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MIGRATIONS, CITIZENSHIPS, AND THE RIGHT AND CHOICE TO PLAY FOR A NATIONAL FOOTBALL TEAM WITH A FOCUS ON THE CROATIAN NATIONAL TEAM

Vladimir Iveta,¹ Marijeta Rajković Iveta^{II}

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ABSTRACT

Migrations, Citizenships, and the Right and Choice to Play for a National Football Team with a Focus on the Croatian National Team

Contemporary national football teams mirror numerous migration processes. The research was focused on the formation of football teams, examples of migrations of national team members, and changes in international rules (civil and sports citizenship, options of playing for the national team). The analysis of examples of footballers who have chosen to play for a country other than their country of birth shows multiple practices. However, the most prominent choice is to represent their parents' country of origin. The research results contribute to studies on obtaining privileged citizenship and opportune citizenship, to integration theories, and to studies of elite migration.

KEYWORDS: citizenship, sports citizenship, national football team members, right to choose a national football team, privileged citizenship

IZVLEČEK

Migracije, državljanstva ter pravica in izbira igranja za nacionalno nogometno reprezentanco s poudarkom na hrvaški reprezentanci

Sodobne nogometne reprezentance odražajo številne migracijske procese. Avtorja se v raziskavi osredotočata na sestavljanje nogometnih reprezentanc, primere selitev nogometašev v druge reprezentance ter spremembe mednarodnih pravil (državljanstvo zaradi razlogov na področju športa, možnosti za igranje v reprezentanci). Analiza primerov nogometašev, ki so se odločili za igranje za državo, ki ni njihova matična država, kaže, da se nogometaši odločajo različno, najpogosteje pa si izberejo igranje za državo, iz katere prihajajo njihovi starši. Rezultati raziskave prispevajo k študijam pridobivanja privilegirane in oportunega državljanstva, k teorijam integracije ter k študijam migracij elit.

KLJUČNE BESEDE: državljanstvo, športno državljanstvo, člani nogometnih reprezentanc, pravica do izbire reprezentance, privilegirano državljanstvo

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INTRODUCTION

Today's population of modern European countries results from numerous immigrations and confirms that we live in an age of global migration (for more information on migration patterns, see King et al., 2010; Castles et al., 2014; Hollifield & Foley, 2022). Migration processes are also evident in many athletes of immigrant origin and immigrants in the line-ups of certain present-day national teams. National teams represent the country/nation whose kits the athletes wear and are an important symbol of national identity, their victories strengthening a sense of national pride. Furthermore, the issue of immigrant integration is one of the most important issues of the modern European society. To be legally and politically integrated, an immigrant must also obtain the citizenship of the receiving country (Penninx & Garcés-Masareñas, 2016). On the other hand, for a player to be a national team member, the citizenship of the country of that national team is not enough. Such a player also needs that country's "sports citizenship" (Medić, 2017). After clarifying the legislative context of the research, the difference between these citizenships, and the formal options of playing for a national football team, this paper will try to investigate the relationship between the two citizenships as well as the right and choice to play for a national football team in the context of migration processes. From the first migration of players into football clubs to the formation of national football teams, it uses examples of migrant national team members to present how the international rules of FIFA (Fédération Internationale de Football Association) have changed. The paper's central goal is to investigate and analyze the reasons for a player's choice to play for the national team of a country other than the country of their birth, which shall be done using specific examples/real experiences of national football team members. Investigating the differences in the options of obtaining and choosing citizenship, we will examine the options of obtaining privileged citizenship and opportune citizenship and indicate the need to question the current citizenship policies aimed at migrant integration (Džankić, 2019), the theories of integration, especially the legal, political, and identification aspects (Penninx & Garcés-Masareñas, 2016), with regard to the citizenship industry (Džankić, 2019), citizenship, and national identity (Koska, 2012; Decimo & Gribaldo, 2017; Slooman, 2018). The concept of this paper goes beyond previous research, only fragments of which relate to the aims of our paper. Previous research has studied the migration of professional foreign footballers (cf. Lanfranchi & Taylor, 2001; Dietschy, 2006; Taylor, 2006; Storey, 2011), the relationship between citizenship in sport and the right to play for a national team from the aspect of the international sports law (Medić, 2017), and the identities of national team members from the diaspora (Komar, 2015).

We found the collection of works that connects football and contemporary processes of international migration (cf. Elliott & Harris, 2015) useful as a starting point for the paper. These works discuss the social and ethnic affiliation in the context of transnationalism of the second generation of migrants, transnational

continuities, ethnic reification, and local connections (cf. King, 2000; Wessendorf, 2007). Certain works indicate that the processes of denationalization, de-ethnicization, and deterritorialization are visible in contemporary sports (Poli, 2007; Bašić, 2015). They indicate a disconnection between the geographical origin of athletes and the countries they should represent (Poli, 2007). Research into globalization, migration, and identity processes shows that constructing nationals as citizens instead of members of an ethnic group collides with imagining the nation-state (cf. Bauböck, 2019; Džankić, 2019). On the other hand, some European countries, such as Croatia, invite the descendants of emigrants (grandchildren and great-grandchildren) from other continents to return and believe that their integration is unnecessary as they are granted citizenship (cf. Rajković Iveta & Gadze, 2014; Rajković Iveta, 2019). These practices indicate a need for deeper research and linking of the topics of acquiring citizenship, the process of integration, transformation, and dynamism of identity (cf. Eriksen, 2001; Decimo & Gribaldo, 2017; Slooman, 2018) in migration contexts. This paper aims to contribute to such research. It discusses the personal/family migration context as a resource. In contrast, citizenship and the choice of a national team for which one will perform are discussed as a subjective and situational career strategy.

The paper covers the period from the end of the nineteenth century until today, emphasizing the contemporary period. It is based on analyzing various sources: legal acts of international and national football organizations, state regulations, and published literature. We mostly learned about the experiences of international footballers by analyzing the media discourse (Bryman, 2012), which we did by searching interviews with national team members who are immigrants or have a migration background. Analyzing information from different media (e.g., social networks and portals) helped us confirm and compare information and prepare questionnaires for interviews with Croatian national team players. Part of the paper is based on the experiences of footballers, Croatian national team players, and one potential national team player, all born outside the Republic of Croatia, for which we conducted qualitative semi-structured interviews in addition to information from the media (Zapata-Barrero & Yalaz, 2018).¹ We used biographical narrative interviews and problem-oriented interviews (Zapata-Barrero & Yalaz, 2018, pp. 14–15). We presented the obtained ethnographic material as the ethnography of the particular (Abu-Lughod, 1991). We also interviewed a long-time official of the Croatian Football Federation (CFF) who, for the past two decades, has participated in discussions with potential national team players from the diaspora about them playing for the Croatian national team. According to his wishes, he will remain anonymous in this paper.

The paper is structured so that we may provide a brief introduction to the development of professional football and the migration of footballers to other clubs and countries. We will then explain the process of acquiring citizenship with an example

1 Since international footballers are public figures, we will use their names in this paper whenever they were used in our sources. The research has been conducted according to the ethical code of the Croatian Ethnological Society ("Etički kodeks", n.d.).

and show how that relates to the national team. We will also state the differences between civil and sports citizenship, focusing on formal options for playing for the national team. Following this discussion is a section on the forming of football teams, examples of migrations of national team members, and changes in international autonomous sports rules. The paper concludes by analyzing examples of footballers who had the right to choose a national team, emphasizing the personal motivation for each choice.

INTRODUCTION TO MIGRATIONS OF FOOTBALLERS

In 1863, representatives of eleven clubs and teams from London and the surrounding area founded the first national Football Association (FA). The basic goal of the association was to adopt and implement uniform rules according to which their sports game would take place. The founding of this association resulted in the strengthening of the organizational structure of football, an increase in the number of matches, and the first competition that took place from 1871 to 1872—the FA Challenge Cup (Mason, 1980, pp. 15–16). The migration of football players took place parallel with the development of organized football. After professional football was legalized in England in 1885 (i.e., footballers were legally paid to play) and the first competition, the Football League, was organized in 1888, the arrival of players from Scotland to English clubs became increasingly frequent. There were soon 58 Scottish professionals playing in English clubs, and in 1890, there were already 230 of them (Schulze-Marmeling, 2019, p. 33). In the twelve English professional clubs that played the Football League in 1891, a total of 448 professional players were registered, more than half of whom were from Scotland (Mason, 1980, p. 82). Clubs with sufficient financial resources created entire teams of players from outside England. For example, all players in the Liverpool FC 1892/93 team were foreigners—8 of them were from Scotland, as was the club's first coach (Schulze-Marmeling, 2019, p. 31). For a long time, until the 1980s, players from other British associations were the only “foreigners” who played in English clubs. After that, the arrival of players from other countries increased, and it became a common occurrence in the twenty-first century for some Premiership clubs (topflight of English professional football) to play with no Englishmen in their starting line-up.

In contrast, in most European and South American countries, it was the British who introduced the new game and participated in the establishment of the first football clubs (for Austria, see Schwind, 1994; for Germany, Eisenberg, 1994; for Spain, Eguizábal & Méndez, 1988; for South American countries, Campomar, 2015; and for a general overview, see Baker, 2015).

After the introduction of professionalism in the countries of continental Europe in the 1920s, transfers of players from clubs in one national association to clubs in another association increased significantly. During the twentieth century, national

football associations had different ways of regulating the registrations and the right of foreign nationals to play in domestic club competitions, with periods of more or less liberal approach to this issue (Iveta, 2022, p. 109). Players' transfers from a club in one national association to a club in another association led to the first occurrences of players changing their national teams. The twentieth century was marked by numerous migrations, both between European countries and immigration to European countries from other continents (cf. Black et al., 2010; King et al., 2010; Castles et al., 2014; Hollifield & Foley, 2022). Apart from players who came to the association of the receiving country with which they had no connection until then, national teams were also changed by immigrants and their descendants who played for the national team of their country of origin.

CITIZENSHIP AND NATIONAL TEAM

A national team in any sport, including football, represents a set of the best athletes in a particular sport with the citizenship of a particular country (with exceptions that will be mentioned later). Citizenship is the legal connection between an individual and a country, the connection that gives them the status of a citizen (Pezo, 2007, p. 267). Each country independently regulates and changes the conditions to be met for a certain natural person to become its citizen (Koska, 2012; Bauböck, 2019). We will present only the example of the Republic of Croatia and the Croatian Citizenship Act (2011) as a framework for obtaining citizenship. According to this Act, Croatian citizenship is obtained based on origin, birth in the territory of the Republic of Croatia, naturalization, and international treaties (Croatian Citizenship Act, 2011, Article 3). A foreign-born individual may obtain Croatian citizenship based on origin if they had one parent with Croatian citizenship at the time of birth, given that they have applied for registration as a Croatian citizen by the age of twenty-one (Croatian Citizenship Act, 2011, Article 5). A foreigner who has applied for admission to Croatian citizenship may acquire it by naturalization if they have reached the age of eighteen if they have been discharged from foreign citizenship, or if they have submitted proof that they will receive a discharge if they are admitted to Croatian citizenship, if they have lived in Croatia with a registered residence for eight years continuously until the application is submitted and have an approved status of a foreigner with permanent residence, if they speak the Croatian language and read Latin script, if they are familiar with Croatian culture and social structure, if they respect law and order, etc. A privileged group of persons who can obtain Croatian citizenship by naturalization without meeting the above conditions are expatriates and their descendants. According to this Act, expatriates are Croatians who emigrated from the territory of the former countries of whose territory the present Republic of Croatia was a part at

the time of emigration (Croatian Citizenship Act, 2011, Article 11).² Foreigners whose admission to Croatian citizenship would represent an interest in the Republic of Croatia and who can acquire Croatian citizenship by naturalization without having to comply with the assumptions for regular naturalization constitute a special category (Croatian Citizenship Act, 2011, Article 12).

A citizen has certain rights and obligations with respect to their country. One of their rights and obligations is to play for their country's national sports team. In football, as in most sports, appearances and all other issues related to the national team are resolved by the national association (see Sports Act, 2022, Article 47, Paragraph 5; for football, see Assembly of the Croatian Football Federation, 2021, Article 1, Paragraph 1). For example, Article 72 of the Statute of the Croatian Football Federation (HNS) establishes the basics of the organization of national teams. The Regulations on National Football Teams of the HNS shall regulate the detailed organization of national teams.³ National teams play international matches against each other. The matches recognized by FIFA are those between two FIFA members in which each member plays with their own national team. If a FIFA member has allowed one of its leagues to choose a team that bears their country's name, such a match is also considered international (FIFA Statutes, 2010, Article 3, Paragraphs 1 and 4).

CITIZENSHIP AND SPORTS CITIZENSHIP: FORMAL OPTIONS TO PLAY FOR A NATIONAL FOOTBALL TEAM

Citizenship in the legal and political sense should be distinguished from the so-called sports citizenship, which an athlete must have to play for a particular country's national team. It differs from civil citizenship in the following:

1. It cannot be dual, i.e., a player cannot play for different national teams at the same time despite having two or more citizenships.
2. It does not always coincide with civil citizenship. A footballer can hold the citizenship of a FIFA member country and the sports citizenship of another country, also a FIFA member, and play for its national team. Examples include citizenship of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and sports citizenship of England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, or Gibraltar. For example, players from the Faroe Islands with Danish citizenship perform for the Faroe Islands team and those from Puerto Rico with US citizenship for the Puerto Rico team.

2 In practice, this means that persons who have been established to be Croatians or whose ancestors moved from the territory of the present Republic of Croatia 150 years ago and who do not know the Croatian language also have Croatian citizenship.

3 Regulations on National Football Teams, HNS Registrations no. 20/98.

Apart from these contemporary examples, historical examples include the football associations of Austria, Hungary, and the Czech Republic, which had competence over territories within one country: the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. However, all these associations were also members of FIFA and played international matches. This is because FIFA does not require its members to be sovereign states but also accepts associations responsible for organizing and supervising football in their own countries. At the same time, it is particularly emphasized that each British association is recognized as a separate member (FIFA Statutes, 2021, Article 11).⁴

In its statement of reasons in case CAS 2014/A/ 3776 Gibraltar FA v FIFA, the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) gave the most comprehensive presentation and legal position regarding the options of membership of a particular association in FIFA (see Court of Arbitration for Sport, 2016).

In its basic principles, FIFA also regulates the right of footballers to play for a national team, referring to appearances in the teams of national football associations that are members of FIFA. Such an arrangement of football citizenship (previously mentioned sports citizenship specific for football), as well as the principle that only players with civil and football citizenship of a country can represent its national team, is also recognized by European Union (EU) law. EU law prohibits discrimination based on nationality and therefore requires that every EU citizen has the right to move and reside in the territory of any member state in sport, too, as well as be allowed the right to work. However, the European Commission's *White Paper on Sport* (2007), the most important EU document in the field of sport, allows for three exceptions concerning these general principles. The first is the most important for this paper: the right to choose an athlete for the national team based on nationality (i.e., citizenship; European Commission, 2007). This exception means that the ineligibility of citizens of other EU countries to play for a national team of any EU state does not constitute discrimination based on nationality.

FORMING OF NATIONAL FOOTBALL TEAMS, EXAMPLES OF MIGRATIONS OF NATIONAL TEAM MEMBERS, AND CHANGES IN INTERNATIONAL FOOTBALL RULES

Historically, the establishment of the English FA was followed by the forming of football associations in other countries of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland (now Northern Ireland). Shortly after, the idea arose of organizing matches

4 The term "country" is defined in the FIFA Statutes as an independent state recognized by the international community. Given that there are several members who do not meet this criterion, we point to the provision of Article 11, Paragraph 6 of the Statutes, which stipulates that "an association in a region which has not yet gained independence may, with the authorisation of the member association in the country on which it is dependent, also apply for admission to FIFA," which is an echo of the former regulation of the status of football associations in colonies.

in which the best eleven players of each association would play (Butler, 1991, p. 19). The first match of the two associations' teams, also considered the first international match, was played in Glasgow in 1872 between the Scottish and English teams (Bell's Life, 1872). The fact that the limits determining the right to play for a particular national team were still fluid is proven by Lord Arthur Kinnaird playing for Scotland when he was also a member of the FA Committee and later a long-standing president of that association (Butler, 1991, pp. 17–19).⁵

During the second half of the nineteenth century, mass migrations occurred from European countries to North America and then to South America (King et al., 2010; Castles et al., 2014). These migrants conveyed the game of football not only as a way of spending leisure time but also as a professional sport. By the beginning of the twentieth century, football had spread to most European and South American countries, where national football associations were also established. Due to the increase in the number of international clubs and national team matches, there was a need for regulation at the international level (playing according to uniform rules, organizing competitions, cooperation, and mutual recognition). Representatives of the football associations (or sections) of France, Belgium, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, and the Madrid Football Club on behalf of Spain founded FIFA at a convention held in Paris in 1904. The organization's statutes were adopted at that first congress, and the leaders were elected. Over the years, FIFA has asserted itself as a relevant organization with numerous members that manages international football. The right to play for national teams was not regulated before the Statute of 1929, which stipulated that each association determines the conditions necessary for playing for their national team (FIFA Statutes, 1929, Article 36).

In the second half of the 1920s and early 1930s, there was a noticeable trend of South American players arriving in European countries. They were national team members who switched the citizenship of their country of birth for the citizenship of their parents' country of origin and continued to play for it (for example, Argentinian players of Italian origin went to Italian clubs and took Italian citizenship). The most famous is the Argentinian *oriunda*⁶ trio of Juventus—Renato Cesarini, Raimundo Orsi, and Luis Monti. All three played for the Argentinian national team (Cesarini and Orsi won the silver medal at the 1928 Olympic Games, and Monti played in the 1930 World Cup final). After joining Juventus, they were granted Italian citizenship, and Orsi and Monti, along with two other naturalized Argentines, Enrique Guaito and Attilio Demaría, Roma players, won the World Cup in 1934 with Italy (Schönau, 2008; Barnade & Iglesias, 2014).

However, seeing that this way results in manipulation and "import" of foreign players into national teams, FIFA incorporated the provision that players who are

5 Kinnaird holds the record for appearances in the FA Cup finals, appearing in nine finals with different clubs.

6 An expression that denotes a returning immigrant, especially in sport, in Italian and Spanish. In Croatia, the term "diaspora player" is commonly used.

capped for the national team should be citizens of the country they represent into their Statute of 1933 (this was a rule until then, but it was not in the Statute). Furthermore, if a player appeared for a national team, he was not allowed to play for the national team of a new association until he had been a resident of the association for three years (FIFA Statutes, 1933, Article 21, Rules). In practice, however, the three-year rule was not respected. In 1935, Orsi and Guaita left Italy, and in 1937, they were again capped for the Argentinian national team (Barnade & Iglesias, 2014, p. 37).

After World War II and the establishment of communist regimes in Eastern Europe, there was a wave of refugee migration (including football players and national team members) toward Western European countries. In 1945, László (Ladislao) Kubala from Hungary, whose parents were of Slovak origin, migrated to Czechoslovakia and played for their national team. He then returned to Hungary and played for their national team. In 1949, he defected to Italy and founded the Hungaria club with a group of compatriots with whom he played on the European tour. He settled in Spain, where he joined the Barcelona club. As their player, he also played for his third national team, Spain (Pereira, 2010, p. 60). Kubala's registration for the Spanish club sparked a huge dispute between the Hungarian and Spanish football associations because the Hungarian federation suspended him for unauthorized departure. The Spanish federation replied that it was a suspension for political reasons because Kubala was an anti-communist. The Hungarian federation was joined by other associations from the Eastern Bloc and asked to suspend the "fascist" Spanish Football Federation because it did not respect the FIFA Statutes in part, stating that one member must respect the suspension imposed by another member. FIFA refused to interfere, and in 1953, Kubala was allowed to play for Spain in official matches as well (Lanfranchi et al., 2004, pp. 89–93; Dietschy, 2006, pp. 37–38).

After the suppression of the Hungarian uprising in 1956, a large number of footballers, including the majority of players of Honvéd, the best European club at the time and the backbone of the Hungarian national team (referred to as Light Cavalry in Croatia and former Yugoslavia), which was the first to beat England on home soil, and was the finalist of the 1954 World Cup, fled from Hungary to the West. They included Ferenc Puskás, considered the best European footballer at the time. He joined Real Madrid and played four matches for the Spanish national team from 1961 to 1962 (Pereira, 2010, p. 60). Another naturalized Spaniard, Alfredo Di Stéfano, played for Real Madrid and Spain at the time. The Argentine of Italian origin Di Stéfano originally played for the Argentinian team. When he moved to Millonarios from Bogotá, he switched his national team and played for Colombia. Finally, four years after he arrived in Madrid, he also played for the Spanish national team and played 31 matches from 1957 to 1961 (Ibid.). Thus, at the same time, three players who were not born in Spain played for the national team while having no connection with Spain before they started playing for Spanish clubs.

These examples and the remarks of many football associations prompted FIFA to introduce a rule in the 1960s that after a player has played for one country's national

team, he can no longer play for another country unless it is a newly recognized country. This provision was particularly applicable when new countries were formed in the early 1990s, after the dissolution of Yugoslavia, the Soviet Union, and Czechoslovakia, and national team members of former states were allowed to play for the national team of the newly created country whose citizenship they took. The breakdowns of such countries and the change of state borders have prompted numerous co-ethnic migrations of people who returned to their countries of origin (Rajković Iveta, 2012; ethnic return Tsuda, 2009), ancestral migrations and migration due to (King, 2000) capital changes in civil and sports citizenships. However, citizenship was still the only condition for playing for the team.

Contemporary global migrations are characterized by acceleration and short duration (Cohen, 1995; Castles et al., 2014), which also reflects on international migrations of footballers, whether they are changing football clubs or playing for the national team. Of course, numerous footballers are also descendants of different generations of migrants whose parents connect the society of origin and the receiving society through multiple transnational processes (Glick-Schiller et al., 1992; Wessendorf, 2007) and who are connected to their country/homeland of origin emotionally and in terms of identity (Komar, 2015).

Until 2003, the right to be capped internationally was regulated in the FIFA Regulations on the Implementation of the Statute by only one provision, which stipulated that any player who is a naturalized citizen of a country in accordance with its regulations may be capped for that country's national team. If he had already played for a member state's national team, he could no longer play for another team, regardless of citizenship. There was an exception if the citizenship was changed without the player's will.⁷ In 2003, a rule was added to these provisions—that a player who had already played for the national team of a country whose citizenship he holds may still claim the right to play for the national team of another country but, provided that he was never capped for the country's A team (FIFA Statutes, 2002), that at the time when he possibly performed for the national team (except for "A") of the previous association he already had the nationality of the country he intends to play for and that he did so before his twenty-first birthday (FIFA Statutes, 2003).

However, in 2004, an attempt by Qatar to get three Brazilian football players to take citizenship and perform for the country's national team came into focus. One of the Brazilians, then a German club's footballer, was allegedly offered USD 1.2 million to agree to take Qatari citizenship (Bašić, 2015, p. 35). The player explained that even if he had agreed, it would not have been for the money but for the option of playing for the national team. He was not invited to Brazil's national team because of the great competition, and Germany, where he lived and played, also showed no interest in inviting him. However, he met the requirements for regular acquisition of citizenship (Oonk & Van Campenhaut, 2021). The president of FIFA at the time

7 FIFA Regulations on the Application of the Statutes of 2002, Article 18.

insisted that in the event of an appearance for a national team, players should have a clear connection with the country for which they want to play when it is different from the country of their birth. He also expressed concern that there would be thirty-two national teams at the 2014 and 2018 World Cups, but they would be full of Brazilians (Oonk & Van Campenhaut, 2021).

In this invitation example, we see the privilege of individuals, i.e., top football players, who are offered citizenship of a country where they do not need to live, in addition to monetary rewards and privileges, and the issue of integration is not raised. Privileged acquisition of citizenship is also found in other elite immigrants, most often extremely wealthy individuals, to enable them to invest economically and buy real estate in certain European countries (Džankić, 2019).

After a period of consideration, in the Rulebook on the Application of the Statutes of 2008, FIFA elaborated on the right to play for a national team and the right to change associations. The rule that any player who participated in a match in an official competition for one association cannot play an international match for a national team of another association remains. If a player has the right to represent more than one association based on citizenship, he could only play an international match for one of those associations if he met at least one of the following conditions: he was born in the territory of that association, the biological mother or father or grandmother or grandfather were born in the territory of that association,⁸ and the player had continuously lived in the territory of that association for at least two years.

If a player who did not have multiple citizenships and who did not play for any national team acquires a new citizenship to play for the national team of a country whose citizenship he has acquired, he should also meet one of the above conditions, with the continuous stay in the territory of the new association extended to five years after the age of eighteen (FIFA Statutes, 2008, Articles 15–18). Apart from citizenship, these provisions established a clear link between a player and the country for whose national team he plays. Even though the player played an international match (but not with the A team), the rules on changing associations remained the same as those adopted in 2003.

A major change in the rules on the right to play for the national team took place after adopting the Rulebook on the Application of the FIFA Statute of 2020. Four situations relating to the right to play for the national team should be distinguished, and they are related to players' multiple civil citizenships:

1. A player who has the right to play for multiple national teams based on citizenship may play for one of these associations if he is born on its territory or one

8 For example, Daniel Rubén Bilos, an Argentinian footballer of Croatian origin, could not play for the Croatian national team despite mutual interest and possession of Croatian citizenship because his closest ancestor born in the territory of today's Croatia was his great-grandmother. Author's interview with R. Bilos in the spring of 2006.

of his parents or one of his grandparents was born there or lived in the territory under the jurisdiction of that association continuously for at least five years (until 2020, two years were prescribed).

2. A player who has not played for any national team and has acquired a new nationality shall be given the opportunity to play for the country whose citizenship he obtained if he was born in the territory of the association of that country or if his parents or one of his grandparents were born there or if he lives in the territory of that association for at least three years if he started living in that area before the age of ten; five years if he started living in that area between the age of ten and eighteen or after the age of eighteen.
3. A player who was already capped for a national team may play for a new national team (the country whose citizenship he holds) even if he was capped for the A team of the old association (a significant change), provided that he has not reached the age of twenty-one at the time of his last cap, that he has been capped less than three times, that more than three years have elapsed since his last cap, and that he already held the citizenship of the country of the new association at the time of his last cap. If the player played for one of the youth teams (i.e., not the A team), he does not need to have held the citizenship of the country of the new association at that time (but only if he was not older than twenty-one at the time when he played for the youth team), but he needed to meet some of the conditions listed under point 1 or 2. In the event that a player has appeared for the national team of the old association (apart from the A team) and already holds the citizenship of the country of the new association at that time, no additional conditions need to be met (FIFA Statutes, 2021, Article 6 and Article 9, Paragraph 2, Points a–c).

These changes were made so that a player who has already played for a national team whose association clearly no longer counts on him as a member can continue his career in another association's national team in a country whose citizenship he holds as long as he also meets other criteria. It often happened that a player would play one or two matches for a national team and would no longer be called up. At the same time, he would not be able to play for another association's national team in which the competition is not as strong because he was prevented by those few caps for the old national team. Also, according to the new system, a player who played for a youth team is no longer prevented from playing for a new national team if he did not hold the citizenship of the new association at the time of playing for the previous national team. This allowed a player who did not have a new citizenship before the age of twenty-one to be capped for the A team of the new association. For example, if Eduardo Da Silva, a Brazilian footballer who came to Croatia as a minor and played for GNK Dinamo, had played for any Brazilian national team during his youth career, he would not have been eligible to play for the Croatian national

team because he did not hold Croatian citizenship at the time he played for Brazil. Moreover, this player spent almost his entire football development in Croatia. The new system achieved a balance between a liberal approach and, consequently, a large fluctuation of players in different national teams and a very rigid approach that effectively prevented the transition to another national team.⁹

4. A special case occurs when a player has appeared for the national team of an association and wants to appear for an association that became a member of FIFA after that. In this case, a player may appear for the new association without meeting the above conditions if he has no longer played for the old association after the new association had become a member of FIFA. He already held the citizenship of the new association at the time of his national team appearance or obtained the citizenship of the country of the new association when this became effectively possible after the recognition of that country by the majority of the members of the United Nations (FIFA Statutes, 2021, Article 9, Paragraph 2, Point d).

An example of this case is Kosovo and its national team. Following the international recognition of Kosovo, its citizens, who had already played for another national team, were eligible to play for the Kosovo team. This particularly compromised Switzerland's national team because several of its important players were from Kosovo. However, only one player decided to play for Kosovo.

The Rulebook also regulates the situation when a player holds no citizenship (stateless person) or, due to the laws of his country of residence, may never obtain citizenship of that country. In this case, a player may be eligible to play for the national team of his country of residence if he has lived in its territory for at least five years and can prove that the move to that country was not for reasons related to its national team (FIFA Statutes, 2021, Article 8). This can be applied to forced migrants and refugees who have received international protection but not citizenship in the host country.

ANALYSIS OF EXAMPLES OF THE CHOICE OF FOOTBALLERS WHO HAD THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE A NATIONAL TEAM

After presenting the changes in formal options to play for a national football team, in this part of the paper, we will analyze examples of the application of these options, i.e., choosing to appear for different national teams of countries other than the footballer's country of birth. By analyzing the migration background of a national team

⁹ More about sports citizenship and the right to play for the national team (situation in 2016) see: Medić, 2017.

player and the choice of the national team for which they choose to play, we have reached three basic groups/cases:

1. A footballer migrated to another country to play football in a club and became a naturalized citizen. Examples include Eduardo Da Silva and Jorge Sammir Cruz Campos, who came to Croatia from Brazil and played for the Croatian national team after acquiring Croatian citizenship. Reverse examples of Croatian citizens who went to play in foreign clubs and then played for the national teams of those countries are Josip Weber and Branko Strupar, who played for Belgium, Ivica Vastić for Austria, and Filip Ozobić for Azerbaijan.
2. A person migrates for reasons unrelated to football, most often for economic or political reasons¹⁰ (often in the form of forced refugee migrations). Future national team members usually came to a new country as children or in their early youth and started playing football there. An example is a number of Swiss national team members originating from Turkey or Kosovo (e.g., Xerdan Shaqiri).
3. France, the Netherlands, and Belgium are examples of countries whose national teams include footballers from their former colonies, with some also born in the country for which they play.

An additional distinction was observed in footballers (immigrant descendants) who were born in a country different from the country of their parents' birth/origin. In practice, these footballers play:

4. For their country of birth, e.g., Swiss players of Turkish origin Kubilay Türkyilmaz and the brothers Murat and Hakan Yakin (Murat was also the Swiss national team coach) and Mario Gavranović and Josip Drmić, who are of Croatian origin, as well as the Austrian David Alaba, the son of a Filipino and a Nigerian. Marc Viduka and Josip Skoko, Australians of Croatian origin who played for the Croatian clubs Dinamo and Hajduk, respectively, decided to play for Australia, where they were born. The world's most famous example is probably Zlatan Ibrahimović, the son of a Bosniak and a Croatian who migrated from Bosnia and Herzegovina to Sweden, where he was born. Despite the call and efforts of the HNS to play for the Croatian national team, he decided to play for Sweden;
5. For their parents' (or grandparents') country of origin, e.g., (in Croatia) Josip Šimunić and Anthony Šerić/Seric (born in Australia). Josip Stanišić, who was born in Germany and played for the German U-19 national team, and Luka Sučić, who was born in Austria, both played for the Croatian A team. Marco Pašalić, born in Germany, chose the Croatian national team since the U-17 selection and plays for the Croatian U-21 team. The case of Jakov Suver, former

¹⁰ For the causes of migration see Brettell & Hollifield, 2000.

captain of the German U-19 team, is also interesting—he decided to change associations and play for the Croatian national team (FIFA, 2021b).

The relationship of immigrant children with their parents' country of origin, an imaginary homeland in which they never lived, is also interesting when it comes to brothers Niko and Robert Kovač, who were born in Germany, and Ivan Rakitić (born in Switzerland), who chose to play for the Croatian national team. The choice of a national team to play for is based on a number of factors. Early recognition of the footballers' quality, lobbying of national associations, and the responsibility of negotiators for the future career of the footballers are certainly crucial here, which is evident from the testimony of our source, who held a high position at the Croatian Football Federation and went to Switzerland several times to talk with Ivan Rakitić and his family in the procedure for changing his football citizenship:

The then president of the HNS, Vlatko Marković, and I told them that the HNS was very interested in Ivan playing for Croatia, that a generation of players was emerging that could do great things, and that he would fit in perfectly. Of course, we also emphasized his Croatian origin, and we were aware of their patriotic feelings. They were very glad that we showed interest. Then, the Swiss Football Association became involved; their coach also came for an interview. However, both the parents and the player were determined that Ivan would play for Croatia. You know, it is not an easy decision after all. The player was born there, went to school there, had friends, and still played for a Swiss club at the time. On the other hand, the negotiator also has a great responsibility. He can tell the player that he would play for the national team, but what if the coach changes, if he will no longer have a vision of the game with that player? And, in the meantime, you persuaded the player to change the national team and thus 'blocked' him from playing for any national team. Fortunately, everything ended well in this case, and Ivan achieved great success with the Croatian national team. (conversation conducted on 14 September 2023)

The Boateng brothers, one of whom decided to play for his country of birth and the other for the country of origin, are a combination of examples under d and e. Their father came from Ghana to Germany to study, continued living there, and had sons—Kevin Prince and Jerome. They both became good footballers and played for all German national teams during their youth careers. However, after Kevin Prince concluded that he would not be invited to the German A team, he decided to play for the Ghanaian national team, a country where he had never been before. Given that Jerome Boateng was a member of the German national team, two brothers participated in the 2010 World Cup as members of two different national teams (Bašić, 2015, pp. 28–29). This example shows how opportune the choice of a national team can be for a player and how these decisions are subjective and situational career

strategies in which personal and/or family migration backgrounds and contexts are used as resources.

Other examples of brothers playing for different national teams include the Xhaka brothers, where Granit plays for Switzerland and Taulant for Albania. The father of the Thiago and Rafael (Rafinha) Alcântara brothers was the world champion with the national team of Brazil in 1994 and played in clubs in Italy (where Thiago was born) and Spain (see “Thiago Alcantara”, n.d.). Thiago played for *Barcelona* and the Spanish national team, while Rafinha also played for *Barcelona* and the Spanish youth teams. They changed associations during their youth career and played for Brazil’s U-21 and A teams. The Alcântara brothers are an example of naturalization after migration motivated by football (their father moved to play football). We will also mention the example of the twin brothers Matthias and Florentin Pogba, who were born in Guinea (they grew up in France and started playing football in Spain) and play for the Guinea national team. In contrast, their more famous brother Paul was born in France and plays for its national team. Unlike Paul, a standard French international player and a world champion, who played for the great European clubs Juventus and Manchester United, the older brothers played in smaller clubs in various leagues, so obviously, the football quality conditioned the national team for which they would play.

ANALYSIS OF PERSONAL MOTIVES FOR CHOOSING A NATIONAL TEAM ON THE EXAMPLE OF CROATIAN NATIONAL TEAM PLAYERS

The above categorization and examples also show the basic motives that were decisive when a footballer chose the national team for which he would play. Since an international analysis would exceed the framework of one paper, we will provide the data for Croatian national team members from the diaspora, which shows that we can classify them into emotional and patriotic or professional and sports-based motives.

Emotional and patriotic motives are related to a strong national identity of the immigrant parents’ country of origin, as is evident in the statement of Marco Pašalić (Germany) after the invitation to the young Croatian national team: “I cannot describe the amount of pride with which I will play for the Croatian national team because I was raised from a young age with Croatia as my homeland ...” (S. A., 2021).

The same goes for Luka Sučić: “The Austrians were very insistent, they pressured me, they wanted me to play for them, but I was always clear about that: Croatia is my only homeland, and Austrians stood no chance” (Hrvatski nogometni savez (CFF), 2021).

After Josip Stanišić, from a *Gastarbeiter* family in Germany, was first invited to the Croatian national team, a journalist visited his grandfather, who also lived and worked in Germany for years and was an amateur football referee. On the occasion of his grandson’s invitation to the national team, the grandfather held a celebration,

bought a new Croatian flag, and gave the following statement regarding the grandson's decision:

I cannot say that I was a hundred percent certain that he would choose Croatia. I had hoped for it intimately and wanted this, but I did not pressure him, and neither did anyone else in the family [...] he knew what to do and what to decide. [...] Admittedly, we may have contributed to this because we have always proudly pointed out where we come from. We regularly watched the matches of the Croatian national team dressed in our kits at our Croatian club in Munich ... (Patković, 2021).

Josip Šimunić is also one of the former Croatian national team members in this group. He was born in Australia as a child of Croatian immigrants.¹¹ As a member of the Melbourne Knights club (former Croatia Melbourne), which gathered mostly Australian Croatians, he won the Australian Championship in 1996 and garnered the interest of the HNS leadership. After speaking with advisor Ante Pavlović, who offered him the opportunity to play for the Croatian national team, Šimunić agreed and only then requested and obtained Croatian citizenship. When asked if there were any offers from the Australian Football Federation, Šimunić replied: "I was invited to the camps, but when I was supposed to get an invitation to play in one of the Australian national teams, I refused. I wanted to play for Croatia." He mentioned his reason for the decision: "I watched Croatia at the European Championship, I supported them and thought how nice it would be to play for that team. I feel like a Croatian, and I wanted to play only for the Croatian national team."

These examples show that choosing a national team, as well as supporting a particular national team, can be an indicator of the level of national identity of the country of origin, transnational processes, and a failure to identify with and integrate into the society of the receiving country while integrating into their own ethnic community in the receiving country.

Professional and sport-based motives prevail among footballers who choose a national team for which they believe they can compete in terms of football. One national team can have enough quality players, so a footballer cannot assert himself and get a place in the team because the competition is too strong. In this case, the footballer chooses a team for which he has the opportunity to play, whether the football association offers it or he believes it will happen. Such examples are naturalized Brazilians Da Silva and Sammir in the Croatian national team and Croatians Weber and Strupar in the Belgian national team. These players usually want to enrich their professional football career with appearances for the national team, preferably at the World Cup.

11 From the interview with Josip Šimunić, November 24, 2021. The continuation of the text is based on that conversation.

Sports motives may sometimes be mixed with business and financial motives. For example, twenty-two Brazilians played for other teams at the 2016 Futsal World Cup. Seven Brazilians thus played for Italy, six for Azerbaijan (Əhlimanovlu, 2016), and several for Kazakhstan (FIFA, 2021a). On the one hand, these examples show choice and strategy (instrumental aspects) and dynamics of identity when analyzing identity politics (Eriksen, 2001, p. 47), which is conceptualized as an instrumentality of belonging (Ibid.).

CONCLUSION

Contemporary societies, as well as national football teams, are the result of numerous historical and contemporary migration processes. Migrants, professional footballers, and amateurs have spread this game around the world. The expansion and development of professional football also required the harmonization of international rules, and numerous migrations resulted in the need to regulate sports citizenship, or, in the researched example, football citizenship, and to further regulate formal options of representing a national team. The analysis of the use of these options and individual reasons for choosing to play for the national team of a country other than the footballer's country of birth shows that such cases most often occur in countries with a large influx of immigrants, which had colonies, which have a large diaspora, whose football leagues are extremely strong, and which have much competition among footballers. The results show multiple practices, and the choice of parents' or grandparents' country of origin is particularly prominent, which also shows the absence of an identification dimension in the integration of immigrants and their descendants in the receiving society, as well as that identity from the country of origin is passed through and kept in the family and ethnic community. Some national team members play in strong international clubs in one country and for the national team of another where they, and sometimes even their parents, have never lived. The motivation for choosing where to play is emotional and patriotic and/or professional and sport-based, which is especially evident with brothers who are footballers and who, due to the difference in their level of quality, play for national teams of different countries. Furthermore, the research points to the option of obtaining privileged citizenship, opportune citizenship, contributes to the studies of highly specialized, privileged, and elite citizens, questionably of migrants, since they only occasionally physically come to the state of their citizenship (for short preparations of the national team). During the research, potential migration to another country was observed after invitations to play for the national team, which expands the previous typologies of migrants, i.e., virtual migrants and citizens, who do not need to live in a country but contribute to its victories and promotion internationally with their sports skills. Ultimately, no one questions their integration, whether they speak the language or are familiar with the culture, law, and order of the country for which they play, which opens the need for new research and challenging previous theories on integration.

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POVZETEK

MIGRACIJE, DRŽAVLJANSTVA TER PRAVICA IN IZBIRA IGRANJA ZA NACIONALNO NOGOMETNO REPREZENTANCO S POUČENJEM NA HRVAŠKI REPREZENTANCI

Vladimir Iveta, Marijeta Rajković Iveta

Na prebivalstvo evropskih držav so vplivale številne migracije, kar se odraža tudi v sestavi nogometnih reprezentanc. Avtorja v uvodu prikažeta razvoj profesionalnega nogometa in pojav mednarodnih migracij nogometašev, nato pa pojasnita pogoje za njihovo pridobivanje državljanstva. Da bi nekdo postal reprezentant, ni dovolj, da ima državljanstvo države, za katero igra, temveč mora imeti tudi t. i. športno državljanstvo. Po prikazu formalnih možnosti nastopa za reprezentanco avtorja analizirata odnos med temi državljanstvi ter pravico do izbire reprezentance, za katero bo nekdo igral, in sicer v kontekstu migracijskih procesov, od prvih migracij nogometašev v nogometnih klubih (konec 19. stoletja) do oblikovanja nogometnih reprezentanc s poudarkom na suverenosti. Na primerih reprezentantov z migrantskim ozadjem pokažeta na spremembe mednarodnih pravil Mednarodne nogometne zveze (FIFA). Besedilo temelji na različnih virih: pravnih aktih nacionalnih in mednarodnih nogometnih organizacij, državnih predpisih, objavljeni literaturi, analizi medijskega diskurza ter kvalitativnimi polstrukturiranimi intervjuji s hrvaškimi nogometnimi reprezentanti iz diaspore.

Cilj besedila je na konkretnih primerih in izkušnjah nogometnih reprezentantov proučiti njihove razloge in motive za igranje za reprezentanco države, ki ni njihova država izvora. Analiza gradiva kaže, da se takšni primeri najpogosteje dogajajo v državah, ki imajo visok priliv migrantov, ki so imele kolonije, ki imajo številčno diasporo ali močne nogometne lige. Nogometaši se pri tem odločajo različno, najpogosteje pa si izberejo reprezentanco države izvora njihovih staršev ali starih staršev, kar kaže na močno identifikacijsko dimenzijo integracije migrantov in njihovih potomcev ter na močno subjektivizacijo nacionalne identitete, ki se prenaša z družino in etnično skupnostjo v družbi sprejema. Rezultati raziskave kažejo, da so motivi za izbiro emocionalno-nacionalne in/ali športno-profesionalne narave, pri čemer so v nekaterih primerih slednji združeni še s poslovno-finančnimi motivi.

Raziskava prispeva k študijam pridobivanja privilegiranega in oportunega državljanstva ter k študijam visoko specializiranih, privilegiranih in elitnih migrantov. Pokazal se je tudi potencial migracij na poziv v drugo državo, da bi tam nogometaši igrali za reprezentanco, s čimer se širijo dosedanje tipologije migrantov, ki živijo izven določene države, a s svojimi športnimi spretnostmi prispevajo k njeni promociji v mednarodnem merilu. Rezultati spodbujajo preizpraševanje dosedanjih politik državljanstva in teorij o integraciji, zlasti njenih pravnih, političnih in identifikacijskih dimenzij v navezavi na 'industrijo' državljanstva in nacionalno identiteto, saj države sprejema, za katere reprezentanti nastopajo, ne postavljajo vprašanj, povezanih z integracijo, npr. ali oseba pozna jezik, kulturo, pravni red ipd.

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Zhanna Bolat

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