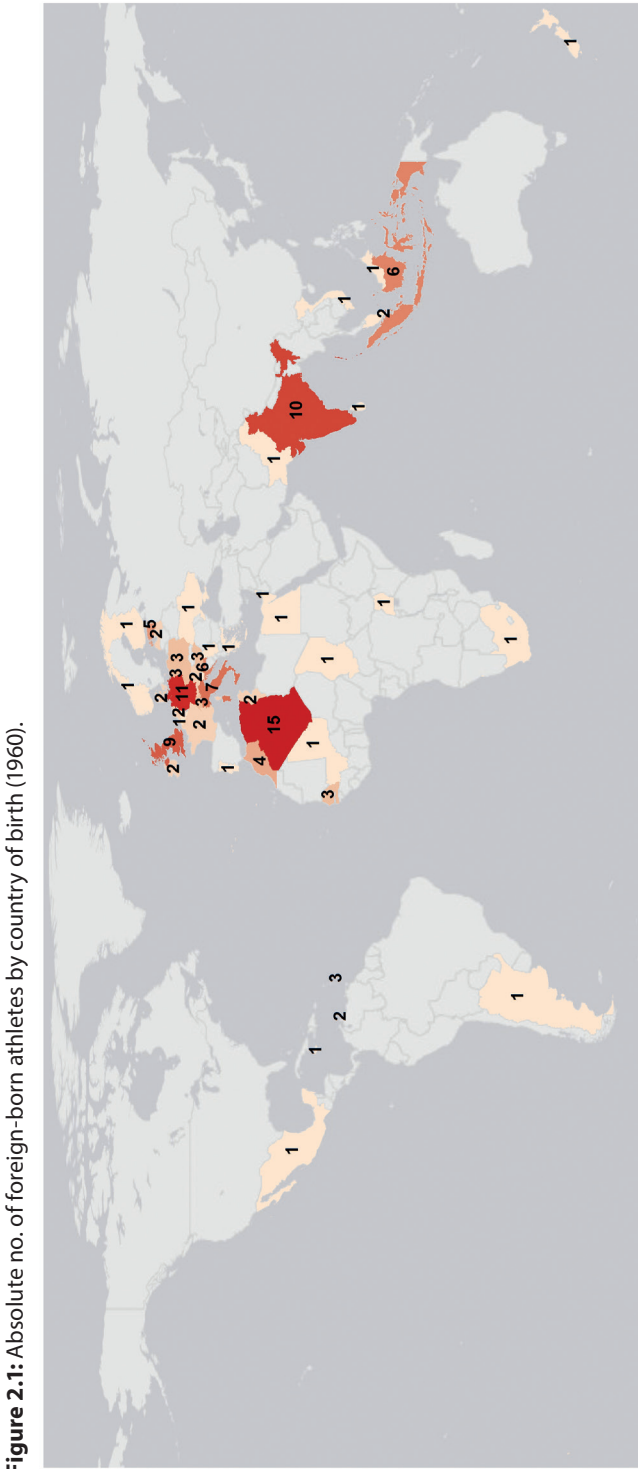


Figure 2.1: Absolute no. of foreign-born athletes by country of birth (1960).

Overall, Table 2.4 indeed shows the relative decline of foreign-born Olympians with a European background, resulting in a more equal distribution of foreign-born athletes over origin continents. Whereas in 1960 over 80% of the foreign-born Olympic athletes representing a North or South American country were born on the European continent, in 2012 their share has significantly decreased. Together, these figures indicate how the direction of cross-continental movements has changed over the decades.

Table 2.4: Cross-continental movements of foreign-born Olympic athletes.

2012	Destination continent				
Origin continent	Europe	North America	Oceania	South America	Total
Africa	26.0%	10.7%	26.7%	0.0%	21.5%
Asia	8.7%	16.0%	26.7%	22.2%	13.6%
Europe	35.8%	38.7%	35.6%	44.4%	36.8%
North America	20.8%	26.7%	8.9%	33.3%	20.9%
Oceania	2.3%	2.7%	2.2%	0.0%	2.3%
South America	6.4%	5.3%	0.0%	0.0%	5.0%

In total, the share of athletes from North America, Oceania and South America has grown quite significantly. New countries of emigration have emerged, like Cuba, Jamaica, China and Brazil. Between 2004 and 2012, 20 athletes born in Cuba represented either Canada, Great Britain, Spain or the United States. In that same period, there were 33 Chinese athletes competing for another country (almost all of them played badminton or table tennis). On a global scale, China also happens to be the country with most emigrants to OECD countries (OECD, 2018). Again, these figures illustrate the central argument of this chapter: the number of foreign-born athletes in the Olympics is above all a reflection of global migration patterns, and therefore our data seem to concord well with OECD data on international migration. The diversified and skewed directional nature of current migration flows is visualised in Fig. 2. Athletes now come from a variety of countries all over the world. In comparison with Fig. 1, one can clearly see that, relative to other countries, fewer foreign-born athletes were born in (former) colonies.³

³ A comparison between Figs. 2.1 and 2.2 can only be made to illustrate the increased diversity and changed origins of foreign-born athletes in the Olympics.

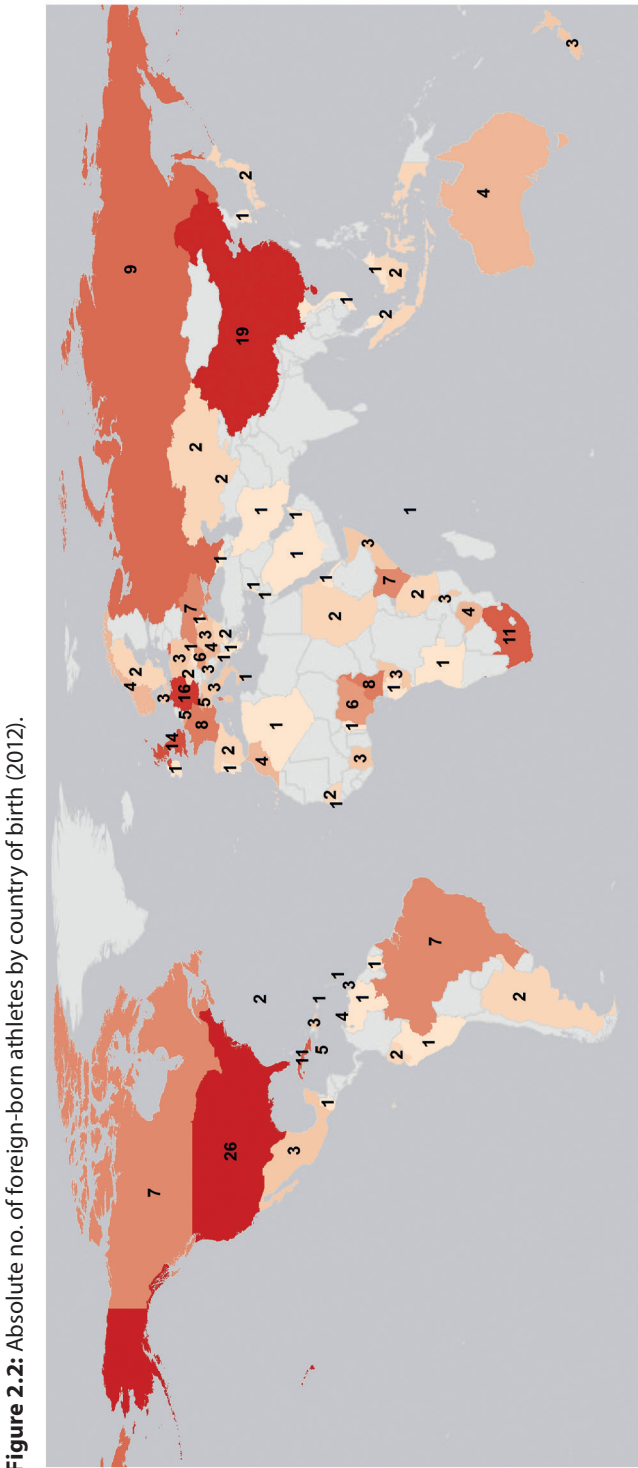


Figure 2.2: Absolute no. of foreign-born athletes by country of birth (2012).

It must also be added that foreign-born athletes often come from developed countries such as Germany, China, the United States, and Great Britain. Although these countries are also among the top 15 countries of origin to new OECD countries (OECD, 2018), we might be dealing with a context-specific pattern here. Many athletes born in these countries face high competition in their home countries to be selected to participate at the Olympic Games. Hence, they might seek refuge elsewhere to chase their Olympic dreams. Because of the non-biographic nature of our data (no information on why and when an athlete has migrated) it is hard to verify such hypotheses.

Conclusion and discussion

In contrast to what many people tend to believe, we have argued that the Olympic Games have not become ‘astonishingly’ more migratory. We must be hesitant to conceive of our times as radically different from the past. The number of Olympic athletes born outside of the countries they compete for is above all a reflection of global migration patterns. Our results indicate that in the history of the Olympic Games, the selected countries have always been represented by sizeable amounts of foreign-born athletes. Migration during earlier editions of the Olympics can to a great extent be characterised as European and colonial. Nowadays, in the epoch of diversity, foreign-born athletes come from all corners of the world. Overall, the intensity, diversity, and direction of migration in the context of the Olympic Games tends to correspond with OECD statistics on global migration flows.

That is not to say that all countries are confronted with the same processes. It is important to note that countries have different histories of migration. Therefore, we need to distinguish between ‘nations of immigrants’, ‘countries of immigration’, ‘latecomers to immigration’ and, what we have coined, ‘former countries of immigration’ (Czaika and De Haas, 2014; Hollifield, Martin and Orrenius, 2014). Countries belonging to the first category (Australia, Canada, and the United States) have always been represented by many foreign-born athletes, especially those from Europe. However, the diversity among foreign-born athletes has grown significantly over the past editions of the Summer Olympics. The same can be said for countries belonging to the second category (France, Great Britain, and the Netherlands). In the period following World War II, these countries were often represented by athletes with a colonial background. Team Great Britain was composed of substantial numbers of athletes born in India, France was represented by many Moroccan and Algerian athletes, and the Netherlands had many athletes born in Indonesia among their ranks. Nowadays, like in Australia, Canada, and the United States, foreign-born athletes come from a wide array of sending countries. The third category applies to countries such

as Italy and Spain. They have only recently entered a phase of immigration, a trend that is also reflected in Olympic context. Lastly, Czaika and De Haas (2014) have shown us that, as former immigration countries, Argentina and Brazil have developed into countries of emigration. Over the course of Olympic history, we have also observed a relative decline of foreign-born athletes representing these countries.

Two major points of debate arise from the findings that we have presented in our study. First, our results suggest that, rather than a dramatic overall increase in foreign-born athletes, it seems to be the public perception of numbers that has changed over the past decades. It may very well be that migration in the Olympic Games has become more visible as a result of increased mediatisation and is therefore conceived of as more prevalent (Czaika and De Haas, 2014). Another possible explanation for a change of public perception lies within the fact that although the number of foreign-born athletes (or immigrants in general) has not dramatically increased in all countries, second or third generation immigrants are sometimes considered to be immigrants too (Schinkel, 2017). In addition to the number of foreign-born athletes, a substantial share of the ‘native’ Olympic athletes in our database might have a migration background. We would argue that taking these ‘immigrants’ into account would not make a significant difference in terms of diversity or direction. However, it could lead one to perceive the Olympics as more migratory, especially in a context where nationalist backlashes have contributed to the reconstruction of immigrant-native boundaries along ethnic lines, causing second generation immigrants to (still) be perceived as immigrants (Alba, 2005; Goldin, Cameron and Balarajan, 2012). When, for instance, looking at second or even third generation Moroccan footballers representing the Netherlands, Van Sterkenburg (2013) found that they, as a result of ‘conditional belonging’, are considered either Dutch or Moroccan depending on their sport performances. Given the limitations of our data it is hard to challenge such discourses.

A second point of debate concerns the lack of attention given in this chapter to the qualitative variation within the group of foreign-born athletes. As such, this chapter is not about naturalisations of talented athletes, or citizenship for that matter. Owing to the nature of our data and its limitations, it is impossible to examine the different pathways to citizenship that have allowed individual athletes to compete for countries in which they were not born. Given the fact that countries employ different citizenship laws, a foreign-born athlete is not necessarily considered foreigner or non-native in every country. Moreover, the divergences between different citizenship regimes make that there will always be situations in which athletes are eligible to represent different countries because they have multiple citizenship (see Chapter 3). Finally, from our data it is hard to trace which athletes acquired citizenship of a country

to which they had 'tenuous' links, for instance because they were offered a passport and financial rewards in exchange for their talents.

To overcome such complex citizenship issues that form an impediment to measuring and mapping international migration and variation therein, the OECD (Dumont and Lemaître, 2005; OECD, 2018) has started developing new databases that include information on both the birthplaces and nationalities of migrants. Dumont and Lemaître (2005) found that using foreign-born data generally leads to an overestimation of foreigners. In the Olympic context, this would imply that the share of foreign or naturalised athletes in, for example, 2016 would be lower than 8.2%, because it is likely that many foreign-born athletes in our dataset were actually considered nationals in the countries they have represented (via the principle of *jus sanguinis*, for example).

More research and additional data are needed in order to map historical patterns of migration in relation to issues of citizenship in the Olympic context in more detail. This, then, would allow future studies to verify the belief that, increasingly, countries are fast-tracking the naturalisations of talented athletes so as to boost their Olympic medal count. Because of the nature of the data used in this study, it is difficult to verify such claims, as more detailed information (e.g. about the nationalities of athletes) is lacking. Yet, despite the limitations of our study in terms of data completeness and selectiveness, we have been able to generate new insights on global migration patterns in the context of the Olympic Games. By adopting a comparative historical perspective, we have thus tried to dispel the commonly accepted myth that the Olympic Games have become more migratory.



3

TOWARDS THE MARKETISATION OF CITIZENSHIP?

This chapter is largely based on an article published as:

Jansen J, Oonk G, and Engbersen G (2018) Nationality swapping in the Olympic field: towards the marketization of citizenship? *Citizenship Studies* 22(5): 523-539.

WHO CAN
REPRESENT
THE
NATION

3 Towards the marketisation of citizenship?

Introduction

On 6 February 2017, World Athletics issued a press release in which they stated that, as of that moment, all so-called 'transfers of allegiance' would be suspended, meaning that it is now no longer possible for athletes to apply for nationality switches. The decision followed a long period of deliberation on how to deal with the allegedly growing number of athletes who switch allegiance to other countries. The athletes in question are sometimes portrayed as 'mercenaries' who are selling their talents to the highest bidding country. World Athletics (2017) itself claims that its current rules are no longer fit to secure 'a championship sport based upon national teams', because 'what we have is a wholesale market for African talent open to the highest bidder.'

Not just within athletics, but also in the wider context of sports, the idea that nationality switching is a rather novel and rapidly expanding practice is widely spread. Naturalisations of prominent athletes are extensively discussed in media broadcasts, often with a focus on non-Western athletes (e.g. Chinese table tennis players or long-distance runners from Kenya). In anticipation of the Rio 2016 Olympic Games, for instance, controversy arose over some athletes swapping passports to the Gulf States Qatar and Bahrain (Vasilogambros, 2016). However, also Western cases frequently provoke public debate, as for instance the 61 'Plastic Brits' who competed for Team Britain at the London 2012 Olympics were subject to a lot of controversy (Daily Mail, 2012).

It seems that various agents in the Olympic field are increasingly inclined to adopt an instrumentalist stance towards migration and citizenship. States are said to utilise migration by lightly offering citizenship to talented immigrants so as to increase their global economic competitiveness or, in sports, their positions on medal tables and FIFA world rankings (Shachar and Hirschl, 2014). This talent migration challenges the notion of citizenship (Adjaye, 2010; Goldin, Cameron and Balarajan, 2012; Shachar, 2011, 2017; Spiro, 2014). Do naturalised athletes who conveniently exchange their talents for passports genuinely belong to a nation? Are they eligible to wear its vest and waive its flag at a global sporting event? Are we witnessing the marketisation of citizenship (Shachar, 2017)?

The claim that sports are confronted with a rather novel and rapidly expanding practice has hitherto not been verified empirically, nor has the idea that nationality switches are indicative of the marketisation of citizenship. In discussions about nationality switching, media broadcasts and academics merely tend to invoke 'anecdotal evidence about the crème de la crème' (Shachar and Hirschl, 2014: 237) and

highlight recent and prominent cases of naturalised athletes (also see Adjaye, 2010). Apart from anecdotal evidence and normative claims, a more systematic, historical, and theoretical perspective is lacking.

In this chapter, we empirically explore the novelty and extent of nationality switching. We specifically analyse Olympic athletes who represented two different countries in the Summer Olympic Games. They form 'strategic cases' in a Mertonian sense (Merton, 1987). These cases represent the 'ultimate' form of nationality swapping and have the advantage of being relatively well documented. By examining the biographies of Olympic athletes who swapped their flags, we track down the stories behind their naturalisations. Ultimately, we aim at verifying claims that these naturalisations are the result of a marketisation of citizenship.

This chapter is organised as follows. First, we present an overview of the citizenship literature that pointed out the intricacies of the study of citizenship. Then, building on Bloemraad's (2018) citizenship as a claims-making approach, we bring Bourdieu into the field, whose relational framework can help us understand the complex dynamic between normative ideas about citizenship on the one hand and citizenship as both legal status and as practice on the other. In what follows, we categorise Olympic athletes who switched nationality according to generic principles of attributing citizenship in order to juxtapose legal statuses, practices and normative claims about nationality switching. Ultimately, we aim at answering two questions:

1. How have patterns of switching Olympic nationality evolved over time?
2. To what extent do cases of Olympic athletes who switched their nationalities indicate a movement towards the marketisation of citizenship?

Theorising citizenship as status, practice, and claims-making

Since IOC regulations (IOC, 2019) state that an athlete's Olympic nationality is dependent on his/her citizenship status (which allows athletes to get selected by their national committees), an understanding of the conceptual intricacies of citizenship is crucial in trying to comprehend how practices of nationality switching and their normative evaluations are dynamically related. Citizenship is a multifaceted concept, and its study entails both formal aspects (legal status, rights) and informal aspects (participation, identity, and belonging) (Bloemraad, 2018; Bosniak, 2006; Joppke, 2007). In the case of Olympians who switch(ed) their nationalities, it is important to study citizenship as both formal status and as practice.

Citizenship as formal status and as practice

Citizenship as status is foremost related to the nationality laws that determine who is legally entitled to membership of a country. Historically, two ideal types of policies of attributing membership are discerned (see Bauböck, 2017; Brubaker, 1990; Vink and De Groot, 2010):

1. *Jus sanguinis*: citizenship acquired through descent. Germany is best known for basing its citizenship regime on this principle. Children born outside of German territory to German parents are eligible to German citizenship.
2. *Jus soli*: citizenship acquired by birth in the territory. The United States is the prime example of employing this citizenship principle, as membership is automatically attributed to people born within the US and subject to US jurisdiction.

However, citizenship can also be acquired after birth via naturalisation (see Vink and De Groot, 2010; Bauböck, 2017). The main principles through which naturalisations are generally regulated are *jus domicilii* and *jus matrimonii* (cf. Vink and De Groot, 2010; Bauböck, 2017). Via the latter principle, immigrants can acquire citizenship by marrying a native citizen. Through the principle of *jus domicilii*, citizenship can be granted to individuals 'independently of the place and community of birth ... after they entered a territory and established residence in this territory' (Bauder, 2014: 93). This residence-based approach to membership applies to immigrants who have resided in their new countries for a minimum number of years. Residency criteria vary across countries and are generally combined with other conditions, such as language proficiency and income criteria.¹

Some scholars argue that, in the global 'war' for skilled labourers, countries increasingly and selectively ease their immigration policies by, among other things, introducing fast-track admission procedures for highly skilled migrants, such as scientists, doctors, engineers and athletes (Goldin, Cameron and Balarajan, 2012; Shachar, 2006; Shachar, 2011). Simultaneously, in the quest for attracting 'the world's rich and affluent', more than a quarter of the world's countries even go as far as developing cash-for-citizenship programmes, which make it possible to purchase passports (Shachar, 2017: 790). In this vein, Shachar and Hirschl (2014: 253) have

¹ Most of the countries we selected (see methodology paragraph) employ residency requirements of 5 years. Australia and Brazil require a residence period of 4 years, and Argentina requires a waiting period of only 2 years. In Italy and Spain, applicants for naturalisation have to meet a residency requirement of at least 10 years. However, in the case of Spain, nationals from Spanish-American countries only have to wait 2 years. For more information, also see: <http://globalcit.eu/acquisition-citizenship/>.

coined 'Olympic citizenship' as a metaphorical and generic term for describing the 'fast-paced race to recruit the world's most creative and brightest' through which countries aim to increase their competitiveness and promote their national projects (Shachar, 2006, 2011; Spiro, 2014). The proliferation of these policies points towards the 'marketisation of citizenship' – i.e. the reconception of citizenship from 'sacred' bond to marketable 'commodity' (Shachar, 2017: 792), which, as Shachar (ibid.: 811) rightfully argues, threatens the 'political ideal of a common enterprise committed to promoting equality, rights, and collective decision-making.'

We propose to call these transactions in which citizenship is conveniently being traded for talent or money *jus talenti*: the right of talent. Following a Bourdieusian and Biblical line of reasoning, we argue that the concept of *jus talenti* captures the two etymological meanings of the word talent: (a) a significant sum of money – concretised in so-called 'cash-for-passport programs' (Shachar, 2017), and (b) 'skills' or 'human capital', which also functions as a currency in today's global market for highly skilled foreigners (Shachar and Hirschl, 2014).² Through *jus talenti*, citizenship is granted either to immigrants who are willing to pay a significant amount of money or to those who hold particular skills that states conceive of as valuable. Although apparently some athletes bought their way into the Olympics (Inside Edition, 2014), the immaterial meaning of the word talent is of particular relevance for this study.

Besides referring to the formal organisation of membership regimes, the concept of citizenship also comprises the practices of those who are affected by legal status categories (Bloemraad, 2018; Bosniak, 2006). When defined as practice instead of state policies, the agency of citizens and non-citizens takes centre stage (Bloemraad, 2018). The study of switching Olympic nationality in relation to normative claims about citizenship partially requires directing attention to the practices and experiences of immigrants themselves, in this case Olympic athletes. A focus on practices rather than on the formal statuses of athletes implies a shift towards analysing their biographies in terms of motives (what motivated them to claim citizenship?), sense of belonging (do they feel that they belong to their new countries?) and experiences (how do they deal with public claims that are dismissive of their actions?).

A relational approach

Bloemraad (2018: 17) makes a plea for studying citizenship as claims-making. Such an approach incorporates the agency of immigrants (those who make claims to

² In 'the parable of the talents' in Matthew 25, the literal meaning of word of talent is a significant amount of money. However, ultimately, the lesson to be learnt from the parable is that we must use our talents, i.e. our abilities and skills, in the best way we can. Others have coined the term *jus pecuniae* to describe this specific type of investor citizenship (Dzankic, 2012).

citizenship), while also recognizing the fact that their agency is heavily structured by legal and institutional constraints (are their claims legitimate?). Besides citizenship laws and regulations, these structures comprise shared normative ideas or 'cognitive maps, cultural meanings and emotive understandings' of citizenship. Immigrants who legitimately acquired citizenship, for instance, can still be conceived of as 'further from embodying the essence of a citizenship characteristic' (ibid.: 18). In a similar vein, some scholars (e.g. Schinkel and Van Houdt, 2010) observe an increased *moralisation of citizenship*, which centres on notions of civic engagement, integration, and nationhood. When these discourses evolve into more or less universal claims, they could have the power to influence citizenship policies and reshape the boundaries of the (imagined) community (Bloemraad, 2018).

The relational approach Bloemraad proposes resonates well with Bourdieu's theory of social fields, which dialectically connects structure with agency and meanings attached to practices. Bourdieu conceives of a field as a relatively autonomous network (but not a self-contained universe) of agents struggling over the distribution of various forms of capital. The configurations of capital that agents have at their disposal (e.g. economic, social, cultural) are used to access specific profits at stake in the field and, ultimately, to preserve or change the status quo of the configuration of forces in a field (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992; Tomlinson, 2004). Fields have particular sets of shared beliefs and rules that either normalise or reject certain practices. Following Bourdieu's (1988) elaboration of the field of sports, we define the Olympic field as an arena in which multiple agents (e.g. athletes, coaches, the public, and sports federations), or 'claimants' in Bloemraad's terms (Bloemraad, 2018), struggle over the dominant meanings attached to practicing Olympic sports.

In the Olympic field, various actors make different claims, both legal and normative, to citizenship. The state, as a kind of meta-field, has the power to shape configurations of power relations and capital in other fields. Sports federations, such as the IOC and World Athletics, hold the power to draw up rules on which athletes are eligible for competition. Athletes strategically mobilise their capital, in this case by making claims to citizenship, so as to improve their position in the field. Importantly, for Bourdieu, social fields are not static. The structures of the Olympic field (e.g. citizenship laws and regulations of international sports federations) are at the same time enacted and acted upon by various agents in the field. Thus, on the one hand, Olympic nationality switching is the product of 'a space of possible practices' as objectified in citizenship regulations, which offer the 'possibilities and especially the impossibilities' for practice (1988: 157). On the other hand, the 'dispositions to practice' and the species of power or capital actors possess provide the very realisation of the structures through practice. In other words, these structures, which involve material

conditions (laws and regulations) for practice as well as normative ideals (e.g. World Athletics stating that we must prevent athletics from becoming a wholesale market), are both generative of and produced by the practices of the various actors involved.

In this chapter, the central question is whether normative accounts of instrumental nationality swapping as being indicative of the marketisation of citizenship are grounded in empirical reality. Answering this question fundamentally requires 'scrutinising relational processes' (Bloemraad, 2018: 14), i.e. juxtaposing the multifaceted nature of citizenship (both as status and as practice) and normative ideas about citizenship. The practices of athletes who switch nationality need to be situated in the realm of citizenship laws to which they and others make claims. Those claims can be either recognised or dismissed as legitimate and morally just. Laws and regulations are the structural conditions that provide individual athletes with 'opportunity structures' or 'life chances', which give them a differential access to certain rewards (Merton and Sztompka, 1996). The ultimate question is, therefore, not whether athletes strategically mobilise citizenship (they most likely do). Our aim is to explore 'socially patterned choice' (ibid.: 157) or 'structured mobilisation' (Bloemraad, 2018: 14) so as to uncover how structures provide the (im)possibilities for practice (Bourdieu, 1988: 157) and impact the resonance of normative claims (Bloemraad, 2018: 14).

Methodology

Given the multifaceted nature of citizenship, historically and cross-nationally examining nationality switches is far from a straightforward exercise. Owing to a lack of data, most mainstream migration studies are limited to counting persons considered foreign-born. However, cross-national variations in citizenship regimes, as well as historical-geopolitical changes, would ideally require additional information on the nationalities of both immigrants and their parents (Van Campenhout, Van Sterkenburg and Oonk, 2018). The OECD also addressed this issue and started mapping international migration by distinguishing between persons who are foreign-born and persons with foreign nationality (Dumont and Lemaitre, 2005). These conceptual and methodological complexities also apply to our aim of understanding the dynamic relation between nationality switches and normative claims about citizenship.

Unfortunately, except from World Athletics that started registering transfers of allegiance in 1998, there are no organisations that keep public records of nationality switches and underlying motives, let alone information on citizenship statuses of individual athletes. Contrary to FIFA regulations, IOC regulations also do not distinguish between various pathways to naturalisation and switching allegiance (e.g. between athletes living in their new countries for more than five years and those with parents

native to the new country). Impediments to the study of nationality changes have led prior studies (Horowitz and McDaniel, 2015; Chapter 2) to conclude that the only feasible alternative is to rely on secondary sources. Both studies draw on information provided by Sports Reference LLC, being the only source that offers an overview of athletes (including their countries of birth) who have participated in the Summer Olympic Games.

To analyse how patterns of nationality switching have evolved over time, we made use of the same database that was created for the analyses discussed in Chapter 2. The database (Jansen, 2017) consists of approximately 45,000 athletes from 11 countries who participated in the Summer Olympics between 1948 and 2016. The 11 countries we selected are Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, France, Great Britain, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and the United States. In total, the selection covers 33% of the total number of athletes who participated in these editions. The motivation for the selection was fourfold.

1. The selected countries have different histories of migration. The selection comprises 'nations of immigrants', 'countries of immigration', 'latecomers to immigration' and 'former countries of immigration' (Hollifield, Martin and Orrenius, 2014).
2. The selected countries employ different citizenship laws, in particular with regard to the principles of *jus soli* or *jus sanguinis*.
3. The selected countries participated in nearly all editions of the Summer Olympic Games after the Second World War, which allows us to systematically map historical variations.
4. Information on the birth countries of athletes in our database is relatively complete.

The database also contains a small number (167) of athletes who have represented at least two different nations during different editions of the Olympic Games. In this chapter, we analyse the biographies of these 167 athletes to capture variations in Olympic nationality switching over time. Given the preselection of both countries and editions, it is, unfortunately, impossible to draw definitive conclusions about the full extent of nationality switching. Moreover, we do not have information on the wider group of athletes who swapped nationalities before or after representing only one

country at the Olympics.³ Yet, despite these limitations, we argue that a systematic analysis of the selected cases enables us to provide a historical understanding of the practice of switching Olympic nationality, as well as an indication of its presence nowadays. They are, in a Mertonian (1987) sense, strategic cases. First, they represent the ultimate form of switching sporting nationality, i.e. competing for two different countries at arguably one of the most prestigious global sporting events. Second, these cases have the advantage of being documented relatively well in media reports. Our strategic selection thus 'exhibits the phenomena to be explained or interpreted to such advantage and in such accessible form that they enable the fruitful investigation of previously stubborn problems' (Merton, 1987: 10). Olympic nationality switches can serve as a prism through which the stubborn problem of changing notions of citizenship in relation to (Olympic) talent migration can be systematically studied.

Insofar as possible, we gathered biographical information about each athlete who has switched Olympic nationality by relying on secondary sources such as Wikipedia or newspaper articles, which we found via Google or LexisNexis Academic. These biographies enabled us to assign each athlete to one of the three citizenship categories. In doing so, we followed a hierarchical procedure. First, we checked whether athletes had obtained their second citizenship at birth via the principles of either *jus soli* or *jus sanguinis*. If this was not the case, we checked whether they were naturalised through marriage or residence in their new countries (thereby accounting for country-specific residency requirements). The remaining cases were assigned to the *jus talenti* category if their naturalisations were clearly instrumentally motivated and the athletes had (as far as we know) no prior connection to their new countries. In 19 instances we did not manage to find enough information to categorise the athlete in question, leaving us with a final selection of 148 cases.⁴

A history of switching Olympic nationality

Although hitherto never verified empirically, it is commonly assumed nowadays that an increasing number of naturalised Olympic athletes competes for countries to which they do not 'belong'. The first question to answer is thus how patterns of

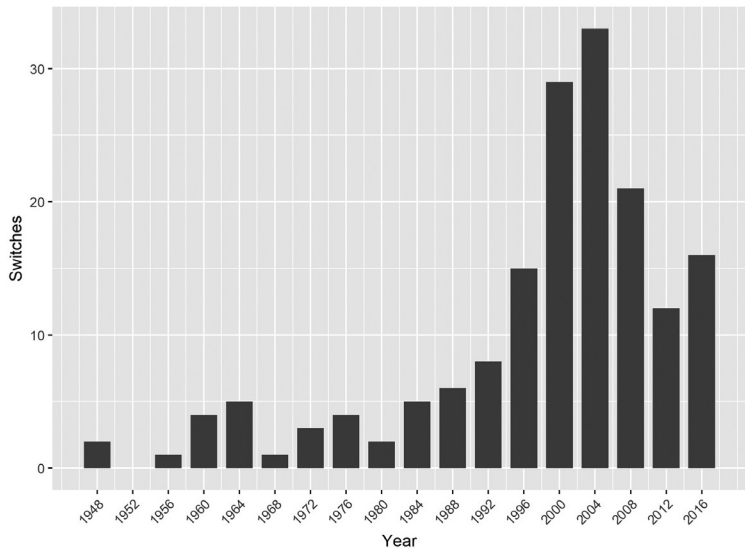
3 Beyond what we know about some controversial individual cases of naturalisations that gained a lot of media attention. A famous example is that of Becky Hammon, an American basketball player who, after not being selected for the US national team to participate in the Beijing 2008 Olympics, decided to apply for Russian citizenship whereupon she represented Team Russia at the 2008 and 2012 Olympics.

4 An overview with more detailed information about individual athletes (e.g. citizenship category to which they were assigned, sources used) was deposited at Harvard Dataverse and can be accessed via: <https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/WRDL17>.

Olympic nationality switching have evolved over time. As for the 167 athletes in our selection, we find that most changes of Olympic nationality indeed occurred after the 1990s (see Figure 3.1). Before the 1990s, the highest total number of switched athletes had been 6. From the 1990s onwards, there is an upward trend (in absolute terms) in switches of Olympic nationality, which is in accordance with the gradual liberalisation of citizenship regimes since the 1980s (Kivisto and Faist, 2007; Koopmans, Michalowski and Waibel, 2012).

In our selection, the Athens 2004 Olympic Games saw the highest absolute number of athletes who had represented or would later represent another country, namely 33. Note that the total number of athletes participating for the 11 countries in that year's edition was 3239, of whom (only) 8% were foreign-born athletes. Most of them did not switch nationality but were considered natives of the countries they represented (see Chapter 2). Although we do not have information about athletes who switched allegiance without representing another country at the Olympics, it seems that Olympic nationality switching is a recent yet rather exceptional practice. Moreover, judging from the data, facilitating transfers of allegiance is not a practice in which only specific countries tend to engage, as practically all countries have selected athletes who had already represented or would later represent another country.

Figure 3.1: Olympic nationality switches 1948 – 2016 (N = 167).



Somewhat counterintuitively, we found that the number of athletes who switched Olympic nationality decreased after 2004. This might indicate that countries in our selection have become more hesitant in recruiting athletes from other countries,

perhaps as a consequence of nationalist backlashes. In line with this, Koopmans, Michalowski and Waibel (2012) argue that citizenship rights in some of the countries in our selection have become less inclusive after 2002 due to a growing right-wing electorate.

The trajectories followed by Olympians who switched nationality show a stark resemblance to global migration patterns, which points towards path dependency. This is in line with what Sassen (1999: xxi) argued, namely that ‘international migrations are conditioned, patterned and bounded processes’. Our data indicate that European and colonial migrations that have taken place during the first half of the 20th century still resonate in recent transfers of Olympic nationality. This indicates the occurrence of a mechanism we call ‘reverberative causation’, referring to a process that causes contemporary migration patterns to be the echo or reversal of migration flows by which they were preceded.

Chapter 2 studied foreign-born Olympic athletes from a cross-national and historical perspective and concluded that the Olympic Games have not become astonishingly more migratory. The volume and diversity in countries of origin of foreign-born Olympians are primarily a reflection of international migration patterns and histories.⁵ Foreign-born Olympians in the first decades of the 20th century often had a European background or colonial linkages with the country they represented. Nowadays, migration in the Olympic context has become much less European, less colonial and more diverse, as foreign-born Olympic athletes are now born in a wide array of countries. Yet, it still seems that immigrant Olympic athletes are inclined to follow the beaten paths. Athletes born in, say, Senegal are more likely to move to France, whereas immigrant athletes from Cuba are more likely to represent the United States or Spain (also see Lee, 2018, for a study of naturalised Chinese table tennis players representing South Korea).

As for Olympic athletes who switched their nationalities, a similar pattern emerges. Although these athletes have agency in determining which country they pledge allegiance to, it seems that their aspirations are path-dependently shaped by prior migrations. In particular, colonial histories are important in understanding nationality switching at present. Of the 21 athletes who would later in their careers switch allegiance to France, 12 athletes were born in one of its former colonies (Cameroon, Cote d’Ivoire, Madagascar, or Senegal). And of the 15 athletes who at some point competed for Great Britain, 10 athletes were born in the Bahamas, Ireland, South Africa, Guyana, or Jamaica. Two athletes who first competed for Argentina later

5 This also applies to other sports, such as football. For instance, Dubois (2010) argues how the diversity of the French national football team serves to remind us of the fact that the history of France is marked by immigration.

represented Spain and Italy. The Brazilian equestrian Luciana Diniz-Knippling switched allegiance to Portugal after already having participated under the Brazilian flag. Such reversed migration trajectories are closely tied up with citizenship principles. The principle of *jus sanguinis* paves the way for the descendants of, e.g. Italian immigrants in Argentina to return to Italy three generations later. Contemporary practices of changing citizenship thus cannot be understood without looking at historical patterns of international migration.

Towards the marketisation of citizenship?

To provide an empirical answer to the second question, i.e. whether the increase in switches of nationality is associated with the marketisation of citizenship, we assigned each case to one of the legal principles through which citizenship is generally attributed. The marketisation of citizenship, then, would imply that increasing numbers of Olympic athletes who switched nationality obtained citizenship via the principle of *jus talenti*. Although the legal attribution of citizenship to athletes through one of the other principles can be considered as strategically motivated practice, we argue that this is the inevitable consequence of the way states organise their membership regimes, resulting in issues of multiple citizenship. Viewed from this perspective, citizenship is not a tradable commodity per se (as would be the case with *jus talenti*).

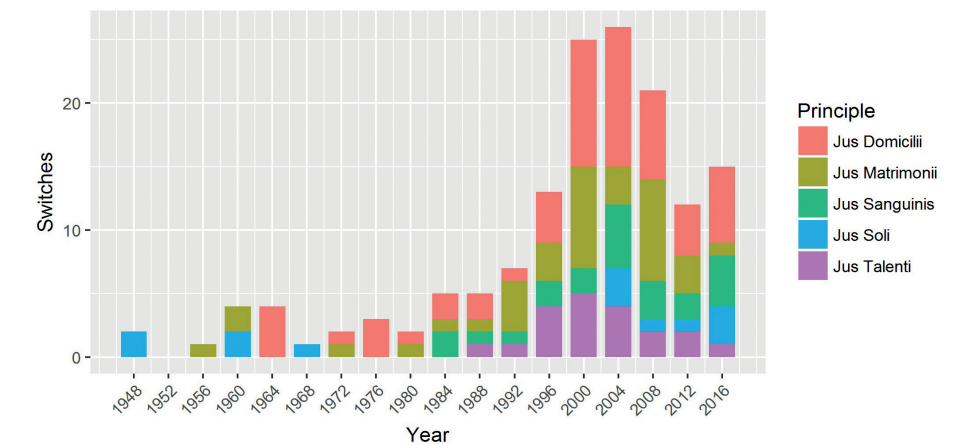
Figure 3.2 shows, like Figure 3.1, the absolute number of athletes who represented two different countries in the Summer Olympics between 1948 and 2016. As we already observed, the general trend for switching national allegiance is upwards. However, we now assigned each case to one of the five different citizenship principles. Interestingly, we find that by far most athletes who switched Olympic nationality had some sort of prior connections with their new countries.

Jus soli and *sanguinis*

First, we note that a substantial number of athletes in our selection switched allegiance to a country in which they were either considered native or born. Even athletes with dual citizenship whose nationality switches are purely cash-driven are legitimate claimants of citizenship of their new countries. Dismissing the instrumental rationality behind the athletes' decisions obscures the structural conditions under which these practices occurred. An interesting example is that of the long-distance runner Kathy Butler, who switched to competing internationally for Great Britain in 2000 after already having competed for Canada. Butler held dual citizenship (she was born to English parents and moved to Canada at the age of 10) and was eligible to represent both Canada and Great Britain. Butler decided 'she had enough of how she was being

treated by Canada and switched to run for Britain' (Mackay, 2001). She felt she did not get the (financial) support she needed from Canada, whereas Britain was willing to provide her with full support. In Butler's case, prior migrations between Great Britain and Canada and Olympic nationality regulations provided the structural basis for her decision to claim British Olympic nationality.

Figure 3.2: Olympic nationality switches 1948 – 2016 by citizenship principle (N = 148).



Another exemplary case we want to highlight is that of Pietro Figlioli, one of the world's most talented water polo players. Figlioli was born in Brazil and grew up in Australia because he and his parents had moved there when Figlioli was three years old. Figlioli first competed for Australia at the 2004 and 2008 Summer Olympics. Since professional water polo is predominantly played in Europe, professional European water polo competitions attract many non-European players who aspire to take their careers to a higher level and monetise their talents. He went to Europe in 2003 and played for the Italian team Pro Recco from 2009 to 2017. His transfer to Pro Recco was controversial. Not only was the deal closed between Figlioli and Pro Recco very lucrative in financial terms, but it also involved Figlioli switching to the Italian national team, which he would later represent in the 2012 and 2016 Olympics, during which Italy and Figlioli were very successful (winning bronze in London and silver in Rio).

At first sight, it seems that Figlioli's controversial case exemplifies the marketisation of citizenship. Figlioli was not born in Italy, nor had he lived there before playing for Pro Recco, yet he still adopted the Italian nationality, a decision from which both he and Italy would greatly benefit. However, a closer look beneath the surface of Figlioli's naturalisation shows us the conditions that ultimately shaped his decision to switch nationality. Historic migrations from Italy to Brazil and Brazil to Australia, as

well as institutional conditions (citizenship laws and sports federations' rules) are, in Bourdieusian terms, important 'socially pertinent properties' that, to a certain extent, shaped his inclination to switch allegiance to the Italian team.

Figlioli is the embodiment of a set of structural properties of the Olympic field. Although born in Brazil and raised in Australia, he is of Italian descent. Figlioli's grandparents were among the many Italian immigrants who arrived in Brazil between 1880 and 1920, and his parents were among the many Brazilians who, after the 1970s, migrated to Australia (Castles, De Haas and Miller, 2014). Since all three countries allow their citizens to have multiple citizenship, Figlioli holds three passports. He is thus legitimately entitled to claim citizenship of and represent three different countries. Given the fact that the Italian water polo federation only allows each professional team to have one non-European player, Pro Secco wanted Figlioli to adopt Italian nationality as a water polo player, thereby forcing Figlioli to leave the Australian national team. Paradoxically, measures meant to protect the Italian-ness of the Italian water polo competition produced the practices some people are dismissive of.

Jus domicilii and matrimonii

Most athletes who swapped sporting nationality obtained citizenship via the principles of *jus domicilii* or *matrimonii*. Although they did not acquire citizenship at birth, they managed to claim citizenship of their new countries because they were married to a native citizen and/or met the basic residency requirements for naturalisation. Apart from marriage, the main reasons for becoming a citizen of their new countries were work (not necessarily related to sport), pursuing a study and having grown up there.

France has often been represented by talented athletes who had also competed for its former colonies (e.g. Senegal and Cameroon). Initially, the athletes went to France for better training facilities and financial support. Some had received scholarships (funded by a joint initiative of World Athletics, the Olympic solidarity commission and the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs), which enabled them to move to France at a young age. These cases too are an expression of the mechanism of reverberative causation, which reverses prior migration flows, making athletes from France's former colonies more inclined to reversely follow the beaten paths. Acquiring citizenship of country via the principles of *jus domicilii* or *jus matrimonii* does not exclude the strategic mobilisation of citizenship in the Olympic field. However, it shows that merely emphasizing instrumentality only offers a partial understanding of the origins of practice. Most Olympic nationality changes were not the outcome of a talent-for-citizenship exchange per se.

A famous example we wish to highlight is that of Bernard Lagat, a talented middle and long-distance runner born in Kapsabet, Kenya. Before representing the

United States in 2005, Lagat had won multiple international competitions representing Kenya. Though prima facie Lagat's nationality transfer may seem like an archetype of, in the words of World Athletics, athletics 'becoming a wholesale market for African talent open to the highest bidder', Lagat's life story nuances this image. In 1996, Lagat was given the rare opportunity to attend Washington State University to pursue a career in athletics and follow a study in Management Information Systems. In 1998, Lagat received his green card and in 2004 he officially became an American citizen, 'not for running, but for life after running', he said (Longman, 2008).

Technically, since at that time Kenya did not allow dual citizenship by law, Lagat was not eligible to represent Kenya anymore. Luckily for Lagat, this was only discovered a few months after he had won a silver medal. Later, in the 2008, 2012 and 2016 Olympics, Lagat represented the United States. Although he did not have any connection with the United States prior to moving there, Lagat claims (ibid.) that he gradually came to identify himself as a 'real' American:

He closely follows the presidential campaigns, intently watching Barack Obama, the son of an American mother and a Kenyan father. Lagat lives in a gated community, plays golf and barbecues four times a week. 'If I drank a lot of beer, I would have everything', Lagat said with a laugh.

Lagat's life story illustrates how many athletes switched allegiance to a country in which they had developed a permanent interest during their lives. Often, their actions are not just the product of sheer instrumentalism. Their (legitimate) claims to citizenship are shaped within the wider context of international migrations and citizenship regimes. In fact, since Kenya did not allow dual citizenship (at that time), Lagat was given no other option but to switch allegiance to the United States.

Jus talenti

As we have already discussed, some countries have implemented fast-track admission programmes to attract highly skilled immigrants in the global race for talented migrants. Part of these programmes are what Shachar (2011, 2017) calls talent-for-citizenship exchanges. Based on the media reports we managed to obtain, our database only comprises a few athletes who explicitly received citizenship via such policies. For example, the Serbian handball player Arpad Šterbik became a Spanish citizen thanks to his exceptional qualities. And in 2000, during the Sydney Olympics, the number of athletes belonging to this category was the largest. Most of them were former Soviet weightlifters or wrestlers who competed for Australia that, perhaps not coincidentally, also hosted the Olympics that summer. They managed to claim

Australian citizenship via a distinguished talent programme, which grants visas to talented academics, artists, researchers or athletes. The applicants are eligible to apply for Australian citizenship after two years.

The Australian weightlifting coach, Paul Coffa, openly admitted he sought to strengthen the Australian team by actively recruiting talented weightlifters from former Soviet countries. Although these nationality switches are the result of instrumental rationality (and thus often invoked as anecdotal evidence in discussions about Olympic nationality), we must not forget the major geopolitical transformations that provided the athletes, Coffa and Australia with a window of opportunity. Before switching allegiance to Australia, these athletes had represented the Soviet Union. After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, which led to a period of socio-economic and political instability, emigration from countries such as Armenia rapidly accelerated. To escape the hardships in Armenia, a number of skilled Armenian migrants migrated to Australia where an, albeit relatively young, well-organised Armenian-Australian community was already established (ANC, 2020).

Our point is not to downplay the instrumental logic behind naturalisations of Armenian weightlifters and other talented migrants, but, what these cases exemplify is that the various agents involved acted under structural conditions that had created a space that offered the (im)possibilities for practice, three of them being: (1) the breakup of the Soviet Union and hardships in Armenia; (2) prior migrations from Armenia to Australia and (3) the IOC-regulations that define Olympic nationality in terms of citizenship.

Conclusion

Assumptions about the novelty and extent of nationality changes in the context international sporting competitions such as the Olympic Games have hitherto remained relatively understudied, as have claims that these practices are indicative of the marketisation of citizenship. In this study, we have tried to shed a systematic, historical and theoretical light on switching Olympic nationality. In answer to the first research question, the results suggest an increase in the number of athletes who switched Olympic nationality, especially after the 1990s. However, in answer to the second question, this practice is not necessarily bound up with the marketisation of citizenship. Following a relational approach, which was inspired by the works of Bloemraad (2018) and Bourdieu (1988), we examined how the practice of Olympic nationality switching is structured in two ways. In turn, these practices become regenerative of the (imagined) boundaries of the field and thus of ideas about citizenship.

First, through a mechanism we call reverberative causation, prior migration patterns are frequently echoed in the decisions of athletes regarding their Olympic nationalities. Rather than randomly picking the highest bidding country, most Olympic athletes who switch nationality are inclined to follow the beaten paths. Second, the instrumental logic behind nationality switches of Olympic athletes takes place within the complex realm of citizenship laws and nationality regulations. Whether granted at or after birth via the principles of *jus soli*, *jus sanguinis*, *jus domicilii*, and *jus matrimonii*, 'issues' of multiple citizenship will inevitably arise as a result of the growing population mobility and international acceptance of dual citizenship (see also Spiro, 2010, 2014). Some athletes are thus technically allowed to represent different countries during consecutive editions of the Olympics. Practices that are *prima facie* merely strategically motivated are in fact shaped under specific structural conditions. Therefore, instead of being an indication of a marketisation of citizenship *per se*, we argue that the study of Olympic nationality switches uncovers the dynamic interactions between structures, practices and ideas.

Acquiring citizenship via the explicit market principle of *jus talenti* is conceived of as more prevalent than ever. Our strategic selection, however, indicates that in reality only a few nationality switches in the 11 countries we studied were the outcome of a purely instrumental talent-for-citizenship exchange between athletes and states between whom no prior connection existed. The 'whole set of "models" of practices (rules, equipment, specialised institutions, etc.)' (Bourdieu, 1988: 157) in the Olympic field are the historical and (socio)logical outcome of struggle between various agents in the field who each mobilise their specific configuration of capital.

Discussion

Part of this struggle involves either making legitimate claims to citizenship or claiming that citizenship is becoming a sheer commodity, the latter which challenges dominant meanings attached to practicing Olympic sports (e.g. athletes ought to represent their 'own' countries). Perhaps, and we believe this is something future studies should address, we can better explain the controversy over athletes who swapped their flags in terms of the moralisation of citizenship, which entails a strong focus on notions of culture, ethnicity and genuine national belonging. For instance, rather than being an indication of the marketisation of citizenship, the fact that 61 athletes who represented Great Britain were pejoratively referred to as 'Plastic Brits' could point towards the reassertion of established discourses of nationhood and the intensification of nationalist sentiments (see Chapter 4 and 5; also see Poulton and Maguire, 2012).

Acknowledging the limitations of our data, we do not intend to make claims about the full extent of nationality swapping in sports. Given the unavailability of adequate data, we were constrained to select a specific group of athletes and countries. For example, this study does not cover countries such as Qatar and Bahrain. Our selection, however, has the advantage that the biographical information needed to categorise athletes was relatively accessible. This enabled us to scrutinise the complex interrelation between the practice of changing Olympic nationality and changing notions of citizenship. We strongly believe that our approach could also be extended to a wider group of athletes who switched their nationalities. For example, prior to the London 2012 Olympics, the Daily Mail published an infographic (Samuel, 2012a) that portrays five British athletes who swapped their flags. Except for Yamile Aldama (who married a Scottish man whereupon she moved to the United Kingdom), all athletes were either born within UK territory or to British parents. Hence, their claims to British citizenship were legitimate, although, as the image shows, their decisions to switch their nationalities were clearly instrumentally motivated.

To conclude, we hope that the outcomes of this study could help future studies that aim at understanding changing notions of citizenship in relation to changes of nationality in sports – and perhaps even in a wider societal context. In this vein, future research should explore to what extent the aspirations and decisions of other groups of highly skilled migrants (academics, technicians, engineers, artists, etc.) to migrate are subject to similar structural conditions (i.e. citizenship regimes and prior migrations) that we have discussed in this chapter.



4

CONTROVERSY OVER CITIZENSHIP AND NATIONHOOD

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WHO CAN
REPRESENT
THE
NATION?



4 Controversy over citizenship and nationhood

Introduction

Although the number of Olympic athletes representing countries in which they were not born has not necessarily increased since the Second World War (the number of foreign-born Olympic athletes has oscillated between 5% and 9% since then), it seems that the practice of switching sporting nationality has become more prevalent since the 1990s (see Chapter 2 and 3). Some of these nationality transfers were highly controversial and the subject of heated discussions in media reports. Athletes who switch nationalities are sometimes referred to as 'mercenaries' who are willing to sell their talents to the highest bidding country, even in the absence of 'genuine' ties to that particular country.

Wrestling with this development, sports federations such as World Athletics are looking for ways to discourage athletes from switching flags. In academia, controversial stories of athletes swapping their sporting nationalities have led to discussions about the changing notion of citizenship. Often, it is assumed that nationality switching is indicative of diluting notions of citizenship. Genuine ties to nations, based on birthright or descent (i.e. *jus soli* or *jus sanguinis*), are, increasingly, said to be replaced with 'thinner' ties, that is, based on sheer contractual relations between athletes and states. From this standpoint, citizenship is sometimes believed to become a commodity that is conveniently being traded for talent (Shachar, 2011; Spiro, 2014).

Nationality switching in sports is anything but a novel phenomenon, however, as it traces back as far as the Ancient Greeks (Van Nijf, 2012). It was the talented long-distance runner Sotades, born in Crete, who was bribed to become a citizen of and athlete for Ephesus after first having competed and won races for Crete during the Ancient Olympics. His switch of city-state allegiance led to great Cretan discontent, whereupon Sotades was banished from Crete (Kyle, 2015). More recent examples of controversial nationality swaps of successful athletes include that of the South Korean-born Russian short-track speed skater Viktor Ahn, the Kenyan-born American middle and long-distance runner Bernard Lagat, and the Cuban-born British triple jumper Yamilé Aldama. All three athletes have competed for multiple countries in the Olympics. Aldama competed for no less than three countries because she also represented Sudan prior to competing under the British flag.

The question is whether such controversy over nationality swapping is a characteristic of the Olympics that is emblematic of our (globalised) era and, if so, why? When discussing nationality switching, journalists and scholars tend to invoke

mere 'anecdotal evidence about the crème de la crème' (Shachar and Hirschl, 2014: 237) and highlight recent cases of nationality switches (see also Adjaye, 2010). There is a need for a more systematic and theoretical approach to the study of nationality switching in sports.

With this study I aspire to fill the gap by systematically analysing global English language newspaper coverage about Olympic athletes who switched their nationalities somewhere between October 1978 and November 2017. Through a combination of state-of-the-art machine learning techniques (see DiMaggio, 2015; Evans and Aceves, 2016) and theoretical insights from a range of social sciences (communication, nationalism, and citizenship studies), 1534 newspaper articles were automatically coded according to three generic media frames: the conflict frame; the economic frame; and the morality frame. This approach enabled me to longitudinally analyse public debate about athletes who switched nationality. In this way I sought to formulate an answer to the question of how debates about Olympic athletes who switched nationality have evolved.

This chapter is structured as follows. First, I present a theoretical framework that synthesises prior research on nationality switching in sports with a framework that has proven to be a suitable tool for analysing (changing) media frames over time. Then, the innovative methodological approach of this study will be presented, followed by the findings based on the analysis. Finally, a critical reflection on the implications and limitations of this study is provided.

Theoretical framework

Studies that discuss controversial cases of athletes who switched nationality mainly revolve around two intertwined but analytically distinguishable strands of thought. The first strand mainly concerns the alleged marketisation of citizenship (see Iorwerth, Hardman and Jones, 2014; Kostakopoulou and Schrauwen, 2014; Shachar, 2011; Shachar and Hirschl, 2014; Spiro, 2014; Chapter 3), whereas the second strand of debate is primarily concerned with the question of nationhood (Adjaye, 2010; Black, 2016; Campbell, 2011; Poli, 2007).

Towards the marketisation of citizenship?

Public and academic debates firstly revolve around the question of whether (recent) cases of athletes switching nationalities are indicative of a marketisation of citizenship. Especially in times of increasing population mobility, citizenship becomes a highly-contested concept as traditional notions of citizenship (i.e. birth right and the right of descent) are under pressure (Kivisto and Faist, 2007). Increased population mobility has

led to a growing number of people with dual citizenship. Descendants of immigrants or, for instance, people who married someone from a different country are often entitled to citizenship rights in multiple countries. Maguire (2008) describes how some athletes make their host countries their new 'homes'. By marrying a citizen of that country or by meeting certain residency requirements, these athletes legitimately qualify for citizenship of their new countries (also see Chapter 3). In the context of the Olympics, the fact that the Olympic nationality of athletes is largely dependent upon their citizenship status (or statuses) means that some athletes are, technically, eligible to represent multiple countries (ibid.). An athlete born in country X to a father born in country Y and a mother born in country Z is, in theory, eligible to represent all three countries in three consecutive editions of the Olympic Games.

However, cases of athletes who applied for naturalisation through marriage or residency seem to be less controversial than those in which athletes are actively recruited by national sports federations and governments. As an example, Maguire (2008) describes how the British Olympic Association and the British Government were actively involved in recruiting talented basketball players for the Great Britain Olympic basketball team in 2012. Similarly, Campbell (2011) demonstrates how Qatar has developed specific programmes, which involve the naturalisation of immigrant athletes, to recruit foreign elite athletes as a means to promote the Qatari national project.

The British and Qatari examples seem to be illustrative of a situation in which athletes and states increasingly engage in conveniently exchanging talent for citizenship and money. According to Shachar (2011), this points towards a marketisation of citizenship, that is, a re-conception of citizenship from 'sacred' bond to marketable 'commodity' (Shachar, 2017: 792). The marketisation of citizenship is conceived of as the hollowing out of the very notion of citizenship; 'real' connections between citizens and states are being replaced with 'thinner' connections (Shachar, 2011). Moreover, since resources are unequally distributed between citizens and countries, this process is discriminatory and unfair by default. Immigrant athletes with talent (or talented immigrants in general), as well as states with sufficient funds, have an advantage over those who lack such resources, which, as Shachar argues, threatens the 'political ideal of a common enterprise committed to promoting equality, rights, and collective decision-making' (Shachar, 2017: 811).

Who may represent the nation?

Apart from the issue of the alleged marketisation of citizenship, another dimension of the controversy over switching nationality revolves around the moral question of who may (or may not) represent a nation. Who 'genuinely' belongs to the (imagined)

community and should be eligible to wear its vest, wave its flag and sing its hymn during the greatest mediated sporting event on the planet? According to Poli, the fact that countries now seem to employ a growing number of foreign athletes reveals 'changes in the conception of who can be part of the 'national' [which] indicate the existence of a trend towards a de-ethnicization of the nation' (Poli, 2007: 652).

Conversely, Appadurai (2006: 84) has shown how 'the tensions produced ... by the forces of globalisation' have produced ethnicist tendencies and growing hostility towards immigrants, even though their numbers are often relatively small. Similarly, Bairner argued that 'sport and globalization have become accomplices in a process whereby the importance of national identity has been ensured despite, or arguably because of, supranationalist tendencies' (Bairner, 2001: 176). Therefore, instead of leading to weakened forms of national identification, it can also be argued that globalisation is fertile ground for the reassertion of established forms of national identification and the intensification of (ethnic) nationalism (Bairner, 2001; Hogan, 2003; Skey, 2010; Thomas and Antony, 2015). In a similar vein, Calhoun notes that nationalism is given the status of an ethical imperative: 'national boundaries ought to coincide with state boundaries, members of a nation ought to conform to its moral values, etc.' (Calhoun, 1997: 6). Expanding this paradigm to the Olympics, athletes ought to represent the countries to which they naturally 'belong'.

Moreover, in public debates about immigration, 'boundary-maintenance' and 'othering' are discursive attempts to define national boundaries and separate the national 'us' from certain immigrant groups (Skey, 2010). The 2012 'Plastic Brits' debate, in which the Britishness of foreign-born athletes representing Great Britain was intensely disputed, is emblematic of these attempts (Poulton and Maguire, 2012). The debate shows how the media, spectators, and governing bodies of sports continue to rely on 'established images of the nation', and how national boundaries are (re) negotiated (Black, 2016: 984). For example, while studying the representation of Great Britain's successful Olympic athlete Mo Farah, a Somali-born Brit, Black found that Farah's case is illustrative of what he calls a 'complicated coalescence of national inclusion and exclusion' (Black, 2016: 979). Mo Farah, though presented and celebrated in newspapers as a symbol of assimilated Britishness, is always positioned in relation to the nation. As such, asking the question of whether naturalised athletes belong to a nation a priori entails the performative construction of an established-outsider boundary.

Whereas the heated 'Plastic Brits' debate can be conceived of as an example of 'hot' nationalism that is, temporary outbursts of strong ethnic nationalist sentiments, for example caused by immigration (Billig, 1995; Skey, 2009) one might wonder whether nationality switching has always been so fiercely contested. Who, for

instance, remembers the track and field athlete Charles Allan, born in Guyana, who represented both Guyana and Canada in the Summer Olympics? And was the case of Fiona May, who competed for Britain and Italy, as controversial as that of, for example, the 'Plastic Brit' Yamilé Aldama?

It could be argued that the heatedness of nationalist sentiments in media coverage varies depending upon context, which points towards the relevance of what Billig (1995) calls 'banal nationalism', that is, the daily reproduction of 'an underlying and unspoken set of assumptions' about the national ordering of the world as a world of nations (Fox, 2017: 28). Viewed from this perspective, uncontroversial practices of nationality switching can help us uncover how the national world is 'routinely breached' (Fox, 2017: 32). Building on Garfinkel's (1967) ethnomethodology, Fox argues that the immigration 'increases our chances of tapping into the otherwise hidden national world of the banal' (Fox, 2017: 37). Therefore, I argue that studying not only controversial but also uncontroversial media coverage about immigrant athletes or Olympians who switch nationality can contribute to our understanding of discourses of nationhood.

Generic media frames: conflict frame; economic frame; and morality frame

In order to longitudinally study how changing discourses of citizenship and nationhood impact debates about athletes who switch their nationalities, I invoke a deductive framework that was originally developed by Neuman, Just and Crigler (1992). The framework consists of several media frames that are well-suited to analysing the debates about the athletes in question. Moreover, a major advantage of this deductive framework is that it can be applied to large corpuses to study longitudinal changes in public debates (Burscher et al., 2014; Opperhuizen, Schouten and Klijn, 2018; Semetko and Valkenburg, 2000). The conflict frame, the economic frame, and the morality frame are of particular interest to this study. The conflict frame emphasises disagreement between individuals, groups or institutions over a certain issue. The economic frame discusses issues or events in terms of the economic/ financial consequences they have on individuals, groups, or places. The morality frame emphasises the ethical context of the issues at stake. Synthesising the two strands of the debate about nationality swapping in the Olympics and the three types of media frames, the main research question of this study can be further refined and narrowed down to three sub-questions.

First, the conflict frame applies to articles that explicitly mention disagreement between actors over athletes who switched nationality, indicating the

general controversy over nationality switches. Second, the economic frame is present when nationality switching is described in terms of conveniently exchanging talent for citizenship, thereby referring to financial expenses and/or gains. An increased use of the economic frame would point to the growing importance of the question of the marketisation of citizenship. Third, in articles that contain the morality frame, the eligibility of immigrant athletes representing their new countries is at stake. In line with Black (2016), I argue that merely asking whether an immigrant athlete ought to represent, for instance, Team Great Britain, always entails discursively positioning the athlete outside of what ideally constitutes a 'real' British team. This synthesis of debates about changes of nationality on the one hand and media frames on the other, leads me to formulate the following research questions:

- RQ1: Has Olympic nationality switching become more controversial?
- RQ2: Are nationality switches by Olympic athletes increasingly framed in terms of an economic exchange?
- RQ3: Do media reports about Olympic athletes who switched nationality increasingly contain moral messages about nationhood?

Methodology

Data collection

To determine how debates about Olympic athletes who switched nationality have evolved over time, this study relies on a corpus of 1534 English language newspaper articles. I selected newspaper articles because they form a set of so-called 'Strategic Research Materials' (Merton, 1987) in the sense that they make possible the longitudinal analysis of the debate. In addition, Billig (1995) and others have repeatedly pointed out the importance of newspapers to the reproduction of discourses of national belonging. I only selected English language newspaper articles because the supervised machine learning approach I use requires texts to be written in the same language.

The articles cover a period spanning October 1978 to November 2017 and include various types of news source, from tabloid newspapers (e.g. the Daily Mail) to broadsheet newspapers (e.g. the New York Times and the Guardian), as well as from a variety of different countries (see Table 4.1 for a complete overview of newspapers in the corpus). The corpus was retrieved from the digital newspaper archive LexisNexis (from the category 'major world publications'). In order to retrieve a large yet balanced corpus of texts that captures a highly specific subject matter such as the topic in casu, different (Boolean) search queries were tested.

Table 4.1: Complete overview of newspapers in the corpus

Newspapers per country
Australia <i>Advertiser, Age, Australian, Australian Financial Review, Canberra Times, Courier Mail, Daily Telegraph, Generic Tabloid, Herald Sun, Hobart Mercury, Sunday Mail, Sunday Tasmanian, Sunday Telegraph, Sydney Morning Herald, Weekly Times, West Australian</i>
Canada <i>Financial Post, Gazette, Globe and Mail, National Post, Ottawa Citizen, Toronto Star Great Britain Bath Chronicle, BBC Monitoring, Belfast Telegraph, Birmingham Post, Daily Mail, Daily Post, Daily Record and Sunday Mail, Daily Telegraph, Evening Gazette, Evening Standard, Evening Times, Daily Express, Guardian, Herald, Independent, Irish Times, Liverpool Daily Echo, Daily Mirror, News of the World, Observer, South Wales Echo, Sun, Sunday Express, Sunday Mercury, Sunday Mirror, Times, Western Daily Press, Western Mail</i>
USA <i>Christian Science Monitor, Daily News, Herald Tribune, New York Times, Newsweek, People, Philadelphia Inquirer, St. Petersburg Times (Florida), USA Today, Wall Street Journal, Washington Post</i>
Other <i>Africa News, Baltic News Service, Business Day (South Africa), Concord Times (Sierra Leone), Daily Yomiuri (Japan), Dominion Post (New Zealand), ITAR-TASS (Russia), Japan Times, Jerusalem Post, Korea Herald, Korea Times, Moscow News, Moscow Times, Nation (Thailand), New Straits Times (Malaysia), New Zealand Herald, Olympian, South China Morning Post, Sunday Mail (Zimbabwe), Sunday Times (South Africa), The Press (New Zealand), The Straits Times (Singapore), Vanguard (Nigeria)</i>

The search query that generated the most satisfying results asks LexisNexis to return only newspaper articles about the Olympic Games that contain a combination of the terms ‘switch’ and ‘nationality’ or variations of those terms.¹ Next, in order to force LexisNexis to return only those articles that are specifically about athletes (and hence exclude irrelevant articles that, coincidentally, contain the former terms), the search terms ‘compete’ and ‘represent’ (and their past tenses) were added. In total, the search generated over 2000 articles. After removing duplicating articles, a final selection of 1534 articles were used for analysis.

Using a computer to code frames

The longitudinal analysis of media reports about Olympians who switched their nationalities ideally requires a large corpus of newspaper articles. When annotating (large) corpuses of text documents, social scientists have hitherto mainly relied

1 LexisNexis search query: Olympic w/50 (grant! OR acquire! OR request! OR receive! OR change! OR appl! OR switch! OR swap! OR obtain! OR get! OR assum! OR gain!) w/5 (citizenship OR nationalit!) AND (represent OR represented OR compete OR competed).

on human coding. It is common practice to either annotate only a subsample of documents from the corpus, or rely on different human coders who, as a group, work on annotating the whole corpus by hand.

However, prior research has shown that human coding of large corpuses is generally very time-consuming and costly (see Burscher et al., 2014; Mikhaylov, Laver and Benoit, 2012). Moreover, when different researchers are instructed to simultaneously annotate a certain number of documents, inter-coder reliability tends to be far from optimal. Therefore, to save resources and produce consistent results, this study employs a supervised machine learning approach instead of relying on human coding. It has been demonstrated that this approach can be used for the automatic coding of the three media frames discussed earlier (Burscher et al., 2014; Opperhuizen, Schouten and Klijn, 2018).

Table 4.2: Indicator questions for media frames and excerpts of texts coded accordingly.

Item	Phrasing of yes-or-no indicator questions
C1	Does the item reflect controversy or disagreement between individuals, institutions or countries about switching national allegiance?
C2	Does the item refer to two (or more) sides of the issue of switching nationality?
ex:	<i>“IOC [International Olympic Committee] President Juan Antonio Samaranch was quoted by The Mail today as saying he opposes her running for Britain; the paper said the African Olympic Committee voted in Tunisia yesterday against her competing in the Olympics.”</i>
E1	Is there a reference to an economic exchange between actors involved in switching nationality?
E2	Is there a reference to economic consequences of pursuing or not pursuing a transfer of allegiance?
ex:	<i>“Speculations as to the veracity of her reasons for assumption of dual nationality are varied but the most prominent has been the opportunity to garner more social and financial benefits as a Spanish national in addition to the more open opportunities for training facilities and competitions.”</i>
M1	Does the item contain the moral question of who belongs to a nation?
M2	Does the item offer specific moral prescriptions in relation to switching national allegiance?
ex:	<i>“I don’t think we can question her motives. I think she’s possibly more British than some of the guys that we’ve acquired. She hasn’t just come over from Jamaica or America.”</i>

Supervised machine learning means ‘building a statistical model for predicting, or estimating, an output based on one or more inputs’ (James, Witten, Hastie and

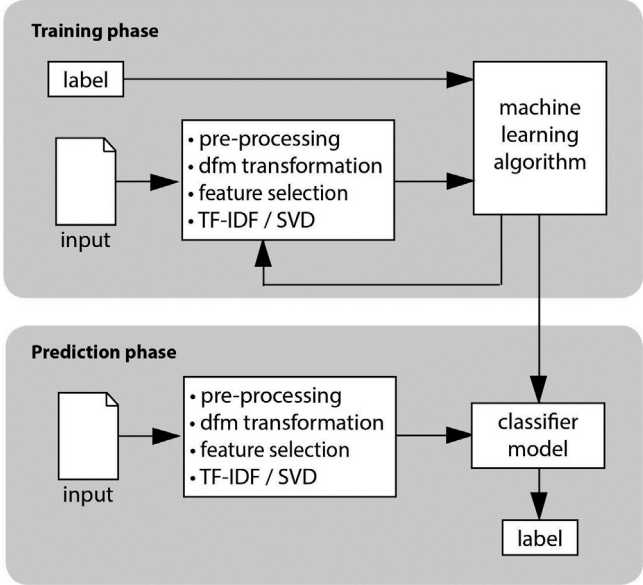
Tibshirani, 2013: 1). In the context of the social sciences, these models are able to ‘learn and reliably extend many sociologically interesting textual classifications to massive text samples far beyond human capacity to read, curate, and code’ (Evans and Aceves, 2016). The idea is to feed the computer with examples of texts and their corresponding (binary) labels, from which it can ‘learn’ and predict codes belonging to unseen documents.

In this study, 300 newspaper articles (randomly sampled from the corpus) were manually coded. These articles are the examples from which the algorithm ‘learns’ to construct a model that is capable of accurately annotating newspaper articles. In this case, an algorithm is trained to accurately perform a binary classification task: is frame X present in the article or not? Burscher et al. (2014) estimate that 300 articles should suffice for the algorithm to generate sufficiently accurate predictions for the frame codes corresponding to all newspaper articles in the corpus.

The 300 articles were hand-coded according to a coding scheme derived from the work of Burscher et al. (2014).² For each media frame, the coding scheme contains two yes-or-no indicator questions. The very specific and theoretical nature of the subject matter of this study, that is, nationality changes in relation to changing discourses of citizenship and nationhood, required some minor adjustments of the indicator questions as formulated by Burscher et al. (ibid.). Table 4.2 shows the final wording of each indicator question used to assess whether or not a media frame was present in an article. Frames are considered to be present in a newspaper report if at least one of the two questions can be answered with ‘yes’. Furthermore, Table 4.2 also shows excerpts of newspaper articles that were hand-coded accordingly.

2 To establish coder reliability, a trained research assistant from Erasmus University Rotterdam also conducted (independently from the author) the manual coding of all 300 newspaper articles. Krippendorff’s alpha and pairwise agreement (in parentheses) for each frame were: conflict frame = 0.87 (0.94); economic frame = 0.95 (0.98); and morality frame = 0.79 (0.93). In a few instances, the author’s initial coding was amended after discussing coder disagreement.

Figure 4.1: Machine learning pipeline.



Constructing a machine learning pipeline

Before machines are capable of ‘understanding’ and annotating texts, several steps need to be performed. Each step is formalised in and carried out by a machine learning pipeline, which is the chain of steps that covers the entire workflow (see Figure 4.1). Although it goes beyond the scope of this chapter to discuss each step in detail, I want to briefly comment on the technical aspects of employing supervised machine learning for text analysis.³ The steps that I iteratively cycled through are:

3 For additional information on step 1 and step 2, see Welbers, Van Attevelde and Benoit K (2017). See Burscher et al. (2014) and Karl, Wisnowski and Rushing (2015) for detailed information regarding step 3. Explanations of crossvalidation and performance metrics are provided by Evans and Aceves (2016). For information on commonly used algorithms for text classification, see Aggarwal and Zhai (2012).

1. Text pre-processing and transformation of the corpus into a document-feature matrix.
2. Feature selection: removing irrelevant parts, as well as numbers, punctuation, symbols, and stop words.
3. Applying the term frequency-inverse document frequency weighting scheme and Singular Value Decomposition in order to reduce dimensionality.
4. Testing different classification algorithms using n-fold cross-validation.
5. Calculating the predictive performance of the algorithms using two metrics: Accuracy (AC); and area under curve (AUC).
6. Predicting the codes corresponding to all newspaper articles in the corpus.

The final algorithm used for this study is called ‘eXtreme Gradient Boosting’ (XGBoost).⁴ Table 4.3 shows the results that were achieved by training the XGBoost algorithm on the 300 hand-coded documents using 10-fold cross-validation (repeated three times).⁵ For all three frames, the AC obtained significantly exceeds ($p < 0.001$) the baseline predictions (also called the no-information rate, that is, the proportion of the class that is most prevalent). Moreover, the AUC is higher than the no-information rate for all three models, which indicates that these models are sufficiently capable of discriminating between the presence or absence of frames. Note that it is usually harder for algorithms to predict codes that are less prevalent in the corpus (i.e. have a higher baseline).

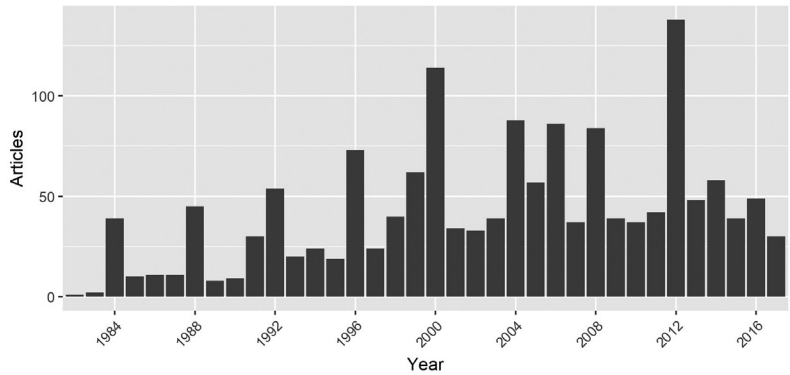
Table 4.3: Performance model.

	Conflict frame	Economic frame	Morality frame
Baseline	0.64	0.80	0.76
Accuracy	0.76	0.84	0.82
Area under curve	0.79	0.85	0.80

⁴ Although it goes beyond the scope of this chapter to explain how the eXtreme Gradient Boosting algorithm works, the basic idea is that it tries to minimise variation in the data by building an ensemble of decision trees (i.e. the model) by means of an additive strategy. This means that the algorithm iteratively learns from the trees it grows and subsequently adds to the model. For more information, see: <https://xgboost.readthedocs.io/en/latest/>.

⁵ All steps were performed in the R programming environment. I used the quanteda package for text pre-processing and the caret package for model building and evaluation. R-code of the machine learning pipeline, an overview of the 1534 newspaper articles, and the frame codes corresponding to the 300 hand-coded newspaper articles were deposited at Harvard Dataverse and can be accessed via: <https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/X8MDUB>.

Figure 4.2: Articles mentioning Olympians who switched nationality.

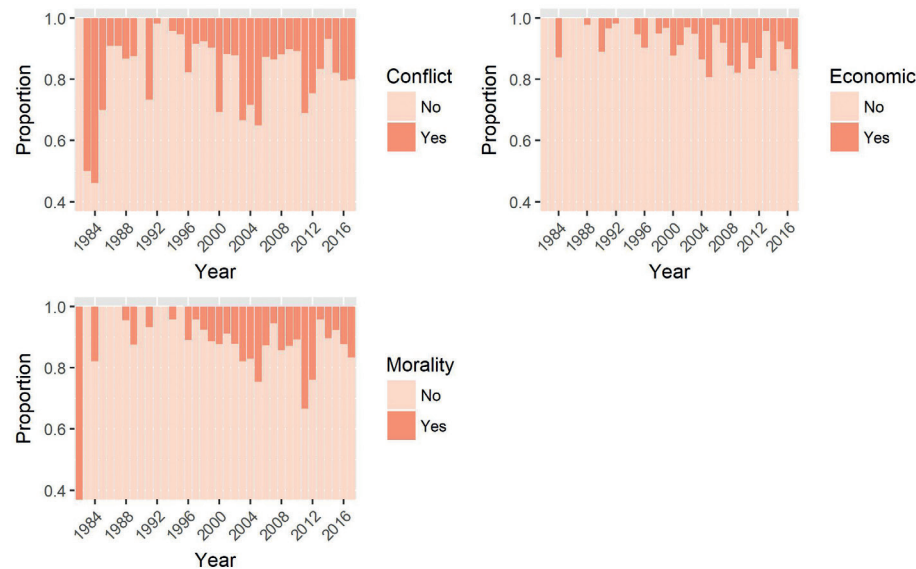


Results

A short history of controversy

Figure 4.2 shows that, between 1978 and 2017, Olympic athletes who switched nationalities have always attracted some attention in English language newspaper reports. Every four years, in the same calendar year that the Summer Olympic Games were held, the number of newspaper articles dedicated to those cases significantly surpassed that of the adjacent years. Interestingly, it seems that nationality switching is less of an issue in the context of the Winter Olympics. Overall, I note an upward trend in the media attention directed towards nationality switching. The Olympics Games in 2000 and 2012 saw the highest absolute number of articles mentioning naturalised athletes, which could partly be explained by the fact that in those years the Olympics were hosted in English speaking countries (in Sydney and London, respectively).

Although it seems justified to conclude that nationality switching has become a bigger issue over time, the analysis also reveals that the practice as such has not necessarily become more controversial. Figure 4.3, which shows the proportional prevalence (i.e. the extent to which a frame is present) of the three media frames in the years 1978–2017, indicates that, especially before the 1990s and after the 2000s, cases of athletes who switched nationality were surrounded with controversy.

Figure 4.3: Proportional prevalence of media frames.⁶

The naturalisation of the South African long-distance runner Zola Budd was by far the most widely reported and controversial nationality switch before the 1990s. At the time, South Africa was banned from participating in international sports competitions due to its apartheid policy. Consequently, many South African athletes sought accommodation elsewhere. Zola Budd, having a British grandfather, was entitled to register as a British citizen and, after her citizenship application was fast-tracked by the British government, she competed as a 'Brit' during the Los Angeles 1984 Olympic Games (Hardman and Iorwerth, 2012). Another early and controversial case is that of Sydney Maree (a native South African runner). The controversy surrounding the stories of Budd and Maree can best be explained in terms of the larger geopolitical indignation over South Africa's apartheid policy. As we shall see, contemporary controversy over nationality swapping is spurred by other reasons, namely changing discourses of citizenship and nationhood.

Buying sporting success

Despite the fact that the practice of financially motivated nationality switching is not limited to recent years (many articles about Zola Budd's controversial naturalisation make mention of the fact that she received an undisclosed sum of money from the Daily Mail, the tabloid newspaper that campaigned for Budd's naturalisation), Figure

4.3 clearly shows that, especially after the Sydney 2000 Olympics, newspaper articles frequently referred to nationality swapping as an economic transaction between countries and athletes.

Examples of reports that contain the economic frame are numerous and heterogeneous. Some reports are rather non-dismissive with respect to the economic nature of some transfers of national allegiance, such as a 2014 article in USA Today about the American born snowboarder Vic Wild, who switched allegiance to Russia for financial and sporting reasons. Meanwhile, other articles are quite explicit in expressing concerns about the economic side to changes of nationality. In August 2017, for instance, a report in the British newspaper the Guardian contained the following statement by World Athletics' president Sebastian Coe: 'Athletes are not tradable commodities. They are human beings and we want the best athletes of their generation competing and showcasing our sport. We don't want a sport where they are being traded in the dark. That is clearly not something I would condone.'

Note, however, that most of the articles do not seem to be concerned with a marketisation of citizenship. Partly, this lack of concern could be the effect of the narrow (i.e. strictly economic) formulation of the indicator questions. The fairly low prevalence of the economic frame could, however, also be explained by the fact that the practice of buying talent with citizenship is relatively exceptional (Chapter 3). Often, nationality switching is the result of athletes having dual citizenship, a feature of the Olympic field that can be traced to cross-national differences in attributing citizenship.

More importantly, the prevalence of the economic frame in media reports has not grown but levelled-off between 2000 and 2017. In line with what was hypothesised in Chapter 3, this stagnation could indicate that countries have recently become more reluctant to 'buy' talent at the price of citizenship. Somewhat counter-intuitively, a 2009 article in the Daily Mail states that Qatar (frequently referred to as the most striking example of a country importing talented athletes), realised that 'the plan [to import sporting success] had backfired' and now 'instead of brashly buying talent, Qatar grooms it and returns it to the rightful owner'.

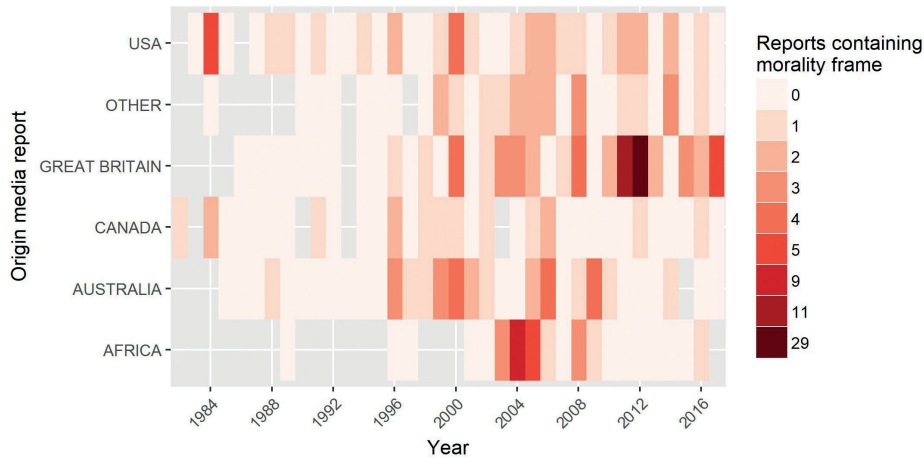
The fact that Qatar is apparently turning against importing sporting success could mark a turning point for the Olympics, so that the heyday of conveniently buying talented athletes might now be behind us. Nationalist backlashes against processes of globalisation and migration could potentially reinforce the hesitation of states to further liberalise their citizenship regimes. Some scholars (Koopmans, Michalowski and Waibel, 2012) have already observed a stagnating trend of the liberalisation of citizenship rights from 2002 onwards. The debate on conveniently swapping sporting nationality in the context of sports seems to evolve in step with this trend.

⁶ For aesthetic reasons, Figure 4.3's Y-axes start at a proportion of .4. This means, for instance, that 2016 the Conflict frame was *not* found to be present in about 80% of the articles.

Between cool and hot nationalism

The analysis (see Figure 4.3) also shows the importance of distinguishing between the two strands of debate about nationality switching. Debating changing notions of citizenship frequently goes hand in hand with the question of nationhood. Yet, while the prevalence of the economic frame plateaued, the number of articles concerned with the moral question of who may represent a nation steadily increased. This finding is consistent with research that argues that globalisation and migration are fertile ground for the reassertion of established forms of national identification.

Figure 4.4: ‘Heat map’ of nationalism in articles about nationality switching.



The debate gained serious traction in anticipation of the London 2012 Olympics when many British newspapers participated in what was coined the ‘Plastic Brits’ debate. The debate concerned 61 British athletes who were born outside of Great Britain. Discussions about the naturalisation of Yamilé Aldama were among the most heated. Before competing under the British flag in 2012 she had already represented Cuba and Sudan in the Olympics.

Nationhood is debated in many different ways. Some articles that contain the morality frame only indirectly address the question of who may represent a nation. Instead of expressing attitudes of disapproval, these reports often contain, for example, comments by interviewed sportspersons on the measure of Britishness that can or cannot be ascribed to a specific athlete. While in explicit commentaries it becomes immediately apparent how the nation and its boundaries are discursively (re)imagined, indirect commentaries are more unconscious discursive attempts to position (future) naturalised athletes as outsiders. For example, even when Aldama’s coach Frank Attoh argued that Aldama is ‘possibly more British than some of the

guys that we’ve acquired’ (Turnbull, 2011), she was still identified and managed as an ‘outsider’ individual (Black, 2016).

Like the previous two media frames, most articles discussing nationality switching did not contain the morality frame. It seems that changes of sporting nationality often takes place fairly unnoticed. Nevertheless, it does get noted. Many of the 1534 articles only briefly mention the names of the athletes who switched nationality, which may at first seem trivial and insignificant. However, it is precisely these reports that uncover how ‘the nation’s taken-for-granted status’ is routinely and subtly reproduced (Bonikowski, 2016: 440). Here, even when latent, the nation always continues to figure ‘as a cognitive construct [that] structures the contours of what is possible and desirable in subtle and unobtrusive ways’.

Figure 4.4 nicely shows the generally dormant or ‘cool’ character of nationalism, which under certain conditions gradually heats up, eventually causing outbursts of hot nationalism. But exactly when and where does hot nationalism spark the issue of who may have the honour of representing the nation at the Olympic Games? Given the nature of the data, this is a difficult question to answer. Three tentative observations are worth highlighting, however.

First, Figure 4.4 shows that this question gains importance in countries in the years in which they organised the Olympics. In 2000 (Sydney) and 2012 (London) one clearly notes an increase in articles in Australia and Great Britain, respectively, that contain the morality frame. These spikes indicate that there seems to be some sort of relationship between organising the Olympics on the one hand and the number of naturalised or immigrant athletes and their reception on the other.

Second, it seems that discourses of nationhood in the context of sports are rooted in broader societal discourses of immigration, multiculturalism, and ethnicity. For example, Castles and Miller (2009) describe how the sceptical immigration climate in Australia led to the election of the centre-right Howard Government in 1996, which resulted in stricter immigration policies. Figure 4.4 also clearly shows a peak of nationalist sentiment in Australian press coverage of nationality changes in 2000 (also see Hage, 1998). Similarly, Castles and Miller (2009) note a rise of anti-immigrant sentiments, political parties, and movements in many European countries, especially since the 2000s. The gradual heating of the debate in Great Britain seems to evolve in step with this trend. In contrast, Canada has remained one of the few countries with relatively open immigration policies and ‘political opposition to immigration per se is virtually nonexistent’ (Castles and Miller, 2009: 294). Unsurprisingly, nationality changes have not been a particularly controversial topic in Canadian newspapers.

Third, not only countries that naturalise athletes are concerned with the question of who may represent their nations. Between 2003 and 2005, several different

African news sources in the corpus devoted substantial attention to the question of nationhood. In that time, the 'brawn drain' of talented African athletes who switched their allegiances to Qatar and Bahrain was viewed with increasing concern. In July 2004, the then Foreign Affairs minister of Kenya, Ali Mwakwere, said to the Kenyan newspaper the Daily Nation that 'Kenyan athletes should not be encouraged to disregard their birthplace.' And in August 2004, the Nigerian Vanguard newspaper wrote that 'such enlistments undermine the archetypal image of a tearful athlete on the medal stand, singing his or her national anthem, watching the flag hoisted aloft.' These examples demonstrate how also countries which lose their talented athletes express their dissatisfaction with nationality swapping in moral terms of national belonging.

Discussion and conclusions

In this chapter, I have argued that in the recent history of the Olympic Games (1978–2017) the practice of nationality switching has often provoked substantial criticism. The nature of this criticism, however, has changed over time. By combining theoretical insights from studies on changing notions of citizenship and nationhood with innovative machine learning techniques, I have sought to demonstrate how and why the issue of switching sporting nationality has become particularly contested after the 2000s. Generally, newspaper articles make mention of nationality changes rather casually. However, in reports about nationality switches that do provoke public debate, questions regarding the marketisation of citizenship and nationhood could help explain why they are surrounded with controversy.

First, in relation to the latter point, I argue that unfolding cases of Olympic athletes who swapped passports contributes to a better understanding of how processes such as globalisation impact on established national forms of identification. In addition, these stories show how 'cool' nationalism may heat up over time and vice versa (Skey, 2009). Nationality swaps that are mentioned rather casually are exemplary of Billig's notion of banal nationalism, referring to the daily and 'mindless remembrance' of the world of nations (Billig, 1995: 144). As such, I followed a 'breaching approach' to uncover the myriad ways in which the nation is taken for granted. I studied the 'edges of the nation' (i.e. the places, times and context where the nation and its boundaries are transgressed) that challenge 'our cherished notions of who we are' (Fox, 2017: 37).

Under the right conditions, banal or cool nationalism can turn into hot nationalism. The heated 'Plastic Brits' debate in 2012 is illustrative of such temporary outbursts of hot nationalism, in which the question of nationhood becomes contested.

This contestation takes place in many different ways. In the acts of both rejecting and accepting, for example, the triple jumper Yamilé Aldama as a 'genuine' British athlete, immigrant athletes are ascribed a degree of difference and as such are always positioned in relation to and outside the nation (Black, 2016; Skey, 2014a). Unfortunately, the nature of this study allows me to offer only tentative explanations for the controversy over the otherwise largely un-noted phenomenon of sporting nationality switches. Therefore, I argue that future studies should explore the conditions under which banal nationalism turns into hot nationalism and vice versa.

Second, regarding the alleged marketisation of citizenship, the results suggest that countries have become more hesitant in 'buying' or importing sporting success, with Qatar's apparent disavowal of the 'brashly buying talent' policy as the ultimate example. This finding is in line with research that shows how the revival of nationalist sentiments slowed or reversed the liberalisation of citizenship regimes after 2002 (Koopmans, Michalowski and Waibel, 2012). In Chapter 3 it was argued that Olympic nationality switching needs to be understood against the background of complex national differences in granting citizenship, which naturally leads to 'issues' of multiple citizenship. It seems that trading talent for citizenship is a rather exceptional practice, which is only expected to further decrease during or after periods of heated nationalism. Therefore, I conclude that invoking 'anecdotal evidence about the *crème de la crème*' to make claims about the marketisation or dilution of citizenship does not contribute to a better understanding of these changing notions of citizenship.

From a methodological perspective, this study attempted to bridge the social sciences and computer science. Unavoidably, bridging implies that some concessions needed to be made with respect to connecting theory and methodology. Most importantly, the deductive framework used in this study allowed for minimal theoretical flexibility, given that the indicator questions were pre-formulated. The marketisation of citizenship, for instance, is somewhat narrowly operationalised in terms of an economic exchange. Future research on changing notions of citizenship and nationalism should consider developing a tailored framework that is better able to capture the theoretical intricacies of these complex notions of nationhood.



5

WHO CAN REPRESENT THE NATION?

This chapter is based on an article that is co-authored by dr. Michael Skey. The article has been revised and resubmitted to an international peer-reviewed journal.

WHO CAN REPRESENT THE NATION?



5 Who can represent the nation?

Introduction

It is now a commonplace to argue that national identities are contested and contingent and stand as a key site of social conflict in the contemporary era. Recent work (Kaufmann, 2004; Skey, 2011; Yuval-Davis, 2011) on the topic has begun to chart the hierarchies of belonging that are used to mark out insiders and outsiders, paying particular attention to the continuing power of gendered, racist and classist categories to define who counts as truly national. In this chapter, we look to extend some of these arguments by focusing on two key issues. First, is the manner in which varying forms of, what Hage (1998) labels, institutional and practical belonging come to define in and out-groups at particular moments and, second, how relations between different groups within (and beyond) the national space are contested and negotiated.

To do this, we draw on insights from two key figures from contemporary social theory, Norbert Elias and Erving Goffman. Elias' work (1994) on insider and outsiders is an obvious reference point for work on national belonging and recent studies have begun to engage with it in a more concerted manner (Pratsinakis, 2017, 2018). However, 'rather than simply highlighting [the reproduction of] simple 'us' and 'them' binaries' (Black, 2016: 979), our main aim is to show *how* established-outsider relations are discursively managed with reference to key, often banal, markers of nationhood (Skey, 2010). Then, given the extent to which Elias's study alludes to, but doesn't necessarily address, processes of stigmatisation, we use Goffman's writing on *Stigma* (1963) to develop a complementary perspective that explores the destigmatisation strategies of those defined as 'other'.

We employ this framework to study a particular case, media debates around the status of elite athletes chosen to represent Great Britain at the 2012 Summer Olympics. While a link between sport and nation is already well-established in the literature (Bairner, 2001; Maguire & Poulton, 1999) and the key role of elite athletes with migration backgrounds in representing 'their' country has been noted in passing (Agergaard, 2019; Holmes & Storey, 2011), it is our contention that events such as the 2012 Olympics provide particularly fruitful opportunities to study wider debates around national belonging as the 'London spectacle' was particularly preoccupied with (re)presenting (and marketing) Britain as a multicultural, tolerant and inclusive nation (Burdsey, 2016; Silk, 2012). For instance, Asian-British and black-British athletes prominently featured as 'London 2012 Ambassadors' in an attempt to assert Britain's multicultural successes.

Notwithstanding these attempts, what makes the London Olympics especially significant in terms of questions of national belonging is the fact that in the build-up to the event, Martin Samuel (a Daily Mail columnist) coined the moniker 'Plastic Brits' to criticise the selection of athletes who had switched to compete internationally for Great Britain under a 'flag of convenience' (2011a). According to Samuel, the then head coach of UK Athletics Charles van Commenee (a Dutch national) had 'imported' athletes from around the world as part of a plan to 'cheat' his way to building a stronger team for the London Olympics. The Plastic Brits label sparked a fierce debate about the Britishness of certain athletes included in Team GB (Poulton and Maguire, 2012). We examine these debates about elite foreign-born athletes in the British Olympic team as a 'site of social conflict' (Ahmed, 2000) from which discourses of nationhood emerged.

The chapter is divided into three main sections. The first outlines the theoretical framework to be used, making particular reference to the work of Elias, Hage, and Goffman, as a means of building a more dynamic model that is able to track the tensions between dominant and subaltern visions of nationhood and the often-routine forms of practice and knowledge used to substantiate them. The second discusses how the data from this study was collected and analysed. The final section presents a number of illustrative examples from newspaper reports that highlight the arguments of those who frame such athletes as potential threats to established forms of national organization and identification, as well as reported responses from the athletes and their supporters.

Established-outsider relations within and beyond the nation

The growing mobility and diversity of human populations around the world means that questions of (national) belonging are becoming both increasingly contentious and contested with a wider range of markers used to define who belongs *at particular moments* (Skey, 2010). It is these debates that this chapter looks to analyse and theorise by developing a framework that uses Elias and Scotson's (1994) study of *The Established and the Outsiders* as a starting point. In this canonical work, the authors focus on community relations in a suburb of the English city of Leicester in the 1960s. In particular, they point to a noticeable division between a more established group of residents and a group who were *relatively* new to the area, many of whom had moved from London to escape the bombing during World War II (1994: 20). The former developed 'a system of attitudes and beliefs which stressed and justified their own superiority and which stamped the [outsiders] as people of an inferior kind' (1994: 18). What is also noteworthy about the study is the extent to which this 'system' is underpinned by, and evidenced in relation to, everyday forms of practice, including

behaviour, dress and accent. As we will argue later, it is these everyday features that often come to the fore when there is any uncertainty about who does and doesn't belong to a given group.

The study is a model for intensive micro-sociological investigations into community relations and more recently scholars have used the established-outsider framework to study processes of (national) othering and exclusion, both outside (Loyal, 2011; Pratsinakis, 2018) and within the realm of sports (Black, 2016; Engh, Agergaard and Maguire, 2013). While this shift in scale offers fresh insights into debates around national belonging, some points are worth addressing in more detail.

First, it must be acknowledged that the boundaries between established and outsider groups are never fixed and that boundary management is a contested, and dynamic, process. Black argues that simplified dichotomous representations could 'serve to ignore the coalescent complexity of in-group and out-group relations' (Black, 2016: 983). Second, relatively little attention has been devoted to the discursive construction of national boundaries itself, that is, which attributes are used to draw distinctions between those who are perceived to (not) belong (Skey, 2013). While established-outsider relations in the Leicester suburb mainly rested upon 'oldness of association' (Elias and Scotson, 1994: xviii), alongside other venerated social practices, criteria that mark national belonging are much more difficult to pin down and will be tied to the particularities of a given national context, both in terms of its institutional orders and everyday cultural norms.

This is where introducing Hage's (1988) analytical distinction between institutional and practical belonging may be particularly fruitful. The former comes from official recognition from the state, generally in the form of citizenship rights, while the latter can be understood as, 'the sum of accumulated nationally sanctified and valued social and physical cultural styles and dispositions ... as well as valued characteristics' (1998: 53). While, of course, citizenship rights are fundamental in providing access to important economic and political resources in a changing world (e.g. voting, healthcare, social security, employment rights), practical forms are also crucial in underpinning claims to, and the recognition of, belonging. Indeed, research on the moralisation of citizenship has shown how formal citizenship alone is often not a sufficient prerequisite for immigrants, or even the children of immigrants, to be recognised as fully 'integrated' members of the (national) society (Pratsinakis, 2014; Schinkel, 2018).

In Western countries, such as Britain, skin colour has often been used as a primary marker for identifying those who do and don't belong, with the status of Black And Minority Ethnic (BAME) groups subject to ongoing scrutiny and continually called into question (Gilroy, 2013). As critical race theorists have observed, examining

the intersections of race and nation becomes particularly significant as the racialised 'other' can only be identified as a 'problem' in relation to the bounded spaces of the nation (Back et al., 2012; Carrington, 2004). Importantly, however, these unequal relations of power within the nation can be subject to change via the accumulation and loss of national forms of capital (Hage, 1988). As Burdsey notes, sport has been one of the primary domains in which BAME groups have, at particular moments, been able to challenge established hierarchies in Britain, both through well-documented domestic achievements and, crucially, in representing the country on a global stage. As a result of these shifts, 'victorious [BAME] British sport stars draped in the Union flag has become an unremarkable sight' (ibid: 18) demonstrating the extent to which dominant forms of practical belonging are also subject to contestation and transformation.

Identifying the markers of belonging that are discursively used to define, and contest, the nation's boundaries is one prime objective of this chapter. However, this emphasis on contestation and transformation also means focusing on an aspect of the established-outsider relationship that has been subject to much less scrutiny, the status and position of subordinate groups and how they may respond to existing relations of power.

Othering and stigmatisation

While Elias and Scotson did address the ways in which members of the 'outsider' group are marginalized, denigrated and excluded, and the feelings of inadequacy, shame and anger that this engendered (1963: 78-79), their approach is limited by a 'lack of attention to the strategies of outsider groups to better their position' (Pratsinakis, 2017: 102). To address this lacuna, we draw on the work of Erving Goffman, who has studied insider/outsider relations from a different perspective using the key concept of stigma. Goffman (1963: 12) defines a stigma as an attribute that makes one 'different from others in the category of persons for him (sic!) to be, and of a less desirable kind – in the extreme, a person who is quite thoroughly bad, or dangerous, or weak'.

Goffman's work has been very influential and the concept of stigma has been used employed across a range of disciplines (see Link and Phelan, 2001, for an overview). Of particular interest to this chapter, are the arguments of those who have discussed the relationship between stigma and prejudice, that is how certain groups, including those from particular ethnic backgrounds, are stigmatised and the consequences of this, in terms of socio-economic exclusion, status loss and psychological damage (Phelan et al., 2008). Contemporary approaches to stigma look to position the stigmatized as 'agents' focusing on, 'the possibilities ... to contest

and transform representations and practices that stigmatize’ (Howarth, 2006: 442). Much of Goffman’s original work examined the issue of passing, how members of stigmatized groups attempted to conceal their damaging attributes in order to ‘fit in’ with mainstream society.

This type of ‘destigmatisation strategy’, which seeks to avoid the taint of negative cultural stereotypes, can be seen in the work of Bursell (2012) and Wallem (2017) who examined the practice of name change among immigrants in Sweden and Germany, respectively. They showed how, by changing their names, individuals try to conceal their immigrant backgrounds so as to pass as ‘normal’ Swedes or Germans. Two other strategies are worth noting, with the second of particular relevance to this chapter. First, are those who attempt to shift focus away from the stigmatised and instead critique the established social order that views some groups as a problem (Howarth, 2006). In the case of the nation this means, ‘re-appropriating, and sometimes redefining the meaning of national belonging’ (Wallem, 2017: 82) so that a wider variety of groups can be accommodated. Such an approach demands a change in wider social attitudes and is therefore much harder to accomplish. The final strategy is simpler as it tends to focus more on the individual and the means by which they seek recognition as part of the established community by associating themselves with a range of valorised cultural practices and representations. As Goffman (1963) observes, this means disclosing some aspects of their ‘biographies’ in order to situate themselves more favourably in relation to dominant norms.

Methodology

Building on insights from the literature on established-outsider relations alongside a more agent-centred focus on in the destigmatisation strategies of sub-ordinate groups, this study uses media reports which discuss the Plastic Brits debate to focus on the ways in which questions of national belonging were framed and contested. The media has been to seen to have a central role in how narratives of nationhood are articulated whether in relation to ordinary (Billig, 1995), crisis (Mihelj et al., 2009) or commemorative (Dayan and Katz, 1992) periods. The latter have been conceptualised as forms of ‘ecstatic nationalism’ (Skey, 2011) and are seen to be particularly significance in representing the nation during moments of widespread co-ordinated public activity, sustained media attention and heightened emotional registers.

In order to differentiate our approach from related studies that focused on individual athletes (Black, 2016; Burdsey, 2016) or different theoretical approaches (Poulton and Maguire, 2012), we undertook a qualitative content analysis of 431 newspaper articles derived from the digital newspaper archive LexisNexis. We used

the search query ‘plastic brit*’ and selected only major British newspapers (see Table 5.1). The corpus, which includes printed versions of newspaper articles that can also be found online, spans a period between June 2011 and December 2017.

Table 5.1: Overview newspapers in corpus.

Newspapers	Articles
The Times/The Sunday Times	97
The Daily Telegraph/The Sunday Telegraph	71
Daily Mail/The Mail on Sunday	68
The Guardian/The Observer	53
The Independent	49
The Sun/The Sun on Sunday	27
Daily Express/Sunday Express	25
Daily Mirror/Sunday Mirror	22
London Evening Standard	12
Daily Star/Daily Star Sunday	5
Daily Record/Sunday Mail	2

The qualitative analysis was primarily guided by the theoretical questions outlined earlier: in newspaper reporting which markers are commonly used to demarcate national belonging and what strategies are elite athletes seen to employ when their status is called into question? The coding process took place as follows. First, we drew a sample of fifty newspaper articles in order to develop categories of markers of belonging. Following Hage, we distinguished between institutional and practical membership criteria. See Table 5.2 for an overview of the markers used and excerpts coded accordingly.

Table 5.2: Markers of belonging and excerpts coded accordingly.

Markers		Examples
Institutional membership	Birth country	'Not everyone is happy with the growing number of foreign-born athletes like Aldama that represent Britain.'
	Domicile	'She's [Laura Bechtolsheimer] lived here since she was 1 so she's no Plastic Brit.'
	Ancestry	'Porter, 24, is perfectly eligible to compete for Britain as she is a dual national. Her mother was born in London and her father is Nigerian.'
	Marriage	'[Aldama] qualifies for Team GB as she is married to a Scot and finally gained British citizenship in 2010...'
Practical membership	Language/ accent	'She [Butkevych] speaks broken, heavily accented English...'
	Cultural affinity	'If you are going to represent Britain at the Olympics then I think it is sensible to know the words of the National Anthem.'
	Pride	'Farah, as proud and patriotic as anyone in Britain...'
	Civic engagement	'Aldama's British credentials are more persuasive than some of her dual national team-mates ... She has paid British tax for a decade and is a longstanding member of the Barnet Copthall club, where she is also a volunteer coach.'
	Military service	'But after he [Derek Derenalagi] was so badly injured fighting for Britain in Afghanistan in 2007 that he lost both legs and was pronounced dead, who can doubt his right to pull on a Team GB vest?'
	Loyalty	'She is no Johnny Come Lately. Bardsley represented England at under-19 and U21 level and her commitment never wavered even after she failed to feature for a single minute in the run to the Euro 2009 final.'

Then, for each article, we checked which athletes were associated with the Plastic Brits debate, whereupon we coded if the athlete in question was explicitly accepted or rejected as a Brit by the author and on what basis. In addition, we checked whether reference was made to other persons (e.g. officials, coaches) who expressed their opinions on the selection and Britishness of foreign-born athletes. Lastly, we coded how the athletes in question (or persons in their entourage) responded to the Plastic Brits debate.

Figure 5.1: 'Plastic Brits' debate versus actual foreign-born athletes.

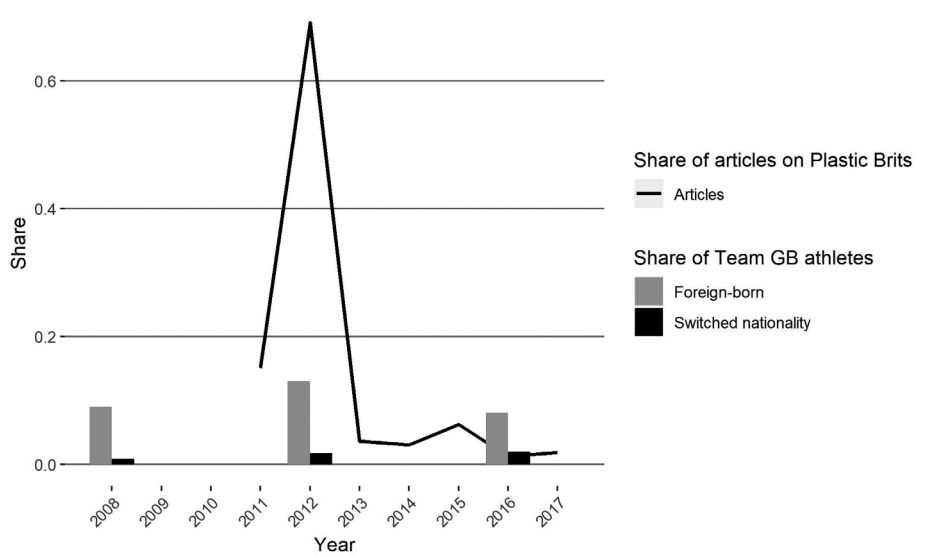


Figure 5.1 shows that the use of the 'Plastic Brit' label reached its peak in the year of the London Olympics, with over 60% of all articles published in 2012. We contextualised our qualitative analysis with data (see Chapter 2 and 3) on foreign-born Olympic athletes who participated in the Olympics of 2008 (Beijing), 2012 (London), and 2016 (Rio). This data (includes biographical information on the athletes, such as how they had acquired British citizenship and if they had already competed internationally for another country). Figure 5.1 shows that neither the proportion of foreign-born Team GB athletes nor the number of athletes who switched their nationalities was disproportionately higher in 2012 than in adjacent Olympic years, forming empirical evidence for the fact that hosting the 2012 Olympics 'encouraged journalists and politicians alike to (re)interpret and attempt to make sense of contemporary Britain' (Poulton and Maguire, 2012: 23).

The following empirical sections of this chapter centre around three themes that emerged from the qualitative analysis. First, we address the banality of nationhood that underlies discussions about which athletes should (not) represent Great Britain. Second, we discuss *how*, informed by a range of practical and institutional criteria of belonging, the nation's boundaries are discursively marked. Third, we examine some of the responses of athletes and their entourages that were reported by the media and examine whether and in what ways they tried to avoid the stigma of being labelled as a Plastic Brit. One final point is worth making at this juncture. While we look to highlight the destigmatisation strategies of elite athletes caught up in the debate, it

should be noted that we are relying on quotes that have been selected by professional journalists. Therefore, while such reports do offer a useful proxy for the athletes' views, the context in which they were generated needs to be acknowledged.

International competitions in globalised times

Before addressing how national belonging is demarcated, it should be observed that in discussing the status of elite athletes who participate in *international* sporting competitions, many journalists show significant reflexivity with regard to the impact of processes of globalization and, in particular, international migration on changing citizenship regimes and the blurring boundaries of national belonging.

Obviously, as the planet shrinks there will be increasing numbers of children born in one country and growing up or moving to another. More people will have dual citizenship, through parentage or migration. The business of nationality will become more complex generation to generation. (Samuel, 2012b)

This issue [nationality in sport] mirrors, to a large extent, the debate over the meaning of nationhood in a world where boundaries are losing their significance. How to tax companies that straddle borders? How to regulate the environment? You only have to look at the debate over EU membership to see how the desire for national identity is in competition with the logic of globalization. (Syed, 2013)

Importantly, however, this reflexivity operates against the background of a national order that is largely taken-for-granted. That is, underlying discussions about the status of 'foreign' athletes who competed under the British flag at international sporting competitions is a wider logic of nationalism. This logic consists of the idea that 'the world is (and should be) divided into identifiable nations, that each person should belong to a nation, that an individual's nationality has some influence on how they think and behave and also leads to certain responsibilities and entitlements' (Skey, 2011: 6). Many journalists in our sample commented on the necessity of upholding the *national* character of international sporting competitions, which was, in some cases, seen to be threatened by the presence of hyper-mobile athletes:

Every sporting competitor who has the option of representing different countries in international sport can choose once - and then must stick with

their nation through thick and thin. What destroys the concept of international sport more than anything is the ability to transfer from country to country, as if they were just another club or team. (Sunday Express, 2012)

Those applying official cunning to the lenient rules of nationality are utterly bare-faced. Keen [performance director UK Sport who called the term Plastic Brits 'unpleasantly xenophobic'] talks of the diversity that makes Team GB great, but it didn't need ringers from the NBA or Eastern Europe to make it so. We have plenty of diversity already. A wide range of ethnicity is revealed each time a British team takes the field. (Samuel, 2012b)

In many cases, debating whether foreign-born athletes can be legitimately included as members or representatives of the nation can be seen as a form of repair work undertaken to restore the national order of things. As Hage (1998: 53) observes, 'repair work' is generally undertaken by 'spatial managers' (e.g. journalists, politicians) who feel that the nation, as well their dominant position in that nation, is threatened. Following critical race theorists, within such discourses of decline whiteness operates as the default 'norm' against which 'others' are defined or treated as a possession, as illustrated by the claim 'we have plenty of diversity already'. Furthermore, the desire to defend or restore the 'normal' state of affairs often goes hand in hand with the explicit denial of racist motives (Hylton, 2010). As we shall see, some degree of accommodation can be made for athletes with the 'right' combination of characteristics, but if too many athletes compete for countries to which they do not 'genuinely' belong or show no loyalty towards the nation, the national order of things becomes threatened and requires careful management.

Marking national belonging

Perhaps the most striking element that emerged from our analysis is the fact that among the various reports it proved impossible to chart clear-cut hierarchies of belonging that were consistently employed by journalists, government officials, athletes and others.¹ None of the markers used had the power to function as a meta-criterion by which discussions about Britishness could be settled. As Bonikowski

¹ Unsurprisingly, newspaper coverage in the Daily Mail, instigator of the debate, was overall much more negative than in, most notably, The Guardian (in which Aldama had her own column). However, within and between the various newspapers included in our sample, each with their particular political connotations, contrasting opinions existed regarding the inclusion of (some of the) 'Plastic Brits' in Team GB.

writes, the question of ‘who belongs to the nation?’ is so difficult to answer because there is simply too much ‘variation and ambiguity in respondent’s conceptions of legitimate criteria of national membership’ (2016: 437). This ambiguity is evidenced by disagreements over the actual number of Plastic Brits, ranging from eight athletes who previously competed for another country, to 61 foreign-born athletes (Poulton and Maguire, 2012).

Table 5.3, which shows athletes who most prominently featured in the debate, offers an illustration for the ambiguity in conceptions of national belonging. Two observations are worth discussing more. First, we found that although blackness alone is not the *sine qua non* for being relegated as outsider, BAME athletes seem to be more easily represented as ‘outsiders in a Western setting’ (Gilroy, 2013). Aldama and Porter, for example, are much discredited for switching their sporting nationality, while others (Hindes) seemed to pass under the radar. However, as Black argues (2016), Mo Farah, was never labelled a Plastic Brit, but often brought up in the debate as a positive example of ‘assimilated Britishness’. Moreover, the reception of Butkevych and Stadnik (both white) in some parts of the press was similarly negative to that of Porter and Aldama.

Table 5.3: Athletes featuring in Plastic Brits debate.

Athlete	Articles	Sport	Birth country	Switched nationality	Black athlete	British ancestry to Brit	Marriage
Tiffany Porter	156	Athletics	United States	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Yamilé Aldama	107	Athletics	Cuba	Yes	Yes		Yes
Shara Proctor	62	Athletics	Anguilla	Yes	Yes		
Shana Cox	40	Athletics	United States	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Mo Farah	34	Athletics	Somalia		Yes	Yes	
Olga Butkevych	28	Wrestling	Ukraine				
Yana Stadnik	17	Athletics	Ukraine				Yes
Zharnel Hughes	15	Athletics	Anguilla	Yes	Yes		
Michael Bingham	11	Athletics	United States	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Cindy Ofili	11	Wrestling	United States		Yes		
Delano Williams	10	Athletics	Turks and Caicos	Yes	Yes		
Philip Hindes	10	Athletics	Germany	Yes		Yes	
Laura Bechtolsheimer	9	Cycling	Germany				

While, however, there was no defining marker of inclusion, two other related arguments are worth making at this juncture. First, is the fact that practical forms of belonging trump institutional forms in all cases. That is, simply possessing British citizenship is never enough to guarantee recognition as a member of the nation. Indeed, it is a range of everyday markers of belonging that really matter when it comes to defining established and outsider groups, even if a passport may provide opportunities to live and work in (and compete for) a given country. In this study, a combination of extended domicile in Britain, cultural affinity, expressions of national pride and/or commitment to the country were primarily used to offer (sometimes grudging) acceptance of an athlete.

Earlier, we introduced Hage’s concept of national cultural capital, the range of ‘valued social and physical cultural styles and dispositions [and] characteristics’ (1998: 53) that mark someone out as (not) belonging. In the extracts below we see a number of markers employed, but what connects them (and many of the other, more positive reports we examined) is the idea that these athletes have shown *ongoing* commitment to the country. In Aldama’s case, this is evidenced by domicile and family life but perhaps more importantly in the form of her service to a local community organisation, rendering less important the fact that she represented other countries at an earlier stage.

It actually feels almost an insult to mention the obnoxious moniker ‘Plastic Brit’ to a Cuban-born woman who has lived in London for more than a decade, holds a UK passport, is married to a Scot, has two British children and has been a servant to grass-root athletics at Shaftesbury Barnet for 11 years. (Chadband, 2012)

Critics would label her one of Team GB’s ‘Plastic Brits’. [...] There is a case for the defence, however. Butkevych has fulfilled the residency requirement, having lived in Britain for more than five years. ‘I fell in love with the culture and people and never looked back’, she said. Shaun Morley, British Wrestling’s performance director, insists that Butkevych is not taking the place of a British-born wrestler because none has reached the required standard. (Fletcher, 2012)

Likewise, with Butkevych there is a period of domicile but also the key phrase ‘never looked back’, which again suggests that her loyalties cannot be called into question. This mechanism operates in line with a broader ongoing moralisation of citizenship foregrounding the ideal of a culturally integrated and civically engaged immigrant

who only has one loyalty (Schinkel, 2018). At the same time, Butkevych's status is not settled. *Currently*, she is not taking the place of a British-born wrestler but, of course, this situation could change over time, making her acceptance temporal and conditional (Skey, 2012). Therefore, these extracts show both the repertoire of markers that can be used by 'outsiders' to generate some degree of acceptance, but also the conditional nature of these relations and the power of more established members to define who belongs.

Similarly, those who hold more critical views of the inclusion of (certain) foreign-born athletes, especially of those who already represented another country, tended to emphasise the incongruence between institutional belonging (formal citizenship) and practical aspects of membership, such as domicile, cultural affinity and, above all, showing loyalty to only one country. This became particularly apparent when Tiffany Porter posted a Twitter message about celebrating the 4th of July, which was picked up by a Daily Telegraph journalist, Simon Hart, who wrote:

In the face of such criticism [of being a Plastic Brit], the sensible thing for Ofili-Porter to do would have been to pledge her loyalty to her adopted country or, perhaps better still, just say nothing at all. But instead, on American Independence Day, the 23 year-old saw fit to post the following message on Twitter:

It's the 4th of July!!!!!! Wishing I was in the States to celebrate this special day! I'm definitely there in spirit though

If the implications of such a message were lost on Ofili-Porter, they certainly were not on former sprinter Ato Boldon, now an NBC track and field commentator, who tweeted back: Thought u British now lol.

Laugh out loud, indeed.

While Hart (2011) states that Porter has 'every *legal* right to wear a British vest [our emphasis]' because she qualifies through her London-born mother, his key argument revolves around the idea that foreign athletes who compete under the British flag should express a sense of national pride: 'As fans, we want to see athletes cavorting with the Union Jack to celebrate their medal because they really mean it. We want to see the bottom lip quivering when the flag is hoisted and God Save The Queen rings out.'

Our second, related argument is that this idea of showing commitment, of demonstrating your status as a 'good' immigrant (Schinkel, 2018), is often placed in direct opposition to the 'narrow-eyed resourcefulness' of others. Here, national pride is replaced with individual 'ambitions' alongside the spectre of someone *taking advantage* of their diverse (e.g. American/British) ancestry by merely using Great Britain as a flag of convenience. This is perhaps best illustrated with reference to the following extract, where Farah is discussed *in relation to* Porter.

Tiffany Porter, who became British only after finding her professional ambitions thwarted in America, can be accused of narrow-eyed resourcefulness in a way that Mo Farah, who progressed through the British system having arrived in this country from Somalia at the age of eight, cannot. (Samuel, 2012b)

As Black (2016) has shown in his detailed study of Mo Farah, the Somali-born athlete is often held up as the paragon of the immigrant-made-good. While Farah is also not a priori considered a true member of the nation, a liminal space can be created for certain outsiders who are 'discursively managed as part of the *established "us"*' (Black, 2016: 984). In contrast to Porter, Farah, below, is prepared to continually (the 'look mate', pointing to some degree of exasperation, but here also operating as marker of the in-group) state how proud he is of representing 'my country':

'Look mate, he said, this is my country. This is where I grew up, this is where I started life. This is my country, and when I put on my GB vest, I'm proud. I'm very proud.' It was that 'look mate' that did it. Entirely natural, totally convincing, it made further debate quite redundant. (Collins, 2012)

These types of debates are also where Hage's concept of the 'domesticated other' (1998: 37) - the idea that otherness within a nation can be tolerated provided it can be managed in a way that accords with the values and mores of the established group - may have particular purchase. Farah, as a product of the 'British system' can be seen as the archetypal 'domesticated other', while the figure of someone like Porter, with her dual loyalties and overlapping identities, seems to represent a particular problem. Those who define the conditions of belonging are prepared to offer some leeway to 'outsiders' provided that they demonstrate a degree of cultural affinity and commitment and, ideally, are successful. Elite athletes, of course, need institutional membership to be allowed to compete at all, but this is often not enough to mark them as part of the insider group. Instead, it tends to be markers associated with everyday life and culture - some obvious, some curious - that come to the fore in

defining belonging. As demonstrated in the next section, these markers are also employed by the athletes themselves as a key strategy of destigmatisation.

Responding to stigma

In relation to the Plastic Brits debate, elite athletes whose status was called into question generally tended to stress their Britishness by disclosing details about their 'biographies' (Goffman, 1963). In some cases, they were assisted by family, coaches or teammates who helped to bolster their arguments. Importantly, these strategies were grounded in the use of the same markers of belonging, formal and practical, that are employed by more dominant groups. Note, for example, how the rather uncontroversial Norwegian-born handball player Britt Goodwin asserts us that she is truly British:

I have the British manners and the British behaviour, even though I grew up abroad. I have always felt British. I have only ever had a British passport and we always took our family holidays in Manchester. There's no foreign blood in my body. (Bateman, 2012a)

Here, it is noticeable that Goodwin uses both institutional ('a British passport') as well as practical ('family holidays in Manchester', 'the British manners') forms of national belonging to establish her credentials. Goodwin's response can be interpreted as an attempt to keep any 'stigma from looming large' (Goffman, 1963: 125), thereby ensuring that she appears as a 'normal' member of the British nation (Wallem, 2017).

Another athlete who was never explicitly stigmatised as a Plastic Brit is Philip Hindes, a German-born track cyclist (Poulton and Maguire, 2012). He qualifies through his father, a former British soldier once stationed in Germany. While many reports mention aspects of his 'discredited biography' (his imperfect English, strong German accent and the fact that, like Porter, he has competed for his birth country as a junior), it is Hindes *himself* who felt the urge to 'swat away a potentially awkward Plastic Brit debate' (Majendie, 2012):

Hindes says: 'I feel British. I am not really a Plastic Brit. My dad is British.' His argument seems robust, and he has those words to God Save The Queen memorised if it all goes spectacularly well in London. (Dickinson, 2012)

Elsewhere, Hindes assures the public that he is 'not like an African runner who has two parents in Africa. My dad is British, loads of family live here and I feel British' (Bateman,

2012b). This particularly noteworthy destigmatisation strategy not only uses ancestry to demonstrate belonging but also points to the illegitimacy of 'others'. Although Goffman doesn't directly address these hierarchies of belonging, he does note how some *discreditable* individuals look to maintain distance from those already discredited (1963: 121-122). In other reports, Hindes' Britishness is substantiated by references to cultural idiosyncrasies. To The Times, Hindes said had developed 'a passion for Yorkshire puddings since leaving the bratwurst behind' (Dickinson, 2012), and Hindes' affinity with aspects of British culture is emphasised by his companion Sir Chris Hoy, who lends Hindes his DVDs:

Most recently The InBetweeners, to relieve boredom between training sessions. 'He's got a British sense of humour,' Hoy says. What about Fawltly Towers? 'No, I haven't given him that.' Hoy adds that 'it's not as if it's somebody who's visited the country a couple of times or has it on residency. His dad's British and if you're eligible, you're eligible.'

It's worth noting, here, the role of humour in marking out someone as belonging to a particular group. While the link between comedy and national identity has been studied in more general terms (Medhurst, 2005), knowing about, and getting, particular jokes or forms of comedy requires some degree of immersion in a given cultural setting and can be an important way in which people can distinguish themselves from others, including in national terms (Skey, 2018).

'And we still drink tea, of course'

Athletes who were instead explicitly labelled as Plastic Brits frequently employed similar strategies, disclosing biographical information which centred on key markers of belonging (e.g. stressing ancestry, national pride or domicile). In the two examples below, it is banal markers associated with food and media consumption that are used to try and reaffirm the athlete's connections with the nation. While it is easy to denigrate these type of markers (by labelling them as clichés, for example), we have previously argued that when there is uncertainty about who belongs, official markers of identity generally become far less important than those quotidian features that are broadly recognised, and often valued, by more dominant groups (Skey, 2011; also compare Elias and Scotson, 1994). An interview with Tiffany Porters' mother in The Sun (Samson, 2012), for example, speaks of the family's affinity with everyday British cultural artefacts:

I am happy Tiffany's running for Britain because I have such strong connections with the country. I used to read *The Sun* a lot while I was there. I really loved reading about the Royal family. The monarchy of Britain is just fantastic. I also loved Blankety Blank and Terry Wogan. And we still drink tea of course. And when we were in Britain it was the Iron Lady. She was a strong-willed lady, I liked her. I also loved fish and chips - that was the main thing I enjoyed.

In Aldama's case, initial accusations about her 'outsider status' were frequently countered with reference to her affinity with aspects of British culture. In her column in *The Observer* Aldama herself (2012) wrote:

I feel part of this country. At home we have Sunday roast and I love it, gravy and roast potatoes. Andrew, my husband, makes Scottish dishes, I drink tea. I didn't grow up with these things, but I embrace them because they are a part of my home, of my family.

From our analysis, providing biographical information in relation to various established markers of belonging, can be seen as a particularly attractive 'destigmatisation strategy' (Bursell, 2012), in the sense that they help Aldama and other athletes with 'questionable' biographies try and secure greater recognition as legitimate members of Team GB.

Concluding remarks

Elite athletes who compete in international competitions offer particularly compelling case for studying national belonging as they continue to embody and represent the nation during periods of sustained media attention and heightened emotional registers. And yet when compared with other types of representatives, heads of state, ambassadors, political leaders, they have received much less scholarly attention. Furthermore, the growing mobility of human populations, in general and elite athletes in particular, has begun to complicate the role and status of such national representatives, as cultural affiliations become more complicated and countries search for quicker routes to international glory.

This chapter has looked to address this lacuna by combining insights from different sociological theorists as a means of building a more dynamic analytical framework that is able to attend to both established regimes of power as well as questions of agency and resistance. First, we have applied insights from Elias and

Scotson's classic work on established-outsiders to the national context, before drawing an important distinction between institutional and organisational markers in the assertion and contestation of belonging. Second, by extending Goffman's (1963) writing around stigma, we found a productive means of attending to the shifting status of different groups within the nation as well as the attempts by more marginal groups to assert a sense of belonging, again often in relation to everyday markers.

This framework has been used to analyse media reporting of the 'Plastic Brits' debate, where athletes brought in to represent Team GB were subject to ongoing scrutiny and critique over a sustained period of time. Overall, our analysis reveals the complex and segmented nature of discourses of nationhood. While in the eyes of some (more) established members of society most outsiders could eventually be domesticated as part of the established group, certain others seemed to be more difficult to manage (Ahmed, 2000). More specifically, in line with our analytical framework, we have noted: the complex repertoire of formal and everyday markers used to define and manage national belonging, the conditional forms of recognition that are offered to those who demonstrate appropriate levels of commitment to and/or cultural affinity with their adopted nation, and the varying ways in which athletes caught up in the Plastic Brits controversy sought to respond to and challenge processes of stigmatisation. We have also argued that most reporting continues to reproduce a largely taken-for-granted 'logic of nationalism' – with the world 'naturally' divided into nations that compete against each other through the activities of committed, skilled representatives. In times when dominant forms of national belonging are felt to be under threat or in decline, debates over who counts as national, and on what grounds, become ever more contested.

Finally, we believe that our approach can also be employed in more quotidian settings to track the manner in which both dominant and subordinate groups look to understand and manage the thorny issue of national belonging and, of course, the entitlements that may flow from being seen as a legitimate member of the nation. Future research would benefit from paying more attention to these entitlements, whether tangible, as in the case of elite athletes being able to compete on a global stage with the full support of a well-funded government organisation, or more rhetorical, the feeling that one has the right to comment on, and regulate, the presence and activities of 'others' within the nation.



6

**CONCLUSIONS
AND
DISCUSSIONS**

**WHO CAN
REPRESENT
THE
NATION**

?



6 Conclusions and discussion

Empirical synthesis

This study's central aim, as a part of the *Sport and Nation* research project, was to examine how notions of citizenship and nationhood are challenged in debates about the national eligibility of elite foreign-born athletes competing in mass-mediated international sporting competitions. Formulated in the title of this dissertation: which athletes represent and can, both in a formal and moral sense, represent the nation? Focussing on the Olympic Games, being one of the greatest mediated sporting events on the planet, the first step in answering that question was to create a historic overview of the number of foreign-born athletes competing in the Olympic Games. As reported in Chapter 2, it turns out that historically many countries have been represented by athletes who were not native-born. Since the 1948 Summer Olympics hosted in London, the share of foreign-born athletes as a percentage of all participants has fluctuated between 5% and 9%. Especially 'nations of immigrants' such as Canada and Australia have always been represented by substantial numbers of athletes born abroad. To an important extent, the volume and diversity in countries of origin of foreign-born Olympians resonate with broader patterns that have been found in studies on international migration (Czaika and De Haas, 2014). Viewed from this perspective, the Olympic Games have not necessarily become as 'astonishingly' more migratory as is frequently claimed, for instance in media reports that refer to the 61 foreign-born athletes representing Great Britain in 2012 or the 44 foreign-born athletes 'donning the stars and stripes' in Rio, 2016 (Chapter 1).

As acknowledged in both Chapter 1 and Chapter 2, one issue with counting the number of foreign-born athletes is that it neglects to take into account the qualitative variation between these athletes in terms of how they acquired citizenship of the countries they were selected to compete for. Some of the uneasiness or controversy over certain foreign-born athletes is not due to their birth outside of the country per se, but to the fact that their decisions as regards their Olympic nationality (and possible changes thereof) were allegedly merely based on instrumental motives in the absence of 'genuine links'. In the literature on citizenship, naturalisations of talented athletes are frequently connected to a broader marketisation of citizenship. This marketisation of citizenship, defined here as a state-led strategy aimed at giving the country a competitive edge in today's global economy, entails a reconfiguration of membership regimes as a consequence of which citizenship is transformed into a marketable commodity, thereby blurring the boundaries of belonging, loosening

the link between individuals and political communities, and exacerbating global inequalities (Shachar, 2011, 2018).

Notwithstanding a number of empirical limitations, which will be addressed further on in this chapter, Chapter 3 presents a more nuanced picture of the role that citizenship plays in the strategic decisions of athlete to switch their Olympic nationalities. Only a fraction of the athletes that were studied acquired their new citizenship via the explicit market principle we have coined *jus talenti*. Most of the athletes who switched their Olympic nationalities were attributed a second or new citizenship via 'normal' routes to membership, i.e. either at birth (via *jus soli* or *sanguinis*) or after birth through marriage or residency. Furthermore, broader as well as historical patterns of migration are frequently reflected in the athletes' decisions of nationality; for instance, athletes who switched to compete for France or Great Britain were often born in one of the former colonies. While athletes mobilise their citizenship strategically, it is my contention most of their decisions do not entail a commodification of citizenship as such. In my view, we should be hesitant to frame these athletes as mercenaries who are willing to forsake their national identities and sell their talents to the highest bidding country.

Much of the controversy over the decisions of these athletes is grounded in the idea that a 'genuine link' ought to exist between the athlete and the country he or she represents (Iorwerth, Hardman and Jones, 2014; Shachar, 2011). While formal citizenship was always assumed to guarantee such a link, increased population mobility, immigration, and the growing acceptance of dual citizenship, are challenging the basis for belonging to a nation-state and question a naturally assumed overlap between peoples and homelands (Castles and Davidson, 2000). In response to this, international sports federations are called upon to further regularise and 'police' (Spiro, 2014) the choices athletes are allowed to make, for instance by the introduction of additional residency requirements and the elimination of provisions that allow for transfers of nationality. In this way, notwithstanding the complex nature of the issues of migration, citizenship, and national belonging, regularisation rather than liberalisation is frequently perceived to be the way out of the current impasse with regard to the principle of sporting nationality in globalising times.

Solutions of such kind, which are sometimes put forward in academic debates as well, can be problematic in a number of respects. First, they tend to neglect the plain socio-psychological fact that peoples' identities are 'complex, multi-layered and contingent' (Storey, 2019: 1). Second, they treat what Brubaker (1996) calls *categories of practice*, such as 'nation' and 'genuine national belonging', as *categories of analysis*. For while these vernacular categories are meaningful to people in identifying themselves and others in the context of their everyday experiences, Brubaker warns us that they

should not be unreflexively treated as ‘real, substantial things-in-the-world’ (2002: 164). In line with the recent literature on nations and nationalism, I believe that these categories are ultimately political in the sense that they are bound up with processes of inclusion and exclusion (see Chapter 1). A more sociologically productive research avenue, therefore, would be to try and analyse how and when nations and nationhood are invoked and evoked in everyday settings, which also involves paying attention to the heterogeneity in views of the nation’s meaning and its symbolic boundaries (Bonikowski, 2016: 435).

Chapter 5, then, has taken the ‘Plastic Brits’ debate as a case study to discuss how the nation’s boundaries are discursively drawn, ultimately demonstrating, in the words of Ghassan Hage, ‘the rift between the granting of citizenship by the state and the acceptance of those citizens by those who consider themselves from the dominant culture’ (1998: 50). Indeed, discussions about the status of foreign-born athletes selected to represent Great Britain in the London 2012 Olympics are illustrative of a differentiation between formal and moral citizenship (Schinkel, 2017). Although each of the athletes born abroad was a British citizen in the formal sense, many of them even from birth, a complex repertoire of everyday features was used by journalists, athletes, their families, and other actors to try and mark who ‘really’ counted as a national and on what grounds. Importantly, the chapter demonstrates how established groups (e.g. white journalists) are prepared to offer outsiders some form of recognition as nationals provided that they have shown a degree of loyalty and cultural affinity to the nation. So while athletes themselves might feel that they belong, their belonging also needs to be recognised by more established groups in order for certain outsiders to be accepted as ‘genuine’ representatives of the nation.

Synthesising the materials presented in the empirical chapters, the main conclusion of this research is that, contrary to popular belief, the countries studied have always been represented by substantial numbers of athletes born abroad, albeit that the athletes’ pathways to participating in the Olympics are subject to certain differences over time in terms of the role of formal citizenship as a prerequisite for selection. Also, controversy over some of these athletes is not new *per se*, as for instance Zola Budd’s decisions to ‘swap’ her South-African passport for a British one in 1984 was subject to a lot of media debate. Nevertheless, what seems to have changed in the perception of the number of foreign-born athletes, which all in all remains relatively small, is that the ideal of the Olympics as a purely *international* competition is becoming increasingly difficult to hold onto. That is, less and less citizenship is believed to be able to guarantee the existence of a ‘genuine link’ between athletes and the countries they represent. Repair work, in the form of implementing additional rules,

regulations, and requirements as regards the athletes’ eligibility, is seen to be needed to restore the national order of things.

Finally, this dissertation has tried to demonstrate how the microcosm of sport can be used as a prism to further the study of wider issues of social division in the contemporary era, which is marked by ‘ontological insecurity’ spurred by globalisation. International sporting competitions, such as the Olympic Games, not only ‘frankly mimic warfare’ by providing arenas of blatant nationalism or ‘orgies of hatred’, as famously noted by George Orwell (1945; Beck, 2013: 83). They are also occasions where more latent ideas of nationhood are invoked and evoked. With this study of text and talk about sport, and then in particular about the status of athletes born outside of the countries they competed for in mass-mediated sporting events, I hope to have contributed to building a deeper understanding of the meaning of national belonging in the contemporary era.

Limitations of this study

The goal of this study was to *systematically* develop an understanding of (i) how the number of foreign-born athletes competing in the Olympics has changed over time, and (ii) how these changes are related to the attribution of citizenship and ideas about nationhood. Systematically, here, is meant in two respects. First, since prior research on this topic was often based on anecdotal evidence about rather recent and mediagenic cases, in this dissertation I have tried to employ a more comparative historical perspective by theoretically selecting and analysing the countries of birth of a large number of participating athletes (approximately 45,000) who competed for 11 different countries between 1948 and 2016. Moreover, within that selection I have studied the biographies of 167 athletes who switched to compete for a new country in terms of how they acquired citizenship of those respective countries. Second, this study is grounded in a theoretical framework that combines different strands or fields of social science research. By including empirical research and theoretical perspectives from studies on migration, citizenship, and nationhood, I have tried to make connections between dimensions that already show some natural overlap.

Notwithstanding my attempts to add more structure to academic research about the status of foreign-born athletes participating in international sporting competitions and their reception, this research still has a number of important limitations that I wish to highlight in this final chapter. In doing so, I also invite future research on this topic to make use of some of the methodologies and perspectives here employed and proposed so as to further research on the topics of this dissertation.

The first, perhaps most obvious limitation of this study is that Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 are based on an analysis of a limited number of preselected countries and editions. Owing to the fact that it proved very difficult to acquire complete data on all participating athletes (including countries of birth and nationalities) between 1896 and 2016, a preselection was made on a number of theoretical and more pragmatic grounds. By theoretically selecting countries with different migration histories and which also participated in nearly all editions since 1948, in Chapter 2 we were able to comparatively and historically assess the belief that the Olympics have become more migratory over time. Furthermore, in Chapter 3 we could strategically use the fact that 169 athletes had participated for two different countries in the Olympics in order to link discussions about foreign-born athletes to academic debate on the notion of formal citizenship.

While on the one hand these methodological choices proved productive in the sense that they allowed for a systematic analysis of numbers of foreign-born athletes in international sporting competitions, they also limited the scope of the analysis. Part of the debate on the topic of this dissertation concerns athletes who switched to compete for countries that were left out of the analyses carried out in this study. Most notably, countries like Qatar, Bahrain, Russia, and Turkey are much-criticised for their policies for naturalising talented foreign-born athletes in search for Olympic success. Although I would have preferred to include these countries in the analyses of this dissertation, restrictions of data availability and also language prevented me from doing so. In this vein, it is good to see that other scholars (Reiche and Tinaz, 2019; Storey, 2019) are expanding on the topic and filling that gap by including these countries in their studies.

However, following Wollmann, Vonk and De Groot (2015) and Storey (2019), I believe that also in studying these rather extreme cases it remains important to maintain critical distance to the one-dimensional interpretations that are often offered in media reports, but also in academic writings, namely that athletes 'defecting' and switching to compete for such countries are mercenaries forsaking their national identities in search for glory, lured by states that are reconfiguring the notion of citizenship fuelled by their wish for national Olympic success (see Chapter 1). Not only are their numbers most likely to be relatively small on a global scale, and naturalised athletes are often not the most talented prize-winning athletes that countries of origin have brought forth (Reiche, 2016), it should also not be forgotten that athletes are human beings and 'not just record-setting "vessels" that bring glory to their teams and adoptive nations' (Shachar, 2011: 2123).

In line with the latter remark, a second limitation of this research concerns the fact that a number of actors, most notably athletes but also federations, governments

and 'the public', were not given a direct voice in this study. The motives behind the decisions of various stakeholders involved in, for example, the naturalisation of a talented runner, were therefore not systematically examined and subsequently related to issues of citizenship and nationhood. Also, the public's reaction thereto was only analysed in this study by examining media English language reports about (i) athletes who switched their nationalities (Chapter 4) and (ii) the 'Plastic Brits' debate (Chapter 5).

For their recent study of naturalisation policies for foreign-born athletes in Qatar and Turkey, Reiche and Tinaz (2019) interviewed different stakeholders involved in such policies, which enabled them to establish a more detailed picture of the reasons and considerations behind naturalisations and the role of citizenship laws and regulations in these processes. In addition to the findings presented in Chapter 3, their approach could be 'rolled out' across other national contexts in order to further examine whether and to what extent citizenship is strategically mobilised, and perhaps transformed, by the naturalisations of foreign athletes. However, interviewing other stakeholders involved, in particular athletes themselves, seems particularly valuable to me in that it not only allows us to capture the issues of citizenship, but also can help come to a better understanding as to how dominant conceptions of nationhood are negotiated and reproduced in discussions about sport. For instance, in some of the quotes from interviews by Reiche and Tinaz (2019) with different stakeholders involved in naturalisation policies, one can also find an illustration of the paradoxes between banal forms of nationalism and immigration policies aimed at enhancing the country's international sporting success.

It might prove difficult to find top-level athletes willing to elaborate on the sensitive issue of their motives and feelings regarding their choices of sporting nationality. As Storey aptly notes (2019: 12), athletes 'generally avoid alienating their fans so that displays of allegiance and wrapping themselves in the national flag might be seen partly as expressions of identity but also as sensible responses to fan expectations and a means to avoid accusations of disloyalty.' Still, it would help us to better understand how individuals with migration backgrounds and overlapping identities themselves experience taken-for-granted ideas about 'the naturalness of the world of nations, divided into separate homelands' (Pratsinakis, 2017: 98).

Literature on the concept of everyday nationhood reiterates that more attention should be directed to how the national order of the world is not simply reproduced, but also sometimes 'ignored and deflected' (Fox and Miller-Idriss, 2008). As several scholars have argued (e.g. Bonikowski, 2016; Pratsinakis, 2017; Skey, 2018; Wallem, 2017), relatively little research so far has focussed on how and when people with migration backgrounds experience or challenge the primacy of the nation as

a framework for organising the world. From this perspective, Chapter 5 sought to address such questions of agency in relation to issues of citizenship and national belonging. However, I believe that more attention could be directed to the different meanings people attach to the nation, as well as variations in the way that boundaries of national belonging are drawn (also see Bonikowski, 2017). Mapping such distinct ‘repertoires of nationhood’ (ibid.) also necessitates concentrating on the experiences of people with migration backgrounds and how they negotiate and perhaps subvert the boundaries of their, oftentimes precarious, national belonging.

Finally, while my theoretical focus in this research was primarily on the relationship between migration and national belonging as a particular form of social division (both legal and moral), it should be stressed that, as for instance Yuval-Davis (2006) has argued, issues of citizenship and national belonging also intersect with social divisions along lines of class, gender, race, disability, etc. From this perspective, future research could extend the analysis presented here by paying more attention to the ways in which claims to national belonging in times of ‘ontological insecurity’ and globalisation, both by people with migration backgrounds themselves and other publics, are also affected by questions of intersectionality (Bonikowski, 2016; Skey, 2013; Zenquis and Mwaniki, 2019). Such a perspective would also imply the use of additional methodological strategies.

Epilogue

I would like to conclude this dissertation with some thoughts on how future research on nationhood might proceed, not least because it is a topic that is dear to me. When conversing with others about this dissertation’s topic, one comment often made is that the athletes’ belonging is most likely to be mediated by their sporting success. People thus tend to assume that athletes who perform well by (contributing to) earning medals or titles will generally receive higher levels of acceptance and are therefore more quickly seen to belong. Such remarks are expressions of the idea of ‘conditional belonging’ and in line with research that demonstrates how notions of ‘performance’ and ‘value’ come to the fore in debates about immigration and diversity, not only in sports (Van Sterkenburg, 2013) but also in the broader society (Hage, 1998). Provided that ‘they’ are ‘integrated’, ‘productive’, ‘grateful’, et cetera (Schinkel, 2017), immigrants (athletes or not) can be assimilated as part of the established ‘us’.

In *White Nation*, Ghassan Hage works out a distinction between different modes of national belonging, namely ‘passive homely belonging’ (“I belong to the Netherlands”) and ‘governmental belonging’ (“the Netherlands belongs to me”). With the first, Hage refers to a situation in which people feel that they belong to the nation

‘in the sense of being part of it’ and expecting to ‘have the right to benefit from the nation’s resources, to “fit into it” or “feel at home” within it’ (1998: 45). By the concept of governmental belonging, on the other hand, Hage refers to a position of national dominance, which ‘gives one not only the position of cultural dominance within the field, but also ... the power to position others within it’ (ibid.: 55). Governmental belonging, in other words, is a field of power in which people yearn to have ‘a legitimate view regarding who should “feel at home” in the nation and how, and who should be in and who should be out’ (ibid.: 46). Citizenship, albeit a prerequisite for institutional belonging, does not automatically guarantee the practical recognition as fully belonging nationals by others.

Chapter 5 showed how, for certain athletes, their homely belonging or ‘Britishness’ was recognised so that they could be incorporated as part of the national ‘us’. Of course, this recognition did not come naturally, as they were still in need of incorporation in the first place (also see Black, 2016). As a next step of analysis, however, it is important to note that, regardless of the degree of national cultural capital they accumulated, but also their sporting success, such homely belonging does not automatically translate into a dominant position within the nation and the power to be able to define the conditions of belonging (Pratsinakis, 2017). As Hage notes: ‘Some migrants, for example, through sporting success, manage to accumulate a high degree of ... “passive homely belonging”, but this does not necessarily translate into a position of national dominance’ (ibid.: 55).

The relevance of Hage’s distinction between various quantities (more or less national) and qualities (passive homely, governmental) of national belonging became particularly apparent when Mo Farah, the successful distance runner, in spite of being called ‘as British as a beefeater in the Tower of London’ by Boris Johnson (Johnson, 2012), was admonished for interfering in the controversy over Tiffany Porter’s appointment as captain of Team GB. Farah had stated he was ‘disgusted’ by the way Porter had been treated by the media, in particular by being ‘put on the spot’ by a Daily Mail journalist to sing the national anthem (Shea, 2012). Des Kelly (2012), a Daily Mail journalist, responded to that statement by writing the following:

When the American-born Tiffany Porter took her first, awkward bow as captain of the British athletics team, everyone was told she did not deserve the label ‘Plastic Brit’. Who said so? Britain’s head coach, Charles van Commenee, while alongside him world 5,000m champion Mo Farah complained he felt ‘disgusted’ by the line of questioning Porter had to face. And so a Dutchman brought up in Amsterdam and the Somali-born runner who lives in Portland, Oregon were on hand to refute the accusations that

Porter was not 'British enough'. I'm not sure whether this proves the Brits do irony better than any other nation or the exact opposite. It's all too confusing.

Notwithstanding Farah's widely accepted status as a British national, what the above statement reveals is that at the moment Farah expressed his views as regards Porter's stigmatisation as a 'Plastic Brit', Kelly hurried to remind us of the precarious nature of Farah's own acceptance. Kelly seems to deny Farah a dominant position within the national space as, apparently, it is ironic that one 'Plastic Brit' is supported by two other individuals whose own Britishness can be called into question. Although in his piece Kelly acknowledges the complexity of the issue of nationhood and also provides us with some details about his own mixed heritage (half English, half Irish), he still claims to hold more governmental belonging than someone like Mo Farah, making him feel empowered enough to 'manage the space of the nation' by criticising Farah's remarks, Team GB's selection policy, and the entire system of eligibility criteria in international sporting competitions. Farah, on the other hand, does not seem to 'naturally' hold the right credentials to voice his opinion on the subject, i.e. on who can represent the nation or not, which apparently makes him less national than Kelly.

What this example illustrates, in line with what was presented in Chapter 5, is not only the complex nature of the issue of nationhood, but also how sport and international sporting events can serve as strategic research sites where 'everyday articulations of the nation' are made explicit (Fox and Miller-Idriss, 2008). Distinct repertoires of nationhood are invoked by different groups of people across a variety of contexts in an attempt to make sense of the thorny issue of national belonging. Underlying all these different, contradictory, and shifting understandings, however, the nation as such still very much seems to shape 'common-sense understandings of reality' so that in turn 'the nation is made salient' (Bonikowski, 2016: 440). In an era that faces emerging waves of (neo)nationalism, a deeper understanding of the 'appeal and significance' of nationalism is imperative (Skey and Antonisch, 2017: 332). Sport, sometimes referred to as the world's most important side-issue, should figure centrally in research that aims to examine when, where, and how the world of nations with its boundaries is reproduced, even in times when processes of globalisation challenge taken-for-granted ideas about citizenship and nationhood.

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Dutch summary

Hoewel sport in het algemeen, en de Olympische Spelen in het bijzonder, wellicht ogenschijnlijk neutrale en triviale kwesties lijken, probeer ik in dit proefschrift te laten zien dat de microkosmos van sport strategisch bestudeerd kan worden om sociologisch inzicht te verkrijgen in bredere maatschappelijke discussies. Deze discussies hebben in dit geval specifiek betrekking op de veranderende betekenis van nationaliteit onder invloed van processen van globalisering, en dan in het bijzonder internationale migratie. Het centrale doel van deze studie, als onderdeel van het bredere onderzoeksproject *Sport and Nation* (Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam), was om te onderzoeken in hoeverre hoe de notie van nationaliteit wordt uitgedaagd in debatten over de status van in het buitenland geboren atleten, van wie soms afgevraagd wordt of ze wel gezien kunnen worden als 'ware' vertegenwoordigers van hun land tijdens internationale sportcompetities zoals de Olympische Spelen. Geherformuleerd naar de titel van deze dissertatie stel ik de vraag welke atleten voor welke landen historisch gezien hebben kunnen uitkomen op basis van hun *juridische nationaliteit* (bij de bepaling van iemands Olympische nationaliteit wordt uitgegaan van zijn/haar juridische nationaliteit), en mogen uitkomen op basis van bestaande *morele opvattingen over nationaliteit* c.q. burgerschap. Deze vraag komt voort uit het wijdverspreide idee dat landen in toenemende mate vertegenwoordigd worden door atleten die geboren zijn in andere landen. Een groeiend deel van deze atleten zou geen 'oprechte band' hebben met het land dat zij vertegenwoordigen, en vooral om instrumentele redenen, in plaats van met het hart, een keuze voor een bepaalde Olympische nationaliteit hebben gemaakt. Natie en staat vallen in dat geval niet (meer) samen.

Door mij strategisch te richten op de Olympische Spelen, als één van de grootste gemediatiseerde sportevenementen ter wereld dat georganiseerd is rondom het principe van nationaliteit, was de eerste stap bij het beantwoorden van die vraag het maken van een historisch overzicht van het aantal in het buitenland geboren atleten die aan de Olympische Spelen meedoen. Daarbij werd in hoofdstuk 2 vastgesteld dat vanuit historisch oogpunt veel landen altijd al vertegenwoordigd zijn geweest door atleten die in het buitenland waren geboren. Sinds de Olympische Zomerspelen van 1948 in Londen schommelde het aandeel van in het buitenland geboren atleten als percentage van alle deelnemers tussen 5% en 9%. Vooral 'immigratielanden' zoals Canada en Australië zijn altijd vertegenwoordigd geweest door een aanzienlijk aantal in het buitenland geboren atleten. Het volume en de diversiteit in de landen van herkomst van in het buitenland geboren Olympiërs resoneren in belangrijke mate met bredere patronen die zijn gevonden in studies over internationale migratie.

Zo werden landen met een koloniaal verleden in de eerste jaren na de Tweede Wereldoorlog vaak vertegenwoordigd door in de koloniën geboren atleten, terwijl de herkomst van in het buitenland geboren atleten tegenwoordig meer divers is. Vanuit dit perspectief bezien zijn de Olympische Spelen niet noodzakelijkerwijs zo verbazingwekkend meer 'migratoir' geworden als vaak wordt beweerd, bijvoorbeeld in krantenberichten die verwijzen naar de 61 in het buitenland geboren atleten die Groot-Brittannië vertegenwoordigden in 2012 (zij werden 'Plastic Britten' genoemd) of de 44 buitenlandse geboren atleten die de Verenigde Staten vertegenwoordigden tijdens de Olympische Spelen in Rio, 2016.

Zoals in zowel hoofdstuk 1 als hoofdstuk 2 werd erkend, komt het tellen van het aantal in het buitenland geboren atleten met een aantal beperkingen in het licht van de beantwoording van de hoofdvraag van dit onderzoek. Er wordt bijvoorbeeld geen rekening gehouden met de kwalitatieve variatie binnen deze groep atleten in termen van hoe ze de juridische nationaliteit hebben verworven van de landen waarvoor ze zijn uitgekomen. Een deel van het ongemak of de controverse ten aanzien van bepaalde in het buitenland geboren atleten wordt niet veroorzaakt door hun geboorte buiten het land als zodanig, maar door het feit dat hun beslissingen met betrekking tot hun Olympische nationaliteit naar verluidt louter gebaseerd waren op instrumentele motieven, zonder dat er sprake was van een 'echte band' met het betreffende land. In de literatuur over burgerschap worden naturalisaties van getalenteerde atleten (en andere migranten) vaak in verband gebracht met een bredere vercommercialisering van nationaliteit. Deze vercommercialisering van nationaliteit, gedefinieerd als een door de overheid geleide strategie die erop gericht is het land een concurrentievoordeel te geven in de hedendaagse mondiale economie, houdt een herwaardering van lidmaatschap van een natie in, waardoor burgerschap in feite wordt getransformeerd in een verhandelbaar goed, waardoor de grenzen van een natiestaat en het lidmaatschap daarvan meer en meer vervagen.

Ondanks een aantal empirische beperkingen, die in de conclusie van deze dissertatie zijn beschreven, geeft hoofdstuk 3 een meer genuanceerd beeld van de rol die de vercommercialisering van nationaliteit speelt in de strategische beslissingen van sporters om van Olympische nationaliteit te veranderen. Slechts een fractie van de onderzochte atleten verwierf hun nieuwe juridische nationaliteit via het expliciete marktprincipe dat we *jus talenti* ('het recht van talent') hebben genoemd. De meeste atleten die van Olympische nationaliteit wisselden, verkregen hun juridische nationaliteit via 'reguliere' routes naar lidmaatschap van een natiestaat, d.w.z. bij de geboorte (via *jus soli* of *sanguinis*) of na de geboorte door huwelijk of langdurige residentie. Bovendien zagen we in de beslissingen van de atleten met betrekking tot hun keuze voor een Olympische nationaliteit vaak bredere en historische

migratiepatronen weerspiegeld. Atleten die bijvoorbeeld van Olympische nationaliteit wisselden om vervolgens voor Frankrijk of Groot-Brittannië uit te komen, waren vaak in één van de voormalige koloniën of overzeese gebieden geboren. Hoewel een aantal atleten hun (dubbele) nationaliteit strategisch mobiliseerde, zijn hun beslissingen vaak niet het gevolg van een vercommercialisering van nationaliteit als zodanig. Op basis van dit onderzoek moeten we ervoor waken deze atleten te framen als huurlingen die bereid zijn hun nationale identiteit op te geven door hun talenten te verkopen aan het hoogstbiedende land.

Een aanzienlijk deel van het ongemak of de controverses over de keuzes van in het buitenland geboren atleten komt voort uit het idee dat er een 'echte link' zou moeten bestaan tussen de atleet en het land dat hij of zij vertegenwoordigt. In het verleden werd aangenomen dat iemands juridische nationaliteit garandeerde dat een dergelijk band bestond. Tegenwoordig, onder invloed van o.a. immigratie, de toenemende mobiliteit van populaties en de groeiende internationale acceptatie van dubbele nationaliteiten, lijkt de lang als natuurlijk veronderstelde overlap tussen naties, staten en gebieden meer en meer onder druk te staan. Deze ontwikkeling uit zich ook in de context van internationale sportcompetities zoals de Olympische spelen, die primair georganiseerd zijn rondom het principe van juridische nationaliteit. In reactie op het idee dat de juridische nationaliteit van een atleet niet meer kan garanderen dat er een oprechte relatie bestaat met het land waarvoor hij of zij uitkomt, worden internationale sportfederaties in toenemende mate opgeroepen om de regels omtrent nationaliteit aan te scherpen. Dit aanscherpen kan bijvoorbeeld door de introductie van aanvullende vereisten met betrekking tot het land waar atleten woonachtig dienen te zijn, en de afschaffing van bepalingen die wisselingen van Olympische nationaliteit toestaan. Op deze manier wordt verdere regularisering, en niet liberalisering - niettegenstaande de complexe aard van migratie, nationaliteit en nationale verbondenheid - vaak als dé oplossing gezien om de 'authenticiteit' van de Olympische spelen in de toekomst te kunnen waarborgen.

Bij dergelijke oplossingen, die soms ook in het academische debat worden opgeworpen, kan een aantal vraagtekens geplaatst worden. Ten eerste gaan ze voorbij aan het sociaalpsychologische feit dat de identiteiten van mensen vaak complex, gelaagd en contingent zijn. Ten tweede neigen ze ernaar om in het dagelijkse leven gebruikte categorisering, zoals 'natie', 'nationaliteit' en 'oprechte nationale verbondenheid', te reïficeren tot werkelijk bestaande categorieën. Dit in plaats van ze als sociaal geconstrueerd te beschouwen. Hoewel dergelijke categorieën betekenisvol zijn voor veel mensen, bijvoorbeeld in termen van het identificeren van zichzelf en anderen in de context van hun dagelijkse ervaringen (zeker in tijden van wat sociologen 'ontologische onzekerheid' noemen), waarschuwen sociologen als

Rogers Brubaker ons ervoor dat ze niet onreflexief moeten worden bestudeerd en geanalyseerd als echte, substantiële dingen in de wereld. Geïnspireerd op de recente literatuur over naties en nationalisme die in hoofdstuk 1 werd besproken, stel ik dat deze categorieën uiteindelijk politiek zijn in de zin dat ze verbonden zijn met in- en uitsluitingsprocessen. Een sociologisch productievere route van onderzoek zou daarom zijn om te proberen te analyseren hoe en wanneer er een beroep gedaan wordt op het idee van naties, en daarmee hun grenzen, in alledaagse contexten zoals sport. Daarbij dient ook aandacht te worden besteed aan de heterogeniteit in opvattingen over de betekenis van de natie en de symbolische grenzen ervan, in plaats van ze te beschouwen als objectieve realiteiten.

In hoofdstuk 5 stond vervolgens het debat over de zogenaamde 'Plastic Britten' centraal. Dit debat, dat in de aanloop naar de Olympische spelen van 2012 gehouden in Londen werd uitgevochten in de Britse media, had betrekking op een groep in het buitenland geboren atleten die voor Groot-Brittannië uit zouden komen. Uit de analyse van het debat werd duidelijk dat er sprake is van een veelvoud aan opvattingen over de vraag wie er nu wel of niet écht tot de natie behoort, en derhalve in moreel opzicht als waardig vertegenwoordiger van die natie gezien kan worden. De analyse laat zien dat er een kloof bestaat tussen het idee van juridische nationaliteit aan de ene kant, en opvattingen over het werkelijk toebehoren aan een natie aan de andere kant. Discussies over de status van de in het buitenland geboren atleten die zijn geselecteerd om Groot-Brittannië te vertegenwoordigen, zijn daarmee illustratief voor een aan kracht winnend idee waarbij onderscheid gemaakt wordt tussen formeel (juridisch) en moreel burgerschap. Hoewel alle in het buitenland geboren atleten Britse burgers waren in juridische zin, velen van hen zelfs al vanaf de geboorte, werd een complex repertoire van alledaagse kenmerken of eigenschappen (denk aan culturele affiniteit, loyaliteit en trots) aangewend door journalisten, atleten, hun families en andere actoren om te proberen te bepalen wie er écht als 'national' aangemerkt kan worden. Belangrijk is dat het hoofdstuk laat zien hoe de meer gevestigde groepen in de samenleving (bijv. witte journalisten) bereid zijn om 'buitenstaanders' te erkennen als leden van hun groep op voorwaarde dat ze een zekere loyaliteit aan en culturele affiniteit met de natie hebben getoond. Daarmee is de erkenning als lid van die dominante groep altijd voorwaardelijk. Dit maakt tevens dat hoewel atleten zelf het gevoel kunnen hebben dat ze erbij horen, hun verbondenheid met de natie en acceptatie als 'echte' vertegenwoordiger ook als zodanig moet worden erkend door de meer gevestigde groepen.

De conclusie van dit onderzoek is dat, in tegenstelling tot wat vaak wordt gedacht, veel landen in de Olympische Spelen altijd al zijn vertegenwoordigd door een aanzienlijk aantal in het buitenland geboren atleten. De rol die de notie

van juridische nationaliteit hierin speelt, bijvoorbeeld de groeiende internationale acceptatie van dubbele nationaliteiten, is in de loop der tijd enigszins veranderd. De controverse over sommige van deze atleten op zichzelf is niet nieuw. De beslissing van Zola Budd om haar Zuid-Afrikaanse nationaliteit in 1984 in te ruilen voor de Britse was bijvoorbeeld onderwerp van veel debat in de media, zo bleek uit hoofdstuk 4. Wat echter lijkt te zijn veranderd in de perceptie van het aantal in het buitenland geboren atleten, dat al bij al nog relatief klein is, is dat het steeds moeilijker lijkt te worden vast te houden aan het ideaal van de Olympische Spelen als een 'authentieke' *internationale* competitie. Dat wil zeggen: in afnemende mate lijkt het idee van juridische nationaliteit het bestaan van een 'echte band' tussen atleten en de landen die zij vertegenwoordigen te kunnen garanderen. Reparatiewerkzaamheden, in de vorm van de implementatie van aanvullende regels, voorschriften en vereisten met betrekking tot de nationaliteiten van de sporters, worden noodzakelijk geacht om de nationale ordening en authenticiteit van de Spelen te herstellen.

Ten slotte heeft dit proefschrift geprobeerd aan te tonen hoe de microkosmos van sport als prisma kan fungeren om bredere maatschappelijke kwesties met betrekking tot sociale scheidslijnen te bestuderen. Internationale sportevenementen, zoals de Olympische Spelen, bieden als 'oorlog zonder wapengekletter' niet alleen arena's van flagrant nationalisme en 'orgies van haat', zoals George Orwell ooit opmerkte (1945). Het zijn ook contexten waarbinnen meer latente ideeën over bijvoorbeeld nationaliteit worden gearticuleerd en bediscussieerd. Met onderhavige sociologische studie over sport, en dan in het bijzonder over de status van atleten die zijn geboren buiten de landen waarvoor ze deelnamen aan de Olympische Spelen, hoop ik te hebben bijgedragen aan een beter begrip van de betekenis van nationaliteit in deze globaliserende tijd.

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About the author

Joost Jansen (1988) holds a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration and a Master's degree in Sociology (Cum Laude), both obtained at the Erasmus University Rotterdam (EUR). After graduation, Joost joined the Department of Public Administration and Sociology where he started working as a research assistant and developed an interest in the sociological study of international migration. In 2014, he obtained a position as a junior lecturer. Teaching a range of substantive and methods courses, Joost was able to further develop his sociological imagination and skills set. In September 2016 he started working as a doctoral researcher within the *Sport and Nation* project, also at the EUR. During his PhD trajectory, Joost followed courses in Data Science and Big Data Analytics at the London School of Economics and the University of Copenhagen, and at the same time obtained his University Teaching Qualification (BKO). In November 2018, Joost obtained an Erasmus+ grant with which he visited Loughborough University and was able to expand his knowledge of nationalism studies. He has published several articles in international peer-reviewed journals, such as *Citizenship Studies* and *Migration Studies*, applying a variety of methods and theoretical perspectives. Currently, Joost works as a policy advisor and data analyst at Gemeente Rotterdam.

Curriculum Vitae

Working experience

2020 –	Policy advisor and data analyst, Gemeente Rotterdam
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Education

2012	MSc in Sociology (Cum Laude), Erasmus University Rotterdam
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Additional training

2019	Migration Summer School, European University Institute
2018	Social Data Science, University of Copenhagen
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2017	Data Science and Big Data Analytics, London School of Economics

Publications

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