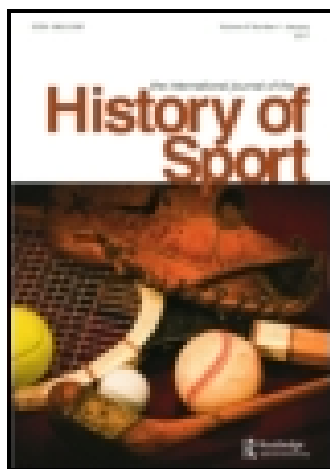


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Migratory Networks Used by Algerian Professional Footballers in France: From Colonial Times to the Postcolonial Era, 1932–1991

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The aim of this article is to reconstruct the history of transfer networks used by footballers who left Algeria to work in the French League for first and second division clubs from the 1930s to the early 1990s. The genealogy of the intermediary market from the colonial period to the postcolonial period is analyzed through a study of French and Algerian state and federal policies which impacted on how these migratory channels were modified from the colonial period through to the postcolonial period. Forty interviews were conducted with Algerian migrant players and various federal archives studied highlighting four distinct historical contexts between 1932 and 1991: a pioneering student channel (1932–1954), colonial control of transfer networks during the Algerian War (1954–1962), departures to the former motherland marked by exemptions, blocks, and adventures (1962–1982), and professionalization under the control of Algerian Internationals (1982–1991).

Keywords: immigration; networks; professional football; Algeria; France

Introduction

With the professionalization of the French Football League in 1932,¹ intermediaries became involved in the transfer of thousands of African players. Despite having different backgrounds (journalists, supporters, lawyers, players and their family, trainers, recruiters, presidents of clubs, and national sport selectors), these intermediaries can be defined as people who were known by the player and the employer, and who provided advantages to both sides.² They created migratory channels through which the footballers passed.

Recent historical research on international sporting migrations is agreed on the existence of strong structural bonds – historical, political, social, cultural, and linguistic between the motherland and the colonies, the ex-motherland and the ex-colonies.³ They also affirm that since the beginning of the 1980s, there has been a process of diversification of migratory channels due to the globalization of the football market. This means that African footballers are turning to new sporting destinations which are not necessarily the former motherland. This process of internationalization towards new geographical areas (North and South America, Asia, Persian Gulf, and the Maghreb) has been made possible by a widening of the zone of activity of clubs, the creation of the profession of sporting agent,⁴ and a more relaxed legal framework, i.e. a less strict quota system such as the Bosman ruling.⁵ Historian Paul Channeltschy and Sociologist David-Claude Kemo-Keimbou describe ‘a real “steeple chase” by Europeans scouting for the best African talents’.⁶

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After having studied the rather ambivalent development of Algerian footballers' migratory plans to join the French league⁷ and the Algerian national team,⁸ the National Liberation Front (FLN) team,⁹ it is essential to reconstruct the history of the transfer networks¹⁰ used by footballers who left Algeria to work in the French League in the first and second division. The genealogy of the intermediary market from the colonial period to the postcolonial period will be analyzed by furthering research by historians Pierre Lanfranchi and Matthew Taylor who wrote the history of twentieth-century sports migrants who 'moved with the ball, those who migrated with the intention of earning a living playing football'.¹¹ In other words, the article explores the conditions under which these young sportsmen from Muslim families crossed the Mediterranean by boat or plane, both before and after Algerian independence. Special attention will be paid to the impact that French and Algerian official and federal policies had on how these migratory channels modified over time.

Three reasons explain the choice to focus on professional footballers from Algeria. First, Algeria was French from 1830 to 1962 when the colonial period ended with the long and bloody Algerian War which had started in 1954. According to historian Bernadette Deville-Danthu, during the colonial period, 'Algeria was closely linked to France by its population since it had the highest concentration of French settlers. It was seen as a base camp and held a privileged place in colonial programs'.¹² Moreover, there were a significant number of Algerians in France who were firmly settled. If the history of Algerian immigration to France is studied from the angle of labour immigration, which had been high since the 1930s,¹³ historians Benjamin Stora and Emile Temime affirm that 'with nearly 900 000 Algerians in 1975, it was the strongest immigrant minority in France to date (with the Portuguese), and it was, in many regards, an exemplary migration'.¹⁴

From a sporting perspective, the large scale and long-standing high level of Algerian sports migrants in the French league is striking, including 10 players selected to play in the French team.¹⁵ From 1932 to 2003, according to sociologist Marc Barreaud, 174 Algerian footballers made up the third largest sporting population working in France (behind the Yugoslavians and the Argentinians) who had been born outside mainland France. They precede the 136 Senegalese, 112 Cameroonians, 108 Moroccans, 105 players from the Ivory Coast, and 33 Tunisians,¹⁶ which correspond to the average of the total migratory flow from these six North African and Sub-Saharan countries to France. During the 1957–1958 season there were a total of 34 players from European and Muslim amateur clubs in Algeria working in the French league, almost three times more than the 13 Moroccans. Ten years later, when these four countries had already been released from the colonial yoke several years before, 11 Algerian were still playing in French clubs.

In spite of the difficulty of *a posteriori* caused by the malleability of memory, the relation of maintaining¹⁷ memories and biographical illusion,¹⁸ this contribution is based mainly on oral sources¹⁹ collected and analyzed by theme. In 2006 and 2007, 36 semi-directing interviews, of approximately two hours each, were carried out with footballers who had started their career in France during the colonial period (23)²⁰ and postcolonial period (13).²¹ They were held in France and Algeria (Alger, Médéa, Mohammadia, Mostaganem, Oran, Saïda, Sétif, and Tizi-Ouzou). In order to identify networks of membership and common commitments, these 36 interviews were supplemented by material from the few consultable archives of the Algerian Federation of Football (FAF) and the International Federation of Association Football (FIFA) and by three other interviews. These were with Ali Bencheikh, a player who was forbidden to leave the country by the State-FLN, Djamel Zidane who lives in Belgium, and Omar Kezzal, three-time president of the FAF between 1982 and 2001. From the 1932–1933 season when Ali

Benouna signed for Sète making him the first Algerian sporting migrant, to the 1990–1991 season which was characterized by the absence of Algerian sports migrants in the French league, we will analyze the transformations of the transfer networks used by elite Algerian footballers.

A Pioneering Student Channel, 1932–1954

During the interwar period, after the massive recruitment of tens of thousands of workers and colonial soldiers, French employers started a second wave of Algerian emigration to France. It was followed between 1945 and 1955 by a third migratory flow needed to help rebuild France and replace the Italian immigrants and Polish who were in short supply.²² Benjamin Stora points out that after the Second World War, ‘the November 2nd, 1945 ruling defined the conditions of entry and stay in France from abroad and created the National Office of Immigration which had the monopoly on operations of labour recruitment as well as organising the reunification of families’.²³ In this context, Algerian professional footballers were numerous and some were renowned. In 1938, an issue of *Paris-Soir* reports that: ‘in French football exportation, this season, one can notice especially the plundering of North Africa. Marseilles, French champions, have managed to get hold of six. It is the best reference’.²⁴

Although we have little information about their social, cultural, and geographical background, we understand that some of them are clearly from the colonial intelligentsia, indigenous elite who were supposed to exemplify the merits of the colonial policy of assimilation.²⁵ For Pierre Lanfranchi and Matthew Taylor, the early 1930s marked the first arrival to France of large groups of Algerian immigrant workers as well as an increasing number of Algerian students attending French universities. ‘Kouider Daho, a medical student born in Oran, came to France to play professional football and complete his studies. Abdelkader Ben Bouali, from a wealthy Algerian family, was signed by Montpellier in 1933’.²⁶ Not only was he the son of a *caïd*²⁷ (local governor), he was also a French International (like teacher Kader Firoud who went to mainland France and enrolled at the Regional Institute for Physical Education in Toulouse). Other players also mixed professional careers and studies. Ahmed Firoud studied Medicine at the University of Rennes from 1945. Hamid Bouchouk continued his studies in Pharmacy in Sète in 1948. Salah Djebaili studied Ecology from 1957 in Montpellier. All three followed in the footsteps of Moroccan and Yugoslav footballers who had graduated.²⁸

However, the 1940s saw a change in trend: the search for players became more streamlined and sporting opportunities multiplied. Even before the end of the Second World War, the emigration of the Algerian sports migrants to France accelerated thanks to new channels opening up. According to historian Alfred Wahl,

because of its quality, North-African football underwent a draining of talent as from 1944; French clubs which had to re-equip themselves with quality players but lacked financial resources to tap other markets, in particular those of Central Europe, went scouting so actively in North Africa that in 1946 the French Federation of Football (FFF) had to prohibit all transfers for two years.²⁹

Without any restriction being felt, nine Algerian professional footballers played in France during the 1944–1945 season, 18 during the 1948–1949 season, and 19 during the 1953–1954 season. Among them 27³⁰ players began their careers between 1945 and 1954 when the law of 20 September 1947 authorized freedom of movement between North Africa and mainland France. Gradually, recruitment linked to sociological factors fell: from then on, the majority of Algerian footballers did not have wealthy parents nor did they come to

mainland France to pursue higher education. Testimonies from El Habib Draoua and Tahar Belhadj, professional footballers in Le Havre, respectively from 1937 to 1939 and from 1946 to 1948, were two such cases.

The first, born in 1914, grew up in poverty as part of a large family. He left USM Oran in 1937 ‘by boat, after having obtained parental authorization and signing a lucrative contract to play for two seasons’.³¹ The second, born in 1918 in Tizi-Ouzou, also from a deprived background, was transferred in 1946 to the Normandy club from AS Saint-Eugene, an elite European club in Algiers where he had been employed as stadium caretaker. Under conditions which we could not clarify, it seems that he was ‘helped up the ladder by his former trainer Paul Baron’³² who backed him to join Le Havre Athletic Club, demonstrating the close ties and the importance of the colonial links forged between Algerian clubs and mainland clubs.

Colonial Control of Transfer Networks during the Algerian War, 1954–1962

In a context where, according to Benjamin Stora, ‘Algerian immigration to France doubled between 1954 (211,000 people) and 1962 (350,000)’³³ and ‘helped modernize French industrial facilities’,³⁴ migratory channels, which were more or less specialized, became established between Algeria and mainland France. In addition to the possibilities of assistance from workers (friends, family, clans, and village members) who were already settled on the mainland, structured recruitment networks had been set up by large French companies.³⁵ As for sport, during the 1954–1955 season, 20 Algerian footballers³⁶ worked in the French league. From 1964 to 1962, their numbers had risen to 66. Before the FLN team had been put together in 1958, this emigration of French-Muslim players would accelerate following two political instructions.

On the French side, at the FFF, ‘the November 27th, 1955 ruling prohibited any new foreign players’³⁷ from joining the French League in order to avoid an excessive outflow of financial resources from French football and to give young players the chance to flourish. In Algeria in 1956, a wave of departures followed the order of the FLN, demanding that ‘all Muslim clubs ... [and Muslim players in European clubs] cease any sporting activity imperatively’.³⁸ Thus, during the 1956–1957 season, 35 of them played in professional clubs and 14 new footballers played on French pitches.³⁹ Traditional channels functioned alongside sporting networks which were finding their strength. Whereas few Algerian footballers left for mainland France without guarantees of being recruited to an amateur or professional club, there were many who requested help from a network (family, friends, and military) to get over there and find lodgings.

Thus, the former goalkeeper of the French team, Abderrahmane Ibrir, made good use of his contact with the Oranian trainer Lucien Jasseron, to help sign to Le Havre in 1956 his little brother Smaïn and his two nephews Mohamed and Abderrahmane Soukhane. From 1953, Hamid Kermali from Sétif joined Mulhouse, where two friends lived and worked. They ‘looked after him’⁴⁰ (providing food and lodging) until his local club signed his first contract. Military institutions also played a significant role in these departures.⁴¹ Sometimes they found a club for their Algerian conscripts so that they could start a career in France. After having studied for two months in Albi where he was forcibly enlisted in 1957, the conscript Abdelkrim Kerroum who originally came from Saïda was introduced by one of his staff sergeants to the management of the town’s amateur club whose director was a retired colonel. After a conclusive test, they ‘struck a deal’.⁴²

It was rare for players – such as Larbi Boussa from Algiers who went to Angers in 1956 – to have a letter of introduction from their trainer. Nevertheless, shrewd recruiters

travelled around Algeria seeking out the 'rare pearl'. From summer 1954, the future Saint-Etienne forward Rachid Mekhloufi received the first proposals from a professional club, FC Toulouse, via a lawyer from Sétif, Maître Hassan. After having declined the proposal, he was spotted by Mr Setboun, former trainer of the amateur club of Roche la Molière. The latter worked for Sétif council and was one of the recruiters from AS Saint-Etienne. He was responsible for scouting Algerian teams for promising footballers.⁴³ The French clubs already had strategies for scouting and paid advisors of repute to represent them. Added to these two sporting channels were networks of managers from European teams in Algeria. At the time of its arrival in the amateur club of Niort in 1955, Abdelhamid Zouba benefited from the many relations provided by his European club in Algeria: AS Saint-Eugene. Moreover, after the transfer of Saïd Ferrad and Mustapha Zitouni to Troyes and Cannes in 1950 and 1953, four other players from this club became professionals in France from 1954 to 1956: Abderrahmane Boubekeur, Sherif and Hocine Bouchache, and Mohamed Maouche. When looking at the biographies of 29 professional footballers from the Team of the FLN, one notices that the players who came from a European club in Algeria, even if they were fewer in number, had more opportunities (76%) to begin their careers in mainland France directly in a professional club than those who left a Muslim club (24%). Originally from the Sporting Club of Bellabès, Saïd Amara explained the conditions of his transfer to Strasbourg in 1956: 'encouraged by my trainer Rene Rebibo, I wanted to go to France. The future trainer of Strasbourg, Jean Avellaneda, knew me because he was originally from Bellabès. He asked his management to call me in for a trial which was conclusive'.⁴⁴

Mohamed Maouche – who, like other sports migrants of his generation, had already been to mainland France – was spotted in 1956. This was during one of the numerous tours organized by French teams (Olympic Lyonnese in Oran, AS Monaco in Bellabès, etc.). These exhibition matches offered a double advantage: to help the local team fill the stadium and ensure high ticket sales and for the visiting team to prepare the new sporting season and to test during the match the best Algerian players with a view to recruiting them. Once again, mediation by someone from mainland France was almost always the norm. So, as Mohamed Maouche was about to play one of his last matches against AS Boufarik in 1956, three representatives from the Rheims' team, who had come to play against the Algiers club Gallia Sports, approached him simultaneously. 'Mr Germain, the president, Mr Batteux, the trainer and Mr Percha, the director of sports, were on the terraces. At the end of the match, they contacted me in the changing room and offered me a trial',⁴⁵ he explained. At 20 years old, he flew straight back to mainland France with them. Other sporting channels took shape: French clubs would send a letter inviting the player to carry out a test there (Mohamed Bouricha in La Grande-Combe in 1957); footballers would faithfully accompany their trainer from an Algerian club to a French club (Embarek Chenen in US Fécampoise in 1956) are some examples though the list is not exhaustive. Contrary to the rare Cameroonian players like Eugene N'Jo Léa and Zacharie Noah playing in France at the time of the wave of independence movements at the end of the 1950s, these Algerian footballers did not become 'professionals by accident'.⁴⁶

Departures to the Former Motherland Marked by Exemptions, Blocks, and Adventures, 1962–1982

On 3 July 1962, when more than 350,000 Algerian immigrants resided in France, the country officially recognized the independence of Algeria. Over and above the existence of a legal arsenal with regard to Algerian immigration to France,⁴⁷ 'the authorities were

looking for legitimization by claiming heritage of the struggle for independence and drew on other arguments including economic development with socialist option, non-alignment in foreign policies or the official control of the values of Islam'.⁴⁸ With Mohamed Maoche as President, the FAF was declared at the Prefecture on 15 November 1962 and was affiliated to FIFA on 6 February 1963, 'after having benefited ... from a letter of sponsorship from Pierre Delaunay, general secretary of the FFF'.⁴⁹ The two countries worked in co-operation. Algeria gradually nationalized its football thanks to training schemes managed by French technicians (Maurice Baquet, Georges Boulogne, Henri Guérin, Joseph Mercier, and Jean Snella) in Algeria and France, at the National Institute of Sport. When the 1962–1963 season started, 21 Algerian migrant players were playing in France for professional league clubs, eight more than the previous season, which shows that there was still the will to migrate.

Professional clubs recorded in 1962 the return of 11 footballers⁵⁰ from the FLN team. This was probably the result of directives of the President of the Popular Democratic Republic of Algeria Ahmed Ben Bella, former player of the reserve team of Olympique de Marseille in 1939–1940 when he was a warrant officer in the French Army. The FAF gave exceptional authorization to those 'Algerian players bound by contract to French professional clubs'⁵¹ to play once again in the former motherland. This was despite the fact that the FAF only recognized the principle of 'amateurism'.⁵² The FFF and the professional clubs who had seen contracts with some of their best players become defunct on the announcement of Algerian independence, saw them revalidated. The fact that the professional French League was on the whole protectionist until 1966⁵³ cannot explain the inexorable postcolonial regression of emigration by Algerian footballers.

In spite of the context of free movement of labour guaranteed by the Evian Accords of 18 March 1962, sports emigration was prohibited by the State-FLN: the borders between Algeria and France were arbitrarily closed for young sporting hopefuls who were not authorized to leave the country. The 'Algeria' file in the FIFA archives, consulted by Pierre Lanfranchi and Matthew Taylor, reveals the existence of an unambiguous letter sent from the FAF: 'we regret to tell you that following the decision of our State Secretary of Youth and Sport, the Federation has decided to take every step to terminate the departure of our young players abroad and therefore we will not give any clearance certificates'.⁵⁴ Therefore, the footballers could not leave the country to work since even if they were in possession of an exit letter from the club which they wished to leave, the FAF would not provide them with the international exit clearance certificate. It is easy to understand the FAF's reasoning behind this control: first, to keep hold of its best players such as the forward Ahcène Lalmas in order to improve the level and increase interest in the Algerian League. Second, in the absence of the World Cup, they wanted to enter the most competitive team possible for the final stages of the Africa Cup of Nations since professional footballers were no longer allowed to don the Algerian shirt after the Ethiopian games in 1968.

Contrary to FIFA regulations,⁵⁵ this strict measure was softened with the Sports Reform of 27 June 1977⁵⁶ which semi-officially set the 'minimum age' at 28 years old for footballers wishing to play abroad. Thus, two players who were 29 years old were authorized to go professional in the second division. They were Mohamed Henni, recruited in Limoges from 1977 to 1979, and Abdelhadj Djebar who signed to Chaumont in 1979. Other players, at least seven,⁵⁷ who were ready to do anything to fulfil their dream of becoming professionals, set off on the same adventure. All of them understood that FIFA regulations were favourable to them. A regulation concerning the status and the transfer of players specified that 'if the official certificate of transfer does not arrive at the national association within one year, the player is regarded as definitively qualified'.⁵⁸

In Algeria under Presidents Houari Boumechanelne (1965–1978) and Chadli Bendjedid (1979–1992), despite the fact that from April 1979 Algerian citizens were no longer given clearance to leave the country, these footballers used various transfer networks. Whereas the departures of Internationals Gamouh Rabah and Djamel Zidane for Paris were the result of individual initiatives, two channels from the colonial period continued to be used by players. The first involved having a letter of introduction from a local sporting celebrity to hand to one of their trainer friends in the French League. Djamel Tlemçani remembers having tried his luck in Rheims because he was ‘recommended by a former footballer pro, Max Sellal, who gave me a letter for the trainer at Rheims, Rene Vernier. These two former players knew each other as they were both born in Algeria’.⁵⁹ The second was when French clubs scouted in Algeria through representatives or intermediaries. In 1975, during a match between the Algerian national team and Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) in Oran, Rheda Mohammed Ali Messaoud was contacted by a manager of PSG. Three years later, Nasser Oughlis was also put in contact with the same club by Lucidio Ribeiro, the renowned Portuguese agent in Africa. Sometimes French professional clubs depended on their fans. This was the case with future lung specialist and footballer Khelifa Benmessaoud, who was recommended to the president of Caen and joined the team in 1979. Contrary to the other Algerian footballers we interviewed, he was over the 28 years minimum imposed by the Sports Reform and was at the end of his career with the club DNC Algiers. His reasons for migrating were mainly to study at university.

In exceptional cases, which go to prove that the FAF did not react in a uniform way and was susceptible to favouritism and perhaps corruption, some players were free to leave. One such example is Djamel Tlemçani who, at the age of 24, left CR Belouizdad (Algiers) in 1979, for Rheims thanks, to the support he said he received from the general secretary of the FAF. In an attempt to dam the flow of footballers migrating, the FAF reacted in three distinct ways: it sent letters expressing firm opposition (like that received by Djamel Zidane)⁶⁰ or refused to reply to the insistent letters sent by the FIFA. The way the state managed the thorny ‘Bencheikh affair’ reveals how the federal authorities and Algerian state strategically used terror to get their own way. It also illustrates, according to historian Pierre Vidal-Naquet, that ‘under Boumechanelne as under Chadli, Algeria had a regime with a triple power structure. ... One was the reign of the army which acted as leader caste and police force. However, within the army, it was Military security which held many of the keys to power’.⁶¹

Bencheikh was an international footballer and soldier under the orders of the head coach and a key member of the Algerian national team. Even so, in 1978, this midfielder for MC Algiers accepted the advances of FC Nantes and crossed the Mediterranean. At the time of his departure he was blocked by the FAF who refused to issue him with the famous international certificate of transfer. He was even repatriated *manu militari* by agents of the Algerian special services then prohibited by Houari Boumechanelne to leave the country. Ali Bencheikh remembers:

at the end of my military service in 1978, I was going to sign to Nantes. In Paris, one morning, an unmarked police car approached me. ‘Don’t be scared. We are from the Algerian Consulate’. I immediately understood that they were members of the security services. At the Algerian Consulate, I was told: ‘the President of the Republic is ordering you to return to Algeria’. I left. I was young. I was 23 years old. At the time of Boumechanelne, everyone was afraid of Military security. At the time, it was a strict dictatorship.⁶²

The abortive departure of Ali Bencheikh shows the level of police control exerted by the Algerian State on its players after 1962. His testimony shows that it used both ‘the carrot’, a privileged life in decolonized Algeria, and ‘the stick’, the threat of repression.

Professionalization Under the Control of Algerian Internationals, 1982–1991

Within the African football movement, marked by the lack of sporting infrastructure, politization, administrative laziness, and corruption,⁶³ everyone was excited by the qualification of the Algerian national team to the 1982 World Cup. It was already influential across the whole continent⁶⁴ and benefited from the effects of the institutionalization of military sport (1972), from the advent of the Sports Reform (1977) and the recent authorization allowing professional footballers in France to become Internationals (1980). Interestingly, during the 1981–1982 season, there were only three sports migrants.⁶⁵ In Algeria, this qualification was laden with issues on the level of both sport and politics. It was a time fraught with ‘multiple conflicts between modernists and traditionalists, Arabs and Berbers, democrats and supporters of the FLN, resident Algerians and emigrants all started to tarnish the official image of a welded nation’.⁶⁶ Thus, after the performance of the Algerian national team during the 1982 World Cup, its (2-1) victory in Gijón against the prestigious German Federal Republic and European champions – or the ‘lesson in humility from the Algerian “zeros”’⁶⁷ – the sports borders officially opened, under certain conditions, for some Internationals. Their professionalization occurred under favourable conditions: in France, since 1982, under FAF regulations, the quota of foreign footballers per professional club was limited to two with the possibility of recruiting a European footballer.

In Algeria, for political reasons such as the hope of reaping the benefits of the ‘World Cup effect’, renewing confidence and gaining the backing of Algerian citizens, Chadli Bendjedid authorized new transfers. The status and fame of players after this World Cup were determining factors: to block them against their publicly expressed will could be perceived as an arbitrary and unpopular measure in Algeria. Moreover, from a sports perspective, the departure of these footballers, members of the national team, was used to showcase Algerian football abroad and was seen as a means of reinforcing it: the Greens improving their standards with players who had been toughened up in the French championship. Lastly, from a financial point of view, as the profession of sporting agent⁶⁸ was developing in France, the FAF imposed itself as the only go-between for transfers of Algerian players, excluding agents and putting the interests of the national team and of its protégés first. It even seems that the FAF, by controlling the migratory networks, grew rich by illegally⁶⁹ receiving transfer fees which correspond to a debatable ‘return on investment’ (training and support staff) on each player departure. Omar Kezzal, general secretary then president of the FAF, was in charge of the majority of the negotiations and drafting of contracts which systematically included a clause releasing players from professional clubs in the event of being selected for the national team. He provided an invaluable account of an event he witnessed:

after the World Cup, Chadli Bendjedid organized a Festival of Youth at the Governmental Palace in Algiers, in the presence of players. Salah Assad asked him for the authorization to turn professional. The President turned towards the Minister of Sport Abdennour Bekka and said to him: ‘we must let them leave but with dignity’. That meant that one should not let them go for rock bottom fees and that it was necessary to negotiate.⁷⁰

Moreover, he added that ‘Madjer, Bensaoula, Assad, Guendouz, are all authentic Algerian products. Therefore on the contract, there was 20% of the bonus on signature which was for the FAF. But this money, we never touched it. We didn’t go through with it. I plead guilty’.⁷¹

After obtaining the double political agreement (President of the Republic and Minister), 24-year-old Salah Assad sought to make firm contact with professional clubs.

He approached Mohamed Maouche, ex-head coach of the national team, then turned to Rachid Mekhloufi, chief technical officer of the Greens during the World Cup and recently appointed technical director of FC Mulhouse. An initial negotiation, invalidated by the FAF, took place in Tunis between Rachid Mekhloufi, one of his lawyer friends and Mulhouse president André Goerig. A three-year contract between the FAF, representing Salah Assad, and FC Mulhouse was finally signed in Algiers during the summer of 1982. One year later, after an open conflict with the FAF, 25-year-old Rabah Madjer joined RC Paris after having finally obtained the agreement of Omar Kezzal who wrote the contract in his Algiers office with Serge Guyot, administrative director of RC Paris. 'I needed my exit letter. I was allowed to leave for the good of the national team and my country',⁷² Hussein-Dey, the NA forward remembers.

Federal guardianship also influenced the transfer of players over 28 years old. Thanks to the intervention of his friend and fellow national team member Abdelghani Djaadaoui, Tedj Bensaoula joined Le Havre in 1983. The following year, two other 30-year-old players settled in the former motherland. One of them, Mahmoud Guendouz, signed to Martigues, even though his contract to SCO Angers was filed with the FAF, 'thanks to an Algerian business man met by chance on a plane who knew the president of Martigues'.⁷³ The other, Nasser Guedioura, was contacted by the French trainer of Grenoble Claude Roy then by the management of La Roche sur-Yon who also approached the FAF. In 1987, after the Mexican World Cup, the Algiers' centre-forward Djamel Menad signed to Nimes at the age of 27. He details the conditions of his transfer:

the president Jean Bousquet came to Annaba with trainer Jean Séraphin to supervise me during an international match. We met at the FAF to negotiate and agreed on a three-year contract. There were three parties. Each got his share of the nest egg: 20% for my club, Tizi-Ouzou, 20% for the federation and the remainder for me.⁷⁴

As for the rare Algerian footballers like Sofiane Meziani in Creteil in 1982 and Rabah Djenadi in Istres in 1984 who wanted to attempt to go professional without the agreement of the FAF, they held convenient meetings in France with intermediaries who had links to the clubs in order to leave Algeria.

In October 1988, violent riots broke out in Algeria. It was 'a deciding moment which tipped Algeria into the multi-party system'⁷⁵ and triggered a murderous black decade.⁷⁶ At that time only Djamel Tlemçani and Djamel Menad were playing for French professional clubs. With the financial disengagement of the State which had adopted a new Law on Sport on 14 February 1989 and the crisis of the Algerian football league, the arrival of new Algerian sporting migrants in France stopped until 1991.

Conclusion

At this time of colonial to postcolonial changeover, from the 1930s to the beginning of the 1990s, in the same way as for Cameroonian footballers,⁷⁷ the transfer networks used by Algerian professional footballers in France were significantly redrawn. The migratory channels became more autonomous: with a reduction in the level of recruitment from higher social classes as players no longer came to France as part of an intellectual emigration, the transfer networks between Algeria and France detached themselves gradually from the traditional family and friend channels on which they had been founded. The consolidation of various sporting networks during the Algerian War and the persistence of the desire to migrate could not avoid the inexorable regression of the Algerian football emigration which occurred after Algerian independence. From 1962 the networks became disorganized by the massive exodus of Europeans from Algeria to

the former motherland and by the authoritative control of the Algerian government and the FAF which prohibited players from leaving the country, although some still attempted to become professionals. The networks gave little importance to intermediaries other than those who were linked to the FLN government. In Algeria, where the league had been disrupted by the riots of October 1988 and the black decade, the liberalization of the intermediary market was only possible from the beginning of the 2000s with the installation of sports agents and the development of training centres.

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Notes on Contributor

Stanislas Frenkiel is a socio-historian of sport with a specific interest in international sporting migration. He currently works as a teacher and researcher at the Institut des Sciences du Sport of the University of Lausanne, publishing his first book entitled *Une histoire des agents sportifs en France: Les imprésarios du football (1979–2014)* in 2014.

Notes

1. Nicolas Bancel and Jean-Marc Gayman, *Du guerrier à l'athlète* (Paris: PUF, 2002).
2. Jean-Baptiste Meyer, 'Network Approach versus Brain Drain', *International Migration* 39 (2001), 91–110, 94.
3. Pierre Lanfranchi and Matthew Taylor, *Moving with the Ball* (Oxford: Berg, 2001); Youssef Fatès, 'Sport et politique en Algérie' (PhD diss., University Paris I, 2002); John Bale and Mike Cronin, *Sport and Postcolonialism* (Oxford: Berg, 2003); Matthew Taylor, 'Les migrations de footballeurs: une approche historique', *Histoire et sociétés*, 18, nos 18–19 (2006), 24–45; and Stanislas Frenkiel, 'Des footballeurs professionnels algériens entre deux rives' (PhD diss., University Paris-Sud, 2009).
4. Stanislas Frenkiel, *Une histoire des agents sportifs en France* (Neuchâtel: CIES, 2014).
5. Roger Besson, Raffaele Poli, and Loïc Ravenel, 'Comprendre les mécanismes des migrations "glo-balles" africaines', *Afrique Contemporaine* 133 (2010), 63–76.
6. Paul Dietschy and David-Claude Kemo-Keimbou, *L'Afrique et la planète football* (Paris: EPA, 2008), 310.
7. Stanislas Frenkiel and Nicolas Bancel, 'The Migration of Professional Algerian Footballers to the French Championship (1956–1982)', *The International Journal of the History of Sport* 25 (2008), 1031–50.
8. Stanislas Frenkiel, 'Grandir et travailler en France, jouer pour l'équipe nationale algérienne de football dès 1980', *Hommes et migrations* 1289 (2011), 80–91.
9. Stanislas Frenkiel, 'Les footballeurs du FLN: des patriotes entre deux rives', *Migrations et Société* 110 (2007), 121–39; Stanislas Frenkiel, 'L'équipe algérienne du "Front de Libération Nationale" (1958–1962): au-delà du mythe', in Thierry Terret (ed.), *Histoire du sport et géopolitique* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2011), 221–42.
10. "Transfer networks can be defined as a group of interdependant individuals whose objective is to organize the movement of footballers between different clubs. In the specific case of players' markets, the notion of movement can be defined as a sequence of stays in different towns made in the context of an economic environment structurally organized to make it profitable, within which the transfers are accompanied by an exchange of capital'. Raffaele Poli, *Le marché des footballeurs* (Berne: Peter Lang, 2010), 87.
11. Lanfranchi and Taylor, *Moving with the Ball*, 6.
12. Bernadette Deville-Danthu, *Le sport en noir et blanc* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1997), 194.
13. Abdelmalek Sayad, *L'immigration ou les paradoxes de l'altérité* (Bruxelles: De Boeck, 1991); Ralph Schor, *Histoire de l'immigration de la fin du XIXème siècle à nos jours* (Paris: Colin, 1996); and Ahmed Boubekeur and Abdellali Hajjat, *Histoire politique des immigrations (post coloniales)* (Paris: Amsterdam, 2008).

14. Benjamin Stora and Emile Temime, 'L'immigration algérienne', in Laurent Gervereau, Pierre Milza, and Emile Temime (eds), *Toute la France* (Paris: Somogy, 1998), 125.
15. In order of appearance playing in a blue shirt (year of first selection/number of selections): Ali Benoua (1936/1), Abdelkader Ben Bouali (1937/1), Abderrahmane Ibrir (1949/6), Kader Firoud (1951/6), Abdelaziz Ben Tifour (1952/4), Ahmed Mihoubi (1953/1), Rachid Mekhloufi (1956/4), Saïd Brahimi (1957/2), Mustapha Zitouni (1957/4) et Khennane Mahi (1961/2).
16. Marc Barraud, 'Les footballeurs étrangers dans le championnat de France professionnel (1932–2003)', *Migrance* 22 (2003), 70–87, 82.
17. Hélène Wallenborn, *L'historien, la parole des gens et l'écriture de l'histoire* (Loverval: Labor, 2006), 106.
18. Pierre Bourdieu, 'L'illusion biographique', *Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales*, 62, nos 62–63 (1986), 69–72.
19. All those interviewed gave their permission for the results to be published.
20. In alphabetical order, Saïd Amara, Ahmed Arab, Kaddour Bekhloufi, Tahar Belhadj, Nadir Ben Drama, Mohamed Bouricha, Larbi Boussa, Embarek Chenen, Abderrahmane Defnoun, El Habib Draoua, Abdallah Henni, Smaïn Ibrir, Hamid Kermali, Abdelkrim Kerroum, Mohamed Lekkak, Kamel Lemoui, Khennane Mahi, Mohamed Maouche, Rachid Mekhloufi, Amokrane Oualiken, Amar Rouaï, Abderrahmane Soukhane, and Abdelhamid Zouba.
21. In alphabetical order, Redha Mohamed Ali Messaoud, Salah Assad, Hamid Bellabès, Khelifa Benmessaoud, Tedj Bensaoula, Rabah Djenadi, Rabah Gamouh, Nasser Guedioura, Mahmoud Guendouz, Rabah Madjer, Djamel Menad, Nasser Oughlis, and Djamel Tlemçani.
22. Benjamin Stora, *Aide-mémoire de l'immigration algérienne (1922–1962)* (Paris: Ciemi, 1992), 22.
23. Benjamin Stora, *Ils venaient d'Algérie* (Paris: Fayard, 1992), 94.
24. Jean Eskenazi, 'A huit jours de la reprise en football', *Paris-soir*, 15 août 1938, 12.
25. Stanislas Frenkiel and Nicolas Bancel, 'Les premiers footballeurs africains dans le Championnat de France', *Les Cahiers de l'INSEP* 46 (2010), 65–77.
26. Lanfranchi and Taylor, *Moving with the Ball*, 172–3.
27. A high-ranking Muslim in North Africa, often from a wealthy family, who concurrently held administrative, judicial, financial posts, and was sometimes a tribal leader.
28. Lanfranchi and Taylor, *Moving with the Ball*, 111–39.
29. Alfred Wahl, 'Football et jeux de ballon', *L'Empire du sport*, CAOM (1992), 46–7.
30. It refers to Boudhiene Abderrahmane (who worked in France from 1945 to 1955), Abdelkader Amar (1945–1948), Mokhtar Arribi (1946–1955), Rachid Belaïd (1950–1956), Tahar Belhadj (1946–1948), Nordine Ben Ali (1945–1951), Sadi Ben Arab (1946–1951), Mohamed Ben Brahim (1945–1953), Ben Samed (1949–1950), Abdelaziz Ben Tifour (1948–1958), Mohamed Bernou (1948–1954), Hamid Bouchouk (1948–1958), Kouider Daho (1945–1948), Assassi Fellahi (1953–1956), Saïd Ferrad (1950–1957), Ahmed Firoud (1945–1957), Sliman Guitoun (1946–1955), Saïd Hadad (1956–1958), Abderrahmane Ibrir (1946–1953), Hamid Kermali (1953–1958), Amar Kodja (1953–1956), Mustapha Labacci (1945–1948), Ahmed Mihoubi (1946–1957), Ben Nehari (1948–1950), Nehibi (1946–1947), Ahmed Nemeur (1945–1950), and Mustapha Zitouni (1953–1958).
31. El Habib Draoua, interviewed on 7 August 2006 in Oran. His biography was reconstructed in an interview with El Habib Draoua's son, in the presence of the latter who suffers from Alzheimer's disease. This article was also analysed: Mehdi Benbassal, 'Draoua Habib, ancienne gloire du football algérien -ex-joueur et entraîneur 1928–1983', *La voix de l'Oranie*, 5 juillet 2001, 22.
32. Tahar Belhadj, interviewed on 31 July 2006 in Tizi-Ouzou. His biography was reconstructed in an interview with Tahar Belhadj's nephew, in the presence of the latter who suffers from Alzheimer's disease.
33. He specifies that 'the Ministry of the Interior, at the same time [in 1962], gave the figure of 436,000'. Benjamin Stora, *Histoire de la Guerre d'Algérie (1954–1962)* (Paris: La Découverte, 1993), 40.
34. Stora, *Aide-mémoire de l'immigration algérienne*, 22.
35. Concerning competitiveness and jealousies between French and Algerian companies: Jacques Marseille, 'L'Algérie était-elle rentable?', in Charles-Robert Ageron (ed.), *L'Algérie des Français* (Paris: L'Histoire, 1993), 147–54.

36. Licensed in Alès Rachid Belaïd, in Bordeaux Abdelhamid Skander, in Cannes Hamid Kermali, in Lens Mokhtar Arribi, in Lyon Ahmed Mihoubi, in Monaco Abderrahmane Boubekeur and Mustapha Zitouni, in Nantes Amar Kodja, in Montpellier Abderrahmane Boudhiene, in Rouen Sliman Guitoun, in Saint-Étienne Assassi Fellahi and Rachid Mekhloufi, in Sète Saïd Brahim, in Toulon Hassen Chabri and Ahmed Firoud, in Toulouse Hamid Bouchouk, Saïd Hadad, and Abderrahmane Meftah, and in Troyes Abdelaziz Ben Tifour and Saïd Ferrad.
37. Pierre Lanfranchi and Alfred Wahl, *Les footballeurs professionnels des années 1930 à nos jours* (Paris: Hachette, 1995), 137.
38. Fatès, 'Sport et politique en Algérie', 598.
39. Ali Ben Fadah and Abderrahmane Defnoun signed in Alès, Ahmed Neggache in Besançon, Salah Lardjane in Bordeaux, Hocine Bouchache, brothers Abderrahmane, and Mohamed Soukhane with their uncle Smaïn Ibrir in Le Havre, Din Den Bey in Lille, Saïdi Zoubir in Red Star, Mohamed Maouche in Reims, Khennane Mahi in Rennes, Hacène Bourtal in Sète, and Saïd Amara in Strasbourg.
40. Hamid Kermali, interviewed on 13 November 2006 in Sétif.
41. Sociologist Manuel Schotté showed in the 1920s the importance of the military institution 'in the process of specialization of indigenous Morocans in cross-country ... [to whom were accorded as soldiers] a number of favours (grades, rewards, leave and facilities to increase their training times)'. Manuel Schotté, 'Destins singuliers, la domination des coureurs marocains dans l'athlétisme français' (PhD diss., University Paris X, 2005), 51–3.
42. Abdelkrim Kerroum, interviewed on 11 July 2006 in Mohammadia.
43. Hocine Seddiki, *Rachid Mekhloufi, l'imagination au bout du pied* (Alger: SNED Ahmed Zabana, 1982), 25–6.
44. Saïd Amara, interviewed on 8 July 2006 in Saïda.
45. Mohamed Maouche, interviewed on 20 July 2006 in Algiers.
46. Stanislas Frenkiel, 'Les transformations historiques des conditions d'émigration des footballeurs professionnels camerounais en France (1954–2010)', *Stadion* 37, no. 2 (2013), 327–47.
47. Stora, *Ils venaient d'Algérie*, 313.
48. Benjamin Stora, *Histoire de l'Algérie depuis l'indépendance (1962–1988)* (Paris: La Découverte, 2001), 4.
49. Yvan Gastaut, 'Algérie-Allemagne, la victoire des héritiers du "Onze de l'indépendance" lors de la Coupe du Monde 1982', in Paul Dietschy, Yvan Gastaut, and Stéphane Mourlane (eds), *Histoire politique des Coupes du Monde de football* (Paris: Vuibert, 2006), 295–310, 300.
50. Saïd Amara (Bordeaux), Ali Ben Fadah (Toulon), Hocine Bouchache (Le Havre), Abderrahmane Defnoun (Angers), Abdelkrim Kerroum (Troyes), Ahmed Oudjani (Lens), Amar Rouaï (Angers), and Abderrahmane a,d Mohamed Soukhane (Le Havre). They joined in Saint-Étienne Rachid Mekhloufi after several months spent in Servette de Genève and in 1964 in Nîmes Abdelhamid Zouba after two years in Grange, Neuchâtel, and Berne.
51. During the session of 11 November 1962, the members of the Managing Committee of the FAF discussed the 'situation of Algerian players on professional contract'. Premier numéro du bulletin officiel de la FAF *Algérie-Football* du 5 janvier 1963. Archives de la FAF, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris, FOL-JO-17032 1962–1965.
52. Article 2 of the section 'Qualification, licences et mutations de la saison 1962–1963' from the first FAF official bulletin *Algérie-Football*, 5 January 1963, relating to the session of 23 December 1962 confirming that: 'any amateur Algerian player can sign a licence in the club of his choice whatever his previous qualification, in Algeria, in Tunisia, in Morocco or in France'. Ibid.
53. During the year when the financial state of professional clubs improved, the authorized quota for new foreign players increased to two per club.
54. Lanfranchi and Taylor, *Moving with the Ball*, 174.
55. FIFA regulations ensured the free movement of footballers on the double condition not only that the host federation authorized its clubs the recruitment (qualification) of foreign players but also that the footballer himself could present an exit letter from his former club and an international transfer certificate from his federation of origin.
56. In parallel to the new code of Physical Education and Sport (ordonnance n° 76–81 of 23rd October 1976), a sports reform was put in place which had been decided in the Ministry of Youth and Sports by Ahmed Fadel and Djamel Houhou. According to Youssef Fatès, 'as

professional sport was energetically being denounced because it was the most disastrous example for youth, the dissolution of civil clubs and their replacement by performance sports associations (ASP) was decided by the Council of Ministers. These ASPs were paid for by socialist companies, the only sector which had resources (equipment, management, transport and support for athletes). Fatès, 'Sport et politique en Algérie', 667.

57. Except for Ali Bencheikh, Redha Mohamed Ali Messaoud worked at PSG (1976–1977) and Alès (1977–1980); Khelifa Benmessaoud in Caen (1980–1982); Rabah Gamouh in Nîmes (1976–1982), Grenoble (1982–1983), and Guingamp (1983–1984); Nasser Oughlis à Caen (1980–1981); Djamel Tlemçani à Reims (1979–1982), Rouen (1982–1984), Toulon (1984–1985), Quimper (1986–1987), Rennes (1987–1988), and Lorient (1989–1990). As for Djamel Zidane, he was recruited in Belgium in Saint-Nicolas (1978–1980), Courtrai (1980–1985), and Waterchei (1985–1986).
58. Paragraph 4 of article 7 of Chapitre IV 'Certificat international de transfert', Règlement international FIFA concernant le statut et le transfert des joueurs, 2001, 7.
59. Djamel Tlemçani, interviewed on 11 November 2006 in Médéa.
60. By two letters: one addressed 23 October 1977 to the Union Royale Belge des Sociétés de Football-Association (URBSFA) and the other dated 26 November 1977 to FIFA. FIFA Archives, Zurich, 'Correspondances avec les associations nationales, 1962–1983, Algérie'.
61. Pierre Vidal-Naquet, 'L'Algérie, société militaire? Réflexions sur trois moments d'une histoire: 1958, 1988, 1998', in Gilbert Meynier (ed.), *L'Algérie contemporaine – Bilan et solutions pour sortir de la crise* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2000), 169–84, 176–7.
62. Ali Bencheikh, interviewed on 1 August 2006 in Algiers.
63. Gary Armstrong and Richard Giulianotti, *Football in Africa* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 240.
64. Algeria won in 1975 the Mediterranean Games and in 1978 the African Games, as well as the Junior African Cup of Nations. They were quatre finalists of the Junior World Cup in 1979 and fourth in the Mediterranean Games in Split the same year. They came second in the Africa Cup of Nations in Lagos then participated in one of the quarter finals of the Olympic Games in Moscow in 1980.
65. Khelifa Benmessaoud in Caen, Rabah Gamouh in Nîmes, and Djamel Tlemçani in Reims, all three in the second division.
66. Jean-Charles Scagnetti, 'Coupe du monde 1982: les internationaux algériens et leur équipe nationale', *Migrance* 29 (2008), 45–58, 46.
67. Gastaut, 'Algérie-Allemagne, la victoire des héritiers du "Onze de l'indépendance" lors de la Coupe du Monde 1982', 305.
68. Frenkiel, *Une histoire des agents sportifs en France*.
69. Alinéa 2 of article 8 of Chapitre IV. Certificat International de transfert du règlement de la FIFA concerning 'Status and transfer of players' states in 2001 that 'it is strictly forbidden for national associations to take fees and demand the payment of taxes in relation to the establishment, by them, of an international transfer certificate'. 'Compensation for training' and 'compensation for training and education' (Chapitre VII. Indemnités de formation pour les jeunes joueurs) are paid by the new club to the training club and not to national associations.
70. Omar Kezzal, interviewed on 4 December 2006 in Algiers.
71. Ibid.
72. Rabah Madjer, interviewed on 27 July 2006 in Algiers.
73. Mahmoud Guendouz, interviewed on 25 July 2006 in Algiers.
74. Djamel Menad, interviewed on 19 July 2006 in Algiers.
75. Stora, *Histoire de l'Algérie depuis l'indépendance*, 4.
76. Benjamin Stora, *La guerre invisible, Algérie, années 90* (Paris: Presses de Sciences Po, 2001).
77. Frenkiel, 'Les transformations historiques des conditions d'émigration des footballeurs professionnels camerounais en France'.